



Afghans  
For Progressive  
Thinking (APT)



## **APT-ANAHO LEADERSHIP PROGRAM 2022 -PAMPHLET-**



**APT YOUTH.ORG**

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## Introduction

This pamphlet provides information about APT's in-person leadership development program including topics, objectives, challenges, and impacts, which was organized with the partnership of Afghan National Aid & Humanitarian Organization (ANAHO).

This document is prepared based on the staff evaluation, participants' feedback, and instructors' rating. The participants are all youth from different universities in Kabul province with various backgrounds.

The engagement of youth is a crucial asset to any society's progress. Young people have many unique and astonishing ideas, but their ideas will not make any impact until they are put in action.

Ethnic and religious-based discrimination is a solid barrier to the formation of a country-wide network of youth. Well-connected youth can develop nation-based solutions for the issues and challenges at hand.

Afghan youth who live under an autocratic regime keep losing hope and motivation of taking part in building a progressive society. Unreasonable rules and regulations cause challenging situations and sometimes marginalization. It is necessary to work on capacity-building programs and provide opportunities to help the youth to get connected and keep motivated.

## About Us

### **Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT)**

APT is an Afghan youth-led non-government organization that works to promote peace and education in Afghanistan. More specifically, APT provides online coaching events for young women who live under the Taliban regime. It also offers trauma management sessions for Afghan refugees who have escaped persecution in the country. APT organizes collegiate debate tournaments, holds leadership development courses, conducts international exchange programs, and continues to run a school for children in Afghanistan.

One of APT's major programs has been the selection of the Afghan Youth Representative to the United Nations since 2018. With members in 34 provinces of Afghanistan and across the world, APT has impacted more than 50,000 youth and children since its inception in 2010.

You may read more about APT at [www.aptyouth.org](http://www.aptyouth.org).

### **Afghan National Aid and Humanitarian Organization (ANAHO)**

Afghan National Aid and Humanitarian Organization (ANAHO) is a non-profit organization registered with the National NGOs Unit in the Ministry of Economy of Afghanistan. ANAHO was initiated by a group of Afghan experts who have a vision of a developed Afghanistan, where everyone has equal access to education, food, and social well-being. ANAHO plans to get involved in humanitarian assistance, reaching out to underserved Afghan communities across Afghanistan. ANAHO focuses on girls' education and empowerment plus child education, protection, and empowerment as fundamental basics of society.

Read about ANAHO at [afgnaho.org](http://afgnaho.org)

## Activities

Every year, APT organizes two leadership development programs: one in the spring and one in the fall. The change of government in mid-August 2021 resulted in many challenges and caused the NGOs to reshape their activities and operation based on the situation. APT also decided to work on initiatives to help Afghan youth build their capacity, enable their leadership capabilities, and do its part to contribute to build a democratic society with much less discrimination. Hence, APT started organizing online leadership programs. Since April 2022, APT has completed three cycles of online leadership programs. Over 150 APT debate club members and university students across the country have learned basic leadership skills and have connected with a wider community.

Based on our evaluation and the participants' suggestions, APT in partnership with ANAHO decided to start the face-to-face leadership development program. This program envisions building the leadership capabilities of members of APT debate clubs and Afghan university students. The first such on-site leadership development program took place from 15th October to 30th November 2022. It included ten 90-minute sessions each. The participants were selected through two competitive steps: APT released the call for application forms through its social media pages and websites. The second step was a written test and an interview. Ultimately, 22 university male and female students from different universities in Kabul were admitted to the class.

The program covered different topics taught by national and international expert instructors. Participants were also divided into three groups to develop a concept note for a social project. After an intense competitive review by a committee of judges, one of the teams, "The Change Makers", was awarded the first prize. APT and ANAHO provided the team with a small financial sum to help fund their project. The winning project had two phases; the first phase included an online session on stress management to help youth find ways to manage stress and deal with challenging situations. Distributing warm clothes to street children completed the project. The team had prepared 35 sets of warm clothes to help street children feel warm during winter. APT and ANAHO awarded the participants a certificate of appreciation after the successful completion of the program. The participants are committed to continuing their initiative. APT plans to monitor and support "The Change Makers" in the near future.



