

Child Sponsorship in Bamyan, Afghanistan

Progress Report, October 2010

Dear Sponsor,

Greetings from Bamyan Province, Afghanistan!

Our work has only started recently in Bamyan, and many of you joined us right at the very beginning. But already, many families are being supported with livelihood opportunities and providing a better education for over 3,500 children. Other achievements, such as forming women's groups to tackle their problems together, and communities learning more about children's rights are also taking place right now.

Thank you very much for sponsoring a child in Bamyan community. With your generous support we are able to work with poor families to achieve some wonderful results, as you will see through the following pages.

Warm regards,



Fazal Ali
Sponsorship Manager
ActionAid Afghanistan



Over 150 children from Zakria village, Bamyan, have gathered together to practice drawing and school lessons at the children's centre formed by ActionAid. In one voice they say thank you!

112 families are supported with a livelihood scheme

“My life has financially improved. Without the support of ActionAid it was hard to live free of borrowing money and food from my relatives and neighbours,” says Wazir (49) from Khowja Hasan village.

She continues, **“My husband died five years ago and so I live with my son's family. My son, Rahmat, is the sole breadwinner for the family of six. He has a small plot of land where we cultivate wheat. This is only possible once a year due to the harsh winters, meaning we only get food for eight months of the year. To ensure we can still eat the rest of the time, my son works as a daily wage labourer in Bazaar which is located in the city of Bamyan.”**

As Wazir explained, the winters here can be extreme, sometimes falling to -35 degrees Celsius. This makes the land impossible to cultivate and irrigation is also hard to provide. During this time, 30% of households report having problems finding food and 25% of the population receives less than the minimum daily calorie intake needed for good health.

To support families, especially women headed households, ActionAid provided one lamb and one goat each for 112 families. After these animals have bred, families will then continue the project by passing the offspring to more households.

“ActionAid offered my family a goat and lamb which we use for dairy. In the future we will also breed them so we can sell them and use them for food. I would like to take this opportunity to thank ActionAid and you sponsors for thinking about us,” concluded Wazir.



With the lamb and goat provided by ActionAid, Wazir can now help improve food and income for the family

Realising the importance of education

“Hello! My name is Najaf Ali and I am 12 years old. I live in Shash Pol village, with my parents, five brothers and one sister. I am now in grade three at school. Before, I never liked going to school. Our teacher would sometimes beat us and my father used to take me out often to help out on the farm.

But now I am back at school all the time and also attend the child centre twice a week for two hours. We practice our school lessons, tell stories, draw and play with each other. Our centre facilitator encourages us to carry on attending school because this will help us with jobs when we are older. I know I will now stay in school because it is important. Thank you for helping us children.”

Due to poverty and lack of awareness about the importance of education, parents often prefer their children to work rather than attend school. To tackle this issue, ActionAid conducted meetings with parents and village representatives to encourage them to send their children to school.

Child centres have been established by ActionAid where children can come together, out of school hours, to practice what they learn in school, learn about the importance of education and play together in a safe environment.

On top of this, your sponsorship has enabled ActionAid provide stationary to 3,500 students who could not afford these items.



Najaf Ali, doing his homework at Shash Pol child centre, is happy to be back in school

New greenhouses supply more food to extended families

To ensure more families are getting enough food, ActionAid has distributed 10 greenhouses for 18 households, with extended families, to use. It was concentrated on extended families as it is even harder for these to provide for all the mouths in the home - with a lack of water, extreme temperatures and small plots of land.

After installing the greenhouses, a two-day intensive training was given to the families about how to care for the greenhouses, control temperatures in them and how to care for the plants.

Essa and his wife Gulbar benefited from this project. He told us, **“We live with my brother's family. Despite working hard on the land, we could not afford to start a life independently.**

ActionAid kindly installed a greenhouse on some of my brothers land and gave us vegetable seeds such as turnips, carrot and radish. They taught us how to grow these plants and look after the greenhouse.

Our dream has come true. We will cultivate the vegetable seeds and sell them at the market. Finally, this will give us the money to start an independent life together.

We would like to thank you from the bottom of our heart for caring for us in this remote area of Bamyan.”



Essa and Gulbahar can work in their greenhouse together

Other ways your sponsorship is helping in Bamyan:

- 400 people have benefited from two wells dug in Katasang and Khoja Roshnaay villages
- 80 teachers and Mullahs (religious leaders) received an eight-day training about child rights
- 10 schools received sports materials, benefiting over 5,000 students
- Established five *Reflect* circles for 115 women. *Reflect* is ActionAid's innovative adult learning programme where participants not only learn basic literacy and numeracy skills but meet to discuss the problems they face and come up with solutions to address these problems



Teachers and Mullahs receiving information about child rights

- 75 Community Development Council members received training on how to identify and prioritise support needed for families within their three villages
- One water reservoir was built in Shokhta village, providing water for 40 families

Looking ahead through 2010 and into 2011, ActionAid plan to:

- 30 women will be identified and trained on legal issues to work as women activists in six villages of Bamyan
- 10 flood affected villages will be provided with emergency toolkits
- Five more *Reflect* circles will be formed in five villages for 165 women
- 1,500 school children will receive stationary (notebooks, pens, pencils and crayons) for the new school year
- 600 Community members will attend a child rights training day in which most of the focus will be about the importance of girls' education

Thank you! I hope you can see how your generous sponsorship of a child here is really making a difference to the lives of families living in Bamyan. On behalf of the children and their families, thank you so much.

If you would like to write to the child you sponsor, or to the wider community, please use the following address:

ActionAid Afghanistan
Street 9th, House # 705,
Taimani,
Kabul,
Afghanistan

To make sure your messages arrive safely, please include your supporter reference number and the child's reference number and we will happily pass them on for you!