



Final Evaluation Report

Resilient Livelihood Project

June 2018

Conducted by:
Humayoon Iqbal &
Soumitra Ghosh

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GLOSSARY

AACRS	Australia Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme
CDC	Community Development Council
CIG	Common Interest Group
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture Irrigation and Livelihood
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DMO	Data Management Officer
DoEc	Directorate of Economy
DoLSAMD	Directorate of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables
DOWA	Directorate of Women Affairs
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EoP	End of the Project
FFS	Farm Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MoEc	Ministry of Economy
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
PwD	People with a disability
RLP	Resilient Livelihood Project
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is an end-term evaluation report for the Resilient Livelihood Project (RLP) implemented by CARE in Khulm and Charkint districts of Balkh Province in Afghanistan. RLP is implemented under the Australia Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme (AACRS), a tripartite agreement between Australian Government, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and five specialist organizations including CARE. The project was implemented during 2015 to 2018.

The project aimed at improving the lives of asset poor and vulnerable households across the two disadvantaged districts of Charkint and Khulm in Balkh Province. The project aimed to reach 1450 households and involve 30 villages across the two selected districts.

The project intended to strengthen community resilience among vulnerable households by achieving three End of Project Outcomes: 1) poor wheat farming households have improved food security, income and resilience; 2) landless and labour-constrained households are more resilient to food insecurity and have greater access to social and economic opportunities; and, 3) vulnerable groups are able to influence decision making. Within the communities of Charkint and Khulm, the project will specifically target vulnerable households including women-headed households, people with disability, landless and land-constrained, households in remote areas, and disaster prone and affected households.

The purpose of the final evaluation is to evaluate the impact of RLP to enhance the resilience of households in rural communities of Afghanistan since the project began in January 2015. A secondary purpose is to generate lessons learned, and inform future programming. The evaluation also provides an opportunity to follow-up on recommendations provided in the mid-term review (January 2017) to ensure continuous project improvement and accountability. The evaluation will provide findings, recommendation and conclusions which can be used for future programming under a potential extension phase. The study was conducted external evaluators. Primary data was collected through survey, KIIs and FGDs with different stakeholders of the project.

Key Findings

Highly Relevant Project in the context of Balkh Province of Afghanistan and AACRS

In the backdrop of declining purchasing power, disruption of livelihood options and poor rain fed staple performance, most appropriately, the projects' outcomes intend to improve food security and resilience. The project attempts to ensure availability of wheat which is the staple food in Afghanistan, diversify agricultural activities through dairy farming and non-farm based income generating activities to ensure food availability and increase diversified source of livelihood. The project also envisaged to complement dietary intakes with vegetables produced through the kitchen gardens. In a fragile economy where the formal financial institutions are almost non-existent, the VSLAs offer the most effective solution for financial access.

The third EoP Outcome of the project empowers vulnerable groups, particularly the women to participate in the collective decision making processes. In a society with predominant biased gender norms, these changes are transformative and would have wide and long lasting impacts to build inclusive growth based resilience.

The project has achieved significant impact at the Intermediate Outcome levels in terms of enhanced productivity and income, diversified farming and dietary intake, empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups and equitable decision making process. However, the higher level changes in terms of food security and resilience would require more sustained efforts to see these changes emerge.

The study also confirms that the project objectives were aligned with and are contributing to the four pillars of AARCS's theory of change: 1. Diversified Livelihood 2. Access to Market 3. Natural Resource Management and 4. Production.

- Though the Project has achieved significant success at the Intermediate Outcome levels, the study does not suggest any significant change at the general coping behaviour as demonstrated in the previous six months across all the segments of the target groups (for both EoP outcomes 1 & 2).
- The study finds remarkably improved coping behaviours related to food distresses as demonstrated in the preceding seven days of the study. However, we would need to revalidate the data to eliminate the risk of error as the study was conducted just after the Ramadan month.
- The Project has been impactful in terms of creating diversified livelihood opportunities through livestock, kitchen gardening and creating access to microcredit.
- Food Security and Resilience are much higher level impacts and should not be expected at the level of income and wheat productivity (as it is assumed in EoP Outcome-1). Further, EoP Outcome 1 alone can't create the conditions for food security and resilience. In fact, The composite effect of all three EoP Outcomes if targeted for the same cohort might lead to food security and resilience. In the project design, the second Outcome targets a completely different set of beneficiaries. The project can have different strategies targeted to different groups but these stand-alone Outcomes might not meet the ambitious goal of the project.
- The project has shown outstanding impact to enhance quality participation of the vulnerable groups including women in the community groups. The participants demonstrated better participation and influenced the decision making process more effectively. The traditional power holders are sensitized and the Community Groups are more responsive and accountable.

In the backdrop of recurring droughts, a volatile political situation and a highly patriarchal society, the project has been significantly effective in initiating transformative changes.

- As discussed in the impact section, in respect to the EoP-1, the project has been effective at the Intermediate Outcome level and requires more sustained, strategic and comprehensive approaches to achieve the EoP Outcome and eventually the project goal.
- The project has been significantly effective in terms of EoP 2 and 3. However, contrastingly, women's participation in household level livelihood affairs has dropped by 25.3%.
- The strategies have been effective to initiate a transformation in the power dynamics in the community. The vulnerable people in the community have better access and influence to the community groups and decision making process.

- The VSLAs have been instrumental to create capacity and livelihood opportunities for the women to contribute to their family income. Access to finance and livelihood opportunities for women would be effective to create much larger impact on gender equity.

The overall M&E system is responsive to the requirements of the donor and assisted the internal decision making to a great extent.

- High staff turn-over has been a challenge for CARE Afghanistan as an organization and the Data Management Officer (DMO) was the only dedicated M&E staff based in Kabul office. Therefore, field activities were not monitored by an independent or semi-independent M&E staff of the project in order to verify the activities.
- Annual performance appraisals are meant to evaluate employees' performance against the pre-determined activities which result to recognition subject to the quality of the performance. The Admin/Data Entry Officers' annual performance appraisal did not include a M&E component. On the other hand the DMO reported to the project manager but her annual performance appraisal is done by the Program Coordinator who oversees several projects including RLP.

Scalable Strategies

The study validated that the strategies of VSLA, Agricultural Extension (including FFS and Demo Fields) Improved Seed Supply Chain, Kitchen Gardening and Inclusive Community Structures and Processes as replicable and scalable models for larger impact.

Sustainable Changes

- The project has been successful to create sustainable impact on the agricultural practices, income generation skills and dietary practices.
- The impacts in gender equation and community power dynamics have the potential for long lasting and wider transformations.
- The strategic focus on capacity building, attitudinal and behavioral change has ensured that the impacts would sustain and further prosper even beyond the project period.

Effective Adaptation and Course Correction

The project has conducted a mid-term review and has addressed all the findings and recommendations to re-strengthen the project strategies.

Active coordination with Government Ministries and Directorates

CARE has established active functional linkages with the different Ministries and respective Directorates at the national, provincial and district levels. The established collaborations would be instrumental in a successful handover and phase out.

Key Recommendations

- The Project Design should be revisited and consider putting Resilience and Food Security at the Project Goal level.
- The project should adopt a more holistic approach toward food security. It should incorporate more focus to address the issues like access to food (including intra household equitable access), absorption and maintenance. This will need a targeted and logical approach toward specific attitudinal and behavioural changes.

- CARE should integrate a Community based DRR approach with the project to capacitate the community in dealing with the stressors and shocks related to natural hazards.
- The VSLA participants would need more hand holding support, reinforcements and skill upgradation to manage and sustain the VSLAs independently.
- CARE should consider initiating non-farm based vocational trainings for women, disabled and other vulnerable section in the community.
- CARE should consider improving productivity of the local horticultural activities and also to introduce other low water consuming crops like Barley to supplement supply deficit of wheat. This will help in further diversifying the farm economy and create a risk buffer.
- As recommended by the community members, CARE should reconsider the strategy to promote poultry farming.
- It seems the extension workers need further capacity building to support the farmers more effectively.
- The project logical framework should be revisited based on causal analysis. A multifaceted and comprehensive approach targeting the same cohort might be more effective to create the resilience and food security level impacts.
- CARE needs to develop the capacity of the project staff in disability issues and incorporate focused strategies to engage the PwDs in resilience building process.
- It is recommended that field activities should be monitored by dedicated M&E staff who are independent in his/her activities to some extent. The field monitors will provide the management with first-hand information against the unilateral reports of the activities. Thus the outputs are verified and will add to the transparency and accountability.
- CARE should take the learnings from VSLA, Kitchen Garden, Agricultural Extension (including FFS and Demo Field) and Inclusive Community Structure and Process Building Strategies for further replication.
- AACRS and CARE should consider extending the project in a more comprehensive manner to consolidate the changes toward the project goal. The project has successfully set the process toward an ambitious goal which requires adaptation and sustained effort to build resilience.

INTRODUCTION

CARE has been implementing the Resilient Livelihoods Project under Australia Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme (AACRS) since January 2015. The project is aimed at improving the lives of asset poor and vulnerable households across the two disadvantaged districts of Charkint and Khulm in Balkh Province. The project planned to reach 1450 households and involve 30 villages across the two selected districts. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to promote sustainable livelihoods for, and strengthened resilience of, vulnerable rural communities in Charkint and Khulm Districts of Balkh Province.

The project intended to strengthen community resilience among vulnerable households by achieving three End of Project Outcomes: 1) poor wheat farming households have improved food security, income and resilience; 2) landless and labor-constrained households are more resilient to food insecurity and have greater access to social and economic opportunities; and, 3) vulnerable groups are able to

influence decision making. Within the communities of Charkint and Khulm, the project specifically targeted vulnerable households including women-headed households, people with disability, landless and and-constrained, households in remote areas, and disaster prone and affected households.

An End-term Evaluation Study was conducted in June 2018 to assess the project's relevance, impact, effectiveness, sustainability and also to derive the recommendations for future.

This document is the Report of the End-term Evaluation of 'Resilient Livelihood Project'.

