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Note From Editor

One might ask why create this newsletter for YLF?

Fortunately, this is a question easy to answer; the intention behind this newsletter is to form a spark to connect YLF members and reflect the successes achieved in bringing generations of young Afghans to understand of democratic values and peace building processes in Afghanistan.

With this year venture of FES, Afghan Young Leaders Forum comes with new features worth mentioning like the formation of the mailing list, a proper and modern way of communication.

A common bond of respect for universal values of equality unites us all and it is our responsibility to pass on these values as committed citizen of Afghanistan for a prosperous tomorrow of this nation.

I believe that this newsletter will foster inspiration and will spur us to a greater sense of achievement just by sharing our common experiences.

If we work together, we will become the best group of Young Leaders Forum, a group to talk about for years to come. All will be a coordinated effort that we could come with the best, starting this newsletter is the best way to coordinate and leave a tangible record of our passing.

I fear if we do not have a platform like YLF we will remain a group of individuals, rather than a true team of young Afghans with high aspiration. I wish to have full cooperation of the YLF members to bring this newsletter to a platform of success and hope every one will enjoy reading it.

Thank You.

Bahram Rahman

WORDS FROM FES COUNTRY DIRECTOR



Ms. Ursula Koch-Laugwitz
Country Director of FES-
Afghanistan

The Young Leaders Forum of Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) in Afghanistan, What is the over all aim? To devise, strengthen and support the Afghan Youth that will work for peace, conflict

transformation, understanding, and social development and last but not the least introduction of democracy.

Since 2004 as an initiative by FES, youth from different groups learn and discuss in harmony.

FES tries its best to build the capacity of these young leaders in issues such as conflict transformation, peace building, leadership skills, and so on.

YLF-Afghanistan has established contacts to other regional forums in South Asia and Africa.

Overall strengthening of a youth net-work on a regional level will help lay the foundations of integrations, cooperation, and peaceful understanding in Central and South East Asia.



OUR CO-ORDINATOR SULAIMAN QEYAMAT

Nearly two years of membership in this program and more than one year of coordinating its activities, make the Young Leaders Forum (YLF) part of my life.

With half of the 30 millions population of Afghanistan younger than 18 years old, working with youth becomes a vital necessity.

For the last four years the Kabul office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has been running its "Young Leaders Forum" (YLF) to train active youths in leadership skills, teamwork, conflict management, peace building skills, event management and moderation techniques.

The overall aim of the program is to help in growing up well-trained active youths that later on can effectively contribute in the democratization process of Afghanistan.

YLF is still recruiting motivated young Afghans from different spheres of life on a yearly basis. The current group has been selected on April 2007 through the YLF Assessment Center.

Now the group has initiated the idea of issuing a monthly newsletter with the purpose to take their voice beyond the boundaries and



Mr. Sulaiman Qeyamat
Co-ordinator, FES-Afghanistan.

limitations. This itself shows another success point of the program and I appreciate it much in deed.

I hope that this newsletter opens up another successful page for the Forum as well as for all other young Afghans interested in it.



FES AND THE WORLD

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) was founded in 1925 as a political legacy of Germany's first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert.

With representation in over 70 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America FES has been active in providing services with the ground aims of democracy and pluralism for individuals in different levels of society, strengthening the civil society institution, and contributing to international understanding and scholarship for gifted young professionals. After re-establishment of FES in 1947, this foundation followed the ground objectives behind this insituation in an broader level in to the national and international stage.

Beside providing developing contributions in developing countries in to promote peace, understanding, supporting democratization of the state,

strengthening of civil society institutions, independent media structures and facilitating regional and world wide cooperation. FES maintains 33 offices in countries in Western and Central Europe, CIS, USA and Japan with the aim of keeping dialogue between



FES OFFICE, KABUL

democratic forces and balancing interests and resolving conflicts.

After the fall of the Taliban, FES opened its office for the first time in Afghanistan in 2004. Since then FES has been involved in providing different services

dedicated to the aims FES follows worldwide.

