

Companion Curriculum

RISE!

Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan

In Plain Sight: Volume 5

A WITNESS and Amnesty International Partnership



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How to Use This Guide

The companion guide for *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan* provides activities and lessons to engage learners in a discussion of issues which seem difficult and complex, such as gender inequality and the influence of history, politics, and culture on the evolution of women's rights in Afghanistan. Designed to be as comprehensive and informative as possible, this guide can be used in its entirety as an in-depth unit of study or individual activities can stand alone as learning extensions after watching the film. For more ideas regarding using film in educational settings, please use the tip sheet included in this curriculum guide. For additional sources such as international documents, fact sheets, and links to actions and reports, please visit the following websites:

Amnesty International – www.amnestyusa.org

WITNESS – www.witness.org

RAWA – www.rawa.org

Prior to showing the film, educators should prepare learners by discussing key topics addressed in the film, such as current events in Afghanistan and the effects of Taliban rule on Afghan women. Because this film includes some violent and disturbing footage, be sure to give students time to share their reactions and questions after viewing the film. Use the movie discussion guide to facilitate critical thinking and thoughtful discussion.

This guide can be adapted for use in middle school and high school classes, college classes, and community groups. For additional ideas, refer to the Further Study section of each lesson and to the *Kite Runner* curriculum guide, which provides additional information and fact sheets about Afghanistan.

Note to Community Groups – Though some of the small group and project ideas may take more time than groups have during a meeting, groups can show the film and use the discussion guides, supplemental materials, informational resources, and action ideas to educate people about women's rights.

In addition to the companion guide for *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan*, this guide also includes an HR 201 which focuses on the relevant international human rights document for the topic addressed in this film - the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

If you have questions or would like additional support, please contact the Human Rights Education Department of Amnesty International (education@aiusa.org) or visit our website (www.aiusa.org/education).

NOTE – Please take time to fill out the feedback form found at the end of this guide or on our website. Thank you!

Lesson 201:

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Historical Overview:

The ***Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women*** (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and is described as the international bill of rights for women. CEDAW consists of 30 articles that define discrimination against women and establish a framework which countries can use to design policies and legislation to protect women's rights. The convention addresses the rights to equality between men and women in political, public, and private life and to offer equal access to education, health and employment. The convention also addresses women's reproductive rights. Countries that have ratified CEDAW are legally bound to implement the protection of rights as stated in the convention. As a government they are obligated to uphold these rights through monitoring and reporting on measures taken to uphold women's rights. Presently, 185 countries have ratified CEDAW thus making them legally bound to uphold the protection of women's rights.

Lesson Overview:

This lesson will provide students with an overview of CEDAW and the specific rights developed to protect women from discrimination and violence.

Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of CEDAW
- Students will identify women's rights within their country

Materials:

- Handout 1.1: Discrimination against Women: Case Studies
- Handout 1.2: Abbreviated CEDAW
- Blackboard or chart paper

Procedure:

1. Give a historical overview of CEDAW. Then distribute an abbreviated version of CEDAW and read through it as a class.
2. Introduce the discussion of rights and whether the students think having rights specifically to protect women is important? Why or why not?
3. Assign students or small groups to read one of the four case studies in Handout 1.1.
4. As a class, discuss what rights were upheld or violated and resources each woman did or did not have access to. Students may refer to Handout 1.2 to help with the discussion.
5. Ask students to think of the community they live in and to identify rights women may need on a daily basis. List the examples students offer and the rights they identify on the board.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think the UN would create a separate document listing the rights of women? Do you think such a document is necessary? Why or why not? Use examples if possible to support your answer.
- Why is it important that CEDAW is an international document? How would it work differently if each country were to make its own rules?
- Why is it important that countries sign CEDAW?
- What are some possible reasons that some national governments do not ratify CEDAW?
- Do you think the United States has ratified CEDAW? If not, why?
- This agreement is meant to be defended by states, but is there anything that individuals can do to make sure these values are protected? Is there anything your school/group can do? If so, what?

HANDOUT 1.1: Discrimination Against Women: Case Studies

Case Study 1

An indigenous woman told Amnesty International how in 2001 she was beaten and raped by a former boyfriend. Her attacker went to the police and confessed that he had raped her three times and forced her to perform oral sex. As she was under 18 at the time of the rape, the crime constituted statutory rape under the law of the state where it took place. However, he was allowed to plead guilty to reduced charges and was sentenced to three years imprisonment of which he reportedly served a year and three months. After the rape, the young woman reportedly engaged in increasingly self-destructive behavior. Her mother told Amnesty International that she begged the state authorities to provide her with a counselor, but to no avail. She said her daughter served a longer sentence for stealing and destroying a relative's car than her attacker had for rape.

Case Study 2

Setareh had been educated at a university before the Taliban came to power. To escape the dangers presented by the new regime, she and her husband were forced to flee their native city Kabul to a rural village in Wardak Province. Because Setareh was one of the only educated women in the village, she was determined to open a girls' school. However, her husband and his family begged her not to teach fearing she would be killed. This danger became a reality one morning when one of Setareh's students discovered a landmine in the classroom. Despite the danger the landmine presented both to herself and to her students, they were not overly surprised by the discovery. A few weeks earlier the Taliban had posted a note in the village mosque demanding that all girls' schools close immediately, threatening those that remained open.

Case Study 3

Grace Coleman sent domestic servant Jane from Ghana to the United States to be a nanny for the Blackwells, Coleman's daughter's family. Jane was able to get a visa because Coleman, a member of parliament in Ghana, gave a personal guarantee of Jane's prompt return. Upon her arrival in the U.S., Jane's passport was confiscated. She was forced to serve the Blackwells, cook and clean for them as well as care for their children and sometimes their friends' kids. Jane worked every day, from 7 a.m. until 12:30 a.m., for almost no compensation. She stayed because of constant threats, including harm to her own children back in Ghana. Two women helped Jane flee in 2001. Coleman and her daughter were indicted on seven criminal counts.

Case Study 4

Neary grew up in rural Cambodia. Her parents died when she was a child, and, in an effort to give her a better life, her sister married her off when she was 17. Three months later they went to visit a fishing village. Her husband rented a room in what Neary thought was a guest house. But when she woke the next morning, her husband was gone. The owner of the house told her she had been sold by her husband for \$300 and that she was actually in a brothel. For five years, Neary was raped by five to seven men every day. In addition to brutal physical abuse, Neary was infected with HIV and contracted AIDS. The brothel threw her out when she became sick, and she eventually found her way to a local shelter. She died of HIV/AIDS at the age of 23.

