



ASIAN UNIVERSITY
FOR WOMEN

WWW.ASIAN-UNIVERSITY.ORG

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Dear Friends,



The sheer pace of innovation at Asian University for Women sets the institution apart from any other one may come across in the world.

With over 1600 students*, this place is a melting pot of opportunities, diversity and inclusion. I sat through a meeting the other day and heard a student lament about not being “AUW enough” yet. Being “AUW enough” is quite a journey that every student embarks on. The campus, bubbling with the expectant faces of hundreds of women, all aspiring to make it in the world, is a happy space of degrees turning into dreams. These students have stories that are safe within the walls of AUW, but these stories, in spite of some being inked with bias and displacement, are constantly defying the “lakshmanrekha”, a constant metaphorical reminder of limits and rules set for most women in the world.

Two and a half years ago, when the campus woke up from the Covid slumber, my colleagues had huge challenges to address. We had over 500 women from Afghanistan coming in. After having gone through years of war and terror, the landscape had culminated to a new peak in August 2021 as the Taliban took power. Two-thirds of those who lived within that territory depended on humanitarian assistance, where self-determination had become a lost cause for women. But then, a few hundred made it to Chattogram. The pressing requirement then was to restructure Pre-Undergraduate program and have six different levels in there for the women to be placed approximately. Apart from the pre-UG and UG programs, a brand new masters in Education program also had to be introduced in order to accommodate more mature Afghan students. Amidst all this, the bigger challenge lay in recruitment of faculty. In a short span of time, we had to bring in scholars, critical for the core and the majors.

However, at that point, it was also essential for us to stay true to the spirit of opening doors for all, including the most underserved. Thus, a large cohort of almost 200 plus women were brought in from the Rohingya camps. They needed more attention, then pushing AUW to create a new General Studies program, which eventually would lead to Pre-UG.

At that point, we were evolving fast, and we needed data. In order to do justice to the system and to track progress, we had to build a full-on ERP to cater to our requirements of digitalisation.

The real space also was being built at the same time. Today, with the first building of the new campus getting ready, all of us at AUW wait for its unlimited potential to unfold. The possibility of the next phase of construction is equally exciting, if not more. This phase will include dorms followed by two more academic buildings, one performance center designed by the famous Italian architect Renzo Piano and his team.

Today, amidst all this, AUW remains committed to its journey beyond academic excellence, offering space for all to celebrate the lives of hundreds of Mahsa Aminis who defy the bland and long for color...almost invoking a bold hashtag of #SheForShe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rubana Huq'.

Rubana Huq, PhD
Vice Chancellor, Asian University for Women

* Student enrollment has increased to nearly 2000 by the time of publication.



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EDUCATION AS A HUMAN RIGHT

BY AUW CHANCELLOR, CHERIE BLAIR



Education is not merely a privilege but a fundamental human right—essential for empowering individuals and advancing societies. As Chancellor of the Asian University for Women (AUW), I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of education in shaping the lives of young women across Asia. This experience reinforces my conviction that access to quality education must be universal and indiscriminate.

The principle of education as a human right is enshrined in international agreements such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These frameworks affirm that every individual, regardless of their background, deserves access to education that enables full societal participation. Yet, millions of girls and women around the world face significant barriers to education, often rooted in cultural, economic, and political challenges.

At AUW, our mission is to dismantle these barriers and provide young women with the tools they need to become leaders and change-makers in their communities. Educating women is not just an investment in their futures—it is a catalyst for economic development, improved health outcomes, and social progress. Educated women are better equipped to challenge injustices and advocate for the rights of others, contributing to a more equitable and just world.

The journeys of our students exemplify the profound impact of education. Many come from marginalized communities where opportunities are scarce, yet their resilience and determination enable them to overcome these obstacles in pursuit of higher education. These stories remind us of the untapped potential waiting to be unlocked through education.

However, access alone is insufficient. High-quality, relevant education is equally crucial. At AUW, we prioritize an academically rigorous and socially conscious curriculum that equips students with the skills to address the complexities of the 21st century. This includes fostering critical thinking, leadership, and a commitment to social justice.

Inclusivity and equity are also vital. Education must address the diverse needs of all learners, creating environments where every student feels valued and supported regardless of socio-economic background, ethnicity, or religion. At AUW, we champion this ethos by uniting students from diverse countries and cultures, cultivating mutual respect and shared purpose.

Education as a human right is not just an aspirational goal—it is a moral imperative. As Chancellor of AUW, I am steadfast in my commitment to advancing this cause. By ensuring that every young woman has access to quality education, we lay the groundwork for a more just, equitable, and prosperous world. Together, let us turn this vision into reality for current and future generations.

A VISION REALIZED

REFLECTIONS ON AUW'S JOURNEY

BY JACK MEYER, CHAIR OF THE AUW SUPPORT FOUNDATION

I met Kamal at the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1980's. My job was to manage the Foundation's endowment. His job was to think big thoughts. I was pretty good at my job. He was great at his. We spent many hours talking about progress, or the lack of progress, in the developing world. He convinced me that the key to progress, in the developing world, was women's education. Women make the key decisions in developing world families. They need education to make those decisions well.

In the 1990's, I went to Harvard to manage its endowment but Kamal and I kept in close touch. In 2000, he called me and said "I am going to do it". I did not have to ask what "it" was. He was going to start a first rate university for women and site it in Bangladesh. My response was immediate: sign me up for anything I can do to help. And that is what I have tried to do for the past 20 years—help, in any way I can.

I can confidently say that AUW has exceeded our expectations in every way. More students, better students; more faculty, better faculty. More world impact - note the successes with Afghan and Rohingya students.

And the pace is picking up...



AUW AT A GLANCE:

PRESENT AND THRIVING

In September 2024, AUW welcomed 1,598 students back to campus as the new academic year began. With an additional intake in January 2025, the student body grew to 1,734—the largest in AUW's history. This reflects AUW's ongoing commitment to expanding enrollment, with a goal of reaching 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students over the next five years.

The academic year officially commenced in September, with all programs, student activities, and support services becoming fully operational after a slightly delayed start due to political and civil unrest. Pre-undergraduate students were accommodated at the MM Ali Campus, while undergraduate and graduate students were housed at the Mahsa Amini Campus, which had recently expanded with the addition of a new building.

