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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Review of the UNICEF programme Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan 2013-2015

Final Report

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Table of contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
Preface.....	4
Executive Summary	5
1 Introduction.....	8
1.1 Scope of the evaluation	8
1.2 Education in Afghanistan	9
1.3 BEGE Programme.....	13
1.4 Swedish results strategy.....	18
2 Method.....	20
2.1 Evaluation process	20
2.2 Limitations	25
2.3 Evaluation team.....	27
3 Findings.....	28
3.1 Relevance	28
3.2 Effectiveness	39
3.3 Efficiency	47
3.4 Impact.....	51
3.5 Sustainability	52
4 Conclusions	54
4.1 Relevance	54
4.1 Effectiveness	54
4.2 Efficiency	56
4.3 Impact and sustainability	57
4.4 Ways forward.....	58
5 Recommendations.....	60
5.1 Recommendations to UNICEF	60
5.2 Recommendations to Sida	62
Annex 1– Terms of Reference.....	64
Annex 2 – Inception report.....	74
Annex 3 – Documents Reviewed	75
Annex 4 – Persons Consulted	79
Annex 5 – BEGE Theory of Change	85

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALC	Accelerated Learning Centres
BEGE	Basic Education and Gender Equality
CBE	Community Based Education
CBS	Community Based Schools
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DED	District Education Department
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EoS	Embassy of Sweden
EQ	Evaluation Question(s)
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
PED	Provincial Education Department
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
NESP	National Education Strategy Plan
SMS	School Management Shura
TA	Technical Assistance
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TTC	Teacher Training Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPD	United Nation Statistics Division
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Preface

This evaluation of the UNICEF programme *Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan 2013-2015* was commissioned by Sida's Afghanistan Unit, Department for Asia, North Africa and Humanitarian Assistance, in January 2016.

NIRAS Indevlop carried out the evaluation between January – July 2016. The independent evaluation team consisted of:

- Ms. Annica Holmberg, as Team Leader
- Dr. Leo Schellekens, as Education Specialist
- Ms. Jessica Rothman, as Evaluator (also Project Manager)
- [Name protected], as National Team Leader
- [Names protected], as national evaluators

Ian Christoplos provided external quality assurance to the evaluation methodology and reports.

The evaluation manager at Sida was Fredrik Westerholm, together with Inger Johansson.

Focal persons at UNICEF were Andrea Berther and [Name protected], while [Name protected] provided administrative and logistical support.

This evaluation report was finalised based on feedback from UNICEF and Sida on the draft report.

Executive Summary

This evaluation is a summative and formative evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE) programme undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MoE). The evaluated period is 2013-2015. The evaluation assesses the BEGE programme in relation to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as well as UNICEF's ability to achieve quality results over time, to coordinate with the government and other actors in the field, including donors and to some degree also UNICEF's upstream support to national policy in the education sector.

The main purpose of the Sida support to BEGE is to ensure an increase in educational levels of children, particularly girls, through more equitable access to quality basic education services in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on the 10 most deprived provinces and four provinces in the north. The provinces are Bamyan, Badghis, Daikundi, Ghor, Helmand, Kandahar, Paktika, Paktia, Uruzgan and Zabul, Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan and Saripul.

The evaluation was carried out between February-June 2016 and included field visits to Kabul, Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Kandahar and Bamyan. The security situation and regulations strongly limited the possibility to visit rural and remote communities where the bulk of the BEGE programme is being developed, which is why the findings are based only on a small sample of stakeholder interviews from community based schools, with a relatively large representation from urban and semi-urban schools and duty-bearers and other key stakeholders based in urban centres of the visited provinces. The evaluation includes interviews with district, provincial and national levels of the Ministry of Education and in-depth discussions with UNICEF staff at national and provincial levels. The evaluation team has had a strong focus on children and teachers and the majority of the consultations were held with these two groups.

The Swedish support to BEGE is based on project funding. There was little or no understanding in UNICEF at national and provincial levels of this fact. The components of BEGE were perceived as part of UNICEF's current Country Programme and the education teams did not refer to BEGE as such. Provincial education staff focused on ongoing and recent activities for 2015-2016, and had little understanding that the evaluation focused on the full intervention period of a project. This made it difficult to seek response to some of the evaluation questions, to focus on the earlier years of the intervention period and assess all its components. The evaluators were thus asked to evaluate a project that in fact did not exist in its own right.

The evaluators conclude that the BEGE programme at an overall level is relatively relevant to the national education strategy but that it has not been adapted to the new realities of the political context. The lack of clear gender equality strategies, and the fact that the programme has been implemented with a general out of school children focus rather than a girls focus, makes the programme less relevant for the Swedish results strategy for Afghanistan, but also for the pressing need in Afghanistan to continue to focus on the access to education for girls and women.

UNICEF is an important actor in the education sector in Afghanistan with its direct relation with the Ministry of Education and strong cooperation with the donor community supporting basic education. . The evaluation finds that UNICEF has untapped potential in promoting a more creative, innovative and rights-based support to basic education in the country. While the BEGE programme is contributing to increased access to education it shows little progress in contributing to quality education. It has neither been developed through clear strategies for how to promote gender equality within basic education; focus has been on access to school for all children by using a rather vague understanding of the concept *inclusive education*.

UNICEF can become a much more relevant actor within the educational sector by making use of the expertise that exists in the organisation globally on gender equality, and child rights and child centred methods. The practice of human rights-based approach is found to be weak, and the support to child centred and child friendly teaching methods has so far been based on too short, sporadic and non-comprehensive capacity development initiatives. Teachers are introduced to new methods without being equipped with strategies for how to develop and sustain the approaches in their school and among their colleagues.

One of the most central components of the BEGE programme is the support to the capacity development of the MoE as an institution and its key staff. The absence of a comprehensive gender equality perspective and the lack of participatory and learning oriented approaches that build institutionalised capacities within MoE and among teachers, are some of the most critical findings of this evaluation. There is little evidence of improved capacities at the MoE to manage, develop and monitor the basic education provided. This is a fundamental conclusion that needs strong attention in future interventions.

UNICEF needs to review their strategies of how the MoE is best supported. The close relations with the MoE constitute a strong foundation for an open and critical discussion on how to develop institutionalised capacity at the MoE. The models of technical assistance need to be assessed in relation to the actual needs of different levels of the MoE and be adapted to the rapidly shifting realities.

The programme's expected results are formulated on an output level that does not support the measurement of change over time. Programme monitoring focuses on activities and their quantitative indicators; factors that lead to change are overlooked

and lessons learned are not documented and institutionalised. The lack of and inability to monitor the programme is also a major weakness, as is results based management in general. UNICEF needs to put significant effort into developing a realistic theory of change with plausible strategies to achieve identified outcomes, and to strengthening their monitoring system and capacities.

Finally, the evaluation concludes that there is an opportunity for UNICEF to play a role to promote basic education in Taliban controlled areas. The Taliban's recent shift to a more positive approach to education opens up for education programmes in regions and communities under Taliban control.

1 Introduction

1.1 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is a summative and formative evaluation of the UNICEF Afghanistan Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE) programme¹ during the period 2013-2015², with a no-cost extension until December 2016. The main purpose of the Sida support to BEGE is to ensure an increase in educational levels of children, particularly girls, through a more equitable access to quality basic education services in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on the 10 most deprived provinces and four provinces in the north. The Swedish project support is a continuation of an earlier contribution³ through a thematic joint fund⁴ to UNICEF's BEGE programme.

The purpose of this review of the support to the BEGE programme is to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations for Sida to use in the upcoming assessment of possible continued Swedish support. The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the BEGE programme in relation to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (including cost efficiency) and sustainability. This includes assessing UNICEF's ability to achieve quality results over time, to coordinate with the government and other actors in the field, including donors and to some degree also UNICEF's upstream support to national policy in the education sector.

The purpose is also to get a deeper understanding of UNICEF's work with the Ministry of Education to support:

- implementation and provide quality education through its Community Based Schools (CBS) Accelerated Learning Centres (ALC)⁵,
- to ensure continued education for its students in formal schools,
- to efficiently distribute teaching and learning material,
- to efficiently implement the child-friendly school packages, and

¹ UNICEF implement BEGE programmes in over 140 countries around the world. The Sida support to BEGE in Afghanistan is a project support, but since BEGE normally is called a programme by UNICEF the report uses the term programme.

² 1st of December 2013 - 1st of December 2015, the total granted support has been 140 MSEK.

³ Sweden has supported UNICEF's BEGE programme during the period of 2010-2013.

⁴ The earlier funding was also a contribution from the Swedish bilateral funds for Afghanistan and was a basic funding to the BEGE.

⁵ CBS and ALC are two approaches to Community Based Education (CBE).

- to build the capacity of government actors at the national, provincial, and district levels in order to contribute to sustainable Afghan ownership within the education sector.

Also of interest is to what extent communities are involved in the schools. The review has furthermore assessed how and to what extent the BEGE programme applies a human rights-based approach and how it contributes to improved gender equality.

1.2 EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

The situation of education in Afghanistan is changing dramatically. The change does not only stem from the Government of Afghanistan, the UN and the international civil society organisations (CSOs). It is the demands of the mostly rural populations all over Afghanistan that are awakening in favour of education, whether they live in government controlled or Taliban governed areas, which will force these changes⁶. They are accessing information through modern means of communications (i.e. internet, mobile phones, radio and TV)⁷ about the importance of education for the future of their children and this is stimulating their expectations on duty bearers to ensure that education is offered to their children.⁸

A comprehensive population census has not been completed in Afghanistan yet; all population data are only estimates. The Afghanistan Central Statistics Office estimates the population to have been 28 million in 2013. However, the United Nations Statistics Division's (UNPD) estimates were 34.4 million for the same year.

The MoE uses UNPD's population estimates for planning purposes. Population growth is 3% according to the UNPD, and if the population continues to grow at this rate it will reach 42.6 million in 2020. Fifty percent of the population is made up of children under 15 years old, and 36% of the population are of school-age (about 12.4 million in 2013). Student enrolment has increased rapidly. While only one million

⁶ On communities and education see: BEACON, Basic Education for Afghanistan Consortium, Teaching & Learning in Cluster Model, A qualitative Analysis of effective Community Base Education in Afghanistan. Kabul, Afghanistan, January 2015.

⁷ Communication in Afghanistan has rapidly expanded after 2001, and has embarked on wireless companies, internet, radio stations and television channels. As of 2014, about 90% of the country's population has access to communication services. There are about 18 million mobile phone users in the country.

⁸ Can you help me now? Mobile phones and peace building in Afghanistan. United States Institute of Peace. 2014 www.usip.org

children (almost all boys) were enrolled in schools in 2001, over 8.6 million children were enrolled in 2013 of which 39% were girls.⁹

Women's literacy in Afghanistan is among the lowest in the world – approximately 14%. However, a change has taken place. Previously, only 3% of girls went to school; now about 36% receive education. Investing in girls' education is critical to addressing girls' needs, concerns, and human rights.

According to the Government, some of the key barriers to access to education are:

- insecurity
- poverty and working children
- lack of schools in remote areas
- long walking distance to schools
- harassment of children on the way to schools
- low quality of education

There are also specific barriers toward girls' education including:

- shortage of female teachers, especially in higher grades
- cultural beliefs about girls' education
- lack of necessary facilities in schools such as toilets, drinking water, and surrounding walls
- early marriages¹⁰

1.2.1 History of destruction

Education indicators have always been low in Afghanistan (literacy has never risen above 25%) and the state's role in the provision of education has been limited. A conservative Islamic tradition has permeated Afghan society and religious leaders have influenced community life, including the development of the education sector.

In 1978, when the Soviets invaded, the literacy rate was 18% for males and 5% for females. Immediately after the communist coup in 1978, the school system became one of the primary victims of the decades-long conflict between the soviet forces and the Mujahedeen. The new Government, led by the pro-Moscow People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) pushed hard for increasing the enrolment rate and also launched an ambitious adult education programme, which local party workers tried to force village women to attend. These efforts were met by a backlash in conservative Afghanistan and large parts of the existing infrastructure were specifically targeted and destroyed by the Mujahedeen. The rural areas were hardest hit. With the disrup-

⁹ National Education Strategic Plan (2015 – 2020) (draft) MoE, Kabul (2014)

¹⁰ Ibid

tion of education 50% of schools in Afghanistan were destroyed.¹¹ In 1989, after the Soviet occupation, factional fighting between Mujahedeen parties delayed reconstruction. The country entered into a civil war in which different fractions of Mujahedeen fought for power in different parts of the country. The chaos around the country caused many more schools to be closed or destroyed. Girl's education particularly suffered.

Between 1996 and 2001, the Taliban took control and banned female participation in education.¹² While in power, the Taliban closed girls' schools and restricted other forms of non-religious education. Only limited services to the huge population in Afghanistan were provided by Ministry of Education, which by 2001 needed to be rebuilt from scratch.¹³ In 2003 the Asian Development Bank estimated that 80% of all school buildings at all levels had been damaged and destroyed.

1.2.2 Current situation of education in Afghanistan

Public opinion in Afghanistan demands more education, and opposition to education generates local resistance, even in the Taliban controlled and governed areas. In 2016, a joint NYU/UC Berkeley "Randomized Field Experiment" survey found that 96,7% of Afghan respondents thought "sending children to formal school is good".¹⁴ The same research indicated that 95,5% of the respondents thought "educating the boys increases their household status". The number was slightly lower for girl's education, at 88,4%, but still a large majority of Afghans support education for girls in this conservative environment.

Communities are pressuring the Taliban to change their stand on education. Recently the Taliban has issued a policy that supports education as a "basic human need" including for girls "within the scope of Sharia and Afghan traditions".¹⁵ The Taliban now sometimes prefer to control schools rather than to close them, at least partly in response to the massive demand for education among Afghans.

¹¹ Statement in the UN 1983 by the Afghan Foreign Minister.

¹² Under the Taliban, secular education did not exist. Boys received religious education, but girls were forbidden education altogether. Parents who wanted their children educated had to arrange for private tutoring in informal groups at home. See: www.rawa.org

¹³ Knowledge on Fire, Attacks on Education in Afghanistan, Risks and Measures for successful Mitigation. November 2009 (study conducted by CARE on behalf of the World Bank and the Ministry of Education, with assistance of CoAR/OSDR)

¹⁴ Barnett Rubin, Clancy Rudeforth, Enhancing access to education: Challenges and opportunities in Afghanistan. Center on Cooperation International, April 2016

¹⁵ Ibid

The Taliban have released several statements in support of education in recent years. In August 2013, an *Eid* proclamation attributed to Mullah Omar (who had died four months before) stated, “To protect ourselves from scarcity and hardships, our young generations should arm themselves with religious and modern education, because modern education is a fundamental need in every society in the present time.” In May 2015, the Taliban published a statement made by its representatives at an international conference in Qatar, which committed to upholding all rights of women under Islam, including the right to education. In January 2016, the Taliban’s “Commission for Training, Learning and Higher Education” released an education policy statement that reiterated support for “modern education”.¹⁶

Under pressure of the local communities in Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan, where several districts are now governed by the Taliban, communities forced the Taliban to allow the re-opening of schools and even ask for support of the government Provincial Education Authorities who are increasingly supporting these local communities.¹⁷ In Kandahar, the Taliban have requested the Provincial Education Director (PED) in a letter by the Director of Education for the Taliban in Helmand and the Deputy Director of Education for the Taliban, to support education programs in Helmand province, to provide schoolbooks and stationery to the schools in Taliban occupied districts.¹⁸ The PED has provided all these materials, but asked at the same time that his office should be able to monitor the schools concerned. This was allowed by the Taliban.¹⁹ UNICEF materials were also distributed by the PED to the schools.

The situation is slowly normalizing in other areas of Afghanistan as well. In the Central Province of Bamyan, where the population is largely Hazara, schools are re-opening and children are going to school. Accounting for up to one-fifth of Afghani-

¹⁶ Ibid, The education policy has the following principles: Education, teaching, learning and studying the religion [are] basic human needs; The Taliban in accordance with its comprehensive policy has established a Commission [to] ... pursue, implement and advance its education policy; The Commission seeks growth to all educational sectors inside and outside the country, be they Islamic such as religious Madaris, Dar-ul-Hifaz, village level Madaris, up to legal Islamic expertise; or be they modern primary, intermediate and high schools, universities or specialist and higher education institutions; For the development of these institutions, if any countryman seeks to build a private institution, the Commission will welcome their effort and lend all necessary help available; To raise the education level and standardize these institutions the Commission will welcome and gladly accept the views, advice and constructive proposals of religious scholars, teachers and specialists in religious and modern sciences; The Commission seeks ... to encourage and motivate the sons of this nation towards educational institutions and to give special attention to creating opportunities for educational facilities at village level.; and, The Commission has provincial level and district level officials who will execute all educational plans and programs in their respected areas. All the respected countrymen will be able to gain access to them regarding affairs of education.

¹⁷ Interview with [names protected].

¹⁸ May 2016 Letter of May 2016 to PED in Kandahar

¹⁹ Interview [name protected], May 2016

stan's population, the Hazaras have long been branded as outsiders by the Taliban. Now, fifteen years after the fall of the Taliban, scars remain in the highlands of Bamyan, but there is a sense of possibility; today the region remains one of the safest in Afghanistan. Hazaras have new access to universities, civil service jobs and schools are being rehabilitated, education for women is promoted and the province is slowly recovering. Most support for the rehabilitation of education in Bamyan is coming from UNICEF and the Aga Khan Development Network.

The situation for the three visited provinces in the North has both improved and deteriorated. The community support for education continues to grow stronger and the demands for secure and qualitative education is high both for boys and girls. Education as such is no longer questioned at a general level. However, older girls are still hindered to complete their schooling due to cultural norms, and early and forced marriages continue to be a serious problem. The latter is particularly evident in the Samangan province. The security situation has worsened during recent years in the North and many communities are now cut off from direct contact with the UNICEF team due to the risk of attacks. The evaluators could not at all visit the Saripul province because of insurgent groups presence in a number of districts.

1.3 BEGE PROGRAMME

The BEGE intervention²⁰ is Sweden's fourth largest contribution in Afghanistan²¹ with a total budget of 140 MSEK²². BEGE is one of several interventions within Sweden's support to the education sector in Afghanistan; the World Bank project Equip 11, direct support to the Ministry of Higher Education, UNESCO's work with developing capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and literacy programmes nationwide, and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan's community based education. Sida entered into a two-year agreement with UNICEF to fund the BEGE programme in December 2013. It was agreed to extend the programme with a no-cost extension until December 2016.