HANDOUT 1.2: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Abbreviated

- Article 1** “Discrimination against women” means any restriction based on the sex of a person, particularly women, which harms their equality, human rights, and fundamental freedom. This discrimination can be intentional or unintentional.
- Article 2** States are to condemn all kinds of discrimination and agree to act through the law to end discrimination.
- Article 3** States are to guarantee in their legislation that men and women may equally advance in political, social, economic and cultural fields.
- Article 4** Temporary special measures to accelerate the de facto equality of men and women are not discrimination. These temporary measures, however, should not create separate standards for men and women.
- Article 5** States should act to ensure that practices based on gender stereotypes of inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes end. For example, family education should make clear that it is the common responsibility of men and women to raise their children.
- Article 6** States are to act against all forms of trafficking in women, including the forced prostitution of women. This means States are to consider the root causes, including underdevelopment, poverty, drug abuse, illiteracy, and lack of training, education, and employment opportunities.
- Article 7** Women and men alike have the right to vote, hold public office, and participate in non-governmental organizations and associations.
- Article 8** Women and men have equal opportunities to represent their State internationally.
- Article 9** Women and men are equal in their right to change or retain their nationality and citizenship. A wife’s nationality must no longer change with her husband’s. Furthermore, women and men equally determine their children’s nationality.
- Article 10** Women have equal access to all levels of education, career and vocational guidance, scholarships and grants, and physical education.
- Article 11** Women have equal access to employment opportunities, including the right to choose their profession, training, social security, promotions, training, job security, and all benefits employed men receive. In addition, women are entitled to maternity leave with pay or comparable social benefits.
- Article 12** Women have equal access to health care, including services related to family planning.
- Article 13** Women have other economic and social rights, including the right to bank loans, mortgages, and other forms of financial credit as well as the right to participate in recreational activities and sports.
- Article 14** States are to recognize the problems faced by rural women and take acts to ensure women may participate in development planning at all levels. Women may also organize self-help groups and cooperatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities.

Article 15 Men and women are equal before the law. Women may enter contracts and own and control property. Women may choose where they want to live and where they want to move.

Article 16 Women have the same family rights as men. Women may freely choose their spouses and have the same rights and responsibilities during marriage. Men and women have equal responsibilities in matters relating to their children. Both spouses have the same rights in the ownership, management, and enjoyment of property.

Lesson One: Learning about Afghanistan

Time: Time will vary depending on the combination of activities chosen

Overview:

This lesson is an overview of the social and political conflicts that have shaped Afghan history, with a special focus on how these conflicts have impacted women. Because many students may be familiar with Afghanistan from news clips, the lesson provides time for them to share knowledge they may already have about the country, while also allowing time to explore key issues more deeply. Because different classes and groups will have varying degrees of familiarity with the issues facing Afghanistan and Afghan women in particular, the lesson has been divided into several activities from which the teacher may construct the lesson most appropriate for her or his students.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge about how the political history of Afghanistan has affected Afghan women
2. Become familiar with the key groups affecting Afghanistan's social and political development
3. Situate Afghan history within the context of American history
4. Critically view the film *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan*
5. Analyze the socio-political situation in Afghanistan through a human rights lens

Preparation and Materials:

- Reference 1.1: Historical and Political Overview of Afghanistan
- Reference 1.2: RAWA: History and Key Facts
- Handout 1.3: Movie Discussion Guide
- Handout 1.4: The Taliban's Rules and Punishments
- DVD Player
- Copy of *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan*
- World Map
- Posterboard or Butcher Paper and Markers

Procedure:**Activity One: Gauging Prior Knowledge (20 minutes)**

1. Post the following questions on the board and ask students to write down their answers on a piece of paper.

Pre-Quiz:

1. Name two countries that border Afghanistan. *Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan*
 2. What is the approximate population of Afghanistan? *32 million*
 3. What is the major religion of Afghanistan? *Islam*
 4. What country occupied Afghanistan from 1979-1989? *Former Soviet Union*
 5. What country launched air strikes against Afghanistan in 2001? *USA*
 6. List two things you know about women in Afghanistan. *Answers will vary.*
 7. List two things you know about Afghanistan in general. *Answers will vary.*
 8. Name two key players or groups in Afghanistan. *Answers will vary. You may also ask, "Who are the Taliban? What is Al-Qaeda?"*
 9. What images come to mind when you think of Afghanistan?
 10. Write one question you have about Afghanistan.
2. When students have finished writing their answers, reconvene as a large group. Review the answers to questions 1-5 as a group, and then ask students to share responses for questions 6-10. Use the questions as a starting point for discussing ideas, preconceptions, and questions the students have about Afghanistan.

Activity Two: Where is Afghanistan? Key Events & People (40 minutes)

Section One: Where is Afghanistan?

1. Pull down a world map. Ask a volunteer to point to Afghanistan on the world map.
2. Ask students to share what they already know about Iran and Pakistan, two countries that border Afghanistan. Because many Afghans living in border regions do not recognize the porous borders between Pakistan and Afghanistan, social and political events in one country often strongly impact the other. Afghanistan is the leading country of origin for refugees in the world; over a million Afghans have settled in refugee camps in Pakistan, while close to a million have sought asylum in Iran.

Section Two: Key Events & People

3. Before moving into the history of Afghanistan, it may help students to create a timeline of events in America to provide a context for later discussion. Divide students into small groups. Provide each group with a piece of posterboard or butcher paper. Students will use their combined knowledge to create a timeline of important events in American history from 1942-the present. Encourage students to be as creative and specific as they can, especially concerning events that have happened in their lifetimes.
4. When groups have finished working, each group will share key events from its timeline with the class. Make sure that World War II and the Cold War are included in the timelines. Refer back to these timelines and to the world map as you review the political history of Afghanistan.

5. Review key dates and figures in Afghan history, using Reference 1.1 and the timeline (Appendix 1) as references.

Activity Three: Film Viewing and Discussion (50 minutes)

1. Even before the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan in 1996, the women of Afghanistan had already formed an organization designed to secure more rights for women and to fight for social justice: The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). Though women were allowed to go to school and become professionals in the 1970s when RAWA was formed, women in the cities still faced considerable discrimination and women in rural areas had few rights at all. By the time the Taliban rose to power, RAWA was the only organization actively fighting against them. At great personal risk, RAWA members filmed the atrocities committed under the Taliban and smuggled the films to sympathizers who publicized them. Use Reference 1.2 to introduce RAWA.
2. View the film. *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan* is a compilation of film clips gathered from RAWA footage filmed under extremely dangerous conditions. **Note: This film contains some graphic, violent scenes.*
**Note: Because this film moves quickly, it may be necessary to stop the film every few minutes to discuss what students have seen.*
3. Instead of immediately discussing the film, allow students five minutes to write their initial reactions and response to the film. Students may use the following questions to stimulate free response writing. What images surprised you? What images were compelling to you? What key facts stood out to you? How did this film make you feel?
4. When students are finished writing, ask volunteers to share their responses.
5. Divide the class into discussion pairs. Assign each pair one discussion question from Handout 1.3. Discuss student responses as a class.

Activity Four: Analyzing the Taliban Through A Human Rights Lens (40 minutes)

(Adapted from Amnesty International's [Kite Runner](#) curriculum guide)

1. Divide the class into three groups. When assigning each group's activity, make sure that the groups do not know what other groups are doing.
2. Group A will record their daily routine. What do they do from the time they wake up until the time they go to bed on school days? Instruct students to be as specific as possible.
3. Distribute Handout 1.4 to Groups B and C. Group B will read and discuss the Taliban's rules. Group C will read and discuss the Taliban's punishments.
4. Ask Group B to choose one representative. Group B's representative will call on a random student from Group A and ask, "What is your daily routine?"
5. Whoever is chosen must slowly list each thing that he or she has written. For each activity listed in the daily routine that is against Taliban rules, members of Group B must scream, "Violation!" Group B may also ask for clarification. (Example: If a student says she eats lunch at school, a Group B representative may ask if she eats in the presence of boys. If so, she is in violation.)

