

**THE PRACTICE HOUSE IN AFGHANISTAN**  
**A CASE STUDY**  
**OF**  
**PIONEER WORK IN HOME ECONOMICS IN KABUL**

by

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Office of Education  
Washington 25, D. C.

October 1955

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the story of my pioneer work in home economics in Kabul, Afghanistan. In April 1953 (while completing a Fulbright Professorship in Paris, France), the American Embassy informed me of an immediate opening for a home economist in Afghanistan. Later, I received a letter from the Department of State which included the following excerpt:

"It is believed that you would be able to make a very worthwhile contribution toward the mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of Afghanistan. Accordingly, the Secretary of State offers you a grant under Public Law 402, 80th Congress, the Smith-Mundt Act, to enable you to accept the proposed visiting professorship at the University of Kabul."

Thus, I implemented the "pilot" home economics project in Afghanistan at the request of the Royal Afghan Ministry of Education after being strongly motivated by Mr. Charles F. Edmundson, Public Affairs Officer of the local United States Information Service (U.S.I.S.). When school closed in December, my Smith-Mundt award also expired and I returned to America. In February, 1954, I was appointed by Foreign Operations Administration and sent back to Afghanistan to continue my initial project under the United States Operations Mission to Afghanistan and remained there until March, 1955.

This was a challenging assignment. Blood, sweat and tears were involved in cutting this project entirely out of new cloth. Of necessity, I learned to improvise on improvisations and I benefited immensely from this unique experience. I had an invaluable opportunity to impart

information about America, to demonstrate and share our skills and to learn about the culture and problems of Afghanistan. Moreover, I have a much keener appreciation of the needs of humanity--especially the plight of women in this Islamic land. It is sincerely hoped that this project resulted in a reservoir of friendship and goodwill of the Afghans for the United States. As for myself, I left with a better understanding and sympathetic attitude toward Afghanistan and her many problems.

## THE BACKGROUND

### Historical

Afghanistan is an intensely interesting ancient oriental kingdom--an independent constitutional monarchy. Its history goes back some 2,500 years during which it has been the scene of many vital movements of history, for it contains within its borders the dividing line which separates Central from Southern Asia. Because it lies on both sides of the famous range of mountains called the Hindu-Kush and between the Oxus River and Indus, Afghanistan has been trodden upon by history. Darius, Alexander, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Babur all invaded Afghanistan or "Land of the Afghans". It is the birthplace of the "Vedas" and the "Avesta"--two ancient documents which help to trace the formation of the earliest Aryan society in the first Aryan kingdom about 3,500 years B.C.

A close study of the Afghan way of life, the Afghan folklore, folk songs and folk dances reveal how very deeply these ancient times have left their impression on present usages and customs. Historic literature on Afghanistan discloses ancient tales of kings and heroes that are of historical interest and literary value.

Religion had a strong influence on the ancient culture and traditions of the Afghans. Asoka, who ruled from 273-232 B.C. accepted the religion of Buddha in 260 B.C. At that time Buddhist centers were firmly established in parts of Afghanistan and it remained the stronghold of Buddhism until the year 900 A.D. The introduction of the Islamic

religion brought about a great revolution in Afghanistan as their ancient culture was replaced completely by the Islamic one and this has remained a decisive factor in the Afghan way of life ever since.

In 1885 A.D. a serious clash took place between Russia and Afghanistan. This together with the rebellions of 1890 and 1892 against King Abdur-Rahman inside Afghanistan, and the political and economic pressure brought to bear from the outside resulted in a diplomatic war against the British. This was subsequent to the Afghan territory which had been taken--the so-called North West Frontier of India, and the territory known today as Pakhtunistan.

King Abdur-Rahman was succeeded by his son Habibullah who accepted the British political influence. During the First World War Afghanistan remained neutral. King Habibullah was assassinated and he was succeeded to the throne by his son Amanullah. He voiced the long suppressed desire of the Afghans for the independence of their land. This demand resulted in the Afghan War of Independence. Soon after this victory, King Amanullah succeeded in establishing diplomatic relations with the outside world. After achieving this goal, King Amanullah began to introduce reforms inside Afghanistan and to prepare his people to play their part in international affairs--not only in relation to Asia but also in regard to the Western World.

This movement resulted in invitations being extended to the King to visit several European countries. King Amanullah returned from Europe favorably impressed and eager to introduce the western way of life into

Afghanistan with revolutionary swiftness. The King's reforms were strongly opposed by a certain group of people who resisted the modernization of their country. Fierce civil wars broke out in Afghanistan and later resulted in the abdication of King Amanullah and his exile. One full year of civil wars ensued. Most of Afghanistan's political leaders were killed, banished or imprisoned. After a time, Nadir Shah succeeded in establishing himself as a powerful ruler and, with the help of an elected Parliament, drew up a new Constitution for the country. In 1933, only three years after his coronation, Nadir Shah was assassinated and he was succeeded by his only son His Majesty Zahir Shah, the present King of Afghanistan.

### Geographical

Geographically, Afghanistan is located in the heart of Asia. It is situated in north latitude  $34^{\circ} 31'$ ; east longitude  $69^{\circ} 12'$  in South Central Asia at the western end of the great Himalayan barrier. Moreover, it contains within it the dividing line which separates Southern from Central Asia. Afghanistan is a comparatively small country of about 270,000 square miles of mountainland and desert--an area as large as Texas.

Afghanistan is surrounded by Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan. Her neighbors on the northern borders are the people of Soviet Russia (Uzbeghs and Tadjiks); in the East, a narrow strip of land, Wakhan, brings the Afghans into contact with the Chinese; on the East and Southeast is Pakistan, and Iran lies on the West.

The dominant geographic feature in Afghanistan is the lofty

Hindu-Kush system which begins in the Pamir fringe of the Himalayas. The mountains, which rise to over 24,000 feet near the eastern border, extend in a general southwest direction, with spurs spreading to the north, the south and the west. Several historic passes penetrate the mountains. The most famous of these being the Khyber Pass--the main route from northern Afghanistan to Pakistan and India.

The boundary line between Afghanistan and Russia is over seven hundred miles long, four hundred of which is defined by the River Oxus and the remainder by stone boundary pillars or natural water courses. Incidentally, the part of the boundary formed by the River Oxus is passable only in a few places where small Russian steamers and Afghan ferry boats operate along the river. The Russo-Afghan border near Pamir is on the northern side of the Wakhan strip and rises to a high altitude reaching the snow-fields of Pamir, the highest plateau in the world, more familiarly known as "The Roof of the World." Afghanistan is completely landlocked and the nearest approach to the sea is through Karachi, Pakistan, which is some 600 miles to the south. The country is mostly mountains, narrow fertile valleys and uninhabitable desert.

