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« Where women's education is progressing, democracy is advancing »
Chékéba Hachemi, President and Founder of Afghanistan Libre
23 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

OUR VISION

School is at the heart of our vision and we firmly believe that girls’ education is the key to the successful development of any society. When educated, women gain power and can actively participate in the political, economic and social development of their country.

Afghanistan Libre’s approach aims to initiate a virtuous circle of good practices that can then be replicated at the national level. This is why the association has been working since its creation in synergy with the local authorities and the Afghan government. For example, we introduced sporting activities in our schools in 2001 and sport is now part of the official curriculum of the Afghan National Education System.

All of Afghanistan Libre’s actions are based on a realistic vision of development and the projects implemented are designed to meet the local demands and needs, strengthen the skills of the local actors and propose sustainable solutions.

Our field team is 100% Afghan, and has been present in our territories over 20 years, which allows the association to be strongly rooted in the communities and to benefit from the support of the Shuras, i.e. the village councils, and the local authorities for all its programmes. This close and stable relationship with the communities and local authorities ensures the acceptance and smooth running of our projects.

Chékéba Hachemi
President and founder of Afghanistan Libre

“2018 was a black year for Afghanistan in many ways: the deadliest year in terms of civilian casualties, declining education, the worst drought in decades, etc. Most schools in the southern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan are closing as Taliban groups return. Daech also arrives from the west (through Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). We’re stuck in a vise. In such a context, it is more essential than ever to continue to lead our fight for girls’ education and women’s empowerment. It is essential to invest in education. Acting on girls’ education certainly has a positive impact on reducing inequalities, promoting economic growth and developing a country. And it is passed from one generation to the next: educated girls have healthier, fewer and better educated children.

We must keep hope. From Europe, Afghanistan Libre is fighting to remind us that this war continues, that we must not forget the Afghan people and the thousands of women and girls who struggle every day to exist.”
The headquarters of Afghanistan Libre are located in Paris. The Parisian team is in charge of designing the projects in direct contact with Kabul, looking for fundings, ensuring the reporting and communication activities, as well as the relations with the various partners.

The field team is in charge of project implementation and is 100% Afghan. With 23 years of experience in its intervention areas, Afghanistan Libre benefits from a very good acceptance of its projects among the local populations and from the authorities.

Afghanistan Libre also manages the staff of preschools and health education centers, as well as any other staff employed for the running of the projects. There are currently 30 employees and some additionnal contractors.
OUR ACTION IN 2018

- 8800 students (5500 girls) in 7 schools
- 20 teachers (¾ of them are women)
- 1500 beneficiaries of IDs and solar lights
- Construction of 4 classrooms
- Installation of 24 solar panels

- 4 Health and Education Centers for 100 women

2 INTERVENTION AREAS:
- Panjshir province, in 2 schools
- Paghman district (Kabul province), in 5 schools

Operational partners

Local authorities and communities
The Ministry of National Education of Afghanistan
The school administrations
IN 2018, AFGHANISTAN LIBRE EVOLVES

In 2018, Afghanistan Libre restructured its actions around 2 major poles: the **Education Department** and the **Women’s Department**. It responds to the evolution of our actions. We thus propose a **global integrated approach within the schools** with:

**The Education Department**

The Education Department offers programmes that mark out an integrated school career from early childhood to university. This includes:

- The improvement of the teaching conditions through the construction and improvement of schools and material distribution
- The creation and support of preschools,
- Teachers training,
- The intense training of female students for the University entrance exam (the Kankor),
- Vocational digital training via the Digital Classes,
- The distribution of solar lamps,
- Assistance in obtaining identity documents for young girls.

**The Women’s Department**

The activities of the Women’s Department are concentrated in the Health Education Centres which are located within the schools and whose beneficiaries are the women of the surrounding villages. This includes:

- Education and awareness sessions on health and basic hygiene
- The distribution of first aid kits, hygiene kits, delivery kits and winter kits
- Midwife consultations
- Literacy classes
Objective

Promote, in 4 preschools, the cognitive development of children under 6 years old and give them access to a balanced meal per day in a country where no educational structure exists for early childhood and the malnutrition rate reaches 41% among children under 5 years of age.

Beneficiaries

The teachers' children and other children from the villages, teachers and their students, who benefit from a better education

Financial Partners

Foundation Les Ailes

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

Although school does not start until the age of 6 in Afghanistan, there is no structure for early childhood education in rural areas.

However, in a traditional society, where women's rights are limited and where women represent only 19% of the working population, childcare adds an additional barrier to access to employment. Many women are thus unable to work as teachers because they have no means of care for their children. For the same reasons, current female teachers have a high rate of absenteeism.

