

# Transformative Chronicles 2.0

STORIES FROM  
AFGHANISTAN  
2023 — 2024



Funded by  
the European Union



From  
the People of Japan





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## Foreword

Dear readers,

As you open the pages of “Transformative Chronicles 2.0,” you are invited to journey through the heart of Afghanistan’s transformation. This volume continues the narrative begun in our first edition, diving deeper into the stories of resilience, hope, and relentless effort that we have found across the country.

Through the United Nations Development Programme’s flagship ABADEI initiative, we have had the privilege of witnessing extraordinary moments of change—moments powered by the strength and spirit of the Afghan people, supported by our global partners. From the revitalization of small-scale infrastructure that connects communities, to the empowerment programs that rebuild lives, each story is a testament to what we can achieve together.

This book does not just recount the successes of projects; it celebrates the human spirit behind them. You will meet individuals like Fatima, who found strength in adversity following the loss of her home to an earthquake, and young Ghulam, whose new business ventures illuminate the possibilities that emerge when communities harness sustainable energy.

Our commitment extends beyond immediate relief to fostering sustainable growth and resilience. Our focus on climate adaptation,

women’s economic empowerment, and community-led solutions underscores this long-term vision. We are inspired by the way communities have embraced these initiatives, driving them forward with local knowledge and determination.

I am profoundly grateful to our donors and partners whose steadfast support makes all of this possible. Their dedication is not just to our projects but to the people of Afghanistan who benefit from them every day.

As you read these stories, I hope you are moved by the courage and community spirit they embody. “Transformative Chronicles 2.0” is more than a documentation of development; it is a celebration of human resilience and a look forward to the sustainable development goals we continue to pursue.

Together, let us draw inspiration from these pages and continue to support the journey towards a more prosperous Afghanistan. Your engagement and interest mean the world to us and to all those who see a brighter future on the horizon.

**Stephen Rodrigues**  
UNDP AFGHANISTAN RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

# At a glance

in 2023

## Community Structures

164,898

households benefiting from improved infrastructure

446

structures constructed/reconstructed/rehabilitated/repared



## Health



41

health facilities equipped with materials and equipment

## Cash-for-Work (CfW)



20,224 labourers

including 533 women benefiting from cash-for-work (CfW) schemes

## Education



977 trainees including 757 women

benefiting from project-supported vocational/TVET and education programmes

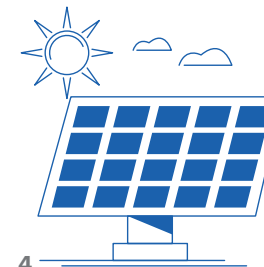
## MSMEs



6,328 MSMEs including

4,545 women-led ones benefiting from technical and financial support in ABADEI II

## Renewable Energy



28,217

households gained access to clean and affordable energy

40

facilities powered through renewable energy

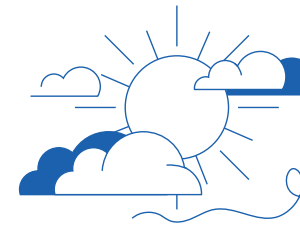
## Agrokits and training



1,308 farmers including

638 women benefiting from agricultural inputs, assets and training

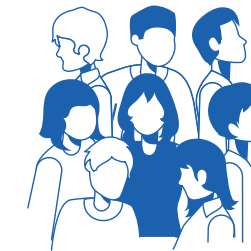
## Disaster Risk Reduction



1,200 individuals

including 590 women acquired knowledge and skills on disaster and climate resilience management, and adaptation

## Social Cohesion



28,326 individuals

including 12,389 women have better awareness about social cohesion

## Ecosystem



97 hectares of land

rehabilitated to absorb environmental stress and climate shocks

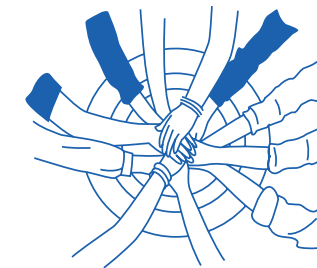
## Gender



1,189

women benefiting from measures addressing gender-based violence (GBV)

