



ACTED
Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique Et au Développement

SAMUEL HALL.



‘Increasing the Access and Quality of Basic Education for Marginalized Girls in Faryab’

An Educational Baseline Survey for *ACTED*

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Foreword for “Increasing the Access and Quality of Basic Education for Marginalized Girls in Faryab”

“Increasing the Access and Quality of Basic Education for Marginalized Girls in Faryab” is a timely and useful document. From the perspective of women’s rights in general, and girls education in particular, the past few years have undoubtedly witnessed real progress in Afghanistan. According to education minister Farouk Wardak, some 10.5 million students were enrolled in 2013, 40% of them girls. Faryab, a province of Northwest Afghanistan, is no exception. This report finds some 57.7% of young girls are literate as opposed to 44% of adults. ACTED alone provided education to some 15,000 girls and young women over the past three years. These figures may obscure vast differences in terms of quality, but it is certain that education in Afghanistan has greatly improved since the overthrow of the Taliban. However, with the last Western troops about to leave Afghanistan, anxieties about the sustainability of these achievements have emerged. The future of the country is by definition uncertain, and a recent American intelligence assessment predicted that the gains realized during the past three years may be lost quickly after the drawdown. The report spoke of the larger gains made by the Afghan society since 2002, not just education, but raised questions about the future of some of the most fragile segments of the Afghan population.

It is unclear whether even a return of the Taliban would inevitably lead to the exclusion of girls and young women from the educational system. Afghanistan has changed tremendously over the past ten years, and Taliban attacks on schools have produced serious backlash among the Afghan public. As a result, the Taliban itself has reaffirmed the right of women to education. These statements have to be taken with a grain of salt, but they undoubtedly reflect a new awareness about popular aspirations. On the other hand, it would be absurd to pretend that the evolution of the society alone could prevent a reversal of positive trends in education. Should the security situation significantly deteriorate, it will likely have a negative impact on education. Reaching out to communities to pursue educational and more generally development efforts in such a situation will be complicated enough. While teachers and educators will have little control over the political and security dynamics, their main challenge would be to ensure that women’s education did not suffer more than the educational system in general. This is in itself a formidable task, achievable only if educators are able to demonstrate the worth of their work to a society in which traditional values and mores still hold considerable sway.

This is where the DFID-funded GEC initiative, implemented in Faryab by ACTED, has value. This report correctly assesses that although there seems to be a consensus on the need for education, it is still unclear what the content or objective of these curricula should be. Hence, education needs to be as practical as possible and relevant to the job market. In Faryab, where unemployment rates reach sometimes 60%, it is difficult to prioritize women’s education when with no job in sight it is unlikely to lead to a better future for them, irrespective of their level of literacy.

Moreover, women education will be more likely to survive in Afghanistan if it does not contradict the values of society too openly. That education is, almost by definition, a vector of change does not mean that it should necessarily oppose society’s values. The need for women’s teachers expressed by the report is therefore not the expression of an inherent conflict, but a necessary condition for the perpetuation of women’s education. As the idea of educating women gains traction, it can promote a virtuous cycle that advances women’s rights in general by changing Afghan attitudes towards females. Women’s education will survive the inevitable difficulties of post-2014 Afghanistan only if it is accepted by the population not as a luxury, but as a practical necessity. In the same manner, women’s education will last in Afghanistan only if Afghans themselves claim ownership of the process. The report therefore rightly underlines the need to train the trainers, and to do so at the appropriate time.

The lesson here goes beyond education alone: Afghanistan, like every other society will accept to change, but change cannot be imposed by force. The Afghan communists in the 1970’s, the Soviets in the 1980’s, and to some extent the Taliban in the 1990’s, each tried to impose their respective agendas against the will of the population. All were ultimately rejected. Any effort to achieve change must be done in a dialogue with the population, not against it. It is still unclear whether the changes prompted by the Western intervention will survive the exit of NATO forces. They will last only if they have been appropriated by the locals. Women’s education will be no exception. This report thus serves as an especially welcome addition to the effort to understand the legacy of thirteen years of war in Afghanistan.

Frederic Grare

Director and Senior Associate – South Asia Programme, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This baseline evaluation report for ACTED's GEC implementation programme in Faryab comes at an important moment for the NGO, for Afghanistan and for the future of development assistance in areas marred by conflict. Not only is this survey unique in its structure and scope, but it is also the very first of three external baselines done in Afghanistan for DFID's implementing partners. As such, it has the potential of serving as a benchmark for the other NGOs and for other large education projects that may or may not be undertaken in Afghanistan in the coming years.

The country's political instability, exasperated by the current presidential elections, the pull-out of foreign soldiers and the continuing and expanding insurgency, makes working in the field of education even more challenging and dangerous. As this report will show, ACTED is in a unique position to influence the debate surrounding education in Afghanistan but also to make the most out of a large and ambitious project.

A desk review and interviews in Kabul were followed by three weeks of fieldwork in Maymana and all relevant districts, though to varying degrees of accessibility. The main quantitative household survey was crafted by Coffey and administered by Samuel Hall across 8 districts; it was also complemented by qualitative focus group discussions and area observations in order to have the best possible initial overview of the current situation in Faryab, both in terms of girls' access to education and challenges.

Data collection and analysis have highlighted several interesting findings at the current baseline stage:

- With regards to literacy and numeracy rates, 57,7% of young girls can be described as illiterate and 42,6% innumerate;
- Almost all parents agree with the need for education for children and for girls, what exactly is understood by education for villagers still needs to be understood in depth;
- 56% of adults interviewed were uneducated and only 1,5% had completed higher education studies;
- Education for girls is often seen in light of cultural practices and religion and at times is believed to help girls become better wives and mothers;
- The vast majority of people in Faryab are farmers, 43% are labourers and another 7% own a business;
- The unemployment rates in some districts reach almost 60% and are higher in slightly more urbanized areas;
- The vast majority of families (92%) had all of their children vaccinated for at least one illness out of tuberculosis, diphtheria, polio and measles.

In light of these findings and in order to better prepare for the steps, recommendations further developed in the report are divided into three key areas that have been highlighted as necessary for the improvement of the organization and its programming, namely teaching, community awareness and monitoring and evaluation:

- **Make the learning process more student-oriented** – A particular south Asian learning culture coupled with a lack of resources for students and a strong focus on discipline (see data on teaching), makes teaching in Afghanistan very focused on theory. Pupils learn about computers without ever using one and their science labs are often non-existent or decrepit. In light of these common complaints from the students, implementers can ensure that the adequate materials are available, but more importantly, that the teaching culture evolves towards student-centred learning.
- **Review the scope of the GEC** – The difficulty in reaching out to communities along with the strict socio-cultural norms that prevail in rural Faryab mean that the overall targeting of 'marginalized' girls might be harder to implement than expected. Even with ACTED's extremely strong experience, networks and relays, Samuel Hall doubts that the NGO will be effective in reaching the most marginalized.
- **Thoroughly review the M&E tools** – In its present form, the main questionnaire is not effective and is even detrimental to the proper conduct of the evaluation. Samuel Hall proposes to craft it again whilst ensuring that it fits with Coffey International's criteria and indicators. All the sections need to be reviewed, the flow and direction of the questions need to be changed, filter questions are essential and context-specific situations need to be kept in mind. Finally, techniques to access adolescent girls should be changed and adapted to the conservative context in order to ensure that the research could track similar cohorts over the years.

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ACRONYMS

AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network
ACTED – Agence d’Aide à la Coopération Technique Et au Développement (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development)
AFN – Afghanis
AKF – Aga Khan Foundation
AOG – Armed Opposition Group
CARE – Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBE – Community-Based Education
DDR – Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFID – Department for International Development
DoE – Department of Education
DoL – Department of Literacy
EFA – Education For All
FGD – Focus Group Discussion
GEC – Girls’ Education Challenge
GoA – Government of Afghanistan
IDP – Internally Displaced Person
ILO – International Labour Organization
INEE – Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IO – International Organization
IOM – International Organization for Migration
IRA – Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
ISAF – International Security Assistance Force
MDG – Millennium Development Goals
MoE – Ministry of Education
NATO – North-Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
NRVA – National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP – National Solidarity Programme
PISA – Programme for International Student Development
PRT – Provincial Reconstruction Team
PwC – Pricewaterhouse Coopers
SH – Samuel Hall
ToC – Theory of Change
TLO – The Liaison Office
UN – United Nations
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
VfM – Value for Money
VLC – Village Literacy Course
WFP – World Food Programme
YDC – Youth Development Centre

I. FARYAB CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Faryab is located in the Northwest of Afghanistan and shares a Western border with Turkmenistan. To the East lie Jawzjan and Sar-i-Pul, Ghor is to the South and Badghis to the Southwest. The northern part of the incomplete ring road linking Kabul to Herat via Mazar-e-Sharif passes through the province but stops in Badghis. The majority of its people are Uzbeks (53,3%) with a sizeable Pashtun minority (18,5%) especially in the West. Other groups include Tajiks, Aimaqs and Turkmens in smaller numbers.¹ The literacy rate is no higher than 40% and numerous civilians have been displaced due the ongoing conflicts.²

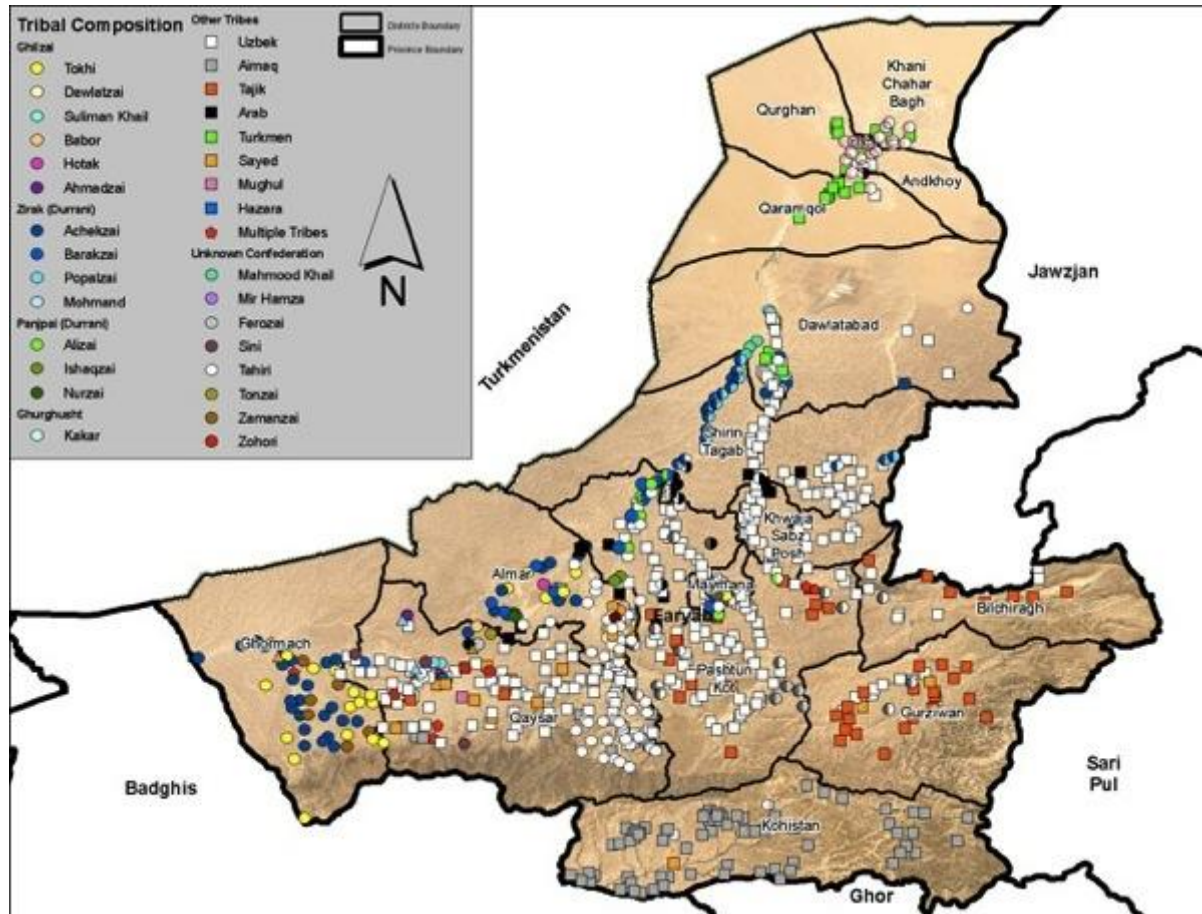


Image 1: Ethnic and Tribal Map of Faryab (TLO)

Faryab's considerable isolation and distance from Kabul has enabled a variety of old and new political and military actors to fight for influence and the development of their own patronage networks in a highly rural and conservative area. Often dominated by militias close to the Soviet-backed regime until the civil war, the province then saw the creation and break of several alliances between local commanders, regional strongmen and later the Taliban. Following the disappearance of the Taliban regime, the two strongest groups in Afghanistan's North re-emerged: the mostly Uzbek Jumbesh-e-Milli and Jamiat-e-Islami, with a strong Tajik following. The current governor is the Soviet-educated Mohammadullah Battash³; the walls of the provincial office in Maymana are heavily plastered with posters of the late Ahmad Shah Massoud. The past decade has also seen a variety of high and low-intensity conflict between the two main political factions on a variety of issues, often fought by the movement's respective youth wings.

As part of NATO's military commitment, a contingent of mostly Norwegian soldiers set up a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in 2004, which lasted until the fall of 2012. Similarly to the situation in neighbouring

¹ Faryab Provincial Profile, *The Liaison Office*, July 2011

² Faryab Provincial Profile – Regional Rural Economic Regeneration Strategies, *MRRD/GRM*, 2006: <http://eafghanag.ucdavis.edu/country-info/Province-agriculture-profiles/faryab/Faryab.pdf>

³ Biography of Faryab's Governor, *Governor Office's Website*, 2013: <http://faryab.gov.af/en>

Kunduz where the recent withdrawal of German forces has led to a sharp increase in the level of violence, the closing down of the PRT in Maymana has been followed by renewed and more intense fighting, especially in the West of the province around Ghormach, Almar and Qaysar.⁴ The current situation is highly fluid and it is not uncommon for actors to occasionally switch sides. Afghan security forces including the military, police and militias known as *arbakai* face a strengthened Taliban allied with other extremists groups from Uzbekistan for example. The government-backed militias are not exempt from blame and, at times, are responsible for the mounting criminality as well⁵.

At a time of increased instability and an election year along with the probable departure of most of the foreign soldiers by the end of 2014, a very small group of NGOs present in Faryab face the full consequences of violence, lack of economic opportunities, strong poppy production increase and cultural shackles when implementing a variety of development programmes. Although the cultivation level is deemed 'insignificant', Faryab lost its poppy free status in 2011, regained it in 2012 but is at risk of losing it again⁶.

ACTED differs from the rest of the NGO community in Faryab (and to some extent throughout Afghanistan) due to its longstanding presence in the North and its strong networks across the board. ACTED has traditionally provided agricultural support in Faryab but also a number of literacy classes; this larger foray into education thanks to the support of DFID, at a time of deep political uncertainty in Afghanistan, will involve new challenges for the NGO.

“All the people in the village support girls’ education the same they do for boys. Both boys and girls have the right to education. Even during the Taliban period girls in this village used to study in their homes.”
~Badghisi elder

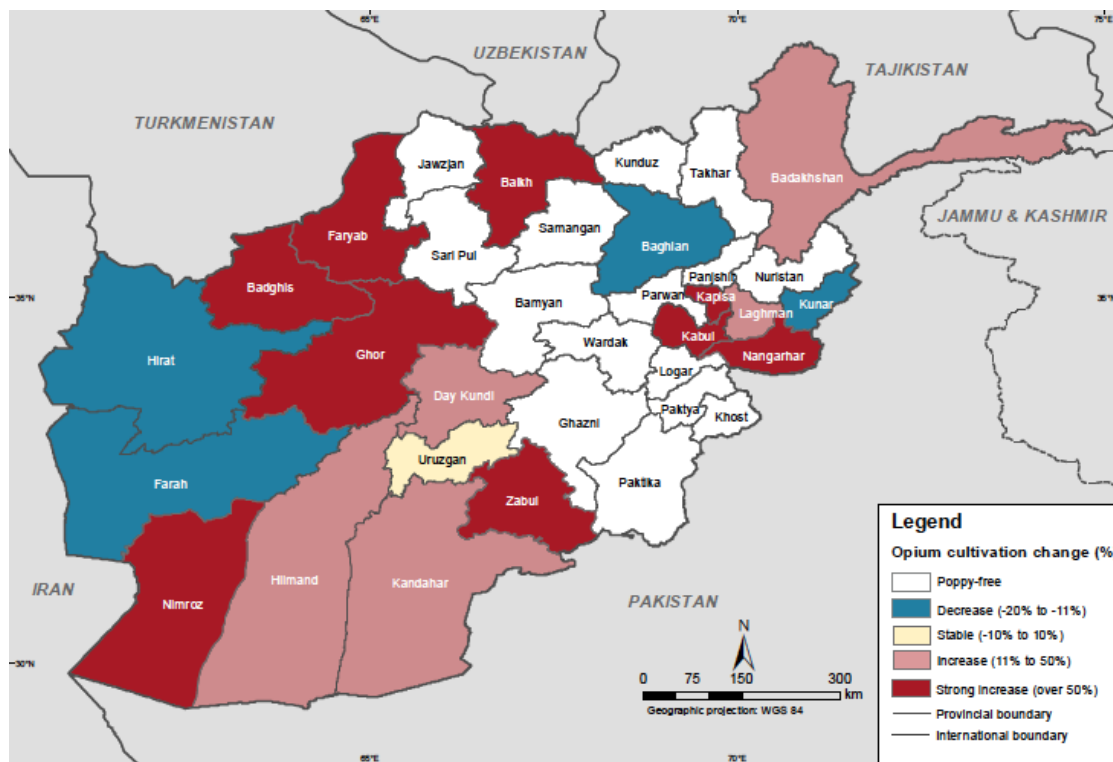


Image 2: Opium Cultivation Change in Afghanistan by province, 2012-2013 (GoA)

⁴ Pajhwok News, Nov 18th and 24th, 2013

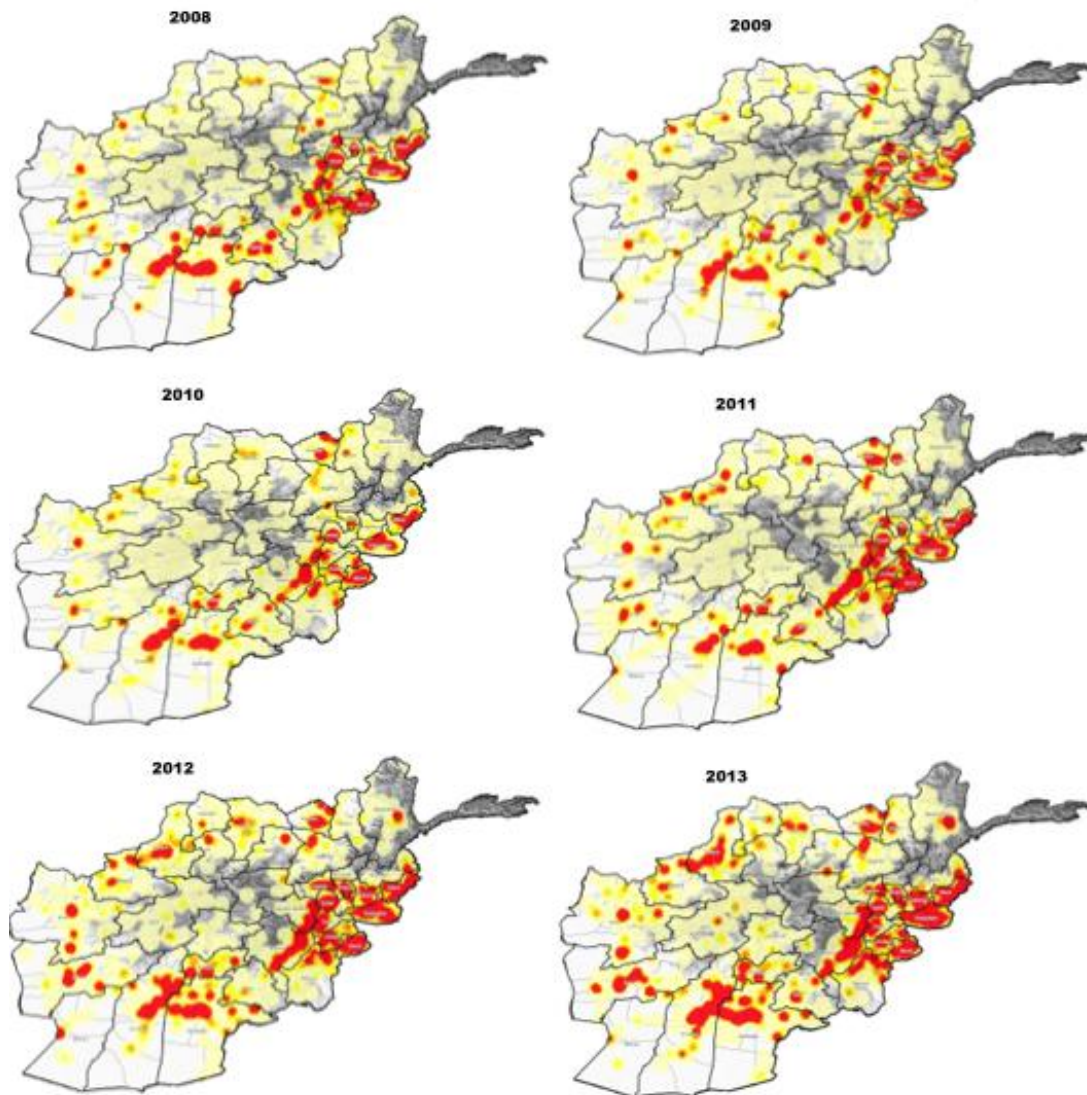
⁵ <http://m.irinnews.org/Report/97788/Security-and-aid-work-in-militia-controlled-Afghanistan#.UvnOKcfycy4>

⁶ UNODC, ORAS Report, April 2013, p. 14 http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/ORAS_report_2013_phase12.pdf

Prospects for 2015 and beyond

Based on a May 2014 report from the International Crisis Group, 'Afghanistan's Insurgency after the Transition'⁷, there is now evidence that the security situation in Afghanistan – and in Faryab in particular – will get worse over the next two years. As shown in the ANSO map below, Faryab has clearly become one of the most dangerous provinces in Afghanistan, "if not the most dangerous one"⁸.

Graph 1: Security incidents in Afghanistan 2008-2013 (provincial breakdown)



However despite a continuously worsening security situation, the post-electoral security environment remains largely unpredictable, as explained by the International Crisis Group:

- *In Faryab, most senior provincial officials believed that the Afghan security forces, provided that they continued to receive international support, would be able to withstand the insurgency. Even if the Taliban continued to gain in peripheral areas, locals in 2013 did not perceive it as a threat to the survival of the government.*

⁷ International Crisis Group, 'Afghanistan's Insurgency after the Transition', Asia Report N°256, May 2014.

⁸ Source: Interview with UNAMA representatives in Kabul, May 2014.

