



## NEWS RELEASE: Corruption vulnerability in school education. Top concern: teacher appointments process is largely corrupted

*Kabul, Afghanistan, Thursday October 26, 2017:* Today, MEC is releasing a new analysis of the **Vulnerability to Corruption of the Afghan Ministry of Education**. The MEC report identifies the different areas and sectors within the education ministry being vulnerable to corruption. MEC makes sixty-six recommendations for improving different areas and bringing much needed reform.

This analysis was requested by His Excellency Dr. Asadullah Hanif Balkhi, the Minister of Education. Despite being aware that the results would be highly critical, he and his staff were co-operative and actively engaged. Both His Excellency and MEC believe that openness and honesty regarding the problems of corruption in education are essential if there are to be better results for students and for the country.

This is a large study, and is the first-ever comprehensive evaluation of corruption vulnerabilities across the entire Ministry. MEC carried out 542 interviews with five groups of people: Ministry officials (109), Provincial Education officials (126), Training Colleges (76), Teachers (93), Parents and students (125), Development Partners and other (22), and MEC conducted 160 Focus Group Discussions. The study took place in Kabul and in the nine provinces of Badakhshan, Balkh, Faryab, Ghazni, Herat, Khost, Bamyán, Pansjhir and Nangarhar, and in 138 schools.

### Main Findings

MEC reviewed 36 different types of education corruption. Taken together, they constitute a corruption of the very ideal of education in Afghanistan. This deep problem has been the status quo for at least the past 10-15 years, and is not improving.

**1. Jobs market.** Because the Education ministry is so large, with 262,000 staff (68 percent of total civilian staff of the Afghan government), it is the prime jobs market for corrupt influence.

**2. Teacher appointments are largely corrupted.** So many teachers and newly qualified graduates are really keen to do a good job and serve their country. However, across the country, teachers are appointed on the basis of influence, nepotism and bribery, not on the basis of merit. The very high levels of teacher unemployment – some 75% of Teacher Training College Graduates are unable to find work – is likely due in large part to this corruption. There are widespread related problems, such as a corruption of the testing procedure, payment being required to get the teaching position, corrupted recruitment procedures, teachers paying to stay on beyond retirement age, gender bias.

MEC concludes that this issue - corruption in teacher appointment - is the most dangerous topic that threatens the education of students.

**3. Extensive corruption in textbooks,** especially in distribution. Students all across the country have to buy their own textbooks, which are meant to be free,

**4. The Ministry is so large that it is almost unmanageable.** Therefore corruption flourishes and cannot be controlled.

**5.** There needs to be routine, **independent** inspection of the quality of education in the schools. At present school quality inspection is ineffective and not independent.

**6. Salaries continue to be paid in cash across most provinces.** This is a high risk of corruption, and Ministry progress on this topic is too slow

**7. Procurement procedures** continue to be vulnerable to corruption. This causes most projects to lag behind, and some projects have been left incomplete for years. Eg Better external verification on school construction, including by donors, is required.

8. The EMIS data for the schools visited was found to be 23% higher than the number of students actually attending in the small sample of schools (88) for which MEC gained actual data. This data sample is too small for any generalizable conclusions. However, given that MEC did not analyse the most insecure provinces, where the attendance is likely to be still lower than enrolment, this finding therefore needs urgent attention by those reviewing EMIS data quality.

9. Adult literacy program is heavily corrupted

**10. Corruption problems also happen as a consequence of the school curriculum being too large.** This means that it is beyond the competence of many teachers and not realistic to teach so much to students in the time available. Because of this, they have to resort to dishonest methods to help the students get through the exams.

## Recommendations

- Increasing local responsibility for selecting teachers, so that school communities have more responsibility for choosing their teachers
- Establishing an independent oversight body for educational quality
- Establishing an independent oversight body for teacher appointments
- Reforming the Ministry - reducing the size and scope of the Ministry, so as to enable tighter management.
- Reducing the overall size of the curriculum
- Greater enforcement and referral of corrupt cases to AGO

MEC has discussed the findings with His Excellency and with members of his leadership team in the Ministry. They were professional and helpful, and have commenced their own anti-corruption action plan.

MEC will now actively monitor the implementation of these recommendations and the progress of the Ministry over the next two years. MEC will publish these findings every quarter.

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