Afghanistan maintained a policy of isolation until 1919. It has embarked upon its present era of progressive modernization within the last twenty years. Even now, Afghans do not visit and are rarely visited. Obviously, this remote country has not welcomed tourists. There is not a single railroad and only about two miles of paved road in the entire country and this is confined to Kabul, the capital city. The three

airfields in Afghanistan have no paved runways and, in unfavorable weather, it is impossible for infrequent planes to land or take off. Moreover, the rough, dirt roads and poorly constructed bridges contribute to transportation problems. The country is sparsely settled and there are few large towns. About half of the population live in permanent villages scattered in the agricultural districts while the rest lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic existence.

The prevailing climatic conditions are dryness combined with extremes of temperature. However, the weather is governed to a large extent by the altitude--ranging from alpine in the higher mountains to desert in the south. In general, winter months are characterized by intense cold and the summer months by extremes of heat, with fluctuations in temperature. Few meteorological data are available except for Kabul which is 6,500 feet above sea-level. In Kabul, where the climate is comparable to that of Denver, the mean annual temperature is approximately 58° to 60° F. Low winter temperatures are encountered in many districts throughout the north, while in Kandahar and the desert country to the south, summer temperatures of 110° to 120° are common. The rainfall which is scanty in all parts of the country, is only from 10 to 15 inches a year in the river valleys of the northeastern mountains to 2 to 3 inches in the southwest. Precipitation is usually confined to winter and spring months except in Kabul river basin where the southwestern monsoon of Indian Ocean may be responsible for the occasional storms in July and August. Heavy snows persist for three months or longer

throughout the north, while many of the higher peaks are capped perpetually with snow. The melting snows of spring and summer feed the abundant mountain streams, providing ample surface water in the northwestern provinces in spite of the relative deficiency in rainfall.

### Population and Socio-Economic Conditions

No official census has ever been taken in Afghanistan, but the population is variously estimated from 12 to 14 million. Kabul has a population of about 200,000. Afghan people represent a medley of races with different ethnic backgrounds and distinguishing customs and modes of life. The inhabitants of Afghanistan, regardless of race and religion, are known as Afghans. They may be distinguished thus: Pakhtuns or Pashtuns, the largest group in the country which comprises 60% of the total population; Tadjiks 30.7%; Uzbecks 5%; Hazarachs 3% and others .8%. The Pakhtuns and Tadjiks belong to two ancient branches of Aryans who settled in Afghanistan. The only difference between these two communities is their language as the Pakhtuns speak Pashto and the Tadjiks speak Persian. Both languages belong to the same group of Aryan languages and have a strong resemblance to each other. The Uzbecks are of Turkish origin while the Hazarachs descend from the Mongols. The rest of the population includes a small percentage of Hindus, Jews, and a mixture of Central Asian races. Out of the total population, two million Afghans, most of them belonging to the Pakhtun community, lead a nomadic life and depend on their cattle for a living. The grazing grounds are changed regularly with the seasons. During the summer they stay in Hazarajat while in winter they move

to the Eastern province.

Afghanistan is mostly pastoral and to a lesser degree agricultural. There is no heavy industry in the country. Agriculture and stock raising form the foundations of the national economy. Only 5% of the nation's land is cultivated. The arable land is confined largely to narrow plains bordering the rivers except in the Oxus and Kabul river valleys in the north where the acreage under cultivation is increased by irrigation. Hard and soft wheat, barley and other cereals constitute the major crops --also grown are: vegetables, fruits, nuts, sugar-beets, cotton, tobacco, oil-seeds, opium and rice. Large numbers of goats, fat-tailed sheep, karakul sheep, camels, cattle, yaks and horses are raised by the nomadic tribes who migrate seasonally with their flocks to the higher summer pastures. The most valuable exports are karakul skins, dried fruits and nuts which together account for almost 75% of the income of the territory. Other products which are exported are wool, cotton, silk, fruits, furs and skins, opium and medicinal herbs. Agricultural production is restricted by very primitive methods of farming, adverse climatic and soil conditions.

#### Vital Statistics

There are no accurate vital statistics for Afghanistan. Data concerning births, deaths, and related statistical information are meager for the settled populations, and almost completely lacking for the nomadic tribes. Reliable observers report that infant and maternal mortality rates are high in all parts of the country. The principal causes

of death in infancy and early childhood are malnutrition, malaria and intestinal infections.

### Food and Nutrition

No comprehensive studies have been made of food habits and nutrition of different Afghan peoples. The diets of both villagers and city dwellers are governed by racial customs and local food resources, as well as by financial resources of the individual families. The standards of nutrition are variable but many observers believe that almost 50% of the population are under-nourished. Native breads of wheat or barley flours, supplemented by vegetables and fruits in season, form the basis of most dietaries in the urban and rural areas. Tea is the customary beverage and alcoholic beverages are forbidden. Rice is popular--often expensive since its cultivation is limited to low-land districts along the southern foothills of the Hindu-Kush. Although sheep, goats and other livestock are raised in large numbers, little meat is normally consumed except as an ingredient of the national dish--"pilau" in which rice is augmented by mutton or chicken. Because of religious restrictions, pork is not consumed and there are no hogs in Afghanistan. Butter, cheese, and a form of dried curd are used extensively. They are prepared most frequently from sheep's milk. Milk cattle are kept in the Kabul valley and in certain districts of the southwest. The fats derived from the tail tissues of the indigenous fat-tailed sheep are often employed as a substitute for butter. The nomadic tribes subsist largely on milk and meat. Since surplus supplies are customarily traded for grains, their diets

also include a certain amount of bread. The poverty-stricken masses in Afghanistan live on merely tea and bread and occasionally a little fresh fruit.

### Language

Persian and Pashto are the two common languages of Afghanistan. Pashto is recognized as the official language but both are taught in the Government schools. Persian is commonly used for official correspondence and in education. Most educated Afghans are bilingual in Pashto and Persian, while many also speak Western languages. Arabic is the medium of religious instruction.

### Religion

All Afghans are Moslems. The Sunni branch of Islam is the national religion, but the Hazaras and certain minor tribes are Shiites. Afghan men and boys worship at the Mosques but it is not customary for the women or girls to go there. The women-folk make their ablutions and say their prayers in the privacy of their homes. Even when a woman or girl dies, her body is taken to the Mosque by the men-folk and the women remain at home to mourn. There are many holidays--fast and feast days that are centered around the home as well as the Mosque. There is no separation of church and state. The "mullahs" or priests are also the judges in the courts.

### Calendar

The Government and the business communities observe the Shamsi or

solar year which usually begins on March 21, or spring equinox of the Western calendar, and ends on March 20 of the following year. Since their year I corresponds to 622 A.D.--the date of the Hegira, or Mohammed's flight from Mecca, I arrived there in 1332 instead of 1953. Their calendar year has 365 days and 12 months of 29 to 32 days each. The religious holidays are observed on the lunar calendar.