Figure 1 Project Area in Map

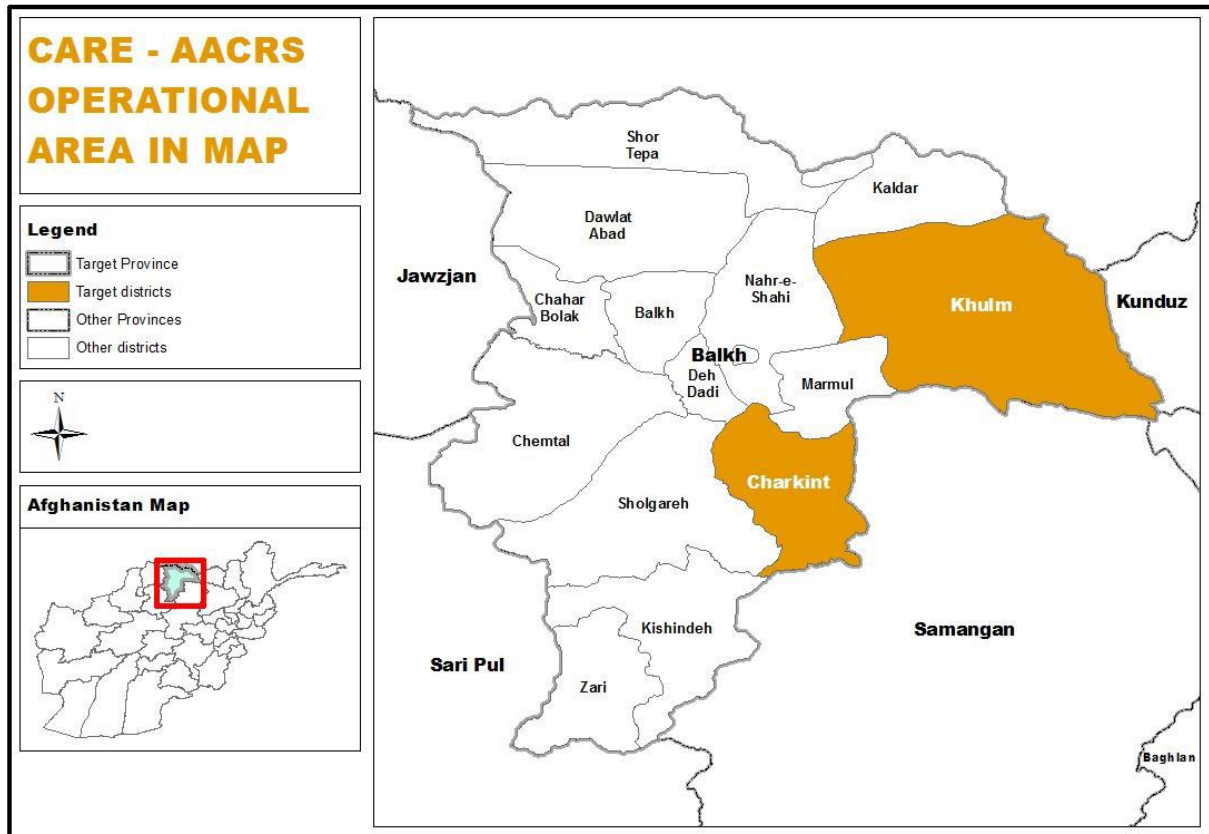
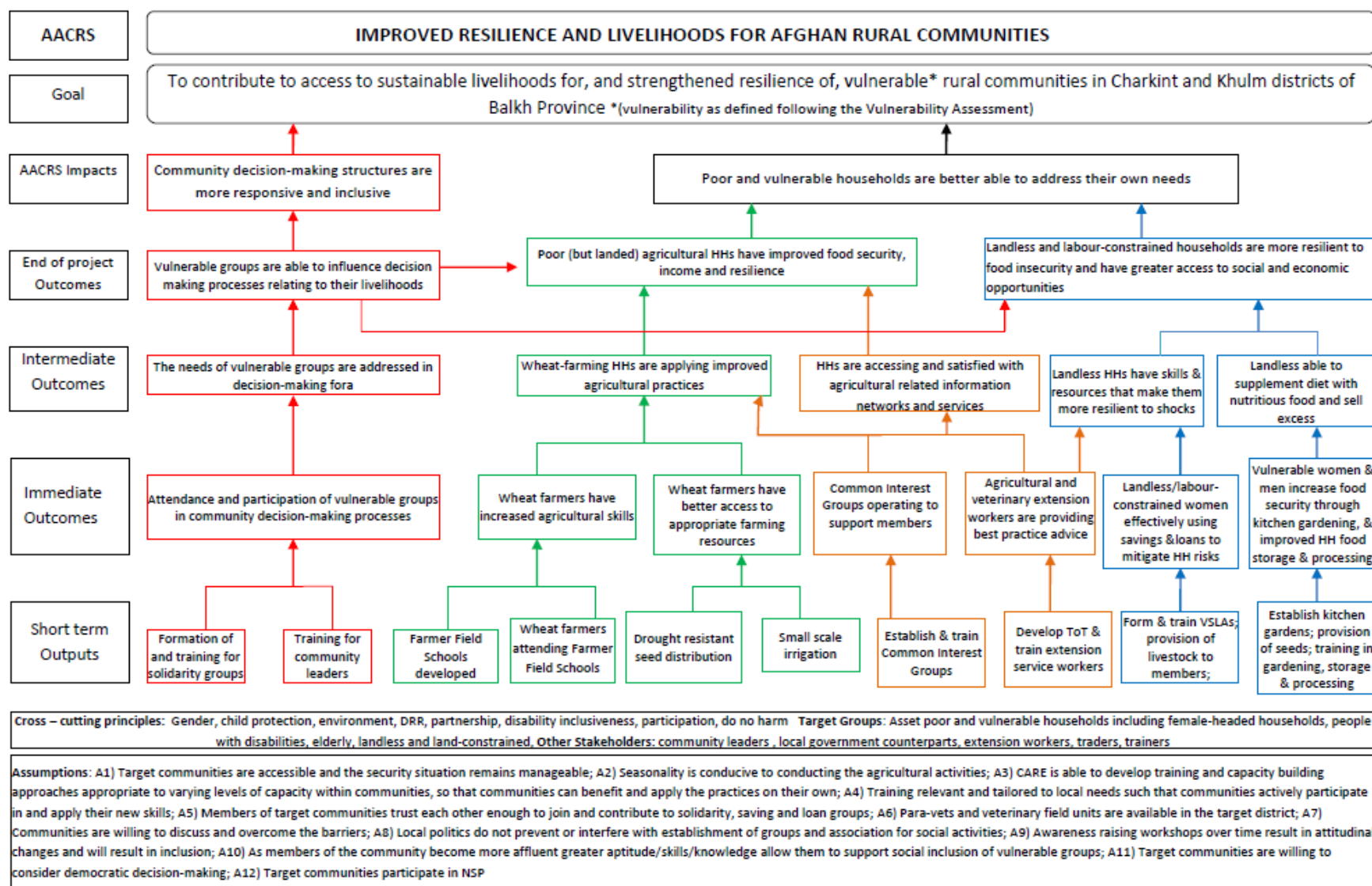


Figure 2 Logical Framework of the Project



METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of final evaluation is to evaluate the impact of RLP to enhance resilience of households in rural communities of Afghanistan since the project began in January 2015. A secondary purpose is to generate lessons learned, and inform future programming. The evaluation also provides an opportunity to follow-up on recommendations provided in the mid-term review (January 2017) to ensure continuous project improvement and accountability. The evaluation will provide findings, recommendations and conclusions which can be used for future programming under a potential extension phase. The findings of the evaluation will be shared with CARE Australia and Afghanistan staff, CARE's stakeholders, DFAT and AACRS partners and Scheme Coordinator to demonstrate results; share knowledge and learning and inform development of future programming.

Evaluation Scope and Key Evaluation Questions

Objective A:

- To what extent have the three objectives of the project been achieved, as compared with the results of the 2015 baseline survey? Consider differences in social and cultural contexts and gender relations across project locations and communities in Khulm and Charkint districts. The three objectives are:
 - improving food security of vulnerable farmers;
 - improving social and economic status of women; and
 - What combination of strategies or factors have led to the most changes in women's status and expanded roles and decision-making in households, groups and communities?
 - enhancing the role of vulnerable groups in decision making.
- Evaluate the monitoring system regarding its appropriateness for gaining meaningful and useful quantitative and qualitative evidences about the outputs, outcomes and impacts (expected and unexpected) of the project.
- To what extent does the data provide information on participation and diverse perspectives and experiences of individuals (women and men), households and groups involved in the various project activities?
- How has project monitoring data been used to make improvements over the life of the project?
- How has the project monitored unintended consequences, such as backlash or gender based violence in households?
- Evaluate project design and implementation strategies regarding involvement of vulnerable groups (including men and women with a disability, internally displaced people and returnees, women headed households and poorest people and households) in decision making process related to their household livelihoods, groups and community matters?

Objective B:

- To what extent have the recommendations of the mid-term review been integrated into the project?
- How have adjustments improved program quality?

Objective C:

- Which component(s) and approaches of the project would offer the best opportunity for replication, up-scaling and/or adjustment?
- What risks (if any) are there of 'saturation' (in terms of not being able to involve new people and households who are poor and marginalised) if the project continued in its current form, with the same communities?
- What is the level of sustainability in the current interventions; how will the project ensure the sustainability of benefits after the end of the project?
- Which women, men and households have benefited the most? Why?
- What results/ impact can be continued by project participants and other stakeholders after completion of project?

Objective D:

- What were the key strengths and challenges of Common Interest Groups and VSLAs in promoting gender equality and women's voice?
- How did these groups contribute to behaviour change of direct beneficiaries and/or broader attitudinal changes in the community?
- Assess the extent to which women have benefitted directly from project resources and opportunities?
- To what extent have women have been involved in designing project activities, participating in project management and advisory roles (both within CARE and through community structures and key partnerships)?
- To what the extent has outcomes been reported equally among men and women?
- What combination of strategies or factors have led to the most changes in women's status and expanded roles and decision-making in households, groups and communities?
- Which project activities/interventions have contributed (singly or in combination) to increasing women's participation in decision making process at the community and household levels?
- Which strategies/approaches appear to be promising/producing some changes in practices by men (considering husbands and other men in families, elders and community leaders, government duty bearers and service providers/extension staff)?

- Have there been any unexpected/unplanned changes (positive or negative) experienced by women and/or girls?

Design of the evaluation methodology

Given the nature of the undertaking, the evaluation was informed by DAC criteria which sought to understand the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project in the light of baseline assessment and the midterm review. The consultants determined a strategy to ensure consistency in terms of methodology. To do so, the evaluation was conducted using mixed methodology. In order to ensure comparability, the sample size from the baseline was interviewed and individuals were selected based on their level of involvement in the project to conduct focus group discussions and key informant. The findings of the evaluation helped us understand what worked and what didn't, which components of the project to be scaled up/changed/repeated/dropped and ultimately led to some recommendations which would guide the next phase of the project.

