



German Cooperation with Afghanistan

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Gender Matters – education officials discuss gender mainstreaming in teaching

At a two-day workshop organized in Kabul by Afghan-German Cooperation and the Swiss Development Cooperation, 45 experts discussed gender equality in the education system from a policy perspective. Taking part in discussions on gender mainstreaming models for the Teacher Education Directorate, participants included male and female technical experts from the Ministry of Education.

Kabul, 5th – 6th August 2014 – Over the past two days, 45 officials from the Ministry of Education came together in a workshop to discuss approaches to gender equality in education. In the opening speech for the workshop on gender mainstreaming, Mr. Akbar Hamidi, Deputy Director of the Teacher Education Directorate (TED), stressed the importance of considering gender perspectives when planning education policies, saying that this is an “opportunity to talk about a very sensitive, yet important issue.”

On the first day of the workshop session, 25 male technical staff members came together to discuss gender concepts from their perspective as men. They reflected on how male gender identities affect planning in the education sector and educational outcomes of men and boys throughout the country. Mr. Bismillah Abedi, Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in the TED, commented that he has “attended a lot of gender workshops before,” but what he likes particularly about this one is that “terminology is adapted to the Afghan context, to the social values, and they are explained very well from an Islamic perspective.”

The lively discussion focused on the prejudices that are attached to the English word “Gender” in Afghan society. Participants came to the conclusion that Hamyari Ejjemaye – meaning “social cooperation” – is a good Dari substitute that encompasses the concept, but helps to avoid negative attitudes when first discussing gender concepts.

The second day of the workshop brought the male participants together with 20 female technical staff members of the TED to discuss practical concepts of gender and gender mainstreaming that can be used in their daily work. Discussions focused on coming up with indicators for measuring gender equality in their work on the national policy level.

The Teacher Education Directorate established a Gender Team in 2012 to concentrate on gender issues in teacher education, based on an overarching gender strategy which tackles the various aspects of teacher training. A two-day gender basic training for administrative staff at the Teacher Education Directorate will be conducted next week.

The workshop was organized with the support of the Basic Education Program for Afghanistan (BEPA), implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Afghanistan’s Ministry of Education of (MoE). The aim of the programme is to establish a good foundation for teacher training and promote gender equality in education.