

The ESL Newsletter from American River College

The Parrot



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Special Issue: Afghanistan



Learn More about Afghanistan!

Desserts, p. 4

Culture, p. 7

A Flight from Kabul, p. 13

Poetry, p. 18

Famous Places, p. 21

My Great Teachers

Who are teachers? Of course, teachers are people who teach all people in the world. When we are children, they help us to learn how to write and read. Also, they teach us how to be a good person in society. The best teachers that I had in the past were Mrs. Razia, Mr. Davis, and Mrs. Hena.

Mrs. Razia was my first-grade teacher. She was very tall and pretty. She was the kindest teacher that I had. She always talked with me like my friend. She always said I'm your friend. She always kept the attention of her students. Every time we had problems, she tried to help us. She taught us how to solve the problems. Indeed, she was a lovely teacher for my first to third grades.

When I was in Afghanistan, Mrs. Hena was my 7th to 9th grade teacher. She taught us Afghanistan history. This subject was very hard for me, but she made it fun for me and other students. She always acted like a president in the past. Every day she had amusing programs like games that the whole class enjoyed. She was a competitive person, and she always tried to be a successful person. She read a lot of books, and she always said if a person reads a lot, they can do anything they want in their life. The best thing that made an amazing teacher for me was that she painted my picture. On Teachers' Day at school while I was in the 8th grade, we took a picture. She



painted with a paintbrush using the picture that she had on her phone. She used a lot of beautiful colors. I couldn't believe it when I saw it because it was the first time that someone painted my picture. I didn't ask her why she painted me, but one day she told me that I reminded her of her little sister who was in London. I believe she painted it because she thought of me as her sister and loved me for it. I loved her painting. In short, she was a great teacher in my 7th to 9th grade.

Last of all, Mr. Davis was my 10th and 12th grade teacher. He was my first teacher in the U.S.A. I saw him on my first day of school here. He was very kind with me. He said, "Anytime if you need help, come to my class and I will help you." Also, he was a caring teacher about me, and he introduced me to another Afghan girl, and he said you can be friends with her. Her name was Narges. I am really grateful for the work that he did for me because I didn't have a friend at school and he found me a friend. She was a good girl. We were friends with each other until 12th grade. We were always together and helped each other. In brief, I'm very grateful for him, and I really admire him.

These special teachers were the greatest teachers that I ever had. Indeed, I am really thankful for them.

**Mitra Noori - ESL 47
Opinion Essay**

My Immigration Journey

Hello everyone, I am Marina from Afghanistan. I came to the U.S. in 2017. I started learning English at ARC in August 2021. Today I want to tell you about my experience of immigrating to the United States from Afghanistan. How do you think people feel when they leave their country? I can say that it was very difficult for me to leave my parents, siblings, friends and home, but I accepted all difficulties to start a new life in a more peaceful country. I had to leave my country due to insecurity and unemployment. My husband, my children and I had the chance to become permanent citizens in the United States, so I considered myself lucky and took this opportunity. I hoped that one day I could continue my education, and my children can also get a good education. Unaware that my husband, with an engineering degree and ten years of experience in the Army in Afghani-



stan cannot get his professional duties in the United States. We immigrated to America and started our new life. It didn't take me long to realize how hard it is to live in a foreign country when you don't understand its language and customs. In my country I lived like a queen in a very beautiful house and had servants, but in America I had to do all the housework and take care of my children alone. On the other hand, happiness was that I was able to start learning English at ARC and my children studied with good facilities and security. They were able to shine in their school and make their parents proud by getting excellent grades in a short period of time. I learned from my immigration experience that we should be ready to make sacrifices and always be patient in order to achieve our goals .

**Marina Mojadada- ESL 51
Narrative Writing**

Manto: A Special Food from Home

A special food in my country Afghanistan that I like is "manto", a dough that is made from flour, then it's shaped. Beef is added inside of it and cooked, and then beans and yogurt are also added. It is very tasty and has a special taste. It is medium-size. It has different colors, such as brown, white, and red. It is a main dish, and it's used for dinner and lunch. It's not expensive, and it has a reasonable price. It's a specialty food.



Manto is a special food, not a delicacy food. The taste is so delicious, and the smell is pleasant. The flavor is very special and yummy. The texture is soft. For example, it's easy to eat because it has a soft texture, and it is easily digested and keeps you full for a long time. Indeed, this food is famous and so delicious among the people of my country.

**Nilab Arbab – ESL 47
Descriptive Paragraph**

Popular Desserts in Afghanistan

There are many amazing and tasty desserts in Afghanistan, but we have several ancient and famous ones. People prepare and make many desserts in factories and at home. These desserts are so popular in Afghanistan. Usually, we make these desserts for special events.



First, *sheer pira* is a wonderful dessert in Afghanistan, and we make it for the Eid holiday. Most people love *sheer pira*. It has a good flavor, and it is smooth. The ingredients of this dessert are dry milk and liquid milk, sugar, cardamom, and pistachio. It is like pudding, but it is dry and soft. Then we have to put it in the refrigerator. After it becomes cold, we cut it into small pieces. People especially make this dessert most of the time for holidays. For example, we have a particular celebration holiday called *Eid*. One of the cities in Afghanistan is named Mazar Shareef. There are many factories, and they make great *sheer pira*. When someone comes from that city to other cities, the special gift they bring from there is *sheer pira*. Finally, eating *sheer pira* with a cup of green tea is enjoyable after lunch.

Second, *jalebi* is another well-liked and ancient dessert in Afghanistan. Most



consumption of this dessert is in the celebration of the New Year in Afghanistan. Usually, people make it at home or buy it from supermarkets. *Jalebi* has several colors and beautiful round shapes. It is crispy, crunchy, very sweet, and juicy. The ingredients of *jalebi* include flour, sugar, lemon juice, cardamom, saffron, corn starch, yogurt, baking powder, pistachio, and water. It is similar to rose cookies but a little different. First, we make a liquid dough like pancake dough. Next, we make it like round shapes inside the boiling oil. After it is fried, we put it inside a sugar syrup. This dessert is especially important for people who are engaged. The man has to take some *jalebi* and fried fish to his fiancé's family one week before the New Year in Afghanistan. This is our culture. In summary, *jalebi* is a precious and memorable dessert for everyone in Afghanistan.

