GPE Afghanistan Semi-Annual Report2015



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Acronyms

ACE – Academic Council for Education

AC – Academic Supervision

ALP – Accelerated Learning Program

DANIDA – Danish International Development Work

DEO – District Education Officer

DSM – District Social Mobilizer

CA- Coordinating Agency

CBE – Community Based Education

EFA – Education for All

EIP – Education Interim Plan

EMIS – Education Management Information System

EQUIP – Education Quality Improvement Programs

GE – General Education

GPE – Global Partnership for Education

GPEPCU – Global Partnership for Education Program Coordination Unit

HRMU – Human Resource Management Unit

ISD – Infrastructure Services Department

LDG – Local Donor Group

LEG – Local Education Group

MoE – Ministry of Education

MoF – Ministry of Finance

MBE – Mosque Based Education

PED – Provincial Education Directorate

PSMCs – Provincial Social Mobility Coordinator

SE – Supervising Entity

SMS – School Management Shura

TA – Technical Assistant

TED – Teachers' Education Directorate

TVET – Technical Vocational Education and Training

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Fund

Executive Summary

The aim of Global Partnership for Education (GPE), established in 2002, is to assist low-income countries reach their Education for All (EFA) goals. This partnership consists of 64 developing countries that focus on access to quality education.

After the endorsement of the Education Interim Plan (EIP) by the Local Donor Group (LDG) in March 2011, Afghanistan became the then 44th developing member of Global Partnership for Education (GPE). UNICEF provides support as Supervising Entity (SE) and the government of Denmark, through the representatives of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) at its Embassy in Kabul, serves as Coordinating Agency (CA) respectively.

The program consists of four priorities that aim to increase and sustain equitable access to education in the hard to reach and insecure provinces. Priority one **"strengthening community and social mobilization at the local level"** aims to strengthen community and social mobilization with a view of addressing socio-cultural and political barriers to education; focusing on support for girls' education. The second priority **"expanding and reinforcing multiple pathways to education"** aims to increase access to basic education by expanding alternative basic education programs.

The third program priority **"increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparity"** aims to increase girls' enrollment in the target districts through an expansion in the number of qualified female teachers with a focus on creating enhancing sustainable local capacities. The objective of the fourth and last priority **"streamlining policy and administrative systems in the MoE"** is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the MoE in planning and formulation of policies in the MoE.

The semi- annual report (2015) provides an overview of the implementation status of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) program in Afghanistan for the period January to June, 2015. The report covers the implementation progress, achievements, challenges and recommendations for the improvement in program implementation. A year of uncertain political environment and delays in the introduction of the cabinet, halt on the recruitment, delays in making major decisions in favor of the program from higher management of the MoE resulted in low implementation of the program in the first half of 2015.

To start program implementation at national and sub-national level the major focus in the first year was on recruiting, training and mobilizing GPE program staff. In the current staff structure there are 12 Provincial Social Mobility Coordinators (PSMCs), 1 vacant, and 93 District Social Mobilizers (DSMs), 27 vacant, positions at sub-national level. To strengthen and mobilize communities and create awareness among community elders, leaders and other influential people, the PSMCs and DSMs conduct bi-monthly meetings and public awareness events every year. Due to late transfer of fund in first half of 2015, the PSMCs and DSMs were only able to conduct **8** bi-monthly meetings among education stakeholders at district level, however no public awareness events have been conducted. Because the fiscal budget is approved by the Parliament every year after a rigorous process resulting in delays, the first half of the year is generally focused on monitoring of previous year's progress, working on annual operational plans for the year and capacity building of the sub-national staff. To ensure provincial staff are informed of the program deliverables for the FY 2015, a series of training workshops were held in May and June 2015. The focus of these workshops was to provide: an orientation on the Operational Plan; explain the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the program; share the Program Implementation Manual, CBE policy review,

Social Mobilization guidelines and other relevant topics.

The community involvement in school governance was addressed through School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Under this strategy 1000 SIPs are planned for three years, 550 for the first two years. A total of 401 SIPs were contracted during 2013. The status of these SIPs till the end of June, 2015 is – 131 completed in December, 2014 and **56** completed in the first six months of 2015 and 158 are ongoing projects, 60 projects have been stopped due to technical problems and high ceiling cost that needed to be fixed. A complete report of these SIPs are provided to MoE higher management for a decision on how to restart the work on these SIPs. A total of 164 SIPs were contracted in 2014, among which 31 are ongoing projects, 46 newly awarded and 87 stopped due to security, lack of quality material and issues between contractors and sub-contractors. In 2015, a total of 379 SIPs have been planned among which 349 have been designed and are under evaluation and 30 are being designed by the Engineering department. The overall physical progress of all SIPs is **93.94%** and the financial progress is **66.35%** till the end of June, 2015.

The purpose of community and social mobilization activities has been to expand and reinforce multiple pathways to education. In the first two years of the program implementation there was substantial progress in terms of establishing Community-Based Classes (CBCs) and Accelerated Learning Classes (ALCs). Since 2013, a total of 1,355 CBCs enrolling 37,755 students (53% girls) and 665 ALCs enrolling 16,936 students (51% girls) have been established across the forty districts in thirteen provinces where GPE program is being implemented. 15,702 **(40% girls)** get education in Mosques from Mullah Imams.

There is a positive link between deploying female teachers and enrollment of girls in school in Afghanistan. The initiative of deploying qualified female teachers to girls' schools in rural areas was explained to local communities in GPE target provinces and they were supportive of the initiative. A total of 146 qualified female teachers were recruited and deployed in GPE target districts in the first two years. For 2015, there is a target of 153 female teachers to be recruited by the end of 2015.A number of qualified female teachers have been longlisted from the pool of CVs collected through a nation-wide campaign though famous television and radio channels at local and national level in the last quarter of 2014 and the gap will be filled in the third quarter of 2015. Currently, from 146 recruited teachers 122 are on-the-job and providing services.

The program priorities have addressed many possible barriers to education through interlinked strategies and activities. There is notable achievement under the activity re-opening closed-schools; 67 closed schools were re-opened in 2014. However, as for the utilization of emergency fund for supporting closed-schools, there is no policy in use in the MoE, therefore, the allocated emergency fund remained unutilized in 2014.

To provide technical support to MoE, a Program Coordination Unit (GPEPCU) was established in 2013. The Unit consists a team of Program Coordinator, Planning and Evaluation, Human Resource, Finance and Procurement. Social Mobilization Coordinator and Communication Coordination. Currently, the positions of Finance and Procurement and Communication Coordinators are vacant, however, these positions will be filled in the 3rd quarter of the year. In addition, technical assistance has been provided to MoE departments involved in GPE program implementation. The technical assistants (TAs) include, 2 to Human Resource Management Unit (HRMU), 2 to Directorate of Publication and Information, 2 to Finance Department, 2 to Procurement Department, 3 to Infrastructure Services Department (ISD) and 3 (1 recruited 2 vacant) to Academic Supervision (AS) Department at central level from 2013 until first half of 2015. In addition, ISD

Department has been provided with 13 Provincial Engineers, who have been working in GPE target provinces since 2013.

To strengthen the capacity of MoE planning and EMIS departments, 8 master trainers have been provided to planning department and 13 TAs at sub-national and 1 at national level to EMIS. Furthermore, to strengthen EMIS infrastructure, GPE is providing financial support for **"Data Assessment and Verification"** project which was awarded to an Afghan consultancy firm "ARTS" in May 2014 till the end of 2014, 50% of the project was completed and the remaining 50% work will be completed in the second and third quarter of 2015. The other major project is the **"Connectivity Project",** aiming to connect 34 provincial sites to the central EMIS site. The first lot of the project (purchase of hardware) was awarded in December 2014 and the equipment were purchased in the first quarter of 2015. However, the second lot is services which is divided into two sub-lots i.e. lot 1 is connecting 4 provinces and was announced in the second quarter of 2015 and the second sub-lot is connecting 30 provinces and has been awarded to Roshan Telecommunications Company in the first quarter of 2015 with an expected completion date of September, 2015.

Under the last priority of the program "streamlining policy and administrative systems in MoE" there has not been a desired progress. The reason of delay in the implementation of this priority was due to delay in the decision whether to outsource the component or implement internally in the MoE, hiring national and international advisors. After extensive consultations with the MoE relevant Departments, the decision was taken that local consultants will be recruited and embedded within the department to gather first hand data and to help implement developed policies. Due to standstill on recruitment the positions were announced in May, 2015 and only one position of national communication consultant have been filled till the end of June, 2015.

For the FY 2015, the GPEPCU has developed accelerated operational plans to help smoothen the implementation of the Program. Furthermore, detailed provincial planning which are time bound are drafted along with revisiting the Program Implementation Manual to ensure all involved stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Over the last two years there have been formidable challenges in the implementation of GPE program in the insecure provinces of Afghanistan. The challenges include; insecurity in the target provinces and districts, unavailability of qualified staff at sub-national level, unavailability of qualified female teachers at sub-national level, lack of formal monitoring mechanism of sub-national staff, lengthy government procurement processes, late transfer of fund to provinces, lack of reliable data and delay in the provision of textbooks and training to teachers.

Despite all the mentioned challenges at the central and provincial levels implementation of the Program has so far been satisfactory. With timely mitigation strategies, the MoE was able to accelerate the implementation of the Program and help remove bottlenecks.

Program Overview

Global partnership for Education (GPE) program in Afghanistan is led by the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan. The program involves a number of stakeholders including the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and other development partners and civil society organizations i.e. the Human Resource Development Board (HRDB) and the Local Education Group (LEG).

The proposed program covers three years and has a budget of US$55.7 million. The program has maximum impact on all major EIP programs, including other donor-supported interventions. It consists of four priorities that are mutually reinforcing and have their strategic origins in the EIP and offer opportunities to build on previously successful experiences.

The four program priorities are:
1. Strengthening community and social mobilization and governance systems at the Local level, (USD 22.7 million, 41%);

2. Expanding and reinforcing multiple pathways to education (USD 19.4 million, 35%);

3. Increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities (USD 6.9 million, 12%); and

4. Streamlining policy and administrative systems in the MoE (USD 6.5 million, 12%).

The package targets 40 districts in 13 provinces namely (Badghis, Daikundi, Farah, Ghor, Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, Nimroz, Nooristan, Paktia, Paktika, Uruzgan and Zabul) and 40 districts. The targeted locations are insecure, underserved, difficult to access, have lowest education and economic indicators.

The purpose of targeting these areas is to increase and sustain equitable access to education in these locations. Low access rates to primary education, hide bound customs, the need to take action in favor of girls' education, and need to provide equitable to education are major challenges in the targeted districts.



