



# Transformative Chronicles

STORIES FROM  
AFGHANISTAN  
2022 — 2023



Funded by  
the European Union



From  
the People of Japan

**STFA** Special Trust Fund  
for Afghanistan



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## Foreword

In the following pages, we unveil a profound celebration of Afghan resilience and determination. This serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of a people who have faced and overcome significant adversity in recent years. Through the lens of personal stories, we offer an intimate view of remarkable Afghans, representing the country's diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. These stories are primarily narrated by Afghans themselves, serving as beacons of hope and inspiration to all. They remind us that strength can emerge even in the most daunting of circumstances.

At the core of these stories are individuals who have weathered life's storms to become symbols of unwavering resolve. Their transformative experiences have turned them into active agents of change, inspiring others in the era of transition that has followed August 2021. As Afghanistan continues to reshape its destiny, these individuals embody the nation's potential for progress.

This compilation also aims to preserve the richness and resilience of Afghan culture—a tapestry interwoven with enduring threads of heritage that have stood the test of time and conflict. The resilience of Afghan culture itself stands as a testament to the strength of a people who persist in the face of adversity.

Throughout these stories, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) serves as a constant presence,

exemplifying its commitment to the well-being of the Afghan people. UNDP Afghanistan's unwavering 'stay and deliver' mandate demonstrates its essential role in supporting communities on their transformative journeys.

Though deeply rooted in Afghanistan's unique cultural and historical landscape, these stories are not solely a national endeavor. They underscore the invaluable contributions and profound partnerships forged with both our national and international counterparts. The European Union, the Government of Japan, the UN Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan and our national and international implementing partners play an indelible role in this collective journey toward a better future. Their unwavering support amplifies the impact of local initiatives, making it possible to scale the reach and scope of efforts aimed at empowering communities.

This synergy of national and international collaboration heralds a new chapter—one that embodies a collaborative, shared vision and provides hope even when faced with immense challenges. Together, these narratives demonstrate the transformative power that emerges when local resilience is met with global solidarity, weaving a tapestry of change that extends beyond borders and spans generations.

**Stephen Rodrigues**  
UNDP AFGHANISTAN RESIDENT  
REPRESENTATIVE

# ABADEI: at a glance

**ABADEI (AREA-BASED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT EMERGENCY INITIATIVES)** is UNDP's flagship development programme in Afghanistan - a comprehensive strategy to address poverty in all its dimensions, supporting basic human needs, and complements short-term humanitarian life-saving assistance by safeguarding livelihoods and strengthening community resilience.



ABADEI maintains a strong partnership with local communities, utilizing an extensive network of over 60 local NGOs and 9 International NGOs to carry out our initiatives. Supported by UNDP's eight field offices and more than 40 years of sustained engagement in Afghanistan, our diverse team of national and international experts brings invaluable experience, insights, and community relationships to the table. This allows us to adapt our programs to meet the unique needs and conditions of various localities, even in a rapidly evolving environment.

Our operational approach in any given area is built upon the following pillars:

- 1. Community Engagement:** We engage in constructive dialogues with local Community Development Councils, NGOs, women's groups, religious leaders, and other key stakeholders. This comprehensive interaction allows us to fully understand the pressing issues and specific needs of each community.
- 2. Pilot Testing and Rapid Scaling:** We start by piloting promising interventions. Successful initiatives are then rapidly scaled up to maximize positive impact.
- 3. Field-Based and Participative Monitoring:** Through our local offices and third-party monitors, we employ a multifaceted monitoring strategy that includes participative monitoring from the community itself. This approach is vital for ensuring that our support is inclusive and effective.
- 4. Empowerment:** We equip local communities with the necessary financial resources, skills, equipment, and infrastructure, enabling them to sustain and protect their own well-being.