## Community Planning



2,453

programmes carried out by community networks/structures

191

community development plans developed or updated

## Community Kitchens



63

Community Kitchens

631

Employees/members

414

Women employees

550K

Free meals

25,929

Persons served

12,548

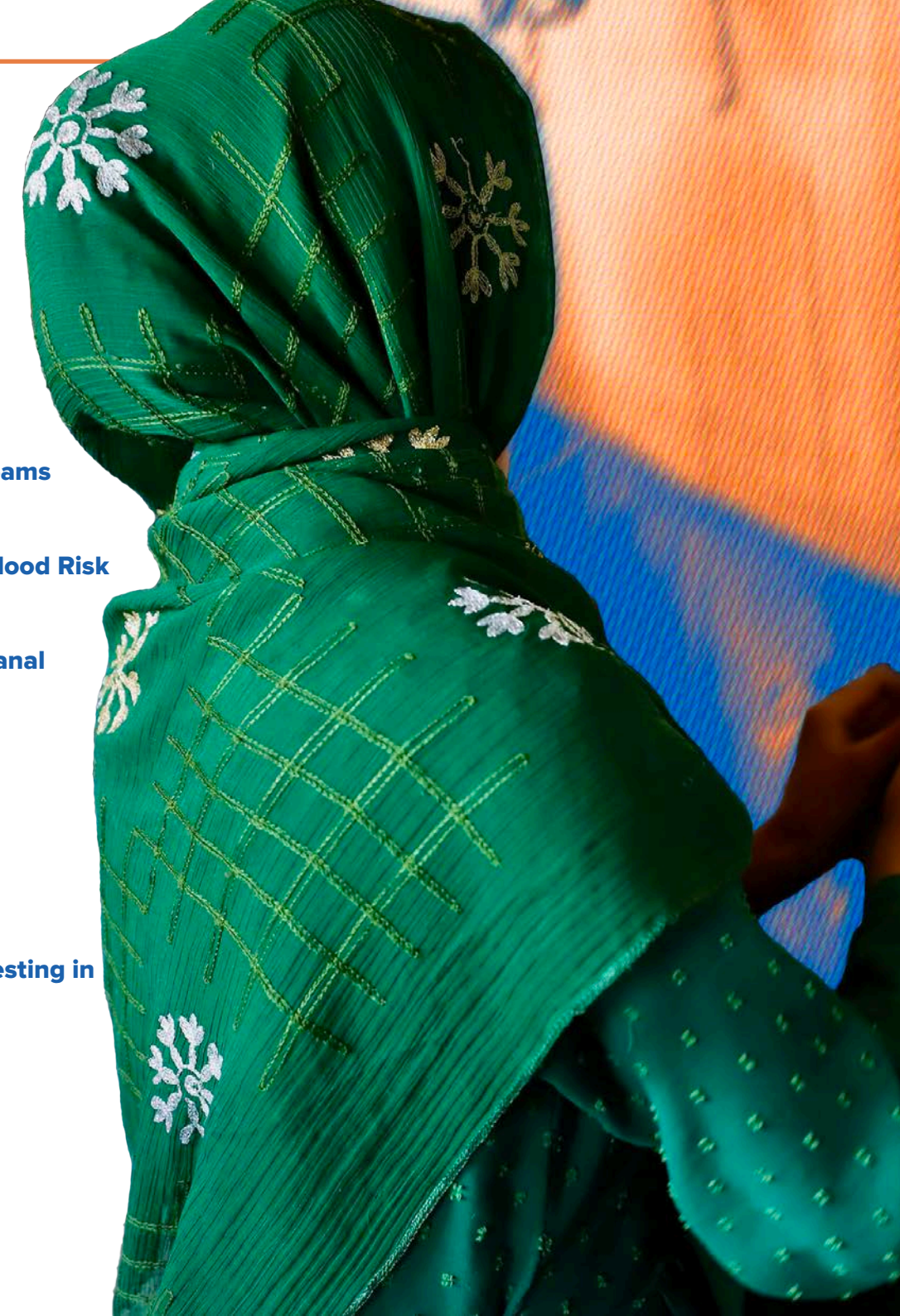
Women served

257K

Meals served to women

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SUGHRA



## A Bee Story

### AHMAD AMIRI

Beekeeper entrepreneur  
Guldan Village, Chak District, Maidan Wardak Province

**Baharan Honey and Bee Production Company was born from a vision to combine sustainable practices with the sweet rewards of nature.**

Young entrepreneur Ahmad Amiri, a man with a small piece of land and big dreams, was reluctant to start beekeeping. But after training and encouragement, he embarked on a new professional journey.

His business grew with each passing year, but the COVID-19 pandemic and fall of government created major challenges. Production reduced, and most employees were released.

Ahmad faced other obstacles due to lack of business management skills. Baharan previously had a very limited access to markets, as few buyers were familiar with the company's fine-quality products.

Baharan was then selected for business support. Staff members received training in areas such as business management,

quality control, pricing, packaging, warehouse management, and marketing. The company received mentorship and support to improve the quality of packaging. Baharan's packaging quality now matches international standards. Baharan now uses computer-based applications and databases to maintain inventory and sales records. The company also received access to a seven-day exhibition to find new markets.

Ahmad now encourages other communities to produce and scale up honey and bee production in Wardak Province. "I am on a mission to create a wider selling platform for my fine quality products and to improve the livelihood of my community members by providing employment opportunities especially to women."

Sales have increased by 22%. To meet increased demand, Baharan now plans to hire new staff and increase the number of bee colonies to 50 boxes.



*"After receiving the branding and marketing training, I have realised that packaging is very important to attract customers and find new markets for my fine quality products. With the new packaging, the demand for my honeybee products has drastically increased, and I now generate more revenue with the increased production."*





Area Based Approach  
to Development  
Emergency Initiatives

From  
the People of Japan

این طرح‌ها از سوی  
ژاپن حمایت می‌شود



**Honey harvest:** ABADEI support is creating a big buzz for Afghani beekeepers like those at Baharan Honey and Bee Production Company. Local entrepreneurs receive training in areas such as business management, quality control, packaging, and marketing.



