

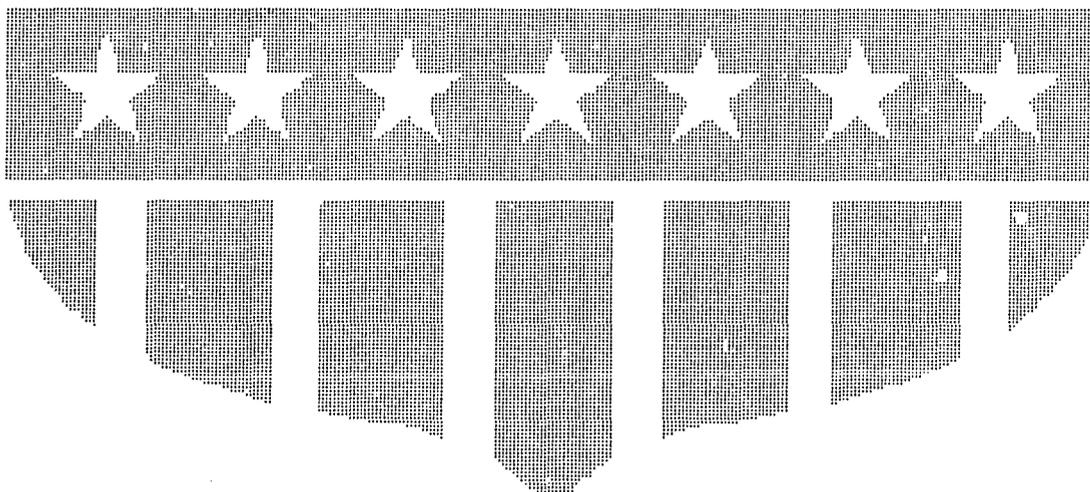
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USAID

MISSION TO PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

**PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION
REPORT**

**Education Sector Support Project
(306-0202)**



*Submitted by Office of Afghan Field Operations
June 1994*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------------|---|
| AID/Rep | Office of the AID Representative to Afghanistan |
| ASP | Afghan Scholarship Program |
| ECA | Educational Center for Afghanistan |
| ECSPA | Educational Council for the Seven Party Alliance |
| EMIS | Educational Management Information System |
| HRDP | Human Resources Development Project (AID/Rep) |
| IEES | Improving the Efficiency of Educational Systems |
| IMDC | Instructional Materials Development Center |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| MOE | Ministry of Education |
| MTP | Manpower Development Program |
| REC | Regional Education Center |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commission for Refugees |

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PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT (ESSP) (306-0202)

June, 1994

1. BASIC PROJECT DATA

| PROJECT TITLE: | Education Sector Support Project | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| PROJECT NUMBER: | 306-0202 | | |
| PROJECT OFFICER: | John Tucker | | |
| ASST PROJECT OFFICER: | Pam Wegge | | |
| TA CONTRACTOR: | University of Nebraska, Omaha | | |
| Action | Dates | PACDs | Auth. Amts. |
| Authorization | 08/08/86 | 08/08/89 | \$8.9 million |
| Amendment No. 1 | 03/09/88 | 08/08/89 | \$14.3 million |
| Amendment No. 2 | 12/26/88 | 12/31/92 | \$30.3 million |
| Amendment No. 3 | 12/16/89 | 12/31/95 | \$31.2 million |
| Amendment No. 4 | 08/24/91 | 12/31/95 | \$49.2 million |
| Amendment No. 5 | 01/14/94 | 06/30/94 | \$49.2 million |
| Amendment No. 6 | 02/13/94 | 09/30/94 | \$49.2 million |
| Total Amount Obligated: | \$43,983,333 | | |
| Total Amount Disbursed: | \$42,110,364 (as of 3/31/94) | | |

2. PROJECT GOAL AND PURPOSE

In response to war, the original goal of this project was to provide educational humanitarian assistance to Afghan citizens in the resistance-controlled areas of Afghanistan. The objectives were to: (1) establish primary schools inside Afghanistan; (2) promote literacy among members of the resistance organizations; (3) train teachers; and, (4) assist in the development of the Education Center for Afghanistan (ECA).