### Education

Most of the population is illiterate. Education is free to all from the elementary through the professional schools and is theoretically compulsory for the boys. The education of girls is still very much in its infancy. The Ministry of Education made little provision for the education of girls due to the culture of the area; therefore, there is no such thing as co-education in Afghanistan. Young girls and women observe strict "purdah"--i.e., they wear "charderies", or long, full-hooded garments that completely cover their bodies and veil their faces. This rigidly enforced "purdah" system imposes many social restrictions for women. The first girls entered school to begin formal education in 1936, and a few of the original group finished college in 1951. Until very recently, Girls' Schools were found only in Kabul, but now some of the girls out in the provinces have reached as far as the third grade. Because of the limitations of the "purdah" system, Afghan women educated in Kabul are not free to go out to the provinces and teach, as they are not permitted to travel alone or spend a night away from under their father's or husband's roof. On the other hand, the village women cannot travel to the

cities on educational pursuits. Dormitory life for girls does not exist in Afghanistan as it is not in accord with the customs. The Afghan Government operates elementary schools for the education of boys. Kabul University, organized in 1932, now has faculties in medicine, law, science and literature for young men. The "Faculte" for women is located at Malalai, one of the Girls' Schools. Students (male) are sent abroad on scholarships to countries as America, France, England and Switzerland. Women are not given an opportunity to study abroad unless they are accompanied by a male member of their family. French, German and English are taught in the high schools. Many of the teachers employed in higher education at the Boys' Schools are from America and France. In Kabul, schools open in March after the spring rains, and close in December or earlier if the weather becomes too cold, as the schools are unheated.

#### Housing and Family Living

The turbulent history of the country is reflected in the walled-cities. The average well-to-do Afghan city dwellers live in what is locally referred to as a "compound". This property usually consists of the main residence building, other out-buildings for servants, kitchen, garage and storehouses for coal, wood, etc., a lawn, and possibly a vegetable garden, all surrounded by a high mud wall. It is not uncommon to find a living room for men, and another for women in Moslem homes. Likewise, there may be an outdoor garden for men and one for women. By tradition, little opportunity is afforded women to participate in family circles. When the male members are engaged in discussions of serious

matters, women are not present, nor are they permitted to be seen by men other than those in their family. One often finds several family units living under one roof.

In Afghanistan, the marriages are usually arranged by the parents who act as go-betweens or negotiators. Sometimes outside match-makers are sent to make economic and other arrangements within the norms of the culture. In these cases, the prospective bride and groom never see each other before the wedding. On the other hand, certain relatives within the family may marry. The most common linkage which unites family systems is the marriage of cousins. By this, family systems have great solidarity, strong lines of authority, and a high degree of integration. Obviously, these marriages are made among relatives who have seen each other in family circles.

Polygamy is practiced in this Moslem country, i.e., religion permits men to have as many as four wives if they treat them all alike. Because of economic conditions, very few Afghan men marry more than one woman. While women have no social status, many voice themselves in the home and some men are inclined to listen. In other family situations, the woman is voiceless and the husband is definitely patriarchal. For the most part, the servants are male, as women do not work outside of their homes. Female nursemaids are sometimes hired into families with children, but I have also seen male servants as "baby sitters."

Invariably, boys in the home have definite social standing. Their births are registered, presumably, for future military purposes.

Significantly, births of girl babies are not recorded. For obvious reasons, pregnant women prefer to give birth to male children because of the negative attitude of men toward women in this Moslem society. Interestingly enough, fathers are frequently seen in the bazaars with their sons and small daughters. Girls do not usually observe the strict "purdah" system until after they have reached the age of puberty. There are some stricter families that require their girls to wear the charderi as early as age nine. Customarily, boys and girls do not attend the same schools. Organized play for children is not yet known in Afghanistan. However, the American Embassy compound has a children's library where little boys and girls go for story-telling, to be shown educational as well as entertaining movies, to have an opportunity to engage in activities centered around the use of paper, crayolas and scissors and, when the weather permits, to enjoy supervised outdoor play in sandpiles. It has been noted that as the girls grow older, they do not welcome the boys into the group. On the other hand, it has been observed that the small boys do not resent the presence of the girls. Children are a potential target for education in family living in Afghanistan.

Afghans like babies but do not demonstrate affection for them. Usually many superstitious practices are involved in infant care. It is a common belief that various charms should be worn by the baby to protect him from evil. One Afghan mother informed me that she tied a medal on the baby so her love for him would go into the disk. They firmly believe that babies who are loved too much die early. Afghans keep their babies

too still by tightly wrapping them from the shoulder (arms enclosed) to the feet. They are of the opinion that wrapping babies assures them of straight postures. Little is known about infant-feeding. Fortunately, Afghan women lactate copiously and most of them breast-feed their babies a long time. On the other hand, formulae-making is a relatively unknown procedure. Milk is rarely ever consumed as a beverage in Afghanistan. Some mothers wean their babies on to mixtures of tea and cornstarch or simple soups. Infantile diarrheas are common because the sanitary standards are very low. In the well-to-do families, babies are handled almost wholly by dirty, ill-trained "Nanas" or nursemaids. I have observed male Afghan servants out "sunning" babies in buggies but I have never seen an Afghan woman in "charderi" pushing a baby buggy in the streets. Afghan women are very clever with needles and will knit or embroider many beautiful clothes for their babies. Recently, U.N.I.C.E.F. established an Infant Welfare station and Dried Milk Dispensing Depot at Malalai, one of the girls' schools. The Finnish Pediatrician there states that 40 - 60% of the Afghan babies die in their first year.

Other Problems Affecting the Development of Home Economics in  
Afghanistan

A. Women "in Purdah"

1. Do not frequent bazaars - some women are just beginning to shop at cloth bazaars and the like. Difficult to motivate them to purchase wisely and economically. Only women who are too poor to afford servants "frequent" bazaars.

Only men and boys work in shops - male servants buy most things for the households as: food, clothing, fuel, some furniture and furnishings.

2. Do not appear in public places in groups. Therefore it is impossible to take them on educational field-trips because most of them are only permitted to go to school and right back home. In fact, many of them are driven directly to and from school by male servants in cars or horse-drawn carriages. Classes have to end promptly around 5:00 p.m. because if these young teachers are late getting home, they risk being severely reprimanded by their husbands or fathers. Women are not allowed to go to the library. Thus, women's magazines, catalogues, books, bulletins, etc., had to be made available in a small "bibliotheque" in the practice house.

3. Do not visit the homes of foreigners (as a rule) - not even those of women who live alone without special consent of a male relative. This is a definite social barrier because it is difficult to introduce new ideas unless Afghan girls may widen their scope of experiences to include contact with women of other lands.

4. Do not have a positive attitude toward using their hands. They have to be led slowly into these types of activities. Women are practically never in situations where they have to use their hands (except for a little knitting or crocheting at home). They feel that anything to be done routinely with the hands is a chore to be delegated to the servants.

5. Do not travel. Most of the benefits of educational projects undertaken in the capital city never diffuse out into the villages where help is greatly needed. Afghan women are not issued passports or visas.

