

Education

Assessing the Teacher Training Programme of SAB in Afghanistan

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BRAC Research Report



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ACRONYMS

AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
BTRC	BRAC Training and Resource Center
CA	Creative Associates
CDC	Community Development Council
CUTC	Columbia University Teachers College
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
SAB	Solidarité Afghanistan Belgium
SCA	Swedish Committee of Afghanistan
SCF	Save the Children Fund
TEP	Teacher Education Programme
TOT	Training for Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The government of Afghanistan decided in 2003 that a total of 70,000 Afghan school teachers would receive in-service training. Since then, several international organizations have become seriously active in providing training to teachers to improve the standard of basic education of Afghan children. Solidarité Afghanistan Belgium (SAB) has been providing both in-service and pre-service training to Afghan teachers to achieve this goal by up-grading their competencies and developing teaching materials. Over the years, SAB has trained nearly 12,815 primary school teachers. While SAB has been contributing in training school teachers of Afghanistan for many years, no assessment of this programme has been undertaken.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The broad objective of this study was to assess the *Teacher Training Programme* of SAB in Afghanistan. The specific objectives were to understand the knowledge and skills of SAB trainers, review the training process, identify challenges in conducting training, identify the needs and expectations of the trainers, assess the quality and performance of SAB trainers and provide suggestions for improvement, if needed. A combination of approaches was used to gather information for this assessment. These were workshop with SAB trainers, classroom observation and interviews with the participants.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Knowledge of training

The SAB trainers had no clear understanding about ‘training’, its type and the role of training in capacity development. Many of the SAB trainers have been in this profession for a long time without having the conceptual clarity of training. *All SAB trainers should be equally conversant with the basic concepts of training, its forms and the utility not only in teacher training but in other sectors as well.*

Training process

The training equipment supply and their use were adequate and appropriate. *Use of pictorial materials adds value to the quality of training and is suggested that this should be continued.*

The tendency to use course module in the classroom was limited indicating that the trainers under-estimated the use of modules in improving the quality of training. The trainers were aware of the allocation of time in various segments of the lessons and generally manage their allocated time quite effectively. *SAB training management should adequately focus on keeping the training module in their teacher training programmes so that they can rearrange their daily lesson plan if required.*

Only a few of the trainers used the lesson plan in the training sessions while the others tended to deliver lessons from their memory. *SAB should include lesson plan as a routine activity in the total training plan and regularly monitor the implementation of this task.*

Although the trainers were aware, they could not create friendly classroom environments as they have little control over this. *It is suggested that the trainers could arrange their classrooms in various ways to make the sitting arrangement more appropriate and interactive.*

Sharing course objectives was not routinely practiced as no lesson plan was used. The participants, therefore, were not clearly aware of the purpose of the session. *This gap should be minimized by promoting the value of sharing lesson objectives with participants in the beginning and at the end of the session.*

Given the class size, it is difficult to make individual contacts with the participants in most cases. Although a built-in evaluation system is followed at the end of session, *it is recommended that SAB should develop and introduce structured format to assess the progress and the adaptability of SAB approaches.*

No formal monitoring system existed at present to ensure that the programme was on the right track. *It is suggested that SAB should develop a routine monitoring system to understand the difficulties the trainers are having and the quality of performance.*

Needs and expectations of the trainers

Only a few of the trainers ever received any formal training of trainers (TOT). Although attended a two-week long training facilitated by European trainers, most trainers felt that their capacity should be up-graded further as they were not always comfortable to carry out the training assignments. *SAB should take necessary measures for their capacity development. They should receive TOT to make them oriented with new approaches practiced by others.*

Challenges face by the trainers

SAB trainers frequently faced problems while training a mixed group of teachers with wide variation in qualification, capacity and experience. Training a heterogeneous group of participants should be avoided. *SAB should develop a system where the teachers should be selected on the basis of their academic qualification, length of experience, possessions of specific talents and the grades they teach in schools.*

In many cases, the participants had no adequate academic qualifications to understand the basic issues of Science and Mathematics. *SAB design a screening system in selecting eligible and qualified participants to improve the quality and effectiveness of the training.*

The trainers reported several problems such as lack of security, transportation, lodging, training venues, etc. particularly in outside Kabul. *SAB should take appropriate measures to overcome these. The most sensitive problem emerged has been the existence of ethnic tensions among SAB trainers – an issue that needs to be dealt with cautiously by SAB management.*

Most training duration was short to adequately complete the contents. *It is suggested that the duration as well as the contents should be extended depending on the nature and complexity of the subjects.*

Most trainers had no teaching experience and, therefore, were not aware of the real problems of the teachers. *It is suggested that SAB trainers themselves should participate as school teachers in several practice sessions to become aware of the real problems.*

Performance and quality of SAB trainers

Most participants appreciated the course design and contents as relevant, and evaluated the communication and presentation skills of the trainers as good. SAB trainers performed equally well in all locations and to various groups of participating teachers. The trainers could create lively and joyful learning environment in the sessions. The supply of materials was also fairly adequate. *SAB trainers, however, should be strict in maintaining discipline of the training session.*

Not all training venues had adequate training materials. *SAB should take measures to send necessary equipments needed for the training.* SAB should have necessary logistic supports, heating system in winter, electricity, accommodation and other facilities to attract better trainers in the remote districts.

SAB requires that each trainer should prepare and submit a report on their assignments. Most the trainers felt that the report they prepared were not very useful for SAB. *A short training on Report Writing should be organized since all trainers need to submit training report to their supervisors.*

Generally the participants praised the training as useful in improving their quality of teaching. *SAB programmes have improved the teaching skills, learning methods, preparing lesson plans and teaching materials, importance of small groups, understanding child psychology, use of participatory methods maintaining class disciplines among others.*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

SAB has played an important role in providing training to primary school teachers in Afghanistan. The performance of the trainers was satisfactory although the quality could be improved further. SAB trainers have identified their own limitations, expressed their needs and expectations, and have provided a set of suggestions for further improvement of their performance. The study suggests that SAB should take appropriate measures to enhance the quality of training and satisfy the growing demand of Afghan teachers to better perform in their schools.

INTRODUCTION

More than two decades of civil wars in Afghanistan have not only destroyed its economy and infrastructure, the education system of the country has also severely suffered. This has led the literacy rate in Afghanistan today to be one of the lowest among developing countries (UNDP 2004). Although only 28.7% Afghans over age 15 can read and write, the current primary enrolment ratio is quite high (54.4%) (UNICEF 2004) indicating that children are increasingly returning to schools. Thus, the need for trained teachers (especially women teachers in rural areas) and learning materials had become increased to keep those enrolled children in schools.

The government of Afghanistan decided in 2003 that a total of 70,000 Afghan school teachers would receive in-service training with the help of UNICEF. Since then, several international organizations have become seriously active in rebuilding schools and providing training to teachers to address the post-war needs of the country. The training programmes have focused on new ways of teaching in the areas of improving classroom management skills by integrating the emerging needs into the curriculum. Emphasis has been placed on including women in the teacher training programmes to reduce gender gap as the girls were denied the right to practice their profession for many years in Afghanistan.

