

Literacy - Tool for Sustainable Development and Key
to Lifelong Learning

Afghanistan
National Literacy Action Plan
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Preface

Education, when envisaged as the core and catalyst of lifelong learning, has been shown to contribute effectively to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Adult literacy in particular lays the foundation for improving the lives of the poor by enhancing the quality of health, raising livelihoods, fostering the ability to actively participate in society, and contributing to overall happiness and general well-being. Recognizing the strategic importance of literacy and lifelong learning in reaching national and global targets of Education for All (EFA), the National Education Strategic Plan of Afghanistan (NESP) has identified Literacy and Non-Formal Education as core components. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals Vision 2020 have also both emphasized the extension of non-formal educational interventions for youth and adults. Accordingly, UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) was adopted in 2007 as Afghanistan's national literacy framework. It provides all literacy providers, donors, the government and civil society organizations, both national and international, with a common tool to coherently and collectively extend the opportunity to become literate to millions of Afghans and thereby contribute to the long-term peace and development of the country.

To translate this collective spirit into concrete action, the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) was developed through a systematic process of need assessment and consultation with various educational stakeholders throughout the country. It is expected that the NLAP will provide the government and its partners with a common framework for action to provide vision and a set of guiding principles for the implementation of literacy programmes across the country.

The Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education has the ultimate responsibility for steering the development of national literacy programming and coordinating literacy activities throughout the country, as well as monitoring and assuring quality. However, development and implementation partners together with technical support institutions such as universities and research organizations also have strategic roles to play in the various stages of the implementation of the NLAP. It is my hope that the NLAP will enable all of these partners to work together in fulfilling these various roles and responsibilities and thereby bring coherence even while it ensures flexibility and dynamism for the diverse literacy programmes currently taking place across the country.

The NLAP addresses the particular challenges facing Afghanistan including widespread illiteracy, predominating in rural areas, remote locations, and among females and marginalized populations. In addition to providing an overview of the current illiteracy situation in Afghanistan and a review of the various literacy initiatives currently underway, the Plan includes projections for needed increases in adult literacy programmes crucial to ensuring continued progress toward the national EFA target. The NLAP is supplemented by an illustrative outline on operational strategies for literacy programming,

including key steps for implementation. It is hoped that the NLAP will thus function as a strategic document, encouraging collaboration between planners and practitioners in order to meet the needs of the diverse population and thus play a key role in eradicating illiteracy from the country and contributing to the long-term development of Afghanistan.

I conclude by expressing sincere thanks to UNESCO, various Ministries and governmental departments, the LIFE Coordination Working Group members, our development partners, both local and international, and all others who contributed at various stages to the preparation of this important national planning document.

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Acknowledgement

Literacy for Empowerment (LIFE), as a global initiative for EFA, continues to make a significant contribution to accelerating the achievement of national literacy objectives in Afghanistan. LIFE was adopted as the national literacy framework in 2007 and since that time it has evolved as a common platform for all literacy stakeholders within the country to plan and implement their respective activities in a harmonized manner for the collective, collaborative achievement of the national literacy targets. The National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP), because it was developed within the framework of LIFE, also functions as the LIFE Country Action Plan.

Within the framework of LIFE Afghanistan, and as a part of the UN Joint Programme for Afghanistan - Integrated Functional Literacy Initiative (AIFLI), the Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education has been working closely with UNESCO to develop the NLAP with financial support provided by WFP, a LIFE member. In preparing the NLAP, a series of steps were taken, including a needs assessment and extensive consultations with LIFE partners, governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations. In this way it is seen as a reflection of the particular needs and aspirations of the Afghan context.

The overall goal of the NLAP is to build a productive, peaceful, secure and literate Afghanistan, by empowering the illiterate population, especially females and their families. To achieve this ambitious, though highly attainable goal, the NLAP proposes a general approach leaving ample scope for flexibility in the delivery of literacy programmes to suit the various, diverse needs of youth and adult learners throughout the country. In addition to basic literacy programming, provision has been made for need-specific vocational skill training for qualified learners. Within the NLAP, the professional development of literacy personnel is a point of emphasis: it is seen as a critical component to both raising the quality and increasing the quantity of literacy opportunities that respond effectively to the needs of millions of illiterate Afghans living in this ethnically and geographically rich country.

UNESCO supports the Ministry of Education, in particular the Literacy Department, in expressing sincere appreciation to the LIFE partners, donors and varied international organizations for their collaboration and support in accomplishing this important task. Special acknowledgement also goes to the many consultants and researchers who contributed significantly throughout the preparation of the NLAP. As the NLAP has been prepared through a collaborative and consultative process, it is certain to be widely and frequently utilized by all literacy stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring their present and future literacy activities in Afghanistan.

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Abbreviations

ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Programme for Education for All
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Community Development Council
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CT	Core Trainer
DLC	District Literacy Centre
DP	Development Partners
EFA	Education for All
HC	High Commission for Literacy
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INGO	International NGO
LC	Literacy Course (Literacy Centre)
LD	Literacy Department
LIFE	Literacy Initiative For Empowerment
LMIS	Literacy Management Information System
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management Information System
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NESP	National Education Strategy Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NLAP	National Literacy Action Plan
LD	National Literacy Centre
NSDP	National Skill Development Programme
PLC	Provincial Literacy Centre
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDT	Skill Development Training
TSUL	Technical Support Unit for Literacy
UNDESD	UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development
UNLD	UN Literacy Decade
VEC	Village Education Committee
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

Educational provision extending to opportunities for lifelong learning contributes effectively to poverty reduction and the sustainable development of society. Situated within broader national and global Education for All (EFA) targets, the Afghanistan National Education Strategy Paper (NESP) affirms the strategic importance of lifelong learning and literacy by setting the objective of increasing the overall national literacy rate by 50 percent. In accordance with this, the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) was developed as an operational framework to effectively increase literacy rates and thereby contribute to improved livelihoods to foster positive change in the quality of the life of all Afghan people. The NLAP is envisaged as providing the government, donors and all other literacy stakeholders with a common vision, guiding principles, and a sound national strategy that lays out a general framework necessary for the effective implementation of literacy programs and plans.

The need for the NLAP is clear. Afghanistan faces a situation of widespread illiteracy with conditions most severe in rural areas, difficult to access locations, and among girls, women and other marginalized people. The estimated national adult literacy rate (15 and above age-group) is 34%, with 18% for women and 50% for men. In rural areas where some 74 per cent of all Afghans reside the situation is more acute: an estimated 90 per cent of women and 63 percent of men cannot read, write or compute. Reducing these numbers by at least half with special focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in Afghan society is the overall goal of the NLAP.

The Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education is responsible for developing the national literacy programme envisioned by the NLAP, as well as conducting monitoring, evaluation and coordination of literacy activities throughout the country. Key external partners providing technical and financial support to these Ministry of Education-led literacy programs include various UN agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UN Habitat, WFP, and FAO), USAID, JICA and others. In addition, there are a number of international NGOs and national NGOs that are active partners in extending opportunities for literacy to different parts of the country. A coordinated, collaborative approach among all of these various partners and stakeholders is critical to addressing the nation's literacy needs and ensuring the effective implementation and realization of the NLAP vision.

The overall goal of NLAP is to build a productive, peaceful, secure and literate nation, through empowerment of the illiterate population of society with special focus on women and out of school girls and their families. The NLAP is envisaged as making a substantial

contribution to Afghanistan's MDG vision and NESP goals by providing illiterate youth and adults with access to basic literacy and lifelong learning and enabling **at least 2.1 million Afghan adults to attain functional literacy and vocational skills by 2015.**

The NLAP comes at a crucial time, but also must be seen as a part of a larger educational strategy linked to success in improving formal education. If current trends of an increase of **seven hundreds thousands** literates per year continue, then by 2020 a total of only 6.3 million adults will have become literate **at least 60 percent of the learners are females, members of minority groups, nomads or persons with disabilities.** This is equivalent to roughly 55% of all existing illiterates in the country. However, by that time another population of illiterate adults will have emerged as a result of persistently high rates of drop-out from formal education and/or non-enrolment in any form of education. To combat the trend of an increasing number of illiterates, the annual coverage of literacy programmes will need to be significantly enhanced, together with concurrent measures to increase enrollment and retention in formal education and increase participation in other non-formal education programs.

The NLAP is situated within a nationally agreed upon general approach of promoting literacy from the perspective of promoting lifelong learning. Literacy initiatives under the plan will aim to facilitate the acquisition of life-skill based, sustainable literacy leading to social and economic empowerment. The scope for further learning will remain open to suit the learning capacity, needs, and means of individual learners. Within this broad framework, there will be a variety of program options and approaches, but all will aim to contribute to the objectives of NESP and the educational goals of ANDS. Programme packages will be developed in a sequential manner so that the learners can gradually move forward and learn at their own individual pace.

Flexibility in delivery of literacy programmes is envisaged by the NLAP to suit learning times and availability of adult learners. To meet the diverse learning needs of the people, not only a core literacy programme but also specific vocational skill training will be provided to selected prospective neo-literates. Broadly the programmes will be clustered under two major categories/packages: (1) literacy and life skills education and (2) vocational skill training.

Bringing literacy to the millions of illiterate Afghans living in cities and villages across the country's ethnically and geographically diverse landscape clearly requires an effective strategy for professional development of literacy personnel. The NLAP lays out a training delivery system that will be developed to support capacity development of the literacy staff at various levels. In addition to training, other HRD measures such as study visits, internships,

and counseling are envisaged to ensure literacy and lifelong learning initiatives are both effective in the short term and sustainable in the long term.

Under the NLAP, learning courses will be organized especially in communities with the highest concentrations of illiterates. Local communities will be mobilized to provide house, land, and/or contribute in cash or kind to build a venue for conducting literacy courses. A village level management committee will be formed to oversee management of literacy courses, to ensure intensive local participation, monitor and reduce dropouts, supervise courses, and provide immediate, sensitive solutions to local problems.

For vocational skills training programmes, the NLAP advocates provisions be made for practical training either in formal training institutions or through actual work opportunities (through internships) in various trades. Required technical and institutional support will be obtained from NSDP and other specialized organization/programmes of NGOs and private training institutions. Skills training will be delivered through institution-based skill training courses using existing and newly established vocational training institutions/centres. Outreach skill training courses will be organized by creating rural vocational training centres and community based centers. Keys to the NLAP vocational skills training component is accessibility and market utility.

Under the NLAP, the planning, implementation, management and quality assurance roles and functions of literacy programmes will be shared by various stakeholders – government, NGOs, academic and training institutions, corporate agencies, civil society organisations and professional associations. The roles of different organisations will vary depending on their mandate, capacity and physical presence at central, provincial, district and community levels. The NLAP lays out plans for the formation of various collaborative bodies to serve as venues to bring these various stakeholders together for collaboration and knowledge sharing about good practices.

Within the NLAP options will be available for one to two year-long literacy and post-literacy courses that will provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning. In terms of financing, the NLAP suggest that at minimum US\$ 95 should be allocated as an average budget expenditure per learner for a year-long course. Based on this average learner allocation, the total fund requirement through **to 2015 to ensure literacy opportunities for 2.1 million adults is estimated to be at least US\$ 199.5 million. An average budget per trainee for vocational skill training should be at least US\$ 500. Based on this, provision of vocational training at least to 21, 0000 adults (10% of learners of literacy education) the total fund requirement is projected to be US\$ 100.5 million. Taken together, to**

achieve literacy for 2.1 million and vocational training 21,000 Afghan adults, the NLAP estimates the total resource requirement will be a minimum of US\$ 300 million over the next three and half years.

Development and implementation of NLAP will have significant programmatic and systemic implications for ongoing and future literacy programmes run by the government, DPs, INGOs and local NGOs. To increase effectiveness of ongoing programmes, literacy providers will need to revisit and revise their existing programmes in line with the NLAP. It is hoped that NLAP will enable all development planners and practitioners in effectively planning and collaborating to eradicate illiteracy from the country, a crucial foundation for the construction of a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

1. Introduction

Education is an effective tool of social change as it empowers people with essential skills for learning, communication, productivity, problem solving, and harmonious living. In the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the education sector has been charged with the role of developing a productive workforce with relevant skills and knowledge that contributes to the long-term economic growth of the country. Educational provision extending to opportunities for lifelong learning also contributes effectively to poverty reduction and the sustainable development of society. As has been repeatedly shown in diverse contexts worldwide, learning can be sustained and enhanced only if there is a solid base of linguistic and numerical proficiencies spread equitably among the population including reading, writing and calculation skills. These skills, which together constitute the term adult literacy envisaged and utilized throughout this report, play a vital role in contributing to the continuous increase of knowledge and competencies. Adult literacy thus helps improve the lives of millions of poor by enhancing their abilities to live healthier lives, obtain more income and better utilize existing resources. The strategic importance of literacy lies in its role to facilitate access to information about health, environment, education and the world of work, but most importantly to provide the means of learning how to learn throughout life. These skills contribute to empowerment, enable people to better direct and manage their lives, actively participate in society as responsible citizens, enhance their livelihood, and practice healthy life styles.

Affirming the strategic importance of literacy and lifelong learning in reaching national and global Education for All (EFA) targets, Literacy and Non-Formal Education has been identified as a core component of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP). In the Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Vision 2020, targets have been set for achievement of universal primary education and gender parity in primary and secondary education. The NESP objectives also include improving literacy by setting a target of increasing literacy rates nationwide by 50 per cent.

To translate this national commitment into action, a major push is required to increase the literacy rate of the country to levels suggested by global EFA targets - the reduction of the number of illiterates by at least half. The challenges Afghanistan faces in ensuring Education for All are still major as it has recently been estimated that there are over 11 million adults throughout the country who do not know how to read and write. Compounding this low base, there is a general lack of relevant continuing education programmes for large numbers of neo-literates and primary school drop-outs. Moreover, the issue of comparability of

curriculum and learning achievement between formal and non-formal education has not yet been seriously addressed nor institutionalized.

It is in this context and based on the lessons from previous experiences within the country, insights from the other countries, and a rigorous needs assessment study conducted in 2007-8, the National Education Strategic Plan of (2010- 2014), the Interim Education Plan of (2011 - 2013), and the Joint Sector Review (2012) recommendations, the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) has been developed as an operational framework to catalyze an increase in the national literacy rate.

As part of the NLAP preparatory process, to support the government's initiatives the Literacy Department in association with UNESCO conducted a rigorous Needs Assessment (NA) to review and analyze the conditions of literacy in Afghanistan, as well as identify challenges faced in extending literacy and lifelong learning opportunities to illiterate populations. Policy design and planning, program design support, program implementation support, monitoring and evaluation were the priority areas in the NA study. The NA was conducted in consultation with the Ministry of Education and all partners in literacy promotion efforts. This analysis has helped in determining where priorities need to be set, what adjustments and amendments to existing approaches need to be made, gaps that must be filled and capacities that should be enhanced in order to accelerate national literacy efforts and make positive gains in existing levels of literacy. The results of the Needs Assessment has provided a solid, data-rich base on which this National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) has subsequently been developed.

The National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) outlines the actions required of the government, donors and other stakeholders to accomplish the national literacy targets stated above. It is envisaged as providing the government, donors and other stakeholders with a common vision, guiding principles, general strategy and detailed plans describing the necessary steps that should be taken in implementing literacy actions.

The NLAP has been formulated with utmost priority given to Afghanistan's particular needs, priorities, and national capacities. The visions for sustainable development of Afghanistan depicted in ANDS, Afghanistan MDG targets, the Education Law (2008) ,NESP, Interim Education Plan and the Joint Sector Review have been the guiding force in formulating the NLAP. The NLAP is developed specifically to achieve literacy goals set in NESP and MDG Goal 2 (achieve Universal Primary Education) and Goal 3 (promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women). The effects of improved literacy are also projected to help in achieving the MDG Goal 1 (Eradicate poverty and Hunger), Goal 4 (Reduce Child Mortality),

Goal 5 (Improve Maternal Health) Goals 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases) and Goal 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability).

Realizing the importance of the global Literacy initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) for achieving goals and objectives set out in the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP), LIFE was officially adopted in Afghanistan in 2007 as the country's framework for national literacy. Since its adoption, it has evolved as a platform for all literacy stakeholders to plan and implement their respective activities in a harmonized manner so as to collectively work to achieve the literacy goals set in the National Education Strategic Plan. The LIFE framework is country led and its actions will be planned, implemented and monitored by the MoE in close collaboration with various development partners including NGOs, UN organizations, bilateral donors, and local communities among others. Targets are based on the country's needs and requirements to achieve overall literacy goals set out in the National Education Strategic Plan.

This NLAP has been developed within the approved national framework of LIFE of UNESCO, through a consultative process with the government, UN Agencies, donors, NGOs and other partners. NLAP thus will also function as the LIFE Country Action Plan. The overall objective of the NLAP is to reinforce the national commitment to literacy by making improvements in advocacy and communication, formulating policies for sustainable literacy, catalyze improvements in management systems and capacity at all levels and raise the overall quality of education. Literacy programmes are envisaged as going beyond the limited scope of reading, writing and calculation skills to encompass the notion of lifelong/life-wide learning in ways that will bring positive changes in the lives of people by empowering them to face day to day life challenges.

The plan gives an overview of the current illiteracy situation of Afghanistan and literacy initiatives by various organizations. The next sections contain estimated projections required of adult literacy programmes to achieve the national EFA targets. It then provides an illustrative outline of operational strategies to support quality literacy and lifelong learning programmes. The concluding sections of the this document then address necessary steps to finance and implement the NLAP vision.

