

Afghan Women Pursuing Peace Under Oppression

Findings from a Survey of Women Peacebuilders' Experiences and Needs in Afghanistan

BY SYEDA HALEEMA HASAN | September 2026

Executive Summary

August 2026 marked the fifth anniversary of the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan, during which time the regime has systematically erased Afghan women and girls from public life.¹ The Taliban has imposed over 160 restrictive decrees on women, denying their access to education, employment, and healthcare as well as restricting other human rights such as freedom of expression and movement.² Afghan women face such extreme repression that many scholars agree it amounts to gender apartheid.³ This unprecedented structural oppression of women has been implemented against the backdrop of over four decades of continuous war, foreign intervention, and insurgency that devastated the country. Together, it demonstrates Afghanistan's unique context, where women are disproportionately impacted by systemic subjugation repression as well as the long-term effects of conflict. Data highlights this reality, with Afghanistan continuing to rank lowest out of 181 countries on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index,⁴ which scores countries based on women's status since 2017.

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1 GIWPS, "Five Years On."
2 United Nations, "Universal Declaration."
3 End Gender Apartheid Campaign, "End Gender Apartheid."
4 GIWPS, *Women, Peace and Security Index*.

Despite facing this systemic cruelty, Afghan women demonstrate extraordinary persistence every day, continuing critical work on peacebuilding, human rights, and development.⁵ Grounded in this reality, this report brings findings from a digital survey of nearly 500 Afghan women working on peace and security to highlight their choices, challenges, and needs, as well as their actionable recommendations for international support. The results show that Afghan women peacebuilders are working across multiple areas, from education and healthcare to economic empowerment and mediation—underscoring that peace and security efforts do not occur in siloes. They are also doing this work with far fewer resources than in the past and with mounting personal and collective challenges. However, despite reporting their peace and security work generates negative repercussions at higher rates and personal benefits at lower rates than women globally, the majority of Afghan women confirm they will not stop their efforts. They demonstrate clarity and resilience, offering urgent and strategic ways to support their work that is building peace and helping uphold the rights of women and girls in their communities.

Anchored in a rigorous 32-question survey administered across Afghanistan through local networks, the report’s empirical findings center Afghan women’s voices and self-articulated priorities instead of external assumptions. In a moment where they are fighting simultaneously on multiple fronts to assert their fundamental human dignity, international actors must step up with sustained, multifaceted solidarity and support that matches Afghan women’s bravery.

Introduction

In 2025, the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) launched an online, multilingual Global Women Peacebuilders Survey that generated critical insights on peace and security work from 2,744 peacebuilders in 121 countries.⁶ The survey—disseminated through GIWPS networks and local organizations—garnered a sizable response from Afghanistan, where the Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS) contributed to its dissemination, playing a unique and significant role. DROPS’s network of Afghan women spans 32 provinces, and the Bishnaw-Wawra platform allows them to collect data even amidst such severe exclusion of women from public life.⁷

This report presents analysis of the responses from 461 Afghan women surveyed as part of the Global Women Peacebuilder Survey,⁸ complemented by research and expert input from GIWPS and DROPS.⁹

5 GIWPS, “Five Years On.”

6 The survey was available in Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Dari, English, French, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (Cyrillic and Latin), Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian/Bahasa, Pashto, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Thai, Ukrainian, and Urdu.

7 See DROPS, <https://dropsafghanistan.org/>, and Bishnaw, <https://bishnaw.com/>.

8 Findings on WPS National Action Plans were excluded from this survey because these were suspended following the Taliban’s 2021 takeover and remain inactive under Taliban governance.

9 **Methodological Note:** This report analyzes a subset (Afghanistan only) of the Global WPS Survey data. Quantitative data was analyzed using STATA where responses to multiple choice questions were converted to binary variables that helped evaluate the exact proportion of respondents selecting each option, as well as composite count variables for selecting multiple options. Cross-tabulations were conducted using Pearson’s chi-squared tests and t-tests to assess statistically significant differences between the Afghanistan, South Asia (regional), and global samples. 3 Qualitative responses were translated into English where needed, with direct quotes included in the report. The findings are augmented by desk research and insights from policy and research experts at GIWPS and DROPS. Gemini AI Chatbot was used for process support in text (e.g., editing and organizing) and coding (reviewing code format or debugging).

It offers an invaluable look into Afghan women's lived realities, including their peace and security efforts, challenges, needs, and strategic priorities.

Defining “peacebuilding” in contemporary Afghanistan is not straightforward and requires moving beyond traditional frameworks of formal negotiations to encompass the holistic, daily strategies Afghan women employ to defend human rights and generate conditions for peace. In a context of extreme regime suppression and on the heels of over four decades of continuous war, their peace work manifests across diverse, non-traditional fronts. These include: establishing secret home schools and online learning networks; sustaining informal economic livelihoods following bans on female employment; supplying underground legal and psychological aid; providing humanitarian assistance; and leading community-level advocacy. The survey allowed respondents to self-identify and describe their work. The diversity in their activities shows the need to expand our conceptualization of peace and security actors and efforts, allowing us to understand and support the full spectrum of Afghan women's resistance.

Who are the Afghan women in our sample and what peace and security work are they doing under Taliban rule?

