

Ghulam Omar Qargha

Education, Research, & Program Evaluation Expert

Accomplished bilingual development professional with 20 years of diverse overseas experience in designing, managing, implementing, and evaluating international education programs. Adept at analyzing relevant data, country context, and development constraints to recommend policy and program interventions. Experienced in conflict and emergency contexts.

Education

Ph.D. International Education Policy

University of Maryland – College Park, 2021

Dissertation topic: Educational transfer and privatization

M.A. in International Comparative Education

Stanford University, 2011

M.Ed. Curriculum & Instruction

George Mason University, 2006

B.S. Chemistry

University of North Florida, 1997

Languages: English (native), Persian (fluent), Pashto (basic), Arabic (basic)

Selected Accomplishments

Educational Program Design and Implementation

- Worked directly with HE President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and HE the Minister of Education to develop a comprehensive reform framework and a new national educational policy for Afghanistan.
- Led a diverse team of national and international experts to design, develop, and implement a two-year science and mathematics training program for 350 professors in 18 universities across Afghanistan. Negotiated to ensure that USAID, Ministry, and university goals aligned for a successful implementation.
- Designed and implemented a targeted teacher training program for formal and community-based schoolteachers to respond to an emergency ramp-up in school enrollment as part of the Education for All (EFA) efforts in post-Taliban Afghanistan.
- Coordinated national and international experts in designing and developing peace, environmental, health, and computer literacy training programs to meet the specific needs of students in 28 schools across Afghanistan.
- Designed a comprehensive and interactive business communication and project management training for the USAID funded Afghanistan Workforce Development Project (AWDP). Thirty-five private sector companies validated the training program, 479 mid-level professionals completed the training, 318 received promotions or raises.
- Worked with a team as part of the USAID funded University Support and Workforce Development Project (USWDP) to improve university quality assurance and administrative systems and connect 11 universities with private sector employers.

- Established Mezan International School to provide students in Afghanistan an opportunity to study a US accredited curriculum balanced with a foundation in the Afghan context.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Managed and led the first Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA) for Afghanistan. RERA provided USAID and the Ministry of Education an updated snapshot of how conflict and risks affect education and the types of resilience strategies that targeted communities use to overcome those risks.
- Designed, supervised, and analyzed a national survey of ghost schools, ghost teachers, and ghost students for the Office of Afghanistan's President. Discovered significant discrepancies within the Ministry of Education data. The study's findings resulted in an overhaul of the Education Management and Information System (EMIS).
- Designed, managed, and analyzed a comprehensive organizational capacity assessment of Afghanistan's Ministry of Higher Education and ten leading universities. The assessment highlighted areas of strength, deficits, and opportunities concerning leadership, financial management, human resources, procurement, and administration.
- Designed and managed numerous qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method monitoring, evaluation, and validation studies in education, agriculture, infrastructure, vocational education, and market research for various donor agencies.
- Successfully conducted an impact evaluation of seven programs funded under the America's Fund for Afghan Children, initiated by the White House and administered by the American Red Cross in consultation with USAID.
- Responsible for all the design and quality control of verification missions, analysis, and reports produced by education, health, humanitarian aid, and gender technical specialists for Canada's Field Support Services Project (FSSP) in Afghanistan.

Management & Supervision

- Conducted site surveys and managed the construction - including building plans, community consultations, and budget expenditure – for twelve schools.
- Successfully managed diverse teams of national and international experts working in education, monitoring and evaluation, and business development. Reduced staff turnover, improved team collaboration, and increased productivity.
- Served as head of several teams to accurately present ideas and concepts (both in oral and written formats) to government and donor audiences in multiple languages and ensure collaboration of all stakeholders.
- Organized and managed numerous humanitarian missions to provide relief aid to returning refugees, internationally displaced people, and people affected by conflict and natural disasters. Activities included organizing cargo planes from the United States and Europe, clearing customs in Afghanistan, planning distribution strategies and security measures, participating in field distribution, and conducting final audits.