- *Even in the absence of reliable information about the Taliban’s progress in the districts, some observers in the provincial capital believe that the conflict could increase in coming years, in part, because long-standing tensions between Pashtun villagers and the provincial government have yet to be resolved. Since 2001, the Pashtun minority has seen comparatively less development in their villages under the Uzbek- dominated provincial government. More than 60 % of Pashtun villages lack roads, running water and electricity – more than twice the provincial average.*
- *Relations between pro-government forces in Faryab will play a major role in shaping the conflict’s direction. Relations between the Jamiat and Junbish militias hold the potential for significant change, for better or worse. Commanders were reported to be distributing weapons and ammunition to followers as a hedge against instability after NATO withdrawals: “Part of the reason why militia commanders fight each other to control more territory is because they want to control more votes for the elections. They can sell these votes for a good price. We blame the Taliban for the violence but in many cases we’re fighting each other” (ICG sources).*
- *Faryab powerbrokers seemed to view the elections as less of a hurdle to stabilisation than the early years of the new presidency. Whoever is elected will need to find ways to distribute patronage without alienating factions now supporting the government. A party official said, “everything depends on the future leader, and whether he shares power among the tribes and ethnicities”. The post-election period will determine the extent to which jockeying for power either provides insurgents with or deprives them of opportunities to benefit from internal divisions.*

Conclusion

The worsening and volatile security context in all the districts of the Faryab province clearly puts both ACTED and *Samuel Hall* teams at risk. In these regards, both DFID and PwC should understand that:

- Interviewing 960 girls may still be possible, providing that the questionnaire is drastically reduced: *“The questionnaire is too long. When interviewees realize that they will be asked questions about their children and girls for almost two hours, they get scared and start lying to shorten the interview. This study puts their lives at risk and our life as well” (SH field coordinator).* We suggest a reduction by 30 to 40% for phases 2 and 3, which will allow the fieldwork to be more easily manageable while keeping the data unbiased (survey fatigue + sensitiveness + security).
- While the review team perfectly understands the request of having classroom observation for phases 2 and 3, we also think that this methodology is not only biased (qualitative one-shot + cognitive issue) but also dangerous, as our researchers may be perceived as spies. In-class observation is clearly not realistic in Faryab social and political context.
- While the review team praises collaborative dialogues with other research actors, we have never worked with politicized research organisations (such as Eureka or ATR for instance). In other words, we do not accept to share information or ideas with actors that (have) also work(ed) with ISAF/NATO or USAID contractors in the provinces where we conduct our surveys. This clear strategy has allowed *Samuel Hall* to benefit from a neutral and non-politicized image among *all the political stakeholders*. On a different note, we have good reasons to be extremely sceptical on the professionalism, rigor, and quality of the methodology of and data collected by most organisations working in Afghanistan today.

However, the review team will start developing some alternative solutions to ensure the robustness of the quantitative and qualitative information collective in the midline and endline phases:

- Close collaboration with the ACTED M&E team, to double-check the field results and cover any missing data/information;
- Reduction of the original questionnaire and interviewers’ workload, to decrease the time spent by field teams in remote and potentially unsafe areas;
- Increase of the time spent on training sessions and pilot tests to improve field interviewers;
- More systematic triangulation of the field data – mainly through community based assessments and phone based follow-up interviews with households and teachers.

ACTED Reflections on the Faryab Context

The baseline analysis has portrayed a clear picture of the current context in Faryab, especially in relation to security. One of main issues today in Faryab is that it is not always clear which external actors or armed opposition groups are controlling different areas. Due to the influx of foreign Taliban groups who report to leaders in different countries and the divisions between Uzbek and Pashtun Taliban, the situation is constantly evolving as these power games between different groups play out. Faryab is seen as a strategic location for the Taliban and is now considered one of the most dangerous provinces in the country. This context creates challenges for any programme, especially with such an intensive monitoring and evaluation framework.

In terms of the comments from the external evaluator on how the changing security environment will affect additional data collection, these comments are valid. As evidenced throughout this baseline report, the data collection challenges in the baseline stage were numerous and we expect this situation to worsen by the time the midline data collection takes place. Different kinds of solutions can be found for conducting household surveys in intervention areas, but this will continue to be a challenge for control groups as ACTED staff do not have the level of community relations and acceptance required to have easy access and movement in these areas. Therefore, as opposed to the external evaluator's suggestion on reducing the questionnaire length, ACTED would firstly like to work with PwC to find a solution to try and reduce or remove the 'control' locations and focus on a rigorous framework for intervention sites where ACTED has better access and can mobilise locally based staff to do more data collection.

It is also clear that due to the delicate security situation, the midline and end line cannot be conducted independently as perhaps is the case in other GEC country programmes. Following the lessons learned from the baseline stage, ACTED and the external evaluator need to work together to develop more rigorous M&E systems that can run continuously throughout the programme with data collected by field staff to support any data gaps in the midline or end line. As the external evaluator touched upon, they do not feel comfortable visiting school sites and ACTED has locally based community mobilisers who will take more responsibility for some of the 'spot check' observation aspects of the project.

II. EXPLORATION OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Education in the GEC Context

Following the ousting of the Taliban regime in 2001, many Western countries highlighted the importance of providing access and quality of education to the Afghan citizens and in particular to its young female population who had been largely deprived of the opportunity. Thirteen years later, the country has seen dramatic changes in a variety of domains, education being one of them. Nevertheless, important challenges remain, both in urban and rural areas, hence ACTED'S activities in the field throughout Northern Afghanistan. In Faryab, the focus of ACTED's Girls Education Challenge (GEC) component is to cater to 15000 "marginalized" girls through several activities including supporting formal government schooling, increasing the number of village literacy classes and creating youth development centres for other women to learn vocational skills.

The following report sheds light on one of the few large development projects remaining in Afghanistan in the education sector. Through a thorough data collection and analysis, this survey will hopefully contribute to the overall national and international discussions on the role of education for young Afghan females.

A defining characteristic of Afghanistan, which sets it apart from the majority but not all other GEC-targeted countries, is the more volatile security environment and the very specific socio-cultural context. In this context, communities, institutions and the state itself are particularly fragile. Heightened insecurity limits the areas in which ACTED can operate and also hampers the monitoring process. Moreover, the context of fragility jeopardises the sustainability of the educational facilities provided. As international actors withdraw from Afghanistan over the coming years, the resiliency of the current state framework will be tested.

Another concern is how the educational facilities will integrate into the local landscape of violence. As in other contexts affected by long-term political violence, education in Afghanistan can promote peace building, but educational practices can also exacerbate conflicts. Attacks on schools have diminished in recent years in Afghanistan, but the situation remains volatile.⁹

The heavy reliance on such a project at a time of political uncertainty with a possible nationwide troop pull-out and highly controversial elections leads us to consider two main questions that focus on both the contextual and structural aspects of the challenges at hand:

- **Contextual** – Is such a large project sustainable and can it have an impact on the beneficiaries when the insecure environment presents considerable challenges both in terms of attitudes and infrastructures?
- **Structural** – Is it realistic and does it make sense to pursue education for girls in a very rural and isolated Afghan province in which the impact might not be felt due to certain attitudes and beliefs held by many parents, elders, mullahs and even MoE staff who impede attempts to increase access to education for girls?

In light of this, do the contextual and structural aspects of such an undertaking match the possible impact of educational outcomes in a highly insecure, remote and conservative area? There is clear room for improvement but the scope might need to be revised. These are merely questions that Samuel Hall believes are important to keep in mind throughout the implementation of the GEC's they might force all actors to adapt over the years.

Through this report, these key questions should be kept in mind and can guide us in wondering about the challenges at hand (such as about immediate aid provision or long-term consequences for development and sustainability) and about the most effective ways to overcome them.

⁹ Antonio Giustozzi and Claudio Franco, "The Battle for the Schools: The Taleban and State Education", AAN, 2011; "The Ongoing Battle for the Schools: Uprisings, Negotiations and Taleban Tactics", AAN, 2013 and *Schools as Zones of Peace*, Samuel Hall for Save the Children, 2013

ACTED's Theory of Change

The GEC, funded by Britain's Department for International Development (DFID), aims to improve the socio-economic conditions of marginalized girls and women through the development of education. ACTED's implementation model of the GEC in Faryab takes a diversified approach to educational development by offering three different structures for learning: formal primary schooling, village literacy courses (VLC) and Youth Development Centres (YDCs).

"All of the people in the village want their girls to go to school; education is necessary for girls so that they can bring up educated children in the future."

~Jamshidi Bala elder

The prioritization of girls' education in Faryab, as well as the management and design of this intervention, stem from a much larger effort to promote literacy and education for girls and women across the developing world. Perhaps most prominently, gender equality and girls' education have been highlighted as development priorities in the multilateral Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) frameworks. DFID has responded to those priorities through the GEC, which funds NGOs and non-state actors to provide education for girls and women in 22 developing countries, including Afghanistan. Given the international scope of the GEC, it is important to consider its key concepts and underlying assumptions, as well as the question of applicability to the context of Afghanistan, and Faryab in particular.

The following section touches on key themes that are related to the creation of quality educational outcomes in developing countries and are critical to an overall understanding of the challenges and opportunities available in Faryab over the coming years, for ACTED but also for all other actors involved.

According to ACTED's theory of change, a comprehensive response to Faryab's educational challenge is required, based on a multi-dimensional approach that supports both formal and informal education. Five key barriers to accessing education for girls have been identified and their responses planned.

Table 1: Summary of ACTED's theory of change

Barriers	Responses	Results
1. Lack of separate, high-quality female education facilities	Construction of 10 girls-only primary schools and 7 female YDCs	2400 girls regularly attending classes in new primary schools, 1680 out-of-school girls attending literacy classes in YDCs and 720 accessing vocational trainings in YDCs
2. Lack of quality teaching	Hiring of professional female teachers for the YDCs and regular teacher trainings	Improving the quality of education delivered at local level
3. Insecurity	School construction and village literacy/numeracy courses through a low-input CBE approach	Increased enrolment and attendance in schools and 12240 girls benefiting from basic literacy/numeracy classes
4. Household poverty	Vocational training through YDCs in order to increase female economic empowerment	706 out-of-school girls receiving vocational training, contributing to household economic well-being
5. Conservatism	Community mobilization and engagement and radio programming	Improved acceptance and support of girls' education in target communities

In light of this approach the findings highlighted below, Samuel Hall believes that the fundamental assumptions underpinning this theory of change are relevant and legitimate and its responses constitute the best possible approach to improving access to education for young girls in Faryab.

Focus On Quality

In line with complaints regularly voiced by the Afghan youth (most recently at the conference organized in Kabul to create a National Youth Strategy for Afghanistan), the GEC does not only aim to get girls in school, but also to make sure they learn once there. This is reflected in the teacher training dimension of ACTED's intervention. Emphasis on quality over quantity is also projected to be a revised development priority after 2015 for the UN.¹⁰ Regarding Faryab in particular, a 2011 TLO (The Liaison Office) report found that while the number of schools had nearly doubled since 2002-3, and the student population has grown three-fold, the persistent low quality of education, the lack of suitable facilities and basic supplies undermined the system more broadly.¹¹ While poverty remains the biggest obstacle to girls' education, poor quality in education and school buildings and materials is also significant, as it acts as a disincentive to send children to school.¹² Significant numbers of enrolled girls mentioned the lack of satisfactory textbooks (12,1%), the lack of satisfactory teaching (14,7%) and the regular absence of teachers (16,3%); these numbers are taken from the full sample of girls, meaning that the proportion is in reality much higher. In an ethnographic study of household decision-making and school enrolment in the Faryab district of Bilchiragh, it was found that over half of households who did not send their children to school or had withdrawn their children from education cited dissatisfaction with the quality of education provided.¹³ **In this context, the added attention towards teacher training and monitoring appears strongly justified.**

That said, it should be noted that improving teacher quality in remote areas raises specific problems. It is often unfeasible to monitor whether periodic training sessions have a measureable impact in the classroom. Also, off-site training does not provide teachers with the on-going support and guidance that under-qualified teachers require most. One solution to this problem that ACTED is already planning to implement, which has been deployed in sub-Saharan Africa and Australia, is to create peer-support networks amongst teachers in a local district. This network can be overseen by more senior colleagues from a distance (for example through regular remote monitoring).¹⁴

Public-Private Partnerships

A cornerstone of the overall GEC project is a commitment to involving non-state organizations in the development and assessment of international education initiative for marginalized girls. Thus, GEC funding is reserved for projects led exclusively by non-state organizations and seeks to leverage greater private sector involvement and resources in intervention countries. This commitment is also reflected in the management structure of GEC: the fund management is contracted out to Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) and the evaluation management to Coffey International. In Faryab, this commitment is operationalized through the use of ACTED.

The idea that non-state organizations can be a more effective conduit for providing aid than the state has been gaining increasing prominence within donor countries since the 1990s. This reflects a parallel domestic trend within many donor countries to favour public-private partnerships for providing education to their own population rather than deliver services directly. The UK has been at the forefront of this trend, and therefore its approach to girls' education in Faryab should be seen as an extension of a cross-party commitment to the idea that the role of a central government is to facilitate rather than provide educational services. One of the theorists most closely associated with this position is James Tooley, who argues that the best means of promoting educational development is to allow communities themselves to develop grass-roots initiatives,

¹⁰ Angeline M. Barrett, « The education Millennium Development Goal beyond 2015: prospects for quality and learners », *EdQual Working Paper 16*, 2009. Pham Thi Lan and Nicola Jones, *Education for All in Vietnam: High Enrolment but Problems of Quality Remain*, Young Lives Policy Brief 4: <http://www.younglives.org.uk/files/policy-papers/education-for-all-in-vietnam-high-enrolment-but-problems-of-quality-remain>.

¹¹ TLO, *Faryab Provincial Profile*, July 2011, p. 33

¹² Ashley Jackson, *High Stakes: Girls' Education in Afghanistan*, Oxfam Joint briefing paper, 2011, p. 11: <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/afghanistan-girls-education-022411.pdf>.

¹³ Pamela Hunte, *Household Decision-making and School Enrolment in Afghanistan Case Study 3: Neshar Villages Bilchiragh District, Faryab Province*, AREU, 2005, pp. 20-21

¹⁴ Macdonald, Doune. "Teacher attrition: A review of literature." *Teaching and teacher education* 15.8 (1999): 835-848; Mattson, Elizabeth. *Field-based models of primary teacher training: case studies of student support systems from Sub-Saharan Africa*. DFID: 2006

including low-fees private schools.¹⁵ This route favours local accountability and discourages the state from getting in the way of development, through over-bearing regulation and often-systemic corruption. In a multi-country study¹⁶ of student-level data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Ludger Wößmann has found that public-private partnership systems which combine private operation with public funding are most efficient in terms of a limited range of knowledge outcome indicators (e.g. literacy and numeracy test scores).¹⁷ Sally Power and Chris Taylor have argued that the political commitments of the public and private spheres of education are multi-faceted and should not be reduced to simplistic slogans. Focusing on the US and UK contexts, they found that while the state may present itself as the purveyor of the public good, its actions often exacerbate social injustices in a way that private actors can avoid, such as in the provision of education for religious minorities.¹⁸

However, dependence on NGO management, foreign aid and community-based education is high in Afghanistan. The lack of accountability and transparency within the MoE, the fragmentation of aid-led initiatives across the country, and the political uncertainty (and potential instability) likely to accompany the ISAF withdrawal jeopardise the long-term sustainability in Afghan education, including the GEC intervention. It is worth recalling that the current investment in favour of girls' education in Afghanistan is far from unprecedented. Successive campaigns for educational development, dating back to the reign of Amanullah in the 1920's, have uniformly failed to provide long-term sustainability, and have often sparked popular discontent.¹⁹ While the macroscopic issue of sustainability is beyond the scope of the present intervention, its long-term outcomes will be dependent not only on the leveraging of further private investment as identified by DFID, but also on favourable political developments in Afghanistan as a whole.



Image 3: A young girl being interviewed

¹⁵ James Tooley, *The Beautiful Tree*, Cato: 2009

¹⁶ Alan Fowler, "The Role of NGO's in Changing State-Society Relations: perspectives from Eastern and Southern Africa", *Development Policy Review* 9(1), 1991, pp. 53-84

¹⁷ Ludger Wößmann, "Public-Private partnerships and student achievement: a cross-country analysis", in Rajashri Chakrabarti and Paul E. Peterson (eds.) *School Choice International*, MIT: 2009, pp. 13-47

¹⁸ Sally Power and Chris Taylor, "Social justice and education in the public and private spheres", *Oxford Review of Education*, 39(4), 2013, pp. 464-480

¹⁹ Yahia Baiza, *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, Influences and Legacies since 1901*, London: Routledge, 2013.

Economic Integration of Women Through Education

Significantly, the business case for the GEC intervention strongly emphasises the instrumental over the intrinsic value of girls' education.²⁰ It argues that investing in girls' education provides long-term socio-economic returns at good value-for-money for the entire community. Thus, the project management of the GEC focuses on developing educational resources, which are believed to deliver positive outcomes in terms of health and socio-economic conditions for women. To achieve this, DFID reserves GEC funding for projects targeting girls and young women, rather than community-wide interventions.²¹

A key concern is whether the overall GEC theory of change corresponds to some aspects of Afghan political economy. The vocational training component of ACTED's programme is meant to enable girls and young women who participate to make a 10% contribution to their household income. Women's access to capital through independent wage-earning capacities is seen as a means of social empowerment, by allowing her to be active in the public sphere and by elevating her position within the home.²² A positive correlation between increased education and employment appears intuitive, but is not always validated across economic contexts. Such a correlation is premised upon two key conditions: first, the existence of a local labour market which can expand to integrate greater numbers of educated workers; second, a cultural environment willing to hire educated women into waged labour. It remains to be seen whether ACTED and the provincial government will be able to provide these conditions for young women who want to contribute economically after having been given vocational training.



Image 4: A young girl taking the literacy test

Given that the regional economy in Faryab is heavily dominated by the agricultural sector,²³ there are few opportunities for women to profit economically from the skills and literacy training provided by the GEC. However, other economic activities do exist. 22% of rural households have some income from trade and services, and 16% from manufacturing.²⁴ Women are particularly active in Karakul and Kilim making, using wool

²⁰ DFID, *Girls' Educational Challenge: Business Case, Version 4*, 2012:

<http://projects.dfid.gov.uk/project.aspx?Project=202372>.

²¹ This prioritisation was theorised as the Women in Development (WID) approach. See: Campillo, Fabiola. *Gender Women And Development A Framework for IICA's Action in Latin America and the Caribbean*. IICA and Collier, Paul. *Women in Development: Defining the Issues*. World Bank, December 1988

²² Fennell, « Contested Gender Frameworks » in Arnot and Fennell, *Gender Education and Equality in a Global Framework*

²³ TLO, *Faryab Provincial Profile*, July 2011.

²⁴ NRVA, 2007/8.

produced locally.²⁵ A suggestion could be to implement vocational trainings in these areas that are adapted to local economic activities in which women are able to participate, thus possibly attaining the 10% contribution goal in Faryab.

That said, it is important to note that there are currently no empirical studies which demonstrate that, on average, women who have access education have greater earning power in Afghanistan. Indeed, the countrywide 2007/8 NRVA report states that “education, which is supposed to open the gate for women’s active involvement in the labour market, does not seem to help”.²⁶ While the national unemployment average was reported to be 7% for women in general (the same as for men), for educated women this figure rose to 18% (compared to 8% for educated men).²⁷ The same report also finds higher rates of unemployment amongst literate women (16% for females, 7% for males). Importantly, the unemployment rate is also higher for urban women than the national average (18% vs. 7%) and women have higher rates of economic inactivity in urban Afghanistan than their rural counterparts (51% vs. 46%). Urban areas are precisely where one might expect to see greater labour opportunities for educated women: cities tend to be less culturally conservative, have a more diversified economy, and have a larger educated female population. Yet, in Afghanistan this reasoning does not appear to reflect local realities, as women have more opportunities to access specialised income-generating activities in rural areas. In the case of Faryab, Maymana would be considered the only real urban centre that could host extra vocational training components.

Defining Marginalization

The GEC proposes to improve the lives of marginalised girls and young women through education. However, defining what should count as situations of marginalisation (social exclusion) is both contested and variable according to the context. In the field of sociology, static definitions of marginalisation referring to poverty level have given way to dynamic analyses of how political, social and economic processes of social disadvantage create states of exclusion.²⁸ Such dynamic approaches allow for a deeper understanding of why marginalisation occurs within a community, but also resist simple models of cross-contextual comparison. In the case of the GEC, a common set of marginalisation indicators (such as Impact Indicator 1, Outcome Indicator 1 and Outcome Indicator 2) may not be applicable across the multiple countries targeted, or even across multiple intervention sites within one country: Afghanistan cannot be compared to countries in central Africa and Faryab is quite different from Bamyan for example. Moreover, child-centred approaches to marginalisation have argued that the concept is best understood as an active relationship between the child’s experience and others’ interpretation of the child’s socio-economic position.²⁹ This dynamic approach recognises that outsiders may view a child as living in a marginalised circumstance when that child does not identify with that attribution. These considerations raise serious issues regarding how marginalised girls and women are identified as part of ACTED’s work in Faryab. This is crucial because even if DFID’s definition focuses on ‘out-of-school girls and those at risk of dropping out’, the numbers are so low in Faryab that almost all girls can be considered marginalized and at risk of dropping out (because of a sudden spike in violence for example) given that the number of out-of-school girls (94313) is very close to that of in-school girls (114143)³⁰. The question therefore remains centred around finding the most marginalized of the entire group or focusing on those who are the most likely to stay in school. For example, ACTED could concentrate its efforts on the relatively more urban areas of Faryab, in the hope that girls who choose to become teachers (as many of them profess to desire) can have better access to their surrounding rural area and help the girls that are even more marginalized than them.

²⁵ Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Provincial profile for Faryab, no date given.

<http://eafghanag.ucdavis.edu/country-info/Province-agriculture-profiles/faryab/Faryab.pdf>

²⁶ NRVA 2007/8, p. 105: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp213398.pdf>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ S. Tawil, “Social Exclusion and Violence: Education for Social Cohesion”, UNESCO background paper, 2001:

<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE/pdf/pdfbg2e.pdf>.

²⁹ Kyriaki Messiou, « Understanding marginalisation in education: The voice of children”, *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 21(3), pp. 305-318.

³⁰ UNICEF data on Population, Enrolment and Out of School Children by Province, 2011

A Diversified Approach to Educational Development

A distinctive feature of the GEC project in Faryab is that it intervenes on several levels: it aims to provide primary schools, village literacy courses and vocational training courses. This reflects a global trend away from a narrow concentration on increasing primary school enrolment, which had been the key focus of the original EFA framework. Indeed, there is a growing consensus amongst international education researchers that the post-2015 agenda needs to reach out to learners with non-traditional backgrounds, who either did not receive an education when they were of primary school age, or cannot attend formal schooling because of environmental, economic, or social barriers.³¹ This is particularly important in contexts affected by conflict, where educational provision has been disrupted for a number of years.³² Accordingly, a diversified approach which can accommodate a broad range of learners and needs, is also recommended by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).³³

However, diversification may also raise a number of problems for the implementing partner. ACTED will have to manage several different programmes simultaneously and develop quality management tools appropriate to each. There is a risk that these simultaneous efforts will dissipate the GEC intervention's overall impact.

Role of the Baseline in the M&E Strategy

Over the next three years, the Samuel Hall evaluation team will be in charge of thoroughly assessing the scope, challenges and outcomes of the GEC project in Faryab. The following report presents the results of the first phase of that evaluation, the baseline study conducted in November 2013 and its additional data collection in March 2014. This study consisted of 893 household surveys distributed across test and control sites, 10 focus group discussions with village elders, 29 area observations, 10 teacher questionnaires and 18 school observations – only 8 sites were actually visited due to security, the other 10 were conducted on the phone. In order to establish a context-appropriate basis for evaluating success, it is essential to clearly define what can realistically be expected of the GEC in Faryab: What are the conditions on the ground and how well adapted is ACTED's Theory of Change to those conditions? By analysing the results of the baseline field study in conjunction with a comprehensive review of relevant past studies and secondary literature, this report identifies the risk factors (including barriers to education) and evaluation indicators most relevant to the success of the GEC intervention. This aims to:

- Introduce the socio-economic and political situation of the North-Western Afghan province of Faryab;
- Provide the reader with an empirically validated assessment of the state of education for girls and young women in Faryab;
- Develop a comprehensive baseline survey of the GEC initiative, as conducted by ACTED in Faryab, to further inform the next phases of this three-year assessment;
- Identify recommendations that can be used to improve the implementation of the GEC project in Faryab and inform the design of educational development projects in similar contexts.

Following the methodological explanations and an overview of important themes linked to education and development, the report addresses the situation on the ground in Faryab before dwelling on the data analysis, broken down in the areas of demographics, literacy and numeracy, perceptions and expectations. Having such a division can help with the narration and provide the most accurate picture of the situation in supported areas.

Lastly, the conclusion and recommendations section provides ideas for the midline and endline phases of the evaluation as well as for the overall planning of the project at a local, national and international level.

³¹Burnett, Nicholas, and Colin Felsman. "Post-2015 Education MDGs." Washington: Results for Development Institute (2012).

³²Talbot, Christopher. "Education in Conflict: Emergencies in Light of the post-2015 MDGs and EFA Agendas." (2013).

