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AFGHANISTAN

**Mid-Term Evaluation
of
Afghan e-Quality Alliance (AeQA)
by
USAID
in the
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

August 3 – September 16, 2009

This report was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared under contract with Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc. (Checchi) through USAID’s Afghanistan “Services under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking” (SUPPORT) project. The report was prepared by Dr. Gerald Boardman (Team Leader), Ms Patricia McLaughlin, Ms Farima Nawabi, and Mr. Arslan Muradi, under contract with Checchi.

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for Results Tracking (SUPPORT)**

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US

Acronyms

ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ACIE	American Councils for International Education
ACOMET	Afghan Center of Multi-Profession Educational Training
AED	Academy of Educational Development
AeQA	Afghan e-Quality Alliance
AIM	Asian Institute of Management
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANGeL	Afghan Next Generation e-Learning
AP	Advanced Placement
ASMED	Afghan Small Medium Enterprises Development
AUAF	American University of Afghanistan
CD	Compact Disc
CDP	Capacity Development Program
COP	Chief of Party
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSI	Civil Service Institute
CSUN	California State University at Northridge
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
e-Learning	Electronic Learning
FMIC	French Medical Institute for Children
GDA	Global Development Alliances
HE	Higher Education
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Education System
HEP	Higher Education Program
IACD	Institute of Asian Culture and Development
IACSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
IBT	Internet-Based Training
IIPA	Indian Institute of Public Administration
ILS	Integrated Library System
INLTC	Independent National Legal Training Center
IOD	Institute of Diplomacy

IT	Information Technology
KEU	Kabul Education University
KMU	Kabul Medical University
KPU	Kabul Polytechnic University
KU	Kabul University
MIIS	Monterey Institute of International Studies
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MPPA	Masters in Public Policy and Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NU	Nangarhar University
OSSD	Office of Social Sector Development
PPT	Paper-Based Training
SHEP	Strengthening Higher Education Program
SUPPORT	Services under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking
TERI	The Energy and Resources Institute
TISS	Tata Institute of Social Science
TOEFL	Test Of English as a Foreign Language
UAL	University of Arizona Library
UC	University of Colorado
UMD	University of Maryland
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
UW	University of Washington
WSU	Washington State University

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mid-term evaluation of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Afghan e-Quality Alliance (AeQA) was carried out for Checchi on behalf of USAID under Contract No. GS-10 F-0466P, from August through Mid-September 2009.

1.1. PURPOSE

This is a formative evaluation whose objective was to provide pertinent information to assist Washington State University (WSU), its implementing partners, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), and USAID to learn what components and project activities are working well, and why; which are not working, and why; what relevant management, program and financial findings present themselves; and to make modifications and mid-course corrections. In summary, the evaluation will help to understand the initial results and contributions of the project, and re-focus and strengthen it.

1.2. METHODOLOGY UTILIZED

The main data collection methodology and instruments used in the AeQA Mid-Term Evaluation were desk/document review, interview guides, focus groups, survey/questionnaire, and site visits. The evaluation included visits to six higher education institutions; Balkh University and the Faculty of Education, Herat University and the Faculty of Education, four Kabul-based institutions – Kabul University (KU), Kabul Polytechnic University (KPU), Kabul Medical University (KMU), Kabul Education University (KEU), and two institutes – Civil Service Institute (CSI) and Institute of Diplomacy (IoD), plus a face-to-face interview with the Shaik Zayed University (Khost) ANGeL Center staff (while they were in Kabul), and an electronic survey of the Afghan Next Generation electronic -Learning (ANGeL) staff of Nangarhar University. More than 50 interviews were conducted with target beneficiaries – including six Chancellors & Vice-Chancellors, MoHE Deputy and Special Advisor, coordinators for Hartford University and the University of Colorado, and related United States (US) government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) and implementing partners. In addition, questionnaire and focus group interviews were conducted with 20 plus Masters of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) participants, questionnaire and focus group interviews of 150 plus student users of ANGeL Centers, focus group interviews of 60 plus faculty member users of the ANGeL Centers, five interviews of returning Overseas Masters Degree participants and an electronic survey of three participants in the US, along with reports from six US partnership institutions.

1.3. FINDINGS

1.3.1. Which AeQA Components and Activities are Working and Why?

- The basic and advanced Information Technology(IT) courses are working as they are providing a foundation set of basic IT skills, which will help the students and faculty in their studies and careers;
- The overseas merit scholar Masters Degree program in Engineering, Computer Science and GeoScience varied based on institution – influencing factors were oversight, committed coordination, institutional commitment, good English and an

Advisor who was willing to provide the one-on-one time to mentor and follow through with the participant;

- In general, the internships have functioned well although they have been mostly managed by other NGOs - need quality oversight and monitoring; AeQA's contribution has been mostly in terms of some stipend support; the internships need to be expanded – over 70% of the participating students are getting jobs; and
- Some of the partnerships are strong; the partnerships allow for a leveraging of additional resources but the transfer of some of these resources has been ineffective; where institutions have made a major commitment in cost-sharing, contributions have been more effective.

1.3.2. Which AeQA Components and Activities are not Working and Why?

- The higher education leadership and management component has not been working well – support has been fragmented and mostly focused on travel funds with little follow through and without a clear and definable outcome; the Higher Education Project (HEP) has provided the key leadership in ensuring quality assurance in this area;
- Bandwidth is too slow to support any e-learning platform or web-based research; lack of English skills limits access; ANGeL Centers need to develop supplemental materials and software in Dari and Pashtu;
- Digital libraries are imbedded in the e-learning platform which limits access to a higher knowledge of IT and English and a better IT infrastructure of support than currently exists; again, the majority of the materials are in English and not necessarily related to specific subject-matter areas of the faculty members;
- Curriculum reform is a long-term process that needs strategic planning and there is a need to work closely with the MoHE and the accreditation system; returning professors are required to create new courses, however, there isn't a system to integrate these courses into a unified curriculum; in general, all faculties need to undergo a teaching methodology course related to their field in order to integrate the new IT and course materials; need a process to publish their materials and books so they can be integrated into the system;
- Internships needs to be developed as an integral part of the curriculum/program with credit awarded; the competency-based clinical skills for Kabul Medical University students has been a challenge and is struggling for quality and good management; and
- MPPA program has struggled due to lack of clearly defined and implemented selection criteria; weak English skills on the part of the participants, weak project management in Afghanistan, weak pre-departure orientation and inadequate files.

1.3.3. What Initiatives are Emerging for Replication? Sustainability?

- ANGeL Centers have the potential of replication and sustainability if they are integrated into the larger systems at each institution of higher education and match more closely to the needs of the institution; currently, they are trying to do too much – need to become part of an integrated whole; need to do a better job of tracking and monitoring of results;

- Internships have potential for replication and sustainability – need to be developed as an integral part of the curriculum; and
- The three partnerships of University of Colorado, Hartford University and Ohio University are good; the models used by these institutions need to be documented as they have potential of replication.

1.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.4.1. What Mid-Course Corrections are Recommended?

Higher Education Leadership. HEP needs to continue to take the lead in developing standards and quality assurance in implementation of MoHE draft strategic/action plan; remove from AeQA outcomes.

ANGeL Centers: There is a need to review ANGeL center budgets; begin to integrate into the individual institutional IT plans moving towards sustainability; trainers need to be gradually shifted to institutional funds; no additional centers opened at this time until the role and function is more clearly defined and there is a plan for integration into the overall institutional plan, strong interest and need by Chancellors for more Centers.

Digital Libraries: The server needs to be moved in-country (possibly, Herat University; other options include Ministry of Higher Education, Kabul University or Kabul Medical University); develop in-country capacity to manage and implement; complete full cataloging of existing Afghan university library books, develop and implement a comprehensive training plan for faculty & students on how to access – by department.

Merit Scholars: Ohio University, University of Hartford, and University of Colorado programs need to be continued; Western Cape program needs to be phased out but allow those students with potential to finish their thesis within a given timeframe (e.g., 1 year); Aga Khan nursing/health services program needs to be re-visited as there are some concerns - could possibly merge with new HEP/Medical Education project.

Curriculum Reform: Reform can be successful in Engineering, Computer Science, and Geosciences with continued oversight and facilitation.

MPPA Program: The program should be continued but restructured with greater MoHE and KU collaboration and enhanced quality; depending on English proficiency, new partnerships with other regional management institutes (e.g., Asian Institute of Management) can be developed; for Cohorts 1, 2 & 3 Kabul University needs to take responsibility for assigning advisors, providing orientation and guidelines to assist in assuring quality advisement, and guiding the outstanding thesis; for Cohort 4 – the overseas component needs to be re-structured and delivered at Kabul University.

Internships: Internships should be continued, nominally supported and expanded in priority areas; KMU competency-based clinical biology program needs re-visitation.

Partnerships: Successful partnerships should be maintained, supported and developed.

1.4.2. What are Suggested Strategies to Further Enhance Project Objectives?

Strategies could include:

- AeQA project continuation with additional funding;

- Institutionalization and/or discontinuation of selected components and project activities along with continuation of selected components and project activities;
- Project discontinuation with current personnel contracts (December 09);
- Merger of viable components and activities into other USAID/higher education projects; and/or
- Some combination of the above with sufficient funding to achieve desired impact.

A decision is needed on each project component and activity whether to move toward institutionalization, or continue or discontinue based on overall USAID strategic objectives and the draft MOHE action plan. If the decision is to continue – an action plan is needed for the component and the corresponding activities with an estimated budget on what it would take to achieve the desired impact for that component and corresponding implementation activities.

2. ASSESSMENT OF ROLE OF MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1. ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION (MoHE) IN SUPPORT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan has recently emerged from 25 years of civil unrest, where the higher education infrastructure was completely destroyed. In an effort to restore the system, there has been a renewed effort to focus on the development of a national plan for institution and program review, which can guide higher education institutional development, quality assurance and accreditation. The World Bank and the Higher Education Project (HEP) have been the key players in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to assist in drafting the National Higher Education Strategic: 2009-2014. The plan is linked to the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and reflects the vision, goals, and objectives of the MoHE for the future in accordance with the New Higher Education law (draft currently under consideration by Parliament). The process began in 2003 at the MoHE and has continued with the recent efforts.

2.2. LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION & PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION–OUTCOME 1

2.2.1. What Have Been the Areas of Support?

Outcome 1 of the Afghan eQuality Alliance (AeQA) Project – ‘Higher Education Leadership and Management are Meeting Standards of Performance of Excellence’ was seen as an effort by the project to support the MoHE efforts on quality assurance and standards. There have been several Ministers of Higher Education and Chancellors of Kabul University (KU) during the past three years; thus, communication and participation have varied. Initially, there was more communication between AeQA and the MoHE and KU but this gradually changed and AeQA became less involved in the MoHE as time past. In September of 2006, AeQA provided travel funds for 350 participants to attend a national conference working session in support of the Higher Education law; in January of 2007, AeQA provided travel funds for the Deputy Minister of Higher Education to attend a Higher Education Accreditation Council, and later in 2007 and in 2008, AeQA provided some travel funds for higher education representatives and AeQA representatives to attend selected higher education conferences/ meetings, present related professional papers, and for study tours.

2.2.2. What Areas Have Received Little to No Support?

There has been no progress on development of a Masters Degree in Higher Education Leadership and Management and little support in development of a set of National Standards of Excellence and Quality Assurance. Support in the latter area has been primarily provided by the Higher Education Project (HEP) and the World Bank. There has been little to no tracking of Outcome 1 impact against a unified set of indicators.

2.3. TRACKING THE GOALS OF HIGHER EDUCATION – OUTCOME 1

2.3.1. Is AeQA on Track to Meet the Goals of Higher Education?

There is a need to support and track higher education plans/professional development efforts that align with MoHE draft action plans/areas of priority. The draft MoHE Strategic Plan Structure includes two programs: 1) Educate and Train Skilled Graduates with four sub-programs – professional faculty/staff development, curriculum and materials revision and development, infrastructure and teaching and learning facilities, and research and graduate instruction; and 2) Lead and Manage System of Higher Education with six components – governance, access, national admissions exam, accreditation and quality assurance, funding strategies, and Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS). Since there has been little tracking of the AeQA Outcome objectives and indicators, it is difficult to align specific AeQA results against the MoHE goals of education.

2.3.2. How to Improve AeQA Support for the Goals of Higher Education?

There is a need for improved clarification of the AeQA objectives and indicators in order to improve tracking of results of AeQA support related to the goals of the MOHE action plan. There is need for better coordination and collaboration with the MoHE, World Bank and USAID/Higher Education (HEP) efforts to improve complementarities. There is a need to better coordinate with the supporting institutional plans; for example, Kabul University, would like to support the 22-35 age group for the multiple year study/advanced degrees; the 35-55 age group for knowledge upgrades for 3 to 5/6 months of study; and over 55 group for the one/two week short-term visit or conference presentation. Kabul Polytechnic University has a similar plan.

2.4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The AeQA higher education leadership and management component has not been working as well as it should; support has been fragmented and mostly focused on travel funds with little follow through and no clear and definable indicators. HEP has provided the key leadership in ensuring quality assurance with the MOHE.

3. ASSESSMENT OF ANGEL CENTERS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

3.1. ESTABLISH AND SUSTAIN ANGEL CENTERS - OUTCOME 2

3.1.1. What is the Purpose of the ANGEL Centers?

The Afghan Next Generation e-Learning Center (AeQA) is a centralized computer site where students and lecturers learn to use information and communication technologies to improve teaching and learning skills. They learn these skills through a range of activities

that include self-study, accessing digital libraries, taking on line courses, and interacting with other on- line communities. The mission of the Afghan Next Generation e-Learning (ANGeL) Center is to strengthen teaching and learning. The AeQA goal was to open ANGeL centers at Kabul University, Kabul Medical University, Kabul Polytechnic University, Balkh University (2), Herat University (2), Nangarhar University, and Shaikh Zayed University (Khost). Bamyán and Kandahar Universities were included in the Cooperative Agreement, but were not implemented due to logistics and security. AeQA provided technical support to establishment of Open Learning Centers at the Civil Service Institute (CSI) and the Institute of Diplomacy.