Several donor agencies and international organizations are now working to improve the situation from various perspectives starting from rebuilding and renovating the teacher training institutions (USAID 2005) to capacity development of teachers in Afghanistan (Spink 2004). The MoE implemented a rapid teacher-training programme of almost 20,000 teachers across the country with the help of UNICEF. It has been reported that UNICEF-funded training of the MoE had significant impact in raising the morale of teachers, to give them a taste of new ways of teaching and to raise their interest in the learning needs of children (Spink 2004). The organizations that who had significant contribution in teachers training in Afghanistan were Columbia University Teachers College (CUTC), Teacher Education Programme (TEP) of the government of Afghanistan, The World Bank (WB), Creative Associates (CA), Swedish Committee of Afghanistan (SCA), IRC, Save the Children (USA), Solidarité Afghanistan Belgium (SAB) and BRAC.

In Afghanistan, many rural school teachers have no more than a primary school education. It has been reported that only 15% of teachers, currently working in Afghan schools, have graduated from teacher training colleges (UNICEF 2003). A large proportion of teachers have simply twelve years of education. Thus, developing a pool of professionally trained teachers was quite difficult task at present. A number of international agencies have been providing funds and technical assistance to train teachers to ensure Afghan children a brighter and more prosperous future.

Solidarité Afghanistan Belgium (SAB), an international NGO, has been involved in humanitarian assistance for the Afghan population since 1984 focusing on basic education and vocational training (SAB 2005). SAB activities began in the refugee camps in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) in Pakistan. More than 10,000 teachers were trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan since 1984. SAB believes that education is a fundamental right of each individual and is a precondition for political, economic and social development. Thus, it has SAB focused on training courses for Afghan women who have been deprived of education and a productive social life mainly for many years.

The goal of SAB's education programme is to improve the standard of basic education of Afghan children at the primary schools by help rebuilding the educational system in Afghanistan. SAB attempted to achieve these by up-grading their competencies in the academic subject they teach with their pedagogic skills, developing teaching and teaching aid materials needed for training and providing the necessary teaching guides and materials to teachers during training programmes.

SAB has been providing both in-service and pre-service training to Afghan teachers. Since 1997, SAB has been offering pre-service training at the Teacher Training Institute (TTI) in Laghman province. The approach is quite flexible to adapt with the current curriculum. The vocational training, on the other hand, is based on the concept of apprenticeship with qualified masters in their workshops in bazaars. Apprentices not only learn their trade but also obtain first-hand exposure to enter the business world. This training helps to expand the income generating opportunities and individual self-reliance.

Over the years, SAB has developed a cadre of skilled, professional and dedicated staff to run its projects. SAB currently operates in 8 provinces of Afghanistan. It has trained about 12,815 primary school teachers, 10,456 apprentices in different trades, 60 students in pre-service teacher-training projects. SAB also supports one teacher-training institute in Laghman since 1997 in collaboration and cooperation with the Afghan Government.

While SAB has been contributing in the education and training sectors of Afghanistan for many years, independent review and assessment of its programme activities have rarely been undertaken. Although the government and many other organizations have been providing teacher training since last three years, the evaluation of teacher training programmes has been very limited (Spink, 2004). It has been decided by SAB that its training programme for the primary school teachers should be evaluated. Solidarite Afghanistan Belgique (SAB) requested BRAC Afghanistan to carry out an assessment of its training programme.

Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to assess the *Teacher Training Programme* of SAB in Afghanistan. The specific objectives are to

- understand the knowledge and skills of SAB trainers,
- review the training process (design, content development, instructions, etc.),
- identify challenges in conducting training,
- assess the needs and expectations of the trainers,
- evaluate the quality and performance of SAB trainers and
- provide suggestions for improvement, if needed.

It is expected that this assessment would provide the current status of the training programme in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, and the training needs and challenges. Such information would help SAB in designing better training programmes for the teachers of Afghanistan in future.

METHODOLOGY

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

The study has focused on to understand the process and outcome rather than the impact and change as a result of the teacher-training programme of SAB. Several sources of information were used in this study. These were SAB trainers, the training environment and the participants (school teachers). A combination of approaches was used to gather information for this assessment. These were i) workshop with the SAB trainers, ii) classroom observation and iii) interviews with the participants.

SAMPLING

All 28 SAB trainers were targeted as informants for this evaluation. Finally, 26 trainers participated in the workshop where they provided their individual views on a self-reported questionnaire. This was followed up by an intensive group discussion with them. The number and locations for the classroom observation were purposively selected. In total, 12 sessions were observed in various locations.

SAB provided the list of participants (school teachers) who received training from SAB. The participants included both male and female teachers. Most of the participants were from Kabul although a large proportion were from outside. For this assessment, 100 participants were identified using stratified random sampling method. The participants were stratified by sex, residence and the year of training received. A total of 84 participants were successfully contacted and interviewed. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of sample participants.

Table 3.1. Distribution of sample participants

Criteria	Sex		All
	Male	Female	
Residence			
Kabul	27	97	59
Outside	73	3	41
Training received			
Current	56	51	54
Previous	44	49	46
N	45	39	84

Estimates are shown in percentage.

SOURCES OF DATA

To understand the knowledge and views of the SAB trainers, a workshop was organized in the SAB offices in Kabul where 26 SAB trainers participated. Each of them was given a questionnaire to individually fill-up and hand-in to the evaluation team. They were asked to report their individual perception, the problems they experienced and their views to resolve those problems. Then, they were invited to participate a group discussion where several issues including their views, common experiences and problems in providing training were raised and discussed at length. The trainers also provided a set of suggestions to improve the quality of training.

To understand the training environment, the performance of the trainers and their interactions with the participants in the real contexts, the evaluation team observed a series of classroom sessions in several locations.

Finally, the participants (teachers) were interviewed at their home or in schools. All three approaches were effective in understanding the training process, determining underlying constraints and the outcome of the SAB training programme in improving the capacity of the school teachers.

LIMITATIONS

SAB has been conducting teacher training for many years beginning at the refugee camps in Pakistan. It was, therefore, impossible for SAB to provide a comprehensive list (with addresses) of participants (teachers). Thus, the sampling frame, used in this study, was largely incomplete. In many cases, the sample teachers could not be located. The group discussions and interviews were conducted in Dari language which were translated into English. This process might have influenced the findings of the study in some cases.

FINDINGS

KNOWLEDGE AND VIEWS OF TRAINERS

Training capacity of SAB

The capacity of the trainers in providing training to teachers was considered crucial. It appears that most of the trainers have not received formal TOT from any training institution. About 4 out of 26 of them received TOT from SAB. The duration was about two weeks. Only one person got a 13-day long TOT from the Teacher Education Programme (TEP).

A number of persons, however, received training on various other issues. About four persons participated in training on narcotics. Two of them received gender training focusing on women's rights. Two trainers attended a course on active learning. Two others received TOT on problem solving skills. A few others received vocational training, education and management, etc.

Of the 26 trainers interviewed, only 5 were women, 9 had education of 16 years and only 6 had experience of more than 6 years. An attempt has been made to know whether the SAB teachers have a clear understand the concepts of 'training'. It appears that only two had a very clear concept and another 10 trainers had some ideas of training. The remaining trainers had no clear understanding of training and their necessity. Generally, Female SAB trainers had better understanding about training than their male counterparts. The concept and the role of training were poorly understood by the more educated and more experienced than others. The concept has been further elaborated when they were asked to mention the training cycles. Only 3 trainers were able to correctly mention the cycles. Again, the knowledge of training cycle was much less among male than female trainers.

