

Review 2007-4

Assessment of Education
Activities under the Norwegian
Refugee Council in
Afghanistan
(Review of Norwegian NGOs in Afghanistan Phase 1)

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List of Abbreviations

ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
DECO	Development Consulting AS, Oslo
DED	District Education Department
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
GMU	Grant Management Unit
LINS	Centre for International Education, Oslo University College
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MTR	Mid Term Review
NAC	Norwegian Afghanistan Committee
NSP	National Solidarity Program
Norad	Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation
PED	Provincial Education Department
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
NGO	Non Government Organization
NSP	National Solidarity Program
PTA	Parents and Teacher Association
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
TA	Technical Assistance
TEP	Multi-stakeholder Teacher Education Project
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission In Afghanistan
UNESCO	UN Education, Social and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Foreword

1. The Norwegian Embassy in Kabul has initiated reviews of the work of NGOs in the education sector in Afghanistan. The first NGO to be assessed is the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). During the period from 27th of March to 5th of May 2007, one consultant from The Directorate of Education and Training, Oslo, and one from LINS/DECO, Oslo, undertook desk studies, interviews with resource persons and field visits in Afghanistan, followed by further interviews, desk studies and finalisation of report writing in Oslo.

1 Framework

1.1 Education as part of nation building

2. Ministry of Education (MOE) in Kabul is gaining strengths at central level and also in the provinces and districts. During the time of writing this report the “National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan 1385-1389” was presented in final version, and discussed with stakeholders. By this, a long awaited need has been fulfilled – MOE has prepared the policy and strategic framework according to which education will be further developed. At the same time the EQUIP/MOE programme has been declared by the MOE as the structure and model on which further educational services will be provided in the country.
3. The MOE is one of the most important governmental actors in Afghanistan’s nation building. This is not only due to the fact that education services are spread all over the country and reaching out to distant and remote areas, but because the population in general so highly appreciates the services this ministry provides for the communities and for their children. And the schools and the activities related to them are, in addition to teaching the students, important arenas for building democracy, improving the situation for girls, and strengthening local participation in decision making.
4. MOE strongly emphasises the importance of the NGOs’ role in education as it will take many years before the ministry manage to fulfil all educational needs alone. Nevertheless, it is obvious that these organisations will have to adapt and correspond to the new framework of the Strategic Plan and model of delivery as developed by EQUIP. From being more or less independent actors in many remote areas of Afghanistan during almost thirty years, the NGOs now at increasing extent have to integrate activities with district and provincial educational offices, and cooperate with others NGOs. Focus and modality for all actors will change from service delivery under emergency to development cooperation.
5. The changing framework also impacts on the work of the bilateral and multilateral donors in Afghanistan. In order to adjust to the context and need of nation building at least some of these stakeholders will transfer more of their assistance to governmental controlled channels and aligning to international policies which underlines importance of fewer projects, and more program- and budget support, in the spirit of recipient control and harmonisation among actors.
6. The 2005 Norwegian Education Team Report¹ underlined the importance of the Norwegian Embassy carefully to consider further/extended support to the NGO sector. It would be necessary to take into deliberation that Norwegian funded NGOs, in the local

¹ “Afghanistan Norwegian Education Team Report” Oslo/Kabul August 2005.

perspective have the potential to become very powerful actors, in both positive and negative sense. Warnings were raised that these NGOs, since they dispose of considerable human and material resources, transport and equipment, might continue to maintain responsibilities of the government and indirectly prevent important growth of national, governmental ownership of development.

2 Education Development Modalities – EQUIP

2.1 EQUIP has become national model.

7. MOE, with assistance from the World Bank and with co-financing from Norway has implemented education related work in Afghanistan under the name of EQUIP (Education Quality Improvement Programme) since May 2004. The Mid Term Review (MTR) of EQUIP took place during the period from 15th to 30th of April 2007². The Norwegian embassy was represented by three team members in the MTR mission³.

8. **On Thursday April 26th 2007, in a meeting where all educational stakeholders had been invited, the Minister of Education, declared that EQUIP was the national education program for the Government of Afghanistan and it was envisaged that the program would be expanded in phases to cover all 34 provinces of the country.** Consequently it is important that actors in education development, assess the EQUIP structure and function and see if elements of EQUIP can be used in own organisations. This might improve the current relatively chaotic situation where many stakeholders and actors maintain their own modalities and channels.

9. The MTR reviewed all project components and assessed: (a) the capacity of schools and communities in better managing teaching–learning activities; (b) the status of human resource development (teachers, principals and education administration personnel) capacity and physical facilities; and (c) institutional development of schools, District Education Departments (DEDs), Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and the MOE at the centre; and, (d) the extent to which the project has promoted the priority for female students within each component of the Program. The findings of the MTR were in general positive, but it is obvious that a programme like this will need continuous fine tuning and readjustment in its various strategies and methods. Reference is given to the Aide Memoire of the MTR. Reference is also given to coming assessments and evaluations which will take place during 2007 and which will shed further light on the advantages as well as challenges of the EQUIP.

2.2 Main EQUIP methods

10. In the following the main characteristics of the EQUIP methods will be highlighted. Further information is provided in documents produced by the programme.

11. Originally the World Bank was not intended to get involved in the education sector beyond the Emergency Education Rehabilitation and Development Project (EERDP). As a

² Education Quality Improvement Program, Mid Term Review Mission Aide Memoire, April 15 – April 30, 2007, Draft, para 3.

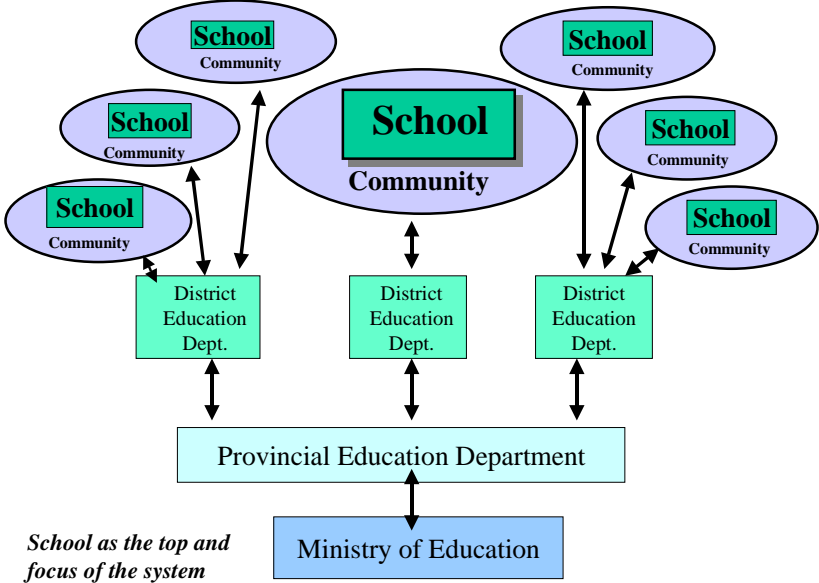
³ Marit Granheim from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and Janne Lexow and Anders Wirak from LINS/DECO, Oslo.

consequence of the fact that other donors committed only US\$ 77 million as compared to the US\$ 250 million education development budget for one Fiscal Year (March 2003- March 2004) however the bank was requested by Afghan ministers to support preparation of an education program to be financed by IDA and others. No doubt, the MOE had a profound opinion of ownership to EQUIP from the very beginning of the programme.

12. The EQUIP development objectives are to improve the quality of educational inputs and processes as the foundation for a long-term strategy to enhance the quality of educational outcomes⁴. This will be achieved through: (a) a focus on schools and communities to strengthen their capacity to better manage teaching-learning activities; (b) investment in human resources (teachers, principals and educational administration personnel) and physical facilities; and (c) institutional development of schools, DEDs, PEDs and the MOE. The program also aims to promote education for girls by giving a priority for females (both teachers and students) within each component activity.

13. As shown in the figure below, the program aims to put schools at the center of activities and the top of the system whereby PEDs and DEDs and the MOE will be supporting the well-functioning of schools.

Figure: School as the Top and Focus of the Education System



14. To achieve the objectives, the program finances the following components:
1. Grants to schools for: (a) quality enhancement; and (b) infrastructure development;

⁴ The World Bank: "Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, Education Quality Improvement Program Proposal", (not dated) p. 3

2. Support to schools through human resources development and institution building for:
 - (a) teacher development programs; (b) school principal selection and training; and (c) capacity building of PEDs and DEDs to strengthen their school support functions; and
3. Support for policy development and monitoring and evaluation.

