Country Gender Profile: Afghanistan

Final Report

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Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
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ACRONYMS

ACU Accelerating Contraceptive Use
AIHRC Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
AMICS Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
AMS Afghanistan Mortality Survey
ANDS Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AREDP Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme
AREU Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
AWBF Afghanistan Women’s Business Federation
BHC Basic Health Center
BPHS Basic Package of Health Services
BTC Business Training Center
CBE Community Based Education
CBS Community Based School
CDC Community Development Council
CED Community Led Enterprise Development
CHC Comprehensive Health Center
CSO Central Statistics Organisation
DDA District Development Assemblies
DFC District Field Coordinators
ECBE Emergency Community Based Education
EG Enterprise Group
EQUIP Education Quality Improvement Program
EU European Union
EVAW Eliminate Violence Against Women
FAO Food and Agricultural Organization
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GE General Education
GER Gross Enrolment Ratio
GKD Grand Kabul Development
GOA Government of Afghanistan
HMIS Health Management Information System
HP Health Post
HSSP Health Service Support Project
IDU Injecting Drug User
IEC Independent Election Commission
IMA International Medical Corps
IPSO International Psychosocial Organisation
IRA Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IRD International Relief and Development
ISAF International Security Assistance Force
JICA Japan International Cooperation Agency
LSGI Local Self-Governing Institutions
MAIL Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MD Medical Doctor
MDG Millennium Development Goals
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GENERAL OBJECTIVES & METHODS

a. Background

The main purpose of this Country Gender Profile is to stimulate gender mainstreaming in JICA programmes and projects in Afghanistan. The Country Gender Profile will serve as reference material for JICA personnel in formulating its assistance plans, programmes and projects with gender perspectives in the country.

The Gender Country Profile provides: (1) gender analysis of key sectors, policies, legal frameworks and institutions; (2) assessment of the key interventions of JICA in Afghanistan in terms of gender mainstreaming; and (3) recommendations on how to close programming gaps. The Country Gender Profile also presents basic gender disaggregated data for identified key sectors.

The study was conducted by a team consisting of two consultants (one Japan-based and one Afghanistan-based), under the guidance and supervision of the Japan-based consultant. Samuel Hall was commissioned by JICA to undertake the contracted work in the timeframe described below.

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b. Methods

This research deployed a mixed methodology approach.

- **DESK REVIEW AND DATA MINING**

A thorough desk review of contemporary literature was conducted for each of the sections of the report. The primary sources of information in each section are relevant Afghan ministries, or nationwide surveys like the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8, or the Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010. In addition, data gathered by NGOs working on the ground is also included to provide a more nuanced context. Wherever possible, the report references data from its original source, to allow independent analysis of veracity and a comparative study of methodologies.
Much of the information necessary to conduct a thorough gender assessment of Afghanistan is not readily available from government websites; therefore, information was also requested from ministries and governmental agencies, as well as organisations like the United Nations or the World Bank. This report includes information sent from the Ministries of (1) Education (MOE), (2) Women’s Affairs (MOWA), (3) Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), (4) Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and (5) Urban Development, and (6) the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). The Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled and the Ministry of Justice were unable to provide information for this research, other than the information readily available on their respective websites.

**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS**

In conjunction with the desk review, Samuel Hall researchers conducted a series of interviews with key opinion elites working in the relevant sectors. These interviews provided both strategic and tactical knowledge and perspective to the literature review. The following key informant interviews were conducted.

- **JICA staff**: Primarily team leaders, gender specialists and other project officers of JICA-funded projects.
- **Line ministries**: Technical advisers in line ministries that are implementing and coordinating these projects.
- **UN agencies**: Such as UNFPA, UNWFP, or UNWOMEN, which have specific areas of expertise and are key actors in the stakeholder landscape regarding women.
- **NGOs**: Such as Madera, MdM, AL, GERES, ACF, Solidarités, Mission East and Handicap International, who have been implementing projects in the field.

**LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS**

Comparing statistics over time is fraught with difficulty as sample sizes and definitions are often absent or inconsistent in the literature. This report clearly describes data sets and sample sizes wherever possible in order to facilitate further analysis in the future. Where this has not been possible, statistical comparisons should be treated as illustrative rather than definitive.

One of the main difficulties in analysing data in Afghanistan is that the issues they describe are often highly politicised. This is especially true for issues relating to female participation in Afghan society. Data gathered by government ministries and international aid organisations occasionally pander to the need to show improvements over time and may not reflect the true nature of reality.

Another difficulty is that many of the key sources of information, such as ministry websites, are still under construction, which means that there are critical gaps in the knowledge base in each sector.
SECTION 1: BASIC PROFILE

Many years after the end of Taliban rule, the situation of women in Afghanistan is a matter of concern. They suffer discrimination and have few opportunities to lead self-determined lives or to play a role in society. Eighty per cent of Afghan women cannot read or write, and only one in three girls goes to school. Four out of five women are victims of domestic violence. The participation of women in society is a key issue for Afghanistan’s development.

The fall of the Taliban was a landmark event that promised a new beginning for women in Afghan society. The Bonn Agreement led to the creation of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and was one of a number of formal steps taken to ensure that women played a greater role in the reconstruction, development and transformation of the new Afghanistan. However, over the past ten years, many reports have highlighted widespread gender gaps in health, education, access to and control over resources, economic opportunities and political roles; fewer studies have insisted on the key idea that if women bear the direct cost of these inequalities, the negative impact can be felt throughout the political, economic and social Afghan paradigm.

In 2005, a World Bank report assumed that this paradigm was “inextricably interlinked with the national destiny. Women are symbols of family honour but also carry the burden of embodying the national honour and aspirations of the country. Gender has thus been one of the most politicized issues in Afghanistan over the past 100 years, where many reform attempts rightly or wrongly have been condemned by opponents as un-Islamic and a challenge to the sanctity of the faith and family.”1 As such, tackling gender inequality has been, and will continue to be, an extremely difficult challenge, as the interplay between society, economy and politics is aggravated by insecurity and international intervention (civil and military).

To better tailor JICA’s gender strategy to a rapidly evolving context, research is thus needed to assess whether and to what extent the situation of women in Afghanistan has improved. However, this exercise comes at a time of strategic revision of programmes and activities for JICA in a context of transition and decreasing security. Given the combined social, cultural and economic changes of the past decade, it is probably more important than ever to explore the current gender landscape in Afghanistan.

Education
Many schools still do not have enclosing walls, lack buildings, books and access to clean drinking water, and have poor sanitation. There are not enough female teachers to meet the demand for segregated schools. Female teachers with children do not have access to day-care facilities or kindergartens, and Afghanistan’s poor transport infrastructure makes it difficult for many women to work far from their homes. Many parents still do not recognise the importance of sending their daughters to school beyond primary school age. This is particularly pronounced at university level.

Access to healthcare
Many areas are still without access to basic healthcare facilities or trained health professionals. A significant proportion of women still give birth at home without a skilled birth assistant. Many men and women are still unaware of the family planning methods available to them, and the number of men and women who use contraceptives is still low across the country. Many women, and indeed their husbands, are suspicious of contraceptive methods: some think that it will make them

permanently sterile. Traditional health practices continue to play an influential role in rural communities where mullahs or older members of the community may be the only people to whom patients can turn. Moreover, HIV testing is very low and limited data is available about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women. Lastly, there is a deficit of trained mental health and psychosocial workers, in a society which has been shaped by decades of war and conflict and that still lives with violence.

**Economic activity and employment**
Women are far less likely to be in paid employment than men, and the labour force participation rate shows that 86% of men are working compared to only 47% of women. Women work fewer hours, earn less and are more likely to work in vulnerable employment than men (96% compared to 88%, respectively). Vulnerable employment is usually informal and insecure, and has unstable or inadequate earnings and low productivity. Furthermore, access to employment for women is lower in cities than in rural settings – only 19% of the female urban workforce is employed – and women from poor rural households tend to work in unskilled agricultural activities. Women tend to be involved in activities that are considered to be low-value: as women are usually closely tied to their households, they are often involved in activities such as weeding, harvesting and threshing, which are perceived to be less valuable than taking the product to market to sell for money. Women are underrepresented in government administration: in most ministries, women constitute less than one in five workers. Finally, apart from agriculture, women are involved with manufacturing, health and education, but very few are employed in any other sector. Over 50% of workers in manufacturing and education are female, yet they constitute a small fraction of employees in sectors such as trade and repair or real estate.

**Human rights and social norms**
Women in Afghanistan are still denied fundamental human rights: after a lack of education (25%), respondents in the Asia Foundation Survey in 2011 considered a lack of rights to be one of the biggest challenges facing women in Afghanistan (15%). One of the key reasons is, of course, the strong conservatism of Afghan society (both urban and rural): as many people still rely on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, the reliance on local mullahs and shuras further reinforces conservative socio-cultural norms which are often to the detriment of women’s rights. Around 80% of disputes are still resolved through traditional dispute resolution.

**Regional and ethnic differences**
As there are no official disaggregated data for ethnicity, it was impossible to clearly assess the regional and ethnic differences in women’s socio-economic situation; however, our survey also shows clear differences: for instance, even if female enrolment has historically been very low across Afghanistan, the number of girls in education varies considerably from province to province. The 2012 figures from the Ministry of Education show that Badakhshan (47%), Herat (47%) and Kabul (44%) have among the highest levels of female education, while Southern, South-Eastern and Eastern provinces (mostly Pashtun) have the lowest percentages of female students (10% to 30%), which is not only due to a deteriorating security context but first and foremost to ethnic and cultural differences. Likewise, older women are notably less likely to have received any education than younger women: 58.5% of girls aged 12–14 have received no education, compared to 93.6% of women aged 45–49.

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2 Ministry of Education (2011), EMIS data set 1390, "Total number of Government schools students by Province."

3 Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 35.
SECTION 2: GOVERNMENT POLICY ON GENDER

The second section of this study highlights two main aspects of the government policy on gender:

- Based on interviews with the heads of the Gender Units of four key ministries (MOUD, MOWA, MAIL and MRRD), the review team sought to better map the strengths and weaknesses of the current governmental understanding of gender promotion strategies and policies; and

- Based on a rapid assessment of all the Afghan ministries (with the prior agreement of the Central Statistics Organization [CSO]), the review team identified significant gender disparities within governmental agencies and public institutions.

a. Policy and legislative framework

Afghanistan has made vast progress in including gender related concerns within the policy and legislative frameworks governing the country. Commitments to gender equality have been enshrined in the Afghan Constitution, the Afghanistan Compact, the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA) and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Afghanistan has also signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Below are the relevant national and international frameworks that guide MRRD’s Gender Policy.

- The Bonn Agreement
  The Bonn Agreement laid the foundation for the national Constitution and the establishment of democratic governance in the country. It set the platform for increasing women’s participation in government and the establishment of the MOWA to act as a lead ministry for the advancement of Afghan women.

- The Constitution (2003 [1382])
  Article 3 of the Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women in Afghanistan, in the context that no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam. Under Article 22, the Constitution enshrines the policy of non-discrimination and equality in rights and duties between women and men.

- The Afghanistan Compact (2006)
  The Afghanistan Compact noted the need to address gender concerns and stated that by the end of 2010 the NAPWA would be fully implemented in line with Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Women’s participation in all Afghan governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service, will be strengthened.

  The NAPWA is a central component of Afghanistan’s effort to implement its commitments to women in an organised, systematic, coordinated and sustainable way. NAPWA’s main aim is to ensure that all government agencies, sectors, institutions and individuals have a responsibility to mainstream women or gender concerns. NAPWA will pursue the twin goals of women’s empowerment and gender equality. NAPWA’s third pillar on Economic and Social
Development focuses on government’s responsibility in creating an enabling social and economic environment conducive to advancing Afghan women’s ability to participate in and contribute to the social and economic fields, thereby fulfilling women’s economic potential. Adoption of a comprehensive economic assistance programme for women to include essential assistance for self-employment, income generation and entrepreneurship has been listed as responsibility of the MRRD. The MRRD’s Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme (AREDP) has been working at enhancing the participation of rural men and women in economic activities that have proven beneficial for women in the provinces in which they work, especially in terms of access to credit.

  The ANDS positioned gender as a cross-cutting theme within the national development agenda and adopted a three-pronged goal for promoting gender equity, which included: (1) eliminating all forms of discrimination against women; (2) developing women’s human capital; and (3) ensuring women’s full participation and leadership in all aspects of life in Afghanistan. This cross-cutting strategy looks to institutionalise gender responsive development aiming for economic growth, poverty reduction and reconstruction. The ANDS places responsibility on government entities for ensuring: (1) the cultivation of a work environment that supports egalitarian relationships between women and men; (2) the establishment of internal enabling mechanisms for gender equity; and (3) support for women’s shuras.

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
  Afghanistan is a signatory to a number of relevant international treaties including the Platform of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1984), the Beijing Platform of Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women (1985) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), which has also been ratified by the Government of Afghanistan (2003). The Government of Afghanistan is obligated through this Convention to endorse the principle of equality between men and women.

- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
  Nine major goals have been identified by the Afghan government under the MDG framework, the third goal of which is to promote gender equality and empowering women. Afghanistan has defined its MDG contribution as targets for 2020. These include women-specific targets in the fields of education, economics, health and political participation.

b. Overview of Four Afghan Ministries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry of Urban Development Affairs</th>
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<td>The Ministry of Urban Development Affairs implements its activities according to a national strategy and four pillars (Planning and Urban Development; Housing; Infrastructure and Civil Services; Administration and Implementation). Out of the four ministries surveyed by the review team, the MOUDA is clearly the one that has not benefited from a lot of financial and technical support from international actors. Despite a strong tie with JICA, the governmental counterparts clearly said that “the lack of capacity and equipment hinders any potential development of our dialogue with our international partners” (Planning Department, Anonymous). Likewise, considering the quasi-absence of any clear strategic guidelines in this Ministry, involving or targeting women is often an empty and abstract notion: “We have a few training on gender but it is not related to what this Ministry does and I don’t think it is integrated to our strategy” (Housing Department).</td>
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### Gender Issues in Urban Development and their challenges:

- The Gender Department was established a year ago in the MOUDA.
- It has three employees: the head of the Gender Department, the Awareness Manager and the Planning Manager.
- There is no exact budget for the Gender Department at the MOUDA.
- They consider that they are paid less than other civil servants working at the MOUDA.
- There is a clear lack of budget for the practical implementation of programs.
- There is no scholarship for the Gender Department and the female employees of the MOUDA.

### Latest development strategies of MOUDA:

- There is one representative from the Gender Unit on the employment board of the MOUDA.
- They planned to increase the number of female employees up to 30% of MOUDA employees by 2013, so incentives and bonuses are given for female candidates.

### Programs for next year:

- A monthly assembly for women about psychological matters.
- Improving the culture and habits of people living in apartments.
- Hiring four to five psychologists to train female employees on how to behave with their children and family members, and to provide consultation for resolving their family problems and issues.

### Organisational structure:

- MOUDA has three deputy ministers.
- MOUDA has 19 directorates (one director is a woman: the head of the welfare directorate).
- MOUDA has three advisors.
- MOUDA has 32 provincial directorates.
- Total female employees: 120.
- Total male employees: 563.
- Total central male employees: 349.
- Total central female employees: 110.
- Total provincial male employees: 214.
- Total provincial female employees: 10.

### MOUD and JICA

- The Gender Department of the MOUDA wants JICA to support them with their programs, as they acknowledge the expertise of the Agency in urban development; however, there is also a lack of specific understanding of what JICA does and could do to promote: (1) urban development in collaboration with the MOUDA; and (2) gender equality within the Ministry (training sessions, specific measures).
The MOWA has 9 central departments and 34 provincial departments. Its first procedural regulation as a central institution was passed in 2004 (Decree No. 26 of 24.05.2004). Article 3 of this regulation states that “MOWA has the responsibility over implementation of political and social policy of the government in order to secure and expand legal rights of women and ensure the rule of law in their lives within its activity area.” The overall strategy of the MOWA for 2008–2018 is defined in the NAPWA. Its theoretical goal is to actively promote institutions and individuals to be responsible agents of women’s empowerment and gender equality by providing a clear focus and direction, coordinated action and shared commitment to the government’s vision. This mission is supposed to be pursued at all levels of the state apparatus, with the executive branch of the government playing implementing and enabling roles under the leadership of the MOWA, which is the government’s lead ministry for the promotion of women’s advancement. According to the goals adopted by the government under the Afghanistan Compact and the I-ANDS, the NAPWA goals will be pursued through a three-pronged, interlocking gender equity strategy: to eliminate discrimination against women, develop their human capital and ensure their leadership capacity in order to guarantee their full and equal participation in all aspects of life. In practice, however, all the MOWA officials, partners and counterparts we met acknowledged that there was: (1) a gap between the guiding principles of the NAPWA and their actual implementation; (2) a worsening context for women in Afghanistan (especially after 2005–2006); and (3) an inadequacy between the noble intentions of international organisations and the scale and nature of the problem. In summary: “You do not fix multi-sectarian issues with a two-day training. If you want to fix Afghanistan and improve women’s fate, you need to think about security and economic issues. The MOWA is just a gadget for westerners. Otherwise, you write nice reports, help one woman for a few days and let the others in pain for centuries” (NGO Activist, Jalalabad, January 2013).

### Latest development strategies of the MOWA:
- The MOWA has a ten-year strategy named National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (the review team was kindly provided with a copy of this document). They are planning their implementation programme according to this strategy; in addition, the other Ministries have to make their plans according to their own current strategies.

### The objectives of the NPP programme:
1) Gender mainstreaming.
2) Work plan training (to understand how to implement gender mainstreaming).

