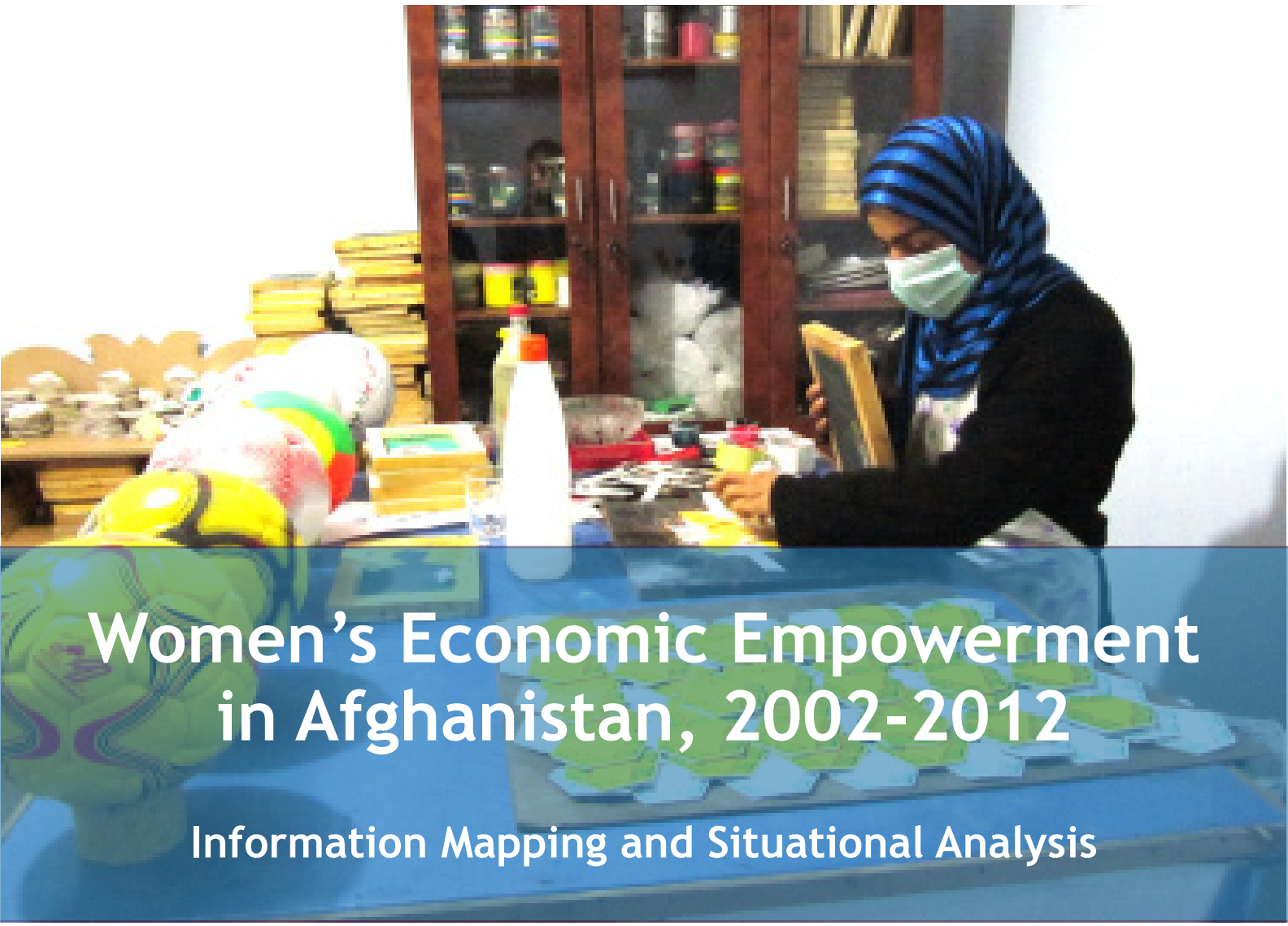

Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012

Information Mapping and Situational Analysis

AREU

November 2013

UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Synthesis Paper

Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012:

Information Mapping and Situation Analysis

Dr. Lena Ganesh

with

Massouda Kohistani

Rahim Azami

UN WOMEN

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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About the Author

Dr. Ganesh is an anthropologist researching and working on gender, particularly in areas of armed conflict. An architect with professional media experience, her other areas of research experience and interest concern violence against women, gendered exclusion within traditional hierarchical social structures, and the historical and extant gendered uses of space.

About the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) is an independent research institute based in Kabul. AREU's mission is to inform and influence policy and practice through conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research and actively disseminating the results, and to promote a culture of research and learning. To achieve its mission, AREU engages with policymakers, civil society, researchers and students to promote their use of AREU's research and its library, to strengthen their research capacity, and to create opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate.

AREU was established in 2002 by the assistance community working in Afghanistan and has a board of directors with representation from donors, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organisations. AREU currently receives core funds from the Embassy of Finland, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

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Preface

In the recent socioeconomic cultures of Afghanistan, as in those of most countries since the Industrial Revolution's introduction of the artificial division between production and reproduction, women's participation in the labour economy, whether reproductive or productive, has been invisible and unaccounted for. In parallel, socio-cultural practices specific to Afghanistan—that have often been an uncertain mix between the Shariat code and those customary laws followed by different ethnicities and tribes—have adversely affected women and girls' living conditions. As a consequence, women's practical and strategic needs have not been addressed by consecutive regimes. At the same time, little of the discourse on women's human rights has advanced beyond the more recent rhetoric around "gender empowerment" to materially and politically improve the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan.

This Report looks at the current status of the women of Afghanistan. It juxtaposes the many international agreements, laws and strategies that Afghanistan has effected in the past decade with women's current human rights and economic status. As a parallel tool in understanding the whole, the report then looks at community contexts and the gender norms prevalent within them to assess the ways in which women's participation in an economic opportunity project has affected their empowerment, agency, decision-making and status within their families and communities.

The Report concludes with recommendations evolving from the analysis and offers an understanding of the ways in which policies and processes can work in limited ways at the programming and implementing levels. While streamlining can offer greater efficiency, there is a need for greater emphasis on effective and accountable programming for longer-term economic empowerment strategies. This is all the more urgent given the impending transition of security responsibilities and its associated concerns on the bartering away of women's recently (re)gained rights to placate conservative factions. The programming and resource utilisation could be better sensitised toward a cogent gender-oriented strategy that contributes to women's equal participation in the development of Afghanistan, and equally importantly, as equal citizens of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Foreword

The economic empowerment of women in Afghanistan will not only contribute to greater personal income independence, but will also play a vital role in efforts to secure equal rights for women and the removal of gender discrimination from laws, institutions, and behavioural patterns. The creation of an enabling environment for women to engage with market mechanisms will further the development of our country, and individuals, communities, and society as a whole will prosper as a result.

AREU has worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development on a variety of research projects, and we hope that this positive and productive relationship will continue to grow. Knowledge is our most precious yet most overlooked resource, and organisations such as AREU have been instrumental to our acquiring this knowledge as well as to the dissemination of the learning it has engendered.

This research paper contributes to a body of work that serves to enhance our understanding of the economic role of women within a wider contextual framework, and underlines the socio-cultural barriers and policy deficits that remain to be addressed.

Wais Ahmad Barmak
Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
Government of Afghanistan
October 2013

Foreword

The past decade has brought with it many changes in Afghanistan, some encouraging and others challenging. For Afghan women and girls progress has been made towards creating increased opportunities and choices but these progresses are still modest and can be difficult to sustain.

During 2010, UN Women supported the preparation of the Women Economic Security and Rights (WESR) Strategy, which aims to strengthen the various domestic and international rights frameworks the government has endorsed with the aim to guarantee Afghan women a multitude of economic rights. As part of this strategy a research was commissioned to create a body of knowledge that can be used for evidence based advocacy. UN Women is now presenting the results of this study in the report "Information Mapping and Situational Analysis on Women Economic Empowerment 2002-12" which focus mainly on women's economic rights. The report includes information on a variety of knowledge products on how wage, land, and trade policies in Afghanistan impact Afghan women's ability to build economic assets. Through this research, it is envisaged that all the development actors both national and international as well as government and non-government entities will benefit immensely on identifying and recognizing the economic needs of Afghan women.

This study is done in two parts, the first part being the Information Mapping. This part looks into developments and interventions around women's economic status in Afghanistan post 2002, including on international resolutions and governmental strategies, legal amendments, procedures and mechanisms. Reviewing gendered developmental and economic indicators, it maps the ways in which women's access to human rights and to economic engagement have been addressed, or not, in this past decade. The second part details out Situational Analysis. It contextualises the first part by focusing on the views of women participants and their communities, of selected projects in rural and urban Kabul that aimed at enhancing women's economic opportunities and activities. It takes a closer look into the socio-cultural processes that help or hinder women's participation in the income-generation interventions that the policies and strategies of the government and international agencies seek to engender. In doing so, it looks at the space between policy and implementation, and between strategy and praxis.

I forward this study and all the key findings and the insights provided in this research with the sincere hope that it will help all of us to improve the lives of Afghan women and strengthen their status within the family and society at large and as active contributors to the Afghan national economy.

Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladottir
Country Representative
UN Women, Afghanistan Country Office
October, 2013

Foreword

The 12 years since 2001 have constituted an upheaval in Afghan political structures and institutions. Two Presidential elections; the deployment of international troops; an expanded presence in the world's media; and a spotlight on social growth and development by governments, have all occurred against a backdrop of an economy in transition. As 2014 approaches, heralding the formal withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Forces and the end of President Karzai's term in office, change is once again the order of the day.

Concurrent with the handover process, an opportunity has presented itself to translate into tangible accomplishments what is now universally acknowledged: that women are integral to a successful Afghan State. While this recognition has become enshrined in policy its realisation needs to be continuously emphasised. In order for Afghans to claim their inheritance and craft a future of which they can be proud, rebuilding their country and their lives, the voices and actions of those who are most marginalised must be the most valued.

For some, the inability to move beyond platitudes to measurable results regarding the role of women in Afghan society constitutes an insurmountable challenge. However, despite the collective failure to meet a number of associated benchmarks, the fact that such benchmarks have been set in the first place should be a point of encouragement. We need to cling to the most generous vision; even if we are unable to realise it, each step is one closer, and one to which governments, organisations and the public can be held to account.

Women's economic empowerment not only forms the basis of a just and equal society, but also leads to stability and growth, as a country in which half the population are excluded from the workforce is destined to flounder amid competitive market forces. This is particularly pertinent to Afghanistan's development given the expected drop-off in Official Development Assistance. Microfinance schemes have established a basis for women's involvement in the economic sphere and can be solidified through coherent meso-level policy.

Improving education and health care access will expand the opportunities and capabilities of the Afghan workforce by addressing the discrimination and disadvantages faced by women and girls. Improving lives and ensuring fulfilment should be sought for all, regardless of gender, ethnicity or nationality. Through this Issue Paper, AREU and UN Women, further locate the most acute needs by listening to those at the frontlines of poverty. Standing in solidarity with women and girls across the world, we hope to afford them the dignity that is theirs by right.

Nader Nadery
Director
Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
October, 2013

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This research is indebted to Massouda Kohistani and Rahim Azami without whose dedication and skills, much orientation would have been lost. In particular, their tenacity in identifying appropriate individuals and representatives of organisations and of the government and their persistence in the often burdensome task of following up with them contributed immensely to this Report, as have their field notes, observation and many other aspects of research. The hard work put in by Ehsan Khamosh, Abdullah Azizi, Hoshem Sidiqi, Homayun Rahimi and Ibrahim Amiri in translating and transcribing the interviews remains invaluable. Thanks are also due to Mahdi Mosawi and Roya Mahtabi for their contributions to phases of this project.

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Dr. Chona Echavez's formidable coordination, cheer, guidance and feedback through this project remain invaluable. My thanks to Dr. Malathi Velamuri for her insights and feedback on this report, and for our discussions on gender and political economy. Finally, I express my gratitude to the reviewers of this report who so kindly took the time and trouble to offer comments and suggestions in order to improve its quality and clarity.

Any mistakes and misinterpretations remain my responsibility.

Lena Ganesh
October, 2013
Kabul, Afghanistan

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Glossary

Baad: A practice where female family members (that is, children, young girls and women) are given as brides to settle blood feuds. Such brides are seen as of low status and, consequently, are more susceptible to domestic violence. Also practiced and seen as socially legitimate when an engaged woman or girl runs away (or elopes) and her family cannot repay the groom's engagement expenses, or return the toyana (brideprice); another unmarried female relative of the family is given or taken away as restitution. Women and girls could also be given in baad in lieu of non-repayable loans. All baad is usually either decided by the Jirga or condoned by the community as restorative justice to prevent conflict. Baad is a criminal offence in Afghanistan.

Badal: lit. "exchange"; a practice when a female (sister, daughter, niece) and male of one family are married to a male and female from another. Seen as involving unwilling parties and/or inappropriate matches; for example, a father marrying his daughter to a man and marrying the other man's daughter in exchange.

Besharm: The term behaya (without modesty) or besharm (without shame), mostly used for women, is analogous with behaviour that is unseemly and lacks zanangi (the ethos of the zanana). Besides adhering to gender norms in soft speech and fully modest dress, and maintaining visual and spatial gender boundaries, women are also expected to display deference to be considered with '"sharm." Being besharm is also associated with the phrase "padar karda nabod" – "one whose father did not bring her up well."

Chhadori: the traditional, all-encompassing, loose and stitched outer garment worn by Afghan women, ideologically associated with Islam and with the honour implicit in "keeping purdah", i.e. maintaining gender boundaries. It covers the body from head to toe with a latticed opening over the eyes. It has generally been de rigeur among the settled population during the past century and blue in colour since about the 1990s in Afghanistan.

Gheirat: honour, self-respect, prestige, lineage, status of a household or quam (tribe) of an individual man.

Hashār: community "duty," performed by women and men through, for example, sending bread at times of death to a family in the community/settlement, cleaning the mosque for festivals, participating in shurās for the ceremonies like fateha, khatm of the Holy Qur'an, in happiness and sadness ceremonies or problems of the community.

Jirga: Gathering/council of elders—traditionally elite males, with some seniority, wealth, learning and/or other markers of social capital—within a community or tribe to discuss and decide upon economic, legal and social issues. The issues could be intra-community, inter-tribe/community or between the community/tribe and the state. Decisions taken by the Jirga members can be authoritative and not generally open to dissent or non-compliance.

Mahr: the amount given by the groom to the bride. While mahr-e-moajal is given at the time of marriage, mahr-e-ma'ajal, the amount set upon the finalisation of marriage, is, under Islamic jurisprudence, a contractual obligation to be paid by the husband to the wife in the eventuality of the dissolution of the marriage. Both types are observed more in their breach than in deed.

Mahram: husband or another close male relative with whom marriage is prohibited and who is a responsible for the well-being and actions of a woman.

Meshrano Jirga: "House/Council of Elders", Afghanistan's Upper House of Parliament

Nang: could be described as male-specific social capital that is honour-based and which adds to his gheirāt, and to that of the family, household and quam. Nang can be seen as a complex of honour, courage, bravery, dignity and shame.

Namos: could be seen as the private aspect of nang, dealing with inviolate and inviolable privacy, personified best in the women of the family/household/settlement/ village/quam/ nation. It refers to the "integrity, modesty and respectability of women and to the absolute duty of men to protect them ." Preserving nāmus is a constitutive logic of nang; it requires control over and protection of women.

Pardah: "Keeping pardah" or "keeping hjab" or zanangi (noun) or being "with haya (modesty)" and "with sharm (shame)" are terms encompassing a range of behaviour that helps recreate the spirit of the zanana, which is, physically, that part of the house in which women are dominant. The recreation is through spatial and physical segregation, veiling of the face and body, avoidance of unrelated men, restriction of physical mobility, supervision and control over physical movements, avoidance of public spaces and gendered forms of address. Women "keeping pardah" could generally remain segregated from direct interaction with the public, issues regarding household consumption, expenditures, health care, visiting the shops, and sundry situations. It is equally incumbent upon men to maintain this pardah and modesty in interaction in non-mahram situations. A good family deserving marital alliance could be described as a "parda-karda" family, i.e. one that keeps pardāh and which is therefore decent and respectable.

Quam: ethnic group/subgroup, clan, tribe; an identity-marker.

Qur'an, Qur'an-e-Sharief: lit. "reading", Holy Qur'an; teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during his lifetime.

Shura: Local council.

Shari'ah: lit. "path"; the legal process within Islam that governs the believer's relationship to the state, to community and to the divine, in adherence with the principles of the Qur'an-e-Sharief and the Sunnah, given extant socio-political circumstances. Of its major schools of madhaahib (jurisprudence), Hannafiand Ja'fariare followed in Afghanistan. The former, seen as the most liberal and followed by Afghanistan's majority Sunni population, emphasises the application of logic by scholars in applying Islamic rules to new situations.

Siyali wa shariki: a highly structured social exchange of concern, material gifts or help and support between female kith and kin to show solidarity in good times and bad.

Siasar: wife, or woman generally; sometimes can also mean significant female kin like daughter, mother.

Sunnah: the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It reflects the "normative practices" to which the believer must adhere. The Sunnah supplements the Qur'an, offering insight into some of its meanings.

Wolesi Jirga: "House/Council of People", Afghanistan's Lower House of Parliament

Ulema: religious scholars.

Acronyms

AAIDO	Afghan Almond Industry Development Organisation
AAWU	All Afghan Women's Union
ACCI	Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries
ACE	Agricultural Credit Enhancement
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ADF	Agricultural Development Fund
AGRED	Afghan Agricultural Research Extension Development
AIA	Afghanistan Interim Authority
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
AISA	Afghan Investment Support Agency
AMDGs	Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals
AMICS	Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
AMIP	Agriculture Market Infrastructure Project
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
APA	Afghan National Army
APTTA	Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement
ARD	Association For Rural Development
AREDP	Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ARMP	Afghanistan Rural Microcredit Program
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ASAP	Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Project
ASM	Artisans and Small Mining
AWBC	Afghan Women Business Council
AWBF	Afghan Women Business Federation
AWC	Afghan Women's Council
AWEC	Afghan Women Educational Centre
AWN	Afghan Women Network
BHCs	Basic Healthcare Centres
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CBE	Community Based Education
CCD	Community Centre for Disabled
CDCs	Community Development Councils

CDMA	Code Division Multiple Access
CEDAW	Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia
CLG	Common Livelihood Group
CoC	Chamber of Commerce
CSO	Central Statistics Organisation
CTAP	Civilian Technical Assistance Program
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDAs	District Development Authorities
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DoWA	Directorate of Women Affairs
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
EIF	European Investment Fund
EPAA	Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FPs	Facilitating Partners
FRDO	Female Rehabilitation and Development Organisation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSM	Global System for Mobiles
HAM	Humanitarian Assistance Muska
HFL	Hope For Life
HLP	Horticulture and Livestock Project
HMIS	Health Management Information System
IALP	Integrated Alternative Livelihood Program
I-ANDS	Interim-Afghanistan National Development Strategy
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICCP	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESC	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IEC	Independent Elections Commission
IEEW	Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
ILO	International Labour Organisation

IMCs	Inter-Ministerial Committees
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRU	Innovative Research Universities
IT	Information Technology
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LEVAW	Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women
LOFTA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
MAIL	Ministry Of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MCIT	Ministry Of Communication, Information and Technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEDA	Mennonite Economic Development Associates
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MFIs	Microfinance Institutions
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan
MISPA	Ministry of Women's Affairs Initiative to Support Policy and Advocacy
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industries
MoEc	Ministry of Economy
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoFAD	Micro-Finance Agency for Development
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoM	Ministry of Mines
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoRR	Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation
MoTCA	Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
MoUD	Ministry of Urban Development
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NABDP	National Area Based Development Program
NADF	National Agricultural Development Framework
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan
NASP	National Afghanistan Statistical Plan

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NECDO	Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organisation
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NOREF	NorskRessurssenter for Fredsbygging/Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre
NPPs	National Priority Programs
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSDP	National Skills Development Program
NSP	National Solidarity Program
NTM	NATO Training Mission
OHCHR	Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights
PARSA	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Support for Afghanistan
PC	Provincial Council
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHDP	Perennial Horticulture Development Project
PWDC	Provincial Women's Development Council
RAMP	Rebuilding Agricultural Markets in Afghanistan Program
RASA	Rabiha-e-Balkhee Skill Support Administration
RECCA V	Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan
RMLSP	Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Program
RSPS	Road Sector Support Program
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAF	Solidarity for Afghan Families
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Area
SAL	Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDNRP	Sustainable Development of Natural Resources Project
SDO	Sanayee Development Organisation
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SHARP	Strengthen Health Activities for the Rural Poor
STARS	Skills Training and Rehabilitation Society
TAFA	Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan
TALP	Targeted Alternative Livelihood Program
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAW	Women for Afghan Women
WFW	Women for Women
WOCCU	World Council for Credit Unions
WPDC	Women's Policy Development Centre
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Photo taken by Massouda Kohistani, Perfume Shop, Shahr-i-Naw, Kabul

"I'm very happy that I have this small shop, […] other women should see me in the picture so they get the courage to open some shop for themselves in public and local markets."

Executive Summary

Women's economic participation in Afghanistan is increasingly being seen as an integral part of both women's rights and local development. As a part of UN Women's broader strategy on Women, Economic Security and Rights, this research maps and reviews efforts that have been undertaken to improve women's economic status and rights since 2001. It places the deficit of Afghan women's economic participation in the wider frame of policy and the deep-rooted socio-cultural barriers that women face in different arenas.

This report, based upon research conducted in 2012-13 by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, is presented in two sections. The first section, Information Mapping, looks at developments and interventions regarding women's economic status in Afghanistan post- 2002, including international resolutions and governmental strategies, legal amendments, procedures and mechanisms. Reviewing gendered development and economic indicators, it maps the information of various government resources and multilateral and institutional agencies working in Afghanistan. It offers an assessment of their workings and analyses the ways in which women's empowerment and economic engagement have been addressed, or not, in the past decade.

The second section, Situational Analysis, contextualises the earlier one by focusing on the views of women participants and their communities on selected projects in rural and urban Kabul that aimed at enhancing women's economic opportunities and activities. It takes a closer look at the socio-cultural processes that help or hinder women's participation in the income-generation interventions that the policies and strategies of the government and international agencies seek to engender. The analysis focuses on women's agency and empowerment while taking into account the systems of dispositions that inform institutional practices and perspectives. In doing so, it reviews the space between policy and implementation, and between strategy and praxis. The Report concludes by offering policy recommendations.

This research uses three methods for obtaining information:

(i) evaluations and analyses of programming of the government and implementing organisations working directly on projects designed to enhance women's participation in economic activities,

(ii) primary evidence from 68 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with representatives of Ministries and government programmes, donor agencies and embassies, agencies and networks that implement projects for women's economic participation, project participants and male agnates of the participants, and 10 focus group discussions with female and male representatives of the project participants' immediate communities, and,

(iii) secondary evidence from documents and material obtained from and about Ministries and donor agencies.

Although there is a paucity of gender-disaggregated data in many sectors—especially labour, employment, time-use, and similar—this research synthesises available information and identifies those aspects that need to be considered for strengthening this much-neglected, but crucial area.

Research findings indicate that although there have been many achievements this past decade, they are relative to the cumulative deprivations faced during the preceding three decades and are, further, heavily constrained by extant severe poverty. Gender gaps are wide across sectors and strategies in Afghanistan. At the government level, they are most keenly seen in legal instruments, in the inadequate implementation of policy into strategy, and in the lack of extensive outreach of ministerial policies and national strategies for gendered development. Further, even as many policies are well positioned and cover much ground, some lack context and gender-sensitivity, while others focus on broad-based vision statements that offer little material direction. The effects of the gender gaps are sharpest in the following:

- access to basic health services, particularly in reproductive health, mental health, and in addressing gender-based violence;
- female absolute enrolment at primary levels and in retention at secondary and tertiary levels;
- women's economic participation in the public and private sectors and in the urban and non-urban economy; and
- women's political participation, especially at district and provincial levels and their absence in most national decision-making bodies.

All of these ultimately have a cascading effect on women's economic well-being, particularly within the contexts of the high levels of gender-based violence and increasing insecurity in Afghanistan.

Economically, the picture that emerges is of women's unpaid or low-paying work in insecure and vulnerable jobs being unaccounted for in an informal, unregulated economy. While the micro-finance investment sector, a potential opportunity channel for women, is currently quite restricted, there is a dearth of support for women in small and medium-scale entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, some of the strategies, programmes and projects of the past years in capacity- and skill-building are beginning to bear fruit, with urban Afghanistan and select pockets in rural Afghanistan being the drivers of change. Spaces and cracks are opening up that encourage women's economic engagement. There is immense potential for new opportunities for women in the small and medium-sized enterprise industry, particularly in horticulture, poultry, agri-business and manufacturing. In these sectors, protection is required to nurture and sustain their initial gestation and growth. The need now is to harness the energy and knowledge of the many micro-level projects for women implemented in the past decade into a coherent meso-level policy that can inform the national economy. Women-only occupational groups and producer associations need to be nurtured and strengthened in an enabling environment through regulatory reform, investment and trade links, even as women's labour participation should be acknowledged and formally encouraged through policy, incentive and remuneration.

Equally, this research shows that women's economic participation is hugely dependent upon localised, community-based perspectives incorporated into a project's programming and that a project's efficacy and sustainability are possible only if its link to markets is strong. While an Islamic framework validates a project's legitimacy, women's income enhancement propels significant changes in self-perception and ability that affect gender roles within the family and the community. Although all women in this research are unequivocal about the rights that income generation can or has conferred upon them, the changes in attitude are clearer in projects that brought visible income generation or enhancement.

Bringing changes in women's access to economic opportunities will require strengthening existing actions in, especially, education, health, and religious affairs. These converge in the field of what could be termed *"creating women's spaces for women"* by:

1. Strengthening the policy environment: At the Central level of the Government, across Line Ministries and within the Central Statistics Organisation (CSO), there has to be a revised understanding of women's contribution to Afghanistan's economic development. The specific implementation of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA) and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) alone, in collaboration with the Line Ministries, would address many of the gaps that the country is facing today in human development, poverty reduction and the greater involvement of women in economic activities, including through women-friendly labour and finance reform.

2. Addressing human development gaps: It is crucial to address the gaps that girls and women face in education, health care, and access to safety, physical mobility and political participation. One of the routes to take is to adhere to customary and traditional norms and values in gendering facilities. In the meantime, there is already enough encouragement for women's access to education—the quest for knowledge being a central pillar of Islam—and to health services. The bottlenecks here are access to separate but equal resources for women, particularly for girls and younger women.

3. Focusing on deliverables: It is important to create a strong and active cross-sectoral network of and for women that operates at a pan-Afghanistan level to build a women-to-women service delivery model (from producer to wholesalers/ processors/exporters) as well as female entrepreneurship with a focus on the domestic market and export potential.

4. Engendering financial services: Access to credit and capital is essential to widen and enhance women's economic engagement. Access to collateral remains a bottleneck and women lack insurance and risk guarantees; the current microfinance climate offers women only limited opportunities, especially in the rural informal sector and in small-scale entrepreneurship. Larger-scale investment in medium- and small-scale industry that makes better use of women's entrepreneurship and business skills and labour participation is needed.

Given Afghanistan's socio-cultural background as well as the gender dynamics prevalent prior to 1973 and between 1973 and 2001, the situation at present could be called encouraging. Nonetheless, the economic empowerment of women in terms of policy in Afghanistan is greatly complicated by the absence or limited presence of human rights. There has to be both a better perception of how various dimensions of exclusion interact with gender and an ability to address existing socio-religious power structures that limit women's economic participation.

Equally, in order to create free, fair and favourable opportunities for women's equitable access to the monetised market, a "level playing field" in the world economy is necessary. Much depends upon the nature of the transition and the terms of the negotiated agreement as well as the turn the economy may take; nonetheless, a focussed national policy on women's economic empowerment, with protection measures, is needed. While short-term initiatives and medium-term investments by politicians, academicians, civil society activists, political parties, religious scholars, tribal elders, provincial councils, members of commerce and trade, and other groups are critical to keep the momentum of the past decade going, longer-term human and resource investment is vital for the comprehensive rejuvenation of society.

1. Introduction

A key development in Afghanistan's recent history has been its legal, political and humanitarian engagement with the international community in the wake of the events since 2001. In many publicised interactions on these issues, human rights compliance and gender equality have been features meriting both national and international scrutiny. However, gendered economic engagement and empowerment, interfaced as it is with low development and predicated on the precondition of security, has perhaps received less attention. Since 2004, Afghanistan has formally subscribed to the free market economy[1].The increasing interweaving and dependence of Afghanistan with the globalised economy has further meant that women's entry into the labour market ensures they do a triple shift[2]. Women typically remain in labour-intensive, micro-level activities, at best supported by microcredit and other forms of restricted access to resources and without access to savings and susceptible to risk; the feminisation of poverty is evident[3]. Further, the economic policies of the government have not emphasised the sectors that currently involve the majority of the population[4] and in which women play significant (if "invisible") roles. The ideal division of labour is still very much the man as breadwinner and the woman as homemaker, despite or due to the centrality of Islam; this has severe implications for women's ability to access a monetised labour market positioned in the public sphere.

Afghanistan's growth is, in a best-case scenario, predicted at 7 percent for 2011-18 with agriculture and natural resources seen as the key drivers and mining showing potential. The per capita GDP has grown from US$426 in 2009 to US$505 in 2010 to US$629 in 2011[5]; in 2012, the per capita GDP was US$725[6]. Afghanistan's population for 2012-13 is estimated at about 25.5 million with nearly 12.5 million females and 13 million males[7]. 2007/2008 figures show women's labour participation at 47 percent, with nearly 95 percent of women in vulnerable employment and 78 percent in unpaid family work[8].

1 Article 10, Constitution of Afghanistan, 2004. http://www.afghanembassy.com.pl/cms/uploads/images/Constitution/The%20Constitution.pdf (accessed 9 June 2013).

2 Caring labour for the family, household work and income-generating work. See, for example, S. Himmelweit, "Making Visible the Hidden Economy: The Case for Gender-Impact Analysis of Economic Policy," *Feminist Economists* 8, no.1 (2002): 49-70.

3 Poverty in Afghanistan is defined as the ability to access 2,100 calories and some basic non-food needs, the monetary equivalent of which works out to about 47 Afs per person per day or 708 Afs/US$14 per person per month, which 36 percent of the population is unable to access while 53 percent can just about access. Central Statistics Organisation (CSO) and World Bank, "Setting the Official Poverty Line for Afghanistan", (CSO and World Bank, undated): 24, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/AFGHANISTANEXTN/Resources/305984-1326909014678/8376871-1334700522455/PovertyStatusMethodologyReport.pdf (accessed 5 June 2013). See also Amelie Banzet, Marjan Kamal, Peggy Pascal, Johan Pasquet and François Grunewald, "Research on Chronically Poor Women in Afghanistan: Final Report," 18 (Japan International Cooperation Agency and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, March 2008), http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/CPW_report_hand-ove-_march2008.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). A more recent multi-dimensional analysis of poverty in Afghanistan reports a Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.51 by which estimate almost 84 percent of Afghan households are multi-dimensionally poor, Centre for Policy and Human Development, "Afghanistan Human Development Report 2011 The Forgotten Front: Water Security and the Crisis in Sanitation", (Kabul: Kabul University, Centre for Policy and Human Development, 2011):36-38.

4 59.1 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, 24.6 percent in services and 12.5 percent in industry services, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy, "Afghanistan Provincial Briefs 2011" (Kabul: 2011), http://moec.gov.af/Content/files/Last%20updated%20english.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). However, agriculture contributed to 26.74 percent of the GDP in 2012, while services and industry contributed 48.27 percent and 21.39 percent respectively, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, CSO, "Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12" (Kabul: CSO, 2012).

5 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Statistics Organisation, "Statistical Indicators in the Country" , http://cso.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/StatisticalIndicatorsinthecountry392012859827055332 5325.pdf (accessed 5 June 2013).

6 CSO, "Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12."

7 Not including the 1.5 million nomadic population, Central Statistics Organisation, "Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12", Settled Population by Civil Division, http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Settled%20Population%20by%20Civil%20Division.pdf (accessed 7 June 2013).

8 Ministry of Economy and the World Bank "Poverty Status in Afghanistan: A Profile Based on the National Risk Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007/8" (Ministry of Economy, 2010). However, as Gaye et al. (2010) note: "Labor force participation, as traditionally measured, ignores the important contributions of women in unpaid work and may perpetuate the undervaluing of these critical activities.' Amie Gaye, Jeni Klugman, Milorad Kovacevic, Sarah Twigg and Eduardo Zambrano, "Measuring key disparities in human development: the Gender Inequality Index" (Human Development Research Paper, UNDP 2010/46): 14, http://paa2013.princeton.edu/papers/130872 (accessed 5 June 2013). Further, the numbers of underemployed women are not

However, the socio-cultural codes in Afghanistan around honour, household and extended family, require that the product of women and men's joint labour be converted by men in the monetised market, to which women generally have no direct access. Since women's economic empowerment, arguably, is based upon a community's understanding of gender roles and because such gendered performance, in itself, involves a huge socio-cultural component, the issue of economic engagement relates to questions of the gendered self in Afghanistan. These include the "sexualisation of space" (that is, that women's femininity as an extension of sexuality is partly defined by dependence), socio-cultural parameters for women, and their general exclusion from the parochial and public spaces. These issues traditionally fall within the jurisdiction of social anthropology, and, for the relation of culture to environment, within feminist sociology. It is in this context, therefore, that variables in women's reaction to and interaction with empowerment and agency are assumed to influence women's income-generating activities and subsequent gendered identities.

Simultaneously, traditional codes could often prevent the social acknowledgement of women's equal ability to earn an income, reiterate the concept of man as breadwinner and woman as homemaker, and prevent women's access to both acknowledgement of their labour and to greater, formal participation in economic activities. The introduction of different perspectives, such as civil and political rights and human rights for women, particularly since 2001, have thrown into sharper relief certain communal understandings in the gendered interpretations of the "great tradition" and "little tradition"[9] of Islam. These changes have been introduced in a highly decentralised society that has been buffeted by, among other things, differing ideologies and the idea and praxis of "modernity." However, what constitutes modernity depends upon which social value system, and which of its dominant elements, define tradition.

Some of the major constraints that women face are lack of job opportunities, lack of experience, low pay, low educational attainment, and an unsupportive family environment[10]. Even as women's economic empowerment can be defined as "the ability of women to bring about positive changes in their lives and societies as a result of their participation in economic activities"[11], in the Afghan context, women's economic empowerment can best be additionally contextualised as i) the availability of economic opportunity that monetises and/or makes visible their labour and ii) the allowance given by socio-cultural norms and economic contexts to access the opportunities. Ideally, proposed introductions in the former should address the latter because of more embedded norms and values influencing the latter.

