Rahela Trust for Afghan women's education

England & Wales · Charity number 1165763

Details

Other names	FARKHUNDA TRUST FOR AFGHAN WOMEN'S EDUCATION, FARKHUNDA TRUST (FTAWE)
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2016-02-25
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	6 Station Parade Northolt Road South Harrow Harrow HA2 8HB
Phone	02037198185
Email	info@rahelatrust.org
Website	www.rahelatrust.org

Activities

Objects: TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN BY PROVIDING FINANCIAL AND SUCH OTHER SUPPORT AS THE TRUSTEES FROM TIME TO TIME SEE FIT.

Activities: Rahela Trust provides financial support to enable young Afghan disadvantaged women to pursue higher education.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1165763

Geography

- Afghanistan
- City Of London

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£175,986	£159,976	-	-
2024-03-31	£61,025	£46,820	-	-
2023-03-31	£34,075	£37,190	-	-
2022-03-31	£52,166	£36,412	-	-
2021-03-31	£47,681	£35,302	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Elizabeth Liz Mermin		2017-10-16
KAMINI PAUL		2017-10-16
Marika Patrick Theros		2020-12-03
Mel Bradley		2022-01-06
Samantha Rennie		2020-01-10
Sear Sadat		2020-08-06

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1165763

Rahela Trust for Afghan women's education

England & Wales - Charity number 1165763

Accounts

Rahela Trust

For Afghan Women's Education

RAHELA TRUST ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2025

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENT

PRESENTED BY:

RAHELA TRUST

Table of Content

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

1.OUR MISSION, VISION, & VALUES
1.1.MISSION
1.2.VISION
1.3.VALUES

2. KEY MESSAGES
2.1.CHAIR'S MESSAGE
2.2.FOUNDING DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

3. LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

4. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, & CORE VALUES

5. STRATEGY, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

6. YEARLY PROGRESS ON SCHOLAR SUPPORT INITIATIVES
6.1.HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS
6.2.RAHELA MODEL SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS
6.3.RT STAFF AND SCHOLARS' COACHING & MENTORING STORIES AND COMMUNITY-BASED COACHING AND MENTORING
6.4.GRADUATED SCHOLARS
6.5.MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING
6.6.UK COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM
6.7.ENGLISH AND FARSI LANGUAGE EDUCATION INITIATIVES

7. YEARLY PROGRESS ON DIASPORA ACTIVITIES AND ACTIVISM SUPPORT SERVICES: AMPLIFYING AFGHAN WOMEN'S VOICES
7.1.ENGAGING THE DIASPORA
7.2.ACTIVISM SUPPORT SERVICES

8. WITH GRATEFUL THANKS

9. THE FUTURE

10. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Mission, Vision, & Values

1.1. VISION

Rahela Trust (RT) is committed to providing university and secondary school scholarships, mentorship opportunities, and access to both local and international professional networks for disadvantaged yet talented Afghan women from rural areas. These women are dedicated to building a future in which women are empowered as active participants and leaders within society.

1.2. MISSION

RT envisions a society in which women's rights are fully recognized, and women are actively engaged in the social, political, and economic spheres of Afghanistan. By nurturing a community of educated and empowered women, the Trust aims to contribute to a more equitable and prosperous future for all Afghan women.

1.3. VALUES

- Excellence in Scholarship Provision: Delivering a scholarship program of the highest quality, ensuring that educational opportunities meet rigorous academic and ethical standards.
- Transparency and Accountability: Committing to open, detailed, and honest reporting on all organizational activities and financial operations.
- Results-Oriented Management: Administering the scholarship program with a strong emphasis on measurable outcomes and continuous improvement.
- Efficient Resource Mobilization: Streamlining the use of financial and human resources to minimize delays, enhance operational efficiency, and maximize impact.

2. Key Messages

2.1. Chair's Message:

"Every day without school darkened my world further. But this year, I found a new light." These words from one of our students capture both the struggle and the hope at the heart of Rahela Trust's work.

Afghanistan today is one of the hardest places in the world to be a girl. Secondary schools and universities remain closed. Women have been pushed out of work and public life. Many girls are forced into early marriage, while even the simplest freedoms — such as walking in a park — are denied. These are not just restrictions but deliberate efforts to erase women's presence. And yet, Afghan women and girls continue to resist, finding ways to learn, to teach, and to support one another.

This is why Rahela Trust's work matters. Education is not simply about learning, but about dignity, leadership, and the future. Our scholars are not only pursuing their studies; they are also sustaining knowledge, supporting younger women, and keeping alive the hope of a different future. The Rahela Model of Mentoring — rooted in community leadership, and combining education with mentoring — proves that even in the harshest conditions, Afghan women can shape their own futures, and that no country can thrive while half its people are excluded.

This year Rahela Trust strengthened its financial base to expand scholarships, grow mentoring, and sustain schools. We are also exploring how to extend remote learning to the many Afghan refugee girls in need in neighbouring countries. Looking ahead, our new five-year Strategic Plan charts an ambitious course. We will grow a network of 500 scholars whose leadership and mentoring will reach more than 37,000 women and girls, while mobilising the Afghan diaspora as a global community of solidarity. Together, these efforts will ensure the right to education for Afghan women and girls remains firmly on the global agenda.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank our Director, Rahela Sidiqi, whose courage and vision inspire us all, as well as our team, partners, and donors. Your solidarity keeps the door to education open.

Dr. Marika Theros
Chair of Trustees

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

2.2. Founding Director's Message:

It is with great pride that I report on the inspiring achievements of Rahela Trust scholars at both university and secondary school levels. A majority of our scholars attained between 70–98% in their examinations and have actively contributed to skills transfer initiatives or supported young women in their communities through small business activities. Collectively, they have reached more than 3,000 young women through skills transfer and supported 400 in establishing small businesses. These accomplishments are remarkable, particularly given the systematic denial of their basic rights and the severe discrimination to which they are subjected.

It must be underscored that many Afghan women continue to face abuse within their homes and endure various forms of oppression in public. The practice of gender apartheid is evident, with escalating restrictions on women's mobility, access to education, freedom of speech, and even their ability to look beyond their windows. Furthermore, the incidence of forced early marriages has become increasingly prevalent.

Despite these harsh realities, I remain both hopeful and resolute that our collective resilience and efforts will endure. I reaffirm the Trust's mission to bring hope and change to the lives of Afghan women through school and university scholarships, mentorship programs, and by empowering women to transfer their skills within their communities. In doing so, we continue to provide both online and discreet in-person education for girls who stand as "shining lights" for Afghanistan's future.

Allow me to share the words of one of our scholars: "We believe that any small step of ours can build a big future. We will continue, as we have learned that our collapse is not the end of the journey, but rather a new beginning."

I call upon the international community to support Afghan women-led organizations and urge global leaders to take meaningful action in empowering Afghan girls during this critical time through education and economic empowerment.

Rahela Sidiqi
Founding Director
Rahela Trust

3. Legal & Administrative Details

3.1. Trustees:

Dr. Marika Theros, Chairperson

Samantha Rennie

Mel Bradley MBE, Vice chair

Kamini Paul

Liz Mermin

Sear Sadat, Treasurer

3. Legal & Administrative Details

3.2. Executive Team:

Rahela Sidiqi
Founding Director

Dr. Nargis Sadiq
Development Officer

Farahnaz Mahsheed
Communications Officer

Ali Ahmad Barat
Finance Officer

Safia Nasrat
Admin/Logistics Officer

Sofia Hakimi
Community Officer

Ziarmal Gharghasht
IT Officer

4. Structure, Governance, & Core Values

Rahela Trust (RT) is pleased to present its Annual Report and unaudited Financial Statements for the period spanning 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The Trust operates in full compliance with statutory requirements, its governing constitution, and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for Accounting and Reporting by Charities, in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102).

Established as a UK-registered charity on 26 February 2016, RT functions under the provisions of its constitution, which was most recently amended on 3 April 2021. The Board of Trustees assumes full responsibility for the governance of the organization, ensuring regulatory compliance, and providing strategic oversight and direction.

The Board convenes on a quarterly basis to deliberate on strategic matters, conduct risk assessments, and review financial and operational activities. Trustees volunteer their time and expertise without any form of remuneration. The day-to-day management of the Trust is entrusted to the Director, supported by a Development Officer and an Advisory Committee. Major strategic, policy, and financial decisions are made collectively by the Board. In addition to scheduled meetings, urgent issues are addressed promptly through digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp and email, with extraordinary meetings convened when necessary.

The Trustees have undertaken periodic skills audits to identify any competency gaps within the Board; with the objective of recruiting individuals whose expertise aligns with the Trust's mission and who can dedicate the requisite time and commitment. In recognition of the pivotal role of volunteers, Rahela Trust reimburses approved expenses in accordance with its volunteering policy.

In Afghanistan, the Trust's work—and that of its local partners—relies heavily on voluntary contributions. Nonetheless, a team of 69 staff members is employed through our partner organizations across various provinces to support the advancement of women's education.

5. Strategy, Goals, & Objectives

RT was founded by women's rights activist Rahela Sidiqi in response to the significant challenges faced by educated women in Afghanistan. The Trust's mission is to promote and advance the education of talented and rural Afghan women through the provision of financial assistance, mentorship, and broader support initiatives.

In 2023, RT revised the three-year strategic plan centered on four key objectives:

- Expanding networks of educated women to contribute actively to Afghanistan's national development.
- Engaging the Afghan diaspora and British allies in efforts supporting Afghanistan's reconstruction and development process.
- Advocating for sustained international support for the education of Afghan women and girls.
- Strengthening RT's institutional capacity to ensure it remains a resilient and impactful organization.

Looking ahead, the Board of Trustees intends to explore the potential expansion of RT's activities into Afghanistan's neighboring countries as part of the organization's forthcoming three-year strategic plan. The Trustees also affirm that, in making decisions where relevant, they have duly considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

6. Yearly Progress on Scholar Support Initiatives

Despite severe restrictions on female education in Afghanistan, RT continues to empower Afghan girls and women through higher education scholarships, secondary school programs, and tailored coaching and mentoring. Over the past year, graduates and current scholars have excelled academically while leading impactful community initiatives, from literacy and vocational training to refugee support. With strong partnerships in Afghanistan and the UK, RT is fostering education, leadership, and solidarity across borders.

6.1. Higher Education Scholarships

Amidst ongoing restrictions on female education in Afghanistan—including the nationwide school ban imposed in 2022 and the closure of women's health science institutes in 2024—RT continues to support many scholars pursuing degrees across various academic disciplines. Over the past year, 12 scholars have successfully graduated in fields such as Law, Nursing, Business Administration, and Computer Science. The majority of the graduates are now employed remotely with different organizations, including RT. Currently 21 scholars are pursuing their higher education online in different fields. Despite these challenges, RT scholars have remained committed to their studies while also providing vital educational and starting community business support to those most affected by the bans.

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

6.1.1. University Scholars' Academic and Community Contributions:

Scholars from Kandahar, Goharshad, Helmand and Women Online University demonstrated strong academic performance while engaging in volunteer teaching and administrative roles.

Highlights include:

- Completion of Cambridge English courses, mobile application development, and business administration classes.
- Voluntary instruction in literacy, mathematics, IT, and religious studies to marginalized women and children.
- Leadership in student coordination, class management, and exam organization.
- Launch of vocational workshops, including tailoring and digital skills (e.g., Microsoft Word) for refugee women in Iran.

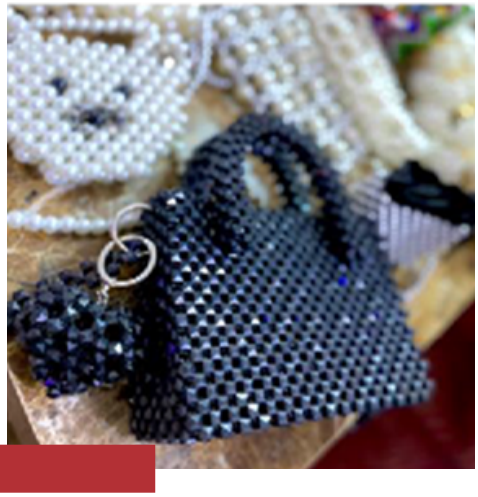
In Kandahar, students such as Zubaida Azad (Z. A.) and Sabera Nasery (S. N.) balanced their university coursework with professional development activities, including mobile application design and project management.
In Herat, Sahiba Adel (S. A.) successfully launched and managed a literacy and sewing program for women, equipping them with essential life skills and vocational training. Additionally, scholars like Shahla Hamidi (S. H.) implemented structured digital literacy training programs for Afghan refugee girls, helping them build practical computer skills and enhance their employment prospects.

a. Helmand Scholars' Community Engagement:

In Helmand, six RT scholars responded to the education ban by engaging in hands-on medical training at Fatima Bayat and Malika Suraya Hospitals while delivering home-based schooling to girls deprived of formal education. These scholars also completed online medical and English language courses. Activities included:

- Teaching literacy, science, English, and vocational skills to over 80 girls.
- Volunteering in hospitals and schools.
- Completing certified online programs in ultrasound, prescription writing, diagnostics, and English.

b. Goharshad Scholars' Community Engagement: Small Business and Educational Initiatives



Photos of clothing, hijabs, and decorative products by scholars' small business cooperatives

In 2025, RT selected five new university scholars in Kandahar through combined educational and entrepreneurial initiatives, enabling them to strengthen their skills and contribute to their communities.

- **Scholarships and Digital Access:**

Each scholar was awarded a scholarship after a transparent selection process, including interviews and online examinations. To support their education, laptops and smartphones were provided, ensuring access to essential resources and continuity of online learning.

- **Formation of Business Groups:**

In line with the Rahela Model of Mentoring, the scholars established a total of 15 small business cooperatives. Activities included beadwork, embroidery, tailoring, hijab-making, painting, wood engraving, and other handicrafts. Several groups received seed capital and formally launched their businesses.

- **Production and Income Generation:**

Groups that received financial support successfully began producing items such as clothing, hijabs, and decorative products. Sales have already been achieved, with profits reinvested into further business activities. Other groups remain in the product preparation phase, demonstrating strong potential for future growth.

- **Capacity Building and Impact:**

Participation in these initiatives has strengthened managerial, teamwork, and entrepreneurial skills among the scholars. The experience has increased confidence, fostered innovation, and built a practical link between education and business development.

Future Outlook:

Opportunities have been identified to further expand impact by:

- Reaching more girls from diverse communities.
- Providing specialized training in business, management, and accounting.
- Facilitating workshops, seminars, and mentorship with successful entrepreneurs.
- Creating market opportunities through participation in exhibitions and connections with national and international partners.

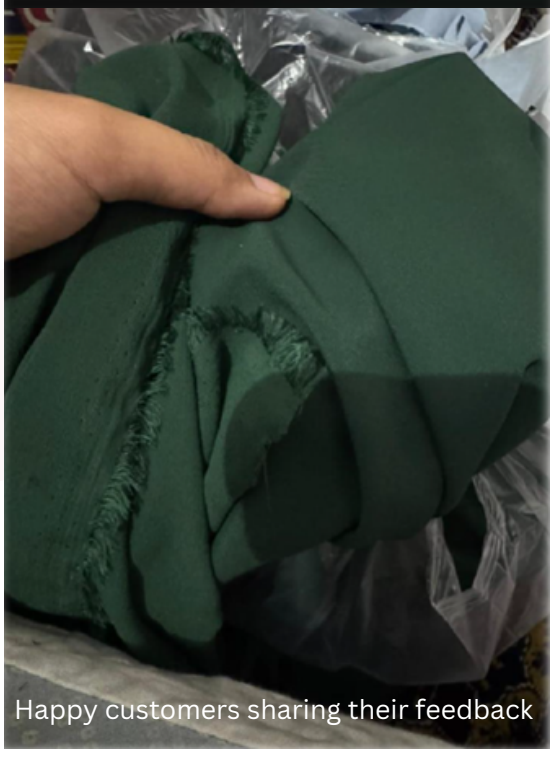
These initiatives demonstrate that RT's support extends beyond scholarships, laying the foundation for long-term empowerment. By combining education with entrepreneurship, scholars are building sustainable livelihoods while inspiring pathways for other young women in their communities.

c. Women Online Scholars' Community Engagement:

RT scholars have initiated small-scale entrepreneurial projects to build self-reliance and strengthen their economic participation.
Here are a few reports on the small business run by scholars:

Report by Hadisa Farhad (HF)

Our business group, called Arzan Kharid ("Affordable Purchase"), started its work in March. After covering expenses, our net monthly profit is around 20–25,000 AFN (approx $350). Each month, compared to the last five months, our sales have gradually increased, especially in selling Arabic-style hijabs such as jilbabs etc.
Each of the five members of cooperative initially invested about $10, which has now grown to between $80–100, this kind of profit though varied from one to another.
At the beginning, due to lack of experience, we faced many challenges, but with time our team's efforts improved. Our sales are fully online, which is easier as we don't need to pay shop rent. Our main trade is hijabs, and it has grown much more than we expected in a short time.
The skills we learned from RT—honesty, trust, perseverance, and hard work—were very effective. We now plan to expand by building a brand and eventually moving into bulk/wholesale sales. With the effort of our team, I am confident we will achieve more success.
My advice to other students who want to start small businesses is to begin with confidence, perseverance, and honesty, to study the market carefully, and to build customer trust for better sales.


Happy customers sharing their feedback

Report by Qaderdana Gul Jaber (QGJ)

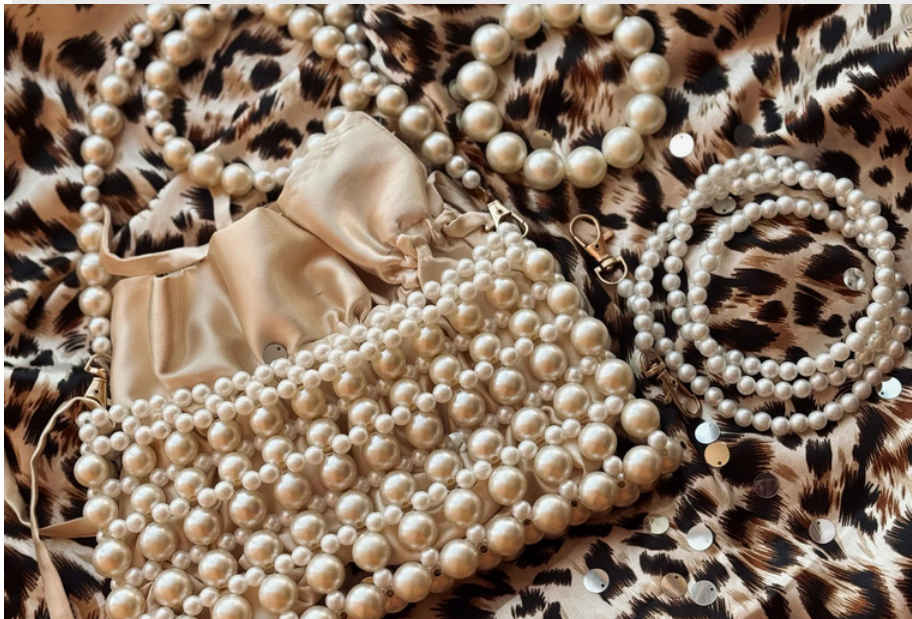
Since I started my business, despite many restrictions, I have worked hard with my Cooperative members to continue and succeed. Living in a remote area, we are under constant monitoring and are not allowed to freely conduct activities, but we continue our efforts with hope.

Our main goal is to strengthen our economic situation and support other girls and peers so that together we can adapt to conditions and continue this process.

We faced many challenges, but so far, we have managed to move forward. On average, our monthly profit has been modest—80 AFN, 100 AFN, and sometimes up to 400 AFN—altogether about 500 AFN. We divide this equally among team members. Currently, we have decided to reinvest the profits into our project to complete our sewing equipment, which is still partly lacking.

Due to weak economic conditions, this has been very difficult and time-consuming, but we remain hopeful that with persistence our efforts will eventually bear fruit and help us overcome these hard times.

Photos of Qaderdana Gul Jaber at her small business cooperative production.



d. Kandahar Scholars' Community Engagement:

Kandahar Province – Chicken Production Cooperative

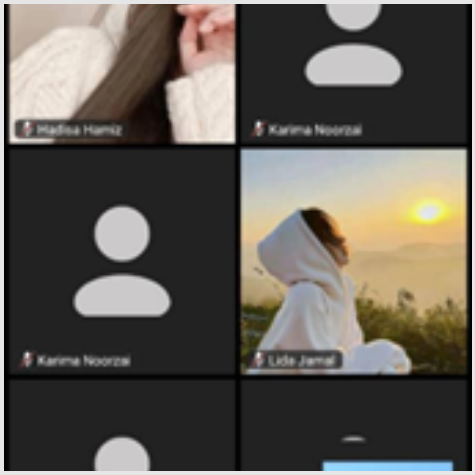
Sabria Naser Khail (SNK)
She started her business on 1 July 2025.
In the past month, her small poultry business progressed successfully. She collected 20 eggs in one month and sold them at 12 AFN each, earning a total of 240 AFN. Unfortunately, the chickens contracted a disease that affected their blood. Treatment and shelter maintenance cost 150 AFN, leaving a net profit of 90 AFN this month. At present, further investment is on hold until the chickens recover.

Shabnam Sultani (SS)
She started her business on 1 July 2025.
Within the past month, she collected 15 eggs and sold them at 11 AFN each, generating 165 AFN. Part of the income has been set aside for purchasing feed to ensure continuous care and sustainability of her poultry business.

Natarsia Nadim (NN)
She started her business on 1 July 2025.
Over the past month, she produced 50 henna bangles. Each bangle set is priced at 50 AFN. So far, she has sold 10 of them, earning 500 AFN. The henna bangles vary in design and price, and while 10 have been sold, the remaining stock is available for future sales.

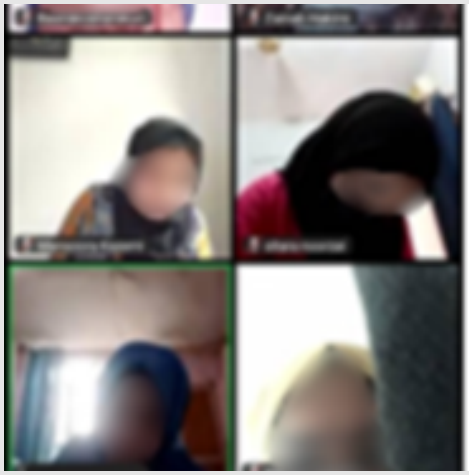
6.2. Rahela Model School Scholarships

RT is proud to announce significant progress in advancing secondary education opportunities for Afghan girls. Through generous funding from the Malala Fund, we have launched an innovative online learning program that provides access to high-quality education for girls who have been excluded from formal schooling due to the ongoing restrictions in Afghanistan. In June, Rahela Model School officially began operations.
The recruitment of teachers and teacher trainers began in May with the goal of elevating the quality of secondary education and ensuring that students receive high-quality instruction. Following an open call for applications, a thorough shortlisting process was conducted, along with written and spoken examinations. As a result, 12 outstanding teachers and teacher trainers were successfully recruited. In addition, induction mentoring conducted by RT director about policy, procedure and responsibilities of teacher and teacher trainers about standard quality of education.



Student recruitment for Grade 11 also commenced shortly thereafter. After announcing the opportunity and receiving more than 100 applications, 100 applicants shortlist was created, and candidates underwent both written and oral examinations. In addition, previous school transcripts were carefully reviewed. Ultimately, 50 students were selected to join the program.

To support their participation in online learning, each scholar was provided with a mobile phone and an internet package, ensuring that technological barriers do not hinder their educational journey.



Currently, 100 Afghan Model school scholars are enrolled in Rahela Model School online classes, demonstrating outstanding dedication and academic excellence. The mid-term and final exam results have been extremely encouraging, reflecting the scholars' resilience and commitment to their education despite the severe challenges they face. Grade 11 students were promoted to Grade 12, and their transcripts and graduation certificates have been issued. The provision of their diplomas is currently in process.

6.2. Rahela Model School Scholarships

During distribution of mobile phones

Rahela Model School curriculum is designed to be comprehensive, covering key subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, alongside life skills training that empowers students to think critically and engage actively in their community activities. Classes are delivered online by qualified instructors with experience in remote education, and scholars receive continuous academic mentoring and psychosocial support.

Beyond academic instruction, the program fosters a strong sense of community and solidarity among students through virtual group discussions, workshops, and extracurricular activities, ensuring that learning extends beyond textbooks and into real-world empowerment.

This initiative is a vital step toward ensuring that Afghan girls can continue their education, build brighter futures, and eventually lead and contribute to rebuilding a peaceful and equitable Afghanistan. We are deeply inspired by the courage and determination shown by these young women and remain committed to expanding and sustaining these educational opportunities in the years ahead.

In February, the annual exams for the 11th-grade students at Rahela Model School were held. The results were announced in an official meeting, and certificates were awarded to the students with A+ grades.

Distributed certificate for top scholars

HERE ARE A FEW STORIES FROM RT CURRENT SCHOLARS:

ONE TEACHER'S STORY: MASUMA SABIR (MS) RAHELA MODEL SCHOOL TEACHER

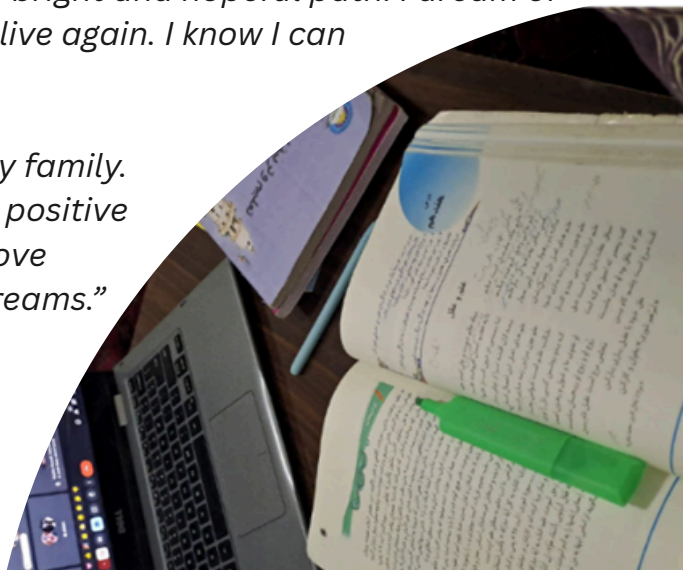
"Anyone who opens the door of a school closes a prison.
A school is more than a place for learning; it is a sanctuary where the soul grows, and dreams take root.
I have witnessed the transformation education brings, especially for the young girls of our homeland. There was a time when schools thrived, filled with the laughter and aspirations of countless Afghan girls. Each day, they walked toward their dreams, dreams that expanded and soared with every lesson learned.
Amid this darkness, a beacon of hope emerged. Ms. Rahela Sidiqi, a courageous and visionary woman, fought tirelessly from afar to reignite the flames of education. Through her efforts, countless girls were given a chance to dream again, to learn, and to grow.
I am honored to be part of Rahela Trust's mission, a collective effort to bring education to those who have been deprived of it. As a teacher, I see this as both a national duty and a sacred responsibility.

A STUDENT AT RAHELA MODEL SCHOOL WRITES...

Shahla Baha (SB) – 11th Grade Student at Rahela Model School

"For three years, my life passed under the shadow of despair. Every day without school and learning darkened my world further. But this year, with the arrival of an extraordinary, patriotic, and capable woman into my life, I found a new light. The Rahela School gave me the opportunity to return to the world of knowledge and rekindle my hope for the future.
Now, every day, I eagerly sit down to learn, feeling that my life has regained its meaning. Each lesson and every word I learn brings me closer to a new life. This happiness and motivation remind me that no matter how difficult the circumstances are, there is always a way to improve.
I am no longer alone; I am walking with others on a bright and hopeful path. I dream of a brighter future, and my aspirations have come alive again. I know I can achieve my goals and build a new world.

This change is not only evident in me but also in my family. My happiness has touched their lives too, and this positive energy has impacted our household. Now, I can move forward with greater confidence and pursue my dreams."