Data collection methods

In consultation with the CARE team, the consultants decided to collect primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through the Household Survey, Key Informant Interviews and Focused Group Discussions. The secondary data were collected using a literature review.

Desk review

The consultants sought to fully understand the objectives and history of the intervention, and became acquainted with the specificities of the project. The desk review compiled based on existing M&E documentation, project documents, baseline and midterm reports. The consultants reviewed the AACRS partnership agreement, AACRS design, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework, CARE AACRS Narrative, Final Report AACRS Mid-term review report – Coffey, Resilient Livelihoods Project Mid-term review report, RLP Baseline Survey Report, RLP Interim Report, AACRS Vulnerability Assessment, Annual Reports, Semi-annual report, CARE's unifying framework, MAIL's Food Security and Nutrition Strategy 2015-2019, MAIL's Agricultural Priorities and National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Program 2016 – 2021. The findings of the review informed adaptation of tools and refinement of the evaluation tools including interview and discussion guides for the study.

Household Survey

In order to ensure the consistency, the consultants used the sampling and the sample size of the baseline survey. The sample was drawn from project beneficiaries using multi-stage random stratification process. First, the sample ($n=218$ HH / Confidence Interval=6.1 / Confidence Level=95%) was distributed proportionally across the three types of project beneficiaries (Farmers, Kitchen garden keepers and VSLA members). Then, the sample was distributed by district to find out how many people within each district should be survived. Next, the sample was further distributed across the targeted

clusters in each district. Finally, households were randomly selected from each cluster to be surveyed. Below table shows the profile of Household Survey's Participants.

Table 1 Type of Beneficiaries

Participants' Profile	District		Type of Beneficiary			Sex	
	Khulm	Charkint	Farmer	Kitchen Gardening	VSLA	Male	Female
Baseline	130	90	126	29	65	135	85
Endline	130	89	128	29	62	130	89

It is worth noting that 18 respondents were replaced by either another adult member of the household or beneficiary of similar characteristics. Following are the reasons for replacement:

- The household moved to another location than the target area.
- The respondent was not reachable.
- Absence of the respondent and another family member was interviewed.

Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Consultants organized the FGDs in each district targeted in the project. All participants in the FGDs were identified by the consultants in collaboration with CARE.

Six to 12 participants were selected in total in each focus group discussion. In order to respect local cultural norms and extract more in-depth information from respondents, consultant organized separate FGDs with male and female participants. In addition consultants ensured that the group homogeneity is maintained in order to avoid loss of information due to introduction of hierarchy, class and social status in groups. The qualitative team conducted 31 FGDs of which 18 were conducted with male and 13 with female beneficiaries.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Key informants were identified by the consultants in collaboration with CARE. They were selected based on their subject-matter expertise, insights or and contribution to understanding the project effects in terms of success and failures. They included representatives from Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, District Governors of Khulm and Charkint, Senior Provincial Manager (CARE), Field Supervisor-Charkint (CARE), Assistant Country Director-Program (CARE), Program Coordinator (CARE), Project Manager (CARE) and Scheme Coordinator

M&E system assessment

The consultants adopted an M&E Participatory Self-Assessment Tool developed by MSH to assess the M&E system utilized by RLP project. To do so, consultants reviewed background documents related to M&E such as the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, data sets and data collection tools and interviewed the project staff involved in M&E like Field Supervisor, Data Management Officer and Project Manager.

Data Collection

Recruitment of field staff

Consultants were supported by the enumerators and researchers hired by CARE for both districts.

Training of Project Staff

Training took place directly before the beginning of data collection. The training took place in Mazar e sharif and the consultant travelled there to train the enumerators and researchers in two batches.

Batch one (Enumerators):

- 5 teams of enumerators (3 male and 2 female) were trained for one day on evaluation objectives, ethics of research, interview skills and the logistics of data collection. The enumerators conducted multiple mock interviews critiqued by their peers and the guided by the consultant.

Batch two (Researchers):

- During the first day, field staffs were trained on the project objectives, general evaluation methods, work ethics and procedures to ensure quality of data throughout the data collection. Trust building protocols, and the qualitative tools. Trust-building techniques and privacy policies were also be discussed.
- On the final day, all groups were tasked with practicing the tools. A dedicated session afterwards troubleshoot any remaining questions. They also received instruction in the transportation of data and a reminder of ethical protocols and confidentiality requirements.

Data Management Plan

Data Entry

Two data entry operators, who were instructed about the data entry, entered the household survey data in a pre-designed Excel database. In order to save time, the data entry operators used the pre-assigned codes.

Data transcription

The consultants transcribed manually the field notes and the tape recorded interviews from KIIs and FGDs from local language to English.

Verification

In order to make sure that the data has the required accuracy and consistency, the consultants selected 10% of the survey forms randomly and cross matched them with the data in the database. The result of the verification came out with 100% accuracy and consistency.

Analysis (Qualitative)

Subsequent to the transcription exercise, the consultants reviewed the field notes and transcribed interviews to generate codebook. They used an overlapping, yet objective process to identify themes and subthemes from transcribed field notes. In the first step of the thematic analysis process, the team reviewed textual data “line-by-line to identify major themes and sub themes. It is worth noting that the process of identifying themes began during transcription of interviews. Grouping of sub themes took place by reviewing their meaning in relation to the major themes. The purpose was to start grouping themes in a hierarchical tree structure. Sub themes placed under each major theme in a way that provided interpretation of the major theme. This was necessary to ensure we had captured the full meaning of the major themes.

After major and sub themes were identified, we provided interpretation of the themes by including information from field notes to explain each theme in a more elaborated manner. To supplement and support study findings, the research used direct “quotes” provided by study participants (key informants and/or FGD participants) for some of the sub themes.

Analysis (Quantitative)

The consultants used SPSS statistical package to analyse the quantitative data. The data was imported from the spreadsheets into SPSS. The data analysis included the following steps:

1. Descriptive Analysis: The univariate descriptive analysis was done for two purposes. One, to check for any outliers or any invalid values in the dataset. The second purpose of the analysis was to get the proportions for the main indicators. The outcome of this analysis was presented in the form of simple tables, frequency tables and graphs.
2. Inferential Analysis: The consultants had initially planned to conduct statistical significance tests including paired t-test to see whether or not the difference is due to the intervention. The test was not applied since the data could not meet the requirements.

Report Writing

The findings of the study were presented in the form of technical report outlining key findings of the research study in target districts and recommendations for priority interventions. The report was prepared following guidelines presented in the RFP document by the CARE team. The report was shared with CARE team for their review and approval. The consultants incorporated comments from CARE team

in the document and resubmitted for their review and approval. After the document was approved, consultants submitted the final version of report along with all raw data to CARE team for their record.

FINDINGS

Relevance

Contextual Relevance of the Project

Afghanistan is highly prone to intense and recurring natural hazards, including earthquakes, floods, flash floods, landslides, avalanches and droughts. Within low-income countries Afghanistan takes second-place only surpassed by Haiti, in terms of the number of fatalities from natural disasters between 1980 and 2015. For every 1 million inhabitants 1,150 people die in Afghanistan, 50% of these fatalities from geo physical and weather related events, respectively.¹ Climate change also poses a threat to Afghanistan's natural resources, of which the majority of Afghans depend for their livelihoods. Afghanistan faces significant impacts of climate change and disasters which will impact growth prospects. The most obvious is the impact of floods and droughts on agriculture productivity. The country's low level of socio-economic development makes it extremely vulnerable to disasters, resulting in frequent loss of lives, livelihoods, and public and private property. Several factors have contributed to Afghanistan's vulnerability to disasters. Decades of conflict have undermined the country's coping mechanisms and protective capacity. This increases the likelihood that hazard events turn into disasters with large humanitarian and economic consequences. Disasters also have an impact on fragility and conflict. While natural hazards and disasters do not necessarily cause conflict in and of themselves, natural disasters can exacerbate the challenges people already face in fragile states, create new risks and add stress to an already weakened governance system and fuel grievances¹.

The Province of Balkh, located in the north of Afghanistan typifies much of the rest of Afghanistan in that it is experiencing stagnating poverty rates in excess of 36%, with women the most impacted, making up the majority of vulnerable and at risk members of the community. The agriculture sector is central to Afghanistan's economy and its future prosperity and stability, and therefore the focus of proposed interventions in the Province².

The districts of Charkint and Khulm share several development challenges around entrenched farming practices, poor or lack of infrastructure both on-farm and off-farm, poor market knowledge and value-chain understandings, vulnerability to disasters and shocks, and limited enablers that facilitate recovery from shocks and/or economic and entrepreneurial initiatives (e.g. access to credit). However the two districts have distinct differences due to their physical characteristics as well as ethnicity and therefore the development challenges differ. Charkint is a mountainous and more remote region, with limited agricultural potential, a reliance on rain-fed crops, and the majority of the communities are Hazaras. Khulm is predominately flat terrain, has stronger agricultural diversity and is better located along the transport corridor to other main urban centers, and has a predominately Tajik population. Both Khulm

¹ Natural Risk Profile, Afghanistan, World Bank , GFDRR

² Resilient Livelihoods Project for Vulnerable Rural Communities in Balkh Province, Afghanistan, Proposal Document

and Charkint are susceptible to natural disasters including flooding, drought, landslides, and earthquakes³.

In this backdrop of declining purchasing power, disruption of livelihood options and poor rainfed staple performance, most appropriately, the projects' outcomes intend to improve food security and resilience. The project attempts to ensure availability of wheat which is the staple food in Afghanistan, diversify agricultural activities through dairy farming and non-farm based income generating activities to ensure food availability and increase diversified source of livelihood. The project also envisaged to complement dietary intakes with vegetables produced through the kitchen gardens. In a fragile economy where the formal financial institutions are almost non-existence, the VSLAs offer an effective solution to financial access.

The third EoP Outcome of the project empowers vulnerable groups, particularly the women to participate in the collective decision making processes. In society with predominant bias gender norms, these changes are transformative and would have wide and long lasting impact to build inclusive growth based resilience.

Relevance to People's Priorities

In the FGD sessions, both male and female participants confirmed that the project activities were in alignment with their perceived priorities. The farmers expressed that the supply of seeds had been of immense support to increase productivity of their staple crop-wheat. Interest-free loans through the VSLAs have been of high relevance to need for liquid cash to invest in farming, income generation activities and also to meet contingencies. The respondents recognized that kitchen garden activities have not only helped to supplement their diet but also to generate extra income through sell of the surplus vegetables. Irrigation canals were among the most useful supports as recognized by the communities; especially, for the small and marginal farmers who didn't have access to the existing water sources.

