



Annual Report 2024

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Message from the Chair of the Board



This year, Women Leaders of Tomorrow (WLOT) is proud to celebrate the significant achievements of our nonprofit organization, dedicated to empowering women through education and sports. We reflect with joy and gratitude on our efforts over the past year and the positive changes we've brought to the lives of Afghan women.

Education remains a cornerstone of empowerment. By providing educational opportunities, we equip our Afghan women scholars with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to overcome obstacles both locally and globally. In addition, sports play a vital role in empowerment. WLOT believes that engaging in sports not only promotes physical health but also boosts self-esteem, leadership abilities, and teamwork.

By embracing their athletic talents, Afghan women athletes have challenged societal stereotypes and fostered an environment of equality and inclusion.

None of this progress would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, and partners. Your generosity and commitment have made a tangible difference in the lives of countless women. We extend our heartfelt thanks for believing in our mission and standing with us on this journey of empowerment.

As we look to the future, we are excited about the opportunities that await us and remain committed to expanding our impact”

H. Hailey Graham is the chair of the board of WLOT and a lawyer practicing in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Message from the Founder & Executive Director



سلام عليكم (As-salâmo 'alaykom). سلام (Salâm).

When I started Women Leaders of Tomorrow (WLOT), my goal was to create opportunities for young Afghan women for a long term solution to reach their full potential. Afghan women and girls are smart, talented, and enthusiastic, but opportunities have always been taken away from them by the Afghan patriarchal culture. Therefore, the purpose of WLOT was to create those missing opportunities.

The last three and a half years have been very difficult for everyone who has ties to Afghanistan.

Since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the achievements of Afghan women and girls in the field of education, sport, and career have been undone by the Taliban's regime. The United Nations has recognized the Taliban's regime as 'gender apartheid'.

Women aren't allowed to attend school above the sixth grade, sing, speak aloud in public, and aren't allowed to play sports. In addition, the Taliban have also banned employment for women. This means that women can no longer work in banks or work for non-government organizations (NGOs), including at the United Nations office in Afghanistan.

As has been extensively reported in the international news media recently, the situation for women and girls in Afghanistan remains dire and is getting worse every month. With all high schools and forms of higher education for women shut down by Taliban edict throughout the country, the Taliban has recently imposed even more strict so-called "laws" upon the population of the country. For example, every woman must now be accompanied by a male family member when travelling outside of the home. Defying these edicts implementing the Taliban's gender apartheid risks flogging, imprisonment or worse.

Since August 2021, Afghan girls and women have been banned from participating in sports. Women athletes who previously competed in regional and national events have received threatening letters and warnings of the death penalty. Many have gone into hiding or fled the country. The Dojo (Judo centre) that WLOT supported for many years has had to shut down. Despite initial promises that education would still be accessible, the Taliban has now outlawed education for females beyond sixth grade. Millions of girls and young women are now prisoners in their own home, with no opportunities to learn or develop their potential.

But we can't give up! Supporting the women leaders of tomorrow has never been more important.

WLOT's work and advocacy is more relevant and needed than ever. The Taliban regime wants to erase Afghan women's identity, and will steal away any opportunities that will give women and girls a chance to learn and thrive. Therefore, I've doubled my efforts to support the women and girls in Afghanistan.



Through WLOT, young Afghan women have the chance to define themselves as they wish to be seen and heard. WLOT provides an opportunity for Afghan women to form their own individual identity. They are exposed to a world class education and a variety of leadership opportunities. They can embrace those opportunities in ways that are not currently possible in Afghanistan.

In 2024, WLOT worked tirelessly to help Afghan women realize their dream, such as:

- Advocated for scholars-at-risk to be offered full-ride scholarships outside Afghanistan at the Canadian educational institutions
- Spoke out about the situation in Afghanistan through the media and public events
- Asked the Government of Canada to prioritize Study Permits for our scholars
- Facilitated scholarships and student visas at Canadian high schools and universities
- Assisted WLOT scholarship students in leaving Afghanistan and travelling to Canada.
- Advocated for the female athletes with the IOC to be able to compete again
- Held #walkwithafghanwomen to raise awareness about Afghan women in Canada
- Continued offering direct educational programming in Afghanistan
- Continued online fitness/Judo and English language classes via the Afghanistan Learns Online program

This year, we are very pleased to report that we were able to support five young female scholars with full scholarships at private schools in Canada to complete their high school educations. All five of them have successfully arrived in Canada, and are happily attending their classes.

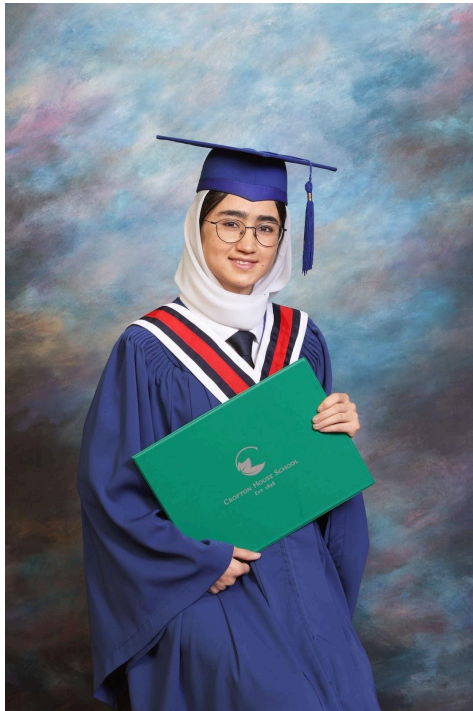
WLOT also joyously celebrates its first cohort of three high school scholars, including the successful 2024 high school graduation and university undergraduate scholarship placements for these students. These three students are remarkable, brave, and the future of Afghanistan. Their perseverance is inspiring to the world. Their hard work and dedication to education is a testament to the importance of education for girls in Afghanistan.

