



Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan

Ministry of Education

National Report on the Development of Education in Afghanistan.

Kabul, Afghanistan

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1. The education system at the beginning of the twenty-first century: An overview in Afghanistan.

1.1 Major reforms and innovations:

a. Legal framework of education:

Despite the long war and the collapse of educational system and its infrastructure, the legal framework of education for Afghanistan has been reestablished. Article 43 of the Constitution of Afghanistan states that: Education is the right of all of Afghan citizens and it is provided free of charge by the State covering up to the level of Bachelor's Degree. For the provision of balanced education all over Afghanistan and obligatory middle schools education (end of 9 grade), the State is responsible to prepare and implement effective programme

and prepare the ground for the teaching of mother tongue in the regions spoken.

Afghanistan on the basis of the order of the President of the Republic has also embarked on preparing its education laws to guide educational development at all level and type of education. Education laws, under preparation at the Academic council on Education (ACE), shall be proposed in due course by the Minister of Education, to the Cabinet and consequently to the Parliament of Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Afghanistan has prepared a 12 year education plan which foresees that all school age children should be in school by the year 2015 with the preliminary educational cost estimate of \$2.2billion. This 12 year plan is based to a great extent on recommendation of the International Form on Education, Dakar 2000.

Afghanistan envisages extending its educational plan to cover a period of 25 years beginning by 2004. This will be a period of reconstruction and redevelopment of education almost equivalent to the period of war that destroyed all infrastructures and development of all sectors including education of Afghanistan that had been achieved in the first three quarters of the 20th century.

b. Organization, structure and management of education system:

The organization of education in Afghanistan after the promulgation of its Constitution is 9-3-4. So far, the educational system and its management has been a centralized one. This does not respond to the fast quantitative development and highly demanded quality of education in the nation. Consequently, the administrative and teaching / learning structure of education is being seriously studied for renewal and changes to bring efficiency and functionality to the educational system. Structural changes will be based on decentralization of authority and responsibility in administration and management and teaching / learning throughout the nation.

Community participation in educational developments is given a high priority. The formation and activation of Parent - Teacher Association (PTA) is developed, encouraged and activated.

c. Curriculum policies, educational content and teaching and learning strategies:

The Constitution of Afghanistan is clear with respect to curriculum policy and its coverage. In this context, Article 45 of the Constitution states that: The State develops and implements a unified curriculum based on Islamic principles, national culture and in accordance with scientific methods and it prepares the

curriculum of the religious subjects on the basis of the branches of Islam in vogue in Afghanistan.

An international workshop on curriculum development was organized by the Ministry of Education, International Bureaus of Education (IBE) and other organizations in 2003 and curriculum framework and objectives were developed in the following domains:

- Ethics
- Knowledge and Learning
- Arts and Culture
- Social and Civic
- Economic
- Health

Teaching / Learning strategies involve:

- Islamic teaching
- Language
- Mathematics
- Natural science
- Social science
- Practical work , arts and computer
- Physical education
- In upper secondary school (10-12 grades), general education shall be divided into two branches of natural sciences and social sciences.

- Courses and extra-curricular activities are also provided in schools. Especially information technology courses will be provided at middle school level and extended to upper secondary schools. With the availability of needed equipment, courses, in agriculture and crafts will be
- provided. Such courses will finally be introduced as electives in the secondary school curriculum.
- Teaching hours are 45 minutes. There are 26 teaching hours of 45 minutes each in a week. In view of the high demand for schooling and lack of school buildings, school buildings are used in three shifts. Despite lack of space for effective teaching, people are keenly interested to send their children to school and it is an indicative of the trend and high demand for quantity of education with its consequent challenges and demands for quality of education.