2. Context

2.1 EFA Goals and Policy Framework

The magnitude of challenges Afghanistan faces in achieving EFA goals is great given that the country has lost over **three decades** of growth and development to the ravages of war. While most countries in Asia have made substantial economic and social progress over the same period to help improve the lives of their people, Afghanistan has had to wait for peace and public order to return before committing itself fully to the realization of EFA goals. Global initiatives such as the Dakar Framework of Action for EFA, and UN initiatives like UNLD¹, UNDESD² and LIFE³, and the World Bank initiative for National Framework of Qualifications have contributed significantly to changing the realities of literacy in a majority of the countries of the world, including many in the dynamic Asia-Pacific region. Although Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries before its decades of war, in the 1970s it was slowly increasing its governance capacity with support from the international community and would surely have achieved similar levels of development as surrounding regions were it not for the destruction and reversals due to war..

Afghanistan is still in the process of rehabilitating from the decades of conflict that left, in addition to widespread physical destruction of facilities, a population severely deprived of education. Social and physical destruction and deprivation has been compounded by a shattered economy resulting in low literacy rates across country. The years of war have had devastating effects on the country including the near complete destruction of the education system. It also has had severe implications on the social system, particularly in preventing the participation of girls/women in education and social life in general.

Given this historical backdrop, one of the primary goals of the government of Afghanistan is to ensure that every adult has access to opportunities to become literate and that all children enroll in formal schooling or an alternative, comparable education system. This national commitment is manifested in the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP). Specifically, the emphasis on literacy is evident from the fact that Literacy and Non-formal education has been identified as one of the NESP's priority programmes areas. NESP mentions explicitly that the vision of the Ministry of Education is "to facilitate the development of vibrant human

¹ UNLD - UN Literacy Decade (2003 – 2012)

² UNDESD - UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014)

³ LIFE – Literacy Initiative For Empowerment, launched by UNESCO

capital by providing equal access to quality education for all and enable people to participate and contribute productively to the development, economic growth and stability of the country”.

The United Nations Population Division estimates that in 2005 the Afghan population was approximately 29.9 million, but will increase to 35.6 million by 2010. This includes approximately 16 million Afghans age 15 or older in 2005, with an increase to 19.3 million projected by 2010. Assuming that approximately one-third of the current population aged 15 and above are literate, there are at least 11 million Afghans age 15 and above who are now in need of opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

The ANDS strategic vision for the education sector is that regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status or religious affiliation, all Afghans will have equal access to quality education to enable them to develop their knowledge and skills and thereby maximize their potential. In ANDS, the overall outcomes expected of the education system include, among other goals, an increase in the national literacy rate, improved quality of education, an expansion in the capacity of the education system to absorb more students (particularly female students), equal access to education for all, improvement in opportunities and enhancement of the quality of Higher Education. Accordingly, the Government has set itself a target to enable at least 1.8 million Afghans to attain demonstrated literacy by 2010, and ensure that at least 60 percent of the learners are females, members of minority groups, nomads or persons with disabilities.

The recently formulated Education Law (Decree # 56 of 31/4/1387), decrees equal rights of education and training for the citizens of Afghanistan through the promotion, provision and development of universal, balanced and equitable educational opportunities. One of the objectives of the law is to eliminate illiteracy and provide means for accelerated learning among children and adults who are outside formal schooling. The law states that provision for “literacy and basic practical education comprises reading, writing, counting and learning knowledge of basic practical skills, vocational and professional occupational skills that shall be provided in a balanced and equitable manner for the deprived adults, adolescent and youths, who are left behind from educational institutions in the country.”

2.2 Diversity and Magnitude of Illiteracy

Overall Situation

Youth and adult literacy rates in Afghanistan are among the lowest in the world. Recent data are hard to come by – the UNESCO Institute of Statistics shows no literacy data beyond 1979 based on the only national census ever undertaken (NVRA 2009), and the 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report records no data for Afghanistan (UNESCO 2011). The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA 2009) put the overall literacy rate at 26.2% (12.5% female and 39.3% male), based on household sampling. Unfortunately, these figures cannot be compared with the earlier assessment (NRVA 2005), since the latter gives literacy data for 6 years and over, rather than the more usual international norm of 15+ years, which the more recent assessment adopts. The NRVA 2009 figures are cited in subsequent documents (NESP 2010). The recent data show disaggregation by gender, urban/rural divide and for the Kuchi migrant populations; they also provide a breakdown by province. In the absence of a nation-wide survey, the NRVA 2009 data offer the best basis for analysis of the literacy situation.

2.3 Gender Disparities and Effects

The challenge to ‘reverse women’s historical disadvantage in Afghan society’ (ANDS 2008: 17) will be addressed in education as a key locus of socialization and attitude-shaping. The female literacy rate is estimated nationally to be 12% (NRVA 2009), with 18 out of 34 provinces with a rate of 10% or less. Even though the situation is improving, the highest estimated female literacy rate on the same 2009 data was 31% (Kabul Province). Four southern provinces are shown with a rate of just 1% - indicating that women there have had no viable opportunity to access literacy learning. The Constitution of Afghanistan protects the right of women and girls to education (Article 44), and the explicit aim of reducing female illiteracy by 50% is listed in the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan 2008-2018. The same Plan calls for ‘deliberate interventions to reduce the gender gap in literacy and education’ (p.96), and links this to the provision of female teachers in the Afghan cultural context: ‘given that girls are segregated from boys and there is a social and cultural preference for girls to be taught by female teachers, there is a greater demand for female teachers than the supply.’ (p.98).

Despite these references, there is no specific mention of the need for a greater number of female literacy facilitators, although the same cultural considerations apply. It is clear that a higher number of female literacy facilitators is one factor in increasing female enrollment in literacy learning. Other factors also affect enrollment, such as availability of a literacy group close at hand, support from other family and community members, and the potential value of acquiring literacy skills in accessing new opportunities for productive work or ongoing learning for women.

Neither the NEIP nor the 1390 Literacy Program Plan indicates any targets for female facilitators specifically, although the target percentage of female learners is 60%. Data from 1390 on female participation in learning and teaching literacy indicate that the provinces with a high proportion of female learners have a correspondingly high proportion of female teachers – evidence that where there are sufficient numbers of female teachers, it is possible to reach higher numbers of learners.

Widespread female illiteracy is affecting the health, well-being, productivity and overall societal prosperity in Afghanistan. The high population growth rate,⁴ child mortality and morbidity, maternal mortality, non-enrolment of children in formal schooling, especially of girls, and large average family sizes are all considered to be correlated to illiteracy in one way or another. NRVA (2005) findings show that there are higher mortality rates among women over 24 years of age as compared to those rates of men in the same age group. This appears to be related to the cumulative effect of social disadvantage borne by women, including the lack of health facilities, poor nutrition, and the high frequency of marriage of girls under 15 years of age. Traditional attitudes constrain female literacy, and this is compounded by difficult or limited access to schools. High illiteracy amongst women is considered to have adverse effect on overall economic development because many Afghan women carry the responsibility of providing for the entire family as a result of either having been widowed or living with husbands disabled as a result of decades of conflict. Yet due to illiteracy and poverty these women have problems entering formal employment as well as finding productive self-employment. Moreover, illiterates, especially women, are generally excluded from making decisions, economic and otherwise. They are not able to participate as full citizens of a democratic country, with the result that many Afghan women have lost confidence and faith that their condition will one day improve. Being about half of the total population, it is a necessity that women's sense of self-esteem and realization of their potential are revived through substantial, concerted efforts towards an increase in the female literacy rate.

Population Distribution and Geographic Disparities in Illiteracy

The **rates of literacy** vary from province to province. As per NRVA 2005 data, the highest literacy rates in Afghanistan are found in the provinces of Kabul (58%), Balkh (44%). Kapisa (39%), Parwan (37%) and Hirat (36%) and the lowest rates are in Zabul (<1%), Paktika (2%), Hilmand and Uruzgan (5%). Variations in the rates of illiteracy are compounded by the

⁴ According to UN Commission on the status of Women (2006), on the average, each woman has given birth to 6.6 children.

widely uneven population distribution across the country. Analysis of the population distribution reveals that concentrations of populations are found in certain provinces. According to CSO-UNFPA data, 43.7% of the population is concentrated in just 7 of the country's 34 provinces (Kabul alone has more than 10% of total population); more than two-thirds of the population lives in 13 provinces and some three-fourth live in 21 provinces. This suggests that there are higher concentrations of illiterate populations in some two-thirds of the 34 provinces.

Another complicating factor is that, the **illiterates are dispersed** across the country as there is a wide variance in population density. Though the average population density for the country as a whole was calculated at 23.4 per square kilometer (1993), it varies widely among the provinces, ranging from 489.4 per square kilometer in Kabul to 0.7 in Nimroz, a province in the southwest with vast sandy and stony deserts. Even within the same province there are often large variations in population density among districts within the same province. The dispersed, uneven nature of illiteracy spread over a wide geographical area poses a challenge for designing and reaching many illiterates through centre-based literacy programmes, an approach to adult literacy that has been pursued in many other countries.

Acute **poverty** manifested by food insecurity is also widespread throughout the country but also shows diversity among various population groups. The NRVA 2005 report reveals that, 44% percent of the Afghan households perceive themselves as food insecure to different degrees - 28% of the urban households perceive themselves to be food insecure while in contrast, 40% of the Kuchi (nomadic ethnic group) households and 48% of rural households perceive themselves to be in this condition. These perceptions are in agreement with research findings elsewhere. Out of loans granted to the households in 2004, 45% of urban households used them to purchase food, and about 65% of both Kuchi and rural households also used them to cope with food insecurity. Illiteracy and poverty go together: higher concentrations of poverty are seen in rural areas, in geographically inaccessible areas, among marginalized groups and in the provinces where there are the highest concentrations of illiterates. Poverty manifestations are also high in difficult accessible areas which lack roads that can provide access to markets to sell products, purchase goods, establish pricing information which would empower farmers to maximize profit margins, and organize cooperatives or farmers' associations that might facilitate greater access to markets and credit.

Illiteracy among marginalized groups is alarmingly high. According to Multi-sectoral Assessment there are, nearly 2.4 million Kuchis in Afghanistan, which is a significant number within the total Afghan population. NRVA 2005 shows that only 6% of the Kuchi can read (4% for women and 8% for men). The national average of Kuchi children attending schools

is 6.6 per cent for boys and 1.08 for girls. This means that nearly 98 per cent women and 94 per cent male remain illiterate. The nomadic and semi-nomadic nature of this group further limits their access to basic education.

Language (literacy in mother tongue) is an issue that heavily affects the realities of illiteracy in Afghanistan because there is a diversity of languages spoken across the country. Though a macro-picture suggests that about 87% people speaks one of the two major languages (Dari 38.12% and Pashtu 48.71%), there are other languages, some which are predominant in selected provinces. For example, in Faryab province, 54% people speak in Uzbeki with only 27% speaking Dari and 13% Pashtu. In the context of the existence of diverse languages, an immediate consequence of the implementation of literacy programmes in majority languages is low progress in the improvement of literacy rates among linguistic minority groups.

Illiteracy among Afghans with physical disabilities is high as well. As a result of three decades of war, the number of physically challenged people increased dramatically and addressing their social needs has become an issue of national importance. One estimate (TISA 2003) shows that around 4% of the population - equivalent to approximately one million people - suffers from physical disabilities. The national survey by the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled in 2003 showed that among a sample of 13,000 disabled persons surveyed across the country, men represented 78% of those with disabilities, and 38% of them had been disabled by the war and 16% by mines. Among women, 10% were affected by war followed by disease or congenital disabilities. Half of all men and almost all of the women with disabilities were reported as illiterate.

Security and accessibility are today becoming important determining factors in programmatic interventions. As assessed by most analysts, the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated at a constant rate since 2007. For example, the UNDSS Programme Accessibility Map classifies about one third of the total surface area of the country as extreme risk zones thereby limiting and/or hindering access to programmes. The areas include the southern and extreme northern parts of Helmand Province, most of Kandahar Province, a portion of northern Nimroz Province and most of Zabul and Uruzgan Provinces, the whole of Paktika Province, the "Tora Bora" area of southern Nangahar Province, and the extreme northern area of Nuristan Province.

2.4 Synopsis of Current Interventions

This section provides a brief description of the major existing literacy interventions currently on-going in the country. It is expected that these will contribute to the targets and strategic vision laid out in this NLAP as well as be revised and updated accordingly to reflect the NLAP approach.

The Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education, headed by a Deputy Minister, is responsible for developing the national literacy programme, as well as subsequent monitoring, evaluation, and coordination of literacy activities throughout the country. The key external partners providing technical and financial support to the Ministry of Education's literacy initiatives include several UN agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Habitat, WFP, and FAO), USAID, and JICA among others. In addition, there are a number of international NGOs and national NGOs that are active in providing literacy courses in different parts of the country. Besides the Literacy Department of MOE, several other government ministries are also implementing literacy courses and related training for their employees. These include the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, etc.

The Literacy Department currently supports a nine-month literacy course for those between the ages of 15-45 who have not previously had access to education and who are illiterate. Participants take part in an initial six month basic literacy course that utilizes a common curriculum and textbooks developed with support from UNESCO under the LAND Afghan project. After this initial period, participants take part in an additional three-month supplementary course, known as post-literacy courses. According to the report of Joint Education Sector review report (2012), more than half a million adult learners participated in literacy classes in 2011. The chart presents LD data on the contributions of major institutions or

Numbers of learners, by provider – 1390/2011		
	Learners	% female
MoE	108,707	50.95%
NGOs	64,372	79.98%
MoWA	1,920	100%
Mosque-based	2,105	1.18%
ELA (UNESCO)	97,820	67.47%
CLC and vocational trng (MoE)	3,761	55.96%
Security Department	8,527	2.08%
MoJ/prisons	2,109	36.51%
ANP	45,576	0.93%
WFP	35,322	84.55%
UN Habitat	85,193	54.00%
UNICEF	41,548	98.14%
ANA	59,400	0%
Total	556,360	

groupings supporting literacy in 2011:

Besides LD interventions, there are three other major projects being implemented currently by UNESCO, UN Habitat and UNICEF.

- The majority of literacy learning is organized and managed by the MoE, through its Literacy Department (LD) and the provincial and district Education Departments, each of which has a Literacy Manager. The Ministries of the Interior, of Defense, of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled, and of Justice also run literacy programmes.
- The Learning for Community Empowerment Program 2 (LCEP-2) is an initiative of UN Habitat with funding from USAID, 2008-2013. It provides micro-credit, establishes microfinance banks in communities, and seeks to increase productive skills while building critical reading, writing, and computational abilities, as well as enhancing critical thinking. LCEP-2 will reach 300,000 learners in more than 3,000 communities in 18 provinces over five years. Of the total beneficiaries, 60 percent will be women. The courses provided by the program will each last for 18 months.
- The Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) is an initiative of UNESCO with funding from the Japanese government and addresses the literacy needs of 600,000 learners in 18 provinces in Afghanistan by providing quality literacy learning consisting of a six-month basic literacy course followed by a three-month post literacy course and a few months of vocational skill development for youth and adults. Women are the priority throughout the courses. Primers, supplementary learning materials, and writing supplies are provided to the students. The current phase of ELA ends in April 2013.
- UNESCO also supports literacy learning in the Afghan National Police through the programme Literacy for Empowering Afghan Police (LEAP). In support of the initiatives of the Ministry of the Interior, NTM-A and GIZ, the programme gives support to facilitator training and maintaining literacy skills. The roughly 1000 facilitators deployed in police training are supported by a number of master trainers. Literacy use is promoted by the production of materials, including police-specific materials such as a monthly magazine for new literates (grade 3 level) and a monthly magazine. The current programme ends in 2013.
- UNICEF focuses on female literacy as a component of its Basic Education and Gender Equality programme. In 2010-11, 122,000 learners acquired literacy skills in 4,596 centres across 34 provinces. This work included the training of 5000 female facilitators. In addition, UNICEF has supported the creation of 133 resource centres consisting of book libraries for new literates. The programme will undergo a

comprehensive review in 2012, and, on that basis, in 2013 decisions about its future direction will be taken as part of UNICEF's country programme review. Key questions include a clearer identification of the purposes and outcomes of literacy learning for the women in the programme.

- WFP runs a Food for Training programme which supports literacy learners in food-insecure districts. In 2011, 54,000 learners received such support in 24 provinces, 60% of whom were women. The impact of the programme is currently being evaluated, and this will form the basis for decisions about its future direction.

A number of NGOs, both local and international, run literacy programmes, of which the following:

- Afghan National Association for Adult Education, 115,000 learners in various adult learning courses, of which 10% literacy learning; supported by DVV.
- Aga Khan Foundation, 3600 learners in 4 provinces, 90% women
- Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, Literacy and productive skills for approx. 2000 in 2 provinces for women and youth
- Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, Literacy and life skills for women
- Norwegian Refugee Council, Approx. 2000 learners in 3 provinces – IDPs, refugees, returnees

2.5 Major Programmatic Challenges

All ongoing literacy, post-literacy, continuing education, and skill training courses have been planned separately by implementing agencies based on their own needs assessments, organizational priorities and the availability of resources. In the absence of a national framework and comprehensive plan for increasing literacy rates, however, the visibility of change is very limited. Thus, a number of challenges were identified in national level consultations, the needs assessment study, and through evaluations of ongoing projects. Based on these, a set of programmatic challenges and options has been identified in the national report for CONFINTEA (International Adult Education Conference) regional meeting of October 2008. Those were as follows.

- a) **Access to literacy programmes:** Most of the existing literacy programmes operate in urban areas within the country. In the rural areas, where there are the highest concentrations of illiteracy and poverty, people have less access to literacy programmes and are less likely to participate if they do not see the relevance of the planned activities in their daily lives. Insecurity in some areas of the country is also an obstacle to people's participation in literacy initiatives, especially for women.