Challenges in conducting training

Most of the participating teachers in the SAB training had very poor level of formal education. As a result, it was difficult for them to adequately understand the basics of training that they were supposed to receive and understand.

Among other problems the trainers have been facing are the lack of security, transportation and lodging particularly in outside Kabul. Also, the training venues and other facilities have not been appropriate in many instances. The government sometimes sent unqualified participants to receive training. The most surprising problem emerged has been the presence of ethnic tensions among the trainers – an issues need serious attention by the SAB management.

SAB trainers reported several problems while training Science and Mathematics. In most cases, the teachers had no adequate academic qualifications to understand the basic issues of these subjects. Some of the participants were not teachers at all but involved in other activities in schools or in the Ministry.

Most of the teachers could not apply their newly acquired skills because most of the schools had no relevant equipment and material to apply these skills.

Need of capacity development

When asked whether they have adequate capacity to effectively train the teachers on various disciplines, only 4 out of 26 were confident to carry out the training assignment. The source of confidence, according to most of them, was their experience that added value in their teaching.

Regarding the need of training for the trainers (TOT) to increase their skills, most of them appreciated that training on new methods and techniques would help them to improve their skills and performance.

Most of them felt that SAB could take initiative for the Master Trainers to improve their capacity to more effectively discharge their responsibilities. Some of them proposed that SAB might arrange to send them to other institutions for higher learning to improve their capacity. Also, a few of them proposed to organize some methodological training from experienced trainers.

Most of them were not aware whether SAB had any capacity development process for its Master Trainers. Some of them, however, mentioned that SAB arranged one week-long training on new methods and techniques that was facilitated by two European trainers. Most trainers were aware of the changing needs of training as the 'world has been changing'. They proposed to send the trainers to overseas for higher studies to acquire the latest approach of training.

Training evaluation

No format of training evaluation system has been in place in the SAB training programme. Some of the trainers reported to conduct pre and post tests to have an understanding about the ability of participants. SAB trainers reported to discuss with their participants to understand their problems during the sessions. At least some SAB trainers assessed training needs by using questionnaires before starting and at the end of training.

VIEWS FROM GROUP DISCUSSION

Selection of participants

In many instances, the teachers did not have the academic background or prerequisites to understand (and subsequently teach) science or mathematics to their students. These were the misuse of resources and time for both the trainers and participants. Training a mixed group of participants with wide variation in academic qualification, capacity and experience was a major problem. Since the basic level of understanding of the teachers differed widely, it was difficult for the trainers to effectively train the subjects in question. SAB trainers had limited options in such cases because the less qualified teachers were sent for training by the schools.

SAB training process: the gaps

Although the trainers could not provide specific reasons for not sharing the course objectives with the participants, they have understood that this could help the participants understand whether the purposes of the lesson were achieved. The trainers were aware about the importance of keeping the module with them so that they could take help in planning their lesson, managing or adjusting lesson if needed. Lesson plan was required for a trainer in the classroom although not all of them found carrying this in the classroom. Their argument was that they could deliver from their memory. The trainers were quite aware of different types of seating arrangements in the training classes. Since the training programmes were organized most often by others, SAB had limited options about this issue.

Training equipments

The trainers were found to use different equipments particularly in providing training in science and mathematics to train school teachers. While this kind of training was very effective, very few teachers could apply their new acquired learning and skills in their respective schools had no such equipments at all.

Adaptation of SAB approaches

The trainers had a tendency to make the participants understand and adapt SAB approach. They attempted this by applying the pre and post-tests and taking reflections from the participants. No structured format was introduced to assess the adaptability of SAB approaches.

Need assessment and monitoring

SAB trainers did not assess the training needs. The Ministry of Education (MoE) had the responsibility of selecting teachers for training. No formal system was found in place to monitor SAB training programmes.

Overcoming constraints

SAB trainers could organize model demonstration training in the schools to raise awareness and the demand of training their teachers. Given that the training sectors have becoming increasingly competitive, SAB should consider providing TOT in other subjects to upgrade the skills of the trainers. TOT on Report Writing should be organized since all trainers need to submit training report to their supervisors. Not all training venues have adequate training materials. SAB should take measures to send necessary equipments needed for the training.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Course module and its use

Most SAB trainers did not use course modules in the classroom although they had modules and were supposed to use them. This finding indicates that the trainers could not realize the advantages of using modules in organizing the contents and improving the quality of training.

Training materials

Of the twelve sessions observed, pictures were used in two sessions to make the lesson attractive, easy and understandable to the participants. In other words, good posters, relevant to the lesson, were presented. While using picture or poster might not necessary or helpful in providing training in some subjects, the selection of training materials and their use seemed to be appropriate. Use of pictorial materials added value to the quality of training and suggested that this approach should continue. The training equipment supplies, such as poster, picture, overhead projector, etc., were also adequate and appropriate.

Lesson plan

Not all trainers had lesson plan while conducting the training sessions. About five, out of twelve sessions observed, found to use these in the class room indicating that using lesson plan was not considered a requirement for SAB training programme.

Sitting arrangement

Sitting arrangement, as found in most sessions, was traditional in nature that generally followed in the schools. It seems that the trainers were not very familiar with the need of participant-friendly classroom environment. The trainers could arrange their classrooms in various ways to make the sitting arrangement more appropriate and interactive (such as making the class room in U-Shape so that all teachers could see and move more easily).

Sharing lesson objectives

The objectives and expectations of the session were discussed but, in most cases, were not very systematic and specific because no written lesson plan was used. As a result, the participants were not clearly aware of what would happen in the session and what should be achieved at the end of the day. This should be improved by sharing lesson objectives with participants in the beginning of the session.

Learning environment

Joyful learning environment is regarded as a plus point to the effective training programme. The SAB training sessions were very lively in most cases observed although some participants, as found elsewhere as well, were inattentive and passive. The trainers generally managed their allocated time fairly effectively.

Session evaluation

On going evaluation of the session was not been attempted. Given the class size and seating arrangements, it was difficult to make individual contacts with the participants in most cases. A built-in evaluation system was found to be in place at the end of each session. However, this evaluation results were not used in subsequent sessions or to improve the overall performance of the training.

ASSESSMENT BY TEACHERS

Profile of the teachers

The socio-demographic characteristics of the sample teachers are shown in Table 4.1. As it appears, the mean age of the teachers was 34 years where male teachers were much older than female teachers. They had fairly good level of education in the Afghan context. Although the average years of schooling was 13, nearly half of female teachers had more than 12 years of education compared to only 16% among male teachers. Average teaching experience was higher among male (10 years) than female (7 years) teachers.

