

**Friendship School Report
2013 to 2015**



Norwegian Afghanistan Committee

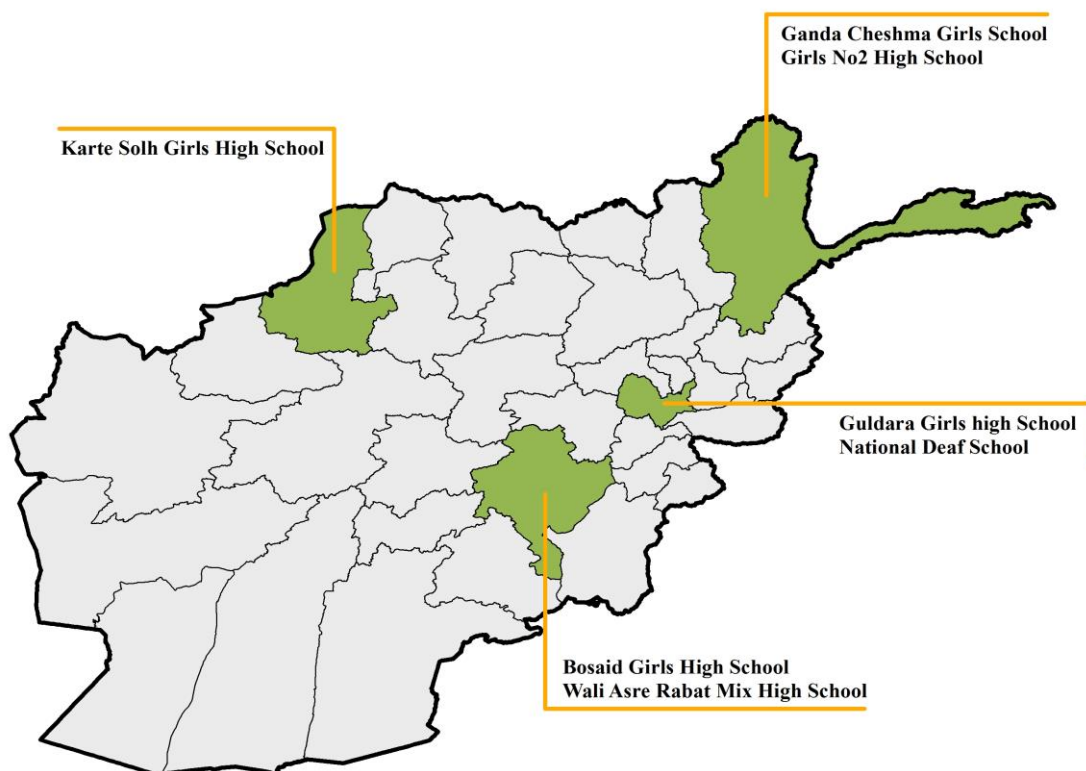


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Introduction

The 'Friendship School Projects' is organized and implemented with generous support and funding from the children, teachers and parents in three Friendship Schools in Norway, namely; Krohnengen, Sulitjelma, and Vindern. The three Norwegian schools are partnering with three schools in Badakhshan (*Ganda Cheshma Girls' School in Argu and Girls High School No. 2 in Faizabad*) and Kabul (*Guldara Girls' High School*), and are supporting another 4 schools in Faryab (*Karte Solh Girls' High School in Maimana*), in Ghazni (*Bosaid Girls' High School in Jaghori and Wali Asre Rabat Mixed High School in Malistan*), and in Kabul (*ANAD School for the Deaf*):



The main objectives of friendship school in both countries are:

- I. To learn more about each other (culture, country, environment, etc.)
- II. To understand about the children life in both countries and the different communities
- III. To know that solidarity is one of important issue for bringing change to the life of children, both for children in Afghanistan and Norway
- IV. To learn from each other by sharing knowledge and experiences

Activities started in 1998, while students of Girls No 2 High School in Faizabad started relationship with Krohnengen School in Bergen. Later Vindern School in Oslo started its partnership with Guldara High School for Girls in Kabul, and finally Sulitjelma School was partnered with Ganda Cheshma School in Argu. Another four schools Faryab, Ghazni and Kabul are also benefitting from the Friendship School Program. Children are in contact each other through letters, drawings and by sharing spring logs. The children in both countries run programs here they learn more about each other through curricular and extra-curricular activities. The children in Norway have annual events where they raise funds for their Afghan friends which helps the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) to address many of needs of children and teachers in the Afghan Friendship and Partnership Schools.



