

**Security Sector Reform as a Part of University Education of Afghan
Young Professionals – Experience of Slovakia**

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Afghan Academia Needs and Challenges Assessment



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I. INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, Slovakia has undergone long and not always an easy path of democratic transition. Today, it is considered to be a stable democracy in Central Europe with a well-functioning market economy and democratic institutions. On its way to the current position, Slovakia had to overcome many obstacles related to its integration into the international democratic community (EU, NATO, OECD and others.) as well as building well-functioning domestic institutions as a cornerstone of a well-functioning civil society. Since creation of the independent Slovakia, one of the most important tasks was security sector reform (SSR). Throughout the whole process of SSR Slovakia gained a large amount of experience that it is trying to give over to other countries which are passing transition, including Afghanistan.

The current situation in Afghanistan (subject to different cultures, religion, history and a permanent state of war) is diametrically different from the situation in Slovakia after 1993. Nevertheless, subjects focusing on building of active civil society and security sector within it, as well as on civil-military relations and democratic control of armed forces, have to be included to the educational process at Afghan universities. Slovak experience shows that it is necessary to focus on the young generation of Afghans and in the case of this project on the academia with an emphasis on university students.

Particularly academia will play a crucial role after 2014, which foresees a gradual withdrawal of the international armed forces. Therefore, it is necessary to train sufficient number of educated professionals in the following years, who can work both in the executive branch as well as in various structures of civil society. In the future, trained experts on security issues at universities should be able to create a legal framework that clearly circumscribes the following areas:

- Security sector reform
- Democratic control of Afghan armed forces and police
- New civil-military relations
- Control the independence of the judiciary and other enforcement units in the state
- Guaranteeing freedom of speech and press
- Gender equality

CENAA is an independent think-tank, focusing mainly on activities in the field of foreign and security policy. Within the framework of these activities CENAA accomplishes projects and research, organizes expert events and issues publications together with partners from Slovakia as well as from abroad.

The aim of CENAA is to play an active role in the strategic discussions in Slovakia and in the Euro-atlantic area, to participate in the education process of future foreign and security policy professionals, and to contribute to the stability and sustainable development in partner countries where we are present through our educational and training programmes.

Slovakia supports the whole process throughout Slovak Aid grant for the common project of Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA) and Afghan Professionals Organisation based in Kabul titled "*Security Sector Reform as a Part of University Education of Afghan Young Professionals – Experience of Slovakia*". Desirable status after the completion of the project (for which the project will seek) will be above all the possibility to claim, that civil society and especially the capacity of academia in the field of SSR in Afghanistan have been

strengthened and have clarified the possible ways of interfering and influencing of the transformational changes in society.

II. METHODOLOGY

The project consists of the three main phases: phase one – evaluation of the situation regarding to the education about security sector reform in Afghanistan. This stage also includes the 6-days exploration visit of Slovak experts in Afghanistan followed by report about Afghan academia needs and challenges; phase two - selection of appropriate persons for dealing with the topic on Afghan side. This includes the 5-days study trip of four selected Afghan experts to Slovakia; phase three – preparation of the curriculum with study texts and its presentation during the second visit of Slovak experts in Afghanistan.

This report follows the exploration visit of three Slovak experts which have been conducted in November 2012. Team of CENAA consisted of Róbert Ondrejcsák, Director of CENAA, Marian Majer, Senior Research Fellow and Zaher Jaan Zaher, President of World Afghan Professionals Organization. It was prepared with the organisational support of Afghan Professionals Organization.



Picture 1: CENAA team (from left): Marian Majer, Róbert Ondrejcsák, Zaher Jaan Zaher.

Team of CENAA led two-day workshop where more than 30 representatives of Afghan universities participated. There were following aims of the workshop:

- to introduce Slovak transformational experience in the fields of security issues and security sector reform including education;
- to inform about Slovak educational system focusing on the subjects of international relations and security studies;
- to focus the attention on particular topics of Slovak experience such as the reform of Armed Forces, reform of police, aspects of human rights in transformation etc.;
- to know details about the current situation in Afghanistan in the area of university and higher education in security issues;
- to explain the Slovak-Afghan relations focusing on the field of education;
- to present Slovakia as a security actor in the modern world.

