

VUSAF



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Union of Assistance for
Schools in Afghanistan.

Hamed Nadjib reports about his trip to Andkhoy (Province of Faryab) and Aibak (Province of Samangan)

Dear Friends

The purpose of this trip was to enable us to evaluate the situation in Andkhoy after the murder of our regional director Rahmanqul. Unfortunately, the murderer has not been arrested yet. All discussions I had with the responsible authorities during my three day stay in Andkhoy were disappointing. Some suspects were arrested and but released again for lack of proof. At present, one suspect is in jail in Maimana (capital of the province), however, there is no proof of his involvement in the killing, either. It is unfortunate that the investigations have not led to any result because the insecurity and fear of further attacks will be present with us and our employees in Andkhoy until it is at least clear who was behind this incident. The authorities, but also ordinary people and our employees, believe that this dreadful deed is not connected to our work in Andkhoy because there have not been any further incidents, threats, or indications. So we are hoping that they are right in this and that we will be able to continue our efforts to improve the education system in Andkhoy. The people of Andkhoy, especially the girls, are worried that we might reduce our activities in the area. However, in many meetings I have made clear that, as long as security allows, we will continue our support as before. However, everyone needs to be vigilant and careful. Should another incident happen, this might force us to limit our commitment.

The newly established working circle is doing very well. Each department works independently as much as possible but they meet every week for discussions and report back to Kabul and Germany.

The home schools, sewing, English and computer courses are running as usual. It is admirable that the girls are continuing with their courses despite their fears. The teachers are even reporting about an increased eagerness to learn and more enquiries about the possibility to join the courses.

Our education center is becoming more and more the center of all of our activities in Andkhoy. The English, computer and preparation courses for the university are still taking place here. However, one of our precautionary measures was to move the girls' courses from the education center to the Yuldoz Lycee. Although there may not be a connection between the murder and the work of our committee, everyone supports this measure, even though it worried the girls. Therefore, my visit at this time was very important and helped to strengthen the trust between us.

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The work of our carpentry training workshop amazed me. The 10 trainees are now working very well under the guidance of their carpentry teacher. They are producing doors and windows for our construction sites and are making book shelves for our education center. In approx. four months they will have completed their 12-months' training period and should have enough experience to work as carpenters either in the construction business or making furniture.

Our construction projects re-started four weeks ago and the building workers are very happy about that. Here, too, I felt that the people want to continue with their work. The head of our construction team, Qahar Khan, who accompanied us to all the construction sites is more than satisfied with his team. The structure of the building for the Qaramqul Lycee has just been finished while in Yussuf Mirzai the team was plastering the walls and covering the roof of the new building for the girls' school. The walls of the water reservoir for the girls' school and the foundation of the boys' school in Khancharbagh are under construction. Some smaller construction projects which we had stopped because of the incident should now also be brought back on our agenda for this year.

During my trip through Afghanistan I also went to Aibak which is the capital of the province of Samangan (south of Mazar-i-Sharif). Quite some time ago we had been asked for the construction of a school building for the village of Zundai Kot. The primary school of this village is situated in a small derelict building which is not even big enough for the 480 girls and boys presently attending this school. The people are ready to give us the land for a new building. I have discussed how we could realize such a project in Aibak together with the elders and authorities in Aibak and also with our colleagues in Mazar and Kabul. The need and the wish for a new school is so great that everyone is ready to help. For example, the village people immediately said that they would build the boundary wall for the school. Having done all the necessary formalities, we should be able to start with the construction this summer. I am convinced that we shall be as successful in Aibak as we have been in Andkhoi. This project could be the starting point for our future activities in the province of Samangan.

The family of our Rahmanqul lives in Kabul now. The loss of their husband and father remains very painful for them and they are still frightened because no-one knows who was behind the killing. At least for some time their financial needs can be met because of the support we have received for the family. The girls are going to school and the son will start his three year course in Business Administration in July. We are hoping that the family will succeed in overcoming these difficult times and start a normal life again.

Kind regards
Hamed Nadjib