²⁰ It should be noted that the intervention is not known to the UNICEF education staff as BEGE, but as the education component within the country programme. The evaluation however uses the name BEGE since this is used in the project proposal, the agreement between UNICEF and Sida, and is referred to in the progress reports.

²¹ Sweden's larger interventions in Afghanistan are: Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (525 MSEK), Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund with the World Bank (280 MSEK) and Rural Access Improvement Project with UNOPS (215 MSEK).

²² Equivalent to 19,532,787 USD.

According to UNICEF's funding proposal, the main purpose of BEGE is, *"To ensure an increase in educational levels of children, particularly girls, through a more equitable access to quality basic education services in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on the 10 most deprived provinces and an additional four provinces in the north"*²³. The priority provinces include Bamyan, Badghis, Daikundi, Ghor, Helmand, Kandahar, Paktika, Paktia, Uruzgan and Zabul. The Northern provinces include Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan and Saripul. The priority provinces follow UNICEF's effort to focus their programming, while the Northern provinces were included to give continuity to previous Swedish efforts in the region.

After many years of short-term emergency programming UNICEF has shifted to developing a longer term Country Programme Document²⁴ and associated Country Programme Action Plan. The Government of Afghanistan and UNICEF started implementing a new Country Programme of Cooperation which covers the period 2015-2019 that is in line with the priorities of the National Educational Strategic Plan (NESP)²⁵. The main outcome for education of the Country Programme is, *"Girls and boys of school age especially vulnerable children in deprived provinces and areas, access primary education that is progressively child-friendly and demonstrates learning outcomes"*. The BEGE programme falls within the priorities of the Country Programme and is related mainly to the education outcomes, but also to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) outcomes and indirectly to social inclusion and child protection outcomes. The BEGE programme is not mentioned in the UNICEF country programme action plan (CPAP).

UNICEF works with the Ministry of Education at the policy level, and through the MoE with hands-on implementation of activities on national, provincial, district and community levels. UNICEF acts as a donor, partner, advisor and facilitator in providing technical and financial support to government counterparts on the various levels. UNICEF also engages NGOs for monitoring and programme delivery.

The education activities are implemented by a small education team in each province, with technical support (monitoring, communication, administration, etc.) from UNICEF staff at the zonal office, and the Education Department in Kabul. The educa-

²³ According to UNICEF's funding proposal.

²⁴ The new country programme of cooperation 2015-2019 has been developed on the basis of the UNICEF Executive Board approved 'UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017' and follows the structure of the global plan which has 'Outcomes' organized by six sectors: Health, Nutrition, WASH, Education, Child Protection and HIV/AIDS and a seventh outcome on 'Social Inclusion'. All country level plans developed after the plan are expected to align to the structure of the global strategic plan.

²⁵ NESP II. NESP III originally planned for 2015-2019 has been delayed and will cover the period 2017 to 2021.

tion activities within the country programme are coordinated with other areas such as child protection, WASH, and emergency work.

1.3.1 Theory of change

The BEGE project proposal does not include a Theory of Change (ToC). The evaluation endeavoured to understand the explicit intervention logic of BEGE and were requested by UNICEF to use the ToC from their Country Programme Action Plan 2015-2019,²⁶ which states: *The overall theory of change for the CP underpins leveraging UNICEF's catalytic role in Afghanistan in making sustainable changes in the systems, policy, and programme implementation to enhance absorption capacity of all stakeholders to anchor progressive realisation of rights of children and women. The country programme aims to make significant changes at two levels: i) Upstream: strategic level by addressing capacity gaps of duty bearers, the governments and stakeholders, to address root and underlying causes of issues or rights violations and to improve accessibility and coverage of quality of services; and ii) Downstream: by educating, engaging and empowering communities and community structures to address a mix of root and immediate causes, such as promoting positive cultural and social norms, beliefs, to improve demand and utilization of services.*

The intervention logic for UNICEF's education programme in Afghanistan in the Country Programme Action Plan is described as follows:²⁷

Impact: Realising the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged		
Outcome	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.	Assumptions & Risks Humanitarian crises do not overwhelm capacity; Political support for addressing inequity remains strong; Evidence-based approaches plus technical solutions make a difference in children's lives; Consensus on the importance of partnerships continues; Progress in other areas
Output	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. 2. National and subnational education authorities (MoE) have management and financial capacity to progressively manage Community Based Education and ensure higher transition rate from grade 3 to grade 4 for girls and boys (including EiE).	Assumptions & Risks Availability of resources for education continues to increase; Capacity of Government structures, at all levels increases in order to sustain access gains; Emphasis is placed on quality and learning

²⁶ Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2015-2019 (dated November 2014) serves as the basis for the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education

²⁷ The figure from the CPAP is presented in Annex 5.

	3. GPE in Afghanistan leveraged for resources and results to meet national education objectives. 4. Strengthened national and subnational capacity to implement Child Friendly Schools (CFS) especially in targeted schools in deprived provinces and other areas. 5. National capacity strengthened to develop and operationalize a system for monitoring of learning achievements and setting of national standards in core subjects for primary grades. 6. Girls' education and Community Based Early Childhood Care and Education developed and demonstrated in selected communities in deprived provinces and other focus areas.	outcomes; Availability of quality data and evidence continues to increase; Funding gaps do not widen; Reprioritisation of limited resources to support early childhood education
Strategies	Partnerships • Establish key partnerships with national and international non-governmental organisations in order to deliver better results for children; • Play an active role in cluster and sector coordination mechanisms on community based education and Child Friendly and Inclusive Education cluster meetings; Identification and promotion of innovation • Expand the innovative approaches of monitoring education outputs through mobile technology to all 10 focus provinces. Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages • Scale up cross-sectoral work on early childhood development, girls' education, children with disabilities and WASH in schools Service delivery • Provide learning opportunities to children of grade 1-3 primary age by establishing Community Based Schools • Provide teaching and learning materials to 20,000 children per year that are enrolled in CBS. • Work with children, parents and communities to create awareness of the importance of education, especially girls	Assumptions & Risks Capacity for delivery and coordination of community based activities from Government, at all levels, continues and increases; Security situation remains stable and access to remote areas increases; Effective monitoring and data gathering is in place to inform planning and implementation; Supply and cash inputs reach beneficiaries on time; Quality of teaching is progressively increased; Community mobilisation is effectively carried out and communities accept and collaborate in activities; Teachers selected are adequately trained and committed; Other development partners continue to support education.

The first part of the ToC presents the expected results. The logical link between the impact and outcome level is only partly satisfactory. The expected outputs are linked to the national goals for basic education in Afghanistan, as the CPAP is part of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and the MoE. The way the outputs are defined calls into question the spheres of control and influence by UNICEF, and also how the influence of the different levels of the MoE is understood.

The risk that the conflict poses to the achievement of the programme goals is not sufficiently considered. Given that UNICEF has chosen to target some of the most deprived provinces, and in those provinces, the most deprived districts, would call for an in-depth analysis on the impact of the particularly harsh environments and the ongoing conflict has on the programme. The limitations of the ToC will be further discussed in 3.2.1.

The specific results framework for the BEGE Project presents the following three outcome results (although the evaluators assess these to be output targets):

1. By the end of 2014, a total of 555,000 primary school age children (60% girls) will enrol and progress in Community Based Schools (CBE) (125,000), Accelerated Learning Centres (ALC) (30,000) and newly constructed formal schools (400,000).
2. 1,500 formal schools, in 102 districts, in 10 provinces, implement comprehensive child friendly school package resulting in improved access, retention and learning achievements
3. By 2014, female literacy programme redesigned and 140,000 female learners of age 15-45 in current programme, complete 9 months of literacy course

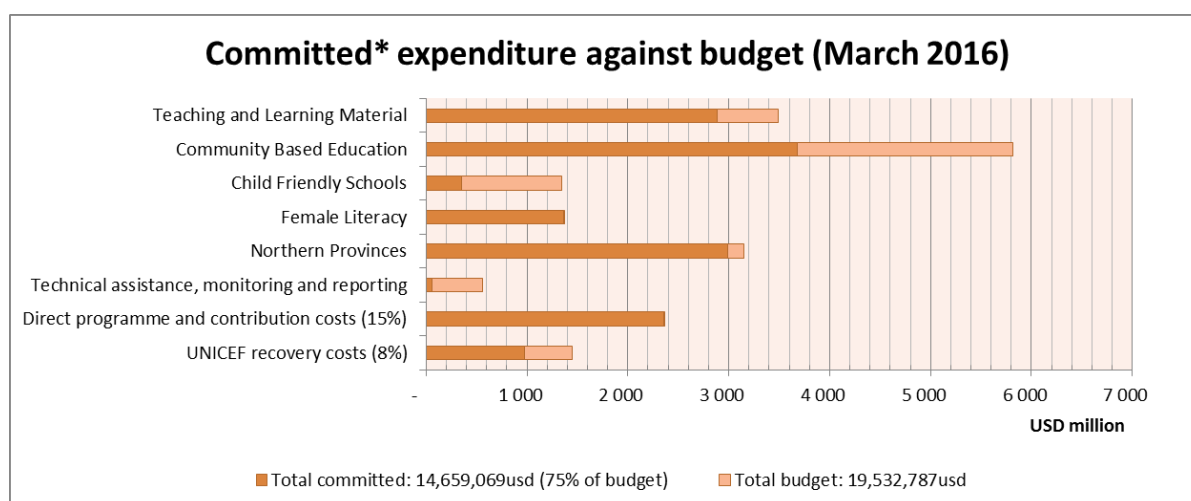
BEGE has a strong service delivery focus – comprised of five components:

What	Where	Who (reported by UNICEF March 2016)
Distribution of Teaching and Learning Material (TLM): learners kits and teachers kits containing stationary	14 provinces (UNICEF & Sida priority)	2,200,000 children (% girls unknown) enrolled in school 59,373 teachers Completed
CBE and ALC: catering to the needs of out of school children and adolescents where challenges exists to attend formal schools – to date 1,775 CBS and 440 ALC have been established	14 provinces (UNICEF & Sida priority)	47,363 learners (44% girls) attending CBE 452 CBE teachers trained in child-centred teaching
CFS /Model Schools: construction of boundary walls, play grounds, rehabilitation of toilets, water points, windows, doors, painting walls, solar water pump systems, teacher training	10 provinces (UNICEF priority)	31,612 students (55% girls) 1,751 teachers (39% women) trained
Female Literacy and Empowerment: establishment of female literacy centres, training of teachers and provision of materials, teacher training	10 provinces (UNICEF priority)	17,000 females 680 teachers trained Completed
Comprehensive Education Interventions in the Northern Region: CBE, TLM, distribution of TLM, rehabilitation of schools, psychosocial support, training child-centred teaching methodology, CFS package, psychosocial support, advanced pedagogy and hygiene education	4 provinces in the North	16,184 children (51% girls) attending CBE 24,883 students (24% girls) benefited from rehabilitated formal schools 4,985 teachers and school management trained (21% women)

UNICEF has a strong focus on community based education in the current programme activities. Since the inception of the BEGE programme, there has been a shift from supporting urban schools (including earlier infrastructure initiatives), to concentrate on rural communities. UNICEF is supporting the MoE by establishing community based schools (or rather classes) in communities far from rural hub schools. The strategy is to enable increased access to education from grade 1 to 3 in the community based schools; after finishing grade 3 the children will walk to the nearest hub school (from grade 4). The transition rate from grade 3 to grade 4 is thus an important indicator of the level of success of this strategy. The BEGE programme proposal puts a particular focus on the transition rate of girls from grade 3 to grade 4.

1.3.2 Project resources

The total project budget is 19,532,787 USD²⁸ for the three-year period. Seventy-eight percent is allocated for project activities, while 22% is budgeted for technical assistance, monitoring and reporting, direct programme and contribution costs, including an agreed recovery charge of 8%.²⁹ According to UNICEF's financial reporting March 2016, 75% of the budget had been committed. The following chart provides an overview of the allocation between components as well as a breakdown of committed expenditure to date against the budget.³⁰



1.4 SWEDISH RESULTS STRATEGY

The current Results Strategy for Sweden's international development cooperation with Afghanistan covers the period 2014–2019. The strategy has two overall expected results; 1) Strengthened democracy and gender equality, greater respect for human rights and freedom from oppression; and, 2) Better opportunities for people living in poverty to contribute to and benefit from economic growth and gain a good education. One of the four focus areas of the second expected results is education, and its expected results, are:

²⁸ The agreement between Sida and UNICEF on project support is for 140 MSEK. The UN operational rate of exchange prevailing at the time of receipt of the funds is used for reporting.

²⁹ The agreement with Sida includes a recovery charge of 8% that is in accordance with the UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2013/5, applied to project support to cover overhead and administration costs

³⁰ According to UNICEF's financial reports "committed" figures are defined as "provisional amount so far committed and includes not yet paid expenses"; they do not represent "actual spent" resources.

- More girls and boys have access to improved schooling up to and including upper secondary education
- More girls and boys have the opportunity to complete their schooling

It is against these two expected results that the relevance of the BEGE programme in relation to the Swedish strategy is assessed. The intervention is also assessed against Sweden's focus on gender equality, rights perspective and the perspective of the poor, also understood as a human rights-based approach. *The target group will mainly comprise people living in poverty in rural areas, with a particular focus on women and children. Increased gender equality and opportunities for women and girls to enjoy their human rights and actively participate in the development of society are to pervade all result areas.*³¹

The conflict perspective is of particular importance in a context like Afghanistan and the strategy stresses the relevance of thorough risk assessment and strong risk management in all contributions to increase the possibilities of achieving results and to minimise the risk of corruption.

The strategy highlights lack of security, long distances and few female teachers as contributing factors to the low enrollment and high drop-out rates of children, particularly of girls. The Swedish support, *“Should therefore focus on increasing the availability and quality of education from primary to upper secondary level. In addition to girls and children in rural areas, children with special needs may also be prioritised. Support to girls to continue on to higher education may also be considered.”*

³¹ Sweden's international development cooperation with Afghanistan 2014–2019, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Government Office of Sweden

2 Method

2.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process has consisted of three phases; inception and desk review, data collection in Kabul and five provinces, analysis and reporting. The evaluation was structured by an evaluation matrix that defined how evidence to answer each evaluation question would be identified, based on the following format:

Evaluation question	Indicators to be used in evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and reliability of data /comments
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The inception period included review of programme documents, policy documents of Afghanistan and Sweden relevant for the evaluation, external evaluations and other studies (See Annex 3 for list of consulted documents). During the inception period methods were developed for the data collection as well as selection criteria for, 1) identifying informants to interview (stakeholders and non-stakeholders), 2) provinces for data collection, and 3) types of activities to visit, to be included in the sample. The inception phase involved a series of consultations with Sida and UNICEF Afghanistan to discuss methods and approaches, requests for documents and data, and the plan for the data collection in the selected provinces. The division of roles and responsibilities within the evaluation team was defined and three sub-teams were formed for the mission. When the inception report was approved essential data was still missing for the final selection of locations for the data collection. When only one week remained before the start of the data collection phase, the missing data had still not been provided. Therefore the evaluators, in consultation with Sida, decided to postpone the field visit by one month. The final decision for the locations for the data collection resulted in i) Kabul, ii) Kandahar and Bamyan, and iii) Balkh, Jawzjan and Samangan.

The data collection was initiated at the end of April with interviews with UNICEF and other stakeholders in Kabul, as well as with Sida staff that had responsibility earlier for the partnership dialogue with UNICEF Afghanistan. The consultations in Kabul were followed by three field trips carried out by two teams; one team with two male and one female evaluators visited Kandahar in the South and Bamyan in the

central region; and the other team with one male and two female evaluators visited the North region including Balkh, Samangan and Jawzjan provinces.

Interviews with 200 adult stakeholders and 290 children were conducted. The evaluators met with the UNICEF Education team in Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar and Bamyan as well as with other sections of UNICEF³². The evaluation team sought details of UNICEF's management and monitoring systems and working procedures. 28 schools were visited; an overview is provided in table 1 below. In each school interviews were held with school children mainly in grades 1-3, but also with older children in grades 4-12. All interviews with children were through focus group discussions. The majority of the consulted children were girls, mainly because the scheduled visits to formal school had a focus on girls' schools or occurred when the girls had their school shift in mixed schools. Interviews were held with teachers, head teachers, principals and administrative school staff as well as with school management shuras (SMS), community development committees (CDC) or community shuras. In general, the community members of the shuras are men (while female teachers and female students also are members of the SMS); and all interviews with shuras were held with male members. It was planned that the evaluators also would hold separate interviews with religious leaders, but no such consultations were organised in the detailed programmes. However, in the provinces in the North, consultations were held with some Madrasa trained teachers and elders in shuras.

The table below provides an overview of the sample coverage included in the field visits for interviews and observations:

	Name	Public school	CBS	ALC	Boys	Girls	Mix	Rural	Urban ³³
Balkh	[name protected]	CFS				X			X
	[name protected]		X				X	X	
	[name protected]		X				X	X	
	[name protected]		X				X	X	
	[name protected]	CFS				X			X
	[name protected]	X			X				X
	[name protected]	CFS							X
	[name protected]	X							X
	[name protected]								
	[name protected]	X				X			
J	[name protected]	CFS				X			X

³² WASH, operations unit, resource mobilisation unit, and Deputy Representative

³³ Including semi-urban areas within the municipality

	[name protected]	CFS				X			X
	[name protected]	X			X				X
Samnang	[name protected]	CFS							X
	[name protected]								X
Kandahar	[name protected]		X			X			X
	[name protected]	CFS					X		X
	[name protected]		X				X		X
	[name protected]	CFS			X				X
	[name protected]	CFS				X			X
Bamyan	[name protected]	CFS					X	X	
	[name protected]	CFS					X	X	
	[name protected]	CFS				X		X	
	[name protected]	CFS					X	X	
	[name protected]			X			X	x	
	[name protected]	CFS				X			X
	[name protected]	X					X		X
	[name protected]		X				X	X	
	[name protected]	X					X	X	

The two teams also met with different representatives of the provincial and district education departments in the five provinces. The Kandahar visit also included consultations with the PED in Uruzgan provinces through telephone interview and visits from the PEDs of Zabul and Helmand to Kandahar. Finally, civil society organisations active in the education section were consulted in Balkh and Bamyan provinces. The data collection phase was concluded with a joint feedback session at the Swedish embassy where the evaluation team discussed preliminary findings with UNICEF and Sida.

