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Technical Assessment of Selected Offices within the Afghan Ministry of Education for Textbook Development and Distribution

February 2016

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared under contract with Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc. for USAID's Afghanistan "Services under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking Phase II" (SUPPORT II) project.

This report was contracted under USAID Contract Number: AID-306- C-12-00012. Afghanistan Services Under Program and Project Office for Results Tracking Phase II (SUPPORT II). This Activity was initiated by the Office of Program and Project Development (OPPD) through Mr. Mohammad Sediq Orya, COR/SUPPORT II.

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Activity Start Date: December 14, 2016

Completion Date: February 16, 2016

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Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, or any other organization or person associated with this project.

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ACRONYMS

AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
ARTS	Afghanistan Reliable Technology Services
BELT	Basic Education, Literacy, and Training
CBE	Community Based Education
CTD	Compilation and Translation Department
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DED	District Education Department
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Project
E&Y	Ernst and Young
FGD	Focus group discussions
G2G	Government to government
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICA	Institutional Capacity Assessment
ICB	International Competitive Bidding
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPPD	Office of Program and Project Development
PED	Provincial Education Directorate
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

SoC	Statement of Compliance
SoW	Scope of Work
STEP	Strengthening Teacher Education Project
SUPPORT	Services under Program and Project Office for Results Tracking
TA	Technical Advisor
TED	Teacher Education Department
TTC	Teacher Training College
TVET	Technical and Vocational Training & Education
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

USAID/Afghanistan requested this assessment of the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to design, print, and distribute grade 1-12 textbooks as it considers funding a printing project of approximately 50 million textbooks. Since the development of a new curriculum in 2009, the MoE has printed and distributed millions of textbooks with assistance from USAID and other donors such as the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) and the World Bank, including through the USAID-funded Basic Education, Literacy, and Training (BELT) project. Donors have observed a number of serious management challenges.

One recurring problem is the MoE's failure to adequately plan for textbook needs, necessitating "emergency procurements" that suffer from irregularities in the procurement process and from quality issues. Additionally, the Ministry has demonstrated an inability to develop a concrete and realistic distribution plan, which has contributed to uneven and inefficient distribution of textbooks to schools across the country. Indeed, despite donor requirements, the MoE has acknowledged that it is unable to account for the number of books distributed to individual schools.

EVALUATION DESIGN, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this assessment is to examine how effectively the MoE manages the design, production, and distribution of quality textbooks that yield grade-appropriate learning outcomes. In specific, the assessment was guided by the following questions:

1. Does the MoE have established standards and procedures for the design of grades 1-12 textbooks, and are these standards and procedures sufficiently

adequate and adhered to on a consistent basis by MoE staff responsible for these activities? Are standards implemented by the Curriculum Department aligned with pedagogical standards implemented by the Teacher Education Department?

2. What are the major risks during the procurement phase? What are the quality control and verification systems used by the MoE to ensure that procured items meet the contract requirements?
3. Does the MoE's technical staff have acceptable guidelines and procedures for textbook distribution? Are these procedures and guidelines suitably adequate, transparent, and adhered to on a consistent basis by the MoE's technical staff responsible for these activities to prevent and/or eliminate leakage and the loss of textbooks? Does the MoE have sufficient monitoring and oversight procedures in-place that govern the design, the procurement and receiving, and the quality of textbooks, and textbook distribution to provincial and district-level depots or warehouses and schools throughout Afghanistan? Can the MoE demonstrate that monitoring information is effectively used?
4. Does the MoE have sufficient procedures in-place to accurately estimate, plan, and maintain records for its annual textbook needs? To what extent does the Education Management Information System (EMIS) or other MoE data contribute to planning for textbook needs?
5. Acknowledging Afghanistan's current socio-economic environment: What is an appropriate period of use or lifespan of textbooks for grades 1-12 in Afghanistan?
6. Can management demonstrate that it has taken actions to address deficiencies previously identified during the BELT project?

In order to answer the above questions, the assessment team reviewed literature published on textbooks in Afghanistan, analyzed a number of MoE-issued textbooks,

and conducted fieldwork in three provinces (Kabul, Balkh, and Herat). The team interviewed and collected data from a number of MoE directorates and offices, including Provincial Directorates of Education (PEDs) and District Departments of Education (DEDs). Stakeholders at NGOs and other organizations involved in education in Afghanistan were interviewed. Focus group discussions were conducted with principals, teachers, parents, and other school-level informants. As stated in the Assessment Design and Limitation of Methodology sections, the assessment was limited by the MoE's reluctance to share some information and by insecurity, which determined the places that could be visited.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Major findings and conclusions are presented below according to the MoE department or textbook process stage component assessed.

Curriculum

The MoE developed a new curriculum in 2009 for general and Islamic education, based upon which new textbooks for basic education were developed, printed, and distributed. Prior to this, the Ministry used a curriculum that had been developed with the help of UNESCO in 2003. During the Taliban era, there was effectively no curriculum, as education was based largely on the rote learning of Islamic subjects by boys and young men. The MoE substantively updated the curriculum in 2011, and since then revisions have consisted of correcting errors and typos in textbooks.

The MoE uses various methods for writing textbook content. These include contracting authors, using foreign consultants or advisors, or assigning MoE permanent staff to

write textbooks. Textbooks are reviewed by language, *Islamiyat*,¹ and culture committees, according to the MoE. Officially, the MoE's policy is to review book content every three years, though not necessarily revise it. Respondents criticized the curriculum development process on several grounds: manuscripts are reportedly reviewed and edited by the same people who authored them; content is sometimes copied and pasted wholesale from other countries' textbooks; and the Ministry reportedly fails to hold officials who work on textbook content accountable for any flawed output.

Nonetheless, new iterations of curriculum development show important areas of progress. The assessment's respondents are generally satisfied with the new curriculum; they reported it is more modern, less ideological, has complex content, is better organized, and is more practice-driven than previous generations of textbooks. Teachers and parents say textbooks have improved in content and are more interesting, despite being riddled with errors. Another area of improvement is the textbooks have messages promoting peace and national unity.

Still, the textbook review (discussed below) found, and respondents reported, a number of weaknesses. The textbooks do not encourage problem-solving or critical thinking skills, do not always follow a logical or coherent sequence from one grade to the next, and are sometimes too dense and difficult. In addition to these, there are structural barriers to delivering the curriculum. One is teacher capacity, as many teachers, especially at the primary level, do not have a complete high school education. Another is the length of classes, which are often 30 minutes and insufficient to cover lessons.

¹ Islamic studies

Textbook Review

The assessment reviewed a sample of 11 MoE-issued textbooks, in both Dari and Pashto languages, from primary, secondary, and upper-secondary school grades. On the one hand, the review found the books are generally well written and show improvement in quality compared to textbooks from 2003 in terms of layout, design, and printing. On the other hand, they are far from adequate. The review found typos, and in some instances new editions of textbooks are worse than the previous editions. For example, the grade 1 math book published in 2013 has more flaws than the 2005 edition. Other problems include font size that is too small for beginning readers; visuals that are too small, out of context, or blurry; and overlapping images and text.

The books were also reviewed for religious, ethnic, and gender representation. The assessment found that most references to Islam are from the Sunni rather than Shia perspectives, and there are few, if any, representations of women and ethnic minorities. When women and girls are illustrated, they are often shown to be doing domestic work.

Planning

The MoE operates on a five-year planning cycle based on the assumption that textbook acquisition and distribution takes a minimum of 15 months, and on the current policy that textbooks should be used for three years. The Ministry estimates textbook needs based on student enrollment figures taken from EMIS and sometimes cross-checked with enrollment figures kept by provinces or other departments. To cover contingencies such as refugees enrolling in schools and to account for books provided to private and community-based schools, the Ministry adds an additional percentage to arrive at the number of textbooks needed.

However, EMIS is populated with poor-quality data, and the system is not actually used to determine textbook distribution. Almost all respondents reported that EMIS figures are not reliable. School officials are not instructed on how to fill out EMIS's paper forms, which are sent to the DED for crosschecking and then forwarded to the PED to be inserted in a spreadsheet. EMIS officials do not have the staff and budget to verify the data, and are hindered by other factors such as insecurity. Instead, PEDs and MoE departments come up with a parallel system to distribute books to DEDs and schools.

Data management related to textbooks is also severely lacking. Even large urban centers do not have reliable Internet access or book inventories maintained on computers. Another challenge for keeping track of books is that students who purchase copies of textbooks or originals in the market often return the non-MoE-issued books to the inventory. Most respondents believe that the three-year lifespan is too long; primary level books are especially likely to be damaged in the first year. Opinions are mixed about whether the three-year policy is suitable for textbooks for other grades.

Textbook Design

The Design Department of the MoE's Curriculum Directorate designs grade 1-12 textbooks. The department consists of a team leader and 15 staff, eight hired by the World Bank and seven whom are *tashkeel*² contract employees. After a book is prepared by the Curriculum Department, it is passed on to the Design Department for layout and visualization, and then forwarded to the Publications Department. The department has some technical capacity but appears to be IT-driven rather than focused on pedagogy.

² Permanent employees on the government payroll

There appear to be few if any official policies guiding textbook design. According to the team leader, the department makes sure design meets Islamic, cultural, and scientific standards and does not use online material that is copyright restricted, but beyond that he could not stipulate other policies or criteria. As with curriculum, there is a lack of external monitoring, as the team leader does the quality check. Authors have great influence over images; when an author is involved and specific about the illustrations desired, it is easier for the department to find or create them; when he is not, the illustrations may be vague. This explains the discrepancy between the quality of design in different books, according to the team leader.

Procurement

Within the textbook acquisition process, procurement represents one the greatest risks of fraud and corruption. This is most clearly seen in the selection of Baheer Printing and Packaging Ltd., a leading Afghan company, for five out of six textbooks procurements between 2004 and 2010. According to various sources, Baheer was the MoE's preferred supplier despite not meeting the contractual obligations, such as printing books in-country. During this time period, donors had relatively fewer procurement requirements in place and did not require third party monitoring.

Since 2011, when donors discovered issues with Baheer, the procurement of textbooks has become more transparent. Baheer has won fewer contracts, while international firms, including from India and Vietnam, having won increasingly more contracts. The most recent Danida procurement of 16.4 million books was reportedly to have gone smoothly because external monitoring was in place at nearly every step. USAID has also improved its monitoring efforts; in 2014, it contracted Ernst & Young and Checchi & Company Consulting to verify the distribution of textbooks.

Storage

While the MoE owns and is supposed to oversee all warehouses and storages, in practice these are administered unilaterally by PEDs and DEDs. The facilities vary in size, capacity, and type, ranging from spacious and secure warehouses and containers at the MoE and PEDs, to books being stored at mosques, houses, classrooms, and tents at the school level. The MoE reports owning five big warehouses with 150 containers that can contain 35 million books. The Kabul PED has three warehouses comprised of 30 containers that hold a total of 750,000 textbooks. In Balkh and Herat, officials were unaware of the exact sizes of the PED storages, but were satisfied with their capacity and condition.

At the warehouses and storages, the assessment team noticed recordkeeping of textbooks is conducted manually, and keeping track of inventory appears to be neither practiced nor appreciated. No storage keeper was able to provide an account of textbooks in circulation. In addition, there does not seem to be an effective system for monitoring the storage facilities. The MoE's warehouses are monitored by the very same department that administers them, the Publication Department, and PEDs and DEDs storages are visited irregularly. The security of storage facilities at the MoE and PEDs is ensured by locking the facilities' heavy-duty padlocks. The team noticed problems such as the presence of expired books and material other than textbooks being stored.

Distribution and Delivery

Schools are more concerned with the delayed delivery and shortage of textbooks than problems related to textbook quality and content. The distribution of textbooks is highly centralized, with the MoE managing the process, but different stages implemented by the PEDs, DEDs, and schools. After printing, textbooks are delivered to the MoE warehouses in Kabul. The MoE draws up a distribution plan by province

and, with ministry resources, delivers textbooks to 12 provinces, while private transportation is hired for the remaining provinces.

At the PEDs, committees are formed to receive and check the books. The PEDs divide the books by district and organize and pay for transportation to DEDs. In some cases, schools collect their books directly from the PED rather than the DED. Schools have no budget for transportation and costs are paid out-of-pocket by the principal or DED director, or sometimes taken from some other budget line. Once schools receive textbooks, they distribute them to students, who thumbprint (for students in grades 1-6) or sign (for students in grades 7-12) a registry book. There is no specific policy or practice determining which students receive books when there are not enough books for all students.

Although there are numerous forms signed and receipts given for the distribution and delivery of MoE textbooks, the process faces a number of challenges. One is major delays, which originate with the printer or transport. Schools often do not receive books before the start of the academic year. Another problem is shortages of books, as many schools do not receive a complete order. In addition, there is a problem of "leakage," with MoE-issued books ending up in the market rather than the classroom. Book leakage is facilitated by a lack of transparency in the distribution system because of little third party oversight and the absence of a shared access and jointly managed database. Students often contend with book shortages by buying textbooks in the market.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this assessment of the MoE's capacity to design, print, and distribute textbooks, the following recommendations are provided:

Curriculum

1. The Curriculum Department should have strict qualification and experience standards for technical advisors tasked with working on textbook writing.
2. The Curriculum Department's editing process should be reformed to ensure different individuals review and edit manuscripts they did not also author.
3. Overall daily instructional time should be increased by a minimum of 25% for all levels, and consequently class periods should be increased to a minimum of 45 minutes at the primary level and a minimum of 55 minutes at the secondary level.
4. The number of subjects for both primary and secondary should be decreased. Suggested subjects to drop are the careers and culture subjects in secondary grades, and at least one of the *Islamiyat* subjects in early primary grades.
2. Clear, written national core standards should be established for each grade and subject, which are integrated into teacher education standards within the new teacher certification and accreditation system.

Planning

3. The MoE and donors should prioritize the improvement of EMIS as the primary source of school data.
4. The MoE should pursue computerization of textbook recordkeeping and inventories to improve planning and facilitate monitoring, even if the goals are as modest as ensuring that provincial offices use spreadsheets for inventory tracking by 2018.

5. The Ministry should explore and donors should fund the piloting of SMS systems for basic reporting of textbook needs and textbook receipt at the school and district level.

Textbook Design

6. The MoE should develop specific policies and criteria for using illustrations in textbooks, particularly resources found online.
7. The MoE should assess the technical capacity of the Design Department and provide support where needed.

Procurement

8. The MoE and donors should assess the capacity of local printers along the lines reported by Graphium Consult AB Sweden in 2006. It is necessary to know how many books a printer can produce in a day, be it color or black and white.
9. The UNICEF system of preferred suppliers should be considered locally and internationally. These preferred suppliers meet stringent regulations set by the procurement section and are given the opportunity to bid among themselves for lucrative contracts. The system is valid for a number of years, after which other suppliers can also compete to become a preferred supplier.
10. The MoE and donors should explore the possibility of routing books through Iran. It may be a more secure and efficient way than the Karachi route in the future, especially in relation to the nuclear deal that should see an increase in imports and perhaps more flexibility in allowing goods to transit to Afghanistan.

Distribution and Delivery

11. All MoE, PED, and DED staff involved in textbooks distribution tasks should sign codes of conduct as part of their normal contracts of employment that specify penalties for participating in corrupt practices and for failing to adhere to policies.
12. The MoE should work toward having schools use electronic logbooks for textbook stocks, digitize the accounting of textbooks system, and use an intranet.

INTRODUCTION

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Education (MoE) relies entirely upon donor support to print and deliver textbooks to schools across Afghanistan. Since 2002, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided support to print and distribute more than 130 million primary and secondary grade textbooks for learners in Afghanistan. The curriculum has undergone several revisions. Most recently, in 2009, the MoE developed a new curriculum framework and syllabi for general and Islamic education. Based upon that framework, new textbooks for basic education have been printed and distributed with the support of USAID and other donors, such as the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) and the World Bank.

In 2011, USAID launched the Basic Education, Learning, and Training (BELT) project to improve access to quality education services in Afghanistan. To that end, BELT strengthens the management capacity of the MoE to receive direct assistance and effectively deliver education services in the country. The textbook printing and distribution portion of the BELT project provides assistance to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to procure the printing of MoE-approved grade 1-6 textbooks in Pashto, Dari, and English. The subjects include mathematics, Dari, Pashto, and English languages, arts, handwriting, life skills, geography, and science. The initial phase of this \$27 million component supported the procurement and delivery of 13.6 million textbooks between October and December 2012. A second phase provided assistance for a follow-on procurement of an additional 34 million textbooks.

Beginning in May 2014, the MoE delivered textbooks to Kabul City and six provinces: Kabul, Logar, Parwan, Wardak, Panjshir, and Kapisa. USAID also supported the MoE in transporting textbooks to the provincial centers in the remaining 28 provinces, at which point the MoE used its own resources to complete the distribution of the textbooks to schools throughout Afghanistan. This phase of the distribution began in August 2014 and was largely completed in early 2015, though more than three million textbooks remained at the MoE Kabul warehouse. USAID received final monitoring reports on the distribution from Ernst & Young and Checchi & Company Consulting in September 30, 2015.

USAID encountered several challenges while implementing the BELT textbook printing projects in Afghanistan. One recurring problem is the MoE's failure to adequately plan for textbook needs, necessitating "emergency procurements" that suffer from irregularities in the procurement process and quality issues. Additionally, the MoE has demonstrated an inability to develop a concrete and realistic distribution plan, contributing to uneven and inefficient distributions of textbooks across the country. Furthermore, following the distribution of 34 million primary grade textbooks, the MoE acknowledged that it was unable to account for the number of books distributed to individual schools, despite such a requirement in the implementation letter signed two years prior. USAID and other donors have experienced similar problems since 2002.

USAID has conducted several relevant assessments of textbook printing in Afghanistan, as listed below:

- In 2008, USAID requested that Checchi perform a rapid content evaluation of grade 1-6 MoE textbooks to identify grammatical errors as well as any content that may be objectionable to political, religious, or ethnic sensitivities.
- In 2013, a rapid gender assessment was conducted of grade 1-6 textbooks to identify the extent to which the textbooks have positive, gender-balanced

images and narratives, and the extent to which the MoE had coordinated and collaborated with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and other stakeholders.

- Finally, USAID will conduct a survey of available early grade reading materials in Dari, Pashto, and other local languages, including textbooks printed through BELT, as part of the Early Grade Reading Survey implemented by Chemonics International.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE

The work plan for this textbook assessment was developed with the following objective: to meet the expected purpose of the Technical Assessment of Selected Offices within the Afghanistan Ministry of Education for Textbook Development, Printing, and Distribution. The Scope of Work (SoW) highlights the purpose of the assessment as follows:

To effectively examine the MoE’s technical capacity and abilities to design, print, and distribute, and use basic education (grade 1-12) textbooks. Activities supported as part of this assessment will assist USAID and Afghan counterparts in determining the MoE’s ability to successfully implement a large-scale, on-budget textbook procurement and printing project of approximately 50 million textbooks. This assessment shall review and analyze the six broad challenges as previously mentioned in the Global Partnership for Education report with respect to the MoE and provide appropriate recommendations for mitigating MoE deficiencies.³

³ Scope of Work, Pg. 5

3. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The assessment's key guiding question is: To what extent does the MoE effectively manage the design, production, and distribution of quality textbooks that yield grade-appropriate learning outcomes? The assessment included a desk review of two or three elementary, secondary, and high school textbooks from science, math, and social sciences (excluding Islamic studies). The desk review addressed the following two key questions:

1. Does the design and content align with the latest research and evidence on effective instructional design for the respective subject and grade?
2. Does the content correspond to current teacher training and pedagogy as defined by the MoE's Teacher Education Department (TED) and implemented by the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and other similar institutions throughout Afghanistan?

In addition to the above two questions, the consultants reviewed and addressed the illustrative questions referenced in Annex I, including:

1. Does the MoE have established standards and procedures for the design of grades 1-12 textbooks, and are these standards and procedures sufficiently adequate and adhered to on a consistent basis by MoE staff responsible for these activities? Are standards implemented by the Curriculum Department aligned with pedagogical standards implemented by the Teacher Education Department? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations.
2. What are the major risks during the procurement phase? Note any specific deficiencies and provide actionable recommendations. What are the quality

control and verification systems used by the MoE to ensure that procured items meet the contract requirements? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations.

3. Does the MoE's technical staff have acceptable guidelines and procedures for textbook distribution? Are these procedures and guidelines suitably adequate, transparent, and adhered to on a consistent basis by MoE's technical staff responsible for these activities to prevent and/or eliminate leakage and the loss of textbooks? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations. Does the MoE have sufficient monitoring and oversight procedures in-place that govern the design, the procurement and receiving, and the quality of textbooks, and textbook distribution to provincial and district-level depots or warehouses and schools throughout Afghanistan? Can the MoE demonstrate that monitoring information is effectively used? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations.
4. Does the MoE have sufficient procedures in-place to accurately estimate, plan, and maintain records (e.g., requests for and the distribution of textbooks at national, provincial, district, schools levels) for its annual textbook needs? To what extent does Education Management Information System (EMIS) or other MoE data contribute to planning for textbook needs? Please summarize major deficiencies in the findings and conclusion sections, and provide actionable recommendations.
5. The MoE's current policy concerning grade 1-12 textbook usage mandates that these textbooks be used for three years by schools. However the MoE's Planning Directorate reportedly disagrees with this three-year usage policy.

Acknowledging Afghanistan’s current socio-economic environment: What is an appropriate period of use or lifespan of textbooks for these grades in Afghanistan?

6. Can management demonstrate that it has taken actions to address deficiencies previously identified during the BELT Textbook Printing Project – e.g., poor quality books identified by Checchi at the Kabul warehouse; the MoE’s inability to provide USAID with evidence of the number of textbooks received by individual schools? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations.

4. METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

This section describes the assessment design, data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the assessment’s methodology.

a. Assessment Design

The assessment took place in three provinces: Kabul, Herat, and Balkh. The criteria for selection of these provinces included sound geographical coverage and security considerations necessary to collect credible data. The number of districts and the exact locations were determined on the basis of information collected from the MoE. Data collection activities were carried out with key stakeholders in the following Kabul-based MoE Directorates and Offices:

- Provincial Monitoring and Coordination Manager (and five sub-offices);
- Goods Affairs Organizing (including Distribution and Control Offices);
- Information and Publication (Directorate);
- Academic Counsel on Education and Standards Board;

- Deputy Ministry for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training (including Directorates Curriculum Development, Training Affairs, and Curriculum and Criteria);
- Directorate of Policy and Planning (including the Education Management Information System);
- The Department of General Education;
- The Department of Teacher Education; and
- The Department of the Academic Supervision.

The assessment team visited three Provincial Education Directorates (PEDs) and collected data from Provincial Education Directors, Deputy Education Directors for General Education, Academic Supervisors, and other relevant officials involved in textbook distribution. Data was collected from a select number of schools in the three provinces and stakeholders at the school level were consulted. Six districts in the three provinces were visited; in Kabul Istalif and Qarabagh Districts; in Balkh: Dehdadi and Naher Shahi Districts, and in Herat: Gozara and Injil Districts. Several international organizations working in the education sector were interviewed in order to draw on their experience working in partnership with the MoE, knowledge of textbook production and/or distribution issues, and perspectives from the school level, where textbooks are actually used: the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), and the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). In addition, other donors to textbooks, including Danida and the World Bank, were also interviewed.

b. Data Collection Plan

The assessment collected qualitative data from the technical, management/leadership, and administrative levels at the stakeholders' institutions. The following data collection tools were employed:

Table 1: Data Collection Method Used

Method	Data	Sources
Document Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoE policies and <i>tashkeel</i> • MoE planning documents relevant to textbooks • Donor documentation of relevance, such as work plans with textbook-related activities • Tools and templates used by MoE for textbook development and production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Rapid Gender Assessment, Checchi, 2013 • Basic Education, Learning, and Training (BELT), Ministry of Education, Government of Afghanistan, 2011 • Contract Statement of Compliance, World Bank, 2006 • Curriculum Framework Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, Government of Afghanistan, Volume 1, 2003 • Danida/HLB "Value for Money Audit, Danida, 2013 • Inspection Report, MOE/G-72/ICB, Ministry of Education, 2015 • National Education Strategic Plan (NESP), Ministry of Education, Government of Afghanistan, 2014 • Procurement Contract, MoE/G-43/ICB, Ministry of Education, 2011 • Procurement Contract, MoE/G-47/ICB, Ministry of Education, 212 • Procurement Contract, MOE/G-72/ICB, Contract with Danida, Ministry of Education, 2015 • Quality Control Inspection Checklist, MoE, 2015 • Textbook Procurement, Storage, Distribution, and Monitoring Policies and Guidelines, MoE, Year Unknown • Textbooks Supply Requirements Standard Technical Specification for Print & Supply of General Educational Textbooks, MoE, Year

		Unknown
Literature Review	<p>Previous evaluation or assessment reports on textbook production and/or publication in Afghanistan that are available</p> <p>Empirical research reports and/or journal articles on key findings, lessons learned, and best practices in textbook production and impacts on learning outcomes</p> <p>Guides and tools on best practices in textbook development and production</p>	Please refer to Annex III.
Textbook Assessment	Random selections from science, social sciences and math subjects in Dari and Pashto languages from grade 1-12	Please refer to Textbook Review under Findings, Page 39.
Interviews and Focus Group Discussions	Typed/ written transcriptions	<p>The following categories of respondents were covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Monitoring and Coordination Manager (and five sub-offices); • Goods Affairs Organizing (including Distribution and Control Offices); • Information and Publication (Directorate); • Academic Counsel on Education and Standards Board; • Deputy Ministry for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training (including Directorates Curriculum Development, Training Affairs, and Curriculum and Criteria);

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate of Policy and Planning (including the Education Management Information System); • The Department of General Education; • The Department of Teacher Education; and • The Department of the Academic Supervision. • Three Provincial Education Directorates (PEDs) • EMIS Team at MoE • Six districts in the three provinces were visited; in Kabul Istalif and Qarabagh Districts; in Balkh Dehdadi and Naher Shahi Districts and in Herat Gozara and Injil Districts. • Swedish Committee for Afghanistan • The Aga Khan Foundation • World University Service of Canada • Danida • World Bank • Tw private schools in Kabul • Three public schools in each of the three provinces (Kabul, Balkh and Herat) • Private Printing Press Companies
<p>Process Analysis Mapping and Site Visits</p>	<p>Observation notes</p>	<p>Data from the following milestones within the process were collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and standards • Planning • Curriculum & Content • Review • Design • Procurement • Quality Control and Verification • Storage

- Distribution
- Delivery

c. Data Analysis Plan

Data was analyzed individually at each of the three provincial levels and comparatively, where possible and relevant. After the data was collected, grounded theory was applied to the data sets in the analysis stage, using the open coding process.⁴ The analysis of the qualitative data include identifying repeating patterns, identifying interrelationships across the data, creating meaningful categories for the data,⁵ grouping the repeating ideas into broad themes, and creating conceptual categories with labels, thus creating a framework for analysis. Once key patterns, relationships, and theoretical constructs emerged from the analysis, axial coding was applied, and the findings were cross-analyzed with other recent, relevant research findings on the subject from the literature review.

All qualitative data were analyzed by a coding system. For example:

Interview Question	Code	Conceptualization
Answer		

Data was used to map out the process chain of textbook development and production in Afghanistan. As noted by Crabbe and Nyingi (2014),

⁴ Strauss & Corbin, 1990

⁵ Hoepfl, 1997

The entire book production and distribution process—the book chain—operates in such an interconnected way that a problem in one link creates a ripple effect along the rest of the chain. To address the problems of getting quality books to schoolchildren, we needed to have a holistic problem-solving approach rather than solutions aimed at solving individual problem areas only. A piecemeal approach may strengthen one link to the neglect of other parts of the book chain.⁶

The data collected thus fed into a mapping of the process chain to identify areas of strength and weakness in the chain, drawing from process modeling methodology, wherein “conceptual models are developed in an attempt to describe an interrelated set of processes within a specific organizational context.”⁷ This approach allowed for a bird’s eye view of the textbook planning and production process at the MoE. We used Scheer’s (1998) Event-driven Process Chain model to map the process of textbook development and production, which enables an integrated view of activities, events, and their interconnections within a process (an event being, for example, the commission of a new textbook), such as identifying the preconditions to the successful completion of a task.

d. Limitations of the Methodology

Executing the assessment’s methodology was affected by the following constraints:

- The MoE was strict about sharing policies, guidelines, and rules. Calls for documents from the Ministry, particularly in relation to *tashkeel*, organizational

⁶ Crabbe and Nyingi, p. 17

⁷ Brocke, Buddendick, Kelly & Ó Scolai, 2007, p. 553

organogram, budget and contract settlement with private sector services, and internal M&E reports, either faced challenges or remained unheard.

- Due to insecurity in the country, sites visited were limited to Kabul province plus two other provinces (Herat and Balkh), and did not include remote and/or insecure locations, and thus were not fully representative. Due to security issues, visits to districts remained limited to districts near the three provincial centers.
- There were limitations associated with the methodology, including selection bias and respondent recall bias. Selection was limited to the options offered by the MoE.
- The time of year for this assessment presented challenges, considering it was winter, with many schools not in session and personnel not always available for meetings, focus groups, or interviews. This was addressed to a large extent by inviting participants during their private times (particularly teachers and parents).

The challenges posed a number of issues that affected the geographical and technical scope and depth of this assessment. First, the study is not representative of regional areas of the country, such as the particular context of the southern provinces as no data were collected from this region. Given the diverse nature of each province in terms of security, educational standards, and accessibility to the administrative bodies, this is one of the major constraints of the study. Second, the unavailability of documentation (whether because it was not provided by the MoE, or did not exist) limited a full technical assessment, while at the same time yielding findings as to whether policies and process documents are accessible, known and applied by the staff. Third, the limitation of selection bias caused by the MoE's selecting schools to be surveyed affected the data collection at the district level. This issue was partially

mitigated by visiting non-MoE selected schools to cross-reference.⁸ Last, the timing of the year disallowed including the voices of the students, a shortcoming that is reflected in the study. However, to address the issue of closure of the schools for the winter holiday, management, teachers, and communities were invited to the provinces to attend focus group discussions and to share their perceptions.

⁸ In addition, for example, in Herat, the assessment team declined to assess a school that was evidently above national standards due to extensive funding from NGOs. In Kabul, the assessment interviewed two private schools that were not initially included in the MoE's preferred list of interviewees.

FINDINGS

This section discusses the main findings of the assessment, by each step in the process chain of planning, producing, and distributing textbooks. Preceding the primary findings is a brief literature review that describes findings from secondary sources reviewed by the assessment team.

1. Literature Review

While strides have been made in many areas of public education since the fall of the Taliban, criticisms of textbooks – in terms of both their content and quality, and students’ access to them – have been pronounced since the beginning of the rebuilding of the education sector. Both Afghan and international media have published stories to this effect, and complaints have been aired by a range of commentators, who have pointed to serious and systematic weaknesses in textbook quality and access. This literature review highlights the findings of published research on textbooks in Afghanistan, as well as institutional documentation to which we had access, including from USAID and other donors and from GIRoA. It also draws from evidence-based findings of best practices from comparable contexts in the developing world. In line with this assessment’s research methodology, we take a systems-focused approach, recognizing that textbook development and production relies on the systems that govern it, including management processes, performance measurement frameworks, distribution paths, and financing, among others.

Investing in textbooks is a strategic priority for education quality reform, given that textbooks have been identified as the most cost-effective input to improve learning

achievement.⁹ Particularly in the poorest countries, textbooks “can counter-balance the problems of poorly trained teachers and the lack of basic facilities in schools.”¹⁰ Furthermore, USAID’s research shows that the availability of age-appropriate, leveled, and decodable texts is critical to learning.¹¹ Textbooks are also “one of the most visible components of government educational provision and their absence is noted by parents.”¹² Yet, the process of textbook development and production is highly susceptible to the institutional weaknesses that are prevalent in education governance in the least-developed countries. The key findings from the literature focus on the identification of such institutional weaknesses, and are organized according to each step of the process chain of textbook development and production: (1) Policies and standards; (2) Planning; (3) Curriculum and Content; (4) Review; (5) Design; (6) Procurement and Contracting; (7) Production; (8) Storage; (9) Distribution and Delivery, as follows.

a. Policies and Standards

Best practices in textbook development and production suggests that countries should have national book policies “that address the core issues of reliable national provision and the parallel development of local skills and capacity.”¹³ USAID also recommends the development of a language policy in a multilingual society, to promote improvement in early grade reading.

GIRoA has committed to the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal

⁹ Majgaard & Mingat, 2012

¹⁰ Read, 2011, p. 4

¹¹ All Children Reading, 2015

¹² Read, 2011, p. 2

¹³ Ibid.

primary education by 2020, adjusted from the target year of 2015 to account for insecurity challenges in Afghanistan. The country has also made other international policy commitments, such as to Education For All (EFA). It has been a participant in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) since 2011, when it received a GPE grant of \$55.7 million for the period 2012-2016 with UNICEF as the supervising entity. GIRoA's last National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) expired in 2014, and a new plan (NESP III) remains in development, leaving – to date – a two-year gap without an approved national policy guiding education planning. Further, there is no monitoring mechanism in the Ministry of Education (MoE) to measure progress towards the strategic plan.¹⁴

Despite this overarching policy framework, the MoE lacks policies that specifically guide the development, production, and distribution of textbooks. Without such policies, “there are no enforceable standards for evaluating quality of content, manuscript approval, and book selection.”¹⁵ The literature review uncovered no independent assessments specifically of policy frameworks relevant to textbook production in Afghanistan, nor any discussion of the viability of developing a national book policy. The Curriculum Policy was last updated in 2011, and policy relevant to the procurement of textbooks is discussed in section c.

In terms of policies related to human resources, the MoE has a human resources manual that encompasses HR policies and procedures, and includes an appraisal system. The manual is supposed to specify training plans for personnel, which would include textbook authors and curriculum developers, among other personnel involved at different stages of textbook planning and production. The Procurement Department, which recruits technical advisors (TAs), is also reportedly tasked with

¹⁴ Rhodes & Hyder, 2011

¹⁵ Crabbe & Nyingi, 2014, p. 14

planning for Ministry capacity building needs.¹⁶ Weaknesses in the HR system assessed in 2011¹⁷ include the lack of signed employment agreements, personnel files not adequately maintained, and no mechanism to record and report staff attendance.

b. Curriculum Development

Curriculum development has been identified by USAID as one of the seven key priority areas for institutional reform, to promote better early grade reading outcomes (2013), with textbook provision considered “the most cost effective input affecting student performance.”¹⁸ And while curriculum design is often presented as an objective, technical process, it is well-established that ideologies underpin curriculum and textbook design,¹⁹ thus begging the question of what ideological influences can and should shape Afghanistan’s curriculum, and which ideological influences should be countered. Two recent reports highlight the deep penetration that radical Islamist groups have in the education system of Afghanistan.²⁰ The findings of these studies make a compelling case for curriculum and textbooks that robustly promote peace instead of violence, effectively undermine overt and covert attempts to radicalize youth, and meet the MoE’s stated objectives of promoting tolerance and unity in the face of the country’s diversity, through curriculum.

The use of curriculum has only recently re-emerged in Afghanistan. During the Taliban and *mujahedin* civil war period, the MoE effectively stopped using syllabi, making textbooks the only form of curriculum. The country went three decades without a

¹⁶ Rhodes & Hyder, 2011

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Read, 2011, p. 4

¹⁹ Jones, 2007

²⁰ Ali & Giustozzi, 2015; Osman, 2015

national curriculum, and consequently one of the key challenges today is the lack of curriculum expertise in the country.²¹ In the post-Taliban era, UNESCO initially supported the country to plan a new curriculum and eventually provide accompanying textbooks, with support from donors, led by USAID. The new curriculum document that resulted in 2003 stated that, “by the completion of schooling cycles, when young people enter the world of work, as a result of the implementation of the new curriculum, they will be good Muslims, civilized human beings, and true, self-reliant Afghans,”²² and it emphasized in several places the need to foster national unity and social cohesion. Six objectives were identified: 1. Spiritual and moral objectives; 2. Intellectual development; 3. Cultural and artistic education; 4. Social and civic education; 5. Economic education; and 6. Health education.

The Japanese International Cooperation Agency-funded Strengthening Teacher Education Project (STEP) developed teacher guides for grades 1-3 in 2007 and for grades 4-6 in 2010. The work was carried out by the MoE’s Teacher Education Department (TED), the Compilation and Translation Department (CTD), and the Sayed Jamaluddin Teacher Training College, with technical expertise from Natuto University, Japan. The process of developing the teacher guides included reviewing the curriculum and new textbooks, field testing, revising based on field test results, and editing (two rounds for the grades 4-6 books). The guides were then printed and deposited in the MoE central warehouse for distribution by the Publications Department.²³

In 2009, the MoE developed another new curriculum framework (and syllabi) for

²¹ Georgescu, 2007

²² Department of Compilation and Translation, 2003, p. 11

²³ Nicholson, 2013

general and Islamic education, based upon which new textbooks for basic education were developed, printed, and distributed.²⁴ The CTD began a review of the grades 1-3 curriculum and textbooks in 2012, and grades 4-6 in 2013, concentrating on “correcting errors and matching the topics to the assigned number of hours/lessons stated in the curriculum.”²⁵ The MoE developed the curriculum and textbooks for grades 7-9 with assistance from Iran, which also provided workshops on developing textbooks and teacher guides. The grades 7-9 textbooks and teacher guides were distributed in 2011. Textbooks for grades 10-12 were developed after, and printed in 2013. These books were significantly strengthened in the level of content, and the teacher guides were intended to support teachers unfamiliar with the more advanced content, to teach it.

Later, in STEP II, teachers were taught to use the teacher guides with a four-day training and the development of a Teacher’ Manual Users Guide (TMUG) and accompanying video of model lessons. Nevertheless, criticisms expressed of earlier textbooks (see section b) continue, and gender representations remain a concern: one report notes that MoE textbook authors are overwhelmingly male, with 94% of members of the Research, Analysis, and Authoring Committees men.²⁶

Nicholson (2013) reports on a survey of the grades 1-3 textbooks conducted by the CDT in 2012 of students, teachers, principals, parents, school supervisors, and monitors, which found that respondents, in general, “agreed with about 80% of the curriculum and textbook material.”²⁷ But the survey also found that most teachers do

²⁴ Foulds, 2013

²⁵ Ibid. 52

²⁶ Wafeq, 2015

²⁷ Nicholson, p. 52

not use daily lesson plans and are not familiar with new methods of teaching. In particular,

*the major challenge in using the [teacher guide] is the shift system in schools, which can dramatically reduce the duration of lessons from 45 minutes to 20-30 minutes. Following the lesson plan means the practical activities and group work cannot be covered in the time period, and many teachers resort to traditional teaching methods to complete the lesson.*²⁸

Thus, while this and other sources have found much improvement in the quality of teacher guides and textbooks, there are challenges of human capital in terms of teacher competency, and systemic limitations in terms of the short instructional time, a limitation that has also been found to significantly negatively impact early-grade reading outcomes.²⁹ It is also noted that teacher guides are routinely unavailable or not distributed to teachers.³⁰

Georgescu (2008) concludes that the first curriculum needed further refinement in its planning and design, and “could still be viewed as a fragile intellectual construct in need of both more solid foundations and important readjustments.”³¹ She further notes the “tough questions” that remain pending for curriculum reform in Afghanistan:

whether high school students would be better off in single- or multiple-track systems; whether evolutionism and modern genetics ought to be taught in high

²⁸ Ibid. 54

²⁹ USAID/RTI, 2014. In 2010 the Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS) and Paiwastoon Networking Services surveyed teachers and calculated Afghan students receive only 410 hours of school per year versus the OECD average of 598 hours per year.

³⁰ Bethke, 2012

³¹ Georgescu, p. 447

schools as foundations of modern biology; whether more international history should be taught in high schools, while also focusing on important moments that shaped modern democracies and the human rights movement; whether language-arts courses should develop skills with regard to different types of writing, e.g. more national and international modern literature alongside the traditional poetry samples essentially found in textbooks). Such questions and dilemmas are not easy to address, not even in stable, more developed societies, let alone those striving for national reconciliation while searching for a meaningful balance between their past and a more promising future—such as Afghanistan.³²

Numerous actors are involved in curriculum reform, resulting in a patchwork of activity since the end of the Taliban's government. Some improvements in content have managed to emerge, which are largely accepted by the country's diverse population – a not insignificant achievement. Furthermore, curriculum is for the most part seen as supporting the goal of national unity and peace in its content. Yet deficits remain in the overall system used to develop curriculum – such as ensuring consistent quality control and internal capacity to build curriculum – and more critically, in teachers' capacity to effectively apply the curriculum. Teachers' constraints are both structural (insufficient instructional time) and capacity related (a population of teachers of which approximately half remain unqualified or under-qualified).

c. Review and Design

Numerous sources make it clear that review of material prior to publication has often been inadequate, and the absence of a systematically applied rigorous review process has led to weak quality control over teaching and learning materials. For instance, reviewing the MoE's development of a new secondary curriculum that was nearing

³² Ibid. 445

completion in 2007, Georgescu (2008) noted that “draft syllabuses needed further refinement, based on broad public and professional consultations, before being published and widely disseminated,” and implies this did not occur:

While the Ministry of Education was keen to embark on secondary textbook production, it would be commendable if finalizing the secondary syllabuses appropriately were not dismissed because of the urge to develop new textbooks and other learning materials as soon as possible.³³

Criticisms of the content of specific subject textbooks were highlighted in the media as new textbooks were printed and distributed. An analysis of the Dari literature textbooks for secondary school found them riddled with typographic errors, as well as being predominated by hagiographies of early Islamic figures and a questionable interpretation of literature.³⁴ This suggests gaps in the quality control process in terms of both content editing and copy editing, and a lack of diverse viewpoints about what constitutes ‘literature’ in Afghanistan.

