Review of Food-For-Training Component

Survey commissioned by the World Food Programme

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Executive Summary

World Food Programme (WFP) Afghanistan has planned a systematic analysis of changes – positive or negative, intended or not – in people's lives as brought about by Food-For-Training (FFT) activities on livelihoods of participants and their communities. This report is the first comprehensive review of FFT in Afghanistan and focuses, for feasibility and methodological purposes, on 2009 participants only. Based on initial discussions with WFP, 5 provinces were selected for the review, providing a geographic spread in the Central, Eastern, Northern and Western regions of the country; 45 training centers were randomly chosen (30 vocational, 10 functional literacy, and 5 teacher training centers).

Main lessons learned from the profiling exercise:

- **Participants' profile:** The gender target of the FFT programme has been reached with 88.7% of women. The age distribution focuses mainly on the 16 to 40 years of age (82.9% of respondents). The surveyed centers capture the extremes in terms of educational profiles – benefiting both the least educated (in FL and VT activities) and the most educated (in TT activities).

- **Social Targeting:** Vulnerable groups within each community are well captured in the FFT activities according to a set of vulnerability indicators used to compare trainees and household profiles. As an example, there are more households with medically ill persons or children (whether physically disabled, chronically ill or mentally ill) among trainee households (55.9%) than among other community households (39.5%). Correlatively, the average and monthly income level of FFT beneficiary households is 6,544 Afs (USD 130) compared to 9,172 Afs (USD 183) reported by other community households.

Main lessons learned from the review phase:

- **Center Selection Process:** The selection of training centers is a complex process and it is often very difficult to 1) find reliable partners, as only a few candidates do match WFP criteria (accountable and professional non-for-profit structures), 2) monitor and evaluate the actual capacity of the selected partners, as security issues prevent WFP staff from assessing new candidates and evaluating ongoing partnerships.

- **Participant Selection Process:** The participant selection process is reliable *in practice* but there are no applicable and explicit guidelines even if most training centers succeed in targeting the most vulnerable segments of the population.

- **Social Acceptability:** The level of social acceptability and of community 'buy-in' of the FFT programme is very high, across target groups and indicators: 89.6% of the interviewed trainees considered that their families and community were very supportive and happy about their participation in WFP-FFT activities; 95.1% of the household respondents rated FFT activities as very useful or useful, and only 4.9% as average, insufficient or very poor.

- **Food Distribution:** Food rations are a key incentive: when asked to name the main reason why participants attend the training courses. Almost half of the interviewed trainees (45.8%) mentioned the reduction of food expenditures as a key outcome of the FFT programme, which suggests that food rations allow people to reallocate the money they spend on other

food and non-food items. However, the WFP-FFT programme still relies on a quantitative and short-term approach that is inadequate with the current needs of most participants. For instance, the food distribution calendar is not always adapted to people's immediate needs – especially when participants are returnees who recently migrated from Iran (Herat province) or Pakistan (Nangarhar). Lastly, if the food delivery rate is quite satisfactory (between 97% for FL centers and 100% for TT centers), the average food ration in terms of quality and quantity is still poor: 46.1% of interviewed participants consider that the food rations are not adequate with their daily needs.

- **Training Activity:** The overall satisfaction rate of participants is quite impressive, as 90.0% said that the training they had received was either "very good" or "good". The results are comparable when we benchmark vocational, literacy and teacher training centers, even if the rate falls to "only" 80.7% with Teacher Training. Moreover, the success of the literacy rates of Functional Literacy (50.2%) vs. Vocational Training (33.6%) participants, points to the need and opportunity to combine both activities in future programming to enable VT participants to bridge the literacy gap.

- **Professional Opportunities:** Most of the current or potential implementing partners (training centers) do not have the capacity to develop participants' skills and provide them with an access to the labor market. In-depth interviews showed that employers were quite skeptical about trainees' chances of getting a job in today's labor market. Correlatively, if trainees are generally thankful for the direct (food) and indirect (training) outcomes of the FFT programme, they are still not convinced that training can provide them with job opportunities: only 28.0% of the interviewed participants reported having found a job (55.0% work in the handicrafts sector – which requires predominantly female skills and jobs). The employment pattern of female participants is marked by unemployment and a lack of diversity of female employment and marketable skills.

- **Security Situation:** The security situation has deteriorated in all the surveyed provinces and it is now a major issue that questions the organization and implementation of FFT activities on the ground: the security situation strongly decreases WFP's operational capacity in many districts, (ii) leads WFP to hire M&E contractors that cannot be fully trusted, (iii) and may put women training centers at risk on the medium run.

Main areas of opportunity for both short and long runs:

- **Programme Strategy:** The main goal of the WFP-FFT programme should not be focused on food distribution and quantitative outputs but rather on a more comprehensive development strategy that increases the social and economic welfare of participants. As such, the training programme should start from scratch and be more comprehensive: from advocacy to food rations, from social integration to training, from long-term capacity building to actual marketable skills, from a diploma to the labor market. In the meantime and in line with general WFP guidelines, we suggest to stay focus on functional literacy and vocational training exclusively, as teacher training centres do not target piority population groups (poor and uneducated women).

- **Partnerships with other Stakeholders:** It is recommended that WFP links its FFT programme with other international keyplayers' activities. The FFT programme could benefit from the practical knowledge of organizations like GTZ and AKF (AKDN in general) to better understand their long-term strategies and tie some of its curriculum to GTZ long-term programmes. However, WFP-FFT should also rely on minor NGOs that could develop short-term or niche projects. Lastly, it is recommended of WFP project management staff to: 1) be

more demanding of its FFT governmental counterparts (both at provincial and national levels); 2) to build better capacity within certain "weaker" ministries like MoWA, to reinforce their potential in the field in the hope of giving them more contracts for FFT.

- **Knowledge Management:** It is crucial that the WFP-FFT programme centralizes its information system to benefit from lessons learned at both national and provincial levels. In this regard, WFP-FFT programme should: 1) streamline the existing flow of information at the field level; 2) enhance the coordination and information sharing between offices; 3) coordinate national and provincial pilot plans.

- **Communications Strategy:** Advocacy is a key aspect of the FFT programme to make people understand the long-term benefits of the programme, beyond the food benefits. As such, WFP Afghanistan needs to provide official and public interlocutors with relevant and comprehensive information to help them understand the strategy, missions, quantitative, and actual qualitative outcomes of the WFP-FFT programme specifically. Providing a clear communications paper to all interested parties would ensure increased clarity and transparency for the FFT programme. In parallel, we recommend developing a full communications strategy with local communities about the duration of the programme, its goals and the process of beneficiary selection are important to avoid triggering a sense of entitlement to food for participation in trainings among national participants.

- **Training Center Selection:** It is essential to design a typology of training centers that have been working with WFP on the food-for-training programme. It is recommended that WFP should launch 5 to 8 pilot partnerships with the best training centers in 2011 to unify the WFP-FFT programme approach by: 1) Increasing the quality, quantity, and diversity of the food rations; 2) Enhancing the pedagogic content of the training. In the meantime, it is important to keep working with the large majority of the training centers that can only provide participants with food rations and basic skills. The WFP-FFT programme could progressively enhance their capacity by providing them with a common *curriculum* (mix of basic technical and literacy skills + portfolio of 3 to 4 main professional skills). Lastly, it is crucial to progressively decrease the number of the lowest quality training centers.

- **Food Ration Delivery:** Food ration quality is one of WFP's processes that are beyond the control of the Country Office; however, it would be extremely useful to examine the feasibility of increasing the quality and diversity of food rations. It is also crucial to increase the average food ration quantity. At the same time that both quality and quantity of food are increased, the frequency and duration of the food delivery should also be extended.

- **Training Activities:** It is a priority to phase out of TT training activities, as these centers do not target priority population groups (socio-economically disadvantaged people, unskilled and uneducated women, etc.) and as the current oil distribution represents an insignificant incentive to most trainees. Another recommendation is to narrow down vocational training activity portfolio to 2 or 3 technical activities, teaching the same ones nationwide, rather than doing a bit of everything everywhere. In this regard, a last actionable recommendation is to merge vocational and functional literacy training components to increase women's capacity and economic well-being.

- **Training Design:** It is crucial to homogenize and standardize a common training *curricula* (for FL and VT, as we suggest to phase out of TT courses) so that: 1) a potential employer knows exactly what is behind a one-year FFT functional literacy training or a nine-month tailoring course; 2) a worthwhile training certification process can be set up. The research team also recommends that the provision of training materials be included in the FFT distribution list to

training centers. A special budget and delivery of raw materials and equipment should be included as part of a standard package to all the pilot projects.

- **Market Linkages:** The FFT programme could link its activities with employers in order to increase the productivity of small businesses, the level of skills of employees, and the overall positive impact on the community. Correlatively, it would be useful to: 1) increase the duration of training to strengthen market linkage activities, and have a longer job placement and follow-up period after the end of the training; 2) provide trainees who graduated with a professional kit (tailoring, carpentry, kitchen gardening, etc.) to help them overcome the gap between the training class and the workplace environment.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** It is essential for WFP to increase the number of field monitors in all its area offices. Monitoring and evaluation should be a real strategic asset but there are not enough field coordinators to monitor all the ongoing FFT activities. Given the intensity of the projects and the UN security rules, it leaves very little time to supervise each project and develop a more qualitative and in-depth analysis. However, it is still possible to outsource M&E field operations while improving implementing partners' skills, methodologies, and tools. In the meantime, to help in the selection of the M&E partner or third-party, it is crucial to streamline contractors' activity.

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Acronyms

AKF - Aga Khan Foundation
AKDN - Aga Khan Development Network
AREU - Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
COPAC - Country Office Project Approval Committee
CSO - Central Statistics Office
CSOs - Civil Society Organizations
CTG - CTG Global
DED - Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst
EC - European Community
FFT - Food-For-Training
FL - Functional Literacy (Training)
GTZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HH - Household
IDP - Internally Displaced Person
IOM - International Organization for Migration
IP - Implementing Partner (Training Center or M&E Contractor)
MEW - Ministry of Energy and Water of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
MoA - Ministry of Agriculture
MoE - Ministry of Education
MoEc - Ministry of Economy
MoF - Ministry of Finance
MoLSAMD - Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoWA - Ministry of Women Affairs
MRRD - Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
NESP - National Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014
NLAP - National Literacy Action Plan
NRVA - National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSDP - National Skills Development Programme
NSP - National Solidarity Programme
PAC - Project Approval Committee
PRRO - Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations
SME(s) – Small and Medium Enterprise(s)
SHG - Self-Help Group
TT - Teacher Training
UN - United Nations
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC - United Nationals Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID - United States Agency for International Development
VT - Vocational Training
WB - World Bank
WFP - World Food Programme

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1. Introduction

"'It's all to do with the training: you can do a lot if you're properly trained".

Queen Elizabeth II

1.1. Background

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO)

WFP has implemented a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) in Afghanistan the midst of a complex humanitarian situation influenced by the convergence of security, socio-political and economic challenges. These have affected household livelihood systems, rendered community market structures increasingly volatile, and constrained institutional responses and the development of core infrastructure. Most of public schools were either closed down or operating on a very limited scale, targeting only boys. Girls were progressively banned from public education during the 90's leading to highest levels of women illiteracy in the world. Hunger and malnutrition are widespread: 7.3 million people (31%) in a total population of 26 million are considered food-insecure; with another 5.4 million (23%) at risk and vulnerable to food insecurity, according to data obtained from the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) data from 2007/2008.

In response to this situation, WFP in Afghanistan has implemented several cycles of Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations. PRRO 10427 ended in 2009 and has been followed by new 3-year PRRO 200063 for 2010-2012. Its overall objectives are to support food insecure households with livelihood strategies and education based on a gender sensitive approach and in line with WFP Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013. As such the primary objectives of PRRO 200063 are to:

- *Strategic Objective 1:*

Support conflict- and disaster-affected people, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups, including malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women, whose food security has been adversely affected by shocks,

- *Strategic Objective 2:*

Support and increase the capacities of the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) to prepare for, assess and respond to acute hunger arising from disasters,

- *Strategic Objective 3:*

Support the re-establishment of the livelihoods of communities and families affected by shocks, including through basic education and basic skills training for girls and women,

- *Strategic Objective 4:*

Improve the success of tuberculosis treatment,

- *Strategic Objective 5:*

Develop local food security systems and the capacity to predict and reduce hunger.

This three-year commitment is based on core relief, recovery, and capacity-development components. The recovery component of the PRRO includes programmes such as Food for assets, Food for education and Food for training. WFP specifically aims to provide incentives through Food for Training (FFT) programmes to increase households' human capital and communities' productive capital and self-sufficiency. The Programme also aims at encouraging trainers to work in remote areas through the provision of food incentives during the training period, in order to increase access to female teachers and to encourage girls' education.

Food for Training (FFT)

FFT is an intervention in which food insecure beneficiaries are given a food ration in exchange for their participation in an activity designed to impart knowledge or skills that can generate income. The food is provided in the form of a dry take-home ration, and is used to compensate for the time spent in training and the opportunity cost of other economic activities foregone. They may be used to provide small business skills (literacy, numeracy), technical skills (carpentry, mechanics, sewing/tailoring, plumbing), or life skills for new arrivals to urban settings (e.g., small animal husbandry, microagriculture, health, nutrition, water and sanitation skills). FFT takes longer to plan and implement than targeted household distribution, so it is appropriate for chronic food insecurity.

Food For Training support is aligned with the Government of Afghanistan National Skills Development Programme (NSDP). The NSDP compliments the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2010-2014 and the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) 2010-2014, guiding frameworks that aim to enhance literacy courses for adults. The NESP has prioritized teachers' training and has earmarked resources to open Teacher Training Centers at district level to increase the number of teachers, especially women, in rural areas.

FFT Methodology

The programme is being targeted to food-insecure districts with high rates of female illiteracy. The targeting methodology has been fine-tuned through a consultation process with national and local authorities, including representatives from the relevant line ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Ministry of Women's Affairs). Vocational training and literacy training activities have been designed to target at least 60% women for participations, including support to specific vulnerable groups such as widows, female-headed households, disabled people and unemployed youth. Support for teacher training has been set to a target of 70% women, with priority given to participants in accelerated courses in rural areas.

WFP partners with government, non-government and the private sector in implementing FFT activities which aim at supporting short-term technical/vocational training courses that impart specific life skills including functional literacy. Through these partnerships WFP has provided food assistance to centers that offer Vocational Skills Training and Functional Literacy activities, including literacy and numeracy courses, life skills training, handicraft, food production as well as trade skills. The support targets participants in districts where 24% of the population is food insecure (as per the NRVA), aiming specifically at 60 % women's participation (in particular vulnerable adolescent girls, widows, female headed households as well as disabled persons attending the training).

Monitoring and Evaluation

WFP Afghanistan has planned a systematic analysis of changes – positive or negative, intended or not – in people's lives as brought about by FFT activities on livelihoods of participants and their communities. This report is the first comprehensive review of FFT in Afghanistan and focuses, for feasibility and methodological purposes, on 2009 participants only. WFP Afghanistan staff will use the information provided here to better adapt PRRO and FFT to the current needs and context.

Picture 1: Field interviews in Nangarhar province

1.2. Project Description

The main objective of the review mission is to monitor FFT activities by determining not only the quantitative outputs but also the actual social and economic outcomes of the programme, to capture the sustainability and efficiency of the training provided through the FFT programme. To this aim, the study focuses not only on quantitative data (*percentage of trainees who found a job, average salary, etc.*) but also on **qualitative** data *(through a mix of comprehensive perception survey, description of long-term individual outcomes, long-term collective impact assessment, and contextual anthropological analysis)*. Two broad categories of activities have thus been confirmed as part of the initial scope of work. These are:

- To provide evidence and rationale for the impact of all sub-activities of WFP FFT assistance on the livelihoods of supported participants;

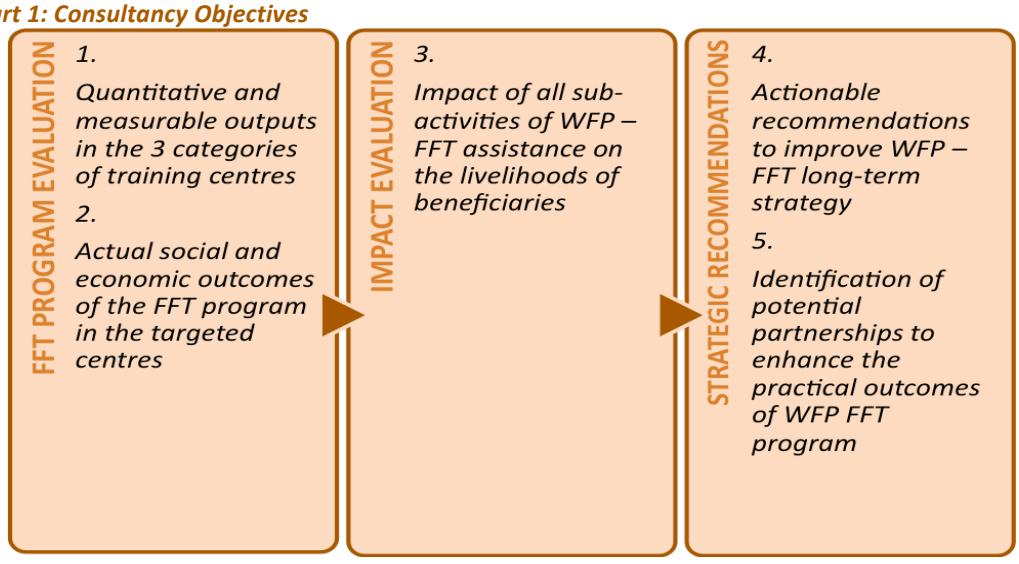
- To critically look at the potential linkages and partnerships with government, WFP cooperating partners, targeted communities and participants, that could enhance the practical outputs of WFP FFT programmes;

Therefore, based on the preliminary discussions with the WFP staff and the information gathered throughout the fieldwork by the Review Team, this report provides WFP with:

a. A matrix of relevant quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor the effectiveness and sustainability of the vocational, literacy and ToT training programmes.
b. Actionable recommendations to tailor its strategy and implementing projects to the actual needs of its participants in all the provinces where the WFP operates its FFT programme.
c. Potential sustainable partnerships between FFT programme and other partners (governmental actors, local or international NGOs, etc.).

To draw a better picture of the consultancy purpose, chart 1 below highlights the five major objectives of this project.

Chart 1: Consultancy Objectives



1.3. Research Tools & Fieldwork

1.3.1. Fieldwork

Based on initial discussions with WFP, 5 provinces were selected for the review, providing a geographic spread in the Central, Eastern, Northern and Western regions of the country. As illustrated in the map below, the 5 provinces are Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan and Herat. In each province, 2 to 4 districts were selected to provide an overview of FFT activities in three distinct areas and to allow for a greater representativeness of the sample. These areas include:

- "**Central**" districts, where the administrative and economic provincial capital is located;
- "**Peripheral**" districts, immediately surrounding the central district and provincial capital;
- "**Remote**" districts, separated from "central districts" by at least one administrative district.

The fieldwork was divided in 3 phases during the month of July 2010 with the following breakdown:

- **Week 1**: Nangarhar
- **Week 2**: Badakhshan and Herat
- **Week 3**: Balkh and Bamyan

The only province not visited by the project management staff is the province of Badakhshan, scheduled for week 2, but unreachable by internationals due to the cancellation of all flights during the week of the Kabul conference. However, local teams of consultants and interviewers ensured a successful data collection process. All other provinces were visited and evaluated directly by all project staff, international and national alike.

In each city or community, the team of researchers requested a list of contacts for each training center, along with a list of trainees. Based on these contacts and lists, and the additional support of WFP and training center staff, our staff randomly selected respondents. On the qualitative side, researchers met with the WFP staff and other partners and stakeholders: DoE, DoLSAMD, DoWA, UNHCR, UNICEF, as well as local and international NGOs, among others.

The training centers for this survey cover the 45 training sites detailed in Table 1. The number of training centers was chosen in accordance with the criteria set by the WFP in the ToR, notably of: 30 vocational training centers, 10 functional literacy centers and 5 teacher training centers. Certain centers were changed from the first list either due to an inactivity of the centers in 2010 or to the lack of security. As such, 2 centers in Balkh and 2 centers in Bamyan were replaced.

Chart 2: Map of Surveyed Provinces

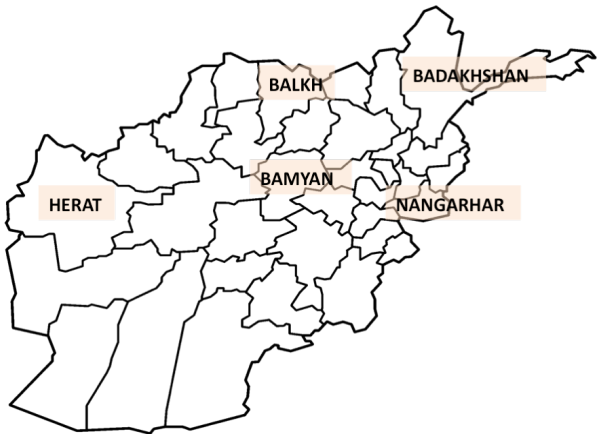


Table 1. List of sampled training centers

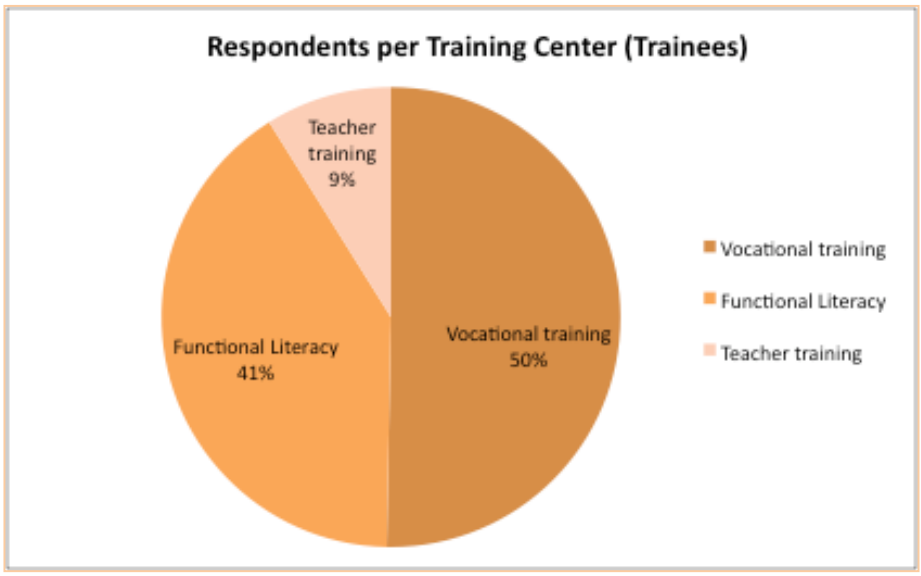
Number	Province	District	Training	Implementing Partners
1 / 5	Badakhshan	Fayzabad	TT	TTI
2 / 5	Balkh	Mazar-I Sharif	TT	DoE
3 / 5	Bamyan	Bamyan	TT	DoE
4 / 5	Herat	Herat	TT	TTI
5 / 5	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	TT	DoE
1 / 30	Badakhshan	Shuhada	VT	DoWA
2 / 30	Badakhshan	Shuhada	VT	Afghan Aid
3 / 30	Badakhshan	Argo	VT	Afghan Aid
4 / 30	Badakhshan	Argo	VT	DoWA
5 / 30	Badakhshan	Fayzabad	VT	CU
6 / 30	Badakhshan	Fayzabad	VT	AWCR
7 / 30	Badakhshan	Fayzabad	VT	MSDO
8 / 30	Badakhshan	Fayzabad	VT	DoWA
9 / 30	Balkh	Mazar-I Sharif	VT	AAB
10 / 30	Balkh	Balkh	VT	AAB
11 / 30	Balkh	Dihdadi	VT	AAB
12 / 30	Balkh	Dawlatabad	VT	LSA
13 / 30	Bamyan	Bamyan	VT	AWBC
14 / 30	Bamyan	Bamyan	VT	AWBC
15 / 30	Bamyan	Bamyan	VT	AWBC
16 / 30	Herat	Injil	VT	DoLSA
17 / 30	Herat	Injil	VT	DoWA
18 / 30	Herat	Herat	VT	EZA
19 / 30	Herat	Herat	VT	EZA
20 / 30	Herat	Herat	VT	HWC
21 / 30	Herat	Herat	VT	WSSF
22 / 30	Herat	Herat	VT	ARCS
23 / 30	Herat	Herat	VT	WHO
24 / 30	Nangarhar	Surkh Road	VT	NCRA
25 / 30	Nangarhar	Surkh Road	VT	ADVS
26 / 30	Nangarhar	Surkh Road	VT	RSSAO
27 / 30	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	VT	AWSBDA
28 / 30	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	VT	NHPA
29 / 30	Nangarhar	Behsud	VT	ADVS
30 / 30	Nangarhar	Behsud	VT	NHPA
1 / 10	Badakhshan	Argo	FL	DoWA
2 / 10	Badakhshan	Fayzabad	FL	DoE
3 / 10	Balkh	Balkh	FL	DoE
4 / 10	Balkh	Mazar-I Sharif	FL	SC-UK
5 / 10	Bamyan	Bamyan	FL	DoE
6 / 10	Bamyan	Shibar	FL	DoE
7 / 10	Herat	Injil	FL	CDC
8 / 10	Herat	Herat	FL	HWC
9 / 10	Nangarhar	Behsud	FL	DoE
10 / 10	Nangarhar	Surkh Road	FL	DoE

As agreed in the original proposal, a team of international and national consultants (team leaders and interviewers) led qualitative and quantitative interviews in all 5 provinces to meet the following target number of interviews and training centers:

- Target number of training centers: 45 training centers

Based on criteria set in the WFP request for proposal, the 45 training centers were selected with the following quota in mind: 30 vocational training centers, 10 functional literacy centers and 5 teacher training centers. However, it is worth mentioning that the respective percentages of training centers (66% of VT, 22% of FL, and 12%) do not exactly match the respective percentages of interviewees from these different FFT activities: as shown in the chart below, there were, on average, more trainees in Functional Literacy Training Centers than in Vocational Training Centers (66% of VT with 50% of the interviewees only but 22% of FL with more than 40% of the respondents).

