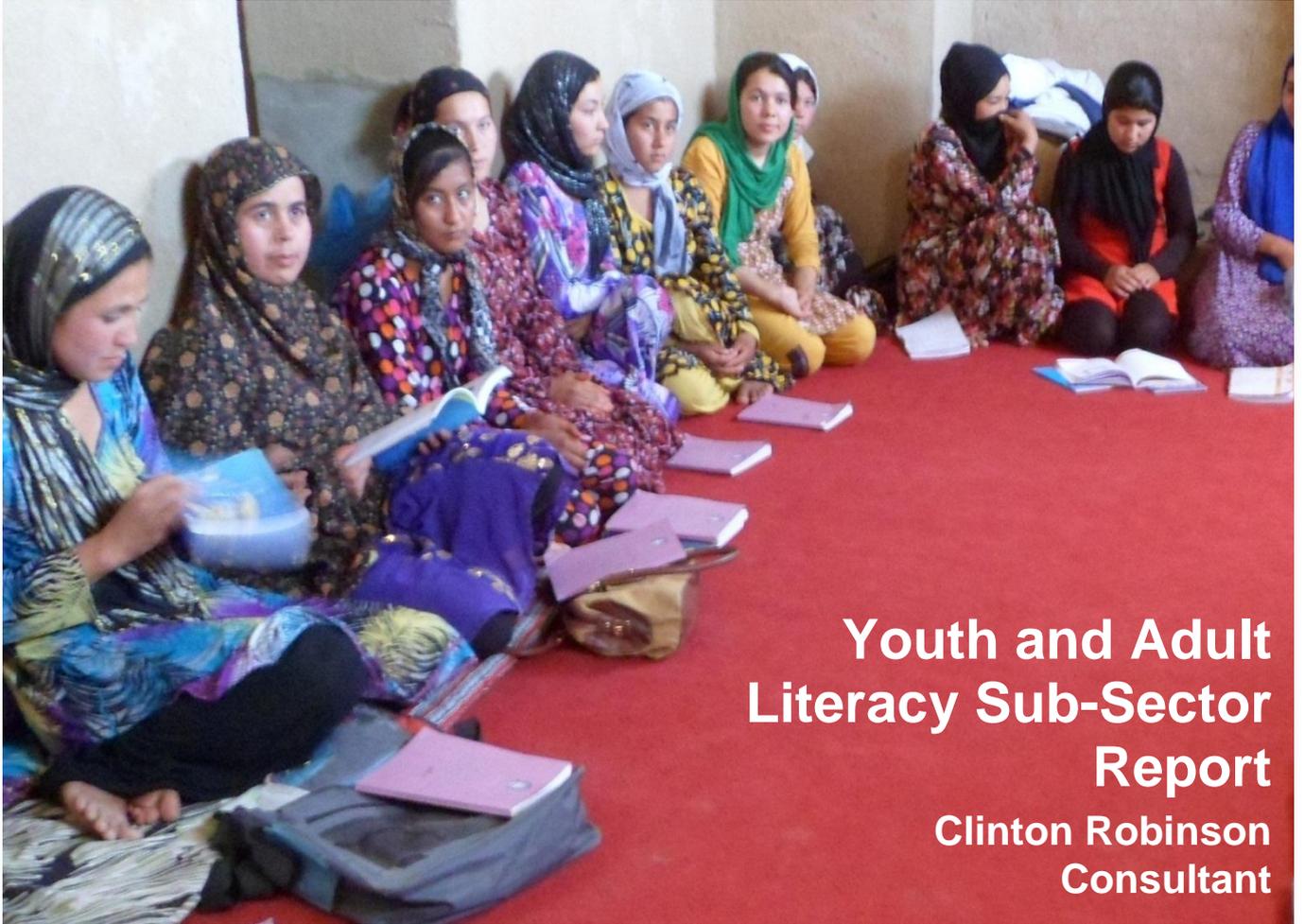




Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

د افغانستان اسلامي جمهوریت

جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان



**Youth and Adult
Literacy Sub-Sector
Report**

**Clinton Robinson
Consultant**

د پوهنې او روزنې د سکتور کلنی ګډه کتنه
مرور مشترک سالانه سکتور تعلیم و تربیه

**Education Joint Sector Review
1391 / 2012**

**Education Joint Sector Review
Youth and Adult Literacy
June 2012
Clinton Robinson, Consultant**

~~ a learning society is a developing society ~~

Content

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1 | Methodology | 3 |
| 2 | Understanding of literacy | 3 |
| 3 | Current Situation..... | 3 |
| 3.1 | National goals and objectives in literacy..... | 5 |
| 3.2 | Initiatives and partnerships | 6 |
| 3.3 | Implementation arrangements | 8 |
| 4 | Progress against targets | 9 |
| 4.1 | Comments on performance..... | 11 |
| 5 | Expenditure against budget | 14 |
| 6 | Female Teachers..... | 15 |
| 7 | Issues in literacy in Afghanistan | 17 |
| 7.1 | Programme design | 17 |
| 7.2 | Leadership and coordination..... | 22 |
| 7.3 | Literacy Assessment..... | 26 |
| 7.4 | Transition, sustainability and funding | 26 |
| 7.5 | Cross-sectoral linkages..... | 27 |
| 8 | Recommendations | 28 |
| 9 | Next steps..... | 31 |
| | Annexes | 32 |

1 Methodology

Data for the review of the youth and adult literacy sub-sector were collected between 30 April and 7 June 2012 in Kabul, and Faryab and Panjshir Provinces. Data sources were

- National strategies and plans in development and education;
- Reports and other papers from literacy providers of all kinds;
- Interviews with representatives of government, NGO, multilateral and bilateral agencies (see Annex 5), in Kabul, Faryab Province (Maimana and Andkhoy), and Panjshir Province;
- Visits to literacy classes in Maimana City, Pashtun Kot District and Andkhoy District (Faryab Province);
- Interviews with literacy facilitators and learners in the above districts of Faryab Province.

Data from the field trip to Faryab Province cannot be generalized, but served to inject a sense of realities on the ground and to illustrate many of the achievements, challenges and difficulties addressed in this report.

2 Understanding of literacy

This sub-sector of the EJSR deals with youth and adult literacy. As is customary in international data on literacy, the age range of adult literacy is 15 years and over, while youth literacy is understood as the age range of 15-24 years. Any data on youth literacy are therefore a sub-set of data on adult literacy as a whole.

There is no universal definition of literacy. UNESCO, often regarded as the agency that offers such definitions, has moved towards a position where literacy is seen as plural or multiple (UNESCO 2004; UNESCO 2005), its nature or functions being defined variously in each context. Thus, in the context of Afghanistan, an example would be the literacy of a rural woman aged 40 in Kandahar and that of a male youth aged 19 in the peri-urban environment of Kabul. The languages, uses, modes (paper, digital media, etc) and demands of literacy are different and must be understood and described within each context.

There is often a misunderstanding that lack of literacy equates with ignorance. This is emphatically not the case. Adults have extensive life experience and knowledge of their immediate and wider environments. Literacy is a means of communication involving text (writing and graphic representation in any media) and is a competence that facilitates both the expression of and access to further knowledge. In promoting literacy for adults, it is a fundamental principle to respect, draw upon and express the knowledge and experience of the learner.

3 Current Situation

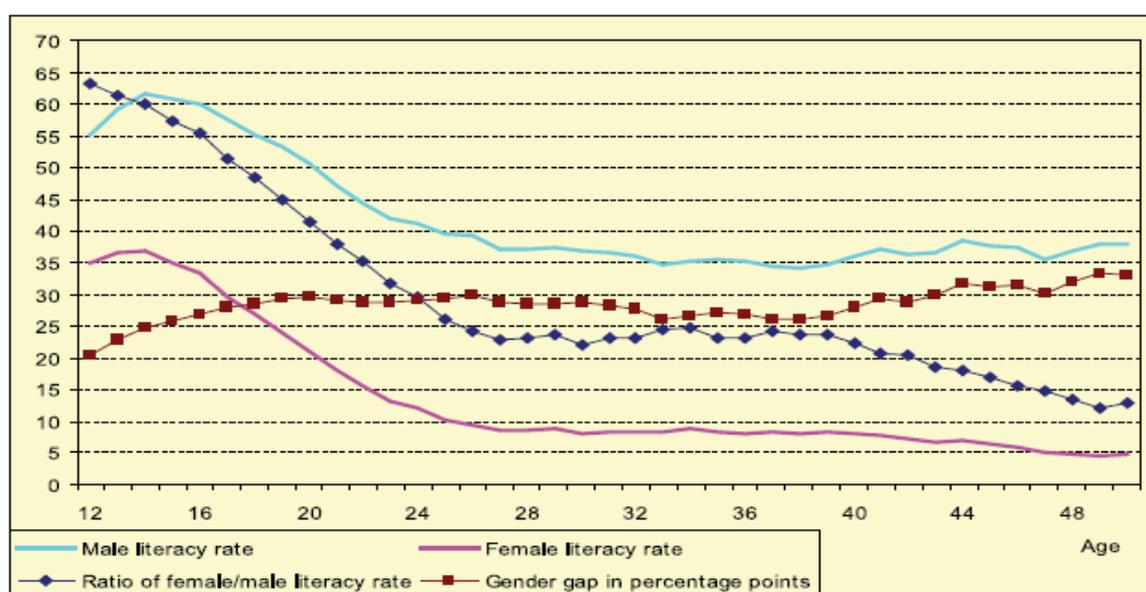
Youth and adult literacy rates in Afghanistan are among the lowest in the world. Recent data are hard to come by – the UNESCO Institute of Statistics shows no literacy data beyond 1979 based on the only national census ever undertaken (NVRA 2009), and the 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report records no 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.

The following table gives an overview of the most current statistics, disaggregated by population/location and gender:

| % | Urban | Rural | Kuchi (migrant) | National |
|---------------|-------|-------|-----------------|----------|
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | |
| Male | 62 | 35 | 14 | 39 |
| Female | 33 | 7 | 3 | 12 |
| M+F | 48 | 21 | 8 | 26 |

Source: NRVA 2009

It is more difficult to obtain a sense of how literacy rates have changed over time. NRVA 2009 attempts to get at this issue by examining the declared literacy levels of different age groups, thus showing whether younger age groups may have benefited from greater literacy learning and thus demonstrate higher percentages of literacy competence. The assessment states that the data 'strongly support the notion of significant improvement of literacy recently', as indicated by the following graph showing literacy rates by age (p.66):



^a Based on 5-year moving averages.

The statistics for youth literacy (15-24) confirm this trend, with younger females manifesting a literacy rate almost double that of the total (15+) female literacy rate:

| | Male % | Female % | Total % |
|---------------|--------|----------|---------|
| Youth (15-24) | 52.9 | 23.9 | 39.0 |
| Adult (15+) | 39.3 | 12.5 | 26.2 |

Source: NRVA 2009

Data from the Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010-11 (CSO/UNICEF 2012) provide a more detailed picture of literacy rates among young women, according to regional, urban/rural, age, and wealth variables. Only young women in urban areas, with secondary schooling or in the highest wealth quintile have a literacy rate of over 50%:

| Literacy among young women | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Percentage of women aged 15-24 years who are literate, Afghanistan 2010-2011 | | | |
| | Percentage literate | Percentage not known | Number of women aged 15-24 years |
| Region | | | |
| Central | 40.5 | 0.3 | 1,762 |
| Central | 34.6 | 0.1 | 343 |
| East | 16.4 | 0.1 | 866 |
| North | 24.2 | 0.5 | 1,257 |
| North East | 20.8 | 0.0 | 1,799 |
| South | 2.7 | 0.0 | 1,259 |
| South East | 16.1 | 0.1 | 1,121 |
| West | 21.9 | 0.6 | 1,213 |
| Area | | | |
| Urban | 51.6 | 0.6 | 1,868 |
| Rural | 15.1 | 0.1 | 7,752 |
| Education | | | |
| None | 1.1 | 0.1 | 6,749 |
| Primary | 28.9 | 1.1 | 1,135 |
| Secondary | 100.0 | 0.0 | 1,733 |
| Age | | | |
| 15-19 | 27.7 | 0.3 | 5,510 |
| 20-24 | 14.8 | 0.2 | 4,110 |
| Wealth index | | | |
| Poorest | 5.1 | 0.1 | 1,673 |
| Second | 10.6 | 0.1 | 1,797 |
| Middle | 13.0 | 0.0 | 1,875 |
| Fourth | 23.8 | 0.3 | 2,029 |
| Richest | 50.3 | 0.4 | 2,245 |
| Total | 22.2 | 0.2 | 9,620 |

Source: CSO/UNICEF 2012

These statistics provide a general picture of the literacy situation in Afghanistan which is a helpful means of assessing the size of the challenge. The way that such figures are arrived at leaves much to be desired, and the question of monitoring and data are taken up later in this report.