- b) **Curriculum:** The literacy curriculum is out-dated and does not meet the requirements of students today. The new curriculum has just recently been developed with technical and financial assistance from UNESCO. In addition, there is no existing curriculum for the skills training offered in the supplementary schools and local educational centers. The use of multiple local languages throughout Afghanistan is another obstacle to literacy training and requires the use of local facilitators who read and write the local language. The Department has written a new textbook as part of the LAND Afghan project with funding from the Government of Japan. There is some question as to whether a formal literacy textbook is the most effective way of teaching literacy and whether it is economically viable to base the literacy strategy on an approach that requires the use of a textbook. A more flexible approach would require that teachers are able to develop and produce low-cost teaching materials relevant to the lives of participants but this requires a more concerted training effort for literacy teachers.
- c) **Community participation:** There is a need to increase the involvement of communities in literacy efforts. When adults do not see the relevance of planned programmes, they do not participate. This is a major challenge and obstacle to literacy initiative in many parts of the country. Therefore, the vision for the Community Learning Centers (CLCs) includes a prominent role for local people with regard to the design and implementation of programmes in the Centers.
- d) **Sustainable literacy:** Completion of a literacy program does not guarantee that students will be able to read, write and calculate in the long-term. Many programmes globally have failed because they do not consider the learners' needs after courses have ended. Literacy is sustained when skills are continually used and when materials are available that are understandable and useful to those with very basic skills. What is often called 'post-literacy' can be supported by ministries and agencies that, for instance, provide literature on health and agriculture that is written for people with basic literacy skills. Radio and TV programmes are already a major contributor to children's learning as well as youth and adult literacy in Afghanistan. This can be built upon to further national literacy objectives and need to be an explicit part of any comprehensive national strategy.
- e) **Coordination and collaboration:** Literacy efforts so far in Afghanistan have been fragmented, with disparate efforts by various ministries, aid agencies, civil society organizations and individuals. Yet the government cannot undertake the task alone. Collaboration and coordination is absolutely essential if national coverage is to be achieved and if Afghanistan is to become a literate nation in the foreseeable future. A

well-designed program and clear policies can allow for the flexibility and innovation required to address the range of needs and learners. In this effort the Ministry of Education must take the lead while bringing all other stakeholders into partnership. A coordinated strategy requires sensitivity on all sides to the historic role played by the Ministry, as well as the important part civil society has played in fostering literacy. Achieving a fine balance and sense of true partnership, with mutual respect, is fundamental to making literacy gains a reality.

- f) **Building government capacity:** For the Ministry of Education to take the lead on a comprehensive national literacy program, developing the relevant capacities of the Ministry to do so must be given a high priority.

2.6 Conceptual Issues and Definitions

To facilitate common understanding and promote uniform application, key terms and issues pertaining to literacy are defined here and clarified in relation to the NLAP. Literacy related terminology is based on international definitions promoted by UNESCO but also takes into account particular factors specific to the Afghan context.

Literacy

Literacy provides a solid foundation for poverty reduction and sustainable development. It establishes a basis for respect for human rights, the universalization of basic education, peace building, conflict resolution, nutritional sufficiency, and for an overall improved quality of life. Literacy is considered a first major step towards other forms of learning. Literacy contributes to fulfillment of 'basic learning needs'⁵ that comprise both essential learning tools and the basic learning content required by all human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and to work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve their quality of life, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.

Often literacy is defined in the narrow sense of knowing how to read, write and calculate. However, over time understandings of literacy have broadened beyond mechanical skills to include the ability to think critically and understand the context of one's life. In NLAP this broader definition of literacy will be utilized as the plan seeks to attain the objectives of enabling individual and communities to be more effective in participating in the development of themselves as well as the country as a whole. Adult literacy program in NLAP refers to an organized and facilitated set of group activities for 15 - 45 age-group adults where the focus

⁵ As defined in the World Declaration on Education for All (1990)

is the mastery of basic reading, writing, calculation skills and social awareness/competencies. Literacy and life skills education will be integrated in a balanced manner to use new words, new knowledge and foster new attitudes to make informed decisions about productive and financial matters, family and community health, to resolve conflict and to better understand the teachings of the Holy Quran.

Non-formal Education is a purposeful and systematically organized form of learning that generally occurs outside formal educational institutions. It is designed to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons of different ages and backgrounds. It is envisaged as flexible in terms of organization, time and place and may cover basic and continuing educational programs to impact basic literacy, and may encompass life skills, work skills, general culture, and facilitate lifelong learning to enhance earning capabilities and contribute to poverty reduction. It ensures equity in access and human resource development; it may or may not follow a 'ladder' system, and may be of varying durations. In NLAP, non-formal education will specifically refer to the education programmes for the out-of-school children and adolescents between 9 – 14 years of age.

Lifelong Learning offers a holistic perspective on the role of education in the life-cycle of an individual and affirms that learning is continuous and plays a critical role in enabling individuals to adapt and deal with new challenges and changes in their life and surrounding environment. Lifelong learning embraces all forms of educational and learning experiences and prepares individuals to engage in purposeful interaction with their own environment by developing their knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities.

Islamic Education: Islam is at the core of Afghanistan's culture and values and, accordingly, the 1382 (2002) Constitution stipulates that education is to be consistent with the tenets of Islam. Therefore study of the basic teachings of Islam and the Holy Quran will form essential ingredients in all of Afghanistan's formal schools and other educational programmes. In NLAP, core issues covered in Islamic education will be identified as contents of literacy courses with curriculum and materials developed accordingly. For those who want to study Islam in more depth, there are separate government supported Islamic schools. Historically the mosque has played an active role in the delivery of religious education for the children and youth. In many places, the mosque has filled the gap in the formal education system in under serviced remote rural communities. For effective delivery of these contents, partnerships with mosques and other Islamic institutions will be developed. Mullah/Imams will play a role in providing community support for literacy courses and may even be trained to become literacy facilitators in their communities.

Post-literacy refers to an organized and facilitated set of group or individual activities where the focus is reinforcing literacy skills integrated with the development of functional knowledge needed for leading a productive life as a worker, parent and/or citizen. Advanced literacy skills and need-based knowledge/information content is integrated in post-literacy courses.

Continuing education is the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning beyond basic education (literacy and primary education) in response to the needs of the disadvantaged individuals and groups to enrich their socio-economic lives, livelihood and learning.

Skill development training (SDT) is to focus on vocational, entrepreneurship and employment skills. Under NLAP, all types of skills development courses contributing to income generation are covered under this program, with the understanding that income can be generated by self-employment, by working for others or by adding to personal resources through investments. SDT will help participants acquire new vocations or upgrade parental occupations and provide business skills for operating their own enterprises.

Life skills education: Life skills essentially refer to skills and attitudes needed to enhance mental abilities such as to reflect, to solve problems to raise questions concerning rights and responsibilities and to make informed decisions on matters that concern one's life. Life skills education enables a person to seek information and use it appropriately. It also aims to develop confidence for effective participation in community life.

Community Learning Center (CLC) is a community-based organization developed and promoted as a capable, inclusive community development center with a wide variety of programs and interventions. It is responsive to the varied requirements of community members of all ages irrespective of social and economic status. CLCs are focal points for lifelong learning and have diversified programs, including those targeting the underprivileged and marginalized in communities. It meets the diverse learning needs of the community and extends institutional support to people to improve their quality of life through ensuring economic self-reliance and social empowerment.

Equivalency Programme is defined as an alternative educational support system enabling a learner to acquire equivalent recognition to existing formal general or vocational education for learning non-formal or distance education programme modalities. The equivalency education programme creates scope for further education at the basic, secondary or higher education levels.

3. NLAP Goals, Objectives and Targets

3.1 NLAP Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of NLAP is to build a productive, peaceful, secure and literate nation, through empowerment of the illiterate population with a particular focus on women and out-of-school girls and their families. In line with the Afghanistan MDG vision and NESP goals, the NLAP will contribute significantly to achieving the following results:

- Provide illiterate youth and adults across all 34 provinces with access to basic literacy and lifelong learning
- Enable at least 2.1 million Afghan adults by 2015 to attain functional literacy
- Provide opportunities for comprehensive literacy development integrating vocational skills, income generation, agriculture and health components
- Ensure that females, language minority groups, isolated communities, Kuchis and people with disabilities are targeted and prioritized
- Reduce the number of existing illiterates nationwide by at least 55% before 2020

A variety of literacy programmes are being implemented across Afghanistan in conjunction with various external partners seeking to assist in the rebuilding the war-torn economy and people. To derive optimum benefit from these programmes, the NLAP considers it to be strategically important to link-up these various programmes and approaches through a national framework. This will enable all those involved in literacy to achieve commonly agreed upon minimum standards of literacy competencies while maintaining diversity and thus flexibility in the implementation of the programmes.

NLAP will help the literacy providers and other stakeholders to revisit ongoing practices from this collective perspective and guide the design of future programmes towards the realization of these literacy objectives. It will also facilitate mainstreaming of innovative practices with the aim of qualitative gains in the implementation of literacy programmes.

NESP Milestone: *“A National Literacy Strategy will be developed that delivers community-based, demand driven and cost effective services for non-literate Afghans. Based on the national strategy, a literacy implementation plan will be developed in close collaboration with other related ministries and partners.”*

3.2 Projected Coverage and Priority Target Population

According to CSO-UNFPA data, the total population of Afghanistan in 2004 was 23.56 million. The estimates for the 2008 population was 32.74 million out of which roughly half are 15 years or older. Based on the current national illiteracy figure of 65.7%, a calculation of the total number of the illiterate population aged 15+ years of age equals 10.57 million. However, as the literacy rates in different provinces vary, an alternative calculation of the number of illiterates based on an aggregate of the number of illiterates in each province was also conducted. The sum-total of 15+ illiterates in all provinces of Afghanistan according to this calculation stands at 11.87 million. These estimates are consistent with the NESP estimate of a total illiterate population of approximately 11 million. To reach the EFA target of reducing the number of existing illiterates by 50%, **the national targets will seek to make at least 5.5 million people literate by 1394 (2015)**. However, given existing national capacity and levels of coverage, it is estimated that assisting a maximum of 700,000 adults (and 10% increase every year) to reaching functional literacy annually is a more realistic target. Based on this figure, the maximum number of persons achieving functional literacy by 2015 will be 2.1 million.

Besides providing literacy courses, under NLAP, at least 210,000 (10% of the total target for literacy courses) adult learners will be given the opportunity for vocational skill training and employment support services.

It is estimated that if the rate of the population becoming literate is sustained at half a million per year, by 2020 a total of only **6.3** million adults will make the transition to literacy – equivalent to roughly 55% of existing illiterates. By that time, another large number of adults will grow as illiterates because of high drop-out from formal education and non-enrolment in any form of education. To combat this increasing trend in the number of illiterates, it is a requirement that the annual coverage in literacy programmes be enhanced significantly, in addition to increasing enrollment and retention in formal education and non-formal education.

To bring about the most significant improvements in levels of literacy, the major concentration of literacy programs in the period of the plan will be in rural areas. **A calculation of Badakhshan province, for example, shows, that by targeting the rural illiterate population (15-34 age-group) some 468,188 people have the potential to become literate, where the NLAP target for literacy in that province is 154,502 illiterate people.** Clearly, some of the biggest strides toward reaching NLAP targets can be made by concentrating programs on rural populations. Thus there should be a strategic shift to organize more literacy courses in rural areas. Taking into consideration the local conditions

and the gross number of illiterates, the NLAP sets a national target of reaching at least 75% of rural adult illiterates.

To recover the existing gaps in lower female literacy rates and to achieve the EFA targets, a particular emphasis of literacy programs over the next few years will be on reaching female illiterates. Analysis of data disaggregated for gender shows that even targeting the 15-34 age-group female illiterate population alone can achieve a significant portion of the NLAP literacy targets. There should thus be specific plans for and priority given for organizing more literacy courses for female learners. Taking into consideration the local conditions and the gross number of illiterates, in each province the target of reaching at least 60% of female adult illiterates will be established.

The priority target group in terms of age should be younger aged illiterates who have the potential to contribute for longer periods of their lives to the development of Afghanistan. NRVA 2005 data shows that 52% the Afghan population is 17 years of age or younger. Data disaggregated for age shows that about 41% of the total population falls in the 15-44 age-group and 31% falls in 15-34 age-group. From this perspective, the priority age-group under NLAP will be illiterates in the country aged 15-34 years old.

Analysis shows that if literacy targets are achieved in even just 13 provinces where some two-third population of the country reside, 4.8 million people will achieve functional literacy, which is above of the NLAP target. However, for balanced growth in the literacy rate of the country as a whole, minimum target of reaching illiterate population in each province and districts will be established.⁶

Density of population will be another determining factor in planning literacy programmes. Therefore, communities with higher population densities within provinces will be targeted in the initial phases to cover the optimum number of illiterates in the most cost-effective manner.

The economic dimension will be another consideration in setting literacy targets and formulating literacy programmes. Predominantly poverty-stricken provinces and economically marginalized groups will be considered a priority for the implementation of literacy programmes. Since the highest incidences of illiteracy are seen in poverty-prone districts and among marginalized groups, these populations will be specifically targeted, which will support achieving both poverty reduction goals and the other educational

⁶ A map showing illiteracy scenarios for each province is given in the Appendix.

objectives of ANDS. This will also contribute to reaching the most risk prone groups of illiterates, who usually remain beyond the reach of many conventional literacy interventions.

Language issues will be given prominence in the NLAP to ensure that language minority groups do not remain outside of the scope of literacy programs. Although the macro-picture shows that nationwide about 87% people speak in two major languages (Dari 38.12% and Pashtu 48.71%), there are other languages, some of which predominate in selected provinces. In Faryab province, for example, some 54% of the population speaks Uzbeki with Dari (27%), Pashtu (13%) and Turkmani (6%) showing much lower prevalence. Here if literacy programs are planned for only Uzbeki speakers, the provincial target of EFA will not be achieved. For this reason, in setting literacy program targets, coverage of various language groups across the province should be taken into account.

Increasing literacy among the marginalized groups like the Kuchis will be considered a special agenda for action under the NLAP. According to Multi-sectoral Assessment there are nearly 2.4 million Kuchis in Afghanistan, which is a significant number to cover under the literacy program. The national average of Kuchi children attending schools is 6.6 per cent for boys and 1.08 for girls. This means that nearly 98 per cent of females and 94 per cent of males remain illiterate. Special literacy programmes need to be designed for the Kuchi population to increase literacy rates among them. Taking into account the implication of significantly higher rates of illiteracy among the Kuchi, it is estimated that approximately half a million of the Kuchi population should be covered under NLAP, which is roughly 13% of NLAP total target for literacy.

As a result of three decades of war, physical disability is an issue of national prominence. Estimates show that around 4% of the people in Afghanistan (approximately one million people) are victims of some form of physical disability. In planning literacy benchmarks, separate targets will be set to cover specific numbers of illiterate people having some form of physical disability. During the plan period a target of providing literacy and life skills education to at least 250,000 people with physical disabilities will be set.

4. Operational Plan

A nationally agreed upon, general approach of promoting literacy from a lifelong learning perspective will be followed throughout the country. All literacy initiatives in Afghanistan will be aimed at facilitating the acquisition of life-skill based sustainable literacy leading to social and economic empowerment. The scope for further learning per needs and aspirations of individuals will be kept open to suit learners' learning capacity and means.

Strategic plans are described in the following sections, presenting specific action plans for each type of function. A summary action plan is also provided at the conclusion of this document (Appendix 3).

4.1 Program Types and Curriculum Framework

Within the broad NLAP framework, there will be a variety of programmes, each contributing to the objectives of NESP and the educational goals of ANDS. The programme packages will be developed in a sequential manner so that the learners can gradually move forward and learn at their own pace. There will be flexibility in delivery of the programmes to suit the learning time and opportunities of the adult learners. Besides core literacy programmes, to meet the diverse learning needs of the people, need-specific vocational skill training will be provided to selected prospective neo-literates. Accordingly, an integrated package of literacy, life skills education and vocational skill training will be developed and delivered. However, for the purpose of systematic planning, the process of literacy (along with life skills) and vocational skills training are outlined separately in this document.

Literacy and life skills education programme

In an integrated manner, this programme will cover basic literacy, post-literacy and life skills education courses.

- The basic literacy course will cover essential literacy competencies to enable learners to acquire how to learn, defined as acquiring the essential skills of reading, writing and computation (calculation) as determined in the national adult literacy curriculum up to the self-learning level of literacy. In the literacy courses, reading, writing and computation skills will be integrated with life skills issues to suit the learning needs of adults.
- The post-literacy course will enable the neo-literates to further consolidate their newly acquired literacy skills and to acquire vocation-oriented literacy skills in preparation for joining the vocational training course.
- Life skills education courses will cover skills and attitudes needed to enhance mental abilities such as to reflect, to solve problems and to make informed decision on matters that concerns one's life. Activity-based life skills education will enable adult learners to seek and acquire information about healthcare and participate more fully in social life.

The contents of the literacy and life skills education programme will depend on the nature and needs of the target population. Importantly, these needs are conceptualized as being changeable over time. Along with literacy and post-literacy packages, a variety of activities will be arranged to deliver life skills education. At minimum, the basic literacy course will run for six months and the post-literacy course will be conducted over 3 months. To ensure achievement of sustainable level of skills, whenever possible the programme for adult learners will be planned for two years; the initial six months will be for preparation extending

the learning period up to 18 months with the concluding six months to be aimed at linking learners to the world of work and/or further learning. Basic and post-literacy courses integrated with life skills education will be planned as a single package and will be delivered in a sequential manner.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Review all existing literacy curricula and identify core competencies and life skills	Study of documents	Year 1	Literacy Department	Central level
Develop a national literacy framework through a consultative process	Workshops	Year 1	Literacy Department	Central level
Develop provincial level frameworks adapting national framework to provincial needs	Need assessment studies and workshops	Year 2	Provincial offices under the guidance of LD	Provincial level

Vocational skill training

The focus of vocational skill training will be the development of market-oriented vocational skills of young adults based on their interests and capacity. The skill training courses will be planned in consideration of future demands for goods and services in the local, provincial, and/or national economy. In this way, it will facilitate the linking of graduates to mainstream, productive economic opportunities. Depending on the trade, the duration of training courses will vary. Achievable skills for each of the various trades will be specified in the respective curriculum.