Third, *khajor* is one of the traditional desserts in Afghanistan. People make *khajor* also for many holidays or for breakfast. It is a very delicious and full of flavor cookies. Everyone loves it especially children. It is easy to make whenever we want. It is made from dough. The ingredients of *khajor* are flour, egg, sugar, baking powder, milk, oil, cardamom, and pista-

chio. First, we make a hard dough. After that, we make it into small and beautiful shapes. Then they must be fried inside hot oil. Lastly,



we put some pistachio powder on top of them. I make *khajoor* at home sometimes because my children and I love it. In conclusion, this cookie is a very delicious, specialty

dessert in Afghanistan.

To summarize, there are many kinds of popular and delicious desserts in Afghanistan. People make or buy them for their special occasions. I am proud of my country Afghanistan, because there are many factories, and they make several kinds of tasty and famous desserts.

**Sona Ferozy - ESL 47
Descriptive Essay**

Karahi



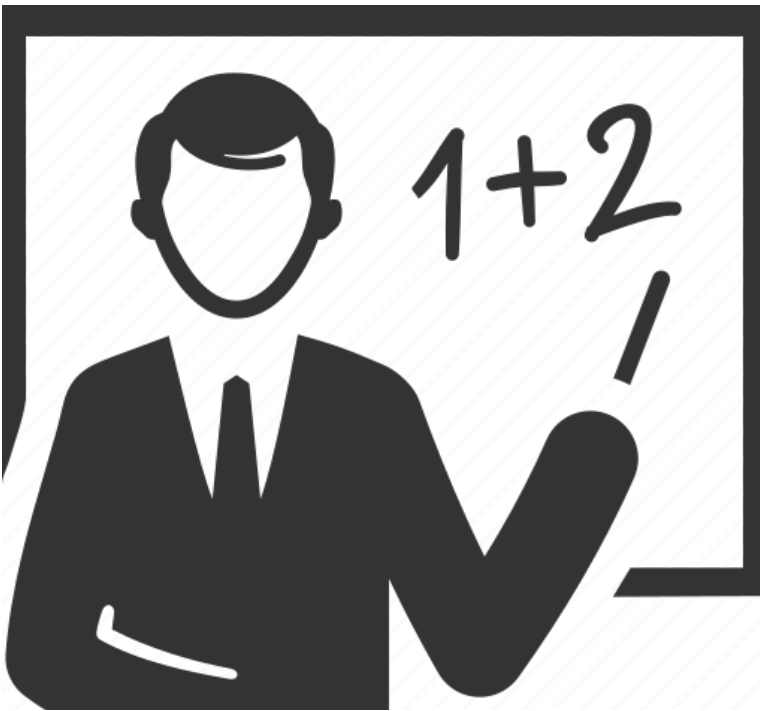
In my country, Afghanistan everybody likes *karahi*. *Karahi* is made in a few ways, but the best way is to make it on the fire. You take some lamb. The amount depends on how many people are cooking for, and how much meat you should add. First, you put some oil in the pot, and then you add the meat. After a few minutes, you add some salt, pepper,

garlic, tomatoes, and some *Karahi* seasoning. You close the lid for about 30 minutes to fry. It looks oily, but it is very tasty. It smells delicious and looks yummy. Usually, we make it for special event, or for parties for lunch and dinner. We sometimes eat it because it is expensive, and takes a while to make. *Karahi* is usually made of two kinds of meats, lamb, and chicken. For example, some people like chicken but some people like the lamb. The difference is chicken *Karahi* needs less time to cook, but the lamb takes more time. We usually use the same ingredients for both meats. *Karahi* is usually spicy and test delicious. Finally, we feel awesome all time after eating *Karahi*.

**Yasmin Sahil – ESL 47
Descriptive Paragraph**

Teacher: Creator of Generations

What job do most people want to have in your country? In my home country Afghanistan, most people want to be a doctor, an engineer, a pharmacist, or a lawyer. However, some people would like to be a tailor or a salesperson. Everyone has a different job in my home country Afghanistan. I want to be a teacher for several important reasons.



The first reason is that I want to help girls to get an education. In my home country, Afghanistan, a lot of women and girls are not literate, and they don't know how to write and read. I want to make classes for women and girls who are not literate to study writing and reading because women don't usually have the chance to study science. Moreover, some people know that girls need to study, but they don't let their girls go to school. Therefore, I want to help and talk to girls whose families won't let them go to school, and I want to support them. In addition, some people are very poor, and they don't have money to buy

clothes, shoes, and books for their girls, so they don't let girls go to school. I want to help and give money to these families and provide educational opportunities for them. In short, I hope one day I can be a kind and helpful teacher and help girls to study in Afghanistan.

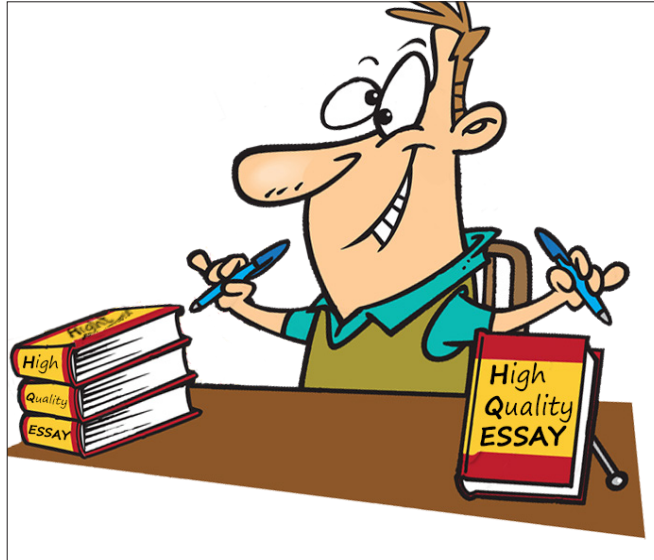
The second reason is that teaching is the most important and best job for me. Every part of the world needs teachers and all teachers teach people reading and writing. Teachers are spiritual mothers and fathers to the children of the country who nurture the human spirit. Teachers teach knowledge and life skills to the children of the country. They not only teach knowledge, but they also teach kindness, honesty, respect for older people, good behavior, and lifestyle to students. The teacher is the creator of the future generations of each country, so teachers are one of the important parts of a society and a country will never be complete without teachers. If teachers weren't there, the country and the city wouldn't develop. Therefore, teaching is one of the most honorable and respected jobs in the world for me. Teaching is the best job for me because I can have a good and regular schedule, and I can do all of the work regularly. I will have time to spend with my family and friends. I like to communicate with students and other teachers. In sum, teaching is my favorite job.

