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**Name of Project: Second Education Quality
Improvement Program (EQUIP II)**

Assignment Title: Program Evaluation of EQUIP II

Afghanistan

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
January 15, 2016



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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACER	Australian Council for Education Research
ADE	Associate Degree in Education
AFS	Afghan Currency/Afghanis
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
AUAF	American University of Afghanistan
BESST	Building Education Support Systems for Teachers
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CC	Community Contracted
CU	Coordination Unit
DAARTT	Danish Assistance to Afghan Rehabilitation and Technical Training
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DED	District Education Directorate/Director
DIE	Diploma in Education
DPE	Department of Planning and Evaluation
DSM	District Social Mobilizer
DTE	Diploma in Teacher Education
DT3	District Teacher Training Teams
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
EQUIP II	Education Quality Improvement Program (Phase II)
ESOMAR	European Society for Opinion and Market Research
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguard
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GER	Gross enrolment rates
GIZ	German International Cooperation
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
GPE	Global Partnership Education Program
GSP	Girls' Scholarship Program
GU	Gender Unit
HR	Human Resources
HAS	High Scholl Assistance
ICR	Implementation Completion Review
INSET	In-Service Education for Teachers
IP	Implementing Partner
I-SAPS	Institute of Social and Policy Sciences
IRD	International Relief and Development
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
ISD	Infrastructure Service Department

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ISM	Implementation Supervision Mission
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KII	Key Information Interview
LA	Learning Assessment
LAU	Learning Assessment Unit
MED	Monitoring Education Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
NCB	National Competitive Bidding
NER	Net enrolment rates
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPITT	National Program for in-service Teacher Training
OPM	Organizational Planning and Management
PAE	Public Awareness Events
PAU	Public Awareness Unit
PDI	Professional Development Infrastructure
PDO	Project Development Objectives
PED	Provincial Education Directorate/Director/ Departments
PLC	Principal Learning Circles
PMO	Provincial Monitoring Officer
PSTE	Pre-Service Teacher Education
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMS	School Management <i>Shuras</i>
SMT	School Management Training
SMU	Social Mobilization Unit
STR	Student/Teacher Ratios
TEA	Teacher Education Analysis
TED	Teacher Education General Directorate
TLC	Teacher Learning Circles
TMIS	Teachers' Management Information System
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ToR	Terms of References
TPR	Third Party Review
TTC	Teachers Training College
UKSRA	UK Solicitors Regulation Authority
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNAMA	United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund

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USAID United States Agency for International Development

WB World Bank

WFP World Food Program

Special names

Article 25 An international non-governmental organization

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The evaluation team would like to thank the staff of the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) for the support provided by them. The heads of EQUIP departments and their staff in Kabul were always present for lengthy interviews and for crosschecking information collected in the provinces. Especially the Social Mobilization Unit (SMU) core staff who compiled the schools lists for the nine provinces, encompassing more than 1,100 schools. EQUIP officers, engineers, and social mobilizers in the provinces were always ready to provide information. The social mobilizers working at district level in the nine provinces enabled the evaluation team to look closely at the structure and functioning of the education system in Afghanistan.

In particular, we wish to thank the Department of Planning and Evaluation (DPE) at the Ministry of Education (MoE). The Senior Manager for Research and Evaluation supported the team whenever needed and provided all relevant documents on EQUIP II.

All necessary data at district and provincial levels was provided by the Ministry of Education's Education Management Information System (EMIS). The collected data in the field mission had been evaluated by the evaluation team until August 2014.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This evaluation covers the second World Bank-supported Education Quality Improvement Program of the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, hereinafter referred to as EQUIP II.

EQUIP is the largest national multi-donor program in Afghanistan. It was launched in 2004, and completed its second four-year phase (EQUIPII) in August 2012. EQUIP II was extended to August 2014. To cover this extension, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and the World Bank (WB) approved an extension grant of over USD 250 Million (M). Subsequently, the extension phase has itself been extended, to August 2015.

EQUIP have been supported with USD 517 M in total since 2004 (including USD 22 M off-budget), of which approximately USD 438 M is accounted for by EQUIP II, and approximately USD 79 M by EQUIP I. Some 51% of the total funding has been provided by the World Bank, with the remainder provided by donors through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

EQUIP focuses on the following three Project Development Objectives (PDO):

- (1) Promoting equitable access to basic education;
- (2) Improving quality of education;
- (3) Strengthening service delivery.

EQUIP focuses on supporting communities, and society in general, in providing balanced and equitable education for all eligible children. This is being done through the establishment of School Management *Shuras* (SMS) with the support of the EQUIP's Social Mobilization Unit (SMU). EQUIP covers all 34 of Afghanistan's provinces, including Kabul city. The program covers all the educational institutions irrespective of location.

EQUIP is implemented primarily through three main components, namely:

- (1) School grants for quality enhancement, infrastructure development, and social awareness and mobilization;
- (2) Teacher and principal training and education, including a component aiming to increase the number of female teachers; and
- (3) Project management, monitoring and evaluation.

EQUIP is organized into nine units and it has staff working at national, provincial, and district levels. They are all employees of the Ministry of Education, and a number of them have their offices in the Ministry. As of May 2014, EQUIP has 85 staff members at national level, mainly located in Kabul. There are 860 EQUIP staff at province level, of whom 17% are female. At the time of this evaluation (May/June 2014) there are 695 EQUIP staff district social mobilizers.

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Objectives of the evaluation

The primary objective of this evaluation is to document, evaluate and disseminate the progress, achievements and challenges of EQUIP II. It should assess the progress of EQUIP II in three overarching objectives, namely: promoting equitable access to basic education; improving the quality of education; and strengthening service delivery. More specifically, the evaluation aims to: assess the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the EQUIP II support; identify lessons to be learned; and provide recommendations to improve education sector policy-making and service delivery.

Methodological approach

The methodology comprised literature review, analysis of statistical data, individual interviews with education stakeholders, visits to and discussions in 47 schools in nine provinces. The field trip covering nine provinces took place from 19 May to 26 June 2014. The choice of provinces was agreed with MoE. The security situation during election campaign prevented visits to other provinces at the time of the mission. Moreover, there were significant time constraints.

Interviews were carried out in selected EQUIP departments to assess their capacities and weaknesses so that any shortcomings can be addressed with the implementation of EQUIP III. Interviews were also carried out with ARTF donors.

The inception phase and the field trips took place during the presidential election. Security was therefore a key consideration and had to be reviewed each day. This meant that some locations that the team had planned to visit had to be substituted with other locations at short notice. Evaluation work was interrupted from 10 to 18 June 2014 due to the second round of the presidential election.

Context

Throughout the 1990s, until 2001-2002, Afghanistan's education sector was disrupted by civil war, internal displacement and forced migration. According to the Education Joint Sector Review 1391/ 2012 (Main Report, p. 2), just 900,000 children, nearly all boys, attended school in Afghanistan at the beginning of the millennium. No educational standards existed, few books were available, and there were few teachers – 20,700 according to EMIS data.

Figures provided by EMIS in June 2014 indicate that the education sector has changed significantly since 2002: by the time EQUIP II commenced in 2008, school enrolment had increased to 5,343,310 and by 2013 there were 8,204,328 students in schools. The proportion of girls in the school population has increased by 66% from 2008 to 2013. EQUIP has been a major driver of these developments. Nevertheless adult literacy rates remain low. UNESCO data for 2011 indicates an overall adult literacy rate of 31.74%, with female adult literacy at 17.61% and male adult literacy at 45.42%. Overall youth literacy is significantly higher, at 46.99%. The disparity between the genders remains large, although it is significantly less than for adult literacy (32.11% female youth literacy, 61.88% male youth literacy). Enrolment rates also remain low, especially amongst girls located outside the main cities.

What worked and why

Despite the difficult operating environment, the overall enrolment rate increased from 1,948,741 girls and 3,394,569 boys in 2008, to 3,225,898 girls and 4,978,430 boys in 2013.

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	Start of millennium	2008 (end of EQUIP I)	2013 (EQUIP II)	% increase from 2008 to 2013
Girls enrolled in school		1,948,741	3,225,898	66%
Boys enrolled in school		3,394,569	4,978,430	47%
Total enrolled in school	900,000	5,343,310	8,204,328	54%
Ratio male to female enrolments		1.74	1.54	

Table 1: Summary of enrolment trends since the start of the millennium (Source: based on EMIS, June 2014)

Information provided by the Infrastructure Service Department (ISD) in October 2014, of the 1,662 planned school buildings, 786 (47.3%) have been completed and a further 850 (approximately 51%) are at various stages of construction. Additionally, 26 school construction projects are classified as ‘problematic’. Various organizational, budgetary, legal, and community factors have contributed to delays in school construction projects. Some issues have been addressed, but others have not.

- Quality enhancement grants have been provided to a total of 11,542 schools (in total, 10,800 schools under EQUIP II, and 742 schools in additional finance) to procure teaching materials and equipment;
- 73 model school projects were initiated;
- 14,222 School Management *Shuras* (SMS) had been established by the end of June 2014;
- 90,000 teachers graduated from Teacher Training Colleges (TTC), of whom 42% were women;
- The number of TTCs increased from four in 2001-2002, to 44 TTCs distributed across 34 provinces, with some branches at district level;
- Since 2001, some 136,650 students have graduated from pre-service and in-service TTCs across Afghanistan. In-service teachers account for 56% of this figure, and 28,672 (38%) of these in-service teachers are female. These statistics suggest that TTCs are playing a significant role in increasing upgrading the qualifications of in- service teachers.

Four new units were established with the EQUIP structure between 2011 and 2013:

- Gender Unit;
- Learning Assessment Unit;
- Environmental and Social Safeguard Unit;
- Public Awareness Unit.

A stricter supervision, monitoring, and control system was introduced in 2011 and this has eliminated some program problems, primarily in the school construction sector.

Some SMSs are actively supporting the education process in their immediate environment, sometimes in the face of significant resistance. Their engagement should be documented and used as an example for other less active SMSs. For example in Nangarhar and Kandahar, SMS members were able to stop young, uneducated men threatening girls and female teachers on their way to school. They achieved this by talking to community elders, the police, and provincial council members, or by convincing *mullahs* to raise this topic during the Friday sermon.

The Education Management Information System of the Ministry of Education has maintained high quality data reporting, despite the continuing political insecurity. EMIS data for 423 districts in Afghan Years 1390-1392 (2011- 2013) indicate that, as of 2013, the system encompasses more than eight million students, and almost 15,000 schools.

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What did not work and why

The increase in the number of staff and projects throughout the country was achieved at the expense of quality, especially with regard to infrastructure and social mobilization. The increase in the number of social mobilizers from 68 (eight years ago) to 695 was not followed up with training measures, because, among other things, the complexity of the social mobilizers' work was under-estimated (possibly also the challenge in recruiting suitable qualified people), and budget was allocated for the training of trainers at district or province levels. Social mobilizers were not always appointed on merit, but were sometimes appointed because of their connections to influential persons.

A number of activities could not be carried out according to plan because training budgets were not released on time due to the MoF's cash payment procedures, although funds were available. Coordination between EQUIP and the Ministry of Education's finance department is not optimal due to lack of capacity in EQUIP's finance unit.

All units are affected by the highly bureaucratic procurement process. For example, up to 102 signatures are needed for procurement in a particular case as reported to the evaluation team, which can take up to eight months from start to finish. For purchases of over USD 1,000, three people from the procurement department are sent to obtain different quotes. The procurement department is audited several times each year, and the preparation of special documents for these audits interrupts other work. Procured items are put into stock and require up to 17 signatures to be released to the unit/ department for which they were procured in the first place – this procedure takes one month or more.

The objectives of the Social Mobilization Unit (SMU) are very ambitious. This unit does not currently have sufficient capacity to meet all objectives throughout the country. Training Needs Assessment (TNA) has not so far been undertaken at provincial and district levels. Close monitoring is necessary to see if social mobilizers, for example, follow the implementation of the mobilization process and if they have the ability to do so.

High turnover amongst district social mobilizers suggests that the effectiveness and sustainability of the recruitment of a large number of social mobilizers, over a relatively short period, has not been as effective or sustainable as might be expected. Stakeholder feedback points to a number of factors, including: the highly diverse background and qualification of recruits; insufficient training for the work, especially for those working in insecure locations; remuneration packages that are not contextualized to different locations (e.g. insecure locations); and late payment of salaries.

While security of international experts is well taken care of, the security of local EQUIP staff in insecure areas is highly unsatisfactory. There is little understanding by the donor of the need to differentiate between 'normal' and 'insecure' provinces in the context of EQUIP. District mobilizers in insecure provinces and districts are not supported. District mobilizers and the EQUIP administration requested that the salaries of social mobilizers working in insecure provinces be increased from USD 400 per month to USD 600, to cover, among other things, appropriate transport to avoid being mistaken for Taliban, but their request was declined by the main donor.

Challenges

Inadequate domestic revenue and reduced donor funding pose a major challenge to the education sector in the short and medium terms.

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The overall management of the education system at the national, the provincial and the district level needs improvement. Strong institutions with permanent, qualified operational staff can compensate for incompetent, temporary political appointees.

Procurement is the most significant challenge for EQUIP II. The procurement and finance units should provide services for other units enabling them for better work. However, this does not always appear to be the case in EQUIP II. Not in the way as reported for example from Learning Assessment Unit (LAU) which was provided with used computers, which were not equipped to carry out data analysis. The donors should ensure that the underlying issues are resolved prior to EQUIP III.

The quality of education also needs to be improved. Steps have already been taken to improve the quality of infrastructure, by increasing the supervision of schools and monitoring the quality of the infrastructure. In order to improve the quality of education itself, social mobilization should focus more on the quality of training, especially at provincial and district levels.

Teacher gender balance needs to be strengthened at district level. For example in some districts there is no experience of female teachers teaching male students. In male-dominated areas, there are insufficient qualified women to fill the quota for female teachers. The number of female teachers at provincial level needs to be increased, and a continuous program of capacity building needs to be put in place for them. Financial and other incentives could be provided to help recruit qualified female teachers to schools in rural and more remote areas. This in turn would help to increase female enrolment rates in schools in rural areas. The Global Partnership Program (GPP) shows that this challenge can be met. One-third of that program's staff is female.

Key Strategic Recommendations

Girls - access to education

It is recommended that EQUIP III undertakes a concerted, long-term program of direct and indirect measures to address female enrolment in school. This could, for example, include incentives and support: for schools, especially outside the main centers, to recruit and retain female teachers, to enroll female students, and to increase the role of women in SMS; for qualified female teachers to work outside the main centers; and for families to enroll girls, especially in more remote areas.

Effectiveness and sustainability of social mobilizer recruitment

There has been a rapid and significant increase in the number of social mobilizers. It is recommended that the SMU be strengthened with experienced, specialized human resource management capacity to ensure continuous, systemic assessment and improvement in the area of social mobilizer recruitment, retention, and professional development. Issues that need urgent consideration include: quality training to address initial and continuing professional development needs; the recruitment process itself; and working conditions.

Administrative procedures

EQUIP staff have been introduced into the Ministry of Education. To support the Ministry in addressing today's major strategic challenges, it is recommended that these staff might be more closely integrated into the Ministry's permanent structures. It is also recommended that the World Bank and ARTF donors discuss the issues of slow procurement, and unpredictable funds disbursements with the Ministry of Education with a view to identifying mutually acceptable mechanisms to ensure that these issues do not undermine EQUIP III.

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Infrastructure costs

It is recommended that infrastructure cost calculations should take geographic differences into consideration, and, wherever possible, local materials should be used. Community Contracted (CC) infrastructure projects should be managed by SMS only when the ISD has confirmed that the *shura* has the necessary technical competence. The World Bank's supervisory agent, International Relief and Development (IRD) should be provided with details of the cost structure of civil works so that it can better assess the financial efficiency of each civil works project that it monitors.

Sustainability of school buildings and equipment

It is recommended that the ISD allocate annual maintenance budgets at district level to cover all EQUIP-supported schools, because there is a significant risk that many of the schools constructed and equipped with EQUIP funds will, over time, become unable to assure equitable access to quality education. District authorities, through civil engineers and educationists, should systematically inspect infrastructure, facilities, equipment, and materials at each school at least twice per year to assess maintenance needs and to draw up maintenance plans as necessary. On the basis of these plans, the District Education Department (DED) should procure the necessary work, facilities, supplies, etc.

Statistics

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education eliminates duplication and data re-entry of statistical data by different departments as this is wasteful of resources and is likely to introduce errors, rather than improving the quality of the data. Schools should be requested annually to verify and, where necessary correct, information held on the EMIS. This could be done by generating a standard report for each school to verify and correct. This approach would be far more efficient, than re-entering all data each year. To maximize the accuracy of reports, the EMIS should record data at unit (school) level only. All aggregated reports (district, province, national) should then be generated from the original school level data. It is recommended that teacher data is recorded in more detail. It should include, among other things, age, employment status (permanent/ temporary/ other), grade(s) taught and subject(s) taught. There should be greater emphasis on analysis at district level. School Directors should see data accuracy and completeness as a step towards ensuring the necessary staffing and resources for their schools' students

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context of the Program Evaluation of EQUIP II

1. Afghanistan was subject to violent conflict for most of the last quarter of the 20th Century. Since 2001, Afghanistan has seen the ratification of a new moderate Islamic Constitution and the election of a president and National Assembly. It implemented a “National Solidarity Program” with the goal of accelerating nationwide development. In the first half of 2014, for the first time in its history, Afghanistan voted for a change of government and president in a democratic election.
2. There have been significant developments in the education sector over the last decade. In 2001 fewer than one million students were enrolled in the education system, and these were mainly boys. Enrolment now stands at more than eight million, of whom more than three million are girls.
3. One of the main drivers of this successful development in the education sector is the World Bank-supported EQUIP of the MoE of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which commenced in 2004, and completed its second four-year phase (EQUIP II) in August 2012. EQUIP II was extended to August 2014 so that the program could be reviewed in depth before commencing the next phase, EQUIP III. To cover this extension, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and the World Bank (WB) approved an extension grant of over USD 250 Million (M). Subsequently, the extension phase has itself been extended, to August 2015, so that three on-going evaluations can inform the planning of EQUIP III.
4. Various Sector Reviews¹ identified strategic and structural deficiencies, despite significant progress. According to these reviews there is a need for continued attention to:
 - **Increasing access to education;**
 - **Increasing equity and quality;**
 - **Improving the management of the education system.**
5. The present evaluation is one of three concurrent studies commissioned by the MoE in 2013:
 - Analysis of the Afghanistan Education Sector & PETS/QSDS of EQUIP II, which corresponds broadly to the third component of EQUIP dealing with education service delivery;²
 - Teacher Education Analysis (TEA), which corresponds to the second component of EQUIP on teacher and principal education and training;³
 - Program Evaluation of EQUIP II with a focus on school grants, social mobilization, and SMS, which corresponds broadly to the first component of EQUIP.
6. These three evaluations will inform the planning of EQUIP III. The findings and conclusions of the Afghanistan Education Sector & PETS/QSDS made by Particip GmbH are discussed in section 6. The results and recommendations of the Teacher Education Analysis (TEA) made by I-SAPS are discussed in section 2.3.9 and section 8 below.

¹ (e.g. 2012: Education Sector by P.O. Rasmussen, and others)

² Undertaken by Particip GmbH

³ Undertaken by I-SAPS

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7. This evaluation report made by the Evaluation Team of INTEGRATION GmbH considers the implementation of EQUIP II. It aims to address the following questions:
- What worked?
 - What did not work?
 - Why?

1.2 Objectives of the Program Evaluation of EQUIP II

8. The primary objective of this evaluation is to document, evaluate and disseminate the progress, achievements and challenges of EQUIP since 2008. It should assess the progress of EQUIP II in relation to the following three Project Development Objectives (PDO):
- Promoting equitable access to basic education.
Equitable access refers to the opportunity to enroll in and complete a formal education program, regardless of gender, geographic location, and minority status/ethnicity.
 - Improving quality of education.
Quality education includes: 1) a safe learning environment; 2) teachers who are competent in subject matter and pedagogy conducive to learning; 3) adequate and relevant materials for teaching and learning; and 4) appropriate class sizes and teacher-student ratios.
 - Strengthening service delivery.
Service delivery refers to the capacity of support systems at the MoE to provide equitable quality education across Afghanistan, in terms of finance, procurement, human resources, as well as in terms of information management and use of data on policy and planning.

As well as reviewing overall progress towards meeting PDOs, this evaluation focuses on two specific areas of program implementation, namely

- The contribution of school grants in improving school facilities and learning environments;
 - The contribution of social mobilization and school shuras in ensuring school functioning, governance and accountability.
9. The specific objectives of the evaluation of EQUIP II since 2008 are:
- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the EQUIP II activities in achieving the intended outcomes;
 - Relevance refers to appropriateness of activities and approaches to the present and anticipated future needs of learners;
 - Effectiveness refers to the achievement of the intended outcomes of a given activity, and an analysis of whether the outputs produced are the most appropriate to ensure achievement of the outcomes;
 - Sustainability refers to the viability of activity outcomes in the long-term, considering financial, management, and accountability structures.
 - Identify lessons to be learned (“what worked”, “what did not” and “why”), including analysis of the sustainability of successful EQUIP II interventions. The lessons learned through this evaluation will allow the MoE, the WB, and other development partners, for example, the foreign donors financing the EQUIP program through ARTF, to prepare the follow-up EQUIP III program;
 - Provide recommendations to improve education sector policy-making and service delivery.