6. For each violation, Group C will have 2-3 minutes to determine an appropriate Taliban punishment. Again, Group C can ask for clarification. Repeat this process with 2-3 students. Allow students time to discuss their reactions to this activity as a class.
7. In their groups, ask students to choose three Taliban rules and three Taliban punishments. For each rule and punishment, students will list what human rights are being violated. Students may refer back to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, and other human rights conventions to complete this exercise.
8. Many of the atrocities committed by the Taliban against civilians are defined as war crimes punishable by the International Criminal Court under the Rome Statute. One woman interviewed in the film, however, lamented that there was no one to whom she could complain or seek redress. After groups have identified human rights abuses, they will answer the following questions: How should the international community respond to the human rights abuses committed by the Taliban and other groups in Afghanistan? How could the national and international community help to promote a culture of human rights (especially women's rights) in Afghanistan? A group representative will present one key idea from the group's discussion to the class.

Close

For homework, ask students to share one thing they learned in this lesson with friends and/or family.

Further Study

For additional resources and lesson ideas regarding the political history of Afghanistan, refer to Amnesty International's [Kite Runner](#) companion curriculum.

Reference 1.1: Historical and Political Overview of Afghanistan

- Beginning with the British in the 1880s, foreign nations have competed for control of Afghanistan. Its position between India, the Middle East, and China makes it a valuable strategic asset for foreign interests seeking influence in all three regions.
- The British were finally ousted in 1903, when Afghanistan won the last of three long wars for independence. The twentieth century would be a tumultuous one, however, as foreign occupiers, including the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as competing national interests, such as the Mujahideen and the Taliban, vied for control of Afghanistan.
- Abdur Rahman Khan, king of Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901, was the first leader to institute some rights for women, including raising the marriage age and permitting women to divorce their husbands. His son, Amir Abibullah Khan implemented even more progressive rights for women including allowing women to remain unveiled in public and establishing the first university in Afghanistan which women were allowed to attend. Amanullah, Habibullah's son, went even further by publicly campaigning against the veil, against polygamy, and for education of girls.
- In 1929, opposition to Amanullah's progressive reforms for women forced him to step down from power before he was assassinated like his father.
- By the 1950s, however, women were encouraged to abandon the veil, attend university, and secure professional careers in order to help boost Afghanistan's economy. The 1964 Constitution even awarded women the right to vote and to participate in politics.
- Marking the beginning of the modern era of conflict in Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, King of Afghanistan from 1933 to 1973, was overthrown by his cousin, Prime Minister Mohammed Daoud, in 1973. Daoud declared Afghanistan a republic with himself as the ruler.
- In April, 1978, Daoud and his family were shot during the communist coup, known as the Saur (April) Revolution. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a Marxist party supported by the Soviet Union, took control of the government and attempted to implement sweeping social changes.
- The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) was founded in Kabul in 1977 to fight for human rights and social justice in Afghanistan.
- Hafizullah Aman became the president of Afghanistan in 1979. His dictatorial policies, which included killing thousands of Afghans, precipitated a Soviet invasion in December 1979. The Soviet Union, locked in the Cold War with the United States, desired a popular communist stronghold in central Asia. Because they viewed Aman's violent practices as counterproductive to their aims, the Red Army assassinated Aman and flew in Babrak Karmal from Czechoslovakia as a replacement.
- Unfortunately, Soviet rule was even more deadly to Afghan citizens than Aman's. Over a million Afghans were killed as Soviet forces tried to establish their control, and millions more fled as refugees.
- Afghan Islamic fighters, known as the Mujahideen, fought the Soviet invasion, aided with weapons and funding from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and China. In the face of intense resistance, the Soviet Union withdrew in 1989, leaving a power vacuum that was soon filled by the Mujahideen who took control in 1992. Factions emerged within the Mujahideen and they could not agree on how to share power, resulting in civil war that resulted in tens of thousands of Afghan deaths.

- When the Mujahideen took power, they burned the universities, libraries, and schools, all places which they viewed as threats to traditional Afghan culture and to Islam. Women were forced to wear the burqa, and rape became so common that women were afraid to leave their homes. Many women committed suicide and burned themselves alive to avoid forced marriages and to escape abusive situations.
- In the midst of this anarchy, the Taliban began to compete for political power and advocated the overthrow of the Mujahideen. The Taliban, funded by wealthy donors in the Persian Gulf, is comprised mainly of Pashtuns from rural areas of Afghanistan. Led by religious cleric Mullah Omar, the Taliban recruit members from Saudi funded madrassas, or religious schools. Strict religious instruction and military training at the madrassas provide a consistent supply of soldiers for the Taliban.
- In 1996, the Taliban took control of Kabul and began to institute its own brand of social change based on a radical interpretation of Islamic Sharia law. The Taliban established the Department of Vice and Virtue to punish those who did not follow the strict laws the Taliban leadership established. Women were not allowed to leave their homes without a male escort, were forbidden to receive medical care or education, were forbidden to work outside the home, and were forced to remain covered from head to toe at all times. Any woman who did not comply with these and other rules risked public beatings or stoning.
- The Taliban's gender apartheid was not the only thing that captured world attention: its opium production and support of Osama Bin Laden also drew international censure.
- In October 2001, the United States began an airstrike on Afghanistan after the Taliban refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden, believed to be the mastermind behind the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.
- In June 2002, the United States officially declared an end to the conflict when it turned over control to the Afghan Transitional Government. Hamid Karzai, backed by the United States, was sworn in as president in December 2001, after the Taliban were forced from their strongholds in Kabul and Kandahar.
- In 2004, the interim government ratified Afghanistan's constitution, which contains important provisions that guarantee women's rights. For example, the constitution states that women are the equals of men under Afghan law, that the state must provide educational opportunities for women, and requires that women be guaranteed at least a quarter of the seats of Parliament (only 15% of the United States Congress is female). The constitution also promises that Afghanistan will abide by CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women).
- Because government control does not reach far outside of Kabul, many Afghan women still do not enjoy the rights guaranteed them in the 2004 constitution.
- According to Amnesty International, the removal of the Taliban was initially welcomed and was accompanied by general celebration. Over time, however, as foreign aid has failed to produce promised tangible benefits to Afghan citizens, support for the government has waned. The Taliban has stepped in to fill this gap, and has begun to rebuild its forces. A Taliban fighter is paid around \$300 a month, while an Afghan soldier is paid around \$100. Economic desperation and lack of access to education and other basic human rights has radicalized some segments of the population. According to Oxfam, over 7 million Afghan children still do not have access to school.
- In addition, schools, especially schools that allow girls to attend or that employ female teachers, are being specifically targeted by the Taliban. 172 violent attacks against schools occurred in the first six months of 2006, compared with 60 in all of 2005. Aid workers have also been targeted, forcing aid agencies to withdraw staff and supplies from areas in grave need of assistance. Targeting civilians is considered a war crime, prosecutable by the International Criminal Court.

- The Taliban has also targeted women, leading many women to abandon educational and professional endeavors. Many women fear a return to the mass rapes and general persecution experienced under the Mujahideen and the Taliban.
- Challenges facing President Karzai, who won the first popular election in 2004, include extending government control to rural areas, creating a sense of national unity, disarming militias, prosecuting human rights abuses, and enforcing the laws enshrined in the constitution, especially rules that apply to the rights of women.

