Helping women and children in Afghanistan
www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org
Welcome to our eighth annual newsletter

From the outset we have kept close to our original objective – to help women and children in Afghanistan. Many women and their young children find themselves very vulnerable, with absolutely no safety net, when things go wrong and there are no male relatives around to care for them.

We are too small to significantly affect the war or the politics but we can help individuals, and that's what we do - read this newsletter or visit our website to see how.

A newsletter like this can only show some of our projects but not a week goes past when Lorna and I aren't touched by some personal story. It's a privilege to be able to significantly turn some situations around, although sometimes one thinks of those young women who aren't selected for an LNF scholarship and realise their aspirations have effectively been extinguished by our decision.

Things aren't improving in Afghanistan and years of aid-funding might appear to have made little impact. We all wonder whether our small contribution makes any difference in such a sea of suffering, whether we increase aid dependency, help more children to survive and thus increase the unsustainable population pressure in a country where 42% are under the age of 14. The problems appear so vast and insoluble that one's let off the hook, but we can't just stand aside and watch it happen, especially when those suffering are women and children.

Our sympathies are with the everyday Afghans as they try to live their normal lives and bring up their families. For some individuals, their lives will depend on your donations.

Thank you for your support.

John and Lorna

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Charity Registration Number: SCo41843
Afghan staff

We are fortunate to have two young Afghan women who work part time as project managers - two because, if one moves on, one still remains who understands the projects. An experienced well-qualified Afghan volunteer provides oversight.

Pariwash Gouhari our last project manager left this summer. Najia Nabizada has been with us for two years, initially working alongside Pariwash. She studies Political Science and Public Administration at the American University of Afghanistan.

We were impressed with Frishta Matin’s efficiency when she was our contact at Gawharshad University and she joined us in July. Frishta is studying for her Masters in Public Law at Azad University.

NoorAlam Hakimyar worked with Linda in Jalalabad and has recently returned to his job with DFID in Kabul after completing an MBA at Warwick University. He is invaluable to us in an advisory capacity.
**A Year’s Funding**

- **December 2017 - £5,040** to Khadija Kubra, an Afghan charity based in the insecure city of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan to get **15 street children to go to school**.

- **December - £4,000** to Afghan Connection towards the cost of **building a school** in rural Takhar province. Our contribution was doubled by the National Geographic Society.

- **March 2018 - £6,860** to SCAWNO, an Afghan educational charity, operating on a shoestring in a run-down area of Kabul, running **classes for children** not attending school, after-school classes for those who do, and also providing training in **tailoring for widows and single mothers** enabling them to make a small income.

- **March - £8,490** towards our **Medical Scholarship Programme**. See article.

- **April - £6,450** to Global Partners to run a health education project in the Wakhan Corridor aimed at getting people to **use their toilet** rather than the open ground around their villages.

- **April - £1,950** to Womanity. The final payment of a four-year programme providing books for **rural school libraries**.

- **April - £230** to **Nahida, an exceptionally bright girl** who received a partial scholarship to attend a prestigious Afghan-Turk school in the north but whose family were struggling to provide their contribution.
May - £5,310 to the Chaharde Ghorband Beekeeping Co-op to allow 23 women to earn a sustainable income with 2 new beehives.

July - £5,280 to the Afghan Mobile Mini Circus for Children funding annual circus festivals across Afghanistan – see article.

August - £7,350 to SCAWNO. A further 6 month’s funding following payment given in March.

August - £2,420 Our 61 university scholarship students all received $50 cash gifts to mark Eid, a celebration following the end of the fasting period of Ramadan. Some donors might not wish for their contributions to be spent like this, but several Trustees wanted to give some light and ease to the often harsh existence of the students and provided the funds themselves.

September - £21,430 towards our Medical Scholarship programme enabling 33 women to study to become doctors – see article.

September - £10,140 to La Chaine de L’Espoir for life changing surgeries for 9 children and 2 women - see article.

October – £11,260 towards Gawharshad Scholarship programme. The funds that you donated enabled 38 women to study for degrees in law, economics and business studies. Annual tuition fees are £295 which we consider to be good value for money.

October - £1,939 allowed seven girls from poor families to attend Heela Model School in the conservative town of Jalalabad.