1.3 Methodological approach

Overview

10. This evaluation report consists of 8 chapters, including the chapter 1 *Introduction* and chapter 8 *Recommendations*. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 provide the main analysis. Chapter 2 *Analysis of EQUIP II* provides an overview of the context and operating environment for education, and it provides a brief overview of EQUIP II. Chapter 3 *Education Management Information System* analyzes the data and outlines the improvement of the data management system. Chapter 4 *Donor (ARTF) involvement in EQUIP II* analyzes relations between the World Bank, which administers the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, and the fund's other main donors. Chapter 5 *Impact* assesses the relevance, the effectiveness, and the sustainability of EQUIP II activities. Chapter 6 *Overview of main findings & conclusions of sector analysis and EQUIP II PETS/QSDS* summarizes the main findings of the third party report 'Analysis of the Afghanistan Education Sector & PETS/QSDS of EQUIP II', which consisted of three parts:
- An analytical overview of the education sector in Afghanistan;
 - A historical overview of EQUIP;
 - An assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the education system, based on statistical analysis of MoE and EQUIP II data.

Chapter 7 *Lessons Learned and Challenges* considers EQUIP II's institutional set-up and the key elements of the program, namely social mobilization and infrastructure. The *Challenges* draw attention to the issue of public sector finance in the light of inadequate domestic revenue, the decrease in the number of donors and their contributions, the transition process, and the overall management of the education system at national, provincial and district levels.⁴

11. Much of Chapter 2 addresses questions 'why' things worked or did not work. Several subsections in section 2.3 summarize 'why' under 'Main weaknesses' or 'Findings'. In sections 2.4 and 2.5, the 'why' is discussed extensively and is integrated into the general text. 'Why' questions are also addressed in the recommendations.
12. The methodology comprised literature review, analysis of statistical data, individual interviews with education stakeholders, visits to and discussions in 47 schools in nine provinces.⁵
13. The study comprises quantitative and qualitative research and process analysis. The Code of Ethics of the UK Solicitors Regulation Authority (UKSRA) and the European Society for Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR) Guidelines for Market and Social Research were observed throughout the evaluation. The quantitative methodology elaborated the available data provided by the MoE and the WB as well as by foreign donors, both bilateral and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Combining quantitative analysis with a qualitative analysis

14. It cannot be expected that statistics collected over the last decade are always correct. Therefore, the data collected at national level were crosschecked during the field trip.
15. Some sections of this evaluation rely to a large extent on qualitative assessment. Open but structured interviews were carried out with the EQUIP administration at national level in selected departments, and at provincial and district levels in selected schools in different

⁴ During the inception phase in Kabul (February 21 to March 07, 2014), interviews were carried out with the main stakeholders, and the main steps of the evaluation process were agreed upon with the evaluation department of the MoE.

⁵ The nine provinces are: Nangarhar, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Jowzjan, Badakhshan, Bamyan, Parwan, and Kabul Province.

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regions.⁶ In order to assess sustainability, special attention was given to the process of community social mobilization. The quality of the infrastructure was assessed according to the required technical standards.

Selecting schools

16. The main criteria for selecting the schools were: schools with very active and semi-active school *shuras* as well as *shuras* that have stopped functioning. Selected schools were located in provincial capitals and districts.⁷ Model schools were included, but the terms of reference did not specify that they should be evaluated as a separate group.
17. The evaluation team asked EQUIP's Social Mobilizing Unit (SMU) to propose at least six schools per provincial capital, considering the status of the SMS according to the above-mentioned criteria. From the six schools, approximately three were chosen in each provincial city by the evaluation team.
18. It was possible to visit only one district near the provincial capital. Again, school lists for these districts were provided by EQUIP. The team took blind samples from these lists. In Kabul province, however, three districts were selected.
19. The type of school (primary, secondary, high), gender (female, male/ mixed), and the number of students were taken into account (small schools, large schools) when making the selection.
20. As the original selection of schools did not cover enough school construction projects, the evaluation team's civil engineer selected some newly constructed schools so that the quality of construction work could be assessed on-site.

Limitations of the selection

21. The field trips (and the inception phase) took place during the presidential election. The security situation around this event, and time constraints, limited the sample. In Kandahar province, it was possible to visit only the provincial capital – visits to districts were not possible.⁸ The security situation had to be reviewed each day. In some instances, schools selected for visits had to be changed at short notice.⁹ In these cases, the team selected schools from the original list on-the-spot to replace the originally chosen schools.¹⁰ The schools were informed shortly before the visit. To complement the team's selection, one school proposed by the Provincial Education Department of Kandahar, and a model school proposed by SMU/EQUIP were also visited.¹¹
22. Evaluation work had to be stopped from 10 to 18 June due to the second round of the presidential election. By that time two thirds of the field trips had already been undertaken. By

⁶ The latter covered the school management (director and others), the SMS, and as teachers. See Annex 2: Selected schools in nine provinces

⁷ They were selected from lists (provided by EQUIP) of schools in nine provinces: Nangarhar, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Jowzjan, Badakhshan, Bamyan, Parwan, and Kabul Province. The nine provinces were proposed by the evaluation team to ensure coverage of the different regions in North, South-, East-, West- and Central-Afghanistan.

⁸ However, district social mobilizers did provide information about their districts.

⁹ For example, there was a military operation in Surkhod district (Nangarhar province), and schools were closed for security reasons in Kandahar. In Surkhod district, the team was able to visit another school which was not affected by military operations. In Kandahar, a member of the SMS of a closed school was interviewed, and two newly selected schools and one construction site were visited. A small number of schools in Badakhshan and Parwan also had to be replaced for security reasons.

¹⁰ See Annex 7: Social Mobilization, which lists the schools that were actually visited.

¹¹ The PED thought that the team should have consulted him too for selecting the schools. He was not familiar with the evaluation procedures.

taking the necessary precautions, the evaluation team was able to visit even those provinces where security was precarious.¹²

23. Afghan society is diverse, and schools differ. School *shuras* are usually representative of the immediate social environment. Therefore, the selected sample of schools may not be fully representative of the entire country, but it does nevertheless extend the present level of knowledge about technical standards, and the sustainability of school *shuras*. Despite the above mentioned constraints on the field trip, on-the-spot qualitative assessment and participative observation provide a much deeper view of EQUIP II than is possible with telephone interviews carried out from Kabul.

Data collection

24. The team collected enrolment data of students at provincial and district levels by type of school and gender of students. These data were compared with national data from EMIS and were then analyzed by the evaluation team's statistical expert.

Interviews

25. Interviews were carried out in selected EQUIP departments to assess their capacities and deficiencies so that any shortcomings can be addressed with the implementation of EQUIP III. Interviews were carried out with foreign donors supporting EQUIP. Some have carried out their own evaluations in the past, albeit with limited scope. Interview guidelines, based on the guidelines in the ToR, were developed for interviewing all stakeholders.¹³
26. The Team Leader provided preliminary information on the progress of the field trip during the WB Implementation Supervision Mission (ISM) in Dubai on 06 June 2014.

1.4 The Evaluation Team

27. The team consisted of:
Dr. Hannelore BÖRGEL (Mrs.), Team Leader - Development Economist, Development Advisor
Mr. Geoffrey HOWSE, Deputy Team Leader - Education Economist, Data Analyst
Mr. Aref NATEQI, International Key Expert - Civil Engineer
Mr. Mohammad Y. JABARKHAIL, International Key Expert - Social Scientist
28. The team is contracted by INTEGRATION GmbH, Frankfurt/Germany.

¹² In these provinces, the SMS and other stakeholders greatly appreciated the visits and they provided valuable feedback about the context and operating environment. This feedback is reviewed in section 2.1 *Context and operating environment for education*.

¹³ See Chapter on Process evaluation of overall progress in the implementation of project components and 1. Analysis of the contribution of schools grants in improving school facilities and learning environments as well as 2. Analysis of contribution of social mobilization and school shuras in ensuring school functioning, governance and accountability

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1.5 Timetable of the field trip

29. The field trip covering nine provinces took place from May 19 to June 26, 2014¹⁴. These are listed in Table 2, below.

Date	Province
May 19 – 21	Nangarhar
May 22 – 25	Kandahar
May 26 – 28	Jowzjan, Balkh
May 29 – June 1	Herat
June 1 – 2	Kabul City
June 3 – 10	Badakhshan
June 10-18	Kabul City ¹⁵
June 20 – June 21	Kabul Province
June 19	Parwan
June 22-26	Bamyan

Table 2: Field trips

¹⁴ For detailed time schedule, see Annex 2 (Field trips could not be undertaken due to presidential election period.)

¹⁵ Field trips were not possible during this period due to the security situation around the presidential election.

2. ANALYSIS OF EQUIP II

2.1 Context and operating environment

Before EQUIP

30. Throughout the 1990s, until 2001-2002, Afghanistan's education sector barely functioned. Civil war, internal displacement and forced migration destroyed the sector. Only 900,000 children, nearly all boys, attended school in Afghanistan at the beginning of the millennium.¹⁶ No educational standards existed, very few books were available, and there were few teachers. Afghanistan needed a well-functioning education system to promote a civil society in which all communities can live in peace and prosperity.

Since the beginning of EQUIP II

31. The education sector has changed significantly since 2002. By the time EQUIP II commenced in 2008, school enrolment had increased to 5,343,310 and by 2013 there were 8,204,328 students in schools.¹⁷ Thus the number of children in school increased by 911% between 2001-2002 and 2013. Nevertheless illiteracy remains very high.¹⁸ Despite significant progress, due to various factors (e.g. security, family circumstances), only 55% of boys and girls enroll in primary education and 32% in secondary education.¹⁹ Significant effort is still required to convince parents, elders and *mullahs* in some communities of the importance of completing education.

	Start of millennium	2008 (end of EQUIP I)	2013 (EQUIP II)	% increase from 2008 to 2013
Girls enrolled in school		1,948,741	3,225,898	66%
Boys enrolled in school		3,394,569	4,978,430	47%
Total enrolled in school	900,000	5,343,310	8,204,328	54%
Ratio male to female enrolments		1.74	1.54	

Table 3: Summary of enrolment trends since the start of the millennium²⁰

Education differs from district to district

32. The operating environment for education differs from province to province and from district to district. Sometimes progressive SMS operate alongside highly conservative SMS in the same district. In some districts, some SMS closed their schools temporarily or permanently due to localized political pressure and concerns over security, while successful schools continue to operate only few kilometers away.²¹

The role of SMS

33. Members of SMSs are at risk in provinces and districts where the rule of law is weak. The influence of elders and *mullahs*, and the Friday sermon in the mosque in favor of education are important factors in promoting education in the community.

¹⁶ See Rasmussen, P.E., among others: Education Joint Sector Review 1391/ 2012, Main Report, p. 2

¹⁷ Figures provided by EMIS June 2014.

¹⁸ Literacy rate is 28.1 %, www.cia.gov: 12. Oct.2014

¹⁹ Figures BMZ: Neue entwicklungspolitische Strategie für die Zusammenarbeit mit Afghanistan im Zeitraum 2014 -2017, März 2014, p. 32

²⁰ Source: based on EMIS, June 2014

²¹ This can be seen in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces.

Functioning communities are the foundation of education.

34. Community mobilizers play an important role within the education process at community, district, and provincial levels. Together with the community, they establish the foundation for the reinforcement of education in Afghanistan.

The role of social mobilizers

35. Social mobilizers play a vital role in convincing communities to play an active part in promoting and sustaining education. However, much more needs to be done to develop the capacity of social mobilizers and to support them in their work. EQUIP considers 13 of the 34 provinces as 'insecure', making the operating environment in these provinces problematic. In some provinces, staff of the Provincial Education Department (PED) interfere in the work of EQUIP II staff, through decisions and other forms of influence that undermine the independence of local EQUIP II decision-making.

The role of PED

36. There are, however, a number of provinces where there is good cooperation between EQUIP and PED. The director of the PED is appointed by the MoE, but proposed by the governor or the president. The deputy director is usually from the province, and qualified, but may lack influence. In some provinces with a problematic PED power structure, the deputy director played an important part in enabling EQUIP II to make incremental progress.

EQUIP activities and social structure

37. Interviewee feedback indicates that provinces with a high number of returnees from refugee camps in neighboring countries are considered to be more open to EQUIP activities and education in general. Nangarhar province, with a high percentage of returned refugees is considered very active from an educational perspective. On the other hand, it is proving difficult to mobilize the population in Kandahar. Interviewee feedback suggests that former refugees tend to be more self-organizing and they have experience being mobilized. They understand the benefits of education and the need to promote and develop education.

2.2 Brief overview of EQUIP II (2008 -2014)

Concept, organizational structure and finance

38. EQUIP commenced in 2004 and is one of the National Priority Programs of the MoE and part of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP). The program is nationally executed with the support of the World Bank, which is the main contributor of funds. A number of foreign donors support the program through the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), which is managed by the World Bank.²²
39. Applying the lessons learned from Phase I (2004 -2008), EQUIP's Phase II (2008 -2012, prolonged to 2015) aims to increase equitable access to quality basic education, through school grants and teacher training, and by strengthening institutional capacity with support from communities and the private sector. Increasing girls' access to quality basic education is a special priority.
40. The EQUIP Program focuses on supporting communities, and society in general, in providing balanced and equitable education for all eligible children. This is being done through the establishment of SMS with the support of the EQUIP's Social Mobilization Unit (SMU) EQUIP covers all 34 provinces, including Kabul city.

²² Source of this brief description is based on an Equip brochure.

41. EQUIP's objectives (equitable access to basic education, better quality of education, and strengthened service delivery) are to be achieved through.²³

- The focus on schools and communities to strengthen their capacity to better manage teaching and learning activities;
- Investment in human resources such as teachers, principals and education administration personnel, and physical facilities;
- Institutional development of schools, the District Education Directorate (DED), the Provincial Education Directorates (PED), and the MoE.

42. EQUIP is implemented primarily through three main components:

(1) School Grants

43. School grants support:

- The improvement of teaching and learning by facilitating the creation of an enabling school environment;
- The improvement of basic school facilities at existing government-registered primary, middle, and high schools with teachers on the payroll.

44. This component is divided into three sub-components:

- School Grants for Quality Enhancement;
- School Grants for Infrastructure Development;
- Social Awareness and Mobilization.

(2) Teacher and Principal Training and Education

45. The objective of this component is to create sustainable systems that will increase the level of professional knowledge and skills of educators throughout Afghanistan. Over time, training efforts will focus more on the creation and development of local professional networks, which will allow educators to share ideas, problems, and solutions with their peers.

46. This component is divided into three sub-components:

- District Teacher Training and Professional Development;
- Principal Training;
- Increasing the Supply of Female Teachers.

(3) Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

47. The objective of this component is to:

- Build on and support the existing EQUIP implementation structure in the MoE;
- Establish and implement a practical monitoring and evaluation system for the program so that lessons can be drawn in a timely fashion to facilitate project improvement, and policymaking.

48. This component is divided into three sub-components:

- Project Management and Coordination;
- Monitoring;
- Evaluation.

²³ The objectives are covered in more detail in section 1.2.

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49. EQUIP as an institution is organized at national, provincial, and district levels. The EQUIP organizational structure contains the following units²⁴:

- Equip Coordination Unit (CU);
- Social Mobilization Unit (SMU);
- Gender Unit (GU);
- Environmental and Social Safeguard Unit (ESS);
- Learning Assessment Unit (LAU);
- Communication Unit (CU);
- Public Awareness Unit (PAU);
- School Quality Grant Audit Team.

50. The Infrastructure Services Department (ISD) and Teacher Educational General Directorate (TED) are not EQUIP units. They are existing MoE structures that responsible for implementing parts of EQUIP. The Education Management Information System (EMIS) is also not an EQUIP unit.

51. Three of the above-mentioned EQUIP units became active in 2012 and 2013.²⁵

52. As of May 2014, EQUIP has 85 staff members at national level, mainly located in Kabul:

Director	1	Officers	19
Deputy Director	1	Script Writer	1
International Advisor	1	Translators	2
National Advisor	1	SA Liaisons	3
Executive Assistant	1	Graphic Designer	1
Coordinators	9	Test Administrators	13
Managers (FYED)	1	Assistants	8
Senior Specialist	1	Provincial Staff (FYEI)	7
Specialists	2	Auxiliary Staff	8
Senior Officers	5	TOTAL	85

53. There are 860 EQUIP staff at the provincial level, of whom 710 are male and 150 female.²⁶ This number includes EQUIP Officers, Social Mobilizer Supervisors, and District Social Mobilizers who account for 80% of the total. Some of the positions are vacant or are in the process of being refilled. The role and work of District Social Mobilizers is discussed below in Section 2.3.2 'Social Mobilization Unit' and Section 2.4 'Social Mobilization'.

54. There are currently 695 district social mobilizers. Prior to August 2012, there were just 68 social mobilizers throughout the country – two per province. This meant that in some provinces one social mobilizer was responsible for 700 schools. Now one social mobilizer is responsible for approximately 10 to 20 schools. However, there are significant differences in the experience and qualifications of social mobilizers. The position of social mobilizer at province and district levels is especially subject to external influences.²⁷

55. EQUIP provincial offices are located in the Provincial Education Departments. Usually the office comprises one EQUIP officer, one financial officer, two site engineers, and one supervisor.

²⁴ See Annex: EQUIP UNIT Organizational Structure

²⁵ LAU was established in January 2013 to monitor education development through assessment of learning achievements. The PAU was also established in 2013. The School Quality Grant Audit Team was established in July 2012 to provide indepth assessment reports to EQUIP management.

²⁶ See annex: EQUIP Provincial Staff

²⁷ See Chapter: "Social Mobilization Unit"

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56. Overall, EQUIP has more than 2,000 people on its payroll. They are all employees of the MoE, and a number of them have their offices in the MoE.
57. EQUIP is the largest national multi-donor program.
58. EQUIP have been supported with USD 517 M in total since 2004 (including USD 22 M off-budget), of which approximately USD 438 (including USD 22 M off-budget) is accounted for by EQUIP II, and approximately USD 79 M by EQUIP I. Some 51% of the total funding has been provided by the World Bank, with the remainder provided by donors through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.
59. EQUIP I (2004-2008) received USD 35 M from the World Bank.
60. EQUIP II (2008-2012) was supported with USD 210 M from the World Bank (including USD 22 M off-budget) (USD 188 M & USD 22 M); Additional financing of up to USD 250 M has been provided for the 2012-2015 program extension mainly by ARTF.²⁸

2.3 Capacity assessment of selected EQUIP departments²⁹

2.3.1 Human Resources Unit

61. The Human Resources Unit (HRU) is located in the MoE. It was established in 2009 and consists of 15 young qualified staff, often holders of foreign university degrees. The unit is supported by EQUIP, the Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), and UNESCO. The HRU is responsible for the main HR functions, including recruitment and selection of EQUIP staff, contract management, and filing management. One person in the EQUIP office is responsible for coordinating HR matters between EQUIP central staff and the HRU.

Needs and challenges

62. On-the-job training is needed, especially at the district level, and the quality of training needs to be improved. Staff recruited for EQUIP at district level are not always well qualified.³⁰
63. EQUIP makes no allowance for security and remoteness of location. Job descriptions are announced through websites. In some provinces, applicants do not meet the most basic requirements.
64. Until now there has been no TNA at province or district levels. At present, there is just a written test to assess whether applicants for social mobilizer positions are literate or not. In a report on training and development published in December 2013, TNA guidelines were developed by the Social Mobilization Capacity Building Advisor at the SMU. However, these guidelines have not so far been implemented. Up to 10 additional staff will be required to implement these guidelines. At present, just two people at the SMU are responsible for EQUIP capacity building. The HRU has proposed a training and development function, which is expected to be initiated

²⁸ See Annex: "Support by Foreign Donors"

²⁹ This section assesses the capacity of selected departments to perform their roles in EQUIP and only in relation to their required work for EQUIP II. Assessment of all work of the MoEs' HRU, for example, is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

³⁰ Qualified people are not so interested in working as social mobilizers. At USD 400 per month, remuneration is low, and this has to cover transport costs of up to USD 150. This is considered too low for working in the 13 provinces considered as insecure. A request to increase remuneration in these provinces up to USD 600 was declined by the main donor.

following approval of the procurement plan. With additional staff, the HRU could consult each department and develop and implement capacity building plans to address their needs.

65. A challenge for HRU is to anchor the issue of gender at district level. In some districts there is no experience of female teachers teaching male students. In male-dominated areas, there are insufficient qualified women to fill the quota for female teachers. The number of female teachers at provincial level needs to be increased, and a continuous program of capacity building needs to be put in place for them. The GPP shows that this challenge can be met. One-third of staff in this program is female.

2.3.2 Social Mobilization Unit

66. The Social Mobilization Unit (SMU) is located at the EQUIP administrative office site, separate from the MoE. As of May 2014, its core staff consists of 16 specialists. It is headed by a National Social Mobilization Coordinator. The other 15 staff consists of:

- 1 Regional Social Mobilization Coordinator;
- 4 Senior Social Mobilization Officers;
- 3 Regional Social Mobilization Officers;
- 4 Social Mobilization Officers;
- 1 Social Mobilization Assistant;
- 1 female Regional Social Mobilization Associate;
- 1 Social Mobilization Capacity Building Advisor (foreign).

67. The core team supports 825 provincial social mobilization staff, which includes 130 social mobilization supervisors and 695 district social mobilizers.³¹ One district social mobilizer is responsible for 10 to 20 schools and one supervisor is responsible for 100 schools. They report to the provincial EQUIP officer. The rapid increase numbers means that it has been difficult to fill all positions with suitably qualified people.

68. Required qualifications are well defined in job descriptions for each position. The National Coordinator must have a Master's degree in sociology or social sciences and at least some years of relevant professional experience, while Social Mobilization Officers must have a Bachelor's degree in humanities, sociology, social sciences, or any other field with at least three years of relevant experience in education and community mobilization. The Social Mobilization Assistant must have at least a 14th Class Degree in any field and at least three years of relevant experience in education and community mobilization.

69. The District Social Mobilizer (DSM) is considered to be the backbone of the program. Their tasks are therefore considered in more detail here. Education of grade twelve or higher is required for (DSM), although this condition may be relaxed for female candidates in especially remote or depressed districts. DSM candidates must be resident in the district in which they wish to be hired. Experience of two or more years in education and/ or social mobilization is also required.

