

## A high-altitude mountain landscape covered in deep snow under a clear blue sky. The foreground shows a steep, snow-covered slope with some dark rocks visible. In the background, a range of jagged, snow-capped mountains stretches across the horizon. The lighting is bright, creating strong shadows and highlights on the snow.

# An Emerging Mountainscape



# **HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN**

## **An Emerging Mountainscape**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ALTC</b>	Australian Learning and Teaching Council
<b>ANDS</b>	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
<b>APQN</b>	Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network
<b>CAA</b>	Commission of Academic Accreditation (United Arab Emirates)
<b>DELNI</b>	Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland
<b>EDSTATS</b>	Education Statistics Database of the World Bank
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GER</b>	Gross Enrollment Ratio
<b>GoA</b>	Government of Afghanistan
<b>HEFCE</b>	Higher Education Funding Council (U.K.)
<b>HRD</b>	Human Resource Development
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IQAU</b>	Internal Quality Assurance Units
<b>MoHE</b>	Ministry of Higher Education
<b>MQF</b>	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
<b>MQR</b>	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
<b>NAAC</b>	National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India
<b>NAC</b>	National Accreditation Centre( Kazakhstan)
<b>NCQAA</b>	National Commission on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (for Afghanistan)
<b>NER</b>	Net Enrollment Ratio
<b>NHESP</b>	National Higher Education Strategic Plan
<b>NTFS</b>	National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
<b>PHEI</b>	Private Higher Education Institution
<b>QAC</b>	Quality Assurance Committee
<b>SDC</b>	Staff Development Center
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VLE</b>	Virtual Learning Environment



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## **OBJECTIVES AND AUDIENCE OF THE REPORT**

This report, which has been prepared in consultation with senior higher education policy makers, academics, researchers, staff and students in higher education in Afghanistan, intends to serve several purposes. First, the report provides a wide-ranging and evidenced-based review and analysis of the higher education sector in Afghanistan. Second, the report surveys a rich variety of higher education systems, policies and reforms observed in the modern world with an emphasis on those areas where Afghanistan faces the greatest higher education policy challenges. The report provides a menu of policy options for consideration among policy makers in the Government of Afghanistan, including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Higher Education, as well as stakeholders and beneficiaries of the higher education sector such as public and private higher education institutions, members of the academic community, development partners, and employers and business leaders. The information and analysis presented in the report can contribute to the preparation and implementation the next phase of the higher education development strategy for Afghanistan. Finally, the analysis in the report will inform future support from the World Bank for higher education in Afghanistan.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**E1. Enhancing education outcomes and accelerating human capital accumulation is at the heart of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).** The government is fully aware of the rising importance of human capital in the modern global economy [MoHE-USAID (20120)]. In addition, policy makers recognize the contribution that education can make to promoting the civic values and attitudes needed for a modern, enlightened democracy, and to the development of a socially cohesive nation. Education is one of the top three priorities relating to the country's economic and social development [GoA (2008)].

**E2. The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has a National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP): 2010-2014, which is linked to the ANDS.** The NHESP was produced through a wide-ranging process of consultation with key stakeholders in the higher education sector, such as government policy makers and officials, university academics and researchers, parents and students. The NHESP sets out the vision, goals and objectives of the higher education system [MoHE (2009)]. The NHESP is structured around seven priority values: higher quality of tertiary education; promoting national unity; ethics and integrity; equity; good governance, effectiveness and efficiency; institutional autonomy; and public accountability. The MoHE is now in the process of preparing a new Higher Education Strategy from 2014-2018.

### HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**E3. Investment in human capital has a positive and increasing impact on economic welfare, at all levels of education from primary schooling upwards through higher education, for both urban and rural populations in Afghanistan.** In addition, as the education levels of individuals rises their welfare, measured by consumption expenditures per capita, increases. These findings support the notion that investment in human capital is an important determinant of the economic welfare of households in Afghanistan. Further, the higher education coefficients are larger than the coefficients of any other levels of education, for individuals in both the urban and rural sectors. In the urban sector individuals with postgraduate qualifications enjoy the highest levels of welfare, followed by graduates and then graduates from teacher training centers. In the rural sector, graduates enjoy the highest levels of welfare followed by graduates from teacher training centers.

**E4. The economic relevance of university education is considered of central importance in the universities of both developed and developing countries.** University graduates need to emerge from the university system with the academic knowledge, technical competence and soft skills that make them employable in both private and public sector institutions. Some university systems, especially in developing countries, produce graduates that find it hard to get jobs, especially in the private sector, due to inadequate curriculum choices. A curriculum that is relevant to the economic needs of a country is a mark of a quality higher education system, and is a key justification for public investment in university education.

**E5. Soft skills of graduates are important in the labor market, especially for graduates from arts, humanities, general science and social science degree programs.** Graduates from these degree programs, unlike graduates of professional degree programs such as engineering, medicine, teaching and law, usually seek work in a wide and varied range of administrative, managerial and technical jobs. In addition, they can work in either the public sector or the private

sector. Hence, it is important that these graduates have the soft skills, such as habits of industry and disciplined work, the ability to cooperate in teams, and the capability to work punctually and to deadlines, which are useful in general administrative and managerial occupation. Fluency in modern international languages such as English, and the use of modern technology such as IT, is also essential for these graduates.

**E6. There is growing evidence on the significant social benefits of higher education.** These include contributions to democratic institutions, human rights, political stability, lower state welfare costs, lower health costs, lower public incarceration costs and so on [McMahon(2010)]. In the context of Afghanistan it is particularly important to highlight the critical role of higher education in fostering democracy and forging a unified national identity.

**E7. Universities have a key role in promoting social cohesion.** Various factors contribute to social cohesion, including shared norms or values, and a shared sense of identity [Easterly (2006)]. Particularly in light of the varied ethnic and social landscape of Afghanistan, higher education institutions provide one of the few spaces to demonstrate collaboration and foster shared values among the diverse citizenry. The academic content and research, especially in the social sciences and humanities, provide further opportunities for promoting the shared values which contribute to a cohesive society.

## **PATTERNS OF ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**E8. Higher education enrollment in Afghanistan is one of the lowest in the world.** The higher education gross enrollment ratio (GER) is about 5 percent. This is one of the lowest higher education participation rates world-wide. Among countries comparable to Afghanistan, in terms of income per capita and/or their geographical locations close to Afghanistan, only three countries, Burundi, Chad and Eritrea have lower higher education enrollment rates. Countries with per capita incomes closest to Afghanistan, such as Guinea, Rwanda and Togo, have higher gross enrollment rates.

**E9. There are two main reasons for the low enrollment in higher education in Afghanistan.** First, the 1980s and 1990s were a turbulent and violent period in the country, and education attainment levels declined. This affected all levels of education, including higher education. Second, education attainment among women is particularly low in Afghanistan. The three percent enrolled in higher education consists disproportionately of male students. Females comprised only 19% of all students enrolled in public universities and higher education institutions in 2012 [MoHE (2013)]. Low female enrollment is partly due to the smaller number of girls compared to boys in the secondary school system, which reduces the pool of women available to move on to higher education. However, it is also partly due to the lack of sufficient transport services, and sanitation and residential facilities in campuses, for young women to attend university. Also, in some cases, young women eligible to enter university may also be mothers, in which case the absence of adequate child care facilities such as crèches and nurseries are also important constraints to female enrolment.

**E10. Afghanistan will need to expand enrollment in higher education over time.** There is strong demand for higher education from secondary school completers, and the pressure for expansion is already being felt in both public and private higher education institutions. The Government of Afghanistan (GoA) needs to develop a rational and efficient strategy for

increasing higher education enrollment. Expanding the enrollment of young women would be particularly important. To achieve this, Afghanistan will need to provide for facilities that female students and staff consider very important, such as adequate sanitation on-campus, secure residential facilities, and safe transportation for female students. Increasing female enrollment in universities is a top priority for the future development of higher education.

## ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

**E11. Developing a good quality university system is a key challenge facing Afghanistan.** Policy makers in the country consider improving the quality of university education to be one of the foremost priorities for the future development of higher education [MoHE (2009); MoHE-USAID (2012)]. The quality of a university system has multiple dimensions. These include the quality of academic performance of students, especially in relation to international standards for their disciplines and study programs; the economic and social relevance of graduates; and the research outputs of academic staff, such as journal articles, books and monographs [Salmi (2009); Altbach and Salmi, (2011)]. The various dimensions of university education quality are, in turn, the result of a number of inputs and processes, and their interactions and inter-relationships. Afghanistan is beginning to address these elements of higher education quality, after a period of reconstruction of the university system.

**E12. A higher education system stands or falls by the quality of its human resources. Adequately qualified, well-motivated academic staff members are essential for successful development of higher education.** The State and individual higher education institutions will both benefit by recruiting and retaining academic and managerial staff of appropriate quality into the higher education sector. Human resource policy initiatives are often aimed at new academic staff: the inflow into the system. However, as great a challenge for many academic systems is changing the skills and work culture of the stock of existing academics in current system, especially older, well-established staff.

**E13. Continuing staff development is extremely important to strengthen the quality of academic work.** This is relevant for young staff entering the profession and for mid-career academics. Staff development centers typically train academics in modern teaching-learning methods, the use of technology in instruction, the structuring of curricula and the design of courses, assessment methods, communication and motivation. In some countries participation in a training course is compulsory before entering a university job. In other countries it is mandatory for new lecturers to pass a certificate program to become a confirmed tenure track academic. A good staff development center itself needs to be staffed by suitably qualified, trained and competent full-time academic staff and a management cadre.

**E14. A substantial proportion of physical facilities in many universities are in poor condition and unsuitable for modern teaching and learning.** In addition, a large backlog of maintenance and repair exists, both for facilities and equipment. The country needs to invest in a long-term repair, renovation and refurbishment program. The government could set aside a specific fund for this purpose over a designated period of, say, five years. The resources invested in the fund need to be linked to the creation of a maintenance culture. This would require the provision of adequate resources each year for a rolling preventive maintenance program, as well as training, and the application and enforcement of efficient work norms, for maintenance staff.

**E15. The Afghanistan MoHE has commenced the development of a Quality Assurance (QA) system.** The MoHE undertakes external quality assurance reviews of public universities. The universities also have Quality Assurance cells, to assist with the internal review process. The MoHE has initiated the process of external and internal quality assurance, with the development of protocols and procedures, training of staff, and implementation of reviews. While there has been good progress on quality assurance at a basic level in the recent past, the system now needs to be raised to a new level.

**E16. Establishing linkages with international Quality Assurance networks can be very useful for Afghanistan.** The Afghan higher education sector has been relatively isolated, and the universities have been separated from the levels of quality observed internationally. It will be difficult for Afghan universities to demonstrate that their QA standards are of adequate rigor and substance. As a result, it would be useful for the QA system to be linked with recognized international QA networks, such as the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). The APQN includes agencies from developed countries such as Japan and Australia, South-East and East Asian middle-income countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and China, and other countries in South Asia such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India. Over time, Afghanistan is likely to benefit considerably through membership and participation in APQN.

**E17. The establishment and development of Internal Quality Assurance Units (IQAUs) would be a key policy measure.** The aim of an IQAU is to support the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and heads of faculties and departments to establish and maintain a continuous quality culture in the university. The role and functions of an IQAU will reflect the national system for quality assurance and may depend on what the national QA Unit does. If there is an active national External Quality Assurance function, the work of the IQAUs will be partly responsive, but also locally proactive in promoting and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the university.

## **STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

**E18. Governance is of central importance to the performance and effectiveness of university systems.** Globally, the trend in developed and developing countries over the last two decades has been to promote greater autonomy of universities. This trend has been driven by the observation that the overwhelming majority of the world's most famous universities, especially the celebrated elite research universities in the U.S.A., have enjoyed and operated within an atmosphere of considerable autonomy [World Bank (2010)]. In addition, as higher education systems have grown rapidly, close government control has tended to hamper the improvement of quality and the ability of public universities to respond flexibly to evolving economic and social needs [World Bank (2012b)]. Afghan policy makers have expressed interest in promoting autonomy, based on their experience of an expanding higher education system.

**E19. Afghan public universities have historically operated in a highly centralized structure with little autonomy.** There are considerable limitations and constraints for the public universities to exercise academic and administrative autonomy. Academic responsibilities such as: (a) appointments, promotions, salaries and dismissal of academic staff; (b) establishment of academic standards and curricula; (c) decisions on the size of enrolments; (d) awarding of degrees; and (e) decisions on the introduction of new courses and the elimination of old courses,



require review and approval by the MoHE. Procedural responsibilities such as procurement and purchase of material, and financial management, are also considerably centralized.

**E20. Higher education policy makers in Afghanistan need to decide the degree of autonomy, and the type of accountability, which are needed to promote high quality public universities.** Preferably, academic autonomy should be maximized, subject to the requirements and constraints of a centrally funded public university system. The curricula offered in various degree programs, the teaching-learning processes, and the assessments methods, should be devolved to the individual universities, as far as possible. The only regulation would be through a sound quality assurance and accreditation process. The universities would themselves participate in this quality assurance process through regular self-reviews, combined with external reviews. Similarly, universities and academics should enjoy full autonomy when deciding on research projects and activities.

**E21. Staff development centers (SDC) in universities could be of value in facilitating and developing the skills needed among academic and professional staff for greater autonomy.** The focus of a SDC is the development of the human resource capacity within a university. This covers all categories of staff and their training and development needs, which should be developed within the framework of an overall Human Resource Development plan that reflects the needs of the university's strategic plan.

**E22. The Government of Afghanistan recognizes the importance of promoting private sector participation in higher education for the long-term development of the country.** The MoHE would like actively develop private universities, both as a cost- effective strategy to expand access and enrollment, and to promote the delivery of quality degree programs relevant for the labor market. In this context, the government needs to establish a suitable accreditation framework for higher education.

**E23. A regular and effective accreditation process that has the confidence of the private providers and that can assure the general public about the quality of provision is extremely important.** The accreditation system should be built on the foundation of the external quality assurance reviews. The same independent, external quality reviews need to be applied consistently, with similar standards, for both public and private universities. The accreditation process which would be based on the external quality assurance reviews would then be perceived as fair and equitable for both public and private higher education institutions.

## **INCREASING INVESTMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**E24. Public investment in higher education is moderate.** The Government of Afghanistan invests about 0.5 percent of GDP and around 1.4 percent of government expenditure. This places Afghanistan in the middle, but more towards the lower group, of South Asian and low-income developing countries. The relatively modest share of public investment in higher education can be attributed to several factors. First, as a country which is still trying to provide universal basic education for children, the lower levels of education are a policy priority. Second, the higher education sector is just beginning to develop, after a lengthy period of decline during the 1970s-1990s. Hence, the momentum of higher education development has just started, and the demand for greater investment in higher education is beginning to be felt only now. Third, a significant

share of public investment in education is provided by development partners. The majority of development partners award greater priority to basic education over higher education.

**E25. The Government of Afghanistan is seeking to increase investment in higher education to meet the future challenges of expanding access, and raising quality and relevance.** Adequate, consistent and sustainable financing of higher education is a necessary condition for the development of a higher education system. However, the scope for enhancing public investment in higher education through the government budget is limited, given competing priorities at other levels of education, and in other sectors including health care and physical infrastructure. Therefore, the government needs to consider options to raise resources for higher education through alternative means. In this context, the country has two broad sets of options: (a) introduce reforms to the way public universities are funded, diversify their sources of revenue and enhance the efficiency of funds utilization; and (b) promote private sector participation in higher education. Within each of these broad sets of options there are several different alternatives, which generate a variety of models of higher education financing. The country needs to select from among these options and develop the best models for itself. This choice will be influenced by factors such as the country's overarching policy objectives, the resource envelope available to the government, and the political and economic context of higher education reform and development.

## STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Key Needs	Strategic Medium-Term Development Initiatives	Long-Term Development Initiatives
Controlled, diversified and equitable expansion of higher education	<p>Enhance the gender sensitivity of facilities and services in public universities</p> <p>Pilot innovative modes of provision of higher education programs</p>	Expand labor market-oriented degree programs and professional courses
Enhancing the quality of university education	<p>Increase the proportion of university academic staff with Masters level qualifications</p> <p>Establish international linkages for the quality assurance system.</p> <p>Increase the stock of facilities and equipment to enable modern teaching and learning</p>	<p>Increase the proportion of university academic staff with Ph.D. level qualifications</p> <p>Establish Internal Quality Assurance Units in universities</p>
Strengthening the governance of universities	<p>Gradual increase academic autonomy, especially in curriculum design and delivery, teaching-learning processes, and assessment methods</p> <p>Promote quality assurance mechanisms within public universities</p> <p>Develop a sound registration, quality assurance and accreditation system for private higher education</p>	<p>Increase procedural autonomy in higher education</p> <p>Apply the same norms and processes for quality assurance and accreditation of public and private higher education institutions</p>
Improving the economic and social relevance of higher education	<p>Incorporate employability of graduates as a key indicator for higher education on policy and planning</p> <p>Increase the focus on soft skills of students</p>	Broaden the sources of financing of public universities

# CHAPTER ONE

## HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

**1.1. Afghanistan has played a prominent role in world history.** The country is strategically located at the inter-section of Central, South and West Asia, and is bordered by six countries, China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The great silk route of ancient times ran through Afghanistan. The country has a population of about 34 million people living in a land area of around 650,000 square kilometers of mainly mountainous terrain. Afghanistan had a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$ 576 in 2011.

**1.2. Afghanistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita remains one of the lowest in the world, but the country has experienced an exceptionally high growth in the recent past.** Real GDP grew at an average rate of 9 percent per year between 2003/04 and 2010/11 [World Bank (2012a)]. The dynamism in the economy has been driven mainly by investments for reconstruction activities, security and ancillary activities, large aid inflows and periodic spikes in agriculture production. The services and construction sectors, in particular, have experienced strong growth in recent years.

**1.3. Strengthening education outcomes and accelerating human capital accumulation is at the heart of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).** The government is fully aware of the rising importance of human capital in modern economic production activities and processes [see Box 1.1]. Education is one of the top three priorities relating to the country's economic and social development in the ANDS [see Figure 1.1]. In addition, policy makers recognize the contribution that education can make to promoting the civic values and attitudes needed for a modern, enlightened democracy, and to the development of a socially cohesive nation.

#### Box 1.1: Education in Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013

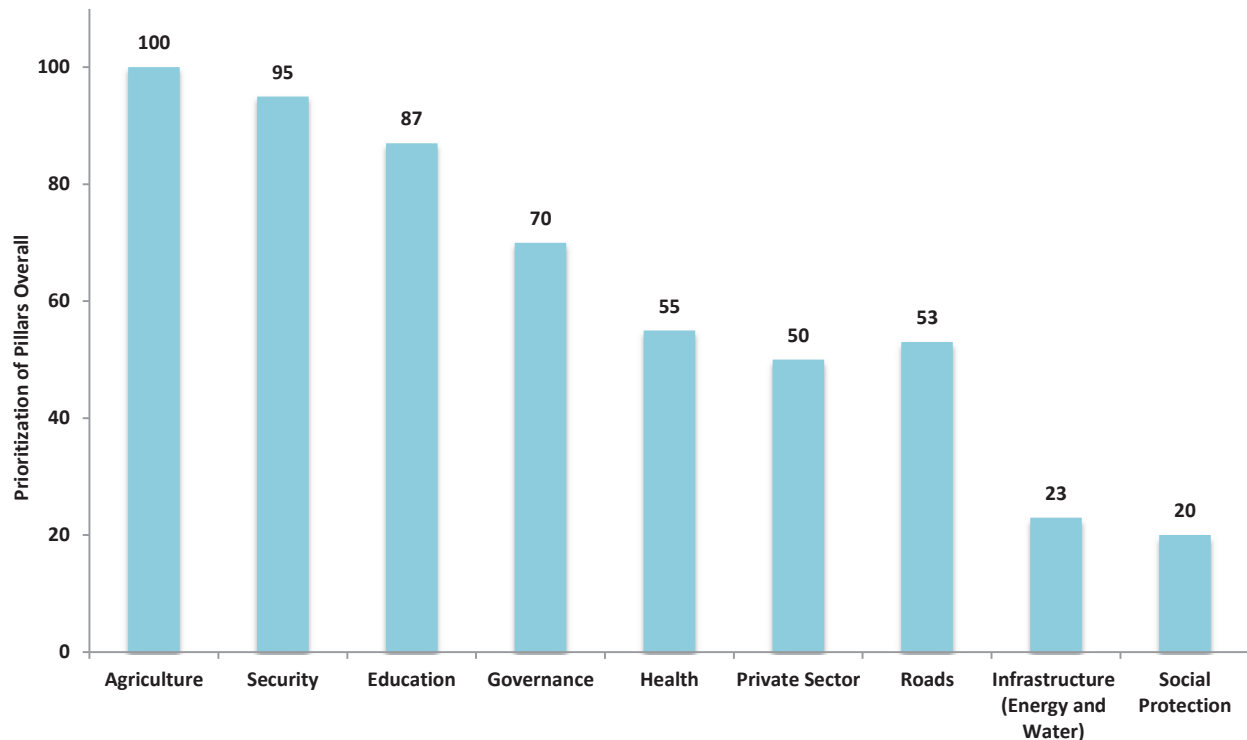
The ANDS strategic vision for this sector is that regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status or religious affiliation, all Afghans will have equal access to quality education to enable them to develop their knowledge and skills and thereby maximize their potential. "An education sector that engenders a healthy workforce with relevant skills and knowledge is a key to long-term economic growth. "

Source: Government of Afghanistan (2008)

**1.4. Higher education, along with other levels of education, is a critical engine of growth and development.** The higher education system produces the pool of high level human resources, including policy makers, administrators, managers, entrepreneurs, engineers, highly skilled technicians, as well as qualified teachers and academics, who are vital for development. Even in the case of Afghanistan, where there is still room for primary and secondary education to fully expand, the country cannot afford to wait before igniting the higher education engine. The overall economic development of the country largely hinges on the availability of such a pool of

well-educated human resources. Secondly, with the expansion of the number of graduates from secondary education, social demand is rapidly reaching the university level and adequate responses need to be devised to meet this demand.

**Figure 1.1: Prioritization of Ranking of Sectors in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013 (Percent)**



Source: Government of Afghanistan (2008)

**1.5. The Government of Afghanistan is aware that higher education can produce a wide and varied range of economic and social benefits, and places great emphasis on the development of the higher education sector.** The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has a National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP): 2010-2014, which is linked to the ANDS. The NHESP was produced through a wide-ranging process of consultation with key stakeholders in the higher education sector, such as government policy makers and officials, university academics and researchers, parents and students. The NHESP sets out the vision, goals and objectives of the higher education system [MoHE (2009)].

The NHESP is structured around seven priority values:

- (a) higher quality of tertiary education;
- (b) promoting national unity;
- (c) ethics and integrity;
- (d) equity;
- (e) good governance, effectiveness and efficiency;
- (f) institutional autonomy; and
- (g) public accountability.

There has been strong progress on many of these goals in recent years [MoHE-USAID (2012)].

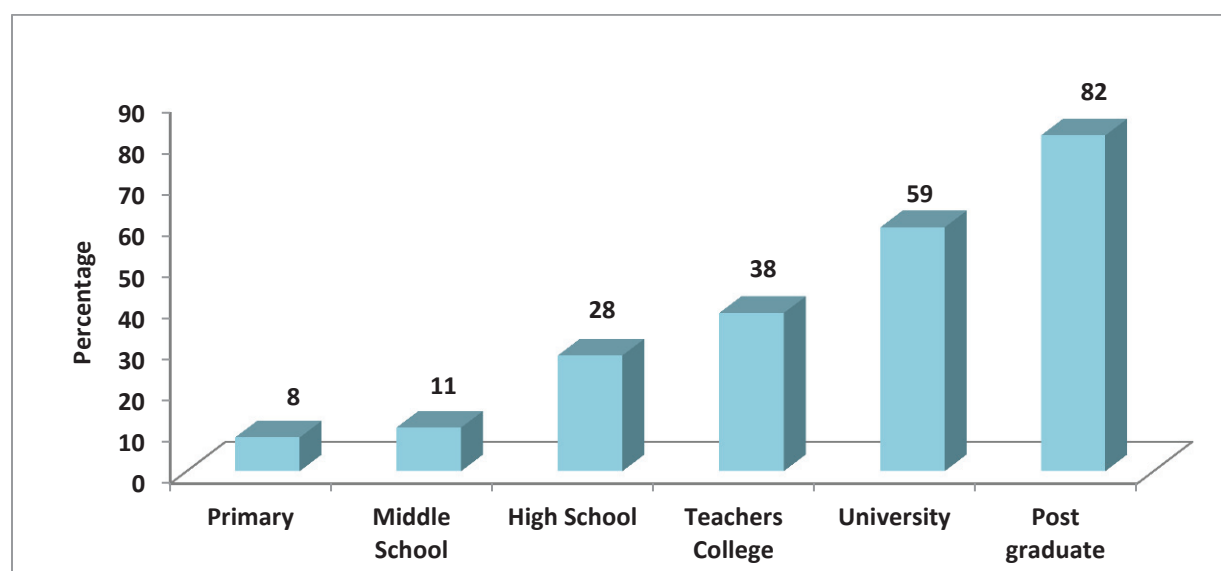
1.6. **The MoHE is currently in the process of extending and updating this national strategic plan to cover the period 2014-2018.** The analysis in this report covers key dimensions of higher education access, quality, governance and financing, which can contribute to the extension and updating of the higher education strategy and program for the country. The discussion reflects lessons learned during the implementation of the present strategy, new information on higher education around the world, and on fresh policy priorities. The report also incorporates information and ideas provided by a wide variety of government counterparts, universities, academics, researchers, employers, business communities and students.

