A nationwide education system with professional teachers using high-quality learning materials and methodologies is essential to economic growth, democratic development, and stability. Afghanistan has one of the youngest populations in the world, making quality education particularly critical for the rapidly growing numbers of school-aged boys and girls. As more Afghans attend school and seek skilled employment, there is a growing demand for textbooks, learning spaces, trained teachers, and innovative approaches that prepare young Afghans to join the workforce. From primary school to the university level, USAID is strengthening the processes and institutions that undergird the national educational system to ensure that all children have the chance to learn.

Over 9 million children are enrolled in school (including over 3.5 million girls) according to the Afghan Ministry of Education. Public and private universities enroll around 300,000 students, including around 100,000 women according to the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education. USAID has trained more than 200,000 teachers, including more than 66,000 women. USAID has printed and distributed more than 165 million textbooks to schools. USAID has helped over 85,000 Afghan girls attend community-based education classes.

Recent Highlights

- Through UNICEF, USAID supported the establishment of 4,055 community-based education classes between 2016-2017, ensuring over 119,000 children in rural areas, including over 58,000 girls, have access to education.
- USAID supported the establishment of 2,437 Accelerated Learning Centers for students who experienced interruptions in their early education; over 49,000 students have enrolled at these centers, including over 23,000 girls and 26,000 boys.
- USAID equipped over 154,000 teachers, including over 54,000 women, with the skills they need to ensure schools are delivering on their promise to educate the next generation.
- USAID trained over 17,000 school principals and administrators, including over 3,000 females, in basic school management.
- USAID printed and distributed 47.7 million textbooks.
- USAID supported the design of 32 new, market-oriented, Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s degree programs at four Kabul-based and regional universities.
- USAID is supporting scholarships for 462 young women who are studying at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) and in 23 other universities throughout the country through the Promote Scholarship Program.

Improving Basic Education

USAID supports improving the quality of basic education by helping to train teachers, produce quality learning materials, distribute textbooks, and by strengthening the Ministry of Education’s ability to administer a nationwide educational system.

Supporting Higher Education

USAID is helping Afghans to pursue higher education and vocational training opportunities that will equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to meaningfully contribute to the workforce.

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EDUCATION

Three decades of conflict devastated Afghanistan’s education systems and institutions. In 2002, only an estimated one million children, mostly boys, attended school, while women and girls were almost completely excluded from educational opportunities. Since then, the Afghan government, USAID, and international donors have worked together to rebuild Afghanistan’s education sector. USAID has trained thousands of primary and secondary school teachers, produced and distributed tens of millions of textbooks, helped thousands of Afghan girls and boys in remote provinces attend community-based education classes, and supported the Afghan government to design the systems and infrastructure in order to administer a nationwide education system.

Today, due to the efforts of USAID, other international donors, and the Afghan government, more than 9.2 million children are enrolled in school of which 39% are girls, according to the Afghan Ministry of Education. USAID is also making significant gains in higher education, equipping more men and women with industry-relevant degrees. In 2001, only 1 percent of college-age students were enrolled in higher education, among the lowest percentage in the world. Currently, approximately 9.6 percent of college-age students—around 300,000 students—are enrolled in public and private universities, including around 100,000 women. USAID has trained thousands of university instructors, university leaders, and administrators, as well as supported scholarship programs to promote female enrollment.
OUR WORK

A nationwide education system with professional teachers using high-quality learning materials and methodologies is essential to economic growth, democratic development, and stability. Afghanistan has one of the youngest populations in the world, making quality education particularly critical for the rapidly growing numbers of school-aged boys and girls. As more Afghans attend school and seek skilled employment, there is a growing demand for textbooks, learning spaces, trained teachers, and innovative approaches that prepare young Afghans to join the workforce. From primary school to the university level, USAID is strengthening the processes and institutions that undergird the national educational system to ensure that all children have the chance to learn.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

In 2016 and 2017:

- Through UNICEF, USAID supported the establishment of 4,055 community-based education classes between 2016-2017, ensuring over 119,000 children in rural areas, including over 58,000 girls, have access to education
- USAID supported the establishment of 2,437 Accelerated Learning Centers for students who experienced interruptions in their early education; over 49,000 students have enrolled at these centers, including over 23,000 girls and 26,000 boys
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- USAID is supporting scholarships for 462 young women who are studying at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) and in 23 other universities throughout the country through the Promote Scholarship Program

IMPROVING BASIC EDUCATION

USAID helps improve the quality of basic education by supporting the training of more than 200,000 teachers, including more than 66,000 women, producing quality learning materials, and distributing more than 165 million textbooks to schools. USAID has helped over 85,000 Afghan girls attend community-based education classes, eliminating the need for Afghan girls to travel lengthy and sometimes dangerous distances to school, which deters them from attending. USAID has also supported the training of 950 science and math teachers and lab technicians in remote schools and the printing and distribution of more than 6,000 training books to math and science teachers.

USAID works directly with the Ministry of Education to strengthen the government’s ability to administer a nationwide educational system. USAID advisors are helping the MoE to enhance
their systems for managing finances, recruit civil servants and teachers, procure educational materials, and monitor and evaluate the performance of schools across the country. USAID and other donors have assisted the Ministry in drafting and implementing national plans for strengthening Afghanistan’s education sector. The National Education Strategic Plan III (2017-2021) establishes policies and objectives for the next five years, and focuses on preparing students to become skilled and well-informed citizens.

**SUPPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION**

USAID is helping Afghans to pursue higher education and vocational training opportunities that will equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to meaningfully contribute to the workforce. Currently, public and private universities enroll around 300,000 students, including around 100,000 women according to the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education, and demand for higher education continues to grow. USAID is helping Afghanistan’s higher education professionals effectively manage the growth in demand for higher education while also improving academic quality. USAID is enhancing the management capabilities of the Ministry of Higher Education and public universities so that they can better manage increased demand and improve the quality of their curricula. Overall, 11 universities are receiving technical and financial support from USAID’s University Workforce Development Program (USWDP). Under this program, USAID supported the development of Afghanistan’s first Information Technology Associate’s degree at Kabul Polytechnic University, the launch of the first Associate’s degree in Bio-Medical Equipment Technology at Kabul Medical University, and the establishment of a new Master’s Degree of Educational Leadership and Management at Shaheed Rabbani Education University. Through USWDP, USAID is also helping young men and women find jobs that match their skills by engaging potential employers through public-private partnership events, conducting labor market surveys, and developing internship activities. USAID also contributes to the World Bank’s Higher Education Development Program (HEDP), which provides technical support to the MoHE and funds around 900 scholarships for faculty members at 25 public universities in technical fields which will ultimately benefit their students.

USAID continues to support the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), the first private, independent, non-profit university in Afghanistan. Through assistance from USAID, AUAF enrolls 41% female students. AUAF has offered Afghanistan’s first western-style Master of Business Administration degree since 2011 and has opened a Professional Development Institute to provide professional training and certification programs to students seeking new technical skills. As of June 2017, AUAF has graduated 148 Masters of Business students, 303 Masters students, and 521 undergraduate students. AUAF also enrolled 444 students, including 232 women, in their Nangarhar, Mazar, Herat and Kandahar Professional Development Institutes (PDI), which offer internationally recognized certification programs in Information Technology, accounting, project management, English language, and other essential fields. Through an agreement between USAID and the U.S. Department of State, 20 Afghan women are studying under scholarships at the American University of Central Asia and AUAF.