The last reason is that it is my dream to be a teacher. I have wanted to be a teacher since I was a child. For example, when I was 6 years old, I liked reading and writing a lot, and I always practiced writing with my cousins, and I liked to teach them as a teacher. Now, I want to become a good and hard-working teacher. I want to teach students the best

ways and help them to learn. I also want to help students with everything and solve their problems. Teaching is an excellent service to people, and I want to teach everything I learned to students. I want to serve people and my country by teaching. When I was in grade ten, my teacher Raihana was a great chemistry teacher, and she taught us very well. When I saw her talent that she had a good method of teaching, my interest increased in teaching. After that day, I decided that I want to be like her: a kind, responsible, and smart teacher. In short, I hope my dream comes true, and

I can be an intelligent teacher.

In conclusion, I want to be a teacher in the future because I want to help girls to get an education, teaching is the best job for me, and it is my dream to be a good teacher. I am trying and studying hard to make my dream come true.



**Bibi Kawasr Hamidi -
ESL 47
Opinion Essay**

Afghanistan Culture

Why is native culture special?

There are several reasons that make Afghan culture special to me. In my native country, Afghanistan, there are Afghani foods, clothing, games, and more things that are very important for Afghan people. For all people, their native culture is important. I really like my native culture. They are very special for me. Our culture represents our nationality.

In my country, food is very important on special days such as Eid, wedding parties, birthday parties, ect. Our special food is *gabuli palaw*, which is very popular in my country, as well as *manto*, *ashak*, and more. My family and native



people prepare these foods on special days. I still remember my family preparing them back when I was a kid, especially on holidays. We were very happy when my mom cooked these delicious dishes. My mother's food was so delicious that I still remember its taste. To prepare this food, we need rice, meat, salt, carrots, oil, onions, and garlic. We add carrot and salt with the meat, and we boil it together, and when the meat is soft, we add the rice and we let it all cook for about 30 minutes.

There are many different cultures in my native country, and the way people dress is very important for these cultures. We wear different clothes depend-

ing on the occasion. Some clothes are very famous in my native culture, such as the traditional afghan dress or "Gand Afghani". That dress has different colors such as red with green, and it's very famous in my country. Women wear the Gand Afghani dress for Eid or wedding parties, and when they wear that dress, they usually wear it with bangles or bracelets. Furthermore, these kinds of clothes are very popular. There are also clothes for men called "Tanban Shirts", and they come in different colors such as white, black, peach, or any other color that everyone chooses according to the occasion.

In Afghan culture, our popular holidays are Eid and the New Year. We have two Eid holidays and New Years. For the two Eids, which are Ramoza Eid and Qurban Eid, all people in my country have a



holiday in New Year. Afghanistan has so many holidays such as New Year, Army Holiday, Teachers Day, Farmers Day (the first day of spring), Independence Day, but the most important is Eid. The shops, and grocery stores and pharmacies remain closed when

we celebrate the Eid. Indeed, these are the holidays in my country, and the most important are Eid and the New Year.

Indeed, all people and countries have culture. Our culture is part of our personality. In every country and people, culture is special, and we should respect all people and their culture.

Farahnaz Quraishi- ESL 47
Opinion Essay

Moving to My Home Country



My journey started when I got married and I moved from the place where I was born, which is the United Arab Emirates, to my home country, Afghanistan. I wasn't home sick when I made my decision. I simply couldn't pass up the audacious chance that

came my way. However, there is always a backstory to something. When I first moved, I had a strange feeling, as if I had been born again in a country where I knew nothing. In the first two months, I began to see my home country as more than just a place where I belonged. Everywhere, amazing things were happening, and I began to have new perspectives on life in this place. Things seemed more serious and important. But the great transformation and the drastic change that occurred in my life suddenly wasn't easy. I had to say goodbye to my family and friends, which was the hardest part of moving. After spending one year in Afghanistan, I noticed that I faced things more difficult than just missing my family and friends. I missed things that were part of the basics of life that I only noticed when I came to Afghanistan. I struggled with

learning the local language, I suffered from the bitter cold of winter and lived insecurely among the raging flames of war.

I was surprised by how much one can learn simply by traveling. I learned the meaning of family and how difficult life is when you are away from the ones you love. I can say that messages, images, and phone calls will partially fill the void. I had a lot of beautiful pictures of my family that I usually viewed when I felt lonely. That was making me feel happy and excited. At the time I

moved, the internet cost was so high and people rarely used it. So, I wasn't using the internet. I was buying mobile cards to make international phone calls and connect with my family and try, in a specific and short time, to know all the details that hap-

pened with them from events and occasions that I missed. In fact, the sense of being lonely and overpowered and the great distance between me and my loved ones had worn me down.

My parents' language was Pashto, and it's the language that my parents used to talk only among themselves but not with us. They used to speak Arabic with us. I wouldn't be able to compose a phrase, but I could understand what people were saying to me very clearly. I only realized the importance of my mother tongue when I moved to my country. I always felt ashamed when I was speaking in my limited language. People



were making fun of me. I had no friends at that time, other than my close relatives because I didn't like to socialize with people very much. I used to go with my relatives to the hospital or shopping to spare myself from feeling inferior from time to time. But that wasn't the right solution. Things started to get difficult, and my dependence on others became exhausting. So I decided to learn my native language. I started watching TV series every day. I broke the barrier that was stopping me from dealing with people.

When I was about to express anything, I was trying to speak in my native language. I was willing to accept the risk of appearing silly every now and then, but in the end, I

was able to resist all those difficulties and to speak with confidence and courage.

Whenever winter approaches, I get upset. It was the season that I hated and couldn't stand. And to escape from it, I was traveling to see my family. I suffered a lot from the freezing air because I wasn't used to a place where the temperature was down in the -20s. Before winter came, all the people were preparing their houses to keep them warm. I learned some of those tips that really helped me to face the freezing cold. For example, I used inexpensive, translucent shower curtains over the windows that get sunshine, and hung a pair of thick curtains

that could be opened in the sun and closed in the shade to stop strong breezes. Every sunny day, I kept the sun's rays that reached my house to keep it warm all day. I was wearing a thick dressing gown or bathrobe. But it looked like a large, thick blanket with sleeves. I hate wearing thick clothes because they are so heavy and I can't move easily while wearing them. The hardest part of all was when I was using the wood-burning heater, it was so difficult for me to heat the room. A power outage or an abrupt loss of electricity had an adverse effect on all my activities, including working, cooking, and being able to see at night. Every winter, I had the feeling of being bored and lazy. But a month-long trip back to my family was giving me a lot of power to prepare for returning to a life full of difficulties.



