

# Afghanistan

## The Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic Report (January – December 2016)

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAE	Aid Afghanistan for Education
ACO	Afghanistan Country Office
AGEI	Afghanistan Girls Education Initiative
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
ALCs	Accelerated Learning Centers
AWP	Annual Work plan
BEGE	Basic Education and Gender Equality
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBE	Community Based Education
CBS	Community Based School
CES	Cost Effective School
CFS	Child Friendly School
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DED	District Education Department
DOEs	District Education Officer
ECC	Education Coordination Committee
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EIP	Education Interim Plan
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoIRA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INEE	Inter-agency Network on Education in Emergencies
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple indicators cluster survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MTR	Mid-Term review
MTSP	Medium-Term Strategic Plan
NESP	National Education Strategy Plan
PED	Provincial Education Director
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
RR	Regular Resources
SADA	Southern Afghanistan Development Association
SC	Save the Children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMS	School Management Shura
TED	Teacher Education Department
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
ToT	Training of Trainers
TTC	Teacher Training Centers
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNPD	United Nations Population Division
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

# 1 Executive Summary

Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world and is ranked as the 169<sup>th</sup> on the UN's 2016 Human Development Index. According to the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA, 2011-12), 36% of the population live below the poverty line. Thirty years of conflict and bad governance have resulted in the destruction of the country's education system.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) with support from UNICEF and relevant education stakeholders continues to make remarkable progress in increasing primary school enrolment, completion rates as well as improvements in the quality of education. The annual Education Management Information System (EMIS) data shows increase of enrolment in general education (primary and secondary schools) from 6,504,715 students (37%) in 2009/2010 to 9,234,459 students (38% girls) in 2016/1395. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for primary level increased from 75% in 2012 to 112% in 2016. Yet, major challenges related to access and quality remain. An estimated 3.5 million children of school age are reported to be out of school, the majority of them are girls and children in remote, mountainous and insecure areas. The gender parity index, though improving, remains at 0.62 for all levels of education. The low proportion of female teachers, which has slightly increased from 31% in 2012 to 33% in 2016, remains a major hindrance to girls' enrolment and retention.

Key demand and supply-side barriers for girls and boys to attend school include distance to schools, lack of adequate school facilities and shortage of female teachers; cultural and traditional beliefs impact negatively on the schooling of children, particularly for girls. Highly centralised governance structure, inadequate technical and financial capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE), lack of adequate coordination, planning and monitoring systems as well as lack of reliable data and statistics contribute to limited efficiency and effectiveness of the overall Education system. Chronic poverty, underdevelopment and the complex emergency situation (protracted conflict, recurrent natural disasters, and increased population movements) further exacerbate the already weak Education system. In 2016, conflict related violence continued to directly impact on access to education in all regions of the country. The sense of insecurity and danger led many families to withdraw their children from school.

In order to address these challenges, UNICEF in collaboration with key Education partners, continued in 2016 to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) in its effort to reach the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and Education for All (EFA) target, by 2020<sup>1</sup>. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNICEF's Strategic Plan (2014-2017) and within the 2015-2019 Country Programme (CP) cycle, UNICEF continued to focus on access as well as quality components of Education, including learning achievements of students, both within community-based and regular primary school setting. UNICEF worked with the MoE at policy and strategic levels to increase school enrolment and support the provision of quality educational opportunities for children, particularly for girls and those living in hard to reach communities. Community-Based Education (CBE), the main strategy adopted by GoIRA to increase access to quality Education, played a major role related to programme implementation. UNICEF also partnered with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to ensure effective programme delivery and monitoring of interventions. Throughout 2016, UNICEF continued to support the implementation of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), being the Supervising Entity (SE) in the country.

The goal of the Education component within the CP is '*Education of girls and women increased through more equitable access to quality basic education services.*' The key strategies adopted to achieve this goal include: (1) Capacity development of education officials at sub-national level to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor programme activities, including education in emergencies; improvement of Child-Friendly-Schools (CFS) teaching methodologies and school environment, and emergency preparedness and response; (2) Service delivery through cash and direct supply assistance to the MoE and implementing partners, such as establishment of CBE classes, distribution of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) at a national scale and school construction; (3) Implementation of innovative strategies, in particular for increasing the number of female teachers in remote geographical areas; (4) Institutionalisation and systems' building related to measuring and monitoring of learning outcomes; and (5) Advocacy for the reduction of the gender disparities in education.

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<sup>1</sup> National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) III 2017-2021, Ministry of Education, 2016

During 2016, UNICEF continued to focus on 10 most deprived priority provinces, while keeping interventions such as the distribution of TLM nationwide. In addition, UNICEF supported the Government of Afghanistan in its emergency preparedness and response throughout the country, with focus on the returnee crisis.

The major achievements of the BEGE (Basic Education and Gender Equality) programme in 2016, through the utilisation of thematic and other contributions include:

**More Children in School..** *In 2016, UNICEF continued to focus on the enrollment and retention of the most vulnerable children, specifically those out of school and girls. It worked to strengthen the formal schooling system and supported the Government's efforts in its roll-out of Community Based Education (CBE) by supporting the establishment and maintenance of 5,180 Community-Based-Schools (CBSs) and Accelerated Learning Centers (ALCs), benefiting 139,707 students (out of which 71,474 are girls). UNICEF also supported the MoE in identifying alternative pathways to learning to increase access to education for hard-to reach children. In an effort to reduce supply side barriers, over 1.3 million children were provided with basic education materials; in addition, out of 70 schools planned to be constructed, 60 schools have been completed and handed over to the MoE by end of December 2016.*

**Improved Quality of Education.** *In 2016, 751 schools benefitted from CFS trainings, including School Improvement Planning (SIP), child-centered methodologies and teaching aids to improve quality in the classroom. UNICEF has also supported the process to develop a National Assessment Framework for Afghanistan (NAFA). Formative Assessment trainings benefitted 7,841 primary school teachers and Academic Supervisors to improve classroom-based assessments.*

**Improved Institutional Capacity.** *In 2016, UNICEF in its role as Supervising Entity (SE) for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) provided programmatic and fiduciary oversight support to the MoE for the implementation of the Programme, including managing an external audit. At national level, UNICEF supported processes linked to the development and/or review of policies, strategies and programmes to improve education (initiation of an Out of School Children Study, revision of CBE and ECD policies, ongoing development of a Girls' Education strategy and policy). At community levels, UNICEF worked with School Management Shuras (SMSs), parents, influential community members, local decision-makers and children, aiming at better school management.*

**Emergency Preparedness and Response:** *In 2016, UNICEF reactivated the EiE Working Group, including advocacy for Cluster activation, to respond to immediate education needs of over 500,000 children affected by the returnee crisis. By the end of 2016, 30,989 school aged children affected by conflict and related displacement as well returnees children from Pakistan were reached in the South, East and North of the country; 50,000 information brochures were distributed with essential information on children's rights to education.*

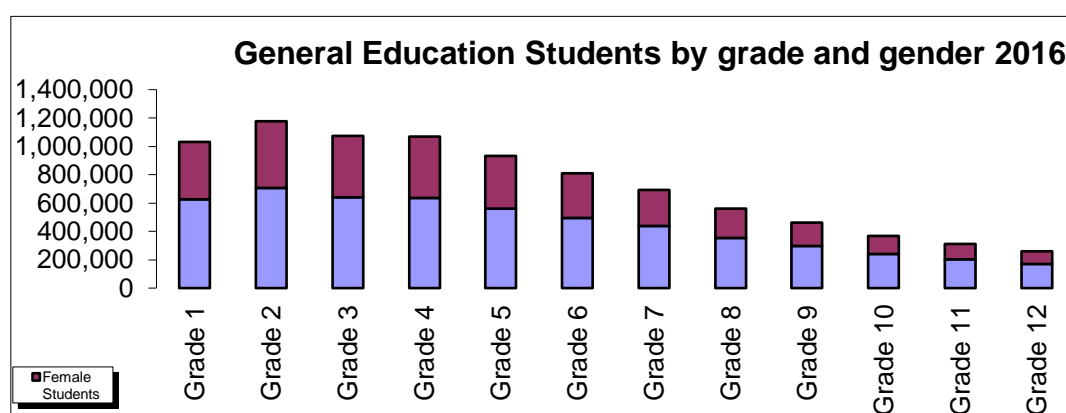
## 2 Strategic Context of 2016

### 2.1 The Country Situation: Education in Afghanistan

In 2016, protracted conflict, recurrent natural disasters, chronic poverty and underdevelopment continued to undermine the survival, livelihood and dignity of Afghan children and women. Conflict related violence directly impacted on the access to education in all regions of the country and according to the MoE, approximately 1,000 schools remained inactive or closed down due to security issues in 2016. The sense of insecurity and danger led many families to avoid sending their children to schools.