15. Project Components and their implementing agencies⁵

Components	Subcomponents	Implementers	Facilitators	Primary Supervisors	Secondary Supervisors
1. School Grants	1.1 Quality Enhancement Grants	Schools (PTA/ SMC)	DEDs/ PEDs	PEDs	MoE/ EQUIP Unit
	1.2 Infrastructure Development Grants	Schools (PTA/ SMC) through Local Contractors	DEDs DOC NGO	Engineers in PEDs, Engineers in NGOs	MoE/ DOC
2. Human Resource Development	2.1 Teachers' Training	TEP, TTC, NGOs	TTD	MOE/ EQUIP/ TTD	Core Team of TEP
	2.2 Development of School Principals	TEP, PEDs, NGOs		MoE	TTD
	2.3 Capacity building of District and Provincial Education Departments	DED, PED		PD	MoE
3. Policy Development, and Monitoring and Evaluation	3.1 Policy Development	PD and other relevant dep't. of MoE		PD	MoE
	3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation	PD Third Party M&E		PD	MoE/ EQUIP

16. EQUIP has developed extensive strategies, checklists, models for reporting, training, and systems for monitoring. These are under continuous development and upgrading and are found in the PIM (Program Implementation Manual). In order to make the PIM more user friendly the MTR Aide Memoire (May 2007) recommended MOE/GMU to continue to modify and simplify the PIM.

2.3 Local community participation and ownership is the main guideline.

17. One of the reasons for the positive accomplishments of EQUIP is the emphasis on local community participation and ownership. Considerable resources are invested to establish and strengthen local community groups, and the main focus is School Management Committees (SMC). Local responsibility for the schools is imperative in order to develop sustainable schools, and to establish durable methods for maintenance and repair in addition to the very important quality related aspects.

18. PIM provides guidelines for approaching local communities. It has been warned, however, that in many schools relevant organisations are already active. Before one embarks on mobilising new organisations, sensitivity is needed in order not to create confusion, overlap

⁵ PIM for EQUIP page 14.

and even local conflict. Existing organisations might be utilised, for instance after minor changes in composition and mandate. The critical point is whether they are supported by parents, teachers and local community.⁶

19. The previous National Solidarity Programme was instrumental to establish Community Development Councils (CDC) in 19 provinces. The CDCs were to decide on own village priorities. Often these CDCs selected schools as their main priority. Therefore these organisations need to be consulted and taken into account also at later stages. Also the traditional local community based meetings which are deciding local affairs; the Shurias need to be considered as the EQUIP embarks on project work in new localities.

20. PIM presents detailed lists of the main responsibilities of the SMCs and PTAs (PIM page 20-22). It is proposed that these lists are considered as checklists of responsibilities, rather than fixed mandates to be applied everywhere. Great care and competence is needed for the preparation of mandates for these organisations, which ideally should be undertaken in close cooperation with the Head Teachers and representatives from the District. Overlap between responsibilities of local groups should be prevented.

21. The main responsibilities of the SMCs are in the field of management, preparation of School Improvement Plans, financial duties and control in relation to purchasing and building, while the PTAs should be working more with education quality, enrolment and similar issues. In principle SMCs have a shorter period of functioning than the PTAs.

2.4 EQUIP and gender

22. From Norwegian point of view it has repeatedly been underlined that the PIM should be more specific and explicit on barriers, numbers, activities and responsibilities regarding girls' education and female participation, including female teachers. This could facilitate the monitoring of this issue and help to identify problem areas. It is also noted that the PIM does not refer to female participation at provincial and central level. The document does not spell out any details of strategies and methods used in the girl focused social mobilisation work.⁷

23. The MTR of April 2007⁸ wrote that it was "pleased to note that the trend in national enrolment for girls has been highly satisfactory with an unprecedented number of girls in school. Program performance data show that of the students enrolled in 2007, 45% are girls and that 35% of teachers in program provinces are female (in 2003, it was 14%). The mission found that the EQUIP social mobilisation team has promoted female participation at several levels in the program. The requirement is that all SMCs have at least one female member. This is a positive step in initiating broader female participation. The mission also commends the positive influence of the facilitating BRAC and CARE who normally advocate girls' education in their regular programs. The mission notes that reporting in the various program components based on gender disaggregated data could be improved.

24. The MTR Aide Memoire also found that the existence of a boundary wall around a school can be a strong encouragement for a girl to be sent to school. The mission recommended therefore that communities be given some funding for the construction of boundary walls.

⁶ JRM, Aide Memoire from January 2006 – op cit. Annex 1, chapter 5

⁷ Education Quality Improvement Program "EQUIP" AIDE MEMOIRE November 8, 2005 – February 8, 2006, Annex 1: Input from the Norwegian part of the team, Paragraphs 92-94.

⁸ Education Quality Improvement Program, Mid Term Review Mission Aide Memoire, April 15 – April 30, 2007

2.5 Consequences for Norwegian cooperation in Afghanistan's education development.

25. **The current consultants recommend that Norwegian financed organisations and projects in the education sector as soon as possible study the practices of EQUIP and undertake the necessary adjustments in their own approach. It is also proposed that the Embassy in future limits the cooperation to multi-, bilateral-, organisations and NGOs in the education to those who align to these new MOE policies. These policies are in line with the MOE National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan which has been issued recently (April 2007).**

26. The Minister of Education has stressed the importance of continued cooperation with not least the NGOs in order to fulfil the educational needs of the country. Many aspects of the EQUIP approach, in particular the local mobilisation elements, are areas where the NGOs have special competence and experience, and which will be highly needed in the coming years.

27. The decision made by MOE to select EQUIP as a national program is essential. In Afghanistan, more than in most countries one can compare with, NGOs and other actors have been allowed to develop their own modalities, sometimes without MOE guidance and coordination. With MOE in the driving seat and the EQUIP's model as the primary approach, the current development is to a large extent also instrumental to promote nation building and national solidarity.

3 Norwegian Support to Education in Afghanistan

3.1 Recommendations from Norad's education team 2005

28. The 2005 Norwegian Education team tried to assess how the Norwegian contribution could be strategic, achieve the greatest possible impact, and be in line with Afghan priorities and Norwegian policies. The team's report described Afghan realities and policies, relevant Norwegian priorities for development co-operation in general and in the education sector in particular. The Norwegian education portfolio was described. More specific recommendations for the Embassy in Kabul were also made. In the following these recommendations are commented and updated in order to take into consideration new developments since 2005.

3.1.1 Lining up with Afghan priorities

29. The 2005 team indicated that it was not easy to identify the main Afghan educational priorities – as they are spelled out by the Ministry of Education. Currently, in 2007 however, the situation has definitely improved:

- The MOE, with assistance from in particular UNESCO/IIEP, has issued the National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan 1385-1389,
- The MOE has stated very clearly that the main processes and strategies in education development would be as much as possible in accordance with the EQUIP approach,⁹

⁹ This was again repeated by the Minister of Education in a meeting with most educational stakeholders in MOE Thursday 26th of April 2007.

- One of the main findings of the MTR of EQUIP is that the capacity of MOE at PED and DED levels is considerably improved and at least in the areas visited by MTR mission, the government MOE system seems to be able to pursue necessary processes to deliver basic educational services.

3.1.2 Cost-efficiency

30. In 2005 it was difficult to assess cost-efficiency of the work with school infrastructure, teacher training, and different modalities of provision of education. The situation has improved and it is now easier to compare different stakeholders' and implementers' activities.

3.1.3 Transparency, corruption, reliability, sustainability

31. Such issues are as important today as in 2005 and to some extent more easy to substantiate due to the fact that the security situation in some districts in Afghanistan has improved. In areas where the security situation is better activities tend to become less focussed on emergency and more on regular development.

3.1.4 Project – programme – or budget modalities

32. Norwegian cooperation continues to focus on development activities which strengthen processes leading to programme or budget assistance. Also the NGOs play a role in this connection. The general opinion of many informants to the current team is, however, that the situation needs to improve considerably before general budget support will be the main modality of development cooperation.

3.1.5 Gender

33. As in 2005 there is a need in 2007 to underline the importance of girl's education. Since then, however experiences have been gained and some of these experiences have been included to form new recommendations as are reflected in the 2007 EQUIP MTR Aide Memoire.

3.1.6 Specific recommendations for NGOs

34. For NGOs to play an important role in education sector in a coordinated manner they should
- **Be aligned** with government (registered and approved by MOE, and reporting to and informing MOE).
 - **Coordinate** both with government and other NGOs in order to learn from experience, and avoid duplication and overlap.
 - Have a policy for, and in reality take part in, **capacity building** of the Afghan government, from central level, and the ministries, to the provincial and district levels.

4 NRC's Education Projects in Afghanistan

4.1 General information

35. NRC's education program started in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan in the nineties, where NRC organized schools, conducted teacher training and held conflict resolution trainings. From 2005 onwards, the education program has expanded into Afghanistan.¹⁰

36. The organisation informs that it will achieve its mission in Afghanistan by operating closely with the central MOE to implement their strategy, specifically on three sub-parts: Working at a central level on policy development and implementation plans, conducting advocacy with the MoE around issues affecting returnees and IDPs in education and joint assessments with MoE of quality of primary education in Afghanistan.

