

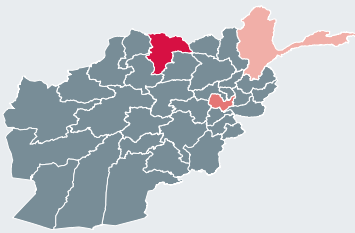
German Cooperation with Afghanistan

Peace education

Programme



Overview



Activities in the provinces of Balkh and Badakhshan (top, from left to right) and Kabul (below right)

Programme: Civil Peace Service
Area of activity: Peace education

Commissioned by: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Partners: Ministry of Education (MoE)
Teacher Training Colleges (TTC);
National Centre for Policy Research (NCPR)

Implementing organisation: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Provinces: Badakhshan, Balkh, Kabul

Programme objective: The curricula used in the Afghan education system (schools, vocational training colleges and universities) include compulsory peace education topics and methods that are appropriate to Islamic culture.

Situation

Afghanistan is in the process of rebuilding its education and training system. However, the consequences of the lack of education during the war years are still palpable – a time when hardly any schooling was on offer and the educated classes left the country. Even now, sustained classroom teaching is far from common and many curricula are out of date.

Improvements achieved in the educational sector are often cancelled out by the worsening security situation. School closures are being seen time and again in some districts. Meanwhile, children and youth now make up more than half of the Afghan population. Knowledge and learning are held in high esteem in Afghan society, yet there is a shortage of participatory teaching and learning methods. Schools and universities are strongly hierarchical in their structures, which leaves teachers little leeway for what to include in their lessons. Ethnic lines of conflict and prejudices hinder the day-to-day job of teaching and stoke hostility between teaching staff and students. Corporal punishment is commonplace in many schools. Often, the teachers do not possess much more knowledge than their pupils – which is just one reason why their persistent questioning and the desire to understand can end in punishment.

Objective

Through the Civil Peace Service (CPS) the German Government is supporting efforts to integrate peace education as a crosscutting topic in university teaching. The aim is to take as a topic the conflictual nature of the teaching and learning environment, and work through this issue, while also fostering an understanding of the importance of a sustainable reconciliation process.



A trainer from the Sanayee Development Organization conducts classes in conflict mediation for the leaders of the Madrasa in Balkh | Photo: GIZ

Results

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) CPS works in the teacher training colleges to promote a learning environment free of violence, for instance, incorporating peace education in the development of teacher training curricula. It also produces teaching and learning materials and provides training to lecturers on the content of the curricula. The lecturers thus become intermediaries for non-violent interaction, who can share and directly apply peace building subject matter. Structures conducive to violence within the teaching system are exposed and can be changed. Two peace experts are employed to conduct the training at the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) in Mazar-e Sharif and Feyzabad. At the academic level, on behalf of BMZ, another peace expert is supporting the National Centre for Policy Research (NCPR), which was founded at the University of Kabul by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in 2003.

Results of the Afghan-German Cooperation:

- Peace research and peace education have become an established subject at the University of Kabul; they are now being prepared as a crosscutting topic for all the faculties.
- The Faculty of Psychology has developed a seminar on peace education.
- Young academics from all the universities of Afghanistan have joined together in a network for academic exchanges on peace-related topics.

- Dialogue processes are now organised in the form of conferences. These bring together civil society representatives, scholars and staff of governmental and non-governmental organisations to discuss peace-related issues.
- Dialogue on issues relevant to peace education has been established with foreign universities, for example, with the University of Bochum, the UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies in Innsbruck, and Kulturstudier in Pondicherry/India.
- The courses offered by the partner organisation, NCPR, are also in demand among other educational institution, such as Afghanistan's diplomatic academy.
- Students and lecturers at the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) in the provinces of Badakhshan, Balkh, Kunduz, Sar-e Pol and Takhar have been introduced to basic conflict resolution skills. The lecturers at the colleges teach these skills self-reliantly, using the 'Peace Counts' exhibition and the materials devised for it.
- The first modules have been developed for the peace education curriculum. These initial modules have been introduced to the master trainers and lecturers at the Feyzabad Teacher Training College, who are now able to use them independently.

Status as at January 2013

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