3.1.2. What was the Methodology Utilized?

The main data collection methodology and instruments were the desk/document review, structured/semi-structured interview guide, survey/questionnaire, focus groups and site visits. The evaluation included visits to seven ANGeL centers plus two Institutes. An electronic survey was sent to Nangarhar University, and a face-to-face interview was held with the IT training staff from Khost. Over 50 interviews of target beneficiaries were conducted; i.e., chancellors, deans, trainers, faculty, and students. More than 150 students and 60 faculty completed questionnaires or provided follow- up information. (See Annex 4 for supporting tables and data for Outcome 2 - ANGeL Centers)

3.2. STUDENT USAGE, SATISFACTION, QUALITY AND RELEVANCE

A total of 7,386 students and faculty have participated in some form of training by ANGeL Centers since 2006. Of these, 489 were faculty members (411 male and 78 females) and 6,803 were students (4,939 males and 1,864 females).

3.2.1. What is Student Usage at ANGeL Centers?

Balkh University has the Highest Usage: Data shown in Table 1 (Annex 4) provides a snapshot of ANGeL Center usage from August 2008 -May 2009 (AeQA 12th Quarter Report) at the nine learning centers. The report showed that 1,765 students accessed ANGeL centers during the reporting period; Balkh University reported the highest usage, followed by Herat University, then the Kabul-based sites, and lastly, the Khost site.

Demand Exceeds Capacity: There are approximately 20 computers at each of the nine ANGeL centers. Demand exceeds capacity, resulting in 2-3 students at a computer which affects quality and satisfaction. This high demand was reported at Herat University, Kabul University and Kabul Medical University; KPU uses additional computers that were donated by the Institute of Asian Culture and Development (IACD), so it is not faced with this problem. Presented in Figure 2 are data on enrollment of students in different courses. ANGeL centers offer Basic IT, Advanced IT, Medical IT and computer-based English courses. From August 2008 - May 2009, 56% of the students in the universities were enrolled in Basic IT courses, 28% in Advanced IT, 9% in Medical, and 6% in Computer Based English, reflecting the introductory level of computer skills of the students.

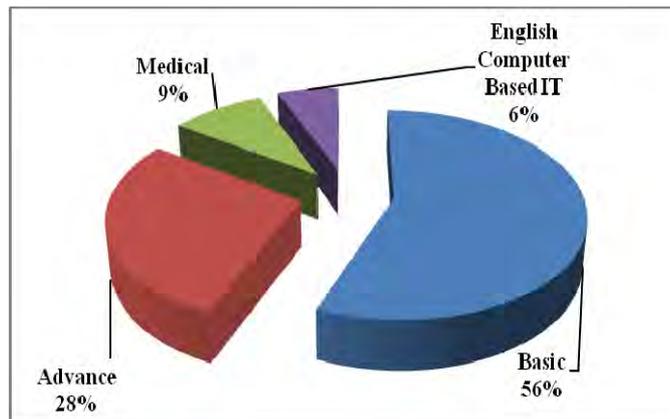


Figure 1: Student Usage at the ANGeL Center

Interviews about Access were Positive: This is reflected in the large number of students who have indicated interest in taking the Advanced IT courses. Trainers noted that many students wanted to have Intermediate Level IT courses. Many reported that they would prefer 90 minute classes to have additional time on the computers. Usage of ANGeL centers would increase if universities could operate classes in the winter when students are available for more intensive study. Usage could also be improved if ANGeL centers were wireless, so that students or faculty could use lap tops.

Female Usage is Lower than Males: Nearly all ANGeL centers made efforts to schedule classes around the needs and demands of students, which resulted in the majority of classes being offered in the afternoons or when most students are free. This schedule disproportionately affected females who often have to leave campus to return home by 1:00. This was particularly true at the main campus at Herat University, but also occurred at other campuses. Recruitment/retention strategies need to be implemented to address this situation.

3.2.2. What was the Student Satisfaction Level with Support at ANGeL Centers?

Balkh University: Students reported 100% satisfaction with support available during their ANGeL Center course. This appeared to be the result of the leadership skills of the team leader and support by the vice chancellor. The team at Balkh implemented teaching techniques which facilitate improved learning; one trainer assisted in the classroom while another trainer was teaching; staff created a supplementary compact disk (CD); and weekly handouts were provided to the classes. These efforts enhanced student satisfaction.

KPU: Students reported 100% satisfaction with support and length of the courses. IT Trainers made efforts to teach and provide materials in Dari as most students were not able to follow in English. Good management and coordination with the main campus IT center strengthened the ANGeL Center. Technical problems with computers were fixed by the IT staff. AeQA offered face- to- face English classes at KPU, which were well received.

Kabul Medical University: There was less satisfaction with support; 54% said it was always available and 38% said that it was sometimes available. Students said that when a computer broke down there was no technical support and computers were too slow to view websites. Survey data showed that students thought courses were too short with little opportunity to practice skills. Students in the medical field wanted more relevant content, but IT Trainers were unable to help. The Chancellor of KMU expressed concern that IT staff was absent often and AeQA should provide better management and monitoring of trainers.

Kabul University: Student support was lowest at Kabul University; only 36% of students said support was always available and 54% reported sometimes available. The ANGeL Center at Kabul University is large and nearly impossible for one person to teach without an assistant. Students were observed not following the course instructor, but surfing the net. Bandwidth is slow and cannot accommodate the needs of the computer lab. There are many large classes at Kabul University and better tracking/monitoring is needed to ensure progress.

Herat University: Many females enrolled at the School of Education; thus, 40% of the students who access the computer lab are female. High satisfaction was reported. Due to high demand, there are sometimes 2-3 people at a computer. Supplementary materials need to be created in Dari. The IT Manager provided support for the technical problems.

Khost and Nangarhar Universities: No student surveys were conducted at Khost or Nangarhar universities due to limited access.

3.2.3. What is the Quality of Teaching and Materials in the ANGeL Centers?

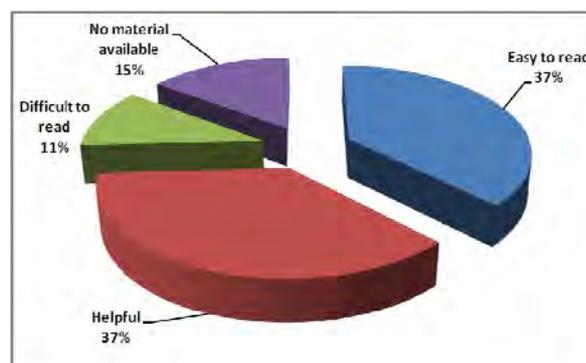


Figure 2: Student ANGeL Center Quality of Materials

Responses Varied: In response to the question, “How did you find the learning material?” Thirty-seven percent (37%) rated the materials as easy to read, 37% found materials helpful, 11% found materials difficult to read, and 15% said that there were no materials at all.

Students in General have Low IT and English Skills: Terms, references and commands need to be translated into Dari or Pashtu as students do not possess required English knowledge. Several students reported that they were unable to remember the sequence of steps to navigate a web page or complete other applications. Usually no written materials were available for reference. Because of varying levels of IT and English skills, students learned at different paces. Students reported that it was difficult to keep up with the teacher who moved too quickly through the content and didn't monitor student progress. Many centers had more than one person at a computer, so the faster student would do the work for others, leaving no way for the IT Trainer to assess individual progress. Students reported that they wanted 90 minute classes to allow time to practice more. Students complained that the speed of the computer was too slow. AeQA moved forward with establishment of ANGeL centers without enough infrastructures in place. The result was that fluctuations in electricity and limited bandwidth have made learning in the classroom a slow and tedious experience for students accessing websites or downloading material. For the most part, the ANGeL Centers do not have the capacity to support web research or the E-platform.

3.2.4. Is ANGeL Center Course Content Relevant to the Classroom?

Students are eager to learn IT skills as they understand that they will need these skills for future employment. Reported application and transfer of skills to coursework was low. Of all students 58% said that they sometimes could apply their knowledge in the classroom. Kabul Medical University is lower as only 35% said that they could always apply what they learned in their classes. Most students at KMU wanted greater access to medical websites or more specific information related to their classes. IT Trainers did not understand the medical terms and could not effectively assist. Having an IT person who understands the technical content of a specific field to assist the IT trainer would strengthen learning. At Kabul Polytechnic only 36% of students responded that they could easily apply learning to the coursework. This response is because classrooms need to be refurbished and few instructors use technology in the class or require students research. It appears students are learning IT skills for self development and not because they are expected to use the skills in their coursework.

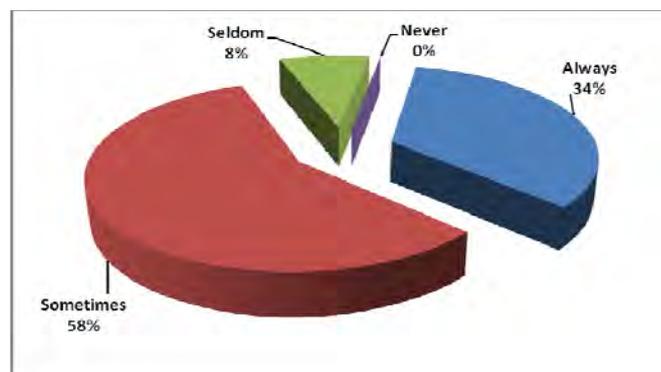


Figure 3: Student ANGeL center Application

3.3. FACULTY USE, SATISFACTION, QUALITY AND RELEVANCE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

3.3.1. What is the Usage of ANGeL Center among Faculty?

Faculty Usage is Low but there is Some Interest in Learning: Data presented in Figure 1 shows that faculty usage of the ANGeL centers is low. From August 2008 - May 2009 only 58 faculty members attended courses in ANGeL centers. Contributing factors are heavy teaching loads, low IT skills, lack of English, age and accessibility. Many faculty members have little control over their schedules and are teaching both morning and afternoon. If they are not teaching, they have jobs outside the university. Many are older and lack both English skills and interest in learning IT because they don't see a direct application to their teaching.

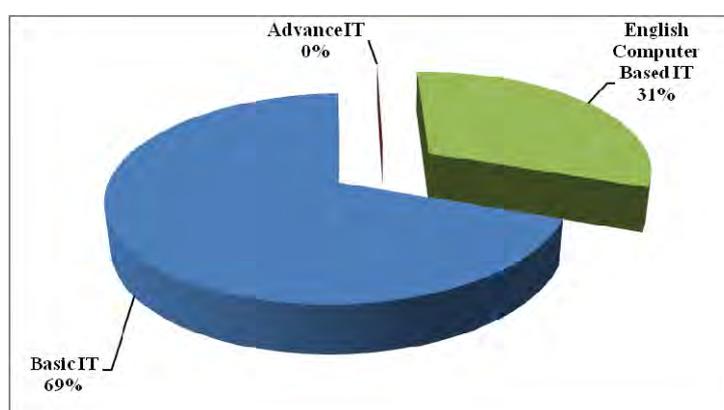


Figure 4: Faculty ANGeL center usage

Most Faculty took Basic IT: Figure 4 shows that 69% of faculty members took Basic IT and none took Advanced IT during the reporting period. At Khost University, 31% of faculty took a computer English based IT program to strengthen English skills; none took Advanced IT. IT Trainers report that because English skills are low, it is difficult for faculty members to learn computer skills. It takes 2-3 times longer to cover the same material taught to students. IT trainers need teaching methodology training and more materials in Dari and Pashtu are needed. The slow learning discourages faculty and is reflected in low usage.

3.3.2. What is the Satisfaction with Support for Faculty Members?

Though faculty usage is low, interest and satisfaction with basic IT courses are high. Faculty who attended Basic IT, Advanced IT and the E-learning courses reported that they had gained knowledge and awareness of new resources and websites for their students. The main concerns were lack of supplementary materials and adequate time to absorb the material.

3.3.3. What is the Quality of Materials and Teaching for Faculty Members?

In terms of quality, faculty reported similar results as the students. The teaching was sometimes too fast paced with some IT Trainers getting frustrated at the lack of retention. IT Trainers need teaching methodology to deal with this situation. Faculty members reported that they need more Dari or Pashtu materials to help them learn. Additional time in the class to practice the lessons and absorb the material would be beneficial. Faculty members observed at various sites appeared quite lost during the E-learning courses.

3.3.4. What is the Relevance of Materials for Faculty Members?

Relevance of material varied among the universities. At Balkh, 60% of surveyed faculty reported ability to apply what they had learned in the classroom. ANGeL Labs are reserved by faculty for students to browse websites related to course work. Some faculty members assign homework and have students go to the ANGeL lab to conduct research. A few professors have created power point slides. Faculty reported that they enjoy learning Basic IT and surfing websites related to their fields, but are unsure about application. Many lecturers still use lecture-based instruction. Faculty do not understand how to integrate technology into their information. Most of the IT Trainers graduated from the computer science and know IT computer content, but have not received any teaching methodology training. They also lack knowledge of different technical fields; such as, medical, geo sciences, engineering. This creates an inability to adequately address faculty member learning needs. The main resources found in the e-Learning platform, Advanced Placement courses and Digital Library, require advanced English and the majority of faculty members, even if they locate the content, are not able to read and understand the information.