The status of girls and boys in education continued to be compromised in terms of access, quality and gender equality. Only 50 per cent of eligible children were enrolled in schools while approximately 3.5 million of children, especially girls and children in remote, mountainous and insecure areas remain out of school. This exacerbated also by the estimated 2.1 million<sup>2</sup> students (61% male and 39% female) who remain on-the-books for up to 3 years, but are actually out of school as “permanent absentees”.

**Figure 1:** General Education Students by grade and gender (2016) (EMIS Data set, 2016)



Education in Afghanistan suffers from disparities across gender, geographical location and household income, with higher enrolments amongst boys, in urban provinces and amongst the richest wealth quintile. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) stands currently at 0.63 for the General Education Programme while it differs for other programmes of the MoE. The GPI is quite significant for teacher education (1.3) and for literacy (1.2) while it is still in a low stance for Islamic education (0.3) and TVET (0.2). The girls’ participation in education gets lower as one goes through the education ladder due to high drop-out rates amongst girls. The enrolment figure above (see “Student graph in 2016”) indicate the decreasing numbers in enrolment as one moves up the school grades. It is estimated that of the ten children who enrol in grade one, only 2 reach grade 12. The gender disparity in access to education is also a function of geographical location with rural girls being the most disadvantaged. Rural children rank seriously behind their urban counterparts in available teachers, school materials and, not surprisingly, in access.

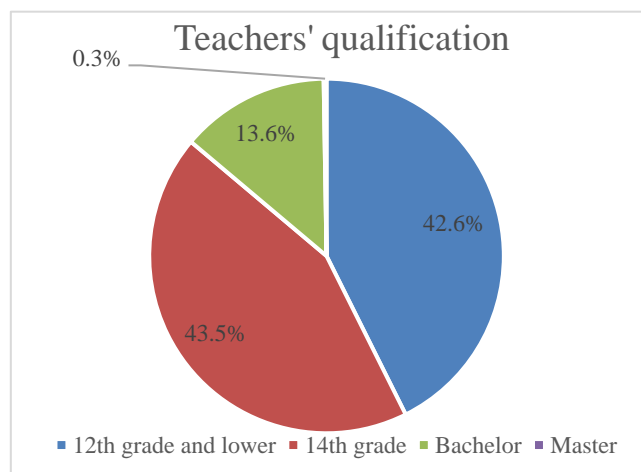
**Figure 2:** Students’ statistics by programme in 2016/1395 (EMIS dataset, 2016/1395)

Students' statistics by programme in 2016/1395				
Programme	Male Students	Female Students	Total	Gender Parity Index (GPI)
General Education	5,363,188	3,392,767	8,755,955	0.63
Islamic Education	250,870	82,080	332,950	0.33
TVET	49,529	6,535	56,064	0.13
TTC	29,975	38,783	68,758	1.29
Literacy school's Students	9,598	11,134	20,732	1.16
Total	5,703,160	3,531,299	9,234,459	0.62

<sup>2</sup> EMIS data exam results 2015/1394

The shortage of female teachers, especially in rural areas is one of the major causes for low enrolment and retention amongst girls. Out of the 201,226 teachers only 33% are female and only very few of these are teaching in rural schools. In addition, only 57% of the teachers meet the required qualifications (grade 14 and above). The situation is worse in rural provinces. The shortage of female teachers in rural schools is mainly due to a growing proportion of trained teachers avoiding insecure areas by concentrating in the cities. Educated girls/women from the cities are not ready to serve as a teacher in rural schools because the current salary level is not attractive and not enough to meet the living expenses in a new location. Due to strong cultural and traditional beliefs in Afghanistan, parents do not allow their daughters to be taught by male teachers and lack of female teachers in schools becomes a major barrier to girls' enrolment.

**Figure 3: Teachers' Qualification**



**Figure 4: Teachers' Statistics by programme in 2016/1305 (Data: MoE Teacher Registration Department)**

Teachers' Statistics by programme in 2016/1305					
Programme	Male teachers	Female teachers	Total	% of female teachers	PTR
General Education	121,850	62,691	184,541	34%	47
Islamic Education	6,123	568	6,691	8%	50
TVET	3,310	674	3,984	17%	18
TTC	2,174	358	2,532	14%	27
Literacy school's Students	2,145	1,333	3,478	38%	6
Total	135,602	65,624	201,226	33%	46

Poor access and retention of boys and girls in school can be attributed to supply-, demand- and systems-related barriers. General insecurity in many parts of the country, socio-cultural practices, traditions and beliefs that undermine girls' education, explain the fragility of school demand. The limited offer for Education includes inadequate number of schools, especially for girls (only 17% of schools are girls' schools). Shortage of qualified teachers especially female teachers, and inadequate facilities in schools such as toilets, drinking water, boundary walls and learners desks also negatively affect access and retention.

According to the MoE, 17,455 education centres are registered in the Education Management Information System (EMIS). From the total education centres, 15,709 are general education schools out of which 42% are primary (14% male, 5% female and 23% mixed), 26% lower secondary (8% male, 4% female and 15% mixed), and 32% upper secondary (13% male, 8% female and 12% mixed). About half (45%) of schools do not have usable buildings; 64% of school buildings lack boundary walls; 17% of schools lack water drinking facilities, 43% of schools lack safe drinking water and 60% of the schools lack sanitation facilities; 45% of schools lack proper toilets; about 37% of schools are running on multi-shifts (34% are running two shifts and 4% are running even three shifts in one day) and consequently with reduced teaching hours. Shortage of schools result in long walking distance to schools.

## 2.2 Main objectives and results from the country programme

Through its 2015-2019 Country Programme (CP), UNICEF is committed to support the Government of Afghanistan in its effort to realise the rights of children to survival, development, protection and participation, in line with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the United Nations Development

<sup>3</sup> The remaining 57% of schools have safe drinking water facilities like tap water, protected wells, hand-pump, water tank, well and deep well.

Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the National Education Strategic Plan, thus contributing to the consolidation of the overall peace and the reconstruction process.

UNICEF through its BEGE Programme contributes towards achieving the MDGs and SDGs 4 and 5 goals as well as the overall national targets and objectives set out in the MoE's National Education Strategic Plan (NESP II and draft NESP, 2017-2021, endorsed in March 2017). UNICEF's CP cycle, 2015-2019 builds upon the programme interventions from the previous programme cycle. During the year 2016, the Afghanistan BEGE programme continued to support the MoE to ensure increased access to quality education, particularly for girls and the most marginalised children. The overall goal and objectives of the 2016 - 2017 Rolling Work Plan specifically contributed to the following outcome and outputs:

Outcome 5: Girls and boys of school age, especially vulnerable children in deprived provinces and areas, access primary education that is progressively child-friendly and demonstrates improved learning outcomes.

- Output 5.1: Access to primary education for girls and boys in deprived provinces and other focus areas scaled up to meet the minimum defined standards for Afghanistan;
- Output 5.2: National and subnational education authorities (MoE) have management and financial capacity to progressively manage CBE and ensure higher transition rate from grade 3 to grade 4 for girls and boys, including in emergencies;
- Output 5.3: GPE in Afghanistan leveraged for resources and results to meet national education objectives;
- Output 5.4: Strengthened national and subnational capacity to implement CFS, especially in targeted schools in deprived provinces and other areas;
- Output 5.5: National capacity strengthened to develop and operationalise a system for monitoring of learning achievements and setting of national standards in core subjects for primary grades;
- Output 5.6: Girls' education and community-based Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) developed and demonstrated in selected communities in deprived provinces and other focus areas.
- Output 5.7: Provide continued quality access to Education for children affected by emergencies (This Output has been added to the MoE/UNICEF Rolling work plan after CPAP endorsement).

