



# the linda norgrove foundation

2022 Newsletter



**Helping women and children in Afghanistan**  
[www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org](http://www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org)

# WELCOME TO OUR TWELFTH ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



This last year has felt as though we've all been careering down a slippery chute, out of control, gathering speed. The idea of a golden age when we were governed by responsible politicians, read serious newspapers and watched the same TV news is surely a chimera, but the rate of change has become uncomfortably fast of late. It's not just us getting older and slower.

The Foundation has experienced rapid change as well. Since the Taliban takeover we have taken in significantly more donations, expanding our programmes to suit. This requires additional administration, so we have increased both the number of trustees and paid staff time.

Overheads have increased but our trustees have raised their contributions so we can continue to say, 'Every penny donated gets to Afghanistan'.

If it's very difficult to see how our lives will change, it's doubly so for Afghan women and children whose situations continue to deteriorate.

Secondary schools for girls remain closed and, with a factional Taliban, it's just not possible to foresee when/if this will change.

Electricity supply, never very reliable, is now turned on for a couple of hours a day in Kabul.

It's reported that the Taliban are exporting the country's coal to earn foreign currency and most will sit out this freezing winter without significant heating.

Many have lost jobs, with budgets further tightened by rampant inflation and access to savings held in dysfunctional banks restricted. Millions now rely on emergency food aid to prevent them from starving.

A small organisation, we can react quickly to change and adapt our programmes to suit the changing circumstances. So far, it seems to be working.

*John and Louisa*

## STUDENT STORY



**Tayaba** 21 years old, from Kabul Province, has completed four years of medical studies and last term her average grade was a terrific 97.96%. There are seven people in her family: her parents, three brothers and one sister. Her father was working as a driver but he lost his job after the Taliban took over. Her mother is a tailor and her monthly income is around £95 a month. Her elder brother was studying computer science in a private university but after her father lost his job they couldn't afford to pay his fees and he was forced to leave the university. Tayaba took leave for one semester to find a solution. Luckily she got to know about the Linda Norgrove Foundation Scholarship, her last hope, otherwise she would have been forced to quit.

# Christmas Cards and Calendars

## 2023 Calendar

Our 2023 calendar is a beautiful collection of photographs of Afghan life, landscapes and children, many taken by Afghan photographers. The calendars are wire-bound, with each month displaying two pictures, opening up to A3 for hanging. £10 each.



## Christmas Cards

We have two new designs of A6 glossy cards, sold in packs of 10 with envelopes. £5 per pack.

## Ordering and Postage

All products can be ordered through our website, or by post with a cheque. UK postage is £4 per order.

## SURGERY STORIES



**Arezo** is a six year old from a remote district of Daikundi province. Her father works in Iran to support the family but can only send £45 a month, which is not enough to keep them fed.

Her mother works a small patch of land and Arezo is looked after by her granny who says *“Most of the time we don’t have bread to eat, if we have some bread we restrict ourselves and so feed our children, because they are children and need good nutrition, especially Arezo, who is sick and has heart problems.”*

Arezo was weak, prone to fainting and would have been unlikely to live much longer. The heart surgery, PDA, wasn’t possible in government hospitals but your donations paid the £740 needed and surgeons at The FMIC, assisted via video link by surgeons in Paris, fixed the problem. Granny and the bigger family are so relieved.



**Sana**, aged 9, has lived 7 years of her life in an IDP camp in Kabul. Her family left Kapisa province during heavy fighting and have now lost all title to their house and land. From the age of three, when she started trying to walk, she has experienced a lot of difficulty moving around. She had low self-confidence, few friends and didn’t go to school. Government hospitals couldn’t undertake the surgery required to fix her developmental hip dislocation. The operation at FMIC, costing £610, was successful but, because she should have been operated on sooner, it will be some time before she fully recovers.

# Life-Changing Surgeries for Women and Children



Every year we pay for a modest programme of surgeries arranged by La Chaîne de l'Espoir (LCdE) at the French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children (FMIC) in Kabul. Children and mothers are selected following consideration of their absolute need of treatment, the impossibility of treatment in their home province, and their economic situation. All costs are covered and the kids and mothers stay free in the LCdE Children's House next door.

This year your donations paid for opera-

tions for 13 women and 17 children, costing £17,650, fixing issues ranging from club feet to heart disease.

## **Marjan's Story**

We have been receiving heartrending accounts of Afghan women's situations for 12 years, but we were shocked, as you will be, by the life story of Marjan.

It's not a typical story, it's an extreme case, but it highlights the issues Afghan women have to cope with.

Reprinted below, pretty much as we received it from the hospital.

Marjan is a 22-year-old Afghan girl from Badghis province in Afghanistan, currently living in a women's shelter. She lost her father when she was one and a half years old and her mother had to return to live with her own father who was suffering from cancer. To support herself, Marjan's mother remarried as a second wife to another man who had young children.