6. Do not assume leadership roles and thus it is difficult to build up a lasting program without an active "counterpart" in the host country. Women teachers are not even permitted to go to the Ministry of Education. The "Chiefs" at the Girls' Schools are men who act as "liasons" between the Ministry of Education and their respective institutions.

7. Do not have citizenship or opportunities to pursue careers.

B. "Mullahs" and older men

resist change in the situation among Afghan women. They do not yet appreciate the value of a "two-footed" educational program that includes training of girls as well as boys.

C. Afghanistan has practically no middle-class

There are two main groups or classes of people - the very poor and the very rich. The extremely poor people seem out of reach at this time. Some of the many obstacles are that these women are completely illiterate; they may have only one pot in which to cook, and only one dress--the one they wear. Traditionally, in some villages, the men buy the little food that is cooked in the one pot and also the material from which the one dress is made. Moreover, the education of girls in the villages is a new departure and many of the poor people in Kabul do not send their

girls to school in spite of the fact that education is free to all.

On the other hand, there is the so-called rich woman whose household is maintained by many underpaid, untrained servants. She is thus wholly unaccustomed to using her hands and home economics is not meaningful to her.

Problems that Affect Subject-matter:

1. Food and cooking -- Dirty, untrained servants "man" most of the kitchens in Afghanistan. These kitchens are mainly filthy outhouses that the Afghan woman has never even entered. A few of the poorer women do their own cooking. On the other hand, the poverty-stricken masses do not have what could even be called a kitchen. So, with a couple of afghanis (local coins) they buy a pot of tea from the nearby "Tea-houses" and fresh nan or bread to feed the whole family. Occasionally, they add a few grapes to this and have a "typical" meal requiring no cooking facilities. Their meager hovels (often one-room adobe huts) house their large families and cattle. Because of the abundant supply of fresh fruits and vegetables, home-canning is a technique that needs to be taught in Afghanistan. However, due to transportation problems in this isolated country, glass jars, rubber rings, tin cans, etc., are not readily available. The "high altitude" also presents a problem in cooking.
2. Clothing (Sewing) - Afghan women do rather nice needlework but often they waste time and energy working on cheap, non color-fast materials. Oddly enough, it is customary for the woman to have a

male tailor come into her home for the making of (measuring and fitting) such garments as: dresses, suits and coats. In Afghanistan, no patterns are ever used but pictures in catalogues and simple drawings are copied.

3. Housing - In many cases, the house is selected or built by the man before he marries. Often, the newly married couple may move into a multiple-family household. Under these circumstances, the young bride would have practically no opportunity for planning a home.

4. Finance - Young Afghan women have no conception of money management as most things are bought for them and they are not wage-earners. Habits of thrift are hard to teach women who have not had the opportunity to buy even their own lipstick.

5. Family relationships - Since young Afghan women have no "dates", no courtship periods or the like, all of their relationships with people are centered around home and school. Family ties are thus very strong.

6. Sex education - This subject is "taboo" as Afghan women lead such highly sheltered lives. Their knowledge of sex is limited mainly to what they learn in the biological sciences at school. Co-education does not occur.

7. Health - Many Afghan men will let their wives die before they will let a male physician examine or attend them. Obviously, there are no Afghan women physicians. Teams of nurse-midwives were

trained recently by a Danish Obstetrician (woman) who served in Kabul under W.H.O. Upon her departure, the young Afghan women were given few opportunities to go out on home-deliveries as their husbands or fathers preferred to keep them at home rather than risk having them seen by men at the house of the mother-to-be. There are few and poor medical facilities for women in Afghanistan. Cots are conveniently placed beside cribs of hospitalized infants and pre-school children so the mother may nurse her sick child.

8. Sanitation - A complete lack of sanitation is evident throughout the country. Frequently in dry weather, there are dust-storms. Commonly the only water supply is from shallow, open ditches of unclean water located on each side of the dirt roads. Fortunately, the sun and high, dry mountainous air do much for the polluted streams. Water-carriers are important men in Afghanistan. They keep down the dust in the crowded bazaars and city streets by taking wooden spades and shoveling water on the streets from these ditches or "jueys." Full-glass window panes, screens, kitchens within the house, indoor toilets, etc., may be considered luxuries for most Afghans.

9. Recreation and entertainment - It is not deemed "lady-like" for young Afghan women to participate in active games. For the same reasons, gymnastics are not engaged in at school. Entertainment for Afghan women is very limited. Recently, for diversion, they have been permitted to go to the movies in Kabul either in the mornings

or early afternoons. They are shown movies mostly from India as these are closer to their culture. Interestingly enough, men go to different movie-houses in the evening. They frequently see American movies. Young Afghan women are just beginning to have more plans, exhibitions and social affairs at school. Socially, they can only go to gatherings of women as: tea-parties, weddings, birthday celebrations and the like.

10. Child care and development - What is taught in courses like this may or may not be practiced at home. The nursemaid at home for the young Afghan baby often was the wet-nurse for the young mother. Thus, the latter, out of respect, is in no position to re-educate this tradition-bound, illiterate servant. Since this servant wrapped the mother, her off-spring will also be wrapped.

11. Laundering - Because of the menial nature of laundering, it is difficult to do much effective teaching along these lines until the value of home economics education is better understood.

### My Introduction to Afghanistan

I arrived in Kabul during the Summer of 1953 after coming directly from Paris, France, and thus had no opportunity for "briefing" in Washington, D. C. The United States Information Service (U.S.I.S.) and the Royal Afghan Ministry of Education were very helpful in orienting me. Through American Embassy personnel and key people in the Afghan community, I became acquainted with my host country, its people and its educational system--particularly for girls. I soon discovered that school

had been in session since March.

I met Dr. Anas, the President of the University of Kabul. Fortunately, he had been to America and spoke fluent English. During a conference at his office, he informed me that only young men attended this university. Therefore, I found it expedient not to mention that my assignment was that of visiting professor of home economics at the University of Kabul. Dr. Anas drove me to Lycée Malalai where I was introduced to Mr. Azizurahman, President of all of the Girls' Schools in Kabul. Mme. Hénaff, the French "Directrice" of this Lycée (which was attended by 1,700 girls from ages 6 to 18 in the mornings) and Mlle. Kobrah, her young Afghan assistant. Dr. Anas proudly related that Mlle. Kobrah was one of his former students; that is, he had taught her physics at the Women's "Faculté" (college) which held its classes every afternoon on Malalai campus. Mlle. Kobrah was an excellent representative of the first young Afghan women to enter public school in 1936 and finish college in 1951.

To facilitate communication, all four of us conversed in French. I was taken on a "visite" to one of the classrooms where many little girls were quietly engaged in needle-work at their desks. I observed one student, about 10 years old, doing some beautiful embroidery on a pair of white cotton rompers for a baby. All of the girls were wearing the typical school uniform--a simple black dress and dark shoes. It is customary for these small girls (before the age of puberty and the charderi) to wear a short shoulder-length white veil called a "charda" over their

beautiful dark hair. When I walked into this classroom with my hosts all girls grabbed up their treasured needle-work and rose to their feet immediately.

