



Invitation to CWI Zoom Meeting, Tuesday, January 25, 2022 (12:00-1:30 PM)

January 2022 Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (CWI) Invitation
<https://womensclearinghouse.org>

“**Combatting Women's Health and Wealth Inequities**”

Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 12:00-1:30 pm via Zoom

[Registration Link](#)

What do you think of when you read/hear "Women's Health and Wealth Equity"? What is the correlation? What is the impact of health and wealth inequalities on women? What can we do about it? Attend this CWI noon zoom meeting on January 25th to find out.

Dr. Martha Burk, a long-time feminist activist and Money Editor of [Ms Magazine](#), will focus on financial (Wealth) inequities. **Alanna Murrell**, Special Projects Manager, [Black Women's Health Imperative](#), will address Health inequities. They both will highlight the intersection of the inequalities and what can be done to overcome them. This meeting will be hosted by CWI's, **Holly Joseph**.

Dr. Burk will summarize how county, state, and federal government [Pay Equity initiatives](#) have fared. Dr. Burk's work, featured on the [U.S. Department of Labor website](#), advises city, county, and state governments on gender pay equity and conducts internal pay analyses for private sector companies seeking to improve their understanding of wage gaps by gender and race. She designed and implemented the first-in-the-nation equal pay contractor reporting initiatives for the State of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque. Dr. Burk holds a Ph.D. in experimental psychology with an emphasis on research and statistics.

Alanna Murrell, Special Projects Manager, and Communications specialist, [Black Women's Health Imperative](#). The Black Women's Health Imperative (BWHI) is the only national organization solely focused on promoting the physical, emotional and financial health and wellness of the nation's 21 million Black women and girls. For almost four decades, BWHI has served as the leading voice for health and wellness for Black women and girls across the country. Their mission is to advance health equity and social justice for Black women across the lifespan, eliminate racial and gender-based health inequities and deepen Black women's resolve in becoming informed decision makers to achieve optimum health and wellness.

Please join us at this meeting by registering and coming to our noon Jan. 25 zoom meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwsdO2przMiGNBHh2119StBIPsyDHvi0XLI>

Our February 22 noon zoom meeting will feature some follow-up, with focus on Black Health and Wellness, which is this year's Black History Month theme featuring: **Dr. C. Nicole Mason**, [Institute for Women's Policy Research \(IWPR\)](#), **Chloe Mondesir**, [National Women's Health Network \(NWHN\)](#), **Dr. Ethlyn McQueen-Gibson**, Director, [Center for Gerontology Excellence](#), [Hampton University](#).

Summary of October 26, 2021 Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (CWI) Zoom Meeting on "The Challenges and Future for Afghan Women and Girls"

by Sheila Wickouski with help of the presenters and notes from NOW intern, Michelle Runco

This CWI noon zoom meeting on October 26, 2021 focused on the issues related to women and girls who are in grave danger after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021. This meeting was organized and emceed by CWI Co-President, Connie Cordovilla and Vice President for Global Issues, Megan Corrado, who has worked for Women for Afghan Women and is now Director of Policy and Advocacy for the Alliance for Peacebuilding. A video of this meeting is available at <https://youtu.be/hY-LdByUakk>.

Sue Klein, Co-President of CWI and Education Equity Director, Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) introduced **Eleanor Smeal**, President of FMF and publisher of Ms. Magazine. Sue pointed out that among Eleanor Smeal's many leadership activities on behalf of women's rights, she was the original leader who brought the Taliban's atrocities against women and girls during their first takeover in 1996-2001 to the attention of Americans. Smeal was nominated for the Nobel prize for this work and has continued to help women in Afghanistan for the past 20 years.



Smeal amplified her understanding of the history of oppression of Afghan women and the current disaster under the Taliban and shared her advice on what women's organizations and activists should do now and in the future.

The 4th UN Conference on Women took place in China in 1995 when Hillary Clinton stated that women's rights were human rights. However, in 1994 in Herat, Afghanistan, the Taliban began issuing orders that women could not get education or work.