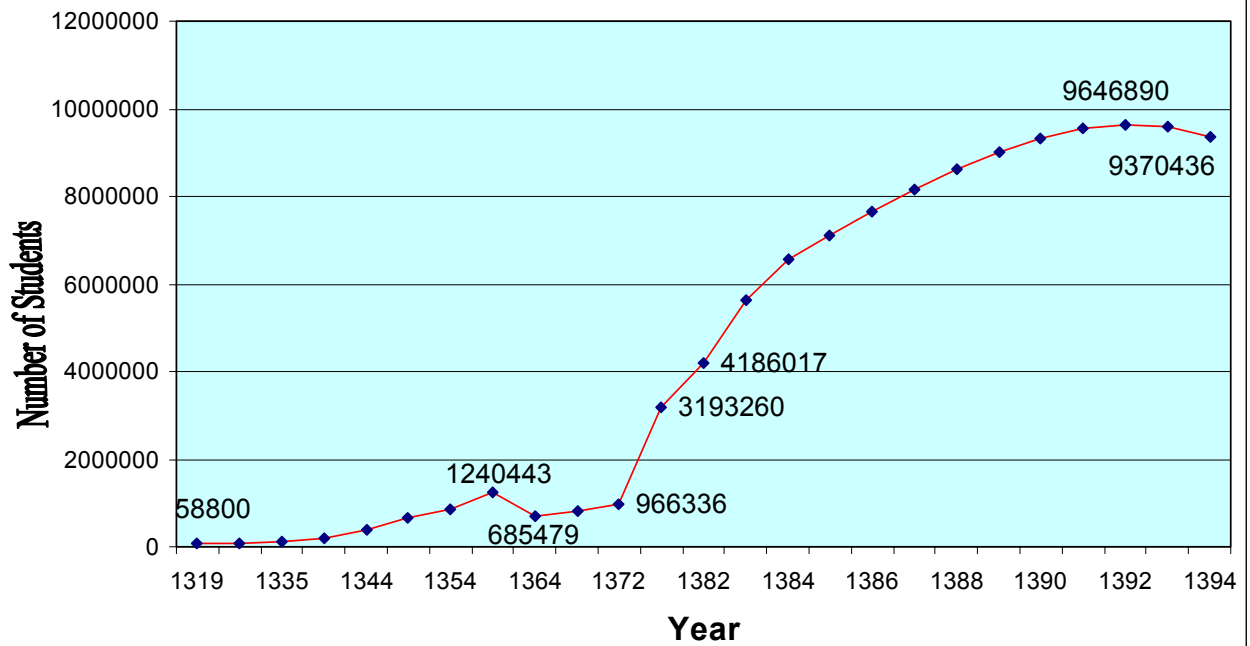
1.2 Major achievements

a) Access to education:

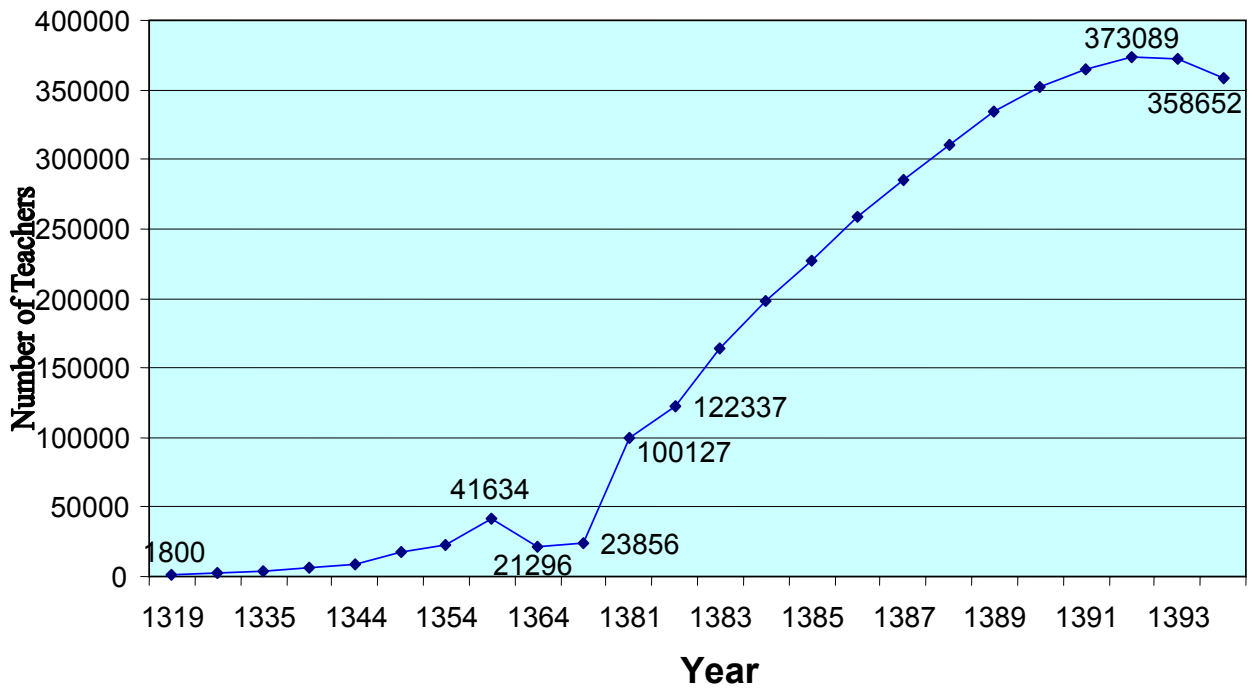
Access to education is very high and successful for the academic year 2004. Afghanistan has had 1.5million children entering grade one throughout the nation. The same will happen next year and later till all school age children get to