Subsequently, the goal was amended in 1992 to enable the project to expand the educational base of Afghanistan to promote economic growth, facilitate broad-based political participation, and foster sustained development. The objectives of the re-designed project were to: (1) strengthen the Afghan Counterpart Agencies, Education Center for Afghanistan and Ministry of Education, improving central capabilities in planning, budgeting, and policy development; (2) strengthen the primary school network, improving key elements, including curriculum, textbooks, instructional aids and teacher training; (3) increase the incidence of adult literacy, providing textbooks, instructional materials, and technical guidance to groups involved in literacy training; (4) to train Afghans through scholarships, providing study opportunities in

U.S. colleges and universities in programs relevant to initial rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan; and, (5) to train Afghans in basic skills for employment, providing technical training related to the resettlement and initial rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

In October, 1992, objectives number 4 and 5 were subsumed under the newly created Human Resources Development Project. In November, 1993, the USAID Mission was mandated to close-out the Afghan program in FY 1994. Subsequently, the ESSP was terminated early and closed in June, 1994.

3. BACKGROUND

Prior to the closure of USAID/Kabul in 1979, USAID was a major contributor to Afghanistan's education sector. During the war years, resistance leaders were keen to establish their own schools in Afghanistan, and there was great demand for education among the Afghan refugee population in Pakistan. Following the establishment of the Office of the A.I.D. Representative for Afghanistan Affairs (AID/Rep) in 1986, the Education Sector Support Project (ESSP) was put on a fast-track to meet these needs. The first ESSP ensured that education for Afghans survived, both in refugee camps and in resistance-controlled areas of Afghanistan.

The project quickly assembled and began distributing textbooks to schools, set up literacy programs for Mujahideen, and initiated a scholarship program to provide a limited amount of post-secondary training in the U.S. To achieve these objectives and support schools inside Afghanistan, the Education Center for Afghanistan (ECA) was established with ESSP assistance, providing an Afghan counterpart agency that represented the Seven Party Alliance of the Afghan Resistance. The ECA quickly became a "shadow" Ministry of Education. Working closely with the ESSP technical assistance team from the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), the ECA began developing capabilities to develop curriculum, provide teacher training, and administer an education system, including schools inside Afghanistan.

In 1991, following an evaluation of the ESSP, the project was re-focused to enable AID/Rep efforts to move from "relief-oriented" educational assistance to creation of the basic building blocks needed to reconstruct Afghanistan's war-ravaged educational system. The single factor perhaps most critical to attracting and retaining students is the quality of the curriculum. The "new" ESSP, therefore, emphasized the development of a complete primary curriculum, in effect creating an entirely revised set of texts, in local languages, that were culturally acceptable and soundly based on modern learning theory.

To make the new curriculum and texts effective in schools, a thorough program of teacher training was started, supported by development of teaching guides and teacher resource books. To enable the new curriculum to reach more schools, the ESSP included a significant effort to improve the institutional capacities of the ECA. Following competitive bidding, the technical assistance contract for the new ESSP was awarded to UNO, and work began in May, 1992.

4. PROJECT COMPONENTS

Curriculum Development

Given the need for rapid project start-up, and a long history of curriculum disputes, the texts produced by the project in the early years were not based on a standardized curriculum. Instructional aids, which earned much praise, were, however developed in a similar curriculum vacuum. Consequently, the development of a logical, sequenced and integrated primary school curriculum that was politically and culturally acceptable and systematically built the skill levels of students was the focus of this component after the re-design in 1992.

To accomplish this task, Scope and Sequence charts were prepared for grades one through six, covering mathematics, science, language arts and social studies. These charts systematically outline the progression of required skills for each subject and grade level and are a necessary component of a comprehensive curriculum plan needed to develop textbooks and corresponding teacher's guides.

The Education Center for Afghanistan (ECA), the implementing counterpart agency created by the project at its inception, has been responsible to ensure that the curriculum developed received the support and endorsement of the various interim governments throughout the years of war, and more recently of the Afghan Ministry of Education.

Textbook Production and Distribution

The initial 153 textbooks designed and developed by the project were later extensively reviewed and revised in accordance with the new comprehensive curriculum plan. Initial review and acceptance of the ECA textbooks was conducted by the Education Council for the Seven Party Alliance (ECSPA), advisory council to the ECA, 1987-1989. The books went to schools inside the liberated or resistance-controlled areas of Afghanistan.