A 2012 news report noted the then-newly printed textbooks were riddled with “glaring mistakes,” both “typographical and factual errors” and “barely legible study guides.”³⁵ For instance, the invention of the microscope was dated differently in each of the textbooks for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students, and the figure for the Newton was incorrect. Representatives of the MoE interviewed for the article offered differing explanations for the mistakes, with one, Abdul Zaher Gulistani, Director General of Curriculum Development, quoted as saying, “We accept the existence of the mistakes,

³³ Ibid. 444.

³⁴ Arbabzadah, 2010

³⁵ Fakhri, Dec. 11, 2012

but these mistakes cannot be used to question the content of the textbooks.”³⁶

It was further noted that teachers were only invited to review the content of the books after printing. Ekhtyar (2013) noted of the Pashto books, “Asadullah Ghazanfar, a writer who has looked into the way the textbooks were compiled, says the work on Pashto grammar contains inaccurate definitions, in addition to explanations so poorly worded as to be incomprehensible.” Ekhtyar (2012) also observed a math teacher identify 15 errors within the first few pages of the grade 11 physics textbook, who suggested that “much of the content has been blindly copied from foreign publications, with errors introduced along the way.” Indeed, Georgescu (2007) writes that in the immediate post-Taliban period, when the University of Nebraska developed primers funded by USAID, “instead of the ‘Curriculum and Textbook Department,’ the appropriate office in the MoE was called the ‘Compilation and Translation Department,’” noting that its main functions “consisted of ‘translating’ books from neighboring countries and ‘compiling’ sufficiently satisfactory textbooks for students.”³⁷ This process omitted harmonizing content with learning objectives, activities, and assessment procedures.

In terms of design, such as the use of graphics and illustrations, layout, chunking, color, and formatting, few sources assessed this comprehensively. In most countries, primary school textbooks are printed in four colors, while secondary textbooks are usually printed in one or two colors, with some exceptions such as biology and geography textbooks. The key minimum criteria in design include the quality and relevance of illustrations and page design.³⁸ It is well-established that student learning

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Georgescu, p. 430

³⁸ Read, 2011

from textbooks relies in part on appropriate and quality design.³⁹ Recently, the MoE revised the mathematics textbooks. An independent assessment that compared the old and new math textbooks for grades 7-9 based on teachers' perceptions of the books found that the new books were of better quality, had more illustrations, and were much better designed, with charts, graphs, and diagrams supplemented by explanations.⁴⁰ Yet, this additional content, while improving the books, also complicates them, and teachers felt they were beyond the ability of students to absorb. Wafeq's review (2015) echoed the findings of earlier gender analyses⁴¹ that many illustrations in textbooks contain gender bias, with males represented as strong, professional income earners and women portrayed in more passive roles as nurturers and mothers doing household chores. Wafeq brings up the composition of the MoE's design committees, where only three of the 153 people on the committees are women.

These flaws in the final printed versions of textbooks suggest the review, editing and design phases of the production process are particularly weak, and missing important quality control checks. It also suggests that the personnel the MoE have dedicated to these tasks lack the requisite skills and expertise to effectively carry out this work.

d. Procurement and Contracting

There is growing consensus that decentralization, competitive pressure that results from public-private partnerships, and the erosion of monopoly over textbook provision greatly improves the quality of textbooks and teacher guides. Stimulating the growth of multiple private textbook providers, subject to minimum production

³⁹ Wittmann, 1994

⁴⁰ Tani, 2014

⁴¹ Foulds, 2013; Fahim, 2010

specifications, also incubates the development of national authorships and publishing capacity.⁴² On the other hand, national printing usually fails to achieve competitiveness in price and quality, nor does it develop “capacity in key processes for durability, such as thread sewn binding or high quality cover finishing,”⁴³ while sole-source supply tends to provide opportunities for corruption “because large sums of money are available on the basis of a single national decision.”⁴⁴

In Afghanistan, the MoE’s textbook printing contracts are mostly managed using the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) mode of procurement (for amounts exceeding 500,000 Afs), in accordance with the Afghanistan Procurement Law of 2009. However, the Ministry lacks its own policies and procedures manual for procurement.⁴⁵ The MoE has committees for different procurement tasks such as inspection and bid evaluation, and standard forms and templates for purchase orders. The Ministry has an Investigation and Internal Audit Directorate tasked with investigating malpractice, such as misappropriation of funds, “and also performs transaction-level audits to ensure that policies of the MoE are being complied by all the Directorates.”⁴⁶ Besides remarkably little media coverage in either English or the local languages on the procurement of textbooks in Afghanistan, no independent research or reports on the issue could be found in the public domain, suggesting a gap in the public and civil society’s scrutiny of the issue. The review only consulted internal donor-commissioned assessments that addressed procurement processes.

An audit report by Danida covering the period 2003-2013 found “indications of

⁴² Read, 2011

⁴³ Ibid. 6

⁴⁴ Ibid. 8

⁴⁵ Rhodes & Hyder, 2011

⁴⁶ Ibid.

external influence irregularities in the selection of supplier for the printing of textbooks.”⁴⁷ One such irregularity was the procurement proceedings being “unnecessarily prolonged and the contract [being] awarded to a bidder despite not meeting the conditions specified,”⁴⁸ as well as a lack of records in the MoE at all levels. In addition, the report uncovered numerous violations of the Procurement Law, such as the failure to use a bid box for the safe custody of bids; failure to collect declarations of conflict of interest; lack of documentation on the appointment of inspection committees, internal auditors, or supervisor engineers to report on procurement activities; lack of documentation on performance; incomplete records of payments to contractors; and concerns over the transparency of the procurement process, among others. For example,

*a bidder was selected on the basis of domestic preference, although there were some discrepancies in the bid documents submitted by the bidder regarding the price schedule and non-availability of the financial information. Bidder also did not meet the technical capacity criteria to complete the assignment. Despite domestic preference and ignoring the better-ranked international bidders as per evaluation report, the contract was awarded to a bidder who got the books printed from outside the country, thereby depriving local market of the intended benefits of the domestic preference, which is also a violation of clause SCC 20.1 of the Specific Contract Conditions.*⁴⁹

A later review of the MoE’s procurement process for textbooks commissioned by Danida included auditors directly observing and monitoring bidding activities.⁵⁰ In this case, the two Danida-funded bids of textbooks under examination were carried out in

⁴⁷ HLB International, 2013

⁴⁸ Ibid. 6

⁴⁹ Ibid. 5

⁵⁰ RSM, 2015

accordance with the Procurement Law and the MoE's procedures policy, although "during the implementation several deviations and risks were strictly controlled by taking preventive and detective control measures."⁵¹ Some of the concerns highlighted included unrealistic cost estimates by the MoE (bidder's prices are on average 60% of the estimation cost); no formal scorecard being used in bid evaluations; bidders not required to have audited financial statements; no clause specifying that in case books are not in accordance "with dummies or agreed specifications" a reprint would be required;⁵² delays in the bidding process; and a need for much greater segregation of duties among those involved in different stages of the bidding in order to reduce conflict of interests.

These concerns echo earlier recommendations from USAID's Pre-Award Assessment (2011), such as the call for "a documented policy for vendor selection and registration for compilation of a list of pre-approved vendor. Also, there should be a defined process for vendor performance evaluation."⁵³ In summary, there are numerous vulnerabilities and a deficit of controls and transparency, making the procurement stage one of the weakest within the process chain, and in need of substantial reforms.

e. Production

Maximizing the life of textbooks greatly reduces the costs of textbook provision and should be a priority for all developing country governments. Best practices to maximize quality in textbook production include⁵⁴:

⁵¹ Ibid. 15

⁵² Ibid. 19

⁵³ Pg. 8

⁵⁴ Read, 2011

- Text paper should be minimum 70-80 grams per square meter (gsm);
- Wood-free paper with a machine finish;
- White paper for maximum contrast and readability, with a good opacity in order to prevent see-through;
- Highest grade of cover for best protection, a one-sided art card of 240-300 gsm that is rigid with a thickness of at least 30 microns;
- Cover card finished with either a laminate or ultraviolet (UV) varnish that provides some waterproofing protection to the book block; and
- Up to 96 pages in extent for saddle-stitched binding (i.e., a wire stitch through the spine of the textbook and closed against the center pages); above 96 pages all textbooks and teacher guides should have thread sewn bindings, gathered into signatures with “drawn-on” covers with four scores and two hinges so that the cover opens against the hinge and not against the spine.⁵⁵

Afghanistan’s textbooks have a standard three-year life cycle,⁵⁶ and generally do not meet the above-listed minimum criteria to extend book life. Cover cards of 300 gsm are not locally available and must be imported. As a result, domestic bidders requested reducing the requirement to 260 gsm, which the MoE did, against the recommendation of auditors, who pointed out that increased cover weights better protect books, thus ultimately reducing costs in the long run.⁵⁷ Domestic bidders also complained about the requirements for sewing section binding, saying it takes longer to produce and costs more, but the MoE upheld this requirement, which also

⁵⁵ According to Read (2011) “Under no circumstances should unsewn bindings be used for textbooks because the life of an unsewn textbook binding can often be measured in weeks, particularly if the process is not well performed. Standard unsewn binding is called “perfect” binding which is a classic misnomer. Another form of binding which should never be used for school books is “side-stabbing” in which a metal staple is inserted from the front cover through the book block to the back cover. This kind of binding leads to “mouse trapping” in which the textbook will not stay open so that students have to press out the ‘gutters’ of the textbook, thereby breaking the binding instantly.” (p. 9).

⁵⁶ Sartor, 2015

⁵⁷ RSM, 2015

contributes to extending the life of textbooks. In recent bids (2015), the MoE changed requirements from film lamination coating to UV coating, which is known to improve the quality of textbooks.

None of the literature consulted assessed alternative means of accessing textbooks in any depth, such as exploring the viability of commercial distribution (where students buy textbooks in the open market), or using ICT-mediated means. We saw no assessment of whether the soft copies of textbooks available on the MoE website are accessed by students or teachers with any frequency, or whether those versions are the most up-to-date and complete editions. Neither was any literature or documentation found that discussed licensing or copyright status of textbooks in Afghanistan. The literature that is available suggests important deficiencies at the production stage characterized by low standards in printing requirements and poor quality control by the MoE.

f. Storage, Delivery, and Distribution

Afghanistan has a highly centralized textbook distribution system, managed directly at every stage by GIRoA, with the exception of printing, which is outsourced to a small pool of domestic and recently, to international printing presses. The bulk of business reportedly went to one printing press in particular, Baheer Printing and Packaging Co. Ltd., until more recently when some contracts were awarded to foreign printers located in India, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Distribution, however, is handled exclusively by the MoE through its own transportation resources and warehouses. Crabbe and Nyingi (2014) point out that centralized distribution “is often the preferred choice of governments that may either not understand the role of distributors/booksellers or simply think they create an expensive layer (or middleman) in book provision,” concluding that “this practice has been shown to be generally bureaucratic, inefficient,

and prone to delays, leakage, and corruption.”⁵⁸

In 2015, USAID commissioned Ernst & Young (E&Y) to do a national verification of textbook distribution, which covered 24 provinces and 1,206 schools. At the time of the verification, it was found that actual distribution was 76% (2,066,811 books). E&Y found that 263,877 textbooks reportedly had not been distributed to districts in seven provinces due to insecurity, and a small number of books (1,615) were documented as lost in transit in three districts.⁵⁹ Variance by province ranged from 3% distributed less than planned to 33% less in Baghlan, and over-distribution by 3% in Ghor and 63% in Helmand. The verification also found that, in at least one case, MoE textbooks were sold to a private school, noting that the MoE management stated that this and “similar instances will be adjusted in Fund Accountability Statement as recovery.”⁶⁰ E&Y also found that in 94% of observed cases, no parents or community members were present during distribution,⁶¹ and 31% of schools had no official stamp with which to stamp books.⁶² The verification further found that the vast majority of schools (81%) kept no separate records of USAID-sponsored textbooks.⁶³

Checchi’s (2015) separate verification for USAID focused on four provinces, using the same methodology as E&Y. It found that a majority of schools sampled faced textbook shortages: “even if schools had received books from the [Provincial Department of Education/ District Department of Education], they did not receive a complete

⁵⁸ Crabbe and Nyingi, p. 109

⁵⁹ Ernst and Young, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 16

⁶¹ Ibid. 28

⁶² Ibid. 29

⁶³ Ibid. 31

order.”⁶⁴ Almost half of the students interviewed reported receiving used or old books. Other problems uncovered included “inappropriate storage and disorganization of book stocks, a lack of registry or other methods for keeping track of books, and a lack of FS9 forms to order new books from the MoE.”⁶⁵

The MoE itself carried out a verification of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) data through a private firm, Afghanistan Reliable Technology Services (ARTS), which included textbook distribution as one of its indicators. This verification found a variance of 6% between MoE data and ARTS data, where the MoE reported 4,957,519 textbooks distributed and ARTS found 4,698,807 books distributed. While variances in other indicators verified had justifiable explanations, such as data being reported at different points in the year, for textbook distribution, the ARTS report noted that the reasons behind the variances were “mostly due to lack of proper recording of these data at the school level,” adding “there is an urgent need to improve the timely and accurate data recording at school level” for this indicator.”⁶⁶

An earlier audit by HLB International found that in the sampled provinces of Balkh and Nangarhar distribution was ineffective, “as students did not receive the books according to the requirements and not even in time.”⁶⁷ In Kabul, it was found that “0.63 million textbooks remained undistributed, out of which 0.43 million books expired due to changes in the curriculum.”⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the audit assessed the economy and efficiency of textbook printing and supply operations as “moderately

⁶⁴ Checchi, p. 2

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ ARTS, p. 11

⁶⁷ HLB International, 2013

⁶⁸ Ibid p. 7

satisfactory.”⁶⁹ Nicholson’s (2013) study of teacher education in Afghanistan similarly found that even students in Kabul often lacked access to textbooks, that textbooks were not distributed on time, and often teacher guidebooks were not distributed to teachers,⁷⁰ a finding echoed by Bethke (2012). In terms of distribution for the new grades 1-3 textbooks developed in 2007, Nicholson notes that distribution was erratic, and,

Some provinces managed to distribute to all schools whilst others managed only a few districts. [Because] of a lack of budget allocation in the MoE for book distribution, JICA undertook to distribute the G4-6 TG to DED. A distributor was contracted and the distribution of TGs was completed in December 2010. A national workshop for PED Directors and distribution offices was held to raise awareness of the TG and explain the process for distribution. This, however, was poorly attended, as staff were involved in textbook distribution. In addition, a radio awareness campaign was broadcast twice a day for 10 days to announce their publication. However, whilst more of the TGs seem to have reached the schools, some have been distributed, some are used by teachers and some remain unwrapped in school stores.⁷¹

In terms of storage, USAID’s 2015 textbook verification conducted by Ernst & Young found an 8% variance between the District Education Department’s (DED) records and actual stocks of textbooks in DED storage, noting that the MoE had stated it “will provide the reasons for above differences in stock at DEDs.”⁷² Of sampled students, 71% received old-stock textbooks,⁷³ and in another sample, 6% of students did not

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Nicholson, p. 52

⁷¹ Ibid. 51

⁷² Ernst and Young, p. 19

⁷³ Ibid. 22

have all books for their syllabus.⁷⁴ E&Y also found that 23% of schools had textbooks in stock, amounting cumulatively to 118,029 books, but still pending distribution. Textbooks were stored in a wide variety of locations, but rarely in store rooms or containers; most frequently, they were stored in a private home (33%), the school library (27%), the school's warehouse (17%), a classroom (14%), or the principal's office (6%).⁷⁵ Checchi's verification for USAID (2015) in the four western provinces uncovered concerns with book storage, including books "stored in inappropriate or inadequate places, often with little protection from environmental damage," which left books vulnerable to theft and damage.⁷⁶

Best practices in storage, distribution, and delivery of textbooks emphasizes adequate planning and preparation, guided by good policy:

There is a need, therefore, to identify and address any weakness in distribution systems before distribution begins. Issues include proper packaging (against weather changes, rough handling), storage, transportation, and security as well as tracking and delivery verification to ensure that books do not leak into the illegal market.⁷⁷

The leakage identified in verification reports suggests a deficit in the MoE's distribution planning.

Considering all stages reviewed, the literature's findings point to systemic weaknesses at all stages of the process, but particularly in production and distribution. While

⁷⁴ Ibid. 24

⁷⁵ Ibid. 26

⁷⁶ Checchi, p. 19

⁷⁷ Crabbe & Nyingi, 2014, p. 79)

progress has been made in the quality of content, curriculum development is still marred by weak planning, insufficient division of roles, and a lack of competency in the technical skills of editing and design, among others. Overall, the process at all stages lacks quality control mechanisms and both internal and third-party systemic monitoring that could act as pressure points for reform.

2. Curriculum

A curriculum consists of a framework, syllabus, competency criteria, and textbooks. This section briefly reviews Afghanistan's current curriculum objectives and the historical context of curriculum development in the country, and then describes the current curriculum development process, followed by an assessment of the curriculum and our findings related to how the curriculum is applied in practice by teachers. We identify strengths and areas of progress, as well as highlight key areas of concern and priority areas for improvement.

a. Historical Context of Curriculum Development in Afghanistan

The latest incarnation of curriculum in Afghanistan is set against the backdrop of frequent and drastic shifts in the ideologies underpinning curriculum. This began with Soviet advisors adding subjects such as Russian, Spanish, political science, and compulsory natural sciences, and adapting subjects like geography to include more study of Russian.⁷⁸ In contrast, during the 1990s, *Sharia* law was the major influence on curriculum. There was no uniform curriculum, and religious education was prioritized, while the equity emphasized by the Soviet-backed government between girls' and boys' access to education disappeared.⁷⁹ During the Taliban period, the majority of

⁷⁸ Modern Education in Afghanistan, *Criterion Quarterly*, 2012. 6(1).

⁷⁹ Shorish-Shamley, Z. (1998). "Look into My World." 50th Anniversary publication of the United Nations.

subjects taught at all grade levels were devoted to Islamic studies, and public female education ended. There was no process for external input to the curriculum (such as from teachers, principals, and parents or outside advisors) for any secular subjects. Memorization and rote learning were the only teaching and learning strategies practiced, and there was no central reporting on student achievement.

Most qualified teachers left the country. During the Taliban government, and for the first years thereafter, “the previous centralized curriculum was replaced by diverse (local) curricula, and numerous erratic changes have affected its quality,”⁸⁰ resulting in an absence of appropriate sequencing and linking between grade levels and subjects, and little supervision from the central government. It is this situation that the MoE faced when it first embarked on post-Taliban curricular reform, in 2003.

b. The Curriculum Development Process

Curriculum development at the MoE is guided by a curriculum framework covering textbook development and production. A work plan specifies the process for implementation. Since 2003, the MoE has used various methods for textbook writing, including contracting authors, using foreign consultants or advisors, or assigning MoE permanent staff to write textbooks. Manuscripts are approved by a committee. The MoE states that committees prepare each textbook, and then the book is edited, respectively, by the following review committees: Language, *Islamiyat*, and Culture. Several respondents suggested that manuscripts are reviewed and edited by the same people who authored them. For instance, one individual, Dr. Shir Ali Zarifi, Head of the Curriculum Development Project, is a textbook author, editor, and the supervisor for

⁸⁰ Curriculum Framework Afghanistan, Volume 1 (2003). MoE Afghanistan Compilation and Translation Department, p. 12.

all textbook development for grades 3-12, covering multiple subjects, including science, geography, English language, and math. Respondents also criticized the methods used for textbook writing, which occurs within a highly centralized curriculum development process, as being composed in part by copying and pasting content from Iranian and Jordanian materials.⁸¹

Curriculum was last substantively updated in 2011, and updates since then have consisted of correcting errors and typos. Officially, the policy is to *review* books' content every three years, though not necessarily revise it. Concerns about the cycles for curriculum content revision and for printing textbooks are consistent across Kabul, Herat, and Balkh and the different education levels (PEDs, DEDs). Respondents said the primary school curriculum is only reformed every five or six years; however, printing textbooks based on the same curriculum should be budgeted to allow for reprinting annually for primary grades, and every five to six years for secondary grades. A consistent timeframe for the replacement and/or reform of curriculum is critical because teachers and students require time to adjust to a new curriculum, and new textbooks require additional time for preparation, generating new syllabi and lesson plans (and any supplementary materials), designing new assessments, and becoming conversant with the new textbooks before the academic year begins.

Since 2011, the MoE has sought to recruit only Afghan nationals as members of national curriculum committees and advisors. There is no shortage of curriculum department personnel, but rather a problem of low capacity, education, and technical knowledge among the Curriculum Department staff (though the Curriculum Department has recently requested 100 new positions for its *tashkee*).⁸² Use of

⁸¹ Interview, Director of Teacher Education, MoE, January 18, 2016.

⁸² Interview, Deputy Minister for Curriculum Development & Teacher Training, MoE, January 20, 2016

technical advisors has failed to build *tashkee*/human resource capacity, and those staff who did benefit from capacity improvements left the MoE. Retaining qualified staff has been a consistent struggle for the Curriculum Department.⁸³ Initially, textbook authors, including both foreign consultants and Afghan expatriates, were contracted. Presently, textbooks are authored by permanent MoE academic staff, who generally have an undergraduate degree. The Curriculum Department states that improving the quality of content of the textbooks will not be possible without graduate degree-holding staff.⁸⁴ Some non-MoE respondents expressed the view that the Ministry's management does not hold those who work on textbook content planning and writing accountable for their output, including technical assistants, advisors, and consultants who were engaged to work on textbooks and curriculum.⁸⁵

c. Assessing the Current Curriculum

New iterations of curriculum development show important areas of progress. There are new activities for teachers and students in the textbooks, which are more creative and employ a range of thinking, motor skills, and some group work. Respondents' assessments of the curriculum are generally positive. They see a curriculum that is more modern, less ideological, has complex content, is better organized, and is practice-driven. Teachers and parents say textbooks have improved in content and are more interesting, notwithstanding being riddled with errors in most cases. For instance, teachers in Istalif district of Kabul province said they appreciated that the current textbooks listed learning objectives for every topic and lesson, had separate activities for teachers and students, included exercises and discussions, featured

⁸³ Interview, Director of Curriculum Department, MoE, January 6, 2016

⁸⁴ Interview, Director of Curriculum Department, MoE, January 6, 2016

⁸⁵ For instance, Interview, former USAID finance officer, January 26, 2016

illustrations, and were clearly formatted, pointing out that, “previously textbooks were more teacher-oriented and now it is more student-oriented.”⁸⁶

Another respondent said,

*The good aspects are more than the [number of] flaws. The content is better and the printing quality is better now. For example, now math problems are introduced and resolved with more clarity compared to the past. Another example is a poem in a language book. Now all the history of the poem and the details about the poet and the grammatical and linguistic details are on the same page, which makes it easier for students to understand.*⁸⁷

Another important area of progress is the removal of content promoting violence and divisiveness. Most respondents assess textbooks as being reasonably fair with regard to representing Afghanistan’s ethnic diversity, though they often pointed out the exclusion of Shia content in *Islamiyat* classes: “In our books we do not have Shia sect covered in the book. Only the prayers of the Sunni sect are mentioned, not Shia’s.”⁸⁸ One school director emphasized the view that the books effectively convey national unity while representing ethnic diversity.⁸⁹ No major concerns were raised by respondents with regard to any content that promotes violence or terrorism, and most respondents felt that the current textbooks are peace-promoting. For example, one respondent said, “Previously the content of the textbooks encouraged war and

⁸⁶ Teachers FGD, Istalif District, Kabul, January 20, 2016

⁸⁷ Interview, School Director, Ghazi Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan High School, Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh, January 5, 2016

⁸⁸ Teachers FGD, Heart city, January 12, 2016

⁸⁹ Interview, School Director, Ghazi Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan High School, Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh, January 5, 2016

violence, but now it is more peace-related and inspires hope.”⁹⁰ Another emphasized the concerns are on quality control and clarity, not on the substance of the content: “I have not seen any objectionable content in the book apart from grammar and typos.”⁹¹ The director of the Curriculum Department himself declared, “With confidence I can say that there is no single word about violence or biases toward any ethnic groups. There are 1,742 books, and no inappropriate word in them. I am accountable if there is any word.”⁹²

However, despite these improvements, most respondents agreed that the curriculum is not one that supports critical thinking or problem solving by students.⁹³ Current pedagogical best practice emphasizes the necessity of an integrated learning approach to creating curriculum and associated materials including textbooks, whereby students learn about complex connections and interdependencies in the surrounding natural, social, and artificial environment by making use of a broad range of learning strategies addressing both reason and senses, intellectual as well as physical, spiritual, emotional and social skills. While content now promotes participatory activity and discussion to some extent, one senior MoE official expressed a feeling that the textbooks are still oriented towards rote learning.⁹⁴ This is

⁹⁰ Interview, DED Director, Qarabagh District, Kabul, January 20, 2016

⁹¹ Teachers FGD, Kabul City, January 19, 2016

⁹² Interview, Director of Curriculum Department, MoE, January 6, 2016

⁹³ Remarkably, these same criticisms were voiced by USAID over four decades ago: “Lacking in practical training the teacher relies on the traditional patterns of instruction he himself encountered as a student (recitation and memorization). Using limited resources the teacher continues a style of instruction reinforced by cultural patterns which characterize the teacher as a person of wisdom from whom the student is to secure a body of knowledge and information. The few textbooks available contain a body of knowledge to be learned. The teachers drill their students in this body of knowledge. The students memorize and learn the prescribed content” Easterly, E. M. (1974). Impact of the Afghanistan Ministry of Education Curriculum and Textbook Project on Primary School Student Learning. Columbia University doctoral thesis, pp. 29-30.

⁹⁴ Interview, Director of Teacher Education, MoE, January 18, 2016

exacerbated by poor sequencing and scoping in the curriculum: “Content wise, there has to be a logical chain in different grades. Math should start simply and in each grade it should get progressively more difficult, but this is not the case now. Some years are hard, then easy, without logical progression.”⁹⁵ An MoE official shared his view that textbooks do not match the curriculum, and explained that textbook authors of the same subjects for different grades do not coordinate with each other, resulting in a lack of logical sequencing between levels and content that is often too difficult for the grade level it covers.⁹⁶

Another major weakness is the lack of core standards for each subject in the curriculum. Teachers, in particular, require clearly conveyed target learning outcomes and performance standards to guide their lesson planning, assessment, and pedagogical choices.⁹⁷ The Curriculum Department sets standards and objectives for each textbook developed. However, the lack of core standards for subjects and grades that could support a shared understanding of learning objectives and expectations between schools, DEDs, PEDs and the MoE is detrimental to measuring the impact and relevance of curriculum. Furthermore, there is reportedly no syllabi.⁹⁸

Respondents cited problems with specific subjects. For example, the physics and chemistry books are too difficult and are not grade-appropriate in the content’s complexity and presentation. Many respondents pointed out that while there are now computer science textbooks, the overwhelming majority of schools do not have computers, and learning this topic theoretically is meaningless. A principal in Herat

⁹⁵ Interview, School Director, Ghazi Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan High School, Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh, January 5, 2016

⁹⁶ Interview, Director of Quality Research Department, MoE, January 19, 2016

⁹⁷ UNICEF (2000). United Nations Report Card. UNICEF: New York, NY. Retrieved from: <http://www.unicef.org/education/files/Curricard.PDF>

⁹⁸ Interview, National Consultant, Save the Children, January 7, 2016

said, "The history books and the religious books have problems, others do not. The content in these two books are more political. Other books are modern and scientifically standard (e.g., they cannot change)."⁹⁹

Numerous concerns were also raised with regards to *Islamiyat* subjects. Since 2011, the MoE has prioritized Islamic education over general education, "leading the MoE to exceed all of its Islamic education targets while failing its general education targets."¹⁰⁰ Some see this as driven by the agenda of the previous minister of education, Farooq Wardak, under whom the MoE reportedly forged an agreement with the Taliban to adopt a more religious curriculum in exchange for allowing public schools to remain open in Taliban-controlled areas.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, there was often a disconnect between policy and practice around the balance between Shia and Sunni content in *Islamiyat* classes. The MoE's policy is that schools with over 70 Shia students shall include study of the Jafari school of jurisprudence; however, "the university entrance exam (Kankor) asks questions that only cover Hanafi sect's questions. Many students fail the Kankor for that reason."¹⁰²

d. The Curriculum in Practice

Perhaps the greatest challenge for Afghanistan's curriculum lies in the education system's capacity to implement the curriculum and to maximize the impact of textbooks given structural constraints (limited instructional time) and human resource

⁹⁹ Interview, Principal, Injil District, Herat, January 11, 2016

¹⁰⁰ Royall, E. (2013). *Winning Minds: The Role of Education in Securing Afghanistan*. Georgetown Security Studies Review. Retrieved from: <http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2013/12/26/winning-minds-the-role-of-education-in-securing-afghanistan/>

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Teachers FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 3, 2016

constraints (unqualified teachers). The current curriculum is more practice-oriented, as opposed to purely theoretical, and reflects active learning principles. Yet, teachers have not been prepared to teach such a curriculum, and the shortage of teacher guides¹⁰³ and failure to integrate the guides into teacher training programs has left many teachers without support or explanation as to how to best use the textbook content and meaningfully apply the curriculum. For instance, a school principal in Herat commented that, "In grade 10 chemistry, there are questions where there is no explanation in the book, and it is very difficult for both student and teacher," adding that there are no teacher guides for grades 10, 11 or 12.¹⁰⁴

The duration of lessons was the most oft-cited barrier to effective delivery of the curriculum. Teachers emphasized the impossibility of covering the textbook material in classes that run 30 minutes, not accounting for time lost in taking attendance, getting students seated, or interruptions. Parents complained about the amount of time their children spend outside of school because of "too many holidays and days off," in addition to unscheduled days off that prolong holidays and further reduce instruction time.¹⁰⁵ The school day for primary students is supposed to be four hours, five hours for middle school students, and six hours for secondary students; however, in practice, the school day is often much shorter, with primary students attending school as little as two-and-a-half hours daily.¹⁰⁶

A teacher in Herat explained the challenge of limited instructional time:

Our office compels us to complete the textbook, but we can't complete the

¹⁰³ Currently, teachers' guides for grades 9-12 remain in development.

¹⁰⁴ School Principals FGD, Gozara District, Herat, January 11, 2016

¹⁰⁵ Parents FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 5, 2016

¹⁰⁶ Oates, L. (2014). Early Grade Reading and Math Activity: Gender Analysis. USAID: Kabul.

*books in the academic year. We have to cover the book, give homework, read their homework, take attendance – this all needs time. Teachers are not machines that they can do all this in 35 minutes. It is all hypocrisy. I told the monitors that I make a plan, but it is a lie. We are deceiving ourselves with this plan. We lie to students. We grade students' performance, we tell them that you should have good handwriting, but I do not have time to teach the students the skill. This is not fair.*¹⁰⁷

In addition, over and over, respondents – from teachers to provincial education authorities to NGOs – pointed to the low competency levels of teachers as barriers to effective delivery of the curriculum. Views on textbook content vary significantly, with many respondents highly critical while others praised the content, but there was largely consensus that the greater barrier is the teachers' capacity to teach content beyond their own training and understanding. As one parent observed, "A teacher is the one who gets the lowest grade on the Kankor. How we can trust that person to teach our children?"¹⁰⁸ All teachers interviewed in the three provinces, as well as principals, officials at the Teacher Education Department (TED), Monitoring and Evaluation departments of the PEDs, the MoE's Department of Academic Supervision and the teacher training colleges (TTCs) in Kabul, remarked that teachers need to be better educated, have ongoing professional development, and have their student/class sizes reduced significantly.

Many teachers, especially at the primary level, do not have a complete high school education. These teachers do not know how to assess student learning. They struggle with basic content knowledge and have little or no pedagogical foundation for their teaching, except perhaps a repetition of their own school experience based on rote

¹⁰⁷ Teachers FGD, Herat City, Herat, January 12, 2016

¹⁰⁸ Parents FGD, Herat City, Herat, January 12, 2016

learning and memorization. Since class sizes are very large,¹⁰⁹ most teachers must focus on behavior management and teacher-centered delivery. A DED official explained it thus: “The previous books were very simple and basic. The current books are contemporary and modern. But these beautiful books are useful when we have capable teachers to teach the content.”¹¹⁰ Respondents reported that teachers who are TTC graduates or have less education struggle with teaching content for grades 10, 11 and 12, though teachers who are university graduates can manage.¹¹¹ Some respondents felt the textbooks should be simplified to match teachers’ capacity, while others thought the approach must be to bring teachers’ capacity to the level of the books: “the high standard of books should be supplemented by teachers’ education, training, and capacity development.”¹¹²

The MoE states that the final phase of producing new textbooks is preparing teachers to teach them through in-service training. This process is as follows: “four or five teachers from each province come to Kabul. Authors teach two chapters from the first, middle, and end chapters to teach the teachers the subject matter. Then they become master trainers and go to provinces to teach the subjects and pedagogy.”¹¹³ However, evidence from interviews suggest that in-service teacher training programs are not sufficiently focused on preparing teachers to teach the new curriculum: “Three years ago when the new books were released, there were no trainings for teachers on how to teach the new curriculum. When the books arrived, the teachers didn’t know how to

¹⁰⁹ The MoE policy states the maximum number of students per teacher in primary grades is 55, and for secondary, 45; however, in practice many class sizes far exceed this standard.

¹¹⁰ Interview, M&E Officer, Istalif DED, Kabul, January 20, 2016

¹¹¹ For example, Teachers’ FGD, Herat City, Herat, January 12, 2016

¹¹² Teachers FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 3, 2016

¹¹³ Interview, Director of Curriculum Development, MoE, January 6 2016

use them.”¹¹⁴ Another respondent pointed to the disconnect between textbooks and teacher preparation, blaming the truncated order of planning that occurs as successive donor-funded projects: “The question is also with us that when they give us the book to teach, we wonder, has anyone had a look at it, to determine whether it is teachable or not? The problem is that the MoE takes it as a project and the donors are funding it with no follow-up.”¹¹⁵ A respondent from the country’s main TTC pointed to the lack of coordination between the schools and TTCs in terms of development of books and curriculum: “whatever the students learn in school and the teachers learn in TTCs all the lessons should be linked together.”¹¹⁶

Furthermore, in-service training programs do not make use of the MoE teacher guides. Field visits suggest that there is little systematic monitoring at PEDs of how curriculum is applied in schools. The disconnect between teacher education and curriculum development is symptomatic of overall weak coordination across departments that should, in practice, be working closely together. As observed by one donor respondent, the “MoE is very weak in implementation of the policies, frameworks, and plans. There is no synchronization with teacher education.”¹¹⁷ Respondents external to the MoE repeatedly emphasized the lack of coordination between departments, but some also indicated the MoE is aware of this gap and has recently proposed in a donors’ meeting to take action to coordinate across departments. This would facilitate, for example, the synchronization of new textbooks and teacher guides with the curriculum of in-service and pre-service teacher training.

¹¹⁴ Interview, M&E Director, PED Balkh, January 3, 2016

¹¹⁵ Teachers FGD, Kabul City, January 19, 2016

¹¹⁶ Interview, Sayed Jamaludin Afghan Teachers Training Institute, January 24, 2016

¹¹⁷ Interview, former USAID finance officer, January 26, 2016

In addition to teachers' incompetence, absenteeism was also identified as a key problem: "Teachers do not teach, they just sign their attendance sheet, but do not come to school to teach."¹¹⁸ The problem of ghost teachers, as well as weak implementation of the curriculum due to the low qualifications of teachers, could be mitigated to some extent by more systematic monitoring. The Monitoring and Evaluation departments of the MoE and the PEDs are responsible for observing, evaluating, and supporting teachers' and principals' performance. The M&E department staff also appears to be the only mechanism by which teachers can share feedback on textbooks and curriculum.

The MoE reports that it field tests textbook manuscripts in experimental schools prior to finalization. However, we did not find evidence that this is done in a systematic way that includes both urban and rural schools in field testing. The Curriculum Department reported that field testing takes one to six months and may be done by six to ten teachers called in from the provinces, adding "If we have more time and budget, they take six forms with them and go to the provinces and they are observers. The monitors observe the classroom teaching. They collect feedback from teachers and students. It is a test to see if the books can be taught in schools easily."¹¹⁹

Besides the process described above, there appears to be no consistent formal feedback mechanism for teachers to the MoE on the curriculum or textbooks. The director of teacher education at the MoE stated that there is no field testing of curriculum.¹²⁰ This was supported by the observations of teachers in the field. For instance, a teacher in a focus group in Dehdadi District in Balkh said, "No one has

¹¹⁸ Parents FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 5, 2016

¹¹⁹ Interview, Director of Curriculum Department, MoE, January 6, 2016

¹²⁰ Interview, Director of Teacher Education, MoE, January 18, 2016

asked us for our feedback in the last 14 years.”¹²¹ However, some respondents mentioned sharing their feedback when MoE monitors visited,¹²² or that there had recently been consultations¹²³ (though these were after textbooks were published). One respondent expressed the view that staff from the Curriculum Department at the MoE visit schools to observe the use of textbooks and curriculum “randomly, based on projects.”¹²⁴

However, there does not appear to be any means of channeling this information to the relevant departments. Teachers and principals are keen for opportunities to engage with the MoE. For instance, one respondent stated, “the MoE should print more books and send them to us on time. They should come to inspect the distribution of the books, the storage, the warehouse, and they should note our problems.”¹²⁵ Another emphasized that teachers are an untapped resource: “Principals and teachers have experiences and they know, but they are not invited to give their feedback.”¹²⁶

¹²¹ FGD, Shaheed Balkhi High School, Dehdadi District, Balkh, January 5, 2016

¹²² For instance, the DED Director in Dehdadi District, Balkh, said that they reported to MoE inspectors who had visited around October 2015 that teachers were struggling with the content of the grade 11 and 12 textbooks, as well as pointing out grammatical errors (January 5, 2016), though collecting such feedback was not the purpose of the monitors’ visit.

¹²³ A teacher said, “I corrected 100 mistakes in grade 10 physics subject. My remarks of the mistakes were taken to the MOE by someone who works in the M&E committee of PED.” (FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 3, 2016).

¹²⁴ Interview, Director of Curriculum Development PED Herat, January 10, 2016

¹²⁵ DED Director, Dehdadi, Balkh, January 5, 2016.

¹²⁶ M&E Officer, Nahreshahi District, Balkh, January 5, 2016.

3. Textbook Review

a. Textbook Selection Criteria

This assessment included a review of MoE-printed textbooks. A sample of 11 textbooks, in both Dari and Pashto languages from primary, secondary, and upper secondary school grades, were selected, as per the following criteria:

Criteria for book selection:

- Coverage: Grade: 1-12
- Level: Primary (four books); Secondary (five books); and Higher Secondary (two books)
- Subjects: Math, Science, Social Science, Life Skills, English Language
- Languages: Dari, Pashto, English
- Teacher Guides (where available from the MoE or PED)

Number of books based on subjects:

- Math: three books
- Science: three books
- Social Science: three books
- English: two books
- Teacher Guides: six books

Number of books based on languages:

- Dari: five books
- Pashto: four books
- English: two books

The following table summarizes textbook selection:

Table 2: Textbooks Reviewed by the Assessment Team

Level	Subjects	Grade	Dari	Pashto	English
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Primary	Math	1	1		
	Science	4		1	
	Social Science (Life Skills)	3	1		
	English	4			1
Secondary	Math	7		1	
	Science (Biology)	8	1		
	Social Science (Geography,	9	1	1	
	English	8			1
Upper Secondary	Math	10	1		
	Science (Physics)	11		1	
Total			5	4	2
Totals			17 Official MoE Textbooks		
			11 Student textbooks 6 Teacher guides		

b. Pedagogical Benchmarks

The pedagogical benchmarks for textbook evaluation were assessed by the following questions:

1. Is the subject matter covered accurately and adequately given the grade/age level and in accordance with curriculum standards of the region?
2. How is the curriculum guided by age-appropriate abilities and activities?
3. Does the curriculum present a “balanced” view of gender, ethnicity, and economic status?
4. What role models are presented for recurrent occupations presented in textbooks (e.g., police officer, teacher, doctor, cleaner, driver, IT technician)?
5. Are the examples in all textbook subject areas reviewed consistent with the national education policy of promoting peace and unity and being actively anti-terror and anti-illegal drugs in all curriculum design?

6. What are the historical and economic status scenarios presented to the students in the texts, and are these relevant to their life in present Afghanistan?
7. Do the textbooks provide practical examples/scenarios from Afghanistan, including illustrations/photos using a range of ethnic customs, clothes, racial groups, gender, housing, and landscapes?
8. Do the texts use open-ended questions or other techniques for encouraging a range of critical thinking and creativity for both students and teachers?
9. Are the textbooks using current programs and examples, or do they need to be edited for material referring to obsolete programs?
10. Are the teacher guides using all of the above-stated criteria?
11. Do the teacher guides' pages correspond in all ways to the student texts?

c. Textbook Analysis & Findings

The MoE textbooks are generally well-written, illustrative, and descriptive. They strictly follow Islamic values, promote cultural norms, and encourage peace and coexistence, thanks to the various relevant committees at the Curriculum Directorate that review textbooks before their publication. There has been some progress in the quality of textbooks since 2003 in terms of layout, design, and printing. The textbooks allow for interaction between teachers and students and encourage in-class activities. This dynamism offers more creative learning opportunities and employs a range of thinking, motor skills, and group work.

Substantial improvements can be observed in the first editions of textbooks compared to the books that were published in the pre-Taliban era, but the later editions do not indicate any obvious difference. Review (as opposed to revision) of textbooks is reportedly done each time a book is reprinted. In some instances, however, new editions are worse than the previous editions. While beyond the scope of this study initially, a comparative analysis of one textbook was carried out to illustrate this issue.

