



SHELTER-NEWS

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Dear Friends and Partners of Shelter Now

Four dreadful terror attacks in Afghanistan within eight days. A close friend of ours was among those killed. We are still recovering from the shock.

Not all news is terrible though. Our work keeps going in spite of everything. We have been able to provide more than 20,000 people in Iraq and Afghanistan with food and warm clothing during this past winter. Our development projects have also continued without interruption.

In view of the immense problems in Afghanistan we do of course wonder about the sustainability of our projects in this country. Cows, sheep, bees and saffron are increasingly enabling people to become self sufficient. More on this in the Report.

*Warm regards,
Udo Stolte*



Shelter Now – Rebuilding lives - Restoring hope



New cows for village families



The Kuchi are nomadic shepherds



Bees and the training of bee keepers



Plucking saffron threads – a test of patience

Necessary concerns about sustainability

We have to seriously consider how sustainable our various projects really are.

- What would happen if one day we were no longer present in a particular village, area or country?
- Would the project simply carry on?
- Would the people still be benefiting from the project for years to come?
- Would they still require long term support from outside?

We need to answer these questions.

What would become of the refugees we help with food and clothing year after year? Unsustainable? Well, if we don't help them at all a number are likely to die. Then, although this may sound cynical, we won't need to think about future sustainable projects for them. But we must help these refugees, long term if necessary, and sit down with them as soon as possible to begin a process that will eliminate dependency from outside. In the past, for example, we built schools in the refugee camps in Pakistan; education having the greatest sustainability. In Kurdistan we supplied the camps with bottled drinking water for a whole year. The refugees were dependent on these weekly deliveries because tap water was contaminated. After one year they received water filter canisters, known as, 'Lifesaver Jerrycans'. These could filter any kind of water, so making the refugees less dependent on us. A further step could be to provide them with chickens, geese, and perhaps some day with sheep. This would make them more self sufficient. Of course, we must discuss such plans with the refugees themselves in order to find the best way forward.

Self sufficiency by means of cattle breeding and field crops

Over 10 years ago we began to enable those living in rural areas of Afghanistan to make a living by establishing their own farming businesses. Here are some examples:

Cows: The project began in year 2007 when 32 families received credits for a pregnant cow or a cow with a young calf. They had to pass on the credit to another family after one year so that the new family was also able to buy a cow, and so on. Not all families could already repay their credit after 12 months but managed to do so a few months later. In the meantime roughly 300 families own cows, which of course have bred many more. A few years after the

start of the project I visited the villages and was immediately surrounded by proud dairy farmers and the cows they had brought to show me. That day I had to consume large quantities of milk and yogurt. A great project!

Sheep: In 2010 we launched a similar project with the Kuchi people. Kuchis are nomads, whose traditional livelihood has been sheep herding. A project with cows would not have been appropriate. Every year 120 families each obtain five ewes, and three families share a breeding ram. Again the credit is passed from one family to the next. Probably all 1,500 families will be sheep owners next year. A family is able to live from a herd of 50 sheep. This means that soon three Kuchi clans will be able to manage without depending on outside support. Another great project!

Bees: Following the above pattern interested families obtain five bee colonies each. After two years and according to their propagation they aim to pass on five colonies to the next family. In this way a lot of honey is produced and pollination by the bees results in a larger fruit harvest.

Saffron: We began a saffron project in the western province of Herat in 2008. We gave Afghan refugees returning home from Iran saffron crocus bulbs, free training and fertiliser. They were required to leave part of the saffron harvest for us for a period of four years. The bulbs which had propagated well were dug up after five years. The farmers had to hand over half of them to repay their credit. They still had more than doubled the number of bulbs they started with. Some sold their bulbs but most wanted to continue cultivating saffron. One of the farmers, K. Ahmady, has already increased his cultivation area tenfold and produces a high quality saffron.

The gross yield from saffron is around 20 times higher than that from wheat.

One reason is that saffron bulbs have a rest period during the hot and dry summer and so don't require costly irrigation. The Afghan government has recognised the potential for agriculture and is supporting the further development of farming with 20 million dollars in the next five years. The saffron pioneers in Herat like K. Amady have laid the foundation for this positive development. We have also made a small contribution to this process.

I have just received a new delivery of top quality saffron, which we will sell to Germany spice dealers and restaurants, but also privately. One gram costs 9.5

euros.. Until Easter the cost per gram is only 8 euros. For orders of more than 3 grams postage and packing are free. A few recipes are included.



Food distribution brings joy to Chalou families

20,000 people helped through the winter

In Afghanistan hundreds of thousands live far from their home villages. In most cases they were expelled by terrorists, but many also by the Pakistan authorities. These internally displaced people have little possibility of finding enough work to live from. They often end up as day labourers or waste collectors. It is particularly hard in winter, when in every respect they are under-supplied, undernourished, become sick and die.

Refugees in Northern Iraq suffer the same fate.

Thanks to your generous donations and additional funding from various partner organisations we were able to provide food and warm clothing for more than 20,000 refugees during the past winter. Many of them were overwhelmed by our help and deeply grateful to the donors.

Here is a short report from Kabul on the winter aid for Chalou families:

"Chalou" is the name given to a people group in Afghanistan that is greatly despised by others. They are mostly unable to get work which results in extreme poverty and the need to beg. Some collect garbage or earn a pittance by doing jobs that no-one else wants to do. Fact is, what they get does not suffice.

Shelter Now distributed food to 750 families (around 5,300 persons) in the Chaman Babrak Camp in the heart of Kabul during the Christmas season. Living conditions in this camp are disastrous, characterised by its extreme poverty and unpleasant smell. They don't expect any help from outside at all, so when we came to them with food they were naturally both surprised and delighted.

A teenage boy came to our project manager and told him that his father had been killed the previous year because he had publicly defended the Chalou. He went on to say: "Thank you for coming to help us. My father believed that we Chalou must take a stand and not allow anyone to look down on us. This stance cost him his life but I am proud of him. Following his death I almost lost hope. Now you have come and your visit has reminded us never to give up, because God sends people to help and care for us. We thank you for your love although we have nothing to offer in return."

This completes some of our success stories.

There are also tragic reports:

A terror attack by the Taliban in the Hotel Intercontinental. Brigitte Weiler, a longstanding friend of ours, died as a result of this inhuman attack. She was not a Shelter Now staff member but we had known each other for many years and had sporadically organised projects together. Brigitte had given her life to the poor in Afghanistan, especially to the children. She had started with her work in the eighties. She collected donations and in addition invested much of her personal savings in the projects of her organisation "Cabilla". She courageously travelled to remote areas of Afghanistan to help many in need. She was a heroine, who we will be greatly miss. We will implement the projects that Brigitte can no longer carry out. We are wondering whether we are able or not to take on some of her long term projects as well.

Transformation of the School postponed

In previous Reports we informed you of our plans to transform our primary school into an early learning



Brigitte surrounded by the kids she loves

centre. Unfortunately our expert had to move away from Kabul. She is so indispensable that we will have to postpone the implementation of the project until she returns - hopefully soon. On the positive side, our teachers have completed their further training and are now enthusiastically teaching according to the new methods.

We sincerely thank you for your generous support. Much has been accomplished - the impact is growing.

*With our best wishes,
Udo Stolte and the Shelter Team*

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