In 1990 the books were accepted by the Afghan Interim Government/Ministry of Education in Peshawar; in 1991 the books were accepted by UNHCR for use in their refugee schools. In April 1992, after the fall of the communist government, the books became available to all newly liberated areas inside Afghanistan. Distribution to refugee schools was terminated in April, 1992, except for a few girls' primary schools. Throughout the project years, demand for the texts far exceeded supply. In 1993 a joint ECA/MOE committee reviewed all the textbooks, and subsequently the MOE in Kabul accepted the textbooks as the official books for all the schools in Afghanistan.

UNO subcontracted with the Afghan Printing Press of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Peshawar, for the printing of the school books, and with Afghan truckers for distribution inside Afghanistan. The 15 million textbooks produced and delivered by the project to primary schools inside Afghanistan has been a valuable contribution to the education of the children during the years of civil turmoil.

Instructional Materials Production

Instructional materials were designed and produced to supplement textbooks used in primary schools, for use in the teacher training program and for the literacy curricula. The Instructional Materials Development Center (IMDC), established in Peshawar in 1987, became a well-managed and efficient unit of the ESSP, producing durable and cost-effective instructional aids. The items ranged from multi-colored silk screen work of the highest quality to math and science kits and blackboards. All silkscreens were prepared in color on white cotton cloth. The cloth can easily be folded for shipping and storage, and can be cleaned by washing. Because they are extremely portable and lightweight, they can be shared among teachers and used in shelter-less school settings.

All the instructional aids produced by the project are practical, cost-effective technology wedded to sound pedagogy and can easily be emulated inside Afghanistan, as demonstrated by a smaller scale silk-screen production center recently established at the Regional Education Center (REC) in Khost, Afghanistan.

Teacher Training

To assure proper use of the textbooks prepared and distributed, the ESSP included an extensive in-service teacher training program that was started in 1990. Master teacher trainers prepared teacher trainers through four month courses in the skills required to execute 4-5 week in-service training to teachers in Afghanistan and the refugee schools in Peshawar. Over the last two years the training of female teachers was emphasized. Training manuals and accompanying instructional aids were produced for use in the teacher training seminars.

To enable teachers with a minimum of training to effectively transmit the educational messages to children, teacher's guides that are keyed to each of the textbooks were prepared for all of the books and lessons, grades one through nine. The teaching guide for grade one is most comprehensive. Guidance for the instruction of each individual lesson is arranged according to: objective, pre-teaching tasks, teaching, practical applications, challenge items and evaluation of the exercise.

Literacy

From FY87 to FY92 Mujahideen were offered literacy courses in the winter camps along the border, using the "Alphabet of Jihad Literacy" books prepared by ESSP. In 1992 the emphasis shifted from the conduct of classes to technical support and the development of instructional materials. In 1993 the focus became more defined and women became the sole beneficiaries of project support. Instructional materials focused on health and nutrition. To minimize societal constraints imposed on the education of women, "pilot literacy home" schools were established as a potential mechanism to provide literacy training to women inside Afghanistan.

Research and Planning

In February 1993 the project designed an Education Management Information System (EMIS) to provide information to support planning and decision making by the Afghan education system. The framework adopted as the basis of the EMIS is the efficiency-based model developed by the "Improving the Efficiency of Education System" (IEES) project. A five-phase plan was put into place, along with fourteen special studies, to develop an information system comprehensive enough to address the information needs of several different groups.

Phase I data were collected for 28 of Afghanistan's 29 provinces through the project's Research and Planning Unit. Since ESSP is concerned with extending educational services to increasing numbers of schools inside Afghanistan, and with implementing new materials, Phase I indicators concentrated on issues of access and quality, in direct support of these goals. In Phase II, a wider range of indicators addressed measures of student flow, instructional materials, and student achievement by grade levels. Due to the early termination of the project, only a pilot test of this phase was conducted.

Participant Training

Through the Afghanistan Scholarship Program (ASP) and Weber Scholarship Program 105 participants have been sent to the United States to attend undergraduate or graduate level programs and non-degree programs. Thirty-nine scholars remained in studies in the United States and ten were out of status when the program was transferred to the new Human Resources Development Project on October 1, 1992.