References:

“Afghanistan’s Turbulent History.” BBC News October 08, 2004.
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1569826.stm)

Ahmed-Ghosh, Dr. Huma. “A History of Women in Afghanistan: Lessons Learnt for the Future.”
Journal of International Women’s Studies 4.3 (2003)

“All Who Are Not Friends Are Enemies: Taleban Abuses Against Civilians.” Amnesty International April 19, 2007. (<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110012007>)

Reference 1.2: Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)

- Founded in Kabul in 1977 by Meena and other intellectual female leaders who desired more rights for women as well as the establishment of a democratic government in Afghanistan
- After the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, RAWA became directly involved in the resistance movement against the Soviets. Meena was assassinated by an Afghan branch of the KGB (the Soviet secret police) on February 04, 1987.
- In 1981, RAWA began a bilingual magazine entitled *Payam-e Zan* (Women's Message) to spread their message of equality and democracy. Because it is one of the few independent publications in Afghanistan, and because of its consistent intelligent and controversial reporting, it is widely read by both men and women in Afghanistan.
- RAWA is one of the few organizations directly addressing the needs of refugee women and children. They have founded schools for girls as well as boys, established orphanages, started a hospital for refugee women and children in Quetta, Pakistan, and taught nursing and literacy classes to empower and educate women.
- RAWA's Watan Schools, open to both male and female refugee children, are designed to contrast the militant madrassas, strict religious schools relied upon by the Taliban and other fundamentalist groups for recruits. Watan schools teach all major subjects and encourage critical thinking and questioning. RAWA believes that the only way to eliminate extreme fundamentalism is through enlightenment and education.
- According to the RAWA website, UNICEF estimates that 97% of Afghan females and 72% of males are illiterate. RAWA offers literacy classes for adult women in order to combat this trend.
- Many women who become heads of household because of war casualties have no means to support themselves, and are sometimes forced to turn to begging or prostitution in order to make ends meet. RAWA provides vocational classes to train women in meaningful work that will help them support themselves and their families.
- RAWA members must operate with great caution and secrecy, as they have consistently been targeted and threatened for their democratic views and feminist agenda.

Handout 1.3: Movie Discussion Guide

1. RAWA members gathered clips for this film at great personal risk. The images and interviews were compiled with care to show the world the reality of daily life under the Taliban. What message do you think RAWA members were trying to send viewers? What clips from the film strengthened this message? What clips stood out to you?
2. Describe two images of women you saw in the film. What do these images reveal about daily life for women under the Taliban?
3. In the film, a RAWA member noted that the original goal of the organization was to fight for women's rights and equality. After the Soviet invasion, however, RAWA members decided that national emancipation must precede female emancipation. What does the word emancipation mean? Why do you think RAWA members felt national emancipation must come first?
4. List two specific risks that refugee women from Afghanistan face. What services does RAWA provide for refugee women and children?
5. A woman interviewed in the film states that "fundamentalists are the enemy of Islam." She goes on to say that she equates the word 'fundamentalist' with ignorant reactionaries and common criminals. What does the word fundamentalist mean? Describe one fundamentalist policy you saw in the film. How have fundamentalist policies affected women in Afghanistan? Use the film to support your answer.
6. In the early 1990's, 70% of teachers, 40% of doctors, and 50% of government workers in Kabul were female. Beginning with Taliban rule in 1996, however, women were forbidden to engage in professional work or attend school, were required to wear the burqa, were prohibited from practicing medicine or visiting a male doctor, and were encouraged to stay hidden from view. How do you think these rapid changes affected the psychological health of women in Kabul?
7. What human rights violations did you see in the film? What human rights were denied to women under the Taliban? Use the film to support your answer.
8. Why do you think the editors of this film chose to include the footage of the hanging and the men killed in the bombing? Do these images strengthen the overall message of the film? Why or why not?
9. Because women comprise over half the population of Afghanistan, it is critical that women have a voice in rebuilding the country. Women suffered grave human rights abuses under both the Northern Alliance (Mujahideen) and the Taliban, and do not trust leaders from either group to lead the country. What does RAWA see as the central challenges facing Afghanistan, especially Afghan women? What is their vision for the new Afghanistan?

Handout 1.4: The Taliban's Rules and Punishments

The Taliban's Rules Regarding Females

1. Females may not work outside the home, including teachers, engineers and doctors
2. Females may not participate in any activity outside the home unless accompanied by a close male relative such as a father, brother or husband
3. Females may not deal with male shopkeepers
4. Females may not be treated by male doctors
5. Females may not study at schools, universities or any other educational institution
6. Females must wear a long veil (burqa) which covers them from head to toe
7. Females who do not wear the burqa will be whipped, beaten and/or verbally abused publicly
8. Females whose ankles are visible will be whipped in public
9. Females found guilty of adultery will be publicly stoned to death
10. Females may not use cosmetics
11. Females may not talk to or shake hands with males that are not in their family
12. Females may not laugh loudly- no stranger should hear a woman's voice
13. Females may not wear high heel shoes. men must never hear a woman's footsteps
14. Females may not take taxis without a male member of her family
15. Females may not appear on radio, television or public gatherings of any kind
16. Females may not play sports or enter a sports center or club
17. Females may not ride bicycles or motorcycles
18. Females may not wear brightly colored clothes that can be considered "sexually attracting colors"
19. Females may not gather for festive occasions such as Eid (religious holiday) or for any recreational purpose
20. Females may not wash clothes next to rivers or in a public place
21. Modification of all place names including the word "females." for example, "female garden" has been renamed "spring garden"
22. Females may not appear on the balconies of their apartments or houses
23. All home windows must be painted so females cannot be seen from outside their homes
24. Male tailors may not take a female's measurements or sew a female's clothes
25. Females and men may not travel on the same bus
26. Females may not wear flared or wide-leg pants even under a burqa

EXAMPLES OF THE TALIBAN'S PUNISHMENTS FOR BREAKING THESE RULES:

- PUBLIC WHIPPING
- PUBLIC STONING
- AMPUTATION OF LIMBS
- PUBLIC HANGING
- IMPRISONMENT
- PUBLIC SHOOTING
- PUBLIC EXECUTION
- DANGLING OF BODIES FROM CRANES
- PUBLIC BEATINGS

27. Females may not be filmed or photographed
28. Females' pictures may not appear in newspapers and books, or hung on walls of houses or shops

Rules Regarding all Afghans – Male and Female

1. No one can listen to music
2. No one can watch movies, television or videos
3. No one can celebrate the traditional new year because it is deemed “un-islamic”
4. No one can celebrate labor day because it is deemed a “communist” holiday
5. No citizen of afghanistan may have a non-islamic name
6. All afghan youth must have short hair or be subject to forced haircuts
7. All men must wear islamic clothes and a cap
8. Men may not shave or trim their beards
9. All afghans must attend prayers in mosques 5 times daily
10. No one may keep pigeons or any other bird as a pet. any violater will be imprisoned and the birds shall be killed
11. No one may fly kites
12. In any sporting events, onlookers may not clap
13. Anyone who carries objectionable literature will be executed
14. Anyone who converts from Islam to any other religion will be executed
15. All boy students must wear turbans
16. Non-muslim minorities must stitch a yellow cloth onto their dress to be differentiated from the majority
17. No one may use the internet, including foreigners
18. No one may dance at weddings
19. No one may gamble
20. No one may engage in a cultural celebration
21. No burying of anyone who was killed by the taliban. bodies must remain in the street as examples to other “wrongdoers”

Note: It must be noted that the Taliban did not have control over ALL of Afghanistan. However, they did have a significant presence in certain cities. There were many cases where the Taliban tried to seize a town and apply its rules and did not succeed due to the strength and courage of Afghans who rebelled and stood up for themselves in a non-violent way.