Lycée Malalai was considered the best Girls' School in Afghanistan. There were 51 teachers and 1,700 students in the first twelve grades. Forty-one of these teachers were young Afghan women of whom 16 were among the first college graduates in the class of 1951. Of the remaining 25, there were about 10 who taught the younger girls in the mornings and attended the Faculté themselves in the afternoons. Oddly enough, male teachers are seen in Girls' Schools. Lycee Malalai had six men, naturally Afghans, engaged in teaching religion from the Koran (Holy Book). In the Faculte classes at Malalai, most of the college courses are taught by professors who are also on the faculty at the University of Kabul.

Mr. Azizurahman accompanied me over to Zarghoona, the so-called English-speaking Girls' School. I met the President, an Afghan man and the Principal, an Afghan woman. Language became a barrier as this young woman didn't know a word of English nor French but German was her Western language. Mr. Azizurahman was interpreter. As at Malalai, I visited several classrooms and made brief "good-will" speeches to the English classes after their "impromptu expressions of welcome". I was shown a beautiful display of handwork done by the students from the fourth standard on up. This exhibit included knitted goods such as sweaters, baby clothes, crocheted doilies, toy elephants, pillow-cases, household linens and the like. Zarghoona had more teachers and students than Malalai.

My first days in this far off land were filled with many questions. The paramount one was how could I reach the women behind the "chardaris"? If I were successful in overcoming this social barrier, then in what way could home economics contribute knowledge beneficial to the family life in this Islamic Culture? How could I best represent my country, race and profession in this pilot project with the hard-to-get-to, highly sheltered Afghan women? One thing was sure, I would not have a "counterpart" as there were no Afghan leaders among the women because of the "purdah" restriction.

Significantly, I represented many precedents as a visiting professor under the International Educational Exchange Program of the Department of State. I was the first American Negro to be sent to Afghanistan, the first home economist to work closely with the young Afghan women in Kabul and the only person in the American mission to see the beautiful, unveiled faces of these students behind the "purdah" walls at school. At the outset, I was very much aware of my real responsibilities and the importance of discharging them in an acceptable yet effective manner within the narrow framework of the mores, customs and patterns of Afghanistans.

### Project Planning

With practically no pre-planning and no Afghan counterpart, I found it very difficult at first to decide on a specific approach to a project. There were so many obvious needs. Moreover, conditions among women in Afghanistan were so completely different from those in the countries I had visited.

As men are the dominant sex in Afghanistan, it was expedient to work tactfully through them to get to their women. Obviously, they had a strong feeling about women's place being in the home. One Afghan man remarked that he was glad that I had come to show their lazy women how to do something. Another man intimated that my work would not be useful as I had come too early while still another said I came too late. The Minister of Education said that there should have been three of me to initiate an educational project among Afghan women.

After a brief study of this situation which imposed many restrictions, I got the idea of setting up a home economics practice house as an approach to teaching the home-making arts in a "learn-by-doing" type of project.

#### Problems and Decisions

To which group was I to teach the home-making arts? As has been mentioned, Afghanistan has practically no middle-class and the poor women that I wanted so much to help were beyond reach at that time. On the other hand, the educated rich ones were completely surrounded by untrained servants. At one time I wondered if I might make a more effective contribution as a home economist in Afghanistan if I could teach the servants. Obviously, they could all profit from courses in cooking, sanitation, and proper food handling. Eventually, it was decided that an ideal group with which to start a pioneer project in home economics would be the young teachers from Malalai and Zarghoona Girls' schools.

**Proposal:** To establish a practice house as a center for teaching the home-making arts in a "learn-by-doing" situation.

**Over-all aim:** To create in Afghan women a desire to use home economics education as a key to better living.

**General objectives:** (Three of the most important of the many)

1. To develop in the student a favorable attitude toward home-making as a worthy occupation.
2. To help the student acquire skills in homemaking arts.
3. To stimulate in the student an appreciation for democratic principles.

The Minister of Education was readily sold on this whole idea and permitted me to use an old, unused cottage I discovered by chance on Malalai campus. This rather large cottage was empty except for the impressive presence of two mud stoves. But it contained two luxuries: a tin roof above and beautiful prison-made tile floors in two of the largest rooms. Investigation revealed that the young Afghan teachers (mostly married) were interested in pursuing this projected course in home economics.

It was gratifying to note at this point that the decision regarding the nature of the project, the choice of students and the subsequent "gift" of the old cottage as a place where home economics could make its debut in Afghanistan had been the result of only two weeks of planning with the Royal Afghan Ministry of Education. The local United States Information Service also gave me full support in launching this project.

As the Ministry of Education had only male translators, I was faced with the overwhelming problem of finding a woman translator. This was necessary because six languages were spoken among my prospective students. Fortunately, two young sisters of the Queen, who had been educated two years in India, heard about my dilemma and volunteered to act as my interpreters.

The next hurdle involved financing the project: Who would be responsible for financing what? The Minister of Education, the Public Affairs Officer and I had several conferences before mutual agreement was reached about what financial support each would contribute toward the home economics project.

I encountered many difficulties in getting the old cottage rehabilitated. All the work had to be done by men and ordinarily their presence was forbidden on a Moslem campus. There were days and days of dirty work in the empty cottage before it was in condition to receive the students. The renovation was accomplished by paying the Afghan men to work on holidays and after school. Fortunately, the school officials were very sympathetic with my plight and granted me some concessions. I decided, due to the fact that no Afghan woman was permitted to enter any embassy, to move my office from U.S.I.S. in the American Embassy compound and set up my headquarters in the cottage at school. Here, I would be readily available to the people I came to serve. The energetic movers from the embassy were not allowed to haul the heavy furniture into the walled-in girls' campus and the elderly men on guard at the school gate were too

weak for such a strenuous task. Therefore, it was necessary for me to supervise the stalwart movers that evening by flashlight after the girls had vacated the unlighted school grounds.

During the planning process much paper work was involved. Teaching materials were assembled--some in Persian and others in French which was the Western language more commonly understood at Malalai. I made a comprehensive list of the movies, pamphlets, books, etc., available through the U.S.I.S. Library. At the outset before I learned to speak Persian, the Ministry of Education provided me with a French-speaking "liaison" and he accompanied me to the bazaars.

#### Implementation of the Project

Early in August, 1953, the first organized home economics course in Afghanistan was open to Malalai and Zarghoona teachers at the cottage. The classroom was in order--the tile floors had been scrubbed clean, the students' freshly painted double-desks and benches faced the teacher's area in front of the classroom.

