Welcome to our newsletter which we send each summer to more committed supporters and regular donors.

How we do this will depend on possible Covid19 restrictions at the time so do check our website.

An annual report is now available on our website. We have had a quiet year but I'd like to share with you some of the highlights. A full report is available on the website.

**Fundraising**

A £3,500 was raised in 2020 from the 26 laps of football pitch by Linda Thomson and Jacquie Mahoney (2.6 Challenge). Towards the end of 2020, the Foundation hosted a Christmas Fayre, where the proceeds were raised from a sale of garden plants in Nairn, and a star-jump challenge.

**Projects**

Several projects are ongoing.

1. Supporting a young woman or family in desperate need in Afghanistan.
2. Supporting Afghan universities to establish an Afghan National University.
3. Establishing a university in the UK.
4. Supporting Afghan women to establish a business.

**Other Activities**

- In the previous year, we received a £5,000 grant towards our website's development.
- Our 2020 LNF Calendar is in the making, and Christmas cards will be available. More information is available on our website.

**Tax Advantages**

Gift Aid is 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, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

To donate, please complete the form below and send it, together with your donation to:

The Linda Norgrove Foundation, 3 Mangersta, Uig, Isle of Lewis, UK, HS2 9EY.

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

I would like to know more about setting up a monthly donation:

Tick the box and sign the declaration below:

I want to Gift Aid this donation, future donations and any donation over the past 2021.

I enclose a donation of: £ ............................................

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

E-mail:  ..........................................................................

Postcode:  .................................................................

If you wish to cancel your Gift Aid status, please contact us.

Our privacy policy, which details how we keep and protect your data, is available on our website.

Thank you for your support. The women getting a chance to improve their lives and then those directly to them.

Now I'm sure that some of the above won't fit in with the world view of a small minority of LNF supporters. So be it. Another way Lorna and I are fortunate is that, running our own charity, we aren't forced to remain diplomatically neutral and we don't all have to agree on everything, thank goodness.

As Afghan universities are closed some of our students are taking online courses but some don't. We are concerned about their future. We had an email recently from a student studying at the American University in Kabul. They said: 'COVID a big equaliser, 'We're all in this together' – pull the other one. The government has made brave efforts to lock down but most working class Afghans have no savings and space. Those who have suffered have mostly been less well off in the widest sense.'

'COVID a big equaliser', 'We're all in this together' - pull the other one.

Thank you for your support. The women getting a chance to improve their lives and then those directly to them.
Welcome to our newsletter which we send each summer to more committed supporters and regular donors.

Lorna and I constantly strive to maintain an independent life away from the mainstream, so think again if you're expecting a long moan about COVID19 because we haven’t enjoyed such a relaxed break in years.

For the past nine years we have been working most days on Foundation administration but this has tailed off, our leisure time has expanded accordingly and we’ve been hoovering up books, gardening and building a greenhouse.

Few restrictions have affected us in rural Lewis, there have been no tourists, no campervans and we’ve had marvellous weather. It may be an illusion but nature seems to have expanded to fill the gap. Fewer wildflowers are getting trodden on, golden and white-tailed sea eagles have become bolder – it being a rare walk when they’re not spotted, and the red deer have become something of a plague.

But then, possibly like you, we are from a fortunate generation. My supportive parents were neither rich nor poor but I benefited from an excellent grammar school education, a subsistence grant at university, continuous employment, early retirement with a lump sum and a gold-plated pension. Like many of us, we’ve benefited from the inheritance of parents’ homes which sold for around 70 times the original purchase prices and then paid no tax on this due to the ridiculously high inheritance tax threshold.

Someone in a similar situation now would find starting out with children far more challenging and many of them have gone through a cooped-up lock-down to reduce the chances of vulnerable old people like us becoming seriously ill.

Of the 30% of us who have enjoyed the lockdown, I would bet that most have been the aged with savings and space. Those who have suffered have mostly been less well off in the widest sense. ‘COVID a big equaliser’, ‘We’re all in this together’ - pull the other one.

Then again COVID19 has, rather audaciously, crossed into developed countries, unlike most of the previous infectious diseases like SARS and Ebola. Despite the fact that the actual number of COVID deaths is pretty low in comparison with those due to malaria and the other tropical, poverty-related, diseases, we have both thrown money at it and slowed the world economy right down. Whilst we might financially ‘catch a cold’, rest assured that those less well-off overseas will catch pneumonia.

