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ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION
OF
WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

Learning Quality Standards COACHING MANUAL

For the Implementation of the AEWA Learning Quality Standards Supporting independent, private, non-profit, and other non-governmental learning providers dedicated to educational programming for Afghan women and girls.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Coaching Manual

This Coaching Manual serves as a comprehensive guide for coaches assigned to assist educational providers in meeting the Learning Quality Standards established by the Alliance for the Education of Women in Afghanistan (AEWA). Coaches play an integral role in supporting providers in the self-evaluation, improvement planning, and continuous quality assurance processes, which are essential for fostering high-quality educational programming for Afghan women and girls.

What Are the Learning Standards?

The Learning Quality Standards were developed by the Alliance as a benchmark for educational providers committed to supporting Afghan women and girls. These standards outline principles and expectations that guide providers in delivering quality education in a challenging context, emphasizing accountability, adaptability, and continuous improvement.

The standards offer a clear, consistent framework that member organizations can use to evaluate their practices, establish improvement goals, and ensure that their programs meet the expected quality benchmarks. Coaches use this manual to provide structured support, working closely with providers to implement the standards and maintain alignment with AEWA's overarching mission.

Background

The AEWA Learning Quality Standards were created in response to the urgent need for consistent quality benchmarks across educational services provided to Afghan women and girls. The standards were discussed and finalized in consultations involving Alliance members, with a commitment to creating a cohesive, adaptable approach suited to Afghanistan's unique educational landscape. Drawing on established resources like the HPass Learning Providers Standards and the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, the AEWA standards were adapted to the specific contexts and experiences of member organizations.

Scope and Applicability

These standards apply to a diverse range of educational providers, including NGOs, private institutions, and non-governmental organizations offering various levels of education from primary to tertiary, as well as vocational and technical programs. Developed through the lens of education in emergency settings, the standards are particularly relevant to providers working within Afghanistan's challenging resource, policy, and social constraints.

This manual, and the standards it supports, apply to both virtual and face-to-face learning environments, making it adaptable to different educational settings. Coaches will guide organizations through each standard, with a focus on contextualizing actions according to their unique needs, resources, and community contexts.

How to Use the Coaching Manual

This Coaching Manual is structured to provide clear, sequential guidance for coaches working with AEWA member organizations. Each section covers a key aspect of the coaching process:

- **Overview of Standards:** Explanation of the Learning Quality Standards, including their structure, purpose, and relevance to Afghan women and girls' education.
- **Monthly Coaching Framework:** Step-by-step outline of the coaching process, organized into four weekly phases, guiding coaches in supporting organizations as they evaluate and improve their practices.
- **Key Coaching Materials:** Templates and tools designed to support documentation, goal setting, progress tracking, and feedback collection, ensuring consistency and accountability in the coaching relationship.
- **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Structured feedback mechanisms for collecting insights from organizations and coaches to inform ongoing improvements to both the standards and the coaching process.

Principles of the Coaching Process

The AEWA coaching process emphasizes several core principles:

- **Flexibility and Contextualization:** Recognizing the diversity of learning providers, the coaching process is designed to be adaptable, allowing each organization to contextualize standards and actions based on their specific needs, resources, and learner demographics.
- **Goal-Oriented Support:** Coaches work with organizations to set realistic, actionable goals based on self-assessment findings, fostering a structured approach to improvement that aligns with AEWA standards.
- **Accountability and Documentation:** Coaches play a key role in ensuring that organizations document their progress, challenges, and successes. This documentation provides a basis for future evaluations, benchmarking, and transparency across AEWA member organizations.

1. INTRODUCTION TO COACHING ROLE

Purpose

The AEWA Standards Coaching Manual is a guide for coaches who support Alliance member organizations in implementing and maintaining the AEWA educational standards. Coaches play an integral role in guiding organizations through a structured process of self-assessment, improvement planning, and documentation to meet established standards. The aim of the coaching process is to support organizations in continuously enhancing their educational programs for Afghan women and girls and aligning with the shared values and goals of the Alliance.