3.1 National goals and objectives in literacy

Article 22 of the Constitution of Afghanistan proclaims that 'education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan', thus echoing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which declared education as a human right. Where, as in Afghanistan, opportunities for basic education have not been and are not yet available to all, it is important to see literacy for youth and adults as a

fulfillment of the right to education. Chapter Ten of the Education Law (MoE 2008b) calls for the provision of 'literacy and basic practical education' for the 'illiterate and less literate' with a view to acquiring vocational skills and as preparation for continuing education.

The ANDS and NRVA link the improvement of literacy both with achieving educational goals and with equipping the population with the skills for economic development:

The Government aims at having a well-educated nation. Since 2002, the Government has invested heavily in the education sector and has attained progress toward the ultimate goals of educating all of Afghanistan's children, reducing illiteracy, and creating a skilled labor force. (ANDS 2008:14)

Literacy and educational attainment apparently are key factors in the explanation of poverty, and therefore should be incorporated in poverty reduction strategies. The ability to read and write and knowledge learned in the education system are strong facilitators for adequate performance on the labour market and in social life. Households of illiterate heads are 31 percent more likely to be poor than those of literate heads, and the household poverty rate decreases steadily with higher levels of education: the likelihood of being poor for households with uneducated heads is 1.5 to 5 times higher than those with heads that have any educational attainment above middle school. (NRVA 2009:60)

Thus 'the provision of basic education and reducing illiteracy rates will remain the top priority for the Government throughout the life of the ANDS.' (ibid).

The Kabul Conference in 2010 laid the basis for 22 National Priority Programs (NPPs), whose purpose the Government of Afghanistan expressed in the following terms:

...the national priority programs represent a new commitment in Afghan national development strategy frame work and their aims are to empower Afghans and Afghan institutions for better service delivery, creating jobs, sustainable development of economic, incomes, protecting Afghan citizens' right, government and NGO's and sustainable peace. (sic) (Ministry of Finance <http://mof.gov.af/en/page/3976>)

NPP-1 is entitled *Sustainable Decent Work through Skills Development and Employment Policies for Job-Rich Growth* and includes a component of occupational literacy focused on integrating literacy learning with the acquisition of productive skills in a single learning package. The scope of this component is quite limited, aiming to reach around 58,000 learners in courses organized by MoLSAMD, with MoE technical support for the literacy dimension. This is a welcome and appropriate initiative which will prove motivating for learners; however, its scope will not address the challenge of over 10 million adult illiterates in the country. NPP-2, entitled *Education for All* focuses exclusively on children's schooling, despite the echoes of the six international Education for All goals with their emphasis on basic education from early childhood to adult learning, in both formal and non-formal settings. The two relevant NPPs do not therefore present proposals for tackling the huge challenge of adult literacy in Afghanistan, in spite of the commitments cited above, and in spite of the recognition by the government and its partners that improvements in adult literacy are essential for security, socio-economic, civic and cultural development. The omission of planning for extensive adult literacy provision will be a serious barrier to moving Afghan communities towards becoming learning societies and therefore developing societies.

3.2 Initiatives and partnerships

Afghanistan has adopted the international initiative Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) as the framework for literacy promotion. Within this a number of major programmes are in progress:

- 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 lifeskills for women |
| Norwegian Refugee Council | Approx. 2000 learners in 3 provinces – IDPs, refugees, returnees |

More than half a million adult learners participated in literacy classes in 2011. The following chart presents LD data on the contributions of major institutions or groupings supporting literacy in 2011:

| 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 | |

Source: Literacy Department (2nd data update)

Note that the totals for a single calendar year for ELA depend on the relative starting date of the phases and courses. Hence ELA management figures indicate a higher number of active learners in 2011 – 177,663, of which 60.47% are female.

In terms of networking, the LIFE Coordination Committee at central and (some) provincial levels provides a platform for exchange and information-sharing specifically in literacy. It offers a space for discussions proposed later in this report on curriculum, materials, national policies and leadership, etc. The Education Cluster brings together government and NGO partners across the education sector, including NGOs active in literacy.

3.3 Implementation arrangements

The government has literacy structures at national, provincial and district levels, to which other partners relate. The Literacy Department at national level has departments of training, programming, and curriculum (and a general management unit), while provincial and district offices have a literacy manager, monitoring officers and master trainers.¹ In practice, the posts at these levels may not all be filled. Increasing transfer of financial management, programme management and training functions to government structures by partners – as part of moving funds ‘on budget’ and transition to Afghan leadership – are putting a strain on the government’s human resources at all levels.

¹ For organizational chart, see Annex 2.

At community level, the role of the Community Development Councils (CDCs) is mixed. Some fulfill functions of identifying facilitators, raising awareness among potential learners and exercising a general monitoring role with regard to the good implementation of programmes; others are not involved in literacy programming in any way. A CDC in Faryab Province felt marginalized from literacy processes, but, on the other hand, did not appear to have taken any steps to increase their involvement. This illustrates two points: first, CDCs cannot everywhere be relied upon to support literacy actively without developing their awareness; second, engaging community leadership may require pro-active networking and relationship-building efforts.

With regard to the implementation by literacy partners, UNICEF's programme operates in a decentralized mode with staff in provinces who cooperate closely with MoE staff. However, the UNESCO ELA programme and UN Habitat were established with separate structures: the staff hired in the field reported directly to their Kabul programme offices. In both cases, these implementation arrangements are being reviewed; ELA is now promoting implementation through provincial and regional MoE literacy staff, with reporting through the MoE structures; UN Habitat is coming to the end of its current programme in literacy – LCEP2; a possible extension to the programme is under initial consideration. It may also be that UNICEF-initiated classes will fall under MoE management in the future.

The information on local providers of literacy is less complete. Programmes may be implemented by institutions at a local level, on their own initiative. These may include mosques and related institutions, cultural groups, businesses and the private sector, village development, self-help or cooperative working groups. There is a need to map such groups so that the nature and purposes of programmes can be linked to wider provision. It may be that in some local areas, adequate structures already exist to meet literacy needs, if provided with appropriate capacity development. Locally driven and owned structures have a much greater chance of sustaining literacy provision – a considerable advantage in light of the uncertainties of transition in Afghanistan.

4 Progress against targets

The Government of Afghanistan has set a number of goals and targets for youth and adult literacy, on the principle that literacy will “help [the Afghan population] to develop their knowledge and potential and to better contribute to their communities and wider society.” (MoE 1389:36). The goals and targets are found in the following documents:

- Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013
- National Education Strategic Plan II 2010-2014/1389-1393
- National Literacy Action Plan 1389-93/2010-14
- National Education Interim Plan 2011-2013
- Literacy Program 1390 National Operational Plan

The **overall multi-year goals** are as follows:

| | ANDS 2008→2013 | NESP II 2010→2014 | NEIP 2011→2013 | Notes |
|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Literacy rate Total/M/F | | T48% - M54% F43% | T40% - M48% F31% | |
| Number of basic literacy learners (% female) | 1.8m by 2010 (60% female and minorities) | 3.6m (60%F) | 1.8m | |
| Number of literacy+skills learners (% female) | 0.5m | 360,000 (=10% of learners) | 360,000 (60%F) | |

| | ANDS 2008→2013 | NESP II 2010→2014 | NEIP 2011→2013 | Notes |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Number of centres/hubs | | 10,000 in schools 1,000 in mosques | 10,000 in schools 1,000 in mosques | |
| Number of CLCs | | 412 | 120 | |
| Number of courses | | 140,000 | 36,000 | |
| Vocational courses equipped and with materials | | | 6,678 | |
| Number of trained teachers (% female) | 17,000 (30%) 3,500 mullahs | 2,850 perm 11,000 contract | 18,000 | |
| Number of trained supervisors (% female) | | | 2,700 | NEIP also refers to 'master trainers' – 900 annually |
| Literacy books and teachers guides revised | | | 28 | Refers presumably to no. of titles |
| Literacy learning materials published & distributed | | | 3.3m | |
| Literacy support learning materials | | | 825,000 | |

The National Literacy Action Plan 2010-2014 (NLAP – MoE 2008a) takes the overall goal from the NESP II – to reach 3.6 million learners over 5 years, with 60% female participation. The NLAP sets no other quantified targets, but indicates that numbers of other resources (eg teachers, supervisors and trainers, materials, centres and learning spaces) will be derived from detailed year-by-year planning, in each context. It thus provides a clear indication of **what** will be necessary, but leaves it to further planning to determine **how much**.

It appears that targets have become more specific as further planning has been undertaken, with a more detailed set of targets in the NEIP as compared with the NESP II. More detailed target-setting has also led to a reduction in the target numbers, particularly in the pro rata numbers of learners, courses and CLCs in the NEIP. In contrast, the number of trained teachers is increased. Since planning must be an ongoing process, it will be crucial that the lessons of experience, particularly with regard to capacity to deliver, should inform future target-setting.

In order to assess performance against targets in the past year, the targets shown in the Literacy Program 1390 National Operational Plan are used, with performance derived from the data for 2011 from the LD. The table in Annex 1 shows the indicators and targets, with the corresponding performance, based on data provided by the LD.

A note of caution: the data shown are based on current data collection and processing methods; there is a debate on how these methods can be made more accurate and reliable. In the process of this review during which some discrepancies in the data were questioned, three sets of statistics were supplied in succession – the last set is used as the basis for the data in this review (3rd data update, unless otherwise indicated).

4.1 Comments on performance

The numbers of learners have dropped over the last three years, in the following table, according to the MoE 1390 Progress Report (enrollment was 92.9% of the target figure):

| Learners | | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| | Male | Female | Total | % female |
| 2009 | 287,124 | 395,555 | 682,679 | 58% |
| 2010 | 255,327 | 356,134 | 611,461 | 58% |
| 2011 | 262,001 | 295,573 | 557,574 | 53% |

However, the NEIP also reports figures from 2009, with a total of 510,200 learners – 25% less. The question of the reliability of data is critical not only to monitoring and reporting processes on an annual basis, but to capturing overall progress in literacy in the country. Discrepancies may also lie in availability of data from different literacy providers.

The drop in learner numbers of 8.81% runs contrary to the rhetoric of the importance of literacy and is clearly a trend in the wrong direction. Some of the reduced numbers may result from the way that learner numbers are reported, and certainly reporting needs improvement particularly with regard to capturing data for a calendar year about flexibly scheduled 9-month courses.

