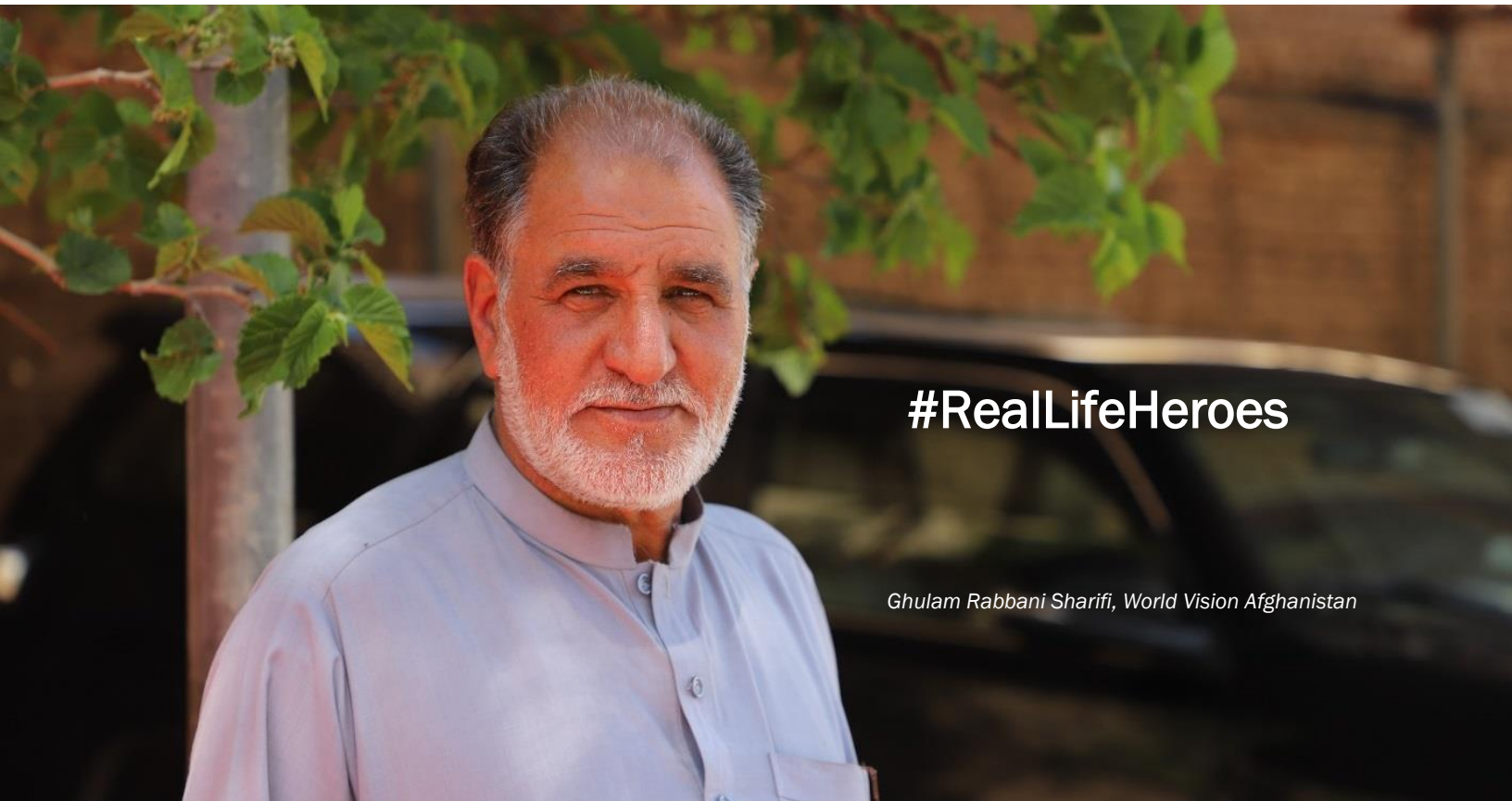




# Special Series Newsletter

Tribute to Humanitarian Real Life Heroes in Afghanistan  
*Voices from the Field - 2020*



**#RealLifeHeroes**

*Ghulam Rabbani Sharifi, World Vision Afghanistan*

*When we think of #RealLifeHeroes in the humanitarian sector, we must honor every individual who contributes by dedicating his or her life and commitment to serving others in emergencies and conflict. Many find their way into this line of work by choice and equally many by chance. We dedicate a series of stories to a few of the many humanitarians who are worthy of admiration and recognition every day.*