Living in Afghanistan in a difficult and complex environment full of explosions and war had a profound impact on me, and especially on those who live within these spaces. I was amazed at those people who actively resist wars and continually live in the midst of their daily consequences. I was living in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. There was no security there, and unemployment and poverty were widespread. My husband was carrying a gun in his pocket all the time. Some nights we were unable to sleep because in some cities the air force began night bombing and thousands of people were dying. Fear and panic were controlling

us. I spent most of the time at home because I was afraid of the sudden explosions. I also felt sad every time I left the house and saw sad scenes of children working in the streets or the homeless asking for food to satisfy their hunger. Despite the wartime situation, children were still able to play and have fun in some cities. Both young children and teenagers enjoyed going to the movies and entertainment venues. There was still a soul in those conditions. People with broken hearts are still celebrating holidays and special occasions,

and they adhere to their customs and traditions.

After spending four years in my home country, we received an email from the U.S. Embassy that our visa had been accepted. We started our new journey to the United

States. It was a big transformation in my life. While I was living in my home country, I learned many things in life. I became more mature, I learned more about my country, and I felt the suffering of its people. I also tasted their feelings. I didn't have that feeling when I was living with my family in the Emirates. Finally, I have confirmed for myself that wherever you go, you will have a set of advantages and disadvantages to deal with. Simply knowing your priorities will make it easier for you to let the negatives roll off your shoulders.

**Khadija Gran – ESL 325
Narrative Essay**

Afghan, Afghani, or Afghanistani?



**Hamed Karzai Ex-president
of Afghanistan
From Pashtun tribe**



**Ahmad Shah Masoud Ex-Leader of resistance
forces and National Hero of Afghanistan
From Tajik Tribe**



**Abdul Rashid Dostum Former
Marshal of Afghanistan
From Uzbek tribe**

It was super interesting and at the same time felt weird when I, as a citizen of Afghanistan, faced the following question from my American coworker. I had no solid answer for him. He asked, "Edres, nationality-wise what should I call you? Afghan, Afghani or Afghanistani? Here in America, we have a blanket that we call an afghan, so, can I call you Afghani?" At that moment, my mind froze for a few seconds and flashed back all those long years ago to the ongoing controversial debates in Afghanistan in high governmental levels as well as between friends, coworkers and classmates etc, that actually had not settled on an answer to this question: What should a citizen of Afghanistan be called? To my coworker's question, I first responded that "afghani" is the currency name for Afghanistan money. For that reason, the word "Afghani" can automatically be cancelled from this list. However, there is no solid answer to what an Afghanistan citizen should be addressed as when choosing between Afghan, Afghanistani, and some other names that some specific tribes prefer to be called.

We have so many tribes living in Afghanistan such as Tajik, Pashtun, Uzbek, Hazara, Arab, and

others. For many years, there has not been an actual census done in Afghanistan. Hence, we cannot say for sure which tribe has the majority population in Afghanistan. Although, many Afghanistan citizens who mostly are from the Pashtun tribe claim that Pashtun is the majority population of Afghanistan and conclude that the word Afghan is a synonym for *Awghan*, which in their language refers to a member of the Pashtun tribe in Afghanistan. Thus, in their view all citizens of Afghanistan should be called Afghan. In addition, there has been an amendment in the Afghanistan constitution to call a citizen of Afghanistan "Afghan." However, this is not acceptable to many who are living in Afghanistan, and they say that the term "Afghan" is being forced on all Afghanistan citizens.

On the other side, the Tajik tribe, who are considered more literate, claim that there has been no actual census done for 100 years or more and now consider the people who speak Dari in Afghanistan (who are mostly Tajiks) to be the majority of Afghanistan population, and we don't want to be called Afghan. We don't want to be referred to as Afghan because it is a word that belongs to the

don't want to be listed as their tribe member. Since we are from Afghanistan, we believe that citizens of Afghanistan should be called Afghanistani. Other tribes have similar kinds of debates and discussions going-on and some prefer to be called Afghan while others prefer to be called Afghanistani. There is still no conclusion for this debate even after many years. So, that is why I felt weird when I faced this question. In fact, I still don't have an answer that is acceptable among even just ten Afghans from diverse tribes.

I am student at American River College, where we have so many immigrants from Afghanistan. To see what are the opinions of Afghanistan's immigrant students at American River College, I asked this question to ten students from Afghanistan and also 4 Afghanistan citizens who are not students at ARC now.

What do you want to be called?

- A. Afghani
- B. Afghan
- C. Afghanistani
- D. Not sure

And why do you want to be called by that?

Unsurprisingly, when I asked this question, I noticed that, if the person belonged to the Pashtun tribe of Afghanistan, without a second thought they chose to be called Afghan and strongly objected when others wanted to be called any other name than Afghan. Some, who were even Dari speakers and were from tribes other than Pashtun, also chose to be called Afghan. When I asked why they chose this option, they mostly answered, this is how we have been addressed for so many years and it is written in our constitution for many years and I don't care if it was forced on us or if it's not acceptable for all to be called Afghan. They basically said, "I am used to being called this and will choose to be called Afghan in the future too."

Interestingly, 3 out of 14 choose to be called Afghanistani. They believe it is a broader name that could include all the tribes of Afghanistan. There are lots of Afghans who don't like to be addressed as Afghan, and they like the word Afghanistani better. For instance, Abdul Latif Pedram, a famous politician who is a Tajik and a Dari speaker, and is the leader

of National Congress Party of Afghanistan, has been fighting for many years over this debate and raised his voice that he prefers to be addressed as Afghanistani and doesn't want to be called Afghan.

There is not a single answer to this important question that is acceptable for all tribes living in Afghanistan because the preference of each person most often depends on their tribe of origin or the language they speak. Therefore, since it has been a century that Afghanistan citizens are addressed as Afghan and since it was mentioned in the Afghanistan constitution, everyone is bound to address an Afghanistan citizen as Afghan. I even noticed that all international troops in the last 20 years were addressing Afghanistan citizens as Afghan. I believe they were trained to address Afghanistan citizens as Afghan because it was in the Afghanistan constitution and they were required to follow the Afghanistan constitution while serving in Afghanistan.

As a final thought, for now, since there is no full agreement about what to call someone from Afghanistan, it is always nice to ask each person, and when you do, it will likely begin a very interesting conversation that will help you get to know them better as an individual, unique person from Afghanistan.

Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi



A Flight from Kabul

I have lived almost my entire life in a war zone, but I had never experienced anything like what occurred in August 2021. My family had traveled back to visit my grandmother, and the same day we were planning on flying out of Afghanistan, the entire country fell to the Taliban. The worst days of my life played out over those 48 hours; I watched my country collapse and survived a mass shooting. The fall of my country to the Taliban, the mass shooting at the airport, and all of the effort it took to escape back to the U.S. were the most dangerous and frightening things I have ever experienced.

I was at the airport waiting for a flight from Afghanistan to the United States with my family. The Taliban took over Afghanistan while we were waiting in the airport. They took over Kabul and opened the prisons while we sat in the airport. The prisoners and Taliban slowly took over the entire city and country while we hoped that our flight would leave. Then we saw the workers of the airport take off their work uniforms, and the security guards also took off their uniforms. They put their guns away, too. I was very, very shocked they just gave up. I couldn't believe it, and this made us realize that the flights out of the country on airlines were stopped, and our flight out wouldn't happen. I would say it was an incredibly dark and difficult time for me. We were in the terminal for 24 hours with no food or water because

we didn't have any choice. I remember the night felt longer than any other night, and it was incredibly cold. We felt so exposed in the airport, and didn't know what to do. We knew going outside we would be faced with the thousands of prisoners that had been let out by the Taliban, members of the Taliban, and desperate people trying to leave the country. We decided to stay inside while a friend in the US looked for information on how to get on the evacuation flights.



Early the next morning, the Taliban came inside of the airport. They told everyone they were emptying the airport. I felt very nervous and very scared. Next, we tried so hard to be strong inside the airport because we heard a lot of gunfire from outside and didn't know what was happening out there. The only thing that we could do was sit in the terminal and pray that we could leave on a plane. Everything was shut down. I was feeling really shocked and very disappointed. I had never felt like that in my life. The Taliban returned inside the airport and said everyone needed to leave. Then, they started to shoot people. Everyone was trying to find a way to get out of the airport. It was chaos. People were screaming and yelling, they were running everywhere to find an emergency door or an exit, but unfortunately no one found any way to get out of the airport. Through all of that chaos, the

Taliban just kept killing people. I felt very nervous, and I was in shock. My mother grabbed me and pushed me forward towards the door. I saw a lot of people dead as we ran, but we couldn't do anything to help anyone. We saw a lot of people die in front of our eyes. It was like my mind went to another place,

and I did things that didn't make sense. For example, my luggage fell off the cart and opened, spilling clothes everywhere. Instead of running for my life, I stopped to clean up. I felt a heavy and large hand grab my arm and pull me up. When I looked at the face of the

person, I was looking at a member of the Taliban eye to eye. At that moment, I thought I would die. I didn't know what he would do to me. He didn't shoot me or yell, but instead pleaded for me to run and leave my things. I was sobbing and quickly stacked my luggage again and left.

The next day, after more than 24 hours we were able to leave the airport. When we left, I realized my 18 year old brother was not with us. I felt very sad and cried. Unfortunately, we didn't have a phone to call him because some men stole my father's phone right after we got to the airport. My brother had a phone and he was trying to find us, but he couldn't. He knew if the Taliban saw him, he would get in big trouble because he was wearing a suit. The Taliban doesn't like western clothing, so he was very nervous and very scared about that. After five hours, he was able to get out of the airport, and I am really thankful he was safe. We all went to my grandmother's house to wait for information from our American friend who was trying to get information about evacuation flights. We were all so tired, and had some food and slept while we waited for our friend to call.



We saw on the news that American soldiers had arrived at the airfield to help Americans and Green Card holders get out of the country. One of my American friends helped us get information on how to reach the U.S. soldiers and get inside the gate entrance where the flights were, from her relative in the mili-

tary. We tried one time to go to the gate for the flights, but my mother had a panic attack from the gunfire in the streets and we went back to my grandmother's house. Our American friend called and urged us to go now, and disagreed with my father's idea to wait two or three days before traveling. We listened to her, and the second time we made it to the gate.

With a lot of difficulty we were able to get out of the country at 12 p.m. It was very hard. When I think about how we were able to get out of that situation, it feels like another life. Every time I think about it, it's very, very hard for me. It is especially difficult to remember when I couldn't help those who died in front of us. They needed help, but we couldn't save them. My family and I feel a lot of guilt that we couldn't save anyone. I can still hear people calling out for water as they died. I can see their faces and the look in their eyes. Right now as I am writing this, I feel like I am right back in Kabul in the airport.

I think I will never forget that day, one of the darkest days in my life. It changed me in so many ways, and I work everyday to recover from the trauma of everything that happened.

Najia Karimy
ESL 47
Narrative Essay



**Would you like to
contribute to *The Parrot*?**

If you want to share your work, an opinion, or anything with *The Parrot*, please email us at TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu. We would be happy to hear from you and will try to respond ASAP.

The Parrot welcomes all ESL student matters!



Did you know that the national flower of Afghanistan is the tulip? Tulips are actually native to Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Central Asia! Fields and fields of them can be seen for miles in Afghanistan. Tulips are a symbol of love and purity, traits that Afghan culture holds dear.

Source: [Naan Kabob on Pinterest](#)

Restaurant Review

ARIA-AFGHAN RESTAURANT

Aria-Afghan Restaurant has been serving some of the best Afghan and Middle Eastern cuisine in the Sacramento area for many years. The menu selection is abundant, and can satisfy the most discriminating taste.

I would give this place a 10 out of 10. Not only was the food exquisite and fresh, but the service was great! The people who work there receive you with a huge smile on their faces, making you feel welcome. We ordered the food and waited for 20 minutes for them to bring it out because the dishes are all freshly made.

My favorite dish was the dumplings called *man-too*. They have ground beef, onions, and spices inside with garlic yogurt and split peas on top. They feel soft in the mouth, and they taste sour and sweet at the same time. I ate 5 in a row!

The chicken that came in the Triple Combination Kabob was also very good with perfect combination of seasoning. It is served with grilled chicken, beef, and lamb together with basmati rice and salad.

Go and check it out at 5601 Watt Ave #2, North Highlands, CA 95660.

<https://www.ariaafghanrestaurant.com/>



A "FNUunny" Cultural Clash Experience in the U.S.

In most parts of Afghanistan, we call men or women by their first name. We don't call someone by his last name even if we know his last name. It's become our habit, and we are accustomed to it. Also, computerized passports were issued in our country about two years ago. Unlike computerized passports, old handwritten passports didn't have a column for the last name. While we were traveling to the USA, we had the old handwritten passport which didn't have our last name. Although I had FNU (first name unknown) on my visa, I didn't care because I didn't know the meaning. I noticed a little when I received my Green Card and driver's license with FNU on it.

