UNESCO Global Education Coalition
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris

To whom it may concern,

University of the People (UoPeople), a member of the Global Education Coalition, is delighted to provide support for education in Afghanistan. UoPeople is looking forward to partnering with other members of the GEC who can help with scholarship funding, providing connectivity or other needs.

Founded on the belief that higher education is a basic human right, UoPeople is the first non-profit, tuition-free, American, accredited online university. Dedicated to opening access to higher education globally, UoPeople is designed to help qualified high school graduates overcome financial, geographic, political, and personal constraints keeping them from collegiate studies. The University offers associate and bachelor's degree programs in business administration, computer science, and health science as well as an MBA and a Master of Education (M.Ed.). UoPeople was founded in 2009 and accredited in February 2014. UoPeople has seen exponential growth in student enrollment from 500 students in 2014 to over 106,000 students today. Over 10,500* of these students are refugees – more than all other U.S. universities combined.

1,000 Scholarships for Afghans, with a priority to women

To support the educational futures of Afghanis following the Taliban's takeover, and in keeping with UoPeople's core belief that higher education is a fundamental right for all, the university is offering 1,000 full scholarships, with priority to women in Afghanistan. Many of these students have lost all hope for their future yet desperately want to continue their education online even though they fear for their lives under Taliban rule.

From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban held power over roughly three-quarters of Afghanistan and enforced a strict interpretation of Islamic law. While in power, the Taliban did not allow women to be educated after the age of eight. Women seeking an education were forced to attend underground schools, where they and their teachers risked execution if caught. UoPeople's accessible and flexible online degree programs ensure that these students can study at any time, from anywhere, and at any pace. Students only need to have an internet connection to access the university's courses, which means they can easily study from the safety of their homes.

Zakia Q., an Afghan woman who is one of the first recipients, shares her story of desperation and determination: She and her family left Afghanistan for Pakistan 21 years ago after the Taliban killed her father. He was murdered simply because he was well-educated and wanted the same for all of his children – including his daughter. Lately, she moved back to Afghanistan to pursue her

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* Estimate based on students' self-reported legal status in country of residence

bachelor's degree, since refugees are not able to go to college in Pakistan. She was in her fifth semester at an Afghan university when the Taliban took control of the country. Zakia, however, was determined to continue her education and was awarded a scholarship to study at UoPeople. "I'm attending UoPeople because it is the only way I can continue my education, and I do not want to give up."

In the first three days after making the announcement, hundreds of Afghan women have already applied. UoPeople is seeking funding partners to support these women and potentially others. Scholarships are available for all of University of the People's degree programs, undergraduate and graduate, and are allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis with priority to women.

As a non-profit institution, the university does not charge any tuition or enrollment fees and all course materials are available online for free. UoPeople only charges a small one-time application fee and a nominal assessment fee of $120 at the end of each undergraduate course and $240 for its graduate-level courses. So, any contribution will benefit far more students than at a traditional university.

Sincerely,

Shai Reshef

President
University of the People