Concomitant goal of the exploration trip was to deepen the knowledge about the general context of political and social situation in Afghanistan and to promote and expertly prepare a field trip of Afghan experts to Slovakia. To meet this goal the project team conducted meetings with relevant stakeholders and decision-makers from Afghan state administration, academia, United Nations Mission in Afghanistan and private companies.

Based on these circumstances and assumptions the aim of the report is to:

- introduce the general security, political and social context of contemporary situation in Afghanistan;

- introduce the framework where education of the future Afghan leaders is conducted;
- identify the main problems and challenges of higher education in Afghanistan;
- evaluate a situation regarding educating of young Afghans in subjects of international relations and security studies.



Picture 2: Participants of two-day workshop organized in Kabul.

III.OVERVIEW OF AFGHAN INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONTEXT

A) Afghanistan: International Context

Facts about Afghanistan:

- Population: around 30 million
- Area: 647,500 km²
- Official languages: Pashtu, Dari (Persian)
- Independence: since 1919
- Neighbours: Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China

A month after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, the U.S. launched military campaign to oust the Taliban and disrupt al-Qaeda's operations in Afghanistan. Together with the Northern Alliance, the United States, the United Kingdom and other Allied Special Forces' troops freed Kabul. Subsequent fall of Kandahar in December signalled also the fall of the Taliban, which fled most of the northern Afghanistan. However, Mullah Omar, leader of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, leader of the terrorist movement Al-Qaida, remained at large.

In order to fill in the remaining political vacuum, the United Nations had called for the debates amongst former opposition leaders on the future of Afghan government. Discussions resulted in the signature of the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, which created the Afghan Interim Authority led by Interim President Hamid Karzai. Parties to the agreement recognized that

the responsibility for providing security, law and order throughout the country resides with Afghans themselves. However, they requested the assistance of the international community in helping new Afghan authority. UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force

(ISAF) limited to Kabul and its immediate vicinity was established. ISAF was tasked to protect the Afghan people; counter the insurgency; enable the delivery of strong governance and development; and finally build the capacity of the Afghan security forces so they can take lead responsibility for security in their own country.

Reflecting its task and situation on the ground, over the time ISAF has extended its mission in terms of size and geographical scope. Currently, ISAF covers the whole territory of Afghanistan. Fifty ISAF contributing nations deploys 102 011 troops (as of December 3, 2012). Especially countering the insurgency and training of the Afghan security forces became the engine for the massive increase of the troop numbers.

The biggest ISAF contributor, the United States, currently provides mission with 68 000 soldiers. Significant increase has been recorded after president Obama announced his new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2009 the Afghan conflict has reached stalemate. Any tangible progress has been hampered by a lack of troops. While the troops have been able to take ground from the Taliban, they have been unable to hold it. For this reason, additional troops should have boosted the effort in Afghanistan to build the Afghan capacity to allow for a responsible transition of American forces out of Afghanistan. For this, president Obama decided to deploy 30 000 additional troops as quickly as possible and set July 2011 as a date to begin pulling US forces out of the country.

The first country that actually completely end combat mission in Afghanistan was Netherlands. Political row over Dutch participation in ISAF brought down the coalition government and Netherland pulled out 1950 combat troops in August 2010. Despite that their pull out did not make a significant military difference, it had symbolical impact to other countries facing similar opposition due to raising casualties and growing doubts about the war.

Operation ISAF:

- Established in 2001
- Since 2003 led by NATO
- Currently 50 contributing nations

Obama's decision reflected also declining support of public for the war in Afghanistan. While in the wake of 2001 91% of Americans supported the war, over summer 2009, the number of people who were against the war outnumbered the number of people supporting it. The statistic of every year since 2003 recorded the upward tendency of the death toll rate for the soldiers in Afghanistan. The number of casualties over year 2009 more than doubled compared to year 2008. In the same time the US were experiencing a wide federal budget gap that required cuts to domestic programs, increased deficit spending and imposition of new taxes.