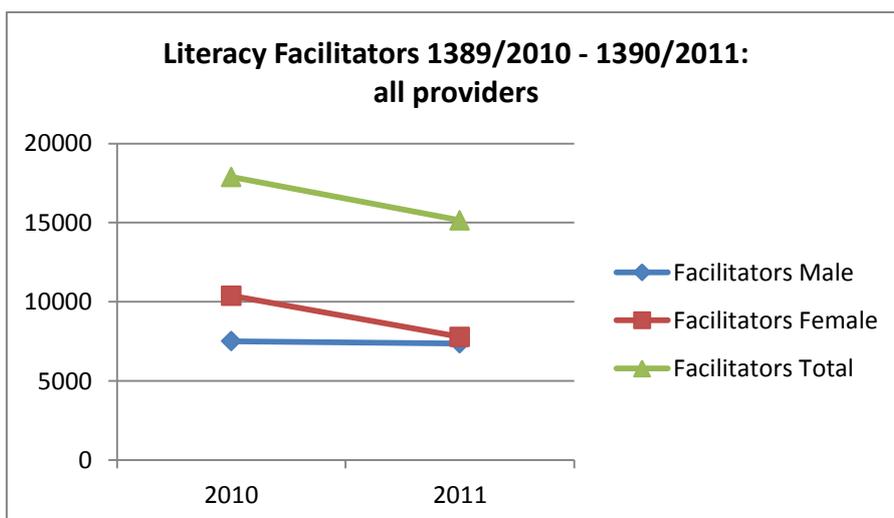
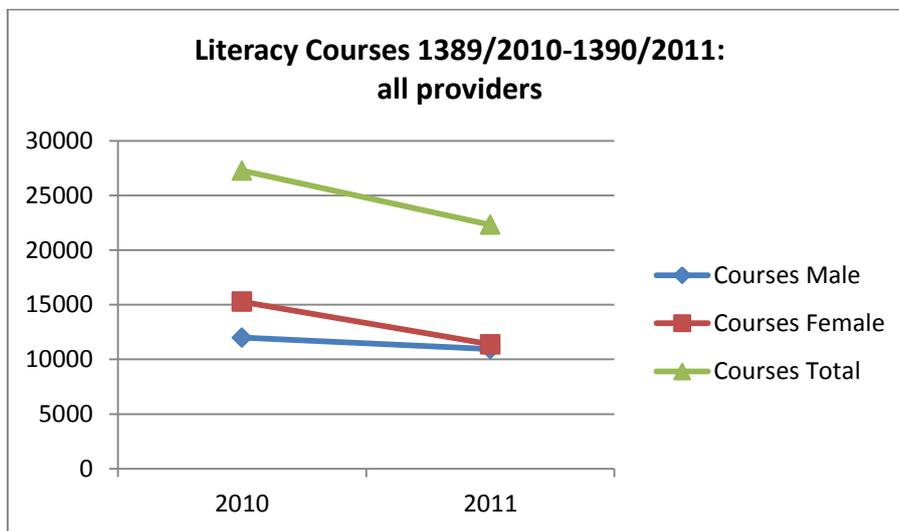
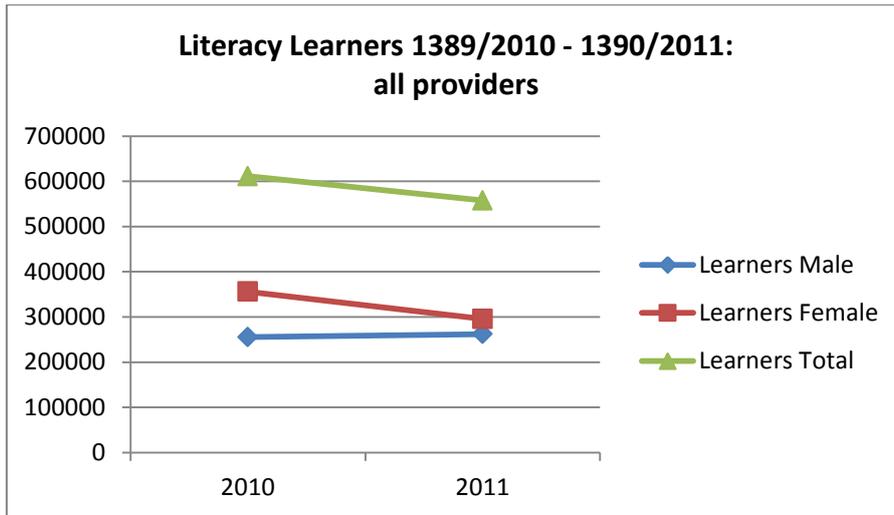
The reducing percentage of female learners is of particular concern (58%→53%), given the low base of women's literacy and the role of learning and education in the wider pursuit of gender equity in society. A reduction of 17% in the number of women participating in literacy from 1389/2010 to 1390/2011 runs counter to the policy expressed in the NAPWA (2009:100) that

...‘the Afghan government will work to increase adult and functional literacy programs particularly those aimed at reducing gaps in education between women and men.’

There is also a reduction in the number of courses reported. For 1389/2010 a total of 27,270 courses were reported, and for 1390/2011 22,311 courses (Annex 1) and 19,861 (excluding 2,450 Army literacy courses). The overall reduction was therefore 18%. This would indicate that less literacy learning is actually taking place. Worsening security in some areas may be an explanation, but these figures constitute a call for further strategic investment in literacy provision.

Teachers/facilitators: the number of new permanent teachers reached 68% of the target figure – there is no breakdown by gender in this particular category. Engaging permanent female teachers is particularly important for sustainable female literacy learning, although the mobility implied in being a permanent teacher makes it difficult for women to take up such a position. Contract teachers (63% of target) represent a means of multiplying literacy outreach, but each contract teacher may not teach more than one cycle of literacy. However, using comparable data from 1389/2010 and 1390/2011 on the **total** number of teachers/facilitators, there is an overall reduction of 15%, or 2,776 fewer.

The changes in numbers of learners, courses and facilitators in the past two years (for which comparable data are available) are shown in the following charts:



There are currently no data on dropout from literacy courses. Data from the LD on completion are provisional for 1390/2011; these data show that 38% of learners completed the nine-month course, of whom 64% were female. A system of assessment of literacy achievement is planned, but not yet

in place. No progress was reported on developing standard assessments for literacy achievements. Certificates of completion are awarded to those who complete the 9-month basic literacy course, but these are not based on achievement. The question of what exactly would be recognized by awarding a certificate also arises – this relates to the purposes for which people learn and use literacy, a question raised later in this report.

Although the NEIP and other plans call for specific attention to Kuchi population groups, the reports do not provide any disaggregated data for that group. The MoE Progress Report 1390/2011 notes that ‘a long term policy of establishing literacy courses for Kuchis’ has been developed, but this is not currently available. Plans to provide access to literacy to the Kuchi population must now be implemented, in full recognition that this population is not homogeneous, but includes nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled groups.²

People with disability are not included explicitly in current targets or planning. With an estimated 1.6% of the Afghan population with a disability of some kind, this group is half as likely to have benefited from schooling and needs focused and appropriate programmes to meet their literacy needs. (NRVA 2009:89).

Literacy learning may have little to do with the actual context in which literacy is used. Performance on the targets for ‘vocational training for learners’ and ‘follow-up materials’ is 21% and 0% respectively (Annex 1). Both targets represent opportunities for learners to use and build upon their initial, basic literacy skills, but there has been a lack of investment or planning in enabling learners to apply their new skills. This low level of performance may represent another issue: literacy learning may not be linked to relevant purposes in learners’ lives, and planners/managers may not have made these connections at the start. Note also that numbers in the ‘post-literacy’ category are shown as the same as learners of basic literacy – this is because learners are counted for the whole 9-month cycle (6+3), so these numbers overlap entirely.

Overall, the reducing numbers of learners, courses and teachers/facilitators give serious cause for concern as without expansion it is certainly not possible to meet the numbers of youth and adults without literacy. If there are an estimated 10 million illiterates in Afghanistan in 2012, at a rate of just over 500,000 per year (enrolled, not even completed), then it will take almost 20 years to meet the need, without addressing those who become adults without having acquired literacy through schooling and who will be added to the illiterate population. There is need to translate the stated political commitments on literacy into action and to put in place the capacity and structures to address the literacy challenge adequately. Accelerating progress must be based on both top-down investment and bottom-up development of ownership at community level (see ‘community engagement’ below). The embedding of literacy learning with other relevant areas of development will be important in these processes, as well as flexible and diverse delivery methods.

In summary, the performance figures in literacy refer exclusively to inputs and outputs, but not to outcomes. That, and the unreliability of the data, makes it difficult to assess the overall results of the literacy effort. MoE reports from 1389/2010 and 1390/2011 respectively show the increase in the national 15+ literacy rate as follows:

| | Baseline rate | % increase on year | Revised literacy rate |
|-----------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1389/2010 | 26% | 2% | 28% |
| 1390/2011 | 30% | 3% | 33% |

Source: MoE Progress Reports 1389 and 1390

² The Panjshir Education Department has launched a new programme for the *Kuchi* population, due to start during 1391.

The gap between the rate achieved at the end of 1389 – 28% – and that used as the starting point for 1390 – 30% – clearly represents an inconsistency. Given the lack of assessment criteria for literacy achievement or any direct testing of sample populations, the basis for assessing current change in the literacy rate is opaque. The literacy rate is increasing without doubt, given the investment in and enthusiasm for learning (and the increased numbers of children in school); it is not clear, however, how the current figures are arrived at.

5 Expenditure against budget

The operational budget reported in the MoE progress reports for 1389/2010 and 1390/2011 are as follows:

| US\$ | 1389/2010 | 1390/2011 | Change 1389/1390 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| Operating (ordinary) budget | 8,064,561 | 9,757,896 | +21% |
| Spent | 6,844,379 | 9,431,591 | +37% |

There is no breakdown of how this expenditure was allocated across the costs of providing literacy, and no indication of the proportions of government budget and external financing contributions. There is a marked increase in both budget (21%) and spending (37%), but these figures need to be set against the estimated costs of making significant progress in meeting the huge literacy challenge.

The National Literacy Action Plan 2010-2014 estimated that to reach 3.6 million adults over five years with literacy would cost a total of US\$342 million, or about US\$68 million per year. The National Education Interim Plan proposed an operational budget over three years to reach 1.8 million learners of US\$113.3 million, an average of US\$37.7m per year, on the basis of a low scenario. This is almost four times the current actual expenditure.

The development budget was as follows, indicating that actual allotment and expenditure fell far below the ambitious levels of budgeting and indeed decreased over the two years:

| US\$ | 1389/2010 | 1390/2011 | Change 1389/1390 |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|
| Development budget | 5,350,000 | 10,450,000 | +195% |
| Allotment | 2,930,000 | 2,280,000 | -23% |
| Spent | 2,790,000 | 2,020,000 | -28% |

Total reported spending on literacy in 2010 (operating + development budgets) was therefore US\$9,634,379 and in 2011 US\$11,451,591, an increase of 16%. These figures equate to 1.99% of the government education expenditure in 1389/2010, and 1.95% in 1390/2011. The dollar amounts are less than one fifth of the estimated annual cost of funding literacy for 3.6m people over five years (NLAP 2009).

The 16% increase in the absolute amount of expenditure on literacy did not prevent the percentage of total education spending from slipping back slightly (1.99% → 1.95%). As the total envelope for education expands, these figures indicate that literacy is not being accorded any higher priority, as the NEIP clearly proposed.

The available figures do not indicate the relative proportion of funds from domestic government revenue and from donor sources. Major efforts are underway to move donor funding 'on budget' – managed either as direct budget support or within the education sector. In terms of the major donor-funded literacy delivery programmes, UNICEF and, more gradually, UNESCO are moving the management of funds and programmes to the Literacy Department. The UN Habitat programme,

funded by USAID, is considering moving on budget at a later stage. An accurate picture of current NGO funding for literacy is not possible, as some programmes do not report their expenditure, and others report through parallel channels direct to the MoE.

There is thus a need for a mapping of resources available for literacy, in order that efforts can be coordinated and funds used more efficiently. Literacy attracts resources from a diverse range of providers, from government, through international partners to local associations. Government resources will remain inadequate to meet the need in the foreseeable future, so in addition to existing sources of funding, further sources should be identified, particularly among countries supportive of Afghanistan's human resource development.

6 Female Teachers

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 (see p.3 above), 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 indicate 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. The following chart presents seven examples of a positive correlation, and two examples where a low proportion of female teachers results in lower numbers of female learners:

| Female learners and teachers in 9 selected provinces – listed by percentage of female learners | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Province | % female learners | % female teachers |
| High percentage of female learners/teachers | | |
| Badakhshan | 93% | 88% |
| Daikundi | 91% | 91% |
| Bamyan | 75% | 74% |
| Balkh | 65% | 60% |
| Hirat | 60% | 48% |
| Faryab | 59% | 55% |
| Nangarhar | 57% | 61% |
| Low percentage of female learners/teachers | | |
| Helmand | 35% | 20% |
| Zabul | 30% | 29% |

Source: Literacy Department (2nd data update)

Notes:

- This chart presents a rough guide, according to data available.
- In most cases, the proportions of female learners and teachers are within five percentage points, with the difference probably explained by varying class sizes.
- However, in other cases, it may indicate that some women's classes are taught by men. Anecdotal evidence confirms that this may be the case.
- The fact that in many provinces the proportion of female learners is low is of course an argument for increasing the number of female teachers.

