



# Engaging Afghan Refugee Families: Learning from the Experts

Session 2 | February 7, 2024



# Welcome!



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# Welcome!



Parisa Khoshnood (She/Her)  
Youth Education Program Manager, HIAS PA



Parvin Hashemi (She/Her)  
Youth Education Case Manager, HIAS PA



# HIAS Pennsylvania Background

- Refugee resettlement and legal services agency
- Supporting refugees since 1880s
- Now, provide legal and social services to immigrants of all backgrounds





## Who does HIAS PA serve?

- **Refugee:** Persecuted in their country of origin due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion
- **Immigrant:** Willingly leaves country of origin to settle in another
- **Asylee/Asylum Seeker:** Leaves country of origin without applying for a status pre-arrival - requires petitioning to remain in the new country post-arrival
- **Afghan Humanitarian Parolees:** Allows for temporary admission into the United States due to urgent humanitarian reasons



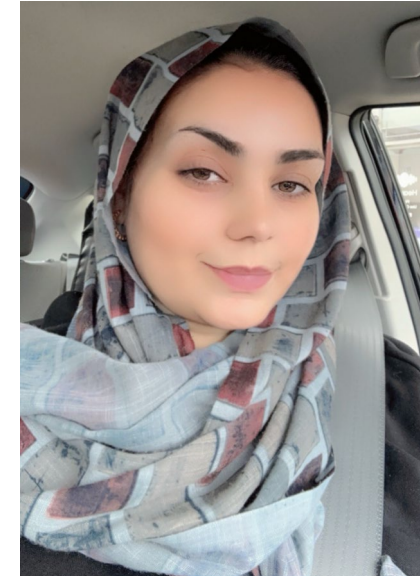
# Welcome!



Karima Saddiq



Sakina Barbari



Elham Aminy



# Group Commitments

1. Be present and participate as much as you are able.
2. Respect the diverse experiences and opinions of others.



# Session Objective

Through this session, participants will:

1. Further their knowledge about equitable and culturally relevant strategies to engage Afghan refugee families.





# Agenda

1. Icebreaker
2. Quick Review of Session 1
3. Learn from Parent Panelists
4. Learn from HIAS PA
5. Closing



## In the chat, please share...

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role
- Location
- Something you did in the past week to engage refugee families



# Quick Review of Session 1





# Why is family engagement critical to supporting student and family success?

- Higher grades, test scores, and enroll in advanced courses.
- Attend school more regularly.
- Have better social skills and improved behavioral outcomes.
- Be promoted to the next grade, graduate, and go onto post-secondary school.
- Improved parent-teacher relationships and teacher-student relationships.
- Increased parental attendance and investment in school events.
- Increased levels of community support, teacher satisfaction, and retention.



# PDE Learning Community Standards

1. Connect families to community resources that support their goals, interests, and needs.
2. Build partnerships with families that are strengths-based, authentic, reciprocal, and respectful.
3. Partner with families to identify information, resources, and strategies to support them in their roles as teachers, models, encouragers, monitors, leaders, and advocates as they support their child's learning.
4. Provide intentional opportunities for families to connect and engage with each other.
5. Support families as they develop their leadership and advocacy skills.
6. Build partnerships with families during times of transition.



# Learning from Sakina and Elham





# Questions for Parent Panelists

- What is your hope for your children's education in the U.S.?
- How have schools involved you in your children's education?
- How can schools involve Afghan families in their children's education?
- What would you like schools to know about working with Afghan refugee families?



# Learning from Parisa and Parvin







## Questions for HIAS PA

- Describe the work you do to support Afghan refugee families with their child's education.
- From your work, can you share with us how Afghan refugee families bring expertise and knowledge to partnering with schools and supporting their children's education?
- What are some strategies that have helped you support Afghan refugee families with their child's education?
- What are some common challenges that the Afghan refugee families you work with encounter when trying to be engaged in their child's education? How have you helped Afghan refugee families and educators address the challenges?
- How can HIAS support schools trying to improve their engagement with Afghan refugee families?



# Advice and Recommendations

- Practice patience and understanding
- Be cognizant of cultural differences in parenting styles
- Educate parents about the importance of after-school activities and its long-term benefits
- Push and advocate for primary, secondary, and higher education
- Be aware of student disabilities and the fact that the evaluation process is unfamiliar





## Questions/Comments?

Parisa Khoshnood

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Parvin Hashemi

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# My Personal Commitment

What is one thing you plan to do differently as a result of what you learned today?

The image shows a digital whiteboard interface. At the top center, the text "My personal commitment" is displayed. On the left side, there is a vertical toolbar with various icons for editing, including a pencil, eraser, selection tool, and other drawing tools. The main whiteboard area contains four colored squares: a yellow square on the left, a green square in the middle-left, a cyan square in the middle-right, and an orange square on the right.



## Questions/Comments?

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## Session 3: Evidence-Based Family Engagement

**Wednesday, February 14, 3:00 – 4:15 PM**

Learn evidence-based strategies and tools to cultivate equitable and culturally responsive family engagement. Engage in break-out discussions to foster peer learning and begin to identify ways that you can incorporate what you have learned into your work with Afghan refugee families.