Lesson Two:

The Effects of Fundamentalism on Women’s Rights

Time: Time will vary depending on activities chosen.

Overview:

According to the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children (as quoted in the film), “Afghan refugee women suffer from a triple dose of insecurity as women, forced migrants, and inhabitants of dangerous areas.” This lesson explores the effects of fundamentalism and war on Afghan women, including lack of access to education and medical care, and increased exposure to landmines, sexual violence, and other dangers. Despite the many risks, women are working to help one another cope with and overcome these dangerous effects of war. Students will examine the ways that RAWA is working to address critical issues affecting women’s health, safety, and equality.

Objectives:

Students Will:

1. Use poetry to examine the effects of fundamentalism on Afghan women
2. Demonstrate understanding of the risk factors affecting women in a conflict environment
3. Evaluate methods women are using to help other women in conflict areas

Preparation:

- Handout 2.1: Reenvisioning Afghanistan
- DVD Player
- Copy of *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan*
- Access to computers or research materials (for Activity 3)

Procedure:

Activity One: Exploring Fundamentalism (20 min.)

1. Write the word “Fundamentalist” on the board. Give students two minutes to free-write all the words and images that come to their minds. Call on volunteers to share one response or image. Write the responses on the board.
2. Discuss the following three questions as a class: What is fundamentalism? What does fundamentalism look like in America? In Afghanistan? Divide students into small groups to answer the following questions:
 - What factors contribute to the creation of fundamentalists? In America? In Afghanistan?

- In Afghanistan, the Taliban is comprised of a group of extreme fundamentalists. What fundamentalist policies did you witness in the film *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan*?
 - How do fundamentalist policies affect Afghan women?
 - How do fundamentalist policies impact Afghan culture in general?
 - How can society (Afghanistan and the international community) combat fundamentalism?
3. Share and debate group responses in a class discussion.

Activity Two: Poetry As Civil Disobedience (25 min.)

1. The following poem was one of many written by Meena, RAWA’s founder. Poetry is an essential aspect of RAWA’s legacy, as RAWA members traditionally used poetry instead of violence during mass political demonstrations. Poetry is an integral part of RAWA’s policy of peaceful resistance and civil disobedience. Review the concept of civil disobedience with the class.
2. Copy the following poem on the board. Each student will read the poem individually. Ask a volunteer to read the poem aloud to the class. Use the following questions to stimulate discussion about the poem:
 1. To whom is the poem addressed?
 2. What is the central message of the poem?
 3. What is the attitude of the poem?
 4. What does the poem reveal about the experiences of Afghan women?
 5. How is the poem a form of civil disobedience?

To the Fundamentalists

You can dim the light of the candle whose glow warms my eyes
 You can freeze the kisses on my lips
 You can fill the air with curses
 Or with the terrible silence of my grief
 You can steal my sister’s smile
 You can put up a thousand walls
 You can do all that
 And I, I can fight

1. As the above poem demonstrates, RAWA members and other Afghan women have continued to fight for women’s rights and democracy in the face of overwhelming odds and despite incredible danger to themselves. Ask students to spend five minutes developing a response to the following question: What right, if any, would you consider risking your life to defend and what measures would you take, if any, to defend that right?
2. When all students are finished, ask volunteers to share their responses with the class.
3. *Optional Extension Activity:* Ask each student to write a poem modeled after “To The Fundamentalists.” The title of the poem should be: “To The . . .” and may be addressed to anyone who commits or who suffers from human rights violations. Alternatively, students may write song lyrics or develop an artistic response with the same title.

Activity Three: Developing Solutions (90 min.)

1. Divide students into five small groups. Assign each group one of the following topics: Education, Healthcare, Poverty, Landmines, and Sexual Abuse.
2. Distribute Handout 2.1. Review the directions with students.
3. As a class, listen to several personal accounts of life in Afghanistan. Replay the interviews with refugee women from *Rise! Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan*. Listen to the first five minutes of the radio interview conducted with Miriam Rawi, a member of the cultural committee of RAWA, on CBS Radio in June 2007. (Available at: http://www.rawa.org/events/release_refugees.htm) Refer to the Resources section at the end of this guide for additional personal accounts from women in Afghanistan.
4. Provide groups time to research their assigned topic and to develop their strategic plans to improve conditions for women in Afghanistan. When all groups have finished their work, group representatives will share their plans with the class.

Optional Extension: It is important to note that women are helping each other cope with and overcome the effects of war and gender apartheid. This, too, is a form of civil disobedience. Review ways that RAWA is helping women survive and flourish. (Refer to the RAWA website and Appendix Three of this guide for more information.)

Further Study:

1. What would America look like if it were controlled by fundamentalists? What rights, if any, might be taken away? What rights would women have? What rights would men have? How would fundamentalism change American culture?
2. Why do some women in Afghanistan still choose to wear the burqa?

Handout 2.1: Reenvisioning Afghanistan

Scenario:

You work for the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Afghanistan, and will be attending an important government policy session discussing plans for rebuilding Afghanistan. At this session, you are to unveil your long-term action plan to improve conditions for women in Afghanistan in one of the following areas: Education, Healthcare, Poverty, Landmines, or Sexual Abuse. You must address the following questions in your presentation:

- How are women currently affected by this issue?
- What are people already doing to address this issue?
- How will you support community efforts to improve conditions for women affected by this issue?
- How will you ensure that both men and women comply with your plan?

Directions:

1. Before drafting your long-term action plan for your assigned issue, you will listen to women give their personal accounts about life in Afghanistan.
2. You will then have time to research how women are affected by your assigned issue. Use the film, appendices in this guide, and links provided in the Resources section to help you in your research.
3. After you have completed your research, develop a long-term action plan that addresses your issue and ensures that women in Afghanistan have full access to their human rights. Keep in mind that an effective plan should involve the women of Afghanistan in both the planning and implementation stages.
4. After you have written your plan, you will present your detailed report to the class.

Lesson 3:

Women Empowering Women

Time: Lesson time will vary depending upon activities chosen

Overview:

This lesson uses song and poetry to examine ways women are helping one another find their voices and get involved in the struggle for women's equality. It also explores the concept of gender apartheid and ways that various interests can take action to help bring gender equality to Afghanistan.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Use poetry and song to examine the women's movement in Afghanistan
2. Understand the concept of gender apartheid
3. Brainstorm ways that various interests (both foreign and national) can help to end gender apartheid in Afghanistan

Preparation:

- CD Player/Computer with Speakers (for Activity One)
- Handout 3.1 – Using Creative Expression to End Oppression
- Handout 3.2 – Battling Gender Apartheid

Procedure:

Activity One: Helping Women Find A Voice (40 min.)

People often turn to creative expression during times of oppression and hardship - some people keep diaries, some create works of art, some write poetry, and others sing. The following exercise examines both songs and poetry as means of creative expression in the midst of oppression.

Section One: Finding A Voice with Poetry

1. Distribute Handout 3.1. Read stanza three of "Sympathy" to the class or ask a volunteer to read the stanza.
2. Divide the students into pairs to analyze and discuss the poem. Students will answer the questions on Handout 3.1 in pairs. When all students have finished working, discuss student responses as a class.

Section Two: Finding a Voice with Song

1. RAWA uses inspiring songs to motivate women and raise awareness about the situation in Afghanistan. Choose one of the songs from RAWA's website

(<http://www.rawa.org/cd12.htm>) to play for the class. Listen to the song one time as a class. What is the tone of the song? Is it mournful, upbeat, militant?

