Context: Background Information:

Salient Features: Basic facts and salient features of teacher education in the country, including present and emerging issues and challenges

The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2006-2010 indicates what the education system of Afghanistan should look like in the future. It represents the ambitions and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan, their government and the Ministry of Education for a knowledge-based, secure society, guided by the principles and values of Islam, with a strong national identity, actively engaged with the rest of the world and the main national education stakeholders. It is our assessment of what is required to meet the ambitious benchmarks in education set for achievement by 2010 in the Afghanistan Compact, agreed between the government and the international community in 2006. Achieving these targets will set us on our way to achieving our Millennium Development Goal for Education by 2020.

Overall goal: To build a national cadre of qualified primary and secondary school teachers to improve the learning achievements of all primary and secondary school students.

The majority of teachers throughout the country do not meet the official requirements to be teachers, and the lack of quality teacher training has resulted in poor instructional quality in the classrooms of Afghanistan. Pre-service training is fractured and outdated. In addition, subject specialists are not encouraged to consider teaching, and recent short-term in-service training interventions have had limited impact. Possibly half the teachers currently employed would not be able to pass the examinations that are given to their students. The low level of teacher salaries is another major problem in attracting and retaining qualified teachers in the education system. The average teacher's salary is $74 per month although this is expected to increase as part of the implementation of general public administration reforms. Some additional incentives to attract qualified teachers, particularly women, or to relocate them to areas where there is a shortage of teachers will also be considered.

Overall strategy

Over the next five years, the foundation of a teacher education structure will be developed with pre-service teacher training facilities established in every province and linked to district Teacher Resource Centers that will provide in-service teacher training to teachers in government or other schools. Distance education strategies will be explored to augment these fixed facilities. The Ministry is committed to providing upgrading opportunities for teachers, and training and technical assistance for school principals, administrators and other staff whose role is to support teachers. One incentive scheme being considered is the establishment of special housing for teachers in order to attract women to the teaching profession, and to increase the number of qualified male and female teachers in the rural and underserved areas of the country. Incentives to encourage well-qualified Afghan teachers in Iran and Pakistan to return to Afghanistan and to become teachers in their home country may also be considered.

Framework: Education framework, vision, and policies

National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan 2006-2010

Highlights

Objectives
Ensure that 70 percent of primary and secondary teachers pass a nationally-administered teacher competency test by the end of 2010, and increase the number of female primary and secondary teachers by 50 percent by 2010. Develop national pre-service and in-service teacher training programs that are based on national teacher competencies by the end of 2006. Establish a national teacher qualification and registration system and a competitive and transparent recruitment system by the end of 2006. Operationalize 34 teacher training colleges with boarding facilities by the end of 2006, and establish 364 Teacher Resource Centers (one in each district) by 2010. Train and deploy 2,184 teacher educators by 2010 to the newly established Teacher Resource Centers to provide ongoing in-service training and teacher support.

Develop a set of distance learning teacher training modules by the end of 2007 that target rural and hard-to-reach primary school teachers.

**Priority program components**

To address these objectives, the teacher education program will consist of the following components:

- Construction and upgrading of teacher training facilities
- Pre-service teacher training
- In-service teacher training
- Distance education
- Education administration
- Research and standards

**Teacher Education Institutions:**

**Construction and upgrading of teacher training facilities**

**Targets:** By 2006, construct and equip 18 Teacher Training Colleges, including facilities for audio-visual and internet linkups. By 2010, construct and equip 364 district level Teacher Resource Centers (19 of the 364 TRCs will be multi-purpose buildings, which will also be used by CLC and District Office Administration). By the end of 2006, establish a National Teacher Training Institute.

At the central level the Ministry will establish a national Teacher Training Institute (TTI). Its focus will be on training trainers for the provincial Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) rather than training teachers directly. It will also provide guidance for all provincial TTCs and will be equipped with audio-visual and internet facilities. The Teacher Training Institute will be linked to Sayed Jamaluddin College and Kabul University of Education. Linked to the TTI will be 34 provincially based Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). The Ministry plans to construct new facilities where none exist as well as to bring all existing TTCs to a national standard agreed by the Ministry. The TTCs will provide the main support for pre-service teacher training for pre-primary to grade 9. Each TTC will be equipped with a library, administrative buildings, training centers, science laboratories, internet, video conferencing facilities and audio-visual and radio equipment. The network of TTCs will also utilize the local school system to increase the practice teaching component of the curriculum. Boarding facilities to accommodate an average of 200 students (100 male and 100 female) will also be constructed. The third level of the Ministry of Education’s teacher training structure will be the district level Teacher Resource Centers (TRCs). These centers will focus on providing in-service teacher training to existing teachers.
They will be small facilities that will be used as a training center, as well as a base for the district level trainers. A standard design for the TRCs is being developed by the Ministry. The TRCs will provide the main face-to-face training program to ensure that all teachers across the country are brought up to a satisfactory standard as defined through the eight teacher standards and the national teacher competency assessment, which will be developed by the Ministry in the next 12 months. The Ministry’s approach will be to ‘bring the training to the teacher’.

**Teacher Education Curricula (i.e. content of TE programs):**

**Prerequisites:** Pre-service teacher education system entrance requirements:

**Targets:** By the end of 2006, develop a new pre-service curriculum framework and syllabi for all grade 1-9 teachers and write accompanying textbooks and other instructional materials. By the end of 2006, develop a new pre-service curriculum framework and syllabi for special education, pre-school and Islamic education teachers. By 2010, educate 17,000 new teachers; at least 40 percent of whom will be women. By the end of 2007, provide 4,500 trainers with one year of intensive training in subject and grade specific areas.