Provision of livestock and livestock rearing trainings were found to be of great relevance to generate more income by the community members. However, during the FGDs, the

Excerpts from the FGDs on Relevance

Men: "Yes the project is in line, the farmers received seeds in order to increase their yields, trained the farmers in agriculture, poor women received milking cows in order to use the products and sell them too, kitchen gardening and capacity building were useful too".

Women: "we grow vegetables which are highly nutritious. Livestock is very useful as we use its products for our own consumption and sell. Before we had to take loans from the bank whose interest was too high and we could not afford it but now we have VSLAs which has no interest"

Men: "we didn't know about the vegetables and its benefits and now we have it in our kitchen garden to eat and sell it. There is little amount of cash in Charkint and whenever we need some money we can take it from the VSLA. We needed to learn about how to control the weeds which were affecting our crops and we learnt it through FFS"

Men: "the project is in line with our needs since life in Charkint depends on agriculture and on the other hand the project created jobs for both men and women."

³ ibid

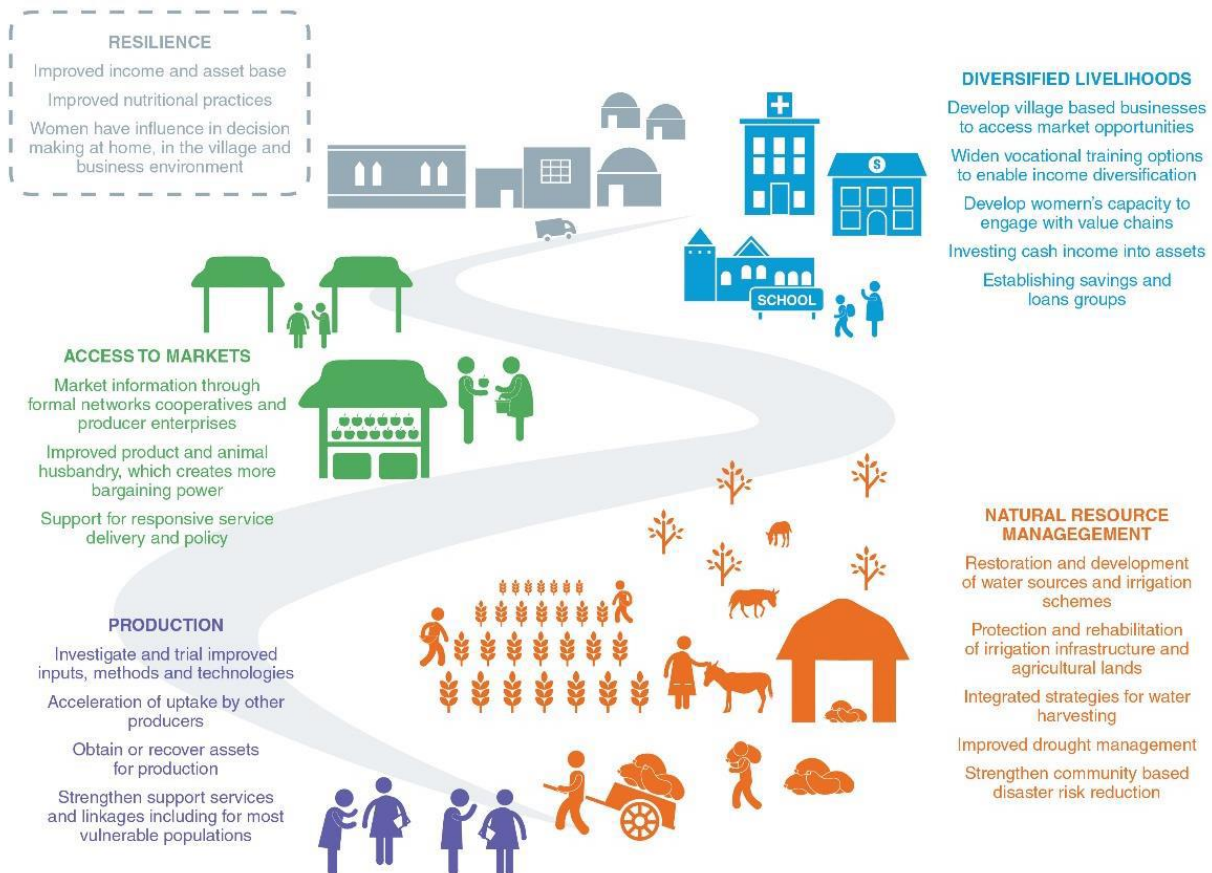
beneficiaries suggested that cow rearing is not a preferred option for them as it is capital intensive and involves high risk for them. Instead, they would prefer poultry farming and sheep rearing.

As expected in any acute poverty situation battered by violence, insecurity and natural hazards, the respondent's priorities were based on the tangible and immediate benefits provided through the EoP Outcome 1 and 2. However, through the hardware components and immediate benefits, CARE could successfully engage the communities and sensitize them to prioritize the long-term social and behavioral aspects to bring in transformative changes in a progressive manner.

Insights gained through CARE's long presence in the Balkh Province and the findings of baseline study, vulnerability and food security assessment informed the project planning to align with the community's priorities.

Relevance to the AACRS Theory of Change

Figure 3 AACRS Theory of Change⁴



AACRS theory of change for Resilience Building is broadly based on four strategic pillars-

- Diversified Livelihood
- Access to Market
- Natural Resource Management
- Production

The following section will examine the relevance of the project against each of these four pillars.

1. Diversified Livelihoods: CARE's project strategies for promoting farm and non-farm based livelihood opportunities which include promotion of livestock rearing, kitchen gardening, basic business skill development etc. has contributed effectively to initiate livelihood diversification. Though it's too early to measure the share of these new opportunities in the overall economy, it shows good potential for the

⁴ Mid Term Review of the Australia Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme (AACRS), Final Report by Coffey

coming days. VSLAs have provided effective platforms to capacitate women to participate in diversified livelihood activities and also to provide access to credit to boost investments in the economic activities.

2. Access to Markets: The project had originally planned to create Common Interest Groups as platforms to engage the traders and producers and to strengthen market-farm linkages. However, at a later stage, the project realized that it's too immature a stage to create such multi-stakeholder group and decided to keep it on hold for now.

However, with increased yield, the strategies to promote livestock rearing and vegetable production, and access to capital would be expected to create more stock holding capacity, marketability and bargaining power for the producers.

3. Natural Resource Management: The project has incorporated relevant strategy for creating micro irrigation project through canals. These irrigation projects would contribute to better water and soil management. The project distributed drought resistant seeds and promoted improved farming techniques. However, integration of community based DRR activities could have made the project more relevant for this strategic objective.

4. Production: While the first EoP Outcome of the project envisages improving farming techniques and inputs to enhance wheat production, the second EoP Outcome intends to promote diversified on-farm and off farm productions through vocational skill building, promotion of livestock rearing and kitchen garden. The Outcome also intended to ensure availability of capital to boost the production system through the VSLAs.

Key findings

- The project outcomes and strategies are relevant to with the contextual situation. The project design incorporates the local food security situation, cropping pattern, geo-climatic condition, behavioral and social aspects of the targeted communities. While CARE's long experience of working with the local communities has provided valuable insights, the project design is informed by the detailed situation analysis including food security and vulnerability analysis.
- The project outcomes and strategies address the prioritized felt needs of the community.
- The project strategies are in complete alignment with the AACRS's Theory of Change. However, the Market Linkage element required strategic focus.

Key recommendations

- CARE should consider incorporating Community Based DRR strategies in the project design to address the natural disaster related shocks and stresses.

Impacts

End-of-Project Outcome 1: Poor wheat farming households have improved food security, income and resilience

The project intended to achieve the EoP Outcome through *improved agricultural and livestock practices* (Intermediate Outcome 1.1) and *access to agricultural related information and networks* (Intermediate Outcome 1.2).

Target Beneficiaries: To achieve this outcome, the project intended to target 900 wheat farming households who, despite having access to land and resources, are still classified as poor or ultra-poor. They are those most vulnerable to natural disasters, reliant on rainfed agriculture, have high household dependency ratios, and/or have limited land under cultivation (less than 2 jerib irrigated or less than 5 jerib rain fed land). In addition, the project envisaged to engage with a selection of middle-class farmers (for example, those with at least 5 jerib of rainfed or 2 jerib of irrigated land) as these farmers will have the resources to contribute to demonstration plots.

Achievements: End of Project Outcome 1

Out of 128 respondent project participants, 119 (92.9%) participants reported significant increase in their wheat productivity attributing to the improved farming practices promoted and agricultural inputs provided by the project (Table-2). The farmers reported productivity of 302.8 KGs of wheat per Jerib⁵, an increase of approximately 32.5% over the baseline data (Table-3).

Table 2 Change in Productivity and Income

	# of HH Improved	% of HH Improved
Productivity in Wheat	119 out of 128	92.9
Income	121 out of 219	55.0

The farmers attributed this significant improvement of productivity to the farm inputs like improved variety seeds, fertilizers and pesticides and their improved knowledge of farming, water management etc. through the extension services.

Table 3 Change in Wheat Productivity

Average Productivity Per Jerib (2000 Sq Meter) in KG	
Baseline	228.6
Endline	302.8

However, in the Focus Group Discussions, a significant number of participants expressed that the amount of seeds distributed was not sufficient and in some cases, the distribution was late.

The farmers reported surplus of food grains (wheat) over their household consumption requirement and that helped them to generate more liquid income through sells in the local markets.