---

## **Real Life Hero in Herat, Afghanistan**

*Hard work that pays off seeing hope in the eyes of those we serve*

**World Vision Afghanistan**

---

Ghulam Rabbani Sharifi is a 52 year-old real life hero from Herat in western Afghanistan who has been working with World Vision Afghanistan since 2002. Early on, through his passion to help alleviate the suffering of his fellow citizens, Ghulam put his personal vehicle to use to provide services to humanitarian operations in his region. His dedication and energetic work led to the organization offering him a full time job and within five years, he became head driver. Over the years, Ghulam has accompanied his colleagues to the most hard-to-reach and remote areas in Herat,

Ghor, and Badghis provinces. He feels a sense of satisfaction on a daily basis, knowing he has helped facilitate getting resources and staff to the people most in need - safely and securely. It does not come easy because many areas are located in insecure districts, and Ghulam puts his security training to use during every journey. When necessary, this means he is available even during weekends, so that there is no disruption to humanitarian assistance being provided.

With all the challenges and hazards in his job, what does Ghulam find most satisfying?

*'As a father of seven children, I find peace and comfort when I see our work leads to life-changing experience for other parents and fathers who are desperate and struggle to find sustenance for their*

children. In spite of the challenging environment for our operation that is posed by the security risk, my work pays off when I see hope in the eyes of vulnerable communities particularly children that we serve.'

For more information on World Vision Afghanistan's work, visit <https://www.wvi.org/afghanistan>

---

## **A promise made, a promise kept**

*Becoming a doctor to help alleviate suffering seen*

**Johanniter Unfall-Hilfe Afghanistan**

---



Dr. Mohammad Waseel Rahimi is a medical doctor working with Johanniter Unfall-Hilfe in Afghanistan as Program Manager for Health. His journey into the humanitarian world started straight after graduation from the medical faculty in Kabul University by providing emergency health services to the conflict-affected populations in Kandahar province.

*"During the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan, many families were forced to migrate to neighboring countries, including my own family who migrated to Khyber Pakhtunawa province in Pakistan. While there, I would witness suffering of fellow Afghan refugees who would fall ill in evacuation centers with no access to any health services. It was there when I promised myself that when I would become a doctor, I would dedicate my career to serving and helping alleviate suffering of the most in need and most vulnerable."*

Twelve years later, Dr. Rahimi started his journey in the humanitarian sector and he continues to serve the people of Afghanistan by providing emergency

health services. Being a humanitarian worker in Dr. Rahimi's view is very challenging but at the same time self-fulfilling.

*"There are times when I have to be away from my family for long periods of time, travelling in hard-to-reach and insecure areas."*

Nevertheless, the call of duty prevails and he explains to his family and friends why he has to be away and that he may sometimes be out-of-reach and not be able to contact loved ones. His career has taken him across Afghanistan where, for example, he meets people in remote areas of Kunduz province, and visits Kuchi communities in Khost province - many of whom have never come across a medical doctor before.

*"It breaks my heart seeing people suffer. Helping them is what keeps me going and encourages me to do what I do; trying to save people's lives, providing them services with dignity, and to bring hope to them in my own small way."*

It is difficult to want to help as many as possible but with insufficient resources. Nevertheless, he follows his calling as a doctor and continues serving those who need medical care and attention.

For more information on Johanniter Unfall-Hilfe in Afghanistan, visit <https://www.johanniter.de/die-johanniter/johanniter-unfall-hilfe/start/project-countries/asia/afghanistan/>

---

## **Sensitive to needs of people on the move**

*Hardest part of my job, leads me to my favorite part*

**Concern Worldwide**

---

MA is a Management Information System (MIS) Officer and member of Concern's Gender Working Group. For the past two years, she has been based in the Northeast region as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit with Concern Worldwide. The humanitarian sector has always been where she wanted to pursue a career and she now has over 10 years of experience, having first worked for an international NGO in Kabul for eight years before moving to her current location and position.

Because of personal experience - having been born in a refugee camp in Pakistan and both



parents being refugees in Pakistan and Iran – MA is particularly passionate about supporting vulnerable people on the move.



