



WISE woman Jamila Afghani wins *Peacemakers in Action* Award

"I have often heard that Afghan women are not political. That peace and security is man's work. I am here to challenge that illusion."

-Jamila Afghani addressing the United Nations Security Council

The board, founders and staff of the American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA) is proud to announce that Jamila Afghani has received the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding's *Peacemakers in Action* award. WISE, a program of ASMA, nominated Afghani for the award, which honors individuals inspired by their faith to work on peace initiatives in regions of armed conflict. Afghani, a native of Afghanistan, won the award in March alongside Bishop Ntambo Ntanda of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The selection committee noted that this year's nominees were particularly outstanding and that it was their most competitive selection process to date.

As a recipient of the award, Afghani will enter a network of 25 other Peacemakers and is invited to attend a retreat in Abuja, Nigeria to create bonds with fellow awardees, receive training and to share and listen to stories of peace building. Afghani also earned a financial prize to help support her efforts.

Afghani began her career in Pakistan as a social worker in an Afghan refugee camp. After returning to Afghanistan, she founded the Noor Educational Centre (NEC), a non-profit organization that educates women and youth through classes on health, Quranic education, and conflict resolution. NEC also offers income-generating programs, including tailoring and handicraft production.

In July 2009 Afghani attended the WISE conference in Kuala Lumpur, where she met with Muslim women from more than 40 nations. The conference offered Afghani the



Jamila Afghani addresses more than 200 women from around the world at the 2009 WISE Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia about Afghan women's issues.

opportunity to interact with NGO activists doing similar work and to attend leadership, political, media and spiritual skill-building sessions. WISE is currently collaborating with Afghani in creating a gender-sensitive Imam training program in Kabul that was modeled after the work of fellow WISE woman Laisa Masuhud Alamia of the Philippines. The training program educates religious leaders on women's rights and establishes male partners in attaining gender equality in Afghanistan.

The Tanenbaum Center is a secular organization based in New York City, dedicated to fostering interreligious education and reducing hatred based on religious difference. Nominees for the *Peacemakers in Action* award are chosen because of their religious motivation, work in armed conflict, efforts despite extreme risk, connection to local community, and lack of significant recognition for their work.

The Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality is a program of the American Society for Muslim Advancement and the Cordoba Initiative. ASMA aims to elevate the discourse on Islam and foster environments in which Muslims thrive through interfaith collaboration, youth and women's empowerment, and arts and cultural exchange. The Cordoba Initiative works to improve relations between the Muslim World and the West by offering innovative, viable, and sustainable solutions with concrete outcomes. The mission of WISE is to build a cohesive, global movement of Muslim women that will reclaim women's rights in Islam, enabling them to make dignified choices and fully participate in creating just and flourishing societies.
