

YLF- Visiting programme in Germany

Role, ideas and experiences of German Youth in social and political participation

Rohullah Niazi, FES Kabul, May 2005

25 Afghan youths, young men and women, discussing, working and laughing together: this is the Young Leaders' Forum (YLF). It is a project by FES-Afghanistan established in 2004, in which outstanding youths from various walks of life are working together and are supported to develop leadership capacities. The group is trained in the areas of peace building, democracy, social justice, conflict management and international understanding. They also actively participate in the Afghan peace process by organizing conferences, seminars, election observation etc.



A group of 12 male and female participants from YLF went on a study trip to Germany from April 14 to April 24, 2005. During their stay in Germany, the group met with youth activists in different fields such as media, politics, education and social work. They also had a meeting with young members of the Bundestag, the German parliament.

The members of the group termed the visit a great learning experience and some of them expressed their views and feelings about the trip as follows:

Shazia Hashemi: The German political system is a very transparent one. Had I not come on this trip, I would have not learned this. There is a saying which says "Seeing is believing."

Sediq Sediqqi: One of the most important lessons I learned during the visit is that democracy is a process, not an end and that we need to go slowly in Afghanistan. Right now we are moving very fast.

Khalid Khosrow: For me every meeting and discussion with German youths and other groups was a learning experience. One of the most important lessons that I learned was: Everyone can bring a change and be effective in the society.



The overall feeling among the group members was that such trips can help youths bring positive changes in their personality and play a more effective role in society.