The Significance of Sport

- Message by Director of Star Sports Department and Physical Training -

As you all know, sport can bring people together by giving them a sense of personal identity, as well as feelings of group membership and social identification. Sport holds a prominent place in our society and that the consumption, valuation, and participation of sports have potential for both positive and negative outcomes and consequences. Keep in mind, however, that sport also has incredible potential to serve as a vehicle to participate in activities which can push us forward.

Star Educational Society is multi-dimensional and has spread its wings to bring changes in other aspects of our people’s lives. Star Educational Society is not only an English language institution but also a small community of thinkers who have dedicated themselves to developing the potential of talented Afghan youth. Star strives for a sound society and has always encouraged our youth to actively participate in activities which can push us forward.

Star believes that taking part in sports can promote good health and steer youth away from the tendency toward narcotics and drug abuse. Sports are a vital ingredient for better physical and mental strength and, therefore, Star has organized several Futsal tournaments in recent years which were highly welcomed by schools and other educational centers. Moreover, the auspicious and unique tournaments held by Star caused Sport and Olympics Federation Committee officials to attend, encourage and honor our Futsal tournaments. Besides, many young and motivated athletes joined Star Futsal Team which is a great success for both Afghanistan national Futsal team members and our community. Our intention of initiating and conducting Futsal tournaments are to trigger enthusiasm in our student community and Star Educational Society students to participate in sport. Hence, we now hold Futsal tournaments to enhance active contribution of students and consequently dictate the significance of sport for their health and how sport can prove beneficial in efficient learning. Futsal tournaments and its likes help steer away youth and society from drug addiction and create a sound environment for the growth of an advance community. Similarly, we endeavor for quality tournaments and to introduce new emerging talents to the futsal society and Afghanistan Futsal Federation to play in national teams. For example, Mohammad Yasin, Mohsen, Hussain, Hadi, the players competing in 3rd and 4th Futsal tournaments of Star currently are the national Futsal team members and struggle to win Afghanistan national and international awards.

Star Educational Society will hold its 5th Futsal tournament within a couple of months. Besides, Star intends to organize chess and volleyball tournaments and to introduce new emerging talents to the futsal society and Afghanistan Futsal Federation to play in national teams. For example, Mohammad Yasin, Mohsen, Hussain, Hadi, the players competing in 3rd and 4th Futsal tournaments of Star currently are the national Futsal team members and struggle to win Afghanistan national and international awards.

Similarly, we endeavor for quality tournaments and to introduce new emerging talents to the futsal society and Afghanistan Futsal Federation to play in national teams. For example, Mohammad Yasin, Mohsen, Hussain, Hadi, the players competing in 3rd and 4th Futsal tournaments of Star currently are the national Futsal team members and struggle to win Afghanistan national and international awards.

Finally, I can certainly claim that Star Educational Society has always been a consistent source of motivation for youths and a big supporter of sport competitions. Let’s be the source of positive change and create a sound society.

JOIN US FOR A DIFFERENCE!
At first sight, it was a normal day. The kite was flying high above the clouds, but suddenly, a gust of wind caused it to sway uncontrollably.

My brother, Kabir, was particularly excited about his kite. He had spent hours preparing it, and now he was eager to let it soar into the sky. I, on the other hand, wasn't as enthusiastic. I had been flying kites since I was very young, but I wasn't as excited about it as my brother.

As we got closer to the park, I noticed a group of boys already there. They were talking animatedly, and I couldn't help but eavesdrop. They were discussing the best kites and strategies for the upcoming match. I was a bit envious of their enthusiasm.

When we arrived, my brother immediately started building his kite. I watched him from a distance, trying to decide if I should join in. I had always preferred to play alone, but perhaps being part of something new would be refreshing.

As we were setting up our kites, I overheard the boys' conversation. I was surprised to hear them discussing the different types of kites and their features. I had never really thought about it before.

Suddenly, a kite flew into the sky. It was a large, colorful kite, and we all watched in awe as it danced in the wind. I felt a surge of excitement.

My brother and I decided to fly our kites against each other. We started by gently pulling on our strings, but soon, the wind picked up, and we had to work harder.

I was flying my kite, carefully maneuvering it through the air. As the kite ascended, I felt a sense of accomplishment. I had never felt so alive before.

My brother's kite started to pull harder, and I could see the tension in his face. I knew that he was determined to win.

As we continued to fly our kites, I realized that I was enjoying this moment. I was feeling alive, and I didn't want it to end.

When my brother's kite started to falter, I knew it was my chance to win. I pushed harder, and soon, my kite was soaring higher than ever before.

I felt a surge of pride as I looked down at my kite. It was a beautiful sight, and I knew that I had done well.

As we walked back home, our kites still soaring, I realized that I had discovered something new. I had found a sense of purpose through my first experience with flying a kite.

From that day on, I continued to fly kites. I found that it was a great way to unwind and express myself. It became a part of my daily routine, and I never regretted it.