2. As the students listen to the song a second time, ask that they imagine what the song is about. What feelings is the song trying to capture? What is the mood of the song? Play the song a second time.
3. The students will write their own lyrics for the song, based on what they have learned about the situation for women in Afghanistan. Play the music softly in the background while the students write.
4. When all students are finished, volunteers may share their lyrics. Post lyrics around the classroom or in the hallway as part of an awareness raising campaign.

Activity Two: Battling Gender Apartheid (50 min.)

1. Write the word “Equality” on the board. Give students two to three minutes to free-write all the words and images that come to mind when they see the word “equality.”
2. At the end of three minutes, ask students to share words and images that came to mind, and write these responses on the board.
3. Divide students into small groups. Each group will answer the following questions: What does equality look like? Racial equality? Gender equality? Equality for women in the United States? Equality for women in Afghanistan? Students may draw or write their responses.
4. When students are finished, discuss the responses as a class.
5. Explain the term “gender apartheid” to the class. (*Gender apartheid is strict segregation based on gender and enforced by the state, and later reinforced by cultural and social norms.*) Ask students to list examples of gender apartheid in Afghanistan. What are some of the cultural effects of gender apartheid? Have you ever witnessed gender segregation in your community? In the United States?
6. Divide students into small groups. Distribute Handout 3.2 to each group and assign each group a perspective. Review the directions with the class.
7. When all groups have finished working, the groups will present their campaigns to the class.

Further Study: Film and Photography as Advocacy Tools

1. Ask students to choose a photo of a woman in Afghanistan to bring to the next class. Students can find images in newspapers, magazines, or in RAWA’s online photo gallery “[Kabul: One Year After the Taliban.](#)” *Note – Some photos located in the galleries on the RAWA website are graphic and disturbing.

Students will write a 1-2 page first person narrative from the perspective of the woman in the photograph. Volunteers may share their narratives with the class. Post student work as part of an end-of-unit awareness campaign.

**Optional Extension:* Students may choose or take a photograph of a woman in their family or community. Students will then write a 1-2 page narrative from the perspective of the woman in the photograph. How did this exercise help them to see women in their homes or community differently? Are there any connections between the two photos?

Handout 3.1: Using Creative Expression to End Oppression

Directions:

Read stanza three of “Sympathy.” Then, answer the questions below.

About the Author:

Paul Laurence Dunbar, born in 1872, dealt with racism and inequality throughout his short life. Though slavery was officially abolished in America in 1865, African Americans did not enjoy racial equality for another century. Many of Dunbar’s poems revolve around his struggle with racism, and the suffering it caused. Maya Angelou took the title of her autobiography I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings from this poem.

***Sympathy* (Stanza 3)**

By: Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

“I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore -
When he beats his bars and would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea that upward to heaven he flings –
I know why the caged bird sings!”

Questions:

1. What is this stanza of the poem about?
2. What does the caged bird symbolize?
3. The poet asserts that he knows why the caged bird sings when most people do not. Why do most people think the caged bird sings? Why does the poet say that the caged bird sings?
4. Does the poet feel it is useless for the bird to sing? What will help the bird break free of its cage?
5. In what ways is this poem a metaphor for the women of Afghanistan? Why do you think RAWA members compose songs and poetry? Why do they consider songs and poetry integral to their campaign for equality?

Handout 3.2: Battling Gender Apartheid

Directions:

Develop a campaign to help end gender apartheid in Afghanistan.

You will work to develop this campaign from one of the following perspectives: the United Nations (any branch), the government of Afghanistan, the United States government, women in Afghanistan, men in Afghanistan, women in America, a student group (from any nation), or a multinational corporation operating or investing in Afghanistan.

Before you start developing your campaign, your group must answer the following questions from your assigned perspective:

1. Do you think that the international community has an obligation to help end gender apartheid in Afghanistan? Why or why not?
2. What international human rights conventions apply to gender apartheid? (List at least three specific articles and explain how they apply to the situation).
3. In what ways, if any, should the international community take action to help end gender apartheid?
4. What do you think would happen if foreign interests intervened on behalf of Afghan women? If they did not intervene?
5. How do you envision equality for women in Afghanistan?

Choose the focus of your campaign.

For example, if you are working for the education branch of the UN (UNESCO), you might campaign for more schools for girls.

Define your goals for the campaign.

What do you hope will happen as a result of your campaign? How will your campaign help to end gender apartheid in Afghanistan? How can you work together with other organizations and the local communities to help end gender apartheid?

Develop a way to spread the message of your campaign.

Think about a campaign medium that will appeal to your chosen audience. For example, you may choose to campaign through a speech, radio broadcasts, posters, a YouTube video, a pamphlet, a film, or a song.

*Remember that RAWA uses the talents of women of all ages and walks of life to make their organization successful. List the talents of the people in your group. How can you use their talents to help build an effective campaign?

Present your campaign to the class.

Appendix One: Political and Historical Timeline of Afghanistan

1919 – Afghanistan regains independence after winning third war against British forces.

1926 – Amanullah proclaims himself king and institutes many social reforms, including many reforms that give more rights and freedoms to women.

1929 – Facing opposition to his social reforms from conservative forces, Amanullah flees Afghanistan.

1933 – Zahir Shah becomes king.

1953 – General Mohammed Daud, Zahir Shah's cousin, is named Prime Minister. As Prime Minister, he institutes several social reforms that benefit women, including abolishing purdah (secluding women from public view).

1963 – General Daud is forced to resign as Prime Minister.

1973 – General Daud seizes power in a coup and declares Afghanistan a republic. His leadership style of playing the USSR against Western powers, especially the United States, alienates several political allies.

1977 – RAWA formed in Kabul.

1978 – The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) kills General Daud and his family during a coup supported by the USSR. Conservative Islamic and ethnic leaders who object to social changes introduced by the PDPA begin armed revolt in rural areas.

1979 – Hafizullah Amin's dictatorial practices cause rural revolts to intensify. The Soviet Union sends in troops to remove Amin, who is then executed. Ten year period of Soviet intervention begins.

1980 – Babrak Karmal, leader of the PDPA and favored by the USSR, is installed as ruler. Resistance to the PDPA and the Soviet intervention intensify, and Mujahideen groups are supported and armed by the United States, Pakistan, China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

1986 – The United States begins supplying the Mujahideen with Stinger missiles so that they can shoot down Soviet helicopters.

1988 – Afghanistan, the USSR, the United States, and Pakistan sign peace accords. The Soviet Union begins pulling out troops.

1991 – The USSR and the United States agree to end military aid to warring Mujahideen factions vying for control of Afghanistan.

1996 – The Taliban seizes control of Kabul and institutes strict Islamic law, banning women from work, and introducing punishments such as amputation and stoning.

1998 – Devastating earthquakes kill thousands of people. The United States launches air strikes against possible bases of Osama bin Laden, suspected of bombing US embassies in Africa.

1999 – The United Nations imposes an air embargo and financial sanctions on Afghanistan to force them to hand over bin Laden for trial.

2001 –

March – Taliban blow up giant Buddha statues in defiance of international efforts to save them.

May – Taliban order religious minorities to wear tags identifying themselves as non-Muslims.

September 11 – Osama bin Laden takes credit for attacks on Twin Towers and the Pentagon.

September – Ahmad Shah Masood, leader of the main opposition to the Taliban, is killed by assassins posing as journalists.

October – The United States and Britain launch air strikes against Afghanistan after they refuse to hand over Osama bin Laden.

