



**Delegation of Afghan Women Leaders
Proposing Participatory Models to Enhance Reconciliation and Reintegration
June 2011**



A women's rights officer in the Herat regional office of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, **Suraya Daqiqi**, a teacher by profession, began her career by establishing and teaching home-based schools for girls during the Taliban regime. Since then, she has maintained her commitment to empowering women and girls, citing public awareness and implementation of laws as crucial to their protection.

Ms. Daqiqi coordinates her human rights work with Voices of Women, a US-based nonprofit organization that advocates for women as decision makers in global policymaking, and serves on the advisory boards of the Afghan Women's Network as well as the Women Activities and Social Services Association. She is a member of Herat's municipal *shura* council.

Ms. Daqiqi previously coordinated OKANDAN International development projects and served as a social organizer for UN Habitat. She received her bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Kabul University.

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For 15 years, **Wazhma Frogh** has mobilized social change for the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of Afghan society. Currently an executive board member of the Afghan Women's Network, Ms. Frogh maintains dialogue on gender equality with government agencies, national and international NGOs, research entities, and activists. She has advocated for legislative reforms, including the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women and the Shia Personal Status Law.

At regional and international levels, Ms. Frogh has addressed the role of women in security sector reform, regional peace efforts, and Afghanistan's national peace processes. She also served as the gender and development specialist for the Canadian International Development Agency in Kabul.

Believing that the media was inaccurately representing Afghan women as vulnerable, Ms. Frogh started a career as a reporter and social activist at the age of 17. She contributed weekly updates to The Frontier Post about women and children in the refugee camps of Peshawar, Pakistan, where she also organized community-based empowerment programs for women.



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Just after the formal fall of the Taliban government in 2002, Ms. Frogh completed the first gender assessment of women's conditions in Nuristan. She supported the establishment of Women's Development Centers in Kandahar, Ghazni, Herat, and Parwan provinces, creating leadership and livelihood opportunities. By 2007, her efforts reached more than 215 local organizations and created gender-sensitive development opportunities under the Initiative for the Promotion of Afghan Civil Society, with Counterpart International.

A post-graduate fellow at the University of Warwick, Ms. Frogh has participated in the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard University and the Law and Leadership Program for Muslim Women Human Rights Lawyers at Karamah and George Washington University.

Ms. Frogh received the US Department of State's 2009 International Women of Courage Award. For the past four years, Ms. Frogh has advocated for women's inclusion in the peace, reintegration and reconciliation process led by the Afghan Women's Network.

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Liza Ghausi views women's economic self-sufficiency as the key to realizing their rights and began her work on women's empowerment in the business world. As chief executive of the Mutaharek Construction Company, she creates job opportunities for women across Afghanistan and in so doing contributes to peacebuilding. She was recognized by *Enterprising Women* as one of the world's top entrepreneurs in 2011.

Since 2008, Ms. Ghausi also served as director of Afghanistan's Women Peace Torch Association, where she raises public awareness on legal rights and violence against women. To further support this work, she is studying law at Aryana University.

Ms. Ghausi worked in the political affairs unit of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's Jalalabad office, where she monitored and analyzed security and human rights trends and their impact across the region. She also recommended courses of action to senior UN officials. She previously conducted field monitoring for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in Nangarhar province.

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As a prominent figure in journalism, reporting and producing programs for Radio Kabul on a wide range of current international affairs, **Shafiqah Habibi** raises awareness on gender issues and women's rights. She directed the Radio Television Women's Association until the Taliban regime came into power. When she was silenced, she founded the Feminine Association, an underground movement that provided women with skills to manufacture and sell crafts. More recently, Ms. Habibi directed the New Afghanistan Women Association, which operates home schools for literacy, a center for journalism training, and a production studio for television programs on women's rights. She is also the founder and director of Afghanistan Women Journalist Union.

Ms. Habibi was a delegate to the 2010 Peace Jirga and a member of the 2003 Constitutional Loya Jirga. She directs the Women Political Participation Committee, which formed in response to customary councils' treatment of women. Previously, she served as media director for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and as a member of UNESCO's Ad-hoc Independent High Commission of Information and Communication for Afghanistan. Prior to the Taliban's ban on women in journalism, Ms. Habibi was honored as a distinguished announcer in Afghanistan. In 2002, she was given the Ida B. Wells Award for Bravery in Journalism and named one of the 21 leaders for the 21st century.

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As founder and president of Kandahar Treasure, the first women's private enterprise in Kandahar, **Rangina Hamidi** believes that women are the critical ingredient to transforming Kandahar's long history of violence. Her current business provides opportunities for 400 Afghan women to improve their own lives through traditional embroidery work, achieve economic independence, and build their influence for peace. Formerly, she managed the Women's Income Generation Project with Afghans for Civil Society, a grassroots organization dedicated to the social development of southern Afghanistan.

Ms. Hamidi has led groundbreaking networks for women, pioneering weekly women's meetings and social programs that led to women's historic march for peace at the Kherqua Shrine in March 2009. At the age of four, Ms. Hamidi escaped Soviet-occupied Afghanistan. Since her return to Kandahar in 2003, she has been recognized internationally for her work with women, selected as one of 18 finalists for the CNN 2007 Hero Award, and chosen as a "Personality of the Week" by Radio Free Europe in January 2008. She has contributed to numerous publications and radio programs, including TIMES Asia Magazine, The Globe and Mail, Der Spiegel, Business Week, The Guardian and Telegraph, NPR, BBC, and the Voice of America.

