

Do Not Forget Afghanistan: a report of the campaigning event in the Netherlands

In 22 countries worldwide - from the US to Japan, to France, etc. – events were organized in the last week of November in the framework of the campaign “Do Not Forget Afghanistan”. This campaign was launched by the Kabul-based umbrella organization ACBAR, with 128 Afghan and international member NGOs that are implementing development projects in Afghanistan. Looking ahead to the international Afghanistan Conference in London the 4th of December 2014, ACBAR decided to stress the importance of ongoing international commitment for Afghanistan. The campaign should show the world that international support has improved life in Afghanistan, but that there still remains a lot to be done.

In the Netherlands, CARE Holland, Cordaid, Healthnet-TPO, Oxfam Novib, Save the Children, ZOA, and DCA-VET (all organisations working in Afghanistan for a long time already) sat together to organize a Dutch version of the Do Not Forget Afghanistan campaign. This event took place in The Hague on November 24th, 2014. Some 60 participants came to the Humanity House in The Hague to attend the alternating programme.

Main part of the programme was the documentary “Stories told by the wind” (to be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/112366059>) by the cineast Michal Przedlacki. The documentary showed an in-depth picture of the results of NGO activities in Afghanistan. One of the examples is a prosthesis factory annex rehabilitation centre in Kandahar, offering Afghans who lost one or more limbs because of roadside bombs the opportunity to fully participate in society again.

ACBAR director Justine Piquemal stressed the crucial role played by Afghan and international NGOs in rebuilding Afghanistan. Even in the remotest areas, the NGOs provide humanitarian support and basic facilities. The public, among whom many Dutch Afghans, suggested several ideas for the future. Main issues mentioned are good governance, economic development, and fight against corruption.

Tijs Berman – former member of the EU Parliament and head of the EU commission of observers of the Afghan elections in April 2014 – looked back at the turbulent election period. He was very critical in his opinion about the process of the elections. But he agreed with the outcome: the establishment of a government of national unity by both candidates for presidency, Ashraf Ghani (now president) and Abdullah Abdullah (now Chief Executive). In the past weeks, the new government took some important steps towards a better future for Afghanistan.

So please “Do Not Forget Afghanistan”, as all participants agreed. In 2001, the world took the huge responsibility to destroy the Taliban regime and to commit itself to rebuild Afghanistan. Now, in 2014, we are on the right way, but there still are a lot of loose ends to tie up.



See <http://do-not-forget-afghanistan.acbar.org/> for the ACBAR campaign and events that are organized all over the world.