3.4. IMPROVED TEACHING/ LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

3.4.1. How Has Teaching and Learning improved as a Result of ANGeL Centers?

ANGeL centers have had minimal impact on teaching and learning due to low faculty participation and skills. With proper planning and management, ANGeL centers could play an integral role in improving instruction in the classroom. At present, most faculty members are taking Basic IT which provides a basic foundation in computer skills. With a proper sequence of study, that is coordinated among the computer labs at the universities, faculty members could gain needed skills to use computers. Computer instruction needs to be centralized, tracked and monitored by the IT centers. There needs to be a basic sequence of courses available for faculty and customized to their individual content needs.

3.4.2. What are the Findings from a Faculty IT Needs Assessment Study?

ANGeL centers have not had a significant effect on teaching and learning due to low usage of faculty, limited English skills and bandwidth problems. In response to low faculty participation, AeQA conducted an IT needs assessment in June 2009. Results revealed that faculty want: 1) on-line courses on teaching methodology, 2) word processing and e-mail, and 3) testing on line (See Figure 5).

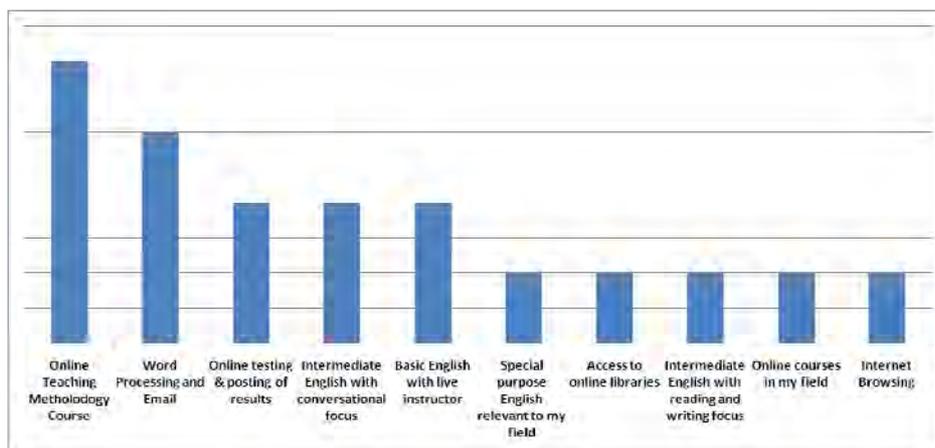


Figure 5: Faculty IT and English Needs Assessment

Top Need was for On-Line Courses in Teaching Methodology: The top need that faculty expressed was for on-line courses in teaching methodology, which reflects a desire to improve teaching skills. There have been limited face-to-face seminars in content-specific teaching methodology available for faculty in Afghanistan. The e-Learning platform is not adequate to meet this need. The E-Learning course does address web research skills, access to digital libraries, and help with putting course content on line, but presupposes that faculty members understand English and know how to create course syllabi. Faculty lack skills in both areas and need a basic course in teaching methodology in their native language prior to the e-Learning course. One week of coursework is not adequate for faculty to learn such complex computer applications; e-Learning course needs to be taught in smaller modules. Faculty IT skills and English need to be more developed before they can benefit from the E-learning platform, the Advanced Placement courses, the HIPPO website or English materials found in the Digital Library. An option is to put more of the E-learning platform in Dari or Pashtu. Even so, the E-Learning platform cannot be utilized effectively until the bandwidth problem is solved. In both of the e-Learning classes that were observed, faculty members were unable to complete assigned tasks due to low bandwidth.

Second Need was for Word Processing: The second application requested was to learn word processing and use of e-mail, which shows that many faculty members still need to learn basic word processing skills. This content is adequately covered in the Basic IT classes at the ANGeL centers, but AeQA needs to create a strategic plan to serve all faculties. If this were coordinated with the Chancellor, IT centers and faculty department heads, this goal could be reached.

Third Need was for On-Line Testing: The third most requested application was to have on-line testing and posting of test results. This reflects the long hours faculty members spend correcting and grading tests. They believe that some of this could be put on line, however; this may be just a case of trying to reduce workload, rather to improve quality in testing. Faculty need to be taught how to integrate components of their courses with web based learning and how to use on-line testing applications.

3.5. CAPACITY OF IT TRAINERS

Each ANGeL center has a training team who creates and deliver IT curriculum for their campus. It was observed that IT teams at Balkh University, Herat University and Kabul Polytechnic University are stronger due to good team management. More oversight and management is needed to create standardized IT curriculum in Dari, Pashtu and English for all the centers. Clear syllabi, curriculum and materials for each course need to be developed; along with supplementary materials, either CD or a manual, and a system of tracking and monitoring progress. Presently, each center operates independently and appears to implement its own course of programming. Quarterly meetings of the IT trainers from all the centers would help create a more cohesive system of delivery.

3.6. ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS

3.6.1. What has been the Role of Administration at Herat University?

There are nearly 7000 students at Herat University. The acting Chancellor of Herat University understands the value of computer-based learning as it complements his strategic plan for the university. His plan is built upon three pillars, discovery, learning and support. He sees the ANGeL center as part of discovery and anticipates that students and faculty will gain a foundation in IT skills, so that they can conduct research and participate in on line learning courses with other institutions. The Chancellor coordinates with USAID, Berlin University, the University of Florence and other institutions for support of different labs on campus. Each lab serves the needs of particular faculties. He sees the role of the ANGeL centers as open to all faculties and students who need basic skills. He noted that when the ANGeL center opened, AeQA should have conducted a needs assessment. As it was, faculty just had access to pre-made programs which were at too high a level for both their English and IT skills. He specifically stated that E-learning platform and class was too advanced for the majority of faculty. He said that faculty lacked knowledge in conducting basic research, and even in creating basic curriculum. The E-learning platform presumes that faculty already have this skill set. Furthermore, he stated that the overall goals and mission of the ANGeL centers was unclear to administration, faculty and students. Better marketing materials are needed to let faculty and students understand what is being offered at ANGeL centers.

3.6.2. What has been the Role of Administration at Balkh University?

Balkh University serves approximately 9000 students and, though there are numerous computer centers on campus, demand is higher than access. There are seven functioning computer centers at Balkh University:

ANGeL –	Structured classes, Free – 20 computers
Cisco-	Structured classes – Free- 11 Computers
IACD-	Structured classes- Free- 8 Computers
Iranian Site-	Charging \$5 a month- 15 Computers
SHEP-	40 for a half hour- 13 computers
HEP	Free- Lecturers only

In the opinion of the Vice Chancellor, the ANGeL center labs were of higher quality than the other labs because they were larger, modern and served more students. The faculty which has benefited most is the science students, who integrate research into their course work. Balkh would like another ANGeL Center at the new campus which opens next year.

3.6.3. What has been the Role of Administration at Kabul Medical University?

The Chancellor of Kabul Medical University reported satisfaction with the support of the ANGeL Centers. He said that there were quality computers which gave faculty and students a chance to upgrade needed computer skills for medical research. Bandwidth capacity needs to be improved as it is too slow to access medical resources. He wanted more basic medical IT courses and for IT Trainers to have some medical knowledge. A major issue is that Kabul Medical University lack an IT manager. The Chancellor would have liked AeQA to have coordinated with KU IT to provide one. Currently, a KMU staff member is handling IT but is too busy to deal with the technical difficulties of the computers. The lab space could be reconfigured to accommodate more students. KMU also needs to digitize the medical library and is looking for support from AeQA. To date, little progress has been made on this effort.

3.6.4. What has been the Role of Administration at Kabul University?

The Chancellor at Kabul University feels the ANGeL Centers have been useful but need better organization and to be institutionalized; would like to see more Centers in other faculties around campus. The Chancellor feels the digital library is badly needed but, unfortunately, KU hasn't done much and has been idle in their efforts. Infrastructure at the library is weak and needs upgrading; acknowledges there are bandwidth and electricity issues. The server should have been moved to Afghanistan long ago and the work done in Afghanistan. Curriculum reform has not been well coordinated – there have been some individual revisions but not a coordinated effort. KU professional development plan will support the MoHE draft action plan.

3.6.5. What has been the Role of Administration at Kabul Polytechnic University?

The Chancellor is supportive of the ANGeL Centers but believes the Center needs to be part of an overall IT plan. The ANGeL Center has been mainly used for non-computer science students as the Computer Science students are using the Korean compute labs. Likes the English language training program and feels that every Engineer should know English and the software applications in his/her area.

3.7. ADAPTATION, REPLICATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.7.1. How to Enhance Adaptation of Materials and Resources?

Computer-based curriculum materials need improvement to be adapted for use. Beginning with the Basic and Advanced IT courses; accompanying CD's need to be made; English versions need supplementary Dari versions, and content needs to be simplified. Some centers have done some of this, but it should be shared and

standardized. The English level of course content found in the HIPPO collection, digital libraries, and the AP Placement courses is too high for general use; content needs to be reviewed and better adapted for use in Afghanistan.

3.7.2. How to Enhance Replication of the Centers?

Presently, AeQA should not undertake replicating centers at additional universities. AeQA should review the role/function and on-going cost of existing ANGeL centers at each institution. A strategic and streamlined plan for each center should be coordinated with the Chancellor and Head of the IT departments before expanding any of the Centers.

3.7.3. How to Enhance Sustainability of the Centers?

ANGeL centers have sustainable potential if they are integrated into the larger systems at each institution. AeQA, the Chancellor and the Director of IT centers need to develop a coordinated institutional plan that includes support of staffing, networking costs and maintenance for each ANGeL center. At universities, where there are multiple IT centers, coordination is needed to ensure courses already being offered are not replicated. A clear budget for each center will need to be created and adhered to.

3.7.4. How to Enhance Tracking/ Monitoring of the Centers?

Each ANGeL center has its own sign in sheet and system for tracking attendance. This should be standardized and sent to administrative staff once a month for data keeping purposes. The management system to track progress and grades needs to be standardized, so that data is easily accessible for quarterly reports. Little monitoring of IT staff has occurred. IT staff reported that they have received no formal feedback on their teaching from administrative staff in Kabul. In some cases, the team leader gives feedback to staff, but observations on a quarterly basis need to be ongoing and consistent. IT Trainers are dedicated and hardworking, but lack formal teaching methodology skills.

3.8. FINDINGS AND/ CONCLUSIONS

3.8.1. What are the Lessons Learned?

Electricity fluctuations and lack of bandwidth impede course delivery and should have been solved early on for ANGeL centers to be successful. Materials for computer training cannot be directly imported into Afghanistan without substantial adaptation and review for English level; IT Trainers need to have methodology training to be effective and more oversight and management was needed by AeQA.

3.8.2. What are the Recommendations?

Course content in Basic and Advanced IT courses needs to be reviewed for end-user usability; materials found in the E-learning platform must be adapted for use in Afghanistan; professional development plan for IT Trainers needs to be created; and, ANGeL centers need to be integrated into the host institutions in coordination with institutional and IT centers.

3.9. ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL LIBRARIES

3.9.1. What is the Purpose of the Digital Library?

The University of Arizona Digital Libraries subcontract is to construct a complete digital library infrastructure and to build capacity of faculty and library staff for Afghanistan's academic libraries. The University of Arizona has been working with Afghanistan academic libraries and the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan since April 2002. The idea is to develop the capacity of Afghan libraries to work with an open source digital libraries platform and to catalog open content and educational materials that Afghanistan's universities can share. Since 2002, the University of Arizona has been providing training support to build a digital library in Afghanistan that supports the needs of the higher education institutions; library staff have made seven trips to Afghanistan and provided training to staff and faculty. The objective is to include holdings of all higher education institutions throughout Afghanistan and to provide and enhance access to scholarly information resources and open content that the universities can use.

3.9.2. What Methodology was Used to Assess the Digital Library Status?

The main data collection methodology and instruments used were desk/document review and questionnaire/focus group interviews. Twenty six people were interviewed from different institutions in Kabul; KPU team leader and computer instructor, KPU IT manager, KPU English Instructor, KU Angel center team leader, KU Angel Center IT manager, KU INLTC library acting director, KU INLTC library assistant, KMU Angel center team leader, students of KU Angel center, students of KMU Angel center, students of Law Faculty KU at INLTC, Head of Central Library KU, and KU Central Library assistant. (See Annex 5 for supporting information on Digital Libraries – Afghanistan)

3.9.3. What is the Status of the Afghanistan Digital Libraries?

Some Work Has Taken Place: The University of Arizona has modified Koha, an open source software that is used in worldwide libraries, for use in Afghanistan. A Dari translation of search commands and an English Dari open source Integrated Library System (ILS) has been built to organize Afghanistan's academic library holdings. The University of Arizona has scanned and digitized the *Da Afghanistan Kalany* also known as the *Salnemah* I Kabul from 1932-1990. This is an Afghanistan Yearbook which is compiled by the government of Afghanistan. To date, 31,212 pages of this collection have been digitized. In addition, UAL is working to digitize ACKU items from the Jihad Period 1989-2006.

UAL Continues to Evaluate Scholarly Resources: Resources include Springerlink, Ovid MedLine, Health Internet and others. UAL librarians regularly develop guides and tutorials to assist Afghanistan library staff with training. These guides include information on topics such as processing, cataloging and bar-coding for Kabul University Central Library staff in English and Dari languages. In February 2009, UA staff migrated two systems out of UAL to allow library staff in Afghanistan to input records into the ILS and ultimately to sustain the system. Currently two systems are running on virtual servers. The migration is lower cost and has a quicker response to download time.

