



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada

[Home](#) > Supporting Afghan Women and Girls

## Backgrounder

### Supporting Afghan Women and Girls

---

Canada's six priorities in Afghanistan provide an opportunity to make a direct contribution to improve the well-being of women and girls. Canada supports a full range of projects to increase women's legal rights and access to education, maternal health, the labour market and political life.

Despite harsh inequalities, women in Afghanistan have seen some progress. Today, Afghan women represent 27 per cent of Afghan parliamentarians, more than 2.1 million girls are enrolled in school, and more than 290,000 women have accessed small loans and savings services across the country.

However, women in Afghanistan are still among the most disadvantaged in the world. They continue to be exposed to violence, poverty and deprived of basic human rights to property, education and literacy.

Addressing these challenges is a long-term process that will not happen overnight. But with Canada's support we are already seeing positive changes in Afghanistan. Moving forward, Canada's commitment will remain steadfast in helping improve the lives of Afghan women and girls.

#### Canada's Support for Afghan Women and Girls:

- Canada is currently funding a three-year \$5 million project with Rights and Democracy that promotes legal and policy reforms to improve the status of women by working with opinion leaders, advocates and public authorities on a range of women's rights and family law issues.
- Canada is a strong supporter of the Afghan electoral process. In March, Canada announced up to \$35 million in funding for the 2009 and 2010 elections in Afghanistan. As part of this contribution, Canada is working with Afghan and international partners to address particular needs of women voters in Afghanistan, including gender sensitive voter outreach and adequate security at voter registration centres.
- Canada strongly supports opportunities for Afghan women to actively participate in their communities. In March 2009, Canada announced approximately \$2 million to support War Child Canada's Afghan Women's Community Support Project. As part of this project, Afghan women will receive basic literacy and numeracy education and training in marketable trades such as carpet weaving, beekeeping and agricultural farming.
- The Microfinance Investment Support Facility (MISFA) project has provided small loans and savings services to more than 445,000 impoverished people across 23 provinces in Afghanistan, of which almost 2/3 are women. From 2003 to 2009, Canada contributed more than \$100 million to MISFA.
- CIDA's support to CANADEM's gender advisor in the Afghan Ministry of Interior has had tangible success in raising gender awareness among police, collaborating with international agencies on police gender matters and introducing such programs as the family response unit, a pilot female patrol in a park.
- World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and CARE Canada's project contributes to increase the self-sufficiency of vulnerable women, including widows, and their families in Kabul through skills development and related employment and income generation support. Canada's contribution to this project is \$4.95 million from 2007-2011.
- The BRAC project for girls' basic education is currently providing primary education to over 80,000 students, 80% of them girls, and to date, has trained over 2,500 female community-based teachers. Canada's contribution totals \$14.5 million (2006-2010).
- In January, 2009 more than 11,000 Afghans, approximately 80% of whom are women, graduated from the UNICEF and World Food Programme's Functional Literacy Program.

Date Modified: 2009-04-04