A Grade 1 math textbook published in 1392 (2013) was compared to an earlier edition published in 1384 (2005). In terms of content, the assessment team found the new edition suffers from more flaws than the earlier edition. Color, design, cover page, and fonts remain the same in both editions. Examples of issues in the new edition are summarized in the following table:

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of MoE-Issued Textbooks

Math, Grade 1 (1384)	Math, Grade 1(1392)	Issues
The number of members on the consultancy committee (including authors) is 12.	The number of members on the consultancy committee (including authors) is 10.	Because the new version of the book does not demonstrate significant change, the number of authors in the new version is questionable.
The monitoring committee is comprised of four individuals.	The monitoring committee is comprised of three individuals.	A new committee has been developed for religious, political, and cultural reviews. This should require further scrutiny to ensure books are not radicalized and politicized (examples below).
Message from the former Minister of the Ministry of Education, Noor Mohammad Qarqeen.	Message from the former Minister of the Ministry of Education, Faruq Wardak And (as new addition): Publication Organizer: Mohammad Kabir	The new information about the Publication Department, as well as the message from the Ministers of Education on both versions, have been criticized by teachers as an effort to politicize textbooks. Anecdotal references indicate that the Ministers have a tendency to destroy books that are not signed with their name.

	Haqmal, Director of the Publication Directorate	
All pages have an "Objectives" line, and at the bottom a brief instruction is provided for teachers.	All pages have an "Objectives" line, but the teachers' instruction section has been removed.	Ideally, it is better if textbooks have no instructions for teachers, which should be contained in teachers' guides. However, given the unavailability of teacher guides at the secondary level, this could negatively impact the teachers' ability to teach the content, as long as teacher guides are not produced for secondary-level subjects. Furthermore, the space that is freed-up is not used to expand the page frame area in which text is encompassed. The freed area is left blank outside the page frame area. This suggests a lack of coordination between the Curriculum and Design Departments during revisions.
Text-based math questions example: "54 is made of five tens and four ones and as a currency note it is five note of tens and four Afghanis" (Translation, p. 75).	The same as previous edition.	Numeracy and literacy are two distinct areas of learning for Grade 1 students, and they are of crucial importance. Generally, these two areas are taught separately. This has not been corrected in the new edition.
Poor punctuation in text-based questions: e.g., "Write a number that has fourten [no space between "four" and "ten"] and zerone [no space between "zero" and "one"]" (Translation, p. 76)	The same as previous edition.	Text formatting is not consistent, creating a reading problem. Comprehension is impossible when math questions are posed in poorly written text, discouraging learning.

<p>Religious questions in text format and puzzles are given to students. There are 16 questions on pages 97-99: E.g. "What are the total units of morning and afternoon prayer verses?" (Translation, p. 97), and: "Farida had ten Afghanis, and she paid eight Afghanis for a pen. Now how much is left?" (Translation, p. 98)</p>	<p>Page 97 has the same text, content, and font as the previous edition.</p> <p>Page 98 contains more text to not only accommodate the content of page 98 of the previous edition, but also page 99 of the previous edition, into this page. The font, therefore, is much smaller.</p>	<p>Pages full of text for a Grade 1 math learner are not advisable. When new editions attempt to reduce the fonts in order to fit more text onto a page, it suggests a lack of coordination between the curriculum and design teams.</p> <p>Older version contains six text-based questions, while the new edition contains ten text-based questions, at the expense of presenting the problems more succinctly.</p> <p>As noted above, even the free space (in the new editions where teachers' instructions are removed) is not used to make space for this purpose.</p>
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Textbooks were analyzed as per the criteria stated above. The following example illustrates the collection of data at a more detailed level.

Table 4: Analysis of a Grade 1 Dari-Language Textbook

#	Question	Answers and Examples
1.1	Are role models for recurrent occupations presented in textbooks? E.g.: police officer, teacher, doctor, cleaner, driver, IT technician, etc.	<p>No.</p> <p>P.1-99 about fathers' and brothers' roles</p> <p>P.100 about mother's role (see below for details)</p> <hr/> <p>Comments: All parent characters are fathers, except one representing a mother and that is because the topic is about the letter "m" and the word "mother."</p>

		<p>Roles: Preparation in the morning - all girls (p. 1)</p> <p>Roles: At home mostly women with the head of the family and outside all men (p. 2-3)</p> <p>Roles: Students reading national anthem, all boys (p. 4)</p> <p>Roles: Teacher as a man and as a woman - good (p. 5)</p> <p>Roles: Baba (father) (p. 15)</p> <p>Roles: Father purchased cheese from the old man (p. 17)</p> <p>Roles: Father - only boys play with balls. Popal likes to play with volleyball (p.18)</p> <p>Roles: Tawab ate berries (p. 20)</p> <p>Roles: Ghaws (boy) brought water to Soraya (girl) (p.22).</p> <p>Roles: Good deed (Father). Gheyas (boy), Soraya (daughter). (p. 24).</p> <p>Roles: Jamil brought orange. (p. 26)</p> <p>Roles: Corn (2 boys and 1 girl) (p. 28).</p> <p>Roles: Sandals. Chaman (boy) buys sandals (p. 29).</p> <p>Roles: Father of Khalida (girl) makes cover for the well (p.30)</p> <p>Roles: Boy bring water from the well (p. 30)</p> <p>Roles: Mahmood (boy) exercises. (p. 32)</p> <p>Roles: The father of Mahbooba went to Pilgrimage. (p. 33)</p> <p>Roles: Fakhrya (girl) is a good girl (p. 35).</p> <p>Roles: Father works with scythe (p. 38)</p> <p>Roles: Dawood brought the scythe (p. 38)</p> <p>Roles: Sakhi and Khalid (Boys) write in red pen (p. 40).</p> <p>Roles: Daweed (boy) toothache (p. 29).</p> <p>Roles: Zakira (girl) give paper to Nazir (boy). Nazir wrote (p. 43)</p> <p>Roles: Saboor brought carrots. Mariam cooked the carrots (p. 46)</p> <p>Roles: Raziq brought flour. Mother made dough out of it. Raziq took the dough to the bakery. (p. 47)</p> <p>Roles: Niyaz brought onion. He gave it to Zainab. (p. 49)</p> <p>Roles: Zaman brought carrots. (p. 50)</p> <p>Roles: Behzhan (boy) is planting and Muzhda (girl) is helping. (p. 52).</p> <p>Roles: Mansour (boy) brought soap. Sediqa washed the clothes. (p. 62).</p> <p>Roles: Ziya (boy) is swimming. Ziya plays with Fayaz. (Razya- name only, no role in the story) (p. 66)</p> <p>Roles: The father of Faiz (boy) is a doctor (male in the picture). He gives</p>
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	<p>Ziya (boy) medication. (p. 67).</p> <p>Roles: Latif (man) is a tailor. (p. 70)</p> <p>Roles: Zarifa and Nazifa (both girls) are clean students. (p. 73).</p> <p>Roles: Zahir (man) sells dishes. (p. 74)</p> <p>Roles: Uncle of Mahroof (boy) likes honey. (p.76)</p> <p>Roles: Haziza (girl) is happy on Eid days. Shujah (man) is friend with Haziza's father. (p. 77)</p> <p>Roles: Gheyas and Ghafour (both male) are working in the garden. (p. 79).</p> <p>Roles: Gheyas is working in the garden. The father of Gheyas has a garden. (p. 80).</p> <p>Roles: The father of Nafisa (girl) works in the factory. (p. 82).</p> <p>Roles: Farid (boy) is working in a textile factory. (p. 83).</p> <p>Roles: Qaseem (boy) writes with a pen.</p> <p>Roles: Qaseem (boy) is the brother of Muqeem (boy). (p. 86).</p> <p>Roles: Father is working with pick. Kabir (male) is working with father. (p. 88).</p> <p>Roles: Akram (man) is a worker. Akram's father has a tractor. (p. 89)</p> <p>Roles: Gulalai (girl) loves flowers. She takes care of flowers (p. 92)</p> <p>Roles: The father of Ahmad (boy) likes redbud flower. (p. 93).</p> <p>Roles: Lala (big brother - or male name) is growing beads every year. (p. 96)</p> <p>Roles: Jalal and Salim like roses. (p. 97).</p> <p>Roles: Fahim likes fish. Ahmad brought fish from the market. (p. 99).</p> <p>Roles: Mother works hard. I respect my mother. (p. 100).</p> <p>Roles: The name of my brother is Munir. Munir brought orange from the market. (103)</p> <p>Roles: Parwana's father is a baker. (p. 104)</p> <p>Roles: Wahid brought watermelon. (p. 106).</p> <p>Roles: Father said our country has good fruits (p. 107)</p> <p>Roles: Hashim and Bahader are two blacksmiths (p. 110)</p> <p>Roles: Haroon (male) exercises every day in fresh air. (p. 111)</p> <p>Roles: Nazi and Niyaz (male & female) like tailoring. Yaseen (male) bought them sewing machine. (p.114)</p> <p>Roles: Yaseen (male) is a carpenter. He has a carpentry shop. (p. 115).</p>
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1.2	Are values promoted to respond to violence?	Yes, on most pages.
		No: p. 7; p. 137
		<p>Comments:</p> <p>The illustration on the page is from a traditional folklore fable. The pictures narrate the story of a lion and goat. The lion eats the goats when they do not listen to their mother and opens the door without asking who was knocking on the door. The lion is later chased by the mother, who sharpens her teeth and nails to prepare for a battle with the lion. She then rips the chest of the lion and takes the babies out. This story's description is very violent (p.7).</p> <p>The next story is about a crane that is labeled as a duck and suffers until it rejoins other cranes. The instruction on the page guides the teacher to help the students to reflect on the bad behaviour that the ducks exhibited toward the baby crane. This story is very much in line with the stereotypical notion that one shall join the people he/she belongs to because that is the only way of survival. (p.137)</p>
1.3	Are spiritual and Islamic values incorporated?	Yes, on all pages.
		<p>Comments: Most of the phrases and text refer to religion. Specific topics have been allocated for religious lessons as well. However, Arabic script جَلَّ جَلَّاهُ (meaning "May His glory be glorified" that comes after Allah's name, and written in a complicated calligraphy format is not spelled out for students. Instructions on religion are scattered and lack consistency. For example, the first lesson is about pilgrimage, the last pillar of Islam and a difficult concept because it involves a practice that takes place in a foreign country (p. 33), while the word Islam starts with the first letter of the alphabet of the language and it has not been used or taught at this stage of the book.</p>
1.5	Do the textbook examples in different subjects promote leadership and team building concepts?	Yes, to some extent, but only in a limited way.
		Comments: Because there is gender bias in representing women's role in the society, this aspect is overshadowed.
1.6	Do these textbooks also incorporate both female and male	Yes, somewhat.
		<p>Comments:</p> <p>For many actions taking place outside the household only male figures</p>

	examples?	<p>are portrayed, for example: shopping (in all stories), going to school and observing traffic lights (p.3), playing outdoors (p. 18), and working in a factory (p.83).</p> <p>As stated above, most characters are fathers and brothers. Most names are male names. Female names in the book amount to 16: Names: Soraya, Jamila, Khaleda, Mahbooba, Fakhrya, Mariam, Zainab, Sosan, Sediqa, Zarifa, Nazifa, Haziza Nafisa, Gulalai, Nazi, Parwana</p> <p>Male names in the book amount to 56 names: Names: Tawab, Matin, Popal, Ghaws, Usman, Gheyas, Gamil, Saraj, Najeeb, Sabet, Saqeb, Chaman, Mahmood, Sakhi, Khalid, Dawood, Zakira, Nazir, Saboor, Raziq, Niyaz, Zaman, Behzhan, Muzhdah, Sarwar, Bashir, Bashir, Shakir, Mansour, Sabir, Ziya, Fayaz, Faiz, Ziya, Latif, Hafiz, Zahir, Mahroof, Shujah, Ghyas, Ghafoor, Ghiyas, Farid, Qaseem, Qaseem, Moqeeem, Ahmad, Jalal, Salim, Fahim. Haroon. Hashim, Bahader, Munir, Niyaz, Yaseen</p>
2.2	Are ethnic groups, gender equality and historical events represented and/or interpreted?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Comments: some names of minority backgrounds are incorporated. Some pictures indicate ethnic diversity (e.g. pp. 1-2)</p>
3.1	Do the textbooks indicate practical examples/scenarios from Afghanistan- including illustrations/photos using a range of ethnic customs, clothes, racial groups, gender, housing, landscapes?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Comments: Yes, all of the pictures, occupations, characters, habitual practices, means of production, social and economic relationships and day-to-day life of the people of Afghanistan are reflected in the content and illustrations.</p>
4.1	Does the syllabus correspond to the textbooks used and do	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Comments: Yes. Who has created the world? (p.119); what do we do with a sewing</p>

	they include open-ended questions for the students and teachers to consider?	machine? (p.114). There are three questions in each lesson and one per section is open-ended.
4.2	Are there assignments outside of the classroom in the community or in nature, (for example) or with family members?	<p>Yes, to some extent.</p> <p>Comments: Students are given written work to do at home, but no out-of-classroom assignment is assigned, leading to a weakness in the content as a result.</p>
4.3	Does the text indicate to the teacher to employ group work in the classroom?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Comments: Most lessons encourage group works, e.g. (pp. 7, 16, 17, 38, 40, 54, 64, 71, 72, 73, 76, 78, 85, 91, etc.). Yet some teamwork conditions encouraged by the teacher may not create room for a collaborative teamwork environment: for example, teamwork is advised to be conducted in silence (p. 57).</p>
4.4	Do the texts include topics or suggestions for in-class discussion questions which require the full spectrum of thinking skills?	<p>Yes, to some extent.</p> <p>Comments: There are some topics that are for in-class discussion (e.g. house chores, hygiene, social ethics, and family responsibilities). The problem is that the thinking skills are not deep and remain at descriptive rather than analytical level. For example, a question asks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When you came to school what did you see on the "car-passing roads"? 2. Where was the traffic light? 3. How many colors do traffic lights have? 4. Why should we cross the road on zebra lines? <p>These questions are premised on assumptions that often will not be relevant for the Afghan context: That there are urban style roads with traffic lights and painted crosswalks. Secondly, the questions are mostly</p>

		descriptive information rather than analytical. For example, a more relevant question to the context of a country like Afghanistan would be, "what do we do when there is no traffic light?" (P.3)
5.1	Are the textbooks using current programs and examples, or do they need to be edited for material referring to obsolete programs? (Ex. in IT and language texts).	No Comments: Other than electric fan, the book does not refer to any other technology.
6.1	Are there guidelines for teachers within the student textbooks?	Yes, on all pages Comments: The teacher guide is within the textbook. This has overcrowded the pages. Instruction for teachers: there is no standard as to where the instruction for teachers should be placed. The instruction for teachers (E.g. the objectives of the topic) is inside the lesson (e.g. p. 18).
6.2	Are these teacher guides using all of the above stated criteria?	Yes. Comments: The teacher guidelines are generally good and cover some areas of peace building, group work, cooperation, and support to family. The teacher guide is very generic, repetitive, and follows the same format from page one to the next. Although of three questions that teachers are given to initiate discussion with students, one focuses on critical thinking and often focuses on moral lessons, this question often remains at a shallow level. The teacher's guide that is integrated within the textbook is in three categories: 1. The objective of this lesson is to teach the pronunciation and writing of an alphabetical letter; 2. Ask students to explain the picture/illustration (that is on the letter and/or topic on the page); and, 3. The teachers are to ask a question that has to do with moral lessons, e.g., why is playing on the road not a good idea? (p. 18); Who are you supposed to say hello to? (p. 24); What is the advantage of wearing woollen socks in the winter? (p. 26).
6.3	Are there separate teacher guides in	Yes. Comments

<p>textbook form using the above stated criteria for <i>teachers only</i> to use?</p>	<p>On the textbook, the table of contents specifies 2-3 hours for each lesson. The teacher guide allocates 1 hour for each lesson. It is not clear what accounts for the discrepancy. In most instances the instruction in the teacher's guide does not comment on the objectives of the lesson, For example (p. 4 of textbook; p. 4 in teacher's guide), the picture on the page shows students (all male) reading the national anthem. The Activity section of the guide asks teachers to speak about traffic lights, and to tell students a story. While the guide's skills building section says: "Can students stand up appropriately for reciting the national anthem?" Furthermore, all students' assessment methodology to ensure learning outcomes consists of: "teachers ask some questions about the subject." There is no diversity in assessment tools and methodologies. All assessment questions are the same for all lessons and very generic in nature.</p>
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While all books meet Islamic standards and norms, in some instances they have gone too far. For instance, biology in Grade 8 does not include the human being as part of the study of life; consists of an unscientific, illogical sequencing; and incomplete material for basic biology. Furthermore, most Islamic references are only to Sunnis' interpretation of the religion, few to the Shias'.

There are no representations of women in most books. In other textbooks, there is only minimal representation, and this applies to all reviewed subjects. The roles of females are relegated to domestic or less professional work, while males have a wide variety of roles and positive character traits presented.

From a cultural point-of-view, most material is culturally appropriate and represents the traditions of the country. However, some cultural examples in the secondary school books for "culture/arts," (songs for example) are not from Afghanistan. From the point-of-view of ethnic representation, there are few examples of Hazaras, Uzbeks, or Turkmen ethnicities, and none of the nomadic Kuchis in the current textbooks.

While most subjects are age-appropriate, the math content is too dense and not age-appropriate for grades 7-12. The level and frequency of illustrations are helpful for difficult subjects such as math and science; however, at higher grade levels, the number of illustrations drops significantly.

Labeling of important information is generally poor. Themes, important concepts, and new information are not highlighted or emphasized within the text for students to know to pay special attention to the material. In most books, there is no "revision" section after a number of chapters.

The charts, maps, and some illustrations are too small, lack the required detail for the topic covered, and/or are unclear (blurry). There are overlapping images and text, making both less readable. The font size of print for many primary school books is too small for beginner readers. The illustrations, photographs, and graphics do not correspond to the topic or subject, or are out of context. Poor referencing is another area of concern: significant concepts, landscapes, biographies, and events are not referenced across subjects and grade levels. This is the case for the geography, history, literature, life skills, and sciences books.

d. Teacher Guides

No teacher guides have been written or printed for grades 10-12. There are subjects in grades 7-9 for which there are no teacher guides. We are unclear after our assessment as to whether they have not yet been created, or if they have just not been approved and/or printed.

The "teacher instructions" are not directed toward group- or project-based learning. They are, at best, partner or team work on the same exercises in the textbook chapter.

The teacher guides are printed only in black and white. There is no color, making the guide a very dry, dull text. The page numbers and layout in teacher guides do not correspond to the page numbers and layout in the student textbooks. The teacher's guide text does not contain the same illustrations, photos, or images that the student textbooks contain. Some teacher guides and some student textbooks (previous and current editions) in all subjects still contain basic grammar and spelling errors in all three languages surveyed (Dari, Pashto, and English).

While there are some textbooks and teacher guides for primary and lower secondary grades available online on the MoE website, some links do not lead to any content and most schools do not have reliable access to the Internet.

4. Planning

The MoE works on a five-year planning cycle based on the assumption that textbook acquisition and distribution takes a minimum of 15 months and on the current MoE policy that textbooks should be used for three years.¹²⁷ The planning process is heavily influenced by the MoE's reliance on donor funding for textbooks, which is unpredictable and largely out of its control. This fact, along with the MoE's weak planning capacity, has led to multiple "emergency" textbook procurements that have been conducted in recent years, usually with pressure from the President. This section describes how the MoE currently determines textbook needs.

a. Textbook Needs Assessment

Almost all key informants reported that the MoE bases textbook needs on student enrollment figures, usually taken from the Educational Management Information

¹²⁷ Interview, Director of Planning, January 26, 2016.

Systems (EMIS) and sometimes crosschecked with enrollment figures kept by provinces or other departments. This exercise requires the MoE to have student numbers disaggregated by grade and language preference. In addition to enrollment, the MoE adds an additional percentage to arrive at the total number of textbooks required: 20%, according to the Publications Director, and 30-40%, according to an EMIS Officer.¹²⁸ According to the “MoE Policies and Guidelines” document, 15-20% more books are requested to account for “wastage of textbooks, number of refugees returning, cooperative national/international NGOs, private schools, reopening of closed schools, and maintenance of the safety stock at the warehouse, [for] tackling the emergency cases.”¹²⁹

One official at the MoE reported that the number of books printed in the past and how many remain at the warehouse are considered as well, when determining procurement needs.¹³⁰ While that might be true in special circumstances, in general the planning process assumes that there will be no current books in circulation once the new books are distributed to schools. In fact, by the time most procurements are completed and books are distributed to schools, any books they replace have likely reached the three-year period of use and have expired, although they may very well be in use.

Once books arrive in the Kabul warehouse, distribution takes place on the basis of requests fed from the school level to district, province, and then MoE levels (see the example form FS13 below). Respondents in the provinces, districts and schools did not know whether there was a policy that allowed schools to request more than the actual

¹²⁸ MoE Policies and Guidelines, undated; Interview, Director of Publications, January 18, 2016.

¹²⁹ MoE Policies and Guidelines, undated.

¹³⁰ Group Interview, Planning, Distribution and Publications Officials; December 30, 2015.

need, although a few believed that they were allowed to make modest increases to their actual figures. The General Manager for Textbooks Distribution reported that MoE estimates 7% more than actual (although it was not clear if 7% is added to what was requested or whether schools or districts are allowed to do so).¹³¹ Since the MoE usually has many fewer books on hand than the number of books requested, the distribution teams attempt to fairly allocate books according to requests channeled upward. Distribution is covered in more detail in a later section, but it is important to note that the method for estimating needs and the methods for allocating books are entirely different. In fact, the methods for allocating books during distribution appear to be somewhat different from province to province.

Figure 1: MoE-Issued FSN13 Form

Islamic republic of Afghanistan
Education Department of Zabul Province

FSN (13) Form

No.	Subject	Grade	Language	Amount	Unit Price	Total Price	Remarks
1	Arts	1	Pashto				
2	Maths	1	Pashto				
3	Pashto	1	Pashto				
4	Life Skills	1	Pashto				
5	Drawing	1	Pashto				

b. Education Management Information System Enrollment Figures

The EMIS is populated with data reported by individual schools using an eight-page form. After completing the form, school officials send EMIS forms to the DED for crosschecking and approval, and then to the PED, where data is entered into a networked system. The last of the eight pages covers textbooks and requires schools

¹³¹ Interview, General Manager of Textbooks Distribution, December 30, 2015.

to list the number of books the schools have and need.¹³² However, no respondent mentioned using this data to plan for or distribute textbooks. It is unclear if the data on textbooks is ever used. Instead, officials talked of using student enrollment numbers from EMIS.

Almost all respondents reported that EMIS figures are not reliable. A forthcoming study commissioned by USAID on EMIS highlights critical issues such as lack of training for officials filling the forms and lack of monitoring to verify numbers reported. Both problems were echoed in interviews conducted by this assessment team. In addition, data entry was reported to be another critical weakness where errors can be introduced. Because EMIS data is thoroughly discounted, departments tend to create parallel systems for collecting information, generally requiring provinces to gather data from districts, which in turn, make requests of schools.

The Director of Publications himself gave an example of how difficult it is to determine student enrollment with the data he has.

*We were working on an urgent project for madrassa books with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. We had three types of data: first, EMIS; second, information from the Deputy Minister of Islamic Education; and third, information from the Curriculum Department. All three sets of information were different.*¹³³

Like other departments, Publications has approached this problem by creating a parallel data collection system. The Director himself recently designed a form for schools to fill out which – like the EMIS form – asks for the number of textbooks on

¹³² Interview, Mazar Planning and EMIS Officers, January 3, 2016.

¹³³ Interview, Director of Publications, January 18, 2016.

hand and the number needed, by grade and mother tongue (see Figure 4 below). The problem, of course, in requesting information on such an ad hoc basis is that there is neither the training needed for officials to understand how to fill the form nor the manpower to facilitate the data entry of more than 16,000 forms, as well as the data cleaning and analysis. Finally, these ad hoc methods suffer from the same lack of monitoring.

Accusations of ghost schools and teachers published in the Afghan and international press highlight a tendency of MoE entities to over-report key educational statistics, presumably because such statistics guide funding decisions and verification is rarely done in many parts of the country. The same incentives apply to textbook requests coming from schools, districts, and provinces, especially where there are opportunities to keep extra books for use later or even opportunities to sell books for profit. Monitoring challenges that apply to EMIS and any other regular data collection system are extremely difficult to overcome and include:

- Shortage of staff to perform monitoring visits;
- Lack of budget for travel and per diem costs;
- Cultural barriers to travel for female monitors (or increased costs if funding their male *mahrams*¹³⁴);
- Lack of incentive to report negative findings;
- Lack of training on how to complete monitoring forms;
- Insecurity, which prevents monitoring of a good portion of schools;
- Remoteness, which renders travel impossible during much of the year and expensive at other times; and
- Lack of follow up on monitoring findings.

¹³⁴ A *mahram* is a woman's male escort, generally husband or other family member

Figure 2: New Publication and Information Form, 2016

 (لوا درف) Government of Afghanistan Ministry of Education Publication and Information Form for the need of Textbooks									
No.	Title	Grade	No Students		Books available		Books required		Notes
			Dari	Pashtun	Dari	Pashtun	Dari	Pashtun	
1	Religious Studies	1							
2	Dari								
3	Math								
4	Life Skills								
5	Art								
6	Handwriting								

c. Data Management

Before travelling to the provinces, the assessment team found that the MoE had prepared a master distribution list for the latest shipment of textbooks – the 2.2 million emergency textbooks for grades 7–9 – that showed how many books each school was to receive, organized by province. However, during province visits the assessment team quickly discovered that the plan was not being followed and did not seem to be based on actual school-level needs. According to one provincial Distribution Manager who was asked to use the distribution list, “The problem was that the figures we got were not accurate and we didn’t know how they chose the schools [to receive books]. If we did distribute to one school but not another it would be a big problem.”¹³⁵ When asked how books would be distributed, he said that province devises its own formula to apply the proportion of books received to all district requests, in order to maintain fairness.

¹³⁵ Interview, Kabul Distribution Manager, January 9, 2016.

These centrally-created lists and the planning form recently devised by Publications both represent an attempt to respond to donor requirements that textbook needs and textbook distribution should be based on school-level information. Any quick solution, however, cannot overcome the gap in data management capacity that makes this currently impossible. Later sections will describe the process that the MoE follows to track requests and receipt of books at all levels. Of importance to the planning discussion is the fact that from the province level down, information is paper-based only. At the central level, the MoE does not have ready access to information on the district or school level – other than EMIS, which no one apparently trusts.

The assessment team was surprised to learn that even in the provinces visited – all three of which were large urban centers – Internet access was not reliable and book inventories were not maintained on spreadsheets or other computerized format. Provincial authorities could not readily report on the number of textbooks in circulation and could not report on information at the school level without sending a request to the district. For example, in one province, the assessment team asked how many 9th grade Dari language math books were in circulation in the province. Officials said that to find out a clerk would have to look through three years of distribution receipts and add the total. There was no tracking for lost or damaged books, and no convention to account for loss and therefore arrive at more accurate circulation estimates.

At the schools visited, the assessment team noted that a book register was used to track textbooks issued to and returned from each student, but the register does not exclusively track MoE-distributed books.¹³⁶ If students lose or damage books during

¹³⁶ Observation, Hazrat Omar Farooq Girls School, Herat Province, January 11, 2016.

the year, they might replace them with copies or books bought in the market; these books are tracked in the register just as the original books are. In other cases, students who were not issued a book might buy their books in the market and then donate them to the school at the end of the year, again, with no differentiation in the record. These record-keeping methods are practical, but they may complicate more comprehensive efforts to track or monitor books in the future.

The assessment team learned that a pilot project in Parwan in 2006-2008 introduced a Returned Book Record that aimed to improve such record keeping (see below). While training officials to use such a form would be a challenge, examination of the form's contents shows that over time it would help track lifespan information for books by subject and grade. Introducing this form in all schools would require an inordinate amount of resources and training. However, using it in select schools could help the MoE model textbook loss and damage rates, and improve planning, for example, of actual loss statistics for different grades and subjects.

Figure 3: Returned Book Record, Parwan Pilot Project, 2006-08

School needs for textbooks - Academic Year 2014 - 15									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Title Grade 1	Actual number of Students 2013-14	Number of books received by school 2013-14	Total number of returned books by students	Number of books that are reusable (A)	Number of usable books in the school stock (B)	Estimated number of students for the year 2014-15 include repeaters (C)	Total usable books (A+B)	Book need 2014-15 = estimated number of students (C) minus (A+B)	Final school total + 10%
Arts	45	58	46	44	0	40	44	-4	0
Maths	45	23	18	13	3	40	16	24	30
Pashto	45	28	24	21	7	40	28	12	15
Life Skills	45	30	20	18	0	40	18	22	25
Drawing	45	35	30	27	0	40	27	13	15

	The cells in these 2 columns should always have the same number
	Data input from each school green RBR
	Columns calculated automatically by formula

DEO Signature that data is same as RBR.
---	-------

Check your data:	
Does the data in column 9 match exactly with the Green RBR from the school?	
Yes	Continue with next school
No	Check your data input
Still No	Check the school green RBR for errors in the calculation and make corrections if necessary

d. Appropriate Length of Book Use

Current MoE policy states that textbooks are expected to be used for three years from when they are issued to students, although MoE officials themselves believe that three years is ambitious. The Director of Planning advocates for a 50% replenishment policy, although he believes that lower grades require even greater replacement every year.¹³⁷ Most interviewees, including teachers, principals, and parents, as well as school officials, agreed that textbooks for primary grades have a lower usable lifespan. Many noted that these books are often damaged within the first year.¹³⁸ Opinions were mixed about whether the three-year policy was suitable for textbooks for other grades. A few interviewees suggested that books for high school students might sometimes last even a bit longer. In a Herat focus group discussion, principals made the distinction that smaller books tended to last longer.¹³⁹ Many interviewees and focus group discussants stressed the importance of how students treat the books.

There is no single best practice that should guide the appropriate period of use of textbooks. Rather, many factors must be considered, including the choice of textbook specifications; cost of production, transportation and storage; ability of individual students to maintain books (including with covers); and the policy's effect on opportunities for corruption and leakage.

e. Human Resources

¹³⁷ Interview, Director of Planning, January 26, 2016.

¹³⁸ Focus group discussion, Injil principals, January 11, 2016;

¹³⁹ Focus group discussion, Gozara principals, January 11, 2016.

The MoE employs a total of 1,696 staff members in its ten departments: Gender Education Directorate, Procurement Directorate, Planning Directorate, Academic Council Directorate, Publications Directorate, Deputy Ministry of Curriculum Development, Curriculum Directorate, Teacher Education Directorate (TED), and Sayed Jamaluddin Teacher Training College (TTC).

Data collection from the above-listed administrative units faced some resistance; in many occasions, it was made clear that not all human resource data would be shared with the assessment team. Thus, data was provided for the following categories: *tashkeel* size, gender balance, and formal qualification of employees. Because not all data was disaggregated by sex, data was disaggregated by identifying names (male vs. female names). Please refer to Annex VI, Human Resources Data, for detailed illustrations.

Tashkeel refers to permanent staff members, while “out of tashkeel” refers to employees with technical and non-technical backgrounds who are on payroll on a contract basis for periods ranging from 6 to 12 months. However, in many cases, the contracts are extended for many consecutive years. The level of education refers to school, secondary, and primary categories. School years refer to graduation from grade 12, while secondary and primary refer to grade 9 and grade 6 education, respectively.

Of the total number of positions at the MoE, 24% are currently vacant, while 13% of the staff work on a contract basis. Women comprise 20% of employees and only 6% of the total contract-based employees. The highest levels of education for women are Baccalaureate and high school diploma, representing 31% and 28%, respectively.

Apart from the TED and Sayed Jamaluddin TTC, which are professional environments for teachers, the largest proportion of women, 34%, are recruited by the Procurement Directorate. Women are generally and due to cultural sensitivities not given procurement tasks at government offices. Therefore, while all women at this Directorate work at low level administrative positions, professional staff members interviewed and observed at the Procurement Directorate were all men with decision-making power. The Publications Directorate has the highest number of contract-based staff, 51 employees, while the second highest is at the Curriculum Directorate, which has 28 employees. The highest number of women on contract is at Curriculum Department, and this contractual nature of the ad hoc recruitment explains the low representation of women in textbook content and design teams. Employees, male and female, with the highest level of education are housed at the Curriculum Directorate in managerial positions, while technical positions in the textbook content and design teams are in the hands of male professionals.

Data from General Education Directorate indicates a severe shortage of staff members. Of 204 staff members in the *tashkeel*, only 87 are filled, while the remaining 117 positions are vacant. Despite the high rate of vacancies, 76 staff members are hired on a contract or out-of-*tashkeel* basis. Data from the Department also indicates a remarkable gap in gender balance: women only comprise 13.2% of the total staff members with significantly lower education level.

The Planning Directorate shows a similar picture: of 131 *tashkeel* positions, 36 are vacant while 23 are recruited on a contract basis. The proportion of women comprises only 19.2%. Consistent with all other Departments, their education level falls between grades 12-14 (98%).

The Academic Council Directorate is the only Department with no vacant position. The proportion of women employed is the least in this Department (7.5%), and unlike other Departments, no woman is hired with higher qualifications at masters, bachelors, or grade 14 level.

The Teacher Education Directorate of the MoE has the highest proportion of vacant positions, 28.8%, with lowest out of *tashkeel* recruitment at 1.39%. Women comprise 26.1 % of the staff, and it appears they hold the highest qualifications compared to other Directorates: 55 female staff with high school diplomas and bachelor's and master's degrees.

Sayed Jamaluddin Teacher Training College has 14.6 % vacant positions and only 1% out of *tashkeel* staff. Thanks to the need for female teachers across the country, the proportion of female staff members comprise 41.9%. With the exception of two, they hold high school diplomas and bachelor's and master's degrees.

In conclusion, it is clear from the *tashkeel* set up of the various Departments of the MoE that many positions are vacant and women are under-represented. Further studies may yield interesting and important results as to why permanent staff are not recruited in some Departments, but there are a high number are working on a contract basis. The ratio between male and female staff members significantly favors men, except where the presence of female staff is required (e.g., Sayed Jamaluddin TTC). The lower education levels among women also indicate lower representation in key decision-making positions.

5. Design

The design of grades 1-12 textbooks is carried out by the Design Department of the

Curriculum Directorate of the MoE. After a book is prepared by the Curriculum Department, its first draft is passed on to the Design Department for layout and visualization. Upon its finalization, a CD of the textbook is made available to the Publication Department for further action. There is a general consensus with regard to positive gradual improvements in the quality of textbook design. This optimistic view, however, is partly due to low textbook design standards at the MoE and a lack of knowledge about textbook design quality among school teachers and parents. In the absence of policies and guidelines and a lack of technical competence, the design of the textbooks stage in the process chain demonstrates both a sporadic step forward and significant room for improvement in policy and technical and human resource realms.

a. Policy & Guidelines

The Curriculum Department's senior management was unaware of whether policies concerning textbook design exist. The Design Department Team Leader was called upon to answer our questions. It was confirmed that no specific policies and guidelines exist for textbook design, but guidelines stipulated in policies related to curriculum development govern the textbook design process. The "policies" – as opposed to values or criteria – were identified as meeting Islamic, cultural, and scientific standards. However, the "Textbooks Supply Requirements Standard Technical Specification for Print & Supply of General Educational Textbooks," supplied by the Procurement Department to the textbook bidders, states: "Font styles and point sizes are to be maintained exactly as per the CDs supplied by the General Directorate of Curriculum Development of MoE, including all illustrations tables and pictures, as well as the

languages and purpose for which the books are to be used.”¹⁴⁰

The same policy vacuum applies to online resources: “When there is copyright restriction on online material, we do not use them. When there is no copyright or no institutional logo, we use them.”¹⁴¹ The potential for mistakes in the use of material with copyright restrictions is high and could lead to international disputes between claimants and the MoE, especially given that the MoE textbooks are available on their website, where copyright holders could find copyright restricted material within the books.

b. Monitoring & Evaluation

When a textbook is submitted for layout and design to the Design Department, it comes under the direct supervision of the Team Leader who leads a team of 15 employees. All team members report to the Team Leader, who also conducts quality checks and monitoring. There is no external monitoring mechanism, but after the completion of a textbook it is sent to the sub-committees that review the book from other perspectives (e.g., religion and culture). The Design Department reports to the General Directorate. This lack of an external monitoring mechanism is observed by NGOs that work in the education sector: “The Directorate of Curriculum does everything from A to Z: design, writing, content, and approval. But there is no quality check. Even when they do a quality check, the same people who have created the product [the textbook] check their own quality. This does not work.”¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Textbooks Supply Requirements Standard Technical Specification for Print & Supply of General Educational Textbooks. Prepared by Kambaiz Wali Publication and Quality Control Specialist, approved by M. Kabir Haqmal, pg. 5.

¹⁴¹Interview: The Team Leader of Design Team, Gulustani and Hamidullah Ghafari, Curriculum Department, MoE, January 6, 2016 (CRC003).

¹⁴²Interview: Save the Children. National Consultant. January 7, 2016

c. Staff & Capacity

The total numbers of employees in the Graphic Design unit are 15, eight of whom are hired by World Bank (Professional Designers), and seven are hired by the MoE on annual contracts. The MoE contractors are *tashkeel*, but for the last few years their contracts are regularly renewed. There is one computer operator in each department for daily work, but they are not in the organizational chart. In the past, seven or eight women were reported to have been working for the Design Department, but they reportedly left their positions. No reason was provided.

In terms of the technical capacity of the Design Department, it is clear that there is some degree of relevant knowledge and training, but it is entirely IT-driven as opposed to pedagogically-focused. To the question, “Is the process of book design treated as a technical step only, or are pedagogical and psychological factors to enhance learning also taken into account?” the department Team Leader responded, “In some books, e.g. in math, the pictures are meant to be used as a means to lead the teachers to a purpose. They help students’ learning. But in other places we do not do that – we only match the topic to the picture. It really depends on the author and what they expect of us.”¹⁴³ This, in the view of the respondent, explains why some books have better illustrations than others. When authors are specific about illustrations’ “order,” the Design Department staff are more likely to find a suitable illustration on the Internet; and in the absence of a relevant illustration, the drawing team will step in. However, when authors are vague, only the topic or theme is matched with an illustration that the concerned staff member deems appropriate. When the Team Leader was asked if in his experience the authors are technically

¹⁴³ Ibid.

competent to give sufficient details about required illustrations, his response was, "Yes, the teachers can decide on matching pictures to content."¹⁴⁴ This indicates a technical disconnect between an expected high standard of design and the actual practice.

The Team Leader has obtained training in designing textbooks in Jordan. Although no details on the training completed were available, it could be ascertained from the interview that the training focused on IT and computer software. The Design team members received two trainings in Iran on the subject.

d. Technology & Facilities

There are three main sub-sections in the Design Department, also called the Information and Communications Technology Unit: the Graphic Design Unit, the IT Unit, and the Audio Visual Unit. The Arts Department is also administered by the Curriculum Directorate. These units are housed in three rooms. The software used by the Design Department includes Adobe Photoshop, Coral Draw, Adobe Illustrator, MS Word, MS PowerPoint, and MS Excel. InDesign is the key textbook software covered during the training in Jordan.

e. Quality of Textbook Design

The Curriculum Department is satisfied with the quality of textbooks, but it is under pressure to take the Taliban's views into consideration. This requires a compromise in the quality of textbooks: "In [the Afghan calendar year] 1386, the textbook pictures were not good. But the pictures are culturally appropriate. No Talib has ever torn a

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

book apart [because the books meet their standards, too].”¹⁴⁵

Respondents expressed a wide range of views about textbook design quality. Generally, school teachers, management staff, and parents were satisfied with the quality of textbook design. Teachers from Herat City¹⁴⁶ and principals from Injil District of Herat Province opined that the strength of the new books lies in their colors and pictures.¹⁴⁷ A similar compliment was made by a principal in a Herat City-based school: “The current books are clearer in terms of their content, and they have more pictures.”¹⁴⁸ In Kabul, the same appreciation was echoed: “The illustrations are very useful when teaching students. Before reading the text, they can understand from the images. There are improvements. Design, paper quality, and cover are all good.”¹⁴⁹ The Director of the Sayed Jamaluddin Teacher Training College highlighted the positive change in the textbooks, too: “It is better now in terms of design, content, and layout. It is colored and it has a proper plan for teachers”¹⁵⁰ Parents in Mazar-e Sharif offered a similar view: “There is no problem [with textbook design]. The font and size is fine too. The books are better than the past in terms of their design. The font and size are fine too.”¹⁵¹

There were also critical views of textbook design. For instance, the life skills textbook’s theme does not match the illustrations, and this has caused difficulty for the respective

¹⁴⁵ Interview: The Team Leader of Design Team, Gulustani and Hamidullah Ghafari, Curriculum Department, MoE, January 6, 2016 (CRC003).

