

# END OF YEAR MESSAGE FROM MAHBOBA

2018

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*Front cover image: Mahboba greeted by the children of Panjshir Valley Hope House*

# MAHBOBA'S LETTER

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*Mahboba feeding one of the babies of our Hope House.*

My dear friends,

As 2018 draws to an end, I remember my friends and remind myself of all my blessings.

It was such a joy to see old and new friends celebrate our 20th Anniversary at the Gala Dinner in February. Because of your kind support, this year has been another great year and will be remembered for building a new orphanage, our Hope House in Badakhshan.

I was in Afghanistan from June to October this year, the longest period in many years. Secure travel between the Provinces proved more difficult than the past. Some roads are very dangerous and the Taliban are becoming more powerful. Explosions and suicide bombers were so numerous while I was there, especially during the elections. A bomb exploded quite close to me one day and I am still recovering from the experience and the toxins that I inhaled. The politics there is beyond me!

But our work continues as we give comfort and shelter to the orphans, feed the widows and educate the girls. There is so much need and these are the things I am focused on.

While there, I could not help but compare our projects to the international NGOs that deliver assistance in Afghanistan. They mean well, but they waste so much money, it makes me angry. Mahboba's Promise has an amazing ability to deliver projects at a fraction of the cost with minimum administration fees. We are usually given reduced local rates because we are a charity and there are no middle men filling their pockets. Very often people offer their services free of charge; our project manager in Badakhshan is a good example. I am really proud of this fact and want to thank all my staff and volunteers who punch above their weight to make our projects such a success.

I thank God every day for his blessings and pray for good health so I have the energy to do his work. There is so much work needed to fight poverty and lift people's lives.

I thank you all again for your kindness and beg for your continued support.

May God bless you and keep you safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mahboba Rawi', written over a horizontal line.

Mahboba Rawi  
Founder and Vice-President  
Mahboba's Promise

# BADAKHSHAN HOPE HOUSE

*Forging Forward*

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*Recent photo of Badakhshan Hope House construction progress.*

Building the new Hope House in Badakhshan Province has been our biggest project this year. I am delighted to report that the construction phase is complete. Window fittings have started and the remaining work such as tiling, wiring and furnishing should be completed in a couple of months and I anticipate that the children will move to their new home in early spring (northern hemisphere), when it is a bit warmer.

Unfortunately, I was unable to travel to Badakhshan this time. When my brother Sidiq was launching the project earlier this year, he was stuck there for 6 weeks because of the dangerous roads. Desperate people fly in and out but a plane was shot down recently and I did not want to risk my life. I have too much to do.

While stuck in Badakhshan, Sidiq was contacted by Sanahullah who had heard about the project. Sanahullah was one of 70 young kids rescued after a major earthquake in Takhar in 1998. The kids were

begging for their daily meal at a refugee camp in Pakistan. When I found out, I took them into my care at my Sabah school there. The kids eventually went back to Afghanistan and they grew up at our Takhar Hope House.

Sanahullah had not forgotten how Mahboba's Promise turned his life around and wanted to give back. He now project manages the construction and communicates with me daily. He also visits the orphans and makes sure they are alright. He refuses payment, but we support him with his university fees.

To put things into perspective, Badakhshan is the farthest northeast province in Afghanistan. It is poorest province in the poorest country in Asia. Once the orphanage is completed, I know the demand to house more orphans will be great. Help us prepare to help them.

# PUSHGOOR VILLAGE

*When there's a will*

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*“The flood had washed away the village and 300 people were homeless, living in tents.”*

The village of Pushgoor in Panjshir was devastated by a flood while I was in Afghanistan. The flood had washed away the village and 300 people were homeless, living in tents. I saw the news on television where they announced that the Prime Minister flew there and international money was flowing in.

Six weeks later, I went there to pay my respects to the people and met with the community. They were so nice. They had received assistance such as tents, blankets and bedding. A sum of \$20 million had been pledged by the government to rebuild the village, but not a single cent was received. So many false promises.

Some villagers were unable to cross the river to reach their houses and the high school girls were very distressed. They were a couple of weeks away from their final exams (HSC equivalent), were unable to access their school because the bridge was washed out. So I set to work.