Looking back, I realize that I had discovered something important. I had found a new passion, and it had helped me understand the joy of life.
Hazara Massacre Continues in Afghanistan

August 27th, 2016

The July 23rd, 2016 attack on peaceful Hazara protesters was the deadliest attack since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. 107 Hazaras, the majority of whom were university students, were killed and over 500 others were wounded in a double suicide attack followed by a volley of gunfire by unknown gunmen.

Although the national as well as the international media initially reported 84 were killed and over 230 wounded, time passed became clear that the number of casualties was significantly higher than indicated by these initial reports.

Reasons behind the protests by Hazaras

Over the past three centuries, Hazaras have been massacred, their lands have been grabbed by numerous Afghan governments and they have been forcefully displaced. Deprived of their citizenship rights, they have been living in their homeland as if they are aliens.

Over 62 percent of Hazaras were massacred by the Afghan King Aqab Balram Khan between the years 1860-1882, and much of their lands were seized by the Afghan government during that historical period. Currently, Hazaras live in remote, mountainous areas of central Afghanistan. They almost always, in subsequent years, have been deprived of any services by the government.

All routes ending in this area are considered insecure as dozens of Hazara passengers are abducted and then murdered by terrorist groups on a daily basis.

Due to the existence of such a situation, Hazaras have often staged peaceful protests against systematic discrimination over the past 14 years.

Their protests have often focused on becoming beneficiaries of the basic services which should be provided by the government to every citizen. Hazaras have repeatedly come to the streets to protest against their deprivation of security, poor roads and health and education services. However, their protests have not received adequate attention from the Afghan government and the global community.

Over the past 2 years, thousands of Hazaras were forced to leave Afghanistan, seeking asylum in western countries, as they had suffered from insecurity and the continuation of systematic discrimination in their homeland. Between the years 2014-2015 over 140,000 Hazaras had to flee from Afghanistan. They do not have any hope to live in their Afghanistan where their lives are in constant danger.

Widespread protests following rout of Taliban, 107 Hazaras were massacred. Abdur Rahman Khan was the first to call for the liberation of Bamiyan. Following this strategic retreat, the Talibanconsolidated their position in central and northern regions of Afghanistan.

Following the change in the route of the line, Hazaras inside and outside Afghanistan quickly protested against the Afghan government’s decision and a blatant discrimination against Hazaras.

Following the change in the route of the line, Hazaras inside and outside Afghanistan quickly protested against the Afghan government’s decision and a blatant discrimination against Hazaras.

The Enlightenment Movement decided to end the protest without resorting to violence. On that day, government forces had been deployed to different parts of the city with enough equipment to suppress the protesters, leading organizers to believe there was a possible threat of bloody suppression.

Following this strategic retreat, the protests of the Enlightenment Movement continued outside Afghanistan. Hazaras in Australia, Canada, the US and different European countries staged protests against the systematic discrimination of their countrymen in Afghanistan.

The July 23rd attack on peaceful Hazara protesters was the deadliest attack since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. 107 Hazaras, the majority of whom were university students, were killed and over 500 others were wounded in a double suicide attack followed by a volley of gunfire by unknown gunmen.

Although the national as well as the international media initially reported 84 were killed and over 230 wounded, time passed became clear that the number of casualties was significantly higher than indicated by these initial reports.

Reasons behind the protests by Hazaras

Over the past three centuries, Hazaras have been massacred, their lands have been grabbed by numerous Afghan governments and they have been forcefully displaced. Deprived of their citizenship rights, they have been living in their homeland as if they are aliens.

Over 62 percent of Hazaras were massacred by the Afghan King Aqab Balram Khan between the years 1860-1882, and much of their lands were seized by the Afghan government during that historical period. Currently, Hazaras live in remote, mountainous areas of central Afghanistan. They almost always, in subsequent years, have been deprived of any services by the government.

All routes ending in this area are considered insecure as dozens of Hazara passengers are abducted and then murdered by terrorist groups on a daily basis.

Due to the existence of such a situation, Hazaras have often staged peaceful protests against systematic discrimination over the past 14 years.

Their protests have often focused on becoming beneficiaries of the basic services which should be provided by the government to every citizen. Hazaras have repeatedly come to the streets to protest against their deprivation of security, poor roads and health and education services. However, their protests have not received adequate attention from the Afghan government and the global community.

Over the past 2 years, thousands of Hazaras were forced to leave Afghanistan, seeking asylum in western countries, as they had suffered from insecurity and the continuation of systematic discrimination in their homeland. Between the years 2014-2015 over 140,000 Hazaras had to flee from Afghanistan. They do not have any hope to live in their Afghanistan where their lives are in constant danger.