For comparative purposes, the following chart shows the situation over the last two years, as reported by the LD. According to the data for 1390/2011, the total number of facilitators, across all providers who supplied data is 15,149, with 7,782 female facilitators – representing 51%. In terms of enrolled learners, the same data indicate that 53% of all learners were female in 1390. However, this represents a reduction from 1398/2010 in the total number of facilitators of over 15%, with the number of female facilitators dropping by an even larger margin of 24%.

| Literacy Teachers: year on year change by gender | | | | | | |
|--|-------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|
| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
| | No. | % change | No. | % change | No. | % change |
| 1389/2010 | 7,507 | | 10,382 | | 17,889 | |
| 1390/2011 | 7,367 | -1.86% | 7,782 | -24% | 15,149 | -15.31% |

Sources: Literacy Department Statistics Report 2010 for Literacy Courses; Literacy Department data 2011

These reductions reflect reductions in total learner numbers noted earlier: -8.81% over the two years. Further explanation may lie in the cycle of courses, resulting in a fluctuation of facilitator numbers. However, these numbers are a serious cause for concern as the female literacy rate remains well below male levels.

Where will a greater number of female literacy teachers or facilitators come from? The greatest challenge to finding and deploying female facilitators for literacy is the low female participation in education. The provinces with the largest female literacy challenge have the lowest number of schooled women, almost by definition. In addition, where schooling and literacy levels of women are low, there are also the strongest socio-cultural barriers to women working as literacy facilitators outside the home. These cultural patterns also prevent women from moving to a different village to instruct a literacy class there; the prevailing situation is that a female literacy facilitator is recruited for one, or sometimes two, nine-month cycles of literacy instruction in her immediate locality. Once no further learners present themselves, the facilitator does not continue there, and cannot (easily) move to a neighbouring community. Thus in addition to a low number of female facilitators in the first place, some of those trained and with experience are lost.

In order to see progress in the numbers of female literacy facilitators, there is a need to identify and recruit women with less-than-ideal educational levels. Working with communities – particularly in rural and low-literacy areas – it may be possible to identify women with grade 6, 7 or 8 education who could be trained. This is necessary as the pool of women with grade 12 education, normally required for the facilitator role, in such areas is limited or non-existent. Facilitator training may need to be adapted or extended to implement this approach.

Why do women wish to acquire literacy?

...some responses from learners:

- Because learning is important
- To help our children in school
- For better female and family health
- To write our own stories and history
- To go to school (teenage girls)
- I never had an opportunity before
- To read magazines, newspapers and religious books
- To learn skills to support our families

7 Issues in literacy in Afghanistan

The further development of literacy faces four major issues, which are all interlinked and each of which has a number of dimensions:

- Programme design
- Leadership and coordination
- Literacy assessment
- Transition, sustainability and funding

7.1 Programme design

Approach to literacy

The purposes of literacy as identified by learners and their communities must have greater prominence in literacy programming. The government has up to now adopted a traditional approach to literacy – enabling those who wish to do so to acquire reading, writing and numeracy skills in

stand-alone courses which make no connections a priori with any particular purpose, application or use of such skills. For such courses, the standard government learning materials are used: a basic literacy primer of 108 lessons for a period of six months, and a 'post-literacy', follow-on manual for three months. In practice, all courses are planned and executed over the full nine-month period. This standardised approach has a number of consequences:

- For learners
 - the purposes of literacy learning may not be clear, beyond achieving a new skill;
 - the nine-month period is too short for learners to consolidate their skills;
 - the likelihood of un-learning literacy skills is high as they fall into disuse;
- For programme planners/managers:
 - There is little understanding of the motivations of learners;
 - There is little emphasis on putting literacy into context or on how skills may be used productively and enjoyably.

Identifying learners' purposes requires:

- An understanding of the literate environment – how written communication is currently used and for what purposes – functional, personal, spiritual, for enjoyment;
- Consultation with learners on their aims in learning literacy, before, during and after the literacy course;
- An equal emphasis on writing and reading, as learners will use both in profiting from the wider literate environment.

Identifying learners' purposes has implications for the organisation of literacy programmes such as:

- Linking learning and practice explicitly with locally relevant areas of life;
- Developing materials according to different characteristics and contexts of learners; currently the learning materials are adapted to language (but only Dari and Pashto, not other Afghan languages), but not to learning purpose or learner characteristics (except for the women's reader from UNICEF and some NGO materials).
- Pacing and scheduling learning according to learners' needs.

Community engagement

The principles of community engagement in education and local ownership of educational initiatives are well documented in plans and reports on literacy in Afghanistan. The study of literacy programs in five provinces by APPRO (2011) makes relevance and ownership at community level the first recommendations of its research. The NLAP (2009) calls for greater community participation in order to ensure relevance of learning, and proposes greater use of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) as a way forward. The NEIP (2011) sees greater community participation as a means of increasing enrolment in literacy programmes.

Promoting community engagement has implications for the way literacy is programmed. Currently, the literacy curriculum, embodied in the national literacy primers, is standardized across the country. Variations and supplementary materials have been introduced by NGOs and certain larger programmes, such as LCEP. However, the role of communities in contributing to curriculum (which is understood here as the content of literacy instruction) and developing locally relevant and learner-generated materials has not received attention. Further, the scheduling and location of literacy learning is a community matter, and such input already occurs. The support of community leaders (CDC, *shura*, school management committees) serves also to keep courses going – both learners and facilitators. Without such support, experience (in Faryab Province) has shown that some courses may collapse after just a few weeks.

Ownership by the community means consulting leaders and learners on the purposes, value, outcomes and use of literacy. National frameworks and guidelines must be flexible enough to give

space for this process, and indeed encourage it. Facilitators must be ready, through their training, to initiate and maintain a dialogue with learners on the purposes that learners identify as they learn. Promoting local writing can be supported by the community and serve the purpose of expressing cultural and historical traditions, as well as documenting events and social relations. In the diverse cultural and linguistic environment of Afghanistan, such processes will express the richness of local contexts.

Content, curriculum and 'post-literacy'

The instructional materials used in the vast majority literacy provision across the country consist of a two learners' guides, one for the basic, six-month course, and another for the three-month 'post-literacy' course, published by the MoE. Other widely used materials for particular purposes or groups have been developed by UNICEF, NGOs, UN Habitat, JICA, ActionAid, and the Ministries of the Interior and of Defense. The content of the MoE basic materials covers a number of themes from daily life, but these are not organised systematically, nor adapted to particular contexts.

The curriculum does not reflect the learning needs of particular groups of people. For example, the Literacy Department of Panjshir Province noted that the content of the literacy books do not correspond to the needs of the rural environment. In both Faryab and Panjshir Provinces, facilitators and literacy managers found that the nine-month duration is too short for acquiring sustainable literacy skills. This is compounded by the fact that the course is planned for two hours per day, six days per week – too intensive for those involved in agricultural work, resulting in discouragement and patchy attendance.

Regular consultations among partners in a 'Curriculum Development Working Group' in 2011 and 2012 focused attention on the need for a larger supply of materials and more appropriate materials. A teleconference organised by the ELA programme in 2011 concluded that the current curriculum, as manifested in the basic learning materials, should be more learner-centred, with provision for more interactive pedagogy. A further workshop in May 2012 addressed the need for a process of curriculum reform, questioning whether a single national curriculum would adequately meet the learning needs of adults. The workshop raised two further issues:

- How to make better links between literacy learning and the learning of other skills;
- How to design and implement the forthcoming National Qualifications Framework with respect to literacy learning.

Links with skills training are already part of the 'post-literacy' phase of literacy programmes. There are also links in the technical and vocational skills training (TVET) programmes run by MoLSAMD. These programmes offer literacy to illiterate youth and adults who sign up for non-formal TVET course – 90 mins of a 4-hour session are devoted to literacy learning. Similarly, NSDP training provides 30-60 minutes of literacy instruction within the 8-hour training day for trainees without literacy skills. These links are also taken up in the proposed National Priority Programme 1 (NPP-1) "Decent Work", with a major component entitled 'Literacy for Labour'. Labelled 'occupational literacy' the aim is to identify the communication and recording tasks associated with ten trades/skill areas (adding more later), and teach literacy based on the occupational use of reading, writing and numeracy. This will not only enhance the acquisition of the technical/vocational skill, but will also motivate learners to acquire useable literacy since the purpose of learning it is so clear.

Learners in Faryab and Panjshir Provinces expressed the desire for further learning after the initial nine-month literacy course. In addition to embedding literacy learning from the start into the acquisition of various skills, there is a need also for ongoing learning opportunities. Some members of a group of female learners in Maimana (Faryab Province) continue to meet to learn the basics of Islam with their literacy facilitator. Other women in the same province indicated that they wished to learn tailoring skills, health information, and to become more fluent readers in order to access the magazines, newspapers and religious books in their homes.

There must be viable opportunities for work for those who acquire productive skills alongside literacy. LCEP-2 and several NGOs (eg ANAF AE, NRC) offer packages of literacy and skill training, either sequentially or simultaneously, which link the acquisition of literacy directly with its use. Skills include lifeskills (hygiene, health, civics, etc) and skills for socio-economic development (micro-finance, entrepreneurship, business skills, etc). The question of finding work in the relevant area afterwards is not straightforward. In some cases, literacy providers have contacted employers to let them know that their graduates are available, and this has enabled connections to be made. Many of such opportunities mean moving from one locality to another – while this is possible for men, it is not possible for women. There is thus a need to ensure that the skills that women learn can be used productively in their own environment.

Literacy levels must be fully integrated into the NQF. The NQF is still under development and will, when ready, provide a framework for the recognition of learning levels which at the lower end of the framework will have a strong focus on literacy. There is need for discussions on how to do this, and how to link NQF levels with the TVET National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS), and with the proposed 'occupational literacy' embedded in skills training.

Learning literacy and a skill at the same time: how one NGO does it

In Faryab Province, an NGO runs a skills-and-literacy programme for youth of 15-25 years. Over a ten-month period, selected trainees who have no more than 1-2 years of schooling, follow a course 5 days a week, 5 hours a day divided equally between literacy acquisition and skill training. The first two months are devoted entirely to literacy. Ten different skills are on offer, taught in groups of about 10, depending on the level of demand for each skill. Literacy classes have 20-25 learners, and the facilitators for literacy and each skill are distinct. There are 40-50 learners in each centre (purpose-built) although skill training for women is in homes. At the centres, child care is provided for young mothers participating in the literacy courses. A monthly cash payment is made to learners in lieu of meal provision. Tools and equipment are provided for learners, with an individual set given to graduates of the programme so that they can set themselves up in business. Follow-up includes equipment maintenance and repair. The NGO indicated that the cost per learner is in the region of 'several thousand dollars'.

Impact studies have shown significant increases in income, with most graduates working individually from home (women) or collaboratively in shops/workshops (men).

The programme is intensive, effective... and expensive. It benefits up to 500 young people per year.

MoLSAMD and NSDP initiatives that include literacy will increasingly depend on MoE for the training and deployment of literacy facilitators, as part of a division of labour which maximises each ministry's strengths. In order to offer learners training that is a single, integrated package of instruction, communication and coordination between MoE and MoLSAMD technical and managerial staff, particularly at the operational level (province, district) should be based on a regular mechanism of consultation.

Literacy Provision and Methods

Access to literacy has been provided almost exclusively through the face-to-face methods – a facilitator meeting regularly with a group/class and working through the government-produced instructional texts. This review uncovered no evidence of other approaches, although they may exist on an experimental or small scale. The promotion of standard materials across the country has led to a corresponding standardization of method. As the more context-sensitive approaches proposed here are put in place, there will be room for adaptation and experimentation of method. Some methods in use in other parts of the world may be appropriate:

- Using radio broadcasts with local learning groups³: a literacy listening group can follow a radio programme with an accompanying text/manual. Note that this approach requires a literate person to orient learners in the manual and explain points that learners find unclear, but it does not require face-to-face interaction with a facilitator at each session. However, use of radio alone is not a viable strategy, and a facilitator must visit groups regularly and conduct face-to-face sessions to solidify and monitor progress in learning, as well as to encourage learners to continue. This method also requires careful and coordinated design of the radio programmes and the accompanying written materials, particularly with regard to relevance, sequence, pace and ease of use.
- Use of mobile phones: experience has shown that mobile phones are not a means of initial learning of literacy, but that they can be a relevant and motivating medium for the practice of literacy ('post-literacy' as it has been known in Afghanistan) and its application to people's concerns. Based on the texting function, mobile phones can serve to send small pieces of learning material which require a response from the learner, or they can be used to communicate information on relevant topics (eg health care for children). Questions of connectivity and costs (who bears them?) need to be addressed in making use of this option.
- Use of computers, CD-ROM and online materials: this is an important area of the use and application of literacy, and such materials can be used in practising and reinforcing literacy competence. They are particularly appropriate in urban environments and are often taken up enthusiastically by young people. In Afghanistan, such tools will not reach the vast majority of literacy learners, owing to questions of cost, electricity, connectivity and maintenance.