CBE Class – Daikundi

Objectives of the Program

The overall objective is to increase and sustain equitable access to education in the target districts that face the most critical challenges such as (i) the low access rates in primary education, (ii) the need to overcome traditional obstacles to enrollment through alternative approaches, (iii) the need to take action in favor of girls' education and (iv) the need to continue to build the capacity of the MoE to deliver quality education service.

To generate a maximum impact all the four program priorities are implemented in all the districts. Strategies such as community and social mobilization; relations and links between social mobilizers and communities, and a common policy framework to strengthen MoE capacity are all mutually reinforcing.



ALP Class - Uruzgan

The program was planned to start after the approval of grant in November 2011, however, the late transfer of fund caused 6 months delay in the implementation of the program. MoE received first tranche of the grant (US$ 9 million) in October 2012, it was already late to start the program. The fiscal year was near to an end, therefore, the decision was made to start the program in new fiscal year (1392/2013) after the annual approval of government budget by the Parliament.

After the legal fund transfer agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and UNICEF (Grant Supervising Entity), the program start date on paper was July 2012, however, MoE formally launched implementation of program in January, 2013. The program currently is operating in its third year of implementation. However, as the program is not operating as planned there will be request for no-cost extension for a period of twelve months ending December 2016.

Program Priority 1: Strengthening Community and Social Mobilization and Governance at the Local Level

Strategy 1: Enhance Community and Social Mobilization

Priority one consists of two strategies. The first strategy **"Enhance Community and Social Mobilization"** focuses on communities and leaders/elders and their attitudes to schooling and education.'

The objective is to strengthen community and social mobilization with a view of addressing socio-cultural and political barriers to education; focusing on support for girls' education, and ensuring social support and a protective environment in and around the schools. The aim is to empower the communities to resume ownership of schools and come to the forefront of protecting and defending their own children's schools.

To get the support of community leaders and elders, downstream and upstream communication approach has been adopted. The whole approach is guided by a communication strategy, which will be developed by the MoE through a participatory process to leverage community and social mobilization for the EFA goals in Afghanistan.

Strategy 2: Strengthen School Governance for Quality Schools

The second strategy **"Strengthening School Governance for Quality Schools"** addresses community involvement in school governance through the developing and monitoring the implementation of School Improvement Plans (SIPs). The objective here to implement the concept of quality education involving the physical school environment as well as effective learning, safety and protection.

This Program Priority provides the basis for the implementation of other priorities of GPE Program. Social mobilizers provide the link for all activities at the community level and maintain the network of relationships between School Management Shura (SMS), Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and District Education Offices (DEOs).



Drinking Water Point – School in Zurmat, Paktia



Ecosan Toilet and Drinking Water Point – Dor Kalai, Daman, Kandahar

Priority 2: Expanding and Reinforcing Multiple Pathways to Education

This priority consists of four strategies, the objective is to increase access to basic education by expanding and reinforcing multiple and alternative basic education programs.

Strategy 1: Expand Access to Community-Based Education (CBE)

The purpose of this strategy is direct reduction in the number of out-of-school children in the remote and insecure areas of Afghanistan. The aim is also to improve the implementation of Community Based Education (CBE) and facilitate bridges to the formal education system. CBE is the only education modality in Afghanistan that has successfully provided educational services to more girls than boys.

Strategy 2: Expand Access to Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)

The purpose of this strategy is to provide access to education through faster means. Accelerated learning program is a process through which students complete required learning faster. This program is specifically designed for older out-of-school students. ALP is designed to cover course of one educational year in 6 months. The goal of ALP is completion of primary education or integration into the formal system at an age appropriate level.



Mosque Based Class - Nuristan

Strategy 3: Strengthen Mosque-Based Education

The idea here is to clarify and systematize the channels of work with mosques, strengthen mosques in delivering basic education and create linkages and bridges to the formal education system. Mullahs will be trained in pedagogy and subject specific skills.

Strategy 4: Re-open Closed Schools

The purpose of this strategy is to support communities to rebuild and reopen the schools and encourage them to send their children to schools. This is expected to be a high impact activity because every school that is reopened in insecure province becomes a benchmark for the whole country by demonstrating the ability of communities to expand access to education.

These three strategies being adopted in this Program Priority have also a high degree of acceptance among Afghanistan's communities. This is because they are inherently flexible, meet the education needs of the students, allow them entry at various points, and complement the public education system.

Priority 3: Increasing the Number of Qualified Female Teachers in Areas with High Gender Disparities

This program priority consists of three strategies aiming to increase girls' enrolment in the targeted districts through an expansion in the number and quality of female teachers. All the three strategies collectively contribute to the overall objective: (i) using incentives to encourage female teachers currently teaching in urban areas to work in districts without female teachers; and (ii) supporting accelerated and simultaneous teacher training for adolescent girls at the local level.

Strategy 1: Develop Social Support Systems for Female Teachers at the Local Level

The purpose of this strategy is to develop and implement social support systems to ensure that the new teachers (from the urban centers and at the local level) have a solid base for care, assistance and encouragement. This entails housing, provision of psychological support - engaging communities, community elders/leaders and School Management Shuras (SMSs). Social mobilizers play key role in mobilizing community support.



CBE Class – Badghis

Strategy 2: Recruit, Train and Deploy Female Teachers from Urban Centers to the Local Level

Under this strategy qualified female teachers from urban centers are recruited, trained and deployed to the rural areas with their spouses. In addition, an incentive system will be developed and institutionalized. The incentive scheme will be designed with robust monitoring to ensure that teachers deploy as agreed, that they remain in their posts, and that they are in classrooms and teaching.

Strategy 3: Develop a system for Recruitment, Training and Employment of Female Teachers at the Local Level

Both above mentioned strategies are bolstered by a third one on organizing for sustained community support for newly-deployed teachers and their families as well as for locally hired female teachers. Simultaneously a link is made with the policy component of the Program Priority 4.

Priority 4: Streamlining Policy and Administrative Systems in the Ministry of Education (MoE)

The main objective of this program priority is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the MoE in policy formulation, planning and implementation processes and in the coordination of programs. This is achieved through:

Strategy 1: Enhance Policy Review and Development

Under this strategy the Academic Council of Education (ACE) is the responsible body in MoE for policy development and for the definition of procedures and setting of standards. There is need of technical assistance for policy review and development in ACE. GPE will provide technical assistance to ACE for the development of policies, procedures and standards in view of strengthening the work on the three first GPE program priorities.

Strategy 2: Strengthen MoE Capacity for Improved Planning and Monitoring

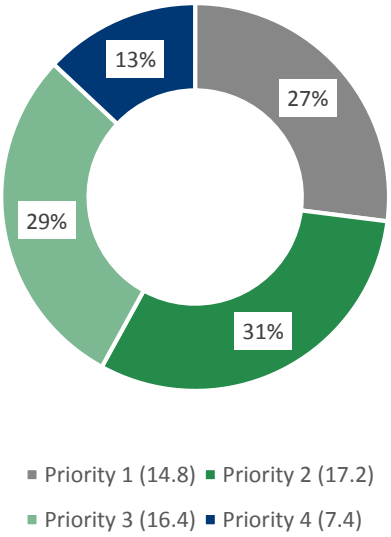
The purpose of this strategy is to strengthen MoE's capacity for improved planning and monitoring through trainings at national and sub-national levels. At national level the plan is to recruit and train master trainers to build capacities at the sub-national levels (train DEOs and PED's staff). Furthermore, the purpose is also to strengthen Education Management and Information System (EMIS) architecture through assessment of the responsiveness of EMIS and other system improvement projects will be supported which will compliment EMIS at central and provincial level.

Strategy 3: Strengthen the Management, Coordination and Resource Mobilization Function in the MoE

The purpose of this strategy is to establish a GPE Program Coordination Unit. The Unit will perform coordination function both within the MoE and in relation to external matters. The Unit will specifically coordinate activities of external and internal stakeholders of GPE program.

While there are several ongoing capacity development activities, the idea here is to add value by linking policy and administrative systems to actual programmatic work. Each of these three strategies of Program Priority 4 feeds into the three other priorities and takes lessons learned from them upstream. The idea is to demonstrate that effective program implementation cannot be undertaken without a solid technical, policy and managerial framework.

GPE Program Original vs Revised Budget



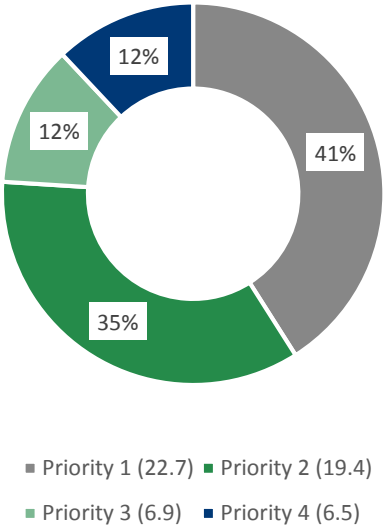
$14,775,000 strengthening community and social mobilization

$17,182,000 expanding and reinforcing multiple pathways to education

$16,351,400 increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with higher gender disparities

$7,433,701 streamlining policy and administrative system at the Ministry of Education

GPE Program Revised Budget in 2014



$ 22,766,042 strengthening community and social mobilization

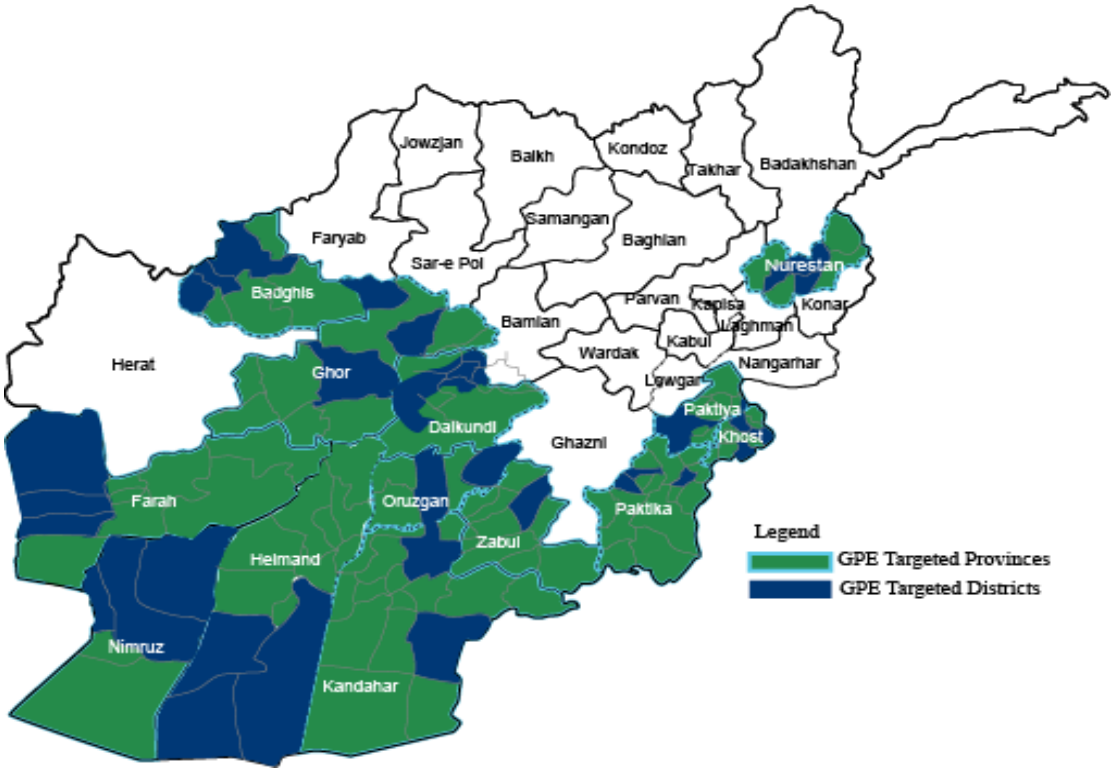
$19,411, 830 expanding and reinforcing multiple pathways to education

