



For Afghan Women's  
Education

# RAHELA TRUST ANNUAL REPORT

**APRIL 2024 -  
MARCH 2025**



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL  
REPORT & FINANCIAL  
STATEMENT

PRESENTED BY:  
**RAHELA TRUST**

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# 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





## 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

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For Afghan Women's Education

# 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.



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.





## 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:

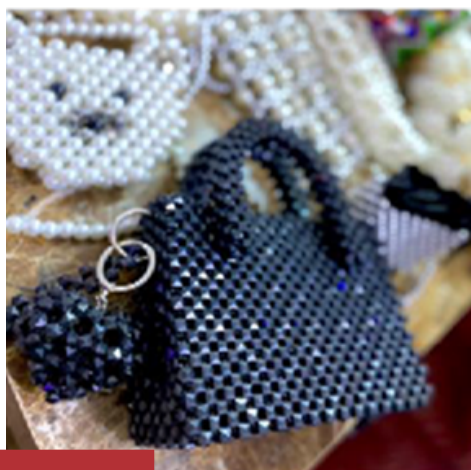
In Helmand, six RT scholars responded to the education ban by engaging in hands-on medical training at Fatima Bayat and Malika Suraya Hospitals while delivering home-based schooling to girls deprived of formal education. These scholars also completed online medical and English language courses. Activities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

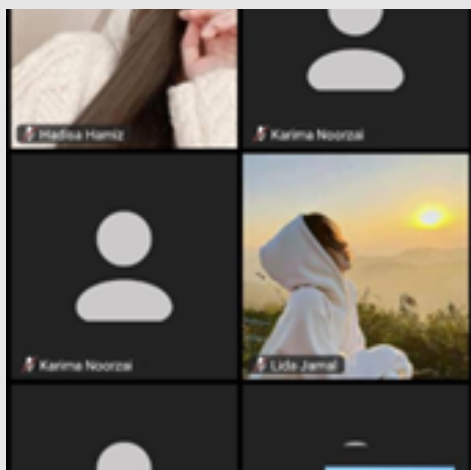
Over the past month, she produced 50 henna bangles. Each bangle set is priced at 50 AFN. So far, she has sold 10 of them, earning 500 AFN. The henna bangles vary in design and price, and while 10 have been sold, the remaining stock is available for future sales.



## 6.2. Rahela Model School Scholarships

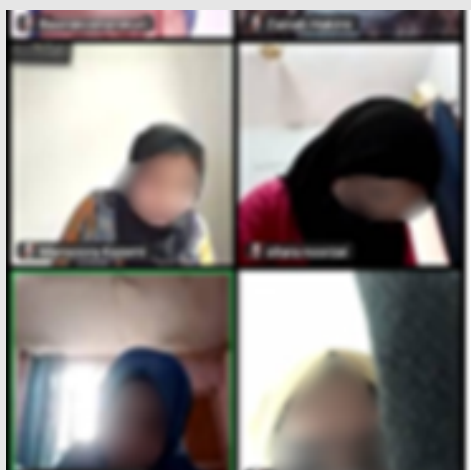
RT is proud to announce significant progress in advancing secondary education opportunities for Afghan girls. Through generous funding from the Malala Fund, we have launched an innovative online learning program that provides access to high-quality education for girls who have been excluded from formal 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



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.



## 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...

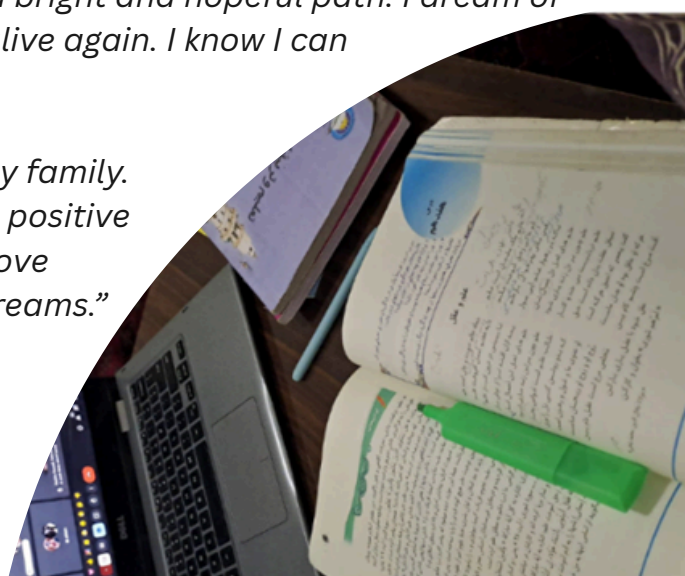
*Shahla Baha (SB) – 11th Grade Student at Rahela Model School*

*"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 are 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.