- 5. Digital and Technology Solutions:** We integrate digital and technological solutions to enhance the reach and effectiveness of our projects, as well as to improve monitoring and evaluation capabilities.
- 6. Feedback Mechanism:** A robust feedback mechanism allows the community to express their satisfaction or grievances, providing us with opportunities for course correction.
- 7. Transparency and Accountability:** We keep all stakeholders, including the local community, regularly updated on the progress, challenges, and successes of ongoing projects.
- 8. Conflict and Cultural Sensitivity:** We ensure that our interventions are sensitive to both the local context and cultural norms, particularly in areas where social tensions or conflicts may exist. This approach ensures greater community acceptance and effectiveness.
- 9. Social Cohesion:** Through community-driven projects and dialogues, we work to cultivate mutual understanding and cooperation among various ethnic, religious, and social groups. By promoting inclusivity and social justice, we strengthen community resilience and enhance the overall effectiveness of our interventions.
- 10. Meeting Social and Environmental Standards:** We are committed to adhering to high social and environmental standards, ensuring that our interventions are sustainable, responsible, and have a lasting positive impact.

Provided improved healthcare to **more than 6M people** through service interventions



Provided essential healthcare to **256,000 people** via mobile health teams

Provided temporary wages to **more than 700,000 people**



Supported **more than 34,000 women-led businesses** to thrive



Trained **almost 30,000 farmers**



Provided inputs for **100,000 households**



Benefitting **more than 500,000 people** through mediation and dialogue sessions and works with peer-to-peer networks

Protected **43,000 households** from flooding

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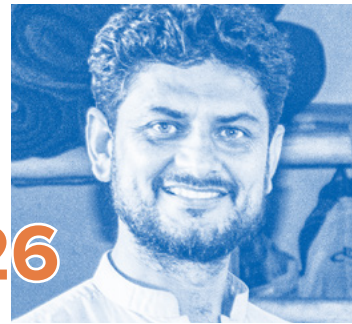
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## The Story of an Afghan Water Carrier

### JAMAGOL OSMANI

Karukh district, Herat province

**Forty-year-old Jamagol Osmani** looks exhausted as he arrives every morning carrying and then holding aloft his prized, nine-litre yellow jerrycan and jug. His place and importance within the team is undisputed. Jamagol beams as he doles out this liquid gold commodity to his brothers.

He is ever ready to provide drinking water to thirsty workers who clean the arterial irrigation canal that traverses the hillsides linking three villages in Karukh district, Herat province. The canal is being rehabilitated through UNDP's ABADEI project implemented by Islamic Relief Worldwide. The intervention employs local, often unemployed villagers from surrounding communities. It provides an important cash injection for families and local economy.

Community elder Mohammad Essa speaks fondly of Jamagol. "We selected him for this cash-for-work project because he has been considered as the most vulnerable person in the village. He does not own any

assets, such as agricultural land, livestock or a house. He also has a chronic disease and must take care of his little children".

As an unskilled laborer, Jamal is grateful that he has as an opportunity to work on a daily basis. Besides serving workers with water, he also advises them about safety measures, such as how to handle hoes, pickaxes, and shovels. He keeps their spirits high by sharing occasional jokes.

"My family is so happy that now I can buy rice, wheat, soap, and medicine. I feel relaxed having been able to repay the loans that I had taken from relatives, and I hope for better economic conditions in my country Afghanistan."

"As an unskilled worker, I had lost all hope until the community leader told me that I had been selected for the new project in the area. Since then, I have had the opportunity to perform easy duties on the construction site and earn a daily wage."







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## Growing Success

### KUBRA KHAWARI

Herat province, Western Afghanistan

#### **The only thing tougher than the farm, is the farmer.**

In a small office in the corner of her farm shop on the outskirts of Herat, western Afghanistan, Kubra Khawari is busy - setting plans, greeting guests, and advising other food processing technicians like herself. She is the chairperson of an 18-member women farmers' association.

Kubra has known adversity. She grew up in Iran as a refugee. Herat province shares international borders with Iran and Turkmenistan and is a regional trade hub. Its population has rapidly increased due to a million unregistered Afghans being sent back from Iran and internally displaced families arriving from neighboring provinces to escape earthquakes, droughts, and floods.

The growing population meant thriving markets and high demand for Herat's agricultural products. Greenhouses began to spring up, providing a year-round growing season while being an eco-friendly and sustainable farming solution in an area prone to droughts.

