

## ***Darya Parsia's Future***



Since November 2021, I have been communicating with Darya Parsia (her online name) through various channels and have verified her story through different sources. She's one of many young Afghan women whose dreams for the future have been interrupted. She wants to study psychology and art and combine the two to help heal her country, someday, realizing that she cannot do much at this time. All the beautiful artwork on these pages is hers and such creation is now forbidden in Afghanistan, where women can no longer go to university.

Darya grew up as a refugee in Pakistan where she saw the Meena cartoons I started in UNICEF in 1992, such as [Dividing the Mango](#), as well as [other episodes in video and comic book form](#), which challenged traditional South Asian gender norms. She lived in a ramshackle house and attended a very basic school. Her mother, a teacher, brought her Meena comic books. From an early age she understood that girls in her family and society do not have the same rights as boys and this is not right.

Darya's father, who has passed away, came from an Afghan minority group. He brought the family back to Afghanistan in 2010 and he and his wife ensured that she went to a proper school. She graduated from high school in Kabul and for a time attempted to attend university, but threats and bombings, and then the collapse of the Afghan government in August 2021, brought her formal education to an end. She and her mother and two older siblings have managed to get out of Afghanistan and are now in Islamabad, Pakistan, applying to emigrate elsewhere. Meanwhile, Darya runs online art therapy courses for kids in Afghanistan and helps translate Afghan women refugee stories for an agency that is helping them find new homes.

Darya is brave and a real fighter but realizes her skills and knowledge need strengthening. She wants to study psychology and art at a higher level, so to begin with, she is registered in an online Health Sciences course at the University of the People, in California.

Please contact me, Neill McKee, at [nmckee20@gmail.com](mailto:nmckee20@gmail.com) if you want to discuss how to help Darya.





**The Art of  
Darya Parsia**



