

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE OUR WORK IN AFGHANISTAN

POVERTY



CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid is an international NGO that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

We work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice.

We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes.

We work with, and through, partners in developing countries: hundreds of local organisations that are rooted in the communities with whom they work, and so understand what is required to lift those women, men and children out of poverty.

We have an integrated approach to poverty eradication, working on humanitarian relief, long-term development, specific advocacy issues, and campaigns for change and influence.

CHRISTIAN AID IN AFGHANISTAN

Christian Aid's programme in Afghanistan has been running for nearly three decades under four regimes – from the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which controlled the country during the Soviet invasion, to the current government that was voted in after the United States-led intervention of 2001.

Today, our work in Afghanistan focuses on protecting human rights during conflicts, increasing food security, building the resilience of communities, and promoting the rights and empowerment of women.

We work alongside local Afghan organisations on projects that reach and respond to the needs of communities facing high levels of poverty, disempowerment and inequality. Christian Aid works with its partners at every stage of a project – from needs assessment and design, to supporting partners and communities as they implement projects – and to regularly monitor and evaluate the impact and changes the work makes on the ground.

All of our projects in Afghanistan are designed with our partners, and draw heavily on their relationships and lines of communication with communities. This approach means partners and communities understand the projects and are fully committed to them from the start. Since the majority of programme activities are implemented by the communities themselves, sustainability and a sense of local ownership are integral.

We have implemented Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) standards across our work in Afghanistan, and we are supporting our partners to do the same.

OUR WORK IN FOCUS

For more than three decades, war and conflicts have been the biggest barriers to Afghanistan's development and have caused breakdowns in social, economic and political structures.

There is an urgent need to secure peace to give the country's economy a chance to function normally, and to enable state institutions to meet people's basic needs and defend their rights.

Natural disasters, such as droughts and floods, have compounded the effects of conflicts, causing displacement and the loss of assets and resources that have left 8 million people – more than a quarter of the population – facing food shortages.

The Afghan government and United Nations agencies have called on NGOs, such as Christian Aid, to work alongside local authorities and communities to respond to these emergencies with humanitarian and development programmes.

Christian Aid and our partners in Afghanistan are committed to working together with a range of stakeholders at different levels – from local government and community organisations to national institutions and international agencies – to tackle poverty, provide life-changing support for the most vulnerable, and achieve greater accountability and transparency.



Christian Aid/Serena Di Matteo

Christian Aid partner AHDA works with rural communities to ensure that they have potable water, employing local people to help build pipelines

Protecting resources, planning for disasters

Christian Aid works in remote districts in Afghanistan's western and northern regions with communities affected by drought, flood, soil erosion, dust storms and unexpectedly cold winters. These communities, whose livelihoods depend on rain-fed agriculture and animal husbandry, are particularly vulnerable.

Communities in these areas have received training to raise awareness about the importance of protecting and managing natural resources and support to develop contingency plans. Community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) committees – consisting of farmers, shuras (consultative councils or assemblies), and elders – have been established by local authorities, communities and Christian Aid's partners to take on specific responsibilities before, during and after disasters.

Helping people lead normal lives

With our partners, Christian Aid has completed rural infrastructure projects, such as dams, reservoirs and protection walls that preserve water for people and their animals and mitigate the impact of natural disasters such as floods and droughts.

Solar- and wind-powered wells have been built, and we have also supported piped water and canal-cleaning projects, and programmes to reduce the intensity of soil erosion and dust storms. This approach has mitigated the impact of natural disasters, protected livelihoods and, ultimately, encouraged people to



Christian Aid / Johanna Rogers

A tomato-processing project supported by Christian Aid partner WASSA empowers women in local communities, helping them to earn a living and develop new business skills

stay in their communities and reduce the impact of displacement.

Food security and fair shares

Christian Aid and our partners are working to increase agricultural production within communities, to improve food security and to increase their income through selling surplus crops. This also includes support with processing and drying food.

Other measures to improve agricultural production include introducing new

methods of cultivation, such as vegetable gardens, greenhouses, irrigation and harvesting, and new products, such as fruit trees, livestock and poultry. This is backed up with the creation of an agricultural infrastructure, training courses, and support with distribution. Our partners also support communities in the prevention and treatment of crop and animal diseases and by providing certified seeds, fertilisers and tools.

Finally, the provision of marketing training for communities has enabled them to sell their products for fair prices, subsequently increasing their income and production capabilities.

Our market access and pro-poor market development work in Afghanistan supports poor men and women by:

- creating new opportunities to secure the fair share of income their hard work deserves by building up sustainable, commercially viable market initiatives.
- enabling them to access high-quality, affordable and appropriate products and services that make their livelihoods more secure.
- enabling them to tackle the power imbalances in markets that keep them poor.

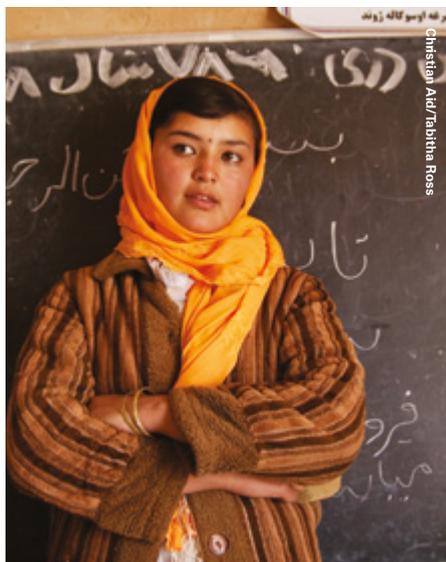
Empowering women

While some progress has been made, gender discrimination in Afghanistan remains widespread within the areas of health, education, access to and control over resources, economic opportunities, and power and political voice. While women and girls bear the direct cost of

these inequalities, the negative effects are felt throughout Afghan society.