*“I’ve always been interested in working in this sector and am really passionate about this. My parents were refugees in Iran and Pakistan—I was born in a refugee camp in Pakistan. I think because of this, I feel particularly sensitive when we are working with vulnerable populations on the move. When there is displacement in the Northeast and we are conducting needs assessments, I always want to do my best for them. To see children and women like this is not easy.”*

Because MA’s family is originally from Takhar, she had already spent a lot of time there prior to joining Concern. Yet it was only in her current role where she began to learn more about the remote villages and the conditions people were living under and the hardship they experience on a daily basis, such as lacking basic facilities and not being able to benefit from their rights. Over the past two years, MA believes she has come a long way in understanding such challenges and finds she has learned significantly:

*“I love teaching friends about these issues. It’s really important to be aware of such realities. I think all of my job is interesting, but when we work in an IDP camp, I always struggle with this at the beginning. The assessment stage is so difficult. Everyone looks tired; their eyes say a lot. There are often so many critical needs, and so many people that need help. That is the hardest part of my job,*

*but it also leads to my favorite part. At the end, when the assessment is done and we are distributing assistance, it is one of the most happy times for me.”*

For more information on Concern Worldwide in Afghanistan, visit <https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/afghanistan>

---

## Decades of dedication to end GBV

*Listening to the issues before trying to resolve*

HealthNet TPO

---

Dr. Hazrat Amin graduated as a medical doctor in 2003 from Kabul University. His humanitarian career began in Uruzgan province in 2004. In 2007 he joined HealthNet TPO, a Dutch NGO, as Technical Grants Coordinator for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and humanitarian programs covering 11 provinces.



His passion for humanitarian work stems from his own experience growing up in conflict and civil war. As a doctor he became aware of the staggering figures around GBV in Afghanistan - with studies suggesting 87 percent of Afghan women experience at least one form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence, and 62 percent experiencing violence in multiple forms. He has therefore dedicated his career to contributing towards addressing these issues, including through psychosocial support for women and children and women empowerment, through his role as a humanitarian worker.



*“Gender-based violence is a pervasive problem in Afghanistan. It stems from complex inequalities and cultural practices which, coupled with poverty and lack of awareness, cause subordination of women towards men and prevents them from acting on or seeking support.*

*The hardest part of my job is raising such issues at grass-roots levels in the more remote and insecure areas of the country. Changing the mindset of people in male-dominated society is very hard. And some areas have extreme geographical access issues which makes it even more difficult.”*

Despite all the barriers and challenges, Dr. Amin feels satisfaction in trying to make a difference. He works for the most vulnerable people including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees and believes in the need to listen to the issues directly from those affected before trying to resolve them.

*“I’m happiest and more satisfied when I’m in the field rather than sitting in the office.”*

For more information on HealthNet TPO in Afghanistan visit <https://www.healthnettpo.org/en/country/2/af>



Qudratullah Saedzai, M&E Coordinator, AfghanAid

---

## **Determination of a Real Life Hero**

*Serving those in need makes my soul feel better*

**AfghanAid**

---

Qudratullah Saedzai has been working in AfghanAid for the past seven years as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team. Throughout this experience, he has engaged with communities in some of the most remote parts in various provinces in the country, where families grapple with meeting their essential needs, dealing with the complexities and impact of conflict as well as natural disasters.

*“As an M&E Coordinator, I’m involved in the entire processes of humanitarian emergency assistance projects. Through my work, I’ve met a lot of*

*families who have not had access to the most basic of needs such as shelter, clean and safe water, and are not even able to provide bread for their children. Every day I’m witness to seeing displaced families not have any fuel or firewood to heat their rooms during the harsh winter months. Instead they have to resort to collecting animal bones.”*

Qudratullah finds it hard to meet families in need and where he cannot do anything for them. There are occasions where needs assessments have been conducted in communities impacted by humanitarian emergencies, with the aim of developing proposals and seeking emergency assistance from potential donors. When funding sometimes does not follow, it is extremely difficult



to see the families in dire need, and seeking assistance.

*“I feel so bad and disappointed when I see such families and I cannot help them. The need is so high and urgent that I also tell my family, friends and colleagues about the emergency needs of some of the families I’ve met. We have, between us, also personally collected cash and winter items.*

Nevertheless, despite the frustrations, Qudratullah finds the most satisfying time, both professionally and personally, is when help is provided and his monitoring visits bring him close to families who have benefited from assistance and demonstrate how they have been able to provide food, clothing, education, and other basic needs to their children.

