

Supported by DAAD – the German Academic Exchange Service in Bonn/Germany – thousands of Afghan students received new textbooks

Six medical Faculties in Afghanistan received twenty different medical textbooks (in total 29.000 books) and the accompanying CDs. This project was supported by the DAAD. All books were authored by lecturers from four Afghan universities (Balkh, Kandahar, Khost, Nangarhar) and the books are written in Pashto and Dari – the main languages spoken in Afghanistan.

Initial situation

University students in Afghanistan have a number of problems. They get traditional lectures, often without visual aids or illustrative materials. Lecture halls, seminar rooms, and laboratories are in a bad condition. Students have to take notes or they receive hand-written materials from the lecturers. The lecturers themselves have copied their materials – often in hand-writing – and might need to photocopy them at their own cost. Sometimes the copies are of bad quality and parts of the materials are not readable. Sometimes the learning content used in the lectures is outdated.

A number of lecturers took the effort to collect and consolidate learning materials with the idea to produce textbooks later on. Unfortunately, there is a lack of publishers in Afghanistan and funding is lacking to change the situation outlined above.

Textbooks are rare in Afghanistan

To solve at least a part of the problems – printing up-to-date learning materials – a project was set up in 2009: Five lecturers from Nangarhar's medical faculty wrote medical textbooks and received support from the DAAD to have the materials printed. In addition, there was a CD enclosed with every textbook and the content was made available via Nangarhar University's web-site. This project got positive feedback from universities all over Afghanistan and other universities asked to have their learning materials printed.

Supporting the academic exchange within Afghanistan

In the year 2010 twenty additional textbooks could be prepared by authors from four different universities (Balkh, Kandahar, Khost, Nangarhar) and the printing was supported by the DAAD. The technical and administrative task of this project were handled by the Confederation of Afghan Medical Staff (Dachverband des Afghanischen Medizinischen Fachpersonals – DAMF) in Germany and the AFGHANIC Society in Afghanistan. The proven concept to provide CDs and publish their content via a we-site was continued. Initially, all printed books and CDs were handed out at no cost to the students of the participating universities or programs – later all other universities in Afghanistan got book deliveries as well to support the academic exchange between Afghan universities and enhance teaching and learning all over Afghanistan. In total, 29.000 copies were printed (20 different books) and the accompanying CD were produced.

All books can be downloaded as a PDF here: www.ecampus-afghanistan.org

There is additional demand

In 2011 the medical faculties of five Afghan universities requested twenty additional textbooks and twenty different textbooks were requested for programs in literature, linguistics, engineering sciences, social sciences, archeology, and natural sciences. The large demand will require additional efforts and the continuation of the successful textbook projects supported by the DAAD – the German Academic Exchange Service in Bonn/Germany. *April 2011*