The COVID situation in Afghanistan is difficult to gauge as reliable statistics aren’t available. Initially many Afghans, possibly a quarter of a million, who had been living and working in neighbouring Iran for decades, were forced out. As a result the viral outbreak took off quickly, especially in the western areas bordering Iran.

The government has made brave efforts to lock down but most working class Afghans have no savings, are paid by the day or are subsistence farmers. Living hand to mouth, if they stop work, they starve, so self-isolation isn’t a realistic option. Testing kits and PPE have proved hard to obtain after being snapped up by wealthier nations.
As Afghan universities are closed some of our students are taking online courses but some don't have internet access and will miss a term. We really do hope that things will settle down after the summer.

I think it's important for us all to realise how fortunate we have been and how selfish our societies have become. And how more selfish we intend to get; our barely visible government advisor/controller centralising power and silencing critics.

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Thank you for your support. The women getting a chance to improve their lives and then those of other women and children really do appreciate your help and every penny you donate goes directly to them.

John and Lorna
Six Month’s Funding

December
£4,570 funded Serve Afghanistan which enabled them to continue with the preparation and distribution of Braille books to blind children, allowing them to receive an education.

Blind from birth, Nazira’s condition wasn’t initially realised and then her parents didn’t have the funds to take her to a doctor. Serve’s staff were surveying issues associated with sight and found her in 2016. She was taken into their education programme and proved to be a very smart girl. She managed the first three years in one year and last year the 4th and 5th grades simultaneously.

£1,875 continuing support for seven girls attending the Heela Model School in Jalalabad.

£4,050 directly funding Rustam School in remote Bamyan province to provide the materials for a water supply along with basics such as a printer, solar panel batteries and stationery. Rustam is an outstanding school which sends over 90% of rural girls, mostly with illiterate parents, to college.

After the winter thaw, local men set to and excavated by hand over a kilometre of pipeline between a mountain spring and the school compound. It’s now complete and the standpipe in the compound is a boon, allowing handwashing and drinking that was just not feasible before, an issue in a school with nearly 500 pupils.

LNF’s contribution towards the water supply was just over £1,000 – this represents good value for us and the voluntary labour contribution will help build community support for the school.

January 2020
£3,916 towards the printing and distribution, free to schools, of 5,000 copies of an illustrated book of traditional children’s stories from Afghanistan.

February
£9,930 for life-changing surgeries for eight girls and three women from poor rural areas at the French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children in Kabul, including their travel and accommodation costs.

£8,280 to SCAWNO, six months continuing support for the small school in a poor district of Kabul.

£8,760 bought a minibus and paid for insurance for the ‘Pink Shuttle Project’ which runs a very small fleet of minibuses in Kabul, driven by and only for women, allowing safe and abuse-free public transport in Kabul, addressing a very real and serious problem for women living there.

March
£6,830 to local charity AGFO allowing them to run a vocational sewing class for 24 women from underprivileged backgrounds, including the production of cloth bags to be sold cheaply in the markets. Bags have logos urging the reduction in usage of plastic bags.

£7,650 funded a midwifery service in Pagman district and Panshir province, both in remote villages and in French charity Afghanistan Libre’s medical clinics.
£2,088 allowed the Afghan Children’s Circus to tackle the COVID crisis by producing and distributing face masks, setting up handwashing stations in refugee camps and numerous imaginative public education initiatives.

£6,215 to the staff of the Gawharshad Private School in Kabul who, when the school was closed down, decided to mount a COVID education campaign and also to give groceries and antiseptic supplies to 70 needy families in Kabul affected by the outbreak. We paid for the goods; the school provided all labour, facilities and transport.

Scholarship Student Update

The COVID outbreak lockdown, imposed since March, has disrupted the studies of our students.

We support 43 medical students studying at five universities and 38 students at Gawharshad. Most universities are providing online classes but many students struggle to access a computer with a good internet connection. It is unclear whether examinations will be held at the end of the semester, whether these will count towards their eventual graduation, or how students adversely affected by lack of internet will be treated.