Various projects have been implemented which have supported Afghanistan in peace building, conflict transformation, independent media and in building a national and regional network between government

of their careers but also to express their commitment to democracy, the state and society.

Also to empower Afghan Young Leaders, FES has come up with the initiative of Young Leaders Forum as another mean of supporting individuals in formation of a network to work together on a basis of democratic values. In general terms it merits to quote, *Friedrich Ebert*, that

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 “WITHOUT
 DEMOCRACY, NO
 FREEDOM... TO
 PROTECT AND
 RESTORE IT
 WHEREVER IT IS
 UNDER ATTACK , IS
 THE TASK OF THOSE
 WHO CHERISH
 FREEDOM.”
 ❖

PEACE MESSAGE READ BY MINA HUSSAINI ON PEACE DAY

Peace is live, giving breeze, mirth and firm faith of grace and honor to the life of human. But we have lost this gift of Allah for universe, during the years of civil war and feel sorry and regret of our actions.

Afghan people in the years of war always wished not to hear again the sound of explosions.

The desire of peaceful life with shining future still stays a desire with dark fog of hate in Afghanistan. A life which all the people are united and love their country, live in security, be heard and believed.



With war nothing is achievable neither for me nor for you my brother.

Guns may make illegal incomes for few people but remains millions of needy Afghans without bread, many will be killed and many would be left orphan. Peace is not a dilemma of unsolved by political leaders which should be talked only, it presents a new life to the people through building and rebuilding again and again. Works need to be done to bring Peace, by flying a dove or reading some notes, we can not bring peace.

Let's work on that!

YOUNG LEADERS

On 28th April 2007 Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES), Afghanistan office was the host of fifty active young Afghans at Setare Hotel in Kabul.

The purpose of this gathering was to elect the next generation of “Young Leaders Forum” (YLF).

The candidates were nominated according to:

Their motivation to learn and improve leadership skills.

Their vision for the future of their country and people.

FES initiated Young Leaders Forum in 2004, a venture to train young Afghans mainly with leadership skills and help them contribute in a more effective way to the democratization and peace building process in their country. They have been selected preferably from different walks of life to create a unique community which can negotiate and talk, learn and tolerate each other in peace and harmony.

Alongside the training sessions, The Forum members get together in bi-weekly meetings to discuss and exchange their ideas on important



Assessment day

social and political issues concerning Afghanistan with prominent and influential figures from the fields of politics, media and civil society institutions.

This forum is going to have lasting and firm relations with other FES youth initiatives around the world such as the Young Leaders Training Program (YLTP) in Madagascar.

Such relationships will open a big gate for the YLF members to know other young people from across the world and let them finding out about their views and ideas on different issues of interest.

With YLF now Afghanistan has got an extraordinary conjunction space for meritorious minds of prominent

youth of Afghanistan, some of which already joined and serve the peace process in the country while others are on the way.

By: Reza Sharifi

YOUNG LEADERS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“When I joined the Young Leaders' Forum, I nominated myself in Parliamentary election. I was not really an experienced student who wanted to have political activities in a postwar country like ‘Afghanistan’.



Sayed Asef Husseini

I knew that it was so difficult to present as a young candidate among 390 other strong ones inside the traditional and conservative society of Kabul although I believed initiatives were more important in the campaigning process. But ultimately I was really in doubt. When I found a group of active and intelligent youths in YLF which later I joined the circle ... Page 7



Young Leaders Forum Members

LETS BUILD OUR VISION

Many people do not have any vision for their future; lots of people have a vision, but do not believe in it!

It is not possible to be a leader without having a vision. Successful leaders not only have visions, but they also believe in them!

But what is a vision?

A "vision" is a temporary limited project for the future (3-5 years maybe). Due to its image of the future, it offers orientation and motivation and strengthens affiliations.