6.3. RT staff and scholars' Coaching & Mentoring Stories and Community-Based Coaching and Mentoring

Mentoring is central to RT's work, supporting scholars' academic, professional, and personal growth through the Rahela Mentoring Model (RMM). Delivered by Rahela Sidiqi and national, provincial, and community mentors, the approach remains flexible and responsive to scholars' evolving needs.

Alongside individual mentoring, RT promotes peer co-mentoring to strengthen leadership, resilience, and community support, while staff also engage in ongoing coaching to build internal capacity and foster continuous learning.

a. Coaching and Mentoring by Rahela Sidiqi

The RMM was shared with national mentors, followed by orientation training to support effective implementation. Coaching and mentoring were provided to recruited teachers, trainers, scholars, and RT staff at all levels to strengthen role clarity, performance, and accountability, while reinforcing core RMM principles of honesty, transparency, and responsible governance.

In parallel, Rahela Sidiqi led resilience-focused mentoring, particularly supporting the establishment of cooperatives. These sessions strengthened capacity across national, provincial, and community levels and contributed to the development of practical policies for production, marketing, governance, and cooperative growth.

b. Coaching and Mentoring in Afghanistan

The RMM was used to filter down the coaching and mentoring programme to our scholars through our National Coordinator, and National and Provincial mentors. We also train our scholars as community mentors – they play a vital role in supporting younger students and peers. Through regular coaching and mentoring, they provide guidance on academic progress, personal development, and community service. These efforts not only strengthen the confidence and skills of mentees but also promote a culture of peer learning, mutual support, and leadership development within the community.

THERE ARE COUNTLESS STORIES FROM THE COMMUNITY, SCHOLARS, GRASSROOTS TEAMS, AND THE EXECUTIVE TEAM. HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RT EXECUTIVE TEAM AND SCHOLARS:

NARGIS SADIQ, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

"Key skills I gained from my coach and mentor, Mrs. Rahela Sidiqi, include effective communication, conflict resolution, strategic planning, and empowering leadership. Professionally, I applied these skills by streamlining communication channels between RT scholars and mentors, ensuring transparency and efficiency. Personally, I applied these skills to improve problem-solving in high-pressure situations and lead initiatives that promote women's education and employment with patience and dedication."

FARAHNAZ MAHSHEED, ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

"Working with Rahela Trust has built my confidence in applying my knowledge in practice while allowing me to learn more from Mrs. Sidiqi. She provides clear guidance, helping me understand what needs to be done to accomplish my duties in a result-based approach. Through her mentoring, I have learned that the only force capable of bringing positive change to a community is the spirit of solidarity. It means recognizing our shared humanity and embracing our social responsibilities, rather than living only for ourselves.

SOFIA HAKIMI, UK

"I have learned effective communication, strategic planning, and conflict resolution. For example, I applied strategic planning skills to successfully organize a community event that addressed local issues. During the Shab Yalda celebration in Birmingham, we had a wonderful event that showcased our community's vibrant culture and spirit. At the end of the event, we discussed the future plans of the Rahela Trust. The community members highlighted some challenges, such as the lack of a proper place to celebrate our events, with the venues being too costly. Additionally, there is a need for a budget to support online classes for both local and Afghanistan-based participants. Addressing these issues is crucial for the continued growth and engagement of our community."

6.4. GRADUATED SCHOLARS

RT continues to actively support all 23 of its graduates, fostering ongoing engagement through online platforms and structured mentoring sessions that offer both practical advice and emotional guidance. Notably, one graduate—now serving as a trauma-release counselor—is providing vital psychosocial support to women in her community as well as to current scholars of the Trust.

HERE ARE A FEW STORIES FROM RT GRADUATE SCHOLARS:

A CURRENT SCHOLAR'S STORY: NASTARAN MORADI'S (NM) PATH TO WELLNESS

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH NUTRITION FOR WOMEN

I am a recent graduate scholar of Rahela Trust, but my passion is to continue to give back to my community. My news for you is that I have launched a nutrition program that perfectly captures the essence of the Rahela circle, where learning, skill-sharing, and community-building converge. This initiative equips women and girls with vital nutrition knowledge, empowering breastfeeding mothers to prevent malnutrition in their children."

Despite the immense challenges facing the women's movement in Afghanistan, Nastaran opened her doors to other women, offering them a safe space to learn.

Through six engaging sessions, Nastaran sparked a wave of excitement and awareness, leaving a lasting mark on the community's health. Her work highlights the transformative power of education, demonstrating how Rahela Trust's commitment to knowledge-sharing is creating stronger, healthier futures for all.

6.5. MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

In recognition of the escalating mental health challenges confronting Afghan women and youth, RT has initiated a series of targeted programs aimed at promoting emotional well-being.

Through the delivery of virtual workshops, the establishment of peer support groups, and strategic partnerships with mental health professionals, the Trust seeks to provide comprehensive psychosocial support to Afghan students experiencing the profound impacts of trauma, loss, and displacement.

Our overarching objective is to ensure that Afghan women are not only academically empowered but also equipped with the emotional resilience necessary to navigate future adversities and contribute meaningfully to the reconstruction of their communities.

During mental health counseling by RT counsel

A SUCCESS STORY FROM RT MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING: MASUMA AHMADI (MA): FINDING HOPE AND RESILIENCE

"I want to share my experience with Dr. Benazir Qutratmand the RT counselor; before reaching out to her, I was in a very difficult mental state. I faced many challenges and truly didn't know how to find a solution. I was scared, extremely stressed, and often felt angry. I had trouble remembering even simple things, sometimes I couldn't recall what I had done just ten minutes earlier. I had no focus on my studies and had forgotten much of what I had learned, along with other aspects of my life.

After connecting with Dr. Benazir Qutratmand, the RT counselor, I received incredible support. Her guidance helped me transform from a distressed and anxious person into someone calmer and more focused. These sessions were extremely beneficial. I was able to find myself, reduce my stress, and realize that things could get better. They gave me new motivation and hope, allowing me to begin a fresh chapter in my life.

I truly felt lost and unsure if I could stand on my own again, but now I feel much better. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Benazir Qutratmand, the RT counselor, for her invaluable support. These sessions significantly reduced my stress and helped me regain control over my life. I cannot thank her enough for the positive impact she has had on me."

6.6.UK COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

With thanks to the National Lottery Fund for investment in UK community empowerment; RT is delighted to announce the formation of key partnerships aimed at enhancing our community outreach and support initiatives.
These partnerships mark a significant step forward in our mission to support education and cultural integration for Afghan communities.

- Nottingham: we have partnered with the Karimia Islamic center and Ariana community cultural center to strengthen our local cultural and educational programs.
- London: we have built collaborations with six charitable community organizations, expanding our support network in the capital such as Nowruz & Eid Ramazan, Eid Qurban, Shab e Yalda or Long Night Fest and Mother Language Day celebrations.
- Coventry: a new partnership with Afghan community center will enable us to better serve the Afghan diaspora in Coventry.
- Afghanistan: our collaborations with partners universities will provide Afghan women with greater access to educational resources and opportunities.

6.7. ENGLISH AND FARSI LANGUAGE EDUCATION INITIATIVES

RT has continued its commitment to supporting Afghan women refugees in the United Kingdom and scholars in Afghanistan by providing access to high-quality online English language instruction. These initiatives have been instrumental in enhancing language proficiency and facilitating greater integration into British society.

Approximately 100 scholars successfully completed intermediate and advanced English language courses, acquiring essential communication skills critical for their academic progression and professional development. Advanced English language mentoring was delivered to displaced Afghan women and refugees through the voluntary contributions of British lecturers, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, focusing on improving participants' linguistic abilities and boosting their confidence.

In addition, beginner and intermediate English classes were conducted for RT scholars through a partnership with the University of Sheffield, offering tailored support according to participants' varying levels of language proficiency. Complementing these efforts, a group of 16 refugee women in the UK were taught beginner English by members of the Afghan diaspora, aiming to enhance their understanding of British culture and everyday life.

We our extremely grateful to the Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield for their continued support in the development of these English language programmes.

Further, a group of scholars based in Afghanistan received English instruction from a British diaspora volunteer, exemplifying a powerful model of community activism and cross-border solidarity.

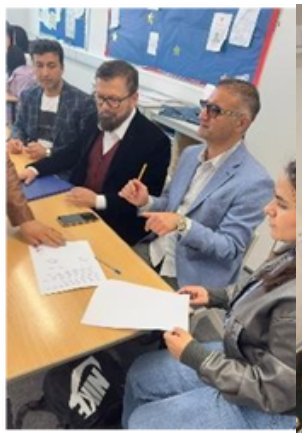
Building on these efforts, RT officially launched Coventry Language School in June 2024, significantly expanding its capacity to provide educational opportunities. Since its inception, the language school has enrolled 22 students, offering structured Persian language education to Afghan refugees in the UK.

RT Coventry Language School

Through the establishment of these language programs, RT has markedly strengthened the language skills of Afghan refugees, thereby facilitating smoother integration into British society. Moreover, these courses have served as an essential platform for educational advancement and professional empowerment, equipping participants with the competencies necessary to pursue further opportunities and actively engage within their new communities

in May 2024, RT launched Nottingham Language School with 42 students enrolled. This school focuses on improving language proficiency and promoting cultural integration.

Our two language schools in Nottingham and Coventry continue to thrive, thanks to National Lottery funding, supporting 64 students with the help of partners like Ariana and the Afghan Association.



RT Nottingham Language School

7. Yearly Progress on Diaspora Activities and Activism Support Services: Amplifying Afghan Women's Voices

7.1. Engaging the Diaspora

RT has significantly expanded its engagement with the Afghan diaspora, with the support of the National Lottery Fund, through initiatives such as the Diaspora Changemakers Network. These efforts are designed to foster stronger solidarity between Afghan communities in the UK and Afghanistan, while amplifying the voices of Afghan women on the global stage. A prime example of the Changemakers Network is the peer-mentoring program for scholars and youth in Afghanistan, which facilitates the enhancement of skills and the development of knowledge. The diaspora-related activities undertaken by RT include:

a. Nowruz & Eid Ramazan Celebration

In April 2024, RT hosted a vibrant Nowruz and Eid Ramazan celebration at Walworth Methodist Church in Southeast London. This well-attended event brought together approximately 300 community members and was the result of months of dedicated planning in collaboration with organizations such as Paiwand, Panjshir AID, Afghan Association, and Maulana Foundation. The celebration served as a significant cultural gathering, fostering connections within the Afghan diaspora and providing a space to honor and preserve their heritage.

Photos During RT Nowruz & Eid Ramazan Celebration

b. Eid Qurban Celebration

Eid Qurban Celebration in Nottingham: In June 2024, RT, in collaboration with the Ariana Cultural Community Centre, hosted a vibrant Eid Qurban celebration in Nottingham. The event brought together over 300 Afghan new refugees and diaspora members, providing a meaningful space to celebrate their heritage and strengthen community ties.
This celebration was made possible through the generous financial support of the Big Lottery Fund, which covered essential costs such as venue rental and cultural activities. The event not only fostered a strong sense of belonging but also encouraged intergenerational engagement in cultural preservation

c. Shab-e-Yalda Celebration

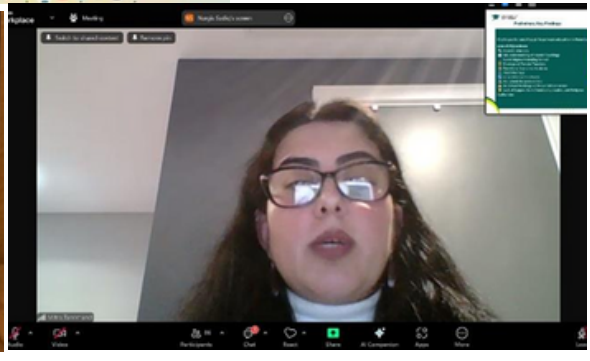
In December 2024, RT participated in the Shab-e-Yalda event in Birmingham, organized by the Amo Association. The gathering brought together over 80 participants, including women and children, to celebrate this culturally significant occasion.
The event provided a valuable platform for cultural exchange, as several guests from England expressed a keen interest in Afghan traditions. During the celebration, we introduced the mission and activities of RT, highlighting our ongoing initiatives. We also announced our upcoming event on March 9th and encouraged community contributions for Ramazani.

d. Mother Language Day Celebration

Organised in London in February, this event, held with the Afghan British and Hindu communities, emphasized the importance of native languages, fostering a sense of pride and cultural identity among participants. Around 200 people participated in this event.

e. Annual Lecture

The Annual Lecture held in January 2025 brought together 100 virtual participants, including two PhD candidates, for a discussion on “Education for Women: The Impact of Gender Apartheid on Women’s Education.”



h. RT Afghan Diaspora Annual Academic Conference

RT held its 3rd Afghan-Diaspora Annual Academic Conference on 2 April 2025 in London, gathering 50 in-person and 46 online participants in a hybrid cultural and academic setting. The conference focused on "The Multiple Impacts of the Current Situation on Afghan Women's Lives," covering themes of Women's Peace and Security, Education, Health, Media challenges, intersectionality, and pathways forward.

This year's event also marked the 10th anniversary of Rahela Trust, celebrating a decade of advancing Afghan women's education and empowerment. A special award was presented to Ms. Khadija Yawari for her outstanding contributions.

The programme featured four thematic panels—Education, Women Peace and Security, Health, and Media—each with four expert speakers sharing research, success stories, and insights, followed by interactive discussions.

The conference brought together academics, practitioners, and advocates from around the world to amplify Afghan women's voices, exchange innovative strategies, and strengthen collective efforts toward justice, resilience, and empowerment.

A few glimpses from the RT Annual Academic Conference from Panel Speakers.

7.2. Activism Support Services

During Gender Apartheid Workshop

RT Director delivering speech at Malala Fund Champion of the International Rule of Law Award by the American Society of International Law (ASIL) ceremony

All-Afghan Women Summit in Albania

RT has strengthened its engagement with the Afghan diaspora, building connections between Afghan women and global networks. Through the Diaspora Changemakers Network, we have fostered solidarity between Afghans in the UK and Afghanistan, offering a platform for women to share experiences and learn from global leaders.

In March, Rahela was invited by Annie Lennox's charity The Circle to take the stage for the International Women's Day Reception at Westminster.

Founding Director Rahela Sidiqi has played a key role in this effort, representing Afghan women in international conferences and creating opportunities for their voices to be heard in leadership, activism, and gender equality. She also facilitated the Gender Apartheid Workshop for the Civic Engagement Project on 12/06/2024.

On 9 October 2024, the Malala Fund received the Champion of the International Rule of Law Award from ASIL for its work on girls' education and its stance against gender apartheid in Afghanistan. Rahela delivered a powerful speech outlining the severe impact of Taliban policies on Afghan girls, including barriers to education, forced marriages, abuse, and rising suicide cases.
She highlighted RT's continued efforts to provide online and secret in-person education, describing Afghan girls as "shining lights" for the country's future. Rahela urged the international community to support Afghan women-led organizations and to take meaningful action to empower Afghan girls during this critical period.

In September, Rahela participated in the All-Afghan Women Summit in Albania, where over 130 Afghan women gathered to stand up against the ongoing violations of women's rights in Afghanistan. The summit focused on uniting their voices, creating strategies to address the humanitarian crisis, and demanding global recognition of gender apartheid.

7.2. Activism Support Services

A few glimpses from Raise Your Pen for Her Campaign

During Spain Gathering

All-Afghan Women Summit in Albania

Raise Your Pen for Her Campaign

In November 2024, Rahela Trust launched the Raise Your Pen For Her campaign as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Through social media, pens were raised from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Europe, and the United States, carrying messages of solidarity and hope.

In December, Afghan women activists, international envoys, UN representatives, and Spanish civil society convened in Madrid for the landmark "Hear Us: Catalyzing Political Space and Accountability for Afghan Women" conference.
Rahela Sidiqi delivered an inspiring speech emphasizing unity and action:
“Mobilizing women and uniting them is truly valuable. She said this discussion is like striking two stones together to create a fire, and that fire brings light to the darkness. That is why I can see the light of this engagement, discussion and solidarity.” She urges the government of Spain to act as an ambassador of Afghan women among his other state members, stakeholders and partners, amplifying our voices. And she had a clear message to the international community:
“Please do not tell us what to do. Ask what we can do.”

On March 3rd, Rahela Sidiqi, founder of Rahela Trust, was invited by Circle partner and took the stage at Westminster for the International Women’s Day Parliamentary Reception.
Rahela Sidiqi:
"My feminist advocacy began in childhood when I insisted to my father, ‘I am your daughter, not your son,’ after he called me his son. From grassroots movements to policy levels, my mission of feminism has always guided me.
Today, as Afghanistan is called a prison for women, I urge the world to invest in their education, leadership, and economic empowerment—because Afghanistan needs queens, women prime ministers, and women cabinet members to lead the country, provide effective and efficient services, and address the current crisis.”

8. With grateful thanks

The Trustees of RT would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following individuals and organizations:

- UK Executive Team:
- Rahela Sidiqi Founding Director
- Dr. Nargis Sadiq, Development Officer
- Ziarmal Gharghasht IT Officer
- Safia Nasrat Admin Officer
- Farahnaz Mahsheed, Communication Officer
- Ali Ahmad Barat, Finance Officer
- Sofia Hakimi, Community Engagement Officer
- Afghanistan Operation Team

Thank you to all the donors who provided grants for the support of women's education and for our events. Thank you to all the foundations, trusts and other organizations who have given grants this year:

Donors:

- Malala Fund
- The Circle
- National Lottery Fund
- Farthing Trust

Partner Universities and Organisations:

- Sheffield University
- Cambridge University
- Civic Engagement Project
- Omid International
- Ariana, Coventry, Amo Community Centers

And a special thank you to all our regular donors from the diaspora and British community, whose continuing support during difficult times has allowed us to continue supporting our scholars.

Ambassadors of Support:

- Asif Noorzai
- Soman Shokori
- Rohela Maarige
- Dr. Homira Rezai
- Tahmina Salik
- Sanga Siddiqi
- Zahra Mangal
- Ameena Mangal

We sincerely thank you for your ongoing support in our mission to advance women's rights and expand access to higher education and secondary education in Afghanistan.

9.1. Scholarships

Looking ahead to the 2025–2026 academic year, RT will continue to prioritize the provision of scholarships across multiple disciplines for both secondary school and university-level scholars. In alignment with our commitment to equitable access to education, based on availability of resources. This initiative will be supported by a network of qualified educators drawn from the Afghan diaspora, ensuring cultural relevance and academic excellence. Additionally, we will enhance our mentoring framework by expanding collaboration with strategic partners such as The Circle NGO and trauma relief specialists, aiming to provide more holistic psychosocial and academic support to our students. As part of our strategic review, the Board of Trustees will also assess the broader educational landscape for young Afghan women residing in neighboring countries, with the goal of identifying potential areas for intervention and support.

9.2. Expanding our programmes

We are pleased to acknowledge and express our sincere gratitude for the confirmation of major grants that have significantly advanced our mission this year and will continue to do so in the coming year. A renewed grant from the Malala Fund has enabled RT to sustain its high-quality online education and mentorship programs, specifically designed to support Afghan girls in completing their final years of secondary education under restrictive conditions. This vital support will continue into the next year.

In addition, a new grant from the National Lottery has allowed us to expand our engagement with the Afghan diaspora in the United Kingdom—promoting community cohesion, cultural preservation, and collaborative initiatives that reinforce our educational and empowerment goals. This work will also continue in the year ahead.

9.3. Strengthening the Organization

RT will prioritize the expansion of its fundraising strategies to enhance the organization's operational capacity and institutional resilience. This strategic focus aims to ensure the sustainability and scalability of our educational programs, enabling us to continue delivering critical support to Afghan women and girls amid an increasingly restrictive and challenging socio-political environment.

10. Financial Statements

RAHELA TRUST
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2025 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	12 Months 31st March 2024 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
Receipts							
Community Donations:	2						
British Community Donations		7,902	-	7,902	7,694	1,200	8,894
Afghan Diaspora Community Donations		4,137	-	4,137	4,362	-	4,362
Restricted Donations from Sponsors		4,040	-	4,040	4,040	-	4,040
Unrestricted Donations		-	160	160	-	5,073	5,073
							-
Grants:	3						-
The Circle		-	6,000	6,000	10,000	-	10,000
Amanat		-	-	-	6,794	-	6,794
Big Give		-	-	-	10,053	-	10,053
The Farthing Trust		-	10,000	10,000	-	5,000	5,000
V-Day		-	-	-	-	3,874	3,874
Malala Fund		97,153	-	97,153	-	-	-
The National Lottery		45,000	-	45,000	-	-	-
							-
Gift Aid:	4						-
HMRC Charities		-	1,594	1,594	-	1,961	1,961
							-
Events and Conferences:							-
Events		-	-	-	975	-	975
Total income		158,232	17,754	175,986	43,918	17,108	61,026
Deduct:							
Direct Costs:							
Scholarship Costs	5	24,820	-	24,820	19,887	-	19,887
Rahela School costs		43,471	-	43,471	-	-	-
UK diaspora events & activities		14,075	-	14,075	1,976	-	1,976
Rahela Trust mentoring manual		11,210	-	11,210	-	-	-
Total Scholarship Costs		(93,576)	-	(93,576)	(21,863)	-	(21,863)

10. Financial Statements

Other Direct Costs:							
Volunteer expenses		-	-	-	-	2,273	2,273
Staff Costs		34,448	-	34,448	14,771	-	14,771
Consultants & contractors		19,457	-	19,457	-	-	-
Partner fees		4,150	-	4,150	-	-	-
Communications		2,217	-	2,217	-	2,506	2,506
Travel expenses		744	-	744	-	-	-
Total Other Direct Costs		(61,016)	-	(61,016)	(14,771)	(4,779)	(19,549)
Indirect Costs:							
Management and adminitration	6	-	3,733	3,733	-	4,448	4,448
Legal and Professional		-	1,152	1,152	-	720	720
Bank charges		-	361	361	-	164	164
Depreciation		-	138	138	-	76	76
Total Indirect Costs		-	(5,384)	(5,384)	-	(5,408)	(5,408)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the Year				**16,010**			**14,205**

RAHELA TRUST
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Income
All income is recognized in the Statement of Financial Activities once received.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognised as expenditure on a cash basis.

Tangible fixed assets
Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures, fittings & equipment - 15% on reducing balance

Taxation
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Charity is a going concern and further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

10. Financial Statements

RAHELA TRUST
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2025 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	12 Months 31st March 2024 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
FIXED ASSETS							
Tangible Assets	8	-	-	183	-	-	259
CURRENT ASSETS							
Bank		36,464	28,369	64,833	32,824	15,999	48,823
		36,464	28,369	64,833	32,824	15,999	48,823
TOTAL ASSETS				65,016			49,082
TOTAL NET ASSETS				**65,016**			**49,082**
FUNDS							
Restricted funds		36,464	-	36,464	32,824	-	32,824
Unrestricted funds		-	28,552	28,552	-	16,258	16,258
		36,464	28,552	65,016	32,824	16,258	49,082
TOTAL FUNDS				**65,016**			**49,082**
				-			-

2. General Donations

Donations were received from community sources, including British Community Donations (£7,902), Afghan Diaspora Community Donations (£4,137), and Restricted Donations from Sponsors (£4,040). These funds were restricted for use on university scholarships and mentorships. Unrestricted donations amounted to £160.

3. Gift Aid

Gift Aid amounting to £1,594 was received by HMRC and it is unrestricted in nature.

4. Grants

Some grants are restricted in nature and are made to support the provision of university scholarships, school costs and mentorships to underprivileged young women. The National Lottery grant provides for activities run in the UK to engage the Afghan diaspora.
For the Year ended 31.03.2025, Grants were received from the following sources:

The Circle	6,000
The Farthing Trust	10,000
Malala Fund	97,153
The National Lottery	45,000

Rahela Trust transferred £93,576 in this reporting period. . These payments were made for university and school costs in Afghanistan and for UK diaspora activities.

6. Volunteer Expenses

These include the costs incurred by the volunteers for the purpose of fund raising at charity events and conferences.

7. Management and Administration

These costs are administrative in nature and include accounts and office costs.

8. Tangible Assets

These consists of two printers and a computer

Donate or Contact Us

www.rahelatrust.org

info@rahelatrust.org

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

Rahela Trust for Afghan women's education

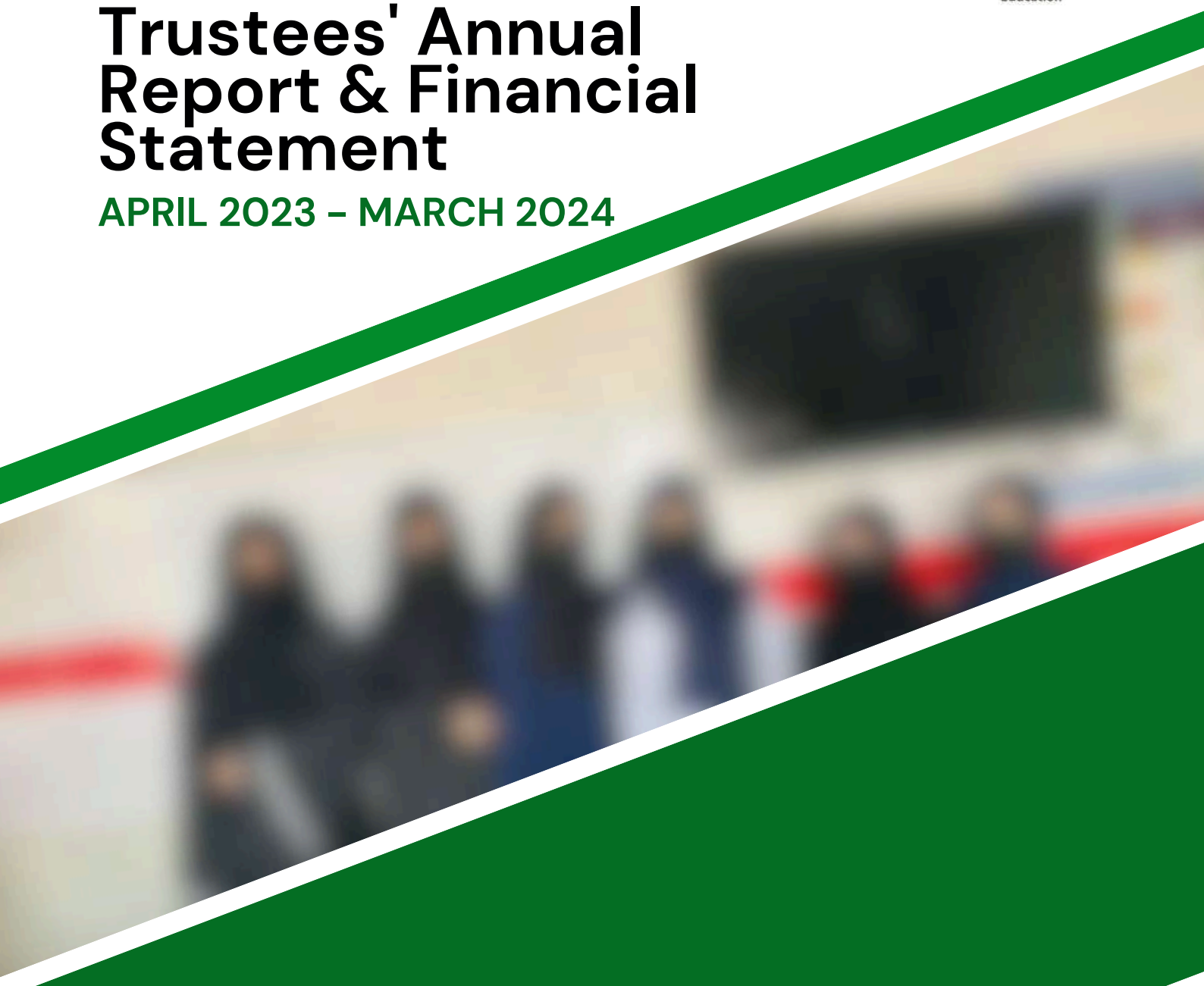
England & Wales - Charity number 1165763

Accounts

Rahela Trust

Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statement

APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024



Investing in Afghan Women through Sustainable Education

CHARITY NUMBER: 1165763
+44(0)20 3718 8185
WWW.RAHELATRUST.ORG
INFO@RAHELATRUST.ORG

Table of Contents

Our Vision, Mission, & Values 03

Key Messages 04

Legal & Administrative Details 06

Structure, Governance, & Core Values 07

Strategy, Goals, & Objectives 08

Our Work This Year 09

Engaging the Diaspora 17

With Grateful Thanks 22

The Future 23

Financial Statements 24

Contact Us 29

1. Our Mission, Vision, & Values

1.1. Mission:

Rahela Trust is dedicated to providing university and secondary school scholarships, mentorship, and access to both local and global professional networks to disadvantaged and talented Afghan women from rural areas. These women are committed to building a future where women are active participants and leaders in society.