UNICEF works with the MoE at national and decentralised levels in a transparent manner to ensure ownership and accountability by the Government of Afghanistan and its communities. UNICEF's work in 2016 was centred on capacity development at national, provincial, district and school levels. Emphasis was given to the strengthening of the capacity, including planning, monitoring and measuring of results to ensure sustainability of the interventions. UNICEF provided direct technical assistance through its own staff, national or international consultants and technical assistance embedded within the MoE at central and Education Directorates at provincial (PEDs) levels.

At national level, UNICEF continued to be an active member of various donor and education partner fora such as the Local Education Group (LEG), Development Partners' and Donor Coordination Groups as well as the Human Development Resource Board (HRDB). Furthermore, UNICEF co-chaired technical working groups on OOSC and CBE, Pre-School Education, Girls' Education and Education in Emergencies (EiE) and was an active member of the Learning Assessment Working Group. UNICEF also continued to play the role of convenor to ensure participation of cross-sectoral government actors and implementing partners in relevant decision-making fora.

UNICEF also extended its partnerships for delivery of services in remote and/or hard-to-reach geographical locations with NGOs. This included partnership agreements with SADA (Southern Afghanistan Development Association) to implement CBE activities in the South of the country, with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to support the capacity development of teachers related to learner-centred methodologies and School Improvement Plans (SIPs) in the province of Paktika, and with AAE (Aid Afghanistan for Education) to provide education for girls who have been denied access to formal schools. UNICEF also partnered with CARE (Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) International and CRS (Catholic Relief Services) for the first time in 2016 to expand provision of CBEs in the Central and Western regions of the country. Partnership agreements with AKF (Aga Khan Foundation), BRAC and Save the Children focused on Early Childhood Development.



In terms of sustainability, UNICEF in 2016, supported community-based interventions through implementation of the CBE approach (establishment of CBSs and ALCs). Efforts continued to strengthen the active role of communities through their full participation in planning of the activities and use of Communication for Development (C4D) approaches. The community has been instrumental, School Management Shuras (SMS) in particular, to mobilise community members to enrol and maintain their children in school, especially girls, stressing the importance and value of education. Their involvement has also ensured the identification of female teachers and protection of students during their commute to the CBSs and ALCs.

### 3 Results in the Outcome Area

Despite the challenging programming environment, significant improvements were made in access to basic quality Education in support of the MoE and relevant education sector stakeholders. Overall, the annual EMIS data shows remarkable progress with an increase of enrolment in general Education (primary and secondary schools) from 6,504,715 students (4,081,447 boys and 2,423,268 girls, 37%) in 2009/2010 to 9,234,459 students (5,703,160 boys and 3,531,299 girls, 38% girls) in 2016/1395. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for primary level increased from 75% (86% Boys; 63% Girls) in 2012 to 112%<sup>4</sup> (131% Boys, 93% Girls) in 2016. By 2021 (according to NESP III), the Government's target is to increase GER rate to 131.6% in primary education. However, gender equity remains a challenge with a GPI of 0.62 for all levels of education. The low proportion of female teachers, which has slightly increased from 31% in 2012 to 33% in 2016, remains a major hindrance to girls' enrolment and retention.

Gains in enrolment and retention can be attributed to the use of various intervention strategies, such as increased availability of CBSs and ALCs as well as more child-friendly learning environments. In 2016, UNICEF contributed to the enrolment of 139,707 children in 18 provinces (out of which 51% or 71,474 girls), through the provision of 1,421 CBS and 1,083 ALC classes as well as the completion of 60 schools in the Central Highlands Region, benefitting 26,506 students (11,346 girls and 15,160 boys) and the procurement and distribution of TLM to over 1.3 million students (grade 1-3) and 34,476 teachers (public schools). Furthermore, UNICEF played a key role in enhancing teacher capacity in the use of learner-centred methodologies through pre-service and in-service trainings. A total of 49,274 school aged children affected by emergencies, particularly in Southern, Eastern and Northern regions of the country and linked to the returnee crisis, benefitted from UNICEF supported education in emergencies interventions.

The table below describes the results attained in 2016, constraints and challenges faced, and remedial actions taken under each planned result. It also summarises UNICEF's work using thematic and other funds that were available in 2016. UNICEF and the MoE reviewed the progress of implementation of the planned results, during the Annual Review exercise held in December 2016, and concluded that progress of four out of seven results were on track while three were constrained as summarised below.

Output Statement	Progress
Output 5.1 Access to primary education for girls and boys in deprived provinces and other focus areas scaled up to meet the minimum defined standards for Afghanistan.	On track
Output 5.2 National and sub-national education authorities (MoE) have management and financial capacity to progressively manage CBE and ensure higher transition rate from grade 3 to grade 4 for girls and boys, including EiE.	On track
Output 5.3: GPE in Afghanistan leveraged for resources and results to meet national education objectives	On track
Output 5.4 Strengthened national and sub-national capacity to implement CFS, especially in targeted schools in deprived provinces and other areas	Constrained
Output 5.5 National capacity strengthened to develop and operationalise a system for monitoring of learning achievements and setting of national standards in core subjects for primary grades.	Constrained

<sup>4</sup> This data is from NESPIII which has been calculated as a baseline in 2016 for the projection of upcoming years.

Output 5.6: Girls education and community-based Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) developed and demonstrated in selected communities in deprived provinces and other focus areas.	On track
Output 5.7: Continued access to quality Education for emergency affected children is provided.	Constrained

### 3.1 Enhanced support to communities with disadvantaged and excluded children to start schooling at the right age and attend regularly

**More Children in School.** While Afghanistan accounts for 3.5 million children out of school, the most vulnerable children, including those directly affected by conflict, need support to encounter education barriers related to poverty, discrimination, violence and displacement. Schools need to be conducive for children to access and continue their learning, while families and communities need to support schooling of every child, especially girls. Alternative types of education are needed for those who have been out of school, and for those where regular schooling is not possible.

UNICEF as an active member of the Development Partners Group and member or co-lead of various technical working groups (such as OOSC/CBE, Girls' Education, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Child Friendly Schools (CFS) and EiE), played a crucial role in contributing to major achievements such as making OOSC and Girls' Education a priority of the NESP III. In 2016, UNICEF continued to support the MoE in increasing access to education via formal and non-formal/alternative types of education. A major focus included strengthening of the schooling system through supporting the MoE's efforts to roll-out the establishment of CBEs, an outreach system of formal schools which consists of Community Based Schools/Classes (CBSs) and Accelerated Learning Centers (ALCs), within a 3km range of each child's community. UNICEF also continued to support the MoE with the provisioning of TLM to students in grades 1-3 of public schools (nationwide) and the identification of alternative learning pathways to increase access to education for the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach children.

#### *a) Improved access and learning environment, particularly for girls*

In its effort to achieve the EFA and MDG goals by 2020, the Government of Afghanistan has adopted CBE as its main strategy. CBE includes (a) the provision of education for 7-9 year old children living in areas where no formal schools exist within a radius of 3km (grades 1-3), and (b) the establishment of CBSs (grades 1-6) and ALCs (10-15 year old) for children who missed entering into the education system at the right age. Students in ALCs are foreseen to transition into formal schools after completion of grade 6.

In 2016, UNICEF continued to provide financial, technical and direct service delivery support to the MoE at national level as well as to PEDs and District Education Directorates (DEDs), aiming at reducing supply- and demand- side barriers to education access. This included:

- *Community-Based Education classes:* Establishment of 2,504 new CBE centers (1,421 CBSs and 1,083 ALCs) and continued support to 2,676 existing CBEs (grade 2-3), reaching a total of 139,707 children (out of which 71,474 girls) in 18 provinces. In addition: Provision of accelerated learning opportunities, in partnership with AAE, for 2,492 girls in 6 provinces.
- *Teaching and Learning Materials:* In Afghanistan, education is provided free for all children from grades 1-9, however the Government is facing constraints in providing sufficient free teaching and learning materials (TLMs). In addition, the majority of Afghan parents having an insufficient income to buy learning materials for their children, which in itself becomes a barrier for children to attend school. Over the years, UNICEF has been providing TLMs to children in primary schools and CBE classes. In 2016, UNICEF procured TLM for over 1.3 million students (grade 1-3) and 34,476 teachers. UNICEF adapted good practices from Uganda using innovative technology to conduct an end-user monitoring and beneficiary satisfaction survey for TLMs, which began in November 2016 and is ongoing in 2017; TLMs for informal schools (CBSs and ALCs) were purchased in 2016 and most will be distributed at the start of the 2017 school year. Due to border closure between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the bulk of supplies had to be rerouted via Iran and is foreseen to be delivered to schools in March/April 2017. Despite strong advocacy by UNICEF, which led to the MoE agreeing to provide textbooks for all CBE Centres, an overall shortage of textbooks in the country can be observed.

