

**Report
Of**

The workshop on Text Book writing

Held from 14 – 26 August 2008

Held at

**National Center for Policy Research
(NCPR)**

Kabul University

Focus and Objectives

16 days workshop titled “Peace Building and Text Book Writing” focused upon equipping the 32 university teachers (Appendix A) from 12 universities of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan with the methods and procedures of inculcating peace keeping concepts and life skills into the text books and their daily classroom teaching at university level. It further focused upon enabling the participants determining the criteria of the text book writing, writing the text book on this pre formulated criteria and evaluating the text book leading towards the improvement of text book. The main objectives of the workshop included:

- To enable the participants to learn about characteristics of a standard text book, knowing the art of writing the text book on scientific and technical bases, and utilizing of reliable and relevant standards for developing their text books.
- To make the participants understand how the peace building concepts and life skills can be integrated while writing text books.
- To develop the text books for universities in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on internationally acceptable standards and criteria to meet the global challenges of the world of knowledge
- To give them hand-on practice in evaluating the text books on standard criteria and to be consistence in writing the text book both from content and style point of view
- To encourage them to write the text book in accordance with the objectives of the curriculum, syllabus outline and expected learning experiences.
- To facilitate them to write the text books keeping in view the principles of text book writing coupled with the religious values, social norms, cultural heritage and national goals.

Protocols and conduct of workshop

The text book writing workshop started on the 14th of August and concluded on 26th of August 2008. Protocols for the conduct of the workshop were set jointly by the participants and the organizers (NCPR). Dr. Alef Shah “Zadran” from NCPR and Dr. M. Zafar “Iqbal” Dean of the faculty of Education of Allama Iqbal Open University of brotherly Islamic country Pakistan were the main facilitators resource persons. The workshop was conducted on a pre-formulated schedule (appendix B). The main topics covered during the workshop were as given below:

- Curriculum, syllabus and curriculum system with emphasis on current curriculum challenges in Afghanistan.
- Learning and its three types i.e. cognitive learning, effective learning and psychomotor learning
- Difference between book and text book
- Three parts of the text book (introductory part, middle part and final part)
- Principles and art of writing the text book
 - learning elements
 - glossary
 - marginalia
 - front matter
 - end matter
 - writing for a real audience
 - style
 - guidelines for cultural and gender issues
 - level of reading
 - clarity
 - good writing
 - prolixity (verbosity)
 - guidelines of avoiding prolixity
 - unmixed coordination and emphasis
- Evaluating text book
- Outlying structures
 - organization of text book

- levels of outlining
- role of real examples in explanation of topics
- Pedagogical elements and their role in text book
 - stages of direct learning
 - principles of indirect learning
 - different forms of pedagogical elements and apparatus
 - openers and closers
 - pedagogical pitfall and guidelines for avoiding it
- Useful tools in chapter creating
 - openers
 - overview and introduction
 - outline and focus questions
 - learning objectives or the outcome of study
 - epigrams
 - internal apparatus
 - closer
 - conclusion
- Assessment (function and approaches + models)
- Tools of the assessment / question types
- Relationship between curriculum and assessment
- Test observation
- Peace building concepts and life skills development
- Peace keeping and text book
- Credit system and its relationship with text book writing

Modalities and procedures

A group work balanced mix up of traditional lecturing, brains storming discussion activities and group work were used as the mean modalities for the conduct of workshop. At least 50 percent time of the workshop was allocated for practical activities in four groups. The haul mark of the workshop was that a group of three persons were assigned to the job of recording the proceedings of each day and present it in the first session of next day for discussion. Other mentioned worthy aspects in this regard are as below:

- Four criteria for the text book evaluation were developed by the four groups in the light of principles of text book writing they studied.
- These four criteria were merged into one standard criteria by the leaders of the four groups for using the same for the text book evaluation in Afghanistan.
- Four books (three those of the Kabul University and one that of Ministry of Education for 12th grade) were evaluated on this criteria and it was found that these books do not meet the criteria. These text books need to be rewritten.
- At least 30 MCQs, 40 fill in the blanks, 10 matching and 22 true and false test items were developed by the groups and presented in the workshop for discussion and improvement.
- The four groups also worked on the methods of plugging of life skills while writing the text books for various subjects at the Kabul University level the recommendations of the groups were discussed with participations and improvements were made accordingly.

SWOT Analysis

1. Strengths

The workshop was able to:

- Achieve its objectives to maximum possible extent
- Bring a positive attitudinal change in participants regarding the need of writing quality text books valid, reliable, objective testing and integrating life skills into the content while writing a text book.
- Inculcate in them the skills of developing criteria for text book evaluation, evaluating the text book on standard criteria and test items development.
- Create an interest and motivation among participants to work in an organized way to achieve the objectives.
- Provide the hands on training in almost all the related skills of text book writing among the participants enabling them to prove themselves a real change agents Afghanistan has now at least 32 technician in the art of text book writing.

2. Weaknesses

- Duration of the workshop was not sufficient to complete the big task of equipping the university teachers with art of text book writing
- Some of the participants were less tolerant at the beginning, but then they were O.K with passage of time.
- Some of the participants were not regular and punctual.

3. Opportunities

- Participants were very receptive and enthusiastic to learn the new things. The extended chain of similar workshops may be useful.
- These trained persons may effectively be utilized for training others particularly to personnel responsible for text book development and those on national committees of testing and evaluation.
- The principle of “multiplier effort” may be used in this regard so that benefits may reach at a gross root level.
- Ministry of Education of Afghanistan may also be taken on board.

4. Threats

- The trained teachers may be rusted if they do not apply the knowledge of skill in their day-to-day professional activities.
- Follow-up study may be conducted periodically to be aware of the impact.
- Finances of sponsorship may not be available to the process so that every university teacher is trained in this important task.
- An active collaboration/coordination between universities, sponsors and Ministry of Education may not be available for continuum of the process.

What to do next?

In the light of the SWOT analysis given above it can be easily suggested that:

- President of the Kabul University in the concluding ceremony of the workshop emphasized that they are working on the revising the curricula and syllabi of all the subjects in the university. He desired utterly that his deans and head of the departments which count to be 80 in total be given fifteen days of training in two batches of 40 each. It is proposed that same may be arranged in collaboration with some international sponsoring agency, Kabul University and NCPR.
- As revealed by the participants during the workshop and at the closing ceremony both formally and informally that this workshop proved very useful for them in learning the skill of text book writing; therefore, it's strongly recommended that similar workshops may be conducted in provinces by dividing all provinces in different zones. At the first step workshops in five zones say north, central, east, south, and west.