## Economic and Social Benefits of Investment in Higher Education

### Education and Economic Welfare

1.7. **Human capital is well-known as a central determinant of the economic performance and social well-being of countries in the modern global economy.** The key feature that distinguishes between the economies of high-income countries, middle-income nations and low-income countries is the knowledge content of their production processes and economic activities. Agriculture, industry and, in particular, services have become increasingly knowledge and skill intensive in the recent past. Moreover, the importance of knowledge and skills is increasing at an accelerating pace. Among advanced countries, for instance, the education levels of their populations are the single most important factor determining their economic performance [Hanushek and Welch (2006); Hanushek and Woessmann (2008)]. Among middle-income and low-income countries, too, economies that have high education levels enjoy substantial welfare benefits [Fasih (2008); Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (2011)]. Human resource development is particularly important for the economic development of low-income countries.

**Figure 1.2: Impact of Education on Economic Welfare, Urban Sector**

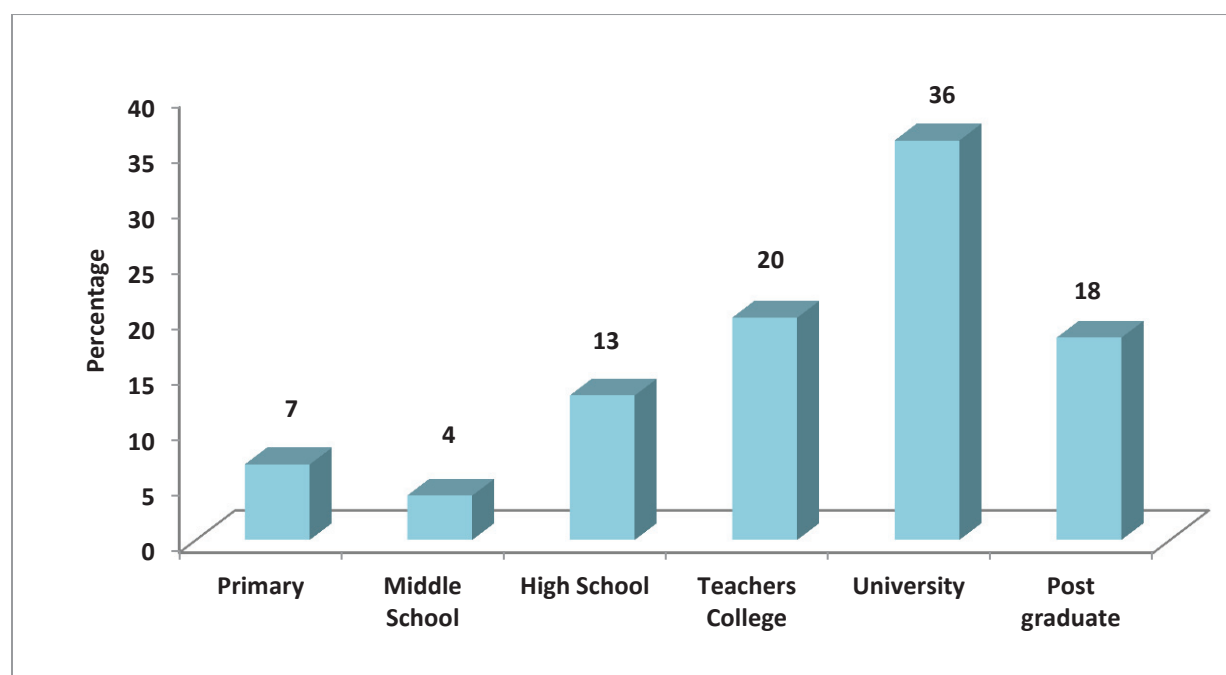


Source: Econometric analysis by Bank Staff Team. Results are reported in Table C1 of Appendix C

1.8. **Investment in human capital has a positive and increasing impact on economic welfare, at all levels of education from primary schooling upwards through higher education, in Afghanistan.** This applies for both urban and rural populations in the country [see Figure 1.2. and Figure 1.3].<sup>1</sup> As the education levels of individuals rise their welfare, measured by consumption expenditures per capita, increases. These findings support the notion that investment in human capital is an important determinant of economic welfare in Afghanistan. Further, the positive impact of higher education on economic welfare is stronger than the impact of other levels of education, for individuals in both the urban and rural sectors. In the urban sector, individuals with postgraduate qualifications enjoy the highest levels of welfare, followed by university graduates. In rural areas, university graduates enjoy the highest levels of welfare, followed by school teachers.

1.9. **The impact of education on economic welfare is greater among individuals in urban areas than among individuals in rural areas.** This is a common finding across countries. It can be attributed to the greater human capital intensity of urban jobs, which are largely service sector and manufacturing jobs, compared to jobs in the rural sector, which are mainly in the agricultural sector. Education enables individuals in urban areas to obtain better paying jobs in services and manufacturing industry. Education also enables individuals in rural areas to migrate to urban centers in search of more prosperous economic opportunities.

**Figure 1.3: Impact of Education on Economic Welfare, Rural Sector**



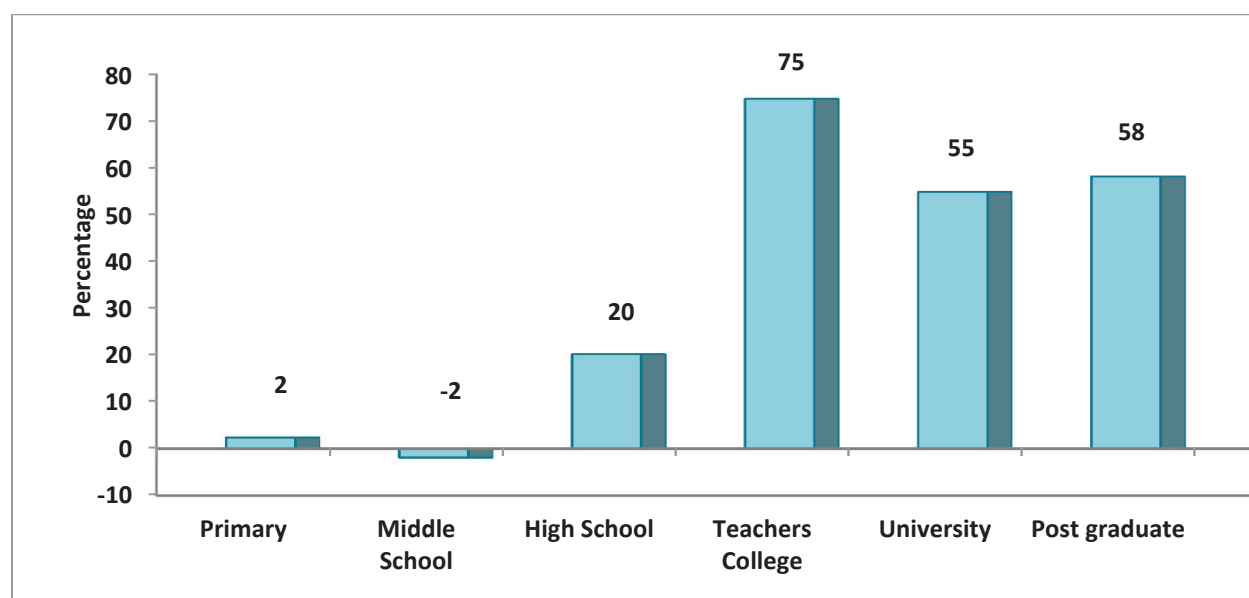
Source: Econometric analysis by Bank Staff Team. Results are reported in Table C1 of Appendix C

<sup>1</sup> This is also clearly demonstrated in the econometric analysis presented in Table C.1 in Appendix C, where all the regression coefficients from primary education to higher education are positively signed and statistically significant.

## Education and Female Labor Force Participation

1.10. **The contribution of education towards the promotion of female labor force participation is an extremely important component of gender development and the empowerment of women.** The relationship between female education and female labor force participation is shown in Figure 1.4 and Figure 1.5. below.<sup>2</sup> Education is strongly and positively associated with female labor force participation of women in the urban sector and, although to a lesser extent, of women in the rural sector. In addition, the likelihood of labor force participation rises with the level of education, for both urban and rural women. Women with higher education qualifications, such as teachers, graduates and postgraduates, are the most likely to participate in the labor market. The positive contribution of higher education to women becoming teachers is especially important in Afghanistan, as the expansion of education enrollment among girls depends to a significant extent on the availability of female teachers.

**Figure 1.4: Impact of Education on Female Labor Force Participation, Urban Sector**



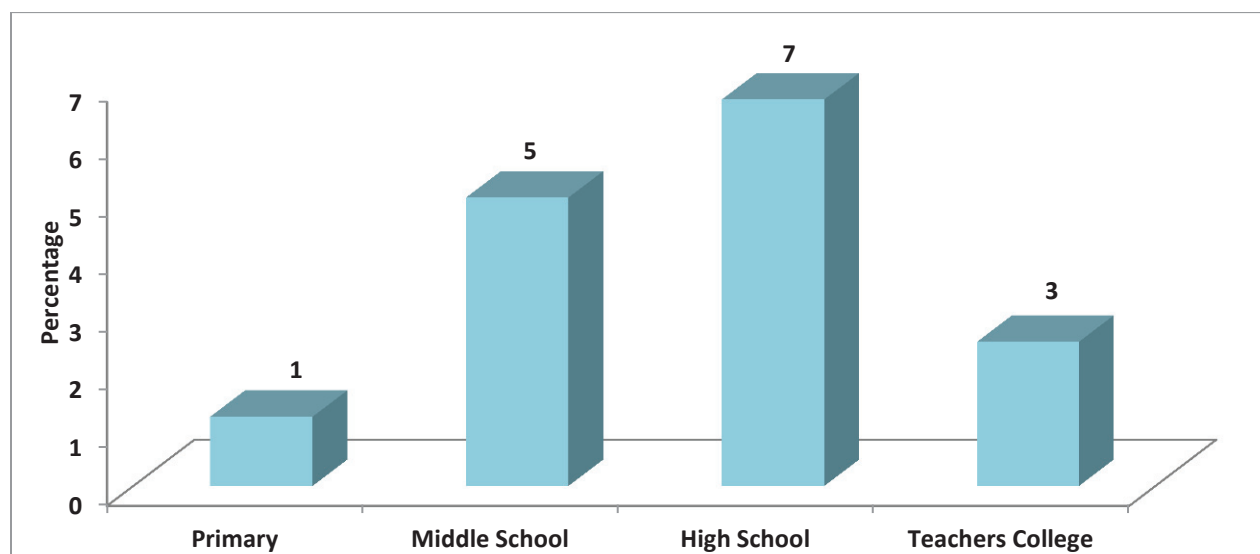
Source: Econometric analysis by Bank Staff Team. Results are reported in Table C2 of Appendix C

1.11. **There are multiple reasons for the higher labor force participation probabilities of women as education levels rise.** First, there are self-selection effects, as women who study up to higher levels of education are likely to possess greater ability, and motivation to work. Second, well-educated women enjoy better life-cycle earnings prospects. As a result, the opportunity cost of non-participation in the labor force, in terms of foregone earnings, greater for well-educated women. “Finally, experience from other countries suggests that women with higher education tend to be less constrained by cultural barriers preventing females to join the world of work”.

<sup>2</sup> Table C.2 in Appendix C provides the econometric analysis underlying Figure 1.4 and Figure 1.5.



**Figure 1.5: Impact of Education on Female Labor Force Participation, Rural Sector**



Source: Econometric analysis by Bank Staff Team. Results are reported in Table C2 of Appendix C

### **Externality Benefits of Education**

**1.12. Education generates a variety of externality benefits.** Well-educated individuals, especially women, are better able to control family health, resulting in reduced child and infant mortality, lower morbidity and disease burden, and greater life expectancy. Further, education facilitates social mobility by creating opportunities for individuals from poor and disadvantaged households to raise their economic and social status. A good education system can promote social cohesion among different ethnic, cultural and religious groups by promoting a favorable multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious national identity. A broad range of additional externality benefits of education have been identified and documented in the economic literature. These cover aspects of development such as improved political decision making, lower incidence of crime, and better quality public services delivered by well-educated civil servants. Education also produces inter-generational economic and social benefits: greater education attainment in one generation raises schooling, income, human development and economic welfare in the next [McMahon (2010); OECD (2012)].

**1.13. Education produces a range of social benefits in Afghanistan.** Both maternal and paternal education have a positive relationship with the likelihood of children being educated [Aturupane, Gunatilaka, Shojoo and Ebenezer (2013a)]. This suggests that education is producing inter-generational benefits, as observed in other countries. In addition, education is important for gender development and empowerment in Afghanistan [World Bank (2013)].

**1.14. The effect of maternal education on family health and child well-being is one of the most important social benefits of education.** It is well-known that in developing countries the prevalence of life-threatening communicable diseases and under-nutrition has decreased significantly over time as women have become better educated. This positive association between female education and the health and nutrition outcomes is seen in Afghanistan, too. Children of educated mothers are significantly more likely to be immunized and protected against dangerous illnesses such as tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus [see

Table C.3 in Appendix C]. This favorable relationship rises with the education level of the mother, and is strongest among women with higher education qualifications. In addition, other outcomes which are correlated with education, such as the decision making power of women, are also positively associated with the likelihood of children being immunized and enjoying better health [Aturupane, Gunatilaka, Shojō and Ebenezer (2013b)].

## **The Relevance of Higher Education for the Economy**

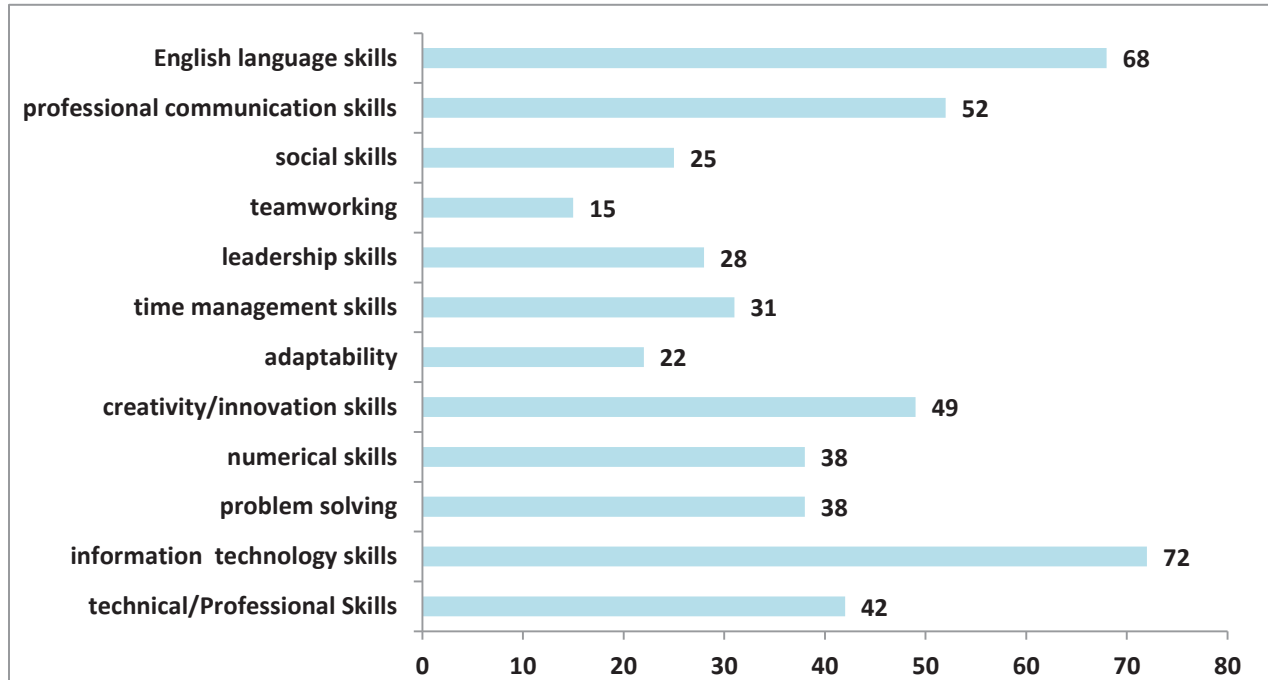
**1.15. The economic relevance of university curricula is considered of central importance in the universities of both developed and developing countries.** University graduates need to emerge from the university system with the academic knowledge, technical competence and soft skills that make them employable in both private and public sector institutions. Some university systems, especially in developing countries, produce graduates that find it hard to get jobs, especially in the private sector, due to inadequate curriculum choices. A curriculum that is relevant to the economic needs of a country is a mark of a quality higher education system, and is a key justification for the investment of scarce public finances in university education.

**1.16. The technical competence of university graduates needs to be strengthened.** The long period of isolation and decline of the Afghan university system in the 1980s-1990s has meant that the curricula taught in universities has become dated and, in some cases, even obsolete. In recent years, the MoHE has sought to establish minimum standards of curriculum quality, with all public universities seeking to use the curricula of Kabul University (where applicable), as the most advanced university. However, over time, all universities should be able to develop their own curricula to international standards, and diversify their curricula so that each institution has a unique and distinct identity.

**1.17. Soft skills of graduates are important in the labor market, especially for graduates from arts, humanities, general science and social science degree programs.** Graduates from these degree programs, unlike graduates of professional degree programs such as engineering, medicine, teaching and law, usually seek work in a wide and varied range of administrative, managerial and technical jobs. In addition, they can work in either the public sector or the private sector. Hence, it is important that these graduates have the soft skills, such as habits of industry and disciplined work, the ability to cooperate in teams, the capability to work punctually and to deadlines, and good communication skills, which are useful in general administrative and managerial occupation. Fluency in modern international languages such as English, and the use of modern technology such as IT, is also essential for these graduates.

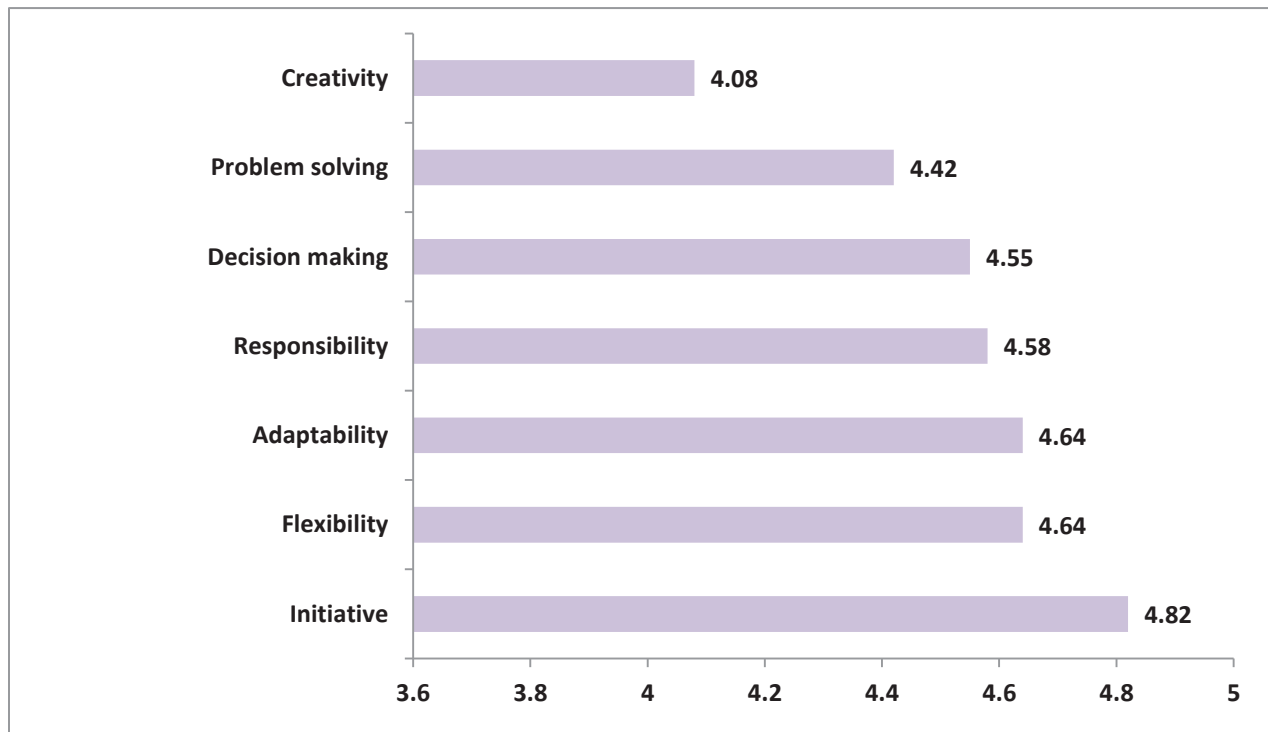
**1.18. The importance of soft skills is universal and increasingly appreciated in countries.** For instance, Malaysian employers consider English language skills, ICT knowledge, good communication skills, and creativity and innovation as high priorities for their staff [Figure 1.6]. Employers in Sri Lanka attach great importance to soft skills such as initiative, flexibility, responsibility, decision-making and problem-solving [Figure 1.7].

**Figure 1.6: Key-Job Specific Skills Required by Employers in Malaysia**



Source: World Bank (2010b)

**Figure 1.7: Priority Soft Skills or Personality Attributes Among Employers in Sri Lanka**



Source: World Bank (2012b)

**1.19. The State can encourage universities to establish close linkages with employers, to better orient degree programs to the world of work.** There are several ways the GoA can encourage universities to forge these partnerships:

- Faculties or departments can be encouraged to create Program Advisory Committees with representatives from the private and public sector to provide advice on the review or modernization of curricula. This would be especially important for the less developed universities, as they seek to advance their institutions.
- The GoA can provide funds to universities so that academic staff can undertake regular and recurring curriculum review and modernization activities.
- Rewards and prizes can be given to those staff who carry out innovative changes to curricula or delivery methods that promote the “soft skills” or “general transferable skills” desired by employers.
- Fostering stronger university-industry linkages. Both public and private institutions can strengthen their linkages with the private sector and with industry to ensure that their curricula better reflect the needs of the workplace. For students, this may include managing and servicing labs and research centers, assignments to work with industry and one-year attachments to industry within sandwich programs. For faculty, encouraging private sector assignments as part of their career development, especially important for engineering and science faculties, to better reflect industry needs in their curriculum; and establishing a permanent industry lecturer program within universities to further strengthen industry-university linkages [World Bank (2007)]. Box 1.2 presents an example of useful university-industry linkages from a developing country, Finland.

**Box 1.2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning through Interdisciplinary Partnerships between University and Industry in Finland**

“You cannot simulate the messiness of the real world. You have to involve real companies.” Universities are increasingly aware that providing a high quality learning experience for their students requires engaging with the real world- with industry. This also means engaging in a multi-disciplinary approach to education because “society’s problems do not exist in silos”.

Over the past 17 years, Finland’s Aalto University has developed a strong platform for collaboration with Finnish industry through its International Design Business Management (IDBM) program. It is set up as a full-year minor study program offered jointly by the Helsinki School of Economics, the University of Art and Design, as well as the Helsinki University of Technology, to complement majors in engineering, design or business – or other subjects. IDBM provides students with real world experience through project-based learning that takes place inside companies. Each company pays the University to engage a multi-disciplinary team of students to tackle a project and produce innovative solutions over the course of a one-year program. Work projects range from designing new applications for mobile radar or waste-water technologies to assessing the innovative potential of Vietnamese companies.

Ultimately this program helps students develop the missing skills and experience critical for workers in a global. The program has trained 703 students in 168 company projects with 114 partner companies, resulting in a direct recruitment platform for IDBM students. It’s not only a win for the students, but for the University and the companies as well. With seven to ten per cent of the IDBM projects resulting in the development of a real-world service or product, there is real value for the industry partner. The university also gains an edge because it is closer to market developments because its students are engaged with cutting-edge business models.