³³ INEE, *Minimum Standards Handbook*, 2010

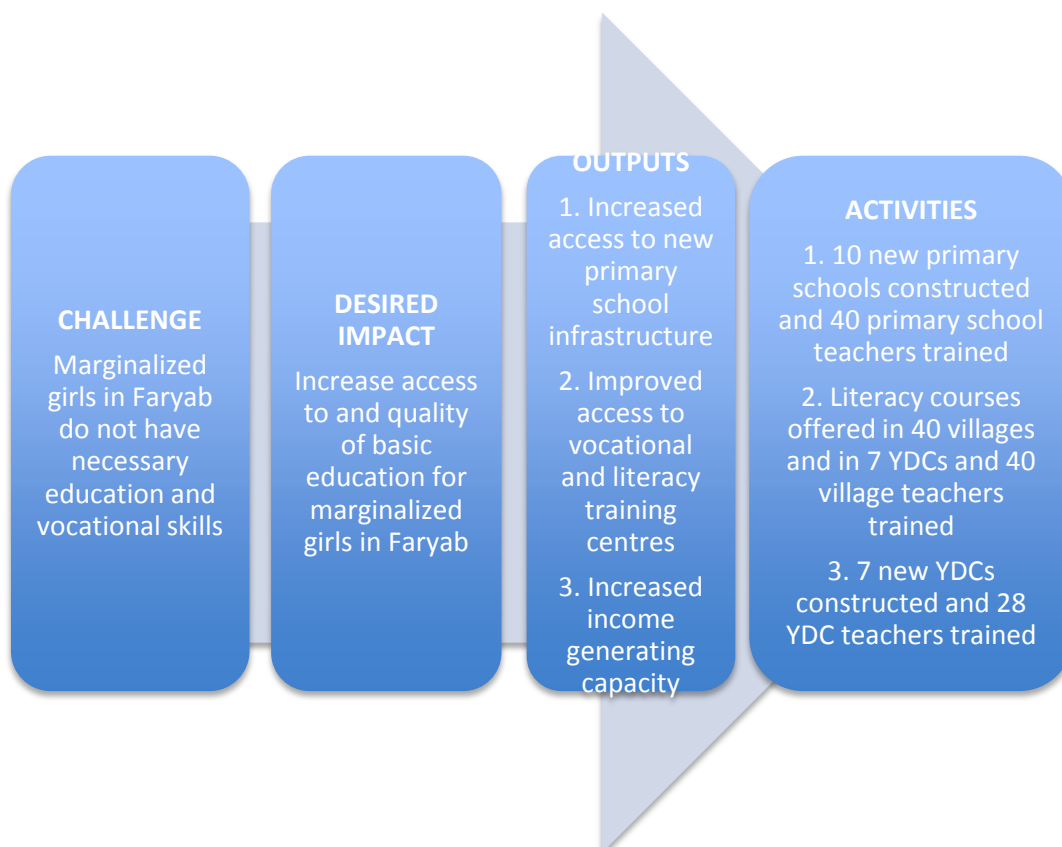


Image 5: ACTED Intervention Logic

The specificity of the baseline study lies in its ability to provide an assessment of the initial conditions in the field in order to identify the terms of success for the GEC project in Faryab which will serve as the benchmark for measuring the impact and outcomes of the entire project in the final report, as well as potentially highlight areas in which the ability to decrease barriers to education might need revisions. It offers a reference against which additionality can be measured during the intervention timeline. Therefore we describe the relevant socio-economic and educational situation in Faryab prior to the intervention. Most importantly, we establish baseline variable measurements and verify equivalence in both test and control sites. Thus the objectives of the baseline are:

- To identify obstacles to girls' education in selected districts;
- To identify the relevant stakeholders within communities affected by the intervention and collect their opinions regarding girls' education;
- To collect data for a regular evaluation process to take place between the present (October 2013) and the termination of the project in December 2015;
- To provide recommendations on how to mitigate those obstacles, on how to improve the research tools and on how to improve the whole programme implementation;
- To correctly calculate the indicators and desired outputs and revise them if needed.

Additional Livelihoods Analysis

Labour market – General trends³⁴

The Afghan labour market is characterized by underemployment, irregular, low-paid and 'unproductive' jobs, labour migration, child labour and job insecurity. In Afghanistan, around 6.6 million people are employed³⁵ (5.5

³⁴ This subsection is based on a Samuel Hall assessment of the Faryab employment market conducted in March 2014. DACAAR, 'Market Analysis, Gender-Based Value Chain Analysis and Feasibility Study in Faryab Province' (Samuel Hall, 2014).

³⁵ All persons aged 14 and over who, during the reference period of one week, were in paid employment or self-employed and who worked at least eight hours (NRVA – 2011-12)

million men, and 1.1 million women). The national unemployment³⁶ rate is 8.2% (6.4% for males, and 16.5% for females), while underemployment³⁷ is as high as 16.8% and 'not-gainfully employed'³⁸ labour constitutes 25% of the total labour force in the country³⁹.

Qualitative interviews and field observations indicate that these features are common in Faryab too. The Faryab labour market is characterized by underemployment as a majority of the workforce is absorbed in agricultural and livestock activities – which are mostly seasonal. Underemployment is more acute for women in Faryab, as many are un-paid family workers or confined to low-paid seasonal jobs such as shawl and handicrafts making or harvesting and threshing crops. Those who are not employed in agricultural activities are often engaged in low-profile jobs like making handicrafts or shop-keeping. While many people rely on income earned from economic activities, almost one third of the total population (31%)⁴⁰ rely on remittances for their living that are mostly sent by their family members working in Iran.

Nevertheless, qualitative interviews among value chain actors suggest that the labour market in Faryab has improved in the last ten years in terms of providing employment and livelihood opportunities. According to respondents this is largely due to increased assistance in the province by government agencies and NGOs, and recent good harvests due to favourable weather conditions.

In spite of these improvements, the future labour market in Faryab faces a number of challenges and uncertainties over the coming years:

- I. The drawdown of international forces *per se* will likely have a limited direct impact on Faryab province where the Afghan National Army has already taken full control of security. Nevertheless, **the security situation continues to decline**, which may a) lead to an exodus of skilled labour, b) restrict interprovincial movement, c) disrupt fragile provincial trade links, and d) reduce NGOs' access to many locations.
- II. The international drawdown will be accompanied by a parallel decline in funding from international donors, leaving Afghan government ministries with large budgetary deficits. In the short term this could lead to **significant underfunding for key government functions in Faryab**, like the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, The Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and the Department of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled, all of which play important roles in supporting the domestic labour market.
- III. Population movements (migration inflows and outflows) in Faryab are difficult to anticipate, but could **destabilize current labour force dynamics**. The potential influx of returnee migrants post-US withdrawal could destabilize existing labour market dynamics, as both skilled and non-skilled labourers return from Iran and Pakistan.
- IV. The labour force itself is changing. Young people entering the labour market today are considerably more likely to be literate and better educated than their predecessors. Indeed, the number of university students in Faryab alone has increased from 1296 in 2010 to 3175 in 2012.⁴¹ However, **the labour market in Faryab does not have the capacity to absorb the rising number of educated youths**. Government jobs may decrease due to a lack of funding and many NGOs are trying to reduce their physical footprint. This will result in a significant 'skills mismatch' between labour market requirements and labour force qualifications.
- V. In practice, this means that educated youths will be forced to work in traditional sectors of activity, rather than sectors that utilise the skills acquired at school or university. With limited job opportunities, especially in rural provinces like Faryab, many people find themselves working as unskilled labourers. Therefore, in addition to a 'skills mismatch', **the future labour market will have to contend with labour 'underutilization'**.

³⁶ All persons aged 14 and over who, during the reference period of one week, were: a) without any work or working less than eight hours, and b) seeking work

³⁷ All persons aged 14 and over who, during the reference period of one week, were a) working less than 40 hours, b) available to work additional hours, and c) willing to work additional hours (NRVA – 2011-12)

³⁸ All persons aged 14 and over who are unemployed or underemployed

³⁹ NRVA 2011-12, CSO

⁴⁰ Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development: *Faryab Provincial profile*

⁴¹ Central Statistics Organisation: *Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook (2012-13)*

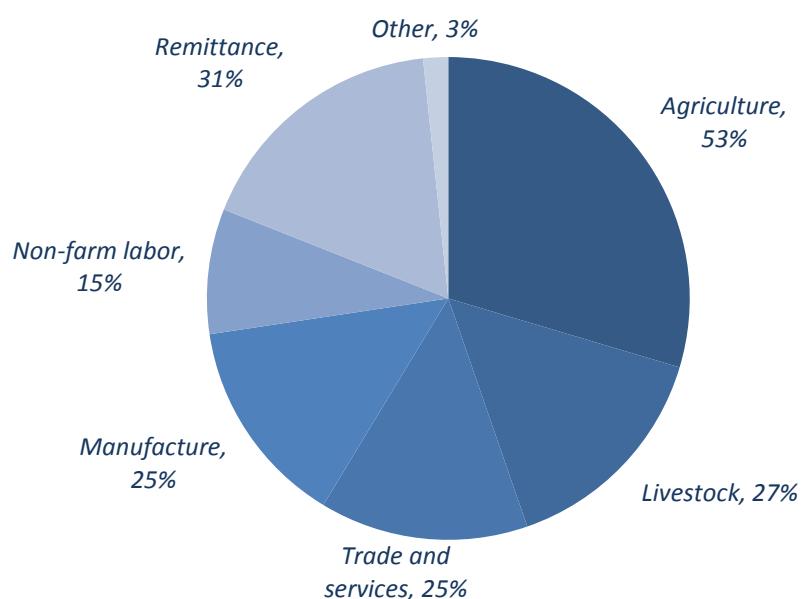
- VI. There is increasing pressure on the working population to provide for the growing number of young people. 48% of the country is below the age of 15⁴², which places an **increasingly heavy burden on the working population to support the younger generations.**

Labour market – Sectoral trends⁴³

Currently, employment opportunities in Faryab are characterised by traditional labour activities. Agriculture and livestock remain the dominant sectors of employment. Collectively, both sectors provide livelihood opportunities to around 80% of the total labour force in Faryab.⁴⁴ In addition, horticulture and small industries like carpet and rugs, karakul skin processing and dried fruits have been providing livelihood opportunities to both males and females for generations and continue to occupy significant proportions of the labour force.

According to interviews with value chain actors and key informants in Faryab, employment opportunities have increased over the last few years for both men and women in a number of activities. Karakul making and animal skin trade, in particular have provided more employment opportunities for men, while carpet and rug weaving, silk production and dairy products generated employment and livelihood opportunities for women. Interview participants said that this was largely due to vocational training that people had received over the last few years. *“As compared to last 5 years, our incomes in rug weaving have increased because in the past people didn’t know how to make rugs professionally. But now everyone is professional in rug weaving”* (Najia ‘40’ – Maymana).

Graph 2: Source of Income in Faryab



Source: Faryab provincial profile (MRRD), Adopted from NRVA 2007-08

- **Agriculture and Livestock**

Agriculture and livestock continue to provide the greatest number of jobs, although many of these take the form of informal labour at a household level, especially for women. Most respondents expect these sectors to remain fairly steady in terms of employment opportunities, and demand for agricultural produce remains high. Given the long historical tradition of practising these activities in Faryab, their optimism is legitimate. Moreover, crop yields have steadily increased over the last 4 years. Since 2010-11, fruit yields – particularly grape, peach and almond - have increased, although production of cotton has remained constant (50 tons

⁴² NRVA (2011/12), p.xvi

⁴³ This subsection is based on a *Samuel Hall* assessment of the Faryab employment market conducted in March 2014. DACAAR, *‘Market Analysis, Gender-Based Value Chain Analysis and Feasibility Study in Faryab Province’* (Samuel Hall, 2014).

⁴⁴ Faryab provincial profile, MRRD

every year since 2010).⁴⁵ However, unpredictable weather patterns could have a drastic effect on both sectors (the production of wheat, in particular, has been volatile⁴⁶) and a bad harvest would push many families into extreme poverty.

Dairy products, on the other hand, have a good domestic demand, yet due to the absence of storage and packaging facilities in the province dairy products are only abundant at certain times of the year – surplus in spring and shortage in other seasons of the year. If such facilities are made available, the dairy sector could have considerable potential for growth in the future and provide a means of livelihood for both men and women.

Faryab saffron is of extremely high quality, even by Afghanistan's high standards, but low levels of familiarity with locally produced saffron in Faryab means that demand is relatively low. However, according to saffron Producer Association members, people's knowledge about the culinary and medicinal benefits of saffron is increasing daily and with it domestic demand.

There are no chicken poultry farming in Faryab province. Chickens and eggs are mostly imported from other provinces for domestic consumption. The sector has potential of growth and can provide livelihood opportunities to a considerable number of people in the province in future. Indeed a number of value chain actors expressed a keen interest in learning more about this sector.

- **Non-Agriculture**

Historically, Faryab has been known for producing carpets and rugs, and the sector continues to employ a large number of people. However, in recent years, the market has experienced a downturn caused by: i) competition from cheaper imported rugs and carpets from Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, ii) lack of innovation in production techniques of Afghan carpets and rugs, iii) quality control issues, iv) lack of investments to help in growth of the sector, and v) decline in the market for Afghan rugs and carpets in foreign markets, particularly Pakistan, which is the main buyer of Afghan rugs and carpets for the purpose of re-export. The solutions to these constraints on the carpet and rug sector are discussed in the Value Chain Analysis section of this report. Overall, we anticipate that this sector will continue to provide significant employment opportunities for men and women. Skilled artisanal work, such as tailoring, shawl making and handicrafts, provide good income-generating opportunities, mainly for women, and since these trades have domestic markets throughout the year, they will likely continue to offer steady employment.

Labour market – Demand for skills⁴⁷

The current labour trends indicate that the biggest sectors (agriculture and livestock) will continue to form the backbone of the local economy over the coming years. However, widespread traditional activities like carpet and rug weaving, and handicrafts may be the key to future economic growth since they do not currently operate at optimal capacity. This has significant implications for the kinds of skills that DACAAR should impart to the local workforce. Based on interviews with regional DACAAR staff in Faryab, and in-depth individual interviews with different value chain actors in Pashtun Kot, Maymana and Khwaja Sabz Posh districts, a number of skills (often linked to current livelihoods), have been requested by both men and women. Most of these trades/skills have already been part of training programmes of different organizations working in Faryab, which may account for the comparatively high level of familiarity with training programmes.

⁴⁵ Idem

⁴⁶ Idem

⁴⁷ This subsection is based on a *Samuel Hall* assessment of the Faryab employment market conducted in March 2014. DACAAR, 'Market Analysis, Gender-Based Value Chain Analysis and Feasibility Study in Faryab Province' (*Samuel Hall*, 2014).

Table 1: Desired Vocational Skills Training (subjective needs assessment)

	Men	Women
Traditional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture and nursery • Saffron cultivation • Livestock (rearing, feeding, taking care etc.) • Sophisticated carpet weaving (that meets international demand) • Carpentry • Metalworking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring • Embroidery • <i>Waskat & Chapan</i> (Handicraft) making • Carpet and rug weaving • Lace sewing • Livestock
New Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop (business) management training • Micro-enterprise development • Business marketing (for international markets) • English Language • Computer and internet • Repairing of electric and mechanical machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy courses • Poultry farming • Soap making • Jam making • Beauty parlour • Baking (kulcha) • Tomato paste making

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the skills requested by value chain actors in Faryab pertain to traditional sectors of activity that are already well established. Most people do not want to start working in a new sector, they want to capitalise on existing skills and improve current production processes. For example, male and female respondents who work in livestock rearing are keen to learn about new and improved techniques for looking after their animals. Others may be keen to acquire skills and knowledge in other traditional sectors in order to broaden and diversify their portfolio of activities. Similarly, many female respondents would like to receive skills training in traditional female activities like embroidery and carpet and rug weaving.

Nevertheless, a small number of respondents said that they would like to receive vocational training in a wide range of new areas. Male respondents were notably more likely than female respondents to request training in commercial skills like **international and domestic business marketing, business management, computer and internet literacy**. According to the key informant interviews and interviews with value chain actors, these skills have not been included in previous capacity building initiatives, which accounts for a) the lack of these skills latterly, and b) the high demand for them currently. In spite of Faryab's ostensibly rural aspect, these skills will become increasingly important as mobile and Internet penetration increases. By comparison, women expressed a greater interest in learning practical skills in areas like, **soap making, tomato paste making, baking, jam making** and **beauty parlour** training which are new to the province and have considerable demand in the import-oriented province.

Given the wide range of requests for vocational training from interview participants, and given the unpredictable nature of the socio-economic context over the next 3 years, the process of selecting appropriate skills for vocational training is potentially complex. In order to facilitate this process the review team judged feasibility according to three criteria: 1) How suitable is the vocational skill for the market? 2) What **impact** will training have on the market? And 3) Is the skill **sustainable**? Based on such basic criteria, 3 vocational skills have been identified: **livestock, carpet and rug weaving, and dairy production**. Vocational training in these areas is highly feasible as they match current and future market trends. The potential impact of vocational skills training in these areas could be significant as local demand for dairy products, and national and international demand for rugs and carpets is high. However, it is important to note that transferable skills such as business management, could also have far-reaching impacts. While demand for these skills is currently low, and while they may be difficult to teach, the long-term benefits could be significant and the cost of conducting training is comparatively low – compared to training people in operating new dairy processing machines for example.

Therefore, vocational skills training should progress along two parallel trajectories: reinforcing existing skills, and teaching the labour force new skills. Emphasis should be placed on reinforcing existing labour market skills in order to exploit opportunities for growth in established sectors like carpet weaving and livestock keeping. This should be a priority for organisations working in Faryab. For example, livestock owners should receive basic training on animal nutrition, disease prevention and recognition, and housing. Dairy producers should receive training on how to operate industrial machinery, such as milking and pasteurisation machines.

Other sectors, like carpet and rug weaving, require very different skills. Many of the necessary skills for artisanal activity are passed down in the family and do not require external inputs. However, the emphasis should be to provide workers with the skills necessary to transform the existing market into a more profitable sector. Specifically, this would require vocational training in areas like literacy and numeracy, as well as business management and simple accounting, which could also have knock-on benefits in other sectors. By focussing on these skills, NGOs should create the necessary foundations for long-term market development without the need for external support. Many of the women who work in the carpet and rug weaving value chain, and the handicrafts value chain, have the practical skills necessary for production, but lack the knowledge and skills to transform their small-scale, localised industries into market competitive businesses.

Conclusions

The review team will undertake complementary rapid assessments during phases 2 and 3, to validate or deepen the assumptions of the DACAAR study. However, it should not be noted that:

- This important component of the study – especially for the endline phase and the recommendations was not in the original TOR;
- The review team will not be able to conduct a proper livelihoods analysis or comprehensive labour market survey – due to limited financial resources;
- In any event, DFID and PwC should be realistic about the *actual* income generating activities for women in the Afghanistan (and Faryab) of 2014 – the situation is clearly worsening every year and the economic window of *opportunity* for women is closing in most provinces;

In this last regard, international organisations should not raise too many expectations among the target populations, as it is: 1) not realistic; 2) deceptive; and potentially 3) counterproductive. By contrast, DFID and PwC should prioritize non-economic outcomes: the GEC initiative may not help beneficiaries find an income generating activity, but it may teach them basic literacy and numeracy skills – which can be helpful to the households on the short-run, while progressively changing the perception that both women and the community they live in have of women's role.

⁴⁸ This subsection is based on a *Samuel Hall* assessment of the Faryab employment market conducted in March 2014. DACAAR, 'Market Analysis, Gender-Based Value Chain Analysis and Feasibility Study in Faryab Province' (Samuel Hall, 2014).

ACTED Reflections on Theory of Change Analysis

Focus on quality: ACTED is encouraged to see the original assumptions underlining the theory of change are also supported by the baseline. As outlined, one key issue related to this is the need for quality teaching resulting from quality teacher training. Due to the security and cultural context of Faryab, it can be challenging to adapt a case-by-case approach for teacher training and support. The most effective teacher training methods focus on continual observation and peer support. Whereas in some areas, teacher support networks have proved successful in encouraging and strengthening literacy teachers, this is simply not feasible in other areas due to the fact that literacy teachers, who are female, are unable to travel to meet each other due to cultural constraints. Therefore, ACTED's methodology of having mobile community monitors who follow up with a certain cluster of literacy classes and can sit in classes and support teachers, seems most appropriate.

Following these baseline comments on the importance of teacher quality- ACTED is developing more internal M&E systems to track attendance, educational progress and dropout rates for individual school classes and literacy classes. These individual classes will be tracked on a database to support ACTED programming so struggling teachers or classes can be taken note of and corrective actions made, either through more intensive one on one support to teachers or additional training.

Out of school girls: The external evaluator was not able to provide any additional analysis on out of school girls. From the ACTED experience in Faryab it is clear that there is a high demand for community based literacy and numeracy classes for what could be considered as 'out of school girls'. Already there are 4,000 girls enrolled in these classes and ACTED anticipates a continued demand for this. ACTED's experience with girls in literacy classes is that whilst at times they may have attended one or two grades in school many years ago, the barriers to education (noted above) prevented them continuing or solidifying their education- hence the necessity to learn literacy and numeracy. As the high illiteracy levels documented in this report show, despite a seeming large proportion of girls having been enrolled, their learning was limited.

Language of students: As is reflected in the data presented on ethnicity in the baseline report, a large proportion of students have Uzbek as their mother tongue. As per the Ministry of Education's curriculum, texts books, instruction and exams for students can only take place in the two national languages of Dari or Pashtun. In the ACTED GEC programme, Dari is used as the language of instruction for girls, the alphabet of which is the same as Uzbek. There are no general text books in Uzbek, so students need to improve Dari in order to pass exams, however, in the current programme, the local teachers, who often also have Uzbek as their mother tongue use Uzbek when necessary in instruction.

Students with disabilities: As the baseline report presents, most girls in Faryab could be considered marginalised because of the lack of access to quality education. This programme does not have a specific disability focus and this has not been taken into account in the designs for schools. However, the medium of community based literacy and numeracy classes can often provide a more accessible medium for disabled students to access learning as classes are held nearer their house and there can be more peer support enabling them to attend classes.

Livelihoods analysis: The external evaluator has added additional livelihoods analysis to this baseline report. A basic household income survey is one of the indicators in the log frame for this programme. At the stage of baseline data collection, the beneficiaries for output three-, which focuses on vocational training, were not yet selected. ACTED's Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (AMEU) has conducted a market assessment to determine the most relevant skills for women to learn in relation to the local economic and cultural context. In addition, a household income survey is in the process of being conducted for all selected beneficiaries alongside their enrolment in the vocational training courses. Another household income survey will be conducted with the same number of beneficiaries three to six months after they have finished the course to track income increase. This information will be shared in the mid line report.

III. SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY

Given the size and scope of the overall GEC programme, a variety of data collection tools have been used throughout the baseline evaluation. These were crafted by DFID, PwC and Coffey International with revisions made by Samuel Hall, in order to ensure a wide-ranging access to all relevant qualitative and quantitative data; ACTED provided regular input when changes and/or additions were made.

Interviews have all been conducted face-to-face, using a core group of Samuel Hall coordinators along with ACTED community mobilizers serving as interviewers. Both male and female surveyors spoke a combination of Dari, Pashto, Uzbek and Turkmen, the main languages used in Faryab.

As always, Samuel Hall has been attentive to respect and follow ethical and cultural considerations, which in this case included obtaining informed consent from the participants, and the consent of parents when participants were children, in each phase of the project.

The instruments used for the baseline survey were both quantitative – a household survey, literacy/numeracy tests and a teachers’ questionnaire, and qualitative – a literature review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and area observations.

The baseline study was conducted from late October to mid-November 2013 with an additional data collection drive in early March 2014 focused on school observations. The winter could already be felt in Maymana and certain remote areas such as Kohistan were witnessing the first snows. The school year was well under way, as it starts in March and finishes in November.