- *Community Mobilisation:* UNICEF has been working to build capacities and increased involvement of local communities, including School Management Shuras (SMS), religious leaders, opinion makers and CSOs in school management (establishment of CBEs, identification of teachers, teacher training etc.). The provision of training on the establishment and maintenance of CBEs, benefitted hereby 1,050 School Management Shuras (SMSs). Community members participated in identifying Out of School Children (OOSC) and selected community members received a CBE teacher trainings. UNICEF also provided temporary learning spaces, such as tents, where no space was available within the community. Establishment of schools at the community level has been a major factor in increased enrolment rates, in particular for girls, and contributed to the reduction of personal security risks and travel time for students.
- *School Construction:* Construction of new schools was used as another strategy to expand access to education. In 2016, UNICEF continued to support the MoE in school construction in three provinces in the Central Highlands region (Ghor, Bamyan and Daikundi). The project was initiated in 2013 with financial support from the Government of Japan. Out of 70 planned schools, 60 (544 classrooms) were fully completed by the end of December, benefitting 26,506 students (11,346 girls and 15,160 boys); UNICEF has been seeking solutions with the MoE and the donor for possible direct implementation to ensure completion of the 10 remaining schools in 2017.

#### *b) Advocacy for Girls' Education*

In 2016, UNICEF focused on strong policy and advocacy leadership to ensure inclusion of Girls' Education in the new National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III, 2017 – 2021). UNICEF in collaboration with relevant Education partners has taken the lead in supporting the MoE in the development of a comprehensive Strategy/Policy on Girls' Education. An overall roadmap has been developed and consultations/workshops have been held under the leadership of MoE. A Steering as well as a Technical Committee to develop the strategy/policy was in the process of being formalized by the end of 2016. In collaboration with the MoE, UNICEF worked to build capacities of School Management Shuras (SMS) and the Girl's Education Unit to engage and promote Girls' Education. UNICEF also worked with religious leaders, opinion makers and CSOs in raising awareness on Girls' Education. Currently, UNICEF is rolling out specific programmes whereby communities are being mobilized to work towards ensuring all girls have access to education, including cross sectoral linkages to prevent child marriage of girls.

#### *c) Strengthened Monitoring*

A key focus in 2016 was the strengthened monitoring and reporting capacity through use of Third Party Monitors in areas with limited access and hiring of 31 Technical Extenders (North, South, West, and Central regions). UNICEF also reinforced its human resources capacity to support the MoE in its efforts to roll-out innovative data collection mechanisms from 2017 (Real-time Monitoring/EduTrac).

#### *d) Implementation constraints and challenges*

In 2016, continued conflict/insecurity in different parts of the country further exacerbated the existing situation, resulting in parents' reluctance to send their children to schools, especially girls. Security related concerns continued to persist across country impacting negatively on implementation of CBE activities. Internal displacement in Central, Eastern and Western regions resulted in a decrease in number of CBE students. In some areas, CBS had to be closed and could not be reopened despite community engagement. Insecurity also led to implementation delays of foreseen training activities, which had to be relocated from local to provincial and national levels. Within this environment, insufficient ownership, capacity and leadership of the MoE to implement policy provisions related to OOSC, CBE, ECD and EiE resulted in a remaining high number of OOSC, including low transition rates for those in school to higher grades.

## **3.2 Increased national capacity to provide access to early learning opportunities and quality primary and secondary education**

**Improved Quality of Education.** Whether children sit in buildings, in tents or in the open air, ideally they are learning, developing and enriching their lives. However, many children endure difficult schooling conditions, inadequate school infrastructures, lack of competent and/or female teachers, as well as lack of adequate teaching and learning materials; others may be forced to contend with discrimination, harassment and violence in and on the way to school. Furthermore, the curricula is outdated and currently undergoing a reform process. In order to

address these challenges, UNICEF together with partners and in support of the MoE, focuses on nation-wide interventions to improve the quality of education through establishment of school-community environments conducive to learning and development. The MoE has adopted the Child-Friendly-Schools (CFS) approach, which focuses on inclusiveness, child-centered learning and the provision of a safe, healthy, and protective learning environment with active community participation

*a) Early Learning Opportunities*

In Afghanistan, in 2013, the GER in pre-primary education was 1.6 percent (1.9% for boys and 1.1% for girls). Provision of ECD services remains limited to a few urban centers, mainly catering to the elites and to rural districts in areas where NGOs focusing on ECD are active. UNICEF is a member of the ECD Working Group and a pre-school curriculum was drafted by the ECD Working Group, currently being reviewed by the MoE. A partnership agreement with AKF was signed to finalize the pre-school curriculum, develop learning standards and teaching and learning materials under the leadership of the MoE and the Technical Working Group.

In 2016, a partnership agreement with AKF was signed to finalize the pre-school curriculum, develop learning standards and teaching and learning materials under the leadership of the MoE and the Technical Working Group. UNICEF further supported the MoE in the establishment of community and school-based pre-schools in 17 provinces, benefitting a total of 8,309 children (53% girls): 290 community-based pre-schools in 13 provinces (6,499 children aged 4-6, 56% girls), and 54 school-based pre-schools in 4 Northern provinces (1,810 children, 49%). Around 50% of these student are ready to enrol at grade one. To support pre-school teachers, UNICEF's NGO partners, SC and BRAC, conducted training sessions on ECD methodology for 347 female teachers and 17 master trainers; 45 school principals benefitted from ECD orientation trainings, and 24 Academic Supervisors from training sessions on the importance of early learning. To support the functioning of pre-schools, 347 ECD kits and 347 floor mats were distributed to all 17 provinces.

*b) Child Friendly Schools*

UNICEF continued to support the implementation of nation-wide interventions to improve quality education and to support school-community environments conducive to learning and development – this based on the MoE's adopted Child-Friendly-Schools (CFS) approach, focusing on inclusiveness, child-centred learning and the provision of safe, healthy, and protective learning environments with active community participation. In 2016, including CFS principles in pre-and in-service teacher trainings aimed at improved learning methodologies and School Improvement Planning (SIP) at decentralized levels. Overall achievements under output 5.4 are constrained, mainly due to delays in implementation of printing of CFS materials and cancellation of SIP trainings in Southern-, Central- and Western regions for reasons related to insecurity. The latter impacted negatively on the actual development of SIPs.

As a key member of the Inclusive and CFS Working Group, UNICEF contributed to monitor progress made in the implementation of the CFS manual. CFS quality standards have been included through the "Quality" Working Group under the National Education Sector Plan (NESP III, 2017-2021) and the new Curriculum Reform proposal being led by UNESCO. A National Technical Assistance (NTA) was hired, dedicated to CFS implementation and monitoring. At school level, CFS communication and advocacy materials (CFS posters, brochure on CFS principles) were developed for dissemination to 1,500 schools in 2017.

UNICEF printed 15,000 CFS modules and training packages, aimed to be distributed to Teacher Training Centres in all 34 provinces. An additional 4,630 sets of Teacher Guidebooks (In-Service teacher training, grades 4-6) are in process of being printed.

At the request of the MoE, UNICEF supported intensive teacher training activities to improve capacity and quality learning based on CFS principles:

- 751 schools in 10 focus provinces benefitted from trainings on the CFS approach, SIP development, child-centred methodologies and the use of teacher guidebooks (grades 1-3): 4,784 teachers (out of which 2,37 female teachers), 622 SMS members, 237 provincial and district Academic Supervisors and 128 provincial TTC lecturers trained;
- 346 schools in 8 focus provinces (592 SMS members) participated in the development of SIPs;
- 178 schools benefitted from small school grants to improve their learning environment (minor repairs, refurbishing of classrooms, water resources, toilets, surrounding walls, school campus and green area).