2.1.1 Evaluation questions

The evaluation has been guided by the following evaluation questions:

1. What is the overall relevance of the project in the Afghan context? To what extent is the project aligned with the priorities of the government of Afghanistan as defined in the NPP Education for All, the NESP II, the draft of NESP III and 2015 NPP on education (if available)? Is the project aligned with the Swedish result strategy for Afghanistan? Is it relevant in relation to the other contributions Sweden is supporting in the education sector?
2. What is UNICEF's theory of change and to what extent has it contributed to sustainable improvements within the education sector? Is the theory of change maintainable and relevant with regards to the context?

3. To what extent has the project been able to deliver on its results in an effective and efficient (including cost efficient) manner? This includes also internal efficiency within the UNICEF with different departments responsible for different components of the project.
4. To what extent have project activities during the agreement period contributed to sustainability, including built capacity among governmental institutions at district, provincial and national level? If information is available, it would be useful to compare with reported results from the previous agreement period 2010-2013.
5. To what extent have project activities during the agreement period contributed towards improved gender equality when it comes to reaching out to girls and improving girls' access to quality education?
6. Does UNICEF-BEGE implement the rights perspective based on the four principles participation, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability, if so – in what ways?
7. To what extent are the project activities coordinated with government activities and priorities and other (CBE) actors (including Swedish supported programmes) in Afghanistan and how does this impact the transition rate of students to grade 4?
8. To what extent has the project contributed to poverty reduction?³⁴
9. Has the support's change toward project orientation contributed to the effectiveness of the Swedish support?
10. Has Sweden being the only donor affected the efficiency of the project?
11. How has the communication to the donor worked and has it had any impact on the project.
12. Does UNICEF apply sufficient risk management? How does UNICEF apply learning and results-based management?

2.1.2 Approach and central perspectives

The evaluators have engaged in a close dialogue with Sida, the Embassy of Sweden and UNICEF Afghanistan throughout the different phases of the evaluation. The evaluation process has been guided by a participatory approach with a particular focus on the dimensions of a human rights-based approach, gender equality and child rights perspectives, as well as risk and conflict perspective. All relevant data identified during the desk study related to achieved objectives and recorded outcomes were triangulated through stakeholder consultations and further study of the monitoring systems applied at national and zonal levels of UNICEF Afghanistan. The triangulation also aimed to better understand the different perspectives that exist on the ToC and other aspects of the evaluation.

³⁴ Sida's definition of poverty as lack of power, choices and resources should be used as point of departure. For further reference the Sida-document "Perspectives on Poverty" should be used.

All stakeholders were informed of the purpose and the process of the evaluation. Interview techniques were participatory, conducted in or translated into Dari and Pashto or to local languages when needed, and adapted to the different stakeholders considering their age, level of literacy and formal education, and other relevant aspects related to power relations within groups and among different stakeholders.

Choice of methods for the different stakeholder consultations was partly based on predefined methodological approaches and partly on adaption to the timeframes and conditions presenting themselves at the time of the actual interviews. Child friendly data collection methods were based on children's active and voluntary participation. Some of the first interviews³⁵ in the North region could not be held with a focus group of children but with the whole class. All remaining interviews were held with groups of 8-12 children that had voluntarily joined the group by raising their hands when the purpose was presented for their class. The focus group discussion was held in a separate room, teachers were asked to leave and only in one case an older boy from grade 5 participated (one of the children school inspectors of the day).³⁶ However, during several focus group discussions teachers would enter the room to fetch or leave documents. The evaluators assessed that this was a form of control, but the teachers never stayed long. All focus group discussions with children in the northern region were held with the two female evaluators. The consultations with children in Kandahar and Bamyan were conducted by the national team members and the focus groups consisted of fewer and older children in general. As in the provinces in the North, teachers were not present during the interviews.

The selection criteria for provinces were:

- Relevance for the project (progress of results)
- Accessibility (distance and means of travelling)
- Availability of schools for girls
- Availability of duty-bearers (key informants), teachers, parents and students
- Security
- All or most components of the project implemented
- Diversity of rights-holders (the study should include representatives from different ethnic groups, including Kuchi, and local contexts)
- Representation of different geographical regions of the country

Selection criteria for informants who are directly involved in the project:

³⁵ One Child Friendly School in Mazar-e-Sharif and 3 community based classes grade 2 in rural areas of the Charkent district.

³⁶³⁶ Every public school has a number of students that for one day register visitors, supervise the school yard and other school premises. The task rotates between the older students.

- The evaluation has given priority to interviews with children and teachers
- Community members and parents were also highlighted as important stakeholders in the inception report
- Another direct rights-holder group was young women who had participated in Women Literacy Centres (a component of the BEGE programme that ended in 2014)

Furthermore, it was foreseen that the following stakeholder groups be consulted:

- Local, provincial and central duty-bearers with focus on the Ministry of Education
- CSOs active in education sector at provincial and national levels
- Donor community supporting the education sector
- UNICEF
- Sida/Embassy of Sweden

2.2 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation has faced several limitations: The access to precise data for the different programme components in the 14 provinces was delayed, which was why the evaluation was postponed by four weeks to allow UNICEF additional time to gather all the necessary data to enable the final selection of provinces according to defined criteria. Despite the later start of the data collection in the field, the evaluation team still had difficulties in accessing some data needed for understanding the scope³⁷ of the programming in order to finalise the sample selection (of where to visit and whom to interview) and plan the field visits.

UNICEF's qualitative monitoring data was extremely limited in terms of measuring learning achievements, capacity developed, changes in the quality of education, etc. The monitoring data that was finally made available to the evaluation team was limited to number of outputs and number of students and participants. Also financial data was not made accessible to the evaluation team, which hampered the ability to undertake systematic cost-efficiency analysis.

Due to the security situation in Afghanistan the evaluation team was dependent on UNICEF to provide logistics for the field work and to develop the itinerary for which locations to visit.³⁸ Thus the selection of activities and informants was not fully independent, although the evaluation team endeavoured to access locations and

³⁷ Number of and location of funded activities, information regarding stakeholders, etc

³⁸ Since UNICEF's provision of logistics support are guided by UN security regulations, the mission plans are based on locations approved by UNICEF security after due mission plans are submitted and

informants outside the mission plan. We are aware that this bias may partially affect the findings presented in the report.

There was little or no understanding in UNICEF at national and provincial levels of BEGE being an intervention with project support from Sida's approved for a intervention period spanning over two country programme periods.³⁹ Furthermore, provincial education staff focus mainly on ongoing and recent activities, 2015-2016 and had little understanding that the evaluation should focus on the full intervention period. This made it somewhat difficult not only to seek response to some of the evaluation question, but also to focus on the earlier years of the intervention period and assess all its components, as for example very few ALC and no Women Literacy Centres were part of the programmes prepared by UNICEF.

The choice of locations for the visits within the provinces was strongly limited by security restrictions. The evaluation team could not, for example, select districts or villages from the list of locations with CBS; UNICEF informed where it was possible to travel according to the UN security instructions and the distances. The fact that there were international team members further limited the selection, since overstay outside the security box is not allowed. Furthermore, in the case of northern region, inaccessible roads caused by flooding's was also an obstacle to a more open choice. This resulted in a very low number of CBS visits, which has severely limited the scope of the evaluation since the community based schools are the core activity of the programme. Despite Bamyan being a much more secure province, the evaluation team only managed to visit one CBS.

Also, the selection of CFSs and schools receiving TLM in urban and semi-urban areas was made by UNICEF in coordination with the MoE. There was very little room for improvisation or change of the programme. These visits were prepared by the provincial education department and all school principals in Mazar-e-Sharif had, for example, been informed that a Sida evaluation mission might visit their school. Numerous teachers in the three northern provinces informed the evaluators that they had been told that a mission was coming to visit the school and that they should list all needed items for the future. The UNICEF Education Team accompanied the evaluators to all school visits to introduce the evaluation team, but school inspectors and/or school field monitors from the provincial or district education department also appeared in the visited schools (Balkh, Jawzjan and Samangan). This somewhat interfered with the data collection since the principals and teachers were a bit tense know-

a Quick Security Risk Assessment (QSRA) is completed with appropriate mitigation measures identified to enable the field visits.

³⁹ This situation will be further discussed in chapter 2 and 3.

ing that the public supervisors were present in the school during the visit of the evaluators.

It was not possible to interview earlier participants of the Women Literacy Centres. The only opportunity the evaluation team had was in Bamyan since this activity had not been implemented in the other visited provinces. However, the data collection programme did not include any meetings with earlier participants despite that this had been discussed with UNICEF in Kabul during the inception report and the first week of the data collection. Interviews with these rights-holders would have enabled assessment of more long-term results.

Parents were only interviewed as members of local shuras, either in SMS or CDC. No separate meetings with parents were possible, mainly due to the timing of the visits and that the meetings were held in the visited schools. The evaluation team was not able to visit parents in their homes, which strongly limited the chance to speak to mothers. The only mothers interviewed were teachers and principals in some of the visited schools, but they were primarily consulted as educationalists.

Finally, the evaluation team had prepared a small test in reading and calculation (in Dari and Pashto) to be used in the consultations with the school children. The test was presented to the Director of the Curriculum at the Ministry of Education in Kabul for approval. The test was orally approved but the team did not get the final formal approval before the departure to the provinces. Therefore the tests could not be applied.

2.3 EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team consisted of one international team leader, Ms. Annica Holmberg; one international education specialist, Dr. Leo Schellekens; one international evaluator, Ms. Jessica Rothman (also Project Manager); one national senior evaluator, Mr. Daud Kohi, also acting as National Team Leader of the three national evaluators; Mr. Mohammad Asif Khirkhwa, Ms. Lailuma Tahiry and Ms. Raqeeba Wardak.

The evaluators were divided into three teams: Ms. Rothman and Mr. Kohi conducted most of the interviews with stakeholders in Kabul; Dr. Schellekens, Mr. Khirkhwa and Ms. Wardak conducted the consultations in Kandahar and Bamyan provinces and Ms. Holmberg, Mr. Kohi and Ms. Tahiry conducted the interviews in Balkh, Jawzjan and Samangan provinces. All team members were involved in analysing the data to identify findings, conclusions and recommendations.

3 Findings

3.1 RELEVANCE

EQ 1 *What is the overall relevance of the project in the Afghan context? To what extent is the project aligned with the priorities of the government of Afghanistan as defined in the NPP Education for All, the NESP II, the draft of NESP III and 2015 NPP on education (if available)? Is the project aligned with the Swedish result strategy for Afghanistan? Is it relevant in relation to the other contributions Sweden is supporting in the education sector?*

The main purpose of BEGE as formulated in the project proposal is to ensure an increase in educational levels of children, particularly girls, through a more equitable access to quality basic education services in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on the 10 most deprived provinces and four provinces in the north. The project has aimed to benefit a total of 2.2 million children through teaching and learning materials provided in the 14 provinces; Community Based Education; Child Friendly Schools; Female literacy programmes in 10 priority provinces; and comprehensive education interventions in the four Northern provinces.

As defined in the proposal the BEGE programme is aligned with the current Swedish results strategy for Afghanistan. However, as will be discussed below, the actual implementation of the education activities has had limited focus on the Swedish priorities.

3.1.1 Aligned with Afghan priorities

The BEGE project was designed to coordinate and cooperate with the Government of Afghanistan, represented by the Ministry of Education in Kabul and its representatives in the provinces, the PEDs. Interviewees at the Ministry view UNICEF to be their most important partner. This was deemed relevant when the project was designed, but the political situation of Afghanistan is rapidly changing. Major parts of the provinces of Helmand, Uruzgan, Kandahar and Zabul are now occupied by the Taliban, who also control the education sector with their own Education Directors.

The Taliban have recently changed their position as regards to education and are now promoting education, also for girls. In 2015 there were still attacks on women teachers and closure of schools, but since January 2016 the Taliban have formally shared an email message suggesting that their position has changed. In the four mentioned provinces, the government PEDs are working together with the Taliban and they support the schools in Taliban occupied districts. This requires UNICEF to adapt approaches towards education development, especially in the southern provinces. The major changes since BEGE was designed can be summarised as follows:

- In the Southern Afghanistan provinces of Helmand, Uruzgan, Kandahar and Zabul, the government is no longer in control of all districts.

- The Taliban in these provinces have changed their position as regards the importance of education.⁴⁰
- The PEDs in these provinces unofficially collaborate with the Taliban in these districts to set up CBSs.

The Afghan education sector is guided by the draft National Education Strategy Plan (NESP III, 2015-2020). Priorities for the plan are, “Improvement of the quality of education through enhancement of teachers’ capacities, improvement and updating of curriculum and textbooks is the main priority of the plan along with focusing on facilitating access to educational services for all school age children and adults. Improvement of education administration and management efficiencies is another priority of this plan to further improve transparency and accountability of the ministry to the people of Afghanistan”.⁴¹ Though the plan includes targets to increase the Gender Parity Index in primary, lower and upper secondary education, NESP III does not give priority to women’s and girls’ education in the practical implementation. The question whether the BEGE project is in line with Government policies can not be answered explicitly, since no clear Government policy as regards to girls’ and women’s education is available. Given UNICEF’s intended focus on girls’ access to education, it is significant that the BEGE project proposal did not make any reference to MoE policies to foster girls’ education in Afghanistan. However, currently UNICEF is supporting the MoE in developing a girls education policy and a strategy.

UNICEF is considered to be a real partner to the MoE. This was voiced by the MoE and other donors and NGOs working in the education sector. Their working relationship is built on close collaboration and directly “off-budget” support to MoE at national level as well as at the provincial levels through the PEDs. The most important aspect of relevance in regard to the cooperation with the different levels of the Ministry of Education is UNICEF’s contribution to capacity development of the MoE.

The Sida appraisal in late 2013 shows that UNICEF’s collaboration was expected to enable the MoE to provide adequate support to systematic teacher training throughout the country to ensure that fair expansion of knowledge and skills are in place for teachers both at rural and urban areas. As NESP II indicates, the teacher training is one of the key components of the programme that MoE is implementing with the support of its international partners.

⁴⁰ As mentioned by the PED of Zabul: “...they have set up a kind of shadow government with their own authorities responsible for education with whom we are now working together”.

⁴¹ National Education Strategy Plan (NESP III), 2015-2020, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, June 2014

CBS teachers supported by the BEGE programme benefit from a 16 day training, which is the only additional programme specific learning opportunity to gain needed skills to become a teacher in a CBS. The information gathered from the field visits indicates that teacher trainings generally take place twice per year. The evaluation found solid information regarding the positive impact of teacher training in urban and rural areas. However, the absence of a proper needs assessment among the teachers is a challenge, and the lack of equal share of opportunities to take part in the training among the relevant groups of teachers is problematic. Though a great proportion of teachers believe that the trainings are relevant to the subjects they are teaching, the inequitable distribution of training opportunities was a concern of the consulted teachers. The PED fails to properly identify the specific group of teachers to attend a training. The paid trainings are not transparently advertised, as the PED and school principals decide who can attend, which means that the attendees come from the group of teachers that are already connected to the PED and the principals' networks. The teachers that have attended the CFS training talked about it as a unique learning opportunity, but the evaluation team saw very little effort to implement a comprehensive approach in the schools towards putting the child friendly approach into practice.

3.1.2 Relevance for the needs of girls

The integration of a gender perspective in the programme is important for its relevance. UNICEF's BEGE programmes around the world⁴² have had a focus on gender equality and on girls' access to primary education in particular. The intervention is expected to reach out of school children in general, with a particular focus on girls and the barriers that hinder girls from fulfilling their education. The intervention is also expected to reach female teachers and young women out of school. The project proposal did not demonstrate that the BEGE project in Afghanistan was based on a specific gender needs assessment in the education sector, although there was a comprehensive problem analysis. Practical and strategic needs of girls and women are only addressed on a general level.

The evaluators found that UNICEF staff are aware about the obstacles to girls' access to education and that the lack of female teachers constitutes a substantial challenge. When asked about how BEGE works to contribute to gender equality UNICEF staff

⁴² The BEGE programmes as such have been phased out in accordance to UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017. UNICEF continues to have a strong focus on gender and girls' rights to primary education. The Strategic Plan (2014-2017) and related planning instruments articulate a sharpened focus on gender equality and empowerment of girls and women, to be achieved through a gender mainstreamed approach and targeted corporate priorities of advancing girls' secondary education, addressing gender-based violence, promoting gender-responsive adolescent health, and ending child-marriage. UNICEF still has BEGE sections in some regions, for example in Eastern and Southern Africa.

explain that they do not have a special gender strategy, make specific efforts to increase girls' education or mainstream gender in the programming, but they rather embed efforts to create schools that are more attractive to girls (i.e. that encourage their parents to send their girls to school) in the programming. Infrastructure initiatives of the programme involve constructing surrounding walls, separate toilets and wash rooms for boys and girls, and rehabilitation of girls schools. UNICEF's approach has focused on basic education in Afghanistan in general, and on "out of school children" in remote and deprived communities in particular. According to UNICEF staff this is agreeing with their mandate which is "inclusive education".

The MoE voiced similar views. Girls are seen as an important target group. It was not obvious how this awareness was translated into actions or which strategies were used to ensure attitude and behaviour changes among parents, community members, school staff or key persons within different levels of MoE. The BEGE programme cannot be said to support gender equality, since its activities and strategies to achieve these aims are not specific or articulated enough.

Another indicator of relevance of the BEGE intervention is the increase of female teachers. The evaluators found no evidence of the programme or UNICEF overall support to the MoE leading to a higher number of women teaching in CBE or in public schools. The number of female teachers varies greatly between provinces, and in some urban centres the evaluation team was told that young women graduated from grade 12 actually were unemployed and searching for teaching positions. Due mainly to security reasons, they were not willing to apply for position in rural and remote communities. The costs involved with transferring to rural areas was another reason.⁴³

3.1.3 Relevance for increasing children's access to school

At an overall level it is fair to say that the access to education has increased in the provinces targeted in the BEGE programme, but there was no means to verify that the reported data of 54,255 learners (21,883 girls) out of the targeted 66,000 children was correct.

The sample of four visited CBSs was too small to do an assessment of the reliability of the reported number. The challenges faced by both UNICEF and PED to monitor the CBE due to security risks also make the data less reliable.⁴⁴ According to the sec-

⁴³ Transport costs and double costs for housing for those with families left behind, or costs for transferring male family members and/or the family to the location of the job position.

⁴⁴ Third party monitoring is implemented in some provinces, in the North so far this has been done by the Department of Finance (a sort of peer monitoring within the governmental structures at provincial level). The third party monitoring through contracted services is planned to start in 2016 in the North.

ond progress report to Sida, 1,941 CBSs have been established in the 14 provinces. According to UNICEF the number of CBSs varies between different years based on the completion of the three years by each cohort of students. The evaluation team was provided with several excel sheets with detailed data on community based education and support to formal schools. The level of details of data in these sheets varies. It is important to note that the numbers of CBSs are divided in grades, which might not be the same as number of schools but rather states the number of classes.