Kubra grasped this opportunity and set up a vegetable and dairy processing enterprise with like-minded women. They invested in greenhouses to grow cucumbers, tomatoes, and melons to preserve and sell.

The enterprise did well until the sudden power shift in August 2021. Overnight, small businesses like Kubra's struggled.

"Our company had to stop trading due to the worsening economy. We had no electricity, rental space, or raw materials. We had no idea whether women would be allowed to work anymore. I sold my greenhouses and fled to Iran."

After monitoring the situation for six months, Kubra returned and restarted her business. Around September 2022, her enterprise was selected under a joint UNDP-UNHCR initiative, supporting Afghan returnees and internally displaced people. Kubra received a grant to purchase new equipment such as plastic sheets for greenhouses, a solar panel, cold and warm storage to process yogurt, and a packaging machine.

"The support we received expanded our production and added value to our products," says Kubra. She continued, "Now that our products are packed professionally, we can sell them to a wider range of customers, such as restaurants, hotels, and groceries, for more profit."

Although she only completed secondary school, Kubra is familiar with production, marketing, and customer analysis. Her leadership as the head of the women's farmer's association, and her skill in managing members from different backgrounds and regions is highly recognized.

Kubra is a good example of the resilience and acumen of women who run enterprises in Afghanistan.



“We as women are strong enough to demand and practice our rights. I do not feel any limitations compared to men. I want to continue to expand this enterprise and diversify my production.”



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## Unleashing Artistic Creativity

### FROZAN SIDIQI

Kabul city

**Prepare to be captivated by the remarkable story of Fuzan, a trailblazer in the world of craftsmanship and business.**

Driven by her passion, Fuzan embarked on an eight-month training program in business and the art of engraving at the Norwegian Embassy. Energized by her newfound expertise, she embarked on her first business venture with Ganjina-Abnos and Kochi Brand companies, garnering international recognition and exporting to Norway and Australia.

Fuzan then established Negarestan Aye Khanum, a gallery that showcased her creations. Employing a team proficient in polishing and sales, she focused her passion on drawing and minatory. Her talent was recognized by the ADA organization, where she secured the top position among 20 gifted individuals.

Seeking to expand her reach and boost sales, Fuzan collaborated with a company to sell her products. With a natural flair for marketing, she utilized her connections through ADA to forge a relationship with the Norwegian Embassy. This fruitful collaboration led to a one-year contract for engraving wooden couches and furniture.

Fuzan continued to diversify her product range by producing small wooden pots, decorative boxes, and trays for stationary. To meet surging demand, she recruited two skilled professionals with prior experience in engraving. This culminated in the enchanting fusion of couch engraving and the artistry of small wooden products.

Despite her success, fate had other plans for Fuzan. The occupation of Kabul by the Taliban forced her to close her gallery and put her business on hold for several months. A series of unfortunate events led to the migration of her experienced staff

to other countries, leaving her and her family without a stable source of income. Determined to persevere, Fuzan sold her jewelry, while her husband sacrificed his smartphone. With an initial investment of AFG 80,000, they bravely restarted their business from scratch.

In her quest for growth and support, Fuzan discovered entrepreneurship support offered by UNDP's ABADeI project in partnership with Danish Refugee Council (DRC). She underwent a comprehensive 5-day training program on MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) management, business strategies, and marketing, all through the Start and Improve your Business (SIYB) program.

The DRC organization provided critical financial support – 60% of the total installment, amounting to approximately AFG 48,000 – and also facilitated recruitment of four skilled technical staff



“Nuristan’s mining sector is a well-kept secret, but it’s time to share its riches with the international market. I believe in the power of an international market to uplift our economy and transform the lives of the people of Nuristan.”

who had lost their jobs during the Taliban takeover. Fruzan and her team immersed themselves in the production of small decorative boxes, table stands, trays for stationery, and an array of exquisite wooden products. Their dedicated efforts resulted in a thriving enterprise, employing a total of six individuals, with two men and four women contributing their talents to the success of the company.