An increase in female teachers in rural areas was aimed at through the enrolment of additional 479 female students in satellite teacher training centers under the “Girls’ Access to Teacher Education” (GATE) project), resulting in a total of 718 girl students (out of 1,000 targeted) now being enrolled in this project, benefitting from scholarships and mentoring.

As part of innovations, UNICEF supported the Science and Technology Directorate (STD) of MoE in procurement of science equipment to produce a DVD of 200 Science and Health experiments for Grades 4-6. This including a 15-day Training of Trainers workshop for 20 Science and Health teachers. Filming of the experiments is in progress with materials to be piloted in 20 schools in 2017.

### *c) Learning Outcomes & National Assessment Framework*

Afghanistan is experiencing a “learning crisis” with data from a grade 6 national assessment revealing that less than half of the children are meeting the minimum required learning outcomes for their level. Only 1 percent of grade 6 students show an understanding of mathematical concepts and 23 percent are not able to read fluently beyond single sentences. UNICEF has focused its support to MoE on the improvement of Afghanistan’s National Learning Assessment System, including classroom-based assessment (national scale).

Overall, the output has been rated as constrained due to the inability to find a qualified institution to undertake the development of a NAFA, including the development of standardized test items. After a third advertisement, UNICEF was finally successful in sourcing an international consultancy firm through a global LTA, who was due to start in December 2016 but has now withdrawn. The consultancy includes streamlining of the activities with curriculum reform processes in close collaboration with MoE and UNESCO. UNICEF is also reinforcing the MoE’s capacity through recruitment of two LA NTAs.

At upstream level, throughout 2016, UNICEF provided technical support to the MoE to incorporate the learning assessment component into the NESP III as a key strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning. UNICEF’s advocacy also led to the establishment of a Thematic Working Group on LA, led by the MoE in co-leadership with UNICEF. In June 2016, the MoE established a new LA Directorate. UNICEF also represented its interventions related to learning in national coordination fora (Curriculum Reform and CFS WGs, NESP Steering Committee, LEG).

Furthermore, UNICEF continued supporting the MoE in capacity-building of teachers on Assessment for Learning (AfL) (Formative Assessment). In close collaboration with the Teacher Education Department (TED), AfL training materials were developed (English, Dari and Pashto) and printed, including Facilitator’s Guide, Teacher Reference Manual and innovative DVD, benefitting 31,161 teachers and trainers. Materials will be used in 34 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) across the country as part of pre-service teacher education.

A ToT designed around the competencies of knowledge acquisition and practical application was conducted (12 Core and 80 Master Trainers) and is currently being rolled-out in 18 provinces. Core Trainers continue to serve as coaching and monitoring support for MTs. As of Dec 2016, 7,841 participants (CFS, CBE and Academic Supervisors) have completed the training. In order to increase the number of female teachers, PEDs were asked to target mostly female teachers, resulting in 30% female participation. Preliminary results of the pre- and post-test indicate the effectiveness of the training related to knowledge and attitude change. Follow-up sessions have been designed and further post-training research, i.e. impact assessment of teacher practices is foreseen to be conducted in the near future.

## **3.3 Strengthened political commitment, accountability and national capacity to legislate, plan and budget for scaling-up quality and inclusive education.**

**Improved Institutional Capacity.** Systems’ strengthening is key to the success of an effective and efficient schooling system. UNICEF therefore continuously advocates at highest levels of Government for better and effective Education planning, policy development, management practices and coordination.

As Supervising Entity for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Programme in Afghanistan, an “on-budget” programme of the MoE (2012-2017) with a total funding of US\$55.7 million, UNICEF has been supporting the MoE in increasing and sustaining the equitable access to education in 13 provinces, covering 40 remote districts in Afghanistan. The four priorities of the GPE Programme are: (i) strengthening community

and social mobilisation and governance systems at the local level, (ii) expanding and reinforcing multiple pathways to education, (iii) increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities, and (iv) streamlining policy and administrative systems in the MoE. In 2016, UNICEF provided continued support to the MoE and the GPE Programme Coordination Unit (GPEPCU) on programmatic and fiduciary components of the Programme. UNICEF facilitated and assisted the MoE with the preparation, revision, and submission of its third no-cost extension to the GPE Country Grant and Performance Committee (CGPC) with subsequent approval, which extended the duration of the programme grant effectiveness period until 30 June 2017. In addition, UNICEF contracted Ernst & Young (EY) to conduct an external audit of the GPE programme, which was supposed to be carried out by the Supreme Audit Office (SAO) of Afghanistan within 180 days of the end of each year since 2013, but had not been done due to the inability of SAO to perform accelerated audit of the GPE programme itself. E&Y conducted the external audit of the programme for 2013, 2014 and 2015, including assurance visits to the target provinces and districts. Finalisation of the audit is pending MoE's agreement on the management response.

#### *a) Programme component*

Programme component activities supported by UNICEF include: a) provision of technical and advisory support to the MoE/GPEPCU in developing and ensuring oversight to strengthen planning, reporting and monitoring mechanisms at district, provincial and national levels; b) provision of technical support to MoE/GPEPCU in reviewing, endorsing and implementing of the operational plan and monitoring framework of the GPE Programme.

In 2016, UNICEF (1) provided technical support to the MoE in sector analysis and financial modelling; (2) provided technical support to MoE in development, reviewing and revising of NESP III; (3) financed and organised GPE related workshops at sub-national level to enhance the capacity of staff at provincial levels, particularly the capacity of female Social Mobilisers and CBE and ALP teachers; (4) through fiduciary advisor, conducted monitoring of the programme in sample selected 109 classes in 35 districts of 13 target provinces; (5) supported the Provincial Education Departments (PED) and the GPECU in organising the programme progress review workshops with participation of about 350 participants representing PEDs, DEOs, Academic Supervision, and CBE and ALP teachers.

Through high-level coordination meetings, UNICEF also supported discussions with the LEG and MoE on the new GPE funding modality and possible bridge fund for the final 6 months of 2017 from USAID. The results of which were that the World Bank will take over as Grant Agent from 2018, under the pooled funding modality which will merge the EQUIP and GPE programmes into EQRA (Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan).

#### *b) Fiduciary Component*

In 2016, UNICEF recruited a new Fiduciary Adviser (FA), Grant Thornton, to assist with fiduciary oversight and monitoring of programme implementation in GPE targeted provinces (previously KPMG). Due to changing firms, some of the FA activities, for example programme assurance monitoring activities, experienced some delays. Major fiduciary support and service included 1) conducting field monitoring of the fiduciary and programmatic aspects of the GPE Programme implementation and fund utilisation in the GPE targeted provinces and districts; (2) producing semi-annual and annual progress reports of and sharing them with MoE and GPEPCU for their consideration and actions; (3) providing substantial support to GPEPCU in revising the Programme's operational plan and budget; and (4) providing technical assistance on overall financial planning and reporting to MoE's Finance and Accounting Department and GPEPCU.

#### *c) Implementation constraints and challenges*

Despite of the aforementioned progress and UNICEF's constant support and assistance to the MoE and GPEPCU, there have been some ongoing challenges and bottlenecks that resulted in relatively low implementation of the GPE Programme at national and sub-national levels. Some of the main constraints and challenges are: (1) perpetual security concerns in the GPE targeted districts, (2) delay in the transfer of funds from centre to provinces, mainly due to the lengthy internal administrative process in MoE, (3) significant delays in provision of teachers' salaries, (4) insufficient inter-departmental communication and coordination at MoE, (5) weak monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism at the MoE, mainly at the provincial and district levels, and (6) political uncertainty and transition that suspended procurement and recruitment for over six months across all public sector, and (7) absence of progress in reopening of closed schools due to non-availability of accurate data and clear definitions.



### **3.4 Increased country capacity and delivery of services to ensure that girls and boys have access to safe and secure forms of education and critical information for their own well-being in humanitarian situations**

**Emergency Preparedness and Response:** Education in Emergency (EiE) preparedness and response support by UNICEF contributes to the continued access to education of disaster and conflict affected children. UNICEF also aims at promoting social cohesion and a culture of peace among children and local communities in regions where violence, grievance and fear persists.