37. Through the education projects NRC will contribute by:

- Giving training to teachers in government in-service training program
- Constructing primary schools (also used for lower secondary education)
- Conducting community mobilization to increase children's enrolment into schools, especially girls, using action-research methodology.
- Conducting peace education / conflict resolution skills trainings with teachers, community leaders, parents and youth representatives.
- Providing skills training (vocational training) for youth from mid 2007 onwards.

38. According to NRC's information brochure the following results have been obtained in 2005 and 2006:

- Constructed 7 mixed primary schools (Maymana district)
- Rehabilitated 1 secondary boys school (Maymana city)
- Trained 2,000 (more than 50% female) teachers in Faryab province (Maymana and Pashtun Kot districts)
- Trained 500 (more than 50% female) teachers in Nangahar province (Jalalabad city)
- Trained 400 teachers (more than 50 % female) and 200 community leaders in conflict resolution skills in Faryab province. (Maymana district)
- Conducted community mobilization with 800 elders and parents around school enrolment, with a focus on girls in Faryab province. (Maymana district)

39. NRC provided the following list of projects:

- "These are NRC grants from MFA in 2006 which includes education and school construction:
 - o **AFG 2760/06003** Strategic Partnership Agreement Teacher Training and Capacity Grant, 2,000,000 NOK, part of three year grant (NRC Code **AFFT 0601**)
 - o **AFG 2764 06/011** School Construction, 4,000,000 NOK, 25.06.2006 (NRC Code **AFFS 0603**)
 - o **AFG 2764 06/38** Education and Shelter Grant, 11,000,000 NOK, 30.08.2006 (NRC Codes **AFFT 0603**, **AFFS 0605** (Shelter), and **AFFS 0607**)
- Grants from MFA in 2007 which includes education and school construction:

¹⁰ This is cut and pasted from a NRC information brochure.

- **AFG 2777 06/049** Support To Return and Reintegration Grant for 15,500,000 NOK 01.04.2007 (NRC Codes **AFFS 0701**, and **AFFL 0702** (ICLA))
- **AFG 2760/06003** Strategic Partnership Agreement Teacher Training and Capacity Grant, 2,000,000 NOK, part of three year grant (NRC Code **AFFT 0701**)”

4.2 Cooperation with Central and Local Authorities

40. The review team has received from NRC copies of correspondence, agreements and MoU as follows:

Date (year, month, day)	Between	Contents
20050601	MoU between NRC and PED Faryab	<p>MoU specifying the responsibilities of the partners:</p> <p>Responsibilities of PED, Faryab:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide venues for all seminars • Prepare list of participants including males and females • Provide security to the seminars and participants • Conduct post-testing for all participants at the end of each seminar • Regular monitoring of the seminars • Ensure close cooperation with NRC related to the education issues in Faryab province <p>Responsibilities NRC's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide qualified master trainers • Provide an incentive of USD4 to each participant per seminar day • Cover all necessary expenses related to the seminars • Train up to 300 unqualified teachers during year 2005 • Provide all necessary teaching material and stationary to the participants • Cont pre-test for all the participants at the beginning of each seminar • Ensure close collaboration with and reports to the PED <p>Joint responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure continued close collaboration with each other and other relevant actors in order to improve the quality of education in Faryab • Conduct joint need assessment for the education sector in Faryab for the next coming years • Carry out planning processes for expansion of NRC's education programme in Faryab • Share all relevant information of Faryab education issues with each other.
20050610	MoU between PED Ningarhar and NRC (A. Sletten)	Equal text as the MoU between NRC and PED in Faryab
20060507	MoU between Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Ministry of Education (Director General Teacher Training Department and manager of TEP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TEP will train the Master Trainers of NRC according to the Active Learning system of Education. 2. The Master Trainers of NRC should be trained in holding TEP seminars. 3. TEP will provide the timetable for 52 sessions of each seminar. 4. NRC should in 13 days manage to train the participants with 52 sessions; each session with duration of 4 class hours and each class hour should have duration of 90 minutes. 5. Representative of TEP will assist NRC regarding holding, arranging and monitoring of seminars. 6. NRC should contact TEP office before conducting teacher training seminars. 7. TEP will submit the list of teachers to be trained by NRC. 8. NRC should not provide training for already trained teacher of TEP. 9. TEP will not duplicate the work of NRC, after signing of this protocol. 10. After signing of this protocol, NRC must submit lists of trained teacher to TEP; these lists must be attested and stamped by head of respective PDE. 11. In order to coordinate the program, TEP will sign the certificates of the participants before distribution of the certificates. 12. NRC should distribute the certificates to all the participants at the end of the seminars. 13. All relevant expenses of seminars, such as incentives, transportation, etc should be according to the TEP standard. 14. NRC should coordinate all relevant expenses of seminars with TEP. 15. TEP will assist NRC with selection of locations, monitoring plan, opening and closing of seminars. 16. NRC should share with TEP all information in regards to plans, centres, and date of opening and closing of seminars before starting the seminars. 17. Representative of NRC should be present in all presentation meetings.

		<p>18. NRC should share all program reports and any budget changes with TEP.</p> <p>19. Core master trainers, head master trainers, and master trainers of TEP will assist NRC when needed.</p> <p>20. NRC can ask for assistance from the technical staff of TEP when required.</p>
20070114	From: MOE, TEP to PED Faryab	<p>This is an instruction from MOE/TEP to PED, signed by head of TEP and head of Teacher Training Department in MOE, Kabul.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PED has responsibility to help NRC on providing teaching material and handbooks. 2. PED is responsible to provide venue for teaching training of NRC. 3. NRC should inform PED regularly of their seminar's plan and coordinate with it from the beginning up to end and report to TEP 4. NRC will distribute certificates on trained teacher while signed by TEP of Maimana 5. NRC should send the list of trained teachers to TEP in Kabul regular.

41. Although the current team has not investigated this in detail, the above MoU and agreements seem to be standard formulas which contain what probably are required by the MOE. The MoUs between NRC and two different provincial departments (PEDs) are identical, and there is nothing in the MoUs which reflects possible differences in terms of resources and needs in these provinces.

42. Building capacity and strengthening local, regional and central government is crucial in assistance to sustainable development, and of course not least in Afghanistan. The review team has read some of the background documents for the projects related to school construction and has observed that there literally is no mentioning of these issues in for instance the contract between MOFA and NRC for AFG 2777 06/049. (One could have expected these integrative issues to be a part of scope, objectives, or indicators of the project)..

43. The monthly report from NRC of March 2007 does not mention communication with any Afghan governmental institution at any level. The February report takes up an issue where the PED in Faryab was involved in the selection of master trainers, and how this was a challenge to NRC: NRC however got support from central level. This report also mentioned joint monitoring missions to construction sites between NRC and Technical departments of MOE at both Central and Provincial levels. In this monthly report several other meetings, workshops and joint monitoring activities are referred to. Also the January report includes cooperation and meetings with government at central and other levels.

44. During the field trip to Faryab the team learned that the Provincial Director of Education (PDE) had started to work just three days ago. Still he was well informed about the NRC education projects in Faryab, knew all the involved NRC staff and seemed to be very satisfied with the way NRC cooperated with his office, and how his staff was consulted when necessary.

45. NRC underlined the importance of this cooperation to succeed in implementing the teacher training and the school construction activities. To strengthen this cooperation even further, NRC expressed that they would like to discuss with the Norwegian Embassy an option of recruiting one staff to work in the Province Education Office as a 'NRC liaison' to strengthen the competence of this office, to take care of proper reporting to the MOE and to improve effectiveness of project implementation from the Province side.

46. The team concludes that collaboration with relevant authorities at central and provincial levels are established and are made use of in planning and implementation of the teacher training and infrastructure work. These contacts were characterised as both constructive and informative, but, as the February report indicates, can also be negative for project implementation. In general however, and based on the above sources of information, it is

concluded that NRC has established both formalised and ad hoc day to day cooperation with relevant authorities.

4.3 NRC Education Staff

47. NRC is increasing its school infrastructure activities in Afghanistan. Considerable parts of the annual budget are devoted to school buildings, and the organisation seems also to recruit professional staff in education in general as well as in school infrastructure. However, reading from the list of staff provided by NRC, only 10 of 158 NRC staff in Afghanistan are working with the education sector.

Support office	37
ICLA staff	105
Education staff	10
Shelter staff	6
Total	158

48. Thus the education staff represents 8,3% of the 121 employees which is not in “support functions” as defined by NRC. Very roughly one could propose that this is also the percentage of the support staff working with education issues. This would mean that about 3 person-years of the support staff would be related to education activities.

4.4 Teacher training

4.4.1 EQUIP/MOE standards

49. The “In-service Teachers Training Program” is part of the Government’s effort to improve the quality of education in Afghanistan. The main objective of the program is to provide better facilities of education for children through improving teaching qualities in schools.

50. The program is national and it is launched by the Ministry of Education with the collaboration and technical assistance of the International Community. It has been decided that all teachers in the country should achieve knowledge and basic skills of teaching. Hence, all the children will develop and utilize their abilities and skills, instead of the classic method of memorizing. Another important objective is to improve learning environment by changing the role of the teacher. Rather than disciplining the children (with sticks) when they behave or respond in a wrong way children will be treated in a friendly way by encouraging them to improve their learning.

