the linda norgrove foundation

Second Annual Newsletter 2012

www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org
Welcome
Earlier this year, we travelled to Afghanistan to visit projects, and to meet with Linda’s friends and colleagues as well as our volunteers there.

The longer we work in Afghanistan, the more it becomes clear what a complex country it is: how similar people’s aspirations are to ours – strong family bonds, sufficient security, some justice, enough food – and yet, and yet, how different – with occasional glimpses of entirely different value systems, cultural norms. We continue to try and help women and children, generally nurtured and well looked after within Afghan society, but for whom, when things fall apart, there is absolutely no safety net and who become so vulnerable. We pay particular attention towards helping without imposing our own values.

We hope that, from what follows, you will be able to appreciate what we have been trying to achieve. Should this be something you’d like to continue to support, all the better. Should this not be the case, please do let us know so we can ensure that our mailing lists are updated.

Our heartfelt thanks for your help over the past year.

John and Hong

Contact us
The Linda Norgrove Foundation is an award winning UK registered charity.
Charity Number: SC041843

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On the cover: A girl adjusts her head scarf in a remote area of Northern Afghanistan. The photograph was taken by Linda in 2008.
The man with the hardest job in Herat works on the second floor of a cement block schoolhouse, at the end of a long, crowded room.

He is the principal of the Saifi School for Boys (and neighbouring school for girls), which together house more than 2,500 primary school students in the middle of the western Afghan city.

“We have many problems - funding, finding qualified teachers, getting books and supplies - but the biggest challenge we face is space,” the principal tells me, as I sit across from him in one of the coveted chairs near his desk. “More and more students want to come to school each year - but there simply isn’t room.”

The school works around these issues by filling each classroom with 40 or 50 students, and rotating students in shifts throughout the day. “The teachers all work three shifts in this school, and still more students are coming. It’s difficult to keep up,” he says to me.

I am here on a visit to check the progress of a programme funded by the Linda Norgrove Foundation and implemented by War Child UK, to integrate 174 former “street children” into this school and several others around Herat. The programme works with students, teachers and the school’s management committee to ensure that these vulnerable students don’t get lost in the shuffle of a large school system.

One of the aims of the programme is to train school administrators and teachers on understanding the dynamics of street life and the effects it has on former street children, leading to a better understanding of how to reintegrate these students. When we spoke of the programme, the principal knew who many of these students were, and could readily speak about their problems.

“These kids need stability and a safe place to go to...that’s the most important thing,” he remarks.

The students in every classroom are engaged in learning: books open and reading aloud in one, working out maths problems on the chalkboard in another. A country’s youngsters learning what becomes a foundation for their lives, their country’s future.

I can’t help but wonder as I stand in the back of one classroom what might be happening in these children’s lives if this school had never been built, where they might be instead.

I think in particular of the 174 kids that are now off the streets and in a safe learning environment thanks to the generosity of many individuals around the world, and the efforts of the reintegration programme. These students now have teachers and advocates who watch over them, and one very attentive principal who I know will not allow them to disappear.

Margaret Orwig is our volunteer on the ground in Afghanistan. She has been working with the Foundation since 2011 and is key to overseeing our work and sourcing other projects for us to fund. She shares her recent visit to Herat to have a look at our newly developed education project.
At the Linda Norgrove Foundation we pride ourselves on being a charity small enough to help the grassroots projects that can sometimes be overlooked. We flow between the cracks of the bigger organisations to reach and respond to programmes quickly, and for those whom funding is often difficult to come by. Over the next few pages we will show you how your donations are aiding very different projects. Thanks to your help, we reach those projects on the ground in Afghanistan that need an extra hand. Have a look at what you have achieved so far:

- ***helped*** fund a new x-ray machine at CURE hospital in Kabul so medical experts around the world can access data to aid a **quicker diagnosis**
  Cost: £11,138

- ***gifted*** a marimba, a large instrument similar to a xylophone, to the Afghanistan Institute of Music. The project helps children, many of whom have seen horrific violence, express themselves and **find comfort** in the study of music
  Cost: £3,000

- ***sent*** a truck load of **emergency supplies to a struggling orphanage** in Faizabad
  Cost: £9,608

- ***supported*** the **education of five primary school girls** in Jalalabad by paying their costs for the next academic year
  Cost: £1,981

- ***financed*** a women-only IT facility and funded a UK volunteer’s expenses to **provide numeracy and accounting skills** for local Afghans, in partnership with ASET (Afghan Support Education Training)
  Cost: £10,780

