

AFGHANISTAN  
SCHOOL.CA

AFGHANISTAN  
SCHOOL.CA

# EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

*A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE*



BY: Mohib Israr B.A., M.TESOL

# EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

## *A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE*



**THE SOVIET WAR COMBINED WITH CIVIL WARS IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE NEGATIVELY AFFECTED ITS EDUCATION SYSTEM.**

During the last three decades of war, many schools were destroyed, books and teaching materials were burned and most of the professional teachers fled to other countries. The education system was ravaged on an extreme level when the Taliban ruled over Afghanistan from 1996 until late 2011. Formal education was forbidden for girls while boys were allowed to go to schools. However, the curriculum was highly dominated by religious studies instead of science, technology, literature, etc.

### Curriculum and Teaching

Almost all schools in rural areas and many of the high schools in urban areas apply a curriculum that was designed 30 years ago. This could be slow to change as there are few organizations actively involved in the design of curriculum and teaching materials.

The high school curriculum includes subjects like English language, Pashto language, Dari language, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Religious Studies, and Mathematics and Algebra.

Even though Science subjects are taught in Afghanistan, only 5% of high schools have a science lab for students to use. The lack of science labs is not the only shortage; it is extremely rare for them to have technology (computer or internet) available in high schools. [Editor's note: a computer lab with internet access will be included in the new school built by Rotary.]

Usually students attend class six days a week, Saturday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon. [Editor's note: At the Rotary sponsored school children will attend in three shifts with girls and boys attending in different shifts.]

A teacher-centered teaching methodology is common in Afghanistan from primary schools up to the university level. The classroom atmosphere is often tense and the teachers are recognized as the authorized decision makers and leaders. Also punishment remains a common practice in the Afghanistan schooling system of today.

Social learning practices such as peer work, group work, activity-based learning and other useful methods are not used in the teaching process at all. There is very little entertainment for students in Afghan high schools. The lack of sufficient playgrounds combined with the strict behaviour of the teachers cause many students to leave school each year.



BY: Mohib Israr B.A., M.TESOL

## School Buildings

The school buildings are constructed of bricks, cement and mud. Tents, huts, the open air and the shade from trees are used as class settings for many schools. The schools within the city are made of concrete and are in comparatively good condition. However, due to thousands of returning Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries and the constant increase in interest for education, the classrooms in many schools cannot meet demand. Therefore the number of students in each class jumps from 30 to 50. Even in many high schools within the city, classes are held under trees and on verandas. There are simply insufficient and inadequate schools in rural areas. Therefore the children are traveling for miles to and from school in many cases. Most of the schools cancel classes when the weather is very windy or rainy.

When there is a school building in place, classrooms in both rural and urban schools have no chairs or tables for students. They normally use tarpaulin and sheets made of straw and plastic on which they sit and work. Due to the large number of students in each class and exposure to the elements students get sick easily and epidemic diseases spread easily. There are no air conditioned facilities for the students so most of them get sick both in winter and summer.

Cities are fortunate to have a few schools that have been recently built by the government and other organizations such as Rotary Canada. These newly built schools not only provide a relaxed classroom environment, but also provide toilets, playgrounds and access to clean drinking water. These facilities directly affect the learning and health condition of the students.

The pictures in this document show our school's condition before and after the support of CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] and Canadian Rotary. I visited this school in May 2009 when there was only an idea of a constructing a building for the students. When I first visited this school to take photos of students and write a brief report to Rotary, I shared the idea of a new school building with the teachers and headmaster of the school. They all took it as just an empty promise made to them by many other NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations.] However, they extended their full cooperation with a shaky hope.

Today after two years, the dream of the students and teachers has come true and now they have a wonderful building with all the facilities, something millions of other students in Afghanistan do not have.

Building schools in Afghanistan will build bridges between the people of Canada and Afghanistan. This will also provide opportunities for boys and girls to be active and respectful members of the local and international communities.



# AFGHANISTAN SCHOOL.CA



Mr. Mohib Israr has a Bachelor of Arts in English Language from Kabul University and his Masters in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from Central Michigan University, USA. He was able to attend CMU through the assistance of the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship Program.

Mr. Israr teaches English at Nangarhar University on a volunteer basis, while his full-time job is serving as the Regional coordinator of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development/ National Solidarity Program (MRRD/NSP). He manages and supervises seven provincial offices in the eastern region and runs a private primary school in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

Mohib Israr is a member of the Rotary Club of Jalalabad, Afghanistan.



A Project of Districts &  
Clubs Across Canada  
Un projet des clubs et  
districts Rotary du Canada