The programme was implemented using the development budget of the MOWA. The programme participants were the representatives of the all the provincial directorates of the Ministry. Training was held on capacity building for gender representatives in 14 ministries, which were supported by the MOWA’s annual budget.

### Donors:
- **UNDP**
  - Implementation of four programmes on gender awareness and its introduction in Kabul University, for the faculties of Science, Engineering, Fine Art and Literature.
  - Each programme had 50 participants (who were students at the university).
- **GIZ**
  - They have supported the MOWA in establishing Gender Units in all Ministries and they support preparation of a monthly meeting in the MOWA of all the gender representatives of the ministries.
  - They had a memorandum of understanding with the MOWA named Technical Coordination, which expired in 2011.
- **GSSP**
  - Developed a database for the Gender Department, which includes all the information about their programmes.
• Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG):
  o According to Presidential Decree 45, IDLG has implemented a programme called the
    Violence Against Women Awareness Campaign in 14 districts of Kabul under the
    coordination of the MOWA.
  o They will implement this programme in six more provinces (Kapisa, Parwan, Wardak, 
    Panjshir, Ghazni and Jalalabad). This programme was funded by IDLG and the MOWA
    is the trainer provider for the programmes they are implementing.

Challenges in implementing the MOWA’s strategy:
• Perception: Local people do not have a positive perspective about gender, even though
  people tend to have a better and more informed perspective than they previously had about
  gender (this is a big achievement for the MOWA). Youth are more welcoming of gender
  programmes than older people are. Different tribes have different ideas about gender:
  mostly in Pashtun areas the MOWA is facing a lot of problems in implementing gender
  programmes. Lastly, most people consider the word “gender” to be intrusive, as it is an
  English concept and view it as a kind of cultural invasion (this was a problem in Kabul
  University).
• Partners: Lack of sponsors (international agencies) to support the MOWA’s strategy.
• Capacity: Because of changes in the gender representatives, another problem is the capacity
  building of the representatives of the gender departments in the ministries and other
  government organisations.

Organisational structure:
• The MOWA has 510 male and 396 female employees.
• All the deputy ministers and the directors of the MOWA are female employees.
• The Gender Department has one head, one manager and six trainers.

Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock
According to the 2009 National Agriculture Development Framework (NADF), women play a key role
in agriculture in general, and women producer organisations can make a very significant contribution
to the local economy, as well as the national economy. Women are also important for social
development: increasing women’s incomes has a significant impact on family health and children’s
education. As part of the activities undertaken under the MAIL’s Economic Regeneration Programme
(a pillar of the NADF), the Ministry aims to ensure that the needs of women and women producer
organisations are met, and that women are explicitly supported in becoming active members of the
economy. This notably entails them having access to adequate business development support,
financial services, technical support for value addition and adequate training on quality control, and
that they be active participants in trade promotion and marketing activities. However, despite the
few efforts made by the MAIL to develop socially inclusive policies (although through the National
Horticulture and Livestock Programme), the reality tends to be different and most MAIL initiatives at
the provincial level focus on productivity, regardless of any systematic affirmative strategy towards
women. “Of course, women are an essential part of the workforce in rural Afghanistan and I am sure
we could do more to help them and assist them. This has become an increasing concern for donors
and the government. But sometimes, programmes keep making the same mistakes again and again;
sometimes also, they are just tired of trying the same recipes that have never worked in a context
that gets better in no way. Here, we do our best to coordinate the efforts of international donors
and, eventually, we include gender components in our programmes. We also train our female staff
here – which is a very successful and effective initiative” (MAIL, Deputy Minister).

General opinion on gender issues in agriculture and the role of women in agriculture:
• The MAIL is one of the key organisations of the Government of Afghanistan, and the
  economy of the Afghan people is primarily related to agriculture.
• Agricultural work is not divided between men and women, and women have an equal role
with men in agriculture, poultry and livestock.
  o The MAIL has allocated 70 jiribs of land to widowed, poor and eligible women in
     Darul Aman in order to improve their livelihoods.
  o The MAIL has also provided these women with training on how to cultivate and
     maintain agricultural farms.
  o The MAIL has also provided them with fertiliser and improved seeds.
• The HLP programme has provided some horticulture and livestock farms to women in order
  to improve their livelihoods.

**MAIL strategy on gender mainstreaming:**

- The MAIL has developed a five-year gender mainstreaming and capacity building work plan
  for its Gender Department, which will be initiated from 2013 (1392).
- The MAIL has a policy and strategy for including gender.
- They have published a book funded by World Bank on gender in Afghanistan’s agricultural
  value chain; the review team received this book.
- The head of the Gender Department is on the board of employment of the Ministry to boost
  the number of female candidates and prevent gender discrimination.

**Challenges:**

- In the Ministry itself, it is very often difficult to have more women involved, as most tasks
  require technical/engineering skills and only a few women in Afghanistan study engineering.
- Despite many attempts and the support of the international community, there is still
  prejudice against women in this Ministry, and especially at the provincial level (DAIL).
- Lastly, as the MAIL directly deals with rural communities, gender programmes and strategies
  often face the issue of traditionalism and conservatism in areas where the social and
  economic role of women is reduced.

**Donors’ assistance to the MAIL:**

**Implemented Programs:**

- GRM-DAFA
  - Training courses in English, computers and leadership provided by the American
    University of Afghanistan and including 150 female employees.
  - Management courses including 20 female employees.
  - Five-day training sessions on gender policy and other subjects on gender related
    issues, with 75 participants.
  - Has funded all the Gender Department’s equipment.

GRM ended its funding to the Gender Department, and now their training programmes have
stopped, so they are working to restart these programmes with other donors’ support.

- GRM-DAFA has supported the Gender Department before, but has now stopped.
- VEGA wants to support the Gender Department in capacity building for female employees.

**Organisational structure:**

- The MAIL has 9,298 employees.
- There are 298 female civil servant employees.
- The MAIL has 200 contracted female employees.
- Two women are the heads of two directorates of MAIL (the directors of horticulture and
  household economy).
- The MAIL has about 15 female employees who are department heads.
- It has been one year and two months since the Gender Department was established.

**Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development**

Rural development is the key to reconstruction and peace building efforts in Afghanistan. According
 to the 2010–2014 (1389–1393) Strategic Intent of the MRRD, the identified objectives of the Ministry
are: (1) to contribute to poverty alleviation through the delivery of a comprehensive package of
services; and (2) to create an enabling environment for sustainable rural development. The Strategic
Intent of the MRRD articulates women’s empowerment as a cross-cutting issue. The MRRD focuses on ensuring increased representation of and participation by women, and also, through its programmes and departments, on ensuring that it impacts positively on the application of development benefits and inclusive decision making processes for women. The MRRD’s gender policy priorities try to address two areas significantly: (1) at the institutional level the MRRD commits to engendering the institution through the systemic institutionalisation of gender concerns within the organisation; and (2) at the programmatic level the MRRD strives to create sustainable development initiatives while creating ownership and increased meaningful participation of women in all phases of project cycles. Through some MRRD programmes, there is already a representation of women in community forums as well as women beneficiaries of different programme goals. In practice, gender components are present in most, if not all, of the programmes and projects that fall under the vast umbrella of the MRRD: “To many extents, the MRRD is probably the ministry that could easily and legitimately facilitate gender empowerment and affirmative actions. Its provincial anchorage and its direct impact at the community level should be used as cornerstones of a national gender policy” (MRRD Technical Advisor, January 2013).

**General opinions on gender issues and the role of gender in rural development:**

- Women have a significant role in villages and some of the MRRD’s female employees have good roles in the Ministry: for example, the Director of AREDP is very active and known as a hard-working person.

**MRRD strategy for gender mainstreaming:**

- The MRRD has a five-year plan called Women Empowerment that has gender mainstreaming components.
- Its Gender Unit is in an advisory position to the Minister.
- The MRRD has included one female employee on the Ministry’s employment board.
- There is a Gender Focal Point in each provincial directorate of the MRRD.
- The MRRD has prepared a gender policy for the Gender Department in order for the Gender Department to arrange their programme according the prepared policy (the review team has received the gender policy).

**Implemented programmes:**

- The MRRD had a memorandum of understanding on Gender Unit programmes with UN Women to implement their programs.
- The MRRD has established Community Development Councils (CDCs), for women and men, and CDCs should assist women, in order to for gender to be regarded by the CDCs and in their programs.
- The MRRD has implemented some capacity building programmes for its female employees.

**Plan for next year:**

- The MRRD wants to implement two programmes on gender for its provincial and central employees to follow their five-year strategy.

**Organisational Structure:**

- The MRRD has 617 male central employees.
- It has 91 female central employees.
- The MRRD has 1,093 male employees in its provincial directorates.
- It has 34 female employees in its provincial directorates.
- The female MRRD staff account for up to 6% of all MRRD staff.
- The MRRD also has contracted female employees (4%); the total of female employees is up to 10% of all employees of the MRRD.

According to the head of the Gender Unit, there are relatively fewer female employees in the MRRD (6% of permanent employees plus 4% of contracted temporary employees), and this is due to the fact that the MRRD is a technical ministry in which it is often harder for women to work at the field level.
c. Rapid assessment of governmental employees and civil servants

According to the CSO, women constitute approximately one-fifth (21%) of government employees. The difference between the number of male and female employees varies significantly by department. For example, only 6% of employees in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Haj are women, whereas 54% of employees in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs are women.

The gender disparity within the government is even more pronounced when viewed in terms of the comparative ranks held by men and women in official positions. When expressed as percentages, only 5% of civil servants in Position 1 are women. Indeed, above Position 4, fewer than one in ten top positions in the government are occupied by women. Looking at the data in numerical format illustrates the extent of this difference in more visual terms.

*Picture 1: Interviews with Civil Servants in Mazar-e-Sharif (August 2011)*

Graph 1: Percentage of positions held by men and women (Source: CSO 1390)


Graph 2: Government Employees by Sex (Officials and Contractors) (Source: CSO 1390)

Ministry of Religious Affairs and Haj: 1% Female, 99% Male
Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock: 3% Female, 97% Male
Ministry of Interior Affairs: 3% Female, 95% Male
Ministry of Public Works: 6% Female, 94% Male
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development: 6% Female, 94% Male
Ministry of Finance: 6% Female, 94% Male
Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation: 7% Female, 93% Male
Ministry of Justice: 7% Female, 93% Male
Ministry of Commerce and Industries: 7% Female, 93% Male
Ministry of Frontiers, Ethnics and Tribes Affairs: 8% Female, 92% Male
Ministry of Mines: 8% Female, 92% Male
Ministry of Water and Power: 9% Female, 91% Male
Ministry of Urban Development Affairs: 10% Female, 90% Male
Ministry of Repatriation and Refugees Affairs: 12% Female, 88% Male
Ministry of Communication and Information Technology: 13% Female, 87% Male
Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 13% Female, 87% Male
Ministry of Economy: 13% Female, 87% Male
Ministry of Information and Culture: 14% Female, 86% Male
Ministry of Higher Education: 15% Female, 85% Male
Ministry of National Defence: 20% Female, 80% Male
Ministry of Public Health: 22% Female, 78% Male
Ministry of Education: 26% Female, 74% Male
Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled: 43% Female, 57% Male
Ministry of Women Affairs: 54% Female, 46% Male

Graph 3: Number of people holding government positions
(Source: CSO 1390)

Women
Men

Graph 4: Percentage of male and female employees by province
(Source: CSO 1390)

Graph 5 shows that there is a weak correlation between levels of female education and the number of female employees in the government. In Khost province, for example, while almost a quarter of students are female (24%), only 2% of government employees are women. In Laghman, the difference is even more striking: 44% of students are female, but only 5% of government employees are women. This suggests that factors other than the prevalence of educated women determine the proportion of female civil servants at the provincial level.

Once again, provincial differences are notable. Herat province has the greatest proportion of female civil servants, yet even here they only constitute 34% of government employees. In many regions there are virtually no female government employees: 2% in Khost and Paktya, 3% in Kunar and 4% in Ghor and Paktika (Graph 4). Nimroz is an interesting case study. Despite being surrounded by conservative Baluch Pakistan in the south and Helmand province in the east, Nimroz appears to have a comparatively egalitarian view on female employment in government: 31% of government employees are women. This may be due to its close proximity to Iran and the high proportion of Afghans who lived in Iran during the period of Taliban rule.
Graph 5: Female Civil Servants versus Female Students
(Source: MoE 1390 and CSO 1390)
SECTION 3: EDUCATION

In 2012, many of the key indicators for improvement show that Afghanistan is moving in the right direction. However, the rate of change appears to have slowed dramatically since 2005, and major progress is still needed in order to ensure that more women are in education. With NATO withdrawal on the near horizon, many donors are beginning to focus on security and governance rather than education. As some commentators warn, the advances made since the fall of the Taliban risk being lost unless the Government of Afghanistan (GOA) and the international community sustain the momentum of the last decade.

Table 2: Summary of Key Indicators on Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2012 Report</th>
<th>2012 Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of female students in general</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>Ministry of Education 1390 Data Set, “Students by program and gender”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who are women</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Central Statistics Organization, Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011–2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of teachers who are women</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Central Statistics Organization, Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011–2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the total number of women in education has increased, the figures are still broadly comparable to 2005 as a proportion of the total number of people in education. Moreover, despite the increases in the number of female teachers, female students and all-girls schools, these figures are still very low in overall terms. The table below summarises some of the key statistics from the research. This research highlights the following five key challenges for improving female education in Afghanistan.

1. **Poor education infrastructure**: Many schools still do not have enclosing walls, lack buildings, books and access to clean drinking water, and have poor sanitation.
2. **Volatile security situation**: NATO forces will withdraw in 2014, with a risk of increased terrorist attacks against schools and universities.
3. **Few qualified female teachers**: There are not enough female teachers to meet the demand for segregated schools.
4. **Lack of support for female teachers**: Female teachers with children do not have access to day-care facilities or kindergartens, and Afghanistan’s poor transport infrastructure makes it difficult for many women to work far from their homes.
5. **Perceived low value of female education**: Many parents still do not recognise the importance of sending their daughters to school beyond primary school age; this is particularly pronounced at university level.
a. Current situation

Context

A focus on education by the GOA and the international community over the last decade has resulted in an increased demand for education for girls. As a testament to this, 85% of people in Afghanistan think that men and women should have equal access to education. Indeed, since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, bans on women in schools have been lifted, and many educational projects have been implemented resulting in higher levels of enrolment among girls and boys in general, technical and vocational education institutions. As a result, student numbers had risen to an unprecedented 7,861,988 in 2011. In addition to this, the number of female teachers increased from 27,200 in 2000 to 54,069 in 2011–12.

However, progress in education over the last seven years has been anything but linear, as gains have been made and lost in many areas. The interplay of these narratives leaves the current state of education in a precarious position. In particular, the supply of schools and teachers is currently unable to meet the rising demand for female education, and the number of female teachers and all-girls schools remains comparatively low. In fact, a great many rural and urban districts do not have a single female teacher.

The influence of the Taliban continues to play a significant role in shaping Afghanistan’s domestic policies and education is no exception. Attacks on state schools and subsequent closures were reasonably common occurrences from 2005–2008, but widespread public opposition to the targeting of schools has, to some extent, encouraged the Taliban to seek other means of influencing education policy. In 2010–2011, attacks on schools largely ceased and schools started to reopen at a much faster rate than in the past. More recently, however, the surge in violence in the south has resulted in school closures once again.

In addition, as the GOA and the international community increasingly seek ways to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table, progressive educationalists are concerned at the growing hard-line Islamist influence on state education. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of women in executive decision-making bodies like the MOE, where they constitute only 26% of employees. Moreover, people’s faith in the public sector as a whole in Afghanistan is relatively low: in 2010 it was considered to be the most corrupt sector in the country.

Thus, while the net gains in some metrics describe an overall positive trend, the detailed picture is far more complex, and significant barriers to female education still exist. The MOE needs sustained external support from both independent Afghan bodies and the international community. The GOA lacks the financial and material resources required to fulfil short, medium or longer-term needs in the sector. In addition, deteriorating security and imminent NATO withdrawal have shifted international focus away from education. Public attitudes seem to have shifted in the right direction, and it seems unlikely that the situation could revert to that under Taliban rule; but this is a critical

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moment for education, and a sustained commitment is needed from all actors in order to capitalise on gains made over the last seven years.

**Enrolment**

Comparisons between datasets are made with caution due to differing sample definitions, but in broad terms female enrolment in education has increased. Indeed, according to the Central Statistics Office, there was a 10.2% increase in the number of female students in 2011–12 compared to 2010–11.\(^{17}\) The 2011 MOE figures show that average female enrolment from Grades 1 to 14 is around 38%,\(^ {18}\) whereas in 2003, 34% of students were female. However, there is still notable gender disparity: girls tend to be less numerous, and to leave school earlier than boys. The table below shows the distribution of students in different types of educational institutions. With the exception of community-based education institutions, women are in the minority across the education sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Total Male Students</th>
<th>Total Female Students</th>
<th>Gender Ratio</th>
<th>Total Male Students (%)</th>
<th>Total Female Students (%)</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Total Program Students to all Program Students (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>4,580,701</td>
<td>2,901,801</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>61.22</td>
<td>38.78</td>
<td>7,482,502</td>
<td>89.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Border</td>
<td>230,253</td>
<td>76,751</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>307,004</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBE</td>
<td>94,733</td>
<td>124,437</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>43.22</td>
<td>56.78</td>
<td>219,170</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Education</td>
<td>169,940</td>
<td>32,014</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>84.15</td>
<td>15.85</td>
<td>201,954</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>40,652</td>
<td>19,523</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>67.56</td>
<td>32.44</td>
<td>60,175</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>33,190</td>
<td>4,139</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>88.91</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>37,329</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Schools</td>
<td>11,162</td>
<td>9,054</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>55.21</td>
<td>44.79</td>
<td>20,216</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,160,631</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,167,719</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.61</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.96</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,328,350</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female enrolment is highest in primary and secondary education, but drops sharply for tertiary education. Again, figures vary, but the weight of consensus shows that girls are statistically far more likely to drop out of education than boys. In 2009, BRAC reported that 82% of girls drop out of education before they complete Grade 6.\(^ {19}\) Similarly, a report by Samuel Hall Consulting in 2012 found that dropout rates among girls (31%) were considerably higher than those among boys (13%).\(^ {20}\) The MOE’s figures show that 40.8% of Grade 1 students are female, but by Grade 14, this figure drops to 29.1%.\(^ {21}\) Many of the female students who are enrolling in schools today are among the first women in their families to receive an education. The figures from the 2010 Mortality Survey show that older women are notably less likely to have received any education than younger women.

