USAID/CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITY (CBA)

Civil Society Capacity Building Needs and Oversight Assessment in Kabul

Assessment Report

Submission Date: January 2018

Prepared By: Community and Civil Society Component of USAID/CBA

This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID.) The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Chemonics International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.
Assessment Report

Civil Society Capacity Building Needs and Oversight Assessment

Analysis and Recommendations
## CONTENTS

Acknowledgment .................................................................................................................. 3

Acronyms & Abbreviations .................................................................................................... 4

Key Concepts and Definitions Used for this Assessment ....................................................... 5

Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 7

Executive Summary ............................................................................................................... 8

1. Organizational Capacity of CSOs .................................................................................. 9

2. Oversight and Advocacy Capacity of CSOs ................................................................. 12

3. Recommendations and Capacity Development Intervention Options ...................... 15

4. Annexes .......................................................................................................................... 18
   Annex 1: - List of CSOs and Organizations Interviewed ................................................... 18
   Annex 2: - Assessment Methodology .............................................................................. 19
   Annex 3: - Assessment Questionnaire ............................................................................ 22
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This civil society assessment in Kabul was carried out under the USAID Capacity Building Activity (CBA) to assess and identify capacity building needs of civil society organizations for conducting oversight of education services. Fifteen civil society organizations took part in the assessment.

CBA would like to thank all the civil society organizations (CSOs) who participated in the civil society capacity building needs assessment during November 2017 and January 2018. CBA also would like to thank the CSOs who demonstrated interest and submitted expressions of interest to CBA. In addition, CBA would like to thank the civil society networks and organizations who accepted our invitation for key informant interviews, and provided valuable inputs, hugely contributing to this report.
### Acronyms & Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANEC</td>
<td>Afghanistan National Education Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Afghanistan Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AETA</td>
<td>Afghanistan Education Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKDN</td>
<td>Aqa Khan Development Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAE</td>
<td>Aid Afghanistan for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFCAC</td>
<td>Afghans Coordination Against Corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Capacity Building Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCs</td>
<td>Community Development Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCDCs</td>
<td>Cluster Community Development Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAR</td>
<td>Coordination of Afghan Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Community Monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DED</td>
<td>District Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSFO</td>
<td>Core Skill Focus Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELO</td>
<td>Development in Education and Literacy Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIRoA</td>
<td>Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSO</td>
<td>Labor Spring Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESP</td>
<td>National Education Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED</td>
<td>Provincial Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Social Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>School Management Shuras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEHAO</td>
<td>Social Education and Humanitarian Assistance Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEST</td>
<td>Technical Education and Skills Training Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS USED FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

a) Civil Society Definition

Civil Society is a domain of ‘all non-state, non-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organize to pursue shared objectives and ideas, whether political, cultural, social or economic’. Civil society encompasses a wide range of actors with distinct roles and mandates, and can include community based organizations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, professional or business associations, not-for-profit media, and philanthropic organizations. Civil society differs from political society because it does not aim to seize power, and it differs from business because it does not seek profit for its members.

b) Civil Society Oversight

Civil society oversight is a form of Social Accountability (SAC) through which civil society conducts monitoring to improve government accountability and transparency. CSOs use different methods to monitor the government’s performance in delivering public services.

c) Social Accountability

Social Accountability (SAC) is a process of constructive engagement between citizens and government to check the conduct and performance of public officials and service providers as they use public resources to deliver services, improve community welfare, and protect people’s rights.

d) Constructive Engagement

The goal of constructive engagement is honest, involved, and sustained partnerships that create space for continuing dialogue and mutual collaboration between civil society organizations and government. Constructive engagement requires a mutual trust and openness between CSOs and government.

e) Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs are self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged people. NGOs in Afghanistan are registered with the Ministry of Economy (MoEC) under the NGOs law.

f) Associations

Generally referred to as voluntary entities, associations are groups of individuals who enter into an agreement to pursue or accomplish a specific purpose. Associations are registered with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) under the associations law. The law of associations in Afghanistan defines associations as “communities, unions, councils, assemblies and organizations which are voluntarily established by a group of real or legal persons as non-profit and non-political”

1 EU roadmap for civil society engagement in Afghanistan, 2015
g) Traditional civil society organizations and community structures

Traditional civil society ranges from small informal units to structured organizations. Compared to modern civil society organizations, traditional civil society organizations are less specialized and less formal. The majority of traditional CSOs are not registered in Afghanistan. Traditional CSOs include but are not limited to school management shuras (SMS), religious groups, water management committees, local community councils of elders called Shuras and Jirgas, cultural and artistic organizations, and semi-traditional organizations such as community development councils (CDCs) and district development assemblies (DDAs).

h) Civil Society Legal Foundation in Afghanistan

The civil society legal foundation is enshrined in the Afghanistan Constitution. The Afghanistan constitution article 35 gives and protects the Afghan citizens’ rights to form associations and independent non-government organizations to pursue shared public interest objectives. Considering this article of the constitution, the Afghan government has enacted multiple laws, such as the law of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the law of association, the law of mass media, the access to information law, and other laws that are currently being drafted such as the law of volunteerism.

i) National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III)

The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III) is the third national education strategy, and is currently being implemented, effective from 2017 – 2021.