Manpower Training Program

This program trained Afghans in skills relevant to meeting rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of Afghanistan. Basic vocational skills training was offered in Masonry, Master Mason, Carpentry, Electricity, Plumbing, Steel work, Welding, Basic Diesel Engine, Basic Automotive Electrical, Introductory Machine and Welding and Office Skills, which was divided into Accounting and Office Administration. The Office Skills program had both men's and women's divisions.

The training offered an integrated classroom and on-the-job training approach in which students devoted approximately 40 percent of their time to theory and 60 percent to practical work. The program was designed in 24 week cycles; the advanced program was an additional 24 week cycle. Curriculum was developed and 24 textbooks were prepared, printed and put in use as part of the instructional program. Four training centers were established in Pakistan and two inside Afghanistan. This program component was transferred to the Human Resources Development Project on October 1, 1992.

5. INPUTS

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) was the sole implementer of the ESSP. All project funds were obligated to two separate contracts and one cooperative agreement with UNO. The first contract with UNO was initiated on September 15, 1986 and concluded on April 30, 1992. Following competitive bidding the contract was again awarded to UNO. The "new" ESSP was implemented on May 1, 1992 and completed on June 30, 1994.

The Manpower Development Program (MTP), a component of ESSP from April 1989 to September 1992, was administered through a separate cooperative agreement with UNO. The cumulative expenditures of MTP were \$2,248,444: \$2,199,043 for Program and \$49,043 for Technical Assistance.

The total amount of funds expended through the LOP of the ESSP will be approximately \$44 million: Approximately \$32 million for Program; \$2 million for Logistical Support; and \$10 million for Technical Assistance.

This was a unilateral project. There was no formal counterpart government, thus no contributions to this project came from the Government of Afghanistan. There were no other donors to this project.

6. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the early years of the project, ESSP focused on opening schools, paying teacher salaries, and delivering textbooks and instructional aids to schools in the resistance-controlled areas of Afghanistan. The emphasis was on quick response. In December, 1990, an independent evaluation of the project recognized that substantial progress had been made in a short period of time. The evaluation noted that the project had become the cornerstone of educational services in the resistance-controlled areas of Afghanistan. With this solid foundation, the focus of the program shifted in 1992 to ensuring quality education and equitable access.

Through the ECA, the ESSP was successful in re-introducing primary education in many of the rural communities in Afghanistan. ECA schools were established in all the provinces of Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation. During the present period of civil strife most of these schools continue to operate, in spite of the fact that ESSP discontinued the payment of teacher salaries in June 1993. ESSP-developed textbooks have been accepted by the Ministry of Education (MOE) as the standard curriculum for all schools in Afghanistan. The provision of teacher training, textbooks and instructional aids expanded to all schools, including government schools, with an emphasis on female teachers and girls schools. The project established a model for decentralization of the Afghan education system with the successful operation of three Regional Education Centers (RECs) in Herat, Jalalabad, and Khost. In addition to coordinating between schools and the MOE, these centers receive and distribute textbooks and instructional materials, and provide teacher training. A strong foundation has been laid for re-establishing the education system in Afghanistan once peace prevails. The key achievements of the ESSP included the following:

Curriculum Development

The ESSP developed a logical, sequenced and integrated primary school curriculum, which is politically and culturally acceptable and systematically builds students' skill levels. This has been accomplished through the development of scope and sequence charts in Math/Science, Social Studies and Language Arts for Grades 1-6 in Dari, Pushto and English. Using these charts as a guide, the project's Curriculum Development Unit developed and published 87 textbook manuscripts in each of the two national languages for grades 1-12, covering primary school subjects of Language Arts, Social Science, Mathematics and General Science, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Approval by the Afghan Interim Government in Peshawar, and later by the Ministry of Education in Kabul, of the ESSP/ECA textbooks for refugee schools in Pakistan and all schools inside Afghanistan is a significant accomplishment.