On the blotter-protected desk was a clock presented by the Minister of Education, a small Afghan flag on a stand, a world globe, a writing set and a book-display from the U.S.I.S. Library. Behind the desk was a beautiful map of Afghanistan which was secured from the United Nations. To the left of the desk was a revolving blackboard with green writing surfaces under which were troughs for holding the new sticks of white chalk. A bulletin board with a colorful poster of the local "Basic Seven Food Groups" (in Persian) thumbtacked on it was at the right of

the desk. These simple items of classroom furnishings were not taken for granted in far-away Afghanistan; to my students they seemed almost luxurious. I wanted this cheerful atmosphere in the practice house classroom to inspire these young teachers to do something about improving theirs in the Girls' Schools.

The white wooden ceiling was ornately designed with geometric patterns built to withstand the strain of earthquakes. The upper walls were painted white and the lower parts grey. There were five large windows providing good lighting and ventilation. Naturally, there were no electric or heating facilities in the practice house.

Of the 48 young teachers who registered for the course, 25 were from Malalai and 23 came over from Zarghoona. These students had previously signed up on two lists. Group I, which was made up largely of the teachers who had finished the Faculté (College) at Malalai, met on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Group II, made up of teachers who had not yet finished college, met on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons; Friday or "Jumah" is the Sabbath in this Islamic country.

The students were most attractive but a little shy the first day. All of them were neatly dressed in Western style clothes. Most of the girls wore dainty nylon or cotton blouses with gaily-colored cotton skirts. A few of them wore the teacher's uniform from the school where they had taught that morning. Each student was wearing nylon stockings, as no teacher is allowed to enter a class-room bare-legged. Afghan women have beautiful hair and these young women had theirs well-groomed.

A study of the "questionnaire forms" that these students had previously filled out for me revealed that there was one young teacher who was 18 years old and another who was 35; but the average age was 22. Interestingly enough, this oldest student had never received formal education in a school as during her childhood days girls were not sent to public schools, but she was the sister of Dr. Anas and had been well-tutored at home.

Except this was August instead of September, I might have thought that I was answering the bell for a school-opening on an American campus somewhere. Some of the Salias, Marias, and Lailas in Afghanistan reminded me greatly of Sallys, Maries and Lilas I had taught in America. The cast was the same in many ways but perhaps the setting was different. Anyhow, I was determined that, before cutting my project from new cloth, I would make every effort first to carefully spin and weave it from natural and local resources that would be practical. That is, the cloth and the pattern to be cut had to conform to the mores and customs of the learner and not the teacher.

Our first days in the old cottage were spent in informal talks on such topics as:

What is home economics?

How can we use it as a key to better living?

Later we discussed the general objectives of the course: To improve ourselves, our homes and to teach others. With the assistance of native translators, all information was presented to the class in the Persian

language. Six languages were spoken by the students in the group: Persian, Pashto, English, French, German and Hindi. However, Persian was the language commonly understood within the group.

I took the students on a tour of the old cottage and showed them room after empty room trying to inspire them to turn it into a lovely practice house for solving home problems. In short, I tried to show them how the projected practice house would provide a place for "learning by doing" in practical situations. Many of these young women came from aristocratic homes and naturally were unaccustomed to using their hands. At first, they just sort of stood around placidly while I tore around trying to get them to grasp my enthusiasm. No one had ever seen a practice house before and during those hot August days I felt many times I was the only one "inspired". Only when they saw me doing things with my hands did they begin to learn--slowly--that there was nothing dishonorable about it. Definitely, I had to lead them gently into things or risk losing all of them as there was nothing compulsory about their attendance.

It was heartening day by day to see the students grasp the spirit of the project and gradually build up a favorable attitude toward doing practical work with their hands. With so many things to be done before the old cottage could become a practice house, at first I listed the weekly activities on the blackboard and let the students choose their leaders and divide themselves into groups. This was another innovation as this kind of supervised group-work was unheard of in Afghanistan.

Later, the students appreciated "group dynamics" as a democratic approach to teaching. The fact that the group arrived at decisions about solving their problems resulted in the students performing menial tasks that I would not have dared to assign them. For example, I recall one afternoon we were cutting, hemming, pressing, and putting up curtains in the classroom section of the practice house. The dirty windows and the bright new curtains just would not look good together but I kept that to myself. One group finished their curtains and when they went to put them up near the windows they stopped. Immediately, there was group discussion. Subsequently, these same young women who formerly held their fingers in the air had organized themselves and were washing windows inside and outside the practice house. The girls were proud of every accomplishment and I gave them individual encouragement. Women in Afghanistan rarely receive any recognition. I knew then that I could not give them a grade, report card, or certificate for their practice house experience but I would have to face that problem later.

The methods of teaching used most frequently in this "practice house" situation were informal group discussions and lecture-demonstrations with the students keeping good notebooks. There was much interaction and exchange of ideas regarding the solutions of practical problems in home-making. When given the opportunity to express themselves, Afghan women are very talkative. Occasionally, the technician has to tactfully inject quiet activities into the program after a stimulating discussion or the like. It is extremely important that the technician show, by example,

that she is sincerely interested in their welfare. Afghan women are quick to sense the slightest insincerity. I know several foreign teachers who were asked to leave after the students revolted. Constant vigilance to avoid situations leading to "hysteria" is a must in working with sheltered Afghan women.

Soon, the students and I were working on group projects in one part of the practice house and the work-men were in other parts behind closed doors. They painted walls, varnished the wooden-ceilings, window sills and door frames. Other men were engaged in putting new window panes in various parts of the cottage. In Afghanistan one rarely sees a full plate glass window but one which consists of a series of narrow perpendicular strips of glass nailed side by side in the window-frame. The use of putty is unheard of and windows blow out with the least bit of wind.

Establishing the "practice house" in Afghanistan presented many challenging situations. In this "learn by doing" type of project, important aspects of home improvement were taught while the cottage was being renovated. After twelve weeks of enthusiastic team work, the house had been set up and furnished entirely by the teacher-students. No furniture or equipment was imported but everything was made or bought from the local bazaars. Caution was taken to have this "model house" represent a goal easily reached by the students in their own homes. This 10-unit house included a combination living and dining room, a bedroom with an infant's corner, a simple bathroom (no tub but a practical

shower stall) combined with a dressing room, a library that doubles as a sewing room and a well-equipped classroom with a kitchen occupying the other half of the long, main room. Many of the students came from homes where they had few homemaking opportunities because of servants. Therefore, the "practice house" right on the campus gave these "in-service teachers" a chance to learn the practical aspects of nutrition and cookery, sewing, home nursing, child care, family living, personal hygiene, sanitation and health as well as general home improvement.

Finally, the old cottage had become an attractive "institution"--a showplace on the campus. Frequently, during the afternoon "break" the girls would invite professors and friends in and take them on an educational tour of their newly created "model home". Obviously, my students did a lot of effective teaching when they interpreted the hows and whys of their project to others.