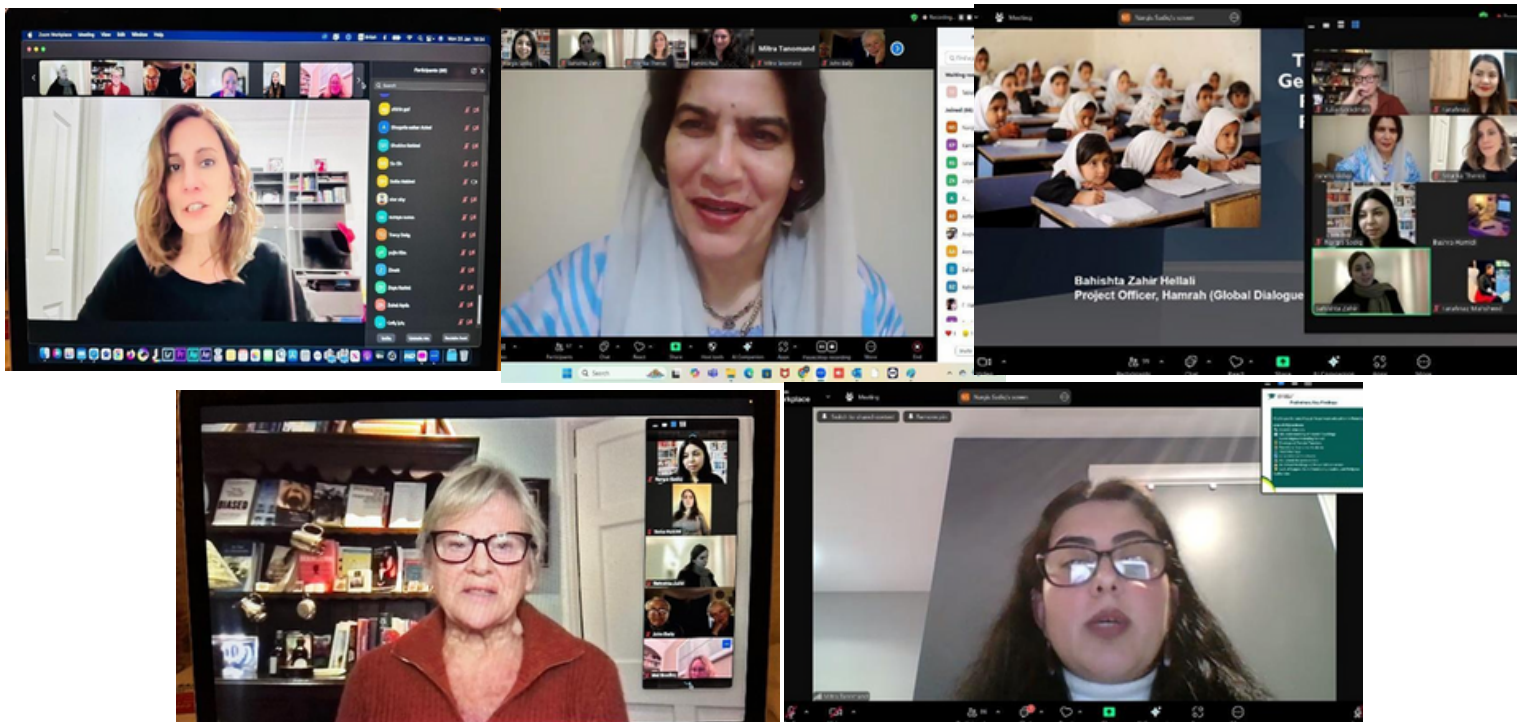
## d. Mother Language Day Celebration

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.

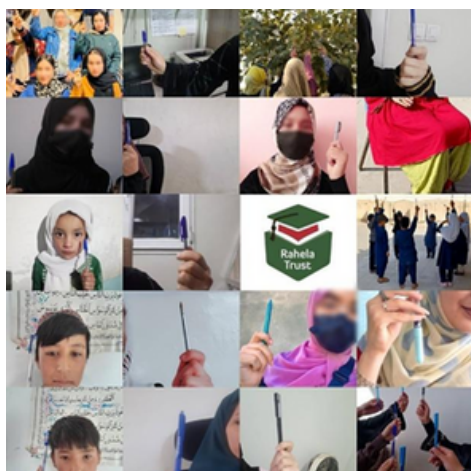
On 9 October 2024, the Malala Fund received the Champion of the International Rule of Law Award from ASIL for its work on girls' education and its stance against gender apartheid in Afghanistan. Rahela delivered a powerful speech outlining the severe impact of Taliban policies on Afghan girls, including 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

### 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."



During Spain Gathering

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."



All-Afghan Women Summit in Albania



## 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 <u>2025</u>			12 Months 31st March <u>2024</u>		
	£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
<b>Receipts</b>						
Community Donations:						
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:						
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:						
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
<b>Deduct:</b>						
<b>Direct Costs:</b>						
Scholarship Costs	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 administration	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**

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>12 Months 31st March 2025</u>			<u>12 Months 31st March 2024</u>		
		£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total	£ Restricted	£ Unrestricted	£ Total
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>							
Tangible Assets	8	-	-	183	-	-	259
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>							
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
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>				65,016			49,082
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>				<u><b>65,016</b></u>			<u><b>49,082</b></u>
<b>FUNDS</b>							
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
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>				<u><b>65,016</b></u>			<u><b>49,082</b></u>
				-			-

### 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



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For Afghan Women's  
Education