Table 4.1. Profile of teachers by background factors

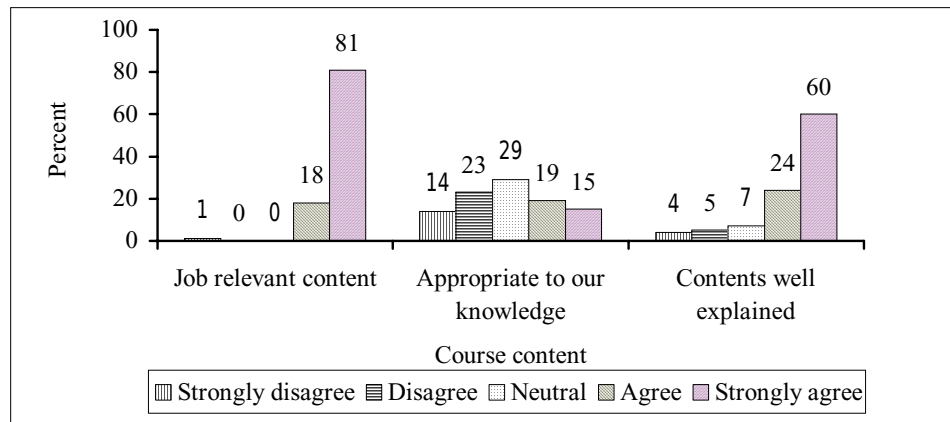
Background factor	Sex		All	
	Male	Female		
Age (years)	<30	40	62	50
	30+	60	38	50
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>34</i>
Education (years)	≤ 12	84	49	68
	$13 \geq$	16	51	32
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>13</i>
Experience (years)	≤ 5	53	61	57
	$6 \geq$	47	39	43
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>9</i>
N	45	39	84	

Estimates are shown in percentage.

Course contents

Three issues of the course content were assessed by the teachers in a 5-point scale. Figure 4.1 shows that most of the teachers appreciated the contents as relevant to their job. On the other hand, relatively smaller proportion felt that all contents covered in the training were appropriate to their level of understanding. This happened because the participating teachers in a given session were not a homogeneous group but were very diverse in terms of their educational qualification and the length of experience. As a result, it was difficult for many participants to grasp the totality of contents covered in the training. This is reflected in the next issue when a proportion of teachers felt that contents were not well explained or they could not adequately understand some of the contents taught.

Figure 4.1. Assessment of course content



While Figure 4.1 shows that the course contents were very relevant to their needs, the variation of their ratings by age, sex, education, experience, residence and time of training are presented in Table 4.2. Overall, the differences were negligible although it appears that young teachers were less likely to give their trainers a higher rating than the older teachers.

Table 4.2. Job relevance by the background factor

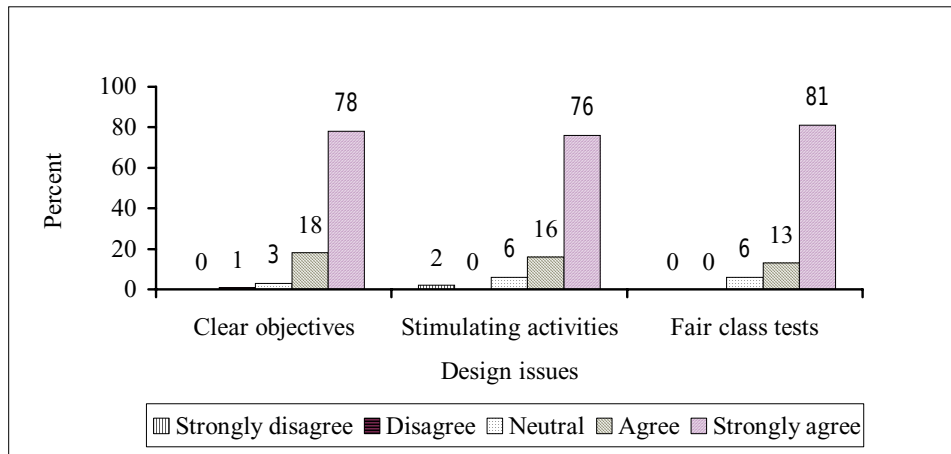
Background factors	Rating*		
	Average or below	Good	Very good
Age (years)			
<30	5	19	76
30+	-	17	83
Sex			
Male	2	13	84
Female	3	23	74
Education (years)			
≤ 12	2	12	86
13 ≥	4	30	66
Experience (years)			
≤ 5	4	17	79
6 ≥	-	19	81
Residence			
Kabul	2	28	70
Outside	3	3	94
N	2	15	67

*Ratings are shown in percentage.

Course design

Like the contents, design of the SAB courses was also appreciated highly as shown in Figure 4.2. About 78% felt that the objectives of the courses were very clear and nearly similar proportion remembered the training as quite stimulating. About 81% strongly agreed that the tests taken in various phases of the training were fair and just.

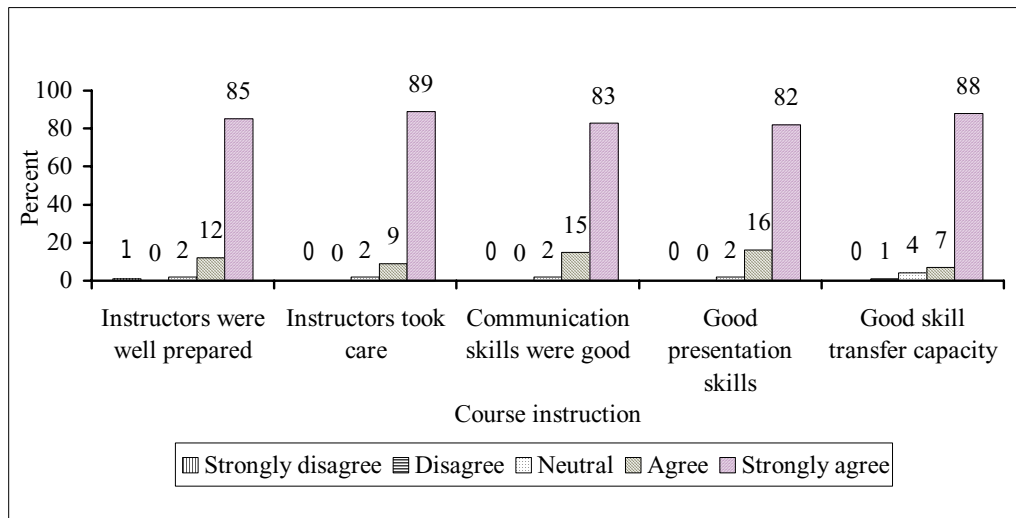
Figure 4.2 Assessment of course design



Course instructor

The performance of the instructors or trainers in classes, as evaluated by the participants, is shown in Figure 4.3. Most of the participants reported that the SAB trainers were not only well prepared in the sessions but they also took great care of the participants to ensure that all participants understood the basics of the courses. Both communication and presentation skills of the SAB trainers were rated as good by the participating teachers. Most participants strongly agreed that the trainers had good skill transfer capacity.

Figure 4.3 Assessment of course instructors



Adequate preparation of the trainers before entering the training sessions was considered the basic and necessary requirement for the good professional trainers. Although this quality was appreciated in earlier section, Table 4.3 presents the variation of this issue by the background factors of the participating teachers. It appears that younger and female participants were relatively more critical about the trainers than the older and male participants. No significant differences in this issue were reported by education, length of experience and residence of the participants.