Young Afghan women from diverse backgrounds are working across multiple sectors, often simultaneously

“...there is chaos in everyone's hearts. No woman can go anywhere alone and without a mahram (male guardian). No woman is free. I myself had the experience of not having a mahram. I was alone, no hotel or inn sheltered me at night. I did not have a mahram. No work branches would let me in.”

- Afghan woman respondent

The demographic information captured by the survey reflects a dynamic sample of Afghan women, which helps to contextualize the report's findings within the country's diverse population. Afghan women in the survey sample were 27 years old on average, much younger than the women surveyed regionally and globally,¹⁰ and the majority lived in urban areas (55 percent). These demographics may be driven by the survey's digital format and dissemination methodology, which made it relatively more accessible for younger women than older women. They may also reflect a changing demography of women peacebuilders inside the country: DROPS research has found that Afghan women involved in peace and security work tend to be younger, especially since 2021. There are a variety of explanations. Compared to older women, younger Afghan women may have greater comfort with technology and social media, relatively fewer caregiving and family responsibilities, as well as enthusiasm about joining a new generation of women committed to fighting for their rights. It may also reflect the reality that many prominent older Afghan women peacebuilders have left the country.

10 Who were six and 17 years younger on average, respectively, than Afghan women.

The Afghan sample also appears relatively more diverse in terms of identity than global survey responses, with Afghan women self-identifying in almost all minority identity categories more than women globally (Fig. 1).¹¹

In terms of education levels, Afghan women respondents attended school for fewer years than women in South Asia and globally; the majority (57 percent) reported 13-16 years of education, compared to women in South Asia (44 percent) and globally (40 percent) who reported 17 years or more of education. Given educational attainment is a cumulative, long-term metric, and that the sample's average age falls well past secondary school age, these figures likely reflect schooling completed prior to the 2021 Taliban takeover. They are unlikely to capture the recent impact of Taliban education bans.

Although most Afghan women did not describe their living areas as active conflict zones or refugee camps, more Afghan women (26 percent) were living in a former conflict zone compared to other women in South Asia and globally. Most Afghan respondents in our sample did not report displacement. However, those who did experience displacement noted armed conflict (57 percent) and economic hardship (52 percent) as the reason—both at significantly higher rates than other women in South Asia. These demographics further demonstrate Afghanistan's specific context, where impacts of historical conflict intersect with current repression. Displaced Afghan women were also far more likely to be forced across international borders: 68 percent fled to a new country, compared to 24 percent in South Asia and 36 percent globally.

When asked about their peace and security work, most Afghan women reported working or volunteering mainly with international (59 percent) and civil society organizations (53 percent). Notably, they reported working with international organizations at twice the rate that women globally do, highlighting the critical role international actors have played in the country's WPS efforts.

Afghan women's contributions to peace and security can take on many forms (Fig. 2). They reported the

“Education is our right and should not be ignored for these basic demands of ours. We call on the international community to support the women of Afghanistan as much as possible, stand by us women and defend our rights”

- Afghan woman respondent

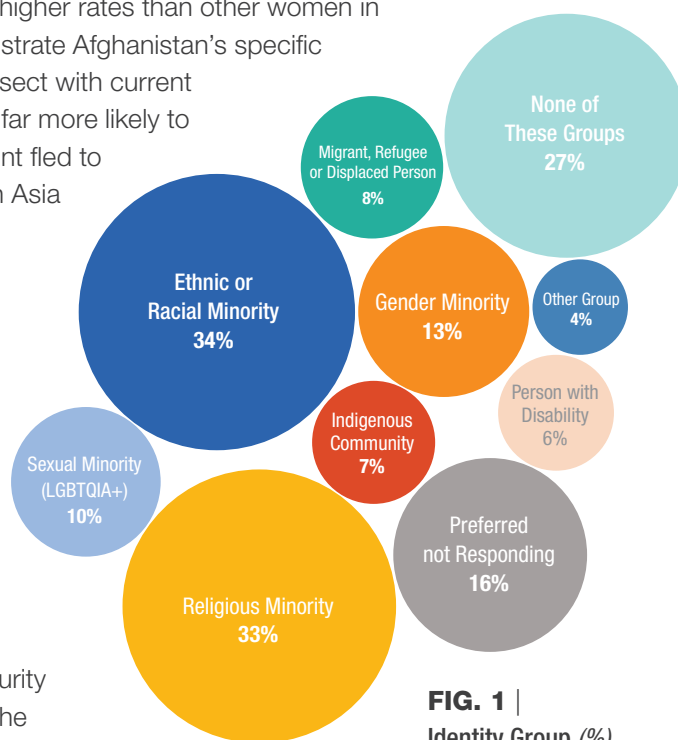
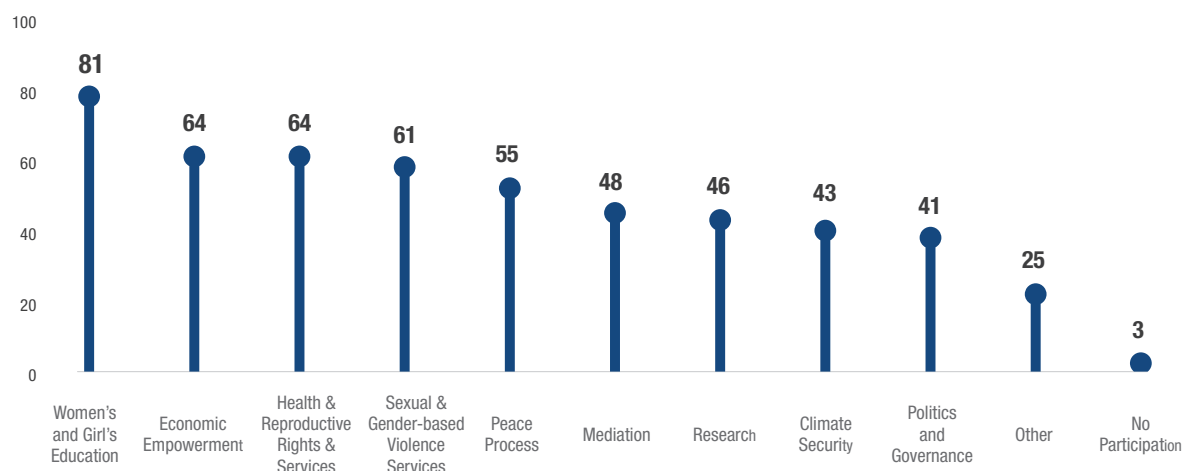