Under the national education strategic plan (NESP III) there is a great emphasis on partnership and involvement with civil society organizations, not only in their current role as education service providers in areas where government cannot provide education services, but also in providing space to civil society to help MOE to improve transparency and accountability within MOE at all levels. As it is stated in NESP III, “Under NESP III accountability for a common set of results will be held jointly by the MOE and all partners, development partners, NGOs and civil society”. To help MOE to achieve this objective under NESP III, CBA will work with CSOs through action plan development based on assessment findings and provide capacity building to improve CSOs engagement with the MOE in conducting oversight effectively.

---

2 NESP III, Page 61, Role of Civil Society and NGOs
INTRODUCTION

USAID’s Capacity Building Activity (CBA) carried out the CSOs Organizational Capacity Building Needs Assessment between November 2017 and January 2018, as part of the requirement to identify CSOs capacity building needs. Specifically, the assessment served two main purposes. First, it aimed to identify CSOs currently engaged in oversight of the ministry of education in Kabul and or CSOs interested in performing education oversight in future. Second, the assessment sought to examine the capacity building needs of CSOs for oversight and examine feasible capacity development interventions for strengthening CSOs oversight role through training, coaching, mentoring and monitoring.

This assessment was very unique, as there are not many tools and methods available for a focused assessment on the oversight role of CSOs, while a multiplicity of tools are available for broad civil society sector assessments.

CBA used a questionnaire for the CSOs oversight capacity building needs assessment. The assessment involved in-depth interviews with 15 diverse CSOs in Kabul, selected through an open call for expression of interest. In addition, key informant interviews were carried out with major civil society networks to validate the findings of this assessment.

Given the scope and purpose of this assessment, only capacity and CSOs government engagement dimensions were taken into consideration during the assessment. Under the capacity dimension, areas for assessment included level of resources with which a CSO functions including human resources and intellectual resources of the organization. Under the engagement dimension, the key areas for assessment included CSOs engagement with government, advocacy capacity, and oversight role of the CSOs.

This assessment report has two sections, the first examines the organizational capacity of CSOs, and the second reviews CSOs oversight and advocacy capacity based on specific advocacy initiatives undertaken. This report also explores and recommends approaches to capacity building of CSOs and the support needed for an effective oversight by CSOs.

The unique nature of this assessment as a focused study of a small group of civil society organizations who were selected for specific purposes mentioned above should be kept in mind while reading that this assessment. This is not a civil society sector assessment or assessment of general capacity of CSOs. CSOs selected for this assessment were included mainly due to their relevance to the objectives of this assessment. Almost all the CSOs who participated in the assessment work in education and or conduct education oversight and advocacy in Kabul or in the provinces. Annexes attached to this document provide additional information about the methodology, including the data collection tool used for this assessment.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment examined the oversight and organizational capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Kabul. It was conducted as part of the USAID capacity building activity for CSOs. CBA supports the Afghan Ministry of Education (MOE) to achieve the goals of its 2017-2021, third National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III) by helping build its capacity to deliver higher quality education services to the Afghan people. CBA’s primary objectives are: 1.) Improve MOE systems and procedures that lead to better provision of education services, and 2.) Increase transparency and accountability of national and subnational MOE systems. CBA, in coordination with the MOE, develops mechanisms and builds the capacity of community and civil society organizations to perform oversight of the education service delivery at national and subnational levels.

The assessment sought to establish a baseline for CBA regarding the oversight capacities of civil society organizations as well as assist CBA in identifying targeted capacity development interventions for CSOs at national level. Conducted between November 2017 and January 2018, the assessment involved in-depth interviews with 15 CSOs and civil society networks in Kabul.

A questionnaire was used to assess the organizational and oversight capacity of the CSOs. The findings, presented in this report, include challenges and issues CSOs face in conducting government oversight in the education sector, and preliminary recommendations to inform a capacity building action plan for CSOs at the national level.

Government oversight by CSOs is fairly a new area for civil society actors in Afghanistan. A small number of CSOs conduct systematic oversight of government. Of the fifteen CSOs who interviewed and completed the assessment questionnaire, only two were performing oversight in education although all had activities in education, five had some oversight experiences in sectors other than education, and eight did not have any experience in government oversight. Major challenges such as lack of resources, nonexistent formal mechanisms for CSO oversight, low capacity and limited knowledge of CSOs about oversight, and limited access to education information were common reasons for not having education oversight activity. However, all the CSOs who interviewed for this assessment had a profound interest in oversight of education service delivery and all the CSOs interviewed have expressed their interest and willingness to participate in a systematic oversight initiative by CSOs.

Building CSOs and communities oversight capacity and mobilizing them to become more organized and capable, developing an enabling environment for CSOs oversight through establishment of mechanisms that will make the education institutions more open and responsive, and improving CSOs’ access to education information are the key overarching instruments to support a sustainable education oversight by CSOs at national level.