Widespread protests following rout of Taliban, 107 Hazaras were massacred. Abdur Rahman Khan was the first to call for the liberation of Bamiyan. Following this strategic retreat, the Taliban consolidated their position in central and northern regions of Afghanistan. Following this strategic retreat, the Taliban consolidated their position in central and northern regions of Afghanistan. The Enlightenment Movement decided to end the protest without resorting to violence. On that day, government forces had been deployed to different parts of the city with enough equipment to suppress the protesters, leading organizers to believe there was a possible threat of bloody suppression.

Following this strategic retreat, the protests of the Enlightenment Movement continued outside Afghanistan. Hazaras in Australia, Canada, the US and different European countries staged protests against the systematic discrimination of their countrymen in Afghanistan.

Hazara Massacre Continues in Afghanistan

The July 23rd attack on peaceful Hazara protesters was the deadliest attack since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. 107 Hazaras, the majority of whom were university students, were killed and over 500 others were wounded in a double suicide attack followed by a volley of gunfire by unknown gunmen.

Although the national as well as the international media initially reported 84 were killed and over 230 wounded, time passed became clear that the number of casualties was significantly higher than indicated by these initial reports.

Reasons behind the protests by Hazaras

Over the past three centuries, Hazaras have been massacred, their lands have been grabbed by numerous Afghan governments and they have been forcefully displaced. Deprived of their citizenship rights, they have been living in their homeland as if they are aliens.

Over 62 percent of Hazaras were massacred by the Afghan King Aqab Balram Khan between the years 1860-1882, and much of their lands were seized by the Afghan government during that historical period. Currently, Hazaras live in remote, mountainous areas of central Afghanistan. They almost always, in subsequent years, have been deprived of any services by the government.

All routes ending in this area are considered insecure as dozens of Hazara passengers are abducted and then murdered by terrorist groups on a daily basis.

Due to the existence of such a situation, Hazaras have often staged peaceful protests against systematic discrimination over the past 14 years.

Their protests have often focused on becoming beneficiaries of the basic services which should be provided by the government to every citizen. Hazaras have repeatedly come to the streets to protest against their deprivation of security, poor roads and health and education services. However, their protests have not received adequate attention from the Afghan government and the global community.

Over the past 2 years, thousands of Hazaras were forced to leave Afghanistan, seeking asylum in western countries, as they had suffered from insecurity and the continuation of systematic discrimination in their homeland. Between the years 2014-2015 over 140,000 Hazaras had to flee from Afghanistan. They do not have any hope to live in their Afghanistan where their lives are in constant danger.

Widespread protests following rout of Taliban, 107 Hazaras were massacred. Abdur Rahman Khan was the first to call for the liberation of Bamiyan. Following this strategic retreat, the Taliban consolidated their position in central and northern regions of Afghanistan. Following this strategic retreat, the Taliban consolidated their position in central and northern regions of Afghanistan. The Enlightenment Movement decided to end the protest without resorting to violence. On that day, government forces had been deployed to different parts of the city with enough equipment to suppress the protesters, leading organizers to believe there was a possible threat of bloody suppression.

Following this strategic retreat, the protests of the Enlightenment Movement continued outside Afghanistan. Hazaras in Australia, Canada, the US and different European countries staged protests against the systematic discrimination of their countrymen in Afghanistan.

Hazara Massacre Continues in Afghanistan
Pashtani Bank: Ten Billion AFS To Be Gained From Business People

Mr. Zia, we start the first question about issues related to the past. In the past, Pashtani Bank, which had gained the trust of citizens in the country, was one of the reliable banks in Afghanistan. How do you evaluate the existing situation considering the improvement of private banking?

Khesraw Zia: Thank you. Unfortunately, three decades war in Afghanistan not only harmed economic, social, cultural and political fields, but also has harmed the country from banking sectors. Pashtani Bank, before 1371, was famous in Afghanistan as the home of businesspeople of Afghanistan. Hence, it became a reliable name. After passing the war and shaping the new political system and creating the free economic barrier in governmental banks, some of the private banks also started functioning. The private banks could have more improvements under the support of the traders. But the existing economic system of Afghanistan has created this need that we should work on all sectors although we are still an importing country and we ward off more than 80% of our requirements. In spite of this, the government reached a decision that Pashtani Bank should be just a bank but a general bank which can provide facilities for banking sections. Specially, we should invest on transportation and this issue has increased the need for being a general bank.

8 AM: During 14 years that there was time for improving all the sectors in the country, how much the Pashtani Bank has moved forward to make itself meet the banking standards?

Khesraw Zia: One of the reasons that the governmental banks have not been included in the markets is the banking procedure and system that wasted the time of the customer. When the customers see that their needs are provided more quickly in the private banks and their time would be wasted less than the governmental ones, they would go to those banks instead. But fortunately, we use a modern system by the name of Koryan, which is completely a computerized system and can provide the customer’s requirement very fast, in Pashtani Bank. In addition, we are working on “Mobile Banking” and “Internet Banking” to provide more facilities for customers. Thus, customers can fulfill their requirements from their homes. We are hardly working on the ATM as well, but our banking system has become very simple nowadays and the customers cannot access every section of it. Of course we face problems in some of the provinces and we hope to remove them. The new banking rule which was issued one year ago has created a better opportunity for the banks. If the governmental banks harmonize themselves with this rule, certainly they can use all the facilities for their customer like private banks.