Having a vision is quite different than having a goal or a mission. While goals are concrete desired situations which are achievable and measurable; a mission describes "the right to exist" of an organisation.

How to build a vision?

What we want to do is, to create a system that will affect our actions and plans now, and in the future.

For the formulation of vision, two procedures are distinguished, that can also be used in combination.

▲ Metaphorical method

▲ Imaginary journey

Both methods require a suitable and relaxed

environment that could help you to better concentrate on your creation.

Metaphorical method:

It is as simple as drawing an image. As everybody knows the language of images express far more than words. They are more complex, richer in content and emotionally more immediate. Example:

The sun will shine again over Afghanistan!

Journey in the imagination:

Imagine how you would like your immediate situation to look like, in approximately 3-5 years. Try to think of as much concrete details as possible. Example: *The dry deserts are green again, the dark clouds are gone away from the sky, there is a smell of blossoms everywhere, children are laughing....*

In brief, I think everyone will be eager to build a vision of his/her own, to go as oriented and motivated in the path of responsibilities and situations as possible. Be sure that by having a certain vision, you will never get equal to somebody who is lost in the dark road of life, and goes further with no sense of direction.

Wish you all build a "vision" of your own future, today."

By: Dr. Humaira Sadiqyar

Seeing Is Believing



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Aliase Hassany

Is one of the members of the Young Leaders Forum. He joined YLF in 2007. Mr. Hassany has completed his higher education in computer science in Peshawar Pakistan.

He has been involved with the social and cultural activities since 1998.

IS

Currently he is working as advocacy manager with the Afghan Civil Society Forum. Mr. Hassany is very optimistic about the future of Afghanistan.

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He believes by providing more opportunities to the young generation of Afghanistan, current in-stability, political and economical challenges could be solved.

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Masooma Mohamadi

Is one of the most successful faces of Afghan women in journalism. She has served as the Chief Editor of *Sadiee Zan* monthly while she was living outside the country

She has finished her education in Iran which later she worked as volunteer to teach Afghan children in refugee camps there. She loves journalism and she has a good sense in poetry. Working as a writer and poet she always carried her responsibility toward Afghanistan. She is also an active member of YLF and she explains her experience with YLF as a turning point in her life. She believes on the importance of dialogue not only in daily life but also in solving Afghanistan's conflict issue.

War, Migration and Afghan Youths

“Wake up,” the intelligence officer yelled at the man inside the intelligence prison arrested for attempting suicide bombing; Abdul Rahman is one of the scores of young Afghans who received militant training in refugee camps in tribal area of Pakistan.

After the invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union, more than 3 million Afghans got refuge in neighboring countries mostly, Pakistan and Iran.

Afghan refugees generally are motivated by a powerful desire to regain their homeland or to restore their nation's influence over a particular territory.

A huge distance has been built between Afghanistan and the generation which left the country, specially millions of young Afghans who were forced to indulge the new ways, thoughts and culture around them.



Afghan refugees in Torkham, waiting to cross Afghan-Pakistan border.

But the sense of nationalism has always swayed young Afghans thoughts to different stream of ideologies, not only to the Islamic fundamentalism, but also to the strange understanding of Afghanistan as a country left behind without any morals that Afghans could be proud of for Afghans living in west.

“Afghans don't have an adequate understanding of their culture and have difficulty speaking their native languages. For us, it is better to accept the new cultural values demanded by today's generation.” says Mizhgon, a young Afghan girl running a discussion program on Afghanistan in the United States of America, in one of her daily radio programs. The lives of many Afghans living outside Afghanistan have been in turmoil. There are clashes between western culture and acceptance of values and importance of Afghani culture with its all distinguished morals which is not a part of Afghans raised in west.

“It is not the weapon that kills, it is not the poverty that brings desperation, it is the brain drainage of young Afghans that will crumble Afghanistan.”