#### *a) Education in Emergencies*

Throughout 2016, UNICEF worked closely together with the MoE to prepare and respond to emergencies. The Education Cluster was discontinued in 2013 and transitioned into an EiE Working Group (EiE WG) in 2014, led by the MoE (since Sept 2016 in co-leadership with UNICEF and Save the Children). Through the EiE WG, UNICEF has played a crucial role in supporting the MoE in its EiE capacity building efforts, both at national and provincial levels, particularly linked to the recent returnee crisis. A comprehensive preparedness and response plan and strategy has been developed by the MoE with support from the EiE WG and submitted to the Ministry of Finance towards the end of 2016. The plan and strategy focuses on children affected by emergencies in general, including returnees, IDPs and host communities, children affected by natural disasters (floods, landslides, avalanches, earthquakes) and conflict.

In 2016, UNICEF has contributed to continue access to Education of disaster and conflict affected children throughout the country and pre-positioned supplies for 40,000 targeted children. In addition, 30,989 school aged children affected by conflict and related displacement as well returnees children from Pakistan were reached in the South, East and North of the country. A total of 14 schools damaged by conflict were rehabilitated in Kunduz. Teaching and learning materials were provided and over 700 tents distributed to serve as temporary learning spaces; 32 CBS were been established targeting approximately 1,000 returnee and IDP children. Tents, school-in-a-box, blackboards, floor mats and ECD kits were provided to the Kabul UNHCR Encashment Centre and 800 children participated in educational and recreational activities. 50,000 brochures were produced in local language and disseminated to returnee families to provide information on available education opportunities. Enhanced advocacy through the EiE WG led to the MoE circulating an official letter to all PEDs, instructing them to provide Education to all returnee and IDP children during the year via public or community-based schools. An academic committee was established by the MoE to facilitate education access to returnee and IDP children without school certificates.

Capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies continued to be a challenge throughout 2016; in addition the absence of reliable data was major constraint to plan and prepare for an effective and efficient education emergency responses. Mobilization of human and financial resources were a big challenge in 2016. Education in Emergencies was not considered in Humanitarian Response Plan 2016 as its own chapter was grouped under the Protection Cluster. Furthermore, lack of reliable data collection systems continued to be a major challenge for planning purposes in 2016.

### **3.5 Integration of gender dimensions into the programme**

The BEGE programme interventions are designed to contribute to MDGs 2 and 3 with a main focus on increased access to basic education especially for girls, and improving the quality of education to attract more children to enroll and stay in school. The newly endorsed National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III, 2017 – 2021) will be instrumental in moving forward the Girls' Education agenda to increase enrolment, retention and completion rates, as well as the development of a comprehensive Girls' Education National Policy and strategy. All seven outputs of the UNICEF work plan are inclusive of a gender component from access, retention, completion to transition. While there are targeted interventions for girls in each output, a percentage of boys is also included which has ensured an equitable gender approach to programming.

### **3.6 Monitoring and evaluation arrangement**

To facilitate monitoring of the planned programme, results and activities, the CP monitoring framework has been developed. The BEGE programme has indicators for each result and activity which helps to monitor planned interventions versus progress. UNICEF zonal office staff monitors progress of implementation of

activities conducted at provincial, district and community levels, in close collaboration with respective MoE counterparts. Quarterly and annual reviews are conducted at both zone office and country office levels. Each zone office has a monitoring and evaluation officer to provide technical support to the organisation.

Third party monitoring mechanism were used to strengthen the mechanism for identifying the implementation gaps and corrective action in a timely manner. This form of monitoring provided independent information which guided the programme implementation to achieve results. In 2015, the country office also initiated the implementation of a comprehensive set of assurance activities for monitoring use of UNICEF resources (HACT). This included a combination of Programme monitoring along with spot checks and audits where necessary.

### **3.7 Advocacy and capacity development for achieving results**

In 2016, UNICEF continued to provide financial and technical support to the MoE, including high-level advocacy for Girls' Education and Early Learning. A focus on strong policy and advocacy leadership ensured inclusion of Girls' Education in the new National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III, 2017 – 2021). In order to address the grave issue of 3.5 million children out of school, in particular girls, there is a need for a comprehensive OOSC strategy/policy beyond CBE. Since this strategy does not exist, MoE has come to realise its necessity based on reinforced advocacy from UNICEF and partners. In fact, respective points have even been included in the new National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III, 2017 – 2021). Integration of OOSC and CBE related strategies into the new National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III, 2017 – 2021) was made possible through high-level advocacy and UNICEF being a core member of the NESP III Steering Committee. Successful advocacy undertaken through EiE WG resulted in the MoE formalizing its support in enrolling all returnee children into schools for a period of three months either through enrolment into public schools or Community Based Schools (CBS).

Capacity development for achieving results is one of the main strategy of the BEGE programme. During the reporting period, a series of hands-on training, coaching, mentoring were provided at MoE central, provincial and school levels. UNICEF continued to reinforce the skills and competencies of government staff at national and subnational levels to implement CBE policy at local levels, and planning and preparation of hub-schools to receive CBE students. Technical support to the Planning Directorate together with UNESCO, resulted in enhanced capacities to collect, analyse, monitor and make use of data by decision-makers. UNICEF also reinforced its human resources capacity to support the MoE in its efforts to roll-out innovative data collection mechanisms from 2017 (Real-time Monitoring/EduTrac).

Furthermore, 18 National Education Technical Assistance (NTA) staff were financially supported by UNICEF to assist MoE's technical departments to plan and implement Education activities (national level). At the provincial level, UNICEF continued to provide technical support to PEDs and DEDs to plan, implement and monitor the education programme in collaboration with UNICEF zonal offices and outposts. In Bamyan, Daikundi and Ghor, UNICEF provided engineers to support the implementation of the Central Highlands School Construction Project. Similarly, provincial coordinators were recruited to support PEDs in its monitoring efforts of the education programme along with two field monitors. In Kandahar, where UNICEF staff are not able to physically monitor UNICEF supported projects due to limited access and security constraints, an NTA was recruited to support programme implementation and monitoring. At school level, through NGOs and the Teacher Education Department (TED), school teachers in 10 provinces were trained in child-friendly methodologies. In addition the recruitment process of 31 Technical Extenders was close to be completed by end of 2016.

### **3.8 Key strategic partnerships developed**

In 2016, UNICEF continued to play a major role in building partnerships to contribute to the Education sector by actively engaging in the Human Resource Development Board (HRDB), a policy forum which allows relevant government ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Labour Social Martyrs and Disabled, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Ministry of Finance) and the development partners to jointly discuss priority education issues on a monthly basis. The forum comprises around 25



Development Partners. During these forums UNICEF continued to raise issues related to equity and equality, advocating for better access to quality education.

The role of Supervising Entity for the GPE, provided a unique opportunity for UNICEF to build and leverage strengthened and multi-stakeholder partnerships, which include Donors, Development Partners, Local Education Group, USAID as coordinating agency, the MoE as direct implementing partner and other government institutions (Ministry of Finance, Supreme Audit Office among others).

### 3.9 Leveraging of resources

The BEGE programme is mostly implemented by funds from UNICEF and bilateral donors. UNICEF Afghanistan continued to work with various donor countries such as the Governments of USA, Japan, Sweden, Iceland, Italy, Korea, UK and Canada and private donors who are supporting education through the German Committee for UNICEF for the generous additional funding support to implementation of the BEGE programme in 2015.