November – Taliban falls.

December 22 – Hamid Karzai is sworn in as head of interim government.

2002 – Vice-president Haji Abdul Qadir is assassinated by gunmen in Kabul.

December – President Karzai, along with Pakistani and Turkmen leaders sign deal to build gas pipeline through Afghanistan, carrying Turkmen gas to Pakistan.

2003 – NATO takes control of security in Kabul.

2004 – New constitution, guaranteeing more rights to women, is signed.

September – Rocket fired at President Karzai's helicopter misses its target.

December – President Karzai is sworn in as President after he wins 55% of the vote in first free elections.

2005 –

May – Details emerge about alleged prisoner abuse at US detention centers.

September – First parliamentary elections in more than 30 years.

2006 –

May – Violent anti-US protests erupt in Kabul after a US military vehicle crashes and kills several civilians.

July – NATO takes control over military operations in southern Afghanistan in an attempt to extend government control into areas ruled by the Taliban.

October – NATO takes responsibility for security in all of Afghanistan.

Adapted From: BBC News: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1162108.stm

Appendix Two – US Commitment to Women in Afghanistan

Fact Sheet

Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues

Washington, DC

January 3, 2006

U.S. Commitment to Women in Afghanistan

The struggle for women's rights is a story of ordinary women doing extraordinary things. And today, the women of Afghanistan are writing a new chapter in their history.

--First Lady Laura Bush, March 12, 2004

Since the fall of Taliban in 2001, the United States has implemented more than 200 projects for Afghan women to increase women's political participation, build civil society, create economic opportunities, support the education of girls and women, and increase access to health care. Afghanistan has achieved some remarkable milestones during the past year to secure women's human rights and civil and social gains. Among the significant achievements were the drafting of the Constitution, ratified on January 4, 2004, the successful presidential elections held on October 9, 2004, and the recent September 18, 2005 elections for Parliament and provincial councils.

Constitutional Loya Jirga and Elections. An Afghan Constitutional Loya Jirga, or Council, approved a new constitution on January 4, 2004 in Kabul. The new constitution affords all citizens of Afghanistan equal rights and duties before the law. The new constitution also reserves 25% of its seats in the lower house and 17% in the upper house of Parliament for women. Of the 500 members at the Constitutional Loya Jirga, 102 were women. Two of the nine members of the Constitutional Drafting Committee and seven of the 35 members of the Constitutional Review Commission were women. More than 200 women participated in the 2002 Emergency Loya Jirga that established the transitional government. Women comprised over 41% of the 10.5 million registered voters for the October 2004 presidential elections, which included a woman candidate. Millions of Afghans, men and women, voted on October 9, 2004 in Afghanistan's first presidential election. In the cities where U.S.-supported women's radio stations operate, the number of women who registered to vote was considerably higher than the national average. The September 18, 2005 elections for provincial councils and the Wolesi Jirga, or lower house of Parliament, were stunning with more than 52% of registered voters voting (43% female). Over 300 female candidates ran for office in these elections where women are guaranteed 25% of the parliamentary seats. The results exceeded expectations, with women candidates filling all of the 68 seats they had been allocated plus an additional 17, who won on their own.

Women Leaders and Programs. The Cabinet appointed in December 2004 included three women ministers -- the Minister of Women's Affairs, the Minister of Martyrs and Disabled and the Minister of Youth Affairs. A woman heads the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Many more women serve in the public and private sectors. The Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs has created an Office of Human Rights, Health and Women's Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to monitor women's programs. The Afghan Ministry of Commerce set up a Department of Women's Entrepreneurship to help women establish their own businesses.

Political Participation and Civil Society

Women's Resource Centers. The United States has allocated \$2.65 million for the construction of an initial 17 Women's Resource Centers throughout Afghanistan. The centers will support outreach, advocacy, and policy formation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and create a space in rural provinces for training women in education, health, job skills, leadership, legal awareness, and political participation. Ten centers are now operational and three are ready to open in the immediate future. Through the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, the United States provided \$1 million in educational training at the centers. Women executives of AOL/Time Warner raised \$60,000 for the Council's Gift Fund to support a provincial women's resource center in Afghanistan.

Electoral Assistance. The U.S. has given over \$100 million to support Afghan elections, including \$15 million for voter registration, and \$8.86 million for civic and voter education, focus group research, training for political parties, and civic activists. Over 600 women ran for parliament in September 2005. Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) Commissioner Najla Ayubi said on May 29, "The turnout of women, who make up slightly more than 10 percent of candidates, is extremely

favorable. The JEMB welcomes our sisters who have taken up the challenge to make sure the voices of Afghan women are heard in the male-dominated elections." Of the 2,915 Afghans who offered their nomination for Wolesi Jirga or lower house, 347 were women. Sixty-eight seats are allocated for women in the 249-seat Wolesi Jirga. Of the 3,170 candidates nominated for the Provincial Councils (which elects the members of Mushrano Jirga, or upper house, of the coming parliament), 279 were women.

Legal Rights and Information. The United States is providing \$3.5 million for private sector development for women and to secure women's property rights. The latter is being conducted to help educate women about their property rights in Islam and assisting them to gain access to legal assistance to use new, more transparent administrative and judicial processes. The United States provided \$5 million to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

Media Training. The United States has provided more than \$500,000 to train women journalists and filmmakers, some of whom produced "Afghanistan Unveiled," a film documentary about abuses against women by the Taliban and "If I Stand Up", a film about women's political participation through running for elections and voting.

Economic Opportunities

Microenterprise and Microcredit Initiatives. Microenterprise training and access to microcredit help women gain self-sufficiency by starting their own businesses. Through a \$10,000 donation to the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council from Daimler-Chrysler, the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), a non-governmental organization, established two village banks in Herat. Daimler-Chrysler contributed an additional \$25,000 in February 2004 to construct another five community banks to support microfinance loans for women in the province. With additional funding from the U.S. Government and other donors, FINCA expects to assist more than 30,000 clients in Afghanistan over the next 5 years. USAID's \$10 million Literacy & Community Empowerment Program (LCEP) targets rural women and their families in 200 communities. The LCEP promotes personal and community self-sufficiency through community savings and loans, enterprise training and linkages to microcredit services. Other microenterprise initiatives for women totaling more than \$9 million provide skills and literacy training. These include training of 25,000 women in animal husbandry, developing skills in tailoring, and preservation of produce and dairy products for sale; technical support to women's carpet and textile projects; and funding bakeries that employ widows and provide subsidized bread to hundreds of thousands of urban poor.

Afghan Conservation Corps. The United States contributed \$3.2 million to the Afghan Conservation Corps (ACC) to rehabilitate the environment. ACC worked with vulnerable, unskilled women to improve the environmental productivity and beauty of an urban hospital, teaching them to grow flowers and vegetables, to irrigate and weed. At a girls' high school, the women grew vegetables for the school kitchen as well as flowers and shrubs for the school grounds.

Education

Back-to-School. Close to five million Afghan children are enrolled in school, and 40% are girls -- the highest percentage of female students in Afghanistan's history. Since 2001, the United States has dedicated \$60.5 million for primary education, to construct schools, train teachers, and provide books and supplies.

Literacy Programs. In 2005, the United States initiated two major literacy programs totaling almost \$10 million, linked with skills development for healthcare workers and enterprise development. \$4 million of this amount supports the establishment of the Women's Teacher Training Institute in Kabul and its first program, the Afghan Literacy Initiative for 200 rural villages. Nine public libraries in eight provinces are participating in a campaign for women's literacy.