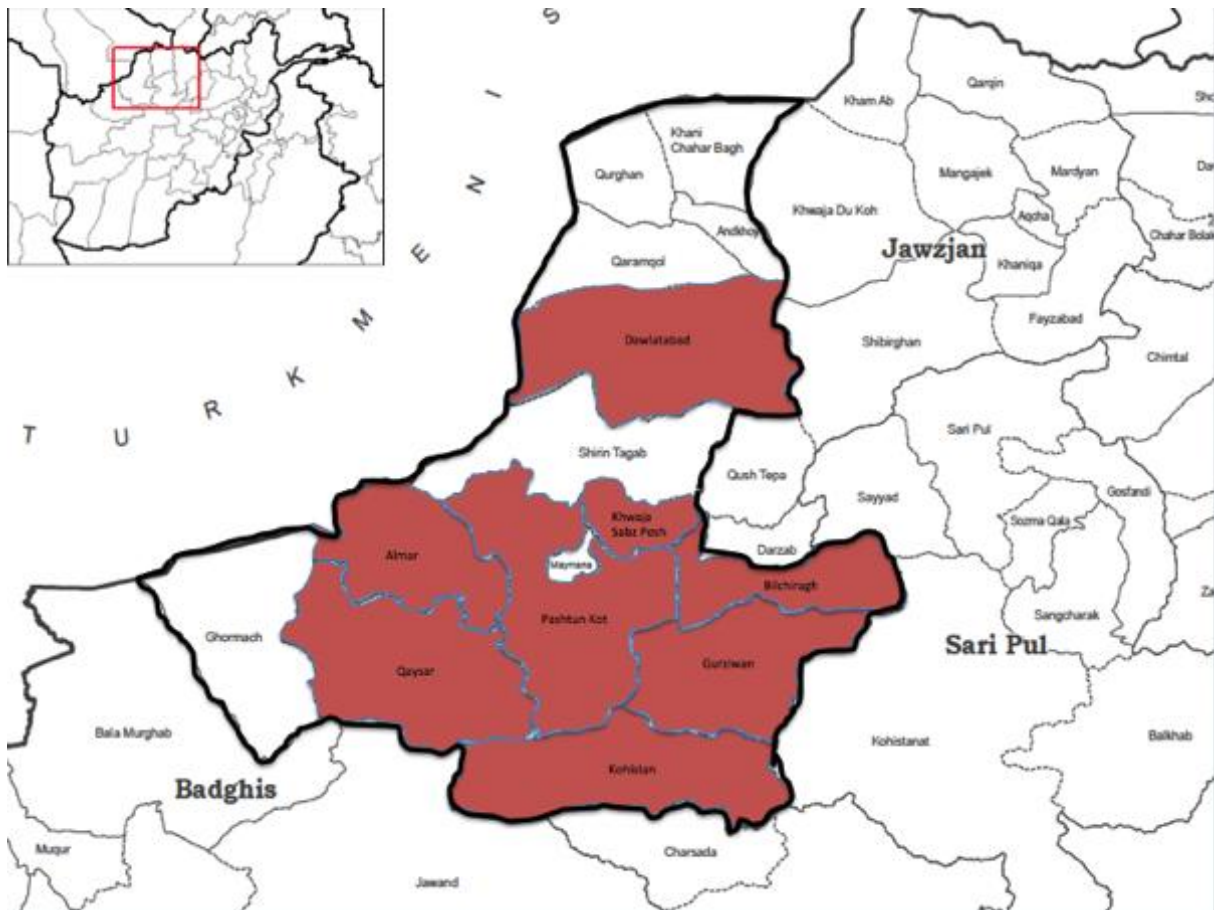


Image 6: Targeted districts in Faryab

Sampling Criteria

The criteria and method used to select the test and control groups was ACTED's prerogative. The sites were selected based on key characteristics such as ethnic composition, population size and similar geography, as well as access. Samuel Hall was given a list of locations to survey, both those receiving ACTED assistance through the GEC and other locations. Only one or two areas did not have test and control locations very near to each other. The test and control locations were quite similar but security issues meant that at times, in two nearby locations, only one was accessible, highlighting the fluidity of the threat of violence in Faryab.

Sample sizes were decided based on security and on the maximum number of surveys an interviewer could complete in a day (usually 10). It was essential to remain as little as possible in a location because of potential intrusions and such an issue effectively arose in Almar where the team had to hastily leave an area that was not safe. Randomly selecting households was also difficult due to the importance of first meeting the village elder and explaining our work before finding people to survey as randomly as possible.

Tools: Quantitative

1. Household Survey

The main tool used for this evaluation is a large survey designed to maximise the number of factors taken into consideration over the course of the next years. Through its administration, the aim is to better understand the living standards, practices, perceptions and hopes regarding education of rural families and young girls in Faryab, and to set various benchmarks at this starting point, in order to identify future key variances. Samuel Hall revised it by adding skips, ensuring that inappropriate or irrelevant questions for Faryab were omitted and overall made it easier to administer for the interviewers.

Out of the total sampling plan of 92 villages (later 93) provided by ACTED, separate test and control locations were selected. ACTED's main concern was to reach villages and areas that are difficult to access and therefore contain a higher number of marginalized girls in them that could benefit from the GEC initiative. The former being the areas where villagers will benefit from ACTED's programming and the latter the ones where no support will be provided, enabling us to see the effects of the GEC implementation between two very close locations. The number of test and control sites is uneven given that the same control site is at times used to compare several test areas with similar characteristics.

Before the fieldwork, the aim was to divide the number of respondents per village fairly equally, usually 10 per location, in order to draw indicative conclusions with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. Security and meteorological realities on the ground, which will be explained in the limitations section, led the coordinating teams to modify the number of areas targeted along with the number of respondents in each village.

The household survey's first respondent was the head of household or primary care giver for the majority of the survey, a different section was however conducted with the primary beneficiaries of ACTED's GEC – young girls aged 6 to 15.⁴⁹

Table 2: Differences in Sampling Targets and Overall Numbers

District	Planned # of test sites	Actual # of test sites	Planned # of control sites	Actual # of control sites	Planned # of respondents	Actual # of respondents	Population ⁵⁰
Almar	5	1	3	0	84	20	68300
Qaysar	6	3	3	2	94	80	138400
Pashtun Kot	10	3	7	3	182	95	183500
Kohistan	5	4	3	3	85	70	53100
Bilchiragh	6	6	5	3	115	149	50700
Gurziwan	7	5	5	2	125	120	73700
Khwaja Sabz Posh	12	11	7	8	195	304	49400
Dawlatabad	5	3	3	0	80	55	47200
Total	56	36	36	21	960	893	664300

⁴⁹ ACTED GEC Baseline Survey in Faryab – Inception Report, *Samuel Hall*, October 2013

⁵⁰ CSO/Afghanistan Statistic Yearbook 2010-2011

Even though the numbers are lower in almost every district, comparative analysis at the sub-provincial level is possible everywhere except for in Almar and Dawlatabad where no control sites were surveyed because they happened to be located in very dangerous areas. If the security situation continues to deteriorate, it will be virtually impossible to gather the same amount of information as in other districts.

2. Literacy/Numeracy Tests

An integral component of the survey and of ACTED's education strategy in Faryab is the ASER test that will enable the NGO to assess the basic education level of the girls as well as follow up on their progress. Only the girls (aged 6 to 15) interviewed in locations that will host a primary school or a village literacy course (VLC) have been surveyed, not those attending a Youth Development Centre (YDC). The test was added at the end of the general questionnaire and was administered at the end of the interview whenever a girl of the appropriate age was available in the family.

The assessment tools employed were adapted from the ASER/UWEZO tests supplied by ACTED, and translated into Dari. These are very short tests, which provide an estimate of average learning. The reading component assesses a subject's ability to recognise letters and words, their ability to read aloud a short paragraph and a short story, and tests their reading comprehension. The numeracy component assesses two cognitive skills: recognition (digits, counting and numbers) and arithmetic calculation (subtraction and division). Assessment was carried out orally with the aid of a question sheet shown to the subject. Scores were attributed (0-5 for reading and 0-7 for numeracy).

Table 3: Reading assessment scores

Score	Attribution
0	No recognition of letters
1	Able to recognize letters
2	Able to recognize written words
3	Able to read a paragraph
4	Able to read a short story
5	Able to answer all comprehension questions about the story

Table 4: Numeracy assessment scores

Score	Attribution
0	No recognition of numbers
1	Able to count
2	Able to recognize digits 1-9
3	Able to recognize values
4	Able to perform subtraction
5	Able to perform division
6	Able to answer bonus questions on division

3. Teachers' Questionnaire

This short 34-question survey received a few additions from Samuel Hall and was administered to 10 different male teachers. The aim was to address their perceptions of their work, their students and the attitude of the communities around them.

Tools: Qualitative

1. Literature Review

The aim of the literature review is to identify potential information gaps and refine the scope of the research for both the donor and the implementer, in order to clarify potential grey areas. This task included looking at official reports, available documentary sources and past educational programming by a variety of organizations. This has enabled Samuel Hall to set the analytical framework of the survey and to highlight important discussions surrounding the analysis and the tools.

2. Key Informant Interviews

In order to understand the roles of important actors in the development and education sectors, interviews were used to assess the impact of the programme through discussions with government institutions, international and non-governmental organizations and for-profit contractors working on education projects.

The format was at times formal, lasting approximately one hour and following an in-depth line of questioning while at others, arranged on the moment in the field and shorter. These individuals (NGO workers, IO staff members, etc.) were selected because of their work on girls' education, their knowledge of Afghanistan and their experience in implementing development projects.



Image 7: Children cross a river that runs through their village in Khwaja Sabz Posh district (ACTED)

3. Focus Group Discussions

Focus Groups with village elders were used to gauge the overall perceptions of a community with regards to their socio-economic reality and their attitude towards education – in particular for girls. A total of 10 interviews were conducted in two districts near Maymana, each of them comprising of 5 to 7 participants. The locations were chosen based on safety and male elders were chosen because of their socio-political clout over the community. Time and security constraints made it difficult to coordinate with other groups such as women. Respondents were selected by first contacting the village elder, explaining our work and then having him find other senior male members of the village.

4. Area Observations

To provide a snapshot of the conditions endured by children and adults in Faryab, both in the province and at the district level, a field assessment was conducted daily in each cluster of villages surveyed. By encapsulating basic socio-economic, migratory and security assessments, a broader portrait of life in Faryab will emerge for ACTED to monitor as well over the course of the next three years. This is a useful output to measure whether the education drive in the area has produced other indirect results (a change in the security situation for instance) or if it remains isolated.

5. School Observations

The purpose of school observations in the majority of locations (both test and control) was to find out the status of infrastructures in ACTED locations along with finding the much needed enrolment numbers for future retention purposes. This tool also enabled the teams to talk with principals and head teachers, take photos of key areas such as the playground, the latrines, the surrounding wall and more, and assess student dropout rates. The findings are outlined in 18 school observations, one page for each school (in 2 schools, staff was not available).

Process and Additionality

With regards to the literacy/numeracy tests, additionality will be measured through potential increases in the mean scores of tests taken by girls in locations supported by ACTED with the aim of surpassing the 1,5 out of 5 mark for literacy and the 1,9 out of 7 mark for numeracy; the number of students reaching the top 25th percentile will also be monitored. In addition, the number of girls completing education courses provided by ACTED (Output Indicators 2.3 and 2.5) will also show prospective gains. Area observations will focus on the physical improvements in the schools and YDCs and all the qualitative work will concentrate on the perceptions of the children and adults regarding the concept of education for girls and its challenges.

For teachers, additionality will be measured by looking at data regarding the number of students per class – both with regards to retention and to the teacher-students ratio (if more teachers are successfully hired, the figure will drop and lead to better teaching conditions for the children – participation in adequate training sessions sponsored by ACTED, levels of education and passion for their job (through qualitative interviews to assess whether they work overtime for example), etc.

Challenges and Limitations

1. Security

The most important impediment that the teams faced with regards to administering the baseline survey was the security constraint. As mentioned previously, the situation in Faryab has deteriorated considerably over the past years and even more so in the past months with numerous abductions, and killings of ACTED staff members in late November. Due to these constraints, the teams were forced to avoid a number of areas and villages that often happened to be among those furthest away from district centres. This in turn raises the question of ACTED's ability to monitor the most marginalized of the girls, those who not only face economic and cultural restrictions in their access to education but who are also forbidden to leave the house because of continuous fighting between opposition and government forces.

Because of this issue, it was also difficult to gather enough first-hand field observations that are crucial to assess daily on-goings of the project. The obvious risk is that schools will not be able to operate in such an environment and in future phases of the evaluation, Samuel Hall plans to concentrate its efforts on areas where fieldwork can be conducted safely, as indicated by ACTED's senior management in Kabul.



Image 8: Number of Security Incidents by Province 2012-2013 (iMMAP)

2. Logistics and Biases

The situation in Faryab meant that it was too dangerous to access the locations without ACTED's support, and liaison staff was in charge of ensuring the proper introductions were made in the various communities. This however meant that the external evaluation could have been perceived by villagers as linked to ACTED which might have skewed the responses to be more favourable of ACTED. In order to mitigate this factor, Samuel Hall tried as much as possible at the beginning of each fieldwork day to explain to the communities what the role of the external evaluation was and specifically focused on the need for honest answers in a neutral setting in

which there are no right or wrong responses. The difference between ACTED and Samuel Hall was also explained to the participants.

Furthermore, after twelve years of foreign presence, it is quite common in Afghanistan to see communities suffer from survey bias as they have been interviewed numerous times and can grow accustomed to the whole process, sometimes even answering in a certain way if they believe they will directly benefit from it. ACTED's presence also makes it difficult for respondents to criticize the NGO, especially in a place like Faryab where it often acts as a substitute for the government's response. In this case, the presence of ACTED community mobilizers as interviewers might have skewed some of the answers, although this cannot be specifically verified. With these types of surveys in Afghanistan, there will always be a certain degree of uncertainty that is impossible to completely address. A modified survey for the next phases of the evaluation will also help in making the questions simpler to answer.

Additionally, the arrival of the winter season also meant that areas such as Kohistan had to be rapidly prioritized given the absence of roads and the mountainous terrain in this southern district.

A logistical error also led a day's work of questionnaires from Pashtun Kot to be lost whilst en route from Maymana to Kabul. The absence of 67 of them is reflected in the table regarding differences between planned and actual sampling figures. However, this does not considerably impact the overall analysis of the data.

Finally, the organizational format of the evaluation raises some practical concerns. How to balance the priorities of the donor (DFID) with those of the fund manager (PwC) and those of the implementing partner (ACTED), without forgetting about the Afghan government, the provincial governor and the local community?

In line with the aims of the baseline and the limited amount of reliable demographic data about the population, quantitative analysis was restricted to univariate procedures. Missing data was not replaced due to high incidence and limited amount of information about the surveyed population; instead, missing cases are dealt with through pair-wise deletion.

Quality Assurance

Data collection errors were dealt with by double-checking questionnaires manually and verifying interviewer mistakes and skips. Missing names of locations were also cleaned on the database through manual verification.

Confidence with focus groups and teachers' questionnaires are strong; however, the format of the main household questionnaire guarantees a number of mistakes that are not possible to amend due to its complexity. It will be considerably improved for the next phases of the evaluation.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS

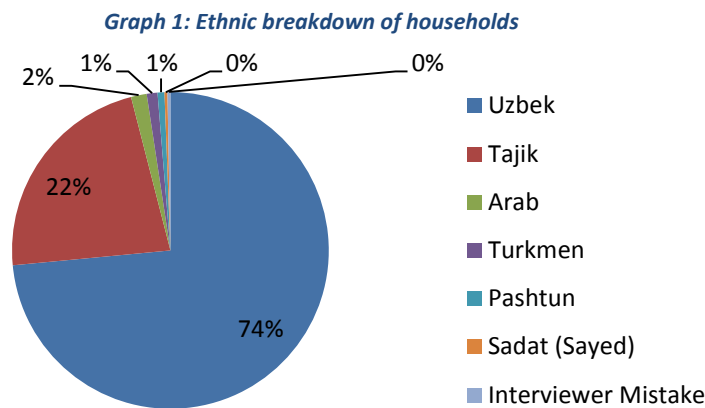
Demographics

1. Overview

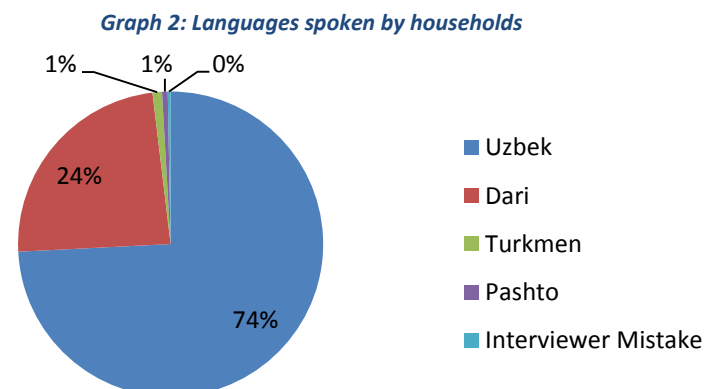
Throughout the areas surveyed, field observations highlighted issues such as economic degradation across the districts with 58,6% of the respondents saying that compared to the same time last year, things had gotten worse for the community. More than a quarter (27,6%) said that the economic situation had gotten better and 13,8% said they saw no difference. The uneven presence of the security forces was also mentioned with 62% of people said they were either sometimes, rarely or never there. To counter that however, the villages surveyed had not seen direct fighting and people had not had to flee.

2. Population

The vast majority of interviewed household heads were male (more than 95%) and three quarters of them were Uzbeks, the dominant ethnicity in Faryab. The larger proportion of male respondents indeed creates a bias given that speaking to mothers could have resulted in more nuanced responses. The number of Pashtun respondents was also well below their provincial proportion (18,5%⁵¹), suggesting that the villages that were inaccessible due to violence were the ones that had more sizeable Pashtun populations; that is logical since areas in Almar and Qaysar, where numerous Faryabi Pashtuns reside, were out of bounds as they were seeing repeated conflict. Overall, ACTED has chosen to target districts that do not have a Pashtun majority.

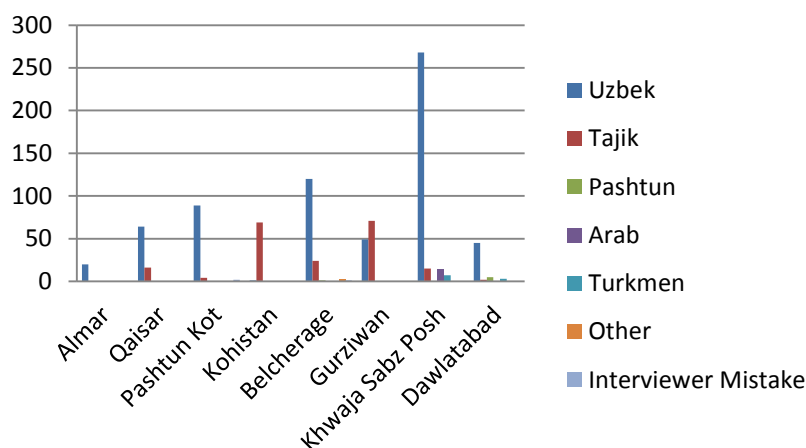


The fact that 74% of the respondents speak Uzbek as their first language can be revealing of some of the challenges of providing education to the girls in the designated areas.



⁵¹Faryab Provincial Profile, *The Liaison Office*, July 2011

Graph 3: Ethnicity of heads of household by district

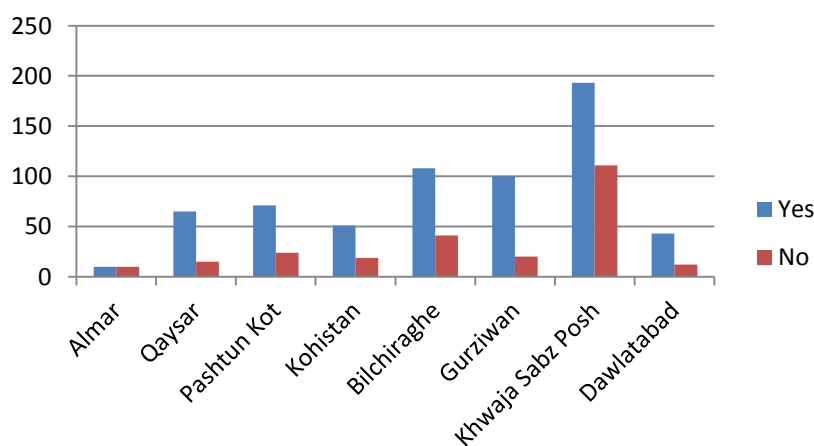


Even though the population is Uzbek and Tajik in majority, surveying Pashtun families is essential for getting a variety of opinions and also because it might help ACTED with community buy-in. For future evaluations, it will be necessary to find an acceptable number of Pashtun respondents in safe villages or find a way to access areas in the Western parts of the province.

3. Socio-Economic Characteristics

When asked if the head of household had a job or pursued an outside activity, most of the respondents answered positively. The unemployment rates were the highest in Khwaja Sabz Posh and Bilchiragh (respectively 57,5% and 38%).As expected in such a rural area, the majority of people in Faryab are farmers; 43% of them are most probably labourers (fishing is almost non-existent) and another 7% own a small business. In light of ACTED’s desire to help a certain number of marginalized women access the labour market through vocational skills, the absence of a strong and diversified pool of activities, combined with cultural restrictions to female employment, make this prospect challenging.

Graph 4: Families’ answers to the head of household having a job

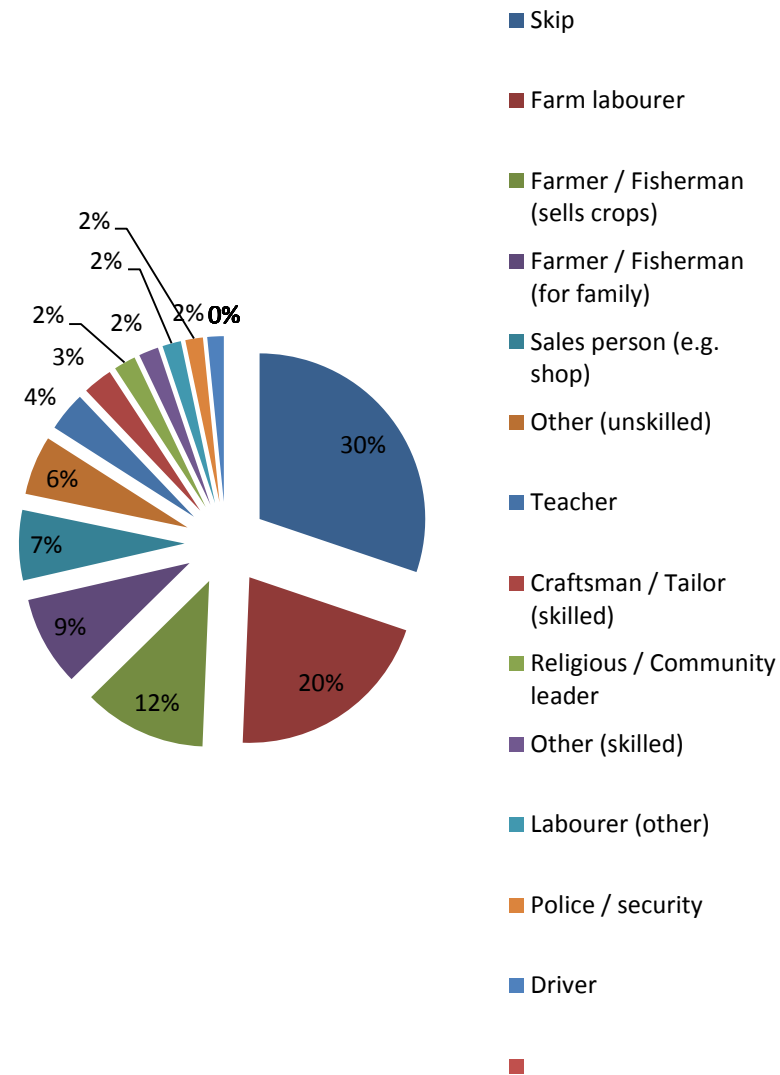


The following table also shows that almost 50% of respondents without any education do not have a job and having some sort of schooling reduces the chances of being unemployed. However, the importance of manual labour in Faryab means that the vast majority of people surveyed (71%) do have a job, often with little or no education.

Table 5: Level of adult unemployment based on education

Level of Education	Employed Respondents	Unemployed Respondents	Total
No school grades completed	442	204	646
None	15	8	23
Primary 1	2	0	2
Primary 2	6	0	6
Primary 3	18	5	23
Primary 4	16	5	21
Primary 5	5	4	9
Primary 6	34	5	39
Junior Secondary 1	12	4	16
Junior Secondary 1	16	2	18
Junior Secondary 1	12	4	16
Senior Secondary 1	8	2	10
Senior Secondary 1	2	0	2
Senior Secondary 1	28	3	31
Higher Education	20	3	23
Interviewer Mistake	2	2	4
Not known	3	1	4
Total	641	252	893

Graph 5: Breakdown of activities done by head of households



The majority of heads of households did not have a job (30%), while as 41% of them were farmers.

4. Education

74,9% of adults interviewed were uneducated and only 2,6% had completed higher education studies. The national rate being less than 30%⁵², these results are coherent. However, as the quality of education appears to be very poor in rural areas, a certain level of education might not necessarily equate to the appropriate literacy and numeracy level of the person.