Labor market research and product need identification will be done at regular intervals at provincial/district level to develop market-oriented occupational training courses. Separate set of courses will be developed based on employment opportunities in rural and urban contexts. Recognizing the variety of needs for occupational skills in local, national, and/or international enterprises, new courses will be developed and existing courses will be

upgraded to meet the needs of the market. Courses will be customized to suit the social, cultural and educational background of the people for whom these courses are organized.

Besides training, there will be provisions made for employment support services through liaison with private sector establishment and employers to facilitate job placement of graduates of skills courses.. Efforts will be made to facilitate access of trained personnel to working capital and credit for ensuring utilization of skills by those who have the proper motivation for enterprise development. The training centres will also create provisions for counseling, guidance and monitoring during and after training, including facilitating linkages with marketing outlets, sale centres, and enterprises for market promotion of products.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Identification of skill training needs and core competencies	Market research	Year 1	NSDP jointly with LD	Central level
Review of existing skill training courses	Study of course curricula and effectiveness	Year 1	NSDP jointly with LD	Central level
Development of national skills standard framework	Workshops	Year 1	NSDP jointly with LD	Central level
Development of provincial courses in line with NSS framework	Market research and workshops	Year 2	Regional/provincial teams of NSDP jointly with LD	Provincial offices

Equivalency Framework

An equivalency framework between formal and non-formal education programmes will be explored for the out-of-school children as a means to encourage them to grow into literate adults. The objectives will be to allow individuals who have missed the opportunity to complete primary and/or secondary school chances to achieve formally recognized educational status thereby opening new doors to further learning, working or income generation opportunities. The equivalency framework will be visualized as a multi-level program that will enable learners to move upwards in a step-by-step manner. It will promote institutional linkages between two important components of the NESP - Literacy and non-formal education and General Education through establishing grade equivalencies between the two streams of education. Exemplar levels of equivalency are mentioned below:

Level 1 - equivalent to grade level 3 of the formal system

Level 2 - equivalent to grade level 5 of the formal system

Level 3 - equivalent to grade 8 of the formal system

Level 4 - covers higher levels such as grade 10 to give individuals opportunities to continue learning and upgrade their skills.

There will be core common competencies prepared in a collaborative process by formal school authorities and service providers of non-formal education. It will be developed keeping in mind local/regional learning needs and based on competencies so that desired skills are developed. The relevant curricula will maintain educational equivalency standards so that, if desired, learners can move from one system of education to the other. Provisions will be made for horizontal and vertical mobility within the programme. The accreditation authority will conduct examinations and issue certificates accordingly which public/private educational institutions, employers, communities and other stakeholders will equally accept.

4.2 Teaching and Learning Materials

4.2.1 Strategies for development of teaching and learning materials

Literacy courses

A national curriculum framework for literacy (including post-literacy and integration with core life skills) will be developed based upon and expanding the scope of, the existing adult literacy curriculum. Necessary adaptations will be made in the existing national adult literacy curriculum. There will be room in the curriculum to accommodate specific learning needs in localities. The centrally planned text materials will cover core curriculum contents. At the province level and district level, core teams will be organized to identify the local learning needs (particularly life skills) and select series of supportive learning materials for use at the field level. The village education committee in consultation with the DLC will select the learning materials from the list of materials approved by PLC.

A decentralized approach to material development will be adopted so that various agencies will be able to develop and use the primer of their choice. However, all materials developed by various agencies will need to be consistent with the national literacy curriculum. A team representing key stakeholders will be formed by the Literacy Department to develop and pilot core materials before their use in the field. The teachers and trainers will be trained to develop their own teaching learning aids and newsletters using simple materials available in each locality. The approach of utilizing learner-generated materials is also strongly encouraged under the NLAP.

Suggested strategies in NESP: *“The current Literacy Department curriculum will be reviewed and adapted where needed and will form the basis for all providers. A massive effort will be made to provide literacy classes using literacy and post-literacy textbooks and teacher guidebooks throughout the country. Also, beginning in 1387, the National Literacy Program will transition to the use of a ‘learning kit’ of materials for each class, from which teachers and individual learners can draw. The content of these materials will be related to participants’ lives and the need for productive skills. In this way literacy teaching will not be only textbook-dependent, but will also build upon best practice materials inside and outside Afghanistan. Learners and facilitators will also develop new learning materials that reflect their interests, local culture and history. Some of these learner generated materials will become part of the ‘learning kit,’ and some will become part of a community library. Students will be encouraged to develop materials and newsletters for a community bulletin board and to help create a ‘culture of education’ within the community.”*

As curriculum and primers play a very significant role in quality improvement efforts, the curriculum and primers will be revised or updated periodically. For this purpose, feedback and suggestions for improvement will be collected from the facilitators and learners of different agencies who utilize particular material. All literacy materials will be in very simple language/pictorial form, user-friendly and consistent with Islamic values. In appropriate cases and given sufficient funds, the material will be translated, printed and distributed in local languages.

For literacy courses, generally LD published or approved textbooks will be used as core learning materials in the LCs. In addition to this, a variety of issue-based books and materials covering locally appropriate life skills will be supplied to the centres. These diverse materials will be developed to reinforce core materials based on identified needs, all of which will be consistent with the core skills set in the literacy curriculum.

To facilitate the use of need-specific supplementary learning materials by the learners in the literacy centres, training courses will be arranged to build the capacity of the district level LD officials and NGO personnel in planning local curriculum and developing information, education and communication materials. These materials will be locally reproduced for use in specific contexts. However, in cases of similarity in contexts and needs, arrangement will be made for use of those materials in other areas. Some of these materials will be developed as generic or prototype materials allowing other education providers to utilize those following appropriate adaptations.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Stocktaking and review of existing literacy and life skills materials	Mapping and analysis of various forms of materials reflecting the curriculum framework	Year 1	LD with support of NGOs	Central level and provincial level
Development of a core team of material developers at central and provincial levels	Selection of potential material developers and organising training courses	Year 1	LD in collaboration with Kabul University	Central and provincial level
Development of new materials as per need or adaptation of existing materials	Workshops and sourcing out	Year 2 - 4	LD, NGOs	Central and provincial levels

Vocational skill training courses

For skills training courses, the curriculum will be developed based on the identified needs and skills benchmarks set at the national and provincial level. Training materials developed and used in courses will be suitable to match the social, cultural and educational background of the trainees. Adequate resource material and equipment support will be made available to ensure that the trainees are given scope to learn and practice optimally within the given course duration. Course contents for skill trainings should be a combination of theoretical information, practical skills and life skills. The proportion of this combination will depend upon the nature and duration of the courses. For the development of vocational skill materials there will be close collaboration with the NSDP.

In selecting skill training courses, the primary consideration will be growth and market potential for widening the scope of employment among training graduates. Opportunities for practical learning within the setting of training institutions and also partnerships with enterprises will be explored with the aim to offer opportunities for strengthening and utilization of skills learned in training courses. Internship arrangement with employers for practical on-site training, as part of course curriculum, will also be explored and made available for as many courses as possible.

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
MOU between LD and NSDP (MOE & MLSA) for collaboration on developing skill training materials and skill training for adult learners	Consultation and identification of common areas of interest	Year 1	LD and NSDP	Central level
Development of easy-to-use skill training manuals and materials	Workshop and Sourcing out	Year 1	NSDP	Central level
Adaptation of centrally developed materials/manuals for use at provincial/district level	Workshop and Sourcing out	Year 2	LD	Provincial offices

4.3 Distribution of materials and assurance of utilization

Producing a sufficient quantity of materials to meet literacy and post literacy learners' requirements as they enter and move on from the literacy courses will be tied **to the time-frame of the NLAP and the target to reach 2.1 million illiterates over the plan period (quantity will vary considerably from year to year).**

To ensure the timely supply of learning/training books and materials, where possible, special arrangement will be made for the printing of books based on the LD prototype at the provincial level. Required permission will be obtained from LD for LD publications and other publishers for selected post-literacy, skill-based books. The district team will make a supply of core textbooks to the LCs through the implementing organizations, offices, and CLCs. Other learning materials and education support tools will be procured at the provincial or district level based on requisition from the LCs in accordance with standard government procurement rules and procedures.

For centrally printed books, budgetary provision will be made to meet the cost for transportation of these materials. The staff of DLCs as well as of literacy program implementing department/NGOs will be responsible for handling issues related to transportation and delivery of literacy materials. Required storage space at provincial and district levels will be created to ensure the timely supply of materials to the LCs.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Provincial level and district-level assessment of materials requirement	Survey	Annual basis	District offices and provincial offices of LD	Provincial level
Introduction of decentralized procurement and supply system	Review of existing system and changes in policy through office circular	Year 1	MOE	Central level
Printing of materials at selected provincial level	Selection of provinces and short listing of printing companies	Year 2	LD/MOE	Provincial level

4.4 Literacy Assessment, Literacy MIS (LMIS) and Monitoring

4.4.1 Assessment and accreditation

There will be entry and course completion assessment of learners in literacy courses using standard assessment tools. It is anticipated that learners will enroll with different levels of literacy skills and throughout the course the pace of learning will vary for each learner. To address the diversity, there will be a process of continuous assessment to facilitate early completion of courses by regular and past learners. Based on the national curriculum framework, the possibility of organizing courses on a modular basis will be explored, so that the trainees can progress gradually and acquire accreditation at the appropriate level. LD will be responsible for providing certificates to adult learners graduating from literacy courses.

Learners who complete the basic literacy education programme should have the opportunity to continue their education and to pursue various career pathways. To this end, the development of a National Qualification Framework and alignment between the National Qualification Framework and the adult literacy education system is essential.

Skill training courses will be planned, as much as possible, in line with various levels of the national skill standards established by the government. The LD will be responsible for providing certificates to adult learners who graduate from literacy courses. Like literacy courses, an equivalency framework will be explored by NSDP to facilitate transferability of graduates from non-formal vocational courses to formal courses.

To ensure equivalent competencies and institutionalise its acceptability, for both general and technical education, skills-based assessment will be introduced. Gradually an effective national testing service will be developed enabling learners to sit exams when they feel sufficiently prepared, without needing to wait for the traditional 'annual' examinations. This test will be more to assess skills acquired, not simply memorizing texts. A learner-friendly assessment process will be adopted and the assessment level of each learner will be properly documented and maintained at the literacy centre level and the district level, data that will ultimately contribute to the development of MIS.

4.4.2 Literacy Assessment

Levels of individual literacy and national progress in literacy are not currently based on systematic assessment. There is no way to know with any confidence what the literacy rate may be or what levels of literacy have been achieved. Apart from the lack of current reliable demographic data (planned national census still pending), there are no instruments or methods to make a direct assessment of literacy competencies. Further, literacy programmes do not appear to assess learning outcomes or certify a level of performance. Note that where certificates are awarded to learners, they acknowledge completion of the course rather than any level of achievement in literacy.

Two kinds of assessment are needed.

First, a sampling of literacy levels among the population. Initial proposals for direct assessment using instruments to test for levels of competence have been developed. The Afghanistan Literacy Assessment Survey (ALAS). Based on UNESCO's Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP), the survey will test a sample of individuals in Dari and Pashto in order to provide a statistically valid result of literacy levels among those populations.

Second, there is a need for methods to assess the achievement of those who have participated in a literacy learning programme, in order both to give the learner a sense of progress and to validate the outcomes of the programmes themselves. Such assessment is implicit in the proposed occupational literacy of NPP-1 since literacy learning is embedded as part of acquiring the respective technical and vocational skill. For those who learn literacy for other and more general purposes, the LD has launched development work on a 'standard assessment system', with the support of the LEAF programme. As more contextualised and locally driven programmes and materials are developed, there will be a need to nuance any 'standard' system to accommodate diversity of learning outcomes.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Development of testing system	Sourcing out	Year 2	LD jointly with Kabul University	Central level
Align the literacy accreditation and certification system with Afghan National Qualification Framework (ANQF)	Work jointly with ANQF for accreditation and certification system	Year 1 to 3	LD jointly with NSDP	Throughout the country
Conducting literacy assessment survey		Year 1 to 2	LD jointly with UNESCO/UIS and CSO	Throughout the country
Dissemination of findings from the survey	Workshops	Year 2 to 3	LD in association with LIFE Coordination Working Group	Central and Provincial level

4.4.3 Literacy/NFE Management Information System (MIS)

A literacy MIS (LMIS) will be developed to support widespread monitoring and evaluation of literacy and NFE. It will be used to guide effective planning, management, coordination and delivery of literacy programmes at national and provincial levels. Through a consultative process, a set of core indicators for the literacy MIS will be developed then utilized by all to record, preserve, and share data among the stakeholders. It is expected that a systematic LMIS will provide reliable data on literacy at all levels and across the nation.

A comprehensive LMIS will be developed to minimize the gaps in basic information concerning quality, efficiency and effectiveness of existing literacy programmes. LMIS will support a process of identifying and addressing the gaps in the areas of actual literacy learning outcomes and the wider effects of literacy on the social and economic well-being of program participants. The lessons from the existing MIS will be used to institutionalize a national LMIS. A comprehensive database for literacy programmes will be developed based on the existing and upcoming databases with necessary adaptation and upgrading of the system. The LMIS will be developed applying common core parameters and through networking with existing organization-based databases.

The LMIS will be designed to store a wide range of data covering, among other materials, learner and facilitator profiles, coverage of learners in LC, DLC, PLC, status of input-output and socio-economic demographics. A decentralized consultative data collection process will be developed with provisions for feedback from all stakeholders. A user friendly and interactive MIS system will be developed having its hub at the LD with a built-in network with organizations implementing literacy programmes for updating of information at regular intervals.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Identification of core indicators	Workshops	Year 2	LD and UNESCO	Central level
Development of data inflow and management system	Sourcing out	Year 2	LD	Central, provincial and district level
Data analysis, report preparation and dissemination	In-house works and Workshops	Annual basis; Year 2 – 5	LD	Central and provincial levels

4.4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Qualitative and quantitative achievements of literacy targets will be emphasized equally under the NLAP. To that end, there will be two types of monitoring - progress monitoring and performance monitoring. The progress monitoring will cover operational progress with respect to activities planned and will be done through progress reporting. Performance monitoring, on the other hand, will cover performance of the LC learners in terms of attendance, drop out and achievement levels in reading, writing, numeracy, and life skills, etc. The progress monitoring will be done monthly while the performance monitoring will be carried out quarterly on the basis of learners' assessment records in the LCs. A participatory monitoring and evaluation system at all levels will contribute to the flow of information both horizontally and vertically. Monitoring and evaluation processes will also include periodic testing and assessment of learners to monitor facilitation, effectiveness of curriculum and material. EMIS software based on central monitoring database will be maintained for supporting project management teams when making necessary revisions and adjustments to literacy program operations.

NESP benchmark: *In order to ensure proper monitoring of the implementation of literacy activities, the database of the Department will be further developed and linked to the EMIS of*

the Ministry. Supervisors will carry out regular field visits to monitor the delivery of the different types of courses and an annual evaluation of the literacy program implementation will be carried out on a provincial basis.

The Community Development Council and Village Education Committee will play key roles in performance monitoring of the LCs. The field-based LD offices (PLC, DLC) will follow-up implementation of planned activities at the community and district level with routine supervision. Moreover, regular monthly or quarterly coordination meetings will be held at all levels where the progress of planned activities will be reviewed and necessary follow-up measures will be decided upon. LC organization, the supply of books and materials, the quality of teaching learning process, learners' assessment, performance of teachers and supervisors, community participation and so on Will all be regularly reexamined in monthly follow-up meetings at the DLC, PLC and LD levels.

In skill training programmes, the focus of quality assurance will be efficiency and effectiveness of the courses – efficiency to measure performance in terms of input, process, and output, where effectiveness parameters will be employability of skill training graduates and cost-effectiveness. Institutional performance of skill training centres will be monitored at regular intervals by LD monitoring teams in collaboration with management of the institutions/centres. The performance parameters presently used by the NSDP will also be consulted when developing monitoring indicators for the skill training courses.

There will be provisions made for both internal and external evaluations of literacy programmes. Periodic evaluation of program operation will be done every 2 years by an internal team formed with representatives of key stakeholders. The impact evaluation will be outsourced to professional study and research agencies.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Review of existing literacy programme monitoring instruments and process	Source out	Year 2	LD with support from UNESCO and NGOs	Central and provincial levels
Development of exemplar skill training monitoring tools	Source out	Year 2	NSDP	Central level
Development of	Workshops	Year 2	LD jointly with	Central and

prototype monitoring manual for use at central and provincial teams of LD and NGOs			UNESCO and NGOs	provincial levels
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4.4.6 Human Resource Management and Development

4.4.1 Recruitment of teachers and others literacy personnel at various levels

Provision for appointment of literacy personnel (teachers, supervisors, managers, trainers, monitors, etc.) at central, provincial, and district levels will be made in proportion to the number of learners and LCs. However, at the minimum, there will be one coordinator and one trainer for each district, two supervisors for each CDC (one for male centres and another for female centres) and two teachers for each LCs (one for male learners and another for female learners).

The coordinators will be staff members of the LD while local governments, in consultation with the coordinator of the district, will appoint the supervisors. The teachers will be appointed by the CDC upon recommendation by the teacher selection committee consisting of representatives from LD, relevant ministries/departments, NGOs and local educational institutions. Supervisors will be appointed by a similar selection committee at the district level. The selection committees will be formed by the LD in consultation with the local government and NGO/literacy provider(s). Young volunteers, students and housewives with required qualification and positive attitudes will be mobilized from the community to take up the work of facilitator in order to fill short gaps of absence or more extended leave by regular teachers.