Table 4.3. Preparation of trainers by the background factors

Background Factors	Rating*		
	Average or below	Good	Very good
Age (years)			
<30	12	14	74
30+	2	12	86
Sex			
Male	4	18	79
Female	10	8	82
Education (years)			
≤ 12	7	11	82
13 ≥	7	19	74
Experience (years)			
≤ 5	8	13	79
6 ≥	6	14	80
Residence			
Kabul	8	16	76
Outside	6	9	85
N	6	11	67

*Ratings are shown in percentage.

Similarly, the differences in presentation skills of the SAB trainers by these factors were shown in Table 4.4. Nearly same scenario emerged and the differences reported were negligible. This indicates that generally the SAB trainers performed equally well in all locations and to various groups of participating teachers.

Table 4.4. Presentation skills by the background factors

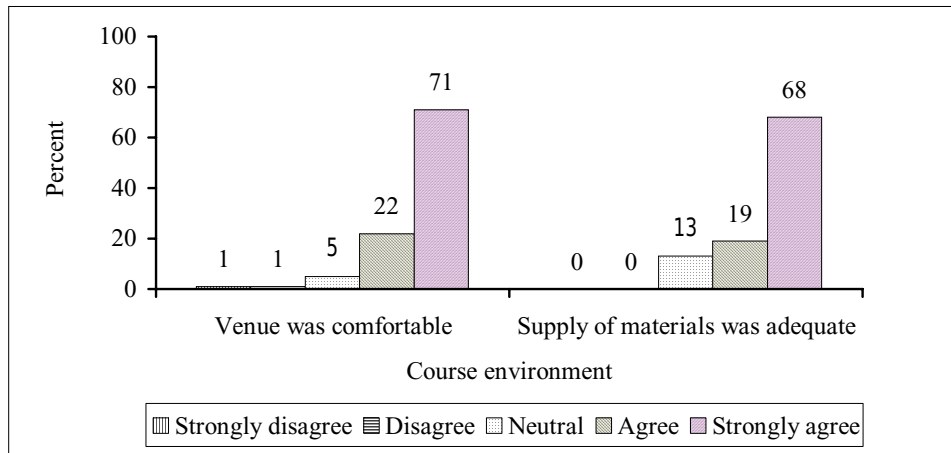
Background factors	Rating*		
	Average or below	Good	Very good
Age (years)			
<30	3	14	83
30+	-	19	81
Sex			
Male	2	16	82
Female	-	18	82
Education (years)			
≤ 12	2	17	81
13 ≥	-	18	82
Experience (years)			
≤ 5	-	13	87
6 ≥	3	22	75
Residence			
Kabul	-	18	82
Outside	3	15	82
N	1	14	67

*Ratings are shown in percentage.

Course environment

Overall environment of the training programme is recognized as a good predictor of the quality of performance. In this study, the training venue and supply of course materials were evaluated by the participating teachers. Although creating friendly training environment was not the responsibilities of the SAB trainers, Figure 4.4 shows that training venue was comfortable to most of the teachers. The supply of materials was also fairly adequate.

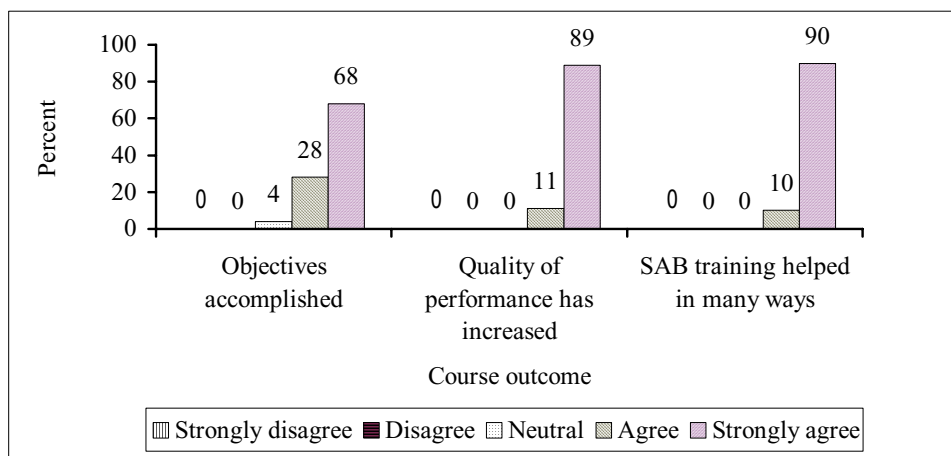
Figure 4.4. Assessment of course environment



Course outcome

Three general outcome indicators were used in evaluating the course outcome as shown in Figure 4.5. Nearly two-third participants strongly agreed that they accomplished the course objectives quite well while most the remaining felt that they achieved with lesser extent. Virtually all participants agreed that this training helped them to improve their quality of performance in teaching schools. Overall the teachers felt that the SAB training helped them in many ways such as improving the teaching skills, better understand child psychology, use of participatory methods in the class, etc.

Figure 4.5. Assessment of course outcome



Accomplishment of the course objectives was considered an important predictor of the performance of the training. The distribution of accomplishment was, therefore, examined in various contexts. Table 4.5 shows that younger, female, more educated, more experienced and Kabul residents tended to become more critical than their counterparts.

Table 4.5. Accomplishment of the course objectives

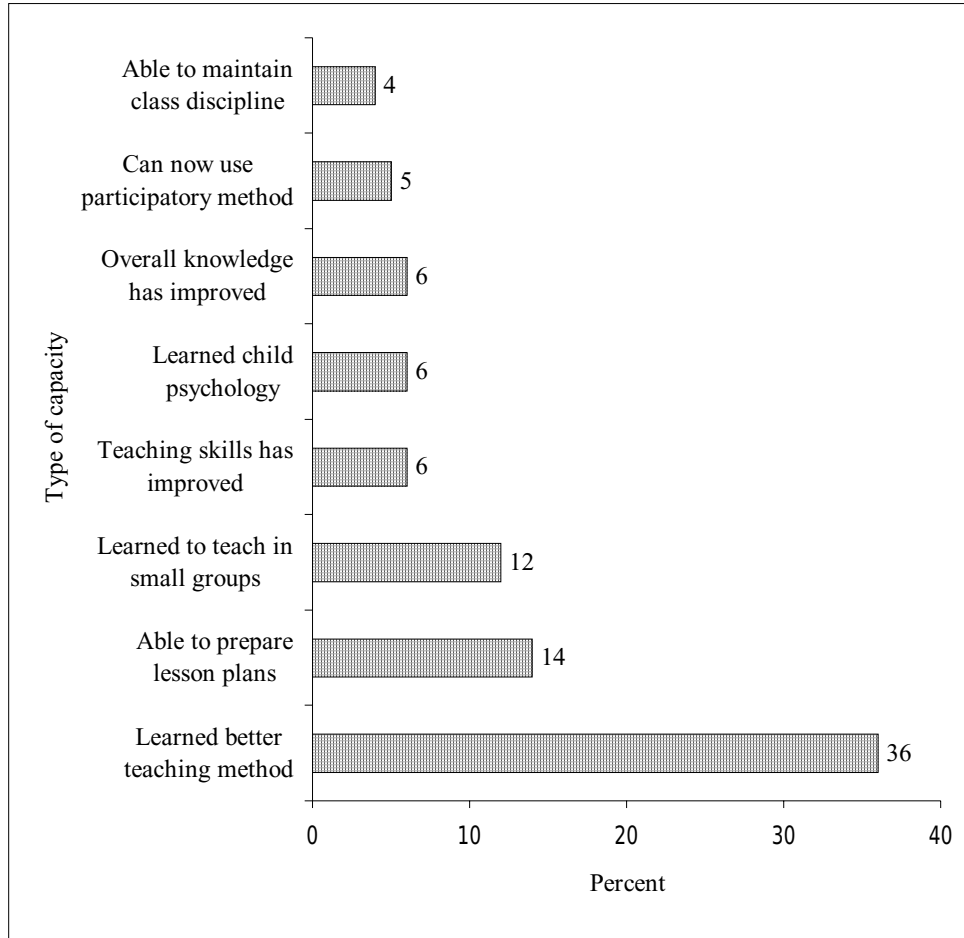
Background Factors	Rating*		
	Average or below	Good	Very good
Age (years)			
<30	7	33	59
30+	2	21	76
Sex			
Male	2	22	76
Female	8	33	59
Education (years)			
≤ 12	3	25	72
13 ≥	7	33	59
Experience (years)			
≤ 5	2	25	73
6 ≥	8	31	61
Residence			
Kabul	6	32	62
Outside	3	21	76
N	4	23	57