The below table is based on the data that was provided to the evaluation team.⁴⁵ The table summarises 1,332 CBSs (when summarising the total number of reported CBSs per provincial data sheet). However, if the total number in the summary sheet is used instead, the total number of CBSs is 1,458. The CBSs reach 34,963 students (of which 18,702 are girls). The figures do not correspond with the data reported in the second progress report. The evaluators do not question that the data in the second progress report might be correct, but note that UNICEF has provided the evaluation team with different figures.

Reported CBS - BEGE (Sida funds)											
Province	No of CBS	Year established		Teacher		No of classes/grade				No boys	No girls
		2014	2015	M	F	1	2	3	4		
Balk	284	70	214	254	30	214	70	0	0	3751	3780
Jawzjan	58	25	33	58	0	33	25	0	0	529	831
Samangan	143	61	No date	93	19	82	61	0	0	1698	2492
Saripul	112	49	63	106	37	63	49	0	0	1794	1309
Bamyan	30			28	2	0	12	13	5	259	250
Daikundi	12			44	12	0	49	7	0	536	617
Paktia	4*			41	4	0	35	20	0	714	747
Paktika	134			81	4	0	85	49	0	1776	1392
Ghor	130			128	1	80	50	0	0	1721	1881
Badghis	62			56	6	0	62	0	0	1129	330
Kandahar	14			-	-	14	0	0	0	358	53
Helmand	280			48	2	280	0	0	0	769	3749

⁴⁵ The data is extracted from a summary and provincial specific sheets. The total number of CBS in the first column is extracted from the provincial specific sheet. Data on year of establishment is only available for the Northern provinces. The data over number of teachers, grades/classes and students is extracted from the overall summary. Sources: Data on CBE schools supported by Sida March, excel, and CBS and HUB-schools Data in 4 provinces of NR (December 2015), excel.

Zabul	19			31	19	50	0	0	0	705	545
Uruzgan	50			50	0	50	0	0	0	522	726

The reports list the actual number of boys and girls attending community based schools but these figures are not related to the total population of girls and boys in the relevant age groups in the targeted communities⁴⁶, which is why it is not possible to assess the proportion of access to education for girls.

An important expected result of the BEGE programme is the transition rate from community based education to hub schools in grade 4. This effect has strong bearing on the relevance of the intervention. The small sample of CBSs visited did not allow the evaluation team to directly assess how the transition rate is progressing in the targeted areas of the programme. UNICEF did not provide the team with any overall data related to transition rates. However, the findings from the visited rural communities showed that the model did not function very well because the distance to most of the hub schools continued to be too far even for the older children, and particularly for the girls. It was also a problem that hub schools were already full, and new children could not be accepted.

The report from 2015 the BEACON programme concludes that “there are serious concerns regarding the transition to hub schools”.⁴⁷ The distance to hub schools and security issues are raised in the report, both also parents’ hesitance to send their children to the hub schools due to their concerns on the instructional quality and gender sensitivity. The report states that “Hub schools lack necessary resources and infrastructure to accommodate incoming students and to ensure a successful handover process”. These findings in the BEACON programme also seem highly relevant to the BEGE intervention.

3.1.4 The rights perspective

EQ 6 Does UNICEF-BEGE implement the rights perspective based on the four principles participation, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability, if so – in what ways?

The narrative reports do not refer to the rights-based principles or illustrate in what way UNICEF is promoting accountability, transparency, active participation or non-discrimination as an end goal or as a process⁴⁸ in the programme implementation.

⁴⁶ Afghanistan does not have reliable census data and there are no official sources to get age-disaggregated village population data. Recently, a socio demographic economic survey has been completed in a few provinces (supported by UNFPA) which UNICEF hopes to use.

⁴⁷ Teaching & Learning in Cluster Model, A Qualitative Analysis of Effective Community Based Education in Afghanistan, Basic Education for Afghanistan Consortium, January 2015

⁴⁸ The United Nations' Common Understanding on HRBA (2003), contains the following goal, process

UNICEF staff have been introduced to HRBA through trainings on a regular basis according to the respondents. UNICEF also provides the staff with online resources. Interviews with staff showed that they have a fairly good understanding of the rights-based principles.

UNICEF informed that they undertake regular stakeholder meetings but it was not clear to what extent rights-holders (children, teachers, community members and to certain extent MoE staff at local level) had taken active part in planning of the programme or the different activities, how they had access to information on the planning, progress and results of the intervention, or in what way they could hold UNICEF and/or different levels of MoE to account. On the contrary, interviewees in schools and communities stated that they had little information on the programme, they showed limited understanding of the different roles of UNICEF and the MoE and that activities such as distribution of TLM or selection of participants to teacher trainings had a top down approach. Shura members in one of the villages with a CBS were concerned over the continuation of the education for their children after grade three. They seemed to have no information on UNICEF's plans of possibly integrating higher grades into the CBS. The evaluation team has found no evidence indicating that there has been any capacity development on the rights-based principles to MoE or school staff.

The application of the HRBA principles in the interaction with children is particularly important. Observations during the data collection included children standing under the hot sun waiting for the evaluation team or children asked to perform skills (for example songs or recite memorised English statements), or high school girls waiting for the evaluators in warm sportswear to play football under the midday sun.⁴⁹ This was of course instructions from the school management and not UNICEF or the MoE, but exemplifies the limited understanding of child friendly approaches in the schools. To our knowledge, the PED monitoring officer or the UNICEF staff did not talk to the teachers or the principles regarding how this contradicts a child friendly approach.

and outcome statements: **Goal:** All programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should further the realisation of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.; **Process:** Human rights standards and principles guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process; **Outcome:** Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities (empowerment) of 'duty bearers' to meet their obligations and/or of 'rights holders' to claim their rights.

⁴⁹ The girls informed the evaluators that they had been told not to change clothes and wait for the evaluators.

The staff working directly with education in the provinces was not aware that the education component in the current country programme is a BEGE programme. They did not know what the BEGE components are, nor did they have knowledge of the nature of the agreement with Sida. According to the UNICEF management, this was not something that the programme staff needed to know, as they were only expected to keep track of the activities in the country programme that are funded by Sida. This situation shows that staff have no access to the actual project proposal and thus do not know what UNICEF and Sida have agreed on for the period 2013-2015 (extended to December 2016). This means that the inherent strong focus on gender equality that both BEGE and Swedish policies have, or the demands from the donors on the application of HRBA, are not clear to the staff. Since the support is not perceived as a specific intervention, there was no indication found of systematic and time specific participation of rights-holders or other stakeholders in project planning or follow-up. Likewise, no information was shared with the evaluation team of rights-holders taking part in decisions concerning the overall implementation of the programme. There were accounts of students, teachers and community members being part of school committees that make decisions, but these committees were active both in CFS and ordinary formal schools.

Finally, the findings do not indicate that UNICEF has actively engaged in processes to empower rights-holders or teachers or that the education teams make use of inclusive methods that lead to meaningful and effective participation in processes that concern the education sector. UNICEF has a unique relation with the MoE that enables influence in policy discussion and access to decision-making processes. UNICEF or duty-bearers within the MoE could not identify any situations where UNICEF has facilitated accountability claims on the MoE from community members, educationists or students, or from coordination with other development actors focusing on CBE or girls' and women's access to education.

3.1.5 Child friendly schools

If we all study, Afghanistan will be a good country with good people. - Boy 1
Yes there are children not coming to this school because of its poor conditions. Those who have money go to better schools. Others don't go to school at all, They will be unemployed when they grow up. - Boy 2
I hope you talk to the Ministry that our school needs to be rehabilitated. - Boy 3
 Grade 4, urban school, Jawzjan

The approach of UNICEF towards the Child Friendly Schools consists of two major contributions: improvement of the physical environment, access to water and sanitation infrastructure as well as some specific teacher learning material, and teacher training on the concept of CFS. In many of the visited schools labelled as CFS the team observed water taps, toilets, and surrounding walls (rehabilitated or constructed with UNICEF funds). Some of the schools had instructive paintings and messages on the walls in the corridors to enhance learning and we were told that this was a result of the teacher training on CFS. Teachers and principals showed equipment, libraries and laboratories, but these were actually not CFS components supported by UNICEF

and the BEGE. Parents and shuras had supported several of the schools with gardens and in some cases they also provided support to the security of the school through day and/or night guards.

The school management generally did not have a clear idea of what was included in the CFS package and what stemmed from other support, which of course is understandable since these resources normally had been provided through the Provincial Education Department. The teacher training on CFS in most schools had been provided to a limited number of teachers and the training had not provided the participants with any systematic approach on how to introduce new methods to their colleagues. We found that teachers that had assisted the CFS training had a very vague understanding of what a child friendly school and teaching is about. It should be said however, that the teachers understood that their schools still needed much more before they could be called child friendly. For example the teachers in the Jawzjan province believed that those schools labelled as Child Friendly should get everything needed to make it as a CFS, otherwise it will be limited to only a label without substance.

Child centred and child friendly teaching methods and a good environment for teaching and learning, are essential parts of a rights-based and inclusive education, but should be combined with active measures to counteract exclusion and discrimination. This includes for example awareness of how to secure that the school is available and accessible for children with different forms of disability (together with related actions), integration of local (minority) languages⁵⁰ in the teaching, outreach activities to identify and include out of school children (girls, child labourers, etc.) in the formal schools, etc. We found no active measures as a result of the UNICEF support in the CFS or in the CBE to counteract different forms of discrimination. There was a general awareness of the need to ensure girls access to education, as mentioned above, and in some schools there were ramps and teachers had received support from the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan on how to assist children with disabilities in the school. None of the CFS were assessed to practice inclusive education, and most respondents had weak or no understanding of what inclusive education involves.⁵¹

The evaluators found no evidence that UNICEF education staff in the field advocated for the approaches and innovations that UNICEF globally promotes. It seems that

⁵⁰ A teacher in Jawzan stated that the last 2 years she had been asking to attend a teacher training on Uzbeki language but getting feedback from PED that the language trainings are not included in the package.

⁵¹ The CFS visited in Kandahar and Bamyan did not, for example, have a policy towards inclusiveness. In most of these schools the evaluators had to explain what was meant by inclusiveness.

there is no clear mechanism within UNICEF for how to communicate these issues from the Kabul office to the field.

The first BEGE progress report (March 2015) provides the following table on the Child Friendly School components.⁵² A column with comments has been added by the evaluators to the table.

CFS Components, Minimum Package Standard and Programme Indicators			
Components	Minimum package standard	Indicators	Comments by the evaluators
Inclusiveness	Schools accept all children regardless of background Non-enrolled children in catchment area are identified and SMS takes action to enrol all children	Inclusive admission policy is publically set up in school At least one action has been taken by school and SMS to enrol all children in the catchment area during the current school year	No evidence Several accounts of teachers and SMS of their efforts to identify out of school children
Effective Teaching and Learning	Teachers are trained on Child-Centered Teaching approach TLM distributed and used in class effectively Advocacy to ensure distribution of textbooks to all children	At least one teacher in each of grade 1-6 are trained on child-centred teaching and learning Textbooks and TLM are distributed to students and used in classroom	Enrolment of teachers steered by nepotism, focus not only on grades 1-6 Uneven distribution of TLM and textbooks, many students without books. Dialogue with MoE on missing textbooks, but no information on other advocacy initiatives
Safe, Healthy and Protective Environment	WASH Package instalment (water, separate latrines for boys and girls, menstrual hygiene facilities) and hygiene education Enforcement of code of conduct for teachers and students to promote a violence-free environment Periodic deworming for all children	Separate toilets for boys and girls exist and are maintained Code of conduct for violence-free school is publically set up All students have been treated with deworming medicine	Yes No evidence No information

⁵² According to the project proposal to Sida (November 2013), in 2011, UNICEF adapted the CFS approach to suit Afghanistan's socio-cultural context and national priorities of the education sector in the following thematic components: inclusiveness; effective teaching and learning; safe, healthy and protective learning environment; gender responsiveness; community and child participation.

Gender Responsiveness	Code of conduct and focal teachers in place to prevent harassment and discrimination against (students) especially girls Advocacy to deploy adequate number of female teachers to support girls' retention	Code of conduct and one or more focal teachers are in place to prevent gender-based harassment and discrimination against students, especially girls	No evidence
Participatory Decision making	School Management Shuras (SMS) strengthened through training to prepare school improvement plans (SIP) and hold regular meeting to support implementation. Student Shura is established and participates in decision-making	SMS is established and conduct regular meeting with school for improvement Student Council is established and regularly meets teachers / school management to express its views	Yes Older students in G10-12 nominated to the SMS, take part in meetings. No separate student councils

The children in the CFS did not know more than other students of the situation of children with disabilities. In most group discussion (regardless if it was a CFS or not) the students could mention some students with different disabilities that had been or were currently studying in their school. They seemed to have had no discussions on non-discrimination in general, or with focus on the rights of children with disabilities.

Based on the consultation with the children, the level of parents' engagement with the children's education and the school seem to vary a lot between different schools, but the evaluators could not identify any significant difference between CFS and other schools. Some focus groups said that their parents do not come to school at all. Some children mentioned that their fathers would occasionally come to school to talk to the teacher or the principal, very few mentioned that their mothers visited the school. Only in one school did the students mention that their teachers would visit their homes. From the children's perspective there was no interaction between the school and their mothers, unless the mother was a teacher.

Most students, but not all, reported that they received learning material in grade one, but that the distribution of notebooks and other material was uneven in grade two and three. In the focus group discussions in the Northern provinces there would normally be 1-3 students out of 8-12 in the group that did not get the UNICEF material last or this year.⁵³ In most classes the school books that should be provided by PED are

⁵³ The interviews were held with randomly selected primary school classes and students that were selected by the evaluators. As stated elsewhere the UNICEF teaching and learning material consists of notebooks, school bags, pencils, etc.

missing for some students. In CBSs there has been no distribution this year. In one school in the North the principal and the head teacher said that 40% of all books are missing. In those focus groups where textbooks were missing, the children listed reading, language and math books, but most common was the lack of the book on Islam. The books, notebooks and other necessities for attending school were also raised by the students as a barrier for poor children to attend school.

No we do not have all textbooks. Some I had to buy at the market. - Girl 1
We need new classrooms, it is so hard to study in the tents when it gets hot. -
Girl 2, focus group discussion with grade 4, Mazar-i-Sharif, CFS
I have to buy all my books at the market. - Boy, grade 3, Mazar-i-Sharif

The children expressed joy over the gardens, they were proud of their schools, particularly the ones that really had developed into more CFS. But they also raised a lot of issues on the hardship of badly lighted or ventilated class rooms, the harsh conditions to study in the UNICEF provided tents (too hot in the summer, too cold in the winter), that it was difficult to concentrate, that they would get headaches, etc. One major concern was the lack of playground and space for sports activities. Some of the visited schools had quite poor conditions for teaching and learning. In summary, in all five provinces, the evaluators found little difference between visited CFS and other secondary and high schools.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

3.2.1 Theory of Change

EQ 2 *What is UNICEF's theory of change and to what extent has it contributed to sustainable improvements within the education sector? Is the theory of change maintainable and relevant with regards to the context?*

UNICEF claims that the BEGE programme applies the ToC from the Country Programme Action Plan (2015-2019).⁵⁴ The document is thus not directly related to the BEGE project; nor does it cover the full intervention period since it was produced after the start of the Sida funded project. However, the outcome of the ToC is, “*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*”. At the moment the evidence is weak on whether the intervention logic is realistic, whereby the outputs will lead to “vulnerable children

⁵⁴ UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2015-2019, 18 November 2014. CPAP serves as the basis for the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education. See section 1.2.1 for a presentation of the ToC and Annex 5 for ToC Figure.

are accessing primary education”, how “progressively child friendly” the education that is accessed is, and if children can “demonstrate improved learning outcomes”. The evaluation finds that the ToC lacks plausible strategies to achieve these outcomes.

The ToC lists the strategies of the programme.⁵⁵ However, these do not explain the role of the different actors involved in the programme or how they relate to each other. It is difficult to follow who will do what and where the responsibility/control of one actor ends and the responsibility of another actor begins. The ToC does not address the sphere of influence of UNICEF in relation to the MoE, or the targeted schools and communities. The ToC does not provide any coherent description of the process of the expected changes. The column on assumptions and risks includes what could be partly assessed as outputs in a chain of progress.

The fact that the ToC is not explicit on the expectations on who does what, and in what ways UNICEF is able to influence the Ministry, became evident in the discussions with the different levels of MoE and UNICEF. While UNICEF stresses that it is MoE that implements the basic education, stakeholders at PEDs saw the UNICEF education teams as the implementing partners to the Ministry. This leads to unclear division of roles and expectations that might inhibit the progress of expected results. At the same time it was evident that many components were delivered by the PED, as for example the distribution of TLM and the provision of teacher trainings. What was less evident was how UNICEF worked to influence their approach in the service delivery.

The ToC mentions all children with specific focus on girls’ access, but it gives little guidance on how a gender focus, disability focus or general non-discrimination focus will be secured. Given the discussions above on the pressing needs of focusing more on girls’ and women’s access to education, the ToC is only partly relevant to the context since it does not put an explicit focus on gender equality.

Likewise, the development of capacities within the MoE and the increased ownership for CBE are insufficiently elaborated in the ToC. As will be discussed later, the initiatives to increase technical skills among public officials at the MoE are still inadequate. The assumption that the close cooperation between the UNICEF education teams and PED and DED will develop skills within local and provincial MoE struc-

⁵⁵ One could argue that the TOC rather refers to the education as a component of the Country Programme. It is presented as a programme in the CPAP.

tures would require more developed, more strategic and better planned technical assistance from UNICEF to the Ministry staff.

Many of the expected results and strategies are relevant and reflect genuine needs, but they have yet to be put into practice. The focus on developing monitoring and evaluation capacities is highly relevant, but implementation has so far not been very evident. The active role in cluster and sector coordination mechanisms on community based education and Child Friendly and Inclusive Education Cluster meetings have yet to be realised at all levels. According to the consultations with external stakeholders, a particular gap is at the level where the education programmes are being implemented. The evaluation noted several weaknesses in this area and that UNICEF's added value to contribute with innovative approaches to education is not used to its full potential.