1.2.Vision:

We envision a society where the rights of women are respected, and women are fully engaged in the social, political, and economic life of Afghanistan. By growing a community of educated women, Rahela Trust is contributing to a brighter future for all women in Afghanistan.

1.3.Values:

Quality Scholarships: Delivering a high-quality scholarship program.
Transparency: Ensuring open, detailed, and honest reporting on all activities.
Results-Based Achievement: Managing the scholarship program with a focus on results.
Effective Mobilization: Streamlining resources to reduce delays and improve efficiency.

2. Key Messages

Samantha Rennie
Chairperson of Rahela Trust

Chair's Message:

As one of our scholars writes in this report: "Education is the only weapon we have against repression" and against the odds, this year Rahela Trust reached the milestone of 100 scholars supported to date – a key target within our 2020-25 Strategic Plan.

This was made possible by bold and generous donors who bucked the trend of those turning away from Afghanistan. The Circle and Farthing Trust joined us this year, new and existing British allies demonstrated their solidarity either directly or through our Scholarship Circle, and through crowdfunding an impressive Big Give gift. Sadly, Amanat made their final gift, yet both the Big Lottery Community Fund and Malala Fund have stepped up, offering major grants at the year-end. Trustees are enormously grateful to them all.

Good progress was made on other strategic goals this year too: greater engagement with the diaspora, a louder voice on the international stage, and stronger internal systems and structures. All the work described in the report was led by our Director, Rahela Sidiqi, whose astonishing capacity to keep going in the face of crushing oppression of her Afghan sisters is an inspiration to all who meet and work with her.

Rahela was supported by Mollie Tant in the role of Development Officer for most of this year, and we're grateful for her contribution as the Trust's first paid worker. As Mollie moved on, we were delighted to welcome Nargis Sadiq to the role.

With two important institutional donors on board, strong foundations now built, and agile programmes being developed in-country, the end of the year was a good time for me to hand on the baton. Marika Theros brings local expertise and academic excellence to the role of new Chair. I want to thank her and other trustees for sharing their time and expertise with Rahela Trust, and for their support to me as Chair over the past three years.

Finally, the courage and tenacity of Rahela Trust scholars - who risk everything to educate themselves and girls in their neighbourhoods or villages - should be a lesson to us all. In an increasingly indifferent international community, they are beacons of hope that can light up a future for Afghan women. Rahela Trust is one of the only NGOs still able to reach them directly. If you are supporting us, thank you. If not, why not put your solidarity into action?

Founding Director's Message:

Rahela Sidiqi
Founding Director

The struggle and resistance of Afghan women continues. The new Vice Virtue Law of the Taliban worsens the situation for women in all aspects of their lives. The law mentions "a woman's voice should not be heard loudly". These increasingly repressive decrees are erasing women from the face of our society.

But our work continues. Using a practical and flexible approach, Rahela Trust has been expanding our support to secondary education and all our students are achieving high marks. Our scholars continue to deliver community education projects and peer mentoring and we support them through our weekly coaching, mentoring and morale building. I am proud to say that we have also established a system of mental health counselling through one of our graduated scholars who is a professional psychiatrist.

Although our contribution is only a drop in the ocean of problems, our higher education and secondary school scholarships build resilience for some of the millions of young women and girls who are lacking access to education. At Rahela Trust we also help graduated scholars build on their skills through partnering with other organisations. We want our scholars to become the agents of change.

Unfortunately, we will lose a generation of talented young women who are the true future leaders of Afghanistan if the investment from the international community does not increase in support of women's education. Afghan women-led organisations are vital to achieve this, using a flexible and adaptable approach to expand access to education through multiple routes.

I am really thankful to our scholars' parents, teachers, mentors and communities for their continual support to our scholars, who regularly achieve over 90% in their selected subjects. I am also grateful to all our partners, donors, grant providers and individual sponsors for their generous and continued support. We will carry on our fight!

3. Legal & Administrative Details

Trustees:

Samantha Rennie
Chairperson

Mel Bradley

Sear Sadat
Treasurer

Dr. MarikaTheros

Kamini Paul

Liz Mermin

Mel Whitney-Long

Rahela Sidiqi
Founding Director

Dr. Nargis Sadiq
Development Officer

Charity Number: 1165763
Registered Address: 6 Station Parade, Northolt Rd, South Harrow, Harrow HA2 8HB
Bankers: HSBC, 275 Greenwich High Road, Greenwich SE10 8NF
Independent Examiner: Sarah Walting, Monksilver GP Accounts

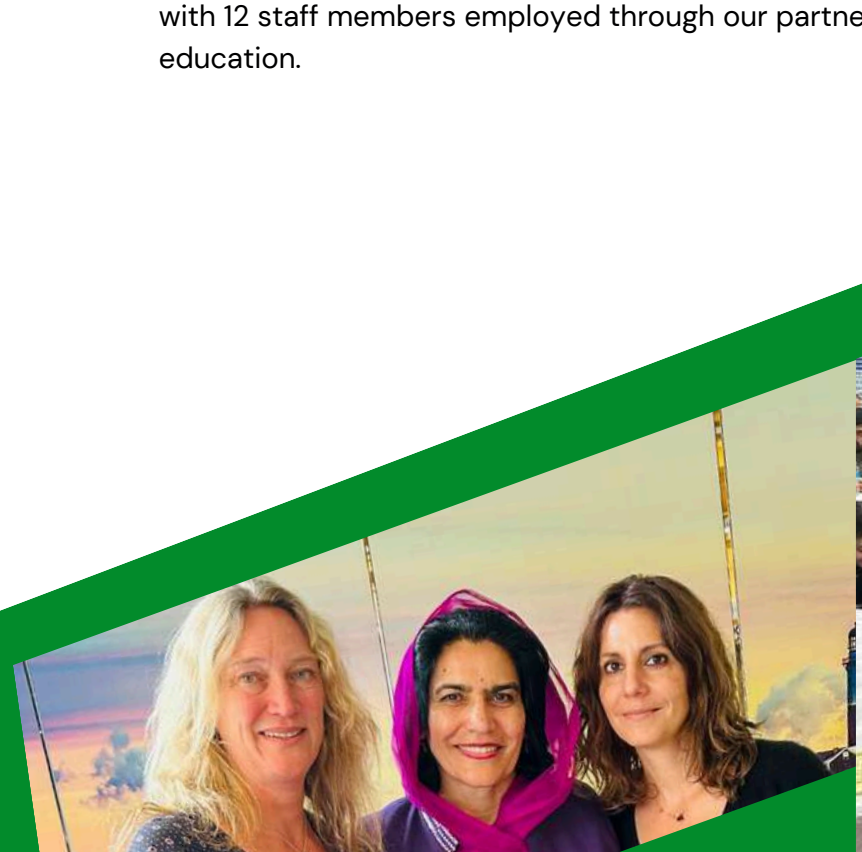
4. Structure, Governance, & Core Values

Rahela Trust is pleased to present its annual report and unaudited financial statements for the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The trust adheres to statutory requirements, its governing document, and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for Accounting and Reporting by Charities in accordance with FRS102.

Rahela Trust, registered as a UK charity on 26th February 2016, operates under its constitution, which was last amended on 3rd April 2021. The Board of Trustees responsible for the charity's governance, ensuring compliance with regulations, and overseeing strategic direction.
The board convenes quarterly to discuss strategy, assess risks, and review operations. All trustees volunteer their time, receiving no remuneration. Day-to-day operations are managed by the Director, with the support of the Development Officer and an Advisory Committee.

The trustees are tasked with making all major decisions regarding strategy, policies, and finance. The board convenes quarterly to discuss strategic issues, assess risks, and review financial and operational activities. Urgent matters are addressed through WhatsApp and email as they arise, with extraordinary trustee meetings held as necessary. The trustees have conducted skills review to identify potential gaps on the board, aiming to recruit individuals who align with the organisation's values and can commit the necessary time.

All trustees volunteer their time and receive no remuneration. Rahela Trust relies significantly on volunteers, who are reimbursed for expenses in accordance with our volunteering policy. In Afghanistan, most of RT and it's partners' work is based on voluntary contributions at this time, with 12 staff members employed through our partners in different provinces to support women`s education.



5. Strategy, Goals, & Objectives

Rahela Trust was established by women's rights activist Rahela Sidiqi to address the challenges faced by educated women in Afghanistan. The charity's mission is to promote the education of Afghan womenby providing financial assistance and other support.

In 2020, Rahela Trust developed a three-year strategy focusing on four key goals:

1. Expanding networks of educated women contributing to national development in Afghanistan.
2. Engaging diaspora communities and British allies in national development.
3. Advocating for international support for women's and girls' educationin Afghanistan.
4. Growing Rahela Trust as a strong and successful organization.

This year the Board of Trustees would like to consider the expansion of RT activities into Afghanistan's neighboring countries as part of RT's next five-year strategic plan. Trustees also confirm that they have taken the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance into account when making any decisions to which it is relevant.

6. Our Work This Year

6.1.Scholarships

Between April 2023 and March 2024, Rahela Trust has continued to support Afghan women scholars. Despite politicalinstability, seven scholars graduated with grades rangingfrom 71% to 98%. A new partnership with a university in January 2023 allowed us to recruit four new scholars into nursing programs, continuing our mission under difficult circumstances.

We also implemented new safeguarding policies to protect scholars, and continued to provide essential resources such as laptops and transportation costs.

6.2.Scholars' Coaching & Mentoring Stories

Mentoring remains a cornerstone of Rahela Trust's work. Each scholar has received regular mentoring from our Director and national coordinators, with a focus on leadership and resilience. This year, mentoring became more fluid to address the evolving situation, and scholars have been encouraged to support each other through co-mentoring.

The director, during a mentoring session, emphasized the importance of true leadership, stating: "a true leader practices what they preach," "leaders should prioritize the interests of the people," and "Be honest and responsible."

She told our scholars, *"a true leader must adopt a transparent approach and serve the community through effective and efficient methods. Leaders who don't practice what they preach or fail to communicate their achievements and mistakes will not inspire others to follow them. Be open about your mistakes, encourage transparency, and highlight the community's achievements."*

She added: *"celebrate your collective successes," and concluded with, "you are the light of your society. Youth are agents of change, when nurtured properly."*

Fig. 6.1. Quarterly mentoring by the Director focused on leadership skills, RT policies and scholar commitments.

More stories from current scholars and coaches/mentors:

a) F. M.: National Coordinator of Rahela Trust

Fig. 6.2. F. M. during counseling and psychotherapy service

As the National Coordinator of Rahela Trust, it has been my pleasure to support the teachers and students at Rahela Trust School, where we open doors of opportunity for Afghan women. It wasn't just about lessons and books—it was about creating opportunities for women who had none. In May, I furthered my mission by co-founding a counseling and psychotherapy service at Rahela Trust alongside Mrs. Rahela Sidiqi. This initiative aims to support the mental health of women, children, and men, addressing a critical yet often overlooked need. I firmly believe that helping people heal, mentally and emotionally, is just as vital as educating them.

My message to other Afghan girls is that the situation in Afghanistan is very harsh, but just as I, a university educator and psychologist, have been able to actively work within Afghanistan, so can they. They should remember these three keys: hope, goals, and effort. They must not give up until they reach their goals. Despair only harms our mental state and achieves nothing. Rahela Trust School, established by an Afghan woman, demonstrates the power of perseverance under any condition. While circumstances can be challenging, it is our own efforts that truly matter.

b) A. Aghah: Breaking Barriers, Building Futures (Current Scholar)

My journey with Rahela Trust reached a turning point in March 2024, when I earned a scholarship that included a laptop, smartphone, and a monthly stipend. This scholarship made my dream of studying psychology a reality. But my mission goes beyond my personal studies I am committed to giving back to my community.

Every morning from 8 AM to 11 AM, I open my home to three young girls who are deprived of formal schooling. From day one, I knew this was my chance to change lives. I not only teach them academic subjects but also help them overcome psychological challenges using my expertise in psychology. My goal is to empower these girls, helping them gain independence and defend their rights.

In January 2024, my dedication was recognized when I advanced to the final stage of the Rahela Trust scholarship process, emerging successful out of 700 students. Now, with Rahela Trust's support, I continue to inspire and educate, even amidst security challenges. Education is a right for every human being, and I'll keep fighting to ensure these girls have a future.

Fig. 6.3. A. A. during the educational program

Fig. 6.4. M.H. during the educational programs

c) M. H.: From Scholarship to Schoolroom (Current Scholar, Zan Online University)

As a Rahela Trust scholarship recipient, I have learned that dedication and education can transform lives. With the support of Rahela Trust, I have taken my commitment to education beyond myself and focused on uplifting Afghan girls. I committed to working with Afghan girls, and I've stayed true to that promise. Currently, I teach eight students in person, ranging from 6th to 11th grade, focusing on science subjects. In addition, I run a computer course for four school graduates eager to learn tech skills. I want to equip these girls with the knowledge they need to shape their futures. I was able to design a three-month structured course with booklets and teaching resources, further expanding my reach.

Through my experience with Rahela Trust, I have realized that the scholarship doesn't just empower individuals—it creates a ripple effect, helping entire communities thrive and ensuring a brighter future for Afghan girls.

Fig. 6.5. F. S. during the educational programs

d) F. S., Scholar (Online Education)

In the rugged landscapes of Helmand, Afghanistan, where the winds of change often falter, Rahela Trust offered me a lifeline through online education. It was not just an opportunity but a necessity. It gave me the chance to break free from limited prospects and create a future on my own terms.

For me, it became a gateway not only to learn but also to teach. Empowered by my new-found knowledge, I dedicated my time to educating other Afghan girls and boys. Twice a day, six days a week, I gathered around twenty young minds, instilling in them the belief that education was within their reach.

As a midwifery student, I also helped pregnant women—sometimes as many as forty in a single day—offering them care and comfort during their most vulnerable moments.

To other Afghan girls and women contemplating online education, my message is simple yet powerful: embrace the opportunity with all your heart.

6.3.Graduated Scholars

Rahela Trust continues to offer support to our twenty graduates. Graduates remain connected through online platforms, and mentoring sessions provide both practical and emotional guidance. One of our graduates, now working as a trauma-release counselor, is providing valuable support to women in her community and to our current scholars.

Here are few storiesfrom RT graduate scholars:

a) R. R. (recent graduate from Law Faculty)

I found Rahela Trust at a time when I was overwhelmed with loneliness and despair. One of my biggest dreams was to continue my education in my field of interest. Due to the injustices imposed on women by this society, I decided to study law at any cost so I could fully understand women's rights in the community.

When Rahela Trust came into my life, everything changed, and I began to pursue my education. While studying, I also held many seminars for women who were unaware of their basic rights, with activities in the provinces of Herat, Daikundi, Kabul, and Parwan.

Fortunately, even after the Taliban took power, despite many challenges, Rahela Trust provided us with online education opportunities, allowing us to continue our studies. Rahela Trust not only guided my academic life toward the heights of success but also filled my mind and heart with knowledge and hope.

Rahela Trust was the best thing that happened in my life. In the end, I hope many girls, like me, have been able to change their lives by joining the Rahela Trust family

Fig. 6.6. R. R. during her work, activism activities, organizing and attending the peace dialogues

b) N. E. (recent graduate scholar from Business Administration Faculty)

I am from a small village in Jaghori, Ghazni province, where opportunities for girls were scarce when I started my education. Despite the challenges, I completed my studies in accounting, achieving the top position in my class. But after that, the struggles intensified. In my community, and even within my own family, there was an expectation for me to marry early. I felt trapped, unsure of what to do next. I knocked on so many doors, searching for a way out. Looking back, I remember the hopelessness I felt after earning my two-year diploma. I had no opportunities to pursue a bachelor's degree, and I didn't know what my next step would be. People in my community would say, "our girls never studied; why do you want to study? It's against our norms." On top of that, I was struggling financially. These challenges were over whelming, and I often felt like giving up.

Eventually, I was introduced to Mrs. Rahela Sidiqi, and that meeting changed everything. I was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship from Rahela Trust, and it opened a whole new world of possibilities for me. In situations like mine, you know there is often no option but to turn to online education as a means of escape and growth. But Rahela Trust helped me transform that hopelessness into direction and purpose. I not only gained access to high-quality education but also found a pillar of support in Mrs. Rahela Sidiqi. Her mentoring and kindness gave me the confidence to dream bigger. She encouraged me to push forward, even when I doubted myself.

Today, I mentor and teach other girls, sharing my knowledge and experiences with them. One of my proudest moments was when I held my first workshop at a university titled, "The Principles of Ethics and Economics." It was selected as the best workshop of the academic year, and both the students and professors were deeply impressed. That moment made me realize that I have the ability to inspire and support others in my community.

My message to all women, especially those from remote areas like mine, is to nurture yourselves through online education. Education is the only weapon we have against repression. If I can achieve my dreams, so can you. Today, I am a graduate in Business Administration, all thanks to the support of Rahela Trust and especially Mrs. Rahela Sidiqi.

Please don't let anyone, including yourself, allow fear or societal pressure to make you give up. Remember, you are an angel full of abilities, a gift to your society.

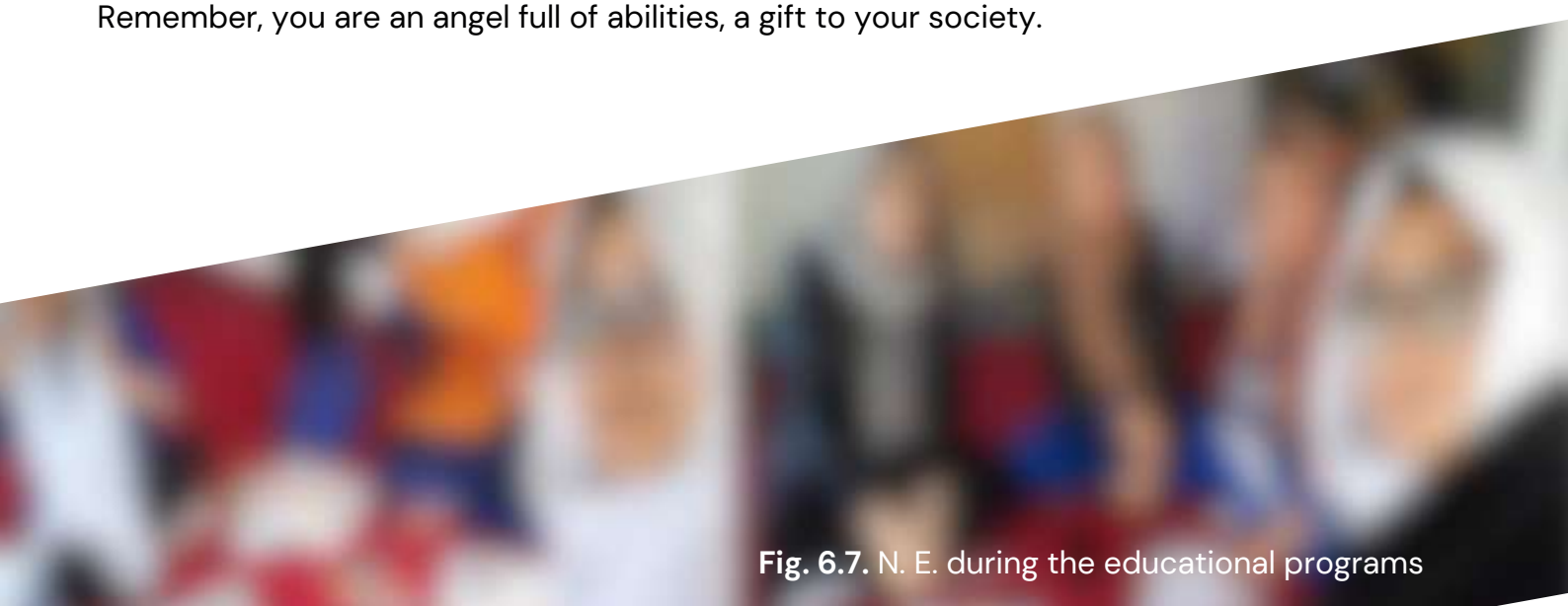


Fig. 6.7. N. E. during the educational programs

6.4 Community-Based Coaching and Mentoring

Our scholars have been involved in community initiatives, putting their knowledge into action. These initiatives reached 370 women and children across four regions of Afghanistan, significantly expanding the impact of our programs.

When the Taliban Ministry for Education banned girls beyond grade six (age 12) from attending school or university on 22nd December 2022, we held an extraordinary trustee meeting to review risks and operations and agreed to strengthen our safeguarding measures. We decided to continue supporting existing scholars as universities scrambled to move back online (as they had done under Covid). Additional measures included:

- **Updating our risk register and reviewing to consider new risks at each trustee meeting.**

We issued scholars with advice, supported by feedback received from women who had lived under the Taliban before.

Rahela Sidiqi, Director of Rahela Trust, was highly active during the previous Taliban time, providing educational and employment opportunities and support to large numbers of women in different provinces of Afghanistan through the UN Habitat program.

We have also been using aliases to avoid including identifiable information in our administration documents.

- **We provide each scholar with a mobile phone and laptop, and the ability to contact the University Coordinator and Director 24/7 through online messaging platforms.**
- **We provide each scholar with the cost of transport, lunch and stationery every month, recognizing that Afghanistan is facing an acute economic crisis, and our scholars can't study if we can't meet their basic needs.**
- **We provide small amounts to each scholar to developand deliver community projects.**
- **We developed and adopted new safeguarding policies, and ensured that our partner universities understand and are following them.**

We worked with universities to be sure they understood our safeguarding policies and their roles and responsibilities, e.g., informing us if there are any problems faced by scholars, such as if any scholar's attendance falls below 70% or if their personal/educational circumstances change.

We ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made availableto staff and the communities we work with.

6.5 Partner Universities

Despite security challenges, Rahela Trust worked closely with partner universities to ensure the continued education of scholars. We provided consultations on gender sensitivity and security protocols, reinforcing the commitment of our partnersto women's education.

6.6 English lessons from UK Universities

We are thrilled to have been able to offer intermediate and advanced English lessons remotely to some of our scholars past and present as well as other Afghan students through the Universities of Sheffield and Cambridge. 17 of them have completed their courses this year and we have plans to continue these English programmes for more students in the coming year. We are very grateful to those who have made this possible.

7.Engaging the Diaspora

Rahela Trust has increased its engagement with the Afghan diaspora through initiatives such as the Diaspora Changemakers Network. These efforts aim to create deeper solidarity between Afghans in the UK and Afghanistan and to amplify the voices of Afghan women on the global stage. The peer-mentoring network for our scholars and community youth in Afghanistan, enhancing skills and knowledge-building, is a typical example of the change-maker's network.

Fig. 7.1. During engaging diaspora mentoring programs

7.1. Activism and Diaspora Activities

Fig. 7.2. Dushanbe peace conference and dialogues.

Throughout the past year, our Director Rahela has been actively engaged in organizing and participating in a range of conferences and dialogues around the globe. These events have been pivotal in fostering engagement and transferring valuable knowledge to young Afghan women, particularly in the areas of activism, leadership, and diaspora involvement.

Our Director's work has been instrumental in creating platforms where Afghan women can share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations while also gaining insights from global leaders and experts. By championing the cause of young Afghan women, she has helped amplify their voices in discussions about gender equality, education, and empowerment. Her efforts have not only promoted the importance of women's active participation in social and political spheres but have also emphasized the critical role of diaspora communities in rebuilding and supporting their home country.

Through these engagements, Rahela has become a key figure in bridging the gap between Afghan women and global networks of support, enabling them to access new opportunities and resources that contribute to their personal and professional development. Her commitment to nurturing the next generation of female leaders is reflected in her ongoing activism and her dedication to ensuring that young Afghan women have the tools they need to become agents of change in their communities.

This global effort has involved collaborations with various organizations, universities, and think tanks, each aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by Afghan women. By facilitating these connections, Rahela is fostering a global network of support that encourages the exchange of ideas, mentorship, and resources for the empowerment of Afghan women, both within Afghanistan and in the diaspora.

Fig. 7.3. Young diaspora and mix diaspora leadership conference

Fig. 7.4. Peace Turkey workshop

Fig. 7.5. Afghan Women strategic conference by Women Peace and Participations (WPP)

Fig. 7.6. Rahela encouraging the Afghan Women's Robotics team in Doha

Fig. 7.7. Women on the front line conference in Jordan in Feb 2024

Fig. 7.8. Jordan with women rights activists

Fig. 7.9. With former Minster of Education of France during UN meeting in Doha

Fig. 7.10. Meeting with Rina Amiri, U.S. Special Envoy for Afghan women, girls and human rights during UN meeting in Doha

8. With grateful thanks

The Trustees of Rahela Trust would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following individuals and organizations:

UK ExecutiveTeam:

Rahela Sidiqi Founding Director

Nargis Sadiq, Development Officer

Ziarmal Gharghasht IT Officer

Safia Nasrat Admin Officer

Farahnaz Mahsheed, Communication Officer

Ali Ahmad Barat, Finance Officer

Afghanistan Operation Team

Afghanistan Team: 9 Mentors and Coordinators

Thank you to all the donors who provided grant for the support of women's education and for our events. Thank you to all the foundations, trusts and other organizations who have given grants this year:

And a special thank you to all our regular donors from the diaspora and British community, whose continuing support during difficult times has allowed us to continue supporting our scholars.

Donors

- The Big Give
- Amanat Foundation
- The Circle
- Farthing Trust
- V-Day Foundation
- Nona Doubleday
- Dr & Mrs Tripp

Ambassadors of Support

- Asif Noorzai
- Walid Halimi
- Gharghasht Gharghasht
- Soman Shokori
- Hogai Aryubi
- Rohela Maarige

Partner Universities in UK

- Sheffield University
- Cambridge University

We sincerely thank you for your ongoing support in our mission to advance women's rights and expand access to higher education and secondary education in Afghanistan.

9.The Future

9.1. Scholarships

Looking forward to 2024-2025, Rahela Trust will continue to focus on offering scholarships in different subjects, including medicine and nursing, which remain viable fields for Afghan women to study and work.

We will be selecting ten new scholars from across Afghanistan for an online university program, sourcing teachers from the Afghan diaspora around the world.

We will also expand our mentoring efforts, working with new partners such as The Circle NGO and trauma relief experts,to strengthen the support we provide to scholars.

The Trustees will consider the situation of young Afghan women's education in countries neighboring Afghanistan as part of their strategic review.

9.2. Expanding our programmes

We are delighted and grateful to have confirmation of two significant grants for the coming year: from the Malala Fund to provide online learning and mentorship to support young Afghan women in finishing their last years of secondary school; and from the National Lottery to expand our work engaging the Afghan diaspora community in the UK.

9.3. Strengthening the Organization

Rahela Trust will focus on expanding our fundraising efforts in order to strengthenthe organization's infrastructure so that we are able to continue supporting Afghan women's education under increasingly difficult circumstances.

