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Principles and general objectives of education

According to the (draft) National Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014, the vision of the Ministry of Education is to develop human capital based on Islamic principles, national and international commitments and respect for human rights by providing equitable access to quality education for all to enable them to actively participate in sustainable development, economic growth, and stability and security of Afghanistan. To do this, the Ministry must evolve into a modern, effective, fully funded and accountable public institution that facilitates education opportunities for children and adults, without discrimination, across Afghanistan.

Education in Afghanistan must strengthen Islamic morals, national unity, independence, rule of law, respect for human rights and democracy, tolerance, peace and stability; and help eradicate poverty, violence and drugs. The education system must promote ethical, emotional, cognitive, physical and social development, and improve the problem solving, critical thinking skills, creativity and scientific thinking of all students including those with special needs. The education system should also contribute to socioeconomic growth, poverty reduction and restoration of stability, security and self-sufficiency. (MOE-DPE, 2010).

The main objectives of the Education Law (2008) are the following:

- Ensure equal rights of education and training for the citizens of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through promotion and development of universal, balanced and equitable education.
- Strengthen Islamic spirit, patriotism, national unity, preservation of independence, and defense of territorial integrity, protection of interest, national pride, and loyalty to the republic system of Afghanistan.
- Educate children, youth and adolescents as pious, Afghans and useful and sound members of the society.
- Develop and improve moral, sentimental, mental, physical nurturing capacities and sociable spirit of the students.
- Strengthen the respect to human rights, protection of the women rights, democracy and elimination of every kind of discrimination, in light of the Islamic values and prevention of addiction to narcotics.
- Provide opportunity for the participation of the students' parents/guardians and other members of the society in the management affairs, and obtaining the moral and financial cooperation for the promotion and development of education.
- Educate and train citizens by active participation to promote economy and social affairs in reduction of poverty in the country.
- Eliminate illiteracy and provide grounds for accelerated learning for the children and adults who are left behind from the school in the country.



- Develop and improve the quality of education by applying modern experiences of the contemporary world, in accordance with the country's needs, Islamic and national values.
- Develop a unified educational curriculum, in accordance with the contemporary and up-to-date standards.

In accordance with the Curriculum Framework of 2003, the new curriculum fosters the development of students' personalities as human beings, good Muslims and true Afghans, supporting their comprehensive development as civilized persons, and accomplished personalities, and their ability to interact with other cultures and traditions. Education should provide equal opportunities for all students, males and females, children, youngsters and adults to develop as persons worshipping God, demonstrating self-confidence, patriotism and national unity, solidarity and respect of human rights. Education has to promote patriotic virtues, such as the defence of national independence, national Governance and sovereignty and to develop an interest to protect and enrich the national heritage. At the same time it has to promote values such as peace and equip students for fighting against all forms of discrimination. (MOE, 2003).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Article 43 of the **Constitution** of 2004 stipulates that Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be offered free of charge up to the B.A. level (e.g. undergraduate level) in the state educational institutes. In order to expand balanced education as well as to provide mandatory intermediate education throughout the country, the state shall design and implement effective programmes and prepare the ground for teaching mother tongues in areas where they are spoken. Article 45 specifies that the State shall devise and implement unified educational curricula based on the tenets of the sacred religion of Islam, national culture as well as academic principles, and develop religious subjects curricula for schools on the basis of existing Islamic sects in Afghanistan.

Article 4 of the **Education Law** approved by the Cabinet in 2008 stipulates that: (i) intermediate (basic) education (covering grades 1-9) is compulsory; (ii) pre-school education; intermediate (basic) education; general secondary; technical and professional, vocational, and artistic education; formal Islamic education; higher education; (grades 13 and 14) teacher training; literacy and basic practical education in the public educational and training institutions are provided free of charge. Article 32 states that teaching in public educational institutions, national private educational institutions, educational and training programmes and centers for literacy, and basic practical education, shall be taught in one of the state official languages (Pashto and Dari). The language shall be selected from one of the two state official languages, based on the current language spoken by the majority of the population residing in the area. Learning Pashto and Dari languages in the schools and educational institutions is compulsory. In the areas where spoken language of the majority of the people is the third official language in the country (Uzbiki, Turkmani, Pashai, Nooristani, Balochi, Pamiry and other languages), in addition to the Pashto and Dari languages, opportunities for teaching of the third language as a teaching subject shall be arranged.

Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of Education** (MOE) directly implements a large portion of educational programmes including but not limited to policy formulation, formal schools, curriculum development, teachers education colleges, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) schools, literacy courses, community-based education, training and capacity building of staff, and monitoring and evaluation. The MOE is structured around the central administration in Kabul and 34 **Provincial Departments**. These Departments ensure provincial-level coordination and supervision for all **district offices** (in the country there were 412 urban and rural districts in 2008), provide technical support and backstopping to district offices, assist with material development, conduct regular monitoring and evaluation exercises, develop reporting formats, and maintain a provincial-level database. In 2008 the Minister of Education was assisted by five Deputy Ministers responsible for: academic affairs; administration and finance; curriculum development and teacher education; technical and vocational education; and literacy. There were four departments working directly under the Minister of Education: the Department of Planning and Evaluation, the Academic Council, the Office of the Minister, and the Department for Internal Audit and Inspection. Programme Management Units (PMUs) have been established based on the eight thematic programmes of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP). The aim of these units is to bridge the gap between the NESP and the implementation of education activities and programmes, and coordinate inter-programme affairs. PMUs will also help reinforce the capacity for the implementation of the strategic plan, and help monitor the programme level and strategic progress of education. (MOE, 2008).

The **Curriculum Department** (sub-programme of Curriculum and Teacher Education) is responsible for the development of curricula and learning materials in coordination with the Islamic education sub-programme. (MOE, 2011).

As a follow-up to the first Afghanistan Education Development Forum and to improve coordination with donors and development partners, an Education Development Board was established in 2008 that holds regular monthly sessions to discuss education development issues. With the inclusion of representative of another three ministries (Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and Ministry of Higher Education) that play a direct role in human resource development, the Board has become the **Human Resource Development Board**. It provides advice to the Minister of Education and ensures coordination between the MOE and donors.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are contracted by MOE and/or donors for implementation of specific programmes (e.g. teacher education, literacy courses, provision of supplies to schools). NGOs have been playing an important role in filling the service delivery gap during and war and conflict and helping MOE in the back-to-school campaign. NGOs directly contracted by donors have delivered important services, with no coordination and alignment problems, when the government was not in a position to provide the basic social services in large parts of the country. As the MOE has strengthened its policy making, coordination and supervisory role there is need for both donors and NGOs to align their funding and programmes and improve vertical and horizontal coordination. The Ministry of



Education also needs to further strengthen its capacities in terms of contract management and monitoring and evaluation of the services being provided by NGOs.

