Dr. Sakena Yacoobi
Private Enterprises

Building the Private Sector in Afghanistan
What are the Yacoobi Private Enterprises?

Dr. Sakena Yacoobi’s ultimate goal is to see her country transformed into one where the people are self-sufficient and the programs offered are sustainable without outside funding.

To help move towards this goal, Dr. Sakena Yacoobi has founded enterprises which she calls “Profit-for-Non-Profit”. These programs are established using some funding from donors and they begin to charge affordable fees to help sustain the programs.

Dr. Yacoobi has set up four private schools, a hospital and TV and radio stations. Projects in development include, Herat based women's university. The private schools charge reasonable fees, and, for families that cannot afford the fees, scholarships are provided. The private hospital is now an independent entity. The schools are self-sufficient and Radio Meraj is working towards that goal.

It takes the courage of inner majesty to stand in this doorway, where there is no celebrating good fortune, where talk of luck is embarrassing. However, your robe of patches is right. If you are God's light, keep moving east to west as you have been. Don't pretend something other than truth.

-Rumi
Dr. Sakena Yacoobi established four private schools: two in Herat Province and two in Kabul Province. The schools are popular, successful and highly regarded.

In 2014, one of the schools in Herat was selected as one of the top four schools in Herat Province by the Ministry of Education. It was recognized in 2019 with an International School Award from the British Council for its global focused teaching.

The schools have also had sporting success winning regional soccer titles. In 2017, an all-girl coding team won the regional competition for the Technovation Challenge with their education app. They represented the area in the worldwide final.

A Kabul school was recognized as one of the top schools in the region by the provincial Ministry of Education.
Afghanistan needs a balanced economy that includes a private sector, which is why Dr. Yacoobi established a private hospital in Herat. All patients treated at the hospital pay something. Those who can afford treatment pay full price, which helps to subsidize treatment for the needy. This system worked well and the facility is now an independent. The hospital has been open since 2010, averaging 24,000 patients a year. Patients receive treatment for illness and injury, dental issues, surgeries, reproductive health and C-sections. This facility is highly regarded and known for exemplary standards of care and pharmaceutical products. Dr. Yacoobi remains involved in the hospital development and monitors its activity.

My name is Farzana and I am 24. I live in Herat City. My husband is a bus driver, but it does not pay well. When we were first married, I was not getting pregnant and we didn't think that there was anything we could do about it. A friend told me to go to a hospital and see if the doctors could help. I went to many hospitals, and doctors said an operation could help, but it was too expensive. There are government hospitals, but they do not do this kind of operations.

I was desperate and hopeless until a relative told me about the professor Yacoobi Private Hospital. I went and was scheduled for an operation within days. The hospital did not make me pay too much. The operation changed my life. I quickly became pregnant, and delivered a boy at the same hospital. Now we are all so happy and thankful to the expert doctors and the whole team for helping us.
For many years, Dr. Yacoobi had been searching for a way to deliver the Afghan Institute of Learning's high quality educational programming to people who live in remote and insecure areas. AIL is the NGO she started over two decades ago. She made the decision to add a third floor to the AIL offices in Herat. The construction served two purposes: housing the growing staff of AIL and a new radio station.

Radio Meraj has been operating since 2015 with programming very much like that offered by NPR in the United States. There is news, educational programming, music, programs for entertainment and poetry. The name Meraj roughly translates to ‘reaching for the highest wisdom.’

The station is a valued community resource for education, news and as a means for people to voice their opinions and get help reaching authorities to deal with local problems. Each year since its start the station has received top awards and is viewed as one of the top two stations in Herat with an estimated listenership of two million.
TV Meraj, sister station to the radio station, is operational but awaiting further equipment from an Italian supplier. The format for the station is similar to that of Radio Meraj. The emphasis is on educational and news information as well as music and poetry. Staff are developing programs, conducting interviews and archiving material so they will be ready when the equipment arrives. Governmental approval, permits and assigned frequency are all in place.
In Development
Women's University, Herat

This project will be a state of the art educational facility with a holistic and cross disciplinary approach to education with integrated skill building and practical learning opportunities.

Every admitted student will begin her studies at the University with a preparatory training in English language and computer education.

Although Dr. Yacoobi ultimately plans to have the university offer both two-year, four-year, Masters and Doctorate degrees in a number of areas, to start the university will offer degrees in two areas—Public Administration (four-year degree) and Nurse/Health Educator/Midwife (two year and four year degrees).

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