



Basira

a film by Shahrbanoo Sadat



FESTIVAL DE CANNES



Basira  
بیسیرا



#### Technical Information

**Working title:** Basira  
**Director:** Shahrbanoo Sadat  
**Screenplay by:** Shahrbanoo Sadat  
**Nationality:** Afghan  
**Genre:** Fiction  
**Format:** Video / HD  
**Length:** 70 min.  
**Shooting location:** Badakhshan, Afghanistan

#### Director's Biography and Filmography

Shahrbanoo Sadat was born in 1990 in Tehran, Iran during the immigration period. After the events of September 11 she moved to her homeland Afghanistan. In 2009 she graduated from *Ateliers Varan*, Kabul a French documentary workshop. During the workshop she made a 24 minute documentary film 'A smile for life'. It was her first experience. In 2010 she directed a short fiction film 'Vise Versa One' (Symbol). She is currently studying cinema in Kabul University and works for *Tolo TV* as a producer. She was the producer of the 2010 edition of the *Tolo Film Festival*.

#### Shahrbanoo Sadat

**E-mail:** shahrbanoo\_sadat@yahoo.com  
**Mobile:** +93 (0) 70 89 08 163 (Afghanistan)  
**Address:** ? , Afghanistan

#### Résidence du Festival Festival de Cannes

3, rue Amélie, F-75007 Paris  
Tel. 33 (0) 1 53 59 61 20  
Fax 33 (0) 1 53 59 61 24  
E-mail:  
residence@festival-cannes.fr  
www.festival-cannes.org

Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or even first

feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.



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## SYNOPSIS

12 year old Basira really likes to go to school but she can't because she is a shepherd and she has to take people's sheep up the green mountains every day. On the other side of the mountain, in another village, there is an outdoor school. She goes everyday to sit behind the muddy wall and listens in secret to the lectures the old teacher gives, before teaching everything she has learned to her sheep. Every day, however, the sheep get into and mess up the class and, because of this, the teacher does not like Basira because he thinks that she causes the disruption on purpose.

And that's not her only worry: she is constantly beset with problems but doesn't understand why, until she finds the old teacher's spectacles and discovers that there is something wrong with her eyes. She realizes that she will need glasses if she is to become like the other pupils but, just then, the teacher appears to give her a beating. She escapes, but the students and the teacher strike out at the sheep instead and some of them get injured. The people of her village criticize her work and stop entrusting their sheep to her, and so she loses her job.

She tries unsuccessfully to find herself some glasses. One day she hears there are doctors giving free consult-

tations at a roaming "Eye Camp" in a neighboring village. She runs after the doctors' bus, but it is too far away already. She retraces her steps, and finds along the way a lot of lens-less broken spectacle frames. Then, she finds a frame in good condition, and puts it on. As she watches the bus vanish into the mist, a tear falls from Basira's eye.

## Note of intent

Most people in Afghanistan do not have access to medical services. People who live in the provinces have to go to the capital for treatment, but going to and fro from one province to another is not easy. They can't stray from the main road because the war is everywhere, so they have to take the long but safe way round and walk for up to 16 hours a day on mountain roads for a week or more, depending on how far they have to go. This is why they only

go to the capital for very serious illnesses, and not minor ones (they believe like those of the eye. According to a new report from WHO (the World Health Organization) more than one-and-a-half million Afghans have a serious eye problem, and one in three sufferers goes blind every hour.

This statistic refers only to the people who actually make it to the sole eye clinic in Afghanistan, which is to be found in Kabul. It does not take into account the huge numbers of people with eye problems who never realize it. There are no statistics about them but we know there are a lot of them. This year, the WHO decided to send out roaming free eye clinics to some of the provinces of Afghanistan, but was unable to eradicate the problem because of issues surrounding doctor security. Just last August, the Taliban killed an entire eye clinic medical team of 18 people. It was not the first time they had killed doctors.

## SYNOPSIS

Basira a 12 ans et aimerait aller à l'école mais elle ne le peut pas : c'est une bergère et elle doit emmener les moutons des villageois dans les pâturages chaque jour. De l'autre côté de la montagne, dans un autre village, il y a une école en plein air. Elle va toujours s'asseoir derrière un mur de boue pour écouter en cachette les leçons du vieil instituteur,

qu'elle enseigne ensuite à ses moutons. Mais chaque fois des moutons entrent dans la classe qu'ils perturbent et le vieil instituteur pense qu'elle fait cela pour l'embêter, et il ne l'aime pas

Ce n'est pas son seul souci : elle a constamment des ennuis sans savoir pourquoi, jusqu'au jour où elle trouve les vieilles lunettes de l'instituteur. Elle comprend alors que ses yeux en sont la cause. Elle a besoin de lunettes si elle veut devenir comme les autres, c'est à ce moment que l'instituteur arrive et la bat. Elle parvient à s'échapper, mais l'instituteur et les élèves battent ses moutons à sa place. Quelques moutons sont blessés. Les gens l'accusent d'avoir mal travaillé et ne lui confient plus leurs moutons. Elle perd donc son petit travail.

Elle essaie en vain de trouver des lunettes. Un jour, elle entend parler d'un dispensaire itinérant pour les yeux (ophtalmologues gratuits) dans un autre village. Elle court après le bus, mais il est trop loin. Elle revient sur ses pas et trouve des montures cassées sans verre. Puis, sur le bord de la route, elle trouve une monture en bon état et la porte. Elle regarde le bus s'éloigner. Une larme coule.

## Note d'intention

En Afghanistan, la plupart des gens n'ont pas accès aux soins. Les habitants des provinces doivent se rendre à la capitale pour se faire soigner, mais effectuer tant de trajet n'est pas facile. Ils ne peuvent prendre les routes principales à cause de la guerre, ils choisissent donc des trajets plus longs mais plus sûrs. Ils doivent marcher 16 heures durant dans la montagne chaque jour pendant une semaine ou plus, en fonction de la distance. Ainsi, ils ne se déplacent que pour des maladies très, très graves et ne s'occupent pas des affections moins graves, comme les problèmes de vue. D'après un rapport rédigé pour l'OMS (Organisation mondiale de la Santé), plus d'un million d'Afghans ont de sérieux problèmes de vue et un tiers d'entre eux perd chaque heure la vue.

Ces statistiques ne concernent que les gens qui peuvent se rendre

à la seule clinique ophtalmologiste d'Afghanistan à Kaboul. Mais elle ne prend pas en compte personnes qui ont de sérieux problèmes de vue sans le savoir. Nous n'avons pas de statistiques les concernant, mais ils sont trop nombreux. Depuis cette année, l'OMS envoie des dispensaires itinérants dans quelques provinces, mais cela ne résout pas le problème car les médecins rencontrent des problèmes de sécurité. En août dernier, des Talibans ont tué tout le personnel d'un de ces dispensaires (18 personnes), mais ce n'était pas la première fois qu'ils tuaient des médecins.