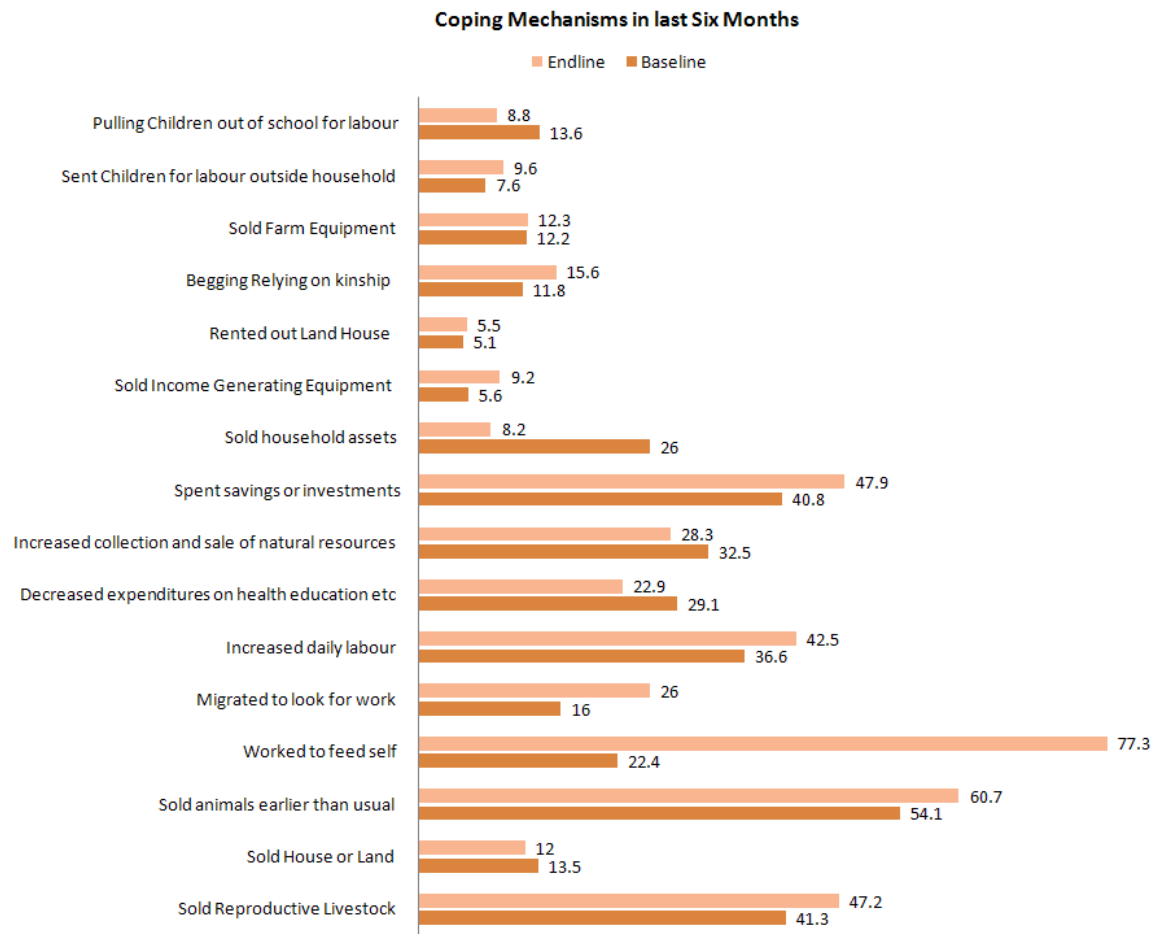
Notably, this increased production was reported despite of the declining production of wheat in the past consecutive seasons attributed to – among other factors – localized dry spells during the wet season⁶.

⁵ 1 Jerib=2000 Square Meter of land

⁶ Rapid Assessment of the 2018 Winter Dry Spell in Afghanistan, FAO

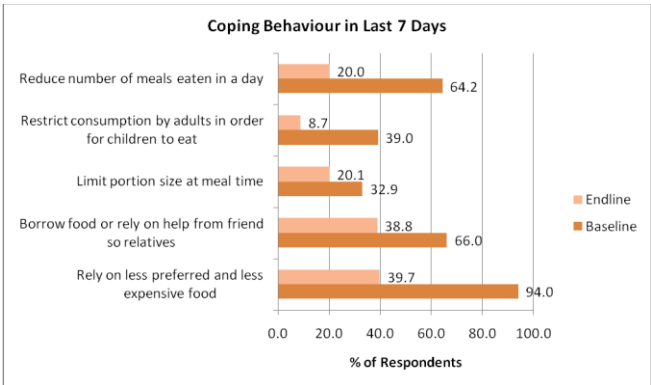
More than half (55%) of the farmers reported an increase of income due to the increased productivity of wheat and also as a result of the other activities like kitchen gardening, reduced debt burden through increased access to finance etc.

Figure 4 Coping Mechanisms in the last six Months



Though the project envisaged improved resilience at the same level of the outcome for income and productivity development, despite significant improvement in income and wheat productivity, positive changes on the coping behaviors of the community members are minimally evident.

Figure 5 Coping Mechanism in the last 7 Days

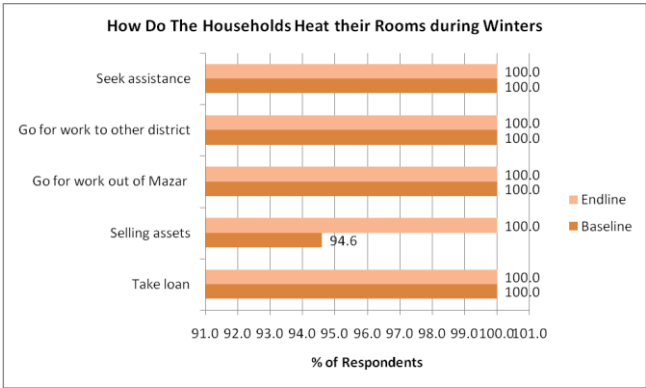


While in last six months, the number of children dropped out in the stressed situations is reduced marginally (4.8%), the study shows that more children were sent to work outside the family to cope up with the situation. Almost the same proportion of people (12.2%-12.3%) were compelled to sell their farm equipment to make up the financial deficit, begging and dependency on kinship has increased by 3.8%,

3.6% more people have sold their income generating equipment, percentage of people who had to sell their house or land assets was even marginally higher (1.5%) than the baseline status, 10% more people had to migrate out for work and so on.

We need to further examine the impact of various factors including the dry spells for consecutive five years which might have acted as major stressors to influence coping behaviors of the community members. We would also need to examine the factors like increased IDP inflow, productivity of orchard and vegetable farming, market linkages, safety net etc. to understand why the coping behavior of the community has not improved as envisaged by the project despite the increased income and wheat productivity and other outcomes.

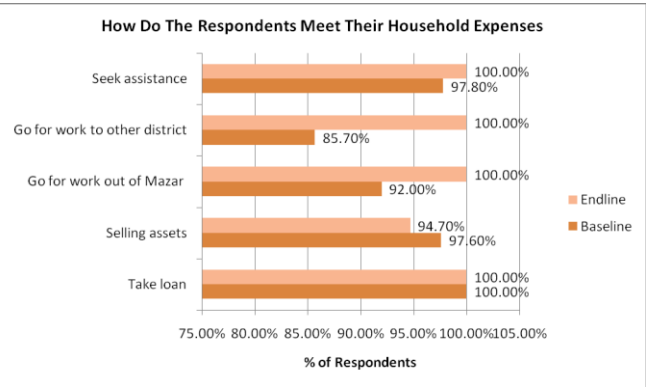
Figure 6 Means of Room Heating



In contrary to the previous six months coping behavior, the food security related coping behaviors of the communities were encouraging in the past 7 days of the study. However, we need to consider that the study was conducted just after the Ramadan⁷ during which the community members were observing fasting and most of the indicators were on food consumption patterns.

In the last winter, most of the respondents reported no significant change in their ways to keep their houses warm except that more (5.4%) people had to cover the cost of heating through sales of their household assets. The rate of outward migration and borrowing remained 100% as it was during the baseline survey.

Figure 7 Means of Meeting Household Expenses



The means of meeting the household expenses reinforces the trend of insignificant changes as it was in case of coping mechanism. Migration and assistance seeking behavior has increased after the project. Again, we need to dig deeper to understand why resilience outcomes show either negative or insignificant change despite achieving the income, production and other intermediate and EoP level outcomes.

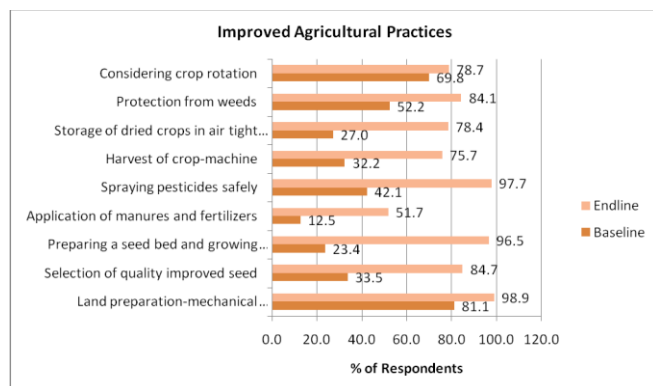
⁷ The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad according to Islamic belief.

Intermediate Outcome 1.1: Improved agricultural practices and production.

The project envisaged that the poor and ultra-poor farming households will improve the productivity of their wheat crops through improved farming practices. Through their engagement in Farmer Field Schools they will gain *new agricultural related skills and resources*. This included demonstration plots and field days to provide training on growing and cultivating wheat, land management, and organic

fertilizer production and use. CARE also distributed certified drought resistant seeds and trained farmers in how to store and produce seeds in subsequent years. Given the reliance on rainfall for crops, CARE had planned to construct and rehabilitate small scale irrigation and increase awareness of water saving techniques and on-going maintenance and repair of systems. Water management committees were planned to be set up to manage water systems and resolve conflicts.

Figure 8 Improved Agricultural Practices

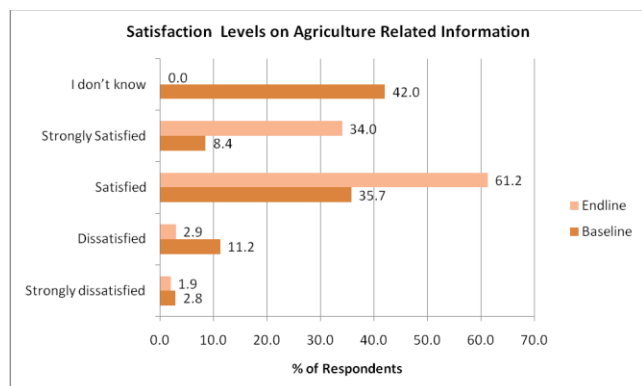


In terms of agricultural practices, the project has achieved significant success. More farmers (10.9%) in the project area considering crop rotation to preserve soil nutrients, prevent soil erosion and prevent crop pests and diseases. More than 30% of the farmers know and apply weed protection techniques, more than 78% of the farmers have adopted appropriate method of storing dried crops in air tight containers, and almost all farmers (97.7%) know and apply safe methods of spraying pesticides. The study also reveals significant improvements in farming techniques like use of manures and fertilizers (39.2% increase), selection of improved variety seeds (51.2% increase).

Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Access to agricultural related information and networks.

The project envisaged that the same households (as per Intermediate Outcome 1.1) would have *increased access to information and networks*. Firstly, Common Interest Groups (CIGs) were planned to

Figure 9 Satisfaction Level on Agricultural Information



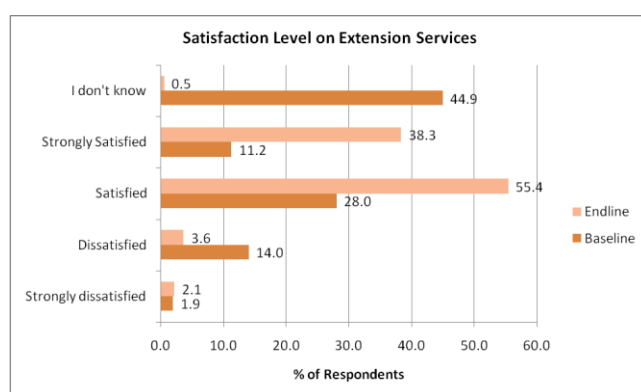
be created and strengthened so that farmers would be better able to support each other to increase their harvest and market their products, to store and access quality seeds in the second year and beyond. These groups would be provided with basic agro-business skills, and where possible these CIGs would be linked to existing Farmer Cooperatives.

The project activities have been significantly effective to achieve this outcome. The evaluation study reveals that more than one

third of the participant farmers were strongly satisfied and more than 60% of the participant farmers were satisfied with the quality and range of information they could access through the project (Table-10).

Secondly CARE planned to link the farmers to improved extension services to meet the agricultural extension needs of the wheat farmers (EoP Outcome 1 beneficiaries), and the veterinary extension needs of those who have existing livestock or receive livestock under this program (EoP Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 beneficiaries). CARE planned to strengthen and expand extension services so that government agricultural and veterinary extension workers will be able to provide improved services to the communities they serve. CARE planned to *identify and assess the capacity of the agricultural and veterinary extension workers* (short term output 1.2.1.2), employed by the Extension Department of

Figure 10 Satisfaction Level on Extension Services



participant farmers were highly satisfied and 55.4% participant farmers were satisfied with the extension activities conducted by the project.

MAIL, and the paravets and Veterinary Field Units (VFUs), employed through the private sector. Collectively, CARE and extension workers intended to *review and adapt training of trainers modules* (short term output 1.2.1.1) on wheat cultivation, irrigation water management, soil erosion, sheep and cow rearing, pasture management, animal care and hygiene, animal diseases, pests control for both on-farm and off-farm related activities.

At the end of the project, 38.3% of the

End-of-Project Outcome 2: Landless and labor-constrained households are more resilient to food insecurity and have greater access to social and economic opportunities through increased savings and loans to minimize harmful coping mechanisms and provide cash for increased productive activities, and assistance to increase subsistence and excess income through livestock and kitchen gardens.

Target Beneficiaries: Outcome 2 intended to target a completely different set of households within the same villages as Outcome 1. These are 450 poor and ultra-poor households that are unable to grow wheat because they are landless, or have insufficient agricultural labor within the household due to household members being elderly, having a disability, or are female-headed.

Similar to the farmers' segment, the landless farmers and the labor-constrained household showed either no improvement or insignificant improvement in their coping behaviors in the preceding six months of the evaluation.

Among the VSLA participants, half of them had to sell off their reproductive cattle which is significantly higher (28.7%) than the baseline data. The study also shows that more VLSA participants sold off their houses and lands, outward migration increased by 17.5%, begging and dependency on kin have also

increased by approximately 3%. However, on the positive side, incidences of children pulled out of schools reduced by 7% approximately. Comparing to the baseline survey, the number of respondents who had to deplete their savings have reduced by 8% approximately (Figure-11).

In comparison to the VSLA members, the respondents who participated in the Kitchen Garden Activities reported lower or negative progress in terms of coping behaviors. 37.9% of the kitchen garden participants sold their reproductive livestock in the previous six months while 25% of them sold reproductive livestock during baseline study. 6.9% of the kitchen garden participants had to sell their house and land to cope up with the financial stress. 31% of the kitchen garden participants had to cut their health and education expenses to compensate other essential and immediate needs; this is 3% higher than the baseline data. 16.3% more participants spent their savings during the last six months. Rate of child labor and number of participants who sold their farm equipment have marginally increased in comparison to the baseline data (Figure-11).

On the positive side, the labor participation rate among the kitchen garden participants increased significantly by 33.5%, and the number of participants who had to sell their animals earlier and had to migrate outside under stress were marginally reduced. The number of participants who sold their household assets was lesser by 8.9% than the baseline data. The number of participants who pulled out children from school also reduced marginally than the baseline data (Figure-11).

Figure 11 Coping Mechanism of Landless and Labor Constrained Families

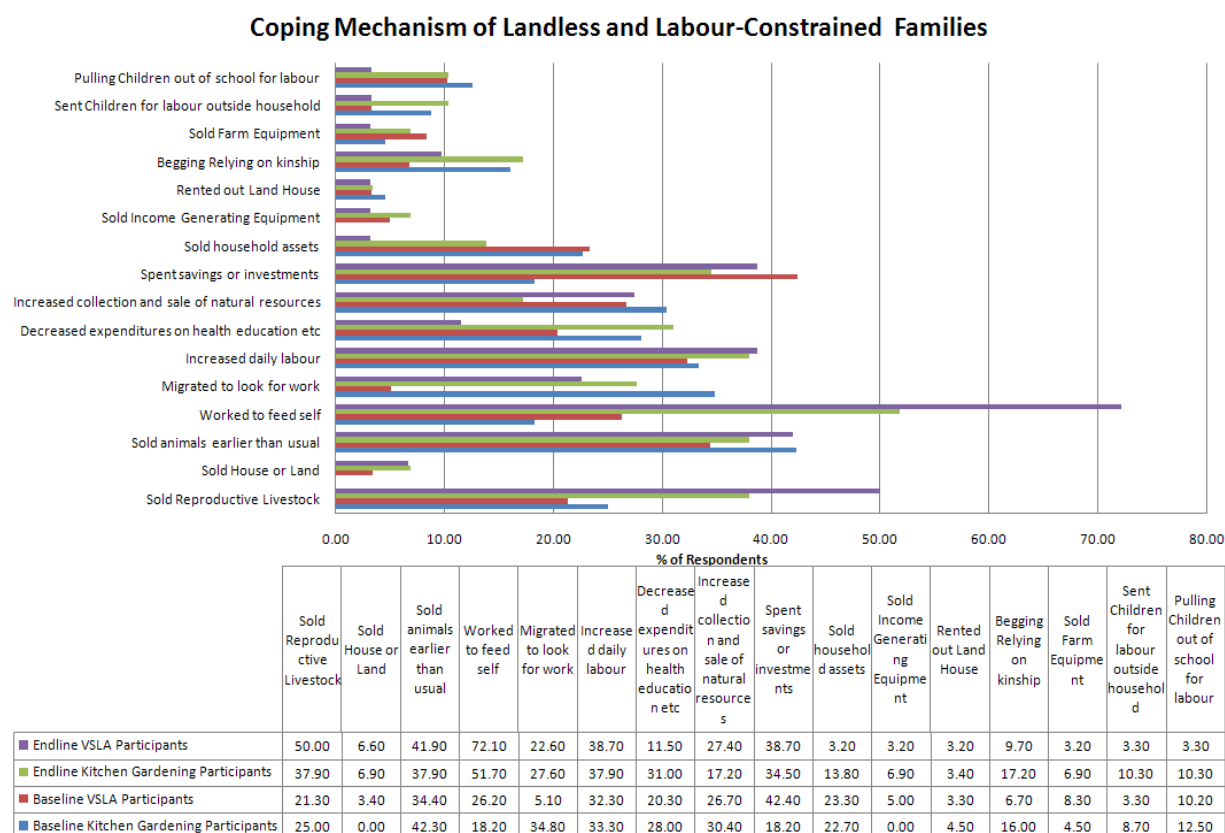
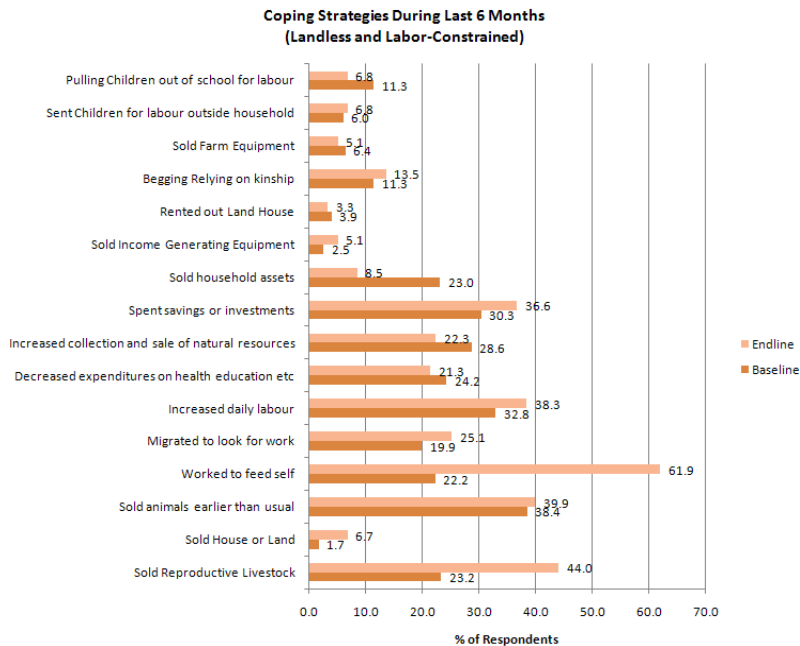


Figure 12 Coping Strategies for Landless and Labor Constrained Families in last 6 Months



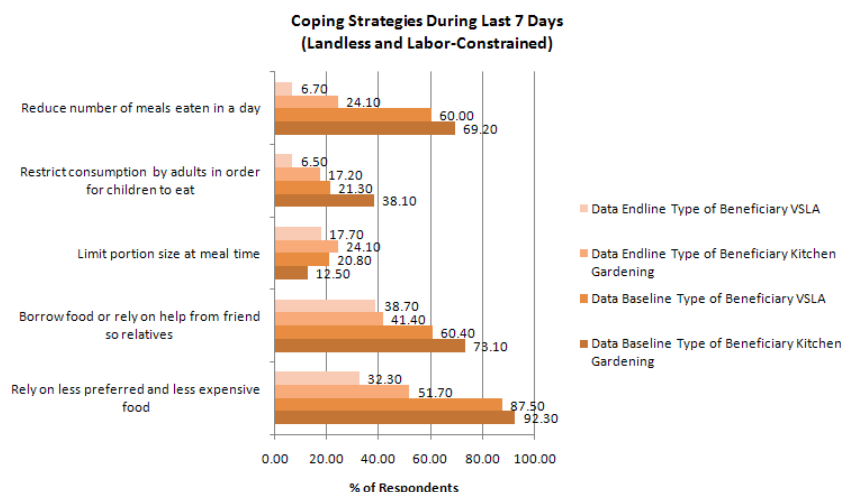
In the case of the landless and labor constrained families who participated neither in VSLAs nor in the Kitchen Garden activities, findings showed almost similar patterns and there was no significant differential pattern between the participant and nonparticipant populations (Figure-12).