Source: Science and Business Innovation Board (2012)

## **The Social Relevance of Higher Education**

1.20. **In addition to the economic benefits of higher education, there a growing body of evidence on the significant external social benefits of higher education.** These include contributions to democratic institutions, human rights, political stability, lower state welfare costs, lower health costs, lower public incarceration costs and so on [McMahon(2010)]. In the context of Afghanistan it is particularly important to highlight the critical role of higher education in fostering democracy, promoting social cohesion and preserving its history.

1.21. **Higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to foster an accountable and vibrant democracy. At their best, higher education institutions exemplify a culture of empirical research, independent reasoning, and informed debate.** These characteristics lend themselves naturally to the process of building and maintaining a democratic society by: a) providing intellectual leadership in examining what form of political democracy is best suited to a particular society [World Bank (2000)] and; b) ensuring a vibrant democracy by contributing to the process of evaluating and articulating a society's shared values and collective aims. As Afghanistan continues to build a democracy in the context of a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Islamic state, the higher education sector has a vital role to play in shaping its democracy in line with the country's deeply held cultural and religious traditions. Besides providing intellectual leadership in the democratic architecture, higher education institutions have another important role in promoting democracy. They provide an opportunity to cultivate democratic values in students, by modeling a culture of tolerance and of the rejection of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religious belief or social class. Instilling these values in students and preparing them as active citizens will have a wider impact on the society as students impart these values in their professional and personal capacity.

1.22. **Higher education institutions, along with other cultural institutions, serve as important repositories of the shared memory and history of country.** The higher education sector can help to ensure that society has a shared memory [World Bank (2000)]. As a natural place for the study of history, higher education provides the research that forms the basis of history and civics curricula in primary and secondary schools, ensuring that a country's history is recorded and transmitted inter-generationally. As Afghanistan continues to grow as a nation, its higher education sector has a critical role in shaping, preserving and transmitting its history.

1.23. **Higher education institutions have a role in promoting social cohesion.** Social cohesion has been conceptualized as a process of building shared values and enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise and share common challenges, or more instrumentally defined as the nature and extent of social and economic divisions within society [Easterly (2006)]. Although various factors contribute to social cohesion, shared norms or values, and a shared sense of identity are two important factors which contribute to a resilient and cohesive society. Particularly in light of the varied ethnic and social landscape of Afghanistan, higher education institutions may provide one of the few spaces to demonstrate collaboration and foster shared values among diverse citizenry. The higher education setting allows students to explore the possibility of shared identity that extend beyond their traditional ethnic, linguistic, or cultural identity. The academic content and research, especially in the social sciences and humanities, provide further opportunities for promoting the shared values which contribute to a cohesive society.

1.24. **The promotion of social cohesion could include explicit strategies to promote equitable access to higher education, especially when structural obstacles exist.** In the quality realm, especially in content and pedagogical standards, examples of social-cohesion building strategies can include foundational academic courses on pertinent social issues as well as community practice or community service components for students, such as internships and courses with applied community projects. Both staff and students could be included in such social and communities service programs provided by universities.

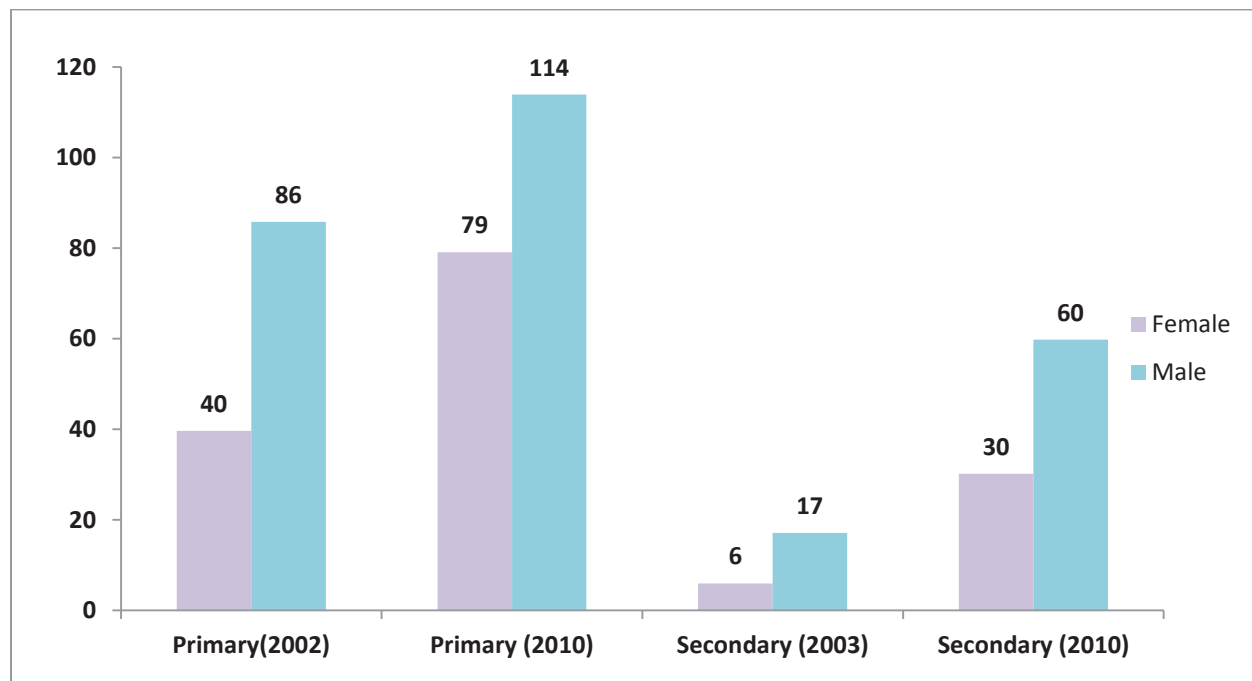
## CHAPTER TWO

### PATTERNS OF ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

#### Introduction

2.1. **The expansion of access to higher education is a key policy priority for Afghanistan.** The potential economic and social benefits of increasing the number of highly educated individuals are known and understood by policy makers. In addition, there is strong pressure to increase higher education opportunities flowing up from the school education system. Primary and secondary school enrolment has grown dramatically in the past decade or so [see Figure 2.1]. In 2002, the gross enrolment rate (GER) for primary school children was about 40 percent for girls and 86 percent for boys, respectively. By 2010 the GER had increased to 79 percent for girls and 114 percent for boys, respectively. Secondary school enrolment also increased for girls from 6 percent in 2003 to 30 percent in 2010, and for boys from 17 percent in 2003 to 60 percent in 2010. The rapid rise in the number of students in primary and secondary education is increasing the pool of students who will demand higher education over the medium to long-term. At present, about 171,000 students sit the the Kankor examination, which concludes secondary education. Around 123,000 students pass, and approximately 51,000 of these students are able to enter public universities, while around 25,000 enter private Higher Education Institutes. This still leaves a considerable number seeking places in higher education.

**Figure 2.1: Trend in Gross Enrollment Rates for Primary and Secondary Children between 2002- 2010**



Source: World Bank Education Statistics (EdStats) database

## Higher Education in Afghanistan in International Context

2.2. **Higher education enrollment in Afghanistan is one of the lowest in the world.** The higher education gross enrollment ratio (GER) is about 5 percent.<sup>3</sup> This is one of the lowest higher education participation rates world-wide [see Table 2.1] even among post-conflict countries. Among countries comparable to Afghanistan, in terms of income per capita and/or their geographical locations close to Afghanistan, only three countries, Burundi, Chad and Eritrea have lower higher education enrollment rates. Countries with per capita incomes closest to Afghanistan, such as Guinea and Togo, have higher gross enrollment rates. There are two main reasons for the low enrollment in higher education in Afghanistan. First, the 1980s and 1990s were a turbulent and violent period in the country, and education attainment levels declined. This affected all levels of education, including higher education. Second, education attainment among women is particularly low in Afghanistan. The five percent enrolled in higher education consists mainly of male students. It is only very recently that female students have begun to enter universities and higher education institutions in any appreciable number.

**Table 2.1: Gross Higher Education Enrollment Rates and GDP per Capita in Low and Lower -Middle Income Countries**

Country Name	Gross enrollment ratio (Percent)	GDP per capita (current US\$)
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>576</b>
Bangladesh	11	735
Burundi	3	271
Chad	2	823
Comoros	7	809
Congo, Dem. Rep.	6	231
Congo, Rep.	6	3,563
Cote d'Ivoire	8	1195
Eritrea	2	482
Guinea	9	502
India	16	1,489
Iraq	16	3,501
Pakistan	5	1,194
Rwanda	5	583
South Asia	14	1,372
Sri Lanka	16	2,835
Tajikistan	20	935
Timor-Leste	17	896
Togo	6	584
Uzbekistan	10	1,547
Yemen, Rep.	10	1,361
Zimbabwe	6	776

Source: World Bank Education Statistics (EdStats) database

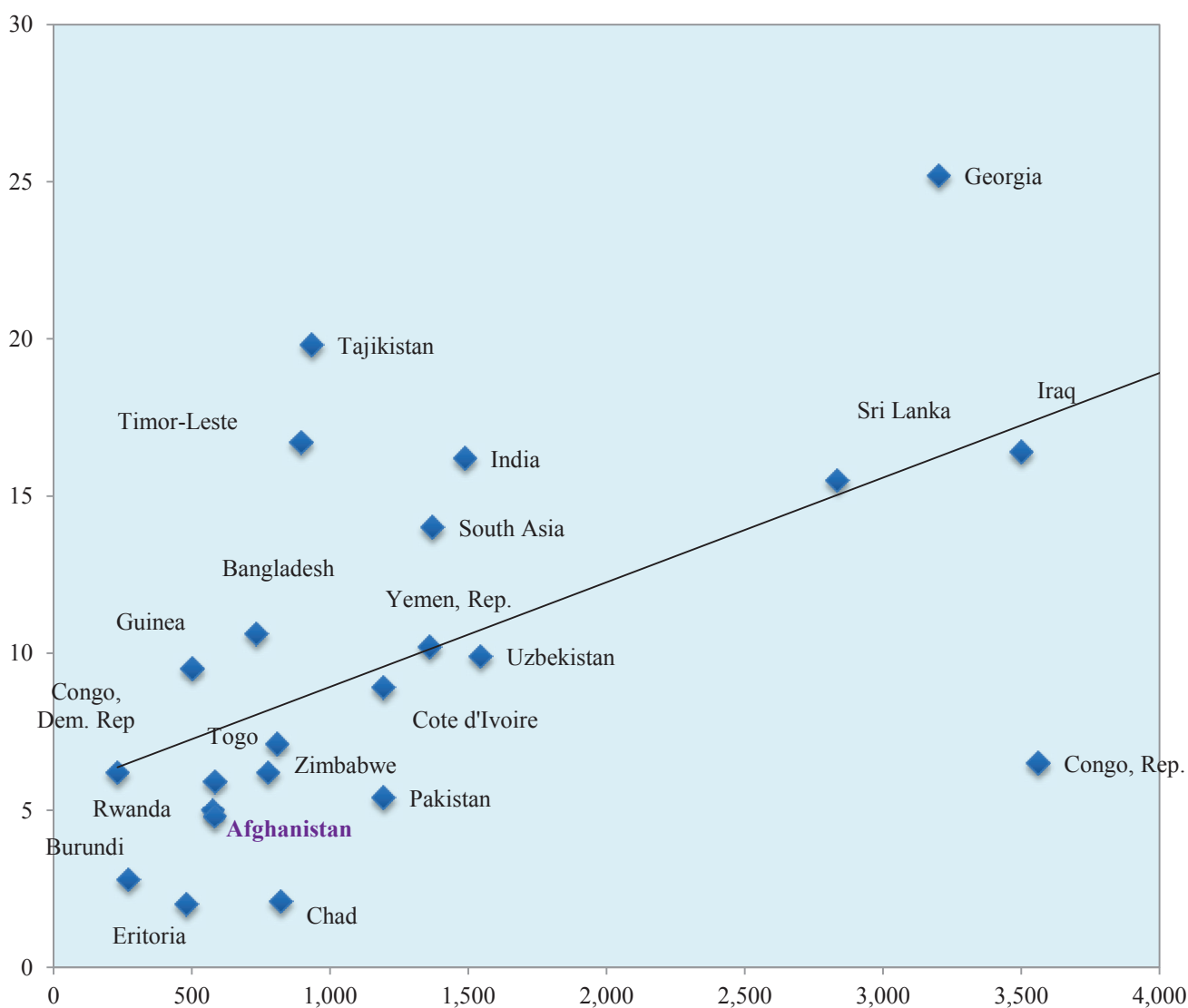
Note: GDP per capita is for 2011. GER is for the nearest available year to 2011.

<sup>3</sup> There are a variety of data sources which give different rates. Where there are conflicting numbers, the analysis in this report is based on the official statistics of the Ministry of Higher Education and UNESCO.



2.3. **Higher education enrollment in Afghanistan is below the predicted rate for the country's level of per capita income.** Figure 2.2 presents the higher education GERs and per capita incomes of low and lower-middle income countries. The regression line shows the expected higher education GER for a country, given its per capita income. Countries above the regression line have higher education GERs above the expected values for their per capita incomes. Countries below the regression line have higher education GERs below the expected values for their per capita incomes. The GER for Afghanistan is below the regression line, suggesting that the country under-performs in higher education enrollment, in comparison to its level of per capita income. Due to the low level of higher education attainment in Afghanistan, the country experiences a critical shortage of well-educated professionals, including engineers, technicians, administrators, accountants, agriculturists, and business leaders, to meet the needs of reconstruction, economic growth and poverty reduction [World Bank (2012a)].

**Figure 2.2: Higher Education Gross Enrollment in Relation to GDP Per Capita of Low and Lower- Middle Income Countries**



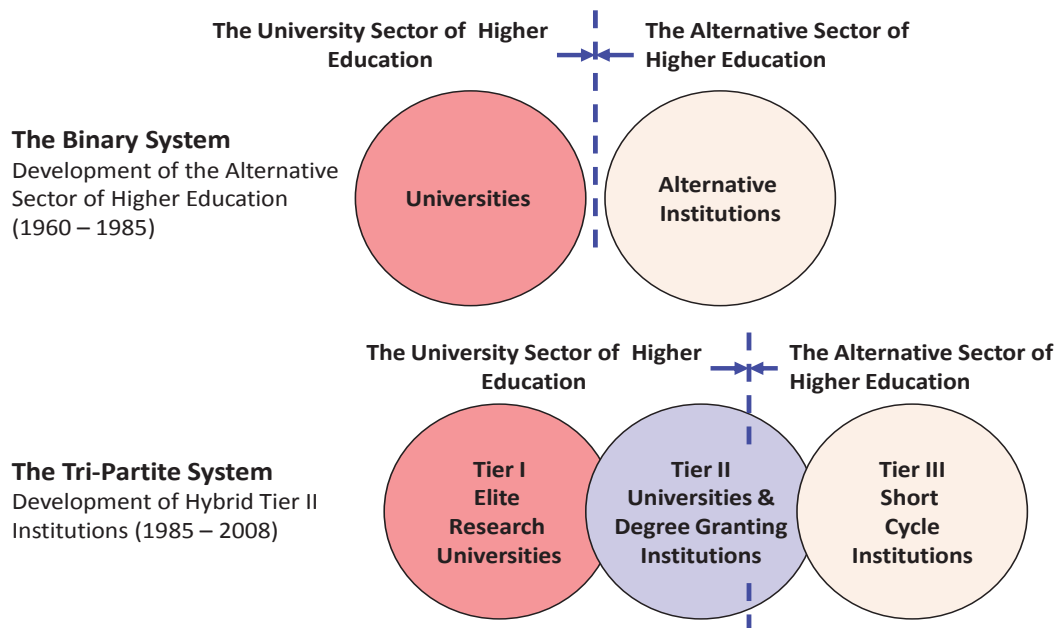
Source: World Bank Education Statistics (EdStats) database

Note: GDP per capita is for 2011. GER is for the nearest available year, usually 2009-2011

## The Higher Education Picture in Afghanistan

2.4. The modern global tertiary education sector consists of universities and of alternative higher education institutions. Universities normally offer degree and postgraduate degree programs. Alternative higher education institutions usually offer short-cycle vocational higher education qualifications, such as professional diploma and certificate programs. Typically, universities offer knowledge-intensive programs, and alternative higher education institutions offer skill-intensive programs. Figure 2.3 below shows how the tertiary education sector can be seen as being constituted of three classified tiers of institutions: Tier I, which consists of elite research and comprehensive universities; Tier II, other universities and degree-granting colleges and institutes; and Tier III, institutions that offer mostly short-cycle, sub-degree programs of about 1–3 years [Mikhail (2008)]. The hierarchy of institutions in Tiers I and II is established by the range and type of degrees offered, the selectivity of admission criteria, and the resources allocated per student.

**Figure 2.3: A Typology of Higher Education in the Modern World**



Source: Mikhail (2008)

2.5. **Afghan universities fit clearly within the universal typology. Universities are dominant, but short-cycle higher education institutions are just being conceptualized.** The Afghan higher education system consists mainly of universities and degree granting higher education institutions. The country has both public universities and private universities. However, a recent initiative of the government is seeking to develop alternative higher education institutions on the model of community colleges in the U.S.A. If designed and implemented well, this is a positive development which would help create an alternative higher education sector,

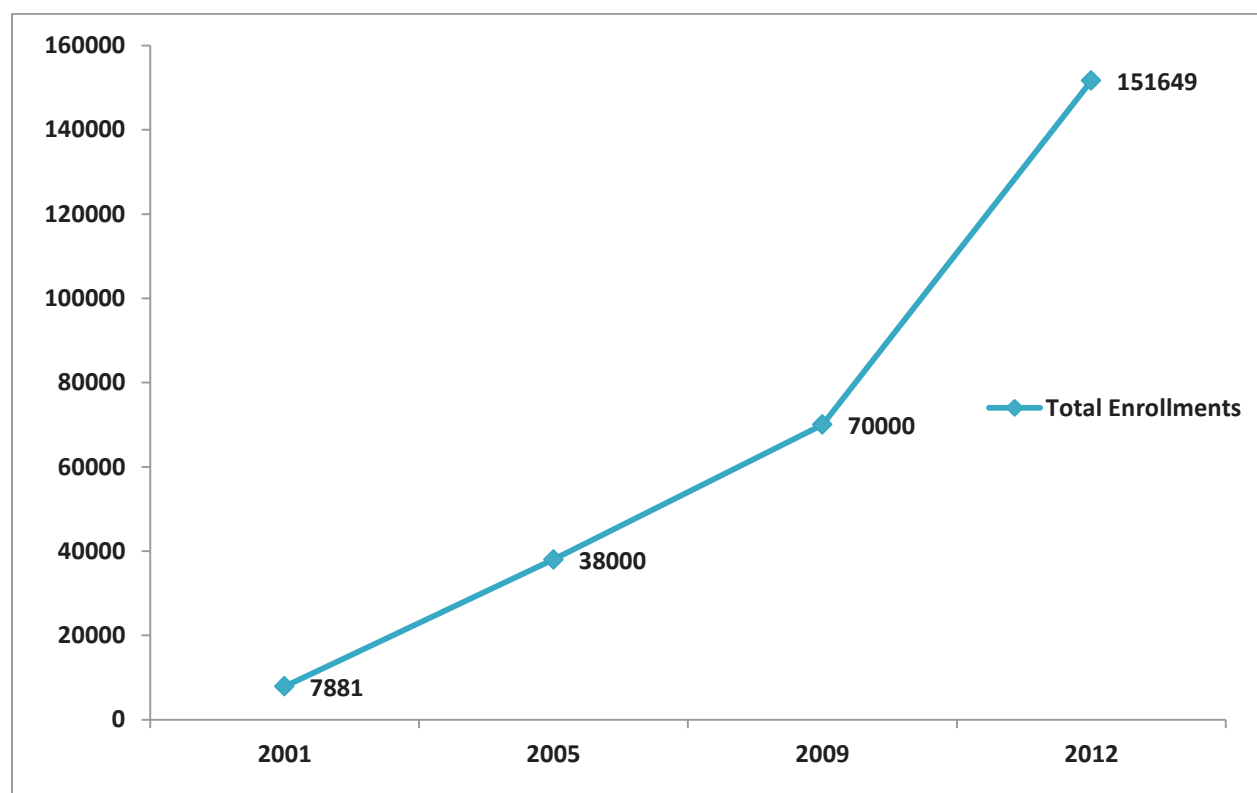
potentially providing skill-intensive, labor-market oriented diploma and certificate level programs and courses, in the country.

## The Time Trend of Higher Education Enrollment

**2.6. Enrollment in higher education has experienced explosive growth around the world in recent decades.** This increase has been the result of a combination of causes. First, the expansion of primary and secondary education worldwide has flowed over into higher education. Second, the economic benefits of higher education have been increasing over the last twenty five years, and generated strong demand for higher education. Third, the supply of higher education places has risen, with rapid increases in the number and enrollment capacity of universities and alternative higher education institutions.

**2.7. Afghanistan, too, has experienced a substantial increase in higher education enrollment over the last decade.** As shown in Figure 2.4 the higher education system has grown significantly in size between 2001 and 2012. The total number of higher education students increased from less than 8,000 in 2001 to about 152,000 in 2012. This increase is particularly noticeable from 2009 onwards, when earlier expansion of primary and secondary education began to feed into the higher education sector.

**Figure 2.4: Total Higher Education Enrollment in Afghanistan (2001-2012)**

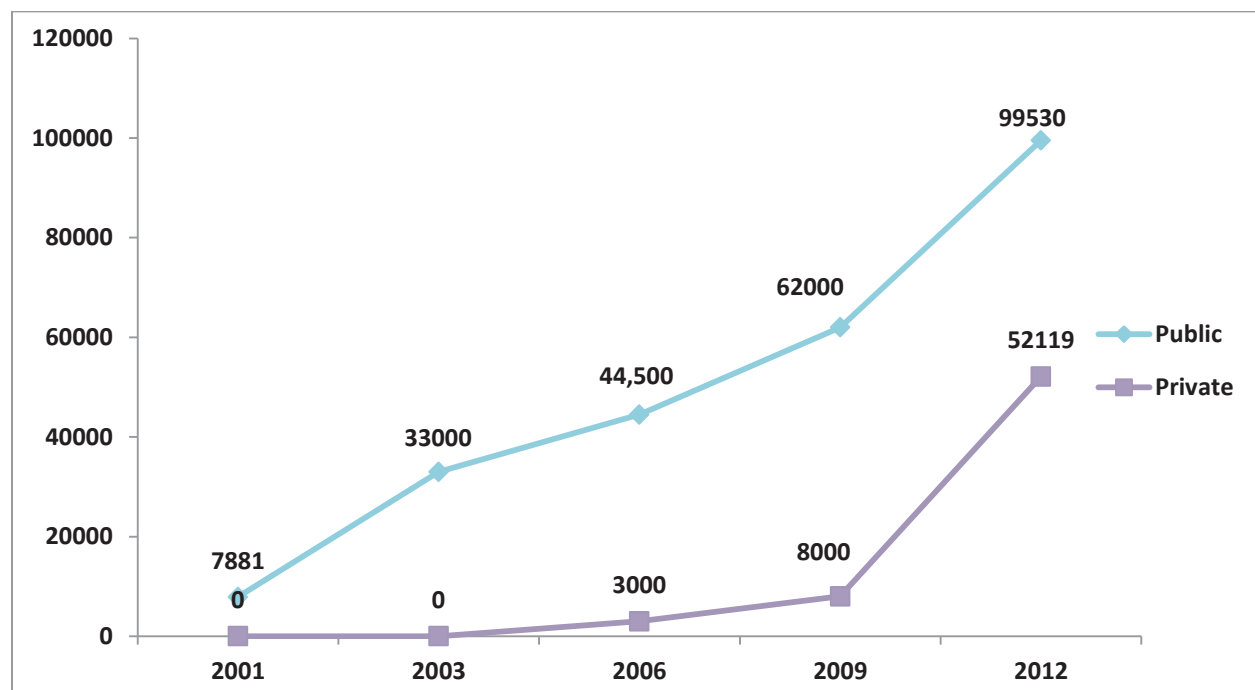


Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2013)

**2.8. The increase in enrollment has mainly been driven by the public sector.** The total number of students in public universities and higher education institutes rose from about 8,000 in

2001 to about 100,000 in 2012 [see Figure 2.5]. However, the private higher education sector has also grown considerably over the same period. Enrollment in private higher education institutions was close to zero in 2001. By 2012, private higher education institutions enrolled about 52,000 students.