Years of war have truly affected the understanding of Afghan youths about the situation going on in Afghanistan. Everyone has brought what he/she has absorbed from the country where he/she was living in for years. This caused Afghanistan to fight the biggest conflict of all time; the inner cultural clashes. Can Afghanistan overcome this challenge today? How much change should we accept in the social structure of Afghanistan? This is a question that only time will answer.

By: Bahram Rahman

DEMOCRACY AND AFGHANISTAN

After the establishment of new government in Afghanistan an immense change has come to the political system of Afghanistan.

Formerly, Afghanistan had experienced different political systems and regimes in its modern history such as Kingdom of Mohammad Zaiee's Family, Communists, Mujahidins and finally Taliban with their extreme interpretation of Islam.

Some common elements in all of these governments were relatively perceptible; none of these governments had emerged with the democratic values or had the legitimacy from the people of Afghanistan and they always imposed their totalitarianism way of governance on the people.

After the fall of Taliban and formation of President Karzai's government with the establishment of Presidency system in Afghanistan through democratic election for the first time in history of Afghanistan with huge participation of Afghans from inside and outside Afghanistan's territory, a new arena of change in political system of Afghanistan had taken place.

This was for the first time that a government had been acknowledged by different ethnics and political groups inside Afghanistan in a peaceful way. The nature of these groups, which are deeply involved in the political system of Afghanistan with in the parliament and other governmental institutions are still intact but the uses of different approaches in concern to their political agendas is a turning point in political structure of

Afghanistan. In general the blood shaded gain of power is no longer a part of their means and this is one of the biggest achievements of the new system in bringing a stream of political activities for getting political and economical magnitude inside the society in a peaceful way. Now what is the biggest challenge this new embedded democracy in Afghanistan faces?

“Democracy without democratic movements and civil society activists is not more than a premise of imagination.”

Does it can change these armed political groups to mainstream political groups for long term which are important for stable political system in Afghanistan and can bring Afghanistan out from the ashes to a platform of prosperity?

Does this new fragile democracy could survive in Afghanistan?

While it faces furious resistance and menace from the fundamentalists and extremists groups intensely involved in drug trafficking, inner government

corruption and centralism of control to the government democratic institutions?

While these antidemocratic movements are striving to weaken democratic institution as an example control of call for Independent Commission of Human Right by the Afghanistan's Parliament what would be the way of fighting back these forces?

It is time and empowerment of civil society institutions that success of democracy in Afghanistan depends on. And democracy with democratic movements, civil society activists is not more than a premise of imagination.

Lots of liberal patrons of democracy like Farid Zakarya; believes that democracy without constitutional and economical reform is not applicable.

Democracy stands on strong and legitimate government with on the geographic boundaries and its citizens, non bureaucratic and functional governmental institutions, low level of corruption, functional economy and direct supremacy of civil society associations and political parties on government.

Without these elements the jeopardy to crumple the socio-political and economical system in country always could be experienced.

Now the big question comes; Does Afghanistan will survive with its new model of democracy? What do you think as young and responsible Afghan about it?

By: Khalid Khesraw

YLF In Their Own..From Page 3

of YLF, I became more confident and I prepared myself to campaign strongly as well as young leader. As you know I lost the Election but after that I learnt so many important points in Leadership, Politics, Management, Conflict management and relationship with members of Afghan community in YLF. Now I think I can share my experiences of Election, Politics and skills of Leadership with all young leaders who are interested to have serious political and social activities in Afghanistan.

Negativity is never the Solution

Anger, jealousy, impatience and hatred are the real troublemakers, with them problems could not be solved.

Though one may have temporary success, but ultimately one's anger and hatred will create further difficulties.



From the book of Wisdom, Dalai Lama



**STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**





Fahim Baktash



Jawad Faryad



A.Halim



Jawaid Sameedi



Zahir Moin



Eshaq Faizi



Shoaib Temori



Marina Joya



Fatima Hussaini



L.Ali Salehi



Mustafa Paakimaa



The Young Leaders Forum