*Ratings are shown in percentage.

Perceived capacity development

About 36% teachers felt that the SAB training helped them improved their learning methods and they were able to practice these in schools while 14% recognized that the training was useful in preparing lesson plans and teaching materials (Figure 4.6). SAB training also helped developed their capacity in understanding the importance of small groups (12%). Although smaller in proportion (6%), the participating teachers could also remembered the role of SAB training in gaining skills and experience, understanding child psychology and overall improvement of knowledge. Among others, the teachers were able to learn participatory methods in classroom teaching and maintenance of class disciplines from the SAB training.

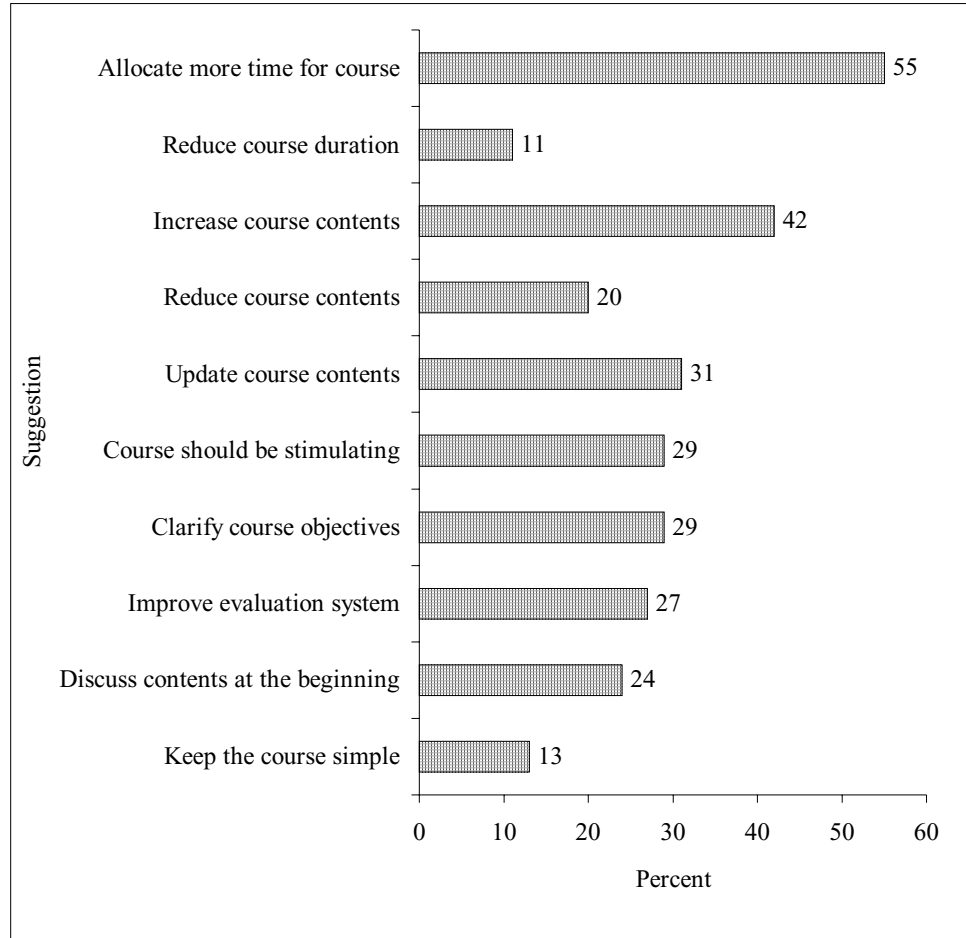
Figure 4.6. Capacity development as perceived by the teachers



Suggestions for improvement

The participating teachers provided several suggestions to improve the teacher training programmes (Figure 4.7). The duration of the training was felt too short by most (55%) of the teachers and they suggested to expand the course duration to fully cover most of the issues discussed in the training sessions. On the other hand, a smaller group of teachers argued to reduce the duration of the course. About 42% teachers suggested that the contents in terms of topics should be expanded and 31% wanted to update these. On the contrary, about 20% felt that the contents should be reduced. A significant proportion (29%) suggested to re-structure the sessions to make the courses more stimulating and more importantly to discuss about the course objective at the beginning of the sessions. Systematic course evaluation improves the quality of training and about 27% suggested to improve the course evaluation. Nearly a quarter of the teachers wanted to introduce an introductory module to provide basic and relevant information of many courses. For some (13%), the SAB training courses were difficult to grasp and the recommended to make the courses simpler so that all participants understand most of the contents.

Figure 4.7. Suggestions to improve the SAB training



DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KNOWLEDGE OF TRAINING

The SAB trainers had no clear understanding about ‘training’, its type and the role of training in capacity development. Many of the SAB trainers have been in this profession for a long time without having the conceptual clarity of training. *It is necessary, therefore, that all SAB trainers should be equally conversant with the basic concepts of training, its forms and the use not only in teacher training but in other sectors as well.*

TRAINING PROCESS

The use of course module in the classroom was limited although they were expected to use these modules. This indicates that the trainers could not realize the advantages of keeping these handy in the class in organizing the contents. *It is suggested that SAB training management should adequately focus on keeping the training module in their classes so that they can rearrange their daily lesson plan if required.*

The use of appropriate training materials (such as picture, posters, etc.) in the SAB training programmes was a common practice to make the lesson attractive, easy and understandable to the participants. The trainers used different equipments particularly in training science and mathematics. The training equipment supply was adequate and their use was appropriate. *Use of pictorial materials added value to the quality of training and is suggested that this should be continued.*

Use of daily lesson plan is a requirement for a good and well-planned training programme although a few of them carry it in the training sessions. They tended to deliver lessons from their memory in many instances. The trainers, however, were aware of the allocation of time in various segments of the lessons and generally managed their allocated time quite effectively. *SAB should include lesson plan as a routine activity in the total training plan and regularly monitor the implementation of this task.*

