

## Technical Working Group 1: Universal Primary Education (MDG #2)

Chair: Deputy Minister of Education:

Chair: Great enthusiasm of the people of Afghanistan for education, so the Ministry is trying to allow UPE by 2015. The Afghan interest in education is new and poses a challenge to the Ministry. Education underpins the other aspects of development and progress. Ministry is trying to make education relevant to the needs and requirements of the population. Need to develop textbooks and materials, train teachers. The capacity of MoEdu has been eroded by 30 yrs of war. What are the needs? Takes time to meet the needs of growing student body. The MoEdu has a policy to increase cost-effectiveness. More technical and vocational training is needed for the lost generation to be able to work. This year we have approx 6 million students, in 9,000 schools. Of which 5,000 have no infrastructure and classes take place in the open air or in tents. Shows extraordinary commitment of the people and the Govt. We have 130,000 teachers. 40,000 graduated from lower classes. Big challenge to train and develop them. By 2015, there will be no children outside school.

Adib Farhadi: Why are we here? We sent you a package of information about MDGs inside. The MDGs are a ten year process and will set overarching goals which inform the ANDS. ANDS has been initiated and a draft will be ready Nov 2005. In the MDG process, I would like to say that every country that wants UN and donor support should be following the MDGs and adopting the targets as their own. There are 8 Goals. We have added a ninth goal on security and de-mining. Very important for Afghanistan. What is the objective for today? The outcome will go to the Office of the President for his approval. We need to agree on the statistical data, set targets for 2010 and 2015.

Dr Sinha: We expect intensive participation from the TWG. This process is slightly different for Afghanistan as the country has emerged from conflict. Are the goals and targets relevant or valid for Afghanistan? Need to monitor progress up to 2015. Supposed to start from 1990, but we don't have 25 years to achieve these goals. The Target is UPE and there are 3 indicators allied to this: Enrolment rate, proportion completing 5 yrs of education and literacy rate.

Dr Pinney: Afghanistan has the biggest primary age population in the world. Older kids now going through primary school as they missed out during the war. Girls enrolment is growing slower than boys. Can't accurately measure the number of 7-12 yr olds in school. What data do we have: MICS and NRVA. Population increase of 8% of 7-12 year olds and pre-2001 enrolment rates were not keeping up with this. Recommend 54% as the best estimate. Enormous regional disparity. Regional patterns increase into secondary schools.

Chair: Primary education involves Grades 1-9 = primary education on the basis of the constitution. Have to revise the data and targets.

CSO: We have struggled with the figures on primary education. Please forward these figures to CSO on time.

Chair: How can the Ministry of Education reach this goal? There are large numbers of children who want to go to school but their nearest school is a long way away. Access is critical for this. Used to have a system of rural schools. But do we have the capacity to address this. How to explain the dip in the school age population in 2000-2002? In 1970s had mobile schools for the Kuchis. Many refugees still to return from Iran and Pakistan. Yes, many students don't have access to schools. Will work closely with MRRD to address this.

Dr Pinney: It is not possible to estimate the net enrolment by age. MICS overestimated the urban population.

Ministry of Justice: Data collection has been very important in our country. Basing on estimates? We should work on the basis of accurate data collection and then we can more honestly measure progress. It is important that we improve our data collection. As the CSO said that they do not have the figure from MoEdu. This is a symptom of poor cooperation. Does the Ministry have the capacity to predict the enrolment rates?

Ministry of Finance: Over the past 3 years, we have received a variety of different estimates - 5 million, 6 million. What is the Ministry working towards - quality or quantity? We have seen a decrease in quality over the past 3 years. Teachers for grade 12 have not completed that grade themselves.

Deputy Minister for Education: I share the opinion of the Deputy Minister for Justice. Every ministry should have a data collection in collaboration with CSO. Should be an electronic system. The refugee population is the reason for the decrease in the population figures. Your view of quality vs quantity is a good point. Teachers were separated from education system. Capacity has been degraded. But what are our choices? When people bring their children to school - we have to accept them. In previous times, the police had to forcibly enroll people. Not the case anymore. Takes time to train teachers.