The children in Guldara School in Kabul are happy about their friendship with children in Norway: *"We are proud of our Norwegian friends and their support for our schools and our education", and; "We have become more open-eyed after getting support from our siblings in Norway, we learn to support each other here in our home land, and think about others also".*

The children are sharing letters, cards, drawing and logs or sending gifts and handcrafts they have made in school. Through the Friendship School Program children in both countries will experience the differences, but also the similarities between the Afghanistan and Norway. Feelings, wishes and dreams are common for girls and boys from different countries and backgrounds as well as children with different abilities. In Afghanistan special emphasis will also be put on learning about democracy and human rights as well as how to resolve problem and conflicts in a peaceful and friendly manner.

The projects focus more on children's rights, right to be heard, to be seen, to participate and to be included. This will be achieved by promoting more child friendly learning methods, inclusive education, and education for sustainable environmental development.

Activities in 2013

In 2013 the students of Guldara in Kabul and Girls' High School No. 2 in Faizabad, Badakhshan worked on spring log and they had collected information about plants, trees, flowers, insects, and birds. In addition, students collected information regarding weather, sun and temperature. The documents and materials were exchanged between two friendship schools.

Furthermore at the beginning of 2013 three open classrooms were constructed (with support from the regular NAC Education Programs) as the school was over-crowded, stationery provided for the students and teachers, and a complete laboratory and library provided for the school (also mainly funded through the regular NAC Education Programs).

All the students' letters, cards, photos and drawings were exchanged between students in Afghanistan and Norway.



Activities in 2014

Project-Based-Learning (PBL)

PBL was implemented in early 2014 with school students and teachers during the long winter break and after school hours in the spring in the friendship school communities in Badakhshan, Ghazni and Kabul provinces. PBL focuses teaching and learning on a themed project, which naturally involves a range of subject areas. With this approach, clear, practical connections can be made between different subject areas in ways that reflect real life and which can't be easily done when subjects are taught independently of one another. PBL utilized school facilities and involved teachers and students, but abandoned the typical classroom educational model in favor of workshops, free discussions and other activities linked to the projects.

Training for teachers

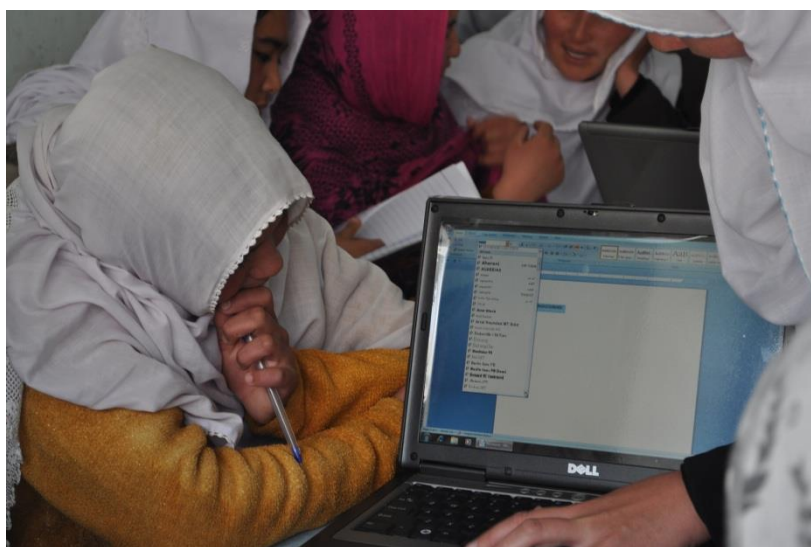
Teachers and other education staff involved in this program received one week's training before beginning the actual projects. Over forty teachers, several district education officials in each participating province and a number of NAC's education staff participated in the trainings.

During the training, participants learned to understand the relationship between different education subjects and how to connect these subjects with the lives of their students. Specific to the project theme, they learned about environmental sustainability and the interconnections between the environment and human needs - like water, good soil, animals, energy, clean air and a safe environment. Participants enjoyed the training and understood the benefits. One of the teachers from Ghazni province, Ms. Shayma, explained, *"Now I understand that children have a lot of abilities, but we teachers forget or ignore them. The children just need guidance to bring these abilities out."*

Doing projects

The project based learning activity camps were conducted over a two-week period during the winter break in Ghazni and after regular school hours in Badakhshan and Kabul.