FIG. 1 |
Identity Group (%)

¹¹ The exception was the person with disabilities category.

FIG. 2 | Afghan Women Participate in Multiple Activities to Promote Peace and Security (%)



highest participation rates in activities related to women and girls' education¹² (81 percent), followed by economic empowerment¹³ (64 percent) and health and reproductive rights and services¹⁴ (64 percent). The high participation rates in education demonstrate both need and problem-solving. Although Afghan girls are barred from education beyond sixth grade,¹⁵ women are still active in the sector, providing temporary substitutions for formal education through measures such as secret or online schools¹⁶ and community-based literacy and skills development programs.¹⁷

Compared with women from the rest of South Asia, Afghan women reported working more—by almost 9 percentage points—in health and reproductive rights and services, but at a notable 18 percentage point less in climate security work. Greater participation in health and reproductive rights work is reflective of the acute gendered healthcare crisis in Afghanistan, as well as possible societal acceptance and targeted opportunities to work in the area. Afghanistan consistently suffers from one of the highest maternal mortality ratios globally, which is further exacerbated by Taliban decrees prohibiting male physicians from treating female patients and barring female midwives from training programs that previously filled critical care gaps. Compounded by drastic cutbacks in international humanitarian aid and health sector assistance, access to essential medical care has reached a catastrophic threshold. On the other hand, even though Afghanistan is among the countries most vulnerable to the climate crisis,¹⁸ it is also among the least prepared.¹⁹ With so many fundamental challenges, climate security may not be a priority for Afghan women, even if it remains a serious concern. Additionally, their lower involvement in climate security work may stem from cultural barriers or lack of access to education and training.

12 Teaching girls, funding or equipping schools for women and girls, advocating for girls' rights to education and to go and stay in school, etc.

13 Supporting women's economic empowerment, developing cooperatives or savings groups, supporting women's businesses, distributing resources in your community, etc.

14 Providing health services to women, working in clinics for women's or children's health, education on sexual and reproductive health, combating female genital cutting, etc.

15 Ferguson and Su, "Education Ban."

16 Malala Fund, "Afghan Girls Are Seeds,"

17 UNESCO, "Keep Learning Alive."

18 Adil et al., *Climate Risk Index 2026*.

19 ND-GAIN, "Country Rankings."

“As a civil activist, I have done many [advocacy] for women and girls which I [am] proud [of] when I remember them. For example, I participated [in] many peace building programs and we had peace education for students of some districts in Afghanistan.”

- Afghan woman respondent

Eighty percent of Afghan women reported more than one area where they participate to promote peace and security. Compared with women globally, Afghan women reported higher participation rates across almost every category of work. Many factors may explain this pattern: Afghan women may be working in multiple sectors due to safety concerns and urgent needs arising from the Taliban’s comprehensive and pervasive attack on women’s rights, coupled with decreases in funding, closing civic space and deteriorating service delivery.²⁰ They may need to take on several roles due to limited job opportunities. Further research could illuminate the factors influencing Afghan women’s multisectoral work, as well as its impact, including possible backlash and harm caused by visibility from greater and wider peace and security work.²¹

The majority of Afghan women (65 percent) contributing to peace and security described themselves as activists. Thirty-seven percent described themselves as human rights defenders and 28 percent as peacebuilders. Most also used multiple descriptors instead of one.

The Global Women Peacebuilders’ Survey report discusses a similar trend amongst global respondents,²² with most identifying as activists; only 29 percent described themselves as peacebuilders. DROPS also revealed that in Afghanistan, ‘peace activist’ is a more likely identifier than peacebuilder, since women working in any sector identify as activists.

“As an activist woman, I am not a victim of war, but an architect of social peace, and this is a voice that must be heard globally.”

- Afghan woman respondent

How is peace and security work impacting Afghan women?