I will say yes - we can meet the UPE goal. We have made a promise in Tehran. Now we have made this promise, we must keep it. Afghanistan deserves this. We must mobilise resources. Should be a common investment, not just MoEdu as education underpins other sectors. We are trying to decentralise the education system, and make it more accessible. Ask the parents for assistance. This is a policy which brings the people close to education.

USAID: With respect to the question of quality vs quantity. USAID has been training teachers and upgrading the education system.

Ministry of Higher Education representative: Our target. According to the constitution, secondary education is also compulsory. I would like MoEdu to pave the way for children to have access to schools. I propose a special kind of school. Rehabilitatory schools, where the disabled, teachers who were away from school could study. This kind of school is relevant to many stakeholders. Technical schools are under MoEdu. We have taken steps to establish technical schools. My suggestion is to get this programme consolidated and done under one roof. Ministry of Edu is better placed that we are. MoHE has little chance to ensure gender equality. MoHE does not generate revenue, it absorbs the budget. It's a sector in which investments are made.

Chair: MoEdu supports the idea of rehabilitative schools. The constitution doesn't permit gender disparity.

Ministry of Communication: In terms of literacy rate 15-65 yr olds = less than 20%

Ministry of Mines and Industry: When we say that the basis of education is primary school, the teachers don't have the capacity and the quality is very poor, so we can't expect positive outcomes of higher education. Unfortunately the teachers have limited experience and capacity. Jeopardises the future of education.

USAID: You said you have a policy for curriculum development, but there is no progress in grade 6 and above. When can we expect something?

CSO:

There is a concern about the policies of MoEdu. Does it have the capacity? All ministries are in the same position, but what is your assessment?

Dr Pinney:

Agreement that 5 yrs of schooling is minimum for development. Primary completion rate. All children, divided by number of 12 yr olds. Girls worse off than boys. Challenges; data, large influx of refugee children which reflects education received in Iran and Pakistan. 37% of grade 1 population is reaching grade 5. Lots of swing in the data.

USAID:

Where did the data come from?

Dr Pinney: national

Ministry of Justice: need hard data not estimates.

Dr Pinney: yes this is very important and unfortunately many data initiatives will report after the MDGR has been submitted.

Ministry of Communications.

Literacy should look at older age group -18-65%. If we drop them out it would be unhelpful. Does the MoE have a programme for the 30-60 age group.

MoE: We have literacy schools.

Dr Pinney: If you measure literacy for 18-24 yr olds over time you get the rate for all other age groups.

Ministry of Women's Affairs: Women ask us to extend the period of training because it is a long term process when they are trained for 6 months and the MoEdu should have some follow up programmes for the literacy courses. Literacy courses established in rural areas around the country, and the women attend for 3-6 months. Does the MoEdu have follow up?

MoHE: The objective is to follow up.

Dr Pinney: Literacy

Modeled estimates from State of the World's Children. Literacy closely reflect age. 15-24 year olds are not showing higher literacy rates, so programmes to date not showing an impact. Men aged 44-55 were most literate. Not the same pattern for women. Recommend the MICS data, as the NRVA is rural only and underestimates the rates.

Save the Children - Leslie Wilson: Is 100% a realistic target? Let's look at countries that had low rates and resources 15 years ago and look at what has been achieved.

Dr Sinha: Don't forget that the MDGs are aspirational. But of course we also need to be realistic. Need shorter term visible targets.

MoEdu: The donors and the people. We need a good plan and a mechanism,. Who can afford not to educate the next generation.

USAID - let's coordinate MRRD.

CSO - literacy rates were calculated in 2001, so we can compare - MICS 2000.

Dr Pinney- but this was likely to have seriously underestimated girls literacy.

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