Five schools were engaged in the program with over 300 students participating in all activities and hundreds more joining in with activities such as advocacy campaigns. During the winter camps, participating students were engaged in highly interactive activities related to the natural environment and technology (with specific work on computers). Students not only learned about the environment, but were supported to take an active role in improving the environment in their school communities (e.g. by planting school gardens) and sharing positive messages through advocacy about environmental protection, sustainability and related issues, including women and girls' rights; targeting senior community leaders and other community members.



"My name is Momena and I'm a student in the Bosaid High School for Girls in Jaghori. My brother got a new computer last year but he didn't know how to use it. My brother used to keep his computer like a holy book. No one could touch it, especially not me or my sisters. After I learned how to use a computer at the NAC "Winter Activity Camp", I taught him how to use his computer. Now his view of me and of other girls has changed. He respects us now."

In Badakhshan, the students led advocacy campaigns at their schools, focusing on the importance of environmental awareness and alternative energy use. More than 750 school students participated from the two schools. They recited poems, read articles and presented what they had learned to parents, neighbors and teachers. In Jaghori and Malistan districts in Ghazni province they were also able to present their suggestions on how to improve education and protect the environment to the district governors.



The results of all these activities in 2014 are below:

- The students become aware to keep clean and protect their environment
- Able to write in computer slogan shown in the picture above
- The children encourage to increase their self-confidence and creativity



Activities in 2015

In 2015 two new Afghan schools joined the Friendship School Projects.

1. Karte Solh Girls' High School in Faryab
2. ANAD (Afghan National Association of the Deaf) School for the Deaf in Kabul



Children painting and decorating the school wall teachers using Sign language during activities for the children in the School for the Deaf.

Workshop on Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Subject Integration in Karte Solh Girls' High School (Faryab)

In order to introduce project based learning to students and teachers as a method for better learning inside or outside the classes and in order to encourage the learners how to search deeply and find out new ideas and learn how to work in the team and produce together something related to their life's, the NAC education team had a workshop on subject integration and PBL for over 30 students in fifth and sixth grades. This new activities had many benefits for children, such as:

- They were enjoying working together and learning together
- Sharing their ideas according to their knowledge

- Discussing the different topic which they are not agree
- Drawing together and illustrate their ideas on the paper
- Connect their ideas related to the topic with different subject.
- The students were feeling free and doing activities related to the topics
- The students learned problem solving through how to solve their own problem



Subject integration through coloring the school walls at Guldara and the School for the Deaf

NAC continues to promote and encourage project based learning in Afghan schools, the students of Guldara Girl's School and the School for the Deaf in Kabul practiced project based learning in their schools, by decorating the school walls with themes related to Dari, Mathematics and Science.

Almost 150 students from both schools were involved and took part in this program. The students enthusiastically worked in groups



to implement the plans made according to their own choice, drawing on the wall. The students worked together in a cooperative way, during the work they has discussion and negotiation and by end find their ways to solve the problem, a great team building exercise. Each group worked on particular subjects such as math, geometry, reflects their own ideas.

At the end, the students were so happy from the result of their work. One of the teachers said: *'Honestly, they really did fantastic job. It was completely something new for the students and by the help of their drawings, they made better environment for learning and they made their schools more beautiful.'* This activity, shows that if the teaching is interesting for the children they could even work for long time without being tired or bored. They were working with a lot of energy in the scorching sun and succeeding with all their objectives, which helped them to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem. In the following pictures you can see how the students are working and how they are happy. Via this activity we will improve the students' responsibility, creativity,

choice and decision making, confident, and will enhance their life skills to be better in future and serve as active person in the community.

Celebration of Nature Day (spring season) at Guldara and School No. 2 in Faizabad

On this special day, 60 students of fifth and sixth grades of Guldara School participated to the program. The main focus of this program was to encourage the students to save and protect the environment. Each students cultivated a tree in their school yard and the learned how to irrigate and how to protect trees and vegetables. At the end of that special day they ended this program through playing game in the school yard.



The students of Girls High School No. 2 in Badakhshan had an exposure visit among students in friendship schools. So we have provided facilitates for the students from grade 4 up to grade 6 in girls school No. 2. Therefore, students under supervision of their teachers came to NAC Demonstration Nursery Farm in Dashti Qurough.

Students were free to discuss, quest, talk and walk in the farm and collect different plants and flowers, at the end they have made fantastic maps of Afghanistan, made words with flowers, and they have enjoyed and learnt more from each other and felt clean weather and environment. The same activity was done in Gandachashma School, students collected different plants and presented it in the class, and they have talked regarding benefit of medical plants. The exposure visit improved their understanding about plants, flowers and other vegetables that students collected.

