

Analysis Report on Teacher Training System in Afghanistan

UK NARIC's Contribution to the Refugees into Teaching Project

June 2007

© UK NARIC 2007



Newman
HIGHER EDUCATION IN BIRMINGHAM



Table of Contents:

Executive Summary	3
Afghanistan	4
Historical Background (General)	4
a. 1960 - 1978	4
b. 1978 - 1990	4
c. 1990-2001	4
d. 2001	5
General Education Structure	5
a. Pre-Primary	5
b. Primary	5
c. Secondary	6
Qualification progression chart.....	7
Teacher Training Structure	7
a. Primary	7
b. Secondary Middle School (or Lower Secondary)	7
c. High School	8
d. Higher Education.....	8
e. Teacher Educators	8
Reforms to Teaching and Qualification Structure	8
Practical placements and experience	9
Curriculum.....	9
In-service training.....	9
Issues facing the teaching profession	10
Attraction of the teaching profession.....	10
Teacher salaries.....	10
Teacher shortages	10
Current reforms	10
Quality Assurance Mechanisms.....	11
List of teaching awards available in Afghanistan and their comparative levels:....	12
Secondary Education:	12
References:	13

Executive Summary

This document relates to UK NARIC / NRP work in partnership with the Refugee Council, West London Graduate Teaching Partnership and Newman College funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). The partnership aims to provide clearer pathways into teaching in the UK for refugee teachers qualified overseas. The report has been designed for information advice and guidance providers, education institutions and the General Teaching Council to assist them in identifying the most appropriate pathways to Qualified Teacher Status for individuals from a number of countries selected by the partnership.

The report consists of an analysis of the teacher education systems in the following ten countries:

- Afghanistan
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Iran
- Iraq
- Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo
- Somalia
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Turkey
- Zimbabwe

Each country analysis firstly considers the structure of the national education system and the historical context of the teacher education system. The main section provides information about the practice, methodology and quality assurance of the current pre-service and in-service teacher training in the selected country. Each analysis also considers other factors such as the status of teachers, salary comparisons and classroom culture and discipline.

In addition, the analyses include information on the academic requirements for entry into teaching in each of the countries. For the purposes of a smooth transition into the UK system, the report provides NARIC evaluations of secondary education (specifically English), higher education and professional teaching awards.

The sources of information used throughout the project are varied. In each case contact has been made with relevant authorities to determine and verify course content and levels. These contacts include government bodies and ministries, the ENIC-NARIC contacts, British Council offices, sectoral representatives and education providers. Wider research has also been conducted using the information held in-house as well as national, European and international sources such as individual ministry websites and pan-European qualification databases.

It is important to note, however, that for certain countries it was not possible to obtain sufficient data to provide a comprehensive analysis. This was particularly the case for the Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sri Lanka. In the absence of centralised coordinating bodies, extremely limited information about the teacher education system is compiled and published on a national level in these countries, particularly in the areas of quality assurance and teacher education reform. These gaps in the country analysis are clearly identified and explained in the report. If further information in these areas becomes available in the future, however, the report may be updated to include these new findings.

Afghanistan

Historical Background (General)

a. 1960 - 1978

In the 1960s two parallel education systems existed in Afghanistan. Firstly, the older *madrassa* school system provided Islamic education locally through the mosques and focused upon the teachings of the Koran, reading, writing and arithmetic. These schools were typically led by religious figures who continued to exercise a lot of power in society through the informal education system, especially in rural communities, where the state-run education sector was less active. In terms of pedagogical training, the leaders of the religious schools, the mullahs, had often undertaken little formal education themselves; receiving their instruction through mosques, *madrassas*, sometimes in Pakistan or Iran.

Secondly the more secular system was introduced initially at the end of the nineteenth century and enshrined in the 1964 Afghan constitution, with the commitment to provide free and compulsory education at all levels. Responsibility for teacher training in the formal sector was split between the Ministry of Higher Education, which was in charge of overseeing teacher education at universities and the Teacher Training Department of the Ministry of Education, which ran the teacher training institutes. The mullahs had little power within the formal education sector, which operated mainly in the cities.

