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Dear Friends and Partners of Shelter Now

There is good in Afghanistan as well!
One example is the latest Shelter saffron harvest. It is now available at a special price by the way. Our summer report also includes articles on other positive developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan which are in stark contrast to the publicly widespread largely negative headlines and paroles.

Only reporting what is good, however, would be one sided as well. The many ongoing hardships in both countries present us with enormous challenges. You can read more on this in the report.

Udo Stolte
and the Shelter Team



Auf dem Kirchentag in Dresden



SPECIAL OFFER in July:
1 gram Saffron 8 euros
instead of 9.5 euros
(postage free from 3 grams on)



Hope for Afghanistan and Pakistan



SHELTER-Report



Udo Stolte reports on his visit to Pakistan and Afghanistan:

Peshawar

On arrival in Peshawar after an exhausting night flight I was promptly informed that we had to visit the villages in the flooded area that same day. After a quick shower and a short nap, I put on my Shalwar Kameez (the local dress consisting of a long shirt over loose fitting trousers), and then we hit the road.

I was by now very familiar with the whole region. The impression this time was so strikingly different – months ago everything had been under water. Now we find flourishing wheat fields; people fully engaged with reconstruction. Everything has a sense of normality, but the appearance is deceptive.

We arrived in the village of Mumtazabad. What a surprise awaited us: everything was decorated; large banners hung on the walls; some men came to welcome us and placed garlands of flowers around our necks. Many men were gathered in the courtyard. We were given refreshments and speeches were made. We were utterly overwhelmed by the magnitude of their gratitude towards us. I too was obliged to make an impromptu speech as I had not been expecting anything like this. The whole event was a deeply moving experience.

We took a look at the newly built houses. Most of them were still empty and without doors or windows. The villagers have to provide these themselves. Now that summer has come temperatures often rise above 50°C – inconceivable for Central Europe. This extreme heat combined with high humidity turns it into an oven. Families need at least a ceiling fan to be able to stand the heat. Otherwise their children often get sick, sometimes with life threatening diseases. We are trying to raise funds to buy the necessary fans. You can compare a summer in Pakistan without a fan to a winter in Central Europe without heating.

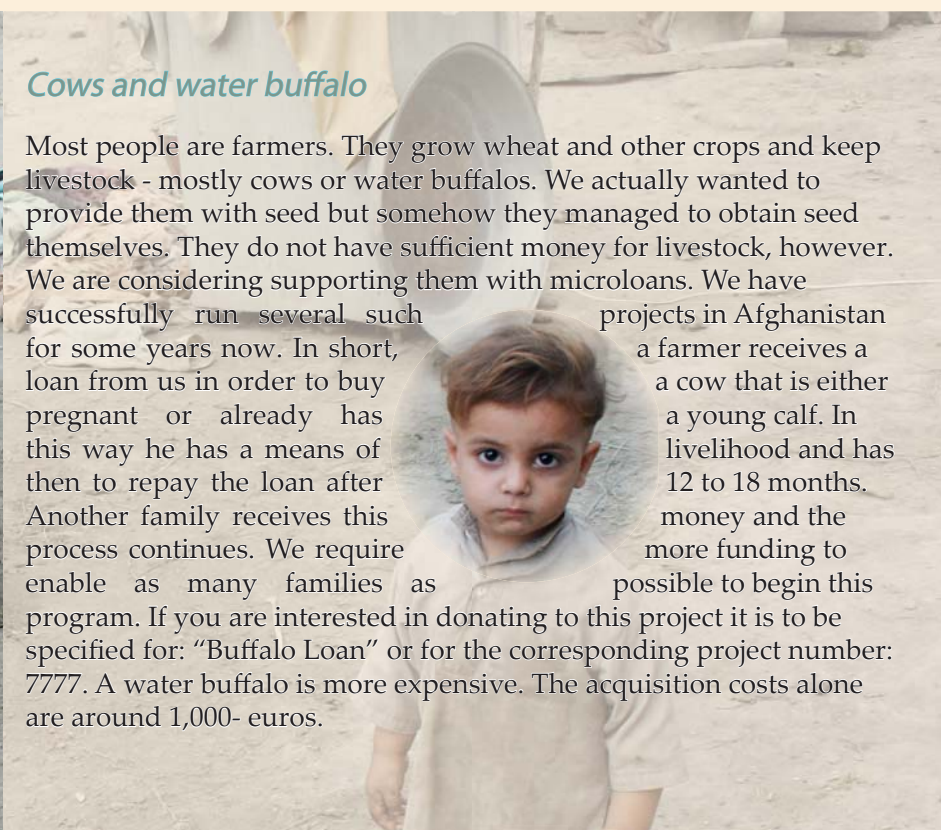


200,000 cattle perished in the floods in Pakistan.