school specially at grade one. The following graph shows the improvement of access to education and provision of teachers for the school with highest number since 2002. The 12 years education plan of Afghanistan envisages to have all school children (boys and girls) of Afghanistan to school by 2015.

Graf of statistics of students from 1940-2015



Graf of statistics of Teachers from 1940-2015



b) Equity in education:

Equity education is a high criterion for school enrolment. Schools are open for girls and boys in urban and rural areas. A mandate to this effect is Article 44 of the Constitution of Afghanistan which state that: For the purpose of creating a balance and developing education for women, improving the education of nomads and eliminating illiteracy in the nation, the State is responsible to develop and implement effective programmes.

It is time to develop programmes and locate needed funds for achieving the major mandate of this Article of the Constitution at national level..

c) Quality of education:

Quality has become a high priority because quantity of education is on a regular and satisfactory progress. Quality of education is enhanced through improving the curriculum and textbooks as well as teacher education. Currently, a 26 day-in-service-training of about 125000 male and female teachers in urban and rural areas of Afghanistan are under preparation with the aim of improving teaching / learning, effective use of textbooks, introducing relevant teaching methodologies, evaluation techniques and guidance.

d) Content of education:

Content of education is improved by improving the quality curriculum and textbooks and relating them to the life of students and their socio cultural and natural environments. In curriculum study and development, the experiences of other countries and international organizations are utilized through participation of their experts in relevant workshops and seminars to this effect. Furthermore, the content of education focuses more on the development of culture of peace, respect for human rights and international understanding, national unity, brotherhood, forgiveness, the reconstruction of Afghanistan and safeguarding its territorial integrity and independence.

e) Policy dialogues , partnership and participation by civil society in the process of educational change:

Major policy dialogue at national level and participation by civil society took place during the Loya Jirga when the Constitution of Afghanistan was approved. Education was given a historical boost by making it free and obligatory from grade1-9. The Constitution of Afghanistan has covered education and its development in Articles 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47.

Currently educational policy in the nation include , the effective implementation of educational dimension of the Constitution, balance and equity in educational development , emphasis on education in least developed provinces, education for all, decentralization of education, involvement of communities specially parents in educational development, developing technical and vocational education , developing religious schools in accordance with new curriculum, gradual development of private education, improving measures for girls education, promoting innovations in education, using new information technology , using innovative experiences of other nations in improving Afghan education.

Special achievements of education for 2003 – 2004 are the preparation of curriculum structure of literacy programmes, preparation of 3 literacy textbooks, teaching 251000 literacy students, preparation of all primary school first grade textbooks based on new curriculum, drafting 15 titles of subjects, based on new curriculum for grades 2, 3 and 4, preparation of all science, social science and English subjects for grade 4 based on new curriculum, activation of education Television Center, revival of 580 schools that were not functioning, creation of 2079 new schools in 2004, raising the level of 613 primary schools to middle school and that of 387 to middle schools to secondary schools (lyeces). Printing and distribution of 25 million textbooks during 2002-2003;

preparation and distribution of 300,000 desks and chairs for students; establishing 262 religious madrasas, 18 teacher training colleges, the Academic Council on Education, Grant Management Unit, Association of Women, Foundation for Human Rights, 10 Technical schools, Department of Educational Training and Guidance, Teachers Union for all Afghanistan, construction and repair of 1753 school buildings all over Afghanistan; and equipping the Provincial Department of Education, and intensive short-term in-service training of thousands of teachers in 2002:

In brief major achievements in the revival and development of education, after almost 30 years of war and conflicts and the destruction of the infrastructure and system of education in Afghanistan, is the educational mandate and policies included in the new Constitutions of Afghanistan. This historical measure has protected the educational system of Afghanistan from being used by various political parties that may gain political power in the nation. In other words, the Constitutional mandate is the backbone of educational stability and sustainability in Afghanistan, and it could lead the development of education for many years till a new Constitution is promulgated.