**Figure 2.5: Time Trend of Enrolments in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions (2001-2012)**



Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2013)

## The Composition of Higher Education Enrollment

2.9. Afghanistan has a combination of public and private universities and higher education institutions. Currently there are 19 public universities and 12 public higher education degree awarding institutes<sup>4</sup>. There are also estimated to be 68 private higher education institutions, which offer degrees and professional courses [MoHE (2013)].

2.10. **Enrollment in public higher education is unevenly distributed among the 31 public universities and higher education institutes.** Tables A.1 and A.2 in Appendix A present the number of students and staff in public universities and higher education institutes. The numbers enrolled in the public universities vary widely, ranging from more than 17,000 students to fewer than 1,000 students. Kabul University accommodates about 17,500 students, and is by far the largest. The next biggest universities are Nangarhar, Balkh and Herat, with well over 9,000 students each. The smallest university is the recently opened Laghman University, which has 400

<sup>4</sup> These are not short-cycle higher education institutions along the lines of U.S. community colleges, but full degree awarding institutions. They could be classified as universities, although they use the title Institute rather than University.

students. Such small institutions are very expensive and unsustainable in the long-term. Apart from this university, all other universities have over a 1,000 students. The public higher education institutes also vary widely in size, ranging from about 3,175 students and 2,795 students at the Faryab and Parwan Higher Education Institutes, respectively, to just 53 students at the Urzogan Higher Education Institute. The small universities and higher education institutes are relatively new, and were opened in the last few years.

**2.11. The private higher education sector in Afghanistan is growing, enrolling about 34 percent of all students** [see Figure 2.5]. As mentioned, there are about 70 private institutions engaged in the provision of higher education in the country, and about 52,000 students attend these institutions. Compared to many other low-income countries, the private sector in Afghanistan has absorbed a relatively large number of students [see Table 2.2].<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2.2: Private Higher Education Enrollments and Share of Private Enrollment**

Country Name	GDP per capita (current US\$)	GER (Tertiary)	Percentage of private enrollment (Tertiary)
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>34</b>
Angola	5,148	4	37
Bangladesh	735	11	43
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4,821	36	17
Burundi	271	3	53
Central African Republic	483	3	9
Chad	823	2	32
Comoros	809	7	15
Congo, Rep.	3,563	7	30
Cote d'Ivoire	1,195	9	36
Georgia	3,203	25	29
Guinea	502	10	10
Nepal	620	N/A	56
Pakistan	1,194	5	33
Rwanda	583	5	64
Timor-Leste	896	17	43
West Bank and Gaza	N/A	49	57
Yemen, Rep.	1,361	10	20
Zimbabwe	776	6	13

Source: World Bank, Education Statistics (EdStats) database

Note: GDP per capita is for 2011. GER and percentage of private enrollment is for 2009 or nearest available year

**2.12. The demand for higher education is strong, and exceeds the supply available in the country.** Despite the rapid growth of the higher education system over the past decade, there is still insufficient capacity to meet the demand for university. In 2011, approximately 150,000

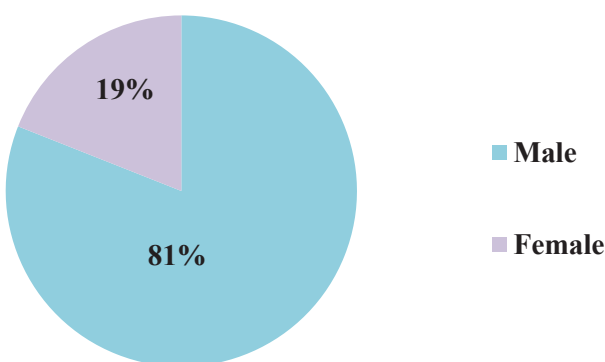
<sup>5</sup> Yemen is a particularly comparable country, given its recent history of social unrest. Private tertiary enrollment stands at about 20 percent of total higher education enrollment in Yemen.

students graduated from secondary school and 117,000 students took the university entrance examination, called the Kankor examination. Of these, 25,000 were accepted into higher education institutions (including study abroad) and 17,000 were accepted into teacher education or technical-vocational institutions. 33,000 chose not to apply for higher education. This left 75,000 high school graduates who did not gain admission because there were insufficient spaces in the higher education sector [MoHE-USAID (2012)].

**2.13. The shortage of higher education opportunities offered within the country has resulted in many Afghan students pursuing degree and postgraduate degree programs abroad.** Over 5,000 Afghan students study in a diverse range of countries including: Germany, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America [see Table A.3 in Appendix A]. Overseas education is an extremely expensive option, particularly if students are enrolled in higher education institutions in developed countries. It also contributes to the brain drain, as many Afghan students who travel overseas fail to return, and take up jobs in foreign countries. There is a clear need to provide a wide range of high quality degree and degree-equivalent professional programs in higher education institutions within the country, and to produce well-educated Afghans for professional and managerial occupations.

**2.14. There is significant gender disparity in higher education enrollment.** This is clear from the information in Table A.1 and Table A.2 in the appendix as well as from Figure 2.6 below. Female students comprised only 19 percent of all students enrolled in public universities and higher education institutions in 2012. Between 2002 and 2012 total participation in higher education increased more than three-fold. The proportion of women enrolling in higher education, too, increased over this period. But this increase occurred at a slower rate among women than among men, so that the percentage of females participating in higher education has declined from 30 percent in 2002 to its current level of 19 percent [World Bank (2005); MoHE (2013)].

**Figure 2.6: Higher Education Enrollment Shares in Public Higher Education Institutions by Gender (2012)**



Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2013)

**2.15. There are a variety of factors that contribute to the sharp gender disparity in higher education participation in Afghanistan,** many of which are identified in the MoHE Gender Strategy. They include the following:

2.16. Gender disparity in secondary education enrollment. Female participation in secondary education in Afghanistan is relatively low, with the most recent data showing a female GER of 30 percent [see Figure 2.8]<sup>6</sup>. As girls get older, the gender gap also widens, from a Gender Parity Index (GPI)<sup>7</sup> of 0.63 at the primary level to 0.48 and 0.38 in secondary and high school, respectively [Oxfam (2011)]. The relatively low participation in secondary education is one of the most important factors contributing to low female enrollment in higher education.

2.17. Distance: The need to travel long distances and/or live away from home has been identified as one of the key factors discouraging women from pursuing tertiary-level studies [World Bank (2010)].

2.18. Lack of security: A general lack of internal security, and especially security for women, is another barrier to women's participation in higher education in Afghanistan. Families have repeatedly expressed hesitance in sending their daughters to university due to a fear for their safety and security [MoHE (2012b)]. Violence against girls' schools has also had an effect on higher education by limiting the pool of young women available for admission to higher education [USAID(2012)].

**Figure 2.7: Gross Enrollment Rate, Secondary Education by Gender**



Source: World Bank, Education Statistics (EdStats) database

2.19. Inadequate physical facilities: There is a lack of adequate facilities for female students, especially sanitation facilities for female students and separate dormitories for girls [Oxfam (2011)]. The Ministry of Higher Education has also identified the lack of dormitory space as a major barrier to women's participation and has set itself a goal of providing an additional 4,000 dormitory room for women by 2015 [MoHE (2012a)]. There is evidence from many countries

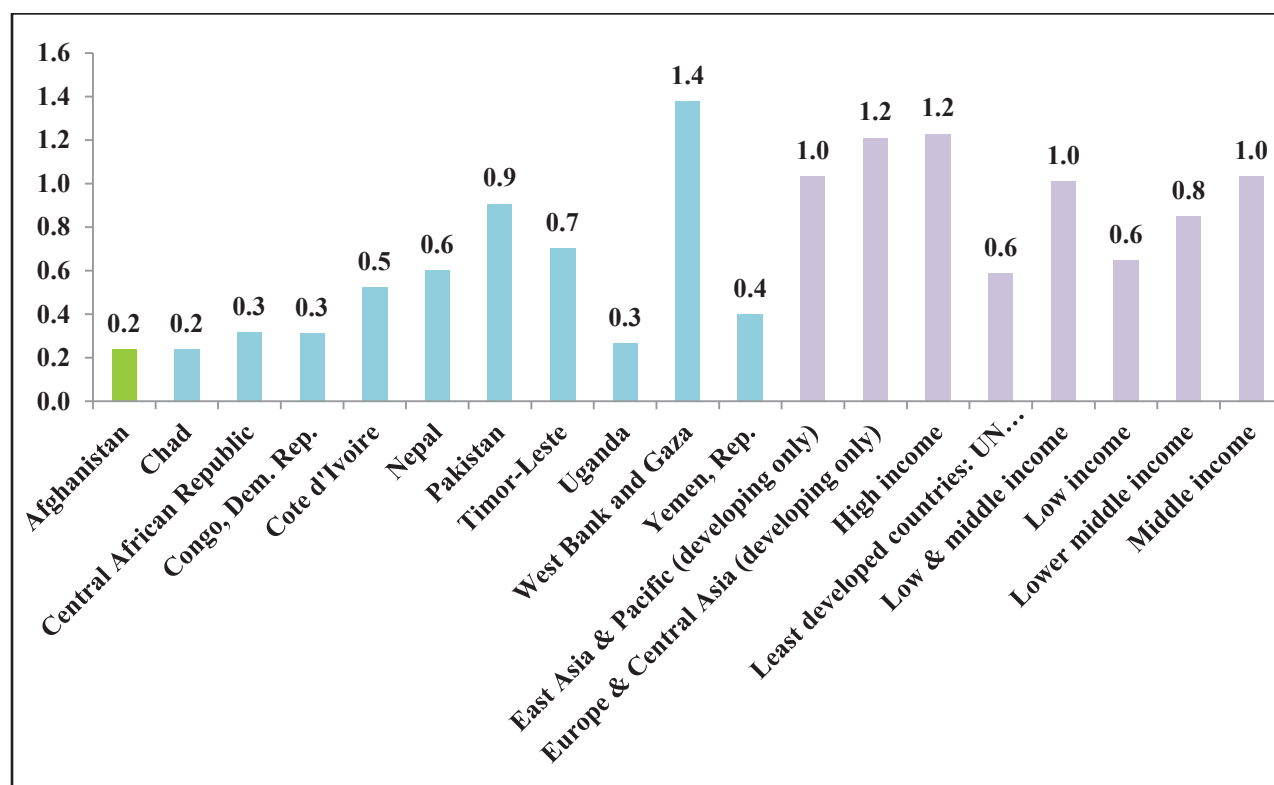
<sup>6</sup> Yemen, a comparable country, has a female GER for lower and upper secondary education of 34 percent and 23 percent respectively [World Bank (2010)].

<sup>7</sup> Ratio of girls to boys (gender parity index) in primary, secondary and tertiary education is the ratio of the number of female students enrolled at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education to the number of male students in each level [ UNMDG Indicators (2013)]

that lack of access to sanitation facilities is a significant barrier to women's participation in education. While the problem is less well-documented at the level of higher education, it is certainly important and pressing in the case of Afghanistan.

2.20. Cultural norms and constraints: Other factors include social norms, which restrict male teachers from teaching female students and discourage women and girls from studying in the same institutions as men. Currently, the ratio of male to female university teachers mirrors that of the student population: roughly 18 percent of teachers in public universities are women [MoHE (2013)]. Forced/early marriage is another cultural factor, repeatedly identified as important barrier to educational participation of women in Afghanistan [MoHE (2012a)]. Nevertheless it is important to note that the supply-side constraints cited above may be greater factors in inhibiting female higher education participation. In a recent survey of school-going girls more than fifty percent of girls interviewed expressed a desire to go to university [Oxfam (2011)]. Equally important, more than half of the parents of the girls interviewed also expressed a desire that their daughters attend college.

**Figure 2.8: Higher Education Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Comparable Countries and Regions**



Source: World Bank, Education Statistics (EdStats) database

Note: Data is for 2011 or nearest available year

2.21. **Globally, women's participation in higher education has significantly increased.** The Global Gender Parity Index for tertiary education stands at 1.08: this suggests that there are more women than men at the tertiary education level [UIS (2013)]. However, as Figure 2.8 indicates, this does not hold true in most low income countries and conflict-affected states. Various studies have identified common barriers in low-income and transition countries, which include: poverty;



socio-cultural factors such as the emphasis on marriage and fertility as more important indicators of women's social value than educational attainment; gender violence and social exclusion; lack of structural interventions to provide information and support for women to enter higher education; and poor quality access to primary and secondary education – particularly in deprived rural areas [Marley and Crossouard (2010)].

**2.22. Conflict-affected states such as Afghanistan pose additional challenges for female participation in higher education.** Research shows that women are often disproportionately affected by conflict situations, especially in terms of their access to health and education. The lack of security, weak governance, and poverty, which characterize conflict-affected areas are key barriers to women's participation in education. Nevertheless, the process of rebuilding in post-conflict settings also presents significant opportunities to institute policies that are beneficial to women and to create a more equal society. If women are to make the most of the opportunities which governance reforms present, investing resources to build their capacity is vital [Harcourt (2009)].

**2.23. The MoHE, recognizing the need to increase female participation in higher education in Afghanistan, has proposed a Gender Strategy for 2012-2014 aimed at increasing the number of women students enrolled in higher education.** The main goals of the MoHE Gender Strategy are outlined below. While these goals are highly laudable, the strategies to achieve these goals are yet to be worked out.

- Increase the number of female students sharply;
- Ensure that women have the opportunity to do as well as men on the Kankor examination;
- Allocate a minimum of 30 percent of scholarships to female students;
- Continue to give female students from war-torn and underserved areas a 15 percent bonus on their Kankor scores;
- Encourage all higher education institutions to establish targets for percentage of women students and faculty members;
- Develop additional policies where needed to protect women on campus; and
- Set-up programs to encourage secondary school women to go to universities.

### **Potential Pathways for the Future**

**2.24. Afghanistan will need to expand enrollment in higher education over time.** The pressure for expansion will be felt in both the public and private sectors. The Government of Afghanistan needs to develop a rational and efficient strategy for increasing higher education enrollment, especially as scarce resources will be needed to finance the growth of the sector.

**2.25. The expansion of private higher education will be a cost-effective and growth promoting strategy for the government.** The pressure for expansion will be felt in both the public and private sectors. The Government of Afghanistan needs to develop a rational and efficient strategy for increasing higher education enrollment, especially as scarce resources will be needed to finance the growth of the sector. Many countries that previously had strong state-dominated education systems, including China, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Georgia, the Slovak Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Cambodia and Vietnam, have diversified and

expanded their higher education systems by encouraging the private sector and by promoting private-public partnerships in higher education. Box 2.1 below outlines Pakistan's strategy to promote Public Private Partnerships (PPP).

### **Box 2.1: Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships in Tertiary Education in Pakistan**

Recognizing the importance of the private sector in the provision of tertiary education the Government of Pakistan has taken steps to promote the participation of the private sector in response to the growing student demand without overburdening the public budget. The approach is two-fold: (i) supporting private institutions with both monetary and non-monetary incentives, and (ii) encouraging private enterprises to contribute to the delivery for education services in public universities. In order to do this, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan took steps to reform the regulatory and funding framework that governs HEIs and also made some funding available to private universities in order to improve the quality and relevance and increase coverage. It is also encouraging private sector cooperation for building and/or operating facilities with the aim of leveraging this initial cooperation to mobilize additional funding through PPP arrangements.

Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (2009)

2.26. Promoting the private sector would have several benefits: (a) in-take capacity in higher education will expand in market-oriented courses, as private HIEs typically offer such programs; (b) it will attract more resources into the higher education sector; and (c) a dynamic private higher education sector will contribute to economic growth. Afghanistan policy makers are aware of the growth potential of the private higher education sector [MoHE (2009)]. Options for expanding the private higher education sector are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 of this report.

2.27. **The public higher education system will also need to grow over time.** While recognizing the tight fiscal space, public institutions may nevertheless have to expand in areas which the private sector is usually not willing to invest, such as programs with heavy up-front set up costs (e.g. engineering) and programs which are important for cultural and social reasons, but which are not necessarily in heavy demand from students. The public university system will need to continue to expand in such programs and courses. In this context the Government could consider diversifying higher education, in order to offer secondary education completers alternatives avenues after graduating. The state could consider directing expansion mainly to the new, small universities (e.g. those with under 2,000 students). Care is needed to increase enrollment so that the quality and labor market relevance of these graduates does not decline. If this can be achieved, it would improve the external efficiency of the new higher education institutions. In addition, other structural requirements, such as societal values and socio-economic factors that can contribute to the participation of women in higher learning, need to be discussed and promoted by national higher education stakeholders.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

#### Introduction

**3.1. Developing a good quality university system is a key challenge facing Afghanistan.** Policy makers, academics and researchers in the country consider improving the quality of university education to be one of the foremost priorities for future development of the higher education sector [MoHE (2009); MoHE-USAID (2012)]. The quality of a university system has multiple dimensions. These include the quality of academic performance of students, especially in relation to international standards for their disciplines and study programs; the economic and social relevance of graduates; and the research outputs of academic staff, such as journal articles, books and monographs [Salmi (2009); Altbach and Salmi, (2011)]. Afghanistan is beginning to address these elements of higher education quality, after a period of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the university system. The various dimensions of university education quality are, in turn, the result of a number of inputs and processes, and their interactions and inter-relationships.

**3.2. The international higher education experience shows that an environment in which high quality learning takes place requires action and commitment at three levels:**

- National agencies and policy makers, who are responsible for quality assurance and enhancement, and resource allocation;
- the individual lecturers and professors, who are mainly responsible for curricula and syllabi, teaching and research, and assessments methods; and
- the academic managers within universities, who are mainly responsible for staff recruitment; facilities and infrastructure; and ICT, equipment and library resources.

**3.3. The role of the State in the quality development of universities is normally to formulate policies, and to prepare and implement a strategic framework.** Central policies can play a vital role in creating the correct climate for a high quality culture to develop. In addition, the State can provide resources and incentives to nurture quality enhancement. But the State cannot mandate for all academic staff to improve the quality of their teaching, nor can it monitor any such mandate. Several of the key steps that improve higher education quality rest at institutional level, and the initiative has to emerge upwards from the universities themselves.

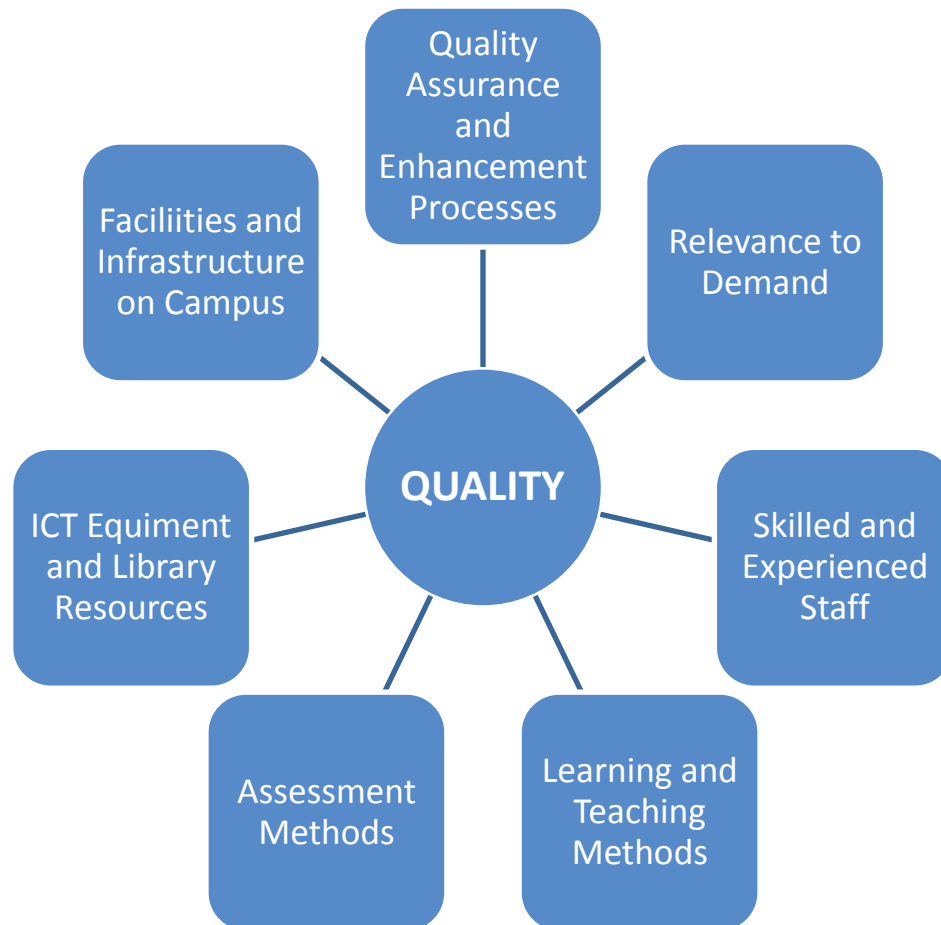
#### Higher Education Quality: A Conceptual Framework

**3.4. The performance of students in a university education system depends on several factors.** The main factors are presented in the model in Figure 3.1. These include:

- The knowledge and experience of academic staff;
- Learning and teaching approaches;
- ICT, equipment and library resources;
- Facilities and infrastructure;
- Assessment methods;

- Quality assurance and quality enhancement processes; and
- The economic and social relevance of higher education.

**Figure 3.1: Determinants of Higher Education Quality – A Conceptual Framework**



Source: World Bank (2009)

3.5. All these factors need not to be in place for good quality learning to occur, both in developed and developing countries. Well-motivated or highly able students can overcome many hurdles in their eagerness and willingness to learn. But not all students are highly able or well-motivated. In consequence, the challenge for universities and higher education policy makers is to ensure that the various elements which contribute to high quality performance are made available, and that teaching, learning and research are promoted and facilitated. The present chapter discusses the first six aspects of education quality. The economic and social relevance of higher education was already discussed in chapter one of this report. The discussion of the factors in Figure 3.1 takes into account a broad range of initiatives in other countries. Where appropriate, options are suggested for the consideration of Afghan higher education policy makers.

## **The Importance of Qualified, Skilled and Motivated Academic Staff**

3.6. **A higher education system stands or falls by the quality of its human resources.** Adequately qualified, well-motivated academic staff members are essential for successful development of higher education. The State and individual higher education institutions will both benefit by recruiting and retaining academic and managerial staff of appropriate quality into the higher education sector. Human resource policy initiatives are often aimed at new academic staff: the inflow into the system. However, as great a challenge for many academic systems is changing the skills and work culture of the stock of existing academics in current system, especially older, well-established staff.

3.7. In terms of academic qualifications, many countries seek to ensure that a high proportion of academic staff have a doctorate, as Ph.D level training is considered the best form of academic training (although it is not a guarantee of teaching quality). Currently, in Afghanistan only about 5 percent of university staff have Ph.D level training [see Table B.1 in Appendix B]. The majority of these Ph.D qualified staff are in just three universities: Kabul, Kabul Polytechnic and Nangrahar. Most universities have either no Ph.D qualified staff or just one or two such staff members. Another approximately 38 percent of staff have Master's level training. While this is a better picture than at Ph.D level, it is still inadequate. About 57 percent of university staff members have only Bachelor's degrees. As a long-term, priority objective, Afghanistan needs to consider how its universities can be staffed with appropriately qualified academics.

3.8. **The MoHE is working on upgrading faculty members for Master's and PhDs.** Currently, there are estimated to be about 500 faculty members pursuing Master's degrees overseas. A small number are also pursuing Ph.D degrees. In addition, there are about 200 Master's degree candidates within Afghanistan. While this is an encouraging step, considerably more investment in the human resource development of academic staff is needed. In particular, bright and promising young academics need to be trained up to Ph.D level.

3.9. **Brain drain is an issue for Afghan universities, even though it may also yield some benefits for the country.** The brain drain depletes the stock of well-educated Afghans available as academics for the universities. The emigration rate of the tertiary educated in Afghanistan was 23 percent in 2000 [World Bank EdStats]. There are clear causes for the "brain drain" from Afghanistan. Earnings and living standards in wealthy nations are considerably higher. In addition, research opportunities and facilities are substantially better in developed countries. Addressing the issue of brain drain is a major challenge that Afghan policy makers will have to address in any human resource development strategy for university academics.

3.10. The departure of academics for jobs overseas is not a clear net loss, however: countries can also benefit from their overseas intellectual diaspora over the long term. These benefits include remittance incomes, investment finance and capital, and the transfer of knowledge and technology. For instance, the members of the diaspora in countries such as Chile, China, India and Israel, helped the creation of technology-intensive industries in these nations by acting as intermediaries between the technology and knowledge of OECD countries, and the markets and labor back in their home countries. However, in the short to medium term the brain drain can be a heavy burden for a country, especially a country as disadvantaged as Afghanistan.