October - £77. It’s a measure of how ‘hand to mouth’ some of the student’s finances are that this ‘one off’ payment meant Husnia could continue with her studies at Gawharshad when her uncle didn’t come up with funds for food and lodging at the start of the autumn term.

October - £540 allowed 2 girls to continue their studies at the Afghan-Turk school.
It’s not so surprising to hear there is a shortage of doctors in Afghanistan but, crucially, it’s the lack of female doctors which impacts on women’s health. It’s culturally difficult for many women to be allowed to be helped by a male doctor, especially with gynaecological issues. This situation results in the deaths of many Afghan women and the highest level of maternal birth mortality in the world.

To address this LNF has developed a programme of providing fee scholarships enabling Afghan women to study medicine for five years. Following the selection this year of 12 new students from over 170 applications, we now support 34 in total.

But there’s little point in funding women to spend five years studying if they are then unable to obtain good quality practical training. Over the past six months, we have partnered with volunteer academics and medics from the University of Dundee and together we are investigating post-graduate practical training for our students and possible funding sources for such courses.

The medical scholarship programme is our biggest commitment, currently costing around £33,000 a year. We certainly wouldn’t have been able to take on this level of ongoing expenditure without the backing of 22 donors who have signed up to pay the fees of a student for the full five years. Our target is 50 medical students so, if you know of anyone who might consider a sponsorship, £1,200 a year for five years, let us know and we can forward our medical scholarship donor factsheet.

Photos have been taken by our friends at the Afghan Children’s Circus during a morning’s visit by our staff and some of our medical students. Great to see everyone having a good time – there’s good news coming from Afghanistan as well but we don’t often hear about it.
Hazaras are Shia Muslims who suffer considerable prejudice from the Sunni majority who control the government and feel that they receive less than their fair share of funding. Fatima’s remote province has 400 schools but only 200 have buildings. The daughter of an illiterate farmer supporting a family of eleven, she did exceptionally well to achieve a 98% average over the last 3 years of school. For 4 years she has been trying to find ways of funding her dream to train to become a doctor. Now, with 5 years funding from LNF guaranteed, she is finally economically independent and hopes to be able to help other women.

There are seven in Kamila’s family and they’ve had a tough time since her father died. Because of their financial circumstances, she is the only member of the family to become literate. Kamila decided that she wanted to become a doctor following an incident when one of her sisters nearly died from malaria. The family and neighbours had to carry her miles to the nearest hospital and only got there in the nick of time – as she says ‘I thanked Allah and decided to be a doctor to help myself, my family and my community.’ With your donations, she can be.

Bibi Sheba was recommended to us by Habib Noori, the Afghan vet who is our main point of contact with the beekeepers in Chaharde Ghorband north of Kabul. Her father died after being shot by unknown gunmen three years ago and now the family of eight is barely supported by her brother who has a small photographic shop. She studies dentistry.
Every year since 2012 we have paid for children’s surgeries at La Chaine de L’Espoir who run a hospital in Kabul. They have an associated Women and Children’s Pavilion where kids and parents from country districts can stay free whilst they undergo surgery and the subsequent recovery process. Children from the remotest valleys and deserts who otherwise would have no hope of receiving operations have their lives transformed.

This year £10,100 paid for operations for 11 children and 2 mothers. Accept a big thank you both from us and from them.

Sadia is 3 months old, she comes from a family of 7 in the Panshir valley whose income is £77 a month. Both her cleft lip and palate were fixed and now she can smile. Thank you.
Kamila’s dad is a baker who makes £92 a month in Ghazni province. He supports a family of 13 but since birth Kamila, age 4, has eaten little, struggled for breath and could barely stand after a few minutes….and her health was deteriorating.

Sent to Kabul for diagnosis, it was established that she suffered from a rare heart condition called Tetralogy of Fallot. In the west this condition is normally diagnosed and fixed within the first year but not in Afghanistan.

At La Chaine de L’Espoir she had a big operation involving stopping her heart, a heart bypass machine, closing up a hole between two heart chambers and cutting away obstructive heart muscle tissue.

After only a few weeks convalescence, she was back on her feet. Her father was delighted. Until now, Kamila had been a solitary child who played little and didn’t talk. Now she’s always asking her dad “Can I go play? Explore other places again?” The whole family is reunited and seeing her play, run and laugh is more than they had hoped for!

And we helped a couple of mums.