⁵² <http://www.indexmundi.com/afghanistan/literacy.html>

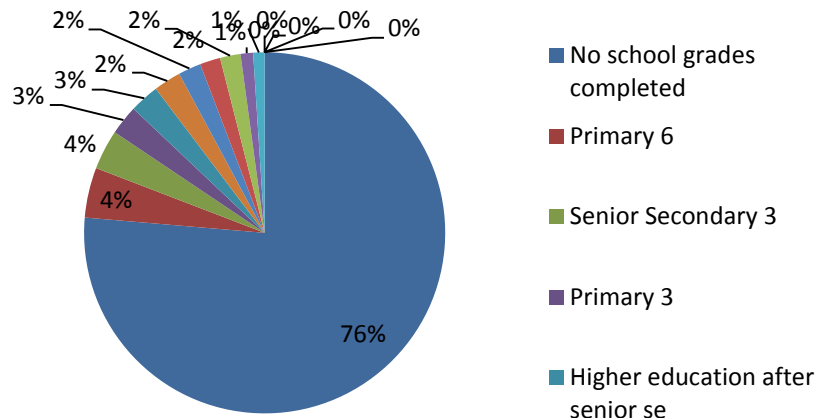
Table 6: Adult education levels

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
No school grades completed	646	72,67%
None	23	2,59%
Primary 1	2	0,22%
Primary 2	6	0,67%
Primary 3	23	2,59%
Primary 4	21	2,36%
Primary 5	9	1,01%
Primary 6	39	4,39%
Junior Secondary 1	16	1,8%
Junior Secondary 2	18	2,02%
Junior Secondary 3	16	1,8
Senior Secondary 1	10	1,12%
Senior Secondary 2	2	0,22%
Senior Secondary 3	31	3,49%
Higher Education	23	2,59%
Not known	4	0,45%
Total	893	100%

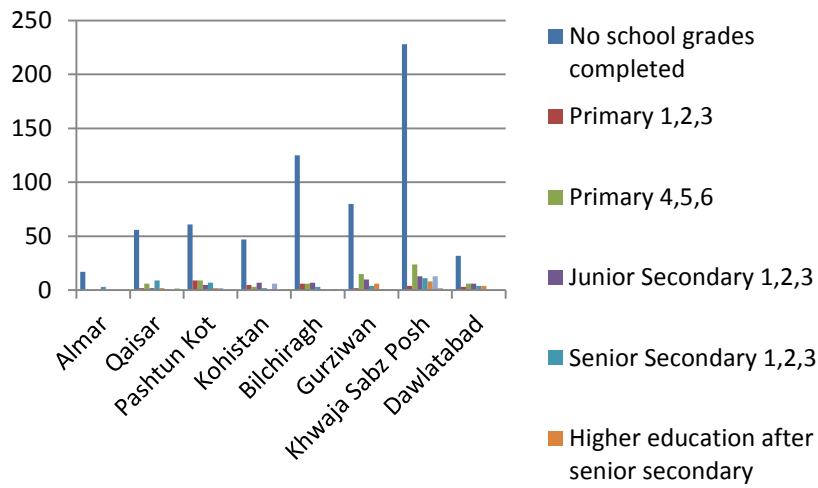


Image 9: Villagers in Gurziwan

Graph 6: Breakdown household head education level



Graph 7: Education levels by district

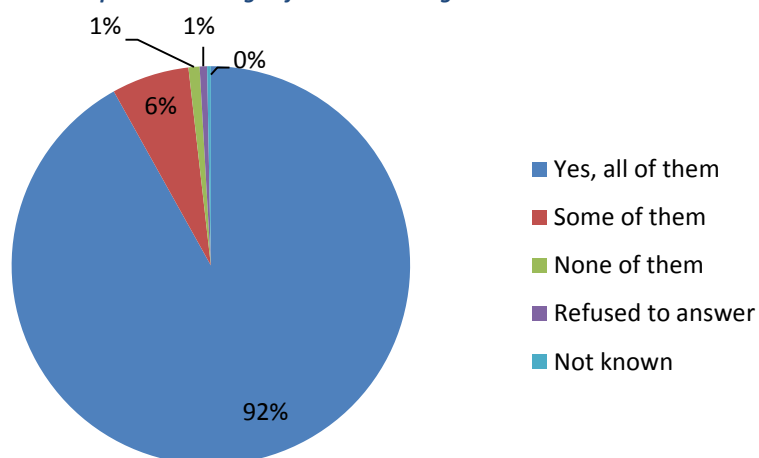


The more educated people were found in Khwaja Sabz Posh and to a lesser extent in Pashtun Kot and Dawlatabad. The vicinity of the main ring road in all these districts might be a reason why more people have had access to a higher education than their peers.

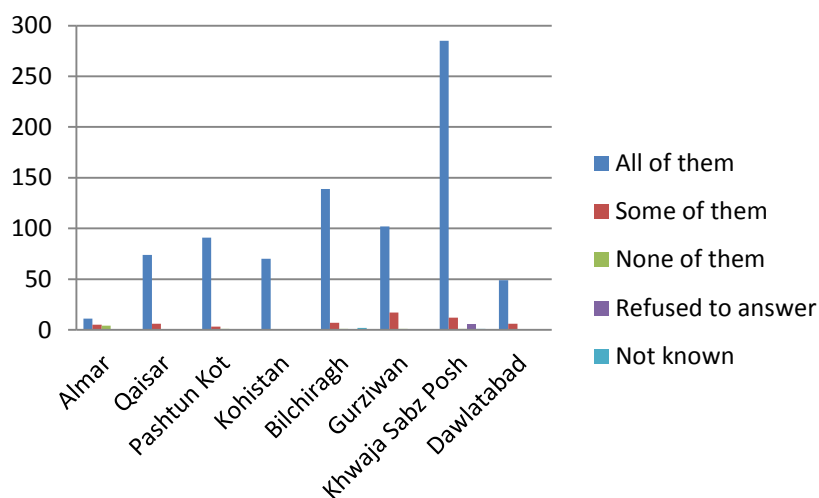
5. Health

With regards to health, out of all the households questioned, the vast majority (92%) had all of their children vaccinated for at least one illness out of tuberculosis, diphtheria, polio and measles.

Graph 8: Percentage of children having been vaccinated



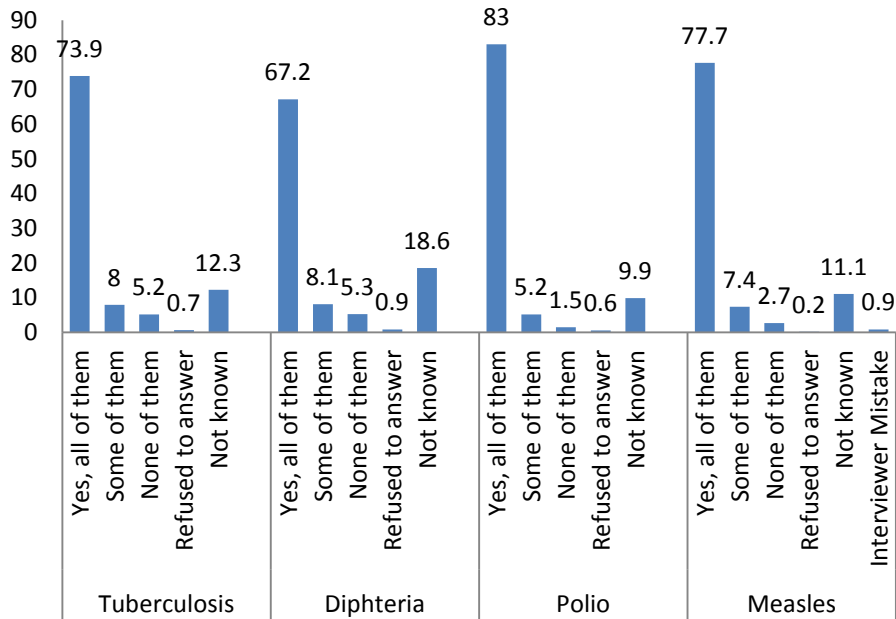
Graph 9: Number of children having been vaccinated, by district



For a rural area such as Faryab, the number of vaccinated children is quite high in comparison with the national level (both 66%).⁵³ Where diseases such as Polio and Diphtheria have lower levels of coverage.

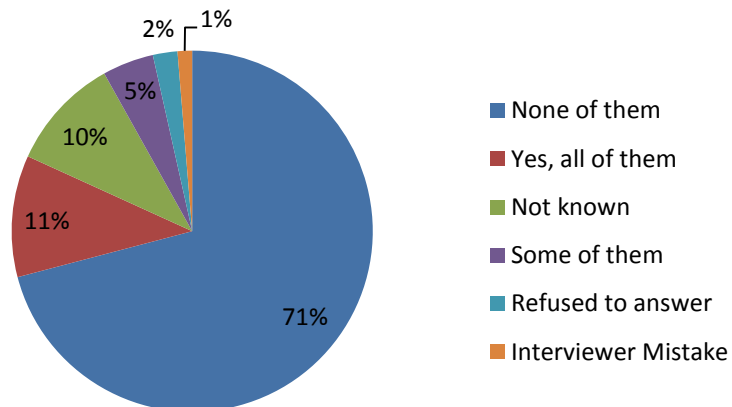
⁵³ UNICEF Health Statistics, 2011: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/afghanistan_statistics.html

Graph 10: Percentage of children having been vaccinated for several diseases



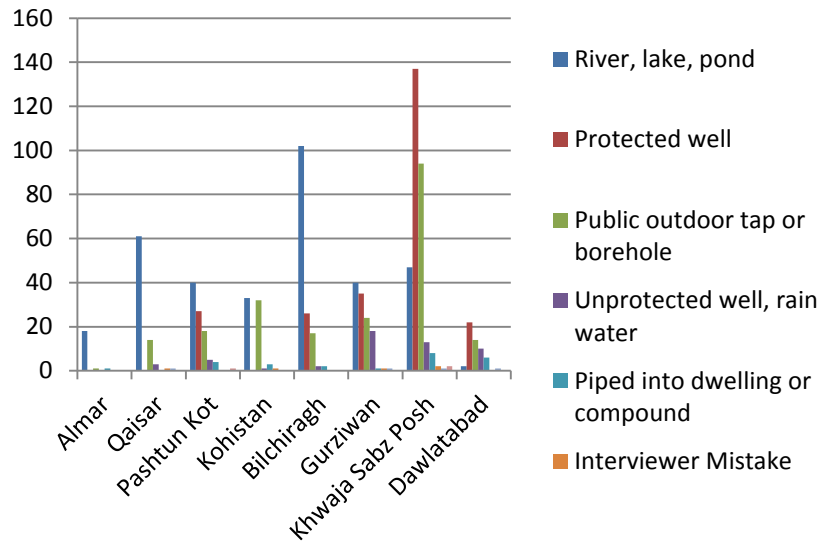
Finally, the majority of children (71%) did not face respiratory illnesses such as the flu.

Graph 11: Percentage of children having suffered from respiratory diseases



These numbers are impressive in light of the fact that a considerable section of the families interviewed used an unsafe water source: 41% used a river, lake or pond or an unprotected well and most of the children in schools have not received a health and hygiene training.

Graph 12: Sources of drinking water, by district



Literacy and Numeracy

Promoting literacy and numeracy skills is high on the list of the stated goals of the GEC in Faryab. Literacy training in developing countries is often advanced as an instrument that is good for promoting social and economic benefits (being able to keep a ledger, read a medicine bottle, etc.). Arguably however, these skills are only truly impactful when they are applied to achieve some defined purpose.⁵⁴ The scope for the applicability of literacy and numeracy skills is defined by the local environment. Therefore, in order to fully assess the impact of the GEC in this area, further stages of the evaluation should assess the local literacy environment, investigating how residents use literacy and what their specific requirements are. In the case of Faryab, focus group discussions with village elders often led to linkages between female education and being better wives and mothers.

“It is important for both men and women to have an educated life partner so that they can form a good family.”

~Badghisi elder

Teaching adult learners raises specific issues in terms of pedagogy and inter-personal recognition. Adult learners have learning priorities and needs which are distinct from children: they are motivated to learn for self-defined purposes, they respond better to contextualised approaches devoid of infantilising practices, and they have high attrition rates due to competing commitments.⁵⁵

While these scores are recorded within the raw data sets, for the purposes of analysis and discussion, they are grouped into two categories. Respondents who scored below 2 (out of a 5 or 7 point scale) are identified as illiterate/innumerate; scores 2 and above are identified as literate/numerate.

These attributions are artificial approximations that respond to the needs of the study and the barriers in data collection. Literacy and numeracy are not skills which can be accurately broken down into simple dichotomies, nor is there a consensus over how best to assess these skills. A subject’s literacy and numeracy skills can be assessed with reference to a test of abstract knowledge, or years of formal schooling, or context-specific form of social knowledge, or functioning. The ASER/UWEZO test is very much the former, and as a proxy for understanding literacy/numeracy, the results presented here should not be seen as an assessment of the

⁵⁴ Alan Rogers, “Some Contemporary Trends in Adult Literacy from an International Perspective”, Literacy and Basic Education, No. 56, 2001

⁵⁵ The Cuban government for example has developed an integrated approach to adult literacy based on Paulo Freire’s principals and specifically adapted for remote rural settings (*Si Yo Puedo*). This has been successfully adapted by UNESCO for Uruguay, and by the government of Timor-Leste.

subject's ability to negotiate her local literate or numerate environment, or even her classroom performance. The present study can only offer a conjectural basis on which to evaluate those areas.

"Literacy and education are gifts of Allah. Using them, one can differentiate between the bad and the good things, bring up better children and solve the current problems of Afghanistan."

~Badghisi Bala elder

However, the limited nature of the test employed responds to the demands of the GEC evaluation of change and the conditions within the field. The narrow metric of assessment is enough to measure variance over time between the test and control clusters over the duration of the study. Given the high concentration of low scores (below 2) collected during the baseline, a 5/6-point scale and a bivariate model of analysis are sufficient. During the mid and end-term studies, it will be informative to observe how many of those subjects achieve scores above the demarcation point, 2.

Table 7: Data on children in and out of school in Afghanistan, UNICEF 2011

Province	School Age Population		General Enrolment		Out of School Children	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Faryab	228 335	208 456	157 647	114 143	70 688	94 313

Moreover, employing simple and short tools is necessary in the context of Faryab where gaining access to girls in order to conduct the assessments was difficult, and enumerators had limited training. The assessment was difficult to carry out because of cultural norms which restricted enumerators' access to female household members. Either a female enumerator was admitted into the household to interview the girl, or in some cases where the girl was very young she was accompanied by a senior male relative to be interviewed outside of the household. The assessment was given to girls aged 5-15 (approximately primary school age). Out of 893 households surveyed, 440 responded to the literacy and 439 to the numeracy assessments. 153 subjects were not currently enrolled in school (only 21 of those had received some schooling). 315 were currently enrolled in school, from grades Primary 1 to Senior Secondary 2.

"- Girls' education does not have any impact for their families or their societies. We have not seen any impact in our community yet.
- Yes, it has a good impact because it educates our children so that they can be effective for their community in the future."

~Badghisi Bala elders

Despite difficulties in accessing female respondents for these tests, a quasi-experimental approach was maintained: 290 tests were administered in test clusters in ACTED's intervention areas, and 149 tests were administered in control clusters, who live in localities where ACTED will not intervene. Variance in responses between test and control cohorts was not found to be significant for either test.

Table 8: Variance in test scores between test and control clusters

	N	Test Mean	Control Mean	t	df	p
Reading Score	440	1,5	1,6	-0,355	438	0,723
Numeracy Score	439	1,8	2	-1,157	437	0,248

The principle aim of the baseline study is to establish a reference against which additionality can be measured during the intervention time-line. Therefore we describe the relevant socio-economic and educational situation in Faryab prior to the intervention. Most importantly, we establish baseline variable measurements in both test and control sites and verify equivalence between test and control sites.

In line with the aims of the baseline and the limited amount of reliable demographic about the population, analysis was restricted to univariate procedures. Missing data was not replaced due to high incidence and limited amount of information about the population; instead missing cases are dealt with through pair-wise

deletion. For skipped questions, only that part of the questionnaire was left out, not the entire entry.



Image 10: A father and his daughter in Gurziwan

1. Findings

In the following section, results of the study relating to the literacy and numeracy assessment are discussed. In all variable discussed, no significant differences between test and control clusters was identified.

Overall, **test results show that reading ability for girls surveyed is very low, thus highlighting the strong need for this intervention and similar ones.** The mean score on the reading assessment was 1,6 out of 5. For the purposes of this study, all scores below 2 are considered to indicate illiteracy (inability to at least recognize commonly used words between 2 and 7 letters in length). 57,7% of respondents to the test can be described as illiterate. There are no significant differences between test and control groups regarding literacy scores: $t(438)=-0,36$, $p=0,72$.

Test results for numeracy are also low. The mean score for the numeracy assessment was 1,9 out of 7. All scores below 2 are considered to indicate innumeracy (inability to at least recognize digits). 42,6% of respondents to the test scored as innumerate. There are no significant differences between test and control groups regarding numeracy scores: $t(437)=-1,16$, $p=0,25$.

A strong correlation can be observed between reading and numeracy scores; if a respondent scored low on the one test, they tend to have scored low on the other as well. This is true for both test and control clusters ($r=.806$). While these scores appear alarmingly low, they can be partly attributed to the age distribution of respondents and the number of unschooled respondents taking part in the study. A positive correlation can be observed between age of respondents and mean test score ($R=.311$, see table1). In terms of our bivariate indicator (literate/numerate – illiterate/innumerate), respondents who are currently enrolled in school tended to score closer to 2, while out-of-school have a mean score below 1 (Table 8). For those girls currently enrolled in school, test scores correlate positively with their grade level ($r=.304$).

Table 9: Mean scores across ages

Age	Numeracy			Reading		
	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
5	0,82	11	1,662	0,27	11	0,467
6	0,91	32	1,510	0,69	32	1,203
7	0,90	39	1,447	0,87	39	1,080
8	1,50	42	1,254	1,14	43	1,060
9	1,42	36	1,645	0,92	36	1,156
10	2,40	47	1,963	1,70	47	1,473
11	2,03	32	1,596	1,84	32	1,505
12	2,32	63	1,925	1,86	63	1,564
13	2,46	26	1,794	2,35	26	1,623
14	1,94	48	2,128	1,58	48	1,711
15	2,64	61	2,221	2,11	61	1,674
Total	1,90	437	1,901	1,51	438	1,517

Table 10: School enrolment and test scores

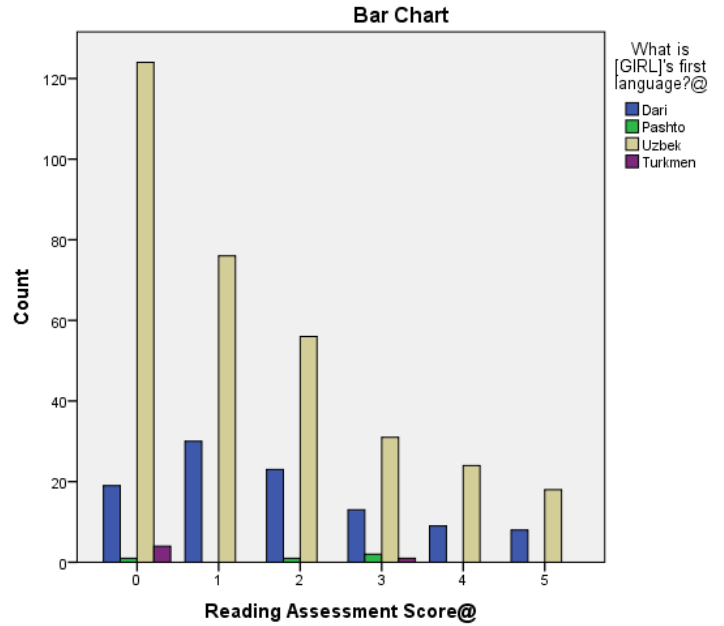
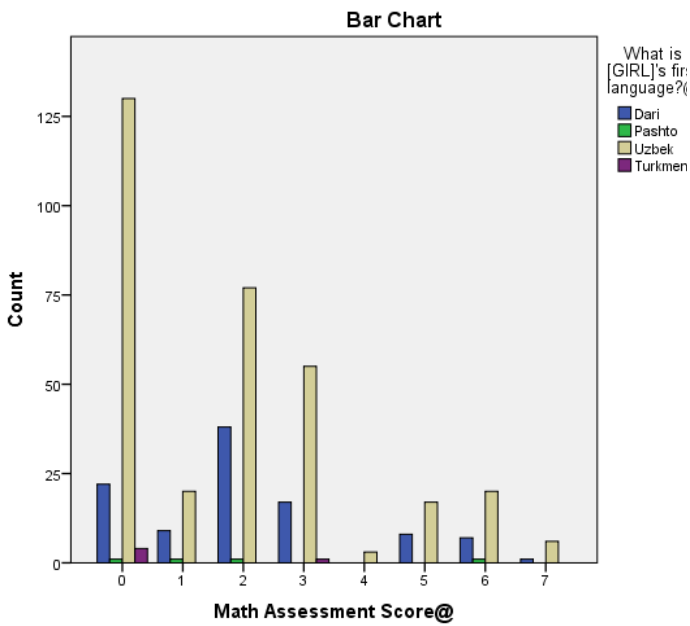
Enrolled in any school?	Measure	Math Assessment Score	Reading Assessment Score
Yes	Mean	2,34	1,88
	N	314	315
	Standard Deviation	1,875	1,492
No	Mean	0,81	0,61
	N	125	125
	Standard Deviation	1,496	1,156
Total	Mean	1,90	1,52
	N	439	440
	Standard Deviation	1,903	1,517

While all of these variables (age, enrolment, grade) would be expected to correlate positively with test scores, none can be said to have a major impact within this sample. Mean scores remain extremely low even amongst older students in secondary schools. The quality of education is generally regarded as poor in Afghanistan, the supply of qualified teachers not being able to keep up with the growth in enrolment. Furthermore, 66,3% of parents report themselves to be satisfied with the teaching in their child's school, and 73,1% are satisfied with the textbooks. However, these variables are an inadequate proxy for measuring educational quality – especially given the high incidence of parents who are themselves unschooled (81,6%) and illiterate in the language of instruction (82,8%). The next phases of the data collection will allow for deeper research into the potential links between schooling and improvement in the test scores, which is one of the most important variations to monitor over the years.

2. Relevant Variables to Test

The language of instruction in schools in Faryab is Dari, however the majority of school-aged girls surveyed speak Uzbek at home (78,6%). While speaking Uzbek speakers are represented within the higher scores of both tests, it is interesting that scores are more evenly distributed across the scale for minority of native Dari speakers, compared to Uzbek speakers, whose scores are concentrated at the bottom. While speaking Dari at home does not correlate with higher test scores, it does seem to be the case that language is a barrier to learning when learners are not instructed in their mother tongue.

Graphs 13 and 14: Numeracy and literacy scores by girls' first language



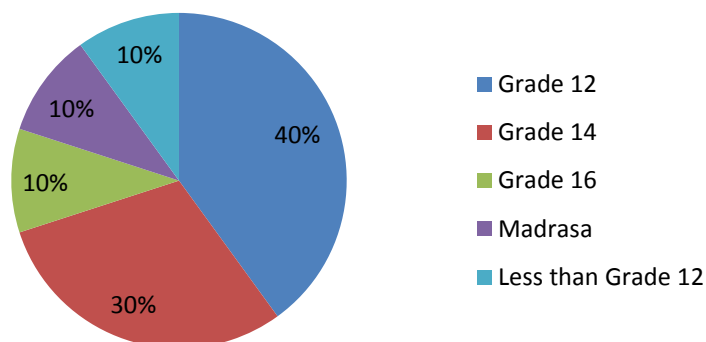
It can also be interesting to look for physical or learning disabilities. This is relevant because there is a high risk in Faryab for such impairments to be missed, hence depriving the young girl of tools to better her situation in and out of school with regards to learning. A strength of the survey questionnaire was to focus a series of questions on those disabilities and whether girls' schooling was affected by a specific impairment. However, there were not enough cases of reported disability to empirically explore its impact on reading and calculus. Parents overwhelmingly denied that their child had a specific disability – at most, 5 parents (1,3%) reported that their daughter had a mobility impairment. A higher proportion of parents reported that their child had some level of difficulty remembering/concentrating (4,7%) or communicating in her home language (9,9%). While these may offer an indication of a learning disability, the answers only reflect parents' subjective opinions. The small number of reports of disability may reflect a low incidence of disability amongst the target population, but may also reflect parents' unwillingness to reveal cases of disability, or a culturally specific understanding of able-bodiedness and wellbeing. When girls themselves were questioned about disabilities, their responses generally reflected those of their parents. These questions may have been more informative if they had been fielded across a larger sample (and if they had been alone).

