

# My motherland, my heart: Stories and ideas of children of the Afghan diaspora By Fariba Ahmadi

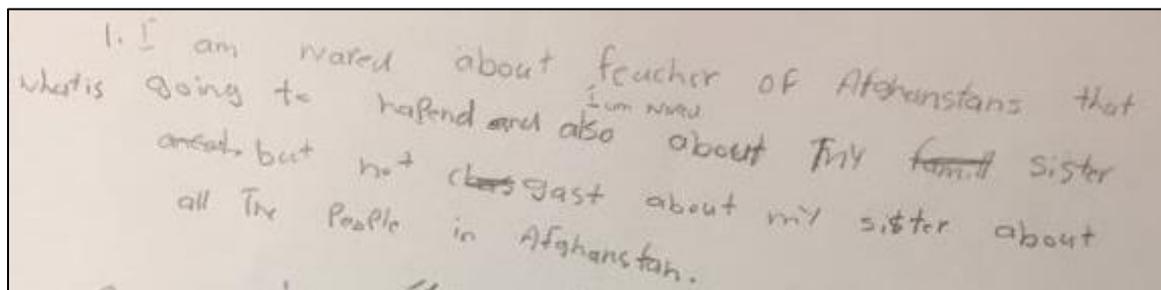
*Fariba Ahmadi (née Fariba Drokshshan) was born in Kabul, Afghanistan and migrated to Australia in 1995. Prior to studying Narrative Therapy, she worked as a Medical Practitioner in Afghanistan. Fariba can be contacted by email: [riba.a67@hotmail.com](mailto:riba.a67@hotmail.com)*

In the days following the Taliban taking control of Kabul, I met with about 20 Afghan boys and girls, 12-14 years old, at the Adelaide Secondary School of English. I explained to them that the reason I was there was to listen to them and share our feeling together. I said something like:

“We are in the same boat. Whatever happens to this boat, we are all together. We are having same experience, same feelings, same pain. If there is any help that you need you can ask through your school leaders and they will contact me, or come and tell me today.”

I then asked them a series of questions and said they could either speak or write down their responses in Dari or English. Many of them wrote beautiful written explanations that made me cry when I read them. I will share them with you here:

## How has the arrival of this crisis changed your life?



*“I am worried about the feucher (future) of Afghanistans that what is going to hapend (happen) and I am also worried about my sister but not gast (just) about my sister about all the people in Afghanistan”*

I am very scared and I am very worried  
and I think everyone is very scared of Taliban

---

My mother is everytime just thinking about Afghanistan  
and she is very worried and when I see my mother is  
very upset I feel very scared

need

*"We feel worried; worried about everyone in Afghanistan."*

*"Nowadays, there are some people that they're ready to die; they prefer death rather than being alive, seeing these horrible scenes".*

*"I am worried because our Muslim brothers are dying from Taliban."*

*"I know that I'm here, but my soul and my heart is in Afghanistan".*

*"My poor mom, my brother and sisters, when we go home after school every day, we all think about people living in Afghanistan".*

*"We are thinking about their future, we're thinking about their present at the moment".*

*"I'm really worried about Afghans and Afghan people's future. I'm worried about people living there at the moment. There are lots of young people who did work really hard, and now they are facing lots of difficulty and hardship. They have to be there. They tried hard, they studied hard. And now they just have to sit home."*

*"All Afghans are like my brothers, my sisters, my family".*

This is a very strong sentence which melted my heart. One of the students then drew a sad face with tears coming from their eyes.

**If you could give this crisis a name or a nickname, what would it be?**

The situation in Afghanistan, it's really bad. It's darkness, it's misery in this day.

Misery.

Killing fighting.

This pain.

Misfortune.

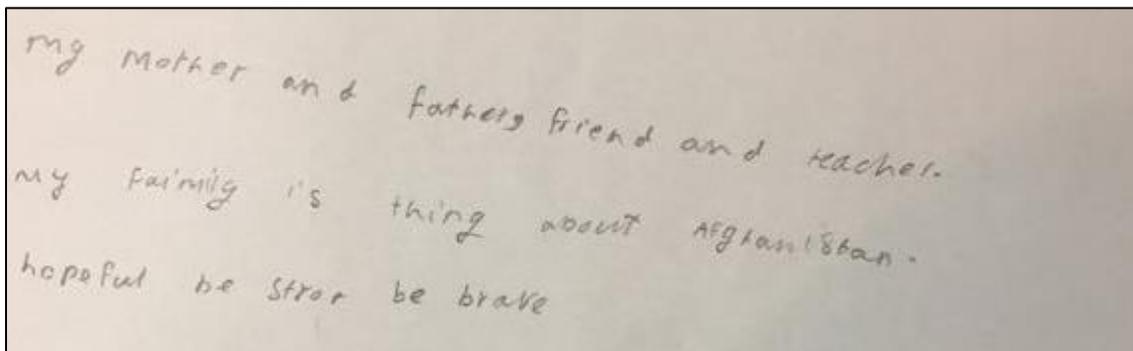
Destruction: destruction of all the country.

Killing innocent people.