8 AM: Because the Pashtani Bank has a long history, the banking service has survived from the past up to now. The crises which were created in the past, the harmed investments and some people could not take out their investments from the bank. The banks also could not get their debts from the people.

Khesraw Zia: There are two issues: one the money that the customer has in the bank and the money the banks has on the trader and investor. About the customer’s money I should say that they still exist in the bank. Many of the customers came and received their money as much as it was. But the money that the bank had invested on the trader or had given to the trader to use it in their business, we face a challenge. We could not receive some or the money we had on the traders. Some of the traders never exist. Some of them have lost their money and have no money to pay to the bank and because of this the bank has been harmed badly. Right now, we have nearly 10 billion AFS on the traders which we could not receive. Of course we are trying to receive this money and the political will also approves it.

8 AM: How close Afghan banking is to the global banking standards?

Khesraw Zia: In the past, the governmental banks of Afghanistan had extreme positive relationships with the biggest banks of the world like Acety Bank of America, Kamerz Bank of Germany, Dwich Bank of Germany and other important banks of the world. That relationship was also stable in the past ten years but because the governmental banks couldn’t equalize themselves to the international standards, this relationship is now ended. The swift and western union money transfer has connection with all the banks of the country. Some of the country’s banks use debit and credit card and some of them are working on this system. We need time to standardize our banking system.

8 AM: What are the facilities that Pashtani Bank is presenting for its customers?

Khesraw Zia: We have all the primary services for our customers. We open current account, the prepaid account and we have standard facilities. We also have the western union money transfer. Our customers can access their account in any sections of Pashtani Bank in the country.
Lina, who is from Finland, is one of the benevolents who has worked for 43 years in developing countries in difficult situations of Afghanistan and now she wants to leave Afghanistan.

She says that she is 72 years old and she has known Afghanistan since 1973. She has worked for 14 years in Kabul during the civil war and also she has given hygienic services in Central parts of Afghanistan in Lal-o-Sargangl district, Ghoor province and now people of Lal-o-Sargangl call her Mama which means grandma. When she came to Afghanistan she was a 29-year-old lady. Her interests in the poor countries made her come to Afghanistan and now she is 72 and she says that she will leave Afghanistan forever. However, her kindness will be with Afghans, and she says that she loves Afghans, and Afghanistan is like her second home.

She was born in 1942 in Finland. Her interests in developing countries made her go to Germany and study Medical Science; then, in 1971, she came to Afghanistan, she said: she came to Kabul, and Kabul was a beautiful city, and a little bit improved, and many people came from Pakistan for shopping. In addition, a lot of tourists were seen in Kabul that is why she did not stay in Kabul.

Lina said that she heard from her German colleagues about Central Part of Afghanistan, Lal-o-Sargangl, where poor people live and made her enthusiastic to visit Lal-o-Sargangl.

Moreover, she said about her experience in Afghanistan that she had heard from her German colleagues who were the former nurses in the Central parts of Afghanistan about Lal-o-Sargangl. She said, in 1971, first she came to Kabul and learned Persian Language; then she went to Hazarajat, where she could not understand people’s language which was spoken with a different accent.

In 1971, she went to Yakawlang, where there were no hospitals and doctors. Later, she went to Lal-o-Sargangl. She said, “We went to Lal-o-Sargangl, where there was an International Emigration Organization that supported us and we lived in a house that had four rooms, two of them were for living and two of them were for our offices.”

Lina said about her diary in Lal-o-Sargangl, “People were poor and kind, and had a very simple life, everywhere looked like my house, my foreigner colleagues told me that I should not accept their invitation for drinking tea till the time they invite, at least four times, but in reverse, I accepted at their first invitation and had tea with them and went to their homes.” She said helping and supporting poor people and poor children had been their real job.

A German woman who has worked for many years in Central parts, died several years ago and also she got the same title that I got (mama) because of supporting poor people.

Lina was in Afghanistan for several years, in 1973, in Dawood’s political coup that turn off kingship government in Afghanistan. Then, Afghan Government expelled her, but, because of her love for Afghanistan, she went to yotopia in Africa.

In 1985, she was back in Afghanistan and started her job in Salbe Sorkh Hospital in Kabul. During the Civil War, in 1989, she got the responsibility of Salbe Sorkh Hospital. Because of continuation of Civil War, in 1986, she had the chance to go to central parts (Lal-o-Sargangl) for the second time and has taught the girls and women midwifery.

