LESSON TITLE: Women on the Rise in Afghanistan

GRADES: 9-12

TIME ALLOTMENT: Two to three 45-minute class periods

OVERVIEW
Using segments from the PBS series Women, War & Peace, students learn about the life of women in Afghanistan, including progress they have made and the obstacles/dangers they face. The lesson highlights Afghan women’s efforts to play an active role in Afghanistan’s peace process and to empower other women in their country. In the Introductory Activity, students learn about current dangers faced by women in Afghanistan and actions two Afghan women are taking to empower other women in their country. In Learning Activity 1, students learn about the rights of women during and after Taliban rule and the efforts of Afghan women to play an active role in their country’s peace process, as well as efforts by the US to support their efforts. In Learning Activity 2, students explore background information about Afghanistan, the Taliban and Islam using an online discussion guide. In the Culminating Activity, students explore efforts women have played in advocating for human rights and participating in peace building efforts around the world. The lesson ends with students writing a reflection paper about topics presented in the lesson.

OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
 o Explain what the Taliban is and how the lives of women were restricted under its rule.
 o Describe progress women have made since Taliban rule.
 o Describe dangers women currently face in Afghanistan.
 o Discuss steps individual Afghan women are taking to empower other women in their country.
 o Describe why Afghan women felt it was critical to be involved in Afghanistan’s peace process and steps they took to make sure they would be part of the process.
 o Explain ways in which the United States has supported the efforts of the women of Afghanistan.
 o Describe the role women have played in advocating for human rights and/or peace in at least two countries.

LEARNING STANDARDS
New York State Standards:
http://www.nylearns.org/module/standards/3679/standard.ashx

Standard SS2: World History
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.
• **Key Idea** SS2.3: Study of the major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

**Commencement:**
- **Performance Indicator** SS2.C.3A: Students analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities.

• **Key Idea** SS2.alt.1: Students will study world history, cultures and civilizations and the important contribution of individuals and groups.
  - **Performance Indicator** SS2.alt.1D: Students explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world.
  - **Performance Indicator** SS2.alt.1F: Students utilize media to become aware of current events.

**Standard SS5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government**
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the United States and other nations; the United States Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

• **Key Idea** SS5.1: The study of civics, citizenship, and government involves learning about political systems; the purposes of government and civic life; and the differing assumptions held by people across time and place regarding power, authority, governance, and law.

**Commencement:**
- **Performance Indicator** SS5.C.1A: Students analyze how the values of a nation and international organizations affect the guarantee of human rights and make provisions for human needs.

• **Key Idea** SS5.4: The study of civics and citizenship requires the ability to probe ideas and assumptions, ask and answer analytical questions, take a skeptical attitude toward questionable arguments, evaluate evidence, formulate rational conclusions, and develop and refine participatory skills.
  - **Performance Indicator** - SS5.C.4D: Students consider the need to respect the rights of others, to respect others' points of view.

**National Standards:**
Standards available online at: [http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/thinking5-12_toc.html](http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/thinking5-12_toc.html)

**Historical Thinking Standards for Grades 5-12**

• **Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation:** The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation. Therefore, the student is able to:
• **Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making:** The student engages in historical issues-analysis and decision-making. Therefore, the student is able to:
  o Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.
  o Marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances and current factors contributing to contemporary problems and alternative courses of action.
  o Evaluate alternative courses of action, keeping in mind the information available at the time, in terms of ethical considerations, the interests of those affected by the decision, and the long- and short-term consequences of each.
  o Formulate a position or course of action on an issue by identifying the nature of the problem, analyzing the underlying factors contributing to the problem, and choosing a plausible solution from a choice of carefully evaluated options.
  o Evaluate the implementation of a decision by analyzing the interests it served; estimating the position, power, and priority of each player involved; assessing the ethical dimensions of the decision; and evaluating its costs and benefits from a variety of perspectives.

**National Standards in World History for Grades 5-12**
http://nehs.ucla.edu/standards/world-standards5-12.html

• **World History/ Era 9 Standard 2C:** The student understands how liberal democracy, market economies, and human rights movements have reshaped political and social life. Therefore, the student is able to:
  o Assess the progress of human and civil rights around the world since the 1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.
  o Analyze how feminist movements and social conditions have affected the lives of women in different parts of the world and compare women’s progress toward social equality, economic opportunity, and political rights in various countries.
• **World History/Era 9/Standard 2D:** The student understands major sources of tension and conflict in the contemporary world and efforts that have been made to address them. Therefore, the student is able to:
  o Analyze why terrorist movements have proliferated and the extent of their impact on politics and society in various countries.