In recent education development, decentralization trend, special attention given to education of girls and women and to minorities such as nomads, and to involve the community

especially the parents in decision making and development of education is a valuable achievement.

To allow the development of private education by Afghans and foreigners in accordance with education laws is a breakthrough in the history of education in Afghanistan especially for reducing the heavy pressure of the education budget on the government.

Access to education is a big success. As mentioned earlier, in 2004 enrolment in grade one of primary schools was 1.5 million while the total primary school population in 1975, in the best area of educational development, was less than a million students.

In 2002 about 45000 school teachers were given short in-service training programmes for improving the quality of education and for 2004 a plan for in-service training of 125000 teachers is under preparation and should soon be implemented.

Despite the above mentioned achievements, priorities for the educational department for 2004 and after are as follows:

- Teacher Education
- Textbooks Development
- Capacity Building especially the training of educational leadership for the present and future.
- Development of Quantity and Quality Education for Afghanistan

- Construction and Repair of School Buildings
- Equipping Schools and Administrative Offices throughout Afghanistan

1.3 The main problems and challenges facing the education system at the beginning of the twenty – first century:

Education quantity has improved drastically. For example, in 2001 the number of children in school was 33% of all the children to be in school. This quantity increased to 66% in 2002 and to 87% in 2003. Similarly, the % of girls in schools was 0% in 2000, it increased to 29% in 2002, to 36% in 2003 and to 42% in 2004.

This is a rather fast increase in the member of students in 7400 primary and secondary schools in Afghanistan but it has created concrete challenges in the educational system. These challenges and problems are:

- Shortage of about 30000 qualified teachers for the year 2004.
- Upgrading 42000 teachers below grade 12 serving as regular teachers.
- In- servicing for improving teaching / learning practices of about 100000 teachers who have returned to teaching in schools after long years of absence from the

educational system due to war and refugee life in the neighboring countries.

- Shortage of new school buildings and the reconstruction and repair of old school building.
- Shortage of textbooks and serious problems for timely textbooks distribution to schools.
- Lack of security.
- Lack of developing funds.
- It is added that 1.4 million children (boys and girls) entered the first grade in 2003. This number increased to 1.5 million in 2004 and it will be repeated in 2005 and possibly in 2006 also. Such large number in grade one will pass grade 12 after 12 years (2015) and they would want to enter the university of their choices. It is a big challenges to establish the needed universities for such large numbers and to find jobs for them after they are graduated. This requires critical action and basic research in various developmental sectors for the identification of human resource needs up on which to base higher education development for the primary school first graders of 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 in Afghanistan.

2. Quality education for all young people: challenges, trends and priorities.

2.1 Education and gender equality:

a) What are the main concern regarding gender and education?

Gender equality in education is a major concern in education development in Afghanistan. The major reason for this urge in educational change is the deprivation of girls by Taliban from 1996 -2001 from education in Afghanistan. During this era all school for girls were closed and women were forbidden to work in the offices. The Constitution of Afghanistan is very clear in its mandate for providing equal education opportunities for girls and boys.

b) Is there a gender- based policy in education and training?

Education policy of the nation envisages special measures for compensating the losses that girls have suffered from. In general the Constitution of Afghanistan as well as the education policy of the nation provide equal opportunities for boys and girls for education. Most primary schools and all institutions of higher education are co-educational. Most private courses in language, mathematics and information technology given after school hours are co-educational.

c) Special measures for youth to promote gender equality in access and quality of education and training?

The major measure and mandate to this effect is the Constitution of Afghanistan where:

- (1) Education is made the right of all Afghans.
- (2) Education is free and obligatory till the end of grade 9 for boys and girls while education is free in secondary schools and universities for boys and girls on the basis of their talents.
- (3) Gender equality are taken care of in curriculum development. For example, the balanced use of male and female names, pictures and stories are considered and shown in the textbooks.

