The Fruit of Our Labor

The Fruit of Our Labor is a collection of 10 short documentary films by emerging Afghan filmmakers that brings to life Afghans’ efforts to address their challenging social and economic conditions. These films provide a fresh perspective on the needs and issues of Afghans beyond the relentless battlefront coverage of western media.

Produced by Community Supported Film

Community Supported Film (CSFilm) strengthens the documentary storytelling capacity in countries where the dissemination of objective and accurate information is essential for effective development and conflict resolution. CSFilm trains local women and men in documentary filmmaking. Their stories, rooted in realities often unrepresented in the media, are used to influence local and international perspectives on sustainable paths to a more peaceful and equitable world.

Building Local Capacity
Giving Voice to Afghans through Filmmaking

In the interest of amplifying the voices and expertise of Afghans, Community Supported Film conducted an intensive 5-week training of 10 Afghans in documentary production in the fall of 2010. After three weeks of rigorous exercises, each student was required to develop and produce a character driven short documentary. The resulting films are gathered in this collection, The Fruit of Our Labor. CSFilm runs an ongoing training and production program in Afghanistan.

The Films and the Filmmakers

‘L’ is for Light, ‘D’ is for Darkness

Direction and Camera by Hasibullah Asmaty
Editing by Hamed Alizada
Sound and Additional Camera by Zarah Sadat

After the refugees returned, post-Taliban, there was no girl’s school in the village. Waseema took things into her own hands, organizing the women, pressuring the resistant men, and setting up 'classrooms' in an abandoned, roofless, building on the outskirts of the village. The sounds of the girls calling out their lessons
doesn't disturb anyone - except for those who won't follow their Mullah’s advice and allow their daughters and sisters to attend. 12 min.

Hasibullah Asmati’s family is from Takhar and he lives in Kabul. He worked as a production assistant on the documentary *Addicted in Afghanistan*, and as a freelance production assistant with the Takhar province TV channel. Hasib is currently working with Community Supported Film to make *Brewing Tea in a Kettle of War*, which will look at best practices in economic and social development from the perspective of Afghan villagers. Hasib is in Takhar province to capture one village’s attempt to come to terms with the cyclical terror of flashfloods and drought.

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**Searching for a Path**
Direction, Camera and Sound by Reza Sahel
Editing by Rahmatulah Jafari

The streets of Kabul are clogged with pushcart vendors of every sort. After the fall of the Taliban, the vendors were left in peace, as there were few cars on the streets. Now they are beaten by the police and chased from corner to corner – unless they pay a bribe. Fruit selling is the product of choice in the fall season. In the summer they rot too quickly in the 105˚ heat. It’s not a profitable living, but in a country with 40% unemployment, the choices are slim. Will these vendors’ children still be facing the same limited opportunities when they seek employment? 13 min.

Reza Sahel is from Ghazni province and lives in Kabul. He works as a freelance photo-journalist with BBC online and also works as a cameraman for Nagar TV on spot and feature news. Reza is a multimedia trainer for NAI in cooperation with Internews, and is a founding member of Third Eye Photography.

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**Hands of Health**
Direction, Camera and Sound by Zahra Sadat
Editing by Jawed Taiman
Additional Sound by Hasibullah Asmaty

The maternity clinic has been built but there are no doctors and no medical equipment. Who’s to blame, the Ministry of Health or the Men's Development Council? The Women's Council handed over their National Solidarity Program funds to the men when they agreed to build a maternity clinic. But with it still not open pregnant woman like Farida continue to make the long trip to Kabul to get medicine and medical advice, including birth control. After ten kids, the father thinks it might be time to stop having children - but says it’s in the hands of God. 14 min.
Zahra Sadat is from Bamyan province and lives in Kabul. Zahra works as a freelance journalist for Jadid Media online and in multi-media production. She founded and directs the Open Society Organization and volunteers with Afghan Youth for Peace.

The Road Above
Direction and Camera by Aqeela Rezai
Additional Camera by Reza Sahel and Baqir Tawakoli
Editing by Jawed Taiman
Sound by Reza Sahel

It is estimated that out of 28 million Afghans, 1 million are addicted to heroin. Mona tried once to get her husband into treatment, but he escaped and she hasn’t seen him since. Now she works street construction, but does the manual labor wearing a burqa to protect the honor of her family. 6 min.

Aqeela Rezai stars in Iranian director Samira Makhmalbaf’s film Five in the Afternoon and appears in many other TV dramas. Since 2009 she has worked part time for the Independent Election Commission. She previously produced and appeared in a documentary on the challenges faced by actresses in Afghanistan.

Knocking on Time's Door
Direction, Camera and Sound by Ahmad Wahid Zaman
Editing by Hamed Alizada
Additional Sound by Majid Zarand

A former Mujahedeen fighter returns to teach at the village school where his father taught. He lives what he teaches: that each of us is responsible to use the time we are given wisely. He’s leading the village development council and trying to build a new school. For many fighters, giving up their gun meant giving up an income and a position of power and respect. Can Afghan government initiatives, like the National Solidarity Program, provide employment and leadership opportunities for men that instill similar pride in the rebuilding of their communities? 6 min.

