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# **Afghanistan**

## **Non-formal education**

Lisa Deyo  
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# Nonformal Education in Afghanistan: Country Profile

Lisa Deyo

*lisa\_deyo@yahoo.com*

## Introduction

Universal primary education and skills development for poverty reduction and economic development are two education-related priorities of the Afghan government in this phase of the country's development. Initiatives in nonformal education have been marked by two distinct trends. The first is manifested in an array of nonformal education programs offered by nongovernmental organizations and governmental bodies. These efforts have been widespread, but loosely coordinated. Programs in this area have concentrated on community, home-based, and accelerated learning programs; civic education; civil society and local governance initiatives; health and hygiene education; livelihoods, technical, and vocational education; adult literacy education; and, to a lesser extent, peace building education. Target communities for vocational and livelihoods education include unemployed youth and adults, the internally displaced, returnees who could not return to their traditional livelihoods, ex-combatants, widows, orphans, persons with disabilities, farmers, and women. Some initiatives have targeted the *kuchi* or nomadic population.

A recent trend is marked by the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to pursue a more coordinated and comprehensive strategy through the Afghan National Development Strategy. This commitment on the part of the government reflects a shift from emergency programs to a longer-term strategy of rehabilitation and reconstruction. The national government is currently engaged in a cross-ministerial effort to develop strategies, benchmarks, activities, and outcomes to support the Afghan National Development Strategy. This cross-ministerial initiative seeks to align budgetary allocations with national development strategies and to build a culture of capacity building over what the Government of Afghanistan has called "capacity buying" (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, April 2007:4)

This document provides an overview of major initiatives in policy development and implementation of nonformal education programs in Afghanistan. The examples of nonformal education programs used in this document are taken from program documentation, strategic plans prepared for the Afghan National Development Strategy, and correspondence with English-speaking NGO and donor staff. They constitute only a sample of the activities taking place country-wide.

## Conceptualizing Nonformal Education

In Afghanistan, *nonformal education* is most often used interchangeably with the term *functional literacy*. Topics related to life skills and productive or livelihoods activities are integrated into functional literacy programs. A differentiation is made between life skills education programs and programs that promote the development of productive

skills and livelihoods. Life skills generally refer to the skills and knowledge associated with such topics as improved health and hygiene, literacy and numeracy, peace and tolerance, and child development. Training in productive skills refers to vocational, technical and livelihoods training, for example, areas such as carpentry, plumbing, agriculture, animal husbandry, handicrafts, and tailoring (BRAC, 2007; DACAAR, 2007; IOM, 2007). Local governance and civic education offered outside the Ministry of Education functional literacy program is typically referenced as a separate category. Equivalency programs have been established in the form of community-based, home-based, and accelerated learning programs for youth and “complementary” programs for adults. Accelerated learning programs, offered by national and international NGOs, cover the primary school curriculum in a shorter time than it would a student to complete primary school in the formal schools, thus assisting an over-age child or youth to “catch up” to his or her grade level and transition to the formal school.

### **Governing NFE**

The Afghan population’s right to education and the government’s responsibility to improve the economic well-being of its population is upheld in their national constitution, ratified in 2004. Article 43 of the constitution states, “Education is the right of all Afghan citizens and it is provided free of charge by the state covering up to the level of Bachelor’s Degree” (Ministry of Education, 2004:1). Article 44 outlines the state’s responsibility to “develop and implement effective programs” that address the educational needs of women and nomads and work towards the eradication of illiteracy (Ministry of Education, 2004:8). Articles 13 and 14 of the constitution outline the government’s responsibility to “design and implement effective programs for developing industries, expanding production as well as protecting activities of craftsmen to raise the standard of living of the people” ... and “within its financial means” ... “effective programs to develop agriculture and animal husbandry, improve economic social and living conditions of farmers, herders and settlers as well as the nomads’ livelihood” (Office of the President, 2006).

The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) provides the framework for policy development and allocation of resources and programs. According to the Ministry of Finance (2006), the Afghan National Development Strategy “lays out the Government’s vision and investment priorities for meeting its commitments in the Afghan Compact and Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals” (p. 4). The Afghan Compact, which followed the London conference with the Afghan government and the international community on January 31 to February 1, 2006, outlines “three critical areas or pillars: security; governance, rule of law and human rights; and economic and social development” (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2005:5). Under the pillar of economic and social development, ANDS has “goals, outcomes, benchmarks, and timeframes” in six priority sectors: infrastructure and natural resources; education, cultural, media and sport; health and nutrition; agriculture and rural development; social protection; and enabling private sector development. Five issues that cut across the Compact’s three

pillars are: gender equity, counternarcotics, regional cooperation; environment, and anti-corruption (ACBAR, 2007).

