

Afeefa Syeed is a cultural anthropologist who served as Senior Advisor at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) where she worked with Washington-based and field staff to develop policy, define best practices, highlight success stories, and otherwise build internal capacity and tools to frame country strategies that reflect greater expertise in engaging in dynamic cultural contexts. She has been a Scholar Consultant for the Carter Center, and is presently Research Associate with Cambridge University's Institute on Religion & Global Affairs, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Global Engagement, and Advisory Council Member for Center for Women, Faith and Leadership. Her work includes religion and development, gender inclusion, countering extremism and integrating cultural context into development and diplomacy. For the past 25 years, she has designed and implemented initiatives and training to address innovations in education, engaging traditional and religious leaders and institutions, human rights, radicalization, socio-political identity, and social entrepreneurship, among other emerging issues.

Afeefa advised the White House, NSC, Dept. of State, UN Democracy Fund, World Bank and various in-country government and non-governmental institutions on the same issues for communities in Europe, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East and North Africa. Afeefa founded and is current Head of School for a model independent school whose core curriculum is peace education and civic engagement. She is a member of various interfaith, social service and advocacy organizations in the US and her involvement and community activism led her to run as a candidate for local office in 2003. She is a published writer and regular speaker on a variety of issues.