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AWER Reflection

I joined the Alliance for Afghan Women’s Economic Resilience during its foundational stages in Fall 2022. As a student under Professor Rachel Brule, I was impressed by the diversity of her research projects, particularly her focus on gender-based issues intersecting with climate change, political representation, and solidarity movements. I approached her about a research position, and she brought me on board.

The Alliance quickly became the main focus of my work. Supported by the Pardee School, the Center for Innovation and Social Science, and Kilachand Honors College, I delved into the work of incredible female Afghan civil society leaders. I was awestruck by the courage and dedication these women demonstrated in their continuous fight for women and girls’ rights to education and employment. I also discovered how academic institutions, companies, and public agencies show solidarity with these women who they might otherwise have no connection to. If not for this position, I likely would have never been exposed to this work.

My main responsibility was supporting the organization of the summit held in February 2024. I was granted more responsibility and agency in this role than I had in any other job before. I built relationships with members of the Boston University community who guided me through the logistics of planning a major event. I also established connections with both Pardee and non-Pardee professors conducting fascinating social justice-oriented research.

Starting in Summer 2023, I took on the role of student team leader, overseeing six undergraduate and graduate students. Their enthusiasm reaffirmed the importance of the Alliance’s mission and the ways it can empower women in different ways.

This position was a remarkable opportunity to engage with an initiative enacting tangible positive change. As we learned in the summit and the following discussions, partners with the Alliance have made real commitments to provide thousands of Afghan women and girls’ access to mentorship, employment, and education. I appreciate the efforts of all partners to not overshadow the ongoing work of existing Afghan civil society leaders, but rather to uplift their work with resources and connections. This idea is so important and undervalued in social justice work.

My experience with the Alliance for Afghan Women’s Economic Resilience has been immensely professionally and personally rewarding. I have felt more integrated into the Boston University research community, and worked alongside professional and inspiring students and faculty. I gained a clearer understanding of how professionals in different sectors can demonstrate solidarity with human rights initiatives. Most importantly, the Alliance members offered me their trust and respect, which has built my confidence and commitment to contributing to a more equitable world.