3.2.2 Gender equality

***EQ 5** To what extent have project activities during the agreement period contributed towards improved gender equality when it comes to reaching out to girls and improving girls' access to quality education?*

The Evaluation Team has had difficulties in assessing the degree of progress towards increased gender equality and girls' access to basic education. The evaluation has no findings on women's literacy levels in locations where BEGE has been implemented. The total number of girls and women accessing basic education through UNICEF supported CBE is, according to the provided data,⁵⁶ 18,702 in CBSs. The data on ALC⁵⁷ refers to access by 10,852 girls and women. In the visited community based classes girls generally had equal access to the education in comparison with the boys in the community. Since the CBE target all out of school children, the evaluation team noted no particular focus on the girls.

The current Sida supported BEGE programme has not yet reached grade three in the funded CBS (with the exception of Bamyan). Therefore it is too early to assess the transition rate from the current BEGE supported community based classes to grade four and hub schools for girls. However, other reviewed data⁵⁸ shows that UNICEF's general transition rates of students from grade three to grade four is currently extremely low when compared with BRAC, CRS and SCA. UNICEF's transition rates from grade three to four was 0,02% while the other three organisations ranged between 0,74-1,4%. It should be noted that while the other organisations manage their own grade four classes, UNICEF does not; the numbers indicate that the UNICEF

⁵⁶ Note that the second progress report March 2016 has another total.

⁵⁷ List over all Literacy centres 2014

⁵⁸ Compiled end of school year CBE student data from 12 organisations supporting CBE.

model of expecting transition to formal hub schools may not be sufficient. The probability of good transition rates of the BEGE student is low due to the lack of a real strategy. This was raised by most stakeholders interviewed.

UNICEF does not report on increased or maintained enrolment of girls in the formal schools that receive support through the BEGE programme. The evaluators could not assess change over time in the visited schools. Teachers, students and community members in the visited schools told of a rather long commitment to girls' right to education. On a more anecdotal level, practically all interviewed school children with older sisters said that their sisters were in school or had already graduated. The interviews with shuras and children suggest that the girls come from families that have supported their daughters' right to education over a longer period. Some of the girls mentioned older girls not coming to school because of parents preventing them from continuing with their education, most of the younger children did not know why, while the older girls mentioned (early) engagement, marriage and the fact that the students had become pregnant.

Some girls stop school when they are 14 or 15. They get engaged to be married. - Girl, grade 4, Mazar-i-Sharif

The BEGE does not report on contribution to a higher number of female teachers. The evaluators found that little action was taken to influence the MoE to embrace policies and practices in order to attract female teachers or young women graduated from grade 12 to community schools.

Respondents in schools raised attention to a number of barriers to girls' education within schools, particularly for older girls. WASH components as well as security measures had been implemented in some of the visited schools, but do not respond to the priority needs. Several shura members noted the insufficient hygiene facilities and security conditions as factors that led to older girls dropping out of school.

The teachers and UNICEF education teams did not mention any special development in teaching methods or textbook content to address girls' need or to include gender equality issues. The provision of TLM did not include any gender equality measure to our knowledge.

The general observations from the consultations with the school children were that most of them were curious, open and in a good mood. The interview situation with strangers created a certain level of shyness, but most participating children would talk during the group discussion. Most were willing to share their thoughts and some were very talkative. They were not scared; nor did they show sign of worries or discomfort. The children expressed that they were fond of their teachers. Most students said it was easy to talk to their teachers and ask questions. In all but three consultations the children confirmed that teachers used positive discipline. In the other three groups there were statements about teachers sometimes using physical and verbal violence.

The groups with more mixed messages around the behaviour of their teachers represented both CSF and other schools.

Most children expressed that they like their school, even in the schools where there are a lot of unmet needs. Given the high dreams of becoming doctors, engineers, “bosses” or police, principals and teachers showed that both girls and boys expected to stay in school and that they would obtain formal employment as adults. Many of the children raised the importance of going to school to become a good person, to know how to behave and respect others, and to have a good future. Lack of education would mean that they would not get jobs and had to stay home.

Another observation related to gender equality was that UNICEF did not make a special effort to arrange meetings with the women during the evaluation. The evaluation team was told that women shura members were invited to stakeholder meetings in Mazar-i-Sharif occasionally and that 2-3 households would sometimes be visited during monitoring visits. The interviews with UNICEF and the desk review of reports did not give evidence of any systematic approach to the involvement of community women in planning or monitoring of the interventions.

Finally, a new and positive example of a more strategic approach is the plan to start ALC in Samangan not only to reach out of school girls and young women with education, but as a strategy to counteract early and forced marriages, a problem that is acute in the province.

3.2.3 Coordination

EQ 7 To what extent are the project activities coordinated with government activities and priorities and other (CBE) actors (including Swedish supported programmes) in Afghanistan and how does this impact the transition rate of students to grade 4?

The findings support UNICEF’s claims of coordinating with MoE and other actors involved in CBE. According to the MoE, one of UNICEF’s main strengths is their open communication and close collaboration with the government. However, practical coordination with developing capacities of the MoE (rather than filling gaps), and sharing coordination information from the provinces (e.g. monitoring data and information regarding payments to teachers) is weak.

Some stakeholders acknowledged that UNICEF is taking the lead in some platforms (e.g. on developing the National Strategic Plan and facilitating the CBE policy) and all highlighted UNICEF’s strategic role. While most stakeholders also active in CBE stressed that UNICEF is a transparent actor that shares information, few of the respondents could tell what the UNICEF approach was to community based education. The evaluators found that UNICEF also lacked detailed awareness of other CBE approaches. In Southern Afghanistan it is clear, that even in the Taliban occupied districts CBS’ are set up. So far, UNICEF materials are distributed by the PEDs in these provinces. UNICEF is not playing an active role in the promotion of CBE in these

districts. As discussed earlier, the evaluation found no evidence that the coordination had positive effects on the transition rate to grade four.

3.2.4 Funding modality

EQ 9 *Has the support's change toward project orientation contributed to the effectiveness of the Swedish support?*

Sida's agreement with UNICEF (December 2013) to shift the thematic support to a project based model was made in an endeavour to improve monitoring and reporting of aggregated results. Sida based this decision on prior weak reporting (activity based reporting rather than analytical and aggregated), UNICEF's internal audit and recommendations from the evaluation of Sweden's support to the education sector in Afghanistan.⁵⁹ The shift in funding modality was a sign of discontentment from Sida's side, and while they recognised that a project model would entail more administration for UNICEF, it was assessed that it was justified in order to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of Sweden's contribution.⁶⁰

The evaluation finds that the Sida funded BEGE project does not exist in its own right but is managed by UNICEF as a part of their education programme in the overall Country Programme of cooperation. UNICEF's education team does not differentiate between funding modalities or donors, but rather consider the funds to be pooled to support their core mandate. The shift in funding modality is completely unknown to UNICEF staff in the visited provinces. Thus, the change in funding modality has not made a difference to the effectiveness of the Swedish support, nor to the management of the programme.

The project modality has brought an additional administrative burden to UNICEF. Since the management of activities are integrated in UNICEF's overall programming, the financial and results reporting is a challenge. According to staff, the process of developing the financial and narrative reports to Sida is cumbersome as it requires manual review of the project based accounting system to identify what activities have been financed by Sida. From there, outputs are extrapolated and attributed to the "Project".

There remains room for improvement in UNICEF's reporting regarding the Swedish contribution, both in timeliness and content. The narrative reports continue to be limited to reporting activities (i.e. trainings conducted) and outputs (i.e. enrollment numbers) rather than the results and changes in quality improvements (i.e. how the train-

⁵⁹ Evaluation of Swedish Support in the Education Sector in Afghanistan – 2012, January 2013

⁶⁰ Sida's decision on contribution, 2013-11-29

ing of teachers has transformed the way they teach and how it benefits the students). Reporting on risks is not included, nor is an in-depth analysis of constraints and lessons learned, something that Sida has requested over the past few years. Reflection on the intervention logic or the assumptions that the intervention is built on, including if the right strategies are used and what revisions should be made to make the project more effective, remains elusive. The second progress report refers to the results in the country programme though those are not part of the agreement with Sida.

The financial reports are at an extremely aggregated level which does not provide relevant information, such as costs of specific activities (e.g. salaries for advisors at the MoE, breakdown of costs for CBSs, security costs, etc.). This detailed financial information was requested by the evaluators but not made available.

3.2.5 Results and risks monitoring

EQ 12 Does UNICEF apply sufficient risk management? How does UNICEF apply learning and results-based management?

“We do not know what is happening in the classrooms, but we do know if the schools are open and who is attending and who is teaching”. (UNICEF staff member)

Monitoring was identified as one of UNICEF’s major weaknesses in several stakeholder interviews conducted during the evaluation.⁶¹ According to UNICEF, the limited monitoring data that is collected is on activity and output level (mainly numbers of attendance, completion of activities, etc.), although the quality of the quantitative data is continuously questioned. Nothing is currently being monitored in terms of learning outcomes and education quality, and there is limited analysis of the activity oriented results.

The evaluation team observed a lack of systematic processes to collect and utilise monitoring data for programme improvement, as well as the capacity to analyse and reflect on the progress towards outcomes or lack thereof.

The responsibility for monitoring remains ambiguous. According to UNICEF the monitoring is done by the MoE, through the 6000 supervisors that exist on provincial and district levels. It is acknowledged that the government lacks functioning monitoring systems and the capacity to manage and implement it. The MoE recognises that there is limited accountability on provincial levels in terms of delivering services and reporting. Monitoring in remote and insecure areas is especially challenging, and stakeholders are unanimously distressed not knowing what is taking place. According

⁶¹ These stakeholders include UNICEF staff, MoE and donors and other CSOs in the education sector.

to the MoE, UNICEF is responsible for integrating the quantitative data into the Education Management Information System (EMIS), specifically on CBE. This was not confirmed by monitoring staff in the provinces. The provided monitoring schemes and interviews with monitoring officers showed that UNICEF education team only report to UNICEF in Kabul. Long term agreements have recently been established with three different institutions to conduct 'Third Party Monitoring' of activities in all UNICEF supported programmes in the 10 priority provinces and priority areas and districts of all other provinces. Contracts were being issued based on these TPM LTAs in all zone offices when the evaluation was in progress.

There is no structured use of monitoring data for follow-up, reflection and learning. When UNICEF national staff conduct (irregular) monitoring visits they take the opportunity to speak to children although this is not structured, nor is the feedback systematically fed into a monitoring system and used for systematic learning. UNICEF plans to start collecting data from children through learning assessments next year.

There is an exchange of learning in Kabul involving the stakeholders involved in the basic education sector, including the MoE, which typically happens in working groups where technical topics are discussed. There is great interest in meeting to discuss emerging findings when study results are presented. However, learning is not organised around UNICEF's and the MoE's own monitoring of their programming. The output data that is collected is reviewed twice a year in connection to the joint planning of the rolling workplans that UNICEF and the MoE undertake.

In terms of risk management the evaluation could not find strong evidence of sufficient risk management based on the progress of results and shifting local contexts, including the impact of ongoing and emerging conflicts in areas where the programmes is being implemented, although UNICEF produced a risk management matrix with the project proposal.⁶² According to UNICEF's operations department, the

⁶² The following information was provided by UNICEF in regards to their financial risk management: The Risk Assurance Unit in UNICEF has a risk assurance specialist and two assistants to strengthen the overall risk management approach of UNICEF. The focus of the unit is initially around fiduciary risks and strengthen assurance activities based on risk classification. The risk assurance is based on the UN common approach to 'Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer' agreed by all UN entities within the UN Development Group. UNICEF in Afghanistan has began implementing this approach from January, 2015. The assurance activities planned and conducted include 'Programme visits', 'Spot checks', 'Audits' and Third Party Monitoring. Spot checks are review of detailed accounts maintained by the partners of UNICEF supported programmes and verification of procedures for budgeting, accounting and reporting. All partners in Afghanistan are considered 'High Risk' and therefore the assurance activities conducted by UNICEF are more frequent than they would be if the partners are assessed as 'Medium' or 'Low' risk. Audits are conducted for partners who have received more than USD 500,000 of cash assistance. So far two of the partners in Education sector viz. Ministry of Education and an NGO SHAO in Kandahar were subjected to such audits. All UNICEF staff are required to undergo

organisation reviews the key performance indicators for the country programme quarterly, which includes risk management. From the consultations with the staff in the provinces it was unclear how UNICEF's education team reviews the risk status and integrates risk management into their programming. Risk management relates to uncertainties that could affect the achievement of the programme objectives. In the context of Afghanistan, a strong conflict perspective is a necessary part of the risk management. Integrating a conflict perspective is not only a matter of security measures. It requires development of methods that enable the programme to work within the conflict and adapt strategies to threats that might arise against the programme objectives. Strong risk management is an integrated part of results based management and includes mechanisms for monitoring, reflecting, learning and adjusting programme strategies to challenges and risks.

Issues of risk were raised by many informants, such as duplication of funds and activities, ghost⁶³ schools and ghost salaried positions. External stakeholders recognise that there are inherent risks embedded in the set-up where UNICEF does not have full control as they work through the MoE. Many expressed a concern that it is therefore more crucial to apply strong risk management in order to mitigate possible corruption and duplication of activities.

The interviews showed that staff and management are aware of many of the weaknesses and have ideas on how to meet some of the challenges, but these evaluative reflections are not systematised in the monitoring system nor communicated to the involved community members, MoE technical staff, school management or teachers.

3.3 EFFICIENCY

EQ 3 *To what extent has the project been able to deliver on its results in an effective and efficient (including cost efficient) manner? This includes also internal efficiency within the UNICEF with different departments responsible for different components of the project.*

The Evaluation Team was unable to access any financial data from UNICEF due to confidentiality claims. We have therefore been unable to assess cost-efficiency in relation to unit costs and achieved results.

online training of two courses on risk assurance called 'HACT' and 'FACE' (Fund Authorization Certification of Expenditure) and Education staff are also in various stages of this training (to be completed in July, 2016).

⁶³ "Ghost" refers to something that does not exist in reality even though it exists in documentation.

Many stakeholders interviewed commented that CBSs operated under the MoE (and funded by UNICEF) are cheaper than those managed by NGOs.⁶⁴ However, it is unanimously recognised that a cost-efficiency comparison would be difficult to do as the two types provide different levels of services, quality and monitoring; the NGOs CBSs are typically more holistic. There is widespread curiosity (by NGOs, donors and the MoE) regarding exploring the cost-efficiency of the two models. One suggestion was raised to do a comparative analysis of CBSs managed by SCA and MoE/UNICEF, as both are funded by Sida.

The reported numbers of community based schools do not coincide with the data the Evaluation Team was provided. It is unclear if the number of “schools” actually refers to the establishment of classrooms and education in the community, or if UNICEF is counting every class as a “school”. The data suggest the latter. This confusion of concepts is also apparent in CFSs, where many teachers and principals understood the CFS to actually refer to a special well equipped classroom, and not a holistic approach to child friendly and inclusive environment. If the number of CBSs is reduced to the actual learning spaces instead of counting the number of classes the cost per school increases substantially.

The MoE raised concerns regarding accountability in relation to payments by UNICEF on provincial levels, specifically for rehabilitation of schools (and earlier for construction), which is not always overseen sufficiently to ensure that work is completed. The MoE suggested the need to develop provincial plans that can be closely monitored. However, it is important to note that during the evaluated period the BE-GE programme has not supported any new construction apart from support to WASH components in child friendly schools (according to their School Improvement Plans), such as toilets, wash rooms and boundary walls. The impression among many informants is that BEGE has spent a considerable amount of money, but few results can be shown. This includes funding of the MoE on central and provincial levels without concrete evidence of capacity having been developed.

One strategy that appears to be inefficient in terms of cost-efficiency is the use of technical assistance (TA) based on the Ministry of Finance policy and guidance on use of National Technical Assistance (NTA) funded by development partners. UNICEF finances TA staff at the MoE who operate as gap-fillers rather than being integrated into the institution or developing capacities within the MoE.⁶⁵ Non-

⁶⁴ The evaluation was unable to access concrete data to verify this

⁶⁵ One example is of a strong CBE unit consisting of only TA staff that operated at the MoE whom all left without developing any institutionalised capacity. The NTA policy was originally intended to attract suitable highly qualified expatriate educated Afghans to the Afghan civil services. Recently, these

transparent recruitment processes of TA staff at the MoE and large salaries were also mentioned in interviews. The evaluation was unable to explore this issue in depth, but it was raised by several informants.

The evaluation shows that the distribution of TLM struggles with various problems; the material is handed over to the PED, but if and how the material is distributed is difficult to follow and the interviews with teachers and students showed an uneven and delayed distribution of TLM some teaching material is kept in locked spaces, meaning that teachers and students have little access to the resources.

The quality of rehabilitation and construction has been a challenge since the earlier BEGE programme. The observations during the visits to CFS schools supported by UNICEF suggest that this continues to be a problem. Newly built or rehabilitated spaces and material were already damaged (chairs, desks, switches, other electric installations, windows, etc.) or developed in an insufficiently child friendly or accessible manner.

UNICEF's security restrictions based on UN security regulations managed by the Designated Official (DO) and UN Department of Safety and Security pose limitations on their ability to operate efficiently in comparison to NGOs. Having limited presence in the districts clearly affects the monitoring. The third party monitoring mentioned in the project proposal from 2013 has been delayed and was implemented in a limited scope in two provinces during 2015. Contracts has been established with three agencies this year and will be implemented later this year (2016).

According to UNICEF's operations department they practice cost-efficiency by being well informed about local costs to ensure that they do not overpay, and they are careful to follow their payment system to ensure that payments are made correctly and they conduct spot-checks on partners. UNICEF does not have any cost-efficiency indicators that they monitor. They measure cost efficiency by the process by which administration and procurement are done rather than measuring cost efficiency by units, activities or outputs due to varying contexts.

Seventy-five percent of the budget has been committed by March 2016. Considering that the project was planned for two years, and a one-year no-cost extension is in

guidelines have been modified to move their salary scales to Capacity Building Results (scales which are same as higher levels of civil services funded on budget through MoF. Since most of the Afghan government's development budget is funded by donors, this transition step has been seen by the Ministry of Finance as an interim step before they can eventually be integrated through the formal civil services paid for by the government.

place till the end of December, the disbursement rate is lagging. However, the evaluation is not able to draw any definite conclusions in regards to the level of overall cost-efficiency, as we have been unable to assess detailed expenditure by activities.

EQ 10 Has Sweden being the only donor affected the efficiency of the project?

The evaluation shows that UNICEF has not taken the support modality into the consideration at an operational level. The project activities have been part of the country programme and have not been implemented as part of a project. There has been no specific project manager and the Swedish support has been managed as one of many contributions to UNICEF's overall objectives for education within the former and current country programme.