Through follow-up discussions at home around the dinner table, I was told that the male members of the family were informed of the various activities in the practice house. I was stopped on the street one day by a young Afghan man I had met on a previous occasion. In perfect English, he informed me that he heartily approved of what I was teaching young Afghan women. I stood bewildered until he smilingly confessed that he enjoyed reading his wife's notebook after her thrice-weekly classes at the "practice house". Since he was an official at the Afghan Foreign Office and had just returned from a tour of duty at United Nations headquarters in New York, I took that opportunity to invite him to visit

our practice house with his wife after school. He was so impressed by our project that the following day he drove his wife to the campus gate with beautiful geranium plants for our two bedroom windows.

Among the most interesting activities in the practice house this year were those that took place in the bedroom with its cozy infant-corner. The purpose of this room was to teach home-nursing and infant care. The students were seated in an informal circle around the bed for both theory and practice; that is, daily careful note-taking was immediately followed by practical demonstrations. In this practical setting, the girls learned such things as how to create pleasant atmospheres in sickrooms, how to make the patient comfortable--how to take temperature, pulse and respiration, how to prepare the patient for a bed bath, how to set up an attractive meal tray and many other techniques were observed and practiced such as bed-making, filling hot water bottles and giving back-rubs. The impact of this lesson was so great that most of the students at the following class meeting informed me that they had gone home and given bed baths to their mothers and sisters before a bedside circle of other female relatives like that demonstrated on a student at the practice house.

The infant corner was one of the most popular areas in the practice house. We had a real "live" baby boy who also represented an innovation in the education of women. Fortunately, he was very responsive to our care and we observed his rapid growth and development from the time he was 4 months old until his first birthday. The mother, a member of the

class, cooperated beautifully and claimed she learned much that she used when her second baby was born. The father approved of our undertaking by permitting us to have the baby in our practice house.

Early in October, we had an "Open House" tea to which the students invited 16 women guests. Among the guests were native and western wives of key Afghan men, a daughter of the king, three American Embassy personnel, a pediatrician, and nurse-midwife affiliated with U.N.I.C.E.F. and W.H.O., respectively. This was a lovely affair planned and executed by the students from the idea and making of the invitations to the arranging of the guided tours and refreshments for the guests. For obvious reasons, this center never received any publicity by way of the press or radio. It is also regretted that our Ambassador and many other interested American, Afghan and foreign men never had an occasion to see the practice house.

Just before school closed in December we were all honored to have Mrs. Richard Nixon visit our practice house during the course of the good will tour she and the Vice-President made to South Asia and the Far East. The students seemed as happy to serve the Nixon Party at this "reception" as its members were in visiting us.

#### Development of Project in 1954

I returned to Kabul this time under I.C.A. (F.O.A.) when school opened late in March to carry on the project the same students and I had initiated the latter part of 1953. It was gratifying to note that many of the problems I encountered before began to solve themselves as the

project progressed. By now, the practice house was an "accepted institution"--an indoctrination center on the women's campus. Its educational function was more thoroughly understood. It was also encouraging that several of the formerly "proud" students voluntarily admitted home problems around which we could plan and "work-through" practical solutions at the center we had set up for this purpose. Yes, we were well on our way to try to help ourselves, our families and teach others.

Because of a felt need, much time this year was devoted to the "Nutrition and Cookery" and "Sanitation and Health" aspects of home economics. Many teaching tools along these lines were developed in Persian. The use of the felt-board technique with models of Afghan foods, etc., proved to be very popular with the students. Moreover, simple recipes for baking were adapted to the 6,000 ft. altitude in Kabul using ingredients readily available in the bazaars. Fortunately, I was able to secure some educational films dealing with these subjects in Persian. The methods of teaching used most frequently in this "practice house" situation were informal group discussions and lecture-demonstrations. With the assistance of native translators, all information was presented to the class in the Persian language. Through the aforementioned informal discussions, there was much interaction and exchange of ideas regarding the solutions of practical problems in home-making.

Summary of Practic House Activities - 1954

<u>Spring Months</u> (Had practice house thoroughly cleaned after winter vacation)	<u>Summer Months</u> (Too hot for a while to continue cooking lessons)	<u>Fall Months</u> (School started again in September after the Eed and Jeschen Festivities in latter part of August)
Continued lessons on sanitation:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-registered groups I and II.</li> <li>2. Re-awakened interest in course. Discussed tentative outline for course in 1954.</li> <li>3. Disseminated printed materials in Persian for notebooks on Nutrition and Cookery course. Lectured on this material before lab.</li> <li>4. First laboratory lesson in cooking involved:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cleaning up 4-unit kitchen.</li> <li>b. Re-arranged utensils, etc., in work tables.</li> <li>c. Washed dishcloths, towels, etc., and wiped off white plastic aprons.</li> <li>d. Assigned housekeeping duties. Taught dishwashing techniques.</li> <li>e. Had a demonstration lesson on measurements.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Other lessons included:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review of routine procedures of sanitary food handling as home pasteurization of milk, boiling of water, disinfecting fruits and vegetables--clean kitchens.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Had practical icebox made with ice pan. Taught food storage procedures.</li> <li>2. Had screens put in all windows and doors.</li> <li>3. Taught use of insecticides, etc.</li> <li>4. Taught fire-prevention and how to avoid home accidents. Taught first aid for simple burns, scalds, cuts, etc.</li> <li>5. General Review (quiet activity during 100° weather):               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What is home economics--Why is</li> <li>b. Principles of home improvement utilized in converting old cottage to practice house:                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Restudied floor plans, exposures, furniture arrangements, furnishings, wall and floor treatments.</li> </ol> </li> <li>c. Home Nursing Procedures</li> <li>d. Reviewed Pre-natal care and infant care booklets in Persian.</li> <li>e. Reviewed methods of canning.</li> <li>f. Reviewed principles of Nutrition and Cookery--signs of good and poor nutrition:</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrated jelly-making, etc.</li> <li>2. Canned inexpensive fruits and vegetables available.</li> <li>3. Did meal planning around Afghan meal patterns.</li> <li>4. Prepared meals--served in dining room under ideal conditions.</li> <li>5. Girls planned, budgeted, prepared and served an Afghan Pilau Party in my honor.</li> <li>6. By end of term, the girls had assembled excellent textbook in Persian--notes in front section--high-altitude recipes in back section.</li> <li>7. At "Final Party", I presented each student with a personal letter regarding their pioneer work in home economics, notes of praise on a practical project she did especially well and how she might use her home economics training in teaching others. The girls were so proud of this</li> </ol>

Summary of Practice House Activities - 1954 (Cont'd)

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Spring Months	Summer Months	Fall Months
b. Demonstrated use of <u>their</u> pressure cookers for high-altitude cooking and canning. c. Emphasized nutritional value of milk in the diet--made cocoa, cream soups, etc., in laboratory lesson. d. Showed U.S.I.S. nutrition movies in Persian. Discussion. e. Had lessons on high-altitude baking. Developed recipe book. f. During "Ramazon" Feast, no school.	5. f. (1) Used flannel-board with paper models of Afghan foods to evaluate Afghan Dietary--its strengths and weaknesses were arrived at by deduction. Analyzed typical menus--breakfast, lunch, dinner. g. Rules and regulations of the cooking laboratory were re-emphasized. Importance of good teamwork was stressed. h. During all of this intensely hot weather to hold class together, each class session was followed by a simple tea party in living room-dining room.	7. (cont'd) recognition that they kissed me and cried for joy.