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\(^{19}\) BRAC (2009). http://www.brac.net/content/afghanistan-education.


\(^{21}\) Ministry of Education (2012), EMIS data set 1390, “Enrolment by Grade.”
For example, 58.5% of girls aged 12–14 have received no education, compared to 93.6% of women aged 45–49. Indeed, looking at the enrolment rates across all school types since last year, the rate of enrolment among boys has increased to a greater extent than that among girls. In other words, the gap between men and women in education is widening rather than narrowing.

For example, in 2010–11 there were 8,472 more male students than female students in Grade 14, whereas in 2011–12 this figure increased to 13,539 more male students than female students. This pattern is also apparent in a closer examination of General Education. Female students are the minority in each year, yet the difference between the number of boys and the number of girls in education becomes more pronounced in the higher grades, as Table 4 highlights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2011–12</th>
<th>2010–11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male Students</td>
<td>Female Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>670,113</td>
<td>462,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>636,031</td>
<td>438,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>564,843</td>
<td>386,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>541,673</td>
<td>349,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>455,703</td>
<td>287,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>412,103</td>
<td>252,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>392,139</td>
<td>214,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>314,935</td>
<td>164,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>275,573</td>
<td>139,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>240,367</td>
<td>126,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>157,454</td>
<td>73,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>120,012</td>
<td>49,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 13</td>
<td>31,777</td>
<td>12,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 14</td>
<td>22,952</td>
<td>9,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2020, p. 35.
The number of girls in education varies considerably from province to province. Historically, female enrolment has been very low: in 2010, 76.2% of women had no education, as shown in Graph 6; this figure was as high as 79.6% for households in the “most remote area,” and never lower than 57.8% in the “least remote area.” The 2012 figures from the MOE show that Badakhshan (47.3%), Herat (47.2%) and Kabul (44.4%) have among the highest levels of female education. Areas that have been affected the most by conflict have the lowest levels of female education. In Paktika province in South Eastern Afghanistan, only 19.2% of the total number of students are female.

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Graph 6 also shows the differences between the percentage of female students at primary school compared to the percentage of female students at the secondary and higher secondary levels. While it is to be expected that the number of students (be they male or female) will decline as students pass from one year to the next, the regional differences shown in Graph 7 are large. In Paktika province for example, while 22% of students are female at primary school level, there are none in higher secondary education.

Finally, female enrolment is highest in primary and secondary education, but drops sharply for tertiary education. The weight of consensus shows that girls are statistically far more likely to drop out of education than boys. A report by Samuel Hall Consulting in 2012 found that among 300 school children in Kabul and Panjshir provinces, dropout rates among girls (31%) were considerably higher than those among boys (13%). The MOE’s national figures show that 40.8% of Grade 1 students are female, but by Grade 14, the figure drops to 29.1%.

Many of the students who are enrolling in schools today are among the first in their families to receive an education. Indeed, the figures from the 2010 Mortality Survey show that older women are notably less likely to have received any education than younger women. For example, 58.5% of girls aged 12–14 have received no education, compared to 93.6% of women aged 45–49. Such a lack of education among older women has resulted in a paucity of female teachers, which is itself a further barrier to younger girls entering the education system. Recent figures are encouraging, but it is crucial to break this self-defeating cycle. The scarcity of female teachers is particularly acute for girls studying in higher secondary and tertiary education. Mixed classes are far more common in primary schools, which means that the need for female teachers is less important. This may, in part, account for the higher enrolment rates at primary school than at all other levels of education.

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27 Ministry of Education (2011), EMIS data set 1390, "Total number of Government schools students by Province."


29 Ministry of Education (2011), EMIS data set 1390, "Enrolment by Grade."

30 Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 35.
Tertiary Education

The number of women in universities has increased significantly since 2005. However, the proportion of women in university has remained more or less static. For the year 2011–12, the Central Statistics Organization reported that 19% of the 77,654 students in government universities were women,\(^{31}\) this figure has not changed since 2005 when the World Bank reported that 19% of students were female in 2003.\(^{32}\) Additionally, the gap between the number of men and the number of women enrolled in universities is increasing. Looking back over the last five years, the Central Statistics Organization offers the following figures, which highlight the growing difference between male and female student numbers.

In simple numerical terms the difference between the number of male and female students has increased from 32,073 in 2007–08 to 48,032 in 2011–12. Cultural barriers continue to hinder progress in this area. By the time women reach university age (and indeed before this) they are often forced into marriage and are unable to pursue their academic aspirations. Many parents still do not see the value of sending their daughters to university. Most people appreciate the importance of some form of education, but this becomes harder to justify the older the child gets. Learning to read is considered to be important, but studying for a degree in a specialist or niche subject is not. Until parents recognise a clear and unambiguous link between obtaining a degree and obtaining a job, this will continue to be a drawn-out challenge.

Graph 8: Number of Students in Government Universities by Gender
(Source: CSO Statistical Yearbooks 2011-12 and 2009-10)

Schools

Likewise, if we now consider the mix of schools for girls and/or boys, there are clear provincial and regional discrepancies, as shown in the graphs below.


\(^{32}\) World Bank (2005), National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction: The Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future, p. 41.

South Western Afghanistan has the fewest government all-girls schools compared to anywhere else in the country. In Central and Eastern Afghanistan, on the other hand, there are actually more girls primary schools than boys schools, which may be a reflection of the targeted government policy over the last few years. However, as the figures attest, there is still much ground to be made up, especially in the North East and South West. At the secondary school level, Eastern Afghanistan provides marginally more schools for girls than for boys, but everywhere else there are notably fewer girls schools than boys schools.
The picture is equally stark by the time girls reach higher secondary schools. Only in the North West are the proportions of gender-specific schools roughly comparable: in the rest of the country, girls schools are the minority.

Teachers

The total number of female teachers has increased since 2005 when 28%³⁴ of teachers were women, but there are still not enough female teachers in the education system, and too few women in teacher training facilities. The supply of female teachers is imperative for improving education among women. In 2012, 31% (53,636) of teachers were female. However in proportional terms, the last seven years have been relatively static.⁴ According to the MOE (Key Challenges), 245 out of 412 urban and rural districts do not have a single qualified female teacher. At the provincial level, the number of teachers varies greatly. In Paktika for instance, only 12 of the 3,220 teachers are female. In Kabul City on the other hand, there are actually more female teachers (16,710) than male teachers (5,768). At the university level, there are also very few female teachers. In 2012, only 15.2% of lecturers were female. The figures are even more pronounced in areas where female education is at its lowest: in Kandahar University for instance, there are no female lecturers.⁵ For married teachers, the situation can be even harder, as they are expected to participate in the household chores of their in-laws. If there are no kindergartens, or if their in-laws are unable to care for young children, female teachers are forced to stop working to take care of their nascent family.

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³⁴ World Bank (2005), National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction: The Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future, p. 43.
b. Obstacles and challenges in education

There are a number of factors that continue to have a negative impact on the number of women in education. These factors are split into two groups: “hard” factors, like poverty and poor infrastructure; and “soft” factors, like familial pressure or societal norms. These factors are equally important and are often closely related.

Hard Factors

Poverty

Poverty is still the main barrier to education for boys and girls. In a survey conducted by Oxfam in 2011, 41.2% of respondents said that poverty was the main barrier to education. Although state education is ostensibly free, there are many associated costs (such as transport) that are prohibitive for many parents, even for families with a stable source of income. For many families, daughters often play an important role in household operations and income generation. Parents in lower income households must decide how to balance the long-term benefits of sending their daughters to school with the short-term benefits of keeping children at home to work. If the long-term gains are perceived to be unrealistic or intangible, parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school. This is closely related to perceptions of the value of education addressed below. Research conducted in Panjshir by Samuel Hall in 2011 on behalf of an NGO showed that parents understood the need to send their children to school, but were forced to keep them at home in order to increase household income. Although 97.3% of parents in the study sample consider education for girls to be “important,” when comparing the percentages who consider education to be “very important,” a considerable discrepancy emerges: 80.6% think that boys’ education is very important compared to only 50.0% for girls. The study found that, ultimately, most people still agreed that women have to stay at home once they are married.

Security

While attacks on schools seem to have slowed in recent months, the last seven years have witnessed appalling atrocities. In 2008, 650 schools were closed down because of security concerns and 140 teachers were killed. Figures from the MOE show that 49% of girls schools in Paktika, 69% in Zabul and 59% in Helmand have been burned between 2006 and 2009. On 20 August 2009 alone, 26 schools were attacked by the Taliban as they were being used as polling stations for elections. Naturally, attacks on schools deter parents from sending their children back to school. While most parents recognise the importance of educating their daughters, these attacks hark back to the recent past when it was forbidden to send girls to school. In addition to the threat of terrorism, rape and kidnapping are also major causes of permanent and temporary dropouts.

Lack of basic facilities

Parents are unwilling to send their children to schools that lack fundamental basic facilities, although they are more willing to accept poorer quality facilities for their sons than for their daughters. The evidence shows that infrastructure remains basic in most schools. According to UNICEF, in 2009 three-quarters of state schools did not have access to safe sanitation facilities. The main areas of concern are the next three “hard” factors described below.

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41 IRIN (2009), “AFGHANISTAN: Thousands of schools lack drinking water, sanitation.”
Sanitation and Water
Access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities is particularly important in a country where diarrheal diseases account for a significant majority of deaths among young children. However, the majority of existing schools in Afghanistan do not provide the sanitary and hygienic criteria required for young students. The lack of private sanitation facilities has a negative impact on female retention rates. According to UNICEF in 2009, 75% of schools in Afghanistan did not have safe sanitation facilities. “One of the reasons that girls do not attend school is because there are no sanitation facilities,” said UNICEF’s Jalalabad head of office Prakash Tuladhar. “It is determinant that water and sanitation systems are built as basic components of any new school. If there are no latrines, then it is almost certain that girls will not be attending school.”

Libraries and books
In a survey conducted by Oxfam in 2011, only 65% of children said that their school had sufficient books. This, too, has a negative impact on the number of girls in education, because parents do not want to send their children to schools that are unable to provide the fundamental building blocks for a good education.

Buildings
According to the MOE, almost half (48.2%) of all schools have no buildings, and 64% of state schools do not have a surrounding wall. Surrounding walls are especially important both for security and protection from insurgent threats, and for screening children from onlookers and passers-by. The fact that so many schools are without surrounding walls is one of the major barriers to getting more women into education.

Lack of all-girls schools
There have been some considerable advances in educational infrastructure since 2005, but there are still major deficiencies that contribute to low levels of female education. Estimates vary, but the figures from the MOE suggest that there are around 13,562 state-run General Education schools across the country. This is a large increase since the data gathered in the 2005 World Bank report, which showed that there were only 3,800 schools in 2002 and 7,130 in 2003. However, while the

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42 IRIN (2009), “AFGHANISTAN: Thousands of schools lack drinking water, sanitation.”
46 Ministry of Education (2012), EMIS data set 1390, “Total Government Schools by Education Type and Province.”
number of schools in Afghanistan has increased, there is still a short supply of all-girls schools: only 16.3% of government General Education schools are for girls between the primary and higher secondary levels, and the simple lack of all-girls schools is still a major hurdle for getting more girls into education. Gender segregation is particularly important in traditional rural communities. While the situation has improved since 2005, 80% of rural districts still lacked girls’ high schools in 2009.

The problem persists. In 2011, for example, it was found that some girls were forced to make three-hour journeys to school every day in Daikundi province. Many girls are unable to make journeys like this on a daily basis and so miss out on education altogether.

**Soft Factors**

**Lack of confidence in the quality of education**

Parents do not want to send their daughters to schools in which they do not think they will receive a good education. The lack of confidence in teachers’ ability and the perceived unfairness of the public exam system serve as disincentives for parents who cannot afford to send children to school without a guarantee that their daughters will get a job afterwards. If parents suspect that the quality of education their children receive is below par, they prefer to maximise skills learned at home through domestic work at a young age, which prepares children for their adult lives. The creation of private schools and universities may provide part of the solution to the low quality of education in some areas. However, most of these institutions are located in cities and urban areas rather than remote rural areas where they may be needed the most. There are now 492 General Education private schools in Afghanistan. Yet at private universities, women are still underrepresented, constituting only 14.8% of private students. However, even sending children to private schools is no guarantee of quality education. Following a probe into private education in Afghanistan in 2011, the MOE closed down ten schools and ordered six others not to reopen for the autumn term until they submitted the requisite documentation.

**Perceived value of education**

The historical legacy of conflict in Afghanistan has left deep scars on the education system: as of 2007/8, only 6% of women over the age of 25 have received any type of education. Particularly in the south and in rural areas, where traditional cultural values hold the greatest sway, many people question the value of sending daughters to school and university. Generations have gone by in which women received no education, and employment opportunities continue to centre on agriculture, for which there is little perceived need for a formal education. Thus, while most people agree with equal education opportunities in principle, in practice it seems that many parents are satisfied with a base level of literacy for their daughters, which can be taught in early grades. Having obtained basic reading and writing skills, they are brought back to the household to work. Subjects taught in tertiary education are often not considered requisite to the role of being a good matriarch. This may help to explain why there is such a sharp dropout rate among girls as they progress through the stages of the education system.

**Social norms**

50 Ministry of Education (2012), EMIS data set 1390 “Number of School by Type.”
Deeply held conservative values continue to present a major barrier to educating women. Marriage (including early marriage) is one of the main reasons why young girls drop out of education. With some exceptions, once girls are married, society dictates that their duties lie with the household and education is frequently forced aside. Again, this is another reason why so few women make it to university. Only 16% of new university students in 2012 were women, according to recent figures from the Central Statistics Organization.\textsuperscript{54} Once a girl becomes engaged, simple tasks like walking alone to school turn into serious obstacles, as the young girl is now seen as being a woman. These factors present greater barriers in rural areas than in regional capitals. As shown earlier, Samuel Hall research in Panjshir showed that the reason many girls do not stay at school is that they have married or because education is not seen as necessary for the traditional roles of Afghan women, such as carpet weaving.\textsuperscript{55}

C. Recommendations

At a practical level there are a number of macro- and micro-actions that would help to achieve the overarching vision of female education in Afghanistan.

Macro-level recommendations

- **Capitalise on early gains in female education**
  In the context of transition and significant aid cutbacks, attention may be diverted away from education. Female education in particular was one of the flagship promises of the nascent Afghan democracy. It is crucial that stakeholders keep this issue in the spotlight over the coming years in order to avoid further stasis.

- **Target areas where resistance to female education is lowest**
  Continue to build schools and fund projects in urban centres like Kabul and Herat. While this does not directly tackle low levels of education in rural areas, it creates an environment in which female education is increasingly seen as normal, and indeed important. In the longer term, one can optimistically assume that positive changes at the urban scale may also impact rural areas. Part of the challenge here will be gathering reliable and statistically robust information to help channel resources effectively.

- **Advocate with the MOE to encourage female teachers to work in remote areas**
  The lack of female teachers where they are needed the most is a significant barrier to increasing female enrolment. By encouraging female teachers to work in remote rural areas, more girls will be able to attend local schools, especially if their parents only allow them to attend gender segregated schools. In addition, female teachers working in these areas could act as ambassadors for female education by providing a role model for younger children. However, it should be noted that training women from rural areas would probably be more effective if they originally come from the targeted areas themselves.

- **Develop a comprehensive and holistic information management system that synthetises key indicator statistics from the MOE, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Central Statistics Organisation**
  The critical lack of a centralised repository of reliable information is a major stumbling block for any development work. The required system would map the education landscape at the


\textsuperscript{55} Samuel Hall Consulting (2012), “School in a Box: Baseline Survey,” p. 35.
local, regional and national levels, allowing accurate analysis of key demographic trends. This is particularly important at a time of significant population movement.

- **Conduct sociological research into the roots of antipathy towards female education**
  The literature is full of anecdotes showing “culture” and “traditional values” as barriers to female education, but there is a lack of detailed analysis, critique or indeed understanding of why these values cause problems, where they come from, or how they can be addressed. Development projects have dealt with the effect (few girls in education) rather than the apparent cause, but at this important juncture in Afghanistan’s history, research is desperately needed in order to more widely re-evaluate the role of societal values.

**Micro-level recommendations:**

- **Provide day-care facilities for teachers with young children**
  Many female teachers are forced to give up their careers because they have to look after their own children, or because their parents do not think it is right for a mother to have a job. Day-care facilities for small children would help to retain qualified teachers in the education system because they would be able to continue teaching and build a family, which are traditionally seen as mutually exclusive objectives.

- **Train more education support staff**
  The presence of educational support staff plays an important role in ensuring that the transition from childhood to womanhood does not act as a major obstacle to female education. Education support staff can act as the first barrier to preventing school dropouts, and can play a mediation role between students and their parents. The French NGO Afghanistan Libre has reinforced its support to schools with weekly visits by a psychosocial counsellor who acts as an interface between school staff, students and families in cases of potential dropout.