She said: “We did not have power and helped many pregnant women at night with the torch.” In the winter of 1999, the time she wanted to help patients, the patients feared the bed. She said, “I prepared the bed for 145 patients, the situation was not good, the weather was cold and snowy, either people carried their patients on their arms or we visited them in their homes”

She said: “We did not have medications and Taliban did not allow the planes to bring medications. Finally, the planes threw the medications from the sky and I taught that the medications were broken but when I checked except two of them the rest were all right, I was so happy.”

She said: “The reason that sickness spread out so fast was, people were, they were poor and had their lunch and dinner in the same dishes, and they did not have spoon, and did not wash their hands. We taught them to have their food with spoon not their hands, and to wash their hands. Likewise, some people slept in the mosque and walked without shoes and many other reasons.”

Lina said she taught many girls and women to help pregnant women and trained many midwives and they could help many pregnant women.

She said that she did not get married because there was no man that she could get married.

2 road projects inaugurated in Logar Province

Translated by: Mohammad Asif
Source: Hash-e-Sobh

Nasir Ahmad Durran, Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, during his trip to Logar besides visiting some of other provinces.

He added that they had 1381 development projects in progress well inaugurated Khoif Road located in Kachi Town near to Alam Bridge. As it is planned, this road will be asphalted in 3 km in the next few months with the budget of 28.3 million Afghans.

MRBD also added that construction of this road is the fundamental need of the residents for better transportation services and the construction will begin soon.

Meanwhile, Sayed Qarib Saadat, a member of Logar Provincial Council added that there would be more security in the area with the construction of the road. Mr. Saadat also appealed for supplying water sanitation pipes in the Immigrants Town and he said they hoped that MRBD would implement the water supply system soon.

Mr. Durran said that the provinces such as Ghanzai, Logar, Dashtkhi, Zhahal, Pakhtika, Farah, Nooristan, Ghor and Maidan Wardak, where there has not been any development project in the past few years, would have more development projects. He as well added that they needed to improve the agriculture products in provinces and could join the agriculture fields with the market. He said more road constructions would begin in Logar and other provinces.

He added that they had 1381 development projects in different sections which will be implemented in most of the deprived provinces.

And in the meantime, Mohammad Halim Fidai, Logar Governor, said that implementing development projects and providing services to the people had influence on security and employment. He added that projects in Logar provinces and other districts of Logar had been going very well. People of Logar support any sort of development projects and as well try to keep them safe. Mr. Fidai appealed MRBD to widen the irrigation and infrastructure projects in the province.

Free style cycling

Translated by: Najiba Ahmadi
Source: Hash-e-Sobh

Interest is obvious on their faces. The place of sports has been asphalted. We can see obstacles all around area for performing different movements.

A lady hits many pedals than stops and jumps over obstacles by bicycle. Her jump was amazing for everyone.

On the first opportunity of bicycle riding, trainer teaches the participants how to control the bicycle. Then, he takes the plug and says to the lady riding a bicycle, “pedal” the lady runs the bicycle slowly. The trainer admires her, and the lady smiles like a champion. This scene of bicycle riding with free styles happened in Kabul.

Free style bicycle riding team has started practicing one month ago. Asghar Mahirzada is a young man who teaches free style with bicycle to other young guys. He is also one of the founders of free style. He says, “I had found bicycle riding team for making an atmosphere without discrimination and popularizing modern sports and also for supporting Afghan living environment.” Mahirzada said, “We wanted to encourage Afghans for solidarity and prevent discrimination by founding free style bicycle riding team.” Asghar said that he faced people with bad behavior and insulting manners at the beginning of training. He said, “When my teammates and I were preferrning free style bicycle riding, people would come and say to us what the hell are you doing?” and at that time I was disappointed.

Because of people’s insulting manners, Asghar felt annoyed but he decided to find a save place for training and stay away from people with bad behavior. He managed to find a place for activity. Now one month has passed from the beginning of his training. Asghar Mahirzada says that they have trained fifty students in different level of bicycle riding. The free style team includes four trainers of free style movements and sixty members, the members of this team can learn new and free style movement bicycle riding in two hours per day.

Asghar Mahirzada points to all young guys to think for their countries pride and learn new skills. The good news for the fans of bicycle riding is that the free style bicycle riding stadium will be opened officially in the coming month.
My G(irls)20 Journey

It was April 2016 when I received the exciting news that I was selected as the Girls20 delegate representing Afghanistan.

Girls20 is a globally active social enterprise from Canada that cultivates a new generation of female leaders through education, entrepreneurial training, leadership, and global experiences – with one ultimate goal: Increasing female labor force participation around the world.

Designed G20 style, Girls20 brings together one delegate from each G20 country, plus a representative from the European and African Unions, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the MENA region. After a thorough selection process, I was honored to be chosen as the representative of Afghanistan for 2016.

