



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

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DIRECTORS' MESSAGE

Dear supporters,

It's been another incredible year at UniArk. Now in our fourth year, we've clocked countless hours of mentorship, awarded two scholarships, supported students through hardship funds - and most importantly, helped change lives.

We're proud to share highlights from the 2024-25 academic year. This year's mentorship programme was especially competitive, with a strong pool of applicants that showed great potential. With a renewed focus on fundraising, our small but mighty team of mentors has worked hard to help students gain university and scholarship places.

So, grab your drink of choice, get comfy, and enjoy catching up with all things UniArk.

With many thanks,

Shukria, Najib and Goncalo



ONE YEAR ON: SHUKRIA RAHIMI, UNIARK'S FIRST SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Shukria Rahimi

MA Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law

(2024-25)

Geneva Academy, Switzerland

Award: £35,000

Has Geneva and your programme met your expectations?

The program has been very rich, and I learned a lot. One of the things I really appreciated was studying in a very diverse classroom. We were from different nationalities, and this was something very special for me. Listening to others' stories, learning about their struggles in their own countries, and becoming friends with them really enriched my knowledge. Also, I found the Geneva Academy and the two institutions behind it, the Geneva Graduate Institute and the University of Geneva, very supportive. I felt that I was in a modern and welcoming place, both in terms of education and how they treat students. Being in Geneva itself, where so many international organisations are based, also gave me the chance to attend events, connect with professionals, and feel close to real-world issues.

Were there any moments outside of your studies where you felt especially proud?

There were many moments that made me feel proud. In several classes, I shared my personal story or talked about the situation in Afghanistan. Speaking as a Hazara woman and activist, I didn't expect people would listen so closely or feel touched. But many classmates told me how strong and inspiring they found my words. It made me feel proud, but also helped me see myself differently. When you go through hard things for a long time, you get used to them and forget how strong you are. But hearing that from others made me reflect and be more kind to myself. One moment I'll never forget is during the exam period in the first semester, when I lost one of my close friends. He was killed by the Taliban while I was trying, with the volunteer group I work with, to help him leave Afghanistan. It was a very painful time, but I continued with my exams and studies.

Looking back, I feel proud that I managed to stay strong and focused, even in that situation. Also, in some discussions, like on mental health, I realised that my experiences were not just theory. They were very real. Some things that were new to others were already part of my life for years. That helped me see how much I've survived and grown.

How do you see your education contributing to the future of Afghanistan and the struggle for women's rights in Afghanistan generally?

This education is not just for me, I believe it's for my country and for Afghan women too. It gives me the tools and knowledge to speak louder to



*Shukria at her graduation ceremony on
17 October 2025*

document what's happening, and to make sure the world doesn't forget Afghanistan. I hope to use what I've learned to support Afghan women's voices, and to push for justice, both for those still inside the country and those who are in exile. In the future, I want to help build better legal systems, and make sure Afghan women are part of the decision-making processes.

How do you balance your education with activism work?

Honestly, it was very difficult. The program was full-time and very intense, sometimes we had classes from early morning to evening. So, I didn't have much time or energy to do activism like I used to. Still, I stayed active in some ways. I gave interviews to the media, wrote about women's issues, and read public statements. I'm also working voluntarily with a group that helps people in Afghanistan, especially in crisis situations. But I couldn't do as much as I wanted. Now that I'm finishing my studies, I hope I can be more active again and give more time to the work I care about.

What's next for you after graduating?

After graduation, I hope to continue working in the human rights and humanitarian law field, especially focusing on conflict, migration, and women's rights. I'm exploring both professional jobs and possible research opportunities. In the long term, I want to be a bridge between the people on the ground and the international world, so that policies and actions are based on real experiences and not just theory. I want to keep working for Afghan women and those who have been silenced.

NEMATULLAH AHANGOSH: FROM UNIARK SCHOLAR TO PUBLISHED POET

Nematullah Ahangosh

MA Development, Conflict and Security Studies

(2022-23)