- ***equipped*** villages in the Bamyan Province with new cookstove technology for a more **efficient and safer method of cooking**, as well as using a greener, more sustainable fuel
  Cost: £9,770
Last summer you provided the means to inform women from 15 rural villages about vital birth life-saving skills and provided vaccinations for 28 villages. The programmes are running efficiently and the local people are really benefiting from your donations.
Cost: £15,496

fed lunch every day for one year to 120 pupils at the Afghan Educational Children’s Circus to encourage learning about issues such as landmine awareness and drug abuse.
Cost: £9,346

In 2011, you helped fund the start of a tourism business in the remote Wakhan corridor which has been going from strength to strength.
Cost: £3,511

Last year, you enabled a better quality of life for the residents at a home for disabled children in Kabul through new furniture, toys and chickens for healthy living. The children are responding well to their new lifestyle.
Cost: £4,138

In our first year, you helped provide the means for sustainable living and a healthy diet at a widows’ home in Jalalabad.
Cost: £1,267

trained 1,800 professionals about children’s rights through a training programme designed to combat injustice and mistreatment of children.
Cost: £21,207

Following last year’s success in educating remote communities through providing mobile libraries and a literacy programme for women to learn to read and write, you have helped us to continue the project for a second year along with our partners Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan.
Cost: £14,975

assisted 174 street children and orphans to stay in education, in partnership with the charity War Child.
Cost: £9,848

encouraged 20 mainly female trainees to take on sewing and tailoring classes, whilst also enhancing skills in basic English, ICT and business through the charity Afghan Action.
Cost: £10,000
Earlier this year, the Linda Norgrove Foundation funded a number of life changing surgeries for children at a unique Children’s Medical House in Kabul. Thanks to your donations you have changed the lives of some very special children forever.

In January this year, the Foundation pledged over £4,500 to the Children’s Medical project, which in turn paid for surgeries for five children most in need - all down to your help.

The project ensures that all medical costs are fully covered and also provides travel arrangements for the child and parent from all Provinces. The medical project has set up a unique Children’s House to provide accommodation for the parent and child before, during and after surgery.

From the house, patients are admitted to the Children’s Medical Hospital, which began in March 2008 with the aim of providing access to necessary surgical care to the most vulnerable and underprivileged children from all areas of Afghanistan.

Since the initial set up, the hospital has completed over 1,400 surgeries by trained Afghan doctors including orthopaedic; plastic and reconstructive; general; cardiac and neuro-surgery. Patients are cared for before and after surgery by a committed British nurse back at the Children’s House.

It is a cost effective service for children who would not otherwise be able to afford the treatment. All ethnic differences are put aside and the children are the number one priority.

Cost of project: £4,543
Meet Samir. Born with a cleft lip and palate, her family could not afford to pay for the surgery that would change Samir’s life. Samir was offered treatment through funding from the Linda Norgrove Foundation. Thanks to your donations, you have helped Samir get her smile back.

This is Firoz. After struggling with genetic bone disease in both legs his whole life, Firoz was finally given the opportunity to have life-altering osteopathic surgery. After multiple operations, Firoz can now stand and walk on his own. Your gift has allowed Firoz to experience a better quality of life.

Right: Firoz’s limbs have been twisted since birth due to a genetic bone disease.
Below: After the first surgery
When the Linda Norgrove Foundation was approached by the Hagar Safe House project to help with funds for a new counselling programme, we did not hesitate to support these remarkable women of strength.

The Lighthouse, a transitional care centre, provides a safe house for women and girls affected by the worst kinds of treatment from human rights abuse, violence and trafficking.

In February this year, the Linda Norgrove Foundation funded a counselling programme and a unique counselling room for the Lighthouse in Kabul.

The aim of the programme was for clients to work with the staff to gain confidence, strength and personal development. Not only does it offer immediate refuge to those that require it, but also medical and legal advice to focus on long term solutions.

In many cases, clients have arrived at the safe house to escape from the threat of violence or death should they return home.

The safe house rebuilds the lives of women who have had their lives shattered through rape, trafficking or the continued threat of violence at the hands of their husband or family. Challenges include overcoming depression, loneliness and fear for some of the women.

The Lighthouse provides a place for women to express their fears and anxieties without any danger or judgement. It provides them with the strength and ability to feel secure and reintegrate into society again. Through the project, women can have the potential to live safe, healthy lives within their communities, whilst being economically independent and with the opportunity to pursue a higher education.

Whilst the Lighthouse project has been a hugely successful and important venture for some Afghan women, it has not been without its challenges. The place of women in Afghan society is still dangerously low but the impact from projects like the Safe House, however small, are vital to ensure a difference for Afghanistan’s women.