University Overview



13:1

Student-Faculty Ratio



40

Student Organizations



27,717

Volumes in Library



20-25

Average Class Size



9

Interscholastic Sports Teams



124

Total Faculty



10

Dormitories



9

Computer Labs



26

Academic Databases

Admissions / AUW has 3 intakes each year: Summer, Fall and Spring



7,816

Total Applications in 2023-24



889

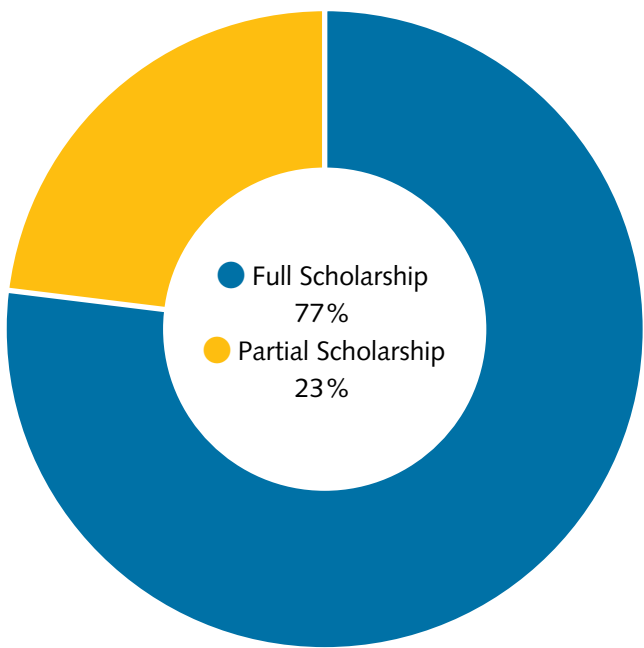
Places Offered



554

Offers Accepted

Students Receiving Financial Aid

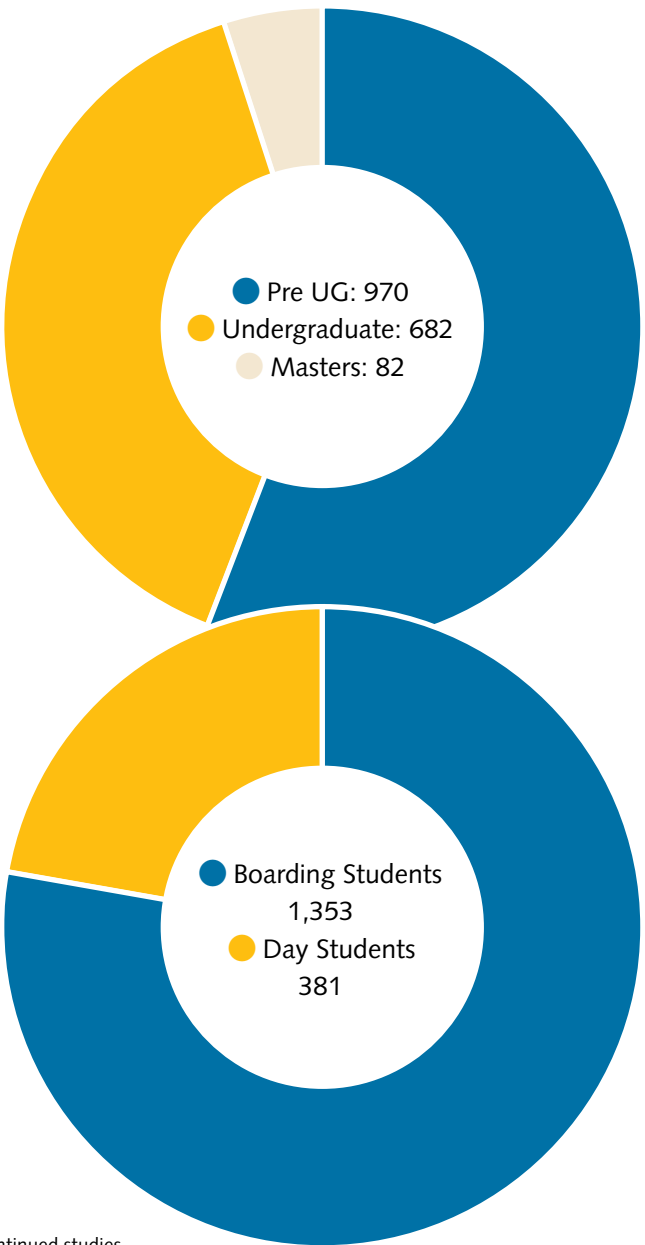


14 Countries Represented

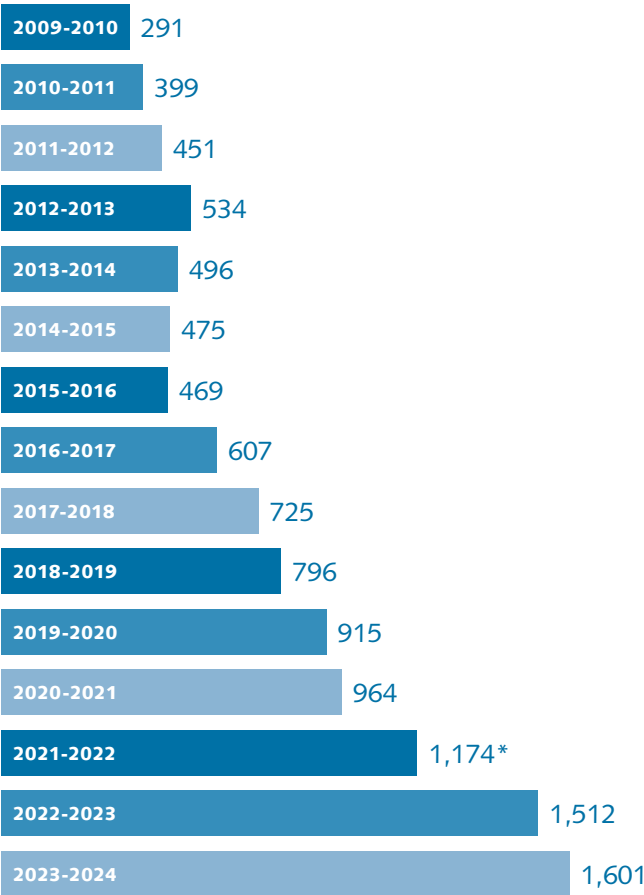
Total: 1,734

Afghanistan	525	Myanmar	320
Bangladesh	752	Nepal	43
Bhutan	9	Pakistan	23
Cambodia	2	Sri Lanka	18
India	14	Timor Leste	16
Indonesia	1	Vietnam	4
Laos	5	Yemen	2

2024 Student Breakdown



Enrollment by Academic Year



* 148 Afghan students were evacuated from Kabul and placed in US universities for continued studies

Students Shaping Tomorrow

MAHDIA KAZEMI, AFGHANISTAN, PRE-UG, CLASS OF 2028

Mahdia Kazemi, a native of Afghanistan, is currently enrolled in the Pre-Undergraduate Program with aspirations to major in Computer Science. In addition to her academic pursuits, Mahdia plays a prominent role at AUW, serving as both the president and coach of the University's Boxing Club.

“ I started AUW'S Boxing Club because I wanted to inspire other girls to take part in the sport, and to also give them an opportunity to learn self-defense. Boxing is not just for men. Women become competitors. Women can do anything. I want to do my bit to demonstrate the confidence and power of women.”

SHANJIDA NAHAR SUMONA, BANGLADESH, COMPUTER SCIENCE, CLASS OF 2025

Shanjida grew up in Ambari, a rural village in the Rangpur division of Bangladesh, in a farming family that has always been her anchor.

Her passion for Computer Science sparked early. "Writing code and seeing it come to life feels exhilarating!" she shares, reflecting on her excitement for learning C, Python, JAVA, etc.

Studying at AUW has been a transformative journey for her. Coming from a village with limited resources, she never imagined attending a "world-class institution." Since 2023, she is working as a Teaching Assistant, gaining independence, confidence, and resilience while navigating a challenging academic environment.

Beyond academics, she has developed strong leadership, communication, and intercultural skills, preparing herself for a dynamic future.

But what stands out most to her is the bond with her peers:

“ What has really made AUW special for me is the sense of community and support I have found here. I've made friends from all over the world who have become like family to me. We support each other through the ups and downs of university life, and we motivate each other to pursue our dreams and make a positive impact in the world.”

HMANGAIHZUALI, INDIA, ECONOMICS, CLASS OF 2026

Hmangaihzuali, from Thingsul-Tlangnuam, Mizoram, is passionate about problem-solving, her favourite subject is mathematics because of its logical clarity.

Outside of her classes, Hmangaihzuali works as a Maths Teaching Assistant at the AUW Learning Centre and serves as the Weekly Event Coordinator at the AUW Maths Centre. She has also been actively involved in the Boxing Club and the Multilingual Club, where she served as an Executive Board member.

She believes she has progressed significantly since joining AUW. She writes:

“ *I used to behave like a tiny village girl who didn't know much about the world. My ideas on things have shifted significantly since moving here, and I am always learning new things. Because we come from various groups, I learnt a lot about other people's actions and thoughts. I take in what I've learnt from others and strive to develop myself every day.* **”**

With ambitions to pursue a master's and improve her community's education system, her journey is driven by a desire to better herself and make a lasting impact.



INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION:

NEW ACADEMIC PATHWAYS



To continue producing effective and innovative leaders across different sectors, AUW's teachings must be socially relevant and remain up to date with ongoing developments around the world. To this effect, the university has made a commitment to expand and build upon its academic offerings with a broadened curriculum. New undergraduate majors include Humanities, Computer Sciences, and Biological Sciences. While our undergraduate majors provide a broader level of study, AUW's growing master's program is specifically tailored to help alumni enter the workforce. Master's programs include the MA in Education, MS in Apparel and Retail Management, and MS in Drug Discovery and Bioinformatics.

Undergraduate Programs

HUMANITIES

AUW's new Humanities Major establishes the centrality of the humanities in learning. The program, taught by a global faculty, aims to produce graduates with a broad understanding of the world, appreciation for diverse cultures, and a commitment to social justice and peace. It encompasses religion, philosophy, history and literature and aligns with AUW's mission to support women from diverse and underprivileged backgrounds. This program is directed by John Matthew, the Dean of Arts and Humanities who comes to AUW with a PhD from Harvard in the History of Science. AUW's Humanities major fosters global perspectives, interdisciplinary learning, and critical skills, equipping students for diverse career paths and promoting social justice and cultural understanding.

Graduate Opportunities: Graduates will gain skills in critical thinking, analytical reading and writing, problem-solving, research, collaboration, communication, empathy, and leadership. These skills prepare them for careers in media, journalism, law, public policy, NGOs, civil society organizations, development sectors, and corporate businesses.

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

The BS in Biological Sciences offers three concentrations: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Bioinformatics, and Biotechnology. The program includes a comprehensive set of courses in biological sciences, ensuring students are well-prepared for both academia and the industry. The 144-156 credit program equips students with the skills necessary to meet current demands and secure positions in international graduate schools as well as careers in various industrial sectors like microbiology, food safety, molecular diagnostics, and pharmacy.

Graduate Opportunities: Graduates of this program will be successfully equipped to pursue their choice of academic or industry roles after leaving AUW such as data science, medical school, pharmaceutical industry, lab technicians, forensic analysis, research, biotech, and computational drug discovery.



“My transformative journey at AUW has been instrumental in shaping my aspirations and commitment to making a positive impact in the world, particularly in Afghanistan. The MA program at AUW served as a catalyst for my passion in educational technology, a field I believe holds the key to addressing educational challenges in societies like Afghanistan. The project-based learning courses, such as 'Design Thinking', 'Educational Technology for Strong Schools,' 'Exploration in Blended and Hybrid Learning' and 'Research Methods' ignited my interest in leveraging technology to bridge educational gaps. AUW's nurturing environment and emphasis on empowering women have fueled my determination to become a trailblazer in the field of Ed-Tech, especially in Afghanistan, where educational access is restricted for girls. My goal is to establish EdTech schools for K-12 learners, integrating robotics, AI, and blended learning systems to enhance STEM education. AUW not only provided me with the academic foundation but also instilled in me a sense of responsibility to give back to my community. Now, pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Technology, at Kent State University, I am dedicated to advancing educational opportunities in Afghanistan and beyond, inspired by the values and experiences gained at AUW.”