In contrary to the general coping behavior, food security related coping behaviors of both the VLSA and Kitchen Garden participants in the preceding 7 days of the study showed marked improvement (Figure-13).

In terms of food security related coping behaviors in the preceding 7 days of the study, remarkable improvement has been observed for both the VSLA and Kitchen Garden Participants. The percentage of people who had to reduce their number of meals due to food shortage has been reduced by 45% and 53.7% in the cases of Kitchen Garden and VSLA participants respectively. The percentage of people who had to restrict adults' food consumption to feed children has reduced by 20.9% and 14.8% respectively among the Kitchen Garden participants and VSLA participants. Borrowing food in the lean periods has reduced by 36.7% among the Kitchen Garden participants and 38.7% among the VSLA participants. In comparison to the base line data, the number of people who had to rely on less expensive and less preferred food reduced by 40.6% in case of the Kitchen Garden participants and 55.2% in case of the VSLA participants (Figure-13).

The trend of coping behavior related to food security shows different pattern contrasting to the general coping behaviors. We need to carefully understand if the Ramadan fasting has not influenced the responses regarding food consumptions in the previous 7 days.

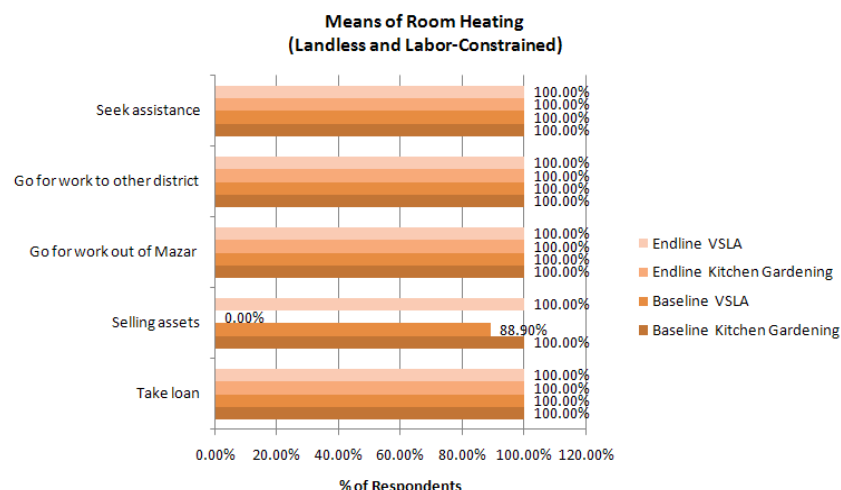
Figure 13 Coping Strategies of Landless and Labor Constrained Families in the last 7 Days



Strikingly, the non VLSA and Kitchen Garden participants also showed similar improvement in food security related coping behavior in the preceding 7 days (Figure-11). We need to carefully examine

if these changes should be attributed to the Kitchen Garden and VSLA activities alone or if there were other externalities which resulted in such similar improvements across the participant and non-participant segments.

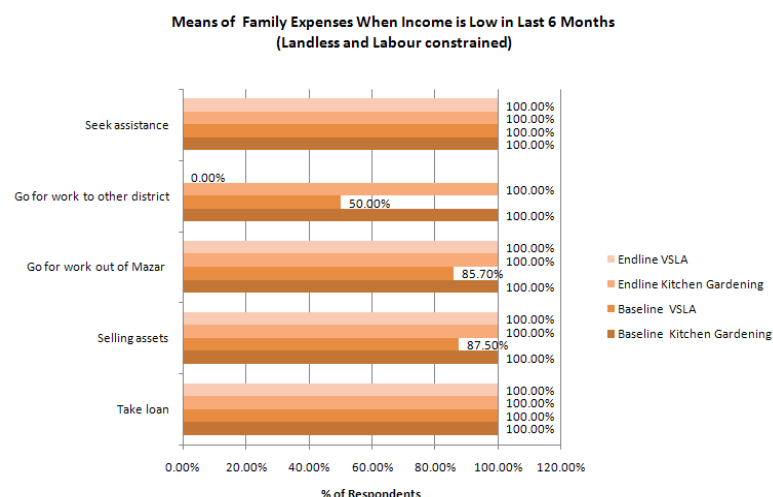
Figure 14 Means of Room Heating (Landless and Labor Constrained Families)



In case of the means of room heating in the winters, there was no significant change observed (Figure-15).

Figure 15 Means of Meeting Family Expenses in Last 6 Months-Landless and Labor Constrained Families

Significantly, in the lean income phases, the means of meeting the family expenses remained unchanged in cases of both the VSLA and Kitchen Garden Participants. All respondents reported that in the previous six months, they had to seek assistance and take loans to meet family expenses. All VSLA members had to go to Mazar in search for work which is a 14.3% increase over the base line data. The number of VSLA members who had to sell their household assets in last six months has increased by 12.5% over the baseline data. However, lesser number of VSLA members go to other districts for work in comparison to the baseline data (Figure-15).



In the preceding 7 days of the study, the respondents reported almost same the pattern of meeting family expenses in financial crunches as it was in the previous six months (Figure-16).

Figure 16 Means of Family Expenses in Last 7 Days Landless and Labor Constrained Families

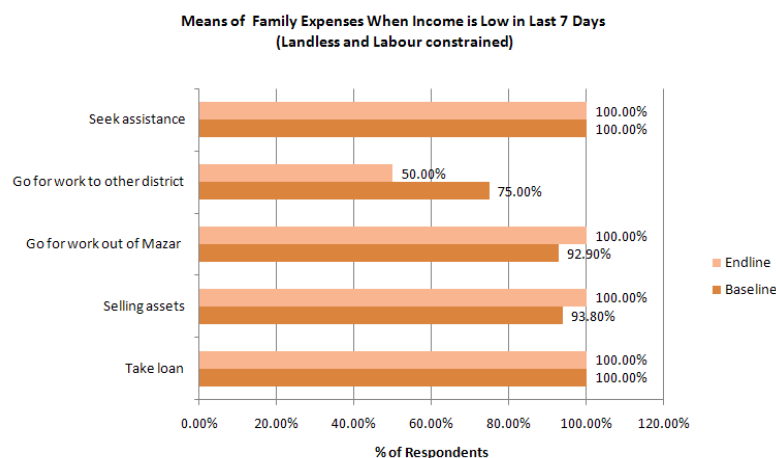
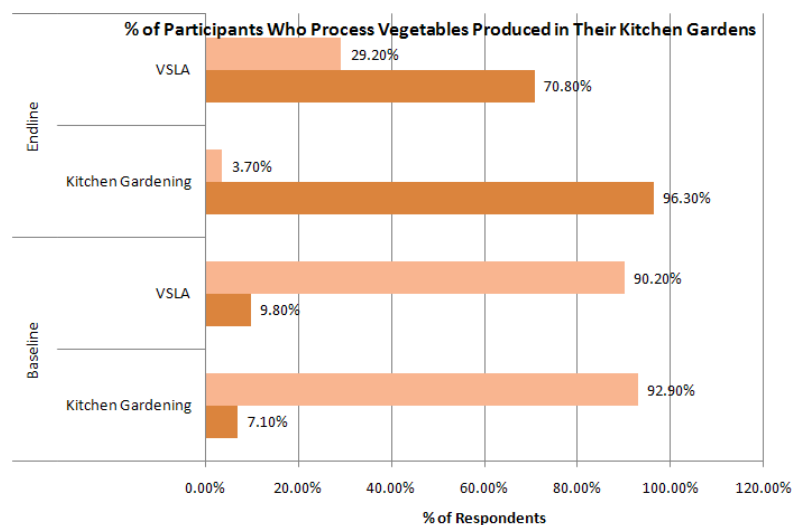


Figure 17 % of Participants Who Processed Vegetables



End-of-Project Outcome 3: Vulnerable groups are able to influence decision making processes relating to their livelihoods

The CARE feasibility assessment found that district government representatives and community leaders are often not aware of needs of vulnerable groups such as women-headed households and people with a disability.

Target Beneficiaries: There were two key sets of beneficiaries under this Outcome. Firstly, vulnerable households identified under EoP Outcomes 1 and Outcome 2, and secondly, community power-holders such as CDCs, religious leaders, and women sub-committees.

Intermediate outcome 3.1: Vulnerable groups' needs are being addressed, because representatives of vulnerable groups would be *attending and participating in community decision making processes* (immediate outcome 3.1.1) such as the community Jirga and community development council meetings.

Vulnerable groups would be organized into *solidarity groups* (short term output 3.1.1.1) using the CARE WAFAA model to *create awareness among the participants* (short term output 3.1.1.2) about human rights, conflict resolution, democratic decision making, gender equity and diversity. As a result, vulnerable groups would attend and participate in community decision-making processes. Participants would not only learn how to advocate for themselves but also how to advocate for the needs and concerns of others.