Afghan women are making greater efforts for magnified impact, but at high risk and with little appreciation

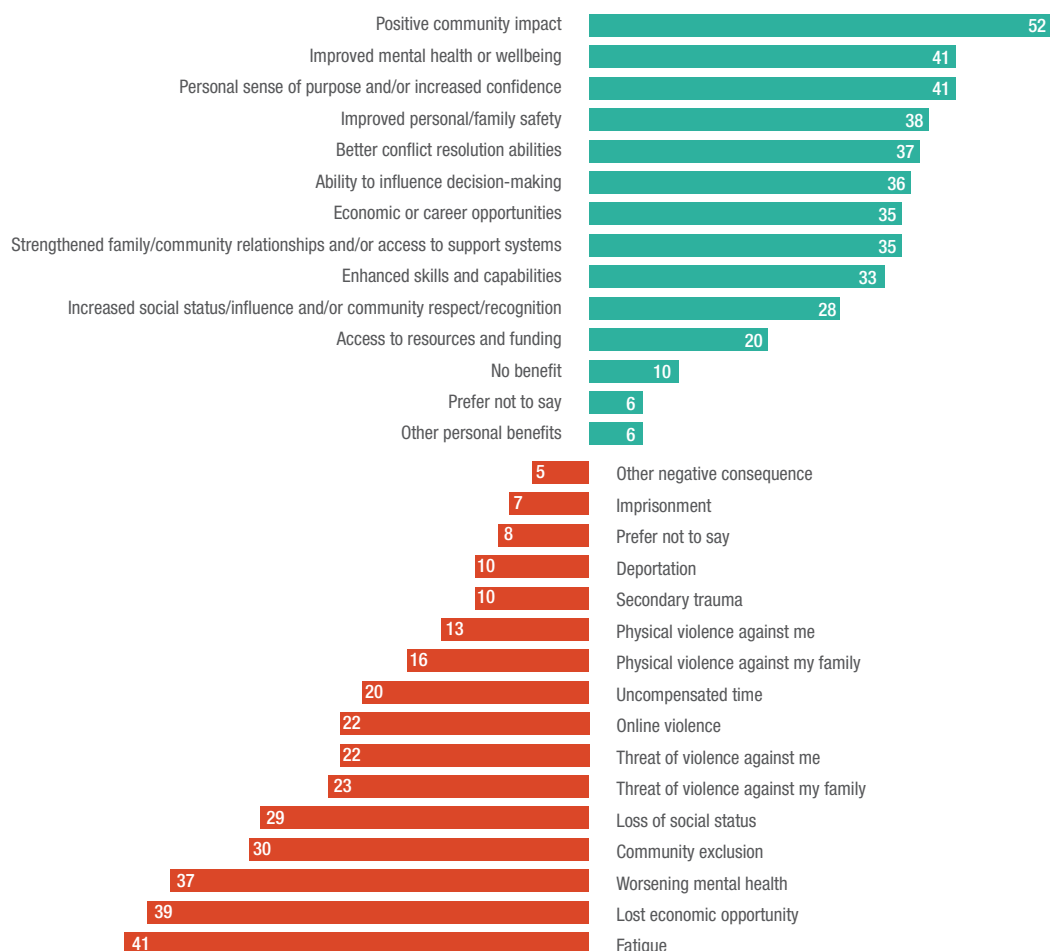
Afghan women reported experiencing both benefits and serious risks from their peace and security work (Fig. 3). Positive community impact (52 percent), improved mental health or wellbeing (41 percent), and personal sense of purpose and/or increased confidence (41 percent) were the most reported benefits. Access to resources and funding (20 percent) as well as increased social status and/or community recognition (28 percent) were the least reported benefits. The most reported negative consequences of their peace and security work (Fig. 3) were fatigue (41 percent) and lost economic

20 UN News, “Afghan Women,” CIVICUS, “Refuse to Be Silenced,” and UNAMA et al., “Summary Report.”

21 UN Women, “Fighting Erasure.”

22 GIWPS, *Women, Peace and Security Survey*.

FIG. 3 | Benefit and Risk from Peace and Security Work (% of Afghan Women)



opportunity (39 percent), while imprisonment (7 percent) and deportation were the least commonly reported risks (10 percent).

Afghan women's work was severely affected by the 2025 United States' aid freeze.²³ They reported impacts at higher rates than both women in South Asia and women globally. The most commonly reported consequences were women themselves or their colleagues suffering from burnout (47 percent), losing access to services they relied on (43 percent), or their organization having to lay off staff (42 percent) (Fig. 4). More Afghan women reported these three impacts than women in South Asia. Only 6 percent of Afghan women reported the aid freeze not affecting them.

Overall, Afghan women report significantly fewer personal benefits and more negative consequences from their work compared to women peacebuilders regionally and globally.²⁴ However, most Afghan women in the

23 From 2021-2025, the U.S. provided over 36% of international assistance to Afghanistan. See Cone, "No One Cares."

24 The only exceptions for negative consequences were fatigue, uncompensated time, and secondary trauma, which women globally reported at higher rates than women in Afghanistan.

survey sample reported that the negative consequences of their work do not deter them. Only 38 percent of Afghan women reported stopping their work due to the reported negative consequences, a slightly lower rate than their South Asian peers (40 percent), yet more than twice the rate of women globally (18 percent).