- **Systematise specific security measures in a worsening security context**
  In the short term, practical security measures (e.g., enclosures around schools, ID checks, security perimeters, etc.) will greatly increase the number of schools suitable for girls, and would likely result in a reasonably swift rise in female education participation.

- **Provide socio-cultural training for education specialists**
  Education specialists need better training to understand the idiosyncrasies and nuances of Afghan culture, particularly since female education is at an impasse with respect to certain aspects of local culture. Among other benefits, this training would equip experts with the knowledge to help families understand the importance of education.
SECTION 4: HEALTH

As with other areas, this report finds that the health environment has improved in some respects; however, once again, the desk research show that significant progress is lacking. The key indicator statistics in 2012 are summarised in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2012 Report</th>
<th>2012 Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality Ratio</td>
<td>327–460 in every 100,000</td>
<td>World Health Statistics 2012, WHO, p. 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face</td>
<td>(327 from the AMS, 460 from the WHO)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth</td>
<td>Women 64.2</td>
<td>Afghanistan Mortality Survey (AMS) 2010, p. 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men 63.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fertility rate</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>AMS 2010, p. 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate</td>
<td>74 in every 1000</td>
<td>MICS 2010/11, p. 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under five mortality rate</td>
<td>102 in every 1000</td>
<td>MICS 2010/11, p. 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraceptive prevalence rate</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>Afghanistan MICS 2010/11, p. vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled antenatal care (at least 1 visit)</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>Afghanistan MICS 2010/11, p. vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled birth assistance</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>Afghanistan MICS 2010/11, p. vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of population within 1 hour’s walking distance from a health facility</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>NRVA 2007/8, p. iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the main findings are as follows.

- **Access to healthcare is poor**
  Many areas are still without access to basic healthcare facilities or trained health professionals.

- **Home births are prevalent**
  A significant proportion of women still give birth at home without a skilled birth assistant.

- **Lack of familiarity with contraceptives**
  Many men and women are still unaware of the family planning methods available to them, and the number of men and women who use contraceptives is still low across the country.

- **Lack of basic health education**
  Many women, and indeed their husbands, are suspicious of contraceptive methods: some think that it will make them permanently sterile. Traditional health practices continue to play an influential role in rural communities where mullahs or older members of the community may be the only people to whom patients can turn.

- **HIV/AIDS**
  HIV testing rates are very low and limited data is available about the prevalence of the illness among women.

- **Lack of trained mental health workers**
  There is still a deficit of trained mental health and psychosocial workers.
a. Current situation

Gender Differences in Mortality

Once again, the challenge of measuring improvements in life expectancy is exacerbated by the lack of comparable data. Life expectancy in Afghanistan is low for both men and women but shows some improvement since the last report, when life expectancy was reported at 44.5. In 2004 the UNDP Human Development Report reported that average life expectancy at birth for men and women was 43.1. In 2008 the Ministry of Public Health published life expectancy figures of 47 years for men and 45 years for women, and World Health Organization (WHO) figures gathered in 2009 record life expectancy as 47 years for men and 50 years for women. More recently, however, the Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010 reported that life expectancy at birth was 63.6 years for men and 64.2 years for women, which is much higher than all previous estimates. The Survey also shows that mortality rates for women aged 14–49 have fallen dramatically since 2000 (dropping from 103/1,000 to 52/1,000). These are significant differences compared to previous research and suggest that factors like differing methodologies may account for part of this variance. These figures should be treated with caution.

Health Infrastructure

The number of healthcare facilities has increased over the last six years but access to medical facilities and trained medical staff is still a problem in many provinces. Nevertheless, research conducted by the WHO in 2002 found that 19 districts had no healthcare facilities at all, whereas today every province has at least one comprehensive health centre and five or more basic health centres. Although the nomenclature of health facilities varies to some degree from source to source, the Ministry of Public Health’s Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) programme defines medical facilities in Afghanistan according to the terms described below.

- **Health Post**
  At these facilities, community health workers offer limited care for maladies such as malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infection. They dispense contraceptives and micronutrient supplements. Female Community Health Workers help with pregnancies, deliveries and referrals for complicated issues. The aim is to have a catchment population of 1,000 to 1,500 people.

- **Basic Health Center**
  These facilities offer the same level of care as a Health Post, but offer more complex outpatient care, including, among other services: antenatal, delivery and postpartum care; non-permanent family planning; routine immunisations; and identification, referral and follow-up care for mental patients and the disabled. Each Center is designed to treat a population of 15,000 to 30,000 people.

- **Comprehensive Health Center**

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In addition to the services outlined about, Comprehensive Health Centers handle grave cases of childhood illnesses, treatment of complicated cases of malaria and mental health issues. Staffed by doctors, they also have limited inpatient care facilities and a laboratory. Comprehensive Health Centers ideally serve a population of 30,000 to 60,000.

- **District Hospital**
  Operating at a district level, these facilities manage all of the BPHS functions including major surgery, x-rays, comprehensive emergency obstetric care and male and female sterilisations. They have comprehensive inpatient and outpatient facilities. Each facility should be staffed with doctors, including female obstetricians/gynaecologists, a surgeon, an anaesthetist, a paediatrician, midwives, lab and x-ray technicians, a pharmacist, a dentist and dental technicians. They serve a population of 100,000 to 300,000 people.\(^\text{63}\)

There are more health facilities in Afghanistan now than in 2001 or 2006. In particular, 2009–2010 saw a sharp rise in the number of hospitals. While the number of Basic Health Centers and laboratories continues to increase, the number of hospitals and Comprehensive Health Centers has decreased since last year. Indeed, the number of Comprehensive Health Centers has been steadily decreasing since 2009. This may be due to the increased focus on providing access to a greater number of basic health facilities rather than a smaller number of comprehensive centres. Indeed, the number of Comprehensive Health Centers started to plateau at around the time that Health Sub Centers were introduced in 2005; moreover, the number of Health Sub Centers has increased rapidly since 2009. Health Sub Centers have a similar role to Health Posts (HPs), although they aim to serve a population in the range of 3,000 to 7,000 people. Health Sub Centers appear to be making a positive impact, providing as much as half the new antenatal care services provided by basic health facilities.\(^\text{64}\) At the regional level, disparities are pronounced, and rural areas are still underserved. In Kabul, for example, there are 38 Comprehensive Health Centers, while there are only two in Panjshir.\(^\text{65}\)


Remote areas tend to be the least well supplied with medical facilities. In Uruzgan there were only 14 medical facilities serving a population of approximately 333,500\(^{66}\) in 2009. Looking at the distribution of smaller health facilities like Health Posts, Basic Health Centers and Comprehensive Health Centers provides another level of comparison at the coal-face of health service delivery. In response to poor access to healthcare facilities in remote areas, one of the aims of the BPHS was to create one HP for every 1,500 people throughout the country. However, the latest figures from 2008 show that many areas still fall short of this target and many people are still without access to basic healthcare facilities.

Data for the number of HPs is difficult to find, but Graph 14 provides a rough indication of provinces that still fall short of the BPHS vision of one HP for every 1,500 people. The picture is mixed. While Kunduz province in particular falls short of this goal with a health post ratio of 0.3 per 1,500 people, other rural provinces like Panjshir, Nurestan and Nimroz are well served by the program.

Figures from the Central Statistics Organization allow a clearer comparison between population size and the number of Basic Health Centers and Comprehensive Health Centers. It should be noted that these figures exclude private facilities. However, given that government facilities constitute the majority of Comprehensive Health Centers (378/383) and Basic Health Centers (813/930),\(^{68}\) the charts offer a rough indication of well-provisioned and under-served regions. These figures are particularly important in the context of what will be a changing aid and development environment after 2014.

In addition to the shortage of healthcare facilities, there is also a dearth of qualified medical staff (and especially female doctors, obstetricians and gynaecologists). The number of doctors per 10,000 people (two) has remained the same since 2006.\textsuperscript{71} There continues to be a particular shortage in obstetrics and gynaecology. The figures in Graph 17 are taken from the CSO’s Statistical Yearbook 2012 and show the distribution of obstetricians and gynaecologists throughout the country. It is notable that 10 provinces are completely without any MDs trained in either of these two areas of women’s health.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Graph_17.png}
\caption{Number of Obstetricians and Gynecologists by Province (Source: CSO Yearbook 2012)}
\end{figure}

Translating these shortages into real terms means that many people are forced to invest time and money in travelling long distances to reach the nearest medical facility. Figures from the 2007/8 NRVA report highlight the extent of this shortage. In Laghman province only 8\% of people lived within an hour’s journey on foot from medical assistance. In fact, all provinces, with the exception of Kabul and Jawzjan, have significant proportions of the population living outside the one-hour catchment radius.\textsuperscript{72}

\section*{Maternal and Child Mortality}

Tracking improvements in levels of maternal mortality are difficult due to an historical lack of comprehensive figures and the use of different expressions to describe the data. Indeed, there appears to be some confusion in the literature about the use of the expressions “maternal mortality ratio” and “maternal mortality rate.” As defined in a recent WHO, UNICEF, World Bank and UNFPA report,\textsuperscript{73} the maternal mortality ratio is the number of deaths during a given time period per 100,000 live births during the same time period. The maternal mortality rate is the number of maternal deaths in a given period per 100,000 women of reproductive age during the same period. The most frequently cited figure until 2010 was 1,600 per 100,000 live births among women of reproductive age. However, the data was gathered from only four provinces (Kabul, Laghman,  

\textsuperscript{72} NRVA 2007/8, p. 75.
Badakhshan and Kandahar\textsuperscript{74}); but in the absence of a more comprehensive survey, this number has often been reported as a representative figure. Both the NRVA 2007/8 (p. 82) and the Ministry of Public Health Annual Report 1387 (p. 1) reported the maternal mortality ratio as 1,600.

Recent figures, on the other hand, are derived from more comprehensive coverage. The Afghanistan Mortality Survey in 2010 is based on research conducted among 24,032 households and was designed to be nationally representative.\textsuperscript{75} This study estimates that the pregnancy-related mortality ratio is 327, with a confidence interval of 260–394.\textsuperscript{76} There are other measures to look at which show improvement in the two main areas described below.

- **Antenatal care**
  The number of women receiving antenatal care (at least once during pregnancy) from a skilled provider has increased since the 2005 report. Definitions of antenatal care vary from source to source, but on the whole the picture shows improvement rather than regression. The proportion who received care has increased from 57% in the period from 36 to 59 months before the Afghanistan Mortality Survey to 68% in 2009.\textsuperscript{77} The gains in coverage were observed in both urban and rural areas. In a similar vein, the NRVA 2007/8 shows that 36%\textsuperscript{78} of women received antenatal care by a skilled professional at the time of the report, and the figures in the CSO Statistical Yearbook 2012 show that 48% of women received at least one visit from a skilled health professional during their last pregnancy.\textsuperscript{79}

- **Access to delivery care**
  The NRVA’s figures in 2007/8 found that 24% of births were attended by a Skilled Birth Assistant (SBA).\textsuperscript{80} In the AMS 2010, more than one in three births was assisted by an SBA.\textsuperscript{81} Despite these improvements, the figures are low overall and there are still gaps in the health system that need to be addressed. For example only 16% of women reported having at least for antenatal visits,\textsuperscript{82} which is the minimum necessary to provide adequate screening for pregnancy complications. Of those who did receive antenatal care only 32% of women were informed of signs of pregnancy complications, 40% were weighed, 32% had a urine sample taken and just 30% had a blood sample taken. In addition, among women who had a live birth in the last five years, only 38% took iron tablets or syrup, and 4% took intestinal parasite drugs.\textsuperscript{83} The figures for tetanus toxoid vaccinations are more encouraging: around half (52.3%) of women aged 12–49 received at least two tetanus toxoid injections during their last pregnancy in 2010.\textsuperscript{84}

**Total Fertility Rate and Family Planning**

Encouragingly, the literature continues to record decreasing total fertility rates among Afghan women. In 2005 the total fertility rate was 6.8.\textsuperscript{85} Currently, the WHO estimates that female fertility is


\textsuperscript{75}Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{76}Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{77}Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, pp. 65–67.

\textsuperscript{78}NRVA 2007/8, p. 84.


\textsuperscript{80}NRVA 2007/8, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{81}Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 75.

\textsuperscript{82}Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{83}Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{84}Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 72.

6.3,\textsuperscript{86} whereas recent government figures place the figure slightly lower in 2010 at 5.3.\textsuperscript{87} However, the use of contraception is still extremely low. In 2005, only 5% of women aged 14–49 used any kind of contraception,\textsuperscript{88} and the Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey from 2012 shows that almost 80% still do not use any form of contraception.\textsuperscript{89}

There is a direct link between educational achievement, the use of contraception and total fertility rates. Only a fifth (20%) of women with no education use contraception compared to 38% among women who have attained at least secondary education.\textsuperscript{90} In a similar vein, according to the 2010 Afghanistan Mortality Survey,\textsuperscript{91} fertility decreased from 5.3 among women with no education to 2.8 among women with higher education.\textsuperscript{92}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Graph18.png}
\caption{Total fertility rate per education background (source AMS 2010)}
\end{figure}

\textbf{HIV/AIDS}

Accurate data about the prevalence of HIV in Afghanistan is hard to find, and estimates vary as to how many people suffer from the illness. Men are statistically more likely to carry HIV than women. As of 2011, 638 cases of HIV were reported in Afghanistan,\textsuperscript{93} which is an increase since 2006 when only 48 cases were reported in the Central Statistic Organization’s Statistical Yearbook.\textsuperscript{94} Those who are most at risk of contracting HIV are injecting drug users (IDUs), men who have sex with men (MSM), prisoners and female sex workers. In 2008, the World Bank estimated that there were 1,160 female sex workers across Kabul, Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sherif. This equates to around 1.9 female sex workers per 1,000 women: much lower than regional averages, which range from 5–15 female sex workers per 1,000 women.\textsuperscript{95} The most recent Country Progress Report by the Ministry of Public Health shows that the prevalence of HIV among women sex workers is zero.\textsuperscript{96} However, a closer

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86} WHO (2012), "World Health Statistics," p. 150.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 40.
\item \textsuperscript{88} World Bank (2005), National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction: The Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future, p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{89} UNICEF (2012), Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012, p. xxi.
\item \textsuperscript{90} UNICEF (2012), Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012, p. xxi.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 41.
\item \textsuperscript{93} World Bank (2011), HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Central Statistics Organization (2009), Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 1387, p. 95.
\item \textsuperscript{95} World Bank (2008), "Mapping and Situation Assessment of Key Populations at High Risk of HIV in Three Cities of Afghanistan," p. 13.
\end{itemize}
scrutiny of the available data suggests that the real figure may be higher than this. Only 4% of female sex workers have had an HIV test in recent months and know their results. Moreover, only 58% use a condom. In 2007, 76.2% of IDUs (one of the groups at highest risk for contracting HIV) reported paying women for sex.\textsuperscript{97} It seems likely, therefore, that the level of HIV among female sex workers is higher than 0%.

**Mental Health**

Sustained pressure from NGOs and the international community led the government to introduce new policies in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy in 2008 that address mental health issues. Within this strategy, the section on mental health outlines the following: “This program will also develop a flexible range of integrated mental health support and care services at all levels of the health system. Particular attention will be given to post-traumatic counselling through the training of more community health care workers and psychologists and their placement in accessible community health facilities.”\textsuperscript{98} Yet, despite the best intentions, there are still very few trained medical workers who are able to treat psychological or mental illnesses, and there is still no dedicated university faculty to train mental health workers in the Afghanistan. Today, a small group of NGOs provide mental health services to Afghan women, but much of this work is confined to urban areas: (1) Medica Afghanistan provides professional psychological counselling services to women and girls affected by war and violence, among other services;\textsuperscript{99} (2) the International Medical Corps (IMC) has been working with the Ministries of Higher Education and Public Health to improve advanced psychiatric education at medical universities in Afghanistan;\textsuperscript{100} and (3) the International Psychosocial Organisation (IPSO) is currently training doctors and nurses in mental health across the country.\textsuperscript{101}

**Nutrition**

A very important factor explaining high child malnutrition rates is the high prevalence of maternal malnutrition. Poor maternal nutritional status will contribute to poor intrauterine growth and low birth weight. Poor complementary feeding practices and micronutrient deficiencies coupled with a high incidence of diarrhoea and subsequent inadequate quality of food lead to malnutrition and growth failure (in particular among under-twos), which in turn leads to another generation of malnourished mothers, who will replicate this cycle. What the National Public Nutrition Policy and Strategy 2009-2013 calls an “inter-generational cycle of malnutrition [can] only be broken by comprehensive public health and food security interventions that effectively address these underlying causes, and that are delivered in such a way as to reach the important target group, women.” In this regard, the Public Nutrition Policy and Strategy for 2003–2006 and 2009–2013, as well as the Health and Nutrition Sector Strategy for 2008–2013, initiated by the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) have sought to reduce infant mortality and under-fives mortality by prioritising women through its awareness, prevention and education campaign in: (1) nutrition promotion; (2) child feeding; (3) intake of micronutrients; (4) food quality control; and (5) public nutrition. As stated in the National Public Nutrition Policy and Strategy 2009–2013, “The strategies designed to achieve these objectives will be primarily targeted at women, adolescent girls and children. Tackling maternal nutrition is particularly important to transform the vicious inter-generational cycle of malnutrition into a positive inter-generational cycle of healthy nutrition” (p. 21).