Funds from Sweden have been merged into the overall budget for the education component. The annual budget reports have coded activity costs coherent with the project proposal to Sida, and through this method deducted the "Swedish" results in the country programme. Education teams at provincial level have not reported on any project level.⁶⁶

The Sida funds for the four provinces in the North have been perceived as "ear-marked" for special components of the programme, but are still coherent with the core activities and the focus for education in the country programme. In summary, the Sida contribution has not been managed as a project but as a support to the overall education activities within the Country Programme Action Plan.

Also relevant to the above discussion is the finding of insufficient communication flow between different levels of UNICEF offices. Crucial information about UNICEF's projects, especially the financing of these projects, is not reaching the people in the field who are executing the interventions. Also the content and the key concepts and strategies of the projects is not clearly communicated to these field offices.

EQ 11 How has the communication to the donor worked and has it had any impact on the project?

The short answer to this question is that communication to the donor has not worked well. The review of the Sida communication with UNICEF during the current funding period, and also for earlier periods, shows that UNICEF has been asked to submit

⁶⁶ The education teams are not aware of a Swedish project and they were never asked to report on this project.

revised reports on many occasions since the reporting has not followed the agreements between Sida and UNICEF. Sida's expectations of a more analytical outcome reporting, including discussions of more long-term effects, have not been met. In some cases the edited narrative reports have been returned for further revisions. Minutes, project assessment and other internal Sida documentation show that it has been difficult to reach a common understanding of what Sida expects from UNICEF when it comes to reporting on results. The intention to achieve a better dialogue has also been stymied by the many shifts in staff both at Sida and UNICEF.

3.4 IMPACT

EQ 8 *To what extent has the project contributed to poverty reduction?*

As anticipated during the inception, it has not been possible to assess impact of the intervention. Using a multidimensional understanding of poverty, including increased gender equality, empowerment processes and access to different services, such as education or security, one could argue that the BEGE programme would plausibly result in changes that substantially improve the life of targeted children and their families. While the Evaluation Team has not been able to find support for the fulfilment of the gender equality goal, the children that previously were out of school in remote and isolated communities, and that now attend community based classes, are definitely in a process of improving their life conditions. It is however too early to say if these children will complete their education. The challenge of long distances to hub schools remain and it is unclear if the children will be able to continue their studies after grade three, although the evidence indicates extremely low probability.

Both UNICEF and other consulted stakeholders claimed that the teaching and learning material distributed to formal schools and support to new infrastructure, rehabilitation of buildings, WASH components and the provision of tents to be used as outdoor classrooms, have had a bearing on the attendance of younger and older school children. Though the TLM has been unevenly and sporadic distributed to the targeted schools, notebooks and pencils for particularly girls and boys coming from poor households have functioned as an incentive and a pull factor. Access to water, increased security and improved hygienic conditions, have meant that parents that otherwise would have been reluctant to keep sending their older daughters to school, allowed their daughters to continue their education. These small, but significant improvements, have an impact on the individual children by increasing their chance to complete school. The evaluators have however not had access to data over time that would allow a counterfactual comparison between schools not supported by the BEGE funds and those receiving UNICEF support through the MoE.

Assessment of change in attitudes and behaviour over time of parents, community leaders and teachers, involved in CBE and formal schools integrated in the BEGE programme would have enabled a discussion of how these changes impact on child poverty. The evaluators can also confirm that there was an overall strong support for

education for both girls and boys. How the UNICEF intervention has contributed to this support was not possible to assess since no outcome tracking exists in the UNICEF monitoring system or in MoE's data collection.

It is commonly recognised that interventions which lead to the empowerment of children and their parents do reduce poverty. Access to literacy and education are important factors in empowerment processes, but this education must also be combined with quality education that includes child friendly, child centred and gender sensitive methods. The BEGE programme is so far increasing access to education and literacy, but has had little impact on the quality of the education provided.

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

EQ 4 To what extent have project activities during the agreement period contributed to sustainability, including built capacity among governmental institutions at district, provincial and national level? If information is available, it would be useful to compare with reported results from the previous agreement period 2010-2013.

Afghanistan's education sector's dependency on foreign assistance is still very high. The evaluation could not see that the overall dependency has decreased during the last implementing period. The implementing partners to the MoE continue to be crucial for basic education in remote areas. UNICEF covers all costs for the CBE in the areas where the BEGE operates, including travel expenses and salaries for some of the MoE monitoring staff (this varies between the zonal offices) and liaison officers based at the District Education Departments (DED). The provincial PED have had only a small role in maintaining the CBSs.

It was evident that the BEGE approach to offer three years of education in CBSs' in rural communities distant from hub schools is not sufficient to ensure the continuation of schooling. Currently the strategies are not sufficient to ensure that children transfer from the CBE to the hub schools and planning with the hub schools to take in transfer students is not taking place. Communities are demanding that the CBE last for at least four years but ideally until grade six. The running of these basic education initiatives will not be sustainable in the near future, but rather calls for a scaled up and longer support from donors and implementing partners and ownership by the government.

The high dependency on foreign assistance also involves the planning and supervision of the community based education. The monitoring capacities of the district and provincial duty-bearers remain weak and the interviews with PEDs showed that they rely on manually produced summaries of data. The quality and the reliability of the collected data are low.

It was difficult to see the effect of provided support to capacity development of administrative and technical staff at national and provincial levels. The evaluators did

not encounter evidence of PEDs being able to overcome challenges such as the distribution of textbooks, TLMs and effective systems for disbursement of teachers' salaries. The absence of a systematic database at the provincial level is also serious. The capacity development initiatives have so far not improved the institutional sustainability of the MoE.

The MoE has experienced high staff turnover in last 10 years, and with changing high level authorities within the MoE, delays in implementing policies and regulation are seen more frequently. The new state administration has since October 2014 been pushing for changes, but it took a long process to have a new minister and team to lead the MoE and subsequently a number of leading and key positions at provincial were not filled quickly as expected.

The support from the local communities is an important asset for a sustainable take over by the MoE in the future. In the rural areas visited, community members and local groups were actively participating in school shuras. The evaluators also noted a great commitment among parents and shuras in urban areas. Both SMSs and CDC support the school environment (through for example gardens), some provide smaller financial support to equipment and the security of the children and the protection of the school building and premises. The threat of attacks on both girls and on the schools is mitigated through the presence of police/guards paid by shuras and members of the shuras walk the girls from and to school in some areas, as well as the changing attitudes of the Taliban towards education development.

The different forms of CBE implemented by partners vary greatly in running costs, and as discussed earlier, UNICEF's model is economically more viable for a future direct management (including the financing) by the MoE.

4 Conclusions

4.1 RELEVANCE

The evaluators conclude that the BEGE programme at an overall level is relevant to the national education strategy but that it has not been adapted to the new realities of the political context. The lack of clear gender equality strategies, and the fact that the programme has been implemented with a general out of school children focus rather than a girls focus, makes the programme less relevant for the Swedish results strategy for Afghanistan, but also for the pressing need in Afghanistan to continue to focus on the access to education for girls and women.

The limited understanding of inclusiveness as “access to education of all children” obscures the barriers that particularly girls encounter once in school, but also lacks affirmative actions to include children with disabilities, children working part of the day or seasonally, or children that are stigmatised due to ethnic, racial or other forms of discrimination. The lack of a real and practical application of a human rights-based approach in UNICEF’s operations also challenges the relevance of the programme. UNICEF is an appreciated partner in the area of basic education. Their unique access to donors and the Ministry of Education is acknowledged by all key stakeholders and there are high expectations from other implementation partners to the MoE on UNICEF to take on a stronger leadership role. This involves not only coordination with the relevant development actors and technical support to the different levels of the MoE, but also in their role as a promotor of innovative, creative and rights-based methods that can work in the changing and challenging contexts of rural and urban Afghanistan.

UNICEF has potential to become a much more relevant actor within the educational sector. The findings show that there are untapped resources from global and national technical levels, and that key approaches such as gender equality, child centred methods and human rights-based approach are not being promoted enough in the dialogue with MoE. The BEGE programme has not been steered by a clear needs assessment nor by strategies that bring about changes in attitudes, skills and behaviour among duty-bearers at provincial and district levels, including the school staff.

4.1 EFFECTIVENESS

The Theory of Change that has been officially adopted was not part of the development of the BEGE proposal and though the current country programme is built on the logic of the ToC, the strategies do not seem to be understood by those who are ex-

pected to implement them. The actual practiced intervention logic of BEGE is not comprehensive. It lacks integral aspects, such as

- how to develop capacities of the MoE
- what the gender strategies to increase girls' education imply beyond numbers of girls accessing basic education
- how to reach and include both mothers and fathers of the children
- how to promote women's literacy
- how to achieve not only access but also quality education based on innovative teacher training that reaches all relevant teachers (directly or indirectly)
- how to ensure that students continue education after completing the CBE
- how to secure that new capacities and knowledge on innovative methods are diffused beyond those receiving training

The expected results of the intervention logic are on an output level that does not allow the measurement of change over time. BEGE, is not built on results based management or a strategy for organisational learning. The activity oriented monitoring overlooks what makes change happen and lessons learned are not documented and institutionalised. UNICEF does not have an overall strategy for how to overcome capacity gaps within the MoE, within the targeted schools or at an individual level of the teachers benefitting from the different trainings. Following up on outcomes and changes that occur due to the interventions is not only important, but a requisite of the partnership with Sida. The provided data do not concur with progress reports. This is an indicator that the monitoring system is also not working at the output level.

The programme design and the monitoring system needs to include mechanisms that compel the teams to stop and analyse at the different stages of the programme cycle. Questions need to be asked; what needs to be done?, who should be involved?, what has been achieved so far?, are we reaching girls in ways that promote their empowerment?, how are our intervention methods working?, how do we integrate the lessons learned from our monitoring into our ongoing and future activity plans for gender equality? Ideally this should be done together with the MoE.

The evaluators understand the enormous challenge it is to monitor a programme that is not only implemented in remote and the most deprived areas, but also in communities that cannot be reached due to the lack of security. The combination of targeting the most deprived and hard to reach areas and the security situation continue to pose great challenges to reliable monitoring. The steps UNICEF is making by hiring third party monitors to improve its monitoring capacity are urgent and highly welcomed.

The absence of a comprehensive gender equality perspective and the lack of participatory and learning oriented approaches that build long lasting capacities within MoE and among teachers, are some of the most critical findings of this evaluation. The lack of knowledge of how to promote gender equality within the basic education system and within the rights-holder groups is a challenge that the provincial and district education departments share with the UNICEF zonal offices.

The evaluators conclude that the involvement of women in the communities where UNICEF CBE is implemented is not systematic or strategic. Female teachers and principals are involved in the BEGE, but other women's input and contribution to the development of the programme was found to be very limited. No real attention has been paid to the effects of the adult literacy intervention targeting women at the inception of BEGE and lessons learned from this work have not been integrated into the programme. It seems that BEGE still has not found a strategy to secure young women's voices in the development of future strategies.

One of the critical findings concerns the way the teacher trainings are developed and managed. There is considerable room for improvement and UNICEF can be a stronger and more critical partner to the PED here, demanding more transparency in the selection of participants and suggesting more long-term approaches that enable the teachers to test, develop and self-assess their newly acquired skills together with their colleagues. Considering the high demand for further teacher training, more efforts could have been made to initiate and generate refresher sessions within the schools to expand the knowledge and maximise the coverage.

The evaluation also questions how the teacher trainings have been planned and implemented by the MoE as the Ministry deeply relies on UNICEF (and other implementing partners) to plan and undertake them. The evaluation concludes that the PED have so far showed little commitment to improve the teacher trainings and equally distribute the learning opportunities and thus have missed the opportunity to upgrade the teachers' technical skills. Furthermore, as child friendly schools and inclusive education continue to be vague concepts for most key actors, real behaviour changes among teachers and MoE staff will most probably not take place as a result of the training.

4.2 EFFICIENCY

It has been difficult to draw any clear conclusions on the efficiency of the BEGE programme given the difficulties to verify and compare data. The deficiencies in the monitoring system pose real challenges to measure if the running costs of the programme can be justified by the level of results.

The evaluation was not able to compare the programme costs with other CBE intervention. It is assessed that CBSs operated under the MoE (and funded by UNICEF) are cheaper than those managed by NGOs. The cost-efficiency comparison would however be difficult since the two types provide different levels of services, quality and monitoring. Stakeholder consultations suggested that it would be relevant to do a comparative analysis of CBSs' managed by SCA and MoE/UNICEF as both are funded by Sida.

The UN's security restrictions and arrangements are costly and limit the ability of UNICEF to closely manage the different components of the programme. Without a close follow-up there is no guarantee that activities are efficiently implemented.

4.3 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

It has not been possible to assess the impact of the intervention. The Terms of Reference asked for evidence of poverty reduction. While the BEGE programme is far from fulfilling its gender equality goal, the children that previously were out of school in remote and isolated communities and are now attending community based classes. They are definitely in a process of improving their living conditions, and thus it is extremely important that they are able to continue their education after grade three. With a more long term approach to CBE, including grades 4-6, a strategy for students to transfer to formal schools, and more developed strategies to enable older girls to complete secondary school and continue to high school, UNICEF could have a real impact on poverty levels.

Access to literacy and education must be combined with quality education that include child friendly, child centred and gender sensitive methods. The BEGE programme is increasing access to education and literacy in the targeted districts but has so far had little impact on the quality of the provided education.

UNICEF's education programme does not include active measures to reach hard to reach children. It is true that the focus on the most deprived provinces and CBE means that UNICEF is supporting the MoE to reach children that did not have access to education at all before. But the "all children" approach renders invisible older girls, children with disabilities, children from discriminated minority groups, or children who are stigmatized due to other reason. The commitment to inclusive education poses higher demands on affirmative actions and power analysis than UNICEF has demonstrated so far in its CBE and CFS approaches.

The BEGE programme focuses on access to quality basic education for all children. The overall reporting and the findings from the five provinces that the evaluation team was able to visit, show that there is actually very weak focus on older out of school children, especially girls. ALC's have not at all been included in the BEGE programme in the Northern provinces (they were not part of the proposal to Sida), and it seems that ALC is not given high priority in other provinces which draws us to conclude that older girls have been left behind to a certain degree so far. ALC need to be developed and further strengthened, based both on an equity approach and the gender equality goal. It is important to provide age differentiated groups so that the conditions for learning in a safe space increase for the students.

UNICEF's education team is dedicated and their technical capacity is highly appreciated by the MoE. However, the need for highly specialised education technical skills is great, and UNICEF has so far not equipped its education teams with the compe-

tence and capacities needed to develop strategies to support needed capacity development within the MoE.

The Ministry of Education will continue to depend on support from donors and implementing partners for a long period. UNICEF will continue to play a key role both as a provider of resources and technical skills, and as a dialogue partner in the development of education strategies. It is problematic that BEGE has not focused more on the support to build capacities within the MoE and in developing more holistic approach to teacher training. Sida had high expectations that BEGE would contribute to strengthen and institutionalise technical skills of the MoE. The evaluators conclude that BEGE has had too little focus on capacity development of the MoE and insufficient technical human resources to be able to strengthen an inclusive, gender sensitive and rights-based approach to basic education.

4.4 WAYS FORWARD

According to UNICEF staff their core strengths, relevant for managing the BEGE programme include a dedicated team, close relationship with the MoE, global systems, including financial management, their global mandate and excellent reputation throughout Afghanistan.

Building on those strengths, UNICEF needs to review their strategies of how the MoE is best supported to become an advocate for a rights and results based basic education. The close relations with the MoE and the good reputation of UNICEF constitute a strong foundation for an open and critical discussion on how to develop institutionalised capacity at the MoE. The models of technical assistance need to be assessed in relation to the actual needs of different levels of the MoE and be adapted to the rapidly shifting realities. Technical assistance needs to deal with the high staff turnover and build on mentoring and coaching approaches in a transparent and cost-efficient manner. This requires not only the provision of skilled and specialised in-house resources at the MoE, but understanding by the UNICEF staff on how to promote and contribute to long-term learning processes. To enable such a development, UNICEF staff need to build their own capacities on how to engage in reflective and learning discussions within their own teams, and with their counterparts at the MoE.

Transparency with regards to financial flows and division of labour between UNICEF, MoE, PEDs and other partners needs to be improved to allow for stronger accountability. This will not only facilitate improvement of effectiveness but will also allow for analysis of cost efficiencies and possible improvements.

The global mandate of UNICEF is important. The evaluators conclude that there are untapped potentials at the global, but also national level, that the UNICEF Education Team in Afghanistan is still to reach its full potential. There are many relevant and innovative resources within the organisation, as well as within other UN agencies, that are not used in the work of the Education Teams at provincial levels. The ap-

proach to basic education comes out as quite traditional. Available tools for gender, age, and disability inclusive approaches seem not be anchored in the methods used. The innovative approaches and resources of UNICEF globally are not promoted in the dialogue with local duty-bearers, school management and teachers in Afghanistan.

There is no quick fix to address these weaknesses and a long-term plan for developing capacities with current and future staff will be necessary. This capacity development should result in UNICEF education teams' increased competencies on how to monitor the different components of the global mandate of UNICEF. This involves a greater understanding of how to put a gender perspective, human rights-based principles, inclusive education and child centred and child friendly approaches into practice. Equally important, is having access to tools that enable the UNICEF teams to promote these practices among other actors, including public officials at the MoE. The evaluation confirms findings from earlier assessments and evaluations⁶⁷ that state that the gender perspective is weak in the implementation of UNICEF's work. This is thus not a novelty to UNICEF and does not only concern the BEGE programme. The evaluators are aware that this is a concern of the Education Department. Just providing staff members with gender trainings or conducting good gender context analyses will not be enough. The management and programme staff need support on-the-job by gender mentors or similar functions. As a short term strategy it might be useful to look for external resources that could play this role over a specific period of time.

Sida expects that its partners implement their programmes effectively for results, where outcomes are in focus and where the implementing partner reflect, evaluate and learn from its monitoring exercise. The evaluation shows that UNICEF needs to put considerable effort into strengthening its monitoring system. It is not only an issue of compliance with agreements and plans, but rather a new approach to programme management. The evaluation shows the need for UNICEF to invest more human resources and time to monitoring and evaluation, and that the programme monitoring becomes more of a collective process where management, programme and monitor officers jointly evaluate the progress of ongoing initiatives with a focus on tracking outcomes and the transformational change. The dialogue between UNICEF and Sida on future cooperation needs to include in-depth discussions on all these issues.