Marjan's stepbrother who was against his father's second marriage and wanted to get back at her mother, arranged Marjan's marriage at the age of seven to a very old man who had no children but wanted them. She became a victim of physical, moral, and sexual domestic violence, exacerbated by the fact that she could not 'give' her husband a child.

After five years, when she was 12, he took her to hospital for a fertility check. After doctors explained that Marjan was too young to become a mother, he became furious, beat her in the hospital corridor, then ran off. She was then referred by the hospital's support to the Women's Affairs department in Badghis. Her husband complained about her to the Taliban, who sentenced her to public stoning because she had disobeyed her husband, but the Women's Department refused to give her up and supported her.

While living there, she met a soldier from Helmand province, who told her that he was single and wanted to marry her. It was only after the wedding that she discovered he already had a wife. Her husband became steadily more aggressive, and eventually she tried to kill herself by drinking battery acid. For two months she could not eat, only drink. After another year and a half, she escaped from her home and went

to the Department of Women's Affairs in Helmand, who sent her to Kabul. She was placed in a women's shelter. Six years later, she's still there.

Marjan complained of increasing pain in her pelvis. After consulting a specialist in gynaecology and obstetrics at FMIC and after ultrasound, pelvic MRI scans, she was diagnosed with a cystic ovarian teratoma of the right adnexa (dermoid cyst) measuring 6.6 cm x 6 cm.

As a single woman with no male guarantor, it was complicated to admit her, as the FMIC feared reprisals from the family, who might discover that she had been operated on without family male consent.

After negotiation, with the support of the Heads of Mission of the LCdE, and a male from the shelter, she was admitted, the mass excised and Marjan was discharged on 23rd June. The cost was 525 Euro.

Today, her main concern is her unknown future under the Taliban who have been pressurising her to get married again. She is currently waiting for a court order confirming her divorce.





## University Scholarships Update

We currently support 94 young women studying medicine and another 54 studying a wide range of subjects from nursing to midwifery to computer science.

Secondary schools for girls remain closed, creating a longer-term problem for our women's university scholarship programme because the stream of new students has been disrupted.

Our response has been to significantly increase the number of medical scholarships whilst options remain available.

Some students, part-way through their courses, now find themselves in financial difficulties and desperately in need of financial support after their families have lost jobs and income, with their budgets further tightened by rampant inflation and by restrictions placed on access to their savings. Opportunities for students to earn by part-time teaching and the like have disappeared.

Some young women, who finished school before the Taliban takeover without examination grades good enough to gain access to medicine, have continued to study to attain the standard required, and are now able to take the entrance exams.

When we advertised our scholarships this autumn we received over 300 applications, interviewed 65 and selected 19.



# 2022 Funding



## January 2022

**£4,000** to the online **Afghan Children's Songbook**, making traditional Afghan children's songs available free to teachers and families right across the country.

**£3,500** was donated to **Afghan Aid's rural development projects** via the 'Big Give Christmas Challenge Campaign' whereby every £1 donated was quadrupled.

**£19,960** for our **scholarship students' living allowances** for the autumn semester of 2021, to pay for their accommodation, food, transportation, and books. Essential now that the students have lost all opportunity of part-time work.



**£62,050** delivered over **1,400 food and hygiene parcels** to desperately poor families headed by women.

**£93,295** for **2021 university fee payments** to six universities and colleges for 110 medical, dentistry, midwifery, and nursing scholarships. Payment, due last year, was held up by the failure of the banking system.

**£9,188** pays the **2021 fees for 35 scholarships at Gawharshad University**, for students studying Law, Economics, Business, and Computer Science.

**£1,588** enabled **Orphans Friends Charity Foundation** to buy coats for 229 orphans and poor children in Parwan province.

**£18,563** covered the cost of three rounds of the **distribution of stoves and fuel** by volunteers from Gawharshad High School to 180 vulnerable women who are the breadwinners for their families, both in Kabul and rural Bamyán province.



**£8,500** to the **Scottish charity Glasgow Afghan United** funding two rounds of food parcel distributions in January and April, to 240 families in the Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces, where the charity has good local contacts.

## February

**£795** enabled **Orphans Friends Charity Foundation** to distribute 228 pairs of shoes in Parwan province.

## March

**£5,982** continued our support to **Serve Afghanistan** who help visually-impaired students, allowing them to access mainstream primary to higher education by producing educational materials in Braille, MP3 and large print.



**£9,900** funded the charity **HealthProm**, providing emergency transport for women in labour in the remote Kaldar region of Balkh province in the north of Afghanistan.

## April

**£6,100** provided **50 student scholarships at private Gawharshad High School**, covering the cost of fees, stationery, uniforms and books for primary-aged girls from poor backgrounds.