10. Financial Statements

The balance sheet reflects a relatively high level of reserves, which can be attributed to the payment schedule for our Afghan partners. Significant payments from both restricted and unrestricted funds are typically made shortly after the end of March each year, explaining the elevated reserve levels at the close of the fiscal period.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Independent Examiner Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Rahela Trust for the year ended 31/03/24.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Sarah Watling
Monksilver GP Accounts
The Old Schoolhouse
Monksilver
Taunton
Somerset TA4 4HY

Date: 27/6/24

Signed: Sarah Watling.
Sarah Watling

RAHELA TRUST
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2024 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	12 Months 31st March 2023 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
Receipts							
Community Donations:	2						
British Community Donations		7,694	-	7,694	8,436	-	8,436
Afghan Diaspora Community Donations		4,362	-	4,362	4,048	-	4,048
Restricted Donations from Sponsors		4,040	-	4,040	2,010	-	2,010
Unrestricted Donations		-	5,073	5,073	-	5,520	5,520
Grants:	3						
The Circle		10,000	-	10,000	-	-	-
Amanat		6,794	-	6,794	-	-	-
Big Give		10,053	-	10,053	-	-	-
The Farthing Trust		-	5,000	5,000	-	-	-
V-Day		-	3,874	3,874	-	-	-
Nona Doubleday		-	1,200	1,200	-	-	-
British Refugee Council		-	-	-	12,134	-	12,134
Gift Aid:	4						
HMRC Charities		-	1,961	1,961	-	1,925	1,925
Events and Conferences:							
Events		975	-	975			
Total income		43,918.24	17,107.97	61,025.87	26,628.20	7,445.00	34,074.85
Deduct:							
Direct Costs:							
Scholarship Costs	5	19,887	-	19,887	9,870	-	9,870
Emergency Funding for Scholars	6		-	-	-	-	-
Total Scholarship Costs		(19,887)		(19,887)	(9,870)		(9,870)
Other Direct Costs:							
Volunteer expenses		-	2,273	2,273	-	2,348	2,348
Telephone and IT costs		-	1,667	1,667	-	1,938	1,938
Marketing costs		-	839	839	-	800	800
Annual Academic Conference		303	-	303	3,810	-	3,810
Fundraising events		1,674	-	1,674	747	-	747
Staff Costs		14,771	-	14,771	14,942	-	14,942
Printing, postage & stationery		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Other Direct Costs		(16,747)	(4,778)	(21,525)	(19,500)	(5,086)	(24,586)
Indirect Costs:							
Management and adminitration	7	-	4,448	4,448	-	1,800	1,800
Legal and Professional		-	720	720	-	758	758
Bank charges		-	164	164	-	101	101
Depreciation		-	76	76	-	76	76
Total Indirect Costs		-	(5,408)	(5,408)	-	(2,735)	(2,735)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the Year				**14,205**			**(3,115)**

RAHELA TRUST
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2024			12 Months 31st March 2023		
		£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
FIXED ASSETS							
Tangible Assets	8	-	-	259	-	-	334
CURRENT ASSETS							
Bank		32,824	15,999	48,823	21,666	12,875	34,542
Cash and cash equivalent		-	-	-	-	-	-
		32,824	15,999	48,823	24,408	13,174	34,876
TOTAL ASSETS				49,082			34,876
TOTAL NET ASSETS				**49,082**			**34,876**
FUNDS							
Restricted funds		32,824	-	32,824	21,666	-	21,666
Unrestricted funds		-	16,257	16,257	-	13,210	13,210
		32,824	16,257	49,082	21,666	13,210	34,876
TOTAL FUNDS				**49,082**			**34,876**
				-			-

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Income
All income is recognized in the Statement of Financial Activities once received.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognized as expenditure on a cash basis.

Tangible fixed assets
Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures, fittings & equip - 15% on reducing balance

Taxation
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Charity is a going concern and further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to

2. General Donations

Donations are received from various sources. These included shoe box donations, one-off community donations, donations collected at charity events and conferences and online donations. Some donations are made for specific purposes and these funds can only be used for that specific purpose so therefore these funds are restricted. Donations received from British Community Monthly Donations (£7694), Afghan Diaspora Community Donations (£4362), and Restristed Sponsor Donations (£4040) could only be used for university scholarships and mentorships. Other donations amounting to £5073 are unrestricted in nature.

3. Gift Aid

Gift Aid amounting to £1,961 was received by HMRC and it is unrestricted in nature.

4. Grants

Grants are restricted in nature and are made to support the provision of university scholarships and mentorships to underprivileged young women.
For the Year ended 31.03.2024, Grants were received from the following sources:

The Circle	10,000
Amanat	6,794
Big Give	10,053
The Farthing Trust	5,000
V-Day	3,874
Nona Doubleday	1,200

5. Scholarship and Emergency Fund Costs

Rahela Trust transferred £19887 in this reporting period. These payments were made to students to fund their university fees and expenses.

6. Volunteer Expenses

These include the costs incurred by the volunteers for the purpose of fund raising at charity events and conferences.

7. Management and Administration

These costs are administrative in nature, other costs include membership fees, web hosting and sundry expenses.

8. Tangible Assets

These consists of two printers and a computer

Contact
Rahela Trust
+44 (0)20 3718 8185
www.rahelatrust.org
info@rahelatrust.org

Rahela Trust for Afghan women's education

England & Wales - Charity number 1165763

Accounts

Rahela Trust

Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements

April 2022 - March 2023

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

Charity Number: 1165763

Table of Contents

Our Vision, Mission & Values..... 01

Key Messages..... 02

Legal & Administrative Details..... 06

Structure, Governance & Core Values..... 07

Our Work This Year

Scholarships & Mentoring..... 09

Engaging the Diaspora..... 17

Influence and Advocacy..... 22

Strengthening the Organisation..... 23

Fundraising..... 24

Key Risks..... 25

Financial Statements 27

Independent Examiner Report..... 27

Profit & Loss Accounts..... 28

Balance Sheet..... 30

Notes to the Accounts..... 31

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Vision and Mission

Rahela Trust's mission is to provide university and higher education scholarships, mentorship and access to local and global professional networks to disadvantaged and talented Afghan women from rural areas who are committed to building a future where women are full participants and leaders in society.

Growing a community of educated young women who are committed to improving the lives of women in Afghanistan, the Rahela Trust envisages a society where the rights of women are respected - and women are fully involved in the social, political and economic aspects of life.

Core Values

Quality Scholarships

A commitment to deliver a quality scholarship programme.

Transparency

Guaranteed open, detailed and honest reporting on all activity.

Results-Based Achievement

Manage the scholarship programme and direction of Rahela Trust with results at the heart.

Effective & Efficient Mobilisation

Ensure resources are well managed and streamlined to reduce delays.

Key Messages

Message from Samantha Rennie, Chairperson of Rahela Trust

> ***the Taliban still allow nursing students to attend college. This may yet change, but again, we will adapt.***
>
> Samantha Rennie, Chairperson

Just as Afghan women warned us, the Taliban has reneged on earlier public promises and reverted to increasingly arcane and misogynistic measures, while the world seems intransigent to a rogue 'state' committing atrocities against its own people. Yet some brave women and men are standing up to this, at great personal risk to themselves, and I feel privileged to be able to support their work.

Among them is the trust's founder, Rahela Sidiqi, whose extraordinary passion and tenacity, expertise and networks are deployed in relentless pursuit of our mission. Thankfully, she is supported by the wonderful Mollie Tant, who has taken on much of the Trust's day-to-day management and fundraising. I'm very grateful to them both, as well as all the volunteers who have contributed to the work reported here.

This includes my fellow trustees, whose wisdom has provided constructive challenge and stable stewardship throughout the year. I look forward to addressing the imbalance of Afghan female representation on the board in the coming year.

As we restart scholar recruitment in 2023-24, we'll be focussing on the only subject that can get women in Afghanistan out of the house and offer some sense of a future: the Taliban still allow nursing students to attend college. This may yet change, but again, we will adapt.

Rahela Trust is now one of the very few NGOs - let alone women's organisations - still operational at the grassroots in Afghanistan. We work under the radar, delivering results through trusting relationships, community connections and agility. None of which larger mainstream NGOs could hope to possess.

I want to thank Annie Lennox and The Circle, the Refugee Council, Omid International, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), and the Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield for their support during the year, along with individual Afghans and British allies. Putting the safety of Afghan scholars, volunteers, partners and donors above all other considerations has taken a toll on our income this year, though. This limits our ability to promote the trust's name and associations, or to demonstrate impact through personal stories. We aim to adjust future fundraising accordingly through more events and informal networking.

In the meantime, please take the time not just to read this report, but to act on it. The achievements documented here belie the challenges faced by Rahela and others in delivering them. Afghan women need your support more than ever right now and you can be assured that your money goes directly to building a future for them - and for their country when the time comes.

Message from Founding Director, Rahela Sidiqi

I am pleased to see that we are observing our scholars become true leaders...I hope increasingly to see the community and local leaders recognise our scholars' commitment to giving back to their society.

Rahela Sidiqi, Founding Director

The situation in Afghanistan remains critical. The situation for women worsens day by day with the imposition of increasingly repressive decrees. But our work continues.

Using a practical and flexible approach, we enable our scholars to continue their studies and work. We maintain our resilience and do not give up, else we risk losing a generation of talented young women who are the true future leaders of Afghanistan. Isn't it true that an education is a basic right of women, a key part of the SDGs? The high mark achievements and commitments of our scholars, even after the Taliban's regime was reinstated, did not stop. They've continued to support their communities.

Scholars have rather changed their approach, focusing on home and community-based education to girls and children in their communities. Our nursing scholars are able to attend in person, while other scholars and studying online. A mix of our online and graduated scholars are participating in English language and soft skills courses with the goal of later finding remote work. However, essential resources like computers and internet access are urgently needed. I am pleased to see that we are observing our scholars become true leaders. We need the next generation to become the agents of change. I hope to increasingly see the community and local leaders recognise our scholars' commitment to giving back to their society.

I am grateful to our hard working team in Afghanistan and in the UK, particularly for our young champion Mollie Tant and her effective support. Likewise, the support of our great chair, Samantha Reine and all our Trustees. My heartfelt thanks to each and every organisational levels and individual donors who had vital contribution to the success of Rahela Trust for achieving its mission and Goal in this challenging time

Legal & Administrative Details

Trustees

Samantha Rennie (Chairperson)
Sear Sadat (Treasurer)
Mel Bradley MBE
Marika Theros
Kamini Paul
Liz Mermin
Mel Whitney-Long

Founder & Director

Rahela Sidiqi

Development Officer

Mollie Tant

Further Details

Charity Number
1165763

Registered Address
6, Station Parade, Northolt Rd, South Harrow, Harrow HA2 8HB

Bankers
HSBC, 275 Greenwich High Road, Greenwich, SE10 8NF

Independent Examiner
Sarah Walting, Monksilver, GP Accounts, The Old Schoolhouse, Monksilver, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 4HY

Structure, Governance & Core Values

Rahela Trust is pleased to present its annual report and unaudited financial statements for the charity in the year 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023.

Reference and administrative details are set out on page 5 of this report. The report complies with current statutory requirements, the charity's governing document and the Statement of Recommended Practice of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102.

The Trust was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and registered UK Charity on 25th February 2016. Rahela Trust is governed by its constitution, last amended on 3rd April 2021.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance of Rahela Trust and they perform their duties with close adherence to the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Board seeks to appoint members who have a wide range of appropriate skills and knowledge of the issues and the sector that will allow them to govern and grow the charity successfully. Our trustees bring a range of skills to support Rahela Trust's mission through Afghan field experience, peace building, media, academia, charity governance, charity law, fundraising and finance.

Trustees make all major decisions regarding strategy, policies and finance. Meetings of the Board are convened every three months to address strategic issues and risk, and review financial and operational activities. Trustees consider urgent issues by WhatsApp and email as they arise, with extraordinary trustee meetings convened as required. The Trustees have conducted a skills review to identify potential gaps in the Board that can then be suitably recruited for. The appointed individuals must support the values of the organisation and be able to make necessary time commitments.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration. Rahela Trust relies heavily on volunteers giving their time to the organisation. All our volunteers can claim back expenses from Rahela Trust in line with our volunteering policy. There are seven staff in Afghanistan, employed through our partners, including two Kabul-based coordinators and one finance officer, one mentor and one coordinator in Helmand and one coordinator and mentor in Kandahar.

Day-to-day activities are delegated to the Director. The Director is supported by the Development Officer and an Advisory Committee.

Strategy, Goals and Objectives

In 2016, Rahela Sidiqi, renowned women's rights activist and Afghan refugee, set up Rahela Trust (formerly Farkhunda Trust) in response to brutal attacks on educated women in her home country. The original mission, vision and values of Rahela Trust remain unchanged since then, as does our charitable purpose:

"To advance the education of women in Afghanistan by providing financial and such other support as the trustees from time to time see fit."

In 2021, trustees developed a three-year strategy with four goals. Following annual reviews and in the light of the Taliban takeover, Goal 3 was changed from 'lesson sharing' to 'international advocacy'. In 2022-23, new scholarships were paused, but have now resumed. Goals 1, 2 and 4 were reaffirmed during the year.

1. Providing scholarships and mentoring to disadvantaged and talented women, from and in rural Afghanistan.

2. Increasing the engagement of diaspora communities and British allies in national development.

3. Influence the international community to support the education of women and girls in Afghanistan

4. Strengthening and growing Rahela Trust to increase our impact.

Trustees also confirm that they have taken the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance into account when making any decisions relevant to it.

Our Work This Year

1. Scholarships & Mentoring

Scholarships

Between April 2022 and March 2023, Rahela Trust achieved the following:

- Total number of Rahela Trust scholars recruited since 2016 rose to 40.
- Five scholars graduated in 2022, each with overall scores between 70-99%.
- Four scholars were recruited in 2022 and successfully began their courses in March 2023.
- Five scholars successfully transferred from their original degree to nursing, starting their courses in March 2023.
- One new Afghan university partnership was established, adding nursing as a new course choice.

In the year 2022-2023 we were pleased to see five of our scholars graduate from university, each with average scores between 70-99%. Given the political situation and threat of violence the scholars face every day, this is a huge triumph. One of our partner universities, who we've worked with for five years, was forced to close their doors due to security risks. We were therefore required to find an alternative partner university, to ensure our scholars were able to continue studying.

When it became clear that the Taliban would allow women pursuing nursing courses to attend university in person, our team engaged our extensive in-country network to seize this opportunity (this exceptional circumstance may be attributed to the alignment of the nursing curriculum with midwifery, as per Sharia Law's mandate for female medical personnel to attend to women's medical needs). We began seeking a university partner that could offer nursing courses to our students while meeting our stringent due diligence standards.

In January 2023 Rahela Trust identified a university that matched our requirements and formalised a partnership agreement with them. This significant milestone allowed us to welcome four new scholars into our programme in 2022, all of whom commenced nursing degrees in March 2023. They are each committed to building a positive future for themselves and their communities.

The successful recruitment and enrolment of new scholars in the nursing program marks a significant achievement for Rahela Trust. Despite severe restrictions on internal movement, our in-country staff went to great lengths to visit the applicants' homes and meet their families. This is to ensure that adequate support from their communities for their educational pursuits exists.

During the same period, five of our current scholars decided to transfer from their original fields of study in medicine or law to pursue nursing. Their choice was primarily driven by a need to maintain a life outside the confines of their homes, something the Taliban is making extremely difficult.

When the Taliban Ministry for Education banned girls beyond grade six (age 12) from attending school or university on 22nd December 2022, we held an extraordinary trustee meeting to review risks and operations and agreed to strengthen our safeguarding measures. We decided to continue supporting existing scholars as universities scrambled to move back online (as they had done under Covid). Additional measures included:

1. Updating our risk register and reviewing it, and new risks, at each trustee meeting.
We issued scholars with advice, supported by feedback received from women who had lived under the Taliban before. We have been using aliases to avoid including identifiable information in our administration documents.

2. We provide each scholar with a mobile phone and laptop.
This is so they can contact the University Coordinator and Director 24/7 through online messaging platforms.

3. We provide each scholar with the cost of transport, lunch and stationary every month.
Afghanistan is facing an acute economic crisis and we recognise our scholars can't study if we can't meet their basic needs.

4. We provide small amounts to each scholar to develop and deliver community projects.

5. We developed and adopted a new safeguarding policy.
We also ensured that universities are familiar with our safeguarding policies and confirmed that they understand their roles and responsibilities, e.g., informing us if there are any problems faced by scholars, such as if any scholar's attendance falls below 85% or if their personal/educational circumstances change.

We ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

The situation in Afghanistan is highly unpredictable, and no measures can completely guarantee safety. We therefore view risk assessment as an ongoing process. If necessary we will seek advice from relevant NGOs and provide written international guidelines, translated as appropriate. Our goal is to ensure that the women taking part in our programme feel as safe and secure as possible while continuing to receive a quality education.

The Future of Scholarships

Following an options appraisal and strategic review in July 2022, and ongoing risk assessments throughout the year, scholarships will continue to be a priority for Rahela Trust for the foreseeable future. Despite the challenges, women are still managing to receive a university education in Afghanistan, and as long as this is the case, we continue to believe our mission is viable. In 2023 - 2024 we aim to increase the number of scholarships we offer, focusing particularly on nursing.

Mentoring

As part of our aim to create confident, educated, female leaders who can help make Afghanistan a more progressive, inclusive, and equitable society, we provide leadership mentoring to our scholars. The mentoring approach applies to all in-country stakeholders, including coordinators, mentors, and university personnel.

Our Founder and Director Rahela Sidiqi oversees the mentoring programme. Traditionally, sessions are delivered by Rahela, our in-country national coordinators, and university mentors quarterly, monthly and weekly, respectively.

This year, however, we adapted to the worsening situation by making mentoring far more fluid and accessible on a needs basis. Rahela has therefore been on hand to support scholars whenever requested. Each scholar has received between 7-19 contact hours each per month on an individual or group mentoring basis. We've also been encouraging an increase in co-mentoring between scholars, providing mutual support at a time when fear, anxiety and hopelessness run high.

Graduates

Given the current circumstances, RT graduates continue to receive mentoring on a needs basis. All 20 graduates are members of an online chatroom and can contact Rahela and the in-country coordinators as and when they need to. Between April 2022 and March 2023, Rahela was contacted over 60 times by graduates for mentoring and moral support.

One of our graduated scholars who is based in Afghanistan has begun to host trauma-release counselling for female university students and other women in her community. She reaches an average of 45 women per month. She says she was inspired by the Rahela Trust's mentoring model in this much-needed work.

In addition, we provided additional practical support to scholars through new partnerships we developed with experts and institutions outside of Afghanistan such as a ten-month Computer Engineering course by USC Viterbi School of Engineering to some of our Computer Science graduates, and an English Language course by an Afghan Danish mentor.

It was not only Rahela Trust's financial support…I learned how to extend my network at the national and international level and I now have digital work income as a physician from Australia.

RT Graduated Scholar

RT was a school of learning commitment for me. I love my community work and supporting other women, I will continue, but I was also working with ICRC until women's work with the aid community was stopped.

RT Graduated Scholar

Partner Universities

This year has posed many challenges to our partners. One of our university partners was forced to close its doors due to security threats in December 2022, and so it has been a key priority to work closely with the University Chancellor of each university to ensure the correct measures are in place to protect students, especially women.

Rahela Trust has offered ad-hoc meetings with universities to advise on security, protocol, and gender sensitivity, providing over 12 hours of consultation time over the year.

Our mission includes capacity building to strengthen partner universities' gender sensitivity. We were delighted to hear from several at our Annual Conference in October, particularly with how committed they remain to the education of women, and their flexible approach to supporting this.

Community-Based Initiatives

To put their learning into practice, scholars are supported to deliver community-based initiatives. This increases the impact of scholarships exponentially, as their knowledge and skills are passed on to other women and girls in the community. It also helps scholars to build their practical and reporting skills, and their confidence.

During the period October 2022 – March 2023, nine out of 20 scholars continued delivering community initiatives. Among the 11 not continuing, three scholars were in hiding or had left Afghanistan for countries like Pakistan or Turkey. An additional four were new to the scholarship program, set to start in May 2023. Security concerns and fear stopped the remainder from taking part. We empower scholars to assess safety based on our guidance, their lived experience, and on-the-ground knowledge, before engaging in any activities.

Within the group of nine scholars who continued with community initiatives, 14 different types were recorded, reaching a total of 370 women and children across four different areas of Afghanistan. These are broken down as follows:

Activity	Count	People Reached
Literary / Grammar	5	61
English Language Lessons	6	67
Maths Lessons	6	43
Dari Lessons	1	5
Computing Classes	1	4
Islamic Studies	1	10
Biology Classes	1	N/A
Self-learning Skills	1	5
Embroidery / Handicraft	2	2
Book Club	1	2
Awareness Raising Sessions	4	66
Hospital Volunteering	2	45
Midwifery Classes	2	60
Motivational Seminar	1	N/A
Total	**34**	**370**

Next Steps

After a pause in new scholarships in 2022-23, we aim to grow the number of Rahela Trust scholars, and grow and develop our mentoring programme.

While our partner universities have gone to extraordinary lengths to provide remote study for existing scholars, by 2023 the only in-person study option for women in Afghanistan became nursing and midwifery. This is attractive because it's the only way women can escape the confines of their homes and meet peers in a learning environment. And it's the only profession that the Taliban will currently allow women to pursue - providing a glimmer of hope that was extinguished in law, journalism, IT and other student areas. Several existing scholars in these subjects have now transferred to nursing for these reasons.

In 2023-24, Rahela Trust will therefore re-start active recruitment of new scholars, focusing exclusively on nursing and midwifery courses.

In the coming year, we will also use the support provided by The Circle NGO to bolster the mentoring we provide to scholars. Through a partnership with The Circle NGO, March 2023 saw the beginning of the Diaspora Changemakers Network. The network aims to increase the level of support we can provide to women in Afghanistan whilst building a deeper sense of solidarity between Afghans based in the UK and Afghanistan.

In addition, through partnerships with trauma relief experts and mentor recruitment within the Afghan diaspora, we intend to increase the level, type and effectiveness of mentoring support available to our scholars and graduates. We will be developing a Mentoring Handbook to formalise and record our approach to mentoring.

Graduates

Before the Taliban, Rahela Trust graduates went on to set up their own restaurant businesses, build careers as journalists, and go into medical fields, the civil service or NGOs. Rahela Trust would provide mentoring and network support as requested by the graduate. Given that women are no longer allowed to work, we have dedicated more of our resources to finding Rahela Trust graduates home-based knowledge-building opportunities.

Through our growing partnership with the University of Cambridge (see page 16), we have been working towards the launch of a joint, in-country English Teacher Development Programme for 18 students, with the support of Voice of America. This is set to launch in the next reporting year April 2023 - March 2024. It aims to equip women with the skills to expand community-based learning through remote lessons and solar-powered tablets which hold a digital library full of helpful resources.

Amina meets Rahela in person for the first time.

Separately, working with The University of Sheffield, we are offering a mix of 15 Rahela Trust students and graduates a six-week remote English language course launching in June 2023. This scheme will act as a pilot to establish the scope for scalability beyond Rahela Trust students.

English language skills are hugely important for the future of women in Afghanistan, especially if they wish to build solidarity and professional networks, or study and work internationally, or with international organisations.

In 2023-2024 we expect to support 10 Afghan women through our partnership initiatives with the University of Cambridge and the University of Sheffield's English Language Teaching Centre. We estimate that each woman will further impact ten people within their wider communities through outreach programmes.

Our graduated scholar - now journalist - Amina Omid (pictured above) has been safely evacuated from Afghanistan to Kosovo, as part of a temporary journalistic program hosted by the Government of Kosovo and the Association of Journalists of Kosovo. Rahela Trust helped negotiate and administer Amina's move.

2. Engaging the Diaspora

Founded by an Afghan activist, working with other Afghan women and men, Rahela Trust is embedded in the Afghan diaspora. The diaspora has a unique understanding of Afghan culture and insight into the challenges young women in Afghanistan continue to face. While trustees were then formally recruited for the additional skills and networks they brought, Rahela Trust remains embedded in the Afghan community in the UK.

Continuing to engage the wider Afghan community is central to strengthening the impact of our work and furthering our mission. We achieve this through events like conferences, lectures, networking and cultural celebrations. These serve as an opportunity for ideas on furthering the education of women in Afghanistan to be presented and discussed, for thoughts and opinions to be shared, and for solidarity and sisterhood to be expressed in an Afghan-centric environment.

Beyond this, we aim to help connect members of the diaspora with each other to foster a greater sense of network and belonging, as well as promote greater intercultural understanding and collaboration with UK allies.

Annual Conference

In October 2022, we partnered with the University of Cambridge to host our first Annual Afghan Diaspora Academic Conference since the Covid pandemic. Supported by funding from the Refugee Council, Omid International, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), and the University of Cambridge, we brought together Afghan refugees, donors (50% Afghan), Trustees, the wider diaspora community, and allies to consider challenges, opportunities and new solutions to delivering our mission. Forty five people attended in person and 30 participated over Zoom.

Group photo, Annual Conference, 17th October 2022.

Some of the topics discussed and explored at the conference include:

- The need to provide women and girls' access to media and the internet, as well as finan-

-cial support for women's civil society initiatives that promote equality;

- The importance of psychological and trauma support;
- How to offer remote, internationally-run English language courses to women;
- The need to create a centralised database for Afghan-focused organisations across the UK and beyond to make it easy for refugees and asylum seekers to find services catering to their needs.

Group photo, Annual Conference, 17th October 2022.

Actions taken following learnings from the conference included:

- To support community-based education we built towards the launch of a joint, in-country English teacher development programme for 18 RT scholars in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and Voice of America.
- RT has made it a priority to provide financial support and internet data allowances where possible, particularly when building out projects with partners.
- Due to research highlighted at the conference and by our scholars, we are looking to expand the psychological and trauma support RT provides.
- Building on discussions around international remote learning opportunities, RT is set to embark on a programme in collaboration with the University of Sheffield to improve English Language skills.

By integrating these findings into our work, Rahela Trust is striving to create comprehensive and impactful programs that address the specific needs and aspirations of Afghan women today. We remain committed to listening, learning, and adapting our approach to ensure that our initiatives are effective, sustainable, and aligned with the priorities identified through our collaborative discussions.
Feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. However, we did learn some lessons for next time including more time allocated to networking, so fewer presentations.

AGM & Annual Lecture

On Monday 27th February 2023, we hosted our AGM and Annual Lecture at the House of Lords. Talks centred around how women can access education and work in Afghanistan today. The event was chaired by Baroness Fiona Hodgson of Abginer, CBE, and we had five expert speakers including Dr. Davood Moradian (Director of the

Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies, AISS), Forozan Rasooli (Afghan Women's Rights Activist), Hameed Hakimi (Associate Fellow at Chatham House and Senior Fellow at Atlantic Council), Wahidullah Azizi (Anti-corruption & Social Activist), and Dr. Marika Theros (Policy Fellow and Peacerep's Afghanistan Research Director, LSE - also a trustee at Rahela Trust).

Annual Lecture at House of Lords in February 2023.

In total there were 60 people in attendance, 24 in person and 46 online. Some key takeaways included:

- Advocacy is one of the most important tools we have to lift the ban on education for women and girls.
- The international community needs to do more to fund organisations that provide scholarships to Afghan girls.
- This is a great way to help those who have already finished or those concluding 12th grade.
- Scholarships should drop some criteria or innovate ways to support Afghan women. This could be dropping the English proficiency test required by most schools for Bachelors and Masters degrees or arranging pre-semester language courses to help them get up to speed.
- The IT sector has great scope to provide Afghan women gainful employment due to the demand for IT skills in labour markets worldwide.

Nowruz, Afghan New Year

On the 20th March, we hosted an Afghan New Year's Celebration, Nowruz. The celebration took place in Solihull, featuring Afghan food and music from the famous Afghan musician Hashmat Ehsmand, and a set from DJ Rasheell. We engaged new and old Afghan refugees and encouraged integration and a celebration of Afghan culture. 50 people attended.

This event also raised £1,586 through ticket sales. The CEO and Founder of The Larkbury Group, Mr Khusal Ahmed generously donated the cost of 20 tickets, while Mr Rafi Hamdam donated six laptops for our scholars in Afghanistan.

Nowruz event in March 2023.

International Women's Day

To celebrate International Women's Day and bring attention to the continued violations of women's rights in Afghanistan, diaspora-led magazine ARIANA and the co-working and cultural events space Second Home came together to host an event in support of Rahela Trust. The event opened with a speech from the host for the evening, Founder of Ariana Magazine, Ariana Abawe and a few words from Second Home's Cultural Curator, Magdalena Moursy.