$ 6,937, 696 increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities

$6,584, 433 streamlining policy and administrative system at the Ministry of Education

GPE Afghanistan Targeted Provinces and Districts

Target Province	Target District
Badghis	Ab-Kamari, Muqur, Bala-Murghab
Daikundi	Ashtarly, Kiti, Khadir, Neli
Farah	Anar Dara, Sheb-e-Koh, Push-e-Koh
Ghor	Dawlatyar, Shahrak, Charsada
Helmand	Garamser, Marja, Nawa
Kandahar	Daman, Dande Shorabak, Spin Boldak
Khost	Sabari, Tani, Terzaye
Nimroz	Chakhansur, Kang, Khashrod
Nuristan	Dowab, Nurgera, Paroon, Wama
Paktia	Dande Pathan, Gardez, Laja
Paktika	Khair Kot, urgun, Yusufkhail
Uruzgan	Chenartu, Khas Uruzgan, Tirin Kot
Zabul	Qalat, Shajoy



Program Progress

Priority 1: Strengthening Community and Social Mobilization and Governance System at local level

The education sector in Afghanistan has to meet many formidable challenges. Among many major challenges, capacity and insecurity are the two main challenges that are faced by the education sector. When it comes to the security of schools, the local community plays very important role. GPE program through its various interventions has been providing communities at sub-national level a sense of ownership. In addition, the focus of the program is to address cultural and social barriers that specifically hinder girls from attending school. Some major barriers addressed so far are the distance from home to school, the absence of sanitation and other school facilities and lack of female teachers.

The involvement of community leaders and elders have very positive impact on school protection, girls' enrollment in schools and removing social and cultural barriers to education, therefore, this program priority builds a foundation for other program priorities to provide and facilitate education to the most hard to-reach provinces in Afghanistan.

1. Enhance Community and Social Mobilization

This priority consists of two strategies, the first strategy focuses on mobilizing the society and community. The objective is to involve community leaders and elders to motivate communities to send their children to school, particularly girls. This strategy includes 4 activities; including recruiting social mobilizer at provincial and district level, conducting bi-monthly meetings, developing educational, advocacy and training material and organizing regular events at district and provincial level on awareness for education.

The four indicators/activities are interconnected. To implement the program in the provinces, 13 provincial social mobility coordinators (PSMCs) among them 12 are on board, 120 (93 on board) District Social Mobilizers (DSMs) were recruited with a one year contract in 2013. As the PSMCs had consistent and satisfactory performance, their contracts were extended for another year. The recruitment standstill decree from the president halted the process of hiring new staff, therefore the vacant positions (1 PSMC and 27 DSMs) were only announced through job search engine www.jobs.af in May, 2015.

The second indicator developing "educational, advocacy and training material" is designed to focus on the capacity building of the GPE staff at the provincial level. The training material were developed in 2013 by Academic Supervision Department in collaboration with the GPE Program Coordination Unit. These training materials and guidelines have been in use and will be used for training the newly recruited GPE staff at the district and provincial levels throughout the program implementation.

The GPEPCU in collaboration of Academic Supervision Department (AS) of MoE conducted refresher training/review workshop for all GPE sub-national staff and relevant Provincial Education Directorates (PED) and District Education Officers from June 7 to 16, 2015. It was conducted in two batches i.e. batch one included Badghis, Daikundi, Farah, Ghor and Nimroz provinces and batch two included: Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, Nuristan, Paktia, Paktika Uruzgan and Zabul. The training contents included explanation of plans i.e Provincial plans, reporting format, monitoring and evaluation plan, program implementation guidelines, CBE policy and discussion of program challenges.




GPE sub-national staff training and review workshop, Kabul, 2015

The third indicator is conducting "Bi-monthly meetings among social mobilizers, DEOs and PEDs" aiming to strengthen coordination among GPE staff, PED and District Education Officers (DEOs) at local level to discuss program progress, lesson learned and challenges of the program. These are 6 meetings for each GPE target province per year. The introduction of new government officials at sub-national level and late transfer of fund halted this activity and the provincial coordinators were only able to conduct 8 meetings in 6 GPE target provinces. There is visible impact of these meetings; the GPE staff and other education stakeholders are now working closely for the timely implementation of program. The Provincial Education Departments in every target province are more involved in the program implementation.

The last indicator is "organizing awareness events" aiming to engage political and traditional leaders and elders to promote education, specifically girls' education at the provincial level. A total of 63 public awareness events were organized in 40 districts of 13 target provinces against a benchmark of 104 events for the year, 2014. The impact of these awareness events is enhanced understanding of communities about the value of education and as a result increased number of students in particular female students in CBE and ALP classes. Other than that now in many GPE target districts the GPE sub-national staff have been able to provide sense of ownership to the communities. Communities are directly involved in the maintenance and safety of schools.

2. Strengthen School Governance for Quality Schools

This strategy addresses community involvement in school governance through the development and implementation of school improvement plans (SIPs). The objective is to mainstream and implement a concept of quality education at the school level that involves physical school environment as well as effective learning, safety and protection, health, water and sanitation, participation, quality and management.




Ecosan Toilet and water drinking point, Khost and Paktia

The strategy includes two main activities – first activity is to train 200 School Management Shuras (SMSs) on their roles and responsibilities and on the development of School Improvement Plan (SIPs). The purpose of training the SMSs was to identify schools that need improvement. A total of 200 SMSs have been trained against a target of 1,000 SMSs over three years of program implementation. In addition to the completed 131 SIPs of 2014 a total of 52 projects have been completed in the first 6 months of 2015. Considering the need to train SMS to complete the rest of target SIPs therefore there is till need to train SMSs on participatory role in SIPs. The rest of the target SMSs will be trained in the final year of program implementation.

The second activity under this strategy focuses on the implementation of SIPs. The need assessment and design of the SIPs is the responsibility of the Infrastructure Services Department (ISD) of MoE. The overall target under this activity is 1,000 SIPs for three years. From the targets (200+350) of 2013 and 2014 a total of 183 SIPs completed (52 completed in first half of 2015), 189 are ongoing projects under evaluation, 46 newly awarded, 54 ongoing and 147 stopped due to instability and security complications in remote districts and technical problems (e.g. rigidness of terrain, difference between the designed map and land surface and ceiling difference of the awarded SIPs and planned). In addition, ISD department has planned 379 SIPs for 2015 – the designs for 349 were completed in the first quarter of the current year and are under evaluation and the rest 30 are in the Engineering department for the design. To accelerate the SIP implementation, the ISD department has been conducting a needs assessment with the objective to increase the current SIP package options – to include other needs other than the boundary wall, bathroom and drinking water. The needs assessment is expected to complete in the 3rd quarter of the year, after which a decision will be made if any additional options are feasible.

Progress Achieved against Benchmarks

1. Enhance Community Mobilization

Strategy 1.1: Enhance Community and Social Mobilization					
Key Activities	**Year 1 Target (2013)**	**Achievements**	**Year 2 Target (2014)**	**Achievements**	**Variance year 2**
Bi- Monthly Meeting	78	39	78	43	35
Public Awareness Events	104	70	104	63	41

2. Strengthening School Governance at Local Level

Strategy 1.2: Strengthen School Governance for Quality Schools								
Key Activities	**3 year target**	**Target (2013 & 2014)**	**Completed projects**	**In procurement**	**Newly contracted**	**Ongoing**	**Stopped**	**Target (2015)**
School Improvement Plan (SIPs)	1,000	200 +350 = 550	131	67	91	54	217	440

Priority 2: Expanding and reinfocing multiple pathwasys to education

In Afghansitan formal school structure does not exist all over the country. Insecurity, lack of financial resources and education infrastructure are the factors resulting in low expansion of education. Schools get closed because of attacks or security threats. Many government schools have long walking distance from the communities, which make parents hesitant to send their children to schools. Most of the GPE target areas are inseccure. In order to address this critical need the GPE program has designed a number of interventions that contribute to the balanced expansion of education all over the country.

The second priority of GPE program in Afghanistan is designed to provide access to education by creating alternative pathways including, community based classes, accelerated learning classes and mosque based classes. Through this informal educational set-up, students get primary education and after third grade are transferred to formal schools. The priority also addresses the need to re-open closed schools and provide emergency fund to facilitate reopening of closed-schools.

1.Expand Access to Community-Based Education (CBE)

This strategy has three activities including; identifying under-served areas through school mapping exercise, facilitating enrolment of students and recruiting qualified teachers from villages. The mapping

exercise in the first and second year were conducted by the social mobilizers. The Social Mobilizer in the first and second years of the program were able to establish the planned CBE classes and enroll 37,755 **(53% girls)** in the established classes.

During the first two quarters of 2015, the social mobilizers were able to identify 156 locations for the establishment of new CBE and ALC classes. However, due to halt on recruitments they were not able to establish these classes during the reporting period. In addition, it should be noted that insecurity remains a big challenge in GPE target provinces, in many areas the established classes are disturbed by anti-government elements. Recently in Zurmat district of Paktia province 30 classes were closed by the anti-government group. There were considerable discussions over the issue, however considering the current level of insecurity, the MoE high management decided to close these classes. Resources allocated to Zurmat district of Paktia province will be re-allocated to another district – Ahmad Abad.