51. The program is an initial step of a long term national process of training teachers. Initially, a group of 20 “**Core Trainers**” was trained. These trainers have trained some 140 “**Master Trainers**” and participated in the development of the textbooks and the instructional materials for the teacher training program.

52. The “Master Trainers” will then train “**Teacher Educators**” in their respective provinces (a total of 2500 all over the country will be trained) to conduct the training program for all teachers. The program consists of two parts, INSET-1 and INSET-2. Both parts consist of 52 lessons, 90 minutes each for a period of 26 days. While attending the training, the teachers will get training for half of the day and teach their classes the other half. During their teaching the master trainers will visit the teachers and supervise them how they are implementing their new knowledge and understanding in their classrooms.

53. **INSET-1** is an introductory course, emphasizing

- general information of teaching (pedagogy)
- difference between active and classic learning
- role of teacher and student in active learning
- creating a free of fear learning environment
- group work – active learning through cooperation
- recognition of child development
- problems and needs of students in school
- control and discipline in the classroom
- lesson planning
- evaluation

54. The Ministry has developed both an instructional manual for the teacher trainers/educators and a comprehensive textbook for teachers to keep after the training is finished. Each sit for a pre-test before the training and a post-test after the training (see attachment). To date 37,543 teachers (25%) have been trained achieving participant gender parity. The remaining 92,000 teachers will be trained though INSET 1 by March 2008.

55. **INSET-2** is a follow-up course, with a focus on subject knowledge (7 core subject areas) and specific teaching methods for each subject. The Ministry has finished the work on the instructional materials and the textbooks for these 7 subject areas and has just started the training of “**Master trainers**” for INSET-2. The current plan is to have 120,000 teachers trained by March 2009.

56. In the future, the “Master Trainers” will create a team of “Provincial Teacher Resource Teams” in each province and the “Teacher Educators” will create a team of “Teacher Resource Teams” (TRTs) for every district. These teams will, in the future, help teachers/school administrators in providing constant professional training.

57. The Ministry has given the Provincial Education Departments an important role of cooperating in implementing INSET-1 and INSET-2 and overseeing the future work of the Teacher Resource Teams both on provincial and district levels

4.4.2 Teacher Training by NRC

58. NRC has to date, as part of EQUIP/INSET-1, trained 1953 teachers in the three districts of Andkhoy, Maimana and Pashton Kot:

Total number of teachers trained to date:

No of teachers trained		2005 Pashton Kot	2006 Maymana	2007 Maymana + Pashtun kot	2007 Andkhoy	total
Reg funding	Male	206	117	33	38	394
	Female	94	283	18	54	449
GAP funding	Male		361	233		594
	Female		439	77		516
TOTAL		300	1,200	361	92	1,953

59. To organize this work, NRC has employed the following staff

- Program Manager - international staff, Kabul (50%).
- Program Coordinator – national staff, Kabul (100%).
- 5 Master trainers (100%), trained by the MOE core trainers.
- 1 local administrative staff (100%).

60. Each training course of 20 participants and one Master Trainer is conducted in classrooms in the schools where the teachers do their regular teaching. The teachers get an allowance of US\$4 a day covering meals and other expenses (as agreed for all teachers in the EQUIP project). The training is free of charge for the teachers. The teachers receive an extensive teaching manual to keep after the course.

61. Originally, in Faryab Province, NRC had mixed groups of men and female teachers in the same training course. One of the last actions of the former Province Director of Education was to see that men and women attend separate courses. In the future it will probably not be a problem to organize mixed training courses again.

62. Compared to the EQUIP training, NRC has added 2-days of peace education. The NRC Program Manager informed that NRC would have liked to include some knowledge of basic skills (like hygiene) as part of the training and hoped this would be possible for INSET-2.

4.4.3 Assessment of training – quality

63. NRC has decided to use the Master Trainers directly in the training of teachers – not to have them train Teacher Educators as the EQUIP model explains. The way of using one less “layer” of instructors is recognized to be much better. For each “layer” of educators in the cascade model researchers have shown that essential parts of the original curriculum is lost or misunderstood.

64. The teachers are all being pre-tested before they start the training, and the results of their achievement are being compared with their results of a post-test after the training. The average percentage improvement for NRC training is 67% (other EQUIP training has 60%). NRC has filed all these individual data in a database. The Master Trainers have access to these results and supervise the teachers based on each individual teacher’s results. The reports from supervisions are also filed in the database to be able to monitor each teacher’s progress.

65. During the field trip to Andkhoy and Maymana the 5 Master Trainers were observed during the training course and during regular lessons where they supervised teachers on how they managed to implement the new teaching methods in their teaching.

66. The first and very important observation was about the quality of the 5 Master trainers. They seemed to be very professional and treated the teachers with firm respect. They aimed to have a friendly atmosphere in their classrooms. From the observation and from teachers’ comments one could conclude that the training was fully succeeded.

67. Secondly, and most important was the observation of the quality of the teachers met during training and in schools. They seemed to be highly committed to their work and were eager to learn the new teaching methods and to improve their skills. It was informed that most of the teachers were lacking formal teacher certification and that teacher training given in many of the teacher training colleges had been of poor quality for many years. Hence it was a very positive observation that teachers seemed to be very resourceful and with a great potential to learn and upgrade their skills if they were given the opportunity.

68. During the training the teachers were actively engaged in group work and other student active methods that the teachers would use later with their own students in their classrooms. The teachers seemed to enjoy the training, and expressed how important they saw this training for development of education in Afghanistan. Many of the teachers explained their understanding of the “new education” as leaving the “teacher talking” model to students being active in the classrooms – investigating and asking questions. Priority was now given to create positive learning environment with encouragement and support – leaving the old disciplining with sticks.

69. Under observation of the trained teachers in their classrooms, many creative attempts to find means to exemplify their teaching were seen. It is difficult to conclude that the positive teaching was due to the training courses. Many of the teachers had probably picked up elements of the new teaching philosophy before, in former training or by themselves. The importance and quality of this training can yet not be underestimated: **The training had clearly given the teachers a common understanding of how education in Afghan schools was to be taught in the future, and how the Government of Afghanistan expected the quality of education to be improved.**

70. The only complain heard about the training from the teachers was that some of the material used in the training (flip-over and markers) were not available in their schools.

The Minister of Education visited Faryab May 3 to open one of the 7 schools constructed by NRC and financed by the Norwegian Government. During this visit he expressed his high satisfaction of the quality of the work NRC had conducted in Faryab. Further he stated that the MoE is very interested in cooperating closely with NRC in the future, to implement EQUIP jointly, where NRC would take part of the Teacher Training and capacity building component (for PDE and DDE) and the MoE for school construction / rehab and the quality improvement grants. However, to date, this cooperation has not been formalized into agreements.

4.4.4 Assessment of training – cost-efficiency

71. The total budget for teacher training for 2006- 2007 is as follows:

72. **2006: REG:** 2 million NOK for training and extensive follow up in classroom of 400 teachers in INSET-1, 400 teachers in peace education, 200 elders in peace education, community mobilization. For 2006-8, REG is part of NRC ‘core’ funding and as such, it covers more overhead costs than GAP did which was not part of NRC ‘core’ funding but came through later in the year.

73. **GAP:** 1,4 million NOK to train 800 teachers – however, NRC trained 1,100 teachers (800 in 2006 and 300 in 2007 with no-cost extension) with this funding in INSET-1: **this budget did not cover:** follow up in classroom, peace education nor community mobilization

74. **2007: REG:** again 2 million NOK for training and extensive in classroom follow up of 400 teachers in INSET-1, 400 teachers in peace education, 200 elders in peace education. In

addition, this budget covers all follow up work with all 1,100 teachers trained with GAP 2006 funding.

75. The organization NRC has set up to implement the training seems to be relatively modest to the work they need to do. The only NRC national staff working as project manager for teacher training has long experience from NGO development work in Afghanistan. He is involved in most local and practical arrangements regarding education and clearly an asset to NRC. He was the core person from NRC during the opening ceremony of the school in Faryab.

76. During the WB mission it was experienced that there were major problems in calculating the cost of the teacher training, and major efforts were started to get a better understanding of this component. Therefore and as for now it is difficult to compare the costs in numbers of the different teacher training courses being implemented.

Conclusions:

77. The quality of the teacher training as observed during the field trip to Andkhoy and Faryab 1. – 3. May was highly satisfactory and promising for the improvement of quality in the schools where teachers are trained. But NRC's plans and financing includes only a fraction of the schools in Faryab province.