Ahmad Whaid Zaman, from Panjshir province and living in Kabul, trained as an agriculturalist. He works as a journalist, producer, and director of long-form news reports, previously at Ariana TV and now at Bakhtar TV.
**Bearing the Weight**

Direction and Camera by Mona Haidari  
Editing by Hamid Arshia  
Sound by Sayed Qasem Hossaini

Not long after marrying at twenty-one, Shafiqa lost her husband, her newly born daughter, and her leg in a rocket attack. The wars in Afghanistan have left some 700,000 disabled. Many - especially disabled women and children - are hidden from view, trapped by their culture. Shafiqa overcame the “paralysis of her soul” and found a way to take care of herself, her two sons, and her community. 13 min.

**Mona Haidari**, is from Wardack and lives in Kabul. The focus of her works has shifted from painting, to photography, to documentary filmmaking. She is the assistant producer of Focus Reports, a program on social issues, for Negah TV. Mona also participated in cinéma vérité training with Atelier Varan.

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**Water Ways**

Direction and Camera by Majeed Zarand  
Additional Camera and Editing by Jawed Taiman  
Sound by Majid Zarand and Ahmad Wahid Zaman

Neighboring villages - one with access to water and one without - offer very different prospects to their residents. The farmers without water are stuck; unable to feed their families, they turn to work as day laborers. However, working a day job keeps them from solving their water problems. Down the road, villagers have easier access to water and have used assistance from the Afghan government's National Solidarity Program to improve their lives. Unfortunately, tensions could arise between these villages over access to water. 11 min.

**Abdul Majeed Zarand**, lives in Ghazni and works in Wardack province. He is a reporter for the Afghan War Reporters Agency (AWRA) and Afghan Daily Times. A poet and novelist, Abdul has also volunteered as a local school teacher for the last 7 years.

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**Beyond Fatigue**

Direction, Camera and Sound by Baqir Tawakoli  
Editing by Hamid Arshia  
Production Assistance and Additional Sound by Reza Sahel
In most corners of the world, a woman's work is never done. In *Beyond Fatigue* an Afghan woman walks miles to help her sick mother-in-law and is responsible for the next generation of young minds as she teaches them the language and lessons of the Quran. In between she works at the vocational training center where she hopes to get a loan to buy her own sewing machine. 9 min.

**Baqir Tawakoli** lives and works in Bamyan province. He is a poet and short story writer, and has previous training in photography. Baqir works and volunteers with economic and social development agencies, and was head of his village’s Community Development Council.

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**Treasure Trove**
Direction, Camera and Sound by Fakhria Ibrahimi
Editing by Rahmatullah Jafari

From the inside of a bakery, an unusual view of the daily lives of Afghan women is revealed - unveiled and uninhibited. 11 min.

**Fakhria Ibrahimi** lives in Kabul and is from Wardack province. She has worked on community-based documentary photography projects in Sari Pul province. Fakhria is also a Kabul-based representative for the Funder’s Network for Afghan Women.

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**Death to the Camera**
Direction and Camera by Sayed Qasem Hossaini
Editing by Hamed Alizada
Sound by Mona Haidari

A camera moves among woman working their last day on a job site. As they joke and fight - accusing each other of being prostitutes, liars, and racists - the mood repeatedly shifts between belly laughs and rage. The women are left waiting for hours for their pay by the charity that administers the cash-for-work program. As they wait, they consider what debts they’ll pay off, what food they’ll buy, and how they’ll stay warm during the approaching winter. There is lively discussion about what happens to all the aid that never reaches them, and whether Karzai is a crook or a servant of the people.

Is the camera revealing anything truthful, or simply inciting these women to present what they think ‘the other’ wants to hear - or what might get them something from the world on the other side of the camera? Who is on the other side of that camera anyway? 20 min.
Sayed Qasem Hossaini, after growing up in Sari Pul and Balk provinces, now studies in the Cinema and Fine Arts department at Kabul University. He has previously produced a short video report on carpet making, served as a sports reporter for a community newspaper, and works as a freelance production assistant.

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Michael Sheridan
Director, Community Supported Film

Michael Sheridan makes documentary and experimental films about people in poor and developing communities challenging the status quo and working to improve their lives. For nearly 20 years Michael has engaged the public with stories from Asia, Africa and the Americas. You can learn more about Michael’s work at www.sheridanworks.com

Michael has taught documentary and experimental filmmaking for 15 years at the community and university level. He served as Senior Fulbright Scholar in Indonesia teaching and working on new films during the 2007-08 academic year. In 2009 he began work on a documentary, Brewing Tea in a Kettle of War, about effective aid and the role of economic development in peacemaking from the perspective of Afghan villagers. To make this film Michael began teaching Afghans documentary filmmaking. The success of this work inspired the creation of Community Supported Film.

Producer
Community Supported Film
www.csfilm.org

Co-Producer
The Killid Group, Kabul Afghanistan
www.thekillidgroup.com

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