Drawdown timeline sketched by the United States was followed by other biggest ISAF contributors. Soon after Obama presented his withdrawal plans, other NATO coalition partners have been specifying when their troops, too, will leave. The US completed withdrawal of additional 33 000 American soldiers in September 2012. Britain also withdrew first 500 troops by the end of the year. German foreign minister welcomed the US decision and underlined its hopes of reducing its own contingent by 500 troops later this year, too. New French president Holland announced France will pull out all French troops (currently more than 500) from Afghanistan by the end of 2013.

The number of troops will further reduce as the number of the Afghan National Forces increases and the ISAF gradually shifts from a combat to an increasingly supporting role. At a

meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers at the end of April 2010 agreement on a common roadmap for progressive security transition to the Afghan authorities was reached. The process began in 2011 and will progress through five phases, finishing in 2014.

On March 2011 Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced the first phase of transition of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces. In seven districts ISAF operations moved towards a more supporting and advisory role, with Afghan National Security Forces assuming the lead in decision making, planning and conduct of security operations. The second phase was announced on 27 November 2011. Following this phase of transition, Afghan Security Forces were responsible for the security of 50% of the Afghan population.

The third phase, was launched on 13 May 2012. It covers over 75% of the Afghan population in every one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Afghan Security Forces are responsible for almost two-thirds of the country's districts. At total 11 provinces are transferred entirely.

Phase 4 has been launched by President Karzai on 31 December, 2012. No date has been given on when the fifth phase might begin. However, the Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan states that by mid 2013, all parts of Afghanistan will begin transition and the Afghan forces will be in the lead for security nation-wide. Final, fifth phase is expected to correlate with the termination of the ISAF combat mission.

Transition would be conditions-based, *“not calendar-driven”* and *“will not equate to withdrawal of ISAF troops”* which will remain in supporting role. Transition would result in Afghan forces gradually assuming full responsibility for security across the whole Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

According to the conclusions of the Lisbon summit, combat mission should end by the end of the year 2014. Declaration agreed in Lisbon identified the mission in Afghanistan as the *“Alliance’s key priority”* with the process of transition to Afghan security responsibility starting in early 2011. Transition would be conditions-based, *“not calendar-driven”* and *“will not equate to withdrawal of ISAF troops”* which will remain in supporting role. Transition

would result in Afghan forces gradually assuming full responsibility for security across the whole Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

The international community will, however remain, committed to Afghanistan even after 2014. The Afghan Government, 55 countries and 25 international organizations gathered on July 8, 2012 in Tokyo to reaffirm their partnership during 2015-2024 known as the Transformation Decade. The conference ended a series of international meetings (Bonn in December 2011, Dushanbe in March 2012, Chicago in May 2012 and Kabul in June 2012). International donors agreed to pledge \$16 billion in development aid to Afghanistan over a period of four years in an attempt to safeguard the transition and transformation process and the work that has been done in the past 10 years.

Tokyo Declaration includes annex entitled *“Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework”* which lays out the principles of partnership between the international community and Afghanistan as a means of providing confidence to Afghans and international donors that the commitment they have made will be monitored and honoured. For the first time declaration also includes

indicators – benchmarks, that will measure progress and condition the financial aid pledged by donors.

B) Afghanistan: Regional Context

Afghanistan is the Central Asian state that is completely landlocked by Iran at the West; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan at the North and the Northeast; by China at the Easternmost top of the Wajhan Corridor; and by Pakistan at the East.

Afghanistan has historically been deeply impacted by rivalries among regional actors and other external powers for political and economic primacy in South and Central Asia. Regional tensions are underscored by ongoing dispute with Pakistan over the legitimacy of the Durand Line border. The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 produced the birth of the newly independent states of Central Asia. It reshaped Afghan security and economic relations particularly with neighbouring countries – Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. While each of regional actors played different role within the Afghan history, the pace and intensity of the Afghan conflict has also been shaped by regional interference and competition.