Cost of Project: £20,688
Aziza’s Story

Aziza is unable to return home, living in fear that her family may one day find her and kill her. She is 22 years old, and has been working with Hagar to gain some support and strength in her life.

With a keen mind and an insatiable appetite for knowledge, Aziza is fluent in four languages. Her family denied her the opportunity to continue with schooling, seeing her hopes of attending university dashed.

Her eldest brother turned power hungry and violent growing up, seeking to take over the family company from their father. When their father refused to relinquish the business, he killed him. Turning on Aziza, he tried to give her to another man in marriage in order to strengthen his position. When she refused, her brother was angered by her ‘betrayal’, and threatened to kill her.

Leaving in the middle of the night, Aziza and her mother fled their home. Over the next four years they travelled between various shelters across two countries. In the fourth shelter they took refuge in, Aziza’s mother died in her arms. Afraid, Aziza felt like she was alone in the world, abandoned and threatened by those supposed to care for her.

Two weeks later Aziza found Hagar, and quickly became settled and rested. No longer restricted from going out, she learned to find freedom again. With her gift for languages, Hagar offered Aziza full time employment helping with translation work. Aziza feels safe and secure again, experiencing life in its fullness and knowing that she always has the full support of Hagar in whatever her next steps are in life.

In the interests of protection, names have been changed and picture does not represent individual.
Providing education to those who have previously been denied it for economic, cultural or ethnic reasons is an area the Foundation increasingly seeks to support. We heard about the Hazara Glory High School project, and decided to act using your help.

The Linda Norgrove Foundation is providing funding for two scholarships for two girls at Glory High School, a Hazara School in Kabul.

The school provides education to both girls and boys, offering extra funding for the poorest students including a hot meal each day. The school ensures that every case is considered for enrolment.

The cost for one child for a whole year – tuition fees, uniform, transport and lunch – is £430.

The Hazara people are the third largest ethnic minority in Afghanistan, making up just under 10% of the total population. Targeted by larger ethnic groups, the Hazaras were enslaved and in some cases became the victims of genocide. The Taliban actively targeted Hazaras well into the late 20th Century (1).

Following centuries of persecution in Afghanistan and the end of Taliban rule in 2001, the Hazara people are starting to make a prominent return to society, with some figures featuring in politics and high profile Afghan government roles.

Supporting schools such as Glory High School is incredibly important.
in assisting this positive change of attitudes in society.

About 250 pupils from primary age through to Year 10 attend the Glory High School. Scholarships are available for those from the poorest backgrounds, including orphans and street children.

The children are taught a range of subjects in a positive and friendly atmosphere.

Last year the school won prizes amongst the independent schools for coming top in science and maths. Recently, art as a subject has been introduced. Many of the children find this to be very therapeutic as some have witnessed horrific atrocities and it helps them to cope. All children are taught English from an early age, and lessons are held in both English and Dari.

A new school is in the process of being built, and with your help, the Foundation is committed to supporting the continued education of these children.

Cost of project: £960

To find out how you can help projects like the Hazara School Scholarships, visit our website at: www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org

“The lessons here make me so hopeful and optimistic. My favourite subjects are maths and art, and in the future I want to be a mathematician or a famous painter.”

- Nikibat, 9, LNF Scholarship Student
The Linda Norgrove Foundation is a grant giving trust that assists individual people in need of support as well as small-scale organisations that require extra funding.

Recently, three different groups have reached out to the Foundation for help in achieving the same goal: to offer immediate assistance to women in the most desperate circumstances.

**WASSA**
Women Activities & Social Services Afghanistan is seeking funds to continue to provide a legal aid service free of charge to all women and girls seeking legal help in areas such as domestic violence.

Those who turn to WASSA are offered full legal advice in all matters related to family law and violence against women. In many cases clients cannot afford to bring their cases into a court setting, and WASSA ensures that a female defence lawyer is available to represent clients in court and fight for justice.

The project aims to encourage women and girls to use the formal legal system, not only giving them financial support but letting them know that help is available in their pursuit for justice.

**WAW**
Providing legal aid for those that require it is one thing; however, sometimes immediate assistance is essential for women who are victims of domestic violence.

Women for Afghan Women is an organisation that seeks to help women and children in the most desperate circumstances. They have approached the Foundation for resources to establish an emergency medical fund. The fund will help women in need of immediate medical attention after suffering the most appalling forms of domestic abuse at the hands of those
who are supposed to care and provide for them.

