

Joint Development Associates International

April 2012



Discover Afghanistan

JDA's WASH program is an Afghan-led solution to a local and very urgent problem, which once addressed has enormous life-changing impact on child mortality and family health. With many villages still hoping for a well of their own and many women asking our Afghan staff to come to their villages, your donations are much needed and deeply appreciated.

Donate to WASH on line or by mail to the address below.

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Dear Friends,

Access to safe water is one of the most critical issues of our time. Unfortunately, safe drinking water is still rare and desperately needed in many parts of the world, including the vast swaths of rural Afghanistan. Despite ten years of international investment and relief work, Afghanistan remains one of the most underdeveloped and poorest countries in the world.

Infant mortality remains high. 85,000 children die annually, which means one in four youngsters never reaches his or her fifth birthday, primarily because of diarrhea and acute respiratory infection.



The cause of death in children is almost always the lack of clean, safe drinking water.

JDA has been working with huge success in 10 villages in Balkh province in Northern Afghanistan to address this urgent need, changing the lives of hundreds of families who often for the first time enjoy a reliable source of clean well water, proper latrines and home-installed biosand filters that provide a continuous supply of safe water. JDA's approach to the activities commonly summarized as WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) is unique in several ways.

First, while women in Afghanistan are often in the traditional role of wife and mother, they are also a vital influence on habits and routines in the homes. Our WASH program recognizes that engaging the women in educational training and demonstrations for better hygiene practices is critical to the program's long-term success and sustainability.

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Unsealed wells like this one need to be repaired to prevent water contamination.

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Second, the WASH teams are led by female educators, so that women are training, teaching and communicating with women. The training sessions are home-based, not unlike a Tupperware party. Sisters, mothers, daughters, and friends gather in someone's home to learn the practical benefits of biosand filters, hand washing, and proper disposal of household waste and feces.

Based around pictures, the lessons are ideally tailored for women who are illiterate or have minimal formal schooling. This female centered, home-based environment, where both friendship and sharing of new knowledge is exchanged and encouraged is what carries the program's benefits far beyond the lessons themselves. Women readily share their newly acquired understanding of how to keep their families healthy and their babies from dying, and that insight ripples through social gatherings from home to home, family to family, child to child.

Similarly, JDA has brought the WASH education to elementary schools and showed thousands of children how flies and bugs spread disease, how soap and water is an effective deterrent against germs, and how unclean ditch water makes them sick. The students learn through puppet shows and fun, interactive play.

Finally, the men are engaged through well drilling and construction and hand pump repair, an important component of keeping the new wells operating and in good use long after installation. Often the men who learn how to maintain and repair their village wells end up training others to form small work teams and businesses, generating additional local jobs and income.

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