To ensure transparency and recruitment of quality teachers, the selection committee shall follow standard selection and employment norms and procedures. These norms and procedures will be developed by the LD in consultation with implementing stakeholders at the central level. There will be provision for adaptation of certain norms to suit particular conditions at the provincial level. A certain extent of flexibility will be allowed in cases of non-availability of qualified teachers in the district. However, such adjustment will require the approval of the DLC. A few common norms for recruitment of teachers will be as follows:

- The main criteria for selection of facilitators should be that they should have educational qualifications and communication skills to teach relevant courses in the LC and should be committed to the cause of uplifting and empowering deprived and marginalized people.

- In the course of selection, preference will be given to the facilitators from the local areas, widows, and disabled women possessing the required qualifications and skills.
- Depending on the circumstances, aged persons, *mahram* male members like father, brothers and other relatives, with required qualification and positive attitudes may be selected to teach women. Mullah/Imams with required skills may be selected to become facilitators.

Identification of community based female teachers will be the most challenging aspect of the envisaged program. Extremely low female rural literacy rates coupled with the NLAP's 60% focus on female learners presents a major obstacle to finding qualified female teachers. In addition, cultural sensitivities that often prevent male facilitators from teaching females who have reached adolescence are anticipated to make achieving the governments time sensitive goals very challenging. Recruitment of female teachers will be made through a participatory and transparent process using a selection criterion that reflects diversity and equity. An appropriate job description expressing clear guidelines is necessary.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Development of recruitment guidelines and committee set-up	Consultative meeting/workshop to identify standard norms and members for committees at various levels	Year 1	LD	Central
Identification of requirement of teachers, supervisors and coordinators	Analysis of the number of literacy centres	Year 1	LD	Provincial level
Preparing panel of teachers, supervisors and coordinators	Advertisement for recruitments, interview and selection of deserving candidates by the committee	Year 1 - 3	LD, provincial and district offices	District level

4.4.7 Professional development of literacy personnel, training and follow-up measures

To bring literacy to the millions of illiterate Afghans living in cities and villages across the ethnically and geographically diverse country will require a precise, well-coordinated strategy for professional development of the literacy personnel. An effective training delivery system will be organized to support capacity development of the literacy staff at various levels. In addition to training, other HRD measures like study visits, internships, and counseling will also be adopted.

In general, a three-stage cascade system of training is envisaged. Beginning with the development of a group of Core Trainers (CT) at the provincial level, Master Trainers will be developed at the district level to train the teachers from LCs. Provincial Core Trainers will be the key resource persons to develop the capacity of the MTs, who in turn will serve as the immediate guides and coaches for the Teachers. An experienced NGO, private training institution, or similar such institutions will be identified as a facilitating partner in each province to provide training to the coordinators, supervisors and literacy centre teachers.

There will be a team of experts at the central level based at the Literacy Resource Centre of the LD. This group will work to develop the capacity of the CTs through organizing specialized and advanced courses. These experts will be identified from various agencies, relevant government departments, NGOs, professional organizations, universities, etc.

NESP suggested strategy: *“The National Literacy Center will provide support for literacy facilitator training at the provincial and district level and will develop national training guidelines and standards. Training programs will be conducted through a cascade model at the district and community level and will be further supported by NGO partners. Literacy teachers will be trained and mentored by master trainers. Special attention will be given to training literacy teachers in how to adapt their literacy activities to learners with special needs. This will be done in close cooperation with the Teacher Education Department. Capacities of staff at the central level will also be enhanced through the organization of several workshops aiming at advanced skill development in program design and planning and in methodological aspects of adult literacy practices. Consultative workshops will also be organized in order to create greater awareness among other ministries and civil society about the importance of adult literacy as a main factor of improving living conditions and stimulating development.”*

To recover transmission losses as a result of the cascade training system, adequate training follow-up measures will be taken in addition to organizing supplementary and refresher

courses. LD together with other organizations and agencies working in the field of education will work to enhance capacity of local literacy providers by providing immediate back-up support and also by organizing courses at the local level.

For effective training and efficient management a standard ratio of trainers to trainees at the various levels will be maintained. Usually the trainer-trainee ratio will not exceed 1:25. However, flexibility in this ratio may occur in order to reflect local conditions in terms of total number of trainees in the area, the training venue and other logistics and support issues.

To a great extent the success of the training will depend on the basic capacity of the participants at the outset and the time allocated for training facilitators, supervisors and master trainers. A carefully planned training schedule will be used in courses allowing trainer/trainee sufficient time for receiving, delivering and observing training sessions.

In developing the national training plan, besides the key approaches mentioned above, certain specific strategies will need to be followed. Below is an exemplar strategy, which can be adapted to suit the specific situation at central, provincial and district levels.

Developing Training Plan – Tips

Identify the exact number of staff to be trained and their training needs. Priority needs should be addressed in the first round of courses. Plan pre and in-service training schedules for existing and future staff and make it a continuous process. Prepare a district-wide training schedule for each province based upon the number of trainees and types of courses. Update this schedule at regular intervals. Ensure design, redesign, publishing and supply of training manuals and materials before the courses are arranged.

A sample training plan to cover 12,500 teachers to teach 250,000 learners is shown here: 10 core trainer's teams of 2 persons each receive initial training at the provincial level. Each core trainer team of 2 persons will train 50 master trainers with 25 trainers per course. The total number of the master trainers thus trained will be 500. Each master trainer team of 2 persons will train two batches of teachers at the rate of 25 teachers per course. The total number of the teachers thus trained will be 12,500. On average each teacher will instruct 20 learners thus covering 250,000 learners in total in one round.

Basic training on pedagogy and literacy centre management will be organised for all LC teachers and supervisors. Need-based pedagogic courses will be organised at regular intervals. Monthly refresher and additional need-based courses will follow these. Rather than

being a one-time activity, training will be organized in repeated rounds of specified duration and based on needs. For example, the initial training will be on the overall objective of the program and training on the first part of the primer. The second and third rounds will be on use of second and third part of the primer and fourth round will lay emphasis on final assessment of the learner and post literacy, in addition to conceptual and operational issues as needed.

For vocational skills training programmes, there will be provision of practical training either in a training institution or at a place of work (through internship) in the relevant trade. Required technical and institutional support will be obtained from NSDP and other specialized organization/programmes of NGOs and other private training institutions.

The training curriculum will be drawn up well in advance for all levels. Although the training courses will be primer/course specific, there will be other relevant issues included in the curriculum. In the training courses, contents will be incorporated to develop the positive relationship between learner and facilitator to provide security, protection, happiness and encouragement in an effort to enhance sound cognitive development. A few core (exemplar) contents are as follows:

- Brief overview of the national literacy program and plan
- Motivational aspect of literacy as tool for development
- Emphasis of education in Islam
- Psychology of adult learning
- Complete understanding of primer and teacher's guide.
- Skills required assessing and building upon the progress of each learner
- Fulfilling, enjoyable learning processes to sustain learners' interest in classes

There is a need to identify and train a cadre of trainers at all levels. This begins with the establishment of a group of experts/resource persons at LD and core training teams at the PLC. These teams will participate in developing and publishing training manuals and materials for use at all levels of the training system. With manuals, training curriculum and materials, orientation and training of master trainers, supervisors and facilitators in the methods and practices of participatory learner-centered, integrated literacy can begin.

Under existing literacy programmes, a number of trainings will be conducted for select literacy staff and vocational training instructors at various levels. There will be a review of the situation to determine current and further training needs of this personnel.

Psychological support and counseling will be provided to facilitators and other literacy personnel particularly in areas operating insecure, stressful areas and where cultural resistance to literacy is high.

Orientation and motivational training and instruction for stakeholders outside the immediate programming staff will be conducted. The following courses are a few examples of what such training and instruction might focus upon:

- Training for community leaders, CDC members
- Orientation/ training for religious leaders
- Orientation for Walis and Wakils
- Orientation for political leaders
- Orientation for youth groups
- Orientation for writers and journalists
- Orientation for community volunteers on building rapport with parents, community, shura and religious leaders.

For vocational skill training, development of trainers and faculty will follow an approach that creates provision for technical back-up support to instructors in terms of training trainers and on-site support to outreach vocational trainers. Advance training courses will be organized and/or professional guidance will be provided for updating the instructors with the changing trends of the labor market. Resource centre-cum-libraries will be developed in the vocational training institutes to enable trainers to access updated information about the world of work.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Training need assessment and preparation of training calendar	Research on training needs and study on existing courses	Year 1	LD with support from NGOs and Kabul University	Central level
Mapping of resource institutions and persons at central, provincial and district level	Survey and documentation based on profile of institutions and persons	Year 2	LD jointly NGOs	Central and provincial level
Development of prototype training manuals for various groups of trainees (including core trainers and	Workshop to develop core contents; Source out preparation of manuals	Year 2	LD in association with LIFE Coordination Working Group members	Central and provincial level

master trainers)				
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5. Delivery of Literacy Programmes

Learning courses will be organized in communities where there are high concentrations of illiterate populations. The local community will be mobilized to provide house, land, and/or contribute in cash or kind to build a suitable location for running literacy courses. The venue for arranging a literacy course will be large enough to accommodate around 20 to 25 Learners. A village level management committee will be formed to oversee management of the literacy courses, to ensure intensive local participation, reduce the number of drop outs, supervise and provide immediate solutions and support for problems that develop locally. Management training will be provided to management committee members.

Massive social mobilization will be organized at the village level and district level supported by a media campaign at the provincial and national level. Besides local level campaigns, there will be mass rallies organized across the district to motivate people to join literacy courses. During the same period there will be extensive media coverage in the respective province to boost public awareness the campaign.

NESP benchmarks: *“Communities are a key partner in improving literacy in Afghanistan. While the Ministry of Education will support some direct implementation of literacy courses, its role will be heavily focused on supporting implementation through community engagement.*

Mosques are a vital part of every community in Afghanistan. The Ministry will seek to involve Mullah-Imams in literacy training initiatives. Imams can play a vital role in both delivering literacy training and in encouraging members of their communities to participate in literacy programs. Participating Imams will also receive training to teach the Ministry’s literacy courses and a supply of the Ministry’s relevant literacy textbooks.

The private sector could also play a vital role in supporting literacy throughout the country in the interests of increased productivity and as a social contribution. Corporate leaders will be natural partners in helping to link local market demand for particular productive skills with curriculum development for literacy courses that will supply a more literate labor force. The Ministry will partner with the private sector to ensure the quality of their programs.

The Ministry intends to reach all households in Afghanistan through the mass media, including radio and information and communication technology, to encourage participation in

literacy classes. The mass media campaign will enlist the support of national, religious and business leaders in order to reach as many Afghans as possible.”

Target learners will be identified through social mapping at the community level guided by villagers. All illiterates and neo-literates of the village will be identified through household mapping of the community and the data will be compiled at the district level. Age-group based information about the number of possible learners between 15 - 45 years in the village along with a profile of learners (illiterate, neo-literate) will be summarized at the village level and district levels. Local NGOs and other community-based groups will play active roles in helping identify and mobilize illiterates to join literacy courses.

Simultaneous with social mapping, household surveys will be conducted. It is vital for documenting profiles of learners and it also provides opportunities to go from house to house to not only merely collect data but to initiate discussions with members of families on the need for literacy. During the survey, discussion will focus on whether it is worth attending a literacy centre after a day's hard work or if it is necessary for women to become literate, etc. Through this process surveyors can help open dialogue about literacy issues and dispel many fads and taboos, doubts and misgivings about literacy that pervade particular areas and impart a positive perception about the benefits of literacy to all areas of the country.

For the purpose of mapping and community surveying, a number of teams will be formed. Depending on the socio-cultural context of the area, teams may consist of male as well as females as it is important to contact and open dialogue with as many women as possible as well. Team of facilitators working together with Community Development Council members may also conduct mapping/survey and identify learners. To ensure appropriateness of data, training programs will be organized to orient surveyors before going to the field. The survey findings and mapping data will be compiled at the community level, the later consolidated to district and provincial level counts. The provincial level summary information will be sent to the National Literacy Centre/ Literacy Department.

Literacy courses will be organized where learners will be able to participate most easily. These courses will be organized in a variety of modes, including mosque-based courses, workplace-based courses, courses for police and defense personnel, specialized courses for Kuchi, etc. These literacy courses will be linked with the multi-purpose community learning centres (CLC) at the district level, where the literacy graduates will be able to undertake further learning opportunities. People who have already acquired basic literacy competencies through existing or other previous programmes will be able to join in post-literacy programs directly. Similarly, learners with advanced literacy skills will have the opportunity to make a choice from among the skill training courses made available in the

CLCs. Through CLC, the learners will also receive support for linkages with employers or the market so that they can optimally utilize their acquired skills for improved livelihoods and/or can join in further education courses under equivalency programmes.

Community Learning Centre - Prototype

Community Learning Centers (CLC) are community-based organizations developed and promoted as a crucial community development center with a wide variety of programs and interventions in response to the varied requirements of the community members of all ages irrespective of social and economic status. CLC is a center for lifelong learning and has diversified impacts towards the underprivileged and marginalized in society. It meets the diverse learning needs of the community and facilitates institutional support to people to improve their quality of life through ensuring economic self-reliance and social empowerment.

Closely working with the community and with support from local development departments/agencies, CLC can gradually be transformed into a focal point for community development and create awareness on various issues including training for income generation activities. A few of the most salient aspects of the CLC include:

- CLC is accessible by all including out-of-school children, local school students, youths, adolescent, adults and people with limited reading skills etc.
- CLC can meet the diverse learning needs of the local people. There is no time bound requirements or restrictions in receiving literacy support from CLCs, it is an open-ended center with the scope for providing lifelong learning opportunities.
- It is a useful information center where people get daily newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and informational materials produced by various agencies.
- CLC can be a launching pad for implementing various programs of local development organizations.
- The Management committee remains responsible for management and maintenance of the center. The committee takes necessary decisions relating to organizational aspects and activities for CLC.
- Local GO, NGOs and associations provide necessary technical and material support to the CLC for its design, construction, growth and sustainability.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Development of prototype programme	Consultative workshop to draft outline and	Year 1	LD	Central level

implementation guidebook at the national level	source out development of guidebook			
Adaptation of the guidebook for use at the provincial level	Sourcing out	Year 1	Provincial offices	Provincial level
Orientation of key management personnel on the guidebook	Workshop	Year 1	LD and provincial offices in collaboration with NGOs	Central and provincial level

Skills Training delivery

Training will be delivered through institution-based skill training courses through existing and newly established vocational training institutions/centres. Outreach skill training courses will be organized through establishing rural vocational training centres and community based centres (schools, NFE centres, CLCs, etc) that draw on resources and facilities from the surrounding area and enjoy technical back-up support from nodal training institutions of the province/district. Efforts will be made to promote potential indigenous skills and craftsmanship through involving indigenous craftsman in organizing outreach courses. A system of vocational training networks will be developed covering training services through community-based training structure and institutional services through vocational training institutions at district or provincial levels.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Development of skill training implementation guidebook	Consultative workshop to draft outline and source out development of guidebook	Year 2	LD jointly with NSDP	Central level
Adaptation of the guidebook for use at the provincial level	Sourcing out	Year 2	Provincial offices	Provincial level
Orientation of key management personnel on the guidebook	Workshop	Year 2	LD and provincial offices in collaboration with skill training institutions/NGOs	Central and provincial level

6. Strategies to Reach Priority Target Population

Women and girls: Besides establishing literacy courses (LC), special measures and strategies will be taken to ensure women's enrollment, participation and retention in the centers. These are critical to reach the NLAP's target of at least 60% coverage for females. Community self-help-groups and teacher associations will be engaged to raise awareness and promote women's enrollment, and facilitate discourse with groups who may resist women's participation in literacy or training courses. LC timing and scheduling will be made with due consideration given to the daily routine of busy housewives and mothers. Curriculum and materials will be developed to compensate for women's limited exposure to the written word and numerical data that their male counterparts regularly encounter in the form of business transactions, shop signboards, operating vehicles or when paying a bill. In villages with low or no literate women for recruitment as facilitator, a socially acceptable male (Mullah or teacher) will be assigned to facilitate the class, where simultaneously a village female learner will be trained as learner-facilitator (co-facilitator). Community-based child-care facilities will be developed to facilitate participation of those girls and women who cannot attend literacy classes/school as they must attend to and/or care for siblings. Formation of self-help groups and micro credit schemes will also be explored to motivate female learners. Special programmes for different groups of women will be designed e.g. war widows who are sole providers of their families will be given vocational skill development programmes along with literacy. In addition, the following measures will be taken for mobilization of local communities toward the goal of female literacy:

- Establishment of district level Community Learning Centers and village level Satellite Learning Centres, where literacy will be provided in an integrated approach combining pre-school literacy, post-school literacy, religious education, vocational education and a well articulated community ownership strategy
- Involvement of Community Development Councils to spearhead female literacy, especially where the literacy levels of women are very low
- Special incentives to women and girls of deprived sections of society to encourage attendance in classes. These may include food for learners and female teachers in remote and food scarce areas, provision of health care for mothers and their children etc
- Capacity building of facilitators and supervisors for the mobilization of women and girls and identification of their needs and problems
- Cooperation and involvement of various agencies and Ministries who support programmes for women.

People with physical disabilities: Providing literacy for learners with physical disabilities and special needs will require additional attention in the areas of curriculum design and material support, facilitator training and the provision of a special learning environment. A specific needs assessment will be made for this unique group drawing upon the experiences of organizations who have an established track record of working with adults with disabilities and special needs. The following measures will be taken to reach the physically disabled, illiterate population:

- Supplementary training for LC facilitators to better manage and understand the needs and training requirements of special and disabled learners
- Identification of special resource teachers at the local level to deal with particular types of disabilities
- Outfit LCs with facilities to meet the needs of special needs of this group of learners
- Teach learners to be able to integrate and work in cooperation with the learners that need special support
- Promote public awareness that integrated literacy skills are a means to assist special needs learners to become responsible and independent citizens
- Identification and training of a cadre of special resource teachers to facilitate literacy courses for the disabled.
- Identify and train disabled rural female mine victims as literacy facilitators.
- Develop an integrated literacy curriculum focusing on vocational and life skills in promotion of self-reliance and independence.

