

NEW SCHOOL - BETTER LIFE

AN EDUCATION INITIATIVE FOR BAMYAN, AFGHANISTAN



Quality Education for Bamyan | August 2010 - December 2012 | Funded by the Japan Platform |
School construction component | Case study in text and photos from school opening ceremony

The opening ceremony



70 guests attended the opening ceremony in Yakawlang. Among them were the Head of the Provincial Education Department, a representative of the Governor's office, representatives of the district's Shura, and several village elders. Most of the 1370 children will see their new school for the first time in spring when school starts again. For the ceremony they stayed at home - temperatures were well below freezing. The ceremony included several speeches and prayers, the cutting of the ribbon, and afterwards a joint meal and a tour through the new facilities. Photos: Mohammad Zubair Shirzay

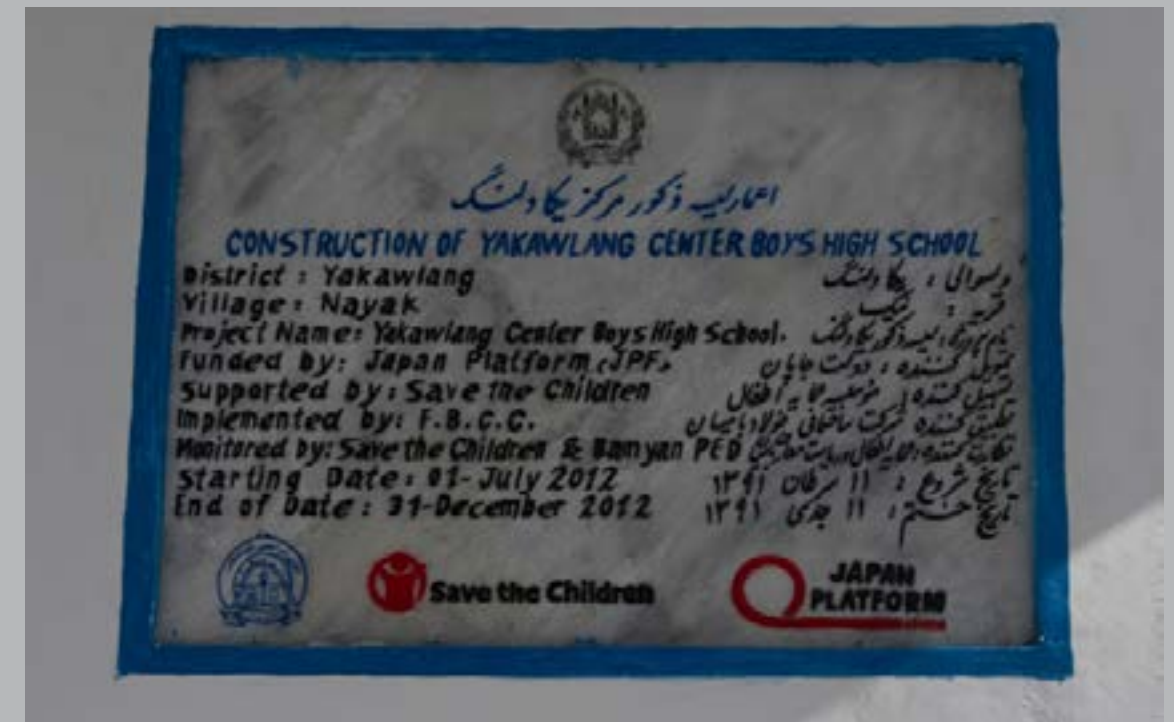
The project

On 23rd of December 2012, Afghan authorities and Save the Children representatives opened the Markas Zokur Central Boys High School for 1350 students in the Yakawlang district of Bamyan. The original school building dated back to the year 1937. Save the Children, funded by the Japan platform, had extended the old building by constructing new classrooms, rooms for the teachers, toilets, boundary walls, and a pump for clean drinking water.

The school construction was part of the "Quality Education for Bamyan" program implemented by Save the Children from August 2010 to December 2012.

In this period, Save the Children constructed altogether six schools and extended the buildings of additional two school buildings, in order to provide a better learning environment for 4765 students in total. Construction works included sanitary facilities such as latrines, wells and hand-wash points as well as fences for the improvement of the children's safety.

The project aimed to improve the situation of children in Bamyan province affected by continuous conflicts and persistent poverty. Additional components of the program (not reflected in this case study document) were the establishment of Early Childhood Development (ECD) groups, teacher training, and health and hygiene education.



Mohammad Reza, 17, student

“I am living in a village five walking hours from Yakawlang district center. We don't have a high school where I live. For a while, I used to walk from my village to Yakawlang high school, but walking for ten hours per day made me sick. In the end, I had to rent a room in Yakawlang to be able to go to high school. My father pays for the room. It is expensive, it costs 1000 Afghanis (20 USD) per month but he has work as a carpenter and can help me. He wants me to get an education. He cannot read and write, and he had many problems in life. He wants me to have a better life. I want that, too. I want to become a doctor.

I faced many problems getting an education, not only my long way to school. This high school used to have only seven class rooms. There were not enough for all of us. Before we got the new class rooms, we often had to study outside, under trees or the open sky. Classes would be cancelled when it rained. In spring, when the river rose, the water would flood the school yard and come into the building. It was hard to reach the school, particularly for the small kids. The older students helped them to cross the river, but many parents decided that this was not safe and didn't allow the children to come. We also didn't have clean drinking water. We drank from the river. Sometimes, I got diarrhea and missed school.

With the new school building, it is much easier for me to learn and get good grades. We have eight class rooms more. I don't have to study outside anymore, and classes take place at any weather. The rooms are bright and warm, and everybody has a table and a chair. We also have a new hand pump to bring up clean drinking water. The new school is a good place. I am happy that they choose my high school for expansion. I enjoy coming and learning here.”



Mohib Ali Nahzat, 42, headmaster

“I became headmaster of this school one year ago. The school was in a bad shape when I arrived. The building was very old – it was built 75 years ago. We had many problems with it. There were no boundary walls so that we could not guarantee the safety of the children. There were also no proper classrooms. They were dark, cold and small, only 2.5 metres by 5 metres, and we didn't have enough chairs and tables.

1370 students come in every day, but for a long time, we didn't have proper facilities for all of them. The children already came in two shifts, in the morning and in the afternoon, but still many of them had to learn outside, under the hot sun or in the sandy winds. And there was no drinking water. The children went to the river behind the house and caught they illnesses.”

The parents of Yakawlang district are good parents. Most of them send their children to school. There are not very many high schools, though. Children sometimes have to walk very far to reach a school and then the facilities are not good enough to really encourage them to come back and learn eagerly. I am very happy that we have additional facilities now. We have eight class rooms more, we also have four rooms for the teachers now, and we have four toilets - before we had only one for more than 1300 children!

I am sure, learning outcomes will be better now that every child can sit and write properly on a chair at a desk in a bright and warm class room. I think, too, that a modern and safe school building like our's with all facilities will also encourage more parents to send their children to high school after primary school.”



The new school



Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for children.

Our vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.



From above (big picture): A teacher writes first words on one of the new blackboards. District officials, parents, and other guests of the ceremony had a tour through the new school and saw the building for the four new toilets (second row left), the new class rooms (second row right), and the hand pump for clean drinking water (left). Pictures on the previous double page: the building from the outside and the boundary wall.

Save the Children
P.O. Box 642
Kabul, Afghanistan

+93 797 59 59 91 (reception)

afghanistan@savethechildren.org
www.savethechildren.org