These findings underscore the paradox of peacebuilding and activism in Afghanistan; reward and serious risk exist simultaneously, especially in big cities like Kabul. Public demonstrations and advocacy bring positive community impact but expose women to danger. Increased activism elevates women’s leadership, but makes them more visible as targets. International support helps their work but brings greater scrutiny and backlash. Managing this constant interplay distinguishes the reality of Afghan women from that of peacebuilders working in relatively more permissive environments.

Unfortunately, despite the risks they assume, Afghan women do not feel their work is valued to the same extent as other women, with a significant proportion pushed into middle tiers of appreciation (such as “somewhat valued”) (Fig. 5).

FIG. 4 | Reported Aid Freeze Impacts (% of Afghan Women)

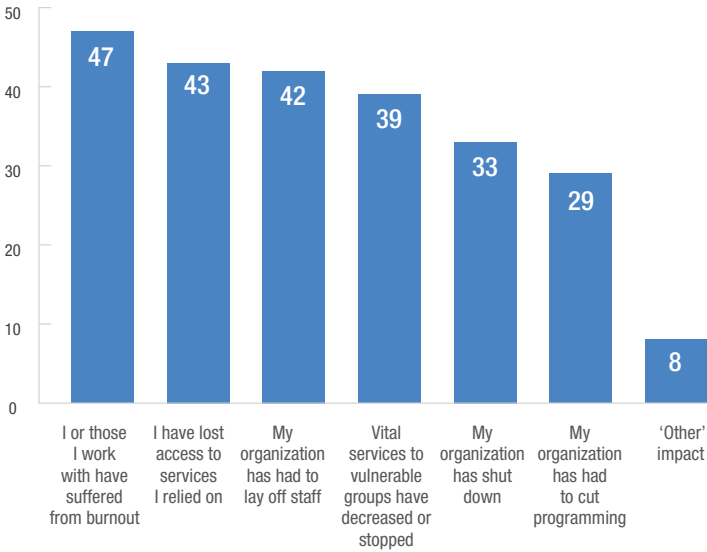
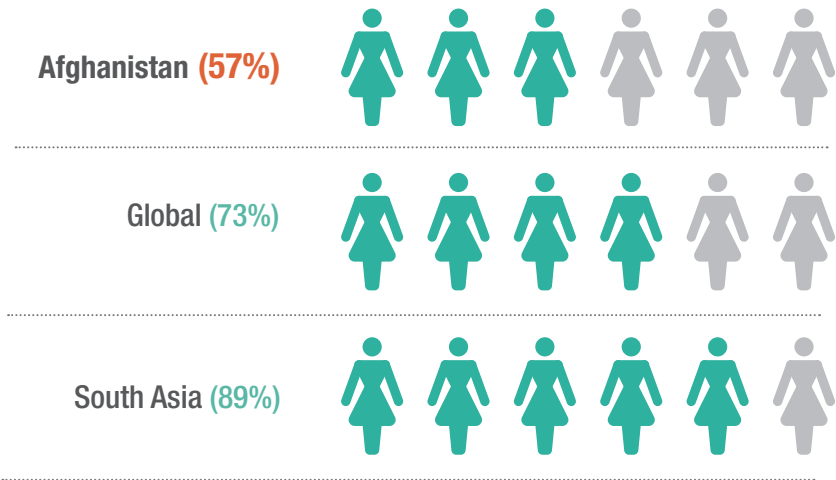


FIG. 5 | Appreciation Comparison



Fewer Afghan women report feeling extremely or very valued by the organizations they work in compared to women in South Asia and globally

“There are many cases where we lost all our jobs after the Taliban came. We don’t have enough food, we don’t have jobs, we don’t have money, we don’t have security, our mental state is bad, but even in these difficult circumstances, we have hope and we are trying.”

- Afghan woman respondent

Where is change happening in Afghanistan?

As civic and decision-making spaces disappear, Afghan women continue to influence change in households, workplaces and their communities

The household emerged as the domain where the largest proportion of Afghan women reported a significant ability to create positive change (49 percent), followed by their workplace (38 percent), their school/university (36 percent), their local community (31 percent), within their religious/faith community (25 percent), and on social media (25 percent). On the other hand, Afghan women indicated most frequently that they had “no ability to make positive change” within local and national governments (27 percent and 22 percent respectively).²⁵ When compared to other women in South Asia, Afghan women reported significantly less ability to create positive change in many of the aforementioned spheres.

Afghan women have a far narrower space in which to operate. They are barred from public spaces and, for the most part, banned from participation in government. Impact in the household remains their most effective channel. Outside the household, some civil society and international organizations are among the few places still focused on women and girls, which may provide avenues of engagement for Afghan women, even if formal employment is not possible. Afghan women have a long history of working with international organizations through years of conflict, and despite increasing difficulty, it remains a vital collaboration. Places like non-governmental organizations (NGOs), schools, hospitals/health centers as well as women’s online networks are spaces that are constrained but can still serve as conduits for mutual support, skills building, and quietly pushing for change. Additionally, although it is highly restricted for girls over 12, education is also the site for peace and security activity by many Afghan women; informal home-based or online schools and *madrassas* (religious seminaries) can offer learning and community, even though they are inadequate substitutes for formal education.²⁶ Finally, some domains of influence may be pertinent in Afghanistan but not elsewhere; for instance, the majority of women in our global sample reported “not applicable” (30 percent) for religious/faith communities, but in Afghanistan a higher proportion of women reported significant ability in this domain,²⁷ notwithstanding an apparent lack of religious leaders’ support and validation for their efforts.