⁶⁷ Evaluation of Swedish Support in the Education Sector in Afghanistan – 2012, Poul Erik Rasmussen – Else Østergaard – Olve Hølaas 2013; An Outcome Assessment of Swedish Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2006- 2008, Final Report, Glen K. Swanson and Julie Thaarup, January 2009

5 Recommendations

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNICEF

1. UNICEF is strongly advised, in dialogue with the Ministry of Education and other key actors within the education sector, to revisit its strategies how to contribute to the capacity development of the Ministry at all levels.
2. UNICEF should encourage their national staff in national and provincial coordination activities together with other key actors in the education sector and continue to seek out strong national capacities. They are also encouraged to place education specialists, rather than general managers, in Kabul, in order to avoid dependencies on short-term advisors.
3. UNICEF is recommended to put specific efforts to further develop the gender perspective in their Country Programme. The Theory of Change needs to be reviewed and developed according to the Afghan context. Strategies need to be specific for the different regional realities and needs.

Given that the above recommendations are followed, the evaluation further recommends more specifically that:

4. UNICEF needs to work strategically to develop capacities at the Ministry of Education in Kabul and on provincial levels. UNICEF and the Ministry of Education are recommended to review earlier capacity development approaches and adopt more needs based strategies that are flexible to the constantly changing contexts within the Ministry and within the education sector. UNICEF needs a strategic approach that is results-based, time bound and explains how progress is to be achieved at different levels.
5. Capacity development approaches need to be transparent and inclusive. UNICEF is encourage to pay particular attention to provincial levels through a mentoring that increases the knowledge of Provincial Education Departments on standard norms and principles for the improvement of all types of schools and learning centres.
6. Future basic education programmes need a solid results framework that identifies appropriate strategies that will increase the likelihood of achieving the intended effects. The MoE should be involved in this process and it should also be based on direct consultations with school principals, teachers, master trainers and rights-holders at community level.

7. UNICEF should take into account the changing political situation, especially in the provinces which are partly occupied by Taliban affiliated groups. In these areas the demands of the populations are getting stronger as regards the importance of education for their children. The MoE has little influence over these areas, but at the same time they are actively supporting education initiatives in these areas. UNICEF is encouraged to develop a policy to actively engage in these districts. UNICEF can benefit from the ongoing discussions within other UN bodies in Afghanistan.
8. UNICEF should engage religious leaders and community influential people in monitoring girls' access to quality education. As part of upcoming NESP III and implementing the new set of indicators for the new national education strategy plan, it is recommended that a survey of quality teaching is carried out to identify how communities can directly be involved in monitoring the quality of teaching.
9. UNICEF is encouraged to revisit their gender strategies for basic education programmes. Specific actions plans could be developed for the different age groups of girls and women right-holders; for the capacity development of female teachers and the objective to increase the number of female teachers in rural and remote areas; and for women's involvement in the development and management of community based education.
10. UNICEF is recommended to engage in a comprehensive approach for the internal capacity development of gender aware approaches within UNICEF education teams. UNICEF is encouraged to develop more tailored on the job trainings and coaching strategies for its provincial staff in order to sustain and develop their knowledge on how to promote and implement gender strategies, human rights-based approach and child friendly and child centred methods.
11. The internal communication between UNICEF's headquarters in Kabul and the zonal offices should be streamlined and improved, including frequent field visits to follow up with zonal staff on quality monitoring. It is also important to strengthen the external communication, particularly the dialogue with concerned donors and other actors in the education sector on the progress of results and lessons learned.
12. UNICEF needs to take a comprehensive look at their planning and monitoring system. There is a great need to develop a strong monitoring system based on results based management that allows tracking of changes over time, and that includes practical guidelines, actions to increase the capacity at the zonal offices, and tools for monitoring of results at output, outcome and impact levels. For a limited period of time it will be necessary to use additional and external resources to enhance the monitoring and evaluation capacity within the UNICEF teams.

13. UNICEF needs to harmonize its monitoring system between different levels within the organisation and better communicate roles and responsibilities for the different steps in the monitoring of the programme cycle. Key functions in Kabul need to give more direct feedback to the reporting from zonal offices and reports to donors need to be shared with all concerned staff.
14. UNICEF and the Ministry of Education should engage in an updated strategy for monitoring of their joint activities, clarifying the division of roles and responsibilities.
15. UNICEF is encouraged, together with the Ministry of Education, to give high priority to address the current gaps of a basic database at Provincial Education Department level to enable monitoring of active community based schools and accelerated learning centres.
16. An in-service teachers training programme for CBE teachers should be developed. UNICEF has good experiences with these programmes worldwide which can be applied in Afghanistan. Such a programme should include forms of cascade training whereby trained teachers are training their untrained colleagues.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO SIDA

1. Sida is recommended to engage in dialogue with UNICEF regarding realistic expectations on how the untapped potentials of UNICEF Afghanistan can be realised.
2. The Afghanistan Unit at Sida is recommended to review its support to UNICEF Afghanistan in dialogue with UNICEF at global level and with other units at Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.
3. Sida is recommended to analyse how Sweden best can support strategic and long term capacity development of the Ministry of Education. UNICEF can be one of the key actors in this support, but it is important to assess the strengths and weaknesses of UNICEF in this role and identify the specific areas of intervention that UNICEF should be engaged in. This assessment should be done in close dialogue with the Ministry of Education, other donors, UN bodies and other key actors involved in the education sector.
4. In the case of future support to UNICEF Afghanistan:
 - a. Sida is recommended to engage in a discussion with UNICEF about the overall working mode of the UNICEF in the education sector in Afghanistan.
 - b. Sida is not recommended to continue with the project support modality, but fund programme or thematic support that is in coherence with current

country strategies/programmes of UNICEF, but that also has explicit conditions on outcome reporting.

- c. Sida should require that UNICEF first deliver comprehensive strategy plans for their gender equality work and human rights-based approach, including inclusive education. It will be necessary to assess the implementation strategies, discuss and agree on strategic priorities and how these will be monitored and reported.
- d. Sida should encourage UNICEF to provide information regarding financial flows and more detailed cost breakdowns to gain a better understanding of how funds are utilised. Financial systems should be in place to allow donors transparent information.

Annex 1– Terms of Reference

Terms of reference/Requirements for review of the UNICEF programme Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan 2013 - 2015

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Information about Sida

Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, is a government authority. Our goal is to contribute to enabling poor people to improve their living conditions. As other Swedish government agencies, Sida works independently within the framework established by the Swedish Government and Parliament. The Government and the Parliament decide on the financial limits, the countries with which Sweden (and thus, Sida) will cooperate, the focus and content of that cooperation. For additional information, please visit Sida's website, www.sida.se

1.2 Information about Sida's Unit for Afghanistan

Sida's Unit for Afghanistan is placed at Sida Headquarters in Stockholm. In addition Sida has 5 sent out staff at the Embassy in Kabul. Sida's unit for Afghanistan is responsible for implementing the Swedish result strategy for international development cooperation with Afghanistan (2014-2019). The strategy comprises a total of SEK 4.87 billion covering the whole period.

1.3 Partner country

Afghanistan is the partner country for this ToR. The current Swedish result strategy for international development cooperation with Afghanistan (2014-2019) specifies that Sweden's support to Afghanistan is focused on the Five Es for Afghan Development: Empowerment, Education, Employment, Enterprise (private sector development and rural development), and Economic Integration. Cooperation within education should focus on i) more girls and boys have access to improved schooling up to and including upper secondary education and ii) more girls and boys have the opportunity to complete their schooling. The target group is mainly people living in poverty in rural areas, with particular focus on women and children. In contrast to previous strategies, which had a certain focus on the Northern provinces, the new strategy states that activities should be carried out on the basis where aid can provide greatest benefit and contribute to lasting results, without a particular geographical focus.

Education is one of the priority areas in the Swedish result strategy for international development cooperation with Afghanistan. According to the overall goals expressed above, improved education is needed in order to fight poverty, promote economic

development and to build and sustain democracy. Sweden is also adhering to the principle of rights-based education, entailing that education is a basic human right, and that no one should be denied access to quality education regardless of gender, age, socio-economic background, ethnicity or disability status, etc.

1.4 Cooperation partner UNICEF Afghanistan

1.5 Intervention/Project description

Sida's current support to the UNICEF programme Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan 2013 – 2015, BEGE focuses on (1) the distribution of teaching- and learning materials (TLM)⁶⁸ to all children in formal schools in grades 1-3 in all 14 provinces, (2) the development of CBS for primary-aged children, (3) offering education possibilities for teenagers through accelerated learning centres (ACL), (4) the development of pedagogy and competence among teachers based on the needs and the rights of children, and (5) to carry out a literacy programme for women in the ages of 15-45 years.

According to UNICEF's country programme action plan, increased access to quality education will be achieved through improved access to primary education for boys and girls in deprived areas and improved capacity of MoE to manage CBE, ensuring higher transition rates to grade 4 for boys and girls. UNICEF is still the largest implementer of CBE in Afghanistan and while UNICEF's current country programme is focused on the most-deprived provinces and areas, mostly in the South, South East and Western regions – the programme will also continue to support nationwide access to high-priority interventions such as basic education

During the assessment of Sida's current support to BEGE, it was agreed that an external review of the entire project should be carried out during the second year of the agreement period. The review will review to what extent the programme activities have (1) contributed to sustainability, (2) built capacity among government staff, especially at the district and provincial level, (3) worked towards improved gender equality, (4) applied a rights perspective, with a focus on child rights, and (5) have been conflict sensitive.

1.6 Current situation in the relevant sector

⁶⁸ For example writing books, pencils, backpacks, teacher's guide etc.

The Afghan constitution guarantees free primary and secondary education for all Afghans. Under the former administration (2003-2014), an Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) was constructed and it constituted several pillars referred to as National Priority Programs (NPP) designed to implement ANDS. One of the pillars, Education for All, focused on improving access to quality education for all school-aged Afghan children. It is also expected that one of the new NPPs (still in process) will concentrate on education. Afghanistan adheres to the principle of rights-based education and in the right to education as defined in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is also a central goal within the ANDS.

The strategic direction within the education sector has since 2006 been guided by five year National Education Strategic Plans (NESP). Together with the new administration, the Ministry of Education is currently finalizing NESP III, covering the years 2015-2020. The draft NESP III states that the vision of the Ministry of Education is to provide equitable access to quality of education to enable all Afghans to actively participate in sustainable development, economic growth, and the stability and security of Afghanistan.

The government's ability to fulfil the promises made in these guiding documents has improved remarkably in the last decade. During the Taliban years (1996–2001) only around one million children (almost exclusively boys) attended primary schools in Afghanistan. Education was controlled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) barely functioned. In 2015, MoE reports that 8.3 million students (39% girls) currently attend school and that the number of government owned schools have increased from 3 400 in 2002 to more than 16 000 in 2014. However, many challenges remain. Still, only 50% of the schools have adequate buildings and lack of security, attacks on schools and the shortage of qualified teachers are major obstacles that have detrimental effects on both access and the quality of that education. A pilot learning assessment carried out among Class 6 students in 13 provinces in late 2013 indicates that while there is a small number of Class 6 students that operate at higher levels of proficiency in each of the domains of mathematical, reading and writing literacy, substantial proportions of the population are not able to perform the most basic tasks in these area. For example, 45% of Class 6 students are unable to demonstrate writing literacy beyond producing a recognisable word to label an everyday object.

In addition to the government owned schools, the education sector in Afghanistan

also includes community based education (CBE), which has proven a good method to reach children in the most remote and insecure areas. According to MoE, CBE is implemented by eleven (11) different international actors and in 2014 approximately 200 000 students (60% girls) were enrolled in Community Based Schools (CBS).⁶⁹ MoE has produced a set of guidelines with regards to the establishment of CBS, which, among other things, stipulates that CBS are to be established at least three (3) kilometres from a formal school and that clusters of six (6) CBS should be connected to a formal school that act as a ‘hub-school’. As most CBS only provide education until grade 3, the role of the hub-schools becomes important as it will ensure possibilities for future studies for students enrolled in CBS. The implementers of CBE are therefore expected to work closely with district and provincial education planning departments. The quality of education in CBS is generally conceived to be better than in formal schools,⁷⁰ partly due to higher costs per students and the fact that a non-governmental provider may be selective with regards to the number of students they receive.

1.7 Related programmes/projects and other development cooperation activities

The Afghanistan unit at Sida is in addition to the support to UNICEF BEGE supporting the education sector in Afghanistan through the following organisations: UNESCO, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and ARTF.

2 SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENT

2.1 General information

As a part of Sida’s assessment of UNICEF’s Basic Education and Gender (BEGE) project in 2013, it has been decided that a project review of the BEGE project shall be undertaken. The review is primarily expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations for Sida to use in Sida’s assessment of BEGE. The review shall take place before assessing a new project proposal and taking a decision on entering into a possible new agreement. Conclusions and recommendations of use for UNICEF shall be provided based on the review questions.

Recommendations given on the basis of findings in this review should focus on key ways and opportunities of achieving maximum outcomes given comparative ad-

⁶⁹ This includes Accelerated Learning Programmes for teenage students, mostly girls, who have not previously had the chance to attend school

⁷⁰ While CBS were not included in the learning assessment carried out, it has been agreed that they will be included in future assessments in order to get a clearer picture with regards to the quality in the different schools. The next round of learning assessments will be done for grade 3 students.

vantages and potential of the project. Clear references to related underpinnings, observations, and applicable global, regional and local best practice should be given for each recommendation.

The review is commissioned by Sida's Unit for Afghanistan and the terms of reference has been generated in consultation with the Swedish Embassy in Kabul. The ToR has also been shared with UNICEF in Kabul. Sida's unit for Afghanistan is responsible for the implementation of the Swedish result strategy for international development cooperation with Afghanistan (2014 – 2019).

2.2 Scope of work

Purpose: The overall purpose of the review is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (including cost efficiency) and sustainability of the BEGE program. This includes assessing UNICEF's ability to reach quality results over time, to coordinate with the government and other actors in the field, including donors and to some degree also UNICEF's upstream support to national policy in the education sector.

The purpose is to get a deeper understanding of UNICEF's ability to provide quality education through its Community Based Schools and Accelerated Learning Classes, to ensure continued education for its students in formal schools, to hand-over schools to government, to efficiently distribute teaching and learning material, to efficiently implement the child-friendly school packages, and to build the capacity of government actors and the national, provincial, and district levels in order to contribute to sustainable Afghan ownership within the sector. The purpose is also to get an understanding of how and to what extent the BEGE program applies a human rights-based approach and how effectively it contributes to improved gender equality.

The review will have a critical and learning approach. The intended direct users of the review are Sida's Unit for Afghanistan and UNICEF Afghanistan. Other stakeholders selected are the Swedish Embassy in Kabul.

For above mentioned purposes, the assessment will (i) document experience of UNICEF's programme activities in Afghanistan; (ii) discuss and define to what extent programme activities have contributed to sustainability, have built capacity among governmental institutions and have applied a rights perspective (iii) discuss and define how and to what extent programme activities have contributed to greater gender equality (v) discuss and define to what extent UNICEF has coordinated with government and other actors in the field (vi) summarize lessons learned and provide additional recommendations for programme design and management going forward.

Stakeholders: An elaborative work plan shall be developed by the evaluating team including necessary interaction with relevant stakeholders.

The evaluators should, during the course of their work, carry out a sufficient number of interviews and interaction with relevant stakeholders such as Sida- and Swedish Embassy-officers and thematic experts, UNICEF staff and management functions,

representatives of national authorities such as ministries, representatives of local authorities at district and provincial level, representatives of local communities as well as a representative sample of beneficiaries randomly selected.

Interviews shall be conducted with men, women, girls and boys. The evaluating team will strive to create equal opportunities for men, women and children to participate in interviews. Conflict sensitivity must be taken into consideration in the planning.

The review will consist of the following:

1. A desk study - as a first step to compile and *critically* analyse the findings and recommendations from already existing evaluations (both external and internal), reviews, programme documents, strategic plans and reports from 2013 and onwards, including result matrixes.
2. An inception report - based on the desk study and these terms of reference, outlining the task and an initial assessment of relevant issues.
3. Field visits - as a complement to the desk study including interviews with relevant stakeholders. These interviews should include UNICEF staff in Kabul and in provinces, representatives of national and provincial education authorities, implementing NGO-partners, local communities, direct beneficiaries, Sida staff, Swedish Embassy staff, and other UNICEF donors in Afghanistan. After the field visit a meeting will be held with Sida to present preliminary results.
4. Findings and results from the desk study and the field visits should be synthesized in a final report focusing on the assessment of effectiveness and sustainability of the implementation of objectives and priorities of the project and on the assessment of possible changes to be made in order to improve the effective and sustainable implementation of the BEGE project. Recommendations to Sida and to UNICEF should be included in the report.
5. A seminar should be held at Sida or at the Swedish Embassy in Kabul, outlining the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the review to all stakeholders interested.

The main review questions should be the following:

1. What is the overall relevance of the project in the Afghan context? To what extent is the project aligned with the priorities of the government of Afghanistan as defined in the NPP Education for All, the NESP II, the draft of NESP III and 2015 NPP on education (if available)? Is the project aligned with the Swedish result strategy for Afghanistan? Is it relevant in relation to the other contributions Sweden is supporting in the education sector?
2. What is UNICEF's theory of change and to what extent has it contributed to sustainable improvements within the education sector? Is the theory of change maintainable and relevant with regards to the context?
3. To what extent has the project been able to deliver on its results in an effective and efficient (including cost efficient) manner? This includes also internal efficiency within the UNICEF with different departments responsible for differ-

ent components of the project.

4. To what extent have project activities during the agreement period contributed to sustainability, including built capacity among governmental institutions at district, provincial and national level? If information is available, it would be useful to compare with reported results from the previous agreement period 2010-2013.
5. To what extent have project activities during the agreement period contributed towards improved gender equality?
6. Does UNICEF-BEGE implement the rights perspective based on the four principles *participation, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability*, if so – in what ways?
7. To what extent are the project activities coordinated with government activities and priorities and other (CBE) actors (including Swedish supported programmes) in Afghanistan and how does this impact the transition rate of students to grade 4?
8. To what extent has the project contributed to poverty⁷¹ reduction?
9. Has the support's change toward project orientation contributed to the effectiveness of the Swedish support?
10. Has Sweden being the only donor affected the efficiency of the project?
11. How has the communication to the donor worked and has it had any impact on the project.

Throughout the review and in the report, special attention shall be given to how gender and conflict sensitivity has been integrated in planning, implementation and reporting. Unintended effects, such as targeting errors, should also be identified.

2.3 Budget

The budget for the review is maximum **SEK 1 000 000**. Upon signing of the contract with the consultant, time and budget for the review will be approved by Sida.

