



“The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them”—Albert Einstein

“...ere long the most valuable of all arts will be the art of deriving a comfortable subsistence from the smallest area of soil.”—Abraham Lincoln

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” — Peter F. Drucker

July 25, 2013

Dear Friends of Ecology Action,

I write this letter with sorrow in my heart, to tell you of the loss of a good person and a friend. Naqibullah Salik, who came to us as a six-month intern in 2004, was a joyful and dedicated man who became part of our local community while he was here. When he finished his internship and returned home to Afghanistan, he created a Biointensive demonstration garden and education center where he provided training sessions on a regular basis.

Salik’s 2012 progress report detailed the work he had been doing: giving technical training to a wide range of people including women, widows, farmers, and extension workers from 11 provinces. He also facilitated the translation of *How to Grow More Vegetables* into Persian. His major project this year was to establish a 20,000 square foot training center in Badan Bagh specifically to teach women extension workers and women farmers. To further emphasize his commitment to helping the women of his country, he hired a woman with an impressive background in agriculture and administration to be in charge of the training center.

Ecology Action and the Willits, CA community supported Salik in all these efforts. His most recent e-mail to me said: *“I am so glad because you, as Ecology Action’s executive director, trusted me and gave me a chance to extend our program to the very vulnerable and hopeless society in Afghanistan. It is a great pleasure for me and my sweet co-worker Merzia Jan [head of the women’s training center] to be part of this great worldwide team with Ecology Action.”*

We knew that Salik was living and doing his peaceful work in a war zone, and that he experienced danger on a daily basis. Nevertheless, it was still a great shock when, on June 18th, we received the following e-mail from Michelle and David Glenn, EA colleagues who are currently living and working in Afghanistan:

“We heard about the two HLP people who were targeted and killed by Taliban this past weekend. One was your friend Salik - whom I believe managed your Biointensive Farm just north of Kabul, in Parwan I think. Michelle and I had lunch with him last year and recently were talking about getting back in touch with him to work with both my AAEP project and Michelle’s NAEC project - as we both have Biointensive components.” Michelle wrote later: *“It has been a sad day. Many at my college knew Salik, and his companion was the uncle of one of my teachers. Seems it was a targeted attack as the driver was not injured. Salik was buried here in Kabul yesterday evening.”*

Shannon, our webmaster, found a news item from February 2013 that might possibly provide some insight into the background of this assassination: the World Bank had announced it would give \$120 million (with possibly more to come) to fund a six-year agricultural project to convert 50,000 acres in at least 10 Afghan provinces into food-raising gardens. The article described Salik as the Horticulture Coordinator at the Ministry of Agriculture, and quoted him as saying: *“Our pledge is to spend the money transparently and in coordination with the relevant agencies.”* It seems possible that Salik’s role in this ambitious and life-affirming project may have led to his death.

As news of Salik’s death spread, we received remembrances and expressions of pain and horror from many sources. The Glenns sent along the following Facebook posts from two of Salik’s young colleagues:

“One of the few incidents in my life that have devastated me is the loss of two great people, two great Afghans, two wonderful person who have worked with honesty and with devotion to change the life of the poor Afghan, the life of the poor farmers.”

“So called Talib, you have broken me yesterday by martyring [Salik and his colleague] while they were trying to improve the life of farmers in Logar. But this morning, I am more motivated than I was before; you can no more break me or any other youth who truly believe in their people and country, who believe in their youth, who believe that Allah sees the work of honest, and good people.”



Naqibullah Salik in his thriving GROW BIOINTENSIVE demonstration garden, against the backdrop of an arid Afghan environment.

Jim Conley, another EA colleague in Afghanistan wrote that Salik’s work involved risks:

“Salik visited me at the Detention Facility in Bagram, 3 years ago, where I was establishing an agricultural training program for Afghan men held at the facility. I remember him as excited and enthusiastic, and he mentioned how much he enjoyed his time in California, learning the GB [GROW BIOINTENSIVE] methods. I asked if he could provide some GB instruction for our detainee population. He thanked me but declined, stating that he was concerned about his safety and didn’t want to interact with “the Taliban in prison”. I recall that he said something to this effect, “You have a passport and will leave one day to return to your family. I have to stay here in Afghanistan. I have a family to support and must take great care.”

Devon Patillo, former EA intern, who with his wife spent time in Afghanistan and was instrumental in catalyzing the Afghan Project, said:

“Wow. I can’t say that I never expected this, but I can say that I never ever wanted to see this become reality. It’s been a terribly sad day for me (and also Elizabeth) in light of this news. Thank you for passing along the information. I feel a strong debt to his family, so please keep me posted about any efforts that develop on your end. I know that Salik thought very highly of you, and your vision, and that he was grateful for all the opportunities that were opened because of you and his ties to Ecology Action.”

Ellen Bartholomew, Manager of Golden Rule Mini-Ag Center, where Salik lived during his internship with us, wrote:

“I am so upset. Do we know where his wife and children are and if they are in danger? I am worried about his family and if there is anything to do for them. I talked to my sister who lived in Rawalpindi, Pakistan for 13 years and worked at a refugee center there, (and had a mujahidin as her gatekeeper) and she thinks his family is definitely in danger. What can I, or our community, do to facilitate making his life as important to the world as it was to us and his family? What a brave and wonderful heart he was.”

PLEASE JOIN US IN HELPING SALIK’S FAMILY

Michelle Glenn, a trusted Ecology Action advisor, was able to locate Salik’s family through an intermediary. She told us Salik’s death left his widow caring for their five children: three boys and two girls, all of them still in school. She said they are having a very hard time because of Salik’s death – not only emotionally, but also financially, as women are very restricted in their ability to make a living, and because Salik obviously had enemies. Michelle says that what the family needs most is cash to provide for everyday expenses. Because of the difficulty in sending funds to Afghanistan, and the difficulty Salik’s wife would have in collecting any funds we sent electronically, Michelle has offered to take funds to them personally when she returns to Afghanistan from a brief visit to the US in September.

We have a chance to take action, to help a family that has experienced great loss because of the good work one man was doing, trying to build a better, healthier, and more peaceful world through sustainable farming.

If you would like to donate money to help Salik’s widow and children, please send a check to Ecology Action at 5798 Ridgewood Rd. Willits CA 95490 with “For Salik’s Family” noted on it.

You can also donate online, via our secure page hosted by Network for Good (go to <https://npo1.networkforgood.org/Donate/Donate.aspx?npoSubscriptionId=4102> and select “Afghan Training Program”). Online donations will be divided equally to support both Salik’s family, and his legacy of teaching GB to women in Afghanistan.

We will collect your donations and forward the funds from Ecology Action to Michelle Glenn at her home in Michigan. She will take the money to Afghanistan herself and arrange for its safe delivery directly to Salik’s widow. All donations are tax deductible.

We are glad that there is a way for us, and the many others who have appreciated Salik and his work, to express our gratitude.

Best Wishes,



John Jeavons

Naquibullah Salik’s Wife and Children
(source: BBC http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2013/06/130628_k05_civilian_causality.shtml)

