

## Literacy education is the best investment to reduce poverty.

“Education is our path to change. Minds and hearts are brightened via learning.” — Galit Breen.

Education is the main key to success and prosperous living.

Unfortunately, the development of the education system in Afghanistan faces many serious problems.

Many education organizations try to improve the education opportunities under very difficult circumstances of permanent conflicts and war.



The Afghan National Association for Adult Education is one of them. ANAF AE was founded in September 2005 as an umbrella organization to foster the development of local adult education centres.

ANAF AE sees itself as a national forum for the promotion of education strategies and programs for disadvantages groups, young adults, with a particular focus on literacy learning, basic education and lifelong learning. The education programs of ANAF AE open new opportunities for young people in transition from school to working life or to higher education.

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Literacy and numeracy are crucial components of a set of essential general skills and competencies for performing daily tasks, leading healthy lives, finding work, engaging in social activities. These essential skills form the basis for many other learning and training opportunities, for basic, formal, vocational and higher education. Strong literacy skills have great potentials to enhance people’s ability to create new life opportunities.

The education of women is traditionally neglected. Afghan women experienced tremendous burden throughout the history, especially over the last decades of conflict and insecurity.

In many rural areas only about eight percent of women can read and write. In the literacy programs of ANAF AE and DVV International, female participants learn reading, writing and numeracy, reflect on their role in the family and community, deal with the



topics of health and hygiene and develop ideas for their own economic activities.

The literacy programs of ANAF AE and its partner DVV International have a direct and positive effect on family health and on school attendance of children. The literacy programs of ANAF AE and its partner DVV International empower women who suffered most.

In other literacy programs ANAF AE and its partner WHH support the reintegration of returnees and IDPs.

Literacy education combined with small income generation activities, like chicken raising, support personal development and the income of the refugee and IDP families.

ANAF AE and its partner DVV International conduct qualified training programs for literacy facilitators and supervisors from different communities.

Literacy learning and adult education are crucial conditions for the stability and the prosperous development of Afghanistan, a fact that is all too often neglected in international interventions that should support Afghanistan.

## **Strengthen the important role of literacy education**

### **Partnership and Networking**

Literacy is a priority on the development and education agenda in Afghanistan. But the reality is very different. We can observe a dramatic underfunding in this important area of essential education.

Improving literacy rates and life opportunities require combined efforts of the Ministry of Education and other partners within the Government of Afghanistan, as well as the support and participation of the communities, of the private sector, of Civil Society and non-governmental actors.

ANAF AE supports the cooperation of national and international literacy providers. Regular coordination meetings, organized at national level and in in nine province, improve the partnership, avoid overlapping and create synergies.

ANAF AE and DVV International in cooperation with the National Literacy Department also conduct workshops at national level for all important literacy providers, in order to support professional dialogue among literacy managers and practitioners.

ANAF AE actively contributes to the work of the new National Mobilization Committee for Literacy Education under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and at the same time promotes literacy education among the network of Civil Society organisations, e.g. like in the



'Partnering for Public Good Working Group' which promotes cross-sector collaboration to support sustainable development within each sector and the national development processes.

In addition, ANAF AE through its initial role in the National Education Coalition supported the events organised during the Global Action Week (GAW E). The highlight of the GAW E in 2017 was on 'Accountability for SDG 4 and Citizen Participation' for delivering on the full SDG 4 agenda.

In this context, ANAF AE with its national and international network partners conducted a national media conference on May 21, on the current situation of the education in Afghanistan. ANAF AE with its partners presented a national joint declaration "Stand-up for education- It is time to deliver". This declaration is recommending changes in 5 key areas:

1. Make schools safe for Learners,
2. Budget allocation and aid effectiveness,
3. Enrolment and attainment in schools,
4. Adult Literacy and Vocational Training,
5. Teachers' Capacity Building.

## **Young people can make important contributions to economic growth and social change.**

Not only girls and young women, the whole young generation is suffering from the conflict situation. The country has one of the youngest populations; more than 63% are under 25 years old. Insecurity, low economic development and the problems of the present education system do not provide future perspectives and many young people already left or are ready to leave the country.

The objectives of ANAF AE's education services are to increase access and to expand the provision of qualified adult education for young adults in line with the new National Education Strategic Plan.

ANAF AE runs a Network of 23 Adult and Community Learning Centres (ALCs and CLCs) in Kabul, Charikar, Mazar, Maimana, Sar-e-Pol, Faizabad, Takhar, Kunduz, Faryab, Samangan and Herat.

Qualified education programs of the ANAF AE Adult and Community Learning Centres enable social advancement and economic participation, open new personal perspectives, better career opportunities and economic empowerment in particular for young people to build their future lives in their communities.

ANAF AE Adult and Community Learning Centres provide education courses in the field of IT, Science, Konkori, Social, Art and Culture, Language, Employability, Literacy and Basic Education). IT courses, like Office Programs, Hardware, and Networks, help young students to find a job opportunity.

In addition, the teachers of the ALCs and CLCs conduct, Math, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Physics, Chemistry, Biology courses; complementary to formal school education. Furthermore, 9 months Konkori preparation courses support young people to join higher education. Young adults can also join the basic Dari and Pashto language courses. Islamic Education courses are conducted in most of the ALCs and CLCs.

Many young people interested in art join the Calligraphy, Nastaliq, drawing and painting courses. Most young learners come to learn the English language. ANAF AE offers the Cambridge, Interchange Four System, foreign language for adults and the "Market Leader"

modules which are ideal for students, job-seekers and employed staff who need to learn the English language in jobs related fields, like business, accounting, in project works or IT.

The employability courses of ANAF AE help young people to improve their personal chances to find some basic jobs and earn some income, to support their livelihoods.

The employability courses includes Office Skills and management, finance and accounting, Office and business related English and IT, Graphic design, Video design, public speaking, beautification, tailoring and mobile phone repairing. ANAF AE also provides job related education for groups of employees from NGOs or other institutions.



In 2016 about 360 teachers of the ALCs and CLCs improved their skills during the trainings provided by the Master Trainers and the Heads of Education Departments in the Adult Learning Centres. A new training framework curriculum for the teachers is still underway.

About 216.000 young participants (138.326 male and 78.023 female), mainly 16 to 26 years old, were counted all education programs of the ANAF AE Network of Education Centres in 2016.



These positive trends show the huge demand for education among young people in Afghanistan and the problems of the government to develop the education system.

Deeply affected by war and conflicts for nearly 40 years, the development of Afghanistan's education system remains fragile.

Afghanistan has one of the youngest populations in the world. Hundreds of thousand returnees from Pakistan and Iran and IDPs bring additional pressure on the education system and are one of the reasons for a fast growing urbanisation processes.



The government has problems to provide the necessary education services. Quality education for the rapidly growing number of young adults is a top demand and a national priority. But there are still huge and significant obstacles to the development of the education system within the country, due to lack of funding, unsafe school buildings, ongoing conflicts and cultural norms.

ANAFAE's education programs are an important investment into the future of the young generation in Afghanistan. Most young Afghans are encouraged to create their own personal perspectives and a future for their families. They want to get out of the vicious circle and see education as their only chance to improve their situation.

With new qualifications and competences, young people can make important contributions to economic growth and social change.