70. The objectives of the DSM are to:³²

- Enhance parent and community participation in education, with a particular focus on expanding the education of girls;
- Improve schools through establishing, training and supporting SMS;
- Enhance quality in the development and implementation of the School Grant with increased community inputs;

³¹ See Annex "EQUIP Provincial Staff"

³² See job description MoE: EQUIP, ToR for District Social Mobilizers

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- Promote the equitable involvement of women and girls throughout the social mobilization process;
- Promote public awareness about the importance of education, and especially to increase enrolment and retention, reduce absenteeism (of students and teachers), and reduce the student dropout rate.

71. The DSM also lobbies provincial and district authorities for the provision of land, free of cost, for the construction of schools.
72. The social mobilization supervisors are stationed at the Provincial Education Directorate (PED). Their main duty is to monitor and supervise the activities of the DS M. They are intended to strengthen the role of *shuras* in improving the quality of schools, and in increasing the enrolment of children, especially of girls. Highly qualified staff is required to meet these objectives.
73. With the support of the Social Mobilization Capacity Building Advisor and with the full cooperation of the SMU core team, a Handbook for SMS was developed to promote community participation for quality education. The handbook is now being followed. “The Program Implementation Manual, Volume II: Social Mobilization” was revised in March 2014. The handbook and the manual give very clear instructions for the different social mobilization steps. Monitoring of the implementation of the social mobilization concept in the 34 provinces is divided among the core staff in Kabul. It is done mainly by mobile phone and e-mail. Senior and junior staffs visit the provinces, coordinate meetings with the PED and with SMS, monitor the school dropout rate, and check availability of materials. They then write reports based on their findings. Usually, approximately one week is foreseen for visiting each province. While senior officers cover five or more provinces, junior staff is monitoring three provinces.

Needs and challenges

74. The SMU does not currently have sufficient capacity to meet its highly ambitious objectives throughout the country. The concept developers and donors apparently underestimated the effort required to implement the guidelines in the recently developed “Handbook for School Management *Shuras*”. In remote areas, where there was no education throughout the war, it will take some time before SMSs can analyze the situation, identify problems and prioritize actions, set objectives, and prepare baseline reports,³³ even if this process is supported by experienced EQUIP staff. Follow up is very important.
75. Due to high turnover among DSM and the presence of under-qualified mobilizers, the important task of social mobilization is not as not as effective as it might be.
76. The Social Mobilization Unit (SMU) together with the HRU is responsible for testing potential staff at province and district levels. All SMU staffs receive orientation from the SMU, which also monitors their performance.
77. As EQUIP II officers function as supervisors for SMO and DSM, they need to have the relevant training in social mobilization. These trained officers can then function as a trainer of trainers for SMO and DSM at provincial level. However, there is no budget at province and district levels for the training of trainers.

³³ See Handbook, op.cit.,p.12

78. A significant achievement of the SMU is the establishment of SMS for each supported school.³⁴ The SMS consists of an elected General Body of 15 male and female members. This body formerly consisted of selected members only.
79. The General Body represents local teachers, parents, and notables. In high schools, students are part of the SMS. EQUIP considers the General Body as the owner of the process that identifies education related issues, and develops possible solutions by creating linkages and partnerships with potential stakeholders.
80. Main weaknesses in social mobilization identified during the evaluation
- The budgeted funds are not released in time for the respective activities;
 - There is a need for staff capacity development. Training of trainers has been taking place only since 2013;³⁵
 - The Social Mobilization Capacity Building Advisor's contract is limited (September 2013 to June 2014);
 - There is a lack of transparency and feedback within the unit;
 - Training of social mobilizers is limited;
 - There is no differentiation in salary levels for staff working in insecure locations;
 - There is no provision for transportation for district social mobilizers;
 - Each district mobilizer has to cover between 10 and 20 schools. This is too many, especially in districts with difficult geographical conditions;
 - 300 schools remain closed because of the security situation in various districts;
 - The security of girls is not guaranteed in some districts;
 - Mahram policy was not implemented. Under this policy, a sum of USD 50 per month was requested for fathers to accompany their daughters to school, or for respective catchment area for girls to be brought to school. The World Bank cannot finance this policy;
 - There is a lack of appropriate office space for social mobilizers;
 - Some schools lack teachers, especially female teachers, to participate in SMSs;
 - There is a shortage of text books;
 - There is a lack of monitoring tools, such as tools for collecting data;
 - SMS meetings and activities are not properly documented, although standardized SMS forms were introduced;
 - Several different monitoring formats are in use and it is unclear if these address requirements.
81. There is no social mobilization focal point at WB office in Kabul. To date, the EQUIP SMU has been visited just once or twice each year by a WB representative stationed in Pakistan.
82. Social mobilization, the core of the EQUIP program, has made progress, often under difficult circumstances. Nevertheless, it is clear that it has not received sufficient attention. Changes were introduced in 2012-2013, almost at the end of EQUIP II, but these are insufficient to meet objectives nationwide. The Social Mobilization Capacity Building Advisor, who was contracted for a limited period in September 2013, initiated the training of trainers, and developed a handbook, among other things. However, there is still no satisfactory approach for training social mobilizers at district level.

³⁴ For more details see Chapter 2.3.2

³⁵ Train the Trainers is a method focusing on training techniques and approaches rather than specific subjects or issues. Train the Trainers in this context is about building the capacity of 'master' social mobilizers to train other social mobilizers to carry out social mobilization. However Train the Trainers does not necessarily cover the subject of social mobilization itself.

83. It is difficult for donors to finance *Mahram* policy. The dropout rate is to a great extent influenced by poverty, and in some areas by security risks.³⁶ A school-feeding program in poverty-affected areas is therefore more important than financial compensation.

2.3.3 Gender Unit

Tasks and staff

84. The Social Mobilization Manual published in March 2014 provides a number of “School Mobilization Scenarios” for the participation of women in the SMS.³⁷ It takes into consideration the various traditional habits in the different communities. The scenarios include, for example, mixed SMSs where men and women sit together and where the decision-making process and executive functions are equally shared; SMSs where men and women sit separately in sub-committees but have an equal share in decision-making and executive functions. Whichever scenario is adopted, it ensures that women’s voices are heard in the decision making process. There are mechanisms in all scenarios to ensure that all SMS decisions are reviewed by female members before they are finalized. Highly qualified staffs are needed to facilitate and monitor this process.
85. The Gender Unit, was established in June 2012. It has four female core staff in the Kabul EQUIP office and 15 female staff at district level. In areas where women have not so yet been engaged, gender work is undertaken by men. The staffs in Kabul have diverse educational backgrounds.³⁸ The team considers itself a crosscutting team. It supports the SMU and conducts training. The WB has approved a management-internship. This will provide newly graduated women with the opportunity to gain work experience in six different departments.

Needs and challenges

86. While the unit feels accepted by the EQUIP team, it is not always included in discussions with other units, and a lack of coordination within EQUIP sometimes leads to duplication. The small number of women in high positions indicates that there is a need for leadership training for women. A small research team within EQUIP would be helpful in supporting the gender unit with its crosscutting work. Its main tasks to date are planning for work in the provinces, monitoring provincial staff (SMU) and activities, and translating guidelines and reports.
87. Main weaknesses identified during the evaluation phase
- As a crosscutting unit, the gender unit should be part of all unit meetings, but it is not;
 - There are just four female staff at national level;
 - Female teachers have limited influence in the SMSs;
 - The MoE takes three to four months to approve EQUIP II activities and therefore the release of funds and training cannot take place as planned, or it does not take place at all;
 - Female staffs are not considered in trainings outside Afghanistan.

³⁶ See Chapter 2.3.2: Social Mobilization

³⁷ EQUIP: Program Implementation Manual: Social Mobilization, Vol. II, March 2014, and Chapter 2.6, p. 32pp.

³⁸ One member of staff has studied English Literature and has an MA in international relations, practical experience in a UNDP-MoE program, and two years of experience of social mobilization. Another has a BA in science from Kabul University and has 38 years of work experience with the MoE, administering schools and as an advisor to the Minister. She joined EQUIP following one term as a Member of Parliament. Another member staff joined EQUIP upon completing university one year ago. She previously worked as journalist.

2.3.4 Infrastructure Service Department

Tasks and Staff

88. The ISD employs 101 engineers for EQUIP, 45 to 48 engineers for DANIDA-supported projects, and six engineers for UNICEF-supported projects. Presently 71 of the EQUIP engineers work in the provinces (at least two per province), and 30 work at central level. In addition, there is one finance officer, one IT specialist, one reporting officer, and one data officer. The ISD offices are situated in a building away from the MoE and EQUIP main offices.
89. The 71 engineers at province level earn USD 1,000 per month. 80% of EQUIP engineers are government staff and are paid about USD 700 per month with an additional allowance of USD 200 per month. However government salaries were recently reduced to USD 600. The ISD is now working to increase the additional allowance to compensate for the government reduction.
90. The ISD had been preparing cost estimates on an ad-hoc basis until 2014 when the World Bank raised objections and assisted them in setting up a system. A broad system was established by August 2014, which is now being used for cost estimation. ISD has typical building designs for various school sizes using different construction materials.
91. All documents for CC schools are sent to the EQUIP SMU for approval, after which the documents are forwarded to the SMS, with whom the contract is signed. EQUIP is responsible for payments and its engineers working in the provinces are responsible for supervision and ensuring construction quality. These engineers are supervised by the ISD who is responsible for monitoring and documenting the construction of CC schools.

Procedures

92. A World Bank contracted international company, IRD, has been undertaking independent monitoring since 2011.³⁹ IRD informs the ISD of any issues it identifies. These issues are resolved through the contractor for NCB contracts and through the SMS for the CC contracts. The Danish NGO, Danish Assistance to Afghan Rehabilitation and Technical Training (DAARTT) is contracted to enhance on site monitoring capacity for infrastructure projects.
93. The international NGO Article 25 was contracted to enhance the ISD's institutional capacity, but could not continue working beyond the inception report as it did not find the environment in MoE, conducive.
94. Lack of maintenance funds is a great concern. Poorly constructed buildings degenerate faster in absence of maintenance.
95. The community monitoring was done through EQUIP engineers until ISD was given the responsibility for supervision and the EQUIP engineers were made to report to ISD. The World Bank appointed IRD's as a third party to monitor the projects on its behalf. With IRD's intervention the quality of construction improved somewhat. However, the MoE/ EQUIP do not provide IRD with details of the cost structure of civil works and IRD is therefore unable to assess if funds have been misused.

³⁹ International Relief and Development (IRD) is a not-for-profit organization headquartered in Washington D.C. In Afghanistan it performs the function of Supervisory Agent on behalf of the World Bank and other donors (ARTF). It supervises civil works and was appointed in 2011 to reduce the cost and improve the quality of EQUIP-funded infrastructure. A team of IRD engineers collects data and carries out site inspections of ongoing and completed civil works. Site engineers report to the team every week via smart phones. IRD has been training communities to monitor community projects. This includes the use of smart phones to send photographs of the construction site to IRD. IRD considers this new type of monitoring as essential, especially in remote areas. All photographs and reports collected by IRD are shared with the ISD.

Capacity building

96. Communities contribute 10% to the cost of CC schools, and they are responsible for project implementation. The cost of CC schools is limited to USD 100,000. The construction of schools costing more than USD 100,000 is contracted through National Competitive Bidding (NCB). NCB was applied to 305 schools under EQUIP I and II, and 1,357 were implemented as CC projects. In total, 1,662 schools have been completed or are under construction. Additional funding 2013-2014 provides for the construction of an additional 1,737 schools (121 CC projects and 1,616 to be contracted through NCB). Design and implementation are currently being carried out under significant pressure and procurement is behind schedule.
97. Cost increases are a major problem for infrastructure projects. In some cases, implementation of contracts that were signed with communities between 2006 and 2008 was significantly delayed. Costs increased in the meantime. A standard cost allocation of USD 8,000 per classroom applies throughout the country.
98. Transportation costs are higher in mountainous and other remote areas. Climatic conditions in some locations reduce the length of the construction season, which in turn contributes to the prolongation of construction time and increases costs. Planning does not take these factors into account.
99. Excessive bureaucracy meant that the ISD was able carry out only 20% of the planned projects in 2013 (i.e. 333 out of 1,616 planned projects).⁴⁰ Some contracts were returned to the ISD for re-estimation, as costs had increased in the meantime. Between 30 and 35 signatures are needed for the payment of contractors. In May 2014, the ISD proposed to the World Bank to reduce the number of signature to six.
100. The ISD requested an additional USD 5.8 million to cover items such sanitary facilities, enclosing walls, etc., which were not covered by EQUIP I and EQUIP II, but are now part of the school standards. This request was declined.
Only two or three vehicles are available in each province to monitor approximately 100 infrastructure projects. This is not sufficient, and ISD staffs sometimes have to ask the community for transport, or they ask the community to provide photographs of the construction site. Sometimes ISD staffs have to rely on construction companies for transportation to project sites.
101. Payment for NCB projects is released following an on-site inspection of the works by ISD staff. However, this procedure was introduced only in 2013 following publicity around payment for works that had not been completed.
102. Provincial engineers, assisted by a special team, monitor CC projects. The provincial engineer and the social mobilizer train *Shuras* on technical matters so they can assess the progress of construction. However, in practice, only the ISD's technical staffs are adequately qualified to monitor construction.
103. Interview feedback suggests that the procurement department lacks qualified technical staff, which limits its capacity to assess construction companies. For CC projects, SMU is responsible for selecting the contractors.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See Chapter 3.3.5

⁴¹ For more detailed SMU responsibilities regarding CC projects, see also chapter 2.3.7

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104. For many years, the lowest bid was automatically selected, as required by procurement law. However, the work was often of a low quality. This has now changed, and it is possible to select the most qualified company, rather than simply the cheapest.
105. The selection of sites for schools is often problematic. It was only recently that the ownership of the site had to be clarified before starting construction. The ISD's technical staffs assess the selected site. However, PEDs do not always comply with the technical assessment, as the site selection is sometimes influenced by parliamentarians and other high profile figures in the district.⁴²

Findings

106. EQUIP has consistently underestimated the difficult operating environment for infrastructure projects in Afghanistan, a country in transition. Even under normal conditions, the construction sector is vulnerable to corruption. Independent monitoring by IRD started only in 2011, and on-site assessment by the ISD prior to payment started only in 2013. Even with these systems in place, it can still be difficult to resist political pressure in some localities, for example when it comes to selecting construction sites.
107. Main weaknesses
- Budgeted funds are not released on time, and this delays the construction process, and the completion of works (this is explained further in section 2.3.5 Procurement Department and section 2.3.10 Finance Unit);
 - The procurement process is too complicated. Too many signatures are required, there is poor coordination between departments, and there are doubts about the technical capacity of the procurement department;
 - Site selection is not always based on need, and may be subject to political interference;
 - There are concerns about the capacity of communities to manage the construction of CC projects;
 - There is insufficient transport for site inspections;
 - The construction sector is vulnerable to corruption.

2.3.5 Procurement Department

Tasks and staff

108. The procurement department is located in the MoE. It has 216 civil servants and 44 contracted donor-paid staff. Procurement is centralized. EQUIP is the biggest project for the department. The department considers that it has sufficient staff.

Procedures

109. On average the department needs three months for procurement at national level, with type of procurement (e.g. supply or services), determining the actual time needed. However, it can take up to seven for eight months. Consulting services, and international bidding usually require the most time, while services such as advertisement, evaluation, and administration normally require approximately three months.
110. 70 signatures are required from the first request to the final delivery, for example, to purchase a computer. If the requested good costs more than AFS 5,000 (approximately USD 100 as of mid-May 2014), three persons from procurement department are sent to obtain different quotes. Usually the lowest quote is selected. A purchase order is prepared, and then 10 signatures are

⁴² For example, in Zareh district in Balkh province, a 10-classrooms school was constructed for just 60 students, while other areas with more students have no school. See Annex A 8: Infrastructure

collected.⁴³ The item is then available from stock, but the department that originally requested the purchase of the item has to submit a request to get it out of stock. This whole procedure can take months. Some items require up to 102 signatures.

Findings

111. The procurement process is highly inefficient. It is governed by an antiquated and highly bureaucratic system that involves too many people and requires numerous signatures. Furthermore, the procurement department is audited several times each year, and the preparation of special documents for these audits interrupts other work.
112. The structure and make-up of the civil service lie at the heart of the problem. Acceleration of EQUIP's procurement activity in the short-term would require the establishment of a procurement team outside the civil service, which means establishing a parallel structure.

2.3.6 Communication Unit and Public Awareness Unit

Tasks and staff

113. The Communication Unit and the newly established Public Awareness Unit are located in EQUIP's main office. The Communication Unit has six positions: one senior communication specialist, one public education officer, one reporting officer, two translators, and one graphic designer. Two of these positions, concerning English translation and reporting, have been vacant for months. They were advertised twice, but there were no applications. The Public Awareness Unit has four staff, including one female member of staff. These units are tasked with communicating with Afghan society, and organizing Public Awareness Events (PAE) to raise awareness about education strategies amongst community leaders, religious scholars and education sector workers, and to motivate their active participation. A newsletter is produced per month. It reports on EQUIP's activities and highlights education success stories, which are often gender-related.⁴⁴

Procedures

114. The staffs of these units do not undertake field trips, but rely for information on reports sent from the field via the SMU. However, there is limited experience of report writing in the field and it is difficult to take photographs.
115. PAE covers all provinces, and some have involved more than 100 participants, including public officials, religious leaders, parents, and community leaders. There is a budget allocation for each province. The theme for 2014 is student dropout. The units are also addressing the eradication of violence against school students and their families. The staff of the two units in contact with Afghan media and they participate in radio broadcasts.

Findings

116. The main problem faced by the two units is that they do not have sufficient staff to carry out their responsibilities nationwide. There should be a psychological support mechanism to accompany communication and public awareness. The PAU needs a second female professional member of staff - two female members of staff could travel together to the provinces. Although there are budget allocations for each province, the release of funds is slow - currently the two units been awaiting funds for more than six months.
117. The newsletter is not systematically distributed. It is currently distributed through SMU but it is not known if reaches the intended audiences.

⁴³ E.g. the head of the goods department; the director of procurement; the director of finance etc.

⁴⁴ See, for example, the September-October 2013 issue of the EQUIP newsletter (the 11th issue).

118. There has so far been no staff trainings for the central tasks.

2.3.7 Environmental and Social Safeguard Unit

Tasks and staff

119. The EQUIP Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Unit, was established in 2011. It is supported by the World Bank's ESS team. It carries out environmental and social safeguard activities in close cooperation with the social mobilization team in the field and with the ISD team. The ESS Unit presently has only one member of staff, the ESS coordinator. He is involved in 123 ongoing projects together with the SMU and the ISD. He studied agriculture in Afghanistan and project management in the Netherlands. Before starting ESS activities, he was a member of the SMU team.

Procedures

120. The ESS Unit started by analyzing World Bank Aide Memoires, which are important for EQUIP. Fourteen ISD engineers are working on environmental and social safeguard-related issues. They ensure that appropriate measures are taken into consideration during the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure projects. ESS guidelines and monitoring checklists have to be used in CC projects by social mobilizers, EQUIP officers, and field engineers. Guidelines for the ESS Unit's crosscutting work are currently being developed. Committees have been established for 123 ongoing projects, in which the unit is involved together with the ISD and the SMU. However, ESS cross-cutting issues are not so far integrated in all EQUIP II components.

121. Land acquisition for school construction receives more attention than it did in the past. Issues have arisen around ownership and consent.

122. Now, three people have to verify that the donor is willingly giving land for the school. The documents are prepared by SMU Social Mobilizers at district and province levels. They are verified by the district education department, and then by the PED, which accepts the land donation. The documents are then forwarded with a cover letter to the MoE.

123. Clauses for environment and social mitigation measures are included in the bidding documents of the MoEs' Procurement Department.

Findings

124. For years, the water and sanitation aspects of school design were inadequate, and construction materials were often of low quality. The ESS Unit has improved this in cooperation with the ISD.

125. There is no training budget. Training planned for provincial staff could not be carried out because of lack of funds. Training did take place in Nangarhar, but these were one-day sessions, rather than the envisaged four-day sessions.

2.3.8 Learning Assessment Unit

Tasks and staff⁴⁵

126. The Learning Assessment Unit (LAU) was established by the MoE in January 2013. It is envisaged that the unit will eventually develop into a national education assessment agency. The overall objective of the LAU is to establish valid, reliable and continuously updated data on the quality of learning, and the education system as a whole, by assessing learning outcomes of

⁴⁵ This section does not evaluate the work of the LAU, as this is beyond the scope of the evaluation. Rather, it highlights some of the challenges faced by the unit.

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Afghan children. The unit comprises a staff of 18, including three female members of staff. It is headed by a National Coordinator. Two members of the unit work as research officers, and 13 as test-administrators. One administration/ finance officer and one technician support the unit. The LAU is well-organized, with highly qualified and motivated staff. Most of the staff work in container offices five kilometers away from the EQUIP office

Procedures

127. Quality-related results are the most important indicators for measuring the impact of EQUIP. The LAU commenced the first national sample-based assessment of learning achievements of children in Grade 6 in 2013, followed by Grade 3 in 2014.
128. The LAU has been positioned to function as the national assessment center to implement assessment activities with technical support and advice from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The assessment project has been named “Monitoring Education Development” (MED) in Afghanistan.”

Findings

129. Staff are taking part in rotational training to build their capacities. Since May 2013 there have been five training sessions at the ACER offices in New Delhi and Dubai. The rules require that attending staff purchase tickets in advance.
130. The unit has no access to the operational budget. The procedure between the MoF and the MoE for releasing funds is very slow.
131. Staff are angered by an expected salary reduction.⁴⁶

2.3.9 Teacher Education General Directorate

Tasks and staff

132. Although The Teacher Education General Directorate (TED)⁴⁷ is not a department of EQUIP⁴⁸, it is responsible for setting up infrastructure for pre- and in-service teacher education, and for planning, delivering, and monitoring teacher education nationwide. The TED’s key EQUIP II elements are:
 - District Teacher Training Teams help the TED to develop and to implement the training and professional development of all government teachers.
 - Gender mainstreaming helps to increase female participation in the public education sector by increasing female staffing and female enrolment levels.
 - Regional allowances are provided to TTC staff because they are located in unsafe or difficult-to-access areas. The allowance is distributed as a bonus in addition to their salary.
133. The TED has made impressive progress under the present head of the directorate.