The education system continued to develop during the 1960s and 1970s with the support of the international community and a range of broadly successful educational initiatives to improve the rates of basic literacy among the population.

b. 1978 - 1990

In April 1978 there was a coup by two communist parties, which resulted in the foundation of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. The communist regime stood in contradiction to the Muslim values of the country, and a resistance movement continued to fight against the Soviet domination throughout the 1980s. This had tremendous and far-reaching adverse consequences for the Afghan economy and society, including education. The education policy of Afghanistan at this time aimed to encourage literacy and a number of reforms to the education system were implemented. However, during this period rates of enrolment in education fell dramatically due to both teachers and pupils becoming refugees and being internally displaced, the involvement of many males in the fighting, and the physical destruction of school buildings and learning resources.

Three years after the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan, the *mujahdin*¹ moved in to Kabul and established the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Education provision, among other elements of society, continued to unravel during this time as the government had neither the expertise nor the resources to develop a policy for education development.

c. 1990-2001

In the mid 1990s a new political force called the Taliban ('religious students') moved into Afghanistan, and by September 1997 they had taken over two thirds of the country, with the Northern Alliance, a religiously disparate group of rebels united in their fight against the Taliban, occupying only a small share². The application of strict

¹ Afghan Muslim rebels

² Symon, F (2001); Afghanistan's Northern Alliance; *BBC Online News*, (19/09/01), UK

Shariah law³ under this regime had severe implications for social, cultural and educational policy, including the ejection of women and girls from institutions of learning.

Before the Taliban regime seized control, women formed a substantial part of the trained teaching force in Afghanistan. Although women were confined to a domestic role under the Taliban, they did continue to exercise an important role in teaching, albeit in the form of unofficial, clandestine home schooling. Possibilities for training and development were clearly limited under these circumstances. Other teachers, both men and women, immigrated to Pakistan to teach in schools for Afghan migrants there.

Clearly, education provision in Afghanistan has suffered heavily as a result of the various conflicts and civil upheaval that have undermined its infrastructure at all levels. For instance, although there are 22 teacher training colleges officially listed, in reality only a few of these are actually functioning. There are also severe shortages of text books, school buildings and basic furnishings and other requisites for learning.

d. 2001

Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, international development initiatives, recognising the importance of education in turning around the situation of Afghanistan, have focussed upon rebuilding the structures of learning. They have begun to repair not only the physical buildings but also to establish a learning culture conducive to a peaceful, democratic society. Teacher education was identified as a priority in the 2004 report by the Ministry of Education⁴.

General Education Structure

From 1990, a 12-year educational structure has been followed across Afghanistan, consisting of six years of primary school, three years of middle school and three years of high school.

a. Pre-Primary

In cities, children between one and three years of age may be looked after in *Shirkhargah* (crèches) and *Koodakestan* (nurseries) from the age of three to six. This level of education is not available in rural communities.

b. Primary

Primary education covers six years from the age of six (Grades 1 to 6), though the period may be shorter in rural areas. Schools are divided into two three-year cycles. The lower cycle curriculum covers:

- Mother tongue (Dari or Pashtu)
- Arts
- Crafts
- Mathematics
- Physical education
- Religious instruction

In the upper three-year cycle, children cover three additional subjects:

- Second language
- Science

³ Derives from the teachings of the Koran and from Sunna Steiner S (2002), *Sharia Law*, *The Guardian*, (20/08/02), UK

⁴ Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan Ministry of Education (2004), *National Report on the Development of Education in Afghanistan*, Kabul, Afghanistan

- Social studies

On completion of primary education, children must pass an entrance examination to gain admission to secondary education.

c. Secondary

Students who pass the entrance examination enter secondary education. As with primary education, secondary education is divided into two cycles of three years in length. Students in Grades 7 to 9 attend a *Maktabeh Motevaseteh* (middle school) and proceed to a *Doreyeh Aali* (high school) for Grades 10 to 12. The curriculum at middle school consists of:

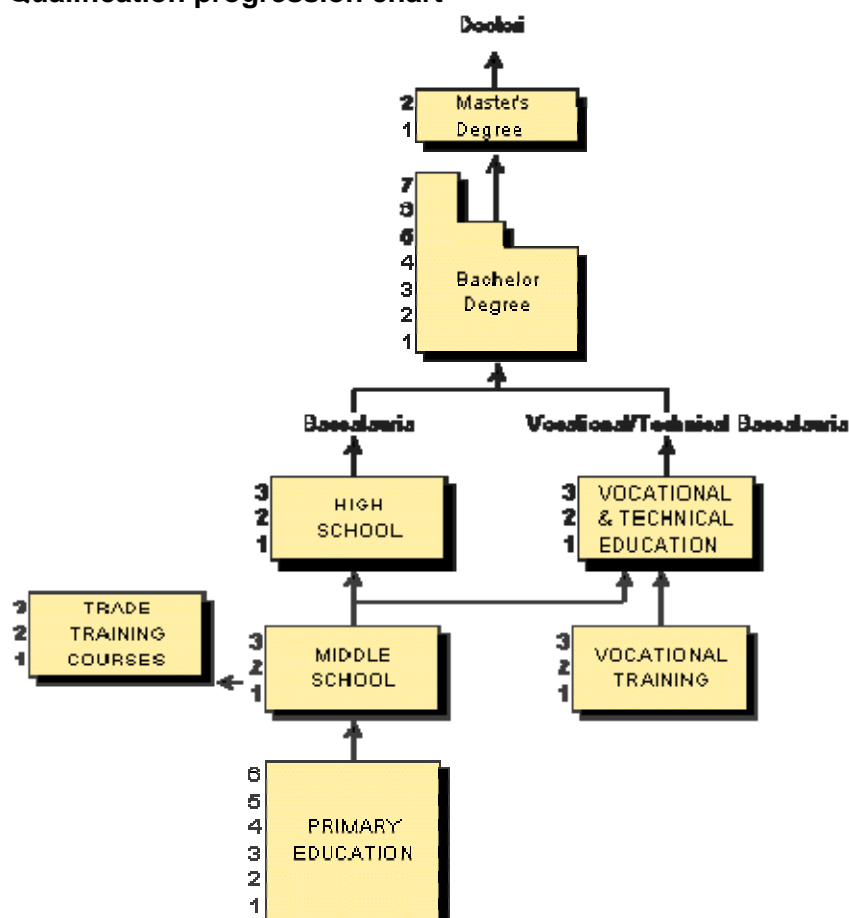
- Dari
- Pashtu
- Arabic
- A foreign language (usually English)
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- The Koran
- Manual work
- Mathematics
- Needlework (for girls)
- Physics
- Theology

At the end of Grade 9, students take an entrance examination to qualify for admission to the *Doreyeh Aali* (high school). Students between the ages of 16 and 19 attend high schools. In addition to the subjects taken in middle schools, the following subjects may be studied:

- Geology
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Religion
- Sociology

Students at high schools specialise in one of three streams: humanities, mathematical subjects or scientific subjects. On completion of Grade 12, students sit for the *Baccalauria* examinations.

Qualification progression chart



Teacher Training Structure

The following courses of teacher education have been available in Afghanistan. However, it is worth noting that the conflict, physical destruction and unstable circumstances in the country have severely impeded the ability of potential teachers to receive appropriate training in recent years, especially since 2001.

a. Primary

To qualify as a primary school teacher, students follow a one-year training course at a teacher training college on completion of twelve years of high school. Entry is based upon successful completion of high school and entrance examinations (concoirs). This course is said to focus on the practical aspects of teaching. The precise title of this award or course is not clear at this time.

