



## Afghanistan

Farooq Wardak  
Minister of Education



*Farooq Wardak was appointed as Minister of Education in October 2008. He started his career as a health officer with the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) providing cross border medical help to the war wounded people in Afghanistan. During the 1980s he served as Director of Health Programs for SCA that was the largest and most extensive health services program of the time inside Afghanistan at a time when the country was occupied by former Soviet Union. Also, Mr. Wardak managed an extensive and worldwide largest UNDP Community Based Rehabilitation program for disabled people from 1996 to 2001. From 2002-2004, Mr. Wardak worked as Director of the Constitutional Commission Secretariat and later the Secretariat of the Constitutional Loya Jirga, the grand Assembly that ratified the constitution. In 2004, he was appointed as Director of the Joint Election Management Body's Secretariat (a UN and Afghan Government body), organized the first voter registration process and first ever presidential election.. In February 2005, he was appointed as Cabinet Secretary and Director General of Office of Administrative Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In January 2006, Mr. Wardak was appointed as the Minister of State for Parliamentary. Mr. Wardak has played key role in the establishment of the new government in Afghanistan, and most of the important benchmarks of the Boon Accord.*

### **Inclusive Education in Afghanistan: Valuing individual differences of all citizens**

The Constitution and the Education Law of Afghanistan guarantee all children the right to education regardless of their gender, their abilities and disabilities, as well as their backgrounds and circumstances. All children have the right to quality education in their home communities as part of early child development, pre-school, primary and secondary education programs particularly to those who are currently excluded from mainstream education or vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion.

We in Afghanistan, in the light of principle of Islam and our Constitution, see inclusive education as respecting diversity, equity, quality of education, non-discrimination and equal access to education for all citizens of the country.

- To move towards inclusion, the Ministry of Education has taken various measures to ensure access to quality education for all.
- Building of more than 30 thousands new classrooms to provide access to education for all;
- Development of new curriculum to raise quality of education;
- Establishing teacher training colleges at provincial and district level to train teachers in the rural areas;
- Introduction of Human Rights education in schools through new curriculum and textbooks for primary and secondary education;
- Establishment of inclusive and child-friendly pilot schools;
- Development of policy for early childhood education and development;

**International Conference on Education,  
48th session, 25-28 November 2008  
“Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future”**



- Development of programs for children with special or individual learning needs;
- Strengthening coordination among various stakeholders in society geared towards creating inclusion;
- Development of School Management Committees to ensure community participation in school management and monitoring of quality of education;
- Promotion of Inclusive education to the private sector;

Access to education and learning opportunities have improved over the past few years. The Afghan education system is not yet inclusive of all children but a very promising beginning has been made. The percentage of girls of the school population has grown from almost 0% in 2001 to over 37% in 1387 (2008). The challenges faced by nomadic (Kuchi) children are being addressed by the government as mobile schools units as well as dormitories have been established to increase enrolment of Kuchi children. An increasing number of children with disabilities are enrolled in school, either in special schools, integrated schools or in the inclusive/child-friendly pilot schools.

Poor infrastructure, lack of human resources (both quality and quantity), social and cultural barriers, gender disparity among students and teachers, linguistic diversity, poor quality of education in general, examination systems, as well as lack of relevance of the curriculum for large population groups are among the main challenges Afghanistan has been and is still facing to implement education for all through inclusive education system and settings.

The enrolment rate of children in general, and of girls, children with disabilities as well as children from minority backgrounds in particular, is adversely affected by the difficult security situation in large parts of Afghanistan. The lack of security and the targeting of schools, teachers and pupils by insurgents and terrorists are some of the main barriers to education in general and education of children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education in particular.

Despite all odds the government of Afghanistan has committed itself to providing quality access to education for its citizens.

“We must remember that when children with different abilities and from different backgrounds learn together in our schools, they will also learn to live and work together in our communities for the common good of our nation” ( National Report of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, October 2008).