## The Transformation of Arghandi

### HAJI WALI

Village representative

Janda Khil Village, Arghandi, Paghman District, Kabul Province

**The village of Janda Khil faces unemployment, poverty, resource scarcity, and inadequate infrastructure.**

The village's vital link to the city, a bridge, was tragically swept away by floods in 2023. Around 100 residences and 324 hectares of land were also destroyed.

The rehabilitation of the bridge was an important moment, bringing infrastructural improvements and enhanced connectivity with neighboring regions. It also created employment opportunities through the ABADEI cash-for-work program.

The program engaged local labor for construction and repair of the bridge, so villagers were able to secure livelihoods and economic stability during the coming winter months. All workers are from Arghandi.



Haji Wali, a respected figure in Arghandi and the representative overseeing rehabilitation of the bridge on behalf of Paghman district, is reflective: "If the bridge had not been repaired, it would likely have succumbed to the effects of future floods, causing immense hardship for the families of Arghandi."

The bridge's rehabilitation is part of wider initiatives to reduce disaster risk in the area. These initiatives include river cleaning, as well as construction and renovation of roadside retaining walls and wing walls around the bridge.

*"The bridge's rehabilitation was a lifeline for our community."*



**From disaster to opportunity:** Citizens residing by the once-destroyed bridge near Janda Khil Village were hired to rehabilitate it.







# Revitalising Tradition: Empowering Communities through Wool Processing and Carpet Weaving



## GUL CHAMAN

Skilled labourer  
Ghazni province

**Gul Chaman is a resilient 50-year-old woman from Kolokhak in the heart of Ghazni province, Afghanistan, known for its rich cultural heritage. Following the loss of her husband five years ago, Gul Chaman has been the sole provider for her family of five.**

In Ghazni, where livelihoods hinge on livestock, many like Gul Chaman earn their living through carpet weaving and wool processing.

Despite her age and the distance from her home to the center, Gul Chaman found a lifeline thanks to Samiullah, a young man who introduced her to a local wool processing center. Here, she found not just employment but a renewed sense of purpose, enabling her to support her two daughters who also contribute by weaving carpets at home.

Transitioning from traditional methods to modern machinery was initially daunting for Gul Chaman. Yet, with determination and the support of an eight-day training program provided by the processing center, she now produces between 1 to 2 kilograms of wool daily, earning 80 Afghanis per kilogram. Her productivity has soared compared to the previous laborious pace of 3 to 4 days per kilo.

“Now, I feel more confident and efficient with these new machines,” Gul Chaman beams. “I’m increasing my output and earning more for my family.”

Tahira Husaini, 40, shares a similar journey. Despite the daily challenge of a long commute to the center from her rented home, she embraces the opportunity to learn and earn alongside Gul Chaman. “Using these machines was a challenge at first,” she admits, “but I’m improving every day.”

This wool-processing center, supported by ABADEI2.0, has transformed the lives of thirty individuals by providing them with a renovated center powered by solar energy. Gathering women from ten communities, it has become a hub of empowerment where skills are exchanged, camaraderie flourishes, and livelihoods are secured.

For Gul Chaman, Tahira, and many others, this center is more than just a place of work—it’s a beacon of hope and progress in their journey towards a brighter future.



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*“Now, I feel more confident and efficient with these new machines,” Gul Chaman beams. I’m increasing my output and earning more for my family.”*



# Dam of Hope in Kandahar

## JAN MOHAMMAD

Skilled labourer

Myankoh, District 12, Kandahar Province



**Within Kandahar, the area of Myankoh in District 12 has grappled with particularly severe economic crises.**

More than 1,000 internally displaced persons and returnees in the area face seasonal floods. Crucially, they lack access to clean water.

Jan Mohammad, a skilled laborer from Myankoh Village, has found joy in his work on the recent construction of the new Kandahar Myankoh check dam. "I am proud to be part of a project that will benefit thousands of families and mitigate major floods in our community."

Check dams counteract water erosion by reducing water flow. The check dam in Myankoh now stores 150,000 cubic metres of water, providing benefits to more than 18,760 households.

"The stored water replenishes underground aquifers," says villager Zarif Khan. "It ensures a sustainable water source for

agricultural activities, domestic use, and other essential needs of our families."

Since its construction, the check dam has stood fast in the face of heavy rains and flooding, protecting lives and property.

The dam is a crucial flood mitigation measure and community lifeline. It serves as a recreational area for youth and a place to strengthen community bonds. The check dam's construction has also paved the way for other UNDP initiatives such as tree plantation and environmental improvement.

In a region facing significant challenges, Jan Mohammad's dedication is a demonstration of the ability of individuals working together to create profound impact within their communities.

*"Working on the Kandahar Myankoh check dam has been a truly rewarding experience. I have found joy and fulfilment in my work."*







**Dam of hope:** Citizens report that water levels in nearby wells have increased by more than 20 metres since construction of the Kandahar Myankoh check dam.