¹⁴⁶ FGD: Teachers. Herat. January 25, 2016

¹⁴⁷ FGD: Principals. Injil District. Herat January 11, 2016

¹⁴⁸ Interview: Naswan Hazrat Omar Faruq High School, Principle. Herat. January 11, 2016

¹⁴⁹ Interview: Qara bagh, Kabul, M&E Department. Member of M&E Abid. January 20, 2016

¹⁵⁰ Interview: Sayed Jamal Uddin TTC, Director DED, Kabul, January 20, 2016

¹⁵¹ FGD: Mazar City. Portents. January 5, 2016

teachers to explain the illustrations in the context of the theme.¹⁵² This new textbook has been incorporated in the curriculum only in the past five years and is generally neither taught in teacher trainings nor in universities. Since the book was designed by the MoE and it is still in the process of being introduced to both teachers and students, support is needed for the teachers to effectively teach the book. One such supports is with regards to the illustrations in the textbook based on which teachers communicate to students their understanding of the topics in an effective manner. However, the irrelevance of the pictures to the text does not offer that support. The grades 10-12 chemistry textbooks and grade 11 physics textbook formulas do not match the content, illustrations are not descriptive of the respective topics, and all of the illustrations lack description/captions. This, it is believed, is caused by random selection of illustrations from the Internet.¹⁵³

Due to a technical and professional disconnect between textbook authors and the IT department of the Curriculum Directorate, illustrations fail to correspond to the text. Some parents observed that illustrations in elementary textbooks are inadequate and of poor quality. By inadequate they refer to the quantity of illustration, and by poor quality they mean illustrations that are not clear due to poor drawing, fading colors and small size. A parent mentioned she had to purchase more colorful textbooks printed in Iran in order to encourage her child to learn the alphabet.¹⁵⁴ Issues with regard to font size of elementary-school textbooks were also raised. Fonts in the previous editions of textbooks were larger and there was less text on a page compared to the current textbooks.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Interview: Private School, Kabul District 5, Kabul, January 24, 2016 (Rohullah)

¹⁵³ FGD: Teachers, Public Schools. Kabul, January 19, 2016 (FGD009)

¹⁵⁴ FGD: Parents. Herat. January 12, 2016

¹⁵⁵ FGD: Mazar City PED Management, January 3, 2016

Some technically-informed NGO sector respondents commented on the poor resolution of photos taken from the Internet and missing citations,¹⁵⁶ the poor design of cover pages (e.g., not inclusive and engaging),¹⁵⁷ and the lack of content that would improve critical thinking and imaginative faculties of students.¹⁵⁸ A statement made by a former USAID employee summarizes the concerns: “There is no observation in the design, quality, lay-out, formatting, and information of basic education textbooks.”¹⁵⁹ A number of organizations (e.g., the World University Service of Canada, the World Bank, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, and the Aga Khan Foundation) further mentioned the need for improvement in textbook design. A couple of these organizations highlighted that improvement should also include a ban on nepotism, which prevents competitive Afghan artists from replacing a number of the current MoE staff members who are not technically equipped to meet contemporary textbook design standards. One NGO proposed that design improvement can lead to saving money and reducing the already heavy volume of textbooks. For instance, a good layout may reduce a 200-page textbook to 150, which will not only save money but will also reduce the weight of the book for students who walk long distances to school.¹⁶⁰

In short, the quality of textbooks suffers from inadequate practices and competencies and a lack of monitoring. There are inconsistencies between illustrations and text due to a lack of pedagogical competence in the IT department or a lack of coordination between the design personnel and the Curriculum Department and poor illustrations

¹⁵⁶ Interview: Save the Children. National Consultant. January 7, 2016

¹⁵⁷ Interview: Programme Director-Swedish Committee of Afghanistan, December 30

¹⁵⁸ WUSC, National Consultant, January (? Lauryn)

¹⁵⁹ Interview: USAID. Former USAID Financial Analyst Backstopping MoE’s Projects, Specifically Textbooks Project Imran Khan via Skype. (? Aimee)

¹⁶⁰ Interview: Save the Children. National Consultant. January 7, 2017

due to inadequate use of either Internet-based or original drawing content. Overall, textbook quality is undermined by the absence of quality checks to ensure the final design is relevant, appropriate, comprehensive, and of a high standard that will foster student learning.

5. Procurement

Within the greater textbook acquisition process, procurement poses one of the greatest risks for corruption and fraud.

a. Major Risks in Procurement

To identify the greatest risks in the procurement process, the assessment team reviewed past results of textbook contracts, as well as information shared during interviews and focus group discussions about irregularities, both past and current. Table 7 shows all of the contracts since 2004, that the assessment team could obtain.

Local versus international firms: From 2004-2010, Baheer Printing and Packaging Co. Ltd., a leading Afghan company, won five of six contracts. During this period, informants agreed that Baheer was the preferred company of the MoE. According to various sources, Baheer continued to win awards despite not following the terms or meeting the necessary requirements (details to follow), and there was little monitoring to expose the arrangement. Donors had been supportive of contracting to Afghan firms, despite higher costs, in order to support local businesses and jobs. The assessment team had a frank discussion with the Senior Procurement Advisor, an expatriate World Bank employee who has worked with the MoE on procurement for many years. To the question of whether the attempts to support the local textbook

suppliers were worth the risk of corruption, he said “there cannot be capacity building if the intentions are corrupt. It just doesn’t work.”¹⁶¹ After donors discovered the issues with Baheer’s relationship with the MoE, however, they began to refuse to contract with Baheer.¹⁶²

Representatives of eight Afghan printing companies, including Baheer, were invited to a focus group discussion, where the MoE’s relationship with printers was a major topic. The seven printing companies that had not won contracts were very critical of the MoE. One representative said, “The publications team at MoE is a mafia. Either they should be removed from their position or there has to be a monitoring system.”¹⁶³ Other companies complained that single source contracting made it more difficult for them to compete. Lots can sometimes be 20-30 million books and required in a very short amount of time, despite the fact that they would sit in a warehouse for six months. They suggested that smaller lots with somewhat longer timeframes would make it much easier for local companies to compete.

Since the shift away from Baheer, textbooks have increasingly been procured from international firms (Baheer won just two of 12 contracts since 2011). The printers’ focus group believed that incentives now favor international firms, for several reasons. First, MoE officials reportedly benefit from international trips, with per diem and luxury accommodations when travelling abroad at a company’s expense. Second, duties on raw materials make it hard for them to compete, especially as imported textbooks are duty-free. They also complained that national companies have more onerous requirements for performance and less favorable payment terms (the team could not

¹⁶¹ Interview, Asif Rishi, January 18, 2016.

¹⁶² Interview, Danida Official, January 18, 2016.

¹⁶³ Focus Group Discussion with Printers.

corroborate this claim). Conditions for competition may change soon, as President Ashraf Ghani has announced a 15% discount for Afghan firms in such bids.¹⁶⁴

Lack of monitoring: The recent Danida contract MOE/G-72/ICB for 16.4 million book procurement was praised by a few informants. The Procurement Advisor noted that it went smoothly because Danida involved a third party at every stage. The third party went to the suppliers in India and Vietnam to check quality. While there is still room for bribery with international suppliers and third-party monitoring, he believed it was greatly reduced with the monitoring effort in place. Contractors can also be encouraged to bid on MoE contracts if transparency is increased. The procurement advisor said that, in the past when MoE officials visited the production houses, they did so to make 'deals,' and there were no serious efforts to check quality, and no lab reports, adding, "If in the bidding document you don't put the specific test to be performed, how can you justify that the quality is good?"¹⁶⁵

Violating in-country production requirements: In 2005 a leading Afghan printing company, Baheer Printing, was awarded the first of the Danida-funded textbook contracts. According to the results of a capacity assessment by Graphium Consult AB, Stockholm, Baheer would have needed seven months to produce and deliver per the contract, instead of the five months stipulated in the contract. In addition, the method of binding required was not yet available in Afghanistan at the time. It can be concluded that Baheer likely bought and transported textbooks from abroad, against contract provisions prohibiting it. Baheer also won the second and third contracts, both of which clearly stated that books were to be produced in Kabul, again with a binding method not available. If Graphium's assessment was correct, Baheer would

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Interview, Procurement Official, January 18, 2016, Part I.

have needed 34 months to produce the 17 million books ordered, whereas they delivered in six months only. The irregularities that took place with Baheer are well-known and documented, and unfortunately further contracts were issued (MOE/G-37/ICB 2009 Danida, MOE/G-41/ICB – 2010 Danida and MOE/G-43/ICB – 2011 USAID/Danida) despite the fact that the company did not meet obligations.¹⁶⁶

Weak donor requirements: Procurement officials said that when a procurement follows World Bank guidelines, the procurement department can process it quickly, but when they must follow the local law, they encounter bottlenecks created by local bureaucracy. One major difference is that under World Bank guidelines the shopping limit is \$100,000; with three informal quotations, submitted by fax or email, then the process may proceed. Under local law the limit is \$10,000. The USAID procurement system was also praised by the procurement officials, as being on par with the World Bank's, given that USAID carries out reviews at all stages. Other donors are perceived to have weak procurement requirements, and thus rely solely on the Procurement Law of Afghanistan. In the past, Danida has had fewer requirements than USAID, as far as issuance of a No Objection Letter, and these lapses resulted in corrupt practices.

Shipping delays: Contracts since 2011 have been awarded to a variety of suppliers, and for every new supplier it becomes a learning curve to provide schoolbooks to landlocked Afghanistan. The preferred delivery route is via the port of Karachi, then by train to Peshawar, and from there, overland across the border into Afghanistan by truck to Kabul via Jalalabad in containers. This routing requires a lot of documentation. If there are any omissions or errors, delays can last weeks.

¹⁶⁶ Danida/HLB "Value for Money Audit."

The necessity of paying bribes has played a significant role in getting the books through the Karachi-Kabul route. The Kabul supplier that has won so many of the contracts in the past, Baheer, experienced this when an audit found expenses that neither the MoE nor the donor could justify. Getting books to Kabul by a prescribed date is a challenge for any supplier; however, the unforeseen occurs with the 2011 contract (MOE/G-02/ISSP Danida), textbooks being delayed at Karachi Port, as all supplies to Afghanistan through Pakistan were halted for political reasons.

b. Recent Improvements

Beginning in 2011, there were positive developments in the fair award of contracts. Table 7 shows the effect of various audits and reporting since 2005. Although the contract MOE/G-43/ICB 2011 (Danida/USAID) was shared between Baheer and Pitambra, an Indian company, the monopoly was broken. It should be noted that Pitambra, despite very favorable prices, has not provided the quality desired.

Contract MOE/G-02/ISSP 2011 (Danida) was developed as Single Source Procurement approved by the highest authority as a matter of urgency. Three suppliers were invited to bid: PT Gramedia, (Indonesia), Oriental Printing (Bahrain), and Baheer Printing (Kabul). It is notable that Baheer Printing did not lodge a bid, as they previously used PT Gramedia for their printing, and had no ability to compete.

Even more recently, the procurement law of Afghanistan was simplified. According to a procurement official, "As of 2015, they have removed the procurement committees which were a major bottleneck. Replaced by a technical review, it is more transparent this way, more streamlined, and better for eliminating corruption."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Interview, Procurement Official, January 18, 2016

c. Technical Capacity of the MoE Publishing Department

Based on interviews and documents reviewed, the assessment team concludes that the Publication Department has significant capacity limitations, especially in terms of its ability to provide detailed specifications for the suppliers. In recent years, there have been considerable developments in textbook production, especially in the availability of more durable binding. However, the only two options seen in current specifications are sewing and hot melt glue PVC. A third option called PUR (Polyurethane) is much stronger than PVC and has been available for about 8–10 years.¹⁶⁸ The officials writing the specifications should have a printing background and be up-to-date with new developments, a relatively easy task with the assistance of the Internet.

The World Bank developed a Statement of Compliance (SoC) document for the MoE's use. Within the SoC, bidders are to offer products matching specifications and provide details of the offer. According to instructions:

Bidders must enter "Comply" or "Not comply" against each paragraph of this specification, comment as necessary, and sign and stamp each page. Failure to complete and submit this statement of compliance to UNICEF may result in the offer being rejected.

The MoE removed the columns indicating either "Comply" or "Not Comply," after a suggestion from an audit report. The assessment team confirms that as of the 2012 contract MoE/G-47/ICB (USAID), those columns have been removed. Removal of this step introduces the following problems:

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.xcaliba.com/2011/10/purbinding-perfectbinding/>

1. The potential supplier may no longer feel obliged to follow each specification in the contract. The original SoC requires the bidder to sign and stamp against each section, indicating that he has read and understood ALL the details. This is a much stronger practice and ensures better compliance.
2. With signature and stamp against all specifications, the SoC then becomes a valuable monitoring tool in the hands of those carrying out M&E at the premises of the winning bidder. It provides a step-by-step checklist whereby any deviations in production can be identified and questioned.

Corruption and fraud since 2005 have been endemic in textbook procurement, with Baheer constantly wielding financial influence within the MoE, targeting all levels of the administration, some of whom are not shy to boast about their monetary gains. Despite recent efforts for the contract awards to be granted fairly and honestly, the influential local provider has, over the years, built up a substantial printing establishment and remains a dormant force ready to take advantage of any loopholes that may arise in the procurement process, especially when a new unaware donor appears on the horizon. Recently, contract 2013 MoE/G-03/NSSP (USAID) for the production of 34 million books, with a value of \$20 million, was awarded to Baheer as a National Single Source Procurement (NSSP). The choice of the NSSP approach for this contract is highly questionable. Aside from addressing endemic corruption, the other issues raised in this report can be addressed with relative ease by those in the procurement section, especially if the donors take a more involved, hands-on approach, with experts monitoring each step of the process.

d. Pricing Schedule

The inclusion of a pricing schedule as an annex to the ITB/RFQ would greatly simplify matters for potential bidders when submitting their prices. All the specifications compiled in one Excel spreadsheet eliminate the need for a supplier to sift through

pages of the bid documents, and risk elimination if any small detail is overlooked. In addition, bidders will benefit by being able to put prices into locked cells so that formulas generate unit cost and a total cost, with no risk of computational error. By insisting that all bidders use the same document when submitting their final prices, the procurement department will have an easier task to evaluate the bids and tabulate results of the bid analyses.

e. Quality Control

The assessment team interviewed the Publication and Quality Control Specialist, and attempted to follow-up with him, yet was unable to obtain a clear description of the quality control process in place at the MoE.¹⁶⁹

At the MoE, there is a Standards and Quality Control Sub-Unit that has one manager and two technical employees. The Publication and Quality Control Specialist is a consultant recruited by the MoE for supervision and capacity building of this sub-unit. He has a relevant printing background with printing experience in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Dubai. From 2009 until the end of 2010, he was working as Publication and Quality Control Specialist with the MoE. In 2012, after a brief break, the MoE asked him to work with them again, and he has been employed in this position since.

Whenever the MoE receives textbooks under a specific contract, a technical inspection committee is appointed by the higher management of the ministry for inspection duties. This committee usually has three or more members, sometimes the General Director of Curriculum Development and Director of Publication and Information

¹⁶⁹ The Publication and Quality Control Specialist promised to respond with a document describing procedures but it was never received.

become its members. The Publication and Quality Control Specialist leads this committee. In total, seven employees work for quality control and quality assurance of textbooks.

Figure 4: Textbook Contracts Rewarded since 2004

Year	MOE Contract No.	Donor	Winning bidder	Country of production	Quantity of Books	Lots awarded	Contract Value \$US	Contract signed Date	Contract Delivery date	Actual Delivery date
2004	MOE/291	DANIDA	Baheer	Afg/Indonesia	3,654,400	1,2	2,171,146	9.02.2004	24.5.2005	2.7.2005
First ever contract awarded for DANIDA through ARDS. Certain textbook production requirements were not available in Kabul thus partial production offshore took place.										
2005*	IFB/MOE/331	DANIDA	Baheer	Afg/Indonesia	17,379,523	1,2,3		2005		2006
Most of the contract was produced in Indonesia despite clear instructions that it was required to be produced locally. Estimated Baheer profit high 6 figure. It should be noted that this contract was not in the DANIDA HLB Audit of 2013 the contracts were the responsibility of ARDS and may not have been available.										
2008	MOE/G-27/ICB	DANIDA	Baheer	Indonesia	16,144,000	1,3,4,5	5,642,036	2.01.2008	14.5.2008 Ext.	20.7.2008
The stipulations of the technical evaluation report were clearly ignored, and somehow, Baheer Printing was selected for technical assessment who won the contract for 4 lots. Baheer Printing enjoyed the benefit of domestic preference for winning the contract and then got the books printed outside the country. HLB Audit for DANIDA Pages 36 and 38.										
2008	MOE/G-34/ICB.	DANIDA	Angelallied	India	6,500,000	2	3,710,637	4.05.2008	20.3.2009 Ext.	17.3.2009
No major flaws were reported in the HLB Audit report other than there was a serious loss of time due to rebidding of the contract.										
2009	MOE/G-37/ICB	DANIDA	Baheer	Indonesia	15,389,000	1,2,3	7,388,767	18.7.2009	10.11.2009	5.12.2009
According to the Article 54 of the Procurement Law of Afghanistan, 2008, under any contract only 20% work can be given to subcontractors with the written consent of the procuring entity. In case of this award contract, no information is available in the procurement files of the contract as to how much work was subcontracted by Baheer Printing. In its letter No. 10 dated April 14, 2009 addressed to MOE, Baheer Printing mentioned that "It is notable that we have printed/produced 25 Million secondary school books out of total 42 Million books from Indonesia which was in the contract with MOE". It is noted from above mentioned statement of Baheer Printing that they got 60% of the textbooks printed by subcontractors in Indonesia which is against the article 54 of the Procurement law. MoE did not take into consideration this past conduct of Baheer Printing in awarding all of three lots to them despite all the objections raised from within MoE and by DANIDA. HLB Audit P 53										
2010	MOE/G-41/ICB	DANIDA	Baheer	Indonesia	40,665,300	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	19,376,948	19.3.2010	14.7.2010	8.7.2010
3 observations showing MOE clearly in favour of Baheer have been noted in the DANIDA HLB Audit report pages 56 -65 and can be viewed as Document 3.0 on the following website https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B89ta5tpDpd7ekdBY1NRbFdDcnM&usp=sharing										
2011	MOE/G-43/ICB	USAID via DANIDA	Baheer	Indonesia	3,228,000	1,2,3	3,162,345	25.9.2011	20.12.2011	20.12.2011
As the successful bidder (for Lots 1,2 and 3 failed to satisfy the criterion of the SBD, his bid should have been rejected straight away. DANIDA HLB Audit report pages 66 - 69										
2011	MOE/G-43/ICB	USAID via DANIDA	Pitambra	India	2,712,000	4	Above is total	5.10.2011	1.01.2012	16.4.2012
2011	MOE/G-02/ISSP	DANIDA	Oriental Printing	Bahrain	3,296,090	3	3,050,522	11.10.2011	12.08.2012 Ext	7.08.2012
2011	MOE/G-02/ISSP	DANIDA	PT Gramedia	Indonesia	12,467,042	1,2,4,5	12,712,609	11.10.2011	12.08.2012 Ext	25.5.2012
Single source procurement method was used for this project with the approval of Minister of Education and Ministry of Finance. 3 bidders were invited to bid Oriental/PT Gramedia and Baheer Printing. Baheer Printing did not submit their bid. DANIDA HLB Audit report page 71 - 72										
2012	MoE/G-47/ICB	USAID	Pitambra	India	13,611,620	All lots	6,674,245	14.2.2012	19.1.2013	
2013	MoE/G-59/ICB	World Bank	Repro India Ltd.	Vietnam	3,700,000	All lots	1,657,590	8.7.2015		To be delivered
2014	MoE/G-03/NSSP	USAID	Baheer	Indonesia/Kabul	34,043,506	1,2	20,000,004	3.2.2014	14.3.2015	
2015	MOE/G-128/NSSP/94	DANIDA	5 local suppliers	Afghanistan	2,269,256	7 lots	1,077,821	30.6.2015	20.7.2015	
2015	MOE/G-72/ICB	DANIDA	Hanoi Joint Co	Vietnam	2,796,000	1,2,3	1,844,949	11.08.2015		Delivery and monitoring ongoing as of 17.02.2016
2015	MOE/G-72/ICB	DANIDA	Repro India Ltd.	India	3,352,000	4	1,888,693	9.08.2015		
2015	MOE/G-72/ICB	DANIDA	Pitambra	India	1,148,000	5	739,415	26.07.2015		
2015	MOE/G-73/ICB	DANIDA/UNICEF	Pitambra	India	2,200,000	1,2,3	1,064,981	12.08.2015		

HLB Report did not include this contract

The MoE uses the following forms and documents as part of the quality control process.

1. A signed copy of the Contract Statement of Compliance that should be used when carrying out onsite monitoring of any supplier. (The MoE provided a Summary of Compliance Form that could be used here).
2. The Checklist of Specifications and Printing Processes is to be checked, witnessed, and signed by the supplier to be used for onsite monitoring. There is one form for local companies and one for international companies.
3. The Quality Control Inspection Checklist is to be used with randomly inspected books on arrival at Pul-i-Charkhi Warehouse, and witnessed by at least four committee members made up from Publishing, Procurement, Distribution, and Donor.
4. The Letter of Acceptance is provided by committee members to Finance as part of the documentation required to release payment.
5. The Rejection Document must be included, should the product not meet the required standards; this will provide the basis for Procurement to take appropriate action.
6. The Textbook Testing Request for testing the raw materials used in any textbook order.

f. Third-Party Quality Control of Contract MOE/G-72/ICB

The reports from the inspections on contract MOE/G-72/ICB carried out by RSM on Repro India Ltd, Pitambra India, and Hanoi Joint Co. still have not been shared with Danida/ the MOE, as the activity is not yet finalized.

The fact that poor-quality books have been identified at Kabul warehouse during the BELT Textbook Printing Project also raises concerns. It has been noted that the contract MoE/G-03/NSSP for 34,043,506 books was awarded to Baheer Printing, which then produced the majority of books in Indonesia and a small percentage in Kabul. While the majority of Indonesian books may well have met the required standards, it is questionable whether the Kabul produced books do. It is not clear whether samples of all books were properly reviewed, or if the origin of the book is distinguishable.

Ernst and Young were contracted to carry out an audit, including verification of goods and services to be carried out on sample basis. USAID intends to extend the scope of this audit to increase the sample size at the warehouse level to verify the quantity received and quantity stored and to verify that the books have been actually received at the school level in all provinces of Afghanistan.

6. Storage

While the MoE is supposed to oversee textbook warehouses and storages at the central, provincial, and district levels, in practice these are administered unilaterally by each administrative entity in their respective provincial and district education departments. In all of the three provinces (Kabul, Herat, and Balkh), warehouses and storage facilities are the property of the MoE, except where textbooks are stored in private or public places. The facilities vary in size, capacity, and type, ranging from spacious and secure warehouses and containers at the MoE and PEDs, to books being stored at mosques, in school administrators' houses, and in classrooms or bathrooms of schools, or tents.

Variance can also be observed between provinces in terms of the availability of textbooks in the black market and the extent a storage facility is organized and is monitored by a higher authority (e.g., PEDs by the MoE and DEDs by PEDs).¹⁷⁰ The size of the storage facilities and the technical knowledge of the management and concerned staff members about the size, maintenance, and capacity of the warehouses vary significantly as well. The MoE Procurement Department did not answer the requests of the assessment team for an annual record of containers available at PEDs and DEDs.



The MoE textbook storage warehouse in Pul-i Charki, Kabul

a. Storage: Facilities & Technology

The MoE reports owning five big warehouses (three 60m X 25m, and two 60m X 35m

¹⁷⁰ Interview, Publication Department, MoE, Kabul, January 11, 2016

dimensions) and 150 containers (20 ft. each) that can contain 35 million books. The Kabul PED possesses three warehouses, each located in one of its three districts: Bagrami, Shakardara, and Paghman. The warehouses are comprised of 30 containers (20 ft. each) and accommodate a total of 750,000 textbooks.¹⁷¹ Herat staff responsible for the maintenance of the books were not aware of the dimensions of the storage facilities but believed that the warehouse had the capacity to accommodate one million textbooks.¹⁷² The Balkh PED estimated having a warehouse 20 x 8m dimension with a capacity to house one million textbooks.¹⁷³ Overall, respondents from the aforementioned administrative entities expressed satisfaction with the space and condition of storages, but raised concern about the inadequacy and insufficiency of textbook storage spaces at DEDs, and particularly in schools.

Storage facilities in DEDs and schools vary too. For instance, the DED in Nahreshahi District of Balkh uses containers, including two containers provided by the World Food Program and USAID.¹⁷⁴ In Injil, Herat, a classroom is used as a textbook storage facility: "We have allocated a classroom as storage. A corner of the classroom is a department, another corner is a lab, another is an office, and the other corner is book storage area. There are three keys, one with the director, one with department head, and one with the storage man."¹⁷⁵

Another reported,

We store books in three places because we don't have storage room or

¹⁷¹ Interview, Publication Department, PED, Kabul, January 11, 2016

¹⁷² Interview, Facilities Director, Facilities Unit, PED, Herat, January 10, 2016

¹⁷³ Interview, Textbook Distribution Official, PED, Balkh, January 3, 2016 (Zahid)

¹⁷⁴ Interview: Education Officer. Nahreshahi District. Balkh. January 5, 2016 (Penhan)

¹⁷⁵ FDG: Principles. Injil School. Herat Province. January 11, 2016.

*containers: we keep them in classes, or in ruined local-style toilets – we will have to cover the floor with plastics and woods, or we keep books in the offices. Books are damaged when there is rain leakage in the classrooms where the books are kept. Sometimes mice damage books. Of course humidity and dust can also damage books.*¹⁷⁶

Two pieces of technology at the storage facilities are relevant: the equipment used for delivering textbooks to shipping and receiving points, and a record-keeping system. The technological capacity of the MoE and PEDs in shifting textbooks during delivery varies. The MoE moves books by forklift – both manual and electric. PEDs, on the other hand, deliver textbooks at shipping and receiving points manually only. This, in some instances in which the volume and weight of textbook plates are substantial, requires opening the boxes and carrying books in smaller numbers/volumes. This lack of technical equipment capacity at PEDs and DEDs may enhance the risk of textbook theft, although no incidences of theft were reported during the assessment. However, visits at the PEDs storages confirmed the existence of open boxes at storage facilities.¹⁷⁷

Recordkeeping of textbooks at the warehouses is conducted manually. It appears there is no coordination with the EMIS team, who appear to sit in different offices, with the other PED technical staff and the storage staff members. Storage keepers maintain textbooks forms, such as textbook offer forms (M7) sent out by MoE to PEDs, textbook demand forms (FS13) sent out by schools to DEDs, forms issued by PEDs to DEDs (FS9), and textbook receipt forms (FS5) signed by schools.

¹⁷⁶ FGD: Mazar city PED, School management, January 3, 2016

¹⁷⁷ It should be noted that boxes are also opened when a school's demand for a particular textbook exceeds the number of books sealed in one box.

Textbooks inventory at storage facilities appear to be neither practiced nor appreciated as a step toward good record-keeping practice. No storage keeper was able to provide an account of textbooks in circulation. A common method of estimating the number of textbooks in circulation is calculating the difference between textbooks received minus the number of students who hypothetically possess the books. This process, in practice, is almost impossible at PEDs, and particularly at the central level. For instance, if a school has 1,000 students, 25 classes of 40 students, and an average of ten subject textbooks in each class, to calculate the number of books in circulation will require reading $25 \times 10 = 250$ forms for the past three consecutive years in order to determine their expiry dates. This will require reviewing a minimum of 750 FS5 forms. While this is a small sample at the school level, the 750 forms containing the names of 40 students each, have to be multiplied by the number of schools present at a district and multiplied by the total number of schools in a province to determine the number of textbooks in circulation at district and provincial levels respectively. This system of record keeping at storage facilities is also difficult for calculating the number of books that are in each year of their three-year expiry term.

The account of the number of textbooks in circulation was not an identified need at the MoE either. The MoE Planning Department's answer to the question as to how many textbooks are in circulation was that it is determined by the calculation of the number of textbooks received in a storage minus the number of books distributed to students as per their attendance sheets.¹⁷⁸ For details on the role of EMIS system please refer to the Planning section of this report.

b. Storage Policy, Regulations, and M&E

¹⁷⁸ Interview: Director of Planning, Planning Directorate, MoE, January 26, 2016

The MoE does not have a specific storage policy for its textbooks. *Textbook Procurement, Storage, Distribution, and Monitoring Policies and Guidelines* were provided by the MoE as a policy document for textbook storage. The content of the 12-page document not only contains factual errors (e.g., it states textbook delivery costs are covered by donor agencies),¹⁷⁹ but has also project-focused details such as time-bound performance management implementation details¹⁸⁰ for what seems to be a particular USAID project. This undermines the credibility of the document as an official MoE storage policy or guideline. A second document mentioned by the Procurement Department of the MoE is the Ministry of Finance's guidelines regarding all storage facilities and warehouses of governmental administrative divisions. The document allegedly contains sections such as the Law of Warehouse; Inventory Guide, Stock Card and Warehouse Card; Filing and Documentation; and, Warehouse Security. The assessment team's repeated requests for this document remained unanswered despite a commitment to provide the documentation from the Warehouse General Manager of the MoE.¹⁸¹ Respondents did not mention any of these two documents in relation to storage.

The vacuum of policy or the absence of knowledge about the existing aforementioned two documents has led to the adaptation of "common sense" practice in managing storage of textbooks. The Kabul PED warehouse answered that it "organizes" its textbooks "as per its perceived sense of responsibility and knowledge."¹⁸² The Herat PED indicated that it "comes up with its own criteria; whatever makes sense."¹⁸³ The

¹⁷⁹ Ministry of Education, *Textbook Procurement, Storage, Distribution, and Monitoring Policies and Guidelines* P. 4

¹⁸⁰ p 10-11

¹⁸¹ Multiple communication attempts (by e-mail and phone) were made by the assessment team requesting the document until the last day the report was being written.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

Balkh PED was unfamiliar with the technical term “storage maintenance policy or guideline,” to the extent that a respondent perceived textbook keeping and management to include encouraging students to maintain their textbooks by reminding them of textbooks costs, as criteria for storage management.¹⁸⁴

In terms of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), a system for storage is either non-existent or is ineffective in leading to quality improvement. The MoE’s warehouses are being monitored by the very same department that administers it, the Publication Department.¹⁸⁵ Annual visits from the Presidential Office or by donor agencies were mentioned, but no reports were available on demand.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Interview: Publication Department, MoE, Kabul, January 11, 2016 (PBC006 Khoshalzada)



Boxes containing textbooks stacked in the Kabul PED warehouse

The Kabul PED does not have its own provincial storages, as textbooks are either directly delivered from the MoE to districts or textbooks are kept at the PED in MoE trucks until their delivery to DEDs. The PED sends monitoring officers to its three district storages on monthly basis without making any statement as to whether they are monitored externally by a third party. A senior PED official shared the cause for M&E failure:

We cannot send monitors and Publications representatives to districts with much confidence for two reasons: first, the process is slow. Second they [monitors] are seen as low-profile monitors. They go by bus, it takes time, they don't have a budget for transportation, and no one takes them seriously. There

*is a lot of favoritism in the field that they visit [e.g., schools]. When our auditors [monitoring officers] go to schools and districts, shorba [soup] is cooked, and green tea is served to them. So we never receive any negative report [from the monitoring officers]!*¹⁸⁶

In Kabul districts, concerns with regard to security, space, and safety of storage facilities were shared.¹⁸⁷ The same concern was echoed by the Istalif District (Kabul province) M&E officer.¹⁸⁸

A common problem with regard to M&E is the ambiguity in the role of monitoring officers. It was consistently observed at all PEDs that monitoring officers have a wide range of tasks. For instance, a respondent from the Balkh PED made reference to a number of tasks, ranging from reallocating excess books from one school to the other to talking to students about the importance of textbook maintenance. While Balkh demonstrated a poor sample of storage facility monitoring, the Herat PED made the claim of being systematically monitored by two entities. According to the respondents, the facility is audited once a year by the Office of Administrative Affairs and Office of High Oversight of the Government of Afghanistan. This, however, takes place “with permission or as per the request of the PED Director.” Further questions revealed that the monitors visit the PED with the objective to monitor all aspects of the administrative unit (e.g., the PED) from budget to goods and services. The monitoring process merits attention: “One day they might give us a questionnaire and leave. After few days they come back. Then they look into receipts, documents, and files. And if our figures are not satisfactory they take legal action. So far we have not faced any

¹⁸⁶ Interview: Kabul PED, Education General Director, Kabul PED, January 9, 2016 (GNE002-Bashir Wardak)

¹⁸⁷ Interview: Publication Manager, Kabul PED, January 9, 2016 (PBC006 Khoshalzada).

¹⁸⁸ Interview: M&E Officer, Estalif Education Department Istalif District, Kabul, January 20, 2016 (MED 002 Rasikh)

problem.”¹⁸⁹ The second monitoring is an “internal” mechanism by the MoE, but the main task mentioned was following up on the auditors’ potential recommendations. They, too, “carry out another monitoring activity covering all aspects of PED: budget, HR, goods and textbooks.”¹⁹⁰

Schools are monitored by DEDs. DEDs generally have a set number of staff that are responsible for a number of schools. For instance, Gozara District has 14 monitoring members, each of whom is responsible for monitoring four or five schools.¹⁹¹ Some schools also receive monitoring visits from the MoE. For instance, the Nahreshahi DED reported that inspections are normally done by the PED and once last year it was monitored by the MoE.¹⁹²

Security plays a crucial role in monitoring activities. Most districts are not accessible for security reasons and some for transportation-related problems. However, even the relatively safer and accessible districts, for instance Injil district in Herat, with only one container for storing books, receives “only one or two visits” from the DED monitoring team. Follow-up questions reveal that the monitoring officers perform a wide range of duties, including teachers’ pedagogical assessment.¹⁹³

While storage facilities are not typically affected by the shortage of technical assistants (TAs), Herat is an exception, and it is unknown if in the other provinces not covered by this assessment similar cases exist. The salary of one of the staff members of storage

¹⁸⁹ Interview, Facilities Director, Facilities Unit, PED, Herat, January 10, 2016

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ FGD: School Management. Gozara District DED. Herat. January 11, 2016.

¹⁹² Interview: Principle. Nahreshahi District. Balkh. January 5, 2016 (Razequllah), and M&E Officer, Nahreshahi District, Balkh, January 5, 2016 (Muradi).

¹⁹³ Focus Group Discussion: School Management. Injil District. Herat. January 11, 2016

facilities at the Herat PED was previously covered by Danida as a TA position. He used to travel to DEDs for monitoring because his expenses were covered, and those costs that were not covered were privately financed thanks to his high salary. However, now that TA funds are unavailable, his visits to DEDs have been significantly reduced. This suggests an unsustainable system that is donor driven and not imbedded in the MoE's own routine processes or policies for oversight.

Cases of theft from the MoE and PEDs were denied. The independent observations of the assessment team in the bookstore markets of Kabul, Herat, and Balkh indicated the availability of photocopied MoE textbooks. These were more limited in Herat compared to Kabul and Balkh provinces. Meanwhile, unlike the other two provinces visited, no original MoE books were spotted in Herat. A few years ago someone from the PED authorities was prosecuted for textbook theft, and the PED used the media to raise awareness about the consequences of selling MoE books.

Quantifying the number of illegal books in the black market is almost impossible. Books are generally discreetly stored and storekeepers only display samples of each set of available books. Direct questions were not responded to, or answers provided were not convincing. For instance, while the assessment team is almost sure that in comparative terms Herat's black market for textbooks is either non-existent or significantly small, it was mentioned by a couple of respondents from the community that the storekeepers can identify those who approach them from investigative or audit teams. In Kabul the black market is too big and scattered to enable a study of this nature and scope to quantify the number of illegal textbooks in the market. In Balkh, while all books were openly available for purchase, only samples were on display. As per the anecdotal communication between the assessment observers and the community members in the market, it was communicated that the booksellers do not identify their books as samples, but it is widely believed that a higher number of

books are stored in the back of the stores to avoid unnecessary attention from questioning authorities.



The Herat PED textbook storage facility is locked with a paper seal signed by designated authorities

done with the old textbooks, a respondent answered that they keep them in their storage,¹⁹⁴ while a different answer was, "if books are expired, we keep it in our storage. If they are not expired and are usable, we ask the PED if we can distribute it

The MoE and the three PEDs responded positively to all questions concerning the conditions of their storages: (a) secure; (b) dry; (c) rodent-free; and, (e) there's a method of stacking boxes so as not to damage textbooks. The assessment team's observation indicated that the warehouses' space is in most cases not efficiently used. For instance, at MoE storage facilities, there are a number of containers with expired, rotten textbooks. In Herat, the assessment team observed that the storage facility was not only used for storing other stationaries and teachers' kits, but also for expired books published under previous donor-funded projects. The same problem exists at the district level, where storage space is a problem. For example in Qarabagh District, Kabul, in response to the question as to what is

¹⁹⁴ Interview: M&E Department, Member of M&E, Qarabagh District, Kabul, January 20, 2016 (MED002 Abid)

again.”¹⁹⁵ A different practice is the norm in Balkh districts: “We either burn or collect them [the expired books]. Or we sometimes use them as supplementary material for students to use. A committee is set by the PED and the school to decide whether to burn them or not.”¹⁹⁶

During interviews, all respondents reported sorting textbooks in storages on the basis of language, subject, and grade. Based on the earlier claims of the MoE with regard to labeling boxes with pictures to eliminate error by illiterate staff, the assessment team observed the labeling system at the MoE and PED storages and found that, in limited instances, that pictures are used, they are the cover page of textbooks that would require literacy to understand. Boxes from foreign printing companies often are labeled in English – a language in which staff members are not literate. While the textbook sorting system is reasonable in the MoE and PED facilities thanks to spacious storages, in schools – in both cities and districts – textbook sorting is neither categorical nor organized. The response to this observation was that it is due to the shortage of space, and that the bookkeeper of the school storage facility had a mental note of where each grade and subject book was piled on top of the other.

The security of storage at the MoE and PEDs is ensured by locking the storage room with MID-heavy duty grey iron padlocks. The presence of a three-member committee is required to open the paper seal of a lock and access the storage, and the signature of the committee on the paper seal is required to close and lock the storage. In some instances, there is only one key, and in others three keys are shared only among committee members. For instance, in Herat, a team of three people is supposed to be present to break the paper seal of the lock and open it. During our visit, we observed

¹⁹⁵ Interview: DED, Education Officer, Qarabagh District, Kabul, January 16, 2016 (DED001 Daoudzai)

¹⁹⁶ Interview: Director of City Schools in Mazar, Mazar City, January 2, 2016.

that the lock of the warehouse was covered with plastic to protect the paper seal from rain. The paper seal was signed by three committee members whose presence is mandatory for accessing the facility. However, in the absence of the two committee members, the door was opened for us, and at this point we were asked to sign the paper seal on behalf of the one of the committee members.

In conclusion, a lack of policy and guidance from the MoE – particularly needed when staff responsible for storage have no training or technical expertise in warehousing, and enforcement of such -- has led to a storage system riddled with vulnerabilities. The current storage practices, especially those at the DED level, do not support the safekeeping and maintenance of books and do not facilitate tracking or stock taking of textbooks, enabling leakage as a result. There appears to be no consistent monitoring of storage, unsurprising given the lack of technical guidelines provided to staff with storage management responsibilities. This is a relatively straightforward area to improve, if the MoE was supported to issue a protocol to be followed for the storage of books at schools, DED and PEDs, and monitors assigned to include site visits to storage facilities to check practices against the protocol.

7. Distribution & Delivery

The shortage of textbooks and delayed delivery are frequently cited as the overriding concern at the school level regarding textbooks, much more so than concerns over the content or quality of books. Distribution is both highly centralized – managed entirely by the MoE rather than publishers or third parties – while also being a truncated process with different stages handled, respectively, by MoE Publications in Kabul, PEDs' contracted laborers, and principals' or teachers' privately-owned or hired transport from PED or DED to the school level. The process is directed in a centralized way though not planned or scheduled using a centralized database system with

shared access for those involved in distribution. This results in a lack of consistent systematization with distribution characterized by delays and unpredictable delivery dates. Distribution plans are sometimes produced to meet donor requirements, though there is no continuously-managed, institutionally-imbedded distribution system. Data on textbook stock, order requests, and other information is all filled by hand, presenting challenges for verification, reporting, and monitoring.

This section describes the three main stages of distribution: from Kabul to the provinces, from PEDs to the schools, and from schools to the students. In addition, it describes findings on the extent of textbook shortages and how schools contend with shortages.

a. Distribution: The MoE to PEDs

At the MoE level, textbook distribution is managed within five units, one each for distribution, planning, quality control, database, and warehousing. After printing, textbooks are delivered to MoE warehouses in Kabul. Once books are in the Kabul

warehouses, a plan for distribution to the provinces is prepared, and transportation units, warehouse staff, and PEDs are alerted. Requested quantities are recorded against actual quantities sent. Drivers are provided with receipt forms for delivery. MoE drivers cover 12 provinces, while private transportation is hired for the remaining provinces. The driver collects a signature and stamp upon



receipt, and then this document is returned to the MoE.