2. Expand Access to Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)

This strategy has three activities including; **identifying under-served areas for ALC establishment of accelerated learning classes, facilitating enrolment of over-age students and recruiting qualified teachers from villages.** During the first half of 2015, the social mobilizers were able to identify 15 locations for the establishment of ALP classes and were able to enroll 75 students in the already established classes. As mentioned above, the first half of the year has been slow, in part due to late approval of national budget by the Parliament resulting in late transfer to provinces, and in part due to halt on recruitments making the program unable to recruit new CBE and ALC teachers. However, the target under the ALC will be completed in the third quarter of the year as all necessary plans are in place to commence the process – mainly location mapping, identifying teachers, finding the required students etc.

3. Strengthen Mosque-Based Education (MBE)

This strategy has two main activities including; training mullahs in pedagogy and teaching basic reading and numeracy skills and provide textbooks and learning material to 50,000 students. To build the capacity of Imams, MoE decided to provide them formal trainings. To serve this purpose the Program Coordination Unit shared a plan inclusive of training guidelines for CBE, ALP teachers and the Mullah Imams. Mosque based education was a new phenomenon in the MoE, therefore, developing a training course for mullah imams was time consuming process. Other than that TED and GPEPCU worked together to align the allocated budget for trainings to TED's standards, by the time the reconciliation was done it was end of 2014 and the financial year was closed. Now TED and GPEPCU have agreed on the training package, start of the training is pending receiving the approval of budget allocation from the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

One of the key problems with Community-Based education has mainly been lack of adequate location to establish a CBE class. Given that every village has a mosque which provide regular religious training for children, these mosque can be used as an ideal place to ensure students are provided with a proper location as a classroom. Using mosques as venues to prepare children for schooling is a unique approach, one which requires focus on qualifications of the local mullah, curriculum that will be taught, and timely transfer of these students to formal schools.

Mullah Imams have been formally recruited to teach in the GPE supported classes. A total of 645 mullah imams teach in mosques and 15,605 students have been enrolled in these classes in 2014. In addition, 33,413 (20,446 in 2013 and 12,967 in 2014) students have been provided with learning material.

4. Re-open Closed Schools

This GPE Program Priority will also aim to reopen 300 of the 450 in Afghanistan, adding to the approximately 400 closed schools that the Government has already managed to reopen. Re-opening schools has also a major symbolic importance for communities and demonstrates their determination to educate their children. This is expected to be a high impact activity because every school that reopens in an insecure province and runs successfully becomes a benchmark for the whole country so far as the impact of efforts to expand access to education are concerned.

In the first year of the program, there was low progress under this activity, however, in 2014 a total of 67 schools have been re-opened and are functioning now. As there was no clear definition of closed-schools in MoE, therefore schools that have been reopened are those that were closed because of security threats. An emergency fund of USD 500 per month per school has been allocated to allow these re-opened schools to operate until they become fully incorporated into the national system. The emergency fund is provided for 9 months for each school. However, so far the schools that have been reopened have not utilized GPE allocated fund, instead have been opened using MoE's emergency fund.

The absence of agreed upon definition of closed-schools in the ministry has made this activity hard to implement. Therefore, General Education with the help of other relevant departments in the MoE has been requested by the Program Coordination Unit to develop a comprehensive definition for the closed-schools and develop a strategy for the use of emergency fund for the closed-schools. The plan, therefore, is to work on the preparatory work in 2015 and start the reopening of closed schools and the utilization of Emergency Funds in 2016, using a clearly defined and agreed upon mechanism within the MoE.

Progress achieved against benchmarks

Community Based Education

Strategy 1: Expanding Access to Community Based Education					
Key Activities	**Year 1Target (2013)**	**Achievements**	**Year 2 Target (2014)**	**Achievements**	**Variance year 2**
Mapping Exercise for the establishment of CBE	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	0
Establishment of CBE Classes	300	871 (210 female)	900	484 (108 female)	(416)

Accelerated Learning Program

Strategy 1: Expanding Access to Accelerated Learning					
Key Activities	**Year 1Target (2013)**	**Achievement**	**Year 2 Target (2014)**	**Achievement**	**Variance year 2**
Mapping Exercise for the establishment of ALC	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	0
Establishment of ALC Classes	400	381 (95 female)	400	287 (70 female)	(113)

Mosque Based Education

Strategy 1: Strengthening Mosque Based Education					
Key Activities	**Year 1Target (2013)**	**Achievement**	**Year 2 Target (2014)**	**Achievement**	**Variance year 2**
Number of Mullah Imams recruited	500	850	2,500	645	1,855
Number of Students provided with learning material	10,000	20,446	50,000	12,967	37,033

Priority 3: Increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities

Increasing the number of female teachers always have positive impact on girls' enrollment. In a country like Afghanistan in many communities, parents do not allow their daughters to be taught by a male teacher. Even if the presence of male teacher is not necessarily a barrier to girls' education, parents and girl students may prefer female teacher to male. Female teachers have positive impact on girls' retention in school, especially in Afghanistan where when a girl crosses age 10 parents preferably let them continue their education only if female teachers teach them. GPE program has addressed this need by increasing the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities.

This priority includes the following three strategies aiming to increase girls' enrolment in schools:

1. Develop Social Support Systems for Female Teachers at the Local Level

The purpose of this strategy is to involve the influential community elders to protect female teachers deployed to rural schools. In many of the GPE target districts many of the female teachers have received great social support from communities. However, because of the security threats communities have expressed that there is no guarantee of protection. To strengthen the social support system, Social Mobilizers discuss the importance of support system in the awareness events.

2. Recruit, Train and Deploy Female Teachers from Urban Centers to the Local Level

According to the program document 300 experienced female teachers from urban centers should be recruited, trained and deployed to the rural areas with their spouses. In the first and second year of the program implementation 146 qualified female teachers were recruited and deployed to GPE target provinces. However, from 146 now 122 teachers are providing services and 178 positions remain vacant.

The insecurity it is very challenging to find qualified female teachers in the GPE targeted provinces. To address this need and identify qualified female teachers, a nationwide campaign was conducted targeting 178 female teachers for the year 2015. So far a potential pool of CVs have been collected, however because of the recruitment standstill the target still has not been achieved. The training will be provided by TED after the recruitment of teachers in 2015. The recruitment process will start in the 3rd quarter of 2015, with a plan to complete the vacant positions by end of the year.

3: Develop a system for recruitment, training and employment of female teachers at the local level

Initially in 2013 GPEPCU, General Education Directorate and Academic Council for Education conducted coordination to develop system for recruitment, training and employment of female teacher at the local level. However, lack of a guiding document resulted in low implementation of this activity. The MoE involved directorates and GPEPCU took the decision to develop a strategy for the development of system by the consultants/advisors who will be hired for the development of other policies and strategies under program priority four.

Similar to Closed Schools, there has been less progress in this deliverable mainly due to a lack of implementable policy and guidelines. To ensure a proper implementation of this deliverable, the decision has been taken to work on the preparatory work in 2015 and start implementation in 2016, with the intention to have a more properly planned training and absorption of these adolescent teachers.

Progress achieved against benchmarks

Increasing the number of qualified female teachers

Increasing the number of qualified female teachers					
Key Activities	**Year 1 and 2 (2013 and 2014) Targets**	**Achievements In 2013**	**Achievements in 2014**	**Current Teachers**	**Variance**
Number of teachers recruited	300 over two years	126	20	142	158

Priority 4: Streamlining policy and administrative systems in the Ministry of Education

The focus of this program priority is to streamline policies and administrative systems in the Ministry of Education, with the objective to improve and provide access to quality education. The MoE has tended to lead, organize and systemize system improvement activities to comply with its priorities. For the sustainability of educational services, it is important to improve the overall system. The following three key strategies are devised under this program priority:

1. Enhance Policy Review and Development

This strategy has two main activities including; developing and strengthening capacity of Academic Council of Education (ACE) in policy review and development and developing and disseminating education policies, procedures and standards. Academic Council of Education supports and reviews policy development. The new policies, guidelines and strategies will touch on (i) community and social mobilization; (ii) school governance; (iii) multiple pathways to education and transition from formal to non-formal education system; and (iv) increasing the number of qualified female teachers and enhancing girls' secondary education.

The initial plan was to develop guidelines, policies and strategies within the MoE involving relevant departments, however, later the plan was changed and decision was made to outsource this component as managing this is difficult for MoE.. To serve the purpose international consultant was hired in 2014 that worked for 4 months and in consultation with ACE developed a comprehensive ToR for outsourcing the component.

Based on the decision of senior management, it was decided that policies and strategies would be developed internally by relevant MoE departments with technical support (technical assistants) provided by GPE. This is because the procurement processes of contracting a firm takes more than 6 months, which means the required policy and strategic documents will not be developed within the lifecycle of the GPE program. International and local nationals will be recruited to undertake this task as soon as the presidential decree of standstill on recruitment is terminated and the guidelines, policies and strategies will be developed during the third year of program implementation.

To ensure an enriched policy development process, the scope of work and the key expected deliverables were discussed with Development Partners i.e. discussion of CBE policy revision and how experiences of CBE Implementing Partners can be incorporated into the policy development and revision. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for these consultants positions have been draftred and recruitment will take place in the 3rd quarter of the year. This is to give enough time for discussions with other stakeholders and ensure comprehensive ToRs and list of deliverables.

2. Strengthen MoE Capacity for Improved Planning and Monitoring

This strategy has one main activity i.e. training DEO and PED staff on planning, monitoring and evaluation and reporting. Planning Department, with support from EMIS, developed short term capacity building courses and trained 150 key provincial and district education staff such as planning and EMIS managers, district education officers, provincial social mobilization coordinators and district social

mobilizers. The one week training course was conducted in Kabul. 38 trainees were invited from the GPE target provinces.

As planned eight master trainers were recruited, 2 of them in 2014 with support from GPE to expand absorption capacity of the training program. The master trainers have reviewed the curriculum and revised teaching and learning material for the planning institute. They have also participated in classroom training and provided mentoring support to students in completing their project assignments in the planning institute.

The second activity is to strengthen EMIS architecture in the MoE. The EMIS system has been deployed at provincial level to improve and accelerate data collection processes. To strengthen the capacity of EMIS system and speed up data collection process, GPE program recruited 16 technical assistants including 13 provincial data collection and quality assurance specialists in the GPE target provinces and 3 central staff in 2013. Currently, 14 TAs are providing services: 13 at provincial level and 1 at central level.

Another EMIS project funded by GPE is the **assessment and verification of EMIS data set.** This project aims to recollect, verify and assess 10 % data from 24 provinces of EMIS, check and assess EMIS system and train 10 employees of EMIS staff in data collection, verification, data monitoring and reporting. The 50% of work of the project was completed till the end of December 2014 and the remain 50% completed in the first half of 2015. The final project report has been shared with EMIS department.

