



USAID

# AFGHANISTAN EDUCATION FACT SHEET

## BACKGROUND

Afghan women and girls face unparalleled limitations pursuing their dreams through education. Since the August 2021 Taliban takeover, women and girls' chances of earning a quality education are quickly fading. A December 2022 Taliban edict forbids women from pursuing higher education and comes on the heels of a prior ban on girls from pursuing a secondary education. This makes Afghanistan the only country in the world which systematically prohibits girls from sitting in secondary and university classrooms. These draconian policies add to the cascading humanitarian, economic, and food security crises that disproportionately affect women and girls.

Despite the Taliban's egregious efforts to erase women and girls from society and deny millions of girls their right to education, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) remains committed to increasing students' access to safe, quality education. We are working creatively with our partners to sustain and expand educational opportunities through formal schools, community-based classrooms, virtual learning, and digital resources.

USAID's 20-year legacy in Afghanistan expanding and improving access to quality education endures. Fathers want their daughters to have the same right to learn as their sons. Young women want an education so they can provide for themselves and their future families. Communities want tomorrow's leaders to have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives. USAID stands proudly with the people of Afghanistan and is determined to protect and promote their right to education.

## OUR PRIORITIES AND IMPACT

As the largest donor to the Afghan education sector, USAID provides critical assistance to Afghan students, teachers, and schools. We work with parents, families, and communities; public and private schools; and private higher education institutions to keep students in school, ensure they gain practical and marketable skills, and safeguard teachers' and students' wellbeing.

USAID uses creative strategies to provide safe, quality, and relevant education for Afghan students. We fund online and virtual learning options, deliver materials to schools and directly to learners, and support local, community-based education. Community-based education classes—which often take place at community centers, a friendly neighbor's house, or other central location—are particularly important for rural students who live far from formal classrooms.

Between 2021 and 2022, USAID assistance funded the creation of five android-compatible apps to help students in grades 10-12 prepare for their university entrance exams, known as Kankor exams. The apps have been viewed by more than two million students and include video training, an overview of the Kankor exam, and in-depth materials covering math, biology, physics, chemistry, and geology. Our assistance also provides financial assistance to more than 1,100 male and female scholars to pursue professional, undergraduate, and graduate degree programs, particularly in health where young women can continue studying.

## KEY 2022 RESULTS

- USAID-funded scholarships are helping at least 390 female students enroll in higher education, including 150 scholars pursuing a two-year midwifery degree. Upon graduation, scholars will not only hold a marketable degree but will also have gained practical clinical and English language skills.
- With USAID support, 750 students, half of whom are women, enrolled in higher education degree programs at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF). In 2022, 450 students graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Through USAID funding, 5,084 learners—4,916 of whom are female—enrolled in community-based education classes. We also helped distribute 11,691 textbooks and learning materials; trained 271 community-based education facilitators; and provided critical support to 931 community members to advocate for children's education.
- USAID worked to improve skills for teachers and school administrators at 80 women-run private schools that serve approximately 42,475 learners from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- USAID provided full or partial scholarships to 145 students to complete their master's degree programs at 12 different universities in India.
- In 2022, USAID launched a \$40 million partnership with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) to increase learning opportunities for adolescent girls, and through our four-year \$27 million award to AUAF, USAID is ensuring Afghan students, particularly those still in Afghanistan, can stay enrolled in and complete a quality university education and are prepared for leadership in their work and communities.