78. NRC has managed to set up a high quality organization for implementing high quality INSET-1 training.

79. If, based on requests from the Ministry of Education, NRC proposes an expansion of the teacher training activities in Faryab, it is suggested to undertake a thorough appraisal where at least the following issues should be considered:

- As it is important to hold on to models and methods which can be mainstreamed all over the country as part of sustainable MOE/EQUIP strategies, the feasibility of applying the NRC training model on a larger scale should be assessed.
- As there are considerable activities and projects going on in Afghanistan in the field of teacher training, mapping of other teacher training actors is needed.
- Comparison of different approaches is necessary, including utilisation of ICT.
- Assessment of costs of the teacher training model applied by NRC compared to other actors involved in teacher training in Afghanistan as well as the "normal" Governmental model is needed.
- In this connection it should be possible, with some more time and information, to establish unit costs for teacher training at different levels and modalities.

4.5 Community Mobilization

80. One of NRC's assignments is to conduct community mobilization to promote school attendance – especially among girls. NRC explained that their community mobilization program included an element of action research – to get a more accurate picture of how many

children were still not attending school – and the reason why. This work is now proceeding and NRC plans to streamline their future actions to the specific findings in the different communities where NRC is operating.

NRC statement:

In April/May 2007 alone, NRC's Community Mobilization team has succeeded in getting 100 out of school children into school in the seven villages where we constructed the 7 schools – as such, this part of the program has been very successful. 80% of newly enrolled children are girls.

81. During the field work there was no opportunity to observe activities under community mobilization. The main problem for school attendance seems still to be lack of school buildings (and surrounding walls for girl's attendance).

82. A main problem for Government, NRC and other aid organizations is the lack of reliable statistics for instance numbers of students in schools and outside schools. During visits to schools it was obvious that **the numbers of students (and teachers) were considerably lower** than what was reported by the head master.

83. The community mobilization is undisputable a valuable and necessary activity. Community mobilization should include community contribution to school construction (i.e. building of surrounding walls etc). The review team was informed by NRC that this is now **not part of** what the MOE wants NGOs to include in their work. On the other hand it was observed that many NGOs mobilised local groups and found this a necessary condition for local ownership and sustainability. It is important that MOE and NGOs cooperate to find a way to include community contribution for NGO constructed schools.

Example:

To involve communities in a good way would include a longer term planning for school construction than has been possible so far. After a new school site has been selected and formalized, the teaching could be conducted in good quality tents until the community had finalized the work on surrounding walls – then the school construction would start.

4.6 School infrastructure

4.6.1 EQUIP/MOE standards and design options.

84. Annex 6 to the EQUIP Programme Implementation Manual (PIM) operates with four categories of schools to be built under the programme, but the number of standards have been reduced to three, by taking out the simplest standard (“Rural Basic”). Hence the alternatives are:

- a) **Rural Improved:** School Grants (US\$ 32,000). These schools will use an improved classroom standard (5 x 7.5m) for a school with **five** rooms (**three** classrooms, one book/resource room and one teacher/principal's office/meeting room). They will have a “double roof” flat structure with steel or concrete binder and appropriate uprights and ties for earthquake resistance, possibly combined with a traditional timber roof if desired by the community. Walls will typically be fired brick, or stone in mud mortar. Other appropriate materials tested in the initial pilot phase, such as stabilized earth blocks, may be used. Schools will be provided with latrines, water system, boundary

walls, and furniture from within the grant. The required community participation component will be about 10 percent of the grant. Construction will be managed by the school management committee at the community level following procurement and price guidelines.

- b) **Peri-Urban Conventional:** School Grants (US\$ 50,000). Construction will use the urban classroom standard (6 x 8m) for a school with **five** rooms (**three** classrooms, one book/resource room and one teacher/principal office/meeting room); it will use a conventional urban construction standard with steel or concrete for earthquake resistance. Walls will be blocks, fired brick, or stone in lime-cement mortar. Schools will be provided with latrines, water system, boundary walls, and furniture from within the grant. The required community participation component will be at least 10 percent of the grant. Construction will be managed by the school management committee, which will be required to publish notice for bids at the community/village level and to select contractors on the basis of at least three quotations, as per procurement guidelines.
- c) **Urban Standard Conventional:** School Grants (US\$ 100,000). These will use the urban classroom standard (6 x 8m) for a school with **ten** rooms (**eight** classrooms, one book/resource room and one teacher/principal's office/ meeting room); they will use a conventional urban construction standard with steel or concrete for earthquake resistance. Walls will typically be fired brick, blocks, or stone in lime-cement mortar. Schools will be provided with latrines, water system, boundary walls, and furnishing from within the grant. The required community participation component will be at least 10 percent of the grant. Construction will be managed by the school management committee which will be required to publish notice for competitive bidding at the provincial level, among contractors approved by the engineering support units within provincial education departments, as per procurement guidelines.

85. The MOE/EQUIP class room unit prices are according to the above

	(a) "Rural improved"	(b) "Peri-Urban Conventional"	(c) "Urban Standard Conventional"
Size of grant	US\$32000	US\$50000	US\$100000
Number of classrooms	3 + store and principals room	3 + store and principals room	8 classrooms + store and principals room
Size of classrooms	5*7,8 m	6*8 m	6*8 m
Other infrastructure	Provided with latrines, water system, boundary walls, and furniture from within the grant.	Provided with latrines, water system, boundary walls, and furniture from within the grant	Provided with latrines, water system, boundary walls, and furnishing from within the grant.
Community participation	Community participation component will be about/least 10 percent of the grant.		
	Construction will be managed by the school management committee at the community level following procurement and price guidelines.	Construction will be managed by the school management committee, which will be required to publish notice for bids at the community/village level and to select contractors on the basis of at least three quotations, as per	Construction will be managed by the SMC which will be required to publish notice for competitive bidding at the provincial level, among contractors approved by the engineering support units within provincial

		procurement guidelines.	education departments, as per procurement guidelines.
Unit price per classroom	US\$10667	US\$16667	US\$12500
Unit price per m2 classroom	US\$273,5	Us\$347,2	US\$260,4

4.6.2 NRC's school building projects

86. NRC's school construction activities have taken place as part of the following agreements with Ministry of Foreign Affairs/The Norwegian Embassy:

- **Project number AFG-2764, and Agreement number AFG 06/11:** "Rehabilitation and school construction". The contract was signed 25 June 2006 and included construction of 3 primary schools and rehabilitation of 2 schools.
- **Project number AFG-2762, agreement AFG -06/038:** "Integrated support to Faryab province" which was signed 4th of October 2006 and where education infrastructure constituted one of three elements: including construction of 4 primary schools (including latrines etc), and finally
- **Project number AFG-2777, Agreement 06/049.** "Support to Return and Integration of DPs to the Faryab Province", dated 1st of April 2007. This project includes building of 10 primary schools, with 10 latrines, walls, well and water point, community mobilisation etc.

87. For the latter project NRC originally suggested a total of NOK 27,249,153 (it was then proposed to include 16 schools and a TTC.) Then a formal request by a letter dated 26.02.2007 presented a budget of NOK 18,519,379 for 8 schools (and ICLA component and Teacher trainin). After consultation with the Embassy it was agreed to reduce the budget to NOK 15,400,000 (whereof NOK 13,891,020 was for school buildings – and then the number of schools had been increased to 10.)

88. The Embassy concluded in the Appropriation Document (page 7) that the school construction budget for AFG 2777 were high compared to former agreements (AFG 2764 (4 new schools and rehabilitation of one for the total costs of NOK 4 mill), and 06/38 (4 new schools for 4 NOK 4 mill.)

89. NRC states in e-mail communication¹¹ that there is an increase in school construction costs for 2007 compared to 2006 for the following reasons:

¹¹ E-mail exchange between Kunela Moore, NRC and Anders Wirak on 1st of May 2007.

2006 schools are an NRC design which we got approved by the ministry. It's a more cost effective design than the equivalent MoE design, however we think it unlikely the Ministry will approve this design again this year (but we are going to try to get it approved as one of the standard school designs, because we believe it is a better value school).

Given this we have budgeted for Ministry designs (see costs below). Also even though we budgeted \$100,000 in 2006 this was not found to be enough, and we have done some small reallocations, the average school comes to just over 100,000 and not all of them needed latrines and only one needed a well.

In MoE standards designs they provide 8 designs (for the ten classroom schools) according to estimations the cheapest is \$97,000 and the most expensive \$194,000. The average is \$119,000. This excludes latrines that they estimate at \$11,000 per school and \$89 per metre of perimeter wall (say one school needs 250 metres = \$22,000).

Therefore the average school according to MoE would be approx. \$152,000 including wall.

NRC has budgeted for \$145,000 per school (\$125,000 for the building, latrines and water and \$20,000 for the wall) – we anticipate using one of the cheaper standard designs.
(From e-mail exchange between More and Wirak 1st of May 2007)

90. The consultants tried to find out how NRC can state that their unit school price is US\$145,000 when, according to the budget for AFG-2777, the unit price for the schools will be approximately NOK 1.4 mill. The latter figure is what MOFA will pay for AFG-2777, divided by the ten schools to be built. The budget for the project changed several times; also during the review process hence it proved difficult to get an exact budget calculation. The following table reflects one of the budgets sent to the Norwegian Embassy. In Annex the NRC budget as of 7th of May 2007 is presented. (This was requested by NRC).