The FMF got involved in 1997. There was a Civil War in Afghanistan and the Taliban took over the country for the first time from 1996 to 2001 and implemented severe restrictions especially on women. Before this takeover, women had been 70% of the school teachers in Afghanistan. Women also were nurses and doctors. The effects of women not being in the work place was felt in the collapse of the educational and health care systems. Women and girls could not go to hospitals. Stadiums were turned into execution centers where many women were shot for violations of Taliban decrees. A woman was murdered for secretly educating girls. Women were prohibited from leaving their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative. Women had to wear burqas (which covered them completely except for a mesh covering for their eyes) and they could not wear white socks.

The FMF started a letter writing campaign to the Clinton Administration to not recognize the Taliban as legitimate. On Women's Day 1998, the UN and US announced that they would not recognize the Taliban. The FMF created a campaign for women in Afghanistan and started a scholarship program for female Afghan scholars in the U.S and sent teams to Afghan refugee camps.

During the 20 years after the first Taliban takeover ended in 2001, FMF continued involvement in helping Afghan women achieve their rights and participate in government, education, jobs, and sports. They helped create an Afghan Constitution with women's equal rights provisions.

When the Taliban re-took control in August 2021, 157 colleges were operating. Women were participating in all levels of education and were 40% of students in post graduate schools, including medical school and law school. The Constitution stated that a certain number of women had to be in Parliament.

In 2019, President Trump began talks with the Taliban that omitted the Afghan government. A treaty was signed in February 2020 that was supposed to stop violence from the Taliban. This treaty said the US would leave Afghanistan in May 2021. (President Biden delayed this to August 2021). Few thought that the Afghan government would collapse so quickly and that the Taliban would again regain control and that if they did this would be similar to their previous reign when they appointed all male leaders.

As of Oct. 2021, the Taliban had closed girls secondary schools, claiming they wanted to change the schools to be Islamic. They have allowed girls to stay in college if they were in private schools, but could not go to public schools. In private schools, women could only have women or elderly men as professors. Also, women had to be segregated from men in classes.

All domestic violence shelters were closed. If women had warning, they were able to flee. Many women journalists, judges, legislators, lawyers who have not been able to flee have been assassinated by the Taliban. Women in previous power positions have evacuated in fear of their lives or are in hiding. Also, women cannot participate in sports, music has been banned again, and with few exceptions women could not work outside the home.

The FMF has written an open [letter](#) to President Biden and Vice President Harris stating that the US cannot abandon women in Afghanistan and maintaining the major gains that Afghanistan had gone through for women's equality. Also, that the US cannot recognize the Taliban as a legitimate government which would normalize and justify what is happening. The US must make sure to welcome refugees, send aid to Afghan women, and support them in opposing the Taliban.

In subsequent discussion, Smeal brought up the important question of who funded the Taliban in addition to the many years of help they received from Pakistan and the funding from opium (they are responsible for 90% of the world's heroin). She pointed out that Taliban victory was not due to religious beliefs of the Afghan people, but likely supported by countries with economic interests like developing an oil pipeline through Afghanistan to China.

Many in Afghanistan do not support Taliban extreme religious beliefs but they do value everyday beliefs in education, adequate health care, freedom to work, fair legal systems and adequate food and housing. While some corruption in the US is to blame for lack of success, much of it did not actually happen in Afghanistan but in military contracts that benefited those in the US. More is known about this from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) studies and in 400 audits, as to what did and did not work for gender equality, and notes taken on lessons learned. A Brown University study of the role of American Corporations in Afghanistan found that many corporations were profiteers on the money that was supposed to be sent to Afghanistan and that most of this money never left the US.

Many are hopeful that principles of women's equality and democracy gained during the 20 year period before the second Taliban takeover will soon prevail in continuing progress in Afghanistan.

Saba, an Afghan woman with family still in Afghanistan is a founder of a college for women in Afghanistan and other Afghan schools and organizations. She spoke about education for children and women in the Afghan educational system.