- **Pakistan:** Despite their dispute over border countries, these two countries share very close economic ties. Landlocked Afghan economy is dependent on Pakistan for the transit of exports and the import of essential commodities. On the other hand Pakistan is interested in benefits of trade and access to Central Asia's resources through Afghan territory. However, trade benefits are considered to be only secondary. Pakistani authoritative decision makers' primary aim at ensuring that Kabul is controlled by friendly regime. Pakistan provides safe haven for the predominantly Pashtun insurgents, particularly Haqqani network, the Quetta Shura and the armed wing of Hizb-e Islami in recruiting, fundraising and planning and conducting cross-border operations against the Afghan government and its NATO allies.
- **India:** Since the fall of Taliban New Dehli's relationship with Kabul has strengthened. India provided Afghanistan with \$ 750 million in aid between 2001 and 2007. On the other hand it received 23% of Afghan total exports. It also expanded its influence over Afghanistan in foreign investment sector through a series of bilateral agreements. India is traditional ally to Northern Alliance networks, which heats up the relations of India and Pakistan. Pakistan is suspicious of the activities of Indian consulates in provinces that border with Pakistan. India fears that Pakistan-backed power sharing agreement of Afghan government with the Taliban would undermine its traditional allies and pose a threat to its national security. India signed a strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan about training, light weapons for Afghan National Army and support of nascent Afghan air force, indicating it attempts to counter Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan.
- **Iran:** The Iranian Revolutionary Guard gave the Northern Alliance critical support during the early days of the US-led military intervention, as Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah strongly supported Hazara and Tajik-dominated mujahidin factions while clashing with Taliban. Cultivating Kabul was not only a national security priority for Iran; it was also a chance to promote a rapprochement with the United States. Iran invested heavily in programs and charities in Afghanistan. It spent \$ 32 million to

assist thousands of Afghan families and students, providing 307 000 students with the opportunity to study in Iran. However, Teheran relations with Washington deteriorated under the Bush administration. As Ahmadinejad was elected president in 2005, Iran's outreach to Taliban became more evident. Nowadays, Teheran maintains a confrontational line with the US presence in Afghanistan, while occasionally sending delegates to meetings in support of the negotiations process.

- **Central Asian States:** Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan share some history and cultural and economic links with Afghanistan. They are concerned about increased military activity along the border, but none of them is well disposed to confront the threat. There are also links between Taliban and fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). IMU fighters played a major role in the Taliban's regime's last battles. The IMU retreated to Wana, Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency.
- **Russia, China:** Like India, Russia places more emphasis on soft power. Under President Putin Moscow has adopted a policy of tactical resistance, for instance skirmishing vigorously on the Security Council over delisting Taliban members. China appears uninterested in anything beyond acquiring natural resources and energy in Afghanistan. Yet, there are signs that any deterioration in stability might force it to change its position. In May 2011, Chinese, Kyrgyz and Tajik security forces held a joint counter-terrorism exercise in Xinjiang.

C) Afghanistan: Domestic Political Context

After the Taliban's defeat, governmental institutions needed to be built from scratch. The 2001 Bonn Agreement addressed two issues within the area of governance. Firstly, it established the framework for a transitional government that would govern Afghanistan until legitimate elections can take place. Secondly, it ruled out drafting of a new constitution on a basis of which the elections could be held.

When Hamid Karzai was elected a new Interim President, the constitutional process started. In essence, the new 2004 constitution was a return to the 1964 blueprint. While the references to the king were removed, the same authoritarian institutional structures were kept in place, and the weak system of checks and balances remained. Within the system of the balance of power between three branches of government dominated powerful executive in Kabul.

Governance:

- Islamic republic
- President: Hamid Karzai (since 2004)
- Vice Presidents: Mohammed Fahim Karim Khalili
- Parliament: National Assembly (Loya Jirga)
- Administration: 34 provinces

A National Assembly of Afghanistan is a bicameral parliament with a Lower House (*Wolesi Jirga*) and an Upper House (*Meshrano Jirga*). 249 members of Wolesi Jirga are elected through the parliamentary elections, 102 members of Meshrano Jirga are selected by Provincial Councils, District Councils and the President.