Kuchi: Appropriate approaches will be developed based on the available experiences and emerging best practices for groups like Kuchis and Nomads who constantly move from place to place and thereby complicate the provision of fixed literacy programs. Special teaching camps shall be arranged for them at their convenient times. A mechanism will be developed to set up seasonal literacy centers at their site of work. Enrolled learners will be provided identity cards so they can join classes at other sites. There will be modular courses of very short durations to enable them to learn specific skill and competencies in a given time. Culturally relevant material for Kuchis reflecting their needs and problems will be developed in consultation with Kuchi leaders and other experts in this field. Efforts will be made to draw literacy facilitators from the targeted Kuchi communities and to develop a monitoring mechanism within these groups to ensure quality, continuity and sustainability of these efforts. Participatory action research will be undertaken for deeper understanding of the movement, literacy needs and demands of the Kuchi people.

Lost Generation: There are nearly nine million Afghans aged between 15 to 35 years whose education was interrupted or never began in 1990 and there are many people whose

education was discontinued in 1980s due to prolonged war and conflict in the country. This generation now consists of adolescents and adults. Some have basic literacy and some degree of education, but many more are illiterate. Most of these people will be provided for by one or another type of literacy programmes. Special programs targeting this group who have no experience of formal schooling may need to be developed in due course.

7. Management of Literacy programs

7.1. Stakeholders at Various Levels and Their Roles

An effective literacy program can only be implemented with the active, sustained participation of people from all levels of Afghan society.. To promote this, a detailed community-based implementation plan will be prepared through consultation with local government departments, NGOs, civil society associations, and professional groups. The district literacy office, other relevant local government agencies and NGOs will implement the program under the overall guidance of the provincial literacy office. At all levels, literacy commissions or committees will be formed with participation of various stakeholders. In each district a literacy expert institution (NGO, professional organization, etc) will be selected to provide technical support to the literacy department local team for implementation of the programmes. The roles and functions including supervision at central, provincial, district, community levels will be specified in the implementation guidelines of the literacy programmes. Necessary orientation and training will be provided to the stakeholders to ensure their active and beneficial participation.

Community Development Councils will help in organizing literacy courses, achievement of targets and providing security to learners, facilitators and other literacy functionaries. Youth, local influential people, Mullahs and other religious leaders will play key roles in making the environment conducive to literacy and motivating learners and facilitators. When necessary, these groups may play the role of teachers as well. The religious leaders will be motivated to highlight the importance of literacy in the light of Quran and Hadis. For this purpose avenues like Juma Namaz, Khutba, Tabligh, Khanaqa etc. will optimally be used.

NESP Focus: *The [Literacy and Non-Formal Education] program aims to improve management and administration capacities to sustain literacy programs at all levels (central, provincial and district). Offices will be better staffed and better equipped, while the technical skills of the staff will be upgraded. These efforts will be even more important because the program focus will shift from urban to rural areas and since active community participation is envisaged under the new program. To train its staff in community development and*

participation, the Literacy Department will conduct its capacity building activities in close cooperation with the Education Administration Reform and Development program.

For mass mobilization and people's participation for bringing about positive changes in society and peace in the country, the involvement of individuals and agencies who have a personal commitment to these causes will be crucial. Such persons will organize groups of teachers, students, unemployed youth, mullahs and so on. in the cause of literacy, protection of environment, harmony and overall social peace and stability. With the support of these groups and facilitators, teaching and learning will take place in LCs.

Role(s) of the Ministry of Education (MoE)

Achieving Literacy (and Lifelong Learning) for All will require a committed, coordinated and collaborative partnership of ministries, communities, civil society organizations, NGOs and donors. The MoE is envisaged as creating an enabling environment and providing leadership in implementation of NLAP in partnership with other ministries, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, the private sector and other relevant entities. It will play the key role in ensuring coordination among all literacy stakeholders.

The role of the MoE will be to establish policy, to set and monitor standards of learners assessment, certify facilitators', train and support trainers and teachers down to the village level, encourage and support best practices, develop and produce materials and curriculum that are appropriate to the life of each learner, establish LMIS - collect, analyze and disseminate data - and coordinate donors and Facilitating Partners to ensure national coverage. To achieve these objectives, significant technical assistance will be required to build the capacity of the Ministry at the central, provincial and district levels.

The MoE will assess the learners according to government standards and provide certificates acknowledging achievement of standards. It will approve curricula and materials developed by any other agency other than MoE at central level in an effort to standardize and harmonize literacy efforts.

MoE Provincial and District Offices will facilitate coordination and linkages with other government departments, agencies, particularly with the NSDP regional teams of MOLSA.

Role of other Ministries

In addition to the Ministry of Education, the Ministries of Higher Education, Women's Affairs,

Religious Affairs, Health, Rural Development, Interior, Defense and others have a history of supporting literacy and an important technical role in the development of thematic literacy courses that provide productive skills. These ministries will also help to adapt literacy courses in different regions of Afghanistan. All ministries will implement their literacy activities in coordination with the LD of MOE. They will enact policies and procedures to improve the literacy of their own workforces at the national, provincial and district levels. Moreover, they will help in organizing youth, provide extension facilities, and help in establishing linkages between adult learners and ongoing development activities.

Role of the Literacy Department (LD)

The Literacy Department will function as the focal point for other ministries, all Facilitating Partners, donors, and NGOs at the national level. The LD will be the point for assimilation and transferal of standards and best practices, training of Master Trainers and provincial and district trainers. It has the core role of overseeing all literacy activities in the country, initiating required policies, setting standards for learner assessment and certifying, training facilitators, and development of curricula and materials. Mapping of existing literacy programmes and an assessment of best practices and lessons learned nationwide will also be part of the strategic function of LD.

Role of UN Agencies and donors

UN Agencies and donors will provide technical assistance to build capacities of both government and communities. They will continue their support through implementation of literacy programmes in a coordinated manner, such as ongoing initiatives under AIFLI. The support of donors will be largely for establishing the LD structure, its capacity building at central, provincial and district levels and for implementation of effective literacy programs across the country.

Role of NGOs

Given the present multiple roles played by NGOs in Afghanistan such as implementing literacy programmes, providing training to the literacy personnel, offering various forms of skills training and mobilizing local communities for social development activities, the roles of NGOs in NLAP will be multi-dimensional. Depending on the capacity of the NGOs, roles will vary at the national level, provincial level, district level and village level. At the field level, the basic roles of NGOs will be facilitating the mobilization of communities and also implementing literacy and skills training courses in coordination with LD. At the provincial

and national levels, in addition to technical services, major roles will be advocacy for policy changes, resource allocation and adjustment according to changing circumstances and contextual realities.

Role of the Private Sector and Voluntary Organizations

Leaders of Afghanistan's major businesses have a natural incentive to improve the literacy levels of their employees, as well as a responsibility to participate in the national literacy initiatives for the benefit of the country at large. The private sector can play a role both in creating demand for literacy programmes, and in providing a supply of literacy venues, instructors and materials. The private sector is a natural partner in linking local market demand for particular productive skills with curriculum development for literacy courses that will supply literate labor. In much the same way, Afghanistan's voluntary sector is also envisaged as an important partner in the NLAP, helping to raise awareness on the importance of literacy and encouraging volunteer literacy facilitators.

Role of Communities

Literacy programme implementing organizations will work directly with community groups and institutions to build their capacities to manage their own community based interventions. These organizations will function as facilitating partners and among their key roles will be responding to the particular needs of local communities. Communities will be supported as needed in the following areas:

- mobilizing social and material support for literacy and productive skills
- developing proposals for submission to LD, NSDP
- managing small block grants
- identifying, supporting and monitoring teachers and learners
- developing, managing and maintaining community learning facilities
- managing, monitoring and evaluating their own programmes
- reporting updated information to the local government agencies
- integrating literacy with productive skills
- Replicating literacy classes within and beyond their own communities.

7.2. Institutionalizing Multi-Stakeholder Involvement

Political will and public participation are required at all levels for the effective implementation of the envisaged NLAP targets as well as the broader Education for All agenda. For the government and the public, to believe that financing and supporting literacy programmes is

worthwhile, all must feel that literacy is an effective tool leading to more productive lives. To ensure this happen, people from all strata of Afghan society must be involved in the form of formal and informal bodies so as to tap their energy and foster their active support.. The following framework will be used as a process for institutionalizing the support of a wider range of stakeholders at central, provincial and district levels.

High Commission for National Literacy

Based on the NESP's call for recognition and legitimacy of a national literacy program at the highest level, a High Commission for National Literacy will be formed to facilitate and catalyze endorsement and support among nation policy makers. Such high level endorsement is critical to promote cooperation and collaboration with other government ministries, raise the saliency of literacy and adult education with donors, (I)NGOs and the private sector, and increase acceptance of literacy programmes in urban and rural communities throughout the country. Members of the HC will be drawn from practitioners, academics, government office and persons who have excelled in the areas of literacy and NFE. The following will function as key members of the HC:

- Chairperson - Vice President
- Vice chair - Education Minister & UN Agency Head
- Secretary - Deputy Minister, Literacy

The role of High Commission for National Literacy will be:

- Create and maintain political will
- Advocate and communicate at the national and international levels
- Mobilize resources
- Coordinate literacy programmes
- Monitor and evaluate progress of programs
- Approve national literacy policy and strategy
- Encourage and ensure policy implementation by related ministries and stakeholders

Commission for Provincial Literacy

Similar to the HC at the national level, a Commission for Provincial Literacy will be formed at the provincial level with members possessing similar skills and background as their HC counterparts, including the following as key members:

- Chairperson - Governor
- Vice chair - Revenue Collector Director & UN Partner (it should be Provincial Education Director)
- Secretary - Provincial Literacy Manager

The Provincial Commission will function to advocate literacy goals in coordination with the HC, performing the following roles:

- Foster political will and people's participation at the provincial level
- Coordinate programmes at provincial level
- Creation of an environment supportive and conducive for literacy
- Monitor and evaluate progress of the program

Formation of Committees at the District and Community levels

While the overall responsibility for implementation of literacy programmes will rest with the government, there is a pressing need for further decentralization. The community and the district will be regarded as effective levels of management and the government will recognize and protect their legitimate role in the process. Accordingly, committees will be organized at the district level to monitor relevant activities and to influence the national and provincial literacy commissions through advocating appropriate strategies for adult literacy. Effective implementation of multi-stakeholder advocacy strategies will be ensured if such a committee can be formed at the field level. Specific roles of the district education committee will be to oversee successful program performance including:

- Mobilization and environment creation
- Monitoring the distribution of material to LCs
- Monitoring and evaluation of program progress
- Liaison activities with development departments, institutions, NGOs etc.
- Identification of local resources
- Security of facilitators/learners

Village Education Committees (VEC) will be formed to ensure grassroots level implementation of the literacy program, particularly the efficient, appropriate functioning of LCs. VEC will play a crucial role in making literacy programmes a success in their communities. Members of this committee will help in identification of learners, motivate and promote the inclusion of all family members who will benefit by participating in a literacy course, especially girls and women. The committees will also help in allocating a location for the LC, identifying teachers and monitoring their participation, motivating special interest groups like the mullah and other influential persons, organizing volunteers to take care of children and siblings, while females attend literacy classes. No less important a role for

committees to play is to put in place and maintain a safe and secure learning environment. The responsibilities of the VEC will be complemented with the village CDC.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Promulgation of regulation forming High Commission, provincial commission and committees at district levels	Through Presidential order	Year 1	Ministry of Legal Affairs	Central level
Formation of commission and committees by selecting prospective members from various sections	Through a consultative process with relevant stakeholders	Year 1	MOE	Central level, provincial level, district level
Orientation of the committee members on the procedures about the functioning strategies of the committees at various levels	Workshop	Year 1	LD, provincial and district offices of LD	Central level, provincial level, district level

7.3 Prototype Institutional Structure and Staffing

8. Literacy Department (LD)

MOE has established a separate executive body with authority which have the following goals and objectives:

- Develop national literacy policy and strategies for country-wide implementation
- Lead in the field of literacy research and development
- Conduct national literacy program monitoring and evaluation and create and maintain a national level literacy database to map programmes, teachers, learners, etc.
- Lead the development of teaching training materials and related capacity building programmes
- Develop integrated literacy curriculum for skill/VET programmes
- Establish a national accreditation system for literacy teachers and courses

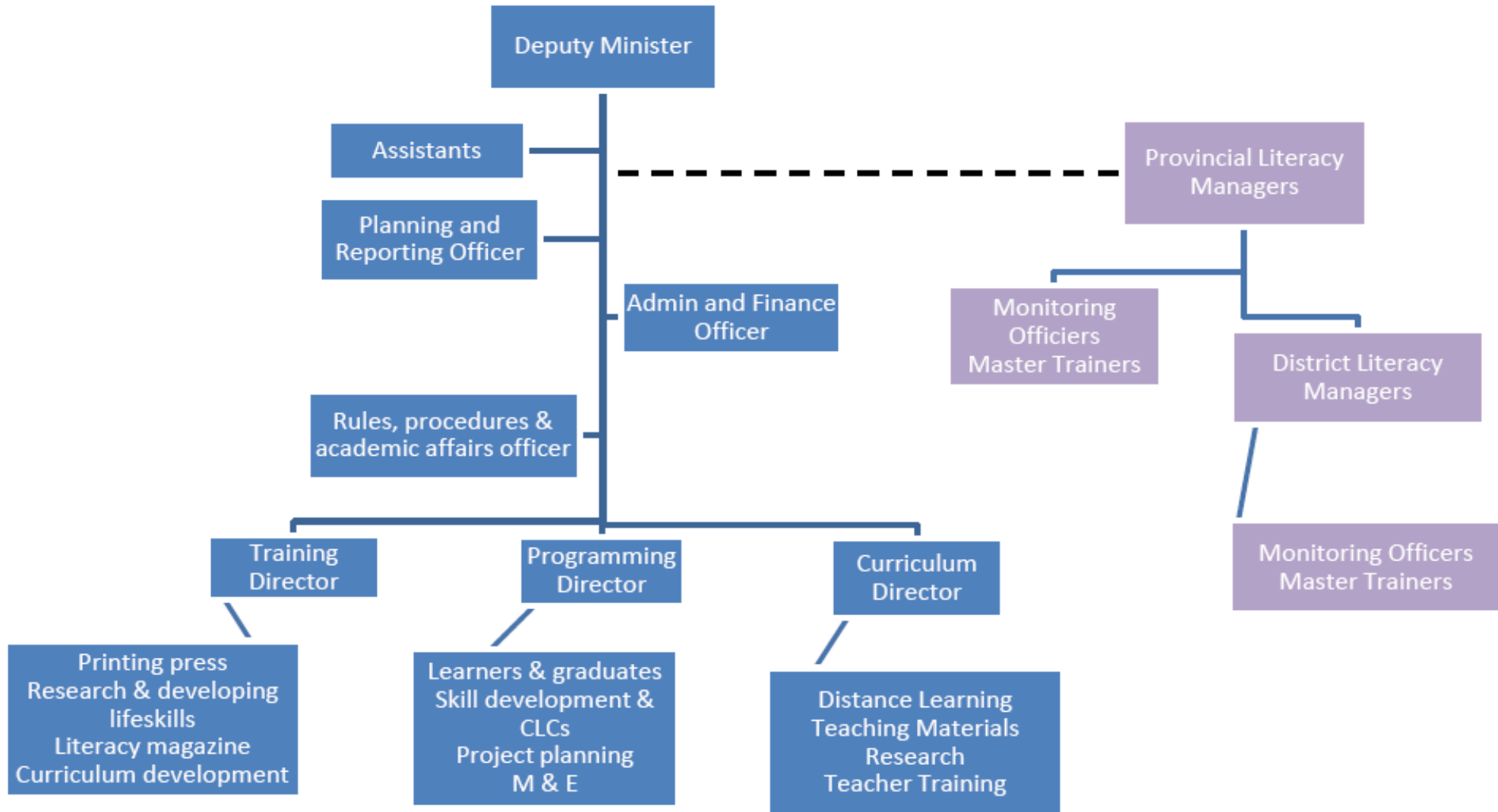
- Liaise and coordinate the literacy sector with GOs, (I)NGOs, civil social groups and private sector organizations
- Assess and compile best practices and lessons learned nationwide
- Document, disseminate and act as resource centre for literacy information for literacy workers and stakeholders

A number of core staff combining managerial and technical people will be posted in the LD. Exact designation and numbers of staff will be determined according to needs. LD will have the following units:

- Programme Unit
- Curriculum Unit
- Teacher Training Unit
- Administration and Finance Unit

In addition to these, there will be a required number of advisors and consultants and administrative staff.

Literacy Department Organisational Structure



9. Provincial Literacy Centres (PLCs)

For coordination and supervision of literacy activities nationwide the LD will establish one PLC in each of the 34 provinces. The functions of PLCs will be to:

- Provide provincial level coordination and supervision for all district offices
- Provide technical support and back stopping to district offices
- Assist with material development
- Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation exercises, develop reporting formats and maintain a provincial level database
- Liaise between LD, provincial GOs, (I)NGOs and district offices
- Facilitate training of trainers
- Manage provincial level material distribution
- Coordinate and maintain provincial level security vigilance
- Promote literacy awareness at the provincial level

A team of qualified staff members will be posted in each of the PLCs, drawing from existing staff and housed at existing MoE offices, whenever possible. Exact designation and number of staff will be determined according to the needs. Each PLC will have following units:

- Programme Unit
- Monitoring and MIS Unit
- Administration and Finance Unit
- Teacher Training Unit

In addition to these core staff, there will be a required number of administrative staff.