3.9.4. What are the Challenges?

Lack of Leadership and Trained Personnel: Though UAL has been conducting IT Digital Library Trainings since 2002, there is a lack of trained IT staff at Kabul University. When the KU Library staff was interviewed, they said that they had little understanding as to what a Digital Library was, had little computer access, and no computerized equipment to catalog books. All work on cataloging was at a halt as they were receiving no payment from AeQA to finish the work. Library staff were using an inefficient and ineffective manual circulation system as most of the library still has not been bar coded. The library was dark, dreary and not modernized enough to manage a resource center with a Digital Library.

Behind in Delivery: Cataloged records in the Afghanistan ILS include selected holdings of book titles from Kabul University Central Library, Kabul Medical University and American University of Afghanistan. UAL staff has been adding titles, but UAL is not systematically receiving lists of library titles from the Afghanistan Institutions for conversion and uploading into the ILS. Do to staff turnover, lack of administrative reports, and limited access to electricity and computers, AeQA has provided little if any oversight management to the project and it is behind in its delivery of outcomes.

Lack of Understanding of Digital Library: ANGeL Center Trainers have received some training; however, of 20 or more students who were questioned about the use of Digital Libraries, few had knowledge of what a digital library was. UAL contends that unless Kabul University can establish a Library and Information Science degree program, sustainability of the digital library, as it stands now, will be a challenge. When the E-learning class was observed at both Herat and Kabul universities, download time took too long to access the digital library effectively. The bandwidth problem must be solved first.

Contract Ends in December 2009: The UAL current contract with the AeQA will be ending in December 2009. There has been some progress, but until major problems with basic infrastructure are resolved, the Digital library cannot be fully implemented. By the end of the year, UAL will complete the cataloging, conversion and uploading of 2-3,000 library books for the College of Engineering and the Department of English at Kabul University. It will continue to work with the KU Central staff to process 10,000 physical backlog materials.

3.9.5. What are the Next Steps?

Server Needs to be Moved and Staff Trained: The server needs to be moved from the University of Arizona to Afghanistan. A location needs to be found that has the required infrastructure to facilitate this. The libraries at Herat, Balkh, Kabul Medical University and Kabul University should be explored. Once the server is moved, the human resource capacity to maintain the collection needs to be developed. Previously trained Library staffs have moved on to new jobs, or have had no practical application to build upon their training.

Need for a Library/Information Science Degree and Updated Resources and Links: UAL states that without a Library and Information Science degree there will be little capacity; NATO bandwidth issue needs to be solved and there needs to be a system to expand access to resource providers and keep links updated.

4. ASSESSMENT/FACULTY DEVELOPMENT & CURRICULUM REFORM

– OUTCOME 3

4.1. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT/E-LEARNING

4.1.1. What Methodology was used?

The main data collection methodology and instruments were the desk/document review, focus group interviews, and site visits. The evaluation included visits to eight sites where the ANGeL centers have been established, focus group interviews of 60 plus faculty, and observations of e-Learning classes Herat and in the Kabul-based universities.

4.1.2. Are Faculty Using e-Learning to Support their Teaching?

Faculty possess Low English and IT Skills: The majority of faculty enrolled in the ANGeL Center courses take Basic IT or English. During the period of August 2008 to May 2009, 58 faculty members were enrolled in ANGeL Center classes (See Annex 4, Table 1) and 69% were taking Basic IT; and, the remaining 31% were taking English Computer-based IT.

August 2009 e-Learning Courses: Recently, e-learning courses were conducted for faculty from 7 institutions (See Table 1 below). It is unclear how faculty members were assessed for English and IT skills, and selected for participation in the course. The course was one week in length and 142 faculty members were enrolled; no evaluation was available for review.

e-Learning Course – August 2009			
Institution	Female	Male	Grand Total
Balkh University	6	18	24
Herat University	15	25	40
Kabul Medical University	6	16	22
Kabul Polytechnic University	3	6	9
Kabul University	4	13	17
Nangarhar University		28	28
Sheik Zayed University in Khost		2	2
Grand Total	34	108	142

Table 1: E-Learning Course/ August 2009

Faculty with English and IT Skills Reported Satisfaction: Faculty members who had good English language and computer skills reported satisfaction with the course. They were able to learn to upload syllabi and course content, access the digital library, and browse various websites. They found new websites and reported that they would like to take their students to the ANGeL center lab to see the sites. They said that the content in

the class would be useful for instruction. It is evident that e-Learning classes can be beneficial for faculty with proficiency in English and good IT skills.

Limitations in Bandwidth Hindered e-Learning: Observers in the course reported that limitations in bandwidth prevented many faculty members from actually being able to upload photos or syllabi easily. This resulted in faculty moving through the class at different speeds. Faculty with limited IT and English skills had trouble understanding and carrying out required tasks. Some professors in Herat possessed no English skills, whatsoever, and could not navigate the websites. IT instructors did their best to assist the faculty, but it was clear that many of them needed additional assistance as their skills were too low.

One Week Course on e-Learning is Inadequate: One week is too short for faculty to learn how to integrate technology into their teaching. According to the AeQA records, there was no follow up course to continue building skills. The course should be at least a quarter, and must be limited to faculty with advanced IT and English skills. If more of the platform were translated into Dari or Pashtu, more faculty members could benefit. Leveling the course and creating a beginning, intermediate and advanced e-Learning class might also be helpful.

4.1.3. Have Faculty Taken and Integrated Knowledge from HIPPO and AP Courses?

The majority of faculty members are taking Basic IT, so few have taken and integrated knowledge from the HIPPO or AP courses. Most faculty lack the English to understand course content found in these courses. Material in the HIPPO and AP courses need to be adapted to more simplified English or translated to Dari or Pashtu to be effective. No documentation exists as to who has accessed the HIPPO or AP courses.

4.1.4. What Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills have Improved as a Result of e-Learning?

According to focus groups carried out at Balkh and Kabul University, faculty members were motivated to use the e-Learning platform. Faculty members with high English and computer skills could navigate the system; one had studied in the states and a few others in Pakistan. These lecturers reported that they could upload syllabi and take their students to research new websites. There is interest among faculty and students to use material found in the e-Learning courses, but most lack sufficient English skills to fully utilize available content.

4.2. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT/MERIT SCHOLAR PROGRAM

4.2.1. What was the Methodology Used?

The main data collection methodology was the desk/ document review, interview and electronic survey/questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with five Merit Scholars in Afghanistan; electronic surveys with three active Merit Scholars in the US; and e-mail correspondence with Merit Scholar coordinators in the US. Included in Figure 6 are the

fields of study of the 35 scholars participating in the Merit Scholar Program. The fields included Engineering, Computer Science and Geo-Science.

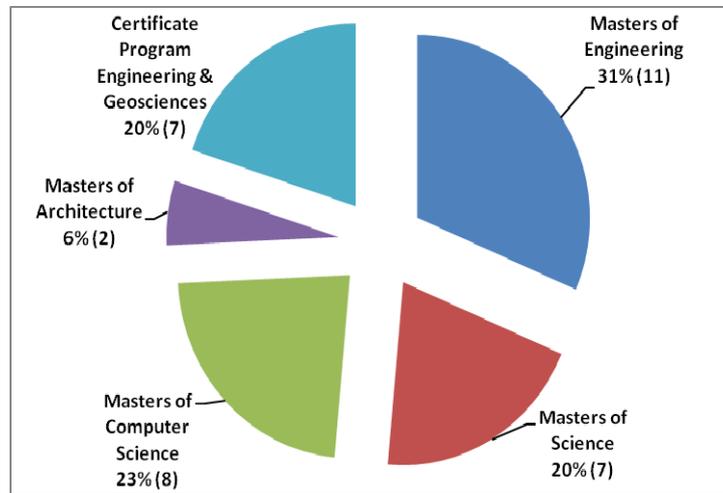


Table 6: Merit Scholars Overseas Study Fields

4.2.2. How Have Returning Scholars Developed Curriculum in Their Institutions?

University of Hartford: Progress is being made towards the goal of improved curriculum development with the University of Herat Engineering faculty. Two of a projected 13 faculty members have returned from the University of Hartford M.A. in Civil Engineering program, and 10 others, including 3 females, are studying engineering and architecture there now. The returnees have been promoted within their faculty; one has finished his thesis on water management and the other will complete his work on earthquakes by December 2009. They plan to develop and teach new courses; returning participants have increased knowledge of subject matter and English and are enthusiastic in their attitude.

Ohio University: To date, there are seven engineering faculty members from the KU Engineering department and Kabul Polytechnic University participating. The program required two years of teaching before starting the program. The participants are enrolled in the traditional Master of Science program at Ohio University. The program requires that the student present a full written thesis, maintain a 3.0 GPA and fulfill the English requirement. As part of the program, they are conducting research which will benefit their department in Afghanistan. Each is expected to design 3-5 new courses to implement upon return. Some have already requested additional training in curriculum development, organizational skills, and school management in order to have an impact upon their faculty when they return.

University of Colorado: Professors from Kabul Polytechnic University and Kabul University attend a nine month training course in engineering and geology. To date, one

professor has completed the 9 month certificate program and six are currently studying, one of them is female. In addition to course work, the professors are obligated to develop or revise three courses that can be offered upon return. A recently returned professor developed three text books in Engineering, uses some of the materials in his classes but the courses have not yet become a formal part of the curriculum. The University of Colorado provides a professor in geo-sciences for KPU. He is helping with curriculum reform and will assist with on-line courses in geotechnical engineering and in course upgrades.

Western Cape University: Agreement to develop a free and open source software management system and provide participant training at a Masters level for lecturers from the KU Computer Science department. The KU lecturers study in S. Africa for one and a half to three months during the winter when universities in Afghanistan are closed and are expected to continue work on their thesis when they return. The program is a thesis only program, but because English was low, faculty took some prerequisite content courses at the BA level before entering the regular program. Participants were assigned a Western Cape thesis advisor and, in addition, a professor came from the University of Maryland to assist the participant with their thesis and work on developing curriculum for open source software. Skype video conference seminars were conducted from the University of Maryland and provided support for the thesis. One professor has completed his thesis and another should finish by December 2009. The others will require more time as their English was weaker.

Hybrid Program was not as successful as Fully Integrated Program. The hybrid exchange program was financially inefficient and challenging to manage. English levels were too low for lecturers to take courses at the MA level; lecturers focused mainly on their thesis and were expected to continue working on their research upon return from South Africa. In reality, the lecturers were too busy with work and family commitments to independently continue their studies. .

4.2.3. What Departments have Upgraded Curricula, Syllabi and on-Line Content?

KU Computer Science Faculty: The faculty members are working to upgrade their curriculum with the help of Colgate University, University of Maryland and Western Cape University. Support with curriculum reform and participant training has helped the Computer Science Department to become a Faculty with three departments. The KU computer science faculty have received curriculum from German and Indian universities as well as Colgate. A curriculum that integrates components from the three universities is in use, but still needs support to be fully implemented. None has been translated into Dari or Pashtu. The University of Colgate gave the computer science department a set of books for object-orientated programming in Java, data structure and algorithms in Java, and materials for software engineering. All books are in English and used as reference materials for lecturers. The University of Maryland designed the Masters program for those lecturers studying at Western Cape University. The material content focused on software development, concepts and tools, in different environments. Some of the material has been adapted for KU use.

University of Herat Engineering Faculty: The long-term plan is to develop the capacity of 13 faculty members who will upgrade teaching methodology and curriculum. Textbook and course materials at the Engineering faculty at Herat University were surveyed and class sets of Engineering books were sent from an Indian University. Readings are in English and courses are delivered in Dari and English. The 13 professors who return with a Masters Degree in Engineering will develop new courses using the skills and knowledge that they gained. A strategic plan that is coordinated with the Chancellor, engineering department and University of Hartford is in place to upgrade teaching methodology and curriculum reform.

University of Colorado: An attempt was made to offer an on-line certificate program from the Center for Advanced Engineering + Technology Education (CAETE) for faculty who could not attend the in-country course but there was little interest due to a lack of endorsement from the Ministry of Higher Education and an unreliable infrastructure. The result was that only one participant participated and he complained that the course was too difficult, bandwidth too slow, and he was too busy. An improved selection process is needed if this approach is tried again and selected candidates must have an intensive period of English training and be briefed better on expectations.

4.2.4. How have Teaching and Learning Practices Improved?

There is a greater awareness of teaching resources available due to the e-Learning platform; Merit Scholars, studying at Ohio University, have coauthored papers with West Point mentors and presented them at the American Society for Engineering Education in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania and Austin, Texas; three participants were able attend their first conference but funding limitations prevented them from attending the second; three participants took the Excellence in Civil Engineering Education workshop held at West Point in July 2008 - an intensive five day working in educational techniques and will attend the International Conference in Perpetual Pavement 2009 hosted by Ohio University; and all three are motivated to return and assist with curriculum reform at KU.

4.2.5. What have been the Findings?

- Infrastructure and fluctuations in electricity limited effectiveness of e-Learning courses;
- High levels of IT and English skills are required for successful use and access to the e-Learning platform;
- Majority of the materials found in the HIPPO and AP courses are at too high level for access and usage;
- English content needs to be adapted for faculty in Afghanistan; and
- The Hybrid model Merit Scholar model used at Western Cape is inefficient compared to the integrated models in the US.