This introductory section is followed by a sub-section that looks at the methodology used to chart the information-gathering process. Section Two is an assessment of the steps taken in the past decade toward Afghan women's economic empowerment. It details women's human rights as they are inextricably intertwined with economic opportunity and engagement. Section Three is a socio-anthropological inquiry into how women perceive empowerment and the changes that economic enhancement projects may have brought in participants' lives. Section Four concludes by offering policy and strategic approaches to address the challenges that women face.

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clear. However, an overall underemployment of 48.2 percent is indicated by NRVA 2007/8. Female employment-to-population ratio in South Asia is highest in Afghanistan (NRVA 2007/8), pointing to the exacerbated effects of extended conflict and its consequential destitution that act as a push factor in women's income generation.

9 Robert Redfield, *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

10 Samuel Hall Consulting, "Economic Assessment and Labour Market Survey of Mazar-i Sharif, Pul-i Khumri, Kandahar City and Kunduz City", (Kabul: Mercy Corps, 2011).

11 UN Women, "Guidance Note Women's Economic Empowerment", (New York, 2012), 1.

1.1 Methodology

Three methods were used in obtaining information for the research in this Report:

(i) evaluations of existing programmes and projects, including those of the government, donor agencies and implementing organisations working directly on women's economic activities projects,

(ii) primary research from 68 semi-structured in-depth interviews (25 representatives of key Ministries, institutions, eight representatives of seven donor agencies, embassies and 25 representatives of 23 agencies and networks that implement women's economic activities projects, five project participants and their five male agnates) and five focus group discussions, each with female and male representatives of a project participant's community, and,

(iii) secondary research from documents, information obtained from and about Ministries and donor agencies.

The project began in September, 2012 with team capacity building and a desk-based Information Mapping process that collected and catalogued policies, mechanisms, programmes and other frameworks aimed at improving women's economic life since 2002. An inventory of currently available qualitative and quantitative data and studies was created on a) ratified international treaties and agreements that are pertinent to the status of women, laws, policies and strategies (Government of Afghanistan/para-government, the private sector), and b) surveys and reports (Government of Afghanistan, Ministries, departments, international agencies, international non-governmental organisations, Afghanistan-based non-governmental organisations). The 58 respondents identified for interviewing for the Information Mapping of this Report consisted of three categories: key Ministries and government programmes, international and multilateral donor and programming agencies, national agencies and networks that implement projects for women's economic participation. The main themes addressed across the three topic guides were the approaches used by donors, government programmers and implementing organisations to improve women's economic situation during the last decade, and government policy planning, reach and implementation. These interviews markedly informed Section 2 of this Report.

The fieldwork for the Situational Analysis, Section 3, was designed to look at projects that were projected to economically benefit both between 50 to 500 women, and fewer than 50 women. According to the project's terms of reference, the research field was within Kabul Province. To identify projects, introductory meetings were arranged with 42 NGOs involved in women's economic activities; these were shortlisted from the more than 300 NGOs working on women's empowerment (the list was obtained from MoWA). The further identification of 23 NGOs was based upon: a) the NGO's focus on women's economic empowerment, b) the ease of approach and availability of the project representative, c) the informed participation in this research of the project participant d) those projects which had been implemented in Kabul Province, and e) those which have been implemented since 2002 and (preferably) completed before 2011.

From these 23 NGOS, five case studies, with project participants, their mahrams and their communities, were identified based on the participant and her community's willingness to contribute to this research, and other factors. Five semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with each of the five participants and five each with their self-identified mahram. Ten focus group discussions were conducted with female and male representatives of the project participant's immediate communities. Focus group discussions looked at community perceptions of gender roles and rights and women's self-perceptions on what "doing gender" may mean for her in terms of economic activities and social acceptability. Each focus group consisted of about seven participants. Appendix 1 presents a list of women and men participants in each research site, with additional information.

Topic guides for these five case studies looked at a) women's perceptions of the socio-economic development role they can perform, their ability to access the economic empowerment initiatives, and initiative sustainability, b) the changes to women's sense of empowerment through their participation,

c) community contexts and gendered socio-cultural practices, and, d) the perceived (and generally self-identified) results of a woman's access to economic power. Appendix 2 presents points that evolved from team discussions around agency, gender and economic empowerment in Afghanistan that helped frame the topic guides. The Situational Analyses use field-based information, combined with ethnographic detail, as a base to understand subjective perceptions of project participation and its effects.

Appendix 3 provides consolidated tabular information on the 78 in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The pilot was conducted in October, 2012 and main fieldwork took place between November, 2012 and March, 2013. Informed, verbal consent was used. Two Afghans—one female and one male—conducted the fieldwork. All interviews except two were conducted in Dari. All interviews were held in person except for two Skype interviews and two telephone interviews. Most interviews were recorded (if the respondent permitted it) and translated by bilingual, non-professional Afghans. The transcripts were reviewed and revised by the team members to ensure construct validity and improved data capture. Fieldwork, in general, required a very high degree of flexibility. In this, security considerations often overtook appointments and other forms of data-gathering, requiring reinvestments of time. Data analysis was done manually though extensive coding and analysis.

The limitations of this Report include:

- A high turnover of project heads and of donor representatives, leading to inadequate data on project implementation, output and monitoring practices.
- A focus on men's perspectives on women's economic participation translating to less time understanding men's views about themselves and about women's work.
- The exclusion of development debates that could contribute to a better understanding of women's equitable economic activity access. This is particularly important in view of government and donor emphasis on private sector development and the free market economy.
- A focus on women's human rights is necessary given that they are inextricably intertwined with women's economic opportunity access. However, this limits the space in this Report for discussing more than a few key economic areas such as agriculture, horticulture, livestock and small-scale trade. Women's involvement in areas like opium-growing and rural handicraft and enterprise, or as informal vendors or domestic workers, will need to be reviewed in another, future study.
- A lack of quality, available data, particularly detailed micro-level studies. Policy documents and programme reports are unclear on the causality link between inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- Some key ministry personnel have been unavailable or busy. There has been confusion about project monitoring and a lack of policy or strategy knowledge among certain ministry personnel. Information on government ministry and department structure is generally not available; official requests have not been met.

The study sample is in no way representative of women in Kabul Province or in Afghanistan, but it does provide useful insights and trend indications. It is relevant because the projects identified have activities that have been repeated in different areas of Afghanistan over the past decade. As such, themes and dynamics that have emerged in the analytical framework have non-Manichean boundaries. Against this backdrop, a number of cross-cutting themes are identified. These concerns underpin the contemporary engagement of gendered development with ideology and social practice. They can be placed at the crossroads that Afghanistan has traditionally stood for, or viewed as reflective of a miniscule section of people in a particular part of the region and globe.

2. Information Mapping[12]

With the UN-convened Bonn Agreement of 2001[13] signalling a different phase in Afghan history, significant achievements for women's rights have been seen in Afghanistan. Nationally, the processes for these include:

- the 2001 Brussels Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy;
- the 2001 creation of the first Ministry of Women's Affairs;
- the 2002 Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women; the 2002 National Area Based Development Program;
- the establishment of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in 2002;
- the 2003 National Solidarity Program (NSP);
- Twenty percent female representation in the Constitutional Loya Jirga;
- the establishment of a 27 percent baseline quota for women's political representation in the Wolesi Jirga (House of People);
- a baseline 17 percent quota in the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders);
- a statutory requirement of female representation in 25 percent of Provincial Council seats;
- the successful passage of the 2004 Afghan Constitution;
- the 2005 Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy;
- the 2005 Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals;
- the 2006 Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice in Afghanistan;
- the 2007 National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (2007-17)[14];
- the 2008 Afghanistan National Development Strategy (2008-13);
- the 2008 Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (2008-13);
- the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women[15];
- the 2010 National Priority Programs.

Each of these has had varying levels of impact on the different sectors[16].

Afghanistan has signed, ratified, endorsed or acceded to many international resolutions and treaties that serve as a framework for some of the extant laws and strategies empowering women. The international Conferences, which brought some members of the international community together in support of Afghanistan, helped set the direction for constitutional and policy reforms toward gender-just practices (see Appendix 4). Afghanistan is also a party to many international human rights treaties, enumerated in Appendix 5. In treaties on fairness, protection and non-exploitation of employees in the labour market, Afghanistan has ratified 19 International Labour Organisation Conventions[17], including on equal remuneration for work of equal value and non-discrimination in employment and occupation. Ratification of these treaties serves as additional protection for women's rights since

12 An expanded, more detailed version of the second section is available as "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012: Information Mapping s', at the website of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.

13 It was through the Bonn Agreement that Afghanistan and the international community agreed to establish the Afghanistan Interim Authority (AIA), Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions ("Bonn Agreement") (Afghanistan), S/2001/1154, 5 December 2001, http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f48f4754.html (accessed 7 June 2013).

14 This took effect in 2008.

15 Yet to be passed by Parliament, but enacted in August 2009 by a Presidential Decree. Under Article 79 of the Constitution (2004), a Presidential Decree is legal unless rejected by the Parliament.

16 With the exception of the first three, women have generally not had equal representation in these processes.

17 International Labour Organisation, Normlex, "Information Systems in International Labour Standards. Ratifications for Afghanistan", http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:102945 (accessed 9 June 2013).

Afghanistan is legally bound to these resolutions and treaties through its Constitution and through the Bonn Agreement[18]. Further, Afghanistan is a signatory to the 1981 Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and the 1994 Arab Charter on Human Rights.

Some of the Afghanistan Interim Administration's[19]chief concerns regarding the rehabilitation and restructuring of the country's human resources, institutions and infrastructure were: a) administrative capacity enhancement, with emphasis on the salary payment; b) education, especially for girls; c) health and sanitation; d) infrastructure, in particular, roads, electricity and telecommunications; e) reconstruction of the economic system, in particular, the currency system; and f) agriculture and rural development, including food security, water management and revitalising the irrigation system. The interweaving of consequent Afghan national strategies reflects these concerns as well as Afghanistan's obligations to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and other treaties.

However, in most of the international Conferences and their Resolutions and Declarations mentioned above, the "woman question", when included, has remained focussed on legal, social and political rights[20]. Women's economic rights, a key human right, have generally remained in the margins rather than as a fulcrum that could support other rights. Further, women's economic engagement places them at a disadvantage when these latter rights have been inadequately addressed.

2.1 Socio-economic development indicators, 2012

Unless indicated, the following are from Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12		
Population (2012)	26.5 million	
Female	49 %	
Population under 15	46.1 %	
Population over 65	3.7 %	
Poverty level	36 %	
Number of schools	14,394	
Female students in schools	3,013,009	of a total of 7,861,988
Female teachers in schools	54,069	of a total of 180,489
Number of universities	60	
Female students in universities	19,934	of a total of 112,367
Women teachers in universities	603	of a total of 4,873
IMR**	74 / 1,000	
Under-5 MR**	102 / 1,000	
MMR**	327 / 100,000	
Number of hospitals (govt & private)	422	
Number of doctors	15,168	
Doctors per 10,000 population	2	
Health Associate Professionals	24,464	
Comprehensive Health Centres	766	

18 Under the Bonn Agreement, in particular, Afghanistan's treaty obligations are crucial. In line with this, only those pre-existing laws that do not conflict with its ratified treaties can be retained.

19 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, 21-22 January 2002: co-chairs' summary of conclusions" http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/afghanistan/min0201/summary.html (accessed 7 June 2013).

20 The prominence given to civil and political rights over economic, social, and cultural rights has been questioned, for example in the 1993 "Bangkok Declaration".

Unless indicated, the following are from Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12		
Basic Health Centres	1,860	
Sub-health Centres	1,358	
Number of beds	22,923	
Number of midwives	2,863	
GDP	903,990 million Afs	
Expenditures	958,865 million Afs	
Per capita GDP	US$ 715	
Agriculture's contribution to GDP	26.74 %	
Industry's contribution to GDP	21.39 %	
Services' contribution to GDP	48.27 %	

** Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Statistics Organisation, "Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010-11", http://cso.gov.af/en/page/6807 (accessed 9 June 2013).

2.2 The status of women's human rights

In 2004, Afghanistan was among the bottom of countries regarding gender parity with an estimated Gender Inequality Index[21]of 0.3. Tracing the graph of women's education, health, safety and political participation in this past decade reveals certain status inertia along with some improvements.

2.2.1 Education

The education sector has seen very modest gains in absolute terms. In 2003, the literacy rate for 15-24 year-old females was 18 percent[22]. According to the 2003 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), the overall school attendance rate in Afghanistan doubled from 27 percent to 54 percent between 1997 and 2002. For 2003, the net attendance was 54 percent, or 2.3 million students[23]. The ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school between 2003 and 2004 was between 0.46 to 0.60, in secondary school between 0.29 to 0.33, and in tertiary education between 0.12 to 0.21[24]. Afghanistan in 2003 had the largest school-age population proportion in the world, with 7-12 year-olds making up 19.6 percent of the population[25]. Only 24 percent of the population 15 years and older could read and write, with an estimated 12.6 percent of women being literate. In rural areas, the literacy rate was 20 percent, which dropped to six percent among nomadic people. The 2003 MICS survey found that Afghan parents' major reasons for not enrolling their children, particularly female, in school included school distance (37.2 percent); inadequate facilities (25.8 percent); lack of gender-segregated schools (22 percent); child labour in domestic chores (17.2 percent); a belief that schooling is not necessary (15 percent); child labour in paid work (7.1 percent); and teacher's gender (6.4 percent)[26].

21 An index that captures women's disadvantages in empowerment, economic activity and reproductive health.

22 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Millennium Development Goals Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Country Report 2005: Vision 2020" (Kabul: United Nations Development Programme, 2005), 34, http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Afghanistan/Afghanistan%20MDG%202005.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

23 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country report 2005," 33.

24 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country report 2005," 42.

25 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country report 2005," 33, citing United Nations Children's Fund, "Best Estimates of Social Indicators for Children in Afghanistan 1990-2005" (New York: United Nations Children's Fund, 2005).

26 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "MDGs Country report 2005," 34.

Figure 1: Female Literacy Rates by Province, 2008[27]

As of 2012[28], the percentage of female students enrolled in formal education (General Education (grades 1 to 12), Islamic Education (grades 1 to 14), Teacher Training College (grades 10 to 14), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET, grades 10 to 14), Community-Based Education (CBE, grades 1 to 6) and Cross-border Education was 38.04. The percentage of male students was 61.96 and the total number of students was 8,328,350. Zabul had the fewest students enrolled at 21,114. Overall, 38.58 percent of teachers were female; five percent were female in Islamic Education[29].

Table 1: National Education Strategic Plan Target and Program Annual Targets[30]

Main Indicators	*Achievement 2010*	*Achievement 2011*	*Target 2014*
Number of students	7,101,461	8,008,676	9,938,727
Number of schools	12,421	13,562	16,150
Number of teachers	166,262	172,291	200,014
Number of school councils/"Shuras"	10,876	1,333	16,150

27 Peter Pauli, "National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8: A profile of Afghanistan", (Kabul: Delegation of the European Commission to Afghanistan, 2009), http://cso.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/NRVA2007-08Report382011125285545533325325.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013),67.

28 For information on the years between 2003 and 2012, see "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-12: Information Mapping", at the website of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.

29 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, "1390 (2011/2012) EMIS Statistical Analytical Report" (Kabul: Directorate of Educational Management Information System and Directorate General of Planning and Evaluation, 2012), http://moe.gov.af/Content/files/MoE_1390_Stat_Analysis_Final.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

30 Adapted from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, "1390/2011 Annual Progress Report" (General Planning and Evaluation Department EMIS Directorate, undated),1.

The total number of schools in 2012 (primary, middle, professional, night-time schools, teacher training and religious) was 14,394, with a total 7,861,988 students, of which 3,013,009 were female. The total number of teachers was 180,489, of which 54,069 were women. In higher education, there were 60 government and private universities with 112,367 total students; of which 19,934 were women. In these universities, the total number of teachers was 4,873, of which 603 were women[31]. In vocational training, however, there were a very low number of women: 3,245 out of 27,019 total students. The highest enrolment in vocational training for women was in management and accounting (around half), followed by food and light industries, which includes computer literacy. However, there was some limited enrolment in non-traditional occupations like auto mechanic (13), but very few women were listed for training in agriculture and veterinary sciences (32)[32]. The figure for women teachers at government teacher-training institutes was very low, just 282 out of 1,577; in many provinces, their representation was nil. The number of female students was 19,233 out of 52,617.

Overall, while girls' enrolment in primary education has increased considerably in this decade, it remains very low in absolute numbers as well as in female-to-male ratio. The Afghanistan Compact (2006) says: "By end-2010: in line with Afghanistan's MDGs, net enrolment in primary school for girls and boys will be at least 60 percent and 75 percent respectively; a new curriculum will be operational in all secondary schools; female teachers will be increased by 50 percent." The non-provision of girls-only schools, coupled with early marriage, has contributed to a high drop-out rate. If Afghanistan is to meet the Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals (AMDGs) aim for 100 percent literacy by 2020, there has to be a huge increase in resources channelled into girls-only schools with all-female teachers, as well as greater child marriage monitoring. Further, the significant provincial-level disparities need to be addressed. Much depends on the security situation and the abilities of the government and the communities to counter reactionary forces. Equally important, the curriculum has to address girls' professional and economic capacities, rather than, for example, agriculture being taught to boys and home management to girls[33]. In keeping with women's current roles in agriculture, for example, it is important to provide knowledge and training within the gendered division of roles in rural work or in trade, enterprise and other aspects of non-rural occupations.

2.2.2 Health

The health sector graph shows some relative improvement in certain areas for this decade. In 2002, Afghanistan had an under-five mortality rate of 257 (varyingly, the second- or third-highest in the world), an infant mortality rate of 165 per 1,000[34], and a fertility rate of 6.9 and an estimated maternal mortality rate of 1,600 per 100,000[35] live births (the single highest cause of death[36]). The rate of chronic malnutrition (moderate or severely stunting) was around 50 percent[37]. About 17 percent of the primary health facilities provided care related to safe motherhood and family planning services, but nearly 40 percent had no female health care provider[38].

31 CSO, "Statistical Yearbook 2011-12, Education," http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Education%20syb.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013), 54.

32 CSO, "Statistical Yearbook 2011-12," 66.

33 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined periodic reports to CEDAW," 46.

34 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Public Health, "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health Annual Report 1387", http://moph.gov.af/content/media/Documents/HNSS-Report-ENG-v4-1281220101156987.pdf (accessed 4 June 2013).

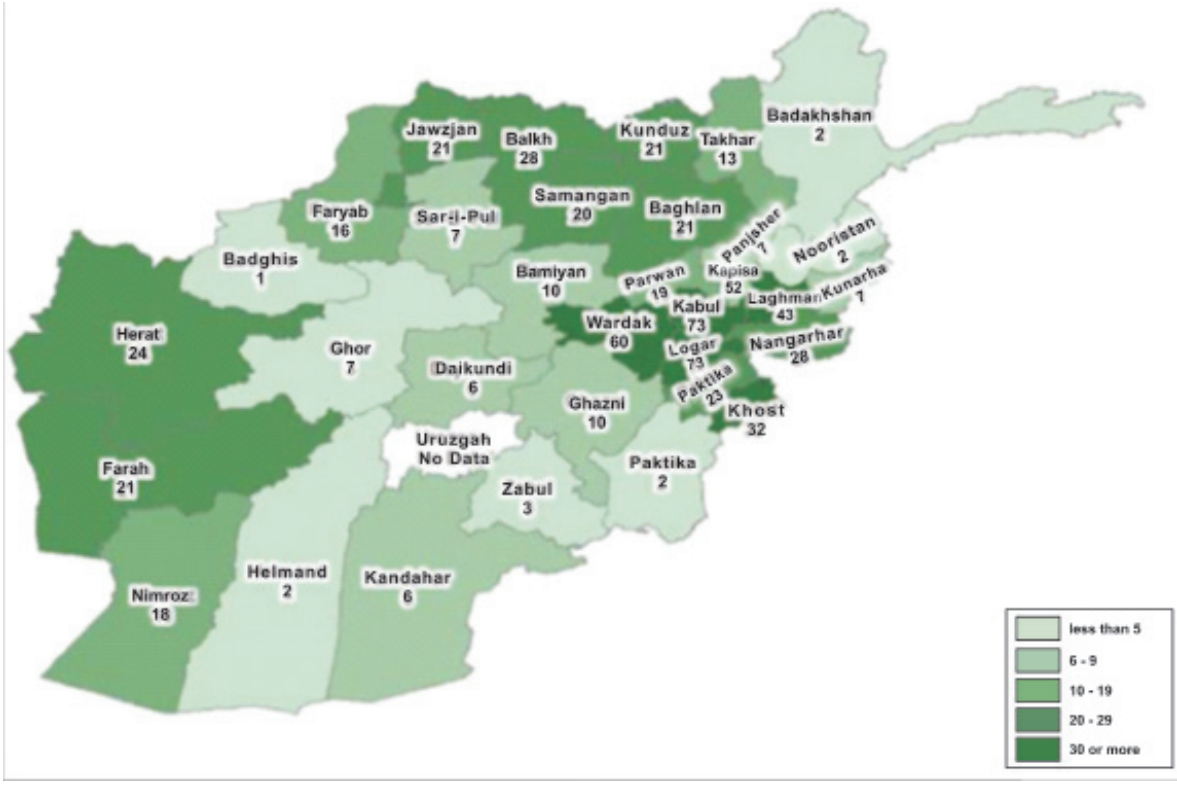
35 There were significant provincial variations. Kabul, for example, had an estimated MMR of 400 per 100,000, while Badakhshan had an MMR of 6,500 per 100,000, Linda A. Bartlett, Shairose Mawji, Sara Whitehead, Chadd Crouse, Denisa Ionete, Peter Salama and Afghan Maternal Mortality Study Group, "Maternal Mortality in Afghanistan: Magnitude, Causes, Risk Factors and Preventability" (Ministry of Public Health Islamic republic of Afghanistan, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United Nations Children's Fund Afghanistan, 2003).

36 Five times that of Pakistan and 50 times that of Uzbekistan.

37 Asta Olesen, Carol Le Duc, Lant Hayward Pritchett, Lana Moriarty, Maitreyi B. Das, Sujata Pradhan and Ratna M. Sudarshan, "Afghanistan: National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction: the Role of Women in Afghanistan's Future" (Washington: World Bank, March 2005), http://siteresources.worldbank.org/AFGHANISTANEXTN/Resources/AfghanistanGenderReport.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

38 Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan, Ministry of Health, "National Reproductive Health Strategy for Afghanistan

Figure 2: Percentage of women using skilled birth attendants, by province, 2008[39]



In 2010, the fertility rate was 5.1. Fertility dropped from 5.3 children per woman among those with no education to 2.8 children per woman among those with higher education[40]. Fourteen percent of women aged 15-19 had begun childbearing with two percent having had a live birth before the age of 15. Nearly 25 percent of women aged 20-24 years had already had a live birth before reaching 18. Importantly, 20 percent of women with no education, as compared to 27 percent of women with primary education, and 38 percent among women with secondary education or higher, used contraception. About 20 percent of women aged 15-19 years were currently married; 15 percent aged 15-49 years were married off before the age of 15, while 46 percent were married off before the age of 18. About seven percent of women aged 15-49 years were in a polygamous marriage with its incidence being twice as high among women with no education (8 percent) than among the women who have secondary education or higher (4 percent). About 2 percent of women aged 15-19 years were in a polygamous marriage, while the figure was 11 percent for women aged 40-49 years[41]. About 57 percent of all marriages involved female children under the age of 16[42].

In 2011, about 87 percent of the population was covered by the basic health services, of which 66 percent had access to health facilities within two hours' walking distance and 57 percent within one

2003-2005" (Kabul: General Directorate of Health Care and Promotion, Women's and Reproductive Health Directorate, Reproductive Health Taskforce, Final document, July 2003), http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan018855.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

39 Pauli, "National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8", 85.

40 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Public Health, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Central Statistics Organization "Afghanistan Mortality Survey 2010: Key Findings" (2010), 6-7, http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/SR186/SR186.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

41 CSO, "AMICS 2010-2011."

42 Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Fifth Report Situation of Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, December 2011), http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Reports/SECR/Report%20on%20ESCR_Final_English_12_2011.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

hour's walking distance[43]. There were 280 public hospitals and 142 private hospitals for a population of 26.5 million[44]. Health services in Afghanistan were still highly limited and the medical profession lacks sufficient female doctors and nurses, including in obstetric care; medical supplies are inadequate and the health centres are not easily accessible for women without transportation or without a mahram. A 2012 Asia Foundation survey said, "only 38 percent of the people agree that their health conditions and access to medicine have improved. Forty-seven percent of the people are still waiting for their health conditions and access to medicine to improve. The change still has to come. Fourteen percent of the people are worried because their health conditions have deteriorated as compared to the Taliban regime[45]."

Overall, the health sector has shown positive trends in reducing infant and child mortality, and maternal mortality, as well as in increasing the range of basic health care facilities. In child nutrition, much more needs to be achieved; the AMDG target for the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age by 2015 is 15 percent, while the MDG target for maternal deaths is 109 per 100,000 live births. Health care and reproductive health service outreach needs to be strengthened further and the fertility rate, evolving from early marriage and child-bearing, needs to be reduced far more. The disparities between urban and rural health-care access are significant. Again, unless women are catered to by women professionals, their health care and the corresponding health-seeking behaviour is likely to remain highly unsatisfactory.

2.2.3 Political and Public Participation

Access to the public sphere and equal participation in a nation's political landscape could be a litmus test for women's empowerment. With the public/private divide in Afghanistan being especially rigid and with a man and his family's honour being associated with female conformity, women's entering into the public sphere has had some strong implications for gender roles and gender dynamics.

Since 2001, Afghan women have participated in a highly limited way in the various international discussions that charted the route to the reconstruction of their country. Apart from the Declaration of the Essential Rights of Women at Dushanbe in 2001[46], the Brussels Conference in 2001, and the 2003 Constitutional Loya Jirga (which had 114 women out of 504 delegates), women's participation in political change has been negligible or nil[47]. In the elections that were held in 2004 and 2009 (Presidential), 2005 (Provincial Council and Parliamentary) and 2010 (Parliamentary), there was a substantial turnout of women voters with about 10-20 percent of candidates being women.

43 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy "ANDS Annual Progressive Report: 1389" (Kabul: Ministry of Economy, 2011), 4,

http://moec.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/ANDSAnnualProgressiveReport1389_English110201114261041755332532 5.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

44 Central Statistics Organisation, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011-12," (Kabul: Central Statistics Organisation, Chapter 4: Health Development, 2012), 110,
http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Health%20Development(1).pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

45 Abdul Qayum Mohmand, "The Prospects for economic development in Afghanistan, Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People, Part 2 of 4, Occasional Paper, No. 14", (Kabul: Asia Foundation, 2012), 5.

46 That many of its demands, including the right to physical mobility for women, were ignored in subsequent instruments like the Constitution of Afghanistan, 2004, is indicative of political processes endemic to Afghan and other societies that gainsay women's right to voice and visibility.

47 The gloss given in the report of the government of Afghanistan to CEDAW (2011:32) says, "[a]mong the 60 participants in Bonn Conference [2001], where a national government for Afghanistan was profound [sic], 6 were women. After the Bonn Conference, Afghan women have attended other conferences on Afghanistan around the world, although the number of women has been lower than the number of men. This can be mainly due to the fact that there are few women in the leadership level in the country'. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW," 32.

Table 2: National-level female turnout and candidate numbers for Presidential and Provincial Council (PC) and Parliamentary elections. [48]

Election	Total votes in million	Percentage women voters	Total candidates	Female candidates	Ex-quota female candidates
2004 Presidential	7.3	37	18	1	--
2005 PC	6.4	41	3,025	247	24
2005 Parliamentary	6.4	41	2,775	335	19
2009 Presidential	5.9	39	39	2	--
2009 PC	5.9	39	3,196	328	20
2010 Parliamentary	4.2	39	2,577	406	18

Generally, these elections saw a lack of female civic outreach workers and polling booth officers. Women voters lacked information about the processes and the candidates as community-level discussions were out of bounds and very few public outreach services could reach them. For women, voting was a powerful expression of rights and of their involvement in the public sphere. They were also more inclined to vote for women candidates in the hope of achieving gender solidarity; problems they would not be able to relate to a male candidate, they felt, would be understood by a woman. This was despite the fact that women candidates did not campaign on a gendered platform[49]. Women candidates were generally constrained by reduced resources, restricted mobility and inadequate safe spaces for campaign venues.

Women in Parliament (currently, 69 out of 249 Wolesi Jirga members and 28 out of 102 Meshrano Jirga members) have been perceived as playing a highly political balancing act. On the one hand, the general expectation of more effective women's issue administration is belied by a deficit in numbers and real political power. On the other hand, since their careers have been linked strongly to their political mentors or parties, rather than to their constituencies, wielding power outside of party or mentor interest is precluded[50]. However, the more outspoken female Members of Parliament face particular intimidation and verbal attacks from the religious majority or conservative colleagues and indifference from other male colleagues; they are also seen as more susceptible to militant threats.

Within the Ministries, women MPs are seen as having little or no authority as compared to male MPs[51].Two out of nine secretaries of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) are women and two women are members of IEC's leadership committee. Seven percent of all staff in the IEC are women; of these, only 6 percent are permanent[52]. However, half of regional and district IEC staff are women and there are equal numbers of female and male public awareness campaigners in all districts of Afghanistan. Direct female representation has been established nationally, with 20 percent of the communities represented through shuras and 36 percent through Community Development Councils (CDCs), as compared to 56 and 60 percent for male representation. Only four percent of CDC officials

48 Oliver Lough, Farokhloqa Amini, Farid Ahmad Bayat, Zia Hussain, Reyhaneh Gulsum Hussaini, Massouda Kohistani and Chona R. Echavez, "Equal Rights, Unequal Opportunities Women's Participation in Afghanistan's Parliamentary and Provincial Council Elections", (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2010).

49 Lough, "Equal Rights, Unequal Opportunities."

50 See also, Anna Wordsworth, "A Matter of Interests: Gender and the Politics of Presence in Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Issues Paper Series, June 2007), http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/711E-A%20Matter%20of%20Interests%20IP.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

51 There are currently 69 women members of Parliament, 12 women in the Executive (three Ministers: Women's Affairs, Public Health and Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled), one General Director, one Director of Independent Commissions (the AIHRC), five Deputy Ministers, one Governor (Bamiyan) and one Mayor (Nili, Daikundi); the Deputy Speaker is a woman. The AMDGs target is 30 percent representation of women in the parliament by 2020.

52 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined Periodic Reports to CEDAW," 47.

are female[53]. Although, when compared to 2001, there is a greater presence of women in many government ministries as well as in the civil service, the numbers of female civil servants dropped from 31 percent in 2006 to 18.5 percent in 2010[54]. Notwithstanding the government's commitment to 25 percent representation of women in the civil service, 20 percent of all government employees are women[55], generally concentrated in the lowest or lower rungs.

For a highly sex-segregated environment, the number of policewomen is very low, with 584 women at officer and lower levels across the police force in 2010[56]. Begun in 2002 as a mechanism to help build the Afghan police force, the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) began training women officers in 2010. In 2011, the LOTFA claimed to have 1,200 women in the Afghan National Police (ANP)[57]. Women police officers have reported experiencing harassment and sexual abuse[58] and being relegated to low-level auxiliary services. There is resistance to progressive policies within the ANP and Ministry of Interior[59].

The judiciary is deficient in its inclusion of women, both in religious and secular systems. The Afghan Women Judges' Association (AWJA) was first created in 2003. In 2010, however, only about 5 percent of the 2,203 total judges were women (48 in the penal courts and 60 in the civil courts)[60]; unsurprisingly, the Family and Juvenile Courts are generally headed by women. Affirmative action has not been taken[61]. Only 35 (6.4 percent) of the 546 prosecutors and 75 (6.1 percent) of the 1,241 lawyers are female. There are no women in the nine-member Supreme Court Council. In 2012, the AWJA was re-launched with 150 women judges.

The lack of female representation in the executive, the judiciary and in law enforcement is a serious negative indicator of Afghan women's political participation. In March 2012, the all-male Ulema Council, composed of 150 leading clerics, issued a statement justifying certain types of violence against women, and calling for legal amendments to facilitate sex-segregated occupational and health facilities, mandatory hijab and a mahram to accompany women in public spaces. This was endorsed by the President at a press conference[62]. If such calls to pre-2001 practices are not challenged or are allowed to be taken forward even regionally[63], the repercussions will impact all constitutional gains and the slow and marginal attitudinal changes toward women's equity for women.

53 Arne Disch, Vegard Bye, Torun Reite, Elina Dale and Stephanie Crasto, "ARTF at a Cross-Roads: History and the Future," (Oslo: Scanteam, September 2012), 13, http://ausaid.gov.au/countries/southasia/afghanistan/Documents/artf-cross-roads.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

54 United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, "Factsheet 2010" (February 2010). http://www.unifem.org/afghanistan/media/pubs/factsheet/10/index.html (accessed 3 February 2013).

55 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Statistics Organisation, "Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2009-10" (Kabul: Central Statistics Organisation, 2010), http://cso.gov.af/en/page/4723 (accessed 1 April 2013).

56 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined periodic reports to CEDAW," 32.

57 United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan, "Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA): 2002-2013" (UNDP Project Factsheet, 2011), http://www.undp.org.af/Projects/Report2011/lotfa/Project-LOTFA-Apr2011.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

58 Quil Lawrence, "For Afghan Policewomen, Sex Abuse is a Job Hazard," *NPR*, 8 March 2012, http://www.npr.org/2012/03/08/148041305/for-afghan-policewomen-sex-abuse-is-a-job-hazard, (accessed 9 June 2013); Samuel Hall Consulting, "Women's Perceptions of the Afghan National Police" (Kabul: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Afghanistan, 2011), http://www.af.boell.org/downloads/PPS_new.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

59 Samuel Hall Consulting, "Perceptions of the ANP," 1.

60 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined periodic reports to CEDAW," 38.

61 Hangama Anwari, Cheshmak Farhoumand-Sims and Krista Nerland, "Assessing Gendered Access to Justice in Afghanistan," (The North South Institute, Environmental Scan, Access and Action Series, December 2009), 15, http://www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2009-Assessing-Gendered-Access-to-Justice-in-Afghanistan.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

62 See, for example, Sari Kuovo, "A Slippery Slope: What Happened to Women's Rights in March 2012?" (Kabul: Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2012).

63 For example, Al Arabiya, "Raping women in Tahrir NOT "red line': Egyptian preacher Abu Islam,", 7 February 2013, http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/02/07/264982.html?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pulsenews(accessed 1 April 2013),

Women's public visibility has increased to a far greater level in this past decade; this has been much remarked upon. Even while this is true mostly in the urban areas, such gains have nonetheless depended on much alertness, will and extracted legitimacy. In the past decade, women have utilised collective strength and gendered solidarity to break this divide[64]. Overall, however, the boundaries for women's entry to the public space and sphere remain. The streets are highly territorialised as women's use of them without a mahram subjects them to different forms of intimidation as well as visual, verbal and physical sexual harassment and assault.

