

Giving Wings To Hope



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HQ NRDC-Italy's "Fai Volare la Speranza" initiative delivers help and hope to Afghanistan



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We in the West are accustomed to being masters of our destiny and fortunes, with our democratic systems developed over 2000 years through revolution, demand for human rights and equality, and the globalisation of

knowledge. Our lives are motivated by self-belief and the pride of our national and civic achievements and were part of the inspiration for operations such as ISAF, in support of the nascent Afghan democracy.

On 7 December 2005, while the majority of the Corps was deployed in Afghanistan, the remaining personnel in Solbiate Olona conceived a humanitarian initiative called "Fai Volare La Speranza", or "Giving Wings to Hope". The title of the project came from the ideas of some children in the Olona Valley who, when told that the Taliban used to outlaw Afghan children from flying their kites, wanted to help their distant peers to visibly celebrate their new found freedom. American actress Jessica Polsky agreed to become the children's ambassador and face of the charity project.

The children involved their parents, and in turn mayors, companies and a host of other parties were caught up in this chain reaction of solidarity, but the project desperately needed an organisation which could turn good wishes into reality, providing storage in Italy and Afghanistan and prioritise, handle and transport the offerings some 10,000km.

Within days, NRDC-Italy had created a project team headed by ACOS Org and Coord Colonel Giuseppe Paternosto, to receive and store over 150 tonnes of donated



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goods and manage the funds of the "Pro popolazione Afghana" fund. In less than a month the first fruits of aid from the project began to arrive in Kabul; money, stoves, hydraulic pumps, blankets, school benches, food and medicine were the priority items despatched. A number of lives were surely saved thanks to this outreach from the Italian people, specifically by the quantities of drugs and medical supplies, costly and impossible to obtain in the Central Asian country, which gave hope and future prospects to entire families.

Through the command of ISAF VIII, and through the "Fai Volare la Speranza" project, NRDC-Italy obtained results which certainly went beyond its given mission and initial expectations. Through the export of its knowledge and democratic ideals, Italy showed the Islamic world that the democratic market economy mechanisms for creating wealth can be shared for the benefit of all, teaching tolerance and mutual respect. This is not economic philosophy, not a comment on natural rights in a country where more than half the population is illiterate, but the practical advantages of democracy, highlighting a lesson from Adam Smith's theories on economics, where the progress of a society depends closely on the material interests of individuals.