Under the pillar of Economic and Social Development, Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals guide the sector strategy for Education, Culture, Media & Sport. The Government's goal for this sector is to:

significantly improve the quality of, and promote equitable access to, education, skills development, and other social services in order to re-invigorate Afghanistan's human capital, reduce poverty, and facilitate economic growth (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Office, 2006:136)

The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger is the first Millennium Development Goal. Afghanistan's targets for this goal are the proportion of people "whose income is less than US \$1 a day decreases by 3% per annum" and the "who suffer daily from hunger decreases by 5% per annum" until the year 2020 (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2005:22). To achieve universal primary education, Afghanistan aims to "ensure that, by 2020, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (p. 22). One of the three indicators for this target is the "literacy rate of 15 to 24 year olds" (p. 22). Afghanistan's target for the MDG concerning gender equality and the empowerment of women is the elimination of "gender disparity in all levels of education no later than 2020." One of the two indicators for this target is the "ratio of literate females to males (15-24-years old)" (p. 22). The development and implementation of "strategies that promote decent and productive work for youth" has as its indicator the "unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, each set and total" (p. 24). Other targets and indicators relating to NFE concern environmental and maternal health and sustainable development.

### **Official bodies in Charge of Supervision or that Act as Coordinator of NFE**

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled oversee large-scale provision of non-formal education activities. The Ministry of Education has two branches, each overseen by a Deputy Minister, that, respectively, hold responsibility for formal education (primary and secondary) and functional literacy. The formal education branch of the Ministry is working with the donor community and nongovernmental organizations to provide non-formal equivalency education for overage youth through accelerated learning programs. The latter branch of the Ministry is translated into English as either the Department of Functional Literacy or Vital Literacy and is commonly referred to in English as the Literacy Department.

The Literacy Department is a main provider of adult literacy education; this department has the mandate to provide guidance and oversee NGO adult literacy initiatives. The Literacy Department is also responsible for vocational education and complementary schooling, which offers a "bridge to formal education" (KRI International Corp, 2007:I-2). Other ministries that offer functional and adult literacy education independently or

with assistance from the Literacy Department include the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled; Ministry of Women's Affairs; Ministry of Defense; Ministry of Justice; and the Ministry of the Interior (MOE, 2007; KRI International Corp, 2007).

The National Skills Development and Market Linkages Program (NSDP) operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled (MOLSAMD). NSDP has a steering committee comprised of representatives from 11 ministries, including the Ministry of Education. The chair of the steering committee is the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled (MOLSAMD). The Ministry of Education has traditionally offered vocational and technical education activities through its own department. According to the National Education Strategic Plan (2007), while the Ministry of Education will continue to play a strong role in technical and vocational education, MOLSAMD will be the lead Ministry. Other ministries that offer technical and vocational education are: the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, Ministry of Water and Power Supply, Ministry of Telecommunication, and the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Tourism (MOE, March 2007:21).

Additional ministries that incorporate nonformal education initiatives into their ongoing efforts include: the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock; Ministry of Commerce; the Ministry of Counternarcotics; the Ministry of Public Health; and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development.

### **Main Sources of Funding**

Funding for the Ministries comes from operating budget and the national development budget. The operating budget covers the recurrent costs of salaries, maintenance, and operations. The Afghanistan Development Forum (2007) states that the national development budget "has become the mechanism through which national development and reconstruction policy is taken forward" (para. 31).

The government makes a distinction between the core budget and the external budget. Core budget funds are channeled through the government; external budget funds are channeled directly from donor agencies to their recipients or contractors. According to the Afghanistan Development Forum, the national development and operating budget for year 1383 (2004-2005), combined, was US \$4,8334.4 million. The external budget was US \$3,454.8 million, and the core budget was \$1,683.2 million (2007).

The government's upcoming budget is set to align with the priorities of the Afghan National Development Strategy. In the 1385 (2006-2007) National Budget, the governance, rule of law and human rights sector and the health sector were budgeted to receive 6 percent each of the core budget. Agriculture and rural development was allocated 25 percent of the total core budget. Economic governance and private sector development was budgeted to receive 4 percent, and the Ministry of Education, 7 percent of the core budget (Ministry of Finance, 2006:9). The National Education Strategic

Plan's revised estimates for the Ministry of Education indicate that the Ministry of Education received USD \$168.52 million from the operating budget and USD \$53.75 million from the development budget (MOE, 2007:25).

