



## PATHS

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**Non-profit organization Federal EIN 20-4343517**

**Project: Operation Exceptional Child Laboratory School: Kabul, Afghanistan**

*“Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not a preparation for life but is life itself.” – John Dewey, 1939.*

### **Intent**

PATHS will develop a laboratory school that is essentially a living laboratory of K-12 student development in special education. The laboratory classroom is a setting for faculty research and where undergraduate and graduate students work together serving as assistants in the classes and as participant observers in the ongoing life of the classroom. Finally, our laboratory classroom will serve as a model of education practice and as a fieldwork site developing best practices in the art of teaching students with disabilities.

### **Goals**

The strategic goals of PATHS laboratory school will include:

- ✚ Strengthening Afghan civil society through our comprehensive special education teacher training program and development of best practices as part of our ongoing research initiatives. PATHS laboratory school is unlike a conventional school since we will focus mostly on teacher, student and environmental interaction rather than on traditional lectures.
- ✚ In addition to teacher training, PATHS laboratory school will promote people-to-people ties in Afghanistan through youth education and vocational training initiatives, English-language proficiency and exchange programs for both Afghan teachers and students. PATHS laboratory school will foster an environment in which students and teachers alike have meaningful experiences that lead to growth—that will open them up to more, higher-level experiences creating informed, engaged and contributing members of Afghan society.

### **Challenges**

At issue is the lack of highly-trained education professionals in Afghanistan with experience in teaching students with disabilities. This in-turn creates an environment of reduced opportunities for the disabled to constructively contribute to Afghan society and the future peace and prosperity of their country.

### **Method**

We will achieve our goals by using a triangulated approach to education including: student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and student-to-society. We will house our laboratory school in a Kabul-based college/university working in partnership with our US-based laboratory school. Our goals are attainable, measurable and replicable. The only ‘new’ concept is that of focusing on the disabled student in the larger context of teacher training and in developing educational best practices in Afghanistan.