Recognizing her unwavering dedication and outstanding craftsmanship, DRC extended an invitation to Fruzan to participate in the prestigious Badam Bagh exhibition. This event serves as a testament to her incredible journey and unshakeable spirit.

Looking to the future, Fruzan remains focused on combining gemstones with engraving, enriching her craft with mesmerizing stone decorations. Her ultimate ambition lies in participating in the illustrious Dubai Winter Exhibition. Her awe-inspiring journey stands as a testament to the power of resilience, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to Afghanistan and the artisans who call it home. Nuristan Engraving Learning and Fruzan represents the embodiment of limitless artistic potential.





## Knitting Puts Food on the Table

### NADIYEH

Herat city, Faryab province

**Nadiyeh lives with her daughter and disabled son.** She runs a small home-based knitting crafts business with her students. The enterprise offers a variety of products to local consumers, such as clothing, decorations, and home utilities.

Under NCA's Integrated Community Resilience (ICRA) project, Nadiyeh received a US\$ 900 business grant. She invested in raw material such as silk strings, bead, and cotton fabric and equipment. She also completed a two-month training program provided by another UNDP partner.

Nadiyeh also trains aspiring women entrepreneurs in her business. "My students are learning the craft very quickly. They aspire to be able to run their own business one day," she adds.

NCA has supported 1,500 women like Nadiyeh in Herat province, who received business grants up to US\$ 1,000 to invest in their businesses.

"I was good at knitting, but not very good at business. The training helped me understand accounting, marketing, and sales. The grant provided the working capital that enabled me to scale my business."



# Showcasing ‘Against All Odds’ Afghan Entrepreneurial Spirit – Khokoly Roh Afza Food Production Company

## BIBI

Jalalabad city

**Bibi Hanifa is no stranger to food processing.** Since 2007, the rollercoaster ride of running a business in a man’s world, coupled with family responsibilities, the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, and regime change in 2021 have tested Bibi’s resolve to unfathomable levels.

Bibi’s is a compelling story of revival, resilience, and purposeful visualization. She has strategically invested in electrical, labour-saving devices (at industrial scale) including various fruit and vegetable peeling/processing machines as well as large portable gas cookers. This was possible from support by ABADEI.

Much of her business is seasonal, with peak processing and bottling in the spring, summer, and autumn periods. Fresh fruit and vegetables are sourced from local markets in Jalalabad. In this way, a thriving supply chain is created based on high and consistent volume demands. Bibi prides herself on the fact that her company provides “quality, confidence, cost-savings and convenience in a glass jar.” It is no wonder that significant events

are celebrated with Bibi’s products in attendance – on the fast track to becoming a household brand!

During the barren winter months, Khokoly Roh Afza Food Production Company can bridge the ‘commodity gap’ by providing quality preserved fruit and vegetables supplied by retail stores throughout the city. Bibi’s products can now be found on shelves of Kabul retailers. One of her 2023 highlights was participating in an EXPO Trade Fair in the capital city, where she showcased her business and products.

Product branding and advertising are also very important to Bibi, and her product range is unmistakable on store shelves. Similarly, at her small processing factory, the walls are adorned with banners and posters promoting the company’s core values and their unique product offering within Afghan cities. Bibi leads a highly motivated and happy team and with these key ingredients, there is every reason to believe that Khokoly Roh Afza Food Production Company will continue to flourish.

Jalalabad is a leading centre of social and trade activity because of its proximity to the Torkham border checkpoint and crossing to Pakistan some 65 km away. Major industries include papermaking, as well as agricultural products including oranges, lemon, rice, and sugarcane, helped by its warm climate. Agriculture is the predominant land use in the region at 44%.

Informal businesses and traders constitute the bulk of the region’s economy. ABADEI is working with viable enterprises that may have struggled in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the August 2021 regime change. Selected enterprises have been rejuvenated with start-up funding and business support via Start/Improve Your Business (SYIB) training and coaching.