2.4 Schedule

The review will be undertaken during maximum seven weeks from 2016-03-15 – 2016-05-13. Maximum three weeks of the review period should be spent in Afghanistan for interviews and field visits.

The inception report should be presented to Sida and UNICEF no later than 7-10 days

⁷¹ Sida's definition of poverty as lack of power, choices and resources should be used as point of departure. For further reference the Sida-document "Perspectives on Poverty" should be used.
<http://sidapublications.citat.se/interface/stream/mabstream.asp?filetype=1&orderlistmainid=2588&printfileid=2588&filex=3499262952264>

after the review is initiated. Sida and UNICEF will have the opportunity to comment on the inception report within one week. The inception report must include a detailed work plan and time schedule agreed upon by Sida and UNICEF.

The draft report shall be submitted to Sida and UNICEF electronically no later than two weeks before deadline. Sida, the Swedish Embassy and UNICEF will comment the draft report within seven working days, after which the consultant shall prepare the *final report* within seven working days.

2.5 Profile of the Supplier and requirements for personnel

The review team shall be constructed to have a solid set of qualifications of monitoring and evaluation, gender, education, children's rights, democratic governance, human rights as well as a good understanding of the Afghan context and development in conflict and post conflict environments.

The Consultant shall use a participatory approach and have a gender balanced team. In order to carry out separate interviews with women, at least one of the female team members must be Afghan and/or fluent in Dari or Pashtu. The consultant team shall have exhibited skills in interviewing and analysing qualitative data gathered through interviews. Capability of conflict sensitivity is a must.

Required competences of the team members are:

- I. Academic degrees in Education, Development Studies, Social science and/or Political science
- II. Vast experience in working and/or evaluating within the sector of human rights, gender equality, children's rights, education, democratic governance, preferably in conflict and post-conflict countries.
- III. Minimum 5 years of experience of evaluation of international development work, particularly in education
- IV. All team members must be fully professionally proficient in English
- V. Good understanding of the Afghan context
- VI. At least one of the female team members must be a local consultant and/ or fluent in Dari or Pashtu.

The Team Leader shall have thorough experience of Swedish Development Cooperation including education and gender, and documented experience of conducting studies, reviews and evaluations. The proposal must include:

- a) A description in the form of Curriculum Vitae for the personnel who is/are to participate in the performance of the project. The CV must contain a full description of the person's or persons' theoretical qualifications and professional work experience.
- b) The working methods employed in order to complete the assignment and secure the quality of the completed work; use a participatory approach and a gender based team, including local consultants;
- c) State the total cost of the assignment, specified as fee per hour for each category of personnel, any reimbursable costs, any other costs and any discounts (all types of costs in SEK and exclusive of VAT);

- d) A proposal for time and working schedules according to the assignment, including suggestions and criteria for selecting projects sites to be examined.

2.6 Reporting and documentation

The appropriate methodology and methods to be used in the execution of the review will be worked out in detail during the inception phase of the review by the review team and documented in an inception report which has to be approved by Sida. The inception report shall include:

- A model for analysis of UNICEF's theory of change
- Further elaboration of questions and an overall design of the review showing how will be answered,
- An account of baseline data identified,
- A basic analysis of stakeholders, influencing and/or affected by the UNICEF BEGE project directly or indirectly,
- An account of how stakeholders will participate in the review (who, how, when, why),
- Possible key issues to be further looked into in the review,
- Possible delimitations to be agreed upon with Sida and UNICEF,
- A detailed work plan including a time schedule agreed upon by Sida
- A budget.

The review team shall present an inception report to Sida for discussion no later than 7-10 days after the review process is initiated. Sida, the Swedish Embassy and UNICEF will have the opportunity to comment on the inception report and these comments shall be taken into account by the consultant. Comments are to be sent to the evaluating team no more than one week after the inception report is received. The inception report will serve as a guiding document for the rest of the review.

A draft report should be delivered to Sida and UNICEF three weeks before deadline for the final report. Stakeholder feedback should be collected during the succeeding ten days. By the time a final report is submitted, one day of work from the lead consultant should remain, to be used for any necessary post deadline revisions or for a half day review-based workshop held for relevant stakeholders.

The report must include a presentation of the process in drawing up the review design and choosing methodology. It shall also list all contributors to the review (excepting those that have opted for anonymity).

An over-all de-briefing of findings to date is expected to be delivered at the Swedish embassy at the end of the in-field part of the review. Related inputs from Sida and Embassy staff, as well as UNICEF representatives participating in this review, should be collected.

During the field visit the consultant has to give relevant feedback to and discuss the

initial observations/findings with UNICEF Afghanistan. Before leaving Afghanistan the consultants shall carry out a debriefing with UNICEF's office in Kabul and the Swedish embassy. A presentation with preliminary findings at Sida HQ on return to Sweden is also expected.

The final report must be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. When the final report has been submitted the consultants will present the report at a seminar at Sida for all stakeholders interested. The final report can also be presented at a seminar at the Swedish Embassy in Kabul.

The review report shall be written in English with the executive summary and recommendations translated into Dari and Pashtu. The format and outline of the report shall therefore follow, as closely as is feasible, the guidelines in Sida Evaluation Manual – a Standardised Format. Subject to decision by Sida, the report might be published in the series *Sida Evaluation*.

The review reports should adhere to the OECD/DAC Glossary on Evaluation and Results-Based Management, and the format should correspond to the benchmark structure presented in Sida's Evaluation Manual Annex B. The final report should at the latest be presented on –day- of –month- and not exceed 50 pages excluding annexes.

3 CONDITIONS AND RISKS

3.1 Conditions for the performance of the assignment
Sida's Standard Conditions for Short and Long Term Consulting Studies 2002 shall apply

3.2 Risks

Result	Risk	Impact <i>Low/Medium/High</i>	Probability <i>Low/Medium/High</i>
Carrying out the review	Escalation of conflict hindering the review to materialize	Medium	Medium
	Lack of conflict sensitivity will affect the work and risk third party security	High	Low

4 CONTRACT OBJECTIVES

The objective is to carry out a project review of the UNICEF programme Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan 2013 - 2015. The review is primarily expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations for Sida to use in Sida's assessment of BEGE. The review shall take place before assessing a new project proposal and taking a decision on entering into a possible new agreement.

Annex 2 – Inception report

See separate document.

Annex 3 – Documents Reviewed

To be completed with final report

UNICEF Afghanistan

- UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme Action Plan 2015-2019, November 18, 2014
- UNICEF SITAN & Proposed 2015-2019 Country Programme
- Sectoral findings of SUTAN 2013, (power point presentation), December 2015
- Using innovation in products, processes and programmes,
- UNICEF Draft 2015-2019 CPD Results Matrix UNICEF Afghanistan
- Enhanced Programming for Equity Afghanistan Experience, Monitoring Results for Equity System, By Bhanu Pathak, 15/12/13, UNICEF

BEGE proposal, reports and other project documents

- Agreement between Sweden and UNICEF on Thematic support to UNICEF'S BASIC EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMME in Afghanistan 2010-2013, 2010-12-07, Sida ref: 5205k0027
- Agreement between Sweden and UNICEF on project support to BASIC EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY IN AFGHANISTAN. December 2013 - December 2015
- Funding Proposal to The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan, UNICEF Afghanistan, November 2013
- Afghanistan Thematic Education Report, Reporting Period: January – December 2011, June 2012 (revised draft for review by Sida), UNICEF, Sida ref: 13I001062
- Afghanistan The Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic Report, (January – December 2012), UNICEF Afghanistan March 2013
- Risk control Library for Sida proposal, UNICEF Afghanistan, RCSA August 2013
- Statement of Accounts as of 31 December 2013, Thematic Fund The Basic Education and Gender Equality, Unicef
- Supplies Requirement for Sida Proposal, Requirement of Teaching and Learning Materials for 2014
- Requirement of Teaching and Learning Materials for 2014 Community Based School (CBSs)
- Distribution plan formal school 2014
- Afghanistan The Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic Report, (January – December 2013), UNICEF Afghanistan March 2014
- UNICEF AFGHANISTAN, AUDIT 2013, AGREED ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REPORT, REPORT OF FEBRUARY 2014

- Progress Report, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Grant: SC130762, Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan, UNICEF Afghanistan, November 2014
- Second Progress Report, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Grant: SC130762, Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan, UNICEF Afghanistan, November 2015
- Second Progress Report, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Grant: SC130762, Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan, UNICEF Afghanistan, March 2016

Programme concept notes, specific data, UNICEF templates, and similar

- Statistics Data Sida, Excel sheet, no date, provided to the evaluation team, 20.02.2016
- Data from Sida, Excel sheet, no date, provided to the evaluation team, 08.03.2016
- Data on CBE Schools Sida March, Excel sheet, no date, provided to the evaluation team 2016
- CBS and HUB-schools Data in 4 provinces of NR, Excel sheet, December 2015
- WASH and Rehab in Hub-Schools 4 provinces of North Region, 2015, Excel sheet, Up-dated 16 March 2016
- Community Based Education (General Briefing Note), no date
- Annex 1. List of Model Schools (CFS), no date
- Female Literacy Programme List of Teaching and Learning Materials, no date
- Guiding Principles for Partnerships with CSOs, UNICEF Afghanistan, SOP 2013-04
- Simplified Financial Management Assessment Checklist, UNICEF Afghanistan, SOP 2013-04
- Assessment of Capacity and Integrity of a New Partner, UNICEF Afghanistan, SOP 2013-04
- Mobile-based service for monitoring UNICEF activities in education, Summary concept note, 5 September 2013
- Job Description of Field Monitor(s) for CBE program
- Job Description of Provincial Coordination Officer for CBE Program

BEGE evaluations

- Evaluation of MoE/UNICEF's "Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme" for 2006-2008 Afghanistan, Sida and the Norwegian Embassy in Kabul, Anders Wirak, Janne Lexow, Nordic Consulting Group, NCG, Kabul and Oslo 4 October 2008
- Forward-looking Strategic Evaluation of the UNICEF-funded Female Literacy Project (2010-2013) in 34 provinces of Afghanistan, Anne Bernard in collaboration with Soft Power Solutions, 2014
- Mid Term Review of UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2010-2013, Final Draft March 2012, UNICEF
- Let us Learn, Formative Evaluation, UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office, Final report, January 2015

Other evaluations and studies

- Evaluation of Swedish Support in the Education Sector in Afghanistan – 2012, Evaluation Report, Poul Erik Rasmussen – Else Østergaard – Olve Hølaas Pouras Consult Aps. Copenhagen 20.01. 2013, including annexes
- Children and Women in Afghanistan, A Situation Analysis, UNICEF 2013
- Teaching & Learning in Cluster Model, A Qualitative analysis of Effective Community Base Education in Afghanistan, Basic Education for Afghanistan Consortium, BEACON, January 2015
- Early Grade Reading (EGRA) & Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), Baseline & End-line Report, Afghanistan, Basic Education for Afghanistan Consortium, BEACON, December 2013
- Education Sector Analysis, Afghanistan, Pouras Consult Aps., Draft, January 2016
- Enhancing Access to Education, Challenges and Opportunities in Afghanistan, Barnett Rubin and Clancy Rudeforth, Center on Cooperation International, April 2016
- Capacity Development Literature Review, Final Report, Ian Christoplos, Kristoffer Engstrand, Anna Liljelund Hedqvist, Indevelop AB, 23 April, 2016
- Education Joint Annual Review 2015, General Education Review Report, (Pre-school, Basic and Secondary Education), Final draft, March 2016, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ,Ministry of Education ,Planning and Evaluation Department , Research and Evaluation Unit
- Education Joint Sector Review Report, 2015, Education Curriculum Development, Final Draft, March 2016, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ,Ministry of Education ,Planning and Evaluation Department ,Research and Evaluation Unit,
- Education Joint Sector Review Report, Teacher Education program, Final Draft, March 2016, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ,Ministry of Education,,Planning and Evaluation Department ,Research and Evaluation Unit
- Education Joint Sector Review Report, 2015, Technical, Vocational Education and Training ,Final Draft, March 2016, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ,Ministry of Education ,Planning and Evaluation Department ,Research and Evaluation Unit
- Education Joint Sector Review Report, 2015, Islamic Education Review Report, Final Draft, March 2016, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ,Ministry of Education , Planning and Evaluation Department ,Research and Evaluation Unit
- Education Joint Sector Review Report, 2015, Literacy and Adult Education Review Report, Final Draft, March 2016, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ,Ministry of Education ,Planning and Evaluation Department ,Research and Evaluation Unit
- An Outcome Assessment of Swedish Development Cooperation with Afghanistan 2006- 2008, Final Report, Glen K. Swanson and Julie Thaarup, January 2009

Sida documents, including assessments memos

- Feedback on program proposal UNICEF BEGE – GENDER, Marianne von Malmberg, Programme Manager, Gender, Afghanistan Unit, 2013-10-22
- Sida Helpdesk on Human Security, Conflict Sensitivity Assessment of UNICEF

Funding Proposal-Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan, 24 October 2013, Sida-helpdesk@lists.brad.ac.uk, (Bradford University, Saferworld and Sthlm Policy Group)

- Handover note, Education Sector Afghanistan, handover from Embassy of Sweden in Kabul, Unit for Afghanistan, Sida, 2014-05-12
- UNICEF Basic Education 2013-15, Basis for Decision on Appraisal, 2013-11-04
- UNICEF Basic Education 2013-15, Decision on Appraisal, 2013-11-05 (in Swedish)
- UNICEF Basic Education 2013-15, Ouality Control of Draft Agreement and Draft Decision, Conflict & Post- conflict Coop / CT Afghanistan, Sida, 2013-11-13
- UNICEF Basic Education 2013-2015, Afghanistan, Protokoll, Sida, 2013-11-15 (in Swedish, meeting memo) (called Bilaga 3)
- Relevance Assessment, Appraisal of intervention, final, Sida, 2013-11-27
- Kommentar till KONQA's rekommendation vg beredning av nytt stöd till UNICEF-BEGE I Afghanistan, Konqa, protokoll 2013-11-15, Tjänsteanteckningar (in Swedish, notes) (called Bilaga 4)
- UNICEF Basic Education 2013-15, Decision on Contribution, Sida, 2013-11-29
- Minutes of the Review Meeting for the UNICEF BEGE Project supported by Sida that took place at Swedish Embassy on 8th September 2014

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

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Government of Afghanistan

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Annex 4 – Persons Consulted

UNICEF

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UN AGENCIES

25. Danilo Padilla, Chief of Education, Unesco
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OTHER MINISTRIES AND GOVERNMENTAL OFFICES

51. Robert Peszkowski, Deputy Director for Afghanistan, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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SIDA, SWEDISH EMBASSY and MINISTRY of FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SWEDEN

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54. Inger Johansson, First Secretary, Education and Children's Rights, Embassy of Sweden
55. [name protected], Sida/Embassy of Sweden
56. [name protected] former Programme Officer for UNICEF in Kabul
57. Birgitta Jansson, Sida, former Afghanistan Unit,
58. Lotta Westerberg, former Sida, former programme officer

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59. John Collins Project Management Specialist, Office of Education, USAID
60. [name protected], Office of Education, USAID
61. [name protected], Office of Education, USAID
62. [name protected], Education Department, Embassy

of Canada

63. [name protected], National Education Quality Improvement Program

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

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SCHOOL CHILDREN IN BALKH, JAWZAN, SAMANGAN, KANDAHAR AND BAMYAN

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COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL STAKHOLDERS IN BALKH

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COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL STAKHOLDERS IN SAMANGAN

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COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL STAKHOLDERS IN BAMYAN

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COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL STAKHOLDERS IN KANDAHAR

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Annex 5 – BEGE Theory of Change

IMPACT: Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged

OUTCOME 4: 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 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 2: National and subnational education authorities (MoE) have management and financial capacity to progressively manage Community Based Education and ensure higher transition rate from grade 3 to grade 4 for girls and boys (including EiE).

OUTPUT 3: GPE in Afghanistan leveraged for resources and results to meet national education objectives.

OUTPUT 4: Strengthened national and subnational capacity to implement Child Friendly Schools (CFS) especially in targeted schools in deprived provinces and other areas.

OUTPUT 5: National capacity strengthened to develop and operationalize a system for monitoring of learning achievements and setting of national standards in core subjects for primary grades.

OUTPUT 6: Girls' education and Community Based Early Childhood Care and Education developed and demonstrated in selected communities in deprived provinces and other focus areas.

Assumptions & Risks

Humanitarian crises do not overwhelm capacity; Political support for addressing inequity remains strong; Evidence-based approaches plus technical solutions make a difference in children's lives; Consensus on the importance of partnerships continues; Progress in other areas

Assumptions & Risks

Availability of resources for education continues to increase; Capacity of Government structures, at all levels increases in order to sustain access gains; Emphasis is placed on quality and learning outcomes; Availability of quality data and evidence continues to increase; Funding gaps do not widen; Reprioritization of limited resources to support early childhood education

Assumptions & Risks

Capacity for delivery and coordination of community based activities from Government, at all levels, continues and increases; Security situation remains stable and access to remote areas increases; Effective monitoring and data gathering is in place to inform planning and implementation; Supply and cash inputs reach on time beneficiaries; Quality of teaching is progressively increased; Community mobilization is effectively carried out and communities accept and collaborate in activities; Teachers selected are adequately trained and committed; Other development partners continue to support education

Partnerships

- Establish key partnerships with national and international non-governmental organisations in order to deliver better results for children;
- Play an active role in cluster and sector coordination mechanisms on community based education and Child Friendly and Inclusive Education cluster meetings;

Identification and promotion of innovation

- Expand the innovative approaches of monitoring education outputs through mobile technology to all 10 focus provinces.

Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages

- Scale up cross-sectoral work on early childhood development, girls' education, children with disabilities and WASH in schools

Service delivery

- Provide learning opportunities to children of grade 1-3 primary age by establishing Community Based Schools
- Provide teaching and learning materials to 20,000 children per year that are enrolled in CBS.
- Work with children, parents and communities to create awareness of the importance of education, especially girls



Review of the UNICEF programme Basic Education and Gender Equality in Afghanistan 2013-2015

The summative and formative evaluation of the UNICEF *Afghanistan Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme* undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MoE) finds that it is relatively relevant to the national education strategy. UNICEF has untapped potential in promoting a more creative, innovative and rights-based support to basic education in the country. While the programme is contributing to increased access to education it shows little progress in contributing to quality education and to gender equality. The practice of human rights-based approach is found to be weak, and the support to child friendly teaching methods has so far been based on sporadic and non-comprehensive capacity development initiatives. UNICEF needs to review their strategies of how to best support the capacities at the MoE to manage, develop and monitor the basic education provided to girls and boys in Afghanistan.