



Afghan Australian Development Organisation (AADO) ABN 25 274 698 213

The Afghan Australian Development Organisation (AADO) is a voluntary, non-profit, non-government incorporated association. Its primary purpose is to implement projects that assist in the reconstruction and sustainable development of communities within Afghanistan. AADO seeks to support Afghan communities, both within Australia and in Afghanistan.



AADO President, Jackie Fristacky, Committee Member, Farida Malek, with guest speaker Brett Sutton at NowRuz 21 March 2024, at the Afghan Gallery

Annual Report 2023-2024
Annual General Meeting 13 November 2024

**Afghan Australian Development Organisation (AADO)
Annual Report 2023/2024
Annual General Meeting 13 November 2024, 6.30pm
Afghan Gallery, 327 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy**

1. Introduction

This Annual Report covers the activities of the Afghan Australian Development Organisation (AADO) for the financial year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

Established in 2002, AADO is committed to improving opportunities for the people of Afghanistan, particularly its women and girls, providing education, training and support. AADO is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. AADO is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). As a charitable development organisation, AADO relies on donations and benevolent funding and has accredited tax deductibility for such donations.

2. AADO Committee of Management (COM) members for 2023/24

COM members are elected at the AGM by AADO financial members who have voting rights. COM members for the 2023/24 financial year were elected at the 5 December 2022 AGM for the 2022/23 financial year, and re-elected at the 27 November 2023 AGM, with exceptions noted below. COM members serving from 1 July 2023- 30 June 2024 were:

| Office | Holder |
|--------------------|---|
| President | Jackie Fristacky AM |
| Executive Director | Dr Nouria Salehi AM |
| Vice President | Homaira Mershedi |
| Secretary | Jennifer Davis |
| Treasurer | David Brennan |
| Committee Members | Farida Malek Assad Najeem: resigned effective 28/8/2023 Sam Parslow: did not seek re-election at 27/11/2023 AGM |

Brief Profiles of AADO COM Members for 2023/24

- **Dr Nouria Salehi AM - AADO Executive Director:** Nuclear physicist and biophysicist, AADO founder and Executive Director since 2002; formerly on the Board of the Refugee Council of Australia, Amnesty International Australia, Brotherhood of St Laurence
- **Jackie Fristacky AM - AADO President:** Lawyer and public policy analyst; formerly taught at La Trobe University; worked in Federal and State governments including as a Tribunal member; former City of Yarra Councillor and Mayor; author of *My Mother and the Prince: Jana Shindler Fristacky in Kabul 1946-1952*.
- **Homaira Mershed, Deputy President :** partner/manager at Afghan Gallery; former medical research assistant in nuclear medicine; medical laboratory scientist; interpreter/translator, trainer, events coordinator with UNIOM/UNHCR
- **Jennifer Davis, Secretary:** retired microbiologist with background in public health; volunteer at Community Radio; former Board Member and Chair, The Leprosy Mission Australia
- **David Brennan, Treasurer:** retired CPA with a background in financial management of manufacturing companies in Australia and Asia
- **Farida Sharifi - Malek, Member:** works with Culture Verse, a multicultural engagement consultancy with former roles in multicultural youth and as a volunteer with Refugee Legal
- **Assad Najeem, Member (part of financial year):** Practising engineer; active in Afghan youth communities; helped found the Afghan Youth Soccer initiative
- **Sam Parslow, Member (part of financial year):** final year of law school, Graduate School of Business and Law, RMIT, with a keen interest in human rights law, geopolitics, and history

3. Report from AADO President and Executive Director

It is now three years since the 20 year US-led coalition withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the fall of the Afghan government, resulting in establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) under a strict Taliban theocracy.

Continuing UN sanctions against the Taliban regime and its repressive policies against women, girls and dissenters brought a drastic reduction in development aid from August 2021. This, together with drought, water and fuel shortages and women (50% of the population) restricted from engaging in employment, public spaces, discourse and opportunities, have all had huge negative impacts on Afghan lives.