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As country director of the Afghan Women's Network, **Samira Hamidi** is responsible for overall management of the Network's programs, finances, and strategic planning. She previously served as the gender mainstreaming coordinator at the UN Development Programme's Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan within the Ministry of Interior and has extensive experience working for both civil society organizations and government agencies.

Ms. Hamidi believes she can best contribute to Afghanistan's development by opening an institute to build women's capacity and skills, including by offering literacy courses, language classes, and workshops to improve their routine work and build marketable skills.

With a bachelor's degree in business administration from Preston University in Pakistan, Ms. Hamidi has participated in many capacity-building workshops and seminars, most recently in leadership training.

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Dedicated to political development and state building in Afghanistan, **Quhramaana Kakar** serves as gender adviser to the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program and Joint Secretariat of the High Peace Council. In that role, which she has held since November 2010, Ms. Kakar recommends strategies and policies for addressing the needs and protecting the rights of women and men. She ensures the equal participation of women and men in all political and social aspects of the peace process and represents women's perspectives in national and international forums. She has eight years of experience in development, particularly related to women and leadership.

During 2008, Ms. Kakar was deputy chief of the party for E-Quality Alliances in Kabul, a project on developing higher education in Afghanistan, sponsored by USAID and Washington State University. Networking with potential external stakeholders and collaborating with provincial partners and the Ministry of Higher Education, she led program development, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation for Kabul's Afghans Next Generation e-Learning Center for Teaching and Learning.

Ms. Kakar has also served as program manager of women's development programs for Catholic Relief Services in Quetta, Pakistan, and as senior national adviser for the International Organization for Migration. She negotiated with Afghan authorities in Pakistan and Afghanistan for support of presidential election programs for those living abroad. Pursuing her master's degree in public policy, with a focus on nonprofit management and international political economy with specialization in gender politics in Afghanistan, Ms. Kakar also holds a master's degree in business management and master's of philosophy in Economics and Development.

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After the 2010 elections, **Farkhunda Zahra Naderi** became a member of the lower house of parliament, the Wolesi Jirga.

Believing in the importance of modeling political involvement for women and youth, Ms. Naderi joined the Hzbi Paiwandi Meli Afghanistan political party. In 2007, HPMA's central council appointed her head of the Women's Committee and Youth Association. In that role, she established an educational center; scholarships for higher education; committees on economics, culture, and sport; sports clubs; music teams; and weekly publications. She promotes the Association's growth by producing community education materials in multiple media.

Prior to her involvement with HPMA, Ms. Naderi helped establish the Matab Healthcare Center in Taimani, where she serves as president. She led the reconstruction of the Hakim Nasir Khusrow Balkhi Cultural Center and Public Library, where she planned cultural events and organized peace seminars throughout Kabul. Honoring this community leadership, the Universal Peace Federation appointed Ms. Naderi ambassador for peace.

Ms. Naderi received her degree in legal studies from Westminster International University in Tashkent.

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With more than 17 years of experience in the public and private sectors in national and international organizations, **Hasina Safi** has maintained her focus on women's empowerment and education as the key to national stability. From working as a teacher at the age of 15 while living as a refugee in Pakistan, she has become executive director of the Afghan Women Education Center. She was also a member of the Afghan Women's Network executive board.

Ms. Safi has been a program officer in democratization and civil society empowerment with the UN Development Programme in Kabul and a project manager for the USAID-sponsored Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society. She led the design, planning, and implementation of a Civil Society Support Centre's network. While serving as a national senior trainer for the International Organization on Migration, she supervised the election process in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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Malalai Roshandil Usmany envisions a government that upholds human rights and promotes an equitable society. To that end, she has served as executive director of the Assistance to Defend Women Rights Organization since she co-founded it in 2002. Ms. Usmany has helped develop policies such as the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Marriage Certificate, Family Law, and Procedures to Establish Non-Discriminatory Environment within Governmental Institutions, which are currently being implemented.

Prior to her work on policy development, Ms. Usmany spent nearly 17 years as a reporter and producer with Afghanistan National Television. Her programs, *Aaieenai Zan* and *Goftomane Siaasi*, focused on political dialogue.

With the vision of helping Afghan women fully realize their legal rights, Ms. Usmany studied law and political science at the Mawlana Jalaluddin Mohammad Balkhi College in Balkh province.

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Awarded by Afghanistan's Ministry of Women's Affairs for her efforts on women's rights and empowerment, **Hossai Wardak** has extensive program development experience with the United Nations, both inside and outside Afghanistan. Most recently, she served as a social policy planning, monitoring, and evaluation specialist for the UN Children's Fund in Baku, Azerbaijan. In that role, she designed and implemented programs on healthy family relations from an Islamic perspective; gender and ethics in policing; psychosocial and trauma counseling as components of basic health service packages; and health through literacy. She also developed UNICEF's four-year country program action plan with the Azerbaijan government.

Ms. Wardak has written on human rights, covering such topics as trafficking of women in Asia and the Middle East, and is active in organizations that address these issues. A member of UNICEF's Social Policy Specialists' Network, she contributes to the UN Population Fund's Gender and Human Rights Global Task Force, the Gender-Based Violence Task Force of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Hiroshima Peace Center.

A UNFPA–and University of Costa Rica–certified trainer in culturally sensitive approaches, Ms. Wardak earned her master's degree in international management from the University of Leicester. Previously, she studied population issues and business administration. She is a peacebuilding and peacekeeping associate with the Hiroshima Peace Center and deputy director of the Afghan women's NGO EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy.

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