SWITZERLAND’S COMMITMENT TO AFGHANISTAN

Quarterly newsletter of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC in Afghanistan

SDC provides additional funding to the Government School Support Program

The primary desire of the Government of Afghanistan is to ensure that all children and adults have access to quality education. As stated by the Minister of Education in the National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan “One of the top priorities of the government is to rebuild an education system that will act as a fundamental cornerstone in shaping the future of the country.”

To contribute to the government’s strategy, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supports the Government School Support Program (GSSP) implemented by Aga Khan Foundation in the government primary schools in the most remote rural areas of Bamyan, Baghlan and Badakhshan provinces. The overall goal of this program is to improve the teaching and learning environment of government primary schools.

“SDC acknowledges education as a key sector in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Considerable progress has been made in the past 6 years, but still there is a need to improve the quality of teaching and the learning environment”, said, Mr. Hans Peter Reiser, Deputy Country Director of SDC in Afghanistan.

The original contribution of SDC to the project is 4’035’000 Swiss Francs (3’073’000 US$). In September 2008, SDC provided an additional funding of 800’000 Swiss Francs in order to allow the project to strengthen the existing objective framework, specifically in three main areas - capacity building of teachers, expanding the literacy classes for women which has been very successful so far, and improving the learning environment by further provision of educational materials, school furniture and minor repairs.

“We didn’t even had the basic requirements in our class such as books, blackboard, chalks, chairs and tables. We used to write with mud in an old blackboard that our teacher had brought from somewhere. Now we have all of these requirements and different kinds of learning kits”, said Gulcheen, a student in Berglich Girls Primary School in the Shibar district of Bamyan. Continued on page 2

SDC continues its support to the Public Administration Reform in Afghanistan

Public Administration Reform and development of civil service capacity is one of the key priorities to the Government of Afghanistan. Reform of its public administration system and re-establishment of a competent and efficient civil service remains as one of the biggest challenges to the government.

This human resources challenge is particularly high at the senior management level. Many of the senior civil servants do not have an understanding and awareness about modern leadership and public management principles.

The Government of Afghanistan has formulated its National Public Administration Reform and Human Resource Development Policy within the framework of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Continued on page 2

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is Switzerland’s international cooperation agency within the Swiss Foreign Ministry. The Government of Switzerland established the Swiss Cooperation Office Afghanistan in 2002 with a view of supporting the processes of political stabilization and reconstruction of the war torn country. Today, the Swiss Cooperation Office Afghanistan is running and supervising a broad development and humanitarian program.
SDC provides additional funding to the Government...

The program aims to increase teachers’ subject knowledge by providing in-service teacher trainings and prevent drop outs through emphasizing on early grades and providing good practices trainings to the teachers and head teachers. It also aims at enhancing community participation in school activities through establishing and training of Parent Teacher Associations and providing adult literacy classes to address critical literacy needs at the community level. Moreover the program improves the management capacity of Provincial and District Education Departments and Teacher Training Colleges.

The program maintains a close cooperation with the Ministry of Education at all levels and works in line with governmental strategies with regards to improving the quality of teaching and improving the learning environment.

The GSSP is the extension of the earlier Rural Education Support Program (RESP) partly financed (3.5 million Swiss Francs) by SDC between July 2003 and September 2006.

Some of the major achievements of the GSSP so far include, supporting of 188 schools which has directly affected more than 3,700 teachers and 96,000 students; providing teacher training courses for more than 3,000 teachers, providing textbooks and stationary for the students and teachers of 135 schools, establishment of Parent Teacher Associations and training of around 1,000 members of them, establishment of 40 mothers’ literacy courses to enable mothers to actively participate in their children’s education with positive implications especially for girls’ retention, and repairing of primary classrooms in 20 schools of Baghlan and Bamyan provinces.

SDC continues its support to the Public Administration...

In view of supporting national initiatives undertaken by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) in the field of Public Administration Reform, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) established the Civil Service Leadership Development (CSDL) project in May 2005.

The Civil Service Leadership Development project was designed to assist IARCSC to strengthen the capacities of key senior civil servants in priority national government institutions. Since its establishment, the CSDL project has succeeded to train 500 senior, top and emerging leaders of the Afghan civil servants selected from 24 ministries and 6 independent agencies, under its 3 popular training programs.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has been supporting the CSDL project since December 2006. SDC’s first contribution to the project was 960’000 Swiss Francs and it recently approved 700’000 Swiss Francs in order to allow the project to build on the achieved results and to use its experience in delivering responsive leadership training programs for key Afghan civil servants.

The new phase of CSDL project supports Leadership Competency Development Program (SLCDP) which starts in November 2008 and ends in October 2009. The objective of SLCDP is to train and certify 500 senior civil servants within a year, provide ToT (Training of Trainers) training to 15-20 trainers from the Afghan Civil Service Institute in order to enable them to conduct similar trainings independently in the future; and to help refine the curriculum for the Civil Service Institute. The program will also pay special attention to the gender aspect training through enhancement of women participation as well as adding gender awareness component to the training curriculum.