Every year in advance of the Annual G20 Leaders’ Summit, the Girls20 delegates come together for their own Summit to debate relevant issues, to learn about strategic skills and to prepare an Official Communiqué to the G20 leaders. My journey towards this inspiring summit started on the first day of August and took me all the way to Beijing, China.

On August 3, I met the other delegates and the Girls20 team during the introductory morning and I can still feel the excitement of talking to them for the first time. There were plenty of other opportunities to get to know each other and share stories mainly during our lunches and dinners and at the debrief sessions, which was usually my favorite part of the day. At the end of the day, we would come together to talk about what we’ve learned and work on team building and networking.

The Girls20 welcome reception was a memorable experience when I met amazing people and some of my role models. The reception was hosted by Ambassador Saint Jacques, Canada’s Ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, and we had the honor of meeting the Canadian Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, the Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister of Canada, the UN Global Coalition of Young Women Entrepreneurs, officials from G20 countries as well as representatives of several international companies. It was truly inspiring talking with them and hearing their ideas about bringing more women into the workforce.

Our program in China was multifaceted. We received a number of trainings to gain valuable skills, such as communications and leadership skills and strategic planning, and we heard speeches of many female leaders. One of the speakers I felt particularly inspired by was Chiing Tien, the Founder and President of Educating Girls of Rural China. She provides emotional and financial support to girls and women in rural China to continue their education, and she gives them the hope and strength to follow their dreams. We had the pleasure of meeting some of these young girls themselves and were able to listen to their stories.

We also had the opportunity to discuss our post summit initiatives with Girls20 advisors and seek their comments and advice. My initiative focuses on the empowerment of girls and women in the rural areas of Afghanistan by enriching them with entrepreneurial and leadership skills and English language trainings. My advisors gave me recommendations on taking a step-by-step approach to implement the project.

Luckily, there was also time for some sightseeing in our host city, Beijing. We visited the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, and of course one of the world’s most famous landmarks: The Great Wall of China. We rapidly forgot about the extremely hot weather as we entered into discussions about our homes countries, their beauties and achievements and areas for improvement.

Coming from Afghanistan, I was often asked questions such as “What is your country’s current situation? Do you have many schools there? Are you safe? Does the Taliban still exist? Can women leave their homes?” etc. I tried to address these questions to the best of my ability and talked about the developments of recent years, the improvements in our education system and the position of women, but I also spoke about the many problems that my country still has to deal with, such as access to education and health clinics in rural areas and the extremely low female labor force participation rate.

I personally believe that the government of Afghanistan should improve access to entrepreneurship trainings in rural areas, to empower women to run their own business and be more financially independent. You can listen to the recommendations of the other Girls20 delegates in this video: http://tinyurl.com/zg2vd4n

We also had the opportunity to discuss our post summit initiatives with Girls20 advisors and seek their comments and advice. My initiative focuses on the empowerment of girls and women in the rural areas of Afghanistan by enriching them with entrepreneurial and leadership skills and English language trainings. My advisors gave me recommendations on taking a step-by-step approach to implement the project.

Luckily, there was also time for some sightseeing in our host city, Beijing. We visited the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, and of course one of the world’s most famous landmarks: The Great Wall of China. We rapidly forgot about the extremely hot weather as we entered into discussions about our homes countries, their beauties and achievements and areas for improvement.

Coming from Afghanistan, I was often asked questions such as “What is your country’s current situation? Do you have many schools there? Are you safe? Does the Taliban still exist? Can women leave their homes?” etc. I tried to address these questions to the best of my ability and talked about the developments of recent years, the improvements in our education system and the position of women, but I also spoke about the many problems that my country still has to deal with, such as access to education and health clinics in rural areas and the extremely low female labor force participation rate.

I personally believe that the government of Afghanistan should improve access to entrepreneurship trainings in rural areas, to empower women to run their own business and be more financially independent. You can listen to the recommendations of the other Girls20 delegates in this video: http://tinyurl.com/zg2vd4n

On August 9, the official part of the summit began with the wise words of the Prime Minister of Canada and self-proclaimed feminist, The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau. His opening address was followed by several keynote speeches and panel debates on issues such as male champions of change, understanding our future workforce, the future of jobs and talent, and securing a fair share in growth sectors.

The most challenging but also most rewarding part of the summit was to define and write a set of key recommendations to the G20 leaders to increase female labor participation. Access to proper education is of great concern to many Afghan citizens and takes a prominent place in the Communiqué. Including the needs of girls and women in education, entrepreneurship and employment policies is integral to providing girls and women with the skills and opportunities to participate and advance in the labor force.

On my Girls20 journey, I had the chance to speak about all the challenges girls and women in Afghanistan face, to hear from other delegates about the issues in their respective countries, and most importantly, to combine our ideas to find the best way to tackle these challenges for a better world. In Beijing, I found an international network of young women – future leaders not to forget - of more than 20 countries; a family that has given me the strength and motivation to pursue my passion to contribute to the empowerment of girls and women and to fight for change in my country, Afghanistan.

