

**International Women's Day 2016
Peace Feast
Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan**



International Women's Day is a global celebration held every 8th of March, since 1975. Beginning in North America and Europe, the celebratory day has since spread to developing countries in Africa, South America and the Middle East. The movement has gained extraordinary momentum in Afghanistan, specifically in Jalalabad City, the capital of Nangarhar Province. Nangarhar is home to thousands of Afghans that have endured countless terrorist attacks from the Taliban, Haqqani and now most recently ISIS networks. But despite the seemingly unending violence and insecurity, local Afghans continue to rise up above the instability as one community, in a lasting effort to counter violent extremism.

The strong, brave and resilient citizens of Nangarhar have been celebrating International Women's Day since 2012. What began as a small ceremony held in the schoolyard of a local girls school has since evolved into an annual celebration with singing, dancing, skits, awards, speakers and community. Despite the well-known security risks, the women, fully cognizant of the warnings, attend with pride and eagerly look forward to the event every year.





Nangarhar has embodied the meaning and purpose of International Women's Day. The celebration is a call for change; to honor and praise ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their community. Over the past five years, and despite the odds, the celebration in Nangarhar has attracted over 30,000 total attendees. Women are being recognized in an important way for their expertise and contributions to society. Every year support grows for the event, with growing recognition from regional governors, the US Ambassador and Afghanistan's newest elected President. Last year the first lady of Afghanistan, the Honorable Rula Ghani, honored the women for their participation with an award and personal letter of appreciation.



Today, Nangarhar is preparing for an even bigger event. This year's theme is Peace Week and it will culminate in a Peace Feast. This feast will provide women with the opportunity to showcase regional specialties and traditional cuisine. Women will bring what she can share, to showcase her cooking skills and celebrate life. A cooking show, an award ceremony, singing and dancing, all will take place in the face of some of the most extreme challenges on earth. Further, female journalists from the remote, isolated border districts will be personally invited to attend the celebration. These women are courageously reporting on issues facing Afghanistan and they will be commended with video tributes to their brave work from world-renowned female journalists. These Afghan women form the backbone of citizen journalism. Their narratives will tell the stories of International Women's Day and the Peace Feast; and in doing so these journalists will both document and demonstrate continued resilience despite incredible adversity.

We often don't hear these stories, stories of resilience and bravery. Such stories help fight the prevailing false narrative crafted by extremist groups and projected by a foreign press as the sole narrative about the people from Afghanistan.

This project to connect local female journalists already enjoys the support from the regional governor, who is using his good offices to offer support in a way that contributes to their safety. Your contribution is therefore matched dollar for dollar (and onion for onion) by the contributions of food, expertise, and sharing that women bring to the stone soup Peace Feast, the brave work of our collaborators organizing these activities, the citizens that bravely show up by the thousands to attend these events, and by the hard working leaders helping to chart new paths forward for Afghanistan with their own in-kind contributions.

Remote parts of our team additionally offer local journalists continuing assistance via Owncloud, crowdsourced technical support, webhosting, data security, and network connectivity as volunteers who act out of love.

We are powered by a can-do attitude, where we make the seemingly impossible happen, despite the odds. There is no better way to affect both the overall trajectory of Afghanistan and the war on terror as well as help empower and reward Afghan citizens than through making a contribution to a volunteer-powered outfit involving no overhead costs.

We have a dedicated relationship with the San Diego-Jalalabad Sister Cities Program which serves as the vehicle through which all of the funds will be received. We request funds to empower young journalists and to help keep them safe, to offer awards for our Women's Day celebration, to rent projectors for stadiums, to buy uniforms for the cricket and football teams, and to purchase solar panels, computers, and continue to connect outlying areas. These projects depend on citizens like you for their support as we are not an entity of any government organization. Even a small amount of money in this part of the world goes a long way. It is the difference between a game or not a game, an event or not an event. We thank you for your kind consideration.

All donations may be made directly or via PayPal at the following link. The San Diego-Jalalabad Sister Cities Foundation is a non-profit 501(c3) organization and all donations are tax deductible (<http://www.sandiegojalalabadsistercities.org/donate.html>).

Further documentation about any of these projects and information happily provided upon request.

Checks payable and mailed to:

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Who we are

The Synergy Strike Force (SSF) is a non-government affiliated volunteer team of networked individuals that provides support to brave local initiatives in Afghanistan to help them continue their truly inspiring and unbelievable progress and work in the face of the challenges they face.

Our team has worked closely with the community for over ten years. We know this region of Afghanistan deeply and intimately. SSF openly operates in eastern Afghanistan, and has empowered and electrified dozens of remote schools on the Af-Pak border, among many other activities.

SSF is comprised of a team of an eclectic array of individuals with a wide array of talents. Individuals are chosen /invited to participate based on their life experience, operational technical knowledge and demonstrated social skills in austere environments. Each of the participants is expected to function in multiple roles. The SSF has established a neutral base of operations where security could be maintained in such a way as to not exclude or greatly limit access by both local people and the volunteers. From that base we have established a base network of internet communications that are serving as a hub site to several outreach efforts in healthcare, education and capacity building activities. The model that we use in Afghanistan can be iterated into a broader initiative and in other societies challenged by the threat of radical extremism.

The primary role of SSF is to support efforts that lead to a higher level of health care, education and capacity for peaceful prosperity.