Funding for the National Skills Development and Market Linkages program is channeled through the Ministry of Finance from the national development budget. For the year 1385 (2006-2007), the Ministry of Education received USD \$0.98 million for operating expenses and 1.32 million from the development budget for technical and vocational education. The technical and vocational education budget proposed by MOE for 1386 (2007-2008) is USD \$1.16 million from the operating budget and USD \$5.3 million from the development budget. Total estimated requirements for 1385 to 1389 (2006-2010) are USD 6.07 million from the operating budget and USD 15.74 million from the development budget.

Last year, the Literacy Department of the MOE received funds from the operating budget to cover salaries and other recurrent costs (Ministry of Finance, 2006); no development funds were forthcoming. The Ministry of Education estimates that for year 1386 (2007-2008) USD 4.2 million is required for functional literacy education activities from the operating budget and 6.51 million from the development budget. Over the life of the 5 year National Education Strategic Plan, the Ministry of Education estimates that USD \$22.25 million is required from the operating budget and \$45.97 million from the development budget (MOE, 2007:25).

The following UN bodies and bilateral agencies are among those that provide funding for nonformal education activities:

Functional/Adult Literacy Education	UNESCO, JICA, USAID, UNICEF, World Food Program
Life Skills	UNESCO, JICA, CIDA, DfID, Denmark, EC, World Bank/IDA, Norway, USAID, ADB
Technical and Vocational Education	GTZ, India, DFID, JICA, Canada, UNESCO, EC, Korea, Ireland, UNICEF, World Food Program, USAID
Agriculture and Alternative Livelihoods	DfID, USAID, JICA, EU, FAO, ADB
Equivalency Education (age 15+ only)	No donor identified in research for this document. Funding from Government of Afghanistan operating budget.

## Evaluating NFE

Ministries are incorporating their monitoring and evaluation frameworks into their strategic plans to support the overall Afghan National Development Strategy. Each Ministry has developed its own system of monitoring and evaluation. Two systems are cited as examples: the National Skills Development and Market Linkages Program and

the system used to evaluate adult functional literacy classes provided by the Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education. The National Skill Development and Market Linkages Program is developing a “system of quality monitoring and performance monitoring and institutional reporting management” (NSDP, 2007:13). NSDP envisions, in the longer run, that “institutions will be accountable through an accreditation system which will identify key ‘hallmarks’ of quality, based on international good practice and standards” ... and those institutions meeting the standard required on all criteria assessed, will gain and retain accreditation status” (p. 13). NSDP anticipates that some institutions will voluntarily adopt ISO quality standards as well.

The Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the classes offered in Kabul provinces; this department oversees the work of the Literacy Directorate in the provinces. In Kabul, one supervisor is assigned to support 10 facilitators. These supervisors monitor classes, train facilitators, and provide technical support. Less support for facilitators is available at the provincial level, where staffing levels are not as high and facilitator training is often not provided (KRI International Corp, 2007:1-5). Currently, at the basic education level, testing is decentralized; each facilitator prepares her/his own exam, and supervisors support the facilitators in the development of the exams. The student assessment system will be reviewed in the coming year. A national teacher certification system is under development for the formal school teachers; plans exist for the development of a certification system for literacy instructors.

The JICA-funded Project on Support for Expansion and Improvement of Literacy Education in Afghanistan (LEAF Program) is working with the Department of Functional Literacy to strengthen monitoring and supervision systems at the national and provincial levels, literacy database management, and teaching materials management (KRI International Corp, 2007: 1-1). The Ministry of Education has been involved in the creation of an Education Management Information System in response to a lack of information for decision-making. The LEAF Program is assisting the Department of Functional Literacy to develop the Management Information System for the Ministry’s adult literacy education initiatives. The LEAF Program is working, at this time, with the Department of Functional Literacy staff at the national level and in three provinces.

## **PART II: NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

Part II begins with an overview of policies and NFE programs operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Education; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development; the Ministry of Labor, Martyrs, Social Affairs, and the Disabled; the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Counternarcotics; and the Ministry of Public Health. The program areas covered are: equivalency education; functional literacy education; functional literacy and livelihoods education; technical and vocational education; agriculture and alternative livelihoods; life skills and civil society building.

These programs currently are operating, or have operated in the past on a nation-wide basis and at a large scale. For the most part, the Ministries provide policy directives, guidance, financial resources, and oversight to the NFE activities, implemented by national and international NGOs and UN bodies and by Ministry staff themselves. The second half of Part II provides examples of programs that are smaller in scale and, for the most part, are developed and implemented by national and international NGOs and UN agencies.

## **A. Governmental Bodies' NFE Programs**

### **Equivalency Education**

The Ministry of Education supports three approaches to the education of school-age children: formal schools, community-based schools, and community-based accelerated learning programs. Of the three, community-based accelerated learning programs or “interim schools,” designed to cover the grades 1 to 6 curriculum over a 3 year period, fall into the category of non-formal equivalency programs. Youth ages 10 to 15 enroll in these schools.

