

Afghanistan Girls' Schools: Achieving Results in a Difficult Environment



PROJECT DOCUMENTS

- [Emergency Education Rehabilitation and Development](#)
- [Education Quality Improvement Program](#)
- [Strengthening Higher Education Program](#)
- [Second Education Quality Improvement](#)
- [Afghanistan Skills Development Project](#)

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MARCHING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE

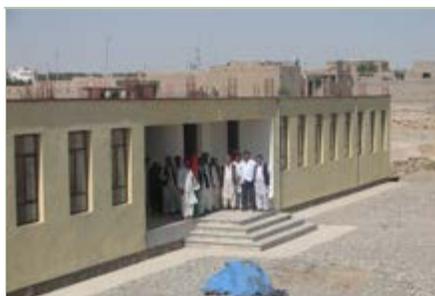
February 25, 2010 - When **Mohammad Yousuf** returned home to Afghanistan in 2003 after spending more than 12 years as a refugee in a neighboring country, the first thing he wanted was a better life for his children and grandchildren. "*When we heard that Afghanistan was finally free and peace had returned, I brought my family home,*" says the 65 year old grandfather of a large extended family.



Mohammad Yousuf

But, Yousuf's ancestral village in western Herat province had suffered greatly during the decades of conflict. "*We faced a lot of problems when we returned,*" **Yousuf** recalled. "*There was no water, no road, no electricity, and no school or health center.*"

Despite these difficulties, the children's future was the greatest concern for all the 500 families in the village. The nearest school was miles



New school building

away. The children had to walk almost two hours to get there. The girls had to be escorted by a male family member each time they went to school and back.

By 2007, almost four years after returning home, all the children in Yousuf's family were in school. "*We have a school in the village for both boys and girls,*" said **Yousuf**. "*All the children attend classes regularly, especially those who couldn't go to school earlier because of the distance.*"

EDUCATION UNDER FIRE

Afghanistan emerged from more than two decades of war and civil strife in fall of 2001. The country was essentially left out of global development for 25 years. In the eight years since the end of the Taliban rule, Afghanistan has made significant strides in overcoming decades of war and strife, and is working toward catching up on all the lost years of development.

Under Taliban rule (1996-2001), the country was plagued by continuing conflict, and international isolation. The education system was virtually dismantled: girls were officially excluded from the system. Boys in school were taught a curriculum limited to religious content. **The net enrollment rate for girls was estimated at 3%.**

After the fall of Taliban in 2001, more and more Afghan families returned home after living the war years as refugees in neighboring countries. As a result village populations across the country have swelled and there was increased demand for education. The presence of a good school in the village is a high priority for returning refugees. They wanted their children to have a better life than they have had.

WORLD BANK'S ROLE

Recognizing that education would play a vital role in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, **World Bank's International Development Association (IDA)** along with other International partners launched since 2001 a series of education programs aimed at providing access and quality education at all levels with a focus on girls. Specifically, these programs aimed to reconstruct the education sector across the country.

Since 2001, the projects have brought new life to education and particularly benefited girls. **Enrollment in grades 1-12 increased from 3.9 million in 2004 to 6.2 million in 2008. Girls' enrollment skyrocketed from 839,000 to more than 2.2 million, and boys' from 2.6 million to 3.9 million**—the highest enrollment in the history of Afghanistan.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Expanding Access to Quality Education

IDA at Work in Afghanistan. [Read More »](#)

Knowledge on Fire

Girls' Schools in Afghanistan Face Highest Risk of Violence. [Read More »](#)

Afghanistan Skills Development Project

is designed to increase the number of skilled Afghans and create a high-quality technical vocational education. [Read More »](#)

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A wide range of social and economic measures on Afghanistan, including links to the World Bank's most important online development databases. [Read More »](#)

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