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BÓTHAR NEWS UPDATE

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+353 61 414142

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Bóthar

# Bóthar Working in Kosovo



Bóthar have been working in Kosovo for over 20 years, since shortly after the war ended. We work through our partners Meshqerra and a multitude of governmental partners. Our CEO, Aideen O'Leary, recently had the opportunity to meet with them when she went to visit farming families and hear first-hand about their experiences. Aideen had the opportunity to meet families who had received their Bóthar in-calf heifers 20 years ago, and to observe the dramatic and sustainable changes that have occurred in their households and communities due to the generosity of the Irish people with their gift of dairy animals. She also visited families who received their Bóthar animals as recently as 2022 and was heartened to see cows milking over 20 litres of milk in their first lactations.

We are proud to continue our work with the Kosovan people this autumn when we will send 60 in-calf heifers to support 3 areas across the country. We remain extremely grateful to our supporters for the opportunity to facilitate the life-changing, 32-year mission of Bóthar.

# Empowering Women in the Developing World since 1991

We are very proud to see female farmers getting maximum benefit through our varied farming projects around the world. In many countries gender inequality does not allow for employment opportunities that would enable women to change their circumstances. This social issue, coupled with additional problems caused by natural disasters and climate change, hinder opportunities to make life improvements.



Bóthar has worked with women in countries such as Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, Nepal and Kosovo to ensure household food security through nutrition, education and sustainable home gardening. The health of these participants and their family members has improved and awareness increased about the importance of a balanced diet to improve the health status of women, especially expectant mothers.

The Kitchen Garden Project offers high quality seasonal seeds together with gardening hand tool kits, which has enabled women to grow seasonal crops while also teaching other members of the household.

*"I have never grown vegetables even though I was involved in agriculture. Now this small garden is a source of nourishment for my family. We eat fresh, pesticide free and organic vegetables every day. So, we are spending less on food and also earning from selling extra vegetables to other villagers. I also support my relatives who have little money to buy vegetables."*  
(Samia, Pakistan)



# Zero Grazing



Throughout our 32-year history, the sustainability of our work has been key to the Bóthar ethos. When operating livestock programmes in tropical climates the concept of zero-grazing is a key element of success. The purpose built zero-grazing unit, used primarily for housing cows and goats, ensures an effective use of the available space for our smallholder farmers. The zero-grazing unit is constructed of locally available materials and has several separate areas for milking, feeding and sleeping. Space for offspring and an enclosed exercise space are also included. These specially constructed pens ensure a healthier living environment for the animals by protecting them from the elements and potential spread of disease.

This controlled environment also allows farming families to monitor food and water intake and to observe the animals' wellbeing. Recipients are trained in fast-growing fodder planting, which is then cut and brought to the animals. Bóthar's animals are never placed in areas where water availability does not meet their needs. Water conservation and irrigation are widely practiced ensuring the availability of water in drier periods. Water harvesting facilities are built adjacent to the grazing areas to facilitate the needs of the families and the animals.

Given the importance of the animals as the primary source of income, and the fact that the farming is done on an easily manageable scale, the animal benefits from great longevity that ensures a firmer hand up for the family and the entire community. Please visit our website, [www.bothar.co.uk](http://www.bothar.co.uk) to watch our video. This video illustrates this story from the point of view of a Rwandan farmer and our supporters, to whom we are extremely grateful to for the opportunity to facilitate this life-changing mission.

# Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Gender Equality

Two key elements of Bóthar's work are sustainable agricultural practices and gender equality. A recent project in Zimbabwe underpins the importance of these areas of focus. The Women Inclusion and Empowerment Project reached 375 female farmers and their families. It was aimed at adapting to and building resistance to drought, floods, pests and human diseases affecting their lives. The element of working with farmers in a sustainable manner to increase their resilience to climate change is increasingly important for all the farming partners that Bóthar works with.

In the case of this project where 72% of the population is classified as living in poverty outcomes observed were the enhancement and consolidation of capacities and skills learned in previous projects supported by Bóthar, with matching funds of Bank of Ireland Staff World Fund. Young women (aged below 35) were chosen for this project as a way of increasing their engagement in community activities. 15 self-help groups were set up and participants attended intensive training on capacity building on small grains production, animal management and health, enterprise development, savings and credit and linking farmers to markets, low cost feed formulation, and environmental management.

The project provided a crucial opportunity for self-transformation, independence and resilience building and we are eternally grateful to our supporters for the opportunity to facilitate the life-changing, 32-year mission of Bóthar



Bothar

The Mount, 2 Woodstock Link,  
Belfast, BT6 8DD.

+353 61 414142

information@bothar.co.uk

www.bothar.co.uk

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