The first presentation was from Afghan poet, Hadisa Hussain Afzaly who read inspiring work in Farsi and then English. We then heard from our Founder and Director, Rahela Sidiqi, who gave an update on the current situation in Afghanistan and the women we work with. Audiences were then lucky to witness a panel of incredible speakers, including a member of Afghanistan's first women's football team, Sabriah Nawrozi Mohseni who dreams of becoming a member of Manchester City's Women's Football team; Former Afghan Judge Marzia Babakarkhail; and Blind Afghan disability rights activist and co-founder of Rahyab Organisation, Benafsha Yaqoobi and her husband, Mahdi Salami.

The night closed with a traditional rubab performance and fashion show, featuring clothes from MAC Store London and food from Watani Box and Kulcha Kafe.

International Women's Day event in March 2023.

Communications

Our first e-newsletter was distributed in July 2022. These newsletters are designed to give our supporters regular updates relating to our UK-based and in-country-based activities. This includes news about scholarships, mentoring, projects with partners, and events. We also use the newsletter as an opportunity to shine a light on the personal stories of Rahela Trust scholars, volunteers and supporters, without whom Rahela Trust would not function. Since July 2022, we have increased our subscribers by 10%. This year we aimed to increase engagement on social media. Overall, we achieved the following:

- Twitter - 10% increase;
- Instagram - 27.2% increase;
- Facebook - 3% increase.
- LinkedIn - 53% increase.

We have also redeveloped our website, to improve usability and accessibility.

Next Steps

Over the next year, we aim to expand our reach beyond London and into cities like Birmingham, Leeds, Coventry, Nottingham and Sheffield, collaborating with Afghan-focused community organisations in each location. We will review and consolidate our communications and outreach to ensure diaspora engagement is grown proactively and sustainably. A key feature of our work this year has been creating new partnerships with Universities such as Cambridge and Sheffield. We have also brought new funders and donors on board who seek to be more engaged with our work. In the coming year, we will look to maximise these new opportunities and ensure we can develop and grow these partnerships in ways that are also sustainable for our small organisation. Trustees are keen to increase Afghan representation on the board and this will too be a focus.

3. Influence and Advocacy

As the Taliban makes education, and life, increasingly difficult for Afghan women, Rahela Trust is one of very few NGOs still operational and active at the grassroots in Afghanistan - especially outside of Kabul. We are therefore increasingly sharing lessons and case studies from our work to seek wider support for the cause of educating Afghan girls and women.

Our Director, Rahela Sidiqi, is also in greater demand as a speaker and panellist at national and international events. She shares examples of how the Taliban impacts women, lessons from the work of Rahela Trust about how this can be addressed, and increasingly uses these opportunities to call for more proactive bilateral and multinational support for the education of Afghan women.

Some events she has been involved with in 2022-23 include:

- March for Freedom for Afghan Women and Girls in London.
- Guest at the Global Convening on Women's Leadership for Sustainable Peace with UN Women in Geneva.
- Speaker at the Women on the Front Lines, Mena Chapter, Jordan.
- Speaker at the Afghan Leader's Forum in Brussels.
- Panellist at the Danish Refugee Council Afghan Diaspora Conference.
- Organiser and Key speaker at the Afghan Women Coalition for Change (AWCC) Conference
- Panellist at EU Parliament's Public Sessions of Equality Committee
- Speaker at McGill University, Canada: Women & Girls Speak Out: Prioritising Education in Humanitarian Aid in Afghanistan

Rahela at the Afghan Women Coalition for Change (AWCC).

Rahela in Geneva with UN Women.

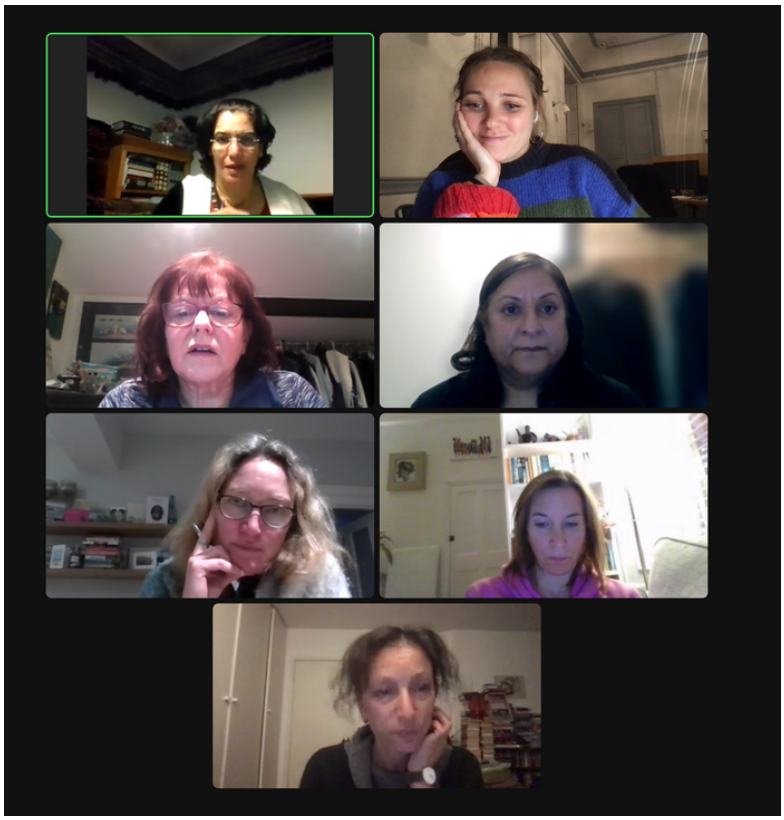
4. Strengthening the Organisation

Trustees adopted new policies for GDPR and Equity & Diversity as well as updating our Safeguarding policy and our financial policies and procedures.

With the appointment of Mel Bradley as a Trustee last year, trustees now receive and scrutinise regular financial reports at each meeting. Building on the positive feedback from the charity commission received the previous year, we carried out due diligence and appointed a new money transfer service to enable funds to be transferred securely into Afghanistan.

Our Development Officer Mollie Tant has been key to enabling us to strengthen the charity. She achieved great results in her first year, including the introduction of Office 365 which has improved the storing and sharing of data and reports, along with the charity's overall management and organisation.

Our valued team of volunteers have supported us to organise and host events, update and design marketing materials, and carry out fundraising campaigns and vital banking responsibilities. Our AV and Communications Volunteer, Ziarmal, was instrumental in delivering the Annual Lecture and Nowruz event, while our Banking Volunteer has helped us keep on top of our accounts.



Trustee meeting in March 2023

Next Year

We plan to increase the number of volunteers we work with so we can expand our UK-based activities, such as hosting events. We plan to review our Social Media policy and update our Safeguarding, and Financial Procedures policies. We will also host our annual Strategy Review in Autumn 2023.

Fundraising

Funds received in previous years towards multi-year scholarships appear in this year's accounts as reserves, although they were paid out just after the year-end. Institutional grants were received this year from British Refugee Council towards our October 2022 Annual conference.

Community donations from the diaspora totalled £6,147 including funds raised at our Nowruz community event and through the LaunchGood Ramazan campaign. We also raised £8,436 from our British community who are mainly donating via monthly direct debits. Donations from individual Afghans continue to form the backbone of Rahela Trust's scholarships. British allies also contributed to general donations - notably through our very successful 'scholar giving circle' and we received several major gifts from kind and generous friends of Rahela Trust.

We are enormously grateful to all our institutional funders and individual donors.
We have submitted several fundraising applications for support with our work in the UK and in Afghanistan, covering all four strategic goals, which we hope to hear the positive outcome of in the new year.

Next Year

In the coming year, we will continue to identify and approach trusts and foundations with potential interest in our work, especially our advocacy and other work to engage new Afghan arrivals to the UK and community building within the diaspora.

We are also looking at how we can reach more individual donors from the diaspora and allies, with a more streamlined approach to engaging supporters in support of scholars and graduates. We are looking forward to taking part in The Big Give's Women and Girls Match Fund in October 2023, and to applying its lessons to a new longer term fundraising plan.

Key Risks

The situation in Afghanistan is volatile, fraught with risk. Trustees have confirmed their attitude to risk in supporting the continued viability of the charity's objects. The charity commission reviewed and approved trustees' approach to risk in the previous year. Risks are reviewed at each trustee meeting and as they arise. Our key priority in assessing risk is safeguarding scholars, therefore not all risks or measures are in the public domain.

Key risks and measures include:
Funds being diverted to the Taliban: Rahela Trust only partners with private (non-state) universities who can provide regular assurances that no funds support the Taliban. We have secured the services of a new money transfer provider following extensive due diligence.

Scholars no longer receiving accreditation: Trustees explored options, including foreign scholarships. With the cooperation of existing partners, we have now minimised the long term impact of the new Taliban edict forbidding women from receiving degrees or certificates.

Universities being compromised or closed: The national humanitarian crisis is impacting all Afghan universities as students fall away. One partner university closed during the year. A partnership with a new university was quickly established, with scholars being transferred to it with no break in studies.

Rahela Trust communication compromised: we have anonymised and adopted aliases for scholars and use a range of communication channels with them. Nevertheless, this creates a new challenge in profile-raising and communicating the impact of our work to donors. We are reviewing external communications and donor engagement in the coming year.

Reserves and Going Concern:

The Trust currently has no investments or policy for reserves. Trustees approved expenditure on the recruitment of scholars and other activities only when sufficient funds were received.

Public Benefit:

The Trustees confirm that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Trust provides scholarships and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young women in Afghanistan, and trustees confirm that all activities conform to the guidance on public benefit.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities:

Law applicable to charities in England &Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the period and its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and the financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

There is no statutory requirement for our accounts to be audited. The Trustees have appointed Sarah Watling at Monksilver GP Accounts as a suitably qualified Independent Examiner.

The Annual Trustees' Report and Financial Statements were approved by the trustees at their meeting on Tuesday 12th September 2023 and signed on their behalf by the Chair.

Signed:
Samantha Rennie, Chair of the Rahela Trust
Date: Tuesday 12th September 2023

Financial Statements

Our expenditure on scholarships was lower in this financial year due to a delay in payment which was made in the following financial year.

The Balance Sheet shows a relatively high level of reserves. This is explained by the payment schedule to Afghan partners which means large payments from both restricted and and unrestricted funds are made just after the end of March each year.

Independent Examiner Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Rahela Trust for the year ended 31/03/23.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Sarah Watling
Monksilver GP Accounts
The Old Schoolhouse
Monksilver
Taunton
Somerset TA4 4HY

Date: 29/8/23

Signed: Sarah Watling
Sarah Watling

RAHELA TRUST
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2023 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	12 Months 31st March 2022 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
Receipts							
Community Donations:	2						
British Community Donations		8,436	-	8,436	9,591	-	9,591
Afghan Diaspora Community Donations		4,048	-	4,048	4,234	-	4,234
Restricted donations from sponsors		2,010	-	2,010	-		-
Unrestricted Donations		-	5,520	5,520	-	8,606	8,606
Grants:	3						
Jalal Agha Foundation		-	-	-	9,721	-	9,721
Big Lottery		-	-	-	9,721	-	9,721
GRA Global		-	-	-	8,120	-	8,120
British Refugee Council		12,134	-	12,134	-	-	-
Gift Aid:	4						
HMRC Charities		-	1,925	1,925	-	-	-
Total income		26,629	7,446	34,075	41,387	8,606	49,992
Deduct:							
Direct Costs:							
Scholarship Costs	5	9,870	-	9,870	21,525	-	21,525
Emergency Funding for Scholars	6		-	-	8,475	-	8,475
Total Scholarship Costs		(9,870)		(9,870)	(30,000)		(30,000)
Other Direct Costs:							
Volunteer expenses		-	2,348	2,348	-	2,813	2,813
Telephone and IT costs		-	1,938	1,938	-	1,665	1,665
Marketing costs		-	800	800	-	1,050	1,050
Annual Academic Conference		3,810	-	3,810	-	-	-
Fundraising events		747	-	747	-	-	-
Staff Costs		14,942	-	14,942	-	-	-

Printing, postage & stationery		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Other Direct Costs		(19,500)	(5,086)	(24,585)	-	(5,528)	(5,528)
Indirect Costs:							
Management and adminitration	7	-	1,800	1,800	-	264	264
Legal and Professional		-	758	758	-	300	300
Bank charges		-	101	101	-	320	320
Depreciation		-	76	76	-	81	81
Total Indirect Costs		-	(2,735)	(2,735)	-	(965)	(965)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the Year				**(3,115)**			**15,673**

RAHELA TRUST
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2023			12 Months 31st March 2022		
		£	£	£	£	£	£
		Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
FIXED ASSETS							
Tangible Assets	8	-	-	334	-	-	410
CURRENT ASSETS							
Bank		21,666	12,875	34,542	24,408	13,174	37,582
Cash and cash equivalent		-	-	-	-	-	-
		21,666	12,875	34,542	24,408	13,174	37,582
TOTAL ASSETS				34,876			37,992
TOTAL NET ASSETS				**34,876**			**37,992**
FUNDS							
Restricted funds		21,666	-	21,666	24,408	-	24,408
Unrestricted funds		-	13,210	13,210	-	13,584	13,584
		21,666	13,210	34,876	24,408	13,584	37,992
TOTAL FUNDS				**34,876**			**37,992**

RAHELA TRUST
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Income
All income is recognized in the Statement of Financial Activities once received.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognized as expenditure on a cash basis.

Tangible fixed assets
Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures, fittings & equipr - 15% on reducing balance

Taxation
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Charity is a going concern and further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. General Donations

Donations are received from various sources. These included shoe box donations, one-off community donations, donations collected at charity events and conferences and online donations. Some donations are made for specific purposes and these funds can only be used for that specific purpose so therefore these funds are restricted. Donations received from British Community Monthly Donations (£8436), Afghan Diaspora Community Donations (£4048), and Restristed Sponsor Donations (2010) could only be used for university scholarships and mentorships. Other donations amounting to £5520 are unrestricted in nature.

3. Gift Aid

Gift Aid amounting to £1,925 was received by HMRC and it is unrestricted in nature.

4. Grants

Grants are restricted in nature and are made to support the provision of university scholarships and mentorships to underprivileged young women.
For the Year ended 31.03.2023, Grants were received from the following sources:

British Refugee Council £12,134.40

5. Scholarship and Emergency Fund Costs

Rahela Trust transferred £9,870.36 in this reporting period. These payments were made to students to fund their university fees and expenses.

6. Volunteer Expenses

These include the costs incurred by the volunteers for the purpose of fund raising at charity events and conferences.

7. Management and Administration

These costs are administrative in nature, other costs include membership fees, web hosting and sundry expenses.

8. Tangible Assets

These consists of two printers and a computer

Trustees would like to wish a special thank you to the below.

All our Ambassadors of Support.

UK Executive Team
Ziarmal Gharghasht
Safia Nasrat
Rahela Sidiqi
Mollie Tant
Khadija Yawari

Afghan Executive Team
**Names have been omitted for security purposes.*

And all our Mentors and Coordinators.

Donors
Amanat Foundation
Charity Aid Foundation
Jalal Agha Foundation
Refugee Council
National Lottery Fund

And all our Diaspora and British community donors.

We **thank you** for your continued support in our efforts to **improve women's rights** and **access to tertiary education** in **Afghanistan**.

Contact

Rahela Trust
+44 (0)20 3718 8185
www.rahelatrust.org
info@rahelatrust.org

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

Rahela Trust for Afghan women's education

England & Wales - Charity number 1165763

Accounts

Rahela Trust

Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements

April 2021 - March 2022

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

Charity Number: 1165763

Table of Contents

Our Mission & Values	01
Key Messages	02
Legal & Administrative Details	05
Structure, Governance & Management	06
Origins, Objectives & Activities	08
At a Glance: Achievements & Performance	10
Scholarships	13
Mentoring	19
Engaging the Diaspora	23
Strengthening the Organisation	32
Financial Statements	36
References	43
Messages of Thanks	
How You Can Help	

Our Mission & Values

Rahela Trust's mission is to provide university and higher education scholarships, mentorship and access to local and global professional networks to disadvantaged and talented Afghan women from rural areas who are committed to building a future where women are full participants and leaders in society.

Growing a community of educated young women who are committed to improving the lives of women in Afghanistan, the Rahela Trust envisages a society where the rights of women are respected - and women are fully involved in the social, political and economic aspects of life.

Key Messages

Message from Samantha Rennie, Chairperson of Rahela Trust

"I'm astounded by the strength, bravery and determination that so many demonstrate – both within Afghanistan and as refugees...Rahela Sidiqi...prominent among them"

Samantha Rennie, Chairperson

The "disaster and betrayal"[1] of abandoning the Afghan people to the Taliban in August 2021 was - and still is - shameful. As I stand beside Afghan women, it's impossible to fully comprehend the fear, trauma and despair as they see their livelihoods, hopes and futures wrenched brutally away from them while the world looks elsewhere.

Yet I'm astounded by the strength, bravery and determination that so many demonstrate – both within Afghanistan and as refugees. Rahela Sidiqi, founder of the Rahela Trust is prominent among them, as are the Trust's scholars, the former ministers, business-women and academics who have featured in the Trust's on-line events this year.

They each and all deserve our admiration and thanks. The Rahela Trust paused new scholarships for the 2021 intake, yet doubled down on efforts to support our existing volunteers, scholars and alumni in-country, with much behind-the-scenes activity among the chaos. Financially, this was another year of growth for the Rahela Trust (formerly Farkhunda Trust) and I'm especially grateful for new grants from the National Lottery's Awards for All and from the Jalal Agha Foundation which enabled us to recruit Development Officer Mollie Tant into the core team.

We also welcomed a new trustee, Mel Bradley, whose financial skills and fundraising connections have brought real value to the Trust. Mel also coordinates a giving circle of generous allies to our cause, each of whom we thank enormously.

All my fellow trustees deserve extra thanks this year, for helping steward the trust through challenging times, which also earnt us a commendation from the official regulator, the Charity Commission who said of their meeting with us: ”While the trustees confirmed the situation is fluid and in a state of constant change, the trustees demonstrated a good working knowledge of how to manage and mitigate any potential risks that arise with working in an area deemed high risk by the Commission.”

So while our local partners - private universities and NGOs - remain open in Afghanistan, the diaspora expands, and we ramp up our advocacy within the international community, the Trust will continue to pursue its mission. We need more generous people to join us in fighting this good fight and hope this annual report inspires you to do so.

Message from Founding Director, Rahela Sidiqi

"I'm pleased that we are observing *[our students]*...**becoming true leaders - we need the next generation to become agents of change!"**

Rahela Sidiqi, Founding Director

The situation in Afghanistan is dire, and the situation for women worsens day by day - but this does not mean that we lose our passion of fighting for women's rights and their right to an education! The high mark achievements and commitments of our scholars, even after the Taliban's regime was reinstated, did not stop them from supporting their community. Rather, they changed their approach, focusing on home-based education to girls and children of their community. Yamina from Kandahar said *"I do enjoy when I see my peer-coaching result in the improvement of marks".*

At the Benawa University *Unama* meeting, the University Chancellor said he really enjoyed it when our Rahela Trust scholars spoke about their awareness-raising projects and the impact they had on women and the community. He added how he had observed huge differences between Rahela Trust scholars and the other students. I thought the Rahela Model should be replicated for all the other students of Benawa University! I am pleased to see that we are observing their practice of becoming true leaders - we need the next generation to become the agents of change! In fact, the recognition of our scholar's commitment to giving back to their society by the community and leaders is what I hope to see more.

Legal & Administrative Details

Trustees

Samantha Rennie **(Chairperson)**
Kamini Paul
Liz Mermin
Marika Theros
Mel Bradley
Mel Whitney-Long
Sear Sadat **(Treasurer)**

Founder & Director

Rahela Sidiqi

Development Officer

Mollie Tant

Further Details

Charity Number
1165763

Registered Address
28 Burns Close, Welling, DA16 3NJ

Bankers
HSBC, 275 Greenwich High Road, Greenwich, SE10 8NF

Independent Examiner
Sarah Walting, Monksilver GP Accounts, The Old Schoolhouse, Monksilver, Taunton, Somersrt, TA4 4HY

Structure, Governance & Core Values

Rahela Trust is pleased to present its annual report and unaudited financial statements for the charity in the years 2021-22 - 1st April 2021 to 1st March 2022. Reference and administrative details are set out on page 5 from part of this report. The report and financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the charity's governing document and the Statement of Recommended Practice 0 Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102.

The Trust was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and registered UK Charity on 25th February 2016.

Structure & Management

Rahela Trust is governed by its constitution last amended on 3rd April 2021. The board of trustees are responsible for the governance of Rahela Trust and they performs duties with close adherence to the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Board of Trustees seeks to appoint members who have a wide range of appropriate skills and knowledge of the sector that will allow them to govern and grow the charity successfully. With that, we are happy our trustees bring a range of skills to support Rahela Trust's mission through Afghan field experience, peacebuilding, media, charity policies and finance.

Trustees make all major decisions regarding strategy, policies and finance. Meetings of the Board are convened every three months to address strategic issues and review financial and operational activities. Trustees consider all other issues via email as and when they arrive.

The Trustees conducted a skills review to identify potential gaps in the Board that can be then suitably recruited for. The appointed individuals must fit within the requirements in the constitution, support the values of the organisation and be able to make necessary time commitments.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration.

Rahela Trust relies heavily on volunteers giving their time to the organisation. All our volunteers can claim back expenses from Rahela Trust in line with our volunteering policy. There are seven volunteers in Afghanistan, including two Kabul-based coordinators and one finance, one mentor and one coordinator in Helmand and one Coordinator and Mentor in Kandahar. The coordinators receive salaries paid for by the Trust's institutional partners or their affiliated partners.

The day-to-day activities are delegated to the Director. The Director is supported by the trustees, Development Officer and Executive Advisory Committee.

Core Values

Quality Scholarships

A commitment to deliver a quality scholarship programme

Transparency

Guaranteed open, detailed and honest reporting on all activity

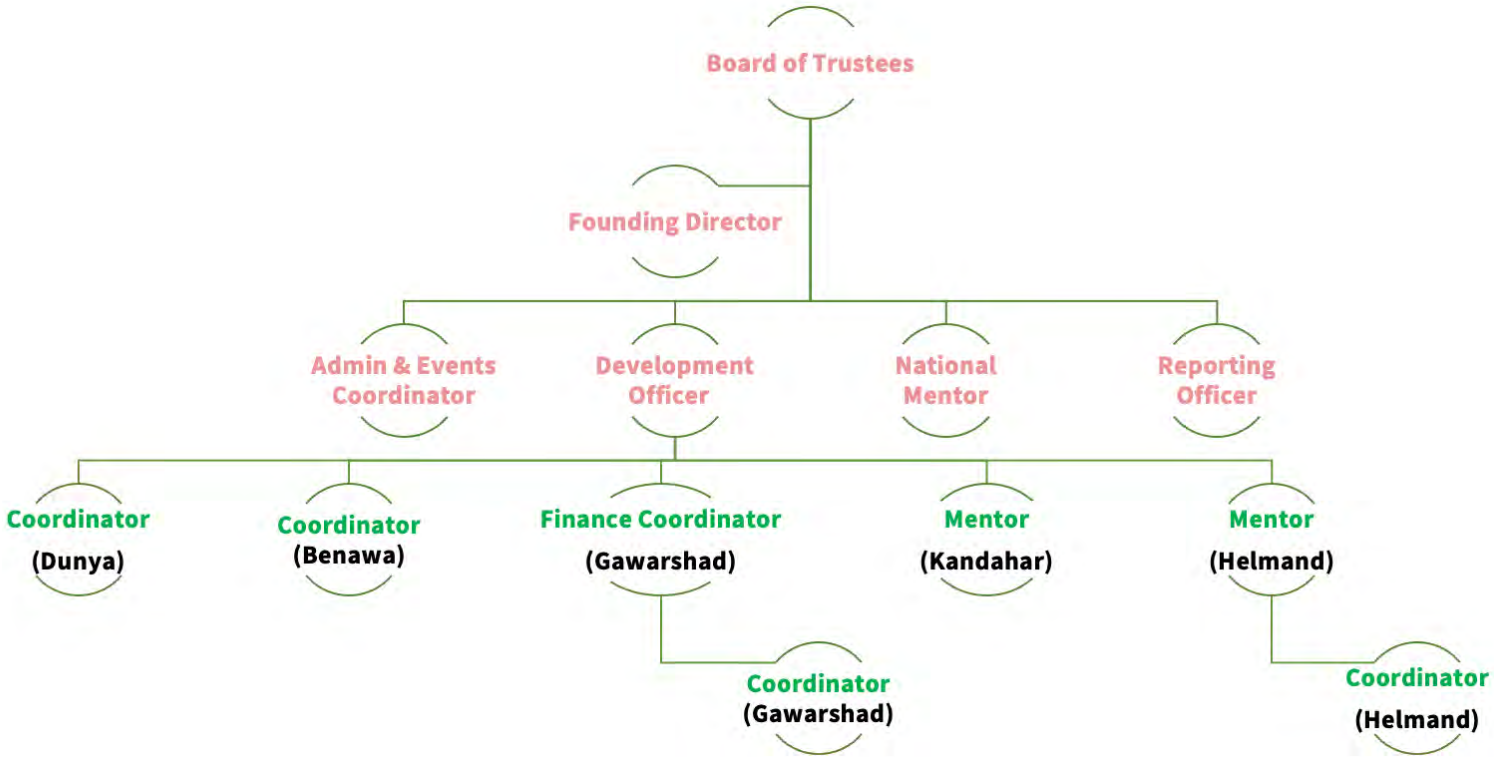
Results-Based Achievement

Manage the scholarship programme and direction of Rahela Trust with results at the heart

Effective & Efficient Mobilisation

Ensure resources are well managed and streamlined to reduce delays

Governance & Management Structure March 2022



Origins, Objectives & Strategic Goals

Origins

Afghan women's rights activist Rahela Sidiqi founded Rahela Trust to improve the situation for women in Afghanistan due to the continued systematic discrimination of women at both the familial and societal levels. Originally, Rahela Trust was named Farkhunda Trust in honour of *Farkhunda Malikzada* who was murdered by a mob in Kabul after being falsely accused of burning a Quran in 2015. Rahela Trust underwent the name change in 2021 out of respect for the family's wishes who later reneged since the Trust was founded in 2016.

Objectives

Our aim is to advance women's education in Afghanistan and to create safe, inspiring spaces for Afghan women to pursue their education. This has of course become even more of a challenge since the takeover by the Taliban in August 2021. Our selection criteria look to support academically-talented girls who have struggled with violence or have financial difficulties. Rahela Trust provides other forms of support as Trustees deem appropriate - this includes helping to safeguard their security in a nation suffering conflict.

Partner Universities & Institution Networks

Gawharshad University, Kabul
Duyna University, Kabul
Benawa University, Kandahar
Bost University, Helmand
OESD [Organisation for Socio-Economic Development]

Strategic Goals

1. Providing scholarships to disadvantaged and talented women, from and in rural Afghanistan

2. Supporting scholars through mentorship and networking

3. Raising awareness and engaging the Afghan diaspora in the development of Afghanistan

4. Strengthening and growing Rahela Trust to increase our impact

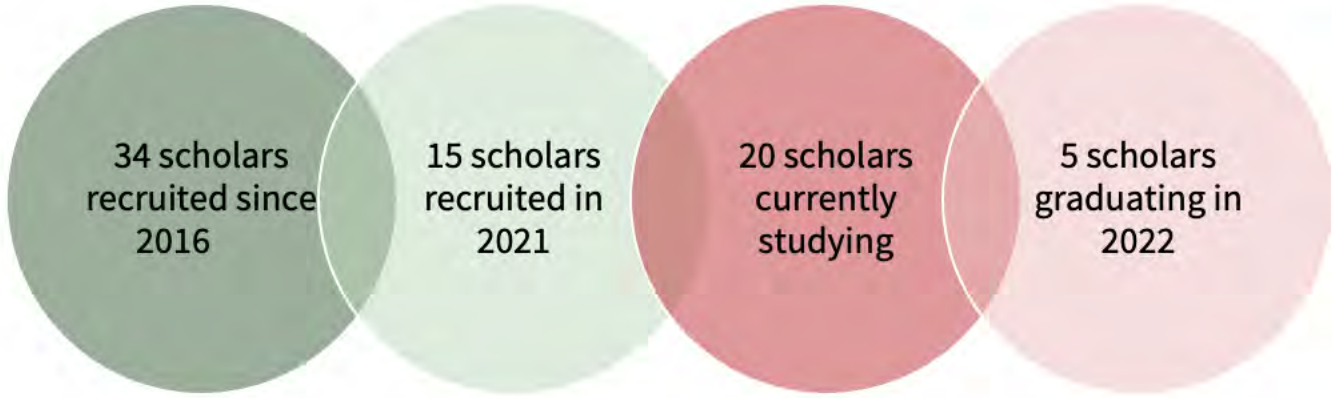
At a Glance: Achievements & Performance

Scholarships

Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, no new scholars have been onboarded or recruited. Our primary concern has been to monitor and maintain the welfare of our current scholars during this traumatic period and do all we can to support the successful attainment of their academic qualifications.