I am deeply grateful to WLOT's board members, volunteers, donors, and supporters; however, we still have much work to do to ensure that Afghan women and girls have access to education and are able to play sports with dignity.

We need the support of donors, volunteers, advocates, secondary and post-secondary institutions to continue addressing the immediate risks faced by Afghan women, while also investing in them as the leaders of today and tomorrow. Please join us!

Friba Rezayee
Executive Director and Founder

Graduation 2024



Tahira Khalili

Tahira has received a full scholarship for undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Starting in the 2024-2025 school year, Tahira plans to study biology, health sciences and other prerequisite courses prior to applying to medical school.

In her own words: "It's June, and all the graduation ceremonies are happening. I can't believe how fast time has passed. When I close my eyes, I still feel like I'm in Pakistan, waiting for my visa to get approved. But when I open my calendar and see all the dates for my graduation, grad dinner and dance, tea party, and other celebrations, it feels real. This makes me reflect on my journey and thank all the lovely people who made this journey possible: the Crofton House community and Women Leaders of Tomorrow."

It's unbelievable that I'll soon be a university student. I'll be joining the University of British Columbia with a full scholarship in Science. I know my journey has just begun and I have a long road ahead of me, but I'm grateful that I can dream again and make plans for my future—a right that every human being deserves, including Afghan girls."



Marweh Attai

Marweh has received a full scholarship for undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Starting in the 2024-2025 school year Marweh plans to study mathematics, physics and electrical engineering.

Marweh, a recipient of the 2022 WLOT high school scholarship program, came to Vancouver to complete their high school education at Crofton House School, one of the premier private all-girls' schools in British Columbia. Their high school journey began in Herat, at the Afghan Turk Maarif school, where they received numerous academic and leadership awards.

Marweh developed an interest in robotics and linguistics at a young age, and attending a prestigious school allowed them to delve deeper into these fields. As a member of the school's robotics club and an avid language enthusiast, they participated in various international competitions and secured several student leadership positions.

In August 2021, during grade 11, the government collapse and Taliban occupation of the capitol occurred, leaving Marweh imprisoned in their house after the complete ban on female education. Despite the challenging circumstances, they continued learning English and math online, achieving an 8.5 on the IELTS and scoring in the 99th percentile on the SAT math section when they eventually were able to leave the country.

Marweh made the most of their final years at Crofton. They describe it as a place where they connected with brilliant individuals and found their community. Quickly adapting to Canadian culture, Marweh began volunteering with KidSafe, Rainbow Refugee, and the Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Association shortly after arriving in Canada. After a year away from school, they successfully secured an internship within UBC's faculty of electrical and computer engineering.

To further expand their knowledge in this field, Marweh applied to the best six engineering schools in Canada and received admission offers from all of them, along with scholarship offers. Ultimately, they accepted UBC's offer and were honoured with the Don Wehrung International Award, recognizing outstanding students from war-torn countries who have achieved academic excellence.

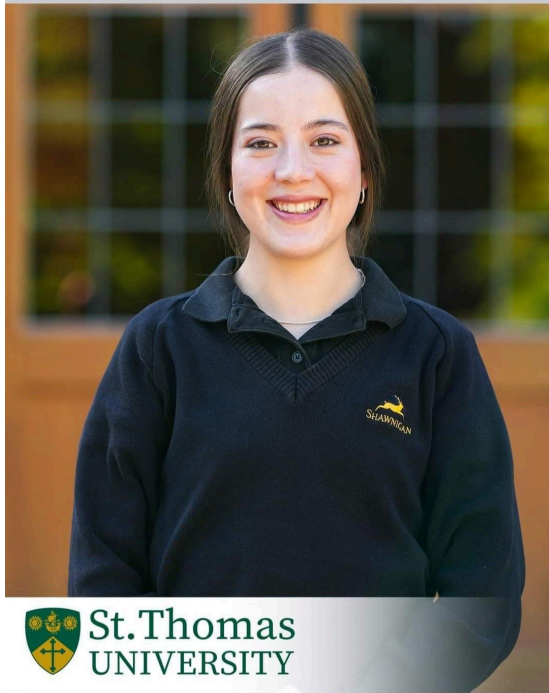
Marweh is eagerly anticipating their journey at UBC. In the fall, they will pursue general engineering with Honors Mathematics, but they are hoping to major in electrical engineering and minor in Persian language studies.

In their words, Marwa says "I always wanted to continue my education. Even when I was in Afghanistan before the war, I had already started planning where I wanted to go to university and what I wanted to study," they explained. "Even after the war, when I was at home, I was still hoping to continue my education. When I heard about this opportunity I just jumped right into it. I couldn't say no."

Marwa's transition to a new education system presented many challenges. "It's all a trade-off, you need to trade so many things in your life, and I traded off my family, and my country to come here and do high school."

The internships they completed at UBC's engineering faculty not only provided them with valuable insights but also helped shape their aspirations for the future. "Doing those internships, having those connections with people at the engineering faculty, helped me narrow down my path and what I'm going to do next year," they said. Looking ahead, Marwa is embarking on the next chapter of their educational journey, studying engineering with honours math at UBC. "The scholarship I got to UBC is called the Donald Wong Award. Just being at UBC doing engineering as an internal student is a big thing for me. It's something I never even dreamed of, because it was just too big. But it's happening now."

Furthermore, they say, *"The person that I was two years ago is just so much different from the person I am now. Sometimes I come across an issue and I catch myself having feelings about it that are very different from the feelings I thought that I would have a couple years ago. I've really grown. I'm proud to be a part of this community, just because of how socially aware it is. Even the current state of the world, which is awful, I know people in my grade, my friends who are worried about things and are actually doing things to make it better—I'm just proud of that. I'm proud to see people my age actively working to make change."*



Marina Musleh

Marina has received a full scholarship for undergraduate studies at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Starting in the 2024-2025 school year Marina plans to study liberal arts, law and business.

