



PWSDevelopments

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A Student's Perspective in Afghanistan

IT IS HIGHLY UNUSUAL FOR WOMEN to speak to men in Afghanistan, never mind a young girl addressing the *shura*—the local religious council consisting of male community leaders. But Jamila, a ninth-grade student at Abdul Rahim Zai School, doesn't know about that.

As well as being a student—which is still a privilege for far too many girls in Afghanistan—Jamila has a special role to play. “I share the needs of the students with the *shura*,” she says. If the school is going to succeed, it's important that the entire community get involved. “We only have three female teachers in our school so we need more. We also need a boundary wall that protects us.” ➤





Members of the local *shura* meet with representatives to discuss education for girls in their community.

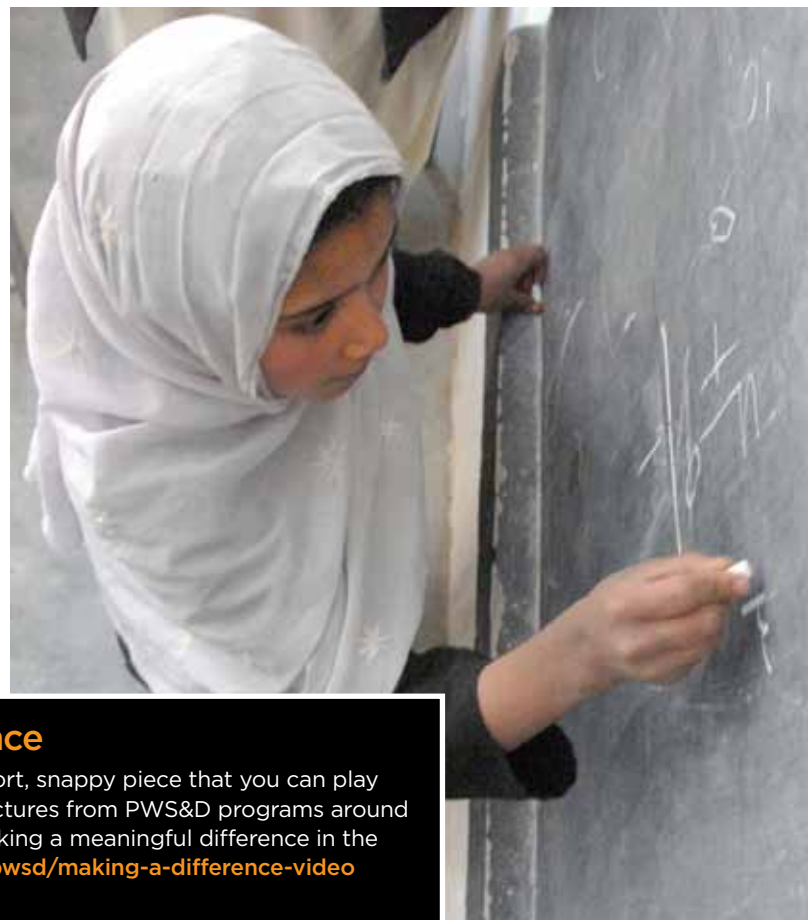
PWS&D is pleased to support the education of girls in Afghanistan, like Jamila. Working through local partners Church World Service – Pakistan/Afghanistan, PWS&D is helping girls find their voice and a sense of confidence. The goal of the project is to not only get girls into classrooms for the chance to learn, but to raise awareness among parents and community members in order to create positive social and economic development.

“My parents are proud that I am taking this step to talk to the *shura*,” Jamila says. “My father is on the parent-teacher committee, and he nominated me for this role.”

Jamila’s role gives students an opportunity to speak from their perspectives to the *shura*, and it creates a newfound sense of leadership. “Now I feel confident to share ideas with male community members.”

The opened lines of communication among newly formed parent-teacher committees, female student representatives and the *shura*, create opportunities for further advancement with regard to education and community development. By expressing the concerns and needs for improved enrolment rates and quality education, students like Jamila will help bring desired change to the classrooms. Support from the *shura* is essential for sustainable development in rural Afghanistan, and the positive response in the district indicates that the future of education may include more child-friendly classrooms, improved infrastructure and an increased number of both female students and teachers.

PWS&D and Church World Service – Pakistan/Afghanistan continue to look for ways to assist communities in education development so that current and future generations will have better access to a basic human right.



New Video Available: Making a Difference



PWS&D’s new “Making a Difference” video is a short, snappy piece that you can play during or after worship as a great way to show pictures from PWS&D programs around the world and see how, together, we really are making a meaningful difference in the lives of many people. Visit www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/making-a-difference-video



Building Homes and Dreams in Haiti

Construction of new houses continues and hopes for the future prevail

WRITTEN BY REV. DEREK MACLEOD,
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“I wouldn’t give a dime to Haiti,” a good friend in my congregation said. When asked for an explanation he confessed that he just didn’t trust the situation and he felt sure the money would fall into the wrong hands instead of getting to the people who need it most.

