

Voices

FROM THE FIELD



Najibullah Kohistani

Program Officer (Education), JICA Afghanistan Office

Najibullah Kohistani got to know more about JICA when he worked as an office assistant/translator for a JICA project called “Strengthening Special Education” at Kabul Education University in 2007. “I was inspired by JICA projects supporting the improvement and expansion of inclusive education and gender equality for war-affected children in the country,” he explains.

According to Kohistani, over 72% of teachers in Afghanistan are unqualified; they are either school graduates or school students. To improve the situation, JICA started to develop the Teacher Guides for grades 1-6 from 2007 to 2010. “It was challenging to convince our counterparts of its importance,” he says. However, the impact of these efforts were significant. Teachers were impressed with newly introduced guides and were able to develop effective teaching plans and have active classes.

Kohistani also witnessed JICA’s efforts to develop a special needs education system. Afghanistan has experienced decades of war since the late 1970s. The damage to the country has been cumu-

lative. “Of 1.5 million disabled, more than 300,000 were children,” he explains. After 2001, again, Afghans suffered from the war and more have become disabled. It was under these circumstances that JICA, for the first time in Afghanistan, established a special needs education faculty in 2007 at higher education level. Technical cooperation projects with The Ministry of Education followed whereby Kohistani had a chance to help people with disabilities and found himself motivated supporting them. “Also, I am proud to be part of JICA’s challenge to increase the literacy rate, estimated to be as low as 32% and which will require a national movement to change,” he adds.

Looking ahead, Kohistani sees JICA playing a crucial role in assisting local community development, which serves as the foundation for people’s daily lives. “While focusing on the education sector, I want to contribute in strengthening the effective relationship among donors and the Afghanistan government, aiming at peace building in the country.”

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Cover:
A boy holding a notebook smiles
at the camera in Kigali, Rwanda.
(Photo: Kenshiro Imamura)

Photo on pages 2-3:
Girls on their way to school in Zambia.
(Photo: Atsushi Shibuya)



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