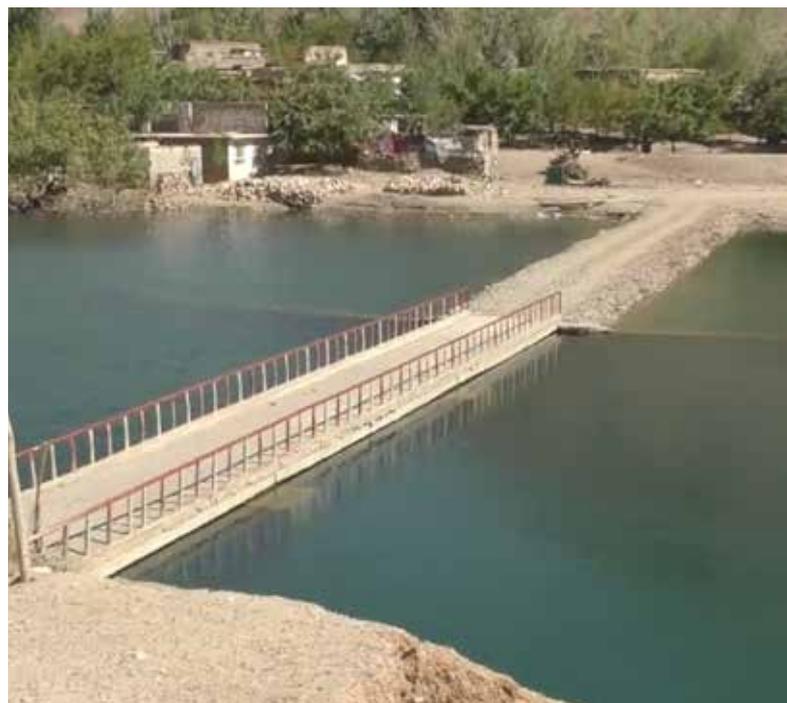
I negotiated with a contractor to fix the bridge for US\$4000 and with the help of the local community, the bridge was fixed within one week. 400 trucks of pebbles were needed. The girls were able to sit their final exams after all.

I dedicated much of our Qurban appeal this year to this village. We gave the villagers 100 goats to feed on. I also encouraged the women to empower themselves and form a committee to lobby the first lady directly. I estimate they need \$2m to build a house for every family.

Winter is arriving and the men are living in tents, still waiting for the promised money. Going forward, I promised them we'd support their Girls High School in as many ways as possible.



*Damage caused by flood waters in Pushgoor Village.*



*Completion of the bridge Mahboba built.*

# CONFECTIONERY FACTORY

I am so happy to report that the Confectionery Factory is gaining strength year on year. The factory sits adjacent to the Kabul Hope House and the employees are all our orphans who grew up there. We employed an Iranian sweet-maker to train more and more of our young orphans in cake and sweet making and introduce new recipes. As a result, sales have increased. Their customer base is increasing and they deliver large orders by car.

During the feast period this year they made the equivalent of AUD \$18,000. Some of the money is used to pay for equipment, materials and salaries, and all the profit is poured back into the funds needed to run the Hope House in Kabul.

# CONFECTIONERY SHOP IN PANJSHIR

My dream for 2019 is to franchise the Confectionery Factory in the Panjshir Valley. We would rent a shop close to our Hope House, fit it and sell the cakes and sweets prepared in Kabul. It will cost approximately \$25,000 to set up and finance in its first year. By the second year, it should support itself. The older orphans will be trained to run the shop and sell the produce. All profits from the shop will help fund the Panjshir Hope House. We have the skills to do it and it is achievable.

*Below: The workers and their creations at Kabul Confectionery Factory*



**Help us open our Confectionery Shop in Panjshir Valley**  
**Email us at [office@mahbobaspromise.org](mailto:office@mahbobaspromise.org)**

# SUSTAINABILITY

One of my key objectives has always been creating projects that can sustain the running expenses of the Hope Houses. The Confectionery Factory and the Permaculture Project are great examples of what I strive for. I have plans to grow and support these two successful projects.

*Below: One of the Half-way House boys working at the factory.*



# PERMACULTURE

I was in Kabul in summer this year when so many products were in season. On our farm we have peaches, apricots, eggplant, chillies, runner beans, okra, tomatoes, onion, garlic, spinach, watermelon, grapes, potatoes & pumpkins. The farm has water pumps running on solar power. The farm is growing from strength to strength under the care of Gulabudin.