I scheduled a doctor's appointments for myself, my wife, and my son. It was hard for me to understand when I received a call from the doctor's office for an appointment reminder. The calls stated that "FNU" has an appointment tomorrow. Because of three FNUs in our household, it was confusing to figure out which FNU had the appointment. We weren't the only FNUs either! Some other FNUs also lived there. One day I took my wife to the doctor for her regular appointment. There were two windows, and lots of people were waiting in the lobby for their name to be called. The door opened, and a nurse called, "FNU!" Suddenly, my wife stood up and moved toward the door. At the same time, another couple moved to the door, too. The nurse exclaimed, "Oh, my God!" She asked for the last name, and told my wife to wait for her turn.

From that day, I started thinking to do

something about it. I was new, so I asked my friend for help. He guided me how to change the names, so I waited for the whole name change process to finish. Finally, I received an official name change letter from court, and our names were changed.

**Rahim Karimy - ESL
Narrative Essay**

FNU - FUN



دنيا همه هيچ و اهل دنيا همه هيچ
 اي هيچ براي هيچ با هيچ ميچ
 داني كه زادمي چه ماند پس مرگ
 عشق است و محبت است و ديگر همه هيچ
 مولاناي رومي (بلخي)

Did you know? Dari and Pashto are the two most widely used languages in Afghanistan.

[Languages of Afghanistan](#)

Dari Poem

The world is meaningless, and its residents are nothing,
 You are noting do not get involved in pointless things.
 Do you know what is laid before you after life,
 Love and affection and the rest are null and void.

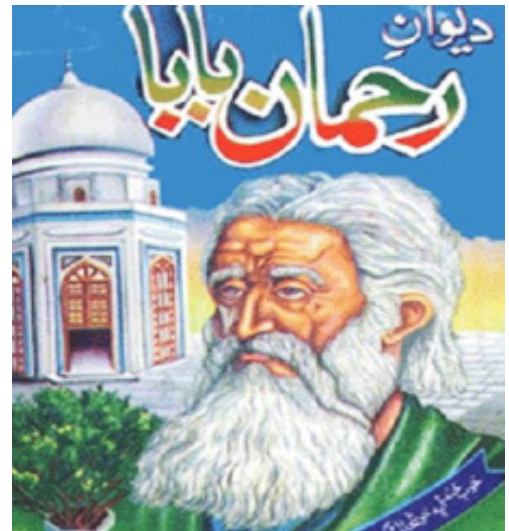
Moulana Rumi (Balkhi)

خلک ماره په مينه گرحی
 زه وژی تژی دجانان ومینی یمه
 “People get love from their lovers,
 I am thirsty for the love of my lover

د زره په سر می ازغی مات دی
 نه یی ایستی شم نه یی حال ویلی شمه
 There are some thorns inside in my heart
 Neither can I throw them out nor can I tell anyone.

هغه ده ستا په انتظار کی چه په ماتیریکی
 تاته ده هغه درد دیدلی ماشام سه پته ده
 You don't know how much I am suffering from your
 waiting
 You don't know the pain of that evening.

اوس می ازغی هم لمنه نه نیسی
 دومره بی اسری ژوندوکوزه
 Even thorns don't catch my shirttail
 My life, look how supportless I have become!



Pashto Poem

The author is Rahman Baba, a famous Pashto poet.
 Poem translated by Asila Sadiqi and Ahmad Maroof Kabiri.

Beautiful Places - Afghanistan



Herat Citadel, Herat Province - Afghanistan



Band-e-Amir, Bamyam Province - Afghanistan



Monar-e Jam, Ghor Province - Afghanistan



Paghman Valley, Kabul - Afghanistan



Mahipar Valley, Kabul Province - Afghanistan

Afghanistan Famous Places



Herat

Click on the photo to watch the video, and learn more about this wonderful place!

Kabul

Click on the photo to watch the video, and learn more about this wonderful place!



Mazar

Click on the photo to watch the video, and learn more about this wonderful place!

Kandahar

Click on the photo to watch the video, and learn more about this wonderful place!



“You can do it!” Thoughts from Mozhdah Afghanzo: ARC Immigrant Student and Employee

Thank you, Mozhdah Jan, for interviewing with the Parrot. Please introduce yourself and tell us about your educational journey.

Mozhdah Afghanzo: Thank you. I am Mozhdah Afghanzo. I am an immigrant student at ARC. I started my journey in fall 2021. Hopefully, summer 2024 I will graduate from ARC and continue my studies at UC Davis.

Can you tell us about your experience as an immigrant student at American River College?

Mozhdah Afghanzo: The biggest challenge was setting up everything, and the enrollment process was difficult. It was also new to me and different. So, for a student like me who graduated high school in Afghanistan, it was really a totally new experience and academic system.

If you compare the enrollment system in Afghanistan colleges versus here at American River College, how is it different?

Mozhdah Afghanzo: The biggest difference is here the process is super easy. Students, if they have a good GPA, just go to any college of their choice and start their college journey right after high school. However, it is totally a different system in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, we have an incredibly hard entrance exam called *Kankoor*. The

reason for *Kankoor* is because the acceptance rates in Afghanistan Universities are very low, due to lack of resources. So, they instituted the *Kankoor* entrance exam to give the chance of higher education only to the best or smartest students. According to the score they got from the *Kankoor*, students will be placed in different majors. They can only enroll in the majors that they have selected prior to the exam and if they got the required *Kankoor* score for that major.

So, basically choosing a major is based on the *Kankoor* in Afghanistan, right?

Mozhdah Afghanzo: We have the option to choose 5 different majors prior to the *Kankoor*, but we will get into one of those majors only if we get the required *Kankoor* score for that major. Otherwise, they will assign us to any other major, or we won't get the chance to enroll that year, and we have to wait for the next year's *Kankoor* exam and try again. The system sometimes assigns a major which a student is not interested in, but they have no choice and mostly end up studying 4 years in a major that they were never interested in.

In what position are you working and how was the hiring process for you?

Mozhdah Afghanzo: I am working with the Counseling Department at ARC. My position is just a student help. I help students schedule appointments with the advisors and meet with them. The



hiring process was not really bad. I didn't have experience working in offices or an academic environment, but I did have one year of experience in other jobs. The hiring process was pretty easy for me as a student. I just applied, then I got the interview and waited for the official paper work process to get completed and started my job.