Electoral Law adopted in 2004 orders the use of single non-transferable vote system (SNTV), where each voter indicates one favoured candidate. While the system appears simple, in multi-seat constituencies it causes problems because if a large proportion of citizens' vote for one candidate, this large group will elect only one

representative. On the other hand possibly a much smaller number of voters will disproportionately elect other favoured candidate. Thus, in large provinces, seats can be won even with small margins of votes. This system is ill-suited to a country such as Afghanistan where constitution creates barriers to political party formation. Under this system, “party” risks having too many votes cast for one candidate and too few for other.

The first presidential elections were held in 2004. President Karzai won the presidential election convincingly in the first round. Despite the widespread concerns over the lack of preparation, elections have seen a high level of voters’ self-discipline. There was far less security incidents that were expected after Taliban threats. High turnout of almost 69% demonstrated the strong desire of the Afghan citizens to participate in the political process. On the other hand, elections of 2004 have been compromised by the incorrect use of the indelible ink, which was supposed to mark voters who already cast the vote.

The parliamentary elections in 2005 saw the lower turnout. Compared to the presidential elections, turnout decreased from 8,1 million to 6,4 million voters. There were no major security incidents on the day of the elections, although seven pro-governmental clerics, five electoral workers and seven candidates were killed during the campaign period.

Yet, the flawed voter registry was a problem for both elections. There is no official data for the population in Afghanistan. Last census was conducted in 1979. Due to the Soviet invasion and a massive movement of the populations it was not completed. Before 2004 elections, 10.6 million citizens were registered for the election. In 2005 register was updated and another 1.7 million voter cards were distributed.

Ahead of the second presidential elections in 2009 roughly seventeen million voter cards were distributed; a figure that probably exceeds the number of eligible voters by about six million. After the election the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) has received 2 842 complaints over ballot-stuffing. Following the investigation and disqualifying some of the ballots, the International Electoral Commission (IEC) determined Karzai had won 49,6% of the vote and Abdullah 30,5% of the vote, thus necessitating a run-off. Yet, Abdullah denounced his participation in the second round because he was afraid of another fraud. This situation left Afghanistan in legal vacuum for which neither constitution nor the electoral law had the answer. Because of that the IEC declared the winner the only candidate left standing – an incumbent president Hamid Karzai. The fraudulent elections without a second round brought the president’s chair to Karzai, nevertheless the legitimacy of his presidency is now in doubt.

Instead of full scale electoral reform, on 18 February 2010 president released the decree on the electoral law, which created unclear provision over the range and scope of regulatory powers of electoral institutions and the processes dealing with complaints. By a near unanimous vote the Wolesi Jirga rejected the decree in March, but when it reached the Meshrano Jirga, Karzai pressured members to declare that constitution prohibits parliament from discussing or amending electoral law in the last year of parliament’s term. The electoral decree was thus adopted by default and the dissatisfaction with the elections repeated again during the parliamentary elections in 2010.

The prolonged crisis over the election’s results has further undermined President Karzai’s credibility. Clashes between the executive, legislature and judiciary are paralysing government and weakening already fragile institutions.

Between polling day and three days after the announcement of the preliminary results, the ECC received 2 724 serious complaints. In total, IEC excluded 1 330 782 ballots out of 4 271 908 ballots cast. Losing candidates held demonstrations and rallies accusing the IEC and the ECC from the electoral fraud and manipulating results by throwing out valid votes. In December 2010 the Supreme Court established a special tribunal for elections complaints, which disqualified 62 candidates. In response Wolesi Jirga passed a no-confidence vote against six of the nine Supreme Court judges. Week later fights erupted in parliament over whether to initiate impeachment procedure against President Karzai. A deal was eventually struck, under intense political pressure only 9 out of 62 candidates were disqualified by the IEC.

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Yet, Afghanistan will be facing new general elections shortly. President Karzai's term will end in 2014 thus necessitating new presidential elections. It is very probable that under current conditions the 2014 elections will be plagued by massive fraud, leading to a constitutional crisis. Under the current constitutional and electoral law the government is not equipped with the means to cope with legal challenges to polling results. Nearly decade after the first elections, parliament and president remain divided over the responsibilities of constitutionally-mandated electoral bodies. It is also unclear which state institution has final authority to adjudicate disputes before and after the elections.