Procedures and Findings

134. In 2004, 130,000 teachers, predominantly male, worked in the education system. 90,000 teachers have graduated from TTCs during the course of EQUIP II, of whom 42% are women.

⁴⁶ The average gross salary of the unit of USD 800 (USD 740 after tax) would be reduced to USD 500. It will not be possible to attract qualified staff with such a low salary. The issue is currently under discussion with the HR department. The World Bank is reducing its support to EQUIP salaries from USD 3 million to USD 2.5 million per annum. The discussion over salary reductions has so far made no distinction between highly qualified and less qualified staff.

⁴⁷ The TED is covered by another evaluation.

⁴⁸ This section therefore focuses only on some of the achievements and challenges of the TED.

135. In 2001-2002, there were just four operational TTCs, all in Kabul, with 450 male students. As of May 2014, there are 44 operational TTCs in 34 provinces, with branches in the districts.
136. As of May 2014, of the 179,632 teachers presently engaged in general teaching, 31% are female. 52% have a college education.
137. The following analysis is based on a third party review undertaken by another contractor, of the pre- and in-service teacher training programs of the Teacher Education General Directorate (TED).⁴⁹

The pre-service program

138. The Diploma in Teacher Education (DTE) is a well-designed program offered uniformly at all TTCs. It compares favorably with similar pre-service programs in India and Pakistan. The DTE allocates more time to practicum; it addresses gaps in the subject knowledge of prospective teachers; and it includes an action research component to build capacity for reflective engagement with teaching practice.
139. The subject knowledge courses cover all school subjects and all grade levels. The DTE has fewer pedagogical courses than similar programs in India and Pakistan but this reflects the current need in Afghanistan for emphasis on subject knowledge.
140. The DTE explicitly covers nearly 78% of the competencies in Afghanistan's Teacher Competency Framework (TCF), with others covered although not explicitly identified in course materials. All relevant teacher competencies should be explicitly listed as DTE outcomes. The TCF itself should be reviewed, as it was developed more than ten years ago. It should then be periodically reviewed to address changing needs. The TED produces many publications to support the implementation of the DTE. These are generally of a high quality, but some include translation and other errors, suggesting that quality assurance needs to be improved. Quality assurance should also cover the development and assessment of competencies, the extent to which all competencies are covered (and in what depth), and the extent to which DTE is leading to lasting proficiency in competency areas.
141. The majority of TTC faculties have a bachelor level academic qualification but no professional qualification and there are few opportunities for in-service professional development. Minimum quality standards should be introduced for education programs, faculty competency, and faculty standards for all teacher education institutions. Many TTCs lack basic infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, IT and internet, printing, and photocopying facilities.
142. There is a significant mismatch between the number of teachers being trained and the number of teaching jobs on offer. For example, female enrolment at TTCs has increased steadily in recent years. However, not all female TTC graduates become teachers and the percentage of Girls Scholarship Program (GSP) graduates becoming teachers decreased from 53% to 31% between 2012 and 2013, primarily due to lack of teaching positions. It is important that the work of the pilot placement office been established at one TTC is reviewed to inform the prompt establishment of placement offices at other TTCs. The imbalance between teacher supply and demand could be mitigated by developing a teacher projection model.

In-service education for teachers (INSET) programs

143. In the absence of a proper professional development infrastructure (PDI) in Afghanistan, the DT3 modality has been used to quickly reach a large number of teachers and principals. This

⁴⁹ Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS) (11 May 2015) *Report on Third Party Review of the Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training Programs (NPITT, DT3, TTCs) of the Teacher Education General Directorate (TED)*.

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involves contracting out professional development. The programs consist of a modular, competency-based, national unified teacher-training curriculum for all school levels.

144. All in-service education for teachers (INSET) and school management training (SMT) is informed by relevant competency frameworks. Feedback from teachers indicates that INSET has helped to improve instruction, classroom management, and assessment practices. There are comprehensive materials, in Dari and Pashto, for trainers and participants for each INSET and SMT package. Teachers indicate that INSET supplementary materials are useful and easy to understand.
145. There appears to be some tension between trainers and the PED staff that carry out monitoring, as the former consider that PED monitors are not sufficiently sensitized to the content and focus of INSET training. This suggests that there is a need to raise awareness amongst PED monitors about INSET training. The recording of monitoring data is paper-based making it difficult to analyze. The Teacher Education Management Information System (TEMIS) needs to be enhanced to gather information on all trainers and teachers. Among other things this would help to keep track of which teachers that have been trained, and on which modules, which is currently problematic.
146. While INSET packages can be offered repeatedly, it is not possible to repeat individual courses. This would be useful, for example, for refresher training or for teachers who have missed out on some training.

Educational Leadership and Management

147. Ninety six percent (96%) of principals consider that SMT has helped them to improve school management. SMT packages have been developed on the basis of needs assessment in select provinces and packages are continuously updated on the basis of emerging needs. Training has evolved from addressing basic administrative issues to more complex issues, such as teacher performance appraisal, parent communication, and student involvement.
148. Stakeholder feedback has emphasized the need for more coverage and regular updating of specific subject matter, and linking pedagogy with the specific subject matter being taught. INSET, especially INSET IV, has been responsive to these needs.
149. Principal Learning Circles (PLC) have been formed to provide continuous support and learning for principals. Kabul PLC members, for example, consider that the PLC mechanism is effective in helping them to address management and pedagogical issues at their schools. Nevertheless, there are issues that need to be resolved: PLC participants are expected to cover their own participation costs, which undermines sustainability; PLC meetings are held at irregular intervals, they lack purpose and structure, and minutes are not systematically produced and circulated; leadership of PLCs tends to be monopolized by the most senior participants; and logistical arrangements are particularly problematic for female PLC members.

Organizational Planning and Management

150. The TED envisages a PDI at the national and province levels. At province level, the PDI will require effective coordination between the suppliers of professional development services for teachers (TTCs and TDCs) and users (PEDs, DEDs, and schools).
151. The institutional structures for planning and managing teacher education are still evolving, as are the relationships between various key organizations involved in the training of teachers. TTCs have good relations with the TED, but less so with provincial and district education departments. In particular: PEDs are slow to release budgets to TTCs, and the latter are not consulted during the annual provincial planning and budgeting processes.

152. PEDs do not always inform TTCs of about available funding and in some cases have used TTC funding for other purposes; PEDs insist on participation in TTC purchasing committees dealing with gender and general grants; all TTC procurement is covered by a single item in annual province budgets without reference to actual TTC plans; in the context of the annual planning process, there is no coordination between the PEDs and the TED, or between the PEDs and the TTCs.
153. The TED needs to further consolidate its financial, administrative and monitoring systems to support teacher development programs at the pre- and in-service levels. The TED is a sub-department within the MOE, and needs better coordination with other sub-departments including planning, HR, finance and procurement. Also, the MoE needs to better coordinate with other ministries, such as the Ministry of Finance (MOF) (e.g. to ensure timely release of payments to TED implementing partners, consultants, and staff), and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), as university graduates play an important role as TTC faculty members and other staff at the TED, and the MOHE's timely input is important for approving positions and facilitating staff recruitments. The TED notes that MOF approves a fraction of the requested expenditure and this is significantly constraining the development of new TTCs and the recruitment of staff. On the other hand, the MOF considers that some delays are caused by inaccurate cost estimates provided by the TED.
154. On the program side, the TED has academic and research expertise, but this needs to be complemented with expertise in areas such as psychometrics and quantitative analysis.
155. The TED has a strong, well-qualified team of program officers and managers for effectively managing both pre and in-service programs. However, the monitoring function needs to be streamlined and made more responsive to needs and issues in the field.
156. Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation
157. The overall performance management of the entire professional development infrastructure requires an independent and highly competent research, monitoring and evaluation (RME) department. It must be able to engage in a deeper exploration of pre- and in-service teacher education, to better understand whether or not particular interventions are having the expected impact. For example, GSP monitoring and use of GSP data for planning purposes are currently very limited.
158. However, the TED currently lacks data analysis and reporting capacity. While there are individual results frameworks for activities funded by different donors, the TED lacks an overall monitoring or results framework covering all of its programs and activities. The TED lacks dedicated specialist researchers, evaluators, and monitors. The M&E function is currently distributed amongst staff with other responsibilities, and who not been provided with professional development opportunities in this regard. This is constraining the frequency and quality of M&E activities.
159. The TTC monitoring process is generally well-defined. Each TTC is monitored twice every year by teams of two to four monitors, with each monitoring visit lasting approximately 10 to 12 days. Monitors conduct class observations, lecturer interviews, student interviews, administrator interviews, and facility inspections. Monitoring teams provide on the spot feedback and advice.
160. While the regular conduct of National Teacher Examinations (NTE) is a remarkable achievement, the process is not in line with international standards for the development of teacher competency tests/ assessment. There is no clear model for setting, administering, scoring, analyzing, and reporting on exams. There is therefore a significant risk of inconsistencies in the system and a lack of comparability between years. NTE data are not used

to identify and address areas of weakness amongst teachers. Nor are they used to inform pre- and in-service programs.

2.3.10 Finance Unit

Tasks and staff

161. EQUIP's Finance Unit consist of two persons – one financial coordinator and one assistant. The financial coordinator has worked in this position for two years but has not received any training on rules and regulations. There has been just a single one-day workshop, but this did not cover finance and procurement procedures.
162. The MoE's Department of Finance is slow to release funds due to rigid rules and regulations. EQUIP itself does not have funds to pre-finance its activities.

Procedures and Findings

163. The department of finance at the MoE notes that it handles funds in accordance with the Public Financial Law, and procurement is fully compliant with government procedures
164. The slow release of funds to EQUIP units is one of the main problems for the program.⁵⁰
165. The department of finance at the MoE considers that problems are the result of poor planning and management by EQUIP.⁵¹
166. Low cost, community-based contracts are often subject to long delays, sometimes lasting several years. This leads to cost increases, which are exacerbated by inflation.
167. Some complicated procedures have been simplified. Salary allocation is now done annually rather than quarterly. However, the limited capacity at province level is limiting the impact of these improvements.
168. In order to enhance co-ordination, EQUIP's finance unit has requested that the department of finance at the MoE appoint a focal point who is familiar with EQUIP's needs. This is currently being discussed.

2.4 Supervision/Monitoring

169. This section is based on field trips through nine provinces in May and June 2014. More details are provided in Annex 7: *Social Mobilization*. This includes the names of the schools that were visited, and statistics provided by the PED and DED offices.

2.4.1 Objectives and tasks of School Management Shuras

170. Community mobilization is central to EQUIP's strategy. To this end, the EQUIP SMU supports the formation of SMS in each school. SMS are responsible for:
- Identifying educational and infrastructure needs in schools through the School Improvement Plan (SIP);
 - Cooperating with the district and provincial education authorities in addressing identified needs by applying for EQUIP's quality enhancement grant;

⁵⁰ However, the TED requested a one-time AFS 50M (USD 10 M) in cash for training. The finance department advised the TED to spread the training over time.

⁵¹ Incompetent contractors have been selected by the procurement department to carry out works. Sub-contracting is not permitted for school construction, only for road construction. In some cases, the time allowed for works is unrealistic because the long winter in some areas limits the construction season to five months per year.

- Overseeing and implementing the planning and expenditure of the grant.

171. SMSs should participate in all aspects of quality improvement, including construction and rehabilitation of school infrastructure, and equipping schools with educational materials and equipment. SMSs oversee school construction activities and support the development of the school with contributions from their personal assets. SMSs are responsible for monitoring teacher attendance, and student absenteeism and dropout. They also follow up all ESS and gender-related issues.
172. In total, 8,581 SMSs were established between the start of EQUIP II and late 2013 and a further 442 have been established in the first half of 2014, bringing the total to 9,023. Overall, by June 2014, 14,222 SMSs have been established since the start of EQUIP I.

	EQUIP I	EQUIP II	Total EQUIP I & II		
		2004 - late 2013	First half 2014	Total EQUIP II	
SMSs established	5,199	8,581	442	9,023	14,222

Table 4: Establishment of school management *shuras*

2.4.2 Province and district level⁵²

173. Provincial Education Directorates (PED) and District Education Directorates (DED) provide the administrative framework for the schools and SMSs. The PEDs have school budgets. These budgets are generally considered insufficient.

Nangarhar

174. The UNHCR, JICA, the Swedish government, and Save the Children have also been engaged in the education sector in Nangarhar, although on a smaller scale than EQUIP
175. Only half of the 888 schools in Nangarhar have a building. The other half make do with tents. Sometimes lessons take place under trees. 92% of schools (820) have SMSs.
176. There are three model schools. All schools are open. If found closed, then they are only temporarily closed, for example, due to military operations near the border with Pakistan. The PED ensures that any closed schools are opened again as soon as possible.
177. Education in Nangarhar is supported by *mullahs*, and the PED discusses educational matters with them. Nangarhar’s population supports education. Further education evening classes are available in schools and colleges, and qualifications can be attained by this means.
178. The Director of the Nangarhar PED considers that some community mobilizers need to be more skilled in engaging with communities. He believes that there should be twice the number of model schools. He noted that it is difficult for girls to attend school in remote areas.
179. The EQUIP team in Nangarhar consists of one head of office, nine supervisors (all male), two engineers, and 49 district social mobilizers (of whom three are female). The office is headed by

⁵² Note: additional information on provinces and districts provided in section 2.1 ‘Context and operating environment,’ and Annex 7: Social Mobilization.

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an EQUIP officer, a social scientist, who joined EQUIP in 2009. He previously worked for an international company and has experience as a supervisor in the field, and as loan officer, among other roles. He started his career with EQUIP in Nuristan, following a six-day introductory seminar to EQUIP. While in Nuristan, he was held captive by the Taliban for six nights. Following his release, EQUIP transferred him to Kunar and subsequently to Faryab. He has been working in the Nangarhar office for three years.

180. Annual planning in Nangarhar addresses issues such as how many schools will be equipped laboratories, and which schools will receive materials, etc. Officers are supervised to ensure that they are visiting schools according to plan. The biggest problem for the office is that funds do not arrive on time.⁵³ The head of the EQUIP office considers that more staff training is required, particularly on training communities.
181. The EQUIP office is located in the compound of the PED in Nangarhar. It is poorly equipped. For example, it covers 888 schools in 22 districts but has just one photocopier.
182. Social mobilizers in Nangarhar do not have sufficient transport and are therefore unable to visit schools and SMSs regularly. Their salaries are generally paid late, and payment is sometimes delayed by months.

Surkhroad

183. The DED in Surkhroad district has 52 schools with 56,000 students, of who almost half are female. The DED considers that the education system is well-organized. Thirty-two schools have been equipped by EQUIP. The biggest problem is lack of buildings - 16 schools have no building at all, and others have insufficient classrooms, so learning takes place in shifts.

Kandahar

184. The evaluation team recommends that EQUIP undertake a detailed on-site assessment of EQUIP-PED management arrangements in Kandahar. The Director of the Kandahar PED demands that EQUIP is more transparent and that it decentralizes more decision making to Kandahar, while he himself seeks to concentrate decision making in his office. EQUIP has expressed concern about some of his decisions. He attempted to influence the selection of schools to be visited by the evaluation team.
185. EQUIP officers work in cooperation with the PED's Deputy Director, who is a qualified academic. However, he has limited decision-making power. According to him there are 45,000 students enrolled in Kandahar province in 2014.
186. Schools were closed by the Taliban in districts under their control. One hundred of the 444 schools in Kandahar remain closed. USAID, UNICEF, local NGOs, Save the Children, and ISAF/PRT are or have been engaged in constructing schools and supporting them with materials.
187. The Deputy Director notes that, for cultural reasons, families are reluctant to allow girls to continue education beyond primary level. One reason is the lack of female teachers. SMS and parents in remote areas have requested female teachers to address this issue. The support of the Global Partnership Education (GPE) program (which is involved in three districts), has enabled salaries for teachers in remote areas to be increased from USD 600 to USD 1,000 per month. As a result, more female teachers are working in such districts and this has encouraged families to allow girls to continue their education, even beyond Grade 6. The Deputy Director

⁵³ See also section 2.3.10: Finance

appreciates that EQUIP operates as part of the state education system, rather than as parallel structure.

188. The Director of the Kandahar worked for the governor of Kandahar before taking up his current position six months ago. He considers that EQUIP decision-making is excessively centralized in Kabul. The Director notes there is an engineering faculty in Kandahar, and that there is therefore no need for engineers from Kabul. He also suggests that some SMSs have insufficient capacity to manage construction projects, as some schools were not been completed, although the allocated were fully consumed. In these cases, the PED had to ensure the completion of the project. The Director considers that SMSs should therefore not be entrusted with EQUIP funds.

EQUIP team

189. The following overview shows that tailor-made approaches are needed for the work of social mobilizers, including support for transportation. Work in insecure areas cannot be compared with work in secure areas. EQUIP staff working in insecure areas need special training, higher salaries, and allowances for transportation.

Nangarhar: The work of social mobilizers

190. As Kandahar is an insecure province, the work of the Kandahar social mobilizers is described here in more detail to illustrate the conditions under which they operate at district level. For security reasons, the evaluation team was unable to visit the districts and it was therefore not possible to crosscheck the provided data, or to collect information directly.
191. The EQUIP team in Kandahar has a staff of 21, consisting of one acting head, 16 social mobilizers (of whom two are female), two engineers, and two supervisors. Until 18 months ago, just two social mobilizers were responsible for the entire province. Nevertheless, there is still insufficient staff and the team is not able to cover all districts.
192. 400 applicants responded to announcements on radio and television about the recruitment of social mobilizers. The two female social mobilizers graduated from Grade 12 but lacked professional experience prior to joining EQUIP. The 14 male social mobilizers include:
- A tribal leader who graduated from Grade 12;
 - A student;
 - A private teacher;
 - A recently qualified medical doctor, who was previously an EQUIP supervisor;
 - A high school teacher;
 - A former employee of a national company;
 - Former teachers;
 - Others with experience of working with USAID or UNAMA.
193. All social mobilizers have participated in two or three training sessions, each lasting between one and three days. There is additional training once each month. The two female social mobilizers communicate with men and women.
194. The EQUIP office in Kandahar is presently led by an interim head, a teacher of mathematics by profession, who already worked with EQUIP as a supervisor. They have opened 50 schools with the support of SMSs.⁵⁴ Initially premises were rented for use as schools. Subsequently, schools were built on government-owned land.
195. Social mobilizers need special training to work in this difficult environment.

⁵⁴ Some schools remain closed because no social mobiliser is available to work with the community. The EQUIP office is engaging with *mullahs* and the Taliban to convince them that Muslim religion allows education.

196. The following districts are illustrative of the conditions in which social mobilizers operate.⁵⁵

- In *Shah Wali Kot district*, 13 schools are closed and three are active. Social mobilizers were able to arrange meetings with the community, but they were also subjected to threats for doing so.
 - In *Takhtapul* district, two of 12 schools are open. Community mobilization as commenced, 37 girls were encouraged to come to school. But the school buildings are in poor condition.
 - In *Prnjway district*, 38 schools have been established, as planned. 17 schools were activated and five were closed, but the mobilizers will try to open them again. Thus far the district's population has not been convinced of the benefits of education and security is not guaranteed.
 - *Meynashin district* is 65km from Kandahar city. There are 12 schools of which eight have been re-opened. On one occasion, shots were fired at the social mobilizer. Since then the local police always accompany him when he visits the district. He has found three people in the community to work with him.
 - In *Spen Buldak district*, there are 20 schools with an SMS. Of these, 17 are active and are supported by two social mobilizers. Students who dropped out have been encouraged to resume school. The Taliban mine destroyed one school because it was used as a polling station during the recent election.
 - The *Arghistan district* has 18 schools in its plan, of which eight are active. Two additional schools were opened. This district is extremely dangerous. The social mobilizer can no longer travel by motorcycle, as there is a high risk that the Taliban will attempt to kill him. Instead, he travels by taxi, which is more expensive than travelling by motorcycle. He is obliged to pay for from his personal funds and he has not been reimbursed so far. The alternative is a three hour walk.
 - In *Zerai district*, there are 33 schools, but only 17 are active. Three schools have reopened as a result of the social mobilizer's intervention. Four schools were in a refugee camp and will not be reopened. There were 16 refugee camps for returnees from Pakistan and 30 teachers were teaching in these camps. The social mobilizer received a letter of appreciation from the district.
- In *Dand district*, there are 28 schools. Just one has been closed for nine years. The social mobilizers have been unable to visit the area in which this school is located.

2.4.3 Schools and School Management *Shuras*

197. The SMS generally consists of 15 members. They were previously elected every two years, but are elected every three years.⁵⁶ Membership of the SMS generally consist of teachers, parents and sometimes a *mullah*. Some parents are especially concerned about education, and SMS were established after they approached the MoE or the PED for support. The MoE then asked EQUIP to support them.

Nangarhar

198. SMS members in Nangarhar include engineers and businessmen. The main topics of discussion are EQUIP's financial support programs, security, and now to encourage school dropouts to resume their education.

199. The dropout rate in some schools is up to 10%. SMS members visit the families of school dropouts to convince them to send their children back to school. They are generally successful in this. Ensuring that young married women continue education is a major challenge, as their husbands have to be convinced to allow their wives to return school.

⁵⁵ Not all of Kandahar's 17 districts are covered here, as the evaluators were not able to interview all social mobilizers.

⁵⁶ Some SMSs indicate that they hold elections when necessary.