This is all the more damaging as the presence of female teachers in schools is essential to promote their attendance by girls.

OUR RESPONSE

Since 2004, Afghanistan Libre has created and opened 4 preschools, within the school grounds we already support. In 2019, 137 children of female teachers were welcomed in places adapted to their development and supervised by qualified professionals. In our preschools, children receive a balanced meal a day, participate in a variety of educational activities, and their health is monitored by the educators and through a monitoring table completed by the team.
OUR IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

General objective

→ Provide a quality education for Afghan girls so that they have access to higher education.

Target group

→ Students, especially girls in grade 12
→ The teachers

Beneficiaries

The school staff, the school students and future students.

Financial Partners

La fondation ELLE
CDC Développement solidaire
Agence des microprojets
W4

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

Although great progress has been made in education since the fall of the Taliban regime, with the number of students rising from 1 million - exclusively boys - in 2001 to 9 million in 2016, 39% of whom are girls, there is still a long way to go. In 2018, for the first time since 2002, education declined. 3.7 million children are still out of school in Afghanistan, almost half of all children aged 7 to 17: 60% are girls and this figure rises to 85% in rural areas.

In addition, many factors still hinder enrolment, especially for girls: lack of infrastructures, distance from the schools in the rural areas, insecurity on the way to school, persistent early marriages. The lack of qualified female teachers (only 30% of teachers are women) is also a major obstacle to girls’ education. Indeed, many families still refuse to let their daughters attend classes taught by men.
In 2018, Afghanistan Libre supported 7 public schools, i.e. 8,800 students (including 5,500 girls) through various programmes:

1. IMPROVING THE TEACHING CONDITIONS

This year we have equipped 5 schools with solar energy. The installation of 24 solar panels has enabled the schools to improve their energy capacities. Previously depending on highly polluting generators and suffering from regular power outages, schools are now more energy independent.

We have also started the construction of 4 new classrooms in Keraman’s school in the Panjshir Valley.

2. PREPARING STUDENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION (KANKOR)

The Kankor preparation, is open for girls in grade 12 (last year of high school) on a voluntary basis. It offers additional courses in the scientific subjects (chemistry, biology, physics and mathematics), that have the highest coefficient. These courses are taught by qualified teachers from Kabul. This program aims to increase the students’ knowledge and confidence in order to increase their chances of success. The Kankor is a very selective exam that determines the possibility of entering the public university, which offers few places.

174 students benefited from the preparation at Kankor in 2018.

The girls who benefited from the training sessions in 2017 passed their Kankor in March 2018 in Panjshir and in May 2018 in Paghman. The results are still very encouraging: the success rate of the beneficiaries of the preparation was 86% compared to the national average of 66%.

3. STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITIES OF WOMEN TEACHERS

The capacities of female teachers are strengthened through a system of self-learning. A room equipped with a television set as well as DVDs and teaching materials created by the Afghan Ministry of Education is accessible to female teachers.

The self-learning program has been in place implemented in 2017. This activity is a continuation of the teacher training program with external instructors. The major difficulty for the training of female teachers is their availability, so self-learning gives them the opportunity to train continuously and at their own pace.

OBJECTIVES 2019

- Complete the construction of the additional classrooms in Keraman as well as a library and a playground.
Objective

→ Expand academic and professional opportunities for Afghan girls through computer courses that qualify and stimulate interest in the digital professions, a recruiting sector.

Beneficiaries

→ Girl students from grades 9 to 11 from 4 of our schools

Financial Partners

ENGIE Foundation
SAT

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

Afghanistan is a young country (84% of the population is under 40 years of age) with a very high unemployment rate of 40%. Therefore, supporting girls’ education is not enough, they must also be given opportunities for their future. Digital technology is a dynamic growth industry in all countries, and in this field, Afghanistan is a very competitive country. National school programs already include English and computer classes, but these two subjects are often sacrificed due to a lack of qualified teachers. Moreover, when it is taught, computer science very often remains at a theoretical level because schools are not provided with the necessary equipment. Thanks to the Digital Classes, high school girls have access to digital technology and can thus position themselves more competitively in the digital sector.

OUR RESPONSE

The Digital Classes project is the vocational part of our integrated school career.

It is a 3-year course for female students aged from 15 to 17. The first year is dedicated to the discovery of computer tools and the mastery of basic office automation softwares. The next two years are devoted to learning and mastering coding and programming. Computer courses are combined with reinforced English courses. We employ qualified instructors to teach the courses at a rate of 1h30 English and 1h30 computer per week per grade.