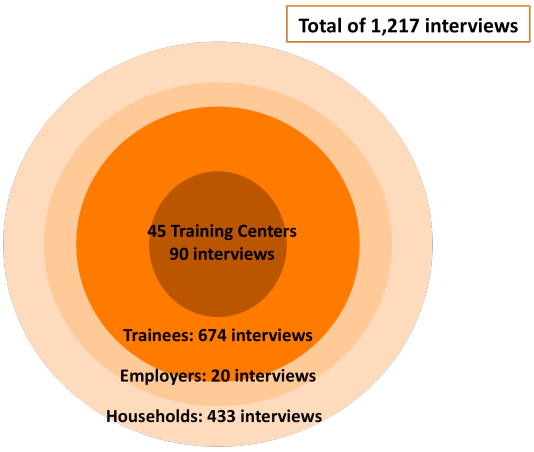
Chart 3: Percentage of Respondents per Training Center



- Target quantitative interviews: 1,217 interviews

The breakdown of interviews follows the initial plan of 27 interviews per training center: 2 interviews with training center staff, 15 with trainees and 10 with households. As much as possible, the review team also tried to interview participants' employers (20, in Nangarhar and Herat only) to get a professional and external feedback on trainees' performances.

Chart 4: Target Population Breakdown



	Nangarhar	Herat	Badakhshan	Balkh	Bamyan	*Total*
Participants (trainees)	148	166	164	105	91	*674*
Training center staff	20	22	22	14	12	*90*
Households	101	112	111	70	59	*453*
Total by province	269	300	297	189	162	*1,217*
Grand total	**1,217 interviews in 45 training centers (average of 27 interviews per center)**					

- **Survey instruments**

The survey consists of both quantitative and qualitative fieldwork methodology.

Four close-ended questionnaires were designed to target each specific category of respondents: Trainees, training center staff, employers and community households.

The primary questionnaire – the Trainees questionnaire – contains 62 questions built around the following sets of questions:

- Interviewee personal profile
  - Social and demographic characteristics,
  - Economic characteristics,
- Training activity description,
- Self-assessment of training and assistance received,
- Perceptions of the training programme.

The second questionnaire – the Training center staff questionnaire – integrates additional elements for the assessment, such as staff feedback on the assistance provided by WFP and the methods of cooperation, as well as an assessment of trainees' profile and feedback from participants.

The third and fourth questionnaires – namely the Employer and Household questionnaires – focus on the impact of the training programmes and WFP's assistance on potential employers and households in the communities of each training center. An initial but interesting finding is the lack of employers of trainees. This shows that the training skills provided are not met with a stable source of revenue or employment; most women staying either at home and working, or not working at all.

In addition to the quantitative questionnaire, a qualitative exercise was led amongst the beneficiary group. At least 2 case studies were implemented in each province based on a case study guideline.

- **Case studies*:***

In each location, 2 case studies were led for a total of 6 case studies overall. These case studies were selected from both male and female participants, and based on their representativeness of beneficiary profiles in each center. The questionnaire followed a guideline of open-ended questions structured around the same themes as the quantitative questionnaire. However, it also integrated view points from other members of the beneficiary's immediate environment. These case studies lasted on average 1 hour.

1.3.2. Quantitative Methodology

The research team consisted of 2 international consultants, 2 national consultants from Kabul, and 14 interviewers, selected on the basis of their thorough experience leading surveys and their detailed knowledge of the local area.

During the fieldwork phase, the responsibilities were divided as such:

- 2 national consultants each led one team of 7 interviewers – 4 men and 3 women,
  - One team covered the provinces of Nangarhar and Herat
  - The second team covered the provinces of Badakhshan, Balkh and Bamyan
- All interviewers led on average 7 quantitative interviews per day of fieldwork,
- The 2 national consultants ensured the monitoring and supervision of the fieldwork,
- The 2 national consultants also carried out qualitative interviews (case studies and key informant interviews) in each community.

The female interviewers randomly selected women from the group of female participants, while the male interviewers randomly selected male participants within the community.

Table 2 below shows the focus on female respondents by the review team with overall 745 interviews with women (61.2%) and 472 interviews with men (38.8%). This is particularly true of the beneficiary interviews, of which 88.7% were led with women; the larger percentage of male interviews having been led with employers and households to capture the community perception. These numbers are in line with the WFP project design and required gender focus.

Table 2. Respondent gender breakdown by interview category

Gender	Trainees	Trainers	Employers	Households	Total
Male	76	36	11	349	472
Female	598	54	9	84	745
Male	11.3%	40.0%	55.0%	80.6%	38.8%
Female	88.7%	60.0%	45.0%	19.4%	61.2%
Total	674	90	20	433	1217

1.3.3. Qualitative Methodology

Aside from the initial meetings and in-depth interviews conducted with WFP staff in each location, international consultants led other key informant interviews with key stakeholders in each province. These **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** aimed at gathering additional qualitative data on the locations surveyed, collecting information on the participants, and assessing the perception of stakeholders on the WFP FFT activities.

The KII process was designed to allow the team to meet with a range of stakeholders relevant to the topic of the assignment: starting with WFP interlocutors to governmental representatives, relevant UN/international organization representatives, and implementing partner and NGO staff. These interviews will be led using a semi-open questionnaire and will last about 1 hour each.

Key informant interviews were led with the following stakeholders:

- *With the government*: MoE, MoLSAMD, MoWA and their provincial representatives
- *With UN agencies*: UNHCR and UNICEF
- *With NGOs / Implementing partner staff*: Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Afghan Red Crescent Society (ACRS), and Help

In addition, the research team conducted a total of 10 **household case studies** with men and women (2 per area), although female respondents represented 7 of these 10 case studies to allow for a specific gender focus in our qualitative approach as well.

The case studies followed a geographic, social, and economic selection criteria to provide WFP with a large spectrum of anthropological and sociological information. Household case studies consisted of in-depth interviews of the beneficiary as well as other members of his or her household (with pictures, direct observations, and open questions). This approach was used to provide a level of qualitative description to complement the data collected through the large-scale quantitative survey on one end, and the information obtained through focus groups or the key informant interviews on the other.

1.3.4. Limitations & Constraints

The training centers initially selected for the purpose of this programme review were all active in 2009 – but their activities were not all funded for the 2010 annual cycle. As such, some of the centers the research team was planning to visit were no longer active at the time of the research, and many of the participants no longer lived in the immediate surrounding area and could not be located.

The main constraint for our survey team was to locate participants and implement a fully random sampling methodology. Given the fact that beneficiary lists were only available in area offices (and not at WFP Country Office), and that they did not contain contact information such as telephone numbers, the review team was dependant on the guidance of each implementing partner. This introduces an inevitable bias in the selection of respondents for the survey. It also highlights another inherent limit: the control over beneficiary numbers, names, and contact information is in the hands of implementing partners, with a notable distance between WFP and its participants, with limits for monitoring and review purposes.

In addition, in the provinces of Bamyan and Herat, the review team's district selection had to be reviewed to take into account security and logistical considerations. Districts were modified based on prior consultation with WFP staff. This was the case for a center in Yakawlang, 7 hours distance (one way) from the provincial capital, rendering it impossible to finalize activities in the given timeframe.

1.4. Structure of the Report

This report is divided into five chapters. The introduction provides background and contextual information, as well as the methodological approach that was used to gather qualitative information and quantitative data. The second chapter draws a picture of the socio-economic profile of the surveyed population, with a focus on participants and a comparison with community households. This profiling follows four steps: a demographic, social and economic profile, with a specific analysis of food insecurity, needs and coping strategies. The third chapter then provides a detailed overview of training activities and of the process, from start (selection of centers and participants) to finish (outputs and outcomes). This section includes the feedback received from participants and communities on the assistance provided by WFP and implementing partners. The fourth chapter provides recommendations for WFP staff as well as a matrix of indicators that can be used systematically by WFP staff to assess the progress of FFT activities in years to come. The final section is an annex with case studies from the qualitative fieldwork and beneficiary interviews.

Picture 2: Female Interviewer in Mazar-e-Sharif

2. Respondents' Socio-Economic Profile

2.1. Demographic profile

The WFP FFT training objectives are to provide livelihoods and educational opportunities for populations living in food-insecure areas, focusing on a target of 60 to 70% of female participants. At the field level, and as previously illustrated in table 2, this target figure was exceeded in 2009, as 88.7% of all participants interviewed were women. The research team had to redesign its interview plan to allocate more resources to female interviewers.

Household composition

The relationship of participants to the head of household is an important demographic indicator to take into consideration when reviewing the impact of training activities on household human and productive capitals. In the sample of 675 household participants surveyed, most respondents reported being the sons or daughters of the head of household – i.e. not the direct decision maker in the family. Only 7.6% of all interviews were led with participants who are the heads of their households, as illustrated in table 3. This highlights the fact that training activities are not seen as a major or potential source of income generation and self-sufficiency, but as a social asset (for women to learn to read, write and count) and as a coping strategy for poor families needing basic assistance such as food distribution to provide for their families.

Of the female participants, only 5% are the heads of their household – indicating a low representativeness of female-headed households, which highlights one of two problems:

- Either a bias in the selection process designed by the WFP and its implementing partners; or
- A lack of interest or time for female heads of households to participate in training activities.

Given that one of the main focuses of the programme is to target female participants and vulnerable groups (widows or female-headed households), the programme design needs to be better adapted to their expectations and needs. **If the heads of households are not better integrated in the programme, it will prevent any sustainable impact of FFT activities**, leading instead to populations viewing it mainly as a food assistance programme.

Table 3. Household composition and respondent position (beneficiary interviews)

Position within household	**Gender of interviewee**		
	Male	Female	Total
I am the Head of Household	**27.6%**	**5.0%**	**7.6%**
Husband / Wife	**1.3%**	**45.3%**	**40.4%**
Son / Daughter	**67.1%**	**41.6%**	**44.5%**
Son-in-Law / Daughter-in-Law	1.3%	4.2%	3.8%
Grandchild	2.6%	0.5%	0.7%
Nephew / Niece	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Father-in-Law / Mother-in-Law	0.0%	1.3%	1.2%
Grandfather / Grandmother	0.0%	1.3%	1.2%
Brother / Sister	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
Other relatives	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

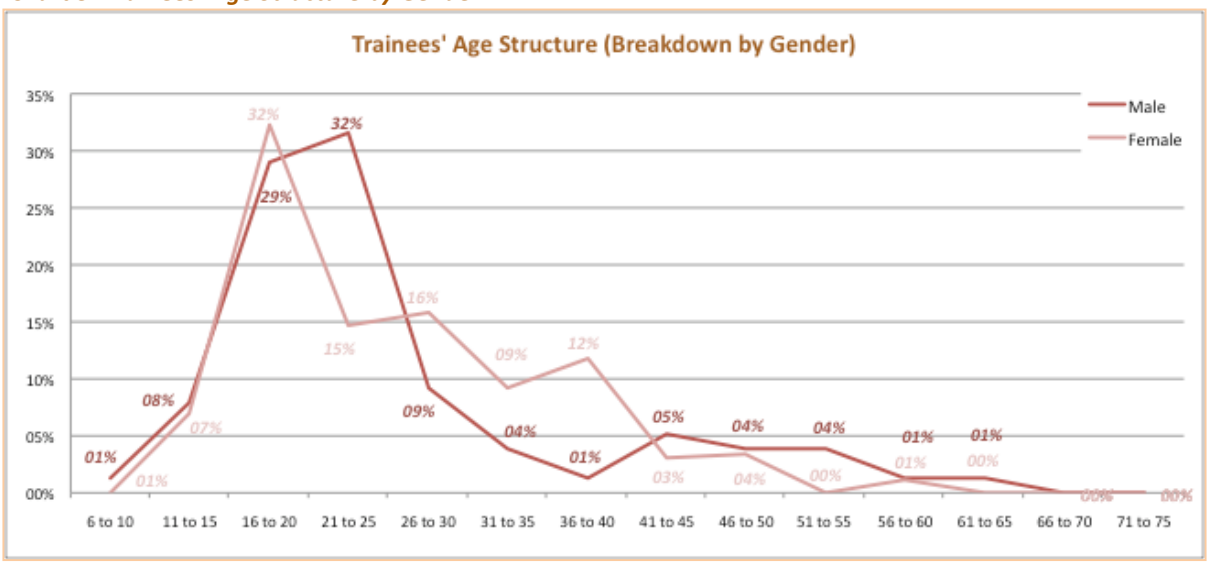
Age structure and Gender

Turning to participants' age composition, it is important to look beyond quantitative indicators to more qualitative indicators by understanding how age should be used differently to guide the selection process of trainees. Participants, within a certain age frame, are most likely to use skills learned during the training to increase human and productive capital. If trainee age structures mirror the natural composition of the household and communities' age structures, it will not help in providing a 'push' to the segments of the population (young adults) who can bring about change.

One of the main criteria of the WFP FFT programme is to target participants between the ages of 16 to 40. The data collected reveals that 82.9% of participants fall within this target age category. However, looking passed this quantitative indicator, some important findings need to be highlighted.

The first realization is that male participants are concentrated in age categories that are more in line with learning potentials and income generating activities. For instance, 31.6% of men interviewed are aged between 21 to 25 years of age; compared to only 14.7% of women in that category. On the other hand, 11.9% of women participants fall in the 36 to 40 year old age bracket, as opposed to only 1.3% of men. Graph 1 below illustrates the age curves for the surveyed participants.

Chart 5. Trainees' Age Structure by Gender



One of the main findings here is that the selection process for women should pay more attention to enrolling female participants that fall within the 16 to 30 age bracket, an age at which women can more easily learn to literacy, numeracy and income generation skills. Below or beyond that age, it is more likely that the participants interviewed will not be able to use the skills taught to impact and reverse household poverty trends and external shocks.

A second finding, still on the selection process, is to ensure that implementing partners understand that children under the age of 16 should not be enrolled in training activities meant for adult members of the household. 7.1% of all trainees fall in the 11 to 15 years of age bracket, with an almost equal representation of male and female participants. However, *"teenage girls are sometimes not allowed to go to school alone, but they can attend training courses with other household members. The fact that they get food may therefore be seen as a pulling factor, especially in case of very young children" (WFP Senior Staff, Kabul).*

Similarly, only a small percentage of cases should be limited to trainees above 50 years of age, allowing for programme objectives and resources to be materialized among an economically active and young population with a higher learning and implementation potential.

Table 4 illustrates the age structure of trainees surveyed, with a breakdown by gender, and a comparison with the immediate communities' age structure. The comparison shows that trainees' age breakdown follows closely the age structure of households. However, this should not be the case as the FFT programme should be targeting specific age groups (16 to 40) rather than following the natural pattern. A more targeted and subjective selection process is therefore needed at the field level.

Table 4. Age structure of trainees and households

Age Structure	Trainees	Male	Female	Households
6 to 10	0.6%	1.3%	0.5%	0.0%
11 to 15	7.1%	7.9%	7.0%	3.5%
16 to 20	31.9%	28.9%	32.3%	22.9%
21 to 25	16.6%	31.6%	14.7%	12.9%
26 to 30	15.1%	9.2%	15.9%	12.9%
31 to 35	8.6%	3.9%	9.2%	8.5%
36 to 40	10.7%	1.3%	11.9%	10.2%
41 to 45	3.4%	5.3%	3.2%	7.9%
46 to 50	3.6%	3.9%	3.5%	6.2%
51 to 55	0.7%	3.9%	0.3%	4.6%
56 to 60	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	4.6%
61 to 65	0.4%	1.3%	0.3%	2.1%
66 to 70	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
71 to 75	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

2.2. Social profile

Education and literacy rates

When asked to indicate their educational level, the majority of trainees (54.7%) declared they were illiterate – this rate is significantly higher rate that the illiteracy rate of other households in the community (40.9%) or of employers (35%). So, relatively speaking and as a group, FFT participants are less educated and more illiterate than the average population in their communities.

However, these numbers hide two important realities – and two distinct groups of participants:

- *Group 1: FL and VT:* On the one side are functional literacy (FL) and vocational training (VT) participants, who are for the vast majority illiterate, their illiteracy being a criterion for their selection in FL and VT courses.
- *Group 2: TT:* On the other hand are teachers, who make up most of the high school and university graduate population of trainees, and who participate in teacher training (TT) activities.

Participants in Group 1 show higher illiteracy rates (49.8% for FL and 66.4% for VT). They are women and men who are on average less educated than their neighbors but who have had the opportunity to gain literacy skills through non formal schooling and training. As a result of basic literacy and numeracy training courses followed in 2009, 34.5% of the FL participants now indicate being literate. On the other hand, the VT participants show a higher rate of illiteracy and a lack of informal literacy training. The rate of success of basic literacy training (elementary reading and writing) in the centers visited should be tested in future programmes on VT participants as well – combining functional literacy and vocational training lessons.

Participants in Group 2 display a level of literacy beyond that of other households in their community as these trainers are selected among the most literate. In this group, 93.3% declare having a university degree. It is worth noting that 5% of the teachers interviewed reported not being literate, which shows teacher training should in some instances (for specific technical skills) include a functional literacy component to ensure that all trainers who benefit from the World Food Programme's support can show a minimum required literacy level.

The next two tables illustrate the information provided so far on respondents' educational profiles.

Table 5 below maps the existing disparity when discussing average literacy levels among the different groups of respondents – trainees, trainers, employers and households. As detailed above, the core group of trainees needs to be distinguished between FL/VT trainees and TT trainees, to provide a nuanced perspective on their educational and literacy levels.

Table 6 provides this breakdown and allows us to compare the beneficiary population to that of other community members – trainers, employers and households. As a result, we see that WFP programmes allow to capture the extremes in terms of educational profiles – benefiting both the least educated and the most educated in specific communities, helping to address both the supply and the demand side of training courses. However, this does not provide a guarantee on the quality of literacy. Although 93.3% of TT participants claim having a university degree, it would be worthwhile to check on competencies and provide a refresher course even for them.

Table 5. Education level of respondents – trainees, trainers, employers and households

Education level	Trainees	Trainers	Employers	Households	Total
Illiterate (no schooling)	54.7%	12.2%	35.0%	40.9%	46.3%
Literate (no schooling)	17.2%	6.7%	0.0%	4.4%	11.6%
Primary school	8.9%	7.8%	15.0%	11.8%	9.9%
Secondary school	4.6%	12.2%	20.0%	13.6%	8.6%
High school	5.5%	30.0%	20.0%	23.3%	13.9%
Vocational school	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.4%
University	8.9%	31.1%	10.0%	5.1%	9.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6. Education level of participants by type of training activity – FL, VT, and TT

What type of food-for-training activity did you follow in 2009?						
FFT Activity	Illiterate	Literate	Primary school	Secondary school	University	Total
FL	49.8%	34.5%	7.3%	8.4%	0.0%	100.0%
VT	66.4%	7.7%	11.5%	13.3%	1.2%	100.0%
TT	5.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	93.3%	100.0%
Total	54.2%	17.9%	8.9%	10.1%	8.9%	100.0%

Vulnerable groups

Different indicators were used to determine whether participants belonged to specific vulnerable groups – thus checking whether the WFP FFT assistance was delivered, as initially designed, to the most needy and vulnerable groups within each community. To test this hypothesis, the same set of questions was asked of FFT participants and community members. The numbers of female-headed household, the presence of orphans, of physically disabled persons, of chronically ill persons, and/or of working children were indicators that rated higher for participants than for other households.

If we take as an example **household composition** in trainee families and other household families, the presence of adult men is on average much lower for the trainee families than in other community families. As table 7 shows, all averages are similar except for one – the average number of male adults per family. The only explanation for a drastic difference on the male adult presence can be linked to higher poverty levels in beneficiary families, confirming the fact that FFT participants are selected according to poverty and household structure criteria.

Table 7. Household composition of trainee vs. community households

Household Structure	Trainees	Households
Male Adults (over 18)	1.6	2.1
Female Adults (over 18)	2.1	2
Male Children (under 18)	2.3	2.4
Female Children (under 18)	2.4	2.3
Total	8.4	8.8

In addition, trainee and household families were asked separately to verify whether they belonged to any of the following categories of population according to the following set of vulnerability indicators:

- Female-headed household,
- Single parent household,
- Household with orphans,
- Household with physically disabled, mentally ill, or chronically ill person and
- Extremely poor family of 5 dependants or more with no livelihoods strategy,
- Household with working children.

Systematically, on all but one of the above vulnerability indicators ("single parent household"), the percentages were higher for trainee families than other community families (as shown in table 8).

Table 8. Vulnerable groups within beneficiary populations – in relative terms to the surrounding community

Does one or more of these descriptions fit with the description of your household?	Trainees		Households	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely poor family	364	54.0%	159	36.7%
Household with physically disabled person / children	133	19.7%	64	14.8%
Household with chronically ill person / children	124	18.4%	55	12.7%
Household with mentally ill person / children	120	17.8%	52	12.0%
Responsible for orphans	92	13.6%	27	6.2%
Single female / female headed household	60	8.9%	14	3.2%
Single parent household	49	7.3%	36	8.3%
Household with children working during day or night	20	3.0%	8	1.8%

2.3. Economic profile

FFT beneficiary households present, on average, a higher number of working family members (both adults and children) than their neighbors in the communities visited for this research.