**What and/or who has been helping you during this hard time?**

*"At home, mostly my mother, my dad sometimes, my grandmother, and my brother."*

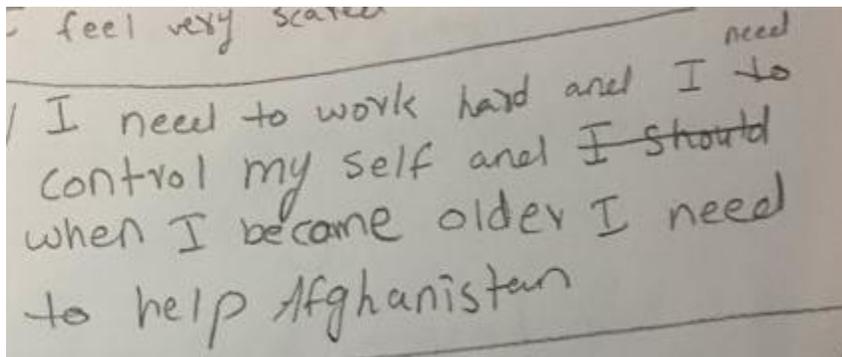
*"At the school, my teachers, BSSOs, my friends, and God."*



*"Whenever I get upset and worried, I call my friend in Afghanistan. I tell my friend that I'm thinking about her; I'm here to help you. She is listening to me and I always tell my friend: don't lose hope - I'm here and I will help you all the time."*

**What have you learnt about yourself that makes you believe you're able to cope with this situation?**

The students had many thoughts about this.



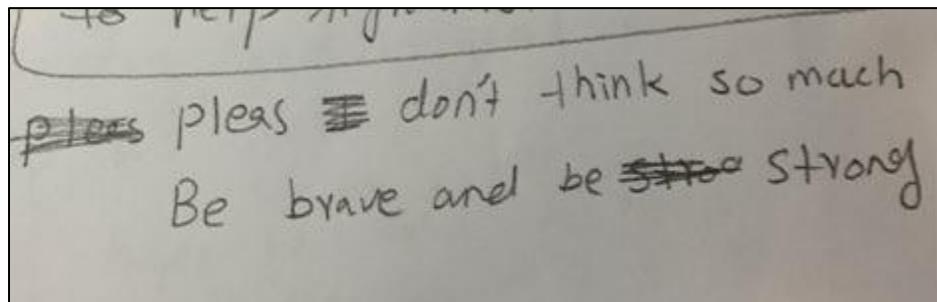
I feel very scared  
I need to work hard and I need to control my self and I should when I became older I need to help Afghanistan

They also said they were trying to be patient and hopeful, and that one day, everything will get better.

They also spoke of the importance of being united with each other, to support each other.

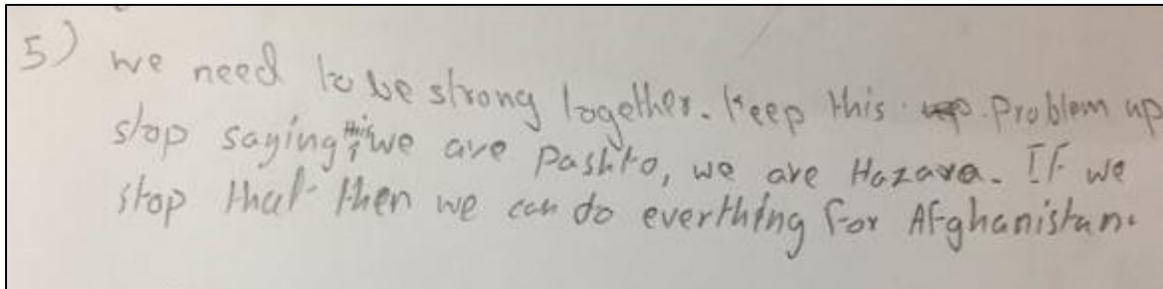
And to be persistent.

**What do you suggest to other Afghans who are dealing with this situation?**



pleas pleas ~~==~~ don't think so much  
Be brave and be ~~strong~~ strong

Some of the students had poignant messages about unity:



5) we need to be strong together. keep this ~~up~~ problem up  
stop saying <sup>we</sup> we are Pashto, we are Hazara. If we  
stop that then we can do everything for Afghanistan.

When one of the children asked another student; "Are you Sunni or Shia?" I responded to this by saying,

*"One day, one of you might be the Afghan president. You might be the leader of the country and guide others, other youngsters. Our country will need you to unite the people. Everyone has the right to choose their own religion. And we need leaders who will bring us all together. We can start right here today."*

A 12-year-old then said the following words:

*"I try to stand up against Taliban, against oppression of Taliban. Our three color flag - red, green, and black - is so beautiful. It was just waving in the beautiful environment of Afghanistan. I hope that the people, with their hard work and persistency, will be able to raise this flag again as a sign of peace in Afghanistan."*

And one student wrote the following words:

Dear homeland.  
Be patient.  
Our pain will be cured one day.  
The palace of our oppressors will be destroyed one day.  
We will not all give up.  
Solidarity will bring victory for our country.  
God is great, and we hope that God will help us again.  
Our only hope is God, as God is the friend of the helpless.

## Creating a banner

The school counsellor, Paul Coates, had the idea to make a banner and we decided to make it in the three colors of the flag of Afghanistan. The black symbolizes the troubled past of the nation. The red represents the blood shed by those who fought for the country's independence and the green represents prosperity that arrives after overcoming the darkness.



The students placed painted hand prints on the canvas and then also wrote different messages.

## Sending messages back to these students

I'll be meeting with further students in coming weeks. If anyone has any message to send to them, please email then via David Denborough at Dulwich Centre Foundation: [daviddenborough@dulwichcentre.com.au](mailto:daviddenborough@dulwichcentre.com.au)