4.2.6. What are the Conclusions?

- Capacity building of English and IT skills should be continued to be successful with the e-Learning platform;
- e-Learning courses need to be lengthened or split into different levels; and

- Supplementary materials in Dari and Pashtu would improve learning.
- Merit Scholar programs at University of Hartford, Ohio University and University of Colorado have been successful and need to be continued.
- Returning participants have been active in curriculum reform (engineering, computer science, and geosciences)
- Returning participants have increased knowledge of subject matter and modern teaching methodology; are enthusiastic and positive in their attitude
- Western Cape thesis only model is financially inefficient and academically challenging
- English proficiency remains problematic
- Weak monitoring/tracking and support of the scholars by AeQA

5. ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNSHIPS – OUTCOME 3

5.1. STRUCTURE, SATISFACTION AND QUALITY OF MPPA PROGRAM

The main methodology used to assess capacity of the public policy and administration and internship programs were the use of focus group discussions and interviews with 20 plus MPPA participants; an MPPA survey/questionnaire with 10 participants; on-site visit of the Civil Service Institute and Institute of Diplomacy, and on-site visit of five internship programs; interview with senior-level management at the Ministry of Higher Education and at Kabul University; and review of project documents. (See Annex 7 and Annex 8 for supporting tables and data for the MPPA and internship programs, respectively.)

5.1.1. What is the Structure of the MPPA Program?

The participants of the first three cohorts were initially selected and vetted by the Civil Service Commission. The program had multiple vetting and verification issues. The program is now handled completely by Kabul University. The program structure includes three distinct program components; component 1 - 10 courses taught at Kabul University by international/national faculty in English in a condensed format of 30 hours/2credits over a one to two week period, component 2 - 4/5 courses overseas taught in English, and component 3 - a thesis written in English and supervised by an approved Kabul University advisor. The degree is offered by Kabul University. Fifty-six participants have participated in the MPPA program to date – 53 at the University of Washington - Cohorts 1-3 (44 males and 9 females) in which there were 9 defectors and three at the ASIAN Institute of Management. There are 18 participants in Cohort 4 (13 males and 5 females). Cohort 4 is currently taking courses at Kabul University (component 1). English proficiency has been the main challenge

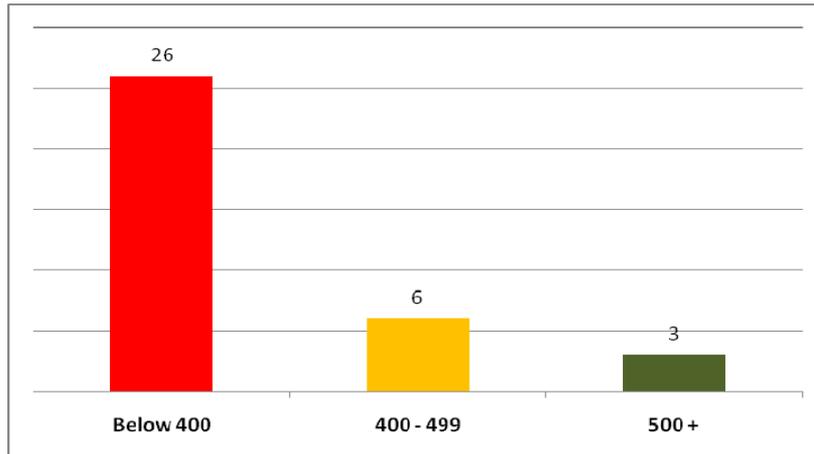


Figure 7: Illustrative Cohorts 1-3 TOEFL Scores

as noted by the TOEFL scores shown in Figure 7 from Cohorts 1-3; 26 out of 35 participants had TOEFL scores below 400 and another 6 were between 400-499. None had the required 550 needed for overseas Masters Degree study.

5.1.2. What is the Participant Satisfaction with the MPPA program?

Cohorts 1-3 rated satisfaction low; too many participants in the classes, classes too short, not enough time to cover the content, little support from AEQA, communication with some Professors was not good, and no idea of the grading structure. Satisfaction with the overseas course work was better although grading was still an issue and, mostly, the group was kept together with no integration into on-going courses except for ASIA Management Institute. Satisfaction has improved with Cohort 4. There are still issues with timeframe, insufficient handouts, too much lecturing, and a need for an earlier assignment of the thesis advisor.

5.1.3. What is the Quality of the MPPA program?

The quality of the teaching varied. The data in Figure 8 show that 80% of the lecturers were rated average. The common complaint was that the lecturers were not sufficiently prepared,

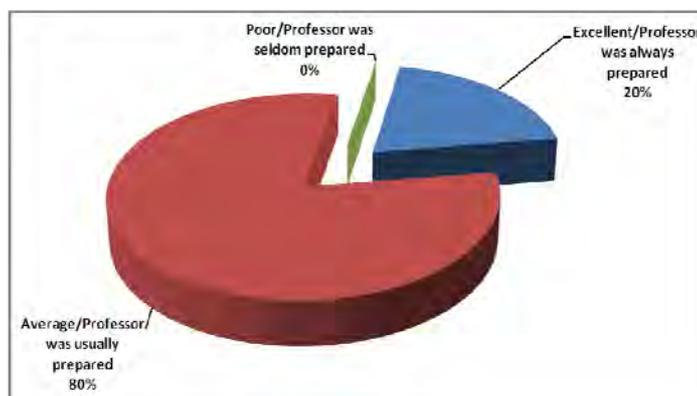


Figure 8: Quality of MPPA Program

which could be attributed to the English language issue. Teaching was mostly lecture and a general lack of syllabi and handout materials. Cohort 4 has shown some improvement.

5.1.4. How have Participants rated the Support provided?

The data in Figure 9 shows that project support was rated 60% - mostly average, ‘Sometimes I was unclear as to who could help me solve my problems’. Comments were as follows: administration of the program can be improved, we did not receive the support we needed in the US, and orientation/pre-departure training did not address much information that I need in my training.

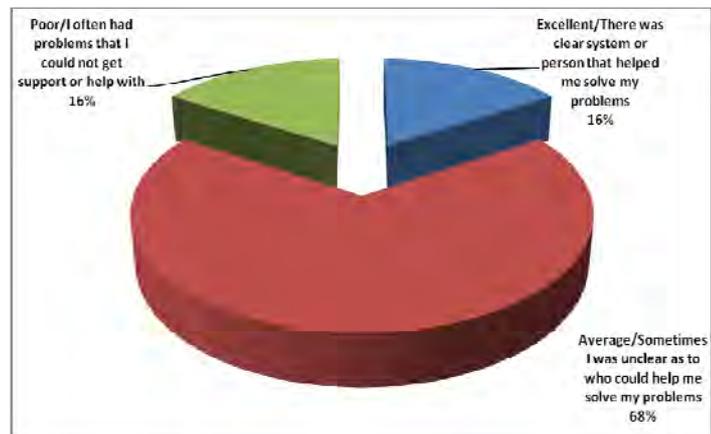


Figure 9: Support Provided

5.1.5. How have Participants rated the Relevance of the Program?

The participants found the program useful and it has given them an opportunity to develop their careers; and, in general, they were able to get experience from the program, learned how to do research and write a paper, learned about project and human management, and obtained an understanding of policy formulation. Participants now have more confidence, see changes in their knowledge and skills, and have developed their leadership and management skills.

5.1.6. How has Capacity in Public Policy and Administration been Enhanced?

The participants found the relevance of the program to be good in spite of certain issues. The NGO participants have typically received a promotion and have more responsibilities while the civil service participants, mostly, returned to their previous positions. A few have been given additional responsibilities. The lack of the completion of the degree is a key issue to promotion in the government positions. Some participants are leaving the government to take advantage of their new experiences and learning.

5.1.7. What are the Findings and Conclusions?

Findings:

Satisfaction. Cohort 1, 2 & 3: Selection/transparency issues; program clarity and support issues; in-country coursework satisfaction-low; overseas coursework/satisfaction-average; thesis issues exist (English proficiency was underlying issue)

Quality. Courses varied; overseas courses were rated higher than in-country courses

Transparency. Selection criteria, procedures and transparency improved with KU/Cohort 4

Academic Competency. Inspection of transcripts, grade averages, leadership/supervision potential, and work experience has improved with Cohort 4

English Language Proficiency. There is greater emphasis on English with multiple English language testing – listening, reading and writing with Cohort 4

Monitoring. Cohort 1, 2 & 3 student records are incomplete with few transcripts and grades; AeQA is making an effort toward maintaining a more complete student record filing system with Cohort 4

Professional Skills/Career. There is a positive change – careers have improved, some promotions; skill development includes enhanced ability to work in groups, more confidence, better English, and how to manage, make a budget and develop policies

Conclusions:

Selection. English Proficiency is still low but there is improved transparency

In-country Coursework. Improvement is needed; more materials, clear syllabi and curriculum that can be transferred to the program; develop a mentor program for Afghan counterpart faculty; needs academic writing component as part of early coursework

Overseas component. There is a need to re-visit: e.g. for low English proficiency participants, there should be an in-country Dari option followed by a thesis in Dari with an Afghan advisor; and for participants with 550 TOEFL, AIM or other similar institutes could be considered with a thesis in English and an Afghan advisor

KU Management Faculty. There is need for establishment of a KU management faculty/ department

Tracking. MPPA program needs better participant record keeping

Thesis. Advisors need to be assigned and standards established for a quality thesis

5.2. ASSESSMENT OF INTERNSHIPS

5.2.1. How has AeQA Supported the Civil Service Training and Development Department and how has this been Useful?

The civil service internship program is for recent graduates from any of the higher education institutions. The program was initially managed by the Training and Development Department (Civil Service Institute) within the Civil Service Commission. Placement was done through Civil Service Institute. UNDP is the main donor for the program with AeQA providing Cohort 4 stipends only. The participants indicated a need

for more educated trainers, improved learning material, and more of a focus on public administration. Skills acquired were computer, English, and management. AeQA also supported an exchange program in the Philippines where six Civil Service employees worked on a Human Resource Handbook and a Financial Management Handbook. This program was very successful.

5.2.2. How has AeQA Supported and Developed Internship Opportunities?

In addition to the stipend assistance provided to the Civil Service Internship/Cohort 4; AeQA provide stipend funds for the KU Pharmacy Internship, which is managed by FMIC; provided stipend funds, tea/biscuits and a lab coat for both the KU Biological Science Internships and KMU Competency-Based Clinical Biology Internship, both of which were managed by ACOMET Family, Loma Linda and Aliabad Hospitals; assisted in finding training space at KU and in graduation logistics for the Business Development Internship, which is managed by DAI/ASMED. AeQA has not been involved in the development or management of the internships.

5.2.3. What has been the Satisfaction, Quality and Relevance of these Internships?

Participating students were pleased with their internships as they gained valuable practical skills and believe they will get jobs as the result of the training. Oversight and monitoring by managing organizations was good although there was need for additional learning materials and more one-on-one mentoring.

5.2.4. How has Internship Opportunities helped to Strengthen Afghan Institutions?

There is a need to integrate the experience into regular university programs of study, provide credit, and expand the program. Currently, only a certificate of participation is provided. Internships should be an integral part of USAID and Higher Education training projects.

5.2.5. How has the Progress been Tracked?

AeQA obtained participant counts only but provided no monitoring or tracking of the participants as the programs were managed by other organizations. Essentially, AeQA's only role was to provide some stipends.

5.2.6. What are the Findings and Conclusions?

Key findings:

- **AeQA Support.** \$100 stipends were provided - Biological Science, Pharmacy and Civil Service/Cohort 4 internships; assisted in finding training space for business development
- **Management.** Coordination/management provided local hospitals/ACOMET, FMIC; UNDP/Civil Service Institute, and DAI/ASMED depending on the program.
- **Employment Opportunities.** Over 70% of the participants are able to find employment
- **Challenges.** Participation is selective and no credit is provided

Key conclusion:

- **Oversight, Access and Credit.** There is need for improved oversight and more program clarity; expanded access for students and higher education credit should be provided.

6. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANT TRAINING

6.1. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

6.1.1. What Management Guidelines are in Place for Participant Training?

The participant training programs – Merit Scholars Masters Degree, MPPA, and short-term study tours/conferences/exchanges were implemented as they unfolded without a clear set of management guidelines of implementation and staff responsibilities for support and monitoring; e.g., announcements/advertisements, selection criteria, vetting-verification, program structure, in-country management support, forms to be processed, overseas support and monitoring, and returnee and non-returnee tracking. In accordance with the USAID ADS Chapter 253 – Training for Development, there are specific programming policy directives and required procedures for handling (approving, obtaining required documentation, and tracking) participant trainees. Comments on these procedures are included below:

6.1.2. How was the TraiNet System Maintained?

The project is required to maintain the USAID TraiNet system on each participant. Because of staffing mobility and incomplete files, the TraiNet system was maintained but was incomplete; was not up-to-date, and had inconsistencies/errors and missing data; thus, making tracking of participants difficult.

6.1.3. How were Planning and Implementing Participant Training Activities Tracked?

AID Reference Form 1381-6 (Conditions of Sponsorship for J-1 Visa Holders) is the main form used for planning and implementing training activities. This was handled by Capacity Development Program (CDP) for some of the participants and by Washington State University for other participants. The form focuses on Visa Requirements rather than actual tracking and monitoring for results and impact. The project is responsible for the actual tracking and monitoring of participants separate from the USAID forms that are filed with the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade, office of Education (USAID/ EGAT/ED). AeQA/Kabul depended on their Washington State University office and the overseas institutional program coordinators for monitoring of the participants with little follow-up from the Kabul office.

6.1.4. How was Security Risk Documented?

A Security Risk and Fraud Inquiry Form is used to document security risk. This form was handled by CDP. After several of the participants defected, the form was updated to include three/four additional questions related to training and work activities during the

1996 – 2001 period. Verification of the data on the form is difficult as it can only be verified against previous data. If the selection and vetting period was lax, the existing information will be inaccurate and the Security Risk and Fraud Inquiry (SRFI) Form will include inaccurate information. Participants can be flagged and waivers requested, although most received their waivers and were approved for travel. An English proficiency exam (Communicative English Proficiency Assessment - CEPA) was administered by CDP although this exam is intended more for short-term cultural orientation type programs and not for Masters Degree work, which typically requires a TOEFL score of 550. The bottom line is that no Masters Degree participant without a TOEFL of at least 550 should have been authorized for travel.