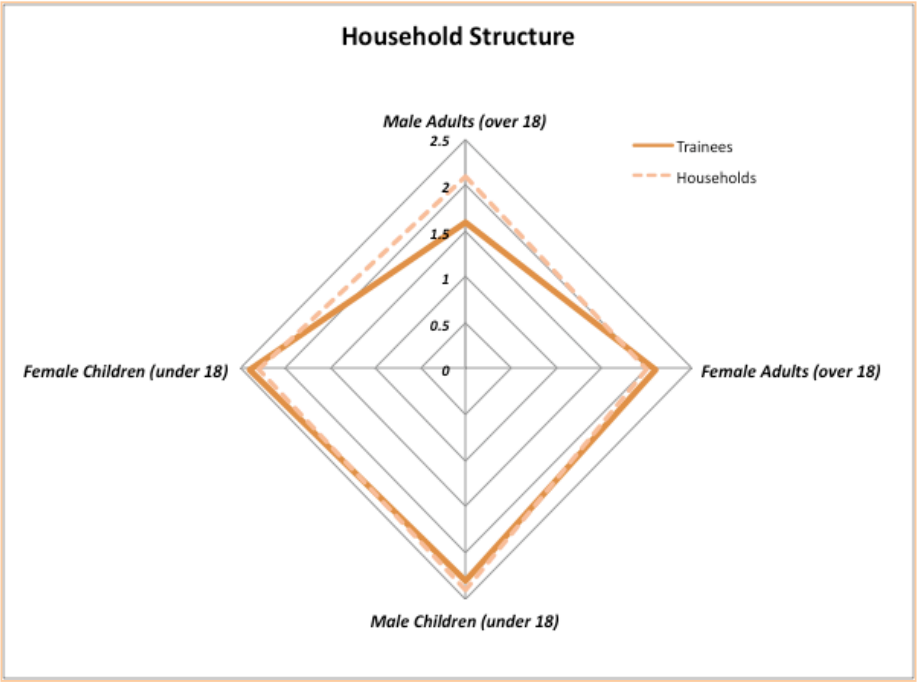
- On average over a sample of 675 households, beneficiary families are composed of 8.4 family members – 3.7 adults and 4.7 children – of which 1.7 are working and earning an income – 1.5 adults and 0.2 children. The economically active percentage overall is of 20.2%, with 40.5% of working adults and 4.3% of working children. If we look at community and non-beneficiary households, the picture is slightly different.
- Of an average household of 8.8 family members – 4.1 adults and 4.7 children – 1.5 is economically active, and they are all adults. As a result, 36.6% of adults in community households work, with a notable lack of a trend in child labor.
- Lastly, it is interesting to note, as shown in table 9 as well as the chart below, that there is a deficit of male adults in beneficiary households (1.6 per household, to be compared with 2.1 in other households). It shows that *"there are a significant proportion of widows in our training, as they are a very vulnerable population in our community" (Ehsan, Trainer, Mazar-e-Sharif).*

These numbers are an important poverty indicator: they show a greater dependency, in FFT beneficiary families, on work and a greater tendency to send women and children to work. The numbers of adult women who work are drastically different: 14.3% for FFT beneficiary families as opposed to 5% for community households. The numbers representing child labor are at odds as well: 4% of child labor in FFT beneficiary families (of which one half are young girls), while there are no reported cases of child labor in community households. These numbers are illustrated in table 9.

Table 9. Share of economically active household members, FFT trainees vs. community households

Household Composition & Income	Household Structure		Household Income Contributors	
Household Breakdown	**Trainees**	**Households**	**Trainees**	**Households**
Male Adults (over 18)	1.6	2.1	1.2	1.4
Female Adults (over 18)	2.1	2	0.3	0.1
Male Children (under 18)	2.3	2.4	0.1	0
Female Children (under 18)	2.4	2.3	0.1	0
Total	8.4	8.8	1.7	1.5

Chart 6: Household Structure (Breakdown per Gender and Age)



Excerpt from an in-depth interview led with a VT training center in Bamyan

"Most female participants are widows in this center. They often lost their husband and have to find a job for their family. But these women are very poor and most of them have only basic skills. That's why this training can really help them. On the short-run, we give them the food; on the longer run, we teach them how to work and earn a living. Only a few of them have the opportunity to find a good job but it is really rewarding for us when it happens".

The main sources of income of FFT beneficiary households are centered on low-skilled and daily labor jobs whereas other community households are increasingly involved in more technical and specialized sectors. As shown in Table 10, the breakdown in income of each sub-group highlights certain key differences.

- FFT beneficiary households get their income from 2 major sectors: daily labor in the construction sector (32.9%), and in the agricultural sector: 15.9% in production, 9.8% in daily labor and 1.8% in livestock.
- On the other hand, other community members are relatively more active in technical and specialized sector, notably in the handicrafts (29.1%), education (9.4%) and carpet weaving (5%) sectors.
- In both cases, non-employment related income sources such as remittances or rent are represented in minimal numbers.

Table 10. Sources of income of FFT beneficiary and other community households – A comparative review

	Trainees		Households	
Sources of Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Construction (Daily Labor)	222	32.9%	115	17.1%
Handicrafts (sewing. embroidery. etc.)	130	19.3%	196	29.1%
Agriculture (production and sale)	107	15.9%	88	13.1%
Retail trade. shop keeping	80	11.9%	75	11.1%
Agriculture (Daily Labor)	66	9.8%	40	5.9%
Governmental job. Administration	28	4.2%	31	4.6%
Military Service	26	3.9%	13	1.9%
Transportation (Taxi. buses)	23	3.4%	36	5.3%
Car repair	17	2.5%	20	3.0%
Livestock (trade)	15	2.2%	12	1.8%
Education (Teachers. Trainers)	13	1.9%	63	9.4%
Carpet Weaving	13	1.9%	34	5.0%
Health (Doctors. Nurses)	13	1.9%	10	1.5%
Household Workers (Khalas)	13	1.9%	12	1.8%
International NGO or Agency (UN)	13	1.9%	19	2.8%
Livestock (Daily Labor)	12	1.8%	4	0.6%
Remittances	12	1.8%	4	0.6%
Construction (Skilled Labor)	10	1.5%	15	2.2%
Restaurant/Hotel	8	1.2%	1	0.2%
Furniture / Carpentry	7	1.0%	4	0.6%
Welding / Metal	5	0.7%	4	0.6%
Electricity. Plumbing	5	0.7%	4	0.6%
Bakery	4	0.6%	3	0.5%
Dry Cleaning	3	0.5%	0	0.0%
Rental income	3	0.5%	1	0.2%
Mining (Lapis Azuli)	2	0.3%	0	0.0%
Religious Leader	2	0.3%	3	0.5%
Butcher	1	0.2%	3	0.5%
Afghan NGO	1	0.2%	1	0.2%
Respondents	674		433	

The income generating activity structure explains, in great part, the difference in income levels between FFT beneficiary and other households. The average and monthly income level of FFT beneficiary households is 6544 Afs (USD 130) compared to 9172 Afs (USD 183) reported by other community households. This represents an average 37.4% more income for community households. The graph below clearly shows the gaps between beneficiary and non-beneficiary households when it comes to monthly incomes:

- *Less than 5000 Afs / USD 100 per month:* Almost half (44.7%) of FFT beneficiary households earn on average less than 5000 Afghanis per month (that is less than USD 100) and 59.1% are unemployed.

- *More than 20000 Afs / USD 400 per month:* Only 3.6% FFT beneficiary households have a monthly income of USD 400 or more; a rate that is more than twice that population for community households: 9.6% benefit on average of an income exceeding USD 400/month.

Chart 7: Household Income (Breakdown per respondents)

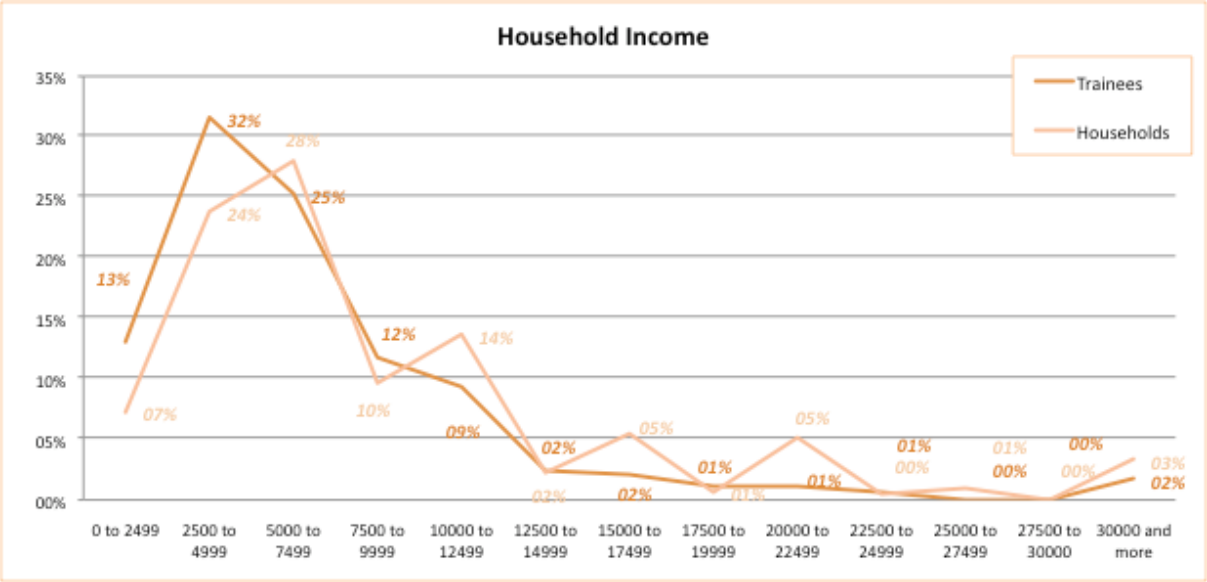


Table 11 below summarizes the income distribution of FFT beneficiary / trainee households and other community households surveyed. Regarding the methodology, the household figures do not include community households who had previously been involved in training programmes to ensure that the two groups (trainees and households) are mutually exclusive.

Table 11. Sources of income of FFT beneficiary and other community households – A comparative review

Income	Trainees		Households	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0 to 2499	88	13.1%	24	7.2%
2500 to 4999	213	31.6%	79	23.8%
5000 to 7499	170	25.2%	93	28.0%
7500 to 9999	79	11.7%	32	9.6%
10000 to 12499	63	9.3%	45	13.6%
12500 to 14999	16	2.4%	7	2.1%
15000 to 17499	14	2.1%	18	5.4%
17500 to 19999	7	1.0%	2	0.6%
20000 to 22499	7	1.0%	17	5.1%
22500 to 24999	4	0.6%	1	0.3%
25000 to 27499	2	0.3%	3	0.9%
27500 to 30000	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30000 and more	11	1.6%	11	3.3%
Total	674	100.0%	332	100.0%

When asked to state the portion of their monthly income spent on their food needs, **80.4% reported using their income on food expenses, as compared to 66.7% of households in the community.** This highlights the poverty status of FFT participants and the more basic revenue and expenditure structures of their households, as men, women and children work almost exclusively to provide for the food needs of their families.

Picture 3: Carpet Weaving Activity in Mazar-e-Sharif

2.4. External shocks and coping strategies

Socio-economic shocks

Two-thirds of FFT participants – and of community households alike – reported having suffered from social problems in the last two years. Both groups reported the same problems, in similar numbers and proportions. The main social problems highlighted by trainees were, in order of importance:

- A notable increase in household size (13.9%),
- Eviction from their housing or pressures to leave their housing (10.4%),
- Loss of their local support network (8.2%),
- Insecurity and conflict (5.3%),
- Loss of land (5%) and
- Fear of eviction (3.6%).

Fewer numbers – only 15.4% of FFT households and 18.9% of other community households – reported suffering from specific economic problems in the last two years. Of these the major economic problems were:

- An unusually high level of inflation (74.2% of FFT participants),
- Loss of income generating resource (18.4%),
- Reduced salary of a household member (16.5%), and
- Loss of employment of a household member (12%).

The main coping strategies, in times of dire socio-economic shocks, are to take loans from relatives and friends, buy food on credit from local shops and compromise on food quantity and quality. These coping strategies are used simultaneously and are interdependent. Half of the respondents rely on:

- Loans from relatives and friends as their first coping strategy (52.1%),
- Credit from local shops (49.6%)
- Reducing both quantity and quality of food (47%).

The remaining coping strategies are to send children to work (6.2%), send women to work (5.2%) and migrate to a new location in Afghanistan to find work and better opportunities (5.2%), thus confirming that women and children are two groups 'at risk' in poor families.

Only 4.5% of respondents claim not having any coping strategies – they all have ways to work out their own solutions, independently from outside assistance, and based on their social networks of relatives and friends which are their core support and survival system.

Food insecurity

When asked specifically about problems meeting their food needs, only 19.9% of FFT participants reported never having experienced food insecurity in the past year, as opposed to 29.1% of other community households. The remaining population was spread out over a spectrum of food difficulties – from rare occurrences of lack of food (1 or 2 times a year), to frequent and common occurrences, as detailed in table 11 below.

Table 12. Food insecurity

How often in the last year did your household have problems meeting its food needs?	Trainees		Households	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Never	134	19.9%	126	29.1%
Rarely (1 to 2 times)	142	21.1%	103	23.8%
Sometimes (3 to 6 times)	191	28.3%	115	26.6%
Often (a few times every month)	127	18.8%	57	13.2%
Mostly (this happens a lot)	80	11.9%	32	7.4%

To solve their food problems, the main coping strategies used by FFT participants and households alike are, in order of importance to:

- Buy less preferred or less expensive foods
- Purchase food on credit from local shops
- Borrow food and rely on help from relatives and friends
- Limit portion sizes at meal time
- Diminish the food consumption of adults to have more food for children
- Reduce the number of meals eaten in a day

Table 13. Coping strategies to respond to food insecurity

Has your household had to rely on the following strategies?	Trainees		Households	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Buy less preferred and less expensive foods	387	71.7%	227	74.2%
Purchase food on credit	340	63.0%	240	78.4%
Borrow food / rely on relative or friends	314	58.1%	200	65.4%
Limit portion size at mealtimes	208	38.5%	109	35.6%
Restrict consumption of adults	72	13.3%	25	8.2%
Reduce number of meals eaten in a day	69	12.8%	74	24.2%
Skip entire day(s) without eating	41	7.6%	16	3.7%
Harvest immature crops	29	5.4%	8	2.6%
Feed working members at the expense of other	21	3.9%	10	3.3%
Consume seed stock held for next season	17	3.1%	8	2.6%
Send household members to eat elsewhere	13	2.4%	5	1.6%
Send household members to beg	6	1.1%	1	0.3%
Respondents	540		306	

2.5. Concluding remarks on FFT beneficiary profiles

It is worthwhile and instructive to not only look at FFT beneficiary demographic, social and economic profiles, but to compare these along with data collected from households living in the immediate community of the trainees and training sites.

We will intend here to underline the main lessons learned from this profiling exercise:

- The gender target of the FFT programme has been reached with 88.7% of female respondents, all of whom selected randomly from a pool of participants from 45 training centers.

- The demographic profiling indicates a gap in the participation of heads of households in the FFT training programme. Of the female participants, only 5% are the heads of their household, indicating a low representativeness of female-headed households and an opportunity to better integrate heads of households in future programme designs.

- The age distribution focuses mainly on the 16 to 40 years of age (82.9% of respondents); however, the age bracket criterion could be better implemented and further refined. First, men's age distribution falls in bracket that better targets higher learning capacities, hinting at the need to revise the age bracket for women as well. Second, implementing partners have been selecting at times children under the age of 16 to participate in training activities meant for adult members of the household.

- FFT programmes capture the extremes in terms of educational profiles – benefiting both the least educated (in FL and VT activities) and the most educated (in TT activities). The success of the literacy rates of FL (50.2%) vs. VT (33.6%) participants points to the need and opportunity to combine both activities in future programming to enable VT participants to bridge the literacy gap.

- Vulnerable groups within each community are well captured in the FFT activities according to a set of vulnerability indicators used to compare trainees and household profiles. As an example, there are more households with medically ill persons or children (whether physically disabled, chronically ill or mentally ill) among trainee households (55.9%) than among other community households (39.5%).

- The economic profile of FFT beneficiary households highlights a higher number of working family members, and a greater tendency to send women and children to work. Child labor is a trend seen among beneficiary families (4.3% of children are put to work), whereas this trend was not reported among other community households. As for women, numbers defer significantly with 14.3% of FFT beneficiary households relying on female employment, as opposed to 5% in other community households.

- The main sources of income of FFT participants are centered on low-skilled and daily labor jobs whereas other community households are increasingly involved in more technical and specialized sectors. FFT participants are in greater numbers involved in 2 major sectors: as day laborers in the construction sector (32.9%), and in the agricultural sector: 15.9% working in production, 9.8% as day laborers and 1.8% in livestock.

- The average and monthly income level of FFT beneficiary households is 6,544 Afs (USD 130) compared to 9,172 Afs (USD 183) reported by other community households. This represents an average 37.4% more income for community households. Furthermore, FFT beneficiary households spend 80.4% of their income on food vs. 66.7% for other households.

- Trainees and households face the same levels of socio-economic shocks based on indicators taken from the past 2 years. Both groups reported the same problems, in similar numbers and proportions, with the most significant social problems being increases in household size and eviction from their housing, and the most significant economic problems being unusually high inflation rates and loss of income generating resources.

- Food insecurity is a problem for 80.1% of FFT participants and 70.9% of other community households. Coping strategies range from a decrease in preferred goods or in the quality of goods, to receiving food and help from relatives and friends, and purchasing food on credit from local shops.

Picture 4: Tailoring in Mazar-e-Sharif

3. Food-For-Training Programme Review

To better identify the actual outcomes of the WFP-FFT programme, this chapter will shed light on the major characteristics of the 45 surveyed training centers by interviewing FFT participants but also FFT teachers as well as participants' employers. The sections below will follow the different steps of the FFT programme, from the selection of a training center to the follow-up of former participants.

3.1. Training Centre Profile

General Overview of Implementing Partners

As shown in the previous chapter, most FFT programme participants suffer from significant social and economic deficits, compared with average households. This double bind between an unprivileged socio-economic environment and poor educational profiles clearly hampers target population's capacity to develop sustainable income generating activities and enter the local workforce. Therefore, finding an adequate balance between short-term emergency (Food) and long-term recovery (Training) has been defined as the main goal of WFP-FFT activities. In this regard, **most of the interviewed managers and trainers insisted on the social dimension of their work and the role their institutions could play in the local development**: *"We have a role to play. Not only in this village but also at the district level: if neighbors, cousins, relatives spread the word, they will show that poor people and especially women can change something in their life. It gives hope to everybody" (Farida, Training Manager, Jalalabad).*

Excerpt from an interview led with UNHCR staff, Herat

"Food-for-Training is a great solution for women, especially in returnee camps and townships: in these areas we do consider the most vulnerable (UNHCR criteria of EVIs – Extremely vulnerable individuals). Women cannot do intense work like the men in these areas. That is why it makes sense to enroll men in food/cash for work programmes, and women in food for training programmes. It is the best way for them to have an in-kind source of income, while the men can make $3/day elsewhere".

The surveyed centers offered very diverse profiles and the number of participants could vary a great deal, with an average number of 243 trainees a year per center but extremes of 15 to 1946. However, to draw a representative picture of the actual training environment, 90 managers and trainers (from 45 training centers) were interviewed during the course of the survey: all of them had a manager, trainer, or teaching assistant position at their respective training center in 2009 and almost four-fifth of them are still working in the same training center. As shown in the table below, the training centre environment has changed a lot and highly *"depends on donors, like WFP, as our budget is really small and people we train very poor" (Hamida, Teacher, Argo).* When asked if the training centre had changed since 2009, half of the respondents answered positively and insisted in priority on quantitative increases (more participants, more training courses, more staff) whereas only a minority (8 to 16%) said that their activity had slowed down.

Table 14: Training centers' internal evolutions since 2009

Training Center's Evolutions since 2009?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Has the training center changed since 2009?	50	55.6%
We increased the number of participants	35	70.0%
We increased the number of training courses	34	68.0%
We hired additional staff	27	54.0%
We changed our curriculum	13	26.0%
We decreased the number of participants	8	16.0%
We had to fire some staff members	5	10.0%
We decreased the number of training courses	4	8.0%

Training Centre Selection

The selection of implementing partners is a key success factors for the FFT programme. The selection procedure is rather heavy and often takes *"more than 6 months, and sometimes more" (WFP-FFT Staff, Jalalabad).* Training centers request assistance from WFP with a proposal through an open bidding process that takes into account a broad set of parameters: accountability, experience, infrastructures, gender component, social context (returnee camps) and geographical location. The need for assistance is confirmed when the target area is identified as a food insecure area (based on NRVA data): basically, WFP staff selects the organization based on established criteria and observable evidence from field visit. The field team assesses each center's activities and passes on a positive or negative judgment to the project approval committee (PAC) at the Area Office. Based on this assessment, the PAC looks into the feasibility, ability to deliver the food, registration certificates, and sends a final report to the country office. The selected implementing partner is then designated in consultation with the Government and local counterparts (district governors, *shura* elders). Since January 2009, the WFP Country Office in Kabul is in charge of all final approvals through the Country Office Project approval committee (COPAC).

Finally, considering WFP selection process and security constraints, it is often extremely difficult to:

- Find reliable implementing partners, as **many potential candidates do not really understand WFP's roles and policies** *("they ask for money but we only distribute food", WFP staff, Mazar-e-Sharif)* and are not able to write adequate proposals (even if WFP staff is supposed to help them write better proposals);

- Monitor and evaluate the actual capacity of the selected partners to perform their task: in Herat, Nangarhar, and to a lesser extent Balkh, **the security is getting worse every week and prevents WFP staff not only from monitoring the quality of the services** provided by the training centers, but also from assessing the feasibility of new partnerships.

In these regards, it is clear that the security environment undermines WFP's ability to find and adequately monitor local training sites: out of the 45 surveyed training centers, the review team identified a few examples of "garage institutes", with unskilled trainers and "ghost trainees", where food rations were diverted by the staff and resell on the bazaar. It is of course inacceptable but, in practice, due to security constraints (see 3.8 and 3.9 below), it is impossible either to be more demanding with partnering institutes or to accurately monitor and evaluate them.

Excerpt from an interview led with WFP staff, Jalalabad

"In 2009, it was difficult for us at the Jalalabad office to select IPs – many proposals were incomplete, did not have a budget or any resources, we had to reject them and we had a surplus of 50% of the food items not distributed. Generally, a large majority of projects are submitted through UNHCR and focus on IDPs and returnees. UNHCR is putting a lot of money in 5 locations and we work in close collaboration with them. With UNHCR, for example, we are working on beekeeping – 1 box to each beneficiary, alongside with training and machines. In 2009, we used to work with 14 implementing partners. In 2010, there was only 1 new NGO, the rest being old ones. "

Picture 5: Carpet Weaving Center in Mazar City

3.2. Beneficiary Selection Process

The survey showed that the FFT programme was extremely popular among the local population as many people wish to attend them. Asked if they had decided to attend the training by themselves, a large majority said that they had decided on their own (72.1%) or that their family had convinced them to attend (25.7%), which shows that **the decision to enroll is often an active choice made by people who understand the positive impact** (food and additional skills) of the programme. Such a participatory phenomenon is of course an important factor of success for both trainees and training programme.