With the economy contracting significantly under the Taliban rule, poverty, unemployment and food insecurity remain huge problems for much of the Afghan population. Unemployment has been also exacerbated by Pakistan's forced repatriation from September 2023 of over half a million Afghans who fled there and similar numbers being repatriated from Iran.¹

Ongoing bans on women and girls attending public secondary schools and universities, working for the UN, NGOs, and in most public occupations, together with the exodus of many professionals and trades, plus reduced international involvement has created acute skills shortages.

On the other hand, strict anti-graft and other measures by the Taliban have improved security and cleaned up much of the corruption which siphoned billions of dollars of foreign aid prior to August 2021. The regime's strict ban on narcotics has led to a dramatic fall in drug production by an estimated 95%.

Another surprising positive has been a major increase in primary school attendance. The Taliban's ban on girls attending public secondary schools and universities remains, but a World Bank Survey² reports 60% of girls aged 7-12 were enrolled in primary schools in 2023, up from 36% before the Taliban takeover. Primary school attendance is compulsory for all children but a shortage of schools, distance to schools, and family constraints, especially in isolated areas, hamper full primary school participation.

Notwithstanding repressive restrictions on women and teenage girls, AADO has still been able to continue development aid through 2023/24 providing literacy courses for illiterate and semi-literate women in villages, and courses for secondary schoolgirls.

AADO courses are inspected every few months by Taliban Security and officials from the Ministry of Vice and Virtue and Education Department, with no adverse outcomes to date. Inspectors appear satisfied with attendees wearing appropriate attire, literacy and maths/science curricula taught and other arrangements made through AADO's in-country partner, the Afghan Australian Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (AADRO), a not-for-profit entity funded by AADO and registered as such in Kabul.

¹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/afghanistan-three-years-after-taliban-takeover>

² <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/975d25c52634db31c504a2c6bee44d22-0310012023/original/Afghanistan-Welfare-Monitoring-Survey-3.pdf>

Year 12 Intensive Courses for Girls

Two Year 12 intensives for schoolgirls in Kabul were successfully run through AADRO in 2022/23 for over 400 schoolgirls with classes in Science, Maths and English (SMEC). These were introduced to offset educational deprivation of teenage girls with secondary schools not re-opened by the Taliban in early 2022 and then girls in late 2022 being banned from physically attending secondary school.

With these ongoing severe restrictions, AADO during 2023/24, funded a third 13 week intensive SMEC program for secondary schoolgirls from April to August 2023, with courses shifted to being delivered on-line. 210 female students were enrolled: 142 of the girls received the training on-line and 68, without access to internet, followed the lessons via USB flash drives provided. Apart from English, Science subjects include Physics and Chemistry while Geometry and Trigonometry are studied in Maths.



As with earlier SMEC courses, training is provided through volunteer teachers forming an Afghanistan Education Support Coalition (AESC). It is understood that female secondary teachers employed by the Afghan Government continue to receive at least some salary while girls secondary schools remain closed. This has enabled AADRO to secure qualified teachers through the AESC to teach SMEC subjects, which are mandatory for tertiary study.

It was heartening that an edict by the Taliban leadership in January 2024, lifted restrictions on girls attending private secondary schooling enabling girls to again physically attend classes. Following in February 2024, was a further edict enabling girls to proceed to train and work in medical institutes and hospitals.

These changes together with additional donations from benefactors, enabled AADRO to fund a fourth SMEC round from February to May 2024 with course participants increasing to 288. Interestingly, 120 students attended in person with 103 studying the subjects via internet and 65 via USB. Statistics and Probability was included at the girls' request.

School attendance is now the dominant form of study, reflecting teenage girls' need for interaction with peers and desperation for activity external to being effectively prisoners in their homes.

A 5th round of SMEC classes was considered in May 2024 subject to further funding of \$10,000 being available to cover the costs of running another SMEC round. This 5th round has since been implemented in the reporting period beyond this financial year.

Literacy and Livelihoods for Village Women

AADO during 2023/24, funded a 19th round of courses in literacy and numeracy for another 100 women in 5 regional villages. These had commenced in May 2023 during the prior financial year, but continued from July 2023 until the end of January 2024.

The courses were held in the Qara Bagh District of Kabul Province with 5 trainers organised through local district authorities and lessons held in private homes. AADO funded staff in Kabul engaged with local authorities in the Villages to appoint accredited local teachers and ascertain an appropriate home in each village in which to hold classes for 20 women at a time. Rent is paid to the household for use of the home AADRO monitors delivery, attendance, teaching standards and deals with any issues that arise, providing AADO with monthly reports.