SIMA AHMADI

Ph.D. Student in Educational Technology at Kent State University; AUW Graduate

COMPUTER SCIENCES

AUW's Computer Science program prepares students for impactful careers across the evolving technology industry and development sectors, blending technical expertise with social insights to address real-world challenges in areas like health, microfinance, education, and civic activism. Students learn to design and implement socially viable applications and services for diverse, global contexts, aiming to support sustainable adoption for the next billion users worldwide. Graduates will leave with a robust technical foundation and the ability to apply their skills to real-life challenges, solve complex analytical problems, and conduct system-level design through modeling, analysis, and integration of knowledge across CS/ICT disciplines. They will also bring a strong sense of ethical responsibility to their work, and demonstrate excellent communication and teamwork skills, allowing them to thrive as collaborative and conscientious professionals.



Graduate Programs

MS IN APPAREL AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT

The HSBC-AUW School of Apparel, launched in 2023 with financial and other support from HSBC Bangladesh, offers a one-year full-time MS program in Apparel and Retail Management. The program aims to develop expertly trained women in Bangladesh to manage local businesses, fostering executive talent, sustainability, and women empowerment. Key features include academic excellence, industry relevance, and social significance. Graduates will be equipped for roles in RMG companies and global retailers, with skills transferable to other industries. Open to AUW graduates, self-sponsored women, and company-sponsored employees, candidates undergo a rigorous admission process. The inaugural cohort graduated in 2024 with a 100% employment placement record for the class.



MA IN EDUCATION

Launched in 2022, the Master of Arts in Education at AUW expands the university's mission to include postgraduate education, providing advanced opportunities for women with undergraduate degrees to become leaders in the field of education. This program prepares students as educational leaders, policy influencers, and change-makers. The curriculum combines theoretical frameworks, practical skills, and research, covering leadership, curriculum development, policy analysis, and educational technology. With a hybrid learning model, students are guided by professors from AUW and partner institutions like Johns Hopkins and Boston College. The program has grown to include students from Bangladesh and across Asia, all dedicated to transforming education in their communities.



MS IN DRUG SCIENCES AND BIOINFORMATICS

AUW's MS in Drug Sciences and Bioinformatics program is being designed to empower women to become leaders in pharmaceutical sciences and bioinformatics, aligning with AUW's mission to drive sustainable development. This interdisciplinary program trains students in drug sciences, computational biology, statistics, and data analysis, preparing them for impactful careers in healthcare and research. The two-year curriculum includes rigorous coursework and a final semester focused on research or internships. Graduates will be equipped with advanced skills in areas like pharmacoinformatics, cheminformatics, and industrial application, positioning them to contribute meaningfully to healthcare innovations and global sustainable development.



VOICES OF LEADERSHIP:

INSIGHTS FROM AUW FACULTY & STAFF

NAZNIN SULTANA, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND HR



What is your job at AUW? What are you responsible for?

I am the Director of Finance concurrently looking after HR as well for the time being.

My core job is to provide financial oversight for the organization and be responsible for the entire range of financial management, from daily operations to high-level management. As the HR Director my core responsibilities are to oversee compensation, recruitment, performance appraisals, and staff training and development activities.

What is your favourite thing about your job?

Finance plays a vital role in strategic planning and decision making for any organization which I like most. Besides that, tackling complex financial challenges, finding innovative solutions, leading and monitoring a team of finance professionals, developing relationship with stakeholders, playing key role in financial risk management are something I like in my role as the Director of Finance.

What do you think the future holds for AUW?

How would you like to play a role in the university's future?

AUW stands as a beacon for marginalized students aspiring to higher education and leadership roles. The institution's recent expansion in student numbers and curriculum enhancements are pivotal for its continued growth and increasing philanthropic backing. To ensure long-term sustainability, AUW must identify stable revenue streams to mitigate future financial challenges. Establishing a clear succession plan is also crucial for enduring success. As a key finance professional, my responsibilities include effective fund management, financial forecasting, promoting sustainable growth through strategic investments, and providing guidance on best financial practices and risk management.

Do you have a memorable moment from your time at AUW?

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, especially managing it without any loss of life, which I consider one of the most notable memories during my tenure. Additionally, the experience of welcoming over 500 Afghan individuals following the Taliban's return to power is another unforgettable event. The dramatic evacuation and subsequent relocation of 148 Afghan students to the USA, facilitated by AUW, also leaves a lasting impression on me.



GLOBAL EDUCATORS:

TEACHING FELLOWS SHAPING AUW'S FUTURE

Overview of the Project



Launched as part of AUW's commitment to fostering global exchange and high-quality education, the AUW Teaching Fellowship Program recruits recent graduates from top universities in the US and UK to teach at AUW for one year. These fellows

bring fresh perspectives and diverse academic expertise, enriching the learning experience for AUW students. Through this initiative, students gain access to world-class educators while fellows are immersed in a cross-cultural environment, fostering mutual growth and learning. The program exemplifies AUW's mission to build global bridges and create transformative educational experiences.

AUW has selected 19 Teaching Fellows for the 2024-2025 academic year to support the teaching and learning in the University's academic programs. Fellows come from universities across the United States and the United Kingdom, including Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, Wellesley College, University of Notre Dame, Cornell University, Davidson College, University of Bath, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Williams College, University of Pennsylvania, Smith College, Earlham College, University of Cambridge, and Amherst College.

Fellows receive comprehensive support, including a monthly stipend of \$1000, furnished accommodation, health insurance, and round-trip airfare. They gain hands-on teaching experience while being immersed in Bangladesh's diverse culture. Opportunities for engagement, such as visits to local communities and industry sectors, add depth to the fellows' experience, making it both impactful and personally rewarding.

2023-24 Teaching Fellows

- **Aleeza Hassan, University of Chicago '23**, BA Anthropology
- **Ashira Shirali, Princeton University '23**, BA English
- **Domenic De Santes, Georgetown University '23**, BA Government
- **Joy Won, Amherst College '23**, BA Education Studies
- **Monica Scotti, City College of New York '22**, BA International Studies
- **Preeti Chemiti, Princeton University '23**, BA History
- **Richard Bennet, Wesleyan University '23**, BA Critical Education Technology
- **Sarah Borden, Yale University '22**, BA Political Science
- **Sawyer Taylor-Arnold, Harvard University '23**, BA History and Literature & Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
- **Yee-Lynn Lee, Amherst College '23**, BA Economics
- **Rhya Evans, Georgetown University '23**, BS Global Health
- **Sara Kohlberg, New York University '17**, BS Global Health and Food Studies
- **Sanju Banerjee, University of Oxford '18**, BA History and Modern Languages
- **Rozey Hill, Wellesley College '23**, BA Africana Studies & American Studies

2024-25 Teaching Fellows

- **Yasmin Afifi, Wellesley College '22**, BA Computer Science and Cinema & Media Studies
- **Emma Ryan, University of Notre Dame '24**, BA Political Science and Global Affairs
- **Mimi Diaz-Salgado, Wellesley College '23**, BA Peace & Justice Studies and Latin American Studies
- **May Yuasa, Cornell University '24**, BA Civil Engineering
- **Katherine Cotzer, Davidson College '24**, BA History
- **James Scanlan, University of Bath**, Placement Student, Politics & International Relations
- **Hannah-Abigail Mosier, University of Wisconsin-Madison '24**, MA Southeast Asian Studies
- **Samantha Fisher, Yale University '24**, BA History
- **Li Platz, Williams College '24**, BA Environmental Studies
- **Afrah Chowdhury, University of Pennsylvania '24**, BA Physics
- **Olivia Moss, University of Bath**, Placement Student, Politics & International Relations
- **Anya Wintner, Wellesley College '24**, BA International Relations
- **Shireen Amna Waraich, Princeton University '24**, BA History
- **Audrey Kim, Smith College '24**, BA Statistical & Data Science
- **Nicolette Decker, Wellesley College '24**, BA English & Creative Writing
- **Emma Guenther, Earlham College '20**, BA Human Development & Social Relations and Spanish & Hispanic Studies
- **Shivank Singh, University of Cambridge '24**, LLM Master of Law
- **Afiya Rahman, Harvard University '24**, BA Social Studies

Testimonials from Teaching Fellows



“ When I applied to become a Teaching Fellow, I sought an opportunity to grow personally, undertake a socially impactful career, and become a part of something bigger than myself. All three of these wishes went beyond my wildest expectations... The students here are some of the most remarkable, talented, and dedicated people I have ever known, and they are, by far, the highlight of my job. Navigating the challenge of teaching in a foreign country is not easy, but it's a challenge well worth embracing. ”

PREETI CHEMITI

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY '23



“ While other teaching abroad opportunities may offer chances for travel or immersion, this fellowship is centered around the classroom and your role as an educator for an international student body. I have developed close relationships with my students, and I am dedicated to their success. This also means our classroom is a place of cultural exchange and dialogue that you cannot find elsewhere. ”

DOMENIC DE SANTES

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY '23





“ Being a Teaching Fellow at AUW has been a truly rewarding experience. I am constantly inspired by my students, who are enthusiastic, hardworking and resilient. I am grateful for the chance to contribute to their journeys. Living in Bangladesh has made me grow in many ways, and I will always cherish the friends I made here. ”

ASHIRA SHIRALI

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY '23



“ As a TF at AUW I have not only learnt about teaching and education more broadly, but I have also grown considerably as a person... I have found it to be an extremely rewarding experience where I can immerse myself in different aspects of the educational experience. This naturally includes the act of teaching directly in the classroom but also getting involved in extracurricular activities and engaging with students, staff and other faculty outside of class time. ”

RICHARD BENNET MORALES

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY '23

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY

- Complete the application on the AUW website
- Attach a copy of your transcript and resume
- Send to Hannah.Taylor@asian-university.org
- You will be contacted for an interview

The Teaching Fellows program is described fully on the AUW website, which has a link to the application: <https://asian-university.org/academic-programs/pre-undergraduate-programs/teaching-fellowship/>

QUESTIONS? Contact Hannah Taylor:
Hannah.Taylor@asian-university.org

EMPOWERING CHANGE:

AFGHANISTAN IN FOCUS



Since the fall of Kabul in August 2021, AUW has been at the forefront of providing educational opportunities and safe passage for Afghan women seeking refuge and a future free from oppression. One of our most profound accomplishments was the

successful evacuation of 148 Afghan students, a major step in our commitment to Afghan women's education. These women were safely relocated to the U.S., where they have continued their studies at various partner institutions including Arizona State University, Brown, and Cornell. Many have since progressed into advanced programs, embracing leadership roles within their respective fields, including international relations, public health, and education. Their stories are not just about survival; they are about determination, empowerment, and hope for Afghanistan's future.