6.1.5. How was the Overseas Monitoring Handled?

There is a Stakeholder Compact form that needs to be signed; which is a re-statement of participant requirements; participant training director rules and regulations/responsibilities – listing administrative arrangements to be made; and a training institution lead contact person rules and regulations/responsibilities – listing overseas monitoring items such as address, course of study, level of achievement, and departure arrangements. These items were handled sufficiently by most hosting institutions except the University of Washington where backstopping support was insufficient because of the size and nature of the group.

6.1.6. How were the Recovery Actions for Non-Returnees Documented?

The non-returnees are in ‘terminated’ status in the TraiNet system. Washington State University has determined the cost spent for training, completed form 253-1, and initiated actions to recover participant training cost; i.e., the institution has sent financial reimbursement statements to each of the families of the terminated participants. The EGAT/ED office has been notified in writing of the non-returnees and efforts are being made to track their status.

6.2. SELECTION, VETTING AND NON-RETURNEES

6.2.1. What were the Basic Requirements for Acceptance in Participant Training?

The main challenge was in regard to Cohorts 1-3 in the MPPA program. Criteria were established for the selection of Cohorts 1-3 MPPA candidates as per the Postgraduate Diploma and Masters in Public Policy and Administration – Announcement, Kabul University, 24 February 2007 included in Annex 7 and referenced in the Documents Consulted. The Civil Service Commission made referrals and preliminary selections. Kabul University is handling Cohort 4.

6.2.2. How were Students Vetted?

Vetting and verification of candidates were inconsistent and informal – especially, with the MPPA Cohort 1-3 candidates. Procedures for vetting and document verification were not clearly defined. There was minimal oversight and validating procedures in place resulting in increased program risks of candidates.

6.2.3. What Risks Exist with Respect to Desertion of Participants Trainees?

Low English scores was one of the main risks. Included in Annex 7 are TOEFL scores on the MPPA Cohort 1-3 participants; only three scores were over 500 but still less than the required 550 for graduate studies, 6 scores were in the 400's, and all remaining scores were less than 400. None of the participants should have been approved for study in the MPPA program in the U.S based on their TOFL scores alone, excluding the issues imbedded in the vetting and verification process. The group was too large to monitor and include in normal cultural orientation activities. In addition, the participants needed to be at the level where they could be integrated into regular courses with non-Afghan students rather kept together as a single group – which created an artificial quality issue. Lastly, there needed to be stronger guarantees up front; participants stated that many of the deserters were young, unattached, and recent graduates who had not worked for the civil commission for more than the required two years.

6.3. SUPPORT AND POTENTIAL ISSUES

6.3.1. What Types of Support were Available to Students during their Study?

AeQA provided financial support but, in general, that was it. The MPPA focus group information – Annex 7/Survey, shows participant pre-departure orientation and support, while overseas, was average. Participants responded that it was unclear as to who could help solve their problems. There was a lack of clarity in answers provided. Many inquiries to the AeQA office went unanswered, while other inquiries were slow to receive a response. A general comment was that the administration of the program can be improved. The merit scholar Masters Degree program had better overseas support, mostly because of stronger host institutional support.

6.3.2. What Issues need to be Addressed in Future Participant Training Activities?

Issues identified were written and oral English and ability to converse in academic English; increased program rigor in the Kabul courses; improved selection, vetting and verification process; clearer guidelines, standards and statement of expected results and training; and qualified professors for advising the thesis.

6.4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In general, there was limited vetting and verification of candidate documents and qualifications, average orientation/pre-departure procedures, inconsistent and incomplete files, poor management, and limited support in behalf of some of the host-institutions, especially with the MPPA program. English language was probably the most severe limitation and the participants should never have been sent for overseas study based on their English scores alone. The Merit Scholar Masters Program and MPPA programs are good programs and should be continued but re-structured with improved quality in selection and more clearly defined procedures, results and expectations; especially the MPPA program.

7. ASSESSMENT OF LINKAGES AND PARTNERSHIPS

7.1. LINKAGE AND PARTNERSHIP COMPLEMENTARITIES

7.1.1. What Linkages and Alignments are needed to Maximize Complementarities - AeQA Project, Other USAID Projects, and Projects of Other Donors – e.g. SHEP?

Some of the Better Partnerships: Some of the better partnerships have been University of Hartford, University of Colorado, and University of Ohio, where the institutions have made a strong commitment of support and provided more institutional cost-sharing and where SHEP/World Bank has made a contribution, especially at Hartford University. Each of these institutions had coordinators who understood Afghanistan, its unique needs and constraints.

Duplication and Need for Better Infrastructure: There was duplication of efforts between Colgate University, University of Maryland, and Western Cape University, resulting in some inefficiency in the computer science curriculum development and training area. The University of Arizona has done a good job in developing a digital library but failed to recognize the constraints of implementing a digital library in Afghanistan with its severe infrastructure constraints. Washington State University and the University of Washington underestimated the level of local support needed when hosting Afghans, especially, Afghans with limited English. Aga Khan has had its challenges in working with Kabul Medical University. Some of the private firms, who were providing free access to their resources (SpringerLink and EBSCO), now want to charge for access. Afghanistan didn't have the infrastructure to support e-learning; thus, resources, such as those made available by Digital Learning Commons and W3 Schools have had limited access.

Better In-Country Coordination Needed: There is a natural competition for resources in-country creating difficulties in synergy of energy for partnerships between donors and between USAID projects. It is hard to get Afghan partners to work together. There needed to be better project and donor coordination and stronger Afghan involvement and leadership in developing the complementarities. The coordination between HEP and SHEP/World Bank has been good at the MoHE, while the AeQA partnership has been weak.

Fewer Partnerships Better: It would have been better to have fewer partnerships and build a model to maximize complementarities and later add other partnerships. There was weak overall management of the partnerships with some overlapping resources and inefficiencies; better organization and coordination was needed focused toward specified objectives.

7.1.2. What are the Successes and Challenges Related to Building and Cultivating Partnerships?

A success has been the number and geographically dispersed partnerships (institutions and private firms) mobilized in support of Afghanistan. The challenge has been how to effectively manage and efficiently leverage the partner resources for Afghanistan. Partner

institutions and agencies are committed and interested. There has been a lack of project management in mobilizing these resources in an effective and efficient way to maximize in-country impact in Afghanistan. As a result, you had more institutional building on the partner side than the Afghan side. A network with good contacts has been built. Washington State University did a good job identifying partners, setting up MOU's and sub-contracts, and in defining expectations. The weakness was in the overall management, coordination and monitoring of the partner tasks related to achieving specific objectives and indicators.

7.2. MOBILIZATION OF PARTNERSHIP RESOURCES

7.2.1. How well has the Model Worked?

Some good products and outcomes were produced; however it was hard to implement the Afghan side. There was some good development but poor transfer to the Afghan system. Mobility of leadership at several key Afghanistan institutions was a barrier and the interests and visions of the new leadership varied. Initially, the Chancellor at Kabul University had a strong interest in IT, subsequent chancellors have had less. Herat University and Kabul Medical University, currently, have strong leadership and, thus, have some potential to be developed and, also, perhaps, Kabul University. Partners had certain IT technical competencies, but there was no pedagogy component to support the implementation. E-learning is a high level of delivery and presupposes a strong foundation in teaching pedagogy which doesn't exist in Afghanistan. There should have been more collaboration with the HEP/USAID pedagogy component. There is a need to look more at South East Asia and East Asian partnerships in the future. South Korea and Japan would be good partners, also India. Listed in the documents consulted are more than 10 websites with partnership possibilities for training. There are severe English language restrictions and visa issues when working with the United States. Overall, the model has had its limitations.

7.2.2. Has the Project Effectively Garnered Resources and Expertise - were Partners Properly Engaged?

There was minimal effectiveness in garnering the resources and expertise. Partnerships were identified and developed, but due to weak management, the project was unable to mobilize and transfer the resources and expertise. There was an underestimation of the destruction of the Afghanistan infrastructure and developing the human resources capacity was a major barrier. Mentally, Afghan leadership was still in a self-orientated and survival mode. Institutional capacity was at a minimum and should have been strengthened before attempting such an advanced approach. Still, the partnerships are there and can be built upon, especially some of the stronger ones. Partners were properly engaged but poorly managed.

7.3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Some of the partnerships are strong and have allowed for leveraging of additional resources. The transfer of resources has been the challenge and the inability to see how resources can be leveraged effectively. The infrastructure to support some of the resources has been minimal. There was a weakness in overall project management, coordination and monitoring of the tasks of the partners toward achieving focused results

related to specific objectives. There is a need to continue to support and develop the successful partnerships.

8. ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT OF AeQA PROJECT GOALS

8.1. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

8.1.1. To What Extent is the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project achieving its goals and objectives – that of improved leadership/ management and teaching practices of the participating Afghan higher education institutions?

Relative to improved higher education leadership/management, as noted in Sections 2.2, 2.3 & 2.4 on Participation and Performance in Support of Higher Education, there has been minimal impact as the AeQA higher education leadership and management component has not been working as well as it should; support has been fragmented and mostly focused on travel funds with little follow through and no clear and definable indicators. The Higher Education Project (HEP) has provided the key leadership in ensuring quality assurance in this area. Relative to improved teaching practices, as noted in Section 3.4 on Teaching and Learning in the Classroom, there has been limited impact. The E-Learning platform concept was too advanced for the available infrastructure. Faculty English proficiency, content and pedagogy needed to be improved prior to an introduction to an e-learning platform. AeQA has supported Merit Scholar Masters Degrees in Engineering and Computer Science and built the curriculum capacity of a few professors, but this has not been linked to a training plan. AeQA has done better with the ANGeL Centers – especially, the student dimension; e.g., see Section 3; i.e., Levels of Student Usage, Satisfaction, Quality and Relevance.

8.1.2. Are Stated Objectives Proving Useful for Achieving the Project Goal?

Stated outcomes, objectives, outputs and related tasks in the Cooperative Agreement are not consistent with the work plan and PMP. The stated objectives in the cooperative agreement were never developed to an operational stage where they could be monitored and assessed and, in some cases were changed and/or dropped. An illustration of a changed objective is to improve performance of 19 (now 7) Afghan higher education institutions and of dropped objectives (to strengthen the Afghan Rectors Conference, to develop a collaborative Masters Degree Program in Higher Education Leadership and Management, to modernize certificate and degree program catalogs, to develop a Gender Institute track, and to teach courses for MPPA program using e-learning platform.) These changes were not included in any contract modification; thus, it is difficult to assess usefulness of the original objectives. Objectives need to be revisited in view of the MOE draft action plan and remaining project funding.

8.1.3. What barriers, if any, exist to achieving project goal and objectives?

The main barriers were political instability, weak infrastructure, changing Afghan leadership, weak project management, and limited partner coordination.

- **Political Instability.** There was deteriorating security, which limited travel, creating challenges and delays in ANGeL center implementation in some Universities; as the security situation degenerated, implementation became more challenging.

- **Weak Infrastructure.** There was a general lack of basic infrastructure; sporadic electricity; limited bandwidth; limited English & IT skills
- **Changing Afghan Leadership.** There was mobility of top leadership at MoHE and in the participating Universities; MOUs should have been in place to provide consistency; consequently, Afghan vision, priorities and ability to manage varied
- **Weak Project Management.** Project oversight/accountability was weak and there were inconsistencies in the planning documents (cooperative agreement, work plan, PMP); little documentation of expected activity results; and limited understanding of USAID requirements
- **Limited Partner Coordination.** There were multiple partners but limited guidance in coordination and adaptation/transfer of resources; limited role of Afghans in the coordination, adaptation and transfer of the resources; and no Afghan advisory/steering committee

8.2. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

8.2.1. Is the project adequately staffed and managed to achieve its stated objectives and to respond to USAID reporting requirements?

The project was neither adequately staffed nor managed to achieve its stated objectives. Staffing changes were made in early 2009, which are referenced in modification #5, to better respond to project management needs; however, senior staff is still mixed in their management skills and USAID compliance capabilities. Multiple variations of the PMP exist but none have been approved. Multiple work plans exist, but it is difficult to ascertain what has been approved. The evaluation team was told that the project Work Plan for 16 June 2006 to 15 June 2007 had been approved but the plan contains no implementation activities. Reporting capability was weak, especially during the first two years. It appears that quite a bit of information exists about this project, but because file management systems are incomplete, it is difficult to access it easily if at all. In general, there was a lack of understanding of USAID procedures and reporting requirements.

8.2.2. Was the project financially managed in an effective and timely manner?

The funds were not managed effectively and in a timely manner according to the work plan. As of June 30, 2009, \$9,018,992 has been expended (including obligations) with a burn rate of about \$230,000 per month and \$11,440,642 of Federal funds obligated. The project should be well into a Showing Results stage and approaching Sustainability while, in actuality, it is at a much earlier stage, where it is still trying to define its objectives and indicators in order to track results. The work plan was not prepared with clear objectives and activities, making it difficult to financially manage in an effective manner. Data are included in Table 1 for Federally Obligated Funds and WSU Expenditures by Outcome along with cost-sharing. Procurement and subcontracts are well documented and WSU can account for the funds although there is a question about the cost-sharing procedures, especially for Outcomes 2 & 3. More-detailed cost-sharing documentation is needed.