Local communities and **school shuras** (school councils established in most schools across the provinces) are engaged in campaigns at the local level for the enrolment of children in schools, school protection, construction of school building and monitoring of quality of education services at the local level. The school shuras have been established by MOE to engage parents and the local community in education decision-making at school level.

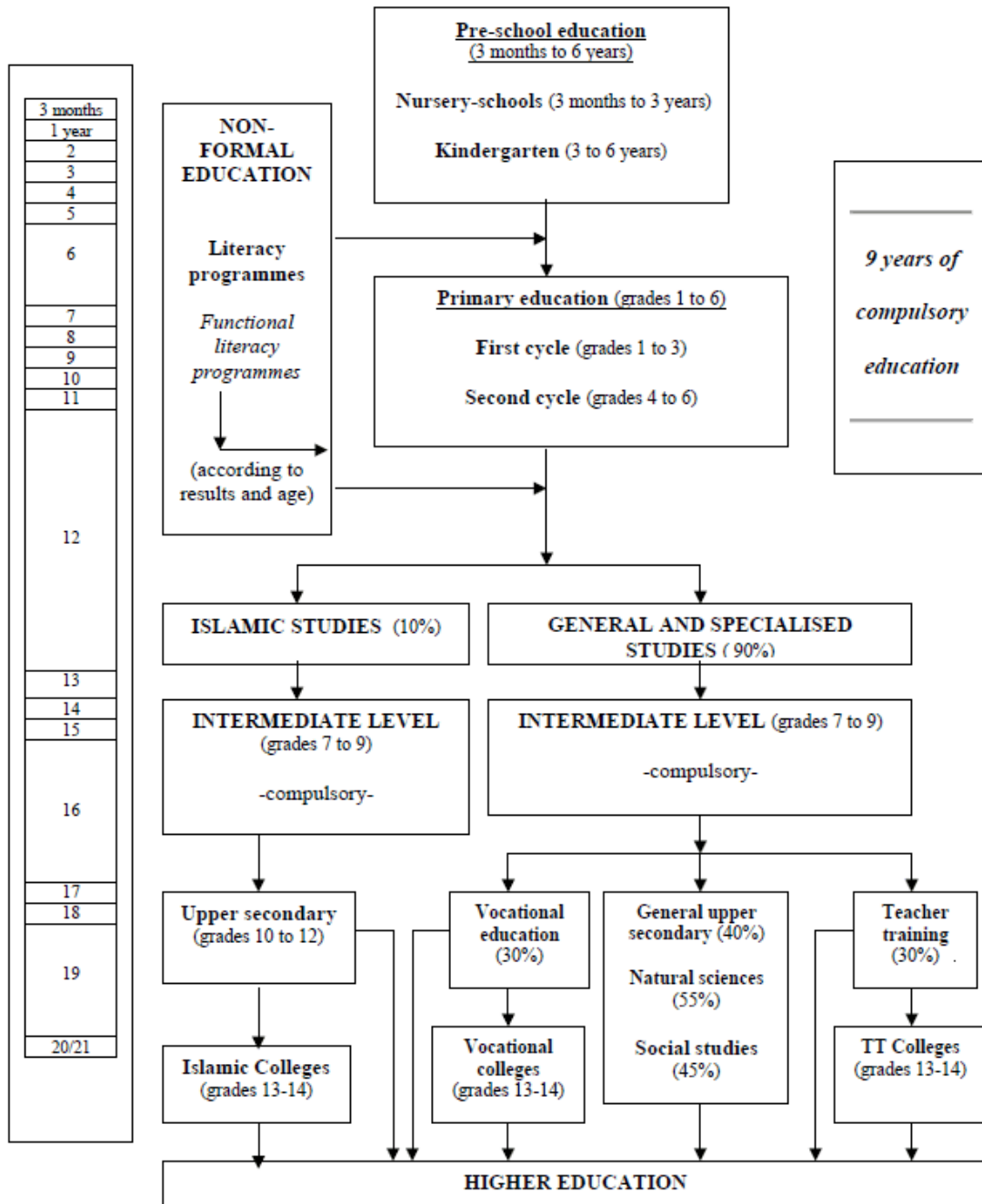
The Ministry of Education must provide access to Islamic education for all boys and girls wishing to pursue their studies in this field. Islamic education is provided through Madrasas (grades 1 to 12), *Dar-ul-Huffaz* (schools covering grades 1 to 12 and primarily focusing on Quranic studies, memorization of the Holy Quran, and recitation) and *Dar-ul-Ulums* (grades 13 to 14 offered in Centers of Excellence where students are provided further Islamic education almost the same format and the same services as in Madrasas; students at the district level attend Madrasas and they can enrol in Centers of Excellence that exist in provincial capitals). On the basis of the National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan 2010-2014, MOE intends to establish at least one Islamic school in each district and one well-equipped *Dar-ul-Ulum* and *Dar-ul-Huffaz* in each provincial capital. Pedagogical and vocational trainings will also be included in the curriculum of Islamic education, particularly for grades 13 and 14. (MOE-DPE, 2010).

The mission of the **Ministry of Higher Education** (MOHE) is to facilitate equitable access to higher education to all who are academically qualified, establish innovative institutions that provide high quality teaching, research, and service; produce graduates who are competitive in a global economy; contribute to economic growth, social development, nation building, and the stability of the country. MOHE is responsible for the training of secondary school teachers and for teacher training at the tertiary level. According to the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014, a Quality Assurance Agency will be established and it will operate initially within the MOHE. The Agency will oversee the process of accreditation of all public and private higher education institutions. The development and institutionalization of the Higher Education Management Information System and the National Research and Education Network are also important parts of the Strategic Plan. (MOHE, 2010).

The **Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Martyrs and Disabled** provides vocational skills training through its 17 training centers; designs and implements course curricula; prepares academic guidelines for training, assessment, and evaluation; and issues certificates. The Ministry also determines capacity building, coordinates and registers NGOs working in the non-formal sector, and serves as liaison with key line ministries in an effort to understand their capacity-building needs. The Ministry also has core responsibilities on pensions and social affairs (such as dealing with veterans, persons with disabilities, unemployment pensions, and so forth). (World Bank, 2008).

Structure and organization of the education system

Afghanistan: structure of the education system



Source: MOE-CTD, 2003.



Pre-school education

Nursery schools are expected to cater to children aged three months to 3 years. Kindergarten and pre-primary classes are for children aged 3-6. Pre-primary education is not compulsory.

Primary education

Primary education is part of general education and the admission age is 7. Primary education lasts six years (grades 1 to 6), and is divided in two three-year cycles. According to the Education Law of 2008 primary education is compulsory. Islamic education is provided in religious schools (*Madrasas* and *Dar-ul-Huffaz*, covering grades 1-12).