91. If AFG-2777 produces 10 schools with 10 classrooms each, unit price per classroom will be approximately NOK 140.000. The size of the NRC classrooms is 4.5 meter by 7 meter (31.5 m²), while the MOE standard school classrooms for this kind of school is 6*8 meter (48 m²). As a consequence the total square meter for classrooms in a NRC school is 315 m², while an 8 classroom standard schools has 384 m².

92. Not only will the square metre price for the NRC classrooms be very high compared to other actors. It is also from a quality of education point of view questioned whether it is right to build so small classrooms (31.5 m²) for classes with 40 students.

NRC Budget for AFG-2777 (10 schools, Standard MOE type)

Acc.grp	Type of expenditure	NOK	US\$ (=NOK6.3)
42	Purchasing equipment/spare parts	74800	11873
43	Purchasing building materials/commodities	1632000	259048
46	Contractor and subcontractor services	6800000	1079365
49	Field project support	2399020	380797
	4 Project materials, goods, services	10905820	1731083
50	Salary expat salary agreements	539000	85556
52	Salary local staff	811110	128748
54	Social tax	48000	7619
55-59	Other personnel costs	11000	1746
	5 Personnel costs	1409110	223668
63	Premises cost	84320	13384
64	Rent machines, inventory a.s.o.	440640	69943
66	Repair and maintenance	6800	1079
67	External services	8000	1270
68	Office and accommodation expenses	99280	15759
69	Telephone, postage a.s.o.	102872	16329
	6 Premises, communication, etc	741912	117764
			0
70	Cost transportation	121040	19213
71	Travel expenses and allowances	152072	24138
73	Meetings and public relations cost	5440	863
75	Insurance premiums	27200	4317
77	Other costs	1700	270
	7 Total costs travel, transport etc	307452	48802
81/82	Financial items (net)	40800	6476
	Total applied project costs ex admin	13405094	2127793
	Admin. compensation 5%	670256	106390
	Applied project costs	14075350	2234183

4.6.3 Cost of school construction – other actors

93. In order to discuss the price issues the current consultant contacted a number of informants and search was made in relevant data and information sources. The informants include staff at GMU/MOE, EQUIP mission staff, Aga Khan Foundation, BRAC, CARE, Swedish Afghanistan Committee, and the EQUIP MTR team members.

BRAC

94. BRAC, which has been “Facilitating Agency” under EQUIP and build a considerable number of schools, informs that in addition to the unit prices stipulated by MOE, there is 15% for operational costs. This includes offices (at Provincial and District levels), BRAC engineers, mobilisation of local communities and training.¹²

95. Unit price including BRAC’s 15% fee as specified above will then become:

¹² BRAC’s main education activity in Afghanistan is, however, the community school programs financed by Sida and other donors. In these programmes classrooms with standard size of 7,2m * 4,5 meters are rented by local communities.

BRAC – some calculated costs for the MOE categories			
	(a)	(b)	(c)
Unit price per school, including BRAC 15% fee	US\$36800	US\$57500	US\$115000
Unit price per classroom, including BRAC 15% fee	US\$12267	US\$19167	US\$14375

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

96. The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) has a long history from Afghanistan and this organisation is also renowned for its activities in education, including building of schools. Andreas Stefansson in the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan was kind enough to reply to a question about what they pay for building schools.

97. Stefansson informed that in 2007 the SCA schools with 8 classrooms and 4 administrative rooms and corridor cost 90 000 USD. The community contributes with 20%, i.e. SCA's cost is 72000 USD. This does not include surrounding fence, however. SCA's administrative costs and overheads of 10% are included in the price.

98. This means a unit price of 131 USD/m² as each school is of total 681 m² (including the 8 class-rooms, 4 teacher/admin rooms, corridors).

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan – some selected prices	
Unit price per school of 681 m², including 8 classrooms, 4 teacher/administrative rooms and corridors.	US\$72000
Local contribution 20%	US\$18000
Costs including local community contribution	US\$90000
Unit price per classroom, community contribution included	US\$11250
Unit price per m², for total school area	US\$131

CARE's school building in Bamyan

99. CARE was also "Facilitating Agency" working with the MOE/EQUIP programme. CARE was responsible for activities for MOE/EQUIP activities in Bamyan province, and the following table presents the budget and costs of the schools in the process of being built in this province.

Information about Bamyan province NCB eight classroom schools¹³

S/N	Name of school	Name of district	Contract No	Name of construction company	Allocated budget as per contract (US\$)	Actual contract amount (Afs)	Actual contract (US\$). 1 US\$=60 Afs
1	Kalo School	Shebar	CARE/EQUIP/-WU52	Sunbol Construction and Rehabilitation Company	100000	5087746	84796

¹³ CARE made the following note to the table: "CARE Education program got No Objection from both MoE and World Bank for all above schools"

2	Deh Sorkh school	Yakawlang	CARE/EQUIP/-WU53	Alhaj Raufi Construction, Road and production company	100000	5100003	85000
3	Gharghary School	Panjab	CARE/EQUIP/-WU54	Sunbol Construction and Rehabilitation Company	100000	5582712	93045
4	Sultan Robot School	Waras	CARE/EQUIP/-WU55	Khyber Bostan Construction Company	100000	6115326	101922

100. As part of the MOE/EQUIP the quality and size of school infrastructure is defined by the EQUIP specifications. The schools will not have surrounding wall included in the price.

CARE as part of EQUIP – some selected prices	
Average unit price per school in Bamyan, including 8 classrooms, 2 teacher/administrative rooms.	US\$91191
Unit price per classroom	US\$11399

4.6.4 NRC's price compared to BRAC

BRAC is not necessarily the least expensive organisation, but in the following BRAC will be used as an example. If understood right, information in 4.5.2 above shows that the Norwegian Embassy/MOFA will pay about NOK 14 million for 10 schools with 10 classrooms and including surrounding wall, latrines and water. If, on the other hand for instance BRAC was provided the responsibility as implementing agency, the same amount of funds would, very roughly, be sufficient for building plus/minus 19 schools, with more or less the same quality and of same size, but with 8 classrooms (but the number of square meters for class rooms will still be higher for BRAC).

101. The current consultants will be careful to make blunt statements, and there are many considerations to take, and further detailed studies are needed. As it seems at current stage, however, the **difference** between the two implementing agencies (for the same amount of funds) is about **9 schools**. In terms of access 9 schools mean an **added student population of roughly 2880 students, or the double if the schools run on a two shift basis**.

102. The main reasons for this rather remarkable difference are believed to be the high number of foreign expatriates in NRC and high costs in general operation, while BRAC and the other organisations referred to above operate with lower costs.

103. The comparable higher costs of NRC should indicate that NRC is providing considerable "added value". Such values could for instance be:

- Extra quality and special design. This has been mentioned in the correspondence and NRC-documents, but has not been assessed in a comparative perspective by the current review team.

- Keeping a presence in Afghanistan of NRC as a specialised organisation for refugees/IDPs. If the general situation gets worse it is an advantage to have such competence in the country.
- The importance of keeping Norwegian organisations in operation in Afghanistan. This is a significant issue; however the majority of the expatriate workers in NRC are not coming from Norway, and normally the embassy do not promote Norwegian interests this way.
- Another issue is that NRC and its staff can function as a “bridge builder” between Norway and Afghanistan.

104. On the other hand – one should also consider actual or potential added values of an organisation like BRAC:

- BRAC has for several years established a strong organisation in Afghanistan, with offices in many Provinces and Districts.
- BRAC has a considerable education programme, primarily within in community school sub-sector and with focus on girls (assistance from Sida and others), but also as facilitating agency under the EQUIP programme, building schools and channelled funds for quality improvement, mobilisation and information work.
- Another special benefit of BRAC is that the organisation is specialised in local community mobilisations, with a particular focus on poor and remote areas. Since BRAC was established in the 40-ies improvement of the state of women has been a high priority. As EQUIP is becoming the national program, the communication/mobilisation element will play a stronger role in education work.

105. Obviously the school building unit cost is only one factor in a larger context. Sometimes higher unit costs for classrooms and schools are acceptable for instance when better than average building quality is required (for instance earth quake “proof” construction) or there could be special problems with the terrain or the school site can be in very remote areas. Although it is very difficult to compare prices, and that great precaution is needed, the current consultants have not identified significant and systematic differences between the different building concepts as they are presented above. **The overall conclusion is that NRC’s prices are considerably higher than the other relevant school construction actors.**

4.6.5 Assessment of School Buildings - Quality

106. During the field trip 4 of the schools under construction by NRC in Faryab Province were visited. (Said Ahmad Bina, Khoja Poitacht, New Nazir Abad and Afghan Kot schools). They were all built according to the Ministry’s model school. NRC had contracted a German firm to supervise the construction process of the 7 schools, and an engineer in this firm had made some adjustments to improve the original design.