The political and public participation of women remains a highly contested area[65], and interviews with women's groups in this research have brought about strong calls for the use of the clergy in redressing this[66]. While there have been some efforts by multilateral agencies and private initiatives to this end[67], representatives of women's groups feel there has to be a far stronger thrust by the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA) in rectifying the wrongs done to women due to legal custom and socio-cultural traditions, which are mistakenly thought to have sanction under Islam.. While the respondent from MoHRA[68] has reiterated many of the traditional sentiments and ideals of the private sphere being a woman's primary locus, he has also expressed a need to rectify many practices, especially on widows' rights, mahr and inheritance. He is of the opinion that the Ministry can encourage the spread of "correct interpretation" through the different jameh mosques and unjameh mosques, takaya, husainia and khanaqahs[69] through the country. The MoHRA has compiled a book for jumma khutbas (Friday sermons) on how to incorporate gender rights in a more Islamic way[70]. Overall, the influence of imams in Afghanistan cannot be overstated and it is incumbent upon the government to be far more proactive

2.2.4 Safety

The poverty trap in which Afghan -women are enmeshed has been exacerbated by what has been called a "post-conflict" situation, but where the state's authority has been ongoingly threatened. Varying levels of armed military offensives continue in various parts of the country and there is a rise in the intensity of armed conflict between the Afghan government/NATO-led troops and the different

64 For example, in 2005, Kabul saw hundreds of widows protesting against the kidnapping of a woman aid worker. In 2007 in Kandahar, women came together at the Kherqa Sharif mosque (mosques are normally barred to women), and offered peace prayers. Julie Billaud, "Visible Under the Veil: Dissimulation, Performance and Agency in an Islamic Public Space," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 11, no. 1 (2009): 120-135.
In 2007, women in Kabul visited mosques to advocate against the use of religion as a justification for suicide attacks. In 2008, women in Kandahar protested the kidnapping of a woman aid worker. In 2008, blue scarves were worn by women across many provinces to signify opposition to violence and war. In 2012, there were protests by women and men in Kabul against the execution of a woman on charges of adultery by the Taliban in Qimchok, Parwan Province. "Women are managing public restaurants in Herat and Mazar where clientele are families, or women-only groups,' Amelie Banzet, Marjan Kamal, Peggy Pascal, Johan Pasquet and François Grunewald, "Research on Chronically Poor Women in Afghanistan: Final Report," (Japan International Cooperation Agency and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, March 2008), 18, http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/CPW_report_hand-ove-_march2008.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

65 For example, Nancy Hopkins, Mohammad Osman Tariq, Fazel Rabi Haqbeen, Palwasha Lena Kakar, Abdul Ghafor Asheq, Fazel Rabi Wardak and Habibullah Haidar, "Afghanistan in 2012: A Survey of the Afghan People" (Kabul: The Asia Foundation, 2012), http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Surveybook2012web1.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

66 One respondent expressed it as, "I have a request from the Hajj and Islamic Affairs Ministry that in the Friday's prayers they take at least four minutes of their time and talk about women's rights in mosques and takya khanas ...' Khadija Sherbaz, All Afghan Women's Union, AREU interview, 29 December 2012.

67 For example, the UNDP, since 2007, has trained about 5,000 mullahs in collaboration with MoHRA on how to improve women's lives vis-à-vis education, marriages, rights, and inheritance. The mullahs are responsible for disseminating this information from an Islamic perspective in districts in four provinces; the MoHRA has compiled a book for jumma khutbas on how to incorporate gender rights in a more Islamic way. Gulistan Ibadat, Gender Specialist, UNDP; AREU interview, 6 January 2013. Similarly, the Noor Education and Capacity Development Organisation (NECDO), begun in 2002, has trained 900 mullahs in four years. NECDO's goal is the, "implementation of the women's rights according to Islam and the laws of the Afghan Government and to the [international] conventions that the government has agreed to'- Jamila Afghani Kakar, Director, NECDO; AREU interview, 23 January 2013.

68 Gul Aqa Habib, Director of Planning and Policy, MoHRA; AREU interview, 31 December 2012.

69 Jama mosques are used for daily congregation, unjameh are used for special occasions like Eid, takaya and husainia are Shi'te mosques, and khanaqah are congregations in the presence of a living pir or holy man.

70 Gulistan Ibadat, Gender Specialist, UNDP; AREU interview, 6 January 2013.

militia groups. Apart from many districts in Kabul Province, conflict is not seen to have ceased nor the rule of the law to be effective[71]. Moreover, armed violence is used by non-state actors (including insurgent groups, criminal cartels, drug rings, warlords and local militias). There is a high incidence of ongoing violations against women[72] through child labour, adult and child prostitution, harmful traditional practices like baad[73] and badal, sexual violence, trafficking and human smuggling[74]. In addition, with the government's efforts to eradicate poppy crops[75], young daughters or sisters are kidnapped or traded to smugglers and others to meet the debts of impoverished opium farmers. The situation continues through internal displacement, poor access to civic and human rights and lack of employment, health, food and nutrition, justice and security, education, and public participation.

71 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2010" (December 2010), http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2010_web.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). As of December, 2012, there were about 102,000 foreign troops stationed in Afghanistan and the size of Afghan Security Forces in October, 2012 was around 337,000; the number of insurgent attacks in October, 2012 alone was around 2,250. Ian S. Livingston and Michael O'Hanlon, "Afghanistan Index: Also including selected data on Pakistan" (Washington: Brookings Institute, January 2013), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20130131.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). See also Andrew Beath, Fotini Christia and Ruben Enikolopov, "Direct Democracy and Resource Allocation: Experimental Evidence from Afghanistan" (Washington: The World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper Series 6133, 2012), http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/07/16/000158349_20120716094426/Rendered/PDF/WPS6133.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Simon Chesterman, "An International Rule of Law?" *American Journal of Comparative Law* 56, no. 2 (2008): 331-61, http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/NYU_aninternationalruleoflaw.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). Seventy-four individual NGOs were victimized in 164 incidents, including 25 abductions and 45 violent (IED, SAF) cases; a total of 2,038 people died in 2012 in conflict-related incidents, Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, "Quarterly data report: Q. 4 2012" (2013) http://www.ngosafety.org/store/files/ANSO%20Q4%202012.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). Armed Opposition Groups have been becoming nationalised with operations now converging to counter the efforts of the government/NATO forces, Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, "Quarterly data report," 14. Over 10,000 Afghan civilians have lost their lives in armed hostilities since 2008. The number of those maimed and wounded is unknown, but estimated at over 20,000 people, Orzala Ashraf Nemat and Ajmal Samadi, "Forgotten Heroes: Afghan Women Leaders Killed in Impunity, Ignored in Justice," (Afghan Rights Monitor, 2012), 1, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Forgotten%20Heroes%20Afghan%20Women%20Leaders%20Killed%20in%20Impunity%20Ignored%20in%20Justice.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

72 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, "Still a Long Way to Go: Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan" (Kabul: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 2012), http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Qy9mDiEa5Rw%3d&tabid=12254&language=en-US (accessed 1 April 2013).

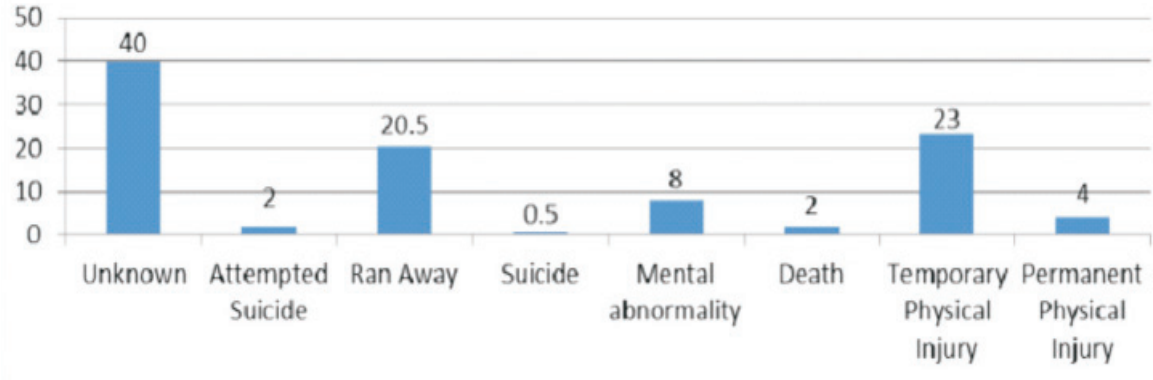
73 A practice where the female members of a family are given in marriage as compensation for crimes committed by their male relatives against the men of another family, through decisions taken by the Jirga. A criminal offence under Article 517 of the 1976 Afghan Penal Code (only applicable when a woman above 18 years or a widow is traded, punishable with up to two years' imprisonment) and under the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (with up to 10 years' imprisonment, including for trading girls under 18 years of age.) See also, "Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan", (Kabul: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, 2010).

74 Rachel Reid, "The 'Ten-Dollar Talib' and Women's Rights: Afghan Women and the Risks of Reintegration and Reconciliation" (New York: Human Rights Watch, July 2010), www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/afghanistan0710webwcover.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Ashley Jackson, "High Stakes: Girls' Education in Afghanistan" (Oxford: Oxfam GB, Joint NGO Briefing Paper, 24 February 2011), http://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/oxfam/bitstream/10546/125287/1/bp-high-stakes-girls-education-afghanistan-240211-en.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Diya Nijhowne and Laura Oates, "Living with Violence: A National Report on Domestic Abuse in Afghanistan" (Washington: Global Rights, 2008) http://www.globalrights.org/site/DocServer/final_DVR_JUNE_16.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Julie Lafreniere, "Uncounted and Discounted: A Secondary Data Research Project on Violence against Women in Afghanistan" (Kabul: United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, May 2006); United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, "Child and Forced Marriage: Conference Proceedings" (Kabul: United Nations Development Fund for Women Afghanistan, March 2007); United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, "Still a Long Way to Go: Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan" (Kabul: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 2012), http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Qy9mDiEa5Rw%3d&tabid=12254&language=en-US (accessed 1 April 2013)

75 Opium production generates about 9 percent of the GDP and the opiate economy has an export potential amounting to about 15 percent, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Opium Survey 2010." In 2011, the farm-gate income from opium was US$ 1.4 billion (9 percent of GDP); export earnings are estimated at US$2.4 billion (15 percent of GDP), The World Bank, "Afghanistan Economic Update, 2012, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, South Asia Region" (World Bank: 2012), http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/734470WP0Afgha0C0disclosed011010120.pdf (accessed 10 June 2013).

Following on from the State's decreased control over the armed militia and other groups since 2005-06, gender-based violence and intimidation is seen to have increased in all the provinces since 2007. The killings of women in public life, in particular the shootings of women politicians, media figures and other high profile women, has reiterated the extreme risks that women face when they step out of traditional gender roles[76]. In the private sphere, women and girls are seen to face regular, severe and multiple forms of domestic violence[77], which institutionalises and perpetuates the cycle of violence in a conflict-ridden society[78]. The increasing incidence of self-immolation by young women as an extreme form of protest[79] is matched only by the pitifully low number of shelters[80]. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has initiated the establishment of Human Rights Councils in 2012, covering at least 22 provinces and led by civil society organisations, to advocate for and address human rights and women's rights violations.

Figure 3: VAW and its effects[81]



Regarding domestic violence there is lack of engagement with socio-cultural and legal practices that often invalidate the mandated provisions of women's constitutional rights. The predominant view remains that family problems should be handled at home or with elders continues, and, "women who do seek outside aid are often shunned by their own families[82]." Also, according to AMICS, 2010-11, 92 percent of women have an acceptance of domestic violence. Rationales include: neglect of children (61 percent), not taking the husband's permission to go out of the house (78 percent), arguing with their husbands (76 percent), wearing inappropriate clothing (63 percent), refusal to engage in sexual intercourse (46 percent) or if they burn food (31 percent)[83].

76 Nadia Sediqqi, Acting Head, DoWA, Laghman Province, was shot dead on her way to work in December, 2012. Her predecessor, Hanifa Safi, was killed in July, 2012 by a car bomb that her family blamed on the Taliban. A schoolgirl, Anisa, was shot dead in Kapisa Province in December, 2012, allegedly for her volunteer work on polio vaccinations which the Taliban opposed. These are just three examples of publicly visible killings that reached the wider public domain. Such killings have included women development activists, doctors, journalists, provincial lawmakers, teachers, and others. See, for example, Nemat et al., "Forgotten Heroes."

77 Diya Nijhowne and Laura Oates, "Living with Violence" (Kabul: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 2009); "Silence is Violence: End the Abuse of Women in Afghanistan" (Kabul: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 2009); Elaheh Rostami Povey, Afghan Women: Identity and Invasion (London: Zed Books, 2007),159.

78 The AIHRC alone recorded 18,580 cases of violence against women from 2002 to 2012, which makes for approximately six reported cases per day recorded by one institution. Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Fifth Report Situation of Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan", (Kabul: AIHRC, Qaus 1390/November/December 2011), http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Reports/SECR/Report%20on%20ESCR_Final_English_12_2011.pdf (accessed 17 June 2013). The AIHRC records about 25 percent of the total recorded cases of Violence against women.

79 Anita Raj, Charlemagne Gomez, and Jay G. Silverman, "Driven to a Fiery Death - The Tragedy of Self-Immolation in Afghanistan," New England Journal of Medicine 358, no. 21 (22 May 2008): 2201-03, http://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMp0801340 (accessed 1 April 2013).

80 There are 17 shelters across Afghanistan which have housed a total annual average of 60 women from 2005-09; in 2010, the total number of women housed in shelters was 186; Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined periodic reports to CEDAW," 50-51.

81 United Nations, CEDAW, "Consideration of reports submitted under CEDAW," 18.

82 Samuel Hall Consulting, "Women's Perceptions of the Afghan National Police."

83 Central Statistics Organisation, "AMICS 2010-2011." See also Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Annual

Family courts have not been instituted in most Provinces; where instituted, not all function. The informal justice mechanism, which many women approach by both default and tradition, does not have women in the jirgas and shuras that arbitrate and decide[84]. The informal courts, based on subjective patriarchal tribal and customary laws and practices with deep-rooted gender inequalities, continue to hold sway in much of the country[85].Women take their issues to such courts due to ignorance about alien legal processes, financial and mobility constraints, and the social pressures that stigmatise a public approach to private matters[86]. In 2007, the informal justice system still handled an estimated 80 percent of cases;[87] in 2010, the government attempted to give legitimacy to informal courts[88]. Subsequently, in 2012, the President's office endorsed a National Ulema Council statement that declared that women are secondary to men, and that certain types of violence against women are allowed by Shari'ah[89], contrary to the provisions and penalties for domestic violence offered in the LEVAW (2009)[90]. At the same time, the passage of such laws as the Shia Personal Law (2009)[91] is detrimental to women's limited gains.

Report 1389" (Kabul: AIHRC, 2010/11), http://www.aihrc.org.af/media/files/Reports/Annual%20Reports/inside.pdf (accessed 8 June 2013).

84 Rebecca Gang, "Community-Based Dispute Resolution Processes in Kabul City," (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2011). The rights granted to women under the Civil Code as well as Hanafi jurisprudence are ineffective when local decision-making bodies, like shuras or jirgas, favour traditional norms, like Pashtunwali, which permits baad in conflict resolution, denies women land ownership and restricts marriage and inheritance rights.

85 After the Taliban's departure, "the enthusiasm for restoring a highly centralized government was confined to the international community and the Kabul elite that ran it,' Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). However, "even in the urban and relatively well-developed boundaries of Kabul, formal institutions often rely on informal traditional conciliators, known as mosliheen or hakamain, to adjudicate civil, commercial and some aspects of criminal cases. Over the course of one four-month period, 11 of 27 civil and seven of 23 criminal cases were resolved through conciliator mediation,' Zuhal Nesari and Karima Tawfik, "The Kabul Courts and Conciliators: Mediating Cases in Urban Afghanistan" (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, Peacebrief 101, 29 July 2011), http://www.usip.org/files/resources/PB101.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

86 Christine Noelle-Karimi, "Village Institutions in the Perception of National and International Actors in Afghanistan" (Bonn, Germany: Center for Development Research, University of Bonn, Working Paper Series 65, April 2006), http://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/zef_wp/wp65.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); The Asia Foundation, "Afghanistan in 2007: A Survey of the Afghan People" (Kabul: The Asia Foundation, 2007), http://www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/AGsurvey07.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Anwari et al., "Gendered Access to Justice"; Jennifer Brick, "The Political Economy of Customary Village Organizations in Rural Afghanistan" (prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Central Eurasian Studies Society, Washington, September 2008), http://www.bu.edu/aias/brick.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013); Ruth Rennie, "State Building, Security and Social Change in Afghanistan: Reflection on a Survey on Afghan People" (Kabul: The Asia foundation, 2008), http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/2008surveycompanionvolumefinal.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

87 Center for Policy and Human Development, "Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007: Bridging Modernity and Tradition: Rule of Law and the Search for Justice" (Islamabad: Army Press, 2007), http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/asiathepacific/afghanistan/afghanistan_2007_en.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

88 Many NATO governments, notably the U.S. and Britain, have promoted the strengthening and official recognition of this attempt, "despite the explicit protestations of most Kabul-based human rights activists,' Torunn Wimpelmann, "Promoting Women's Rights in Afghanistan: A Call for Less Aid and More Politics," (Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center, NOREF Policy Brief, October 2012), 5, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/7b618f95386a5a70f36422867871046c.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013). "Many criminal and civil cases are currently being settled through traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Such mechanisms are suffused with practices that severely violate Afghan law, women's human rights, as well as women's rights under Sharia law. Thus, they cause serious setbacks for women's rights in Afghanistan. Further, traditional mechanisms often cross the line from mediation over to judgment and punishment, which is illegal. Only the formal justice system of the government has the legal right to determine whether a crime has been committed and to convict and mete out appropriate punishment in a proper court of law.' Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan" (Kabul: Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2008), 41.

89 Official declaration by the National Ulema Council of Afghanistan on March 2, 2012, and endorsed by the President on March 6. See Kuovo, "A Slippery Slope." (Kabul: Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2012), http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/a-slippery-slope-what-happened-to-womens-rights-in-march-2012 (accessed 1 June 2013).

90 In May, 2013, the EVAW law was debated without endorsement by the Parliament.

91 See also Lauryn Oates, "A Closer Look: The Policy and Lawmaking Process Behind the Shiite Personal Status Law" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit Issues Paper Series, 2009), 28, http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/935E-%20A%20Closer%20Look%20-%20The%20Policy%20and%20Law-making%20Process%20Behind%20the%20Shitte%20Personal%20Stauts%20Law.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

Lastly, the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) is severely lacking[92]. There are nine female members of the 70-member High Peace Council[93]and two women in the Council's 15-member governing body assigned with carrying out peace negotiations with the Taliban and other militia groups. There is no reliable information on the number of women in the provincial peace councils; according to a provincial council member, there are two or three female members out of approximately 25–30 members in each council[94]. Moreover, regarding the different regional talks held with neighbouring countries negotiating with militia groups over the terms of the coming transition[95], women members say they are either not invited or told about the meetings; sometimes the meetings are held at night when women find it difficult to attend[96]. A National Action Plan on Afghanistan's implementation of the UNSCR1325 is yet to be formulated.

Of equally grave concern is the arming and funding of ex-militia members to establish village-based defence forces, the Afghan Local Police[97]. Such methods have been tried in many post-conflict areas and are associated with ongoing human rights violations, whether as militia or as part of the legitimate government[98]. The National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and Stability Law (2009) gives amnesty to all those currently in government for conflict crimes, including for crimes against women and for sexual crimes[99]. A national strategy on justice and reconciliation with a timeline on reconciliation points, their ideation and internalisation, needs to be pursued. This is necessary for, on the one hand, restitution and healing of a society left exhausted from three decades of brutal violence, as well as, on the other hand, to sustain islah (peace efforts through community-based reconciliation, arbitration) in the coming years[100].

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92 For example, Zarin Hamid, "UN SCR 1325: Implementation in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Afghan Women's Network, 2011), http://www.gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Afghanistan_Report.pdf (accessed 14 June 2013).

93 Created as part of a Joint Secretariat to oversee the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) after the Peace Jirga of 2010. In 2011, the APRP issued a Gender Policy, including the creation of a Gender Oversight Committee, a Gender Unit in the Joint Secretariat and Provincial and District Level Gender Steering Committees, Stefanie Nijssen, "The Peace Process & Afghanistan's Women Part 2 of a 4 Part-Series on Peace and Reintegration in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Civil-Military Fusion Centre, 2012), https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Governance/Afghanistan_Women_Reconciliation.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

94 Anonymity requested, pers. comm., at the Women, Peace and Security Forum, Kabul, 4-6 December, 2012.

95 The Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace, a process that included 78 discussion groups across Afghanistan in October 2011, recorded many Afghan men and women saying they were worried that women's rights would become a casualty of peace. The Dialogue report noted that many of the 1,500 participants interviewed said that women's rights to education, work and freedom of movement in public spaces should not be compromised and that Taliban-era abuses against women should not be permitted to return; Nijssen, "The Peace Process and Afghanistan's Women", 5.

96 Anonymity requested, pers. comm., at the Women, Peace and Security Forum, Kabul, 4-6 December, 2012.

97 International Development Committee, "Afghanistan: Development Progress and Prospects after 2014: Sixth Report of Session 2012–13" (London: House of Commons, Vol. 1, 2012), 21, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/403/403.pdf (accessed 1 April 2013).

98 "[I]n May 2012, in the NATO Summit, the Afghan Women's Network called for: "a more transparent vetting process for the recruitment of Afghan Local Police and other security forces so that those guilty of previous human rights violations do not automatically become part of the security forces, including a community-based vetting process that allows women to report on the background of those being recruited,"' Pirjo Jukarainen, "Implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan'- Analysis of Finland's Activities during the Period of the National 1325 Action Plan 2008–2011" (www.1325.fi : 1325 Network Finland, 2012), 8, http://www.1325.fi/tiedostot/Jukarainen_Afghanistan_report_final_2012.pdf (accessed 10 June 2013).

99 The Law, which grants amnesty to perpetrators of gross gender-based violence, threatens constitutional rights and contravenes the provisions of the Convention on Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity 1968, which Afghanistan ratified in 1983.

100 See, for example, "Position Paper, Demands of Afghanistan Civil Society on the occasion of Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan – 08 July 2012,"

http://www.af.boell.org/web/Democratization-Demands_of_Afghanistan_Civil_Society_on_the_occasion_of_Tokyo_Conference_374.html (accessed 10 June 2013); Emily Winterbotham, "Healing the Legacies of Conflict in Afghanistan Community Voices on Justice, Peace and Reconciliation," (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012).

There are five issues of alarming concern for gendered rights: trafficking, the rights of disabled women, the situation of women-headed households and chronically poor women, the situation for displaced women returnees, and child marriage. These cannot be elaborated here due to lack of space.

2.3 Women's economic activities and engagement

While the employment sector in general has not received attention during this past decade[101], women's economic empowerment in particular has not been reviewed in government policies and strategies. Importantly, in the strategies of most multilateral agencies, gender remains a cross-cutting issue; consequently, projects addressing women's direct needs have received fewer resources as compared to other projects. For example, of a total of US$5.4 billion expended on projects by the World Bank from 2002-12, US$597.4 million were for projects related to women (see Appendix 4). Further, it needs to be noted that very few bilateral agencies and international non-governmental organisations working in Afghanistan have a gender strategy[102]. Overall, Afghan women's economic engagement has generally been overlooked in favour of vocational training and micro-jobs, which have had no specific market outlets[103] and which, moreover, have had extremely limited impact on income enhancement. Some programmes have focussed on urban economic renewal, but have allowed a non-gender-specific programme focus. Further, in a country where 77 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture-related activities and 55 percent solely in agriculture, neglecting the economic potential of women is detrimental to the majority of Afghanistan's population.

The Afghan Constitution enshrines the free market with minimal intervention by the state[104], an approach that is neither pro-poor nor equitable, especially given the lack of social protection measures and the poverty and near-poverty levels. Vulnerable groups like women who have the least access to education, training, work experience or marketable skills and to mobility, capital, credit or business acumen will face an uphill struggle in capturing and retaining footholds in the unfolding economy[105]. Women are further ring-fenced by their reproductive and caring roles, especially given the high reproductive rates and limited access to health and care facilities. Other socio-cultural norms ensure that males necessarily mediate access to the public sphere of markets. Economic betterment is blocked in many ways for women in a cash economy with its locus being the public sphere; their entry into it is all but "forbidden."

This section will first look at the available data on women's labour force participation, and then at the efforts taken in this decade to enhance women's engagement in agriculture, horticulture, livestock and small-scale entrepreneurship[106]. It will conclude by offering some suggestions on women's inclusion in sectors perceived to have economic potential. In doing so, it is conscious of privileging a market-driven position over other approaches, particularly those oriented toward more developmental or

101 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy, "ANDS Annual Progressive Report 1389" (General Director of Policy, ANDS Monitoring and Evaluation, 2011), 3: "the labor market has not yet been developed; statistics or labor market analyses are not available. This is due to accurate statistics not being collated and observed by relevant ministries.' And, page 44: "The government has not yet developed its own set of economic objectives based on our guiding principles, neither for the economy as a whole nor for individual sectors.'

102 See "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-12: Information Mapping," Appendices 5 and 6. Available on the website of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.

103 For example, Ministry of Economy "ANDS Annual Progressive Report, 1389," page 44, says, "In total 186,409 women have received literacy training, attended workshops, campaigns, technical and vocational trainings in the capital and provinces.' There is no mention of the types of training or of their impact on women's income generation.

104 According to the Vision 2020 (2005:10), Afghanistan in 2005 was, "putting in place the most liberal trade and tariff regime in the region.' One of I-ANDS' five-year strategic benchmarks was gaining accession to the WTO by 2010 (ANDS 2005:165); the third pillar of ANDS and Goal 8 of the AMDGs emphasise private-sector-led development.

105 This is also to be seen in the light of the constrained status of Afghanistan's middle class. Women are not to be seen much, except to some minimal extent in government institutions; neither are they much evident as managers, producers, regulators, traders, teachers, voters, and similar occupations that have a market economy function. The market economy also depends on a functioning system of laws, courts, schools, credit, electricity, information, security, transportation, and similar sectors, all of which are currently either absent or woefully inadequate in Afghanistan.

106 Issues that need further research and consideration include the opium economy, women's roles in food security, gendered rural enterprise and handicraft, and the environment and gender.

social protection strategies. This is partially due to space and scope limitations and partially in response to the free-trade approach that dominates Afghanistan's existing economic strategies. Yet, a tilt in this Section toward the small-farm gendered economy may provide a counterforce that propels and develops a rights-based solidarity among small-scale and individual women producers.

The informal sector in Afghanistan and women's engagement

At the outset, it is useful to classify the informal sector in Afghanistan into two segments based on the type of activity, number of people involved and the complexity of transactions. The smaller segment can be classified as income-generating activities (IGAs). Such activities are pre-entrepreneurial and of a subsistence nature, supplementing farming incomes. They usually involve part-time, seasonal activities that are based on traditional technologies, local materials and local markets[107]. The second segment, i.e, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), consists of businesses that are bigger than IGAs. They employ about 10 to 20 (sometimes 50) people. They use non-traditional or "modern" technologies in at least some of the productive aspects of the transformation process. Their products and services range from simple to complex and similarly span a range of consumer types. The marketing pattern may be somewhat complex, reflecting innovation in raw material procurement and in output sales[108].

2.3.1 Women's labour participation

In 2002, female employment was 17 percent of the total employment in the non-agricultural sector[109]. In the agricultural sector, a report on the NRVA in 2003[110] indicated a low participation of women in income-earning activities and reported that their income was about 40-50 percent of that of men[111]. By 2007, Afghan women living in certain urban areas were able to set up their own businesses or go into teaching, healthcare jobs, etc[112]. However, employment inequalities remained in the rural areas, with women being restricted to low-paid employment. About three percent of active women worked in the formal economy[113], while 20 percent were own account workers and 78 percent worked unpaid in income generation within the family. Agriculture and livestock showed 44 percent female contribution and women formed 70 percent of manufacturing from home-based craft industries; around 95 percent of women workers were in vulnerable employment[114].

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107 Examples of IGAs in Afghanistan would include seasonal trading of agricultural produce, keeping domestic animals, and many traditional craft activities like embroidery and carpet weaving, especially in rural areas. This segment usually employs a few family members, apprentices and a few permanent workers. The technology is typically traditional and the activities are not usually scalable.

108 SMEs are (on the margin of) formal: they are usually registered with the local government and tend to pay some taxes. Some examples of small enterprises are: garment assembly, motorized transport, building and construction and medium-scale industrial agro-processing. Many of these businesses have strong potential for growth, and for the development of organizational and managerial skills.

109 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals, Report 2005 Vision 2020" (Kabul: United Nations Development Programme, 2005), 39, http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/MDG-2005-vision2020.pdf (accessed 9 June 2013), citing 2002 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

110 Carried out in July-September 2003 by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD).

111 Very few were engaged in planting, harvesting, and a marginal number in irrigation or shepherding, with more women employed as domestics or in self-employment through home-based handicraft-making, weaving, tailoring and embroidery; wood-gathering and other natural resources were also used for income generation, Hector Maletta, "Gender and Employment in Rural Afghanistan, 2003-5", Journal of Asian and African Studies (2003): 173-196. See also Hector Maletta, "Women at work: Gender, Wealth, Wages and Employment in Rural Afghanistan, 2002-2003" (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigación en Ciencias Sociales, Universidad del Salvador, April, 2004).

112 In the case of urban sector employments, such as education, healthcare and service industries, women continued to be in the minority.

113 A figure far lower than the eight percent shown in 1989 statistics as women engaged in the formal sector; see Valentine Moghadam, "Patriarchy and the Politics of Gender in Modernising Societies: Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan", International Sociology, 7, no. 1 (1992): 35-53. It is also lower than the 1981 statistics of eight percent; see Hanne Christensen, "The Reconstruction of Afghanistan: A Chance for Rural Afghan Women" (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2000), 8.

114 Pauli, "NRVA 2007/8.", 32. At an average, the number of female full-time employees ranged from 3 percent in small firms (1-19 employees) to 4.2 percent in medium-sized enterprises (20-99 employees) and 1.6 percent in firms with 100+ employees, The World Bank and International Finance Corporation, "Enterprise Surveys –Afghanistan" (Washington: The International Bank

In 2008, women's share in non-agricultural employment was 18.4 percent[115]. In 2009, education and health and services appear to have the greatest potential for employing women since jobs in these sectors are usually aligned with traditional gender roles, although manufacturing also offered a high potential[116].

In 2011, the female labour force participation rate (15+) was 15.8 percent[117] and the ratio of female to male labour participation was 0.196, similar to the 1990 figure of 0.190, but higher than the 2000 figure of 0.166[118]. The cumulative disadvantage for women in the labour market can be summed up as: fewer hours and less income in less secure work[119].

2.3.2 Sectors of women's participation in IGAs

Agriculture

Agriculture has traditionally been the mainstay of the Afghan economy, but the contribution of agriculture to the GDP has come down from 31.11 percent in 2009-10 to an estimated 26.74 percent in 2011-12[120]. Of the economically active female population in 2010, 32.1 percent were involved in agriculture[121]. Typically, women farmers and small farmers are the major contributors to Afghanistan's agricultural economy, even with small landholdings[122]. Equally, this sector has been a chief vehicle for women's income generation. Women form an integral part of the informal economy and of the agricultural value chains; their involvement is equal to that of men, though it is affected by various factors[123].

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for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2008), 14. Of firms surveyed, 0.7 percent had women at the manager level, while 2.8 percent had female partnership in ownership.

115 The World Bank, "Share of Women Employed in the Non-Agricultural Sector (% of Total Non-Agricultural Employment)," http://search.worldbank.org/quickview?name=Share+of+%3Cem%3Ewomen%3C%2Fem%3E+employed+in+the+nonagricultural+sector+%28%25+of+total+nonagricultural+employment%29&id=SL.EMP.INSV.FE.ZS&type=Indicators&cube_no=2&qterm=afghanistan+women+agriculture (accessed 10 June 2013).

116 Women were barely represented in trade and repair, construction (1 percent), accommodation and food services (1 percent), electricity, gas and water (2 percent), mining and quarrying (3 percent), information and communication (3 percent), real estate (3 percent), transport and storage (5 percent). Of these, the sectors that provided maximum employment for workers (female or male) were education (average of 20.6 workers per establishment), mining and quarrying and construction (10.6 workers each, average). Manufacturing accounted for an average of only 3.6 workers per establishment while health and social work provided for an average of three workers per establishment; however, manufacturing had only 1.3 paid employees, health and social work, 1.7, and education had an average of 18.2 paid employees per establishment. Asian Development Bank and Central Statistics Organisation, "Afghanistan Integrated Business Enterprise Survey Report 2009.", xiii

117 The World Bank, "Labour Force, Female (% of total labour force) ," http://search.worldbank.org/quickview?name=Labor+%3Cem%3Eforce%3C%2Fem%3E%2C+female+%28%25+of+total+labor+%3Cem%3Eforce%3C%2Fem%3E%29&id=SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS&type=Indicators&cube_no=2&qterm=afghanistan+women+labour+force+partcipation (accessed 10 June 2013).

118 United Nations Development Programme, "International Human Development Indicators," http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/48906.html (accessed 11 June 2013).

119 As the Afghanistan National Statistical Plan states, generally, "the main labour market problem in Afghanistan is not unemployment but inadequate earnings'; further, many who are employed find only few hours' work and/or can insufficiently provide income, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Central Statistics Organisation, "Afghanistan National Statistical Plan" (Kabul: Central Statistics Organisation, 2010): 50. See also, World Bank, "Afghanistan: National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction – the Role of Women in Afghanistan's Future," (Kabul: World Bank, 2005), 4.

120 CSO, "Statistical Yearbook 2011-12," 133.

121 Food and Agriculture Organisation, "The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11, Women in Agriculture Closing the Gender Gap for Development," (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2011): Table A4, http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf (accessed 10 June, 2013).