Gulabudin manages the farm and I am so lucky to have him. He works with passion, dedication and honesty. Uneducated, but a brilliant farmer. God has blessed me with good people working for me and Gulabudin sits very high on that list.

Orphanages have yearly supplies of tomato sauce, garlic, chilli, potatoes & onions. The fresh and organic produce feeds the Hope Houses in Kabul and Panjshir. We dry tomatoes and chillies and also make tomato sauce to use for cooking. Anything leftover is sold. We even exported some tomatoes and grapes to India in the last 2 years.

We also have cows and calves for milk and yoghurt. I want to help the farm grow and become more efficient. We need a fridge to store the produce in summer and a car to transport it to the Hope Houses and to the market. We took the kids from Kabul Hope house for a picnic at the farm. They had a ball.

*Below: Gulabudin sorting fresh harvest*



*Below: Kabul Hope House children visit the Farm.*



**Help us raise \$2,000 for a fridge and \$4,000 for a truck.  
Email us at [office@mahbobaspromise.org](mailto:office@mahbobaspromise.org) for more information.**

# SPONSORSHIP

*Our Sponsorship Program is the bedrock of our operation.*

Our sponsorship programs need a boost. Through natural attrition, the numbers are decreasing and I need to focus strongly at increasing the number of sponsorships next year. For less than the cost of a cup of coffee you can sponsor a child or a widow and give them the opportunity at a better life. Ask your friends if they would.

**The Widows Outreach** program funded by the widow sponsorships feeds around 150 widows monthly and gives them opportunities for training in sewing, nursing, maternity and permaculture. This program lifts the women from absolute poverty so they don't have to beg in the streets.

**The girls' education** sponsorships support our Girls School in Abdara village and encourages the girls to complete their education. I believe the education of girls transforms the community and is key to a better future for the country. I would like to expand this program to support girls' education in other areas, such as the Pushgoor village.

**Our Orphan Sponsorships** are used to feed and clothe the children and keep them in a safe and secure environment. There is so much demand, it's hard for me to explain. It grieves me to be hard and not accept more children and babies who need shelter, but I cannot extend myself.

**Become a Sponsor for as little as \$25/month.**  
[www.mahbobaspromise.org/donate/sponsorship](http://www.mahbobaspromise.org/donate/sponsorship)

# WATER WELLS IN BAMIAN PROVINCE

*Below: Our previous work in Badakhshan Province digging a well.*



Afghanistan is facing one of the worst droughts in decades, according to the UN. Record low snow in Afghanistan over the winter blamed on the La Nina weather cycle in the Pacific, has been followed by rainfall of up to 70 per cent less than normal in some places. Water levels are so low wells have run dry.

Earlier this year we had an appeal to raise funds to build much needed wells in the Bamian province. With your support, we raised just under \$20,000, enough for 2 wells.

The preliminary work for the building of the wells was done but unfortunately, we cannot get the equipment into the province. Our contractors are refusing to go there because the Taliban have installed themselves in the area.

I am considering an alternate plan, to build a larger community well in Parwan province, which is also suffering from the drought and has a severe shortage of water. They are currently paying for their water but I could make the water available to them at very low cost.

The money raised is still there and I want to ask you, the donors, if you have any feedback on this alternate plan. Please email or call us with your views at [office@mahbobaspromise.org](mailto:office@mahbobaspromise.org).

*“I am considering an alternate plan, to build a larger community well in Parwan Province, which is also suffering from the drought.”*

**Tell us what you think by emailing  
[office@mahbobaspromise.org](mailto:office@mahbobaspromise.org)**



**MAHBOBA'S  
PROMISE**  
An Australian Aid Organisation



Above: Mahboba welcomes Hope House children in Panjshir.

## WAYS TO HELP

*“There is so much work needed to fight poverty and lift people’s lives. I thank you all for your kindness and beg you for your continued support.”*

1. Become a Sponsor and make a lasting difference in the life of a child or widow in Afghanistan.
2. Contribute towards a project, such as our water well or new Confectionery shop project.
3. Give to an appeal, such as Pushgoor Village, which was recently struck by a devastating flood.
4. Become a Volunteer or Fundraiser. Use your skills and network to help us further our work in Afghanistan.

Visit our website at [www.mahbobaspromise.org](http://www.mahbobaspromise.org)  
or call us on (02) 9887 1665 to make your donation.