

The 2023 Henrietta Fore Award for Excellence in Development Special Recognition

U.S. GOVERNMENT LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF IN AFGHANISTAN

The local staff of USAID, the State Department, and other agencies represented in Afghanistan were indispensable partners with U.S. staff from the time the U.S. embassy reopened in 2002 until it closed in 2021. Whether in the field or inside the embassy, they improved their American colleagues' knowledge of Afghanistan and vastly increased understanding between the cultures. In one of the most challenging environments in the world, the Afghan employees demonstrated extraordinary expertise, dedication and courage in carrying out the largest U.S. development program worldwide. Working at the forefront of their country's efforts, they were integral to helping Afghanistan make dramatic gains in sectors such as infrastructure, girls' education, maternal and child health, and human rights. They provided not only technical expertise but also critical knowledge and skill in operating programs at the local level. They did this at great personal risk, putting their lives on the line every day. With profound respect and gratitude, the Academy recognizes their invaluable contributions.

The award is accepted on behalf of the group by:

Ramin Bahar is a human rights activist, legal expert and researcher with over 14 years of professional experience working for the United Nations and US Government in Afghanistan. Mr. Bahar currently serves as the Political and Human Rights Specialist in the Afghanistan Affairs Unit of US Embassy for Afghanistan in Doha, Qatar. Previously, Mr. Bahar spent almost four years at US Embassy in Kabul, where he first worked for the State Department in the Rule of Law and Human Rights Unit of the political section (2018-2020), and then as a Project Management Specialist for USAID Afghanistan in the office of Democracy and Governance (2020-2021).

Shakiba N. Shaheer has more than ten years of professional experience in management, higher education administration and women's and children's rights advocacy. From 2014-2019, Ms. Shaheer was the Management Assistant in the Executive Suite for USAID in Kabul, Afghanistan. She is the recipient of USAID's On the Spot Award for her extraordinary effort in launching the Afghanistan Spatial Data Center and strong advocacy and dedication to the empowerment of Afghan Women. Since her immigration to the U.S in 2019, she has advanced her career in higher education administration. She currently serves as the Assistant Director of Admissions and Recruiting at George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management. Ms. Shaheer holds a Bachelor of Literature from Kabul University and an Associate's degree in Journalism from Nai Media Institute Education, Kabul.