

# Strategizing a Seat at the Table Initiative



## Strategizing a Seat at the Table Initiative:

**Making the voice of women heard at all levels of political decision-making in both formal and informal spaces and increasing their meaningful representative participation and leadership in policy and decision-making at community and national levels.**

The SSTI seeks to address the notable absence of women in the peace processes of Afghanistan by developing a cohesive strategy and action plan for their inclusion both locally and internationally. Initiated in September 2023, the SSTI has brought together Afghan women politicians, academics and researchers, diplomats, civil servants, members of civil society groups, and experts in the private sector, human rights, economic development, and education. The SSTI Initiative links to the United Women for Peace Initiative, a network of women peace-builders that Women for Peace and Participation has built to highlight the importance of women in peace negotiations.

Through this cross-sector collaboration, the SSTI has become a strategic space to address the meaningful and full participation of Afghan women in all policy dialogues, processes and decisions relating to security, peace, economic, humanitarian, and socio-cultural issues. This work bridges the gap between advocacy and action to work towards achieving inclusive and long-lasting peace in Afghanistan around a shared vision for the future of the country.

Our eco-system-based strategy leverages the complementarity of Afghan women's perspectives, capabilities and approaches of Afghan women within our broader networks, both inside and outside of Afghanistan. This strategic alignment enables a cohesive, multidimensional approach to advocacy and capacity building. Rather than creating an additional network our objective is to fortify existing networks of Afghan women, fostering strategic collaboration that is vital to sustaining their impact during this critical period for Afghanistan.

By building on established networks, we aim to cultivate a unified front that maximizes the collective impact of Afghan women's contribution to peace, resilience and national development.



## Vision

Our strategic framework for the Strategizing a Seat at the Table Initiative (SSTI) is built on three key approaches that underpin our work with Afghan women: Ecosystem, Theory of Change, and Complementarity. Each approach provides a unique perspective, enhancing the initiative's capacity to achieve meaningful, sustained impact in promoting Afghan women's inclusion and leadership.

## Mission

To empower Afghan women to play a central role in all policy and dialogue processes, fostering an inclusive strategy that reflects their diverse perspectives and contributions to ensure they shape Afghanistan's future. We strive to address shared fears, realize collective hopes, and inspire a future of unity, equity, and prosperity.

## Approach

Our strategic framework for the Strategizing a Seat at the Table Initiative (SSTI) is built on three key approaches that underpin our work with Afghan women: Ecosystem, Theory of Change, and Complementarity. Each approach provides a unique perspective, enhancing the initiative's capacity to achieve meaningful, sustained impact in promoting Afghan women's inclusion and leadership.

- **Ecosystem:** The ecosystem approach emphasizes that no single organization can address the challenges facing Afghan women in isolation.
- **Theory of Change (ToC):** The ToC serves as a structured framework guiding sustainable, long-term empowerment for Afghan women. This approach emphasizes capacity-building and ensures that Afghan women are prepared to actively participate in governance and peacebuilding efforts, even in restrictive environments.
- **Complementarity:** The principle of complementarity focusses on the unique contributions of each participant and enhances each other's work for a holistic impact. This approach is vital as it fosters a coordinated, synergistic strategy where different networks and initiatives reinforce one another, maximizing the overall effectiveness and reach of advocacy efforts.



## Objectives

1. Ensure Afghan Women's Participation in Decision-Making. Leverage diverse strengths and networks to secure Afghan women's meaningful participation across key decision-making platforms, amplifying their collective impact.
2. Enhance Strategic Skills for Influence. Equip Afghan women with essential skills in mediation, negotiation, and thematic expertise to enhance their ability to engage effectively and influence the decisions impacting their lives.
3. Strengthen Alliances and Optimize Resources. Forge and strengthen strategic alliances with local and international stakeholders, ensuring an optimal and transparent approach to resource utilization.

4. Center Women's Agency. Advocate and foster a narrative that recognizes women's leadership and transformative potential in shaping policy and peace in Afghanistan.
5. Build Resilience and Support Shared Aspirations. Create a supportive ecosystem that addresses common challenges and nurtures Afghan women's aspirations for a peaceful, equitable, and prosperous Afghanistan.



At the heart of Strategizing a Seat at the Table Initiative (SSTI) is a commitment to fostering an Afghanistan where women are not only present but lead as empowered voices shaping the nation's future. Our Vision and Mission reflect a deep-rooted dedication to building an inclusive society where Afghan women play critical roles in peace, policy, and national development, aligned with the values of justice, equity, and resilience." "

While this document offers an overview, it highlights the multifaceted strengths of Afghan women both individually and collectively, showcasing the breadth of their influence and dedication. Our strategy is committed to addressing the diverse needs of Afghan women, building robust networks, engaging in strategic partnerships, providing essential services, and leveraging expertise across all sectors.

This approach forms a resilient base for advancing SSTI's strategic goals, ensuring that Afghan women's influence remains integral to the creation of a peaceful, equitable, and prosperous Afghanistan. Through a unified, purpose-driven framework, we are determined to support and amplify Afghan women's voices, fostering sustained impact and leadership in policy, peace, and development.