## 4 Financial Analysis

The budget for the Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme in 2016 was US\$ 24,560,010. This included planned RR amount of US\$ 6,000,000 and planned ORR of US\$18,560,010 as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Planned Budget by Outcome Area in 2016

Outcome area	RR	ORR	TOTAL
05-02 Equity # focus on girls# and inclusive education	4,120,000	11,643,600	15,763,600
05-03 Learning and child-friendly schools	1,593,000	5,460,960	7,053,960
05-05 Education # General	135,000	1,129,950	1,264,950
Other	152,000	325,500	477,500
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>	<b>18,560,010</b>	<b>24,560,010</b>

**Table 2:** Country-level thematic contributions to outcome area received in 2016

Donor	Grant Number	Contribution Amount	Programmable amount
Canada	SC1499050484	746,524	697,686
<b>Total</b>		<b>746,524</b>	<b>697,686</b>

### 4.1 Financial implementation

**Table 3:** Expenditure by outcome area (2016)

Organizational Target	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	Regular Resources	Grand Total
05-01 Early learning	137	1,023,053	331,250	1,354,440
05-02 Equity # focus on girls# and inclusive education	50,277	17,856,163	9,239,211	27,145,651
05-03 Learning and child-friendly schools	587	3,499,611	1,048,843	4,549,041
05-04 Education in emergencies	518,192	1,247	37,724	557,163
05-05 Education # General	218	1,143,944	759,556	1,903,718
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>569,411</b>	<b>23,524,019</b>	<b>11,416,584</b>	<b>35,510,014</b>

**Table 4:** Thematic expenses by programme area (2016)

Organizational Target	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	Grand Total
05-01 Early learning	72	219,958	220,029
05-02 Equity # focus on girls# and inclusive education	1,565	775,753	777,318
05-03 Learning and child-friendly schools	306	893,213	893,519
05-04 Education in emergencies	31	764	795
05-05 Education # General	114	40,987	41,101
Grand Total	2,087	1,930,675	1,932,761

**Table 5:** Thematic expenses by programme area (2016)

Specific Intervention Codes	Expense
05-01-01 National policies on early learning and school readiness	140,410
05-01-04 Community-based child development and early learning	777,589
05-02-01 Out of School Children Initiative (OOSCI)	-2,505
05-02-03 Girls# primary and pre-primary education (excluding UNGEI)	20,075,117
05-03-02 Child Friendly Schools # Education	3,615,656
05-03-04 Learning assessment systems	354,993
05-03-05 Curriculum reform or development	-48,475
05-04-05 Education # Emergency preparedness	24,215
05-04-06 Education - Emergency response	374,066
05-05-08 Education -technical assistance to regional and country offices	23,866
05-05-09 Education -support to achieving global and regional goals	992,307
08-01-07 Humanitarian Planning (CAP/SRP, HAC) and review related activities	34,397
08-02-01 Situation Analysis or Update on women and children	389,668
08-02-02 Situation Analysis or Update focused on adolescents	6,449
08-02-08 Monitoring # General	54,317
08-02-09 Emergency rapid assessments	79,717
08-02-10 Humanitarian performance monitoring	2,356
08-03-01 Cross-sectoral Communication for Development	239,767
08-05-01 Supply # General	471,290
08-06-01 Building evaluation capacity in UNICEF and the UN system	154,463
08-07-01 Adolescent development # General	6,439
08-08-01 Gender programming not classifiable by sector	56,702
08-09-06 Other # non-classifiable cross-sectoral activities	2,155,975
08-09-11 Emergency preparedness and response (General)	4,628,434
10-07-12 Management and Operations support at CO	-38,292
2062 Teacher training and support for basic education	440,304
2092 Education interventions for out of school children in humanitarian response and post-crisis recovery	762
5033 Knowledge systems in humanitarian action including emergency preparedness plans, rapid assessments etc.	219,675
6901 Staff costs (includes specialists, managers, TAs and consultancies) for multiple Focus Areas of the MTSP	2,126
7911 Representative and governance	4,376
7921 Operations # financial and administration	273,850
Grand Total	35,510,014

**Table 6:** Planned Budget for 2017

Outputs	Planned Budget	Funded Budget	Shortfall
001 INCREASE ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION	23,353,500	22,630,152	723,348
Other Resources - Regular	19,656,869	21,185,441	(1,528,572)
Regular Resources	3,696,631	1,444,711	2,251,920
002 ENSURE HIGHER TRANSITION RATE FROM G3-G4	900,000	1,396,338	(496,338)
Other Resources - Regular	900,000	1,196,598	(296,598)
Regular Resources	-	199,740	(199,740)
003 RESOURCES LEVERAGED FOR EDUCATION SECTOR	2,302,442	1,963,736	338,706
Other Resources - Regular	1,502,442	1,492,442	10,000
Regular Resources	800,000	471,294	328,706
004 CFS IMPLEMENTED FOR QUALITY EDUCATION	3,706,960	2,668,862	1,038,098
Other Resources - Regular	3,706,960	2,497,622	1,209,338
Regular Resources	-	171,240	(171,240)
005 MONITORING OF LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT SYSTE	1,101,505	1,263,324	(161,819)
Other Resources - Regular	1,101,505	1,263,324	(161,819)
Regular Resources	-	-	-
006 GIRLS# EDUCATION AND ECD DEVELOPED	2,973,000	5,467,682	(2,494,682)
Other Resources - Regular	1,473,000	2,337,835	(864,835)
Regular Resources	1,500,000	3,129,847	(1,629,847)
Grand Total	34,337,408	35,390,094	(1,052,686)

<sup>1</sup> Planned and Funded budget for ORR excludes recovery cost. RR plan is based on total RR approved for the Country Programme duration

<sup>2</sup> Other Resources shortfall represents ORR funding required for the achievements of results in 2016.

## 5 Future Work Plan

### a) Education Access and Retention

In 2017 and within the new country programme, UNICEF will continue to support the MoE to increase access to education via formal and non-formal/alternative types of Education utilising good practices that have had an overall impact on school enrolment. The new NESP presents opportunities to collaborate with the government in increasing access and retention especially in rural areas. At the national level, a review of the current CBE policy will be conducted to develop a standardised costing model and an operational plan. Teacher training for new teachers and refresher trainings for CBS and ALC teachers, salaries for CBE contract teachers and learning assessment trainings will be provided as well as TLMs for both the formal and non-formal/alternative schools. At the community level, the Provincial Coordinators, Field Monitors, and Academic/District Supervisors will be supported to monitor the functioning of both CBE and public schools, as well as learning outcomes of children. Workshops on CBEs and on transitions to hub-schools will take place in 13 provinces for School Management Shuras (SMS) who play a critical role as mobilizers within their communities. Efforts to improve low literacy rates will be attempted through Reading Programs for CBE students which include establishment of selected community libraries. Continued efforts will be made to increase the enrolment rates of students in accelerated learning centers for adolescent girls and women (AAE supported schools).

### b) Quality Education

In 2017, UNICEF will continue to support the MoE in its efforts to provide quality Education for all children in Afghanistan. UNICEF will hereby work with the MoE and other partners to develop and scale-up interventions based on the Child Friendly Schools approach in order to improve the quality of education and to ensure school-community environment are conducive to learning and development. Focus will be given to systems' building at national level, through the finalization of a draft outline of a National Assessment Framework in line with the ongoing Curriculum reform as well as streamlining the Child Friendly Schools principals at national, provincial and local levels. Additional work will be done related to teacher education through the conduct of a teacher study, looking specifically at the situation of female teachers. Capacity on

planning, implementation and monitoring will be strengthened through the development of a comprehensive capacity development strategy.

*c) Girls Education and Early Childhood Development*

In 2017, UNICEF will continue its endeavors to reduce gender disparities and promote girls education. Efforts will be made to develop strategies to address the barriers to girls' education. Advocacy will continue to ensure a functioning Girls Education working group and coordination among the partners for girls' education. It is also planned to support MoE for piloting Early Childhood Care and Education which are specific to the country context.

- Efforts will be scaled up to address the dire state of low enrolment, retention and completion rates of girls. Initiatives to increase the number of female teachers, CBSs and ALCs, as well as to improve the school environment, such as in WASH in Schools, will continue in order to address the current low rate of 17% of girls' schools. Communication and advocacy campaigns at the community level will continue to solicit behaviour change on the importance of girls' education.
- At national level, the Development of the National Education Strategic Plan will provide an opportunity on specific policies and strategies to address the huge number of girls out of school and provide equitable quality education to support increased girls' education. A Comprehensive Strategy and Policy on Girls' Education is currently being developed with the support of UNICEF which includes a concept note and roadmap with key milestones to be achieved throughout the year.
- An Out of School Children Study will be undertaken in 2017 which will provide tailored interventions taking into consideration contextual differences in the country as well as areas under Government control and areas controlled by Non State Entities). This will contribute to the development of key policies and strategies which, in turn, will seek to address low enrolment rates of girls.
- The NESP III is inclusive of pre-school education, for the first time, which UNICEF will support through both human and financial resources. A technical specialist/advisor will be recruited to support this fairly new thematic area in the Ministry of Education, to assist with the conduct of a cost-effectiveness study and ELDS (Early Learning Standards), and to chair the ECD Working Group. It is hoped that the Working Group will contribute to strengthening coordination between respective line Ministries to ensure a holistic ECD approach. The existing 347 Early Learning Centres will continue to be supported and 250 more Centres will be established and linked to CBEs.