Cows and water buffalo

Most people are farmers. They grow wheat and other crops and keep livestock - mostly cows or water buffalos. We actually wanted to provide them with seed but somehow they managed to obtain seed themselves. They do not have sufficient money for livestock, however. We are considering supporting them with microloans. We have successfully run several such projects in Afghanistan for some years now. In short, a farmer receives a loan from us in order to buy a cow that is either pregnant or already has a young calf. In this way he has a means of livelihood and has then to repay the loan after 12 to 18 months. Another family receives this money and the process continues. We require more funding to enable as many families as possible to begin this program. If you are interested in donating to this project it is to be specified for: "Buffalo Loan" or for the corresponding project number: 7777. A water buffalo is more expensive. The acquisition costs alone are around 1,000- euros.



Afghanistan - Refugees

On my arrival in Kabul I was besieged by our Afghan staff. Each one had particular needs to tell me about: There is a refugee camp in Kandahar with thousands of people who have fled from the Taliban. We are the only organization that is still operating in Kandahar and the government is urgently asking us for help. We are to build wells and distribute food to 500 families. There is a similar camp close to Kabul. We drove there to see it. The atmosphere was oppressive and the stench overwhelming: feces and foul smelling pools of water everywhere; the people seemed desperate. Here, too, around 500 families were especially in need. 250 families need our support in Nuristan (Project number 6011).

The blind help the blind

I got to know a blind couple (she is Afghan and he is Iranian). They told me about their work. They have established a center for the blind which caters for children of school age up to young adulthood. The younger blind children are taught how to find their bearings in life and also prepared to attend a "normal" school. The pupils are accompanied so that they can cope with school life and learn braille. Adolescents and young adults are given vocational training. I am impressed by what this blind couple has already accomplished. Unfortunately, due to lack of finance, the program for the young pupils is the only one running at present. While there I passed on a gift of 2,000 euros, so that they can at least cover the cost of basic necessities for now. But what then? (Project number: 6203)

Bees

The following day was special: Daoud Khan, a long-term Afghan employee, invited us to come and look at his bees. We drove to the beautiful district of Paghman in northwest Kabul: it has a reservoir; many fruit plantations and orchards; and a background of snow-covered mountains. Daoud had bought himself two bee colonies a year before. They multiplied so quickly that I now counted about 20 boxes: some with only a few bees and a queen, but most swarming with life. The sound of buzzing was everywhere. These hard-working insects came from the fruit trees car-

Sohem is nine years and is almost totally blind. He is the eldest of four children and hyperactive. He began attending the school seven months ago. His hyperactivity led his parents to believe that he was mentally retarded and unable to learn anything. They had no expectation for their son at all. When Sohem came to the school he hit and scratched the other children and even bit his teacher. He only played with dirt and could not sit still. Seven months have gone by and his family can testify to progress and changes in his life. He no longer hits, scratches or bites and now knows the complete alphabet. He does not react uncontrollably anymore, takes a full part in class activities, and we heard him singing at the top of his voice with the other children.



rying their sweet load into the hives. After giving me a thorough explanation of everything to do with bees, the beekeeper promptly extracted a couple of the hives. We drank pure honey from tea glasses; it tasted wonderful; everything was sticky...

In this area many fruit farmers could make a start with bee colonies and honey production. In Afghanistan honey is in great demand and expensive (Project number 6701).



Herat

Bees in Paghman.



The 5th dental chair being installed.

In Herat four friends from Germany have just installed the fifth dental chair. The Shelter Now dental clinic has now established an excellent reputation that has reached as far as Kabul.

Other news from Herat: There is as yet not much to see from the garden for women: only the women themselves and the large field they are cultivating. They really need a small tractor for the hard work. I think I will be able to write more about their first harvest in the fall. I have brought back some saffron from Herat. It is the latest produce from our Shelter saffron project. The quality is at least as high as before. I myself use it when cooking and I'm delighted with the results.

You can order it by phone or e-mail and soon over the

Internet as well. We have a special offer of 8 euros per gram until the end of July instead of the usual price of 9.5 euros. Postage is free for an order of more than 3 grams (only in Europe).

Wieder in Deutschland – Kirchentag in Dresden

"Nothing is good in Afghanistan", claimed Ms. Käsmann, the former head of the German Protestant

Church in her New Year address at the beginning of last year. I had to contradict her statement. At that time I invited her to travel with me to Afghanistan to see our projects for herself and then maybe revise her judgment. But she did not remain in office much longer, though her words remained in peoples' memories and are still quoted repeatedly in public. So off I went to the Church Congress in Dresden - dressed in the Shalwar Kameez, wearing a turban, and displaying a large button attached to my waist coat inscribed with the words, "**a lot is good in Afghanistan**". It was very interesting. Many spoke to me and there were simulating discussions. Particularly as a result of media coverage, a false picture of Afghanistan has unfortunately been formed in Germany. There is definitely a lot of good in Afghanistan now – not just our projects...

With this in mind – my sincere thanks for your support. Let me pass on to you the overwhelming gratitude of those affected by the floods in Pakistan.

Kind regards,

Udo Stolte and the Shelter team

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