Secondary education

Secondary education is organized in two three-year cycles: intermediate or lower secondary education (grades 7-9), which is compulsory according to the 2008 Education Law; and upper secondary education (grades 10-12), which includes two streams, e.g. natural sciences and social studies. Primary and intermediate education are part of the compulsory nine-year basic education. Post-secondary education (grades 13 and 14) is offered in vocational education colleges, teacher training colleges and Islamic colleges (*Dar-ul-Ulums*). Technical and vocational education provided in schools under the Ministry of Education is normally for grade 9 graduates. The duration of programmes varies between two and five years, depending on the field of specialization and the trainee's entry level; successful students receive a diploma or an associate degree (end of grade 14). Vocational skills training courses offered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are usually short-term programmes (less than one year) emphasizing practical work.

Higher education

Tertiary and higher education is provided at universities and higher education institutes. Admission depends on the results of the general entrance exam taken by grade 12 graduates. Programmes leading to the bachelor's degree normally take four years to complete (five years in the case of engineering, pharmacy and veterinary; seven years in the case of medicine, including one year of internship). Master's degree programmes last two years. Doctoral degrees usually require at least three years of study.

In principle, at the general education level the school year should consist of 36 (six-day) working weeks. The academic year is divided into two semesters, each normally including 16 weeks of courses.



The educational process

Education in Afghanistan suffered for many years as different competing groups throughout the country developed their own curricula and as textbooks were used to promote various political ideologies rather than academic content. In 2002, the Ministry of Education, Department of Compilation and Translation (CTD), with the support of UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE) and UNICEF began the process of developing a new curriculum framework for general education. The focus of this framework is the development of a centralized and uniform curriculum that will be used throughout the country to cultivate traditions, religious and moral values and to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to become lifelong learners prepared for work and adult life. The Ministry, with the support of partners, has developed syllabi and textbooks for all subjects of primary education (grades 1 to 6) in the two national languages. In some parts of the country, children in the early primary grades study in one of the local languages spoken in the area. Therefore, the CTD began translating and developing the grades 1 and 2 language textbooks into Uzbeki, Turkmani, Baluchi, Pashaei and Nuristani. The revision of the primary school curriculum was the first task undertaken by the CTD, in line with the priority placed on improving primary education within the context of the Education for All (EFA) and MDG targets. With regard to secondary education, in the first year after the fall of the Taliban (2001), there was a review of all textbooks, except the religious textbooks, to ensure that specific political ideologies were not included in the texts.

The process of curriculum reform for grades 7-12 began in 2006. It was necessary to update the secondary school textbooks which were written in the 1980s and to eliminate confusion between the syllabi and the contents of the textbooks. The use of the existing materials was further complicated by the fact that many secondary teachers do not have the required skills to teach their subjects effectively. In addition, the content of the courses and the methodology of teaching do not engage students, which diminishes the quality of their learning. One challenge to the implementation of the curriculum is the shift system that is being used in many schools in the country. Due to the dramatic increases in enrolment in recent years, many schools, especially in crowded urban areas, are operating in multiple shifts. This means that children's time in the classroom is reduced by as much as 50%, with significant impact on the quality of their education and learning. There is a need to identify the minimum knowledge and competencies that students should learn in each grade and to provide guidance to teachers on how to meet these minimum criteria.

The Curriculum Framework of 2003 outlines a number of principles for developing a new curriculum. The new curriculum fosters the development of students' personalities as human beings, good Muslims and true Afghans, supporting their comprehensive development as civilized persons, and accomplished personalities, and their ability to interact with other cultures and traditions. In order to foster national unity and social cohesion, the curriculum comprises common requirements for all students. It is a unified and centralized curriculum, developed as a result of public consultation and inclusive processes. The content of the new curriculum is selected and organized with a view to equip students with relevant and



updated knowledge, based not only on factual information, but also on highlighting concepts, relationships and structures between concepts, between concepts and facts, and between concepts, facts and values. The new curriculum fosters the development of higher-level intellectual skills, emotional and social skills, as well as the development of positive/constructive attitudes. School organization, as well as learning and teaching methodologies will have to take into consideration the need to encourage students to learn, and to motivate them in a constructive way. Students' potential has to be explored and cultivated, while learning and behaviour-related problems have to be addressed in order to help students overcome the obstacles and develop their potential to the full. The new curriculum addresses the need for improved vocational education and training in the country, as well as the need for preparing students for life and for taking different roles as adults seriously and successfully. (MOE-CTD, 2003).

In order to enhance the quality of assessment and evaluation tools and procedures, special attention must be paid to the need to diversify assessment/evaluation tools and procedures, and use them to foster students' motivation and interest in learning and self-development. Results of assessment and evaluation have to be addressed constructively, and not as a mean for punishing students. Because learning is a continuous process, assessment and evaluation procedures have to address the students' potential for progress and self-improvement. Along with further improving internal evaluation, it is necessary to introduce gradually external evaluation systems, especially with regard to final examinations and certification. Professionals in the areas of assessment and evaluation have to be intensively trained, and must cooperate with professionals in curriculum development and teacher training to develop updated guidance for teachers, students, parents and schools with regard to standards, criteria, tools and procedures in modern assessment and evaluation. The capacity of the Ministry of Education to handle assessment and evaluation questions will be reinforced through the creation of specialized bodies working closely with the curriculum and teacher training departments. Furthermore, special bodies have to be set up (i.e. counselling and guidance centres) in the Ministry of Education, in schools and at local level to provide professional counselling and guidance for students. Their purpose is to help students develop self-awareness, overcome personal problems and guide them in the choice of future studies and career tracks. (*Ibid.*).

After the new curriculum framework was agreed, textbooks for the primary grades were re-written, printed and distributed to the schools. USAID continued to support the printing of the new textbooks and DANIDA (e.g. the cooperation agency of Denmark) began providing support in this area in 2004. In the period 2004-2007, almost 21 million textbooks have been printed (17 million by USAID and 3.6 million by DANIDA). As of 2006, all primary school textbooks have been re-written but not all have yet been printed and distributed. (MOE, 2007).

Efforts to make the curriculum more inclusive and responsive to the diverse abilities and backgrounds among learners started in 2008. The establishment of an Inclusive Education Division within the Curriculum Department will help the Ministry of Education to ensure that future curricula will be more inclusive and learner-friendly. Plans are being made to develop a two-year pre-school education curriculum, as well as teaching and learning materials. This work will be completed



by the new Division for Preschool Education under the Curriculum Department. (MOE, 2008).

According to the Education Law of 2008, the unified educational curriculum is the standard which sets forth general and specific objectives of education and training and based on that, the Ministry of Education provides and organizes the content of educational textbooks, methods of teaching and teaching materials and aids. A unified educational curriculum shall apply in all public and private educational and training institutions (Article 13). Article 31 specifies that the Ministry of Education, in order to prepare and draft develop educational curriculum and teaching materials and arrange its related affairs, shall establish the academic board and the developing educational curriculum, teaching materials and its publishing office. The composition, duties and authority of this office shall be set forth in separate rules. The unified educational curriculum for levels of intermediate (basic), secondary, technical and professional, vocational and artistic, formal Islamic education, teacher training, literacy and basic practical education, pre-school education, and distance education and education by correspondence, shall be continuously reviewed and developed, in accordance with the needs of the society and considering internationally accepted academic standards.

