

Project: Strengthening Public Administration Education in Afghanistan (SPA-GIZ)

Strengthening Public Administration Education project in Afghanistan (SPA-GIZ) is working closely with two main Stakeholders, the Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education) in establishing a Bachelor's degree program offered in five universities in Afghanistan (Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar and Kandahar University) and the Afghanistan Civil Service Commission Institute (ACSI). The goal of the project, Strengthening Public Administration Education (SPA) in Afghanistan is to outline the foundations for standardized and consistent public administration education in the public sectors in Afghanistan. The overall objective is to help and strengthen the Afghan public administration, thus enabling the Afghan state to provide services for its citizens more effectively and efficiently.

Promoting Gender Equity in Public Administration and Policy Making Rules:

In many developing countries like Afghanistan, public administration often remains a patriarchal institution, perpetuating gender-biased traditions, attitudes and practices. In an ideal world, public administration is guided by principles of fairness, accountability, justice, equality and non-discrimination, and the civil service should serve as a model where women and men equally participate and lead, including in decision-making.

I have personally worked persistently (despite many obstacles) to support the Bachelor's in Public Administration(BPA) female faculty members at five BPA faculties of Afghanistan (Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar and Kandahar) and offered them guidance and opportunities to improve and enhance their capacity through various methods and approaches. Initially, there were no female lecturers in some of the BPA faculties. Now four out of five faculties (all except Nangarhar University) have female lecturers (shown in table 1.1).

I have set my personal goals for improving gender equity in all five-university faculties and succeeded in getting more female lecturers than we have had in previous years to participate in out of country training activities in 2014 and 2015. Previously, one or two female teachers attended the summer and winter academies (which were held in Delhi and Ankara). However, the table below shows now 35 % of the participants are women.

I have insisted that these academies include meetings and gatherings (which I have organized) for female lecturers to discuss with me both their workplace issues and their academic needs. I have encouraged them not to lose the opportunity to enrich their knowledge. Hence, I was pleased to see that 30% of the attendees at the 2015 winter academy that took place in India New-Delhi were women. Moreover, two of the three Afghan BPA lecturers who presented at the NISPACee International Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia were women!

Numbers of Male and Female Lecturers in Public Administration Faculties										
S/No.	Balkh BPAF		Herat BPAF		Kabul BPAF		Kandahar BPAF		Nangarhar BPAF	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	M
2012	3	1	3	0	5	1	0	0	1	0
2013	5	3	3	4	5	2	3	0	8	0
2014	6	2	6	3	5	3	4	0	10	0
2015	6	2	8	4	6	3	2	0	15	0

Table 1.1

Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. Women and men have the equal right to participate in governance and, through that participation, contribute to the redefining of political priorities, placing new questions on the political agenda and providing new perspectives on mainstream political issues. Consequently, ensuring women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making, and increasing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

Indeed, women's representation at the highest levels of national and international decision-making has not changed in the five years in Afghanistan. Women continue to be in the minority in national parliaments. Women's lives should be viewed within the social, economic and political framework of the society, and not outside of it.

Gender quality feature:

The partners whom we are working with are very positive and supportive of what we are doing in case of gender quality. For instance, we provide Muharam for those women who cannot go out to other provinces or out of the country for official purposes and for participation in any conferences and forums. The women can also take their children to another country or other places and all the costs and accommodations are provided by our project. Our partners are satisfied with the exceptional work of GIZ towards gender mainstreaming and their response has resulted in a special recognition of GIZ's efforts to support women among the community and other donor agencies. Moreover, the SPA project has prearranged and structured the following activities:

1. Providing English language courses in neighboring countries for both culture exposure and professional development and a meant for exposure for both men and women (BPA faculty

members). To date, however, only two male deans who are also lecturers have taken advantage of this opportunity.

2. Introducing of female/male lecturers to international conferences. For instance, the SPAS project supported Afghan participants in International NISPAcee Conferences at Serbia-Belgrade in 2013, Hungary in 2014 and Republic of Tbilisi-Georgia in 2015. We had around 12-15 participants including male and female lecturers who presented academic papers.
3. Nominating female/male lecturers for Master and PHD degree programs inside and outside the country.
4. Providing short-term fellowships for both male and female BPA lecturers.

Gender and RBM:

1. Increment of female lecturers from 5 % to 35% in summer and winter academies
2. Recruitment growth of female lecturers in Public Administration Faculties, up to 10%.
3. Eleven (8 male and 3 female) BPA lecturers presented research papers at the International NISPAcee Conferences held in Serbia-Belgrade, Hungary and the Republic of Georgia.
4. Three BPA Deans are pursuing graduate degrees (Two Masters and one Ph.D.) in Public Administration in other countries and three lecturers (two of whom are female) have been accepted for the MPPA Program at Kabul University.
5. One BPA dean has been sent to Turkey for English language proficiency and accomplishment study.

Cooperation:

Although I had the cooperation of the team (including our international colleagues) in efforts to support female lectures, I often approached majority of the tasks single-handedly. For instance, as I mentioned earlier, I organized three meetings two times at Kabul University and one time in New Delhi-India for exchanging of ideas between the female BPA teachers, responding to their academic as well as workplace needs and finding a way for their career development and profession enhancement.

Culturally we are living in a male dominated t, patriarchal society thus the female generation remains behind the renovations, modernizations and new technologies around the world since their fathers, and husbands do not permit them to take part in assemblies, conferences, seminars held outside of Afghanistan. Consequently, Afghan women apparently require more attention in case of their requests and needs.

All the female staff of public policy and administration faculties would like to be aware of a the strategies and programs that contribute to reducing gender gaps that impede development and slow progress. For this reason, they feel a need for and request the development of a framework and metrics that measure the gender influence in the program. This approach will allow Public Administration Scholars to measure women's participation, priorities, and needs; and make sure that the composition of the working staff reflects their own principles in a way that they reflect their commitment to equality and female leadership.

Still we need improvements for further development of women faculty and staff in the field of Public Administration. Due to the existing gaps and required arena, I personally request the SPA Project of GIZ-Afghanistan to prioritize the issue very seriously and consider it as a priority component of the project. Since I am in charge of gender issues and was recently requested to serve as a Gender Focal Point for the SPA project to attend the general gender forums and gatherings in GIZ main office Afghanistan. I insist and reassure you that I will definitely help our Afghan women and work for them to become and serve as future leaders, scholars and managers in the country.