3.11. **There are relatively few strategies to address brain drain.** One strategy, adopted in developing countries, including Sri Lanka and Pakistan, is to offer incentives, including tenure track appointments, to highly qualified individuals early in their academic careers. Among South Asian countries both Sri Lanka and Pakistan have incentive systems which are linked with opportunities for overseas study and tenure track appointments [see Box 3.1].

### **Box 3.1: Incentives for Academics in Sri Lanka and Pakistan**

Sri Lanka offers young graduates with First-Class or Upper-Second Class Bachelor's Degrees entry into tenure-track positions, on probationary basis. These young academics are given five years to obtain research Master's degrees or, preferably, Ph.D degrees. Academics pursuing their postgraduate degrees overseas are given a combination of paid and unpaid leave, depending on the duration of their studies. Upon completion of their Ph.D or Masters degrees, they are confirmed in permanent, tenure-track systems. Academics in Sri Lanka are also entitled to undertake consulting opportunities, which bring an extra source of income. Staff in public universities, both academic and administrative, also have a more generous social security scheme than government administrative staff.

In order to attract and retain highly qualified individuals, a performance-based Tenure Track System has been established in Pakistan. Tenure Track provides an opportunity for life time employment following a certain number of years of teaching, which may be viewed as a trial period. The Tenure Track System has been institutionalized in almost 90 percent of all public universities and higher education institutes in the country. The system is applied to all new faculty appointments, while existing faculty have the opportunity to apply for it.

Source: World Bank staff team (2013) and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (2009)

3.12. **Continuing staff development is extremely important to strengthen the quality of academic work.** This is relevant for young staff entering the profession and for mid-career academics. Staff development centers typically train academics in modern teaching-learning methods, the use of technology in instruction, the structuring of curricula and the design of courses, assessment methods, communication and motivation. In some countries participation in a training course is compulsory before entering a university position. In other countries it is mandatory for new lecturers to pass a certificate program (at postgraduate level) to become a confirmed tenure track academic. A good staff development center itself needs to be staffed by suitably qualified, trained and competent full-time academic staff and a management cadre. An example of staff development centers from universities in Sri Lanka is given in Box 3.2.

#### *Staff Development Centres in Universities*

3.13. **Staff Development Centers (SDCs) can help strengthen the human resources of a university.** This covers all categories of staff and their training and development needs, which should be developed within the framework of an overall HRD plan that reflects the needs of the university's strategic plan.



### *Roles and functions of SDCs*

3.14. The activities of SDCs vary across different countries. Usually their main role is the delivery of short courses (face to face or online) dealing with various aspects of teaching and learning and pedagogy. In this area the main focus is teaching and learning - how subjects are taught and how students learn. As different academic subjects require different techniques and technologies, SDCs tend to focus on generic issues such as assessment and evaluation or e-learning and the provision of initial training and induction programs for new staff.

3.15. Academic staff are only a part of the clientele of an SDC, as SDCs are responsible for the training and development of all the other categories of staff: managerial, administrative and clerical and manual. Courses delivered for these staff often reflect the need to understand regulations, such as procurement and financial management, and legislation such as health and safety, but will also cover soft skills topics.

3.16. An SDC may be expected to develop a human resource strategy and plan for the university working with any guidelines in the strategic plan. As well as delivering programs and courses themselves staff in SDCs will help to place academics on courses run by suitable external providers. SDC roles and functions should be prioritized and implemented on a pilot basis. The development of a good quality SDC is a long-term process, and this will need to be recognized in Afghanistan.

### **Box 3.2: Staff Development Centers in Sri Lankan Universities**

Sri Lanka has universities with active Staff Developed Centers (SDCs), especially Colombo University and Peradeniya University. Both SDCs undertake a variety of activities to enhance the quality and performance of academic and administrative staff. The SDCs offer programs in innovative teaching and learning, research methods, and management and administration. The programs in teaching and learning are meant to be part of a process of continuous professional development for academics. The programs in research methods are especially useful for young academics who are about to commence their Master's or Ph.D research.

There are also tailor made courses for technical and clerical staff. These could cover courses such as the use of computers, the operation of equipment and technology, and maintenance and replacement of equipment and facilities.

A limitation of the current Sri Lankan model of SDCs is that they are staffed, at the senior level, by academics who work for a period of about three years and then return to their academic teaching and research. Sri Lanka is now considering establishing full-time cadre positions for senior staff of SDCs. This will enable the country to have well-trained permanent staff in the SDCs, and facilitate the sustainability and consistency of SDC activities.

Source: World Bank staff team (2013)

## Staffing

3.17. The staff development centers would need a core cadre of full-time professional staff to perform effectively over the long-term. The staff cadre of an SDC varies according to the emphasis (and budget) given to human resource development (HRD) by the Chancellor and the size of the university; at the least it should have a full time Director, one or two senior assistants and some clerical staff to organize course materials and training events. In all cases the university's SDC activity should be headed by a full time, permanent member of staff, with an official university cadre position as the head of the SDC.

## Improving Learning and Teaching Approaches

3.18. Students should be provided a high quality learning experience by their university teachers. The quality of the interaction between academic staff members and students is of central importance for student learning. Students need to be guided and helped, through activity-based and teaching methods, to develop skills such as creativity and analytical thinking, and to acquire habits of industry and hard work. Continuous improvement in teaching techniques, especially as technology evolves, is required in universities. At present, in Afghanistan university instruction is heavily teacher centered, and there is relatively little use of student centered participatory learning, or the use of technology and practical work.

**Figure 3.2: Types of Academic Staff Incentives**



Source: Adapted by World Bank Staff Team (2013) from Vegas (2005)



3.19. **An incentive framework needs to be created which favors good teaching.** An example of a good incentive framework for academics is given in Figure 3.2. Some of these incentives, such as salary differentials, stable employment, and pensions and benefits, are economic. However, the importance of intrinsic motivation, as well as of extrinsic motivation through recognition and prestige, are also important for academics. At present, the Afghan university system relies heavily on intrinsic motivation to promote good teaching. There is relatively little focus on the economic incentives or extrinsic motivation. In the future, a clear policy, a supportive environment, and financial resource would be needed to improve the focus on good teaching.

3.20. **Many university academics need to be encouraged and motivated to adopt new methods of instruction and teaching.** Transforming time-honored methods of teaching are time consuming and, for some staff, threatening. Changing teaching methods can be a long process which needs to be implemented over a period of time. A potentially promising approach to promoting better teaching is to emphasize the importance of teaching quality, and encourage staff to invest time and effort in modern methods of teaching. This can be supported by the State through a system of incentives, which includes recognizing teaching excellence. the creation of a fund to support improvements to teaching methods. The United Kingdom (UK) has implemented such approaches, with considerable success. An example from the UK is presented in Box 3.3 below. While the experience of a developed country such as the UK may be too advanced for Afghanistan at present, a simpler approach which nonetheless recognizes and rewards good teaching could be developed over the medium to long-term.

### **Box 3.3: National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) in the United Kingdom**

The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme in the UK recognizes and rewards individual practitioners who have demonstrated excellence in learning and teaching. It is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DELNI). It is open to all higher education institutions and further education colleges in England, Northern Ireland and Wales who have more than 100 FTE students and are funded by HEFCE, HEFCW, or DELNI. NTFS was established as one strand of our Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund.

From 2000 to 2003 there were 20 awards per year with the award holder receiving £50,000 over three years to support their project. From 2004 to 2005 the awards were expanded to 50 fellows per year. From 2006 onwards the award scheme split, with individual awards to 50 fellows receiving £10,000 each, and project awards of up to £200,000 to support development projects in learning and teaching where National Teaching Fellows must be 'principal investigator'.

Source: The Higher Education Academy, United Kingdom (2013)

3.21. **The campus experiences of students, and the support received from the universities, are vital components of the quality of higher education.** The “on-campus experience” and the relationships and interactions with staff and other students, are the hallmark of a university

education compared to study by distance learning, and needs to be cultivated and nurtured. Some students experience difficulties in learning for a range of reasons: inability to master the self-discipline needed, private emotional problems, ill-health, and discomfort and distraction through poor learning facilities. Universities can assist in the resolution of students' problems by providing support functions, such as guidance, and counseling, and also ensuring that academic support is available from within Faculties and Departments. These services need to operate at a professional level, with academically and technically trained counselors. The availability of such services could be especially important for female students and students from distant regions.

**3.22. Students can benefit from periods of work place internships during their degree programs.** Such internships placements enable students to observe and learn the ethos, culture and environment of work places, as well as the practical applications of some of their theoretical training. Work place internships can also improve their job prospects [USAID-MoHE (2012)]. It also helps forge a stronger link between universities and the industrial community. Countries in the region have instituted this practice, and with considerable success.

### **ICT Equipment and Library Resources**

**3.23. IT literacy and competence is a necessary condition for a modern university graduate.** There are vast and rapidly expanding reservoirs of knowledge on the internet. Universities and academics around the world are linked through modern information and communication technology. While ICT usage and internet access is relatively low in Afghanistan at present, over time this situation will change. Universities need to be at the forefront of positive developments in the use of ICT. Higher education policy makers, when considering capital investment and expenditure in universities, need to consider the importance of computer access and the supporting infrastructure, including wireless networks.

**3.24. Teaching in modern universities is making much greater use of electronic resources, and access to global resources is now essential for scholarship and research.** This means that in addition to staff and students being computer literate, libraries need to have access to a wide and varied range of international research databases, e-journal collections (via aggregators<sup>8</sup>) and academic repositories of electronic teaching materials such as MERLOT<sup>9</sup> or JORUM<sup>10</sup>. Also, the availability of e-resources and e-learning material needs to be considered, especially for access for students in university libraries in Afghanistan. The MoHE needs to consider whether there is scope for universities to have subscription to electronic resources. However, given complex copyright and licensing issues involved (e.g., electronic licenses and access agreements), the negotiations for e-resources needs to be done carefully, and by a competent team. The establishment of a country wide scheme, under which staff and students can access e-materials of all kinds, needs to run in parallel with suitable investment in hard copies of books and journals,

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<sup>8</sup> Aggregators are companies that collect journal or book titles from publishers and make electronic copies of them available to institutions (or national consortia) for a subscription. Some aggregators are willing to consider discounts for developing countries.

<sup>9</sup> MERLOT is a US-Based collection of peer reviewed online learning materials, containing about 21,000 items. See [www.merlot.org](http://www.merlot.org)

<sup>10</sup> JORUM is the UK's national repository of electronic teaching materials and resources contributed on a voluntary basis by university staff. It is available through [www.jorum.ac.uk](http://www.jorum.ac.uk)

as it will be some time before the academic community – particularly older academics– will be willing to work on e-books and e-resources.

3.25. In the context of promoting greater access to ICT, equipment and library resources, there are several policy initiatives which are especially important:

- The MoHE, in discussion with the Ministry of Finance, need to develop a national strategy for the delivery of ICT services in universities.
- The universities need to set goals and targets for student skills in ICT, within the national strategy.
- The creation of a national center for electronic resources, with a mandate to negotiate and acquire e-material and e-resources, such as databases, e-journals and e-books, for use by all academic staff and students of universities, if necessary through a national academic network.
- The creation of a national library catalogue, which links all existing library catalogues, and simplifies the development of a fast and efficient system of Inter-Library Loans.

An example of government policy action to increase connectivity and ICT usage in Bangladesh is given in Box 3.4 below.

**Box 3.4: Raising the Connectivity Capacity of the Higher Education Sector in Bangladesh**

The Bangladesh Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project is supporting the establishment of the Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN) which provides high speed connectivity within the country and internationally, allowing teachers, students and researchers of both public and private sectors to access the latest knowledge and facilitating collaborative research across institutions of higher learning.

Specifically, the Project is financing a lease of dark fiber which will provide access to more than 3,500 km of fiber optics around the country, International Partnership for technical support, BdREN equipment, campus network, International Academic Connectivity, and various applications such as video conferencing, digital video transport system (DVTS), data computing, visualization/image modeling and e-learning.

BdREN currently connects six universities, Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission of Bangladesh and aims to connect all universities, research institutions, libraries, laboratories, healthcare and agricultural institutions across the country in phases. BdREN is connected to global networks in Eurasia (TEIN3), USA (Internet 2), Ireland (HeaNet), Continental Europe (GEANT 2), and Asia-Pacific region (APAN). Users connected to BdREN are able to communicate and collaborate with their counterparts over the virtual work space at improved network performance and lower network latency.

The Project has also supported the establishment of digital library facility, the UGC Digital Library (UDL) to facilitate access to the global repository of knowledge. The UDL has been established with 28 public and private universities. The UDL subscribes to electronic-resources from international electronic journals such as ACM, Emerald and JSTOR.

Source: World Bank Staff Team (2013)

## Physical Facilities and Equipment in Universities

3.26. **The physical spaces and equipment available for teaching and learning are a key determinant of quality.** At present in Afghanistan some universities are over-crowded and congested, while other universities operate with very poor facilities. For instance, universities in urban centers such as Kabul tend to be crowded and congested. Some newer regional universities have classes which function in buildings that are barely more than sheds. Many universities are using buildings constructed for other purposes as university buildings, although their design and structure are not appropriate for university teaching. A substantial proportion of physical facilities in universities are in poor condition and unsuitable for modern teaching and learning. In addition, a large backlog of maintenance and repair exists, both for facilities and equipment.

3.27. **University students are best taught through learner-centered, inter-active pedagogical methods.** Student-centered, active learning requires teaching in small groups. This, in turn, needs university campuses with large numbers of small classrooms. In addition, modern pedagogy makes extensive use of technology, including multi-media projectors, machinery and equipment. Lecture and classroom spaces and laboratories need to be well equipped, and also have the basic infrastructure required to support modern technology, such as adequate electricity and power.

3.28. **Afghanistan is still building its university infrastructure: hence, the country has a late mover advantage, in that lessons can be learnt from the experience of other countries for the most appropriate infrastructure for university campuses.** The construction of new spaces, and the renovation of existing buildings, needs to take into account modern teaching methods as far as possible. The Ministry of Higher Education can provide guidelines for the use of space, within which universities need to re-allocate building spaces so that existing facilities are efficiently utilized. Care needs to be taken in ensuring that any new teaching spaces on campus are constructed so as to be flexible and linked to ICT wireless or wired networks with suitable connections for university teachers and students computing equipment (e.g. laptops), for future use.

## Student Learning Assessments and Examinations

3.29. **Student assessment is one of the key drivers of quality in higher education.** The chief objective of student assessment is to evaluate and certify learning outcomes of pupils, both knowledge and skills, in relation to learning objectives. Assessment is also linked to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards.

3.30. **The current practice of student assessments faces a number of challenges.** The foremost challenge in Afghanistan is the absence of clear standards or benchmarks that specify the student learning outcomes for all subjects/disciplines. As a result, there is wide variation in the quality of degrees across universities. In order to address these issues, the universities can consider developing benchmarks for learning outcomes for every program. This would also facilitate horizontal mobility for students.

3.31. **A further challenge for Afghanistan is that assessments systems are based mainly, or in some cases even exclusively, on annual written tests.** There is little use of practical tests, or the use of a range of testing methodologies to test different skills of students. Another limitation is that assessment results are hardly used to provide feedback to students on how well they learn, and to academic staff on how well they teach.

3.32. An example of how another country in South Asia, Sri Lanka, is seeking to improve the examination and assessment system is given in Box 3.5 below. Afghan policy makers could consider using lessons from the model in Sri Lanka.

3.33. **The capacity building of academic staff on assessment methodologies, as well as on the use of assessment results to improve learning and teaching, is important.** In addition, there needs to be an entity in place at the university level to ensure that adequate training is provided for academic staff on student learning assessment. University Staff Development Centers could provide this type of training and capacity building for university academics.

### **Box 3.5: Student Examinations and Assessments in Sri Lanka**

Most of the university disciplines in Sri Lanka have mechanisms in place to assess student learning outcomes during each semester. These assessments are often a combination of continuous (assignment, quizzes, mid-semester examinations) and end-term examinations. The Credit and Qualifications Framework of the Degree Programs in Universities recommends that a minimum of 20 percent of the total grades be based on the continuous assessments for a given course, and that the maximum level depends on the type of course: for instance, more weight could be given to continuous assessments for certain practical-oriented courses. The balance between continuous assessments and end-term examinations varies greatly across faculties and disciplines. A range of assessments is used across the disciplines.

Source: World Bank (2009)

## **Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

3.34. **Quality assurance and improvement is a key initiative that can flow down from the central level to institutions, and also operate within institutions.** National higher education policy makers can undertake periodic quality assurance reviews of higher education institutions, such as universities. Typically, these external quality assurance reviews take place on a cycle of about four to five years. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of the UK undertakes external quality assurance reviews every four years. The Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) implements external quality assurance reviews every five years. Box 2.1 shows the Quality Assurance System currently implemented in Pakistan. However there are often other overlapping reviews: for example, both UK and Australia look at “collaborative provision” which examine how universities manage their partnerships with colleges that they validate and which offer their degrees. Australia also audits the extent to which foreign students have adequate English language skills.

**3.35. Internal quality assurance self-reviews can be very important for the development of universities.** These internal reviews may be undertaken on an annual cycle. The results of self-reviews are usually utilized to fine tune the development plans of universities, and to monitor and support the implementation of these plans. The internal quality assurance self-reviews, when implemented well, can make a powerful contribution to the development and establishment of a quality culture in universities. Several processes need to fall into place for quality to be assured, both within an institution and externally. These include:

- An institutional strategy that promotes quality and quality improvement, and has regular internal procedures and processes to achieve them.
- An internal process for undertaking faculty, departmental and subject reviews of quality at appropriate intervals. The internal reviews are typically based on the same criteria as external reviews, so that the latter can validate the findings of the internal reviews. The internal reviews are useful to produce initiatives for self-improvement by faculties and departments, while external reviews are useful for policy level interventions by the Ministry of Higher Education.
- Support systems in the institution to advise academic staff on curriculum reform and provide relevant training and development in quality assurance and quality enhancement.
- An external quality review process that is based on nationally agreed criteria and subject benchmarks. This would undertake program, subject, departmental and institutional reviews at suitable intervals, using trained external assessors.
- A mechanism for the national quality assurance (QA) agency to draw on international expertise and experience so that it is abreast of current developments and thinking.

**3.36. The Afghanistan MoHE has established a Quality Assurance Department to undertake external quality assurance reviews of public universities.** In addition, the universities have Quality Assurance cells, to assist with the internal review process. The Quality Assurance Department (QAD) has initiated the process of external and internal quality assurance, with the development of protocols and procedures, training of staff, and implementation of reviews.

**3.37.** External and internal reviews have now been conducted for about three to five years in Afghan universities. These have been useful to successfully establish acceptance of external quality assurance reviews. This is an important hurdle to be surmounted in university systems in many countries. The internal quality assurance reviews also been useful in creating awareness, and promoting a practice of, self-evaluations among university faculties and departments. However, as is normal with young systems, there are limitations and challenges. The rigor and quality of the external and internal reviews processes could be further strengthened. More evidence is also needed on how universities are undertaking internal quality assurance activities. The extent to which universities have improved their learning and teaching strategies, the quality of these strategies and their implementation experience, due to their participation in QA reviews, needs to be assessed. Although the QAD has assisted the creation of internal QA cells in universities and helped to train their staff, it has played no formal role in monitoring their activities and impact on university development. In addition, the link between the findings of external reviews and development initiatives in the Ministry of Higher Education is limited and as hoc. The Afghan higher education sector now needs to move on to the next stage of development of a Quality Assurance system, based on international experience.



**3.38. There is a wide range of experience across countries on the institutional framework and system for external quality assurance.** Table 3.1 presents the structure of external quality assurance in a number of East Asian countries. Afghanistan has adopted a model found in other low and lower-middle income countries, such as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, where a government department acts as the quality assurance agency. Also, government funds the quality assurance work fully. Over time, as the country develops, quality assurance agencies could gradually move to an autonomous status, as it is the case in more advanced developing and middle-income countries.

**3.39. Establishing linkages with international Quality Assurance networks can be very useful for Afghanistan.** The Afghan higher education sector has been relatively isolated, and the universities have been separated from the levels of quality observed internationally. It will be difficult for Afghan universities to demonstrate that their QA standards are of adequate rigor and substance. As a result, it would be useful for the QA system to be linked with recognized international QA networks, such as the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). The APQN includes agencies from developed countries such as Japan and Australia, South-East and East Asian middle-income countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and China, and other countries in South Asia such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India [see Box 3.6]. Over time, Afghanistan is likely to benefit considerably through membership and participation in APQN.

**Table 3.1: Features of External Quality Assurance, East and South Asia**

	Type of body			Type of system			Body funding source			Requirement		Disclosure	
	Independent body	Semi-autonomous Body	Government-represented body	Accreditation	Audit	Assessment	Government	Institutions	Other	Mandatory	Voluntary	Complete	Limited
<b>Economy</b>													
<b>Afghanistan</b>			X			X	X				X		X
<i>Lower-middle</i>													
Sri Lanka			X			X	X				X		X
Vietnam			X		X		X			X			X
Lao PDR			X	X			X			X			X
Cambodia			X	X			X			X			X
<i>Middle-income</i>													
Malaysia	X			X	X		X			X			X
Thailand	X			X	X		X			X		X	
China		X		X	X		X			X			X
Indonesia	X			X			X			X		X	
Philippines	X			X				X		X			X
<i>High-income</i>													
Japan	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Singapore			X	X	X	X	X			X		X	
Hong Kong SAR, China		X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
Korea, Rep.	X			X	X	X	X	X		X		X	

Source: World Bank (2012b)



### Box 3.6: The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) was established in Hong Kong in January 2003 with assistance from International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and financial support of the World Bank Group (development grant facility, DGF). APQN is a non-profit-making organization with the Constitution. The mission of APQN is ‘to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them’ with the following main objectives:

- to promote good practice in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education in the Asia-Pacific region;
- to facilitate research in the region into the practice of quality management in higher education and its effectiveness in improving the quality of higher education in the region;
- to provide advice and expertise to assist the development of new quality assurance agencies in the region;
- to facilitate links between quality assurance agencies and acceptance of the decisions and judgments of each agency;
- to assist members of APQN to determine standards of institutions operating across national borders;
- to permit better-informed international recognition of qualifications throughout the region;
- to assist in the development and use of credit transfer schemes to enhance the mobility of students between institutions both within and across national borders;
- to enable members of APQN to be alert to dubious accrediting practices and organizations;
- where appropriate, represent the region and promote the interests of the region, e.g. vis-à-vis other networks and international organizations.

Source: Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network (2013)

#### *Development of a Strong Internal Quality Assurance System in Universities*

**3.40. Strengthening and developing the internal quality assurance system in universities can be vitally important for the future advancement of quality teaching, learning and research.** Annual internal reviews are very useful for university authorities. The development plans of universities need to be built on the findings and recommendations of internal QA reviews. At present, the proposal and plans of universities for development have relatively little relationship to the analyses and conclusions of the QA processes. However, the QA system, when applied with care and rigor, is an excellent diagnostic tool to feed into the development plans of universities.

**3.41. The establishment and development of Internal Quality Assurance Units (IQAUs) would be a key policy measure.** The aim of an IQAU is to support the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and heads of faculties and departments to establish and maintain a continuous quality culture in the university. The role and functions of an IQAU will reflect the national system for quality assurance and may depend on what the national QA Unit does. If there is an active national External Quality Assurance function, the work of the IQAUs will be partly responsive, but also

locally proactive in promoting and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the university.

### **Potential Pathways for the Future**

3.42. The preceding analysis discussed, in detail, a wide range of issues related to the quality of university education. This included the quality of academic staff, facilities, equipment and technology; the relevance of university curricula; the incentives and rewards for improving the quality of teaching in public universities; and quality assurance for universities. At each point recent and relevant international experience was outlined. The next step is for higher education policy makers, academics and administrators to discuss the various options outlined for development, and select which alternatives would be implemented, in which order, and the resources required for implementation. Some development options are in the control of individual universities, faculties and degree programs, and could be implemented relatively swiftly. Other options require reforms at the national level. These may require more time and resources. However, with the leadership of the Ministry of Higher Education, there are several promising policy measures that can be implemented, and which are likely to have far-reaching positive consequences for the quality of university education in Afghanistan.

3.43. **The human resource development of academic staff to Master's and Ph.D level is a vital short to medium-term requirement.** The MoHE and universities need to develop a human resource development plan which outlines the staff development requirement of each university, and strategies to enable academic staff to obtain the academic qualifications required for good academic performance. An appropriately costed plan could also be discussed with development partners for financial and technical support.

3.44. **There are several options which policy makers can consider to enhance the quality of teaching and learning over the medium term.** These include:

- Requiring faculties and universities to review curricula and teaching methods at regular intervals, particularly in the light of feedback from the internal and external quality assurance processes.
- The provision of grants to universities specifically targeted at the use of modern teaching and assessment methods.
- Delivering incoming students with short courses on study skills that will help them to benefit from new learning methods and opportunities.

