

## Meet WFP USA international intern Arezo Hamid, who was born in Afghanistan

Angelika Selle  
November 1, 2019



### About me

I was born during the war in Afghanistan and unlike many people, my childhood wasn't so peaceful. When the Taliban seized Afghanistan in 1996, they barred women from all public institutions including schools, workplaces, and universities. Women were forced to wear a Burqa – a misogynistic piece of clothing meant to conceal the identities of women. At that time, my parents decided to leave Afghanistan in hopes for a better future for my siblings and I. We left Afghanistan in 1996 and fled to Pakistan, where we stayed for three years, before ending up in Denmark. I have spent most of my life in Denmark. I finished school and attended university there, and I am currently studying towards a graduate degree in international relations and conflict resolution at the University of Copenhagen.

I can't relate to the view on women in Afghanistan and other parts of the world because I have been taught differently. Growing up, I questioned the fact that men were prioritized over women. I think women are just as capable as men if they are given the platform and the same opportunities. But that is a simplified answer to the conflict. Real life is much more complicated. For instance, in Afghanistan women have the right to vote, work, drive vehicles and much more, and yet they are absent. I believe this is due to the mindset of the majority. When you oppress a population for decades, they are likely to be illiterate and progress is therefore a struggle.

As I was interested in global issues related to human rights, particularly women's rights and peace, I was searching to do an internship with an organization that works to empower women. Luckily, I found WFP USA and I was interested in learning how an organization like WFP can affect positive social and developmental changes in the lives of women in the US as well as what they can offer internationally.

I was eager to learn and contribute my enthusiasm and skills by applying for an internship position.

*Question: What inspires me and why WFWP USA?*

This is a question I have been asked often.

History has proven that the world is interconnected, and if we ignore the sufferings of others, eventually these issues will grow and affect our own lives. As an organization with worldwide reach, active in more than 100 countries, WFWP is highly valuable in its ability to address complex issues with a global perspective. Interning here inspires me because as the mission and vision of WFWP USA state, women here are working together to establish a culture of heart in the family, community and in the world to achieve genuine sustainable peace and they do this by empowering women with leadership skills, knowledge, and a supportive community.

When I was in Chicago during the Global Women's Peace Network Conference on October 18, 2019, I conversed with a friend in Denmark who knows me well. She said that she was surprised that I was interning at a women's organization since I wasn't very vocal about feminism. I remembered what WFWP USA President Angelika Selle mentioned in her speech at the conference. I told my friend that many other women's organizations believe that being in opposition to men is the way to demonstrate the power of women, but this only leads to conflict. I quoted President Selle and said that WFWP is a feminine women's organization, not a feminist one. WFWP not only promotes women's voices, but also focuses on bringing solutions. It is based on the principles of living for the sake of others, which motivated and inspired me immensely.

### **The Chicago GWPN Conference**

As part of my internship, I took part in helping with the planning of the Midwest launch of the Global Women's Peace Network in Chicago, titled "Women as the Turning Point for Peace." I read about the program, the speakers and HerStory Award. I became very passionate about the conference and decided to attend.

It was a well-organized conference with remarkable people from diverse cultural backgrounds but with one vision: to live with the logic of love. I was able to meet people that encouraged and empowered me. The dedication of all the people involved with WFWP was inspiring. When President Selle, and Dr. Sun Jin Moon, WFWP International Senior Vice President and the daughter of the founder, Hak Ja Han Moon, gave their speeches, I felt at peace. When Dr. Sun Jin Moon talked about the growing division of humanity due to ignorance, global war and nationalism, the refugee crisis and religious intolerance, she came with a simple solution that requires a turn of heart and mind to God.