Objectives of the Coaching Role

Coaching within the AEWA framework is structured around three main objectives:

- **Guidance and Facilitation:** Coaches assist organizations in conducting self-assessments, providing detailed guidance on each standard, and explaining the expectations and processes necessary to meet and maintain these standards. Coaches work collaboratively with organizations to ensure clarity and consistency in interpreting and applying the standards.
- **Goal Setting and Improvement Planning:** Coaches work with organizations to identify specific areas where improvements are needed. They support organizations in defining measurable, achievable goals and creating structured plans to reach these goals within a specified timeframe. Improvement planning includes identifying required resources, setting timelines, and defining milestones for tracking progress.
- **Documentation and Accountability:** Coaches ensure that each organization systematically documents its progress toward meeting standards. This documentation includes recorded observations, progress reports, and structured feedback. By maintaining these records, coaches help organizations monitor their ongoing development, establish accountability, and provide a basis for future evaluations and adjustments.

Coaching Responsibilities

Coaches are responsible for providing consistent support and guidance to organizations throughout the process of adopting and maintaining AEWA standards. Each coach is assigned to a specific organization, allowing for an in-depth and continuous relationship. Responsibilities include:

- **Providing Structured Guidance:** Coaches deliver guidance on each standard and related key actions, helping organizations understand the requirements and apply practical measures. This involves both explaining each standard's objectives and advising on specific actions to implement.
- **Facilitating Regular Check-Ins:** Coaches conduct scheduled check-ins with organizations to monitor progress, address any challenges, and adjust improvement plans as needed. These check-ins ensure that the organization remains aligned with the established timelines and objectives and that any necessary course corrections can be implemented in a timely manner.
- **Offering Constructive Feedback:** Coaches observe and evaluate the organization's implementation process, providing feedback based on progress and adherence to standards. Feedback is focused on practical steps the organization can take to meet requirements effectively and sustainably.
- **Supporting Continuous Improvement:** Coaches assist organizations in periodically reviewing and updating their practices to reflect any changes in standards, shifts in organizational needs, or developments in the educational landscape. This ongoing support ensures that the organization remains compliant with standards and can adapt to future challenges or advancements in educational practices.

Long-Term Goals of Coaching

The AEWA coaching framework is designed as a long-term support system, with the following goals:

- **Sustained Compliance with Standards:** Coaches guide organizations in establishing practices that meet and maintain standards over time, fostering consistency and quality in educational programs.
- **Alignment with Alliance Objectives:** Coaches help organizations align their educational practices with the mission and values of the Alliance, ensuring that each organization contributes to a unified vision for Afghan women and girls' education.
- **Adaptability and Resilience:** Coaches support organizations in building adaptable and resilient practices that can withstand changes in resources, technology, or other external factors while maintaining high-quality education.

2. MONTHLY COACHING FRAMEWORK

The Monthly Coaching Framework provides a structured approach for coaches working with organizations to implement and sustain AEWA standards. This framework is divided into four weekly phases, with specific objectives, activities, and documentation requirements for each phase. This consistent structure allows coaches to guide organizations through self-evaluation, goal setting, improvement planning, and feedback collection.

Week 1: Initial Meeting and Self-Evaluation

Objective:

Familiarize the organization with the AEWA standards, introduce the self-evaluation process, and initiate the assessment of current practices.

Activities:

- **Introductory Session:** Review the AEWA standards and their importance. Provide an overview of the coaching process, expectations, and outcomes.
- **Self-Evaluation Tool Walkthrough:** Guide the organization through each section of the self-evaluation tool. Explain how to rate their practices against the standards and answer any questions about interpreting specific criteria.
- **Initial Self-Evaluation:** Encourage the organization to complete the self-evaluation tool independently, documenting areas where they meet the standards and identifying gaps or areas for improvement.

Documentation:

- **Self-Evaluation Summary:** Ask the organization to summarize their initial assessment findings, listing areas where they meet standards and those needing improvement. This summary will serve as a foundation for the improvement plan in subsequent weeks.
- **Coach Notes:** Record any initial observations, such as common questions or areas where the organization may need clarification on standards, for use in follow-up sessions.

Week 2: Identifying Growth Areas and Setting Goals

Objective:

Analyze self-evaluation results with the organization, helping them identify key areas for improvement and set specific, achievable goals.