122 Only 12 percent of land in Afghanistan is arable and only half of this currently under cultivation; 46 percent is under permanent pasture, CSO, "Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12," 138; http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Agriculture%20Development.pdf (accessed 9 June 2013). Thirty-seven percent of rural households have less than 3 percent of the irrigated land, Ministry of Agriculture, "Animal Husbandry and Food, Master Plan," (Kabul: 2005), cited in Adam Pain and Sayed Mohammad Shah, "Policy Making in Agriculture and Rural Development in Afghanistan," (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2009), 44. Landholdings are small, less that 0.5 ha of irrigated land, Pain et al., "Policymaking in Agriculture," 14, citing Asian Development Bank, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agriculture Sector" (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2003), 23. Households and families that own land can rarely depend on it for their entire source of food or household income. Instead, they supplement their income through handicrafts, trade, livestock, farm labour, services and employment, both seasonal and part-time, International Labour Organisation, "The state of employment in Afghanistan", (Kabul: International Labour Organisation, 2012), 17, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_4066.pdf (accessed 9 June 2013).

123 Whether a woman belongs to a landed or landless household; village-specific resource sharing arrangements; household

Women's participation this sector, further, depends upon the region, communities and ethnicities that they are a part of, as well as their age and class, the number and age of the other women in their household, and other related factors. Women from the better-off farming families tend to work more within the household while women from sharecropping families tend to work with their men on the land. Unmarried and married women rarely own land. Daughters, married or unmarried, may sometimes have access to land use and to the produce of their labour, but, even if the land is inherited, they do not have the selling or mortgaging rights. Widowed women may inherit land sometimes and lend it out for sharecropping or work on it themselves.

Women's farm-based activities include: removing stones from the soil, seed-bed preparation, weeding, cleaning and preparing the seed, moving wheat for storage and de-husking it in preparation for making flour, preparing meals for male household members, and, in certain areas, working the land. Men's agricultural activities, such as land preparation, planting, and fertilizer application, are usually completed within a specific time frame, while women's agricultural activities are recurrent, daily activities that last from the time the seed is planted to harvest time[124]. Although in many regions women's farming activities are described as pre-harvesting and mostly post-harvesting work, interviews with representatives of MAIL[125] show that women in Nuristan and Kunar Provinces undertake the ploughing of fields and a host of other activities normally associated with men. Regional variations mean that women may not be allowed to plough or harvest the fields in the South.

Women farmers, however, face poor access to resources; poor recognition in formal accounting and programming methods, lack of land ownership, insecure tenure, insecure control over land and its produce, fewer draft animals, lack of control over the livestock and its related income (whether owned or managed), socio-cultural impediments to direct market access; reduced or no access to newer varieties of seeds, fertilizers, pest-control measures and mechanical tools, equipment, training and technology; unequal access to year-round or full-time jobs; lack of credit and collateral; acute disparity in daily wages; and less education and less access to aid and extension services. In sum, there is lack of gendered equity in the availability and accessibility of opportunities; thus, women in agriculture and related activities generally remain at the micro-scale of production.

Horticulture

Women's major contribution in horticulture is currently in dried fruits (grapes, raisins, almonds, saffron), medicinal plants, and spices and seeds.[126] Women are also involved in fruit and vegetable cultivation and a series of post-harvest crop processing activities, such as cleaning and drying vegetables[127].

composition; knowledge of agricultural activities; marital status; wealth; tradition; location and size of villages; and, the nature of NGO projects working in a given village, Jo Grace, "Who Owns the Farm? Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2005), 16.

124 Thomas Fattori, "Organizing Afghan Women to Generate Income from Poultry, Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) in Afghanistan," (Washington DC: Food and Agriculture Organisation and Chemonics International, 2005), unnumbered, http://globalfoodchainpartnerships.org/cairo/papers/TomFattoriAfghanistan.pdf (accessed 10 June 2013; see also World Bank, "National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction."

125 Nasrullah Bakhtiani, Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, AREU interview, 18 December 2012; anonymity required, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, AREU interview, 1 January 2013.

126 In 2011-12, nuts and dried fruits contributed 32 percent of Afghanistan's exports, while medicinal plants contributed 18 percent. Of the nuts and dried fruits, raisins were 48 percent of export and almonds were 18 percent, CSO, "Statistical Yearbook, 2011-12," 224.

127 For example, Alice Kerr-Wilson and Adam Pain, "Three Villages in Alingar, Laghman: A Case Study of Rural Livelihoods" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2003).

Studies on women's presence in the raisin, almond and saffron sub-sectors show that women are heavily involved in their irrigation, weeding, and harvesting[128]. Women farmers with small land holdings are less able to access innovative technology (dryers for saffron, shelling for almonds, trellising for grapes, etc.). Moreover, extension training is often provided based on land ownership, which means women are generally excluded. Women's access to local produce markets is not addressed by transportation mechanism patterns[129]. The male networks of intermediaries, village-level traders, and input suppliers are generally out of bounds for women.

Unlike in agriculture, the key obstacle to women horticulturists or to producer associations moving up in the value chain seem to be on the input side, in the spheres of post-harvest processing and in the marketing. These latter two are the key areas where greater income can accrue and where the conversion of women's labour to the monetised market is effected, currently by male village-level traders, sales agents, retailers and wholesalers. This not only prevents the woman as worker from realising the full benefit of her labour, but also prevents the direct interaction with key actors of the value chain.

For example, there has been an increase in the grouping of horticulturists into cooperatives and women producer groups are emerging. Among the saffron growers, for example, Herat has two women producer associations. In Pashtoon Zarghoon district, the 275-member producer association owns the land, while in Ghoryan district, the association (480 women, including many widows) leases the land[130]. Since they have cooperative strength, they are better able to reach markets with female domestic retailers. These retailers are in direct contact with both domestic consumers and informal international exporters. However, women are not part of the input supplier side of saffron growing. Moreover, there are few or no women service providers in extension, credit, input supply, or marketing. Despite the key roles women play in harvesting and post-harvest processing, there is little or no training in quality control, including hygiene, sanitation, and higher-value varieties.

Livestock

An integral part of farming systems in Afghanistan is the livestock sector. It functions as a source of sustainable livelihoods, savings as assets that can be accumulated, protection against seasonal changes and insurance in times of disasters, and as social currency used in marriage transactions (pie-wasi[131]) and also for consumption[132].

Livestock animals, and generally their produce, are considered women's domain, especially those animals that are brought in pie-wasi from parental homes. Except in nomadic communities, women are responsible for all livestock-related activities from breeding, caring for new-born and sick animals, collecting fodder and feeding to milking and making dairy produce such as *krut* (dried yoghurt balls), milk and butter. Many women also engage in spinning wool and some use the wool

128 The World Bank, "Understanding gender in agricultural value chains"; Saeed Parto, Anastasiya Hozyainova, Rozbih Mihran, Jos Winters, Nafasgul Karimi, Zarghona Saify and Joost Gorter, "Gender and the Agricultural Innovation System in Rural Afghanistan: Barriers and Bridges" (Kabul: Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organisation, 2011). In the grapes/raisin and almond sectors, while women are mostly involved in drying, cleaning, sorting, grading/sorting, with some level of contribution in packaging, they are not involved at all in the post-harvest processing, including in dealing with middlemen, traders, wholesalers, retailers and exporters. Further, "[r]ural women perform harvesting and post-harvest processing of raisins, almonds, and saffron as a part of household chores; thus, their work goes unpaid. Af 100-200 per day, or Af 100 per 50-kilogram processed is paid to women in urban or peri-urban areas, who are hired by processors or wholesalers to clean, sort, grade, and package raisins or almonds for national, regional, and international markets', The World Bank, "Understanding gender in agricultural value chains", viii.

129 J. Howe, "Rural Access and Mobility in Afghanistan – A Gender-sensitive Analysis", (Washington: World Bank, 2010); Ruxandra Boros, "Afghan Women Entrepreneurs: At the Crossroads Between Globalization and Local Traditions," *International Journal of Business and Globalization* 2, no. 4 (2008): 373–402; Julie Babinard, "World Bank Gender Transport Surveys: An Overview" (Washington: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2011), http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTRANSPORT/Resources/336291-1227561426235/5611053-1231943010251/TRN-43-GenderSurveys.pdf (accessed 10 June 2013).

130 The World Bank, "Understanding Gender", 21.

131 The livestock given by the natal family to a woman shortly after or at the time of marriage.

132 Food and Agriculture Organisation, "Invisible Guardians, Women manage Livestock Diversity" (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2012), http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3018e/i3018e00.pdf, (accessed 11 June 2013).

from the sheep for filling cushions and pillows and for making namadas (felted woollen rugs)[133]. This greater responsibility for livestock does, to some extent, appear to translate into more decision-making power over the produce of the animals. In parts of the Northeast, women even interact with veterinarians; yet, veterinary training by organisations is generally given to men in villages. Further, despite not contributing to the rearing of livestock, men are more likely to decide on the purchasing and selling of feed and animals and their produce[134].

Poultry tends to be the traditional backyard system with feed being scavenged; meat and eggs are generally sufficient for household consumption. About 93 percent of backyard chicken owners are women. However, there is evidence of poultry farming moving from the traditional system to the more intensive semi-scavenger or semi-commercial systems. Through a RAMP/FAO project, for example, 850 village women producer groups have been formed that received training through female extension workers and were provided with vaccines and mixed feed; poultry advisors also assisted and guided the producer groups to establish contacts with shop-owners in the provincial centres for the marketing of eggs[135].

Changes in recent years

Examples of women-owned or women-managed ventures, albeit funded and project-framed, in agriculture/horticulture/livestock are[136]:

1	The Kabul Women Farm Store: a women-only store for inputs such as seed, fertilizer, trellises, pruning tools, agricultural machinery (for sale or rent) and extension services (provided through training and demonstration plots and greenhouses)
2	Roots of Peace: facilitates horticultural extension services from 18 women extension workers for women's producer groups; they receive training and information on improving post-harvest processing
3	In Kabul City, the Afghan Pride Association (APA) is a processing centre owned and operated by women, with 200 women members who work at the centre as processors or supervisors. The APA cooperates with women's associations such as the Afghanistan Women's Business Council (AWBC)

Some strategies and programmes

1	Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)
2	The Facilitation of Sustainable Decent Work through Skills Development and Market-Friendly Labour Regulations Programme
3	Agriculture Research and Extension Development programme (AGRED)
4	Integrated Alternative Livelihood Program (IALP)
5	Horticulture & Livestock Programme(HLP)
6	Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods (SAL)
7	Agriculture Market Infrastructure Project (AMIP), including the Livestock Support Project and Horticulture Support Project.
8	The National Rural Access Program (ARD Cluster) that links farmers and communities to the growing national road network while providing nationwide labour-intensive road construction and maintenance. The Agriculture and Rural Development Cluster Programs are to generate jobs by increasing productivity in rural areas, help the farm sector to link agricultural and rural products to markets, and create opportunities in rural enterprise in both agricultural and non-agricultural value addition activities.

133 Grace, "Who Owns the Farm?"; Fattori, "Organizing Afghan Women."

134 Jennifer Solotaroff, Nadia Hashimi and Asta Olesen, "Main Report. Vol. 1 of Gender in Developing the Agriculture and Livestock Sectors: Increasing Women's Opportunities along Value Chains of Farm Products. Afghanistan Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Note Series; No. 2" (Washington: The World Bank, 2012), http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2012/07/16541786/gender-developing-agriculture-livestock-sectors-increasing-womens-opportunities-along-value-chains-farm-products-vol-1-2-main-report (accessed 11 June 2013).

135 Fattori, "Organizing Afghan Women." There is a preference for watani eggs ("of Afghan soil, local), that is, produced non-commercially in Afghanistan, over mashinie eggs, or commercially produced and generally imported.

136 The World Bank, "Understanding Gender,"18-23.

Some of these and similar projects have incorporated female groups and some are cooperatives. Some also provide training through female extension workers, access to innovative technologies and improved market support; the degree of focus on women's groups is unclear in many[137]. Moreover, in the overall principles driving these projects, as Pain and Sayed (2009) noted of policy-making in MAIL, "[t]here are critical conditions or assumptions that have to be met if linkages between changes in agricultural productivity and effects on poverty can be created. Many of the positive effects of agricultural growth depend on small farms playing the major role in agricultural growth, and this cannot be guaranteed[138]."

However, many, if not all, of these initiatives depend upon the projects initiated by aid agencies and on the programming life of the aid itself. In such short-term projects, not only do the tenuous links between the donor and the implementing agency break almost as soon as they are established[139], but, with no follow-up activities charted—which are essential when gendered socio-economic development is aspired for in traditional contexts—the energies generated by short-term projects evaporate all too soon[140]. In this and all efforts, it is incumbent upon the government to develop long-term programmes that can build upon each short-term project in ways that can have effect at pan-Afghanistan levels. In this, government-partnered, owned and operated programmes are more sustainable and likely to win people's long-term involvement[141].

In concluding this sub-section, it can be said that, currently, the critical mass for women in all sections of the value chains has not been reached. As Parto et al. (2011) say, the creation of women's associations alone cannot eliminate gender inequities. What is needed is a, "[s]ystemic change in chain governance [providing] continued support, nurturing and even protection of these associations, regulatory reform, and (dis)incentives aimed at creating an enabling environment conducive to the emergence of a level playing field for all actors in the value chains, regardless of gender[142]." Information-sharing among individuals engaged in these IGAs becomes a challenge when women are not allowed to travel to nearby households and villages. Access to local markets remains insufficient to generate economies of scale, and to create employment of a large enough magnitude to lift people out of poverty Without institutional and organisational capacity, women's associations or microcredit institutions have limited potential to transform themselves into actual capital creation channels for women.

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137 Some, like the Agriculture Market Infrastructure Project (AMIP), Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and Horticulture and Livestock Project (HLP), are clearer.

138 Pain et al., "Policymaking in Agriculture", 25.

139 As is also noted in Section 3 of this Report.

140 Such measures, as the 2010 OHCHR report based upon a 14-province survey points out, serve to exacerbate a situation of dire poverty, especially when they do not take into account localised contexts, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Human Rights Dimension of Poverty in Afghanistan" (Kabul: UNOHCHR: 2010). In making a similar point while advocating for transformative social protection against social and economic sources of risk, Kantor and Pain also say that this approach, "clashes with the current political reality in Afghanistan, where pressure to show quick results trumps interest in dealing with the structural causes of poverty', Paula Kantor and Adam Pain, "Running Out of Options, Tracing Rural Afghan Livelihoods" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2011), 7.

141 For example, the government, through MAIL, has created the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF), which provides farmers and agribusinesses with loans for everything from buying certified seed to building farm equipment. Designed to lend to small commercial farmers with farm holdings between one and 30 hectares, it has faced the problems with women around lack of land and collateral. Its pilot, called Zahra and designed for 135 female agribusiness entrepreneurs already operating medium-scale enterprises individually or in groups in annual and perennial horticulture, livestock husbandry and agro-processing, is underway, USAID, "Agricultural Credit Enhancement (ACE) Program 2012 Annual Report", (Kabul: USAID, 2012), http://www.acdivoca.org/site/Lookup/ACE-ANNUAL-REPORT-FY2012_web/$file/ACE-ANNUAL-REPORT-FY2012_web.pdf (accessed 11 June, 2013). Similarly, MAIL has recently completed a Women's Cooperative Necessity Measurement with UNDP, which assesses the needs of women in the management of cooperatives, Qais Faqeeri, Administration and Finance Officer, Rabiha-e-Balkhee Skill Support Administration (RASA), AREU interview, 27 November 2012.

142 Parto et al., "Gender and Agricultural Innovation," 25.

2.3.3 SMEs and women's economic engagement

Afghanistan ranked 183rd out of 183 economies in a 2011 survey on national environments for conducting and doing business[143]. Afghanistan's export partners in 2012 were chiefly Pakistan (50 percent), India (18 percent), Turkey (2.9 percent), Iran (5.31 percent), and Russia (8.77 percent); commodities were, chiefly, fresh fruits, dried fruits and nuts, medicinal plants, seeds, hand-woven carpets, wool, cotton, sausages, hides and pelts, and precious and semi-precious stones. There is enough evidence to say that women are involved in the production of most, if not all, of the listed commodities, which the disaggregation of recorded labour has not acknowledged. Afghan women in trade and entrepreneurship are generally small-scale or micro-level and need support at local, national and international levels.

According to the Afghanistan Women's Business Federation (AWBF), women's entrepreneurship and economic activity participation in the past decade has changed such that, for example, women who formerly traded individually have gradually started forming groups[144]. Much like participation in MFI, women in trade groups can experience a range of empowerment indicators: greater confidence, mobility and ability, and widening networks of contacts and knowledge, along with improved responsibility, decision-making and household, community and economic status. Representatives from organisations working on women's rights and economic empowerment point out that the donor-led projects, besides using de-contextualised, non-participatory and opaque programming, tended to focus on occupational training and neglect to support the input side or marketing and sales.

The chief problem for women traders in Afghanistan seems to be conservative attitudes that make it difficult for a woman to make decisions independent of the husband or father; other problems involve physical mobility, interaction with non-mahram males, high levels of insecurity, and corruption.[145]. Other constraints for women in trade include:

- lack of literacy and numeracy;
- lack of access to forms of economic and social capital[146];
- inadequate management skills, credit, and market knowledge;
- inadequate access to quality raw materials and technology;
- lack of knowledge about the legal requirements necessary to convert an income-generating activity into a formal business;
- lack of or inadequate production space, equipment/ facilities, quality control and packaging, market information, transportation; and,
- inadequate reach within domestic and international markets.

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143 Exports in Afghanistan had declined from US$ 1.2 billion in 2003, to US$ 545 million in 2009, to US$ 403 million in 2010, and declined even further in 2011-12 to US$ 376 million, Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAFA), "Afghan Women Go to (the Global) Market: An Analysis of Women's Participation in Trade and Business" (Kabul: USAID & Chemonics, 2011), 7.

144 A woman has now, "directly entered the society, and can ascertain her presence in the family and in the society, and says that she herself is involved in the economic activity, and this is my daily or monthly or annual income that [it] comes to the house [household income] from her'. Malalai Jawad, Membership Manager, Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF), AREU interview, 30 December 2012.

145 Malalai Jawad, AWBF, AREU interview, 30 December 2012; Sahiba Nooristani, Investment Promotion Officer, AISA, AREU interview, 1 January 2013.

146 Accessing formal, non-family capital calls for significant negotiating skills in convincing her family, normally a first and natural resource for a son, so they can trust her to not fail and squander savings and that the land, house or other immovable property is to stand as collateral for her venture. The would-be entrepreneur also needs three more people who can vouch for her: one government staffer and two established store-owning businesspeople. Since the chances are that most store-owning businesspersons are men, it means that the woman is going through yet another round of battling against deeply held patriarchal beliefs that distrust a woman's ability to do business, besides the store-owner's reluctance to stand guarantee for a third party, Malalai Jawad, AWBF, AREU interview, 30 December 2012.

Further, access to power remains a problem with strategies based upon grid-connected electricity and not enough attention paid to demand-driven renewable sources, especially solar home systems[147]; In addition, there is a lack of gender perspective in terms of equal access to wind, micro-hydro, geothermal or biomass sources[148].

Another issue is that the many limited time-frame ventures financed by international agencies and implemented by local NGOs generally offer technical skills such as tailoring, embroidery or jewellery making. As with IGAs in agriculture, agencies working with women in SMEs tend to wind up a project after some training and capacity building. As one research participant asks, "in which community can such initiatives empower women economically?" Once such a project is over, the centre vanishes, she said, and, "the women don't know where to go and what to do." She suggested hybrid, public-private partnerships that can offer women long-term occupational stability and income generation. Further, all projects should provide equipment that can become the property of the project participants so that the skills acquired during the project can be continued[149]. Those organisations and donors that have had marketing plans in place have stronger capacity to continue their activities in imparting skills to women. For example, SABAH, which trains women in jam- and sauce-making and in tailoring, is able to market the products through a tie-up with SAARC, and through both its donor (SEWA) and MoWA.

Links to potential markets for women entrepreneurs need to be made available at regional, national and international levels. For the SME segment to become a dynamic employment source, favourable access to international markets through trade is imperative; the low-income domestic market is not capable of absorbing the production of SMEs on a scale large enough to provide substantial employment. Overall, there is a dearth of organisations to provide technical and entrepreneurship training to women at regional and district levels, including basic numeracy, bookkeeping and accounting skills, the ability to make a profit, understand a business plan, comply with government rules, or obtain larger loans become pitfalls for women moving toward sustained income expansion.

In Afghanistan, these (generic) problems need collaborative effort between the ministries, agencies and commissions to formulate a national policy on women in national and international trade and entrepreneurship, including through Business Development Services. Moreover, Afghanistan has entered into many bilateral and multilateral trade agreements in this past decade, and is a part of many trade bodies[150], yet women, "are not consulted or represented in dialogues on national trade policies and international trade consultations, therefore, their particular needs and concerns are not surfaced, recognised and addressed[151]." Interviews suggest that the government and its agencies need to be more proactive in ensuring women's participation at both the national and international levels; affirmative action and a quorum for women at all such governmental decision-making bodies and forums around trade, commerce and industry should be considered.

147 "solar radiation averages about 6.5 kWh per square meter per day and the skies are sunny about 300 days a year.', Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Energy, 1397-1391(2007/8-2012/13) Vol. II, Pillar III, Infrastructure" (2012): 22, http://moec.gov.af/Content/files/Energy%20Sector%20Strategy%20-%209%20June%2008%20-%20English.pdf (accessed 13 June 2013).

148 See, for example, Rainer Gonzalez Palau, "Opportunities for Micro-Electric Power in Rural Afghanistan" (Kabul: Civil-Military Fusion Centre, 2011), https://www.cimicweb.org/Documents/CFC%20AFG%20Infrastructure%20Archive/20110602-INFRA-SEC-Micro-Electric-Opportunities.pdf (accessed 14 June 2013).

149 Dr Alema, Civil Peace Service Coordinator, GIZ/DED, AREU interview, 12 December 2012.

150 Including South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC,) UN Economic and Social Commission Asia Pacific (UNESCAP), and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

151 TAFA, "Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey," 19. Also seen in countries such as Turkey, Robert Hisrich and Sevgi Ozturk, "Women Entrepreneurs in a Developing Country", *The Journal of Management Development* 18, no. 2 (1999): 114-125; and Morocco, Kenneth Gray and Jocelyn Finely-Hervey, "Women and Entrepreneurship in Morocco: Debunking Stereotypes and Discerning Strategies", *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* 1, (2005): 203-217.

Lastly, Afghanistan's WTO membership is probably due in 2013-14; AISA argues that it will grant the country far greater trade opportunities[152]. However, WTO membership would also mean opening up Afghanistan to international competition from economies far more structured and technologically informed. With little in the way of social protection, there will be a greater feminisation of poverty, with many small industries in agri-business, livestock, horticulture and the rugs and carpet industry becoming more susceptible to more exploitative terms in the face of far greater competition than already exists.

Information and Communication Technology

If Afghanistan's informal IGA and SME segments are to coordinate their activities and integrate with domestic and international markets, access to communications is a key prerequisite. Given Afghanistan's difficult physical terrain, poor transport networks and cultural factors that restrict women's mobility, the ability to communicate is one of the strategic options for overcoming geographical and time barriers. Afghanistan is well placed to employ Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to achieve its development needs[153].

The government is already using mobile technology to deliver a literacy programme to its citizens. As noted in the earlier subsection, Afghanistan's female literacy rate remains at just 12.5 percent, compared to 39.3 percent for men. The mobile literacy programme enables men and wom by the end of 2008; this falls under the category of Development/ Gender Cross-Cutting Issues. Although the pilot's implementation and subsequent policy development is unclear, in May 2013, the MoWA and the MoCIT launched mobile technology programmes, "specifically designed for women, such as a distance-learning literacy programme, a family hotline facility, an SMS service for teachers and students to fast-track their progress in education, and mobile health applications during pregnancy[154]." Such programmes should equally be considered in women's access to various forms of cross-sector information that enhances their role in the economy and increases income.

2.3.4 Networking across IGAs and SMEs

If women are not to remain relegated to subsistence-level or the lowest-paying jobs, SME and IGA cross-linkages must be considered in a systematic and regulated fashion. To promote and integrate women's livelihood groups, for example, one chain model could be the following:

a. **At the village level**: Expansion of livelihood-based, village-level women's producer groups (that are to some extent being addressed by some aid projects). These producer groups can be linked to the CDC women's shuras, to the MRRD women's councils, to the MISFA microcredit and savings groups and perhaps to the women producers in NABDP's DDAs and the women's groups in the Targeted Alternative Livelihood Programme (TALP) of the AREDP. As an entry point, these programmes provide a governance mechanism by ensuring producer group transparency and accountability. Such women producer groups can be represented at the district level in a

152 According to AISA, WTO membership will bring more credibility, lowering of barriers to cheaper imports and commodities, wider regional and global export markets, preferential status among WTO members, and greater foreign direct investment, Afghanistan Investment Support Agency, "Afghanistan's Accession to the WTO," http://www.aisa.org.af/newsarchive/AfghanistanAccessionWTO.pdf (undated). Besides wider benefits can accrue due to its land-locked and Least Developed Country status (additional technical assistance, support for economic diversification, developing skills and infrastructure through Aid for Trade, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/ World Trade Organisation "Aid for Trade at a Glance 2013 Connecting to Value Chains" (OECD/WTO, 2013); http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/ aid_glance-2013-en (accessed 9 June 2013). Membership to the WTO can potentially offer Afghanistan greater cooperation with neighbouring member countries for access to ports and the overland transport of exports.

153 According to the MoCIT, mobile telephone coverage is over 60 percent of the population; over 19.5 million are GSM subscribers while about 164,000 are CDMA subscribers in a country of 31.4 million. There are 4,760 active towers throughout the country spanning 85 percent of the population. The Ministry plans to expand its services in remote parts of the country where the remaining 15 percent of the population will be covered with the installation of 700 new towers, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, "Telecom Statistics, End of December, 2012," http://atra.gov.af/en/page/telecom-statistics-end-of-december-2012 (accessed 14 June 2013).

154 USAID, "Connecting to Opportunity: A Survey of Afghan Women's Access to Mobile Technology" (Kabul: USAID, 2013), http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/documents/document/Document/2894/A_Survey_of_Afghan_Womens_Access_to_Mobile_Technology_English (accessed 8 June 2013).

cooperative form for each economic activity: fruit growers, carpet makers, dairy producers, poultry growers, farm workers, saffron producers, weavers, raisin producers, almond producers, embroiders, tailors, patch-workers, vegetable growers, cotton gin-workers, silk producers, honey-bee farmers, mud brick producers, and similar.

b. **At the district level:** women's Community Centres could be beneficial if developed as a women-only, cooperative, one-stop centre for all issues connected with livelihood groups specific to that district. The Centre can combine:

- a Cooperative store: input supplies, procurement and storage of raw material, seeds, vaccines, veterinary medicines, fertilizers, etc.; credit/smart cards could be offered,
- a Centre for training and extension services, with facilities for networking with mobile services such as Roshan's M-Paisa and with linkage to e-choupal,
- kiosk centres with services like e-choupal,
- MFI Points: loan, credit, savings and insurance facilities,
- SME Points: training and access to a capital and links to private sector databases, with tax training and help with tax forms; legal aid could also be introduced,
- production areas: catering exclusively to women's local livelihood sectors,
- Renewable Energy Centres: where environment-specific renewable energy investments are made in solar, wind and biogas and women are trained in operation and maintenance of energy equipments,
- an equipment leasing facility,
- child care,
- transportation access for women to and from villages,
- marketing services for local produce to be linked to domestic markets and to regulated public-private partnerships for trade to international markets through Regional Centres, and
- product collection from the village and transportation of goods to Regional Centres.

The Community Centres could also coordinate between government agencies and women producer groups on problems related to irrigation, disease, electricity, water, and similar. They could also help eliminate the middleman and enable a putting-out system, in which work is contracted by a central agent to subcontractors who complete the work in off-site facilities, either in their own homes or in workshops with apprentices and craftspersons. Through this system of subcontracting, the domestic manufacturing sector can be linked to international markets to allow for economics of scale without disturbing the cultural norms that govern Afghan society.

c. **Regional Centres**: These will need to be based upon the types of produce specific to a geographical region, since the administrative boundaries of the current 34 Provinces do not necessarily correspond the soil and economic conditions connected to differing ecosystems. The Regional Centres could be based upon, for example, Dupree's 11 divisions of Afghanistan[155] as an alternative; these could then be the link between women's village- and district-level produce and the national women's organisations dealing with international markets. They will cater to local production as well as export with:

- AISA regional offices for women,
- the business support offices of the livelihood-based regional groupings of women in SMEs, with a Social Protection Network
- training and extension Centres, including for renewable energy,
- input Procurement Centres that offer and supply quality input at cost rates to the district Women Community Centres,

155 The Wakhan Corridor-Pamir Knot, Badakhshan, Central Mountains, Eastern Mountains, Northern Mountains and Foothills, Southern Mountains and Foothills, Turkistan Plains, Herat-Farah Lowlands, Sistan Basin-Hilmand Valley, Western Stony Desert, and Southwestern Sandy Desert.

- free trade zones for women in agriculture, livestock and handicrafts and other products and businesses specific to the Region,
- MFI Centres for women, with a) sector-specific and women-friendly credit, training, research, and b) survey centres that can monitor women's MFI access and use in the relevant districts,
- SME Centres for women, with a) sector-specific and women-friendly loans, capital and credit, and b) Business Development Services training, research and survey centres that can monitor the women's SME access and use in the relevant districts,
- a regulated, public-private-partnered industrial park for women-owned and operated SMEs, with a low tax rate for microenterprises, small business, and small local agricultural producers,
- a coordination point for public-private partnerships for trade to international markets, and
- an all-female Gender Technical Team to coordinate with other Regional Centres, developed by MAIL, MRRD and MoCI, which includes specialists in finance, gender, technical services, renewable energy, value-chain, customer service, female ulema, marketing, procurement and ICT.

d. **At the national level:** an umbrella Afghan women's organisation is needed that:

- coordinates all issues concerning women's livelihood options, income and equal wages,
- coordinates women's access to credit, capital and training needs,
- coordinates women's access to power, especially through renewable energy sources,
- offers policy advice to the government and reviews all existing laws in tax and labour practices from a gender perspective, and
- reviews international agreements in tariff and trade negotiations to ensure women's benefits and interests are protected.

As a representative organisation, it will have members from the Regional Centres with sector-wise cross-linkages, and who will have a presence in national-level institutions like AISA and ACCI, contribute to Ministerial briefings, participate in all international regional trade bodies and in all international multi-regional conferences on trade and export.

Strategically targeted and regulated public-private community partnerships that address women's social exclusion and build their socio-economic capital offer promise for women's economic empowerment, but they need to be highly regulated. Such mechanisms that bring together community-based organisations (NGOs, SHGs), government agencies and private companies to work on development projects would promote income generation while taking into account social and environmental factors[156] that can be used to invest in women-owned SMEs. They can be better utilised to provide access to training and networks, markets, and finance to women in IGAs as well as in expanding the potential of women-owned SMEs.

Much more remains to be done to create an environment where women can better participate in the Afghan economy. The chief casualties continue to be education, health, women's presence in the public sphere and women's safety, four important indicators of women's well-being in any society that connect directly to the economic empowerment of women. Although women have been granted some rights through laws, enforcing and implementing those laws is lacking.

2.4 Impacts of greater rights on economic opportunity and vice versa

An analysis of some of the strategies and initiatives that have been programmed and activated in the past decade around women's civil, political and economic empowerment shows that women's informal participation in Afghanistan's economy needs to be streamlined and harnessed to utilise their full economic potential.

156 See also Principles for Responsible Investment, "The Global Compact and UNEP Finance Initiative," http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/news_events/9.1_news_archives/2006_04_27/pri.pdf. (accessed 1 April 2013).

- The AIHRC's reach across the country is powerful and the effects of its activities are far-reaching. However, as an independent Commission, it lacks teeth in enforcing punitive action since it is limited to documentation, building awareness and lobbying.
- Studies of the impact of women's MFI use show varying results in: access and forms of utilisation, mobility, household social status, decision-making power, economic status, independence and self-confidence, and sense of financial ownership. An extended MFI interaction programme radius, in general, has had limited effect in impacting gendered social change. There are many sections in agri-business, for example, where negotiations could be considered to offer attractive returns for the partial transfer of the land/equipment to a/the wife; this could be in lieu of, for example, zero tariffs on exports. Microcredit is not tailored according to subsector; the need for loans in the wheat crop may differ from those for livestock, while handicrafts and other small-scale businesses like retail may have different repayment schedules. There is a lack of savings services and no insurance products[157].
- The rights of women have been left unresolved between the Shari'ah, customary law and statutory law, and between constitutional "equality" and legal inequality. Since customary barriers restrict the economic activities of women and prevent their legitimate access to inheritance, mahr, maintenance, work, financial independence and ownership of property and assets, there is a need to review family law in the Shari'ah and address and reconstruct customary law accordingly, including on consent.[158]
- The AMDGs' progress is lagging far behind the project's 2020 Goals. To reach parity in education by 2020, for example, will require five girls to be enrolled at the primary stage for every three boys, and three girls for every boy at the secondary stage[159]. In female work participation in government

157 Maliha Hamid Hussein, "State of Microfinance in Afghanistan" (Kabul: Institute of Microfinance, 2009), http://www.inm.org.bd/publication/state_of_micro/Afghanistan.pdf (accessed 11 June 2013). See also: Chona Echavez and Sogol Zand, "The Impact of Microfinance Programmes on Women's Lives: A Case Study in Balkh Province" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012); Sogol Zand, "The Impact of Microfinance Programmes on Women's Lives: A Case Study in Parwan" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2010), Erna Andersen, Paula Kantor and Amanda Sim, "Microcredit, Informal Credit and Rural Livelihoods: A Village Case Study in Bamyan Province" (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2008); Afghan Management and Marketing Consultants, "Gender Mainstreaming in Afghanistan's Microfinance Sector: An Impact Assessment" (Kabul: MISFA, undated), aqr.slow@ammc.com.afwww.ammc.com.af (accessed 11 June 2013); Dale Lampe, "One Step Back from the Brink: Donors, Disbursement and Default," *Microbanking Bulletin* (2011),

http://www.themix.org/sites/default/files/MBB%20-%20one%20step%20back%20from%20the%20brink_1.pdf (accessed 11 June 2013); Microfinance Investment Support for Afghanistan, www. misfa. org.af.