What do Afghan women need to enable change?

Afghan women prioritize survival and safety as key services fall short in fulfilling their needs

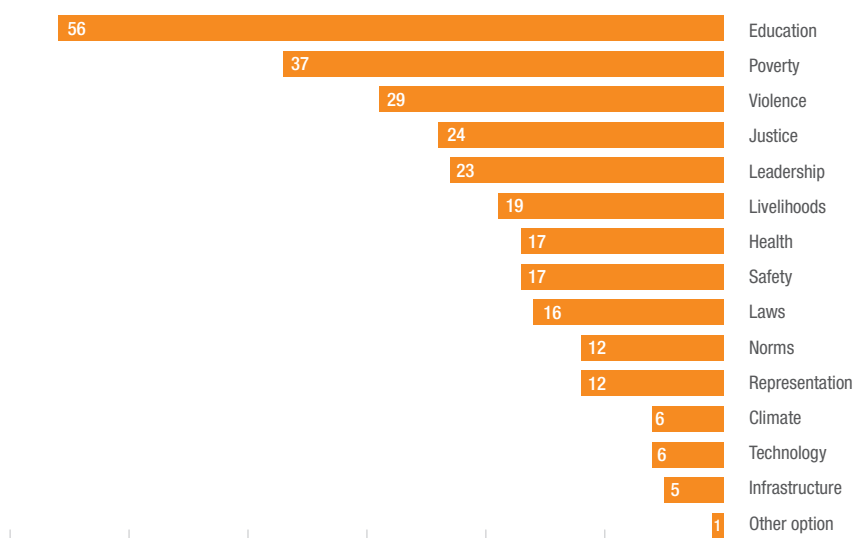
Most Afghan women indicated education (56 percent), poverty (37 percent), and violence (29 percent) as among their top 3 challenges. The majority of Afghan women identified basic rights, capacity building, and economic empowerment as the factors that are most important to advancing women’s abilities to create change in their communities (Fig. 6).

25 Some questions in the survey had a high share of “Not Applicable” (N/A) responses, which can skew statistical comparisons. For instance, if universities closed for women in Afghanistan, those spaces became “inapplicable” to many Afghan women respondents. Examining these factors in detail is beyond the scope of this report but a possible area for future research.

26 A study on *madrassas* by DROPS shows that families consider sending their daughters to *Madrassas* to teach or study as a way for them to stay active, address mental health issues, and gain financial benefits as teachers.

27 Alsousi and Alarabed, “Afghanistan After 2021.”

FIG. 6 | Challenges Reported as Top 3 Most Difficult (% of Afghan Women)



Most Important Factors to Advance Women's Abilities to Create Change (% of Afghan Women)



Education and skills training (52 percent), legal protections for women and girls (40 percent), and access to economic opportunities and financial control (32 percent) were selected most frequently out of 16 enabling factors. Conversely, factors such as cross-sector collaboration or coalitions (e.g., between government and civil society) (4 percent), institutional support mechanisms (4 percent), and gender-sensitive security policies (6 percent) were selected least often by respondents in Afghanistan as enabling women to create change. These results also stand out when compared to women in South Asia and globally. As key enablers, Afghan women prioritized education and legal protections at significantly higher rates, and report institutional levers, awareness raising, and networking at lower rates than both groups.²⁸

28 Includes activities such as formal peace processes, civil society networks, awareness campaigns, and sustainable funding.

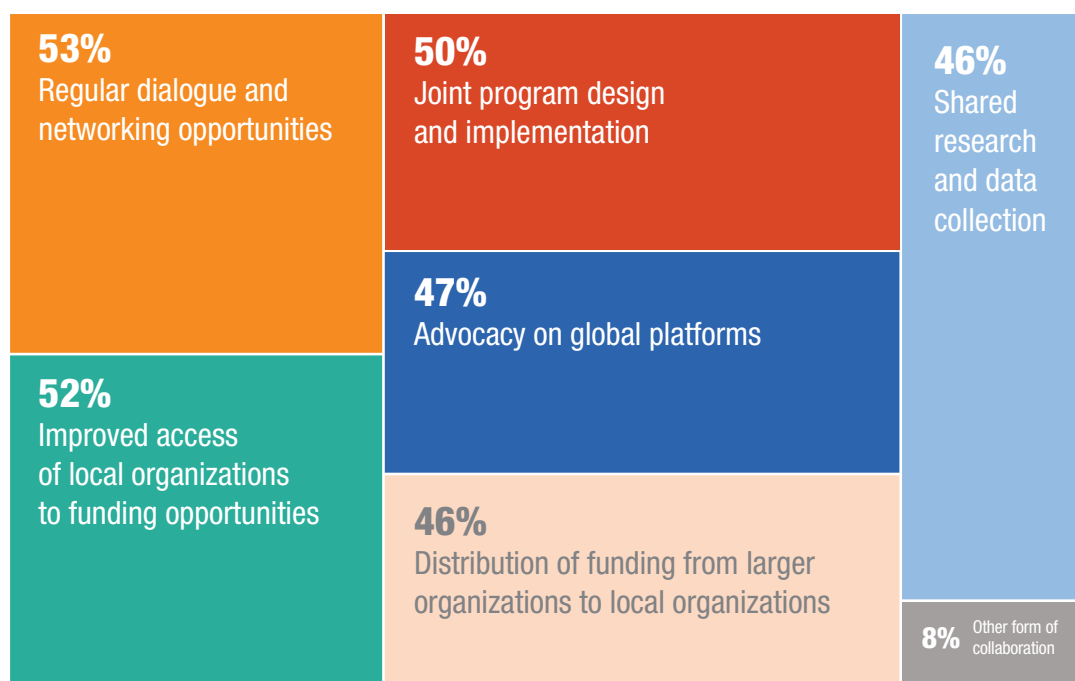
FIG. 7 | Afghan Women's Top 6 Urgent Needs from the International Community (% Selected)