Activities:

- **Self-Evaluation Review:** Discuss the organization's self-evaluation results. Review each standard, focusing on areas that were marked as needing improvement or where scores were lower.
- **Goal Setting:** Work collaboratively with the organization to define realistic, measurable goals for each identified area. Each goal should have a clear purpose and link directly to one or more AEWA standards.
- **Initial Action Steps:** Outline preliminary steps the organization can take to start addressing each goal. These may include resource gathering, staff training, or policy updates.

Documentation:

- **Goal-Setting Template:** Complete the goal-setting template with the organization, listing each goal, its purpose, and the specific actions planned to achieve it. This document should be updated as the organization progresses.
- **Coach Notes:** Document any specific challenges or resource limitations that could impact the organization's ability to meet its goals, noting potential solutions or support needs.

Week 3: Developing the Self-Improvement Plan

Objective:

Support the organization in formalizing a self-improvement plan that includes detailed action steps, timelines, and resource needs.

Activities:

- **Plan Structure and Review:** Review the self-improvement plan structure, ensuring each goal is clearly stated and that all necessary actions are detailed.
- **Resource Identification:** Help the organization identify resources required to meet their goals, including training materials, technology, or staffing needs. Where applicable, suggest alternative resources or solutions if specific needs cannot be met immediately.
- **Timeline and Milestones:** Work with the organization to establish a realistic timeline for each action, defining milestones that allow for progress tracking and accountability.

Documentation:

- **Self-Improvement Plan Template:** Complete the self-improvement plan template with final details on each goal, action steps, required resources, and timelines.
- **Coach Notes:** Summarize the organization's progress, listing areas where additional support or resources may be needed. Record any adjustments to goals or timelines based on feasibility discussions.

Week 4: Reflection and Feedback Collection

Objective:

Conduct a reflection session with the organization, gathering feedback on the coaching process and documenting final insights.

Activities:

- **Reflection Meeting:** Lead a structured reflection meeting to review the month's progress. Discuss the organization's experiences with the standards and their impressions of the self-improvement plan.
- **Feedback Collection:** Use a standardized feedback form to collect the organization's feedback on the standards' clarity, relevance, and usability. This feedback will support ongoing refinement of the standards and coaching process.
- **Final Adjustments:** Make any final adjustments to the self-improvement plan based on feedback or newly identified needs, ensuring the plan is ready for continued implementation.

Documentation:

- **Feedback Form:** Have the organization complete the feedback form, focusing on how well the standards were understood, their applicability to the organization's work, and any suggestions for improving clarity or usability.
- **Coaching Summary Report:** Complete a coaching summary report that includes key achievements, remaining challenges, documented feedback, and any recommendations for future coaching sessions or support.

3. KEY COACHING MATERIALS

This section includes templates and tools for coaches to use during the coaching process. Each template is designed to standardize documentation, promote accountability, and support organizations as they work toward meeting the AEWA standards.

3.1 Self-Improvement Plan Template

The [Self-Improvement Plan Template](#) is a central tool used to document an organization's goals, action steps, resource needs, and timeline for meeting each AEWA standard. Coaches may guide organizations in completing this template during Week 3 of the Monthly Coaching Framework, ensuring it reflects clear, achievable objectives.

Template Sections:

- **Goal Summary:** A brief, specific statement of each improvement goal aligned with the AEWA standards.
 - ▷ Example: “Enhance digital literacy skills of instructional staff to improve the quality of online learning delivery.”
- **Actions:** Detailed, step-by-step actions required to achieve each goal.
 - ▷ Example: “1. Schedule monthly digital literacy workshops; 2. Identify suitable online training resources; 3. Set up peer mentoring for ongoing support.”
- **Timeline:** A realistic timeline with start and end dates, along with any specific milestones that can track progress.
 - ▷ Example: “Month 1: Schedule workshops; Month 2: Begin workshops and track participation; Month 3: Conduct feedback session with participants.”
- **Resources Needed:** List all resources (e.g., staff, budget, technology) required to achieve each action step.
 - ▷ Example: “Budget for online workshop licenses, facilitator fees, and digital resources.”
- **Progress Tracking:** Space for documenting ongoing progress and adjustments, updated regularly by the organization with support from the coach.
 - ▷ Example: “Week 1: Workshop scheduled; Week 2: Workshop attendance at 90%; Week 3: Participant feedback collected.”

3.2 Goal-Setting Template

The [Goal-Setting Template](#) is a tool for defining specific goals in response to areas needing improvement identified in the self-evaluation. Coaches may choose to use this template during Week 2 to capture each goal in detail.