## Javedan Footwear – Walking the Talk in Afghanistan’s Eastern Region

### JAVED

Jalalabad city

#### **Javed aka Khatiz Javedan Shoes Making Company is a remarkable young man.**

He is prepared to put his name on the line when it comes to his footwear. In Pashtun language, the word Javedan translates to durability and quality. Javed embraces change, particularly technological advances that maximize productivity, competitive advantage, and product excellence. When it comes to believing in and personally endorsing his footwear, he is prepared to “walk the extra mile.”

His enterprise immediately acquired a state-of-the-art laser design and cutting machine, which has revolutionized his business. Using CorelDRAW software in the design process, he transfers data to the laser equipment with greater speed, accuracy, and efficiencies. In the past, this process was done manually through templates and patterned designs. The softer shoe parts, known as uppers, were previously cut by hand, which proved to be time-consuming and energy inefficient, with high material wastage.

Raw materials in the form of shoe soles are imported from Iran, and uppers, often in the form of strong and durable imitation leather, is imported from China and Iran. With a range of robust yet chic upper designs, Javed and his hardworking team of 14 (including 3 women) weave their own brand of footwear magic by bringing uppers and soles together. Stamp branded with a crested eagle, a noble and apex predator, Javedan Footwear uses a mixed marketing and sales strategy to move its product range even in the face of stiff competition from mass-manufactured Pakistani footwear.

The company provides stock to wholesalers and retailers throughout Jalalabad and the Eastern Region of Afghanistan (a further three provinces) as well as Kabul. Javid uses social media extensively and has groups on WhatsApp and Telegram where he shares latest updates, designs and stock availability.

As Javed casts an optimistic eagle-eye towards 2024 and beyond, his hopes are for greater stability in the manufacturing and socio-economic environments, with fewer fluctuations and uncertainties. The greatest threat is random load-shedding (electricity outages) they are subjected to for several hours a day. Jalalabad’s power grid is particularly prone to outages to balance limited supply with increased demand. ABADEI plans to provide ongoing consistency and continuity in support through solarization of his business premises. With an installation completed by end of August, generating approximately 8kw of solar power, Javed and his team will have greater and more reliable manufacturing time. Using power from the national electricity grid and renewal solar energy in creative tandem, his hopes are about to be realized!







## Laghman province's Diversified Rural Livelihoods: Aqua & Agri – Culture Thrive!

### HAYATULLAH

Shamangal village, Mehterlam district, Laghman province

**Several districts in Laghman province are blessed with an abundance of surface water.** Rice-paddy field cultivation has been extensive over decades. To diversify upon this and practice adaptive natural resource management, fish farming has proved to be a viable option.

A local contractor constructed 40 fishponds. Another contractor provided fish and fish farming equipment and supplies (solarized water pumps, oxygenation equipment, fish food). Several thousand grass, silver and common carp were provided and released into the ponds.

Community elders actively petitioned for the fish farming initiative. Location-specific analytical data showed that many areas are waterlogged (due to three actively flowing rivers and their shared water catchment areas) and are far from ideal for typical, vegetable and fruit, cultivation. Therefore, ABADEI decided to utilize the waterlogged lands for fish farming.

Hayatullah is a resident of Shamangal village of Mehtarlam district Laghman province. He is the only breadwinner for a family of 17 and is one of the working fishpond beneficiaries.

Hayatullah had very little knowledge of fish farming. He earned income from growing rice and vegetables, which could not fully support his family. When ABADEI started work, Hayatullah was identified as a beneficiary for the establishment of a fishpond a half-jerib in size.

"I would see my neighbor selling his fishpond products at the farm gate for good prices. He was happy, with high income. I had dreamed of owning my own fish farming business, but I was not able to establish even a small pond because I had insufficient income from my agricultural products. I then received training and regular guidance from ABADEI, and I can now manage this new fishpond business."

Hayatullah harvested his fishpond with a total production of 1,500Kg fresh fish/1000m<sup>2</sup>. He can sell 1Kg of fresh fish for 270AFs, with a total income 405,000AFs. The fish farm has created a small business for his family, and it has created job opportunities for villagers.

"My income has been increased and enabled me to enroll my two children in private school. I can now better support and care for my family."