Key enablers of change for Afghan women are also aligned with their most urgent needs from the international community which include legal support, capacity building and funding options (Fig. 7).

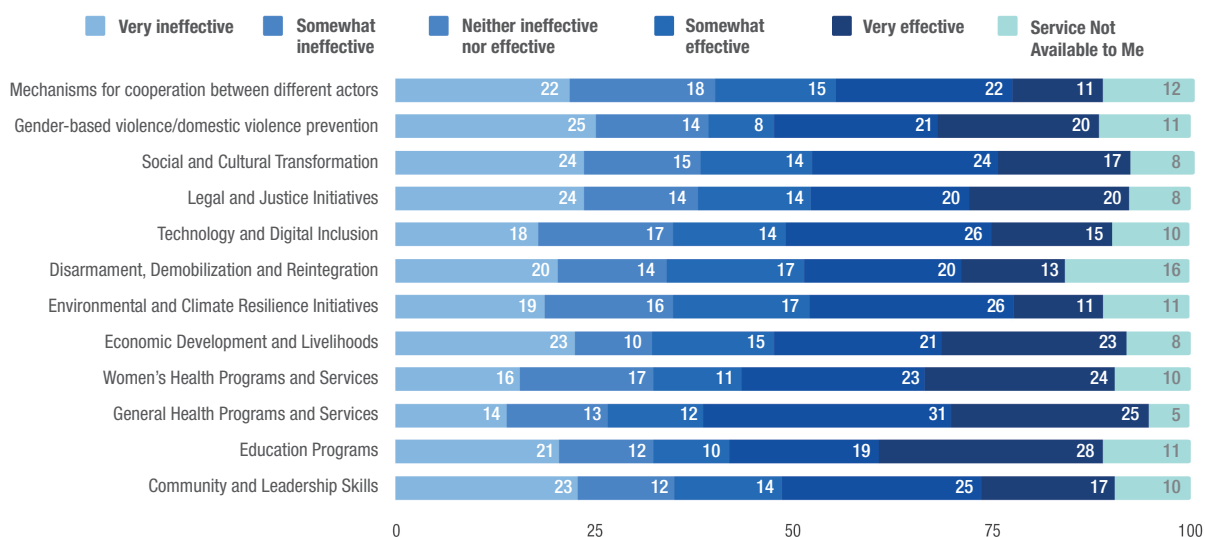
The survey findings also reveal the most effective forms of collaboration between local women and international organizations working on peace and security (Fig. 8), with the vast majority of Afghan women reporting that there are multiple effective forms of collaboration.

FIG. 8 | Effective Modes of Collaboration between Afghan Women and International Organizations (% Selected)



Assessments of services designed to meet their needs reveal a mixed picture, where a sharp divide emerges between some of the basic social services and other systemic initiatives (Fig. 9). Education programs (28 percent), general health services (25 percent), and women's health services (24 percent) were rated as very effective most frequently. In contrast, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention programs (25 percent), legal

FIG. 9 | Rating effectiveness of services in supporting women to promote peace and security (% of Afghan Women)



and justice initiatives (24 percent), and social/cultural transformation programs (24 percent) were rated most frequently as *very ineffective*. Crucially, 11 percent of Afghan respondents report education programs as completely unavailable, a statistically significant gap when compared to regional (0.6 percent) and global (3 percent) unavailability.

These results reflect the realities of women under Taliban rule. When formal civic architecture, legal frameworks, and institutional channels have been dismantled or rendered hostile, activists are forced to focus on meeting basic needs such as education, direct legal assistance, and economic self-sufficiency. A stark example from the survey underscores this reality: 40 percent of Afghan women believe legal protections for women and girls are among the most important factors to enhance their ability to drive change, yet a majority rated legal and justice initiatives as *very ineffective*. Other programs aligned with capacity such as community skills and technology/digital inclusion were rated *somewhat* or *very ineffective* by most Afghan women.

