



# BOND STREET THEATRE

peacebuilding, empowerment & healing through theatre

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## New Psychosocial Care Program for Incarcerated Women in Afghanistan

New York, NY, March 2015 - While other organizations are pulling up stakes, Bond Street Theatre is stepping up its activities in Afghanistan. This spring, Bond Street introduces creative programming into Afghanistan's women's prisons and juvenile correction centers.

The **Psychosocial Care Program** incorporates theatre-based methods into the rehabilitative process for women in the Afghan justice system, providing them with emotional support while incarcerated and helping to ease reentry into society. The first of its kind, the program addresses the emotional and psychological needs of imprisoned women and their children, and provides them with much-needed outlets for self-expression. The program will be initiated in the Herat Women's Prison.

Despite the dramatic improvement in human rights since the fall of the Taliban, Afghan women continue to suffer severe social and economic inequalities. This is especially pronounced in the justice system, which imprisons women for violating social and religious norms, including rape and flight from abusive domestic situations. According to Human Rights Watch, 95% of girls imprisoned in Afghanistan are serving time for moral or *zina* crimes, as are 50% of incarcerated adult women.

Working in partnership with Simorgh Theatre of Herat, an all-female theatre troupe, the Psychosocial Care Program gives women who have been deeply debilitated by violence and injustice a safe environment to discuss problems, learn their legal rights, and develop the communication skills and confidence to speak out.

Additionally, young children are often incarcerated with their mothers. Although this proximity is emotionally beneficial to mother and child, prison can have lasting traumatic effects on children, including poor socialization skills, lack of cohesive family identity, and diminished self-esteem. The project provides an active, creative play process necessary for children's proper development. The goal is to create a self-sustaining drama and storytelling group in the prison, run by the women themselves. Initially, the program will be conducted in the Herat Women's Prison, the second largest in the country, and then will serve as a model, encouraging similar activities in women's prisons throughout Afghanistan.

The Program is made possible through generous support from [Dining for Women](#), an organization working to impact the lives of women and girls worldwide.

**Bond Street Theatre** has been initiating creative projects for peace in conflict zones globally since 1984, and working in Afghanistan since 2003. The company conducts a variety of workshops, trains all-female theatre troupes that reach isolated women, and builds the capacity of local organizations to design and implement programs for social development. Bond Street's recent Voter Education & Fraud Mitigation Project reached over 200,000 Afghan voters.

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For further information or interviews, please contact [Joanna Sherman](#) or [Michael McGuigan](#) at 212-254-4614 in New York City or +93 (0)796 188 612 in Kabul, Afghanistan.

**Bond Street Theatre**, founded in 1978, initiates theatre-based projects for education, conflict resolution, and healing in areas of conflict and poverty globally. The company collaborates with local artists to enjoy the benefits of artistic exchange and promotes the value of the arts in shaping a peaceful future. Recipient of a MacArthur Award, the company has also received support from the Trust for Mutual Understanding, Theatre Communications Group, Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, Association for Performing Arts Presenters, ArtsLink, Asian Cultural

Council, US Institute for Peace, US Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, NEA, US Embassies, and other organizations.

***Bond Street Theatre is a non-profit organization, and an NGO in association with the United Nations.***

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