

<p><i>Judo for fred</i> - fight for freedom</p>	 <p>judoforfred.no</p>	 <p>NORGES JUDOFORBUND</p> <p>www.judo.no</p>	 <p>ijf.org</p>
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Judo for fred (JFF)
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Judo in a tent in Kabul. Photo: Birgit Ryningen

Judo for peace in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the world's worst countries to grow up in with respect to everything from safety to education, health care and nutrition. It is also one of the most dangerous countries to be a female. It scores high in corruption, instability and lack of infrastructure. Drug abuse has gained a foothold and many of the inhabitants are internal refugees. The country imports weapon and exports opium. Most people consider Afghanistan a mess, but there are a few that use their spare time and their own resources to create a happy place, a hope and a future for the most unfortunate children and youth in Kabul. More than 1 100 children and youth, many of them girls, consider the dojo their happy place and judo their passion, motivation and arena for self-development.

These children were sponsored by Norad, the Norwegian Agency for Development and Cooperation, and private donors and volunteer work in Norway and Afghanistan. In 2019 Norad cut their funds to zero from 2020. The cut in funding has a dramatic effect for the children and volunteers involved. Currently many of the Afghan volunteers have borrowed money to maintain the activity.

To help the situation, Norwegian volunteers are actively fundraising. In 2019 we were able to raise 15 000 Euro, an increase of more than 200% from 2018. The situation is, however, not sustainable and we are now asking if IJF is interested in contributing the approximately 60 000 Euro/year that is lacking to continue the judo activity for children and youth in Kabul, mainly street children, orphans and girls.

Background for the application

Judo for fred operates several judo clubs in Afghanistan and Zambia, and our primary expenses are judo suits, mats and food for the children after practice. Norad is still supporting the activity in Zambia, which currently emphasises refugees with focus on the judo club in Meheba Refugee Settlement. This application is, thus, only concerning the activity in Afghanistan.

We have been working in Afghanistan since 2002, and over 1100 Afghan children receive food and training on a regular basis as a result of the program. We cooperate with the Afghanistan Judo Federation (AJF) as well as schools, the ministry of education, orphanages and centres for street working children.

In the beginning

Judo for fred (JFF) is Norwegian and means “judo for peace”. JFF is a committee under the Norwegian Judo Federation (NJF), and the program has been realised through countless hours of volunteer work, together with financial support from Norad (which has now been cut to zero) and private sponsors.

Judo for fred wants to make judo available to all children in Zambia and Afghanistan, particularly the most vulnerable children, including the girls. As a result of war and poverty, sports and play have been taken away from the children. We want to give it back.

It all started in September 2001 when the Norwegian diplomat, stationed in Kabul, and former Olympic competitor Mr. Stig Traavik initiated the project. He started trainings for orphan children (boys and girls) and helped creating the Afghan national judo team in addition to contributing to the already existing training sessions for men.

To continue Stig's work in Afghanistan, the project *Judo for fred* was established in the spring 2002 in Norway. The project consisted of a board of volunteers. In 2006 JFF became a committee under NJF.

In the beginning, the project focused on trainer exchange and transfer of judo knowledge and trainer education. As the judo level in Afghanistan increased the focus shifted toward organisational, financial and English skills development. Simultaneously the security situation in Afghanistan worsened and it became difficult to send volunteers to Kabul. It became also more and more difficult to obtain visa to Norway for the Afghans to travel to Norway. The latter years, we have therefore met in India at almost yearly basis. The local partners are running the projects, the trainings and the activity- and financial reporting. *Judo for fred* has contributed with funding for the activities and language- and financial education as well as monitoring, promoting and acting as consultants for the projects and writing applications and reporting towards Norad.

Today we run 6 projects as a cooperation between the Afghan- and Norwegian partners, all of them local initiated and locally governed.



Structure in Afghanistan: 6 projects

A total number of six projects are included in the *Judo barai shola* (Judo for peace in dari) program. The board consist of all the project leaders and one financial responsibility. In the following, all the projects are presented in brief.

The judo girls project (JGP)



200 girls are training judo at 4 different schools. Since girls are often subjected to strict cultural regulations, most of the girls growing up in Kabul are not allowed to join any activity outside their homes. If the training is within the schools and in connection with the school's opening hours, however, it is easier for the parents to allow their girls to join the training. It also decreases the challenge with transportation. Since girls are not allowed outside their home (or the school) without a male companion, transportation is always a challenge for the girls. This project is a cooperation with four different schools and the ministry of education.

Aschiana: Street children



300 street children (20 girls) are currently training judo at Aschiana centre for street working children. Aschiana means nest in dari and is run by an Afghan non-governmental organisation (NGO). Children working in the streets are welcomed parts of their day to receive some basic education, basic carpenter skills, artwork, some food or judo training. The judo training has become very popular. The main costs are food after training, since the street working children, in general, are

not allowed to waste energy on training. JFF is also supporting gis and a small trainer fee, since none of the children involved are allowed to take time of the street if they are not paid for it.

In addition, the Aschiana children are currently faced with an extra challenge, since they will soon lose their dojo. Buying land and building a permanent dojo will cost approximately 80 000 Euro.

Support the Children and Afghan Women in Need organisation (SCAWNO)



400 street children (85 girls) are training judo in a rebuilt container dojo at SCAWNO, which is also an Afghan NGO. As for Aschiana, these children are also working in the streets and are welcomed parts of their day to receive some basic education, basic carpenter skills, artwork, some food or judo training. In addition, SCAWNO welcomes women in need and educate them in tailoring. The judo training is very popular here as well and the main costs are food after training, gis and a small trainer fee. The dojo is also built by JFF.

Tahi Maskan Orphanage



100 boys are training judo at Tahi Maskan. It is a governmental run orphanage for boys only. The boys are given shelter, food and education inside the walls of the orphanage. The orphans are not allowed outside without an application. Orphans with no family in Kabul are therefore never outside the walls of the orphanage. At the age of 18 they are no longer allowed to stay and have to leave. Youth without a network outside the orphanage have nowhere to go. The orphans

playing judo are invited to training camps and competitions to ensure that they get some time outside the orphanage walls and that they build a network in the judo community. The main costs are gis and transportation. The dojo at the orphanage was built by JFF.

Bibi Mahrow judo club



This is a regular judo club in a poor neighbourhood in Kabul with 100 children and youth training (some girls). Many of the children in this club are street working children. The dojo is a re-built container dojo built by JFF. The main costs are land rent and electricity. In winter they train in the cold and dark.

Istiqlal

Istiqlal is freedom in dari. The project is mainly organising judo activities for children, such as training camps and competitions. The goal is to give children, especially the street working children, orphans and girls, a place to meet and develop their judo and build a network.