



**VUSAF**  
Union of Assistance for Schools in Afghanistan

Verein zur Unterstützung  
von Schulen In Afghanistan e.V.

11 October 2006

Dear Friends,

It really was very nice that just a few weeks before my 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday and after a long break it was possible for me to visit the projects again. After many years it was my daughter Dr. Christine Nölle-Karimi who accompanied me again. We travelled with the army from Cologne directly to Mazar-i-Sharif where we visited the school which we had built for the refugees who had returned from Haripur/Pakistan.

The following day we went to Andkhoi together with our employees. We were very happy to see all our old friends again. In the previous months two new buildings and a water reservoir had been built for the Lycee Qurghan and everyone was waiting for us to inaugurate these buildings. After four years of studying in tents the lessons can now be taken in nice class rooms. Students and teachers were very happy about that.

On the following day we had a big gathering with all headmasters and one headmistress. It was not possible for me to visit all the schools so this meeting was very useful. I was informed about the problems of the schools: the low pay of the teachers by the state, the lack of qualified teachers (because of the great number of students, there are just not enough professional teachers), the lack of text books. We are trying to help as much as we can. For example, we have just supplied the note books and pens necessary for all 30.000 girls and boys and we organise training workshops for the teachers.

Our wonderful "VUSAF Education Center Ulla Nölle" was inaugurated on the next day. This center may be something unique in Afghanistan. In a well equipped workshop young men are trained to become carpenters. Furthermore, 10 hours per day young men and women attend computer classes and in five preparatory classes students of the upper grades of the schools study 8 different subjects to be ready for university as soon as possible. The teacher training workshops mentioned above also take place in this center.

It was a great pleasure for me to hand over a new building to the teachers and students of Qazi Baba Murad, a school which was established 60 years ago and was just made a Lycee. Now the students who had been taught in 11 tents for four years have a good new building. Every time we visited the school in the past the boys had asked for help. Some of you might remember ("Please stop us from burning in our tents" or "Help the guiltless children").

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The new school year had just begun and many beginners – boys and girls - have started school. Many of the buildings which we put up over the years are not big enough anymore. Therefore, many more classrooms are needed. For example: The Lycee Abu Muslim had 10 students in each upper grade class. But nowadays there are four 10<sup>th</sup> grade, five 11<sup>th</sup> grade and four 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes.

The government pays only the low teachers' salaries and supplies the text books. For all other needs such as class rooms, tables and benches or the supply of drinking water, all schools rely on our help. Our school magazine which is printed with 1500 copies four times a year is also very useful for the students. It is an excellent little paper with 1320 subscribers which is not only read in Afghanistan from Kabul to Kunduz but also by relatives abroad in Canada, Germany, Holland and the USA. Of future issues 3000 copies will be printed.

Every school has now a parent teacher association which helps actively, either by making bricks for new a new building or by erecting surrounding walls or starting a school garden. Students have collected money and planted trees. Their German partner schools also helped with this project.

However, the home schools and the sewing courses, the English and computer courses as well as all courses and workshops in our new education center are our own projects which means not only that we bear all the costs but we can also employ the right teachers and ensure that the quality of education is at its best. Meanwhile we have established further sewing courses and language courses in English and Persian in the villages surrounding Andkhoi. The young women get a sewing machine at the end of their training and can so help with the upkeep of the family. The older girls and women of the villages prefer these home courses because they study with other adults and the schools are close to their home. In the town it is their aim to study quickly enough in three years that they can start normal school at grade 7.

These are good news, however, there are some clouds too. The low rainfalls of the last winter have lead to a great water shortage. All reservoirs are empty. The well at Mirabad – the school with the most beautiful garden – has dried up. The water level has sunk by about 8 m. We can only hope for a better winter.

In the news about Afghanistan we hear a lot about fighting Taliban in the South and East of the country or about suicide attacks. There are also incidents with criminal backgrounds. However, we see the other side – the peaceful aspiring Afghanistan. Maybe our successful work has contributed to keeping this region peaceful. The people here are still hopeful that their difficult life will improve. Afghanistan still has a stony walk to climb. We would appreciate very much your continued help for our endeavours.

Now we would like to thank everyone who has helped in us in the past, starting with our excellent employees in Andkhoi and Kabul, with our construction workers who have worked for us for many years, the board and the working circle in Germany, our partners in the Foreign Office, GTZ and especially Misereor, but also our partner schools and donors. Let us continue our work together, please; we are still needed in these difficult times!

Kind regards

Ursula Nölle

PS: Our calendar for 2007 is ready. We are looking forward to your orders.

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