\textsuperscript{98} Afghanistan National Development Strategy 1387–1391, p. 110.


b. Obstacles

Many women, particularly those in rural areas, still give birth at home without the assistance of a skilled healthcare professional. Across the country, only 33% of births take place in a health facility. The differences between urban and rural women are stark: while two-thirds (65%) of urban women give birth in health facilities, this figure drops to only 25% among rural women.\(^\text{102}\)

Despite sampling differences, both the Afghanistan Mortality Survey in 2010 and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in 2011 show that factors such as level of education and place of residence are directly related to the likelihood of having a skilled birth assistant present during labour.

**Table 7: Summary of Key Indicators on Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Percentage Delivered by a Skilled Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AMS 2010(^\text{103}) (Base: 16,998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrassa</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the fieldwork of the 2010 Afghanistan Mortality Survey, households which reported a death in the family were then asked to respond to a specific verbal autopsy questionnaire depending on the age of the deceased relative. Among these deaths, 64 were due to maternal conditions. Despite the small sample size, data from the Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010 provides a snapshot of some of the common causes of maternal deaths.

At the regional level, the findings from the 2010/11 MICS report illustrate that the highest rates of both infant and under-five mortality are in the West, South East, Central Highlands and North.\(^\text{106}\)

Unfortunately, more nuanced data at the provincial level is currently lacking. However, provinces in

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103 Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 79.
105 Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010, p. 139.
the Western region (Herat, Ghor, Baghdis, Farah) have among the poorest levels of health facility coverage, which may account for the fact that the West has the highest levels of mortality.

Another reason for higher female and male mortality rates in some regions and not others may be related to the availability of doctors. Dividing the population by the number of government doctors in each region shows how many people are served by a single doctor. With the exception of the South region, the results broadly corroborate the assertion that a lack of doctors may be one of the factors that contributes to high levels of mortality.

The greatest single proportion (35%) of deaths in Afghanistan is due to non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular diseases or cancer, while communicable diseases and infections account for roughly 30% of deaths. Looking at the causes of death among women, the most common causes of death are infections and parasitic diseases (18%), cardiovascular diseases (18%), respiratory infections (15%) and perinatal conditions (12%). Maternal conditions account for 20.3% of deaths among women aged 15–59. By a small margin, women are more likely than men to die from communicable and non-communicable illnesses, but men (20.8%) are more likely to die from injuries than women (6.7%).

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The biggest challenges for combating HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan continue to be low levels of literacy, low levels of sexual or reproductive education, the ostracising of people who have HIV and, most importantly, a fundamental lack of a comprehensive database or survey with accurate figures about the current level of HIV prevalence in the country.

C. Recommendations

- **Continue to support infrastructure growth**
  There is still a lack of healthcare provision in rural and remote areas. The focus should be on small Health Posts and Mobile Clinics, which provide basic maternal care and advice through trained Community Health Workers (CHWs). More importantly, the World Bank may like to consider ways in which it can support grassroots training for local community members to staff Health Posts in areas lacking female CHWs.

- **Invest in training and capacity building**
  There is also a serious lack of specialist medical consultants like gynaecologists and obstetricians. Many specialists tend to cluster in large urban areas and rural communities are often underserved. Again, the focus should be on providing healthcare in remote areas; therefore, incentivising health workers to work in rural districts through salary, childcare facilities (if they are parents) or other benefits should be considered.

- **Support the development of mental health care staff and facilities**
  The small amount of information available from HMIS about mental health in Afghanistan shows that detection rates are much higher in areas where there are a greater number of trained mental health workers and facilities. Although there are still no accurate figures about the proportion of the population suffering from mental health issues, the legacy of violence and conflict has likely taken its toll on the mental wellbeing of many Afghans.

- **Conduct more research into HIV/AIDS among men and women**
  Perhaps one of the biggest knowledge gaps in the health sector is HIV/AIDS. There is a considerable degree of stigma attached to being HIV positive, so many people do not come forward to be tested. Providing safe and secure facilities across the country in which people can be tested would be an important first step towards tackling the issue. In addition, more research should be conducted into drug use and prostitution. Both areas are currently little understood, yet the risk of carrying and transmitting HIV is likely to be the highest for these two groups.
SECTION 5: RURAL DEVELOPMENT

As an area of intervention, gender has long played a central role in the design of agricultural and rural development projects in Afghanistan. According to the FAO, \(^{109}\) “Analysing rural livelihoods and activities with a gender perspective is essential to understanding differences between men and women in respect to their roles and workloads, their access to and control over resources and benefits, their participation in decision-making and their needs and priorities.” Such an analysis can demonstrate important differences in terms of the nature of the activities they carry out (division of labour) and their access to resources (difference of access to credit sources or what is culturally acceptable for women in terms of access to markets). As seen in Graph 22 on the female share of the active population in the 23 provinces directly targeted by the National Horticulture and Livestock Programme, women have an active role to play in rural development and agricultural activities. If women are generally not involved in cultivation, \(^{110}\) they are highly engaged in harvesting (for all crop categories), and probably even more in processing activities such as shelling nuts and drying fruits. In the livestock sector, while men and women are both active in raising livestock, poultry are mainly raised by women. In terms of processing, women are in charge of producing dairy products and processing wool into yarn. At the very beginning and at the end of the value chain, it is men who link households with the market to obtain the necessary supply of inputs and actually sell both horticulture and livestock products, even if women can be significantly involved in selling eggs, milk and dairy products, and sometimes even poultry in some regions.

Graph 22. Female Share in Active Population (As a Percentage of Total Active Population)


\(^{110}\) Except in a few provinces where they work together with men to cultivate cereals and grains, such as in Farah, Helmand and Jawzjan, fodder and industrial crops in Helmand, or vegetables in Nangarhar.
In rural settings, female involvement in the workforce is significantly higher than in towns and cities. Just over half of the female workforce (54%) is in employment.\(^{111}\) This is largely due to the fact that women play a central role in household farming strategies. However, women are largely confined to the lower end of the value chain and do not wield decision-making responsibility or broker trade exchanges with the market. As the World Bank reported in 2011, rural women have very few incentives for increasing their productivity under the current social-economic framework. This is largely because their work is unremunerated or because they must divide their time between other household tasks like child raising or caring for the elderly.\(^{112}\)

**Horticulture**

Women play a critical role in the agricultural sector, but are often stuck at the lower end of the production value chain.\(^{113}\) The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) focuses on gender mainstreaming in agriculture to help improve women’s economic status and financial autonomy. However, traditional gender roles are deeply embedded and pose many barriers to advancing up the production value chain, as discussed later in this report. Agriculture in Afghanistan is one of the most deeply conservative bastions of Afghan culture. The sector is characterised by small family farms where traction is still largely dependent on animals (52%) and tractors and other mechanical traction devices account for only 35%.\(^{114}\)

Agriculture is based on land ownership, yet most women do not own land, despite the fact that the Civil Code and Sharia Law give them the right to do so.\(^{115}\) Many women are simply unaware that they have the right to own land at all and depend on their husbands or brothers to administer land ownership claims and manage the land.

Most farms in Afghanistan practice subsistence farming and struggle to produce for commercial markets.\(^{116}\) The pressure to provide food for the family means that existing social constructs and mechanisms that tie labourers (male and female) to a traditional production chain act as significant barriers to reforming women’s place in agricultural production. Farms that are only able to produce enough to subsist annually rely heavily on long-established social frameworks and will be resistant to changes that may upset the precarious balance of labour. Moreover, farmers who own small plots of land are especially reluctant to try new technologies or techniques because the risk of failure far outweighs the potential benefits.\(^{117}\) Indeed, poorer households generally require a greater involvement of female labour than wealthier households because they depend on all family members contributing to income-generating activities.

The traditional division of labour is deeply embedded. Qualitative research conducted in 2009 among 360 rural households in Badakhshan, Bamyan and Kabul provinces found that women were mainly involved in roles such as weeding, harvesting and post-harvest work such as threshing and cleaning seeds. Respondents said that these roles had not changed in living memory.\(^{118}\)

**Livestock**

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111 NRVA 2007/8, p. 27.
114 NRVA 2007/8, p. 50.
115 USAID (2012), Land Reform in Afghanistan, p. 12.
Traditionally, women have been in charge of looking after livestock; they feed animals, do the milking, collect fodder and feed stabled animals, and diagnose sick animals. However, as with horticultural practices, women are usually confined to the lower end of the value chain and have little or no access to the wider market. Looking at the division of labour for farming activities reveals some interesting distinctions (Table 8). The data is taken from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock’s Master Plan from 2008.\textsuperscript{119}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8: Percentage of Women’s and Men’s Responsibility in Animal Husbandry (Taken Directly from the World Bank\textsuperscript{120})</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Work Responsibility</strong></td>
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<td>Feeding</td>
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<td>Grazing</td>
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<td>Watering</td>
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<td>Tending young</td>
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<td>Milking</td>
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<td>Treating</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchasing animals</td>
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<td>Purchasing feed</td>
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<td>Selling animals</td>
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<td>Selling wool</td>
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<td>Selling fibre</td>
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<td>Treating</td>
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</table>

Table 8 clearly shows that women have greater responsibility for the “stay-at-home” components of animal husbandry, while men have greater responsibility for purchasing livestock and selling produce on the market. Again, these figures reiterate the central finding that women are still confined to the lower end of the production value chain.

\textsuperscript{119} World Bank (2012), “Increasing Women’s Opportunities along Value Chains of Farm Products,” Afghanistan Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Note Series, No. 2.

\textsuperscript{120} World Bank (2012), “Increasing Women’s Opportunities along Value Chains of Farm Products,” Afghanistan Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Note Series, No. 2, p. 2.
b. Obstacles and challenges

According to the World Bank and the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, the division of labour in agriculture is largely a reflection of social and cultural norms, where women have limited interaction with men outside their family, restricted ability to travel by themselves and complicated means through which they can own land (often making it near impossible to do so).

Limited access to resources and services

These factors constitute a real barrier to women’s access to resources and services, including credit, training, extension, inputs, trading and marketing networks, as well as education and information. Without collateral to apply for credit, opportunities to participate in extension training (selection for these opportunities is often based on land ownership) and a lack of women service providers in credit, input supply, marketing, and so on, women become marginalised. Despite the key roles women play in harvesting and post-harvesting processing, this work, when done inside their own household, is considered to be part of their expected household duties, and therefore generates no income. At times women may work in the fields of other people as day labourers at very low wages (again limited due to cultural norms and behaviours). Furthermore, there is little or no training for women on quality control, including hygiene, sanitation and higher-value varieties. As briefly mentioned in the above section, access to credit from financial institutions often depends on the ability to demonstrate ownership of traditional forms of collateral property such as land, machinery and housing. Women, who generally lack title to land and other property, therefore have less opportunity to access financial services. Moreover, social mobilisation of producers by aid agencies is often based on proof of land ownership or on “head of household” rules that enable only one family member to register with an association.

Mobility and rural access

Poor roads and the lack of transport services affect the entire population’s mobility in general, but women are particularly affected by the need to adhere to strict standards for socially acceptable behaviour. Rural women’s mobility outside the home or village is also restricted by security concerns. Furthermore, women may be prohibited from traveling outside the village, required to have an escort and unable to interact (including proximity seating) with men outside the family. Limitations on travelling longer distances, especially on public transport that would require communal seating with men outside the family, preclude rural women from easily accessing markets, other villages and cities. In a few instances, women entrepreneurs have gained greater mobility with acceptable escorts and affordable, suitable means of transport; but to have this freedom of movement, financial costs can be greater than they are for men due to the necessity of hiring chaperones, cars and drivers (it is socially unacceptable for a woman to drive herself). These patterns of travel and transport constrain women’s participation in economic activity, making it challenging for women to

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access financial services outside their immediate neighbourhoods and communities. Some acceptance exists for the strength-in-numbers approach, and women travelling in groups may be an effective means of circumventing mobility problems.

**Land ownership**

The vast majority of Afghan women do not own land. Societal factors dictate that women should not own property, especially land, although they can inherit land as widows and as children of landowners. Despite Sharia and national land inheritance laws giving daughters and widows the right to claim land inheritance, in practice, customary laws, local tradition and lack of awareness about these rights discourage and/or reject women’s claims to their property rights. Women traditionally rely on their husbands or brothers to take care of them and as a result are often reluctant to pursue land inheritance claims that would reduce their brothers’ share; in addition, they are often reluctant to claim land in land disputes that may involve them due to cultural norms dictating that men are the responsible breadwinners of the family, and therefore should own the means of ensuring income.

c. **Recommendations**

At a programming level there are a number of short- and long-term actions that would help to improve the situation of women in the agricultural and rural development sectors.

- **Agribusiness development**
  More ambitiously, the development of a more dynamic agribusiness sector could lead to significant employment opportunities for women (working, for instance, in fruit drying or in de-shelling activities at almond factories).

- **Private Entrepreneurship**
  Private enterprise is a sustainable option for women in Afghanistan. Passing from self-sufficient income-generating activity to a small business can be possible with technical support and better knowledge of market needs. The Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Program (AREDP) has already shown good results since 2010.

- **Poultry at home**
  It is important to note that, with the exception of small-scale commercial poultry activity, women’s labour is essentially targeted for activities that do not generate income but rather focus on household subsistence. Therefore, expectations of financial contributions may become difficult for widows who have full responsibility for their household. As such, development programmes focusing on agriculture and rural development could of course have a positive impact on women with backyard poultry activities, for which the preference will be given to widows, as well as poor households, disabled persons and recent returnees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the selection of beneficiaries.

- **Dialogue with communities**

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The participation of women in agriculture will be heavily reliant on the capacity of international actors to engage in and maintain a permanent and long-term dialogue with local authorities (CDCs, shuras, local elders, heads of households, etc.).

- **Awareness and sensitisation campaigns**
  It is also important for local and international actors to engage in an intensive information and mobilisation campaign and not just rely on local authorities to circulate information, perhaps by identifying local women’s associations and working with them to inform women in the villages of a project zone. Finally, meetings should be organised taking into account other activities carried out by women in the household and mobility limitations (making it possible to come accompanied by a child or a family member if necessary) so they can attend the meetings.
SECTION 6: ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Levels of unemployment in Afghanistan are low overall, yet there are considerable differences between the number of employed men and women. Women’s poor status in the working environment is largely a symptom of social constraints as well as economic necessity. Assessing the current situation for women in work is a critical part of gender mainstreaming activity in Afghanistan as it is closely related to issues about education and the rights and legal status of women.

The findings presented below show that strong traditional cultural norms tie women to the lower end of the economic value chain. Women are mostly engaged in labour-intensive activities that are not highly valued because they involve production rather than trade or commerce. Extreme poverty throughout the country fosters an entrenched reliance on existing production systems, which are highly resistant to change. As a direct result of this very few women have commercial decision-making responsibility or financial autonomy.

As the GOA seeks ways to empower women, this is an important area to study. However, compared to the health and education sectors, in which there is a large volume of often-contradictory statistical information, Afghanistan’s labour market suffers from a dearth of fundamental information, and very little is gender disaggregated. This section of the report synthesises the current literature to paint a picture of the Afghan economy today. Using case studies from urban and rural research projects provides a more nuanced context for women’s employment and work status. To avoid potential overlaps with the previous section, this section intentionally omits analysis of agriculture and rural development.

a. Current Situation

Looking at the distribution of employment in various sectors shows that Afghanistan is fundamentally an agrarian society. Social structure is often built around property and land ownership, and more than half (55%) of the population is involved in agricultural activity in some form, according to the latest comprehensive figures from the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment in 2007/8. \(^{129}\) Figures from this survey provide a detailed insight into which sectors employ the greatest proportion of the workforce.

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\(^{129}\) NRVA 2007/8, p. 40.
Yet, despite this, the graph below shows that agriculture has been declining as a proportion of Afghanistan’s GDP in relative terms since 2002. As of 2011, over half of Afghanistan’s GDP was derived from “services” (telecoms, IT, transportation, retail trade, etc.), which has been steadily increasing since 2002. Industry, by comparison, has remained comparatively static as a proportion of GDP.

However, the growth of the services sector is largely due to the presence of international aid organisations, NGOs and NATO forces. Thus, in absolute terms, as the graph below shows, agriculture generates considerably more revenue in 2011 than it did in 2002. Looking ahead, it is likely that the economy will revert to a heavy dependency on agriculture. Therefore, one of the main focuses of this section of the report will be on women’s role in this sector.

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130 NRVA 2007/8, p. 32.
National Levels of Employment

There are a number of different ways to measure levels of employment and unemployment, and informal employment through families and familial networks makes this a particularly difficult figure to judge. The labour force participation rate is the percentage of people who are either working or looking for work (the workforce) who are employed. In 2007/8 the labour force participation rate was 67%, yet the difference between men and women in work was significant: 86% and 47%, respectively. Another way to look at the level of employment is the proportion of people who are of working age (16 years and over) who are employed or unemployed: the employment-to-population ratio. In 2007/8 this figure was 62%, and again it varies dramatically for men (80%) and women (43%). The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percentage of the labour force: 7% for men and women in 2007/8. These figures are fairly typical of many developing countries. Extreme poverty forces people into work and drives employment figures up.

Gender disaggregated data about employment are not numerous, so it is still hard to measure how women are integrated into the job market. However, there are many small-scale regional studies that help researchers to piece together the complex issue of women and work in Afghanistan.

Women in Employment

Overall, compared to men, women work fewer hours, earn less, are more likely to work in vulnerable employment and have limited financial autonomy. The NRVA figures from 2007/8 show considerable differences between levels and types of employment among men and women and in rural and urban settings. For clarity, this section looks at women’s roles in urban settings and rural settings separately. In rural settings, employment is dominated by agriculture as shown in Graph 26. In cities, trade is the primary source of employment.