The trainers were very familiar with the need of participant-friendly classroom environment. Unfortunately, they were not closely involved in planning training sessions or consulted by others who were responsible to organize the programmes. *It is suggested that the trainers should arrange their classrooms in various ways to make the sitting arrangement more appropriate and interactive.*

Sharing course objectives and expectation were neither systematic nor specific because no lesson plan was used. As a result, the participants were not clearly aware of the purpose of the sessions and the take home learning of the day. *This gap should be minimized by promoting the value of sharing lesson objectives with participants in the beginning and at the end of the session.*

No formal training evaluation system was in place in SAB training programme. Routine evaluation of the session is an approach that could be attempted although some trainers tried pre and post-tests and reflections to have an understanding about the progress of the participants. Given the class size and seating arrangement, it was difficult to make individual contacts with the participants in most cases. Although a built-in evaluation system was

practiced at the end of each session, *it is recommended that SAB should develop and introduce structured format to assess the progress and the adaptability of SAB approaches.*

NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

The capacity of the SAB trainers in providing training is considered crucial. The trainers need to increase their knowledge and skills on new methods of training. Most of them attended a two-week long training on new methods facilitated by two European trainers. However, only a few of them received any formal training of trainers. Some of them participated training on narcotics, gender, active learning, vocational training, education and management. *It is highly recommended that SAB should take necessary measures to increase the capacity of its trainers. One major area for their capacity development should be to provide them TOT to make them oriented with new approaches practiced by others.*

One positive thing was that SAB trainers were aware of their limitations. Most trainers felt that their capacity should be up-graded as they were not always comfortable and confident to carry out the training assignments with all types of participants. *The confidence level of most SAB trainers has remained poor and it is suggested that appropriate measures should be taken to overcome this problem.*

CHALLENGES FACE BY THE TRAINERS

SAB trainers frequently faced a problem while training a mixed group of teachers with wide variation in academic qualification, capacity and experience. Since the basic level of understanding of the teachers differed widely, it was difficult for the trainers to effectively train the subjects in question. SAB trainers had limited options in such cases because the less qualified teachers were sent by the schools. Training a heterogeneous group of participants should be avoided. *It is suggested that SAB should develop a system where the teachers should be selected on the basis of their academic qualification, length of experience, possessions of specific talents and the grades they are teaching in schools.*

Another related problems they experienced while training science and mathematics because, in most cases, the participants had no adequate academic qualifications to understand the basic issues of the subjects. As a result, it was difficult for the participants to adequately understand the basics of training that they were supposed to receive. Some participants were not teachers at all but sent to SAB as participants of teacher training programmes. They were administrative staff of the government or the schools. *It is recommended that SAB design a screening system in selecting eligible and qualified participants to improve the quality and effectiveness of the training.*

Lack of security, transportation, lodging, training venues, etc. were some of the problems that the trainers frequently faced. Other logistics should also be improved such as heating system in the winter particularly in outside Kabul where *SAB should take appropriate measures to overcome these problems.*

PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY

Most participants appreciated both the course design and contents as relevant to their job. They evaluated SAB trainers as good and well prepared to train them. They felt that the trainers tried to ensure that all participants understood the basics of the subjects. Communication as well as the presentation skills of the SAB trainers was rated highly by the participants. *The SAB trainers performed equally well in all locations and to various groups of participating teachers.*

Overall training environment was good. The SAB training sessions were very lively and the trainers were able to create joyful learning environment to conduct the training very effectively. There were few sessions, however, where some participants were inattentive and passive. Although creating friendly training environment was not the responsibility of SAB trainers, the training venue was comfortable to most participants. The supply of materials was also fairly adequate.

Most of the participants agreed that SAB training helped them to improve their quality of performance in teaching schools although there was room for further improvement. *SAB training programmes improved their teaching skills, learning methods, preparing lesson plans and teaching materials, importance of small groups, understanding child psychology, use of participatory methods maintaining class disciplines among others.*

OTHER ISSUES

Most training duration was too short to adequately complete the contents. The participants suggested to increase the frequency of the course and demanded that necessary training materials (including notebooks and videos) should also be provided by SAB. *It is suggested that the duration as well as the contents should be extended depending on the nature and complexity of the subjects.*

Most of the SAB trainers had no experience in teaching schools. Thus, they were not aware of the real problems the teachers have been facing at present. *It is suggested that SAB trainers themselves should participate as school teachers in several practice sessions to become aware of the real problems.*

Not all training venues had adequate training materials and supplies. *SAB should take measures to send necessary equipments needed for the training.* SAB should have necessary logistic supports and accommodations in other provinces to increase the availability of better trainers in the remote districts.

SAB requires that each trainer should prepare and submit a report on their assignments. Most the trainers feel that the report they prepare are not very useful for SAB. *A short training on Report Writing should be organized since all trainers need to submit training report to their supervisors.*

Given that the training sectors have becoming increasingly competitive, *SAB should consider providing TOT to their own trainers in many other subjects to upgrade their skills of the trainers in those subjects.* SAB should organize higher training programmes for the trainer to learn modern teaching techniques.

Currently, no formal system exists to monitor SAB training programmes. SAB should routinely monitor the outcome and evaluate process of training programme to ensure that the programme is on the right track. *SAB should develop a routine monitoring system to understand the difficulties the trainers are having and the quality of performance.*

The training needs were identified jointly by the SAB and the TTI in several discussion meetings. In some cases, the Ministry of Education also sent the teachers to SAB for training. The need of marketing for SAB is an issue. *It is recommended that a formal mechanism of marketing should be developed by SAB to expand its scope in providing training to teachers in Afghanistan.*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

SAB has been playing a very important role in providing training to primary school teachers in Afghanistan. Overall, the performance of SAB trainers was satisfactory although the quality of their output could be improved further. SAB trainers identified their own limitations, expressed their needs and expectations, and provided a set of suggestions for further improvement of their performance. The study suggests that SAB should take note of the strengths as well as the limitations of their trainers, consider the context and environment where they work and take appropriate measures to respond their needs. It is argued that such measures would significantly enhance the quality of training and satisfy the growing demand of Afghan teachers to better perform in their schools.

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Appendix A

BRAC Afghanistan BRAC Training and Resource Center-BTRC Kabul, Afghanistan

Questionnaire for the SAB Trainers

A. Personal background

- a. Name of the Trainer:..... ID number:
- b. Age (in years): Years
- c. Sex: Male - 1 Female – 2
- d. Educational qualification: class completed
- e. Years of experience as teacher trainer:..... years
- f. How long are you working with SAB as trainer? Years
- g. Ever worked as teacher? Yes - 1 No – 2
- h. If yes, for how many years? Years
- i. Date of interview:

B. Concept of training

1. What do you mean by training?
2. What are the steps of training cycle?

C. Training method and materials

3. Mention five popularly used training methods that you use in training.
4. What issues should you consider to select a training method?
5. What is training material?
6. What issues should be considered in selecting training material?

D. Training need assessment and lesson plan

7. What is training need?
8. What are the steps of lesson plan that you discussed in training?
9. What challenges and/or problems do you face for science?
10. What challenges and/or problems do you face for mathematics?