### **Objectives and Topics**

This program was designed to develop the capacity of young Afghan men and women to think critically and creatively and to apply this reflective thinking in action. The program covered the following topics:



- Conflict Resolution
- Leadership Styles
- Communication in Leadership
- Values
- Goal Setting
- Team Building
- Concept Developing
- Servant Leadership
- Project Planning and Delegating

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

Since the collapse of the previous Afghan government, some security challenges have disrupted NGOs activities. Participants from different parts of Kabul found it challenging to attend the sessions. New regulations by the Taliban have marginalized the youth specifically girls. This has badly impacted the interest and motivation of social activists as well as university students. To overcome this issue, APT members regularly conduct online and face-to-face meetings with youth across the country to provide them with alternative and applicable solutions to deal with the current challenges.

Providing a space where male and female participants can jointly attend the program and practice a democratic environment was another challenge.

Previously APT used to organize on-site programs on the campus of a partner university or in an embassy. Unfortunately, universities are no longer allowed to host such programs and most of our partner embassies are presently not operating in Afghanistan.

By partnering with ANAHO and their office, APT was able to overcome this challenge.

We believe that Afghan youth deserves to be provided with the opportunities to build their capacities and to promote freedom of speech. We believe in basic human rights and access to good education for all. APT, despite the risk, is committed to standing with the youth across the country to shape a better future for them and their communities.

### **Impact of APT and ANAHO Leadership Development Program**

APT and ANAHO were designed to promote gender equality, and leadership capabilities, develop soft skills, and advance team-based creativity and innovation through Leadership Development Program. Our Leadership Development Program (LDP) helped 22 female and male students from various provinces of Afghanistan with different backgrounds to enhance their leadership capabilities, APT and ANAHO believes that LDP helped participants to learn the abilities and skills to face the restricted rules enforced by the current de facto authority, Taliban, to analyze the situation and to find ways to advocate for human rights in Afghanistan. They also learned to stand for a democratic society where everyone can be involved in decision-making and peacebuilding process.

The LDP also connected participants with different backgrounds, ideas, and opinions to build strong teams in order to initiate their own unique programs and take part in social progress programs in Afghanistan. At the end of the program, participants practiced the lessons learned and their leadership capabilities through practical



activities. Leadership Development Program participants are now successfully leading committees in different communities with tangible results, for instance; currently, three participants are leading APT debate clubs at Kabul University, Kabul Educational University, and Kabul Polytechnic University. Other participants like Ms. Nilab Ibrahimy is the program manager at “Empowering Afghan Women Organization”, Mr. Hussain Azimi is leading a movement called “Let’s Be Friends” or Yari Ham Basham, this movement is offering workshops to female school students, they assist them in overcoming the barriers and challenges and motivates them to do not lose hope and stand for their basic rights, Mr. Abdul Naseer Sahibzada is the founder of a digital marketing company and the co-founder of Khodkaar Educational Institution which provides an educational and cultural program for Afghanistan students.

In addition, all LDP participants are committed to teamwork and to taking part in making a difference in their societies. APT and ANAHO will continue to monitor their activities and will always help the participants if any assistance is required.



## Success Stories

Some success stories of LDP participants are as below:



**Nilab Ibrahimy** - University Student and Program Manager at Empowering Afghan Women Organization

“Nilab Ibrahimy is studying engineering at Kabul Polytechnic University. She is a program and workshop manager at EAW (Empowering Afghan Women), she likes reading novels in her free time and she is good in communication and networking. She got information about the Leadership Development Program in the year of 2022 through social media. She was so excited to attend to LDP, because she always believes that leadership can benefit every aspect of life, helps to build confidence, strengths communication and negotiation skills and has huge impacts on career and personal life, leadership values also put people on the fast track to be successful in their lives.