Indeed, the assessment findings suggest to strengthen social accountability in education sector through CSOs participation. Technical assistance and activities should be aligned and implemented in all four-mentioned areas.
1. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF CSOs

This section first summarizes descriptive information about the CSOs interviewed. It then examines the overall organizational capacity of CSOs. After summarizing the relative strengths and weaknesses of CSOs, the section concludes with potential interventions that CBA and others can take to further the organizational capacities of CSOs for effective oversight.

1.1. About the Organizations:

Within the sample CSOs selected and assessed, 14 of the 15 CSOs were registered as Non-Governmental Organizations with the Ministry of Economy (MoEC) and one CSO was registered as association with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) under the law of association. The CSOs were registered between 1989 (the oldest CSO interviewed) and 2015 (the most recent established CSO interviewed), with average year of registration being 2005. All CSOs had participated in or led at least one advocacy initiative.

All the CSOs interviewed had their head office based in Kabul, but on average, CSOs were active in nine provinces other than their head office based in Kabul. On average, the sample CSOs employ 81 full time staff members, with the smallest staff size consisting of 5 full time permanent staff, and the biggest consisting of 312 full time permanent staff. While only one CSO had dedicated full time staff for government oversight, six CSOs had dedicated full time staff for advocacy, while eight CSOs did not have either. All the CSOs had advocacy experience, but for those CSOs who did not have dedicated staff for the job, the advocacy role was the responsibility of a full time senior staff such as program manager or director. Of the CSOs sampled, three were women-led organizations.
1.2. **Focus Issues of CSOs Interviewed**

When asked about CSOs’ “primary” focus, CSOs tended to state several issues. The findings from key informant interviews shows that this is partly the result of pandering to the interests of donors.

The chart below shows the focus issues CSOs mentioned the most:

![Focus Areas of Interviewed CSOs](chart)

1.3. **CSOs Education Activities**

All the interviewed CSOs had interventions in education but only two had education oversight activities. Some of the CSOs were implementing multiple activities. The specific types of CSOs interventions in education are shown in below chart.

![Type of CSOs Education Activities](pie_chart)
1.4. Beneficiaries

With regards to the main beneficiaries of CSOs, most CSOs indicated that their beneficiaries are the general public. However, when asked about specific groups of people each CSO works for, CSOs specified at least three specific target groups on average. A breakdown of these beneficiaries is below.

![CSOs Beneficiaries Chart]

- Teachers: 1
- Drug Addicts: 1
- General Public: 3
- Rural Communities: 2
- Girls: 2
- Government Officials: 2
- Religious Leaders: 1
- CSOs: 1
- IDPs /Returnees: 3
- Farmers: 1
- Children: 3
- Men: 2
- Women: 6
- Youth: 8

*Note: The chart represents the number of CSOs that work for each specific group.*
2. Oversight and Advocacy Capacity of CSOs

This section first examines the oversight and advocacy capacity of CSOs in terms of specific advocacy initiatives undertaken, and then highlights the major challenges and limitations for CSOs oversight.

The assessment findings show that currently systematic oversight of education service delivery by civil society is not a customary practice. Few CSOs have project-based oversight activities, and for those that do, the closure of the project meant that the oversight activity also ended or became an ad hoc or marginal activity of the organization. Of the fifteen who CSOs interviewed and complete assessment questionnaires, only two were performing oversight in education, five of them had some oversight experience in sectors other than education, and eight did not have any experience in government oversight. However, all the interviewed CSOs had advocacy experience either through direct implementation of advocacy projects, or through involvement in advocacy initiatives implemented by other CSOs.

On average, the CSOs in the sample had seven years of advocacy experience, and each CSO is a member of at least one civil society advocacy network. This illustrates that the civil society sector as whole appears to be relatively robust when it comes to advocacy. However, when asked about their core advocacy work, several organizations mentioned methods (e.g. research, awareness raising, capacity building, or lobbying) rather than the issues. This suggests insufficient knowledge in planning issue-based initiatives.

Indeed, of the fifteen CSOs, thirteen had an advocacy plan and ten had currently active advocacy projects or activities. This indicates that the CSOs often carry out ad hoc advocacy activities, which likely impact their ability to focus on specific issues. Indeed, the assessor observed that most CSOs tend to be donor-driven with a broad scope of activities and priorities that shift based on donor priorities.

Oversight and Advocacy Strength

- CSOs already have experience in designing and implementing advocacy and lobbying initiatives. Specific focused capacity building trainings on oversight will further empower them to use their advocacy skills for oversight effectively.
- There are already existing civil society platforms on education that provide a foundation for further development of and engagement with education institutions. Platforms such as Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC) and Afghanistan Education Taskforce (AETF) have experienced CSO members.