# Finding Purpose In A Community Kitchen

## SHAKAR

Community kitchen member

Naw Abad Community, Ghazni Center, Ghazni Province

**Of the 2.5 million population in Ghazni, 1.5 million are considered as people in need. Roughly 756,000 people are registered as people in need of food.**

Shakar, aged 43 and mother of 3 daughters and 2 sons, lives with her disabled husband in the Naw Abad community of Ghazni Center.

“Females are not allowed to go out of their houses and communicate with other women and girls,” says Shakar. “The majority suffer from depression. When a female is illiterate and unemployed, home is like a jail. No entertainment, no good feelings, nothing new to experience.”

Stress, depression, and psychosocial problems took their toll on Shakar. Doctors told her that her stomach ache was due to severe anxiety. Her daughters cannot attend school. In the face of severe economic challenges, Shakar felt forced to send her youngest son to Iran to earn money for the family.

“Everyday, I thought about my son. He was too young to go to another country for work. We felt we had no alternatives. My

disabled husband does daily chores in a nearby bazaar. Some days, he comes home only with 30 Afghani (USD0.40). No one can understand those days that passed. I had forgotten how to be happy. Thank God, those days have passed now.”

In March 2023, Shakar was selected to join the Naw Abad community kitchen as a cook. Her contributions now help vulnerable community members. “The light in my life turned on.”

Shakar was the first individual selected for ABADEI’s community kitchen programme in Naw Abad due to her vulnerability and willingness to support other nearby women and girls. She now works with a group of women.

Shakar’s husband Abdul Qayum has noticed the positive changes in Shakar. “Everyday, when I came home tired, the only thing I encountered was my sick wife, whose illness was not understood. All my income was spent on medicines, but not even one percent was useful. Since her work started with the community kitchen, her facial expressions have changed. She started talking with us, laughing, and



working actively. Her stomach pains are gone. We now have a source of income, so we called our little son to come back home, and we are pleased to have the whole family together.”

Everyday, Shakar and other community kitchen members work together to distribute 150 meals daily to people in need. Shakar considers this as a main reason behind her recovery. “This kitchen helped me, my family, and nine other community kitchen members to learn new skills, to work as a team, to take part in community activities, to play an active role in family decisions, and to be the role model for those who also suffer.”

Shakar has now also established her own home-based restaurant, where she prepares fast food for customers. “I now have an income source, and I can fulfill my dreams and the dreams of my family”. She smiles, saying, “I am sure that I no longer need that medicine.”



*“I was using a huge number of medicines, suffering from chronic stomach problems. Doctors said my stomach was fine, but I was suffering from depression that affected my physical and mental health, and I needed to be busy. Joblessness created depression that affected my family.”*

*The light in my life turned on when I joined the community kitchen. This kitchen helped me to be involved in community activities, to be busy, to have a job, to support my family, to work, and share my reflections with other women. The kitchen not only shaped my mental health, but also helped me to start my business. I now have an income source and can fulfil my dreams and the dreams of my family.”*



**From dark days to light:** Through the Naw Abad community kitchen program, Shakar not only cooks for the vulnerable, but also runs her restaurant.







## Scaling A Tailoring Business

### FAZILA FAIZY

Tailor entrepreneur

Mula Khalil Village, Hesa 1 Kohistan District, Kapisa Province



**Fazila is cutting cloth. She stands behind a table covered with scarves in a large room in her parent's house. Some of her employees sew, while others stitch with embroidery hoops.**

Before Afghanistan's regime change in August 2021, Fazila had a good job as a school teacher. Tailoring enabled her to earn income in her spare time. Fazila's husband had his own tailoring business until he was killed by Iranian border forces.

After losing her husband, Fazila started living with her parents. When her father died, Fazila was left only with her mother, three younger sisters, and two little children. Facing economic difficulties, Fazila started her own tailoring business. With financial help from relatives who live abroad, she purchased two sewing machines and raw materials, and she started producing clothes for her family and relatives.

Fazila initially hired five trainees, while the available work merely covered production costs. She struggled for months to find a way to expand. She was then selected from a large number of vulnerable women entrepreneurs who run tailoring businesses in Kapisa.

Fazila received USD1,200 as a grant to purchase more sewing machines, equipment, and raw materials. She expanded her business, providing job opportunities for local women. Now, she has more than 70 trainees working in 2 shifts, producing up to 6 pairs of clothes everyday and selling them in local markets.

Fazila now plans to open her own sales shop to connect to more markets and expand her customer base. After struggling for more than two years, life has finally improved, and Fazila can provide healthy meals for her two children and other family members.

*“Only two years had passed since my marriage. I had two little children and a small job as a schoolteacher in the local school, when suddenly the regime changed. Our family decided to emigrate to Iran. While crossing the border, my husband was shot dead. I returned to Afghanistan with my two children to live with my parents. Nearly a year ago, I decided to start my own tailoring business.”*



**Seamstress Success:** Fazila's tailoring business sustains her family and also supports other women in Kapisa, creating ripple effects in the community.