The Literacy Department supports a limited number of classes which provide equivalency education for adults or “complementary education.” According to the National Education Strategic Plan (2007), the Literacy Department offers literacy supplementary schools which cover grades 4 to 9; 40 percent of the program is focused on vocational content and 60 percent on literacy. Labor supplementary schools are for the employed; in these schools, learners have the opportunity to complete a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education then move on to night schools, where they can study up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. A third program is for completers of the accelerated program; in this program, learners study from grade 5 to 9. Content focus – 40 percent vocational and 60 percent literacy - is similar to the supplementary schools. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs offers a limited number of equivalency classes, in which women can complete a high school education.

### **Functional Literacy Education**

The Ministry of Education’s vision for its National Literacy Program is “a long-term literacy campaign to empower literate, healthy, and productive individuals and communities – the foundation of a literate nation” (Ministry of Education, 2006:1). Participation in literacy education classes since 2001 has grown tremendously. The number of participants enrolled in classes expanded from 7,359 in 2001 to over 386,000 in 2005/2006 (MOE, 2003:5; MOE, 2007:42).

Table 9: Number of enrolled students and number of graduates, 1381-1384

Year	Male Enrolled / Graduated	Female Enrolled / Graduated
1381 (2002/2003)	180,723 / 92,389	161,361 / 86,713
1382 (2003/2004)	199,447 / 115,824	157,891 / 91,888
1383 (2004/2005)	271,938 / 111,036	174,959 / 82,184
1384 (2005/2006)	190,728 / 52,937	195,713 / 67,168

Source: Ministry of Education, National Education Strategic Plan 1385-1389, 2007:42

The Ministry of Education, in its five-year National Education Strategic Plan, commits itself to a reduction in the number of the total 11 million non-literate adults (ages 15 and above), with assistance from partners. The Ministry's goal is to enroll 1.8 million participants in the literacy courses by 2010. Currently, the Literacy Department has approximately 4,000 literacy teachers, most of whom are located in Kabul province. The Ministry aims to train 17,000 literacy teachers and 3,500 mullahs to provide literacy classes (MOE, 2007:20). The Ministry plans to establish a High Commission for Literacy to engage in high level advocacy and awareness raising.

Most MOE-sponsored literacy classes have been offered in urban areas. In the upcoming years, the focus will shift to rural areas. The MOE plans to recruit at least 60 percent women for the literacy classes. The Ministry of Education plans to target minority groups, nomads or *kuchis*, and persons with disabilities. The MOE has recently adopted a policy to allow other organizations, with approval from the Ministry, to use their own materials.

The Ministry is currently supporting literacy education texts produced by the UNESCO LAND Afghan program and a women's literacy education text first drafted by UNICEF and the Literacy Department in the early 2000s. The Government of Afghanistan has offered a nine-month basic literacy program, consisting of three textbooks, in the two national languages: Dari and Pashto. In 2006, the MOE printed the new literacy primer produced under the Literacy and Nonformal Education Development in Afghanistan program (LAND Afghan). This initiative is part of a larger LAND Afghan project, established in 2003, to create a national system of non-formal education provision, including training in teaching methods and materials production and the provision of printing facilities (UNESCO, 2007). The text series produced by UNESCO and UNICEF are both offered in the Dari and Pashto.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNESCO, FAO, and the World Food Program entered into a strategic alliance to engage in a national literacy campaign, the Joint Program on Adult Functional Literacy. Under this program, the World Food Program provides food aid in vulnerable areas. In September 2007, a UNICEF representative announced that over 48,000 women have already completed literacy classes with support from UNICEF and over 78,000 participants have completed literacy classes as part of the Joint Program (UNAMA, 2007). At the time, UNICEF was providing support for 2,500 classes for 60,000 participants, and with the five UN

agencies involved in the Joint Program, providing support for more than 120,000 participants (UNAMA, 2007).

The Ministry of Defense offers literacy education classes with materials specially designed for military personnel. The Literacy Department supports this program by providing facilitators and organizing classes (KRI International Corps, 2007:1-5).

The Ministry of Interior supports literacy education for its police recruits. The low literacy level of its recruits is the greatest obstacle to training, and less than 30 percent of police force recruits who enter training are literate (Wilder, 2007: 65). Initially, two training programs were created for recruits: a nine week course that included tasks like report writing for literate recruits and a five week course for non-literates. A revised course for non-literates now includes the full nine-week course and five weeks training in literacy (Wilder, 2007: 30).