In 2010, MOE completed the development of a new curriculum for basic education (grades 1-9) based on active learning methods, with content relevant to students' needs. New textbooks and teacher guides have been developed by the Curriculum Department of MOE, printed, and distributed to all grades 1-9 students across the country. New textbooks and teacher guides for grades 10-12 are also under development. However, schools continue to lack science kits and laboratories and supplementary teaching and learning materials. The Curriculum Department (sub-programme of Curriculum and Teacher Education) is responsible for the development of curricula and learning materials in coordination with the Islamic education sub-programme. The Curriculum Department has developed the new curriculum framework and syllabi for the primary level and 109 books for grades 1-6 for general education. The books have been printed and students are now using them in the classroom. The drafts of 89 teacher guides have also been developed. Although the quality of new textbooks is better, the Curriculum Department will need to revise primary textbooks on a regular basis to meet the ever-changing needs of the country. In 2008, 147 titles of old textbooks for grades 7 to 12 were edited and distributed for students' temporary use. The new curriculum framework and syllabi for grades 7-12 of general education schools is developed by the MOE Curriculum Department with support from UNESCO and UNICEF. The Department has completed development of new textbooks for grades 7-9, and textbooks are printed, and distributed in 2010. The development of new textbooks for grades 10-12 is in progress. The new curriculum framework and syllabi for grades 7 to 14 of Islamic schools (*Hanafi* and *Jafari* sects) has also been developed and 50% of the development of 298 textbooks and teacher guides for grades 7-14 of the Islamic education programme has been completed. The development of textbooks and teacher guides in third languages is ongoing; sixteen books have been completed while an additional 68 are being developed. These books are written in Pamiri, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Pashae, and Nuristani. (MOE, 2011).

According to the Education Interim Plan 2011-2013, the goal is to provide quality modern textbooks and learning materials according to the new curriculum, based on Islamic principles and national values, in light of modern educational



standards and the present and future needs of the society. The general objectives to be attained by 2013 are to: revise and develop the curricula, textbooks, and learning materials of general and Islamic schools on a regular basis; develop and implement a system to assess the learning achievements of primary and secondary students throughout the country; ensure that all Afghan students in Islamic and general schools have access to a complete set of textbooks every year; and ensure that all teachers have access to teacher guides. The national programme will develop the national curriculum and quality learning and teaching materials. Vocational streams will be introduced in middle and high schools to equip youth with skills needed for employment. The Curriculum Department will continue to improve the curriculum to make it more relevant to students' daily lives and the country's priorities for reconstruction and development. The focus will be on how students can use and apply the knowledge and skills learned. Cross-cutting issues like human rights; gender equity; drugs abuse prevention; and awareness of HIV and AIDS, family planning, and environmental protection to promote education for sustainable development will be incorporated into all subjects. Civil society, students, and parents will participate in consultations to further refine the curricula. Revisions will be based on results from the pilot testing of textbooks, results of the new national standard assessment system, and research and evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum. The Ministry will use the private sector to print and distribute textbooks and learning materials.

Provincial master trainers, science supervisors, and academic supervisors will receive training on the new curriculum. These individuals will then be responsible for introducing the new textbooks to teachers and for helping them to implement the curriculum correctly. The curriculum will be incorporated into pre- and in-service teacher education programmes. To improve the quality of curricula developed for all Ministry programmes, an autonomous National Institute for Curriculum Development is to be established in 2011. This Institute will be responsible for the broad curriculum policies of general and Islamic education and will also coordinate curriculum development for teacher education, technical and vocational education, and literacy. The curriculum department, in close coordination with teacher education, general, and Islamic education departments will revise the regular examination system for general and Islamic schools, and develop and revise the national standard assessment system. (*Ibid.*).

Pre-primary education

At the pre-primary level nursery schools are expected to cater to children aged three months to 3 years. Kindergarten and pre-primary classes are for children aged 3-6. Pre-primary education is not compulsory.

On the basis of the Curriculum Framework of 2003, the objectives of nursery education are to: look after the physical and psychological health of children according to national and international quality nurturing standards; expose children to basic rules of social life; and prepare children for kindergarten. The objectives of kindergarten are: foster spiritual and moral development; familiarizing children with individual and group activities/tasks; experiencing joy in performing individual and group activities; develop curiosity for investigating the world children live in; reinforce hygiene rules; prepare children for primary education reinforcing cognitive/intellectual skills. (MOE-CTD, 2003).



According to the Asian Development Bank, “Early Childhood Development programmes have a relatively short history in Afghanistan. They were first introduced during the Soviet occupation with the establishment in 1980 of 27 urban preschools, or *kodakistan*. The number of preschools grew steadily during the 1980s, reaching a high of more than 270 by 1990, with 2,300 teachers caring for more than 21,000 children. These facilities were an urban phenomenon, mostly in Kabul, and were attached to schools, government offices, or factories. Based on the Soviet model, they provided nursery care, preschool, and kindergarten for children from 3 months to 7 years of age under the direction of the Department of Labor and Social Welfare. The vast majority of Afghan families were never exposed to this system, and most of those who were never fully accepted it because it diminished the central role of the family and inculcated children with Soviet values. With the onset of civil war after the Soviet withdrawal, the number of kindergartens dropped rapidly. By 1995, only 88 functioning facilities serving 2,110 children survived, and the Taliban restrictions on female employment eliminated all of the remaining centers in areas under their control. At present [2003], no programmes of any size exist, facilities have been destroyed, and trained personnel are lacking.” (ADB, 2003).

The Ministry of Education understands the importance of preschool education for children’s cognitive and psychomotor development, and for reducing dropouts and increasing completion rates in basic education. Mosques are playing an important role in preschool education by providing basic literacy and Islamic education to children from an early age. In addition, the government supports early childhood education initiatives including kindergartens in the major cities for children of working mothers and setting up preschool classes. To assist in the development of early childhood education, a new section was added to the organizational structure of the MOE with the task of developing learning materials for preschool education. Finally, NGOs and private schools also play an important role in providing early childhood education. The MOE plans to expand support to preschool education in the future through curriculum development and pilot testing, training early childhood education teachers, establishing more preschool centres and strengthening data collection on indicators related to early childhood education. (Ministry of Education, *Response to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011. Afghanistan Section*, Kabul, 2010).

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Martyrs and Disabled operates about 200 kindergartens, mainly in Kabul. (World Bank & DFID, 2010).