  
 ZEENAT AFGHAN  
 زینت افغان  
 شرکت تولیدی ترشی  
 مخلوط اوری زینت افغان

**Entrepreneurial triumph:** Fawzia's Zeenat Afghan pickles bring flavour and hope to Parwan Province. With newfound skills and support, Fawzia is expanding her business, providing livelihoods for women and families, and spreading joy through her products.

## Pickling

### FAWZIA HAMIDI

Food processing entrepreneur  
 Gulbahar Village, Jabalseraj District, Parwan Province



**Fawzia knows hardship.** Married at an early age to a taxi driver, she gave birth to seven children, then tragically lost her husband. Life as the sole earner in her household has been challenging.

Fawzia learned how to produce jams and pickles, then trained her two young daughters. She learned about licences and registrations required to start a food processing business. Fawzia sold her personal belongings and invested in products such as lemons, tomatoes, vinegar, salt, containers, and bottles.

After a month, Fawzia delivered her first products into the market. The response was overwhelming. Her products tasted great and were well priced. She registered Zeenat Afghan pickles processing in Parwan Province and looked to expand her business to local markets, city consumers, and big

supermarkets. Recognizing her need for knowledge of sales, promotions and access to markets, she searched for support from NGOs and donors.

Fawzia received training from an ABADEI initiative in areas such as business development, management, quality control, product packaging, pricing, and marketing. With regular mentorship, she improved her business and the quality of product packaging. She also participated in exhibitions, showcasing her high-quality goods on a larger scale.

Sales have increased by 30%. Fawzia is now contracting new retail shops and supermarkets, and she is providing livelihoods for 25 female staff and their families.

*“I want to expand my business to other provinces. I can train more women on production of pickles and jams and provide employment to vulnerable women and girls like me. The improvement of their livelihoods will contribute to the development of the national economy.”*





## Restoring Centuries-Old Canals For Better Food Production

### GULAM HABIB

Farmer

Parwana Village, Inji District, Herat Province

**For too long, recurrent flash floods washed away crops, livestock, and homes within Dehshaikh and Parwana villages in Herat Province.**

Ghulam Habib, a 55-year-old farmer, now tends to his wheat field alongside his two sons in Parwana village. The greenery is lush, and the air is fresh.

Ghulam has dedicated most of his life to farming. He has often encountered hardships during the severe winter season. Heavy rainfall often led to destructive floods that damaged not only his land, but also the lands of fellow farmers in his village.

“Repairs to damaged sections of the canal were costly in the past,” says Ghulam. “We needed to hire labourers and purchase wooden stacks and plastic sandbags to fix damaged sections and redirect the water

flow into multiple sub-canals. We were always running out of water. We could not control water losses through seepage. Disagreements arose among farmers about water use.”

ABADEI inaugurated a 210-meter-long protection wall, 3 super passages, and canal lining to save valuable water for drinking and irrigation for 800 families in 2 villages. The project also created employment opportunities for 317 vulnerable citizens during construction.

“This project was jointly built for 2 villages, for more than 5,550 people,” says village leader Gulbudin. “The canal is over one century old, but was previously in bad condition. Now, we are expanding our fields to include new crops. Our women are considering setting up a kitchen garden to grow vegetables.”



In both villages, the total area of irrigated land has increased by 50 percent. Farmers now receive three times as much water with less effort. More water equates to more food for consumption and sale, improving lives in the process. The project has enabled food-insecure rural households to plant two crops yearly rather than just a single wheat crop.

The new farming infrastructural improvements have paved the way for sustainable farming practices, resulting in higher crop production, increased income prospects, and improved food security.

**Wall of protection and progress:** Increased water retention and improved irrigation systems safeguard crops and offer a brighter, more resilient future for 800 families.



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*“Following the completion of the protection wall, my farm has been receiving uninterrupted water flow, allowing me to carry out my farming activities throughout the year. Before the protection wall, water shortage was a major problem. The water used to flow away unused, but now we have sufficient water for our crops and no longer worry about floods.”*





# Shazia's Journey

## SHAZIA BAYAT

Food processing entrepreneur  
Faqir Abad Village, District 5, Balkh Province



**The morning sun brings light to a small, one-room, mud-brick house. There, Shazia creates jams, pickles, and yoghurt.**

Originally from the Dara-e-Suf district of Samangan Province, Shazia's house and property were destroyed by fire. She and her family then moved to Balkh Province, and they have lived in rented houses for a year. Unfortunately, her husband is unemployed, adding to their challenges as a displaced family.

Shazia expresses her concerns. "Upon our arrival in Balkh, we found ourselves without shelter and household items, not even carpets on the ground. The fire took everything. Both my husband and I were unemployed. The rent for the house was a constant struggle, and we could not afford enough food."

In December 2023, Shazia's food processing enterprise was selected to participate in an eight-day training session for small businesses. Upon completion, Shazia received a financial grant of 62,000 Afghanis (USD840) to expand her business.

Shazia was then able to present her goods at a large exhibition event for female entrepreneurs in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif. Her food processing enterprise saw significant increase in income as a result of this exposure. To meet increased demand, Shazia now employs two women to assist in running the business.