Template Sections:

- **Standard Reference:** Indicate the specific AEWA standard(s) related to each goal, providing a clear link between the standard and the planned improvement.
 - ▷ Example: “Standard 4.1: Evidence-based Pedagogy.”
- **Goal Statement:** Concise, actionable description of the goal.
 - ▷ Example: “Integrate evidence-based teaching methods across all literacy programs.”
- **Justification:** Brief explanation of why this goal is a priority, referencing self-evaluation findings or specific needs.
 - ▷ Example: “Current teaching methods vary across programs; standardized, evidence-based practices are necessary for consistent quality.”
- **Initial Action Steps:** Outline the first steps required to initiate progress toward the goal, guiding the organization as they begin implementation.
 - ▷ Example: “Research evidence-based literacy teaching practices; identify three applicable methods; plan a workshop to introduce these methods to instructors.”

3.3 Coaching Session Log

The [Coaching Session Log](#) is a tracking tool for recording the focus areas, key outcomes, and next steps of each session between the coach and organization. This log ensures continuity between sessions and provides a clear record of discussions and decisions.

Template Sections:

- **Date and Session Number:** Record the date and number each session chronologically for easy reference.
- **Focus Areas:** Briefly list the main topics or standards discussed during the session.
 - ▷ Example: “Reviewed self-evaluation results for Standard 3.3; discussed goal-setting for digital literacy.”
- **Key Outcomes:** Summarize key takeaways from the session, such as decisions made, clarifications provided, and agreed-upon next steps.
 - ▷ Example: “Confirmed need for a formal digital literacy curriculum; organization will identify local training resources.”
- **Next Steps:** Outline any actions for the organization and coach to follow up on before the next session.
 - ▷ Example: “Coach to share a list of digital literacy curriculum resources; organization to create a training schedule.”

3.4 Feedback Form

The [Feedback Form](#) is used at the end of the monthly coaching cycle to collect the organization’s input on the standards, the self-evaluation tool, and the coaching process itself. This form provides critical insights for refining the standards and improving the coaching approach.

Template Sections:

- **Clarity of Standards:** Request ratings on the clarity of each standard on a scale of 1 to 5, with an option to explain any areas that were challenging to interpret.
 - ▷ Example: “Standard 2.3 Digital Learning Environments: Rate 4/5. Comment: More examples of digital engagement strategies would be helpful.”
- **Applicability to Organization:** Ask for ratings on the relevance of each standard to the organization’s work, along with any feedback on adapting standards to specific contexts.
 - ▷ Example: “Standard 1.2 Child Protection and Safety: Rate 5/5. Comment: Highly relevant given the number of young participants.”
- **Usability of Self-Evaluation Tool:** Gather feedback on the ease of use and functionality of the self-evaluation tool, including any suggestions for improvement.
 - ▷ Example: “The tool was straightforward, but an option to add notes for each rating would be useful.”
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Open-ended section for organizations to provide general feedback on the standards, coaching, or self-evaluation process, helping to refine these resources over time.

3.5 Coaching Summary Report

The [Coaching Summary Report](#) is completed by the coach at the end of each month. It serves as a consolidated record of the organization's progress, challenges, and feedback. This report is submitted to AEWA for internal review and to inform further support for the organization.

Template Sections:

- **Overview of Organization's Progress:** Summarize key achievements, completed goals, and any notable improvements observed over the month.
 - ▷ Example: "The organization made significant progress in developing a digital literacy curriculum, completing three of four planned workshops."
- **Challenges and Limitations:** Document any challenges faced by the organization and any obstacles that may require additional resources or support.
 - ▷ Example: "Limited budget for digital resources constrained training options; alternative low-cost resources were identified."
- **Feedback Summary:** Summarize the organization's feedback on the standards and coaching, highlighting any suggestions for improvement.
 - ▷ Example: "The organization suggested a need for additional guidance on implementing Standard 4.3 (Transparency) effectively in remote settings."
- **Recommendations for Next Steps:** Provide recommendations for future coaching sessions, additional resources, or adjustments to the organization's improvement plan as needed.
 - ▷ Example: "Recommend prioritizing Standard 5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation next month, with a focus on developing data tracking practices."