



the **linda norgrove** foundation

Fourth Annual Newsletter



Helping women and children affected by the war in Afghanistan
www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org

Welcome to our fourth annual newsletter



Our focus as a charity isn't in the UK - it's in the results achieved in Afghanistan. It would be better to have a newsletter where we were invisible and the emphasis was firmly on the projects, told by the people closest to the sharp end. So, that's what we've tried to do for this newsletter – give a voice to the people of Afghanistan. We have our project manager in Kabul writing about what it's like to grow up as a woman in Afghanistan; students whom we've

sponsored describing the transformation resulting from a scholarship; a photographer explaining what it was like to work in Afghanistan with one of our supported charities.

Fundraising is difficult for us living in the Western Isles – a small and generous, but not an affluent society. We took a decision early on not to engage in fundraising that involved high costs but rather to focus on keeping overheads to a bare minimum so that we would appeal to discriminating donors who could be secure in the knowledge that their money would get to the people who need it.

We believe in transparency and every year we publish our Annual Report and Accounts on our website. All of our work is undertaken by volunteers and our trustees donate back their costs. So, for 2013, our running costs in the UK totalled less than £4,000. We funded projects in the same period to the tune of £239,000.

Maybe cutting our costs isn't such a clever strategy as it reduces our ability to support fundraising efforts. Which makes it all the more important that, if you know someone who is making a will and is likely to pay inheritance tax, you might advise them of the fantastic tax break offered by HMRC by which, subject to certain conditions, the government will effectively quadruple money left to charity. This deserves to be more widely known. *Further details on page 14.*

Thanks for all of your support over the past year.

John and Lorna

Contact us

The Linda Norgrove Foundation is an award winning UK registered charity.

Charity Number: SC041843

For more information please contact us:
The Linda Norgrove Foundation, 3
Mangersta, Isle of Lewis, UK, HS2 9EY

info@lindanorgrovefoundation.org
www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org
Facebook: /lindanorgrovefoundation
Twitter: @lindaoundation

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For a couple of months in the spring of 2012 we employed an Afghan intern here on the Isle of Lewis to help us with administration. After Zulfia Abawe had returned to work in Afghanistan, she introduced us to the Afghan NGO with the unpoetic acronym of SCAWNO, which stands for Support Children And Women in Need Organisation.

LNF staff and volunteers in Kabul visited and gave glowing reports of the work that SCAWNO was doing and we were impressed by their low cost base. Since that time we have become their main funder and we donate more to this organisation than to any other.

SCAWNO runs classes to teach the Holy Quran to around 100 children a day, teaches painting, calligraphy and miniature arts to 60 children, computer classes to 42 children and instructs 22 women in tailoring skills. Class sizes are generally below 20 and there are up to five classes per day.

Ahmmad Shakib Masoodi, SCAWNO's director, describes better than we ever could the thinking behind the tailoring classes: *'Here the women, who either are widows or are too poor to support their families are attending this class. Most Afghan men do not allow their wives' measurements to be taken by male tailors and this gives these poor widows the chance to get benefit of such situation. After graduation of 6 months session they will start their own private tailoring shops to sew clothes for other women and this is a good income generation task in their own house while they are safe and do not have to go out. We even have some higher aged girls who have not been to school and have no education at all, so this will give them an opportunity to have a good job despite being illiterate.'*



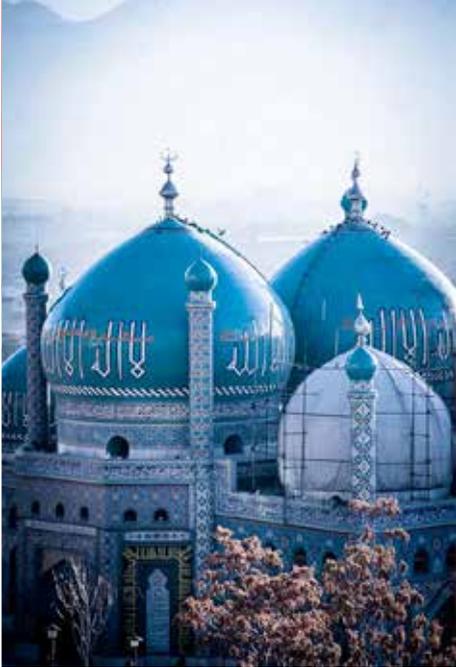


SCAWNO also run a very successful judo club. Usually there are two classes for 60 boys in the morning and one for girls in the afternoon, but at school holiday times numbers swell to 150. They use an ageing second-hand mobile judo hall for their practice, judo mats have to be carried to and from the building for each session and there are insufficient judo uniforms. In spite of these constraints, the judo clubs have been a huge success, the children often winning in club competitions.