Regardless of which sector women work in, the NRVA 2007/8 reports that 96% of working women are in vulnerable employment, compared to 88% of men. The ILO defines vulnerable employment as being informal and insecure and typified by unstable and inadequate earnings, low productivity and a lack of “safety nets” to mitigate risks when labourers are in dire straits.\textsuperscript{134}

The NRVA offers further statistics for the average number of hours worked by men and women in urban and rural settings per week. Nationally, men work on average 39 hours per week, compared to women, who work 30 hours a week. In a rural context the difference between working hours is much smaller as women play a large role in agricultural production: men work for 36 hours a week and women work for 34 hours a week. In urban centres, in comparison, women work 34 hours a week while men work for 52 hours a week.\textsuperscript{135}

**Urban Employment**

There is very limited data available about the distribution of female labour in urban settings, but Graph 27 summarises the findings from research conducted in 2008 by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled. The survey was conducted in all the provincial capitals except Uruzgan, Wardak and Daikundi (which were omitted largely for security reasons) and so offers a fairly reliable indicator of female urban labour distribution.

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133 NRVA 2007/8, p. 32.
134 ILO (2009), *Key Indicators of the Labour Market*, Sixth Edition, Chapter 1, section C.
135 NRVA 2007/8, p. 33.
Overall, the NRVA figures from 2007/8 show that access to employment for women in cities is lower than in rural settings. While 79% of the male urban workforce is employed, only 19% of the female workforce is employed. Graph 27 shows that women are primarily involved in low-income, low-civil influence roles such as tailoring, cooking and carpet weaving. Only 3.6% of urban women are employed by the government and only 7.1% are teachers.

Graph 27: Percentage of Female Working in Each Occupation Nationwide
(Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2008)

A much smaller study conducted by AREU in Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad in 2006 found that urban livelihoods in general are characterised by informality. Most people in the study areas were found to be employed through informal networks of friends and contacts. The study asserts, without statistics, that many livelihoods were heavily dependent on women and children working for extremely low incomes. This corroborates research conducted in rural communities in which women provide a cheap labour service at the lower end of the value chain.

Private Enterprise

Although agriculture accounts for such a large part of the workforce, there are other, smaller, sectors working throughout the country; yet here, too, women are underrepresented. Barriers to entering these sectors are likely to be more acute than for other areas because many of these activities are not household-related. Lack of financial autonomy, poor mobility and the necessity to conduct regular household chores make it hard for women to act independently, or to seek work in sectors other than those dictated by tradition or necessity.

In order to assess the number of private non-agricultural enterprises in Afghanistan, a survey was conducted in 2009 by the Central Statistics Organization. The survey was conducted across the country among 2,334 commercial establishments.

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136 NRVA 2007/8, p. 27.
137 Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled (2008), An Urban Area Primary Source Study of Supply & Demand in the Labor Market, p. 25.
The study estimated that there were in the region of 402,000 establishments employing 1.2 million people. The survey found that the majority of workers were unpaid, which corresponds to the wider employment sphere. Women accounted for over half of the labour force for manufacturing (57%) and for education (56%); both sectors are among the least well paid compared to sectors like transport and storage or real estate, in which there are virtually no women. In comparative terms, health and social work is well paid, and an encouraging 18% of employees in this sector are women.

Table 9: Workers’ Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paid</th>
<th>Unpaid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationals</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 28: Gender Distribution in Each Sector
(Source: IBES 2009)

However, it is not immediately clear from the survey whether women’s roles in these sectors are formal or informal. Graph 25 suggests that female employment in manufacturing may be informal, as very few people in the sector get paid for their labour services. In education, by comparison, paid employment is far more common.

Graph 30: Average Number of Workers Compared to Number of Paid Workers
(Source: IBES 2009)

Research conducted in 2007 among 1,019 adults on behalf of the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan found that many women did not have the authority to make financial decisions alone. Although this research was only conducted across nine provinces, the findings provide clear evidence that financial decisions are still mostly taken by men rather than women. This supports the findings from the NRVA in 2007/8, which found that even among women who generate income themselves, only 20% independently decide how to spend their money.

The issue of autonomous decision-making is moot. It is common for households in the West to make financial decisions as a household unit: neither the husband nor the wife makes financial decisions with autonomy. Therefore, while this is an interesting statistic to monitor in the future, it is not a particularly effective indicator of equality.

Graph 31: Ability to make autonomous financial decisions
(Source: Greeley, M. 2007)

- 36% No
- 39% Yes - without consultation with husband/father
- 12% Yes - in consultation with husband/father
- 13% Not sure / Don’t know

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b. Obstacles to work

Throughout the literature some common themes emerge about the reasons why women are at the lower end of the value chain or simply not employed at all. The factors below restrict women’s ability to secure jobs with greater responsibility and autonomy.

- **Mobility**
  Women are usually unable to travel alone or interact with men outside the family unit. Therefore, they cannot act as trade intermediaries or broker exchanges with other traders. This means that they are only able to work at tasks that can be conducted in or around the home.

- **Personal networks**
  One of the conditions for access to the job market in Afghanistan is to have a strong network of contacts. Currently, the main networks available to women are their own families (who, paradoxically, are often the main obstacles to female kin gaining financial autonomy). A lack of mobility makes it hard for women to forge relationships with potential business contacts outside their immediate family groups.

- **Lack of knowledge about basic rights**
  Many women do not know that they are entitled to own or inherit land. Research conducted in 2012 by USAID among 30 women in Jalalabad found that most respondents thought that buying and selling land was the privilege of men rather than women. Some said that this was because women do not usually have access to sufficient funds, while others said that women are not allowed to buy or sell land in Afghan society.147

- **Access to credit**
  Women cannot access credit or financial support if they are unable to demonstrate that they own land. Support from financial institutions and NGOs is often withheld in the absence of official documentation to corroborate ownership.

- **Women do not accrue their own wealth**
  Research in Badakhshan, Bamyan and Kabul provinces showed that although some women could sell animal produce (like eggs and qrut) within their villages, not all vendors were able to keep the proceeds. In most cases, women use the income generated for household necessities rather than personal needs. This is likely a function of poverty as much as the dictates of culture. Nevertheless, this illustrates that gaining financial autonomy, even through traditional employment, is extremely difficult for many women.148

- **Restricted access to knowledge**
  Most business transactions take place between men, so women often have very little understanding of the wider market.149 Therefore, business knowledge is low, which decreases women’s chances of progressing up the value chain, and of initiating independent private enterprises.

c. Recommendations

Taking specific groups’ concerns into account is critical for promoting social justice and equity in the transition process and avoiding “one-size-fits-all” approaches. This will involve addressing the participation of women, who have traditionally had restricted access to employment, through education, credit schemes and professional development. At the national and local levels, there are a number of macro- and micro-measures that would help to further improve the situation of women on the Afghan labour market.

- **Holistic approach**
  In the long run, only coordinated, market-driven and contextualised initiatives will contribute to improving the situation of women on the job market (both qualitatively and quantitatively). As such, the mainstreaming of employment objectives in long-term programming cycles, through the National Priority Programs that specifically focus on job and skills creation for women, has to be prioritised to enable sustainable implementation strategies through multiyear capacity building and employment generation strategies. However, it should also be noted that very often, rural women: (1) do not have the basic literacy and numeracy skills that would allow them to start new businesses; and/or (2) are not allowed by their families and relatives to engage into any commercial activity (other than unskilled agriculture-related jobs). Those two correlated factors strongly hinder women’s capacity to find jobs and develop economic activities.

- **Pragmatic market-driven employment and capacity building policies**
  To build stronger linkages to the labour market, priority should be given to: (1) longer term employment strategies towards women, which address institutional capacity building through technical and financial support (e.g., Employment Service Centres [ESCs]); and (2) making both public and private higher educational institutions more accessible to women as well as more market-responsive to the womanpower needs of the economy.

- **Informed and evidence-based policies**
  A major impediment to development efforts has been the lack of adequate information on the Afghan labour market. To fill this important gap, research priorities must be defined, in partnership with the management and staff of the CSO and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD), to gather accurate data on the existing labour market to provide a solid basis for the formulation of relevant vocational training programmes specifically tailored to the existing and potential female labour market.
SECTION 7: GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN JICA PROGRAMS/PROJECTS

The Government of Afghanistan and the international community have endorsed national priority programmes in accordance with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Among the key development areas, Infrastructure Development, Health, Education, Agriculture and Rural Development are significant fields for improving the lives of the people of Afghanistan. In this regard, the Government of Japan (through JICA) has agreed to conduct several programmes and projects in line with these priorities and cluster approaches. However, by their very nature, these programmes do not necessarily include gender components, and gender mainstreaming activities are too often considered as a collateral consequence of JICA’s activities and projects in Afghanistan.

SUPPORT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Promotion of Kabul Metropolitan Area Development is, of course, the main project through which JICA channels its assistance and support to the development of the local urban infrastructure. Through our discussions with project and programme managers of the Grand Kabul Development (GKD), we learned that there was no specific understanding or focus on gender related issues in the infrastructure development component of JICA’s assistance. However, the strategy and advocacy of JICA in Afghanistan could strongly benefit from: (1) the systematisation of data disaggregated by gender in all the information collected by the GKD team; (2) a basic socio-economic impact assessment (baseline and endline surveys) of the impact on women of Grand Kabul development, as there may be some direct and positive outcomes from this project for the lives of many women; and (3) the development of partnerships with governmental agencies, UN agencies (the ILO) or NGOs operating in Kabul and Deh Sabz to create capacity building, employment centres or job placement programmes tailored to the needs of local women.

SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world, and much of its poverty is situated in rural areas. About 80% of the population depends on agriculture and associated forms of rural production for their livelihood. Seasonal and chronic unemployment are common and increasing. This results in severe food insecurity, a socioeconomic environment that is conducive to instability, an illicit economy and extreme poverty.

- Capacity Development and Institutional Strengthening of the MAIL (CDIS)

Although the MAIL has been implementing an institutional reform programme called Change Management since October 2009, the capacity of providing public services remains insufficient. Institutional strengthening is an urgent issue to be addressed for long- and medium-term agricultural development. In these circumstances, the GOA made a request to the GOJ for a technical cooperation project, which aims to improve public service delivery by MAIL through capacity development and institutional strengthening in policy/programme formulation as well as at the program/project management levels in Kabul, and in the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL), from May 2012 to April 2017.
Although the outputs of the project are both ambitious and realistic – considering JICA’s significant involvement in the initiative – it is striking to see that none of the four outputs specifically considers vulnerable populations or gender sensitive issues: (1) improved capacity of the MAIL in policy setting, programme formulation and coordination; (2) improved capacity of the Irrigation Directorate (ID) in formulating, implementing and monitoring, and evaluating irrigated agricultural development projects; (3) improved capacity of developing and disseminating appropriate cultivation and farming techniques in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Directorate (ARD) and the Agricultural Extension General Directorate (EGD); and (4) improved capacity of the DAIL(s) in the target areas regarding farming and irrigation management for farmers. This lack of consideration is certainly a pity given the programme’s potential and what almost all of its outputs could offer in terms of gender empowerment or promotion.

When asked whether specific measures had been taken to promote gender within CDIS, JICA’s counterparts said that the topic (agriculture) was not conducive to a discussion of gender related issues as it was extremely technical and as only a few women work at the MAIL or DAILs. However, even if JICA only has bilateral technical agreements with the government, a more sensitive and voluntarist approach could facilitate the promotion of gender equality by JICA including conditionality clauses in its partnerships and specific objectives towards gender promotion. In particular, JICA could remind its national partners that the pivotal role played by women in the agricultural economy must be taken into account while designing plans and strategies at the national, provincial, district or community level. Likewise, JICA could include specific indicators and M&E tools in its training modules so that its governmental counterparts could assess the positive or negative correlations between their plans and the socio-economic situation of women (and vulnerable people) living and working in rural areas.

- Rice-Based Agriculture Development in Afghanistan (RIPA)

In Afghanistan, rice is the second largest staple food after wheat, and it is also important as a summer cash crop. Currently the domestic annual production of rice is 400,000 tonnes while consumption is 500,000 tonnes, equivalent to approximately 10% of cereals in the country; Afghanistan is reliant on imports, mainly from Pakistan, to cover the 100,000-tonne deficit for domestic requirements. The amount of rice consumption in the country is gradually increasing because of the rapid increase in the population (2.7% annually, according to the World Bank) accompanying a high birth rate. Additional food supplies will also be needed for 3 million repatriates and refugees, which is equivalent to 10% of Afghanistan’s population. Moreover, the experience of other developing countries indicates that the appetite for food inevitably diversifies during economic growth. The country’s rice production, however, remains stagnant, with more than 10 years of lower productivity in comparison with neighbouring countries: the rice yield in 2009 was 2.3 tonnes per hectare, while it was 3.8 tonnes per hectare in Pakistan (according to FAOSTAT).

The GOA requested that the GOJ implement a technical cooperation project with the aim of promoting rice production and improving its quality in Nangarhar province, which is one of the highest potential areas for rice in Afghanistan due to its temperate climate and the abundant supply of water from the Kabul River and Kunar River. JICA has been successfully carrying out the project Improvement of Rice-Based Agriculture in Nangarhar Province (RIP) since September 2007. RIP has fulfilled its obligations to increase rice productivity and to disseminate improved cultivation techniques through a demonstration farm, and terminated in March 2011. In the terminal evaluation study, conducted in November 2010, the necessity for more enhancements of activities on research and extension in Nangarhar province was confirmed. It was also observed that there is a
need for expansion of the outcome to other potential rice areas, such as Laghman, Kunar, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar, Balkh and Herat, from April 2011 to March 2016.

As observed by JICA’s counterpart, “such a technical cooperation agreement does not lead to includ[ing] gender related issues.” However, should JICA decide to streamline a cross-cutting gender strategy throughout all its activities and programme components, specific clauses could be included in the RIP project (e.g., technical cooperation could depend on the creation of a few selected cooperatives of women working specifically in the production of rice, etc.).

- Development of Wheat Breeding Materials for Sustainable Food Production (2011 to 2016)

In order to develop new breeding materials to promote sustainable wheat production in Afghanistan, joint research has been developed between the Directorate of the Agricultural Research Institute and Yokohama City University. So far, four officials have been sent to Japanese university as Master’s course students. However: (1) the extremely technical nature of this bilateral agreement does not immediately include objectives for gender promotion; and (2) it is very often difficult to convince Afghan families to consent to women going abroad (to Japan) to study for six months or a year.

- The Community Development Project for Returnees and Receiving Communities in Nangarhar Province (NRRC)

This project aims to improve the livelihood of returnees and receiving communities through the construction and/or rehabilitation of community infrastructure (agricultural roads, schools, small irrigation systems, etc.) in the province of Nangarhar, which has been experiencing a high rate of return from Pakistan. The Community Development Project for Returnees and Receiving Communities in Nangarhar Province (NRRC) was launched by JICA on 1 June 2010 to improve the living environment of returnees and receiving communities by providing community level basic infrastructure such as schools, clinics, roads, irrigation canals and footpaths in 11 villages in Behsud and Surkh Rod districts of Nangarhar, Afghanistan, and focused on enhancing the capacity of local communities, local consultants and local contractors.

Despite its “remarkable success” (according to an expert from the Norwegian Refugee Council), the NRRC has not really tried to promote specific gender activities: if updated socio-economic data are available, there is no real disaggregation by gender; if pilot infrastructure projects are selected based on social and technical needs and a secured environment, there are no specific vulnerability or gender related criteria; lastly, due to the architecture of the project (providing local communities with basic skills), there are no specific components that directly address women’s issues, even though construction, rehabilitation and repairs can strongly contribute to the wellbeing and empowerment of female members of the community. Finally, as gender is not acknowledged as a key aspect of the programme, there is no data available to evaluate the social and economic outcome of the NRRC initiative with respect to women, although it is probably extremely positive and could easily be highlighted as a key achievement of JICA’s activities in the country.
Project on Poverty Reduction for Chronically Poor Women

This project (2009–2013) was originally designed to develop the capacity of the MOWA in policy making and information dissemination to enhance women’s economic empowerment through training, information collection and analysis, and coordinating and promoting pilot project(s) carried out by other ministries. In May 2010, during the mission from JICA HQ, the MOWA strongly requested the implementation of pilot projects. After discussions, JICA and the MOWA agreed to implement pilot projects which were to be utilised as tools for on the job training (OJT) for MOWA Working Team (WT) members.

The MOWA WT consisting of 10 staff members from different departments first started to prepare guidelines, and have subsequently been conducting all processes of the project cycle by themselves with support by JICA PR-CPW. The MOWA WT created guidelines, and different types of formats of reports such as needs assessments, monitoring, baseline surveys and lessons leaned/evaluations. They conducted information collection workshops, needs assessments, baseline surveys and monitoring, and they are now planning a small evaluation for a second pilot project using baseline data. In order to develop and diversify their thinking process, the WT was tasked to create and prepare all tools and documents by themselves; therefore, the tools created by the WT are developing documents and may not be perfect, so the revision of tools was also undertaken from time to time.

So far two pilot projects have been implemented. The selection criteria for beneficiaries were that they be Chronically Poor Women (CPW). The first pilot project was animal husbandry targeting 35 CPW in Dehdadi district in Balkh province, while the second project involved animal husbandry and leather bag making targeting 40 CPW in Istalif district in Kabul province. The second project was completed on 14 December 2012. Since health issues and lack of education are also attributed to poverty, both pilot projects aimed to cover not only economic issues but also health and education. Health, hygiene and literacy training as well as TB awareness were covered in both pilot projects. The TB component was added to the JICA TB project. The Department of Women’s Affairs (DOWA) in Balkh and Kabul provinces were also involved in the pilot projects.