**£3,300** provides funding for **Afghan charity LEFAO**. 20 children, who had been working on the street, receive additional vocational training – plumbing and wiring for the boys and embroidery for the girls.



## May

**£14,481** to help launch a free **Telemedicine service for Afghans**: upgrading the security and accessibility of their IT systems and funding three female doctors in Kabul, two gynaecologists and a paediatrician, to provide remote consultations to women and children.

## June

**£33,360**. Another round of **scholarship students' living allowances**. Two rounds every year.

**£16,000** to **Afghan charity Aschiana** to run two schools in IDP camps in Kabul for those displaced from their homes. The schools provide primary education and a hot meal to 120 children each day.

**£8,500** allowed the **Italian charity NoveOnlus** to run a mobile health clinic for a year. It provides free health care in deprived areas. The doctor sees around 55 patients a day. 75% are women and children.



## July

**£15,300** pays for **17 surgeries for children and 13 for mothers** at the French Children's Hospital in Kabul.





## September

**£24,100** to the **CURE hospital in Kabul** funded four women doctors' residencies, each of which lasts for three years, and also the running costs of two mobile clinics in IDP camps run by volunteering CURE doctors and staff.

**£4,400** pays for a **mother and baby clinic in Herat** run by a volunteer hospital doctor and midwife. Arranged through relatives working in a refugee centre in Greece.

**£7,200** paid a group of **Afghan refugees** in France, previously academics, to support Afghan women running informal teaching centres for secondary aged girls throughout Afghanistan.

**£1,800** provided the final element of funding allowing **Business for a Better Society** to build a women's centre in the Wakhan Valley.

## October

**£8,900** funded our partner, volunteer staff from the Gawharshad private school in Kabul, to give **200 primary school girls support packages** including uniforms, satchels, books, stationery. See page 12.

## November/December

**£10,000** towards a project run by **Hand in Hand** providing funding, mentoring and support, for 300 women in Balkh province starting small businesses.

**£1,300** provided **six prizes for the best academic performances** of our sponsored university students.

**£41,200** living allowances of **\$600 a year for all of our 148 scholarship students.**

**£144,670** **university fees for 2022.**

**£3,060** **annual subscription for the Lecturio online resource** for the medical students.

**£91,270** funded the **Afghan Children's Circus's** programme of festivals across the provinces, totally funded by a matching grant from the VITOL Foundation. The Children's Circus is registered in Denmark where the banking restrictions are ridiculously tight, accounts summarily closed if any funds go to Afghanistan. Hence the funding through us, without touching Denmark.



# Strengthening our Organisation

No-one can doubt that women's lives in Afghanistan have been severely impacted by the change in government. Despite their situation being overshadowed by the war in Ukraine, many donors have been keen to increase their support for Afghan women and, as we specialise in helping them, our income has increased both steadily and significantly.

For the first ten years, we were run in the UK by unpaid volunteers. Nearly two years ago Sophie Brown joined and supports Lorna's work organising fundraising and liaising with donors and John's keeping track of the projects and, more recently, arranging the transfer of funds to Afghanistan. Her three-days-a-week contribution has proved invaluable and we couldn't have coped with the additional workload of the past couple of years without her.

Frishta and Farzana Matin, the two sisters who worked for us in Kabul and escaped to Stornoway last year, have joined the board of Trustees.

Existing Trustees work voluntarily and pay their own expenses.

Frishta and Farzana will continue to work for us, Farzana voluntarily alongside her full-time job with the Scottish Refugee Council, Frishta, at home with her pre-school child, Kia, will continue to be paid for the hours she works, but not for time spent undertaking Trustee duties. They have both been an invaluable help to us managing the scholarship programme - a difficult task with so many students dropping out, leaving the country, changing universities to minimise journey time to and from their homes, and the general turmoil.

Negina, who monitors projects for the Foundation in Kabul, will soon be joined by an assistant.

Our fund-raising success is due, in part, to our being able to state that 'Every penny donated gets to Afghanistan' as Trustees have paid all LNF UK expenses. These have risen sharply to around £30,000pa and whilst Trustees' donations this year sufficed, it's too much to sustain long-term and so we have been fortunate to receive the support of a wealthy donor and two Trusts so we can continue to fund the administration costs.

Given the concern some donors have about high overheads and their money not getting to the final recipients, we think it important to emphasise the commitment, in both unpaid time and financial contributions, that the Trustees make.





## Gawharshad Private School Volunteers

Gawharshad private school is a fee-paying school whose headmaster and staff have volunteered and delivered several of our projects over the past two years.

They delivered food parcels during the first Covid epidemic.

They delivered 95 packs of stoves and fuel to families headed by women during last winter, one round in Kabul and one in Bamyan province.

In April, we funded 50 scholarships allowing girls from deprived backgrounds to attend the Gawharshad school.