Primary education

Primary education is part of general education and the admission age is 7. Primary education is compulsory and lasts six years (grades 1 to 6), divided in two three-year cycles. The progression of pupils depends on the results of the end-of-year exams administered at the end of each grade. Islamic education is provided in religious schools (Madrasas and *Dar-ul-Huffaz*, covering grades 1-12). On the basis of Article 17 of the Education Law 2008, the intermediate (basic) educational level comprises grades 1 to 9, provided free and compulsory in a balanced and equitable manner, in accordance with the educational standards. According to Article 18, the objectives of intermediate (basic) education are to:



- Understand the basic principles and commandments of the sacred religion of Islam and strengthen Islamic belief and values. Non-Muslim students are exempt from this provision.
- Improve and strengthen Islamic sensation and spirit of patriotism and unity and national solidarity, justice, equality, peaceful coexistence, peace loving, tolerability and self-reliance.
- Improve and strengthen respecting to the human and woman rights.
- Make the students aware of the importance of the protection of the environment and its proper use and strengthen the spirit of adduction.
- Improve and strengthen the spirit of social responsibility, law abiding, order and discipline, social behavior, respecting parents, elder, teachers, lecturers, *Modrasan*, and effective participation in the family, schools and societal affairs and spirit of mutual assistance, kindness, and cooperation.
- Develop and strengthen physical, spiritual, moral, mental, affection and social soundness of the students.
- Develop and expand training physical education, cultural and artistic programmes in accordance with the Islamic values.
- Help students acquire functional literacy and develop skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening in the national and international languages.
- Develop and strengthen the habit and culture of reading.
- Help students acquire basic knowledge of social and natural sciences.
- Develop and strengthen the sense of initiation, intelligence and indentifying problems and seeking logical solution.
- Prepare students for the secondary educational level.

According to the Curriculum Framework of 2003, the objectives of the first cycle of primary education (grades 1-3) are: foster the spiritual and moral development of children; help children to acquire basic knowledge and skills (reading and writing, calligraphy, numeracy); develop motor skills; develop of a sense of discipline/appropriate conduct and approach tasks constructively; develop basic artistic skills; help children to acquire basic hygiene rules. The objectives of the second cycle (grades 4-6) are: reinforce spiritual and moral development; use basic knowledge and skills for self-expression; extend knowledge and skills by exploring the natural, social and artificial environment; develop skills for self-monitoring of learning processes; apply knowledge and skills in solving daily-life problems; look after physical health; develop teamwork skills; develop an interest in public matters; and reinforce artistic skills. (MOE-CTD, 2003).

The weekly lesson timetable for primary education according to the Curriculum Framework of 2003 is presented below:

Afghanistan. Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

Curricular area and subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	First cycle			Second cycle		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Islamic studies:</i>						
Holy Quran	2	2	2	2	2	2
Islamic education	2	2	2	2	2	2
<i>Languages:</i>						
First language (Pashto/Dari)	8	8	8	6	6	6
Second language (Dari/Pashto)	–	–	–	3	3	3
Foreign language	–	–	–	3	3	3
<i>Mathematics:</i>						
Arithmetic	5	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Natural sciences:</i>						
Men and environment	–	–	–	2	2	2
<i>History and social studies:</i>						
History, geography and social studies	–	–	–	2	2	2
<i>Life skills</i>	2	2	2	–	–	–
<i>Arts, practical work & technology:</i>						
Calligraphy	2	2	2	2	2	2
Drawing and home economics	2	2	2	2	2	2
<i>Physical education & sports</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	24	24	24	30	30	30
Optional activities	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2

Source: MOE-CTD, 2003. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. In addition to the subjects in the timetable, optional activities can be organized at students' request and in compliance with the school profile and local resources and circumstances; optional activities may include: sport activities; environment education; peace and human rights education; mine awareness; life skills; and computer education. 'Men and environment' is an integrated subject area including health education. In grades 4-6, mathematics includes arithmetic and elements of geometry.

Teachers, especially in rural areas are often poorly educated, with little more than a secondary school certificate. Their ability to make links between theory and practice, and thereby make education 'alive' for the children is therefore limited. Their confidence in their own abilities and skills is low. They therefore tend to escape into more traditional form of teaching and are mainly lecturing from the blackboard instead of interacting with their pupils. They are often afraid of allowing or encouraging the children to ask questions beyond what is in the textbook because they themselves may not know the answer, and they are worried about how this would affect the respect (or fear) many children have for their teachers. Most subject matters



are taught separately without any attempts of project-based learning or subject integration. The connections between different subject matters, i.e. language, mathematics, and science are therefore not made visible to the learners. This affects the understanding of learners and limits their interest in education, and it reduces the willingness of parents to send or keep their children in school. The lack of quality and relevance of education results in large drop-out rates in primary and secondary schools. (MOE, 2008).

Traditionally, evaluation in Afghanistan is based on oral and written items differentiated according to specific subjects. In grades 1 to 3 (first cycle of primary education), pupils' evaluation is based mainly on oral items, while in upper grades it also includes writing papers on certain topics/answering questions. In the area of Qu'ranic studies reading and reciting are important targets for assessment and evaluation. Grading is based on a scale from 1 to 100. In order to graduate successfully a certain grade (year of study) and/or pass examinations students have to score at least 40 points in each subject, and at least 50 points as an average result in all concerned subjects. In students' evaluation school attendance is also important (for instance, only students who have attended classes at least 75% of the school time allocated for this purpose are allowed to enter final examinations). Final examinations are organized internally by the schools. (MOE-CTD, 2003).

Pupils in grade 4 and above go through two comprehensive exams on all of their subjects, one mid-year and another at the end of the year. Each teacher develops his/her own questions and the new teacher guides include guidance on how to determine the number of pupils who have learned the knowledge and skills contained in the lesson objectives. If a student scores less than 50% for more than two subjects he/she must repeat the grade. Students who score less than 50% in one or two subjects retake the exam after a 2-3 month remedial course and are then promoted to the next higher grade if they succeed. Presently, students' achievements are measured through tests that are developed by schools and districts and there is no standard system. The exams vary among schools, so the learning achievements of students with the same scores may differ considerably. There is therefore a need for a standard evaluation system. A Standards, Research and Evaluation Directorate has been established within the Curriculum Development Department to address such issues. The national standard evaluation system will include a questions bank that will be developed after all textbooks have been completed. (MOE-DPE, 2010).