Today, AUW hosts over 500 Afghan students, making it the single largest host of Afghan women students globally. Our student body includes a rich representation of Afghanistan's diverse ethnic groups, including Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras. Over the years, we have seen these students excel in academia, leadership, and community-building, demonstrating the extraordinary potential of Afghan women when provided with access to education.

Our recruitment efforts continue to grow, **with almost 20,000 applications received from aspiring Afghan students.** In response to this overwhelming demand, AUW has pledged to increase its Afghan student population to 1,000 in the coming years. Our fundraising campaigns, bolstered by international support and key partnerships, are vital to sustaining this mission. We are working towards securing more scholarships and resources, ensuring that Afghan women, regardless of their circumstances, can access a world-class education at a time when no such opportunity is offered to them in their own country.

Stories of Afghan Students

MAHDIA JAHANGIRI, AFGHANISTAN, ECONOMICS, CLASS OF 2026

Mahdia, an Economics major and UG2 student at AUW, is also pursuing a double minor in Finance and Computer Science. A passionate advocate for education and women's empowerment, she has taken on leadership roles that reflect her dedication to social impact and academic excellence.

As the UG2 Batch Representative in AUW Student Government, Mahdia has been a voice for her peers, ensuring their concerns are addressed. Her work extends beyond the university, she participated in UNLEASH Rwanda last year, where she pitched innovative solutions and advocated for Afghan girls' right to education. Through her relentless efforts, she successfully secured funding, expanded her network, and supported Afghan girls in securing scholarships to pursue higher education abroad.

Mahdia is the Head of the Scholarship Mentorship Program and Communication Officer at Flying Wings Online School, a transformative institution that has educated over 600 Afghan girls and refugees. In this role, she has guided countless young women toward academic success. Additionally, as the Founder of Aghaz Mentorship Program, she leads initiatives that have empowered over 100 mentees to learn coding and technology skills.

A trailblazer in education, mentorship, and social change, Mahdia's work is shaping a brighter future for Afghan youth.

“Education is more than just a right, it is the foundation of freedom. Every girl deserves the chance to rise, to dream, and to lead. I am here to make that possible.”

KHATIMA AFZALI, AFGHANISTAN, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY & ECONOMICS (PPE), CLASS OF 2020

Originally from Jaghori Ghazni, Khatima grew up in a large family with 10 siblings, where education was a deeply held value. Encouraged by her parents, she excelled academically, consistently achieving top grades while also immersing herself in extracurricular activities such as English and Quran studies, swimming, horse riding, and football. Determined to pursue higher education beyond Kabul, she applied to international programs and joined AUW in 2016, graduating with a degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE).

Now based in Pakistan, Khatima previously worked as a reporter at WAN-IFRA Women in News, an organization dedicated to closing the gender gap in journalism. However, her true passion lies in education and giving back to Afghan students and her alma mater. In 2022, she founded The Freedom School, a pioneering initiative in Quetta, Pakistan, that provides scholarships and academic support for Afghan refugees, women, and marginalized communities, including the Hazara. Under her leadership, the school has enrolled over 70 students and graduated two cohorts, helping them access pathways to higher education. Remarkably, seven Freedom School students are now pursuing degrees at AUW, with another 19 accepted with scholarships.

Through her work, Khatima continues to uphold AUW's mission, expanding educational opportunities for Afghan students and ensuring access to learning for those who need it most. Her dedication to education is driven by a deep sense of responsibility to create opportunities for others, just as she once received.

“Everyone has the potential of leadership because everyone can help.”





SHEKEBA AHMADI, AFGHANISTAN, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY AND ECONOMICS (PPE), CLASS OF 2018

Growing up as a refugee, Shekeba is a passionate advocate for women's political participation and agency in peacebuilding. To escape Taliban rule, Shekeba's family fled to Pakistan when she was just a few months old, returning to Afghanistan in 2011. Despite financial hardships, Shekeba managed to support her education by working part-time as an English teacher, graduating from high school in 2013.

The opportunity to attend university was a groundbreaking moment for Shekeba and her family. Upon hearing about AUW from a friend, she was excited about the chance to pursue higher education and connect with people from diverse backgrounds. As the first female in her family to achieve this milestone, she deeply values the transformative experiences she had at AUW.

“ *I found an amazing community at AUW, where I not only earned a degree but also learned to think beyond borders and work for a better world.”*

Graduating *Summa Cum Laude* in 2018 with a major in PPE, Shekeba returned to Afghanistan and worked in various roles, including as a Coordinator and Researcher for NGOs focused on women's rights and peacebuilding. She then served as a Civil Society Advisor and Development Cooperation Advisor for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in Kabul. In 2021, amidst political turmoil, Shekeba escaped to Helsinki, where she currently resides.

Now engaged in Afghanistan-focused initiatives with the Women in Peacemaking team at CMI, a foundation established by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, Shekeba continues her advocacy work. She was accepted into the Peace, Mediation, and Conflict Research program at Tampere University but has deferred her studies to focus on her role at CMI.

An active participant and organizer of forums and panel discussions on women in peace and gender equality, Shekeba's inspiring story is frequently featured in local media outlets.



PARISA FADAYEE, AFGHANISTAN, MA IN EDUCATION, CLASS OF 2024

Parisa Fadayee is a dedicated educator and advocate for refugee education, committed to improving learning opportunities for marginalized communities. A graduate of AUW's Master of Arts in Education program, she is part of a team of 16 AUW graduates—including 12 Afghan women—who are leading transformative training sessions in the Rohingya refugee camps as Trainers for the UNICEF-funded Upper Primary Teachers Training Program. This initiative, designed by AUW, aims to equip 1,200 educators with effective teaching methodologies, strengthening the quality of primary education for Rohingya children.

In the camps, Parisa works alongside her fellow AUW graduates to train master trainers, mentor teachers, and classroom educators, ensuring they have the pedagogical skills to foster inclusive and engaging learning environments. Her work directly supports AUW's mission to empower educators and expand access to quality education in crisis-affected regions.

Parisa holds a Master's degree in Finance and Banking Affairs from Kabul University and a Master of Arts in Education from AUW. During her time at AUW, she was actively involved in the AUW Community School, Roshini-e-Omid Online Platform, and the Workers' Learning Center, all initiatives aimed at expanding education beyond traditional classrooms. Through her efforts, Parisa continues to champion the power of education as a tool for empowerment and social change.



ALUMNAE RISING:

STORIES OF SUCCESS AND LEADERSHIP

Student success and graduate placements prove that the transformative power of AUW yields social returns well beyond the impact of one young woman. United in their drive for community service, together our graduates form an international network of leaders with the courage, skills and strategies needed for tackling challenges of discrimination, poverty, gender-based violence, climate change, inadequate healthcare, and access to education.

AUW's inaugural class graduated in 2013 and to date we have over 1600 alumni, many of whom were first in their family to go to university. Around 50% pursue further studies and place at top international institutions and many secure employment in the public, private and NGO sector.

Alumnae Snapshot

1699 Alumnae

12 Graduating Classes

670+ Master's Degrees

60+ PhDs

40+ in Government Roles

170+ in NGOs

180+ in Education Sector

40+ in UN Agencies Worldwide

INTERNATIONAL GRAD SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

- Arizona State University
- Brandeis University
- Central European University
- Columbia University
- Duke University
- Durham University
- Ewha Woman's University
- Goethe University
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Manchester University
- New York University
- Northeastern University
- Oxford University
- Stanford University
- Trento University
- University of Cambridge
- University of Oslo
- University of Sussex
- Vanderbilt University
- Wageningen University
- Wisconsin Medical College

SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENTS

- Aga Khan Development Network
- AIA
- Bhutan Ministry of Health
- Chevron
- Citibank
- Deloitte
- H&M
- L'Oréal
- Ralph Lauren
- Standard Chartered Bank
- The World Bank
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
- UN World Food Programme
- UNIQLO
- World Health Organization (WHO)



Graduate Profiles

ZYMA ISLAM, BANGLADESH, ASIAN STUDIES, CLASS OF 2013

Zyma's repertoire of work contains three common themes: the abuse of power, inequality and state-backed corruption. She specializes in rights violations by the state and law enforcement agencies, with a focus on torture, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and repressive legislation. She also investigates cross-border capital flight, illegal profiteering, white-collar crime, and how big companies collude with the state to deprive the disenfranchised. She believes in tangible impact and routinely compels the government, the judiciary and the state machinery to step up and take action based on her journalism. One of her biggest achievements in the past three years has been that her investigations on an oligarch and a former land minister in 2023 has led to cross-border money-laundering investigations between Singaporean and Bangladeshi financial regulatory authorities. Zyma has been interviewed by The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism of the University of Oxford, for her work documenting how the Bangladeshi law enforcement were shooting to kill during the July-August uprising. Zyma's work has been picked four times in The Global Investigative Journalism Network's top 10 "Best Investigative Stories" in her region, and once globally. She is the winner of the 2024 Transparency International Bangladesh Investigative Journalism Award.