Nafisa from Baghlan province is 26 and a mum to 6 kids. Lots of women have non-cancerous growths of muscle tissue in their uterus but Nafisa had multiple large growths at a young age and needed urgent surgery. She’s very glad to be rid of the burden of such a mass of useless tissue.
Afghan Woman Summits Mt Noshaq, the highest mountain in Afghanistan

Using her own savings, Marina LeGree started the US charity Ascend 4 years ago. She believes that teaching mountaineering skills to young women empowers them, imparts leadership and team working skills and provides an example to other Afghan women of what they might achieve. LNF has supported Ascend since 2016, paying the expenses of their volunteering work.

We all take for granted the freedom to climb the hills, but it’s something which can change the lives of young women in Afghanistan. For many the first night spent camping on a training expedition is the first night spent outside their family compound.

On 10th August this year, a 24 year-old Afghan team member, Hanifa Yousoufi, who three years ago couldn’t even do a sit-up, became the first Afghan woman to summit Afghanistan’s tallest mountain. At 24,580 feet, Mt Noshaq is higher than any mountain in the world outside the Himalayas.

Hanifa’s life has been hard. She was married off at 15 to a much older man who proved to be horrendously abusive. A visiting relation was shocked at her situation and managed to extricate her. Poor, illiterate and facing the social stigma of being a divorced woman, she spent the next two years mostly in her room at home, totally isolated.

Her cousin brought her to Ascend in 2016. Timid and shy, Hanifa could barely bring herself to speak with the other girls at first, but she started to learn how to read and write and took to climbing, hiking, and physical activity like a fish to water.

Despite her background, altitude sickness and the frostbite in her toes, she did it. In spite of the personal risk, she doesn’t want to be cowed to remain anonymous. News of her achievements has already reached more than 4 million Afghans and she hopes other women will be inspired to challenge their situations.

We know Linda would have been delighted with Hanifa’s success.
This year, fundraisers have raised a fantastic amount for the Foundation, over £17,000. The time, effort and energy that you all have put into organising, participating in, and giving your support has made a real difference to the lives of the women and children whose stories feature in this newsletter.

Rosie Wiscombe raffled a ‘Hoodie’ last Christmas, and later this year auctioned Harris Tweed ‘Ice-cream cones’. In May, Tobias Wellensiek and the Hilfswerk Lions-Club Heidelberg-Altstadt held a night of jazz with Thomas Siffling and his band in Heidelberg. Donations were given in lieu of presents for David Muir on his 70th, Dr John Hay saved change from his weekly shopping trip, and Rob and Janis Scott kept a donation bowl at the Morven Gallery. Qaasim Hussain ran in the Middlesbrough 10K Tees Pride event, Chris Williams in the Cardiff half marathon, and Linda Thomson and Jacquie Mahoney organised a 10k walk along the Moray Firth. Adventurous campers spent a night in the Mangersta bothy or wheelhouse.

The eighth LNF 10k run/walk was well supported here on the Isle of Lewis in atrocious weather, elsewhere in the UK, and in sunnier climes in Myanmar, Kazakhstan, Canada, the USA, in Sweden, Germany, and France. Betsy Marcotte and Lloyd Feinberg travelled across the Atlantic to Scotland for the event with £3,232 in sponsorship. DAI in Maryland, USA, Linda’s former employer, held a 5k, yoga session and Happy Hour raising £4,399.

Thank you all for your generosity and help.

If you would like to organise your own fundraiser, please let us know. You could even help from your armchair if you shop online by registering for ‘Easyfundraising’. It doesn’t cost you anything, you only need to set it up once and a small percentage of your purchases go towards LNF funds. To do this visit: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk

You can also choose the Linda Norgrove Foundation to benefit from your shop with AmazonSmile who will give 0.5% of all your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to LNF. To find out more, please go to: smile.amazon.co.uk
Thanks for all 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.

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Full Name: ..........................................................................................................................

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I enclose a donation of: £ ...................................  to the Linda Norgrove Foundation.

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If you wish your donation to be treated as Gift Aid and boost your donation by 25p on every £1 you give, please tick the box and sign the declaration below:

*Gift Aid it* □ I want to Gift Aid this donation, future donations and any other donation over the past 4 years to The Linda Norgrove Foundation.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify us if you change your name or home address, want to cancel this declaration, no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

Signed:................................................   Date: ...........................

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

Please leave us a message, we’d love to hear from you!