After the Taliban were removed in 2001, girls' schools were formed and opportunities opened for women in Afghanistan to receive education and to move into higher education and the workforce. Thousands of Afghan women who had been denied education in the 1990s returned to Afghanistan to improve education for women there. During the first Taliban takeover some girls and women had dressed as boys to be able to attend schools when they were banned from attending as women.

By 2018, women in education increased from 0 to 2.5 million, child marriage dropped by 44%, but 3.7 million school age children were not receiving education and 60% of these children were girls. 60% of teachers only had 2 years' experience of teaching and some had not graduated from high school. Teachers had to protest for income and some did not receive a salary for over a year. Some schools have no buildings or very little infrastructure.

In 2021, the Taliban used the failings of the previous government to justify their takeover. They claim that education is of no use and believe that Masters and PhD degrees are completely useless.

It is mandatory that women wear niqabs, specifically in private universities. Women are only 5% of students in higher education which makes it extremely hard for schools to segregate them. If there is not enough female staff than only elderly men of "good character" can teach them.

If the Taliban continue to refuse to allow women to access education, women can still do so from their homes with technology. Advancements have made it so that the Taliban cannot hold women back like they had before.

The international community needs to ensure that aid goes to the right places and not to the Taliban government and in human rights violations. There must be protection for those in Afghanistan that are in hiding and for those that wish to return and not remain refugees.



The final presenter was **Stacey Schamber**, with the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), which promotes inclusive and sustainable peace in countries affected by violent conflict, extremism, militarism, and closing political space. ICAN spearheads the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), a global network of 90 women-led peacebuilding organizations across 40 countries, including Afghanistan. ICAN supports their partners in WASL personally through solidarity and relationships,

professionally through technical support and grantmaking, and institutionally through building organizational capacity.

WASL members in Afghanistan have worked to build peace for years through the following activities:

- Peace building training;
- Support Afghan High Peace Council;
- Create awareness of violence against women including training men in this;

- Provide safe shelters for survivors of violence;
- Provide training in conflict resolution methods;
- Develop local mechanisms for resolving conflicts in families on property;
- Call for ceasefire with Afghanistan;
- Direct advocacy with the Taliban, US, and internationally; and
- Raised awareness around COVID.

As part of its Better Peace Initiative (BPI) which provides training on inclusive and gender-responsive peace processes, ICAN created a coalition in February 2019 calling for women's inclusion in the peace talks between in the US and the Taliban and conducted bilateral advocacy with governments. They have also published tools for peace and women in Islam, trained Afghan women and politicians involved in the peace process, and conducted public advocacy on the situation in Afghanistan. Since August 15, ICAN has focused its support to Afghans inside and outside of Afghanistan, including humanitarian and protection support, resettlement case accompaniment, institutional support to women-led peacebuilding organizations, and advocacy on the political, security, and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Individuals can support ICAN's work through the following actions:

- Contribute to the [Afghan Solidarity Coalition](#)
- Sign and share the [Action Points to Guarantee the Rights, Safety and Health of Women and Girls in Afghanistan](#); and
- Join the [She Builds Peace](#) campaign to stand with women peacebuilders

Discussion after the presentations pointed out a number of continuing concerns:

The US Dept. of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control has issued two funds for humanitarian needs but omitted money for education.

When refugees arrive in the US they are being given parole which does not put them under refugee status and give them the benefits that come with that.

Afghan women's roles have been limited in many ways. When it was advocated that women be able to talk to the Taliban to create peace, this was not taken seriously, a violation of UN Resolution 1325. When women spoke at the UN, Afghanistan did not report on who these women were or what was said by them. Only male leaders have been seen talking to the Taliban even from international communities -- complying with the rules of the Taliban by not allowing women to speak to them even from different countries. It had been requested that money not be sent to the Taliban until they agree to respect women but this has not taken seriously. Since our Oct. 2021 CWI meeting, conditions have become worse because of the winter weather, lack of food and collapse of the banking/financial system as well as additional Taliban restrictions on women.