158 See Nadjma Yassari, (editor), "The Sharī´a in the Constitutions of Afghanistan, Iran and Egypt: Implications for Private Law," (Tubingen, Germany : Mohr Siebeck, 2005); Nadjma Yassari and Mohammad Hamid Saboory, "Sharia and National Law in Afghanistan," *Jura Gentium* (undated),

http://www.juragentium.org/topics/islam/en/yassari.htm, (accessed 12 February 2013); Thomas J. Barfield, "On Local Justice and Culture in Post-Taliban Afghanistan," *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 17, (2002): 437-439; International Legal Foundation, "The Customary Laws of Afghanistan: A Report by the International Legal Foundation" (Kabul: International Legal Foundation, 2003); Palwasha Kakar, "Tribal Law of Pashtunwali and Women's Legislative Authority," (Harvard Law School Islamic Legal Studies Program, unpublished research paper, 2003), http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/ilsp/research/alhp.php (accessed 11 June 2013); Lynn Carter and Kerry Connor, "A Preliminary Investigation of Contemporary Afghan Councils" (Peshawar, Pakistan: Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), 1989), 7, http://repository.forcedmigration.org/?search=A+PRELIMINARY+INVESTIGATION+OF+CONTEMPORARY+AFGHAN+COUNCILS&start=0&rows=10 (accessed 11 June 2013); Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Combined periodic reports to CEDAW," 32; Barnett R. Rubin, "Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition From Turmoil to Normalcy," CSR 12, (Council of Foreign Relations, 2006):25; Miriam A. Nawabi, "Women's Rights in the New Constitution of Afghanistan," (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2003): 9-11; Christie S. Warren, "Lifting the Veil: Women and Islamic Law," (William and Mary Law School Scholarship Repository, Faculty Publications, Paper 99, 2008), http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/facpubs/99, (accessed 11 June 2013); Faiz Ahmed, "Shari'a, Custom, and Statutory Law: Comparing State Approaches to Islamic Jurisprudence, Tribal Autonomy, and Legal Development in Afghanistan and Pakistan," *Global Jurist Advances*, Article 5, 7, no. 1 (2007): 1-54; Laura Belkner, "The Secular and Religious Legal Framework of Afghanistan as Compared to Western Notions of Equal Protection and Human Rights Treaties: Is Afghanistan's Legal Code Facially Consistent with Sex Equality?" *Cardozo Journal of International and Comparative Law* 20 (2012): 501-36; Rural Development Institute, "Women's Inheritance Rights to Land and Property in South Asia: A Study of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka" (World Justice Project, 2009), http://www.landesa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/RDI_Report_WJF_Womens_Inheritance_Six_South_Asian_Countries_December_2009.pdf (accessed 12 June 2013); Nusrat Choudhury, "Constrained Spaces for Islamic Feminism: Women's Rights and the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 19 (2007): 155-74.

159 United Nations Development Programme, Afghanistan, "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women," http://www.undp.org.af/undp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=68 (accessed 12 June 2013).

institutions, the figures show a dip from 30 percent in 2005 to less than 20 percent in 2010[160]. Further, there seems to have been certain gaps in data collection and availability, especially in those provinces that continue to be affected by conflict. Most importantly, to adequately enhance female labour participation in Afghanistan, the crucial sectors to be monitored, analysed and strategised for are in the agricultural and non-agricultural informal economy. Although it is possible to get a measure of the challenges faced in increasing the gender balance in the four targets of Goal 3, strong programming in these two sectors will need to be implemented on an urgent basis.

- NAPWA in early 2011 showed slow progress, reflecting a wide gap between policy and implementation. The points made in various documents for the lack of NAPWA implementation are related to the role and position of MoWA, the lack of benchmark mechanisms, the lack of timeframes and enforceability within all Ministries responsible for gender mainstreaming and, to some extent, a lack of ownership of NAPWA within MoWA and the government as a whole. There is also not enough understanding of how gender is localised in Afghan contexts. Further, in the absence of specific benchmarks as well as low capacity on gender within Ministries, substantial guidance and capacity is required to fulfil NAPWA directions.
- AISA and the ACCI do not yet have a focus on developing specific initiatives and strategies across sectors in order to enhance women's economic potential, including women-specific proposals in business training and skills development across provinces.
- TAFA has not mentioned any gender-sensitive measures being represented in trade policies nor in its collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, nor in women-specific knowledge dissemination around policies and opportunities. The establishment of government-certified quality control measures in various sectors across the country is needed.
- The ANDS Action Plan and its Monitoring Matrix should be reviewed across all sectors and pillars for expected outcomes, indicators, baselines and targets that refer to the implementation and, thence, the monitoring of gender-focused points[161].Their implementation within Line Ministries needs to be effective.
- The NSP results for women's participation are mixed. According to interviews, the CDCs of the NSP have not enhanced women's public participation. The MRRD lists 388 CDCs with male-only shuras, 377 CDCs with mixed shuras and none with women-only shuras[162]; some of the CDCs with male-only shuras have women's groups and some have Advisory groups that include women. Female participation and authority in the CDCs varies from highly limited to absent. Further, the CDC needs fiscal embedment within the national budget.

Effective assessments have yet to be conducted; in their absence, it is difficult to estimate the impacts of improved human rights on women's economic advantages. There have been some qualitative and quantitative studies based upon limited samples and they point to various results in women's status. They also point to the possibility that, even with the sometimes grim situation, there have been positive changes toward women's human rights as well as women's economic empowerment in this past decade. The efforts of some of the strategies and programmes and projects are beginning to bear fruit, with urban Afghanistan and select pockets in rural Afghanistan being the drivers of change. Spaces and cracks are opening up that encourage women's participation and economic engagement.

In sum, while there has been a limited increase in opportunities in education, health and political participation for women, it has been greatly tempered by reduced safety. Compared to 2001, women's access to education and health care in 2013 has improved in absolute numbers, but it is

160 Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, "Fifth Report Situation of Social and Economic Rights in Afghanistan" (Kabul: AIHRC, 2011), 73; UNIFEM Factsheet 2010,

http://www.unifem.org/afghanistan/media/pubs/factsheet/10/index.html, 12.

161 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan National Development Strategy, (2008-13)," Appendix 1, National Action Plan (2009-13): 192-245 and Appendix 2, the Monitoring Matrix.

162 Unpublished, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, National Area Based Development programme.

not proportionate to the population. In women's political participation, while the numbers exist in some sectors, the overall efficacy remains highly limited. In safety, the situation for women is deplorable, which is crucial as access to economic opportunity is mediated by perceptions of safety as well as by socio-developmental indicators and community contexts. The government has just begun to focus on women's economic potential; for this potential to be realised, all Ministries and their strategies, as well as international aid, have to be fully oriented toward ANDS and to all principles of the NAPWA. How "gender mainstreaming" is understood varies within programmes and strategies; the implementing mechanisms need far more streamlining and strengthening. Further, there is also a large gap between broadly stated principles in some policies and the specifics that are then provided within the policies themselves. Coordination and monitoring mechanisms need buttressing as do accountability. MoWA has formed a monitoring and evaluation unit to ensure the integration of gender-sensitive components in the design and implementation of NAPWA and the indicators that have been developed jointly with women's networks and the line ministries.

Women's representation in labour is disorganised and piecemeal with very little sector-based analysis. Available data indicates that, so far, there has been no surge in their economic participation. Their participation remains at the lower end of value chains and lack of access to many resources prevents an upgrade of their skills and income. Organised, informal income generation needs processes and national strategies that can structure, streamline and harness women's potential, even if in a rather instrumentalist approach. This includes credit- and trade-related services for a deeper outreach tailored to suit gender and sector needs so that women are incorporated into the promotion of value chains in all products.

2.5 Arenas for policy review

Based on the insights gained from the sections above, the following points arranged in four broad categories could enhance women's economic engagement. Gender is "mainstreamed" through all four categories via the motif of "*creating women-only spaces*."

The four categories are: 1) Strengthening the policy environment, 2) Addressing human development gaps, 3) Focusing on deliverables, and 4) Gendering the financial services.

1. **Strengthening the policy environment:** At the central level of the Government, and for the Central Statistics Organisation (CSO), there has to be a revised understanding of women's contribution to Afghanistan's economic development. The specific implementation of NAPWA and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) alone, in collaboration with the Line Ministries, would address many of the gaps that the country is facing today in human development, poverty reduction and the greater involvement of women in economic activities.
2. **Addressing human development gaps:** It is crucial to address the gaps that girls and women face in education, health care, safety, physical mobility and political participation. One route to take is to adhere to customary and traditional norms and values in gendering facilities. In the meantime, there is already enough encouragement for women's access to education—the quest for knowledge being a central pillar of Islam—and to health services. The bottlenecks here are access to separate but equal resources for women, particularly for girls and younger women.
3. **Focusing on deliverables: T**o build a women-to-women service delivery model (from producer to wholesalers/ processors/ exporters) and entrepreneurship among women with a focus on the domestic market and export potential, a strong and active network of and for women across sectors that operates at a pan-Afghanistan level in cities and provincial headquarters should be created.

4. **Engendering financial services:** Access to credit and capital is essential to widen and enhance women's economic engagement; access to collateral remains a bottleneck. In addition, women lack insurance and risk guarantee. In the current microfinance climate, they also face high interest rates and small credits coupled with tight repayment schedules. Simultaneously, the reach of the microfinance sector is limited when compared to demand and is of a fairly standard nature which does not always address the needs of women in the informal rural sector and those in small-scale trade.

3. Situation Analysis[163]

This section is guided by the case studies of women who have participated in projects for economic engagement It looks at community contexts, prevalent gender norms, women's positioning of the self in relation to community, effected gendered practices and the ways in which women's participation in a project has affected their empowerment, agency, decision-making and status within their families and communities.

These case studies investigate the ways in which the selected communities position women and their economic engagement and status. Focus group discussions with women and men reveal the ways in which changes in roles and rights may have taken place, or not, in the past decade including due to the impact of migration, changing economy and the effects brought about by the project's intervention in the community. In-depth interviews with key male agnates point to some ways in which women's dependence and autonomy are constructed and how modifications have taken place. Individual women's perceptions of the self, their embedment in the community, the gender norms and roles they may subscribe to, and the modifications effected are provided in detail. Correspondingly, the views of the representatives of the project's implementing organisation bring out its aims and objectives, its efficacy and the levels of economic engagement that it was able to realise.

Analytically, this part of the report draws upon understandings of a person's gendered embedment in community and quam and the nature of belonging that this can prompt[164]. From this evolves perspectives on the structures of hierarchy and deference that determine position, status and access to resources; the concepts of patriarchy, nāmos[165] and nang and the ways in which they interact with the ascribed and gendered ability to possess reason and discrimination; the effects the above have on "keeping pardāh" and "performing zanāngi"; and the construction of respectability and of stigma and reputation. The Glossary elaborates the words commonly used by participants and locates them where pertinent and to some extent, in their cultural concepts. These socio-cultural constructs have bearing upon the avoidance behaviour that women are expected to display to help maintain social structures[166] in order to prevent social fitnā (disorder, anarchy) and mediate transactions between the individual and community in culturally valued ways[167].

163 An expanded, more detailed version of this section is available as "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012: Situational Analysis', at the website of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.

164 For an expanded discussion on some aspects of the gendered self in Afghanistan, see "Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan, 2002-2012: Situation Analysis", available on the website of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.

165 Diacritics are used to express the high/long vowel 'a' of Dari in this Section of the Report.

166 Writing in the 1970s, Azoy said that, "resources for the average male remain: land, water, livestock and women.' Of these, "it is women, however, who are widely considered the most volatile cause for serious dispute. Without control over female reproductive services, a man can have no sons (to assist in economic activity, to act as the core of political support, and to provide security in old age) and no daughters (to be married outside the nuclear family and thus provide both bridewealth and affinal alliance)...[women] serve as the primary embodiments of masculine honour. A man may suffer the loss of material property and still keep the core of his self-respect intact. But the mere suspicion of illicit access to his women requires an overt response: immediate and extreme.' G. Whitney Azoy, *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan* (Longrove, Illinois: Waveland Inc., 2012): 31-32. See also David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), and Bernt Glatzer, "Being Pashtun - Being Muslim: Concepts of Person and War in Afghanistan," in *Essays on South Asian Society: Culture and Politics II*, ed. Bernt Glatzer, 83-94 (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1998).

167 Hanna Papanek, "Purdah: Separate Worlds, and Symbolic Shelter," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15, no. 3 (1973): 289-325; Hanna Papanek, "Family Status-Production Work: Women's Contribution to Social Mobility and Class Differentiation," in *Gender and the Household Domain*, ed. Maitreyee Krishnaraj and Karuna Chanana (New Delhi: Sage, 1989):97-116; Nancy Tapper, *Bartered Brides: Politics, Gender and Marriage in an Afghan Tribal Society*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Richard L. Tapper, "Ethnicity, Order and Meaning in the Anthropology of Iran and Afghanistan," *Colloques Internationaux* (1988), Nancy Hatch Dupree, "The Family during Crisis in Afghanistan," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Turbulent Times and Family Life in the Contemporary Middle East, no. 2 (2004):311-31; Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1986); Mai Ghoussoub, "Feminism—or the Eternal Masculine—in the Arab World," *New Left Review* 161 (1987): 3-13; Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," *Development and Change* 30 (1999): 435-64; Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival," *Cultural Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (2001): 202-236; Leila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing

Evolving from the above, it would be useful to situate agency as, "what the person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals and value he or she regards as important"[168]. While acknowledging, as Amartya Sen does, that, "some of the constraints that are imposed on what women are free or not free to do may relate to women's own perceptions of legitimacy and appropriateness[169]," and despite the need for assessment and discipline, there is value in Sen's view that, "the use of one's agency, is, in an important sense, a matter for oneself to judge[170]." This locates agency in the view of people as "responsible agents" who can direct their well-being while seeking and engendering positive changes in their lives and societies through participation in economic activities.

The following pages provide qualitative perspectives of five case studies on the female participants of identified projects, their male agnates, some women and men of their immediate communities, and a representative of the project's implementing organisation. The five community research sites are in:

a. Nahr-e-darsan, Guzargāh: sports ball manufacturing project, Humanitarian Assistance Muska (HAM).

b. Police Township, Kabul city: Qur'ānic literacy training and jam and pickle making, Afghanistan Women Education Center (AWEC).

c. Isārkhail village, Istālif: animal husbandry and training and leather bag sewing, Female Rehabilitation and Development Organization (FRDO).

d. MousākhilPāein village, Qārābāgh: training in jam-making, National Area-Based Development Program (NABDP).

e. Adam Khān village, Bagrāmi: tailoring training, Sanayee Development Organisation (SDO)/ National Solidarity Programme (NSP).

A list of participants with details is provided in Appendices 1 and 3. Each site is first described from the observations and interactions of the field researchers with non-participant community members, women and men, and which elicited localised, informal information.

3.1 Sites and contexts

The five sites in this study could be described as peri-urban (Nahr-e-darsan), urban (Police Township), rural (Isārkhail) and semi-rural (Mousākhil Pāein and Adam Khān).

Nahr-e-darsan, located between Dār-ul-Aman road and Guzargāh, has an estimated 200 families, mostly Tajik, and has witnessed out- and in-migration. Many men here are employed in government institutions or NGOs in the city, as teachers, in the informal economy through small businesses like shops, and in services like masonry and daily waged labour; some women are also teacher or also are employed in NGOs, and in government offices in the city. The community has relatively good access to health care, government offices and public and private educational facilities. The project implemented here by Humanitarian Assistance Muska (HAM) trained women in making sports balls.

Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (1990): 41-55; Al Samatar, "The Women's Mosque in Gabiley," in *Geographies of Muslim Women Gender, Religion, and Space*, ed. Falah Ghazi-Walid and Caroline Rose Nagel (New York, London: The Guilford Press, 2005):377-411; Cynthia Nelson, "Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World," *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 3 (1974): 551-563; Katherine Frank, "Agency," *Anthropological Theory* 6, no. 3 (2006): 281-302; Shubhra Gururani, "Construction of Third World Women's Knowledge in the Development Discourse", *International Social Science Journal* 54, no. 173 (2002): 313–323; Arun Agrawal, "Indigenous Knowledge and the Politics of Classification", *International Social Science Journal* 54, no. 173 (2002): 287-297; *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (London: Routledge, 2004); Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992).

168 Amartya Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985): 203. See also Alberto Melucci, "Identity and Difference in a Globalized World," in *Debating Cultural Hybridity*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London: Zed, 1997): 58-69.

169 Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 426.

170 Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities*, 204.

In the male focus group discussion, the respondents expressed many reservations about women seeking employment outside the community. Their main concerns in this were that child care would be inadequate and the women would encounter the particularly gendered insecurity of the public space and sphere. As expressed by Abdul Hadi (48 years, retiree, T*ā*jik), "first there should be a good security so they can come out of their houses freely, and walk outside freely." The men also pointed out that many families have strong connections to their quams and ties to their lands in their watans (homeland, point of origin), which they visit periodically. They do not want to put themselves or their families in danger from radical militia "outside of Kabul" who oppose women being employed outside of certain specific parameters. Thus, a woman who is working outside of the quam's socially dominant norms while in Nahr-e-darsan could invite repercussions beyond the immediate radius.

The men suggested livelihood options for women, including factory labour, carpet-weaving, livestock, poultry and tailoring; teaching and working in an all-women environment were also suggested. Projects should have programming with the intended women participants, they said. The advantages they see in ventures for women's economic engagement were: a family that may require additional income through its women's employment could use these opportunities upon facing need (and there are many such families, according to the men); the women will learn a profession while earning an income; and, it would be a good change for them.

In the female focus group discussion, all felt strongly that women should have an income since it would: contribute to family income ; provide money for medical needs; allow children to study instead of earning money; "because women know better than men how to use money"; reduce dependence on men; increase the status of the woman and her family in the community; increase a woman's status within the household; and enable women to not be considered a "bread-eater" (freeloader). The government and the NGOs, they said[171], do not have income-generating activities for home-bound women nor do they care about women; "they put the raw brick in the water and went away" [put materials to waste], said Kamill*ā* (38 years, teacher, T*ā*jik).

Women shoulder all household responsibilities, including the care of children. Families are often resentful of women who are employed; their female agnates remarked upon the household work being left undone by the "working woman." In a few families, there is some understanding and empathy toward working women. The housewives ask for money from the male, either the husband, son, brother, or son-in-law. The younger members (20, 23, 24, 28 years) have observed their mothers asking their fathers for money frequently; they believe that their mothers' illiteracy is the reason for this. None in this discussion seem to have accessed micro-finance[172]. The three home-bound women and the four university-affiliated employed women were somewhat wary about microfinance and preferred an income that pays daily or monthly.

There was general expectation among the women in this discussion that if or when a woman starts bringing in earnings, then the decisions around it are hers. Even if diluted by a male agnate's decisions and authority, this expectation allows some level of ownership and decision-making for women. The two earning women spend about 500-2,000 Afs without feeling the need to consult the men. They inevitably spend it on household expenses, including clothes, stationery, books for their children or siblings, and on siy*ā*li wa shariki (for which husbands do not always give women money). Larger expenditures are always undertaken by the men, they say, often without women's participation. In the community, there is some increased activity in women going to the local bāzār to buy household

171 A soap-making project for women in their homes was begun a few years ago by an organisation; it foundered very soon when the organisation did not see the project through. Another project involved women making spaghetti in a nearby street; this, too, seems to have been a short-term project.

172 Women know other women who have taken loans and whose lives have improved, but are also aware of how such loans may create many other problems, too. The common sentiment is that women do not know how to use the money effectively. Zarghon*ā* (55 years, housewife/widow, T*ā*jik) feels that, "it's the shortcoming of the [lending] organization that they do not show women how to use the money. Once my daughter told me that we should take a loan as well. But I told [her] that we do not know how to use the money nor do we have any business, so how we can we pay the instalment of the loan'. There is also the incident of a woman from the community who swindled some of the women into putting in some money for a loan and who then disappeared with the women's money, which the men had to pay back. They also know about a group of women who took a joint /group loan and have found the venture successful and useful.

items if they bring in an income. The dominant associative value of the bāzār is consumption, and the capacity to spend one's earned income there. Mobility problems include lack of transportation and sexual harassment, they say.

The implementing organisation (HAM) trains women in making sports balls. This 2007 project in Doghābād was World Bank-funded and implemented through the NSDP office in MoLSAMD, through IRC. HAM trained 40 women in ball-sewing on US$22,000 from IRC. The women were from Dasht-e-Barchi, Afshār, Allāudin and from the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th Districts; some were from Arzānqemat. The trainer was a woman. Ball-sewing requires strength and skill and a woman could sew about 3-5 balls every day; she is paid 50 Afs per ball. Women also work in stumping, sticking and cutting. Of the 40 women, 20 are employed at HAM's ball-sewing factory on a project-to-project basis, while the other 20 have married and/or moved away. HAM provided basic literacy and numeracy along with training, but simultaneously advocated a very traditional division of labour within the home. It uses an Islamic understanding of a "good woman" in its discourse on women's rights and sees women's economic participation as a way for her to fulfil her responsibility toward her mahram and her children.

The project's daily half-day schedule was a three-hour ball-sewing session followed by one hour of numeracy/literacy and women's rights and responsibilities. The six-month course ended with a three-day business training workshop conducted by the donor. The project could be called successful since the capacity building and training led to sustainable earning via the factory that HAM has set up and which gets international orders to manufacture sports balls.

The project participant, Morsāl, has been working with HAM for a few years now. She joined the ball-sewing training project while living in Doghābād. She belongs to a household of ten living in poor economic conditions; she is the third child and has an elder brother and sister. Her interest in the project was influenced by a strong sense of empathy for her father and her sense of responsibility toward her family. Moreover, at the time, the project office was just a lane away from her home and known and established for about 3-4 years. Her father, Abdul Ishāq, had briefly worked as a cook at HAM[173], and was aware of the way it used a very Islamic idiom in focus and process. Morsāl's extended family, having a background of income-generating women[174] and displacement (from Parwān) and migration (to Shirāz, Iran), could have contributed to a less rigid application of traditional gender norms within the family unit in Nahr-e-darsan. Her father has very clear views on daughters and sons being equally able to learn and work and, "make something of their lives." For him, it is a matter of pride for his wife or daughter to be working and earning halāl (legitimate, licit, "kosher") money.

During the training, participants were paid 500 Afs per month for transportation, which Morsāl mostly used for buying her siblings stationery and clothes. Later, when a job order came in, she was asked to join HAM and has continued on a project-to-project basis. Her salary is now about 3,500 Afs which she mostly spends on clothing and books for her siblings, on their school expenditure (teachers' day ceremony, school reconstruction fund) and smaller household needs (a mattress, a pillow). She gives her brothers money, -for one's club membership, and for another's transportation[175]. She also contributes to her mother's siyāli wa shariki, which her mother accepts with both reluctance and blessings. Seen as sensible and level-headed, she has full freedom to use her money in the way she thinks is most appropriate.

She has been a bit of a role model for some of her classmates and her cousins: they have also trained at the ball-sewing classes with HAM. Her classmates also approach her for advice on employment. Her specific status in the (extended) family and the community is high, especially compared to that of her older brother and sister. Her work at HAM continues to provide the opportunity to meet a variety of people at exhibitions, including businesswomen; she also attends workshops on leadership and

173 To supplement his employment as a driver.

174 The wives of Abdul Ishāq's three nephews are working (nurse, beauty salon owner). One has travelled abroad (to India). A niece works at an NGO in Kabul.

175 The temporal changes of gendered household dynamics that can evolve from such power plays are interesting and merit further study.

peace. She has developed great confidence and networking skills, which she has used effectively in her current volunteer work at the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Morsāl can anticipate sexual harassment on the streets and often takes pre-emptive measures to tackle it, ranging from evasion to aggression.

The second site, the Police Township, is in the north of Kabul city. It has 11 five-story buildings, which include 408 apartments, many of which are run-down. The residents are mostly Tājik, Pashtoon and Hazārā; they are families of ex-policemen. The population is about 8,000, with many living here for more than three decades. There is high unemployment, especially among the youth.

The township has easy access to city transportation. There is a high school with segregated time for males and females, and girls and boys generally continue their education till the tenth grade. The health clinic is a 15-minute walk away. Some men are in active police service, while some others have shops for trade or services; many are day labourers, street vendors and similar. Most women with an income work in NGOs and government offices; some widows do domestic work and some women work as cleaners in institutions. Martyrs' families receive an income from social protection. The project implemented here by the Afghan Women Education Centre (AWEC) trained women in basic literacy and in jam- and pickle-making.

The male focus group had ten participants, including a maulavi, with ages ranging from 22-70 years; about half were retired or jobless. They emphasised that employment opportunities should be provided for men rather than for women. All the men had high reservations about women seeking employment outside the community. They felt that women should work according to religious norms and wear the hijāb, which, for this group of men, includes zanāngi, but does not necessarily include the chāddori. There were high anxieties among this group that allowing women to work would introduce "western ways." Further, their gheirat did not permit them to expose their women to sexual harassment on the streets. There was significant opposition to women having authority or responsibility and they did not approve of women going to the shops and speaking to non-mahrams like the shopkeeper. The men of the focus group said that Islam should not be challenged: if women are to earn, it should be in a women-only space; if they are to study, they should be taught only by female teachers, and if medical care is needed, they should be attended to only by women medical personnel.

In the women's focus group discussion, women expressed views contrary to that of men and strongly felt the lack of income-earning opportunities. This group of women saw positive changes in attitudes to women's economic engagement, especially from the time when women and men thought of income-earning women as shameful; there is currently greater acceptance of it. Some of the changes noted in the past decade have been: revision of some dogmas on women and work; greater presence of women in government offices and NGOs; better access to education for girls and better health care facilities; far greater number of women going to the bāzār to shop; greater knowledge of women's rights due to migration and the media; and, a reduction in levirate marriages.

The women in this group who had participated in the AWEC project found the literacy course useful; they were particularly appreciative that child care was provided. As Sharifā (55 years, Pashtoon, a housewife and a widow) put it: "for our hearts, that literacy class was like a trophy...there we saw the other women and they gave us an idea about the value of education." The women say that before the AWEC project, they thought that, "women should stay at home and do the house chores and that only men should work outside feed the family and earn money." The strong norms in this community made women particularly prone to gossip[176]. The AWEC project also made the women more aware of the particular vulnerabilities of zan-beparast (women without protection or a mahram, destitute) and has brought a higher empathy for them.

The change in women's attitudes is worth noting in this project. Previously, according to the women, the only other local literacy source was the community madrassa, which they could not use. In this project, there were examples of literacy training that have resulted in their economic engagement,

176 Of note is the physical layout of the Police Township, which offers a certain higher level of surveillance of the community in general and of women in particular.

both for those who took part in the course and for those whose relatives did. According to their responses, there is now a greater level of solidarity among the women based upon mutual self-interest; for example, they are aware that they stand a greater chance for legitimate mobility if they approach a mahram in twos or more. Women stepping out of the house and girls going to school face sexual harassment from men of all ages; transportation is unreliable and inadequate, they said.

The implementing organisation, Afghan Women's Education Centre (AWEC), began the project with a survey in the Police Township; it indicated that women wanted training in jam- and pickle-making. It rented an office in the Township during the project, said the project representative, Jamil*ā* Zafar. Facing resistance from the men to women's participation, AWEC began by teaching men about family relations: 1,000 men attended their training sessions on parents' and children's rights twice a week. One hundred and fifty women, mostly between the ages of 18-35 and from Sar Sabzi Square, Sar*ā*i-eShamā*l*i, Bl*ā*k Hai Sar*ā*ndouy and the Tents[177], were then given training in literacy, cooking, cleaning, and child and parent's rights. Financially, they were unable to source market outlets and, after the training, women did not have the capital to invest in materials and ingredients. AWEC proposed a follow-up project with the donor in which women working in groups could access business loans, but it did not come through. One-year, or short-term, projects for women are not effective, said Jamil*ā*. According to her, projects should be extended in budget and time-span so they may have a sustainable effect; importantly, access to capital must be programmed into a project to achieve advantage from the initial training. She therefore termed the project "50 percent successful." Of the beneficiaries, some have obtained jobs and a few others have been working at home, making jam or pickles.

For the project participant, Shukri*ā*[178], the project has meant a leap in social and economic solvency. Her husband, Mohd. Aziz, is a retired police officer with a high school education. They have six daughters and four sons and are Hazār*ā*s. Their household size is 17 members, including two daughters-in-law and two grandchildren, living in two rooms; field notes observe that the house is better-kept than neighbouring ones. Mohd. Aziz now runs a welding shop with his brothers and his two older sons. Though their two older sons are high school dropouts, their younger sons will graduate from high school this year and are planning to go to the university. Two daughters are literate. While the younger ones are studying, the eldest daughter has discontinued school due to sexual harassment on the streets, which she could neither stand up to nor ignore.

Her husband had participated in AWEC's short course on women's rights for a brief time and understood that "it was good", that is, nothing untoward or immoral. The benefits he understood from these once-a-week sessions were that girls and women have a right to study, which, in addition, will be of socio-economic benefit to the home and society. He concludes that, "what they said about the women, work and income is exactly right."

Shukriā learned reading and writing at this class of about 25 women, held in the mornings[179] in the AWEC office within the township. She also went on to ask the mullah at the local mosque whether she could learn the Holy Qur'*ā*n. Excited by his encouragement and upon learning that there was a female teacher at the madrassa, she asked her husband's permission and started learning to read and recite the Holy Qur'*ā*n in the afternoons. At the ceremony to mark the end of the AWEC literacy training course, Shukriā recited the Holy Qur'*ā*n into a microphone. Later, as people realised she had become a reciter, her social status began improving. Her public visibility has since increased, while her mobility has widened greatly since people started requesting her to recite from the Qur'*ā*n at the funeral ceremonies in their families.

177 Zor*ā*b*ā*d, where internally displaced people live.

178 Name and other details changed for the project participant and her husband, anonymity requested. Her occupational identity, however, is not confidential, according to her.

179 When Shukri*ā* registered at the AWEC course with her daughter, they were taught reading and writing followed by cooking lessons on making jam, pickles, chatni and similar. Her daughter's description of sitting on a chair is echoed in many grassroots women's groups across the globe: "At least this class was an excuse to get out of home...It was really interesting for all women who were in this class because none of us ever sit on the chair nor they have taken pen to their hand.' Sitting on a chair, holding a pen and similar have been powerful moments for many grassroots women, for whom both have been out of grasp.

For her services, she is given food, clothing and money (about 1,500 to 3,000 Afs for a recital), which, she says, is very useful for household expenses and education for the children. Her son was able to enrol in English and computer classes through her income. Her literacy has helped her in innumerable ways in everyday life, such as the ability to read billboards or use a cell phone. In addition, since she is now seen as knowledgeable, has far greater authority inside the home and does not let her husband make decisions on everything. Her husband leaves her income and its spending to her.

The third site, Isārkhail village, is a one-and-a-half-hour walk uphill from the Istālif main bāzār. Perched upon a bare and rocky terrain, around 90 families live in Isārkhail, all Tājik and Persian speakers. A two-hour drive away from Kabul city, this village has been removed from many of the resources (material, technical, ideological) to which neighbourhoods in Kabul and its peripheral areas have access. The isolation of the village is exacerbated during winter, which also shuts off most of the men's livelihood options. Electricity is yet to make its entry; firewood, tāpi, sargin and pishqil (dried animal droppings) are used for cooking and heating. Isārkhail has no health facility; and the nearest ones are at Sar-e-takht in Istālif (about one-and-a-half-hour away by foot) and the Qārābāgh hospital with a maternity ward (about an hour away by car). There is no public transportation nearby and the nearest bus stop is a two-hour walk down the "qoul" (valley), at Tangi Meyānā.

Limited land holdings are farmed here; the sources of cultivation water are seasonal and limited. Many men from Isārkhail village go to the mountains to crush stones, which they sell to truck drivers for construction sites. Families that have livestock have between one to four or five sheep or goats. Women who care for livestock manage any sheep, goats and the cow that the household may own while men graze the sheep in a pasture an hour away in the hills and which has some water sources. Sheep are generally sold before the winter since feed is not affordable. Some women keep poultry, about 10 chickens; some others have sewing machines. Animal droppings for use and sale are also collected by young girls. Bringing water from the village's water supply and from natural springs is also the responsibility of young girls. The project implemented by the Female Rehabilitation and Development Organization (FRDO) in Isārkhail distributed livestock to women and also taught them bag sewing.

In the male focus group discussion in this settlement, issues around women going "out to work" are not prominent; its isolation alone precludes any such discussion and the men are very clear on this: "women do not go to the bāzār." Agency, decision-making and perceived ownership for women, too, could be far more nuanced in this village than that seen in Nahr-e-darsan or in the Police Township. The idea of women owning anything caused amusement in the discussion. There is amusement also at the notion of men doing any household work. The income from selling sheep and sheep produce, for example, is only nominally acknowledged by the men as what women have earned; in practice, all decisions on expenditure are taken by men[180]. Domestic violence is spoken of in an instrumentalist fashion, as a means to rein in recalcitrant women.

In the women's focus group discussion, the women presented traditional views: "Allah created women for household work and for serving their husbands, what should women do out of the home", and, "women can't do anything else but give birth". The women in this discussion take great pride in their adherence to the "right way of life" wherein they are to take care, sustain, obey and serve their men. According to them, no woman in this community brings in an income independent of her household. The women were not aware of any way in which they could contribute in the family decision-making or household: in their daily lives, men decide and women obey. Altercations, if any, were said to be between senior women affines. Seniority is given great importance; mothers-in-law direct and supervise all actions of the younger women, including, for example, what is to be cooked. Household supplies are generally under the control of the senior woman. Younger women cannot go to another woman's home without permission from elders. Unmarried girls, especially after puberty,

180 The field researcher notes that sheep provided by the FRDO project implemented in Isārkhail may have been sold, as the men initially said. Later, probe questions on the lambing and income from livestock were stone-walled, saying that "the sheep got sick and died', or, that they were being grazed in Faryā (at a pasture some distance away). According to the men's understanding, the animals brought to the community by the project belongs to the family/man, and he can sell it to meet household needs, or reinvest the money in a sewing machine or another business.

are under great control and monitoring: they are described as "locked up". Women generally do not go out of the immediate neighbourhood. Apart from these, a woman has her other duties to the community, that is, for weddings, deaths, births, illness, siyāli wa shariki, hashār, etc.; women participate in all these extensively. Matchmaking and deciding upon alliances is also the domain of men in Isārkhail; the women from the groom's family are then informed to formally approach the bride's household.

Women do not go to the bāzār; the men buy and bring what is asked for, and a man with gheirat would not allow a woman to do go to the bāzār. They do not go into the mosque. The women feel the lack of a clinic very much; transportation to Qārābāgh and other places for health care is very expensive. An illness could entail seeking loans; informal loans seem to be a prominent coping strategy. Most births take place at home, with the help of other women. On education, they say it is enough for a girl to study up to the second or third class; there is no need for a girl to study more. The women do not know about a women's council. Women feel their lack of income acutely. In their opinion, an income may at least contribute to their siyāli wa shariki. Life is hard, they say; young girls are also idle at home, while the men can only labour at uncertain, and often dangerous, stone-breaking.

The Female Rehabilitation and Development Organization (FRDO) project, which began here in 2011, entailed distributing livestock to women and, later, training them in bag sewing and tailoring. About 25 women were identified for the FRDO project by the malik and his son, primarily on the basis of family permission, available time, and age. The participants were given basic livestock training and information on personal health care. In an add-on project, the participants were given training in literacy (alphabet and math) and in sewing bags (for six months, for four hours in the mornings). The malik's son, who is the only educated person in Isārkhail other than the mullah, implemented both these trainings. Classes were held in the two rooms in the malik's courtyard. All of what they were taught and learned was new knowledge for them, the women said.