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200. Security is another challenge, especially in the 13 insecure provinces. Young men, generally uneducated and unemployed, threaten female students and teachers. SMS members in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces have been able to stop these threats by talking to community elders, the police, and provincial council members; or by convincing the *mullahs* to raise the issue during the Friday sermon. In Jalalabad (*Arabian High School*), a boy was killed in May 2014 by a stray bullet from outside the school compound. The use of buses was considered as a possible solution to the problem transporting children to school in Nangarhar, but the idea was not pursued, as they were considered too vulnerable to attack.
201. Some SMSs are very active in promoting quality education, and some of their members attend classes to observe teachers at work, for example in the *Arabian High School* in Jalalabad. They voice their concerns when they consider that teachers are not sufficiently competent, or are not qualified in the subject area for which they have been hired to teach.
202. When the Taliban held power, one community in Nangarhar established a local *shura* to address its problems. It continues to function alongside the SMS, and some members engaged in both *shuras*.
203. One SMS, which was established eight months ago in *Hazrat Omar Farooq School* in the Bisood District of Nangarhar, procured a tent for its school so that classes could be held indoors, rather than under trees, which had been the case until then. The number of enrolled students has increased since the SMS was established. The SMS meets once each month but has so far not received any training from EQUIP.
The SMS is very interested in recruiting female teachers, and it is planning to establish a female SMS. The *mullah* is highly supportive of the activities of this SMS, which has managed to raise AFS 13,000 (USD 260) locally for the school.
204. The *Shireendil Kochi Primary School*, also in Bisood district in Nangarhar, has 221 boys and 145 girls. Teaching takes place in UNICEF tents and under trees. The school has been waiting for a permanent building with proper sanitation since 2009, when the SMS was established. EQUIP has informed them that these requirements are included in its plan, which currently awaits approval. The SMS received a short orientation from EQUIP. Social mobilizers visit the school regularly, approximately three times each month.
205. The school has six teachers, five trained and one untrained. The SMS is highly motivated. It established the school itself, with contributions from the community. A private individual provided land for the school, another contributed to the construction of a boundary wall around the school, and yet another contributed wood to construct the tent. UNICEF provided the tent and JICA the stationary.
206. In the Surkhroad district in Nangarhar, the visited EQUIP-supported schools and SMSs received training twice. The SMSs consider that this is not sufficient. They would like more guidance on motivating parents and addressing security problems. These schools and SMSs have received both first and second generation quality enhancement grants. Disbursement of grants, and purchases, are well documented. However, there are insufficient textbooks and the PED has been asked to help. One school resorted to buying books, of low quality, in a local market. The SMS in Surkhroad district notes that when a school moves from a tent into a permanent building, enrolments increase and dropout rates fall. In Surkhroad district, the SMS was able to stop the harassment of girls on their way to school with the help of elders and the *mullah*.
207. Quality enhancement grants are disbursed to schools and usually used to procure items such as laboratory equipment, books, tables, and chairs. Schools are sometimes supported by local

businessmen. In Surkhroad district in Nangarhar, for example, a businessman donated AFS 20,000 for the repair of school windows.

208. Land title is a problem for some schools. The SMU is seeking to address this issue, which has been a problem since EQUIP started in 2004.⁵⁷
209. Many female students who graduate from school go on train as teachers. For example, of the 102 girls who graduated from the *Charbagh Girls High School* in 2013, 85 enrolled in teacher training. The other 17 went to university and other institutions.
210. SMSs in Nangarhar identify the main challenges as:
- Not enough training for SMSs;
 - Long wait for permanent school buildings (five years in case);
 - Not enough classrooms;
 - Not enough textbooks;
 - Not enough qualified teachers;
 - Problematic security situation.

Kandahar

211. The model school *Safia Amajan Girls High School* is housed in a building constructed with the support of UNICEF.⁵⁸ There are 64 teachers, mostly female, and 750 girls up to 12th Grade. The SMS was formed four years ago. Its main topics of discussion are:
- Examination issues;
 - The size of the classrooms (too small);
 - Dropout rate;
 - Child marriage;
 - Security.
212. Security and dropout rate are linked, as evidenced by an increase in dropouts following an explosion nearby. Of the children who have dropped out, 20 have not yet returned. Thirty of the school's graduates went on to TTC in 2013. Under the guidance of a teacher, students have painted most of the classrooms with peace motifs. The school is in a good condition.
213. The *Shaheed Abdul Ahad Karzai School* was opened 37 years ago.⁵⁹ It has 1,410 female and 2,388 male students. The SMS was established four years ago. The school has 86 professional teachers, of whom 25 are female. SMS members are elected each year. The SMS includes two students and one *mullah*. As in other schools, the SMS has taken up the issue of students dropping out. The main reasons for dropping out are poverty, family financial problems, and security concerns.
214. One female teacher, who lives four kilometers away, was followed to school by a man for three days. The man was detained and questioned by security officials, after which he stopped following the teacher. On another occasion, students were alarmed when police opened fire on a motorcycle that failed to stop at a checkpoint near the school.

⁵⁷ See section 2.3.7: Environmental and Safeguard Unit

⁵⁸ This school was included in addition to the original list of the evaluation team. It was suggested by head of SMU to visit a model school when he was informed that some of the selected schools could not be visited for security reasons.

⁵⁹ This school was selected by the PED- Kandahar and was visited by the evaluation team to find out what kind of schools PED thinks he has to show to visitors. His others suggestions were ignored by the team and the team proceeded with its original selected schools or replacements they selected themselves.

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215. The World Food Program (WFP), until recently, provided food for the school. When this WFP intervention ended, the dropout rate amongst female students increased. This is a poor community and the SMS has asked for the food program to be resumed. It is understood that the WFP is undertaking research to help it decide whether or not to resume the program.
216. With the help of EQUIP quality grants amounting to AFS 195,000, the school has been able to install electricity and solar panels, among others things that were prioritized by the SMS's procurement committee. Some SMS members have requested financial support to compensate them for loss of income when they attend meetings.
217. Some graduates of *Sofi Saib Female High School* in Kandahar City returned as teachers, having completed training at TTCs. This school was founded 42 years ago. An SMS was established six years ago. The school has dropout rate of approximately 5%, caused mainly by family problems and migration. Some parents prefer that their daughters work as tailors to increase family income, rather than attend school. The SMS has established links to the community and has convinced the *mullah* about the importance of education. It also engages with parents whose children have dropped out of school. Local businessmen have provided the school with some items. The EQUIP quality grant was to construct a boundary wall, and to purchase 200 to 300 books, three computers and items for the laboratory. Of the school's 65 teachers, three are male, and seven are non-formal teachers. Fourteen have graduated from TTCs. The SMS is well organized, and systematically identifies problems that need to be addressed, such as the lack of water system, the lack solar energy system, student transport, and security.
218. A security officer was killed in front of the school. To allay the fears of the traumatized students, the SMS contacted the police and a checkpoint was established. Security has improved since 2009.
219. The *Nazo Ana High School* SMS was founded two years ago. It meets once or twice each month. The school building, which has 12 classrooms, was constructed six years ago with the support of the Turkish government. Nevertheless, some classes are still held in a tent. There are 1,200 female students and 40 teachers, of whom 36 are formal teachers. Some of the school's female graduates (fluent English speakers) returned as teachers having been trained at TTC. There are currently just four female teachers. Dropouts are caused by security and financial problems. The WFP's decision to cease its school food program eight months ago is responsible for 10% of the overall dropouts. The SMS requested the WFP to resume its program but there has been no response. It is expected that if the WFP were to resume the program, between 2% and 3% of the children who left would return.
220. Some students receive verbal threats on their way to the school. In one instance, this was reported to school security and subsequently resolved by the police.
221. Teachers complain that they are pressured by the Kandahar DED to promote students to higher classes, although they are not able to read and write. They have requested seminars on how to handle these cases.

2.5 Review of infrastructure and related issues at visited schools

222. Field trips for this evaluation were undertaken through nine provinces in May and June 2014. This section of the report provides information about Badakhshan province as an example of

the main achievements in the construction sector and the challenges it faces. Some of the findings in Badakhshan also apply to other provinces.⁶⁰

2.5.1 Some Figures on Construction of Schools

223. The MoE's Infrastructure Services Department (ISD) is responsible for implementing the construction component of the EQUIP. According to information provided by the ISD by e-mail on 14 October 2014, the status of this component in October 2014 is as indicated in the following table:

	Totals	%	Community Contracted Projects	National Competitive Bidding
Planned	1,662	100%	1,357	305
Completed	786	47.3%	541	245
Under construction	265	15.9%	244	21
Partially completed	543	32.7%	543	
Problematic	26	1.6%	13	13
Construction started	42	2.5%	21	21

Table 5: School construction (Source: Provided by the ISD with email on October 14, 2014)

224. SMS have full responsibility for the CC projects, although they often lack sufficient technical knowledge. EQUIP is convinced that this can be addressed with training by the ISD and the SMU. It is recommended that EQUIP closely monitors the implementation of contracts executed by SMSs with private companies.

2.5.2 Badakhshan Province

225. EQUIP commenced in Badakhshan in 2005. Badakhshan has 260 high schools, 222 secondary schools, 135 primary schools, and five vocational schools. 30% of the population (326,570) are school students, of whom 153,866 are female and 172,704 are male. The province has 10,012 teachers, of whom 6,739 are male and 3,273 are female.⁶¹
226. From 2008 to 2010, EQUIP provided AFS 63,200,000 (USD 1,264,000) to 491 schools. These funds were used by the community administrative *shuras* to procure school materials and equipment such as laboratory equipment, chairs, tables, tents, computers, and teaching materials. In 2011, EQUIP donated a further AFS 36,072,300 (USD 721,446) to 481 schools in 24 of Badakhshan's districts. A further AFS 1,170,000 (USD 23,400) was provided in 2013 to eight schools in seven districts. This was used for similar purposes, this time including medical provisions.
227. Only 254 schools of the 651 schools (39%) in Badakhshan province, have buildings and of these schools, 113 have been constructed by EQUIP. The construction of 42 schools was stopped due to lack of funds.

⁶⁰ Further details about the other eight visited provinces are provided in **Annex 8: Infrastructure**.

⁶¹ Source: Ministry of Education comment.

228. The construction of 39 schools was contracted through national competitive bidding in 2013, and works are currently in progress. Three community projects were also contracted. A province procurement committee is responsible for procurement. This committee consists of seven representatives from various institutions, such as provincial, judicial, prosecutorial, and rural development institutions.
229. In 2013, the works on 61 schools remained unfinished due to the lack of funds. Reasons for the failure to complete school construction include:
- Prices are determined in Kabul, but actual prices are different in each province.⁶² For example the price for one bag of cement is AFS 350 in Kabul, whereas in Badakhshan province it is AFS 500 (i.e. 43% higher);
 - The uniform buildings and materials specifications do not reflect the availability of materials at the construction location. For example, in some locations, it would be more efficient to stone rather than brick, as stone is readily available;
 - There are only two monitoring engineers. Due to the long distances involved, they are able to carry out on-site monitoring just once each year;
 - The disbursement of funds to pay for construction is often delayed.

2.5.3 Brief Report of 8 Schools in Badakhshan

230. *BaghSha School*: EQUIP funded the construction of this school in 2013 at a cost of USD 99,500. Members of the community 4,000 square meters of land, and a further 1,000 square meters were purchased. However, the school does not meet the requirements (it lacks a rainwater drainage system) and it remains uncompleted.
231. *Laya Aba School*: This school was established in 2001. Members of the community donated 4,000 square meters of land, and the Ministry of Agriculture donated the green area around the school. The laboratory equipment was donated by GIZ. The school has 18 rooms in total, including 12 classrooms, a library, and a laboratory. 350 students attend the school per shift. In one class, only six of the 13 registered children were present at the time of the evaluators' visit. EQUIP provided AFS 47,000 to this school, which used to purchase 288 books, cabinets, chairs and 20 computers.
232. *Badra Secondary Mixed School* (in the Yaftal Pain district): This school was established in 2005. It has 147 male students and 130 female students. There are 12 teachers besides the head of the school. This school does not have a building and classes take place in tents. The land for this school (4000 square meters) was donated by a member of the SMS. Despite trying for five years, the SMS has so far been unable to secure funding for a building.
233. *Payanshahr Female School* (in the Baharak district): The Asian Development Bank donated USD 200,000 to this school in 2010. EQUIP donated AFS 117,000, which was used to purchase tables, chairs, 303 books, a sewing machine and three cabinets.⁶³ The 6,000 square meters occupied by the school was donated by members of the community. Payanshahr Male School and Payanshahr Female School used to be a single school but they were separated in 2010. The Payanshahr Female School has eight classrooms, four administration offices and five toilets. The school lacks a laboratory.
234. *Payanshahr Male School*: This school was established in 2003. 4,000 square meters was donated by a member of the community. USD 10,000 was spent on this school and members of

⁶² See also sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.5

⁶³ According to comments from EQUIP, the purchase of tables, chairs, and 303 books for the classrooms is not in line with EQUIP policy.

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the community participated in its construction. Three classrooms were built with the support of GIZ. The school has no boundary walls, no toilets, and no supply of drinking water.

235. *Baharistan Female High School* (in Baharak district): EQUIP spent USD 64,000 on this school, which is still under construction. The works are of a very low quality – part of the building is cracked, the roof (which has not yet been finished) does not comply with the specifications. The building lacks toilets and drinking water, and it has not green space.
236. *Khairabad Female School* (in Baharak district): This school was established in 1963. It has 12 classrooms and 28 students who study in two shifts. In 2005, EQUIP provided USD 10,000 for the construction of a single building with six classrooms. Local toilets were reconstructed with funding provided by GIZ, which also provided USD 6,200 to purchase chairs, and for painting the walls and concreting the floor. GIZ has funded a computer room, a printer, a generator, and 2,000 liters of fuel, 10 laptop computers, two air conditioners, 485 books, a cabinet, chairs, tables, and laboratory equipment. GIZ trained teachers in science and assigned one teacher for computer training. These improvements have helped to motivate the school's students. The National Solidarity Program donated USD 7,000 for the construction boundary walls.
237. *Kokcha High School* – (a model school in Badakhshan): This school received financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany and was supported by GIZ. It is also supported by EQUIP. It was established in 1931 as a primary school, and became a high school in 1966. It has 2,199 students and 71 teachers. EQUIP has provided the school with funds on three occasions. The first funding of USD 10,000 was used for the construction of four rooms. The second funding of USD 117,000 was used to purchase chairs, tables, book cabinet and 196 books. The third funding of USD 15,000 was spent on general repairs, and the purchase of four computers, solar panels, a printer, a projector, teaching materials, a first-aid box, a cabinet, 192 books, and laboratory equipment. The school does not have a computer science teacher, and it lacks a maintenance budget.

3 EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

238. EMIS is not an EQUIP unit, but is a Directorate of the MoE. It's inclusion in this report addresses one of the requirements of the terms of reference for this evaluation.
239. This section draws on discussions with MoE officials in Kabul (between 16 May and 03 June 2014), prior analysis of published EMIS data by District for Afghan Years 1387-1389 (2008-2010), feedback from field visits, and follow-up analysis of Afghan Years 1390-1392 (2011-2013) data from the EMIS Directorate for 423 Districts.

3.1 Data Analysis

240. The EMIS Directorate at the MoE has an exceptional collection of data for almost 15,000 schools in 420 districts aggregated into 34 provinces (including Kabul City). Table 6 summarizes Afghanistan's EMIS reporting and its apparent strengths. The MoE's data reporting system encompasses more than eight million students in almost 15,000 schools. Given the continuing political insecurity, the data reporting system can be considered of high quality.

	Reporting Levels	Data Reported	Quality	Issues for discussion
1	National	Aggregated schools, students, teachers data	High	Means/Averages and disaggregated data
2	Provinces (34)	Aggregated data sets	High	Major reporting unit/s
3	Districts (400+)⁶⁴	Aggregated schools data	High	Report/use all data
4	Schools (14,700+)	Annual data collections	High	Major collection unit/s
5	Classes/Classrooms	Numbers, conditions	High	Attributes of Schools
6	Students (8 million +)	Grade, Gender	High	Grade, Gender (shifts)
7	Teachers (184,000)	Qualifications, Gender	Good	Use administrative data

Table 6: Overview of Afghanistan EMIS

241. Wide variations across the 34 provinces show totals and averages plus graphs published in annual Ministry reports. National aggregates provide gross enrolment rates (GER) and net enrolment rates (NER) meeting international standards, but without the rural-urban, gender, and ethnic/ language variations between districts (and within districts). Greater focus on analysis and reporting of district data sets would strengthen analysis of access issues and the diversity between major cities/ towns and rural districts within provinces, especially variations in school participation, grade progression and completion rates.
242. Just as provinces compare their ranking in national tables published annually by the MoE, publishing consistent district-level data would encourage districts to monitor their standing against other districts in their province and adjoining provinces. Data use identifies errors and inconsistency, which – if reported and examined – should lead to better data quality.⁶⁵ User audits are an important input to data quality.
243. Afghanistan has high quality teacher data, but is rated “Good” in Table 6 above. Duplicated reporting to the MoE by the directorates of Human Resources, Teacher Education and EMIS limits both analysis and use of teacher data. Part-time, temporary and unqualified teachers may not be reported, or they may be treated differently in the different sets of reports.

⁶⁴ The MoE reports 402 official districts, but EMIS reported 420+.

⁶⁵ Comparison of “School Enrolment by Gender by District” with “School Enrolment by Grade and Gender for each District” in 1390-1392 identified discrepancies in the 1391 (2012) data sets but almost exactly matches for years 1390 and 1392.

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244. In secondary grades, the distinction, for instance, between a teacher who is qualified to teach biology and a qualified teacher who is teaching biology without any qualification in the subject of biology creates inconsistencies in schools reporting to districts, provinces and the MoE. Consistent data would provide a better basis for initiatives at each level to improve the training, recruitment and retention of qualified teachers. Consistency between systems is essential, but not duplication, as this is wasteful of resources and may result in inconsistent or contradictory data.
245. EMIS counts teachers but produces limited data on teachers whose qualification is less than Year 14 (Grade 12 graduates plus two years teacher training). EMIS data for 2008 reported approximately 20% of 107,971 male teachers, and 45% of 45,295 female teachers had Grade 14+ qualifications. The ministry's Vision 2020 document envisages that female teachers will account for more than 50% of teachers by 2020, and that all teachers will have at least Grade 14. The 2020 targets are ambitious, as the ministry notes that 90% of qualified female teachers are in nine major urban centers.⁶⁶ Demand for qualified teachers (male and female) is greater in rural areas.
246. It is recommended that (a) the Directorate of Teacher Education and the Directorate of Human Resources match 2013 school-level data on teachers by highest level of education/ training, years of teaching, teaching status and gender to provide assessments by province (and district) of teacher "qualifications" and experience; and (b) the Directorate of EMIS compare its summary data by district and province. Where EMIS numbers of teachers or classification of teachers differ by an agreed percentage, the three directorates should compare their three data sets.
247. Consistent teacher data would improve both the quality of data and understanding of teachers' skills and competencies, and total staffing costs. Parallel collections of teacher data by each of the three directorates wastes effort, creates confusion, and limits the validity of reported measures such as pupils per teacher. The joint audit would resolve discrepancies and improve collaboration, and data quality would improve the MoE's decision making. Duplicated collection/ reporting of teacher data would be reduced if each school received a report (from the MoE/ PED) showing teachers on payroll, their status and qualifications, etc., and the school confirmed details and any changes in personnel, subjects, classes, grades, subjects taught and hours taught. Unqualified, untrained, un-paid volunteers should be reported. It is also important to record details of teachers and other school employees not on the public payroll.
248. EMIS collects and reports minimal data on teachers. The MoE reports progress towards integration of EMIS and Human Resources data, and this should improve the quality of reporting and avoid duplication. As noted above, it would be more efficient if a teachers report were generated for each school to validate. Data reported and corrected by individual schools are the building blocks for an effective and efficient information system. If this moves the focus away from reporting provincial aggregates as national data, it should encourage districts to use their data to monitor and compare their outcomes with national and provincial averages. Understanding rural-urban and gender differences within districts would highlight access to school issues and improve the quality of reported data. Districts using their data offer both data audit and an informed explanation of local factors affecting student participation and outcomes.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Teacher Education Department presentation in Dubai (June 2014) reports having tracked 5297 graduates from the Girls Scholarship Program, of whom only 1620 (31%) have been hired as Teachers. As noted above, 90% of qualified female teachers are in nine major urban centers - Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad (Nangarhar), Mazar-i-Sharif (Balkh), Faiz Abad (Badakhshan), Taloqan (Takhar), Pul-i-Khumri (Baghlan), Jowzjan and Maimana (Faryab).

⁶⁷ School "errors" disappear in aggregations to district; District "errors" disappear in aggregation to province.