• **World History/Era 9/Standard 3A:** The student understands major global trends since World War II. Therefore the student is able to:
  o Assess the degree to which both human rights and democratic ideals and practices have been advanced in the world during the 20th century.
  o Analyze causes of economic imbalances and social inequalities among the world’s peoples and assess efforts made to close these gaps.

**MEDIA RESOURCES**

**Video:**
*Women, War & Peace, Episode 3: “Peace Unveiled,”* selected segments

Access the video segments for this lesson at the Video Segments Page:

**Clip 1:** “Women in Afghanistan Today”
A look at efforts two Afghan women are taking to help others, as well as dangers faced by women in Afghanistan today.

**Clip 2:** “Life During and After Taliban Rule”
An overview of life in Afghanistan during and after Taliban rule and women’s efforts to participate in the country’s peace process.

**Clip 3:** “Fighting to be Heard”
A look at efforts by women of Afghanistan to participate in government and the peace process.

**Clip 4:** “Supporting the Women of Afghanistan”
A look at Afghanistan’s need for international support and actions taken by the US to advocate for Afghan women.

**Websites:**
*For use in Learning Activity 2:*

• *Women, War & Peace: “Peace Unveiled” Discussion Guide*

For more information, visit [www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/)
This discussion guide features information about “Peace Unveiled,” Afghanistan, the Taliban and the rights of women under Islam, as well as related resources and questions to help viewers think more deeply about the program’s content. The guide’s “Background Information” section is used in this lesson.

For use in the Culminating Activity:

- **Empowering Women Peacemakers in the Niger Delta**
  www.usip.org/publications/empowering-women-peacemakers-in-the-niger-delta
  This section on the United States Institute of Peace website describes efforts to empower women in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria to address conflict in their communities.

- **Women Peacemakers in Iraq**
  www.usip.org/publications/women-peacemakers-in-iraq
  This section on the United States Institute of Peace website describes efforts to improve the security and status of women in Iraq.

- **Women as Mediators in Pacific Conflict Zones**
  www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=436&Itemi d=207
  This section of the ISIS International website describes the role women have played in peacebuilding efforts in the Pacific Islands of Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Related Resources:

- **Women, Peace and Security**
  www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/eWPS.pdf
  This report created by the United Nations explores the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peacebuilding and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution around the world.

- **Campaign for Afghan Women and Girls/ The Taliban and Women**
  http://feminist.org/afghan/taliban_women.asp
  This section of the Feminist Majority Foundation’s website provides information about the Taliban and the restrictions they placed on women.

MATERIALS

For the class:

- Computers with internet access
- Computer, projection screen and speakers (for class viewing of online/downloaded video segments)
- The “Background Information” section of the “Peace Unveiled” discussion guide.
  www.communitycinema-dc.org/2011-2012Season/PeaceUnveiled_discussion_guide_FINAL.pdf
Note: This discussion guide could either be used online or printed out for use in Learning Activity 2. During the activity, the class will be divided into 5 groups and each group will be assigned to one of the topics in the Background Information section (“History of Afghanistan,” “Understanding Afghan Culture,” etc.). Print out enough copies of pages 4-6 in the Discussion Guide so that each student gets the page that contains information about his/her group’s assigned topic.

For each student:
• One copy of the “Facts about Afghanistan Student Organizer.” (Download here.)

BEFORE THE LESSON
Prior to teaching this lesson, you will need to:

Preview all of the video segments and websites used in the lesson.
Preview the “Peace Unveiled” discussion guide at www.communitycinema-dc.org/2011-2012Season/PeaceUnveiled_discussion_guide_FINAL.pdf and the description of Learning Activity 2. If you plan to have students access the guide online during the lesson, bookmark the site on each computer they will be using. If you plan to print out the guide, see the “materials” section above for details.

Download the video clips used in the lesson to your classroom computer(s) or prepare to watch them using your classroom’s internet connection.

Print out one copy of the “Facts about Afghanistan Student Organizer” for each student. (See the “materials” section above.)