How grateful we are that many Presbyterians thought otherwise and donated over \$1.6 million to the PWS&D appeal that assisted thousands of people in need after a 35-second earthquake devastated the country. However, I understand his concerns and suspect such uneasy feelings are shared by others.

Haiti, like many countries including our own, is not immune to corruption or its leaders misusing their power for personal profit. Even humanitarian organizations that are sent to assist can betray trust and confidence—though the unacceptable actions of a few ought not to tarnish the exemplary work of many.

On a recent trip to Haiti, I had the opportunity to visit with PWS&D’s partners through the ACT Alliance in the town of Léogâne, just outside Port-au-Prince, the epicenter of the earthquake. It was dubbed “The Lost Town” by some news reports as an estimated 80% of the community’s buildings were damaged and almost 30,000 residents killed.

Thank God however, that Léogâne was not forgotten. Efforts were made by many, including PWS&D, to join with those struggling to rebuild and recover. Empty fields once covered in tents are now filled with local children playing football as many homes had been repaired and rebuilt. There were many vendors on the roadside selling produce and commercial goods—signs of a society functioning again.

The new houses are straightforward, even humble dwellings, but designed

to better withstand hurricanes and earthquakes. Construction crews made up primarily of local people with assistance from North American engineers have joined with families to build the new homes together. The excitement and determination to begin again was so very palpable as even young children could be seen hammering in nails; everyone wanted to participate.

When I asked one family if I could take their photo with them standing in front of their new home, the owner said, “Oh please do. My old home was so modest. This is a palace!” Such gratitude and appreciation is as humbling as it is inspiring.

Many said it would take a thousand trucks running for a thousand days to clear the rubble out of Port-au-Prince. I wonder how many trucks loaded with the frames of new homes would be needed to build up the cities again: one thousand, one hundred thousand? The need is great and the task almost insurmountable, but it has begun. The donations that Presbyterians so generously made have helped families return to new homes where they can be safe, dry and together. Children have returned to fields to play and school to learn, and people are finding hope again. In the wake of such a nightmare, that is no small feat and says much about the Haitian people and the power of partnership.

One of the builders wrote a poignant message on the front of his hat. He wrote the word DREAM.

“I’m on the dream team,” he said with a grin, having worked countless hours helping build homes and inspire dreams, though he himself remains in a temporary shelter with his family. They are on the waiting list but there are no guarantees they will receive a new home. Yet such possibilities did not dissuade this young man from working, dreaming and serving his community and God’s people.



Welcoming a Stranger

Congregations encouraged to sponsor refugees to Canada through PWS&D

More than 4.5 million Iraqi citizens have been uprooted from their homes since the Iraq conflict began in 2003. Fleeing violence and a constant threat to their lives, over two million have sought asylum in neighbouring countries. Some of those at most risk include religious minorities such as Christians, ethnic or sexual minorities, women, and people with professions considered “un-Islamic.”

In March 2009, Citizen and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney announced that the Government of Canada would increase its resettlement targets for Iraqi refugees, providing an opportunity for private sponsorship and a chance for Iraqis to find freedom, security and new opportunities in Canada.

Now is your opportunity to step up and take part in the life-changing ministry of helping refugees being new lives in Canada. Refugee sponsorship is a tangible way for a congregation to take action and learn more about the challenges faced by people in another region of the world.

The goal is that three to five Presbyterian congregations will take on a refugee sponsorship with support from Presbyterian World Service & Development. PWS&D will help with planning and organizing, and provide a small amount of funds to offset some of the costs. Congregations will take responsibility for one year of settlement support, including financial and material assistance, help with settlement and integration, plus moral support.

If you and your congregation would like to learn more about embracing the exciting challenge of welcoming a refugee to Canada, please contact PWS&D refugee coordinator Carolyn Vanderlip at cvanderlip@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 249.



Hunger Myth “There isn’t enough food to feed the world.”

Reality: According to the World Food Programme, there is currently enough food in the world for everyone to have the nourishment necessary for a healthy and productive life. There is, however, a need to be more efficient, sustainable and fair in how we grow and distribute food. This means supporting small-scale farmers (who currently make up the majority of farmers in developing countries) and ensure they have fair access to markets.

PWS&D works with farmers across the globe to help them learn improved agricultural practices to extend crop yields, diversify crops for better nutrition and irrigate fields for increased harvest.

actalliance

Canadian Churches in Action

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A Christian Response to Hunger



Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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A GIFT OF HOPE