This pilot project was set up in March 2018 in 4 schools, and is a real success: the beneficiaries are very satisfied and the results are good with an average success rate of 70% on the final exam. 113 grade 11 students received a certificate of achievement in December 2018.

OBJECTIVES 2019

- Equip a new Digital Class in Abdullah Bin Omar
- Develop partnerships with IT Universities
Objective

→ Enable the girls to have a legal identity that guarantees access to their rights/Improve their homework conditions at home in the evening and safety on the way to school with the solar light.

Beneficiaries

→ The students of our schools who do not have a Tazkira, in priority the young girls, as well as the children of the surrounding villages.

FINANCIAL PARTNERS

La Voix de l’Enfant
Fondation ENGIE

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

Girls’ education now seems to be generally accepted up to secondary school, but continuing in high school and beyond often remains the prerogative of the most privileged families.

From high school onwards, the Tazkira, the official Afghan identity card, is required for school enrolment. It is essential for passing national examinations, in particular the Kankor.

However, only 20% of Afghan women own their Tazkira. The vast majority of girls have no legal identity: they cannot continue their studies and often become victims of forced and early marriages, which affect 70% and 40% of Afghan women respectively.

OUR RESPONSE

We recruit social workers who go in the villages to raise awareness among the parents on the importance of taking the administrative steps to ensure that their children have a civil identity. The social workers then go to the selected schools with a photographer, in the presence of the local authorities, to take the necessary information for the establishment of the Tazkira. We favour little girls as beneficiaries of the Tazkiras.

The solar lamps are distributed to older female students so that they can light up the way to school and do their homework in the evening.

In 2018, 1500 children received their Tazkira and 1500 girls aged from 12 to 18 years received a solar light.

OBJECTIVES 2020

Enable 2000 new students to acquire their Tazkira and a solar lamp.
General objective

→ Promote the empowerment of Afghan women in rural areas

Beneficiaries

→ Mothers of students, teachers, students and women in the surrounding villages, their children, their families and the community as a whole

Financial Partners

Linda Norgrove Foundation
Ivory Foundation

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

Afghanistan is one of the countries with the worst living conditions for women due to alarming rates of maternal and child health. Almost 7% of children die before the age of 5 and a woman dies every two hours from pregnancy-related complications.

In rural areas, 4 out of 5 women have never heard of family planning and 95% do not use contraception, despite the negative effects on health of repeated pregnancies. Similarly, 90% of women do not wash their hands regularly, a simple but very effective gesture to prevent diarrhoea, the second leading cause of death among children under five in Afghanistan (WHO, 2013).

According to the latest Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey report (2016-2017), only 16% of women receive four prenatal examinations (the number recommended by WHO for normal pregnancies). Also, in this very traditional country, women also face specific obstacles such as the shortage of qualified female medical personnel.

Moreover, in a country that has been in conflict for 40 years, violence is omnipresent in Afghanistan. Women are all the more affected as they are subjected to gender-specific violence. For many women, this begins in childhood, and continues throughout their lives. 87% of women reported having experienced at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological violence or forced marriage in their lifetime.

Finally, the right to work for women is poorly recognized and encouraged. According to the International Labour Organization, only 19% of the Afghan labour force was composed of women in 2014 (compared to 51% in France and more than 24% in Pakistan).

« Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. » (definition of WHO)
OUR RESPONSE

In response to these issues, and with the idea that basic health knowledge can save lives, Afghanistan Libre has created and supports 4 Health Education Centres for Women since 2003. These Centres are neither a medical centre nor an infirmary. The person in charge is a health promotion-trained educator who provides health and basic hygiene education sessions.

1. HEALTH EDUCATION

In 2018, 88 women benefited from health education sessions. The Centres are open all year round and the sessions take place 3 times a week. Health educators advise women on everyday hygiene and health practices and address more personal topics, such as pregnancy, contraception or puberty, depending on the demand and needs of the women.

During the school year (from March to December), about 2000 high school girls were able to benefit from occasional sessions.

Throughout the year, our team also distributed 185 hygiene kits, 1 first aid kit per centre, 100 winter kits and 60 delivery kits, in order to implement the advice received during the sessions.

2. INTRODUCTION TO LITERACY

In Afghanistan, 8 out of 10 women are illiterate. Yet literacy is the essential first step towards empowering women. Literate, they can develop their talents and skills, build or strengthen their social and economic independence.