In her own words: *"I am Marina Musleh, a girl from Afghanistan and with the background Hazara ethnic group. I was born and raised in Kabul Afghanistan along with my four siblings. I am the first girl in my family who was lucky enough to attend school in Kabul Afghanistan. My school journey started at Marefat High School, a school that embodied and built the students with resilience and equality. I was in the middle of my 12th-grade final exams and dreaming of going to Kabul University and studying political science. However, in August 2021 the government of*

Afghanistan fell under the control of the Taliban. In the morning, they took control of Kabul city. I was in school and doing my exam. When I finished my exam I planned to go home and get ready for the next day of my exam. Unfortunately, I saw the shocking moment of my life.

I saw the vehicles of a Taliban full of young Taliban soldiers with guns and rockets. For a moment, I thought it was the end of my life because until a day before they were bombed and killed thousands of innocent people across Afghanistan. Luckily, I managed to get home safely but I will never forget the silence of the night when Kabul fell.

The Taliban stripped the women and girls right away. I was banned from going to school and going outside without my father accompanying me, and all my rights as a human being were taken away from me. I was forced to stay home. I was desperate for help to continue my education. I searched for many ways to graduate from high school in Afghanistan but it was impossible. Luckily, I had a developed connection with the Women Leader of Tomorrow organisation prior to the coming of the Taliban. I called directly to Friba Rezaee, the executive

director of WLOT and asked her to help me to finish high school. I told her about my plans and how I have a dream to become the first female president of Afghanistan.

After a couple of weeks of searching and trying different schools and colleges around the world, she connected me at Shawnigan Lake School. I had my enrollment interview with Mr. Lamont the headmaster and the director of admission of Shawnigan Lake School, on the roof of my house in Kabul on a frozen morning in November.

I sneaked across the border of Pakistan with my important documents hidden in the pocket of a T-shirt that my mom sewed for me under my clothes. I was in Pakistan for 3 months and 10 days to get my student visa. On May 20 2022 I left Pakistan and came to Canada and was very welcomed and accepted to Shawnigan Lake School community.

I have studied for two years at Shawnigan. Finally last week on June 23, 2024 graduated from Shawnigan Lake School with many excellent experiences and opportunities that I never could imagine having in my life. Shawnigan Lake School has had an enormous impact on the direction of my life. I always remember the generous support of Shawnigan and Women Leaders of Tomorrow in my education journey. Now, I am going to one of the best universities in Canada and will empower myself with education and knowledge to fight for human rights, especially for women and children around the world.”

Undergraduate Studies and Sports Leadership

Zakera Hussaini



Zakera is a member of the Afghan women’s national Judo team. She was also a student at Kabul University studying Sports Science and Physical education when the Taliban returned to power. In 2019, Zakera was the recipient of a highly competitive sports scholarship program from the Japanese non-profit “NPO JUDOs” to study advanced level Judo at Tokai University in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan.

As a part of her Judo training in Japan, Zakera received personal, one-on-one training from Sensei Kenji Mitsumoto who has trained multiple Olympic gold-medal winning athletes.

At the time of the Taliban capture of the capitol in August 2021, Zakera was at her home in Kabul. Shortly afterwards, she was forced to flee and go into hiding while armed groups of Taliban began searching the homes of female athletes, journalists, NGO employees and persons associated with any and all foreign-supported projects in Afghanistan. Returning home to find her house ransacked, she fled soon afterwards to Pakistan to escape from the Taliban.

She was awarded a full-ride scholarship to study Sports Leadership and Community Development at Cape Breton University. She arrived and started attending her classes in May 2024. Continuing her advocacy, Zakera has continued her sports career, training with a local Judo club, and has recently been interviewed by CBC Radio Cape Breton on the topic of women’s rights, the Taliban, Afghanistan and the story of how she came to Canada.

What We Do

WLOT is a group of Afghan women and supporters of women and girls' education and empowerment. Established in 2021, we seek to close the gender gap in Afghanistan by facilitating the emergence of a new generation of female leaders in sports, business, government and non-traditional occupations. Our primary focus is on helping Afghan women to obtain a world-class education. We are guided in this work by our Mission, Vision and Values.



Women Leaders of Tomorrow empowers Afghan women and girls through participation in sports and access to world-class education at home and overseas.



We seek to build a world in which Afghan women are equal in all aspects of life including access to education, career opportunities (including non-traditional fields), participation in sports, and decision-making roles in government and the private sector.



We strongly believe that:

- All women and girls have the right to access to education, freedom of thought, and a life of dignity and purpose.
- Education is the single most important means to improve the status of women in Afghanistan.
- Women and girls' leadership is critical for developing the next generation of leaders for Afghanistan.

We invite you to read through our [Annual Report 2024](#) to see the many ways that WLOT has been standing up for and with Afghan women and girls over the last year.

Programs and Activities

WLOT operationalizes its mission through four program areas:

- Education in Afghanistan
- Leadership through Sports
- Education Overseas
- Advocacy

Due to the continuous crisis in Afghanistan, this year we added *online educational and sports, Afghanistan Learns Online program*, and activities to support Afghan women and girls. We also ramped up our efforts to link the women and girls in our network to scholarship opportunities in North America.

Here are some highlights of what we engaged in and achieved over the last year.

By the Numbers: 2024

- 20 young women participating in weekly English-language training
- 20 volunteer English-language teachers and mentors
- 2 judo coaches training the next generation of female athletes
- 5 female students were granted university scholarships in Canada
- 5 young women linked to scholarships at Canadian high schools

Since the crisis began, WLOT has pivoted our programming to respond to the constant stream of requests for help from the Afghan women. We have been working tirelessly to speak out about the situation in Afghanistan through the media and public events; highlight the at-risk status of female athletes still inside the country; offer direct educational programming in Afghanistan; and ramping up our efforts to facilitate scholarships for Afghan women at Canadian high schools and universities.