	Federal Obligated Funds Authorized \$	WSU Actual + Obligated Expenditures \$	Cost Share \$
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Outcome 1		318,955	27,825
Outcome 2		1,987,783	4,891,271?
Outcome 3		2,036,970	2,044,643?
Outcome 4		1,358,670	186,110
WSU		2,298,368	
Sub-total/WSU e-mail 9/2/09		8,000,746	7,149,849
30 June SF269	\$11,440,642	\$9,018,992	6,764,193

Table 2: Federally Obligated Funds, WSU Expenditures and Cost Sharing

8.2.3. Is the Project Assisting USAID/Afghanistan to Achieve Strategic Objective 7, A Better Educated and Healthier Population?



Figure : AeQA Progress vs. “Should be’ Given Time and Funds Expended

SO7 Status Comment. Five years and 11.4 million dollar project – three years completed and 9 million plus spent. SO7 Status: Some progress - AeQA is at least a year and a half behind where they ‘Should Be’ in terms of time and money expended. AeQA is still in the ‘Showing Progress’ stage while they ‘should be’ well into the ‘Showing Results’ stage based on time and approaching the ‘Sustainability’ stage based on funds expended.

8.3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, because of a lack of consistency between the Cooperative Agreement, Work Plans and PMPs, it has been difficult to assess achievement of project objectives. Project management and oversight has been weak and, in general, there was a lack of understanding of USAID project management and reporting requirements. The work plan was not prepared with clear objectives and activities; thus, making it difficult to financially manage in an effective manner. The project was not adequately staffed nor managed to achieve its stated objectives; and progress toward the USAID SO7 has not been as great as it should be given the funds and time expended to date.

9. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, LESSONS LEARNED AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1. USAID EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Included are the evaluation questions and a brief response. This is followed by sections on key findings and conclusions about which components and activities are working? Which are not working? And why?

9.1.1. What are the Findings and/or Conclusions Related to the Evaluation Questions?

Each of the evaluation questions has been answered in the main text and major findings and conclusions have been provided; included is a reference to the section where the question has been answered and a summary response.

- Is the project assisting USAID/Afghanistan to achieve its Strategic Objective 7, A Better Educated and Healthier Population? (See Section 8.2.3 – Achieving USAID/Afghanistan Strategic Objective SO7 - *There has been some progress but results are not as far along as they should be based on the time and funds expended.*)
- To what extent, if any, is the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project achieving its goals and objectives – that of improved the leadership, management and teaching practices of the participating Afghan higher education institutions? Are the stated objectives proving useful for achieving the project goal? What barriers, if any, exist to achieving project goal and objectives? (See Section 8.1 – Project Goal and Objectives - *There was a lack of consistency between the Cooperative Agreement, Work Plans and PMPs; thus, it was difficult to assess achievement of project objectives. There was limited impact relative to improved leadership and management and teaching practices. Key barriers included political instability, weak infrastructure, and weak project management.*)
- Is the project on track to meet the goals of the Ministry of Higher Education, the ANDS and the new Higher Education Law? What has been the level of participation and performance of the Ministry of Higher Education in the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project? (See Sections 2.2 & 2.3 – *Participation by the MoHE has been*

sporadic; AeQA support to the MoHE has been fragmented and mostly focused on travel funds with little follow through and no clear and definite indicators.)

- What are the levels of use and satisfaction with the ANGeL Centers for Teaching and Learning? How have the ANGeL centers improved the teaching and learning in the classroom? What has been the role of the higher education institutions' administrators related to the ANGeL centers? (See Sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6 – *Students are satisfied – student demand exceed capacity; faculty usage is low but there is interest in learning; ANGeL centers have had minimal impact on teaching and learning due to low faculty participation and skills; administrators have reported general satisfaction and support of the Centers but would like to have seen better management/organization and more integration with their overall institutional IT plans.*)
- What knowledge, attitudes and skills have improved among lecturers in key academic areas? Which key academic areas have upgraded their curricula, course syllabi, and online content? (See Sections 4.1.4, 4.2.2, 4.2.3 & 4.2.4 – *Faculty members with high English and computer skills can navigate the e-learning platform and have a greater awareness of teaching resources available in the system; Computer Science and Engineering are the key areas working to upgrade their academic programs.*)
- How has the capacity in public policy and administration been enhanced in Kabul University Civil Service Institute? In what ways have the cooperation and internship programs with the Civil Service Training and Development Department been useful? (See Sections – 5.1.5, 5.1.6 & 5.2.1 - *Participants found the program useful; it provided them an opportunity to develop their careers; gain experience; learned how to do research and write a paper, learned about project and human management, and obtained an understanding of policy formulation; mostly, the civil service participants returned to their previous positions; a few have been given additional responsibilities; in general, internships have functioned well with over 70% gaining employment.*)
- What mid-course corrections to the project objectives and related activities, if any, are recommended for the remaining years of the project? For example, what innovative solutions and strategies could further advance the implementation of stated project objectives? (See Sections 9.2.1 & 9.2.2 – *Mid-course corrections are included for the following component/activity areas: Higher Education Leadership, ANGeL Centers, Digital Libraries, Merit Scholars, Curriculum Reform, MPPA program, Internships and Partnerships; for those component/activities continued and/or re-structured an action plan is needed with an estimated budget and specific activities and indicators of success.*)
- What linkages and alignment are needed between the AeQA project, other USAID projects, and projects of other donors, such as the World Bank/SHEP project to maximize complementarities and synergy of effort? (See Section 7.1.1 – *There needed to be better project and donor coordination and stronger Afghan leadership*

and involvement in development of the complementarities; there was weak overall management of the partnerships with some overlapping resources and inefficiencies; would have been better to start with fewer partnerships.)

- Is the project adequately staffed and managed to achieve its stated objectives and to respond to USAID reporting requirements? (See Section 8.2.1 – *The project was not adequately staffed nor managed to achieve its objectives; there was a lack of understanding of USAID procedures and reporting requirements.*)
- What are the successes and challenges related to building and cultivating partnerships? How well has the GDA model worked in this project? And are these geographically dispersed universities and private firms properly engaged? Has the project effectively garnered resources and expertise from around the world? (See Sections 7.1.2, 7.2.1 & 7.2.2 – *The success has been the number and geographically dispersed partnerships formed while the challenge has been how to effectively leverage the partner resources for Afghanistan; the model has had its limitations – partners were properly engaged but poorly managed; there was minimal effectiveness in garnering the resources and expertise – fewer and more selective partnerships might have been more effective.*)
- In keeping with ADS 253, what measures have been put in place regarding management guidelines for participant training? What risks exist with respect to desertion of participant trainees? What lessons have been learned and potential issues that will need to be addressed in future participant training activities? (See Sections – 6.1.1, 6.2.3 & 6.3.2 – *Selection, vetting and verification has been improved with Cohort 4 and maintenance of the TraiNet system has improved; there have been improvements in the English language testing process although written and oral English and ability to converse in academic English is a major challenge; no students should be allowed to enter an overseas Masters Degree program of study without a TOEFL of 550; there is need for increased program rigor in the Kabul courses and more qualified thesis advisors.*)

9.1.2. Key Findings - Which Components and Activities are Working and Why?

- The basic and advanced IT courses are working as they are providing a foundation set of basic IT skills, which will help the students and faculty in their studies and careers;
- The overseas merit scholar Masters Degree program in Engineering, Computer Science and GeoScience varied based on institution – influencing factors were oversight, coordination, institutional commitment, good English and an Advisor who was willing to provide one-on-one time to mentor and follow through with the participant;
- In general, the internships have functioned well although they have been mostly managed by other NGOs - need quality oversight and monitoring; AeQA's contribution has been mostly in terms of some stipend support; the internships need to be expanded – over 70% of the participating students are getting jobs; and
- Some of the partnerships are strong and have been able to leverage additional resources/ cost-sharing although the transfer of these resources to Afghanistan has been less effective.

9.1.3. Key Findings - Which Components and Activities are not Working? and Why?

- The higher education leadership and management component has not been working well – support has been fragmented and mostly focused on travel funds with little follow through and without a clear and definable outcome; the Higher Education Project (HEP) has provided the key leadership in ensuring quality assurance in this area;
- Bandwidth is too slow to support any e-learning platform or web-based research; lack of English skills limits access; ANGeL Centers need to develop supplemental materials and software in Dari;
- Digital libraries are imbedded in the e-learning platform which limits access to a higher knowledge of IT and English and a better IT infrastructure of support than currently exists; again, the majority of the materials are in English and not necessarily related to specific subject-matter areas of the faculty members;
- Curriculum reform is a long-term process that needs strategic planning and there is a need to work closely with the Ministry of Higher Education and the accreditation system; returning professors are required to create new courses however there isn't a system for them to integrate these courses into a unified curriculum; in general all faculties need to undergo a teaching methodology course related to their field in order to integrate the new IT and course materials; need a process to publish their materials and books so they can be integrated into the system;
- Internships needs to be developed as an integral part of the curriculum/program with credit awarded; the competency-based clinical skills for Kabul Medical University students has been a challenge and is struggling for quality and good management; and
- Masters Public Policy and Administration program has struggled due to lack of clearly defined and implemented selection criteria; weak English skills on the part of the participants, weak project management in Afghanistan, weak pre-departure orientation, and inadequate files.

9.1.4. What Initiatives are Emerging for Replication? Sustainability?

- ANGeL Centers have the potential of replication and sustainability if they are integrated into the larger systems at each institution of higher education and match more closely to the needs of the institution; currently, they are trying to do too much – need to become part of an integrated whole; need to do a better job of tracking and monitoring of results;
- Internships have potential for replication and sustainability – need to be developed as an integral part of the curriculum; and
- The three partnerships of University of Colorado, Hartford University and Ohio University are good; the models used by these institutions needs to be documented and have the potential of replication.

9.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MID-COURSE CORRECTIONS

Included are recommendations for mid-course corrections.

9.2.1. Corrections to Project Objectives and Related Activities

Higher Education Leadership: HEP needs to continue to take the lead in developing standards and quality assurance in implementation of MoHE draft strategic/action plan; remove from AeQA outcomes

ANGeL Centers: ANGeL Center budgets need to be reviewed; need to begin to integrate into the individual institutional IT plans moving towards sustainability; trainers need to be gradually shifted to institutional funds; no additional centers opened at this time until the role and function is more clearly defined and there is a plan for integration into the overall institutional plan, and strong interest and need by Chancellors for more Centers

Digital Libraries: There is a need to cover the server in-country (possibly, Herat University, else Ministry of Higher Education, Kabul University or Kabul Medical University are options); develop in-country capacity to manage and implement; complete full cataloging of existing Afghan university library books, develop and implement a comprehensive training plan for faculty & students on how to access – by department

Merit Scholars: There is a need to continue Ohio University, University of Hartford, and University of Colorado programs; Western Cape program needs to be phased out but allow those students with potential to finish their thesis within a given timeframe (e.g., 1 year); Aga Khan nursing/health services program needs to be re-visited as there are some concerns - could possibly merge with new HEP/Medical Education project

Curriculum Reform: Reform can be successful in Engineering, Computer Science, and Geosciences with continued oversight and facilitation

MPPA Program: The program should be continued but restructured with greater MoHE and KU collaboration and enhanced quality; depending on English proficiency, new partnerships with other regional management institutes (e.g., AIM) can be developed; for Cohorts 1, 2 & 3 Kabul University needs to take responsibility for assigning advisors, providing orientation and guidelines to assist in assuring quality advisement, and guiding the outstanding thesis; for Cohort 4 – the overseas component needs to be re-structured and delivered at KU

Internships: Program should be continued, nominally supported and expanded in priority areas; Kabul Medical University competency-based clinical program needs re-visit

Partnerships: The successful partnerships should be maintained, supported and developed

9.2.2. Innovative Solutions and Strategies that could Advance Implementation?

Strategies could include:

- AeQA project continuation with additional funding;
- Institutionalization and/or discontinuation of selected components and project activities along with continuation of selected components and project activities;
- Project discontinuation with current personnel contracts (December 09);
- Merger of viable components and activities into other USAID/higher education projects; and/or

- Some combination of the above with sufficient funding to achieve desired impacts.

A decision is needed on each project component and activity whether to move toward institutionalization, or continue or discontinue based on overall USAID strategic objectives and the draft MOHE action plan. If the decision is to continue – an action plan is needed for the component and the corresponding activities with an estimated budget on what it would take to achieve the desired impact for that component and corresponding implementation activities; for example,

- There is a senior Pakistan Digital Library specialist who was instrumental in setting up the Pakistan, Iraq and Madagascar Digital Libraries, and who, in collaboration with a senior Afghan, could transfer the University of Arizona Afghanistan Digital Library to Afghanistan;
- There is a senior Afghan Education/Public Policy specialist with a BA, MS and PhD from the US and former Professor, Dean and Head of the Research Center at Kabul University with outstanding English writing and public policy research skills who could direct the outstanding Cohort 1-3 thesis;
- A fixed amount of funds could be transferred to each higher education institution to assist in making the ANGeL Centers sustainability (6 months to one-year grant) with oversight by the institutional IT Centers and integrated into the overall institutional IT plans; and
- The Aga Khan nursing education subcontract could be merged with the Medical Education piece that HEP is now managing.



USAID | **AFGHANISTAN** FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

STATEMENT OF WORK

MID-TERM EVALUATION OF

AFGHAN E-QUALITY ALLIANCES

USAID GDA COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT NO. 306-A-00-06-00524-00

I. INTRODUCTION

This external evaluation comes at the chronological mid-point of the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project. It is a mid-term, formative evaluation whose objectives are to help determine what components and project aspects are working well and why, which perhaps are not and why, and to make modifications and mid-course corrections, if necessary, to help guide the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project over its second half. Examined should be the flexibility and adaptability of the project, as typified by the Masters of Public Policy and Administration at Kabul University, and the ANGeL center in the Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not planned for in the original agreement, but now realities.