Omid International organised a crowdfunding initiative on behalf of Rahela Trust to distribute $250 to each scholar and volunteer to support them throughout the harsh winter - for example, emergency food.

We are proud to report that 99% of our scholars have managed to continue to perform despite the extremely challenging situation, achieving an average of 70 - 95% in their exams. It is with regret and sadness that one scholar has had to pause studying due to the security threat to her life. We continue to be in daily contact with this individual and are doing our upmost to safeguard her security.



Mentoring

In the Autumn Term of 2020, all of Afghanistan's university campuses were closed due to Covid-19. This caused, similar to universities all over the world, teaching and learning to operate remotely. Therefore, many of our scholars were already familiar with maximising the use of instant messaging apps such as WhatsApp, as well as video communication platforms, such as Zoom. This was useful to maintain mentoring activities with scholars during the uncertainty of August 2021 and beyond, and helped them to adapt to new circumstances.

Our mentoring structure is mapped out below. It is important to note that Afghan university terms operate on a two-term basis - the year runs from 1st April to 31st January the following year.

Spring Quarter Induction

Conducted by Rahela Trust's Director with all new, current and graduated scholars.

The focus of this session is to familiarise students with Rahela Trust policy and the expectations scholars should aim to fulfil.

The presence of existing and graduated scholars serves to provide new scholars with role models and individuals they can direct relevant questions towards.

Quarterly One-to-Ones

Rahela Trust's Director conducts quarterly online one-to-one sessions utilising WhatsApp video and Instant Messaging.

For new and existing scholars, this session helps us to understand their personal experiences and how they feel they are progressing outside of just exams. For graduated scholars, sessions work to help them find and maximise opportunities, as well as community work initiatives.

University Mentor Support

University mentors provide personalised coaching according to each student's needs.

Following the 2020 evaluation of University Mentors' coaching and mentoring work, it was understood students were in need of greater support.

Due to this, we opened communication lines on WhatsApp which enabled students to contact their mentors at any time.

Monthly Sessions with NC's*

Our National Coordinator conducts monthly sessions with our scholars.

These sessions are used to ensure the student feels supported. Their academic progress is also reviewed.

We also use these sessions to keep track and encourage scholars to put their skills into practice by participating in activities including awareness raising, community organising and mentoring.

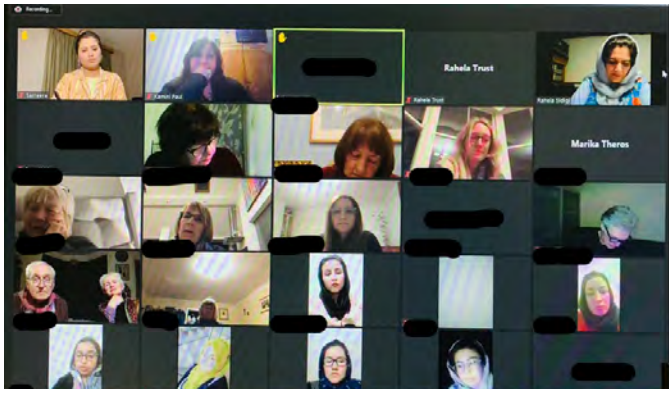
*NC's are our National Coordinators

Engaging the Diaspora and Allies

We believe supporting women's education does not stop at teaching. Building relationships with the Afghan diaspora, networking with different individuals, groups and organisations, and mobilising volunteers from the diaspora and ally community are also vital.

Each year we hold an Annual Lecture which focuses on a particular topic. It serves as a space where individuals from across the globe can share, listen and learn about Afghanistan and the work of Rahela Trust. This year's lecture focused on how the resurgence of the Taliban will shape Afghanistan's future and what needs to be achieved to help Afghanistan move toward a more positive, functioning society where all genders are respected and included. Our key speaker this year was one of Afghanistan's most eminent politicians, Mrs. Fawzia Koofi. We had over 90 attendees.

In March 2022, we also had the pleasure of being involved and invited to the wedding of one of our community members and Ambassadors, Farid Wahimi. It was hugely successful and a great example of marrying community engagement, fundraising and integration initiatives.



Strengthening the Organisation

Following the decision to pause the recruiting of new scholars in light of the Taliban, we channelled efforts to our fourth Strategic Goal - ensuring Rahela Trust is a strong organisation. Due to this, we decided to recruit a part-time Development Officer in early 2022. We had over 100 applicants. After conducting a full round of panel interviews and much deliberation, we offered the role to Mollie Tant who excitedly accepted and was onboarded in March 2022.

The organisation also migrated to Microsoft 365 which has streamlined our communications allowing for better resource sharing between country teams, and improved our filing systems and overall security.

We are in the process of improving our website, developing our social media and expanding our fundraising initiatives.

1. Scholarships

Partner Universities

The Trust operates scholarships in partnership with selected private (non-state) universities and third-level colleges, accredited by the Afghan Ministry for Education. We have focused on developing relationships with institutions outside of the capital so to ensure we are accessible to women who are from the most underprivileged and rural areas of Afghanistan.

We have established Memoranda of Agreements with each institution to ensure our respective partners are in written agreement with their roles, expected services and payment method for named scholars. They support the work of several of our programme co-ordinators and mentors and provide general administrative support.

Scholarship Cost Breakdown

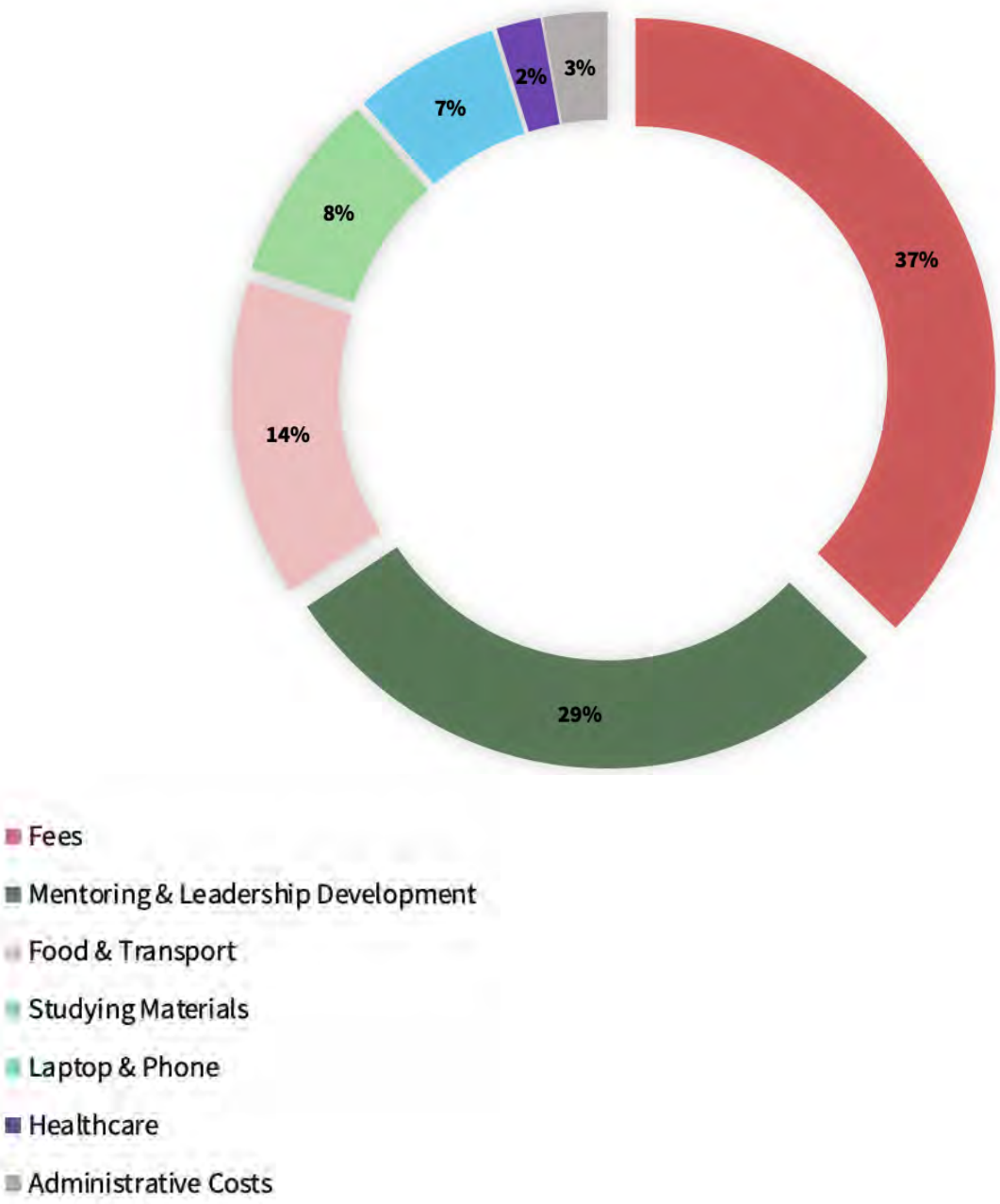
Each scholarship covers tuition fees and living and travel expenses, as well as the cost of books and studying utensils [including a laptop]. It was also decided in 2021 that Rahela Trust would supply smartphones due to the unreliable internet connection through powerlines.

Scholarships are only available for the full duration of the degree course, subject to satisfactory academic results each year [distinction and above]. Rahela Trust scholarships are uniquely designed to provide one-to-one mentoring, leadership-skill development and access to a global professional network. This works to empower individuals to become future leaders and agents of change.

All degree courses are four years, except medicine which is five.

A breakdown of the scholarship costs per year are as below:

Breakdown By Percentage



Approximately, scholarships cost £1750 per year, per scholar, including administrative charges.

Recruiting New Scholars

Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Rahela Trust took the executive decision to pause all recruitment for new scholars. We wanted to prioritise our existing scholars and ensure their financial and programmatic security to successfully complete their degrees. It was also a good opportunity to cement the Trust's systems and processes and bolster fundraising activity whilst the Taliban's presence caused disruptions to female education.

So far we have established Microsoft Office for Trustees and our members of staff including our National Coordinators. We recently hired Development Officer (March 2022). in accordance with our 2020 Strategic Goals.

When we resume recruiting for our scholarship programme in September 2022, we will continue to follow the Open Competition model. The process is described in greater detail below.

Stage One

Scholarships are advertised on the websites of Rahela Trust, our partner universities and the Afghan Women NGOs Network. We also maximise awareness through events and our community network.

Candidates then apply with evidence of their academic achievements.

Stage Two

When the application window closes, a long list of applicants is generated by university and academic committee members and Rahela Trust's National Coordinators.

The long list is produced using a scoring system and is then fully screened by the Mixed Committee of Independent Academic and Civil Society in Afghansitan.

Stage Three

The highest scoring candidates are visited at home by a Rahela Trust Coordinator. Applicants who live in distant provinces have their applications checked by Rahela Trust in cooperation with civil society organisations.

Based on these findings, the shortlist is then produced.

Stage Four

Rahela Trust's Board of Trustees and the Director assess the shortlist against the criteria and host remote interviews with prospective scholars [detailed below]. A final selection is announced and letters of commitment are dispersed to scholar parents and associated community members to sign.

Rahela Trust Scholar Selection Criteria

Our eligibility criteria comprise questions which reflect the philosophy underpinning Rahela Trust, which is listed below. We aim to recruit scholars who will not only thrive within an academic environment and do not have the economic means to do so without help but are also committed to positively developing the future of women and civil society in Afghanistan.

Does the applicant wish to apply for senior level government jobs and develop their capacity in management through leadership training?

Has the applicant already attended higher education, is registered, but had to drop out or has been in a period of limbo at home due to economic reasons or other pressures?

Is the applicant financially disadvantaged, or lacking financial resources to continue education?

Does the applicant come from a deprived family background with evidence of violence and/or abuse?

Does the applicant have a passion for edcuation, an exceptional academic ambition or promise, with evidence of a high school degree (70 - 100 score)?

Does the applicant have solidiarity with other women, a desire to combat discrimination, and is prepared to support other female students?

Does the applicant have a future plan to work in a leadership role?

Does the applicant have a commitment to women empowerment and solidarity building?

Scholarships and The Taliban

Current Situation

The current situation in Afghanistan is devastating. The Taliban are back in power and continue to reintroduce laws which are highly reminiscent of those in 1996. Although there is debate over whether reductions in civil liberties will continue long-term and without international interference, as it stands, the official status of girls' education in Afghanistan is at a standstill.

Following the announcement on Tuesday 22nd March 2022 by the Taliban that the six-month-long closure of girls' secondary schools will not end, the problem of girls' education in Afghanistan blazes on.

Reports detail that primary-school girls are continuing to attend school in some provinces, however concerns over their safety from violence grow. Girls of high-school age and up are rule-bound to their homes, and so half of Afghanistan's population are yet again disempowered *(The Guardian, 2022)* and fundamental human rights flouted *(The Print, 2022)*.

Rahela Trust Reponse

Our number one priority is to safeguard Rahela Trust's scholars. Not only do we want to safeguard their security, but also their future. It is a tough line to balance as we and the students are collectively passionate about their learning. Only one scholar has gone into hiding due to the risk of violence against them. The student's families are frightened.

Due to the private status of our university partners, all but one of our scholars are continuing to attend their classes in person. We have taken several actions since the fall of the Taliban listed below:

For very high risk students, meaning they are currently in hiding, we have done our best to maximise our network of high-powered individuals who have the knowledge and ability to protect them best - by removing them from the country. Though we have come to no resolutions yet, we continue to press with this.

Provided instant messaging communication with Director Rahela Sidiqi to help maintain their sense of direction and provide appropriate support where possible.

Engaged members of the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) who meet on a weekly basis to share and receive information about Taliban activity and current activity.

Response Analysis

Rahela Trust is a very small organisation with one part-time employee, Mollie Tant a Director, Rahela Sidiqi and seven Trustees. We rely heavily on grants, donations and individuals volunteering their time to keep Rahela Trust's programmes and activities going and so our response to the current situation has it's limitations. We strive to be a transparent and open organisation and so these are summarised below.

With greater resources, we would be able to spend greater time formalising cases and contacting individuals outside of our networks who may be able to help.

Our Director undertakes the majority of scholar communication responsibilities which is a heavy mental burden. We would to recruit more individuals who would be able to support her in this.

Adapting for the Future

We would like to provide scholarships to Afghan refugees wherever they are, however, we are severely limited by resources and other legal parameters. We are focusing on expanding the Rahela Trust community by restarting our regular events [affected by Covid] and spending more time on our social media accounts.

The use of the Hawala system to transfer money to Afghanistan will continue to be assessed and monitored carefully.

We will remain agile in responding to the changing situation in Afghanistan.

2. Mentoring

The Rahela Model

The Founding Director's model for creating a ripple effect in a community of women and young girls revolves around equipping individual scholars with the capacity, knowledge and tenacity to share their learning and instigate community-based initiatives.

Rahela Trust has four In-Country Coordinators who are required to stay in contact with the scholars on a daily basis. Scholars also have additional support on a fortnightly basis from their external mentors who serve as role models - they are specialists in their fields of study and are able to offer tailored advice. Our Founding Director Rahela hosts mentoring and coaching sessions for all scholars on a quarterly basis remotely.

Mentoring in Action

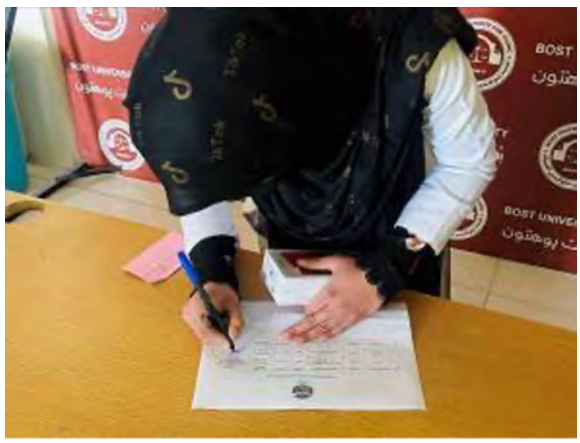
Bost University, Helmand

One of our In-Country Mentors worked closely with the five Rahela Trust students based in Helmand. She was instrumental in two key mentoring activities which are detailed below.

Overcoming Taliban-Related Obstacles

After the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021, the banking system was badly affected which meant Rahela Trust was unable to send money needed for tuition fees, pocket money and transportation in the formal way. After an emergency Trustee meeting on the 6th December 2021, it was decided the Hawala system would be used to transfer the necessary funds.

Our In-Country Mentor was key to this process and worked with the Coordinator based in Helmand to distribute the money to the relevant individuals. She was also vital to helping us overcome the security issues which were blocking our ability to issue the student's laptops and mobile phones. These technologies are of course essential to the scholars whilst participating in the scholarship programme.



NGO Training & Cooperation

Our In-Country Mentor linked each student with various international NGOs such as the ***International Rescue Committee*** *(IRC)*, ***Action Against Hunger*** *(AAH)* and the ***International Committee of the Red Cross*** *(ICRC)* who were offering training opportunities and chances to volunteer in social activities.

Each scholar underwent a three-day Covid-19 and Omicron spread prevention training, hosted by the ***IRC.*** They were encouraged to share their knowledge with their local communities and there are currently plans to host training sessions after their final exams.

There are five scholars at Bost University who are heavily involved in carrying out activities in their communities.

One of our scholars ****Faiza*** manages and teaches basic subjects to a class made up of young children. She is passionate about education and thinks it is one of the best ways to secure a bright future for Afghanistan. She is in her third semester.

Another of our Bost University students, ****Ghazal*** teaches very young children in her home and donates teaching materials and notepads to the students.

The scholars at Bost University took part in the three-day Covid-19 and Omnicron spread prevention training ran by the ***IRC.*** They too have taken steps to share these skills with their local communities.

Gawharshad University, Kabul

At Gawhardshad University, the scholars are encouraged to share their skills. They are committed to helping women gain greater economic freedom.

One of our top scholars, ***Sabrina*** has hosted several sessions for local women. She focuses on teaching them entrepreneurial skills which enable them to sell items that they sew. As part of this, she helps build their sewing capabilities by demonstrating various sewing patterns.

Maeda is an especially talented mathematician. Throughout both semesters, she has hosted troubleshooting sessions for her peers who are struggling in the subject.

Dunya University, Kabul

We have one student at Dunya University who is extremely motivated to encourage younger girls to value their education and gain greater freedoms.

This year, ***Saboora*** has hosted seven days of workshops to young girls in her community who have been deeply demoralised by the resurgence of the Taliban. She tries to spark hope and motivation within her students so they do not lose hope, mirroring the mentoring she has personally received through Rahela Trust.

Saboora has also hosted seminars for housewives exploring the impact of parent's behaviour on their children. The attendees were extremely receptive and engaged in the conversations that followed.

Benawa University, Kandahar

There are eight Rahela Trust scholars at Benawa University. The social activities here have been impressively diverse and reflective of the various scholar's passions and interests.

*__*Sanaz*__ has conducted many awareness-raising sessions in her community, focusing on various topics including; violence against children, the rights of children and the importance of education. Schools, community leaders, parents and administrative personnel have all been in attendance at these sessions.

*__*Shahzadah*__ has focused on matters of health. She is key to helping with doctors' appointments, facilitating conversations, helping patients to fill in forms and ensuring services run smoothly overall.

3. Engaging the Diaspora

Overview

Our UK-based activity in connecting wider diaspora and Afghan refugees together in support of women's education is an extremely important aspect of Rahela Trust. Given our extensive and deep networks in the country and within diaspora communities, this is integral.

We hold a number of events to foster engagement each year including an Annual Lecture and General Meeting, Annual Academy Conference and other, smaller social and fundraising events. Due to Covid-19, we have been unable to host the Annual Afghan Diaspora Academic Conference for two years and so are thrilled to report our second conference will be held Monday 19th September 2022 at the University of Cambridge.

This section will explore several diaspora initiatives undertaken by Rahela Trust:

- Annual Lecture & General Meeting
- Director Activity Summary
- Diaspora Community Wedding

Annual Lecture & General Meeting

Rahela Trust hosted its Fifth Annual Lecture during a time where populations around the world continued struggling with a global pandemic that placed heavy burdens on all aspects of society - from job markets to health, education and social services. Unsurprisingly, women have been disproportionately affected by the impact of Covid. From increased violence to worsened economic rights, existing gender inequalities have only intensified. For Afghanistan, this, and the fall to the Taliban in August 2021, has put the future of women and girls at even greater risk than pre-pandemic.

This year's lecture focused on the current state of Afghanistan - what Afghans and the international community can do to secure a more positive future for the women of Afghanistan, and the country as a whole. We also explored the experience of our students and how they have been tackling unprecedented challenges, as well as how Rahela Trust has managed and adapted to new developments.

Speakers

Elizabeth Winter - Fifth Annual Lecture Chair

Founding member of British & Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group **(BAAG)** and a Trustee of Afghanaid. A social scientist and researcher, she specialises in civil society development.

Rahela Sidiqi - Founder & Director of Rahela Trust

Founding Director of Rahela Trust, Rahela is also a core founder of the National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan. Since 1993 she has worked as a women's rights activist at the grassroots and policy levels in Afghanistan.

Samantha Rennie - Chairperson of Rahela Trust

Experienced charity relief executive, she has worked with Rosa, the UK Fund for Women & Girls and Handicap International. She is a lifelong champion of social justice and the power of grassroots movements to effect change.

Fawzia Koofi - Political Leader & Activist

Leader of the Movement of Change for Afghanistan party and the first woman to lead a political party in Afghanistan. Ms Koofi is an active figure in the field of women's rights in Afghanistan and has played an active role in the enactment of protective laws for women and children.

**Yumna* - Rahela Trust Scholar

**Name changed for safeguarding purposes*

Attends Dunya University.

Rahela Sidiqi

This year, Rahela Sidiqi explored the efficacy of the **Rahela Trust's** scholarship programme and evidence that following the Rahela Model approach is successfully achieving results.

Utilising the example of a former Rahela Trust student, Amina who graduated from Gawharshad University, it is clear that higher education, coupled with coaching, mentoring and networking is key to forging organically grown and empowered female leaders.

Providing individualised coaching and direct access to 24/7 academic and personal support through instant messaging apps [such as WhatsApp] has proved imperative to building confidence and strength in scholars, especially throughout Covid and the Taliban's takeover. Rahela Trust's mentoring philosophy encourages the adoption of values including respect, honesty, kindness and helpfulness to others. This is key to establishing female leaders.

Amina is an excellent example of someone who has embraced these teachings. Since graduating, she has worked closely with nationally regarded journalists, secured official employment with Afghanistan's government just three months after graduating, and is now a mentor to girls who follow in her footsteps.
Rahela's key message is for the young people of Afghanistan to not lose hope, and for the diaspora, allies and others to support Rahela Trust Scholars in any way they can.

(L-R) *Rahela Sidiqi, Rahela Trust scholar, Annual Lecture & General Meeting participants, Rahela Trust scholar Amina.*

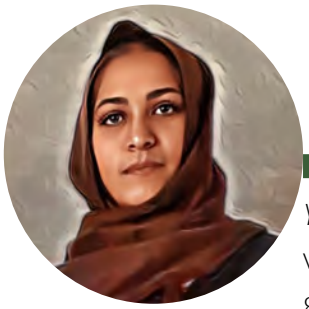
Fawzia Koofi

Fawzia Koofi outlined the unique context Afghanistan finds itself post-conflict and urged the international community to use their leverage to instigate meaningful political dialogue.

The complexity of the situation in Afghanistan is such that some provinces were taken by the Taliban without force. There is a portion of Afghanistan's population who are genuine supporters of the new leadership, all the while many of the young, empowered, talented and educated groups have been driven out of Afghanistan, spelling greater difficulties for the country's future.

At this time, the Taliban's actions have demonstrated an exclusionary approach to gender. Since the ban in December 2021, girls' education has yet to be reinstated and it appears it will remain this way for the foreseeable future. There are also no females working for the government.

Moving forward, Ms. Koofi stressed that the importance of policies and laws affecting women and girls cannot be underestimated. A political conversation between the general population and the current government is required to establish a meaningful political structure that represents *all* the people it serves. The Taliban need to open up to dialogue and establish their legitimacy nationally and internationally in order to achieve this. Ultimately, Ms. Koofi makes it clear that political dialogue is a priority if empowered Afghan women are to feel safe, and free to positively contribute to their country.



Rahela Trust Scholar - **Yumna*

Yumna shared her personal story with those attending the virtual lecture. It was a very special moment for us as Mrs Sidiqi and her in-country mentor had spent great time and work drafting, finalising and practising in English with *Yumna*.

Yumna's transcribed speech can be found in the Index **[Item A]** at the end of this report as we would like her words to live outside the Annual Lecture. We have included a shortened version below.

"Growing up in the Logar Tribe, they did not send their daughters to school due to being conservative and having a complicated opinion....my uncle...was obliged to leave our village because I was not allowed to go to school... "As soon as I finished school, due to my interest in continuing my education, I successfully passed the Dunya university entrance exams for the faculty of economics...however, as soon as the first semester ended...my grandmother was not able to pay my education costs...I was obliged to leave the university.

"The light was sparkling in the dark...I was given hope....fortunately, I joined the school of Rahela Trust...it was through coaching mentoring and moral building...and the encouragement and support of Ms. Sidiqi...I achieved 99% Mark in my academic studies. I am getting better and better and moving stronger than before....I took responsibility...I learned that I must be someone who does not give up on honesty, truthfulness, kindness, and service to people. I was able to do something for my capacity building...I am proud...

"Yumna who was...very shy yesterday..presents with...braveness...today...I convey...honesty, working on herself, empowering others. To be a stable human being in society to be a role model in society, these are the values that I learned from Rahela Turst...I learned...the effective and efficient use of resources is important...that the money given to me for projects for women and girls should be used carefully...it was an internship for me...that these resources should be used...well...I learned that I had to work harder in the face of the Taliban...and never give up.

Director Activities with Afghan Diaspora Community

Rahela Sidiqi, Rahela Trust's Director is an active women's rights activist and represents the Trust and its unique approach to development at various events including, international conferences, lectures, workshops and advocacy sessions.

See more information below.

Danish Refugee Council

In November 2021, Rahela attended the Danish Refugee Council *Afghan Diaspora Conference* in Copenhagen. The aim of the conference was to offer a space for the Afghan diaspora to come together, network, learn from each other and assert their positions as key stakeholders who should be consulted by European member states and EU institutions.

Rahela Sidiqi is pictured at the conference, third from the left

Advocacy Initiatives

Rahela frequently organises and participates in events which advocate for Afghan women's right to education and freedom. See below for some of the 2021 highlights:

(1) Advocacy session with Baroness Fiona Hodgson and 80 women from Afghanistan

(2) Co-Chaired for the Danish Refugee Council alongside Samira Nawa Amini, Danish MP and three professional Afghan women panellists

Rahela Sidiqi is pictured third from the left.

(3) Rahela Co-founded the Afghan Women Coalition for Change (AWCC) in February 2022 with support from The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). There are 16 members.

Rahela Sidiqi is pictured fourth rom the right.

(4) Rahela was asked to be a panellist by the EU Parliament for the *Public Sessions of Equality Committee* on two occasions.

(5) She also mobilised women activist refugee groups and educated them on how to support higher education for women in neighbouring countries.