Educational Programming in Afghanistan

WLOT was able to continue offering English language tutoring and mentorship in Afghanistan, even after the Taliban takeover. In fact, more young women are participating in our program than ever before. It has become an important social and educational connection for the participants as they have been forced to stay at home and are no longer able to attend school. WLOT is one of the few Canadian organizations still offering educational and sports programming in Afghanistan.



There are 20 participants enrolled in our English language and mentorship program *Afghanistan Learns Online* program, provided by 20 amazing volunteers. We provide a 1:1 ratio between the teachers and students, but the program is about more than learning English. Our volunteers act as mentors, someone who will walk with the student on their academic, athletic, and personal journey. The goal is to make them feel that they have someone in their corner who will listen, provide support, guidance, and champion their academic endeavours and beyond.

Donations to WLOT for the *Afghanistan Learns Online* directly cover the cost of internet connection for these English language students, since the program runs virtually. Our Executive Director and volunteer lead teachers support the volunteers with their lesson planning and building their capacity as mentors for our incredibly strong and resilient participants. WLOT keeps the number of the students in this program low to focus on the quality rather than quantity. However, with more funding and volunteers, we could expand this important work.

Leadership through Sports

Girls of Afghanistan Lead (GOAL) was established to help underprivileged Afghan women gain leadership in sports coaching roles and to become instructors to open their own sports clubs or to become professional athletes. GOAL has a particular focus on judo, but also supports women's general fitness programs. Our support for a judo dojo in Kabul, with 3 coaches and 15 emerging athletes, was active and impactful. Unfortunately, as of August 2021, we had to suspend this activity as the Taliban banned all female participation in sports. Since then, WLOT's Executive Director (ED) has been working non-stop to coordinate full-ride scholarships, and refugee sponsorships for Afghan female athletes who are at risk of violent punishment (100 lashings for playing sports) or the death penalty (for leaders and women who competed internationally).



Education & sports are essential for social wellbeing. Because it is building and maintaining healthy relationships and having meaningful, authentic interactions with others. Our community is made up of the people around us. For example our friends, peers, mentors, faculty, family and colleagues. It has a sense of belonging while valuing diversity and inclusion in sports & education.

WLOT is encouraged to continue its work based on these values and outcomes.

Education Overseas

The ban on female education above grade six in Afghanistan since August 2021 is devastating for millions of girls and women. While WLOT has always worked to link Afghan women to quality educational opportunities, the need has increased exponentially. Besides women's desires to pursue their education, there is now the added urgency to bring women at risk of violent reprisals to safety.



Since August, WLOT has been working day and night to facilitate access to scholarships overseas and student visas for Afghan women. By partnering with educational institutions and humanitarian organizations, WLOT has been able to secure:

- 5 full scholarships for young Afghan women at four private high schools in BC
- 5 female students have been linked to scholarships in British Columbia and Ontario

All the women supported by these scholarships are highly talented, with so much to offer the world. One example is a high school student who wishes to become a doctor, and return to Afghanistan and establish a modern health care system.

PROGRAM VISION

WLOT is embarking on a new and exciting path to offer future WLOT students a unique opportunity to select and design their educational path. Our Women in STEM program will create opportunities for Afghan women to study STEM, Business and Sustainability in Canadian colleges and universities. By partnering with various educational institutions that offer a range of types of programs across many levels of education, WLOT will be able to create a comprehensive program that offers the choice and flexibility that allows Afghan women to get quality education and build a strong foundation for their success.

Our goal is to create a sustainable and supportive program that considers the unique financial needs and personal situations of all our students. To accomplish this, our program will offer a variety of educational pathways:

- Access to English upgrading for those who need it
- Options to study at high schools and or for a 2-year Associate Degree or a 4-year Bachelor's Degree
- Starting at a college with small class sizes for two years and then transitioning to university for the final two years of their undergraduate studies
- Opportunities to pursue a degree of their choice

It is important that these women are adequately supported throughout their studies, which is why our program will cover international travel and settlement costs, purchase of a computer, tuition fees and living expenses. In addition, through the mentorship of WLOT staff and contribution of volunteers, WLOT provides wrap-around, personalized support for each student throughout the process.

Wellbeing and Belonging

Eid Celebration!



"Celebrating Eid means being at home in Canada" - WLOT scholars

Eid is an important part of the Islamic religion and Afghan culture. In order for the Afghan female students to feel at home, WLOT hosted an event celebrating Eid ul Fitr 2024 in Canada. The event had Afghan cuisine, live Afghan music and dancing, a fashion show, networking and belonging. The Eid celebration also represented Afghan culture to the Canadian community.

Advocacy Activities

WLOT partner secondary school Crofton House School has held a panel discussion by inviting the WLOT scholars on the school's Ivy Day. The purpose of the discussion was to talk about the importance of Afghan women's education, and that the Canadians don't forget Afghan women and Afghanistan.



Picture: head of Crofton House school (on the left) with the Afghan women scholars and Mariam Safi in Vancouver.

International Day of The Girl Child 2024

WOMEN LEADERS OF TOMORROW

OCTOBER 11 IS THE

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

Let girls voices empower others.



I am leading!

WOMEN LEADERS OF TOMORROW IS LAUNCHING THIS CAMPAIGN ACROSS CANADA TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT AFGHAN GIRLS' RIGHTS TO EDUCATION & SPORTS!

THERE WILL BE A LEADER IN EACH CITY **ROYA**, WHO IS AN ATHLETE, AND A SCHOLAR WILL LEAD THE DISCUSSION IN YOUR CITY!

LEADER: ROYA SHAFAI
CITY: BELLEVILLE
ONTARIO
TIME: 11:00 AM
ADDRESS: LOYALIST COLLEGE CAMPUS

Find out more at www.WOMENLEADERS.ca



WOMEN LEADERS OF TOMORROW

OCTOBER 11 IS THE

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD 2024

Let girls voices empower others.




We leading!

WOMEN LEADERS OF TOMORROW IS LAUNCHING THIS CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT AFGHAN GIRLS' RIGHTS TO EDUCATION & SPORTS ACROSS CANADA!