3.45. **The country needs to invest in a medium to long-term repair, renovation and refurbishment program.** The government could set aside a specific fund for this purpose over a designated period of, say, five years. The resources invested in the fund need to be linked to the creation of a maintenance culture. This would require the provision of adequate resources each year for a rolling preventive maintenance program, as well as training, and the application and enforcement of efficient work norms, for maintenance staff.

3.46. One approach which can be used as the basis for allocating such a fund is to require each university to undertake a condition survey of its buildings, using external professional surveyors. These condition surveys could classify the various buildings depending on their condition. The findings from all the surveyors' reports would be costed and used to calculate what resources

would be needed to remedy the shortcomings over a ten year rolling program. Buildings in the worst category would be the first priority to receive funds from the national fund.

### **Box 3.7: The Functions of Internal Quality Assurance Units in Universities**

There are three sets of activities that internal quality assurance units could play, over the short to long-term.

#### **Short to Medium Term Activities**

- Conducting workshops and awareness sessions about quality for university staff, both academic and managerial.
- Producing guidelines and documentation on processes for strengthening quality.
- Preparation of relevant QA related Manuals, such as academic regulations, equipment manuals, and laboratory manuals.
- Training relevant staff, both academic and managerial, in how to prepare the self-evaluation reports required by QAC and preparing the final submission.
- Encouraging the establishment of faculty Quality Cells, and overseeing and coordinating their work when they are established.
- Working with heads of faculties to help them develop faculty processes for improving quality

#### **Medium to Long-term Activities**

- Coordinating all QA activity in the university within the framework of a university development plan, and contributing towards the quality goals and objectives of the plan.
- Running regular internal self-assessment reviews.
- Coordinating all activities in the university through external review visits by the QAC and other accrediting bodies.
- Monitoring the university's follow up action to the comments and recommendations of external QA reviewers.
- Reporting annually to the Senate and Council on quality matters.
- Undertaking any investigations into issues of quality as the Senate may request.

#### **Coordination & Liaisons**

- Liaising with the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and other IQAUs.
- Highlighting and sharing good practice from other IQAUs.
- Liaising with the QAC and other external validating or accrediting bodies on all their reviews of the institution.
- Each university's IQA activity should be headed by a full time, permanent member of staff, with an official university cadre position as the head of the IQA unit. It should not be an academic who comes on release from his / her normal research and teaching for a period and then goes back at the end of that period to his/her normal academic work. The number of other staff in a central IQA team would depend on the extent and nature of the work envisaged. The IQA team should be a well-educated and trained set of professionals, as the IQA function is of central importance.

Source: World Bank staff team (2013)

3.47. The special requirements of female staff members and students need to be taken into account when facilities are designed and built. Secure facilities, including boundary walls and enclosed spaces with limited access points, and ample sanitation facilities, are important for female academic staff and female students. In addition, many families prefer their daughters to be

taught in separate campuses to male students. These are key considerations that the government needs to take into account when facilities are provided.

3.48. The establishment and development of Internal Quality Assurance Units would be a key long-term development initiative. The functions of a typical IQAU are outlined in Box 3.7. The development of an IQA system along these lines would require long-term support. In the medium term the Government of Afghanistan would need to make a policy decision to establish such units, and make appropriate cadre provision. Promising staff would have to be recruited for the IQAUs, and international technical expertise to develop the capacity of the staff through appropriate training, leadership and guidance, would need to be provided. Membership in an international agency such as the Asia Pacific Quality Assurance (APQN) network would also facilitate the development of the required technical expertise among the staff members of the IQAUs. Over the long-term, the national IQAU staff members would acquire the skills required, mainly through on-the-job learning, supported by targeted training.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

#### Introduction

4.1. **Governance is of central importance to the performance and effectiveness of university systems.** The framework for the governance of universities normally addresses such questions as the extent and nature of autonomy and accountability of public universities and higher education institutions; the protocols and processes for the management and organization of state universities and higher education institutions; and the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the state and the private sector in university education.

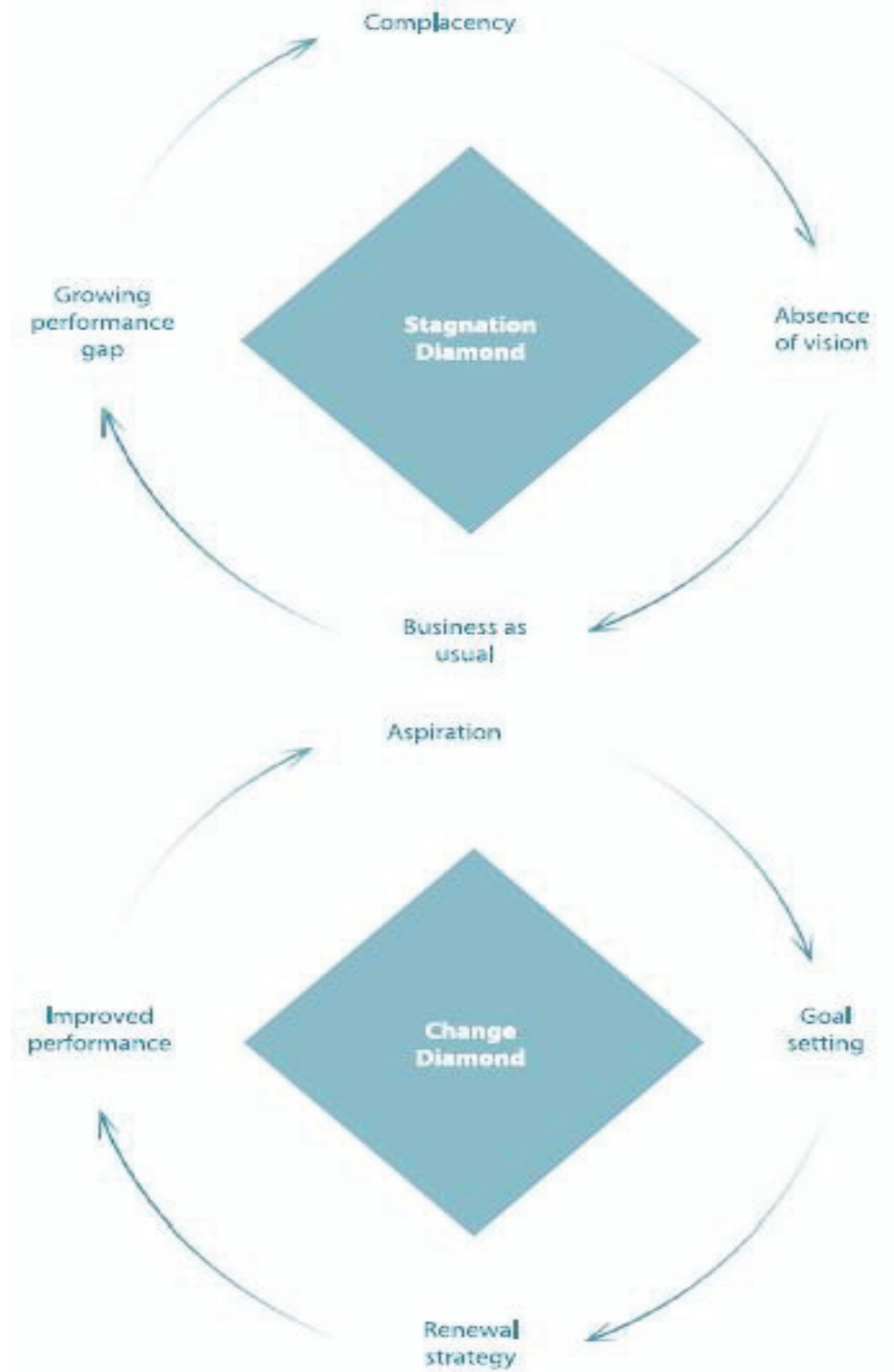
4.2. The analysis in this chapter covers the governance issues above. The objective is to stimulate and contribute to the thinking and debate on the national higher education strategy and program in Afghanistan. The analysis examines the current status of universities and higher education institutions in the country, the governance challenges faced, and the presentation of various options for consideration by policy makers and stakeholders in the higher education sector.

#### Governing the Higher Education Sector: The Role of the State

4.3. **There are six key roles that the state plays, according to the general principles of governance of a higher education sector [Fielden (2008)]:**

- Deciding the structure and size of the sector. This would involve, for example, the number and types of publicly funded universities, and the structure and composition of degree programs in the different categories of universities.
- Monitoring or setting the number of students in the sector, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance as regards funding.
- Seeking to ensure equitable access for qualified applicants for university education, especially young women.
- Defining the role of private sector universities and setting out how they should be regulated.
- Developing a national research and development capacity, where relevant and applicable. This could particularly apply to the older, more established universities.
- Devising and then implementing a national strategy for the development of the university system will require identifying ways in which the State can be assured that its funding is producing graduates with skills that are of high quality and relevant to the labor market. This will especially apply in the context of Afghanistan given the high number of educated young people who search for jobs in the government services, and the small size of the formal private sector. This is a challenge typical of many countries in South Asia, as well as in other parts of the world including the Middle East.

Figure 4.1: The Stagnation and Change Diamonds



Source: Salmi (2009) adapted from Perry and Sherlock (2008)

**4.4. High quality universities depend on a dynamic and continuous process of objective review and self-assessment, followed by measures to improve.** In contrast, universities which are complacent and rest on their laurels tend to stagnate, especially in the fast-changing world of the twenty-first century. A model of the difference between developing and stagnating universities is presented in Figure 4.1.

**4.5. Higher education policy and strategy development in Afghanistan are the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education.** Public universities are legal entities established under various Acts. Public universities are entities with their own governing councils, but operate within the regulations, guidelines and procedures emerging from the MoHE. They are funded by the Government, through the MoHE's recommendation and budget, for both recurrent (operational) and development (capital) expenditure.

### **Promoting Autonomy and Accountability in Public Universities**

**4.6. Globally, the trend in developed and developing countries over the last two decades has been to promote greater autonomy of universities.** This trend has been driven by the observation that the overwhelming majority of the world's most famous universities, especially the celebrated elite research universities in the U.S.A., have enjoyed and operated within an atmosphere of considerable autonomy [World Bank (2010); Aturupane (2011)]. In addition, as higher education systems have grown rapidly, close government control has tended to hamper the improvement of quality and the ability of public universities to respond flexibly to evolving economic and social needs [World Bank (2012b)]. Afghan policy makers have expressed interest in promoting autonomy, based on their experience of an expanding higher education system.

**4.7. Several countries in Asia have introduced policies to increase the autonomy and accountability of public universities in recent years, and with considerable success.** The trend towards greater autonomy has included developed countries, as well as developing countries. For instance Japan, through a National University Corporation Act in 2004, provided substantial autonomy to all 87 national universities. Singapore extended autonomy to its two foremost public universities, the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University in 2005-2006. Universities in both Japan and Singapore appear to have benefited substantially from the greater autonomy they enjoyed after the reforms. In Japan, the number of world-class universities increased from 5 to 11 after the policy of increasing autonomy of universities. In Singapore, both the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University have made positive gains in various university rankings. Universities with a high degree of autonomy in Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea, such as the Hong Kong University of Technology and the Pohang University of Science and Technology (POSTECH) in the Republic of Korea, have also established strong linkages with industries and occupy high positions in global university rankings. Reforms to promote autonomy of public universities in Malaysia and Thailand have seen better linkages between the research output of universities and the economic and technological needs of private firms [World Bank (2012b)].

### **Substantive Autonomy and Procedural Autonomy**

**4.8. There are two types of autonomy, substantive autonomy and procedural autonomy, which need to be considered in the context of universities.** Substantive autonomy is related to



academic matters, such as curriculum design, research policy, entrance standards, academic staff appointments, and the award of degrees. Procedural autonomy is related to the management of universities, and cover areas such as budgeting, financial management, procurement and purchases, appointment of non-academic staff, and contractual arrangements with external agencies. These two dimensions of autonomy are outlined in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Substantive and Procedural Autonomy**

<b>Substantive (academic)</b>	<b>Procedural (nonacademic)</b>
Curriculum design	Setting and using fees; budgeting
Research policy	Financing management
Entrance standards and numbers	Nonacademic staff appointments
Academic staff appointments	Purchasing
Awarding degrees	Entering into contracts

Source: World Bank (2012b)

**4.9. Afghan public universities have historically operated in a highly centralized structure with little autonomy.** The extent of autonomy in Afghan universities, in comparison to universities in East and South Asia, is given in Table 4.2 below. There are considerable limitations and constraints for the public universities to exercise academic and administrative autonomy. Academic responsibilities such as: (a) appointments, promotions, salaries and dismissal of academic staff; (b) establishment of academic standards and curricula; (c) decisions on the size of enrollments; (d) awarding of degrees; and (e) decisions on the introduction of new courses and the elimination of old courses, require review and approval by the Ministry of Higher Education. Procedural responsibilities such as procurement and purchase of material, and financial management, are also considerably centralized.

#### *Strategic Options for Increasing Autonomy and Accountability of Public Universities*

**4.10. The trend in favor of greater autonomy for universities has required fresh approaches to the role of the state.** The university sector has public goods aspects including externality benefits, as well as problems of informational imperfections and monopoly power. Therefore, the market alone cannot supply university education optimally: the state needs to play an important role in the governance of the university sector. However, instead of a direct controlling role, globally states have been moving more in the direction of creating a good incentive system for performance and exercising regulatory functions. This combines autonomy and empowerment of universities with accountability.

**4.11. There is strong demand for greater autonomy from universities in Afghanistan.** In addition, the centralized management of a growing higher education system has exerted considerable strain on the management of the public university system by the government. As a result, policy makers consider it important for Afghanistan to increase substantive and procedural autonomy for public universities, with the state playing a positive and facilitating role, through appropriate incentives and rewards for performance, and through the creation of a good accountability framework [MoHE-USAID (2012)].



**Table 4.2: Autonomy Among Higher Education Institutions: Afghanistan and Selected Countries**

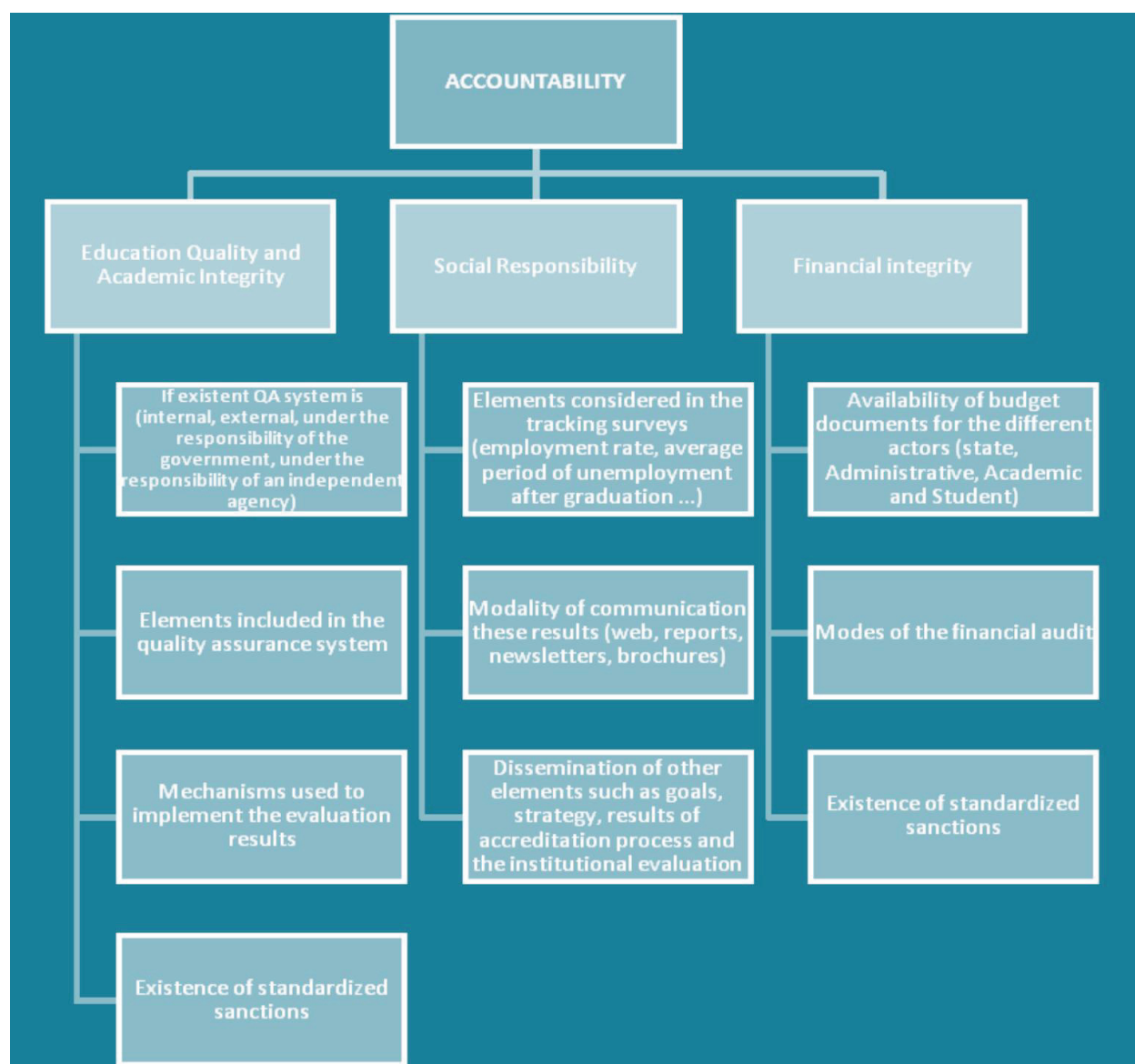
Economy	Institution type	Substantive autonomy			Procedural autonomy				
		Set academic structure/course content	Employ and dismiss academic staff	Decide size of student enrollment	Own building and equipment	Borrow funds	Spend budgets to achieve objectives	Decide level of tuition fees	Set salaries
Afghanistan	Universities	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	○
<i>Low- and Lower-Middle income</i>									
Sri Lanka	Universities	●	●	○	●	○	●	○	○
Vietnam	Public	●	○	●	○	○	○	●	○
Lao PDR	National University of Laos	●	●	○	○	○	●		○
Cambodia	Public	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<i>Middle-income</i>									
Malaysia	Public	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
Thailand	Autonomous	●	●	○	●		●	○	●
China	National and Regional	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	
Indonesia	Autonomous	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
Philippines	Public	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	
<i>High-income</i>									
Japan	National	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Singapore	National University of Singapore Nanyang Technological University, and Singapore Management University	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●
Hong Kong SAR, China	Public	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Korea, Rep.	National/Public	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	

Source: World Bank (2012b)

Note: ○ has no autonomy; ● has autonomy; ● has autonomy in some respects.

4.12. **Developing a sound accountability framework for public universities is important as autonomy increases.** Typically, accountability is developed in the context of autonomy through a combination of standards and norms, quality assurance, and transparent fiduciary processes. There are a number of dimensions of accountability, including education quality and academic integrity, social responsibility and financial integrity. The components of these dimensions of accountability are given in Figure 4.2 below. There are several elements of this accountability framework that Afghanistan is currently developing, especially in relation to quality assurance, and the development of norms and standards. Other elements of the accountability framework could be developed over the medium-term.

**Figure 4.2: The Structure of Accountability in Higher Education**

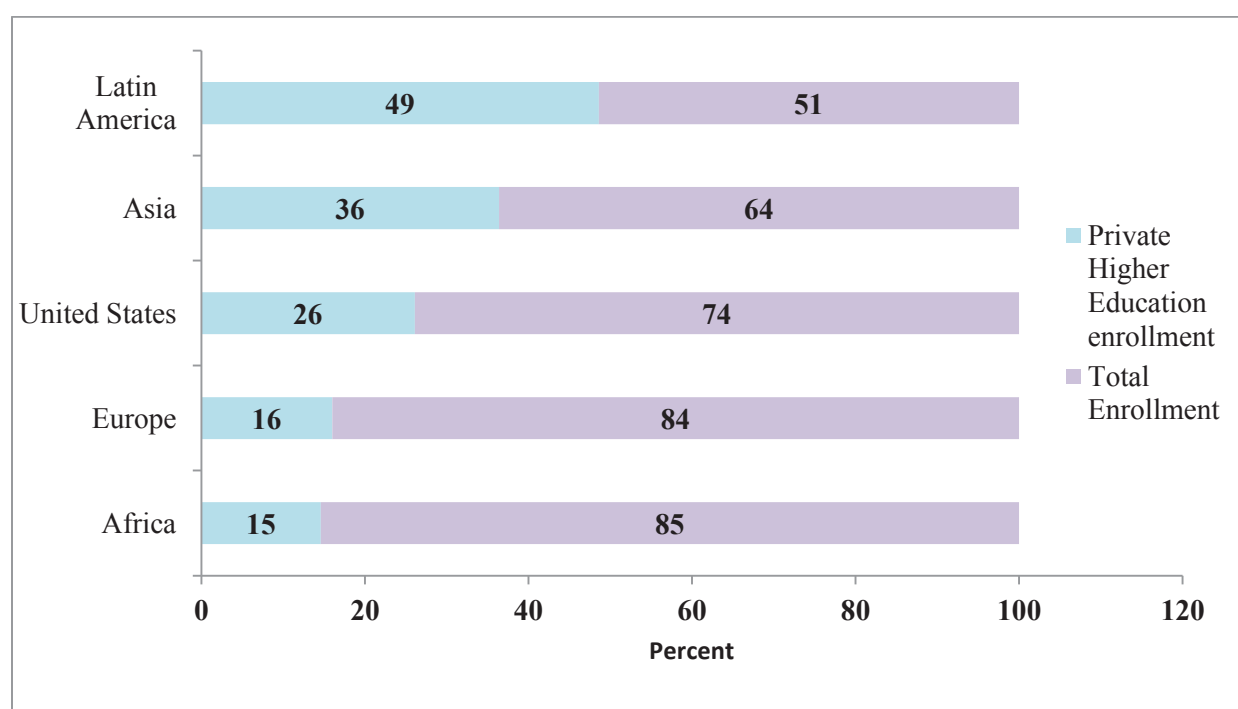


Source: World Bank Staff Team (2013)

## Stewardship of Private Higher Education Institutions

4.13. **The private sector in higher education has experienced explosive growth world-wide in recent years.** Among developing regions Asia and Latin America in particular have large private higher education sectors [Figure 4.3]. Countries such as Japan, South Korea and the Philippines have always had substantial private higher education sectors, due to a pro-private policy environment. More recently, countries such as China, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos have opened higher education to the private sector [World Bank, 2012b]. Private higher education institutions currently account for more than two-thirds of higher education enrollment in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Philippines, China and Indonesia [Figure 4.4].