DC Area and National Feminist Events and Resources

Please send your upcoming feminist events to post in CWI newsletters to sklein@feminist.org . LIKE and FOLLOW us on CWI's Facebook www.facebook.com/womensclearinghouse and Twitter www.twitter.com/CWInews pages! Also SUBSCRIBE and LIKE our video sponsor and provider. <https://www.youtube.com/user/Hanburycross>. Paid-up CWI members will receive additional forwarded email messages on feminist meetings and activities. Times given are Eastern Time. Special thanks to Montgomery County, MD NOW for information on many of these events.

EVENTS

Tuesday, Jan 18, 7-8PM Justice at Our Border: Addressing the Barriers Faced by Undocumented Women. NOW National Action Center. [Click Here to Join](#)

Thursday, Jan. 20 10:AM- 11:30 AM EST. Solutions for Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan, The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security. **RSVP [here](#) .**

Thursday, Jan. 20 12:30 PM- 1:30 PM EST. Rob Wilcox on GUN Safety: A National Priority. MoCo, MD, Women's Democratic Club **[FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER](#)**

Thursday, Jan. 20, 4PM-5:30 PM. The Women's Power Gap at Elite Universities: Scaling the Ivory Wall. AAUW [Register](#)

Thursday, Jan. 20, 4PM-5:PM. Stories from NSA's Computing Women. Maryland Women's Heritage Center. **[FOR MORE INFO AND Tan REGISTER](#)**

Monday, Jan. 24, 7 PM Ranked Choice Voting: Greater Choice? Stronger Voice? League of Women Voters of Montgomery County **[FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER](#)**

Tuesday. Jan 25.Noon. Combating Health and Wealth Inequities, CWI. See Page 1.

Tuesday. Jan 25. 7-8PM. Congressman Jamie Raskin on his New Book "Unthinkable" MoCo, MD, Women's Democratic Club. **[FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER](#)**

Jan 19-29. MOCO History Conference 2022: Histstory,Herstory, Ourstory, Yourstory. Virtual and In-Person. [FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER](#)

Now to Jan, 30: Check out National Gallery of Art Exhibit: The New Woman Behind the Camera see article by Sheila Wickouski https://starexponent.com/entertainment/the-new-woman-behind-the-camera-a-striking-look-at-life-around-the-world/article_f7569671-b585-5b06-affe-4450beab9b5c.html

Now – Feb. 27 In the Tradition: African American Hand Sewn Quilts, in person (Jan 15-1-3PM meet the artist). Maryland Women’s Heritage Center [FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

CWI’s newsletter is endowed in loving memory of our previous longtime editor, Roslyn Kaiser

Meeting summary by Sheila Wickouski and many of the Meeting Presenters.

Newsletter edited by Sue Klein

CWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS, JULY 2021 – JUNE 2022

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Clearinghouse on Women's Issues Membership Form

<https://womensclearinghouse.org/>

The CWI membership year is: **July 1-June 30**. Multi-year and Gift memberships are encouraged and discounted! Please fill in beginning and end years (e.g. 2022-2025 for a 3-yr membership). Members will receive CWI newsletters and meeting announcements as well as other feminist news and event notifications. Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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| One-year | \$25 | \$40 | \$15/yr. | \$20/yr. |
| Two-year | \$45 | \$70 | Gift Membership (insert information in individual or organization membership) | |
| Three-year | \$65 | \$100 | | |

Membership Dues Amount: _____
Tax deductible donation: _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED = _____
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- Mail form & check to Connie Cordovilla, Membership Chair, CWI, 7439 Patterson Rd., Falls Church, VA 22043-1332; or
- Pay through PayPal, by selecting the desired membership option on our website's membership page <https://womensclearinghouse.org/membership/> & please send this form by mail to the above address or email it to MembershipChair@womensclearinghouse.org; or
- Bring a check, payable to CWI, and this completed form to a CWI meeting. (Form Revised: 10/13/20)