Textbook Production and Distribution

The project printed and distributed approximately 15 million textbooks to primary schools in all 29 provinces of Afghanistan and in limited numbers to schools in the refugee camps in Pakistan. Over 1,600 primary schools and 446,000 students received ESSP textbooks in Afghanistan, and 1,031 primary schools and 167,022 students received ESSP textbooks in the refugee camps in Pakistan. The significance of this accomplishment becomes impressive given the logistical difficulties inherent in operating a project cross-border with a fragile security situation.

Instructional Materials Production

The Instructional Materials Design Center (IMDC), which started in 1987 in the basement of the ESSP office with a staff of four, is a success story. IMDC quickly expanded to a large operational plant with over 100 employees, including artists, audio-visual and design staff, tailors, carpenters, and assembly-line workers, and produced hundreds of thousands of instructional aids. All equipment needed for production of the instructional materials was designed and made by IMDC staff, which was exclusively Afghan. IMDC designed, produced, and distributed more than 450,000 silkscreened instructional charts, maps, teaching aids as well as slate boards. Twelve cloth storybooks were designed and printed in two languages, Dari and Pushto, and over 100,000 storybooks were manufactured and distributed. These materials are noted for their cost-effectiveness, portability, and durability.

Teacher Training

The project developed and implemented a teacher training program designed to enable teachers with minimal training to upgrade their teaching ability. One hundred twenty three master teacher trainers, including women, were trained. Three thousand six hundred and ninety (3,690) teachers were provided with a four week in-service teacher training program in basic pedagogy and the use of the textbooks and instructional materials. Starting in 1992 the project

began to emphasize the training of female teachers with more than 600 female teachers participating, 370 inside Afghanistan. Women master teacher trainers travelled from Peshawar to Jalalabad and Kabul, and there was a permanent female teacher trainer staff at the Regional Education Center (REC) in Herat. The concept of Afghan females on TDY demonstrates a growing support for female education and cultural acceptability of the curriculum.

To further assist the effectiveness of the teachers, the project developed teaching guides for all subjects in grades 1-9 and resource materials that are cross-referenced to the textbooks.

Literacy

The project provided literacy training to 43,694 Mujahideen in the Winter camps along the border from FY87 to FY92 using the "Alphabet of Jihad Literacy" books (three Dari and three Pashto) prepared by ESSP. When the focus of this component changed in late FY92 to the provision of instructional materials to other agencies providing literacy training, a Home/Family Learning to Read and Write literacy textbook, teaching guide and reading pamphlets were completed plus a general literacy book for adults and one specifically for farmers. After the focus shifted once again in 1993 to the provision of literacy training to adult females the project prepared eight functional cloth storybooks in the fields of health and nutrition, 12,000 of which were distributed. Ten pilot adult literacy home/based schools for older girls and women were established in Peshawar and Quetta and 21 women trainers, including five from other agencies were trained. Based on data from the pilot literacy "home schools", women can be brought to a fourth grade reading level with nine months of classes meeting two hours a day. The literacy "home schools" were extremely well received by the communities and initial studies suggested that they were an effective and culturally acceptable means of providing female literacy training.

Research and Planning

The project established a Research and Planning Unit within the ESSP which has initiated a comprehensive Education Management Information System (EMIS) and collected school data from 28 provinces (only Kabul remained undone due to security problems). The survey included 2,589 schools and 722,400 students. Six special studies were completed; School Participation Rates, Alternative Financing of Teachers' Salaries, Community Support for Education, Teacher Issues in Implementing the New Materials, Effect of Teacher Training on Teacher Performance, and Audit of Data Accuracy. Baseline data are now available that can help support planning and decision making for the Afghan education system and for future assessment of the effectiveness of donor interventions. The design of the EMIS is highly flexible, permitting modifications necessitated by evolving conditions and the desires of future decision makers (MOE, regional directors, donors, etc.)

Participant Training

Selection of students for participation in the Afghanistan Scholarship Program (ASP) and the Weber Scholarship Program was completed in the summer of 1991. One hundred and five participants were selected for study in the United States to pursue undergraduate or master programs and non-degree programs. Fifty-six scholars completed their degrees and returned, ten were out of status and thirty-nine remained in studies when the program was transferred to HRDP.

Manpower Training Program

The project established four vocational education skills training centers in Pakistan and two centers inside Afghanistan. A curriculum was developed and twenty-four textbooks prepared and printed. From 1989 to 1992, 942 students passed the final exam out of a total enrollment of 1,367 for a pass rate of 68.9%. When the program was transferred to the new Human Resources Development Project on October 1, 1992 there were 507 trainees in attendance.