## Healthcare's Paradigm Shift in Kapisa province

### DR. HASHMATULLAH ASAD

Kapisa province

**In Kapisa province a medical revolution is underway.** People from all walks of life gather at a humble hospital, waiting anxiously for their loved ones to receive the care they desperately need.

Dr. Hashmatullah Asad, leader of this hospital, understands the pain of patients who come seeking help. He recalls the devastating story of Abdullah, a father eagerly waiting for his newborn son. Unfortunately, the hospital lacked the advanced machines required to save his son's life. With heavy hearts, they advised Abdullah to rush his son to a hospital in Kabul. Tragically, the ambulance broke down on the way, resulting in the loss of the innocent life.

Abdullah's story is not an isolated case. Many others have faced similar heart-wrenching challenges. However, with support from ABADEI and partner CARE International,

the Provincial Hospital of Kapisa has undergone a remarkable transformation. State-of-the-art equipment including stretchers, baby warmers, vein detectors, and a standard ambulance, have been provided to the hospital.

Before the arrival of these life-saving machines, hospital staff faced numerous obstacles. Each week, they had to refer more than 10 patients to other hospitals due to lack of equipment. More than three newborns were lost each month. With ABADEI's support, these challenges are now a thing of the past.

The impact of this medical intervention extends beyond Kapisa province. People from neighbouring provinces also flock to this hospital, aware of the exceptional care it provides. The community's positive response is overwhelming. Abdul Karim, a local resident, expresses

his joy, stating that he no longer needs to spend his hard-earned money traveling to Kabul for medical treatment. With the best hospital in their own province, the future is bright. However, the community also appeals for continuous support.

UNDP understands the importance of accessible, high-quality healthcare for all. Their commitment to revolutionizing the healthcare sector in Afghanistan and beyond is unwavering. By bridging the medical gap, they are passionately working towards a healthier future.





# Digital Payments in Afghanistan: Delivering humanitarian aid and development assistance

## FATIMA

Badakhshan province

**NCA, in collaboration with United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and Circle Internet Financial, has successfully piloted delivering aid funding in USDCs (a cryptocurrency) directly to project rightsholders in a remote part of Afghanistan.**

The total value of the transaction was 30,000 USDCs provided to 60 female beneficiaries in Badakhshan province, Northeast Afghanistan.

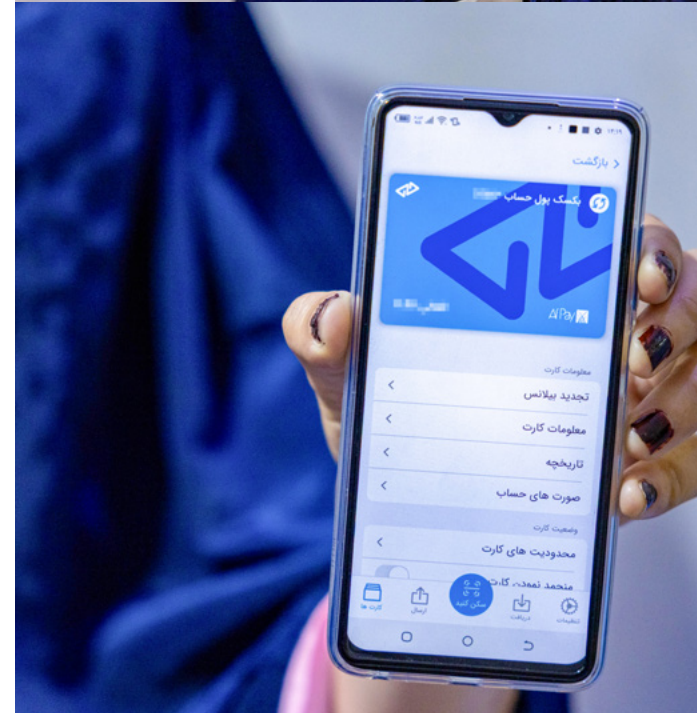
The women supported are ex-judiciary and ex-police personnel who have been out of jobs since the regime change in August 2021. The women received seed funding to start new businesses. They also received training in marketable skills and psychosocial counselling.