“School children here complain that their teachers are not professional and cannot teach well. They do not have any other problems at school.”
 ~Qezel Qul elder

Teaching

Out of a small group of teachers interviewed, 70% were ethnic Uzbeks and the remaining 30% were Tajiks. This is interesting since the latter account for fewer than 10% of the Faryab population. An explanation can be that Tajiks have traditionally gravitated towards administration positions across Afghanistan. The majority of teachers appear to have only basic qualifications with half of the respondents having completed high school or less.

Graph 15: Teachers' level of education



Teachers had between 20 and 40 students in their classrooms, with a peak around 33-35 pupils per class. A vast majority (80%) acknowledged that they did not have enough teaching materials in their classroom (meaning that all subjects might suffer from a lack of adequate instruction), but they also overwhelmingly stated that they felt they were reaching the students with their teaching (80%) and that they had received adequate training for teaching literacy, numeracy and sciences (90%). Given that one of ACTED's assumptions is that the quality of education is particularly low (Barrier 2 of the ToC), it is not possible to use the teachers' responses to assess the success of the programme. It must be remembered that it is also in the interest of the teachers to appear qualified and competent. Information has to be triangulated with student focus group discussions that appear to include both those who think the quality of education is good and those who find the professors not qualified enough.

When discussing teaching socio-cultural values to the children, all of the teachers said they indeed thought students about the different duties of boys and girls (meaning their separate responsibilities in the Afghan context); most did so by using religion (80%) and local customs and culture (70%), and only 20% used science. This can give us an idea of the type of education in this area that is being administered.

A good sign is that none of the teachers said they hit, kicked or caned their students in order to manage their classroom. However, 80% also said that it very important to discipline children and another 10% said it was important. Again, by triangulating with children and parents, a more accurate picture of physical punishment will emerge.

Finally, all teachers interviewed felt respected in their community but they all requested additional training to improve their knowledge on certain subjects.

Through interviews, it also appears that teacher is virtually the only profession accessible to women in the various districts. Only a few areas mention the presence of tailoring and weaving for some women.

"The biggest problem is that parents prevent their girls from going to school which makes us go to them and convince them into letting their girls go to school."

~Naisher teacher

Perceptions on Education

1. Characteristics of Rural Faryab

Faryab is a very rural province that has not seen the same level of development as other areas of Afghanistan in the past twelve years (more than half of the population is still not connected to an electricity grid). As such, attitudes towards education and other concepts that have not been common are at risk of being more conservative and the people more apprehensive with regards to the outcomes of literacy. However, the following section shows that even old villagers and community leaders are aware of the overall benefits of education and also support the right of young girls to receive schooling. Nevertheless, this very positive finding needs to be measured in light of two factors: survey fatigue can lead respondents to say what the interviewer wants to hear and more importantly, there needs to be an understanding of what rural Afghans in Faryab (and beyond) mean by education, and where they draw their red lines.

“We do not discuss political issues because our people are poor and illiterate and cannot discuss about these things. In our gatherings we just discuss the issues that are relevant to our village and community.”

~*Khuja Qoshri Payan elder*



Image 11: Men talking near the main park in central Maymana (Flickr-Norwegian PRT)

Without going into details on the topic of relations between progressive ideologies championed by development actors and the imposing strength of religion and customs – or a mixture of both – in Afghanistan, it is important to mention the uneasy cohabitation of these two spheres. Women in Afghanistan still get married very young, an estimated 60 to 80% of these unions are forced⁵⁶ and only a fifth of adult women are literate⁵⁷. Tribal and traditional interpretations of Islam also seclude the woman to the home and confine her to child rearing and other household activities. As such, when trying to implement an education programme and evaluation its potential and scope, it is necessary to remember the respondents' mindset and look for less obvious clues as to the chances of the GEC programme to succeed in Faryab, and what lessons can potentially be learned for other parts of Afghanistan. Amongst the interviewees, less than 15% were under 20 and married.

⁵⁶ South Asia Human Rights Index, *Asian Centre for Human Rights*, 2008:

<http://www.ecoi.net/188769::afghanistan/314492.312847.7951...mr.312930/forced-marriages-and-child-marriages.htm>

⁵⁷ State of the World's Mothers, *Save the Children*, 2004: http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/SOWM_2004_final.pdf

2. Community Cohesiveness

The vast majority of villages surveyed were ethnically homogenous, a finding reinforced by the focus group discussions where village elders constantly stressed the calm and stability of their community due to the absence of outside tribes or groups. Only two out of the ten groups of men interviewed mentioned land, money or women issues, and these were linked to the fact that the village was not united according to them.

State services being fairly weak in the districts, the lack of facilities for children to enjoy school was visible: some areas did not have any buildings for girls and others for example, needed a bridge in order to avoid the dangers of an overflowing river, like in Badghisi (Khwaja Sabz Posh district). Only one group mentioned the lack of presence of the Afghan security forces even though it is known that the government is stretched thin in those areas.

“Our people were deprived of education during three decades of war and now they have come to understand the value of education. Now they know how important education is for men and women, which is why they want their girls to go to school.”

~Badghisi Bala elder

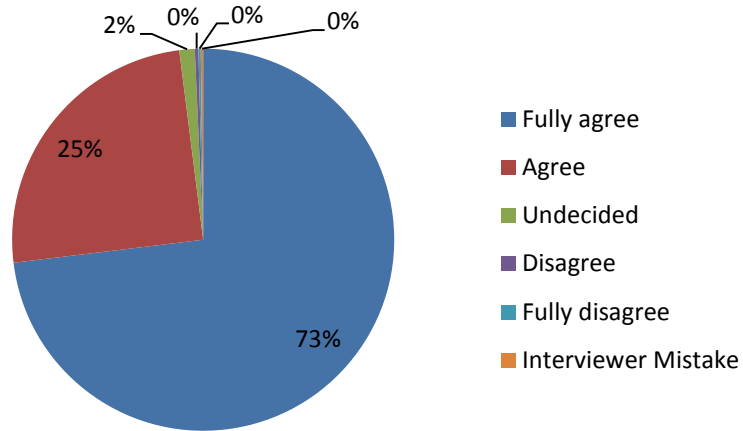


Image 12: Buzkashi game in Bilchiragh

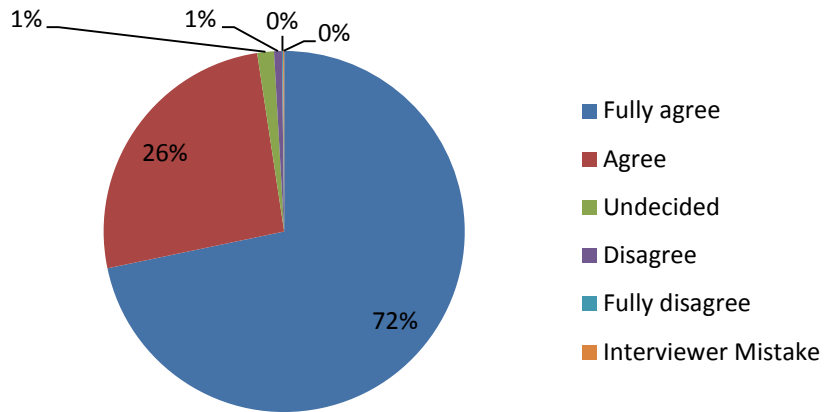
3. Household Perceptions of Education

At baseline level, we can see that almost three quarters of the respondents fully agree with the idea of education for children and another quarter agrees. The percentage of those people also answering positively to having girls going to school is very similar, at a 98% between those who agree and those who fully agree.

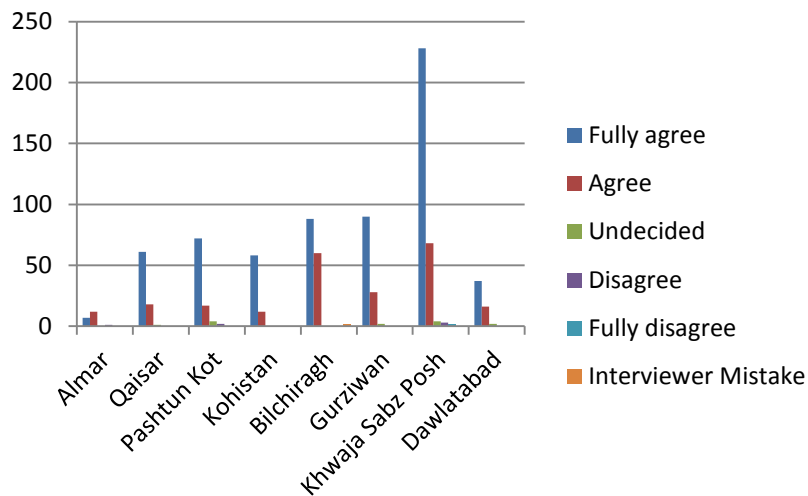
Graph 16: Parents' answers to their thoughts on education for children



Graph 17: Parents' answers to their thoughts on education for girls



Graph 18: Parents' answers to their thoughts on education for girls, by district

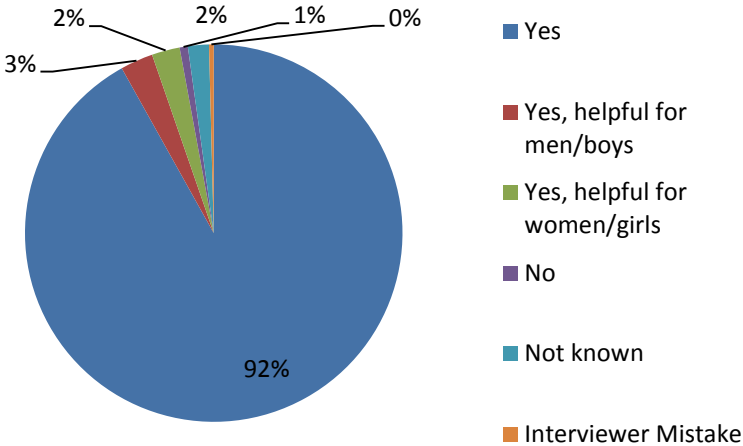


These very positive figures need to nevertheless be put into perspective. Some rural Afghan men might see education for girls a good thing only until a certain age. The cut-off point is often at puberty (10% of respondents), at adolescence (20% of respondents) or later on, depending on the family’s mindset. Interestingly, more than half of the respondents said that a girl should be able to go to school up to the 18-20 age bracket. This is surprising given the very small number (around 10) of high schools for girls listed in recent years in Faryab⁵⁸.

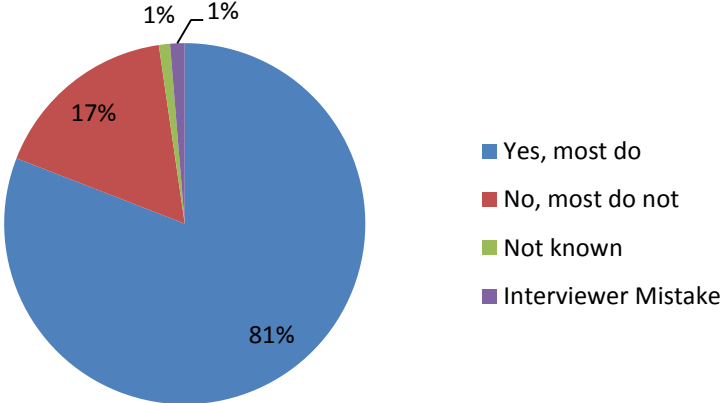
“Girls should go to school until they are 15 and boys should graduate from university. Unless the school management and teachers are all female, girls should not attend when they are over 15 because at that age they become adults and it is not good for them to be taught by male teachers”
~Qezel Qul elder

Similarly, the vast majority of respondents (92%) said that education indeed helped people make better lives for themselves but a sizeable minority (almost 20%) also mentioned that it was not usual for people in their area to send girls to school.

Graph 19: Parents’ answers to whether education is good for personal development



Graph 20: Parents’ answers to whether most people send their children to school in the area



⁵⁸ <http://www.foodsecurityatlas.org/afg/country/provincial-Profile/Faryab> and <https://www.cimicweb.org/AfghanistanProvincialMap/Pages/Faryab.aspx>

These positive results, on which to base future evaluations, are only minimized by the environment in which parents and children live. Even if households profess their belief in education for their daughters, a variety of factors mean that it is very easy for villagers not to abide by their word. Evolutions of perceptions and evolutions of practices do not mechanically follow each other. These factors can be divided between the ones that ACTED has addressed through its Theory of Change and additional obstacles that need to be taken into account.

- Violence (ACTED Barrier 3 of the Theory of Change)
- Local customs and traditions (ACTED Barrier 5 of the Theory of Change)
- Lack of rule of law (related to ACTED barrier 3 of the Theory of Change)
- Harassment
- Geographic barriers (lack of bridges, river overflowing)
- Weather
- Poor teaching (ACTED Barrier 2 of the Theory of Change)
- Lack of female teachers and schools for girls (ACTED Barrier 1 of the Theory of Change)
- Weak economic prospects (ACTED Barrier 4 of the Theory of Change)

For example, more than a fifth (22%) of adults consider dangerous the road to school for girls. The average duration of the journey to and from school being usually in the 10-15 minutes or the 20-30 minutes brackets (approximately 30% of respondents each give these times), the dangers can be armed violence and natural obstacles but in the case of more urban areas such as Khwaja Sabz Posh, the harassment faced by girls in the bazaar that is almost never mentioned explicitly. When fathers say 'insecurity', they often do not designate any tangible dangers other than the exposure of their girls to harassment. It is insecurity in a very 'cultural' sense, not only an objective statement. This information can be gleaned by witnessing the unease on men's faces when explicitly enquiring about issues surrounding harassment.



Image 13: Villager on a horse at a survey location in Bilchiragh

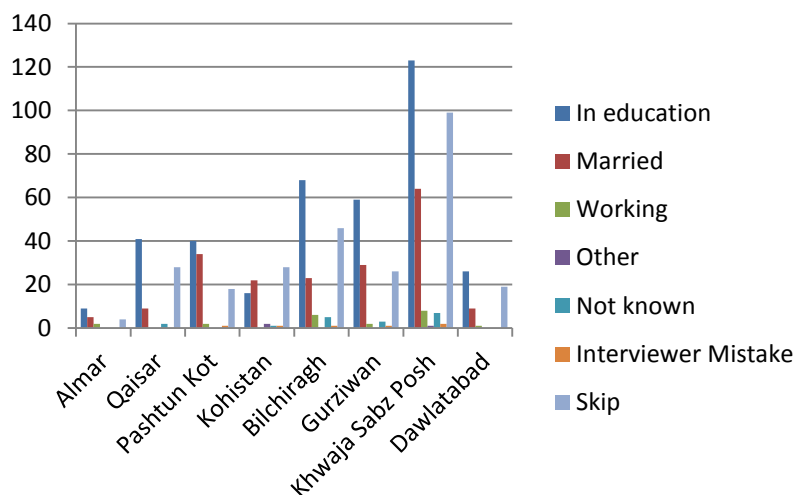
"Parents here are in favour of education for girls but once they get married, their husbands won't let them go to school."

~Zarshoy Bala teacher

Expectations

It is a positive sign to often see a majority of villagers seeing their daughters still in school by the age of 18, most notably in Khwaja Sabz Posh, Bilchiragh and Gurziwan. The number of those seeing them married at 18 is nevertheless quite high, and survey bias might explain why it is not even higher. This was not specifically addressed during the interview but as mentioned before, the aim and methods of the survey were explained at length at the beginning of the process. Working is only rarely seen as a viable option; something that ACTED needs to keep in mind when it tries to develop female employment through vocational skills.

Graph 21: Parents' answers to where they see their daughters at 18, by district



There also seems to be a recurrence in what villagers mention as the reasons for the need for education. A vast majority of respondents explain that literacy enables people to:

- Distinguish between the good and the bad and have an efficient moral compass; intended in a religious sense;
- Raise better offspring;
- Solve Afghanistan's major problems

This response is also given in various contexts throughout Afghanistan, particularly in studies done in Kapisa Province and Kabul⁵⁹. Here we can identify religion, family and sense of belonging: the very strong trinity of concepts that can be regularly found in any debate or on any given issue in Afghanistan and that should be kept in mind when wanting to push an agenda forward, especially with rural communities.

"We don't want to get married soon and we love studying at school but it is a tradition here to give girls into marriage and not let them go to school. It is not common for the people here to send their girls to study in distant locations."

~Charmghar Khana student

⁵⁹ Samuel Hall, [School in a Box Midline Survey](#) for the Womanity Foundation, 2013



Image 14: A YDC literacy course (ACTED)

The overwhelming majority of adult respondents reported that they were in favour of girls' education. In response to the question, "Should girls be able to go to school?" 71.9% fully agreed and 25.9% agreed. Of the remaining 19 respondents who answered this question 13 were undecided and 6 (out of 847) disagreed with the proposal that girls should be able to go to school. These questions referred to the hypothetical questions of girls being able to go to school. Parents were also asked about what level of schooling they wanted their own daughters to have (see table 1). Two interesting elements arise from this area of questioning.

The first is that there is a significant disjunction between parents' (mostly fathers) views on the principle of female education and their reported aspirations for their own daughters. While 97.8% of respondents claim to be in favour of the principle, 14.3% did not want their own daughters to have any schooling when their daughters were young, and 8.3% report still not wanting their daughters to be schooled. On the basis of the data collected during the baseline study it is not possible to explain this discrepancy. It may reflect ambivalence around the question, but parents' responses regarding their own daughters may also reflect what they believe to be realistic within their framework. 26.2% of parents do not feel that there is enough support in their community for girls to succeed in education – both from the government, and on a deeper level, as a effect of certain cultural practices.

Table 11: Parents' views on education for their daughters

'When she was young, what level of schooling did you want her to have?'			'Think now, what level of schooling would you like her to have?'		
	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
None	78	14.3	None	46	8.3
Primary	252	46.2	Primary	82	14.7
Lower secondary (until 13 or 14)	143	26.2	Lower secondary (until 13 or 14)	217	39.0
Upper secondary (until 15 or 16)	62	11.4	Upper secondary (until 15 or 16)	137	24.6
College or university	11	2.0	College or university	74	13.3
Total	546	100	Total	556	100

The second point of interest to arise from parents' views on their daughters' education is that it appears to evolve over time. When asked what level of schooling they want for their daughters at the time of interview, parents' responses are consistently higher than what they claim to have wanted when girls were young. For example, the proportion of parents who want their daughters to have schooling now drops from 14.3% to 8.3%. Parents were also asked what they thought would be the best situation for their daughters once they reached 18, and given the options of "marriage", "working", or "in education". 63.2% of respondents chose education, while 21.9% chose marriage. There is no significant variance between test and control clusters in their responses to these questions ($t(554)=0.508$, $p=0.612$). Again, it is not possible at this stage to explain this trend, but the mid and end-term studies will allow us to see if it persists over the next two years.

Amongst those girls surveyed, feelings about schools were overwhelmingly positive: 95.6% of respondents reported that school was a nice place to be most of the time, 88.8% feel fairly treated by their teachers, and 98.3% feel that school is a good place for them. In line with the high consensus of these responses, there were no significant differences between test and control groups in this area. Also, when asked questions about what they viewed to be the most important good thing, the majority of girl's responses involved education and literacy. Across all age groups, over 95% of girls responding said that going to school was important to them. These numbers fuel the logframe's output indicator 1.6.

There is a clear consensus amongst both the adults and the girls in our sample that schooling is a valuable resource, and that girls should have access to it. Beyond their statements of principled support, 13.3% of respondents claimed to have a household member involved in a school committee, indicating that education is also a focal point of civic engagement. But what tangible benefits do they expect from education? Unfortunately, this question was not explicitly addressed during the baseline survey, which limits the possibility of incorporating into the intervention the instrumental strategies community members develop with regards to education. However, this issue was raised in a series of focus group interviews with 10 groups of community elders. Repeatedly, elders stressed two central motivations for educating girls. The first was the need to train female teachers and doctors. The latter was highlighted as being especially important, as the lack of local female medical professionals meant that when women in the community were ill, they were obliged to travel long distance for assistance. The second motivation was with regards to marriage, consistently elders voiced the opinion that marriages would be more successful if both parties were educated, and that this would also help them to better raise their children.



Image 15: A village literacy course (ACTED)

“Our lives may change positively if we are permitted to get educated because, as far as we know, any woman who gets educated will have a good life and won’t be in need of others. We can also make money through education.”

~Khuja Qoshri Payan student

Summary of Key Findings

The key message to be taken from the baseline survey is that **both test and control samples respond positively to the idea of girls’ education, while the current level of educational attainment is very low.** The majority of adult respondents are favourable to girls being able to go to school, claiming they would like their own daughters to have some education, and indeed most girls in both cohorts are currently enrolled various institutions.

Girls themselves also appear to be favourable to schooling, the majority of enrolled girls reporting being happy in school and feeling that they belong there. During focus groups, a few also mention the prevalence of cultural practices that force them to get married at adolescence and then be subject to their husband’s decisions regarding further education.

What we also observe however is that even amongst girls who are enrolled in school, most are not demonstrably literate or numerate. This reflects a broader trend in developing contexts, including Afghanistan, where efforts in bolstering enrolment capacity have not been matched in terms of quality of learning in schools. The real challenge for education in the areas of ACTED’s intervention, may be less about enrolling vast numbers of girls in school but rather making sure that they are able to attend regularly and that they learn effectively in the classroom.

The midline and endline phases will allow us to measure the impact – or lack of it – of the GEC implementation on both perceptions and practices regarding girls’ education.

Project Assumptions and Design Objectives

The project is indeed measuring the right changes through its output indicators but this report has added a few more in an additional table of indicators that might be relevant to monitor.

Targeting the right individuals is particularly complex but the evaluation could benefit from two distinct quantitative surveys: one for the adults/parents and one for the girls, in order to better differentiate and track similar questions.

In order to better target the right groups, the aim is to review the household questionnaire and focus on locations that are safe enough for teams to regularly visit and monitor the girls' progress.

Moreover, given that that most of the barriers to education have been identified and are being addressed by ACTED, additional focus could be put into looking at solution for areas that are often cut out from basic services (issues of weather and geographic barriers such as rivers); and to tackle harassment, efforts could be included in the community mobilization and engagement already planned for barrier 5 (conservatism).

With regards to the poor quality of education, frequent teacher training sessions (especially during the winter months when schools are closed) are crucial, but so are the presence of enough qualified female teachers, as opposed to older female students who take over classes of girls who are only a few years younger.

ACTED Reflections on Data Analysis and Key Findings

Baseline Data Collection and Challenges: Whilst ACTED completely acknowledges the limitations the external evaluator faced in accessing certain areas and collecting sufficient household surveys in planned locations, it is also a shame to see the disproportion of villages interviewed closer to Maymana town in areas such as KSP, that clearly have a different set of challenges to the more remote districts such as Dawlatabad. Poverty, development and cultural attitudes in Afghanistan can often be linked to proximity to a provincial centre or main road, and so it is worth taking this into account when assessing the overall trends surmised from this survey. In terms of selection of communities, it is notable that the numbers of interviews conducted in insecure districts were relatively low. To enable to external evaluator to have access to sites, more secure districts had to be selected, which of course needs to be taken into account when making overall assumptions about the situation in rural Faryab as a result of this baseline.

Key Findings: As this baseline clearly illustrates, illiteracy rates are high, with even girls enrolled in schools being illiterate. A large component of this programme is targeting out of school girls, yet as the baseline has shown, a number of students in different cohorts are reported to be 'in school' yet with little or no learning. ACTED's methodology focuses on reducing barriers to education, which in some areas and with older age groups who have not been attending formal education for sometime, is addressed through creating village literacy classes. These not only intend to provide literacy and numeracy skills for girls, but to create an entry point for girls to access further education, such as reintegrating back into the formal school system.

Some of the attitudes parents have to the quality of their daughters' education are being addressed by ACTED in terms of formal support to schools through the provision of text books, training of teachers and construction of safe and adequate school buildings. In some areas, where there is potentially a government school nearby in name, it is not functioning adequately and is in an unsafe location. ACTED through working closely with the community has selected locations for school sites that are supported by the DoE and community.

V. SCHOOL OBSERVATIONS

The following 18 school profiles provide a snapshot of the areas and facilities available to the girls (and boys) in the test and control locations. The objective of the school observations is to enrich the evaluation through the direct assessment of school infrastructures in order to measure the changes in the learning environment brought by ACTED's GEC and the impact those have on girls' education, both in terms of access, retention and quality of education.

