

July 2026

APT NEWSLETTER

Highlights



Youth consultation in Geneva launched the Afghan Youth Inclusion Strategy.



Afghan girls' artwork and stories showcased in Toronto.



36 Afghan students received one-on-one international mentorship.



Creative Writing Program published participants' work and illustrated storybooks.



Afghan Youth Inclusion Policy initiative advanced youth participation in global policymaking.



Afghan youth perspectives presented at the United Nations through a high-level side event.

Quarterly Reflection

Over the past three months, Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT) has continued working alongside Afghan youth, women, educators, and international partners to create opportunities for learning, leadership, and meaningful participation.

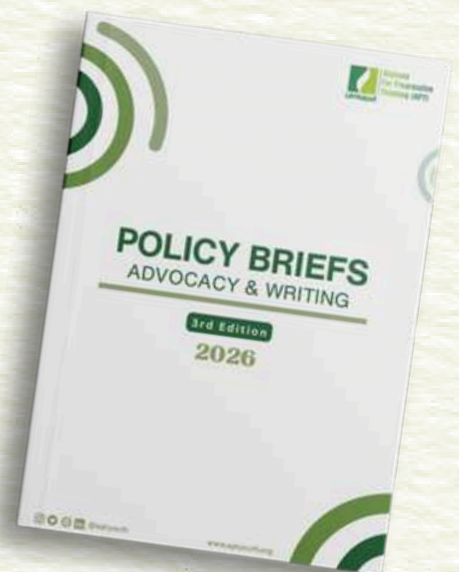
From Geneva to Toronto and the United Nations, Afghan youth have shared their perspectives on education, human rights, and the future of their country. At the same time, our programs inside Afghanistan have continued supporting students, young women, and emerging writers through mentorship, creative expression, and educational initiatives.

This edition highlights some of the key milestones and achievements from April through June 2026.

1 Empowering Afghan Youth in Canada

We launched our Advocacy and Writing Program for 15 Afghan youth in Canada, empowering them to amplify the voices of young men and women navigating life under Taliban. Participants connected with peers inside Afghanistan, documented their lived experiences, and wrote policy briefs to amplify their voices.

Access the complete collection of policy briefs [here](#).



2 Rising Voices: 80 Youth, One Movement

We launched another cycle of our Advocacy and Writing program for over 80 youth inside Afghanistan, helping them build a strong foundation in advocacy and learn how to transform the challenges into policy recommendations. The participants drafted two collections of policy briefs.

The first collection can be accessed [here](#).

The second collection will be published during the month of August 2026.



3 Afghan Youth Inclusion Mechanism Consultation in Geneva

The Afghan Youth Inclusion Mechanism brought together Afghan youth from inside Afghanistan and the diaspora at the Palais des Nations in Geneva to begin drafting the Afghan Youth Inclusion Strategy. Participants discussed safe youth participation, collaboration, representation, and advocacy priorities. Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, also joined the consultation and emphasized the importance of amplifying Afghan youth voices, particularly those of young women.



4 Afghan Girls' Voices Through Art

APT organized an Art, Stories & Networking Exhibition at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, creating a platform for Afghan girls to share their voices through creative expression.

The exhibition featured:

- Original paintings
- Digital artwork
- Personal stories
- Videos and messages from girls inside Afghanistan

Participants joined both in person and online, allowing Afghan girls to directly share their experiences with an international audience. The event highlighted how art can promote dialogue, healing, awareness, and solidarity.



5 Mentorship for Higher Education Program

Our Mentorship for Higher Education Program continued supporting girls and young women in Afghanistan pursuing international academic opportunities.



Program achievements:



36 mentees matched with **22** international mentors



Three expert-led lectures on scholarships, university selection, and personal statement writing



Two months of intensive **TOEFL** preparation



Individual guidance on academic CVs, motivation letters, scholarship applications, university admissions



A major milestone was reached as **7** mentees progressed to the visa application stage, bringing them one step closer to pursuing higher education abroad.



6 Announcement: APT Mentorship Program – New Cycle Open

Afghan women and girls can now apply to our Mentorship for Higher Education program to receive one-on-one guidance and support with university and scholarship applications, and advice on essays, CVs, and personal statements.

We also invite mentors, educators, scholarship alumni, and professionals to guide young Afghan women through university applications, review their documents, and share advice to increase their chances of success.

Deadline for both mentees and mentors: July 20
Apply as a mentee here: [Mentee Application Form](#)
Apply as a mentor here: [Mentor Application Form](#)



7 Networking Event and art Exhibition in Toronto

APT hosted a Networking Event & Art Exhibition in Toronto, bringing together students, educators, youth leaders, and community members. The event showcased artwork and reflections by girls in Afghanistan, creating opportunities for dialogue, networking, and greater understanding through art and storytelling.



8 Afghan Youth Perspectives at the United Nations

In partnership with the German Mission to the United Nations, APT hosted the side event "Afghan Youth Perspectives on the Future of the UN in Afghanistan." Afghan Youth Representative Aziza Akrami (2025–2026) presented findings from consultations with more than 3,000 Afghan youth across Afghanistan, refugee communities, and the diaspora. Discussions focused on education, employment, mental health, gender equality, youth participation, and barriers to higher education, concluding with a call for greater inclusion of Afghan youth in shaping Afghanistan's future.



9 Supporting Learning Through eBooks

Each month, APT shares a curated collection of eBooks with more than 1,000 youth across Afghanistan, providing free access to educational resources that support learning, personal development, and new ideas. The initiative helps young people continue learning by making books and knowledge more accessible.



10 Open Letter to the UN Secretary-General

On June 1, Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT) sent an open letter to the United Nations Secretary General, written by 40 youth activists in our Advocacy Program. The letter calls for urgent action to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of women and girls and presents recommendations for the United Nations.

The letter can be accessed [here](#)



Survey on Afghan Women's Educational Experiences and Well-being

APT has launched a research survey to better understand how education bans have affected the mental well-being, hope, and future aspirations of Afghan girls and young women. The findings will help inform research, advocacy, and recommendations aimed at supporting access to education and improving well-being.

If you are an Afghan girl or young woman, we invite you to share your experience. Your responses will remain confidential, and the survey takes approximately **3 minutes** to complete.

Survey Deadline: July 20, 2026

Scan the QR code or use the survey [link](#) to participate.



Shaping the Afghan Youth Policy Agenda 2026–2027

To strengthen youth participation in policymaking, APT launched the Afghan Youth Policy Engagement & Leadership Survey. Building on the Afghan Youth Inclusion Mechanism (AYIM), the survey gathers Afghan youth perspectives on education, employment, leadership, human rights, and meaningful participation. The findings will contribute to the Afghan Youth Policy Agenda 2026–2027, providing evidence-based recommendations for governments, the United Nations, donors, universities, and civil society.

Scan the QR code or use the [link](#) to access the survey in English, Dari, or Pashto.

