





- What is the **Gawhardshad Institute of Higher Education**?
- How does the **Women’s Empowerment Centre** relate?
- How did UWHAW get involved?
- Who are the girls we have been helping?
- What are our graduates doing now?
- What is our continuing involvement?

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All to say, a brief UWHAW 101, and an intro and welcome for our new members.

Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education:

It is a nonprofit, Ministry approved, institute of higher education in Kabul. It was founded in 2010 by Dr. Sima Samar, Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and our mentor. It offers undergraduate degree programmes in Economics, Management, Business, Law, Political Science, and Engineering. It is co-ed. It’s mission is to prepare competent and committed leaders for the future of Afghanistan, leaders who will respect and promote the universal values of human rights and principles of an open society. Tolerance, civic responsibility, and critical thinking have special places in Gawharshad’s learning environment.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTRE AT GIHE



In 2011 GIHE establishes Women's Empowerment Centre as part of its mission to create better opportunities for women

Women's Empowerment Centre:

Due to culture and tradition, women in Afghanistan, as you know, have been marginalized and their rights have been significantly ignored throughout history.

Dr. Samar recognized the urgent need for a consistent, evolutionary and positive movement to create an environment that would enable Afghan women to take an active part in the social, political and economic life of their country.

As part of its mission to create greater space and opportunities for Afghan women, the Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education established the Women's Empowerment Centre in March 2011. Since then the Centre has played a considerable role in ensuring women's full participation in the academic life of Gawharshad.

In addition the Centre strives

- To improve the education and employment opportunities for female students
- To facilitate opportunities in their capacity building

THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AT GAWHARSHAD & THE UWHAW PROJECT



Donors:

- UWHAW
- Linda Norgrove Foundation Scholarship
- Culture of Resistance Scholarship
- Indigo Foundation

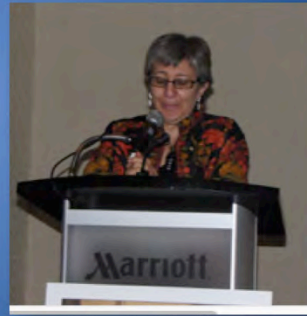
The Scholarship Program at Gawharshad aims to empower women through higher education by providing financial assistance to young women who demonstrate great leadership skills but who do not have the financial capacity to pursue their education beyond high school.

GIHE leadership believes that education will empower women economically, and such empowerment will enable them to better take control of their lives and protect themselves against violence while defending their human rights.

The programme is supported through international organizations and individual philanthropists both inside and outside Afghanistan.

UWHAW has been one of the major donors and the UWHAW Project as we are known is held in highest regard.

HOW UWHAW GOT INVOLVED



Dr. Simar speaks at the 2010 CFUW National AGM and Conference

In 2010 CFUW-Ottawa hosted the CFUW National AGM , Value our Past: Shape the Future, and a full day conference on the 3 D's in Afghanistan.

We had become interested in Afghan women and girls and wanted to help them shape their future.

Dr. Samar spent a week in Ottawa and some of us attended many meetings and open sessions with her. We learned so much.

That September we formed our study group, UWHAW, and continue to this day be motivated and guided by our three original goals:

1. To continue to learn of the current issues facing women and girls in Afghanistan
2. To raise awareness about them as we can – locally, nationally, and internationally
3. To help how we can, specifically with fundraising for scholarships for girls at GIHE

The founding of Gawharshad coincided beautifully with our own founding.

OUR FIRST GRADUATES



April 2012

December 2014



In 2011, the UWHAW project began with 10 students, and eventually 12 benefited from our scholarships. Eight of the students received full scholarships and 4 others were assisted with 50% of their tuition costs.

They all graduated in the fall of 2014 and you may remember Sally Armstrong attended the graduation and told us about it at our garden party the next summer .

Sadly not all 12 girls are pictured here as some could not afford to attend the graduation ceremony.

However, note above some of the CFUW letters of congratulations from us and written by Mary Partington.

- WHO ARE OUR FIRST GRADUATES?



- WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?