One woman was shot in the back by her husband because she failed to produce a child, resulting in life-threatening injuries. Her family did not ensure that she received medical attention, and sufficient medical facilities to treat her injuries are not available in Afghanistan. It is in circumstances such as these that an emergency fund could be used to pay for her surgery in Pakistan or India. The Foundation is looking to provide aid for women and children who are the victims of these horrific acts of abuse, whichever way it can.

**Women reaching out**
The Linda Norgrove Foundation regularly comes across individuals from such horrific and tragic circumstances that it is difficult not to respond.

Our volunteers on the ground in Afghanistan came across two widows who shared their story through a focus group in a village in the south east. The women were living in fear and struggling to make ends meet after the Taliban threatened and killed members of their families.

One of the women explained how her three sons were killed in three related incidents by the Taliban.

Her eldest son worked for the police in Kandahar and was coming home to visit when the Taliban intercepted and killed him on the basis that he worked for the government. After hearing of his death, the mother and her other two sons went to collect his body, however the Taliban were awaiting their arrival. They killed a second son, and when the mother and the youngest were burying the bodies, the Taliban abducted the youngest from the graveyard and tortured and killed him.

When asked if the Taliban still bother her, she explained; “What more can they do? They killed all of my sons and my husband is already martyred [from Mujahdeen]. There is nothing left for them to ruin.”

Women like those from the focus group face a continual struggle for a safe and secure life on a daily basis and these are the very people that are in grave need of our support. We are currently investigating how we can help widows like the two who were brave enough to come forward and share their testimonies with us.

Whilst many Afghan women and children live in a positive and safe environment, the stories that have emerged from the three different groups create an impression of a sad and desperate world for many of the victims involved. The Foundation is looking into ways to help each organisation, however it can, to bring safety, security, and a sense of normality back into the lives of those women who have suffered so much cruelty.

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Through your donations, we can and will offer assistance to these women who have reached out to us in desperate need.
We are a small organisation with just one employee, five trustees and a whole team of volunteers. Based in our wee office in the loft of John and Lorna’s house on the beautiful and remote Isle of Lewis, friends and family have pitched in to help with running the Foundation from across the world. From the accounting to the media campaigns to the web development, help has arrived from a dedicated group of individuals who truly believe in what we are doing. From this little village in the Outer Hebrides we are making big changes for women and children in Afghanistan, thanks to all of our fantastic volunteers.

Great Scot!
On 6 October the Foundation was awarded “Charity of the Year” at the Sunday Mail’s Great Scot Awards for the charity’s efforts in Afghanistan. John and Lorna were delighted to represent the Foundation at the ceremony in Glasgow. Altogether now...‘Great Scot!’

Foundation on film
Readers will be interested to hear about the Foundation’s debut on screen, broadcast earlier this year in October on Gaelic channel BBC Alba. ‘Lorgan Linda: Linda’s story’ followed John and Lorna’s trip to Afghanistan and the beginnings of the Foundation. To watch clips of the documentary visit our website.

A helping hand
- Zulfia Abawe became our first Afghan intern to work with the Foundation at the LNF office on the Isle of Lewis. Zulfia worked with us for almost three months and was a huge asset to the charity helping with local school presentations, internal communications and researching potential projects in Afghanistan.
- She has since left to continue her study of Human Rights Law at Cardiff University.

Uig Sands, Isle of Lewis
Across the world, our supporters have been hard at work fundraising for the Foundation. This year funds have been raised through the most fantastic variety of events, including hosting Afghan dinners; playing concerts; book exchanges; tweed cycle rides and a world-wide 10K run. Thank you for running, cycling, reading, singing, buying, eating, listening, watching, wearing and driving in support of change for women and children in Afghanistan.
Thanks for all of your support.

If you would like to make a donation to help transform the lives of women and children in Afghanistan, please complete the form below together with your donation and send it to: **The Linda Norgrove Foundation, 3 Mangersta, Uig, Isle of Lewis, UK, HS2 9EY.** Your help is greatly appreciated, however you choose to help the Foundation.

Full Name: 
Address: 
E-mail: 
Postcode: 

I enclose a donation of: £ 

If you would like to know more about setting up a monthly donation, please tick this box: ☐

Please check contact details are correct (full name and address), and sign the Gift Aid Declaration below if you wish for your donation to be treated as Gift Aid:

I want the Linda Norgrove Foundation to treat all donations and all future donations as Gift Aid donations. You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclams on your donations in the appropriate tax year (currently worth 25p on every £1 you give).

Signed: Date: 

Thanks for all of your support.