In April 2024, AADO approved funding for a 20th round of literacy and livelihood courses for another 100 women in 5 villages over 10 months which commenced in the subsequent financial year.



Other AADO activities

AADO Executive Director, Nouria Salehi AM continued her regular annual visits to Afghanistan during 2023/24. She travelled to Kabul in September 2023 and April 2024 to discuss and monitor AADO courses. This supplements monthly AADRO reports on the monitoring and assessment of courses and finances by our partner program manager in Kabul and regular email follow-up of these from Melbourne.

AADO's annual **Now-Ruz (Now-Roz) Afghan New Year celebration** was again held for members and supporters at the Afghan Gallery on 21 March 2024. Our special guest at this event was Professor Brett Sutton AO, former Chief Medical Officer for Victoria, now in a senior executive role at the CSIRO, who spoke on his "*Experiences in Afghanistan working with Médecins Sans Frontières.*"

This very successful Now-Ruz dinner, raised in excess of \$22,000 for AADO programs kindly assisted by coaching consultant, Ruhee Meghani who facilitated a funding pledge process of bids for donated prizes. These included a weekend away, an Afghan rug and saddle bag, coaching session by Ruhee, Afghan Gallery dinner, and a Brett Sutton autographed cushion! AADO is most grateful to Ruhee Meghani, Brett Sutton, the Afghan Gallery, donors and attendees for supporting this important annual event.

AADO during 2023/24, via Ministerial correspondence and as a member of ACFID (the Australian Council for International Development), continued to advocate accelerated processing of Afghan visa applications and make submissions on supporting increased Australian development aid for Afghanistan. Advocacy has also covered promoting UN, World Bank and private sector development aid in agriculture, solar and wind energy generation to power lighting, cooking, heating and water pumps.

Appreciation of support for AADO

AADO's work requiring a deal of manoeuvring and diplomacy in implementation, could not have been achieved without huge efforts to ensure security and continuation of training programs in Afghanistan. Thanks again to all AADO Committee of Management members for their contributions, but especially Secretary, Jen Davis for handling the demands of correspondence and record keeping, AADO's esteemed Treasurer, David Brennan, for efficiently recording our accounts in trying circumstances, Homaira Mershed's support at the Afghan Gallery, and to Farida Malek for her efforts at our Now-Roz celebration and to AADO's dedicated representatives in Kabul.

Finally, hearty thanks to AADO's members and supporters for your donations which have made AADO's ongoing vital work in Afghanistan possible despite the restrictions under which we operate.



Jackie M. Fristacky

Jackie M Fristacky AM, President



N. Salehi

Dr Nouria Salehi AM, Executive Director

AADO Financial Report for 2023/24

The full audited Financial Statements dated 23rd September 2024 with explanation of Notes and Independent Auditor's Report, PMK Partners, is available on AADO's website: www.aado.org.au/resources/ or on request

Summary of AADO Financial Position

Donation and foundation funding to AADO increased in 2023/24 to \$118,597 from just \$50,443 in 2022/23. This enabled continuation of our programs helping overcome the previous year's concerns regarding AADO's ongoing development program capacity.

AADO in 2022/23 operated at a deficit due to a reduction in donations and reduced foundation funding. There is a view that with the application of sanctions against the Taliban Government of Afghanistan and restrictions on the country's women and girls, little can be achieved. However, this is not the case and there is considerable scope to expand training and development for women and girls in Afghanistan discreetly and diplomatically. It is important that potential donors appreciate what can be achieved by projects such as those funded by AADO.

It is pleasing with concerted efforts during 2023/24, that additional funds for AADO's work were secured, so that AADO ended the financial year with a net profit of \$54,137 compared with the prior year's loss of \$66,566.

AADO was thus able to fund delivery of two Year 12 courses for near 550 secondary schoolgirls and for 200 women in 5 Village programs during 2023/24.