Christian Aid's programme in Afghanistan has empowered women through the formation of groups known as 'Reflect circles' and through literacy and rights education groups. Our partners also run training courses on women's and children's rights, peace building and conflict resolution.

Through our work on secure livelihoods, and by supporting income-generating activities including sericulture, agriculture and handicrafts, women have directly received the training, skills and equipment they need to increase their income and gain power over their own lives. We are confident that



After attending a women's literacy course run by Christian Aid partner STARS, teenager Karmeen Herawi from Ghor, in western Afghanistan, now wants to enter local politics and help women learn about and protect their rights



Christian Aid/Sarah Mallan

Christian Aid works alongside members of parliament like Fawzia Koofi (right) to advocate for the equal rights of Afghan women and other marginalised social and ethnic groups

seeing the positive impact of women's empowerment on families and society will begin to change attitudes towards women in the country.

Communities raising their voices

Through our partner organisations, Christian Aid works with remote and rural communities, religious leaders, community elders, teachers and the government at different levels to help mobilise people in communities, cooperatives and groups, and to provide rights education and awareness training.

Our partners work to empower and mobilise men and women, encouraging them to speak out about their communities' needs and take collective action to reduce poverty,

marginalisation and vulnerability.

A key element of our work is strengthening our partners in advocacy, but Christian Aid wants to extend this work by helping our partners stand together to be a stronger force for change.

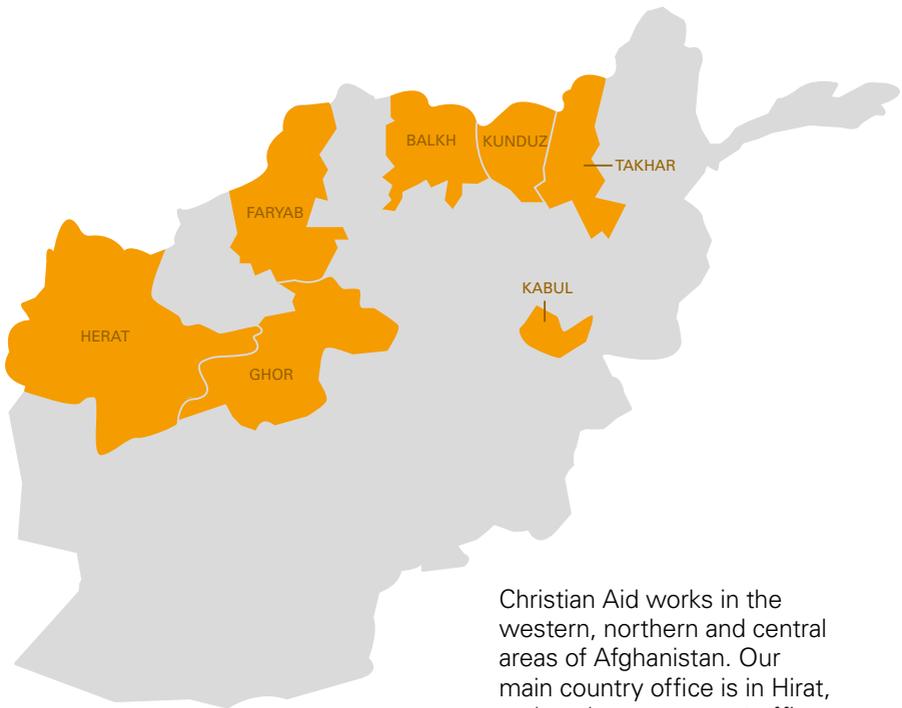
Christian Aid and its partners already lobby institutions and the Afghan parliament to endorse laws that protect the rights of excluded and marginalised social and ethnic groups. We also work to increase awareness of Afghanistan's legal framework, to prevent violence against women, discrimination and exclusion.

Our policy and advocacy work, with partners and organisations such as BAAG (British and Irish Agencies

Afghanistan Group), ACBAR (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief) and Crisis Action, is part of an integrated approach that supports communities and individuals to hold the Afghan government to account on key issues such as gender equality and empowerment, rights, conflict resolution and peace settlement.

Christian Aid, Crisis Action and a number of other organisations have led the advocacy campaign Together Afghanistan. For more information about this project visit togetherafghanistan.org

WHERE WE WORK



Christian Aid works in the western, northern and central areas of Afghanistan. Our main country office is in Herat, and we have a support office in the capital city of Kabul.

 **Provinces we work in**

OUR PARTNERS IN AFGHANISTAN

Agency for Humanitarian and
Development Assistance for
Afghanistan (AHDA)

Rehabilitation Association and
Agriculture Development for
Afghanistan (RAADA)

Coordination of Rehabilitation and
Development Services for Afghanistan
(CRDSA)

Skills Training and Rehabilitation Society
(STARS)

Afghan Women's Network (AWN)

Afghan Development Association (ADA)

Afghan Women's Educational Center
(AWEC)

Women Activities and Social Services
Association (WASSA)

Current donors:

Department for International
Development (DFID)

European Commission

Monsoon Accessorize

Electric Aid

Past donors:

United Nations

Irish Aid

ECHO

ACT Alliance

Tim Goggs Fund

Phyllis Little Memorial Trust

Trust Greenbelt



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