The Ministry of Women's Affairs offers literacy education in its Community Development Centers. The Ministry of Justice offers literacy education to prisoners; the Literacy Department arranges these classes (KRI International Corp., 2007).

### **Functional Literacy, Livelihoods, and Productive Skills Education**

The Ministry of Education supports two programs that offer both literacy and livelihoods education. The National Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations, with support from JICA, initiated a three-year "community-based NFE project on the development and management of Community Learning Centers (CLCs)." These facilities are used for literacy and vocational education, training programs, and materials development activities. To date, six community learning centers have been built in the Kabul area. The National Education Strategic Plan has called for the establishment of a 364 community learning centers in rural and urban areas. Literacy and vocational education will be offered in these centers. (MOE, 2007:86).

The second program is a follow up and expansion of the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program, a USAID-supported program developed and implemented by the Education Development Center and UN-HABITAT. This program integrates literacy, governance, and economic empowerment. LCEP developed participants' literacy and numeracy skills to support their engagement in the work of the Community Development Councils and overall community planning and development. The Literacy and Community Empowerment Program trained over 9,600 men and women across 190 communities in five provinces. One male and one female were selected as teachers for each village. Village teachers received altogether 35 days training. LCEP 1 offered approximately 430 hours of literacy education instruction over 36 weeks (12 hours per week). The program offers four modules: Self in Community I and II and Governance and Micro-enterprise I and II (EDC, no date).

Literacy and Community Empowerment Program 2 is a USD \$40 million dollar program to build the capacity of the Ministry of Education and expand literacy education programming that integrates literacy, numeracy, and governance along with training in business skills development and productive skills and the promotion of self help groups and community banks. The Ministry of Education is working with UN-HABITAT and the National Skills Development Program to design and deliver services. LCEP 2 is a five year program, which begins in 2007. The program will serve 300,000 adults in 3,000 rural and urban communities over the five-year period (Hakim, 2007). The duration of the educational program activities in each community will be approximately 18 months altogether.

### **Vocational and Technical Education**

Along with the technical and vocational education programs of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled, the National Skills Development Program estimates that more than 200 international and national NGOs are running such programs (MOLSAMD, 2007b:5).

Ministry of Education's Department of Technical and Vocational Education runs 42 technical and vocational education schools; of these, 17 are located in Kabul. A total of 8,029 males and 982 females attend programs in these institutions. Females attend classes in eight schools in Kabul and three schools in the provinces (MOE, 2007:40). The Ministry of Education offers a two-year vocational education program (grades 13-14); a three year program (grades 10-12); and a five-year program (grades 10-14). The curriculum, according to the Ministry, has not changed for approximately 30 years. The Ministry will use the labor market study conducted by NSDP as guidance in the revision of the new curriculum. Priority sectors for the updated programs are construction (plumbing, electrical); automotive and large equipment mechanics; information technology and agriculture (MOE, 2007:41). The MOE's future plans include training 12,000 people in finance and management and 13,000 in short-term technical and vocational courses by 2010. An additional 1,200 new vocational education teachers will be recruited by 2010 (MOE, 2007:81).

The National Skills Development Program (NSDP), led by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled, seeks to establish a national framework and system for vocational and technical education that is "responsive to labour market needs and which provides Afghan citizens with the knowledge and skills for decent work" (National Skills Development Program, 2006:1). The short term aim of NSDP is to "facilitate the delivery, through public, private and NGO sector training agencies, of essential labor market driven training which is procured under competitive bidding..." (MOLSAMD, March 2007b:3). The VET system includes:

short and longer term training, formal and non-formal, as well as training across all sectors (agriculture, commerce, services, construction and industry). It also encompasses the whole area of second chance skills

development (and integrated underpinning education), for those women and men whose self-development opportunities were seriously curtailed during the years of conflict (p. 2).

A priority expected result for NSDP is increased “wage and self-employment opportunities” for 150,000 unemployed and underemployed persons by 2010 through “the provision of market oriented skills training, business training and linkages to micro-credit and business development support services” (MOLSAMD, 2007b:3). Of the 150,000, MOLSAMD anticipates that 94,000 will have gained “worthwhile waged or self employment by 2010”. At least 35 percent of the trainees will be women and 5 percent of the trainees will be persons with disabilities (MOLSAMD, March 2007b:32). .

MOLSAMD offers short term vocational training to about 5,000 people in its 18 training centers. Approximately 12,000 people attend courses offered by MOLSAMD-registered NGOs. NSDP is assisting the Ministry of Education to pilot “shorter, labor market driven, craft level courses working in partnership with local workshops, small factories and construction sites so as to deliver/manage combined on-the-job and off-the-job training experiences (MOLSAMD, March 2007b:6). Additionally, the Ministry of Commerce, under its private sector development program, has offered business skills development courses.