E. Training evaluation

11. How do you assess the training needs of teachers?
12. What measures do you undertake to evaluate the conducted training?

F. Challenges in conducting training

13. What challenges and/or problems do you face in teachers' training?

G. Training capacity

14. Have you received *Training of Trainers* (TOT)? If yes, from which institution and how long (duration) it was?
15. Have you received any other training? If yes, what are those?
16. Do you think you have adequate capacity to train the teachers? If Yes/not; why? Please explain.
17. Do you think if you receive/attend training, it will help you to train the teachers in a better way? If yes, what are those?
18. Can SAB take some initiatives for the *Master Trainers* so that they can be more capable to discharge their responsibilities in a better way? If yes, what are those?
19. Does SAB has any capacity development process for its Master Trainers? If yes, what are those?

H. Suggestions for improvement

20. What new needs have you found for future teachers training so far?
21. How do you ensure that the approach you used in training are adapting to the objectives of SAB teachers' training?

Appendix – B

Observation Check List

Personal background

- a. Name of the Trainer:..... ID number:
- b. Sex: Male - 1 Female – 2
- c. Date of observation:

Topics/issues	Verifiable Indicators	Remarks
Preparation of module	Presence with prepared module	
Ensuring training materials	Presence of <u>appropriate</u> and <u>adequate</u> training materials for all participants	
Ensuring training venue	Presence of training venue with proper authorization	
Ensuring logistics	Presence of <u>all</u> necessary logistics in the class room	
Ensuring necessary training equipment	Presence of <u>all</u> necessary training equipment in the class room	
Fixing the date and time of training	All selected participants can say that the date and time of training is appropriate	
Ensuring lodging for the participants (if necessary)	Provision of good lodging facilities with adequate items	
Ensuring food for the participants	Expression of satisfaction by the participants	
Ensuring participation and keeping information about the participants	Presence of all targeted participants having information of any absentee	
Preparation of checklist for training materials	Having checklist of materials with the trainer	
Preparation of checklist of logistics for the class room	Having checklist of logistics with the trainer	
Using lesson plan in the class room	Presence of a well written <u>day wise</u> lesson plan with the trainer	
Sitting arrangement	Presence of <u>learning friendly</u> and good looking sitting arrangement in the class room	
Maintain formalities before starting academic session	Greetings to the participants, Recitation from the Quran, registration of the participants	
Using story or touchy issues as an entry point	Started the lesson with story or any touchy issues	
Sharing lesson objective with the participants	Participants can say the objectives of the lesson	
Time management	Start and finish the lesson on time	
Prevailing lively and joyful learning environment	Participants express their satisfaction about the session	

Appendix – C

Questionnaire for the Teachers

Personal background

- a. Name:
- b. Age (in years): years
- c. Sex : Male - 1 Female - 2
- d. Educational qualification: Class completed.
- e. Years of experience as teacher: years
- f. Date of interview:

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle your response to the items. 1 represents the lowest and most negative impression on the scale, 3 represents an adequate impression, and 5 represents the highest and most positive impression. Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this course.

COURSE CONTENT (Circle your response to each item.)

NA = Not applicable **1 = strongly disagree** **2 = Disagree**
3 = neither agree/nor disagree **4 = Agree**
5 = strongly agree

- 1. The content is relevant to my job. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 2. I had the prerequisite knowledge and skills for this course. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 3. I was well informed about the objectives of this course. N/A 1 2 3 4 5

COURSE DESIGN (Circle your response to each item.)

- 4. The course objectives are clear to me. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 5. The course activities stimulated my learning. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 6. The test(s) in this course were accurate and fair. N/A 1 2 3 4 5

COURSE INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR) (Circle your response to each item.)

- 7. The instructor was well prepared. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 8. The instructor was helpful. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 9. Interpersonal communication skills were high. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 10. Presentation skills of instructors were very good. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 11. Capacities of the trainers to pass on skills were good. N/A 1 2 3 4 5

COURSE ENVIRONMENT (Circle your response to each item.)

- 12. The training facility at this venue was comfortable. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 13. The training facility at this venue provided everything I needed to learn. N/A 1 2 3 4 5

COURSE RESULTS (Circle your response to each item.)

- 14. I accomplished the objectives of this course. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 15. I will be able to use what I learned in this course. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 16. SAB training was a good way for me to learn this content. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
- 17. Please give us an example of how this training has improved your capacity to perform much better than before.
.....
.....

18. Please suggest how this course could be improved. (Check all that apply.)

- a) Provide better information before course.
- b) Clarify the course objectives.
- c) Reduce content covered in course.
- d) Increase content covered in course.
- e) Update content covered in course.
- f) Make course activities more stimulating.
- g) Make the course less difficult.
- h) Allot more time for the course.
- i) Shorten the time for the course.
- j) Improve the tests used in the course.

19. What other improvements would you recommend in this course? Please describe

Thank you.

Appendix – D

Responses on the SAB Workshop Outcome

A one-day workshop was organized by SAB on the findings and recommendations of this evaluation. The recommendations were discussed at length. The outcome of the workshop was found very useful to both SAB and the evaluation team. SAB forwarded the workshop outcome (comments and feedback from the trainers) to the evaluation team. The responses of the evaluation team on those comments are presented in this section.

Lesson plan

There is no doubt that SAB trainers use the lesson plan. The evaluation team suggested that the trainers should keep it handy and follow it through in the class. They should not depend on their memory.

Course module

The course modules are designed to achieve the learning objectives of the course. Generally, the course contents are systematically organized in modules in order to maximize the learning. Each module again may be divided into several parts.

Sharing course objectives

SAB trainers explain the general objectives of the course. However, it will be better if each trainer each day explains the objectives of his/her lesson as mentioned.

Training evaluation

Taking an oral evaluation of the previous lesson is an innovating idea. But it may be difficult to implement as *evaluation* in the class. A good proportion of class-time may be needed if all participants are evaluated orally. Also, participants are unlikely to express the negative ratings (weaknesses) of the trainers in an open forum. The evaluation process, therefore, should be confidential. A structured evaluation form may be used at the end of each day where the participants should remain unidentified but very quickly rate the different aspects of the trainers and session of the day.

Problems in training mixed groups

Although SAB has clear criteria regarding the selection of participants, SAB has to face the reality as it has very little control over it. This is unfortunate.

Training duration

SAB has quite correctly identified the reality of the Afghan context that the extension of course duration would significantly reduce the number of participants. It is expected that SAB will be able to take care this issue in future.

Providing TOT to SAB trainers

The decision by SAB to provide TOT to its trainers is expected to have significant positive impact on their quality of performance. It will certainly improve the skills of the trainers and make them aware of new teaching techniques.

Monitoring SAB training

Formal monitoring system will immensely help SAB to improve its quality if appropriate and timely decisions are made based on the monitoring findings.

Other issues

It is good that SAB management is quite aware of such (lack of materials and supplies) problems. Given that SAB provides training services with other organizations in remote provinces, it has to face these problems. Regarding the ethnic conflict, it is now clear to the evaluation team that the problem is the consequences of personal conflicts rather than the ethnic crisis.

General comment

This comment is well taken. The evaluation team recognizes that translation of some parts of the evaluation instruments was difficult.