Please visit http://www.girls20.org/ to read the full Girls20 Communiqué.
My Grandmother Told Me

The grooms, adorned in madrassi turbans, sat on the first horses; the brides, covered in bright green shawl, on the second ones. The procession had traveled from Dawood to bring to their village two sisters from Koshay Daala. Our little village just happened to be on their path.

It wasn’t every day that a wedding procession passed through the village. They beat the hand drums, and the sound of the drums got closer and closer as they approached the pass. We heard the drum, and like the other young girls from the village, we rushed to the direction of the pass outside the village. We saw the first few horses leading the procession, and then people on foot and luggage loaded on donkeys. There might have been 30 people, all well dressed, but appearing tired and covered in dust.

There was a tradition back then. Some kids held hands to form a chain and block the path of the procession to ask to be paid to allow passage. Some boys lit little fires on the path, and did the same. The girls and women of the village did not ask for money, but instead, they lined up and each asked to see the face of the bride as a charge for allowing passage.

We lined up, and waited for our turns. I was with my friends. We stood in the queue. Our turns came, we lifted the veil of the brides, looked at their faces, ran back to our own little groups, and spent the rest of the afternoon giggling and laughing about how ugly those two sisters were. We were kids, mean kids.

A GREAT BIG TREE

May I be a great big tree
so big I can’t see those taking shelter under me,
a deep green conical figure wrapped in serenity
Just as I dangle my bare feet in the water
may my roots joyfully draw
from an unknown subterranean current
May I be such a great big tree
that those who look at me
will naturally feel peace and repose
Yet may my luxuriating branches and leaves
whisper to a breeze like stray hair
May they awaken before anyone else in the rosy glow of morning
May their blue shadows be cast on earth
spreading like a trailing lace skirt
May my thoughts be kind
May my thoughts be refreshing
The tree will not move
The tree will not speak
yet may it be a ladder heavenly children ascend and descend
If someone comes and rests by me at the height of day
I will provide deep shadow and infinite comfort

On a stormy day
I will be even greater, more stalwart
I will firmly anchor my roots in the great earth and will not sway
Yet my sap will flow smoothly
even my incised wounds will issue forth a refreshing scent
Soon I will whisper a smiling song
When night arrives I will dissolve into darkness
unbeknownst to people
may the song alone become invisible ripples

Kiyoko Nagase
Kiyoko Nagase was born in 1906 Okayama, Japan and died in 1995 on her 89th birthday. She published her first book of poems in 1930 at the age of 24. At the age of forty, she took up farming. In 1987, at the age of eighty-one, Nagase published her prize-winning book, Akegata ni kuru hito yo (You Who Come at Daybreak). She was active as a poet throughout her 65-year career, producing timeless crystallizations of her heart.
Could you please introduce yourself? I am Jawad Zawulištani and I was born in 1992 in Daikondi province. I graduated from school in Daikondi. After taking the university entrance exam, I entered Kabul University where I studied English literature. I graduated from university in late 2014. Then I started working with different organizations.

Would you please tell us what points made you become a Fulbright finalist? I can’t mention only one or two certain points as the key of success for there were many other that helped me to prepare myself for this amazing competitive scholarship. How committed you are towards your community, your country and your people can be a good guarantee to get the Fulbright Scholarship. It demonstrates the potential you have as a committed young Afghan, who will return back to the country wherever he or she goes. In addition, I think I was always trying to be that kind of person and I think it helped me a lot. Furthermore, my linguistic skills also enabled me to be successful. I was always trying to improve my language skills as much as I could. Having a clear goal also helped me a lot. While I was studying at Kabul University and while I was working, I was always trying to have a clear goal. And my clear goal helped me write a good personal statement. My thoughts about my future, my past and my potentials helped me to write a more convincing and reasonable essay. And my clear goal helped me write a good personal interview. Now, I can say that it is all about having a clear goal.

To whom do you attribute your success? I can’t say we can do everything by ourselves because the world we live in is somehow very complex and things are strongly related to each other. I was fortunate enough to have many good Fulbright candidate from Afghanistan. I did my best to reach the final stage and interview stage of Fulbright. Therefore, I had prepared myself for the Fulbright interview. Now, I can say that it is all about having a clear goal.

What standards made you successful? I would like to say that everyone’s way of getting or reaching to something is different, so let’s appreciate that everyone can have his or her own way though still there are common things. For example, having a strong academic background is a very strong point that supports candidates everywhere in their academic life. What are the important factors that can make an applicant to become a Fulbright finalist? Anyone who wants to get a Fulbright scholarship should work on his or her language skills, on his or her writing, reading comprehension, speaking fluency and listening comprehension. These are very necessary language skills. Furthermore, candidates should have a clear goal. The other thing which I think is very important is being a very beneficial community member. Candidates should use their potential and whatever they have to help their fellow community members and their fellow country men and women. I think these all will demonstrate a very strong leadership potential. Having a good academic background, good language skills, a clear goal and commitment towards their people, towards their country and towards their community will demonstrate a very strong leadership potential in you. All these will make the candidate a very strong candidate for Fulbright scholarship.