During the program, she learned so many important things about leadership, it is fundamentals, and styles, beside that she found some nice friends from different backgrounds with leadership potentials. She also met some talented and inspiring national and international trainers from different countries such as Germany that she could learn about what foreigners’ perspectives are about Afghan people. As a part of soft skills, she learned what is honor, tribute, how important is trust, and how to influence more and put positive impact in a society as a leader. Overall, the leadership program was fantastic and a great experience for her to learn that to lead is to influence, it can be at home, at the university, or with the whole community. She adds that “Since I am a program manager, I need to know a lot about leadership and this program helped me to lead the programs in my office and manage them all very well. After the program, I decided to change my leadership style, after so I put more positive impacts in my career life. I realized I was more like a position leader; I came to know that being people’s leader will be more efficient. So, I decided to interact more with the members of my organization, have their inputs individually and provide them with more practical materials. As a result, the program has provided me so many good tools that I can implement into my career and personal life in the future that will encourage my students, colleagues, friends, and my family to think

differently and to always put a positive impact. I hope I can put a good impact on my society with all the new knowledge and experiences that I got so I also help other people in relocating their dreams”.



**Abdul Wasi Wahdat** - University Student and a Team Leader

“This is Abdul Wasi Wahdat, I am studying Politics at Bakhtar University, currently, I’m working on my bachelor’s thesis and also preparing for the TOEFL exam. I usually spend my time reading and writing.

In early 2020, I heard about the APT leadership development program and it somehow attracted me to join that class. However, it was not that easy due to a very competitive process, as they were just accepting 30 students out of 400 applications, on the first time I failed to join the class, but I didn’t give up. After I applied again in the next season and I got accepted. We had about 10 sessions with national and international trainers on a variety of topics, for instance; leadership styles, conflict resolution, team building, growth, goal setting, etc. Furthermore, being in the class helped me to be more disciplined, tolerant, honest, and articulate in my career and personal life. During the program, APT initiated collaboration with ANAHO and they organized another class, as I had enough time and I didn’t want to waste my time so I tried to join this season’s class as well, and luckily, I got the opportunity to join the class. In this season, there were some changes and at the end, they divided the class into three groups each group needed to come up with a concept for their social project and they would’ve chosen only one concept and provided them \$100 budget to implement their project.

To sum up, one and half month course helped me to overcome numerous challenges in my life. It also enabled me to meet some great, ambitious, and like-minded youths from different backgrounds and beliefs. I’m confident that everything

that I have learned and the experience I've got and the friends that I made will be very helpful and crucial in my life.

Last but not least, the credit goes to APT leadership for providing us the opportunity to grow, learn, and experience new challenges and the ways how to adapt and cope with them. Also, not to be forgotten, much appreciation to the ANAHO leadership for helping and organizing these classes for us, and a special thanks to Mr. Hameedullah Vali, ANAHO Executive Director, for his tireless efforts and hardships for this class and also without Mr. Nematullah Akbari, APT Program Coordinator, that class wouldn't be as productive as it was".



**Abdul Naseer Sahibzada** - a Freelancer and Founder of Form.af Company

"This is Abdul Naser Sahibzada 23 years old, from Baghlan, Afghanistan. I am a freelance Photographer, the owner and founder of Form.af company (Digital Marketing Company), and Co-founder of Khodkaar.af (Khodkaar Educational Institution). I am so interested in traveling and reading different kinds of books, it is also mentioned that I joined the Leadership Program in 2018 and on that program we were taught many crucial points, and the main concentration of the program was leadership and management, after taking part in Leadership Program, I got a great opportunity of applying to the APT-ANAHO Leadership Development Program, fortunately, I successfully passed the interview and got the chance of being a part of the mentioned program. In fact, the program was incredibly efficient, and we learned many new things, such as values, communications, different types of leadership the servant leadership and concept note writing.

As a result, with no doubt that such great programs really influence the personality of youth and can build up their capacity. In conclusion, Leadership programs are required more than anything else in our society. Today, we hope to be the witness of more programs so that others can take benefit of them, as well."