With entirely voluntary personnel in Australia, overheads remain low, but without DFAT or regular corporate or foundation funding, AADO's capacity to fund its operations relies heavily on annual fundraising activities, taxing on a volunteer Committee of Management, and AADO's position into the future remains unpredictable.

International currency fluctuations also apply. Afghan currency has depreciated substantially under the Taliban regime, while there are regular fluctuations in the Australian dollar against the US dollar. Therefore, the AADO Treasurer and Committee of Management need to make allowances in budgeting for such currency variations.



Afghani



US\$



AU\$

AFGHAN AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION
ABN 25 274 698 213

The following three tables are extracted from AADO's financial statements audited by
 PMK Partners

INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

| | Note | 2023 \$ | 2024 \$ |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|
| INCOME | | | |
| Monetary Donations and Gifts | | 50,443 | 118,597 |
| Fundraising Activities Income | | 2,479 | 6,035 |
| Sale of Books | | 2,740 | - |
| Interest Received | | 338 | 670 |
| Membership Fees | | 360 | 480 |
| Foreign Currency Exchanges Gain | | <u>940</u> | - |
| | 3 | <u>57,300</u> | <u>125,782</u> |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| International Programs | | 116,807 | 63,181 |
| Accountability and Administration | | 7,059 | 8,304 |
| Foreign Currency Exchanges Loss | | | 160 |
| | | <u>123,866</u> | <u>71,645</u> |
| Gain for the year | | <u>(66,566)</u> | <u>54,137</u> |
| Total income for the year | | <u>(66,566)</u> | <u>54,137</u> |

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 JUNE 2024**

| | Note | 2023 \$ | 2024 \$ |
|----------------------------------|------|---------------|----------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS | | | |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | 4 | <u>65,552</u> | <u>96,174</u> |
| Trade and Other Receivables | 5 | | <u>10,000</u> |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | | <u>65,552</u> | <u>106,174</u> |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | <u>65,552</u> | <u>106,174</u> |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | | |
| Trade and Other Payables | 6 | <u>18,839</u> | <u>5,324</u> |
| TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES | | <u>18,839</u> | <u>5,324</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | | <u>18,839</u> | <u>5,324</u> |
| NET ASSETS | | <u>46,713</u> | <u>100,850</u> |
| MEMBERS' FUNDS | | | |
| Retained earnings | 7 | <u>46,713</u> | <u>100,850</u> |
| TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS | | <u>46,713</u> | <u>100,850</u> |

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024**

| | Note | Retained Earnings \$ | Total \$ |
|--------------------------------|------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Balance at 1 July 2022 | | 113,279 | 113,279 |
| Profit attributable to members | | <u>(66,566)</u> | <u>(66,566)</u> |
| Balance at 30 June 2023 | | 46,713 | 46,713 |
| Profit attributable to members | | <u>54,137</u> | <u>54,137</u> |
| Balance at 30 June 2024 | | <u>100,850</u> | <u>100,850</u> |

“Had there been no teachers, today’s world, with these levels of progress, would not exist. Therefore, whether in a rural community or a city, the role of the teacher is very important. But when it comes to how effective the role of female teachers can be, this is even more important in the villages and among the rural people because female teachers can help those people and their families understand the need to break some traditions. On top of teaching students in class, female teachers can put an end to some old customs. For example, in some areas, people believe women should not study and work. So, I can say that female teachers are extremely important because they can change people’s old beliefs and ways of thinking. “

‘Soraya’³

³<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/rights-freedom/education-in-hibernation-the-end-of-a-virtuous-cycle-of-literacy-and-empowerment-for-women-in-shughnan/>



Photographs of Afghan participants in this report are taken without revealing faces, at the specific request of participants, and for security reasons. These hidden faces reflect the current sad situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, many reliant on begging

Afghan Australian Development Organisation (AADO) is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct, a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. As a signatory, we are committed to and fully adhere to this Code of Conduct conducting our work with transparency, accountability and integrity.

For any issues of concern regarding AADO, please email info@aado.org.au.

Our website www.aado.org.au also sets out a complaint handling policy. If not satisfied with AADO’s response to any complaint and you believe there is a breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct, the matter can be lodged with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee at code@acfid.asn.au. Information about how to make a complaint to ACFID can be found at www.acfid.asn.au