Upon receipt at the PEDs, four individuals from the PED are tasked with forming a committee to receive and check the books, including an individual responsible each for the storage or warehouse, auditing, monitoring and evaluation, and publications. This committee completes the M7 form sent by Kabul to verify that the requested quantities were received. The PEDs then use the FS9 form to issue the books to the districts: "After that in the district if they have ten schools they know their requirements and according to the timetable they distribute to the schools."¹⁹⁷

Major delays in textbook distribution originate with printers or transport before delivery to the provinces. Many respondents pointed to the example of a shipment of books printed abroad that was stuck in Pakistan; and though the precise cause of the delay was not identified, many respondents expressed cynicism about books printed outside of Afghanistan as a result of this situation. PEDs have no control over when they receive books from the MoE, and distribution is not typically synchronized with the school year, though there is an MoE decree that textbooks should be distributed during the winter before the start of the school year. In practice, textbooks can come at any time, and often arrive months or even years late. One provincial distribution manager stated,

We at the PED do not even know in advance when we will receive the books. Of the two million books printed in Afghanistan this year, we have received our share for Balkh. The books printed in Vietnam and India are on their way. The

¹⁹⁷ Interview, GM textbooks distribution, MoE, December 30, 2016

*MoE has received them, and is about to distribute to the provinces. We have told them that we promised the schools they'll get the books by early March or late February.*¹⁹⁸

One respondent recounted having to organize to transport books without prior notice:¹⁹⁹

*One time the MOE said you have to take the books from our Pul-e Charkhi storage right away. We could not take the books to storages because logistically the transfer needed arrangements, and we did not have the preparation. We had to keep the books in the open space close to Pul-e Charkhi. I purchased plastic covers out of my own pocket. Others who do not respond well to such calls get the books damaged. The reason for the urgency of the pickup was that the MoE storage was being audited by external auditors (sometimes USAID or Presidential Office). So the MoE did not want to show that they had books, yet they were asking for more books.*²⁰⁰

b. Distribution: The PED to DEDs and Schools

Upon receipt at the PEDs, distribution to schools appears to be reasonably efficient and is recorded in spreadsheets, though delays may be caused by weather, holidays, or waiting for transportation to be arranged. The PEDs currently do not have Internet access and do not use an intranet or shared database systems to jointly manage distribution with the MoE (however, the World Bank may soon assist with equipping

¹⁹⁸ Interview, Distribution Manager, PED Balkh, January 3, 2016

¹⁹⁹ Information from another Kabul PED employee suggests that textbooks may have been sitting in storage because there was not enough books to cover all schools, and distributing some books to some schools would risk appearing as political influence (Interview, Publication Manager, PED Kabul, January 9, 2016).

²⁰⁰ Interview, General Director, PED Kabul, January 9, 2016

PEDs with ICT facilities). PEDs have a director responsible for distribution at the provincial level. This individual prepares a schedule for distribution. Upon receipt at the PED, textbook deliveries are checked against the order specifications and the M7 form is completed. One PED distribution director explained: "In [the M7] form we mention the number of books, grade, subject, and we take signatures internally, and we send the M7 form to MoE to confirm we have received the books."²⁰¹ There is usually some storage space at the PED, where textbooks are held prior to delivery, or where they await pickup by school representatives.

In some cases, PEDs organize and pay for transportation to DEDs, hiring laborers to transport the books;²⁰² in other cases, schools collect their books directly from the PED. Transportation from the PEDs is funded by the MoE on the basis of expense claims to be made by the PED after distribution. This system is considered problematic: "Because we do not receive the budget on time [ahead of delivery] the books get mixed up in the storage rooms. For example, we have to move the books around for arrangement or rearrangement a few times," the general director of the Kabul PED said, adding that, "The [fee] doubles when we tell the transporters that the money for transfer is not available right away."²⁰³

Schools are then informed – usually by written notice, phone, or during the biweekly meetings they have with the DED – that textbooks are available for pick-up. Schools submit their requested quantity of books using the FSN13 Form (for textbooks only, this does not apply to teacher guides),²⁰⁴ where the number of students per grade in

²⁰¹ Interview, Mehrajuddin Seraj, Acting Director of Distribution, PED, Balkh

²⁰² Interview, Distribution Manager, Kabul PED, January 9, 2016

²⁰³ Interview, General Director, PED Kabul, January 9, 2016

²⁰⁴ For instance, a teacher stated, "The way we ask for textbook does not apply to teacher guides. We are never asked to inform the PED as to how many teacher guides the school needs. We actively send requests, but we are

the school is provided, and the FSN5 form is used for recording the number of books received. These forms are in hardcopy and are filled by hand. Schools may request higher volumes of textbooks than the number of students enrolled, reportedly to account for new students who join after the start of the school year.

The school-provided data is then shared by the DED with the PED, which compares it to the data in the Education Management Information System (EMIS).²⁰⁵ If a discrepancy is found, a monitor is sent to verify the number of students, security permitting. If the school is not accessible due to insecurity, the number of books requested by the school is used for the order. Evidence suggests many schools' data are not verified in person, either due to insecurity, to budget constraints, or insufficient personnel to cover all schools in the catchment area. For instance, a staff member of the Balkh PED stated that approximately 60% of schools are not visited, and only urban schools are verified, adding, "We know some schools have asked for more books than they need, for example, 1,000 books more than they need. We can't monitor them. The next day we hear that those books are sold in the market."²⁰⁶ The DEDs compile school data and submit it to the PED.

Upon receiving the books, schools register the number received using the FS5 form sent by the MoE and sign for their receipt. Schools are responsible for transporting books from the DED or PED to their locations. It appears that, in some cases, the DED

not asked to. When we ask for teacher guides, we are often informed that there are none." (FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 3, 2016).

²⁰⁵ Numerous respondents emphasized that EMIS data is incomplete or inaccurate, notwithstanding recent improvements and a decentralization process.

²⁰⁶ Interview, Planning Department Director, Balkh PED, January 5, 2016

is bypassed and schools collect their textbooks directly from the PED.²⁰⁷ Schools have no budget for this, and transportation costs are paid out-of-pocket by the principal or DED director, sometimes drawn from teachers' salaries, or taken from some other budget line. One NGO reported that the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) provides some schools with a budget to cover such expenses.²⁰⁸ Typically, private transport, costing between 150 and 1,000 Afs depending on the distance and the province, is hired for this purpose, and the books are collected by the school's principal, goods registrar, or person in charge of storage.

The MoE states that it monitors a sample of schools during distribution to watch for leakage.²⁰⁹ However, the method of moving books from the PED to schools – privately organized by the school and normally carried out by a lone individual – represents a source of vulnerability for leakage. If an M&E team identifies an instance of leakage, the case is reported to the Education Minister: "We do not know what the decision is from there onward. We know that if the issue is important, the M&E Department becomes involved."²¹⁰ There is rarely any third-party monitoring of distribution at any stage, such as by donors or watchdog groups. For example, a former USAID staff member lamented that USAID staff are not permitted by risk security office to visit textbook warehouses.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ In only one case we came across, the DED reported that they pay for transportation of books to schools from their budget (Interview, DED Qarabagh District, Kabul, January 20th, 2016).

²⁰⁸ Interview, Education Officer, DANIDA, January 18, 2016

²⁰⁹ Interview, Textbooks Distribution Manager, MoE, December 30, 2016

²¹⁰ Interview, Textbooks Distribution Manager, MoE, December 30, 2016

²¹¹ Interview, former USAID OSSD Officer, January 27, 2016

Table 5: Forms Used to Track Textbook Distribution

Form	Purpose
M7	Confirmation Form completed by PEDs, DEDs and schools to verify the requested quantities of books were received - textbook deliveries are checked against the order specifications and the M7 form is completed
M8	Return Form Used by PEDs, DEDs and schools to document quantities and data for books being returned
FS9	Request Form Reportedly the same as FS13 but used only for urban schools
FSN13	Request Form Schools (except city schools) use to submit their requested quantity of books to the DED; and DED uses same form to go to PED
FSN5	Issuance Form Used for recording the number of books issued to the level down. For instance, completed by the MoE when books are issued to the PED, or completed by the PED when books are issued to the DED.

c. Distribution: Schools to Students

Once schools receive textbooks, they distribute them to students, who thumbprint (for students in grades 1-6) or sign (for students in grades 7-12) a registry book at the school for each textbook received. There is no specific policy or practice determining which students receive books when there are an insufficient number of books for all students. There is typically no involvement from the school management shura (SMS) or any other external stakeholder during the distribution of books to the school or to students, though some PEDs report that there are monitoring officers present during distribution at schools. One respondent reported a policy of having distribution

committees, which included someone from the DED, from the school administration, and the storage keeper.²¹² PEDs interviewed report that confirming students receive the textbooks, as well as the storage of textbooks, is part of what they check during monitoring visits.²¹³ Schools report taking inventory once annually.

The MoE and PEDs do not have any formal written policy guiding schools' textbooks distribution practices. These include a lack of requirements, such as that textbooks are kept somewhere secure prior to distribution (especially if they are received during the school holiday), that they are accessible to students (or whether they can or cannot be taken home), that they are kept in good condition, or that they are distributed immediately to students upon receipt. Schools manage distribution at their discretion. A provincial distribution manager described a case where a school did not distribute textbooks when they received them: "They said there are only three or four months left so we don't want to distribute the grade 1 and 2 [books, as] students will destroy the books, and we want them fresh for next season. We told them even if there are three months left in the year, they have to distribute."²¹⁴

Schools try to preserve book life by asking or requiring students to cover the books. Practices differ around the use of old textbooks. If there are old textbooks in stock, some schools distribute them to make up for the shortfall of new textbooks, while others stated they never distribute old textbooks, though they may be used as supplemental materials. Some schools burn or bury old books, and others return old books to the PED. There is no formal policy regarding what to do with old books; rather, this is, left to each school's discretion.

²¹² Interview, Mehrajuddin Seraj, Acting Director of Distribution, PED, Balkh

²¹³ Interview, Distribution Manager, PED Balkh, January 3, 2016

²¹⁴ Interview, Distribution Manager, PED Balkh, January 3, 2016

e. The Extent of Textbook Shortages

Most schools reported that they do not receive the full order of books requested, and they typically receive books late, such as at the end of the school year. One DED official reported, "They never send books according to our need; they send only the books that they get from MoE."²¹⁵ The boxes containing textbooks sometimes arrive opened, as the PED first divides the books among the schools in the province, or the DEDs, to address reported shortages in some schools or surplus stock in others. Sometimes, some quantity of books is found damaged on arrival;²¹⁶ however, boxes are usually properly and accurately labeled by subject and grade level.

Shortage of textbooks appears to be the most acute at the higher grade levels. For instance, a DED director reported, "It's been four years that I am working here. We didn't have books for grade 11 to 12 in all this time. Also, we are using the same books for six years for the first grade."²¹⁷ Another school reported shortages in all grades, and not having any books in any subjects for grades 11 and 12.²¹⁸ The Kabul PED estimated, based on its own surveys, that their schools' grades 1-6 had a 30% shortage across all subjects, a 50% shortage in grades 6-9, and 70% shortage in grades 10-12.²¹⁹ There are no teacher guides available for grades past six. Schools surveyed vary in the proportions of students they estimate rely on acquiring their books from the market, but for the average school, it is between 10% and 50%. One school reported that all students in the primary grades had all of their books, while it

²¹⁵ DED Director, Dehdadi, Balkh, January 5, 2016.

²¹⁶ For instance, as reported by Teachers' FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 3, 2016

²¹⁷ DED Director, Dehdadi, Balkh, January 5, 2016.

²¹⁸ Principal, Shaheed Balkhi High School, January 5, 2016.

²¹⁹ Interview, M&E Director, Kabul PED, January 9, 2016

estimated that 20% of students in grades 7-12 at their school had textbooks.²²⁰ This figure is in line with that reported by other schools, with the exception of schools in Kabul province, where a higher proportion of secondary students received books but still fewer than 50% of what they needed. A school in another district of the same province said they have not had any textbooks for secondary grades in three years.²²¹

f. Where Leakage Happens

Nearly all respondents interviewed, whether parents, teachers, principals, or civil servants, acknowledged the problem of books turning up in the market; it is an undisputed reality in every province. However, there is little agreement over the source of theft and selling of textbooks, which likely happens at numerous levels. Book leakage is facilitated by a lack of transparency in the distribution system because of the absence of a shared access and jointly-managed database, and little third-party oversight, as well as by the existence of incentives resulting from an overly centralized system (e.g., textbooks distributed for free by the government). Many informants described a system that enabled and encouraged leakage: “Everyone wants to take advantage of their positions; from the MoE leadership level down to teachers in district schools. There is no clean government office. Anyone who can gain something, they engage.”²²²

Complicity was sometimes isolated to specific levels within the distribution system, while others saw complicity as widespread: “From the MoE level down to districts and villages, all officials sell textbooks,”²²³ and happening at different levels, “These books

²²⁰ Interview, Principal, Rawza Bagh School, Gozara District, Herat, January 11, 2016

²²¹ Interview, Principal, Lycee Naswan Jamiyat, Injil District, Herat, January 11, 2016

²²² Interview, Education General Director, PED Kabul, January 9, 2016

²²³ Parents FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 5, 2016

are sold in four to five stages by government officials before they come to the black market.”²²⁴ An MoE official claimed, “Books are lost at the publication level. Presently, 70% of students do not have books across the country, yet four times more books were printed than the actual number of students.”²²⁵ While teachers, parents, and principals blamed the MoE, PED, and DED staff, those who work in distribution at the MoE suggested that books may be sold by principals, teachers, or, in one case, it was suggested, by the students themselves.²²⁶ It was also suggested that private schools that buy MoE textbooks sell a portion of them in the market. In one case, the assessment team was informed of a specific incident where books were stolen and sold by a DED storage keeper (*tahwildar*), who was subsequently arrested.²²⁷ Another respondent shared that he was informed the PED in Nangarhar sold textbooks, and speculated that MoE warehouses sold books to private schools.²²⁸ The principal of another school reported finding over 750 textbooks for sale in the local market and secured the support of the police, the National Directorate of Security, and the attorney general’s office in taking action, claiming that today the local market is void of textbooks.²²⁹ While respondents reported cases of action taken, for the most part teachers, principals, and parents expressed cynicism about the government’s commitment to combating corruption and pessimism about their experiences reporting problems to the PED or MoE.

Some teachers speculated the books sold in the market came from “ghost” schools in insecure provinces. PED officials claimed the source of the “leaked” books is

²²⁴ Parents FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, January 5, 2016

²²⁵ Interview, Director of Curriculum Department, January 6, 2016

²²⁶ Interview, Textbook Distribution Manager, MoE, December 30, 2016

²²⁷ Interview, Principal, Gozara District, Herat, January 11, 2016

²²⁸ Interview, former USAID finance officer, January 26, 2016

²²⁹ Interview, Principal, Lycee Naswan Jamiyat, Injil District, Herat, January 11, 2016

commercial booksellers, selling only copied books: “100 % reject the possibility of finding MoE books in the market. They are printed by private printing presses inside and outside Afghanistan – mostly in Pakistan.”²³⁰ The MoE’s General Manager for Distribution stated that the MoE gives permission to private companies to print and sell MoE textbooks, saying they are unable to meet the volume needed on their own,²³¹ and another official said booksellers get books printed in Iran or Pakistan to sell in Afghanistan.²³² Indeed, as all the textbooks are available on the MoE website, anyone can download and print these files. This effectively creates a two-tiered system, and makes it very difficult to distinguish illegally copied books from privately but legally printed books and from leaked books. The Publications Director reported he is working to develop guidelines for private companies printing the books, but this process is complicated by the Constitutional requirement that all education services must be freely provided.²³³

g. How Schools Handle Textbook Shortages

Buying books from the market is the main fallback strategy to contend with textbook shortages. Every school visited reported that at least some proportion of students acquires their textbooks by buying them in the market. Generally, three types of books can be found in the market (though not necessarily all types in the same market): full-color, original MoE-published textbooks, full-color textbooks not printed by the MoE, and copied textbooks in black and white. Prices vary based on whether the book is in color, is original, by the subject and grade level, and by the scarcity of a given book at the time: if there is a major shortage of a certain book, the price for that book rises.

²³⁰ Interview, Director of City Schools for Mazar-e Sharif, PED Balkh, January 2, 2016

²³¹ Interview, General Manager for Distribution, MoE, December 30, 2016

²³² Interview, Director of Information and Publication, MoE, January 17, 2016

²³³ Interview, Director of Information and Publication, MoE, January 17, 2016

Teachers, parents, and principals expressed frustration that schools had missing textbooks that were available in the market. For instance, one teacher observed,

*Books come to us late while books are in the market but not in school. We heard rumors that books are sold from national storages. We believe the rumors because the books are not in the schools, but they are in the black market. For example, the physics subject book was never sent from Kabul, but we had them in the black market.*²³⁴

Another added, "Presently, only four books of grade 12 are available in Mazar schools. However, all subjects can be found in the book stores/black markets," and emphasized that the books are originals rather than illegal copies.²³⁵

To address textbook shortages, schools also organize students to share books. A teacher in Nahrshahi district of Balkh province explained, "If we see we have two children in the same family, we give them one book. In other cases, for example if there are ten subject books, we give five to one student and five to others sitting next to each other, so that they can exchange during study."²³⁶ Some schools also make their own black-and-white copies of textbooks to make up shortages, or in some cases teachers provide notes to students in place of textbooks. NGO-run, community-based education schools have soft copies of the books and pay for their own printing. Some schools reported that some students attend classes without books if they did not get them during distribution and if they cannot afford to buy from the market.²³⁷ The downloadable textbooks on the MoE website are accessed by booksellers, private

²³⁴ FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh, January 3, 2016

²³⁵ FGD, Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh, January 3, 2016

²³⁶ Teachers' focus group, Nahrshahi District, Balkh, January 5, 2016.

²³⁷ Interview, Principal, Lycee Naswan Jamiyat, Injil District, Herat, January 11, 2016

schools, and NGOs, not directly by students. It was reported that some teachers in Kabul had acquired soft copies of teacher guides that were not available in print.

Students must return textbooks at the end of the school year, in order to receive their exam grades. In practice, however, most teachers and principals reported that they do not enforce this rule, and they accept copied books or black-market books as replacements. This means that illegal textbooks are cycled into the school's stock of books, and may affect counts of books, leading to underestimations of the number of missing official MoE textbooks.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions from the findings are summarized here for each phase of the textbook process chain, with emphasis on the areas of greatest concern.

Curriculum

Curriculum development and textbook writing has been undertaken by foreign consultants, Afghan technical advisors, Curriculum Department *tashkeel* staff, and contracted authors, at various times, since 2003. While there is not a problem of staff shortage, there is a problem with methodically organizing and dividing the work of staff and effectively using previous donor-supported capacity building efforts to sustainably improve the competency of the department's permanent human resources. Manuscript preparation has suffered from a lack of coordination with other departments in the MoE, notably Teacher Education, and has been characterized by a hodge podge of methods, including copying and pasting from other countries' textbooks, revising old books, and writing new, original content. There is little consistency in policy or protocol guiding manuscript preparation, such as a clear division of roles between drafts, review, editing, and approval. However, there are policies in place, such as reviewing books every three years, and a process is currently underway to correct errors.

Furthermore, textbooks have greatly improved in the quality of content and in their capacity to support active learning methodology, as assessed by teachers, principals, and other respondents. Yet, they still largely fail to engage critical thinking skills. Some subjects are overly complex or too dense for the grade level they target, and there is an overemphasis on *Islamiyat* subjects to the detriment of other subjects. Objectionable content, such as that promoting violence, has been removed, and

textbooks generally represent a more pluralistic, ethnically diverse Afghanistan.

The greatest obstacles to effective use of the curriculum are the structural limitations in practice. There are, notably, insufficient instructional time (classes of 30 minutes in duration, and short school days), teacher absenteeism and poor performance (enabled by a lack of regular monitoring), and teacher capacity. The lack of teacher guides at the secondary level, as well as the lack of integrating practice with the new curriculum, is problematic. There is also no consistent formal feedback mechanism for teachers to the MoE on the curriculum or textbooks, and a lack of methodical field testing of curriculum before finalization. For textbooks and curriculum to lead to desired learning outcomes, these structural constraints must be prioritized by the MoE and donor partners.

Textbook Review

In line with the textbook design assessment results, a positive change is observed with regard to textbook content quality compared to pre-Taliban era textbooks. More books have been added to the curriculum, and each textbook covers more topics – an initiative aimed at including more content concerning the post-Taliban criteria of improving the curriculum (e.g., from Islamic, cultural, and scientific perspectives). However, textbooks developed in the past 15 years demonstrate very gradual improvement, and in many cases no improvement. This issue emerged in the review of various editions of textbooks where little, if any, improvement in subsequent editions was identified in a comparison between old and new editions, and even regression in the content quality. Furthermore, while the non-existence or inaccessibility of teacher guides is a problem at the planning and/or resourcing level, it

does not negatively impact the quality of textbook content. In most cases, the guides for teachers are incorporated within textbooks instead of as separate guides for the teacher specifically, posing challenges for learners, particularly those in lower grades.

The politicization of textbooks through the inclusion of politically-driven messaging is evident too. This shift raises questions about the recently added committees for cultural and Islamic reviews, and the involvement of a greater number of textbook reviewers and authors in the cases where their input to new editions of textbooks' content, layout, and design appears to be of no significance. Further studies will be required to systematically assess the consequences of these measures on the textbook content quality, textbook cost, and the textbook policies. To improve the quality of textbooks, it is of utmost importance to involve more stakeholders beyond the MoE, including education NGOs and watchdog organizations, Afghan or local language literate technical experts, and particularly competent individuals selected on the basis of merit from outside the MoE's sphere of influence. Improvements in the content of textbooks are directly linked to curriculum capacity improvement – an obstacle that was acknowledged by Curriculum Review Directorate of the MoE.

Planning

Planning is one of the weakest aspects of the textbook process, and one of the most challenging to improve. Officially, textbook needs are assessed based on student enrollment numbers from the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which is considered to be exceptionally unreliable by almost all accounts. MoE officials themselves recognize that they do not have reliable statistics on student enrollment. They also do not have a system for tracking the number of books in circulation. The operating assumption seems to be that the supply of books will always be insufficient relative to the need; therefore, the key problem is how to distribute the books they

receive fairly. Distribution that occurs on the basis of school-level requests – many of which are not or cannot be verified – is probably the most sensible approach given the current situation, but would require the implementation of a centralized data management system used by those with planning responsibilities at all levels: school, DED, PED and MoE.

Improving planning will require better information about actual needs of individual schools, districts, and provinces, as well as general information about how long different books last on average. The current three-year use policy deserves review to account for the fact that books for different subjects and grades have different lifespans. Technology such as SMS reporting or computerized record-keeping could greatly improve the accessibility and accuracy of data, but it would be difficult to introduce, given the current lack of infrastructure and resources to maintain equipment and train staff. Efforts to improve EMIS or any other data collection mechanism must take into consideration that there are disincentives to report information accurately at different levels of the system.

Textbook Design

In general, textbook design quality has improved compared to pre-Taliban textbooks. Despite a general consensus textbook design quality has improved, it can be concluded that satisfaction with the quality of textbooks designed in the past 15 years is mostly a byproduct of low expectations on the part of school administrators, teachers, and parents, and a lack of technical expertise on the part of Curriculum Development Directorate and its associated Design Department. In the absence of policies, guidelines, and recognition for improvement, there is no explicit top-down effort in the highly centralized system to improve the quality of textbook design.

The professional and technical disconnect between curriculum development criteria, pedagogical learning, teaching requirements, and textbook design standards is responsible for some of the existing problems of textbook design. A lack of technical coordination among various departments and committees within the Curriculum Development Directorate, as well the absence of an external and technically sound monitoring body, has mitigated the potential for much needed change. Nepotism, the absence of women's representation in the Design Department, and ineffective human resource arrangements at the Curriculum Development Department are indicative of the need for a multi-faceted reform process needed at the organizational, human resource, governance, and technical levels. Should donor agencies commit to improving textbook design quality in the future, improvements in quality are unlikely without active intervention to establish and maintain more functional internal institutional processes.

Procurement, Publishing, and Quality Control

From the candid accounts of the Senior Procurement Advisor, there is optimism that this MoE department in relation to textbook procurement has been building on lessons learned from the past. The Danida-funded HLB *Value for Money Audit* report of 2013 has been shared with the personnel in this department. Responses and feedback to recommendations for the most part have reflected a desire to improve transparency and not to be the scapegoat or reason for triggering any future audits. Some staff members interviewed have been with the Ministry's Procurement Department for 10 to 15 years; this shows a considerable amount of stability and trust that these members have generated after many years of service. It was, however, clearly stated that the quality of their work is dependent on the documents provided to them from the Publications Department. A preference was shown by the Procurement section for outside contractors, in order to provide support towards

ensuring that the entire procurement process is transparent, as per the RSM Procurement Process Monitoring of Textbooks currently in progress. In addition, the section personnel expressed a desire to distance themselves from the inputs of others before them, over which there were concerns related to reliability and accuracy, so that they are not implicated in any wrongdoings identified.

Research and interviews with the Publishing Director and his staff has not provided conclusive findings regarding the MoE's publishing capacity. The issue of the Director holding two other posts within the Ministry, Spokesman for the Minister and Director of Communication and Information, leaves questions as to whether he is able to focus even marginally on his publishing duties. These two additional titles have been bestowed upon every Publishing Director since May 2005, resulting in poor development of textbook provision procedures by the three individuals who have held the position in that time.

The Publishing Department is responsible for overseeing all the steps from receipt of the print-ready DVDs from the Curriculum Department to the distribution of the books to the schools. The department experiences firsthand contact with all the local suppliers and some international ones, who are all keen to win large, lucrative contracts. The temptation to accept dubious offers is considerable, and in the past there have been clear violations of the contract rules that are reflected in the number of contracts won by a single supplier. Whoever is in the position of Director for Publishing must exercise the highest of ethical standards and must show no favoritism to any of the potential suppliers. It is not clear that the MoE Publishing Department has reached this point yet or has safeguards in place to steer the Department in that direction. In addition, the current methods used to collect data from the schools on how many books are required are very weak. A recent change shows that there is an

effort underway to improve this activity, but it requires much more in the way of capacity building and formulation of good strategies that are effective.

More research is required to fully understand the quality control processes in place in the Ministry. The MoE Standards and Quality Control sub-unit are directly under the control of the Publishing Director, with a Supervisor who has a printing background responsible for two staff. The quality control committee are a team of four assigned by Publishing to complete the textbook quality control form for every single title. Acceptance of the product provides the Procurement section with the approval to release funds for payment. In the past, this section has come under pressure to perform contrary to their expected duties. Books that should have been rejected were accepted due to political pressures and efforts to avoid embarrassment by the books being delivered late. If books were ever to be rejected and returned, this would create a significant financial strain for any supplier, especially if the books come from overseas. Thus, the quality control committee may be influenced by a contractor into accepting a sub-standard product.

Storage

Despite the lack of policies and guidelines for MoE storage of textbooks, the Ministry and PEDs visited during this assessment had reasonable space and arrangements for textbook storage. Nevertheless, DEDs and particularly schools face a shortage of space, poor textbook management, and lack unsystematic record-keeping systems.

The problem of disorganized and poorly-managed and monitored storage facilities has a deleterious impact on the planning, documentation, and distribution of textbooks. Planning at the MoE can be disrupted or records manipulated due to a poor system of record keeping, particularly of those textbooks that are in circulation.

From micro-administrative bodies (e.g., school storages) to the macro-entities (PEDs and MoE), the need for a systematic change in textbook and record-keeping management was unrecognized and needs were only prioritized at the resource (e.g. storage and shelves) level. Should the donor agencies plan to improve the status quo, it will be necessary to work with the MoE to create standards and improve the monitoring qualification of concerned officers, as well as the qualification of storage keepers in storage maintenance and record keeping. A technically and technologically-sound record keeping of textbooks at various storage levels (MoE, PEDs, DEDs, and schools) will better serve the overall objective of identifying textbook needs of students at provincial and national levels.

Distribution and Delivery

The MoE has produced forms to record textbook quantities at different stages of distribution (e.g., the M7, F-5, F-9, F-13 forms, described in Table 5). These forms are filled by hand before being compiled and sent to the MoE to be entered into spreadsheets the Ministry manages. This system is truncated, labor-intensive, slow, prone to errors, and lacks transparency. Computerizing the system at every stage, from the school to the DED to the PED to the MoE, would expedite the process and encourage accuracy, allowing errors to be spotted and corrected more quickly. Transparency would be enhanced if the data was stored in a shared access database.

There are several policy gaps that weaken oversight over distribution. The disparate forms used for distribution, and the processes for completing them, are not informed by written instructions or explicit requirements. Distribution at the school level lacks written guidelines to schools covering the MoE's expectations about: timeliness of distribution to students; practices for protecting books; protocols for lost or damaged books; and protocols for the return of books. In addition, there is a lack of clarity

around the existence of codified penalties for participating in book leakage, and for failure to adhere to policies and practices necessary to ensure transparency and accuracy in reporting.

Further, a distribution system that is managed differently at each stage (from printers to the MoE, from the MoE to PEDs, from PEDs to DEDs and schools) in terms of transportation, scheduling, and procedures deters systematic monitoring. Delivery times are unpredictable, and communication between schools and DEDs and PEDs is slow, making it difficult to schedule monitoring. At the same time, there is an absence of third party monitoring, with the exception of occasional audits. This opaqueness makes textbook theft low-risk, and is compounded by the system of manually collecting and entering data for ordering and receiving textbooks. Consequently, the system is vulnerable at numerous points, such as when a lone individual transports books from the PED or DED to the school, when textbooks sit for long periods of time in storage facilities due to unpredictable scheduling, or when schools, DEDs, and PEDs submit unsubstantiated data for their textbook requests, which is unlikely to be physically verified and is not supported by accurate data in EMIS. Further, the system in its entirety is vulnerable when a valuable good is freely distributed, serving as an incentive to copy or sell it to anyone who has the opportunity to access any quantity of the good when it is unsecured or unmonitored.

In sum, the MoE departments with mandates in the areas of designing, planning, procuring, storing, and distributing textbooks suffer from a lack of human resources capacity and independent monitoring, among other problems. Textbooks have improved since the pre-Taliban era, but still have typos and design problems. The MoE still cannot plan for textbook production and distribution because the system used for counting students, EMIS, is unreliable. Once the most vulnerable areas for corruption, procurement of textbooks has improved with third-party monitoring. Yet,

textbooks are typically not delivered on time, schools suffer from shortages while textbooks sometimes appear in markets, and the storage facilities holding books at the district and school level are often inadequate. Until the many steps in the textbooks chain are reformed, monitored, and coordinated with one another, the MoE will continue to face challenges in delivering high-quality books on time to schoolchildren.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Textbook production and distribution is a process that reaches into numerous spheres of responsibility at the MoE. Thus, to improve the process, reforms are needed in a wide range of departments and sections, and will require strong policy and committed attention from MoE leadership and from USAID to oversee the reforms.

Beginning with the content of textbooks, new configurations of workflow processes are needed in the Curriculum Department that add quality control checks and more clearly divide roles by relevant expertise. Secondary grades need teacher guides, and textbooks should omit instructions to teachers and replace them with rich content for students. A thorough revision process should remove errors and irrelevant content; improve the selection and placement of images; followed by a systematic review of the sequencing of content from grade to grade. The impact of textbook content will remain limited as long as instructional time is limited to half-hour classes.

In the area of planning, there are critical gaps in the way data is collected, managed, and stored, resulting in vulnerabilities that can be greatly alleviated by computerizing data management at as many levels as possible (ideally, including school, DED, PED and MoE). Computerization would harmonize systems and reduce the immense burden of paperwork and hand-filling forms, as well as add an extra layer of monitoring on a permanent basis, by a third-party. In the design of textbooks, emphasis has been predominantly on graphic design and technical capacity, but must shift to also focus on pedagogical design capacity within the Design Department and better coordination between curriculum experts in the MoE and the textbook designers.

In printing and procurement, there are numerous practical steps that can be taken to greatly reduce the risk of corruption, which is evidently rampant and systemic, then other stages. Donors can do direct procurement, establish a system of preferred suppliers, improve the statement of compliance form, add additional checks to the bidding requirements, and ensure third-party monitoring of bidding and contracting.

Similarly, basic practical steps can improve storage practices and prolong the life of textbooks. One such step is supporting the MoE to develop, circulate, and enforce a protocol for textbook storage minimum requirements. The distribution and delivery phases could also benefit from policies like a code of conduct for personnel, the establishment of an oversight committee, and a commitment to more systematically and rigorously monitor these steps in the process.

Overall, one of the most expedient and far-reaching interventions to render more transparent, efficient, and modern the entire process chain would be to digitize as many steps of the process as possible. This would include using electronic logbooks for textbook stocks and for recordkeeping in general at the school, DED, and PED levels, digitizing the accounting of textbooks system, using an intranet to centralize the data management system. The human labor to maintain this cumbersome manual system as it now stands is not more costly than a centralized computer-mediated database management system, even in the short term. The system as is does not work and does not allow for monitoring, which is greatly enabling fraud.

While demanding a front-end investment, such a system would lead to significant cost savings and improved efficiency in the long run and greatly reduce opportunities for corruption. Computerization easily allows for sharing and reduces the room for human error. Rural areas' government offices usually have some municipal electricity daily, so if they had laptops or tablets, they could keep a charge for times when

electricity is off. Also, increasingly, offices throughout the country are resorting to solar power. While there is a front-end investment required, the cost of leaving the system dysfunctional is much higher in the long run.

Based on the findings of this assessment of the Moe's capacity to develop, print, and distribute textbooks, the assessment team proposes the following recommendations, divided by each respective step in the process chain:

Curriculum

1. The Curriculum Department should have strict qualification and experience standards for technical advisors tasked with working on textbook writing, and procedures in place that structure and systematize mentorship between TAs and *tashkee*/textbook authors.
2. The Curriculum Department editing process should be reformed to ensure different individuals review and edit manuscripts they did not also author.
3. A semi-autonomous National Curriculum and Textbook Board within the MoE should be established, staffed by technical experts in the field of curriculum, and at arm's length from the Curriculum Development Department, and that is tasked to provide quality control and oversight to the work of curriculum development, including ensuring separation of tasks (writing, editing, and supervision).
4. Overall daily instructional time should be increased by a minimum of 25% for all levels (for instance, primary classes to at least five hours of instructional time per day, and secondary classes to at least six hours of instructional time per school

day) and consequently, class periods should be increased to a minimum of 45 minutes at the primary level and a minimum of 55 minutes at the secondary level. The Monitoring and Evaluation Department should be tasked with enforcing the increase, within a more robust monitoring of teacher attendance.

5. The number of subjects for both primary and secondary should be decreased. Suggested courses to drop are the careers and culture subjects in secondary grades, and at least one of the *Islamiyat* lessons in early primary grades, since they require complex thinking skills for interpretation and reading skills above the grade level.
6. Clear, written national core standards should be established for each grade and subject, which are integrated into teacher education standards within the new teacher certification and accreditation system.
7. Textbooks should be redeveloped to follow clear and well-organized scope and sequencing for each subject and grade level. The syllabi and lesson plans for the curriculum/textbooks need to be available, as well as the corresponding teacher guides, when the textbooks are published and before the academic year begins.
8. The instructions to teachers within textbooks should be removed, and incorporated in separate teacher guides. Work with education NGOs to promote access to and use of the teachers' guides at the school level. Furthermore, as per Nicholson (2013): "Launch a media campaign with the Deputy Minister of Curriculum Development and Teacher Education in which he endorses the TG from G1-12. Have a signed authorization letter that states that all teachers should use the TG and instruct principals to allow the teachers to

use the TG as their lesson plan/reference for classes. The letter should also include instructions for store keepers to find and issue TG in their stores to schools.”

9. Make all teachers’ guides available in soft copy on the MoE website, as textbooks presently are.
10. Textbooks and materials need to be consistently piloted before final manuscript approval, in order to identify content in each subject book that is overly complex for in-service teachers and requires either removal, moving into a higher grade level, further explanation, or supporting interpretative tools and guidance.
11. Teacher training college syllabi should be upgraded to include courses in curriculum interpretation, curriculum design, and curriculum evaluation as required courses for qualification. In addition, professional development training needs to incorporate these courses for all in-service teachers, especially at the secondary level.
12. MoE budgeting should make provision for updates and changes to textbooks on both annual and curriculum cycles, as determined for different grade levels (secondary every five years; and primary curriculum review every six years) while printing replacement textbooks yearly.
13. A formal coordination mechanism between the Teacher Education Department and the Curriculum Development Department should be established that yields a work plan with clear milestones for the systematic integration of curricular reforms into teacher education planning, so that both pre-service and in-

service teacher education supports the skills required to teach the current curriculum.

14. The MoE and USAID should consider carrying out a feasibility study of commercial textbook production as an alternative to the present system of in-house production in the MoE.

Planning

1. The MoE and donors should prioritize the improvement of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) as the primary source of key data. While the problems with EMIS are severe, it is the only system that comes close to having the infrastructure, staff, and processes needed to produce credible statistics. The only way to counter the strong incentives for over-reporting is to support a rigorous and systematically applied third party monitoring effort and to ensure that MoE planning staff have the budget to train and monitor.
2. There are many barriers to computerizing inventories and textbook records, including lack of computers and Internet access and the fact that many MoE staff are unfamiliar with computers. However, computerization must be pursued as a way to improve planning and facilitate monitoring, even if the goals are as modest as ensuring that provincial offices use spreadsheets for inventory tracking by 2018.
3. The MoE should explore and donors should fund the piloting of SMS systems for basic reporting of textbook needs and textbook receipt at the school and district level. The advantage of using SMS is that the data can be submitted and

aggregated instantly, checked with automatic quality controls, and bypass intermediaries who might wish to alter figures.

4. Currently, the MoE three-year textbook use policy is not based on textbook use data or cost modeling. The MoE should gather data on the actual life of various types of textbooks (even on a sample basis) so it can rationalize its policies. Donors should fund a cost study that examines the cost implications of various options, for example, shortening the length of use of primary school books versus improving the quality of textbooks to lengthen their lifespan.
5. The MoE should develop models for needs estimation which reflect current information on the numbers of private school and community-based education students needing books, and the numbers required for “emergency” stock.
6. As a long-term goal, the MoE should harmonize methods for estimating textbook needs and allocating books once textbooks arrive, on a school-by-school basis. Improving the systems to this extent will require a lot of resources. In the meantime, donors should recognize that the MoE office in Kabul is not yet able to report on this level of detail with any accuracy. Ultimately, USAID, other donors, and the MoE should work towards the implementation of a centralized data management system used by all those with planning responsibilities at all levels: school, DED, PED and MoE.

Textbook Design

1. Specific policies and guidelines need to be prepared with regard to using online resources and to foster adherence to international standards of intellectual property protection.

2. The human resources of the Textbook Design Department need to be evaluated for technical competence and required support should be extended. Support mechanisms should be imbedded within the Department, and designed in a way so as to be adopted within the permanent systems of the Ministry at project-end.
3. An assessment of the technical capacity of the Design Department and potential upgrading of technology is required.
4. A capacity building initiative on the linkage between pedagogy, curriculum, and IT is a crucial need of the Design Department.
5. Textbooks should assure the fair representation of women, ethnic minorities, and various religious sects of Afghan society.

Procurement, Publishing, and Quality Control

1. The Ministry and donors alike should be encouraged to start afresh in assessing all the local printers with expert assistance along the lines reported by Graphium Consult AB Sweden in 2006. It is necessary to know how many books, in both color and black and white a printer can produce in a day.
2. Direct procurement by the donors is highly recommended. Capacity building within the Ministry in the Publishing section over the last ten years has not been successful; direct procurement would significantly reduce or even eliminate outside influence on the specifications and contract criteria.

3. The UNICEF system of preferred suppliers should be considered locally and internationally. These preferred suppliers meet stringent regulations set by the procurement section and are given the opportunity to bid among themselves for these lucrative contracts. The system is valid for a number of years, after which other suppliers can also compete to become a preferred supplier. It is understood that under Afghan Procurement Law such a system can be accommodated.
4. Printing should not be decentralized and handed over to whatever capacity there may be in the provinces. Such printing establishments that exist would not be able to provide the quality required to produce a schoolbook subject to rough handling and that needs to last as long as possible. Monitoring multiple production centers would also be a challenge in an insecure environment.
5. On the Statement of Compliance document, "Comply" or "Not Comply" columns should be reinstated as a prerequisite for any successful bid, and for the signed and stamped document to be used at every monitoring visit to the company as proof of commitment by the supplier should there be any deviations from the required path.
6. The delivery and customs processes from Karachi to Kabul have not been analyzed due to lack of time; however, the MoE Procurement Department should be approached to provide all the steps and documents. It should be explored whether routing through Iran will be a more secure and efficient way in the future, especially in relation to the nuclear deal that should see an increase in imports and perhaps more flexibility in allowing goods to transit to Afghanistan.

7. Potential donors should examine, and the MoE Publishing Department should re-examine, the extensive reporting and results from the Parwan Pilot Project of 2006-08.²³⁸ They should consider the implementation of such a data collection method again as a pilot project, with the objective of creating a system that could provide data via mobile phone and the Internet.
8. The Publications Department should be required to provide a comprehensive M&E plan for textbooks to USAID as soon as possible.
9. The MoE should closely analyze the Ernst & Young report in relation to the 2015 BELT project when it becomes available and take any necessary action.
10. The MoE should closely analyze the RSM monitoring report on contract MOE/G-72/ICB in India and Vietnam when it becomes available and take any necessary action.

Storage

1. The MoE should develop policies and regulations on storage in order to regulate and standardize storage, distributing a protocol to all schools, DEDs and PEDs. These should be enforced through systematic monitoring of applying of the protocol, thus coordination with the MoE's M&E Department will be critical to prepare their monitors to check storage facilities.

²³⁸ Documents 17 – 22 available using the following link..

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B89ta5tpDPd7RHRTb2tBLXFFVmM&usp=sharing>

2. The MoE should carry out a needs assessment of the existing storage facilities in collaboration with staff members in charge of storage management and maintenance. The MoE should take stock of the existing containers during this assessment process.
3. The most urgent needs of schools in terms of storages should be identified, and the most vulnerable schools should be prioritized for first-tier intervention.
4. The MoE should develop a mechanism for monitoring storage facilities and the record-keeping process, and systems of accountability and transparency for storage maintenance should be created.
5. The MoE should identify solutions, and write a corresponding policy, with regard to how to handle expired and destroyed books, in order to reduce the space taken up by such books.
6. Donors should support the MoE, PEDs, and DEDs to create a system to enable them to calculate the number of books in circulation at any given time. As recommended in the Planning section, ultimately, a centralized data management system should be established.