A new pre-service teacher education curriculum will be developed that is linked to the new primary education curriculum textbooks and is grade specific. It will also incorporate elements of modern pedagogical methods and issues related to human rights, HIV/AIDS, narcotics and environment protection. In addition, the curriculum will address the role of the teacher in the community and address some of the key teacher attitudes that are essential for becoming a good quality teacher. The curriculum will be competency-based in order to prepare teachers for the nationally administered teacher competency test. The pre-service teacher training programs will be conducted out of the TTCs. Teacher educators will participate in an initial intensive training program focused on subject and grade specific areas. The curriculum will be delivered through face-to-face training but will also require practice teaching time where teachers will have the opportunity to apply their newly learned knowledge. Training materials will be a combination of printed materials, audio-visual and web-based resources. The training will be a combination of theory and practice. The pre-service teacher training curriculum for grade 1-9 teachers will be developed using a phased approach and will build upon the eight teacher standards that have been developed by the Teacher Education Department and good practice examples from the region. Once the framework has been agreed, the Teacher Education Department will work with a team of staff to develop the syllabi for each subject and assessment unit and will work closely with the curriculum development team in the Ministry as well as with the Islamic Education Department and with the special education and pre-school sections of General Education. Following the development of the syllabi, the Ministry will assemble several teams to develop the teaching materials, which will include print, radio, TV and web-based materials. All training materials will be complemented with teacher training guides.

**In-service teacher training**

**Targets:** By 2010, 140,000 teachers will have participated in in-service teacher training programs. By 2010, 70 percent of all teachers will successfully pass the national teacher competency test. By 2010, 2,200 teacher educators will be trained.

There are currently almost 140,000 teachers in the general schools in Afghanistan and more in the private sector. Few of these teachers have the necessary teaching skills and subject-based knowledge to teach effectively. Based on the competencies of the pre-service curriculum that

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will be developed by the Ministry and building on the materials already developed through the Teacher Education Program, the Ministry will develop a set of in-service teacher training modules. These modules will respond to the specific training requirements of teachers in terms of both pedagogy and subject knowledge. In addition, issues related to human rights, HIV/AIDS, narcotics and environment protection will also be incorporated into the curriculum and syllabi. The in-service material will be rigorously field-tested prior to finalization. The in-service training programs will be facilitated by teacher educators, but will be led by teachers themselves, based on practical classroom experience. District level teacher educators will be trained at the TTCs and selected based on the recommendations of the trainers in the TTCs. Teacher educators will undergo a six-month training program at their provincial TTC prior to deployment to their districts. Distance education strategies will also be incorporated into the delivery strategy.

Distance education

Targets: Develop a comprehensive plan and materials for a multimedia in-service distance learning program for teachers. Establish certification and accreditation criteria for teachers completing programs. Produce multimedia education materials. Monitor and evaluate the program upon implementation.

Distance learning is a logical vehicle to deliver educational services to institutions, communities and households across the country as a means of reducing the problems associated with inadequate facilities and cultural inhibitors to girls’ education in particular. It may also be a useful alternative in rural and remote areas where there is a shortage of trained teachers. Distance education is not a cheap substitute for face-to-face student-teacher interaction. It may well be, however, an important and effective way of directing the new curriculum to remote or other under-served areas as an adjunct to traditional school based delivery. It can also be used as a component of teachers’ in-service and possibly pre-service training. The Ministry intends, with the support of the international community, to explore options for using its existing broadcast capacity and cost effectively using the Ministry’s current and potential assets in this field. The teacher education packages already developed for face-to-face training will be converted into audiovisual materials for widespread dissemination through the media. A comprehensive plan and materials for a multimedia in-service distance learning program will also be developed.

Teachers who attend and complete the program will be issued certificates. The teacher education department will work closely with educational radio/television to develop audio-visual materials. Programs will be monitored upon implementation.

Education administration

Targets: Develop administration competency framework by 2006. By 2010, 21,000 school principals and headmasters will be trained on issues of effective school management. By 2010, 4,000 educational managers will have participated in short-term workshops or received scholarships to improve their management skills.

To perform their jobs properly, the key personnel of the Teacher Education Department, TTI, TTCs and experimental schools need to acquire the basic skills of management, monitoring and evaluation in order to improve the quality of education in their respective organizations. To meet this objective, regular refresher workshops and short- or long-term scholarships will be provided on an annual basis. Management and administration training for headmasters and principals will also be conducted to improve school management and administration.
Standards (Licensing of Teachers – Initial and Continuing):

Targets: Develop standards for admission, enrollment and graduation. Develop a teacher credentialing system by 2007. Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for TTCs and TRCs as well as for teacher training that is conducted in the private sector by 2006.

The teacher registration and assessment efforts that are being conducted by the Ministry (see also the Priority Program on Education Administration Reform and Development) will lay the foundations for developing a teacher credentialing system that will in turn establish teacher pay and grading levels. This credentialing system will enable unqualified teachers who participate in specified in-service training courses to become accredited. The development of a strong monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the teacher training and professional development program is well targeted and effective will also be critical. The monitoring and evaluation program will have three main objectives to ensure that training programs are being implemented effectively, that training programs have an impact on children’s learning and that training programs reflect and respond to the actual needs of teachers in the field. In order to achieve these objectives, the Ministry will carry out a number of specific activities. In addition to the national teacher competency testing that will be ongoing and linked to teacher assessment and accreditation, the Ministry will conduct a national student learning achievement study (see also the Curriculum Development and Learning Materials section). While teaching standards are one assessment of the quality of teaching, a more effective assessment is to understand whether students are learning. The district level teacher educators will become the Ministry’s key classroom monitors on teaching quality. In addition to these staff, small teams will regularly monitor the administrative side of teaching, including teacher attendance and the verification of teachers registered on the payroll and schools that are registered with the Ministry.

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