



Afghanistan-Schulen

Union of Assistance for Schools
in Afghanistan e.V.

8 May 2018

Marga Flader and Tanja Khorrami are reporting from their trip to Afghanistan in April 2018

Springtime in Afghanistan: We were expecting the desert to green with colourful flowers, blooming trees and sheep, goats and cows grazing. Unfortunately, this year we found the landscape along the street from Mazar-e-Sharif to Andkhai in grey and yellow colours, like wasteland. Besides a few green watered fields, we only saw dry lands and herds of animals searching for food and water. Climate change makes life even harder for the rural population and this year's missing rain lets farmers fear a new drought.

The growing awareness of environmental damage is being supported by activities and information at our Education Centre (EC). Speakers of our girls' and boys' ecology groups reported to us about their various activities and plans: They want to reduce the plastic trash in the landscape and villages and try to reach their aim through education. They give presentations in many schools, collect garbage together with other students and discuss waste disposal management with the politicians in charge. Other projects include raising market dealers' consciousness for waste reduction in interviews or reports at local radio and TV stations.



Even more complex topics such as increasing problems with water supply or salinization of ground water are being touched in talks with local administrations.

These committed young people do not only crave for peace and a life without fear of violence and attacks. They also wish an environment without pollution in which their country can develop, and people can earn their living.

Like every year, it was a great pleasure to attend the traditional Thursday show in the EC. For the first time, boys and girls of 7th to 9th grade who attend our prep. courses at the EC organized this event together. This is very special since traditionally girls and boys are separated after primary school. About 150 children sat together in the big assembly hall eagerly and curiously, girls on one side and boys on the other side. They were enjoying the shows just as much as we did!



Presentations, songs and roleplays were being performed considering the central topic of the day: "Knowledge versus material wealth". One definitive result: Knowledge was considered the more valuable asset for a person as it can't be lost. The young people really appreciate the chance to learn so much at our Education Centre. Compared to normal state schools, teachers at our centre are better educated and motivated to do their work. They impart their knowledge vividly and practically. In their courses, they each have assistants who help and are being trained at the same

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time. During school vacation, there will be seminars for up to 100 teachers from Andkhoy and other villages. Our Education Centre is a great success! We hope to be able to continue supporting it financially for



some more years.

The same applies for the Women's Projects: At the Women's Centres at Andkhoy (WCA) and Baghebustan in the district of Qurghan (WCB), Turkmen and Uzbek women learn to sew, embroider, read, write, calculate and, most importantly, they study a mutual language: Dari (Persian), one of Afghanistan's national languages, which enables communication between the different tribes. This brings forward mutual understanding and new friendships. The participants invite their mothers, aunts and friends for parties and presentations and, in this way, many women learn about the centres and gain from them.

WCB offers courses for cooking, a vegetable garden is being created and the play and exercise equipment is being used by women and their children. The fitness centre at WCA is a big success! In various groups, more than 40 women do sport under the guidance of their coach to improve their physical fitness. Right after the fitness program, 12 elderly women learn reading and writing at their own request. They never went to school in their life, but now work hard to learn something!

Once again, village elders and a school principal visited us to talk about their needs. They urgently need three more classrooms for the start of the new school year. To support these small projects, we do need donations! Furthermore, we hope to sponsor an additional course for girls who are educated but could not find a job. They need a place where they can continue learning, have peer exchange and maybe write stories about the lives of older women in their village.

In the city Mazar-e-Sharif, young people have better opportunities but even here there is still a lack of teachers and school buildings. We visited some of the schools that we built and one that is still under construction, as well as one where they are waiting for the construction works to start soon. Here the children sat close to each other in torn tents. Freezing wind and rain made us run into the old school building where the students had found shelter. Every corner was crowded— three classes alone in the small entry hall.

The construction of school buildings remains an important task. To motivate the community for more self-help, we want to support activities of the School Development Committees (SDC). Our Afghan colleagues have discussions with the existing, but often passive committees. We all try to motivate school administrators, teachers, pupils and parents to support the development of the schools and to carry out small repairs to the school buildings, when needed, themselves. This is a long-term project, but we are confident to be successful.

Because of so many projects, it is very important for all our Afghan colleagues to meet regularly for exchange of ideas and new plans in Mazar-e-Sharif. They all do great work and we were happy to join their meeting during our visit.

We never run out of new ideas for our projects and do need your financial support to do this important work.

Should you be willing to continue supporting us, be assured: In Afghanistan donations are well spent on education and the future of young generation!

Best wishes

Marga Flader

Tanja Khorrami



PS: On 10 November 2018, we are celebrating again our Afghanistan-Evening in Oststeinbek and hope you will join us