The crucial approach is to ensure that learning methods offer literacy that is relevant to learners in their context. There is no point in exchanging a standardized approach based on manuals for an equally standardized approach based on other technologies.

In many parts of Asia, Community Learning Centres (CLCs) have been established in order to provide a place and a focus for meeting the learning needs of communities. Literacy learning is often a major activity in such centres, but they are designed to provide other types of skills and knowledge, according to community needs and desires. The LD has a target of setting up a CLC in each district, with a dedicated building. While the concept of grouping community learning activities is positive, the focus currently in Afghanistan should not be on constructing such centres, with the associated high costs. Rather, district literacy managers and their staff should focus on identifying and meeting the particular learning needs of communities and structuring literacy provision accordingly, using venues that are currently available.

A further aspect of literacy provision is learner incentives. Where a range of different literacy providers are active in the same geographical area, as in Faryab Province, some learners receive incentives to attend literacy courses, such as cash payment ('lunch money') or food support in food-insecure areas/periods (eg oil and flour rations). The two largest programmes – government and ELA – do not provide any incentives, on the basis that learners are motivated by the desire to acquire skills that are useful to them. While incentives almost guarantee consistent attendance, they may also mask the reasons why adults wish to acquire literacy and take the focus even more away from the value and use of literacy. Direct support to food-insecure families and poor households has been effective in some parts of the world, particularly in reducing the opportunity costs of sending girls to school, but there is little reason to link such support with adult learning. This issue is currently divisive and needs discussion and agreement at national level.

Languages of literacy

³ TV has developed quickly in Afghanistan over the last decade with local channels proliferating, including at provincial level. TV may be used in literacy provision in similar fashion as radio (with facilitation and support), but will be much more expensive to set up.

Literacy is a language-based process, and the question of the language of literacy instruction is always critical. The Constitution of Afghanistan (Article 22) affirms that “the state is also required to provide the opportunity to teach native languages in the areas where they are spoken.” Accordingly, the policy is to enable learners to acquire literacy in their first language, but this is not currently implemented as literacy learning is provided only in Dari and Pashto, depending on the region. However, a multilingual approach must be systematic and in particular implemented among linguistic groups that are minorities in an area where the majority speaks another language. Literacy providers need to invest in the full range of Afghan languages when preparing materials and promoting local writing and publishing.

7.2 Leadership and coordination

Literacy promotion currently suffers from weak leadership – a clear strategic direction must be articulated so that stakeholders will share complementary goals and maximise collaboration. Literacy is delivered by a diverse range of organisations, and so the question arises of how to ensure clear leadership and direction in literacy and to coordinate efforts most effectively and efficiently, for maximum impact on the ground. Currently, the existing structures do not work well, and the direction of national literacy efforts remains vague, without clear strategic orientation.

Given the size and complexity of the literacy need, coordination must serve to strengthen and focus political commitment to literacy, maximise the use of resources, work to the strengths of different partners, avoid overlap or duplication, and enable more systematic monitoring and collation of results. How can coordination best be achieved?

In present circumstances, coordination takes place on an ad hoc basis, among various providers. Thus two large donor-funded programmes, ELA and LCEP-2 are housed within the Literacy Department and increasingly managed jointly, with a view to building the capacity of the LD to manage the programmes completely. However, other programmes, such as those run by other ministries, are structurally separate from the LD, while communicating some aspects of their work through the LIFE Coordination Group or informally. In particular, close and regular coordination between LD/MoE and MoLSAMD is essential as the learning of literacy and skills is increasingly delivered in a single package to which each ministry brings its specialised input and comparative advantage.

Two possible scenarios have been envisaged in order to improve national leadership and coordination of literacy provision and adult learning:

- The creation of a single government authority, distinct from current structures, responsible for **all** aspects of adult learning and education, including literacy, skills related to specific occupations and work, and any other competencies that adults may wish to acquire in order to improve and enrich their lives.
- Improved coordination mechanism and processes, in which all institutions engaged in literacy and adult learning and education participate and through which they communicate their plans, progress, problems and results.

The following chart shows some advantages and disadvantages of each approach:

| | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|---|
| Single authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unitary management structure enabling a single system of planning, funding and implementation; • An efficient use of resources without duplication • A single institution to which partners can relate • A comprehensive system of monitoring, data collection and reporting, with clearly defined communication channels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly stifle initiative • Possibly marginalize some partners • Less tolerant of experimentation • Over-centralization |
| Improved coordination mechanisms and processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular communication among providers • Enable each organisation to contribute from its strengths • Inclusive and flexible structure • Room for diverse practice and innovation and initiative • Multiple channels of funding • Networking among partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires sustained commitment by many partners • Fragments monitoring & reporting |

The choice of approach will need to consider political, administrative and other contextual factors and should emerge from consultations among partners, based on the lessons of experience hitherto. However, regardless of which option is chosen, the essential and central concern is that certain leadership and coordinating functions must be strengthened:

- Advocating for literacy: mobilizing political and societal support for adequate (= increased, in the current context) human and financial resources for literacy promotion, as well as promoting awareness-raising of the value and uses of literacy among the population;
- Standard-setting with regard to the quality of inputs and outcomes of literacy provision;
- Information-sharing and networking: enabling all partners to share and exchange experience, insights, plans and results;
- Providing leadership and a framework for partnership development among diverse partners;
- Providing communication channels to facilitate expression of demand for literacy and ways of meeting it;
- Overseeing monitoring so that consistent data on literacy are available at national level (based of course on data from other levels).

In addition, the existing mechanisms for collective exchange and networking – the LIFE Coordination Group (bringing together literacy stakeholders) and the Education Cluster (bringing together a wider range of educational stakeholders) perform essential functions of awareness-raising, partnership promotion and mutual support which should be encouraged and enlarged.

Capacity

Literacy promotion is multi-dimensional, requiring attention to educational, social, cultural and organizational aspects, and attention to the management of logistics. Thus there will always be a need for further developing the capacity of those involved, at whatever level they function. This is recognized in the emphasis in the NEIP on training of facilitators, supervisors and administrative

staff, and in the NLAP on establishing a cadre of trainers at all levels. The ELA programme recognized the need for greater capacity in the Literacy Department and has oriented its work to ensure maximum capacity development in implementing its activities.

The LD has the role, in the current structures, of giving leadership in literacy, and this function will become more prominent as programmes and funding are moved 'on budget'. While the department clearly has some experience and capacity to carry out this role, it is lacking in the depth of expertise needed for giving direction in the various technical and managerial dimensions. Leadership requires enough depth and breadth of experience in all aspects of literacy work so that creativity, innovation and flexibility are characteristic of the LD approach.

Capacity gaps must be identified at each level by directors and managers, with steps being taken to raise capacity levels through training, mentoring and other methods. Experience shows that merely attending training or obtaining input does not necessarily lead to new practices and improved performance. There is a need to assess how developed capacity is applied and to monitor its effects. Non-monetary incentives, such as expressions of appreciation, 'best employee' schemes and others, should be fully used to recognize improved performance. Taking part in training, short or long, is not a perk, but a responsibility which must be discharged to improve the impact of the institution.⁴

Where particular gaps in capacity are identified, the LD should consider hiring staff with the needed profiles, or, if it is not available, using international expertise on a time-limited basis to develop in-house capacity, along the lines of recent staff assignments of the ELA and LEAF2 programmes.

A key area for further capacity development is to equip literacy facilitators to interact with adult learners in flexible and creative ways to facilitate learning. Observation in Faryab Province showed a standard 'chalk-and-talk' approach, with heavy reliance on the text of the literacy primers. Use of other kinds of text on the blackboard by the facilitator and stimulating students to write spontaneously were absent, with the result that learners were initiated into a fairly passive view of literacy. Facilitators need to have available to them a range of teaching strategies from which they can select appropriate approaches for different learners, contexts and stages of learning, with a much greater stress on drawing out the knowledge and experience of the learners.

Management

Management of literacy programmes is assured by the Literacy Department at central level, and through Provincial and District Education Offices. At provincial and district levels, a Literacy Manager is responsible for overseeing and implementing literacy programmes directly, as well as for overseeing cooperation with other implementing partners, such as ELA, UNICEF, UN Habitat and NGOs. Conversely, these partners are responsible to report activities and results to the Literacy Manager at the appropriate level and to maintain collaborative working relationships in terms of planning and implementing their programmes. The Literacy Managers report to the District and Provincial Education Directors, and, in principle, manage a small team of staff (in practice not all positions in these teams may actually be filled).

Decentralization of responsibility across these levels is an issue. Literacy provision must be organized as close to the learners as possible. This means that Provincial and District level managers need the authority and the technical capacity to enable contextualisation of programming, scheduling, material development and other aspects of provision.

There are gaps in the channels of communication of literacy data, quite apart from questions of data collection and compilation processes (see below). First, not all partner programmes, particularly those of NGOs, report data to the Literacy Manager. Second, larger programmes may communicate data to Literacy Managers but maintain their own channels from district up to national level. Third,

⁴ Note that ideally capacity is best developed when office-holders in an institution identify for themselves the areas for further professional development, and this is generally facilitated by open and supportive management, where dialogue and learning the lessons of experience (and mistakes) are encouraged.

literacy data may not reach the Literacy Department at National level, as it is communicated via the DEO and PED along with school data to the general education directorate of the MoE. There are two principal implications:

- Communication channels need to be clarified for all partners and for all levels of management, based on maximum accessibility and transparency. These channels should be negotiated among stakeholders with regard to where, when and how data can be best communicated.
- As coordinating nodes of data communication, the DEO, PED and LD will require greater capacity in tracking data flow (from and to other levels and partners); while ICT tools will be most helpful in this regard, they may not be able to be suitably deployed in the near future at all levels. Meanwhile, human capacity should be strengthened.

Monitoring and reporting

The quality and consistency of literacy data are not adequate for planning and programming. Data are currently available through a variety of sources: MoE, LD, major programme providers (UNESCO, UN Habitat, UNICEF), other providers and NGOs. Major programme providers collect their own data and compile it for presentation to other stakeholders, such as donors. The LD is charged both with collecting data on programmes run directly by the government, as well as with compiling data from other providers. An overview is provided in the Annual MoE Progress Report, which addresses all sub-sectors and is based on EMIS data. Literacy data are not yet integrated into the EMIS, although that is the aim. The literacy section (Program 4) of the MoE progress report presents data on some, but not all of the indicators developed by the LD, with no indication as to how the selection of indicators has been made. More seriously, the data themselves are neither consistent nor complete. In particular, the following questions arise:

- What is being counted? The categories (learners, teachers, courses, textbooks, etc) are not straightforward in literacy and must be carefully defined; for example, if a learner is in a 9-month course which spans two reporting years, is s/he counted once or twice?
- Whose data are included in totals? Do MoE figures include the data of other providers consistently across all categories (learners, teachers, courses, textbooks, etc)?
- Why do MoE data not consistently reflect the data compiled by the LD? What data are shared and what not shared? The discrepancies between the data of the MoE Progress Reports (literacy sections) and the data supplied directly from the Literacy Department were striking.

To address this critical area JICA funds the Project on Improvement of Literacy Education Management in Afghanistan (LEAF2) and has developed a pilot project in three districts of Balkh and Nangarhar provinces respectively to improve and systematize data collection and compilation, with a view to developing processes and tools that can be generalized. Since 2010, LEAF2 has developed reporting processes at national level to capture data across all provinces on numbers of courses, and gender-disaggregated statistics on learners, graduates and facilitators. These processes and reporting schemata were the basis for the 2010 and 2011 LD reports used in this review. LEAF2 also includes the development of methods for assessing learner achievement. The outcomes of this work have major potential impact for better monitoring and reporting and should be accompanied by further capacity development in the verification and analysis of the data collected.

On the ground, monitoring is carried out by monitoring officers assigned to the District literacy departments. Their role is to monitor not only MoE literacy courses, but also the ELA courses and, in a rather more ad hoc manner, the courses run by other partners. Literacy managers in Faryab and Panjshir Provinces both indicated that coverage and efficiency would be improved if each district had transport (a motorbike) for monitoring purposes. Currently, courses run in the more remote areas cannot be monitored systematically or at all.