Bookmark all websites which you plan to use in the lesson on each computer in your classroom. Using a social bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us or diigo (or an online bookmarking utility such as portaportal) will allow you to organize all the links in a central location.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

1. Let students know that today’s lesson will focus on advances made by women in Afghanistan, as well as the obstacles and dangers they face. Ask students to think of rights all men and women have in the United States today. (The right to attend school, vote, free speech, freedom of religion, etc.)

2. Ask students to locate Afghanistan on a map and to discuss what they know about the country and its people. Write their answers on a list for the students to see. Encourage students to share what they know about Afghanistan and the rights of women in the country. (Possible things to include on the list: Islam is the main religion; Women do not have the same rights as men; US soldiers are serving in Afghanistan.)

For more information, visit www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/
3. Explain that you will now be showing a segment from the episode “Peace Unveiled” in the series Women, War & Peace, a program which focuses on the impact of war on women and the role of women during war and in helping to bring about peace. Let students know that this excerpt highlights the actions of two Afghan women, Hasina Safi and Shahida Hussein, to help other women in need in their country. As students view the segment, ask them to find out current dangers faced by women in Afghanistan and actions that Safi and Hussein are taking to empower Afghan women.

4. Play the clip “Women in Afghanistan Today.” After showing the segment, ask students to describe efforts that Hasina Safi and other members of the Afghan Women’s Network are conducting to help Afghan women. (They conduct programs for illiterate women.) Discuss the obstacles that Safi and her colleagues face. (They have received letters telling them to stop teaching and threatening violence against them and their families.)

5. Ask students what percentage of women in Afghanistan are literate, based on information presented in the segment. (The segment mentions that about 90% of women are illiterate, meaning that about 10% are literate. According to a July, 2011 estimate, the actual percentage of women who are literate in Afghanistan is about 12.6%).

6. Discuss how Shahida Hussein, the woman’s rights activist featured in the video, helps women in Kandahar. (She listens to their problems and then meets with judges, court officials, provincial council leaders and others on behalf of the women.) Discuss dangers faced by women in Kandahar. (Working women in Kandahar are being assassinated. When women go out in public they are fearful of being shot. The women feel powerless and don’t feel like the government is listening to them. Corruption is prevalent.)

7. Discuss some of the current rights that women in Afghanistan have which they didn’t have under Taliban rule. (They can appear in public in many places without burqas, girls can attend school and women can work. Women have access to health care, the right to vote and the right to 25% of seats in parliament.)

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

1. Explain that the next segment describes women’s lives under the Taliban regime. Ask students to describe the Taliban. (The Taliban is an extreme militia group which took control of the government of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 and led a totalitarian dictatorship that deprived Afghan women of basic human rights.)

2. Ask students to take notes about what life was like for women during Taliban rule and steps Afghan women took to assure a place in the peace process in Afghanistan.

For more information, visit www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/
3. Play the clip “Life During and After Taliban Rule.” After showing the segment, ask students to discuss what life was like for women during Taliban rule. (*Women were imprisoned in their homes and were not allowed to go to work or school. They could not go to a doctor without a male relative. Women were not allowed to show their hands or faces in public and could be beaten if they did. They could be publicly executed for committing adultery or disobeying other Taliban rules.*)

4. Compare and contrast the life of women under Taliban rule to the life of women in Afghanistan today. Discuss rights that women currently have that they didn’t have under Taliban rule.

5. Ask students to describe the actions Shinkai Karokhail and others took to assure women played a part in the peace process. (*They advocated for the inclusion of more women at the peace jirga (assembly) being held by President Karzai. US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton pressured Karzai to include more women in the jirga and was able to secure 20% of the spots for women. The jirga was the first time Afghan women had been present at peace talks with Afghan men.*)

6. Ask students to discuss why Shinkai Karokhail and the women of the Afghan Women’s Network felt it was critical to have as many women as possible participate in the jirga. (*To assure that women’s rights were not sacrificed by religious conservatives participating in the jirga.*)

7. Explain that the next segment highlights efforts that Afghan women took to assure that they had a voice in the government and the peace process. Ask students to write down actions the women took to assure that they had a voice in the process.