Due to security, only 8 locations were physically accessible to the team (as proven by the photos taken there) and for the remaining 10, phone interviews were conducted with school principals or head teachers; the phone numbers were provided by ACTED's office in Maymana. In the remaining 2 schools (both in unsafe areas), interviewers were unable to get in touch with a school representative. In all the surveyed schools, interviewers were able to gather the numbers of students in each class from attendance records that will be necessary to measure retention at midline and endline phases. The information was gathered by the same team and based on empirical and contextual observations. For schools that were not accessible, respondents gave these numbers, and other information, by phone.

For the 2013 school year (1392), the current enrolment rates are 3663 students in test locations and 3228 in control schools.

Table 12: Enrolment breakdown by grade – Test locations

Grades	Number of students
Grade 1	520
Grade 2	446
Grade 3	496
Grade 4	444
Grade 5	432
Grade 6	428
Grade 7	374
Grade 8	296
Grade 9	193
Grade 10	17
Grade 11	17
Total	3663

Table 13: Enrolment breakdown by grade – Control locations

Grades	Number of students
Grade 1	438
Grade 2	436
Grade 3	383
Grade 4	407
Grade 5	369
Grade 6	372
Grade 7	313
Grade 8	232
Grade 9	224
Grade 10	27
Grade 11	27
Total	3228

A note of caution:

It is important to keep in mind that attendance records in rural Afghanistan are often unreliable as schools either inflate the numbers or do not accurately keep track of all the numerous absences and dropouts. As such, even if the figures given for each grade seem to paint a positive picture of education in Faryab, the scope of ACTED's intervention in the area should not be diminished. The gaps are considerable and the challenges multiple; it is therefore necessary to take these numbers with a pinch of salt as respondents are often likely to portray their school as functioning when it might in fact be barely constructed and poorly organized. For example, all planned retention rates are those given by the school representatives during the survey and these are clearly all extremely positive and actually not realistic. Similarly, perceptions regarding drop out rates do not match the information currently in the hands of ACTED that comes from the government.

In order to double-check figures and answers given by respondents in each location, Samuel Hall proceeded in calling the school representatives again to see if their previous estimations matched ours. By asking them how many shifts they have in the school and how many classrooms exist, we can have a rough estimate of the number of children present to compare with the breakdown by grades given. If the numbers do not match, the respondent is inflating the numbers. As a rule of thumb, we can consider that a classroom holds 20 to 40 students.

After managing to get in touch again with 9 schools (9 other numbers were off or unavailable after several calls over 2 days), it appears that the attendance figures are indeed flawed as a basic calculation of the minimum and maximum number of students shows that the numbers are inflated. Table 14 below shows the extent of each interviewed respondent's magnification and thus reaffirms the importance of ACTED's work in Faryab to increase actual enrolment rates and the importance of not believing the schools' bookkeeping.

In conclusion, the information provided in the school observations is all based on questions asked to the relevant school representatives in each location or on the phone and as such cannot be considered accurate in light of the risk of exaggeration by the respondents. These numbers and details should be nuanced and not taken for granted and should not in any case diminish the size of the challenge faced by ACTED in Faryab.

Table 14: Discrepancies between stated enrolment rates and SH estimations

School	Enrolment figures collected on March 24 th -25 th	Samuel Hall estimations (min-max)
Qizil Qishlaq (Control)	403	100-200
Arab Aqsay Bala (Test)	514	160-240
Kariz Lalme (Control)	465	120-240
Shahqasemi (Control)	266	240-480
Darre Zang (Control)	854	100-200
Charmghar Khana (Test)	371	120-240
Naisher (Control)	506	80-160
Chashm-e-Sangin (Test)	162	100-200
Mola Arify (Control)	272	60-120
Total	3813	1080-2080

With regards to spot checks, even though these would greatly enhance the accuracy of data collected, these are not feasible from the point of view of an external evaluator who has to rely on ACTED for aspects of security in Faryab and the fact of coming to the same area several time, even if unannounced, can create a pattern that puts the evaluation teams at risk.

CONTEXT

Khuja Qoshri Payan School for girls is a government school approximately 20 minutes away by car from Maymana. ACTED is building a primary school from scratch in this vicinity; this is considered a test location for the purposes of the evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 14 male and 6 female teachers
- The majority of them have a certificate of high school completion after Grade 12
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6500 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 80% Uzbek, 20% Tajik)		
Grade (40 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 22)
1	0	82
2	0	70
3	0	123
4	0	122
5	0	64
6	0	65
7	0	90
8	0	51
9	0	39
Total	0	704

Girls here are rarely absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of education up to Grade 12. Elders also support female education, and the same goes for the mullah who has his daughter in school.

Planned Retention: 95% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training done by an international NGO where they were taught how to wash their hands with soap and drink clean water. The source of drinking water here is a pond and the water is not treated. The toilets have not been built yet and the waste collection system involves digging a hole and burying the trash.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students		✓			
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity			✓		

CONTEXT

Qizil Qishlaq School is a formal government school approximately 20 minutes away by car from Maymana. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 10 male and 1 female teachers
- The majority of them have a higher education degree
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6750 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 99% Uzbek, 1% Tajik)		
Grade (35 students per class on average)	Boys (Aged 7 to 17)	Girls
1	66	0
2	51	0
3	67	0
4	39	0
5	51	0
6	30	0
7	52	0
8	44	0
9	22	0
Total	422	0

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training done by an international NGO where they were taught how to wash their hands with soap and drink clean water. The source of water here is a private well and the water is not treated. The toilets are clean and the waste collection system is incineration.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment				✓	
Underpaid teachers		✓			
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers					✓
Insecurity					✓

CONTEXT

Zarshoy Bala School is a government school approximately 3 hours away by car from Maymana. A female-only primary school is being built from scratch by ACTED in this location and is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 9 male and 4 female teachers
- The majority of them have pursued schooling up to Grade 10 or 12
- 1 teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is inexistent
- Male/Female teacher salary: 4000 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (50 students per class on average)	Boys (Aged 7 to 18)	Girls (Aged 7 to 18)
1	40	49
2	40	0
3	32	69
4	78	28
5	38	60
6	58	11
7	33	7
8	52	51
9	30	32
Total	401	307

Girls here are often absent but none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of education up to Grade 12 because of the importance they put on girls’ education. Local teachers are also pushing for it.

Planned Retention: 100% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training where they were taught how to wash their hands after going to the bathroom and drink clean water. The source of drinking water here is a shared well and purification tablets are used to treat it. The toilets have not been built yet and the waste collection system is incineration.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space		✓			
Lack of female teachers		✓			
Insecurity			✓		

CONTEXT

Nadier AbadSchool is a formal government school approximately 90 minutes away by car from Maymana. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 18 male and 3 female teachers
- The majority of them have a certificate of high school completion after Grade 12
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6500 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (25 students per class on average)	Boys (Aged 7 to 17)	Girls (Aged 7 to 17)
1	40	31
2	58	35
3	55	27
4	37	30
5	36	31
6	42	24
7	28	39
8	28	28
9	41	41
Total	345	277

Girls here are sometimes absent but none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of education up to Grade 12. Elders also support female education, and the same goes for the mullah. Planned Retention: 90% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training and they do not wash their hands after using the toilet. The source of drinking water here is a pond and the water is not treated. The toilets are somewhat clean and the waste collection system is incineration.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students				✓	
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment				✓	
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space					✓
Lack of female teachers					✓
Insecurity					✓

CONTEXT

Arab Aqsay Bala School for girls is a government school in the central district of Pashtun Kot. ACTED is building a formal primary school in this location and it is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 10 male and 4 female teachers
- All of them have a higher education degree
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is sometimes an issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6500 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (35 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 16)
1	0	80
2	0	68
3	0	48
4	0	64
5	0	59
6	0	57
7	0	43
8	0	45
9	0	25
Total	0	489

Girls here are often absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of education if the teachers are women. The mullah also supports female education.

Planned Retention: 95% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training. The source of water here is a deep well and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers		✓			
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity			✓		

CONTEXT

Kariz Lalme School is a formal government school in the central district of Pashtun Kot. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 11 male and 2 female teachers
- The majority of them have a higher education degree
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6500 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (40 students per class on average)	Boys (Aged 6 to 20)	Girls (Aged 6 to 20)
1	33	42
2	32	25
3	35	35
4	17	23
5	20	37
6	19	20
7	23	27
8	20	20
9	20	30
Total	219	259

Girls here are sometimes absent and at least 10 have dropped out in the past year due to the lack of female teachers and insecurity (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of female education. Elders also support girls' schooling, and the same goes for the mullah.

Planned Retention: 90% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received health training where they were taught how to wash their hands. The source of water here is a water tank and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers		✓			
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers			✓		
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity	✓				

CONTEXT

Salmalik School is a formal government school in the central district of Pashtun Kot. A primary school will be built by ACTED and is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 6 male and 2 female teachers
- The majority of them have a higher education degree
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6500 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (30 students per class on average)	Boys (Aged 7 to 17)	Girls (Aged 7 to 17)
1	0	33
2	0	35
3	0	20
4	0	60
5	0	20
6	0	22
7	0	0
8	0	0
9	0	0
Total	0	190

Girls here are sometimes absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of education for girls. Elders also support female education, and the same goes for the mullah. Planned Retention: 90% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training. The source of water here is a shared well and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students		✓			
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers		✓			
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity	✓				

CONTEXT

Shahqasemi School is a formal government school in the central district of Pashtun Kot. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 11 male teachers
- The majority of them only have a diploma
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male teacher salary: 6500 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 90% Tajik, 10% Uzbek)		
Grade (25 students per class on average)	Boys (Aged 6 to 18)	Girls (Aged 6 to 18)
1	27	0
2	0	31
3	32	0
4	0	37
5	38	0
6	0	27
7	23	0
8	0	0
9	23	20
Total	143	115

Girls here are rarely absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of their education. The same goes for elders and the mullah.

Planned Retention: 95% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training. The source of water here is a well; the water is salty and not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students					✓
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment				✓	
Underpaid teachers		✓			
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity					✓

CONTEXT

Pakhal Sos School for girls is a government school approximately 4 hours away by car from Maymana. A brand new primary school is being built by ACTED in this vicinity and this is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 6 male and 6 female teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10
- 1 teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is non-existent
- Male/Female teacher salary: 4160/6750 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Tajik)		
Grade (50 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 18)
1	0	50
2	0	103
3	0	86
4	0	38
5	0	86
6	0	104
7	0	59
8	0	71
9	0	62
10	0	17
11	0	17
12	0	0
Total	0	699

Girls here are sometimes absent but none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of education up to Grade 12. Influential elders also support female education because they want the girls to be literate; the same goes for the mullah.

Planned Retention: 70% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling because quite a few will get married soon.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training done by an international NGO where they were taught how to wash their hands after using the toilet. The source of water here is a pond and the water is not treated. The toilets have not been built yet and the waste collection system is incineration.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students				✓	
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space		✓			
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity	✓				

CONTEXT

Darre Zang School for girls is a formal government school approximately 4 hours away by car from Maymana. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 17 male teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male teacher salary: 4500 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Tajik)		
Grade (40 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 6 to 19)
1	0	96
2	0	98
3	0	136
4	0	106
5	0	110
6	0	130
7	0	112
8	0	66
9	0	29
Total	0	883

Girls here are rarely absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). All parents let their girls go to school and approve of girls' education here. Elders and the mullah also support female education.

Planned Retention: 95% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training where they were taught how to wash their hands and received vitamins. The source of water here is a pond and the water is not treated. The toilets are clean and the waste collection system involves digging a hole and burying the trash.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity				✓	

CONTEXT

Charmghar Khana School for girls is a government school approximately 3.5 hours away by car from Maymana. A primary school is being built from scratch by ACTED and is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 2 male and 7 female teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is inexistent
- Male/Female teacher salary: 4200 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (40 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 6 to 17)
1	0	40
2	0	41
3	0	38
4	0	38
5	0	37
6	0	35
7	0	36
8	0	38
9	0	35
Total	0	338

Girls here are rarely absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). All parents let their girls go to school and approve of their education. The mullah and schoolteachers also support girls' education.

Planned Retention: 90% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training done by an international NGO where they were taught how to wash their hands with soap after using the toilet and cutting their nails. The source of water here is a private well and the water is treated with purification tablets. The toilets have not been built yet and the waste collection system involves digging a hole and burying the trash.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space		✓			
Lack of female teachers		✓			
Insecurity	✓				

CONTEXT

Naisher School for girls is a formal government school approximately 3 hours away by car from Maymana. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 13 female teachers
- All of them have studied up to Grade 10
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is inexistent
- Female teacher salary: 4100 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: Uzbek and Tajik)		
Grade (45 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 6 to 17)
1	0	68
2	0	66
3	0	92
4	0	58
5	0	76
6	0	68
7	0	44
8	0	22
9	0	25
Total	0	519

Girls here are sometimes absent and some have also dropped out in the past year due to marriage (qualitative source). All parents let their girls go to school and approve of education up to Grade 12. Families are told not to marry their children at an early age.

Planned Retention: 85% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training done by an international NGO where they were taught how to wash their hands after going to the toilet and keeping animals away from drinking water. The source of water here is a pond and the water is not treated. The toilets are clean and the waste collection system is incineration.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students		✓			
Unskilled teachers		✓			
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space		✓			
Lack of female teachers		✓			
Insecurity			✓		

CONTEXT

Shingli School is a government school in the western district of Almar. A primary school will be built from scratch by ACTED and this is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 6 male and 1 female teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6500/4160 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (30 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 22)
1	0	80
2	0	12
3	0	35
4	22	23
5	0	45
6	0	38
7	0	40
8	0	40
9	0	0
Total	22	313

Girls here are rarely absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of their education. The village representative and the mullah both also support female education. Planned Retention: 95% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training. The source of water here is a pond and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity		✓			

CONTEXT

Buri School for girls is a formal government school in the western district of Qaysar. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 1 male and 8 female teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10 and some have a certificate of Grade 14 completion
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (40 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 15)
1	0	104
2	0	80
3	0	45
4	0	60
5	0	55
6	0	45
7	0	30
8	0	40
9	0	41
Total	0	500

Girls here are sometimes absent and at least 150 have dropped out in the past year around 15-16 because of conservatism (qualitative source). Some parents approve of female education. The local mullah supports female education.

Planned Retention: 70% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training. The source of water here is a pond and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students	✓				
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers		✓			
Insecurity		✓			

CONTEXT

Chechaktoo School for girls is a government school in the western district of Qaysar. ACTED has promised to build a primary school here next year. It is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 2 male and 5 female teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism inexistent
- Male/Female teacher salary: 4160 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 80% Uzbek, 20% Tajik)		
Grade (45 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 14)
1	0	80
2	0	102
3	0	60
4	0	61
5	0	43
6	0	104
7	0	99
8	0	0
9	0	0
Total	0	549

Girls here are sometimes absent and at least 30 have dropped out in the past year at 14 because of marriage (qualitative source). Those who reenrol do so only because of their husbands’ consent. Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of basic education. The mullah is also in favour of it.

Planned Retention: 60% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training. The source of water here is a shared well and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students					✓
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space		✓			
Lack of female teachers		✓			
Insecurity	✓				

CONTEXT

Sofi Qala School is a formal government school in the western district of Qaysar. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 18 male and 1 female teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10 and some also have higher education degree
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is inexistent
- Male/Female teacher salary: 6500/4160 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (40 students per class on average)	Boys (Aged 7 to 18)	Girls (Aged 7 to 18)
1	66	52
2	80	57
3	52	18
4	53	49
5	34	40
6	37	43
7	51	43
8	50	44
9	42	38
10	19	27
11	0	23
Total	484	434

Girls here are sometimes absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of education up to Grade 12 so that they can find jobs in the future. The mullah also supports female education but a third of girls leave due to the lack of female teachers or because they get married.

Planned Retention: 70% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received a health training done by an international NGO where they were taught how to wash their hands after using the toilet. The source of water here is a well and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students				✓	
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment		✓			
Underpaid teachers	✓				
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity				✓	

TEST – CHASHM-E-SANGIN Girls School – KOHISTAN

CONTEXT

Chashm-e-Sangin School for girls is a formal government school in the southern district of Kohistan. This is considered a test location for the purposes of this evaluation and ACTED has planned to construct the building which is not present yet.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 5 male and 1 female teachers
- The majority of them have studied up to Grade 10
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male/Female teacher salary: 4000 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Uzbek)		
Grade (30 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 19)
1	0	40
2	0	30
3	0	30
4	0	30
5	0	28
6	0	0
7	0	0
8	0	0
9	0	0
Total	0	158

Girls here are rarely absent and none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Most parents let their girls go to school and approve of their education. Elders also support female education, and the same goes for the mullah.

Planned Retention: 90% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have not received health training. The source of water here is a pond and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students				✓	
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers		✓			
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity				✓	

CONTROL* – MOLA ARIFY Girls School – KOHISTAN

CONTEXT

Mola Arify School for girls is a formal government school in the southern district of Kohistan. It is considered a control location for the purposes of this evaluation.

TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 7 male teachers
- The majority of them have pursued education up to Grade 10 or 12
- No teacher has dropped out in the past year and staff absenteeism is a marginal issue
- Male teacher salary: 4100 AFA

CLASS COMPOSITIONS

Student Breakdown by Grade (Ethnicity: 100% Tajik)		
Grade (30 students per class on average)	Boys	Girls (Aged 7 to 20)
1	0	45
2	0	44
3	0	30
4	0	44
5	0	20
6	0	15
7	0	18
8	0	12
9	0	0
Total	0	228

Girls here are very often absent but none have dropped out in the past year (qualitative source). Some parents let their girls go to school. Elders and the mullah support female education.

Planned Retention: 50% of girls presently enrolled are expected to complete a full cycle of primary or lower secondary schooling.

HYGIENE SITUATION

Students here have received health training where they were taught how to wash their hands. The source of water here is a private well and the water is not treated.

MAIN BARRIERS IN SCHOOL

	Major problem	Important problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Too many students					✓
Unskilled teachers	✓				
Lack of equipment	✓				
Underpaid teachers		✓			
Lack of space	✓				
Lack of female teachers	✓				
Insecurity	✓				

Table 15: Test and Control Schools – Summary of Key Indicators

District	Schools	Female students	Teachers	Female Teachers	Female students -teacher ratio	Classrooms	Toilets	Female students -toilet ratio	Water source	Surrounding wall	Playground
Khwaja Sabz Posh	Khuja Qoshri Payan	704	20	6	35-1	6	0	-	Pond	YES	NO
	Qizil Qishlaq*	-	11	1	-	5	8	-	Well	NO	YES
Pashtun Kot	Zarshoy Bala	307	13	4	23-1	4	1	307-1	Well	NO	NO
	Nadier Abad*	277	21	3	13-1	8	8	34-1	Pond	YES	NO
	Arab Aqsay Bala	489	14	4	34-1	-	-	-	Well	-	-
	Kariz Lalme*	259	13	2	19-1	-	-	-	Tank	-	-
	Salmalik	190	8	2	23-1	-	-	-	Well	-	-
	Shahqasemi*	115	11	0	10-1	-	-	-	Pond	-	-
Gurziwan	Pakhal Sos	699	12	6	58-1	11	10	69-1	Pond	YES	YES
	Darre Zang*	883	17	0	51-1	5	10	88-1	Pond	YES	YES
Bilchiragh	Charmghar Khana	338	9	7	37-1	6	0	-	Well	NO	YES
	Naisher*	519	13	13	39-1	4	10	51-1	Pond	YES	YES
Almar	Shingli	313	7	1	44-1	-	-	-	Pond	-	-
	Akhond Baba*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Qaysar	Haidari Khana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Buri*	500	9	8	55-1	-	-	-	Pond	-	-
	Chechaktoo	549	7	5	78-1	-	-	-	Well	-	-
	Sofi Qala*	434	19	1	22-1	-	-	-	Well	-	-
Kohistan	Chashm-e-Sangin	158	6	1	26-1	-	-	-	Pond	-	-
	Mola Arify*	228	7	0	32-1	-	-	-	Well	-	-

(* = Control locations)

ACTED Reflections on School Observations

Key findings: ACTED appreciates the challenges faced by the external evaluator in accessing test and control school sites. However, considering the importance of collecting attendance, retention and dropout rates at test and control primary schools- which directly feeds in to payment by result rates, ACTED is disappointed to see an overreliance on qualitative data, as opposed to more quantitative which would have involved the physical checking of school registers to measure attendance, dropout and retention. ACTED would have expected the external evaluator to work within the M&E framework and GEC attendance data guidelines to come up with a solution for this. This is something that has been discussed with the external evaluator to look into further at the midline through collaboration with the ACTED community mobilisers who are able to collect school registers on a more regular basis.

In addition, due to the fact that the external evaluator was not able to visit a number of school sites and only spoke to available head teachers over the phone, this raises concerns for the relevance of these observations. After the initial presentation of school enrolment data by the external evaluator, ACTED raised some serious questions after crosschecking this with district level staff and internal records. Information about school enrolment numbers, sex of school students and age group of schools were mismatched. Therefore the external evaluator was requested to do a secondary phone verification of this data. The findings from the follow up phone calls with the head teachers show different figures and the external evaluator's estimation also show much lower enrolment rates for each school. This in part undermines the accuracy of these phone interviews conducted, not to mention the tendency on the head teacher's part to create more of an optimistic and exaggerated portrayal of the attendance, rates, functionality and minimal absenteeism on behalf of teachers and students of each school.

In collaboration with the DoE, the reason these school sites were selected was due to the fact that even if there is a government school in the vicinity, it is considered not to be functioning by the DoE either through having few or irregular teachers, not having any safe structure (i.e., schools operating in tents or temporary rooms in mosques), there being no adequate curriculum and generally poor attendance by girls due to the low standard of teaching and lack of facilities.

Therefore, these factors are clearly not picked up in the baseline report and should be considered when evaluating the information presented from school observations.

Ways forward for school data collection: In year one of the project, ACTED was not working directly in schools as it was focussing on primary school construction. As the project goes on and ACTED community mobilisers regularly visit and support primary school teachers, ACTED will be able to support data collection in schools to cover the gaps noted above. ACTED will work with the external evaluator to get more accurate enrolment figures and regular attendance data. ACTED will also collect exam results to further support midline and end line findings. School observation checklists will be refined in collaboration with the external evaluator.

VI. LOGFRAME OF INDICATORS

GEC Revised Logframe

The logframe below details all indicators developed by ACTED and DFID to measure outputs and outcomes of the project throughout the 3 phases of the evaluation. It also represents the baseline figures available as well as the possible revisions of indicators necessary for the future stages of the evaluation. Finally, the table shows the changes in the main tools necessary to assess accurately these indicators.

The main changes proposed stem from the following weaknesses of certain indicators highlighted by Samuel Hall:

- Inadaptability to the Faryab context
- Difficulty to assess accurately certain figures

As such, 11 out of 25 indicators have been modified to enable the data collection to be more effective during midline and endline and to provide ACTED with more actionable information for their programming. Below is a detail of the issues surrounding some of the indicators:

- **Impact Indicator 5:** 'Influence' and 'positions of influence' are two complex concepts to measure. Furthermore, the only women that respondents in some cases thought had an 'influence' were teachers, but these could only influence their students. A better indicator (proposed in the revised logframe) could be one counting the number of women involved in political institutions, whether formal or informal.
- **Outcome Indicator 4:** 'Support' from key stakeholders needs to be defined – it can either be passive or active. The former involves actors simply stating their support while the latter should show how marginalized girls are practically being helped to complete a full cycle of education (awareness programmes, additional provincial funds, infrastructure improvements, etc.).
- **Output Indicator 1.2:** This indicator could be phrased better. To be precise, it is the building of new schools by ACTED that will create new school places.
- **Output Indicator 1.4:** Tracking the number of teachers who have successfully been trained is not complicated; assessing whether the quality of their teaching has indeed improved is much more difficult. Several girls have said that some of their teachers lack the appropriate skills, as such, interviewers could ask students at midline and endline if they have seen a specific difference in the quality of their professors' teaching methods and topical knowledge.
- **Output Indicator 1.6:** Having a percentage of individuals involved in promoting positive views of girls' education is less relevant than talking about numbers in such a remote province. Moreover, these activities involving support and engagement need to be defined. Respondents might be brought to Maymana for qualitative interviews if it is not possible to access their villages due to security.
- **Output Indicator 2.2:** Again here, the notion of 'quality' education is removed because of its weakness. Girls might have little to compare the assistance with and any form of help might be better than nothing for them. The literacy/numeracy results can be used as a proxy indication of the quality of teaching.
- **Output Indicator 2.3:** The term 'villages' is unclear and the relevant locations should be explicated.
- **Output Indicator 2.4:** Knowing what girls have learnt in terms of personal and environmental hygiene can be assessed by knowing which schools have had health training sessions administered for girls but should also involve interviews with select groups, ideally in the same schools over the course of the evaluation.