249. Data use identifies errors and anomalies and contributes to improved data quality. User-audit is effective and efficient. The EMIS map of provincial pupil teacher ratios for Afghan Year 1391 (2012) general education pupils shows a wide variation from fewer than 40 students per teacher in some provinces to 59 or 60 per teacher in others.⁶⁸ Mapping variations by districts (as in examples provided below) could be more effective, but would be of limited use where small numbers generate absurd ratios. The better solution is use of teacher and administrative personnel data, with school and district verification, and not more data collection.
250. Care is required when using student-teacher ratios (STR). Dividing 8,644 million students by 184,000 teachers gives the national average STR of 47.⁶⁹ This ratio may be overstated if teachers engaged in both morning and afternoon shifts are counted only once. Any distortion would be greater if many untrained teachers have not completed secondary school, but are reported in the teacher data. Unless schools data are audited and corrected at the district level, errors in district reports disappear in province reports and in MoE aggregates.
251. National and provincial aggregate data provide a higher level description of the education sector's characteristics and performance, but they also obscure incomplete or incorrect data reporting at school and district levels. The major limitation of aggregated data is that they present generalized results (e.g. averages) rather than the distribution of students (by gender), teachers (by gender and by qualifications), or schools without sufficient qualified teaching staff. Gender and teachers' year of birth (in five-year groups) is a neglected aspect of many education sector systems – grouped year of birth data is preferred to reporting five-year age groups for teachers. EMIS reports teacher data by categories which cannot be verified against individual teacher employment records. As noted above, schools should verify the list of trained and untrained teachers reported on the payroll, not just the number of teachers.
252. Distribution of enrolment by area depends on school age population as well as on security issues of the area throughout the country. Table 2 (which is based on the EMIS map for Afghan Year 1391 (2012)) uses Year 1392 (2013) general secondary (Grades 1-12) data for 422 districts to map enrolments by district. Latitude (north) and longitude (east) coordinates group districts to show enrolment patterns less evident in provincial aggregate data. Darker cells (such as Kabul with more than one million enrolled, and Herat in the west) highlight variations within provinces.
253. Data for three Afghan Years, 1390-1392 (2011-2013), in Annex A1 show growth and stability, but identify anomalies requiring examination. At 34.5°N 63°E, two Badghis districts (Qadis and Qalai Now) show 90,030 students enrolled in 1390 but 47,726 in 1391 and 49,461 in 1392. This apparent data error would disappear when provincial aggregates are reported, but on inspection of the district data, all six districts in Badghis province show a similar pattern.⁷⁰
254. A similar problem was identified for most districts in Sar-i-Pul Province.⁷¹ Year-on-year comparisons of provincial data should have identified the provincial anomaly. Once identified, it could be corrected. This is not an argument against reporting and use of provincial aggregates but more of a warning about potential errors, which persist if not identified and corrected. If the data look wrong, they probably are wrong. Data use is the best way to verify data quality.

⁶⁸ The data are for Afghan Year 1391, which equates to 20 March 2012 to 20 March 2013.

⁶⁹ This is the national average STR. Individual province level STR vary, as do STR for female and male pupils, nationally and per province.

⁷⁰ An example of data use/ analysis leading to audit: Badghis Districts enrolment for 1390 (Access Table) suggest that the year 1390 primary data are double-counted (i.e. Total is included in the "Total") because the effects are similar for each district but not apparent in lower secondary and upper secondary enrolments. EMIS reports negligible change in numbers of schools in each Badghis District over three years. When in doubt, check the data again.

⁷¹ District data reported by EMIS for Grades 1-6, Grades 7-9, and Grades 10-12 were compared with district data by Grade and Gender, and most discrepancies were for districts where the total had been double-counted.

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255. Table 7 shows Year 1392 (2013) distribution of “Enrolments by Level of Schooling”, the percentage “Female students at each Level”, and the overall “Female share by Province”. Provinces are ordered by the primary female share from 14.8% in Uruzgan to 49.9% reported for Panjshir province.⁷²
256. Table 8 includes the data in Table 3, but adds the distribution of districts by their overall female share of enrolments. This is not a map based on location, (latitude and longitude), but the number of districts by their percentage female enrolment. Provinces reporting females enrolled as more than 45% of all enrolments tend to be made up of districts which are 40% or higher.
257. At the other end of this spectrum, the 14 provinces reporting 35%, or less, female enrolments (also shown in Table 8) show a concentration of districts under 20% female enrolment and many districts with zero female enrolment. Kabul Province reports less than 35% females but students from its districts adjacent to Kabul City may be enrolled in Kabul City secondary schools.

⁷² Province numbers used in this analysis use an alphabetical list (using English names not Farsi*), starting with Badakhshan (1100) to Zabul (4500). Districts are numbered from 01 alphabetically (in English) so the four digit number ranges from 1101 in Badakhshan to 4510 in Zabul Province. This numbering offers an example, which would avoid examples where Ministry reporting of provinces may differ from one year to the next year. Numbered districts avoids “errors” in spelling district names (especially in transliteration from Farsi to English) and facilitates year-on-year comparisons.

* Farsi should be used, together with the approved translation into English.

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Afghan YEAR	North Latitude	TOTAL ENROL	n.s.	61 E	61_5	62 E	62_5	63 E	63_5	64 E	64_5	65 E	65_5	66 E	66_5	67 E	67_5	68 E	68_5	69 E	69_5	70 E	70_5	71 E	71_5	72 E
1392	38,0	36929																					16659	20270		
1392	37,5	77536											2971									31261	10158	12310	20836	
1392	37,0	278232												4579	7858		2285	19550	58447	42251	32840	31859	57070	21493		
1392	36,5	1124946									5560	37820	103209	49997	161018	242786	60432		138254	51857	183846	2104	74491	3376	6537	3659
1392	36,0	412329								42961		50549	13333		28102			71957	121277		37575	36386	3167	7022		
1392	35,5	482743							4534	30215	123901	49184		40227			20415	8384	134988	7282	20296	26060		17257		
1392	35,0	422741			22133		15912	27981			8871		18536			23341		17977		10911	142646	72323	14507	8155	29266	10182
1392	34,5	2009627		13011				49461		48154		89712	12423	31248	36711			31221	6273	77590	1179896	73914	138320	149472	72221	
1392	34,0	1544459		31458	16213	405956	22898	33469	19150	22487				18628	30402	17264	22897	9497	98453	103964	76438	346937	268348			
1392	33,5	494069			17378			5053	8701	18054		10729	18382	90875				138308	37575	108214	24780	16020				
1392	33,0	670369			35874	72055	35798	14075	6574	1340		17073	22181	15749	13766	79258	33952	31975	69915	34768	148993	37023				
1392	32,5	142739			11863	3424	3109			1137		0	8132	20519	9085	396	15979	23133	18456	9323	18183					
1392	32,0	108829		7137		60750	2090				1217	8387	135			11904		1430	5995			9784				
1392	31,5	242393								78637	11703		126484		1953	9661		6198		7757						
1392	31,0	60099				3142	10071			18726		3578	3855	16933	3794											
1392	30,5	51717			49716							2001														
1392	30,0	15019				2190		1248						11581												
1392	n.s.	28948	28948																							
1392	TOTAL	8203724	28948	51606	153177	547517	89878	131287	40096	218830	201383	218364	379109	302235	291143	393050	213742	316593	756733	1696818	702266	669158	589672	191741	16719	3659
Annual Change		5,4%		-1,9%	4,5%	4,2%	1,1%	9,7%	5,8%	16,2%	3,4%	8,0%	7,6%	8,7%	3,5%	3,0%	2,9%	6,7%	4,4%	4,7%	6,8%	6,0%	4,2%	6,1%	1,4%	-0,5%

Table 7: Distribution of Afghanistan General Secondary Enrolments 1392 (2013) by District Latitude (North) and Longitude (East)
 (Source: EMIS data. District latitude/longitude coordinates require confirmation)

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258. In many provinces, female enrolments are concentrated in the provincial capital, with very low female participation in other districts in that province. This was particularly noticeable in Kandahar Province, where almost 80% of females enrolled were at schools in Kandahar City, including more than 95% of females enrolled in lower secondary (Grades 7-9) and upper secondary (Grades 10-12). This local imbalance has longer-term consequences, with almost all students entering teacher training institutes and universities coming from city schools.
259. If most graduates are reluctant to take up teaching positions in rural districts, there are fewer opportunities for rural girls to enroll in primary education and then to continue to lower and upper secondary education. There are other consequences of this gender access issue – with fewer males enrolled in teacher education courses, there will be fewer trained teachers available to teach in rural and remote communities. The consequence could be either more untrained teachers, or teachers with limited training, teaching in primary grades. Without more qualified female teachers, girls in many rural districts may have less access to quality education.

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Afghanistan Provinces			Enrolments (1392) by Level and Gender								Total Districts	Percent Female share
Note	English	Farsi	Primary Female	Primary Male	Percent Female Primary	LSEC Female	LSEC Male	USEC Female	USEC Male			
43	Uruzgan	ارزگان	8013	46291	14,8%	1449	9653	563	3382	7	14%	
37	Paktika	پکتیکا	23805	96410	19,8%	1075	12593	138	4297	19	18%	
21	Hilmand	هلمند	23955	76531	23,8%	3149	9799	1545	6279	14	24%	
45	Zabul	زابل	6675	20772	24,3%	259	2562	107	1298	10	22%	
12	Badghis	بادغیس	24495	67141	26,7%	5060	16811	1530	5339	6	26%	
26	Kandahar	کندهار	46577	105297	30,7%	3720	15097	1896	9044	17	29%	
36	Paktia	پکتیا	39837	82668	32,5%	2923	20139	772	11001	13	28%	
32	Logar	لوگر	30779	61171	33,5%	3628	15086	1334	9080	7	30%	
19	Ghazni	غزنی	70102	132373	34,6%	21090	43023	13866	25392	19	34%	
28	Khost	خوست	64445	118697	35,2%	3929	25156	601	14637	13	30%	
27	Kapisa	کاپیسا	27651	50910	35,2%	6338	16223	5231	13463	7	33%	
44	Wardak	وردک	38061	69247	35,5%	4913	21680	913	12648	9	30%	
17	Farah	فراه	29022	52337	35,7%	6117	12938	3362	6383	11	35%	
25	Kabul Prov	ولایت کابل	62826	104814	37,5%	11658	32326	6260	20244	14	34%	
13	Baghlan	بغلان	77175	114859	40,2%	20396	41378	12991	27955	15	38%	
39	Parwan	پروان	48475	71196	40,5%	10424	23749	7951	20885	10	37%	
30	Kunduz	کندوز	86955	126543	40,7%	17616	32195	10493	20228	7	39%	
20	Ghor	غور	62380	87196	41,7%	13519	25728	3488	11819	10	39%	
40	Samangan	سمنگان	28881	39642	42,1%	7133	13087	4272	7741	7	40%	
23	Jawzjan	جوزجان	49701	67600	42,4%	13995	22114	9878	13606	11	42%	
33	Nangarhar	ننگرهار	212909	286009	42,7%	34836	79583	12580	46625	22	39%	
18	Faryab	فاریاب	86947	115789	42,9%	25226	29738	10939	14032	15	44%	
34	Nimroz	نیمروز	23474	30735	43,3%	2915	4487	1386	2122	6	43%	
41	Sar i Pul	سرپل	46862	60790	43,5%	10915	16387	4278	6754	7	43%	
42	Takhar	تخار	95451	121970	43,9%	25644	38983	14974	21250	17	43%	
35	Nuristan	نورستان	21049	26411	44,4%	2995	4957	523	1092	8	43%	
14	Balkh	بلخ	145214	175995	45,2%	43953	61565	37579	43207	18	45%	
24	Kabul City	شهر کابل	294108	351557	45,6%	89857	130085	73927	108249	16	44%	
11	Badakhshan	بدخشان	101488	119829	45,9%	37596	43136	19370	23207	27	46%	
22	Hirat	هرات	251825	287829	46,7%	66721	69838	33296	31293	16	47%	
29	Kunar	کنر	60171	67157	47,3%	7198	16945	1839	9589	15	42%	
15	Bamyan	بامیان	42315	46316	47,7%	11706	15977	6400	10861	7	45%	
16	Daikundi	دایکندی	51231	55801	47,9%	17135	23325	6270	11277	8	45%	
31	Laghman	لغمان	63896	66151	49,1%	11697	20119	5034	11636	6	45%	
38	Panjshir	پنجشیر	11996	12303	49,4%	2930	5209	1532	4222	8	43%	
AFGHANISTAN 1392 TOTAL			2358746	3416337	40,8%	549715	971671	317118	590137	422	39%	
Source: EMIS 1392			Review Provinces		PcFemale1392.sql			Note: Number alphabetical (English)				

Table 8: Enrolments by Level and Gender, Afghanistan Provinces, Year 1392 (2013)

260. Year-on-year changes are part of the assessment of educational statistics, and the data indicate changes, which may prompt further investigation. As noted above, examples such as Badghis and Sar-i-Pul should have been evident from year-on-year changes.
261. Table 9 provides another access comparison with the ratio of secondary (Grades 7-12) enrolments, by gender, as a percentage of primary (Grades 1-6) for Afghan Year 1392 (2013). Table A3 (split over two pages in annex) includes comparable data for years 1390 and 1391 (2011 and 2012). Dark orange shading in Table 9 shows higher values and yellow shading values under 10 percent, especially in southern Afghanistan Districts (below 33°N) where there are many cells showing 0% of girls progressing from primary to secondary education.

District data

262. The MoE reports district data by grade and gender for each school year. Aggregating districts to provinces simplifies reporting to government and international organizations but limits the value of the information for sector planning and monitoring. As demonstrated in Table 7 and Table 9, analysis at district-level identifies unexpected results that can then be corrected, or if correct can be further analyzed.
263. Distribution of enrolment by area depends on school age population as well as on security issues of the area throughout the country. If the education sector depends on aggregated data, many errors may not be detected. It is strongly recommended that any EMIS store data only at unit (i.e. school) level. When an error is identified in a school's data, and is corrected, the district and province aggregates should be automatically corrected. District enrolment reports should include the number of schools with data reported, as the district is more likely to identify any anomaly. Before the MoE reports its final data for the school year, each district should confirm that its reported schools data are correct, and each province should confirm that its reported districts' school data are correct.

Grade-on-grade comparisons

264. Grade-on-grade comparisons are a sub-set of year-on-year monitoring, especially in Afghanistan where data reported by age group may be less reliable. If comparing six year-olds in Year X with seven year-olds in Year X+1 is not feasible, numbers enrolled in Grade 2 as a percentage of Grade 1 may identify issues requiring further investigation. High rates of repetition in early grades may reduce apparent retention but care is required if smaller Grade 2 numbers are interpreted as dropout.
265. Table 11 compares 1390-1392 (2011-2013) data by half-degree latitude and longitude, by gender, to show the variation in Grades 1-3 (early primary) as a percentage of total enrolment each year.⁷³ This distribution confirms population density, rural-urban and gender disparities. The dark green 0 cells show no students enrolled in Grades 1-3, in most examples, no girls enrolled in Grades 1-3. Light green and yellow cells show 20% to 50% enrolled in Grades 1-3 (implying that more are enrolled in higher grades). Brown cells range between 50% and 80% enrolled in Grades 1-3, or few enrolled in secondary grades, and dark brown/ red cells with 81% to 100% enrolled in Grades 1-3. High Grade 1-3 shares are indicative of poor educational opportunities or outcomes.

⁷³ For mapping district data, latitude (degrees north) and longitude (degrees east) are used, with either the geographic center of the district or the coordinates of the district capital. There are some errors in district co-ordinates (in Takhar Province but not on Turkmen/Badghis border). It is recommended that the Ministry produce an official list of district co-ordinates which would improve accuracy of similar maps.

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266. Table 8 gives aggregate enrolments by province, Table 9 shows the ratio of secondary to primary enrolments for districts by location and by gender. In summary, districts are the more appropriate level of comparison than Provinces, especially for gender, rural/ urban and secondary/ primary enrolments.
267. Table 10 presents each province, ordered by percentage of female students enrolled and the distribution of districts by their female student percentage share in Afghan Year 1392 (2013). It shows the contrast between low performing districts and provinces and the concentration of those districts with over 40% female students in provinces with over 40% female students. The latter provinces include larger urban areas and adjacent districts.
268. Table A3 in the annex is split over two pages – the first page covers districts 34 degrees North and above, and the second page shows differences in shading for districts below 34 degrees North. Enrolments are grouped by gender and for Grades 2-6 and 8-12 in Afghan Year 1392 (2013), divided by Grades 1-5 and 7-11 in Afghan Year 1390 (2011). With overlapping grades, the calculations in the columns on the right are shaded to indicate the implied change (with the extreme values excluded).
269. More detailed study at district level is recommended to examine apparent grade progression (retention) rates for consecutive grades, to identify apparent dropout after Grade 6. The expected result should confirm more rural students being unable or unwilling to travel greater distances to the nearest lower secondary and upper secondary Schools in the provincial capital or other urban centers.
270. Gender, distance to the nearest town with a secondary school, and other factors would contribute to dropout but the solution may not be building small lower secondary or small upper secondary schools in rural districts if the qualified teachers are not available to deliver the courses. Girls may be disadvantaged further, if their Grade 6 results are better than many boys but they have less opportunity to travel to the nearest larger town to attend secondary school. There is no simple solution unless more girls graduating from TTCs in provincial capitals and other cities are prepared to teach in smaller rural communities.

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271. Table A3 (see annex) presents a visual image of this challenge for rural and remote provinces, with the distribution of districts within each province showing its primary female students as a percentage of all students. Unless girls in rural districts achieve higher secondary completion rates, the pattern will be repeated, until more girls from rural secondary schools enter teacher training and return to their home district after completing their teacher training.
272. Table 12 shows the national distribution of students by grade and by gender, with more than 40% of students enrolled in Grades 1-3, approximately 30% in Grades 4-6, with some 19% in lower secondary Grades 7-9 and only 10% reach Grades 10-12. With districts plotted by latitude and longitude, differences between northern and southern provinces are more marked. More than half the enrolments are in primary Grades 1-4.
273. Total enrolments increased from 7.16 million in 1390 (2011) to 7.73 million (+8%) in Afghan Year 1391 (2012), and by a further 0.42 million to 8.15 million (+5 %) in Afghan Year 1392 (2013), but the enrolment growth is distributed unevenly. Districts with no students reported ('0' value in the half-degree in the graphs in attached Table A3), and those with few, usually female, students point to low participation and/ or low population in the district.
274. Table 12 aggregates district data by grade, by gender, to show the concentration of enrolments in lower primary grades. Greater detail and latitude and longitude present district data in annexes (Tables A3).

AFGYR	YEAR	MF	Grade1	Grade2	Grade3	Grade4	Grade5	Grade6	Grade7	Grade8	Grade9	Grade10	Grade11	Grade12	TOTAL	
1390	2011	F	428037	408552	370480	328757	272631	239494	202782	156390	131508	119978	69562	46936	2775107	
		M	604789	579601	517743	500948	423991	385469	365134	292278	254919	212333	140087	106705	4383997	
			1032826	988153	888223	829705	696622	624963	567916	448668	386427	332311	209649	153641	7159104	
			14,4%	13,8%	12,4%	11,6%	9,7%	8,7%	7,9%	6,3%	5,4%	4,6%	2,9%	2,1%	100%	
1391	2012	F	462548	454469	400412	355071	295379	250397	214148	167472	137219	114795	108138	66101	3026149	9%
		M	636500	645929	571571	524014	447359	393577	375765	306109	260793	221308	190853	130480	4704258	7%
			1099048	1100398	971983	879085	742738	643974	589913	473581	398012	336103	298991	196581	7730407	8%
			14,2%	14,2%	12,6%	11,4%	9,6%	8,3%	7,6%	6,1%	5,1%	4,3%	3,9%	2,5%	100%	
1392	2013	F	465477	488883	425597	379135	313594	268412	224526	176977	143613	112363	102480	98704	3199761	6%
		M	674652	670714	601736	557038	473067	419529	383137	316644	267770	219963	193129	174132	4951511	5%
			1140129	1159597	1027333	936173	786661	687941	607663	493621	411383	332326	295609	272836	8151272	5%
			14,0%	14,2%	12,6%	11,5%	9,7%	8,4%	7,5%	6,1%	5,0%	4,1%	3,6%	3,3%	100%	
Cumulative share			14%	28%	41%	52%	62%	70%	78%	84%	89%	93%	97%	100%		

Table 12: Distribution of 1390-1392 enrolments by grade and gender

275. Using the same national data by grade and gender, Table 13 presents the apparent grade progression rates by gender, for Afghan Years 1390-1391 (2011-2012) and Afghan Years 1391-1392 (2010-2013).

Afghan Year and Gender	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total Enrolled
1390 F	428037	408552	370480	328757	272631	239494	202782	156390	131508	119978	69562	46936	2775107
1390 M	604789	579601	517743	500948	423991	385469	365134	292278	254919	212333	140087	106705	4383997
1390 Total	1032826	988153	888223	829705	696622	624963	567916	448668	386427	332311	209649	153641	7159104
1391/1390 F	100	106	98	96	90	92	89	83	88	87	90	95	3026149
1391/1390 M	100	107	99	101	89	93	97	84	89	87	90	93	4704258
1391 Total	1099048	1100398	971983	879085	742738	643974	589913	473581	398012	336103	298991	196581	7730407
1392/1391 F	100	106	94	95	88	91	90	83	86	82	89	91	3199761
1392/1391 M	100	105	93	97	90	94	97	84	87	84	87	91	4951511
1392 Total	1140129	1159597	1027333	936173	786661	687941	607663	493621	411383	332326	295609	272836	8151272

Source: EMIS data (Afghan changes 1390 1392.xls)

Table 13: Apparent grade progression by gender, 1390-1391-1392

276. Higher retention in Grade 2 (for both genders) could be high repetition, late entry of older students and or composite (multi-grade) classes in smaller rural schools. Late enrolments in Grade 4 and Grade 7 could increase Grade 6-7 transition, especially where students move from smaller rural schools to larger schools in the nearest town or city. The impact of proximity to larger towns or cities warrants further examination, as it may exaggerate some district performance (if, for example, primary grade students in Beshud or Surkrud Districts in Nangarhar Province move to primary or secondary schools in Jalalabad City.)
277. Aggregation of enrolment data (to province and then provinces to the national total) may overstate improvements in participation rates. Enrolment at the beginning of the school year cannot reflect non-attendance or drop-out during the year. While it is not feasible to conduct multiple collections (given seasons, distance, limited access, and time taken to process and verify the annual EMIS collection), each district should be encouraged to monitor attendance against the official annual data reported in EMIS. Districts which monitor their year-on-year data should have a better understanding of future enrolments, and prospective demand for more teachers. Improving completion rates in rural districts, especially for girls, may determine future numbers trained as teachers. Urban districts or rural districts adjacent to the Provincial capital may contribute to above average performance.
278. While the grade distribution may appear descriptive, it offers a simple basis for assessing improved national performance.⁷⁴ Unlike abstract measures such as gross enrolment rates and net enrolment rates, the grades profile can be applied to provinces, and also to each district, to identify initiatives to improve national performance.