THERE WILL BE A LEADER IN EACH CITY TO LEAD THE DISCUSSION. THIS YEAR, THE UNITED NATIONS' THEME IS **'GIRLS' MESSAGES FOR THE FUTURE'**, AND OUR FUTURE IS **LEADERSHIP!**

LEADER: ROYA SHAFAI
CITY: BELLEVILLE
ONTARIO
TIME: 11:00 AM
ADDRESS: LOYALIST COLLEGE CAMPUS

Find out more at www.WOMENLEADERS.ca
Email: info@womenleaders.ca




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THERE WILL BE A LEADER IN EACH CITY, **ZAKERA** HUSSAINI, WHO IS A JUDO ATHLETE, AND A SCHOLAR WILL LEAD THE DISCUSSION IN YOUR CITY!

LEADER: ZAKERA HUSSAINI
CITY: SYDNEY NOVA SCOTIA
TIME: 10:AM AM
ADDRESS: CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY

Find out more at www.WOMENLEADERS.ca
Email: info@womenleaders.ca



WLOT's campaign was 'I am leading'. The purpose of this campaign was to raise awareness about the current situation of Afghan girls in Afghanistan. It additionally served the purpose of providing leadership opportunities for WLOT's scholarship recipients across Canada.



The scholarship recipients of WLOT held the campaign, and presented at their schools, colleges, and universities across Canada.



Paris 2024 Olympic Games

This year, WLOT’s annual report is the same year as the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Given the executive director’s background in sports, and participation at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games as one of the first Afghan women in the history of Afghanistan, and the International Olympic Committee, it would be impossible to not mention her advocacy for the Afghan female athletes during the Olympic Games.

The ED was invited as a special guest by the host country of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games to watch the Olympic opening ceremony live in-person, and also to advocate for women’s rights to sport.



While she was in Paris, she met with Zakia Khodadadi and the members of Afghanistan’s team and the Olympic Refugee Team. Zakia Khodadadi, a supporter of WLOT, secured a bronze medal at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games - a record achievement. She is the first woman from Afghanistan to win a medal in the sport of Taekwondo.

The IOC (International Olympic Committee) created an Olympic Refugee Team (ROT) at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. The purpose of this team is to provide sports opportunities for the athletes whose countries don’t allow them to represent their countries due the political system. Countries where they have no democracy rights or freedom.

The ED met the IOC’ refugee team’s Chief of Mission Ms. Masomah Alizada who is from Afghanistan in the sports of cycling, and also Manizha Talash who joined the ROT in the sports of breakdance. Manizha is the first woman from Afghanistan in the sport of breakdance.

Advocating to the IOC

On April 14, 2023, Friba wrote a letter to the president of the IOC, requesting that he open a direct line of communication with the Afghan female athletes, also to consider establishing a direct registration system for them to register for training camps, and IOC tournaments from Afghanistan, and from outside of Afghanistan. This system would allow the Afghan female athletes to compete without the Taliban’s involvement. The entire Afghan National Olympic Committee is controlled by the Taliban, and the Haqani group, and they have completely banned all forms of sports activities for women and girls.

Afghan female athletes feel abandoned by the international sports community (see below story). Since last fall, WLOT has been writing letters to the IOC asking for the immediate inclusion of female athletes who were on national teams.

Afghan women athletes are still banned from participating at the international competitions due the Taliban regime. WLOT launched the campaign #whatatouus? During the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.





Media Interviews and Articles

The Sultanies' stories from Kabul to St.Margaret's School was featured on Times Colonist in 2024. [Link](#)

Friba's work for gender equality, and Human Rights were recognized and featured on the Canadian Immigrant Magazine 2024. [Link](#)

Friba's advocacy to assure that Afghan female athletes can participate at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games with dignity was published in the Sunday Times in the UK. This was also to make sure that the Taliban don't participate at the Olympic Games, jeopardizing the female athletes' and the French people's safety [Link](#)

Friba was interviewed by DE Sportschau on the topic of Afghanistan at the Paris Olympic Games 2024. [Link](#)

Friba was interviewed by Elle Magazine France about the Afghan female athletes 2024. [Link](#)

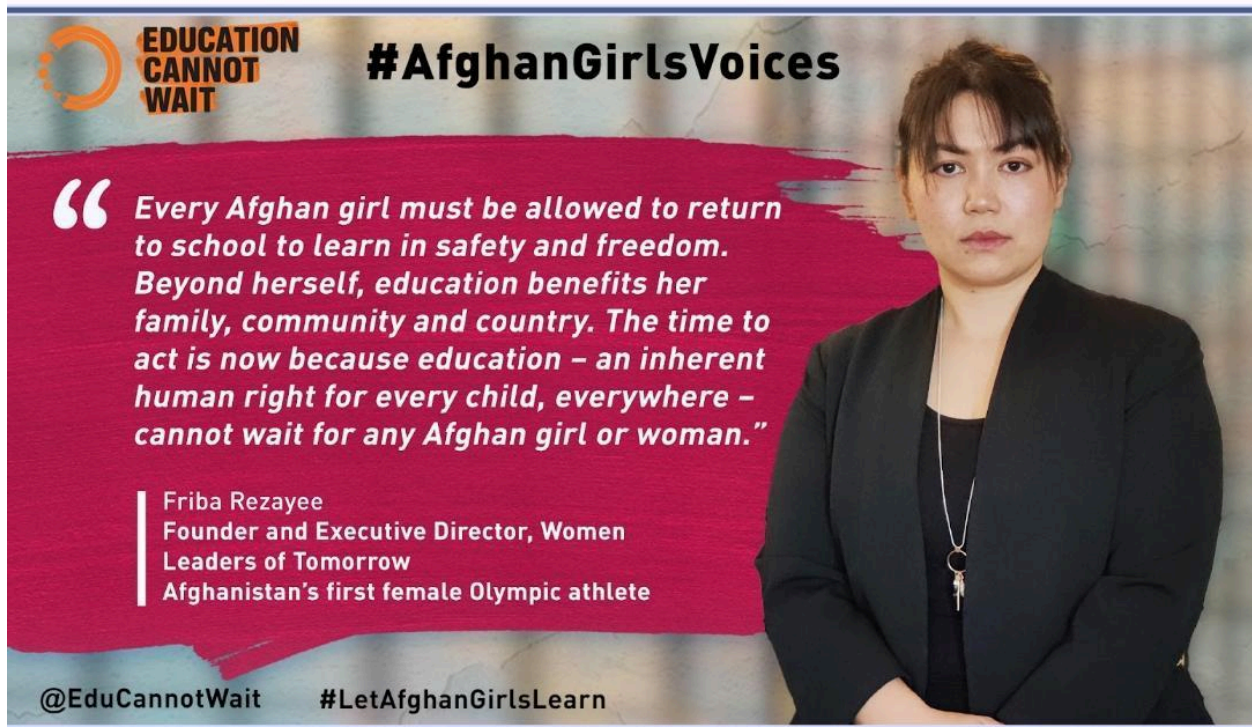
Friba spoke with the BBC World Service about the rights of the Afghan female athletes, and the Olympic Charter 2024. [Link](#)