*d) Sector coordination, planning and monitoring, including GPE*

UNICEF will continue to provide technical support to MoE and GPEPCU to ensure full programme implementation and utilisation of funds before 30 June 2017. This will be done by building on previous lessons learnt, timely identification of bottlenecks, and accelerating programme implementation. UNICEF, in its role as SE, will provide continued support to MoE and GPEPCU to assist them with (1) accelerating the procurement and implementation of remaining 223 school improvement plans (SIPs); 2) accelerate the replacement of 53 qualified female teachers who left their positions; 3) start conducting programmatic events, focus group discussions with communities, mobilising SMS and providing emergency funds to reopen 100 schools; 4) accelerate the policy development work, which should be aligned with and take into consideration the Afghanistan Out-of-school children study results 5) accelerate the disbursement of funds to provincial levels for implementation of 2017 operational plan, 6) clearing pending liabilities from 2016, especially in payment of teachers' salaries. During the programme closure (July – December 2017), UNICEF will support the MoE with development of final programme completion report and clearing the pending liabilities. In addition, external audit of the GPE programme for 2016 and 2017 (January – June) will be initiated and completed.

UNICEF will also support the World Bank and the LEG with the next round of application for the GPE, which will be merged with the EQUIP and called Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan (EQRA).

*e) Humanitarian Action: Education in Emergencies*

In 2017, UNICEF will continue its technical and financial support to MoE in terms of system strengthening and effective EiE service delivery for affected children. Education officials at the national, provincial, district and school level will be trained to collect data, analyse situation, develop programme strategies, coordinate and monitor EiE services according to the minimum standards. They will also be trained to develop emergency preparedness plan which can be implemented at all levels. As first phase, the system strengthening and

emergency preparedness will be piloted at selected province, district and schools. Lessons that are learnt from pilot activities will be incorporated into next phases.

The priority for EiE are the high returnee areas including Nangarhar, Kabul and Kandahar provinces where existing schools are overcrowded and cannot absorb the estimated 100,000 additional children returnees or IDPs. UNICEF interventions are focused on establishing more temporary classrooms and community-based education, provision of additional teaching and learning materials, and recruit more teachers. UNICEF is preparing an accelerated learning curriculum for returnee children who missed out on primary education and who are too old for their current grade. The recruitment of a National Technical Assistance (NTA) person, to be placed within the Ministry of Education, has been approved and is currently underway to accelerate the planning and implementation of EiE Response.

As co-lead of the Afghanistan Education in Emergencies Working Group (EiE WG) UNICEF will continue to support the Ministry of Education in coordinating the Education in Emergencies response. The EiE WG brings together all humanitarian partners implementing Education in Emergencies programs. UNICEF will support the EiE WG and its partners in implementing its 'Education in Emergencies Response Plan' and in providing education to approximately 600,000 Afghan children affected by crises. To achieve this goal UNICEF will contribute to and support the 1) strategic direction of the EiE WG and its partners, 2) mobilization of partners and resources, 3) building of capacity of partners in EiE with a focus on national partners and 3) the establishment and strengthening of EiE WG Focal Points on provincial level, 4) the strengthening of the EiE WG Monitoring and Reporting system and 5) EiE WG advocacy efforts including the full re-activation of the Education Cluster.

*f) HACT assurance activities*

In 2017, UNICEF will focus on rolling out the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT). This will entail capacity building of implementing partners and adopting a strengthened systematic approach to financial monitoring through spot checks and audits. Programme monitoring will be done through a combination of using existing government systems, third party monitoring and also try out innovative technology based solutions for remote and insecure areas.

## **6 Expression of Thanks**

UNICEF Afghanistan deeply appreciates and thanks each donor for the generous contributions in support of education in Afghanistan. The funding enabled many children gain access to basic education which is one of their basic rights. UNICEF also thank colleagues from all the line ministries and departments for their cooperation and support at the central, provincial, districts and community levels. We equally value and appreciate the local community contribution in programme implementation and ensuring quality of output. Finally, UNICEF treasures the collaboration and partnerships with all development partners, local and international NGOs working in different sectors that ensured attainment of the results for the people of Afghanistan.



## Annex I: Human Interest Story

### Beating the odds to get an education

Partially paralyzed at birth, Afghan girl battles long distances and tradition to get to school



Khadija, 13, attends a community-based Accelerated Learning Centre in Bamyān in the Central Highlands region of Afghanistan. © UNICEF Afghanistan/2016/Sheida

BAMYAN, Afghanistan, 1 December 2016. For 13-year old Khadija, the walk to school is more challenging than for most other young girls. Partially paralyzed at birth, she makes the daily 50-minute commute by foot to attend classes at an Accelerated Learning Centre near her village in the Central Highlands of Afghanistan. Winters in these remote expanses can last up to six months.

"One winter morning last year, when everything was covered in snow, I came to class and no one was there. That's when I saw Khadija walking slowly towards the school carrying her backpack," says Maryam, Khadija's teacher.



Khadija, 13, with a classmate at the Accelerated Learning Centre they attend in Bamyān, Afghanistan. © UNICEF Afghanistan/2016/Sheida

"She fell a few times until she finally reached the building, but she still came. I could barely hold back my tears. She is a brave girl," she recalls with emotion that is still palpable.

Khadija, like most girls in her community, was not able to attend school at an earlier age: there simply wasn't one around, not even within a remotely accessible radius.

But this changed when an Accelerated Learning Centre opened in the largely agrarian village of Peer Dad, giving boys and girls an opportunity to get an education and eventually integrate the formal government schools.

At 13, Khadija is in second grade and has a lot to catch up, which is not unusual in many remote villages across the country. The community-based Accelerated Learning Centres are actually structured in a way that allows students to complete the equivalent of two years' worth of classes in one year.

Khadija was born prematurely. With no hospital or health facility readily accessible, her mother gave birth at home and Khadija partially lost mobility in her legs. She studies hard and wants to show others that her disability is not an obstacle.

"I am so happy that we have this school in our village. Maybe one day I can become a doctor, or work with something that can help my parents and other people," says Khadija.

Located primarily in remote areas, Accelerated Learning Centres are part of UNICEF-supported community-based education programmes that give children and adolescents a second chance at education closer to home in under-served communities that have been affected by insecurity, lack of transportation, displacement, or inadequate education infrastructures.

#### A supportive environment

Khadija, 13, does her homework in her house as her father looks on. He has supported her attending classes at a community-based Accelerated Learning Centre in the Central Highlands province of Afghanistan.

Deep-rooted traditions and cultural barriers have long impeded girls from receiving an education in Afghanistan. In addition, young women are expected to continue helping with household chores, so attending classes and finding time to study are not easy commitments for Khadija and her classmates.



UNICEF Afghanistan/2016/Sheida

But Khadija's family has supported her education.

"I wished that a day would come when my girl could at least read and write. I couldn't do anything for her, even though she is the only child in our home. But I can do this. I am very happy that she is going to school and learning," says Khadija's father.

## Annex II: Donor Feedback Form

UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback. Kindly answer the questions below for the above-mentioned report. Thank you!

Please return the completed form back to UNICEF by email to:

Name: Ilona Milner

Email: imilner@unicef.org

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**SCORING: 5 indicates “highest level of satisfaction” while  
0 indicates “complete dissatisfaction”**

1. To what extent did the narrative content of the report conform to your reporting expectations? (For example, the overall analysis and identification of challenges and solutions)

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

2. To what extent did the fund utilization part of the report meet your reporting expectations?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

3. To what extent does the report meet your expectations in regard to the analysis provided, including identification of difficulties and shortcomings as well as remedies to these?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we could do better next time?

4. To what extent does the report meet your expectations with regard to reporting on results?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

5. Please provide us with your suggestions on how this report could be improved to meet your expectations.

6. Are there any other comments that you would like to share with us?

Thank you for filling this form!