Each participant was given three sheep; a veterinarian came to train them once. The animals were given, *de facto*, to the husband or son. Some women who had backyards grazed them there. Space to corral them and feed them during winters was a problem. Very few sheep have lambed. Some women said that their husbands sold the animals to meet pressing household needs[181]; others said that the sheep were too young for lambing and milk and that two sheep were not enough to change anything[182]. Later, four tailoring machines were also given to this community. The finished bags ended up with the project's representatives with the women seeing no income from it. However, they have all been busy and happy with the increased activity. The changes that women have seen in this past decade are: lessening of control, especially from the mother-in-law; more brothers living apart from their joint households; education for girls; and more willingness among men to attend to women's health care needs.

The project participant, Nāzanin, is rather uncertain about the project and its benefits. She is appreciative of the literacy training (including some reciting of the Holy Qur'ān) and is happy she can now write from 1 to 100, read from a second-grade book, write her and her mahram's names, and that, in general, she knows more. However, Nāzanin had hoped that the livestock would bring some income. The sheep, she says, are too young for milk or reproduction. She cannot afford to buy feed and hopes they will survive the winter. Acquiring the two sheep is significant for her.

The fourth site, Mousākhil Pāein, is a village about a half-hour drive on a dirt road from Qārābāgh township. It has about 260 families, mostly Tājik, with some Pashtoon. The main source of income for the families is agriculture and livestock, and some orchards. The lack of water is a source of major concern. There is no electricity. They have a male shurā and a nominal female shurā in the CDC. There is a secondary school built around 2011, but girls generally study till seventh or eighth grade, or until they attain puberty; there are no women teachers. Child marriages are not uncommon. The high

181 For example, the intestine of a sheep can bring in one kilo of sugar while a bottle of yoghurt from sheep's milk can fetch 30 Afs.

182 "So two sheep are nothing...at most, they would give two cups of milk', says Dādā Shirin (42 years, housewife, Tājik).

school is in Dān-e-maidān, which boys attend. For health care, centres at Qārābāgh, Chārikar and Bagrāmi are favoured; the local health clinic, about 10-20 minutes by foot, does not have a woman doctor and is not seen to be effective. Women in labour and during pregnancy have died en route to Bagrāmi. The bus stop is about 45 minutes away. The National Area-Based Development Program (NABDP) project implemented in Mousākhil Pāein taught women to make jam.

In the male focus group discussion, the community men say that the earlier understanding of girls who attended high school as behayā (without shame, modesty) has given way in this past decade, but that sexual harassment can inhibit many girls from going to school. They add, with some disapproval, that women now are aware of the presence of shelters (khānā aman, "house of peace", "secure home") and are amused that running away from home could be termed "not a crime". The human rights and civil rights discourse regarding laws on self-determination in marriage seems to have had some negative effects here, with parents preferring not to educate their daughters due to the potential risk to honour through couples eloping.

In the women's focus group discussion, those representing this community seem to be leading very traditional lives aligned with self-identified practices like obedience and duty to the husband and in-laws. Most keep pardāh, are sater (covered) and do not show their faces to nā-mahram men. Nonetheless, and unlike in Isārkhail, they do not uniformly endorse the value systems of their immediate community; they articulate what they see as discrimination (girls unable to attend school, polygamy, their own lack of religious knowledge, lack of inheritance). Many in this group have TV, watch serials and other programmes and are cynically aware of the discourse on women's rights. As Fribā (30 years, Tājik, housewife) said: "didn't you hear on the TV?...they say that now men and women have equal rights...now men love their wives...they don't beat them." A man who allows his wife to work while he is jobless is begheirat, the women say, but a woman, too, should have gheirat and should search for an income source. Some women are able to travel in a group and without a male mahram to other villages for attending ceremonies; others demur and say a male mahram is a must. All agree that women should not go anywhere without permission from their household head and/or the husband.

Women do all the house chores and do some of farming and other agricultural jobs. They collect wood for cooking and heating, collect, clean and dry fruits like grapes and mulberries, and go to gardens and fields to collect vegetables. Men usually take the livestock to the pasture and women take care of it at home. Senior women can also take the livestock to graze. Women do the milking and feeding and keep the barn clean. None in the village, the women say, has skills for tailoring or embroidery. They suggest quilt making or tailoring as income generating options, and are also keen for literacy and Qur'ānic lessons. They say that projects around livestock are a natural option and wonder whether the NABDP had not considered it.

The National Area-Based Development Program (NABDP) project implemented in Mousākhil Pāein in 2011 was a three-day course that taught 20 women to make jam in order to profit from unsold apples from their annual produce. Mousākhil Pāein was a part of a nine-district project in Kabul Province budgeted for US$ 360,000 and channelled through the District Development Authorities. It targeted 360 women and was based upon the project representative's three-month training in Japan on making the best use of local agricultural products. It was implemented as a result of money left over from NABDP's annual budget.

The NABDP project was uniformly thought to be unproductive and unremarkable in Mousākhil Pāein. The families have fruit trees and jam-making is not new to them; they also watch such training programmes on TV or on cell phones, the women say. If they had the money for sugar and other ingredients and utensils, jars and sundry material, they could have done it anyway. What they lack is the knowledge or skill to market such products. They point out that outlets for the jam were neither scouted for nor contracted. Besides, as Zibā Gull (53 years, Tājik, housewife) said, "how do we test whether the jam we are baking is better than the jams that are in the bāzār or the jams from Pakistan, Iran or other countries?"

The project participant and her husband requested anonymity and confidentiality. Her life has not been affected by this project economically or socially, she said. There are at least three girls in each household; they, and all the women, are "idle." The girls are married off by the men without asking for their consent contrary to what the Holy Qur'*ā*n directs, she said; "they don't ask us [women]", she adds. She does not travel unaccompanied or without permission, she has no income, she has no control over her husband's income, no say in her children's marriages, and no decision-making other than in household chores. She is unwell, but has no money to travel to the clinic or centre or to buy medicine. "Men are in power in this land. Whereas women don't have any rights or power at all... women are frozen in this country", she concluded.

The fifth site, Adam Khān, is a village near the bigger village of NowBorj*ā* and about three km south of Kabul city. It has around 80 families, mostly T*ā*jik and Pashtoon; most houses have joint families. The main source of income is agriculture, livestock[183] and, for the men, also small retail and government employment. The village has adequate land for pasture. There is a school up to the sixth grade for males and females, which is about 20 minutes' walking distance to the next village. The students are, however, studying under tents as a building has not been constructed. Further studies up to class 12 are at Q*ā*m*ā*ri village, about three km away. Most boys and very few girls go there. The average grade for a daughter is the sixth before education is khatem (finished), says a respondent[184]; the school lacks female teachers. The mullah does not allow girls to come to the madrassa in the mosque after about eight or nine years of age. There is a small clinic in Q*ā*m*ā*ri village, but the woman doctor is not regular; people generally go to K*ā*rt-e-nau or Kabul city. Transportation is by taxi and van, from the main road, which is about 20 minutes' walk away, and the bus service is from Q*ā*m*ā*ri. Some families have cars.

The men's council has been part of the NSP 2 project. They built protection walls and a culvert and received solar generators from the joint funds of the women's and men's shur*ā*s; the solar systems are said to be "outstanding". The women's and men's shur*ā*s do not meet. Some of the men in the men's shura have friends whose wives are in the women's shura; communication is normally through this channel. The Sanayee Development Organisation (SDO) implemented a project here to train women in tailoring.

In the male focus group discussion, the participants, all T*ā*jik and Pashtoon, say that most non-government projects emphasise literacy courses; livelihood courses around carpet-weaving, poultry or nursing and midwifery would be more effective, they say. They readily state that women are always working: 14 hours to a man's eight hours, they say. Interestingly, they add that, "work is not only if they work outside and when they have income." Further, the men say that, "we have a traditional division. Since the men work outside, women should do the housework. Work which is at the bāzārs and cities, society will not allow women to do that. People will talk behind one's back if a woman works in the b*ā*z*ā*r or any NGO." Sexual harassment is common outside the radius of the immediate four or five communities, and is a worry for the men. The common sentiment could be seen in what Mohd Akram (50 years, army officer, T*ā*jik) said: "nāmos is our women, our country and our Islam. We must protect them against any offense and at any cost, even our blood. And gheirat is the sense of feeling this responsibility to keep our nāmos safe." As in Q*ā*r*ā*b*ā*gh, the men in Adam Kh*ā*n village are sensitive to the wider discourse around gender and women's rights. Massoud, the male CDC head (35 years, T*ā*jik, retired Army officer) put it this way: "our main authority is with our wives. When we marry our daughters, most of the authority is with our wives. When we get a wife for our son, again women have authority. We do not have any violence with our women. We do not have any problems with our women. Am I right, brothers?"

Parents take decisions on marital alliances, they say. Some families practice toy*ā*n*ā* (bride price), but spend the money on the bride, they claim. If there are serious issues between the daughter-in-

183 A family that has two or three cows can normally sell milk and yoghurt in the bāzār; 7 kg yoghurt fetches about 280 Afs.

184 "If a woman gets her PhD even, someday someone will come and take her. Then she is finished. They are si*ā*sar [wife, common term used for women]; they will get married some day and should stay at home for the rest of the life...', says Abdul Azim (50 years, malik, T*ā*jik).

law and her husband and in-laws, the two families meet. If unresolved, the men's council may be approached and some members of the men's council would adjudicate. Thus far, no woman from the village has gone to court. On income generation for women, the men said that many families do not have the money to invest in livestock, and they wished the NSP 2 had sanctioned money for it. For those families that have livestock, it is entirely in women's control, the men say. Any income generation by women within the home or village is acceptable; training in carpet weaving and poultry would be good, they say.

In the women's focus group discussion, the respondents, all Pashtoon and Pashto speakers and all housewives, said they lived in extended joint families and generally in a joint compound. In their families, girls study till about second or third class, or, rarely, till the fourth or fifth class[185]. It is considered besharm (without shame, modesty) for post-puberty girls to be in school; families that allow this are also besharm. Girls' and boys' alliances are decided by the senior women and men; the girls are married at 13 or 14 years[186]. Most of the time, the mother is not informed about such decisions and is informed when the decision has been made. In this group of women, they and their immediate family do not go to the clinic or bāzār without a mahram and nowhere within the village without permission. A man with gheirat is one who will keep his word, will not look at or abuse a woman, or give his daughter to non-Pashtoons, nor be jobless and send his children to work, they say. Although the women no longer cover their faces in front of their father-in-law and elder brother-in-law, they show great deference (sharm) to all elders, female and male.

There are probably four to six generations of women on average in the families of this settlement. The deference structure in the families here seems very strong, even when compared to Isārkhail and Mousākhil Pāein villages, and definitely at a distance from the families in Nahr-e-darsan and Police Township. The emphasis on and larger presence of sarshārs (women who have authority in the family/household/community) in this village furnishes a glimpse of strong senior women taking on authority in society with age and fertility, nurturing motherhood and grandmother-hood, and wielding great power in the fortunes of the joint family[187]. Grandmothers-in-law and mothers-in-law in Mousākhil Pāein have huge authority in all marital decisions and over the routine movements of the younger women and girls. Caring for livestock, cleaning the barn and milking are generally the duty of the senior women; they can also take the livestock to pasture with a male child. Since the senior women are also seen to have the custodianship of the collective values, it may be useful to consider ways in which older women are consulted and made participatory in projects for younger women of all ages, in particular those involving livestock and poultry.

The women do not collect animal droppings for cooking and heating anymore and now use wood and gas. They also feel domestic violence has lessened over the decades because women no longer keep quiet, and say that it could probably be a result of their migration. All would like to have Qur'ānic learning and the younger women would like to read and write. They are entirely unaware of women's shurā in the CDC and of the CDC itself.

Inheritance and property rights for women are not practiced or expected. Afghangul (18 years, housewife, Pashtoon) says, "who will give legacy rights to women...when we say something, they say 'shut up, just eat the rice and spend your time.'"

The identified project in Adam Khān was a part of the National Solidarity Programme and provided tailoring training along with five sewing machines to women. It was overseen by the malik; his sister-in-law was the trainer. Apparently, the women were not comfortable going to his house; locating

185 There was, apparently, a girl who eloped from school recently and this has caused more families to withdraw their daughters from school. Girls' primary education would have continued but for the one girl's elopement, one participant says.

186 Shaimā (26 years, housewife, Pashtoon) says: "I was 13 years old when my mother engaged me with an elder man in Pakistan, my husband is elder than my father, and the day I was engaged I cried so much, I was not yet 14 when I was married, now I am 26 years old, I have five children, three daughters and two sons, my husband is a hired labourer, and he is not a very rich person.'

187 This power, though, is being (and has been traditionally) challenged by the younger women in this social structure.

the tailoring training there seems to have translated to fewer participants[188]. There were about 10 girls and women who participated, they say. The women do not know where the tailoring machines provided by SDO now are. The use of the malik's house as a training location (including for the machines) could be seen as having led to a public resource becoming more or less private property.

The implementing agency for this project in Adam Khān, the Sanayee Development Organisation (SDO), has been a Facilitating Partner of the National Solidarity Programme within Kabul Province since 2003. SDO's staff is all male and they find it very difficult to recruit and retain women staff. The SDO Director, Samiullāh Nāseri, says that the organisation's capacity building department prepares training material on peace-building, gender and other issues and conducts trainings for the staff. Monitoring of projects is done according to the MRRD Operation Manual for the National Solidarity Programme and they have a reporting system at district and provincial levels. He says that the tailoring project in Adam Khān village entered, "into the 'failed' list of the ministry [MRRD], because the people could not prepare a proper business plan. After completing the projects, they could not do proper marketing for the products."

The project participant Royā is Pashtoon, unmarried, and living with her parents and her brothers' families in their joint parental household. She participated in the training because it was in her house (she is the malik's sister), and because she wanted to learn tailoring and earn an income. Royā says no project staff asked them about the project or its progress since male project staff monitored it. They could not come inside the house and check on the progress of the training, but would stand outside and ask questions. They do not have a women's shurā, she says. The number of machines distributed was also low and the 20 women participants could not get adequate practice and usage time for training. Since the project was implemented six years ago, she and her sister-in-law sew clothes for some family members, as well as curtains, mattresses and other things. They sew on the machines that the project delivered. Other than this, she says, "she learnt a skill and didn't lose anything"; the skill and the available machine saves her money on tailoring clothes. She also sews for some of her extended family, gratis.

The project has not altered her social status in the family or community in any apparent or specific way. She does not have an income and the radius of her physical mobility remains gendered, but contextual; she retains the limited, but greater authority of her position as an unmarried daughter of the house, in a context where her mother has power in the family. Household work remains traditionally gendered. Her brother feels that focusing on livestock is an option for women's income generation. If the tailoring is to be pursued, outlets should be sourced beforehand and regular retail sales should be negotiated. Money to buy good quality cloth is also a problem. The local shopkeepers, Royā says, buy finished clothing, from China or Pakistan and the clothes made here are not comparable in quality and price.

3.2 Analytical perspectives

Based on the findings of this research, gendered agency, empowerment and decision-making need to be contextualised before a better understanding of their nature can be achieved. In villages like Isārkhail, these could be far more nuanced than in Nahr-e-darsan or in the Police Township. Many of the key issues on women and income generation have been gathered from this primary research. These include a range of changes for women in: participation in the public sphere, the radius of physical mobility, access to training and skills enhancement, expectations of the family and community of them as women, awareness of "women's rights", access to health, education and transportation. Some of these, like the effect on economic empowerment of the construction of zanāngi, or changes in perceptions of nāmos, for example, require more analysis with regard to policy than space in this section will permit. The following pages offer analytical perspectives on

188 This is a village where the field researcher knocked on doors and requested women to participate in the focus group discussion. There is some distance between the current malik and the community he represents; not only was he unable to request his village men folk for their household women to participate in the focus group discussion, but the women in his household told the team that other women will refuse to meet at their house.

three aspects of immediate importance to future policy re-appraisals. These issues are: the project and its impact on the participant; the home and the community (including on access to education and health); and the public sphere.

3.2.1 The projects

The projects under study have shown varying levels of understanding in programming and planning for women's economic empowerment as well as in contextual resource utilisation and capacity building. While the Nahr-e darsan and the Police Township projects have been implemented by non-governmental organisations directly funded by their donors with some oversight by Ministries, the Isārkhail project was quasi-governmental in that the involvement of MoWA was very high, on par with that of the donor, JICA. The SDO and NABDP projects in Adam Khān and Mousākhil Pāein, respectively, were Government-led projects.

Among project implementers, some, like the HAM and the AWEC projects, seem to have been beneficial. Where initiatives like these have an inherent advantage is that they are approach the community in the language of the wider agnate, that is, Islam; alienation is sidelined through the presentation of the self in the Islamic idiom. This idiom also seems to have sufficient space in praxis for access to employment and literacy for girls and women. For example, in all focus group discussions, women and men showed acute sensitivity to women not being able to read the Qur'ān. There is a "thirst" for religious literacy among younger and older women.

Despite this, many projects and programmes battle odds to have the men permit "their" women—mothers, wives, daughters, daughters-in-law, sisters, sisters-in-law—to attend a training course or participate in a project. Unless the men are sure of the nature of training or employment being offered, the women are not permitted to join. As said in an interview with a male agnate, "men pave the way for women". The other common denominator between these two organisations is that they were physically located within the community: while HAM's office is in Guzargāh, AWEC rented office space in one of the houses in the Police Colony and gained credibility from the community while satisfying traditional social norms for the surveillance of women.

Attention to context seems to have yielded results for both HAM and AWEC in mobilising women and gaining acceptability for their participation. The 500 Afs that both paid to each woman per month during training has also been an incentive, and was well received. AWEC, although with a short-term, six-month project, has opened possibilities for women who now demonstrate subjective as well as objective agency. The widow in the Police Township who now has an informal contract with a shopkeeper for the sale of her pickles and the housewife inspired to travel to learn are examples of the ripple effect that AWEC has created in the Police Township.

The AWEC and HAM projects have enabled and registered a rise in women's public participation, self-perception, decision-making and autonomy. These are important acts that exemplify the agency as, "what the person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals and value he or she regards as important[189]." AWEC, however, has not charted markets, and although its literacy courses have provided some boost for women in confidence and ability, it does not directly provide income-generating opportunities. HAM, however, has been consistent in providing its women employees with a source of income as its senior management sources markets in other countries for the factory's products.

The FRDO project in Isārkhail seems highly unclear as far as income for women is concerned, with very few of the sheep having lambed and nor any of the bags and coats sewn producing any income thus far. Nonetheless, learning (Qur'ānic lessons, basic alphabet and math, knowledge on personal health), in itself, has brought levels of self-identified empowerment. However, the NABDP and the SDO projects exhibit a certain lack of planning and monitoring. The NABDP project in Mousākhil Pāein sought to spend US$360,000 to teach 360 women in nine provinces how to make jam from seasonal

189 Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities*, 203.

local produce, for instance. The project seems to have started well with initial training provided to men on women's rights (through Islam) being good practice. However, the project participants supplied the raw material, the skill was not unknown, and the product did not have a market; the MRRD ended up buying some of the jam. The pressure of using up the allocated budget has perhaps allowed a lack of perspective on results. The SDO/NSP project in Adam Khān does not seem to have taken into account the local power dynamics within the village and has retained the (male) malik as a natural implementer; this seems to have discouraged women's participation. The male SDO field officer was not able to adequately monitor training or participation, nor was there any market for the products the women made.

Among the weaker aspects of women's economic engagement in the projects under study are by far their graded monitoring and evaluation. While Ministerial and donor positions on gender echo many similar international understandings, many are perhaps not able to contextualise the perspective. Ministerial understanding oscillates between a measured agreement with newer knowledge that promises to benefit women and a more cynical view of multinational and non-Muslim socio-cultural perspectives. On the one hand, there is a policy and strategy development struggle at various government levels. On the other hand, the government provides some limited initial training and dissemination on, for example, the newer strategies evolved for women's public participation, but needs local-level, community-embedded trainers to push forward these newer rights. This lack of trainers and field staff, especially women, tends to reduce the impact of projects for women. In this sense, too, the economic changes that young female earners (like Morsāl) may go through upon marriage need to be investigated. For example, the ongoing effects of the tailoring training for those girls from Adam Khān who have since been married is a necessary part of the monitoring that the NSP/SDO should routinely record.

Currently, the money flow is: donor+ Line Ministry to implementing agency to project participant. In the coming years, the process may benefit if the funding is routed through the Ministry, which then takes the lead in implementation, whether as longer-term government strategies or as two-to-four year projects implemented by civil society or non-governmental organisations. Either way, the donors will need to make sure that the anticipated reduced funding will translate to good value for Afghan women at the ground level along with the capacity building of the Line Ministries in better-streamlined projects. An effective joint impact analysis by donor agencies before rollout, with sufficient flexibility and back-up options in programming needs, will be useful to avoid future pitfalls.

On the project's effects

In Mousākhil Pāein, Isārkhail and Adam Khān, it is sometimes unclear whether women are project participants in their own right or adjuncts of their male agnates. The projects seem to have relied upon the men's abilities to direct women's activities and material resources are regularly handed over to men for distribution. The programming, therefore, does not encourage women's autonomy and work; instead, in many ways, it entrenches the current power structure within households and communities. The construct of women as economically dependent has not been sufficiently reviewed. Yet, even if evidence from, for example, Isārkhail shows a low understanding by women of the project and its processes and aims, it could be seen as "successful" if only because of its novelty in introducing women to hitherto unknown skills and knowledge.

The projects in Nahr-e-darsan and the Police Township have included literacy in their programming. With the participants having a comparatively higher education level, women's rights through Islam was addressed. In Isārkhail, basic alphabet and math were included along with the Qur'ānic recitations. The Mousākhil Pāein and Adam Khān projects, evolving from the NABDP and NSP policies, do not seem to have addressed this aspect in project planning; this could merit some re-appraisal. In this sense, JICA and MoWA's programming for the FRDO project in Isārkhail has planned primary and secondary objectives in a manner whereby the first project (livestock, personal health and basic literacy) is backed by skills training (in leather-sewing) in the follow-up project. Literacy, especially as it includes Islamic education, is an effective way to establish the credentials and validity of the project while building self-confidence and awareness among participants. In the Police Township,

women who earlier did not allow their daughters to enrol in schools, now regret their own and their daughters' illiteracy; some older women are trying to learn to read and write. There is a greater value for education for and among women[190].

Morsāl in Nahr-e-darsan describes the changes she experienced as:

> *First, I found lots of self-confidence and I found out that I have the ability to do a work. And I am not from those women to feel depression and say that I cannot work, oh I wish I could do it. From my life the words "I wish" have gone away like I was saying that I wish I could earn money,I wish I could go somewhere, I wish I could go to an organization, and all of those word that I used, I wish I could, is now gone. And a lot of changes has come to my life and I was able to meet with lots of people and the interesting thing was that I introduced with many women and I got lots of experience from their lives, if it were good or bad I learned lots of thing from each one of them and understand about what is right and what is wrong and took the positive one and leave the negatives. And it was very effective for me.*

For Nāzaninin Isārkhail, the FRDO project was good, "because we learn Islamic studies and Holy Qur'ān...we wrote alphabets and math...".

Shukriā is more reflective about the effects that the AWEC project has brought about in her life:

> *"...sometimes, I think that why our elders were fools and didn't let us study, I had never thought that I can study and have any other activity. And, I was so narrow- minded and I was saying that why women are going out they should stay at home, and thought that those who are going out they are not good women. Believe me I had these foolish thoughts, because I have never been outside...now it is the blessing of that course that I am a Holy Qur'ān reader and I can read and write something specially the signs of shops and other places too. Every day I am going to the madrassa to read the Holy Qur'ān, and now I am saying that those women who are at home they are not good women they can't do anything...now I don't wear chaddori, I have activity at home and outside too..."*

3.2.2 The home and the community

For most male respondents across the research sites, as long as women are offered enhanced economic engagement within the context of community gender roles, projects are acceptable . Repeated references to Bibi Fātimā (pbuh)[191]notwithstanding, women in the three villages position themselves as home-bound and, in a sense, incapable. Women in Isārkhail are far more restricted in their access to economic opportunity. In Mousākhil Pāein, women with relatives in Qārābāgh and Kabul have learned about the newer avenues for women's income, but remark approvingly of the material status the families show.

Equally, women are aware of the community norms that prevent their physical mobility, unlike for their female relatives in urban areas. In Adam Khān, a largely Pashtoon settlement, there is a sense of resignation among the women who believe they may be able to take up a job or some employment only if they can leave the settlement. The Nahr-e-darsan women have a far greater awareness of the possibilities available to women and think a woman earning could only have positive effects. In the Police Township, the accent seems to be on sourcing and expanding potential avenues for income generation as well as maintaining a sense of autonomy. As one participant, Freshtā (25, housewife, Tājik), said, "today, if I spend the money of my husband, I will still have to tell him how much is spent and where, but if the money is mine then I do not need to tell him." For the women, a husband's income seems to be identified as his personal income.

Further, sites like Adam Khān, where the authority of senior women is very strong, can be used better to modify male access to resources, while keeping in mind that the community patriarchy is upheld by the senior women. Single (older unmarried, widowed) women are an audience suited for economic

190 In alliance-seeking, though, an educated bride is not as valued, although education in a groom is sought. Educated and employed women are generally asked by their fiancé or in-laws to discontinue their work.

191 The wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), renowned for her business acumen and skills.

engagement. They seem to be either constructed as "with more time" or "with more need" by men. Either way, it may well be considered more acceptable for a single woman to earn an income than a si*ā*sar, even if it means a greater mobility radius. The cultural spaces thus made available need to be capitalised upon in programming. Older single women with authority should be actively considered since it is important to build upon gendered agency within extant social structures, especially when they can yield a model of feminised authority that is memorable to the community.

The lack of health clinics for women in Isārkhail, Mousākhil Pāein and Adam Kh*ā*n communities is alarming. The lack of accessible health facilities that can provide free medicine and have female doctors for women is a huge problem: women are being forced to "make do". The participant in Isārkhail, for example, is in an obviously injured condition, but has no recourse to anything except the most basic care (berry packs), the efficacy of which for her injured leg is doubtful. Children in Isārkhail have visible facial rashes that are being ignored. Women in Mousākhil Pāein relate their pain at losing three women in this past year due to pregnancy-related complications. Lack of access to transportation in these communities exacerbates women's lack of access to health care.

The situation is more problematic because of the high incidence of child marriage and the tendency to not allow girls to study beyond the third or fourth class. Girls, by default, not only fall back on traditional work options like domestic work and livestock, but are married off early and have early childbirth, with its accompanying maternal and child health problems.

On women's "rights"

There is both inertia and change in the understanding of what rights of/for women can be. While the men's focus group discussions revealed beliefs like, "In Islam, it has been said that obedience of men is women's farz (obligation)", and allusions were made to an accepted presence of domestic violence, women's understandings ranged from a reflection of the above view, to dissent based upon Shari-ah to resigned acceptance of the present circumstances, to contesting and modifying normative understandings.

In Nahr-e-darsan, the women are aware of marital rape and its construction as a violation of women's bodily integrity; son-preference is an experienced and admitted reality. Morsāl, though, is very clear that women have rights in Islam to work and to be independent. She is critical of the rights that brothers assume over their sisters in deciding who the latter can visit or where they can go or the clothes they may wear. In the Police Township, women in the focus group discussion show sadness and resignation on the lack of inheritance, on consent for marriage, and on polygamy, but are also critical and angry with these issues. As Sim*ā* (50 years, housewife, T*ā*jik) said regarding her share of the patrimonial house:

> *"...we are five sisters and three brothers, and we have a house from our father and my elder brother lives there. They never say that our sisters have right on this house. If we say so, our relatives will blame us and my brother wouldn't come to my home and they will call us chashm safed [one who doesn't care for others]. Once I was at my brother's house, there was a programme on TV regarding women and girls' rights. My brother said 'now TV creates fights between brothers and sister', but I said to myself that you men don't care about women's rights. Always men ignore their sister's inheritance, they don't even like that other people talk about that inheritance issue."*

Freshtā (25 years, Tājik, housewife) says on consent to marriage, inheritance and polygamy:

> *"whenever a girl attains puberty, the parents engage her without asking her agreement or if there is something about division of inheritance they are not taking the name of girl or sister...Islam says that you should give the part of your legacy to daughters and sisters and whenever a girl is engaged we should ask her agreement...if my husband gets married for the second time I will kill him with my own hands, that is why I take his money because I don't want him to become rich and get married again. I count each penny he spends. Why should a man marry twice, his financial status is ruined so also his family life."*

Those in polygamous marriages take turns in "hosting" the husband and will not feed him, for example, if it is not their turn. With the bride-price requirements being both traditional and high, the women are keenly aware of the social and economic costs they will bear via a second marriage and a co-wife (hambāq).

The questions such thoughts provoke can be seen to partake of a more reflexive trend among women as regional and global flows of change interact with the more localised ones. They can compel reviews and re-definitions of understandings in ways that can combine traditional concepts with new meanings. Morsāl, for example, has a broad definition of violence: "violence is when we take someone's rights and we don't let them talk or make a decision." She is very conscious of domestic violence in her friends' families, and especially around marriage and consent. Interestingly, she also uses a different understanding of concepts such as "betars". According to Morsāl, betars is a person who acts fearlessly because it is the right thing to do, rather than a woman who is daring/transgressive and therefore shameless. This is a reversal of more traditional portrayals of argumentative women as betars and which is also strongly linked to being shameless, forward, impudent and not a good Muslim woman.

3.2.3 The public sphere

Women's shura participation, authority and power in the CDC seem suspect or absent; women's participation in the CDC is, in the words of the NSP Director, "trivial". The women's CDCs are not operative in Isārkhail, Mousākhil Pāein and Adam Khān. In Adam Khān village, some in the men's shura have friends whose wives are in the women's shura; communication is normally through this channel. This is highly dubious when the balance of power and control is evidently located in the men's shura. It does not encourage any political participation, but rather perpetuates the traditional joint family chain of command even in a platform that seeks to encourage women's entry into the public sphere. Even if the women in traditionally placed areas like Isārkhail are not aware of non-traditional public participation for women, the communities in Mousākhil Pāein and Adam Khān show a more duniyā-dideh (worldly) perspective that needs capacity building by the NSP. This includes greater monitoring and training for women's shurās to be made functional in spirit. Women's participation in development and governance needs to be pursued.

Mobility

There are evidently very strong restrictions on women's physical mobility radius, and, in parallel, equally high levels of monitoring and control. In all five of the research sites, but particularly in the three villages under study, there seems to be a strong resistance, mostly among men, to women moving beyond family/community domains.

Places with inadequate transport connections like Isārkhail sorely test the ability of women to venture out of socio-spatial community radii. Norms in those communities with better transportation seem to allow more women, sometimes in women-only groups and without a male mahram, to travel to both the nearby bāzār (Bagrāmi, Qārābāgh) and to Kabul. However, in these three communities, control over women's mobility is more intense. On the other hand, in places moderately well connected, like Nahr-e-darsan and Police Township, there is evidence of far greater ability of women to travel alone to places of work and education with less family surveillance.

Mobility evokes strong feelings among some women. Against the traditional perspective of women's physical mobility being seen as inherently restricted and the physical public space being out of bounds, there seems to be a counter-narrative emerging. For example, if we regard Morsāl's views on women and perceived independence as an indicator of identity, she said: "We people think that if we don't let our daughter out of home then she is bibi [respectable] girl but it is not right that if a woman stays in home so she is bibi but if she goes out then is not bibi." Younger women and new daughters-in-laws are importing natal family/community traditions that can precipitate some change. Migration, too, has had its effects on women's physical mobility. For example, the women of Adam Khān village, with their stronger historical attachments to the land, experienced changes in their perceptions when most of the village migrated to Pakistan or Iran. They now seem to have greater willingness to travel and earn an income. They are not averse to the potential (as the women in Isārkhail are), but seem

circumscribed by both the lack of opportunity and the social risk they would face were they to contest social norms by seeking employment, for example, in Q*ā*r*ā*b*ā*gh while living in Adam Kh*ā*n.

There is a strong link for women between earning and the bāzār, which is mostly perceived as both a consumptive node and as a site for the exercise of autonomy. The bāzār is also, in a way, a "forbidden place"and a site of mystery. In practice, therefore, it is clear that, for example, the Pashtoon female earner in the group, a teacher, consciously adheres to quam traditions (especially in a settlement in which T*ā*jiks are the socially dominant group). It is interesting that she mentions the quam tradition first and adds that she is very alert to not breaking these norms. She also says she is scared of *getting lost* and adds that her husband would not permit it. The students and other teachers in Nahr-e-darsan are mobile vis-à-vis those destinations legitimised by their families and households; they seem to be able to go to the bāzār occasionally without giving rise to too much gossip. However, they need to ask permission, as they cannot go out on their own.

In Isārkhail and Mousākhil Pāein, women express a sense of danger once they step out of the community space. A car accident, being kidnapped or being attacked (including by armed militia) are some of their fears. On several occasions, though, stepping out, especially going to the bāzār, is in the company of another woman or women. There seems to be an element of mentoring on such occasions, with a more experienced friend, colleague or relative providing spatial and other knowledge. That the bāzār can be a different world to women is fairly clear. In such places, if a woman is seen without a "caretaker', she could be subject to the vulnerabilities of being female in Afghanistan.

If free movement can also be "constructed as a social phenomenon – as a human geographical activity imbued with meaning and power'[192], then women's relationship with male-dominant and relatively alien spheres like the bāzār could be one indicator of the ways in which power is constructed. The negative positioning of female mobility and visibility, which the women in this research continue to contend with, is not just contextual, but is also an overarching positioning of the self. Despite the attractiveness of financial improvement to move about "freely', the construction of the female self as inherently "immobile" has a significant effect on education, health and access to economic opportunities. The parochial constraints that women experience in order to be perceived as a "good woman' whose character has been preserved despite being familiar with the berun (public sphere) is also reflected in the power of the collective. Stigma is a much- used tool for social control and all five women have detailed a variety of reservations regarding their movements outside the home and/or the community/neighbourhood space. From the point of view of female mobility, the presence of a woman in the public sphere can bring with it questions about her chastity and construct her as an "open" person, the cultural opposite of the female self in zan*ā*ngi.

Chasht o pesht

Besides their embedment in household duties, women across the five sites are restricted from dealing with the "outer', male space in other ways. Speech, behaviour and dress codes for women, as markers of contextual cultural conformity, become female characteristics extended to the more public domain. Thus, conditional access to public space could be seen as brokered through a self-presentation as being respectable (chaddori, the headscarf, completely modest dress, the hij*ā*b or its variants, the presence of a mahram, etc.).