Distribution and Delivery

1. All MoE, PED, and DED staff involved in distribution tasks should sign codes of conduct as part of their normal contracts of employment that specify penalties for participating in corrupt practices and for failing to adhere to policies.
2. Adherence to this code of conduct should be monitored by an oversight committee at arm's length from the Publications Department, and a report of findings should be produced annually and published openly by this committee.
3. The MoE should work toward having schools use electronic logbooks for textbook stocks, digitize the accounting of textbooks system, and use an intranet, as part of a centralized data management system used by all those with planning responsibilities at all levels: school, DED, PED and MoE. While demanding a front-end investment, such a system would lead to significant cost savings and improved efficiency in the long run, and greatly reduce opportunities for corruption.
4. The MoE should digitize the entire distribution system and use an intranet. Training should be provided to personnel at the school and DED levels for proper data collection, entry, and cleaning, and at the PED for the same tasks in addition to data analysis.
5. Private publishers should be contracted to deliver textbooks.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: STATEMENT OF WORK

STATEMENT OF WORK

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED OFFICES WITHIN THE AFGHAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FOR TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT, PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

I. Introduction

Textbook development, procurement and distribution in low income countries and in particular post-conflict countries, is a global challenge recognized by USAID. The World Bank and its Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) 2014 Guide on Textbook Development in Low Income Countries: *A Guide for Policy and Practice*, noted that there are six main challenges to textbook provision: (i) High costs, (ii) Poor governance and Corruption issues, (iii) Inadequate supply, (iv) Distribution problems, (v) Poor planning, and (vi) No policy framework.

Many conflict-affected countries lack a textbook policy framework whereby policies and standard procedures are written to guide the development, production and distribution of textbooks. In particular, countries that lack clearly articulated standards for each grade often suffer from low quality textbooks where the books are too difficult to read and comprehend at the assigned grade level. When there are no enforceable standards, the textbook quality cannot be evaluated. Afghanistan has taken strides to address these pitfalls, notably through the EQUIP II's ACER achievement assessments of grades 3, 6, and 9 and USAID's planned nation-wide Early Grade Reading Assessment of learning outcomes in grades 2 and 4.

Moreover, in Afghanistan, due to centralization in Kabul, insecurity, and pervasive graft, the lack of a clear textbook policy framework only exacerbates disconnects among the different donor-led activities, such as USAID's teacher training work under the EQUIP mechanism and the G2G textbook production and distribution. There are also challenges of decision-making power and resources that largely lie in Kabul, where at the local level there is limited capacity and resources, resulting in lack of effective use and distribution of textbooks for both teachers and students.

The textbook industry is a big business in developing countries. The large sums of money involved in production and distribution create avenues for corruption. For example, unqualified staff may be involved in the design process and "approve" unsuitable textbooks. In Afghanistan a comprehensive assessment of textbook quality hasn't been conducted in several years. Therefore, it's unclear to what extent curricula integrate achievement standards and align with pedagogical instruction administered by the Teacher Education Department. Textbooks may also be written conceptually and lack sound concrete examples. This in effect contributes to poor pedagogy by the ill-equipped teacher and results in a lack of learning by students.

Textbooks also suffer from errors in fact and grammar and inappropriate illustrations that may reflect stereotypical gender and ethnic biases. Such biases can reinforce unhealthy cultural gender practices and perpetuate longstanding ethnic conflict. While an earlier rapid assessment of the MoE's grade 1-6 textbook content documented no flagrant cultural biases or widespread grammar errors, future USAID investments in textbook printing demand deeper analysis.

At times, books produced do not make it to their final destination due to inefficiencies such as leakage where books meant for free distribution find their way into the local market(s) for sale to parents and students. Transporting books from national warehouses to remote provinces, districts, and ultimately schools can also be quite challenging. The logistical hurdles may result a backlog of textbooks at the provincial or district levels where they end up in storage as students go without books. In addition, many books are not delivered on a timely basis and/or limited in quantity

resulting in several students share one textbook or schools reusing old and damaged textbooks. In Afghanistan the poor quality of school level data limits the MoE's ability to effectively plan for textbooks needs and also track the flow of textbooks from to students. Such shortcomings are of significant concern to USAID and other donors supporting MoE textbook printing activities.

The above mentioned challenges have hindered past textbook printing activities in Afghanistan, and USAID is concerned that the causes underlying these shortcomings remain unaddressed by the Ministry of Education; and will resurface in future textbook printing activities.

II. BACKGROUND - ON-BUDGET TEXTBOOK ACTIVITY

The MOE relies entirely upon donor support to print and deliver textbooks to schools across Afghanistan. Since 2002, USAID has provided support to print and distribute more than 130 million primary and secondary grade textbooks for learners in Afghanistan. The curriculum has undergone several revisions. Most recently, in 2009 the MOE developed a new curriculum framework and syllabi for General and Islamic Education. Based upon that framework, new textbooks for basic education have been printed and distributed with the support of USAID and other donors such as Danida and the World Bank.

In 2011, USAID launched the Basic Education, Learning, and Training (BELT) project to improve access to quality education services in Afghanistan. To that end, BELT strengthens the management capacity of the MOE to receive direct assistance and effectively deliver education services in the country. The Textbook Printing and Distribution portion of the BELT project provides assistance to the Afghan government to procure the printing of MOE-approved grade 1-6 textbooks in Pashto, Dari and English. The subjects included mathematics, Dari language, Pashto language, art, handwriting, life skills, English, geography, and science. The initial phase of this \$27 million component supported the procurement and delivery of 13.6 million textbooks between October and December 2012. A second phase provided assistance for a follow-on procurement of an additional 34 million textbooks.

Beginning in May 2014, the MOE delivered textbooks to Kabul City and six provinces that included Kabul, Logar, Parwan, Wardak, Panjshir and Kapisa. USAID also supported the MOE to transport textbooks to the provincial level in the remaining 28 provinces, at which point the MOE used its own resources to complete the distribution of the textbooks from the provincial level to schools throughout Afghanistan. This phase of the distribution began in August 2014 and was largely completed in early 2015, though more than 3 million textbooks remained at the Kabul warehouse. USAID expects to receive final monitoring reports on the distribution from Ernst & Young and Checchi Consulting by September 30, 2015.

USAID has noted several challenges while implementing the BELT textbook printing projects in Afghanistan. One recurring problem that USAID has observed is the MOE's failure to adequately plan for textbook needs, necessitating "emergency procurements" that suffer from irregularities in the procurement process and quality issues. Additionally, the MOE has demonstrated an inability to develop a concrete and realistic distribution plan, contributing to uneven and inefficient distributions of textbooks across the country. Furthermore, following the distribution of 34 million primary grade textbooks the MOE acknowledged that it was unable to account for the number of books distributed to individual schools, despite such a requirement in the implementation letter signed two years prior. USAID and other donors have experienced similar problems since 2002.

USAID has conducted several relevant assessments to textbook printing in Afghanistan as listed below:

- § In 2008 USAID requested the SUPPORT project under Checchi Consulting to perform a rapid content evaluation of grade 1-6 MOE textbooks to identify grammatical errors as well as any content that may be objectionable to political, religious, or ethnic sensitivities.
- § In 2013, a rapid gender assessment was conducted on grade 1-6 textbooks to identify the extent to which the textbooks have positive, gender balanced images and narratives, and the extent to which MoE had coordinated and collaborated with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other stakeholders.

§ Finally, USAID will conduct a survey of available early grade reading materials in Dari, Pashto, and other local languages to include textbooks printed through BELT as part of the Early Grade Reading Survey implemented by Chemonics.

2.1 BACKGROUND ON USAID’S EDUCATION SECTOR INVESTMENTS

USAID is a major donor to basic education components of National Education Sector Plan III. In conformity with the stipulations and agreements of the Tokyo Conference on Afghan Reconstruction in July of 2012[1], USAID provides both “off-budget” and “on-budget” support to the MoE’s NESP III implementation. “Off-budget” support is financing given to a third party or programmed into a project implemented by USAID partners. “On-budget” support is financing provided either: 1) directly to the MoE, through a government to government relationship; or 2) to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), managed by the World Bank. In the case of the ARTF, the World Bank and the GIRoA establish protocols for the use of Afghan government systems in the planning and delivery of projects. As such, GIRoA considers funds programmed through the ARTF to be ‘on-budget’ financing provided directly to the MoE. Table three summarizes USAID/Afghanistan’s current **major** investments in basic education under NESP III.

Type of Investment	Program Title	Summary Description
OFF-BUDGET	Supporting UNICEF's role as the supervising entity for the Global Partnership for Education	GPE focuses on increasing and sustaining equitable access to quality education via CBE, accelerated learning programs, and other pathways to education in 40 districts in 13 insecure provinces. USAID supports UNICEF's role as the Supervising Entity of GPE to provide programmatic and fiduciary oversight of MoE's implementation of the GPE project.
	Supporting UNICEF-led CBE and Accelerated Learning Programs	USAID funds UNICEF to implement CBE and accelerated learning programs to support the MoE's EFA goal of universal access to basic education. This investment will also increase the Mission's contribution to Agency-wide targets of increasing equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments. UNICEF's national education program is aligned with the MoE's NESP-II and NESP-III and was developed in close coordination with the MoE.
	Strengthening of MoE management capacity (via LMG)	This activity is currently implemented through a Leadership, Management, and Governance (LMG) field support mechanism that is part of USAID/Afghanistan's Integrated Health Services and Systems Strengthening Program (IHSSSP). This financing supports the maintenance of the Basic Education, Learning, and Training (BELT) project management team, Provincial Community Officers (PCOs), and CBE unit consultants. This activity will end in December

		2015.
	Early Grade Reading Survey	The Early Grade Reading Survey will conduct a nation-wide baseline assessment of reading competency in grades 2 and 4, inventory extant early grade reading materials, survey school management and effectiveness and safety, hold national policy workshops, conduct a needs assessment of the MoE's capacity to implement an early grade reading program, and assess the potential for public-private partnerships.
ON-BUDGET	Capacity building and professional development of teachers and school administrators	USAID/Afghanistan's teacher education support is implemented under EQUIP II, in partnership with the World Bank through ARTF. The objectives of EQUIP II are to: (a) increase access to primary and secondary schooling; (b) strengthen the management capacity of communities to better manage teaching and learning activities; (c) institutionalize district-based teacher training activities nationwide; and (d) prioritize education for girls through a household scholarship scheme and the provision of high school teachers in underserved schools. USAID targets its funds to the Teacher Education Department (TED) so EQUIP II can provide pre-service and in-service teacher training to increase the level of professional knowledge and skills of educators throughout Afghanistan.

Given the various USAID's education investments and the critical interplay that must happen between these investments for good quality textbooks to be effectively used, it will be important that the assessment clearly outlines the linkages and the gaps between the relevant investments and the textbook activity. For example, teacher training competencies under EQUIP needs to be strongly linked with textbook standards, such as they exist in the MoE.

2.2 BACKGROUND ON THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

In 2009 the MoE initiated a revised curriculum for general and Islamic education including accompanying teacher guides for grades 1-9. Textbooks printed under BELT reflect this latest revision. Despite improvements upon previous curricula, the latest draft of the National Education Strategic Plan III comments, "there are some content problems and typo error in the textbooks; teachers are not prepared to teach the new curriculum; many textbooks are stocked in district education offices and are not distributed among schools due to a lack of budget. Distribution of textbooks proved to be very challenging. Despite printing enough textbooks, many students have not received textbooks or have bought copies of textbooks from market."

In addition to the BELT Textbook Printing Project mentioned above, Danida and the World Bank also actively support MoE textbook needs. USAID and Danida supported a request for an "emergency" procurement of 2.2 million lower secondary school (grade 7-9) textbooks that will be distributed in September 2015. Danida is partnering with the MoE to procure 16 million textbooks in grades 1-12 that will be delivered to the MoE's Kabul warehouse in Fall 2015. Likewise, the World Bank also has an ongoing procurement of XX million textbooks that should be received in Fall 2015.

In February 2015 the MoE requested USAID support for an additional 50 million textbooks in grades 1-12.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this assessment is to effectively examine the MOE's technical capacity and abilities to design, print and distribute, and use basic education (grades 1-12)

textbooks. Activities supported as part of this assessment will assist USAID and Afghan counterparts in determining the MOE's ability to successfully implement a large scale on-budget textbook procurement and printing project of approximately 50 million textbooks.

IV. Methodology

The consultants will examine the MOE's technical capabilities to design textbooks, procure printing services and the distribution of textbooks, and use quality textbooks at schools throughout Afghanistan and identify institutional constraints and/or weaknesses that may interfere with meeting USAID's development result, "to strengthen the availability of teaching and learning resources in MoE schools." The consultants will review existing assessments that have been carried out by USAID and other donors to determine technical and managerial vulnerabilities and avoid duplicating past efforts.

The assessment should consider the key informant interviews with USAID staff, other donors and local stakeholders, and be guided by the "G2G Education Toolkit: *Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool*" (December 2013). The assessment report will include a brief literature review, framework for data collection and analysis, methodology of data collection and analysis, key findings and a set of recommendations to Afghanistan's MoE and USAID to address significant weaknesses. The assessment should be done at those levels of government where the activity is implemented and should include visits to at least (3) Provincial Education Directorates to interview relevant staff members involved in textbook distribution, planning, and Academic Supervision, as well as visits to District Education Directorates and schools. In addition, the assessment will include a forensic process analysis that maps out the current path of textbook planning, design, production and distribution to better understand strengths and weaknesses at a systemic level.

The literature review will include a review of past and current studies and assessments of Afghanistan's *textbooks*, including but not limited to:

1. "G2G in Education: Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool." Education Office, Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3), November, 2013.

2. "Ministry of Education (MoE): Report on Pre Award Assessment." Ernst & Young Ford Rhodes Sidat Hyder, December 2011.
3. "Technical Capacity Assessment, Ministry of Education: Final Report." General Directorate, Program Design & Management (GDPDM), on behalf of the Independent Administrative Reform & Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), 2013.

The review will summarize relevant findings from each study and assessment. This summary will inform the data collection and analysis framework by identifying the key areas/categories the consultants may consider. The framework will include a rating scale for each category, such as ranging from advanced to nonfunctional as noted in the ICA tool. The report will also describe the methodology and rationale of how data is collected and analyzed. Finally, it should provide a summary of key findings resulting in a set of key recommendations that both the MoE and USAID need to consider when implementing future on-budget textbook activities.

The assessment team will schedule and conduct interviews and/or surveys with key stakeholders in the following eight Kabul-based MOE Directorates and Offices:

1. Provincial Monitoring and Coordination Manager (and five sub-offices);
2. Goods Affairs Organizing (including Distribution and Control Offices);
3. Information and Publication (Directorate);
4. Directorate of Academic Committee and Board of Standards;
5. Deputy Ministry for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training (including Directorates Curriculum Development, Training Affairs, and Curriculum and Criteria);
6. Directorate of Policy and Planning (including the Education Management Information System);
7. The Department of General Education; and
8. The Department of Teacher Education

9. The Department of the Academic Supervision

The assessment team shall be required to visit three Provincial Education Directorates to conduct interviews and/or surveys with Provincial Education Directors, Deputy Education Director for General Education, Academic Supervision, and other relevant officials involved in the textbook distribution. The selection of provinces should be culturally/geographically representative of Afghanistan and may include Herat, Balkh and Kabul.

Additional offices within the various directorates may also be proposed by the consultants based on the linkages to the activity. **USAID/Office of Education will review and concur with the complete list of planned interviews/surveys no later than two weeks after the assessment team arrives in Kabul.**

Furthermore, USAID/OFM is also contracting a firm to conduct research for a Stage II risk assessment that will evaluate finance and procurement systems of the MOE. The consultants will coordinate with USAID or the firm contracted by OFM as necessary to avoid duplication of effort and leverage complementary information gathered as part of the Stage II assessment. Relevant sections of the Stage II risk assessment report will be shared with Checchi.

V. Evaluation Questions

The assessment's key guiding question is: To what extent does the MoE's system support production of, and access to, quality textbooks that yield grade-appropriate learning outcomes?

The assessment will include a desk review of two-three elementary, secondary and high school textbooks from science, math, and social sciences (excluding Islamic studies).

The desk review will address the following two key questions:

- 1) Does the design and content align with the latest research and evidence on effective instructional design for the respective subject and grade?

2) Does the content correspond to current teacher training and pedagogy as defined by the MoE's Teacher Education Department and implemented by the Teacher Training Colleges and other similar institutions throughout Afghanistan?

In addition to the above two questions, the consultants will review and address where appropriate the *illustrative questions referenced in Annex I*. The final list of questions shall be agreed to between OSSD and the consultants during this assessment's in-brief.

1. Does the MOE have established standards and procedures for the design of grades 1-12 textbooks, and are these standards and procedures sufficiently adequate and adhered to on a consistent basis by MOE staff responsible for these activities? Are standards implemented by the Curriculum Department aligned with pedagogical standards implemented by the Teacher Education Department? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations.
2. What are the major risks during the procurement phase? Note any specific deficiencies and provide actionable recommendations.
3. Does the MOE's Technical staff have acceptable guidelines and procedures for assessing textbook distribution? Are these procedures and guidelines suitably adequate, transparent and adhered to on a consistent basis by MOE's Technical staff responsible for these activities to prevent and/or eliminate leakage and the loss of textbooks? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations.
4. Does the MOE have sufficient *monitoring and oversight procedures* in-place that govern the design of textbooks, the printing of textbooks and textbook distribution to provincial and district-level depots or warehouses and schools throughout Afghanistan? Can the MOE demonstrate that monitoring information is effectively used? Note any specific deficiencies in your findings and conclusions, and provide actionable recommendations.
5. Does the MOE have sufficient procedures in-place to accurately estimate, plan and maintain records (i.e. requests for textbooks at national, provincial, district,

schools levels) for its annual textbook needs? To what extent does EMIS or other MoE data contribute to planning for textbook needs? Please summarize major deficiencies in the findings and conclusion sections, and provide actionable recommendations

6. The MOE's current policy concerning grade 1-12 textbook usage mandates that these textbooks be used for three years by schools. However the MOE's Planning Directorate reportedly disagrees with this three-year usage policy. Acknowledging Afghanistan's current socio-economic environment: What is an appropriate period of use or lifespan of textbooks for these grades Afghanistan?
7. Note any deficiencies in staffing numbers and staff competencies and provide actionable recommendations.
8. Can management demonstrate that it has taken actions to address deficiencies previously identified during BELT Textbook Printing Project (i.e. poor quality books identified by Checchi at Kabul warehouse; MoE's inability to provide USAID evidence of the number of textbooks received by individual schools).

VI. STAFFING

Pursuant to the requirements specified in Deliverables, the Contractor shall identify a team comprised of individuals with excellent technical and writing skills to complete the work performed under this contract. The team member(s) shall meet the minimum level of academic and work experience qualifications described below. USAID/Afghanistan Office of Education will review the CVs of short listed candidates and retain the option to participate in the interview process. USAID/Afghanistan Office of Education anticipates, at a minimum, the assessment team would include the following:

1. **Senior Social Scientist/Team Leader:** The Team Leader will ensure that the requirements articulated in this Statement of Work are fully met. Project management is expected to include cost and quality control of all tasks and assignments undertaken to achieve the objectives of this contract. The candidate for the position of Senior

Social Scientist/Team Leader shall have at a minimum the following qualifications: This position requires at least a Master's degree, preferably a Ph.D. in Education or a related social science discipline. The Team Leader must possess a minimum of 10 years of experience working with Education management and administration. The proposed candidate should have significant experience in designing and conducting case studies, assessments, and evaluations. Knowledge of USAID regulations is required. The individual should have a proven track record of participating in and/or leading high quality evaluation and assessment teams. The Team Leader will be responsible for overseeing the design and implementation of surveys, questionnaires, and/or other data collection instruments for the case studies. Prior experience working in Afghanistan is preferred. Fluency in English and demonstrated report writing skills are required. It is preferred, but not required, that the candidate be conversant in either Dari or Pashto.

2. Two Senior Textbook Assessment Specialists: The textbook assessment specialist provides overall technical oversight of the assessment. The Specialist will be developing the rubric for textbook analysis, oversee the various data collection tools and will be engaged in the analysis and drafting findings and recommendation report. The candidates for the position of Senior Textbook Assessment Specialist shall have at a minimum the following qualifications: Requires a Master's Degree in education, preferably in curriculum development, teacher training, or instructional design. Requires either an academic specialty or extensive field experience in curriculum development and/or instructional design; a combination of both is preferred. At least five years' experience in the technical direction of programs that work specifically to develop and distribute textbooks required. Prior experience with assessing textbooks in developing context is required. Prior experience working in conflict and crisis affected environments is required. Familiarity with and comprehension of core concepts in equitable and conflict-sensitive education is required. Prior experience working in Afghanistan is preferred. The candidate(s) must be professionally proficient and fluent in written and spoken English. It is preferred, but not required, that the candidate be conversant in either Dari or Pashto.

A six-day work week is authorized for this assignment. An illustrative example of the level of effort (LOE in days is provided below:

**Illustrative Level of Effort (LOE)
in days**

Position	Prep	Travel	In-Country	Report Finalization	Total LOE
Expat - Team Leader	2	4	42	17	65
Expat - Curriculum Development Specialist	2	4	42	5	53
Expat - Institutions & Systems Analyst	2	4	6	0	12
Remote – Technical				14	14
Expat - Technical Assistant (i.e. Lauryn - as requested by OSSD)	2	2	24	14	42
1 - Afghan Education Assistant			45		45
2 - Afghan Education Assistant			45		45
SUPPORT-II Evaluation Specialist					
Totals	8	14	205	50	276

VII. MANAGEMENT

The Contractor, Checchi Consulting and Company, Inc., will identify and hire the assessment team and submit the names of the team members for the Contract

Officer's Representative's (COR's) concurrence and CO approval. The Contractor will support the assessment team in preparing a work plan, and arrange meetings with key stakeholders identified prior to the initiation of the fieldwork. The assessment team will organize other meetings as identified during the course of the assessment, in consultation with the contractor and USAID/Afghanistan. The contractor is responsible for all logistical support required for the assessment team, including arranging accommodation, security, office space, computers, internet access, printing, communication, and transportation.

The assessment team will officially report to the Contractor. The Contractor is responsible for all direct coordination with USAID/Afghanistan, through the Office of Program and Project Development (OPPD) COR. From a technical management perspective, the evaluation team will work closely with:

Robert Davidson, Education Officer, at USAID/Afghanistan;
John Collins, Education Officer at USAID/Afghanistan; and
Azizudin Pirzada, Project Management Assistant at USAID/Afghanistan.

Note: USAID shall provide the assessment team with letters of introduction to the MOE prior to the team's arrival in Kabul.

VIII. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

(This is a suggested schedule. The contractor is invited to suggest changes in the proposal).

Deliverables

Based on the activities carried out during the assessment, the consultants will produce a comprehensive technical capacity assessment to determine the MOE's ability to carry out textbook production and distribution throughout Afghanistan. Interim and final deliverables will, at a minimum, include:

1. Draft Assessment for release to USAID and the MoE for comment (*in both Dari and English*)

2. Roundtable with MoE and USAID Office of Education, OPPD, and associated development partners.
3. Discussion paper based on roundtable. *(in both Dari and English)*
4. Final Assessment with recommendations *(in both Dari and English)*
5. Follow-up assessment to verify MoE responses to recommended actions six months after the completion of the final assessment.

1. **In-briefing:** Within 48 hours of arrival in Kabul, the assessment team, should have an in-brief meeting with the OPPD M&E unit and the OSSD for introductions and to discuss the team's understanding of the assignment, assumptions, evaluation questions, methodology, and work plan; and/or to adjust the SOW, if necessary.

2. **Assessment Work Plan:** Within three calendar days following the in-brief, the assessment Team Leader shall provide a revised work plan to OPPD's M&E unit and OSSD. The work plan will include: (a) the overall assessment design, including the proposed methodology, data collection and analysis plan, and data collection instruments; (b) a list of the team members indicating their primary contact details while in-country, including the e-mail address and mobile phone number of the team leader; and (c) the team's proposed schedule for the evaluation. The revised work plan shall include the list of potential interviewees and sites to be visited.

3. **Mid-term Briefing and Interim Meetings:** The Assessment team should hold a mid-term briefing with USAID on the status of the assessment including potential challenges and emerging opportunities. Additionally, a weekly 30-minute phone call with OPPD's M&E unit and OSSD will provide updates on field progress and any problems encountered.

4. **PowerPoint and Final Exit Presentation:** The Assessment team should also hold a final exit presentation to discuss summary of findings and recommendations to USAID. This presentation will be scheduled, as agreed upon during the in-briefing, and ten days prior to the assessment team's departure from Kabul.

5. **Draft Assessment Report:** The draft report shall be consistent with the format and guidelines provided below. Length of the report shall not exceed 45 pages, exclusive of Annexes in English, using Times New Roman 12 point font, 1.15 line

spacing, and consistent with USAID branding policy. The report should address each of the issues and questions identified in the SOW and any other factors the team considers to have a bearing on the objectives of the assessment. Any such factors can be included in the report only after consultation with USAID. The draft evaluation report will be submitted by the Team Leader to OPPD's M&E unit at a date agreed upon at the exit presentation for review and comments by USAID. USAID's M&E unit and OSSD should have ten calendar days in which to review and comment and OPPD's M&E unit shall submit consolidated comments to the Team Leader.

6. Final Assessment Report: The final report should incorporate comments provided by OPPD and OSSD. USAID comments are due within ten days after the receipt of the initial draft. The final report should be submitted to OPPD within five days of receipt of comments by the Team Leader. All project data and records should be submitted in full and shall be in electronic form in easily readable format; organized and documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or evaluation; and owned by USAID.

IX. SUGGESTED REPORT FORMAT

The assessment report could be structured as follows:

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. List of any acronyms, tables, or charts (if needed)
4. Acknowledgements or Preface (optional)
5. Executive Summary (3-5 pages)
6. Background
 1. Assessment major questions
7. Description of Methodology
 1. Brief description of the methodology used in the Assessment, including desk/document review, data collection (interviews, site visits), and process analysis mapping.

8. Analysis: This section should describe, consolidate and analyze the collected information, describe findings focusing on each of the Assessment's major questions, including a narrative section and mapping in table or graphic form of the textbook planning, design, production, and distribution process (process analysis). Moreover the analysis by consultants should be to validate the hypotheses supporting each project or otherwise.
9. Conclusions: This section should include value statements drawn from the information gathered during the evaluation process.
10. Recommendations: This section should include recommendations for existing programming and for the design and performance of future programming.
11. Annexes
 1. Scope of Work
 2. Firms and enterprises reviewed (including brief description of the firm; nature, amount and date of the assistance provided by USAID; nature of interview (on-site/phone interview), responsibilities/roles of the persons interviewed/contacted)/dates of interviews and locations visited (a separate list of the names and contact numbers of persons interviewed will be provided to USAID, but not included in the report itself to ensure confidentiality)
 3. Methodology description
 4. A list of structured interview questions
 5. List of key documents reviewed

X. REPORTING GUIDELINES

- The Assessment report should represent a thoughtful, well-researched and well- organized effort to objectively assess the effectiveness of USAID's investments.
- The Assessment report shall address all major questions included in the statement of work.
- The Assessment report will be written in professional English, free of grammatical and typographical error, and with professional formatting.

- The Assessment report should include the statement of work as an annex. Any modifications to the statement of work, whether in technical requirements, questions, team composition, methodology, or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the USAID.
- The Assessment methodology shall be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists and discussion guides will be included in an Annex in the final report.
- Limitations to the Assessment shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the assessment methodology (selection bias, recall bias, etc.).
- Sources of information need to be properly identified and listed in an annex.
- Recommendations need to be supported by a specific set of findings.
- Recommendations should be action-oriented, practical, and specific, with defined responsibility for the action.

Annex I – Illustrative Questions that will be included in interviews and discussed with OSSD.

Staff Capacity

- 1) Have professional and administrative staff responsible for implementing the activity in question implemented similar activities before? If not have the staff been tested or trained in a manner that assures equal ability to implement?
- 2) To what extent does the Ministry of Education rely on Technical Assistants (TA) to implement textbook printing and distribution projects? What impact does the ongoing reduction of TAs at the Ministry of Education have upon implementation?
- 3) What staff constraints do TAs address and what is the plan to address these constraints under a future BELT Textbook Printing activity?
- 4) Has the Ministry of Education’s staff implemented activities with similar expectations of outputs and timelines to the requested BELT Textbook Printing activity?
- 5) Are there skill improvement opportunities available to professional and administrative staff in disciplines necessary for activity completion?

- 6) Are staff members adequately skilled in textbook needs assessment and planning, including stakeholder outreach, that is necessary for activity completion?
- 7) Do staff members have demonstrated skills in monitoring and oversight of the activity in question, including setting indicators and developing monitoring and evaluation plans?
- 8) Are staff members skilled in measuring results and collecting feedback necessary to complete the activity? Can they demonstrate that monitoring data is used?
- 9) Are staff members accustomed to working from work plans or other directional/guidance documents?
- 10) Is there evidence staff and managers are able to incorporate new systems, models or technologies that could come with the activity in question?
- 11) Are rules of professional conduct regularly ignored or compromised by staff in a manner that would interfere with activity completion?

Management and Motivation Capacity

- 1) Does the MoE have the capacity to deliver the textbooks to targeted schools in a transparent and accountable manner while minimizing leakage?
- 2) Have managers in the implementing entity overseen activities of similar scope and size?
- 3) Do managers have reliable methods of assuring staff performance?
- 4) Do managers have methods for assuring staff have resources and tools to complete activities?
- 5) Have problems and concerns with similar activities been communicated and dealt with by management in a manner that the activity's purpose not compromised (e.g. E&Y Assessment 2011)
- 6) Are there any obvious motivations or political realities that would keep staff or managers from implementing activities?
- 7) Are there a sufficient group of champions for the activity to overcome adverse political will?
- 8) Are the staff and manager tenure typically long enough to rely on those persons for activity completion?
- 9) Is there an articulated strategy in the MoE that covers the activity in question?

- 10) Does the structure or roles of staff complicate responsibilities in a manner that could frustrate the activity?

Systems and Process Capacity

- 1) Does the MoE have administrative or technical processes in place or in design that are necessary for completion of activities?
- 2) Are there processes in place for assessment, monitoring and evaluation for the activity in question?
- 3) Do processes work efficiently, or are well enough understood, that delays would not be expected that could frustrate the quality and delivery of the textbooks?
- 4) Are there adequate quality controls in place regardless of the publisher?
- 5) Checchi Consulting observed quality issues with the 2015 “Emergency Textbook Procurement” of 2.2 million books supported by USAID and DANIDA. Can the MoE document that they took action to respond to USAID communications regarding these quality issues?
- 6) Are the policies and procedures necessary to carry out the textbook activity written or documented in a way that assures their consistent application?
- 7) Are information and communication technologies sufficiently strong for effective project delivery?
- 8) Does the implementing entity have correct staffing levels, or plans for correct levels, for completion of the activity?
- 9) Can the MoE hire qualified persons quickly enough given likely staff turnover?
- 10) Is the MoE able to contract for services/work necessary to complete the activity?
- 11) Do supply chains related to the activity in question work adequately?
- 12) Are there other government institutions that interfere or work at cross purposes to the implementing entity? Or is performance by other government institutions necessary for completion of the activity?
- 13) Does the policy or legal framework interfere with the government completing such activities?
- 14) If there have been performance audits, do those audits indicate anything about technical or managerial abilities to implement similar activities?
- 15) How does the MoE estimate and plan for its textbook needs?

16) Current MoE policy mandates that textbooks should be used for a period of three years, however the Planning Directorate suggests that this estimate of the lifecycle is overly optimistic. What is an appropriate expectation for the lifespan of textbooks for students in grades 1-12?

[1]At the Tokyo Conference, the International Community reaffirmed a commitment to “channeling at least 50 percent of its development assistance through the national budget of the Afghan Government in accordance with the London and Kabul Communiqués.”

ANNEX II: WORK PLAN

I. Purpose of the Assessment

This work plan is developed with the following objective: to meet the expected purpose of the Technical Assessment of Selected Offices within the Afghan Ministry of Education for Textbook Development, Printing and Distribution. The Scope of Work (SOW) highlights the purpose of the Assessment as follows: “to effectively examine the MOE’s technical capacity and abilities to design, print and distribute, and use basic education (grade 1-12) textbooks. Activities supported as part of this assessment will assist USAID and Afghan counterparts in determining the MOE’s ability to successfully implement a large scale on-budget textbook procurement and printing project of approximately 50 million textbooks. This assessment shall review and analyze the six broad challenges as previously mentioned in the GPE report with respect to MOE and provide appropriate recommendations for mitigating MOE deficiencies” (p. 5).

The assessment tools, strategies and plans of this work plan address the evaluation questions (see Annex A) and also include sample data collection instruments (see Annex B). The work plan includes a description of the methodology to be applied to the assessment, a list of the deliverables, and the plan of activities.

II. Methodology

The proposed methodology will elicit and analyze data collected during the course of the assessment in order to formulate key findings, draw conclusions, and then develop recommendations and lessons learned. This section describes the assessment design, data collection plan, data analysis plan and expected limitations of the methodology.

a) Assessment Design

The assessment will take place in three provinces: Kabul, Herat and Balkh. The criteria for selection of these provinces included sound geographical coverage and important

security considerations necessary to collect credible data. The number of districts and the exact locations will be determined on the basis of information collected from the MoE. Data collection activities will be carried out with key stakeholders in the following Kabul-based MOE Directorates and Offices:

1. Provincial Monitoring and Coordination Manager (and five sub-offices);
2. Goods Affairs Organizing (including Distribution and Control Offices);
3. Information and Publication (Directorate);
4. Academic Counsel on Education and Standards Board.
5. Deputy Ministry for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training (including Directorates Curriculum Development, Training Affairs, and Curriculum and Criteria);
6. Directorate of Policy and Planning (including the Education Management Information System);
7. The Department of General Education;
8. The Department of Teacher Education.
9. The Department of the Academic Supervision

The assessment team will visit three Provincial Education Directorates and collect data from Provincial Education Directors, Deputy Education Directors for General Education, Academic Supervisors, and other relevant officials involved in the textbook distribution. Data will also be collected from selected number of schools in the three provinces and stakeholders at the school level will be consulted

Additional offices within the various directorates may also be visited by the assessment team when required.

Selected international organizations working in the education sector will be interviewed for background information: DANIDA, SCA, IRC, CARE, AKF, AKES, WUSC, JICA, GIZ, World Bank and Asia Foundation.

With the facilitation of the USAID, the assessment team will coordinate with OFM as necessary to avoid duplication of effort and leverage complementary information gathered as part of the state II assessment, supported by the USAID.

b) Data Collection Plan

The assessment will collect qualitative and quantitative data. The latter will only apply to analyzing textbook content. The following data collection tools will be employed, preferably and when applicable, at technical, management/leadership and administrative levels at the stakeholders' institutions:

	Method	Data	Sources
	Document Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoE policies and <i>tashkeel</i> • MoE planning documents relevant to textbooks • Donor documentation of relevance such as work plans with textbook related activities • Tools and templates used by MoE for textbook development and production 	MOE's various documents from provincial to district level. Donors or projects (i.e. EQUIP) MoE
	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous evaluation or assessment reports on textbook production and/or publication in Afghanistan which are available. • Empirical research reports and/or journal 	Donors, MoE, public domain Public domain

		<p>articles on key findings, lessons learned and best practices in textbook production and impacts on learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides and tools on best practices in textbook development and production 	
	Textbook Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random selections from science, social sciences and math subjects in Dari and Pashto languages from grade 1-12 . 	Textbooks published by the MOE
	Interviews and Focus Group Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typed/ written transcriptions 	<p>The following categories of respondents will be covered:</p> <p>MoE staff PED and DED staff Teachers, Students Parents) MoE Partners (education NGOs / implementers) Donors</p>
	Process analysis mapping and site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation notes 	<p>Data from the following milestones within the process will be collected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and standards • Planning • Curriculum & Content • Review • Design • Procurement • Production

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Storage ● Distribution ● Delivery ● Impact
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c. Data Analysis Plan

Collected data will be analyzed individually at each of the three provincial levels and comparatively either by provincial or thematic criteria depending on the volume and thematic orientation and value of the data. After the data is collected, grounded theory will be applied to the data sets in the analysis stage, using the open coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The analysis of the qualitative data will include identifying repeating patterns, identifying interrelationships across the data, creating meaningful categories for the data (Hoepfl, 1997), grouping the repeating ideas into broad themes, and creating conceptual categories with labels, thus creating a framework for analysis. Once key patterns, relationships, and theoretical constructs have emerged from the analysis, axial coding will be applied, and the findings will be cross-analyzed with other recent, relevant research findings on the subject from the literature review. The analysis will also identify any unique characteristics of provinces which identify best practices.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using either Excel Spreadsheet or Survey Monkey tools. All qualitative data will be analyzed by a two-layered coding system. For example:

Interview Question	Cod e # 1	Cod e # 2	Conceptualizati on
Answer			

Data will also be used to map out the process chain of textbook development and production in Afghanistan. As noted by Crabbe and Nyingi (2014), “the entire book production and distribution process—the book chain—operates in such an interconnected way that a problem in one link creates a ripple effect along the rest of the chain. To address the problems of getting quality books to schoolchildren, we need to have a holistic problem-solving approach rather than solutions aimed at solving individual problem areas only. A piecemeal approach may strengthen one link to the neglect of other parts of the book chain” (p. 17). The data collected will thus feed into a mapping of the process chain to identify areas of strength and weakness in the chain, drawing from process modelling methodology wherein “conceptual models are developed in an attempt to describe an interrelated set of processes within a specific organisational context” (Brocke, Buddendick, Kelly & Ó Scolai, 2007, p. 553). This approach will allow for a bird’s eye view of the textbook planning and production process at the Ministry of Education. We will use Scheer’s (1998) Event-driven Process Chain (EPC) model to map the process of textbook development and production, which enables an integrated view of activities, events, and their interconnections within a process (an event being, for example, the commission of a new textbook), such as identifying the preconditions to the successful completion of a task. The process chain will be visually mapped out, will include a glossary and a description of each step and milestone in the process, per the figure below.

d) Limitations of Methodology

The assessment’s methodology may be affected by the following constraints:

- Previous experiences indicate that the MOE is strict about sharing policies, guidelines and rules. The contractor will request from the Ministry data about its *tashkeel*, organizational organigram, budget and contract settlement with private sector services, and internal M&E reports within our timeline
- Access to facilities (e.g. warehouses, printing press, and production facilities) may be limited depending of the level of cooperation offered by the MOE.
- Due to insecurity in the country, sites visited will be limited to Kabul province plus two other provinces (Herat and Balkh), and will not include remote and/or insecure locations, and thus will not be fully representative;

- There could be limitations associated with the methodology, including selection bias or respondent recall bias;
- As highlighted in the Scope of Work, the large sums of funds involved in textbook production create ample opportunities in developing countries for kickbacks and other corrupt practices, thus those with a stake in preserving the system as it stands may be uncooperative in sharing information with the Assessment team;
- Time of year for this assessment may present challenges considering it is winter and many schools are not in session and personnel may not be available for meetings, focus groups or interviews; the activity will attempt to mitigate this by hiring three additional national consultants.

III. Deliverables

DELIVERABLES	DATE DUE
In-briefing with USAID	December 15, 2015
Assessment Work Plan	December 20, 2015
Midterm Briefing Presentation to USAID and the MoE	January 13, 2016
Out-briefing Presentation to USAID Office of Education, OPPD, MoE, and other stakeholders	January 24, 2016
Draft assessment report submitted to USAID for comment (in English)	February 22, 2016
USAID to send comments back	February 25, 2016
Submission of final, revised assessment report to USAID (in Dari and English) and accepted report will be provided to the MoE	February 28, 2016
Follow-up assessment to verify MoE responses to	By June 30, 2016

recommended actions six months after the completion of the final assessment[1]	
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The following table describes the key phases of the schedule for the team.

	PLAN OF ACTIVITIES	DATES
	<i>Planning phase:</i> Adjustment of SOW, Developing work plan, introductory meeting with MOE, data collection instruments, logistical arrangements, scheduling	December 16 - December 29, 2015
	<i>Data collection:</i> The team will collect data from Kabul city, Kabul province, Herat, and Balkh	December 30, 2015 - January 28, 2016
	<i>Data checking, cleaning, tabulation:</i> The data will be verified, sorted and entered in a database to facilitate analysis, and tabulated	January 22 – Feb 4, 2016
	<i>Data analysis:</i> The team will analyze the data collected using the methodology described above	January 24 – Feb 11, 2016
	<i>Presentation of preliminary findings:</i> Results of the assessment will be <u>presented</u> to USAID and the MoE,	January 27, 2016
	<i>Report drafting.</i> <u>Report sections will be drafted as data analysis is available</u>	<u>Jan 28 – Feb 16</u>
	<i>Checchi internal review</i>	Feb 17 – Feb 21
	<i>Finalization:</i> The team will collect feedback from USAID and other stakeholders and incorporate it into the final deliverable prior to submission	February 22 - 28, 2016

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[1] USAID is to conduct this assessment, not Checchi.

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ANNEX IV: SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

No	Date	Organization	Name	Title	Phone	Email
1	12/15/15	USAID Afghanistan	Mohammad Sediq Orya; John Collins Azizuddin Pirzada; Bob Davidson; Amy Southworth; Michael Lechner; Hoppy Mazier	USAID COR for Checchi; Office of Education USAID	0707626315 0702 626 288	MSOrya@state.gov
2	12/19/15	AUA Kabul	Sarwar Sultani	Lecturer	0790431063	ssultani@auaf.edu.af / sultani.sarwar@gmail. com
3	12/20/15	MoE	Abdul Wassay Arian	Sr Advisor & General Director Policy and Planning	0799332015	awassay.arian@moe. gov.af ab_arian@hotmail.co m
4	12/28/15 & 1/17/16	MoE	M. Kabir Haqmal	Director of Information and Publication / Spokesperson	0700186150	haqmal.stanekzai@g mail.com
5	12/30/15	MoE	Hashmatullah Esmati	Textbooks Distribution General Manager	0783130019	hashmatullahesmati7 86@yahoo.com hashmatullahesmati7 86@gmail.com
6	12/30/15	TCAP, WUSC	M. Nasir Rizayee	Consultant	0782123703	mnrezaie@kateb.edu. af
7	12/30/15	SCA	Khaled Fahim	Deputy Programmes	0799 308 756	khalid.fahim@sca.org.