Oversight and Advocacy Weakness

- Of all CSOs assessed, seven have experience in government oversight while only two had systematic oversight exclusively in education. This indicates that oversight is a fairly new area for many CSOs in Kabul.
- Lack of resources in terms of both financial and technical human resources hinder CSOs’ ability to engage in oversight. Except one CSO, all did not have dedicated staff for oversight. NGOs usually maintain project staff who must work full time on that project and cannot take on other responsibilities, such as carrying out advocacy or oversight. CSOs use their senior management staff, such as program managers or directors, for
their ad hoc advocacy work. In addition, lack of funds hinders sustainability of CSO’s oversight.

Challenges and Problems

When CSOs were asked about the challenges and problems that hindered their efforts in conducting oversight and advocacy, the most common challenges amongst interviewed CSOs were: lack of mechanisms for CSOs oversight, access to accurate and updated education information, negative perceptions and prejudice in government institutions towards CSOs’ advocacy and oversight roles, and lack of resources and capacity within CSOs to perform oversight.

- Lack of Mechanism for CSOs Oversight

Almost all of the CSOs interviewed identified lack of formal mechanisms for CSOs oversight of education service delivery as a challenge. In the absence of a formal mechanism/guideline, rules of engagement are unclear. CSOs’ relationship with the MOE is personality driven, and that is a major challenge for sustainable mutual collaboration. For instance, it takes a while for a CSO to establish relations with a government official, and when that specific person moves to another department or resigns from the MOE, the CSO’s interaction with the MOE becomes very limited. In such circumstances, CSOs’ oversight activities face huge challenge and ambiguity.

According to CSOs who have implemented advocacy and oversight projects for which they had to collaborate with education institutions at national or subnational levels, there is a negative perception about CSOs’ role within the government generally and as well as among officials of the MOE. The existing prejudices in the government towards CSOs hinder their ability to operate and has limited the space for CSOs to conduct oversight and collaborate. Issues such as lack of knowledge and awareness about civil society and its role among the MOE staff, mainly at subnational level; their perception of CSOs as competitors of donor funds rather than as partners and ambiguity due to non-existence of a formal mechanism or policy about civil society role in education are the root causes.

- Access to Education Information and Public Awareness

Lack of CSOs’ access to education information was reported by many CSOs as a major challenge for CSOs’ oversight of education service delivery at national and subnational levels.

Access to information is one of the pillars of social accountability and a prerequisite for conducting government oversight. Article 50 of the Afghan Constitution guarantees Afghan citizens’ rights to information. In December 2014, GIRoA ratified Afghanistan’s first ever access to information law. It aimed to ensure the country’s citizens the right to access to information from government institutions, increasing their transparency and accountability to public and civil society organizations and the media.

CSOs who conduct advocacy or education oversight often struggle to obtain education data. This is further exacerbated with the lack of, inaccuracy and outdated nature of data.

Many CSOs who have implemented advocacy projects and or conducted oversight of education service delivery either in Kabul or at subnational level in the provinces noted that access to
accurate and timely education information has impacted their efforts and projects. CSOs expressed many reasons for this, the most common including: limited awareness among government officials and CSOs about the content and mechanisms through which CSOs can obtain information, and lack of information sharing mechanisms within the MOE to regularly provide necessary and updated information to the public and CSOs.

- **Lack of Resources and Technical Capacity**

Limited resources both in technical capacity and finance are the primary challenges that hinder many CSOs in performing education oversight. In terms of financial resources, shrinking donor funds in recent years have forced CSOs to limit their terms of engagement in education only to specific deliverables to donors rather than conducting advocacy and oversight initiatives. Of the fifteen CSOs who took part in this assessment, only one had dedicated full time staff for government oversight and six of them had dedicated full time staff for advocacy. While all the CSOs have had advocacy experience, currently due to limited financial resources, CSOs have added advocacy roles as part of the responsibilities of one of their full time senior staff members, such as program managers or program directors, instead of hiring a dedicated advocacy person.

- **Lack of Coordination and Collaboration within CSOs.**

All the CSOs interviewed held memberships in at least one civil society network or coordination body such as Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC), Afghanistan Education Taskforce (AETF), Movement for Support of Quality Education in Afghanistan (MSQEA), and many other networks and working groups. But all of these networks and working groups carry out ad hoc advocacy and oversight interventions in the absence of a long-term plan. Lack of systematic approaches, a long-term vision, and unclear roles of members in these platforms have often led CSOs to have individual project- based relationships with the MOE or its provincial departments rather than using the above mentioned existing platforms for a sustainable constructive engagement.
3. **Recommendations and Capacity Development Intervention Options**

This section summarizes the potential interventions that MOE stakeholders can take to improve the planning and execution of oversight and advocacy work of CSOs.

Open and responsive education institutions, along with organized and capable civil society actors and groups improving CSOs’ access to education information, and alignment of oversight initiatives with national and the MOE programs are overarching requirements for effective, sustainable and successful CSO oversight.