**Nazia Amiri** - University Student and Vice President of Kabul University Debate Club

“I am Nazia Amiri from Bamiyan province of Afghanistan. Currently, I am student of Archeology and Anthropology at Kabul University and I am in 7th semester. I am also an English Teacher at Hujjat Khorasan Network and Vice President of the Kabul University Debate Club since October 2022. I am obsessed with novel books and philosophy books that really inspired me to do my best. I admire APT, It really helped me to go toward my ambitions. Hence, I have joined many virtual programs of APT including Mentorship and Coaching plus Debate Clubs since Taliban took Afghanistan.

Fortunately, I have got the chance to be a participant in the APT-ANAHO leadership class. This program was incredibly exceptional for me; I gained a bunch of insightful information and experiences from nice characters and lecturers. They made unforgettable memories for me plus we had fun and a sweet time with each other. The lessons that I learned such as leadership, team building, communication, how to deal with conflicts, what is my values, how to respect others' values, what is my 10 most precious goals, and how to set my goals. I really learned and experienced many valuable things in these ten sessions. I am happy that in this dreadful situation, in which everyone lost their hopes, LDP helped us to stay hopeful and positive and helped youths to go toward their goals and be optimistic about their future. I believe that youths are diamonds in a society, as much as we polish diamonds, they become precious, so the youth of Afghanistan need to be polished to become unique and exceptional.”



**Somaia Qasemi** - University Student

“This is Somaia Qasemi. I study sociology at Kabul Educational University. I studied English years ago up to the pre-advance level. I like reading novels books

and also Biographies. I love painting and calligraphy and I do it in my free time. I love the calligraphy of Persian poems, especially the poems of Rumi. I joined APT in 2022, It was a good course for learning leadership and when I joined, I learned many good and important points about leadership like communicating with people, values, setting goals, my own leadership and the leader characteristics, and in this course, I met many good people. I made many good friends with different backgrounds and leadership potentials, we had many national and international instructors with different backgrounds who were really experts in their fields and one of them was from Germany that made me know what German people think about Afghan people.

Overall, our leadership program was awesome. In this program, I learned that leadership is very important and to lead is to influence people, to make people our followers by their heart and it can happen everywhere like at home, at university, among our friends, and in our relations. Actually, before joining this program my goals were not clear to me, and even though I didn't have any specific plan for myself. Now I learned how to have a plan and how to set my goals not only this but also, I was weak at communicating with people but I came to know that communication is important and as a result, now I have a notebook and every night I write all my activities which I did during the day and I write my goals and I am trying to find ways for achieving them. At the end, I thank APT for providing such a great program for youths in Afghanistan”.



**Ahmad Sayeed Dildar** - University Student

“My name is Ahmad Sayeed Dildar, a student of Civil Engineering at Kardan University. I am a curious person that always falls in thinking that how things are going to be created or how things are joined, especially in terms of construction. I like to play football, watch Hollywood series, and read books in my free time.

My journey with APT started after I met a person who had completed a program. I don't remember which program it was, but I do remember it was an online program by APT, and this student posted their online session photos with other young boys and girls in 2021. So, I was somehow interested to join one of the APT programs. So, I connected with the Facebook page of APT and was checking their newsfeed every week consequently, in Nov-2022 I saw their post on Facebook that they are going to launch a leadership program in person with the collaboration of ANAHO. Finally, after submitting an application and passing the interview successfully, now I am one of the participants that reached this program. I have learned so many things from this program, which starts from how to set a basic goal for my life journey in this world, up to having a passion to be a servant leader in our society. Before joining this program, I was thinking that changing others could help our society to be the better one, but now I realized changing myself and being the best version of myself could bring a little change in society, not by changing others and the little changes with action by every one of us could bring a huge change in our society. Further, now I am able to be the leader of my own journey, and to pass successfully from those challenges that I face in my life journey, whether it is in terms of academic challenges, business challenges, or other challenges”.