

Newsletter, May 25, 2021

Dear friends,

Here are our colleagues Tooba and Nassiba on their way to an OFARIN school class in Kabul's Shindoval district. Kabul is located in a plain at an altitude of 1800 meters. From this plain, several mountains rise abruptly 400 m high. On the steep slopes of these mountains cling small narrow houses, some built on top of each other. The back wall of many a cottage is simply the rock of the mountain.

The ascent to an OFARIN class is a succession of stairs with very different step heights. If you are unlucky, sometimes the stone stairs are missing and you have to balance over muddy clay. For me, the climb to a class in Schindoval has been torture for years. Again and again breaks are necessary. You don't even have the puff to feel ashamed when a mother runs past you with a toddler in her arms.

Sometimes a woman works on a landing in front of her house. She pulls out nuts or almonds from a large bag and smashes their shells with a stone. The kernels go into another bag and the shells into a third. A shopkeeper gave her this homework. He gets the bag with the naked kernels. The woman gets the shells. She can cook or heat with them. Just do not think that the woman can snack! The trader knows exactly how many grams of nuts have how many grams of shells.

Why am I telling this? In the families of our students and teachers in Schindoval there were severe cases of Covid 19, and still are now. Most of the time OFARIN could and can provide modest economic help.

We had reported about our teacher Muzhgan from Shindoval who lost both parents. Her brothers sold the family home and Muzhgan had to move in with one of the brothers. There was no other way. This is not only a question of tradition, but above all one of security. A single woman is fair game in Afghanistan. In the cramped house of the brother, Muzhgan cannot hold classes. She is entirely dependent on the brothers, who have little income themselves. A vague hope was that she was engaged.

Now she has actually married and moved in with her husband in Reshkhon on the outskirts of the city. There, too, an OFARIN program is running. And not only that. Our program there is widely spread over a mountainous terrain - but not as blatantly as in Shindoval. So far it has been run by two male trainers and the female trainer Nilofa. Nilofa has completed an evening course of study and taken up a professional career. With us, she dropped out.

Muzhgan had taught two classes in Schindoval quite successfully for several years. We consider her suitable to take over Nilofa's duties after a thorough induction. The teachers in Reshkhon will have certain problems getting used to a trainer who is not from their area. We will have to help them a bit to cope with this.

Anne Marie and I were just interviewed by a television reporter from "Deutsche Welle" about our work in Afghanistan. We had to answer a lot of questions. It will take some time to turn the abundant material into a report. The reporter thinks it will be in June. If possible, we will announce it in a newsletter. After that you can see the report on our homepage.

Best regards,

Peter Schwittek

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)