				Implementation Director		af
8	12/30/15	World Bank	Matiullah (Yama) Noori	Director Textbooks Project/ED	0705 171 328	mnoori1@worldbank.org
9	12/30/15	GPE	Hikmatullah Amin	Program Coordinator	0794690450	None.
10	12/30/15	Global Partnership for Education	Hikmatullah Amin	Program Coordinator	93-794-690-450	None.
11	12/30/15	Planning Department	Kambiz Wali	QC and Publication specialist	Missing	None.
12	12/30/15	Planning Department	Najibullah Momand	Textbooks distribution Manager (Donor)	Missing	None.
13	12/30/15	Planning Department	Muhammadullah	Planning Manager (Donor)	Missing	None.
14	1/2/16	Provincial Directorate of Balkh	Mohammad Ayob	Director of City Schools in Mazar (not district level)	0771060968	None.
15	1/3/16	PED Balkh	Khalid Ahmad Zahid	Textbook Distribution Official	0700632300 0796688656	khalidahmadzahid@yahoo.com khalid.786zahid@gmail.com
16	1/3/16	Mazar City Schools Management and Leadership	Hesmatullah Rezayee, and others	Principals and managers of various schools in Mazar City	077 621 60098	None.
17	1/3/16	PED Balkh	Mehrajuddin Seraj	Acting Directorate of Distribution of Textbooks and Supplementary Material	078 444 7652	None
18	1/3/16	Education Directorate of Balkh	Parwin Haris	Directorate of General Education	0707530421	None.

		Province				
19	1/3/16	PED Balkh	Ahmad Shakir	Recruitment Manager	0700 50949334	None.
20	1/3/16	Educational Monitoring & Evaluation, PED Balkh	Toryalay Momand	Directorate of Educational Monitoring & Evaluation	0700519262	None.
21	1/3/16	Balkh City Schools Management	Mr.Hesmatullah Rezayee and others.	Schools managers	077 621 60098	None.
22	1/5/16	Ghazi Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan High School, Mazar City	Mohammad Zahir Mehraban	Director of School	0799 1631 07	None.
23	1/5/16	PED Balkh	Beheshta Teemor,	Member of EMI Dep.	0782 4761 50	None.
24	1/5/16	PED Balkh	Fazila Ofeq,	Deputy of Planning Dept.	0700 53 22 55	None.
25	1/5/16	Mazar City	Haji Abdul Jabar and others.	Parents	0788 812 211	None.
26	1/7/16	STC	Dr. Rafat Nabi	Programme Director	0729 001656	Rafi.Nabi@SavetheCh ildren.org
27	1/7/16	MOF	Mr. Khaled Monowar	Resolutions Liason	782 299166	khaledmonowar@gm ail.com
28	1/7/16	Save the Children	Bahirullah Wayaar	National Education Advisor	+9370000966 5	bahirullah.wayar@sav ethechildren.org
29	1/9/16	Kabul PED	Malikzai; Abdul Zamir	Distribution Officer	0791818836	None.
30	1/9/16	PED Kabul	Ahmad Shah Arabzay	M&E Director	0786 438363	None.
31	1/9/16	PED Kabul	Ali Khoshalzada	Publication Manager	0799 118336	None.

32	1/9/16	Kabul PED	Basheer Wardak	Kabul Province Education Director	+93(0)700037 889	basheer.wardak@yahoo.com / basheer.wardak@gmail.com
33	1/10/16	Herat DED	Azizurrahman Sarwari	Academic Deputy of Herat Director	+93(0)700407 645	azizurrahmansarwary@gmail.com
34	1/10/16	Facilities, PED, Herat	Ahmadi	Facilities Director & staff	0700345459	None.
35	1/11/16	Publication Dept.	Saleem Shah Amiree	MoE textbooks Warehouse General Manager	+93 797 979 929	None
36	1/11/16	Injil District, Herat	Semin Rahimi	Principles	070046 44 91	None.
37	1/11/16	Naswan Hazrat Omar Faruq High School, Herat City, Herat	Arefa Nabizada	Principle	0794 411018	None.
38	1/12/16	Herat, Parents	Jalil Ahmad Faqiri and others.	Parents	0799163000	faqiri.afg@gmail.com
39	1/12/16	Herat schools	Semeen	Teachers and principles	0700464491	None.
40	1/13/16	Kabul PED Publication Dept.	Ahmad Fawad	Textbooks Distribution Officer	93 791 818 836	None.
41	1/13/16	USAID, Office of Financial Management	Roger D. Slate, CPA	Financial Management Officer	+93(0)702323 276 / 2022166288 X 7716	RSlater@state.gov
42	1/13/16	MoE	Mirwais Nabizada	Goods Bidding Manager	+93(0)799133 227	None.

43	1/13/16	MoE	Abdul Zahir Gulistani	General Director of Curriculum Development and Compilation of Textbook	+93(0)700224743 / +93(0)752090147	abdulzahirgulistani@gmail.com
44	1/13/16	UNOPS	Asif J. Rishi	Sr. International Procurement Advisor	+93(0)789883789 / +923005012952	asif.rishi@moe.gov.af
45	1/13/16	Integrity Watch Afghanistan	Naser Sidiqee	Program Manager (CBM-S)	+93(0)794300412	naser.sidiqee@iwaweb.org
46	1/13/16	Ahmad Printing Press	Abdul Ghani Qarzi	Marketing Manager	+93(0)774401855	a_p_press@yahoo.com / ghani24@yahoo.com
47	1/13/16	Habibullah Haseeb Group of Companies	Mohammad Haider Nomany	Director	+93(0)700289740 / +93(0)777289740 / +93(0)202230695	habibullah_haseeb@yahoo.com / info@hgg-c.com
48	1/13/16	USAID, Office of Financial Management	Michael A Dillard	Financial Management Officer	+93(0)702636325 / +13014901042X 3799	dillardma@state.gov
49	1/13/16	Teacher Education Department (TED)	Abdul Haq Rahmati	Director of Academic Affairs	+93(0)776765406	abdulhaq.rahmati@yahoo.com
50	1/15/16	Herat DED	Abdul Razaq Ahmadi	Director		ahmadi_1300@yahoo.

						com
51	1/15/16	Baheer Printing & Packaging Co. Ltd	Shir Baz Kaminzada	Chief Executive	+93(0)799330001 / +93202201444 / +971555888690	bcomprint@gmail.com
52	1/15/16	Baheer Printing & Packaging Co. Ltd	Naveed Hakimi	Managing Director	+93(0)780474747 / +93(0)202201444	md@baheer.af
53	1/17/16	MoE EQUIP	Zulaikha Rafiq	Former MoE/ EQUIP Director		director@awec.info
54		MoE	K. Kabi Haqmal	Director of Information and Publication	0700186150	haqmal.stanekzai@gmail.com
55	1/18/16	MoE EQUIP	Asif Rishi Sr.	International Procurement Advisor		asif.rishi@moe.gov.af
56	1/18/16	HR of MoE (for donor funded projects only)	Mohammad Madani Hamim	HR General Manager- Development Projects (Donor-funded Projects)	0772738105	madanihamim@gmail.com
57	1/18/16	Aga Khan Foundation	Noorullah Nabizai	M&E R (Monitoring & Evaluation, Research) Manager	0795 146284	noorulla.nabizai@akdn.org
58	1/18/16	Danida	Abdul Parwiz Yusufzai	Education Officer	None.	ahmyos@um.dk
59	1/18/16	Procurement Dept	Ghulam Mustafa	Procurement Specialist	0799 31 22 61, 0799 30 99	None

					56, 0799 133 227	
60	1/18/16	Procurement Dept	Abdul Aziz	Good Manager	0799 31 22 61, 0799 30 99 56, 0799 133 227	None
61	1/18/16	Procurement Dept	Mirwise Nabizada	General Manager of Contracts	0799 31 22 61, 0799 30 99 56, 0799 133 227	None
62	1/18/16	General Directorate of Teacher Training	Khalil Fazli	Director of Research and Criteria (previously Curriculum Department)		None.
63	1/18/16	Sayed Jamaludin Afghan Teachers Training Institute	Mohammad Azam Tokhee	Director	0799332318	None
64	1/18/16	General Directorate of Teacher Training	Susan Wardak	General Director of TED	+93729819180 / +9370022766 5	susan.wardak@moe.gov.af / susanwardak2@hotmail.com
65	1/19/16	Teachers Focus Group: Schools in Bagrami, Istalef, Paghman, Dehsabz, Gul Dara,	Abdul Hadi and others.	Teachers	0789058853	None.

		Charasyab				
66	1/19/16	Quality Research Department, MoE	Abdule Zahir Modaqeq	Director	0795 917 285	z.modaqeq@gmail.com
67	1/19/16	Kabul PED	Abdul Ghafoor Ghafoori	Academic Deputy of Kabul PED	+93(0)752041270 / +93795873134 / +93(0)744282322	None.
68	1/19/16	MoE	Asadullah Muhaqqique	Deputy Minister For Curriculum Development & Teacher Education	+93(0)799329830 /+93(0)752329830 / +93(0)202501354	asadullah_muhaqqique@yahoo.com / asadullah.muhaqqique@moe.gov.af
69	1/19/16	MoE	Prof. M. Naeem Baheen	General Director of General Education	+93707382795 / +93752107631	mnaeem_44@yahoo.com
70	1/20/16	Curriculum Development & Teacher Training,	Asadullah Muhaqqique	Deputy Minister for Curriculum Development & Teacher Training	0799 329 830	asadullah_muhaqqique@yahoo.com , asadullah.muhaqqique@moe.gov.af
71	1/20/16	Estalif Education Department	Sayid Jamal Hashimi	Director of Estalif Education Department	0772211640 / 0729130991	None
72	1/20/16	Estalif Education Department	Zabiullah Rasikh	M&E officer	0774164812 / 0729 129 564	None.

73	1/20/16	Qarabagh District, Kabul, Markez school	Abdulhai Saleem	Qarabagh Secondary School – Principal	0799547243	None
74	1/20/16	Qarabagh District, Kabul, M&E Department	Nabiullah Abid	Member of M&E	0795794853	None
75	1/20/16	Qarabag district, Kabul DED	Alhaj Rohullah Daoudzai	Education officer	0700046719	None.
76	1/21/16	Istalif District, Kabul (Group Discussion)	Mir Abdul Qayom, and others.	Principles	0777026029	None.
77	1/21/16	Qarabagh District, Kabul	Faridullah and others.	Parents	0799232780	None.
78	1/21/16	Istalif District, Kabul (Group Discussion)	Bashi Mod. Ibrahim school and others	Teachers	0771184503	None.
79	1/21/16	MoE, EMIS Directorate	Inayatullah Amini	Data Analyst	+93(0)700181515 / +93(0)781181515	i.amini@moe.gov.af / inayat653@hotmail.com
80	1/21/16	EMIS, MoE	Mohammad Isamail Khateb	Director of EMIS	0700616073, 9781 181515	ismail.khattab@moe.gov.af ,
81	1/21/16	Curriculum Development Department, MoE	Shir Ali Zarifi	Head of Curriculum Development Project	0700210062	zarifi60@yahoo.com

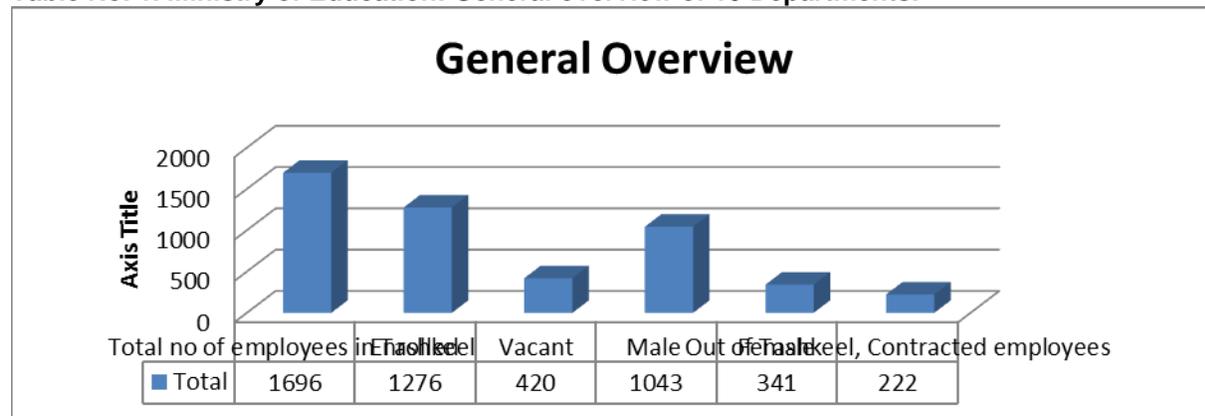
82	1/24/16	Tamim Ansar Private School, District 5 Kabul	Mohammad Azam	Principal	0777 666717	None.
83	1/24/16	Islah Private School, Kabul	Rohullah	Principal	0799219416	None.
84	1/26/16	Planning Directorate, MoE	A. Aryan	Director of Planning	0700520062	a.aryan@moe.gov.af ,
85	1/26/16	USAID/OSSD	Samiullah Ahmadi	Former USAID/OSSD Officer		samiullah.ahmadi@gmail.com
86	1/27/16	USAID/OSSD	Imran Khan	Former USAID/OSSD Officer		Kabul361@yahoo.com
87	2/2/16	World Bank	Abdul Hai Sofizada	Education Specialists, EQUIP	None.	asofizada@worldbank.org
88	2/3/16	UNICEF	Umasree Polepeddi	Former Staff	None.	upolepeddi@unicef.org
89	2/3/16	USAID/Office of Financial Management	Samiullah Ahmadi	Former USAID Financial Analyst Backstopping MoE's Projects, Specifically Textbooks Project	+1 267 905 6599	samiullah.ahmadi@gmail.com
90	2/3/16	USAID/OSSD	Imran Khan	Former USAID Officer	+1 267 905 6599	kabul361@yahoo.com

ANNEX V: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Final data collection survey instruments are appended in a zip file.

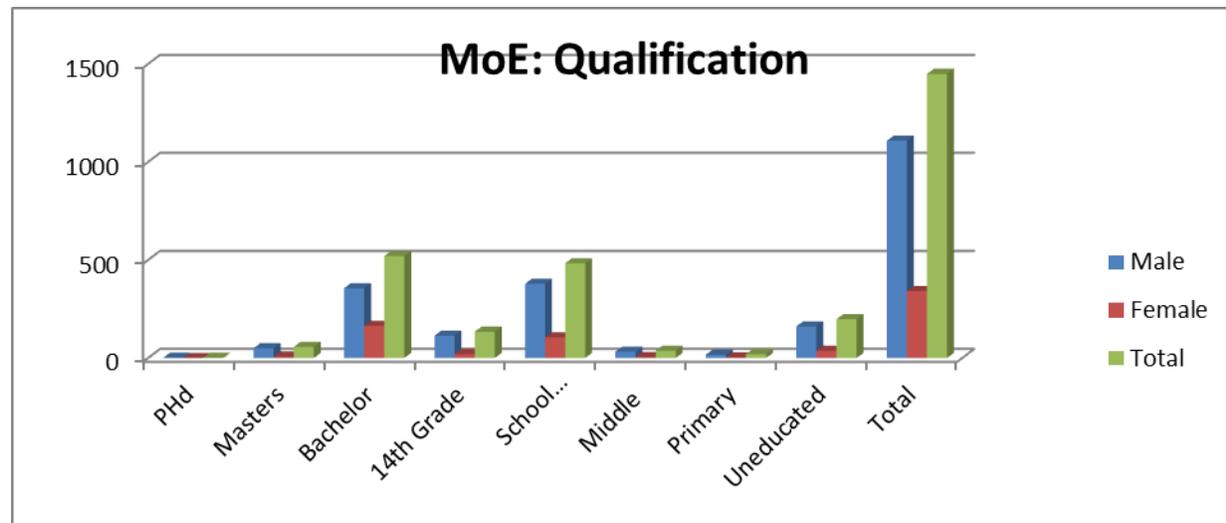
ANNEX VI: HUMAN RESOURCES STATISTICS AND GRAPHS

Table No. 1. Ministry of Education: General overview of 10 Departments.



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	1696
Enrolled	1276
Vacant	420
Male	1043
Female	341
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	222

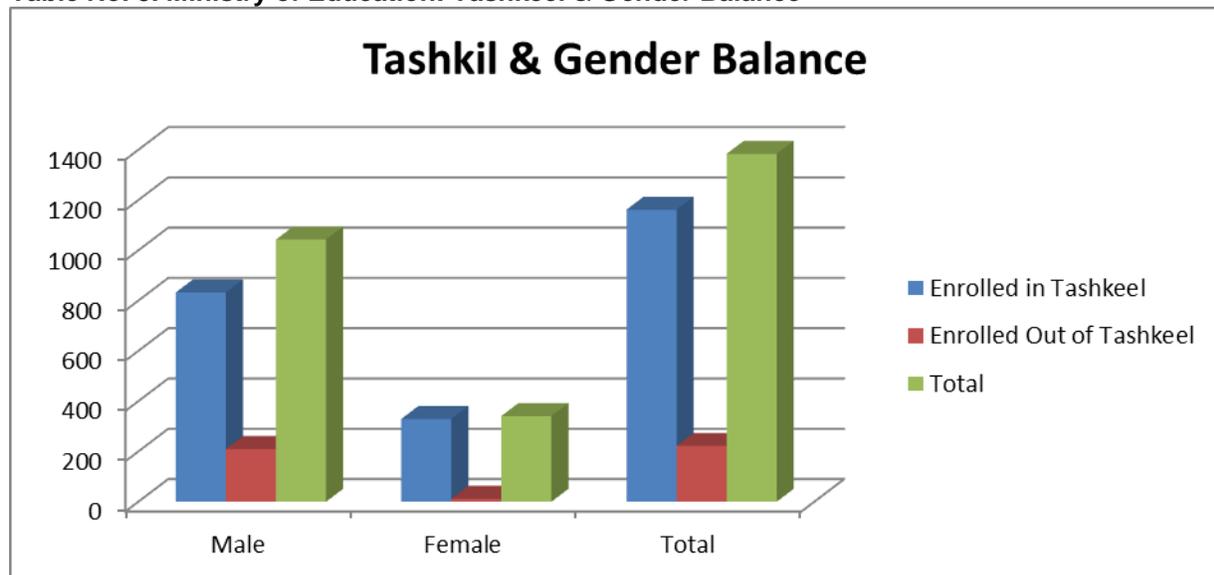
Table No. 2. Ministry of Education: Qualifications



Qualifications			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
PHd	1	0	1
Masters	50	7	57
Bachelor	356	164	520
14th Grade	114	20	134
School Graduated	378	105	483

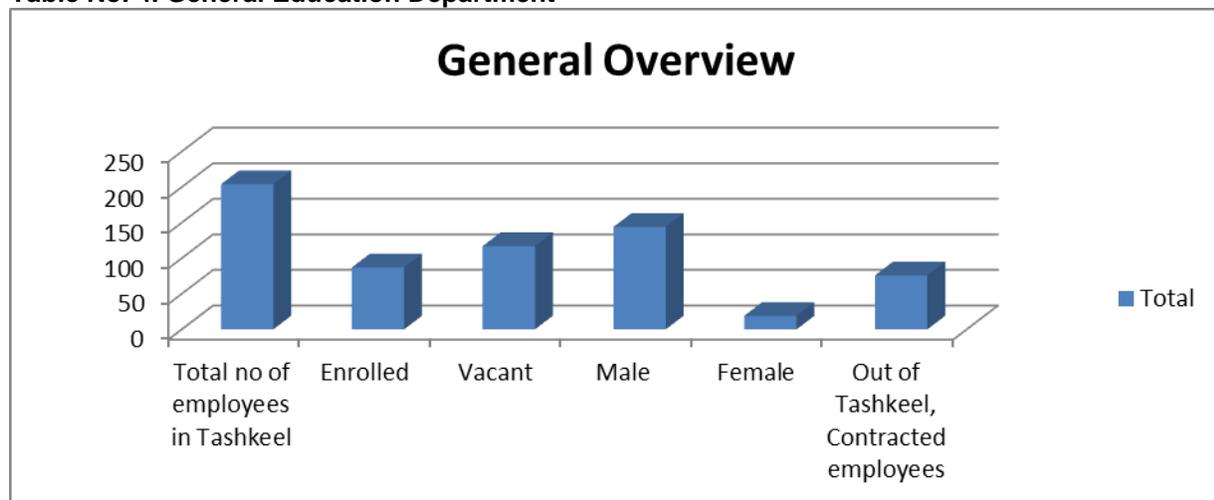
Middle	32	5	37
Primary	17	3	20
Uneducated	161	37	198
Total	1108	341	1449

Table No. 3. Ministry of Education: Tashkeel & Gender Balance



Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	833	329	1162
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	210	12	222
Total	1043	341	1384

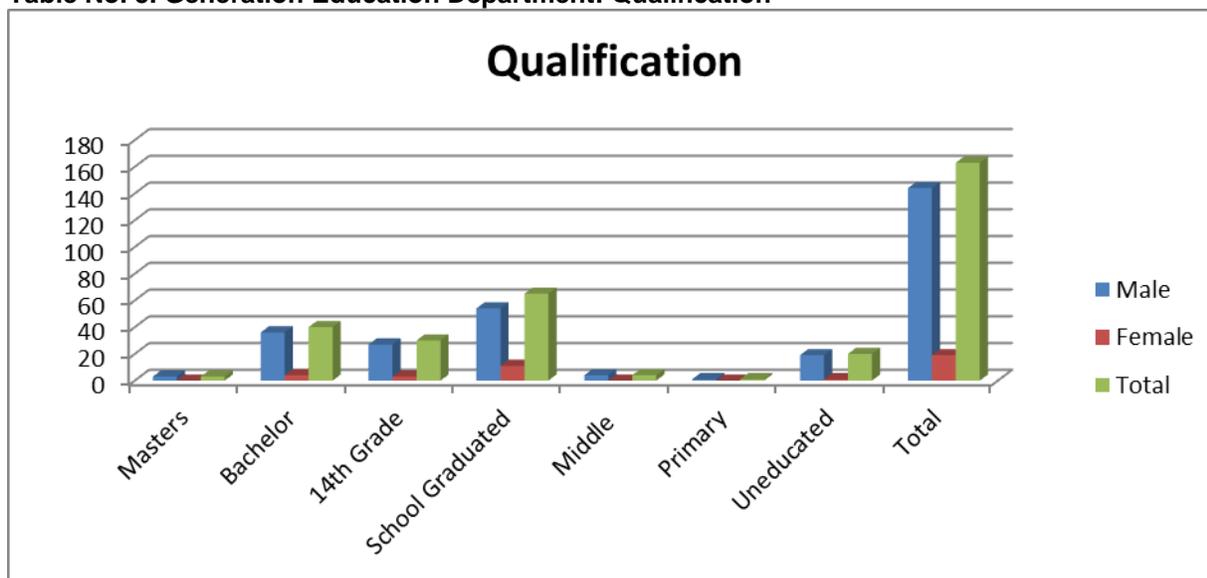
Table No. 4. General Education Department



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	204
Enrolled	87

Vacant	117
Male	144
Female	19
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	76

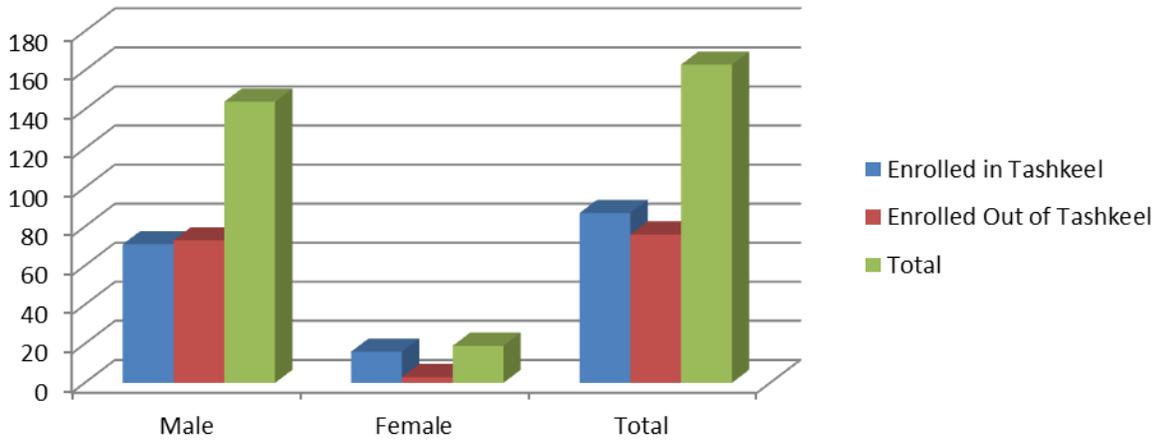
Table No. 5. Generation Education Department: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	3	0	3
Bachelor	36	4	40
14th Grade	27	3	30
School Graduated	54	11	65
Middle	4	0	4
Primary	1	0	1
Uneducated	19	1	20
Total	144	19	163

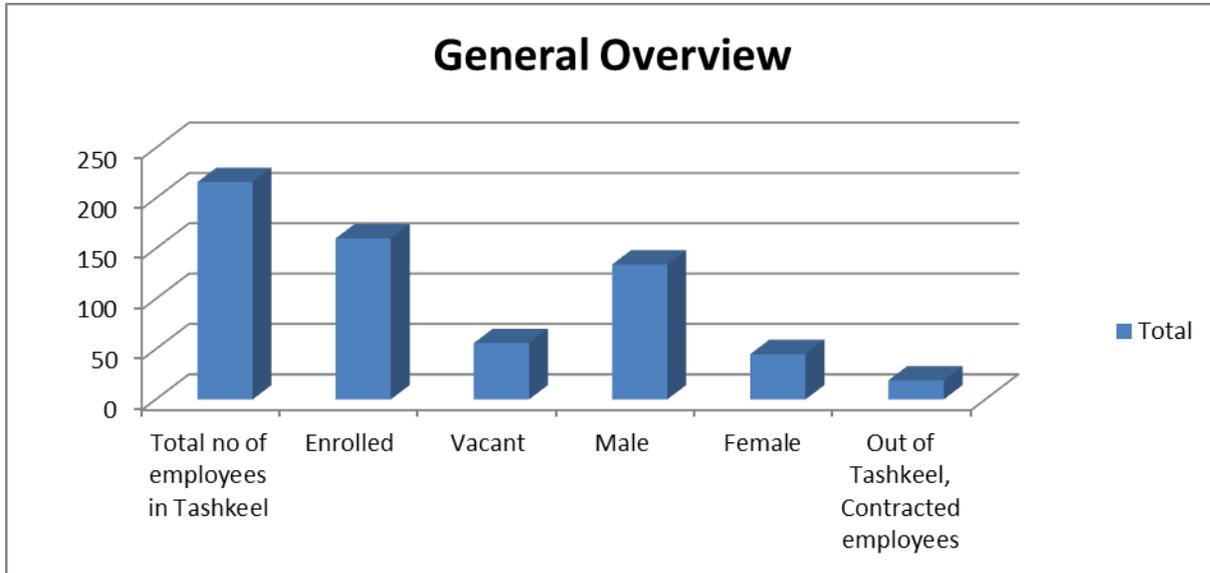
Table No. 6. Generation Education Department: Tashkeel & Gender Balance

Tashkil & Gender Balance



Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	71	16	87
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	73	3	76
Total	144	19	163

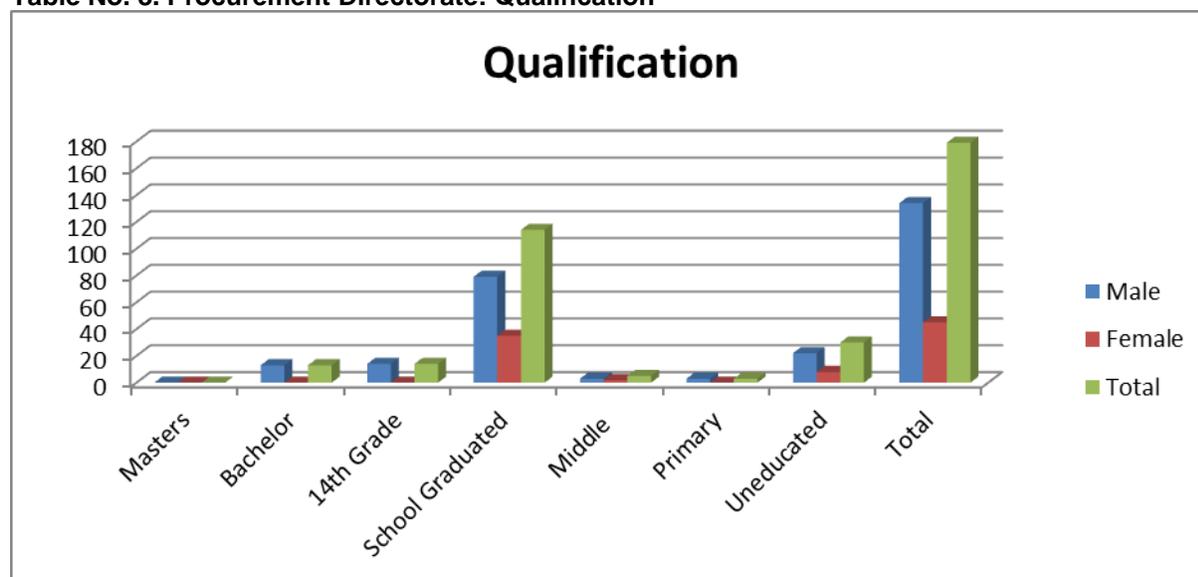
Table No. 7. Procurement Directorate: General Overview



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	216
Enrolled	160
Vacant	56
Male	134

Female	45
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	19

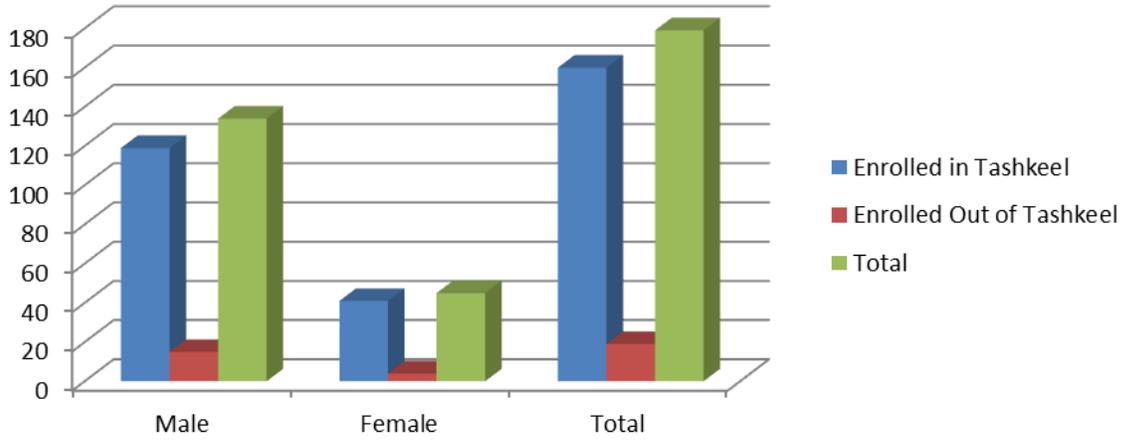
Table No. 8. Procurement Directorate: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	0	0	0
Bachelor	13	0	13
14th Grade	14	0	14
School Graduated	79	35	114
Middle	3	2	5
Primary	3	0	3
Uneducated	22	8	30
Total	134	45	179

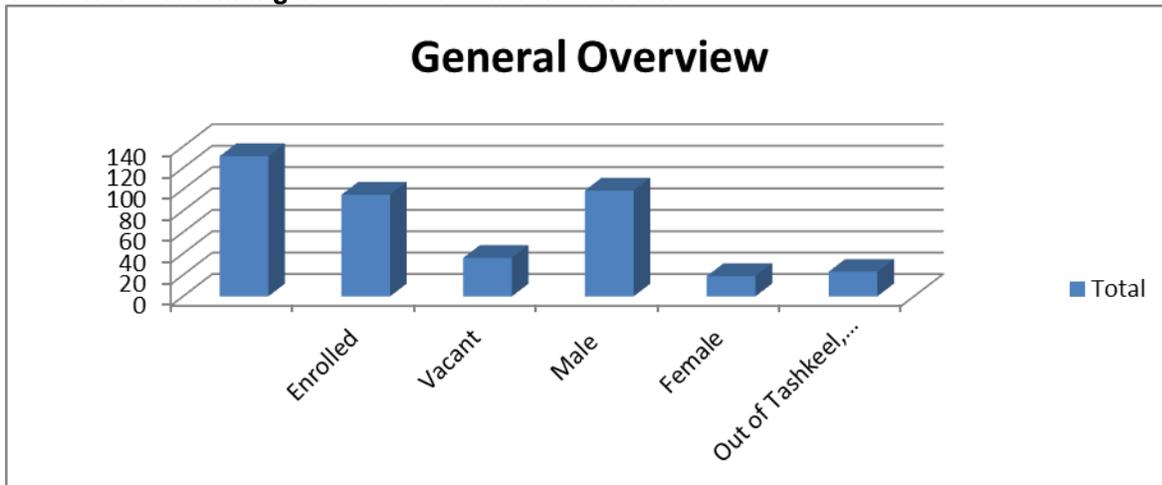
Table No. 9. Procurement Directorate: Tashkeel & Gender Balance

Tashkil & Gender Balance



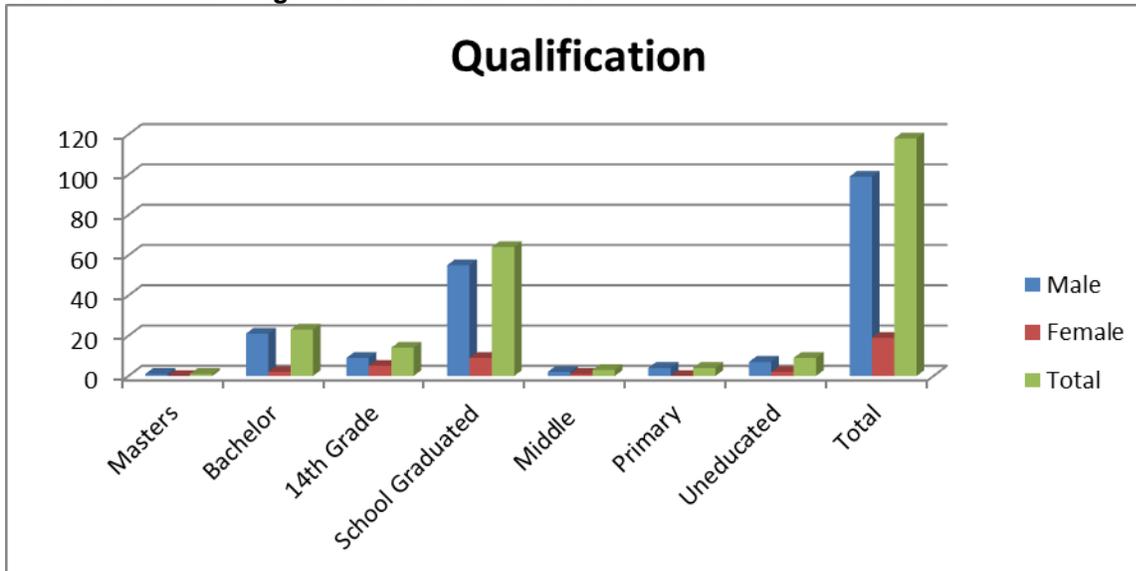
Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	119	41	160
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	15	4	19
Total	134	45	179

Table No. 10. Planning Directorate: General Overview



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	131
Enrolled	95
Vacant	36
Male	99
Female	19
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	23

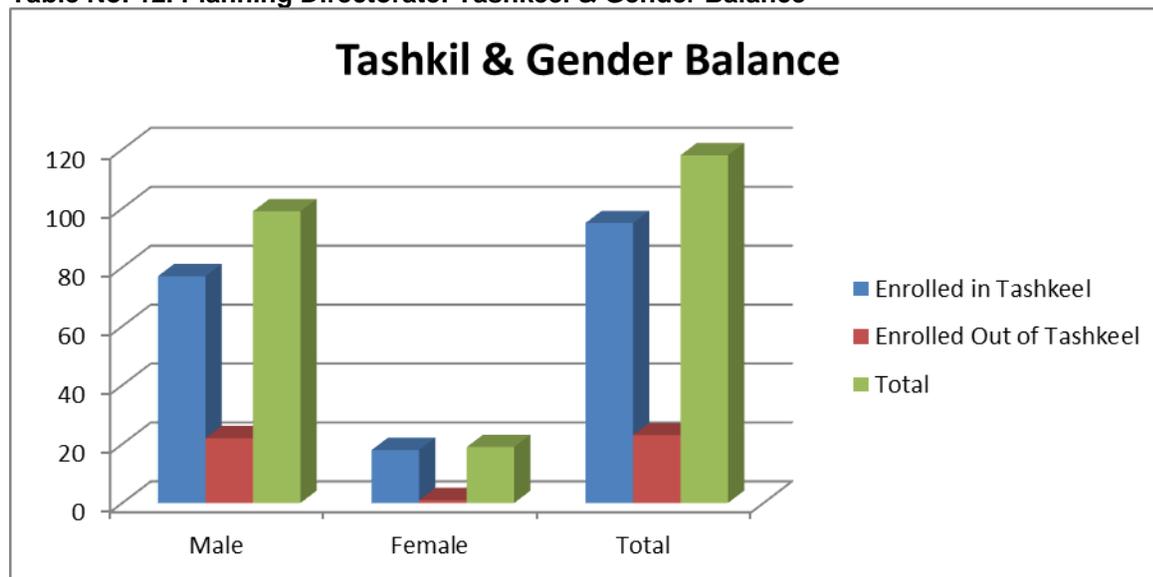
Table No. 11. Planning Directorate: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	1	0	1
Bachelor	21	2	23
14th Grade	9	5	14

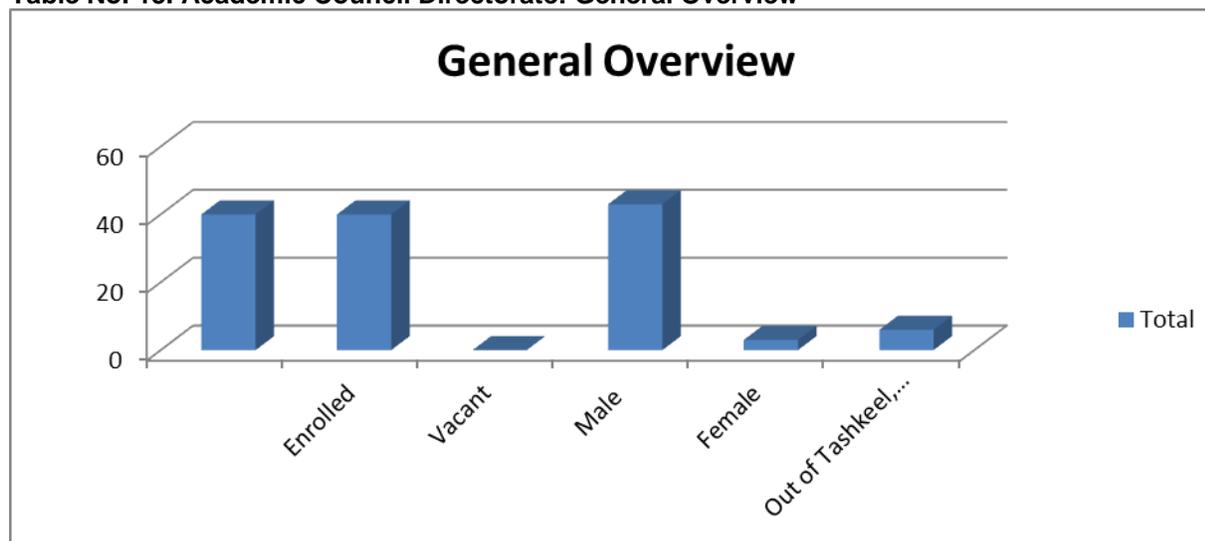
School Graduated	55	9	64
Middle	2	1	3
Primary	4	0	4
Uneducated	7	2	9
Total	99	19	118