7.3 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 (see above), there will be a need to nuance any ‘standard’ system to accommodate diversity of learning outcomes.

7.4 Transition, sustainability and funding

Transition to the post-2014 situation, with its uncertainties as to security and external aid, is of concern in all sectors, and in particular in the delivery of services. Currently supported to a large extent by aid – 80% in the case of education – any diminution could potentially put service delivery, including literacy, in a highly constrained situation. Linked to this concern is how to preserve and prolong the processes of human resource development and to sustain momentum in meeting the educational challenge (World Bank 2012).

If external aid to literacy promotion decreases, programmes currently financed and managed by external partners would become the responsibility of the government. This is what should happen in any case and is part of moving the management of funding ‘on budget’. However, it will not be possible to maintain quality and extend coverage in a resource-constrained environment. Thus it is critical to invest also in non-financial aspects of sustainability, to ensure the maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the use of existing resources. Two areas are critical:

- Currently, multiple partners are involved in literacy provision. Recognizing comparative advantage and working to each organization’s relative strength will improve the effectiveness of resource utilization and of creating successful partnerships. Efficient cooperation will generate and release energies for extending impact on the ground;
- Literacy learning and use will be extended in a community to the extent that the community gives value to it. Community ownership will serve to express demand for literacy, facilitate its provision and extend coverage to new learners. Fostering ownership through community leadership and institutions should be a major strategy in support of sustainable literacy provision.

Adult literacy is consistently neglected in educational funding, in spite of the national and international rhetoric in support of the importance of the sub-sector for national socio-economic

development. At 1.95% of education spending, funding for adult literacy is too low to reach the many millions of potential learners and to provide quality, relevant learning. Literacy on the cheap will only result in unsustainable skills, wasted resources and disheartened learners. Both government budgets and external aid must take a more realistic approach and increase levels of literacy funding.

7.5 Cross-sectoral linkages

As part of a review of the whole education sector, there are a number of points at which the promotion and provision of adult literacy intersect with other parts of the education system, notably:

- Parents and children: where children are in school and parents are also learning literacy, support for both generations of learners can be structured in family literacy or other forms of inter-generational learning, with both separate and joint learning sessions. As parents learn, they follow their child's learning, and the child can share its achievements at school with parents. Suitably adapted versions of the same material can increase common learning goals and mutual support.
- Learning and community: communities are engaged in supporting schools in Afghanistan through *shuras* and other means. Such structures have a key role to play also in organizing adult learning and identifying facilitators and local experts who can support the learning of both children and adults.
- Adult learning and schools: schools may offer an appropriate venue for adult literacy groups (but adults cannot be treated like children or asked to sit at children's desks), if suitable spaces exist. School teachers may facilitate adult learning, **but only** if they are familiar with approaches to teaching **adults**.
- Adult learning/literacy and higher education: research on the methods, contexts, processes, management and outcomes of adult learning/literacy is a key path to greater effectiveness; higher education could fulfil this role, but prospects are slim in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future.

Literacy for economic development in Afghanistan

Increased literacy rates have been shown to have a positive impact on economic development, particularly where average literacy levels are low. While it is difficult to disentangle the economic impact of literacy from that of education more generally, studies analysed in the EFA Global Monitoring Report on literacy (UNESCO 2005:143ff) indicate a positive correlation, in the following ways:

- Direct measures of human capital based on literacy scores performed better than years-of-schooling indicators in explaining growth per capita and per worker (Coulombe et al 2004);
- For 44 African countries, Naudé (2004) found that literacy was among the variables with a positive effect on economic growth;
- Countries that experienced rapid economic growth based on technology transfers had first achieved a literacy rate of at least 40% (Azariadis and Drazen 1990);
- Small changes at high and low levels [of literacy] might not affect economic growth, but small changes at the intermediate levels characteristic of many developing countries do have an important effect (Sachs and Warner 1997).

Based on these findings, the Report presents a conclusion which has special significance for Afghanistan where there is a small proportion of the population with adequate literacy skills, but where the average rate is very low:

...a country that focuses on promoting strong literacy skills widely throughout its population will be more successful in fostering growth and well-being than one in which the gap between high-skill and low-skill groups is large. (UNESCO 2005: 144)

There are many other benefits of literacy – human, political, social, cultural – all of which tend to interact positively with the economic benefits. Given the predominance of economic perspectives in current development approaches, the economic benefits of enabling a much greater percentage of the Afghan population to access literacy will be important drivers of investment in the sub-sector. Failure to invest will rob Afghanistan's economic development of the sound and sustainable basis of an increasingly skilled population.

8 Recommendations

While it is tempting to recommend actions on all fronts needing improvement, a step-by-step approach may correspond better to what is feasible in the light of human and financial resources. Thus, the following recommendations are focused on 2012-2013, limited in scope and as specific as possible.

A. Commitment to literacy

Literacy for national development

1. Continue to advocate for literacy as a key dimension of national development with policy-makers, emphasizing that a learning society will be based on educational opportunities for all, including youth and adults. Commitment to literacy promotion must be based on the right to education and on the positive connections with children's schooling, gender equity and socio-economic development.
2. Strengthen the commitments to literacy in the National Priority Programmes, by including adult literacy in NPP-2 *Education for All* and increasing the scope of occupational literacy in NPP-1 *Sustainable Decent Work*.
3. Work with government departments, agencies, organizations and the private sector so that they put in place internal programmes of literacy learning for their non-literate personnel.

Equitable access to literacy

4. Literacy providers should continue to focus on literacy learning opportunities for women, with attention to their particular needs and purposes, including the role of literacy in raising social status and self-confidence. Where a provider offers literacy learning for both men and women, it should focus at least two-thirds of its provision on women.
5. Plans to reach the *Kuchi* population group must be implemented, with specific initiatives to adapt literacy learning to their lifestyle and purposes/aspirations.
6. Literacy providers should include specific and appropriate programmes for people with disabilities and ensure that linguistic minorities in the regions where they work have access to literacy learning through their first language.
7. In general, literacy programming should take account of the multiplier effect of parameters of disadvantage – being rural, a woman, from southern provinces or from the *Kuchi* group add up to high barriers of exclusion from opportunity.

B. Literacy Programme Design

Approaches to literacy

8. Recognize the multiple reasons why people wish to acquire literacy and use these reasons in the design of materials, pedagogies and programmes; this process will be based on explicit consultation with learners.
9. Build on the current initiatives (MoE, MoLSAMD, NGOs) to link literacy with the acquisition of productive skills – occupational literacy, integrated training, etc – to bring greater purpose to literacy learning, ensuring coordination of approaches and implementation.
10. Integrate reading and writing for enjoyment into literacy programmes as a way of increasing and sustaining motivation to use literacy; this will include local writing and publishing (stories, traditions, poetry, wordplay, news/history, etc).

Curriculum and quality assurance

The demands of learners for literacy that is relevant to the contexts in which they live and for recognition of their investment in learning make it urgent to reinforce and accelerate ongoing processes of curriculum revision and certification.

11. The curriculum revision process already launched should address how to enable literacy providers to take flexible and context-sensitive approaches based on learner needs, while achieving the minimal cognitive goals of reading with comprehension, writing creatively and manipulating numbers accurately. Specific content should not be imposed, beyond guidelines regarding avoidance of inflammatory material in the Afghan context.

Literacy provision and methods

12. Strengthen the training of literacy facilitators, in particular by emphasizing context-sensitive, learner-centred approaches, based on adult learning/teaching methods.
13. Undertake a study on the feasibility and appropriateness of using radio as a further means of extending the reach of literacy provision, and on the possible use of mobile phone texting (SMS) to reinforce literacy practice.

C. Leadership and Coordination***Coordination***

14. Engage in open and transparent discussions among all stakeholders on the nature of the mechanism/structure to improve coordination and leadership in literacy. This will include discussions on the roles of government departments and other stakeholders in providing political, managerial and technical leadership.
15. Further develop the LIFE Coordination Group at national and provincial levels as an open, inclusive and egalitarian mechanism of exchange, information-sharing and issue-based discussion on literacy promotion, and in this context, organize an annual coordination meeting for all literacy stakeholders.
16. Establish an ongoing mechanism for consultation, planning and management of joint literacy/skill initiatives between MoE and MoLSAMD, so that both elements are delivered to learners in a seamless manner.

Capacity development

17. The Literacy Department is the government department responsible for addressing the literacy challenge and its role will increase as partners' programmes are moved on budget; to fulfill this role, the LD at the central level needs greater capacity to exercise leadership in technical and managerial areas:
 - Technically, the LD needs the capacity to conceptualize and initiate creative efforts in all dimensions of literacy work, in accordance with the approaches to literacy proposed above – materials development, pedagogy, facilitator training, links with other learning, context-sensitive approaches to various target groups, and so on. Technical capacity will underpin management functions.
 - Managerially, the LD has long experience of delivering and supervising/monitoring literacy promotion. This capacity needs to be enhanced to enable more flexible and diverse approaches to delivery to be developed, to focus on community perspectives, to reach out pro-actively to partners and to connect implementation with conceptual developments in the field.

It is recommended that a two-pronged approach be taken to LD capacity development:

- a deliberate strategy of identifying and meeting capacity gaps in each department and area of activity, with monitoring of resulting improvements in performance; this

- process would be facilitated by clearly formulated individual job descriptions, based on functional roles of directorates within the LD's institutional mandate;
- the engagement of critical expertise, if possible by integration of new, trained staff into the structure of the LD, or, as an alternative and provisional measure, by using external expertise.

Monitoring and reporting

18. In literacy, all aspects of monitoring and reporting need improvement, from collection of data at programme level, through recording and transmission of data, to national analysis and compilation. These aspects raise, at various levels, the question of deploying ICT tools and ensuring capacity to use them systematically. Building on the developmental work of LEAF2, it is recommended that over the next year capacity at the LD should be developed for ensuring the quality of data. This capacity will enable the LD to critically analyse the data it collects with a view to:
- Ensuring clarity of what the data consist of and what is not included, with a view to greater completeness;
 - Spotting and dealing with anomalies, gaps, inconsistencies, unexplained assumptions;
 - Comparing year-on-year data for inexplicable movements.

Improved analytical capacity will serve to identify further needs for greater capacity in other aspects of the monitoring process, which can be addressed in subsequent years.

D. Literacy Assessment

19. The proposed Afghan Literacy Assessment Survey (ALAS) should engage all literacy stakeholders in view of its importance of arriving at a better understanding of levels of literacy that prevail in the country, including national literacy rates. It would improve the process if a higher level of funding can be found to increase the sample size, and to conduct the survey in other Afghan languages beyond Dari and Pashto.
20. Definition of levels of literacy and numeracy competence should be included in the proposed Afghan National Qualification Framework, with participation by the LD and other literacy stakeholders in the ongoing development process. This process should also engage with the NOSS process (National Occupational Skill Standards) of NSDP/MoLSAMD, and feed into the proposed definition of literacy competencies as part of skills training in NPP-1.
21. Building on the ALAS assessment design and the work of the LEAF programme, and taking into account the Literacy for Labour component of NPP-1 and collaboration between MoE and MoLSAMD, a range of context-sensitive instruments should be developed to assess learner achievement in literacy (and numeracy) which reflect varied learning purposes and contexts.

E. Sustainability and funding

As discussions on transition in Afghanistan gather momentum, the question of the sustainability of action in the delivery of services is coming into sharp focus. In education the dependence on external funding for 80% of expenditure makes sustainability a key issue. However, beyond the question of sustained and increased funding for literacy (addressed above), sustainability also depends on institutional and social considerations. In this regard, it is recommended that:

22. Institutions of all kinds that provide literacy or support to literacy should be mapped for their specific contribution, with the aim of working to each institution's comparative advantage and dovetailing contributions for effective and efficient delivery on the ground. The LIFE Coordination Group can provide an inclusive space for this process. The outcome will be twofold: first, maximizing and tailoring learning opportunities in the

communities of Afghanistan, and second, a more effective use of existing resources, avoiding duplication and overlap.

