



EDWARD ZELLEM
Global Impact Board Member
Captain, United States Navy (Ret.)

Edward Zellem is a retired U.S. Navy captain who served as an active duty intelligence officer for 30 years in a variety of operational assignments and conflict zones worldwide. He is best known for serving on President Hamid Karzai’s staff inside the Afghan Presidential Palace as the founder and first director of the Government of Afghanistan’s first “White House Situation Room,” the Presidential Information Coordination Center (PICC). His last duty station was at U.S. Central Command headquarters in Tampa, FL.

An accomplished linguist, Captain Zellem also is the 12-time award-winning author of five books. Three are bilingual books of Afghan proverbs that he collected as a personal project during a year-and-a-half stay in Afghanistan. The books were illustrated by Afghan high school students and published by a local Kabul publishing house in an all-Afghan project that he coordinated without military or NATO assistance. As a result, 40,000 copies were distributed by Afghans to teach English and folklore at over 200 Afghan schools, Kabul University, and a variety of stationary and mobile Afghan libraries.

His books quickly earned international recognition, book awards and media attention. One of them (*Afghan Proverbs Illustrated*) has been translated by volunteers into 18 languages for refugee integration across the globe. The books’ popularity continues to accelerate, and they are now available in over 100 countries worldwide. His first book (*Zarbul Masalha: 151 Afghan Dari Proverbs*) is now in its 3rd edition and includes a foreword by General David Petraeus (USA, ret.). More information at www.afghansayings.com.

Captain Zellem attended the University of Virginia on a football scholarship, earning All-ACC Academic Team honors and a Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Affairs. He holds three master’s degrees: Master of Public Administration (Auburn University at Montgomery); Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence (Defense Intelligence College); and Master of Science in Operations Science (Air Command and Staff College). His military awards and decorations include 12 personal awards, 14 expeditionary and campaign awards, 9 unit awards, and a variety of others.

A scuba diver since 1986, he currently lives in Tampa, FL where he teaches diving as an active PADI Master Scuba Diver Trainer. He also serves as the Director of Military and Government Scuba Support for a 5-star PADI Instructor Development Center and Aqua Lung Partner Service Center.