During the communist period (1978-1988), training for primary school teaching was conducted through two-year courses at teacher training colleges. After 1988, a one-year post-secondary course at primary teacher training colleges was reinstated.

b. Secondary Middle School (or Lower Secondary)

Students take a two-year course after Grade 12 at a higher teacher training college. The precise title of this award is not clear at this time. The higher teacher training institutes often share locations with the colleges for primary teachers. Entry is based upon successful completion of high school and entrance examinations (concoirs). Holders of a Master's degree in Education may also teach at secondary schools.

c. High School

High school teachers are required to hold a four-year Bachelor of Education degree (also called *Licence*, although the spelling may vary). Students with high grades who have completed the two-year teaching course for lower secondary schools may continue their studies to take the final two years at university.

d. Higher Education

Higher education teachers possess a Bachelor's degree, or a Master's degree or a Doctorate from a university or pedagogical institute. There are three categories of teachers, depending on seniority and experience:

- Assistant
- Associate Professor
- Professor

During the Soviet period, due to the weakness of the domestic education system, it was not uncommon for Afghans seeking higher education to travel to one of the communist states to *study*. There they could obtain a "*Specialist Diploma*", also sometimes called "*Master degree*" in English translations.

e. Teacher Educators

Teacher trainers follow a one-year postgraduate programme at the Academy for Teacher Educators in Kabul, also known as the Pedagogical Institute. This institution also introduced a two-year Master's degree in Education in 1979, also translated as "Master of Arts or Science in Teaching Method". Initially it existed as a pilot course organised through UNESCO and UNDP, Technoexport (of the USSR) and the Afghan government, but became a regular programme in 1984. There are indications that in the early period it might have been awarded by Kabul University.

However, given the extreme shortage of teachers in Afghanistan, in 2002 UNESCO recommended that it may be expedient in the short term to recruit teachers with less than the usual academic and professional qualifications, although in the medium term priority should be given to teacher training. Consequently, some Year 12 graduates (and even some Year 9 graduates) have entered classroom service with only a "crash course" orientation as preparation for teaching. Furthermore, it is reported that teachers had not been certified or trained systematically for decades.⁵

It is also said that many teachers teaching today have education only up to Grade 9⁶.

Reforms to Teaching and Qualification Structure

Increasing access to primary and secondary schooling is a key priority, and one that in turn necessitates the presence of trained teachers. Afghanistan suffers from a very severe shortage of teachers, and indeed during the period of Taliban rule the number of teachers fell from 58,081 in 1996 to 20,781 in 2001⁷.

A great number of initiatives to improve education and teacher training have been implemented in Afghanistan. The majority of the larger schemes are funded, supported and run by international organisations such as UNESCO, charities based abroad and overseas education institutions.

⁵ Afghanistan Education Project (2003), *Textbooks: New Afghan Textbooks for Primary School Children*, Teacher's College Columbia University; USA

⁶ Levine, A (2003), *Rebuilding Education in Afghanistan*; Teacher's College Columbia University; USA

⁷ Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan Ministry of Education (2004), *National Report on the Development of Education in Afghanistan*, Kabul, Afghanistan

Distance education, provided by radio or television, plays a key role in Afghanistan, where it is difficult for those living in very rural settings to access schooling. Radio-based and television-based learning is seen as an important tool for expanding access to teacher training, as well as to higher education programmes and to offer literacy training for workforce development.

In 2003, UNESCO provided 3 month training courses for the staff of ERTV (Afghanistan's Educational Radio and Television) in areas of professional knowledge, technical methods and literacy. As well as sending some participants abroad to receive advanced training, the project observed the complete refurbishment of the ERTV building, which had been partially destroyed. Furthermore, USAID has trained over 10,000 teachers in how to provide accelerated learning to those who were denied an education during the Taliban period. Daily radio-based teacher training broadcasts have been expanded to reach 65,000 teachers nationwide.

USAID also planned to fund a higher education project to improve pre-service teacher training at 16 university faculties of education.

