

# A future for working children in Afghanistan



Jenny Matthews/ActionAid

real lives:

## Nazar's story

Nazar is ten years old and lives in Kandahar City. He has five brothers and two sisters. His family is extremely poor, and he has to work on the streets in order to help them survive.

"I don't have good memories of my life. I remember being a refugee in Pakistan for many years, and back home there was a lot of fighting. My brothers work on the streets in Kandahar City. I sometimes wash cars or pick up plastic from the streets. I would love to go to school, but then who will help my father?"

## Introduction

Millions of children around the world have to work to support themselves and their families. These children often become involved in dangerous or exploitative labour that damages their health, affects their development and denies them access to an education. Child labour can be found in developing countries worldwide, but often these children are invisible, hidden away in domestic homes or scavenging through rubbish.

In Afghanistan, 20 years of conflict, food shortages and extreme poverty have forced countless children into the city streets in search of work. Children working in Afghanistan are exposed to extreme conditions, neglect, health problems and abuse. Unless these children are given access to the education and vocational training that they so badly need, the endless cycle of poverty will continue.

## Kandahar's forgotten children

In Kandahar City, southern Afghanistan, more than 32,000 school-aged children are working on the city streets. They spend their days scavenging through rubbish, collecting metal, polishing shoes or selling water. Over 75% of these children have never been to school. Girls are at particular risk of sexual abuse, and often end up involved in prostitution at a young age.

On average Kandahar's working children will earn less than 65p per day, and will often work for up to 14 hours without food or rest.

Even when these children live with their families, the household income is so low that they are forced to continue working in order to survive. These children desperately need to go to school, in order to learn skills for a better future and reclaim their stolen childhoods.



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# how you can help

By supporting this project, you can help children like Nazar reach out for the future that they deserve.

## The project – building Afghanistan’s future

This project will set up support centres for 300 working children in Kandahar City. The centres will provide Kandahar’s most vulnerable children with a safe place to learn and play together. The children will learn to read and write, and to do maths, computer classes, sewing, tailoring and mechanics. Music and drama will be used to help the children express their feelings, and sports playgrounds will be set up so that children can take part in games and competitions.

The centres will run a flexible timetable, so that working children can still attend classes. Children will be especially encouraged to learn vocational skills, so that they can leave their dangerous or illegal work and gain a proper job. Project staff will work with the children and their families to keep the children out of hazardous work in the future.

## What your support means to children like Nazar:

**£16** could provide one sewing machine for a centre for working children

**£30** could provide 10 children with enough textbooks for one term

**£97** could provide enough training and materials for one child to become a tailor

**£259** could provide desks and chairs for a whole centre

**£540** could provide 20 children with enough tailoring materials to start their own business

**£1,000** could set up a sports ground for 600 working children in Afghanistan



## Afghanistantoday

- ◆ Afghanistan is the poorest country in Asia.
- ◆ Only 13% of the population have access to safe drinking water.
- ◆ 20% of Afghanistan’s children die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable diseases.

## The biggerpicture

- ◆ An estimated 246 million children worldwide are engaged in child labour, and 70% of these children work in hazardous conditions.
- ◆ ActionAid works with communities and local organisations to raise awareness about child labour and to campaign for change.
- ◆ Many children are employed by the suppliers of large companies. ActionAid also campaigns to make companies accountable for their impact on local communities and the environment.