Friba wrote an Op-ed that The IOC Should Stand with the Afghan Female Athletes for New York Times 2024. [Link](#)

Friba's advocacy for equal rights in sports was featured on Rolling Stone 2024. [Link](#)

Friba's campaign to ban the Taliban from the Olympic movement, and Paris 2024 Olympic Games for violating Human Rights, and the Olympic Charter was published on the Reuters. [Link](#)

The arrival of four new young scholars from Afghanistan for secondary education was featured on Vancouver Sun 2024. [Link](#)



Public Campaigns

WLOT was contacted by Kent Page, who is the Chief Advocacy and Communication at the UNICEF to join their campaign #AfghanGirlsVoices to amplify the voices of Afghan women and girls.

WLOT continued the hashtag #EducationIsMyRight this year calling for local schools to organize a tour with the WLOT volunteers to raise awareness about basic Human Rights to an education in Spring of 2024. WLOT's school partner, St. Margaret's School in Victoria, joined the campaigns and students from the SMS Outreach Club held a 45 minute walk outside of the school building 'LetHerLearn', and/or 'Education is my right'.



The purpose of this campaign was to increase public awareness about the persecution of Afghan's female students and athletes and to educate everyone that education is a basic Human Right.

Bahara Ahmadi's story

Bahara was 16 years old when the Taliban returned into power and shut down her school in Afghanistan. She was shocked, speechless, but she didn't give up. When the Taliban closed all the classrooms for girls, they took advantage of the online education system. She studied day and night to improve her English language skills in the pursuit of a scholarship opportunity to Canada.

She applied to WLOT's scholarship, and her application was among 1,800 applications from Afghanistan for secondary education in Canada. Given her academic background, qualification, passion and dedication, she was selected by WLOT to study at St. Margaret School in Victoria BC.

She tells her story in her own words.

"I am Bahara. I was born as the fifth daughter to parents who never had the opportunity to receive formal education, but strived so hard to raise their children educated. So my siblings and I grew up with the mindset that education transfers our life. I attended a public school, and every day went to the class with curiosity to learn and enthusiasm to build my future, the future that I believed would change through education.

But as I stepped deeper into the path of building my future, I came to understand not everyone wants girls to be educated and not everyone believes in the transformative power of education for girls, especially in my country. The price of understanding this fact was too high that I first hand experienced how it feels not to have access to education. In 2021, my middle school, Saeed Al Shohada, was bombed by IS-IS. In one afternoon three bomb explosions happened, hundreds of students were killed and their dreams turned into ash within an eye blink.

Days after that it was a big risk for families to send their girls back to school. But I did go back to my classes. At that time I was even more committed that if I had to sacrifice my life by going to school, I would. Only in three months when things were normalizing and more families felt confident to send their girls back to school, Taliban came into power. They gradually removed girls and women from schools, universities, social and public activities.

It was as if time had paused in my country for a while. I could never convince myself that there would be no path for me to pursue education. So, I literally never did, I never accepted being uneducated, I started self tutoring. Reading books, setting new goals, and envisioning my future differently helped me survive those days and come up with new plans to fulfill my dreams. I later attended an English Language Learning Centre, and became a proficient English speaker in a year. Then, I started teaching English and sharing my knowledge with other Afghan girls who did not have the opportunity I had, the opportunity to carry on their education even in a very simple way. I started teaching English in different non profits.

Later on, I also started my own online organization, Hope Light, where a group of my friends and I were providing free online English classes to more than 300 students. At the same time, I was enrolled in an online World Geography course at University of Texas High School. So I was always looking for a way to pursue education whether it was reading books or attending classes,

but at the end of 2023 when the situation became very dire that I was even banned from doing my online activities, I applied for the WLOT high school scholarship and once I was accepted, flying to Iran and then Pakistan, it took me six months and 14 days to arrive in Canada on August 28, 2024.”

Afghanistan Learns Online (ALO)

Are you ready to join us in transforming the lives of young women and girls from Afghanistan aged 18 to 21? Introducing the Afghanistan Learns Online Education Program, a groundbreaking initiative designed to provide access to education and skills development, paving the way for these talented individuals to pursue higher education through scholarships and alternative pathways.

The Challenge: In Afghanistan, countless young women and girls face daunting barriers to completing their high school education and pursuing dreams of higher learning. Socioeconomic challenges, cultural norms, and no educational opportunities often stand in their way, denying them the chance to fulfill their potential. The Taliban banned education beyond third grade for girls in Afghanistan and shut down all schools for women and girls. Millions of girls are forced to stay at home without access to education.

Working with experts:

ALO works with University of British Columbia experts and faculties who have experience in mathematics and digital literacy who designed the program. Their tremendous expertises and academic background have put a formal structure to the program.