The American University of Afghanistan was established as a private, fee-paying institution on the site previously taken by the American International School of Kabul until the Soviet occupation in 1979. It aimed to provide instruction in English, business administration, computer science and public policy and administration and to train a new generation of professionals and leaders with American values. Currently, the plan is to offer 4 year liberal arts degrees in Business Administration and IT. However, there does not appear to be a plan to offer Education degrees.

Practical placements and experience

Teaching practice is written into training programmes for teachers, albeit not in a very substantial proportion. However, it is unlikely that any of the orientation programmes that have been implemented as short-term solutions to the shortage of teacher contain any meaningful quantity of practical training. At any rate, even fully qualified teachers are unlikely to be trained to deal with classroom situations that regularly occur in the UK, given the entirely different culture of learning.

Curriculum

Traditionally, teacher education in Afghanistan has consisted of telling teachers what to teach their pupils, and when, rather than learning how to work effectively in the classroom. The teaching process focussed on enabling pupils to memorise by rote and repeat uncritically a body of facts.

Many of the new initiatives such as the introduction of textbooks, modernising the secondary curriculum were developed by experts from western organisations. This in turn influenced the approach to training teachers, and how they work in the classroom with the learners, following the child-centred pedagogical approach favoured by modern educators in the West.

In-service training

The Institute of Education in Kabul provided in-service training courses in general education and professional qualifications for teachers during the summer and winter holidays, as well as some short courses and workshops. However, it is not clear to what extent this has been active during the troubled decades of conflict.

With regard to in-service training, although the state has not been in a position to provide professional development on a substantial scale, various opportunities have been provided by independent external organisations. For instance, under the

auspices of the Afghanistan Teacher Education Project, a six to eight week programme has been organised at the University of Nebraska (Omaha). This provides training for women educators and teachers to enable them to improve their skills in teaching English, in curriculum and materials development, basic computer literacy and train-the-trainer skills in the USA. By the end of 2005, the 85 alumnae should have helped 500 teachers in Afghanistan to participate in in-service workshops.

Issues facing the teaching profession

There are many issues facing the teaching profession, in particular the shortages mentioned above and the availability of teacher training. However, moves are being made to make the training more accessible and attractive, through distance learning and opportunities to train abroad.

Pay is also an issue, with salaries being very low and inconsistent; teachers often have to supplement their income through supporting work.

Intermittent violent attacks continue to disrupt teaching and children's education.

Attraction of the teaching profession

Traditionally, teachers were well respected in Afghan society, and village school teachers were usually leaders in their communities with civil servant status. However, it is unclear to what extent this remains the case, given that in recent years there have often not been funds available to pay teachers, thus undermining their social status.

Teachers in the Islamic schools continue to exercise an important societal function.

Teacher salaries

Teachers in the Afghan national education sector work on very low salaries (c. £22 per month), which are not even paid on a consistent basis at the end of each month. Consequently, teachers often have to work two other jobs in order to exist. This has clear, negative implications for professional development, commitment and motivation for the job.

Teacher shortages

In 2002, there were 64,850 teachers in service in Afghanistan, while the Ministry of Education estimated that 93,466 teachers were needed to meet the existing demand for education, leaving a shortfall of 28,616 teachers across the country⁸. Measures have been taken to address these shortages including distance learning and accelerated teaching programmes.

Current reforms

Currently in Afghanistan there are a number of reform programmes in operation. Many of the schemes are being implemented with the support of international organisations and charities therefore they are imbued with a specific socialisation role: encouraging a democratic society, gender equality and health awareness.

Some reform initiatives have focused on the repair of the physical features of the education system. For instance, the Women's Teacher Training Institute in Kabul which opened in September 2004, received the requisite £5m through USAID funding.