The debate on elections now concentrates mostly on five key areas: timing of the elections; the roles, responsibilities and structure of electoral institutions; the format of the voting mechanism; the status of the voter registry; and the procedure for resolving electoral complaints and disputes.

“Goal: Conduct credible, inclusive and transparent Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 according to the Afghan Constitution, in which eligible Afghan citizens, men and women, have the opportunity to participate freely without internal or external interference in accordance with the law” (Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, 2012)

The international community expressed its concern about the lack of clarity on the elections during the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan. Participants called on the government to hold “credible, inclusive and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2015 according to the Afghan Constitution”. In return for financial aid pledged at the conference they require Afghanistan to “develop, by early 2013, a comprehensive election timeline through 2015 for electoral preparations and polling dates”. On July 26 Karzai issued a presidential decree outlining an electoral timetable, which touches on a number of anti-corruption provisions mentioned in Tokyo Declaration. Revised presidential decree left the lower house of parliament and awaits review by the upper house now.

On 1 August 2012 President Karzai also expressed his general support the improvement of the voter registry. Three-person team facilitated by UNDP assessed the means and recommended to compile an entirely new voter registry in a phased approach in which voters would

register at specified polling centres across Afghanistan over six months. In insecure or remote areas they would be allowed to register one or two days before the elections.

D) Afghanistan: Domestic Security Context

The success of the elections is highly dependent on the actual security conditions on the ground ahead of and during 2014 polls. Insecurity restricts campaigning by candidates and participation of the observation missions that then in turn enables ballot stuffing while missing voter registry. But the completion of a new voter registry will be difficult in remote and insecure areas. Moreover the Taliban threatens to kill anyone registered for voting as well as electoral registration workers and election staff. Due to security reasons, about 23% of polling stations also remained closed in 2010.

Yet, security has worsened since 2004 elections despite that the international community multiplied its efforts in terms of human and financial resources. Year 2011 was the deadliest and the most violent year for foreign military troops as well as Afghan civilians since the invasion in 2001, continuing the trend that has occurred every year since 2003. In 2011 UNAMA documented 3 021 civilian deaths, as increase of 8% compared to 2010. It attributed responsibility for 77% of the deaths to anti-Government elements, an increase of 14% compared to the same period in 2010. Security deteriorated especially shortly after President Karzai announced his plans to start transition in several provinces.

During 2012 security incidents lowered, with the figures more comparable to 2010 levels. From May 1 to 31 July, that is the traditional summer fighting season, number of the incidents decreased by 30%. This is to result from the interdiction by Afghan and international security forces of insurgents, arms shipments and funding together with the redeployment of international forces.

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Provinces in the south, south-east and east of Afghanistan, such as Ghanzni, Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar and Nangarhar, remain to be the least safe. Targeted killings of civilians, including Government officials and workers, community elders and religious actors also pose a challenge to Afghan security. The killings of NATO officers in Kabul at the interior ministry and in Kandahar, and the rise of the attacks of Afghan forces on ISAF soldiers further threaten training ANSF efforts.

The surge target strength of 157 000 Afghan national police officers and 195 000 Afghan national army personnel by the end of 2012 is ahead of the schedule. At the end of July, 149 000 police and 185 000 army officers were enrolled. Despite that the Afghan National Security Forces continues to make progress in meeting growth benchmarks, there are concerns over its capabilities and quality.

IV. EDUCATION

A) Laws, regulations and administration of the education system

The right of all citizens of Afghanistan for the education is granted in the Article 43 of the **Constitution of 2004**. It states *“Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be provided up to the level of the B.A. (lisâns), free of charge by the state. The state is obliged to devise and implement effective programs for a balanced expansion of education all over Afghanistan, and to provide compulsory intermediate level education. The state is also required to provide the opportunity to teach native languages in the areas where they are spoken. “*

“Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be provided up to the level of the B.A. (lisâns), free of charge by the state. The state is obliged to devise and implement effective programs for a balanced expansion of education all over Afghanistan, and to provide compulsory intermediate level education.”
(Article 43, The Constitution of Afghanistan)

While constitution obliges state to establish and operate higher, general and vocational education, it also permits foreign persons to set up higher, general and vocational educational private institutes in accordance with the law (Article 46). State shall devise and implement a unified educational curriculum based on the provisions of the sacred religion of Islam, national culture, and in accordance with academic principles (Article 45).