University of Sussex, UK

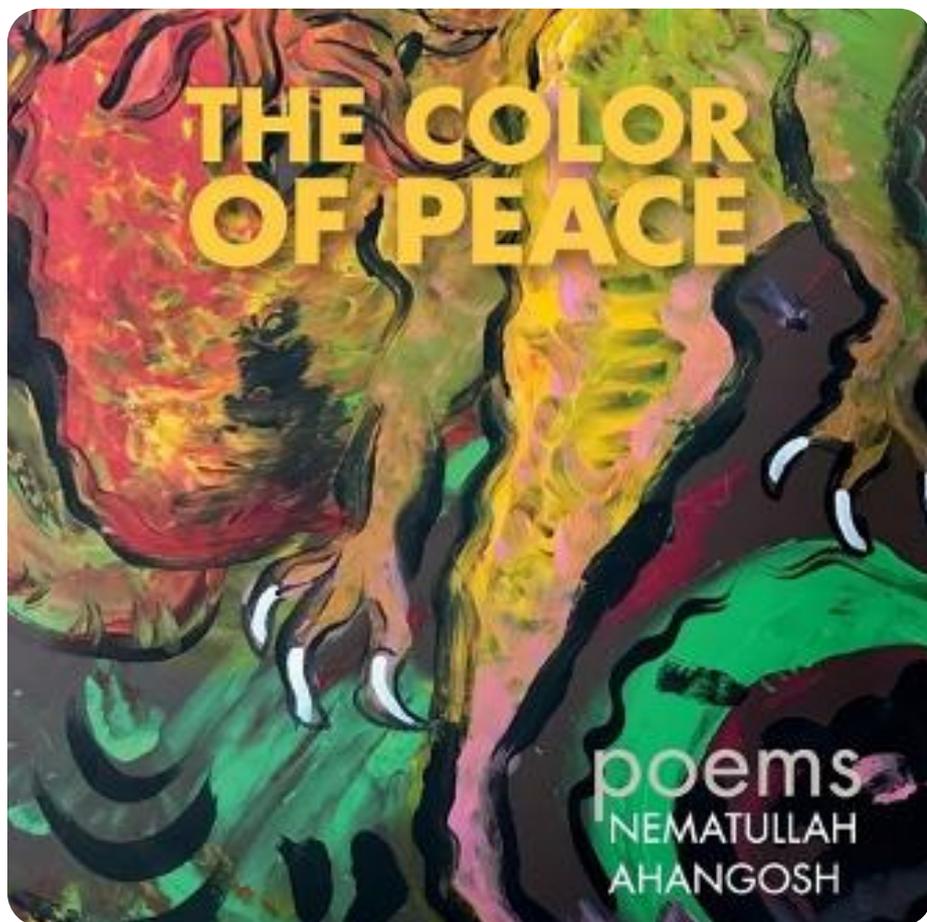
Award: £ 21,000



In 2022, Nematullah Ahangosh received a UniArk scholarship to pursue a Master's in Conflict, Security, and Development at the University of Sussex. Just a few years later, he is a published poet, disability rights advocate, and founder of **Stretch More** - an initiative supporting disabled individuals in conflict and disaster-affected areas. Born with muscular dystrophy and raised in Afghanistan, Nemat began writing poetry in English in 2017 while working as a peace activist in Kabul. His poems draw on lived experience, exploring themes of resilience, war, and the quiet strength of hope. His long-standing commitment to education led him from Kabul to India, where he earned a bachelor's degree with support from the Jesuit Refugee Service.

With UniArk's support, Nemat was able to continue his studies in the UK and invest in his creative voice.

In February 2025, he published his debut poetry collection, **The Color of Peace** - a powerful reflection on the trauma of war, the challenges of disability, and the enduring possibility of peace. To celebrate this milestone, the UniArk team, in collaboration with the University of Sanctuary scheme, hosted a public poetry reading on 13 June 2025 at Mansfield College, University of Oxford. The event brought together students, academics, and community members to honour Nemat's work and the stories it tells. Nemat's story is a reminder of the lasting impact of meaningful support. His journey shows that when opportunity meets potential, individuals can not only thrive - they can uplift others and inspire change.



Book cover, the Color of Peace

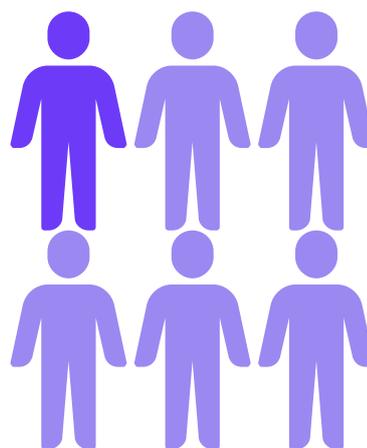


Poetry reading at Mansfield College, Oxford, 13 June 2025

OUR WORK (2024-25)

UniArk's backbone is not formed of interlinking vertebra stacked one on top of the other, but rather pairwise mentor-mentee relationships that stretch through time. Our focus of providing direct, one-to-one support with deserving students has enabled many students make competitive applications to the UK, the US and other global universities worldwide.