Table 15: Training Attendance (Decision Making)

Did you decide on your own to attend this food-for-training programme?		
	Frequency	Percentage
It was my own decision	486	72.1%
My family decided for me	173	25.7%
I was selected by the training center staff	8	1.2%
My employer decided for me	4	0.6%
I was selected by the local leaders / community leader	1	0.1%
Other	2	0.3%
Total	674	100.0%

When it comes to beneficiary selection, the incapacity to meet the large demand for training is thus ranked as a major problem by both managers and trainers, as shown in the table below: *"The demand is at least two or three times higher than what we can actually offer. But we cannot satisfy everybody" (Kamran, Manager, Herat).*

Table 16: Beneficiary Selection Issues (Managers and Trainers)

Selection Process Problems	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Too many people	51	56.7%
People only interested in the food	11	12.2%
Not enough people fitting the WFP criteria	4	4.4%
Difficult to find enough women	3	3.3%

On the other hand, there is a great heterogeneity of centers' methodologies and answers. Most trainers said that they had no specific guidelines, as it was not necessary: *"We know the communities where we are operating. As such, we know the poor and we also know that shura leaders have to be part of the process. At the bottom line, we can define a good list" (Kamran, Manager, Herat).* In this context, "good list" means that **trainers unanimously consider that their lists are reliable *in practice*, in a local environment where the opinion of *shura* leaders and a certain degree of favoritism have to be taken into account**. Asked if anyone, aside from themselves, in their household had already attended other food programmes, 19.1% of the interviewed participants answered positively and 13.8% said that their relatives had attended FFT programmes, which corroborates the idea that many training centers select the relatives or family members of participants already enrolled in the programme: *"Of course, we often select people from the same family. It is also a way to bring food to the same poor household throughout the years" (Hamidullah, Literacy Center, Faizabad).*

Table 17: Training Attendance (Household Participants)

Has anyone in your household participated in the following food programmes?		
Programmes	Frequency	Percentage
None	545	80.9%
Food-For-Training Programmes	93	13.8%
Relief Food Distribution	78	11.6%
Food-For-Work Programmes	69	10.2%
School Feeding	3	0.4%
Institutional Feeding (hospital, orphanage)	3	0.4%

The table below clearly underlines this **absence of explicit guidelines**: when asked how the centers used to select FFT participants, 40.9% of trainers and 66.7% of trainees said that local *shuras* were in charge of this selection; 33.2% and, respectively, 45.6% said that the selection was first and foremost based on an interview process with participants' household; and 28.8% and 22.2% said that a key criterion was participants' personal history within the training center. However, *"sometimes, they use one of these selection criteria, sometimes a few of them. Personally, I was selected because I am a close friend of the manager and I am also very poor" (Farid, Trainee, Herat).*

Table 18: Beneficiary Selection Process

Selection Process	Trainers	Trainees
The local / shura leader selected participants	40.9%	66.7%
Based on interviews with households	33.2%	45.6%
Based on people already enrolled in the training center	28.8%	22.2%
Based on personal contacts at the training center	17.2%	6.7%
Based on individual interviews	13.2%	31.1%
Based on a list of people from the same training center	9.1%	6.7%
I do not know	4.4%	1.1%
Respondents	90	674

Correlatively, when asked which specific criteria they applied during the selection process (through the *shura* or during the interviews), trainers insisted on 5 major key aspects: 1) poverty level, 2) gender, 3) unemployment, 4) age, and 5) personal motivation. These criteria draw a **very clear picture of the participants (at least for vocational and literacy training activities), as already shown in the previous chapter: poor women with almost no skills and a very low income.**

Table 19: Beneficiary Selection Criteria (Trainers)

Selection Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty Level	67	74.4%
Gender	60	66.7%
Unemployment	54	60.0%
Age	40	44.4%
Motivation	36	40.0%
Availability	20	22.2%
Household Size	20	22.2%
Skills Level	8	8.9%
Education Level	8	8.9%
Disabled	5	5.6%
Sickness	4	4.4%
Distance between house and center	2	2.2%

Symmetrically, more than four-fifth of the interviewed trainees tended to consider that the most vulnerable only were selected for the FFT programme, as shown in the table below. Respondents who said that only the most unprivileged had benefitted from the FFT programme, were then asked to tell the main reason why they had been considered as particularly vulnerable: once again the economic criterion is crucial (82.2%). Overall, economic or health vulnerability were quoted by nine-tenth of the interviewees as the main reason of their selection. From this point of view, even if the selection process may suffer from punctual or practical inaccuracies, **the current beneficiary selection clearly succeeds in targeting some of the poorest among the poor.**

Table 20: Beneficiary Selection Criteria (Trainees)

Were the most vulnerable selected for this training programme?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I think so	546	81.0%
No, I don't think so	86	12.8%
I don't know	42	6.2%
Total	674	100.0%
If yes, why were you selected?		
	Frequency	Percentage
My family is very poor	449	82.2%
Lack of skills or education in my family	37	6.8%
I know someone at the training center	21	3.8%
I asked to be included	18	3.3%
Through relatives enrolled in the programme	12	2.2%
Health problems in my family	8	1.5%
I know someone at the government	1	0.2%
Total	546	100.0%

Lastly, when asked if their employee(s) was (were) from the poorest or most vulnerable families in the area, the 20 employers that were interviewed unanimously answered positively and three-fourth said that it helped poor women empowerment. It strengthens the idea that FFT implementing partners are actually perceived as "training-for-the-poor". Based on our quantitative and qualitative assessment, it is also clearly suggests that the surveyed centers do focus on the most vulnerable segments of the population.

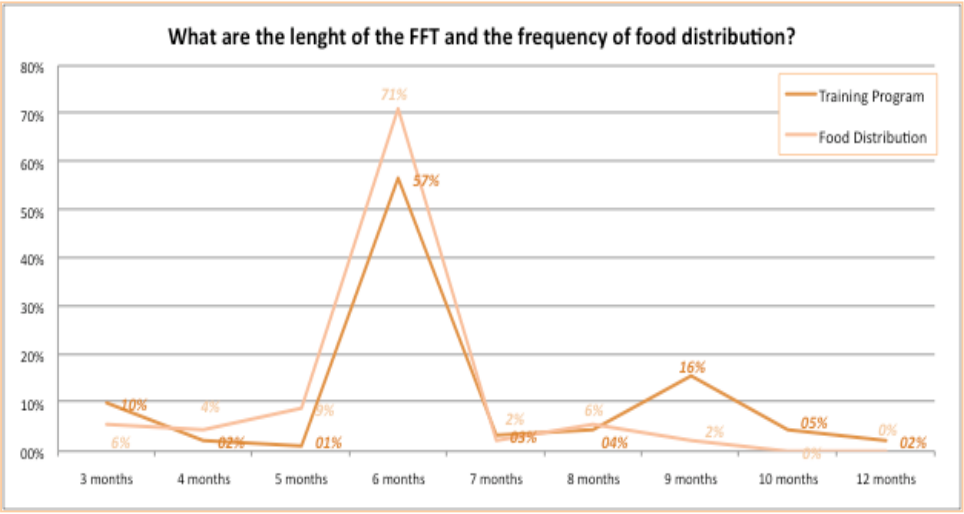
It of course raises the question of the accuracy of the FFT programme. Providing training to the poorest among the poor and the most unprivileged categories is of course in line with WFP missions; however it may not be the best way to sustain the local socio-economic environment on the long-run, as a vast majority of the selected participants have no initial skills, no income to create a small business and develop what they learn, no access to the local labor market and almost no access to the local economic market to sell their products. Once again, **there seems to be a contradiction between humanitarian objectives (help the poor) and early recovery (training and capacity building): in practice, the FFT activities do contribute to relieve the poorest people but it is not sure that training activities target the right people to be efficient on the longer-run.**

3.3. Training Duration and Frequency

If we now focus on the average length of the FFT activities within the surveyed centers, it is interesting to note that the typical training duration is 6 months (56.7%, see table below) or, to a lesser extent, 9 months (15.6%). In the meantime, WFP generally agrees on 6-month food distribution contracts with training centers (71.1%). **In this regard, there is often a temporal gap between the two core activities (training and food) of the FFT programme, which has a negative impact on trainees' attendance:** *"We have many drop-outs when the food distribution stops. Husbands of fathers do not let women go to the centers anymore because there is nothing in compensation" (Akram, Manager, Herat).*

Table 21 and Chart 8: Length of the FFT programme (training and food components)

What is the average length of the FFT programme at your centre? *(90 interviewees)*		
Months	Training Programme	Food Distribution
3	10.0%	5.6%
4	2.2%	4.4%
5	1.1%	8.9%
6	56.7%	71.1%
7	3.3%	2.2%
8	4.4%	5.6%
9	15.6%	2.2%
10	4.4%	0%
12	2.2%	0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%



To corroborate this assumption, it is worth noticing the reasons why trainees missed sessions or dropped out of the course. If almost three-fourth of the surveyed trainees (73.6%) reported having attended every session, 18.8% admitted having missed a few sessions and 7.6% dropped out the courses (see table below). Interestingly, when asked to name the main reasons why they had missed a few sessions or dropped out of the course, the last two subgroups barely mentioned personal reasons (lack of time, problems at home, distance from home, etc.) and insisted in priority on the end of food distribution (72.5%) and food ration quantitative insufficiency (43.8%). Once again, it shows that food distribution is a strong incentive for trainees to attend training courses: *"If I do not receive food anymore, it is better for me to help my family especially during the harvest season"*

(Rodaba, Trainee, Bamyan). Finally, the role played by food rations is confirmed by both trainees and trainers in another section of the quantitative survey: when asked to name the main reason why participants attend the training courses, one-fifth of the trainees and one-third of the trainers answered that food distribution was the main incentive.

Table 22: Attendance and Dropouts

Did you attend the training sessions regularly?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I attended every session	496	73,6%
I missed a few sessions	127	18,8%
I dropped out of the course	51	7,6%
Total	674	100,0%
Why did not you finish the training course? *(178 respondents)*		
	Frequency	Percentage
They stopped providing us with food rations	129	72,5%
The food rations were not enough	78	43,8%
I was not learning anything new	45	25,3%
I was not satisfied with the training center classes or staff	32	18,0%
I did not have enough time	24	13,5%
I had responsibilities to attend at home	24	13,5%
I found a job	12	6,7%
My family asked me to stop going to the training center	4	2,3%
The area was too remote / too far from home	4	2,3%
They did not provide a training certificate	3	1,7%

Another interesting finding is that the food distribution calendar is not always adapted to people's immediate needs – especially when participants are returnees who recently migrated from Iran (Herat province) or Pakistan (Nangarhar): *"When people return from another country and cross the border, they are very vulnerable and have almost nothing. They do need emergency assistance. As such, if we start training them, we have to provide them with food rations immediately and we cannot wait for the next food distribution" (Director, NGO, Herat).* **Although WFP needs a one-size-fits-all-approach, there needs to be some degree of flexibility and adaptability to the profile and needs of participants.** It is also necessary to develop a model that does not constraint implementing partners' activity design and contributes to make it easier: for instance, it may be practically efficient to set up a flexible emergency food ration system, in each WFP provincial office, exclusively devoted to new participants or recent returnees.

Following the same logic, trainees were asked how often they had received food rations during their training: if 61.1% of respondents reported having received food rations "every 2 months", a significant percentage (27.2%) said that they used to receive food rations "every 3 months or more" only. The frequency mostly depends on WFP logistic requirements: *"As per WFP guidance, food needs to be distributed more frequently, as the food insecure poor are being targeted who need this food for their daily survival. Letting them wait for a quarter of a year is not acceptable plus it increases the risk that food is being sold" (WFP Senior Staff, Kabul).* If we now break down these data, it is interesting to see that:

- As shown in the table below, if Teacher Training participants tend to receive food every three months (or more), which is in line with the WFP guidelines, almost one-third of other trainees (35% of FL and 30% of VT respondents) said that they were provided with food rations every three months or more, which falls outside of the intended programme design.

In this regard, the review team has have heard from several centers that 6 months worth of food is sometimes distributed at once, halfway through the training, which means that some participants do not show up for the last 3 months as they do not receive any incentive to do so;

Table 23: Food Ration Distribution Frequency (per Training Activities)

How often were you given food rations at your training?				
Frequency	FL	VT	TT	Total
Every week	0.0%	0.3%	1.8%	0.3%
Every month	1.5%	3.2%	19.3%	3.9%
Every 2 months	63.9%	67.0%	12.2%	61.1%
Every 3+ months	34.6%	29.5%	66.7%	34.8%
Respondents	275	339	60	100.0%

- There are significant differences between provinces, as highlighted in the following table: if we only take into account vocational and literacy training centers, Badakhshan seems to be much more in line with WFP guidelines as only 10.4% of FT and VT trainees said that they used to receive their food ration every three months or more, whereas Bamyan (43.8%), Balkh (43.6%), and Nangarhar (34.3%) still lag behind. Of course the security situation in Badakhshan tends to be better than in other provinces (especially Nangarhar and Herat), but it is not the only explanation and there might be a more structural problem with local implementing partners. It is also indicative of a lack of reliable performance monitoring and evaluation at the field level.

Table 24: Food Ration Training Frequency (per provinces)

How often were you given food rations at your training? *(Vocational and Literacy Training only)*						
Frequency	Nangarhar	Herat	Badakhshan	Bamyan	Balkh	Total
Every week	0,0%	0,0%	0,7%	0,0%	0,0%	0,2%
Every month	6,0%	3,3%	0,7%	0,0%	1,3%	2,5%
Every 2 months	59,7%	68,9%	88,2%	56,2%	55,1%	66,8%
Every 3+ months	34,3%	27,8%	10,4%	43,8%	43,6%	30,6%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

We will come back on these specific points in chapter four, to highlight the fact that, in both qualitative and quantitative interviews, two of the main issues raised by participants and implementing partners were the timeliness and duration of the food assistance.

3.4. Review of Training Activities

If we now consider **the overall satisfaction rate of participants, 90.0% said that the training they had received was either "very good" or "good".** Of course, one should consider these exceptional results with a pinch of salt, as there is both a cultural and an acquiescence bias in the question.

1) As most trainees are thankful to the training centers (and the FFT programme) for the training and food they have received, they tended to indicate a positive connotation;

2) Culturally, Afghan people – and especially the poor – are reluctant to directly criticize the support provided by international organizations, even if they are not fully satisfied with it.

The results are comparable when we benchmark vocational, literacy and teacher training centers, even if the rate falls to "only" 80.7% with Teacher Training Participants: *"As they are more educated, they are generally more demanding and then more easily disappointed" (Besmullah, Trainer, Mazar-e-Sharif).* Correlatively, in-depth interviews we had with trainees and trainers favor the idea that the poorer people are, the more easily satisfied they are with the assistance they receive: *"This programme is really good. Of course, it could be improved but, at least, I learnt new skills. They also gave me some wheat and I can help my husband and feed my family for a few days with it. It is better than nothing" (Shirin, Trainee, Bamyan).*

Table 25: Trainees' assessment of the training (breakdown per activity)

How would you rate the training you received as part of the food-for-training programme?					
	Frequency	FL	VT	TT	Total
Very good	338	47.0%	55.3%	33.3%	50.1%
Good	269	47.0%	33.2%	47.4%	39.9%
Average	40	3.0%	6.9%	14.0%	5.9%
Insufficient	16	0.8%	3.4%	3.5%	2.5%
Very poor	11	2.2%	1.2%	1.8%	1.6%
Total	674	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As detailed in the WFP mission statement (see, for instance, *2009 WFP Annual Report*), nutrition, health, and hygiene are essential components of the FFT programme. In this regard, trainers and trainees were asked whether the 2009 FFT programme had also included nutrition, health, *or* hygiene sessions: 90% of the interviewed trainers answered positively, 42.9% of the surveyed trainees said that they had benefited from nutrition sessions, 41.7% from health session, and 57.0% from hygiene sessions. **Furthermore, trainees who had benefited from nutrition, health, and hygiene training were asked if it had benefited their family. The results were quite positive,** as shown in the table below, as 93.6% of health training participants, 95.2% of nutrition training participants, and 96.6% of hygiene-training participants reported that the training had actually been helpful to their family by reducing childhood diseases (diarrhea) and improving household members' health (basic hygiene and nutrition).

It is also worth narrowing down the analysis to the direct social and economic outcomes of the FFT programme at the community and family levels. **When asked to compare the economic situation of their household before and after the FFT programme, more than four-fifth of the trainees answered that the situation was either "much better" than before (6.1%) or "slightly better" (76.0%).** It is also worth mentioning the relatively high percentage (7.0%) of respondents who said that their overall economic situation was (slightly or much) worse: it seems that, in a few cases, high expectations fuel disappointment, as trainees tend to believe that international programmes like the FFT programme should have a visible, dramatic and immediate impact on their daily life.

Table 26: Economic Situation Self-Assessment (Trainees)

How do you compare the overall economic situation of your household with your situation before the food-for-training programme?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Much better	41	6.1%
Slightly better	512	76.0%
Same	74	11.0%
Slightly worse	18	2.7%
Much worse	29	4.3%
Total	674	100.0%

Furthermore, when asked to name the major benefit of the FFT programme for their families, almost half of the interviewed trainees (45.8%) mentioned an indirect outcome – the reduction of food expenditures. It confirms the idea that food rations allowed people to reallocate the money they spend on other food and non-food items: *"Thanks to this programme, I was able to save more money and buy more potato seeds. As the harvest is good, I finally got more money than last year in the bazaar, which is good for my household" (Assadullah, Trainee, Bamyan).*

Table 27: Programme Outcomes at the Household Level

How did your family benefit from this food-for-training programme?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Reduced food expenditures	309	45.8%
Increased the quantity of food consumed	149	22.1%
Improved literacy / education	107	15.9%
Income generating skills acquired	55	8.2%
Improved health of family members	18	2.7%
Increased the quality of food consumed	16	2.4%
Cash from the sale of the food rations	12	1.8%
No benefit	7	1.0%
Other	1	0.1%
Total	674	100.0%

3.5. Review of Food Distribution

The food component of the FFT programme consists of a distribution of four main items: wheat, oil, pulses and iodized salt. Asked what rations they had received during their training, interviewed trainees confirmed the overall efficiency of the food distribution coordinated by the FFT programme (or its implementers). As underlined by the Food coordinator of an international NGO, *"with the WFP it often takes ages to come to an agreement but once the decision is made, they deliver the exact quantity on time and are very professional" (Food Coordinator, International NGO).* The quantitative data gathered during the fieldwork tend to corroborate this idea: for instance, 100% of the 275 functional literacy participants reported having received bags of wheat and 99.1% of the vocational training participants said they had received oil from the FFT implementing partner. More generally, **if we compare, the theoretical food distribution (per training activity) and the actual food items distributed to the interviewed participants, the quantitative results are exceptionally good, with 98.2% of food delivery for FL training centers, 97.1% for VT training centers, and 100% for TT training centers (where trainees are only provided with oil).**

Table 28: Actual Food Ration Distribution (Breakdown per activity)

Food Ration Items	FL	VT	TT
Wheat	100.0%	98.8%	-
Oil	99.6%	99.1%	100.0%
Pulses	99.3%	97.3%	-
Iodized Salt	93.8%	93.2%	-
Actual Ration / Theoretical Ration	*98.2%*	*97.1%*	*100.0%*
Respondents *(674)*	275	339	60

Iodized salt distribution, to a lesser extent, is also satisfactory: 93.8% (FL trainees) and 93.2% (FT trainees). However, considering the gap between salt and the three other items, it is worth noting the significant differences shown in the table below: there are clearly one exceptional case (Shibar district) and four outliers (which all are provincial capitals: Faizabad, Herat, Jalalabad, and Mazar-e-Sharif). More specifically, the data collected in Mazar and Jalalabad showed very low results (60.9% and 66.0%) and would deserve further investigation from the FFT monitoring team.

Table 29: Actual Iodized Salt Distribution (Breakdown per district)

Surveyed Districts	Yes	Total	Delivery Rate
Argo	30	30	100,0%
Balkh	30	30	100,0%
Bamyan	68	68	100,0%
Behsud	43	44	97,7%
Dihdadi	15	15	100,0%
Faizabad	85	104	81,7%
Ghoryan	26	29	89,7%
Herat	55	75	73,3%
Injil	52	60	86,7%
Jalababad	31	47	66,0%
Mazar-e Sharif	28	46	60,9%
Shibar	3	10	30,0%
Shortepa	14	14	100,0%
Shuhada	30	30	100,0%
Surkh Road	57	58	98,3%
Total *(No Answer = 14)*	567	674	85,9%

If the food delivery is quite satisfactory, according to trainees' statements as well as key informant interviews, it is also worth evaluating the average food ration in terms of uses, quality and quantity. From these points of view, there seems to be clear opportunities for improvement, as it seems that the **FFT programme has stayed too much focused on figures and numbers rather than on practical outcomes**:

- **Uses:** A large **majority (95.5%) of interviewed participants said that they used the food rations to feed their household** (in spite of quality or quantity issues, as shown in the following paragraphs). Even if this question suffers from a certain degree of acquiescence bias, such an unanimous result corroborates the idea that FFT participants are among the most vulnerable population segment in their communities, as they do not try to make some profit out of their food rations: *"I have no husband and my sons are unemployed. My family does need these food rations, even if they are still insufficient. Otherwise we would have to beg some food" (Raheela, Trainee, Bamyan).* However, more in-depth discussions with participants allowed us to understand that: 1) it was often **difficult to resell the wheat in the bazaar because of its poor quality**; 2) trainees sometimes had to **redistribute a share of their food ration to local *shuras* or even training managers.** However, it is important to mention that the FFT programme would need to come with a more accurate estimate of the number of participants who *do* sell the food rations received for money on the market, as this information could not really be captured in the quantitative survey. Reference to this trend came up in a number of interviews. In one such interview in the province of Herat, the review team was specifically told that the low quantities and quality of the food provide does not meet household needs. As a result, i**t seems that many women prefer selling the food received and make use of the money to buy food on the local market** (of higher quality) or to respond to other household needs.

Table 30: Food Ration Use

What use did you make of the food?		
	Frequency	Percentage
I used it to feed my family	644	95.5%
I sold all of it for money	17	2.5%
I sold parts of it for money	11	1.6%
I gave it away	2	0.4%
Total	674	100.0%

- **Quantity:** Considering the significant acquiescence bias that influences most participants' answers – as they are most of the time thankful for what they receive and often too poor or vulnerable to ask more than they already have – it is extremely significant to see that "only" 53.9% of the trainees said that the quantity of the food ration was "good" or "very good" (see table and chart below). **When 46.1% of interviewed participants consider that the food rations are not adequate with their daily needs, it clearly raises – in this specific context – the red flag.** Likewise, almost all the key informants we interviewed insisted on the insufficiency of the wheat, pulses, oil, and salt rations: *"The WFP has rules, as all the international organizations. They have no other choice. In practice, however, it does not work and they should be more flexible. For instance, their food rations are way too small and can only contribute, on average, to the very basic needs of a workingman. In value, their food*

contribution amounts to 15 AFA a day! Our practical experience shows that the contribution should amount to 45 AFA a day for the bread-earners and at least 25 AFA a day for each additional dependent" (Director, NGO, Herat). Moreover, **there is a gap between the official and the actual weight of wheat or pulse delivered by the WFP**. Bags are supposed to contain 50kg, on average, but it has been noted that:

- In some cases sellers and producers add stones to the bags to increase their weight;
- Climate and temperature differences along the procurement route (humid or dry weather) often have a negative impact on the final quantity of wheat per bag.