SCAWNO is firmly based within Afghan society and their local community. The classes that they run reflect this, combining Islam, traditional Afghan arts, sports and training of skills leading to income opportunities. Sometimes it can be less easy dealing with SCAWNO than with western-based NGOs because they haven't the same organisational, accounting and communications skills, but when it comes to rootedness in their community and 'bang for buck', they get our vote.





Sayed Farhad's Story

It was the year 2008 that my father, who was a taxi driver, was killed during a suicide attack in Kabul city. This brought many difficulties on my shoulders as I was the eldest son of the family and so had to provide food and shield for my mother and 8 sisters.

I had to leave school and look for a way to generate income to support my family and so I started car washing and early in the morning I used to sell newspaper. The amount I gained for sure was not enough, but was helping the family as my mother too washes clothes in some other people's houses to make a living.

One day I heard of SCAWNO, enrolled, started playing Judo and let me explain the changes the Judo sport brought to my life. Before, I had lost all my hope and I was very much like a shy boy who tried to avoid the public and could not express my thoughts. Judo sport has built my confidence and self-esteem and I now have more strength, stamina, toughness and confidence. I now feel much stronger, healthier and optimistic.

I am delighted and thankful for all my instructors but specially to my Judo trainer Mohammad Zaki Yaqubi for all his efforts in training me. One of my unforgettable memories is achieving the silver medal in Judo competition, that was like a dream come true.

I cannot thank enough Linda Norgrove Foundation on behalf of all the kids at SCAWNO who have made all these achievements possible and achievable ■

Photographs courtesy of 'judo for fred'
- see their 'Afghan Week' webpost at
<http://www.judoforfred.org/?lang=en>



Education

- **£14,500** - SCAWNO. We are the main funders for this Afghan educational charity. *See the article on page 3.*
- **£850** - Fees to allow Shahriwar to study in Kabul to be a doctor. *See page 9.*
- **£379,000** - 'Afghanistan Reads!'. A womens literacy and community libraries project funded by USAID. Funds passed directly to our implementing partners Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan). 840 received literacy training throughout the country. 40 libraries have been established.
- **£1,700** - Scholarships to allow 7 poor kids to attend the Heela Model School in Jalalabad.
- **£5,500** - Grant to Afghan Connection towards the cost of a new school. Our grant was match-funded by National Geographic.
- **£1,150** - A year long programme of English classes for 60 older girls; not normally an option in the security-challenged area of Khost province.
- **£6,100** - Grant to UK charity Afghan Action towards a training programme for widows to learn tailoring and sewing to enable them to set up a self-sustaining business.
- **£1,000** - Grant to UK charity ASET towards the cost of a new school. Every £1 we gave matched by £9 from the German government.
- **£9,400** - Running costs of the House of Flowers orphanage. *See page 12.*
- **£303** - Fees to allow Mariam to study in Kabul to be a doctor. Other half of the fees paid by our partner organisation CW4WAfghan.
- **£5,800** - Scholarships to allow 21 girls from poor backgrounds to study for either law or economics degrees at the Gawharshad Institute. 14 first year and 7 second year students. *See page 9.*
- **£6,500** - Grant to the Afghan Appeal Fund to allow the construction of walls around the girls area within the new school in Helmand province, without which parents would not agree to their girls attendance.
- **£9,400** - Fees to allow 100 young women to study for 10 months English, communications and computing at the Kandahar Institute of Modern Studies.
- **£7,500** - Two month long summer schools, one for 42 school teachers and another for unemployed youths in storytelling skills, so important in a country with high levels of illiteracy. The summer schools use traditional Afghan stories and are run by Italian charity Plain Ink.