Our Solution: The Afghanistan Learns Online is committed to breaking down these barriers and empowering young women to unlock their full potential. We offer a comprehensive approach that combines education, mentorship, and scholarship opportunities, providing a clear path to success. Through the ALO program, we offer the following.

Key Program Features:

1. **Holistic Education:** We offer tailored high school completion programs that accommodate individual learning needs and schedules. From academic support to life skills training, we equip our participants with the tools they need to excel.
2. **Mentorship:** Our participants benefit from mentorship by accomplished women who serve as role models, providing guidance, inspiration, and support throughout their educational journey.

3. **Scholarship Guidance:** We assist participants in identifying and applying for scholarships and financial aid, ensuring that finances are not a barrier to higher education.
4. **Skill Development:** We offer vocational training and career readiness programs, enabling participants to acquire valuable skills for both personal and professional growth such as Math and Digital Literacy
5. **English Language:** English is an international language, and when women can speak the language, they will increase their chances for higher education, career and will communicate with the rest of the world in their own words. In addition to that, ALO will be offering Judo/fitness classes because physical education is equally important
6. **Impact:** By investing in the ALO Program, you're not only supporting individual dreams but also contributing to the overall development of Afghanistan. Educated women are catalysts for positive change, driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and creating more equitable societies.

Why Invest:

1. **Empowering the Future:** Education is a powerful tool for personal empowerment and community development. Your investment will directly impact the lives of young women and girls, setting them on a path to success.
2. **Building Stronger Communities:** Educated women are more likely to contribute to their communities, leading to positive social and economic outcomes.
3. **Maximizing Potential:** Unlock the untapped potential of young women and girls, who are eager to learn and contribute to the world but lack opportunities.
4. **Sponsorship opportunity for you:** This is also a sponsorship opportunity for you personally, and for your company to help provide access to an education to the young Afghan women and girls who have been deprived of their right to an education in Afghanistan due to the Taliban's regime.

How you can support

1. **If you are a high school administrator/....**
2. **If you are a university/college....**
3. **If you are providing a scholarship..**
4. **If you can provide volunteer support...**

Join us in the ALO Program, and together, we can create a brighter future for these talented young women, empowering them to reach for the stars and achieve their dreams. Together, we can change lives and change the world.

Testimony from one the ALO students

“Hello everyone, I am Maria.

I want to start by reading about something very important the difficult situation of Afghan women in Afghanistan. Right now, many women there are not allowed to go to school or work, and they are losing many of their basic rights. It’s really sad to see that women are being stopped from learning and improving their lives. This reminds us how lucky we are to have the chance to get an education. Not everyone has that opportunity, and we should be grateful for it. This is why online courses are so important. For people who can’t go to school or don’t have access to education, these courses are like water to someone who is very thirsty in the desert. They give us knowledge, a chance to improve ourselves, and to grow, which is something we should never take for granted.

And especially thanks for Ms Friba Rezayee, and Ms Parwin Askari for coordinating these classes and helping us. In life, opportunities are like doors that open for us. If we don’t go through those doors when we can, we might miss something important. Success doesn’t just come by itself, it comes when we take action, make the most of our opportunities, and do the best we can with what we have. I’m really happy to be part of this program because it’s such a great opportunity to learn. It’s not just about learning from the teacher, but also from each other. I believe we can all grow together and achieve great things. I’m excited to see what we can do together and how much we can learn from these classes.

Now, let’s talk about online classes and why they are becoming so popular. They have many benefits. One of the best things about online classes is that you can learn from anywhere.

Whether you are at home, at a café, or even traveling, as long as you have internet access, you can attend your class. This flexibility makes it easier for people with busy schedules, or those who live far away from schools, to continue their education. Think about Afghan women not allowed to go to school and university. Online classes can be a way for them to still learn, even if they can't leave their homes. Another great thing about online classes is that you can learn at your own pace.

In a regular classroom, you have to follow the teacher's speed, and sometimes that can be stressful. But with online learning, if you don't understand something right away, you can go back and watch the lesson again. You can take your time with your homework, focus on the parts that are difficult, and work through them at your own speed. This helps many students feel less pressure and stress. Online classes also offer a wide variety of subjects. You can learn almost anything online, like languages, cooking, coding, and much more. Many well-known schools and organizations offer certificates or degrees online, so you can still earn a qualification even if you're learning from home. This is a huge advantage for people who don't have access to schools or universities in their area. But while online learning has many good things, it also has some challenges. One big challenge is that you need self-discipline.

When you're studying online, no one is physically there to remind you to do your work or keep you on track. It's easy to get distracted or put things off until later. This is why it's really important to be organized and set a routine. You need to manage your time well, make sure you don't fall behind on your work, and stay focused on your goals. It helps to set up a quiet place where you can study without distractions, so you can really concentrate on what you're learning. Another challenge with online learning is that you don't get the same face to face interaction with your teacher or classmates. In a regular classroom, you can ask questions and get answers right away. You can also talk to your classmates, work in groups, and help each other. With online learning, most communication happens through email, discussion boards, or video calls, which can sometimes feel less personal. But even with these challenges, online learning is improving every day, and there are still many ways to stay connected with your teacher and classmates.

In conclusion, online classes are a great option for many people. They give you the freedom to learn from anywhere and at your own pace. They offer a wide variety of courses, and you can still earn qualifications even if you're learning from home. But online learning also requires responsibility, self-discipline, and good habits. If you stay organized, manage your time well, and stay motivated, online learning can be a very rewarding experience. So let's make the most of this opportunity. We are lucky to have access to these classes and to the chance to improve

ourselves. Let's work hard, support each other, and make this a great learning experience for everyone."

Thank you for listening" M.S

Special Mentions

We are thankful to Crofton House School for your generous donations of backpacks. The backpacks were delivered to the Afghan children in BC.

WLOT also thanks [BC 4 Afghans](#) for distributing them to the families. As the back to school is approaching soon, these school supplies will be very helpful.