Shazia is delighted. Her monthly income has increased from around 2,000 Afghanis (USD28) to approximately 6,000 Afghanis (USD84). She plans to buy a dairy cow to produce more yoghurt and milk. She also plans to help other women start their businesses and become economically independent. Shazia is now a role model to other women in Afghanistan, overcoming adversity while supporting her family and other women.

*"I have assumed the role of supporting my family's needs. I cover our house rent and daily expenses, and I ensure that my products reach local supermarkets and street shops. I also assist my husband in managing our household finances. Thanks to the income I have generated, I have invested in approximately 10 chickens, enabling me to sell their eggs and generate additional income."*

**Serving up inspiration:**  
Shazia's food processing business sustains her family and offers a model of successful entrepreneurship in Balkh Province.







## The Ancient Art of Woven Crafts

**NASIRA AZIZI**

Handicrafts entrepreneur  
Mazar-i-Sharif City, Balkh Province

**Nasira's aspirations are limitless. She owns a small handicrafts workshop in northern Afghanistan. With an ABADEI grant, she grew her business almost three-fold this year.**

"My workshop used to be very small," recalls Nasira. "We had only one workstation and six machines. With the grant that we received, I purchased another workstation, sewing machine, and raw material to service more customers."

Women-run businesses in Afghanistan often struggle with access to finance. Banks require collateral for business financing, but most women do not have property in their names, as men traditionally own most family assets.

Businesses receive small grants to accelerate their growth. They also receive technical assistance and training to enhance their business acumen and to strengthen market linkages.

Nasira's business has grown from 25 to 80 employees. "Most women working in my workshop come from poor families. Some are widowers and the only breadwinner in their household."

Nasira plans to expand her workshop to a carpet weaving centre. Currently, she only weaves carpets and then sends them to other regions or overseas for additional processing due to her limited facilities and equipment. Nasira's goal is to consolidate all carpet production activities at her workshop and create new job prospects for more women and Afghan girls.



*"I used to employ 25 women. Now I employ 80, all feeding their families through this business."*



**Weaving employment opportunities:**  
Nasira's handicrafts workshop is flourishing, supporting livelihoods for a growing number of women in northern Afghanistan.





# Training In Climate-Smart Agriculture

## MOHAMMAD AKBAR

Farmer

Deh Jawaz Village, Trinkot District, Uruzgan Province



**Farming is in Mohammad Akbar's blood. Generations of his family have farmed the fields of Uruzgan, and his father taught him to respect the earth and its bounty.**

Since Mohammad was a boy, he dreamed of running his own farm and providing for his family. The harsh realities of climate change have made farming life difficult.

In his small village, droughts have become more frequent and severe, drying up surface waters and wells that irrigated his fields. Mohammad invested his scarce resources alongside other farmers to dig a deeper well. He uses solar energy to pump water to his farm, but even the new well is drying up.

ABADEI now supports Mohammad and 1,500 other farmers to adopt climate-smart agriculture practices. Mohammad

attended a farmer field school, where farmers are trained in climate-sensitive irrigation techniques such as drip irrigation and greenhouse farming.

They also learn organic pest and weed control, eco-friendly use of manure and composting, and modern cultivation, harvest, and post-harvest handling practices. These practices help to reduce input costs, increase yield, and reduce on-farm spoilage.

Mohammad is enthusiastic about the future. "I grow almonds and pomegranates. We are very interested to access better markets to get higher prices and help upgrade our irrigation networks. We hope we receive similar support next year, too."

*"This type of training was never previously available in Afghanistan. We did not understand mulching or organic pesticides and herbicides. Pesticides from the market are expensive and not that effective. Sometimes, we lose yield because of low-quality input supplies in the market. Now, we make our own with organic methods."*





**Seeds of change:** With ABADEI's assistance, Mohammad and fellow farmers in Uruzgan embrace climate-smart agriculture to combat the challenges of climate change.





# Weaving Carpets And Dreams

## AMENA KHODAYAR

Carpet weaver entrepreneur  
Lal Sar Jangal District, Ghor Province



**Amena is determined. Aged 42, she launched a weaving enterprise to fortify her family's financial stability.**

Amena's challenge was to create sustainable income while empowering women and girls in her community, particularly those in the weaving sector who lack access to education.

Amena invested her savings of 10,000 Afghanis (USD138) to purchase tools, a carpet frame, and raw materials. She trained two girls from her village and collaborated with her husband to produce one carpet every two months.

Political instability and economic downturns forced her family to relocate from their home province to Kabul, where they faced the challenge of restarting their business.

Unable to restart their enterprise, Amena's family found support through an ABADEI training opportunity. As part of a six-day

business management training session, they received cash assistance to revive their carpet weaving enterprise.

Amena gained valuable skills. She adapted her approach by engaging 11 trainees and creating a supportive learning environment. Amena trained this group within just one month. Their efforts has led to production of high-quality carpets that they plan to sell at USD75 per meter.