107. This new design had then been approved by the MOE. According to the engineer the new design had decreased the costs of the construction and improved the ventilation and the volume of the classrooms compared to the original design of the MOE. A disadvantage of the new design was that the size of each classroom was smaller than the original MOE design. In the MOE schools the classroom size is 6m x 8m. The classroom size in NRC designed schools is 4,5 x 7m due to roof construction limitations.

108. Since the time spent in the schools during field work was limited, only an impressions of the quality of the constructions of the 4 schools can be provided:

- Solid foundation work
- Concrete and plaster in walls and floors containing sufficient cement
- Good quality roofing (improved from original model)
- Good quality ceilings
- Good quality windows and doors
- Good quality electrical work (lights and fans)
- Classrooms smaller than original model (4,5m X 7,5m compared with 6m X 8m) – volume of classrooms larger due to high ceilings

109. General impression of schools was that they had a nice design and good quality. All 4 schools seemed to have the same high quality - independent of the site where they were placed. It needs to be added, however, that there were no time for comparative assessment with other new schools built by other organisations.

110. One general issue over some years in Afghanistan is the lack of technicians and workers. Many professional craftsmen left the country during the many years of turmoil. The number of active contractors and consultants seem however to be on the increase. NRC received relatively many bids from contractors in early 2007¹⁴.

111. A challenge all over Afghanistan has been to ensure the use of quality materials and work methods in the construction of schools. During our World Bank Mission we saw examples of school constructions based on the MOE models where the quality of the workmanship and the materials being used were inferior to the NRC schools.

112. One reason for the good quality of the NRC schools is probably the close supervision of the construction process NRC has conducted. Through a German firm all the construction sites has been visited several times a week, and where necessary, the German engineer has taught the workers how to improve their skills and working methods. Examples of this are how the roofs are anchored to the walls and how the steel roofs were laid to avoid leaks.

113. Based on their experience with the construction of the first schools, NRC has now employed the engineer as the project manager for construction of the next 10 schools. In this way NRC will secure that his knowledge and experience remains in NRC. Furthermore, this will reduce the cost of using a firm for the supervision.

4.6.6 Assessment of School Buildings – Cost-efficiency

114. The current review team has been asked to assess cost-effectiveness of the NRC school infrastructure work. Although price per unit is the most fundamental criterion in a cost-effectiveness assessment, in order to be fair and relevant, several important considerations have to be considered. These are for instance related to variation in quality of building materials, remoteness of site (and hence variation in prices for imported materials), whether the building is established in accordance with earthquake proof qualifications, size of unit (number of classrooms in school, number of square meters per classroom etc.), needs for special precaution of building site (prevent erosion, landslide, flow), the extent local communities or other donors are contributing, and experience and capacity of contractors and technical staff, size of the implementing organisation (and what should be included in the price of output), and extent to which DED and PED are contributing.

¹⁴ NRC received about 25 quotations for the announcement of 3 schools to be built in 2007.

115. As some materials normally are imported to the localities, prices of schools will vary considerably depending on degree or remoteness, and available road-net and transport facilities. On the other hand in very central areas, it has been proved difficult to mobilise communities to make their own contributions, and this will bring prices up.

116. Hence to establish average unit costs per classroom, per school of certain building category or square meter is very complex indeed and raises a number of issues.

117. The easiest way of calculating is to use the bid price given by contractors as a result of tender invitation. The reason why this would not be sufficient for the Norwegian Embassy is that this only reflects the “net cost” and that any implementing organisation would need to include smaller or larger parts of their general planning and administrative costs. It seems also to be the case that schools will have additional inputs; for instance water wells and surrounding walls, and such infrastructure will be added to the original bidding costs.

118. Minimum and maximum prices. The current consultant can mention that the minimum and maximum prices heard of are as follows:

Price for one class room. Max and mini price heard about.			
Minimum price		Maximum price	
US\$2,750		US\$ 68,800	
Source:	Unit description	Source	Unit description
Fieldwork in Bamyán (April 2007), in meeting with SMC and others	Classroom, standard size but simple and local materials and with considerable community contribution and control. No additional costs. This is “net” price as the 2 classrooms will be added to a currently existing school	Internet: in article of USAID financed school building projects in 2004. ¹⁵	Classroom, standard size, but in Kabul town and with little local contribution. The unit price is calculated from total school price, and hence includes costs for other rooms as teachers and headmasters rooms, toilets etc.

119. These price extremes represent very different conditions; the low price classrooms are in Bamyán, not really in a remote setting, but characterised by rural surroundings, with much community involvement and community contribution. The high price example is from a Kabul city school, in a period of time when USAID and contractors rushed to build a large number of schools and clinics during the months before the elections during autumn 2004. There were most probably limited local community contributions.

120. The fact that so many actors are involved in school construction can create considerable problems if different financing methods are applied. For instance: one NGO is reporting that local communities have become **less interested in contributing to school construction**, as they have heard that other communities do not need this but are fully financed.

121. In order to try to reduce the differences between NRC and the other school constructing actors in terms of cost-efficiency NRC could try to assess following options:

¹⁵ http://www.worldproutassembly.org/archives/2005/12/afghanistan_a_r.html, which refers to Jack Bell, US State Department official who wrote that design and construction difficulties had forced numerous changes to

- Reassess the budgets and plans in order to identify possible overlaps and double calculation
- Reduce costs. It is for instance necessary to purchase new computers and other equipment every time new projects are started up?
- Probably the number of expatriates could be reduced.
- Assess other organisations' work, for instance the Swedish Afghanistan Committee with the objective to find out why they are producing schools at considerable lower price.

4.7 Effects on enrolment and drop-out

122. The work on the 8 first schools NRC has constructed (1 rehabilitated) in Faryab is about to be completed. The first new school was opened for regular use May 5th 2007. The teachers in this school have been trained (INSET-1), but it is still too early to register any effect of enrolment and drop-out of pupils/girls.

123. Another important issue is that none of these schools have been built with boundary walls, and some parents would therefore - most likely - be hesitant to send their girls to these schools before the boundary walls are put in place.

4.8 Gender focus and impact

124. Needless to say, in a male-dominated society as the traditional Afghanistan/Muslim setting, it will be difficult to reach out to girls and women unless for instance the NGOs has a clear gender policy and that gender issues are considered in planning and implementation of the NGOs. It should be said that the gender focus has been high on the agenda of many international and not least Scandinavian NGOs operating in Afghanistan for many years. Often one can observe that these institutions have developed approaches and strategies which are sensitive enough to be performed in the local contexts, but which have positive impact over time.

125. Unless a gender dimension is incorporated in planning procedures and general policy of an organisation, one cannot expect the results and impacts to be particularly positive in this regard. In a one-page information brochure on NRC's activities in Afghanistan and under the heading of "How does NRC Afghanistan achieve its mission?" it is stated that NRC will conduct "community mobilization to increase children's enrolment into schools, especially girls, using action-research methodology". Gender aspects are not otherwise included under this heading, for instance in referring to school construction. In the same brochure, in the listing up of beneficiaries, however, it is proclaimed that more than 50% of the 2900 teachers trained are women. It is also informed that in the community mobilisation activities with 800 participants (elders and parents) there has been a focus on girls. For school construction 7 mixed primary schools have been constructed (and one secondary boys school is rehabilitated). The current review consultants have not been in a position to confirm this information in the field, but it is evident that there is a gender focus in NRC work.

126. As long as schools are built and opened, and as long as they are accessible to girl students, either as co-ed, or only girls schools, the NRC education activities will have a positive impact on girls' situation. Additional mobilisation and information work will often be necessary for this to have a lasting positive gender impact.

127. The NRC Logistics Handbook has been reviewed from a gender perspective. Some might argue that handbooks like this are or should be “gender neutral”. In a country context of Afghanistan, however, if gender issues are not brought into attention, one can be sure that there will be a continuous male focus and dominance.

128. According to the Foreword of the handbook it “is intended to provide a comprehensive guide to all aspects of logistics, including procurement, transportation, warehouse and vehicle management in terms of both policy and procedures.” It is a very important handbook as it supposed to be used by all NRC offices in all countries. Citation: “Adherence to these guidelines is essential in order to ensure an efficient and transparent logistic process with high quality and ethical standard throughout all projects undertaken by NRC.”

129. It is the opinion of the current review team that although predominately bureaucratic and technical, parts of the Handbook are referring to policies and standards where one could have expected gender perspective to be included. Some proposals: under 3.8 “Vendor Guidelines” child labour is mentioned as disqualifying element. Here one could include something about discrimination of women. Under 5.3: “Warehouse organisation” there is much efforts to describe a conducive working place. In order to welcome female workers the specification could have mentioned toilet facilities for women. Finally, under “Information for bidders” on page 89 “environmental policy” is specified, and here gender focus could also be included. Finally, on page 89, the only place in the Handbook where the word “women” is found is in connection with anti-personnel mines which often have children and women as their victims. It is concluded that with good intentions relatively technical/bureaucratic handbooks can room gender elements, and this is considered important in Afghanistan.