### **Agriculture and Alternative Livelihoods**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MOA) goals are:

To restore Afghanistan’s licit agricultural economy by assuring food security and reducing poverty throughout Afghanistan; to assist farmers to increase production and productivity and to manage and protect Afghanistan’s natural resource base for sustainable growth; to improve rural physical infrastructure and irrigation systems; to expand markets and develop human resource capacity (MOA, March 2007:1).

Priority programs for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock are: food security, promotion of horticulture for export, expansion of livestock production and productivity, management and protection of the natural resource base, improvement of rural infrastructure and irrigation systems, increased production for expanding markets, and developed human capacity for sustainable growth (MOA, March 2007). Nonformal education program activities are components of these priority programs.

Funders supporting this Ministry of Agriculture’s Master Plan include ADB, DfID, EU, JICA, and USAID through the Re-building Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP). According to the Ministry, NGOs are “providing site specific gender mainstreamed and alternative livelihood community based projects” in support of this plan (MOA, March 2007:10).

The organizations affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture have delivered training programs with the aim to increase the staple supply and diversify household income sources (MOA, March 2007:15). Target audiences include farmers and farmers' organizations. Training has been provided in such areas as bee-keeping, poultry, food grains, and nutrition education. In the horticulture sector, various organizations are supporting farmers in nursery development, orchard, and vineyard and product export development. Other training programs have included livestock production, veterinary care, dairy industry development, cheese manufacturing, cashmere production, conservation, marketing, and natural resources use and management.

The Ministry of Counternarcotics promotes the alternatives livelihoods to poppy production and works with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock and its partner organizations. Training farmers in the production of high value alternative crops is one example of this kind of NFE activity.

### **Life Skills and Civil Society Building**

Two key NFE initiatives are the community-based health education activities promoted by the Ministry of Public Health and the promotion of local governance through Community Development Councils supported by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development under the National Solidarity Program.

The Ministry of Public Health has supported the appointment of Community Health Workers through the Basic Package of Health Services system to provide basic curative care, basic health education, reporting, and referral to Health Centers. Under this system, Health Centers have recruited and trained over 12,000 female and male volunteer Community Health Workers (CHWs), ideally one female and one male per community or coverage area. The Ministry of Public Health estimates that 40,000 are required for full coverage (MOPH, 2007). CHWs provide basic health education to community members on issues such as personal and environmental hygiene, birth spacing, immunization, birth preparedness, tuberculosis, malaria, and diarrhea and use of ORS.

USAID, the European Commission, and the World Bank fund government health services in Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Under the USAID-funded REACH program, the NGOs which were awarded grants to run government health centers in 14 provinces trained 5855 community health workers (MSH, 2006). The Community Health Workers attended a series of trainings, for approximately 8 weeks over an 8 month period of time to prepare them for their work in the communities. CHWs practice what they learned between training sessions.

The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development's National Solidarity Program (NSP) is designed to promote the development of local governance and "alleviate rural poverty" through the establishment of

a national network of elected Community Development Councils (CDCs); funding priority subprojects to improve access to social and productive infrastructure, markets, and services; strengthening community capacities through participatory processes and training; and promoting accountability and wise use of public and private resources (MRRD, 2006:1).

The National Solidarity Program (NSP) operates in Afghanistan's 34 provinces in 279 districts. By April 2007, 17,349 communities were mobilized under this program (NSP, 2007). In this project, the 23 NGOs and UN-Habitat contracted by MRRD build the capacity of the Community Development Councils through training in such areas as consensus-building, management, accounting, and monitoring. NSP provides block grants to communities of 25 households or more. NSP aims to serve 20,000 communities between June 2003 and June 2007. As of February, 2007, a total \$279,707,625 has been disbursed to the Community Development Councils (NSP, 2007).

Under NSP, Community Development Councils can fund public infrastructure and human capital development projects. Human capital development projects can include: "general education such as health and hygiene education, child development training, training for traditional birth attendants, literacy, and other topics not directly related to income generation" and "productive skill training" (MRRD, 2006:3). Productive skills training include "kitchen gardens, animal husbandry, bee-keeping, food processing, and vocational education" (MRRD, 2006:3).

## **B. National and International Non-Governmental Organizations Programs**

Following are examples of the diverse projects that have been designed and run by national and international nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies. Because most of these programs do not fit easily into one category, such as "equivalency education," the programs are listed by the implementing agency name in alphabetical order.