ARUMUGHAM SHIVALAXMI, INDIA, COMPUTER SCIENCE, CLASS OF 2013

After studying Computer Science at AUW, Armugham found her passion in researching cyber crimes against women and girls and prison rehabilitation. She currently works as an Assistant Professor of Criminology at Rashtriya Raksha University in India. In 2024 she had an article published in the Indian Police Journal—the flagship journal of the Bureau of Police Research and Development. Her piece, titled, "Policing CyberSpace to Prevent Online Child Sexual Exploitation Materials," delves into the various investigation techniques employed and the challenges encountered by law enforcement agencies worldwide in combating the often-overlooked issue of child sexual abuse.



RIMU BYADYA, BANGLADESH, PUBLIC HEALTH, CLASS OF 2014

Rimu Byadya has made significant strides in global health and humanitarian work. With a master's degree in International Health and Tropical Medicine from the University of Oxford, Rimu serves as a Technical Officer at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva. She is also part of WHO's Young Professionals Program, a prestigious initiative nurturing future leaders in global health. Rimu has held impactful roles at WHO and the World Food Programme, working in Geneva, Cairo, and Ukraine, focusing on public health and humanitarian response.





**PRIYA NAGARAJAH, SRI LANKA, POLITICS,
PHILOSOPHY & ECONOMICS, CLASS OF 2014**

Priya Nagarajah, a 2014 graduate with a degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE), has built a distinguished career in diplomacy. As an IKEA Scholar at AUW, she actively participated in the Public Speaking and Environmentalism in Action clubs. After graduating from AUW, she attended the University of Trento and completed her Masters in European and International Studies. Priya's diplomatic journey includes roles for the Sri Lankan Embassy where she has served in Italy and Turkey. She now serves as the Assistant Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.



**SAVITRI PRASAD, INDIA, ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENCE, CLASS OF 2015**

Savitri is from Chakan, India, where she and her two sisters were raised by parents who championed the importance of education – not the norm in her community. Their support and encouragement fostered an ambition within Savitri that carried her to AUW and beyond.

While at AUW, Savitri majored in Environmental Science and minored in Mathematics while also taking full advantage of the liberal arts curriculum, enjoying classes like History of Art and Culture and Women in Indian Cinema that broadened her cultural horizons. After graduation, Savitri served as a Junior Fellow at AUW before going on to receive her master's from Oxford University in Environmental Change Management, an achievement she says would not have been possible without her the support of her AUW professors.



After her time at Oxford, Savitri traveled the world, interning in Seattle and Hong Kong before returning to India where she now works as a member of the Government of Jharkhand as a Deputy Collector. Long-term, she aspires to work at the national level, and she is already making progress—currently overseeing a project to improve living conditions across a block of 40 villages. AUW taught Savitri to dream big, to dream the impossible. She calls herself “a prime example of the power of dreams and the support systems of her family and the AUW community.”

**MURSAL JUYA, AFGHANISTAN, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY
AND ECONOMICS (PPE), CLASS OF 2016**

Mursal Juya is a Senior Integration Officer at the International Rescue Committee UK, leading the integration support for the Refugee Employability Programme. Passionate about tackling social exclusion, she focuses on delivering impactful support to help refugees build stable futures.

After AUW, she returned to Kabul, There, she worked as a fellow in the Information and Public Relations department at the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics, followed by a role as Program Coordinator at the Norwegian Refugee Council. In 2018 she moved to the UK and earned a First Class Master's in International Social Policy from the University of Nottingham. Mursal's personal journey as a refugee drives her dedication to helping marginalized populations, particularly refugees and vulnerable groups. She is the first in her family to study abroad, embodying AUW's values of education and social impact.

LAILA KIRAN, PAKISTAN, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY & ECONOMICS, CLASS OF 2017

Laila was recruited by AUW from the remote Gilgit cultural area of Pakistan. She is the founder of Reality Beyond Dreams, a production house dedicated to leveraging the power of storytelling for positive change. Specifically, she is passionate about issues relating to climate change, entrepreneurship, sustainable businesses, and women's and children's rights. Her team has worked with renowned organizations including the World Bank, Punjab Police, and the Rupani Foundation. For her work, Leila has received the **Girls Impact the World** film award and the UNDP's International Mountains Day film award.

Laila has been interviewed by DW on the challenges she faced as a young female filmmaker in Pakistan's male-dominated film industry which can be found on YouTube.



NEHA GAUCHAN, NEPAL, PUBLIC HEALTH, CLASS OF 2018

Neha (she/they) is an indigenous feminist, art activist, and expert in human rights and digital rights. With a Master of Arts in Human Rights and Democratization, their work focuses on the intersections of digital rights and marginalized communities. Neha combines research, writing, and workshop facilitation to address issues around queer rights, indigeneity, and intersectionality. Inspired by queer feminism, Neha believes in narrative practices that center communities and challenge oppressive systems. Currently, Neha works in Nepal as Project Manager at Udeshya Girls in STEM and an artist at Chyoki Studio, while continuing their advocacy work across sectors.



TASHFIHA NUSRAT RUHI, BANGLADESH, PUBLIC HEALTH, CLASS OF 2020

Tashfiha Nusrat Ruhi is a Chevening Scholar and an emerging leader in public health, specializing in the intersection of gender and climate change. With an MSc in Public Health (Environment & Health) from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Tashfiha has a diverse portfolio spanning NGO work and academia, focusing on environmental health impacts, project management, and both quantitative and qualitative research. Her passion lies in developing climate-adaptive, women-centric solutions for global health challenges.



CHORONAI LEANG, CAMBODIA, ECONOMICS, CLASS OF 2019

Choronai Leang, AUW Class of 2019, earned her Master's in Finance and Investment from the University of Bristol in 2023. After gaining experience at Profitence as an Investment Analyst and later Lead Investment Analyst, she now works as an Investment Analyst at Nexus for Development in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Passionate about supporting SMEs, Choronai's goal is to continue empowering businesses through strategic planning and investment readiness, with long-term plans to launch her own consultancy firm aimed at fostering young professionals, particularly women, in the Cambodian market.



PIONEERING PHD RESEARCH:

AUW AND THE KNOWLEDGE FRONTIER



A PhD stems from making an original contribution to a field of study, coming up with new knowledge and principles that have yet to be explored. With 60 of our AUW alumnae currently pursuing, or having already completed doctoral degrees, our graduates are at the

forefront of a new knowledge frontier. These PhD candidates are proof that the university is successfully building a pipeline of regional talent that are eagerly contributing to the knowledge economy and using their own lived experiences to direct new fields of study in vital areas such as environmental sustainability, cancer biology, epidemiology, global economics, international relations and education.

PhD Fields Include*:

- Applied Statistics
- Biology
- Climate Change
- Computer Science & Engineering
- Earth Science
- EdTech
- Education
- Epidemiology
- Family Health
- Hydro Meteorology
- International Relations
- Political Science
- Public Policy & Administration
- Water Quality & Waste Management

* This is not a comprehensive list

Geographic Distribution of PhD Studies

North America	36
Europe	15
Asia	8
Australia	3
TOTAL	62

GRADUATE PHD PROFILES BY SUBJECT

Environment & Sustainability

DR. ELACKIYA SITHAMPARANATHAN, SRI LANKA, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, AUW CLASS OF 2013

Elackiya joined AUW for its inaugural year in 2008, where her lifelong love of nature led her to pursue a degree in Environmental Science. Upon graduation, she earned a scholarship for her master's program at Wageningen University in the Netherlands in Environmental Technology. Her thesis investigated the impacts of oil spills on aquatic ecosystems and found chemical and biological remediation methods to decontaminate the ocean. So impressed with her work, Elackiya's supervisor asked her to return for her doctorate, which she completed in the summer of 2023.

Her doctoral research focused on developing a "nature-based technology that can be applied in urban environments to treat wastewater." So far, her technology has demonstrated high treatment efficiency on the laboratory scale, meaning the next step is bringing the technology to market. She is currently working on a patent application and developing an entrepreneurial plan with support from the Netherlands government and her University. The implications of this technology could revolutionize wastewater treatment in densely populated urban areas around the world.

NIMISHA KRISHNANKUTTY, INDIA, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, AUW CLASS OF 2013

Nimisha attained her MTech in Environmental Science at the National University of Malaysia where she researched the speciation and spatial variations of heavy metals released from mining sites in Lake Chini, Malaysia. Shortly afterwards she moved to Denmark and is currently a PhD Fellow in the Department of Agroecology—Soil Physics and Hydropedology at Aarhus University, her research focuses on phosphorus transport in rewetted lowlands.