The evaluation should provide pertinent information, statistics and judgments that assist WSU and its Implementing Partners, the MOHE and USAID to learn what is being accomplished academically and organizationally, and what relevant management, financial and cost efficiency findings present themselves. In summary, the evaluation will help all involved to better understand the initial results and contributions of the project, and help re-focus and strengthen it.

II. BACKGROUND

USAID/Afghanistan signed a cooperative agreement (No. 306-A-00-06-00524-00) with Washington State University (WSU) on June 16, 2006, obligating \$3 million. The project is slated to last five years, with an estimated total USAID investment of \$12 million, and slightly more than \$4 million in non-federal cost-sharing funds. Of the anticipated \$12 million in USAID investment, nearly 71% of the budget is for sub-contracts and 11.28 % for salaries.

The key goal and objectives of the project are the following:

- Improved capacity of the leadership and management of the five Kabul-based universities (Kabul University, Kabul Medical University, Kabul Polytechnic University, Kabul Education University; in a more limited sense the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) to meet standards of excellence and quality assurance;
 - a. Improved capacity of the five Kabul-based and six regional higher education institutions (Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Shaik Zayed University at Khost and Bamyan) to sustain services of an Afghan Next Generation e-Learning (ANGeL) Center for Teaching and Learning;
 - b. Improved capacity (knowledge, attitude and skills) of lecturers to teach students by upgrading their curricula, course syllabi and online content in key academic areas; and
 - c. Strengthened capacity of Kabul University and the Civil Service Institute to build capacity in public policy and administration.

WSU and its partners utilize two key strategies in the project:

- First, they use IT to provide access to up-to-date teaching and learning materials for the targeted Afghan universities to supplement—not to replace—lecturers, and to enable a variety of learning modes.
- Second, the project utilizes Global Development Alliances (GDAs) to provide experts with pertinent teaching or industry experience and peer-to-peer technical assistance and training opportunities to achieve shared objectives.

The Afghan e-Quality Alliances project has many initiatives and elements. However, its principal activities can be categorized into six inter-related components, all designed to help the Afghan institutions and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to meet standards of excellence and quality assurance:

1. The ANGeL center at each university is aimed at strengthening teaching and learning at all levels and in all contexts.
2. Faculty development is a key component of the project. Faculty members are learning to use the Internet to support their teaching. Some 53 scholarships for Masters degrees have been identified for faculty members, with 14 already studying in the United States. .
3. Internship opportunities have been developed for students in civil service, business development, radiology technology, pharmacy and clinical biology. Early indications are that about 80% of interns are hired permanently at the businesses, clinics and government offices where they performed their internships.

4. In the area of public policy and administration, the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project has worked to strengthen the capacity of Kabul University's Institute for Public Policy and Administration, and cooperated with the Civil Service Training and Development Department with the civil service interns.
5. To date, 25 Advanced Placement (AP) courses have been developed for students and university personnel. These AP courses cover a wide range, including Biology, Chemistry, Macroeconomics and Microeconomics, Psychology, Critical Reading and Effective Writing in English, Statistics, Earth Science and World History.
6. It is planned is to move the digital library currently residing at a server at the University of Arizona to Kabul University in 2009 The digital library includes the libraries catalog, databases and full-text journal articles from various scholarly sources, and useful and related educational resources sites.

III. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Many pertinent questions could be asked about the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project given its multi-faceted nature, the multiple partner organizations and institutions—representing both the public and private sectors—participating in the project, the many countries represented in its implementation and technical assistance, and this GDA project's links to national socio-economic development in Afghanistan.

The evaluation questions that should be asked are those to gauge the quality, relevance and level of satisfaction of project participants and beneficiaries related to the four goals of the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project presented above. Questions should concern the project's first two and one-half years as well as address forward-looking queries related to what differences, if any, could or should transpire in the project's second half. Anticipated and unanticipated outcomes will inform USAID, the MOHE, GDA partners, participating universities and others about lessons learned and possible modifications. To the extent possible, the questions should help reveal the qualitative outcomes in post-secondary teaching and learning, whether professional, university and organizational capacities have been enhanced, and important characteristics about e-learning generally.

The following are suggested overall evaluation questions. The questions relate to the goal and objectives of the project, as well as the linkages and partnerships with government, the USAID SO7, private firms and U.S. Universities:

1. Is the project assisting USAID/Afghanistan to achieve its Strategic Objective 7, A Better Educated and Healthier Population?
2. To what extent, if any, is the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project achieving its goals and objectives – that of improved the leadership, management and teaching practices of the participating Afghan higher education institutions? Are the stated objectives proving useful for achieving the project goal? What barriers, if any, exist to achieving project goal and objectives?

3. Is the project on track to meet the goals of the Ministry of Higher Education, the ANDS and the new Higher Education Law? What has been the level of participation and performance of the Ministry of Higher Education in the Afghan e-Quality Alliances project?
4. What are the levels of use and satisfaction with the ANGeL Centers for Teaching and Learning? How have the ANGeL centers improved the teaching and learning in the classroom? How has the capacity of the higher education institutions' administrators, faculty and students improved due to ANGeL centers?
5. What knowledge, attitudes and skills have improved among lecturers in key academic areas? Which key academic areas have upgraded their curricula, course syllabi, and online content?
6. How has the capacity in public policy and administration been enhanced in Kabul University Civil Service Institute? In what ways have the cooperation and internship programs with the Civil Service Training and Development Department been useful?
7. What mid-course corrections to the project objectives and related activities, if any, are recommended for the remaining years of the project? For example, what innovative solutions and strategies could further advance the implementation of stated project objectives?
8. What linkages and alignment are needed between the AeQA project, other USAID projects, and projects of other donors, such as the World Bank SHEP project to maximize complementarity and synergy of effort?
9. Is the project adequately staffed and managed to achieve its stated objectives and to respond to USAID reporting requirements?
10. What are the successes and challenges related to building and cultivating partnerships? How well has the GDA model worked in this project, and are these geographically dispersed universities and private firms properly engaged? Has the project effectively garnered resources and expertise from around the world?
11. In keeping with ADS 253, what measures have been put in place regarding management guidelines for participant training? What risks exist with respect to desertion of participant trainees? What lessons have been learned and potential issues that will need to be addressed in future participant training activities.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team should utilize five different, yet complementary and inter-related forms of gathering information. These are:

1. Document review throughout the evaluation process -, including project reports, donor reports, relevant studies and evaluations, MOHE documents.
2. Individual and group interviews – including WSU and subcontractors projects staff; project beneficiaries and stakeholders

3. Focus group discussions, if they are deemed useful and time permits; especially with university faculty and students, internship providers and recipients and returned study abroad participants.
4. Visits to project sites, such as ANGeL centers, participating universities, the Civil Service Institute, offices of the MOHE.
5. The administration of anonymous questionnaires using a Likert-type or similar qualitative/quantitative scale to select groups of people involved in and knowledgeable of the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project.

Despite heavy emphasis on Kabul and Kabul-based universities and other organizations during the project's first half, it is important that the evaluation team travel to both Herat and Balkh Universities to ascertain their needs and how they have been initially affected by the project. (Travel to these provinces must take into account current security considerations.)

Students, faculty members and university lecturers, selected MOHE personnel, university administrators, pertinent businesses and industries and associations thereof, current and former interns, government offices including the Civil Service Institute and the Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and selected personnel of the MOCIT should be the principal groups consulted. It may occur to the evaluation team that other organizations and international groups involved or contemplating initiatives in e-learning could be consulted. Lastly, the effects of security and the insurgency, if any, should be noted by the evaluation team. The evaluation may provide useful insights to post-secondary e-learning in conflict environments.

V. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND PARTICIPATION

This mid-term evaluation of the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project will be carried out through USAID/Afghanistan's SUPPORT Program, which is managed by Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc. in partnership with the Louis Berger Group.

The team should consist of a Team Leader, and one-two other expatriate consultants, and two local consultants (CCNs). All attempts should be made for the team to be comprised of an equal number of male and female members.

Above all, evaluation team members must be objective and should collectively possess expertise and practical experiences which will enable them to successfully carry out this evaluation. At least one team member shall have relevant experience with e-learning and the use of the Internet, and prior work with distance education and the use of educational technology, especially in/for higher education. Team members shall understand and be able to analyze the role of curriculum and materials development, particularly utilizing technology at the post-secondary level. They shall have pertinent experience with university leadership and management, and organizational development and administration. Experience with education in conflict and post-conflict situations is highly

preferred. It is expected that the team will apply innovative thinking to all topics of interest, including methods of enhancing outcomes under difficult circumstances.

Team members should be able to effectively understand and weigh the significance of cooperation between the public and private sectors and GDA-type arrangements. Since the internship programs are increasingly important elements of the project, they should be able to adroitly capture the nature and potential of these.

Evaluation team members should possess some successful experience with program and project evaluations. Knowledge of education and university education in Afghanistan is highly preferred. The Team Leader shall have prior experience leading evaluations. Lastly, team members should have solid data-gathering, analytical and writing skills to collect useful, relevant data and then synthesize them logically for optimal use for USAID, the MOHE, WSU, participating Afghan universities and government offices and others.

VI. SCHEDULE AND LOGISTICS

This mid-term evaluation should occur over a period of 37 working days in Afghanistan,. Two days are allotted for pre-departure preparation and meetings. A six-day work week is authorized for this evaluation activity. The suggested start date is late July-August, 2009.

WSU, MOHE and government institute personnel will brief the team at the evaluation's outset and help suggest places, groups and people the team should visit. They are also expected to assist the team with communications, setting up meetings and logistics. To the extent their time and resources permit, implementing partner personnel can accompany the team to selected project sites such as universities, places where interns are working, ANGeL centers, training courses, the Civil Service institute and others. The team requires exposure to a variety and diversity of experiences offered by the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project.

VII. REPORTING FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

1. The findings will mainly flow from the evaluation questions and results of those answers. However, there will likely be valuable, unanticipated findings arise that are pertinent to the evaluation, particularly since demand and serendipity have fostered program elements that were not foreseen when the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project was designed. USAID, participating universities, the MOHE, GIRoA institutes and ministries, WSU and its implementing partners themselves and others want to know what the project and its first two and one-half years of operations have shown, what has worked out well and what programs elements have been less successful, and the reasons for successes and shortcomings.
2. The evaluation should highlight which of the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project accomplishments and challenges are unique to it, and which are applicable to

similar programs. The possibilities of replication and adaptation are likely to be integral to this evaluation and its findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. As this is a mid-term evaluation, information and empirical evidence that can enhance the remaining two years of the project are important. Essentially, this section brings together information related to the quality of the project and for making decisions about it.

3. Following directly on the findings, conclusions and lessons learned, recommendations suggest the options open to USAID, WSU and its implementing partners, the 19 participating Afghan university and selected GIRoA institutes and ministries for the remainder of the project and the decisions that should be made. The recommendations should be clear, useful and informative to all parties concerned with the Afghan e-Quality Alliances Project. The recommendations will likely be of immediate academic, management, programmatic, administrative and perhaps financial assistance. Getting quality e-learning and teaching at the university level out to the provinces is crucial to avoiding a “Kabul-centric” approach. Finally, the recommendations will help USAID, Afghan universities and government institutes, the MoHE and the implementing entities to further enhance the project.
4. The Executive Summary of the evaluation report itself should briefly state the purpose of this mid-term evaluation, the methodology utilized, findings, and recommendations.
5. The report, including the Executive Summary, should provide a more in-depth treatment of the Executive Summary. It should not exceed 40 pages, not including annexes. The final draft report should be completely finished while all four team members are still in Afghanistan.

VIII. DELIVERABLES

1. The team should present a work plan, detailed evaluation schedule including the list of planned interviews and field trips for discussion and review with OSSD within two days of arrival in Afghanistan.
2. The team should schedule an initial briefing with the front office, OSSD and the Program Office within 3 days after arrival in Afghanistan.
3. The team should schedule a series of briefings with the implementing partner, commencing within three days of arrival in Afghanistan.
4. The evaluation team should submit to the OSSD Office for review copies of survey instruments, questionnaires, interview and focus group discussion guides that it intends to administer by the end of the fifth day of work.
5. Interim briefings and feedback on the team’s findings should be provided as requested by USAID or proposed by the assessment team.
6. After approximately 22 days of work in Afghanistan, the team will present its preliminary findings in a meeting with USAID, complemented by a PowerPoint presentation and/or a memo of up to five pages.

7. Quantitative and qualitative indicators should be clearly established and measured against a baseline. Anecdotal and observational data may also be useful for specific evaluation of pertinent findings.
8. Roughly 26 days into its work, the evaluation team will make a presentation on the preliminary findings, lessons learned and recommendations at a stakeholders' meeting attended by USAID, selected university personnel, the MOHE, GIRoA personnel, the implementing organizations, and perhaps selected other donors.
9. A draft report to OSSD and the Program Office should be provided four days prior to the team's departure.
10. Presentation of a final briefing to key USAID staff and other stakeholders should be provided two days prior to the team's departure from Afghanistan.
11. A final report which incorporates Mission input should be produced within 15 days of receipt of such input. The team should produce 50 hard copies of the report as well as a camera ready version of the report in both Microsoft Word and PDF format. USAID will distribute the copies, including to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) as mandated in the recently revised ADS chapter in the 500 Management Series, ADS 540, USAID Development Information (<http://dec.usaid.gov>).

NOTE: It is suggested that the examiner review the Annual Reports from 2007 and 2008. Also, the project web site provides a good summary of project history (<http://afghanequalityalliances.net/index.php?module=cms>)