



**Malteser  
International**  
Order of Malta Worldwide Relief



# Malteser International Annual Report 2013

## Afghanistan: AFA TV – More than just television

**A** amuzishi, Farhangi, Almi – or AFA, in short – means “Education, Culture, Knowledge.” The name of the nonprofit television channel based in Mazar-e-Sharif says it all. With its programs for all age groups, religions and social backgrounds, AFA TV is bringing education to the homes of some 750,000 Afghans.

34-year-old Robaba I. works in postproduction. She has been a part of the project since its early stages. “My children told me about this new TV channel that offered educational programming,” she says. She started in



Robaba (lower right) is an editor in postproduction since March of 2011. AFA TV has 22 staff members, including three women and two girls.  
PHOTO: AFA TV

### 2001 – 2013: 12 years of sustainable relief for 500,000 people in Afghanistan

From 2001 until 2013, Malteser International’s emergency relief and recovery projects in Afghanistan employed at times up to 20 international and more than 200 national staff, investing a total of 15.6 million euros in the areas of health, education, infrastructure and livelihood. In areas with high ethnic conflict potential, Malteser International supported projects that brought different population groups together, in addition to providing emergency relief for the destitute returning population. From 2002 to 2005, the teams on the ground provided health care services for UN staff and supported the setup of the Afghani police. In 2007, because of the deteriorating security and after the death of three local employees, Malteser International closed its offices in the country, but continued the work through local partners, supporting the treatment of patients suffering from leishmaniasis and epilepsy in a Kabul clinic from 2008 to 2009. The TV project in Mazar-e-Sharif, which started in 2010, was successfully concluded in 2013. Malteser International will continue to follow the developments in the country and, if the security situation allows, look for other ways to help in the future.

March of 2011. “They trained me to become an editor. We have additional courses several times a year. By now, I’m even training new colleagues myself.” Over the past three years, AFA trained a total of 43 Afghans – including nine women.

“Sometimes, it is difficult to find women whose families allow them to work here together with men,” Robaba tells. “Society expects us to fulfill our duties at home. But many women have to provide for their families themselves.” This is the case for Robaba, whose husband passed away a few years before she joined AFA. As a widow with three children, she relies on her income at the channel. “AFA has a great reputation and respects our traditions,” she says. “We are a purely educational channel and inform the population about topics such as health care, coping with trauma, literacy, vocational training, and religion. People trust us because we are not political.”

Television has long been a part of daily life in Afghanistan. In a country with the highest illiteracy rate in the world, where access to schools for girls is still very limited, and where educational opportunities for adults are few and far between, television has gained an entirely new meaning with AFA.



*“When I walk into a store or a restaurant, I often see our shows are on. The most popular are our children’s programs, our nature and technology documentaries, and our shows on religious topics. Many of the commercial channels are now copying our educational topics and the format of our shows. This shows how highly we value education in our society. AFA TV satisfies a basic human need here.”*

Robaba I., editor at AFA TV

Robaba’s son also completed his training at AFA TV. He now works at a different channel. “Our trainees receive good job offers elsewhere, because our courses are really good. I was also offered a job at a different channel, but I would rather work for AFA. My work here allows me to do something important for my country,” she tells. “My greatest wish is that we finally have peace and reconciliation. Maybe someday, we will even have tourists coming here. Mazar-e-Sharif is a very beautiful city.”

Malteser International started AFA TV together with the Afghani organization SCEO. The program is based on the development needs in the region and focuses especially on health topics. Today, thanks to the training of qualified local staff, the channel is able to continue operating independently. Since 2006, SCEO has operated a similar channel in Herat, in western Afghanistan. The Afghani government awarded the organization its “Bright Talents Award” for their work.

With its shows for all ages, religions and social groups, AFA TV brings educational programming to the homes of 750,000 Afghans in the Mazar-e-Sharif region.  
PHOTO: AFA TV