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### The Future

Viewing the situation with typical American optimism, the future looks hopeful--especially since the education of women in Afghanistan is still in its infancy. One cannot predict what will happen to Afghan women or just when inevitable changes will take place but the educational program will have to be revamped to meet those changing needs. At present, Afghan women can do little, if anything, about their plight. The status of women in Afghanistan depends largely upon changing the attitude of the "mullahs" or religious leaders and other men in high government positions from one of the strict conservatism to one of recognizing the value of training women for their role in developing Afghanistan.

Much work needs to be done now with the men in order to build up in them a positive attitude toward the education of women. They must be taught that Afghan women have a definite place in general education and home economics can make specific and invaluable contributions toward achieving a higher standard of living for all. It is hoped that the open-minded, Western-educated Afghan men and the young exchange students going abroad will be influential in effecting broader educational opportunities for women.

Through negotiation with the Ministry of Education, there is no limit to future possibilities. It will take orders from high up to open doors in this country endowed with such deeply-rooted traditions.

The success or failure of this pioneer home economics project can only be measured in terms of what the Afghans themselves do toward

developing a program that is competently carried forward by Afghan women.

### Evaluation:

Due to the short time I was in Afghanistan and the many obstacles I encountered, I feel that I only scratched the surface in this pioneer home economic project. However, what was achieved definitely shows there is a place for home economics in the curriculum.

At first the project took root slowly and then it radiated phenomenally in all directions. The practice house idea was closely aligned with the rigidly enforced custom of keeping the women in the home. It was an "indoctrination center" that provided opportunity to gain practical knowledge and social development even within the narrow framework of the mores, customs and patterns of Afghanistan. The project was carried out in a democratic way and was apparently satisfactory to the Afghan women, men and Ministry of Education.

A review of the original aims and objectives of the project reveals that they were fulfilled for the most part. I can evaluate development in the students toward these objectives from my observation of their performance in class, noting their changes in behavior and attitudes, and home visits gave me first-hand information regarding how many of the practice house procedures were being applied in their daily living. Unquestionably, the students had acquired definite skills in the home-making arts after their practice house experience that they did not possess before. Many of the students invited me to their homes to see the plastic bed-spreads and drapes they had made, to taste a cake they had

baked by our recipe corrected for the high altitude in Kabul, to observe the care they were giving a sick relative or how they were making jelly from their apple trees. Several pregnant students showed me the baby cribs they were working on in their own homes similar to the one at the practice house. This crib was designed by the students, made by the local carpenter, painted blue for our baby boy, draped with mosquito netting and finished off in blue satin ribbons. Other prospective mothers showed me the diapers they were making for the babies they did not intend to wrap. One gratifying result of the practice house experience was the fact that one young student went home, and with her mother established a clean, well-ordered indoor kitchen where the two of them used the recipes we developed in the practice house. No servants were permitted in "their" kitchen. Can cite many more such evidences. These changes in behavior, new knowledges, understandings, skills and attitudes were objectives of the project in which the students participated.

Methods Used:

1. Gained a thorough knowledge of the social structure of the Afghan culture before attempting to launch a program of action.
2. Sought approval and cooperation of Afghan men regarding the project before trying to push it with their women.
3. Started with a project that was important to the woman and indirectly involved her whole family.
4. Chose a location, for demonstration purposes, that was advantageously situated for a home economics center.

5. Brought together in a familiar environment women who already knew each other.
  6. Started with what the people had--converted an empty house on the campus into a "practice house" to meet specific needs.
  7. Capitalized on available local leadership (young teachers) whenever possible; realizing that diffusion from this group to lower groups is usually more rapid than diffusion in the reverse direction.
  8. Let the project evolve from the needs of the women and allowed it to remain "theirs" to develop.
- THERE IS MUCH YET TO BE DONE.

#### Recommendations for Future Program Planning

Because of the existing conditions in the education of women, I recommend the following:

- A. International Cooperation Administration should immediately
  1. Work with the Royal Afghan Ministry of Education and give them greater insight into the hows and whys of expanding home economics in the Girls' Schools

#### Objectives:

- a. To establish a Department of Home Economics at the Royal Afghan Ministry of Education
- b. To make available means for women to travel to other countries on participant training programs
- c. To furnish convincing information regarding the important

contributions home economics education can make toward better living

- d. To study ways and means by which a broad program of home and family living may be developed and more widely supported.
2. Stimulate the Royal Afghan Ministry of Education to appreciate the need for initiating courses in family living at the Boys' Schools

Objectives:

- a. To solicit the cooperation of the Director of Secondary Education in introducing elective courses in family living
  - b. To provide pre-service or graduate education for school administrators that include content relating to homemaking
  - c. To interpret why homemaking is considered to have value for both boys and girls in helping them to share in their present home and family life as well as in preparing them for the responsibilities of marriage.
- B. International Cooperation Administration should ultimately (whenever timely) -
1. Motivate the Royal Afghan Ministry of Education to request a team of at least three ICA home economists to be sent to Afghanistan on the following mission:
    - a. One, to work with an Afghan counterpart in developing a curriculum for boys and girls in the 7th to 11th grades (standards)

To evolve practical methods of giving instruction in home

and family living to teen-age boys and girls

b. Another, to work with an Afghan counterpart in developing a program of teacher-training in home economics at Malalai (Women's Division of University of Kabul)

(1) To meet the need for greater amounts and additional types of teacher-training in pre-service education.

(2) To concentrate on improving subject-matter courses and introduce effective methods of teaching.

(3) To utilize the practice house facilities as a "demonstration school" for practice teaching in home economics.

c. A home demonstration agent to work with an Afghan counterpart in developing an extension program that will reach out to village women.

To employ practical methods of giving instruction to rural women. Note: This should include methods of program planning, the use of visual aids, etc.

The above-mentioned team should be carefully selected. At least one member should have had foreign experience on a high-altitude, hardship post and all three should be experienced in working with women living under rural conditions. Desirable personal traits: intuitiveness, sincerity, sound judgement, good organizational ability, adaptability, courageousness and a sense of humor that will hold up under many difficult situations.

Further recommendations:

1. Develop a free school-feeding program

Objective:

- a. To improve the nutritional status of school children

Note: Surplus foods may be obtained through PL. 480, Title III

This is distributed through the Afghan Red Crescent Society

(Red Cross).

- b. To study means of introducing mother-daughter cooperation in school activities. Example: Mothers must cooperate if a program of diet improvement is to succeed. Perhaps later the mothers could be asked to serve on various school-lunch committees.