Men in focus group discussions across sites evoke the public/private divide strongly. The emphasis is on the perceived unsafe public/non-community space. In travelling outside the private-parochial spaces (d*ā*khili, inner) and into the more public forums (beruni), women encounter a strong level of control through sexual harassment, which seems to be legitimised as routine, "low-grade" harassment. Sexual harassment has been mentioned repeatedly across interviews and discussions. Such intrusions are not necessarily seen as, a breach of public civility. Since visual, verbal and physical harassment are present, women feel the need to shield themselves from this. Time and space are also sexualised and gendered.

192 Tim Creswell, "Embodiment, Power and the Politics of Mobility: The Case of Female Tramps and Hobos," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24, no. 2 (1999): 175-192.

Sexual harassment is a serious barrier to women's economic empowerment, since movement and mobility are basic requirements in acquiring knowledge, skills and opportunities. When women face a daily infringement of personal dignity and safety and men see sexual harassment of women as an important detractor of their nāmos, it is women whose radius becomes curtailed. The high insecurity that being outside the home and the community evokes in women and their families reinforces their dependence on men in multi-dimensional ways. For the same reasons, women's access to education[193] is halted due to their perceived vulnerability. Consequently, too, in these sites, this early stunting of skills and growth can also be correlated to child marriage and early child-bearing.

3.3 Arenas for policy review

This research shows that agency and empowerment for women have the potential for expansion, especially through economic means, and that both are situated contextually and understood relatively, particularly through the lens of reasoned self-interest. Afghan women's views on gender relations should form the foundation of all efforts toward their well-being, particularly in terms of increased opportunities and recognition of the value of women's productive and reproductive work. At the meeting point of gender, politics, the state and Islam in the specific context of poverty, power and security, it would be beneficial to examine the complexities of Afghan gender roles and relationships as they apply to individual women's economic empowerment, especially through the lens of culture and practice.

When women go against what is considered acceptable, and when such actions are seen as individual rather than stemming from the family or an authority figure, it is often contrasted negatively with the inter-dependent network of culture institutionalised through quam and family. Freedom within a less patriarchal family and community offers substantial dividends in terms of women's status. Equally too, income generation and its vitality has allowed women earners a greater mobility than, for example, their non-earning female relatives, who may conform to older patterns of seclusion. At the same time, rights as granted by Islam to women must be emphasised, and, "doing gender" should imply more involvement of the male agnates of women.

The following points are views and perspectives from the analysis of the five case studies that could be considered while shaping programmes or strategies and in implementation:

At the project level, effective baseline studies and needs-analyses (including for the gendered social structure) should be consistently maintained. In those projects that deal with non-urban skills and livelihood opportunities, a focus on gendered natural resource management of selected locales should be a part of programming. Project heads should strengthen the gendered impact analysis and ensure gender-responsive budgeting. There needs to be a focus on women's economic development experts as lead agents. A business plan for the material products of projects is needed. Access to capital must be programmed into a project to execute the initial training.

The NGO sector is not necessarily oriented toward trade and commercialisation; project developers are not skilled in the processes of, for example, manufacturing, marketing, procurement and supply. If this sector is to be utilised by the government and by donor agencies, then capacity building for NGO staff is needed in these areas. Projects should ideally have programming with the intended women participants. Further, since senior community women are seen to be the custodians of the collective's values relating to gender issues, it will be useful to consider ways in which they are also consulted to participate in projects.

Projects should consider infrastructure needs (for example, cold storage facilities that also perform as insurance against market/seasonal fluctuation), design skills (for example, for courses in namada weaving), livestock feed to be provided during winters, and similar enhancements of current project parameters.

193 Third or fourth class in Adam Khān, seventh in Isārkhail and sixth or seventh class in Mousākhil Pāein all present an age range of 8 to 12 years.

Production and storage space also needs to be considered and provided. Safe spaces and women-only spaces need to be created by the implementers of such ventures, including for family or community-based informal surveillance. The project must necessarily make sure that avenues are sourced for employment opportunities for skills imparted and occupational training given. A better use of mobile technology to reach more women in such skills training should also be considered, as with basic literacy and numeracy. Most, if not all, fieldworkers on projects for women should be women; gender balance in office staff of the implementing organisations also need to be effected.

Alongside this, the lack of common space for women should be considered while planning a project. In addition, project implementers could prepare the ground and activate or strengthen existing women's shurās prior to beginning an economic activity or skills and training course. Space for learning, training and production is of great importance. Rather than use a malik's house, for example, there needs to be a neutral space for women. A women-only community resource centre could be considered, since men generally use the mosque premises for secular and religious gatherings. Alternatively, the use of the community mosque for women for certain spans of the day for common purposes could be facilitated.

Within communities, it is necessary to design and implement a pre-course training on the project for local men. Examining men's relationship to and experience of power, privilege and subordination along different social axes and cultural domains is also needed to understand how Afghan women define transformation[194]and to address socio-cultural strictures such that gender equality itself can be seen as a win-win situation for the family and community rather than as a zero-sum game for men[195].

Women entrepreneurs and organisations leading community-based, participatory economic ventures for women need great support from trade organisations in order to find profitable wholesalers or retail outlets for their products nationally and internationally. Small market infrastructure needs strengthening. Importantly, the reach and depth of the microfinance sector needs to be vastly strengthened.

Women in this research are generally unaware of their local CDC; a few are nominal members of women's shurās in a CDC. The NSP should conduct an assessment of the women's involvement and participation in its CDC shurās and strategise on women's inclusion and equal participation in community projects and decisions.

The low enrolment of girls in primary and secondary school is of great concern. If physical mobility remains a problem for girls, whether due to geography or culture, alternative educational means have to be sourced. Community-based education needs to be strengthened with mobile communication a valuable tool to ensure wider reach. Incentives to increase the enrolment and continued participation of young girls through interactive mobile education could include, for

194 The engagement with men and with families is crucial if the projects for women and their implementing organisations are not to be labelled as "un-Islamic', "foreign', "un-Afghan' or "western' and to prevent social tensions that block women's participation. Coburn, in his ethnographic study of an Istālif village, describes the establishment of a women-only, state-of-the-art, electric kiln in Istālif, where traditionally women never participated in the firing process of the village's famed pottery; since the villagers considered it shameful for their women to go to the women's centre, the kiln was eventually of no use to the community and lay unused, Coburn, *Bazaar Politics*, 48-9. "The failure of program and project implementers either to seek or find effective ways of engaging men and boys in transforming attitudes and behaviours, in itself creates resentment and perpetuates resistance and lip-service, leading to discussions of positive gender discrimination in terms of cultural and moral corruption being forced on them by foreigners' Sippi Azerbaijani-Moghaddam, "A Study of Gender Equity through National Solidarity Programme's Community Development Councils "If Anyone Listens I Have a Lot of Plans'", (Kabul: DACAAR, 2010), 33.

195 See, for example, Sylvia Chant and Matthew Guttman, *Mainstreaming Men into Gender and Development: Debates, Reflections and Experiences* (London: Oxfam GB, 2000).

example, providing a free phone for secondary-school-going girls. Women teachers are necessary for every girls' school.

Access to health care is sorely lacking in the three non-urban areas of this research; the greatest barrier, along with transportation costs, is the lack of female health professionals. Mobile clinics are necessary to reach women in communities that are not well-connected to peri-urban and urban health centres.

Lastly, sexual harassment needs to be taken very seriously; non-militia-related violence in the public sphere and sexual harassment need to be tackled. Campaigns should be initiated to encourage community-based action against sexual harassment; young men need to be involved in its prevention.

4. Conclusion

Given Afghanistan's history, it cannot be denied that, till the 1970s, women in Afghanistan have enjoyed agency not atypical to the extant regional trends and norms. Even as events since 1973 have served to undermine human well-being and women's rights, the question of women's status has played a key role in the ideological and, thence, political successes and destabilisations of regimes since then; gender and gender roles have had a strategic importance. As the last three regimes have particularly shown, each restructuring of gender roles and relations has provoked a backlash and also highlighted that any move to address women's rights must necessarily focus on a) the social cohesion that traditional structures enhance and enjoy and b) the integration of changes into the rural power structure.

Writing in 2009, Deniz Kandiyoti voiced her unease over, "at least three distinct strands of discourse of gender and women's rights in Afghanistan"[196]: that of Northern feminists and intellectuals influenced by the invasive power of a terrorism based upon an alien religious ideology, that of the UN and associated agencies and donors who apply a "one size fits all" model of gender relations, and that of the diverse Afghan society trying to come to terms again with a different system of rights conferring equality on the individual citizen regardless of sexual category. In this past decade, too, the process of state-building, occupied as it is with the destruction of indigenous socio-economic structures, is faced with globalisation and its accompanying crippling, transnational power economies.

Restoring the physical, institutional, organisational and human infrastructure destroyed during decades of conflict will require all available domestic resources, as well as access to foreign capital and markets. Women have to participate equally in this nation-building effort as their economic empowerment is a prerequisite for Afghanistan's growth and prosperity. Equally, economic empowerment often precedes social empowerment. Yet, efforts to empower women cannot succeed unless men are involved. Culturally, Afghanistan shares many values with countries in South and Central Asia, especially as they pertain to gender relations, the family and the community. A focus on women's income generation without due consideration of the complex web of social and familial dynamics is not likely to succeed.[197]

The point made on gender-based violence in a recent study[198], that is, that, rather than having women as project "beneficiaries", a more transformative strategy would be to have women themselves as agents of change, supported by political will and governance and justice systems, is equally applicable to women's economic empowerment. In many policy documents in Afghanistan today, there are calls for women's economic participation as a means to the betterment of the family, the community and the nation. Although "giving women" an increased voice in national economic development, particularly in development, trade and commerce, could yield results in an instrumentalist way, an empowerment approach will be able to better challenge practices and customs that effectively block women's economic participation. Given Afghanistan's largely informal economy, it can be argued that developing income-generating activities for women will run parallel with access to education/skills, community-level participation, and access to justice against the existing continuum of violence.

Financially, mobilising the international and national private sector to invest in the productive sectors in a gender-informed manner could jumpstart women's economic potential. However, the regulatory mechanism needed from the government for public-private partnerships is significant, if exploitative terms are to be avoided. Similar care needs to be taken in current and future policies that have an

196 Deniz Kandiyoti, "The lures and perils of gender activism in Afghanistan," (University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, The Anthony Hyman Memorial Lecture, 2009): 1-2.

197 See also Melissa Kerr Chiovenda, "Afghan Women, Culture and Development," *American Anthropological Association* (2012).

198 By the Association of Women in Development (AWID) on the MDG3 Fund by the Dutch Government, aimed at supporting civil society organizations working on gender equality and women's rights, http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/Women-Moving-Mountains-Successful-Strategies-and-Funding-Mechanisms-to-Eradicate-Violence-Against-Women (accessed 6 June 2013).

economic stake in, for example, the extractive industries. At the same time, the creation of women's networks by all stakeholders offers great potential in enhancing women's income and knowledge. The creation and institutionalisation of economic knowledge for women in Afghanistan is crucial as is the transmission of such expertise and experience among women. In this, even as mainstreaming women's perspectives and participation in development and governance needs to be pursued, allocating adequate resources to developing gender-based economic networks is critical.

Women's self-help groups and cooperatives at village and district levels can offer spaces to channel resources that individual women are not able to access; localised groups help incorporate women's familial and social roles into economic activities and shape the contours of each woman's economic engagement. Gendered collective approaches, while simultaneously raising income levels and reducing deprivation, also address inadequacies in capabilities and the paucity of opportunities for women. Human capital (skills) and participatory capital (community, kinship, social networks) can be used to greater effect to maximise women's opportunities, while lobbying collectively to implement changes in legislation and policy. Such agency can create subaltern counter-publics that target economic self-sufficiency, integrated development and consciousness-raising. Collective processes at the local levels need to be linked with women-oriented initiatives at the national and international levels; these links can be facilitated by a far greater focus on women's equitable access to resources.

As has also been seen in earlier Sections, the Government of Afghanistan is bound by economic imperatives, legal instruments and agreements made with the international community to: a) progressively realise its citizens' right to work, and b) create an enabling environment such that each citizen—without discrimination by age, sex, disability, class, ethnicity, religion—has equal access to this human right. It has made it obligatory upon itself to remove all impediments to women's rights and to therefore monitor and direct laws and strategies that specifically address this and women's economic participation and empowerment. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of the impending transition during 2014 and the unfolding political, economic and security situation in Afghanistan, which is seen to be precarious[199].

Despite the (limited) restructuring and reorientation of women's roles in contemporary society, and *contra* to the lives of some urban, upper- and middle-class women in Afghanistan today, one of the chief requirements in policy and programming is the material acknowledgement of the segregated nature of women's lives. This separation, while having tremendous impact on women's ability to acquire skills (literacy, education, occupational training, knowledge) and physical well-being (health care, reproductive health, safety from domestic violence) and limiting their income-generating opportunities, does not take away from either women's existing or potential contributions. Presenting socioeconomic rights within the framework of a "family approach', that is, for the betterment of the family itself, avoids posing a conflict between women and men and does not see itself nor present itself as radical.

Much of the primary and secondary evidence in these two sections suggests that women's participation in the economy can be viewed through gendered solidarity, and contextual as well as well-monitored projects and policy programming. In creating value for women through labour that already forms an intrinsic part of their lives, cross-sectoral, zanangi-informed policy can create or make visible an identity that has been previously either denied or unregistered. Changing women's access to economic opportunities will require strengthening existing actions in, especially, education, health and religious affairs, converging in what could be termed *"creating women's spaces for women*'.

Keeping this in mind, the following could be considered in reviewing and re-framing policy such that women's human and economic rights are better served:

199 For example, Jaïr van der Lijn, "Afghanistan post-2014: Groping in the dark?" (Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2013).

1. Strengthening the policy environment

At the Central level:

- Legislative and administrative measures do not give legal backing to the Constitution or to Afghanistan's ratification of international conventions. There is a need to review all domestic and statutory laws as well as penal and civil codes based upon international agreements, particularly CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, and to ensure that they reflect gender concerns and equity and human rights in all their provisions. Afghanistan should ratify CEDAW's Optional Protocol.
- The review of the legislative framework and the judicial system will gain legitimacy and efficacy only if it engages with the foundation of justice in Afghanistan, that is, Islamic law. A judicial debate that draws upon Islamic notions of equity and social justice is necessary to bring about changes that represent women's interests. Tapping into compatibilities between the Shari'ah and a legal code that recognises international human rights is not an exercise unique to Afghanistan. It has gained acceptance, partly or in substantive measure, in countries like Morocco, Malaysia and Egypt. However, the relevance of the process to Afghanistan and Afghaniyat needs to be validated.
- Along these lines, too, the Family Law should be reviewed to ensure its compliance with the Shari'ah, especially on issues of miras (inheritance) and mahr. Further, until such time as women's access to land and capital is addressed, the government should provide leased land to women's producer groups and to women's cooperatives. The potential of such measures for women's livelihoods, as well as for the rural economy, has been addressed in Section 2. The Waqf Boards can also collaborate in the leasing. In the long run, legislative measures need to be in place to enable women to own, buy, sell and inherit land. Rather than zameen (land, property), zar (gold, similar) and zan (woman, wife) belonging to a man, land being a woman's heritage should also be considered; zameen zar-e-zan ast.
- Women's representation in all consultative and decision-making national and multi-national forums regarding peace and development should be ensured. If the minimum mandated number of women is not present, the decisions of the forum should not be held legitimate for further discussion or progress.
- There should be an assessment of security policies and programmes, including the national Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programme and the National Afghan Security Policy (NASP), to ensure non-discrimination policies as well as to prevent attacks, harassment and aggression against women in the public sphere and space.
- A National Action Plan on Afghanistan's implementation of UNSCR1325 needs to be drafted.
- There should be a mechanism created within the Ministry of Justice that implements all recommendations made by the AIHRC and by the High Commission on ending violence against women. A national audit on the implementation of the EVAW should be conducted annually and its results placed in the public domain. There should be a provision for a minimum of one shelter home and one legal aid centre for women in each district.
- A legal instrument to criminalise sexual harassment in the public sphere, including in all private and public sector work areas, has to be carefully drafted and legislated at the earliest, with consultations across civil society groups.
- Affirmative action for women's employment of at least 30 percent in all government institutions, *at each grade*, including in the judiciary and in each Ministry, should be ensured.
- Labour laws, trade policies and private sector legislation (contracts, standards, tariff, and other similar instruments) should be in line with international standards on labour rights including with Article 11 of CEDAW. They should also contribute to and be in line with the Millennium Development Goals and the ANDS, and should ensure the social protection of vulnerable livelihoods. In particular, government programmes and donor agencies need to include minimum wage monitoring.

- The intense vulnerabilities that are faced by chronically poor women, women-headed households and disabled women need to be recognised.
- It may be useful to pilot an initiative for information dissemination on the monetary aspects of the productive labour of women (and its fiscal impact).

In the Line Ministries, a revised understanding of women's contribution to the economy and the economic development of Afghanistan is required. Although modifications are needed, the specific implementation of NAPWA and ANDS alone would address many of the gaps that the country is facing today in human development, poverty reduction and the greater involvement of women in economic activities. This includes:

- Ensuring gender justification of each project undertaken by any agency and arm of the government, including in sectors considered "non-traditional" for women. Although the Ministry of Finance is currently implementing this before passing annual financial requests from the Line Ministries, implementing budgets for activities targeting women is not currently ensured. Programme impact analyses should be annual and include indicator achievement.
- Mandating gender-responsive budgeting in every Ministry, gender analyses and gender filters of proposed projects, embedded project mechanisms like gender-disaggregated data and targets, a gender impact analysis in every annual report, and gender-auditing of each Ministry's activities. Achievements stated, at Ministerial levels and annual progress reports, cannot be descriptive but need to reflect broader progress than the number of women given vocational training, for example; reports need to provide credible, reliable information, and present a comparative analysis of monies spent.
- Ensuring a Gender Officer in the provincial departments of every Ministry.
- Strengthening MoWA and DoWAs through increased budgets, extensive capacity building and executive powers to ensure accountability across all Ministries.
- Establishing a Labour Inspectorate to ensure an equal, minimum wage for women.
- Ensuring that certification laboratories function for all sectors with budgets, facilities, equipment, and other infrastructure.
- Giving women-owned or managed cooperatives, businesses and companies a tax break for the (graded) gestation period of the enterprise.

Afghan men working in projects for women could have a tendency to downplay both their work and their role since such work can lead to reduced status. This puts at risk their commitment to empowering women. Extensive orientation and training is needed for all male staff in Ministries.

Other recommendations include the following:

- The MoCI, in coordination with Line Ministries, should look at participation in the Enhanced Integration Framework (EIF) of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and consider a gendered Trade Integration study.
- The MoEW, in coordination with Line Ministries, should focus far more on harnessing sources of renewable energy (wind, solar, biogas) and instruct women in using and maintaining energy equipment. MoEW should have a gender perspective in its strategies and gender equality in terms of access, rights and ownership in harnessing renewable energy sources.
- The MoEW, the National Environmental Protection Agency, MAIL, MoWA and UNFAO need to consider a National Policy on Renewable Energy in terms of women's access, rights and ownership to the sources and equipment of renewable energy.
- The MoTCA, in coordination with Line Ministries that programme projects for women's socio-economic needs, should specifically strategise on women's transportation needs. While rural

investments need a strong focus on connecting women to health and education facilities, gender-sensitive policies and investments in transport are necessary, including for women-only group travel; in parallel, intermediary means of transport need be explored seriously.

- The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission should assess the drop in the numbers of female civil servants and provide for more coaching, special internship programmes and incentives to meet the 25 percent mandated representation of women in the civil service.
- The MoJ should provide affirmative action to ensure a 30 percent representation of women in the judiciary, across penal, civil, juvenile and family courts and in the Supreme Court council.

Central Statistical Organisation (CSO)

The CSO should prioritise the following activities:

- Conduct a mixed-method, national, gender core-development Indicators Survey for 34 provinces and a sample size of at least 100,000 households. Comprehensively analyse the gender dimension of, and compile data for women on, the following: value chains in all sectors, labour market participation and unemployment, industrial and occupational distribution of workers, patterns of involvement in subsistence production, unconventional definitions of work, women's work in "non-traditional" sectors, unpaid labour and its nature and extent, land ownership, water management, domestic production and related tasks, time-use surveys, income-earning opportunities, physical mobility, accessibility of services, the market viability of goods made by women, women-managed and women-led patronage and support networks, disability, and similar in order to assess women's productive work and non-monetised contributions to the economy.
- Assess the poverty line in terms of multi-dimensional poverty analysis.
- Gather data on child marriage.
- Gather data on child labour.
- Research women's ability to access physical public space, in terms of transportation, socio-cultural barriers, time, and sexual harassment.
- A gender index for Afghanistan that captures discriminatory social institutions (such as early marriage, discriminatory inheritance practices, violence against women, son preference, restricted access to public space, and restricted access to land and credit), as for example the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) will help guide policy better than indices that capture the gender gap through outcomes.

2. Addressing human development gaps

It is crucial to address the gaps that girls and women face in education and health care, and in access to safety, physical mobility and political participation. One of the routes to take is to be aligned with customary and traditional norms and values.

- Identify and create a network of respected female authority figures, preferably with religious knowledge. Mothers-in-law and grandmothers have a great say in determining women's life-choices. Training senior women (especially wives of male religious leaders) and younger women as female religious teachers (bibis), or as ulemas, will help in reviewing the ways in which Islamic rights for women within the framework of Afghaniyat can be disseminated and at how the "Canon" can be revisited. Home-based Qur'anic schools will help establish such a network.
- The Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs should spearhead the development of initiatives to raise public awareness on Islamic values and women's rights. Greater research, compilation and dissemination of specific aspects of Qur'anic injunction and idiom beneficial to women's economic rights will be useful.

In the meantime, there is already enough encouragement for women's access to education—the quest for knowledge being a central pillar of Islam—and to health services. The bottlenecks here are access to separate but equal resources for women, particularly for girls and young women. The possible ways out of the logjam could be the following:

- Provide equitable access to education for girls and women, including funding and building far more girls-only schools, especially at secondary and higher secondary levels.
- Train and recruit women as sole teachers in numbers and technical expertise sufficient to meet the needs of girls-only schools.
- Develop partnerships with educational institutions and training centres for scholarships and bursaries for girls across sectors, with an emphasis on those considered non-traditional for girls.
- Prevent the socio-cultural trend that accepts girls' withdrawal from education at third to fourth class as normal. Early withdrawal, besides rendering girls uninformed and contained, definitely enables early and child marriages, with the accompanying early and frequent pregnancies.
- Review the education curriculum at secondary and higher secondary levels; for example, offering agriculture-related training programmes to boys and home management skills to girls is detrimental to women's economic knowledge and participation. Gender and peace education should be included. Financial education in schools and other educational institutes is necessary for both girls and boys, including on saving and investment. Women's rights under the civil code and CEDAW as well as under Islamic jurisprudence should also be incorporated in the curriculum.
- Promote reproductive health education for the 10-19 age group. This need not be through a school-based curriculum if deemed too sensitive; alternative routes like community-based groups, religious education groups or programming within all women-oriented government projects should be considered.
- Provide alternate formal education in Islamic jurisprudence to women at village and district levels and incorporate Shari'ah-informed, women's rights-relevant information in colleges and universities.
- In line with the focus shift from reproductive health of women in 2007 to women and girls in 2010 to girls and women in 2013, the greatest stress is on the need to delay their marriages[200].
- Train all medical staff in mental health care and to look for signs of gender-based, domestic violence. Family counselling centres that tie up with women's shurās could be considered.
- Increase health-seeking behaviour and equitable access to care by offering women-only services within comprehensive health-care centres at the district level. Provide women health workers at each community health post and basic health centre, and mobile household health clinics at the village level for the remoter areas.
- Train and recruit women doctors, nurses, midwives, surgeons, obstetricians and paediatricians and other technical staff in numbers and expertise sufficient to meet the needs of women at district and provincial levels.
- Include a strong focus on gender in medical education. The provision of women-only facilities like buildings, hostels, etc., should be expanded (and publicised) to encourage female students. Medical education should include long-term internships in rural areas; state-subsidised medical education should also include mandatory service in rural areas.
- Involve women professionals from regional and other Muslim countries in all the above activities.

200 See, for example, proceedings of the Women Deliver Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 2013, http://www.womendeliver.org/assets/WD2013_Day_3_Release_FINAL.pdf (accessed 14 June 2013).

3. Focusing on deliverables

A coherent, cross-sector, national policy for women's economic participation should be drafted with indicators and monitoring strategies across Line Ministries. A key strategy in this is to build upon culturally accepted norms. The tendency among many families and communities is to restrict women's movement, not just outside their immediate groups, but sometimes even within their immediate ethnic, community or extended families. This restriction tends to isolate women totally and cut them off from gendered solidarity and knowledge/information. Women's groups and networking have a huge potential to promote unity and solidarity to women. Policies across Ministries should collaborate in creating a strong and active network of and for women across sectors that operates in cities and provincial headquarters to build a women-to-women service delivery model (from producer to wholesalers/ processors/ exporters) and entrepreneurship development among women with a focus on the domestic market and export potential. Goals include the following:

- Identify and group women into producer groups and producer associations based upon livelihood and occupational categories. Clusters of women producers could be formed so that women can work and learn in groups; women's groups could also be formed within CDCs. In addition, the women's savings groups of MRRD and other institutionalised women's groups could be transformed into more enterprise-focused entities.
- Mobilise women based on their needs and opportunities through self-help groups, associations, cooperatives, and unions. Provide credit, equipment, training, larger-scale investment and marketing linkages as outlined in Section 2.3.4, "Networking across IGAs and SMEs', including the use of innovative Information Technology.
- Train and recruit women field workers in sufficient numbers, geographical reach and across manufacturing and agricultural sub-sectors, to provide a comprehensive range of technical services and information from input to markets for region-specific women farmers, producers, craftspersons, and entrepreneurs.
- Train and recruit extension workers in quality control, credit, and trade/market linkages to connect with women producer groups. Develop mobile agri-services centres at district headquarters.
- The identified moderate barrier to women producers/associations groups remains at the level of contact and interaction with the next step of the market, that is, village traders/agents/ farmers' groups/associations. Identify and train women to fill these gaps, especially at community level.
- Women input suppliers are needed for farm products in various sectors. Women-only stores should be developed at district level and mobile farm supply stores considered. They should be identified, trained and incorporated into all MAIL and MRRD programmes and projects.
- More women as basic veterinary workers are needed.
- Emphasise women's access to markets. There is some acceptance of the strength-in-numbers approach, and women travelling in groups may be an effective means of circumventing mobility problems. Transportation has to be made accessible to women-only groups.
- Develop women-owned and women-only processing centres. Design and build capacity in financial and bureaucratic procedures, organisational management, market and trade competitive knowledge, promotion and marketing skills and quality control for urban and rural entrepreneurs and women's groups.
- Build the capacity of NGOs that are implementing women-centred projects across sectors. Develop a marketing strategy for each product to access key regional and international markets. MAIL and other Ministries could develop this in consultation with export support agencies, such as the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA) and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), and the private sector. A national consortium can be designed and developed, supported by international investors.

- Target women's access to trade far beyond the current limited number of women participating in trade exhibitions. MoCI should tie up with AISA, ACCI and TAFA to create a "hub-regional" network of women's organisations across Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia. This should also include direct contact with women producer associations in the rural networks. Academia could be consulted.

4. Gendering financial services

Access to credit beyond microfinance is essential to enhance women's economic engagement. The reach of microfinance is limited when compared to demand, is of a fairly standard nature and does always not take into account the contexts of women in the informal rural sector and those engaged in small-scale trading. There has to be a government intervention policy to promote protectionist and supportive programmes and encourage women to come forward through low interest loans, longer repayment periods, and crop buy-backs with fixed prices. The government should also develop eligibility criteria for targeting women and women-headed households, households with girls, disabled women, internally displaced women, and those below the poverty line.

Due to their relatively wide outreach and their established principles of targeting women, MFIs have far greater potential to create women's spaces that encourage access to technical and marketing networks and skills. This could be especially fruitful when combined with the women's CDCs of the NSP as well as the Women's Councils and women producer groups identified by the MRRD. This could be further enhanced if the knowledge thusly generated could be transferred periodically to the girls-only secondary schools. MoEc and the other arms of the government should draft and support policies that enable microfinance and its outreach to enhance women's access to credit across sectors.

The MFIs and SME sector should:

- Develop a diversified range of gender-sensitive financial products that can meet rural sector needs as well as trade and enterprise needs, in line with Islamic modes of finance. This will help expand financial services to rural communities through linkages with the commercial sector.
- Promote micro-insurance and community rural insurance groups and emphasise savings groups.
- Develop a flexible package for building women's SMEs, with longer grace and repayment periods and include credit to buy fodder, seeds, equipment (sale or lease) and all input material.
- Disseminate widely the Secured Transactions Law that allows a broad range of movable assets to be used as security for availing business loans.
- Reach those below the poverty line through appropriate incentives, a wider and modified service portfolio, partnership support and risk mitigation measures.
- Widen the reach of MISFA's Murahaba-based microfinancing.
- Make available loans and grants as start-up capital and/or seed money at the scale that SMEs require. Social investment funds and joint equity funds could be facilitated through international agencies. Loans should be gender-, sector- and context-specific and designed to allow for lower interest rates and longer repayment periods.
- Develop a revolving fund to offer grants and conditional cash transfers to women-run SMEs and agri-businesses; this could be a collaborative venture between multilateral agencies and bilateral donors.
- Assess approaches that use the individual, solidarity group, and village-level banking models to better understand loan/credit use, and its impact on women's empowerment, social status, productivity and incomes.
- The MoEc, MoTI, in collaboration with MoWA and institutions like ASIA and ACCI and multilateral agencies like the World Bank should develop a business development services model for women's small business and microenterprise sector needs, including on credit orientation, production, marketing, management, regulatory compliance, delivery mechanisms and community-based enterprises.

- The AISA and the ACCI, in consultation with, among others, the MoLSAMD, MAIL, MRRD, MoCI and the MoCIT, need to revamp their strategy and policy for women in trade and entrepreneurship. Development of training modules in Enterprise Training, Value Chain Development and Market Linkagesacross sectors would help greatly.
- Gender-friendly Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives among multinational and national companies need to be emphasised and actively encouraged.

Also, at the international level

- Far greater emphasis has to be placed on women's economic empowerment in international conferences and resolutions. These should be accompanied by country analysis, targets and indicators around increasing women's opportunities.
- Lobbying with the WTO and IMF is necessary to highlight the detrimental nature of the free trade economy and its contribution to the feminisation of poverty, especially in countries like Afghanistan.

In light of the impending transition in 2014[201], lower aid and public spending is expected to affect gendered aid programming. Tighter budgets could translate to the greater expectation of value for money:

- Every calf has four legs: there has been a significant lack of coordination among multi-lateral and bilateral donors in Afghanistan, with agencies seeking to push individual country agendas and ideologies onto policy-making within different Ministries. The bushkazi over the Afghan development calf has not given any focused, coordinated or coherent output on gender and development and the ways in which it needs to be systematically and holistically addressed in Afghanistan. Nor have potential complementarities of agencies around gendered economic empowerment been successfully addressed. In order to ensure information sharing on gender equality and best practices in programming, a multi-donor analysis of "lessons learned', including an internal gender audit, will be timely before 2014 and before more monies are channelled.
- Country strategies and context-based gender strategies, currently absent in the programmes of most multi-lateral and bilateral agencies operating in Afghanistan, are needed to maximise development effectiveness.
- The allocation of monies to women-specific projects should be at least 50 percent of overall country strategy and contribution. They should have concrete outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation should not only be conducted and placed in the public domain for all monies and projects, but monitoring through community representatives, with 50 percent women's representation, should be taken on board before and during project implementation.
- It is necessary to a) synergise all initiatives with Afghan-led initiatives to influence policy in a unified manner, b) increase the domestic economic impact of all aid by channelling it through the Afghan government budget, c) increase domestic contracting, and, d) continue to fund and support the formulation and, more importantly, the effective implementation of policies that promote gendered equality in Afghanistan.
- Projects for women should be served by women facilitators on the ground and by women at senior levels. If implementing agencies do not yet have an adequate balance of women in staff and seniority, donor and programming agencies should ask for it. Equally, donor and implementing organisations (including embassies) should ensure gender balance within their offices, especially at the senior management level[202].

201 As of December 2012, 11 of the 34 Provinces are "fully transitioned', that is, have already undergone the transition of security responsibility from the International Military Forces to the Afghanistan National Security Forces.

202 Joanne Sandler and Aruna Rao, "Strategies of Feminist Bureaucrats: United Nations Experiences," (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2012).