To achieve this objective, twice a week, beneficiaries of basic health training also take a 2-hour literacy course.
3. IMPROVE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTHCARE

In order to improve access to reproductive and sexual health and to pre- and post-natal care, Afghanistan Libre has set up midwives consultations within the centers since December 2018. A qualified and equipped midwife works once a month. The consultation days are organized around a first collective awareness session on issues specific to the beneficiaries (e.g. anaemia during pregnancy), then the women are getting a private consultation. This format makes it possible to initiate the follow-up of pregnant women, and to refer those who need it to appropriate care centres. Women with pregnancy complications or gynaecological pathologies requiring more extensive medical care are referred to health centers.

One month after its launch, this program has already met with great success among women in Panjshir province and Paghman district (Kabul Province).

More than 50 women came within 4 days of the official launch of the program. These consultations allowed these women to have access for the first time to a consultation provided by a health professional.

OBJECTIFS 2019 :

• Réformer et transformer les Centres d’Éducation à la santé en Maisons de Femmes afin de proposer un projet d’accompagnement sociocommunaute des femmes encore plus intégré et complet.
MEETING WITH PUPILS OF THE SCHOOL OF BUSSY-SAINT-GEORGES

The Paris team went to meet the young students of the Cousteau school in Bussy-Saint-Georges. The opportunity to discuss with Chekéba Hachemi, President and Founder of Afghanistan Libre, about the association's actions and to initiate a nice collaboration between the Afghan schools and this school. Thank you!

THE AFGHAN DINNER PARTY OF THE AFGHAN SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION OF TOURNAI

On March 16, 2018, the Solidarité Afghanistan du Tournais association organized its famous and delicious Afghan meal. It was prepared by an Afghan family who have lived in Tournai for about ten years.

This year, the profits from this dinner made it possible to support our Digital Classes project with 6000 euros. Thank you to all our Belgian friends!

AFGHANISTAN LIBRE IS PARTNER OF THE FILM "PARVANA"

Parvana, The Breadwinner from Nora Twomey's, tells the story of a young girl who is forced to dress up as a boy to support her family when her father is arrested by the Taliban. The Bacha Poshi - literally "dressed like a boy" - are still a reality in the country today. To help their families, girls disguise themselves as boys to work and are therefore deprived of education.
AFGHANISTAN LIBRE ORGANIZES A UNESCO CAMPUS

On the occasion of a UNESCO campus, Afghanistan Libre presented the film Parvana, The Breadwinner, to high school students. Chékéba Hachémi, President of the association, had a long exchange with the students who were very interested in the living conditions of Afghan children, issues of equality between girls and boys and the actions of our association.

AFGHANISTAN LIBRE IN THE NEWS OF FRANCE 2 TV CHANNEL

Naswan Paghman's school appears in a report broadcasted on October 19, 2018 on France 2 TV channel prime time news. Carried out in the context of tense parliamentary elections, it features one of the schools in Afghanistan Libre, in the Paghman district, and the digital classes we have set up for young girls.

AFGHANISTAN LIBRE PRESENTS THE SIMPLY AFGHAN PHOTO EXHIBITION

As part of the event "Roads and Routes: Afghan Resistance" proposed by the MJC Martigues, our series of Simply Afghan photos were exhibited at the Boris Vian Media Library in Port-de-Bouc from November 20 to December 7. Taken by our beneficiaries, these photos express with strength and simplicity their daily struggle against violence and for the access to their rights.
CROWDFUNDING: MORE THAN 10 000 EUROS COLLECTED THANKS TO OUR DONATORS

The fundraising event organized by our partner W4 was a great success! Thanks to the individual donations we were able to raise 10,150 euros. This funding has allowed us to develop and improve our P.A.G.E. (Promotion of Afghan Girls Education) program in seven rural public schools in Paghman District and Panjshir Province.

THANKS TO ALL OUR PARTNERS 2018
More than 30 years ago, the GROUPE SOS was created with the ambition of fighting exclusion in all its forms. With the desire to respond to the social challenges of our time by developing innovative solutions, the GROUPE SOS has gradually diversified its activities and now operates in 8 sectors: Youth, Employment, Solidarity, Health, Seniors, Culture, Ecological Transition and International Action. Since 2016, Afghanistan Libre has been part of the International Action sector.

The International Action sector brings together social enterprises and associations that work with local actors in more than fifty countries: by providing them with support (through volunteering, training and capacity building) in the fields of health, disability, environmental protection and access to education for all. Through its international action, the GROUPE SOS wishes to contribute to the Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs).

The GROUPE SOS also works to promote economic development by enabling companies with a social and/or ecological impact to develop within its global network of incubators.

GROUPE SOS, is:

- 1984 année de création
- 1.6 million de bénéficiaires par an
- 12 régions
- 16000 salariés
- 850 millions d’euros de chiffre d’affaires
- 54 pays
- 480 établissements et services
- 54 pays