For more information on AfghanAid, visit <https://www.afghanaid.org.uk/>

---

### **A Powerful Force in the Chain of Hope** *When work aligns with values and passion* **La Chaîne de l’Espoir**

---

Nesser Ahmad Mohammadi is a Medical Officer with 10 years of experience, overseeing and supervising the nursing team of French NGO, La Chaîne de l’Espoir (CDE), through the organization’s Women and Children’s House project in Afghanistan. Across all 34 provinces, the project serves women and children who need complex surgical care, including all costs such as accommodation for patient and care, transportation, and medical expenses.



Among his duties and with support from his team of six nurses and in liaison with doctors from the French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children (FMIC), Nesser is responsible for planning the medical course of treatment, and guiding patients throughout their recovery. Within such a difficult and challenging responsibility, Nesser is considered a powerful force in the organization and is known for his positive attitude, tireless energy, and the encouragement he shows fellow colleagues.

*“I can’t imagine anything else being as interesting, challenging, exhilarating, and rewarding as the job I have. I am in love with my job and I enjoy it the most every day when I realize that it involves serving the most vulnerable and poor families of Afghanistan.”*

Like many Afghans, Nesser has lived through war and conflict for a good part of his childhood and youth. He has been witness to his country’s health system struggling under the pressure of insecurity and instability. Throughout Afghanistan, particularly within the remote and rural areas, most patients experience obstacles in accessing health facilities and life-saving healthcare, whether because of the long distance, high costs or displacement as a result of conflict or natural disaster (such as internally displaced persons who have had to leave their homes and villages). Within such a context, Nesser continues to count himself lucky that he is in a position to be able to make a living doing work that is directly aligned with his values and passion and what he deeply believes in.

*“One of the hardest parts of my job is when, as a medical officer, I’d have to dismiss a patient for his or her treatment because facilities are not available in Afghanistan.*

*But at the same time, when I see a patient recovering and can return home safe and healthy, that’s what encourages me and gives me motivation to work even harder.”*

For more information about La Chaîne de l’Espoir (Chain of Hope), visit <https://www.chainedelespoir.org/>

---

## Humanitarian Power Team

*Helping address education and women's rights*

NECDO

---



Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organization (NECDO) was founded in 2002 by Jamila Afghani, a renowned and award-winning feminist and activist for women's rights and education. From childhood she experienced first-hand the challenges of living with a disability, suffering injury from war, and being a refugee fleeing conflict.

Her dedication to the importance of education, particularly for women and girls, has led her to initiate many interesting and innovative projects. The mother of three has also been instrumental in promoting prevention of violence against women by engaging with religious imams in communities. Since 2006, Jamila has been working alongside her colleague Fazal Ghani Kakar and together they have dedicated years of active work seeking positive change in the living conditions of those most affected by war and conflict, including domestic violence survivors, IDPs, returnees, and those living with disability.

By 2015, Fazal took on the role of Managing Director for the organization. He continuously travels to areas of armed conflict in the country's northern, southern, and eastern provinces to work with communities – often risking his life to get

there and play a role in bringing peace and security through assistance and support.



By addressing women's rights within traditional societies, Dr. Kakar believes Afghan religious leaders will play a critical role in mitigating violence against women and inequality.

For more information on NECDO, visit [www.necdo.org.af](http://www.necdo.org.af)

---

## Working to bring positive changes

*Lifetime career helping women's empowerment*

International Rescue Committee

---

Fahima has a longstanding career as a humanitarian worker. She began her journey in 2001, working in the Election Commission – her first job – where she served as a focal person for women's participation in voting. Her daily work was continuously challenged by social norms and beliefs in the environment around her, particularly since she was, at the time, one of very few women pursuing a career and venturing out to communities to reach out to the female electorate.

Fahima now works with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) on women's rights and protection and assists in empowering women in the communities who need support such as those heading their households.





*“Most of the time my friends and family ask me about what I do and feel concern about my line of work. I always tell them that my work brings positive changes. Within the communities, I assist families facing challenges and difficulties. I particularly enjoy seeing my work helping children as today’s children are the future of Afghanistan.”*

For more information on IRC in Afghanistan, visit <https://www.rescue.org/country/afghanistan>

Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief & development (ACBAR) is a national, independent, non-government organization (NGO) that provides a platform for information-sharing/coordination, capacity building and advocacy for 154 national and international NGOs in Afghanistan operating across all 34 provinces. For more information please contact [advocacymanager@acbar.org](mailto:advocacymanager@acbar.org)