Lastly, the WFP staff in Herat raises an important logistic issue that was also mentioned elsewhere: *"Oil rations are difficult to distribute. We usually give 3.7L trainee/month but we have been receiving contributions from different countries in jerricans of 4L or even of 5L. It is a nightmare logistically. The training centers ended up having to take 4 jerricans and tell groups of 5 women to split that amount amongst each other"*

Table 31: Review of Food Ration Quantity

How would you rate the quantity of the food ration that was provided to you at the training center? *(Daily needs of the Household)*		
	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	153	22.7%
Good	210	31.2%
Average	122	18.1%
Insufficient	129	19.1%
Very poor	60	8.9%
Total	674	100.0%

Excerpt from an interview led with UNHCR staff, Jalalabad

"They also complained on the amount of food. The food ration is not enough for 21 days of a household's life. At the moment, the amount given is sufficient for 13-14 days max. WFP response is "we have this standard package for all of Afghanistan". But we should take into consideration the need to improve the standard package and accept, recognize that the amounts are insufficient, by a large margin. Of course, for the most vulnerable, each drop of assistance helps. But we should think about the objective, rather than the standards, and have an amount that fits with that objective".

- **Quality:** Symmetrically, there also seems to be an issue with the quality of the food rations – especially with wheat. **Asked how they would rate the quality of their food rations, "only" 55.8% of the participants said that it was "very good" or "good".** Once again, based on the review team experience of the food assistance in Afghanistan, these results are significantly low. In Nangarhar and Herat provinces, in-depth interviews with participants highlighted the fact that kernels were often discolored (black point disease or rust diseases, which can lower the quality of the grain by 50%): *"What can I do with such a poor wheat? I cannot feed my family with it! Usually, we go to the bazaar and buy some Pakistani wheat to mix it with the other one. But it is still awful" (Mohammad, Trainee, Nangarhar).* However, based on the interviews we had with WFP staff members, two points must be taken into account:

- There are **significant differences between Badakhshan (86.0% of the interviewees rated the food ration quality as "very good" or "good") and Herat (33.1%)**, while other surveyed provinces' rates are comprised between 50% and 55%[1];

- It seems that the relatively **low quality of 2010 food rations (mostly wheat) was an exception**; on the longer run, the satisfactory rate would probably be better. However, it also means that the WFP still has to make sure that its suppliers or subcontractors respect quality standard commitments.

Table 32: Review of Food Ration Quality

How would you rate the quality of the food ration that was provided to you at the training center?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	89	13.2%
Good	287	42.6%
Average	140	20.8%
Insufficient	70	10.3%
Very poor	88	13.1%
Total	674	100.0%

Excerpt from an interview led in Injil district of Herat province, Ravashan township

"None of us have any salary here; the food is the only help we get. But the problem is that even this help is not of good quality – look at the quality of the wheat, smell and touch it." When our staff touched the wheat they realized that it was dry and not fit for making decent bread, as it would not stick in traditional ovens or it would make for dark, almost black, bread.

Conclusion – Finally, to draw a better picture of the food distribution component, trainers were asked to name its main pros and cons. If we narrow down our analysis to the five most frequent answers in both categories, it is worth noticing that:

- **The most frequently quoted problems were not only quantity (36.7%) and quality (32.2%), but also the limited impact of the FFT (38.9%), inasmuch as *"it is only a band aid on a much larger problem"*** *(Manager, Vocational Training Center, Mazar-e-Sharif)*;

- To a much lesser extent, **7.8% of the respondents also raised the question of an increasing dependency**, as *"many families have no other strategy and would not even be able to find an alternative way anymore" (Country Director, NGO, Kabul)*, which of course raises the question of the political and social role played by the FFT at the local level;

- When it comes to the **benefits** of food rations, most trainers highlight: 1) a positive impact on **attendance (76.7%)** and **enrollment rates of both men and women (45.6% and 44.4%)**, 2) a **decrease in short-term hunger and illnesses (respectively 51.1% and 22.2% of the interviewed trainers).** These categories of impact are the two pillars of the FFT strategy, which clearly shows that the FFT programme can have very positive and direct outcomes on the targeted populations.

[1] More precisely: Badakhshan (86.0% of people said that the food was either "very good" or "good"), Balkh (54.7%), Bamyan (51.7%), Nangarhar (51.0%), and Herat (33.1%).

Table 33: Assessment of challenges and benefits of Food Rations

What are the problems with rations?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Temporary help only	35	38.9%
Insufficient quantity of food per person	33	36.7%
Insufficient quality of food	29	32.2%
Trainees become dependent on food distribution	7	7.8%
Not a timely delivery of food rations	7	7.8%
What are the benefits of food rations?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Improved attendance levels at training centers	69	76.7%
Decrease in short-term hunger	46	51.1%
Increase in enrolment rates of men and women	41	45.6%
Increase in enrolment rates of women only	40	44.4%
Decrease of illnesses	20	22.2%

Picture 6: Vocational Training Center in Faizabad

3.6. Linkages to the Labor Market

FFT programme does not specifically aim to develop job opportunities or generate economic income. However, many interviewees consider that *"this training is a first step" (Shingul, Trainee, Herat)* and that it can not only improve the daily food ration of their household but also increase their individual likelihood to find a job. This section describes FFT's potential professional outcomes as well as the actual work environment in which a few trainees were working at the time of the survey.

Asked if the skills they had learned during the training had allowed them to find an employment, 28.0% of the interviewees answered positively. This is of course a very satisfactory result if we keep in mind that the initial objective of the programme is not to find a job and that women account for 88.7% of the interviewed trainees. However, out of the 28.0% of the participants who found a job after the training, 55.0% work in the handicrafts sector, which requires predominantly female skills and jobs. It shows that **the employment pattern of female participants is marked by unemployment and a lack of diversity of female employment and marketable skills:** *"The training is not yet effective in providing female trainees with technical and business skills and graduating them to work on their own outside the training centers" (Raheela, Trainer, Bamyan).* Field observations and in-depth face-to-face interviews with trainees show that most female participants see themselves as employees in the centers who were paid in food rations rather than as trainees who would graduate to employment outside. Due to the absence of a strategy aimed at building self-reliance, the most vulnerable participants, and especially women, have a tendency to linger at the training centers beyond the completion of training and to grow dependent on the centers for their livelihood.

There is, however, as significant gap between the different categories of training centers. Teacher Training Programme participants are, for instance, more likely to find a job: 36 FFT participants who had attended Teacher Training sessions were able to secure a job after their training (19.0% of the respondents who reported having found a job and 60% of the participants to the teacher training): *"It is not so difficult to find a job because there is a huge demand for teachers in the country. There is only one obstacle: some schools are too far from the places where teachers live. That is why only a few trainees cannot find a job" (Teacher, Manager, Faizabad).*

Table 34: Professional Activity (post FFT programme)

What was the first job you secured after finishing your training course? *(28% of the 674 trainees)*		
Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Handicrafts (sewing, embroidery. etc.)	114	55.0%
Education (Teachers, Trainers)	36	19.0%
Construction (Unskilled)	20	10.4%
Agriculture (Daily Labor)	10	5.2%
Carpet Weaving	10	5.2%
Livestock (trade)	3	1.6%
Governmental job. Administration	2	1.1%
Agriculture (production and sale)	1	0.5%
Construction (Skilled Labor)	1	0.5%
Car repair	1	0.5%
Household Workers (Khalas)	1	0.5%
International NGO or Agency (UN)	1	0.5%
Total	189	100%

To better understand the reality of the professional environment of former FFT trainees, the review team asked some of trainees' employers to give an opinion on trainees' profiles, skills, and areas of improvement. In spite of the good rate of participants who are now employed, it was difficult to find people willing to answer, as most "employees" are in fact working:

1) In family owned businesses ("Handicraft");

2) Temporary jobs ("Unskilled construction workers" and "Daily agricultural laborer").

In these regards, it is of course difficult to consider these jobs as "secured" and it is also extremely difficult to determine if the training helped them find a job or not, but, since most of the participants are women, one can say that the concrete professional outcomes of the training are satisfactory. To build on it, the FFT programme may have to facilitate access to the labor market.

As such, the review team was only able to interview 20 employers, whose companies were all involved in the handicraft sector (tailoring, carpet weaving, embroidery, etc.). Most of the surveyed companies were either registered with AISA (6 out of 20) or Ministry of Economy (4); the other ones were NGOs registered with MoF (3) or MoWA (3) and only 5 were not registered (informal sector). The reduced size of the sample does not allow us to draw any conclusion but it can give us a useful, albeit rough, idea of employers' perception.

As shown in the tables below, out of the 14 employers who knew the FFT activities, 8 said that they were "very useful" and 6 "useful": *"It is a good programme as it allows poor people to get skilled and sometimes to find a job" (Ibrahim, Tailoring, Nangarhar).* Moreover, when asked how they rated the professional skills of the FFT participants who worked in their company or organization, employers said that they had "very strong" (8), "strong" (5) or "average" (7) skills. Such a positive perception clearly suggests that **employers have a very positive opinion of the FFT programme**; it is also indicative of a more economic reality, as the average salary of 2009 FFT participants who found a job was Afs 3079 (USD 61): *"I consider two aspects when I hire someone: first and foremost, the employee has to be good, respectful, and well educated; secondly, he or she has to accept low salary because I cannot afford paying my employees a lot. That is why I often hire trainees from the vocational center here, as they are not only skilled but also very cheap" (Abdul Basir, Employer, Nangarhar).*

Table 35: Employers' perception of FFT programme and trainees

How would you rate the food-for-training programme?		**How would you rate FFT participants' professional skills?**	
Five-point scale	Frequency	Five-point scale	Frequency
Very Useful	8	Very Strong	8
Useful	6	Strong	5
Average	0	Average	7
Poor	0	Insufficient	0
Useless	0	Very Poor	0

Following the same logic, employers were asked to agree or disagree with 7 statements about their perception towards the FFT programme; almost all of them (18) said that their employee(s) had learnt a lot and a large majority (15) said that their employee(s) had been able to implement the newly acquired skills on the workplace; likewise, 15 employers agreed with the statements that FFT programme could help employees to get a better position *and* a better salary. However, **in spite of this enthusiasm towards FFT activities, most in-depth interviews showed that employers were quite skeptical about trainees' chances of getting a job in today's labor market**: *"Unless you work in*

the provincial capital, there is no real job opportunity because there is absolutely no market in most rural districts" (Roshana, Tailoring Company, Herat).

Correlatively, when asked to agree or disagree with the sentences prompted in the table below, trainees almost unanimously expressed their satisfaction with the training itself (86.9% said they had "learnt many things during this training") but were more skeptical about its potential economic outcomes: 42.4% thought that the training could help them get a job, 34.4% "a better job", and 30.9% "a better salary". Once again, it shows that **if people are generally thankful for the direct (food) and indirect (training) outcomes of the FFT programme, they are still not convinced that training can provide them with job opportunities.** That may also explain why only a few interviewees agreed with the sentences that stated that they had been able to use the newly acquired skills on the workplace (3.9%) or at home (3.1%): most people liked the initiative but do not have the professional or personal environment to capitalize on what they learnt.

Table 36: Trainees' Feedback on the FFT programme

Feedback – Prompted Sentences	Frequency	Percentage
I learnt many things during this training	586	86.9%
I would recommend this training	396	58.8%
I would like to learn more things on the same subject	300	44.5%
This training can help me get a job	286	42.4%
This training can help me get a better job	232	34.4%
This training can help me get a better salary	208	30.9%
The training is adequate to the reality of my life	105	15.6%
I would NOT recommend this training	36	5.3%
I took the training only for the food – I was not really interested	32	4.7%
I use the new skills on the workplace	26	3.9%
The training is boring	23	3.4%
I use the new skills at home	21	3.1%
The training is not practical enough	13	1.9%
I don't understand why I do this training	2	0.3%

Access to the labor market is therefore an issue for many trainees, as there is no formal labor market in most district: the table below shows, for instance, that employers often ask friends (10 out of 20), relatives (9), or fiends of employees (8) as a recruitment channel. However, out of the 14 employers who knew the activities of the closest FFT training center, 12 of them considered it as a potential source of talents, which clearly suggests that there is already a dynamic interaction between training centers and local companies.

Lastly, when asked if they planned to start their own business in the future, **a significant proportion of respondents (15.9%) acknowledged that the training course had given them the will to create their own business activity and 55.6% that they would favorably consider the idea if they had the opportunity to do so.** It clearly shows the positive impact of the training activity on participants' mindset, and especially on women, as 72.6% of women respondents (63.2% only for men respondents) said that they either had plans to start their own business (16.1%) or would develop a business if they had an opportunity (56.5%): *"Before the training, I could never go out and I did not want to do anything because I had no other choice. Now, it is different. I found out that I was able to work my hands and I like it. My dream is now to start my own tailoring shop" (Mariam, Trainee, Badakhshan).*

Table 37: Trainees' willingness to start a new business

Do you plan to start your own income generating activity or business at some point in the future?				
	Frequency	Total	Male	Female
Yes, I already have plans to do so	107	15.9%	14.5%	16.1%
Why not, if there is an opportunity	375	55.6%	48.7%	56.5%
No, I don't want to	192	28.5%	36.8%	27.4%
Total	674	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

To corroborate this result, it is worth noticing that 93.4% of the 482 interviewees who reported being interested in creating their own business said that they needed additional skills to do it: *"I know that I could make a living out of [tailoring], but I need to learn more technical skills and I also need to understand basic accounting notions to be able to run my future business" (Sahar, Trainee, Badakhshan).*

However, as shown in the table below, when asked if they had the funds or equipment to start their business, only 7.5% of the interviewees who plan to start a new business said that they had enough personal money to do so. It clearly shows that there is a lack of incentives provided to the participants that would allow them to generate an income from the skills learned. As we will come back to in the recommendation section, the gap between the potential and actual outcome described here could be overcome, for example, by providing trainees with start-up kits upon completion of their training course. For the moment, **too many training centers – and especially vocational training centers – look like autonomous businesses with short-term visions and free employees paid in food rations**: *"The implementing partners should focus on transferring technical/business skills to equip the trainees to generate income independently, rather than "employing" poor people on a semi-permanent basis to produce handicrafts for the centers to sell and pay them in food rations" (Programme Manager, UNICEF, Mazar-e-Sharif).*

Table 38: Trainees' Capacity to start a new business

If yes, do you have the needed funds / equipment to start your own business?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I do have enough personal money and equipment for that.	36	7.5%
No, but my family/friends will help me	67	13.9%
No, and I plan to borrow money from an institution	124	25.7%
No, and I still don't know how to get the money	245	50.8%
I don't know	10	2.1%
Total	482	100.0%

3.7. Social Acceptability

The level of social acceptability and of community 'buy-in' of the FFT programme is very high, across target groups and indicators. The research team tested this notion on 3 groups of respondents – trainees, employers and community households – the results of which are mutually reinforcing and confirm the positive social considerations and outcome of the programme. The indicators that were used to assess the level of social acceptability are varied and detailed below.

Trainees

The first indicator used was to ask trainees their own assessment of the community acceptance and perception of the training programmes. This indicator allowed us to judge two crucial issues: (1) the level of comfort of trainees participating in the programmes, especially of women, and (2) their perception of the social acceptability of their activities. Given the role of women as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters, of other community members, their actions are subject to external judgment and prior approval.

The feedback from trainees is widely positive: 89.6% consider that their families and community are very supportive and happy about their participation in WFP FFT activities. Of the remaining one tenth of respondents, the majority had neutral feelings, with only a very small minority being dissatisfied with the programme, as illustrated in table 39 below.

One of the main reasons for the social acceptability of families and community has to do with the perceived health impact of FFT programmes on the health of family members. 74.3% of trainees consider that the training and food assistance received helped reduce the recurrence of illnesses in their family.

Table 39: Trainees' assessment of social acceptability and community buy-in

What is the perception of the rest of the community?	Frequency	Percentage
They were supportive and happy	604	89.6%
They did not care	55	8.2%
They disapproved and were not happy	15	2.2%
Total	674	100.0%

The second indicator used was the impact of the training programme on the level female and male enrollment in subsequent training programmes in the surveyed communities. Trainees interviewed report that, following the WFP FFT activities, both female and male enrollment increased. Of these, 90.8% responded positively when asked if more women enrolled in training programmes as a result of the WFP FFT programme. Another 32.2% report that the programme also had a positive impact on male enrollment in training activities.

Table 40: Assessment of the impact of FFT programmes on female and male enrollment in training centers

Impact – Prompted Sentences	Yes	Percentage
Did the training you followed lead to more **women** enrolling in training programmes in your community?	612	90.8%
Did the training you followed lead to more **men** enrolling in training programmes in your community?	217	32.2%

Although socially accepted, and a positive trend regarding increased enrolment of both men and women in training sites at the community levels, female trainees have also reported a significant level of restraint. Trainees know – especially female trainees – that their families will not allow them to attend training courses for reasons that are not related to assistance. As many of the women in each of the provinces explained to us, men are happy that the food is provided to them, as a way to decrease the pressure on their shoulders to provide for the family. But they do not see the necessity or real benefit of training outside of the food assistance. The latter takes precedence over the former.

Excerpt from an interview with a female beneficiary in Balkh province:

"We learned all these things last year, but now we don't even have books at home to continue on our own. If we don't receive food, our husbands will not let us take a few hours off to go to the center. They prefer then that we work in the fields or at home; they don't see the need for literacy training classes if there is no distribution of food or salaries. They only see the benefit of these programmes for themselves or their children, not their wives".

Employers

The number of employers from the FFT programme is notably very limited – most participants work at home and are self-employed, after the training programme, or the training received did not allow them to then benefit from a more stable source of employment. As a result, only 20 employers were found and interviewed during the fieldwork, although the target had been to interview 5 employers per training site, for a total of 225 employers. The target vs. actual number of interviewed employers shows an inherent lack of linkage to the economic market and a lack of marketability of trainee skills.

Based on the interviews led with employers, it can be inferred that managers and employer are all willing to send their employees to benefit from training courses. However, their degree of commitment is varied and depends mainly on the necessity to pay (or not) for the training received. Employers interviewed were evenly split between those who would be ready to pay for their employees to attend a training programme (40%) and those would be willing to send them only if courses were free (35%). The remaining one-quarter of employers state that they will only send their employees to training courses if they are free *and* if food is provided.

This underlines a window of opportunity for WFP to link its work and the FFT programme with employers in order to increase the productivity of small businesses, the level of skills of employees, and the overall positive impact on the community. As a result, WFP could envisage to build a specific FFT programme for employees in home or small businesses, where they would specifically target female employees to provide them with the opportunity to learn sustainable skills and increase their skills, productivity and income, while also raising their professional and social profile in the community. This is further reinforced by the fact that all employer interviews stated they would be willing to send their female employees and female relatives to attend a training programme, if the latter was free of charge. The trend is therefore of a widespread social acceptability by employers of female training courses.

Table 41: Employers' stated commitment to training opportunities for employees

As a manager, would you pay to attend a training programme?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	40.0%
No, I would only attend if it is free	7	35.0%
No, I will only attend if it is free and if food is provided	5	25.0%
Total	20	100.0%

Households

The community household perspective – derived from a total of 433 interviews with households within the vicinity of each training site – informs us on the potential impact of FFT-type training activities in communities. **The outlook of households on training activities is in general more conservative than employers, but remains overall quite positive.**

One of the main reasons for the more conservative feel is that households are less well informed or educated about the content of the training programmes which they define first as an opportunity to obtain food, and second as an opportunity to actually learn a long-term skill. The ratings are therefore positive: households provided a high rating of food assistance programmes – 95.1% rate them as very useful or useful, and only 4.9% as average, insufficient or very poor.

The training sites visited are overall well known of community households, who distinguish between vocational training centers, literacy training centers and teacher training centers. However, some degree of confusion has been reflected in responses received, as one-tenth of interviewees defined centers as 'food distribution centers', not linking any training to the food distribution activities. As a result, when we add up the number of people who define training sites as food distribution centers, and the number of people who cannot even define sites as either training sites, we reach one quarter of all respondents (see table 42 below). **There is therefore a real opportunity for WFP to require of training centers to increase their community awareness raising activities in order to better inform all households of their activities, and attract potential participants who at this stage might be left out of the selection process.**

Table 42: Households understanding of training center activities

Do you know a training center in this neighborhood?		
	Frequency	Percentage
It is a vocational training center	135	31.2%
It is a literacy training center	158	36.5%
It is a teacher training center	26	6.0%
It is a food distribution center	46	**10.6%**
I don't know this office	68	**15.7%**
Total	433	100.0%

3.8. Implementing Partners' Feedback and Internal M&E Indicators

WFP works through implementing partners, NGOs in the field of vocational, functional and teacher training, who are required to provide their own feedback to WFP to track the progress of their courses. To go beyond the purely quantitative feedback given by implementing partners to WFP (mostly limited to lists of participants, schedule of courses and distribution and proof of delivery of food), the interviews led with training center staff included some elements of qualitative M&E. In this section, we will first provide trainers' perception of the FFT programme, in order to capture the implementing partners' views, and second, an overview of internal and external M&E processes.

Trainers' Perception of the FFT Programme

Out of a sample of 90 training staff interviewed from all 45 training sites, 90% of all trainers report that trainees were satisfied from the FFT programme. When asked to list the reasons for their satisfaction, they reported that trainees were satisfied because:

- They learned a skill (90%)
- Their health and/or the health of their family members improved (51.1%)
- They found an employment after the training (30.0%)
- They are now more independent (15.6%), of special importance in terms of gender issues (gender equality and female empowerment).

On the other hand, although the overall assessment is positive, 34.4% of trainers also reported varying degrees of dissatisfaction, on specific issues related to the food received, the training programme and the outcomes of the programme. In other words, when asked to list the reasons for their dissatisfaction, they reported that trainees were dissatisfied because:

- The quantity of the food provided by WFP was insufficient (34.4%)
- The training programme was too short (24.4%)
- They were not able to learn any skill properly (3.3%)
- They did not find an employment (5.6%)
- The quality of the food was poor (4.4%)

The comments regarding the poor quality of the food came up in all of the qualitative interviews led with training center staff and participants alike. It was a common occurrence, in all provinces, to hear from respondents that the quality of the wheat, specifically, was very low.

In other cases, women have been able to learn or improve on a skill that they have but because of the lack of opportunities post-training, and the lack of any market linkage provided by implementing partners, women stay unemployed, at home; even though they have the capacity and willingness to work.

Discussions with Mariam, a beauty parlor trainer at the DoLSAMD center in Injil, Herat

"The trainer – Mariam - is 25 years old and still single; she has recently come back from Iran where she lived as a refugee for 19 years. She grew up in Iran, went to school there and learned beauty parlor skills. She returned to Injil 3 years ago but has not been able to set up a house for herself; she doesn't even have a salary from her skill. She wants to find a way to set up her own activity – but only help received food. She needs more help; otherwise what's the point of having these skills?"

Taking into consideration the pros and cons of the FFT programme, 82.2% of trainers view the programme as a successful one, in terms of meeting its short-term targets (given that the review was being done on the 2009 programme only). This does therefore not take into account more longer-term goals. If these very satisfactory figures corroborate trainees' perception, they also suffer from a similar bias as managers and trainers are likely to indicate a positive answer when asked to evaluate the FFT programme: 1) the WFP is their main international counterpart and donor; 2) they have of course also contributed to the success or failure of the programme.

Table 43: Trainers' assessment of the success of the 2009 FFT programme

How did you rate the success of the 2009 food-for-training programme? (Trainers)	Frequency	Percentage
Very successful	29	32.2%
Successful	45	50.0%
Average	14	15.6%
Unsuccessful in meeting targets	2	2.2%
Very Bad	0	0.0%
Total	90	100.0%

To deepen this first approach, trainers were asked to evaluate different key steps of the training process, as described in the table below. It is worth noticing that four-fifth of the respondents said that:

- Trainers had been trained to be able to conduct nutrition, health, and hygiene training;
- The food had been delivered in a timely manner;
- There was a monitoring and follow-up of former trainees' activities; and
- They had to send an M&E report to WFP at the end of the FFT programme.