“My PhD focuses on phosphorus transport in rewetted lowlands and the identification of the critical hydrological and geochemical processes driving it. My research contributes to the urgent task of identifying suitable areas for rewetting, as well as pinpointing hotspots where critical phosphorus release must be mitigated before rewetting. **”**

NAZIFA RAFA, BANGLADESH, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, AUW CLASS OF 2021

Nazifa graduated from AUW *summa cum laude* receiving the Andy Matsui Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement. Her exemplary performance landed her a fully funded scholarship to pursue an MPhil in Environmental Policy from the University of Cambridge which she completed in 2022. She is now on a fully funded PhD studentship at Cambridge with full support for her tuition fees and living expenses.

Her current PhD project at the Department of Geography examines the complex interactions between host states and refugee communities, specifically looking at how these dynamics affect disaster risk reduction and response strategies, using Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh as a case study.

Nazifa has recently been awarded with the Vice Chancellor's Social Impact PhD Award, which is given to those who not only pursue excellence in their research but also seek to implement ambitious engagement and impact plans.



Life Sciences



PRIYANKA SHRESTHA, NEPAL, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, AUW CLASS OF 2015

Priyanka, a self-described 'Global Health Enthusiast' from eastern Nepal, graduated from AUW in 2015 and earned her MSc in Control of Infectious Diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) in 2017. After her master's degree, she assisted in multiple projects at the International Diagnostics Centre at LSHTM, researching diagnostics quality and policy importance for public health emergencies, one health, and antimicrobial resistance. Besides research, she has also served in project management and capacity building roles at the World Health Organization to advance social innovations in health in low- and middle-income countries.



Currently pursuing a PhD in Implementation Science at the University of Washington, Priyanka is driven by a passion for addressing health inequities. She was awarded an MPOWER Scholarship and School of Public Health Endowed Fellowship. Priyanka also works part-time as a Graduate Research Assistant at Global Center for Integrated Health of Women, Adolescents, and Children (Global WACH), where she leads qualitative research for a program connecting pregnant women with community health volunteers through SMS. Her work involves data management, coding, and analysis, all aimed at improving healthcare access for underserved communities.



DR. ABHISHA SAWANT DESSAI, INDIA, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, AUW CLASS OF 2016

Abhisha is a Postdoctoral Researcher in Dr. Shelley Berger's Lab at the University of Pennsylvania. After graduating from AUW, she earned her PhD in Cancer Sciences from the University of Buffalo in 2023. Her thesis explored how mitochondria and the nucleus interact to drive cancer development. She then completed a year-long Postdoctoral Fellowship at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, focusing on nuclear metabolic pathways and their role in chromatin accessibility.

Social Science

TSSHERING EUDON, BHUTAN, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY AND ECONOMICS, AUW CLASS OF 2014

At AUW, the opportunity to live with people from different backgrounds and the introduction to subjects like literature, humanities, and social sciences caught her interest. After becoming curious about world issues, Tshering made a bold decision to switch from technical sciences to majoring in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE). Coming from a small country in the Himalayas, she wants to contribute to research in underrepresented and under-explored areas of small states and ultimately contribute to effective foreign and domestic policies, to "represent the voiceless, the vulnerable and the victimized."

After AUW, she traveled to Korea to complete her Masters in Global Affairs & Policy, International Security & Foreign Policy at Yonsei University. Tshering was then accepted to City University of Hong Kong where she is currently completing her PhD in Public and International Affairs. Her focus areas include unequal powers in international relations, poverty alleviation, gender equality, and social injustice, she explains that these are the values and principles that she developed at AUW due to the people she met and the courses she studied.

MOUMITA SEN GUPTA, BANGLADESH, ECONOMICS, AUW CLASS OF 2018

Graduating from AUW with a major in Economics, Moumita pursued her master's degree in International Business at Aalborg University in Denmark. She was later awarded a fully funded PhD research fellowship at the same university. Her research focuses on partnership management between small and large firms, aiming to support the growth and survival of small businesses in an increasingly competitive global market.

TRAM PHAM, VIETNAM, CLASS OF 2015, MAJOR IN ECONOMICS

Originally from Gia Kiem, Thong Nhat, Dong Nai, Viet Nam, Tram graduated *Summa Cum Laude* with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics in 2015. She is pursuing her Ph.D. in Economics at Uppsala University, with a semester spent at Harvard University. Tram's research, which explores the effects of working conditions on workers' mental health, is particularly timely given the growing importance of mental health in the workplace.

“ At AUW, I discovered that my own beliefs are merely stepping stones, not barriers. There, I learned to embrace openness, celebrate differences, and ignite the fire of self-belief within me. AUW is not just a place of education; it's a sanctuary where limitations dissolve, and the boundless potential of every individual shines through. Both women and men should have opportunities to pursue their passions, unrestricted by gender norms. Every field should resonate with this ethos of inclusivity and empowerment!”

ABIRAMY SIVALOGANANTHAN, SRI LANKA, ASIAN STUDIES, AUW CLASS OF 2014

Abiramy is a passionate advocate for human rights and transitional justice, currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Transitional Justice at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. “My academic journey is deeply rooted in my commitment to addressing social injustices, particularly in conflict-affected regions.” With a Master's in Human Rights from the same institution and a Bachelor's from the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh, she has a strong foundation in legal frameworks and global perspectives.

Her work focuses on marginalized communities in Sri Lanka, including war-affected children, families of the disappeared, and war widows. She also advocates for fair labor practices in the garment supply chain across Asia, reflecting her adaptability in addressing diverse human rights issues.

Abiramy is the South Asia Regional Coordinator at Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA). She drives cross-border solidarity, negotiates binding agreements with brands, and influences global labor policies to challenge exploitative supply chain practices. Committed to worker-led advocacy, Abiramy strengthens grassroots movements, ensuring garment workers have a powerful voice in shaping a just and equitable industry.



CHARTING THE PATH FORWARD:

GOALS AND STRATEGIC VISION

Since its foundation in 2008, AUW has striven to develop itself as a liberal arts institution that is:

- Designed to meet the needs of young women in Bangladesh and elsewhere in Asia and to prepare them for worthwhile careers in which they can aspire to leadership positions.
- Open to young women from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.
- Rooted in the intellectual traditions of Asia, while recognising the need to reimagine those traditions for the contemporary world.
- Capable of developing graduates able to participate fully in civil society at a local and global level.
- Ethically grounded.

This model of education has done good service in guiding the activity of AUW over the last fifteen years. In all, as of September 2024, more than 1600 students have graduated from many different countries and from a wide range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds who have achieved great academic and professional success. Reports from employers and others suggest that an AUW graduate is distinguished by her willingness to take intellectual risks, her commitment to tackling urgent social and economic issues and her preparedness for leadership responsibility.

IN THE NEXT FIVE TO TEN YEARS, AUW COMMITS ITSELF TO:

Growing student enrollment to 2,500 by 2028 and 3,000 by 2033: In line with AUW's vision of empowering women from underserved regions, this growth reflects the university's commitment to offering a transformative education to an increasing number of students, while ensuring adequate infrastructure and support.

Refining the Core Curriculum: A rigorous, interdisciplinary foundation is key to producing well-rounded graduates. By continually evaluating the Core program, AUW aims to stay aligned with global educational trends and meet the evolving needs of its students.

Enhancing Mental Health Support: AUW will expand counseling services and trauma-informed care to support students from conflict-affected regions, ensuring their well-being and academic success.

Evolving Majors to Meet Emerging Demands:

As the job market and societal needs evolve, AUW is committed to offering relevant and in-demand programs that equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel.

Boosting STEM for Future-Ready Graduates: AUW acknowledges the global shift towards STEM-driven industries and the critical role these fields play in addressing global challenges, from healthcare to climate change. STEM graduates will be well-positioned to contribute to these advancements.

Expanding Social Sciences with a Focus on Development Studies: Development Studies is central to addressing inequality, governance, and sustainable development—issues that resonate with AUW's mission of empowering women from regions affected by conflict and socio-economic barriers.

Elevating Humanities through New Investments: The humanities offer essential perspectives on culture, ethics, and history. With support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, AUW will enhance its humanities offerings, nurturing critical thinking and cultural understanding.

Mastering Exit Competencies: Ensuring that graduates possess key competencies—critical thinking, leadership, communication, and professional skills—prepares them to thrive in both local and global contexts, contributing meaningfully to their communities and industries.

Launching a Graduate School for Advanced Learning: A Graduate School will enhance academic rigor and provide students with advanced skills to tackle complex challenges in their home countries, empowering them to drive social and economic progress.

Supercharging IT for Academic Excellence: In a rapidly digitalizing world, robust IT systems are fundamental for delivering quality education and research. AUW recognizes the need to invest in state-of-the-art technology to support its growing academic community.

Elevating Teaching Standards: AUW is committed to maintaining high teaching standards by fostering a culture of innovation in pedagogy and ongoing faculty development, ensuring that students receive a world-class education.

Widening Access to Liberal Arts Education:

Diversity enriches the learning environment. AUW will continue to attract students from across Asia and beyond, providing opportunities to those who might otherwise lack access to quality education.

Building a Global Alumnae Network: AUW alumnae are poised to become change-makers. By fostering connections among its graduates, AUW aims to create a powerful, interconnected network of leaders who can collaborate on solving pressing global issues.

Igniting Entrepreneurship & Employability: By equipping students with entrepreneurial skills and providing them with resources to launch their own ventures, AUW aims to foster innovation, self-reliance, and economic empowerment among its graduates.

Enhancing Student Life for Holistic Growth:

AUW understands that a fulfilling student experience goes beyond academics. By enhancing student services, residential life, and extracurricular activities, AUW ensures a holistic development experience for all students.