The Educational Law approved by the Government in 2008 introduced 9 years of compulsory and free education. Education is divided into 4 levels:

- **Pre-school Education:** includes nursery schools, which are expected to cater children aged three months to 3 years, and kindergarten for children aged 3-6 years.
- **Primary Education:** comprises grade first to the end of grade six. The admission age is 7.
- **Secondary Education:** is divided into two three-year cycles. Lower secondary education (grades 7-9) is still compulsory. Upper secondary school (grades 10-12) is vocational. Upper secondary school further divides into natural sciences or social studies. Young Afghans can continue in Islamic Studies or in Technical-Professional, Vocational and Artistic Education.

Post-secondary education (grades 13-14) is offered in vocational education colleges, Islamic colleges and teacher training colleges.

- **Higher Education:** tertiary and higher education is provided at universities and higher education institutes. Admission depends on results of the general entrance exam. Bachelor's degree normally takes four years to complete, master's degree last two years and doctoral degrees usually continue for at least three more years. The academic year is divided into two semesters, each takes 16 weeks.

Education programs are implemented directly by the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**. It designs policies, administers, directs and applies educational objectives, develops curriculum and establishes and equips schools, madrassas and teachers training institutions, technical-professional, vocational and artistic institutions and centers for literacy. It is responsible for management of the issues related to educational levels lower than the bachelor degree. MoE is based in Kabul with 34 Provincial Departments and 412 urban and rural districts around Afghanistan

The **Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)** facilitates equitable access to higher education to all who are academically qualified. It establishes institutions that provide high quality teaching, research and service and produce graduates, who are competitive in a global economy; contribute to economic growth, social development, nation building and the stability of the economy. MoHE also oversees training of secondary school teachers and teachers at the tertiary level.

The **Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Martyrs and Disabled** provides vocational skills training through its 17 training centres.

Ministry of Education or donors also contract **non-governmental organizations** to implement specific programs, such as teacher education, literacy courses, and provisions of supplies to schools. NGOs played an important role during the war and conflict by filling the service delivery gap. When the government was not in a position to provide the basic social services in large parts of the country, they had no coordination and alignment problems. As ministries has strengthened their policy making, coordination and supervisory role, there a need to improve the coordination among ministries, NGOs and donors.

B) Current situation

• General Education

In 2001, less than a million boys were enrolled in 3 400 general schools taught by 20 700 male teachers. Only four Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) were functional in four out of 30 Afghan provinces with a total of 190 male students and 50 male lecturers. Females did not have the access to the institute. 38 Technical and Vocational Education and Training schools were partly active with only 1 510 male students and 550 instructors.

Literacy courses were providing literacy to only 22 000 male students.

Progress report of the Ministry of Education for year 2011 indicates the number of students in general education increased to 8 008 676, with 3 100 000 of female students. In 13 562 schools there were 172 291 teachers. There were 130 Technical and Vocational Education and Training Schools with 37 329 students and 1 439 instructors.

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In order to raise the awareness of the families about the importance of education public awareness campaign was also conducted. The literacy program has also launched 108 public awareness programs throughout the country. As a result number of literacy learners in 22 160 courses reached 553 190, including 53% female enrolled.

- **Higher education**

Years ago Afghanistan had one of the most respected and well organized higher education systems in the region. However, system has been devastated by years of conflict. The violence resulted in death or escape of millions of people. Many of these were faculty members or staffs who are missing on the universities now.

Statistical information

Tertiary education deteriorated dramatically starting in 1990s, when it had a student population of 24 333. By 1995 the number of students enrolled had fallen to 17 370. In 2001, only 8881 young Afghans were studying at the universities. The enrollment rate in tertiary education in 1995 was one of the lowest worldwide. Less than 2 percent of the population over 25 years of age had any tertiary education. In 2009, some 62 000 students (48 980 male and 13 020 female) were enrolled to tertiary education. In 2010 there were 100 000 high school graduates.