⁸ Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan Ministry of Education (2004), *National Report on the Development of Education in Afghanistan*, Kabul, Afghanistan

In order to meet the immediate needs for teacher education, the proposed Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghanistan (TAPA) aims to provide in-service training for primary teachers, capacity building, teaching aids to over 70,000 teachers, and upgrade 15 Teacher Training Colleges. UNICEF and other NGO partners are to provide in-service training to approximately 23,000 teachers this winter (2007), which would supplement and complement the TAPA programme. The professional development of teachers and teacher educators combined with the equipping and of upgrading teacher training institutions would help to meet future needs in teacher education.

Some efforts to effect reform however, have not been successful. For instance, some programmes have aimed to make good the deficiency in textbooks, and to replace those deemed to contain Islamist propaganda. Yet some of the textbooks provided by external donors have not necessarily been useful as they are typically printed in English, which is not generally understood by either the teachers or pupils. This problem has been acknowledged and some initiatives now aim to provide teaching guides suitable to the local linguistic context.

Teachers College, Colombia University (TCCU), USA, has had a long history of collaboration on educational matters with Afghanistan. Together with UNICEF, TCCU has been assisting the Ministry of Education since 2003, to develop new curricular, according to the Curriculum Framework. This aims to integrate critical thinking, conflict resolution, linguistic and gender equality, and a more child-centred approach to teaching and learning. These initiatives should soon be ready to be trialled.

A fully modernised curriculum should be available for all primary grades by the beginning of the 2006 school year. Presumably there will need to be further training of primary teachers in order to deliver this new curriculum; however, no details of this have yet been disclosed.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Currently there does not appear to be any systematic quality assurance mechanisms in place to evaluate the quality of teaching in the Afghan school system.

List of teaching awards available in Afghanistan and their comparative levels:

Primary	2 year course at teacher training institute	VGCSE / BTEC First Diploma standard
Secondary	2 year course at higher teacher training institute	Between VGCSE / BTEC First Diploma and AVCE / BTEC National Diploma standard
Secondary	Bachelor / <i>Licence</i> degree	Diploma of Higher Education standard / Year 2 British Bachelor degree standard
Secondary	Master's degree	British Bachelor degree standard
Secondary	Doctorate / <i>Doctori</i>	British Masters of Philosophy degree standard

The other awards mentioned in this report appear to be of a practical and professional orientation, and as such do not have a specific academic comparability.

Secondary Education:

Secondary	<i>Baccalauria / Baccalaureate</i> Certificate	GCSE Grade A*-C standard (with the exception of English language)
-----------	--	---

References:

Afghanistan

Afghanistan Education Project (2003), *Textbooks: New Afghan Textbooks for Primary School Children*, Teacher's College Columbia University; USA

<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/afghanproject/index.html?cat=textbooks&id=New+Afghan+Textbooks+for+Primary+School+Children>

Kilpatrick, J (2007) Afghanistan: Transforming a "13th Century Curriculum into a 21st Century Curriculum"; Haberman International Policy Institute in Education

Levine, A (2003), *Rebuilding Education in Afghanistan*; Teacher's College Columbia University; USA

<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/afghanproject/index.html?cat=news&id=4618>

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), (1992) Country Education Profiles: Afghanistan. A Comparative Study; Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra

Spink, J; Education, Reconstruction and State Building in Afghanistan, University of Oxford, (fmr1809) <http://www.fmreview.org/text/FMR/EducationSupplement/09.doc>

Steiner, S, (2002) Sharia Law; The Guardian, (20/08/02)UK

Symon, F (2001); Afghanistan's Northern Alliance; *BBC Online News*, (19/09/01), UK

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan Ministry of Education (2004), *National Report on the Development of Education in Afghanistan*, Kabul, Afghanistan

UK NARIC (2006) International Comparisons, 03/06 version, UK

http://www.af/resources/aaca/cg+adf/education_vt_cg/Education%20Sector%20SUMMARY.doc

http://www.hospitalityguild.com/Education/School_Systems/afghanistan.htm

www.internationalcomparisons.org.uk

<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/afghanproject/index.html?cat=overview&id=Background>

<http://www.teacherscollege.edu/news/article.htm?id=4823&tid=4>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001246/124627e.pdf>