23. Literacy promotion should foster community ownership such that literacy programmes are actively supported by community leaders and institutions (eg *shura*, CDC, etc.). Roles of communities will vary by context, but can include: selection of facilitators, identification of 'knowledge-makers' to give learning input, design of materials, encouragement of learners to take part in courses, as well as negotiation of how literacy may be delivered in the face of opposing forces. This is a means to extend the reach and improve the relevance of learning, and – in the Afghan context – to give community endorsement to education.
24. Funding for youth and adult literacy needs to be increased in government and donor budgeting. The current spending of less than 2% of education spending is recognized as inadequate in national plans; the targets of the NEIP of 2.3% of operating budget and 8% of development budget should be implemented as minimally acceptable levels in the next budget round and in negotiations with donors, with the target for regular, ongoing funding at the internationally proposed level of 3% of the education operating budget.
25. Donors must increase the proportion of their support to education which is dedicated to adult literacy, as part of promoting a learning society that will best equip current and future generations for locally owned development.

9 Next steps

The recommendations of this sub-sector review will require a structured process of follow-up, moving through a phased sequence of implementation and engaging relevant stakeholders. Each of the five major areas of recommendation – commitment to literacy, programme design, leadership and coordination, literacy assessment, sustainability and funding – implies a series of steps, with important linkages among them.

Defining the necessary 'roadmap' lies beyond the scope of this review as such; however, a brief outline is attached (see Annex 3) as a way of stimulating further elaboration. The whole process should result in an implementation strategy for diversified and context-specific literacy programmes linked to skill acquisition and other relevant learning.

Annexes

Annex 1: Literacy Targets and Performance

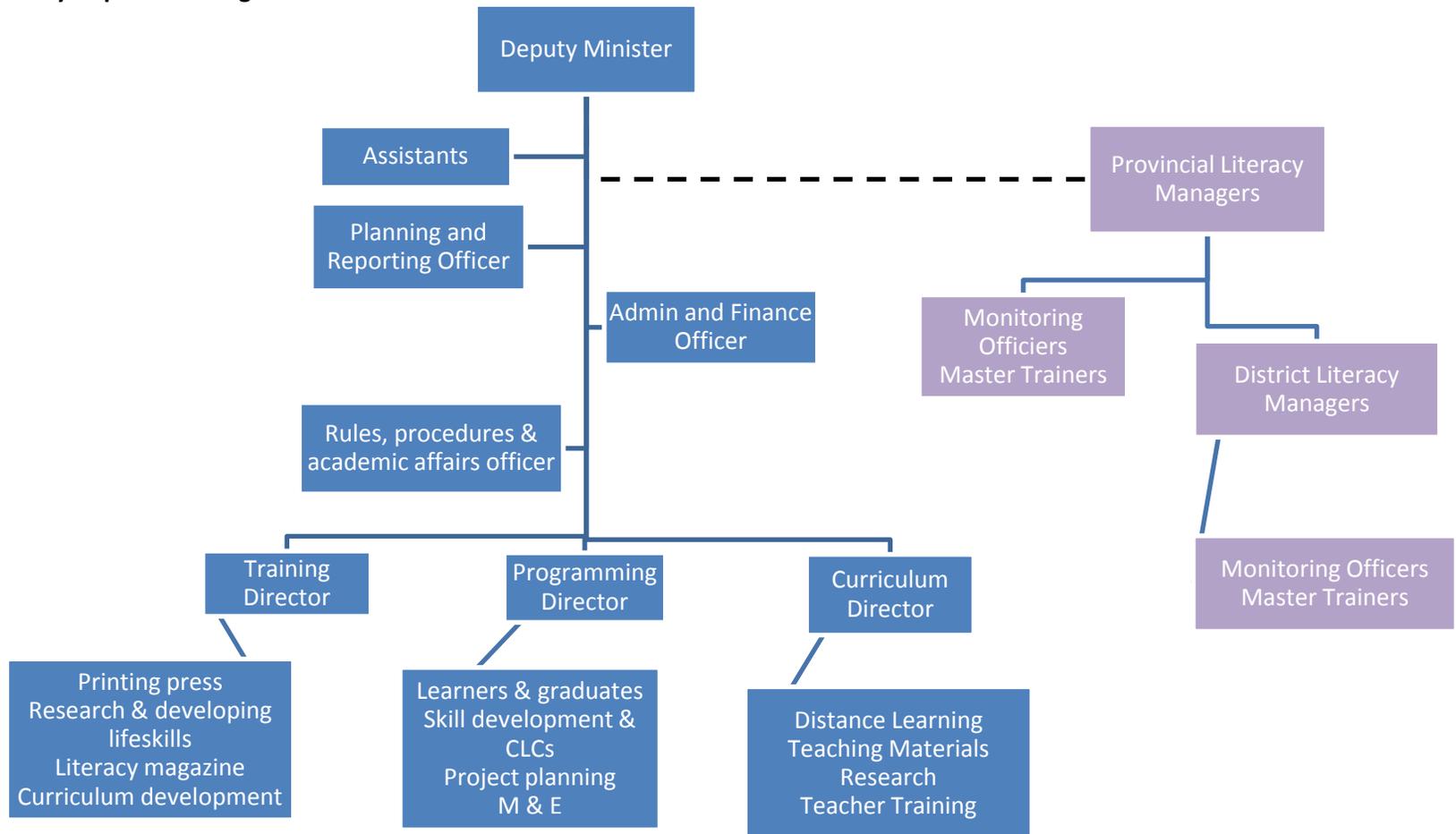
| | Literacy | Indicator | 1390 National Target | 1390 result | Notes |
|------------|--|---|----------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 4.1 | <i>Equitable Access to Literacy Centers</i> | | | | |
| 1 | Conduct public awareness campaigns through the media, mosques, and schools on the benefits of literacy | public awareness conducted | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | Attract and equitably educate learners | Number of educated learners (in the basic literacy) | 600,000 | 557,574 | |
| | | Number of educated learners (in the post literacy) | 600,000 | 556,360 | Same learners as in the previous line |
| | | Number of educated learners (in in service literacy program for illiterate employees) | 126,501 | 10,204 | |
| 3 | Establish literacy hubs in General Education schools and centers in mosques | No of literacy centers established in the general education schools | 2,000 | 630 | |
| | | No of literacy centers established in the moaques | 3,000 | 1.546 | |
| 4 | Establish Community Learning Centers (CLC) | Number of CLC established | 35 | 2 | Cf 4.2/1 |

| | Literacy | Indicator | 1390 National Target | 1390 result | Notes |
|------------|---|---|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 5 | Establish outreach literacy courses throughout the country | Number of outreach literacy courses established | 24,000 | 22,311 | |
| 6 | Encourage other institutions (public and private) to conduct literacy courses for their existing staff | No of courses for staff of other institutions | 5,000 | 4,572 | |
| | Recruit new permanent teachers | No of permanent teachers recruited | 600 | 408 | |
| 7 | Recruit new contract teachers | No of contract teachers recruited | 2,200 | 1,387 | |
| 8 | Provide vocational training for learners (60% female) | No of learners benefited from vocational training | 72,000 | 15,179 | |
| 4.2 | Construction of Community Learning Center | | | | |
| 1 | Construction of Community Learning Center | No of new CLC constructed | 35 | 0 | |
| 4.3 | Curriculum and Learning Material Development and Revision | | | | |
| 1 | Conduct on-going research on the effectiveness of the literacy curriculum for the purpose of program revision | on-going research conducted | 1 | 0 | Ongoing process |
| 2 | Review and revise curriculum and textbooks for all literacy programs | curriculum and textbooks revised | 8 | 0 | |
| 3 | Print and distribute textbooks for learners, teacher guides, and textbooks for vocational courses | Number of textbooks printed and distributed | 500,000 | 235,615 | |
| 4 | Provide follow-up learning materials for at least 50% of learners | No of learners access to follow-up learning materials | 50% | 0 | |

| | Literacy | Indicator | 1390 National Target | 1390 result | Notes |
|------------|--|--|----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 5 | Develop a standard assessment system for issuance of certificates for literacy learners | standard assessment system developed | 1 | 0 | In early stages |
| 4.4 | Training of Teachers and Literacy Supervisors | | | | |
| 1 | Develop the curriculum and learning materials for training of teachers and supervisors | curriculum and learning materials developed | 1 | 0 | |
| 2 | Establish a Literacy Teacher Education Institute | Literacy Teacher Education Institute established | 1 | 0 | |
| 3 | Train 412 master trainers in provinces and districts annually | No of master trainer trained | 69 | 83 | |
| 4 | Provide refresher courses each year to all literacy teachers on teaching methodology and literacy subject matter | No of participant in refresher courses | 3,434 | 3,070 | Of which 15% F |
| 5 | Train teachers to provide literacy education for adults with special needs | No of teachers trained | 142 | 678 | |
| 4.5 | Academic Supervision | | | | |
| 1 | Develop a new system to supervise the activities of the literacy program | system developed | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | Train literacy supervisors | Number of literacy supervisors trained | 900 | 328 | |
| 3 | Supervise academically the literacy courses | No of courses academically supervised | 24,000 | 22,311 | |
| 4 | Establish a standard system to measure the learning achievements of learners after completion of each course | Standard system established | | | No data, but not in place |

| | Literacy | Indicator | 1390 National Target | 1390 result | Notes |
|------------|--|---|----------------------|-------------|--|
| 4.6 | <i>Management and Coordination</i> | | | | |
| 1 | Establish the High Literacy Commission which will conduct quarterly meetings | High Literacy Commission established | 1 | | No data, but other sources indicate it is not in place |
| 2 | Revise policies, regulations, bylaws and guidelines of the literacy program | policies, regulations, bylaws and guidelines revised | 1 | 1 | |
| 3 | Provide proper working space and administrative equipment for at least 50% of Literacy Department personnel | % of personnel have access to proper working space and administrative equipment | 50% | 35% | |
| 4 | Train and enhance the capacity of all administrative staff annually | No of administrative staff trained | ? | 91 | |
| 5 | Develop and publish annual operational plans, budgets, quarterly and annual reports for the Literacy Department each year | No of developed and published operational plans | 415 | 187 | |
| 6 | Conduct a mid-year review of programs and projects each year and revise activities and projects as needed to achieve targets | No of programs and projects with mid-year review and revise | 1 | 0 | |
| 7 | Establish the literacy database | literacy database established | 1 | 0 | |

Annex 2: Literacy Department Organisational Structure



Annex 3: Outline of next steps in developing a 'Literacy Roadmap' for Afghanistan

The following actions should be launched during 2012-2013 and will require further detailed planning. Note that many of these actions are cost-neutral. Indented bullets depend on actions in the bullet above.

A. Committing to literacy

- The Literacy Department with partners designs an advocacy strategy and determines what networking roles each staff member should play and who the key target institutions/individuals are (politicians, policy-makers, etc).
 - Establish a unit within the LD that can advise other organisations on how they might provide literacy learning to their non-literate staff.

B. Re-designing literacy programmes

- The Literacy Department holds a series of seminars, first internally, then with partners, to articulate a context-sensitive, flexible approach to literacy programme design, emphasizing flexibility at local level to meet the needs of diverse groups. This will mean a **shift of philosophy and practice, with far-reaching implications for all aspects of literacy promotion and provision:** facilitator roles and training, material production, content/curriculum, cooperation with other adult learning providers, learner assessment, and programme monitoring.
 - Establish a working group of literacy stakeholders to identify vulnerable and marginalized groups and their specific characteristics, and the implications for the way in which literacy might be best delivered.
 - The Literacy Department promotes this approach in the existing curriculum revision process.
 - At provincial and district levels, work with local community groups to identify learning purposes, local cultural knowledge and plan how literacy fits into learning and communication in each community.
 - ❖ Plan how to re-orient initial and in-service facilitator training to promote flexible, context-sensitive teaching/learning strategies.
 - ❖ Plan how to stimulate local writers and produce local materials, with a view to strengthening the literate environment, including making literacy an enjoyable activity alongside its functional value.
- Undertake a study on the feasibility and appropriateness of using radio as a further means of extending the reach of literacy provision, and on the possible use of mobile phone texting (SMS) to reinforce literacy practice.

C. Leading and coordinating literacy

- The Literacy Department initiates an open and transparent consultation among stakeholders on the options for strengthening leadership in literacy – key functions of leadership, and the structures/mechanisms and personnel profiles which will best ensure leadership.
- LIFE Coordination Group partners promote inclusive membership of all stakeholders in the Group, at national and provincial levels
 - LIFE Coordination Groups plan an annual coordination event/meeting for 2012.