7. LESSONS LEARNED

Before the focus moves to more specific lessons learned the importance of an action-oriented mission where there is mutual support and cooperation between USAID and the contractor is of utmost importance. It is the responsibility of USAID to ensure that this happens. And, of equal importance, especially in the operation of a cross-border program in a war-torn country is the necessity that the contract team has regional specific expertise.

- **The project was able to mobilize rapidly and produce the educational goods and services required to address the basic educational needs of primary schools in the resistance-held areas of Afghanistan. AID/Rep possessed the two necessary ingredients needed in order for this to be accomplished. The enthusiasm and dynamism of the first AID Representative helped to establish the standards for speed of implementation essential in refugee and cross-border programs. And the contractor team selected possessed a working knowledge of Afghanistan and the Afghan culture which made it possible to quickly get the project up and going initially and in the longer term have a sustainable impact.**
- **USAID was more concerned than simply rescuing Afghans from a crisis situation, and consequently focused interventions which would have the potential for a long term impact. In order to accomplish this it was necessary to design a project which responded effectively to a conservative religious and cultural environment as well as received political acceptance and support. ESSP responded to these criteria. ESSP's success is demonstrated by the fact that in July 1993, the new Ministry of Education accepted the ESSP/ECA textbooks as the official textbooks for schools in Afghanistan and began requesting all schools to use them.**

The high demand of ESSP books, plus requests for other ESSP instructional aids and teacher training seminars, demonstrates the popular acceptance of the curriculum and suggests that demands for education are on the increase.

- **The high percentage of Afghan employees, including senior level Afghans on the expatriate team and in all key management positions, greatly contributed to the success of this project.** In order to develop culturally sensitive and acceptable instructional and curriculum materials it is essential that a strong and committed Afghan staff is developed. Many of the Afghans employed by ESSP were trained on the job. Not only did they acquire sustainable skills but also developed a sense of ownership and pride in the accomplishments of their individual components.
- **In a cross-border program it is essential that a counterpart agency is established.** Within the Afghan context broad-based support of all the political parties was a necessary ingredient. The establishment and support of the party-based Education Center for Afghanistan (ECA) as a counterpart agency was an effective mechanism for implementing project activities. The ECA's role resulted in party acceptance of the textbooks and materials produced and later acceptance by the Afghan Interim Government and the Government of Afghanistan. The sustainability of ESSP activities would not have been possible if the project did not work through the ECA.

As demonstrated by the broad-based support the ESSP received, education is one area where representatives with different party affiliations were able to work together. The value of educating youth is a commonality from which other unified program efforts can be developed and implemented. An education project can be a conduit for other development efforts. The ESSP should have been more fully utilized as a mechanism for drug education, health education and mine awareness.

- **The importance of monitoring in a cross-border program can not be overstated.** From the onset of a project it is imperative that the technical assistance team and USAID work together and develop a mutually agreed upon monitoring plan. The numerous difficulties experienced in this area could have been avoided if this approach was taken during the initial stages of the ESSP instead of in the final months.
- **The wisdom of paying teachers' salaries should be carefully assessed.** Not only is it an administrative and monitoring nightmare, it is inherently not sustainable. The payment of teacher's salaries was the single largest program line item expenditure, and in hindsight it is questionable whether this was the most beneficial use of project funds. The project phased out of the payment of teachers' salaries in June 1993, one year before originally planned, with minimal negative consequences. Payment of teachers' salaries increases donor dependency. Experience has shown that if schools are provided with textbooks, instructional materials, and teacher training then education will occur.