The headmaster, Mohammad Ibrahim, sits on our selection committees for scholarships.





## 50 Years On

50 years ago Lorna and I were in Kabul. It had been a full year: 6 months out of university, I'd met Lorna in Newcastle. A passionate romance resulted in a move to work in Lorna's parents' fishing hotel in one of the remotest parts of Sutherland. Marriage quickly followed, then a honeymoon aboard a budget bus (budget £39) from London to Delhi. Numerous breakdowns but we were there in 6 weeks.

6 months later we were still there. Freedom is a marvellous thing, difficult to sustain. You start owning things and then they end up owning you. Then we had very little.

We both felt that when we crossed the border from Iran into Afghanistan we had found the place we were searching for, the exotic east. Herat was a small town where there were more horses and carts than cars, tribesmen strolled the streets with rifles slung over their shoulders. Camels were on the streets of Kandahar. Kabul was more sophisticated with many trees, cafés and shops - we remember a Christmas dinner

including pumpkin pie in a restaurant run by Americans.

Then a trip through the Khyber Pass where the entire set of front leaf springs broke and were replaced by a timber log and we crawled into Pakistan. In Peshawar the local spring works made a complete set that evening using a simple forge and anvil. I was impressed when the bus was operational again within a few hours.

The intention was to continue onward to Australia but we ran out of funds in Sri Lanka, borrowed money from parents and flew home.

But the experience of the totally different cultures affected us both deeply. Travel should expose the tenuous assumptions and attitudes that narrow our perspectives. We were changed by that trip: Afghanistan was the biggest cultural shock and, even now, the cultural difference is the biggest challenge we have to negotiate.



# FUNDRAISING

Once again supporters have been using their imagination and energy to come up with a variety of fundraising activities this year, boosting our funds by £20,454. Thank you to everyone involved for giving your time to organise, participate in, and support these fundraisers.

Our annual 10k attracted runners and walkers from around the world, with the main event held in our home territory here on the Isle of Lewis at the beginning of October where a cheerful crowd were challenged, but not put off, by a mix of heavy rainstorms, sun and wind. Others took part in sunnier climes in Kuala Lumpur, Australia, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, USA, North Vancouver, and across the UK. Our thanks to all of you for helping to add £2,433 to our coffers.

Hats, socks, bags, capes, all beautifully knitted or sewn by islander Margaret Macleod, were sold at a Craft Fair on the Isle of Harris and raised £2,055 for LNF.

Fiona Bruce and her son took part in the Edinburgh Kiltwalk in September and, with a 50% top-up by the Hunter Foundation, raised £788.

Phil Stonehewer, despite an Achilles injury disrupting his training, completed the London Marathon in under four hours and raised £1,191. A fantastic achievement!

Swimmers who took part in our open water challenge received a unique badge embroidered with their distance – 1,3,5, or 10km. Again, water lovers swam in support in different parts of the world.

£2,000 donated after the Charlbury Beer Festival will pay the university fees and living expenses for a female medical student to study in Afghanistan.

A clothes swap organised by Kirsty Anderson in Sandwick, Isle of Lewis, raised £185, and LNF received publicity and donations following Henry Naylor's show at the Edinburgh Fringe, *Afghanistan is Not Funny*. Numerous other fundraisers from earlier in the year are acknowledged in our summer newsletter, featured on our website.

Ongoing: DAI, the organisation that Linda worked with latterly, have challenged staff and friends to a series of photographic competitions to raise money to provide life-changing surgeries for Afghan women and children.

Lexi McGettigan has committed to swim 3,000m outdoors in the Antarctic Penguin Challenge between 1 November and 31 March 2023. You can give her your support via the LNF facebook page.

Looking for an original Christmas present? Check out the range of Sea Charts for sale on ebay, thanks to Andrew Gow, link here: <http://bit.ly/3OhlkyC>

This year we have received funding from several trusts – some wish to remain anonymous but all, including: The Angus Lawson Memorial Trust, Alex and William de Winton Trust, The Inchyre Trust have donated generously and we thank them all for this funding and for showing their confidence in LNF.

Our thanks go to Lorna Macauley and staff at the Harris Tweed Authority office in Stornoway for hosting out Trustee meetings this year.

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>

And if you are thinking of a holiday in the Outer Hebrides, look no further than **Timsgarry Byre**. Profits from the weekly rent of this recently renovated holiday cottage pay for all the administration costs, travel and other expenses for the Foundation. You will be able to enjoy a week of luxury in the knowledge that you are helping to make a real difference to the lives of the women and children whose stories feature in this newsletter. [www.timsgarry-isleoflewis.co.uk](http://www.timsgarry-isleoflewis.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.

Full Name: .....

Address: .....

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

E-mail: .....

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

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:

*giftaid 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: .....

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