Thanks again! We greatly value our friendship!

Thank You for Your Generous Contribution to Our Back-to-School Supplies Drive for Afghan Refugee Children. The BC4Afghans Community Services Foundation have expressed their deepest gratitude for Crofton House School's generous contribution to our recent back-to-school supplies drive. Their support has been instrumental in providing essential school supplies to children of Afghan newcomers living across Greater Vancouver.

The recipients of the backpacks are primarily children of Afghan newcomers, including refugees living across Greater Vancouver . These recipients are our clients who are currently registered with us. We have a comprehensive registration process in place to ensure that we provide services to the most vulnerable members of our community.

We are pleased to report that we provided back-to-school supplies to over 80 children, 30 of which were donated through your organization. The recipients were Afghan boys and girls ages 5 to 16.

We delivered the backpacks in person with the help of our trusted volunteers and team members.

WOMEN LEADERS of TOMORROW

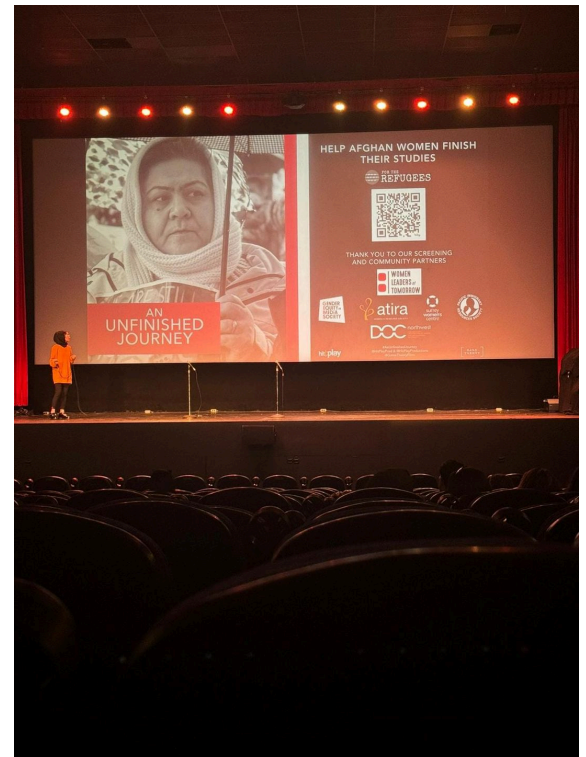
AN UNFINISHED JOURNEY

VANCOUVER, BC
 Directed by Aeyliya Husain & Amie Williams

hitplayproductions.ca/films/an-unfinished-journey/
 #AnUnfinishedJourney

Download Assets Here
 WATCH THE TRAILER

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Documentary Film Projects

In 2024, WLOT was a community partner of Hit Play Productions, a Canadian documentary film producer. The documentary “An Unfinished Journey” follows the story of several Afghan female parliamentarians, journalists and human rights activists in the 2021 evacuation and their subsequent resettlement in Canada. We were honoured to participate in a panel discussion with the Afghan female scholars at the Rio Theatre in Vancouver.

The film also focuses on the story of a young journalist, Nilofar Moradi, who was forced to abandon her career and home in Kabul at the time of the Taliban capture of the city in August 2021. The documentary continues to showcase the human rights and women’s rights advocacy that the recently resettled Afghan women are continuing from their new homes in Canada.



Celebration of 28 Successful Scholarship Recipients

In 2024, WLOT celebrated the graduation of three high school students, and the imminent graduation of ten graduate level students at the University of British Columbia. The cultural and educational event “A Night in Afghanistan” brought together our valued students, partners, members of the local Vancouver business, diplomats, educational communities and donors.



WLOT Scholars in Vancouver receive certificates of recognition on December 7th, 2024.

Financials

Our organization operates without paid staff or overhead, except the ED’s compensation. Our teachers are also volunteers. All donations received go directly to our programming except for a nominal amount for bank fees and office supplies. We also leverage scholarships through relationships with educational institutions and organizations in Canada.

Financial Statement 2024

Donations received	88,195.65
Admin (bank fees, supplies)	127
Current Balance	7,488.92

All Funds Raised or Leveraged

- **Direct Donations Received:** 88,195.65
- **Scholarship value leveraged:** 1,229,012

Special Mentions

We would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all the donors, sponsors, volunteers, and community members who support our work over the last year.

You did it! You stood by Afghan women and girls and your support demonstrates that the international community cares about women’s rights and will not give up on Afghan women and girls. We would especially like to acknowledge:

- All the teachers who volunteer weekly in our English-language program.
- UBC for the admission of ten Afghan female students in graduate-level applied science programs.
- St. Margaret’s School for offering two scholarships for survivors of the Kaaj centre bombing.
- Wilfrid Laurier University for partnering with WLOT to support students overcoming war.
- Glenlyon Norfolk School in Victoria, BC for accepting a “110%” scholarship student for 11th and 12th grade high school.

Looking Ahead

\$150,000 CAD

That's how much we want to raise in 2024-2025 to support:

- English-language and mentorship programming for young women in Afghanistan
- Scholarships to access post-secondary and secondary studies overseas
- Support for Afghan female athletes to continue training and coaching

We also plan to continue developing and deepening our partnerships with educational institutions to support more opportunities for Afghan women and teens to access a quality education in safety. We will of course be continuing our advocacy work, and efforts to sponsor female athletes and students to reach safety in Canada.

How to Get Involved!

We rely on community members to help with fundraising, partnership development, legal advice for student visas and refugee applications, refugee sponsorship and donations to support our scholarships and programs. There are many ways to support our work.

- **Donate:** become a monthly donor or contribute to our *Shamsia Scholarship Fund*
- **Advocate:** organize an awareness event or write a letter to the government
- **Volunteer:** in our English-language program
- **Advise:** we need help from immigration and communications professionals
- **Subscribe:** sign up for our newsletter and announcements