The success of Amena's venture has improved her family's financial stability and also provided employment opportunities for trainees from marginalized communities. Future projects are expected to yield higher earnings.

Amena now plans to expand her business horizons by training more individuals in dyeing techniques and wool spinning. Her journey highlights the power of one small-scale initiative to transform individuals and communities, particularly women and girls.

*"We learned new skills. This training totally changed my economic situation and provided new ideas and also hope for my family and me."*



**Strong threads:** With ABADEI, Amena is revitalizing her weaving enterprise, providing opportunities for women and girls in Kabul.







## Afforestation To Reduce Flood Risk

### NASREEN

Cash-for-work programme recipient  
Tagab Camp and Samarkhel Araban Village, Behsood District, Nangarhar Province

**Nasreen, widow and mother of four sons and three daughters, lost her husband five years ago in armed conflict.**

She had no monthly income to support her family. However, after months of being jobless, she joined an ABADEI cash-for-work afforestation programme. The programme plants jujube (also known as red date) trees to reduce disaster risk faced by internally displaced people communities.

Nasreen's resilience is inspiring. She received 4,600 Afghanis (USD64), enabling her to pay back loans from neighbours. She can also seek medical assistance and treatment for her spinal pain, which she endured without medication for 10 months.

Nasreen's story highlights the particular struggles faced by many widows in Afghanistan's society, especially those who support families with many children.

While the ABADEI afforestation program provided Nasreen with income and debt relief, her vulnerability remains the same. Once such projects end, individuals

like Nasreen may face uncertainty, emphasizing the need for sustainable long-term support for stability and resilience in Afghan communities.

Communities in the area are greatly vulnerable to risks of seasonal flooding and climate-induced disasters. The afforestation project reduces risk of disaster and builds community resilience in the face of climate change.

The project has planted 20,000 trees on 12 hectares of dry land. It created 7,810 cash-for-work days for 781 individuals, supporting roughly 3,200 households.

The afforestation in the area reduces the flow of rainy water, stores precipitation, and reduces soil erosion through terracing. It establishes forests, creates local temporary employment, and supports biodiversity. In the longer term, the project will help to recharge underground water and also create income-generation opportunities through production of high-quality jujube honey.



This initiative is part of wider efforts to engage citizens in afforestation activities that create employment, develop agriculture, and mitigate climate change. In Mirshaikh Bala Village within the Aliabad District of Kunduz Province, ABADEI is supporting afforestation of 20 hectares of land, creating cash-for-work opportunities for more than 2,500 citizens.

*“I was able to buy meat for the first time in six months to feed my children a good-quality diet.”*

**Planting for the future:**  
The planting of jujube trees  
mitigates disaster risks and  
enables widows like Nasreen  
to thrive amidst adversity.





# Irrigation Reservoir and Canal Lining



## FAZAL KARIM

Cash-for-work programme recipient  
Qasim Village Community, Sabari District, Khost

**Fazal Karim was jobless due to drought, lack of available jobs, and major political upheaval that has affected the country.**

“I am the only person who can provide food for my six-member family,” says Fazal. “My father is disabled, my mother already died, and I have two small sisters and three small brothers who are under-aged and cannot work. Finding work is a challenge.

“My family and I have suffered from hunger. Our only income resource was agriculture cultivation, which could not fulfill our daily needs. I tried to flee to Iran illegally for work, but I had no money, and no relatives, villagers, or friends were able to lend me the money. Meanwhile, our circumstances were becoming worse by the day.”

ABADEI then initiated an irrigation reservoir and canal lining project. This small-scale construction and rehabilitation project hired 100 labourers from the village as part of a cash-for-work scheme. Fazal was among those labourers.

Fazal is reflective. “Opportunities like this give us new hope for life.” Fazal hopes for more cash-for-work projects that can bring positive change to community infrastructure while supporting livelihoods.

*“The support has provided employment for me and for other jobless people in our village. This project has helped many poor people to meet basic needs.”*



**Springs of renewal:** Fazal and his community have found a lifeline through the cash-for-work scheme to line a nearby canal and build an irrigation reservoir.



## Rising From The Rubble

### FATIMA

Earthquake survivor and head of six-member family  
Chahak Village, Herat Province

**Fatima's voice trembles when she speaks of the earthquakes that rocked the western province of Herat in 2023.** "I cannot find the words to express the fear we felt when the earth shook," recalls the 61-year-old resident of Chahak village. "The children's cries were deafening. The place we called home crumbled in front of our eyes."

Three years after losing her husband, Fatima was thrust into an unexpected role as head of her family, a hard reality for Afghan women due to the restrictions on employment, education, and movement.

Fatima, her widowed daughter, and grandchildren found themselves camping outside in makeshift tents made of sticks and sheets. "Men and boys can sleep anywhere. But imagine the plight of women and girls. Having to live out in the open made us feel so vulnerable. We did not even have access to a toilet." Like Fatima's, as many as 68,000 women-headed households were affected by the earthquake, exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

In only five days in early October 2023, three major earthquakes struck this part of Afghanistan, close to Iran, claiming the lives of 2,400 people. Most mud homes in the desert villages outside the city of Herat were flattened, making this the deadliest natural disaster to strike the country in decades. Over 10,000 homes were razed to the ground, and over 48,000 homes suffered severe or moderate damage.