⁷⁴ See annex tables A1-A3.

279. Comparing district (and province) enrolments in Grade 1-3, Grade 4-6, Grade 7-9, and Grade 10-12 against the national profile (41-30-19-11) in Table 14 could be a basis for assessing current performance and improvements over the next five years. The simplified 40-30-20-10 profile may offer a simpler basis against which provinces and districts can understand and compare their performance.⁷⁵ Annex table A2 aggregates districts to provinces (alphabetical order) to show G13-G46-G79-G1012 profiles, by gender, and also contrasts the seven provinces south of 33°N. Those seven provinces had a 54-27-13-06 male profile and 60-25-10-05 female profile. Both are significantly different from the national profile.
280. Table 14 shows the national average enrolment by gender (from data in Table 12). Rounding a whole percentage may overstate some changes by grade and by gender.

Afghan Year and Gender	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total Enrolled
1390 F	15%	15%	13%	12%	10%	9%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	100%
1390 M	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	3%	2%	100%
1391 F	15%	15%	13%	12%	10%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	4%	2%	100%
1391 M	14%	14%	12%	11%	10%	8%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	100%
1392 F	15%	15%	13%	12%	10%	8%	7%	6%	4%	4%	3%	3%	100%
1392 M	14%	14%	12%	11%	10%	8%	8%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	100%

Source: EMIS data (Afghan changes 1390 1392.xls)

Table 14: National average performance by gender

3.2 Improving the data management system

281. Afghanistan has inherited a reporting system that manages data without any direct contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Education management at schools is about managing teaching and learning but the focus of data collection and information management is on collecting data on school facilities, students enrolled and teachers, aggregating school data to district and district data to the province. This is not a criticism of Afghanistan, but applies in most advanced and developed countries as well. National reporting systems comply with the international standards when they report to UNESCO and the International Institute for Education Statistics in Montreal, resulting in abstract measures of students-per-teacher which do not directly assess the effectiveness of classroom teaching and learning.
282. Reporting teacher numbers by educational qualification and subject area, and by some classification of qualifications, produces aggregate data for the government to justify funding to the education sector and for international reporting. Qualifications are a proxy measure of educational skill but not of teaching ability.
283. Tables collected for EMIS from schools showing numbers of teachers/ others by their gender, qualifications and subject/area serve little purpose. Unless teacher data includes age,⁷⁶ employment status (permanent/ temporary/ other), grade(s) taught and subject(s) taught, there is tremendous input for minimal benefit.

⁷⁵ Division of some districts to create new districts may limit this “40-30-20-10” measure of performance, and it may be necessary to combine “new” districts with their “parent” district.

⁷⁶ Or “age-group” (in five year groups)

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284. If the Human Resources Directorate in the MoE has most of this data, including payroll status, year appointed etc., it would be more efficient for the ministry or for the provincial department to generate a standard report for each school for checking/ verification by the relevant school. Collecting data largely unchanged from the previous year, entering it on forms and having it entered into the national EMIS data base is massive effort for negligible effect.
285. It would be more efficient if the school received the human resource table, indicated teachers who had left, entered details of additional teachers, and captured information about subjects, grades and classes and hours taught per week. These results could update the national data sets and generate higher quality school, district, province and national reports. Part-time, casual, and temporary teachers not on the payroll would be identified.
286. Comparable data would be collected for administrative staff, generated from human resources for existing staff and updated at the school for any changes in personnel. These suggestions seek to improve the quality and relevance of data collected, eliminate duplication, and reduce data re-entry.
287. The overlap between teacher data collected in the existing EMIS Return and Human Resources would be eliminated (other than the school verifying data and any changes on the previous year/semester/term report). It may be more useful to collect the above details about grades/ classes/ subjects taught each (normal) week from a sample of schools in a sample of districts. A survey of language of instruction and teacher proficiency in that language could be assessed against the “home” language of the students attending a sample of schools/ districts. This is not a recommendation to add more information to the Annual School Return!
288. Further analysis is required to clarify students who enrolled but never attended the school and to verify their exclusion from student-teacher ratios. Analysis is also required on the aspect of part-time/ casual teachers and especially the role, contribution and any payments (by source) to voluntary teaching staff in schools.

4 DONOR (ARTF) INVOLVEMENT IN EQUIP II

4.1 Overview

289. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) was established in 2002 to provide a coordinated financing mechanism for the Government of Afghanistan's budget and priority national investment projects. Today the ARTF remains the vehicle of choice for pooled funding, with low transaction costs, transparency and accountability. It is the largest single source of on-budget financing for Afghan development.
290. The ARTF is supported by 33 donors and administered by the World Bank. The main donors are the United States of America, the European Commission/ European Union, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Australia, and Norway.⁷⁷ The ARTF supports five sectors: agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, human development, governance as well as monitoring, recurrent costs and bilateral premiums. Donors may express preferences for certain sectors, but cannot earmark their contribution to the ARTF for specific projects.
291. The human development sector includes projects addressing basic education, higher education, skills and TVET, and health. The education sector is headed by Canada. Until recently the main donors exchanged their views and provide their professional input in the context of an informal working group. This group did not, however, have a decision-making authority with regard to the World Bank-administered fund.
292. This informal group was recently transformed into the Local Education Donor Group, a forum, headed by Canada, with UNICEF (chief of education sector/ AFG) as deputy leader to provide donors with a more organized structure. The Local Education Donor Group has 35 members, whereas the informal group consisted of between five and eight donors. The forum represents the entire education sector, unlike the informal group of donors engaged in the ARTF / EQUIP.

4.2 Analysis

293. The following text, which reflects donor feedback, identifies some differences in perception between donors and the World Bank with regard to EQUIP. Some of the views expressed by donors are critical of the World Bank. The purpose in presenting these views here is not to attribute blame or to suggest who is right or wrong, or 'who has to change'. Rather, it is important to openly acknowledge the different perceptions so that, together, the main actors can explore and address the underlying issues in a systemic manner.

A) Information exchange

294. Some donor feedback expressed the view that they are not adequately informed about education matters in general and EQUIP in particular. They consider that they are not in a position to track the outcomes and recommendations of implementation supervision mission meetings. They have the impression that EQUIP reports are superficial, and lack transparency. There is a perception that they were not fully informed about the three ongoing evaluations, and they were not invited to provide input for the ToR for these evaluations. Some donors feel that they have to chase up information although their contribution to the ARTF is presently bigger than that of the World Bank. From their perspective, it appears as though the World Bank is doing them a favor by helping them spend their funds and it resents being asked too many questions. For example, donors informed the evaluation team, that they have not been adequately informed about the results of cash transfer for girls' education.

⁷⁷ See Annex 7: ARTF Administrator's Report on Financial Status (June 21, 2014)

B) Presence during the implementation

295. Donors seek information about the education sector through other channels (including bilateral projects in which they are involved), and they undertake their own evaluations. Some express doubt that the World Bank is aware of the level of corruption within the system. There is a general concern donor that the flow of information will diminish when World Bank staffs are relocated to Dubai (for costs and security reasons).

C) Donors participation in missions

296. Donors can participate in World Bank mission to the provinces but they do not feel effectively part of the missions. Several donors requested to participate in the last mission but were informed this would involve a lot of work. Only one person was allowed on the mission. This donor representative, together with other donors, attended some preparatory sessions for the field trips in the World Bank's office in Kabul, but did not go to the provinces.
297. D) The World Bank notes that it spends a lot of time providing information to the donors, but frequent changes in donor staff lead to misunderstandings about EQUIP II. EQUIP III will be discussed with the donors. Aide Memoires are shared with them. Donors were welcome to participate in the World Bank missions to the provinces.

E) Financial risk management process

298. Some donors are only interested in very specific schools and provinces, not in the overall education system. The World Bank notes that it updates the donors every two months. However, it cannot meet their financial monitoring expectations, as funds are transferred to the MoE, which decides how they should be disbursed. The World Bank did introduce stricter controls several years ago following reports of unaccounted or irregular use of funds. It considers that its approach now better addresses the different risks present in individual provinces and districts.

F) Capacity building

299. Some donors perceive EQUIP II as a parallel structure that is not integrated into the MoE. They raise questions about service delivery in fragile provinces. They consider that there should be more emphasis on quality, rather than on quantity. Capacity building in state institutions at province level requires more attention. Donors would like to be informed about the Afghan Government's financial contribution to EQUIP II. Overall donors are concerned that the utilization of their funds is not as efficient or effective as it might be.
300. G) (Deleted)

4.3 Addressing important issues

301. A) It is important that issues such as slow disbursement of funds are addressed in a systemic manner to mitigate obstacles that have undermined EQUIP operations for a number of years.
302. B) The recently established Local Education Donor Group provides an opportunity for donors and the World Bank to jointly seek improvements in areas that are of concern. Local Education Donor Group include:
- Whether donors can do more to protect EQUIP from political interference at the operational level;
 - Whether now is the right time to reduce the salaries of highly qualified staff. The evaluators consider that to do so now will undermine the development of major institutions, and it will discourage well-qualified and experienced Afghan expatriates from returning;
 - Whether institutional development can be facilitated by accelerating the promotion of a new generation of managers, and if so, how this might be done without excessive destabilization.

5 IMPACT OF EQUIP II

5.1 Equitable Access

Gender gap

303. Although Afghanistan has made significant progress in ensuring equitable access to education since 2002, there is still a significant gender parity gap. The gender parity index in primary education is 0.76 (76 girls to 100 boys) in Grade 1 to Grade 6. In secondary education the gender parity index is 0.49.⁷⁸ The parity index differs between provinces and between districts within provinces. Badakhshan province has come closest to achieving parity, while Uruzgan, Zabul and Paktika have a gender gap far below the national average.⁷⁹
304. Equitable distribution of education opportunities and resources to all school-aged children, irrespective of their gender, in all parts of Afghanistan, is one of the main objectives of reconstructing the education sector in Afghanistan. This highly ambitious objective has not so far been achieved in all locations.⁸⁰ There is a gender gap, and there are rural-urban and regional disparities.⁸¹ Female enrolment in many provinces is concentrated in the provincial capital, with very low enrolment in other districts.⁸² This is particularly acute in the south of Afghanistan, where security remains problematic.

Basic education

305. Equitable access to basic education requires that the education system addresses secure and insecure areas differently. Special programs are needed to increase enrolment in insecure areas. For example, in Kandahar province, teachers were incentivized with higher salaries (through the GPE program) to take up posts in remote areas.⁸³ Such an approach might enhance the reach of EQUIP III.⁸⁴
306. The quality of school infrastructure has a significant impact on equitable access to education. Teaching in tents or in inadequate buildings for extended periods reduces enrolment.⁸⁵

5.2 Quality of Education

307. Improving the quality of education is not simply a matter of increasing the number of teachers and improving their skills and qualifications. It also requires:
- More transparent, better-functioning administration at province and district levels;
 - Improvement in the overall learning environment, including buildings, facilities, and supplies, which in turn require timely disbursement of funds;
 - A more secure and supportive community environment.

⁷⁸ See Central Statistics Organization and UNICEF, 2012

⁷⁹ See Women's Role in Afghanistan's Future – Taking Stock of Achievements and Continued Challenges, Kabul, 2014

⁸⁰ See EMIS distribution map 1391 in section 3.1, Table 7

⁸¹ See Annex, Table A 2

⁸² See section 3.1:Data analysis, Tables 8 and 9

⁸³ GPE Afghanistan Annual Report 2014. Available at:

<http://moe.gov.af/Content/files/GPE%20Afghanistan%20Annual%20Report%20%282014%29%20-%20.pdf>

⁸⁴ Poverty also influences enrolment and dropout rates. In Nangarhar and Kandahar, children from poor families were taken out of school when the WFP school-feeding programs ended.

⁸⁵ See section 2.5: Infrastructure

308. The quality of education has a long-term influence on the development of the country. The LAU has been assessing learning achievement only since 2012-2013. The results are of importance for EQUIP III. The quality of school buildings and facilities plays a vital part in the quality of education. Nevertheless, highly competent principals in some of the visited schools demonstrate that it is possible to maintain the quality of education, even when the operating environment is difficult.
309. Highly engaged SMSs with educated parents amongst their membership have demonstrated that they can improve the situation for their children. Nevertheless, the lack of teachers, especially qualified teachers suggests that it will take many more years for quality of education to reach acceptable standards throughout the country.
310. Some PEDs and DEDs require more support to enhance the quality of education through improved administration. The MoE needs to intervene to ensure that student advancement is always based on merit. Qualified teachers must be protected from pressure to advance students prematurely to higher classes. The existence of Grade 12 students who are unable to read or write undermines the credibility of the entire education system.

5.3 Service Delivery

311. The monitoring of service delivery has improved considerably following the engagement of external monitoring agents, such as IRD and DAARTT. Nevertheless, closer monitoring is required throughout the system to provide greater assurance that all funds intended for infrastructure at province and district levels are used for the intended purposes in the intended locations. Procurement and finance rules and regulations need to be simplified to eliminate long disbursement delays that lead to cost increases, unfinished projects, and cancelled activities. (See sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.10).

5.4. Relevance

312. EQUIP II remains highly relevant to Afghanistan's needs. Nevertheless, it needs to adapt, taking into account findings of its own monitoring and evaluation, as well as those of external evaluations.
313. EQUIP aims to promote equitable access to basic education. It aims to improve the quality of education and strengthen service delivery. These improvements are in turn intended to help reduce poverty. EQUIP is part of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP).
314. Afghanistan is still one of the poorest countries in the world.⁸⁶ The education sector was almost destroyed during more than 30 years of conflict. The illiteracy rate remains high. In some areas there are cultural reservations against education, which can be overcome only incrementally and with considerable patience. While the core problems originally identified at the time of EQUIP I remain, the situation has improved over the last decade. There have been significant improvements in some areas, such as enrolment rates, gender parity, and availability and quality of school buildings. This progress is tangible and can be measured and observed. Whereas EQUIP I focused more on quantity, EQUIP II has focused more on quality.

⁸⁶ It ranks 177 on a list of 188 countries ranked in the UNDP's Human Development Index. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

315. Afghanistan remains a fragile state, although the economy has improved significantly since the fall of the Taliban regime 12 years ago, largely due to the inflow of international assistance, the recovery of the agricultural sector, and the growth of the service sector.
316. Nevertheless, the present economic and social situation falls far short of what was expected at that time, and much of the population still lacks adequate housing, clean water, electricity, medical care, and employment. In some areas there are simply no opportunities to earn money. Education is an essential prerequisite for improved livelihoods. Communities need outside support to help them improve education and livelihoods in a sustainable way.

5.5 Effectiveness

317. Effectiveness refers to the achievements of the intended outcomes, and assessment of whether the actual outputs are the most appropriate to ensure achievements of the intended outcomes and impacts. When considering EQUIP’s results, it is important to take account of the challenging operating environment in Afghanistan.⁸⁷ Achievement of intended outcomes depends not only on the performance of those involved in the program’s management and implementation, but is also influenced by unplanned and unexpected external factors.
318. Detailed results for all output indicators are provided in the 2013 and 2014 Implementation Status and Results Reports. This evaluation report explains those results.⁸⁸ A comparison of actual results now with the results at the end of EQUIP I, it is clear that there has been a significant increase in quantity at all levels.

- Overall enrolment increased between 2008 and 2013 – of girls by 66%, and of boys by 47%:

School enrolment in 2008 and 2013	2008	2013	% increase 2008 to 2013
Girls enrolled	1,948,741	3,225,898	66%
Boys enrolled	3,394,569	4,978,430	47%

Table 15: School enrollment in 2008 and 2013

- 1,662 school buildings have been constructed or are under construction;
 - 11,542 schools have received quality enhancement grants since 2008 (10,800 during EQUIP II, and 742 during Additional Finance);
 - There are now 73 model schools in Afghanistan;
 - By the end of June 2014, EQUIP I and EQUIP II had supported the establishment and operation of 14,222 SMS throughout the country;
 - 90,000 teachers graduated from TTCs during EQUIP II, of whom 42% are female;
 - The number of TTCs has increased from four in 2001-2002, to 44 by mid-2014. Each of the 34 provinces has at least one main TTC, and some TTCs have district branches;
319. However, in some areas, most notably infrastructure and social mobilization, the increase in quantity came at the expense of quality. 627 new social mobilizers were appointed (an increase of almost 1,000%) and it is estimated that 45% (approximately 280) were appointed on the basis of personal contacts, rather than their qualification for the job. Moreover, this role was for a long time not supported with appropriate training.

⁸⁷ See section 2.1

⁸⁸ See sections 2.3.2, 2.3.5, 2.3.6, and section 3.

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320. A foreign social mobilization capacity building advisor was appointed only in November 2013 to undertake a training needs assessment and to commence the training of trainers. In the Meantime the Program Implementation Manual was revised and a “Handbook for School Management *Shuras*” was published.
321. Several new EQUIP units were established between 2011 and 2013:
 - Gender Unit
 - Learning Assessment Unit
 - Environmental and Social Safeguard Unit
 - Public Awareness Unit
322. These new units strengthen EQUIP’s institutional structure through emphasis on educational matters, which are important for sustainability.
323. Inadequate monitoring has contributed to delayed implementation and completion of infrastructure projects, and non-compliance with technical requirements. In 2011, the World Bank retained the IRD as supervisory agent on behalf of the World Bank and the ARTF. The IRD’s involvement has improved transparency and has led to improvements in the execution of works. Nevertheless, the IRD notes that civil works are challenging in areas subject to security risks. Until now, the IRD has not had access to cost information and is therefore unable to assess whether or not funds have been utilized appropriately.

5.6 Sustainability

324. Sustainability refers to the viability of the program, its interventions, and the outcomes of its activities in the long-term. This assessment takes into account financial, management, and accountability structures.
325. EQUIP was established from the top down within the existing structure of the MoE.
326. Including province and district level administrations in the overall administration of the education system is important for sustainability. Of the 34 provinces, 13 are categorized as ‘insecure’. Progress within the administration in these 13 provinces is slow, largely due to resistance from conservative elements within society. Nevertheless, the evaluators consider that EQUIP’s multifaceted, holistic approach to the creation of an enabling environment is the right approach for long-term sustainability. This approach incorporates improvements in physical infrastructure and facilities, social mobilization at the local level, empowerment of communities through support to SMS, and improvements in the quality of teaching (through support to teacher training).
327. More emphasis needs to be placed on strengthening district administrative structures, for example through more training and greater delegation of responsibility. EQUIP II has not prioritized this enough, and this is undermining the program’s sustainability. Community mobilization is a major challenge in the context of Afghanistan’s violent and chaotic recent history, and the widespread cultural indifference (in some areas, resistance) to education. Overcoming this challenge requires highly competent social mobilizers, combined with special employment packages for those working in difficult locations (e.g. higher salaries, transport, and training and mentoring to help them overcome extreme challenges).

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328. Financial, management and accountability structures are improving, but are not yet sustainable. EQUIP is integrated into MoE structures, although its staff are paid more than regular civil servants, and some operate from offices located in different buildings from those of the MoE.
329. The fact that EQUIP is able to attract well-educated, foreign trained Afghan staff is important during this modernization phase, and the MoE needs young, well-educated staff for longer-term sustainability. Thus, higher salaries and other special measures for EQUIP staff are justified, for now.
330. School buildings, facilities, and equipment are generally not sustainable, as few schools have a maintenance budget. Thus, when things deteriorate, break, or become outdated, schools have limited possibilities for repairing, replacing, or updating them. There is therefore a significant risk that many of the schools constructed and equipped with EQUIP funds will, over time, become unable to assure equitable access to quality education, and some may cease to function altogether. It is therefore recommended that EQUIP III prioritize the issue of maintenance. This is a complex issue that demands a carefully considered systemic approach, since, apart from anything else, state maintenance funds are likely to be highly constrained (or simply not available) for many years. The implications of this need to be openly acknowledged at all levels, in particular at district and community levels where the impact will be most felt. Failure to do so will ultimately reverse the successes that EQUIP has achieved (for example in reducing dropout rates and increasing the enrolment of girls), and it will make it harder to attract and retain well-qualified teachers. Openly acknowledging the seriousness of this problem is an essential first step to mitigating the risk it poses. EQUIP can help communities to recognize the need for systematic planning for maintenance, and updating, and it can help them to develop their own plans jointly with district authorities. Such plans should not, however, be a blueprint imposed from outside, as this is unlikely to work. Rather, plans have to be developed by the communities themselves to ensure that they are fully adapted to local realities.
331. Community mobilization in support of education is the best foundation for ensuring the sustainability of EQUIP's gains. This is demonstrated by the parents and other community members engaged in the SMS. Quality education improves the prospects of young people and helps to protect them against radicalism. The first generation of young Afghans to graduate from TTCs exemplifies the positive impact and sustainability of education. Quality education can be viewed as positive feedback system. That is, education itself increases recognition of the importance of education and thus increases the demand for education. Positive feedback systems grow exponentially, so growth is slow to begin with, but accelerates over time. Thus there may initially be limited evidence of the wider impact of education in Afghanistan, but this is likely to become increasingly visible over time.
332. There is high turnover amongst district social mobilizers suggesting that, despite the rapid and significant increase in numbers, the recruitment process lacks overall sustainability. Issues affecting sustainability include: the highly diverse background and qualification of recruits (i.e. many may find that they are not well suited to the work); insufficient resources to carry out the job, such as office space and transport; there is insufficient initial and continuing professional capacity development support; salaries are often paid late; the variable levels of security of different locations are not reflected in remuneration packages; social mobilizers working in insecure provinces receive no training in how to go about their work in such a difficult context.