In Ghazni province, where we sponsor 15 midwifery and nursing students, university and colleges have closed. The six medical students in Kabul who were undertaking practical post-graduation training in hospitals have all been sent home.

The whole situation is confusing and we can only hope that things settle down somewhat before the start of the autumn semester. Meantime, we are going ahead with the selection of another batch of students to start in October.

Many students support themselves by part-time work such as teaching in private schools. This is no longer possible and hardship has followed. To counter this, we have decided to give all students a cash grant of $100 from LNF resources at Eid, the Islamic religious celebration following fasting during Ramadan. This is additional to the annual $100 gift to every student financed by personal donations from LNF Trustees.
In our 2014 newsletter Shariwar Khwahany, our second medical student, wrote of the struggles she had persuading her father not to give up on her education and marry her off to a cousin.

Shariwar’s family live in Badakhshan province next to China and Pakistan in the extreme northeast of Afghanistan. At that time, her father was jobless and could no longer support her. Eventually, after much argument, he relented and she enrolled at Zawul university to study medicine. She intended to work her way through university but it didn’t work out and she was just about to give up and return home when she saw the advert for an LNF scholarship. She applied and was successful.

Earlier this year, Shariwar graduated, completed her 18 months of practical training in hospitals and is now registered to practice as a doctor, working flat out helping COVID patients in a new hospital in her native province of Badakhshan.

This is a real milestone for us; we currently fund 43 students studying to become doctors but Shariwar is the first to start work. This year another six have completed their academic studies and, if not for COVID, would already have embarked on hospital-based practical training.

After so many years our programme is starting to make a real difference. It’s all down to our donors and, to those of you who have helped.
Scholarship Student Update

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Lorna has been doing Rebecca's zoom yoga classes throughout the lockdown. Will is a life coach specialising in advising PhD students how to manage the testing business of undertaking their own research. After hearing about the LNF scholarship programme, he offered to tutor online life coaching classes for our students in Kabul.

For six Mondays this spring, together with his colleague Ruth Dunn, Will ran a programme of one-to-one 30-minute coaching sessions for 10 medical students. To ensure a reliable internet connection, we hired an internet café for the mornings and paid for the travel of some of the students who lived on the far side of the city. Will and Ruth gave their time voluntarily; the total cost to LNF was around £400.

Student feedback was very gratifying. Here’s typical feedback from a medical student:

“The short talks with my life coach were very pleasant for me. Also, it helped me forget my problems; my worries and anxiety. Will is very kind and showed me every kindness and cordiality. In life coaching I learnt that if I try hard and have self-confidence, I can accomplish great things in all stages of my life. I was taught how to recognise and solve the problems that prevent me from improving in both my academic, personal and social life. I am looking forward for future life coaching sessions to get new knowledge and new mentality.”

An unfortunate side-effect of sending financial assistance to Afghans is that it can reinforce a dependency culture. But this kind of intervention requires little money and builds the self-reliance and confidence of the women.
Already in this our tenth year since our daughter Linda died and we set up the Foundation, several supporters have given their time and energy into raising £3,500 for us to help a child, a young woman or family in desperate need in Afghanistan.

Our sincere thanks go to Jan, Rob and Catherine at the Morven Gallery (donation bowl at their Christmas Fayre), Rebecca Ellis and Will Medd (Christmas Eve Yoga in Halton), John Porteous (Wallace Stone Christmas lunch savings), Therese and Peter Muskus (Solstice Mandala Weekend & sale of garden plants in Nairn), Doctors Yama and Amy (on their marriage), Sir Stuart Etherington (on his birthday), Mark Miller-Mundy (star-jump challenge), Mr Pointy Haired Jedi (birthday), Linda Thomson and Jacquie Mahoney (2.6 Challenge – 26 laps of football pitch), and, on-going, live online yoga classes all the way from Antigua with Alessandra Silvestrini.

We plan to hold our annual 10K run/walk on Saturday 3rd October. Our intention is to celebrate the 10th anniversary of LNF with 10 simultaneous events around the globe. How we do this will depend on possible Covid19 restrictions at the time so do check our website or Facebook page for updates. However, wherever you are, you can still run, walk, cycle, swim, or do your favourite activity in support.

A 2021 LNF Calendar is in the making, and Christmas cards will be available. More information on our website in due course.

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<th>Thanks for all your support</th>
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