Table No. 12. Planning Directorate: Tashkeel & Gender Balance



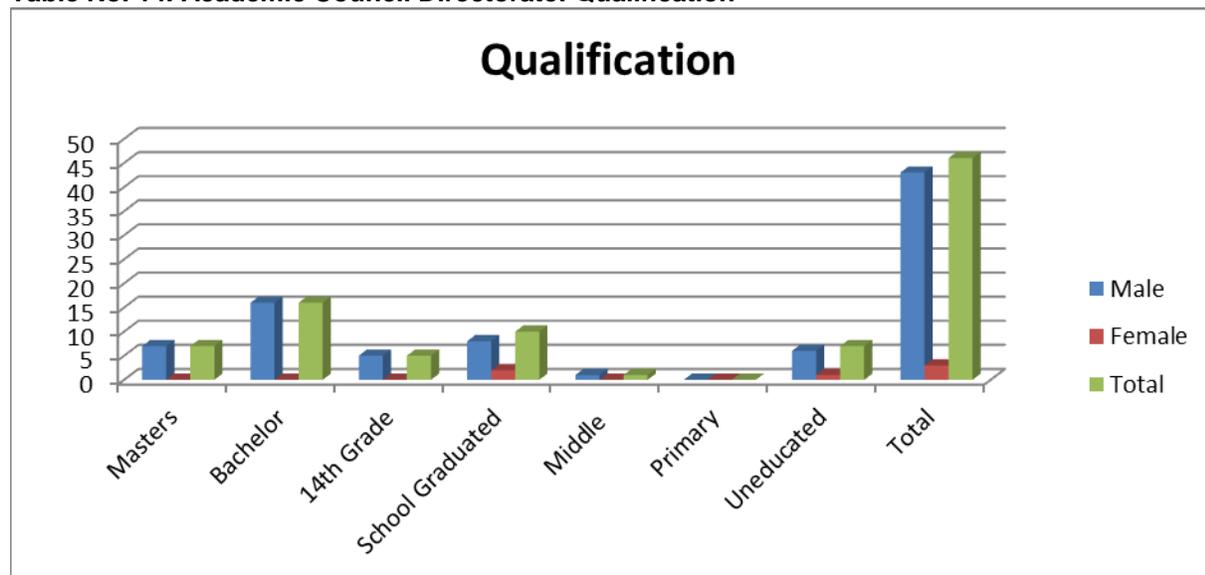
Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	77	18	95
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	22	1	23
Total	99	19	118

Table No. 13. Academic Council Directorate: General Overview



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	40
Enrolled	40
Vacant	0
Male	43
Female	3
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	6

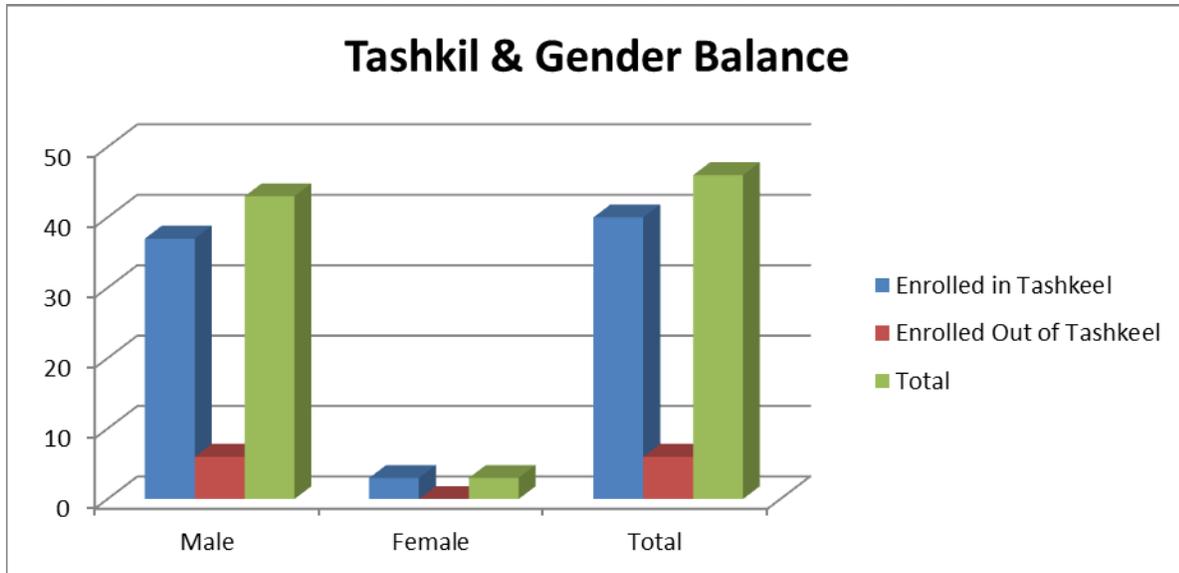
Table No. 14. Academic Council Directorate: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	7	0	7

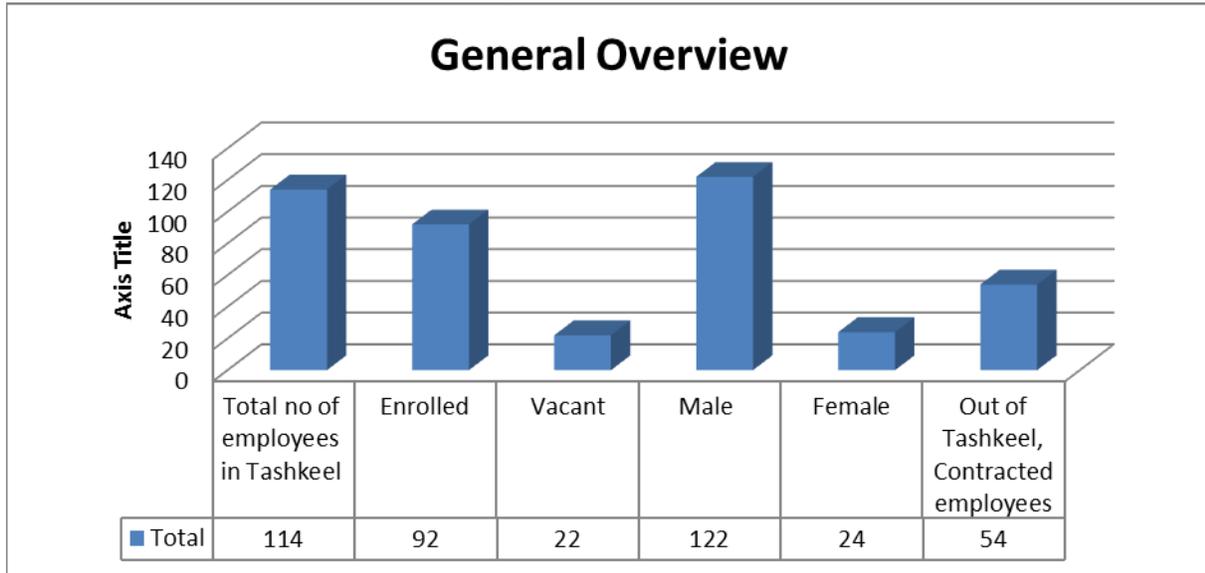
Bachelor	16	0	16
14th Grade	5	0	5
School Graduated	8	2	10
Middle	1	0	1
Primary	0	0	0
Uneducated	6	1	7
Total	43	3	46

Table No. 15. Academic Council Directorate: Tashkeel & Gender Balance



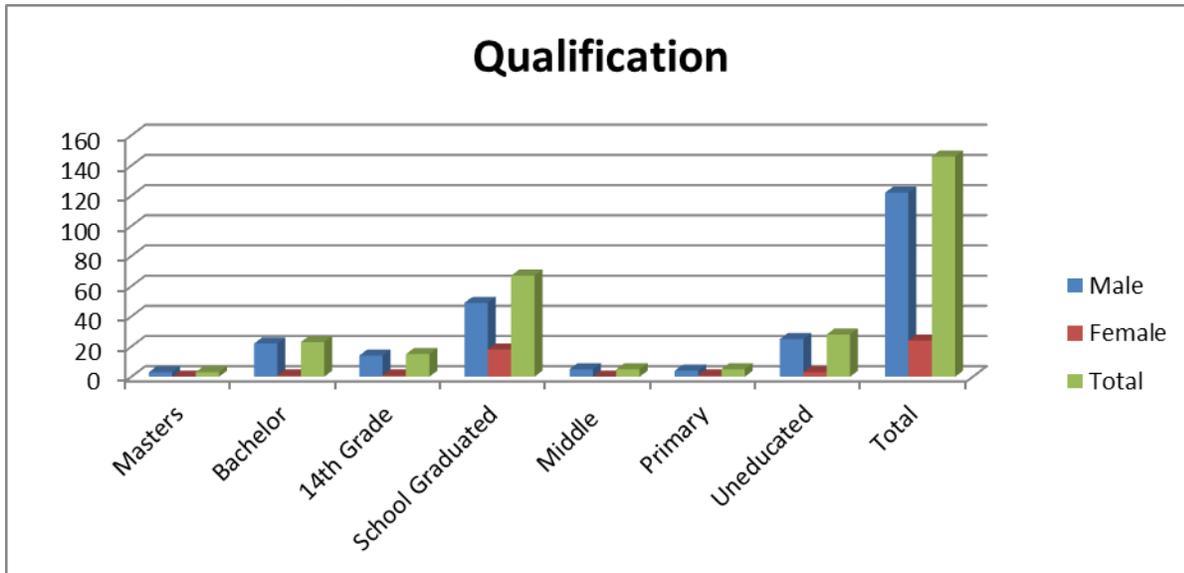
Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	37	3	40
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	6	0	6
Total	43	3	46

Table No. 16. Publications Directorate: General Overview



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	114
Enrolled	92
Vacant	22
Male	122
Female	24
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	54

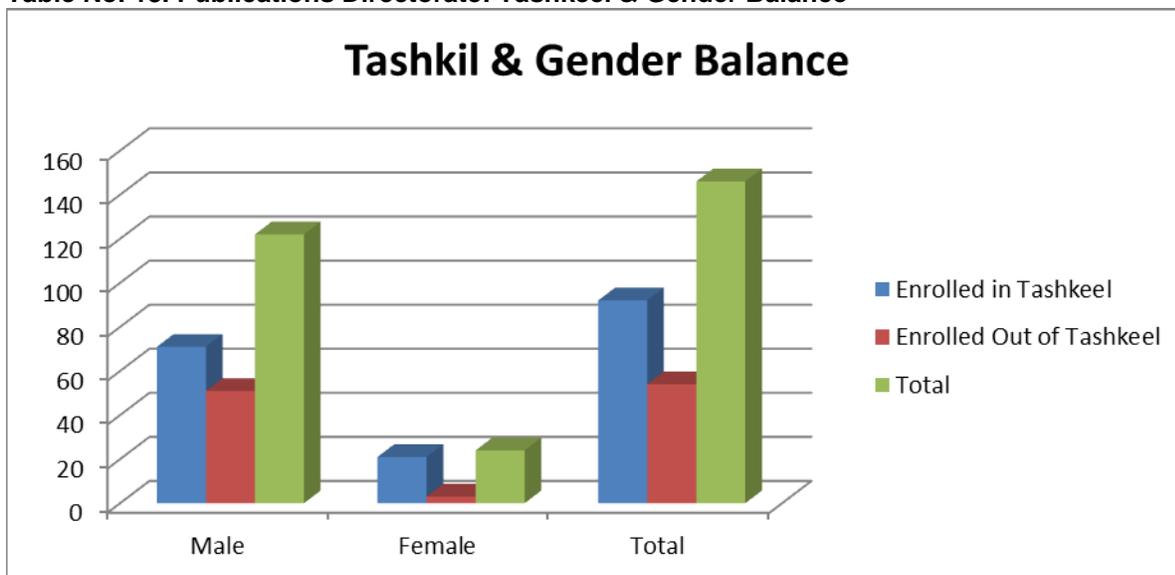
Table No. 17. Publications Directorate: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	3	0	3

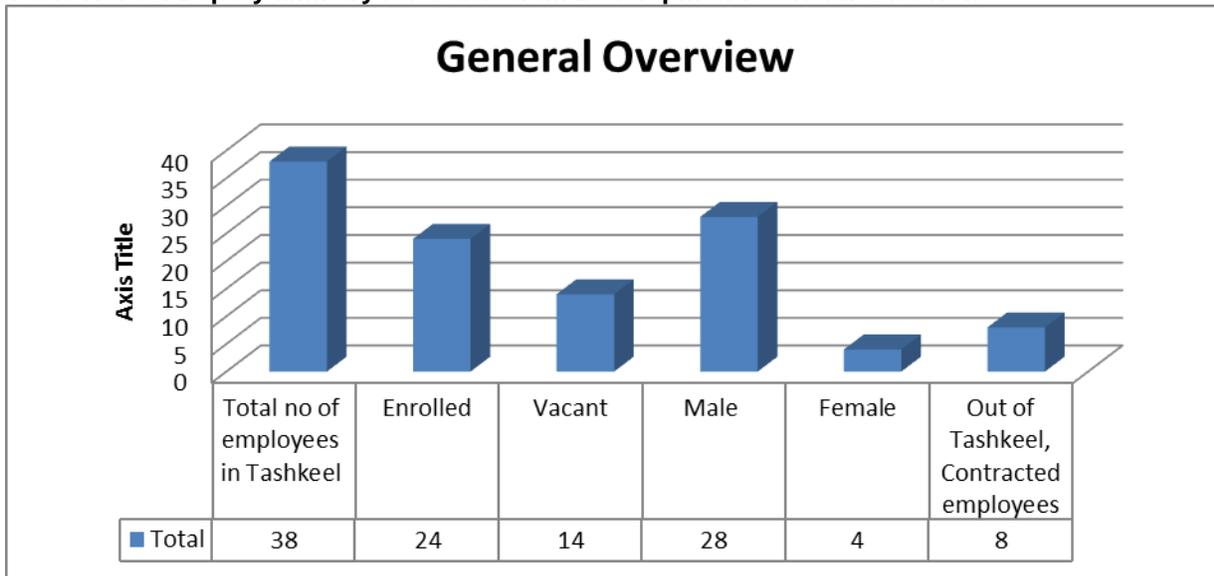
Bachelor	22	1	23
14th Grade	14	1	15
School Graduated	49	18	67
Middle	5	0	5
Primary	4	1	5
Uneducated	25	3	28
Total	122	24	146

Table No. 18. Publications Directorate: Tashkeel & Gender Balance



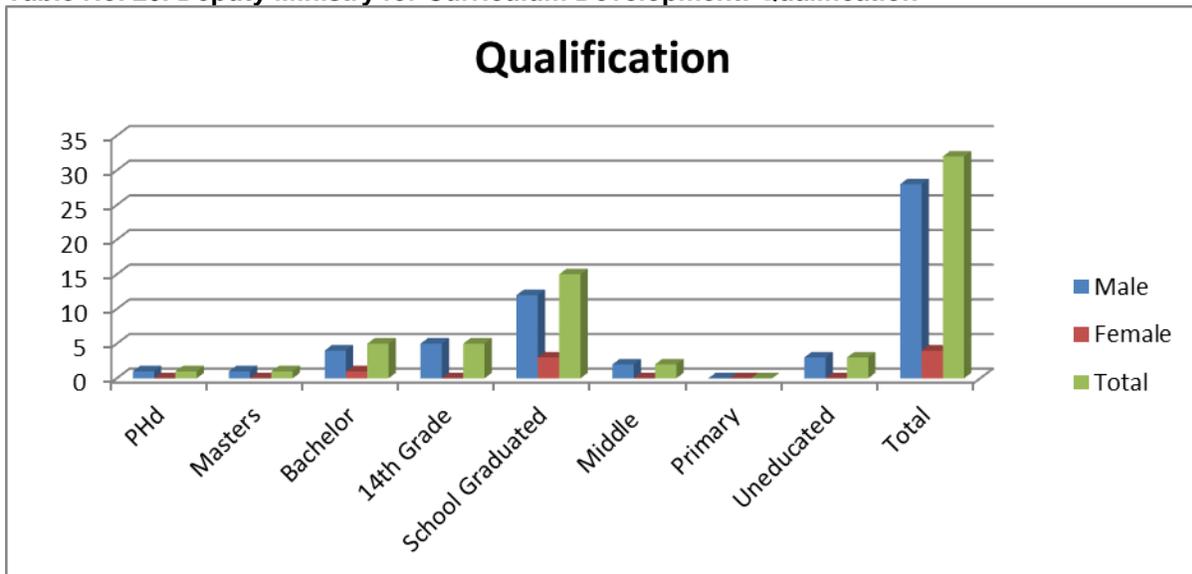
Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	71	21	92
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	51	3	54
Total	122	24	146

Table No. 19. Deputy Ministry for Curriculum Development: General Overview



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	38
Enrolled	24
Vacant	14
Male	28
Female	4
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	8

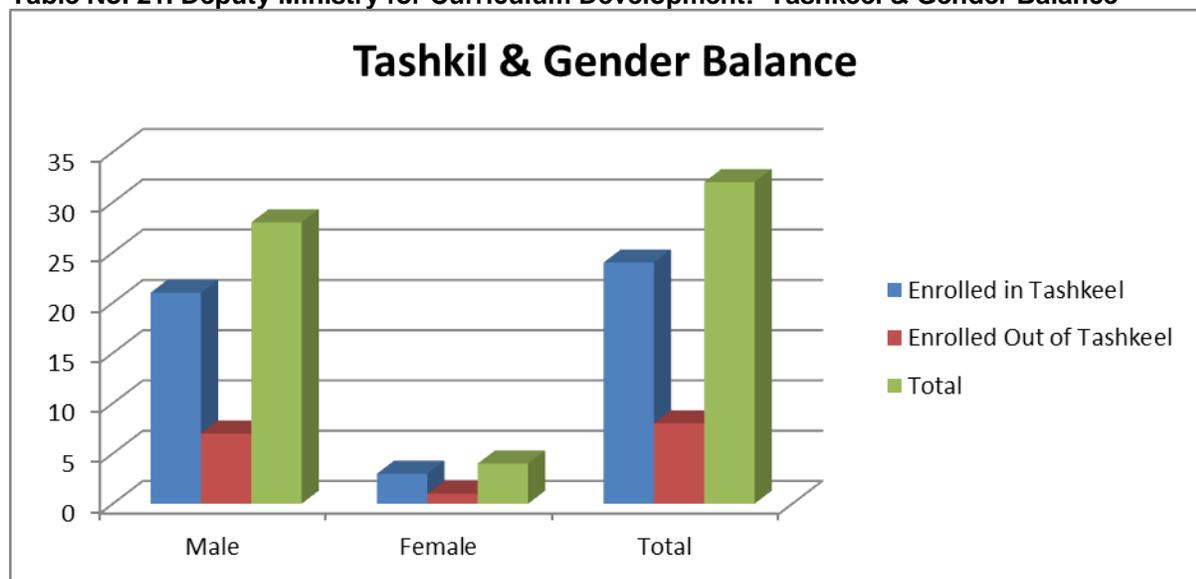
Table No. 20. Deputy Ministry for Curriculum Development: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
PHd	1	0	1

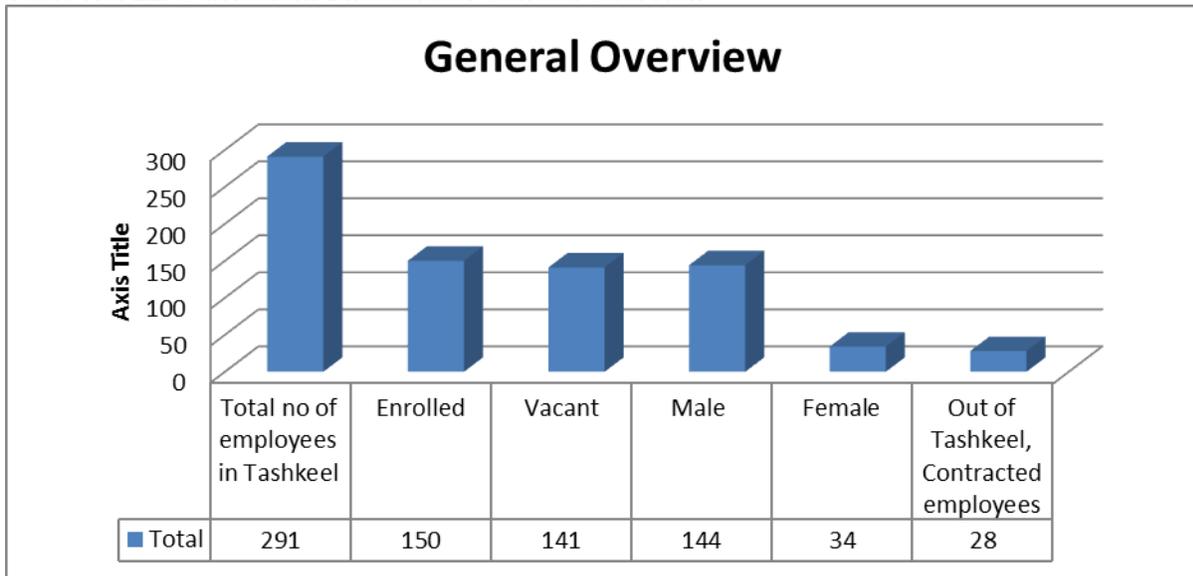
Masters	1	0	1
Bachelor	4	1	5
14th Grade	5	0	5
School Graduated	12	3	15
Middle	2	0	2
Primary	0	0	0
Uneducated	3	0	3
Total	28	4	32

Table No. 21. Deputy Ministry for Curriculum Development: Tashkeel & Gender Balance



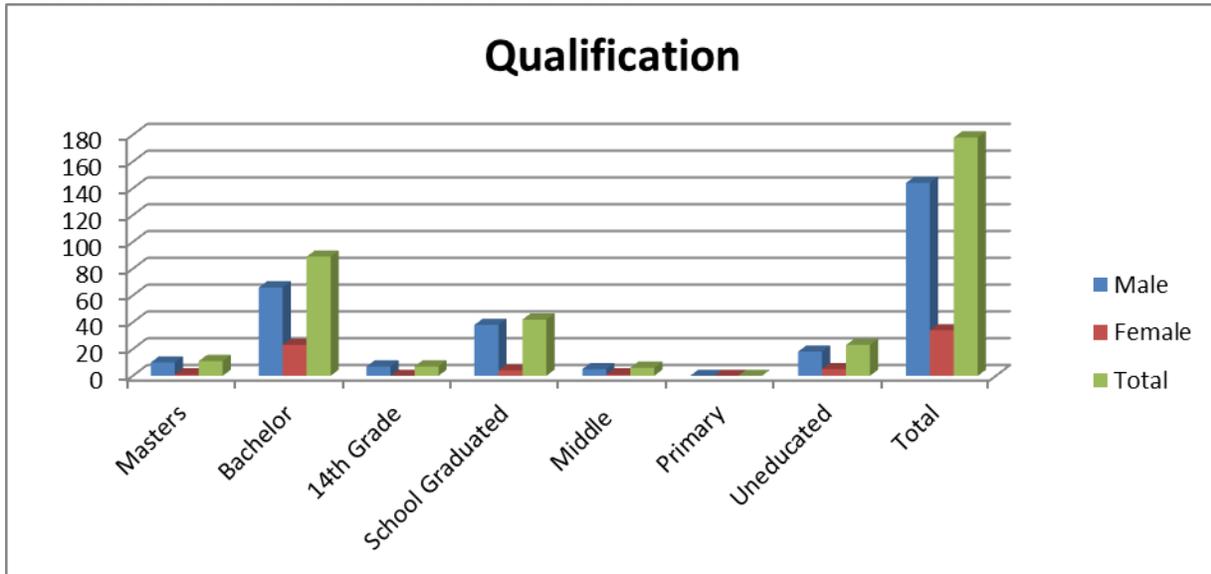
Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	21	3	24
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	7	1	8
Total	28	4	32

Table No. 22. Curriculum Directorate: General Overview



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	291
Enrolled	150
Vacant	141
Male	144
Female	34
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	28

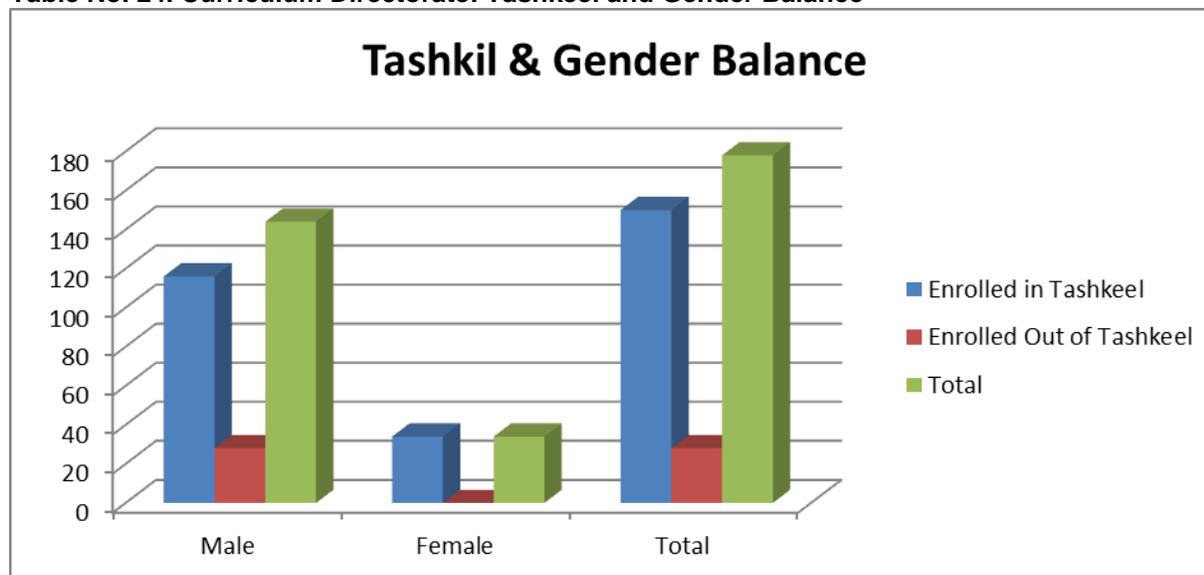
Table No. 23. Curriculum Directorate: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	10	1	11

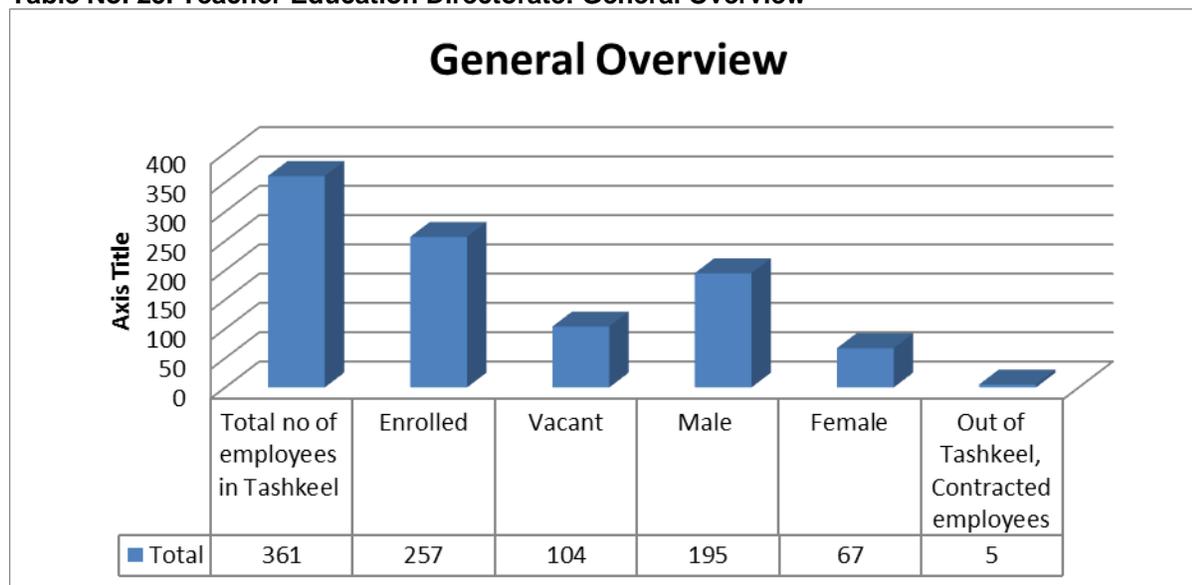
Bachelor	66	23	89
14th Grade	7	0	7
School Graduated	38	4	42
Middle	5	1	6
Primary	0	0	0
Uneducated	18	5	23
Total	144	34	178

Table No. 24. Curriculum Directorate: Tashkeel and Gender Balance



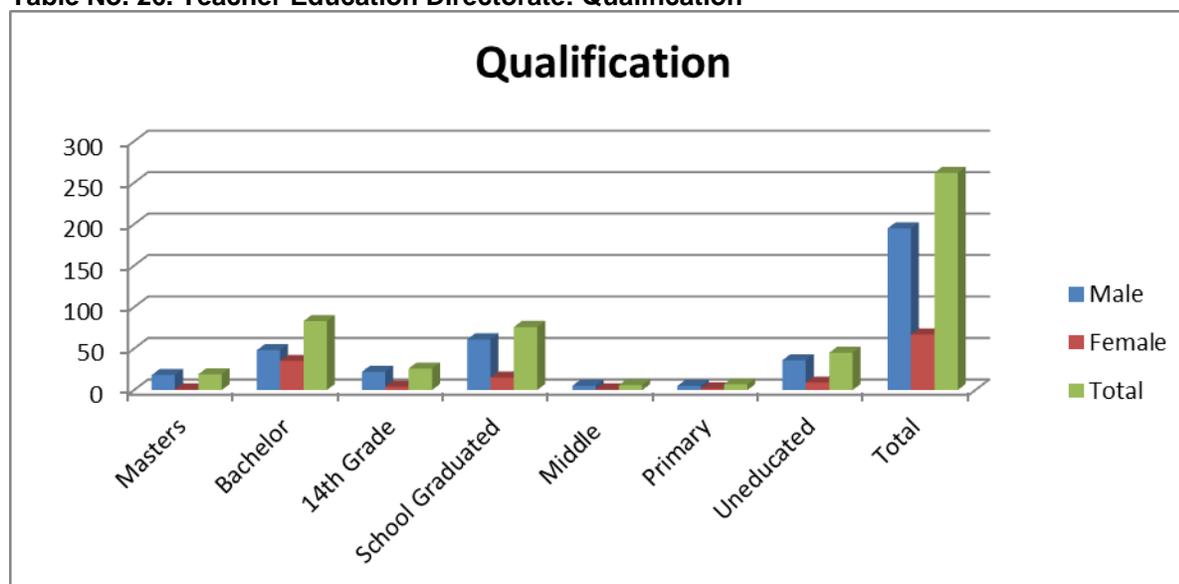
Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	116	34	150
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	28	0	28
Total	144	34	178

Table No. 25. Teacher Education Directorate: General Overview



Name	Total
Total no of employees in Tashkeel	361
Enrolled	257
Vacant	104
Male	195
Female	67
Out of Tashkeel, Contracted employees	5

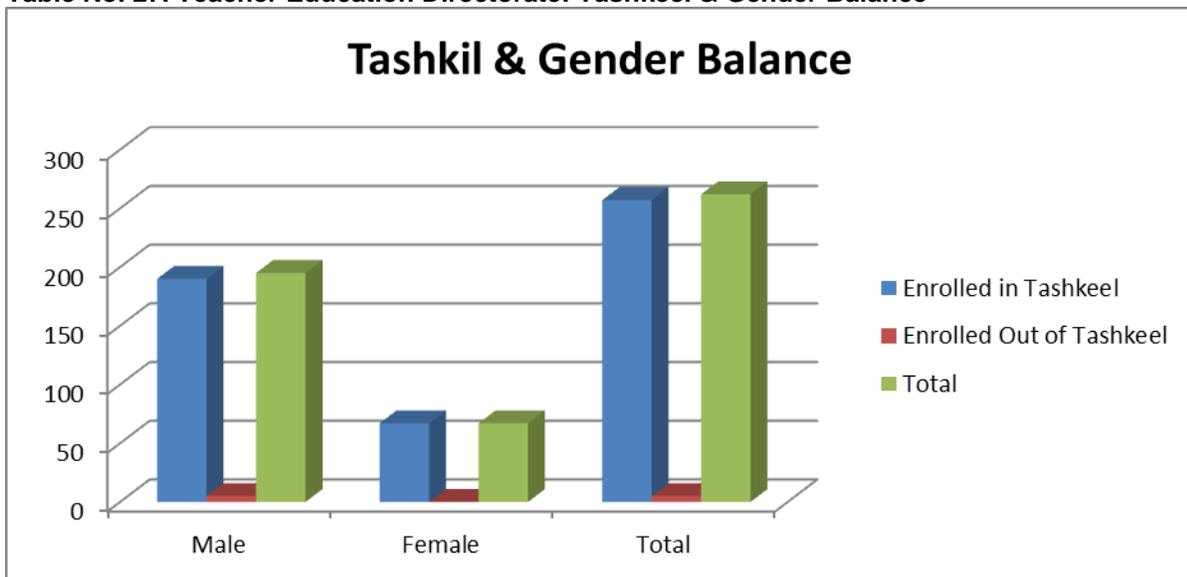
Table No. 26. Teacher Education Directorate: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	25	10	35
Bachelor	55	45	100
14th Grade	30	15	45
School Graduated	70	25	95
Middle	10	5	15
Primary	10	5	15
Uneducated	45	15	60
Total	205	75	280

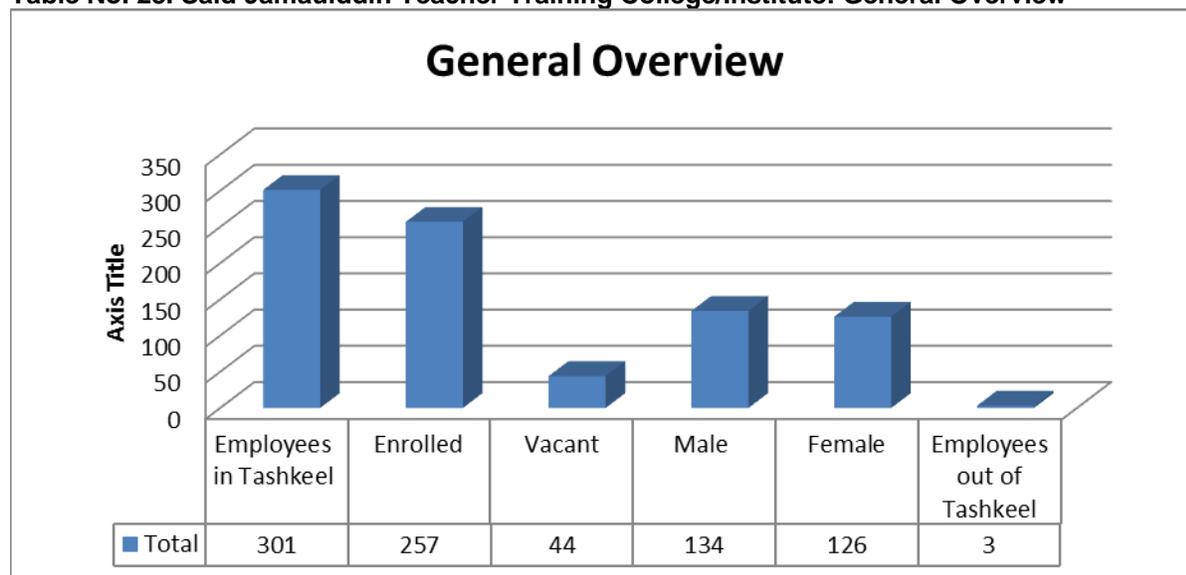
Masters	18	1	19
Bachelor	48	35	83
14th Grade	22	4	26
School Graduated	61	15	76
Middle	5	1	6
Primary	5	2	7
Uneducated	36	9	45
Total	195	67	262

Table No. 27. Teacher Education Directorate: Tashkeel & Gender Balance



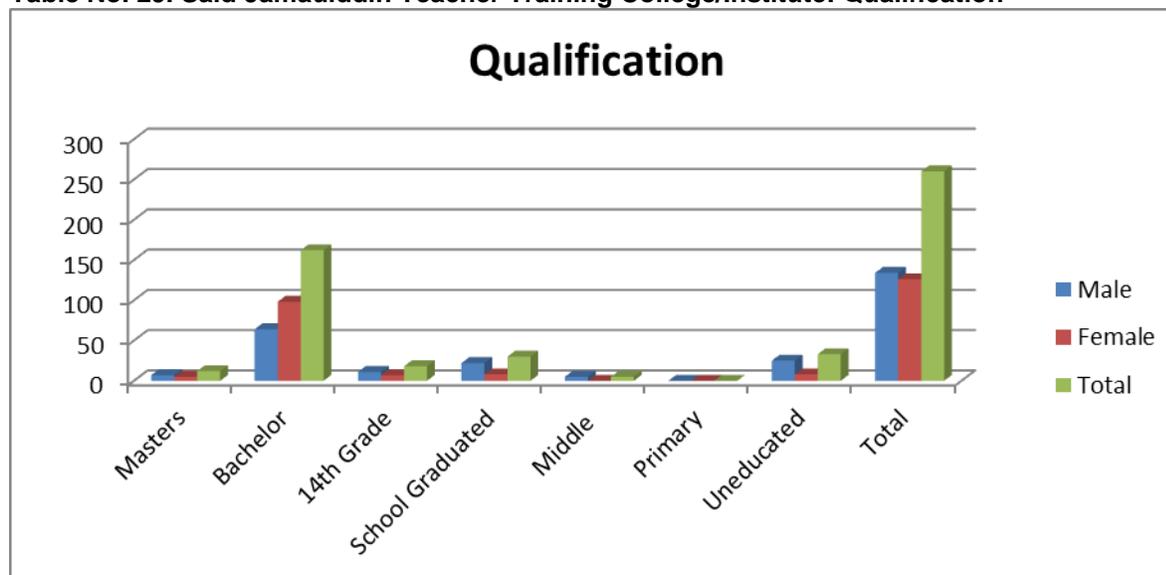
Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	190	67	257
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	5	0	5
Total	195	67	262

Table No. 28. Said Jamaulddin Teacher Training College/Institute: General Overview



Name	Total
Employees in Tashkeel	301
Enrolled	257
Vacant	44
Male	134
Female	126
Employees out of Tashkeel	3

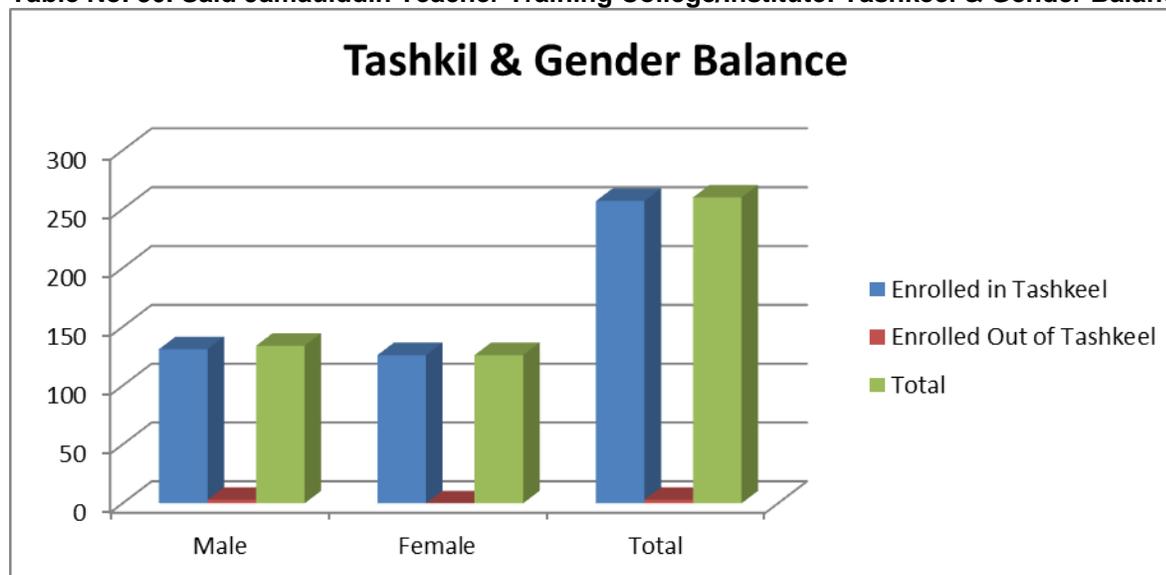
Table No. 29. Said Jamaulddin Teacher Training College/Institute: Qualification



Qualification			
Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Masters	7	5	12

Bachelor	64	98	162
14th Grade	11	7	18
School Graduated	22	8	30
Middle	5	0	5
Primary	0	0	0
Uneducated	25	8	33
Total	134	126	260

Table No. 30. Said Jamaulddin Teacher Training College/Institute: Tashkeel & Gender Balance



Enrolled/Vacant Positions			
Status	Male	Female	Total
Enrolled in Tashkeel	131	126	257
Enrolled Out of Tashkeel	3	0	3
Total	134	126	260

ANNEX VII: DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Name	Noorin Nazari
Title	Team Leader
Organization	Checchi & Company Consulting Inc.
Evaluation Position?	Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Contract No. AID-306-C-12-00012
USAID Project(s) Evaluated <i>(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	Ministry of Education Textbook Production and Distribution Assessment
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> 2. <i>Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.</i> 3. <i>Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.</i> 4. <i>Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i> 5. <i>Current or previous work experience with an</i> 	

<p><i>organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i></p> <p><i>6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.</i></p>	
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I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

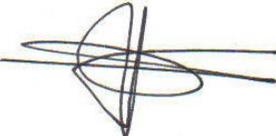
Signature	
Date	November 13, 2015

Name	Dr. Lauryn Oates
Title	Education Specialist
Organization	Checchi & Company Consulting Inc.
Evaluation Position?	Team Leader Team member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Contract No. AID-306-C-12-00012
USAID Project(s) Evaluated <i>(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	Ministry of Education Textbook Production and Distribution Assessment
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are</i>	

<p><i>not limited to:</i></p> <p>7. <i>Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i></p> <p>8. <i>Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.</i></p> <p>9. <i>Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.</i></p> <p>10. <i>Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i></p> <p>11. <i>Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.</i></p> <p>12. <i>Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.</i></p>	
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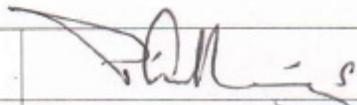
I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
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Date	November 13, 2015

Name	PAUL GIBBINGS
Title	CONSULTANT
Organization	Checchi & Company Consulting Inc.
Evaluation Position?	Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	Contract No. AID <input type="checkbox"/> 306 <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> 12-00012
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Ministry of Education Textbook Production and Distribution Assessment
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	23. 04. 2016.

U.S. Agency for International Development
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Washington, DC 20523