According to MOE, in 2009 there were 11,460 general education schools in the country, of which 5,124 were primary, 3,634 were lower secondary, and 2,702 were upper secondary schools. Around 15% were girls' school, 34% were boys' schools, and 51% percent were schools for both boys and girls attending in different shifts. In addition, there were 518 Islamic education schools, 42 teacher training centers and 61 technical and vocational schools. About 82% of the general education schools were in rural areas; 70% of the schools were operating in one shift, 25% in two shifts, 3% in three shifts, and a few schools were operating in four shifts. In 2009 the total enrolment in grades 1-6 was 4,850,929 students, of whom 1,895,486 were girls. Of the about 156,000 registered general education teachers in 2009, only 27% had an educational qualification of more than grade 14 or higher, which is the official minimum requirement for teaching (51% had completed grade 12, 11% less than grade 12, and 11% had completed primary education only). There are provincial



disparities: in Kabul the rate was 60% percent while less than 1% (only 10) of teachers in Day Kundi have an education of grade 14 or higher. Of the registered general education teachers, 31% were female teachers (mainly concentrated in the Kabul province). There were 136,935 students in Islamic education schools (grades 1-14 altogether) in 2009, of whom some 10% were girls; the total enrolment in grades 1-6 was 94,703 students (24,499 were in grades 7-9, 15,194 in grades 10-12, and 2,539 in grades 13-14). There were 4,377 teachers in Islamic schools, mainly male teachers (4,249). In terms of qualifications, around 35% of the teachers were grade 14 graduates and above, while 65% were grade 12 graduates or lower. (MOE-DPE-EMIS, 2009).

According to the Ministry of Education, in 2007 the overall gross enrolment ratio at the primary level was estimated at 129.7% (157.9% for boys and 99.3% for girls), and the net enrolment ratio at 60.5% (73.6% for boys and 46.4% for girls). (MOE-DPE-EMIS, 2008). It should be noted that: “Between 5% and 25% of enrolled students in each province were reported as ‘permanently absent’ in the 2007 survey.” (World Bank & DFID, 2010).

After three decades of war substantial progress has been made in the education sector. “By 2001, slightly more than one million students were enrolled and the adult literacy rate was 28%. Since 2001, the number of children enrolled in primary and secondary schools increased rapidly, reaching six million in 2008.” Security is still an issue in the country. “Anti-government forces have targeted schools, teachers and students, girls’ schools in particular. In 2008, 650 schools were closed because of concerns about security and 140 teachers were killed or wounded. It is difficult to recruit staff to work in these areas and existing staff are understandably reluctant to be transferred there. This has a negative effect on the delivery of education services and the ability of children to participate, and also compounds gender and regional disparities. The security situation also poses problems for education planning and management. The 2007 Education Management Information System (EMIS) survey was unable to collect data from roughly 200 schools and was not able to verify data on a further 400. In addition, it has not been possible to register all teachers or audit payrolls in insecure areas.” (*Ibid.*). In 2009, 481 schools were closed for security reasons, which deprived around 200,000 students from education. It is noteworthy, however, that around 220 schools were reopened as a result of the cooperation of local communities with the Ministry of Education. In 2009, community-based schools provided 6,681 classes to accommodate 228,030 students. These schools (classes) were established with support from NGOs. (MOE, 2011).

“EMIS data identifies unequal distribution of schools and teachers across provinces, which is reflected in significant variations in participation rates. For example, primary net enrollment rates range from about 30 percent in some areas to almost 100 percent in others. Differences in population densities and terrain, infrastructure, as well as political factors, security issues and differences in the demand for education affect the distribution of education resources. While female participation has improved in recent years it varies considerably across the country, ranging from almost 90% in Nimroz to less than 10% in Helmand and Uruzgan for primary grades.” (World Bank & DFID, 2010).



Secondary education

General secondary education is organized in two three-year cycles: intermediate or lower secondary education (grades 7-9), which is compulsory; and upper secondary education (grades 10-12), which includes two streams, e.g. natural sciences and social studies. Post-secondary education (grades 13 and 14) is offered in vocational education colleges, teacher training colleges and Islamic colleges (*Dar-ul-Ulums*). Technical and vocational education provided in schools under the Ministry of Education is normally for grade 9 graduates. The duration of programmes varies between two and five years, depending on the field of specialization and the trainee's entry level; successful students receive a diploma or an associate degree (end of grade 14). Vocational training courses offered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are usually short-term programmes (less than one year) emphasizing practical work.

On the basis of Article 19 of the Education Law of 2008, the secondary general education level comprises grades 10 to 12, is provided free in a balanced and equitable manner, in accordance with educational and training standards for the graduates of the ninth grade of the intermediate (basic) educational level. According to Article 20, and in addition to the objectives of basic education (Article 18) the objectives of secondary general education are to:

- Develop and strengthen understanding and solidify Islamic belief and values of the students. Non-Muslim students are exempt from this provision.
- Develop and strengthen the spirit of loyalty to the homeland, the system of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, preservation of independence, defending territorial integrity and national values, protecting properties and public assets, consolidating democracy, in conformity with Islamic values and nationally accepted traditions.
- Develop and expand culture of peace and equality.
- Make aware students of the harms of tobacco, drugs, intoxication, danger of AIDS, terrorism, war, violence, discrimination, and every kinds of prejudices and other prohibitions.
- Develop and expand Islamic knowledge, social and natural sciences and mathematics.
- Develop and strengthen skills in national and international languages.
- Use of contemporary technology, including information technology.
- Develop and expand the habit and culture of reading, thinking and analyzing academic researches and self-evaluation.
- Prepare students for continuing their education and/or finding an occupation.

According to Article 23 of the Education Law, technical and professional education, vocational and artistic education are offered in grades 10 to 14 in public educational institutions in a balanced and equitable manner, considering the number of population and *Kochis* (e.g. nomadic population) residing in the area, for the graduates of the intermediate (basic) education schools. Technical-professional and vocational and artistic education comprise short-term courses in order to develop and provide professional skills in accordance with social needs, in the educational



institutions of the ministry of education. In addition to the objectives set forth in Article 20 of the Law, the objectives are to: (i) train human resources in the technical-professional, vocational and artistic fields needed by the society and international market considering national and international standards, with special concern to the women's needs; (ii) develop and expand knowledge and skills through theoretical and practical training in the needed fields; (iii) provide special education for the blind and disabled students in appropriate and needed fields; and (iv) prepare students for admission into the tertiary level institutions and universities.

On the basis of the Curriculum Framework of 2003, the objectives of the intermediate school (lower secondary) are: reinforce spiritual and moral development; develop capacities for exploring the natural, social and artificial environment based on scientific concepts, tools and procedures; encourage inquiry into and interest in intellectual work; reinforce the capacity for self-monitoring of learning processes; enrich communication skills through the acquisition of foreign languages; develop technical skills, including ICT; look after physical health; reinforce self-awareness, capacity to further one's studies and choose of a career; develop further teamwork skills and the capacity to engage in fair competition. The objectives of upper secondary education are: develop further spiritually and morally; prepare for further studies in higher education/developing skills and attitudes important in fostering academic excellence; broaden the knowledge horizon and further develop an interest for quality academic/intellectual work; prepare for adult life and to make full use of knowledge, skills and attitudes in solving academic and daily-life problems; approach rights and responsibilities in different social contexts constructively; look after physical health; develop further skills for self-monitoring of learning processes and the ability to pursue their own talents and interests; develop teamwork skills and an interest in engaging in fair competitions. (MOE-CTD, 2003).

