

# Mahnaz Afkhami

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**Mahnaz Afkhami** (مهناز افخمی) is Founder and President of [Women's Learning Partnership](#) (WLP), an independent, international NGO in Special Consultative Status with United Nations' ECOSOC. She is also the Executive Director of Foundation for [Iranian](#) Studies (established with an endowment from Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, the twin sister of the Shah of Iran) and former Minister of Women's Affairs of Iran. Born in Kerman, Iran, she founded the Association of Iranian University Women and , on behest of Princess Ashraf Pahlavi , served as Secretary General of the [Women's Organization of Iran](#) prior to the [Islamic revolution](#).

Living in exile in the [United States](#), Afkhami has been an advocate of [women's rights](#) for more than three decades, having founded and headed several international [non-governmental organizations](#) focused on advancing the status of women. Formerly, she was President of the Sisterhood Is Global Institute. Afkhami is a Co-Chair of the Women Leaders Intercultural Forum and the Global Women's Action Network for Children. She serves on the boards and steering committees of a number of international organizations including [Global Fund for Women](#), International Museum of Women, Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative, Women's Human Rights Net, Women's Rights Division of [Human Rights Watch](#), and [World Movement for Democracy](#). She created the concept and mobilized support for the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development (APCWD) and the [United Nations](#) International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women ([INSTRAW](#)). She served as a member of Iran's High Council of Family Planning and Welfare, the board of trustees of [Kerman University](#), and the board of trustees of Farah University for Women. Additionally, Afkhami has led numerous task forces on democratization, leadership, and women's [human rights](#) in the Global South including multinational delegations to the UN [World Conference on Human Rights](#) in Vienna (1993) and the [Fourth World Conference on Women](#) in Beijing (1995).

Afkhami has lectured and published extensively on the international women's movement, women's [human rights](#), women in [leadership](#), women and [technology](#), and women's participation in [civil society](#) building and democratization. Among Ms. Afkhami's publications, which have been widely translated and internationally distributed, are *Women and the Law in Iran* (Foundation for Iranian Studies, 1993), *In the Eye of the Storm: Women in Post Revolutionary Iran* (Syracuse University Press, 1994), *Women in Exile* (University Press of Virginia, 1994), *Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights In the Muslim World* (Syracuse University Press, 1995), *Claiming Our Rights: A Manual for Women's Human Rights Education in Muslim Societies* (Sisterhood Is Global Institute, 1996), *Muslim Women and the Politics of Participation* (Syracuse University Press, 1997), *Safe and Secure: Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls in Muslim Societies* (Sisterhood Is Global Institute, 1998), *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women* (Women's Learning Partnership, 2001), and *Toward A Compassionate Society* (Women's Learning Partnership, 2002).

# Profiles

## Mahnaz Afkhami

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Mahnaz Afkhami is Founder and President of Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP), Executive Director of Foundation for Iranian Studies, and former Minister of State for Women's Affairs in Iran. Born in Kerman, Iran, she founded the Association of Iranian University Women and served as Secretary General of the Women's Organization of Iran prior to the Islamic revolution.

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