Policy Development and Advocacy

- Developed the Afghanistan National Education Policy (1400) and negotiated with all top-level national and international stakeholders for input and buy-in. Led the technical direction for reform of the Ministry's structural, curricular, policy, and human resource

- reforms based on the National Education Policy.
- Led a diverse team of international experts, Ministry of Higher Education officials, and members of standards committees from the Ministry and 17 public universities to successfully develop and ratify national standards for teacher education programs for Afghanistan as part of the USAID-funded Higher Education Program (HEP).
 - Successfully developed a comprehensive national teacher competency framework for Afghanistan's Ministry of Education as part of the USAID funded Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST). The competency framework was developed based on a national survey, relevant national and international literature review, and an extensive consultation process to negotiate political support.
 - Successfully developed a teacher credentialing system to meet the needs of quality education in Afghanistan. The teacher credentialing system was designed to guide teachers and principals in understanding what is expected of teachers as part of their role in assuring the quality of students' learning.
 - Actively consulting the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan on the national curriculum reform process to ensure that intended reform meets the challenges of providing quality education within the current context of Afghanistan.

Employment History

Chief Technical Advisor 11/2020 – 08/2021

UNDP – Afghanistan

Worked directly with HE, the Minister, to provide strategic advice and technical oversight of the national reform of Afghanistan's Educational System mandated by HE, the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Designed and developed the Afghanistan National Education Policy (1400), provided technical advice and direction for the structural reform of the Ministry based on the new policy.

Independent Consultant 01/2019 - Present

Various clients – United States & Afghanistan

In charge of quality assurance for Canada's Field Support Services Project (FSSP) in Afghanistan. Design, manage, analyze and develop reports for various educational and vocational programs. Consult on national curriculum reform and design curriculum interventions for Mezan International School.

Managing Partner 06/2012 – 12/2018

Afghanistan Holding Group (AHG) - Kabul, Afghanistan

Led the research and education division, wrote policy papers and manuals, designed training programs, and led the business development efforts.

Independent Consultant 11/2011 – 05/2012

Various clients - United States & Afghanistan

Consulted for the US Census Bureau, developed multi-sector proposals, designed and conducted short-term courses in education and conflict.

Academic Specialist 11/2007 – 06/2010

Indiana University, CSSIE

USAID- Afghanistan Higher Education Project (HEP)- Kabul Afghanistan
Served as Indiana University's lead for national standards for teacher education, science and mathematics, and monitoring and evaluation. Established the National Association of Science and Mathematics Educators of Afghanistan.

Research Associate II

05/2006 – 10/2007

JBS International – Aguirre Division

*USAID- Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST)
Kabul Afghanistan*

Served as project lead for teacher competencies, national teacher evaluation, and national teacher credentialing strategy.

Assistant Director

08/2001 – 04/2006

Help the Afghan Children – Vienna, VA

Responsible for managing all projects, development of training programs, liaising with donors and local communities, monitoring and evaluation, and proposal development.

Project Evaluator

12/2005 – 03/2006

The American Red Cross – Washington, DC

America's Fund for Afghan Children – The White House

Conducted impact evaluation of the following seven programs: Community Health (Aga Khan Foundation), Roll Back Malaria (UNICEF), Therapeutic Feeding (UNICEF), Public Nutrition (Tuft University), Teacher Training (IRC), Libraries (Relief International), and School Health and Nutrition (Save the Children)

High School Science Teacher

08/1998 – 05/2001

Duval County School Board, Jacksonville, FL

Volunteer History

Research and Education Specialist

01/2010 – Present

Afghan Health and Development Services (AHDS) – Kabul, DC

I consult in designing and analyzing research and educational projects. I specifically focus on the intersection of health and education with AHDS.

Publications

Academic Writings

Qargha, O. (2016). An Olive Tree in the Apple Orchard: Establishing an Islamic College in the United States. In Memon, N.A., and Zaman, M. (eds.), *Philosophies of Islamic Education: Historical Perspectives and Emerging Discourses* (Routledge Research in Religion and Education). London: Taylor and Francis Group, 94-111.

Qargha, O. (2014). Primary and Secondary Education in Afghanistan: Exponential Growth and Prospects for the Future. In Heath, J., and Zahedi, A. (eds.), *Children of Afghanistan: The Path to Peace* (Vol. 36). Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 255-268.

Klees, S. J., & Qargha, O. (2014). Equity in education: The case of UNICEF and the need for participative debate. *PROSPECTS*, 1-13.