According to the Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011-2012, there are currently 69 higher education institutions in Afghanistan, 23 of them state sponsored (governmental) and the rest private. Number of faculties is on both types of institutions rising year by year reaching 148 in governmental and 137 in private universities in 2012 (compared to 124 and 72 in 2010). Other important indicators have risen too: compared to the previous figures from 2010 total number of students increased from 84 000 to 112 367 (more than 77 000 of them at state sponsored universities) with noticeable growth of female students (from 15 000 to 20 000) and number of teachers from 4028 to 4873.

The biggest state university by number of students is Kabul University (15 214) followed by Herat University (8691) and Nangarhar University (7538). The biggest private higher education institution is Dawat Higher Education with 6626 students. The most popular faculties are Faculty of Education (17 181 students), Faculty of Literature (9890 students) and Faculty of Agriculture (8235 students).

Challenges for higher education

Yet, Afghanistan's development challenges are enormous and solutions require strong innovative leadership, well-coordinated science and technology structures and human resources. Therefore the improvement of the tertiary education in Afghanistan is a key priority for the future development. Higher education has been marked as one of the 8 pillars of the Afghan National Development Strategy.

The improvement of the tertiary education in Afghanistan is a key priority for the future development. Higher education has been marked as one of the 8 pillars of the Afghan National

The MoHE has set a number of goals designed to improve the quality of higher education including curriculum development, a merit-based recruitment and

promotion system, policies designed to increase research and publications, improvement of facilities (e.g. libraries, ICT, Internet access), development of graduate programs, foreign language instruction (especially English), quality improvement and accreditation. Quality improvement also requires improved student services, advising, health, and placement as well as enhanced capacity to insure the integrity, transparency, and independence of the national entrance examination.

Education in the field of International Relations and Security Studies

Although there are 30 different types of faculties in Afghan universities, there is currently no specialized state sponsored institution aimed on the education in the field of international relations and security studies. Nevertheless, some subjects belonging to the theories of international relations are taught for one year at the faculties of law and social sciences.

Similar situation is at private institutions, however, they differ by providing better school equipment and lecturers from abroad. For instance American Afghanistan University in Kabul is linked to the several U.S. universities enabling them to exploit their personal resources.

There are also a few research institutions more or less associated with the state universities, such as National Centre for Policy Research in Kabul. In their capacity they deal also with peace studies¹ (in general, it can be understood as a synonymous for security studies), but with no direct impact on teaching curricula at the particular universities. Thus, subject of peace or security studies is still missing in the framework of Afghan higher education.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the decade of transition and reconstruction, Afghanistan is still far from being a stabilized country. Mostly security situation is very unstable and social relations are ruptured by animosities among dozens of different ethnic and social groups. Country is currently on the eve of withdrawal of international military presence what strengthens the feelings of uncertainty.

Especially in this situation the conditions for education of new Afghan generation are crucial. Changes in educational system were characterized by numerous positive features and many statistical figures confirm this trend. However, gains in personal and institutional quantity are balanced by persistent problems with the lack of adequate material and human resources.

Afghan higher education offers quite wide variety of opportunities for students interested in social sciences. Nevertheless, there are still no such opportunities for specialized education



Picture 3: Two-day workshop in Kabul

¹ NCPR has four departments, one of them Department for Peace and Conflict Studies

in the international relations and security studies. Young leaders educated also in these subjects are, however, very important for fulfilling the goals during the next decade of transformation. But to be able to meet the goals of the project, it is necessary to overcome several important obstacles:

- Low level of public awareness about importance of security sector reform processes and education in this area;
- General distrust of young generation towards all “security information” coming from the western world. This is caused by many negative experience over the last more than decade associated with robust international military presence;
- Deficiency of specialized workplaces dealing with these subjects. As mentioned before, there is no professionalized institution (university, faculty or department) aimed on the education in the field of international relations and security studies.
- Fragmentation of relevant people from academia with satisfactory professional background, who would be able to promote the necessity to involve these subjects to the university curricula.
- Institutional and organizational unpreparedness for establishing new departments to be able to sustain all the efforts.

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