Indeed, the assessment findings suggest to strengthen social accountability in the education sector through CSOs participation, technical assistance and activities should be aligned and implemented in each of the following four areas:

**a) Open and Responsive Education Institutions**

Promoting the enabling environment to create space for CSOs’ oversight in the education sector is as important as building oversight capacity and skills of CSOs. During the assessment, an interviewee said, “Empowered civil society organizations that have the essential technical resources and skills cannot conduct successful oversight, unless there is a conducive and enabling environment that allows them the space for engagement”. Similarly, the need for having a formal mechanism for CSOs’ oversight of education was voiced by almost all CSOs interviewed.

To cultivate an enabling environment, joint meetings with CSOs and leadership of the MOE should be organized to identify areas CSOs can do oversight and work with MOE relevant officials to develop the mentioned CSO oversight guideline/policy.

Simultaneously, development of civil society oversight guidelines should be done with both the MOE and CSOs in Kabul to create a National CSO Education Oversight Committee and its provincial committees at subnational level in five target provinces, with clear terms of reference that defines roles and responsibilities. This will help to support a collective oversight effort and stronger voice for improving transparency and accountability at the MOE. CSOs’ experience and engagement show that an individualistic approach to oversight and advocacy either has less impact or faces a lot of challenges rendering it ineffective.

Also, at the same time, improving the MOE staff’s knowledge of civil society and its oversight role should take place. Lack of awareness among the MOE staff causes prejudices and negative impressions about civil society’s oversight role. Efforts should be made to also organize specific training sessions for the relevant MOE staff and educate them about civil society and the methods they can use to effectively collaborate with CSOs.
b) Access to Education Information
The availability and reliability of education data is essential for CSOs’ oversight. Such data, analyzed and correctly interpreted by competent civil society organizations, lies at the core of constructive engagement for sustainable oversight. Oversight by CSOs fails when data and information is either not available or access to information is denied. The GIRoA has approved access to information law. However, there are still policies and mechanisms to be developed at each government institution that will facilitate citizen’s and the public’s access to information. Hence, capacity building and technical assistance is needed to improve CSOs and communities access to and timely and appropriate use of the education information that will enable them to execute effective oversight.

Improvement is needed both on the supply side of from the duty bearers at the education institutions and the demand side by the rights holders. First, work should be done with MOE at national and subnational level to develop and establish access to information mechanisms such as simplifying the business procedures for sharing and regular dissemination of education information to the public. Second, public awareness raising and capacity building of CSOs should be done to inform and increase public and CSOs demand for education information from MOE, PEDs, DEDs and schools.

In addition, not only lack of education data, but also inaccuracy of data is a huge problem hindering improvement of quality of education and fostering transparency. To improve education data authenticity, oversight of education data and data verification by a third party such as CSOs through field monitoring is important. This can be done through collaboration between CSOs education oversight platform and the MOE EMIS and communications departments.

c) Organized and Capable Civil Society Organizations and Citizens’ Groups
The capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) is a key factor of successful oversight of public service delivery. The level of CSOs’ commitment to and interest in education oversight, oversight and advocacy skills, ability to effectively use the media, legitimacy and quality of conduct, and ability to mobilize resources and work together with like-minded groups to have collective voice are all central to a successful and sustainable oversight approach. To help build oversight and advocacy capacities, a combination of interactive workshops, trainings, follow up mentoring/coaching, oversight materials tailored to the needs of civil society organizations, and citizen’s groups such as community-based structures at the school level is recommended.

Indeed, the assessment findings show that limited technical knowledge and capacity of oversight among CSOs and CSOs advocacy network is one of the main obstacles. The capacity building of CSOs should be a gradual and follow regular provision of mentoring and coaching. Some of the key and essential training topics suggested by the CSOs during the assessment are:

- Oversight methods such as social audit and action plan development for government oversight
- Advocacy strategic planning. This should mainly focus on issue identification and developing solution packages.
- Oversight of education budgets and how to review and analyze the education budget
- Access to information. This should specifically increase CSOs’ knowledge about access to information law and how CSOs can use mechanisms to obtain the information they would need for conducting oversight not only in Kabul but also at subnational level.
- Social accountability mechanisms and methods based on other similar countries’ experiences.
- Orientation of CSOs on key policies and procedures of education.

d) Bottom Up Approach and Alignment of Community and Civil Society Oversight Efforts with the MOE Strategies and Commitments

The CSOs oversight efforts should be aligned to support the MOE aims for transparency and accountability outlined in National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III), the MOE social mobilization strategy at national and subnational levels, and GIRoA’s open government partnership (OGP) action plan. Bottom up mechanisms should be developed to link CSOs’ oversight initiatives at school level with CSOs at provincial and national level. Linking CSOs at the local community level with the provincial and national CSOs oversight platforms will support achievement of the following:

- Under the National Citizen Charter Program, cluster community development councils (CCDCs) will be created at local levels. These CCDCs will have thematic permanent sub-committees including an education sub-committee that will mainly have an oversight role. There is high likelihood that the current SMS structure at school level will become the subcommittee for education. The CC program is a national government program implemented by CSOs. The CCDCs members will be selected from existing community development councils (CDCs). Therefore, subsequent to the development of oversight capacity of School Management Shuras (SMSs), it is equally important to train current CDC members on education oversight for their future role. Once trained, the SMSs and CDCs should be linked with the provincial and national CSOs education platforms. Often there are education issues that cannot be resolved at the school level that require decision making either by provincial education authorities or ministry officials at the MOE in Kabul. Having established links will provide leverage for community-based organizations when presenting these unresolved issues from their local communities at the provincial and Kabul level through established platforms.
- To promote civic engagement and oversight at school level among students to access education information and report problems to improve transparency and accountability of education service delivery at the community level, an effective complaint redressal mechanism is needed at the MOE in which CSOs also have oversight access. This will enable the MOE and CSO platform at national level to directly connect with communities and community-based civil society organizations and support their oversight initiatives.