Completing the Permanent Campus: A permanent campus will provide state-of-the-art facilities to accommodate the university's growing population, while creating an inspiring learning environment that fosters collaboration and innovation.

Enhancing Learning Resources: To ensure students have access to the latest knowledge, AUW will continue to improve its library, digital tools, and research facilities, offering students the resources they need to thrive academically.

Fueling Research Excellence: Research is crucial to innovation and progress. AUW will increase support for both group and individual research projects, cultivating a culture of inquiry and knowledge creation.

Deepening Community Engagement: Community engagement is at the heart of AUW's mission. By collaborating with stakeholders at all levels, AUW seeks to conduct research, influence policy, share knowledge, and foster development both within its immediate surroundings and in the wider world.

BUILDING FOR TOMORROW:

AUW CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION



Following the enactment of the AUW Charter by the Parliament of Bangladesh in 2006, renowned architect Moshe Safdie was commissioned to create a master plan for AUW's permanent campus. This 140-acre site, a generous grant from the Government of Bangladesh, is situated in the picturesque, hilly outskirts of Chittagong. Safdie's master plan envisioned a fully residential university designed to support the education of 3,000 students. He and his firm were later commissioned to design the first major academic building, the Campus Center. Construction of the Campus Center commenced only after AUW secured full funding in 2022 with thanks to financial support from Fast Retailing Foundation and a loan from The World Bank. This state-of-the-art facility, scheduled for completion in 2026, will house classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, and administrative spaces, providing an advanced academic environment for all students.

As AUW's reach expanded, so did the demand for its transformative education, making the need for a larger campus increasingly pressing. AUW then enlisted Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano to revise the master plan. His vision will accommodate 6,000 students and offer an expanded range of amenities, including a world-class performing arts center with full orchestral capacity for 800 attendees.

In preparation for these revisions, additional topographic and geotechnical studies are being conducted under the guidance of the international engineering firm Arup. Upon completion of these studies, the updated master plan will be finalized, followed by detailed designs and construction for each major building and facility.

Renzo Piano envisions AUW as a "university in the middle of a forest," with extensive tree planting along the campus perimeter to further this vision of sustainability. Over 50,000 trees have already been planted, and these efforts will continue to transform the landscape.

Spanning approximately five kilometers, the AUW campus requires careful attention to security. A comprehensive safety and security study has been commissioned to design an appropriate boundary for this vast and secluded space.

This campus is poised to offer not only world-class educational facilities but also a secure, serene, and harmonious environment where young women from diverse backgrounds will come together to learn and grow. Though the journey has been long and there is still much ahead, the promise of what we set out to achieve remains as inspiring as ever. Our guiding principle remains unwavering: the most marginalized and neglected in society deserve the very best we have to offer.

We remain deeply grateful to Moshe Safdie and Renzo Piano—two of the world's most renowned architects—for lending their talents to this transformative endeavor, alongside the many others who have supported this vision.

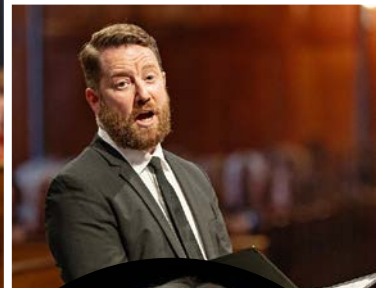


DANISH SUPPORT FOR AUW:

THE LONE DYBKJÆR FOUNDATION



Asian University for Women (AUW) has been profoundly enriched by the steadfast support of the Danish community, led by the Lone Dybkjær Foundation. Established in 2022 by Lone Dybkjær's husband, former Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, and Jeppe Christiansen, CEO of Maj Invest, the foundation champions gender equality and development by providing scholarships to women from marginalized communities across Asia and the Middle East. Anchored in Nordic values of democracy, education, and transparency, the foundation embodies a commitment to global progress.



In 2024, AUW proudly named Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Denmark's first female Prime Minister, as one of its distinguished patrons. Her involvement amplifies AUW's global visibility and strengthens Denmark's partnership with the university. In 2023 and 2024 Lone Dybkjær Foundation hosted an event in Holmens church, bringing together over 700 people to champion the cause of women's education sharing the importance of investing in higher education and health care.

Expanding its impact, the foundation has facilitated collaborations between AUW and Danish universities and companies, addressing the demand for local, well-educated talent in Asia. One standout partnership is with Novo Nordisk, whose scholarship program empowers Public Health students to become trailblazers in health sciences. Also, A.P. Møller Mærsk has contributed substantially to our work funding scholarships.

In January 2025, Denmark and AUW formalized a new climate leadership project to develop young women as climate frontrunners. This four-year partnership, led by H.E. Mr. Christian Brix Møller, Danish Ambassador to Bangladesh, will equip students with education and training in climate science, environmental engineering, and leadership. A portion of the funds will launch AUW's first Bachelor of Science program in Environmental Engineering, guided by Professor Evina Katsou from Imperial College London. This initiative reflects the shared vision of fostering climate resilience and sustainability while creating pathways for scholarships, internships, and employment.

The legacy of Lone Dybkjær, a co-founder of AUW, continues to inspire AUW's journey. Her vision of equal access to education as a pathway to societal development is realized through the foundation's efforts and Denmark's ongoing support. These initiatives not only solidify AUW's foundation but also set the stage for expanding collaborations across Europe.



STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP:

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Board of Trustees

- **Jack Meyer (USA)**, Chairman of AUW Support Foundation; Former Co-Founder of Convexity and Former President of Harvard Management Company; *Acting Chair of AUW Board of Trustees*
- **Meheriar Hasan (Bangladesh/USA)**, Chairman, BRAC Bank Limited; *Treasurer of AUW Board of Trustees*
- **Kamal Ahmad (Bangladesh/USA)**, Founder, Asian University for Women
- **Lynne Anne Davis**, Former President & Senior Partner, FleishmanHillard Asia Pacific
- **Tim DeVoogd (USA)**, Professor, Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell University
- **Tim Ibell (United Kingdom)**, Professor, Engineering & Design, University of Bath
- **Eun Mee Kim (South Korea)**, Former President, Ewha Womans University
- **Colin Koop (USA)**, Partner, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
- **Richard Miller (USA)**, President Emeritus, Olin College of Engineering
- **Adeline Pang (Australia)**, Partner, White & Case
- **Bryan Penprase (USA)**, Vice President for Sponsored Research and External Academic Relations, Soka University of America
- **Firdausi Qadri (Bangladesh)**, Senior Scientist and Director of the Center for Vaccine Science at ICDDR, B
- **Alpna Seth (USA)**, Former COO, Vir Biotechnology & Former Senior VP of Biogen
- **Vijay Subramanyam (USA) Principal**, Advisory, KPMG LLP
- **Meredith Woo (USA)**, Former President of Sweet Brair College
- **Rae Eun Sung**, President and CEO, Youngone Holdings Co Ltd



AUW Support Foundation

US BOARD

- **Jack Meyer**, Chairman, Board of Directors of AUW Support Foundation; Former President of Harvard Management Company; Former Senior Partner of Convexity Capital
- **Paul Ciampa**, Treasurer, Board of Directors of AUW Support Foundation; Former Partner and Senior Portfolio Manager at Convexity Capital
- **Kamal Ahmad**, President & CEO, AUW Support Foundation
- **Natalie Ackerman**, Chief People Officer, Jack Morton Worldwide
- **Lynne Anne Davis**, Former President & Senior Partner, FleishmanHillard Asia Pacific
- **Thom Lockerby**, Secretary of the Academy at Philips Academy, Andover
- **Kathy Matsui**, General Partner, MPower
- **Miwa Seki**, General Partner, MPower
- **Tina Tchen**, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy and Impact Officer, Obama Foundation; former Chief of Staff to US First Lady Michelle Obama

UK BOARD

- **David Taylor**, Chairman
- **Towfika Sultana**, AUW Class of 2016
- **Aurona Sarker**, AUW Class of 2019
- **Tajkiya Ahmad**, AUW Class of 2019
- **Paul Hebditch**, Treasurer; Former Accountant at EY
- **Daisy Nicholas**, Secretary; Assistant Director at AUW Support Foundation

HONG KONG BOARD

- **Rebecca Ip**, Chair
- **Eva Yu**, Vice Chair; President & Managing Director, L'Oréal Hong Kong
- **Hong Tran**, Secretary; Partner, Johnson Stokes & Master
- **Janice Wong**, Treasurer
- **Caroline Chiu**, Partner, Ernst & Young, listed under Janice Wong
- **Richard Folsom**, Co-Founder, Representative Partner, Advantage Partners
- **Marc Desmidt**, Head of Asia Pacific, Point72

DENMARK – LONE DYBKJÆR FOUNDATION

- **Poul Nyrup Rasmussen**, Chairman; Former Prime Minister of Denmark
- **Pui Ling Lau**, Deputy Chairman
- **Jeppe Christiansen**
- **Karsten Dybvad**, former Managing Director of DI and Chairman of Danske Bank
- **Søren Sass**, Chief Advisor at Finans Danmark

JAPANESE SUPPORT GROUP

- **Kathy Matsui**, General Partner, MPower
- **Miwa Seki**, General Partner, MPower
- **Catherine Sasanuma**, Entrepreneur
- **Ali Buford**, Entrepreneur

COUNCIL OF PATRONS

- **Emma Bonino**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy
- **Laura Bush**, Former First Lady, USA
- **Anson Chan**, Former Chief Secretary, Hong Kong SAR
- **Lone Dybkjaer (Deceased)**, Former Minister of Environment, Denmark
- **Helle Thorning-Schmidt**, Former Prime Minister, Denmark

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP:

TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY



At AUW, transparency, accountability, and ethical governance are foundational to our mission. We are committed to upholding the highest standards in financial management, institutional policies, and academic integrity to foster a fair and equitable environment for all members of our community.

