

About Us

Charmaghz was founded in 2018 to instill a joy of reading in Afghan children through mobile libraries. Based in Kabul and a registered NGO, Charmaghz grew from the dreams of a group of Afghan youth whose childhoods were scarred by war, and who wanted to secure a peaceful future for the next generation. We believe that a necessary, first step towards that future is ensuring all children can read, write, and do basic math—though currently only [7% of primary school age children](#) in Afghanistan are proficient in these skills. In Farsi, “Charmaghz” means “four brains,” which reflects our mission to expand and fulfill the potential of Afghan children through literacy. Charmaghz was founded and is led by Freshta Karim, an internationally recognized advocate for education and children’s rights.

Our Mobile Libraries

Charmaghz operates 16 mobile libraries, including five bus libraries, one van library and ten mobile library boxes, to welcome children into a safe, supportive, and creative environment. While visiting our libraries, children are supported to build basic literacy and numeracy skills, but also to engage in art activities, have an open-mind, think critically, and to develop a love of reading. Across all of our activities, we utilize trauma-informed approaches that support children to process the distress and grief that nearly every Afghan has experienced.



Since 2018, Charmaghz’s libraries have been visited over 366,000 times, and more than 46% of the visitors are girls. On average, our libraries facilitate over 2000 visits from children every day. Six days a week, the mobile libraries make stops throughout Kabul, and also reach children in formal school through our new Library Box project. We work in some of Kabul’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods, including Hazara communities and urban slums, where many children are facing extreme poverty, discrimination, and the fear of attacks on schools. In particular, the Taliban continue to forbid girls to attend secondary school. Despite these barriers, families value and recognize the critical importance of education, and we are committed to supporting their children. Our mobile libraries are staffed by trained Librarians (75% of whom are women), who also conduct community-outreach activities to reach local leaders and families with key messages on the importance of literacy and education.

A Renewed Commitment to Literacy

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 cast a storm of chaos, uncertainty, and fear over the lives of our staff, and the children we serve. Despite this latest upheaval in our country's long history—following decades of war as well as the COVID-19 pandemic—our team has remained audaciously dedicated to building the literacy and numeracy skills of every child who



visits our libraries. We remain registered in Afghanistan as a local non-profit, and have developed a professional and neutral working relationship with the Taliban, who have given us permission to continue our operations. In addition, we have established a secure process for transferring funds from international banks to our Kabul office, enabling our trusted partners to continue supporting our mission.

Now more than ever, we believe Afghan children have a right to quality education as well as a peaceful future—both of which must begin with a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy. In the coming months and years, we are doubling-down on our commitment to support Afghan children on their lifelong journey of literacy, and remain hopeful of what we can achieve together.