On the other, only 22.2% of the respondents said they used to provide trainees with a start-up kit to help them implement their new skills. Correlatively, "only" 32.2% of the trainers considered that their job also included a linkage to the local market. If we consider the absence of a real individual follow-up (see next section), it suggests that training centers are neither likely to benefit from lessons learned from previous years, nor able to help trainees find a job or tailor its skills to its new workplace.

Table 44: Trainers' Feedback on the FFT programme

FFT Phases	**Feedback – Prompted Answers**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Were the teachers and staff specifically trained in nutrition, health, hygiene training?	81	90.0%
2	According to you, were the food rations distributed in a timely manner?	78	86.7%
3	Did your assistance to trainees include equipment / start-up kit needed to implement the skills learned?	20	22.2%
4	Did your assistance to trainees include a linkage to the local market to facilitate their income generating activity?	29	32.2%
5	Did your assistance to trainees include any monitoring or evaluation / follow-up after the end of the training course?	80	88.9%
6	Did you have to send to WFP a monitoring and evaluation report at the end of the training programme?	81	90.0%

Training Site M&E Indicators

The internal M&E process, at training site visited, was mainly quantitative and focused on two elements: (1) showing the review team the availability of food distribution records for 2009, signed by each receiving beneficiary, and (2) providing a list of participants of the programme.

A small number of training sites did not have these minimum M&E reporting standards as they were unable to show either beneficiary lists from 2009 (14.4%) or food distribution records for 2009 (13.3%). It is worth noticing that these training centers were almost exclusively located in the most unsecured provinces (Herat, Nangarhar, and Balkh), where WFP monitoring is of course less efficient and relies only on implementing partners (CTG, for instance). This naturally raises a flag in terms of coordination between implementing partners and WFP area offices, and a minimum level of transparency and supervision that should be ensured at all times and on both sides.

In all cases, the indicators of success used to measure the outcomes of the programme were all mainly quantitative and based on the numbers listed below:

- Numbers of people graduating from the programme (60.7%)
- Numbers of people who found an income generating activity after completion of the course (48.3%)
- Numbers of people who continued with another training (29.2%)
- Numbers of people enrolled in the programme (23.6%)
- Numbers of people whose families are in better health after the programme (20.2%)
- No indicators (5.6%)

There is a lack of more in-depth reporting on the desired impact of the FFT programme on family well being, gender issues, on vulnerable groups, or of beneficiary profiles. The M&E process run by implementing partners is still very limited and basic. These IPs could benefit from a training organized by WFP area offices to improve their reporting mechanisms and capacities, in order to evolve from a system based on a set of 'number indicators' as mentioned above.

One example of a reporting indicator that is more qualitative and that would help improve the design of the FFT programme **is an estimate of the number of participants who sell the food rations received for money on the market**. This information was not captured in the quantitative survey – however, reference to this trend came up in a number of interviews. In one such interview in the province of Herat, the review team was specifically told that the low quantities and quality of the food provide does not meet household needs. As a result, many women prefer selling the food received and make use of the money to buy food on the local market (of higher quality) or to respond to other household needs.

Excerpt from a key informant interview led with an implementing partner in Herat city:

"Quantity and quality are both very low; the amount distributed is just a drop in the sea compared to the extent of their needs. Let's say a family of 6 members would need, at the minimum every month, 16kgs of oil and 40kgs of wheat. The wheat distributed by WFP costs 18AFA on the local market – very low cost compared to the local produces. Most women will sell the wheat, earn 140 AFA for 25 kgs, and use this money to buy higher quality wheat. They have no other choice. But they will still sell it for approximately 5-7 AFA per kilo, very much under the market price!"

WFP-FFT M&E Programme Indicators

Training center staff report that WFP field staff monitored their activity on a regular basis (77.8%) and in some cases only once in a year (8.9%). A minority of 13.3% reported that there was no external M&E on the part of WFP at the training sites (6 sites out of 45 surveyed).

Excerpt from a functional literacy training site in Balkh:

"There was no monitoring form WFP last year because they trust me. I call them often, visit their office, I don't hand any report in writing because they know me", says the center director in Balkh.

In the 39 out of 45 training centers where WFP monitoring took place, the indicators that were verified by WFP field staff were mainly concerned with the monitoring of:

- Training methods (77.8%)
- Beneficiary selection (67.9%)
- Results and outputs (40.7%)
- Staff recruitment (29.6%)
- Administrative and financial activity of the center (24.7%).

This shows already that the external indicators used by WFP are more refined and sophisticated (meaning less quantitative and more concerned with the entire project cycle – from human resources, to implementation, selection, and administrative issues). Quantitative indicators are naturally used as well but do not limit the M&E process. This could form the beginning of a training programme for implementing partners on M&E methods, having them replicate WFP methods, with supervision of WFP field coordinators.

Excerpt from an interview with an IP staff member:

"The paperwork of WFP is a big hassle: we have to fill out forms to sign off on every delivery of food, but the forms are very difficult to understand, even difficult for WFP staff to understand. If WFP staff has a hard time figuring out these forms, how are we expected to understand? I had a meeting scheduled with WFP at 11am today, to get trained on the proper methods to fill out these forms, but five minutes before they called to cancel the meeting because of the white city rule due to the Kabul conference".

3.9. Security Situation

Knowing how to adjust the project strategy requires clarity about what project management is accountable for achieving. In this regard, the security situation is going down at an alarming rate in most surveyed provinces (not only Herat and Nangarhar but also Balkh and Badakhshan). Consequently, means access to the field is very limited for WFP staff and, once in the field, the time left for visits has been further limited. In practice, the field visits are more and more outsourced to private monitoring teams.

Because of the deteriorating security situation, all UN organizations had to upgrade their security level. In practice, it had a strong impact on FFT activities, especially in Nangarhar and Herat. In terms of both implementation and monitoring, this situation is not satisfactory:

1) The number of UN "security compliant" districts has been drastically reduced, which led WFP to reduce its operational reach. FFT field officers or monitoring teams need two heavy armored vehicles to go to field sites. As such, there is a serious bottleneck as only one mission can be conducted at a time, which strongly hampers the efficiency and effectiveness of field missions.

2) Likewise, the new security rules have a negative impact, as they tend to put implementing partners at risk on the ground: *"WFP has to demilitarize its action. When we organized a food ration distribution in the district of Zindajan and Koshan, the WFP office wanted to send two convoy-cars with fully armed men with our monitoring team. Aside from the immense additional costs for such staff-overkill, we cannot accept the presence of armed staff during our action. It decreases the overall security and puts our status at risk" (Director, NGO, Herat).*

3) To mitigate these alarming security risks, the FFT programme hired additional Implementing Partners and Contractors (CTG in Nangarhar, AG in Herat, etc.) to monitor its activities, but the quality of these contractors is still very poor.

4) Contractors like AG or CTG do not hire female monitors for security reasons. As such, it is often extremely difficult, if not impossible, to interview female participants in many districts. As women represent nine-tenth of the (surveyed) FFT participants, it of course biases the M&E results.

Excerpt from an interview with a WFP staff member (Herat):

"We had to change our contractors in March 2010. We used to work with CTG but they were not very good and we thought that they were not doing their job properly. We now have a new contract with AG, which is much better even if their reporting skills are still poor and the turnover of their employees too frequent. The reports look identical, the English Is very poor, there is no qualitative feedback and, of course, we cannot be 100% sure of the effectiveness of their work on the field. We trained them and showed them our result based management toolkit but there is still a lot to be done".

3.10. Concluding remarks on FFT programme review

Finally, it was instructive to triangulate trainees' perception with other stakeholders' answers (not only managers, trainers, employers, and households, but also WFP staff and key informants). It deepens the understanding of the programme from its initial steps (training center selection) to the last ones (monitoring and evaluation).

We will intend here to underline the main lessons learned from this review phase:

- The selection of implementing partners is a complex process and it is often very difficult to 1) find reliable implementing partners, as only a few candidates do match WFP criteria (accountable and professional non-for-profit structures), 2) monitor and evaluate the actual capacity of the selected partners, as security issues prevent WFP staff from assessing new candidates and evaluating ongoing partnerships. For the time being, too many training centers – and especially vocational training centers – look like autonomous small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with short-term visions and free employees paid in food rations.
- The beneficiary selection process is reliable *in practice*, in a local environment where the opinion of *shura* leaders and a certain degree of favoritism have to be taken into account. However, there are no applicable and explicit guidelines even if most training centers succeed in targeting the most vulnerable segments of the population.
- The frequent temporal gap between training and food distribution agendas has a negative impact on trainees' attendance, as food rations are a key incentive: when asked to name the main reason why participants attend the training courses, one-fifth of the trainees and one-third of the trainers answered that food distribution was the main incentive.
- The food distribution calendar is not always adapted to people's immediate needs – especially when participants are returnees who recently migrated from Iran (Herat province) or Pakistan (Nangarhar). Although WFP needs a one-size-fits-all-approach, there needs to be some degree of flexibility and adaptability to the profile and needs of participants.
- The overall satisfaction rate of participants is quite impressive, as 90.0% said that the training they had received was either "very good" or "good". The results are comparable when we benchmark vocational, literacy and teacher training centers, even if the rate falls to "only" 80.7% with Teacher Training. Furthermore, trainees who had benefited from nutrition, health, and hygiene training were asked if it had benefited their family. The results were quite positive, as shown in the table below, as 93.6% of health training participants, 95.2% of nutrition training participants, and 96.6% of hygiene-training participants reported that the training had actually been helpful to their family. When asked to compare the economic situation of their household before and after the FFT programme, more than four-fifth of the trainees answered that the situation was either "much better" than before (6.1%) or "slightly better" (76.0%).
- Almost half of the interviewed trainees (45.8%) mentioned the reduction of food expenditures as a key outcome of the FFT programme, which confirms the idea that food rations allowed people to reallocate the money they spend on other food and non-food items:
- If the food delivery rate is quite satisfactory (between 97% for FL centers and 100% for TT centers), the average food ration in terms of quality and quantity is still poor: 46.1% of interviewed participants consider that the food rations are not adequate with their daily needs, which clearly raises a red flag; 55.8% of the participants said that the quality of food

rations was “very good” or “good”. There are, however, significant differences between the surveyed provinces.

- The few employers (20) who were interviewed are generally very positive about FFT activities and FFT trainees. However, most in-depth interviews showed that employers were quite skeptical about trainees’ chances of getting a job in today’s labor market. Correlatively, if trainees are generally thankful for the direct (food) and indirect (training) outcomes of the FFT programme, they are still not convinced that training can provide them with job opportunities: only 28.0% of the interviewed participants reported having found a job (55.0% work in the handicrafts sector – which requires predominantly female skills and jobs). The employment pattern of female participants is marked by unemployment and a lack of diversity of female employment and marketable skills.
- A large majority of respondents (71.5%) acknowledged that they would favorably consider the idea of creating a business if they had the material and financial opportunity to do so. It clearly shows the positive impact of the training activity on participants’ mindset, and especially on women.
- The level of social acceptability and of community ‘buy-in’ of the FFT programme is very high, across target groups and indicators: 89.6% of the interviewed trainees considered that their families and community were very supportive and happy about their participation in WFP FFT activities; 95.1% of the household respondents rated FFT activities as very useful or useful, and only 4.9% as average, insufficient or very poor.
- Training center staff report that WFP field staff monitored their activity on a regular basis (77.8%) and in some cases only once in a year (8.9%). A minority of 13.3% reported that there was no external M&E on the part of WFP at the training sites (6 sites out of 45 surveyed). However, the security situation strongly undermines the quality of data collection and fieldwork organization for both WFP staff and external monitoring and review teams (AG, CTG, etc).
- The security situation has deteriorated in all the surveyed provinces and it is now a major issue that questions the organization and implementation of FFT activities on the ground.

4. Recommendations

"Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value"

Albert Einstein

4.1. General Overview

To make a long fieldwork assessment short, one could say that the most significant gap to bridge for the WFP-FFT is not technical (how can we distribute more food or reach more participants?) but rather strategic: basic food distribution to the most vulnerable people belongs to short-term humanitarian or emergency aid, whereas training and capacity building are long-term activities aiming at developing participants' social and economic environment. This challenging contradiction can of course lead to promising outcomes, but the review team considers that 2 internal factors and 2 external factors still undermine the programme's capacity, as shown in the chart below:

1) The WFP still has a dogmatic approach of its missions in Afghanistan (provision of a basic set of food items only, heavy procedures);

2) The WFP still relies on a quantitative and short-term approach that is inadequate with the current needs of most participants;

3) Most of the current or potential implementing partners (training centers) do not have the capacity to develop participants' skills and provide them with an access to the labor market;

4) The security context is getting worse, which (i) decreases WFP's operational capacity in many districts, (ii) leads WFP to hire M&E contractors that cannot be fully trusted, (iii) and may put women training centers at risk on the medium run.

Chart 9: Internal and External Factors that affect the FFT Programme

In these regards, it is not surprising to note that, when asked to name potential areas of improvement for the FFT programme, trainers equally insist on improving (i) the design of the programme; (ii) the food assistance component; (iii) the work relationship between WFP and the training center; (iv) the monitoring and follow-up of participants (see the box below). According to the survey respondents, all of these components are necessary steps for a successful training programme and a satisfactory working relationship.

The recommendations detailed in this chapter aim to help the WFP-FFT programme to overcome the current strategic obstacles that undermine its activity and development in the country. Therefore, all the recommendations identified here tend to answer a basic question: how can the FFT programme switch from a quantitative food ration delivery approach to a sustainable and comprehensive contribution to the socio-economic development of vulnerable individuals and communities? From this point of view, the main goal of **the WFP-FFT programme should not be focused on food distribution and quantitative outputs but rather on a more comprehensive development strategy that increases the social and economic welfare of participants**. Food rations are only an instrument and an incentive but they should not be considered as an end *per se*: *"It may not be enough to give food – we need to teach them about the lifetime benefits of the FFT programme" (Programme Manager, UNICEF, Mazar-e-Sharif).* As such, if the WFP wants to ensure that its FFT programme does improve participants' life on the long run and not only for a few months, the organization cannot be a food provider only but has to play its key role at all the stages of the process: from wheat quality certification to beneficiary selection, from curriculum design to monitoring and evaluation. As highlighted by a NGO manager from Herat, *"In the end, the ultimate goal of the action is not to transform our participants into patronized beggars for food, but to educate them as responsible decision-makers" (Programme Manager, NGO, Herat).*

Areas for improvement of the FFT programme, as detailed by 90 managers or trainers:

1. **Improvements to be made on the design of each programme, with the need to:**
   - Strengthen beneficiary selection process (35.6%)
   - Design better teaching curriculum (33.3%)
   - Review the choice of training activities (24.4%)
   - Review the length of training courses (23.3%)
   - Incorporate a community outreach component to the programme (4.4%)

2. **Improvements on the food assistance component:**
   - Ameliorate the timeliness of food delivery (33.3%)
   - Adapt the duration of food ration distribution (30%) to match training course duration

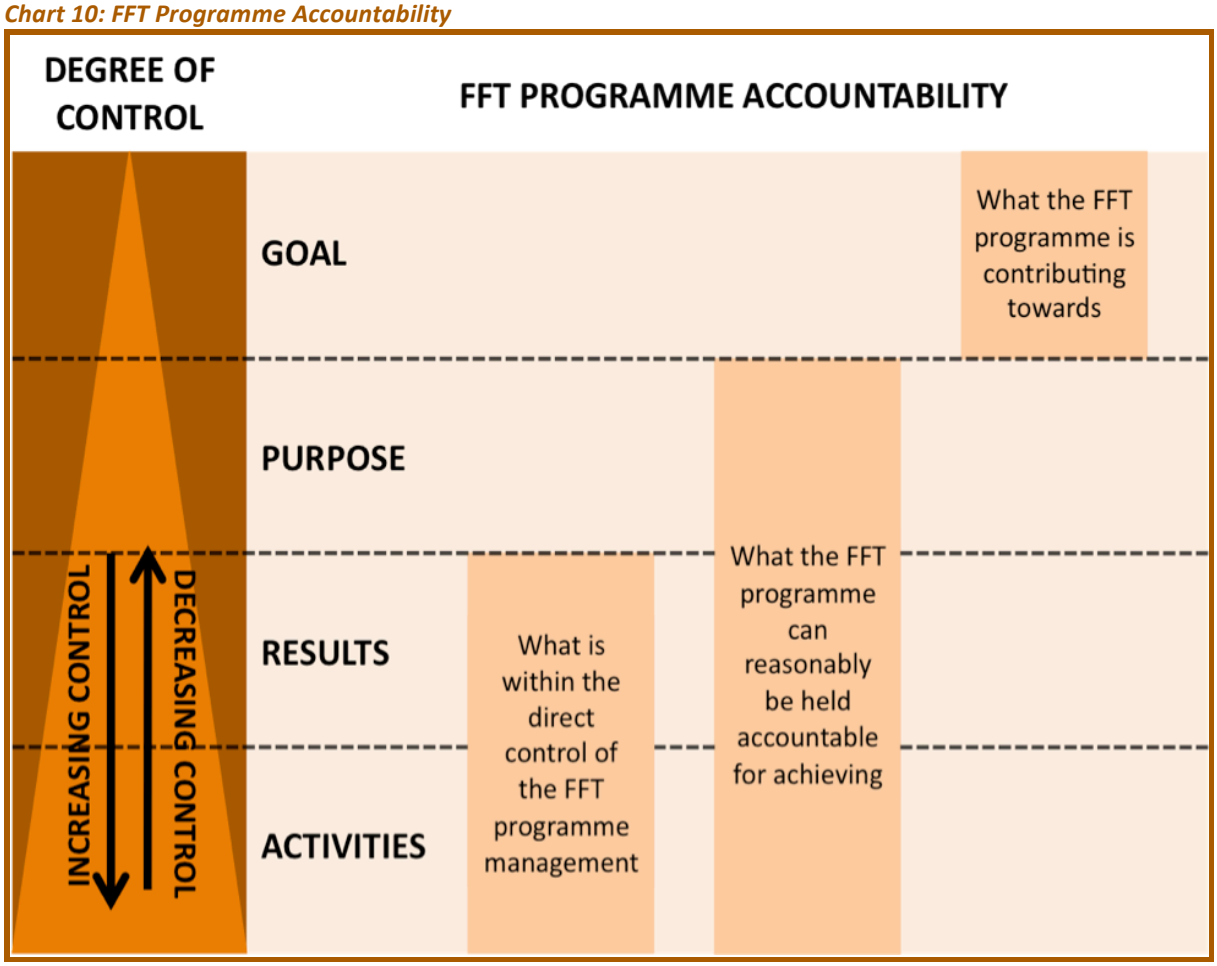
3. **Increasing the assistance and support provided to training centers:**
   - Financial assistance to training centers (26.7%)
   - Material assistance to training centers (more supplies – 18.9%)

4. **Ensuring a thorough post-training component:**
   - Implement a well-planned follow-up with trainees (31.1%)
   - Create monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (27.8%)
   - Provide a starter kit at the end of training for the start of each activity (18.9%)
   - Provide small loans for the start of businesses at the end of training courses (10%)

4.2. Five-Year Strategic Plan

A project's control over factors in the project environment that influence the achievement of objectives decreases with each level of the objective hierarchy. As shown in the chart below, at the level of "activities", project implementers have – theoretically – much control. For example, the WFP-FFT programme can directly control the choice of the implementing partner. At a second level, the programme can also make sure that the selected training centers are able to hire an adequate training venue, prepare materials, provide qualified trainers, and choose suitable participants. But the WFP-FFT programme has less control over whether potential participants will attend and considerably less control, if any, over whether the skills the participants learn will actually be used back in the workplace. However, in today's Afghan context, security is of course the main external factor that threatens the actual implementation of activities. In these regards, the limits of accountability may need to be re-negotiated at both national and provincial levels – which is critical if you are to keep the expectations of impact realistic.

Chart 10: FFT Programme Accountability



Despite the current security environment, the Review Team understands that WFP should stay within its core mandate and recommends ways in which food-based assistance can be used to fulfill longer-term development objectives. To do so, WFP will need to revamp the overall FFT strategic approach. We have identified 8 realistic milestones that could help WFP define a 5-year strategic plan (2011-2015) for its FFT activities.

Table 45: Five-Year Strategic Implementation Plan

Timeline	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Late 2010	Reaching an agreement with all the relevant stakeholders (MoE, MRRD, MoLSA, MAIL, provincial authorities, local *shuras,* international NGOs, other UN agencies, as well as other components of the WFP programme) on a 5-year plan.
Early 2011	• Phasing out of TT activities, as they do not seem to target priority population groups (and as suggested in the beneficiary socio-economic profile – section 2) and as "oil" does not seem to be a satisfactory incentive. • Launching 5 pilot tests in certain key areas – Herat, Faizabad, Mazar, Jalalabad – to address the issue of sustainability by increasing the pedagogic frame (needs assessment, unified curricula mixing a common ground of vocational and literacy skills, teaching techniques, job placement, professional follow-up) as well as the food assistance (quality, diversity and quantity of the food ration); • Relying on the official support of national and provincial governmental counterparts and the operational assistance of skilled and experienced international NGOs (for instance: HELP in Herat, Madera in Jalalabad, Mission East in Badakhshan, PIN in Balkh, Solidarités in Bamyan, AKDN or GtZ in other Northern provinces, etc.).
Early 2012	• Monitoring the results of the 5 pilot tests to evaluate the consistency of the new strategy and its socio-economic quantitative outputs *and* qualitative outcomes; • Based on the findings of the M&E assessment, progressively reducing the number of targeted centers throughout 2012 and 2013.
2012-2013	• Partnering only with centers that can (or could in a near future) fulfill FFT requirements in terms of quality and sustainability; • Building the capacity of the selected centers to develop a Professional, Efficient, Ethical, Reliable, and Sustainable network of training centers (officially affiliated with the WFP-FFT programme through the PEERS network); • Developing a certification of the skills learned during the training session to facilitate participants' access to the labor market.
2014-2015	Progressively increasing the number of affiliated centers to reach a larger beneficiary population (in 2014 – 2015).

4.3. Specific Strategic Recommendations

The training programme should start from scratch and be more comprehensive: from advocacy to food rations, from social integration to training, from long-term capacity building to actual marketable skills, from a diploma to the labor market. In the meantime and in line with general WFP guidelines, we suggest to stay focus on functional literacy and vocational training exclusively, as teacher training centres do not target piority population groups (poor and uneducated women).

4.3.1. Programme Strategy

Programme Strategy

It is essential to design a typology of training centers that have been working with WFP on the food-for-training programme. Three categories of implementing partners can be used to plan for future programming activities. Our recommendations will therefore focus on the following categories:

1) Professional, Efficient, Ethical, Reliable, and Sustainable (PEERS) training centers, which could be selected for pilot experiences (in 2011);
2) Basic Training Centers as well as Semi-professional organizations that would need a progressive needs assessment, a long-term capacity building of their administrative, financial, and pedagogic departments (between 2012 and 2013);
3) "Garage institutes" or "Backyard centers", where the training activity plays a social role but can neither develop the local social and economic activity nor impact the daily life of female participants on the long run.