Teacher Training. Since March 2002, the United States, through partners such as the University of Nebraska and Creative Associates, has worked to improve the quality of basic education. USAID has printed 27 million textbooks, provided face to face training to 6,800 teachers and radio teacher training to another 25,000 teachers, and enrolled 170,000 students (70% girls) in accelerated learning programs in 17 provinces. The University of Nebraska has printed and distributed another 15 million textbooks and supported teacher training.

Fulbright Program. After a 25-year hiatus, 17 Afghan Fulbright grantees, including five women, arrived in the United States in summer 2004 to begin study at American universities. The scholars will focus on areas that assist Afghanistan's national development, such as law, political science, public administration, economics, English-language teaching and journalism.

National Women's Dormitory. In 2005, the U.S. rehabilitated the national Women's Dormitory with \$8.1 million, and allocated another \$3 million for maintenance, management and food services over three years. These are enabling over 1,100 primarily rural women to attend one of four institutions of higher learning in Kabul.

Afghan Youth Sports Exchange. In summer of 2004, girls from Afghanistan visited the U.S. to learn soccer techniques and leadership skills so that they can organize school and city teams when they return home. The girls, who range in age from 11 to 16 years, are part of the Afghan Youth Sports Exchange -- a program whose mission is to develop Afghan youth into leaders who will bring athletics to their communities. The program hopes to create a lasting change in Afghanistan by building youth recreation programs.

Health Care - The United States has financed health care programs in Afghanistan totaling more than \$87 million with a primary focus on reducing one of the highest maternal and child mortality rates in the world. These programs include training women as healthcare workers, community midwives and midwives; maternal/neonatal tetanus immunizations; improving hospital care including the construction of women's wings in hospitals and dormitories for women medical students; and the strengthening of maternal and child health, family planning, and nutrition services, particularly in rural areas. The United States has rebuilt 26 health clinics, and an additional 179 are under construction. Over 700 MOH and NGO midwives have graduated or are being trained; over 2,000 community health workers have been trained and 1,000 are currently undergoing training. The U.S. supports basic health services in 250 health clinics; each clinic averages 989 patients per month, primarily women and children, totaling 247,000 patients served monthly. Overall, the U.S. has provided basic health services to about seven million people in 13 provinces. Most of the recipients are women and children.

Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues
202-312-9664

<http://www.state.gov/g/wi/>

Appendix Three – Overview of RAWA’s Programs

Education –

In Pakistan, RAWA operates 15 primary and secondary schools for refugee children. It also provides literacy classes for adult women. RAWA is also running 9 orphanages for refugee children. In Afghanistan, RAWA members operate secret home schools as well as literacy courses. RAWA curriculum includes all required subjects in addition to discussion of women’s rights, the necessity of education and social participation, democracy and civic freedoms, and possible ways to solve the “Afghan problem.”

Healthcare –

RAWA operates Malali Hospital in Pakistan, which provides free medical care for women and children, in addition to running several clinics in refugee camps. In Afghanistan, RAWA uses mobile teams to visit women who do not have the financial means to see a doctor. The mobile teams deliver an average of three children per day, and educate women and young girls about first aid and medical care.

Human Rights –

RAWA works with human rights organizations and the media to provide current news reports about life in Afghanistan. They also post important news clips and interviews on their website. RAWA has received several human rights awards for their work.

Cultural –

RAWA produces songs, stages dramas and skits, holds poetry and story nights, and publishes posters and magazines (including Payam-e-Zan).

Political/Social –

RAWA’s political activities include organizing demonstrations, holding press conferences, issuing press releases, keeping their website updated, and giving interviews to continually raise awareness about life in Afghanistan and in refugee camps.

RAWA also helps wives, widows, and families of prisoners. In addition, they provide shelter for women who are suffering domestic abuse.

Financial –

RAWA runs several small businesses and provides vocational education for women looking for means of supporting themselves. They run carpet, tailoring and bead knitting workplaces, operate chicken and fish farms, and produce jams and jellies.

In addition to these activities, RAWA helps transfer women and children to Pakistan for medical treatment and education, and distributes food and clothing to families in need.

From: RAWA’s Social Activities: <http://www.rawa.org/s.html>

Resources

Websites:

Afghan Constitution –

<http://www.mfa.gov.af/Documents/Constitution%20of%20afghanistan.pdf>

Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) –

The AIHRC was founded in December 2001, as part of the Bonn Agreement. Its responsibility is to promote, protect, and monitor human rights. View photo galleries, read reports, and examine current news and personal accounts. Also examine the specific methods the AIHRC is using to meet international human rights standards and conventions.

<http://www.aihrc.org.af/>

Afghanistan Relief Organization

<http://www.afghanrelief.com/>

Afghanistan Women Council (AWC) –

The AWC was founded by Fatana Said Gailani in 1986 to fight for human rights, women's rights, children's rights, and peace building. The AWC's primary objective is to enlighten women, improve their living conditions, and help them learn a trade in order to provide for themselves. Read personal stories from women in Afghanistan, learn about AWC's projects, and examine their links and news archive.

<http://www.afghanistanwomencouncil.org/>

Amnesty International – Afghanistan

http://www.amnestyusa.org/By_Country/Afghanistan/page.do?id=1011101&n1=3&n2=30&n3=851

Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) –

MOWA is an organization within the Afghan government that works to coordinate programs for women and girls, and prepares long-term action plans to improve the lives of women in Afghanistan. The section "Gender/Gender Statistics" provides an excellent overview of the issues currently facing women in Afghanistan.

<http://www.mowa.gov.af/>

PBS Online News Hour

Review additional lesson plans about Afghanistan.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/world/>

Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)

<http://www.rawa.org>

The International Rescue Committee (IRC)

<http://www.theirc.org>

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

<http://www.womenscommission.org/>

Women Watch: Information and Resources on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women –

Read United Nations resolutions and reports, and examine the news archive for more information about the current situation of women in Afghanistan. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/afghanistan/>

Women Without Borders –

A forum for connecting women and helping women empower one another. One current project in Afghanistan includes the operation of a women's shelter which offers women computer courses, English and literacy courses, health advice, and a course about democracy and women's rights entitled "Our Country, My Role." <http://www.women-without-borders.org/projects/underway/8/>

World Bank – Afghanistan

Search for Afghanistan in the Countries section and read about international programs designed to help rebuild Afghanistan. <http://www.worldbank.org>

Books

Benard, Cheryl. Veiled Courage: Inside the Afghan Women's Resistance. Broadway Books: New York, 2002.

Brodsky, Anne E. With All Our Strength: The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan. Routledge: New York, 2003.

Hosseini, Khaled. A Thousand Splendid Suns. Riverhead Books, 2007.

Kolhatkar, Sonali and James Ingalls. Bleeding Afghanistan: Washington, Warlords, And the Propaganda of Silence. Seven Stories Press: New York, 2006.

Mortenson, Greg and David Oliver Relin. Three Cups of Tea. Penguin Books: New York, 2006.

Pazira, Nelofer. A Bed of Red Flowers: In Search of My Afghanistan. Free Press: New York, 2005.

Stewart, Rory. The Places In Between. Harcourt Books: Orlando, 2004.

Zoya with John Follian & Rita Cristofari. Zoya's Story: An Afghan Woman's Struggle for Freedom. William Morrow: New York, 2002.