This project is the only project specifically targeting women in Afghanistan. Its overall perceived success, over the four-year implementation period, shows that JICA can actually achieve ambitious projects linking ministerial counterparts and local communities. However, there are no clear indicators of the actual impact of such an essential and innovative approach, and JICA Afghanistan has therefore no way to: (1) seriously monitor and evaluate the quality of the work that has been done; (2) develop recommendations based on this first pilot; and (3) link this initiative, in a more coherent strategic approach, to other JICA programmes less specifically focused on gender.

SUPPORT FOR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS: Health and Education

Afghanistan has faced an acute shortage of health facilities (HFs) and health professionals. Moreover, there is a huge gap in health conditions between urban and rural areas. In order to rapidly improve this situation, major donors in the health sector such as the World Bank, US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Commission have provided substantial financial assistance to Afghanistan since 2003 to expand the provision of the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS), by

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156 This includes widowed, divorced, single and even married women who have no one to provide for or to assist them.
contracting out to NGOs working at the primary and secondary levels of public HFs, and the Essential Package of Hospital Services (EPHS), especially in rural areas. Thanks to this international assistance, the proportion of areas covered by BPHS currently accounts for 85% of the total population. As the coverage for Primary Health Care (PHC) by BPHS has been extended from 9% in 2003 to 85% in 2008, the health indicators have improved significantly.

**Strengthening of urban health in Afghanistan**

In spite of the particular problems seen in urban areas such as the heavy concentration and fluidity of the population and the presence of the poor including internally displaced persons (IDPs), and massive poverty in certain areas, Kabul has received little support from donors simply because its health indicators are not as bad as those in rural areas. Under these circumstances, the GOA requested that JICA provide technical assistance to implement a pilot in Kabul, namely the Urban Health System Strengthening Project (UHSSP), which aimed to strengthen the health system so as to be suitable for the urban areas of Kabul (JICA-UHSSP).  

This 36-month project aimed to strengthen the urban health system in urban Kabul by improving the management capacity of Afghan counterparts (KPHD) for adequate health administration, through three pilot initiatives: (1) improvement of Mother and Child Health (MCH) services with implementation of 24-hour delivery services at four CHCs, as CHCs with Delivery; (2) expansion of immunisation coverage using a public–private partnership (EPI-PPP); and (3) implementation of Community-Based Health Care (CBHC) by Community Health Workers (CHWs).

Despite obvious links to gender related topics (through the first pilot initiative in particular), JICA has not tried to capitalise on this promising project to highlight the positive impact of its health related project on women and children: the focus has been on the technical aspects (“what?” and “how?”) and not on the beneficiaries (“who?”), which could have been done to better assess the needs and understand the profiles of the mothers and children who have benefitted from JICA’s technical assistance.

**Project for the Promotion and Enhancement of the Afghan Capacity for Effective Development (PEACE)**

Afghanistan suffers from a serious lack of skills and capacity among civil servants working in governmental agencies and ministries. Under these circumstances, the Project for the Promotion and Enhancement of the Afghan Capacity for Effective Development (PEACE) was established by JICA as a technical cooperation project in Afghanistan in 2011. PEACE consists of several prospective fields of study, which are based on the needs of relevant ministries, authorities and universities mainly belonging to the Infrastructure Development and Agriculture and Rural Development NPP clusters. In Afghanistan, 18 prospective fields of study have been settled, which were confirmed as being indispensable to the socio-economic development of Afghanistan through the preliminary survey conducted by JICA, targeting highly capable, young government officials and university faculty members, who are expected to engage in formulating and implementing socio-economic

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152 The Urban Health System is a system for urban areas, which includes cities such as Kandahar and Heart, from Afghanistan as a whole. Because the scope of this project is limited to only Kabul, we refer to it as JICA-UHSSP to distinguish it from the urban health system for Afghanistan as a whole.
development plans and to become leaders in Afghanistan. PEACE applicants are selected from relevant ministries, authorities and universities. Japanese universities are then specifically in charge of prospective fields of study, to provide the participants with educational programmes corresponding to their needs and initial background. PEACE participants will acquire expert knowledge, conduct research and build human networks through their studies in Master’s courses in Japanese universities, and are expected to use such knowledge to take on an active role in practically solving the socio-economic development issues that Afghanistan is facing. So far, more than 50 applicants have been accepted, but only three of them are women, as it is often more difficult to: (1) identify women who would be likely to join the programme; and (2) convince their relatives and families to allow them to go abroad for an extended period.

- **Study on the correlation between women’s high incidence of tuberculosis and reproductive health factors, 2011**

In Afghanistan, the incidence of tuberculosis (TB) among women of reproductive age (15–44) is highest compared with men and other age groups. That the highest incidence of TB is among reproductive-aged women is significantly different from other countries. The reasons behind the high incidence of TB among Afghan women of reproductive age remain an unsettled question. Women’s reproductive health is constructed by cultural, socio-economical, historical and environmental factors in Afghanistan. It has been suggested that the excessive TB rate reported among young women could be the result of immunological changes related to pregnancy. However, there was very little direct evidence that pregnancy increases the risk of contracting TB until JICA and the National Tuberculosis Control Programme collaborated in 2011 on an innovative study to tackle the problem and help develop practical interventions likely to reduce morbidity and mortality percentages due to TB among Afghan women of reproductive age. However, when the review team asked relevant interlocutors from MOPH, MOWA, UNICEF, FAO, WHO or WFP if they had heard about this study, none of the ten interviewees was able to mention its subject or findings: this clearly shows that a potentially interesting study has not been adequately shared with other key national and international actors, which may have contributed to reducing its positive impact on gender.

- **Support for Expansion and Improvement of Literacy Education in Afghanistan (LEAF)**

Afghanistan’s adult literacy rate is estimated to be as low as 34% with a huge gap between men (50%) and women (18%), as well as between rural and urban areas. To address this challenge, a number of projects and programmes on literacy education have been implemented by the Literacy Department (LD), development partners, NGOs and other stakeholders. Currently, the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) is being promoted on the initiative of the LD and UNESCO for cooperation and coordination among the activities of all the organisations working on literacy education to achieve the national goal mentioned in the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP).

The project Support for Expansion and Improvement of Literacy Education in Afghanistan (LEAF) was implemented from March 2006 to July 2008 with the cooperation of JICA and the LD. Through this project, the knowledge and skills of the LD with regard to data management of literacy courses, materials management and supervisors’ training were enhanced. Also 10,347 learners received literacy education in Kabul, Balkh and Bamyan Provinces. The terminal evaluation, conducted in February 2008, showed that the project purpose was achieved well and had a positive impact while
the sustainability of the activities was insufficient, and continuous support for the LD is highly necessary to work effectively under the LIFE framework.

Therefore, the GOA requested that the GOJ implement a project focusing on capacity development of the supervisors who are the core element for successful implementation of literacy courses. In response to the request, JICA dispatched a Detailed Planning Survey Team in order to collect necessary information and to discuss the detailed design of the project with the GOA’s concerned authorities. As a result of the surveys, and in order to execute the Project on Improvement of Literacy Education Management in Afghanistan (LEAF2), a Record of Discussions (R/D) was signed on 18 February 2010 between JICA and authorities of the GOA.

The project’s overall goal was thus to improve the management and quality of literacy education in Afghanistan, and enhance the monitoring and technical support capacity of literacy administration. In this regard, and based on JICA’s counterparts, it seems that the project has performed well. However, as highlighted in the discussion with many other JICA project or programme managers, there is no systematic gender approach (even as a cross-cutting issue) in the educational component of JICA’s assistance.

- **Strengthening of Teacher Education Project (STEP) 3, STEP3**

There are many difficulties in capacity development for human resources in education in the Provincial Education Department (PED), Teacher Training College (TTC) and District Education Department (DED). Under these circumstances, starting in 2005, the Strengthening of Teacher Education Project (STEP) Phase 1 and Phase 2 were implemented to improve the teaching skills of in-service teachers using Teachers’ Guides (TGs). Activities in STEP1 and STEP2 included: (1) development of practical TGs with curriculums and distribution to all primary schools (STEP1, Grades 1 to 3; STEP2, Grades 4 to 6); (2) implementation of in-service training for teachers with TGs (STEP1); and (3) development of TTC materials based on TGs and lectures to conduct practical lessons (STEP2).

STEP2 completed the distribution of TGs to DEDs in 34 provinces across Afghanistan by December 2010, and was acclaimed by teachers in the model provinces for the quality and effectiveness of the TGs. Regarding the development of TTC materials, materials were developed regarding teaching methodology in science and mathematics, and workshops were conducted with teachers from 33 provinces (out of 34).

The Strengthening of Teacher Education Project Phase 3 (STEP3), signed in 2010 between JICA and the MOE, was supposed to further achieve the initial objectives of STEP2, through: (1) sensitising primary school teachers to the TGs (Grades 1 to 6) developed in STEP1 and STEP2; (2) improving the level of school activities, through education management training for school staff and local district officers; and (3) enhancing the teaching/learning process in science and mathematics with the use of TTC materials.
SECTION 8: ONGOING GENDER PROJECTS BY OTHER INTERNATIONAL DONORS

**Education: Key existing programmes at the national level**

Like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education recognises the importance of encouraging gender equity and that “special attention needs to be given to increasing the number of women students and women in higher education teaching positions, especially at the senior level.” The Ministry has set a goal of 30% female students in higher education by 2014. To this end, the Ministry of Education has implemented a wide range of programmes under the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) with the support of national and international donors. A short summary of some of the main areas of reported achievement follows below.

**Community-Based Education (CBE)**

In 2012, the Ministry of Education reaffirmed its commitment to CBE, which it sees as an important tool for increasing levels of education (particularly for girls) in remote and rural areas, especially where governmental presence is light. Some of the main criteria for establishing a community-based school are:

1. The host community must allow girls to attend the school;
2. It must provide appropriate shelter for the classes; and
3. It must play an active role in establishing and participating in a school shura.

These prerequisites are important because they encourage communities to play an active role in educating boys and girls. So far, CBE appears to have had a positive impact on the number of girls in education: the Ministry of Education’s figures show that 56.78% of students in CBE are female.

USAID has been working with the Ministry of Education under the Partnership for Community Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) to deliver the Emergency Community-Based Education Initiative (ECBE), which aims to support the Ministry’s commitment to CBE. Through this initiative, looking at gender specifically, USAID reports the following achievements:

1. 44% of the total number of students (19,550) enrolled in primary grade ECBE classes are female; and
2. 22% of people on School Management Committees (SMC) are female.

**UNICEF Community Based School**

Children from poor and marginalised communities are particularly susceptible to missing out on school. Research conducted among the Jogi and Chori Frosh communities in Mazar-e-Sharif by Samuel Hall on behalf of UNICEF showed that 83.9% of Jogi children are out-of-school, compared to

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156 Ministry of Education (2022), EMIS data set 1390, “Enrollment by Grade.”
47.2% of children among the non-Jogi urban poor living in the same areas. Most girls from these communities can be seen begging in the city centres of Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif or Herat. However, although child labour is an important strategy for ensuring livelihoods in these communities, Jogi parents are not averse to sending their children to school in principle. In fact, many of them recognise that education may be the only way for their children to leave poverty behind. Indeed, the only major barrier is that most Jogi do not have a tazkira, or ID card, which has two important ramifications. Firstly, children are unable to register for governmental schools without this form of identification. Likewise, land ownership is prohibited without a tazkira, which means that many parents are unable to break out of the cycle of poverty and exclusion, and are forced to keep their children at home to increase household productivity: 35% of Jogi children beg for a living. UNICEF is tackling this issue in Mazar-e-Sharif by implementing a mixed Community Based School (CBS) to answer the needs of this specific community. Children who attend non-formal education institutions are often considered to be “out-of-school,” and the qualifications they attain are not recognised by the state. While the CBS is hampered by a lack of physical resources, the school has been awarded full recognition from the Ministry of Education, meaning that children who attend the UNICEF CBS will be counted as “in school.”

**Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)**

The ALP plays an important role in providing education to children who may have missed out on education, and are too old to enrol in primary schools. The ALP is tailored to children who are 15 years old. Again, the Ministry’s commitment to ALP is a positive development because it demonstrates the government’s willingness to adopt innovative solutions to tackling the high proportion of children (especially girls) who may have missed out on schooling due to a lack of gender-appropriate schools, teachers or other factors.

**Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP)**

There have been some notable success stories in developing the education sector in Afghanistan. The Education Quality Improvement Program II (EQUIP) is the single largest education programme in Afghanistan, and has supported the construction of 271 schools, with a further 523 schools under construction. The Program appears to have created a momentum of its own. The World Bank’s figures show that more than 1,600 schools are being constructed or rehabilitated in Afghanistan. This has had a direct impact on the number of girls in education. Indeed, girls’ enrolment has increased from less than 200,000 in 2002 to 2.7 million today. This seems to be having a snowball effect on attendance numbers. The more girls and women there are in education, the more people recognise the importance of sending their daughters to school. According to a school council member at Kabul’s Sorya School, Haji Noorzai, EQUIP has been so successful that parents have been donating much-needed equipment to schools, such as books, chairs and carpets. “With the support of EQUIP and the World Bank, parents have realised that this should be like home for their children, so they have come together and worked hard to make this place nice.” According to the Ministry’s figures, EQUIP continues to make progress. For example, the social mobilisation unit has established 515 school management shuras, which comprise parents of students, village elders, religious leaders, teachers, students and school administrators. EQUIP places great emphasis on incorporating women in regional and local level school governance. Through EQUIP, Social Mobilization Supervisors (SMS) are recruited to monitor and support District Social Mobilizers (DSM). Of the 46 SMSs, eight are women. EQUIP reports gains in other areas, too. The EQUIP Gender Unit only had one gender focal point until February 2012. There are now two gender officers and a gender

coordinator. In addition, EQUIP now has a Gender Oversight Committee to oversee the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities within EQUIP.  

In a sense, the construction of all-girls schools creates legitimacy for female education: the more common it becomes, the more is it widely accepted. Female education has clearly benefited from this structured focus. Indeed, under the NESP, the World Bank has provided financial and technical support for a wide range of programmes aimed at increasing levels of female education. These programmes include: the Emergency Education Rehabilitation and Development Program (2002–2006, US$15 million), the Education Quality Improvement Program (2004–2009, US$35 million), the Strengthening Higher Education Program (2005–2010, US$40 million), the Second Education Quality Improvement Program (2008–2012) and the Afghanistan Skills Development Project (2008–2013).

**WFP Food-for-Training Programme**

WFP has cross-cutting guidelines that promote gender social and economic empowerment throughout all the components of a programme. However, the only specific sub-programme geared towards women is in the educational field: the Food for Training (FFT) programme is an intervention in which food insecure beneficiaries are given a food ration in exchange for the participation of female household members (aged 15–50) in an activity designed to impart knowledge or skills to generate income. Beyond the distribution of food, the FFT’s objectives also include supporting the government’s efforts to expand skills training and to help vulnerable households, improving human capital and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. There are two main components to the FFT: (1) Functional Literacy Training (FLT), in which beneficiaries are provided with basic literacy, numeracy and life skills to be linked to the government’s curricula; and (2) Vocational Skills Training (VST), through which beneficiaries gain marketable and technical skills, including (but not limited to) tailoring, embroidery, carpentry and mechanical training. With just over 150,000 direct participants in 2010 and 2011, the FFT’s budget and scope are more modest than other important WFP programmes, like for example the School Meals programme, which directly reached over one million children. Given its smaller scale, re-thinking the FFT’s strategy and implementation modalities does not represent an important risk for the organisation. The FFT therefore represents a good opportunity for the WFP to integrate and pilot new strategies of implementation, which has recently been done with the support of Samuel Hall. More generally, WFP records progress on gender through the Enhanced Commitment to Women indicators in its annual reports. Table 9 shows the 2010 and 2011 results.

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<th>Table 9: Enhanced Commitment to Women Indicators 2011 and 2012</th>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of household food entitlements (on ration cards or distribution list) issued in women’s names in GFD</td>
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<td>Proportion of women in leadership positions in food management committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of women receiving household food rations at distribution point in GFD</td>
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Targets are therefore relatively low and no clear explanation has been available on their rationale. Progress towards these targets is mixed and suggests that most organisations still face several structural, organisational and capacity constraints to rationally and continuously develop concerted efforts and effective results towards gender empowerment.

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Health: **Key existing programmes at the national level**

**Health Services Support Project (HSSP)**

HSSP was started in 2006. The Ministry of Public Health is working with international donors, in particular USAID, to improve the planning, management, implementation and quality of the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and the Essential Package of Hospital Services (EPHS) in 21 provinces. Among other areas, USAID’s role in this process has focused on improving the quality of services for women of reproductive age and young children and to integrate gender-sensitive practices into BPHS and EPHS practices. As part of this project, USAID also supports community-based midwifery education programmes in 13 provinces, as well as providing technical support to the Afghan Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Afghan Midwives Association and the National Midwifery and Nursing Educational Accreditation Board. In addition to this, the HSSP works with the Afghan Center for Training and Development, which conducts gender research and encourages the inclusion of gender awareness practices into health service delivery. According to a factsheet published by USAID, HSSP has awarded 14 midwifery education grants to NGOs to support the training of 942 midwives; trained more than 12,200 workers from NGOs, health facilities and the MOPH in a range of specialist medical areas; and provided technical assistance to the MOPH for developing the National Gender Strategy 2011–2015.

**Economic Activity and Employment: Key existing programmes at the national level**

There have been some important advances made by government and other actors with regard to women’s roles in local enterprise.