Additional indicators highlighted in Table 14 such as reported cases of physical violence against girls in the household, percentage of households who report that girls' other responsibilities stop them from attending school all the time and percentage of households who report that some days girls miss school due to teacher absenteeism are also relevant to keep track of. These are interesting because they add to the already identified barriers faced by girls in Faryab such as poor teaching and links between the economic situation of households and their ability to send girls to school. At midline and endline, finding out more about violence towards girls through in-depth qualitative interviews can shine a light on little discussed practices that are part of some women and girls in Afghanistan.

Table 16: ACTED Revised Logframe

GEC Indicator	Proposed Revisions and/or Comments	Data Source(s) – Main and Additional (for Triangulation)	Baseline Figure(s) and/or Comments
Impact Indicator 1: Proportion of women married by age 15	-	HH survey – Q. B24 (should be modified to: “Are there any women in this household who have been married at 15 or at a younger age?”) Absence of a precise question in HH survey; will be modified at midline	14,7% of households surveyed have married women under 20
Impact Indicator 2: Adolescent birth rate	-	HH survey – Q. B26 and B27 (should be modified to: “On average, how many children do the under-18 mothers in this household have?”)	2011 national figure for Afghanistan: 93/1000 (UN) 9,3% of households have mothers under 20 with 7,3% of them having their first child between 16 and 19 Absence of a precise question in HH survey; will be modified at midline
Impact Indicator 3: Proportion of employed women living below \$1 a day	Impact Indicator 3: Proportion of employed women earning at least 5000 AFA per month	HH survey – new question (should be: “How much do you earn on average each month?”) FGDs with Elders FGDs with Women	2012 national figure for Afghanistan: 5000 AFA for government workers (US State Department) Through school observations, female teachers’ salaries range from 4000 to 6500 AFA
Impact Indicator 4: Proportion of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector	-	HH survey – Q. B12, B20 and C39 Due to low numbers of female-headed households, add a question in HH survey at midline for all heads of household: “Please say what each household member does for work.”	19% of surveyed women work in the non-agricultural sector (out of 4,7% of households headed by women) 4% of girls help with the family business or work outside the home in a non-agricultural activity
Impact Indicator 5: Women in the intervention population in positions of influence over community, local and national decision-making processes	Impact Indicator 5: Number of women in the intervention population part of a provincial institution or a female Shura	FGDs with Women FGDs with Elders (Question should be: “ Do you know of any women in this area in positions of influence over the community? If yes, who are they and what do they do?”)	3 locations mention female teachers as having influence, usually over their students
Impact Indicator 6: Number of marginalized	-	School observations	0

girls supported by the GEC completing a full cycle of primary or lower secondary education		School records	(3747 girls registered in test locations in 2013)
Outcome Indicator 1: Number of marginalized girls who have stayed in school through the life cycle of the project	-	School observations School records	0 Target: 14970 (3747 girls registered in test locations in 2013)
Outcome Indicator 2: Number of marginalized girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes	Outcome Indicator 2: Percentage of marginalized girls supported by GEC who are literate and numerate (above 2 on the literacy/numeracy scale)	HH survey Literacy test Numeracy test School records	0 Not applicable at baseline Literacy figure: 57,7% of girls are illiterate Numeracy figure: 42,6% of girls are innumerate (Additionality to be measured by comparing with female results in control locations) Target: 14970
Outcome Indicator 3: Additional funds secured during the life of the project alongside DFID GEC funds to support the marginalized girls	-	ACTED documents Discussions with ACTED staff members Financial records Management records	0 Not applicable at baseline Target: £ 377000
Outcome Indicator 4: Increased support from key stakeholders to enable marginalized girls to complete a full cycle of education	-	HH survey – Q. D40 and D.41 School observations FGDs with Elders	65,7% of households feel there is enough support in their area for girls to succeed in school 13,3% of households report having members involved in school committees Vast majority of elders in FGDs believe in the importance of education for girls
Output Indicator 1.1: Number of female primary schools constructed by this project with good classrooms, latrines, potable water and play facilities	-	School observations HH survey (Q. C64-C67 and C92) Procurement documents Handover documents Financial records Management records School records	0 Not applicable at baseline Target: 10 32,7% of parents find the school classrooms satisfactory 32,3% of parents find the school toilets satisfactory 43% of parents report of no changes in the school's facilities
Output Indicator 1.2: Number of school places created by primary school construction	Output Indicator 1.2: Number of school places created after construction of new schools by	School observations Procurement documents	0 Not applicable at baseline Target: 2400

	ACTED	Handover documents Financial records Management records School records	(5 new schools are currently under construction)
Output Indicator 1.3: Percentage of female primary students aged 6-12 reporting that new primary schools are accessible	-	HH survey – Q. C60 (should be modified to: “Is the new school built by the NGO in your area accessible?”) FGDs with Girls	45,1% of female primary students aged 6-12 attend the closest school that girls can attend Target: 85%
Output Indicator 1.4: Number of teachers (both formal and informal) that receive 10-day training workshops and 2-day refresher training workshops able to deliver relevant, quality learning experience to female students	Output Indicator 1.4: Number of teachers (both formal and informal) that receive 10-day training workshops and 2-day refresher training workshops	Teacher questionnaire Teacher training attendance records School observations School records Literacy test Numeracy test FGDs with Girls	0 Not applicable at baseline Target: 88
Output Indicator 1.5: Percentage of teachers trained attending primary schools over 85% of the time	-	School observations (“How often are teachers absent from class?” If answer is ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’, then they are considered to attend 85% of the time) Teacher questionnaire School observations School records Discussions with school principals HH survey (Q. E9) FGDs with Girls	0 Not applicable at baseline Target: 85%
Output Indicator 1.6: Percentage of people promoting positive views of girls’ education and right to education in target districts	Output Indicator 1.6: Number of identified individuals unrelated to ACTED in target districts who actively promote girls’ education and engage, at their own risk, with a variety of actors on the subject	HH survey – Q. B100 (should be modified to: “ Do you know of anyone in this area who actively believes and pushes for girls’ education? If yes, who are they and what do they do?”)	97,7% of adults fully agree or agree that girls should be able to go to school Target: 65% Alternative figure will be collected at midline

Output Indicator 2.1: Number of female YDCs delivering literacy courses constructed and operational in target districts	-	YDC observations (to be deployed at midline) ACTED YDC records	0 Not applicable at baseline Target: 7
Output Indicator 2.2: Number of girls enrolled from basic literacy/numeracy courses into new YDCs and in villages receiving relevant, quality education	Output Indicator 2.2.1: Number of girls enrolled from basic literacy/numeracy courses into new YDCs	HH survey YDC observations YDC attendance records	0 Not applicable at baseline
	Output Indicator 2.2.2: Number of girls enrolled from basic literacy/numeracy courses into new schools	HH survey School observations School attendance records	0 Not applicable at baseline (66 girls over 7 locations have re enrolled over the past year)
Output Indicator 2.3: Percentage of girls having completed basic literacy/numeracy courses in new YDCs and in villages	Output Indicator 2.3.1: Percentage of girls having completed basic literacy/numeracy courses in new YDCs	HH survey YDC observations YDC attendance records	0 No applicable at baseline
	Output Indicator 2.3.2: Percentage of girls having completed basic literacy/numeracy courses in VLCs	HH survey VLC attendance records	0 No applicable at baseline
Output Indicator 2.4: Percentage of female students who have improved levels of awareness and knowledge of personal and environmental hygiene and female health	-	HH survey School observations FGDs with Girls	Girls have received health training in 55,6% of surveyed schools
Output Indicator 2.5: Percentage of literacy course graduates (re) enrolling in formal schools	-	HH survey (Q. C55) School observations (to be added: "What percentage of your students have enrolled after having completed a village literacy course?") School records	0 Not applicable at baseline 0,9% of girls surveyed that are enrolled have been out of school in the past for more than a year Target: 6%
Output Indicator 2.6: Percentage of adults with positive views on girls' right to education	-	HH survey – Q. B100 FGDs with Elders	97,7% of adults fully agree or agree that girls should be able to go to school
Output Indicator 3.1: Number of girls completing the vocational training course and	Output Indicator 3.1: Number of girls completing the vocational	HH survey	0 Not applicable at baseline

are earning over \$1 a day	training course and earning at least 5000 AFA per month	FGDs with Girls	Target: 706 (Usual salary for tailoring/weaving: 6500-7000 AFA)
Output Indicator 3.2: Average percentage of household income contributed by girls earning income through skills acquired as a result of this project	Output Indicator 3.2: Average salary of girls having graduated from ACTED's vocational programmes	HH survey (Q. C44) FGDs with Girls	0 Not applicable at baseline 3,7% of parents say the money coming from the girl's work over the past year was very important of fairly important
Output Indicator 3.3: Percentage of girls who feel their earned income has led to increased participation in decision-making that is valued by community members, local authorities and family members	-	HH survey (New question to be added: "Do you feel your earned income has changed your status at home and in your community? If so, how?") FGDs with Girls	0 Not applicable at baseline Target: 35%

Summary of Additional Indicators

The total number of valid datasets for the below table of indicators was 848 divided in 545 (64,3%) test and 303 (35,7%) control locations. Tracking these numbers over the years will give ACTED an idea of the areas in which the GEC project has been a success and those in which it did not meet expectations.

Table 17: Indicators and baseline figures

	Variable	Test Group	Control Group	diff.	Analysis used	df	p	N
Numeracy/Literacy Testing	School Enrolment, girls 8-15 (%)	77,9	72,2	2,638	Chi sq.	1	0,104	649
	Mean Age of girls surveyed	10,68	10,16	1,99	t-Test	584	0,047	586
	Numeracy score (mean)	1,8	2	-1,157	t-Test	437	0,248	439
	For girls in school	2,1	2,5	-	-	-	-	262
	For girls out of school	1,6	1,5	-	-	-	-	78
	For Dari speakers	1,9	3,4	-	-	-	-	102
	For non-Dari speakers	1,8	1,9	-	-	-	-	337
	Literacy score (mean)	1,5	1,6	-0,355	t-Test	438	0,723	440
	For girls in school	1,7	2	-	-	-	-	263
	For girls out of school	1,3	0,93	-	-	-	-	78
	For Dari speakers	1,7	2,8	-	-	-	-	102
	For non-Dari speakers	1,5	1,4	-	-	-	-	338
Household characteristics	Adults favourable to girls' education (%)	97,8	97,7	0,473	Fisher's exact	-	0,946	847
	Head of households with no schooling (%)	73,3	74	-	-	-	-	840
	Head of households working in agriculture (%)	53,3	56,3	-	-	-	-	605
	Household language other than language of instruction (%)	71,8	81,8	11,589	Fisher's exact	-	0,005 ^a	588
	% of adults interviewed who self-report as literate in language of instruction	18	15,8	0,452	Chi sq.	1	0,501	570
	Average reported distance of nearest primary school (Km)	1,8	1,4	-	-	-	-	827
	Average reported travel time to nearest primary school (minutes)	26	23	-	-	-	-	807
	Reported cases of physical disability amongst girls	6	7	-	-	-	-	581
	Reported cases of physical violence against girl in household	3	0	-	-	-	-	588
Girls' responsibilities	% of girls who spend time caring for younger or older family members	45,2	46,2	0,045	Chi sq.	1	0,831	586
	% of girls who spend time on housework	56	54,1	0,203	Chi sq.	1	0,652	584

	% of girls who help growing crops	6,6	11,5	4,206	Chi sq.	1	0,04	585
	% of girls who help in non-agricultural work outside of home	6,9	4,3	1,588	Chi sq.	1	0,208	587
	% of households who report that girls' other responsibilities stop them from attending school all the time	6,1	3,7	3,147	Chi sq.	2	0,207	477
	% of households who report that girls' other responsibilities stop them from attending school some of the time	13,7	18,9					
Household views on school quality	% of households satisfied with classrooms at girl's school	70,1	72,2	0,187	Chi sq.	1	0,665	380
	% of households satisfied with toilets at girl's school	66,9	74,4	2,129	Chi sq.	1	0,145	382
	% of households satisfied with text books at girl's school	69,9	79,5	3,984	Chi sq.	1	0,045 ^a	383
	% of households satisfied with teaching in girl's school	64,4	70,2	1,238	Chi sq.	1	0,266	371
	% of households who report that some days girl misses school due to teacher absenteeism	35,8	35,2	0,015	Chi sq.	1	0,901	385
	Of those households, who reported teacher absenteeism, % who claim it happens several times a month	81,3	89,2	1,399	Chi sq.	2	0,497	137
	Households who reported violence at girl's school in the past year	2	3					389
Girls views on school	% of girls who feel their teacher treats them fairly	88,7	88,9	0,003	Chi sq.	1	0,958	356
	% of girls who feel their teacher respects their opinion	85,4	89,2	0,931	Chi sq.	1	0,335	351
	% of girls who feel their teacher really cares about them	85,4	89,9	1,415	Chi sq.	1	0,234	359
	% of girls who feel afraid at school at least some of the time	21,9	18,9	0,51	Fisher's exact	-	0,958	386
	% of girls who feel school is generally a good place for them	97,9	99,1	-	Fisher's exact	-	0,668	354
	% of girls who feel that school is a nice place to be most of the time	94,9	96,9	0,865	Fisher's exact	-	0,717	384

^ap<0,05

ACTED Reflections on Suggested Logframe Revisions

Suggested Logframe Revisions: Whilst ACTED appreciates the external evaluator’s input on potential revised indicators, ACTED acknowledges that it is not within the scope for either ACTED or the external evaluator to make suggested revisions for impact and outcome indicators. With regard to suggested revision of other indicators, ACTED feels that these potential changes are not necessarily more measurable or clearer than the previous indicators. Therefore, at this stage, the logframe indicators will remain the same with slight amendments on some targets to reflect enrolment data from ACTED’s records.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reflections

Through this baseline, we have seen that the current situation in Faryab is both extremely challenging and full of opportunities. Numerous districts in which ACTED operates see regular and heavy fighting between government forces and insurgents, making the provision of development assistance extremely difficult and the specific targeting of young marginalized girls almost impossible. On the other hand, the very low literacy and numeracy scores that have been measured give ACTED the possibility to develop its GEC implementation over the course of the next three years in an effective and measurable way.

The overall evaluation process, and in particular the tool design and fieldwork in Faryab have shown the limits of the GEC's international approach to helping young women through education. The difficulties in administering the baseline survey, coupled with the need for all stakeholders to better understand the situation of rural Afghan communities, make it essential for the next phases of this evaluation to be carefully planned and executed.

Recommendations

Even though ACTED's longstanding presence in Faryab has enabled it to pursue a wide variety of development projects and become a part of society's fabric in the region, there are a number of areas in which improvements can be made in order for the GEC project there to be a real success and lead to positive outcomes for the young girls. These are divided into 2 broad areas: teaching and community awareness and tools.

1. Teaching

- **Increase the number of female teachers** – As mentioned repeatedly by parents and community leaders, a major impediment for girls to continue their schooling once having attained puberty is the presence of male instructors. Social norms making the mixing of the sexes taboo from a very early age, ACTED is in a unique position to advocate for greater provincial support on this matter and more needs to be done. By doing so, a real progress can be mapped over the programme timeline rather than having promising adolescent girls denied an education at a crucial developmental period of their life. Another way of doing so could be for ACTED to spearhead the creation of a wide consortium of NGOs to lobby the government for the creation of a three year-long economic package for newly qualified female teachers to head to the rural areas of Afghanistan, similar to a civic service initiative.

- **Develop a strong winter teacher training programme** – During the holiday season, refresher courses and advanced subjects teaching should be better organized and emphasized in order for students to be able to look up to competent teachers but also for the latter to gain much needed confidence. In very rural areas, high school girls who have just graduated take over large classrooms of their peers as teachers, leading to ineffective instruction; at other times, sub-literate teachers are ashamed of not mastering their subject and do not let the administration know.⁶⁰

- **Ensure quality control of training sessions and regular internal checks** – People in the development sector in Afghanistan have grown accustomed to giving and receiving a wide variety of certificates for their participation in training sessions, workshops or conferences. Some of these are strong and effective courses while as many others are useless and do not reflect any real knowledge gained. The only way to ensure that capacity building works is to regularly monitor the work done by the teams and ideally organize randomized tests.

- **Make the learning process more practical** – A particular south Asian learning culture coupled with a lack of resources for students and a strong focus on discipline, makes teaching in Afghanistan very focused on theory. Pupils learn about computers without ever using one and their science labs are often inexistent or decrepit. In light of these common complaints from the students, implementers can ensure that the adequate materials are available, but more importantly, that the teaching culture evolves towards student-centred learning. This means special attention to pupils who are behind and a greater involvement of teachers in developing critical

⁶⁰ Samuel Hall, [School in a Box Midline Survey](#) for the Womanity Foundation, 2013

thinking from their students. Supporting language training for non-Dari speakers can also be envisaged, for example by setting up mobile schools.

2. Community Awareness

- **Review the scope of the GEC** – The difficulty in reaching out to communities along with the strict socio-cultural norms that prevail in rural Faryab mean that the overall targeting of ‘marginalized’ girls might be harder to implement than expected. Even with ACTED’s extremely strong experience, networks and relays, the question of whether these young girls can really benefit from the programme needs to be discussed. Samuel Hall recommends focusing on fewer girls with a stricter definition of marginalization (given that even within out of school girls, some might have more difficulties than others in accessing education), while at the same time focus on quality rather than on quantity. At the time of the baseline, implementation had already begun yet the literacy/numeracy rates were still very poor.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation and Accountability

Most importantly, the GEC’s M&E approach in Faryab should take into account a number of factors that do not apply to other countries of implementation, and the household survey needs to be thoroughly reviewed.

Using a tool crafted to be replicated identically in 22 countries, many of them in sub-Saharan Africa, was a considerable challenge. In a rural area of Afghanistan three major flaws of the household survey came to light:

- It did not take into account the cultural and practical realities of Afghanistan and of rural Faryab - for example, surveyors here cannot knock on villagers' doors and ask to interview girls; only women can and female interviewers are always in short supply;
- It shifts between respondents multiple times, rather than having one clear filter question switching from an adult to a child; not only is this extremely confusing for slow surveyors but it is also impractical given that access to people is often hard in villages and trust needs to be built over a short period of time;
- It is too long and in a difficult security environment such as in Faryab, this can endanger the teams by forcing them to spend on average one and a half hour on each questionnaire rather than 40 to 60 minutes.

Overall, the belief in a 'one size fits all' survey is unsuitable. Villagers in Afghanistan cannot be surveyed in the same way as they would in Ghana or Nepal. The questionnaire has a variety of very interesting and pertinent questions but they need to be conveyed differently. In its present form, the main questionnaire is detrimental to the proper conduct of the evaluation. Samuel Hall proposes to craft it again in anticipation of next year’s midline evaluation in close collaboration with Coffey International and ACTED. All the sections need to be reviewed, the flow and direction of the questions need to be changed, filter questions are essential and context-specific situations need to be kept in mind. Finally, techniques to access adolescent girls should be changed in order to ensure that the research can track similar cohorts over the years.

By making the questionnaire shorter, clearer and more user-friendly, not only will the data collection run smoothly but the analysis will also be more to the point and pertinent. In such a complex security environment, reducing the number of targeted girls might also help Samuel Hall track the sample more securely and give ACTED the opportunity to give a more cohesive picture of its implementation to PwC and DFID at the end of the implementation process.

Communication Plan

One of the requirements of PwC is to map the various possibilities to broadcast the work done on the GEC project in Faryab and the several evaluations to come. Whilst a number of potential initiatives could be appropriate, at this stage with the current level of insecurity, ACTED would prefer to observe the unfolding situation over the next two months before developing a comprehensive communication strategy.

ACTED Conclusion and Reflections on Baseline Report

Whilst the baseline component of the GEC programme was considered a preliminary stage to implementation, the careful consideration and time taken to conduct data collection, analysis and presentation, has clearly demonstrated the complexity of working within the GEC framework, as well in a sensitive context such as

Faryab, Afghanistan. To some extent, NGOs such as ACTED who have worked in the country for over 20 years and been present in communities in Faryab for over 10 years, can take for granted the relative access and strong networks of community relations it has built over this time, as is evidenced in the difficulties of contracting an external evaluator to visit communities and gain an understanding of the context. The baseline stage itself, encompassing all of its complexities was always going to be challenging and timely. However, the length of time it has taken in itself, the number of reviews and the general data limitations due to lack of access to the field, is a clear lesson for all parties on the struggles of operating in such an insecure context. Overall, the baseline has confirmed a number of ACTED's pre-project assumptions related to barriers for marginalised girls accessing education. Whilst the seeming 'positive' attitudes towards girls' education are encouraging, the pre-existing low levels of literacy continue to be a driving force for ACTED in expanding its rural educational programmes.

General Recommendations:

Increasing Numbers of Female Teachers: The recruitment of female teachers for output two and three is in the control of ACTED as they are solely responsible for this component. However, for output one, whilst ACTED has been trying to work closely with the DoE to ensure that there are as many female teachers as possible for primary schools, this is also ultimately dependant on how the DoE depends to allocate staff.

Winter Teacher Training Programme: In terms of the general recommendations, it is clear that teacher training is a vital element for ensuring quality in the project. For winter training, this is something ACTED has implemented for literacy and YDC teachers under output two, however, for output one- a winter training programme for primary school teachers is dependent on the DoE timeliness in finalising the list of teachers for that school year.

Teaching Quality: The comments about the quality of ToT courses and practical learning can be generically applied to a number of education contexts in the developing world. Effective training and development of teachers comes not only through stand-alone teacher training sessions, but through continual observation, monitoring and personal drive on behalf of teachers to improve quality. The current system ACTED has implemented of having community based community mobilisers responsible for a specific geographical scope and number of literacy classes, YDC and primary schools is one way to ensure that day to day teaching methods and practices are observed and strengthened. ACTED is developing a number of internal monitoring systems related to literacy classes and YDCs building on this year's experience to strengthen this aspect of the programme.

In general, a number of the recommendations made were more general and ACTED was disappointed to note that despite an 'education consultant' apparently being included by the external evaluator as part of the baseline process, more specific and practical education recommendations were not made. However, ACTED appreciates that the baseline process with the scale of data collection needed, was a large task and it has taken significant time for the external evaluator to grasp the essence behind the baseline, as evidenced in the number of revisions and comments on the baseline to this date.

Data gaps and further collection:

As noted by PwC, due to major security restrictions, it is not possible at this stage to do any additional data collection to raise the number of 'out of school girls' interviewed in order to reach the minimum detectable effect of the standard deviations. ACTED has looked into the internal baseline data collected before the external evaluator was contracted, however, the external evaluator does not feel comfortable in using in using this data. Other potential solutions would be to conduct shorter interviews with girls in village literacy classes to gain a wider understanding of the circumstances which lead them to be considered as out of school and whether they were once formally enrolled in school but did not continue their education.

ACTED proposes no major changes to the programme as a result of the baseline, as the fundamental barriers to education for girls which ACTED are trying to address are clearly highlighted in the baseline report. The main adjustments ACTED intends to make as a result of this baseline are to rigorously reinforce internal monitoring

systems at the field level so additional data can be collected on a regular basis to ensure that the external evaluator can draw upon this data in the midline and end line. This will place more reliance on decentralised staff that have more easy access to the field to regularly collect information on learning, attendance and drop out rates.

Practical systems such as doing spot checks of teachers' and students' attendance, collecting more regular test results and following up with drop out students will reinforce the programme quality aspects of the project. All trainings for teachers will have pre and post training tests to gage knowledge and understanding and again, these qualitative tests can be drawn upon in the midline report. Additional smaller KAP surveys will be used at community meetings to trace wider attitudes to the programme and girls' education in general.

Final Conclusions:

Overall, this baseline demonstrates to ACTED that this three-year programme is not only relevant but also clearly essential in contributing to the longer-term development process of Afghanistan. The whole process of the external baseline how highlighted the need for ACTED and the external evaluator to work more collaboratively in identifying data gaps and refining ACTED's decentralised monitoring tools. Going forward, ACTED anticipates that a number of these challenges faced in the baseline phase will be overcome by having additional data sources provided by ACTED in the midline.



Image 16: On the way back to Maymana

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