4.9 Conflict Sensitivity

130. NRC is an organisation which is originally developed to act and implement under conflict situations. Conflict sensitivity is therefore a natural and integrated part of the organisations strategies for recruitment, staff development as well as project implementation. The review team has not come across incidents or reports pointing to the fact that NRC has acted without the needed conflict sensitivity.

5 Short summary and conclusion

131. This review covers some aspects of NRC’s education programme in Afghanistan. The duration of the review was short as it was undertaken more or less as an appendix to the EQUIP Mid Term Review, rather than a separated full review.

132. The first draft of this review was presented to NRC for comments. NRC’s comments (8 pages) were primarily related to actions and developments taken after the review team had made the fieldwork. Many comments were considered as adding to the review report statements. Finally NRC pointed at some issues which led to changes in the review report. The final report after these corrections is reflecting the consultants opinions, based on the limited time and resources available for the study.

133. The Norwegian Embassy in Kabul initiated the review process by raising some issues, and drafting the Terms of Reference. Costing of some education related services was central. The current review confirms and supports the Embassy’s questions, and it is concluded that there seems to be a need for a more comprehensive review of NRC’s education portfolio in Afghanistan. There is also a need to review more thoroughly other NGOs’ education

programmes – not least in order to obtain a more complete basis for comparison and assessment of cost-benefits of the funds invested. If possible such review should have been organised together with other stakeholders and with MOE participation. This would indicate willingness to cooperate and harmonise efforts to improve delivery of education services to children in Afghanistan.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

REVIEW (PHASE I) OF EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED BY THE NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (NRC)

Education is one of the main sector for Norwegian development aid to Afghanistan. The support consists of both national programs and programs implemented through NGOs. In April this year a team from WB and Norway will conduct a mid term review of the “Education Quality Improvement Program” (EQUIP). The Embassy also requested NORAD to assist in a review of education programs implemented by four NGOs which receive funds from Norway. As we are doing this, using consultants from the EQUIP MTR team and time is not sufficient, the ToR has been changed so that we start by reviewing one NGO – Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The review will look at their teacher training and budgetting in general.

Background

The task of meeting the Millennium Development Goal relating to provision of basic education in Afghanistan by 2015 will require means to expand educational opportunities for children entering school. The aim is to increase enrolment, decrease drop-out and to improve the quality of teaching in basic education. It is especially important to increase the number of girls attending school. The same applies for marginalised groups such as children of IDP/refugees, Kuchis and children from remote villages.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) does not have the capacity in building/reconstruct enough schools in different provinces of Afghanistan. The international community is assisting through programs through the World Bank, UN, ISAF/PRTs, NGOs and community based approaches. School building is based on standard models from the MoE depending on criteria such as geographical areas/number of pupils (rural/urban), earthquake zones etc.

In general, the quality of education being delivered in Afghanistan is low. Raising expectations and aspirations for what can be achieved in the classroom requires focusing on models of good practice. At present MoE does not have the capacity to provide all required training of teachers in primary and secondary schools. Teacher training is therefore supplemented by UN and NGOs, based on the curriculum of MoE (TEP-Teacher Education Programme). Some programme provides additional training. Other programs are expanding this further with additional pilot testing of new sets of teacher training and organisational models.

Terms of Reference

The team will review the Norwegian Refugee Council and their budgeting and estimated costs of school building and teacher training in Faryab province and their teacher training program.

All programs are funded by Norway in 2007 and was also funded in 2006. As for the teacher training there is a three year agreement 2006 – 2008

The focus will be on how grants from the Norwegian Government have supported the improvement of teaching learning activities and a general improving of the school environment.

The review will focus on

- Quality of teacher training according to MoE standards and the agreement with the Embassy
- Cost effectiveness in the NGO implemented projects
- Level of cooperation with central and local authorities
- Effects on enrolment and drop-out of pupils/girls where schools have been build and teacher trained
- Gender focus and impact (female teachers, female pupils)
- Conflict sensitivity
- *If possible: Quality of school buildings/choice of design according to MoE standards and the agreement with the Embassy*

The review will further make a comparison to the MoE implemented EQUIP .

Based on this the team will write a report including findings and recommendation of further support to education in 2008 based on;

- Prioritisation of projects
- Choice of future channels for implementing

The team will:

- Review the NGOs programmes concerning goals, objective, indicators and budgets
- On-sight visits of projects including interviews of stakeholders.

The review will be conducted by a team from Norway in cooperation with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in close cooperation with NRC. Documentation will be made available, both from the Embassy and the three NGOs involved.

The report will be made available for NRC to comment.

The review will take place 30 April-5May 2007, and the draft report should be received by 20 May 2007.

Annex 2: Program for Assessment of Education Activities of NRC in Afghanistan

April 26th – May 20th 2007

Team members:

Mr Anders Wirak/LINS/DECO, team leader

Ms Marit Granheim, Utdanningsdirektoratet, Oslo

Thursday 26 April – Sunday 5 May

Marit Granheim and Anders Wirak working on and off with NRC issues but in the first part of the period concentrating on Mid Term Review of EQUIP

Thursday 26 April

17:00 Meeting at the Norwegian Embassy, with Inger Sangnes, Merete Dyrud and Kunera More

Sunday 29 April

17:00 Meetings, interviews and study of documents at NRC's Kabul office.

Monday 30 April to Thursday 3 May

Marit Granheim on field visit to Mazar I Sharif, Andkhoy and Maymana

Wednesday 2 May

15:30 Meeting at the Norwegian Embassy, with Inger Sangnes and Merete Dyrud, presenting some preliminary findings (A. Wirak).

Thursday 3 May

05:30 Anders Wirak returns to Norway, starting report writing

Friday 4 May

11:00 Meeting at the Norwegian Embassy, with Inger Sangnes and Merete Dyrud, presenting some preliminary findings (M. Granheim).

Sunday 6 May

05:30 Marit Granheim returns to Norway for report writing

Annex 3: Some basic information

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Effective May, 2007)

Currency Unit = New Afghani, US\$1 = 49.00 Afs

AFGHAN FISCAL YEAR 1383: March 20, 2004 - March 20, 2005

Solar Year (SY)	Begins on
SY1381	March 21, 2002 – March 20, 2003
SY1382	March 21, 2003 – March 19, 2004
SY1383	March 20, 2004 – March 20, 2005
SY1384	March 21, 2005 – March 20, 2006
SY1385	March 21, 2006 – March 20, 2007
SY1386	March 21, 2007 – March 20, 2008

Afghanistan subnational administrations:¹⁶

- 32 provinces (*wolayat*)
- Approximately 355 districts (*uluswali*) – each province contains between 3 (the minimum) and 27 districts
- Provincial municipalities (*sharwali wolayat*) – each province, in principle, contains one such municipality
- Rural municipalities (*sharwali uluswali*) – each district contains, at most, one rural municipality, but some have none.

¹⁶ From AREU and World Bank “A guide to government in Afghanistan”

Annex 4: New Budget for NRC school building project

(This budget was prepared after the work with the current review report was started. (NRC requested this budget to be included in the review.)

BUDGET for NRC-PROJECT		Integrated Assistance for Faryab province	
NRC AFFS0701	MFA 100% 0	School Construction	
Afghanistan	Period:	01.apr.07	31.des.07
"Local" currency		NOK	
Acc.grp	Type of expenditure	NOK	
40	Local purchases, customs, freight etc	-	
41	Printed matter	-	
42	Purchasing equipment/spare parts	27 200	
43	Purchasing building materials/commodities	1 768 000	
44	Purchasing emergency articles	-	
45	Seminar and teaching costs	-	
46	Contractor and subcontractor services	8 500 000	
47	Disbursement micro credits	-	
49	Field project support	1 045 233	
4	Project materials, goods, services	11 340 433	
50	Salary expat salary agreements	539 000	
51	Salary other agreements	-	
52	Salary local staff	404 810	
53	Housing benefit	-	
54	Social tax	48 000	
55-59	Other personnel costs	11 000	
5	Personnel costs	1 002 810	
60	Depreciation	-	
63	Premises cost	84 320	
64	Rent machines, inventory a.s.o.	367 200	
65	Purchase machines, inventory, cars etc	-	
66	Repair and maintenance	6 800	
67	External services	8 000	
68	Office and accommodation expenses	121 040	
69	Telephone, postage a.s.o.	85 600	
6	Premises, communication, etc	672 960	
70	Cost transportation	74 800	
71	Travel expenses and allowances	131 400	
73	Meetings and public relations cost	5 440	
74	Membership fees etc	-	
75	Insurance premiums	27 200	
77	Other costs	1 700	
7	Total costs travel, transport etc	240 540	
81/82	Financial items (net)	40 800	
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (excl. Admin. compensation)		13 297 543	
100 %	APPLIED PROJECT COSTS (ex adm)	13 297 543	
5 %	Admin. Compensation	664 877	
APPLIED PROJECT COSTS (incl. Admin compensation)		13 962 420	