Moreover, Afghan women's ratings reflect a pattern of polarization in opinion (Fig. 9). Higher proportions of Afghan women rate the exact same service types as *both* “*very effective*” and “*very ineffective*” compared to regional and global peers. For instance, economic development programs were rated as *both very effective* (23 percent) and *very ineffective* (23 percent). Similarly polarized rating was evident across education, legal, digital inclusion, and GBV services.

Differences in women's experiences of services often come from where they live, what they can access, and their backgrounds. This can be common in contexts like Afghanistan where resources and safety are uneven or irregular. DROPS research confirms that services for Afghan women vary by province, city, or even neighborhood. There are many possible reasons. Gender apartheid policies may not be uniformly applied by the Taliban regime across the country,²⁹ which may mean that women in some provinces have better access or better services than others. For instance, authorities in Kabul might apply restrictions unevenly because of

29 UN OHCHR, “Afghanistan's Human Rights Situation.”

active resistance from women, which may not be the case in other areas. Climate-induced disasters, such as the earthquake that struck Afghanistan's eastern region in August 2025, may also mean services are severely limited in some places.³⁰

Personal expectations and past education also shape women's varied views of these programs. Political factors matter too; some women value international help while others may avoid it because of the Taliban regime's scrutiny or community pressure, for example. Further research is required to understand service delivery to Afghan women and to ensure it aligns with their most urgent needs.

What are actionable ways to support Afghan women?

Strategies focusing on accountability, material support and targeted advocacy are priorities

The Women, Peace and Security survey in Afghanistan demonstrates the relentless efforts by Afghan women in the face of mounting challenges. It also shows key gaps, opportunities and strategic priorities, as articulated by Afghan women themselves. Drawing from these insights and secondary research, DROPS and GIWPS recommend the following for various stakeholders invested in women's rights and dignity.

1. Governments and Donors

- Refuse to normalize the Taliban regime and its brutal, systematic repression of women and girls, using all available diplomatic tools to push back on the regime and demand accountability for crimes committed against women and girls.
- Advocate for the recognition of gender apartheid as an international crime at the United Nations.
- Recommit to and prioritize funding for Afghan civilians—and women and girls in particular—and reverse international aid cuts to critical efforts including humanitarian aid, human rights documentation, and women's education.
- Use creative funding models, holistic (rather than siloed) approaches, and flexible modalities to deliver funds directly to Afghan women-led organizations, enabling them to do their multi-faceted work and respond to community needs.
- Fund research documenting the real-time impacts of displacement, identity-based risks, and the gaps left by the withdrawal of international aid.

2. International Organizations and NGOs

- Prioritize multi-year, multi-sectoral interventions—co-designed with Afghan civil society—that reflect Afghan women's broad participation across sectors.
- Provide direct support to Afghan women's groups to support their continued existence, mitigate burnout, and improve perceptions of value and appreciation.
- Support education inside and outside the country until formal education is reestablished through initiatives such as scholarship programs, alternative education models, and direct financial assistance for local programs.
- Provide strict oversight and reporting on any efforts by the Taliban regime to limit or divert humanitarian aid.

30 Humanitarian Action, "Overview 2026."

3. Afghan Civil Society

- Continue to document and communicate rapidly changing needs, especially around (climate-induced) disasters and displacement.
- Build coalitions to advocate for legal protections, greater inclusion of women in peace and security activities, amplify voices and sustain activism amid domestic exclusion.

“There is no peace in Afghanistan, nor is peace written in the destiny of Afghans. We ask the international community to look at Afghans and Afghanistan for peace, because we are also human beings and have the right to live in peace”

- Afghan woman respondent

- Strengthen relationships between Afghans inside the country and Afghans who are living in exile and supporting women in Afghanistan. These relationships will be critical for post-conflict recovery and rebuilding.

4. United Nations Bodies

- Develop a formal consultative mechanism that ensures Afghan women are co-leaders in key UN-led deliberations. There is no place for the participation of the Taliban alongside the exclusion of half of Afghanistan’s population. Afghan women must not be marginalized.
- Convene regular dialogues between donors, international NGOs, and Afghan civil society to design new coordination mechanisms, funding channels, and advocacy platforms that respond to Afghan women’s needs for legal support, capacity building, and long-term funding.
- Support data collection and policy analysis, especially allowing for disaggregation that captures the diversity of Afghan women’s identities and experiences.

Conclusion

The past five years under Taliban rule has brought tremendous violence and hardship for Afghan women. But it has not silenced them. As this research demonstrates, Afghan women are not passive victims of gender apartheid but strategic actors who—at extraordinary personal risk—work persistently to ensure basic survival and advance humanitarian action, educational initiatives, peace and security, and women’s rights.

That said, resilience is not a substitute for resources. Facing severe funding cuts, heightened personal danger, and systemic exclusion, these women cannot sustain the fight for their rights alone. The empirical findings and recommendations in this report present a clear and urgent roadmap for international action: fund local organizations flexibly, elevate their advocacy globally, and co-design interventions that match their self-articulated priorities. Not only is this action a policy imperative for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, it is an indispensable requirement for standing with those upholding human dignity and security in Afghanistan today.

صلح ارزوی ما است
“Peace is our dream”

- Afghan woman respondent

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