

Sozo school for street children graduates 20

Sozo looks for new location after losing lease

KABUL, Afghanistan—May 24, 2011—After opening in 2009 to serve street children who work part of the day and attend school part of the day, the Sozo Hopeful Hearts School graduated its first group of 20 students March 19, 2011. These children overcame major educational obstacles, starting out behind in their grade levels and learning to catch up enough to reintegrate into the public school system in Kabul. Years of living as refugees and having their lives disrupted by war and violence did not stop these 20 students from reclaiming their right to an education.



A teacher instructs her class at the Sozo Hopeful Hearts School for street children in Kabul, Afghanistan. She handed out new materials last month thanks to Blessing Bags from Hopeful Hearts and a partnership with the Volunteer Community Relations program at Camp Eggers military base.

“This represents an educational success,” said Sozo Board member, Ron Barnes. “These children were not previously equipped to function in public school,” he said. The Sozo school helped the students catch up educationally and worked with their families to help support their continued education.

“Our aim is to divert street children’s attention from begging and working on the streets to education,” said Sozo Afghanistan Assistant Director, Mohammad Khan. “We want to improve their personal character and their hopes for a future healthy life as well as prepare them for continuation of further standard education in the government regular schools.”

Sozo officially introduced the 20 graduates to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in March, and from there they were introduced to Spina Ade High School & Masood – e – Saad High school. Sozo also honored the graduates, both boys and girls, with certificates signed by Sozo National Director Abdul Wakil and the first deputy

minister of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ustad Wassil Mohmand.

Some 222 street children, ages 6-14, continue at the Sozo school in Kabul but will be attending classes in a different location next month as the lease on the current building has been terminated. Sozo staff is hard at work to procure a new location for the school, which serves not only to educate children, but to feed them lunch. This is the only meal each day for many of the children who also work or beg in the streets of Kabul.

About Sozo International - Sozo International began in 2002, in response to the opportunity presented by the liberation of Afghanistan from Taliban forces, shortly after September 11, 2001. Sozo aims to reach the most impoverished people in identifiable communities where war and natural disaster have wreaked havoc. Sozo aims to provide emergency and ongoing relief for internally displaced people (IDP) and to encourage development with education, health and economic initiatives aimed at changing the day-to-day existence of people in need as well as providing for their future. *Sozo – Strengthening communities through transformational development.*

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