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ASIA/AFGHANISTAN - In the country there are more than 8 million students, 39% of whom are girls

Kabul (Agenzia Fides) - Despite the economic problems and obstacles caused by the folk traditions, Afghan girls are returning to school in their villages to guarantee themselves a future. One of these structures is in Qalai Gadar, a rural community in the district of Qara Bagh, about 40 km north of Kabul. It is one of the few elementary schools available to the local population. Opened in 2012, it was built by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The two-story building houses about 400 students, mostly girls from 10 neighboring villages who attend the school in two shifts. In this conservative country, where tribalism and traditionalism are deeply rooted and many parents, especially in rural areas, prefer to keep their daughters at home, the elementary school Qalai Gadar wanted to defy tradition. Most of the students of the school are children of former refugees who fled the conflict with the Taliban and they live in the neighboring states of Pakistan and Iran. According to official sources, one of the main problems for which their parents are reluctant to sending their daughters to school is the lack of female teachers. Currently there are 12 teachers, but only one of them is female. Located in a very poor neighborhood, the Qalai Gadar is a suitable training center for needy children in the community. However, the school has no running water, electricity, textbooks and school supplies, all of which poor pupils do not have. The whole school has a simple manual pump that produces drinking water for both students and teachers. Currently, according to official estimates, there are 8 million students in the country, 39% are girls. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 09/04/2013)

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