



Pashtana Durrani

International Scholar-in-Residence, Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW)
Founder & Executive Director, LEARN Afghan
Wellesley, MA | Global

Education

Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA

M.Ed., Education Policy Analysis,
2023–2025

American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), Kabul

B.A., Political Science & Public Administration, 2019–2022

Minor: English

LANGUAGES

English (Fluent)

Pashto (Fluent)

Persian/Dari (Fluent)

Hindi & Urdu (Professional proficiency)

ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

International Scholar-in-Residence

Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW), Wellesley College
November 2023 – Present

Founder & Executive Director

LEARN Afghan
October 2019 – Present

AREAS OF PRACTICE & EXPERTISE

- Girls' education in conflict-affected and politically restrictive contexts
- Women's wellbeing, community health, and feminist resistance
- Practitioner-led program design, scale, and sustainability
- Executive leadership and organizational governance
- External fundraising and donor partnership development
- Global advocacy, institutional representation, and coalition-building
- Crisis operations and adaptive leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

International Scholar-in-Residence

Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW), Wellesley College
November 2023 – Present

- Serve as WCW's primary practitioner voice on girls' education and women's rights in conflict-affected contexts-Afghanistan.
- Secure and manage externally funded fellowships supporting WCW appointment
- Represent WCW in academic, policy, and feminist spaces across more than 30 countries
- Lead the *Wellesley Around the World Advocacy Tour* focused on girls' right to education
- Mentor and supervise WCW-affiliated interns in advocacy, outreach, and media engagement
- Contribute to WCW's global visibility, partnerships, and institutional reputation

HONORS & AWARDS

- Malala Fund Education Champion (2020)
- Tällberg-SNF-Eliasson Emerging Leader Prize (2021)
- BBC 100 Women (2021)
- TIME100 Talks Honoree (2021)
- UN Young Activists Award (2022)
- CEU Open Society Prize (2023)
- Global Citizen Prize for Human Rights (2023)
- Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Award (2023)
- Women's Excellence Award, World Economic Forum (2024)
- Daughter of Greatness Award, Muhammad Ali Center (2024)
- Ginetta Sagan Award, Amnesty International USA (2025)

PUBLICATIONS

- Last to Eat, Last to Learn* (Book, 2024)
- Contributor: *New Lines Magazine*; *Afghanistan Times*; *Kabul Times*

Founder & Executive Director

LEARN Afghan

October 2019 – Present

- Lead a women-led, community-based education network operating across 18 provinces in Afghanistan
- Deliver education through underground classrooms, community schools, radio-based learning, and SIM-based platforms
- Support over 2,135 girls annually through direct education programs
- Train and mentor **70 women educators and 30 executive-level women staff** across Afghanistan
- Design and implement adaptive education and health models grounded in daily field practice and community feedback impacting 1000 women.
- Launch practice-driven digital tools responding to learner and educator needs in low-infrastructure contexts
- Raise and steward \$2.1M+ in cumulative funding (2020–2025)
- Restructure organization toward long-term financial sustainability

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & RESOURCE GENERATION

- Open Society Foundations – Scholars in Exile Fellowship (\$30,000; 2023–2024)
- UNICEF Learning Outcomes Project (\$30,000; 2026)
- Raised \$2.1M+ through multilateral agencies, philanthropic foundations, and institutional partners (2020–2025)

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP, MEDIA & INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

- **120+ international media appearances and interviews** contributing practitioner-based analysis on girls' education, gender, and global policy.
- **On-air appearances with major global broadcasters**, including CNN, BBC, ABC, PBS, MSNBC, CBS, Al Jazeera, Deutsche Welle, NHK Japan, CGTN, and TOLO News.
- **Profiled or quoted in 100+ international print and digital publications**, amplifying evidence-based perspectives from field and policy experience.
- **Featured in leading outlets** such as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Irish Times*, *Der Spiegel*, *Nikkei Asia*, *The Cut*, *PassBlue*, *The Diplomat*, *The Analyst*, and the *Wilson Center*.
- **20+ radio and podcast interviews** advancing public understanding of girls' education and global gender equity.
- **Notable radio and podcast appearances** include *Democracy Now!*, *BBC World Service*, *NPR*, *Newstalk Ireland*, *The Take (Al Jazeera)*, *Inside Story (Al Jazeera)*, *The International Risk Podcast*, *The Afghanistan Project*, and *AJ English News Highlights*.

TEACHING, GUEST LECTURES & CURRICULUM CONTRIBUTIONS

- **Guest lectures, practitioner-led seminars, and workshops** on girls' education and women's wellbeing at leading academic and professional institutions, including Wellesley College, Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, UCLA, Central European University, Bard College (New York), Bard College Berlin, Google Campus Tokyo, and the American University of Afghanistan.
- **Contributed to practice-informed curricula, training modules, and educator learning materials** for academic and global institutions, including the University of Bremen, Amnesty International (international membership curriculum), and Global Campus of Human Rights (Italy).

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE (WELLESLEY COLLEGE / WCW)

- **Represented WCW in global academic, policy, and feminist forums**, including CEDAW processes, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the ECOSOC Youth Forum, the Young Activists Summit, the Afghan Women International Conference (Bali), and engagements with the European Union.
- **Mentored and supervised WCW-affiliated interns**, providing academic, professional, and programmatic guidance.
- **Participated in panels, convenings, and institutional initiatives** advancing WCW's research-to-policy mission and global engagement.

POLICY BRIEFINGS & ADVISORY ENGAGEMENT

Briefings, Strategic Advising and closed-door consultations with policymakers, multilateral agencies, and philanthropic institutions:

- **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** – UN Headquarters, New York each September and March CSW week since 2022.
- **2nd Civil Society Consultation on Afghanistan's Obligations under CEDAW**
- **Education Cannot Wait (ECW) – High-Level Financing Conference (HLFC 2023)** – Geneva, Switzerland
- **European Parliament – "Invitation EP Afghans" Briefing (Brussels, 19 June)**
- **3rd Conference of the Global Freedom / Global Forum for Advocacy (GFA)**
- **CEDAW Representation** – Germany
- **Afghan-Syrian Exchange Program** – Germany
- Testified in front of **House Appropriation Committee** March 2024
- Engaged with **State Department** from 2021-2024 on Ed-Tech response
- **Imagine Forum Representation** – Japan
- **ECW High-Level Financing Conference (HLFC)** – Geneva
- **European Parliament – Brussels (Official Parliamentary Engagement)** – Brussels, Belgium

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & WEB PRESENCE

- pashtanadurrani.com
- learnafghan.org
- [linkedin.com/in/pashtanadurrani](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pashtanadurrani)
- wcwonline.org/Visiting-Scholars/pashtana-durrani