Health

- **£8,750** - Our share of a year's running costs of the 'Window of Hope' orphanage for 16 disabled children. Costs are equally shared between the Karen Woo Foundation and the charity arm of the UK-based Afghan Professionals Network.
- **£9,000** - Wages for 3 midwives in a team organised by Amorelief, a US charity, which provides outreach healthcare in a desperate area of Kabul where little healthcare provision currently exists. *See page 8.*
- **£6,050** - Part funding in conjunction with the French Hospital in Kabul for surgeries to 10 destitute children. 4 plastic surgeries, 3 orthopaedic and 3 heart operations.
- **£9,418** - A fund run by Afghan charity Women for Afghan Women to provide support and emergency medical treatment for rural women and girls following very serious but isolated cases of assault and/or rape.
- **£11,450** - Grant to UK charity HealthProm to build 3 underground drinking water tanks to serve very poor rural villages in the northern Ghor province. *See page 11.*

Environment and Community Development

- **£6,050** - Support for Afghan-based charity PARSА enabling them to continue with the Trade Afghan project training disadvantaged women and widows in small scale horticulture and smallholding skills to enable them to make a small sustainable income.
- **£7,300** - Grant to French charity GERES who construct solar porches together with other energy saving measures to poorer households in Kabul. *See page 10.*
- **£12,000** - Continuing funding to COAM, an Afghan charity which undertakes environmental work in the mountainous region around Bamiyan in the north. Funding small scale horticulture, reseedling of degraded hillsides and an intern scheme.

Being a Woman in Afghanistan

Doulat Bibi Aliyar works part-time for the Foundation as Programme Manager. She is a final year student at the American University in Kabul having won a scholarship to attend. She comes from the small remote town of Fayzabad in the extreme NW of Afghanistan next to the Wakhan corridor.



Here she recounts her experiences about the Afghan gender divide:

'You are a girl and you shouldn't compare yourself with boys'

- this statement is said to every single girl born in Afghanistan. I have heard this statement from my parents, siblings, neighbours and even teacher all my life.

I remember, when I was 12 years old and our family has just moved to Afghanistan from Pakistan after the collapse of Taliban regime, that I went out to the yard to play with my friends when a bunch of nearly boys my age showed up. They told us that now boys are here and you should go and play inside the house. I grew up in Pakistan and there I was never encountered with such a behaviour and no one ever told me that you are a girl and you should be inside the house. Since, I was a kid and I was very scared of those boys, my friends and I picked up our toys and returned to our house.

That night I told my mother about the incident, which was very shocking for me, and her reply made me more surprised, she said *'they are right, it is not Pakistan, here girls are not allowed to play outside and with boys'*. I still remember her words because she never said something like that when we lived in Pakistan.

Years passed and I grew up with this idea that girls should not always compare themselves with boys. When I was in my 10th grade of high school, I started teaching Math and English for girls in our school voluntarily. My brother was the one who never liked me teaching girls, he used to fight with me and argued with my parents that she must not teach because she is a girl and it will ruin our family's reputation.

But, with all those obstacles in my way, I never lost my hope and refused to underestimate myself. There were times that people pointed at me and said never compare yourself with men, but I have never let myself to believe them and have always strengthened my belief that women have the capability to do any task and job which men are capable of ■

Amorelief

In Afghanistan it is reported that as many as 85% of all births occur with no trained medical personnel present and that one in seven women die following childbirth. These are horrifying statistics and we have been trying to play our part in changing this over the past four years, funding these projects:

For two years we supported a Swedish charity Operation Mercy providing Birth Life Saving Skills (BLISS) and mobile community clinics to remote communities in the Wakhan corridor in the northeast. A firm base established, this work has been taken over by local agencies funded by the Aga Khan Foundation.

You can read elsewhere in this newsletter about our ongoing work with HealthProm who are firmly committed to improving birthing in the remote northern province of Balkh.

We are just about to proceed with another BLISS project in Kunar province where Linda was working when she was kidnapped.

This year we have funded US charity Amorelief who run a Community Outreach and Patient Education clinic (COPE) in a poor, security challenged area of Kabul where no medical care has previously existed.

