



Afghanistan holds its breath whilst global food prices continue to soar

Food prices across the world have risen sharply over the past year with the trend set to continue.

Countries such as Afghanistan, which do not produce enough food to feed their people, have to spend precious funds on imports and are hardest hit by the rocketing prices.

India and Pakistan have restricted food exports to cushion their own domestic markets, causing the price of wheat in Afghanistan to go up by 75 per cent in the past six months.

The aftermath of conflict, two



severe droughts in the past six years, weak infrastructure and an ongoing insurgency have increased food supply problems in Afghanistan.

Around 80 per cent of the Afghan population relies on agriculture, but productivity is low resulting in more than

half of the country's children suffering from malnutrition. Last winter saw high levels of snowfall and an early thaw leading to flooding and low cereal production levels.

In Ghor province, where Afghanaid works, temperatures are up and rainfall is down which reduced the last harvest by 70 per cent.

In Badakhshan, a remote area particularly affected by the winter snows and where we also do work, food shortages have forced hundreds of families to flee and they are now looking for provisions in neighbouring provinces or in Pakistan.

Afghanaid helps communities to grow their own food

In Samangan, a region with severe water shortages, Afghanaid works with farmers in our Field Schools to help them find and grow drought resistant crops.

Farmers learn in a field how to trial different types of cereals and find the highest yield for their area. They increase crop diversity through planting different vegetables, fruit and non-fruit trees and cereals.

We also work with women, helping them to create and run kitchen gardens to help improve their family's diet.

In Gadi village, Delbar, a mother of five, grows her own vegetables after Afghanaid helped her set up a kitchen garden.

She said: "I have enough food for my family and can sell some of the surplus to my neighbours and make a

small income. It is a weight off my mind to know that my children will be well fed all year round."



NEWS IN BRIEF

Babur's Birthday

London's Babur restaurant held an Afghan festival during 1-18 March for the 525th birthday of their namesake, whose gardens in Kabul have been restored recently. Over 170 diners entered a raffle and £1 from every meal was also donated to Afghanaid, raising a total of £355.

London and Edinburgh Marathon Efforts

On 13 April, 15 runners overcame rain and fatigue to complete the London Marathon and raised more than £22,000 for Afghanaid. In addition, on 25 May two entrants finished the Edinburgh Marathon garnering



In October Afghanaid is participating in the 5K 'Big Fun Run' in Edinburgh and Derby as well as the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon. Contact Amanda at amanda@afghanaid.org.uk or 0207 065 0825 for more details.

The Kite Runner at Bristol's Watershed Cinema

Afghanaid is delighted to partner with the Watershed in Bristol to present a charity screening of The Kite Runner on Sat, Aug 30 at 6 p.m. This screening is free with a suggested donation of £5 on the door.

WATERSHED

Turning Opium into Onions

Haji Mirajuddin is a farmer in Kishim, an agricultural district in the west of Badakhshan which is home to 63,000 people.

We all grew opium here but in the past five years we've been forced to stop by the government and we now grow wheat and vegetables.

I prefer to grow these other crops. Poppies need twice the work of wheat and the main profit is made by smugglers and corrupt officials. Why should I do double the work to help them? Only if there is no choice.

Poppy is an expensive product which needs a lot of care and it harms us. My friend has hurt his knees tending the crop and now he can't pray properly.

Our government said it would help but it was Afghanaid who trained us in new methods and how to grow new crops

and use fertilisers.

At first we were sceptical but after our second year of doing it this way, we believe in it and will pass in on to our children.

Two years ago in this district we were importing wheat and now we're self-sufficient but we need help as much as ever. We've had a drought and fertiliser is expensive as well as seeds suited to our environment.

We need your support to banish the poppy forever.



A Different Type of Piggy Bank

During my trip to Samangan this spring I visited Dahasel village. It takes three hours to travel there from Aybak, the provincial capital, and the road winds through a stark cavern for most of the journey.

Because it is so far removed from major trade routes, the villagers must find ways to support themselves.

In Dahasel I met four peer groups for girls. This Afghanaid programme teaches girls about their rights and gives lessons in subjects such as drama, maths and English.



It attracts a devoted following and some girls had walked for over an hour to meet me along dusty tracks which are mere approximations of roads.

In each group, the girls have set up a savings and loan scheme whereby each of them donates 10 Afs (ten pence) each month. Together the four groups have saved 4,600 Afs in a province where the local daily wage is rarely even as much as 150 Afs.

The funds are there to help children whose families are struggling. As one girl explained "we wish to help our people. We determine which child is most in need of the loan and we will encourage and help them to pay it back."

The girls are also planning to make a small business and eventually to buy a computer as the Dahasel village now has electricity all day long.

In Hazrat Sultan district, one hour's drive north of Aybak, the girls are also involved in a savings programme and have saved 2,000 Afs.

They used the money to buy clothes from the local city of Mazar-e-Sharif and sold them at the local bazaar at a profit. This has been re-invested and the group will buy more clothes to sell.

They're not only making some money to help themselves now; they're also developing an entrepreneurial spirit and drive which will help their country.

*Written by Amanda Curley,
Individual Development Coordinator*

The British and Afghan mutual love for tea has been combined in a new event to raise funds for Afghanaid. This September we hope that as many of you as possible will join us by hosting a Green Tea Morning.



Afghanaid has partnered with Pukka Tea to put together the perfect kit for hosts and hostesses. Each kit will contain a box of Pukka Tea's Protect blend which is green tea, cardamom, jasmine and rosemary, plus answers to the most puzzling and intriguing questions regarding Afghanistan's culture and people.

There's always a reason to have "tea time" so take part in this inaugural event and host a Green Tea Morning. All we ask is that you take a little time to socialize over a cup of green tea

with a group of six or more friends, relatives or coworkers.