Klees, S., and Qargha, O. (2013). The Economics of Aid: Implications for Education and Development. In Macleans, A., and Majhanovich, S. (eds.), *Education, Economics, and Development*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Educational Training Books

Qargha, O., Ahmadi, M. J., & Galindo, E. (Eds.). (2010). *Fostering Geometric Thinking and Exploring the Indigenous Mathematical Heritage of Afghanistan (Vol. 3)*. Kabul, Afghanistan: The Afghanistan Higher Education Project.

Qargha, Omar (Ed.). (2010). *Guidebook To Annanburg Videos: Teaching Science in High School (Vol. 4)*. Kabul, Afghanistan: The Afghanistan Higher Education Project.

Qargha, O., & Colak, H. (Eds.). (2009). *Introduction to Inquiry-Based Teaching & Exploring the Indigenous Scientific Heritage of Afghanistan (Vol.2)*. Kabul, Afghanistan: The Afghanistan Higher Education Project.

Qargha, O., & Colak, H. (Eds.). (2009). *Promoting Scientific Literacy Through Inquiry-Based Teaching - the 5E Model (Vol. 3)*. Kabul, Afghanistan: The Afghanistan Higher Education Project.

Qargha, O., Ahmadi, M. J., & Galindo, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Fostering Algebraic Thinking (Vol. 2)*. Kabul, Afghanistan: The Afghanistan Higher Education Project.

Qargha, O., Ahmadi, M. J., & Galindo, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Teaching Mathematics with Understanding (Vol. 1)*. Kabul, Afghanistan: The Afghanistan Higher Education Project.

Qargha, O., & Colak, H. (Eds.). (2008). *Introduction to the Nature of Science and Basic Scientific Process Skills (Vol.1)*. Kabul, Afghanistan: The Afghanistan Higher Education Project.

Policy Documents & Selected Evaluation Reports

Qargha, O. (2010). *National Standards for Teacher Education in Afghanistan's Institutions of Higher Education*. Kabul, Afghanistan: Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education.

Qargha, O. (2007). *Afghanistan Teacher Competency Framework*. Kabul, Afghanistan: USAID - Building Education Support Systems for Teachers.

Kissam, E., & Qargha, O. (2007). *Proposal for a Process for Teacher Credentialing: A 3 Tiered System based on Assessed Competency Level*. Kabul, Afghanistan: USAID - Building Education Support Systems for Teachers.

Qargha, O., & Williams, S. (2007). *Developing Competent Teachers for Afghanistan's Classrooms: A Comparative Literature Review of Teacher Competencies in Modern Pedagogy, Afghanistan's Educational History, and Classic Islamic Pedagogies*. Kabul, Afghanistan: USAID - Building Education Support Systems for Teachers.

Qargha, O., Besmel, P., & Husting, S. (2007). *The Ideal Afghan Teacher: Feedback from Stakeholders in Afghanistan's Educational System*. Kabul, Afghanistan: USAID - Building Education Support Systems for Teachers.

Qargha, O., Amin, I., & Jabarkheil, Y. (2006). *America's Fund for Afghan Children (AFAC): An Evaluation of Projects in Afghanistan*. Washington, DC: The American Red Cross.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles

Qargha, O. (2010). Forging the New Afghans. *Heartland Eurasian Review of Geopolitics*, (2). <http://temi.repubblica.it/limes-heartland/forging-the-new-afghans/1596>

Qargha, O. (2010). *Designing Teaching for the Culture*. IU International.

<http://www.indiana.edu/~ovpia/ovpia/newsletter/Fall2010/afghan.pdf>

Qargha, O. (2005). Relief Work in Difficult Times. Relief Web.

<http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-relief-work-difficult-times>

Presentations

Qargha, O. (2012). Progress and challenges in primary and secondary education in Afghanistan (2001-2012). Paper presented at the 56th Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Colak, H., Qargha, O. Mason, T.C. (2011). Investigating learning about the Nature of Science (NOS) and its effects on science educators in Afghanistan. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Qargha, O. (2009). An Overabundance of Eager Implementers with no Theorists in Sight: The Case of Curriculum Development in Afghanistan. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, California.

Qargha, O. (2005). Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Responsibility. Paper presented at American University, Washington DC.

Qargha, O. (2003). Reconstruction in Afghanistan. Paper presented at The Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Massachusetts.