So, does it mean that the hiring process is pretty easy for all immigrant students if they wish to work while studying?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: Actually, it depends on the student. If the students are comfortable communicating in English and would like to work while studying, then yes.

How do you manage to balance your work and studies as an immigrant student?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: Obviously, it has its challenges working and studying full time. A very good thing in overall at ARC is flexibility in terms of work schedules. Usually I pick my classes and let the Counseling Department know. I share the day and time that I can work. They approve it and I can work. That is really a positive point of the job; it helps me a lot to balance my work and my studies. As an immigrant student, I need to financially support myself and for that I need to work. I believe if someone wants to do something, it is easy to do it. We just need to manage our time and I think I am managing my time wisely. That is why I can balance my work and my studies good.

Can you discuss any challenges you have faced as an immigrant student or employee and how you have overcome them?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: As an immigrant student, I have faced lots of challenges, like the new environment and new academic system as I said. Studying all the subjects that I used to study in another language back home and studying these subjects in

English was one of the challenges. Obviously, I had problem with the basic vocabulary of math, biology and physics like terminology, expressions, and sentences. So, first of all, I tried to become comfortable with the language of science and other subjects. Once I got comfortable, then it became easy for me.

As an immigrant employee, I can say that I haven't really faced any challenges. I had enough experience at ARC as a student and that experience helped me to be a good employee here as well.

What unique perspectives or skills do you think immigrant students can bring to the workplace?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: The biggest benefit that immigrant students can bring to any academic department is their multilingual skills. My first language is Dari and we have lots of students who are from my country and other countries who speak the same language. I can help them, and they feel more comfortable talking in their first language when receiving services at ARC. Also, ARC is diverse and students are from different



countries with different religions and languages, so when they find me as one of their own, then they can communicate with me a lot more comfortably than in English.

Can you provide an example of a task where your immigrant background positively impacted your work or problem-solving approach?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: One of the biggest things was that a student came to the Counseling Department and she didn't just have an English problem, but she was totally new at ARC, so she had a similar experience when I started at ARC. The student was from my country and was speaking my native language. Using my experience, I was able to help her very quickly and enroll her in the college and make an appointment with a counselor and to give her an overview of things expected at ARC and the new

educational journey.

In what ways have you utilized your language skills or cultural knowledge to support fellow immigrant students?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: I have seen lots of student not from my country not continue their education because they have problems navigating the academic system. Personally, I had friends who were students at ARC before me and they helped me. If I didn't have their help during my very first days at ARC, I wouldn't be here today. When you are new to everything, you really need someone to help know what you should expect from ARC. I am from Afghanistan and people from my country dress differently and most girls and women cover their head with a scarf. They think if they talk to people other than Afghans, they will be judged because they are Muslim and they dress differently. So, it is more comfortable for them when they see me as an Afghan Muslim girl and they come to me and share their problem and seek for help. As an immigrant student, I was able to help immigrant students even from other countries than my own because I had similar problems. Sometimes, I think I chose a very good job because, here I am helping students who are struggling with the same things that I was struggling with a while ago.

What are the good things you have here at American River College that you wouldn't have in your home country if you were studying there?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: If I answered this question three years ago, it would be different. I would have said that the facilities and the opportunities here are a lot better, but now the situation in my country

is that the women and girls are banned from their very basic rights. They cannot go to school after 7th grade, which is a very sad thing. Besides that, I can point out some more differences. The biggest thing is the ability to select my major and what I want to become in the future. I have the option to have multiple degrees if I want, and I have the chance to change my major whenever I wish to. Overall, If I work hard for it, I can achieve whatever I want in my life. However, in my county the flexibility is very low and when you don't have your basic rights, you will accept whatever they are giving to you.

Overall, have you found it hard to study in the United States? What advice do you have for new immigrants?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi:

Overall, I found it challenging but not hard. I was speaking good English when I first came to the ARC, so I haven't faced so many challenges due to my language skill. However, I faced some challenges with my science subjects. I was able to communicate in English, but the science subjects' words and expressions and sentences were new to me. After taking the basic classes for my science subjects, I was able to manage this problem.

For new immigrants, I strongly encourage them

to come to ARC and enroll as soon as they can. I really want to tell them that everything here is very good. If you can manage your time and you want to study, ARC can help you a lot. Even if they have problem with their English, ARC offers ESL classes that help so much. Once they are comfortable with their English, they can pick their major subjects.

What do you like to do in your free times?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: In my free time I want to stay



at home and just want to sleep or watch TV. Because I am out of home every day, either in my classes or at work, I really enjoy being at home in my free time.

What is the best movie or series that you have watched so far?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: Almost all Afghan or Middle Eastern people love to watch Bollywood movies and you can count me one of those people. I love watching Bollywood movies and I am a big fan of Shah Rukh Khan. So, I like every single movie of him.

What is your favorite food?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: My favorite food—as an Afghan, I would say either mantoo or other traditional foods. But for my favorite food internationally, I would say pizza.

What are your dream universities?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: Right now, I am living in Sacramento, so I am thinking about the universities around Sacramento, and UC Davis is my favorite university. But if I want to talk about my dream university. My dream university would be Chicago Medical University. The reason is because I visited Chicago one time and I love Chicago.

Is there anything that you want to share with newly arrived immigrants who want to continue their education but have concerns that are stopping them?

Mozhdah Afghanzoi: I just want to tell them to do their best and don't think that you cannot do it because it is a new environment. People are very kind and helpful here. You meet lots of different people and don't judge anyone you meet for the first time. Take any chance you have to improve your English as a first step. Everything is going to be fine. I just want to tell them that everyone faces challenges, and it is very natural to face challenges when coming into a new environment and starting everything from zero. Building everything from scratch is not easy. If I and other immigrant students were able to do it, then every one of you can do it as well. Just don't give up and you will be fine.

Edres: Thank you very much Mozhdah Jan for sharing your thoughts today. I am sure it will help lots of students who are new to the ARC.

Mozhdah: Thank you.

Parrot Staff Interviewer: **Sayed Edres Sadiqi**



Hasina Jalal: Daughter of the First Woman Presidential Candidate in Afghanistan

Most readers may not recognize the name of [Masooda Jalal](#), but she made history in Afghanistan. Masooda Jalal was the first woman nominated in an Afghanistan presidential election. [Her influence has had a great impact on Afghanistan](#), and part of that influence continues through her family. It was my privilege to get to know her daughter, Hasina Jalal, while we were both still in Afghanistan.