GPE funds the **connectivity project,** which aims to virtually connect 34 provinces with the EMIS data center in Kabul. The project has been divided in two lots – lot number 1 is purchasing hardware, which was awarded to Roshan in the first quarter of 2015 and all hardware were purchased during the second quarter of 2015. The second Lot is services which is divided into two sub-lots i.e. lot 1 is connecting 4 provinces and was announced in the second quarter of 2015 and the second sub-lot is connecting 30 provinces and has been awarded to Roshan in the first quarter of 2015 with a completion date of September, 2015.

3. Strengthen the Management, Coordination and Resource Mobilization Function in the MoE

The Ministry of Education decided to establish a Program Coordination Unit that mainly focuses on systematic capacity building and service delivery through GPE funding. The MoE established a virtual PMCU by recruiting staff for the departments that have a direct responsibility in the implementation of the program. These employees are placed in procurement, HR, Finance, EMIS, Academic supervision (AS), publications and the ISD. Besides this an independent Program Coordination Unit, which coordinates the activities of stakeholders within the Ministry has been established.

The Program Coordination Unit consists of 8 members, who along with the GPE staff in other departments coordinate the activities of each department. Since the beginning of the program in early 2013, the program coordinator position has been renewed three times. The third program coordinator took lead of the Program Coordination Unit in last quarter of 2014. The positions of human resource coordinator and planning coordinator were recruited in early 2013. In addition, four other main positions of communication and public relation coordinator, social mobilization coordinator, finance coordinator and translator were filled in the first quarter of 2014 and qualified staff were recruited on merit basis in the first half of the year. However, the finance coordinator resigned from his position in December 2014 and the position was announced in May, 2015 after the decree on re-opening recruitment standstill was

released. In addition, the communication and public relation coordinator resigned in early June and the position will be announced in July.

GPEPCU is planning to develop synergy and more effective delivery mechanisms through effective utilization of resources through collaboration on similar activities with other similar on-budget programs of MoE, mainly Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) in 2015.

Based on the current progress of the GPE program and considering the delays in the program implementation resulted from uncertain political environment, recruitment standstill and weak inter-departmental coordination, the GPEPCU with the support of UNICEF drafted and shared a comprehensive plan to request a no-cost extension from the GPE Secretariat for an additional 12 months, from January to December 2016. The plan was drafted in May 2015 and will be presented to the MoE high level staff.

Challenges and Way Forward

There are some key challenges that remained consistent over the last two and half of the implementation of the program at the sub-national level and cause delay in the implementation. These challenges are:

- Late introduction of the new cabinet
- Presidential decree on the recruitment standstill resulted in the significant delay in the recruitment of sub-national and national staff for the vacant positions
- Delay in the overall implementation of SIPs in some of the GPE targeted districts due to instability and security complications and issues with timely monitoring of progress on SIPs
- Significant delay in the approval of operational budget for 2015
- Significant delay in the initiation of training to CBE, ALP, and MBE teachers; and
- Significant delay in achieving the 300 target for recruitment of qualified female teachers.
- Significant delay in the development of Program policies, strategies and guidelines
- Significant delay in conducting external audit of the department

Ways Forward to Address the Challenges

To assist the MoE to bring the low implementation rate back on track by accelerating the GPE program activities and minimizing challenges in (2015), the GPE Coordination Unit will:

- Work closely with HR department to accelerate the recruitment of staff for the vacant positions. Based on the instructions of H.E. Minister of Education, a recruitment committee will be established to help accelerate the recruitment processes across the Ministry, including the GPE program.
- Work closely to accelerate the initiation of training of CBE, ALP and MBE teachers: TED has prepared the training plan and the allocation is currently being requested from the MoF. Training to commence as soon as the allocation is processed.
- Conduct high-level coordination meetings on a regular basis to accelerate program implementation by creating and strengthening close coordination and cooperation among key stakeholders: With the introduction of the new Acting Chief of Staff, these meetings are being resumed as these meetings had positive results in getting the work done and followed up on timely manner.
- Assist the MoE with the acceleration, effective implementation, and on-time completion of SIPs, including: as per the instructions of H.E. Minister of Education, much efforts are placed on ensuring that SIPs implementation is accelerated and improved, including processes of procurement which in the past has been a key issue in delaying the implementation. A committee will also be established to review and come up with concrete recommendations on how to better implement SIPs.
- UNICEF and GPEPCU had a joint meeting with Supreme Audit Office to discuss the External Audit of the program. There is an agreement with the SAO and the audit team will start its work during the 3rd quarter of the year with a plan to complete the audit by end of the current year.

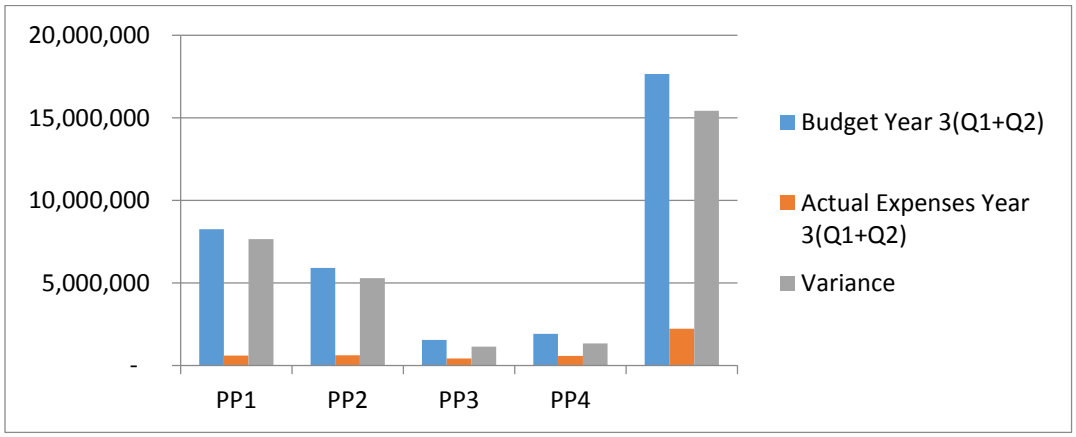
Financial Report

January 1st to 30th June 2015

This financial report provides the numerical and narrative information of GPE program activities for the period of 1st January to 30th June 2015. Furthermore the report provides reasons for the delays in activities and cash flow forecast for the GPE program activities. The following tables contain the information regarding the expenses incurred till 30th June 2015.

Program Priority Description	Budget Year 3(Q1+Q2) US $	Actual Expenses (US$)	Variance
Program Priority 1: Strengthen community and social mobilization and governance systems at the local level	8,262,940	605,830	7,657,110
Program Priority 2: Expand and reinforce multiple pathways to education	5,910,680	616,540	5,294,140
Program Priority 3: Increase the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities	1,555,500	419,799	1,135,701
Program Priority 4: Streamline policy and administrative systems in the Ministry of Education	1,928,713	582,839	1,345,874
Total:	**$ 17,657,833**	**$ 2,225,008**	**$ 15,432,825**

Figure 1.1



Program Priority 1: Strengthen community and social mobilization and governance systems at the local level

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Program Priority 1 consists of 2 strategies. The budget and actual expenditure for the strategies is shown in the table below.

Table 1.0

Strategy Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
	Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**
Strategy 1: Enhance community and social mobilization	675900	379720	296180
Strategy 2: Strengthen school governance for quality schools	7,551,040	226110	7,324930
Total	**$ 8,262,940**	**$ 605830**	**$ 7657110**

Strategy 1: Enhance community and social mobilization:

Strategy 1 of the Program Priority one consists of the following activities. The detailed budget breakdown and expenditure for the Year 2015 (Q1+Q2) is shown below table.

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 2015 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**
1.1.1	Develop training material and guidelines for social mobilizers	-	-	-
1.1.2	Salary and transportation & communication allowances for District Social Mobilizers	324,000	236,126	87,874
1.1.3	Training of District Social Mobilizers		68,934	(68,934)
1.1.4	Salary and transportation & communication allowances for Provincial Social Mobilizers Coordinators	81,900	66,860	15,040
1.1.5	Conduct bi-monthly meetings among social mobilizers, DEO and PED	7,800	600	7,200
1.1.6	Develop advocacy material and engagement guidelines	-	-	-
1.1.7	Organize regular events at district and provincial levels on awareness for education	187,200	7,200	180,000
1.1.8 & 1.1.9	Develop communication strategy based on the needs and subsequently review and Implement the communication Strategy	75,000	0	75,000
	Total	**675,900**	**379,720**	**296,180**

Budget and expenditure analysis

1.1.1 Develop training material and guidelines for social mobilizers, including linkages with two other Program Priorities (multiple pathways and female teachers):

As per the GPE operational budget US$ 20,000 is budgeted for development of two training material and guidelines for social mobilizers, including linkages with two other program priorities (multiple pathways and female teachers). GPE Program Coordination Unit in collaboration with the relevant MoE departments developed the training material and guidelines for both initial training (Y1, 2013) and refresher training (Y2, 2014) internally. As the material was developed internally the allocated budget was not spent and remained as permanent savings. In addition, no budget was allocated in year 3 (2015).

1.1.2 Salary and Transportation & Communication allowances for 120 District Social Mobilizers (DSM):

Salary of US$ 350/person/month and transportation & communication allowance of US$ 150/person/month was budgeted for 120 District Social Mobilizers (DSMs) (for the first quarter 120 and for second quarter 96) in 40 GPE program targeted districts. The difference between the budget and actual is due high staff turnover. By end of June 2015, 93 out 120 target DSMs were on board. There is also an amount of US$ as liabilities as of June 2015 in respect of this activity.

1.1.3 Training of District Social Mobilizers:

US$ 152,100 was budgeted for the training of DSMs and PSMCs for 2014, the cost of trainings was US$ 75,036. The remaining amount of US$ 77064 was budgeted for more training workshops of social mobilization in the 3rd quarter of 2015, but the trainings for provincial social mobilizers were conducted in the month of May 2015. .

.**1.1.4 Salary and Transportation and Communication allowances for Provincial Social Mobilization Coordinators:**

US$81,900 was budget for the salary of US$ 900/person/month and transportation & communication allowance of US$ 150/person/month was budgeted for the first 2 quarters of 2015 for 13 Provincial Social Mobilization Coordinators (PSMCs) in 13 GPE program target provinces. By the end of June 2015 a total of US$66860 is paid as actual expenses and amount of US$12,600 are liabilities under this activity as of June 2015.

1.1.5 Conduct bi-monthly meetings among social mobilizers, DEO and PED (6 meetings/year for 13 provinces):

As per the detailed operational plan, US$7,800 for two first quarters were allocated as a provincial budget for conducting bi-monthly meetings among social mobilizers, DEOs and PED (1 meeting/Quarter/provinces @ US$ 200/meeting. During the first two quarters (Q1 and Q2) only 3 meetings have been conducted. The Reason for low expenditure under this activity is delays in the approval of national budget by the parliament and delays in transfer of funds to sub-national level.