Unlike Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, USDC is a

stablecoin, which is designed to be pegged to US dollars and redeemable 1:1 for US dollars.

The women were able to exchange their USDCs with local fiat currency and withdraw their funds through a local dealer in their city. NCA provided digital literacy that enables the women to operate digital wallets and ensure financial security using their cellphone.

Blockchain technology enables quicker and more transparent aid delivery, offering a greater level of traceability, lower cost of transfers, and a higher degree of data protection. Whereas a moderate level of information and communication technology is required, as well as stable internet connectivity to transact, this was achieved in the context of the pilot.



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## ‘No One is Left Behind’

### FAIZ MOHAMMAD

Daki village, Shibar province

**Faiz Mohammad, aged 55, supports a big family of 11 people.** He is also disabled and with a multitude of pressing issues (primarily being jobless) feels that he leads no ordinary life. He is constantly challenged, especially with the burden of responsibility towards family and his close-knit community.

Winters are brutal and long! Agriculture is their mainstay with potatoes and wheat sustaining them year in and year out. Harvest excesses provide some additional relief, as part of a barter economy, in a largely subsistence farming lifestyle. A “hand to mouth existence” is no understatement and characterizes their precarious and fragile reality. Essential services and infrastructure are rudimentary - one secondary, and one high school, and one clinic are all located within the Daki Community Development Council (CDC).

An irrigation system of wells and springs provides water to fertile highland crops, but with a noticeable reduction of stream flow and water volume in recent years. Enter

the ABADEI CfW intervention, designed to reinvigorate water infrastructure through the rehabilitation of reservoirs, masonry line (preventing seepage and excessive water loss) and clean key canals.

A vital, lifesaving cash injection into the community is where Faiz was able to find his place and purpose once more. His disability prevents manual work with high physical exertion, but his organizational and people management skills are strong. He provided a key supervisory role on the project. As the job did not require physical work, he was able to do his job well and earn money to support his family. As supervisor, he brought hope and new-found respect to his family and supported them financially. The project has reduced water loss and will provide more water to people in the coming years.

“This project changed the spirit of our people beyond hopes and expectations. So many people of the village who did not have jobs were employed within this project. The canal was constructed, and now water flows to the land well without any loss.”





## Defying Expectations

### MALIKA

Balkh province

**Malika, a 45-year-old woman from the north of Afghanistan, started sewing at age 17.** Since childhood, when she contracted polio, Malika can walk only with great difficulty. Despite adversity, she had ambition and started her own tailoring business, 'Muqadas'.

"I started my business with an old machine left to me by my mother," says Malika. By working hard and saving, Malika was soon able to buy a new machine and recruit two students. At the same time, she raised her family including two young sons aged 9 and 11.

However, the economic downturn after the fall of the government in August 2021 hit Malika's business hard. Since then, Afghanistan's economy has withered, and development aid and assets are still largely frozen, leaving the country facing its most serious risk of famine in 20 years.

For women, the situation is especially difficult. Since early 2022, the De Facto Authorities (DFA) have steadily restricted women's rights to move and work in the country. For women, tailoring remains one of the few remaining sectors where they can still earn a living, which is why support to these areas is so vital.

ABADEI supports entrepreneurs, especially women, to start and grow their businesses, and become financially empowered. Malika was one of the women entrepreneurs who received training under the programme.

Now, Malika's business is expanding, as she has negotiated contracts with schools and a hospital to produce uniforms and bed covers. She also has 30 tailoring apprentices who learn tailoring from her in two shifts during the day.

"Now I can pay for my son's tuition and education and support our household," she says. Today, Malika has plans to expand her business. "I want Muqadas outfits to be marketed to other provinces, even outside of Afghanistan. I have the necessary expertise, ability, and people, but I need more modern facilities and an appropriate location to achieve my goal."

In Afghanistan, where opportunities for women are scarce, and where disability is often a roadblock to success, Malika has defied expectations and refused to let herself be defined by others' expectations. ABADEI supports thousands of women like Malika to overcome the odds.