10. District Literacy Centres (DLCs)

At the district level a DLC will be established with a team of literacy personnel to facilitate program planning, training and monitoring down to the community level. The DLC will organize and supervise all LCs in the district. DLC will also oversee activities of CLC and facilitate the linkages of LCs with CLCs at the district level. DLCs will be established in existing MoE offices drawing from existing staff whenever possible. The DLCs objectives are to:

- Provide technical support including training and mentoring to village based literacy facilitators
- Supervise and coordinate the LCs and CLCs
- Conduct monitoring and collect data for the national database.
- Liaise with PLC
- Promote literacy and access for all
- Coordinate literacy issues with GOs, (I)NGOs and the private sector
- Promote and facilitate program linkages for post literacy activities and life long learning.
- Distribute teaching -learning material (supplied by PLC and locally procured) to LCs and CLC
- Assist with facilitator identification and accreditation, set-up of LCs and learner identification
- Assist with learner assessments and certification
- Coordinate, liaise and maintain relations with district level security monitoring teams

There are 364 districts nationwide so a total of 364 DLCs will be established at the district level. Exact designation and number of staff will be determined according to local needs. Each DLC will have following units:

- Administration and Finance Unit
- Monitoring Unit
- Teacher Training Unit

In addition, an appropriate number of supervisors will be recruited depending upon the number of LCs in the district.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Formulate functional links between literacy commission/committees and LD/PLC/DLC	Promulgate rules of business	Year 1	MOE	Central level
Develop organogram for LD, PLC, DLC with clear, defined lines of management and communication	Issue of office circular and formulation of guidelines	Year 1	MOE	Central level
Formulate TOR and delegation of authority	Consultative meetings	Year 1	MOE	Central level

for each level of offices				
Develop coordination and collaboration mechanism of LD, PLC and DLC with NGOs and other stakeholders	Workshops	Year 1 & 2	LD	Central, provincial and district levels

11. Strengthening Partnership and Coordination at All

levels

The planning, implementation, management and quality assurance roles and functions of literacy programmes will be shared by various stakeholders – government, NGOs, academic and training institutions, corporate agencies, civil society organisations and professional associations. The roles of different organisations will vary depending on their mandate, capacity and physical presence at central, provincial, district and community levels. Contributions will be in the fields of identification of learning needs, development of curriculum and materials, program implementation, assessment of learners, monitoring and evaluation. The Literacy Department will play a steering role in mobilising and coordinating the services of various stakeholders at all three tiers of management – central, provincial, district. The local government bodies will be responsible for community level management of the literacy programmes, who will have the responsibility for running the LCs.

Literacy programmes become effective only when linked to life skills and livelihood options leading to improved living conditions. To achieve these important linkages, not only is an integrated skills curriculum required but a learning environment that stimulates experiential learning is also a necessity. For this reasons, linkages will be built with GOs, (I)NGOs and private sector programmes who can provide both appropriate and affordable opportunities for this more grounded learning experience. Literacy stakeholders will be encouraged to collaborate on the development of training methodologies, curriculum and materials that link real life circumstances to the learning of literacy.

To reduce costs and increase impact, the programmes will be built upon and link to existing development programmes such as National Skill Development Program, Livelihood programmes and Vocational Training Centers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs etc. Coordination efforts of LD and NSDP, MOE and MOLSA will benefit adult learners who join livelihood programmes while they also pursue literacy skills.

Wherever possible LCs/CLCs will collaborate with nearby schools and utilize classroom facilities for holding literacy classes. In addition to this, coordination between teachers in schools and facilitators of literacy class will be encouraged for joint learning. Every government teacher will be required to support literacy programs by conducting monitoring, assist in surveying, motivating/mobilizing people to join literacy programs and building an environment promoting literacy.

The most suitable places for women to have classes is some private and secure place. Rural and urban communities will contribute appropriate learning spaces, youth volunteer facilitators and strive to build environments conducive to literacy. In support of unifying Afghan education, all government schools will be encouraged to support literacy, either within the school itself or in the community. Depending on the local situation, mosques may also be utilized for holding male literacy classes.

Youth will be encouraged to lend their effort to promote literacy and function as a catalyst for a peaceful nation building. The youth may form clubs and youth groups to support literacy efforts. Presentation of certificates and incentives will recognize and promote their. Necessary consultation with youth organizations and relevant ministries/departments will be organized.

Different ministries such as Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Rehabilitation etc. will be motivated to integrate literacy into their programmes, as well as organize literacy activities for their beneficiaries. The promotional and communication material of these ministries will, whenever possible, be rendered into simple language so that learners can read and understand it, as well as benefit from those schemes. Inter-program coordination within NESP will have significant implications in the sustainable learning process of adults.

Specific efforts will be made for strengthening coordination between LD and MOE at the central level and literacy officers/managers of LD with education officers of MOE at the field level.

Linkages with universities and research institutes will be promoted as these may play a very significant role for improvement of literacy in the country through provision of various academic and technical services.

As donors and international NGOs will be important partners, strategic linkages will be developed with them, in addition to linkages developed with the private sector and other related organizations. UNESCO will facilitate and promote the building of global and regional partnerships supporting the implementation of NLAP. The UN agencies will be important partners for cooperation and planning through UN joint projects for literacy.

Local/ national NGOs will also be active partners in providing technical services, mobilizing communities as well as implementing programmes at the grassroots level. Other important stakeholders will be the media, mullah, religious leaders, teachers, facilitators, extension workers, communities and learners themselves.

In the skill development programmes, the following measures will be taken to promote partnership and coordination:

- Networking with other skill training providers (private, NGO)
- Coordination with Government TVET programmes, departments and institutions
- Supports from industry and commerce sectors (government and private), corporate organizations
- Establishment of co-operation with local government bodies, coordination with other actors at the local level (like business associations, cooperatives) for strengthening necessary support system including identifying vulnerable households, creating market linkages and ensuring sustainability of rural vocational centres.
- Development of technical assistance mechanisms in association with experts (individual and institutions), for instance in curriculum development, research and evaluation arrangements, development of a dynamic cooperation system linking public and private industry, commerce and other service sectors for continuous improvement of training and employment.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Strengthen LIFE Coordination Working group	Identify strategically important ministries, departments, NGOs and broaden membership	Year 1	LD in association with UNESCO	Central level
Form small groups to work out mode of collaboration between LD and	Inter-ministerial meeting to form committee and to set TOR	Year 1 & 2	LD jointly with NSDP	Central and provincial/regional levels

NSDP				
Identification of key messages and modes of communication of those by various ministries in LC/CLCs	Adaptation of existing manuals/materials to suit the literacy competency levels of adult learners and facilitators	Year 2	LD and field level officials	Central, provincial and district levels

12. Strategies for Enhancing Efficiency at Various Levels

Towards an improved management of literacy programme at national, provincial, district and community level and improvement in implementation of the programme at all level, the capacity of LD, PLCs and DLCs will need to be developed and strengthened. The capacity of these institutions will be fostered through a systematic process with active collaboration and input from relevant stakeholders from government, non-government, academic and corporate agencies/organizations. The management structure at each level will be strengthened. Logistical facilities will also be improved.

For strengthening the LD and enhance the management capacities of LD officials at all levels, there will be scope for their participation in national and international training workshops and seminars, visits to project sites and exposure to good practices within the country and in different countries where similar type of programmes are being implemented.

To improve the LD infrastructure, provisions will be made for appropriate equipment, ICT facilities, and transportation improvements along with supports provided for adequate maintenance.

Improved staffing and assignment patterns will be developed with additional staff at central, provincial and district levels reflecting subsequent needs assessments and the volume of programmes in particular locales. There will be provision for decentralized decision making with adequate check and balance mechanisms put in place to decide administrative and financial decision making to ensure uninterrupted implementation of literacy programmes.

There will be a Technical Support Unit for Literacy (TSUL) to assist the Literacy Department in managing and coordinating literacy initiatives at all levels (central, provincial and district). The TSUL will be comprised of a team of technical experts in literacy and lifelong learning, community development, education planning and management and policy. LIFE partners will

be involved in providing technical support to literacy department, based on the needs of the LD as well as capacities and availability of resources on the part of LIFE partners.

TSUL will assist the LD to develop standards of student assessment and facilitate certification, evaluate and certify curricula and materials, and help coordinate the efforts of development partners⁷. To achieve this there will be a unified structure led by the LD to function as the National Literacy Centre for the research and development of literacy policy, standards, methods, curriculum and training. The LD will establish and coordinate teams of literacy staff (building upon the existing MoE staff when available and identifying new staff when necessary) at the provincial, district and community level tasked with knowledge sharing in the attainment of the national literacy goals.

Key Action Points

Action areas	Process	Time-frame	Responsibility	Place
Capacity analysis and identification of capacity building (CB) needs at various levels	Institutional capacity mapping through study	Year 2	LD with support from UNESCO	Central level
Identification of persons and units who require CB support	Base-line study and staff appraisal	Year 2	LD and provincial offices	Central and provincial levels
Arranging short and medium courses	Source out to expert institutions/NGOs	Year 2	LD	Central/provincial and district levels

13. Governance, Accountability and Decision Making

Processes

In Afghanistan, issues of governance and conflict are intricately related. Support to governance factors such as participatory decision-making, strengthening of civil society and public administration reforms have been initiated. Yet civil society as a vehicle for

⁷ National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan 1385-1389 Report 2006

participation is highly underdeveloped. More than 50% of rural Afghans in many selected provinces have no knowledge of the new constitution. Women's participation is also very limited. Moreover, Afghanistan's civil administration has little reach beyond Kabul. Local commanders retain control of vast regions. Administrative arrangements remain highly centralized, politically, fiscally and administratively. There is lack of skilled professionals, a severe gender imbalance, low pay and lack of merit based recruitment. In general many policies are not yet well defined. The same is true in the case of literacy.

For the MoE to live up to its constitutional and MDG responsibilities and meet NESP targets there is a need for good governance, encompassing power that is effective, honest, equitable, transparent and accountable. The NESP mentions the need to review current policy and approaches to literacy and NFE, including the development of multiple approaches and materials, in order to make the learning process more relevant for the needs of adult learners. There are a number of reform initiatives under way, largely within NESP guidelines. NESP promotes a new paradigm whereby communities are empowered to make decisions and exercise control. More focused efforts will be on women, girls, and ethnic groups.

To accelerate the process the following actions will be taken in a phased manner:

- Develop a coherent legislation and rules based framework for the delivery of quality education.
- A clear language policy to impart literacy will be formulated to fulfill the constitutional obligation that 'the state is required to provide opportunities to teach native languages in the areas where they are spoken'.
- Policy guidelines for education of women and girls, education of disabled, education of deprived sections of society will be developed.
- A general framework for integration of religious and faith based education into the overall system and participation of madrasa and religious institutions in literacy and NFE will be developed to support education consistent with the tenets of Islam.
- Developing contingency plans relating to natural disasters, especially for disaster prone areas.
- Taking initiatives towards institutionalization of literacy programmes conducted by NGOs and other development partners so that resources are not wasted in recreating and experimenting with approaches and programs already carried out by others.

14. Promoting Literacy for Development

14.1 Mobilization and Advocacy for Literacy

The core strategy for advocacy will be national and provincial level advocacy teams for adult literacy that will take the lead on implementing those strategies at various levels. The team should have representatives from government, the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, civil society, communities, universities and research organizations or similar institutions. The role of these teams will be to make stakeholders proactive as well as ensure a shared agenda for the adult literacy advocacy movements where the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder will be clearly identified. A broad-based advocacy and communication strategy will be formulated.

Politicians, policy makers, intellectuals, opinion leaders, religious figures, facilitators and learners will be targeted for advocacy and appropriate messages will be developed for each category. Public opinion will be mobilized through campaigns for creating community participation in literacy efforts. Religious leaders will be sensitized so that they participate in the literacy program and promote the mobilization of learners as well as facilitators. The learners as individuals and as groups will be mobilized to demand literacy for themselves and their children. The enthusiasm of facilitators will be intensified to enhance efforts in enrolling, retaining and teaching learners and minimizing dropouts.

Advocacy campaigns supported by the media to sensitize the general public on literacy and demonstrate impact on the well being of people, communities and nation will be undertaken. The LD will develop the communication strategy in consultation with development partners and in collaboration with the media, newspaper, radio and television. Awareness will be created to promote education as a human right and literacy as a key component. At the national level, an advocacy campaign will address politicians, policy makers, intellectuals, opinion leaders, religious figures, facilitators and learners. Special advocacy materials will be developed and meetings, seminars, workshops, and orientation programmes will be organized.

As part of sensitization of national partners, related ministries, UN agencies, NGOs will be motivated to include literacy as part of their core work. Youth organizations, mullah, mosques, women groups, writers, journalists, poets, and other related organizations/groups will be encouraged to sensitize their own constituents to promote the cause of literacy. In appropriate cases, such advocacy efforts will be supported by research findings and good

practices to show the positive impact of literacy on development and its potential economic returns. Special measures will be taken to mobilize mullah, other religious leaders and conservative sections in society to ensure their support.

A prototype advocacy strategy for literacy is given below, which should form the basis for a national and provincial advocacy strategy.⁸

Advocacy strategy – A prototype

1. Major issues for advocacy

- Develop strong rationales for addressing adult literacy
- Integration of adult literacy with mainstream activities
- Identify specific roles and responsibilities of different actors
- Understanding of government and donors perspective
- Identification of policy gaps and modification
- Coordination among donors, government and others
- Sources of reliable data
- Develop common vision among stakeholders
- Proper designing of plans and programmes
- Capacity building of different actors
- Local resources mobilization for adult literacy activities
- Budget allocation

2. Target Groups for Advocacy

- The Government (central, provincial and district level)
- Political Parties, bureaucrats
- Prime Minister, ministers, Members of Parliament
- Donors, INGOs
- Professional Groups/Associations
- Corporate/Private Sector, business Associations, trade Unions
- NGOs, CBOs, civil society
- Different networks, alliances
- Community, Local Leaders, special focus on Women
- Media (Print/Electronic)

3. Potential Partners for Advocacy

- Central and Local Government
- Donors and funding agencies, charity organizations

⁸ Based on the recommendation from UNESCO-DAM sub-regional workshop on advocacy for literacy (2006)

- Target beneficiaries, youth groups, women groups
 - Research and training Institutions
 - Key personnel of political parties, bureaucrats, civil society
 - Communities
 - Corporate sector
 - Alliances, networks
 - Media groups, artists groups
4. Strategy for Partnership in Advocacy
- Establish networks and alliances among different stakeholders at the national and international level
 - Encourage and involve media for advocacy on adult literacy
 - Sensitize civil society and communities for active participation in adult literacy
 - Draw attention and enlist NGOs that are not directly involved with literacy programmes
 - Lobby policy-makers to help convey the positive impact of adult literacy on development and its potential economic returns
5. Advocacy Process
- Round Table discussions
 - Policy Dialogues
 - Workshops, Seminars, Conference, Convention
 - Research, Study
 - Awareness Campaign through Media, Rallies, Walks, Cultural programmes etc.
 - Celebration of Literacy Days
 - Lobbying (central and local level)
 - Rapport building (central and local level)
 - Highlighting linkages with PRSP, MDGs, etc.
 - Budget tracking to identify gaps
6. Advocacy Tools
- Statistics (Reliable)
 - Bulletins, Magazines
 - Memorandum
 - Global and National Reports
 - Research Papers
 - Case Studies/Visuals
 - Review Policy Documents
 - Articles and Features

14.2 Research, Knowledge Management and Communication

There will be provisions made for research and study in the field of literacy and lifelong education to document good practice and lessons learned over the years. To enhance usefulness and effectiveness of the programmes, these will be continuously reviewed and improved. The professional organizations and related departments of the university will be encouraged to conduct action research or field experiments in various thematic areas. Thematic areas for research studies may include barriers in the participation of girls and women in literacy programmes, literacy and improved livelihood, use of mosque and madrasa for literacy, impact of vocational education on empowerment of women, learning interests and levels of neo-literates, etc. Action research will also be conducted to refine and create better strategies/ procedures.

Universities, academic institutions and other higher education facilities will be instrumental in undertaking research and knowledge management in the field of literacy. A large number of experts of various disciplines are available within universities that can all contribute to the creation of better understandings of the challenges facing the improvement of literacy throughout the country. Moreover, students are available to conduct surveys, impact studies and other relevant research. The following are a few examples of activities universities can play to contribute to literacy programmes:

- *Training for need surveys:* Universities may take the responsibility of training people to conduct need surveys that require a fairly good understanding of the socio-economic and cultural milieu of the community along with the Resource Mapping techniques and comprehension of special needs and interests of the community.
- *Direct involvement in field activities:* students may be involved in direct field level action. College and university level students may teach learners. Their work should be supervised and monitored by teachers. They may also be involved in evaluation of programmes.
- *Identification of learners' learning needs:* students along with the facilitators may be involved to identify learners' learning needs.

15. Costing and Financing

An indicative funding requirement for NLAP based on the cost analysis of some existing literacy projects shows that at least US\$ 60 should be allocated per learner for a one-year

literacy course. The International Benchmarks for Literacy suggests that for sustainability of literacy achievements, a literacy course should be planned for two years to enable the learners the continuing education courses of their choice.

Under the NLAP options would be available to plan one to two year-long literacy and post-literacy courses leading to lifelong learning. At minimum, US\$ 95 should be allocated as the average budget per learner for a year-long course. For longer courses, the average budget allocation may be up to US\$ 120, depending on the nature of the interventions and its provisions.