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1.1.6 Develop advocacy material and engagement guidelines:

These materials were developed internally by the Academic Supervision Department and GPEPCU. Therefore, the budgeted amount remains as permanent saving.

1.1.7 Organize regular events at district and provincial level on awareness for education (8 events/year/province):

US$ 187,200 was budgeted for Organizing 52 regular events at US$3600 per event (Average 30 participants, @ US$100/individual expenses + US$20 for miscellaneous expenses) at district and provincial level (8 events per year, per province) on awareness for education under this activity. During first two quarters US$ 7200 expenditure incurred for conducting 2 events.

Main reasons for delay under this budget line were due to the following;

- Delays in transfer of funds to the sub-national level.
- Delays in the budget approval by parliament;

The overall budget for Strategy 1, component 1, for 2015 (Q1+Q2) was US$ **6,759,00** and actual expenditure of (Q1+Q2) recorded against all activities under strategy 1 was US$ **379,720**, which makes the financial progress **56.1 % in strategy 1.**

Strategy 2: Strengthen school governance for quality schools

Strategy 2 of the Program Priority 1 consists of the following activities. The detailed budget breakdown and expenditure for the year 2015 (Q1+Q2) is shown below table.

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**
1.2.1	Train the SMS on participatory SIP development	80,000	5,000	7,5000
1.2.2	Provide school grants for SIP implementation	7,312,940	83,450	7,229,490
1.2.3	Provision of hiring Engineers to implement SIPs as identified	158,100	137,660	20,440
	Total	**$ 7,551,040**	**$ 226,110**	**$ 7,324,930**

Budget and expenditure analysis

1.2.1 Train SMS on participatory SIP development:

US$80,000 at US$200 per training was budgeted for training 400 SMS in 40 districts of the 13 target provinces. During the first two quarters (Q1 and Q2) US$5,000 expenditure were recorded. Due delays in the budget transfer to the provinces and delays in the approval of national budget by the parliament, the desired target is not achieved. Further, in order to accelerate this process the remaining target of the first 2 quarters have been added to quarter 3 and 4 of 2015.

1.2.2 Provide school grants for SIP implementation:

For the implementation of 400 SIPs in the 13 target provinces US$7,312,940 was included in the budget for 2015 (Y3). US$83,450 actual expenditure incurred during the first two quarters of Y3.

1.2.3 Provision of hiring Engineers to implement SIPs as identified:

US$158,100 salary for 13 provincial and 3 senior engineers at center level was included in the 2015(Q1+Q2). These engineers were recruited during the first year (2013) of the program and were retained for 2014 and 2015. US$137,660 was paid in salaries from the budgeted amount. The rest of the difference is due to recruitment of some engineers at lower rate than the average US$1,450/month. There is also the amount of US$25850 recorded as liabilities as June 2015 in respect of this activity.

US$7,312,940 was budgeted under strategy 2 of component 1 of the program for Y3 (2015). US$83,450 expenditure was recorded, which makes the financial progress **2.99% against strategy 2.**

Program Priority 2: Expand and reinforce multiple pathways to education

Program priority 2 consists of 4 strategies, the budget and expenditure for all 4 strategies is shown below

Strategy Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
	Budget	Actual	Variance
Strategy 1: Expand access to CBE	3,049,160	284,787	2,764,373
Strategy 2: Expand access to ALP, for over-aged students	1,351,520	125,808	1,225,712
Strategy 3: Strengthen Mosque-based Education	1,510,000	205,945	1,304,055
Strategy 4: Re-open Schools	0	0	0
Total	**$ 5,910,680**	**$ 616,540**	**$ 5,294,140**

Strategy 1 & 2: Expand access to CBE and ALP

Strategy 1 and 2 of the Program Priority 2 consists of the following activities. The budget and expenditure is shown in the table below

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	Actual	Variance
2.1.1	Use school mapping tools to identify under-served areas where CBE classes are required	61160	0	61160
2.1.2	Facilitate enrolment of students who are not enrolled in schools CBE classes	945,000	80,970	864,030
2.1.3	Recruit qualified teachers from the communities for CBE classes	1,890,000	203,817	1,686,183

2.1.4	Train qualified teachers recruited from the communities for CBE classes	153,000	0	153,000
2.2.1	Use school mapping tools to identify under-served areas where ALP are required	11520	0	11520
2.2.2	Facilitate enrollment of over-age students who are not enrolled in schools ALP	620,000	46,500	573,500
2.2.3	Recruit qualified teachers from the communities for ALP classes	720,000	79,308	640,692
2.2.4	Train qualified teachers recruited from the communities for ALP classes	0	0	0
	Total	**$ 4,400,680**	**$ 410,595**	**$ 3,990,085**

Budget and Expenditure analysis:

2.1.1 Use school mapping tools to identify under-served areas where CBE classes are required:

USUS$61,160 was budged for mapping 765 areas at the rate of USUS$80/per area, for the establishment of CBE classes in 2014 under GPE Program. No progress is made under this activity because of the following reasons;

- Delays in the transfer of budget to the provinces
- Delays in the approval of national budget by the parliament
- Halt on recruitment by a presidential decree.

2.1.2 Facilitate enrolment of students who are not enrolled in schools (CBE):

US$945,000 was budgeted for the enrolment of students and provision of teaching, learning material (TLM) - (class kits, student kits and teachers' kits) to 63,000 old and new students during Y3. For the first 2 quarters (Q1+Q2) actual expenditure against this activity recorded was US$80,970. Due lengthy procurement process most of the provinces will provide TLM to the students during the 3rd quarter of 2015.

2.1.3 Recruit qualified teachers from the communities to teach in the CBE classes:

US$ 1,890,000 was budgeted for 1358 recruited CBE teachers in Y1 and Y2 and 742 to be recruited in Y3 at US$150 per month/teacher. US$ 1,236,976 expenditure incurred against this activity as salaries for the recruited teachers, during the first 2 quarters. Due to halt on recruitment by a presidential decree and delay in the contract processing at the provincial level and then at the central level, most of the teachers couldn't get paid; therefore amount of US$1,680,008 is recorded as liabilities as of June 2015 and should be paid during the next quarter of 2015.

2.1.4 Train qualified teachers recruited from the communities for CBE classes:

US$153, 00 was included in the first 2 quarters of 2015 operational plan in order to train 900 CBE teachers, at rate of US$170 per teacher. This training was going to conduct by the Teacher Education Department (TED). The training plan for these trainings was finalized in October 2014. Due issues with the budgetary

codes these trainings are delayed until the approval of MoF for reallocating the money to appropriate codes, which is expected during the 3rd quarter of 2015.

2.2.1 Use school mapping tools to identify under-served areas where ALP is required:

USUS$11520 was budged for mapping 144 areas at the rate of USUS$80/per area, for the establishment of ALPs classes in 2014 under GPE Program. No progress is made under this activity because of the following reasons,

- Delays in the transfer of budget to the provinces
- Delays in the approval of national budget by the parliament
- Halt on recruitment by a presidential decree.

2.2.2 Facilitate enrollment of over-age students who are not enrolled in schools (ALP):

US$620,000 was budgeted for the enrolment of students and provision of teaching, learning material (TLM) - (class kits, student kits and teachers kits) to 20,000 old and new students during Y3. For the first 2 quarters (Q1+Q2) actual expenditure against this activity recorded was US$46,500. Due lengthy procurement process most of the provinces will provide TLM to the students during the 3rd quarter of 2015.

2.2.3 Recruit qualified teachers from communities for ALP classes:

US$ 720,000 was budgeted for 648 recruited CBE teachers in Y1 and Y2 and 152 to be recruited in Y3 at US$150 per month/teacher. US$ 79,308 expenditure incurred against this activity as salaries for the recruited teachers, during the first 2 quarters. Due to halt on recruitment by a presidential decree and delay in the contract processing at the provincial level and then at the central level, most of the teachers couldn't get paid; therefore amount of US$833,010 is recorded as liabilities as of June 2015 and should be paid during the next quarter of 2015

2.2.4 Train qualified teachers recruited from the communities for ALP classes:

The training of ALP teachers is planned for the 3rd quarter of 2015 by TED.

Strategy 3: Strengthen Mosque-Based Education

Strategy 3 of the Program Priority 2 consists of the following activities. The budget and expenditure is shown in the table below

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	Actual	Variance
Strategy3: Strengthen mosque-based education				
2.3.1	Develop strategy for Mosque Based Education	10,000	0	10,000
2.3.2	Recruit the mullahs to teach in the Mosque and train Mullahs in pedagogy and teaching basic reading	1200,000	174,204	1025,796

	and numeracy skills			
2.3.3	Provide textbooks and learning material to students	300,000	31,741	268,259
	Total	**$ 1,510,000**	**$ 205,945**	**$ 1,304,055**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

2.3.1 Develop strategy for Mosque-Based Education:

US$10,000 was planned and budgeted for the development of Mosque-based strategy in Y3 (2015). The plan was to recruit both national and international advisors to develop the strategies during the first quarter of 2015, but due to halt on recruitment by the presidential decree, MoE was not able to undertake this activity. This activity is planned for quarter 3 and 4 of 2015.

2.3.2 Recruit Mullahs to teach in the Mosques and train them in pedagogy and teaching basic reading and numeracy skills:

US$1200,000 was budgeted and included in the GPE 2015 plan, for the recruitment and training for 3000 Mullahs in 2015, (at US$50/Mullah/month salary and at US$100/Mullah for training). 1,459 Mullahs were recruited and US$174,204was paid as their salaries. TED will conduct the training of these Mullahs in quarter 3 of year Y3.

2.3.3 Provide textbooks and learning materials to students:

US$300,000 was budgeted for 60,000 Mosque-based students at US$5/student. US$31,741 worth learning materials were procured at the provincial level and given to 6,348 students studying in the mosque-based classes.

Strategy 4: Reopen Schools:

Strategy 4 of program priority 2 consists of the following activities and the budget breakdown and expenditure is shown in the table below.

Budget Line	**Activity Description**	**Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure**		
		Budget	Actual	**Variance**
Strategy4: Reopen Schools				
2.4.1	Organize meetings and focus group discussion	0	0	0
2.4.2	Develop simple mechanism for the utilization of emergency funds	0	0	0
2.4.3	Mobilize and train SMS for the utilization of emergency fund	0	0	0
	Total	**$ 0**	**$ 0**	**$ 0**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

2.4.1 Organize meeting and focus group discussions:
Because of the absence of information on closed school these activities were delayed by MoE and will be included in the 2016 plan.

2.4.2 Develop simple mechanism for utilization of emergency fund:

Because of the absence of information on closed school these activities were delayed by MoE and will be included in the 2016 plan.