AUW has implemented robust mechanisms to ensure openness and accountability. Our anonymous complaint portal allows individuals to report concerns related to financial misconduct, policy irregularities, or any other administrative dysfunctions. We encourage members of the AUW community and the public to use this platform to help us improve our operations.

Additionally, AUW upholds a Statement of Integrity that reinforces ethical management practices across all areas, including campus construction, employment policies, and financial transparency. We are committed to ensuring a safe and respectful work environment, promoting gender equality, and preventing corruption or mismanagement. Any concerns can be confidentially reported to designated Ombudspersons or the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, with all cases independently reviewed and appropriately addressed.

By embedding these principles into our institutional framework, AUW remains steadfast in its commitment to ethical leadership, fostering a culture of trust and accountability within our university and beyond.

COMPLAINT PORTAL

<https://apps.auw.edu.bd/erp/auw/r/auw-erp/anonymous-complaint>



FY24 Financials

In Fiscal Year 2024, Asian University for Women enrolled over 1,600 students while keeping program and administrative expenses under \$12 million, ensuring quality education for women across Asia and the Middle East. Scholarships remain vital, making higher education accessible to those who need it most. Below is a breakdown of revenues and expenses.

Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets

2024

2023

REVENUES

Contributions and grants	\$ 6,822,889	\$ 7,705,417
Donated services	2,711,000	8,728,557
Interest and dividend income	1,760,042	1,145,526
Miscellaneous income	6,469	3,204
Foreign Exchange gain (Loss)	(59,600)	(107,179)
Unfulfilled Pledge Write-off	(20,000)	(20,000)
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT	\$ 11,220,800	\$ 17,455,525

EXPENSES

Program Services		
Grants to AUW	\$ 10,382,276	\$ 16,120,143
Total Program Services	10,382,276	16,120,143
Supporting Services		
Management and general	572,831	508,709
Fundraising	771,866	649,628
Total Supporting Services	1,344,697	1,158,337
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 11,726,973	\$ 17,278,480

NET ASSETS

Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 30,455,488	\$ 30,278,443
Increase (decrease) in net assets	(506,173)	177,045
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$ 29,949,315	\$ 30,455,488

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,377,519	\$ 352,031
Unconditional promises to give	1,702,278	3,812,120
Other assets	28,043,253	26,683,277
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 31,123,050	\$ 30,847,428

The amount raised does not reflect donations made directly to the University or to other AUW Support Groups which was approximately \$2.3 million in FY24.

AUWSF makes its past audited financial statements publically available here, under the "Finances" tab: <http://asian-university.org/whoweare/>

AUW'S COMMITMENT TO DALIT WOMEN



AUW has made a bold commitment to educate 600 Dalit women from across India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, offering full scholarships to talented students who have been systematically denied access to higher education, economic opportunities,

and basic human rights. This initiative is a direct response to the entrenched caste-based discrimination that has kept generations of Dalit women from realizing their full potential.

Reflecting on the ongoing struggles of Dalit communities, AUW's founder Kamal Ahmad describes the profound injustices they continue to endure:

“Mahatma Gandhi called Dalits Harijans, ‘Children of God’; governments in an equally Orwellian twist refer to them as belonging to ‘Scheduled Castes.’ They may well be children of god as well as appear on some officially proclaimed schedules, but what is not told as clearly is how an entire segment of the population, perhaps numbering as many as 250 million souls, remains shackled in oppression decades after their presumed emancipation. Instead, they have toiled as bonded laborers in cleaning other people's excreta, banished to live in apartheid colonies, suffered the depravity of unmitigated violence with little recourse to the law, and been reduced to mere shadows in our modern existence.”

AUW acknowledges that true transformation for Dalit women requires more than just education—it demands a shift in opportunity, influence, and representation. By placing Dalit students in positions of academic and professional excellence, AUW is not only investing in individual potential but also reshaping access to leadership, innovation, and policymaking across South Asia.

SHANTA YADAV: FROM A TEA ESTATE TO HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

One of AUW's remarkable graduates, Shanta Yadav, is proof of the power of this initiative. Born and raised in Lungla Tea Estate, Sylhet, she grew up in a community where education, healthcare, and mobility were limited.

“ AUW has helped us overcome numerous challenges by offering an incredible opportunity for high-quality education. I was fortunate to receive a fully funded scholarship, which not only allowed me to study but also helped me acquire essential skills and confidence. ”

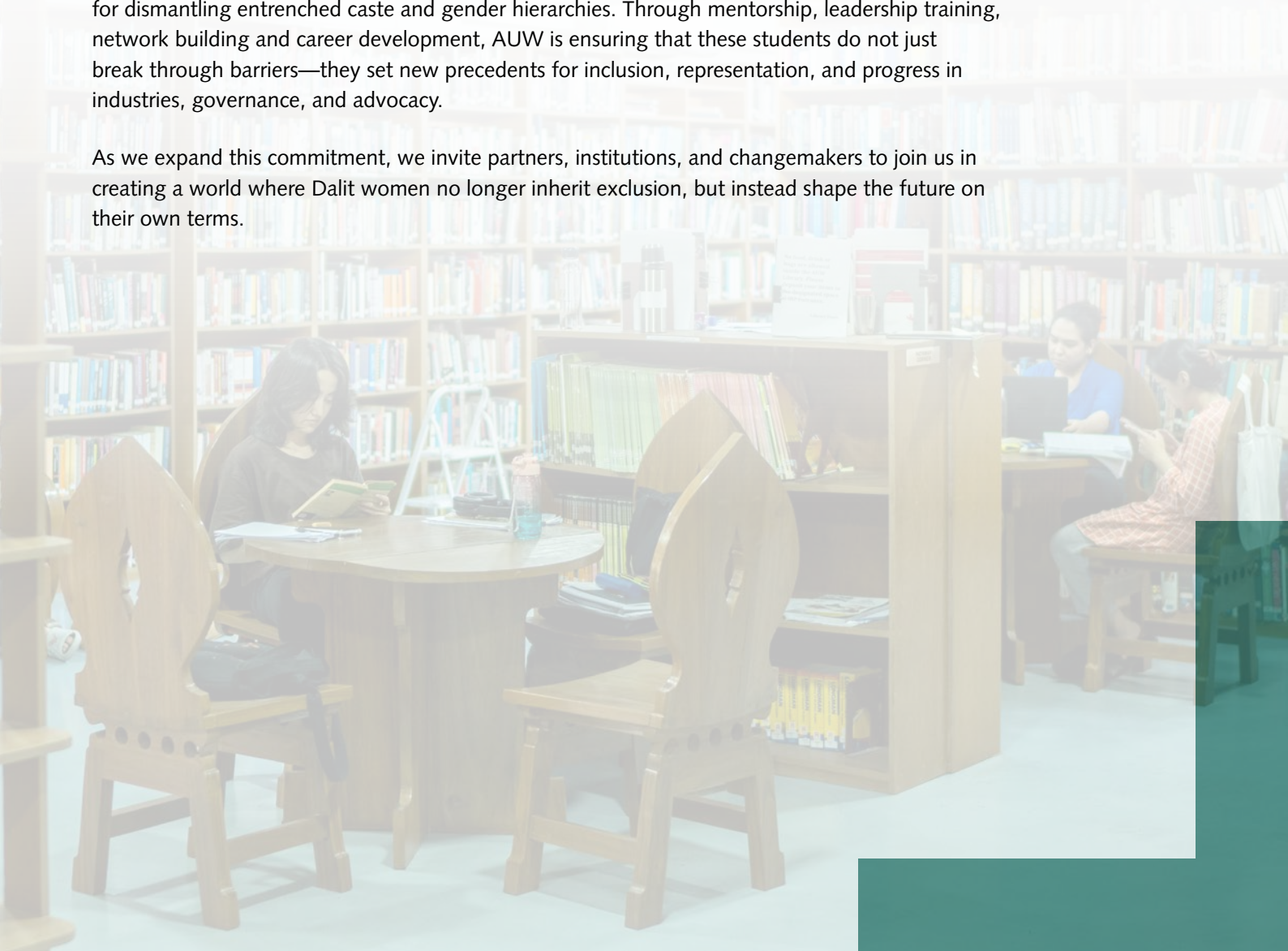
After graduating from AUW in May 2024, Shanta accepted an offer from Harvard Medical School's Master of Medical Sciences in Global Health Delivery (MMSc-GHD) program which she will start in the Fall of 2025. Her journey from a tea estate in Sylhet to one of the world's most prestigious medical institutions demonstrates the transformative power of education when barriers are removed.



Redefining What's Possible

AUW's initiative to educate 600 Dalit women is more than a scholarship program—it is a blueprint for dismantling entrenched caste and gender hierarchies. Through mentorship, leadership training, network building and career development, AUW is ensuring that these students do not just break through barriers—they set new precedents for inclusion, representation, and progress in industries, governance, and advocacy.

As we expand this commitment, we invite partners, institutions, and changemakers to join us in creating a world where Dalit women no longer inherit exclusion, but instead shape the future on their own terms.





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