- **Based on data from an ESSP special study, most Afghans are in support of education for girls (62%) and would send their girls to school if there were better access to schools, more female teachers and if facilities were culturally appropriate. The home school concept is culturally acceptable to Afghans. Girls are attending the primary home schools and women attending the adult literacy home schools, who otherwise would not have access to education. The home school concept is a viable intervention, in order to increase female enrollment in schools, in societies with strong cultural and religious constraints regarding the education of females.**
- **Decentralization of the education system through regional education centers was an effective strategy for program implementation. Three regional education centers were established in Herat, Khost and Jalalabad. Decentralized education decision making can increase educational effectiveness by meeting local educational needs at the district and school level. This is especially true when education assistance is provided during a time of war or civil strife.**
- **Before transferring an ongoing activity to another project and ultimately a different technical assistance contractor, the positive and negative effects associated with the transfer need to be carefully assessed. The Manpower Training Program (MTP), initiated in 1989 under the ESSP, and the Participant Training component of the ESSP were transferred to the newly created Human Resources Development Project in October 1992. MTP was developed, implemented and managed by Afghans; and the transfer to a new contractor had negative repercussions. Likewise, the participant training component was effective under the ESSP with a 86% return rate. Under the HRDP the return rate dropped to 20%. Some observers attribute this decline to the conditions of civil strife that existed inside Afghanistan during the period of the HRDP. However, previous participant trainees returned at a far higher rate when conditions were scarcely better, and all participants were expected to return to the relative calm of Peshawar, not to Afghanistan. Under the ESSP, the contractor had strong connections with the Afghan community here as well as in the U.S. This level of influence, which the HRDP contractor lacked, may well have been a significant factor in the returnee rate. In any event, the wisdom and cost effectiveness of transferring an ongoing activity to a new contractor should be closely examined.**

8. SUSTAINABILITY

ESSP and ECA developed an integrated and coherent curriculum and accompanying textbooks. Initially for use by the schools in the resistance-held areas of Afghanistan during the war, the project's shift in 1992 toward development of a quality-oriented curriculum enhanced education throughout Afghanistan and filled the void created by the rejection of the communist-inspired texts used in the regime-controlled areas of Afghanistan during the war. The textbooks were accepted by the Education Council for the Seven Party Alliance (1987-1989), then in 1990 by the Afghan Interim Government/Ministry of Education, Peshawar. Recently, the Ministry

of Education (under three different ministers) in Kabul has accepted the textbooks as the official books for the schools of Afghanistan. With the support of the MOE and the major mujahideen parties we have every reason to believe that the curriculum developed by the project will be lasting.

The provision of textbooks and instructional materials will have a lasting impact on Afghanistan's education system. The requests received by UNO for textbooks and teaching supplies far exceeded the available supply. The distribution of over 15 million textbooks by ESSP has made a sustainable improvement in both access and quality of primary education in Afghanistan, especially given the fact that the following conditions prevail: in various regions of Afghanistan either the regional authorities, local communities or MOE have assumed responsibility for operating and maintaining the schools and the payment of teacher salaries. The books and instructional materials remain the property of the schools for use by subsequent classes.

The potential that an activity would be sustained increased where a local contribution was involved. The building, site, and security for the three education centers established by the project was provided by the local community. The decentralization of the education system was an effective strategy for sustainability. Warehousing of textbooks and instructional materials at these centers as a part of the phase-out plan will contribute to the possibility that these centers are sustained.

Teacher training and training of trainers also contributed to sustainability. ESSP trained more than 200 teacher trainers and provided in-service training to over 3,600 primary education teachers. Training improved the quality of instruction, contributing to higher enrollments and greater community support. Training local trainers provides an indigenous resource to provide additional pre-service and in-service training, assuming counterpart resources are available to organize and fund the training. In-service training is critical for maintaining quality of education, and pre-service training for expansion of education.

Although initial literacy activities under ESSP concentrated on literacy courses for over 43,000 freedom fighters, the focus shifted in 1992 to literacy for women. An estimated 95 percent of Afghan women are illiterate. Experience shows that literate women support education for their daughters, tend to limit the number of children they bear, provide better quality and more balanced diets to their families, and are more conscious of basic hygiene. ESSP activities to increase female literacy include: developing and distributing textbooks and related materials; training female literacy teachers, including those from other agencies; training of women literacy teacher trainers; and piloting women's literacy home schools. Developing and producing educational materials for literacy programs clearly expands the potential access to the program. Participants in the literacy program, unlike primary and secondary students, keep their textbooks and materials, so they cannot be reused by additional students. This is justified, however, since women need access to reading material to maintain the skills they acquired. The training of female literacy teachers and the training of trainers promotes sustainability since it develops Afghan capacity and skills.