The project team holds local surgeries in a different clinic each day of the week. The project's team leader is a midwife who is assisted by a doctor, two additional midwives and a driver. Together, they deliver antenatal, postnatal, and newborn care and provide vaccinations

to newborns, children, and adults as needed. Each month they see around 1700 patients. This year the Linda Norgrove Foundation is paying the wages of the three midwives in the team.

Patients pay a small fee of \$1 and also pay for essential medications but, if for any reason a person cannot afford the cost, they are provided the same level of care free.

The trust and confidence engendered by the clinics has resulted in more expectant mothers attending the hospital to give birth rather than delivering at home with no outside help.

The end result is that many babies gain a much stronger foothold in their first hours and weeks of life; many lives have been saved, and the mothers are beginning to understand the role education and proper medical care play in the overall health of the mother and child.

As the team leader Shukra says: *'In fact COPE program is encouraging the women especially those who can't access to any health services to know about importance of their health as well as to have safe delivery with healthy baby for a better life. This is a great beginning step in the lives of hundreds of Afghan women.'* ■



Scholarships

Education in Afghanistan is similar to the UK in that state and private systems exist side by side. However, state education is significantly more variable than in the UK and we provide scholarships at privately-run schools and universities for promising students from poorer backgrounds.

We fund seven children at primary school. Last year we paid the fees of seven girls to attend the Gawharshad Institute to study for a degree in law. This year we have sponsored fourteen more.

And we have recently started funding two girls to study to become doctors.



Here is Shahriwar's story

My name is Shahriwar and my family live in Badakhshan province next to China and Pakistan in the extreme northeast of Afghanistan. When I was in 7th grade I got scholarship to continue my education in Afghan Turk High School, a well known school in Kabul City. This school has a very high quality of teaching and it is very hard for students to succeed and get their scholarship and that is why my family allowed me to come to Kabul. Although the school was providing us good facilities, still I was so much under depression without my family. My relatives were used to say bad things about me just because I was living far from my family. They were thinking that I will go bad paths since my family was not here to stop me if I would do something wrong.

After I finished school I had kankor (University entrance) exam but unfortunately I did not succeed in my favorite major which was medical University. I went back to Badakhshan province where my family was. My father had lost his job and he was jobless, my mother was teaching in one of public high schools. I was so hopeless. My father decided to marry me with my cousin who had started university in Badakhshan Province. Before my father forces me to marry I asked him to give me some time to prove myself. After negotiations of days and nights my father accepted and he allowed me to come back to Kabul, to find a job and to start Medical University in a private University. I registered in Zawul University but needed to pay high fees and applied for job in so many public and private organizations but they did not respond because I did not have any job experience. Without money I have to leave and go back. I was so disappointed and lost.

But when I heard about Linda Norgrove Foundation I applied for it and my life changed when I got this opportunity from your organization. My family is also so happy for me that now I could study without any tension and stress. What your organization is doing, is a great job since helping those who really are in need is a priceless task and you are doing that. So thank you so much for giving this opportunity for me to be educated and to serve my country. I will make sure to not disappoint you and my family who have put a lot of trust on me ■

GERES

This summer we donated £7,300 to the French NGO GERES to undertake work which both improves the living conditions of Afghan families and reduces their impact on the environment.

We might have to suffer incessant gales and rain here in Scotland but Kabul residents experience temperature variations between summer and winter two and a half times as great; mean monthly minimums and maximums varying between -7C and 32C.

Traditional Afghan homes have no insulation. Fuel such as coal, oil or gas exist but are very expensive in Afghanistan, and not always available on the market. So winter fuel comprises dried animal dung (most common and cheapest), wood, which is a rapidly diminishing resource and the expensive option of paraffin and oil hauled in by road from Pakistan and Iran. Some households who do not have enough money for heating collect garbage and use it as fuel (plastic bottle, old shoes, cartons...).

Inefficient paraffin stoves, wood and dung fires, clapped-out cars imported from Japan, little wind, atmospheric inversions during fall and winter that trap airborne pollutants; these factors combine to give Kabul one of the highest levels of air pollution in the world - worse even than Beijing. There are twice as many deaths each year resulting from air pollution in Kabul as there are civilian casualties due to the conflict in the entire country.