**Figure 4.3: Private Higher Education Enrollment Share, by Region**

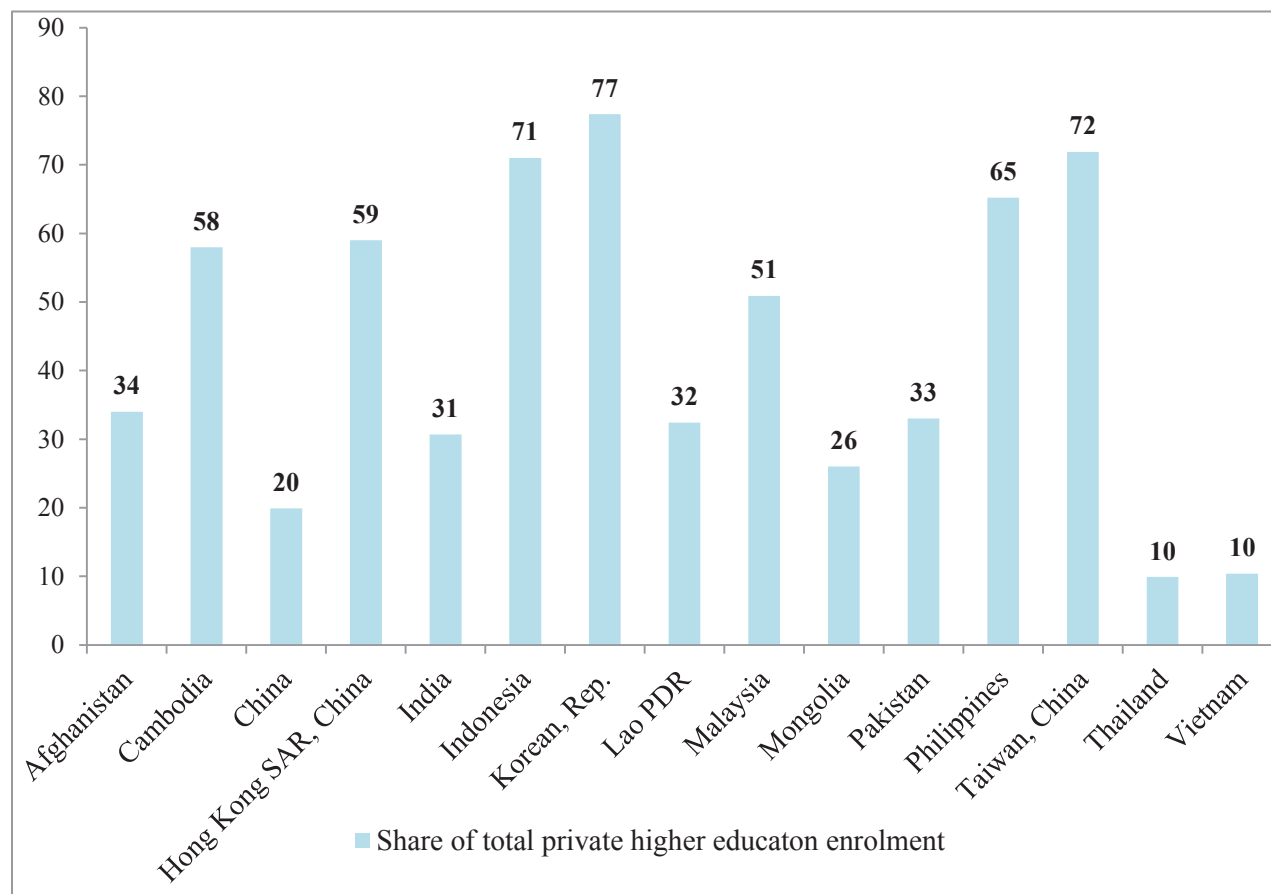


Source: World Bank (2012b)

4.14. **Private higher education institutions in Afghanistan are mainly demand-absorbing institutions.** Private Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) cater to demand for programs such as management, accountancy, marketing and ICT. Many private HEIs offer pre-degree professional diploma and certificate courses which are directly aimed at meeting labor market requirements. These play a valuable role, in preparing the tertiary educated human resources required for the economy at little or no cost to the government. At the university level, Afghan private institutions again typically specialize in profitable programs such as medicine, finance, management, ICT and marketing. This is a fairly typical pattern for the private higher education sector in developing countries. It is a pattern observed in other South Asian countries, such as

India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It is also a common pattern in South America, in countries such as Argentina and Brazil, and in East Asia, in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Figure 4.4: Private Higher Education Shares, Selected Countries**



Source: World Bank (2012b)

**4.15. The Government of Afghanistan can play an important role in promoting good quality, private higher education institutions.** This would require GoA to play two roles. Firstly, GoA needs to encourage and facilitate the establishment and growth of private universities. Secondly, GoA needs a good accountability framework, with strong licensing, quality assurance and accreditation of private universities, to ensure quality. Examples of government regulations concerning private higher education institutions are shown in Table 4.3. The quality assurance and accreditation of private universities should, preferably, follow the same processes and procedures as for public universities. This would provide a level playing field for private and public universities.

**4.16. The Government of Afghanistan recognizes the importance of promoting private sector participation in higher education for the long-term development of the country.** The Ministry of Higher Education would like actively develop private universities, both as a cost-

effective strategy to expand access and enrollment, and to promote the delivery of quality degree programs relevant for the labor market. In this context, the government needs to establish a suitable policy framework for higher education.

**Table 4.3: Government Regulations on Private Higher Education, Afghanistan and Selected Asian Countries**

Country	Regulations		Accreditation/Quality Assurance	
	Policy / approach	Significance of the policy or approach	Policy / approach	Significance of the policy or approach
Afghanistan	Private higher education regulation (2006) and the accompanying bill and guidelines	Regulates Public Higher Education and sets registration /licensing criteria and conditions	Quality assurance and accreditation by the National Commission on Quality Assurance and Accreditation	PHEIs to embark on self-assessment followed by quality assurance
	Draft policy on outcome assessment for private higher education institutions	The policy determines quality and ensuring that private institutions meet minimum requirements in performance and delivery		
	Status of for- profit PHEIs	Are permitted and extensive		
Sri Lanka	Allowed to exist under the Board of Investment	Several overseas higher education providers exist	Can be accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education	A small number of degree awarding institutions have been approved
	Non-profit and for profit PHEIs	Both types of institutions exist		
Malaysia	Private higher education act (1996)	Regulates PHEIs (tight control)	Quality assurance	PHEIs have to obtain accreditation from the National Board of Accreditation; public universities have to carry out regular audits
	Status of for-profit PHEIs	Explicitly permitted and extensive		
	Public-Private Partnerships	Mainly foreign universities and domestic colleges, with the former having some regulatory role over the latter, such as quality assurance		
Thailand	Private higher education act (1969)	Regulates PHEIs (comparatively restrictive)	Quality assurance and accreditation	PHEIs must be externally assessed and accredited by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
	Ministerial regulations	Regulations and guidelines support the PHE act for procedural implementation of PHEIs (comparatively restrictive and detailed)		

Country	Regulations		Accreditation/Quality Assurance	
	Policy / approach	Significance of the policy or approach	Policy / approach	Significance of the policy or approach
				every five years; PHEIs and public universities use similar standards
	Ambiguous Status of for-profit PHEIs	For-profit institutions not allowed in higher education but “30 percent returns allowed” for licensees and investment encouraged		
China	Regulation (overall)	Not extensive and allows for ample competition Varies by province and period	Accreditation	Enhances autonomy and legitimacy (as well as quality), though most private higher education institutions have not earned it( 620 have. 866 have not)
	Ambiguous status of for-profit PHEIs	For-profit institutions not allowed in higher education but “reasonable returns” allowed and investment encouraged; for profit allowed in training institutions		
	Private Education Law (2002)	Requires a board of trustees for every institution; stipulates that it consists of at least five people and that the institution’s legal identity be with the chairperson of the board or the institution’s president		
	Public-Private Partnerships	Mainly public universities and private colleges, with the former having some regulatory role over the latter, such as quality assurance		
Indonesia	Rules (overall)	Grant high autonomy from government in practice		
	Status of for- profit PHEIs	Explicitly permitted and extensive		
Philippines	Status of for- profit PHEIs	Explicitly permitted and extensive		

Source: Authors and World Bank (2012b)

4.17. There are several key areas which need to be clarified in the context of such as policy framework, as follows:

**a) Policy statements on the role of the private sector, and its contribution to national higher education goals.** This policy statement, and the associated policy goals, could be made by the Ministry of Higher Education. Endorsement by the Cabinet would further strengthen the value of the policy statement.

**b) Clearly defined procedures for establishing new private universities.** Some countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Mexico and South Africa, have a hierarchy of processes which separate institutional registration and licensing from accreditation and quality assurance. While the processes of institutional registration, provisional licensing, and full licensing usually look at the institution as a whole, the final accreditation often confines itself to looking at programs.

There needs to be a carefully defined set of guidelines, protocols and processes for the registration, quality assurance, and accreditation of private universities in Afghanistan. The regulations would set out the various stages in the establishment of a private university, and in obtaining the full recognition of the institution, such as:

- Letters of interim authority – temporary recognition, pending registration.
- Registration as a “registered university”, recognizing its operations and allowing it to start teaching.
- Full accreditation with the grant of an institutional charter. This would allow the university to award degrees.

**c) A regular and effective external quality assurance process that has the confidence of the private providers and that can assure the general public about the quality of provision.** The ideal mechanism is to have the same independent, external reviews applied consistently, with similar standards, for both public and private universities. Box 4.1 provides the example of Malaysia, which has a well-developed framework for external quality assurance.

**d) Policies on private sector participation in student grants as well as the ability of staff to bid for research funding on equal terms with state-funded academic staff.** Another aspect of this is whether or not private sector providers can share in national academic infrastructure, such as a national academic ICT network and national inter-library loan or discounted electronic subscription schemes.

**e) A clear statement of the private providers’ obligations in terms of information provision and reporting.** This would be especially important for monitoring by the government. The agreement needs to be carefully tailored, so that the government receives adequate information for monitoring purposes, but private universities are not asked to divulge sensitive or confidential information.

**4.18. External quality assessments (EQAs) are the usual form of check that governments rely on to be assured that private universities are serious about maintaining quality.** These EQAs are carried out by a national agency on a cycle ranging from five to seven years and usually focus on the institution rather than an academic program. The standard approach is for the institution to complete a self-assessment exercise (to a standard format), which is then submitted to the quality agency; this is followed up by a team of reviewers who visit an institution and discuss the self-assessment. However, governments may also request reviews of specific academic programs where they have concerns.

#### **Box 4.1: The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)**

The last two decades has witnessed enormous growth in public and private higher education institutions in Malaysia. This explosive growth of higher education resulted in greater access to higher education but also concern that the increase in the number of students and institutions could affect the quality of higher education in the country. In response, various policies were instituted to ensure high quality management of Malaysian higher education both in the public and private sector. Among them, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act (2007) establishing the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). The MQA is a single, unified, transparent, private/public and private quality assurance body which also serves as a reliable national information center on accredited programs and qualifications in Malaysia. The main role of the MQA is to implement the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). The MQF is an instrument provides benchmarks for qualifications based on international and national best practices. The MQF provides guidance on academic levels, learning outcomes and credit system based on student academic load. The MQA provides accreditation through a two-fold process:

- Provisional Accreditation – this is the initial process which will help higher education providers achieve the accreditation by enhancing the standard and quality set in the provisional accreditation evaluation.
- Accreditation – this is a formal recognition that the certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded by higher education institutions are in accordance with the set standards.
- There is also provision for a self- accreditation to higher education institutions that have well-established internal quality assurance mechanisms.

All the processes outlined above are supported by continuous monitoring to ensure that the programs offered by the public and private institutions in Malaysia are quality assured. The MQA also maintains The Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR) which registers all accredited qualifications and programs. The MQR is the reference point for credit transfer between programs and qualifications that are accredited.

Malaysia has 20 public universities, 53 private universities and six foreign university branch campuses; 403 active private colleges, 30 polytechnics and 73 public community colleges in 2011. The MQA oversees the accreditation of all these universities and higher education institutes, both public and private. In providing these mechanisms for quality assurance, Malaysia has made headway in reaching its strategic education goals of widening higher education access and increasing equity, while ensuring the quality of teaching and learning in higher education and raising standards for all its higher education institutions. It has also provided legitimacy for its private higher educations, making them more attractive to international students and furthering the goal of making Malaysia a regional and international hub of educational excellence.

Source: Malaysian Qualifications Agency (2013); Tham (2011); East-West Center (2009)



4.19. **In Afghanistan, according to the NHESP (2010 -2014), the establishment of an effective quality assurance and accreditation agency at the national level is critical to the development of a high quality higher education system.** Pending the approval of a Higher Education Law, the task is carried by the National Commission on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NCQAA). All public and private higher education institutions are subject to accreditation. The process is voluntary during the first two years, but all institutions must achieve at least candidacy for accreditation status by the end of that time. The regulation on private higher education institutions (PHEI) stipulates specific criteria for registration and licensing. Non-compliance has resulted in regulatory measures, including closure of the institution(s). Eleven PHEIs, which have had graduates, have already started the accreditation process, which has already been underway for public institutions for a year as a pilot. Institutional accreditation of PHEIs has already been initiated under the auspices of the NCQAA.

### **Potential Pathways for the Future**

4.20. The preceding analysis has examined the governance of universities over a wide field. This includes governance at the national level, governance between and across universities, and governance within universities. The analysis has covered both public and private universities. A number of policy options, and the relevant international experience, have been identified. The next step is for higher education policy makers, academics and administrators to discuss the various alternatives that have been presented, and to choose the options to be implemented.

#### **Promoting Autonomy and Accountability of Public Universities**

4.21. **Higher education policy makers need to decide the degree of autonomy, and the type of accountability, which are needed to promote high quality public universities.** A possible roadmap for the promotion of autonomy over the medium and long-term are suggested below.

4.22. **Promoting academic autonomy is an important policy initiative over the medium-term.** Preferably, academic autonomy should be maximized, subject to the accountability requirements and constraints of a centrally funded public university system. The curricula offered in various degree programs, the teaching-learning processes, and the assessments methods, should be devolved to the individual universities. The accountability framework would be regulation through a sound quality assurance and accreditation process. The universities would themselves participate in this quality assurance process through regular self-reviews. In addition, the MHE would undertake with external quality assurance reviews. Similarly, universities and academics should enjoy full autonomy when deciding on research projects and activities<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Where research resources are given by the central government, a competitive process open to all relevant universities is necessary.

4.23. **A high degree of procedural autonomy is desirable over the medium to long-term.** Procedural autonomy would complement academic autonomy. It would also help to strengthen the managerial efficiency of universities. Autonomy over expenditures, where universities have high procurement thresholds and can purchase equipment, goods and technology directly, without having to come to the MHE for most purchases, can be especially useful. This would require capacity building in public procurement, as well as accounting and auditing, and asset management and verification procedures, among university administrative staff and academic staff. In addition, high procurement thresholds for buildings and physical facilities can be useful to promote a culture of repair and maintenance for universities.

4.24. **A degree of financial autonomy would be useful over the long-term.** Universities have the potential to generate resources through such activities as consulting services, and collaboration with industries and firms through fee-based services. This potential will grow over time, as the Afghan economy develops. In the context of power to raise resources two elements are of paramount importance:

- favorable procedures and processes for universities to generate and retain resources for university development; and
- a guarantee that the government budgetary grant to universities would not be reduced if institutions generate resources themselves.

4.25. **The expansion of substantive and procedural autonomy will require stronger academic and managerial skills in universities.** Greater autonomy of universities will need strong multi-year strategic plans. Developing and implementing such strategic plans will require capacity building of academic and professional staff in universities in a variety of areas, including planning, budgeting and monitoring. More autonomy in budget execution would require considerable strengthening of procurement and financial management skills in universities. For instance, procurement activities need skills in the preparation of bidding documents, including technical specifications, and efficient and transparent bid execution, evaluation and award processes. Financial management activities would include good record keeping and sound and timely internal and external audits. Academic autonomy would involve the continuous development of staff skills in curriculum design, assessments and testing, and new teaching methods and learning activities.

4.26. **Once the decision to empower public universities is taken, the appropriate governance structure(s) for these universities also needs to be considered.** The extent of and type of institutional autonomy will need to be decided by policy makers. The appropriate roles and functions of academics on the one hand and managers / administrators on the other hand will need to be defined. Also, the government will need to clarify whether all public universities will have similar internal governance structures, or whether variations will be allowed across universities. Institutional autonomy is a long-term challenge for Afghanistan, and will have to be addressed gradually and incrementally.

## **Promoting Accountability: Strengthening Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions**

4.27. **The development of the accreditation system to enhance stewardship of higher education institutions is an important policy measure for Afghanistan.** Accreditation would constitute an important component of the accountability framework needed as universities become more autonomous. There are several models for accreditation from which Afghanistan can draw lessons, going forwards. Several models are presented in Box 4.2.

4.28. **The immediate requirement for the development of a sound accreditation system is to build a cadre of staff who can undertake the key stages of licensing, coordination of quality assurance reviews, and accreditation of higher education institutions.** The licensing and accreditation stages typically require legal and auditing skills. The quality assurance activities can be undertaken by academics, but the coordination of systematic quality assurance reviews requires academic managerial skills. The range of skills required for a strong accreditation system needs to be developed by the Ministry of Higher Education as a top priority.

### **Box 4.2: Good Practices in Higher Education Accreditation across Developing Countries**

#### **India**

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) offers voluntary accreditation to public and private HEIs at the institutional and department level. Accreditation covers curricular aspects; teaching-learning and evaluation; research, consultancy and extension; infrastructure and learning resources; student support and progression; governance, leadership and management; and innovation and best practices. It is an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission. The primary goal of NAAC is to make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance of initiatives.

#### **Pakistan**

Quality assurance of public and private institutions in Pakistan is undertaken through its Higher Education Commission (HEC). HEC offers institutional accreditation to HEIs while program accreditation is only conducted for some professional programs determined on a needs-basis. It is an autonomous agency under the Prime Minister. HEC aims at sensitizing academia to quality assurance, developing quality assurance standards, processes and capacity, monitor and evaluate quality assurance performance. Development of institutional standards, institutional accreditation, overseeing Professional Councils which accredit programs, and building program self-assessment capacity are the key activities of the Commission.

#### **United Arab Emirates**

The Commission of Academic Accreditation (CAA) in the United Arab Emirates offers detailed standards that must be achieved for institutional and program accreditation. Its jurisdiction covers only private HEIs. The Commission is under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and its primary goal is to ensure quality, diversify services, ensure operational effectiveness, and raise international profile. CAA establishes standards, licenses institutions and accredits programs.

### **Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan's National Accreditation Centre (NAC) is in the very early stages of developing its quality assurance framework covering public and private HEIs. NAC falls under the Ministry of Education and Science and aims at creating and developing a national model of quality assurance in education harmonized with international standards. It establishes standards compliant with the European Bologna process, accredits institutions and programs, assesses foreign qualifications and organizes training regarding accreditation processes.

Source: UNESCO (2013)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### INVESTMENT IN AND FINANCING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

#### Introduction

**5.1. The needs of the Afghan higher education system are broad and deep, and require sustained and long-term investment for development.** However, Afghanistan faces several urgent competing needs for the scarce resources available. Meeting the investment requirements for higher education in the country will require a combination of efficient public investment and private sector participation. The present chapter analyses public spending on higher education in Afghanistan, and then discussed options to increase the volume of funding for the higher education sector as a whole, as well as to fund the state universities appropriately.

#### Public Investment in Higher Education

**5.2. Afghan public universities and higher education institutes are funded from the government budget.** There are no student fees charged in public higher education institutions. The budget of the Ministry of Higher Education has two components, an Ordinary (or Recurrent) budget and a Development (or Capital) budget. The ordinary budget covers salaries and wages of staff, as well as operations and maintenance expenditure. The development budget covers capital expenditures, such as the construction and renovation of physical facilities and buildings, and the purchase of equipment, tools and technology. The Government of Afghanistan spent approximately three billion Afghani on higher education in 2010. About 56 percent of this amount was spent under the ordinary budget, and the balance 44 percent under the Development budget. The bigger share devoted to the ordinary budget is normal, as salaries are usually the largest component of a higher education budget. Yet, the share of spending under the development budget is relatively high. This is also normal in the specific context of the country, and it can be attributed to investment in the higher education sector for the reconstruction and expansion of facilities and equipment in universities, including by development partners.

#### Government Higher Education Expenditure in International Perspective

**5.3. Public investment in higher education is about 0.5 percent of GDP and around 1.4 percent of government expenditure.** This places Afghanistan in the middle, but more towards the lower group, of the South Asian and low-income developing countries (particularly in terms of proportion of total government expenditure) as shown in Table 5.1. This is especially seen in

the proportion of public expenditure on higher education per pupil in relation to GDP per capita, 52 percent.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 5.1: Higher Education Expenditures in Afghanistan and Comparator Countries  
(South Asian Countries, Low-Income Developing Countries)**

Country Name	Total public tertiary education expenditure as a % of GDP.	Total public tertiary education expenditure as a % of total government expenditure.	Public expenditure per pupil as a % of GDP per capita. Tertiary
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>52</b>
Angola	0.2	0.4	80
Bangladesh	0.3	1.0	28
Burundi	1.1	4.2	477
Central African Republic	0.3	2.5	96
Chad	0.5	2	279
Comoros	1.1	1.8**	..
Congo, Dem. Rep.	0.6	2.1	..
Congo, Rep.	0.7	2.1**	134
Cote d'Ivoire	0.9	4.6	110
Georgia	0.3	0.8	11
Guinea	1.3	8.2	100
Guinea-Bissau	..	3.2	..
India	1.2	3.8	56
Liberia	0.4	..	..
Myanmar	0.1	4.8*	..
Nepal	0.5	2.2	39
Rwanda	0.9	3.2	187
Sierra Leone	0.6	2.4	..
Sri Lanka	0.3	1.9	..
Tajikistan	0.3	1.2	178
Togo	0.7	2.3	138
Zimbabwe	0.6	1.9	75

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) database /World Bank Education Statistics (EdStats) database.

Note: UNESCO UIS data is 2010 or nearest available and World Bank EdStats data is 2011 or nearest available year. \*National Estimation. \*\* UIS Estimation.

5.4. The relatively low share of public investment in higher education can be attributed to several factors. First, as a country which is still trying to provide universal basic education for

<sup>12</sup> The relationship between higher education funding and outcomes is complex and non-linear. The contribution of investment to higher education outcomes occurs over a period of time rather than in the year of investment [Millot (2013)]

children, the lower levels of education are a policy priority. Second, the higher education sector is just beginning to develop, after a lengthy period of decline during the 1970s-1990s. Hence, the momentum of higher education development has just started, and the demand for greater investment in higher education is beginning to be felt only now. Third, a significant share of public investment in education is provided by development partners. The majority of development partners award greater priority to basic education over higher education.

**5.5. The Government of Afghanistan is seeking to increase investment in higher education to meet the future challenges of expanding access, and raising quality and relevance.** Adequate, consistent and sustainable financing of higher education is a necessary condition for the development of a higher education system. However, the scope for enhancing public investment in higher education through the government budget is limited, given competing priorities at other levels of education, and in other sectors including health care and physical infrastructure. Therefore, the government needs to consider options to raise resources for higher education through alternative means. In this context, the country has two broad sets of options: (a) introduce reforms to the way public universities are funded, diversify their sources of revenue and enhance the efficiency of funds utilization; and (b) promote private sector participation in higher education. Within each of these broad sets of options there are several different alternatives, which generate a variety of models of higher education financing.

**5.6. There are a number of models of higher education financing world-wide** [Millot (2013)]. These alternative models, which cover both public sector financing and private sector financing, offer Afghan policy makers opportunities to increase investment in higher education. Policy options to increase funding for public higher education institutions are discussed in the next section, while options to stimulate private investment in higher education are discussed in the succeeding section.

## **Alternative Options for Funding Public Higher Education Institutions**

**5.7. In Afghanistan public universities are solely funded through the government budget.** The Constitution of the country mandates that education at all levels should be provided free. Public universities provide degree programs free of tuition fees to students. Living costs on campus are also fully subsidized by the government. This model of funding public higher education through tax revenues is found in many countries of continental Western Europe, and was also followed by the U.K. through much of the twentieth century. In certain variations of this model universities levy earmarked fees, for example for registration and examination, and/or for board and lodging, but provide free tuition. For instance, in Sri Lanka public universities provide tuition free education, but students are expected to pay a nominal fee for registration and examinations, as well as for boarding in campus hostels.

**5.8. An alternative, second model of higher education financing is the sharing of costs between the government and students.** The extent of cost sharing and subsidy vary among countries, and sometimes even within countries. In South Asia this model is found in India,



where students pay fees for university education, although the cost is heavily subsidized by the Government of India, and in the Open University of Sri Lanka, where students meet a part of the cost of their university education through fees. This model is also followed in the state higher education systems of the U.S.A. A student attending a state university in his/her home state receives a subsidy, with the degree of subsidy varying from state to state. Two other advanced countries where the state and students share the costs of education in public universities, through a subsidy from the government to reduce the cost of tuition, are the U.K. and New Zealand.

**5.9. A third model of higher education financing is a dual track system within higher education institutions.** In this model one set of places in public universities is made available free of tuition fees, while another set of places is made available for students who have the minimum qualifications for entry, but fail to receive sufficient marks to gain a free place, and can pay a fee. This model is followed in several former communist countries, including China. It is a radical reform in comparison to the financing model which existed in these countries during their communist period, when all university places were tuition free for students.

**5.10. A fourth model of higher education financing combines free and fee-levying institutions and programs at the country level.** In this model some higher education institutions and programs are available free of tuition fees, while other higher education institutions and programs charge fees. The latter group typically contains more market-oriented institutions and programs whose graduates have superior economic prospects. Countries such as Mexico and Nigeria implement this model. In South Asia Sri Lanka follows this model for postgraduate education in public universities, with some postgraduate and research degrees being offered free, while other postgraduate degrees levy fees.

**5.11. A fifth model of higher education financing is the introduction of deferred tuition fees, where students meet the cost of their undergraduate education after they have completed their studies and entered employment.** Some advanced countries, including Australia and England, use elements of this model of higher education financing. These would essentially be income-contingent loans. The model can be risky for developing countries which do not have a culture of repayment. In addition, in developing countries graduates are difficult to track, especially if they are working overseas, so that repayment can be a major issue.

