



BOND STREET THEATRE

peacebuilding, empowerment & healing through theatre



Our Youth Leaders in Balkh give street-working children a chance to learn and laugh too!

Midsummer News

Greetings!

Here is an update on our creative **Youth Leaders Program** in Afghanistan: We are so proud of our 375+ young women and men who designed and ran their own community improvement projects thanks to step-by-step training by Bond Street artist-educators! *There is no doubt that creative, constructive activities are a great alternate to violent insurgency...* especially for youth who are frustrated by lack of jobs and a lifetime of war.

The impact has been amazing -- here are some of the stories:

In Nangarhar, the Youth Leaders created a massive volunteer campaign to **clean the entire city in 20 days!** To spread the message, they attached speakers to cars to broadcast the importance of a clean city. Upon hearing the message, other youth jumped in the car to join them! Though it's rare

for men and women to work together, they were cleaning trash side by side and even made a short film for TV about the environment. They also convinced taxis and rickshaw drivers to put signs on their cars... no small feat.



Women and men in Nangarhar working hard to clean the streets of their city

Also working on the environment, the Youth Leaders in Herat toured a street theatre show about the importance of clean streets and water. Now (finally) the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) has joined the youth and given them job of directing the greening of Herat! NEPA is providing materials and trucks to keep the project going.

Violence against women and its effect on children is a major issue and the group in Laghmen chose to tackle it. First, they had to gain the support of the village elders and mullahs to request them address the congregation in the mosques. Fortunately, they had full support of the Governor. The group also created dramatic theatre shows on the topic and performed them in parks and marketplaces. They arranged large community meetings where both men and women had equal opportunities to voice their opinions and be heard.



Women in Laghman gathering to discuss women and children's rights

Spaces for women to freely exercise, run or play sports are almost non-existent. In Badakhshan, the female project leaders started **a gym for women**, the first of its kind in the area! The gym has limited equipment, but it does offer yoga and pilates classes which have been a smashing success! Initially, the gym was only open a few hours a day, but has become so popular that it's now open all day long. Sorry, no photos allowed on this one.

In Parwan, the youth are **giving street-working children educational programs** along with creative play. The 35 children in the program quickly became 70, then 100, and continues to grow. Our youth leaders arranged for tailors and bike mechanics to come train the children in useful skills and take them on as apprentices. They also set up a competition in the local schools for Best Student. 7000 guests attended the opening event which got them books for 50,000 children! The kids are forever changed... they have hope!



Former street-begging children have a chance for creative play in Parwan!

In Helmand, a notoriously dangerous area of Afghanistan, the facility the youth group established for street children was blown up 3 times. However, community members rebuilt the facility each time! The youth are working to **eliminate child labor** despite facing opposition even from some of the local leaders. Their perseverance has been rewarded! The local government has hired them to monitor other children's programs in the province.

It's rewarding to see how our collaboration with theatre groups over the years has continued and grown. The groups we trained in our ***Theatre for Social Development*** project years ago are now using our methods to make powerful and tangible changes. This Youth Leadership program has introduced a *culture of volunteerism* while also creating much-needed jobs. Their work has made real changes in the country and given the youth confidence and energy!

And what are our energies geared towards on the home front, you might ask? Our Kickstarter for ***Amelia and Her Paper Tigers*** of course! Don't forget to check out our Kickstarter page and donate what you can to this delightful telling of the Amelia Earhart story. We're halfway to our goal!

[Back This Project](#)

P.S. Also check out this short trailer about our work in Azerbaijan, [Agents](#)

of Change, created by the talented David Sotnik! A full documentary on Bond Street in the making, you are welcome to contribute to this awesome project!



Bond Street Theatre - Agents of Change

Bond Street Theatre initiates theatre-based projects for education, conflict resolution and healing in areas of conflict and poverty globally, currently in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Lebanon.



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Bond Street Theatre is a not-for-profit organization and an NGO in association with the UN. All donations are fully tax-deductible as allowable by law.

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