- *6 mentees*
- *1 full scholarship*
- *1 partial scholarship*
- *4 admissions without scholarship*



1 of 6 mentees was awarded a fully funded-scholarship.

What these numbers do not adequately convey is an enormous amount of hard work and dedication, countless iterations of personal statements, hours spent sifting through university after university, funding calls and visa requirements, the plans A, B, and C for each student, and underpinning it all, the hopes and dreams of students who have endured so much. We are grateful to connect with every student we work with and celebrate their growth on an individual basis.

MENTEE SUCCESS STORY

Abdul Rauf Hasanyar

BSc Computer Science (2025 - 2029)

Recipient of Lester B. Pearson International Scholarship

University of Toronto, Canada

Award: £ 2,000

We were proud to celebrate the success of UniArk mentee Abdul Rauf Hasanyar, who was awarded the **Lester B. Pearson International Scholarship** – the University of Toronto’s most prestigious and fully funded scholarship for international students.

Rauf became the first student from Afghanistan to be named a Pearson Scholar and began a four-year BSc in Computer Science at the University of Toronto. The Pearson Scholarship recognised his outstanding academic achievement, creativity, and leadership - qualities he consistently demonstrated throughout his educational journey.

Born in rural Ghazni, Afghanistan, Rauf grew up facing poverty, conflict, and insecurity, yet remained determined to pursue his studies. Alongside his own education, he taught English to support his family and contributed to community projects aimed at expanding access to education.



Through the Homa Foundation, he helped establish classrooms and a library in his home village.

This achievement represented a significant milestone in Rauf’s academic journey, and UniArk was proud to have supported him - both through our mentorship programme and by providing financial assistance for his travel and visa costs from Kabul to Toronto. We look forward to the impact he will continue to make at Toronto and beyond.

Read more about Rauf on our website [here](#).

THE LAUNCH OF UNIARK SCHOLARS AI

At UniArk, we are also excited about harnessing technology and innovation to further our mission of empowering talented students. We developed **UniArk Scholar AI**, an innovative AI-powered tool specifically designed to support students in crafting compelling and competitive scholarship applications that thoroughly researches scholarships to identify key information (such as evaluation metrics) before analysing student essays.

UniArk Scholar AI provides holistic, personalised feedback tailored to the unique requirements of scholarship essays, helping students clearly articulate their stories, strengths, and aspirations. Despite being in the early stages of development and having limited promotion, this tool marked a significant advancement for our charity.

During our initial trial phase, one of our supported students used UniArk Scholar AI and provided highly positive feedback, highlighting the potential value of this resource. Additionally, the tool attracted private usage from several other students, generating £44 through subscription payments. While modest, this unexpected private engagement underscores the relevance and value of our innovation, even in its preliminary phase.

Given our current resource constraints, we have no immediate plans to commercialise UniArk Scholar AI. Nevertheless, this successful pilot has validated our belief in leveraging AI for educational empowerment. We remain enthusiastic about exploring further technological advancements and AI-driven solutions to better serve our students and enhance our impact.

SMALL FUNDS, BIG IMPACTS

While full scholarships are at the heart of UniArk's work, we also recognise that smaller financial hurdles - like exam fees or travel costs - can become major roadblocks for students on the brink of opportunity. A delayed TOEFL test, missed travel window, or lack of emergency funds can mean deferred dreams or lost chances.

That's why we're proud to have offered small grants that meet students at these critical moments.

This year, we've supported:

- **Husna Hashim** sit her TOEFL exam; (award: £160)
- Granted **Abdul Rauf Hasanyar** funds to support his travel from Kabul to the Canadian Embassy in Islamabad - and onwards to Toronto, Canada to begin his studies in the autumn of 2025; (award: £2,000)
- and provided a hardship fund to **Nematullah Ahangosh** when he faced financial difficulties toward the end of his master's degree at Sussex. (award: 250)

These acts of support may be modest in size - but they've helped keep futures on track.

FINANCIALS

UniArk's funds raised are on the rise, thanks to the generous donations from our supporters. This financial support has enabled us to fund small grants for three students so far. Their dreams to pursue their higher education have been fraught with challenges, and UniArk has been there to support them every step of the way.