It would be an ideal supplement to any office meeting or book club gathering in your home. There will prizes to those who raise the most money.

Sign up at www.afghanaid.org.uk or call our office 0207 065 0825 and a Green Tea kit will be delivered to your doorstep in September.

Every day millions of Britons and Afghans indulge in the benefits of green tea. Join us in celebrating this tradition and supporting Afghanaid's work.



Afghan Kite-Making Workshops

There are few feelings more satisfying than making a kite and then seeing it dance on the breeze with the two of you connected by far more than the string in your hand.

That's doubly true if you're as ham-fisted as me, the only person in the history of my junior school to fail Craft and Design, yet even I was able to make an Afghan kite with the help of a patient and tactful trainer.

You can follow my example by taking advantage of the kite-making workshops which Afghanaid will be running at fairs and festivals around England this summer.

Our trainers will be Afghans who grew up making and flying kites, and all of the wood and paper involved has been brought over from Kabul so the experience could hardly be more authentic.

The kites we'll be making will be the colourful and easy-to-fly type



which will be instantly familiar to anyone who has read *The Kite Runner* or seen the film version.

Our programme includes the Bristol International Kite Festival in August and the Kew Fayre in September.

We're adding dates all the time and at www.afghanaid.org.uk you'll soon be able to buy a kit with the materials to make 10 kites. This kit is perfect for birthday parties or school art activities.

Written by Dominic O'Reilly, UK Director

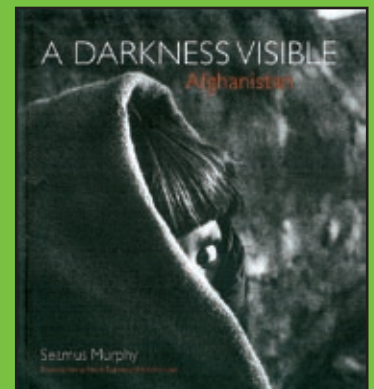


What you can do

Afghanaid has a membership scheme which allows our supporters to become more actively involved with the organisation and to confirm their dedication to its work.

The **Friends of Afghanaid** are a committed group of supporters who donate £15 or more per month (or the equivalent on an annual basis). As well as providing financial support, Friends of Afghanaid act as ambassadors for the organisation, assisting the London Office team with events and awareness-raising. Friends are invited to private events to allow them to learn more about Afghanistan and to keep up-to-date on Afghanaid's work. They are also given preferential entry to other general events hosted by Afghanaid. If you are interested in joining this group please contact Amanda at amanda@afghanaid.org.uk or call 0207 065 0825.

Special Afghanaid Edition of Seamus Murphy's *A Darkness Visible*.



During June and July if you make a donation of £100 or more you will receive a **free** copy of *A Darkness Visible* by Seamus Murphy. This is a special edition copy with a forward from David Page, Afghanaid Board Chairman.

This 175 pg hardcover edition is valued at £40.

AFGHANAID MERCHANDISE

Join Afghanaid's campaign to make people smile. The Afghan Smile t-shirt is sure to bring a smile to anyone who wears it.

The Afghan Smile t-shirt design consists of photos taken by Afghanaid staff or supporters. The images combine to create a silhouette of Afghanistan. The text on the front reads "Afghan Smile, Afghanaid."

For more than 25 years Afghanaid has been bringing smiles to the faces of rural Afghans - both young and old.

Share these images with family and friends by purchasing this limited edition t-shirt for only £8.50 (plus p&p). This offer is only available to Afghanaid supporters.

Call 0207 065 0825 and quote "Smile08" to order your Afghan Smile t-shirt today!

photos courtesy of



**afghan smile
t-shirt on sale now!**



Afghanaid is selling beautiful girls' dresses. We have partnered with two Afghanaid Women's Tailoring Groups in Samangan to bring their skills and beautiful designs to the UK.

These summer dresses are sure to make any girl feel like a princess. Each dress comes with trousers and a veil.

Have a look at our selection online at www.afghanaid.org.uk. The dresses are sized for girls aged 2 - 12. The three piece set is only £10 (plus p&p).

Afghan Photography Exhibition: 'What's the Difference' by Luke Cody

The exhibition will show a series of shots taken by Australian photographer Luke Cody.

In June, Luke traveled across four Afghan provinces in order to look beyond the mainstream media's representation of an isolated part of the world.

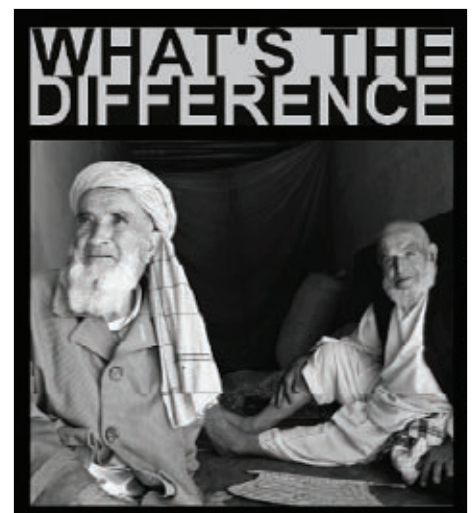
His images highlight the similarities that all humans share regardless of race or religion. Luke intends to use this exhibition to increase global humanity and empathy in

the face of seemingly distant, but real world problems.

Join us on 5-7 of July for this wonderful exhibition. Proceeds will go to Afghanaid.

The exhibition will be held at Baden-Powell House (Assembly Hall), 65 Queens Gate, Kensington, London SW7 5JS.

Find out more about Luke's work and inspiration for this project at www.whatsthedifference.com



www.afghanaid.org.uk