Habiba was one of our first recipients and you may remember her as a victim of polio. Nonetheless she studied Political Science where she consistently ranked high in the Faculty. She still hopes to do graduate work when she can afford to do so. In 2014 she was appointed head of the Section for the Protection and Development of the Rights of People with Disabilities of the Bamyan branch of the Independent Human Rights Commission, but had to resign due to pain in her leg. She returned to Kabul where she now works as a Professional Member of the Ministry of Refugee Affairs.

Sonia graduated from the law faculty in 2014 where she was a very active student. After graduation she passed the intern exam and worked as an intern with the primary court in a Kabul district. In 2015 she qualified to work as a lawyer, and since has resolved more than 50 cases. She is trying to help other needy

MORE GRADUATES



Rabia Taheri



Mahmooda Nazari

Rabia never thought she would be able to pursue her education and was thrilled with the opportunity given to her by UWHAW. She graduated from Gawharshad in 2014 and began her Masters. In 2015 she was selected to continue her Masters at the University of Iran and has just returned to Afghanistan where she hopes to work for women and children.

Mahmooda believes there are many people in the world who share her situation, having had a challenging life. She says “it is fortune and hope that brought me into this stage of my life.” She too was accepted to study for her Masters at the University of Iran, and was also planning to return to Afghanistan in October. She is keen to work for a court and hopes to be able to make a difference in children’s lives.

MORE GRADUATES



Nawin Taheri



Seddiqa Saadat

Nawin came from a large but poor family and graduated from the Law Faculty. Upon graduation she joined a legal training programme at Kabul University and then worked for women and children in a foreign NGO. She now works in the Protection and Development of the Rights of the Child section of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kabul. In addition she paints, and so far, has held several exhibitions of her paintings.

Seddiqa participated broadly in school and now as a graduate is a civil and women's rights activist. She worked in the elections process and now works in the municipalities of Kabul as an officer of the Communications Department. She would like very much to study for her masters but cannot manage it on her salary at the moment.

Of the five other students from our 2014 Graduating Class, one is not well and has not been able to get a job, and 4 others are unaccounted for. It is expected they could have left Afghanistan due to the increasing insecurity in the country.

2016 GRADUATES



The 2016 group of students, our second group, seems to be facing more challenges in finding work. They write that a further degree is necessary for better paying jobs but they cannot afford the tuition. Two applied for jobs in an area of the country that was insecure but because no family member could afford to go with them, they could not accept the offers. Four are working for the PROMOTE program, one of the biggest projects of USAid, but that is a temporary contract, one is a teacher, one is in Pakistan looking after her sick mother, one is working in an organization as an assistant to the project officer, one is jobless because her employer had insufficient funds to pay, one is working in the Communications Department at GIHE. Whether working or not, some are taking English and computer classes and one is teaching Quran to young boys and girls in a mosque near her home.

GRATEFUL STUDENTS



UWHAW Scholarship Students are most grateful for the opportunity UWHAW has given them. I quote, “The scholarships have allowed them to get closer to their future goals and have given them breadth and knowledge they never could have imagined. Their college lives included many experiences and taught them about women’s rights and ways to claim equality in society. Participants in the peace building training acknowledged it helped them a lot in managing their own relationships whether with family, friends or classmates.

UWHAW has been one of the major donors to the scholarship programme at Gawharshad. Nasima Rahmani, Director, Women’s Empowerment Centre at Gawharshad, wrote “no other project could be compared with this programme and its golden outcome.” She writes further that she “loves this programme and nothing else would make me happier than I am with this programme and its results and achievements in terms of the empowerment of young women.”

UWHAW WITH GIHE



Thus far 22 girls have graduated from Gawharshad on UWHAW scholarships, another 14 will do so in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The exciting news just yesterday is that 25 new UWHAW students have just been admitted to Gawharshad this September. Our job continues.

I conclude with food for thought:

A UWHAW 2014 Graduate:

Negina Amiri, UWHAW graduate 2014, writes, "If you had not supported me, I wouldn't have the chance and ability to continue my education successfully. Now the responsibility of helping other girls is moved to me. I hope to be able to support at least one of the other needy girls who have my situation during the college life."

Fishta's Matin, Gawharshad Program Officer:

"All the students who have graduated express their deepest thanks to the UWHAW Team for supporting them to pursue their degree. It is a fact that they wouldn't be able to get their degree without UWHAW's donation." *

Hally Siddons

University