Sport ground Construction at Ganda Cheshma

When they were asked what they wanted most of all the girls at Ganda Cheshma said they would love to have a sports ground where they could play volleyball and badminton. With support from children in Norway the NAC Engineering Team in Badakhshan helped to fulfil the dream of the girls.

The sport ground we will help to improve the students' responsibility, creativity, choice and decision making, confident, and will enhance their life skills to be better in future and serve as active person in the community.

Results of different activities in 2015 in different schools are follows:

- 305 students were involved in different activities in 7 schools under the Friendship School Program
- Students learned how to think independently
- Students learned how to work and learn together and develop mutual respect for each regardless of gender, abilities, disabilities, as well as ethnic, language and religious backgrounds
- Students understood the value of 'Team Work'
- Teachers learned how to implement project based learning in the class as an effective method of teaching and learning
- Teachers received training on inclusive education and project based learning
- Parents learn to appreciate the school, the teachers and the education their children are receiving and how education can help to improve their lives in their home communities
- Children enjoyed working together and learning from each other

In **mid-December** 'Friendship School Programs' will be organized at Guldara in Kabul, the School for the Deaf and School No. 2 in Faizabad in preparation for the Winter Camps early-2016.

Some of the activities planned for 2016

All the children in Afghan Friendship Schools are looking forward to meet their Norwegian friends on Skype in January 2016!

Estimated costs: Free (some transportation and food costs will covered by the NAC)

Art Workshops for children in two of the Afghan Friendship Schools (January)

100 children will be invited to help illustrate health and nutrition education booklets and materials that will distributed to hundreds of schools throughout Afghanistan as many Afghan children and youth suffer from mal-nourishment and stunting which severely affects their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. This initiative will be implemented in collaboration with the NAC Education, Friendship School and Health Teams.

Estimated costs: NOK 100,000 incl. printing costs (approximately 25% will be covered from the Friendship School Budget)

Establishment of JUNIOR WRITERS' CLUBS during Winter Camp for 700 to 1,000 children in the seven Afghan Friendship and Partner Schools in Badakhshan, Faryab, Ghazni and Kabul.

The Winter Camp initiative is a form of Project-based Learning (PBL) which targets teachers and children in the seven schools. Through the initiative, school teachers will be introduced to creative writing and drawing by a team of NAC education and communication specialists, together with teachers from the nearest district or provincial Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), and supervisors from local education departments. For the next two weeks the teams will implement full-day programs together with class teachers in the targeted schools.

Children from grade 4 and 5 who are interested in participating will sign up for the program before the end of the school year. The first part of the program will run from Sunday morning till Thursday early afternoon for two full weeks during the winter break. The children will first learn the basics of creative writing, how to illustrate a story, and how to use computers. Then they will be introduced to a list of topics they can choose between for the stories they will write during the following days. The children will be divided into groups of six and asked to discuss and agree on the main topics for their stories. The topics will be linked to the school curriculum for grades 1 and 2. Ultimately, grade 4 and 5 children will be supported in writing books for their younger friends in school (mainly grade 1 and 2) to instill a sense of responsibility and serve the dual purpose of promoting empathy among older children, and encouraging reading for younger children.

The main theme for each of the books will be 'My Village' with a selection of short stories about a range of topics including: the people who live in the village; the history of the area; the nature surrounding the villages where the children live; what kind of flowers and trees are found nearby; which animals live on their farms and in the forest; what the villagers do for a living; how it is to grow up as a child in the village; and what they usually do during their spare time. Each of the groups will write a short story, using computers, and make colorful illustrations. The stories will be edited by the NAC Team in collaboration with colleagues from TTCs and the local education departments. The children will be invited back to their schools to go through the edited stories, help with layout and decide on fonts and color schemes.

A total of ten book titles will be made (two each from the larger schools and one from the smaller schools), three books will be published in Uzbeki and seven in Tajik (for future projects, Pashtu language schools will also be involved) – More than 5,000 books will be printed and distributed throughout Afghanistan.

Estimated costs: NOK 650,000 (Between 40% and 50% will be covered by the Friendship School Budget)

Many warm winter greetings from the children of Badakhshan, Faryab, Ghazni and Kabul to their friends in Bergen, Oslo and Sulitjelma

And many thanks to the children, teachers and parents at Krohnengen, Sulitjelma and Vindern from all of us in the NAC Friendship School Team in Faizabad, Jaghori, Kabul, and Maimana.