



ONWARD FOR AFGHAN WOMEN

An initiative of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security

PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION FOR AFGHAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

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This month, Afghanistan's schools opened for the start of a new academic year, but Afghan girls remain excluded from the classroom. **The Taliban's ban on girls' education has lasted over a year and its implications are dire.** Without the promise of a secondary education, increases in forced child marriage, gender-based violence, and depression disproportionately affect Afghan women and girls. **There is no simple solution or replacement for in-person schooling.** However, in this critical moment, **the international community must identify, fund, and monitor alternative pathways to education for Afghan girls while continuing to advocate for a reversal of the ban.** The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security hosted four high-level expert discussions with various stakeholders—from underground school administrators, nonprofit directors, media groups, and government officials—to identify practical pathways forward for inclusive and quality education in Afghanistan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Pursue the restoration of formal education pathways by pressuring the Taliban through measures like visa restrictions.** By lobbying for temporary education measures, these measures become the norm. The international community should coordinate and condition engagement with the Taliban on the restoration of rights for Afghan women and girls.
2. **Emphasize that girls' education is an integral component of Islam in ongoing dialogues with Taliban officials.** Regional and Muslim-majority countries should use their meetings with Taliban officials to call for the reversal of anti-women policies that are contrary to Islam.
3. **Support alternative educational models, including online and offline learning systems, to reach a wider range of students until formal education is restored.** To address limited internet connectivity, electricity, and technology, private sector education providers should partner with government and nongovernmental entities to **develop quality pre-recorded materials** to support asynchronous learning; partner with local radio and television stations to air educational programming; design and publish websites with lesson plans and student activities; **provide students with required devices** like computers and internet package; and **explore alternative energy sources like solar panels** to expand the window of electricity access.
4. **Invest in Afghan-led education initiatives and fund local organizations that are providing educational services to Afghan women and girls because of the ban on formal education.** Some community groups have circumvented Taliban restrictions and developed underground school operations. Donors should partner with existing initiatives to **develop and circulate a unified curriculum and methodology** for partners to



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implement across community-based classes to ensure quality and standardization across efforts, specifically to avoid curriculum radicalization at the hands of the Taliban.

5. **Facilitate collaboration among international organizations, neighboring countries, and universities** to help Afghan girls access international educational opportunities, regardless of immigration status. **Utilize existing initiatives such as UNESCO's Qualification Passport** to ensure that Afghan students' existing qualifications transfer to any new institutions; **encourage universities to offer scholarships and seats to Afghan students**; and **fund and establish schools** outside of the country that employ Afghans to teach an inclusive and quality curriculum.
6. **Develop an established system to collect and analyze data to identify limitations and trends in pathways to education, assess program quality, and monitor the effectiveness of educational interventions.** Collaborate with universities and other research-oriented partners and international partners with robust data analysis mechanisms to design effective impact assessment strategies. **Scale innovative initiatives** after identifying data-driven indicators of success.
7. **Connect Afghan women to donors through private sector outreach and existing partnerships** to spotlight Afghan-led educational solutions, reinvigorate donors' commitment to Afghan women and girls, and combat growing donor apathy. **Leverage and build existing partnerships** like the Department of State's Alliance for Afghan Women's Economic Resilience; and **facilitate conversations between governments and partners** to share data, plan, and coordinate financing.
8. **Integrate counseling as a component of any educational programming.** Programming should **include mental health materials or licensed professionals** to address widespread reports of trauma, guilt, depression, and suicidal thoughts.