



Every challenge presents an opportunity...

May 14, 2007

We are in the final weeks of our fiscal year. As a business leader and a member of MEDA, you know that means it's a time of evaluation and strategic planning. I have just come from our senior management meetings and it has been a great year.

You have encouraged us to think innovatively; you have given us the financial support to accomplish so much. But in the final weeks of our fiscal year, we still need to raise the seed money to begin a new and very exciting project.

Helen Loftin, our project manager for Afghanistan, just returned from there. She coordinates a project that will change the lives of many women and their families in Afghanistan.

But let me begin with a story she told me.

While in Afghanistan, Helen met an elderly woman in the village of Dashetopyan in Parwan province. The woman was a mother and grandmother. Her ambitions were simple – just to live in safety, provide for her children and see a future for her grandchildren.

But she, like hundreds of thousands of other innocent women and children, is caught in the midst of civil conflict and war. She doesn't fully understand the issues, but she knows that she has been forced to abandon her home and flee for safety three times.

She has resettled her family now in their fourth home. Even though she has lost everything – three times – she bravely looks to the future and the opportunities for her children and grandchildren.

As Helen continued the conversation with this elderly woman, she saw the courage and dignity with which this woman lived. Her hope was really very basic – she simply wanted a home where her family would be safe and healthy.

Yet, as you well know from many media reports, Afghanistan is neither safe nor a place where health can be taken lightly.

over please...

Please multiply the power of my gift!

- Here is my gift of \$ _____ (x9 by CIDA funds) to provide visionary funding for Afghanistan
- \$ _____ to be used where most needed

I would like to pay by:

- cheque
- 
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Card #:

Expiry Date:

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In July 2005, I spoke with an official from the Afghanistan National Solidarity Program about the potential for MEDA to expand our work in Afghanistan. His words were simple, but incredibly poignant: “The others are leaving; you should be coming.” The emergency is over in the eyes of some relief agencies. So they have left.

Now is the time for MEDA to step in and help with economic development. Helen and her team have worked hard to develop a program that will have the greatest impact on communities of need.

Our focus is on women, helping them earn the income they need to rebuild their homes and care for their families. The conflict makes it very difficult to rebuild. Added to that challenge are the social and cultural norms that confine women to their homes and compounds.

Helen and her team have worked together with the Canadian International Development Agency to develop a program to help women expand their kitchen gardens and grow the food they need to feed their families. We will also use our expertise in developing markets to help the women sell their excess produce, supplementing their families incomes.

Women will be provided with basic supplies including seed, horticultural instruction to optimize production, and help in marketing their produce. We will also help make linkages to quality input suppliers and market channels in socially acceptable ways – building the capacity of suppliers, technical advisors, microfinance institutions, wholesalers and retailers.

Our role is more than food production. We will enable women to gain the respect of spouses and their communities. They will become significant income earners in the context of a challenging social environment.

The Canadian government will provide \$9 for every dollar we raise. So when you give \$1000, your donation will do \$10,000 worth of work! MEDA must raise \$500,000 and CIDA has committed \$4.5 million.

I am grateful for your ongoing support. Please consider making an additional contribution to the rebuilding of Afghanistan – from the ground up.

Sincerely,



Allan Sauder
President

P.S. Please don't hesitate. Your gift today will be multiplied 9 times to help the women in Afghanistan as they rebuild their lives and communities.