The following table gives a minimum projection of the expenses required in one year to make an adult literate:

Item of expenditure	Per learner budget in US\$
Books and materials	9
Teacher salary	25
Supervisory & management staff salary	14
Training	20
Research, Monitoring & Evaluation	3
LC establishment	6
Administrative exp.	5
Direct per learner cost	82
Support for CLC, DLC & PLC	5
LD capacity building	5
Social mobilization	3
Gross per-learner cost	95

Based on this average per learner allocation, **the total fund requirement up to 2015 for making 2.1 million adults literate is calculated to be at least US\$ 199.5 million.** This calculation excludes the expense for vocational courses and the cost increases associated with inflation.

Major expenses items for a year-long literacy course would be as follows:

Budget Item	US\$ (in million)	% of total budget
Books and material	18.9	10%
Teacher salaries	52.5	26%

Supervisory & management staff salaries	29.4	15%
Training	42	21%
Research, Monitoring & Evaluation	6.3	3%
LC establishment	12.6	7%
Administrative expense	10.5	5%
Direct cost for literacy	172.2	87%
Support for CLC, DLC & PLC	10.5	5%
LD capacity building	10.5	5%
Social mobilization	6.3	3%
Total	199.5	100%

In addition to allocation for literacy courses, a separate budget allocation will be required for vocational skill training of the adult neo-literates. Previous experiences of running similar skill training courses shows that there will be varying costs depending on the type of course, duration of courses and the delivery mode. Experience shows, however, that a reasonable average budget per trainee should be at least US\$ 500. **Based on this figure, to provide vocational training to 210000 adults the total fund requirement would be US\$ 100.5 million.**

To provide comprehensive literacy combined with vocational training to 2.1 million adults, the NLAP total fund requirement would be at least US\$ 300 million.

Financing of NLAP will be from government core funding, grant support from donors, resource support from the corporate sector and community contributions. There would be budgetary allocation for literacy programmes on an annual basis but a multi-year commitment from the national budget. Consultation with respective donors (either individually or in consortium) will determine external funding strategies and identify potential donors (Development Partners) to provide financial and technical support for NLAP target activities. Modalities for coordination among donors will be developed to ensure complementarities of support, based on the experience of ongoing UN joint programme funding. The budgets and available funds in the ongoing and committed upcoming projects will be accumulated to find out the current level of funding and to determine the net funding requirement over the next six years.

16. National Literacy Action Plan Implementation

NLAP will be implemented within the framework of ANDS, NESP, NSDP, EFA and other relevant aspects of the national development agenda. It will build upon existing national good practices, extend and reinforce them.

NLAP will be implemented under the leadership of the Literacy Department with the overall guidance of MOE. Required technical support will come from DPs and NGOs in line with the existing policies and programmes in NESP and ANDS. The LD in collaboration with the MoE will develop, implement and monitor policy and national standards of training and provide overall support for the system at national, provincial and district levels. It will collect and disseminate data and monitor and evaluate achievement nationally. This will include the following activities:

Formation of government led NLAP Steering Committee: an MoE-led Literacy Steering Committee will be formed consisting of members from different Ministries, UN agencies, DPs, professional institutes, NGOs and other key stakeholders. The NLAP Steering Committee will function to make key policy decisions. The role of the committee will be to engender joint partnership as well as ensure a shared agenda, where each stakeholder will meet those needs through their own roles. Selected members from existing LIFE Coordination Working Group will be invited to join the NLAP Steering Committee. The other roles of the committee will be to enhance partnership, provide strategic direction to NLAP and provide the LIFE Coordination Working Group members with orientation and advice on planning, implementation and monitoring (the Operational Team will be formed at LD level). It will also ensure that LIFE is placed within overall national development plans, particularly in linkages with EFA and MDG. Monitoring and evaluation of the NLAP will also be one of the important roles played by the NLAP Steering Committee.

Implementation of Literacy Programmes in a Phased Manner: in examining the provincial data it is apparent that there is considerable variation in the nation's illiteracy situation. Therefore NLAP will encourage national and provincial management to implement the target-specific literacy programmes in a phased manner. In the first phase those provinces where illiteracy rates are highest or where the largest total number of people are illiterate will be given priority. The result and impact of literacy programmes in these provinces may be more visible and help catalyze support for subsequent literacy interventions. Moreover, efforts to increase literacy in those areas will lead to considerable learning and help in improving the future literacy programmes in the country. It may also promote healthy competition among provinces in their efforts to achieve widespread literacy.

The need for a phased approach when introducing the national literacy program will be dictated by a number of factors including a shortage of literate female facilitators countrywide, seasonal access to some remote areas, the regional security situation, the existence of current literacy structures, national literacy demographics by area, integration of skills training into literacy curriculum, and the diversity of languages spoken in the province or region to highlight just a few. Adopting a phased approach further emphasizes the need for the MoE/LD to actively solicit and involve communities, NGOs, UN, Ministries, the private sector and related academic centres in the development and implementation of a national literacy initiative.

Development Partners, relevant Ministries, NGOs, academic institutions and the corporate sector will be mobilized to provide financial, human and material resource support to the LD, PLC, and DLC. Necessary adjustments in the ongoing support mechanism will be made to suit the overall structure of phased implementation of literacy programmes under NLAP. To implement the NLAP in coordination and cooperation with all the stakeholders, a number of preparatory activities will be undertaken. These may include:

1. Preparatory meetings: the main objective of the activity will be preparation for implementation of NLAP. Small group meetings will be organized to develop guidelines for each action area in NLAP. Active members of LIFE Coordination Working Group with substantial experience with literacy programming will take the lead. The guidelines will be completed within the first 6 months of first year of the plan.
2. Working Group Meetings: Working group meetings will be organized for mobilization of stakeholders and formation of cohesive groups for various activities like training, material, policy formation, advocacy etc. This group will also monitor programmes at various levels. Monthly meetings of the working groups will be organized under the leadership of MoE and coordinated by LD with technical support from UNESCO. As an outcome of this, issue-specific relevant coordination working groups will be formed for various important issues related to NLAP. The main agencies involved will be UN agencies, Bilateral and Multilateral agencies, LD, (I)NGOs. These meetings will continue throughout the NLAP period as determined in the terms of reference of the working groups.
3. National and provincial level exchange of experiences: Exchange programmes will be organized to learn about the planning, strategies, and experiences of other agencies in implementing literacy programmes in different provinces/districts. These will be yearly or periodical meetings for sharing experiences and highlighting good practices. Its outcomes will be used for improving the NLAP implementation strategy. All implementing agencies will be invited to participate in these exchanges.

4. Inter-ministerial coordination: There will be a regular exchange of views and experiences between MOE, MOLSA to guide and facilitate coordinated activities between LD and NSDP at the central, provincial/regional and district levels. UNESCO as the technical support agency will facilitate the coordination process among various agencies. Meetings will be organized depending on urgency of need and, depending on specific issues and agendas; other agencies may also attend those meetings.

17. Conclusion

The development and implementation of the NLAP as a national plan will have significant programmatic and systemic implications on all ongoing and future literacy programmes run by the government, DPs, INGOs and local NGOs. To increase effectiveness of the ongoing programmes, the literacy providers will need to be aware of various programmatic issues presented herein. These include, a) shift in focus from mere literacy to poverty reduction and development goals; b) widening of the scope to bring diversity to the learning package; c) target setting to reach the priority groups; d) planning programmes for low coverage districts; e) revisiting curriculum and materials to ensure convergence of national and local needs; f) organizing classes with multi-grade setting to suit learners' varied levels of competency; g) promoting interactive, joyful teaching-learning process facilitating learning by doing; and h) fostering a literate environment to sustain the literacy skills of the learners.

Helpful Tips for translating the NLAP into specific plans at the National, Provincial and District levels:

- Decide the thematic action areas (e.g., target setting, curriculum development) on which the plan will be prepared
- Find the relevant section in the NLAP
- Follow the steps recommended in the respective action plan (consult summary action plan, and also the relevant section in the main text for details about the process)
- Customize the steps according to the context and needs; seek out and consider good practices elsewhere
- Elaborate the steps as per requirements
- Formulate realistic program timeline, specify various responsibilities, and set performance targets
- Calculate budget and resource requirements needed to support the plan, establish resource monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

To achieve the programmatic results, there is a need to enhance efficiency in implementing literacy/NFE programmes. The required systemic improvement measures should aim at the following core issues and it is envisaged that NLAP will offer a base to address these issues.

1. Promoting decentralized planning and implementation;
2. Scope for continuous professional development of NFE personnel at all levels (Teacher to Manager);
3. Developing partnerships with other education providers to deliver diverse literacy programmes;
4. Creating scope to support and promote further education;
5. Community participation in micro-level planning and management of literacy programmes;
6. Setting national standards for assessment of learner achievement, and
7. Development of National Qualification Framework (NQF) and alignment of the NQF and the adult literacy education system

It is expected that formulation and implementation of NLAP as outlined here will enable the development planners and practitioners to plan and work together collaboratively to eradicate illiteracy from the country thus ultimately contributing to the peaceful, prosperous development of Afghanistan.

Appendix - 1: Provincial population, Illiteracy rates and Estimated Targets for Literacy

Province	Total Population (2004) [CSO-UNFPA]	Illiteracy rate (15+ age-group)	Estimated number of illiterates in 2004 (15+ age-group)	Estimated number of illiterates in 2008 (15+ age-group) – adjusted	Estimated Target in NLAP (by 2015 - 19% of total illiterates targeted)
1. Kabul	2,447,000	48.3	590,951	821,008	145274
2. Herat	1,813,000	61.6	558,404	775,791	137273
3. Helmand	1,405,100	87.8	616,839	856,974	151638
4. Nangarhar	1,356,500	63	427,298	593,644	105043
5. Balkh	1,141,700	73.2	417,862	580,536	102724
6. Ghazni	1,102,200	73.2	403,405	560,451	99170
7. Kandahar	1,023,100	71.7	366,781	509,569	90166
8. Takhar	852,600	84.7	361,076	501,643	88764
9. Badakhshan	844,600	79.8	336,995	468,188	82844
10. Faryab	844,400	85.4	360,559	500,924	88637
11. Kunduz	790,100	75.9	299,843	416,572	73711
12. Paktika	772,900	76	293,702	408,040	72201
13. Baghlan	759,000	75.8	287,661	399,647	70716
14. Ghor	651,700	81.5	265,568	368,953	65284
15. Khost	643,500	79	254,183	353,136	62486
16. Wardak	538,700	69.3	186,660	259,326	45887
17. Paktya	518,800	79.6	206,482	286,866	50760
18. Badghis	514,800	86.8	223,423	310,402	54925
19. Parwan	498,600	72.3	180,244	250,413	44309
20. Farah	493,800	76.9	189,866	263,781	46675
21. Daikundy	467,800	65.7	153,672	213,497	37777
22. Sar-i-Pul	444,000	82.4	182,928	254,142	44969
23. Jawzjan	433,100	83.7	181,252	251,814	44558
24. Kunarha	417,800	77.5	161,898	224,924	39799
25. Laghman	386,600	69.6	134,537	186,912	33073
26. Kapisa	365,500	67.3	122,991	170,871	30235
27. Zabul	355,900	80.9	143,962	200,006	35390
28. Bamyan	346,900	74.5	129,220	179,526	31767
29. Logar	333,100	63.5	105,759	146,931	25999
30. Samangan	320,500	83	133,008	184,787	32697
31. Urozgan	319,200	80.2	127,999	177,829	31466
32. Nooristan	134,500	79.7	53,598	74,464	13176
33. Nimroz	118,200	80.5	47,576	66,097	11696
34. Panjsher	110,300	65.7	36,234	50,339	8911
Total population	23,565,500		8,542,434	11,868,004	2100000

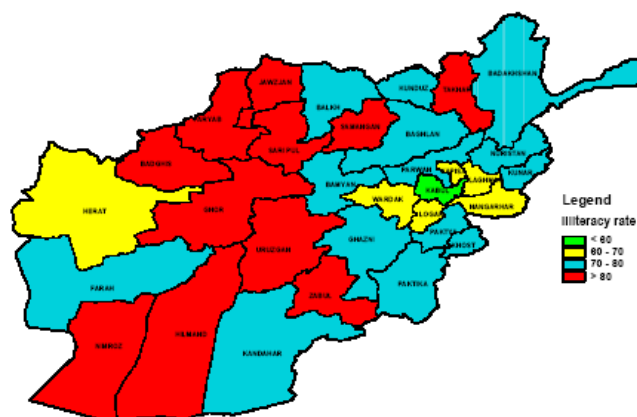
Appendix - 2: Map Illustrating Illiteracy Scenarios for Each Province

[Source: UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2003]

% of people 15+years that are illiterate

PROVINCE	%	Ranking
KABUL	48.3	1
HEART	61.6	2
NANGAHAR	63	3
LOGAR	63.5	4
KAPISA	67.3	5
WARDAK	69.3	6
LAGMAN	69.6	7
KANDAHAR	71.7	8
PARWAN	72.3	9
BALKH	73.2	10
GHAZNI	73.2	11
BAMYAN	74.5	12
BAGLAN	75.8	13
KUNDUZ	75.9	14
PAKTIKA	76	15
FARAH	76.9	16
KONAR	77.5	17
KHOST	79	18
PAKTIYA	79.6	19
NOORISTAN	79.7	20
BADAKHSHAN	79.8	21
ORUZGAN	80.2	22
NIMROZ	80.5	23
ZABUL	80.9	23
GHOR	81.5	25
SAR I POL	82.4	26
SAMANGAN	83	27
JAWZJAN	83.7	28
TAKHAR	84.7	29
FARYAB	85.4	30
BADGHES	88.8	31
HELMAND	87.8	32

	Male	Female	Total
Urban	40	72	56
Rural	64	92	78
National	57	86	71



Appendix 3: Summary Action Plan

Action areas	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Responsibility
1.1 Program and curriculum planning (Literacy & life skills)					
Review all existing literacy curricula and identify core competencies and life skills					Literacy Department
Develop a national literacy framework through a consultative process					Literacy Department
Develop provincial level frameworks adapting national framework based on provincial needs					Provincial offices & LD
1.2 Program and curriculum planning (Vocational skills)					
Identification of skill training needs and core competencies					NSDP jointly with LD
Review of existing skill training courses					NSDP jointly with LD
Development of national skills standard framework					NSDP jointly with LD
Development of provincial courses in line with NSS framework					NSDP Regional/provincial teams & LD
2.1 Plan for Material development (literacy)					
Stocktaking and review of existing literacy and life skills materials					LD and NGOs
Development of a core team of material developers at central and provincial levels					LD & Kabul University
Development of new materials as per need or adaptation of existing materials					LD, NGOs
2.2 Plan for Material development (vocational skills)					
MOU between LD and NSDP (MOE & MLSA) for collaboration on developing skill training materials and skill training for adult learners					LD and NSDP
Development of easy-to-use skill training manuals and materials					NSDP
Adaptation of centrally developed materials/manuals for use at provincial/district level					LD
3. Planning distribution of materials					
Province-wise and district-wise assessment of materials requirement					District offices and provincial offices of LD
Introduction of decentralized procurement and supply system					MOE
Printing of materials at selected provincial level					LD/MOE
Literacy assessment					
Development of testing system					LD & University
Conducting literacy assessment survey					LD jointly with

Action areas	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Responsibility
					NGOs
Dissemination of findings from the survey					LD & LIFE Coordination Working Group
4. Plan for Developing MIS					
Identification of core indicators					LD and UNESCO
Development of data inflow and management system					LD
Data analysis, report preparation and dissemination					LD
5. Monitoring and evaluation system development					
Review of existing literacy programme monitoring instruments and process					LD with support from UNESCO and NGOs
Development of exemplar skill training monitoring tools					NSDP
Development of prototype monitoring manual for use at central and provincial teams of LD and NGOs					LD jointly with UNESCO and NGOs
6. Development of human resource management system					
Development of recruitment guidelines and committee set-up					LD
Identification of requirement of teachers, supervisors and coordinators					LD
Preparing panel of teachers, supervisors and coordinators					LD, provincial and district offices
7. Staff development planning					
Training need assessment and preparation of training calendar					LD & Kabul Univ.
Mapping of resource institutions and persons at central, provincial and district level					LD jointly with NGOs
Development of prototype training manuals for various groups of trainees (including core trainers and master trainers)					LD, & LIFE Coordination Working Group members
8.1 Facilitating program implementation (Literacy)					
Development of prototype programme implementation guidebook at the national level					LD
Adaptation of the guidebook for use at the provincial level					Provincial offices
Orientation of key management personnel on the guidebook					LD and provincial offices in collaboration with NGOs
8.2 Facilitating program implementation (vocational skills)					
Development of skill training implementation guidebook					LD jointly with NSDP

Action areas	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Responsibility
Adaptation of the guidebook for use at the provincial level					Provincial offices
Orientation of key management personnel on the guidebook					LD, provincial offices & training org.
9.1 Planning management set-up					
Promulgation of regulation forming High Commission, provincial commission and committees at district levels					Ministry of Legal Affairs
Formation of commission and committees by selecting prospective members from various sections					MOE
Orientation of the committee members on the procedures about the functioning strategies of the committees at various levels					LD, provincial and district offices of LD
9.2 Management system development					
Formulate functional links between literacy commission/committees and LD/PLC/DLC					MOE
Develop organogram for LD, PLC, DLC with clear line of management					MOE
Formulate TOR and delegate authority for each level					MOE
Develop coordination and collaboration mechanism of LD, PLC and DLC with NGOs and other stakeholders					LD
10. Strengthening partnership and coordination					
Strengthen LIFE Coordination Working group					LD, UNESCO
Form small group to work out mode of collaboration between LD and NSDP					LD jointly with NSDP
Identification of key messages and mode of communication of those by various ministries in LC/CLCs					LD and field level officials
11. Enhancing management efficiency					
Capacity analysis and identification of capacity building (CB) needs at various levels					LD with support from UNESCO
Identification of persons and units who require CB support					LD and provincial offices
Arranging short and medium courses					LD

..... END