GERES provides a range of solutions to address these problems, the most innovative of which is the construction of solar porches to existing houses which are basically polythene sheeted lean-to greenhouses. These provide additional insulation to one side of the family house, and solar gain, which is significant because they get 300 days of sun a year.

Another benefit is additional living space, important in a poor country where an average of nine people occupy a house with one to three rooms and a huge improvement in the quality of life for mothers and their children who are frequently confined within the house by weather in winter and often by cultural pressures which restrict women's movements.

Depending on their circumstances, householders pay 70%-90% of the \$400 cost of a porch. GERES has trained 70 craftsmen to build the porches to a good serviceable standard. The polythene skin lasts between 2 and 4 years and can be recycled to insulate the roof and windows. Maintenance costs average around \$20 a year. They are popular with residents and there is a waiting list.

This year we have funded the construction of 120 porches together with training and energy awareness education in the targeted communities ■





The provision of cleaner drinking water forms an integral part of a much larger project to significantly reduce infant and maternal mortality in this district. It's working; last year there were 65 fewer infant and maternal deaths than the average in the two years before the project started.

HealthProm concentrates very much on working with local communities and is careful to listen to their concerns. This is what a photographer who worked with them last year wrote after she'd finished.

HealthProm Update

In last year's newsletter we reported on a grant to the UK charity HealthProm for the digging, from solid limestone bedrock, of two underground drinking water storage tanks to serve remote villages in the Charkent district of the northern province of Balkh. In these mountains there are high flows in the watercourses each spring from snowmelt but they dry every summer. In the dry season villagers used to rely on putrid polluted ponds, and young children died from intestinal illnesses as a result.

Those tanks were completed on time and on budget by the village men, despite encountering harder rock that required explosives to augment the traditional hand rock-breaking methods. They worked in shifts throughout the nights in order to finish before the end of the winter.

We were so pleased with the outcome, and by their commitment and sheer hard work, that we have funded a continuation for another three tanks this year, each excavated from solid rock by hand and measuring around 10 metres by 5 metres by 3 metres deep. Three will cost £11,500 and serve a combined population of 728 including 520 children. That's £16 a head for a benefit lasting several generations to come.

'I have worked for many NGOs and charities in the developing world and so often I have gone out into the field and have come back feeling let down and disappointed by what I have seen. The money never makes it where it should. After a few years this becomes a very disheartening experience. This is one of the reasons working with HealthProm was so inspiring. Not only did I see that they put every penny into supporting communities but there was a closeness and a mutual respect in the relationships between the locals and international staff. If there is one organisation that I would support it would be HealthProm.' This fits with our experience and we're pleased that, as time progresses, we can continue to build relationships with organisations like HealthProm who economically deliver real benefits for the women and children in Afghanistan which result in lasting rather than ephemeral change ■





House of Flowers Orphanage

Orphanages in Afghanistan can be Dickensian. Afghans generally care well for their children but in the absence of state welfare provision, the alternatives for care outwith families are stark.

Sometimes private orphanages are started with the primary function of providing a livelihood for those running them, at the expense of the children. Money, food, clothing and bedding allocated for the children by NGOs and government can be siphoned off and sold by local staff. Sometimes the children aren't orphaned at all: families unable or unwilling to support their own children place them in an orphanage as a way out. This appears shocking to us but who knows how we would behave if confronted with the options that face a destitute Afghan parent?

We can't realistically fight corruption from such a distance but we can try to improve the quality of care available in the country's orphanages and one way to do this is to fund orphanages which serve to show a better alternative to the others.

One such is the House of Flowers orphanage in Kabul, which we have funded since 2012. The longer we know the people who run it, the more impressed we are by their commitment and progress.

The House of Flowers was founded in 2002 when Mostafa Vaziri and Allison Lide of the US charity MEPO first came to Kabul to work and live. They teamed up with an established Afghan NGO called Hewad, rented premises and opened the House of Flowers. Hewad continue to undertake the day-to-day running and Allison and Mostafa, now based back in the US, continue to monitor, support, fundraise and visit regularly. The orphanage is currently home to 20 boys and 10 girls and there are nine local staff.