Program Priority 3: Increase the number of qualified female teachers in areas with high gender disparities

Program Priority 3 consists of the 3 strategies, the budget and expenditure for all 3 strategies is shown in the table below

Strategy Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
	Budget	Actual	Variance
Strategy 1: Develop social support systems for female teachers at the local level	7,500	0	7,500
Strategy 2: Recruit, train and deploy female teachers from urban centers to the local level	1,440,000	315,362	s1,124,638
Strategy 3: Develop a system for the recruitment, training and employment of female teachers at the local level	10,8000	104,437	3563
Total	**$ 1,555,500**	**$ 419,799**	**$ 1,135,701**

The objective of this program priority is to increase girls' enrolment in the targeted districts through an expansion in the number of qualified female teachers. As per the GPE Program operational plan, 300 female teachers were planned to be recruited till the end of December 2014. However, MoE was able to recruit 142 female teachers till end of December 2014. Due to halt on the recruitment by a presidential decree, MoE was not able to recruit qualified female teachers in the first 2 quarters of 2015 and it is planned for quarter 3 and 4 of 2015.

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Strategy 1: Develop Social Support System for female teachers at local level:

This strategy consists of one activity

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	Actual	**Variance**
Strategy1: Develop Social Support System for female teacher at local level				
2.3.1	Develop and implement social support strategy	7500	-	7500
	Total	**7500**		**7500**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

2.3.1: US$7500 was budgeted in during the Y3 (2015) of the GPE program for the development of social support strategy for female teachers, this strategy is part of the package of all the strategies that should be developed with the financial support from GPE program and reasons for delay are, "The plan was to recruit both national and international advisors to develop the strategies during the first quarter of 2015, but due to halt on recruitment by the presidential decree, MoE was not able to undertake this activity. This activity is planned for quarter 3 and 4 of 2015.

Strategy 2: Recruit, train and deploy female teachers from urban centers to the local level:

This strategy consists of the following activities and the budget and expenditure is shown for all activities in the table below

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**
Strategy2: Recruit, train and deploy female teachers from urban centers to the local level				
3.2.1	Undertake recruitment campaign	5000	15588	(10,588)
3.2.2	Provide two-week orientation training for female teachers identified and recruited for deployment	0	0	0
3.2.3	Develop incentive Strategy (Couple and team deployment, deployment bonus, choices for extension and redeployment etc)	0	0	0
3.2.4	Contract Female teacher to be deployed	1,440,000	299,774	1,140,226
3.2.5	Deploy female teacher along with their spouses in 40 districts.	0	0	0
	Total	**$ 1,440,000**	**$ 315,362**	**$ 1,129,638**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

3.2.1 Develop and implement incentive and deployment strategy:

The plan was to recruit both national and international advisors to develop the strategies during the first quarter of 2015, but due to halt on recruitment by the presidential decree, MoE was not able to undertake this activity. This activity is planned for quarter 3 and 4 of 2015.

3.2.2 Undertake recruitment campaign:

US$5000 was budgeted for undertaking the recruitment campaign of qualified female teachers. After consulting with relevant MoE departments and getting quotations from different advertising companies it was found out that the US$5000 was not enough for under taking this activity, therefore the budget was increased to US$16,000 for this activity. This activity was completed in the month of November 2014, but due to the closure of financial year, the money is paid in 2015 Quarter 2. The budget (US$16,000) for this activity is derived from Program Priority3 (increase the number of qualified teachers in areas with high gender disparities).

3.2.3 provide two weeks orientation training for female teachers identified and recruited for deployment:

The provision of training to the qualified female teachers is planned for quarter 3 of 2015 by TED.

3.2.4 Contract female teachers to be deployed:

An amount of US$1,440,000 was budgeted for the salaries for 300 qualified female teachers at the rate of average US$800/month/teacher. However, MoE was not able to recruit new teachers due halt on recruitment. The amount of US$299,774 is paid to the 122 onboard teachers and an amount of US$352,530 is recorded as liabilities as of June 2015.

3.2.5 Deploy female teachers with their spouses to 40 districts:

Since MoE was not able to recruit new teachers therefore no expenditure is showed against this activity.

Strategy 3: Develop a system for recruitment, training and employment of female teachers at the local level:

This strategy consists of the following activities with its budget and expenditure shown in the below table.

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	Actual	Variance
Strategy 3: Develop a system for recruitment, training and employment of female teachers at the local level				
3.3.1	Train and employ adolescent girls and other female members of the	108,000	104,437	3,563

	community to teach in the primary grads			
	Total	**$ 108,000**	**$ 104,437**	**$ 3,563**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

3.3.1 Train and employ adolescent girls and other female members of the community to teach in the primary grads:

US$10,8000 was budgeted for training 2500 adolescent girls from the communities to teach in primary grads at the rate of 120/person. This training was going to be conducted by the Teacher Education Department (TED) of the MoE. However TED was not able to conduct this training and the US$104,437 showed as expenditure is paid to 66 local female teachers who were recruited to teach in primary grades in Ghor province.

Program Priority 4: Streamline policy and administrative systems in the Ministry of Education

Program Priority 4 consists of the 3 strategies, the budget and expenditure for all 3 strategies is shown in the table below

Strategy Description	**Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure**		
	Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**
Strategy 1: Enhance policy review and development	84,500	14,428	70,072
Strategy 2: Strengthen MoE capacity for improved planning and monitoring	1,407,700	353,274	1,054,426
Strategy 3: Strengthen the management, coordination and resource mobilization function in the MoE	436,513	215,137	221,376
Total	**$ 1,928,713**	**$ 582,839**	**$ 1,345,874**

Strategy 1: Enhance policy review and development:

This strategy consists of the following activities with its budget and expenditure in the table below

Budget Line	**Activity Description**	**Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure**		
		Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**
Strategy1: Enhance policy review and development				
4.1.1	Develop strategy for policy review, development and dissemination in the MoE, including clear division of tasks; processes; training program; monitoring	0	0	0

4.1.2	Implement strategy for policy review and development	2,500	0	2,500
4.1.3	Conduct assessment to identify priority areas for review and development of policies, procedures and standards for the concern department under the MoE	0	0	0
4.1.4	Engage national Technical Advisors to review and develop policies, procedures and standards	72,000	0	72,000
4.1.5	Provide equipment to the ACE and the technical advisors	0	14,428	(14,428)
4.1.6	Disseminate and communicate policies, procedures and standards	10,000	-	10,000
	Total	**$ 84,500**	**$ 14,428**	**$ 70,072**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

4.1.1 Develop strategy for policy review, development and dissemination in the MOE, including clear division of tasks; processes; training program and monitoring:

The plan was to recruit both national and international advisors to develop the strategies during the first quarter of 2015, but due to halt on recruitment by the presidential decree, MoE was not able to undertake this activity. This activity is planned for quarter 3 and 4 of 2015.

4.1.2 Implement strategy for policy review and development:

This activity relates to the development of strategies.

4.1.3 Conduct assessment to identify priority areas for review and development of policies, procedures and standards for the concern department under the MoE

This activity relates to the development of strategies.

4.1.4 Engage national Technical Advisors to review and develop policies, procedures and standards:

The plan was to recruit both national and international advisors to develop the strategies during the first quarter of 2015, but due to halt on recruitment by the presidential decree, MoE was not able to undertake this activity. This activity is planned for quarter 3 and 4 of 2015.

4.1.5 Provide equipment to the ACE and the technical advisors:

US$14428 is paid for the equipment procured for the ACE Department, which was contracted in Y2 and paid in Y3. An additional amount for other purchased equipment will be paid during quarter 3 of 2015.

4.1.6 Disseminate and communicate policies, procedures and standards:

This activity relates to the development of strategies.

Strategy 2: strengthen MoE capacity in the planning and monitoring

This strategy consists of the following activities with its budget and expenditure in the table below

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**
Strategy 2: Strengthen MoE capacity in planning and monitoring				
4.2.1	Develop/revise training program for planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting	10,000	0	10,000
4.2.2	Salary for the master trainers recruited to train the staff of the MoE.	69,600	67,548	3,322
4.2.3	Train DEO and PED staff on planning, monitoring and evaluation and reporting.	288,000	0	288,000
4.2.4	Salary for the TAs to mentor civil servants in related program Directorates in implementation of 3 first Program Priorities under the Planning & Evaluation Directorate.	0	0	0
4.2.5	Assess responsiveness of EMIS to M&E needs of MoE and partners at district, provincial and central levels	150,000	0	0
4.2.6	Salary for the system developers and IT analyst to develop further systems and modules for EMIS at central and provincial levels.	153,600	98,361	55,239
4.2.7	Equipment and running cost for the EMIS module development	616,500	187,365	429,135
4.2.8	Develop an integrated system that includes school and spot surveys and other third-party testing and assessments in EMIS	120,000	0	120,000
	Total	**$ 1,407,700**	**$ 353,274**	**$ 1,054,426**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

4.2.1 Develop/revise training program for planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting:

MoE planning department conducted this activity through other sources; therefore the budget of this activity is reallocated to the other activities by planning department.

4.2.2 Salary of the master trainers recruited to train MoE staff:

US$69,600 budgeted for salary of 8 master trainers Y3 (Q+Q2) at the rate of average US$1450/month/person .US$67,548 was recorded as expenditure during the first 2 quarters.

4.2.3 Train DEO and PED staff on planning, monitoring and evaluation and reporting:

The planning department has started this activity and has already provided trainings to the provincial staff 15 provinces. The expenses for those trainings have not been paid as of 30 June 2015.

4.2.4 Salary for the TAs to mentor civil servants in related program Directorates in implementation of 3 first Program Priorities under the Planning & Evaluation Directorate:

This activity has no budget, since the Program Coordination Unit has been established for undertaking the same role.

4.2.5 Assess responsiveness of EMIS to M&E needs of MoE and partners at district, provincial and central levels:

The assessment project was contracted in late 2014; therefore only US$47,589 payment is made out US$150,000 budgeted for the project, due to delays in the payment process to the contractor this activity is planned to be completed by Sep 2015. .

4.2.6 Salary for the system developers and IT analyst to develop further systems and modules for EMIS at central and provincial levels:

US$153,600 was budgeted for the salaries of 16 national TAs (system developers and IT specialist) at the rate of average US$1600/moth/person for 12 months under this activity. By end of June 2014, a total of US$98,361 was recorded as expenditure and the variance (US$ 55,239) is due to staff turnover.

4.2.7 Equipment and running cost for the EMIS module development:

US$ 616,500 was budgeted for the Equipment and running cost for the EMIS module development in which US$187,365 expenditure has incurred till end of June 2015 and the rest US$429,135 will be contracted in Q3 or Q4.