**The Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Plan (AREDP)**

The AREDP aims to strengthen and support employment opportunities. AREDP was created in order to improve access to credit and business advisory services for rural enterprises. Research conducted among SMEs by AREDP found that the two biggest barriers to private sector enterprise growth were the shortage of business planning, management and marketing, and limited access to formal credit. According to the survey, more than 60% of surveyed SMEs said that they wanted access to a knowledge-based business development service and 96% of enterprises have reported an interest in accessing financial services, while so far only 7% have ever actually received a loan. The latest Interim Status Report from the World Bank shows that the number of Enterprise Groups (EGs) has increased from 76 to 166. In addition, AREDP facilitated “exposure visits” in which groups of female employees from SMEs were taken to Pakistan for technical training. A particularly encouraging development in recent years has been the development of a Gender Equality Strategy, which actively promotes gender mainstreaming in AREDP activities. The AREDP Gender Unit has also set up a Gender Resource Center to gather information about gender issues in relevant areas. Partly as a result of these efforts, women are actively participating in all parts of AREDP. According to the MRRD’s figures, for example, 51% of participants who extend loans in Savings Groups are women. Community-Led Enterprise Development (CED) is at the heart of the AREDP. There are two main components as parts of this mission, each of which has witnessed success over the last few years:

- **Savings Groups (SGs)**
  
  SGs educate men and women about micro-saving practices, how to access credit and how to invest in their rural micro-enterprises. There are now 3,093 SGs, of which 44% are female.

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Figures show that the total aggregate savings reached more than AFA 35 million. Most encouragingly, the rate of saving seems to increase the longer the SG has been in existence.

- **Enterprise Groups (EGs)**
  Members of SGs are encouraged to join EGs to help develop their rural micro-enterprises. During 2011–2012, a total of 15 new female EGs were established across Parwan and Bamyan, bringing the total number of female EGs to 44, and the total number of female members to 232.165

**The Afghanistan Skills Development Project (ASDP)**
The World Bank has implemented the ASDP in order to support women to further develop the skills needed to enter the job market. The Project’s objective is “to increase the number of immediately-employable graduates by building, in stages, a high quality Technical Vocation and Education Training (TVET) system that is equitable, market responsive, and cost-effective.” Implemented by the MOE, the ADSP’s World Bank-funded centres and other sites trained a total of 6,325 students nationwide in 2007, including 490 women. TVET is a flexible answer to dynamic and changing market demands, and allows for rapid training with very targeted specialisation. However, the curriculum is still not homogenous in every TVET centre, and, as in every other field including education, female teachers are rare. Regarding the success of TVET, the World Bank could focus intensively on Training of Trainers (TOT) in a more decentralised manner, in order to better spread technical and practical knowledge in the coming years. Indeed, the lack of skilled women is a serious impediment for young women, as is the lack of highly skilled teachers. Because the TVET choice is not large enough, democratising job access would mean offering a larger TVET choice for both men and women, in order to multiply job opportunities for women, who are still far too restricted to jobs of the same nature.

**Afghanistan Women’s Business Federation**
Afghanistan is not an easy country in which to do business, but women face considerable obstacles to starting up their own businesses, and cultural barriers preclude women from accessing many potential avenues of employment. In 2004, USAID and the Ministry of Commerce supported the creation of the Afghanistan Women’s Business Federation (AWBF). The aim of the organisation is to support female entrepreneurs and to provide a capacity building network for women’s business organisations. The network incorporates organisations at the national, provincial and local levels. AWBF trains women entrepreneurs in business management, marketing, finance and technical skills, and provides business counselling and mentoring services. As of 2009 there were 87 members, and AWBF had conducted over 70 capacity building workshops and provided more than 1,300 training opportunities in basic and advanced entrepreneurship skills.

**Gender Mainstreaming through Capacity Building**
On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ has developed a long-term approach with regard to female civil servants with the Afghan Ministry of Women’s Affairs and other ministries in planning and implementing activities that consider the needs of both sexes. In cooperation with the Civil Service Commission, between 2004 and 2012 GIZ recommended that women’s access to the public sector be facilitated and that they be given better opportunities for promotion. GIZ has initiated a council in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs that acts as a bridge between the government and civil society. It advises the Minister and ensures that information is shared. Since 2010, GIZ has increasingly been promoting capacity development in

164 MRRD, AREDP Annual Progress Report 1390, p. 3.
165 MRRD, AREDP Annual Progress Report 1390, p. 15.
166 USAID (2009), Afghanistan Women’s Business Federation, Fact Sheet.
women’s organisations. Improved communication and negotiation skills enable them to interact with government agencies considerably more constructively, so that government action is better targeted to the needs of the female population. In the province of Badakhshan, for instance, GIZ has successfully promoted the participation of women in political and social processes. Likewise, in Badakhshan and Balkh provinces, active work has been done to combat domestic violence. Thirteen Afghan ministries already have Gender Departments; these are linked through a coordination office. They review strategy papers from the point of view of gender equality, for example, and suggest any changes that are needed. More than 5,000 government staff in the capital city Kabul and in Badakhshan and Balkh provinces have undergone further training on gender mainstreaming issues. Other groups, such as local authorities and religious leaders, also take part in special training.

**Rural Development: Key existing programmes at the national level**

Donors have also placed a special emphasis on women’s political empowerment through greater participation in local DDAs (UNDP) and CDCs (WB).

**District Development Assemblies (DDAs)**

A component of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development’s National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) is the development and strengthening of DDAs, which oversee the implementation of projects and strengthen community participation. The MRRD aims to increase women’s participation in decision making in order to ensure that they are closely involved with development work across the country. The MRRD’s figures\(^{168}\) provide an overview of the current level of female participation in DDAs: 539 women across 21 provinces (Badghis, Balkh, Bamyan, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni, Helmand, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Kunduz, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Paktika, Paktya, Parwan, Takhar, Uruzgan, Warduk and Zabul); 22 mixed DDAs (male and female participation); 16 DDAs contain women’s groups; and eight DDAs include a women’s advisory committee.

**Community Development Council (CDCs)**

There are approximately 28,000 Community Development Councils (CDCs) in Afghanistan, covering 75% of villages.\(^{169}\) According to the MRRD, women are often excluded from participating in CDCs. According to a 2012 MRRD report, one of the reasons why women are underrepresented in community-level decision making is that traditions of purdah and family honour demand that women should not participate in public affairs. Efforts have been made to include women in local government and, with the assistance of NGOs, women-only CDCs have been formed to help develop a framework for women’s priorities in their respective local areas.

**Agriculture: Key existing programmes at the national level**

**The Horticulture and Livestock Project (HLP)**

The aim of the HLP is to help producer households improve horticultural and livestock productivity. In 2012, the human resources of the programme consisted of 12 women among more than 80 male staff at the national and sub-national level. HLP works through Farmer Producer Groups (FPGs) to reach women in rural areas. As of today, 107 women producer groups have been formed and mobilised for receiving services and over 7,000 women farmers have been trained in the semi-intensive poultry programme in seven districts. The actual selection process of women beneficiaries cannot reach the most vulnerable women in rural areas. As it has to pass through men,
discriminatory behaviour can occur at this step; widows are easily excluded, and the lack of transparency can bring tension in the community. The main programme implemented by the MAIL is the Horticulture and Livestock Project (HLP), funded by the World Bank and with the technical support of GIZ. The HLP is located in seven Northern and four Central provinces, with a possibility for extension to another 12 provinces. The focus is in on one district in each of the 11 provinces. The overall objective is to improve the livelihoods of rural households through stimulating production and productivity of marketable perennial horticulture and livestock.

The NHLP includes women in its activities through its Gender Sensitive Agriculture sub-component, which comprises, on the horticulture side, kitchen gardening, post-harvesting extension and advice on nutrition, and, as the livestock component, livestock extension, animal health and poultry activities. All these activities respect the “natural” gender division of labour identified in our survey and have a positive impact on food security (which would be even more efficient if support were provided to build small family storage).

As defined by the NHLP, in order to benefit from the kitchen gardening programme, the following are required: the prior registration of the beneficiary in the Farmer Field School (FFS); the availability of a garden plot of a minimum of 100 square meters with permanent access to a reliable water source; acceptance of the rules of the programme (such as full collaboration with the female Lead Farmers and the female technical/extension workers, as well as exchange of experience with other FFS members); and a commitment to the seasonal calendar and action plan developed by the Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA) and the FFS. In addition, according to the annex of the draft NHLP, 1a, section H, “the Head of a registered woman’s family must be an active member of a FFS group and be punctual in attending the meetings with the female Lead Farmers.” Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the selection criteria for the kitchen gardening programme may restrict the participation of the most vulnerable women. Indeed, the selection of women is conditioned by the “active” participation of their household head in the FFS, which automatically excludes: (1) women who have full responsibility for their household (widows); (2) women whose household head is disabled and therefore cannot participate in the FFS; and (3) women whose household has less than one jerib of land.

Likewise, the NHLP is not very clear about the kind of training women can attend: while post-harvesting is explicitly mentioned, the programme does not explicitly indicate whether they can also benefit from harvesting extension (according to our survey, women are greatly involved in harvesting activities), as well as orchard management, trellising and marketing activities they could contribute to (such as picking, grading, etc.) The current design of the NHLP excludes women from certain activities due to criteria of land ownership. However, women should also benefit from the programme’s variety of extension and training activities, particularly those in which they are already actively engaged such as harvesting and processing.
SECTION 9: RECOMMENDATIONS

Respecting the leadership and ownership of the Government of Afghanistan, JICA has sought to develop sustainable socio-economic activities in three key areas: infrastructure and development; agriculture and rural development; and support for basic human needs (health and education). In particular, “aiming at broader and larger impact on Afghanistan, JICA has put emphasis on the projects on Kabul Metropolitan development and Agriculture and Rural Development.” In a difficult context and a deteriorating security situation, JICA’s strategic choices have proven relevant, effective and efficient to many extents.

However, when it comes to its gender policy, there is clearly room for improvement, as highlighted by all technical experts from the JICA Kabul office. At this stage, JICA has still not defined its gender strategy in Afghanistan, which may undermine its actions and the message the organisation conveys to both its national and international partners. Finally, and despite the success of the Project on Poverty Reduction for Chronically Poor Women, gender is neither considered as a relevant theme per se, nor seen as a cross-cutting issue.

The main key findings of our assessment can be summarised in three synthetic assumptions.

- As most programmes are not directly related to gender promotion, JICA programme officers and managers tend to consider that they do not directly or indirectly promote gender in Afghanistan.

- In reality, almost all the surveyed activities (programmes or sub-components) do support the socio-economic empowerment of women in Afghanistan (through the construction of roads that reduce the distance from a village to the nearest bazaar, the development of additional skills that may offer additional opportunities to female civil servants, the productivity increase in agriculture that could improve the work conditions of women in rural areas, etc.).

- Likewise, most programmes could easily initiate gender-specific activities to actively promote the socio-economic wellbeing of Afghan women (through partnerships with UN agencies or governmental structures, to further develop job placement, capacity building or income generation).

Therefore, and even if gender may not be the cornerstone of JICA’s commitment to Afghanistan today, there is a window of opportunity to take advantage of JICA’s natural strengths to actually systematise a flexible and pragmatic gender strategy by:

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

- Choosing a gender specialist coordinating all the gender-related initiatives in each programme (which means, correlativey, that each programme should have a counterpart to facilitate the process and ensure the quality of the coordination);
- Mapping all the existing components that have to do with gender promotion in each programme;

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170 JICA (2012), Overview of JICA Projects in Afghanistan, South Asia Division 2, South Asia Department.
Mapping all the potential areas that could be developed to further promote gender empowerment in each programme;

- Identifying potential partners (GIROA, UN, NGOs, etc.) that could help JICA implement existing or potential gender-related activities;
- Identifying existing and potential collaboration between JICA programmes or programme components to take advantage of existing synergies;

### STRATEGIC CHOICES

- Setting up a yearly strategic workshop with all the programme managers and officers of JICA Afghanistan, under the supervision of the gender specialist and with the participation of JICA HQ, to discuss the existing challenges, strengths and opportunities, and to agree on a collective roadmap;
- Systematising disaggregated data by gender in all the projects undertaken by JICA Afghanistan;
- Defining a set of realistic goals for each of the three objectives (infrastructure and development, agriculture and rural development, and support for basic human needs [health and education]) based on their existing strengths;
- Initiating pilot projects with national and international partners (GIROA, UN, WB, NGOs, etc.) to further strengthen the potential impact of JICA’s programmes on the socio-economic wellbeing of female beneficiaries;
- Systematically incorporating measurable indicators of success in the strategic objectives of each objective, programme and sub-component;
- Assessing the results and monitoring the quantitative and qualitative impact in each programme component on a quarterly basis, through a set of basic key indicators;

### ADVOCACY

- Sharing the outputs and outcomes of JICA’s gender strategy with the local government as well as other donors;
- Publishing internally the Gender Country Profile (short synthesis of the quarterly reports) to summarise the objectives and achievements of the gender strategy; and
- Developing newsletters or external reports to explain the strategic choices, short- and long-term objectives, achievements and plans.
SECTION 10: INFORMATION SOURCES

a. Reports

General Reading

- AREU (2012), *Equal Rights, Unequal Opportunities* - 2012
- Central Statistics Organization (2008), *National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007/8*
- Ministry of Public Health et al. (2010), *Afghanistan Mortality Survey* - 2010
- The labor Market Information and analysis Unit (2008), *An urban area primary source of study of supply and demand in the Labor Market* - October 2008
- The North South Institute (2009), *Assessing gendered access to Justice in Afghanistan* - December 2009
- USAID (2012), *Land reform in Afghanistan (LARA) gender Assessment: Legal framework for women’s property rights, field findings from Jalalabad, and recommendations for possible interventions* - 2012
- World Bank (2005), *National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction – the Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future* - 2005
- World Bank (2012), *Helping in microfinance works better for women: In a rapidly expanding microfinance sector: more room for women* - 2012
- World Bank (2012), *Increasing women’s Employment opportunities through TVET* - 2012
- Amnesty International (2012), *Tokyo Donors Conference must be ‘turning point’ for Afghanistan human rights* - 4 July 2012
Education

- BRAC: [http://www.brac.net/content/afghanistan-education - 2009](http://www.brac.net/content/afghanistan-education - 2009)
- Civil Military Fusion Centre (2012) *The Peace Process and Afghanistan’s Women – April 2012*
- Institute for War and Peace (2011), *Afghan Private Schools Under Scrutiny* - October 2011
- IRD (2012), *ARTF EQUIP Program Monitoring* - Sept 2012
- IRIN (2009), *Afghanistan: Thousands of schools lack drinking water, sanitation* - 2009
- Samuel Hall Consulting (2012), *School in a Box: Baseline Survey* - 2012
- USAID (2011), *Partnership for Advancing Community Based Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) – Emergency Community Based Education (ECBE) Initiative, Factsheet* - 2011

Health

- Afghanistan National Development Strategy 1387-1391
- Central Statistics Organisation (2008), *Statistical Yearbook 1387*
- International Medical Corp: http://internationalmedicalcorps.org/page.aspx?pid=2273
- Medica Mondial: http://www.medicalondial.org/projekte/afghanistan/psychosoziale-beratung0/?L=1#c1828
- Ministry of Public Health (2005), *A Basic Package of Health Services for Afghanistan, 2005/1384*
- Ministry of Public Health (2010), *A Basic Package of Health Services for Afghanistan, 2010/1389*
- USAID (2011), *Health Service Support Project (HSSP), Factsheet - 2011*

**Employment, Urban Development and Infrastructure**

- Ashrafi, Hedayatullah (2009), *Gender dimension of agriculture and rural employment: special focus on Afghan rural women’s access to agriculture and rural development sector*, Afghanistan National Development Strategy - April 2009
- ILO (2009), *Key Indicators of the Labour Market, Sixth Edition*, 2009 - Chapter 1, Section C
- Microfinance Investment Support Facility in Afghanistan (MISFA), *Gender Mainstreaming in Afghanistan’s Microfinance Sector: An Impact Assessment*
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled (2008), *An Urban Area Primary Source Study of Supply & Demand in the Labour Market* - 2008
- Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (2011), *AREDP Annual Progress Report 1390*
- World Bank (2011), *Understanding gender in Agricultural value chain : The cases of grape/raisins, almonds, and saffron in Afghanistan* - 2011
- World Bank *Increasing women’s Opportunities along Value Chains of farm Products, Afghanistan Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Note Series, No. 2*
b. Organisations

- Afghan Women’s Mission (USA)
- Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan
- Afghan Women’s Network
- Afghan Gender Cafe
- Afghanistan Women Council
- Afghanistan Women’s Education Center
- Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan
- Feminist Majority Foundation (USA)
- Global Fund for Women (USA)
- Medica Mondiale (Germany)
- Refugee Women in Development (USA)
- Womankind Worldwide (UK)
- Women for Afghan Women (USA)
- FemAid (France)
- Help Afghanistan Women (USA)
- Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan
- PARWAZ
- Voice of Women Organization
- Shuhada
- Women’s Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan (USA)
- Kabultec (USA)
- Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women
- Initiative to Educate Afghan Women (USA)
- Afghanistan Midwifery Project (USA)
- Noori Foundation
- AIPDO
- British Afghan Women’s Society
- Mahboba’s Promise (Australia)
- Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
- Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium
- Afghan Health and Development Services
- Afghan Technical Consultants
- Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
- Partners in Revitalization and Building
- Center of Art and Culture in Afghanistan
- Bureau for Reconstruction and Development
- Abdul Haq Foundation
- Afghans 4 Tomorrow
- Nai
- Committee for Rehabilitation Aid to Afghanistan (CRAA)
- AfghanMark
- Tribal Liaison Office
Contacts

Samuel Hall Consulting
Qala-e-Fatullah, Street 5, #2
Kabul, AFGHANISTAN
14, rue Duvivier, 75007
Paris, FRANCE
Kabul: +93 796 60 60 28
Paris: +33 6 66 48 88 32
development@samuelhall.org

Visit our website at www.samuelhall.org