The weekly lesson timetables for (general) lower and upper secondary education according to the Curriculum Framework of 2003 are shown below:

Afghanistan. Lower secondary education (intermediate school): weekly lesson timetable

Curriculum area and subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	7	8	9
<i>Islamic studies:</i>			
Holy Quran	1	1	1
Islamic education	2	2	2
Sayings of the Profet	1	1	1
<i>Languages:</i>			
First language (Pashto/Dari)	4	4	4
Second language (Dari/Pashto)	3	3	3
Arabic language	2	2	2
Foreign language	4	4	4
<i>Mathematics:</i>			
Arithmetic	3	–	–
Algebra	–	3	3
Geometry	2	2	2
<i>Natural sciences:</i>			
Physics	2	2	2
Chemistry	2	2	2
Biology	2	2	2
<i>History and social studies:</i>			
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
Ethics	2	–	–
Civics	–	2	–
Economics	–	–	2
<i>Arts, practical work & technology</i>			
Drawing and home economics	1	1	1
<i>Physical education & sports</i>			
	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	36	36	36
Optional activities	1-2	1-2	1-2

Source: MOE-CTD, 2003. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. In addition to the subjects in the timetable, optional activities can be organized at students' request and in compliance with the school profile and local resources and circumstances; optional activities may include: sport activities; environment education; peace and human rights education; mine awareness; life skills; and computer education. Ethics, civics and economics focus on life skills. History, geography, civics and economics are to be part of the integrated subject 'social studies', to be introduced also at the lower secondary level.

Afghanistan. General upper secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Curricular area and subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	Natural sciences			Social studies		
	10	11	12	10	11	12
<i>Islamic studies:</i>						
Sayings of the Prophet	2	2	–	2	2	–
Faiths	–	–	2	–	–	2
<i>Languages:</i>						
First language (Pashto/Dari)	4	3	2	4	4	4
Second language (Dari/Pashto)	3	3	2	4	4	4
Foreign language	4	4	4	4	4	4
<i>Mathematics:</i>						
Geometry	3	3	3	–	–	–
Algebra	3	3	3	2	2	2
Trigonometry	–	1	1	–	–	–
Geometry & trigonometry	–	–	–	2	3	2
<i>Natural sciences:</i>						
Physics	4	4	4	2	2	2
Chemistry	4	4	4	2	2	2
Biology	4	4	4	2	2	1
<i>History and social studies:</i>						
History	1	1	1	4	4	4
Geography	1	1	1	4	4	4
Logic	–	–	2	–	–	2
<i>Arts, practical work & technology:</i>						
ICTs or drawing and home economics (in girls' schools)	2	2	2	3	2	2
<i>Physical education & sports</i>						
	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	36	36	36	36	36	36
Optional activities	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2

Source: MOE-CTD, 2003. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. In addition to the subjects in the timetable, optional activities can be organized at students' request and in compliance with the school profile and local resources and circumstances; optional activities may include: sport activities; environment education; peace and human rights education; mine awareness; life skills; and computer education.

By 2009, 61 vocational schools were operating in 30 provinces. In 2008, a vocational school was established for students with hearing impairment in Herat – the first of its kind within the technical and vocational programme. The only school for the visually impaired is located in Kabul. The National Institute for Management and Administration was established in 2008 in Kabul and has been providing quality



education for 2,500 students from around the country. In 2009, girls represented 25% of its total enrolment.

There were no technical and vocational schools in five provinces. Of the 61 existing schools, 17 were located in Kabul, providing for 61% percent of TVET students, which means that only 39% of students were attending schools in the provinces. Enrolment in technical and vocational schools has increased over the past few years, from 10,366 in 2007 to 18,296 students in 2009 (grades 9 to 14), of whom 2,766 (or 15.1%) were girls. In 2009 the number of teachers was 1,116 (of whom 238 were female teachers). About 56% of all teachers (70% in the case of female teachers) were located in the Kabul province.

Standard curricula, textbooks, and other learning materials do not exist for many fields. The syllabi for the subjects of electricity, auto repair, machinery, agriculture, and veterinary sciences have been developed and the textbooks for fundamentals of electricity, agriculture, veterinary sciences, machinery and automobile repair, radio and television, management, administration, accounting, and banking are being developed. The main problem in the development of the curricula is the lack of professional curriculum developers.

Although, a bachelor's degree is a requirement for technical and vocational education teachers, 58% of teachers currently have lower levels of education. Though an educational qualification of grade 14 would be acceptable for teachers in the provinces (in the short term), it is a challenge to find teachers with even that level of education. (MOE, 2011).

In 2009 the total enrolment in grades 7-9 was 1,248,689 students, of whom 413,932 were girls. The total enrolment in grades 10-12 was 405,097 students, of whom 113,850 were girls. (MOE-DPE-EMIS, 2009).

According to the Ministry of Education, in 2007 the overall gross enrolment ratio (GER) at the lower secondary level was estimated at 51.6% (70.9% for boys and 29.6% for girls), and the net enrolment ratio (NER) at 21.3% (29.6% for boys and 11.8% for girls). At the upper secondary level, the GER was estimated at 21.5% (30.7% for boys and 11.1% for girls), and the NER at 6.8% (9.2% for boys and 4.1% for girls). (MOE-DPE-EMIS, 2008).

Assessing learning achievement nation-wide

A system for assessing students' learning achievement needs to be developed to assess quality of teaching and learning. (MOE, 2011).

As stipulated in the Afghanistan Compact, the Ministry of Education will put in place a system to assess students' learning achievements at the completion of basic education. This system will be in place beginning in 2012, when the Ministry will administer a national achievement test for all grade 9 students. The results will be used to ensure the effectiveness of human, technical and financial resources, and to guide students towards post-secondary general education, Islamic education, and technical and vocational education after also considering the needs and resources of the various educational institutes. (MOE-DPE, 2010).

Teaching staff

Article 25 of the Education Law of 2008 stipulates that teacher training comprises grades 10 to 14. According to Article 26, the objectives of the teacher training educational level are: (i) train pious teachers, lecturers and Modrasan, with knowledge in highly professional standards skills, in order to attain the objectives of intermediate (basic) and secondary education; (ii) increase the number of professional teachers, lecturers and Modrasan; (iii) promote knowledge and professional skills of teachers, lectures and Modrasan; and (iv) provide grounds for taking the national skills exam of teachers, lecturers and Modrasan while in service.