Category 1: PEERS network
It is recommended that WFP should launch 5 to 8 pilot partnerships with the best training centers in 2011 (from the first category detailed above). In these centers, the goal is to unify the WFP-FFT programme approach by:

1) Increasing the quality, quantity, and diversity of the food rations;
2) Enhancing the pedagogic content of the training:
    a. 3 months of common root with basic technical and literacy skills;
    b. 9 months of specific training based on a portfolio of 3 or 4 professional skills that would depend on the economic environment and participants' profiles).

Category 2: Basic Training Centers
In the meantime, it is important to keep working with the large majority of the training centers that can only provide participants with food rations and basic skills. The WFP-FFT programme could progressively enhance their capacity by providing them with a common *curriculum* (mix of basic technical and literacy skills + portfolio of 3 to 4 main professional skills).

Category 3: "Garage Institutes" or "Backyard Centers"
It is crucial to progressively decrease the number of the lowest quality training centers to avoid that: 1) pseudo-trainers create "ghost-trainees", divert the food rations, and resell the food on the bazaar; 2) handicraft SME's take advantage of participants' vulnerability to make money with their productions without paying them; 3) trainees linger in the center with no real objective on the long-run. In other words, the WFP-FFT programme should more focus on quality, so that it starts being an

actor of the long-term development: *"we should target 200 courses instead of 1000 courses and do a better and more sustainable job" (WFP Programme Officer, Mazar-e-Sharif).*

It is recommended that WFP links its FFT programme with other international keyplayers' activities. On the longer-run and from a development perspective, food delivery cannot be the unique end goal of the FFT programme. As such, the FFT programme could benefit from the practical knowledge of organizations like GTZ and AKF (AKDN in general) to better understand their long-term strategies and tie some of its curriculum to GTZ long-term programmes. The same attitude should prevail with NGO that have a long-term commitment in the provinces: it would allow trainees to get a job immediately after their training session. However, WFP-FFT should also rely on minor NGOs that do not necessarily have the financial capacity or the long-term programme vision to carry on important and costly project, but which know the province very well and could develop some short-term or niche projects.

Knowledge Management

To build its capacity and institutional knowledge, WFP Kabul would benefit from a thorough knowledge management and database system, centralizing information from all area offices and providing the capacity to analyze data related to the programme quickly and efficiently.

It is crucial that the WFP-FFT programme centralizes its information system to benefit from lessons learned at both national and provincial levels. In this regard, WFP-FFT programme should: 1) streamline the existing flow of information at the field level; 2) enhance the coordination and information sharing between offices (Kabul to provinces and province to province); 3) coordinate national and provincial pilot plans (capacity building of the staff, selection criteria of both centers and participants, monitoring and evaluation, choice of common contractors, etc.). The purpose is to lay the emphasis on qualitative sharing of good practices and lessons learned.

It would be useful to lessen paperwork and administrative procedures to focus more on operational results and practical outcomes. Many national and international NGOs complained about a high and inadequate demand on procedures – that affects the quality of their work and is not relevant at the field level.

Communications Strategy

One overarching assessment is the lack of clarity in communicating FFT programme design and objectives[2]. WFP Afghanistan needs to provide official and public interlocutors with relevant and comprehensive information to help them understand the strategy, missions, quantitative, and actual qualitative outcomes of the WFP-FFT programme specifically. The WFP-FFT programme should thus be able to provide stakeholders with basic (one-pager) and detailed (booklet) information on the strategy and actual outcomes of its activities (in English, Dari, and Pashto). It would be helpful not only for its current stakeholders (Governmental Agencies and Ministries, Implementing Partners, other NGOs, other UN agencies, as well as media institutions) but also for the legitimacy and reputation of the programme. Providing a clear communications paper to all interested parties will ensure increased clarity and transparency for the FFT programme.

[2] This issue should hopefully be addressed in a Manual that explains all the ongoing operations and past achievements of the WFP in Afghanistan (draft available in December 2010).

In parallel, we recommend developing a full communications strategy with local communities about the duration of the programme, its goals and the process of beneficiary selection are important to avoid triggering a sense of entitlement to food for participation in trainings among national participants. Advocacy is a key aspect of the FFT programme to make people understand the long-term benefits of the programme, beyond the food benefits. Correlatively, there is also a real opportunity for WFP to require of training centers to increase their community awareness raising activities in order to better inform all households of their activities, and attract potential participants who at this stage might be left out of the selection process.

Capacity building of offices / Field

It is crucial to build the capacity of and provide more responsibilities to national WFP staff. This is especially true if we take into account the usually high turnover of expats at the provincial level.

It would be useful to build the qualitative capacity of the WFP administrative and technical staff at both national and provincial levels, as they need to be more in touch with local realities and with beneficiary profiles and needs.

Monitoring & Evaluation

It is essential for WFP to increase the number of field monitors in all its area offices. Monitoring and evaluation should be a real strategic asset but there are not enough field coordinators to monitor all the ongoing FFT activities. Given the intensity of the projects and the UN security rules, it leaves very little time to supervise each project and develop a more qualitative and in-depth analysis. However, it is still possible to outsource M&E field operations while improving implementing partners' skills, methodologies, and tools.

One of the main shortcomings from an M&E standpoint was the lack of available, reliable, and up-to-date beneficiary lists at the provincial and national levels. Out of the 45 training centers surveyed, the research team encountered instances where the beneficiary lists were inaccurate (wrong names, no phone numbers, inadequate information, outdated, etc.) or where there was no list at all. Such lacks undermine the M&E process as there is no way to double check and contact participants after the training is over, which results in a lack of longer-term strategy and insight into the lives of participants.

Given the deteriorating security situation in much of the country, outsourcing M&E procedures has become a common mode of operation for UN agencies working in insecure areas. In this regard, it is crucial to be more selective in identifying M&E implementing partners. The selection of an appropriate implementing partner is one of the most important aspects of the programme management system and deserves a well thought out mechanism, which guarantees project delivery and ensures the accountability of implementing partners. The establishment of a selected list of knock-out criteria (report writing, long-term staff, qualitative outputs, etc) could be a helpful contribution to this process.

To help in the selection of the M&E partner or third-party, It is crucial to streamline contractors' activity by: 1) defining an overarching M&E training plan for both WFP collaborators and contractors to improve their reporting mechanisms and capacities, in order to evolve from a system based on a set of "number indicators"; 2) building the capacity of the selected contractor's evaluators to help

them conduct both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the targeted areas; 3) using the same M&E templates in all the provinces (to allow benchmarking and sharing of information.

It would be useful to systematize a yearly monitoring and evaluation of each provincial FFT programme outcomes and outputs: *"We haven't had any specific evaluation of FFT in the 8 years that it has been operational in Afghanistan. There has only been a broader M&E of the PRRO, which included the FFT component" (WFP Administrative Officer, Mazar-e-Sharif).* Programme activities, outputs and quality should be monitored: for instance, the impact of trainings on household food security should be evaluated with more refined tools, the effects of FFT on rural-to-urban migration could be assessed

It would be useful to enhance the current capacity of the WFP M&E staff by: 1) organizing frequent internal meetings throughout the year between WFP-FFT M&E coordinators (at all levels) to identify good practices and draw a global picture of the national situation; 2) in the Northern provinces, opening dialogues with GtZ and AKF M&E teams (which benefit from an excellent knowledge of each district thanks to a significant local network).

It would be useful to develop an analytical M&E framework that takes into account the multiple dimensions of the UN Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI measures poverty, literacy, education, life expectation, as well as other social and economic factors[3]. In the Afghan context, the WFP-FFT could define a set of criteria that helps: 1) capture the social and economic profiles of the participants; 2) monitor the actual outcomes of the FFT programme (through field visits and interviews of former participants).

Picture 7: Ripped open WFP Wheat Bags

[3] It is a standard means of measuring wellbeing, especially child welfare, which has been used since 1993 by the UNDP in its annual report. The HDI measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development:

- A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectation at birth;
- Knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio (with one-third weight);
- A decent standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita.

HDI is considered by many to be an accurate tool for measuring development, since both economic and social indicators are covered.

Cooperation with line ministries

It is recommended of WFP project management staff to be more demanding of its FFT governmental counterparts (both at provincial and national levels). It is one thing to align the WFP-FFT on national programmes (like the NSP strategy), the review team assessment shows that in certain cases, it is also necessary to be more demanding with governmental counterparts on the ground (e.g. selection processes, capacity building of MoE training centers, external monitoring of all the training centers funded by the MoLSAMD, etc.): *"They promise a lot but can they really deliver? What is our responsibility in this process? We have a good cooperation with government offices, more or less satisfied. In remote areas they always tell us "everything is ok" when actually they have sub contracted the work to NGOs – not always properly done and we know that. The reality on the ground is often different than on paper!" (WFP Field Officer, Mazar-e-Sharif).*

It would be useful to build better capacity within certain "weaker" ministries like MoWA, to reinforce their potential in the field in the hope of giving them more contracts for FFT. In this regard, WFP should set up a protocol with MoWA in Kabul – the same as exists with MoE and MoLSA. It seems that WFP has less of a cooperation with MoWA/DoWA which is an issue, given the gender focus of the FFT activity.

It would be useful to be careful with MoEd, as some parents prefer to send their daughters to the informal literacy classes instead of sending them to primary school. As such, special care needs to be taken to ensure that the informal literacy classes do not compete with public schools.

Excerpt from an interview led with a WFP Programme Manager, Badakhshan

"How can we improve the market linkage? How can we get the women to be able to sell better on the market and for further development of their activity? DoWA has considered 2 or 3 locations for the sale of women's production and come up with a creative solution: we are counting on the creation of the Baghe Zanan (women's garden) in Jalalabad for the sale and the promotion of women's production activities. We are waiting for the end of the construction of this park. The PRT has funded $65K. It should be ready by the end of 2010. They will then hand it over to DoWA with an office to manage activities".

4.3.2. Training Activity

Training Design

It is a priority to phase out of TT training activities, as these centers do not target priority population groups (socio-economically disadvantaged people, unskilled and uneducated women, etc.) and as the current oil distribution represents an insignificant incentive to most trainees.

It is crucial to homogenize and standardize a common training *curricula* (for FL and VT, as we suggest to phase out of TT courses) so that: 1) a potential employer knows exactly what is behind a one-year FFT functional literacy training or a nine-month tailoring course; 2) a worthwhile training certification process can be set up; 3) a comprehensive and useful M&E approach can be developed by the WFP-FFT programme staff. Points 1 and 2 should of course fall under the umbrella of the implementing partners; however, the WFP could be much more demanding with its partnering training institutes and organizations to make sure that the indirect objective of the FFT programme (training, and not only food distribution) is also successfully achieved.

In this regard, one actionable recommendation is to merge vocational and functional literacy training components to increase women's capacity and economic well-being: most women in the literacy training courses (the majority of all courses in the FFT programme) complained that what they really want is vocational training. Some centers managed to do both – e.g. 1.5 hours of tailoring then 1.5 hours of literacy course. WFP should increase the literacy component even in the vocational training programmes. VT and FL should not be kept as 2 separate activities but should be done hand in hand.

A second recommendation is to narrow down vocational training activity portfolio to 2 or 3 technical activities, teaching the same ones nationwide, rather than doing a bit of everything everywhere. It would be easier (at least at the beginning of the 5-year plan) from both strategic and M&E points of view. Moreover, in-depth interviews with employers showed that they were asking for more skilled trainees, as shown in table below: Advanced skills are systematically the most frequent answer (Literacy, Technical, IT, and Vocational skills).

Table 46: Useful Skills on the Workplace (Employers)

Which professional skills does your employee need to perform better at the workplace, on a five point-scale?					
	Not at all	Little use only	Useful	Very useful	Essential
Basic Literacy Skills	1	1	9	2	7
Advanced Literacy Skills	0	3	3	5	9
Basic Technical Skills	4	6	3	3	4
Advanced Technical Skills	3	2	3	4	8
Basic Technology Skills	4	4	6	5	1
Advanced Technology Skills	3	3	1	6	7
Basic Vocational Training	1	2	4	7	6
Advanced Vocational Training	0	0	1	5	14

It would be useful to tailor training activities to the local context in which trainees are likely to work. Skills built should be able to generate income for beneficiaries, based on an understanding of the labor and services market: 1) FFT projects in urban areas can also build capacity of small-scale traders and informal entrepreneurs; 2) if beneficiaries are expected to return to rural areas in the near term, then the skills should be useful in the rural economy.

Beneficiary Selection

It is crucial to provide some help not only to the most vulnerable people but also to the segment of the population that is more likely to develop sustainable individual socio-economic growth generating activities. In practice, the FFT activities do contribute to relieve the poorest people but it is not sure that training activities target the right people to be efficient on the longer-run. Targeting both the most vulnerable and the most promising people would help bridge the gap between emergency aid and early recovery.

It would be useful to ensure that FFT projects: 1) reach the most food-insecure households, who may be labor poor or have a high dependency ratio; 2) respect the age bracket that better targets higher learning capacities (16 to 45 years for both men and women).

It would be useful to better integrate heads of households in the programme, to help change other household members' mindset, increase FFT programme acceptability, and make the impact of FFT activities more visible and meaningful (instead to populations viewing it mainly as a food assistance programme).

Training Material

Although not in its current mandate, the research team recommends that the provision of training materials be included in the FFT distribution list to training centers. This could be started in pilot training centers with the distribution of up-to-date training material, books, notebooks, pencils, sewing machines, tailoring machines, etc: *"How can we really teach a skill if there is 1 machine for 13 women? One big issue is that of equipment that is lacking for women to continue on the skills learned" (WFP, Field Officer, Mazar-e-Sharif).* A special budget and delivery of raw materials and equipment should be included as part of a standard package to all the pilot projects.

Food Ration Delivery

Food Ration Quality is one of WFP's processes that are beyond the control of the Country Office; however, it would be extremely useful to examine the feasibility of increasing the quality and diversity of food rations. It is actually a key demand voiced by participants in all locations. In this regard, the Country Office could suggest the following improvements: 1) signing long-term contracts with food suppliers (with minimal quality requirements); 2) randomly monitoring the quality of the wheat, oil, salt, etc. provided to the training centers; 3) diversifying the food items – including fresh vegetables, fruits, meat (once a week), etc.

It is also crucial to increase the average food ration quantity by: 1) making sure that there is no gap between the theoretical quantity and the actual quantity (e.g. problems with wheat bags); 2) assessing the actual needs of an average of 8 household members[4]; 3) providing food not only to one individual but to the entire household (which means that food ration quantity would be 2 or 3 times higher).

At the same time that both quality and quantity of food are increased, the frequency and duration of the food delivery should also be extended. The duration of training may not be sufficient to impart the skills that will solidly improve the economic prospects of the benefiting household. In this regard,

[4] See table 7: the average number of household members is, respectively, 8.8 (trainees) and 8.4 (other households).

the FFT programme should: 1) deliver food rations at 3 months, 6 months and 9 months (to avoid gaps between 6 and 9 months); 2) extend the duration programme beyond 6 or 9 months to 18 months (e.g. UNESCO in Balkh) to follow-up trainees' first professional steps.

Certification

Even if it is primarily a pedagogic issue, it is recommended that WFP put pressure on its partners (through RFP requirements and capacity building) to enact unified certification standards for diplomas, in a country where: 1) diplomas are a strong incentive for many students and trainees; 2) employers tend to consider certificates and diplomas as a major selection criterion even if they acknowledge that *"you never know what lies behind a diploma" (Hamidullah, Employer, Bamyan).* Most WFP-FFT pedagogic implementing partners still lack the official stamp of a recognized institution. Considering the strong local attachment to diplomas (see table), it is crucial to enact national certification standards for certificates and diplomas so that the most reliable partnering institutions can benefit from WFP's reputation and that trainees can progressively benefit from their certificates or diplomas on the labor market. Asked whether they had graduated from their training course, only 14.5% of the interviewed trainees (almost exclusively teacher training participants) answered positively and in-depth interviews showed that certification could play a key role for both vocational and literacy-training participants as well. Correlatively, certificates (or diplomas, with prior agreement of the MoEd) would demonstrate the actual skills and value of trainees: *"it would give us an evidence that the people we want to recruit has attended good courses in a serious center, backed by a famous and respected international organization" (Raheela, Employer, Jalalabad).*

Table 47: Significance of Certificates (Employers)

As an employer, how do you consider recognized training certificates and educational diplomas?		
	Frequency	Percent
They are the most important criterion	16	80.00%
I always take them into account, with other criteria	1	5.00%
I do not trust certificates and diplomas	3	15.00%
Total	20	100.00%

Market linkage

It would be useful for the FFT programme to link its activities with employers in order to increase the productivity of small businesses, the level of skills of employees, and the overall positive impact on the community. As a result, WFP could envisage to build a specific FFT programme for employees in home or small businesses, where they would specifically target female employees to provide them with the opportunity to learn sustainable skills and increase their skills, productivity and income, while also raising their professional and social profile in the community. This is further reinforced by the fact that all employer interviews stated they would be willing to send their female employees and female relatives to attend a training programme, if the latter was free of charge. The trend is therefore of a widespread social acceptability by employers of female training courses.

It would be useful to increase the duration of training to strengthen market linkage activities. Lack of market linkages, lack of opportunities post-training, lack of income generating potential, lack of basic financial knowledge, almost always lead trainees to professional deadlocks, in spite of their

willingness to start businesses or find jobs. As such, there should be a longer job placement and follow-up period after the end of the training.

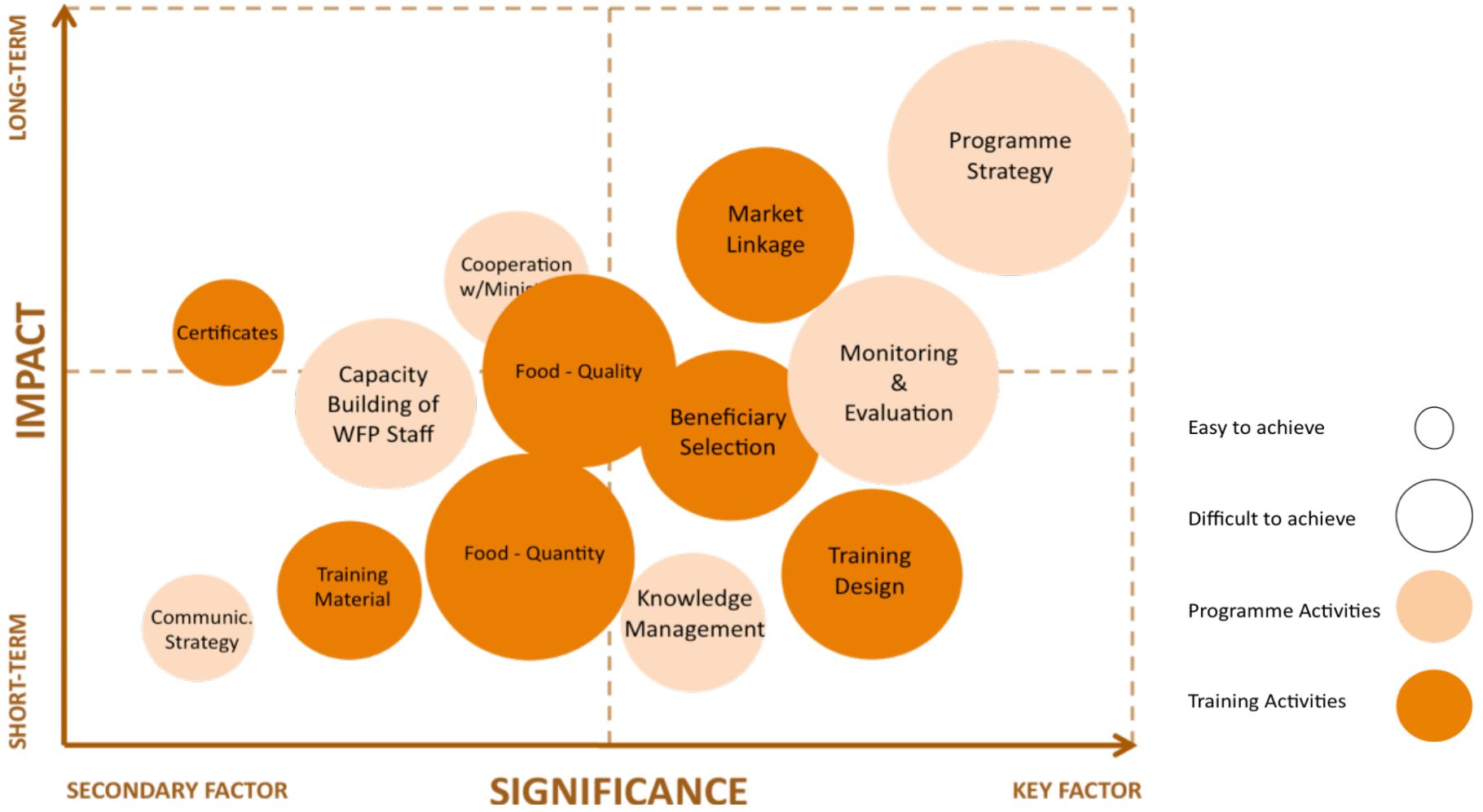
It would be useful to link the FFT project to credit or microenterprise activities — and possibly to longer-term technical support — to enhance sustainability of impact of the activity, as capital, long-term credit or financial support are almost never available for small enterprise startups. Vocational training, for instance, is relevant for asset creation if it leads to life skills that can be used to earn a living. Therefore WFP needs other partners to finance training facilities and to provide poor women graduates of training centers with seed capital for business start-up.

It would be useful to provide trainees who graduated with a professional kit (tailoring, carpentry, kitchen gardening, etc.) to help them overcome the gap between the training class and the workplace environment. However, FFT offices have to make sure to follow-up the practical use of these kits: *"We did that once in 2005: we provided machines for tailoring, we gave the cash to DoWA to spend but we didn't follow up properly and it was misused. We have to redo it but be more carefully" (WFP, Field Officer, Mazar-e-Sharif).*

Excerpt from an interview led with WFP staff, Mazar-e-Sharif

"We should increase from 9-month to 18-month programmes in order to start linking up the students/trainees to self-help groups, so they themselves become implementers and not just dependent on our aid. We could have SHG [=Self-Help Groups] for our programme graduates – to link this as a virtuous circle: from training, to SHG, at the district and provincial levels. We just need to find some agencies to work with them on market development, savings, production, sales etc. We also need to build on existing networks and groups of women in centers to build self-help groups and teach them about income generating activities – that is the key to sustainability. People may say that it is not in WFP's scope of work, but we could liaise with other international NGOs to make it happen".

Chart 11: Strategic Implementation Plan



Example: Reforming the ongoing "Monitoring and Evaluation" policy of the WFP-FFT would: 1) be a very significant factor of success for the programme; 2) have a medium-term positive impact on the FFT programme (as it takes time to set-up an adequate M&E team); 3) demand a lot of efforts (bigger circles).

Annex: Case Studies

Case study 1: Sheikh Mesri camp, Surkh Road district, Nangarhar, July 12, 2010

We visited one of the participants' homes in Sheikh Mesri camp, the only home with electricity in the neighborhood. All the women were gathered around one cotton-weaving machine, and one fan. So while a 3 or 4 women were working, the rest were sitting there and socializing, with their children running around – this is a space where women feel comfortable uniting around their new skill and their income generating activity.

The participants were enrolled in the RSS training programme (*see proposal photocopied from the WFP Jalalabad)*. The organization lacks a proper training center, and one of the requests of the participants and of the training center director is to provide materials to build a proper training center in the neighborhood.

Zahida is a 30-year old Pashtun teacher at the center. She is herself illiterate; her husband is unemployed. Everyday she explains that the trainees weave 1,2 up to 3 kgs of cotton, with an average income of 4,000 AFA per month. Her income for the household, in addition to the cotton weaving, comes from handicraft and cow milk – altogether equaling 5,000 AFA a month.