2.2 Educational and social inclusion:

Afghanistan has gone through a long war which has left many people handicapped. Land mines planted all over the country by various fighting groups in the last 20-30 years have caused handicaps especially among children who have lost an important functional part of their body , like an arm , one or both legs , eye(s) , etc. Some children are left as orphans.

Furthermore, Afghanistan has had chemical pollution produced by bombing and explosions of rockets and the use of various types of ammunitions during the long war. Much of the pollution remains in the soil and water and it is resurfacing in plants, fruits and animal products which are used as food by persons of all ages throughout Afghanistan. This means that pollution is entering the food-chain and it shall have impacts on the health of all population especially children. More serious will be the impact on newborn babies with all sorts of birth defects. Recent information released by hospitals in Kabul was indicating the birth of 11 children with birth defects in one week and 40 children with birth defects in another week.

This means that the Ministry of education should continuously adapt its educational system to the needs of school children including the handicaps.

Some will need special facilities and special education on the basis of their needs and the Ministry of education has the responsibility in accordance with the Constitution to take appropriate actions to this effect. This makes education expensive and friendly countries and organization are invited to support the Ministry of Education with technical and financial support for study and research, curriculum development and teacher education and needed facilities in this particular domain.

2.3 Education and competencies for life:

- a) Primary school curriculum is renewed to include life skills and gainful skills so that students who for some reason cannot go beyond grade 9, can join the world of work.
- b) Renewal of secondary education in Afghanistan will allow most of the 9th grade graduates to enter grade 10th. About 30% of them shall go to technical and vocational education, some to the world of work and the rest will follow general education. This strategy is opted for in view of the needs of the nation for human resources to be trained by higher education and the needs for skilled and semi – skilled persons needed for the reconstruction of Afghanistan to be trained by technical and vocation education .
- c) Secondary education responds to the needs of young people by providing quality general education for the maximum development of their capacities. For example, in general education curriculum and its courses there are technical and vocational elements for the purpose of providing them with gainful skills enabling them to go to the world of work. Certain courses for gainful skills may be given as electives in secondary education. It is planned to have the branches of natural sciences and social sciences in general secondary education to serve the interest of the students.

Similarly, as mentioned earlier 30% of 9th grade graduates are planned to go to technical and vocational education from grade 10 – 12 or even up to grade 14.

Furthermore, guidance and counseling services will be provided to help secondary school students to identify their strength for furthering their higher education in the fields of their choice and competence.

- d) The Ministry of education of Afghanistan is well aware of the post war problems and keeps an eye on the needs of post war education. To this effect, as mentioned earlier, democracy, peace education, human rights, understanding, forgiveness, national unity, etc are accommodated in the new curriculum and programs in primary and secondary schools. In brief, this dimension of education stands very high on the agenda of all types and levels of education.

2. 4 Quality education and the key role of teachers:

- a) Afghan teachers, male and female, are gradually given a role in the development of education laws, policies, curriculum and rules and regulations. This is to enrich educational development and give importance to teachers as the

executive officers of education in the classrooms throughout the nation.

- b)** Both genders are recruited in educational administration, curriculum development, school supervision and teaching / learning. After the fall of Taliban in 2001, about 30000 women have been employed in the education sector in Afghanistan. Hundreds of more ladies can be employed immediately if found qualified as teachers.

- c)** In order to enable teachers to perform better and improve the quality of education, intensive one month in-service training programs are planned as mentioned earlier, to be implemented soon throughout Afghanistan. This will train about 125000 on the job male and female teachers in Afghanistan. A new pre- service teacher education curriculum is under preparation.

For improving the situation of teachers specially financially, the Ministry of education has succeeded to increase teachers payment through encouragement payments and recently through regional salary for working outside his / her home region and under difficult conditions.

Still much is desired to be achieved in improving teachers competencies through urgent in- service teacher education

and up to date pre-service programmes as well as improving the financial situation especially the residential needs of teachers in the nation. In other words, Afghan teachers in general do not have their private homes while rent is very high and their salaries low. Consequently, they are in urgent need of private homes.

2. 5 Education for sustainable development:

The issue of sustainable development is not treated as a subject in the curriculum and teaching / learning process. However the importance of this subject is high on the agenda of education. The approach chosen is to infuse the philosophy, objectives and principles of sustainable development in the teaching / learning of education at all types and levels of education.

Measure suggested for further development of sustainable development is to prepare teachers guides for primary and secondary teachers and have training seminars organized for teachers to this effect.