---

3 The Citizens Charter is a National Priority Program (NPP) of the National Unity Government (NGU) that is developed as the follow up program of national priority program (NSP). The CC Program is currently being implemented by NGOs. Under the Citizen Charter Program CCDCs will be formed from existing CDCs.
### 4. Annexes

#### Annex 1: List of CSOs and Organizations Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Afghanistan Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AETA</td>
<td>Afghanistan Education Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKDN</td>
<td>Aqa Khan Development Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADALAT</td>
<td>Assistance for the Development of Afghan Legal Access and Transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANEC</td>
<td>Afghanistan National Education Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAE</td>
<td>Aid Afghanistan for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFCAC</td>
<td>Afghans Coordination Against Corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSFO</td>
<td>Core Skill Focus Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAR</td>
<td>Coordination of Afghan Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPD</td>
<td>Equality for Peace and Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECW</td>
<td>Empowerment Center for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELO</td>
<td>Development in Education and Literacy Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWA</td>
<td>Integrity Watch Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSO</td>
<td>Labor Spring Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTRO</td>
<td>Peace Training and Research Organization (PTRO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTEC</td>
<td>National Teachers Elected Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>Social Mobilization Department of the Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEHAO</td>
<td>Social Education and Humanitarian Assistance Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEST</td>
<td>Technical Education and Skills Training Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDO Logo</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program Local Governance Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WADAN</td>
<td>The Welfare Association for the Development of Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 2: ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

To achieve the following objectives, CBA conducted a civil society assessment in Kabul:

- To identify CSOs currently engaged in oversight of the ministry of education in Kabul and identify potential CSOs interested in oversight;
- To assess the capacity building needs of CSOs for oversight (both current and potential ones);
- To use the assessment findings to develop an action plan for strengthening CSOs’ oversight role through training, coaching, mentoring and monitoring.

In order to identify CSOs for assessment in Kabul, CBA used the following three methods:

1) Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

In November 2017, CBA released a request for expression of interest (EOI) to CSOs for the following purposes: 1) to identify Kabul-based CSOs engaged or interested in engaging in MOE oversight; and 2) to select from among the identified Kabul-based CSOs, participants for a capacity building needs assessment. The EOI announcement was open for a period of two weeks, during which time 23 CSOs submitted EOIs to CBA. Using generic criteria such as: education service providers, education sector monitors, and advocates for education rights, a sample of 10 CSOs were selected for assessment. The sample selected did not include traditional CSOs and CBOs, as the CBOs mainly function at the sub-national level and few exist in Kabul. No CBO submitted expression of interest.

The CSOs selected included the following types of CSOs:

- **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** - NGOs are self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared towards improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people. NGOs in Afghanistan are registered with ministry of economy under the NGO law.
- **Associations** - generally referred to as voluntary entities, association are groups of individuals who enter into an agreement to pursue or accomplish a specific purpose. Associations are registered with ministry of justice under the associations law of Afghanistan. The law of associations in Afghanistan defines associations as “communities, unions, councils, assemblies and organizations which are voluntarily established by a group of real or legal persons as non-profit and non-political”.
- **Independent Media** - Media outlets, particularly not-for profit media, outlets that do not only inform citizens but also operate as watchdogs on government performance. Media outlets are registered with the Afghan ministry of information and culture under the mass media law of Afghanistan.

2) Desk Research

Parallel to the EOI announcement, CBA conducted a desk research about CSOs and spoke with civil society coordination networks for education such as Afghanistan National Education Network and Afghanistan Education Taskforce to obtain a list of CSOs working in education based in Kabul.
Dimensions of Assessment and Key Questions

CSO assessments normally include the five following dimensions: 1) capacity, 2) engagement, 3) environment, 4) governance, and 5) impact. Given the scope and purpose of this assessment, only the first two dimensions were taken into consideration for this assessment:

a) **Capacity** – Under capacity, areas for assessment included level of resources with which a CSO is functioning, including human resources and intellectual resources of the organization. Some of the key questions were:
   - What are the key programs and relevant projects?
   - Are there enough skilled staff to implement programs and projects related to advocacy, monitoring, or oversight of government entities?
   - Is there a need for CSO staff capacity building, and what specific type of capacity building is needed?
   - Does the CSO partner with other CSOs who share a similar mission to support the achievement of a common objective?

b) **Engagement** – Under this dimension, the key issue for assessment was CSO’s engagement with government, and more specifically the advocacy and oversight roles of the CSOs. Some the key questions were:
   - Does the CSO have oversight, advocacy or monitoring activities?
   - What is the change as a result of the CSO oversight, monitoring, or advocacy work with a particular government entity?
   - Does the MoE openly welcomes inputs from CSOs in different strategies and policy-level discussions, not creating any barriers?
   - Does the CSO engage in joint advocacy efforts, oversight, or monitoring activity efforts with other like-minded organizations?
   - Is the CSO a member of any civil society network for monitoring or related fields?