Razia is a 35-year old beneficiary, also illiterate. Her husband is a day laborer in agriculture or in whatever job he finds in Jalalabad. She earns 2-2,5000 AFA a month for a household of 5 people – they were 7 not so long ago, but they married off 2 of their daughters. She has been working for 1 year now as the female head of household – she has had to borrow money and food from relatives, friends, and local shops. Marrying off two of her daughters was a coping strategy. Razia's complaints are twofold: (1) the wheat distributed is of very poor quality, and (2) they don't even have potable water in this area to clean the wheat. They teach them about hygiene and childcare, but what's the point if they don't even have potable water in the camp?

Interview of Sharipa Ahmadzai *(RSS Training Center Director – 0797329690)*:

I have been working in this activity for the past 6 years in Afghanistan, and prior to that another 20 years of experience in Pakistan. I work mainly with returnees in Nangarhar, with training centers in Surkh Road, Chamtala, Tangi returnee camps. Altogether 7 training centers focused on cotton weaving – with 25 trainees in each center. WFP now provides me with food for 6-month long training programmes. When participants graduate, however, they have to find a way to pay themselves for the machine and wool to turn their skill into an income generating activity. BUT I found a way to be creative and help out participants after their graduation: I sold the cotton produced during the training, and from the revenue I bought machines for participants. I had to bring the machines from Pakistan because they had to be special machines that can be activated by feet movement as these women do not have electricity. So we couldn't use electrical machines. My goal is for each one of them to have 1 machine to work from home. Or lend them one machine, and get it back from them when they are done; the idea is to lend it to them for as long as they want to actively work. If they are no longer interested, or if they're de-motivated, then I will take it back to the center or lend it to someone else.

I have managed to bring these machines from Pakistan BUT I have not given it to them yet. I have to explain to them that they are not for sale, that they have to give them back to us once their production is done. It depends on their motivation, they can make up to 3,000 AFA a month if they

are motivated. I, myself, can produce up to 4kgs a day. Most women will work on average 2.5 kgs a day.

I have been lucky and have received the support of local wealthy individiuals or companies. For example, in this camp WFP will give us food, but Mr. Jabrakhil will provide us with the raw material – he is the owner of an electricity company; he has also built a local school named after his wife (Nazanin Jabrakhil).

Before the training programme, all these women were begging. Now they bring as much money than their husband to their home, their children all go to school built by UNHCR and DoE.

I try myself to provide them with marketing and sales training. I teach them that if they have 10,000 AFA income, then they should use half to buy raw materials and save as much as possible of the rest. Especially when they are new to this activity, it is important to save money. This is a difficult aspect for them to understand.

We work at the community level. I have 2 trainers in each center: they rotate between centers and control what happens to our trainees after they leave – because they are from the same communities as the participants.

The weakness of the WFP FFT programme:

- *Quantity:* These women need more food assistance. Because they get small portions and only receive them once every month, many of the women find themselves having to make less bread, and use the same bread fresh and when it gets old to soak it in water, and eat it that way, give soaked bread to their children. It is not tasty nor is it healthy.
- *Tensions:* This is the case when students and trainers get different portions of food. For example, they are both from the same community, same difficulties, and same age. They don't understand why they should not all get the same amount to address their food needs.
- *Quality:* They need better quality food. The wheat is black and the oil smells. DoE, DoWA and WFP should make more efforts to control the quality of the food that is distributed.

Recommendations:

- **We need more youth involved** in these trainings. For example, most of these women are older – they are mothers and heads of households, not from the next generation of women of this community. It would be good to build up the next generation, and start with younger girls.
- **WFP should give the same portions / rations to trainers as to trainees**, otherwise it creates tensions and some women in the community do not appreciate receiving less.
- **WFP should arrange for monthly distributions** – not every two months.
- **WFP should provide for the basic needs / materials to have a decent training center**: thermos, ice, carpet to sit on, roof over trainee's heads.
- **WFP should also target men** – it is important not to be so focused on women, and to provide men with opportunities. In a lot of these camps, there are little livelihood opportunities. We just handed in a proposal to WFP for a programme at Chamtala for disabled men with no legs. But at least they have their hands to work with!
- **WFP should follow-up on programmes and help us improve our programming:** for example, I specialize in cotton weaving. I would like next to teach these women how to color the cotton, since now we know they can make good quality cotton.

On monitoring and evaluation:

- We write monthly reports to DoE, and once every two weeks to DoF. Then DoE sends it directly to WFP.
- WFP field coordinator comes to visit once every month.

Case study 2: Sheikh Mesri Township, Surkh Road district, Nangarhar, July 12, 2010

This training center is run by NCRA (National Consultancy & Relief Association). Here they do livestock / agriculture training with cows, poultry, also do some kitchen gardening. We visited this training center on a Friday; it was filled with women and young children from the neighborhood.

Asifa is 40-years old and is enrolled in the vocational training programme. Her family's income comes mainly from work in the transportation sector (60%) and construction daily labor (35%). The remaining 5% is a result of the sale of the chicken eggs – chicken that were given to her by the center as part of the poultry programme. There are 8 members in her family, 6 children (3 boys and 3 girls) and the 2 parents. They earn a total of 13200 a month, 1700 from her income and 7000 from transportation, 4500 from construction work.

She used to be the housewife but now her main occupation is poultry, she spends a lot of time taking care of the chicken. She has been actively doing this for 1 year. However, they still have problems meeting their food needs. They have decreased the quantity and quality of food, and sent the children to work to make up for the inflation and rising prices. The money saved through the WFP programme went into buying medication (opportunity cost).

The food distribution definitely motivated the women in the community to come to the training center, visit and see what was going on and how they could get on the list. The camp leader, shura leader and NRCA director were all very present in the selection process: it was based on a household survey of each home.

The **very positive element about poultry** is that it has little expenses, it's easy to take care of and the income is constant and good. Whenever we have needed help, for example to give medication to our chicken when they got sick, NRCA was very quick to respond with vaccines. **"Please give us more chicken – we are ready to work more!"**

Asifa was one of the "better off" women in the center. Other women in the center were much more vulnerable. For example:

Shekiba (0771165203): Her husband died 7-8 months ago, less than a year. Her oldest son is 5 years old, and is sitting by her side, very shy and scared. She also has a 7-year-old girl, and a 1-year old boy. She has 2 boys and 1 daughter. She makes 3000 AFA through the poultry programme every month. But having lost her husband, and his revenue/salary, she is facing a lot of difficulties. She uses everything she can: less quantity food, lesser quality food, she works, she takes loans from shops and friends, indebted.

Case study 3: Trainer and trainee participants, Injil – Ravashan township

The trainer and trainee were selected from the beauty parlor training activity (*see photos attached).* This is a 6-month programme; none of the trainers or trainees gets any salary, they only get food. It is the only incentive for them to go to the center; the other incentive is the hope of learning a skill and turning it into an income generating activity, given that these families are mainly female headed households (men died as martyrs).

None of us have any salary here; the food is the only help we get. But the problem is that even this help is not of good quality – look at the quality of the wheat, smell and touch it. When our staff touched the wheat they realized that it was dry and not fit for making good bread, as it would not stick in traditional ovens.

Us trainers get twice the ration of trainees; it does not cause any tension.

Weak points:

- **Quality:** The wheat is very low and can hardly be used; however the oil and pulse are of good quality.
- **Quantity: very low as well:** on average with 6/7 members in a household, and delivery every two months (often late!), this is not enough.
- **WE would prefer monthly deliveries of food –** rather than once every 2 months.
- **We would need either a salary OR**
- **We request other types of food to be delivered to us, such as:**
    - Rice
    - Flour
    - Sugar
    - Beans
    - Food special for children – cake, biscuits etc.
- **Lack of market linkage and lack of opportunities post-training = women become unemployed, at home, even though they have learned a new skill.**

The trainer – **Mariam -** is 25 years old and still single; she has recently come back from Iran where she was a refugee for 19 years. She grew up in Iran, went to school there and learned the skills she knows regarding beauty parlor activities. She returned to this area 3 years ago but has not been able to set up a house for herself; she doesn't even have a salary from her skill. She wants to find a way to set up her own activity – but only help received food. She needs more help, otherwise what's the point of having these skills?

There have already been a lot of developments – this town ship was created 6 years ago and back then it was a desert, there were no opportunities. We all came from different villages, many of us came as returnees from Iran. *"I have not yet received any help but this help from WFP; I am renting this house with my family, and have not been able to set up a stable life for myself, nor get married. I have had to postpone all my plans because of a lack of money".*

The trainee is called **Shakiba** – she is 16 years old only, and is attending grade 7 at school. She wants to study until grade 12. She enrolled in the programme, at the time, she spent the morning at school and the afternoon in training – it filled her day and she was very happy that way. Now she knows how to do hair, eyebrow, waxing, color…but no resources to turn this into an income generating activity. They are 4 members in her household – her mother, herself and 2 younger brothers. She is now in grade 7 in the mornings – what to do in the afternoons? Life is less interesting now, all I want to do is use my skill, but no opportunities here.

Our family had no choice but to come here: we are originally from Talab in Herat. My father died as a martyr and then we received this offer from the government – it was our only choice so we took it.

At first we had no water, electricity, not even a mosque. Now we have all those things. The PRT has helped us by building this center and providing with some materials.

We need a school – I have to walk 30 minutes to get to the nearest school – and a clinic: there is none nearby.

The trainer highlighted that this girl is an exception – most trainees are between 18-22, those that are chosen are not married. Very few married women or women under 18.

Case study 4: 50-year old extremely vulnerable trainee, Herat city – Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)

The center was filled with elder women – heads of households. This one woman was among the oldest and most vulnerable ones. **Zeinab** is 50-years old; she is the head of her household and has no revenue at all. She relies on the generosity and help of the community, the religious leaders and others who give zakat (Muslim charity) in order to help her. Her son died a few years ago, at the time his wife decided to leave the house. Zeinab was left alone with her granddaughter who is now 16 years old. She goes to school but does not work. As such, they have 0 income. The WFP FFT help therefore represents the only help they get, the only revenue they get for free and in kind.

Her life doesn't improve or get worse, how could it get any worse? I have been working in this training center for the past year but have not yet received any income because we have not sold any of the carpets I have worked on. But I continue to come in the hope I can someday get some money from this activity. I have no other option. I cannot at my age work much or start my own activity outside of this center. It is my only option.

Case study 5: Injil, HERAT, DoWA representative: Mr. Hafizullah

In this center, Khorsh Road center in Injil Herat, women gather at this local leader's house – they undergo functional literacy and Qoran reading. Now they have added tailoring and embroidery courses: 1.5 hours of tailoring + 1.5 hours of literacy every morning; and every afternoon with a different group.

Last year, in 2009, 84 women from this area (out of 200 families) joined the programme. The community itself funds the purchase of materials (as DoWA does not have the resources to provide them with it); DoWA has no budget to help. DoWA is there to motivate them and do some M&E.

WFP provides the food – this has continued in 2010. This is the only help they receive. Most of their homes are in ruins, they are for the most part returnees who have come back after the war to find their homes, which they had to rebuild. Here men are willing to let the women attend because food is an important help – in terms of money spent on other needs. The women's income though only limits itself to the WFP food. The tailoring has taught them to make better clothes for themselves and their families; but it has not translated into any type of income generating activity. It has made them more self-sufficient, but only temporarily. Once the food is gone, there is no money to buy raw materials for tailoring, and they go back to square 1, left with no income.

Unfortunately the WFP food is of low quality – by the time the wheat arrives to us, it takes I think 2/3 years from Canada, the US or elsewhere, then it arrives in Afghanistan and is stored for months in a hangar before being distributed. This means the quality is lost along the way, especially when it does not get stored properly, in a cool and dry place: insects, flies enter the bags. It would be much better if they bought these locally. Maybe more expensive, but also of higher quality, and they would probably save on a lot of logistical expenses.

The oil given to us should be split in individual boxes. For example, for each family WFP says that we have to give 3.7kgs of oil. Now in reality, they bring us a barrel of oil of 5kgs. That means that it becomes very messy to try to divide that amount for each family. In some cases, women do not even divide, some of the more powerful or older women take it all to their own home.

The quantities are not enough: especially for the oil. We need more oil. We need 100kg of wheat, 17L of oil, 5kg of pulse….**A big problem in Herat is that women are not used to eating or cooking pulse; they would much rather have rice given to them! WFP needs to take into consideration cultural differences and habits.** It would be better for families in Herat to be given rice. You have to be able to adapt to local specificities.

We had a **lot of distribution difficulties in 2009**: for example 10-12 villages had to come to one location to pick up the rations. It meant a lot of time and money spent. But now WFP has improved its distribution and the truck goes to each village to deliver rations. This was a big problem in 2009 because the main village where all the food was handed out would take a sort of tax from the other villages – they would ask for money in exchange of keeping the food stored for a few days.

We also had **problems with timing:** we only got 1 delivery for a 3-month training in late 2009. Now in 2010 we have started on a longer timeline.

We are happy with WFP but **the help is not meeting our needs: we have 1500 students, we requested 1500 participants to be included, but WFP only gave us for 400 trainees and 20 trainers – it creates tensions locally between villages.** Injil has 360 villages, we wanted to cover all of them but WFP couldn't meet our needs and ejected the request. Now we cover with WFP 6 villages and 5 centers in total.

Case study 6: Literacy center – Balkh district

In 2009 we had 20 students, 1 teacher and 1 director (who was also the director of many other centers…). We go home by home and collect women who are interested to join. They are all illiterate and we kept the limit at 20 as requested by DoE.

The programme followed a 9-month course, everyday, 8-10AM, 1-3PM…our teachers are ready to teach 4 times a day but we are not given funds / food for that much.

This year DoE discontinued our activities – we are very upset because they retrieved Balkh district from the list of target districts, without any explanation; we think it's because they want to make it benefit their own families and friends.

- We would like to work straight with WFP and not go through the DoE that has a biased selection process. We want to be judged directly by WFP staff and bid independently.

"There was no monitoring form WFP last year because they trust me. I call them often, visit their office, I don't hand any report in writing because they know me", says the center director in Balkh.

These women learn their name, then slowly the alphabet, as well as counting. They can slowly now read what's written on stores in the bazaar/city.

The food helps them concentrate better in class and learn more effectively, especially certain key lessons in the DoE textbook on childcare and hygiene. It has changed the way they interact at home with their families.

EXAMPLE OF LESSONS LEARNED – Examples given by the participants present:

1. We learned about hygiene,
2. We learned that we have to respect our husbands, we learn from the books that we have to provide them with tea when they get back from work, example: don't fight with your husbands in front of your children, learn to be more peaceful for the sake of your family's happiness and stability,
3. Boil water to give to children
4. Don't give leftover and unrefrigerated food to children,
5. Don't let children pee or poop in the streets,
6. If someone from the family coughs for more than 2 weeks, get it checked by a doctor it could be tuberculosis
7. WE learned how to keep the roads in front of the house clean – keep the community clean
8. **We also learn about credit and loan systems to set up an income generative activity but we don't have enough savings now…we are taught to save money – about ½ AFA a day to have money in case we have guests or special needs.**
9. Learn about vaccines for children
10. Learn to only give drinking/potable water to children
11. We don't let them go bare foot outside anymore
12. We wash their hands in soap water after they go to the bathroom

"We learned all these things last year, but now we don't even have books at home to continue on our own. If we don't receive food, our husbands will not let us take a few hours off to go to the center. They prefer then that we work in the fields or at home; they don't see the need for literacy training classes if there is no distribution of food or salaries".

- **To be more independent from our husbands, we would like to get vocational training courses along with literacy courses:** that way we could hope to learn a new skill or use a skill to sell on the local bazaar. We need help with that.

This particular group of participants showed me some very elaborate tailoring and embroidery productions that could sell well on the market (local or regional) if only they knew how to market it, and how to link up to the bazaar. There are already existing skills and opportunities to develop income-generating activities for these women – the presence of these groups could be turned into self-help groups. They have all they need in this area – water, electricity, school, clinic – they just lack opportunities for income generating activities.

Other organizations – like UNHABITAT provide teachers with salaries of 2500 for each session, so most teachers teach 2 courses and have an income of 5000 AFA that used to be 100 dollars. This is even more than the public school teachers who only get 4600 AFA!

Example of what WFP could do – extending timeline of courses:

UNESCO also helps – they have a better programme: 18 months with the same students: twice as long: 9 months for studying, the rest for tailoring and vocational training, to help them generate an income. Moreover, participants can keep tailoring machines that are donated to them.

Case study 7: Save the children – street children center – Mazar-e-Sharif

This is a center for street working children, girls and boys. In 2009, they had 150 students and 150 of the 2008 graduates who received WFP food rations. So total of 300 children given food rations.

In 2010, this programme continues, with 163 registered and another 30 not yet registered but in the selection process. We are doing our survey and needs assessment as we speak. We first need to check on their status.

We have 8 classes in our programme – 4 boys and 4 girls. For those 15-18 we do literacy and from 7-15 we do informal education. Our goal is to get many of them to re-integrate the formal education system. From the 150 of last year, 110 integrated the formal school system – this is a success for us.

Many of them are displaced because of the economic situation and lack of livelihood opportunities in their village. They arrive in the city, and the children are put to work in the streets, or as trainees in metal workshops etc. They spend most of their time in the street, that's how we find them. Then we visit their homes and realize most of the family burden is on them.

We have a 12-month programme – 6 months into it WFP brought the food rations. We gave them all the food at once.

The only problem was the very low quality of wheat. The package doesn't represent much, maybe 3000 AFA total, which over the course of 12 months is very little. It is some help but it is very little and only temporary; but still a relief for these families, and for children especially. Less pressure on them.

Case Study 8: Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) Heart, 19 July 2010, *Interview with Najiba Saadat and Mr. Ibrahim (0799425245)*

This center in Herat city started 1.5 years ago. The first year – in 2009 – we only had carpet weaving. In 2010, we have also added tailoring AND literacy classes for an hour each day to the women benefiting from the VT programme.

We have 2 shifts of classes: one in the morning from 8-12pm then one in the afternoon from 1-4pm. This leaves us enough time to add 1 hour of literacy training after each shift, so one literacy class from 12-1pm and one from 4-5pm. This is needed because most if not all of our trainees are completely illiterate.

This was the suggestion of **DoWA:** we have a very good working relationship with them. They told us it would be good for us to add one hour of literacy training, that can be given by the trainers that are already on the job. The participants liked the idea and wanted to join, so we decided to offer this option.

We work very well with DoWA: we tell them when we miss certain things and they help us out. For example we requested additional sewing machines for our tailoring programme, and the DoWA accepted. We will be picking these machines up tomorrow.

DoWA also helped us with a very good and creative idea: **one of our main problems it that carpets no longer sell as well, now just 4500 AFA when the potential is for 10000AFA. But the market here does not allow for higher prices; there are no exports of our carpets.** So DoWA came up with a suggestion: they said we should open a shop at the airport. They have sent in the request for us and we are waiting to hear back. It would be great to send to travelers, who can often afford higher prices.

Overall good cooperation and coordination with WFP BUT Problems/ weaknesses:

- In 6 months they only came twice – including once for a visit of 2 foreigners from the Kabul office.
- They came to help us distribute to the 200-300 women but
- Quantity and quality are low: very low, doesn't represent anything compared to the extent of their needs.
    - Let's say a family of 6 members would need instead 16kgs of oil, 40kgs of wheat, etc.
- This wheat costs 18AFA on the local market – very low cost compared to local production
- **Most women will sell the wheat, 140 AFA for 25 kgs, and use this money to buy higher quality wheat. They have no other choice. Approximately 5-7 AFA per kilo, very much under the market price!**
- **There is no income from these activities – carpet weaving – mainly just pocket money for them:**
    - Let's say that they sell one carpet after 2.5 months for 4500 AFA:
    - Out of this amount, half goes into buying materials for the next carpet
    - Then another 1000 AFA will go into rent for the office and other admin costs
    - There remains maybe 500 AFA / beneficiary at the end of this process, every 2.5 months… This cannot be considered as a salary or employment. These women are unemployed.
- **We recommend strongly that WFP extends its assistance beyond 6 months to enter into 12-month contracts with us. This would allow for us to ensure that women learn a skill in-depth.**

Case Study 9: DoLSAMD Herat - 19 July 2010,

DoLSAMD strikes a balance between its work on labor issues and its work on social affairs. We work very closely with UNHCR on EVI (extremely vulnerable individuals) issues – specifically with returnee and IDP populations. We have for now 4 centers in the area – 1 in Herat, 2 in Injil and 1 in Guzara district. These centers work with WFP since 2006/2007. It has been the same programme content since.

DoLSAMD gets funding for materials from PRT – the Italian PRT built this training center (*see photo taken of the training center signpost).*

There are 400 families in this township. We have achieved to take one person from each home and enroll them in either of our programmes. We go from door to door and select one person from each compound. **Selection:** we know which families are the most vulnerable. **In this neighborhood they are particularly vulnerable – they are mainly women headed households, since they have lost their husbands / martyrs. As a result, the government has created this township 7 years ago, bringing families from other districts in Herat. This was done by DoLSAMD; at the very beginning there was no infrastructure at all, now it is slowly getting better; we are trying to make this area a priority.**

Attention: this does not mean one person from each family since there are sometimes several families in one compound. It can create tensions when some families are not chosen. They see others in their compound having access to food they do not get.

The negative / weak points are:

- Sometimes we are not warned of **delivery time** in advance; they just give us a 4 hour heads up and expect us to be able to take care of the logistics of food delivery on such a late call. But now they have learned and have improved. I have told them I need at least a 2-day warning.
- **Poor quality** wheat is an obvious example for everyone. We give this wheat to women who are heads of their households, who are responsible for the health and well being of their children. The other members in the household don't want to eat this wheat or any of its production. It is not good for children. "Given our efforts to come to the training center with no salary, we should at least be given decent quality food".
    - This is the case for the wheat
    - BUT also for the flour: CSP flour was distributed for childcare, but every person who received it complained – it was not good quality at all.
- **We do not have enough materials to give to these women – they have to come to the training center if they want to use their skills, no way they can do that from home.**
- **Some other NGOs have a more attractive programme**: example of Intersos that now has taken over / rents the DoLSAMD building:
    - They provide $50/month to the trainees, as a salary, and
    - They provide kits for participants to use their skill at home as an income generating activity.

- **Most importantly: WFP should do a better job in monitoring and evaluation. For example, our recommendation is that the most vulnerable should always be selected.**
    - In some of our centers, we know that only 50% of people need the food help. "*Many of the less needy women sell the food! If they were really that vulnerable they would keep the food, as they would not be able to spend more to get better quality wheat."*
    - *"Look at this center, you see food left outside, and some bags of wheat left in a corner in the main room. This shows to you that the food is not that central to trainers and*

trainees, if they don't take it home right away. So why were they selected? What was WFP's role in the selection process?"

- *"In other centers, I see women with gold watches and bracelets coming to get the same amount of food bags as a women who has no income at all. This is not a fair process."*

- This mis-selection issue is not the responsibility of DoLSAMD, in the eyes of this woman. DoLSAMD, because it is a government office and should represent all Afghans in any given area, it cannot discriminate between most vulnerable and less vulnerable. This is WFP's job to distinguish the different groups and set priorities in terms of selection – not just on paper but in reality as well. **WFP should participate in the selection process actively.**

- **Is the goal to keep getting new participants or to continue with the same ones, so that they learn the skill better?** For example, we will have trainees in a 9-month programme but that does not mean that they can all graduate. If they don't have the level needed, they will enroll again. This is what happened with 2009 participants, who are also often our current 2010 participants. **We have to look into the question of sustainability and selection of participants.**

Picture 8: Sewing Activity in Nangarhar

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