



# BOND STREET THEATRE

peacebuilding, empowerment & healing through theatre



## November Newsletter

### Greetings!

*Our good news this month is a story from Heddy, BST's Research Evaluator, about her visit to our project in Afghanistan.*



Heddy, second from right, and Joanna, fourth from right, with the women from Badakhshan.

Driving through the crazy traffic of Kabul from the airport to the BST facility, here's a snapshot of the million things I saw: people and bicycles fearlessly winding between cars, students holding hands and laughing as they walk home from school, an old man coaching a young man as he prepared a meal on the side of the road, a boy tossing water out of the doorway of a bakery and, the most heartbreaking, street children tapping on the windows and begging for money.

When I got to the BST house, I found it full of young people: 30 youth from 2 different provinces, Badakhshan and Wardak. **These two provinces are very different ethnically, linguistically, and culturally.** One of the main goals of our project is to bring youth together from different parts of the country, especially from different ethnic groups that have traditionally been adversaries.

After the workshop, one said, **"I used to think that Pashtuns were bad people--now I see they are just like me - now they are my friends."**

### Connecting with the Girls

I stayed on the third floor with the Badakhshan girls during the session in Kabul. I was amazed with how easily they drew me into their fold. After a few days, one of the girls mentioned to another, "**Heddy is such a good person... why isn't she a Muslim?**" This really struck me. All our struggles, at home and globally, center on whose beliefs are "right". Another girl answered, "**I don't think it's about religion. I think we have to start first with humanity.**" I was happy to play a part in sparking this discussion.



For their project, the women from Badakhshan, a province in the northeastern corner of the country, will create a Women's Gym for sports training and physical exercise - a **first** in the province's capital city of Faizabad. Currently, women don't have any outlets for physical activity, since they cannot exercise in public and there is no private space available. This facility will finally provide a space for women and girls to enjoy the vigor of sports and healthy effects of exercise. We added Pilates and stilt-walking to their skill set.

But the project isn't so much about discovering empathy with foreigners; rather it aims to change participants' ideas about their fellow Afghan citizens. Throughout the workshop, the young people kept saying how happy they were to have met the youth from the other province. One young man said he knew that these youth, that he'd once thought were so different from himself, would be his friends for life - inspiring words and good news from a place where only bad news makes it to the front page.



Joanna gives Program Certificates to the women from Badakhshan.

## Background

Our **Creativity in Action** program prepares youth across Afghanistan to initiate their own community improvement projects. Our trainers guide them through the process of identifying issues and devising practical solutions. The youth, ages 15-25, are inspired and motivated to volunteer and the program has been wildly successful! So far, our volunteers have initiated over 20 projects. They have worked with street children in 10 cities and aided to city clean-up efforts throughout the country. They've educated their communities about energy conservation and the importance of education. We're so pleased with all that has been accomplished so far and are excited to see what lies ahead.



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*In the face of global challenges, Bond Street Theatre continues to bring creative, humanitarian assistance to troubled areas around the world, thanks to you! Your support makes our work possible. Please give what you can. Thank you!*

## Bond Street Theatre

 Forward to a Friend



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

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