MCGill University, Canada: Women & Girls Speak Out: Prioritising Education in Humanitarian Aid in Afghanistan

On 23rd March 2022, McGill University hosted an innovative event which provided the opportunity for women and girls, in all their diversity, to advocate for their own rights, needs and interests - and a chance for the international community to listen. Rahela was a speaker alongside Founder of Learn Afghanistan, Pashtana Durrani.

Diaspora Community Wedding

Summary

On the 19th March, Rahela Trust's Executive Team were invited by Farid and Lida Rahimi to attend, speak and fundraise at their wedding. As a long standing Rahela Trust Ambassador, Farid wanted to use the opportunity to appeal to his friends and family about a cause that is close to his heart. He, like many other Afghan men, believe that women should have the right to an education and to be treated as equals in society. We are extremely grateful to Farid and his now wife, Lida for their generosity and kindness.

In total, the evening not only resulted in **£531.11** fundraised for Rahela Trust, it also served as a moment for members of the Afghan community to connect with Rahela Trust, and develop relationships and form connections with our Executive Team.

(L-R) *Rahela Trust Volunteer Ziarmal Gharghasht, Rahela Trust's Development Officer Mollie Tant, Rahela Trust Volunteer Safia Nasrat, Rahela Trust Ambassadors; Mansoor Fazli and Marwan Ahmadzai.*

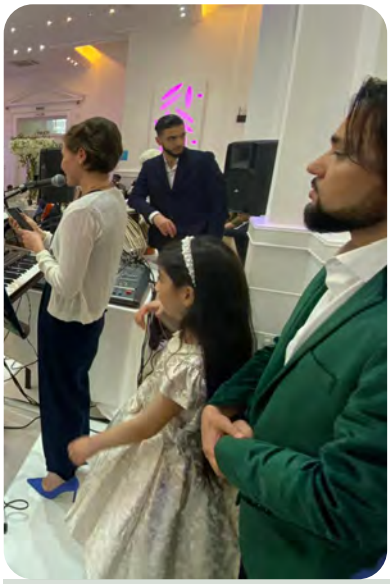
The Wedding

Guests began arriving at 6PM in preparation for the celebrations - our Development Officer arrived first and was seated on a table designated for close family members. It was a great opportunity for her to see an Afghan wedding from start to finish as the only Rahela Trust guest who hadn't attended one before. She had the pleasure of speaking to those sat at the table (and very much enjoyed the sugared almonds [Nuqal] which were generously supplied...and the green tea!). Later, our Rahela Trust Volunteers and Ambassadors arrived and they sat together on their table. It was time for the wedding to commence.

The bride, dressed in a beautifully embroidered emerald green dress and groom in a matching suit entered, with one of the significant elder women in the family dancing her into the great hall. Following this, the dancing commenced. It was a joy to behold with many smiling faces and voices chattering and laughing.

After some time, the bride and groom exit with some significant members of their family to complete the Islamic part of the wedding ceremony. When they returned, they had both changed from their green coloured outfits - Lida into a traditional white wedding dress and Farid in a navy blue suit - to mark their marriage as now official. More dancing commenced to the sound of flamboyant drums and romantic-edged poetry sung in Dhari.

Just before it is time for everyone to delight in the feast, Rahela Trust's Executive Team assembled on the stage and gave the presentation. Farid concluded the speeches to consolidate our asks and appeal to his guests to donate what they could. The food was absolutely delicious and ranged from tomato roasted aubergine to slow roasted lamb, an array of mouth watering curries, rice, an abundance of delicious salads and naan.



When feasting was over, the Rahela Trust team went from table to table to explain a little more about the scholarship programme and collect any donations. It was an excellent opportunity to hear the questions potential Afghan donors have, and many expressed their agreement in the mission of Rahela Trust.

The night's formalities were now over and the only thing left to do was celebrate. Certain guests had changed into the brilliantly colourful and ornate traditional Afghan dresses and the floor became a sea of colour, jollity and excellent dance moves.

(L-R) *Rahela Trust's Development Officer Mollie Tant making a speech to wedding guests. Farid Rahimi stands behind her.*

4. Strengthening the Organisation

Future Plans

Diaspora & Ally Engagement

Going forward, we plan to continue hosting the Annual Lecture and General Meeting, Annual Academy Conference and other events.

We are looking forward to hosting the Annual Academy Conference, Monday 19th September 2022 at Cambridge University after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Conference will take place at the University of Cambridge and aims to highlight the challenges to accessing secondary and tertiary education faced by women and girls in Afghanistan.

The diaspora community is of the upmost importance to us. With the arrival of 15,000 more Afghan refugees to the UK in December 2021, our focus will be on connecting this network to already-established communities and introducing them to the work that we do.

Following the success of our Trustee and Bookkeeper, Mel Bradley MBE's British Community donation group, who we are most grateful to for their support, we aim to continue to drive support from UK-based groups. We are exploring opportunities with universities around the UK, hoping to establish connections, fundraising initiatives and student volunteers. We believe that the students of today will be invested in improving women's rights and securing positive futures for girls in Afghanistan.

Improving and Developing Communications

Leverage our Social Media Volunteer to action the newly developed Social Media Plan across Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn to increase visibility and communication.

Develop our website and a quarterly newsletter for our donors, supporters and friends. This will include reports on Rahela Trust activity, events in Afghanistan and positive diaspora news.

Host more events, both virtual and physical, targeting younger people [below 30 years old] from the diaspora and ally community, serving as a cultural and idea-exchange opportunity.

Build out our resource offering to Afghan refugees settling in Europe and the UK, as well as information and tools to those who also want to help.

Fundraising

The Trust's income experienced an 8.7% increase from last year totalling **£51,861**.

We were excited to have been successful in our bids for funds from the following organisations; ***Amanat Foundation***, ***Afghan Connection***, ***Jalal Agha Foundation***, ***GRA Emergency Fund*** and the ***National Lottery Fund.*** We would like to express our sincere thanks to them for their support.

Community donations including (Diaspora and British Community donations) have also seen a positive increase of 24.3% and 41% respectively.

Recruitment for new scholars was paused this year and so our focus has been on Strategic Goal Number Four. This concentrates on strengthening the capabilities and robustness of Rahela Trust as an organisation. We are therefore delighted to have made our first hire in March 2022, and now have a part-time Development Officer in place.

Looking to the Future

For the year 2022-23, we are planning to resume the recruitment of scholars for the 2023 cohort. This means our efforts will again begin to revolve around fundraising for scholarships. We have increased attention to submitting applications to Trusts and Foundations and are currently developing a three-year fundraising strategy. We'd love to see more scholars with your support.

In October 2022, we are excited to be hosting our fifth Afghan Diaspora Academic Conference at the University of Cambridge.

We will be carrying out a strategy review in the light of the Taliban situation

Key Risks

The Rahela Trust maintains a risk register that is reviewed at each trustee meeting. This year, the Taliban takeover and international sanctions placed additional risks on the charity that we are monitoring closely between meetings as well as considering during them. Key risks and measures to manage and/or mitigate them are as follows:

Threats to security and safety of scholars: Pausing new scholar recruitment to focus on safeguarding existing ones. Safeguarding policy and emergency contact numbers circulated again to scholars and volunteers in Afghanistan. The Director maintains open and on-going WhatsApp communications with each, providing direct support, connecting them with other local and international networks and NGOs and advocating for individuals with relevant 'allied' Foreign Affairs Ministries. Working collaboratively with the BAAG group on NGOs helps increase effectiveness in managing these risks.

Failure to secure funds to support existing operations and growth. Pausing new scholar recruitment; focussing on Goal 4 (Strengthening the organisation, fundraising). Maintaining communications with existing donors; Emphasising current situation and RT risk management measures with new donors; Strategy review to be held July 2022 to re-consider future funding requirements.

Transfer of Funds to Afghanistan: Following the introduction of international sanctions, international banks no longer accepted transfers into Afghanistan. To maintain our activities in-country, Trustees researched alternatives and agreed contracts with XXX (name] Hawala system for transferring funds into Afghanistan and with Ghawarshad University for onward distribution to scholars and volunteers. In response to exceptional international currency fluctuations, the Rahela Trust is also maintaining a higher level of unrestricted reserves than in previous years.

In November 2021, the official regulator, the Charity Commission of England and Wales, reviewed the Rahela Trust's monitoring and management of key risks, including those above. It concluded: "While the trustees confirmed the situation is fluid and in a state of constant change, the trustees demonstrated a good working knowledge of how to manage and mitigate any potential risks that arise with working in an area deemed high risk by the Commission."

Reserves and Going Concern:

The Trust currently has no investments or policy for reserves. Trustees approved expenditure on the recruitment of scholars and other activities only when sufficient funds were received.

Public Benefit:

The Trustees confirm that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Trust provides scholarships and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young women in Afghanistan, and trustees confirm that all activities conform to the guidance on public benefit.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities:

Law applicable to charities in England &Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the period and its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

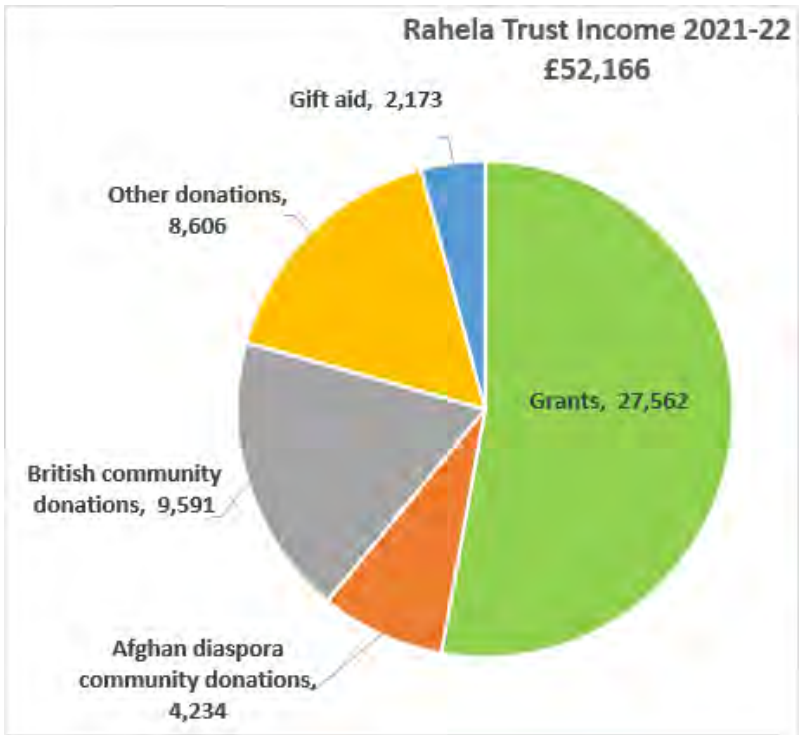
The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and the financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

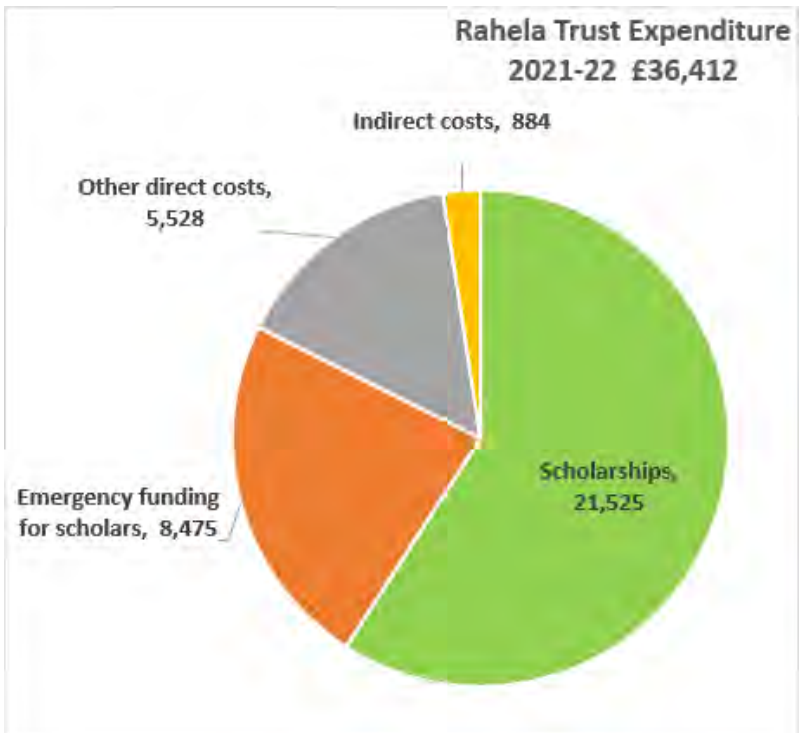
There is no statutory requirement for our accounts to be audited. The Trustees have appointed Sarah Watling at Monksilver GP Accounts as a suitably qualified Independent Examiner.

The Annual Trustees' Report and Financial Statements were approved by the trustees at their meeting on 6th October and signed on their behalf by the Chair.

Signed:
Samantha Rennie, Chair of the Rahela Trust
Date: 6th October 2022

Financial Statements





Financial Statements

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Independent Examiner Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Rahela Trust for the year ended 31/03/22.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Sarah Watling
Monksilver GP Accounts
The Old Schoolhouse
Monksilver
Taunton
Somerset TA4 4HY

Date: 29/9/2022

Signed: Saawatling

Sarah Watling

Financial Statements

RAHELA TRUST
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2022			12 Months 31st March 2021		
		£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
Receipts							
Community Donations:	2						
British Community Monthly Donations		9,591		9,591	6,800		6 ,800
Afghan Diaspora Community Monthly Donations		4,234		4,234	1,642		1,642
Unrestricted Donations			8,606	8,606		8,051	8 ,051
Grants:	3						
Afghan Connection		-		-	1 3,251		13,251
Amanat		-		-	1 7,036		17,036
Jalal Agha Foundation		9 ,721		9,721	-		-
Big Lottery		9 ,721		9,721	-		-
GRA Global		8,120		8,120	-		-
Mother & daughter		-		-	9 01		9 01
Gift Aid:	4						
HMRC Charities			2 ,173	2,173		-	-
Total income		41,387	10,779	5 2,166	39,630	8 ,051	4 7,681
Deduct:							
Direct Costs:							
Scholarship Costs	5	21,525		21,525	29,508		29,508
Emergency Funding for Scholars	6	8 ,475		8,475	-		-
Total Scholarship Costs		(30,000)		(30,000)	(29,508)		(29,508)
Other Direct Costs:							
Volunteer expenses			2,813	2,813		1,590	1 ,590
Telephone and IT costs			1,665	1,665		1,130	1 ,130
Marketing costs			1,050	1,050		600	6 00
Printing, postage & stationery			-	-		68 (3,388)	68
Total Other Direct Costs		-	(5,528)	(5,528)	-		(3,388)

Indirect Costs:						
Management and adminitration	7		264	264	570	5 70
Legal and Professional			300	300	1,650	1 ,650
Bank charges			320	320	100	1 00
Depreciation			81 (965)	81 (965)	87 (2,406)	87
Total Indirect Costs		-			-	(2,406)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the Year				15,673		12,759

RAHELA TRUST
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2022 £ Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	12 Months 31st March 2021 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
FIXED ASSETS							
Tangible Assets	8			410			491
CURRENT ASSETS							
Bank		24,408	13,174	37,582	14,347	7,481 7,481	2 1,828
Cash and cash equivalent				-			-
		2 4,408	3,174	37,582	14,347		21,828
TOTAL ASSETS				37,992			22,319
TOTAL NET ASSETS				37,992			22,319
FUNDS							
Restricted funds		2 4,408		24,408 1	14,3471		1 4,347
Unrestricted funds			1 3,584	3,584		7,972 7,972	7,972
		24,408	1 3,584	37,992	4,347		2 2,319
TOTAL FUNDS				37,992			22,319
				-			-

The annual report and financial statements were approved by the trustees at their meeting on 6th October 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Samantha Rennie

Chair of the Board of Trustees

RAHELA TRUST
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Income

All income is recognized in the Statement of Financial Activities once received.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognized as expenditure on a cash basis.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.
Fixtures, fittings & equip- 15% on reducing balance

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Charity is a going concern and further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. General Donations

Donations are received from various sources. These included shoe box donations, one-off community donations, donations collected at charity events and conferences and online donations. Some donations are made for specific purposes and these funds can only be used for that specific purpose so therefore these funds are restricted. Donations received from Mel B Group (£9591) and Afghan Community Monthly (£4234) could only be used for university scholarships and mentorships. Other donations amounting to £8606 are unrestricted in nature.

3. Gift Aid

Gift Aid amounting to £2,173 was received from HMRC and it is unrestricted in nature.

4. Grants

Grants received are restricted in nature and are spent in accordance with the donor's wishes. In the Year ended 31.3.2022, Grants were received from the following funders for the purposes stated:

Jalal Agha Foundation: £9,721 (towards the recruitment of a part-time Development Officer)

National Lottery Awards for All England: £9,721 (match-funding of Jalal Agha Foundation towards the recruitment of development Officer)

GRA Global: £8,120 (towards emergency relief of scholars and volunteers facing famine)

For the Year ended 31.03.2022, Grants were received from the following sources:

Jalal Agha Foundation	9,721
Big Lottery	9,721
GRA Global	8,120

5. Scholarship and Emergency Fund Costs

Rahela Trust transferred £8,475, £6,525 and £15,000 in this reporting period. These payments were made to students to fund their university fees and expenses.

6. Volunteer Expenses

These include the costs incurred by the volunteers for the purpose of fund raising at charity events and conferences.

7. Management and Administration

These costs are administrative in nature, other costs include membership fees, web hosting and sundry expenses.

8. Tangible Assets

These consists of two printers and a computer

References

ANI., (2022), The Print, 'Taliban flouting basic human rights in Afghanistan: Report'. Available at: https://theprint.in/world/taliban-flouting-basic-human-rights-in-afghanistan-report/924454/

Foreign Affairs Committee (2022) 'Missing in action: UK leadership and the withdrawal from Afghanistan'. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmfaff/169/report.html

Strzyżyńska, W. and Mohammad Makoii, A. (2022), The Guardian, '"Is it a crime to study?': Outry as Taliban bar girls from secondary schools'. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/23/girls-in-afghanistan-school-taliban

A very special thank you to the below.

All our Ambassadors of Support.

Executive Team
Safia Nasrat
Ziarmal Gharghasht
Khadija Yawari

And all our Mentors and Coordinators.

Donors
Amanat Foundation
Charity Aid Foundation
Fard & Lida Rahimi
Jalal Agha Foundation
John Bailey & Safar Sarmast
National Lottery Fund

And all our Diaspora and British community donors.

We **thank you** for your continued support in our efforts to **improve women's rights** and **access to tertiary education** in **Afghanistan**.

Contact

Rahela Trust
+44 (0)20 3718 8185
www.rahelatrust.org
info@rahelatrust.org

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

Rahela Trust for Afghan women's education

England & Wales - Charity number 1165763

Accounts

Rahela Trust for Afghan Women's Education

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Number: 1165763

Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements

1st April 2020
to
31st March 2021

Table of Contents

OUR MISSION AND VALUES	3
KEY MESSAGES	4
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS	6
STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, AND MANAGEMENT	7
ORIGINS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES	9
OUR PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS (SUMMARY)	10
1. SCHOLARSHIPS	11
2. MENTORING	13
3. ENGAGING THE DIASPORA	14
4. STRENGTHENING THE ORGANISATION	19
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	21
THANK YOU MESSAGE	27
HOW YOU CAN HELP	28

Our Mission and Values

The Rahela Trust's mission is to provide university and higher education scholarships, mentorship and access to local and global professional networks to young Afghan women from disadvantaged backgrounds who are committed to building a future where women are full participants and leaders in society.

By growing a community of educated young women committed to improving the lives of women in Afghanistan, the Rahela Trust envisages a society that respects the rights of women to engage fully in the social, political and economic life of Afghanistan.

Key Messages

This report was drafted before the August 2021 Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. It was subsequently edited to remove identifiable details of individual students and alumni, while retaining general information on their and the Trust's achievements. Trustees continue to monitor the local situation closely. Meanwhile our work continues - in Afghanistan, within the wider Afghan diaspora and with new refugees. At the time of writing (November 2021), all our partner universities are open, and students are in class.

Welcome to the Fifth Annual Report of the newly re-named Rahela Trust. Originally named in honour of Farkhunda Malikzada, an educated young woman brutally slaughtered by a mob in a market, we re-named the Trust at her family's request. Trustees chose to honour Founder and Director Rahela Sidiqi in renaming the Trust. Rahela's tireless championing of women's rights over many decades, high standing within the Afghan community, and personal story as a refugee also make it a privilege for me, as the Trust's new Chair, to support her.

I'm grateful to trustee Althea Maria-Rivas who resigned during the year, and to my wise predecessor, Mel Whitney-Long, who remains on the Board. And am pleased to welcome two new trustees: Sear Sadat and Marika Theros.

As Covid shook the world, our scholars stepped up - home-schooling younger girls, distributing food and hygiene packs in their local communities - whilst attempting to study remotely. With universities closed and limited internet access, our mentoring soared. WhatsApp came into its own and we are now supplying all scholars with mobile phones. Income grew again this year, with enormous thanks to the Afghan diaspora community, as well as British, other European, and American allies.

A shining highlight of the year for me was seeing 'A', our very first alumna, speaking from Kabul alongside the key women's delegate at the Doha Peace Talks, the venerable Fatima Gailani. This was at our Fourth Annual (and first virtual) Lecture. It brought to life the Trust's impact in amplifying women's voices and creating women leaders.

2021 marks the Trust's fifth anniversary and the future is now very uncertain. It's an anxious time for women and their rights in Afghanistan. Wider support from allies and donors remains especially vital at this time, as we hold firm and look ahead.

Samantha Rennie, Chairperson of Rahela Trust

Key Messages

Afghan women continued to suffer disproportionately as conflict further intensified this year. Four decades of war has left over two million women widowed, their freedoms curtailed, their lives and livelihoods lost. Yet faced with brutal conditions, Afghan women are not sitting back, but acting collectively to fight for their survival and the protection of their basic rights. Since the Taliban took over on 15th August 2021, the situation has worsened. Restrictions on women's secondary education, employment and ability to work have increased. There have been many cases of human rights abuses, and women have been beaten.

We know that the key factor for sustainable peacebuilding is the education and proactive engagement of women. I believe that Afghan women can and will be great agents of change for sustainable peacebuilding and development. They will do it with the power of education, but they also need resources and support from allies in the national and international community, who must insist that the Taliban observe human rights generally and women's right to education in particular.

One of our newly graduated scholars, who secured a manager's job at the Ministry of Interior, told us: "What I learned from the Rahela Trust was not to go to any interview unless you are well prepared. I was confident, and I got the job. Now it is my moral duty to provide sincere and result-oriented services". Today, she is in hiding in the provinces of Afghanistan. Another one of our other newly graduated scholars in Business Administration established her own restaurant and wanted to recruit other RT year-four scholars for an internship program. But her restaurant is closed, and she is at home. All of our present and graduated scholars face enormous challenges as Afghanistan changes, and we must continue to support them.

Rahela Sidiqi, Founding Director of Rahela Trust

Legal & Administrative Details

Trustees:

- Samantha Rennie (Chairperson from 3rd December 2020)
- Mel Whitney-Long (Chairperson till 3rd December 2020)
- Kamini Paul
- Liz Mermin
- Marika Theros (Appointed 3rd December 2020)
- Dr Althea Maria-Rivas (resigned 3rd December 2020)
- Sear Sadat (Treasurer, appointed May 2020)

Director:

Rahela Sidiqi

Charity number:

1165763

Registered Address:

28, Burns Close
Welling
DA16 3NJ

Bankers:

HSBC
275 Greenwich High Road,
Greenwich
SE10 8NF

Independent Examiner

Sarah Watling
Monksilver GP Accounts
The Old Schoolhouse
Monksilver
Taunton
Somerset TA4 4HY

Structure, Governance & Core Values

The Rahela Trust trustees are pleased to present their annual report and unaudited financial statements for the charity in the years 2020-21 (starting from 01/04/20 and ending on 31/03/21). Reference and administrative details set out on page 6 form part of this report. The report and financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the charity's governing document, and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102.

The Trust was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and registered as a UK Charity on the 25th of February 2016.

Structure

The Trustees are responsible for governance of the Rahela Trust and carry out their duties following the requirements of the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Our trustees bring a range of skills and expertise to support the Trust's work, including Afghan field experience, peacebuilding, media, charity governance, management, and fundraising. Trustees make all major decisions regarding strategy, policies and finance. Meetings of the Board are convened every three months to address strategic issues and review finance and operational activities. The trustees consider other issues by email communication as they arise.

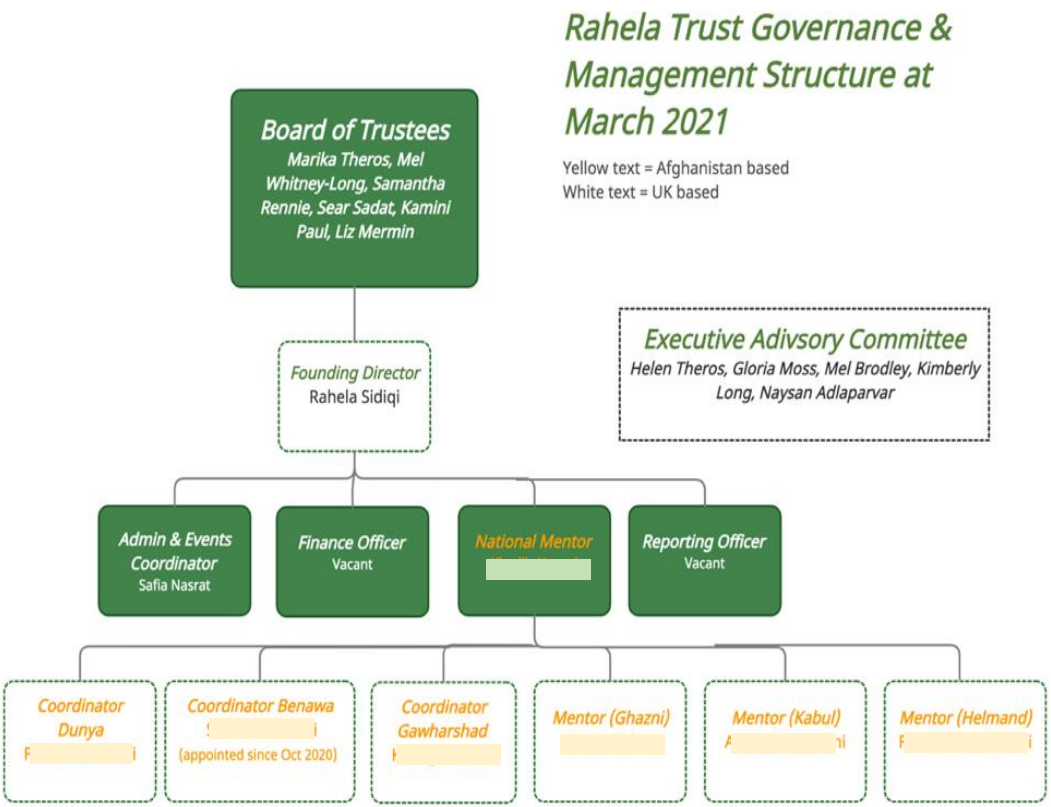
Management

Day-to-day activities of the Trust are delegated to the Director. The Director is supported by the trustees and an Executive Advisory Committee. The Trust is currently heavily reliant on volunteers to manage and deliver its work. There are five volunteers in UK and seven volunteers in Afghanistan, including two Kabul-based coordinators, one in Kandahar and one in Helmand. The coordinators receive salaries currently paid for by the Trust's institutional partners or their affiliated partners. In addition, they receive voluntary expenses from the Rahela Trust to reimburse their communication and transport costs.