"I received six days of business management training, where I learned how to manage my tailoring business. I also received a grant for equipment and services to improve my tailoring business through BRAC [UNDP's partner NGO]."





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## Time to Prepare is Now: Disaster Risk Management Under ABADEI

### HAJI MUHAMMAD

Sanzari village, Kandahar province

**Kandahar is prone to flooding. The roads become very muddy when it rains, so it is difficult to visit the city in case of emergencies.**

ABADEI assisted Sanzari village with training on natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. “We can now use the know-how and deal with natural disasters,” says Haji Muhammad head of the Sanzari village committee.

There are about 22 people in the committee, divided into sub-committees with distinct roles. NCA provided the committee members with Community Emergency Response Tool (CERT) kits.

Haji Muhammad further explains the benefits of the know-how imparted to the village members by NCA trainers: “A few days ago, one of our neighbours fell ill. We transferred her from home to the hospital on time using an emergency ID card. This saved the patient’s life.”

NCA established 90 Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Management committees across nine provinces in the country.

All committees have been trained in disaster risk reduction. The committees have performed hazard mapping of their villages and developed action plans. They are also provided with CERT kits to ensure tools are available to save lives in case of disaster.

“We, all the people, work together to deal with all sorts of incidents. Before these tools and skills training, we could not cope with emergencies. We did not have any tools nor rescue skills.”







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## UNDP's Canal Project Bring Relief to Afghan Villages

### SAIFURAHMAN

Nahr-e-Shahi district, Balkh province

In early summer last year, Saifurahman a farmer in Afghanistan, returned home with fear and apprehension. The sudden change in weather and the appearance of scattered clouds in the sky were alarming. "I looked up at the sky, and a black piece of cloud covered the moon. I went to bed, but anxiety about another flood made it difficult to sleep."

The residents of Joy Kalan Takhtapul and Langarkhana villages in northern Afghanistan have experienced the wrath of Mother Nature several times throughout the year. Floods are one of the main natural disasters that threaten the lives, lands, and assets of the people in these areas. Saifurahman himself has been a victim of flooding, as his house and lands have been washed away four times in the past decade.

Afghanistan is among the world's countries most affected by climate-related threats. The country faces frequent droughts, flash floods, and landslides that affect livelihoods and infrastructure.

Two water canals pass along the two villages of Joy Kalan Takhtapul and Langarkhana, irrigating about 3,000 hectares of agricultural land. However, communities faced a significant challenge. They lacked proper water management systems, leading to loss of 40% water and frequent floods, damaging homes and crops.

ABADEI built canals to help these two villages to control water flows. The project built a total of 780 meters of stone masonry canal with 50 meters of protection walls. With the construction of these two channels, water loss was prevented, and roughly 3,000 hectares of land are better irrigated. Houses are no longer threatened by floods. The project provided short-term employment for 1,380 people from the village.

After the canal's construction, Saifurahman now sleeps safely and does not worry about floods. Since enough water reaches his land, harvests are now more plentiful.







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## War Ravaged Helmand province in Recovery Mode

### MAHMOODULLAH

Helmand province

**For 20 years, the people in Sangin district of Helmand have been on the frontier of war between Taliban and former government forces.** The district has been controlled by Taliban forces since 2017, previously not accessible to any form of direct humanitarian and development assistance through NGOs and INGOs. Mahmoodullah says the war devastated his village. “We couldn’t find proper work for years because of the war. I support family and relatives hurt in the war. Some have lost their eyes or a limb.”

Most irrigation canals in this village have not been cleaned for years due to war, reducing its capacity to carry water to the farms. Mahmoodullah and 123 other people from his village were employed to clean a 5-kilometre key irrigation canal. Mahmoodullah and his colleagues were pleased with the ABADEI program. Many have told them that the cash-for-work project is helping their villages





not just with bringing jobs but also with rehabilitation of community infrastructure. “We thank the donors for putting us to work. This project cleans our canals and brings us jobs. We are grateful to the organizers and donors.”







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