Teachers are recruited at both the central and the provincial levels, but only teachers recruited through the Ministry of Education (MOE) receive permanent status. Teachers recruited at the provincial level are 'contract' teachers. In principle, graduates of the two-year Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) are required to teach for four years and graduates of the universities (four-year programmes) are required to teach for eight years. In practice, however, graduates from these institutions often do not fulfill these requirements. For applicants who are grade 12 graduates, the MOE has conducted a test to determine whether they can be posted as teachers to the provinces. In the past, this test has not been standardized and has been strictly content-based. There has not been a component that attempts to test the applicants' teaching skills or attitudes.

Since 2002, MOE has recruited thousands of new teachers each year. To be hired as a permanent teacher a candidate should be a grade 12 graduate and have obtained a teaching diploma, although many of the teachers throughout the country do not meet this official requirement. In 2005, 29% of all teachers in Afghanistan had completed fewer than 12 years of education and an additional 49% (63,310) were grade 12 graduates. Kabul Province is the only place in the country where the majority of teachers meet the official requirements. Teachers who have not completed grade 12 are generally not formally employed; instead they are categorized as contract teachers. These teachers cannot be promoted and are not eligible for retirement privileges. The Teacher Education Department (TED) of the MOE is responsible for training all grades 1-9 teachers in the country. In addition, the TED also conducts refresher courses for all in-service teachers, including grades 10-12 teachers who were initially trained under the Ministry of Higher Education. The training offered by the TED takes two principal forms: formal pre-service training at the TTCs for which students obtain a diploma upon completion of the programme; and short-term refresher courses (in-service training) that are offered either through the Teacher Upgrading Institute or the Teacher Education Programme. There are two pre-service teacher training options. Students who have graduated from grade 9 can enrol in a five-year pre-service teacher training programme. Upon successful completion of the programme, they are eligible to teach in grades 1-3 of primary education. As of 2005, there were only 195 students enrolled in this programme. Students who have completed grade 12 and want to become teachers can enrol in a two-year pre-service teacher training programme. In 2005, there were 2,478 students (1,530 male and 948 female) enrolled in this programme.



In 2006 the pre-service teacher training curriculum was perceived as outdated, not linked to the new primary education textbooks and not grade specific. The training materials available in the TTCs were normally hand-written, poor quality photocopies. Further, while the two-year pre-service teacher training programme consists of 2,304 hours of study in total, only 12 hours involve practice teaching and not all TTCs offer even this small practical component. In addition to pre-service teacher training, the TED also provides in-service training for existing teachers who wish to upgrade their skills and qualifications. In-service teachers who are grade 12 graduates can enrol in a two-year in-service programme that takes place in a TTC after school hours. The curriculum for the two-year pre-service and in-service programmes is the same; teachers who complete the in-service programme are awarded the same diploma as those who complete the two-year pre-service programme. As of 2005, 7,403 in-service teachers (3,045 male and 4,358 female) were enrolled in the in-service programme and during 2001-2005, 5,603 teachers upgraded their qualifications and received a teaching diploma. (MOE, 2007)

The number of student teachers in TTCs was 42,432 in 2009, of whom 16,117 (or 38%) were female. Of the total number of student teachers, 48% were enrolled in the MOE's two pre-service programmes and 52% were enrolled in in-service programmes. In 2009, the overall number of student teachers enrolled in in-service two-year programmes reached 22,017 and the number of student teachers in pre-service two- and five-year programmes reached 20,415, of whom 19,197 in two-year and 1,218 in five-year programmes. The number of TTCs graduates reached 16,064 in 2009, of which 6,713 teachers (42%) graduated from pre-service courses and 9,351 from in-service programmes. A total of 5,875 female teachers graduated from TTCs (or 37% of the total number of graduates), of whom 1,726 were new female teacher graduates of pre-service programmes. To guarantee TTC graduate employment in their respective provinces, the MOE issued a decree in 2009 asking Provincial Departments of Education to replace unqualified teachers with TTC graduates. In 2007 and 2008, 1,640 teacher trainers and 50,000 teachers were trained on subject knowledge and pedagogy and provided with on-the-job support through the in-service programme provided by District Teacher Training Teams (DT3). Through the programme, a total of 3,640 teacher trainers (at least 10 for each district) holding a bachelor's degree were recruited to enhance teaching in high schools and to help establish girls' high schools. Moreover, 11,000 school principals and head teachers in 11 provinces received training and practical management support. NGOs will provide these trainings for teachers and managers in the remaining 23 provinces.

To improve teaching in TTCs, a new curriculum, syllabi, textbooks, teacher guides, and other supplementary materials were developed. In addition 400 teacher educators were trained on the curriculum and implementation started in the first and second TTC semesters of 2009. Eighty-three textbooks have been completed for semesters one and two, and 30 are being revised, translated, and published for semesters three and four. Special teacher training programmes, including programmes for preschoolers, children with special educational needs, and computer and physical education, have not yet been developed. The main problem in this area is the shortage of Afghan national experts on teacher education and curriculum development. The TED is using international experts and university lecturers as teacher educators. The National Teacher Education Academy was established in 2007 to train teacher educators. In the first round of its programmes, 150 teacher educators, 27% of whom



were female, were trained through a four-month course. The Academy does not, however, have a well-developed curriculum and is currently dependent on foreign educators. A national registration system has been developed. Basic information on teachers in 34 provinces has been collected and entered into the database. However, these data do not include teachers working in the private sector. (MOE, 2011).

In 2001, only four TTCs were operating in four provinces with a total of 400 male students. Today, 38 TTCs (at least one in each province) and 78 district teacher support centers are functioning, providing teacher education to more than 40,000 student teachers. In 2008 a literacy and numeracy assessment of 148,000 teachers was conducted. Around 5,000 teachers were found with serious problems in terms of literacy and numeracy skills. Required competencies of teachers have been determined according to the subject and class they teach. Based on these requirements, a national competency test has been developed and is being piloted. (MOE-DPE, 2010).

“Most teachers have no formal teacher training and some have not finished primary school. In-service teacher training programmes and competency tests for existing teachers aim to address this in the coming period. The quality of pre-service training for teachers is poor and resources used for teacher training at the tertiary level are wasted because many graduates do not become teachers. Qualifications officially required for teachers are unrealistic given the current state of the education system and the urgent need for more teachers.” (World Bank & DFID, 2010).

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Web resources

Ministry of Education: <http://english.moe.gov.af/> [In English, Pashto and Dari. Last checked: July 2011.]

Ministry of Higher Education: <http://www.mohe.gov.af/> [In English, Pashto and Dari. Last checked: July 2011.]

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Martyrs and Disabled: <http://molsamd.gov.af/> [Mainly in Pashto and Dari; some information in English. Last checked: July 2011.]

Ministry of Women's Affairs: <http://mowa.gov.af/en> [Mainly in Pashto and Dari; some information in English. Last checked: July 2011.]

Kabul University: <http://ku.edu.af/> [Mainly in Pashto and Dari; some information in English. Last checked: July 2011.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>