**5.12. A sixth model of higher education financing is the levying of “up front” tuition fees from students at universities.** A wide range of both developed and developing countries, such as England, China, Malaysia, Thailand, the USA, and Vietnam, employ this model. This model can provide universities considerable autonomy, including the ability to set faculty salaries, and appoint staff at the discretion of the university. It can also provide considerable flexibility in terms of opening new courses and degree programs. It is, of course, the chief model used by private universities and higher education institutions, and provides the private sector the flexibility to react swiftly to market conditions. However, in the context of public universities that previously offered tuition free education, the introduction of tuition fees can be highly controversial. It also has the disadvantage of making higher education less accessible to poor students, and for that reason, it needs to be coupled with a well-designed student aid scheme.

Finally, a strict interpretation of the constitutional mandate that education should be free in Afghanistan could also be a barrier to any cost-sharing arrangements between the government and beneficiaries (students).

## **Policy Options for Promoting Private-Public Partnerships in Higher Education**

**5.13. The Government of Afghanistan is explicitly seeking to promote private sector investment and service delivery in the higher education sector [MoHE (2009); MoHE-USAID (2012)].** There are a wide variety of policy options from which countries can choose to promote private-sector participation and private-public partnerships (PPPs) in the higher education sector [World Bank (2012c)]. The main policy alternatives, and their advantages and disadvantages, are outlined below.

**5.14. The first policy option is the provision of financial grants or subsidies towards the capital costs of constructing university facilities and equipment.** This policy option could provide a substantial incentive for private higher education institutions to set up or expand, as the capital costs of constructing facilities and obtaining equipment are normally very high. The land on which the buildings are constructed could be made available to private higher education institutions on a sufficiently long lease, or on a freehold basis, for the full benefits of this option to be realized. Non-profit private higher education institutions could particularly benefit from this option, as such institutions often have less financial resources to draw upon than profit-making private higher education institutions.

**5.15. The second policy option is the payment of subsidies for rented premises.** Such subsidies could play a key role in encouraging private higher education institutions in areas where the available land is scarce and expensive, as in cities and towns. This option would have the advantage of reducing the costs of operating private higher education institutions, and act as an inducement for such institutions to be established or expanded. It would also facilitate non-profit private higher education institutions, as these typically do not offer courses with the same revenue raising potential as profit-making private higher education institutions.

**5.16. The third policy option is the provision of grants or subsidies for students enrolled in private HEIs.** The grants or subsidies could be in the nature of scholarships, vouchers or loans. This policy option would have the advantage of either reducing the cost of tuition fees and living expenses for students (scholarships, vouchers) or of deferring these costs (loans). The initiative would also increase competition among private higher education institutions if the students who receive the grant or subsidy can take the financial benefit to whichever higher education institutions they choose. The competition could be expanded to cover public sector higher education institutions, too, if students were entitled to use this financial benefit in both private and public higher education institutions, and enjoyed the freedom to select between the two sets of institutions. Afghanistan is unlikely to be able to design and implement an effective mechanism for the collection of student loans, so a system of outright grants or vouchers may be more feasible.

**5.17. Scholarship for students can have the disadvantage of being inequitable if they are awarded on the basis of performance at public examinations, rather than on the basis of the economic need of students.** Voucher systems are promising financing instruments, but may require a revolutionary change in the culture of higher education institutions, particularly if they are extended to public universities. This can make such systems very difficult to implement fully, or except over a long period of time. With voucher systems it is also extremely important that weaker universities receive considerable government support in the form of long-term capacity building. Table 5.2. below shows a range of financing options implemented in a middle-income country, Malaysia.

**Table 5.2: Characteristics of Scholarships in Malaysia**

Category of Scholarship	Distinguishing Characteristics
Government/State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. On merit</li> <li>ii. Citizenship</li> <li>iii. Ethnicity/minority</li> <li>iv. To local or foreign HEIs</li> <li>v. Unlimited field of study – though slanted according to national needs</li> </ul>
Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. On merit</li> <li>ii. Limited field of study</li> <li>iii. To local institutions only</li> <li>iv. First degree</li> <li>v. Coverage RM. 6-10k per annum</li> </ul>
Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. On merit</li> <li>ii. Limited field of study</li> <li>iii. To local institutions only</li> <li>iv. First degree</li> <li>v. May include some form of bond</li> </ul>
Universities/HEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Limited to the field of study at the institutions</li> <li>ii. Partial scholarship/merit based scholarship</li> <li>iii. May include bond</li> </ul>
Others (foundations, clubs, associations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. On merit</li> <li>ii. To local or foreign HEIs</li> <li>iii. Unlimited field of and level of study</li> </ul>

Source: Mukerjee (2010)

**5.18. The fourth policy option is for the government to invite private higher education institutions to establish higher education campuses in combination with other economic activities.** For instance, local and foreign partnerships in information technology and communications, linked with the establishment of firms providing information technology and communications services or industries, could be an option. Other services such as commerce and trade, and related higher education institutions, could also be an option. Policy measures along these lines could both expand the higher education sector, and link higher education with economically attractive investments. This model is implemented in countries such as Malaysia and South Korea. There would be a joint benefit, directly to the economy as well as to the

higher education sector. However, there are likely to be a limited number of such opportunities in Afghanistan over the medium-term. Where such opportunities do exist, though, they can and should be explored.

**5.19. The fifth policy option is to provide for research funding for private higher education institutions.** Government research funding could be made available to both public and private higher education institutions. Academics and/or departments and faculties from private universities can be encouraged to compete for research grants from government funds on the same terms as academics from the public universities. This would have several advantages. Such funding would stimulate research, which in turn is positively related to the quality of teaching, as good researchers are normally more up-to-date with their academic knowledge and expertise than academics who are not researchers. It would also stimulate some private higher education institutions to become centers of excellence over the long term. The Afghan higher education system is yet to develop to the stage of producing high quality research programs on a large scale. Hence, this would be very useful for the long-term development of the research capacity and output of universities.

#### Combinations of Policy Options

5.20. Finally, it should be noted that the policy alternatives discussed above are not mutually exclusive. The government could choose to implement and expand a combination of these options.

**5.21. The expansion of private higher education institutions, through whichever financing strategies are selected, needs to be combined with careful quality assurance and accreditation.** In addition, information about the quality of the current set of private HEIs is scarce, and the quality and accreditation of these institutions needs to be a high priority, in the context of promoting further private sector participation in higher education.

### **Potential Pathways for the Future**

**5.22. Overall, it is clear that there are a wide and varied range of policy options open to Afghanistan in the future, both to increase funds for the public sector and to stimulate investment from the private sector.** The country obviously needs to select from among these options and develop the best models for itself. This choice will be influenced by factors such as the country's overarching policy objectives, the resource envelope available to the government, and the political and economic context of higher education reform and development.

**5.23. The provision of resources for public higher education institutions needs to be focused on key policy priorities over the medium-term.** The top priorities include the expansion of higher education opportunities for female students, and the provision of equipment and facilities for degree programs which are relevant for the labor market. In this context, the government could consider setting aside resources for a scholarship scheme for bright girls from disadvantaged households to enter universities. The investment in facilities and equipment

would need to take into account the requirements for modern teaching and learning, such as facilities for small group inter-active learning, and the use of information and communications technology in university teaching and research.

**5.24. The way in which public universities are funded is closely connected to the degree of autonomy that is possible.** Public universities that are mainly financed through the government budget have typically have limited autonomy. Decisions which place a long-term demand on the government budget, such as staff recruitment and remuneration patterns, require approval from the Ministry of Finance. Similarly, expensive capital works projects for universities need to be compete with priorities in other sector for the capital budget, and once again decisions need to be made by the agency in charge of overall resource allocation, such as the Ministry of Finance. Public universities which are mainly funded through their own revenue raising efforts, such as through student fees, typically enjoy greater autonomy. Decisions on staffing and capital works that are funded by the universities own revenues are usually more within the control of the university. Hence, Afghanistan needs to keep in mind that the type and degree of autonomy the country desires for the public universities will need to be supported by appropriate model of financing.

**5.25. If Afghan policy makers consider a cost sharing option for the future, however, it is very important that less affluent but academically-skilled students continue to be provided financial assistance to enable them to access and complete their higher education.** Several countries in East Asia that have introduced student fees have then supported these fees through scholarship and loan schemes. Two examples of such scholarship schemes, drawn from Cambodia and Mongolia, are given in Box 5.1 and 5.2 below, respectively.

#### **Box 5.1: The State-Sponsored Scholarship Program in Cambodia**

In Cambodia scholarships are the main means of helping students overcome cost constraints. In 2000 the government issued a circular to regulate the proportion of fee-paying students in public higher education institutions and stated that a third of students enrolled in such institutions should be fee paying, with the remaining two-thirds on scholarship. Scholarship students do not pay tuition fees, but the share of scholarships is modest. Over the past few years, Cambodia's Department of Higher Education has developed the selection processes to use the scholarship scheme to promote equitable access to higher education, and to improve the equity of access for the poorest. Of the scholarships awarded, 60 percent are based on merit and 40 percent go to priority candidates. Of the priority scholarships, females receive 15 percent, the poor 15 percent, and those from rural areas 10 percent.

Source: World Bank (2012b)

**5.26. The government could also consider options to promote private sector investment in higher education in the medium-term.** The most clear-cut immediate policy measure to support private higher education would be to make research funds available to academics from private higher education providers. This measure would help improve the quality and standing

of private higher education institutions as organizations which engage in research and teaching, rather than just teaching alone.

### **Box 5.2: The State Training Fund in Mongolia**

Mongolia has a combination of scholarships and loans to improve access to higher education. Mongolian bachelor's degree students pay a substantial amount per year as fees, as well as meet their expenses for living and studying at a university. The Mongolian State Training Fund provides funding to tertiary education students through grants and loans, with a need-based component. On average, a recipient student would receive about 80 percent of tuition costs. These scholarships and loans help to offset the cost of education for about 40 percent of students in tertiary education, and helps expand access to higher education. A significant proportion of the grants are need based. In addition, If loan recipients are employed for eight consecutive years, five years in a rural area, the loans are forgiven. This provides an incentive for graduates to take up jobs in services such as education, health and public administration, in rural regions.

Source: World Bank (2012b)

**5.27. The main reason for the higher education models that are not fully tax financed, but where some type of cost sharing exists, is that the tax financed model becomes very expensive for a country when the number of students enrolled in higher education rises.** As the demand for higher education increases, and the cost of improving quality and relevance rises, even developed countries have found it difficult to meet the needs of the higher education sector solely through tax financing, and have introduced one or more elements of the cost sharing models discussed above. This has been seen in recent times in developed countries, including Canada and the U.K., as well as in European countries and former Communist countries, such as China and Russia.

**5.28. Over the long-term a funding formula for public universities on a per capita basis could be useful and relevant.** There are several reasons for a funding formula to be used:

- Allocations would be transparent and not open to “personal negotiations”.
- Allocations would be logical, fair and consistent across universities. A well weighted formula provides both incentives and stability.
- Resources could be clearly linked to outputs and performance, if so desired.
- Unit costs/units of resources used in the formula could be easily adjusted to achieve efficiency/economy gains.
- In periods of hardship the unit of resource used in the formula could be adjusted.

The allocations can be part of a funding system and do not need to meet 100 percent of costs.

**5.29. There are many factors to be considered when developing a formula funding model.** These include the following:

- The funding can be allocated on the basis of students completing their programs rather than those enrolling. This rewards success and penalizes institutions that fail to educate their students. However, measures to protect the quality of graduates would need to be instituted, as otherwise institutions may lower standards to pass students and obtain the funds linked to graduation rates.
- The formula can vary by subject, paying more for expensive disciplines. In the UK there were four price bands until recently, and there are eight price bands in Australia.
- The price paid per student can be based on historic cost or a targeted cost.
- The allocation per student varies for different types of students; e.g. postgraduate students and part-time students.

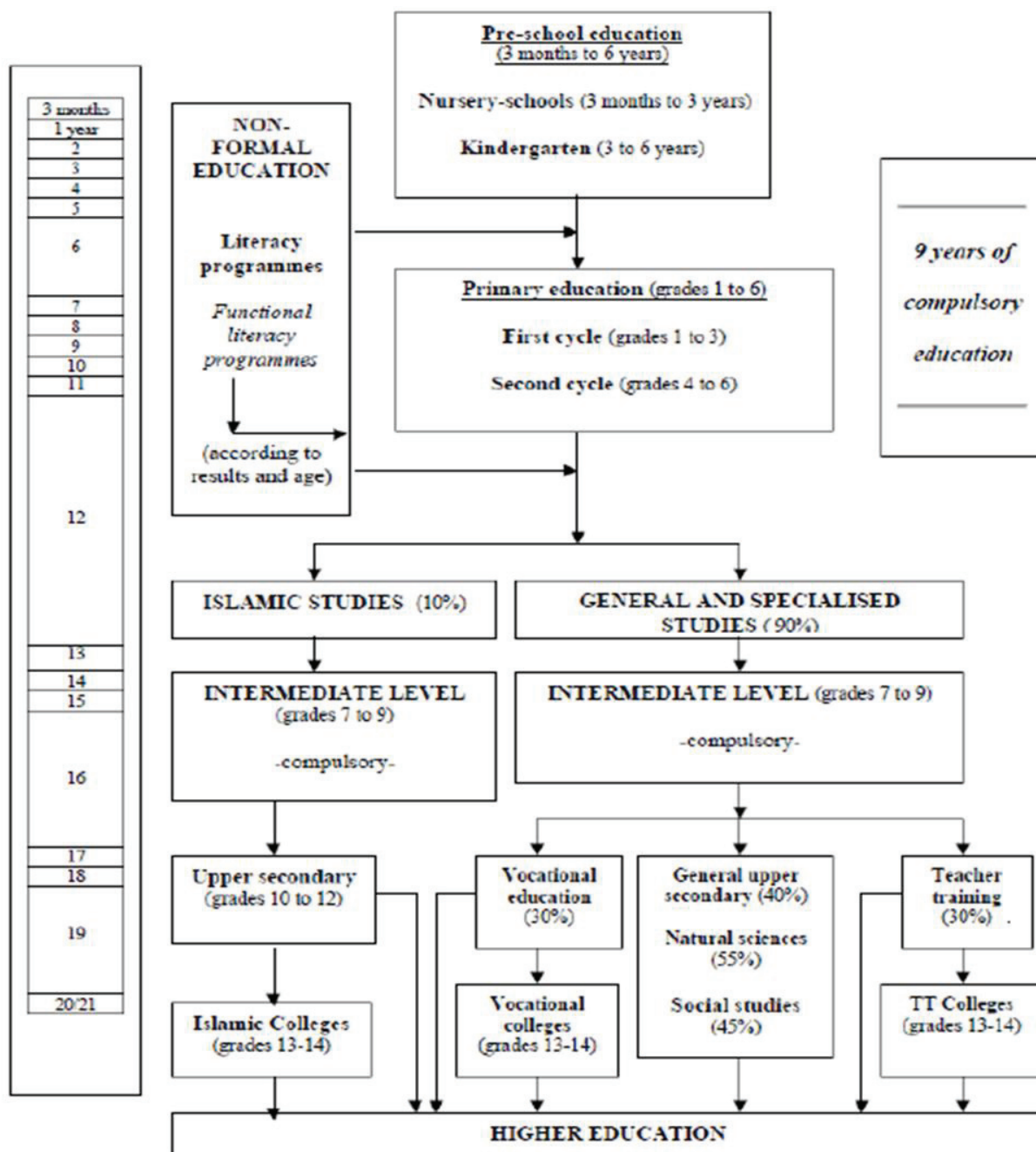
5.30. Developing a university funding formula can be a complex task. Hence, while such an exercise can be useful it would require long-term commitment from policy makers.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

Figure A.1: Structure of Afghanistan's Education System



Source: UNESCO (2011)

**Table A.1: Number of Students by Gender in Public Universities in Afghanistan (2012)**

University		Student population		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Alberoni University	3,409	507	3,916
2	Baghlan University	2,230	293	2,523
3	Balkh University	6,719	2,293	9,012
4	Bamyaan University	2,195	418	2,613
5	Ghazni University	968	212	1,180
6	Herat University	6,452	3,391	9,843
7	Jawzjan University	2,817	592	3,409
8	Kabul Education University	3,575	2,564	6,139
9	Kabul Medical university	1,272	975	2,247
10	Kabul Poly Technique University	2,792	174	2,966
11	Kabul University	13,407	4,166	17,573
12	Kandahar University	3,536	216	3,752
13	Khost University	5,186	61	5,247
14	Konar University	1,001	15	1,016
15	Kunduz University	2,012	253	2,265
16	Leghman University	397	3	400
17	Nangarhar University	9,155	539	9,694
18	Paktia University	3,249	181	3,430
19	Takhar University	2,459	450	2,909
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72,831</b>	<b>17,303</b>	<b>90,134</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Afghanistan, Higher Education Statistics (2012a)

**Table A.2: Number of Students by Gender in Public Higher Education Institutes in Afghanistan (2012)**

Higher Education Institutes		Student population		
		Male	Female	Total
20	Badakhshan Institute of Higher Education	1521	414	1,935
21	Badhis Higher Education Institute	324	54	378
22	Farah Higher Education Institute	160	20	180
23	Faryab Higher Education Institution	2,445	730	3,175
24	Ghor Higher Education Institute	119	19	138
25	Helmand Higher Education Institute	1,175	35	1,210
26	Panjshir Higher Education Institute	385	43	428
27	Parkita Higher Education Institute	102	0	102
28	Parwan Higher Education Institution	2,412	382	2,794
29	Samangan Higher Education Institute	467	151	618
30	Sar-I Pul Higher Education Institute	106	64	170
31	Urozgan Higher Education Institute	53	0	53
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9,269</b>	<b>1,912</b>	<b>11,181</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Afghanistan, Higher Education Statistics (2012a)

**Table A.3: Destination Countries for Afghan Students to Study Abroad (2010)**

Country	Number of Afghan Students
Iran	2,132
Turkey	796
United States	422
Germany	285
Russia	282
Saudi Arabia	247
United Kingdom	199
Tajikistan	139
France	117
Pakistan	116
Norway	96
Austria	95
Kyrgyzstan	87
India	70

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Database.

Note: data is for 2010.

## APPENDIX B

**Table B.1: Afghanistan Academics by Universities and Qualification**

University	Faculty Staff			
	BA/BSc	MA/MSc	PhD	Total
Alberoni University	136	39	6	181
Baghlan University	64	24	1	89
Balkh University	160	118	6	284
Bamyaa University	61	32	0	93
Ghazni university	28	3	0	31
Herat University	200	107	2	309
Jawzjan university	77	18	0	95
Kabul Education University	113	112	7	232
Kabul Medical University	74	142	6	222
Kabul Poly Technique University	64	115	38	217
Kabul University	321	316	78	715
Kandahar University	89	50	1	140
Khost University	109	25	7	141
Konar University	34	1	0	35
Kunduz University	71	9	2	82
Leghman University	12	2	0	14
Nangarhar University	161	143	17	321
Paktia University	62	11	1	74
Takhar University	64	15	1	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>1,282</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>3,355</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Afghanistan (2013a)

**Table B. 2: Afghanistan Academics by Higher Education Institute and Qualification**

Higher Education Institution	BA/BSc	MA/MSc	PhD	Total
Badakhshan Institute of Higher Education	44	1	0	45
Badhis Higher Education Institute	8	1	0	9
Farah Higher Education Institute	7	0	0	7
Faryab Higher Education Institution	63	6	0	69
Ghor Higher Education Institute	4	0	0	4
Helmand Higher Education Institute	19	4	0	23
Panjshir Higher Education Institute	20	0	0	20
Parkita Higher Education Institute	6	0	0	6
Parwan Higher Education Institution	67	13	0	80
Samangan Higher Education Institute	8	1	0	9
Sar-I Pul Higher Education Institute	3	0	0	3
Urozgan Higher Education Institute	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>276</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Afghanistan (2013a)

## APPENDIX C

**Table C.1: Education and Economic Welfare 2007/8, Generalized Least Squares Estimates**

Regression coefficients	(1) Urban	(2) Rural
<i>Demographic characteristics of household head</i>		
Age	-0.0188***	-0.0120***
Age squared	0.0002***	0.0001***
Male (sex)	0.0990	-0.0383
Household head mildly disabled	-0.0018	0.0186
Household head severely disabled	-0.0121	0.0148
<i>Educational attainment of household head</i>		
Primary	0.0784***	0.0656***
Middle school	0.1006***	0.0396**
High school	0.2475***	0.1250***
Teacher's college	0.3247***	0.1851***
University	0.4653***	0.3066***
Postgraduate	0.5961***	0.1672
<i>Household variables</i>		
Dependency ratio	-0.4385***	-0.4003***
Farming for own consumption most important source of household income	0.0017	0.0690***
Market farming is most important source of income	-0.2044***	0.1126***
Farm wage most important source of income	-0.0831	0.0710***
Trade and transport most important source of income	0.1629***	0.1048***
Transfers most important source of income	0.0833**	-0.0165
Constant	8.6561***	8.0930***
R-squared	0.45	0.15
Number of observations	5036	13368

Source: Bank Staff Team estimates, based on the Afghanistan National Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (NVRA) data (2007/8).

Notes:

1. All standard errors have been corrected for heteroscedasticity. \*\*\* means statistically significant at 99 percent, \*\* means statistically significant at 95 percent, and \* means statistically significant at 90 percent.
2. Dependent variable is log of per capita household consumption, adjusted for temporal and regional differences.
3. A set of community and infrastructure variables, not shown in the Table above, were also estimated. The full results are discussed in Aturupane and Gunatilaka (2013a).
4. Based on NVRA data (2007/2008), household weights used.

**Table C.2: Education and Other Factors associated with the Probability of Women's Labor Force Participation in Urban and Rural Afghanistan 2007/08: Marginal Effect of Logistic Estimation**

Regression coefficients	(1) Urban	(2) Rural
<i>Demographic characteristics</i>		
Age	0.0413***	0.0842***
Age squared	-0.0005***	-0.0011***
Widowed	-0.0246	-0.2753***
<i>Educational attainment</i>		
Primary	0.0243	-0.0122
Middle school	-0.0189	0.0501
High school	0.2021***	0.0673
Teacher's college	0.7477***	0.2448*
University	0.5492***	
Postgraduate	0.5815***	
<i>Household characteristics</i>		
Log of per capita household consumption	-0.1400***	-0.1055***
Dependency ratio	-1.4115***	-2.5736***
At least one child less than 10 years of age	0.1443***	0.3560***
Transfers most important source of income	0.1458***	0.1088***
Number of observations	7097	17858

Source: Bank Staff Team estimates, based on the Afghanistan National Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (NVRA) data (2007/8).

Notes:

1. \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote statistical significance at the one per cent, five per cent and ten per cent levels respectively.
2. Dependent variable is the probability of labor force participation.
3. A set of community, cultural and infrastructure variables, not shown in the Table above, were also estimated. The full results are discussed in Aturupane and Gunatilaka (2013a).
5. No university or post-graduate women in the rural sample.
6. Based on NVRA data (2007/2008), household weights used.

**Table C. 3: Mother's Education and Other Factors associated with the Probability of Infants Being Given Colostrum and of Children Being Immunized, Afghanistan 2007/08: Marginal Effects of Logistic Estimation**

Regression coefficients	(1) Colostrum	(2) BCG	(3) Polio	(4) DPT
<i>Household's and mother's characteristics</i>				
Household's per capita expenditure	0.0172	0.1240***	0.0037	0.0877***
Mother's age	0.0000	-0.0027***	0.0000	-0.0031***
Mother's years of education	0.0024	0.0164**	0.0014	0.0222***
Female head/spouse has sole decision-making power over expenditure on medicines for children	0.0220	0.0462*	0.0109***	0.0389
<i>Health facilities in community</i>				
Time taken by foot to health post	-0.0134**	-0.0063	0.0030*	-0.0249***
Time taken by foot to public clinic	0.0116	-0.0325***	-0.0060***	-0.0564***
Female community worker at health post	0.0471***	0.0808***	0.0066**	0.1417***
Midwife at public clinic	-0.0094	0.0376**	0.0126*	0.1049***
Male doctor at government hospital	0.0621	-0.1328***	-0.0033	-0.1725***
Female doctor at government hospital	0.2100***	0.0504	-0.0045	0.1242***
Midwife at government hospital	-0.1153***	0.1273***	-0.0068	-0.0632

Source: Bank Staff Team estimates, based on the Afghanistan National Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (NVRA) data (2007/8).

Notes:

1. \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote statistical significance at the one per cent, five per cent and ten per cent levels respectively
2. Dependent variables are: the probability of receiving BCG vaccination.
3. Sample relates to children 5 years or less.
4. A set of community, regional, and infrastructure variables, not shown in the Table above, were also estimated. The full results are discussed in Aturupane and Gunatilaka (2013b).
5. The F-adjusted mean residual test measures goodness of fit after fitting a logistic regression model to survey data. Archer.
6. Estimated using NVRA 2007/08 data, individual weights used.



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