Assessment Methods

The plan for the assessment was prepared after a desk study and review of existing civil society tools and methods applied globally. Different civil society assessment methods were reviewed. The methods were used by different organizations in different countries for 1) civil society sector assessments, 2) external civil society assessments, and 3) self-assessments of civil society.

Based on the results of the desk study, CBA decided to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve the said objective of the assessment. The specific methods included were:

1. **Desk study and literature review**

   Before collecting primary data through interviews, it was important to review the existing research reports done by other organizations about CSOs’ engagement with government. CBA’s CSO lead conducted desk research to identify relevant reports about CSOs engagement with and oversight of government in general, and specifically within the education sector. In addition, research and monitoring reports produced by the CSOs about specific advocacy engagement with the MOE were also compiled and reviewed.
The desk review of research reports helped CBA to draft a questionnaire for face-to-face interview assessments with CSOs.

2. **Key Informant Interview (KI)**

CBA also held a number of key informant interviews with the following organizations who are engaged either directly or indirectly in government oversight. The key purpose of these KIs were to understand different methods of oversight currently being implemented by them.

- USAID Adalat project,
- Afghanistan national education coalition (ANEC),
- Afghanistan Education Taskforce (AETE),
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP) local government project, and
- Aqa Khan Development Network (AKDN)

In addition, CBA held a consultation meeting with the MOE social mobilization department. The key purpose of this meeting was to share the assessment plan with MOE in order to get their inputs and coordinate the methods of assessment with them. In addition, MOE was asked to share the names of CSOs currently attending the MOE’s events and meetings for monitoring and oversight purposes.

**Data Analysis**

Once data collection was completed, all the data gathered through individual interviews, focus group discussions, the desk study, and meetings with the MOE were compiled together. The CBA CSO lead used a qualitative approach to analyze the data. An excel sheet was used for data entry and producing analysis graphs.

**Limitation of Assessment**

This assessment was very unique as there are not many tools and methods globally available for conducting an assessment of the oversight role of CSOs. This is not a civil society sector assessment, but rather a focused study of a small group of civil society organizations who either work in education or conduct oversight, monitoring, and advocacy.
ANNEX 3: - ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Capacity Building Activity
Civil Society Capacity Building Needs Assessment

Guiding Notes:
Purpose of Assessment:
- To identify CSOs currently engaged in oversight of ministry of education in Kabul and identify potential CSOs interested in oversight;
- To assess the capacity building needs of CSOs for oversight (current and potential ones);
- To use the assessment findings to develop action plans for strengthening CSOs oversight role through providing training, coaching, mentoring and monitoring.

Confidentiality: The data collected through this assessment will be mainly used for CBA program decision making and all the data will be kept strictly confidential.

Note for the Assessor: Sentences in italic are for the guidance only

Details of the Questions: This questionnaire has three parts divided in nine sections. Please respond to all questions as applicable.

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I. ORGANIZATION ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. Interviewee
   1.1. Full Name of Interviewee:
   1.2. Position:
   1.3 Email and Mobile:

2. Organization Contact Details
   2.1. Full Name of Organization:
   2.2. Organization’s Acronym:
   2.3. Organization Email:
   2.4. Mobile:
   2.5. Telephone:
   2.6. Organization Main Office Location:

3. Organization Information
   3.1. Type of CSO
       a NGO □ b Association □ c Media outlet □ d Traditional CSO □ e Other
   3.2. Year of Establishment:
   3.3. Year of Registration and the Registering Entity:

3.4. Coverage Area: Please tick appropriate box or write yes in the boxes that applies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>Field Office</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>Field Office</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>Field Office</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>Field Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badakhshan</td>
<td>Ghor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Badakhshan</td>
<td>Ghor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Badakhshan</td>
<td>Ghor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Badakhshan</td>
<td>Ghor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>Herat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>Herat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>Herat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Baghlan</td>
<td>Herat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>Jawzjan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>Jawzjan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>Jawzjan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>Jawzjan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamyan</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bamyan</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bamyan</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bamyan</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daykundi</td>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daykundi</td>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daykundi</td>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daykundi</td>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayzab</td>
<td>Khost</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fayzab</td>
<td>Khost</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fayzab</td>
<td>Khost</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fayzab</td>
<td>Khost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>Kinar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>Kinar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>Kinar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>Kinar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of provinces CSO currently work:
3.5. What is the main field of CSO's work?
   a. Humanitarian  
   b. Development  
   c. Advocacy  
   d. Other  

3.6. What is your organization primary focus area?

3.7. Other Area(s) of Work (Please write yes in appropriate box as it applies for the CSO and if there are areas that are not listed here please add them at the end)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Service Delivery</th>
<th>Capacity Building</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Awareness Raising</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Coordination &amp; Network</th>
<th>Oversight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Develop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Empower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media &amp; Info</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.8 Who are your organization main beneficiaries (target groups)?