What are your future goals and plans? I want to come back to Afghanistan and establish an organization for security studies where we go to the very communities and ask the people about their problems. I think the people and what the root causes of the conflict are and how they can themselves help to address the Afghan conflict at the grassroots level. The other objective I want to pursue after my education is to do research on Afghan security and try to add an Afghan insight from an Afghan perspective including the local perspectives and the community’s perspectives. As the result, this can create a very good research career for me where I am trying to bring the local views and the community views to the Afghan government and present them to the Afghan International Allies, who are working with the Afghan government. These things are amazing. Afghan local communities want these things and I think these things are the root causes of Afghan conflicts, so please consider all these things in the policy. What I also would do is helping the Afghan government to make some policy in this regard. For example, I think we don’t have a good understanding of Afghan conflict and policy factors. Therefore, all these things have created a mess of everything so that nothing is clear and the Afghan government does not understand what to do and what policy can help deal with the problems. I think if we have enough Afghan researchers and policy makers, who can understand the conflicts at the community level corresponding to international standards, they can help Afghan government to make some policies to mitigate the Afghan conflict and overcome the current security problems we are facing.

Could you please introduce yourself? I am Jawad Zawulištani and I was born in 1992 in Daikondi province. I graduated from school in Daikondi. After taking the university entrance exam, I entered Kabul University where I studied English literature. I graduated from university in late 2014. Then I started working with different organizations.

Would you please tell us what points made you become a Fulbright finalist? I can’t mention only one or two certain points as the key of success for there were many other that helped me to prepare myself for this amazing competitive scholarship. How committed you are towards your community, your country and your people can be a good guarantee to get the Fulbright Scholarship. It demonstrates the potential you have as a committed young Afghan, who will return back to the country wherever he or she goes. In addition, I think I was always trying to be that kind of person and I think it helped me a lot. Furthermore, my linguistic skills also enabled me to be successful. I was always trying to improve my language skills as much as I could. Having a clear goal also helped me a lot. While I was studying at Kabul University and while I was working, I was always trying to have a clear goal. And my clear goal helped me write a good personal statement. My thoughts about my future, my past and my potentials helped me to write a more convincing and reasonable essay. And my clear goal helped me write a good personal interview. Now, I can say that it is all about having a clear goal.

To whom do you attribute your success? I can’t say we can do everything by ourselves because the world we live in is somehow very complex and things are strongly related to each other. I was fortunate enough to have many good Fulbright candidate from Afghanistan. I did my best to reach the final stage and interview stage of Fulbright. Therefore, I had prepared myself for the Fulbright interview. Now, I can say that it is all about having a clear goal.

What standards made you successful? I would like to say that everyone’s way of getting or reaching to something is different, so let’s appreciate that everyone can have his or her own way though still there are common things. For example, having a strong academic background is a very strong point that supports candidates everywhere in their academic life. What are the important factors that can make an applicant to become a Fulbright finalist? Anyone who wants to get a Fulbright scholarship should work on his or her language skills, on his or her writing, reading comprehension, speaking fluency and listening comprehension. These are very necessary language skills. Furthermore, candidates should have a clear goal. The other thing which I think is very important is being a very beneficial community member. Candidates should use their potential and whatever they have to help their fellow community members and their fellow country men and women. I think these all will demonstrate a very strong leadership potential. Having a good academic background, good language skills, a clear goal and commitment towards their people, towards their country and towards their community will demonstrate a very strong leadership potential in you. All these will make the candidate a very strong candidate for Fulbright scholarship.

What are your future goals and plans? I want to come back to Afghanistan and establish an organization for security studies where we go to the very communities and ask the people about their problems. I think the people and what the root causes of the conflict are and how they can themselves help to address the Afghan conflict at the grassroots level. The other objective I want to pursue after my education is to do research on Afghan security and try to add an Afghan insight from an Afghan perspective including the local perspectives and the community’s perspectives. As the result, this can create a very good research career for me where I am trying to bring the local views and the community views to the Afghan government and present them to the Afghan International Allies, who are working with the Afghan government. These things are amazing. Afghan local communities want these things and I think these things are the root causes of Afghan conflicts, so please consider all these things in the policy. What I also would do is helping the Afghan government to make some policy in this regard. For example, I think we don’t have a good understanding of Afghan conflict and policy factors. Therefore, all these things have created a mess of everything so that nothing is clear and the Afghan government does not understand what to do and what policy can help deal with the problems. I think if we have enough Afghan researchers and policy makers, who can understand the conflicts at the community level corresponding to international standards, they can help Afghan government to make some policies to mitigate the Afghan conflict and overcome the current security problems we are facing.