- Ensure long-term consultants with an understanding of Afghanistan and accountability to programmes developed and activated or executed. There needs to be a focus on women economic development experts as lead agents.
- Initiatives like UN Women's Safe Cities should also consider public spaces in countries like Afghanistan, while International networks and forums like the Netherlands MDG3 Fund, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Campaign and the Nobel Women's initiative on Stop Rape in Conflict need to be networked with women's organisations across Afghanistan.
- Multilateral agencies should also consider joint programmes to enable initiatives like an Equal Opportunities Commission.
- International agencies must acknowledge dissent and dissenters within Islam. Cultural relativism and sensitivity must be tempered by taking into account Muslim women's organisations' views on Islam and on Afghan women's rights to participate in the shaping of their culture and religion.
- Networks of women's human rights organisations across Central Asia and South Asia as well as the Middle East should be actively considered. Active funding and technical support for women activists in Afghanistan to link more regionally should be looked at on an urgent footing, both for women's human rights and for economic empowerment, in order to maximise women's gains of the past decade and their ability to deal with the coming years.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Focus group participants (all names changed)

*Hh: household ; Girls: Daughters/sisters; Boys: Sons/brothers

a. Nahr-e-darsan, Guzargah

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Mahram	Hh	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Marziya	28	Housewife	Husband	3	1	-	Pashtoon
2	Rahima	20	Student	Father	8	3	3	Tajik
3	Monira	30	Teacher	Father	7	3	2	Tajik
4	Morsal	23	Participant	Father	7	3	2	Tajik
5	Zakiya	24	University student	Father	9	6	2	Hazara
6	Kamilla	38	Teacher	Husband	7	3	2	Tajik
7	Zarghona	55	Housewife/ widow	Son-in-law	4	2	-	Tajik
8	Minagull	60	Housewife/widow	Son	6	6	4	Tajik

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Mohammad Shafiq	38	Area Representative, Jobless	Married	0	2	Tajik
2	Abdul Hadi	48	Retired	Married	0	3	Tajik
3	Shafi Ahmad	20	Jobless	Single	0	2	Tajik
4	Mohammad Anwar	52	Jobless	Married	3	2	Tajik
5	Gul Agha	28	Government Employee	Married	0	1	Tajik

b. Police Township, Kabul

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Mahram	Hh	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Sima	50	Housewife	Husband	8	3	2	Tajik
2	Sharifa	55	Housewife/widow	Son	8	3	2	Pashtoon
3	Zolikha	57	Housewife	Husband	8	4	3	Pashtoon
4	Massoma	38	Housewife/widow	-	4	3		Pashtoon
5	Roshan	40	Housewife/widow	Father	5	-	1	Tajik
6	Saida	20	Student	Father	6	0	0	Hazara
7	Freshta	25	Housewife	Husband	5	3	1	Tajik

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Abdul Saboor	70	Retiredarmygeneral	Married twice	4	3	Hazara
2	Maulawi Saheb	70	Imam	Married	4	4	Tajik
3	Abdul Qadir	22	Shop keeper	Married	1	0	Pashtoon
4	Shirshah	55	Jobless	Married	2	4	Tajik
5	M.Akbar	48	Carpenter	Married	3	2	Tajik

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
6	Haji Saied Abdul Wakil	70	Ministry employee	Married	4	3	Tajik
7	Haji Mahfooz	55	Retired police officer	Married	4	2	Pashtoon
8	Saidajan	40	Ex-police officer, shop-keeper, shura member	Married	2	3	Tajik

c. Isarkhail, Istalif

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Mahram	Hh	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Hawas Gull	30	Housewife	Husband	5	1	2	Tajik
2	Safora	25	Housewife	Husband	13			Tajik
3	Arifa	37	Housewife	Husband	12	3	1	Tajik
4	Hajirra	38	Housewife	Husband	5	2	1	Tajik
5	DadaShirin	42	Housewife	Husband	11	5	4	Tajik
6	Shirin	45	Housewife/ widow	Father-in-law	13	1	2	Tajik
7	Nazi Gull	25	Housewife	Father-in-law	13	3	2	Tajik
8	Wahida	16	Housewife	Father-in-law	12	1	-	Tajik

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Hh	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Sher Ahmad	70	Farmer	Married	5	3	2	Tajik
2	Ali Mohammad	50	Labourer, Livestock breeding	Married	10	6	4	Tajik
3	Abdullah	35	Leather Sewing Trainer	Married	1	0	1	Tajik
4	Mohammad Samim	40	Farmer	Married	6	3	3	Tajik
5	Gull Mohd	53	Labourer	Married	5	1	4	Tajik
6	Noor Aqa	60	Labourer	Single	0	0	0	Tajik
7	Kamaludin	57	Farmer, Malik	Married	10	5	5	Tajik

d. Mousakhil Pāein, Qarabagh

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Hh	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Sher Ahmad	70	Farmer	Married	5	3	2	Tajik
2	Ali Mohammad	50	Labourer, Livestock breeding	Married	10	6	4	Tajik
3	Abdullah	35	Leather Sewing Trainer	Married	1	0	1	Tajik
4	Mohammad Samim	40	Farmer	Married	6	3	3	Tajik
5	Gull Mohd	53	Labourer	Married	5	1	4	Tajik
6	Noor Aqa	60	Labourer	Single	0	0	0	Tajik
7	Kamaludin	57	Farmer, Malik	Married	10	5	5	Tajik
8	Mujahida	38	Housewife	Husband	13	4	2	Tajik

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Status	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Shayeq Khan	28	NABDP staff	Engaged	0	0	Pashtoon
2	Nematullah	48	Farmer	Married	2	2	Tajik
3	Nasir Ahmad	45	Malik, Estergech	Married	3	7	Tajik
4	Sher Agha	32	Bodyguard, Amruddin	Married	2	1	Tajik
5	Monir Ahmad	28	Malik, Qala-e-Mowsa	Married	4	1	Tajik
6	Abdull Ozir	59	Malik, Bahtarain Khosh Pacha	Married	6	8	Tajik
7	Kaka Kabir	67	Farmer	Married	5	3	Pashtoon

e. Adam Khan, Bagrami

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Mahram	Hh	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Naz Parwar	48	Housewife	Husband	26	6	5	Pashtoon
2	Gull Ghutai	35	Housewife	Husband	30	6	4	Pashtoon
3	Zibba	30	Housewife	Husband	18	4	4	Pashtoon
4	Patmana	50	Housewife/widow	Son	32	7	5	Pashtoon
5	Shaima	26	Housewife	Husband	20	3	2	Pashtoon
6	Benafsha	19	Housewife	Husband	19	1	2	Pashtoon
7	l Daghgull	18	Housewife	Husband	35	1	1	Pashtoon
8	Zargull	25	Housewife	Husband	35	3	4	Pashtoon

No	Name	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Girls	Boys	Ethnic group
1	Mustafa	25	Student	Single	0	0	Pashtoon
2	Mohd Akram	50	Army officer	Married	3	2	Tajik
3	Massoud	35	Retired Army Officer, Head, Men's CDC	Married	1	3	Tajik
4	Abdul Azim	50	Malik, Adam Khan	Married	3	5	Tajik
5	Abdul Rahman	28	Teacher, Qari	Married	1	0	Pashtoon
6	Fazel Ahmad	19	Student	Single	0	0	Pashtoon
7	Ahmad Shah	33	Farmer	Married	1	1	Pashtoon

Appendix 2: Points that helped frame the Topic Guides for the project participants[203].

Indicator	*Levels 1 (self)*	*Level 2 (family/ Household)*	*Level 3 (village/ neighbourhood)*	*Level 4 (wider community)*
Material Change				
Economic Opportunity/ Access	• Desire for economic opportunity • Ownership of livestock • Control over pie- wasi or livestock • skills building	• Access to income-generation • Increased income and income security • Control over loans and savings use and income • Full or part contribution to income- generating tools (looms, sewing machines, etc.) • Investments (livestock, jewellery, land, home, home renovation, etc)	• Access to banking/ credit • Second or third loans taken • Participation in micro- credit networks • Reduced reliance on temporary or informal borrowing • Increased participation of women in paid labour • Increased number of women with greater say over income • Control over land produce/land	• Individual seeking participation in more economic with/in community opportunities • Increased number of women participating in collective efforts for greater income • Greater levels of gendered income parity • More access to financial and technical support services
Resource Access	• Desire for rights to resources in the household and community	• Access to productive assets and household property	• Access to resources in community • Control over productive assets and household property	• Individual /collective action to challenge unequal access to community resources
Economic contribution/ Labour division	• Self-perceived positive evaluation of economic contribution • Ability to make purchases with own income independently	• Control over household labour allocation • Control over income from other household productive activities • Reduction in unpaid domestic work including childcare	• Contribution to knowledge and skills of other women in village and community toward greater income generation • Greater participation in networks and training for income generation skills and capacity building with other village women • More women able to independently make economic decisions for their household	• Greater participation in non-local networks and training for income generation skills and capacity building.

203 Adapted from Canadian International Development Agency, "A Project Level Handbook: The Why and How of Gender Sensitive Indicators" (Quebec: Canadian International Development Agency, 1997) and Zoe Oxal and Sally Biden, "Gender and empowerment: definitions, approaches and implications for policy" (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 1997).

Indicator	*Levels 1 (self)*	*Level 2 (family/ Household)*	*Level 3 (village/ neighbourhood)*	*Level 4 (wider community)*
Access to economic networks	• Collective or dependent access to markets	• Reduced dependence on intermediation by others for access to resources, markets, public institutions, plus increased ability and ability to act independently	• Greater individual mobility and access to the markets, retailers, suppliers and vendors • Greater networking among project related activities	• Individual /collective action to challenge discrimination in access to resources and markets • Greater access to income-generating opportunities through projects and/or NGOs
Perceptual change				
Self	• Increase in confidence and happiness • Desire for equal well-being	• Increased skills including literacy, occupational procedures , etc.	• Increased ability to think ahead and plan for the future	• Increased recognition and respect for women's value and contribution
Self and Others	• Awareness to take decisions about self and others • Assertiveness and sense of autonomy	• Betterment of health and nutrition status • Greater control over household consumption and other valued areas of household decision-making	• Greater participation in village group activities, including around ashar, seyali va shariki • Greater perception of women's economic contribution • Greater perception of women's economic autonomy	• Participation in capacity building activities in wider networks • More meetings with other women and groups • Lesser seclusion within home • Greater perception of women's economic contribution
Self and Gender	• Awareness of discrimination between daughters and sons	• Contribution to higher valuation of and increased expenditure on girl children and other female family members	• Questioning of gender-based practices within community women	
Self and Mobility	• Awareness of the wider world outside • Courage to interact more with non-family	• Discussion on ways to travel and move alone • Drawing solidarity on mobility from key household members • Bargaining with family for greater radius of mobility • Able to travel to next village without mehram, but with permission	• Negotiating socio-cultural barriers within community • Discussions with other women on ways to be more mobile • Planning and travelling with other women to newer locales • Not needing permission or mahram to travel to the next village	• Courage to travel alone • Being able to travel alone • Being able to travel with woman but not needing permission

Indicator	*Levels 1 (self)*	*Level 2 (family/ Household)*	*Level 3 (village/ neighbourhood)*	*Level 4 (wider community)*
Relational change				
Health and Fertility	• Desire to take control of own fertility	• Awareness of and access to reproductive health services	• Control over fertility decisions • Awareness and knowledge of public welfare services	• Joint action for increased public welfare provision for women and village
Violence	• Desire to stop DV • Awareness of other forms of VAW (rape, incest, child marriage, abduction, ba'ad)	• Action to defend self against violence in the household • Knowledge of ways in community and negotiating tactics and coping strategies around DV/VAW.	• Advice given to tackle DV in other households • Action taken to tackle DV in other households • Collective or covert action against other forms of VAW (rape, incest, child marriage, abduction, ba'ad)	• Awareness of laws around DV • Awareness of organisations helping to stop DV • Contacts and meetings with organisations on DV/ VAW • Participation in meetings of workshops women's rights, laws, prevention of DV/ VAW
Socio-cultural contextual practices	• Awareness of gender- based discrimination in cultural, legal and political processes • Desire to engage in cultural, legal and political processes	• Action to challenge and change cultural perceptions of women's capacities and rights in household	• Knowledge of cultural, legal and political processes that can circumvent women's socio-cultural subordinate process • Action for the removal of formal barriers to access to cultural, legal and political processes at community levels • Increased solidarity with women and mutual support over gender issues	• Engagement with and taking positions of authority within cultural, legal and political processes within wider ethnic community or province or women's groups • Greater perception by men and women that women are being more empowered
Public sphere/ participation	• Awareness of local politics • Awareness of legal rights (violence, inheritance, education, health)	• Contribution to family on local elections and village/community matters • Contribution in family on issues of violence, inheritance, education, health	• Greater solidarity against violations of women's rights • Contribution in village/ community on issues of violence, inheritance, education, health	• Participation in local politics • Organising for enforcement or amendment of laws to protect women's rights

Appendix 3: Research Participants

No	Organisation	Name	Position	Date
1	Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)	Ali Zaki	Director, Business Development Services	01.01.13
2	Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA)	Sahiba Nooristani	Investment Promotion Officer	01.01.13
3	Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF)	Malalai Jawad	Membership Manager	30.12.12
4	Afghan Women's Centre (AWC)	Rasool Habibi	Programme Coordinator	19.11.12
5	Afghanistan Women Education Centre (AWEC)	Jamila Zafar	Marketing Manager	31.10.12
6	Afghanistan Women Education Centre	Shukria	Project Participant	06.11.12
7	Afghanistan Women Education Centre	Mohd. Aziz	Male kin	08.11.12
8	Afghanistan Women Education Centre	Community, Kabul, District 5	Female focus group discussion	07.11.12
9	Afghanistan Women Education Centre	Community, Kabul, District 5	Male focus group discussion	07.11.12
10	Afghan Women's Network (AWN)	Leeda Azizi	Programme Officer	22.10..12
11	All Afghan Women's Union (AAWU)	Khadija Shahbaz	Master Trainer	29.12.12
12	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Anonymity Required	-	04.11.12
13	Community Centre for the Disabled (CCD)	Haji Ahmad Shah	Senior Trainer	5.12.12
14	Care	Frozan Rahmani	Gender Project Officer	27.11.12
15	Educational and training Centre for poor Women and girls of Afghanistan (ECW)	Aliya Yousufzai	Programme Officer	29.11.12
16		Parwin Zamani	Head, Educational development	18.12.12
17	Embassy of Canada	Claude Désilets	Deputy Head of Aid	16.12.12
18	Embassy of Finland	Matti Vaananen Musliuddin Aabidi	First Secretary National Programme Coordinator	06.01.13
19	Embassy of Sweden	Roger Karrlson	Project Advisor	29.11.12
20	Female Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (FRDO)	Anonymity Required	Head	20.11.12
21	Female Rehabilitation and Development Organisation	Nazanin	Project Participant	18.11.12

No	Organisation	Name	Position	Date
22	Female Rehabilitation and Development Organisation	Mohd. Imamuddin	Male kin	20.11.12
23	Female Rehabilitation and Development Organisation	Community, Isarkhail	Female focus group discussion	20.11.12
24	Female Rehabilitation and Development Organisation	Community, Isarkhail	Male focus group discussion	20.11.12
25	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	Dr. Alema	Civil Peace Service Coordinator	12.12.12
26	Handicap International (HI)	Samiulhaq Sami Qasim Khan	Advocacy and Awareness Technical Advisor Project Representative	17.12.12
27	Humanitarian Assistance Muska (HAM)	Aziza Momand	Director	20.10.12
28	Humanitarian Assistance Muska	Morsal Azami	Project Participant	21.10.12
29	Humanitarian Assistance Muska	Abdul Ishaq	Male kin	23.10.12
30	Humanitarian Assistance Muska	Community, Doghabad	Female focus group discussion	23.10.12
31	Humanitarian Assistance Muska	Community, Doghabad	Male focus group discussion	17.01.13
32	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Abdul Shakoor	Former Programme Coordinator	21.10.12
33	Institute for the Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW)	Manizah Wafeq	Director	27.11.12
34	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Ikumi Ogiwari	Gender and Development Advisor	08.12.12
35	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)	Nasrullah Bakhtani	Acting Director, Policy & Planning	18.12.12
36		Adela Yousufzai	Gender Director	9.1.13
37		Anonymity Required	-	1.11.12
38	Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI)	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
39		Anonymity Required	-	25.12.12
40	Ministry of Economy (MoEc)	Arif Sahar	Afghanistan National Development Strategy	17.12.12
41		Anonymity Required	-	17.12.12
42		Anonymity Required	-	30.12.12
43	Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Anonymity Required	-	26.12.12
44		Anonymity Required	-	29.12.12

No	Organisation	Name	Position	Date
45	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA)	Gul Agha Habib	Director, Policy and Planning	31.12.12
46	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Development (MoHRA)	Anonymity Required	-	3.2.13
47		Imranullah Kamran	Former Gender Director	25.12.12
48	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)	Abdulrahman Ayoubi	Executive Director, National Solidarity Programme	18.12.12
49		Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
50		Ghizal Haress	Executive Director, Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program	2.1.13 & 05.01.13
51	Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)	Anjuma Nahimi	Head, Economic Development	22.12.12
52		Mizhgan Mustafawi	Deputy Minister	29.12.12
53		Samia Sadad	Head, Gender Capacity Building Department	9.1.13
54		Hussain Ali Moieen	Economic Specialist, Department of Economic Development	09.01.13
55	National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP)	Dr. Sami Jalalzai	Head, Local institutional Development Department	02.12.12
56		Ziyadah Karim	Head, Gender Department	
57	National Area Based Development Programme	Anonymity Required	Project Participant	13.12.12
58	National Area Based Development Programme	Anonymity Required	Male kin	13.12.12
59	National Area Based Development Programme	Community, Mousakhil Pāein	Female focus group discussion	24.12.12
60	National Area Based Development Programme	Community, Mousakhil Pāein	Male focus group discussion	24.12.12
61	National Solidarity Program (NSP)	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
62	National Solidarity Program	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
63	National Solidarity Program	Anonymity Required	-	23.12.12
64	Noor Education and Capacity Development Organization (NECDO)	Jamila Afghani Kakar	Director	23.01.13
65	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Support for Afghanistan (PARSA)	Mahbouba Saraj	Gender and Program Advisor for Women	26.11.12

No	Organisation	Name	Position	Date
66	Rabiha-e-Balkhee Skill Support Administration (RASA)	Abdullah Hamidi	Program Manager	27.11.12
67		Qais Faqeeri	Administration and Finance Officer	27.11.12
68	Sanayee Development Organisation (SDO)	Samiullah Naseri	Director	25.11.12
69	Sanayee Development Organisation	Roya Salamzai	Project Participant	19.11.12
70	Sanayee Development Organisation	Ahmad Zubair	Male kin	19.11.12
71	Sanayee Development Organisation	Community, Bagrami	Female focus group discussion	06.12.12
72	Sanayee Development Organisation	Community, Bagrami	Male focus group discussion	06.12.12
73	Skills Training And Rehabilitation Society (STARS)	Zuhra Aman	Program coordinator	12.12.12
74	Sabah	Wasima Amiri	Director	1.12.12
75	Shuhada	Jawad Wafa	Executive Director	18.11.12
76	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Gulistan Ibadat	Gender Specialist	06.01.13
77	Women for Afghan Women (WAW)	Shukria Khaliqi	Director	26.11.12
78		Friba Ahmadi	Head	31.12.12

Appendix 4: Projects undertaken by the World Bank in Afghanistan relating to women[204]

Project Title	*Commitment Amount in US$ million*	*Status*	*Approval Date*
Adolescent Girls Initiative - Afghanistan	3.0	Active	AUG 22, 2011
National Solidarity Program III	40.0	Active	JUN 29, 2010
Strengthening Health Activity for the Rural Poor Project	49.0	Active	JUN 02, 2010
AF Rural Enterprise Development Program	30.0	Active	MAR 09, 2010
Afghanistan - Strengthening Health Activities for the Rural Poor (SHARP)	30.0	Active	MAR 24, 2009
Afghanistan - Second Education Quality Improvement Program	30.0	Closed	JAN 31, 2008
Expanding Microfinance Outreach and Improving Sustainability	30.0	Closed	JAN 08, 2008
Public Financial Management Reform Project	33.4	Closed	MAY 29, 2007
Afghanistan: Emergency National Solidarity Project II	120.0	Closed	DEC 07, 2006
Emergency National Solidarity - Supplemental	28.0	Closed	JUN 30, 2005
Education Quality Improvement Program	35.0	Closed	JUL 29, 2004
Afghanistan: Emergency National Solidarity Project	95.0	Closed	DEC 23, 2003
Health Sector Emergency Reconstruction and Development Project	59.6	Closed	JUN 05, 2003
Emergency Education Rehabilitation & Development Project	15.0	Closed	JUN 06, 2002

204 Culled from The World Bank, "Projects and Operations, Projects, Afghanistan," http://www.worldbank.org/projects/search?lang=en&searchTerm=&countryshortname_exact=Afghanistan (accessed 10 June 2013).

Appendix 5: Declarations of International Conferences on Afghanistan, 2001-12, with women-specific points[205]

Place	*Date*	*Declaration*	*Source*	*Description*
Dushanbe	2000	Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women	*Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women*. June 28, 2000. Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.bdr.freeservers.com/custom.html	This Declaration is an informal intervention drafted by Afghan women leaders, validated at the international conference organised by NEGAR at Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and presented to the President of the Interim Government of Afghanistan. It is seen as a document that aimed, through its provisions, to legitimise the writ of the State within its borders while simultaneously declaring its right to self-determination as a sovereign nation within the family of other sovereign nations. It describes the rights of women in Afghanistan to equal treatment and opportunities for social, political and economic empowerment. In particular, Section III, item 6, calls for the right to just and favourable conditions of work. Personal law is not within its scope.
Brussels	2001	Brussels' Proclamation – Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy	Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy. *The Brussels Proclamation*. December 4-5, 2001. Accessed March 12, 2013.	This document is a statement from a conference of 50 female Afghan leaders, organised to provide input on the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Its four main areas of recommendations are: Education, Media and Culture; Health; Human Rights; Refugees and Internally Displaced Women. It calls for the inclusion of principles of non-discrimination as central to new legal system, and equal rights for women, including equal pay. N.B.: Source in the following, unless otherwise noted: Civil-Military Fusion Centre. *Afghanistan Agreements: A Collection of Official Texts from 2001 to 2011*. Accessed March 12, 2013. https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Governance/CFC_Afghanistan_Agreements_June2012.pdf.

205 In these conferences (with the exception of the first two), women's equal participation has been absent.

Place	*Date*	*Declaration*	*Source*	*Description*
Bonn	2001	The International Conference on Afghanistan: *Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions ("The Bonn Agreement")*		Sections III, IV, and V include statements concerning the importance of the participation of women representatives in the Interim Administration (III) and the Emergency Loya Jirga (IV); Section V states the Interim Authority and Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga will ensure women's participation.
Tokyo	2002	International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan: *Co-Chairs' Summary of Conclusions*		Sections 8 and 13 emphasise the importance of training and education for women as the country rebuilds. Section 12 emphasises the "centrality of restoring the rights and addressing the needs of women," and that "women's rights and gender issues should be fully reflected in the reconstruction process."
Berlin	2004	International Afghanistan Conference: *The Berlin Declaration*		Section 10 under "Agree" affirms that all efforts at reconstruction should "promote the participation of women according to their rights under the Constitution." No other mention of women.

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
London	2006	The London Conference on Afghanistan: *The Afghanistan Compact*		Principles of Cooperation affirm that all policies and programs should recognise that "men and women have equal rights and responsibilities." Certain benchmarks and timelines from Annex I directly address the empowerment of women: Under Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights: Gender: By end-2010, the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan will be fully implemented; female participation in all Afghan governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service, will be strengthened. Under Economic and Social Development: Education: Primary and Secondary Education: By end-2010, net enrolment in primary school for girls will be at least 60 percent; female teachers will be increased by 50 percent; enrolment of students to universities will be 100,000 with at least 35 percent female students; and 150,000 men and women will be trained in marketable skills. (p. 9) Social Protection: Vulnerable Women: By end-2010, the number of female-headed households that are chronically poor will be reduced by 20 percent, and their employment rates will be increased by 20 percent.
Rome	2007	The Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan: *Joint Recommendations*	*Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan (July 2-3, 2007): Joint Recommendations*. Accessed March 12, 2013 http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/Romejointrecommandations.pdf	Women's access to justice and alternatives to detention for women in conflict with justice are mentioned as key issues. Gender mainstreaming is identified as a cross-cutting issue in rule of law.
Paris	2008	Paris International Conference on Afghanistan: *Declaration of the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan*		The only mention of women is the donors' commitment to support the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women. No specific recommendations.

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
Moscow	2009	Shanghai Cooperation Organization: *Declaration of the Special Conference on Afghanistan*	*Declaration of the Special Conference on Afghanistan Convened under the Auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.* (Moscow, March 27, 2009.) Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.un.int/russia/new/MainRoot/docs/off_news/270309/newen2.htm	Although this conference addressed the economic progress of Afghanistan and the help by the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, there was no mention of women.
Hague	2009	International Conference on Afghanistan: *Hague Conference Declaration*	*Afghanistan Conference: Final Declaration.* March 31, 2009. Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.iwaweb.org/Docs/resource_centre/CBM/2009%20The%20Hague%20Conference%20Declaration.pdf	Calls on Afghanistan to expand efforts to ensure that women are more fully integrated into assistance programmes in recognition of the need to mobilise its entire population in the development of the country.
London	2010	The London Conference: *London Conference Communiqué*		Section 26 records the approval by the international community of the government's commitment to implement the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan and the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law, as well as the overall commitment to strengthen the participation of women in all Afghan governance institutions, including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service.

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
Kabul	2010	The Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan: Kabul Conference Communiqué		Section 10 under Gender and Children's Rights reiterated the centrality of women's rights, including political, economic and social equality, to the future of Afghanistan; commended the mainstreaming of gender into all priority programmes; and reiterated donors' commitment to assist all ministries and government bodies (national and sub-national) in implementing the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan. Called on the Government of Afghanistan to identify and prioritise NAPWA benchmarks for implementation within each cluster; and develop a strategy to implement the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law in the following six months. Sections 13 and 14 under Peace, Reconciliation and Reintegration called for the inclusion of women's rights in negotiations for peace and for local Peace Jirga meetings that include women.
Bonn	2011	The International Afghanistan Conference: Bonn Conference Communiqué		Sections 6 and 7 note the guarantee of equality of men and women under the Constitution, and reaffirms the rights of women as key for Afghanistan's future. Section 18, addressing the peace process, calls for reconciliation to "respect the Afghan Constitution, including its human rights provisions and the rights of women" (p.4).

Place	Date	Declaration	Source	Description
Tokyo	2012	International Conference on Afghanistan: The Tokyo Declaration	The Tokyo Declaration: Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan: From Transition to Transformation. July 8, 2012. Accessed March 12, 2013. http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/afghanistan/tokyo_conference_2012/tokyo_declaration_en1.html	Under Security and Peace Process, Section 9 emphasises respect for the rights of women during the peace and reconciliation process, and stresses the importance of the participation of civil society organizations and women's groups in support of the peace process and the culture of peace and human rights in Afghan society. Under Private Sector and Civil Society, Section 20 calls for emphasis on the importance of job creation and initiatives targeting youth and women employment. Section 22 reaffirms the importance of women's participation in private sector conferences as reinforcing the need for inclusive development and recognition of women's rights. Under the Accountability Framework annex, Section 10 (Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights) affirms that, "strengthened governance and institutions with a particular focus on the rights of women are prerequisites for strong and sustainable economic growth, employment generation and prosperity for the Afghan people." Goals addressing women include improved access to justice for all, in particular women and children, by ensuring that the Constitution and other fundamental laws are enforced expeditiously, fairly and transparently and ensure that women can fully enjoy their economic, social, civil, political and cultural rights. Indicators include to ensure respect for human rights for all citizens, in particular for women and children, and allow the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations to perform their appropriate functions; and to demonstrate implementation, with civil society engagement, of both the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law and the National Action Plan for Women on an annual basis.

Appendix 6: Multilateral Treaties and Resolutions, United Nations

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	*Date*	*Source*	*Description*
International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age	Deposit: 12 November 1947; Entry into Force: 24 April 1950	http://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/UNTS/Volume%2053/v53.pdf http://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/UNTS/Volume%2053/v53.pdf	Convention on agreement to punish those involved in trafficking in women. Signed 12 Nov 1947, without comment or reservation. Concluded at Geneva on 11 October 1933, as amended by the Protocol signed at Lake Success, New York, on 12 November 1947.
International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children	Deposit: 12 November 1947; Entry into Force: 24 April 1950	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=VII-2&chapter=7&lang =en	Concluded at Geneva on 30 September 1921, as amended by the Protocol signed at Lake Success, New York, on 12 November 1947. Convention on agreement to punish those involved in the trafficking of women or "girls of full age." Signed 12 Nov 1947, without comment or reservation.
Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War	Deposit: 12 August 1949; Entry into Force: 21 October 1950	http://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280158b1a	Agreement on protection of non-combatants, prisoners of war, and hors combat during war, armed conflict and occupation. Signed 12 Aug 1949
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	Deposit: 21 March 1950; Entry into Force: 25 July 1951	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=VII-11-a&chapter=7&lang=en	Agreement to punish those exercising traffic in persons and prostitution. Accession 21 May 1985, without comment or reservation.
Convention on the Political Rights of Women	Deposit: 31 March 1953; Entry into Force: 7 July 1954	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVI-1&chapter=16&lang=en	States the right of women to participate in political life on an equal basis as men, including voting, and running for and holding public office. Accession 16 Nov 1966 without comment or reservation.
Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages	Deposit: 10 December 1962; Entry into Force: 9 December 1964	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVI-3&chapter=16& lang=en	States that free and full consent of both parties is required to enter into marriage. Calls on States Parties to enact legislation to specify a minimum age for legal marriage. No participation by Afghanistan.

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	*Date*	*Source*	*Description*
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Deposit: 7 March 1966; Entry into Force: 4 January 1969	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-2&chapter=4& lang=en	Agreement to condemn and eliminate racial discrimination; particularly condemn racial segregation and apartheid; guarantee rights of everyone before the law, political and civil rights. Accession 6 Jul 1983, with reservation (referral to International Court of Justice by one party only) and declaration (arts 17 & 18 - ratification) have discriminatory nature against some states.
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC)	Deposit: 16 December 1966; Entry into Force: 3 January 1976	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4& lang=en	Agreement on rights of economic, social and cultural matters. States Parties guarantee non-discrimination based on sex. Article 3: ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoyment of economic rights. Article 6: right to freely choose and accept work. Article 7: women guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those of men. Article 10, item 2: special protection should be accorded to mothers for a reasonable period before and after childbirth, including paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits. Accession 24 Jan 1983, with declaration (para. 1, 3 of art. 26 contradicts international character in that some countries cannot join.)

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	*Date*	*Source*	*Description*
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCP)	Deposit: 16 December 1966; Entry into Force: 23 March 1976	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-4&chapter=4& lang=en	Specifies the rights of all humans to life, prohibition of slavery, right to equality before the law, freedom from interference in private life, freedom of thought, expression and assembly, freedom of marriage, protection of minors, and freedom from discrimination. Article 3: equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights. Article 23, item 4: ensure equality of rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage, during marriage, and its dissolution. Accession 24 Jan 1983, with declaration (para. 1, 3 of art. 48 contradicts international character in that some countries cannot join.)
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I)	Deposit: 6 August 1977; Entry into Force: 12 July 1978	http://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002800f3586	Reaffirms provisions of original Geneva Conventions concerning international armed conflicts; adds specific articles (76, 77) protecting women and children against assault while in detention. No participation by Afghanistan.
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts (Protocol II)	Deposit: 6 August 1977; Entry into Force: 7 December 1977	http://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002800f3cb8	Reaffirms provisions of original Geneva Conventions concerning non-international (internal) armed conflicts and the protection and humane treatment of civilians, particularly those detained. No participation by Afghanistan.

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	*Date*	*Source*	*Description*
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Deposit: 18 December 1979; Entry into Force: 3 September 1981	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4& lang=en	Calls for States Parties to pursue a policy of eliminating discrimination against women in all aspects of life. Article 11: ensure equal rights to women in employment, including choice of career, remuneration, job security and social benefits, and safeguarding against discrimination based on maternity. Article 13: rights of women to access financial credit. Signed 14 Aug 1980; Ratified 5 Mar 2003 without comment or reservation.
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	Deposit: 10 December 1984; Entry into Force: 26 June 1987	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-9&chapter=4& lang=en	Agreement to prevent torture within borders and not transport people to states where torture may occur. Signed 4 Feb 1985; Ratified 1 Apr 1987, with declaration: does not recognise authority of committee (Art. 20) and disputes sent to ICOJ with consent of all parties, not just one.
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Deposit: 20 November 1989; Entry into Force: 2 September 1990	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4& lang=en	Human rights of children. Article 18, item 1: recognition of the joint responsibility of both parents concerning the upbringing of a child. Article 18, item 3: children of working parents to be ensured of the right to benefit from all child-care services for which they are eligible. Signed 27 Sep 1990; Ratified 28 Mar 1994, with declaration: reserves right to express reservations on all provisions incompatible with Shari'a law.

Treaty/Convention/ Protocol	*Date*	*Source*	*Description*
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	Deposit: 25 May 2000; Entry into Force: 12 February 2002	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11-b&chapter =4&lang=en	Agreement to ensure children under age 18 are not conscripted to armed forces, or if volunteer, do not directly participate in hostilities. Accession 24 Sep 2003, with declaration: minimum age for recruitment to active military service "limited by the age of 22 to 28"; recruitment is voluntary.
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	Deposit: 18 December 1990; Entry into Force 1 July 2003	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-13&chapter=4&lang =en	The civil and political rights of migrant workers and their families, including right to liberty, freedom from slavery, equality before the law, and equality with nationals of the State of employment in terms of remuneration and other conditions of work and terms of employment. No participation by Afghanistan.
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	Deposit 17 July 1998; Entry into Force: 1 July 2002	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-10&chapter =18&lang=en	Establishes the International Criminal Court, defines war crimes, and defines court procedures. War crimes include violence against women during war, such as rape, forcible pregnancy, and abuse. Accession 10 Feb 2003 without comment or reservation.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Deposit: 13 December 2006; Entry into Force: 3 May 2008	http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4& lang=en	Civil rights of disabled persons. Calls on States Parties to eliminate all forms of discrimination against disabled persons. Article 6: appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women with disabilities. Article 27: rights of disabled persons to equal and non-discriminatory employment. Accession 18 Sep 2012, without comment or reservation.

Appendix 7: United Nations Security Council Resolutions

Resolution	*Date*	*Source*	*Description*
UNSCR 1325 "Women and Peace and Security"	31 October 2000	http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf.	Role of women in security, conflict and peace building. Calls upon UN Member States to: Ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels concerning conflict resolution and peace processes Incorporate gender-sensitive training guidelines and materials into training programs for national military and civil police Adopt gender perspective when negotiating and implementing peace agreements Respect rights and protection of women and girls during armed conflict Exclude sexual violence from amnesty provisions
UNSCR 1888 "Acts of Sexual Violence Against Civilians in Armed Conflict"	19 June 2008	http://www.refworld.org/docid/485bbca72.html	Sexual violence against civilian women during armed conflict. Calls upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to: Cease acts of sexual violence against women and girl children Take appropriate measures to protect civilians from sexual violence Exclude sexual violence from amnesty provisions
UNSCR 1889 "Women and Peace and Security"	30 September 2009	http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ac9aa152.html	Sexual violence against civilian women during armed conflict. Calls upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to: Undertake legal and judicial reforms to ensure access to justice Investigate and bring to justice alleged perpetrators Increase access to health care, legal assistance and psychosocial support for victims Encourage leaders to play active role in sensitising communities
UNSCR 1325 "Women and Peace and Security"	5 October 2009	http://www.refworld.org/docid/4acdd8512.html	Sexual violence against civilian women during armed conflict. Calls upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to: Further improve women's participation in all stages of peace processes Ensure gender mainstreaming in all post-conflict peace-building and recovery processes Ensure women's empowerment and involvement are taken into account during post-conflict recovery processes Ensure equal access to education
Status: There is, currently, no National Action Plan in Afghanistan that addresses the above-mentioned Security Council Resolutions. While the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (2009) was brought into effect through a Presidential decree, it has not been passed by Parliament. The National Consultative Peace Jirga (June, 2010) had 21 percent women representatives with nine women (out of 70 seats) on High Peace Council overseeing Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Program. The National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and Stability Law (2009) gives amnesty to all currently in government for conflict crimes, including for crimes against women and for sexual crimes			

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Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
Hs. 144, 3rd street on the left from Charahi Haji Yacoub toward Charahi Shaheed first block on the right
Shahr-i-Naw, Kabul, Afghanistan

phone: +93 (0) 799 608 548 email: areu@areu.org.af website: www.areu.org.af

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First block on the right Shahr-i-Naw,
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