Calendar year 2024

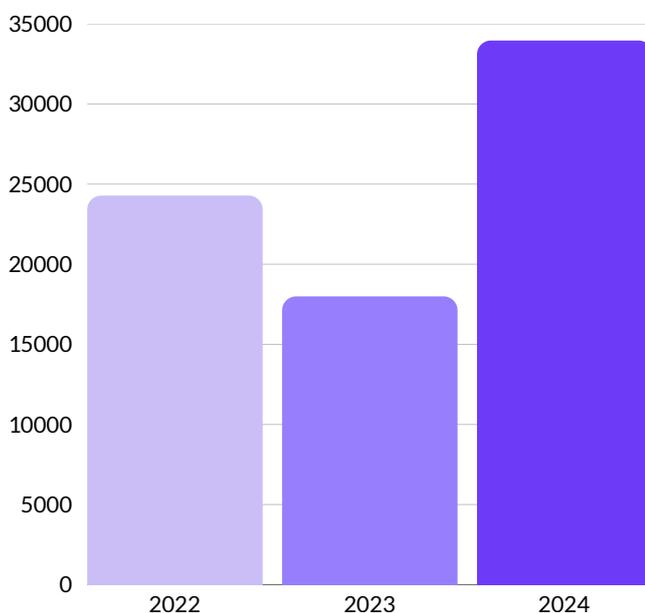
£33,961

RAISED FUNDS

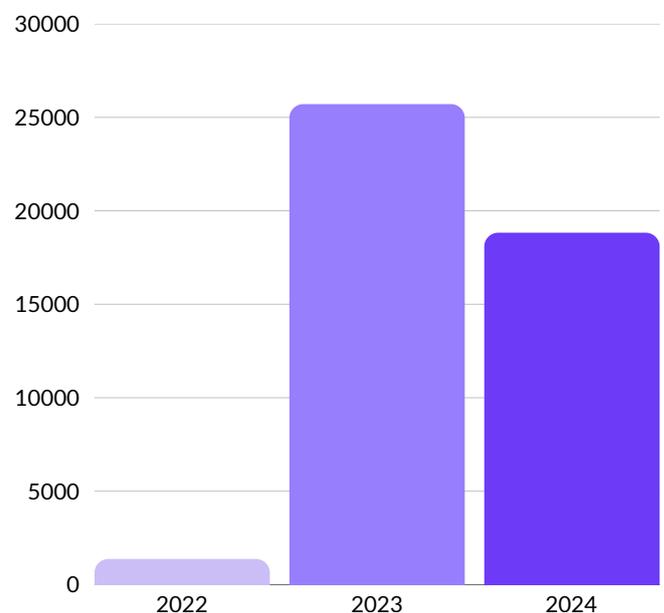
£18,828

ALLOCATED FUNDS

Funds raised for period 2022-2024



Funds allocated for period 2022-2024



For a complete financial review of the UniArk accounts - see the charity commission website [here](#).

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

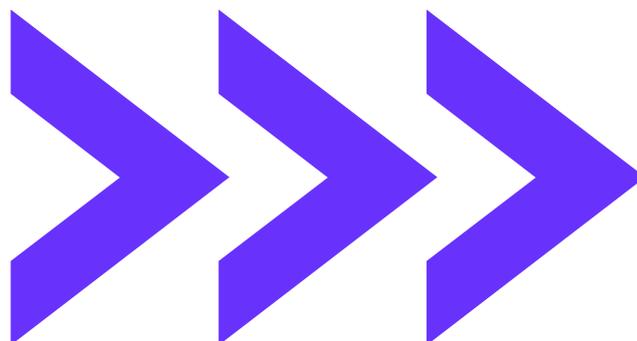
Here are some of our immediate goals:

- **Fundraise another fully funded scholarship through public donations and school charity fundraising.**

Following the successful completion of our 'Invest in Her Future' campaign, we're determined to fundraise for another scholarship and grow our supporter base.

- **Explore the role of technology assisted mentorship in furthering UniArk's mission.**

Providing 1-on-1 mentorship can be resource-intensive, requiring many hours of online research. One of the strengths of UniArk is the diverse talent present in the team. Leveraging the expertise of members with backgrounds in engineering, technology, and software, we are actively investigating ways to optimise our mentoring service and use tech innovation to address this challenge that our mentorship programme faces. The efforts of the team aim to streamline processes, reducing time commitments for both mentors and mentees alike.



THANK YOU

Dr Alison Wood
Dr Soraya Jones
Mark Hardie
Judith Coplowe
Dr Georgie Horrell
Prof Jason Howk
Kerry Ritz
Joe Divana
Evelyn Gilbert-Bair
Ishaan Sethi
Dr Bashir Kazimi
Amna Farooq
Yat Li Lung
Hardika Kukreja
Ritheka Sundar
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