Core Values

- A commitment to delivering a quality service
- The efficient and effective mobilisation of resources
- Transparency
- Results-based achievement

Structure, Governance & Core Values



Names of volunteers in Afghanistan have been redacted to protect their identities

Origins, Objectives & Activities

Afghan women's rights activist Rahela H. Sidiqi founded the Rahela Trust to improve the situation of women in Afghanistan, after observing systematic discrimination of women at the familial and societal level. Particular disparity exists regarding access to higher education, and so the Rahela Trust aims to open a pathway for Afghan women to attend university.

The Rahela Trust was set up in response to the many attacks on girls and young women seeking an education across Afghanistan. Based on consultations with her family, the trust was originally named in honour of Farkhunda Malikzada, killed by a mob for standing up for her rights. Recently, however, the family has had a change of heart, and sought this year to claim exclusive use of Farkhunda's name. The trustees received advice which indicated that there were no legal grounds for this claim. However, out of respect for the family, we have removed references to Farkhunda Malikzada's story from our website and publications. As such, as of this year, the trust's name has been changed to Rahela Trust.

Systematic discrimination restricts women's access to education in Afghanistan. The Rahela Trust aims to create safe spaces for Afghan women to pursue their education. The selection criteria for scholarships target academically-talented girls who have struggled with violence or have financial difficulties.

Objectives

The aim of the Trust is to advance women's education in Afghanistan through the provision of financial aid and mentoring to young women from disadvantaged backgrounds, making it possible for them to attend and graduate from university. The Trust provides other forms of support as trustees deem appropriate.

Partner Universities

- Gawharshad University, Kabul
- Dunya University, Kabul
- Benawa University, Kandahar
- Bost University, Helmand / OSED (Organisation for Socio Economic Development)

Activities

- Providing scholarships to disadvantaged young women in Afghanistan
- Supporting scholars through mentorship and networking
- Raising awareness and engaging the Afghan diaspora in the development of Afghanistan
- Strengthening and growing the Rahela Trust to increase our impact

Our Achievements & Performance (Summary)

1. Scholarships

By March of 2021, the Trust had the following achievements:

- *34 scholars recruited since 2016*
- *16 new scholars recruited in 2020*
- *15 scholars graduated as of this year*

All of the scholars' grades average above 70%, with a large proportion achieving over 80%. The scholars have also become increasingly involved and active members of their local communities, despite many personal hardships. Some scholars were involved in raising public awareness on social issues surrounding women's rights, some in highlighting the importance of women's participation in the peace process and others in commencing life skills training for over 450 community members. Notably, some scholars committed to their graduate study alongside employment, with several offering peer study support at their university.

2. Mentoring

All universities were closed in the autumn term of 2020 due to government regulations regarding Covid. Therefore, the Director conducted quarterly online one-to-one mentoring through WhatsApp and other chatrooms, speaking to graduated scholars about how they can make the most of the opportunities available to them. Spring-quarter mentoring was conducted with new, current, and graduated scholars. The induction was focused on RT policy and the roles and responsibilities of scholars. The presence of current and graduated scholars was highly useful, for they acted as role models to the new scholars and offered help based on their personal journeys with RT.

We conducted an evaluation of National Coordinators and University Mentors' coaching and mentoring work. It had come to our attention that scholars required additional mentoring support this year. As a result, this year scholars built closer relationships with their mentors by extending mentoring sessions outside of Zoom to instant messaging chatrooms, allowing them to share their concerns and progress more easily. The director also emphasised to the coordinators, mentors, and scholars the importance of working with and for women to enhance their knowledge, equip them with skills, and raise their awareness regarding their rights. External mentoring this year was a success, allowing coordinators, mentor and scholars to build their leadership and community-engagement skills.

3. Engaging the Diaspora

A crucial component of the Rahela Trust's work is to raise awareness and build community relationships, network with individuals, groups and organizations, and mobilise volunteers among the diaspora. This year's Annual Lecture was held over Zoom, with a focus on the impact of the ongoing peace talks on women's education. Additionally, the Trust took part in the Mother and Daughter education campaign in partnership with Make Mothers Matter (MMM), alongside high-profile speakers with influence in governance and policymaking. And we worked with around 40 UK-based Afghan charities to raise funds to support Afghan families with food and sanitation during the Covid crisis. The RT participated on condition that at least 40% of aid recipients had to be women.

4. Strengthening the Organisation

This year the Trust recruited a volunteer bookkeeper, Mel Bradley, to work alongside our treasurer and help us put in place stronger financial procedures and systems. We settled a historical Gift Aid claim, which appears in the accounts. We also reviewed our partnership agreements with Afghan Universities. We signed a single partnership agreement with Gharwarshad University in Kabul as the lead University, managing our other university partnerships. Ghawarshad is our longest standing partner and have developed a speciality in women's education. To reduce finance fees and delays Ghawarshad is now receiving all RT funds from the UK and distributing them to other university partners, as transfers between Islamic banks are smoother and less costly than transfers from banks abroad.

1. Scholarships

Partner Universities

To provide the best possible support for scholars, build gender awareness and sensitivity within academic institutions and ensure long-term sustainability for the Trust's work, the Trust operates scholarships in partnership with selected private (non-state) universities and third-level colleges which are accredited by the Afghan Ministry of Education. We have been successful in partnering with institutions outside of the capital Kabul in order to reach young women in the most disadvantaged and rural areas. The Trust negotiates, signs and monitors Memoranda of Agreement (MoAs) with each institution which detail the roles of each partner, the service to be provided and how payments will be made for the named scholars. Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education is our first and key partner. They support the work of several of our programme co-ordinators and mentors and provide general administrative support. This year we signed an MOA with the Organisation for Social and Economic Development (OSED) to manage five new scholars at Bost University in Helmand Province.

What Scholarships Cover

Each scholarship includes tuition fees, living expenses and travel, the cost of books and materials, as well as a laptop. As the mobile telephone network can be more reliable than local internet connections, we are now supplying scholars with mobile phones. Scholarships are offered for the full duration of each scholar's course, subject to satisfactory academic results in each year. Rahela Trust Scholarships are distinctive in that they include mentoring, networking and leadership development, aimed at empowering scholars to become future leaders.

Indicative costs are as follows:

ANNUAL COSTS PER SCHOLAR	
University Fees	£650
Mentoring & Leadership Development	£500
Food & Transport	£250
Studying material	£150
Laptop & phone	£115
Healthcare	£35
Administration	£50
TOTAL	**£1,750**

All degree courses are four years, except medicine, which is five years

Scholarships

Recruiting New Scholars

Scholars are selected through an open competition. Scholarships are advertised through the Rahela Trust & partner universities' websites, Afghan Women NGOs Network, and direct awareness raising through RT partners' social and community gatherings. Candidates apply with evidence of academic achievement and are assessed by a panel of internal and external experts against published selection criteria. Successful candidates are offered a scholarship for a full-time four-year degree course (five years for medicine) and sign an agreement with the Rahela Trust to maintain their studies and to contribute to the wider goal of educating girls in Afghanistan.

Application Process

The shortlisting of applicants for the RT is undertaken by the Oversight Committee in Afghanistan, made up of representatives from universities/academia, women's NGOs, and educational charities/bodies. There are three stages for the selection of the applicants:

Stage One:

For the long-listing stage, university / academia committee members, including the RT coordinator, exclude non-eligible applicants.

Stage Two:

The long-list is screened by the full committee and RT Coordinator. The highest-scoring candidates are visited at home by a coordinator. Applicants who live in distant provinces have their applications crosschecked by RT in cooperation with other civil society organisations. A shortlist is generated based on these findings.

Stage Three:

In the final stage the Trustees and Director of the RT assess all the shortlisted applicants to ensure the FT criteria and its partner university's policies have been considered. A final selection is then made and announced. The selected candidates, the parents of the scholars and associated community leaders will sign a joint letter of commitment.

2. Mentoring

Program Content

The Director's aim for this year was to extend RT's sphere of positive influence, not only by fostering leadership skills in mentors, but also by encouraging them to take an active role in facilitating change in their own communities. All our coordinators are also mentors to the scholars. They are recommended to the RT as advanced students or graduates with exceptional academic achievement. Once selected, they receive three months of remote training from the RT so that they are familiar with our policy, tools and techniques. The national coordinator is trained and coached directly by the RT Director, and she in turn supports university-level coordinators and mentors with an initial three-month training and then continuing on an ongoing basis, including quarterly meetings via WhatsApp or zoom. In universities where we have graduated scholars, we encourage the most high-achieving to become mentors and share what they have learned.

Mentors and scholars were praised for their resilience in continuing their community work despite personal hardships. The RT Director advised them to be exemplary role models: sincere, committed, honest, and generous in the transfer of their skills to others. She reminded them to respond to mistakes with patience and kindness, whether to individual mentees or to a group. They should work hard and give time to their mentees, working collaboratively. The scholars were also asked to create a plan on how their mentoring could help improve the lives of others.

Evidence shows that each scholar can mentor 3 to 5 women at their university or place of work, and provide life skills or raise awareness for 20 to 25 mothers and young women at the community level. A mentoring session was conducted for national and university level mentors on support within the community and work environment to help current students and graduates. Scholars need to learn how to continuously build their own skills and how to support other women in their communities as different issues or obstacles arise, at the national or local level.

The Rahela Model

The mentorship scheme is centred around the Founding Director's model for creating a ripple-effect in a community of women and young girls, by equipping individual scholars with the capacity and skills not only to achieve their own success but also to make a positive impact on society by relaying their skills and knowledge to others.

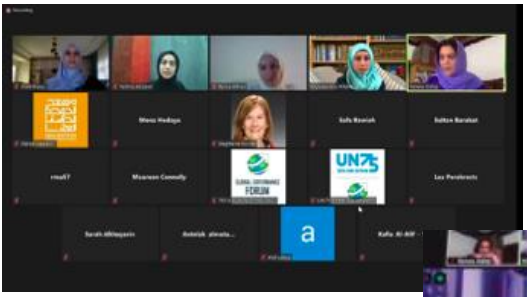
Each Coordinator is required to stay in daily contact with the scholars, to track their progress and address their immediate concerns. Mentors conduct monthly sessions/' where they catch up with their scholars and discuss their contributions to their communities, their life at university, and other areas of concern or achievement. On a quarterly basis Mrs Sidiqi conducts catch-up sessions with scholars, wherein she positively reinforces their hard work and achievements and uses discussion-based methods to instil leadership qualities in the scholars. These sessions also boost the scholars' morale, so that they can have the confidence to pass their skills onto their communities. On a fortnightly basis, our scholars meet their external mentors, who are specialists in their field of study and can offer targeted advice while serving as role-models.

3. Engaging the Diaspora

Alongside our activities within Afghanistan, Rahela Trust holds a number of events throughout the year to foster diaspora engagement. Through attendance at civil society events and conferences, we have built a robust diaspora network. The Rahela Trust has also expanded its outreach by taking on several partnerships.

This year, our Mother and Daughter Education Campaign was held in partnership with *Make Mothers Matter (MMM)*. We actively participated in the *'Raise a Pen'* Campaign, mobilising young women who want to raise their voices for their right to education. And in January we held our Annual Lecture and General Meeting to discuss topics that affect the scholars and the challenges women face in Afghanistan on their journey to higher education more generally. This year, our focus was around the prospects of women's education in the light of the Peace Process. Many apprehensions were raised.

Beyond our own events, the Founding Director has actively engaged in increasing the Trust's community presence and building networks by attending events and meetings to give input and share her vision on the future of women in Afghanistan. These include the Women and Peace Partner Joint Effort Meeting, the Women Activists Meeting with Dr Sultan Barakat from Doha University, the UN Global 75 Conference preparation meeting, and the Women Coalition meeting, among many others.



Founding Director Mrs Sidiqi in UNG Global 75 Conference preparation meeting (left), and Women's Coalition meeting (bottom).

"The key factor to sustainable peace building is women's education and proactive engagement."

- Rahela Sidiqi, Founding Director at the UN Global 75 Conference

Engaging the Diaspora

Annual Lecture & General Meeting

The Rahela Trust annual lecture took place on 21st January 2021 on the theme: The Impact of Peace Talks on Women's Education. Due to coronavirus, the event was held virtually. This meant that it was possible to have speakers based in Afghanistan participating, including former RT scholars.

This year's lecture gave an overview of how RT is planning to grow in the future and create a strong network of graduates promoting the importance of women's education, particularly in light of the (then) ongoing peace talks in Afghanistan. It underlined how the people of Afghanistan are hoping the peace process will root out the causes of violence that plague the country and create a foundation for the future. To create a safe and open society for women, it is important that protection from the threat of violence and avoidance of restrictions in their daily lives should be part of any agreement and a condition for the receipt of overseas aid. It is important that the Afghan people should be involved in the process, and in any decisions that are made on the future of the country.

Mrs Fatima Galiani, *member of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Peace Negotiation Delegation*, called for the peace process to be negotiated properly and in a sustainable way. She questioned whether the Taliban are really looking for peace, and if the government's peace council is speaking with a united voice. She also noted the influence of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, and the impact of the narcotics business in the country. She urged them to put their interests aside to find the best outcome for Afghanistan.

Mrs Rahela Sidiqi, *RT Founding Director,* raised her concerns about the importance of an all-inclusive, just, and transparent deal in the way of creating a lasting and sustainable peace. She especially drew attention to the crucial importance of using the Afghan Constitution as a basis of clarity and a voice for the Afghan people. Mrs Sidiqi highlighted that Women's political, legal, social, economic and educational rights, along with their right to live free from all forms of violence, must be the condition of all international aid.

Engaging the Diaspora

Annual Lecture & General Meeting

Professor Djawed Sangdel, *President of SWISS UMEF University Group, Geneva Switzerland,* spoke about the importance of education in building a prosperous future for Afghanistan, and the problems which are faced in Afghanistan. He acknowledged how the main barrier to many women receiving an education is men, and said it is important for men to be taught the benefits of female education. At present, only around a quarter of people in education are female. This issue continues into academia and government, with no policy to rectify this issue. Although the quality of education is improving, there are still problems in the levels of education achieved across the public and private sectors.

Palwasha Hassan has been working on promoting girls' education for over 30 years, focusing at first on supporting Afghan refugees in Pakistan. From her experience she has seen how educating women can transform communities, and with the help of the international community more children than ever are being rolled into schools. However there is still a long way to go, as only 17% of women and 45% of men are literate, and there is a high dropout rate of girls in schools as many get married at a young age. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict is having a significant impact on the ability to access education. As the peace process progresses the Taliban have outlined their plans to follow Sharia law, but it is not clear what interpretation of Sharia they will apply.

Engaging the Diaspora

Mother & Daughter Campaign

This year, we commenced our Mother and Daughter Campaign in association with MMM, drawing together global personalities and organisations to support education of women and girls in Afghanistan. Our Founding Director engaged in a high-level panel discussion alongside Ann Claire, Director of MMM and partner of RT, Rangina Hamidi, Minister of Education I.R. of Afghanistan, Stefania Gannini, UNESCO Assistant Director General of Education, and Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Executive Director Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

A transparent and open conversation took place addressing the calls of mothers the rights of women to education in Afghanistan. The discussion was dynamic and proactive, with members of the audience raising concerns and commenting through chat.

"At Rahela Trust, we believe Afghan woman can and will be agents of change for sustainable peace-building and development. They will do it with the power of education."

Rahela Sidiqi, RT Founding Director

"What is it about education that makes extremists SO afraid? … There is no better bulwark against conflict than education … raising a pen is critically important. I'm proud to come together with mothers of Afghanistan."

Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Executive Director of Georgetown Institute for Women

"Violence against women should be stopped. Afghan women today suffer the potential danger of the possibility of education being taken away from them."

Staffan de Mistura, Former UN Special Envoy to Afghanistan

Engaging the Diaspora

General Debate - 46th regular session of the ONHCR

Among the many global conferences that our Founding Director attended this year, the General Debate at the UN Human Rights Council, in association with Make Mothers Matter, was particularly significant. Mrs Sidiqi called on the global community to take action and recognize the importance of education for all in sustaining peace and human rights, and she drew attention to the growing threats to women's education as the peace talks continue in Doha.

Founding Director, Mrs Sidiqi, in the General Debate in the 46th regular session of the ONHCR.

4. Strengthening the Organisation

Fundraising

The Trust's income increased significantly this year to £47,681 (from £28,377 the previous year), enabling us to recruit more scholars.

Community donations remained stable and we were delighted to receive a second, larger one-year grant from Amanat Foundation. As the UK-based charity Afghan Connection wound down, we were also pleased to receive a spend-out grant from them towards additonal scholarships. We partnered with Make Mothers Matter, who supported the Rahela Trust's Mother and Daughter project, and our scholars participated in MMM's #RaiseAPen campaign.

Our volunteer bookkeeper, Mel Bradley also co-ordinates a 'giving circle' of British allies who donate regularly to support scholars. They have contributed a significant proportion of our income this year, as well as providing a novel model of giving which we hope can inspire others. We are enormously grateful to each member of this community giving circle.

This year, trustees developed a Fundraising Strategy to sit alongside the Organisational Strategy adopted in 2020. This plan focusses on growing both grant and community fundraising, as well as increasing the reach of our annual Ramadan Appeal.

Future Plans

Following further successful fundraising, we aim to recruit our first paid employee in 2021/22. The part time Development Officer's role will involve diaspora community engagement, now including new refugees. A conference planned for 2022 will seek to engage new refugees and the wider diaspora in exploring options for the future of Afghan women's education.

[Following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, trustees agreed to pause the recruitment of new scholars in 2021/22. At the time of writing (November 2021) existing scholars are all still attending their university courses. We are supporting them, and alumni, virtually through 1-2-1 and group mentoring. We are monitoring the political, security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan closely.]

Key Risks:

The Trustees regularly monitor the security situation in Afghanistan and its potential impact on staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and the Trust's activities. COVID-19 has brought new risks to both the scholars' education and to fundraising events. Measures taken to manage these risks include providing support to scholars studying remotely and the increased use of digital platforms. We have also discussed with each scholar the potential risks of publishing their names and photographs. Each has consented enthusiastically, but the policy remains under review as the situation evolves.

[Following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the charity faces an even more volatile risk situation than previously. Our immediate concern has been the safety and security of existing scholars and alumni. As all our partner universisites are private businesses, international sanctions against dealing with the Taliban state do not apply. However, additional risks now incliude the tranfer of funds into Afghanisitan during the shutdown of international banking. Trustees are responding to risk with more frequent meetings and risk-assessments.]

Strengthening the Organisation

Reserves and Going Concern:

The Trust currently has no investments or policy for reserves. Trustees approved expenditure on the recruitment of scholars and other activities only when sufficient funds were received.

Public Benefit:

The Trustees confirm that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Trust provides scholarships and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young women in Afghanistan, and trustees confirm that all activities conform to the guidance on public benefit.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities:

Law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the period and its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the Trustees should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principals in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the *Charities Act 2011*. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

There is no statutory requirement for our accounts to be audited. The Trustees have appointed Sarah Watling at Monksilver GP Accounts as a suitably qualified Independent Examiner.

The Annual Trustees' Report and Financial Statements were approved by the trustees at their meeting of 29th September *a*nd signed on their behalf by the Chair.

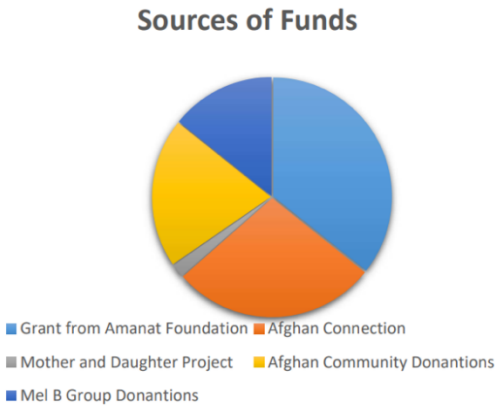
Signed:
Samantha Rennie, Chair of the Rahela Trust
Date: 6th January 2022

Financial Statements

Summary

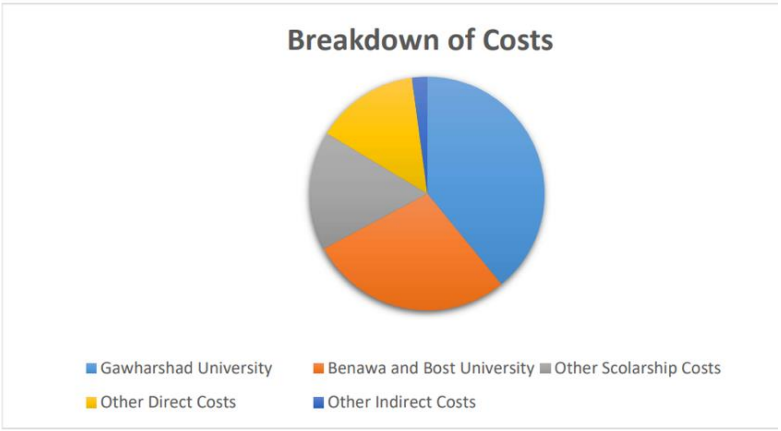
Source of Funds

Grant from Amanat Foundation	£17,036
Afghan Connection	£13,251
Mother and Daughter Project	£902
Afghan Community Donantions	£9,693
Mel B Group Donantions	£6,800



Breakdown of Costs

Gawharshad University	£13,814
Benawa and Bost University	£9,911
Other Scolarship Costs	£5,783
Other Direct Costs	£5,038
Other Indirect Costs	£756



Financial Statements

Independent Examiner Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Rahela Trust for the year ended 31/03/21.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Monksilver GP Accounts
The Old Schoolhouse
Monksilver
Taunton
Somerset
TA4 4HY

Date : 31/10/2021

Signed : Sarah Watling

Sarah Watling

Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Activities

RAHELA TRUST
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2021 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	12 Months 31st March 2020 £ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
Receipts							
Community Donations	2	6,800	9,693	16,493		16,026	16,026
Grants	3	31,188		31,188	12,351		12,351
		37,988	9,693	47,681	12,351	16,026	28,377
Deduct:							
Direct Costs:							
Scholarship Costs and Communication	4	29,508		29,508	9,081	5,677	14,758
Total Scholarship Costs		29,508		(29,508)	9,081		(14,758)
Other Direct Costs:							
Volunteer expenses	5		1,590	1,590		2945	2945
Legal and Professional			1,650	1,650		-	-
Telephone			1,130	1,130		731	731
Marketing costs			600	600		-	-
Printing, postage & stationery			68	68		220	220
Annual Academic Conference						6,425	6425
Total Other Direct Costs		-	(5,038)	(5,038)		(10,321)	(10,321)
Indirect Costs:							
Management and adminitration	6		570	570		2,046	2046
Bank charges			100	100		102	102
Depreciation			87	87		39	39
Total Indirect Costs		-	(756)	(756)	-	(2,187)	(2,187)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the Year				**12,379**			**1,111**

Financial Statements

Balance Sheet

RAHELA TRUST
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	12 Months 31st March 2021			12 Months 31st March 2020		
		£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
FIXED ASSETS							
Tangible Assets	8			491			166
CURRENT ASSETS							
Bank		13,021	8,807	21,828	4,541	5,176	9,717
Cash and cash equivalent						48	48
		13,021	8,807	21,828	4,541	5,224	9,765
TOTAL ASSETS				22,319			9,931
TOTAL NET ASSETS				**22,319**			**9,931**
FUNDS							
Restricted funds		13,021		13,021			-
Unrestricted funds			9,298	9,298		9,931	9,931
		13,021	9,298	22,319	-	9,931	9,931
TOTAL FUNDS				**22,319**			**9,931**

The annual report and financial statements were approved by the trustees at their meeting on 29th September 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

Samantha Rennie
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Financial Statements

Notes to the Accounts

RAHELA TRUST
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Acconting Policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Income
All income is recognized in the Statement of Financial Activities once received.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognized as expenditure on a cash basis.

Tangible fixed assets
Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures, fittings & equip - 15% on reducing balance

Taxation
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Charity is a going concern and further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. General Donations

Donations are received from various sources. These included shoe box donations, one-off community donations, donations collected at charity events and conferences and online donations.

Financial Statements

Notes to the Accounts

3. Grants

Grants received this year:

- Amanat Foundation via California Community Foundation (£17,036) for the cost of scholarships
- Afghan Connection (£13,251) for the cost of scholarships
- Make Mothers Matter (£902) towards the Mother and Daughter project

4. Scholarship Costs

Rahela Trust transferred £9143 and £20364 in this reporting period to Gawharshad university. The first transaction was made in April 20 and relates to the last year scolarship fees and the other transaction in for this year. The payment is sent to Gawharshad University, which sends the money to Benawa. Bost and other instituitions, where studends are being sponsored.

5. Volunteer Expenses

These include the costs incurred by the volunteers for the purpose of fund raising at charity events and conferences.

6. Management and Administration

These costs are administrative in nature, other costs include membership fees, web hosting and sundry expenses.

7. Tangible Assets

These consists of two printers and a computer

Thank you!

Our achievements would not be possible without the huge number of volunteers and well-wishers who support us with their time, expertise, networks and donations. We cannot name them all there, but we thank them all deeply.

We are especially grateful our Afghan-British, other British and worldwide community of individual supporters, whose contributions are the backbone of our income, and to our Afghan and British volunteers who help with the management and administration of the charity. Specific thanks go to:

- Our Ambassadors who include: Asef Noorzai, Khan Nasiry, Walid Halimi, Ziarmal Gharghasht, Nasrien Youness, Nawesa Sidiqi, Pir Mohammad Bawari, Shoaib Shiwari, Zabia Sadiqi, Mechelle Nomani, Soman Shokori, Hogai Aryoubi, Gulwali Pessarly, Nooria Osmani, Sodaba Kamrawa and Farzana Paigeer.

- Our UK volunteers who include Ziarmal Gharghasht (Communications Volunteer and Zoom expert), Safia Nasrat (Admin and Finance Assistant), Mel Bradley (Bookkeeper) and our Executive Committee members.

- Emeritus Professor of Ethnomusicology at Goldsmiths John Baily and Safar Sarmad, who together sponsored our scholar from Herat for four years of study.

- The Charity Aid Foundation, Vday, and the Tide Foundation, whose donations in previous years supported several scholars in their third year of study, and The Institute for State Effectiveness, who contributed to last year's Afghan diaspora Annual conference.

- The Afghan Connection and the Amanat Foundation, who made grants this year to help support scholars in Kabul and Kandahar.

- Great thanks also to our British Community fund who supported this year's scholars in Helmand and some in Kandahar.

Rahela Trust
For Afghan Women's Education

How You Can Help

The work of the Rahela Trust only continues with the support of like-minded individuals and organisations. We are always seeking to grow this community. There are many ways individuals and organisations can get involved!

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

We operate primarily with the help of volunteers. If you have the time, passion and expertise, the Rahela Trust and the Afghan women we support could use your help in the areas of administration, mentoring, event organising, translating, social media, IT, media and marketing, fundraising. Please contact us if you have skills and time to offer!

MAKE A DONATION

You can make a one-off gift or a regular donation through PayPal or credit/debit card, by standing order, direct debit or cash in one of our charity boxes. Or issue a cheque in the name of the Rahela Trust. You can donate through the Rahela Trust website: www.rahelatrust.com/donations. You can also join our £1 monthly community donation campaign.

- £12 per month could pay for study materials and books for one girl.
- £42 per month could cover the costs of mentoring, networking and leadership development for one student.
- £460 could provide a laptop and mobile phone for one scholar.

HOST A FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

Supporting the Rahela Trust can be both fun and social. By hosting a fundraising event, such as a tea-party, dinner or reception, you can help raise much-needed funds for young Afghan women to go to university. Rahela Sidiqi and her team are here to help with support and information.

BECOME A CORPORATE PARTNER

We strive to create opportunities for corporate partners to work with us and invest in talented young Afghan women, in line with our mission and policies. For more information on opportunities to partner with us, please contact Rahela Sidiqi.

LEAVE A CHARITABLE BEQUEST

Through your last will and testament, you can leave a charitable bequest, or a distribution from your estate in the form of property, goods and/or money. This is a simple and effective way to leave a long-term legacy for young Afghan women.

The Rahela Trust
A Charitable Incorporated Organisation formerly known as The Farkhunda Trust
Charity Number: 1165763
Registered Office: 28 Burns Close, Welling, DA16 3NJ, UK
General enquiries: info@rahelatrust.org

www.rahelatrust org @RahelaTrust www.facebook.com/rahelatrust/