6 OVERVIEW OF MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF SECTOR ANALYSIS AND EQUIP II PETS/QSDS

Analysis of the Afghanistan Education Sector & PETS/QSDS of EQUIP II, which corresponds broadly to the third component of EQUIP dealing with education service delivery

333. Many of findings and conclusions are reflected in this report. This section summarizes the main findings of the 'Analysis of the Afghanistan Education Sector & PETS/QSDS of EQUIP II',⁸⁹ which was carried out in parallel with the evaluation covered by this report. This work consisted of three parts:
- An analytical overview of the education sector in Afghanistan;
 - A historical overview of EQUIP;
 - An assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the education system, based on statistical analysis of MoE and EQUIP data.
334. Enrolment has increased significantly since 2002. By 2013, nine million students were enrolled, compared to fewer than six million in 2008, and students are continuing with education for longer than before (i.e. progressing further through the system). The number of girls enrolled increased by 236% (from 1.4 million to 3.3 million) between 2008 and 2013, although this is only 56% of the enrolment growth rate for boys. Nevertheless, in the majority of provinces the growth rate is higher for girls than for boys.⁹⁰
335. 3,300 schools have been constructed since 2008, accounting for 28% of all schools in Afghanistan. The ISD and SMU have tended to support schools in rural areas slightly more than in urban areas, which have contributed to a reduction in rural-urban disparity. Planning for new schools should use models that consider, among other things, local population changes, and distance to be travelled to school (which is important for female enrolment). Efforts have to date focused on expansion of the education system (primarily school construction). There is now a need to focus more on qualitative aspects of the education system, as there are so far few formal assessments of learning outcomes.
336. The majority of TTC-trained teachers currently employed in schools were educated between 2008 and 2013. Since 2001, some 136,650 students have graduated from pre-service and in-service TTCs across Afghanistan. In-service teachers account for 56% of this figure, and 28,672 (38%) of these in-service teachers are female. These statistics suggest that TTCs are playing a significant role in improving the qualification of the teaching profession in Afghanistan.⁹¹
337. Nevertheless, many children still have no access to formal basic education due to remoteness, poverty, insecurity, lack of facilities, and lack of teachers. In particular, girls and children with special needs lack access to education. There are also ethnic disparities. In some locations, there are high dropout rates, especially after Grade 4, and especially amongst girls.
338. Even where there are qualified teachers and suitable buildings, a lack of basic facilities and materials is likely constraining the quality of education, for example, blackboards, textbooks, toilets, and water supply. EQUIP support to schools should be systematically followed up by

⁸⁹ Particip, March 2015, *Analysis of the Afghanistan Education Sector & PETS/QSDS of EQUIP II*

⁹⁰ This suggests that the growth rate for girls in around 10 provinces is much less for girls than for boys. It would be interesting to know which provinces these are and what the main reasons behind this continuing disparity are.

⁹¹ Institute of Social and Policy Sciences, 2015, 'Report on Third Party Review of the Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training Programs (NPITT, DT3, TTCs) of the Teacher Education General Directorate (TED)'

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locally coordinated educationists to ensure that the quality and reach of education provided by these schools is not constrained by a lack of critical, basic resources, infrastructure, or facilities.

339. Completed construction projects do not reflect the level of funds disbursed. Significant amounts of funding do not reach its intended destination. A lack of relevant information prevented the evaluators from determining the causes. It appears that significant funding has not been used for the intended purposes, especially funding allocated for infrastructure. The rate of school construction completion is constrained by inefficient financial and procurement procedures. The problem lies with the MOE's procurement department and the MOE's relationship with the MOF centrally and at province level.
340. Equitable access to EQUIP resources is improving, but it does appear that there is still some disparity, albeit diminishing, with regard to gender, location (rural versus urban), and poverty.
341. Overall return on investment is significant and over the next five years, income gains to the people of Afghanistan are likely to reach five times the level of investment in the education sector.
342. There are weaknesses in EQUIP's monitoring at central, province, and district levels. Site monitoring visits have not been effective in ensuring timely and satisfactory completion of works. Site monitoring could be made more effective by prioritizing projects that are not completed within 2.5 years. EQUIP's central databases are missing much monitoring data that are essential for time and budget management, and standalone databases lack interoperability. These issues could be addressed by enhanced management and supervision of data collection and input, centrally and in the field, and by standardizing certain database keys, such as unique school code, GPS coordinates, and PP codes used by the procurement and finance departments. Relational databases are desirable as they eliminate duplication, enhance accuracy, and facilitate more complex analysis and reporting. Database units need to be strengthened in the Social Mobilization Unit, the Infrastructure Department, and the Teacher Education Department. Better use could be made of data, for example tracking the progress of works projects, and enabling schools to compare budget management and educational performance.
343. Provinces, districts, and schools should be given more autonomy to improve administration and education. The roles and responsibilities of the different structures at province and district levels should be clarified and the MOE needs to strengthen its system of accountability to ensure that its policies are implemented.
344. MOE staff capacity remains weak, especially at lower levels and it lacks a comprehensive capacity development strategy.
345. There is uncertainty over future financing of education due to loss of domestic revenues, falling economic growth, and uncertainty over external funding. Government and development partners need to engage in dialogue to ensure continued expansion of education opportunities. Continued prioritization of education by donors is important, but donor funding needs to be more predictable and more aligned with Afghanistan's national priorities and plans, and these need to be phased, prioritized, and fully costed to ensure that they are realistic.

7 LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

346. Afghanistan is an extreme exception within the worldwide development context. Despite immense international support, the operating environment for the education system remains unstable. Afghanistan's structural recovery requires more time. The country is in the middle of a transition phase where military and security authority are being transferred to Afghan forces. At the same time, the country is seeking to stabilize its institutional structures. International discourse often underestimates the physical and mental effort demanded by post-conflict reconstruction. The emergence of effective Afghan 'ownership' is itself a long process.
347. Development programs and projects, especially those on education, contribute to the transformation into a civil society.
348. Education is a pre-requisite for the stabilization and moderate economic progress of communities, districts, and the nation. In turn, economic development at community level contributes to overcoming violence, and supports the development of civil society. Thus EQUIP's social mobilization and infrastructure activities are vital.
349. The reconstruction of the education system during EQUIP I and II was accompanied by the World Bank in a constructively critical manner – the Aide Memoires list many critical points. Nevertheless, EQUIP II was slow to recognize operational problems. The appointment of external entities includes the IRD, DARRTT and Article 25 to provide independent monitoring was an important step.
350. EQUIP has prioritized quantity over quality and this undermines sustainability. It was only in 2013 that the LAU was established to assess whether students were performing at the expected levels. Social mobilization has been similarly affected - the Social Mobilization Unit engaged a trainer of trainers only in November 2013, almost at the end of the program, and with a contract of less than 12 months. On the other hand, the Teacher Education General Directorate recognized the importance of qualified teachers much earlier.
351. The objectives of the SMU are very ambitious, and it does not have sufficient capacity to meet all objectives throughout the country. There have so far been no training needs assessments at province or district levels. More stringent monitoring is required to assess whether social mobilizers correctly implement the agreed mobilization process, and if they have the ability to do so.
352. There is limited understanding on the part of the donor about the need to differentiate between 'normal' and 'insecure' provinces for the purposes of implementing EQUIP. District mobilizers in insecure provinces and districts do not get enough support.
353. All of EQUIP's units are affected by the slow disbursement of budgeted funds. As a result scheduled training events have frequently been postponed, or cancelled. This serious bottleneck should have been resolved years ago through discussion between the donors and the Afghan authorities. The procurement process is highly bureaucratic and it too affects all of EQUIP's units, and has been tolerated by the donors for many years (in this case throughout EQUIP I and II). Procurement and finance units are supposed to service other EQUIP units but in practice they dominate other units and negatively influence the program.⁹²

⁹² For example, they provided the LAU with used computers that were not configured for the intended purpose (i.e. data analysis) These issues need to be addressed if they are not to undermine EQUIP III.

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354. A number of SMSs are highly effective in supporting and facilitating the education system in their communities, sometimes having to contend with significant resistance and risks to their personal security. Their engagement should be documented and used to provide inspiration for other less active SMSs in the country.
355. Public sector finance is a major challenge in light of inadequate domestic revenue, the reduction in the number of donors and their contributions, and the ongoing transition process. This has medium- and long-term implications for the education sector.

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8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Strategic recommendations

Addressee	Issue	Main references in report	Recommendation
EQUIP Administration	Girls - access to education Access to education for girls outside the main cities is lagging behind that of girls in the main cities. In order to improve access to education for girls in locations outside the main cities, more female teachers are needed at province and district levels.	3.1	It is recommended that EQUIP III includes a concerted, long-term capacity building effort focusing exclusively on women, especially in areas outside the main cities.
Ministry of Education & EQUIP Administration	Dated rules, procedures, and approaches In some regards, the Ministry of Education is constrained by dated rules, procedures, and approaches that are not best suited to addressing today's strategic challenges.	2.3.4, 2.3.5, 2.3.6, 2.3.10	Through EQUIP, young, well-educated, foreign trained staff have been introduced into the Ministry of Education. To support the Ministry in addressing today's major strategic challenges, it is recommended that these staff are supported with leadership development, and other professional development. Consideration should be given as to how they might be more closely integrated into the Ministry's permanent structures.
World Bank, ARTF, Ministry of Education	Appointment of EQUIP staff A significant proportion of EQUIP staff are reported to have been appointed without due consideration to their competence for the role to which they have been appointed.	5.5	It is recommended that the World Bank and ARTF donors discuss this with the Afghan authorities with a view to identifying and implementing measures that would ensure appointments are based on competence (academic qualifications, experience, past performance, etc.)
World Bank, ARTF, Ministry of Education	Slow procurement procedures; slow and unpredictable funds disbursement EQUIP is significantly undermined by excessively bureaucratic procurement procedures, and by slow and unpredictable disbursement of operational funds. These are both serious issues that have hampered EQUIP's operations for years.	2.3.4, 2.3.5, 2.3.6, 2.3.10	It is recommended that the World Bank and ARTF donors discuss the issues of slow procurement, and unpredictable funds disbursements with the Ministry of Education with a view to identifying mutually acceptable mechanisms to ensure that these issues of do not undermine EQUIP III
Infrastructure Service Development	Sustainability of school buildings and equipment School buildings, facilities, and equipment are generally not sustainable, as few schools have a maintenance budget. Thus, when things deteriorate, break, or become outdated, schools have limited possibilities for repairing, replacing, or updating them. There is therefore a significant risk that many of the schools constructed and equipped with EQUIP funds will, over time, become unable to assure equitable access to quality education, and some may cease to function altogether.	5.6	It is recommended that EQUIP III prioritize the issue of maintenance. Openly acknowledging the seriousness of this problem at all levels (national, province, district, and community) is an essential first step to mitigating the risk it poses. EQUIP can help communities to recognize the need for systematic planning for maintenance, and updating, and it can help them to develop their own plans jointly with district authorities. Such plans should not be a blueprint imposed from outside or standardised training, as these are unlikely to work. Rather, plans have to be developed by the communities themselves to ensure that they are fully adapted to local realities.

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Addressee	Issue	Main references in report	Recommendation
Ministry of Education	<p>Statistics Given the size of its reach, and the difficult working environment, the EMIS manages to provide quality reports. There is, nevertheless, scope to enhance the quality and usefulness of collected data, while at the same time minimising costs and effort.</p>	3.1	<p>It is recommended that the Ministry of Education modify the way it collects and uses statistics in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education eliminate duplication and data re-entry of statistical data by different departments as this is wasteful of resources and is likely to introduce errors, rather than improve the quality of the data. 2. Schools should be requested annually to verify and, where necessary correct, information held on the EMIS. This could be done by generating a standard report for each school to verify and correct. This approach would be far more efficient, and less prone to errors, than re-entering all data each year. 3. To maximize the accuracy of reports, the EMIS should record data at unit (school) level only. All aggregate reports (district, province, national) should then be generated from the original school level data. 4. It is recommended that teacher data be recorded in more detail. It should include, among other things, age, employment status (permanent/ temporary/ other), grade(s) taught and subject(s) taught 5. There should be greater emphasis on analysis at district level, as province and national level analyses obscure structural issues, and conceal data errors. 6. School Directors should see data accuracy and completeness as a step towards ensuring the necessary staffing and resources for their schools' students.
World Bank & ARTF	<p>Different perceptions of EQUIP amongst donors There are differences between the perceptions of the World Bank and ARTF donors and this has led to tension between them.</p>	4	<p>It is recommended that differences are openly acknowledged and that the World Bank and ARTF donors jointly explore and address the underlying issues in a systemic manner.</p>

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8.2 Operational recommendations

Addressee	Issue	Main references in report	Recommendation
EQUIP Administration	Interference with EQUIP operations The Director of the Kandahar PED demands that EQUIP is more transparent and that it decentralizes more decision making to Kandahar, while he himself seeks to concentrate decision making in his office. EQUIP has expressed concern about some of his decisions. He attempted to influence the selection of schools to be visited by the evaluation team.	2.4.2	It is recommended that EQUIP undertake a detailed on-site assessment of EQUIP-PED management arrangements in Kandahar.
EQUIP Administration, Infrastructure Service Department	Oversight of CC projects SMS have full responsibility for the CC projects, although they often lack sufficient technical knowledge. 543 of the planned CC projects (40%) have only been partially completed (they are not categorized as 'under construction'). EQUIP is convinced that this can be addressed with training by the ISD and the SMU.	2.5.1	It is recommended that EQUIP closely monitors the implementation of contracts executed by SMS with private companies. CC infrastructure projects should be managed by SMS only when the Ministry of Education/ EQUIP have confirmed that the <i>shura</i> has the necessary technical competence.
EQUIP Administration			Payment should take security and remoteness of workplace in consideration. Payment for working in insecure areas should be increased.
EQUIP Administration			EQUIP III should focus more on capacity development at province and district levels.
EQUIP Administration			Funds should be made available at province and district levels for training trainers.
EQUIP Administration			There should be more transparency and cooperation between EQUIP Units.
EQUIP Administration			The WFP should be requested to continue to support schools in remote and poverty-affected areas through its school feeding program.
EQUIP Administration			Crosscutting units such as the Gender Unit and the ESS Unit should be involved in all meetings of all the EQUIP units.
EQUIP Administration			The staff of the Gender Unit need more training and they should be given the opportunity to participate in training abroad.
EQUIP Administration			The Procurement Unit should consult relevant EQUIP units before confirming orders so that the requesting unit can confirm that the order will fulfil its requirements. Procurement should not be based first on meeting the technical requirements of the requesting unit, and then cost – not the other way around.
EQUIP Administration			A fund should be established under the control of EQUIP to pre-finance travel and other expenses associated with participation in international meetings, conferences, and training.

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Addressee	Issue	Main references in report	Recommendation
EQUIP Administration			Opportunities should be provided for SMSs to visit each other and exchange their experiences. This could help to inspire less active SMSs.
EQUIP Administration			EQUIP III should prioritize school construction in communities without school buildings where SMSs have been active for a number of years.
EQUIP Administration			The MoE and EQUIP should protect teachers from threats when they resist outside pressure to advance poorly performing students.
EQUIP Administration			Quality enhancement grants should be flexible and adapted to the specific needs of each school. It is inefficient for the same equipment to be provided to all schools throughout the country.
EQUIP Administration			The IRD should be provided with the cost structure of infrastructure projects so that it can provide assurance that funds have been efficiently and appropriately utilized.
EQUIP Administration			Stakeholder feedback, and the direct experience of the evaluators suggest that some political appointees holding senior positions in the provinces may be interfering with EQUIP operations in pursuit of personal interests. Where there is evidence of this, the World Bank and the ARTF should bring it to the attention of the government.
Social Mobilization Unit		References!	The staff of the unit should be promoted according to their performance.
Social Mobilization Unit			The quality of training needs to be improved and there should be on-the-job training at the district level. Just a few workshops of one or two days are not sufficient to build capacities.
Social Mobilization Unit			The performance of social mobilizers should be more closely and more frequently monitored.
Social Mobilization Unit			Better transport arrangements should be made for staff at province and the district levels to enable them to carry out their work more efficiently.
Social Mobilization Unit			Tailor-made approaches are needed for social mobilizers working in challenging locations, for example where their personal security is at risk, or there is resistance to education within the community. Social mobilizers working in these locations should be offered, among other things, special training, transport allowances, and salary top-ups.
Social Mobilization Unit			All EQUIP officers working at province level should be provided with adequate office accommodation (quality, size, location, etc.).

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Addressee	Issue	Main references in report	Recommendation
Infrastructure Service Development	The same cost calculation has been used for all schools across the country, but this is not appropriate.		Infrastructure cost calculations should take geographic differences into consideration.
Infrastructure Service Development	The cost of school construction has been unnecessarily increased by the use of materials transported long distances		Local materials should be preferred to material transferred from distant locations. The materials should, however, meet the relevant technical requirements.

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8.3 Recommendations regarding teacher education

The following recommendations are based on a third party review,⁹³ undertaken by another contractor, of the pre- and in-service teacher training programs of the Teacher Education General Directorate (TED)

Addressee	Issue	Main references in report	Recommendation
Teacher Education General Directorate	The Diploma in Teacher Education (DTE) explicitly covers nearly 78% of the competencies in Afghanistan's Teacher Competency Framework (TCF), with others covered although not explicitly identified in course materials. The TCF was itself developed more than ten years ago.	2.3.9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant teacher competencies should be explicitly listed as DTE outcomes. The TCF should be reviewed, and it should then be periodically reviewed to address changing needs. Quality assurance should cover the development and assessment of competencies, the extent to which all competencies are covered (and in what depth), and the extent to which DTE is leading to lasting proficiency in competency areas.
Teacher Education General Directorate	Publications to support the implementation of the DTE are generally of a high quality, but some include translation and other errors	2.3.9	Quality assurance of documents should be improved.
Teacher Education General Directorate	The majority of TTC faculty have a bachelor level academic qualification but no professional qualification and there are few opportunities for in-service professional development.	2.3.9	Minimum quality standards should be introduced for education programs, faculty competency, and faculty standards for all teacher education institutions.
Teacher Education General Directorate	Many TTCs lack basic infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, IT and internet, printing, and photocopying facilities.	2.3.9	TTC infrastructure needs should be assessed and addressed.
Teacher Education General Directorate	There is a significant mismatch between the number of teachers being trained and the number of teaching jobs on offer.	2.3.9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The work of the pilot placement office should review to inform the establishment of placement offices at other TTCs as soon as possible. A teacher projection model should be developed to predict teacher requirements in different locations and subjects to mitigate the imbalance between teacher supply and demand.
Teacher Education General Directorate	There appears to be tension between INSET trainers and PED monitoring staff as the trainers consider that PED monitoring staff are not sufficiently sensitized to the content and focus of INSET training.	2.3.9	Awareness should be raised amongst PED monitoring staff (e.g. via training) regarding the content and focus of INSET training.
Teacher Education General Directorate	Entire INSET packages can be repeated but this is not possible for individual courses outside of an INSET package.	2.3.9	It should be made possible to repeat individual INSET courses where needed for refresher training or where teachers have missed out on some training.

⁹³ Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS) (11 May 2015) *Report on Third Party Review of the Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training Programs (NPITT, DT3, TTCs) of the Teacher Education General Directorate (TED)*.

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Addressee	Issue	Main references in report	Recommendation
Teacher Education General Directorate	<p>Principal Learning Circles (PLC) have been formed to provide continuous support and learning for principals. Feedback from members of one PLC confirms the benefit of participation. However, stakeholders highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PLC participants are expected to cover their own participation costs, which undermines sustainability; 2. PLC meetings are held at irregular intervals, they lack purpose and structure, and minutes are not systematically produced and circulated; 3. leadership of PLCs tends to be monopolized by the most senior participants; 4. logistical arrangements are particularly problematic for female PLC members 	2.3.9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding should be allocated to PLCs to cover the costs of arranging and hosting meetings, and to cover the transport costs of members living in remote areas and who do not have their own transport. 2. Good practice guidelines should be developed for the management and operation of PLCs. These should cover, among other things: organisation; agenda setting; communication; and the appointment and tenure of officers. 3. The specific logistical difficulties facing female PLC members should be assessed and guidelines to facilitate female participation should then be developed.
Ministry of Education leadership	<p>The TED’s envisaged PDI relies on effective coordination between the suppliers of professional development services for teachers (TTCs and TDCs) and users (PEDs, DEDs, and schools). At present, there is poor coordination between PEDs and TTCs regarding annual budgeting, making funds available to TTCs, and interference by PEDs in TTC decision making regarding purchases relating to gender and general grants. There is also poor coordination between PEDs and the TED, and PEDs and TTCs in the context of the overall annual planning process for the number and kind of teachers required by the provinces in a given year.</p>	2.3.9	<p>A vision building process should be initiated, involving PEDs, DEDs, TTCs, TDCs, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Finance to explore and agree on ways to improve coordination regarding professional development at province level, in particular to clarify roles and responsibilities. The results of this exercise should be incorporated into the PDI.</p>
Teacher Education General Directorate	<p>The TED lacks an overall monitoring or results framework covering all of its programs and activities, although there are individual results frameworks for activities funded by different donors.</p>	2.3.9	<p>An overall monitoring or results framework should be established to cover all TED programs.</p>
Teacher Education General Directorate	<p>The TED lacks dedicated specialist researchers, evaluators, and monitors. The M&E function is currently distributed amongst staff with other responsibilities, and who not been provided with professional development opportunities in this regard. This is constraining the frequency and quality of M&E activities.</p>	2.3.9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The TED should establish a dedicated research, monitoring and evaluation department, staffed with qualified experts, to undertake systemic research and evaluation. 2. Professional development opportunities should be provided for existing TED staff in the area of monitoring and evaluation.
Teacher Education General Directorate	<p>The National Teacher Examinations (NTE) process is not in line with international standards for the development of teacher competency tests/ assessment and there is a risk of inconsistency in the process.</p>	2.3.9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A model should be developed for setting, administering, scoring, analyzing, and reporting on exams. 2. Better use should be made of NTE data to identify and address areas of weakness amongst teachers, and to inform pre- and in-service programs.