I was first introduced to Hasina Jalal during my time in Kabul, where she was a dedicated professional at the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. When she made the decision to pursue further education abroad, I took on her role at the ministry. From our very first encounter, I was inspired by her remarkable talents, unwavering work ethic, and most notably, her persistent commitment to advocating for the empowerment of Afghan women and youth both within Afghanistan and on the global stage.

Over the past two decades, Hasina has developed as a impressive voice for Afghan girls and women, leaving an indelible impact on the reform of women's rights in the country. Her influence extends beyond Afghani-

stan's borders, resonating in international circles as she passionately champions the cause. In my interactions with Hasina, I have come to regard her as one of the most esteemed, knowledgeable, trustworthy, and approach-



able Afghan women I have had the privilege to know. Currently engaged in pursuing her Ph.D. in Public and International Affairs, Hasina is also working as a Research Fellow at the Center for Governance and Markets at the University of Pittsburgh. Her dedication to academia and her continued work in advocating women's rights signify her continuous commitment to positive change, making her a true inspiration to all who have the honor of crossing paths with her.

Please find our more about Hasina through her interview.

Can you tell us about your journey as an activist and leader in Afghanistan or from Afghanistan? What motivated you in this field?

Growing up in Afghanistan, I firsthand witnessed and sometimes experienced gender-based discrimination and violence. Hence, to end the inequities and injustices in my neighborhood, community, workplace, and country, I strove to raise awareness, bring

change, and influence policy.

What are the biggest challenges or obstacles you have faced as a woman in Afghanistan while working towards these goals?

And what made you go forward?

Along with gender-based discrimination, I have personally faced age-based discrimination at the workplace in Afghanistan. It was hard and nearly impossible to challenge

the institutionalized and internalized norms and unofficial codes of conduct that governed the workplace culture. To overcome these challenges, I strove to build strong professional networks and embraced resilience. I also advocated for diversity and inclusion by building a diverse team of experts in my office. Having a clear vision for change and being resilient allowed me to go forward.

What is your specific issue or concern for current socio-political and economical situation in Afghanistan?

I am concerned about the humanitarian crisis and the international community's response to it. I am also truly concerned about the erosion of women's rights and freedom. Women and girls of Afghanistan are currently denied their rights to education and employment and access to recreational activities is very much restricted for them. In addition to this, women and girls in Afghanistan are facing significant economic challenges.



What strategies or initiatives have you implemented to empower women in Afghanistan and promote gender equality?

At the National Association of Afghanistan Civil Society (NAACS), we have started an online English language course for college girls based in Afghanistan. So far, we have more than 150 girls in our online school. Our instructors are US-based volunteers whose

backgrounds are from Indonesia, Turkey, India, Yemen, and the United States.

By participating and speaking on various platforms, I have tried to raise awareness about the situation of Afghan women. I have also striven to inform the US's foreign policy when it comes to Afghanistan. I have met with the key countries' Permanent Representatives to the UN including those in the UN

Security Council and raised the concerns of the people of Afghanistan.

What kind of support, both locally and globally, do you believe is essential for the process and success of women activists, education programs, and business leaders in Afghanistan?

At the macro/global level, I believe the UN Security Council should adopt immediate, calculated, and collective measures to ensure women's rights are protected and restored in Afghanistan. Regional countries can leverage their bilateral and multilateral relationships to conditionalize aid and engagement to gender

equality. Locally, I think the UN (the United Nations), particularly, [UN Women](#), should identify and support local women's organizations. As a short-term measure, the international community should also support various initiatives that focus on educating Afghan girls and women.

How has the current political transition in Afghanistan affected your work, and what are your future plans in light of these changes?

For at least one year, I was directly and actively dealing with the aftermath of the political transition in Afghanistan. While trying to identify available resources and support systems to help my family, friends, and fellow activists, both inside and outside Afghanistan, it was very hard to maintain hope and resilience. I plan to continue advocating for a peaceful Afghanistan where human rights are fully protected and respected. If possible, I would like to work on educating Afghan women and girls on a bigger scale. I also intend to continue my collaboration with various US-based organizations to continue providing support to the Afghan refugees here.

Can you share a specific success story that you have achieved and how it has impacted the lives of women in Afghanistan?

Recently, I was able to establish online, volunteer-based English language classes for more than 150 girls based in Afghanistan. Given all the challenges that women and girls are facing in Afghanistan, I hope this initiative, will give them a sense of agency and hope, and remind them that we have not forgotten them.

What are your hobbies, and can you tell us about your childhood favorite experience?

As a kid, I loved playing chess with my mom. While I lost almost every time to her, it was one of my favorite one-on-one times with

my mother.

What is your specific message for Afghanistan women who are inside Afghanistan and who are immigrants in different countries?

For women and girls inside Afghanistan, opportunities and avenues for self-development and capacity building are very restricted. Given that, I want them to know that we have not forgotten them, and we will do everything that we can to stay connected with them, closely monitor the new developments and changes inside the country, and advocate for their rights at the global level.

Women refugees should embrace personal development by prioritizing self-care and their well-being. It is also important that they focus on cultural integration and acquiring useful skills. They should not forget to seek support and resources by reaching out to local organizations and community centers. More importantly, they should be patient and compassionate with themselves because healing takes time.

Interview by Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi



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Zoom Hours

MON - 8am to 12:30pm

THU - 11am to 7pm

FRI - 8am to 4:30pm

ESL Center

Open On Campus

in the LRC!

Monday thru Thursday

8:00 AM to 7:00 PM

The ESL Center helps all multilingual students with their classes and questions. We speak Farsi, Dari, Pashto, Russian, Ukranian, Spanish, and more. Come see us!



Ask
Questions

Get
Help

Out of the Cage



Transfer Day at American River College

During the Fall 2023 transfer day, students can learn about transferring to more than 50 colleges and universities, including:

California State Universities (CSU)

Universities of California (UC)

Independent and/or private colleges and universities

Out-of-state colleges and universities

Pre-registration is not required. Stop by whenever is convenient for you!

Location: ARC Student Center

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Student Editors: **Tuyet Le, Emmanuel Madrid, Mohammed Elmrani, Sayed Edres Sadiqi, Phong Nguyen, and Asila Sadiqi.**

Faculty Advisors: **Patrick Hoggan and David Evans**

Please let us know what we can do to improve *The Parrot*. We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us. Contact us at TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu. To see previous issues of *The Parrot*, go to <https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>

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