



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

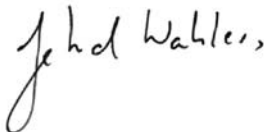
Political education has been the key concern of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung since its founding, and today it still remains the focus of our international work. This is not to ignore the fact that people in many countries in the world are lacking the most basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic – skills which are fundamental to the success of any measures taken to promote political education. Only one quarter of the population of developing countries has a basic level of literacy. In many places even the most elementary education is lacking due to a shortage of schools and teachers, undeveloped infrastructures, lack of time or language barriers. Often governments are just not able to find effective solutions when it comes to educational policy. So along with providing assistance in the areas of primary education and adult political education it is a big step towards more effective self-help if the decision-makers of the future can be given targeted support in terms of their academic or vocational training.

“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance”: this is how Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University, explains the connection between education and economic prosperity. The lack of a functioning education system hampers societal and economic development in many countries around the globe and prevents the development of future political leaders. Very often there are no institutions to help people gain a foothold in society, the labour market, politics or administration. In countries where education is a privilege of the rich, the gap between rich and poor is hardly likely to shrink. Quite the opposite.

“Education for All” is an important element of the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals. It reminds of Ludwig Erhard’s “Prosperity for All” and is indeed inextricably linked with this idea. It crops up again in the UN’s second and third Goals relating to primary education and

gender equality. But there is no mention in these Goals of the need to encourage the development of local and national elites. This could prove to be a mistake, as while societies of course have to focus on "Education for All" they should not forget the need to develop decision-makers of the future who will be the ones to take over responsibility in the political and economic spheres.

This is one of the reasons why over the last 40 years we have been offering scholarships to assist young academics in other countries, thus enabling them to study in their home countries or to come to Germany. We offer support to students and graduates over several years while they complete their studies at German universities, so that they are then in a position to return to their home countries and use their experiences to promote freedom and democracy in politics and society. Today many of these students are in leading positions as judges, academics and in high public office. Our scholarship programmes create networks between top minds in Germany and abroad, which in turn helps the topic of education to receive greater attention in developing countries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary General

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