8. Play “Fighting to be Heard.” After showing the clip, ask students to discuss actions the women took to assure they had a voice in the peace process. (*They lobbied the international community to get women included in the Kabul Peace Conference. They met with Ambassador Karl Eikenberry and were able to get permission to send a representative to make a 3-minute presentation at the conference.*)

9. Discuss the message that Palwasha Hassan delivered at the conference and the significance of her being included in the conference. (*She stressed the fact that human rights must be preserved, as political and security strategies are implemented. In order for there to be peace, everyone in society must be protected. Women’s rights and achievements must not be compromised in any peace negotiations or peace agreement and women’s experiences of war and peace building must be recognized in the peace process. Hassan is the first Afghan woman ever to address the world from an Afghan stage.*)

10. Discuss the impact Hassan’s comments had on the final outcome of the conference. (*Neither the US or the international community stipulated that women must take part in rebuilding Afghanistan.*)

For more information, visit [www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/)
11. Explain that you will now be showing a final clip from Women, War & Peace: “Peace Unveiled.” Ask students to find out how the women feel about getting support from the US and the international community, as well as the efforts the US is taking to support the women of Afghanistan.

12. Play “Supporting the Women of Afghanistan.” After showing the clip, ask students to share information presented in the video.

Information presented in the segment:

- The women of Afghanistan want more support from the international community.
- US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sent Ambassador Melanne Verveer (the first US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues) to Afghanistan to secure spots for women in Karzai’s high peace council. The women were given only 9 of the 70 seats (approx. 12.9%) on Karzai’s peace council, which was less than they had hoped for. Warlords and religious conservatives dominate the council.
- The UN Security Council adopted a resolution on October 31, 2000 to urge all countries to include women in all conflict resolutions, but women are not present in most peace talks around the world.
- Secretary Clinton tells the UN Security Council that it is essential that the rights of women in Afghanistan not be sacrificed as part of the peace process.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 2

1. Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group to one of the following topics:
   - History of Afghanistan
   - Afghan Culture
   - The Taliban
   - The rights of Women under Islam
   - Hamid Karzai
   [Note: This will be conducted as a “jigsaw”-style activity, where each group first learns about one topic and then the members of each group meet with members from the other groups to exchange information.]

   Note: If students do not have access to computers during the lesson, distribute printouts of pages from the guide to the students.

3. Ask each group to read the section of the guide that contains information about their assigned topic. (If you are using printouts, give each group the page that
4. Ask students to write a brief summary of their assigned article in the “Facts about Afghanistan” student organizer.

5. After each group has conducted its research, mix up the groups so that at least one student from each of the original 5 groups is represented in each of the new groups. (For example, there should be students who read about the history of Afghanistan, Afghan culture, the Taliban, the rights of women under Islam and Hamid Karzai in each group.)

6. Ask group members to share information they learned from their articles with the members of their new groups. Ask students to complete their “Facts about Afghanistan” student organizer based on the information they receive from their classmates. At the end of the discussion all students should have all the rows filled in on their organizer.

7. Ask students to discuss some of the new facts they learned about Afghanistan (including the Taliban and Hamid Karzai), Islam and the rights of women.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

1. Lead a discussion about the ways in which Hasina Safi, Shahida Hussein, Shinkai Karokhail are making a positive difference in the lives of Afghan women.

2. Ask each student or group of students to conduct research about the roles women have played in advocating for human rights and/or participating in peace building efforts in a country other than Afghanistan. Some possible countries/regions to include are: Rwanda, Nigeria, Iraq, Pacific Islands, New Zealand, Somalia, United Kingdom, United States. (See the “websites” section for website suggestions for this activity.)

3. Ask students to present their findings to the class.

4. As a final activity, ask each student to write a reflection essay about one of the following quotes (said by people in different contexts and time periods) and apply it to themes and information presented in this lesson:

   • “The education and empowerment of women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just and peaceful life for all,” Aung San Suu Kyi (1945 - ), Daw Burmese-Myanmarese dissident and politician; Leader of National League for Democracy, Nobel Peace Prize laureate.
• “There is no development strategy more beneficial to society as a whole - women and men alike - than the one which involves women as central players,” Kofi Annan, Seventh secretary-general of the United Nations, 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.

• “Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchasable voice in government,” Carrie Chapman Catt, Women’s Suffrage Leader.

• “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals,” Martin Luther King, Jr.

• “Lasting change is a series of compromises. And compromise is all right, as long your values don't change,” Jane Goodall, Primatologist.

5. Ask students to share their reflections with the class.
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<th>Facts about Afghanistan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Organizer</td>
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**Instructions:** In the chart below, record the main ideas presented in each section of the “Background Information” portion of the “Peace Unveiled” discussion guide.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>History of Afghanistan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Afghan Culture</td>
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<td>Rights of Women under Islam</td>
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