3.9. How many permanent staff do you have?
   No of Male Staff  No of Female Staff

3.10. Do you have strategic plan?  a. Yes  b. No  Duration

3.11. Does your strategic plan include advocacy?

PART II. ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT

4. Advocacy

4.1. Does your organization have advocacy experience?  a. Yes  b. No  Start Date of Advocacy

4.2. Do you have any current advocacy project?  a. Yes  b. No

4.2.1. Name of Current Advocacy Activity

4.4. Do you have dedicated permanent staff for advocacy or oversight?  a. Yes  b. No

4.5. Who is the contact person for advocacy?
   a. Name of advocacy person:
   b. Specific Position:
   c. Email:
   d. Mobile:

4.6. Have you implemented any advocacy project in education?  a. Yes  b. No

4.7. Who was your target audience in the government?

4.8. Did the project have any specific result?

4.9. Does your organization have longterm advocacy plan?  a. Yes  b. No  Duration
5. Oversight in Education

5.1. Does the CSO work in education sector?  
   a. Yes [ ]  
   b. No [ ]
   
   ☐ CBE Class ☐ School Construction ☐ Teacher Training ☐ Advocacy
   ☐ Adult Literacy ☐ School Hygiene ☐ Higher Education ☐ Vocational Education
   ☐ Other

5.2. Does the CSO have any government oversight/monitoring activity experience?  
   a. Yes [ ]  
      if yes, please write the details below
   b. No [ ]  
      If not please ask if the organization is interested in oversight
   a.1. Specific oversight activity? ____________________________
   a.2. Who is conducting oversight? __________________________
   a.3. Duration of activity? ________________________________
   a.4. Key challenges the CSO faced? ________________________

Details:

5.2.1. To what extent your CSO oversight have been effective?  
   Details: if CSO oversight resulted in any positive changes at the MOE or its departments in the provinces

5.3. Has your organization made any recommendations to government so far?  
   a. Yes [ ] (if yes, what was the government reaction)
   b. No [ ]

Details for what recommendation and how was the reaction?

5.3.1. How was access to information from the particular government entity you advocated or did oversight?  
Details:
6. CSO Engagement with Ministry of Education

6.1. Is there any CSO platform/mechanism for dialogue with MoE?
   a. Yes ☐ (if yes, please write details below)
   b. No ☐
   c. I don’t know ☐

6.2. In your opinion, is there political will at MoE leadership in engaging with CSOs and Citizens for oversight?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐
   c. I don’t know ☐

6.3. Is there any MOE or government policy that include CSO oversight role?
   a. Yes ☐ if yes, what is the specific policy?
   b. No ☐
   c. I don’t know ☐

6.4. Do you think, is there enough capacity in MoE for engaging with CSOs and Citizens?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐
   c. I don’t know ☐

6.5. What are your CSO limitations in engaging with MoE?

Details: ____________________________

6.6. What are your recommendations and suggestions for improving CSOs oversight of MoE?

Details: ____________________________

PART III. CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

7. Capacity Building Needs

7.1. Did the CSO staff receive any training on oversight?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

   If yes.

   What  ____________________________________________
   Who  ____________________________________________
   When  ____________________________________________
7.2. Are you or your staff interested to receive capacity building training on government oversight?
   a. Yes   b. No  
   "آیا شما علاقه‌مند هستید که در مورد نظارت از حکومت آموزش بگیرید؟"

   Details of specific training need:  

7.3. Are you interested to become part of an oversight effort from ministry of education MOE?
   a. Yes   b. No  
   "آیا علاقه‌مند سهم کری به فعالیت‌های نظارتی از وزارت معارف هستید؟"

   Details:  

8. General questions about access to information from government?
   "سوالات عمومی در رابطه دسترسی به اطلاعات تجربه شما در مورد دسترسی به اطلاعات از ادارات دولتی چیست؟"

8.1. How is access to information from government entities in general?
   Details:  

8.2. Are you aware of the mechanism for access to information from government when you face a problem?
   a. Yes   b. No  
   "آیا از مکانیزم دسترسی به اطلاعات آگاه هستید. به‌صورت کلی چگونه می‌توانید به‌صورت قانونی درخواست داشته باشید؟"

   Details:  

9. CSO Recommendations to CBA on How to Improve CSOs Oversight

9.1. In your opinion what are the key challenges for CSOs oversight and what can be done to overcome those?
   "به نظر شما چالش‌هایی متعلق به فعالیت‌های گروه‌های جامعه‌نما برابر با مانند نظارت جسم و قرون ویکان که چنین می‌توان به آن جامعه‌ها حیاتی نمود نمود."