2.4.8 Develop an integrated system that includes school and spot surveys and other third party testing and assessments in EMIS:

The procurement for this activity took a very long and not finding a proper company to complete this activity was a difficult process. Therefore this activity is not started in the first financial quarter of 2015 so it is planned for the last 2 quarters of 2015.

Strategy 3: Strengthen the management, coordination and resource mobilization function in the MoE:

This activity consists of the following activities with its budget and expenditure shown in the table below

Budget Line	Activity Description	Year 3 (Q1+Q2) Expenditure		
		Budget	Actual	Variance
Strategy 3: Strengthen the management, coordination and resource mobilization function in				

the MoE				
4.3.1	Salary for the members of GPE Program Coordination Unit	144,000	121,401	22,599
4.3.2	Provide equipment/establishment cost for the Program Coordination Unit such as office cost, communication	148,501	0	148,501
4.3.3	Capacity building of GPE Program Coordination Unit staff	0	0	0
4.3.4	Provide technical support to Finance and Accounting Department, Human Resource Management Unit and Academic Supervision Department	144,012	93,736	50,276
	Total	**$ 436,513**	**$ 215,137**	**$ 221,376**

Budget and expenditure analysis:

4.3.1 Salary for the members of GPE Program Coordination Unit (GPEPCU):

US$ 144,000 was budgeted for the salaries of 8 members of the GPEPCU at the rate of average US$3,000/month/person for Y3 (Q1+Q2). US$121,401 is paid as salaries till the end of June 2015 as there are US$22,599 recorded as unspent and the reason of this is the turnover of GPEPCU Staff.

4.3.2 Provide equipment/establishment cost for the Program Coordination Unit such as office cost, communication:

US$148,501 was budgeted for the provision of office equipment and other costs like communication and transportation in the 2015 plan. No expenditures incurred under this activity (transportation, stationary, office equipment and communication costs), which will be started in the begging of Y3 (Q3).

4.3.3 Capacity building of GPE Program Coordination Unit staff:

This training was planned in year 1 of the program, after the assessment it was decided by MoE management to cancel this activity and the money was allocated to other priorities in program priority 4.

4.3.4 Provide technical support to Finance and Accounting Department, Human Resource Management Unit and Academic Supervision Department:

US$144,012 was budgeted for provision of technical assistance to the MoE departments of finance and accounting, HR, Academic Supervision and Publication. 11 TAs are provided to the mentioned department at the rate of average 2,182/month/person for 12 months. US$93,736 amount was paid to the TAs and recorded as expenditures. US$50276 is unspent and the reason behind this is the turnover of the Staff.

Key Challenges in the Implementation of Financial Activities:

There are some key challenges that cause delay in the execution of allocated budget of the program. Which resulted in low implementation of some activities of the program. These challenges are:

- As GPE is an on budget program, the transfer of money from center to provinces involves a lengthy process, which causes delay in the implementation of plan at the sub-national level.
- According to the Ministry of Finance, the financial management policy and the internal fund codes transfer are non-permissible during the first quarter of the fiscal year this results in the delay in the execution of budget.
- Halt on recruitment by a presidential decree for over six months.
- Contracts with CBE, ALP and other provincial staff were signed in the provinces, the transfer of contracts to center, verification of contracts and opening of bank accounts resulted in late payment of salaries.
- A high turnover of finance coordinators position is another key challenge that causes delay in the implementation of financial activities.

Ways Forward for the Implementation of Financial Activities:

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- To avoid unnecessary delay in transfer of teachers' salaries, GPEPCU will proactively plan the entire process of teachers' recruitment considering the lengthy process involved in receipt and verification of contracts
- To speed up salary processing, it was decided that all departmental staff and provincial staff, in coordination with central staff, will send their timesheets on 10th of every month to the finance department.
- To speed up the financial aspects of the program, the vacant position of the finance coordinator and others must be filled. Positions are announced and recruitment process will be completed by end of the third quarter.

UNICEF's Observations and Remarks

Since the beginning of the programme in late 2012 to present, UNIECF has been preforming the role of Supervising Entity (SE) for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Programme in Afghanistan by funding support received from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This 55.7 million 100% on-budget programme makes Ministry of Education (MoE) fully-fledged custodian of the GPE fund that covers four years (2012-2016), while UNICEF is responsible for the transfer of fund through its trust fund from the GPE Secretariat to Afghan Ministry of Finance (MoF). Relevant roles and responsibilities for both – Implementing Agency (MoE) and the SE (UNICEF) – are outlined in the legal arrangement (called Grant Agreement) that had been endorsed by the Government of Afghanistan and UNICEF in 2012.

Based on the GPE proposal, UNICEF (as SE for the GPE Programme) has been closely working with MoE and the GPE Programme Coordinating Unit (GPEPCU) to provide them with required technical support and oversight (under the programmatic and fiduciary aspects of the programme) and advising on overall planning, implementation, and coordination of the GPE Programme – from central to district levels.

Although the GPE Programme was initially designed for a period of three years (June 2012-June 2015), it has undergone two no-cost extensions due to low programme implementation and execution. The first no-cost extension, for an additional 6 months (July–December 2015) along with the MoE's proposed changes in the GPE Operational Plan and Budget, was approved by the GPE Board of Directors in 2014. While the second no-cost extension for an additional 12 months (January-December 2016) was approved by the GPE Country Grant and Performance Committee in July 2015.

In addition to its national and international staff, UNICEF has engaged KPMG Afghanistan (a professional fiduciary firm), to carry on the fiduciary role (Financial Advisor) for the GPE Programme on behalf of UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office (UNICEF ACO) as the SE for the GPE Afghanistan Programme. Since the commencement of the programme implementation in 2013 to present, KPMG has been assisting both, MoE and GPEPCU, with the provision of programmatic and fiduciary oversight and monitoring of the GPE programme implementation in the GPE targeted provinces (Badghis, Daikondi, Farah, Ghor, Helmand, Khost, Kandahar, Nuristan, Nimruz, Paktia, Paktika, Uruzgan, and Zabul).

SE's Major Support to MoE (from January to June 2015)

In addition to its constant and day-to-day support, UNICEF (as SE) has provided substantial support to MoE and GPEPCU from January to June 2015. As SE, UNICEF had:

- Established High-Level Coordination meeting, chaired by MoE's Chief of Staff, to strengthen inter-departmental cooperation and coordination at MoE. Lack of a proper coordination among MoE's departments is considered as one of the major challenges faced by MoE;
- Provided substantial support to the GPEPCU and MoE in developing programme key documents (e,g., Programme Guideline, M&E Plan, Provincial Operational Plan, etc);
- Produced GPE Documentation: Lesson Learnt, which aimed at: (i) generating evidence and knowledge relating to the implementation of the GPE Programme in Afghanistan by MoE, and (ii) documenting the process, challenges, and lessons learnt by UNICEF ACO's engagement (as SE) in the GPE Afghanistan Programme;
- Assisted MoE with the preparation, revision, and submission of it second no-cost extension request and revision of its Revised Operational Plan to the GPE Country Grant and Performance Committee (CGPC);
- Provided no-objection document to assess and justify MoE's second no-cost extension request for an additional 12 months (January-December 2016), which led to the approval of MoE's 2nd request of no-cost extension;
- Financed GPE End-Year Review workshops in the GPE targeted provinces;
- Through KPMG, carried out monitoring and fiduciary oversight of the GPE Programme at provincial and district levels and produced: (i) 13 Field Monitoring, (ii) 1 Annual Progress Review, (iii) 1 Semi-annul Progress Review, and (iv) 2 Quarterly Progress Review reports. All reports had been periodically shared with MoE, through the GPEPCU, for their necessary actions. The monitoring findings had not only helped MoE with identifying bottlenecks and areas for improvements, but they had also recommended affirmative solutions and way forwards for an effective and timely implementation of the GPE Programme; and
- Through KPMG, provided technical assistance on financial planning and reporting to the GPEPCU and the MoE's Finance and Accounting Department.

SE's Observations and Recommendations

The MoE is committed to accomplish the fundamental goal of the GPE Afghanistan Programme by *increasing and sustaining equitable access to education by 15% in the GPE targeted districts*. To meet this goal, MoE should bring GPE programme implementation and execution rate back on track by eliminating unnecessary challenges and bottlenecks that have challenged the effective and timely implementation of the programme at national and sub-national levels.

In addition, to be qualified for GPE II (a maximum indicative allocation of US$100 million that can be applied between 2017 and 2019), MoE has to complete the current GPE Programme successfully and completely. This has been outlined as one of the key pre-requisites for the GPE II. It is in this context that a Joint Working Group was established, composing of Education Development Partners and MoE's officials, to follow the day-to-day preparation of GPE II Grant Application.

To bring low programme implementation back on track, which will also facilitate the GPE II Application, MoE should accelerate the GPE Programme implementation by:

- Expediting the recruitment and relocation of qualified female teachers (who can play a significant role in enhancing girls' access to education in the GPE targeted districts);
- Building the capacity of sub-national staff in the GPE targeted provinces and districts;
- Conducting training for the GPE Programme teachers, who have been recruited and currently teaching in the CBE, ALP and Mosque Based Education (MBE) classes;
- Providing timely learning materials and textbooks to students supported by the GPE Programme;
- Developing and revising programme key strategies and policies, including Communication, Social Support, and MBE Strategies;
- Increasing the frequency of field monitoring and visits; and
- Accelerating the quality implementation, monitoring, and completion of School Improvement Plans (SIPs).

Most of the bottlenecks and delays of the GPE Programme implementation stem from the political transition that occurred throughout 2014 and also affected the first half year of 2015. On one hand, understanding the difficulty of implementing the activities, while many decision-makings are suspended. On the other hand, we have to keep in mind that no-cost extension request has been submitted and approved by the GPE Secretariat to complete programme implementation by the end of 2016. Moreover, GPE Secretariat has underlined that it is unlikely that further extension of the programme will be approved beyond 2016. Keeping all this in mind, UNICEF will continue to provide support to MoE in activating High-level Coordination Meeting and carrying out provincial/district level workshops for MoE to effectively and efficiently implement the GPE programme activities.

It is also important to note here that despite of what is stipulated in the Grant Agreement on the Audits (both internal and external audits), the Government of Afghanistan has not been able to carry out the auditing of the GPE Programme in a timely manner. In order to conduct the external audit of GPE, UNICEF (as SE for GPE programme) has supported MoE and the Supreme Audit Office of Afghanistan (SAOA) to come up with a TOR which has been recently finalized. As a result the SAOA will commence their work

within the latter half of 2015. Since MoE is planning to request the third/final installment of the GPE fund, it is imperative to complete the external audit and provide a quality report that could assure UNICEF, as SE, to request the transfer of fund from the GPE Secretariat. The outcomes of the report will also be useful to come up with an effective way to address the bottlenecks in the implementation of GPE programme.