Teaching follows the Montessori system which involves offering children supervised freedom (not unlimited freedom), which gives them a sense of control whilst the limits give them a sense of safety. The children are free to move throughout the House, to choose their work in the classroom, to draw or play or do any manner of expressive arts. They have a great deal of unscheduled time (unlike other orphanages) in which to play, to sit and read, to think or to chat. The House is a community and each child is expected to play their part, for instance by assisting with chores, helping younger children or managing the small amounts of pocket money they receive.

Emphasis is placed on respect for others and treating them with grace and courtesy. There are plenty of opportunities both within class and afterwards for the children to engage in handicrafts and hobbies. Academic standards are high and they have achieved real success getting students, especially girls, into university.

As always in Afghanistan, security is a significant issue. The orphanage is located in a relatively safe area but one morning last December, a bomb exploded near the House of Flowers. No one was injured, but the blast did blow out several windows in the house, and it was very scary for the children and staff. Emergency plans for future incidents have been prepared and trips outside have been curtailed.

Lorna and John visited the orphanage in 2012 and found an institution that was efficiently run with children who were clearly happy and fulfilled. This orphanage is better funded than most in Afghanistan and these children are clearly much luckier than most Afghan orphans. Allison Lide is actively looking for additional ways to share the House of Flowers Montessori model with other schools and orphanages and we do hope, by showing what can be achieved using a different system, this model will act as a catalyst for change for other Afghan orphanages ■



2015 Calendars and Christmas Cards

Each year we think we've picked the best images for our calendar and each year we're surprised we can pick another selection that is just as good. This year, all of the photos were taken in Afghanistan by Linda or one of her friends.

The calendars are A4 size for ease of mailing, open up to A3 for hanging and are available from our website for £10 each plus £3 p&p per order

Christmas Cards

Large A5 glossy cards with matching envelopes in packets of 12 of one design. Available from our website for £10 plus £3 p&p per order.



Quadruple a Bequest with an Inheritance Tax Break

No one would deny the right to decide what happens to what you've worked for and saved during your working lives, but do spoilt rich children have the right to free money when others are scraping by in poverty? And wouldn't it be great to know that your legacy also includes helping the needy in a poor country?

Alternatively people can leave some money to charities (any registered charity, not just us) and make use of a very generous inheritance tax reduction.

The first thing to say is that the inheritance tax free allowance is currently £325k. For a married couple it's twice that.

But if you leave more than that, you can reduce the tax rate from 40% to 36% by leaving at least 10% to charity.

Here's an example:

The survivor of a marriage leaves £1m. The tax free amount is two times £325k so tax to pay is 40% of the remaining £350,000 - £140,000. But, if they leave 10% (£35k) of their taxable amount to charity, tax to pay is 36% of (£350k - £35K) - £113k. So tax saving of £27k. £35k received by charity. Net inheritance reduced by £8k.

This deserves to be more widely known. Spread the word!



Our Supporters

Once again this year, some amazing challenges have been undertaken by our supporters in their efforts to fundraise for our projects in Afghanistan.

Carolyn Robson, a lawyer in the British Embassy in Kabul, slept overnight in a snow-hole dug in the Embassy grounds at -8°C; Angus Coultts, son of one of our trustees, took part in the Bupa Great Edinburgh Run; Laura Donaldson, an ex-employee, ran her first half marathon; 72 year old Mike Holland cycled from Troon to the Butt of Lewis; Stuart Simpson ran up the highest hill on every inhabited island on the Western Isles on Midsummer's day; son-in-law Matt Corns & friends cycled coast to coast from Workington to Sunderland; Dr Harry Thompson and Dan Fritz ran 50 miles around Great Cumbrae; and cyclists took part in the Harris Tweed Rides in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Young and old, 123 in all, ran or walked in our annual 10k here on the Isle of Lewis. Others joined in around the world on the same day in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, America, Europe and all across the UK.

Not all fundraising activities were quite as energetic: pupils from Linda's class raised funds at a school reunion, others donated in lieu of anniversary gifts, some even had a bucket of iced water thrown over them.

Whatever your way, thank you – we couldn't do what we do without you.





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.

Full Name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

E-mail:

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.

giftaid it

You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year (currently worth 25p on every £1 you give).

Signed:..... Date:

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