In response, ABADEI worked with communities to help rebuild lives and improve community resilience to hazards and shocks. Specific initiatives include construction of transitional shelters, provision of free hot meals through community kitchens, and installation of solar cookers for sustainable cooking solutions.

In the village of Chahak, where Fatima lost her home, all 235 transitional shelters were completed in a few weeks, and all the families moved in. Fatima's family is among them.



These shelters rely on vernacular architecture practices, constructed from local materials using traditional methods like pakhsa (a blend of earth and straw), mudbrick, and stone masonry. These homes are disaster resilient, so Fatima and her family were protected from the aftershocks that continued to rattle the region.

Fatima remains hopeful, despite ongoing challenges. "We still lack warm clothing, and mattresses, but we are safe, healthy and protected from the cold. I am so happy that proper latrines are being constructed, which is essential for women."

After completing the transitional shelters in Chahak village, ABADEI will keep providing shelter and livelihood support to the people of Herat province affected by the earthquake. The goal is to lay the ground for longer-term recovery by building resilience to future shocks.



*“These shelters are warm and sturdy. My grandchildren are happy and healthy, protected from the harsh winter. I can sleep now because I feel safe and secure.”*

**Shelter from the storm:**

Transitional shelters in Chahak Village offer protection to families affected by recent earthquakes. With safety restored and essential amenities provided, Fatima and her fellow community members can now rebuild their lives.







## Sun Power

### GHULAM SAKHI TAQWA

Food production company entrepreneur  
Chela Mazar, Kunduz Province



**Ghulam established the Sakhi Taqwa Food Production Company factory in Kunduz four years ago. Unfortunately, his efforts were derailed by the ravages of war that completely damaged his factory. Facing an uncertain future, he contemplated emigration.**

ABADEI's solarization project has provided solar panels and battery system package as an energy source for day-to-day factory production to support businesses like Ghulam's.

The introduction of this renewable, cost-free power supply revived his factory productivity. Moving from a power generator to renewable energy has led to more reliable, effective, sustainable power source, reducing production cost by around 80%. Ghulam has seen an improvement in the quality of products and a remarkable improvement in profit.

Ghulam is using the increased productivity and income to upscale his business, creating job opportunities for 7 young men in his production unit and 20 women for product packaging. Additionally, he can now afford education fees for his children and has built a suitable home for his family.

Reliable power is vital to entrepreneurial success. Initiatives such as solarization enable entrepreneurs like Ghulam to contribute to the economic advancement of their communities. In recognition of his success and trustworthiness, Ghulam Sakhi has been chosen as head of the local council for his village.

*"I lost my investments and resources due to ceaseless wars that damaged the factory that I founded four years ago. The financial instability and downfall of the business sector forced me to consider migrating to Turkey with my family. Thanks to the solarization to my factory, I regained production, and restored a belief that I could continue here."*



**Powering business:** ABADEI's solarization project brings light to Ghulam's factory and others like his, supporting a transformation in Kunduz.

# Community Kitchens: Investing in Afghanistan's Future



## SUGHRA

Agricultural labourer  
Sar Nahr Village, Balkh District, Balkh Province

**Most of the 150 families in Sar Nahr Village are engaged in agricultural activities. However, the community faces major challenges that undermine well-being and prosperity.**

Challenges include food insecurity, high unemployment, and limited opportunities for female employment. In addition, internally displaced persons (IDPs) have sought refuge in the area due to conflict and instability in the region.

One critical concern is the lack of regular access to nutritious food for many families, which jeopardises health and productivity of residents, particularly children and vulnerable individuals.

Sar Nahr is a vulnerable community that was selected to introduce a Community Kitchen Social Enterprise Ecosystem. Sughra, a hardworking agricultural laborer, faced a daunting challenge as the winter season approached. With her husband disabled and unable to work, she

shouldered the responsibility of being the breadwinner for her family of six. "When winter arrived, I was deeply concerned about how I would find food for my family. There was no work in the fields, and I felt so disappointed and sad."

Community kitchens are complemented by community-driven initiatives. Initially, the women had to bring their children with them to the kitchen, which posed a significant challenge. ABADEI then worked with the community to establish a childcare centre, where children could receive care and education while their mothers focused on their work.

*"The childcare centre provides education to my children and enables me to work in the community kitchen."*





**Harvesting hope:** In Sar Nahr Village, ABADEI's Community Kitchen Social Enterprise Ecosystem transforms challenges into opportunities, provides employment to female and care facilities for their children.





Community Kitchen

Name: *[Handwritten]*

Phone #: *0731453372*

ID#: *38207500*

Location: *Nazari-e-Fayyabi*

**care**

**UNDP**

Community Kitchen

Name: *[Handwritten]*

Phone #: *0219427633*

ID#: *3131184*

Location: *[Handwritten]*








**care**

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