### **1.1 ActionAid: Education to Child Ex-Combatants**

ActionAid (2007) has provided education to child ex-combatants for their transition to the formal school system in the fourth grade. The organization reports that nine hundred children participated in life skills training and passed the tests required for entry to the formal schools in the fourth grade. Sixty percent of that group plans to join the formal schools. Action Aid (2007) reported that in 2006 "484 demobilized child soldiers received vocational training in areas such as: carpentry, tailoring, mechanics, black smith, motor bike repairing, embroidery and carpet weaving" (p. 5). Categories: equivalency education, livelihoods, and vocational training.

### **2.1 Aga Khan Development Foundation literacy education for mothers' councils.**

Aga Khan has developed a literacy program integrating use of the Ministry of Education adult literacy texts, REFLECT methods, and learner generated materials for mothers'

groups. This program is currently offered in Bamyan and Badakhshan. Categories: literacy education, life skills

### **3.1 BRAC Basic Education for Older Children**

BRAC offers a Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC) classes are for youth from the ages of 11 to 15. The two-year BEOC classes cover the first three grades of the MOE curriculum. After completion of the program, students are expected to enroll in grade four. Category: equivalency education (BRAC, 2007).

### **3.2 BRAC Re-integration of Child Soldiers**

BRAC, with support from UNICEF and WFP, has conducted vocational and technical trainings with the aim to reintegrate child soldiers into their communities. Non-formal education is one component of the wider program, which includes community sensitization, medical screening, and job placement (BRAC, 2007). Categories: livelihoods and vocational education

### **3.3 BRAC Agriculture and Livelihoods Training**

In October 2003, BRAC began offering training in integrated pest management, cultivation of maize and wheat, “para-veterinarian development, layer and broiler chicken farming, horticulture nursery, and kitchen gardening” to promote “economically viable activities from the agriculture sector and sustainable use of natural resources” (BRAC, 2007). BRAC has offered women training in “broiler farming, kitchen gardening, and horticulture nursery.” Categories: agriculture and livelihoods

### **4.1 Catholic Relief Services. Accelerated Learning Program & Community Learning Services**

Catholic Relief Services offers Accelerated Learning (AL) classes at the primary school level for youth and women who did not have the chance to attend the formal school system. Over 2000 children and women have participated in this program since 2003, and twenty two village libraries have been established. Early childhood development classes have been established in some areas to promote the participation of women with young children in the AL program. For women who participate in AL classes and do not transition to the formal school system, CRS has supported the development of their community leadership skills through the Community Learning Services (CLS) program. Through this program, CRS has supported the formation of 20 women’s groups, comprised of former AL learners and other women in the community. Women’s group members receive training in leadership skills; group members “define and determine their next steps for improving their and their families’ lives in the community” (CRS, 2007). Categories: literacy education, life skills, civil society building

### **5.1 Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR): Handicrafts and tailoring.**

A number of organizations and individuals provide training in handicrafts and tailoring skills and support in marketing and sales of these goods. One of the most well-known enterprises is DACAAR, supported by the Norwegian government. Category: livelihoods

## **5.2 Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR): Alternative Livelihoods Programs**

The promotion of alternative livelihoods is a core component of counternarcotics activities in Afghanistan. One such program is DACAAR's training and support in the production of the growth of high quality saffron as an alternative cash crop to poppy cultivation. DACAAR provides training in the production and processing of saffron, bulbs for cultivation, and the implementation of demonstration plots (DACAAR, 2006). Category: livelihoods

### **6.1 Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Program.**

The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), an initiative of the UN, began in 2003 and completed in 2006. 55,804 former soldiers and officers chose to be reintegrated; 2,759 dropped out. Vocational and technical education was offered through the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program. Former combatants took part in such training as demining, small business development services, agriculture, and more. Forty two percent of the trainees took part in agriculture programs, and 11,736 participants or 24 percent took part in vocational training. 374 took part in teacher training programs. An additional 24,536 women from ex-combatant communities had already participated in or were identified to receive education and income generation opportunities (UNDP, 2007).

One organization funded under the DDR program was the International Organization for Migration (IOM). IOM's re-integration program focused on activities that created "the conditions that allow combatants to re-enter their communities, by addressing the former soldiers' income needs and employing additional capacity building, skills development and business support initiatives." Carpentry and metal work are two trades for which IOM provided training (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2007). As part of this program, IOM provided literacy education one hour per day, taught by literate former combatants. Categories: livelihoods and vocational education for ex-combatants and those affected by war, literacy education.