- The Literacy Department and MoLSAMD establish joint planning/management mechanism to implement NPP-1 (Component B) and other literacy~skill programmes.
- The Literacy Department makes a systematic assessment of existing technical and managerial capacity in its services, identifies capacity gaps a makes a plan on how to meet them.
 - The Literacy Department consults technical and financial partners on its capdev plan.
 - The Literacy Department lobbies the Minister of Education for greater human resources on the basis of its capdev plan.

D. Assessing literacy status and progress

- The Literacy Department, in consultation with LEAF partners, appoints a qualified educational statistician to check the quality of literacy data received in Kabul and identify capacity gaps in the monitoring system at each level.
- ALAS stakeholders present plans for a larger survey and lobby donors for greater resources.
- Literacy stakeholders participate in the ANQF process, on the basis of a context-sensitive approach to literacy and with attention to literacy embedded in learning other skills.
- ALAS, LEAF and other stakeholders develop context-sensitive approaches to designing instruments for assessing learner achievement.

E. Sustaining and funding literacy

- The LIFE Coordination Group initiates a process of mapping each literacy provider's scope and approach to literacy provision (region, target population, materials, training, etc).
 - Literacy stakeholders work to develop collaboration and synergies where possible.
- At district level, literacy managers and trainers, with local literacy partners, meet with CDCs, *shuras*, school management committees or other local institutions to discuss how they might integrate literacy with other development initiatives and what their responsibility is literacy promotion might be.
- On the basis of the advocacy at A. above and of the context-sensitive approach to literacy provision, the Literacy Department, with the input of partners, develops and keeps updated a cost estimate for meeting NEIP goals in literacy.
 - Dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and donors on the basis of the cost estimate, in the context of overall education funding.

Annex 4: References

- Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO). 2011. Evaluation of Literacy Programs under NESP II an NLAP in Balkh, Bamya, Herat, Kandahar and Nangarhar Provinces. Ms.
- ANDS. 2008. Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013. Afghanistan National Development Secretariat.
- Azariadis, C. and Drazen, A. 1990. Threshold externalities in economic development. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 105, No. 2, pp 501–26.
- Barfield, T. 2011. Afghanistan's Ethnic Puzzle. *Foreign Affairs* 90 (5): 54-65
- Central Statistics Organization (CSO)/UNICEF. 2012. *Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Survey 2010-2011*. Kabul: CSO.
- Coulombe, S., Tremblay, J. F. and Marchand, S. 2004. *Literacy Scores, Human Capital and Growth Across Fourteen OECD Countries*. (Catalogue No. 89-552, No. 11). Ottawa, Ont., Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Statistics Canada.
- Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA). 2012. Annual Progress Report March 2011-February 2012.
- Gul Wahidi, M. and A. Rogers. 2011. Enhancing Recording and Communication Skills in Competency-Based Vocational Education and Training Programmes in Afghanistan. Paper presented to UNESCO Kabul (ELA).
- Human Resources Development Cluster. 2012. *Sustainable Decent Work through Skills Development and Employment Policies for Job-Rich Growth*. National Priority Program 1.
- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 2008. National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan: the government's main vehicle for implementing policies and commitment to advance the status of women 2008-2017.
- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 2008. National Report on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education. Ministry of Education.
- JICA. 2011. *The Project on Improvement of Literacy Education Management in Afghanistan (LEAF2)*. 1st Year Work Completion Report.
- Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). 2008. *Where Literacy Stands*. Needs Assessment Report for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
- Matsumoto, Y. 2011. UNESCO Kabul's capacity development work in literacy: an irreconcilable dilemma? In Sigsgaard, M. (ed). 2011. *On the road to resilience: capacity development with the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Ministry of Education/Literacy Department. 2008a. *Literacy - Tool for Sustainable Development and Key to Lifelong Learning*. Afghanistan National Literacy Action Plan 1389- 1393 [2010 –14].
- Ministry of Education. 1387/2008b. *Education Law*.
- Ministry of Education. 2011. *1389/2010 Annual Progress Report*. Kabul.
- Ministry of Education. 2011. *Education for All*. National Priority Program 2.
- Ministry of Education. 2012. *1390/2011 Annual Progress Report*. Kabul.
- Ministry of Finance. *National Priority Programs*. <http://mof.gov.af/en/page/3976> accessed 22 May 2012.
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled (MoLSAMD). *Sustainable Decent Work through Skills Development and Employment Policies for Job-Rich Growth*. National Priority Program 1.

- Naudé, W. A. 2004. The effects of policy, institutions and geography on economic growth in Africa: an econometric study based on cross-section and panel data. *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 16, pp. 821–49.
- NESP. 2010. National Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014. Ministry of Education, Department of Planning and Evaluation.
- Novelli, Mario. 2010. The new geopolitics of educational aid: from Cold Wars to Holy Wars? *International Journal of Educational Development* 30: 453-459.
- NRVA. 2005. National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005. Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office, Kabul.
- NRVA. 2009. National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8: A profile of Afghanistan. Kabul: ICON INSTITUTE GmbH & Co. KG Consulting Group.
- Rodriguez, D. M. Leaving Afghanistan to the Afghans. *Foreign Affairs* 90(5):45-53.
- Rogers, A. 2011. Afghanistan Mission August-September 2011: Vocational Skills Training and Literacy. Ms.
- Sachs, J. and Warner, A. 1997. Sources of slow growth in African economies. *Journal of African Economics*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 335–76.
- Schur, W. 2011. New Skills for Afghanistan: A Contribution to Individual Empowerment, Community and Civil Society Development and Stability in Afghanistan. *Adult Education and Development* 77 (Supplement):15-28.
- Sims, C. 2012. Theory Versus Practice. *Foreign Affairs* 91(1):178-180.
- UNESCO. 2004. *The Plurality of Literacy and its implications for policies and programmes*. [Education Sector Position Paper]. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. 2005. *Literacy for Life*. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. s.d. 'Literacy for Empowering Afghan Police' (LEAP). Concept Note.
- USAID. 2010. *Institutional Analysis of the National Literacy Center*. Learning for Community Empowerment Programme-2. Kabul: UN Habitat.
- World Bank. 2012. *Afghanistan in Transition: Looking beyond 2014*. Kabul: World Bank.

Annex 5a: Contacts ~ Kabul

| Name | | Position | Institution |
|----------------|--------------|---|---|
| Amin | Adel | Programme Officer | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Kheyal | Afghanzai | Technical Advisor, HRD | Ministry of Finance |
| Jamil | Ahmad | Consultant M&E | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Colin | Alfred | Education Advisor | Save the Children |
| Syed Aminullah | Alizai | Director | National Skills Development Program |
| Najia | Anwari | Project Coordinator | Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance |
| Abdul Wassay | Arian | General Director Policy and Planning | Ministry of Education |
| Minako | Asakura | Consultant – Literacy | UNESCO |
| Rahima | Asmar | M&E Officer | Literacy Department |
| Abdul Zahir | Azizi | Deputy Program Manager, Education | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| Noorudin | Badri | Programme Officer | UNESCO |
| Eddy | Berson | Programme Coordinator | Aga Khan Foundation |
| Jennifer | Blinkhorn | Education Director | Aga Khan Foundation |
| Scott | Braunschweig | | International Rescue Committee |
| Phillip | Choudhury | Advisor, HRD Cluster | Ministry of Finance |
| Karen | Coats | Program Design Adviser | MoLSAMD |
| Mehboob | Dada | Curriculum Consultant | UNESCO |
| John | Ekaju | Education Specialist | UNICEF |
| | Ghafari | Education Department | USAID |
| Aimal | Hakim | Reform Impl'n Man't Unit | Ministry of Education |
| Khalilurahman | Hanif | Reporting Officer | Literacy Department |
| Janat Gul | Hanify | Program Officer | National Skills Development Program |
| Fred | Hayward | Senior HED Consultant | Afghan HED Project |
| Sera | Heras | Programme Officer | WFP |
| Olve | Hølaas | Chief – Education | UNESCO |
| Sarwar | Hussaini | Deputy Minister for Literacy and Non-Formal Education | Ministry of Education |
| Salem | Ibrahimi | Senior Adviser | Ministry of Education |
| Allah Baz | Jam | Programming Director | Literacy Department |
| Nils | Kauffman | Education Officer | USAID |
| Sakhi Ahmed | Khairi | Director of Monitoring and Evaluation | MoLSAMD |
| Abdul Bashir | Khaliqi | Managing Director | Afghan National Association for Adult Education |
| Marghalara | Khara | Director of Cultural Affairs | Ministry of Women's Affairs |
| Rie | Koarai | Consultant LEAF2 | JICA |

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Angela | Mackay | Consultant – Training | UNESCO |
| Mohammad Salim | Matsoor | Director General – Policy and Planning | MoLSAMD |
| Naomi | Matsumoto | Assistant Resident Representative – Education | JICA |
| Yukiko | Matsuyoshi | Chief – Literacy Unit | UNESCO |
| Wahab | Moez | Team Leader – LEAP | |
| Ata Mohammad | Mohammadi | Manager – Planning, Budget, Implementation and Reporting | Literacy De UNESCO partment |
| Rafat | Nabi | Senior Education Adviser | Swedish Committee for Afghanistan |
| Preethi | Nampoothiri | Education Program Manager | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| Kucita | Pawan | Chief of Education Section | UNICEF |
| Mohammad Omer | Qadery | Field Coordinator | Afghanistan Libre |
| Zabibullah | Salik | General Manager of Monitoring and Evaluation | MoLSAMD |
| Wolfgang | Schur | Coordinator Afghanistan | Deutscher Volkshochschulverband |
| Annelie | Stråth | Counsellor/Education and Gender | SIDA/Embassy of Sweden |
| Masami | Suda | Manager LEAF2 | JICA/System Science Consultants |
| Harumi | Tsukahara | Consultant LEAF2 | JICA |
| Gul | Wahidi | ELA Consultant | UNESCO |
| Ahmed | Waiss | Provincial level Decentralization Consultant | Ministry of Education |
| Habibullah | Wajdi | ELA Program Coordinator | UNESCO |
| Seddiq | Weera | Senior Adviser | Ministry of Education |
| Henriette | Wolf | Advisor Strategic Planning | Norwegian Afghanistan Committee |
| Arzhang | Yusefi | Education Officer | UNICEF |

Annex 5b: Contacts ~ Faryab Province

| Name | | Position | Institution |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | (not known) | Governor | Andkhoy District |
| | (not known) | Headteacher | Afghan Kot Girls School, Maimana |
| | (not known) | Headteacher | No.3 Girls High School, Maimana |
| Hadji | Abdulbaki | CDC Member | Bloch Khana CDC |
| Ahmed Khalid | Abhar | Field Monitor Assistant | WFP, Maimana |
| Fazil | Ahmad | Program Specialist | UNICEF, Maimana |
| Mohammad | Asef | CDC Chairperson | Bloch Khana CDC |

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------------------------|---|
| A. Wahid | Ayobi | Provincial Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Ghulam Saki | Bayan | Education Director | MoE, Maimana |
| Mohammad | Ghulam | Andkhoy District Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| | Habibullah | Literacy Manager | Andkhoy District |
| Said Mohammad | Hafizi | Maimana City Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Abas | Khan | CDC Member | Bloch Khana CDC |
| Abdul Quduz | Klich | Headteacher | Jernaial Ghosudeen Boys School, Maimana |
| Saif | Massouf | Almar District Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Zaher | Moradi | Education Director | Andkhoy District |
| | Mustafa | Pastun Kot District Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Wajidi | Mutaher | Dawlat Abad District Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Fida M. | Niazr | National Coordination Officer | UNAMA, Maimana |
| Mohammad | Golam | ?? District Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| Khatera | Saeedi | Education Manager | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| | Saifullah | Qurghan District Coordinator | UNESCO ELA Programme |
| M. Masoud | Saqib | Programme Officer | WFP, Mazar-i-Sharif |
| Haji | Sediq | CDC Member | Bloch Khana CDC |

Annex 5c: Literacy classes

Locations of Literacy Classes and Facilitators ~ Faryab Province

| Place | Context | Organisation – M/F class | Interviews with: |
|----------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pashtun Kot | Peri-urban | ELA – Female | Learners and facilitator |
| Maimana/Baloch Khana | Urban | ELA – Female | Facilitator |
| Andkhoy | Peri-urban | ELA – Female | Learners and facilitator |
| Andkhoy | Peri-urban | CTI – Female | Learners and facilitator |