### **7.1 GTZ and Heidelberger Druckmaschinen Osteuropa Vertriebs GmbH (HOV).**

GTZ writes, "In a public-private partnership (PPP) project with GTZ, Heidelberger Druckmaschinen Osteuropa Vertriebs GmbH (HOV) company is building a training centre for print and prepress. HOV is aiming not only to provide a solid training for its own employees but also to give local employees an opportunity to obtain qualified vocational training" (GTZ, 2007). HOV will design and implement the training programs for men and women. Category: vocational education as a private-public sector initiative

### **8.1 Joint Electoral Management Body. Civic Education**

The Joint Electoral Management Body was "an independent body mandated to administer, regulate and oversee the electoral process during the transitional period in Afghanistan." The JEMB was a "temporary merger of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the UNAMA Electoral Component (UEC)" (JEMB, 2005). The Joint Electoral Management Body carried out a nation-wide civic education campaign to accompany to complement the nation-wide voter registration campaign prior to the

National Assembly and provincial council elections in 2005. JEMB aimed to “provide Afghan communities with accurate, culturally sensitive and timely election information; encourage and promote the involvement of Afghan women in the election process; and to contribute to the capacity building of Afghan civil society and staff in civic education and public information” (JEMB, 2005). JEMB reports that 1872 civic educators reached over 9.5 million citizens in face-to-face outreach activities.

Civic educators conducted community meetings twice, per village. Voter registration was the topic of the first meeting and the polling process the topic of the second meeting. Civic educators also used briefings or “gatherings conducted in public places such as markets, public meeting places, parks, etc.” to get the message out, and they conducted mock elections to help familiarize “Afghans with polling day procedures and demonstrate how to clearly mark the ballot papers” (JEMB, 2005). Other means of public outreach included radio, TV, magazines, and mobile cinema, radio, and theater (JEMB, 2005).  
Category: civic education

### **9.1 Learning for Life**

Learning for Life (LfL) is an adult literacy and learning initiative designed to create pool of women and older girls in rural areas of 12 provinces qualified for Community Health Worker (CHW) and Community Midwifery training. The first tier of classes designed was a nine-month Foundations Program - multi-grade classes covering reading, writing and numeracy skills at grades 1 to 6 levels, religion/social studies, and health-related topics. There was a slightly greater focus on the literacy and numeracy aspects of this program. Altogether 8000 women participated in 360 Foundation. Foundations facilitators were paid around \$50 monthly.

The six-month Bridging Program was for women with at least a 6<sup>th</sup> grade education. Altogether 530 women in 26 Bridging classes participated in the program. Program staff recruited women, age 18 and over. Priority was given to women who wanted to continue their studies in the community midwifery education program and serve in a rural community. The program covered skills and knowledge that applicants required for entry to the community midwifery education program. Program activities also supported the development of skills used in midwifery practice, such as reporting, interpersonal skills, and math. Priority subject matter was identified by community midwifery program faculty and students and informed by the community midwifery education curriculum. Program activities focused on four domains: language, math, communication, and health.

Organizations involved in the creation of the program were the University of Massachusetts, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Management Sciences for Health. Afghan and international NGO partners implemented classes as part of the REACH program. Foundations classes were later offered by a few organizations with funding from UNIFEM. Foundations classes are now offered by CARE and the IRC through the Partnership for Advancing Community Education program. Categories: Life skills and literacy education for all participants, and livelihoods education for those who would apply for midwifery training.

### **10.1 Non-governmental Organizations' Literacy Education Programs (various)**

A sampling of adult literacy education providers include the ActionAid, Afghan Women's Education Center, Shuhuda, CCA, Child Fund Afghanistan, EAC, Future Generations, Afghan Institute of Learning, HAWCA, AWRC, Sanayee Development Foundation, Norwegian Church Aid, and Just for Afghan Capacity and Knowledge. Child Fund Afghanistan has run literacy, numeracy and life skills education for 38,116 persons in the northern provinces. Over half that number was women. Action Aid ran 50 REFLECT circles, comprised of altogether 2000 women, in 2006. The documentation did not provide detailed information about the participants or program activities. The age range of the participants in these classes is not known. Category: literacy education.

**11.1 Norwegian Church Aid** and partner organizations offer various educational opportunities for women: "income generating projects for war widows, veterinary training for women, and education of women 'barefoot' engineers in the use of solar energy sources" (Haug & Sarwari, 2006:26). Category: livelihoods education

### **12.1 Sanayee Development Foundation Human Rights Training**

Sanayee Development Foundation (SDF) provides training in human rights, peace building and conflict resolution "in order to decrease human rights violations and promote human dignity and justice" through its work in the National Solidarity Program (SDF, 2007). Community Development Councils formed under NSP receive training in human rights. Categories: life skills education and civil society building

**13.1 UNIFEM** has offered a grants program for combined income generation activities like lace making, with additional literacy instruction.

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