Figure 18 Existence of Community Institutions

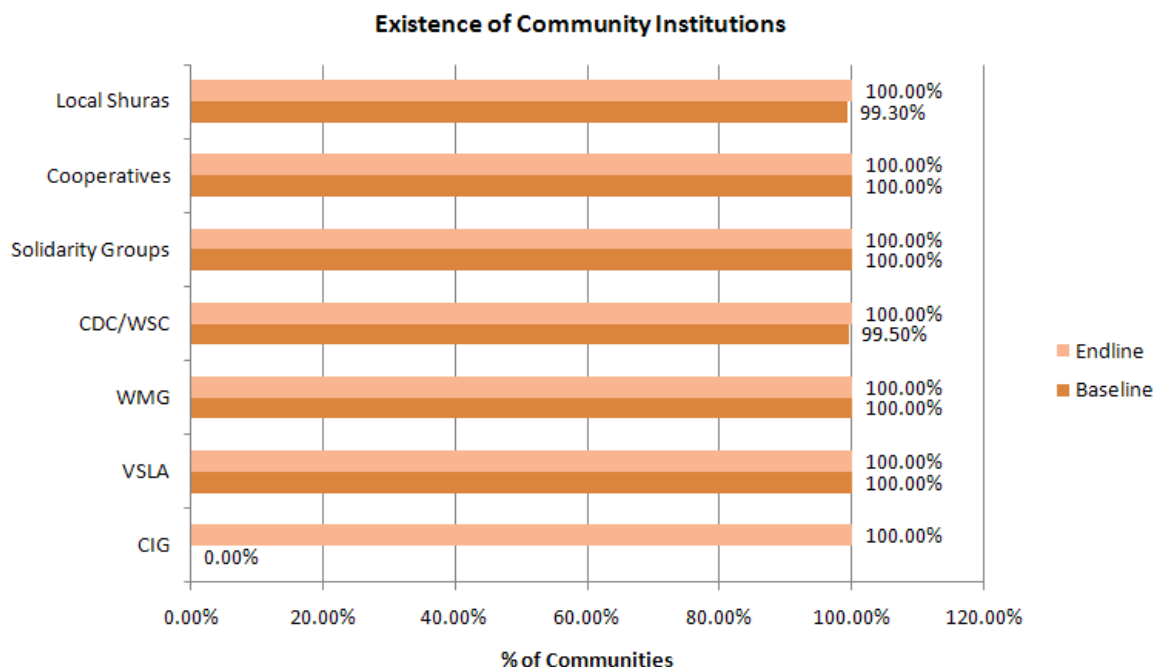
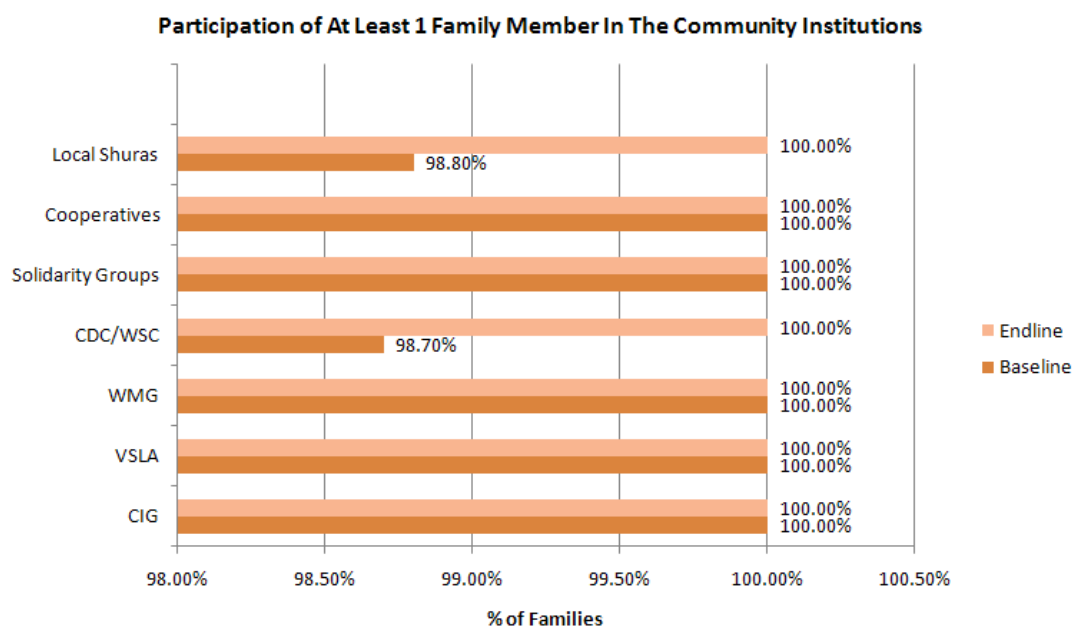
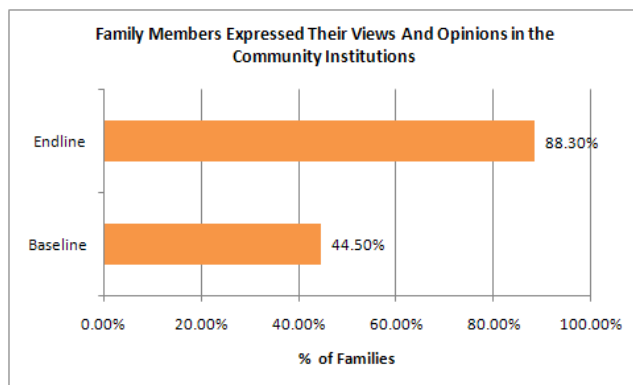


Figure 19 Participation of At Least 1 Family Member in the Community Institutions



Except the CIGs developed as a part of the project activities, all the communities have managed and sustained community institutions like local Shuras, Cooperatives, Solidarity Groups, CDC/WSC, WMG and VSLAs. During the project period, Common Interest Groups were developed in all the communities.

Figure 20 % of Family Members Who Expressed their Views in the Community Institutions



Almost all the respondents reported that at least one member of their families were members of all the community institutions since the baseline survey (Figure-19). However, their quality of participation has significantly improved in the project duration.

Figure 21 Participation of At Least 1 Family Member in Community Institutions

The evaluation study reveals that the members who could express their views and opinions in such community forums has increased by 43.8% over the baseline rate (Figure-20).

Participation of female family members in the CDCs has not only increased by 40.4%, 86%

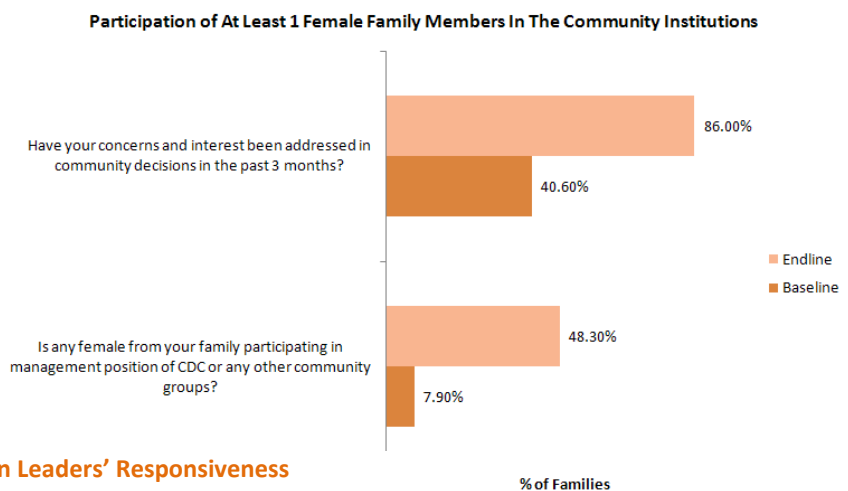
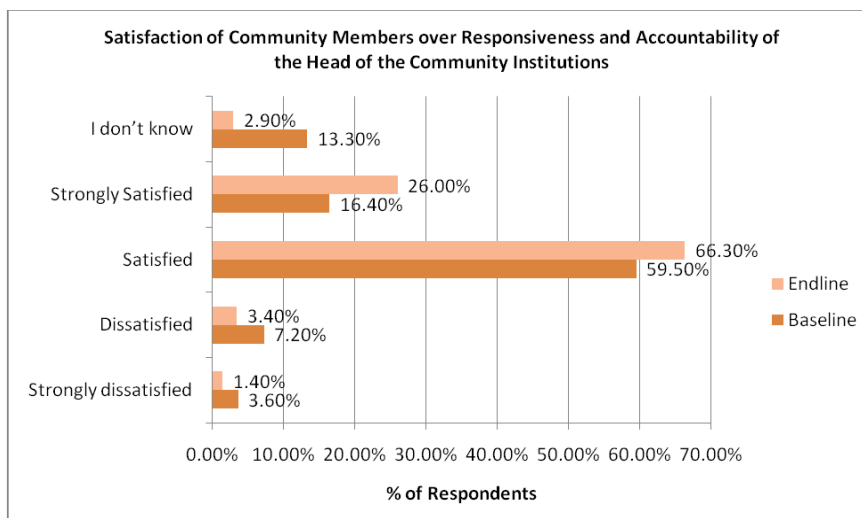


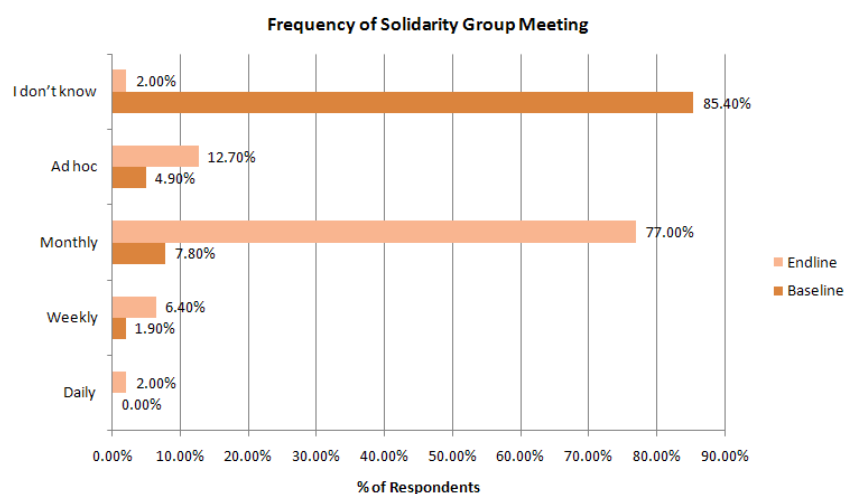
Figure 22 Satisfaction of Family Members on Leaders' Responsiveness



respondents reported that the female members concerns and interest were address in the community decisions (Figure-21).

The study also revealed that the project has been very effective to facilitate the community institutions to be more active, responsive and accountable.

Figure 23 Frequency of Solidarity Group Meeting



For instance, monthly meetings of the Solidarity Groups have increased by more than 70% (Figure-24). Two-third of the respondents were highly satisfied and more than one-fourth of the respondents were satisfied with the responsiveness and accountability of the community institutions at the end of the project (Figure-23).

In contrary to the enhanced women participations indicators at the community level, participation rate of women in the household level livelihood decisions has reduced from 81.10% to 55% (Figure-24).

Figure 24 Women's Participation in Livelihood Decisions in Families

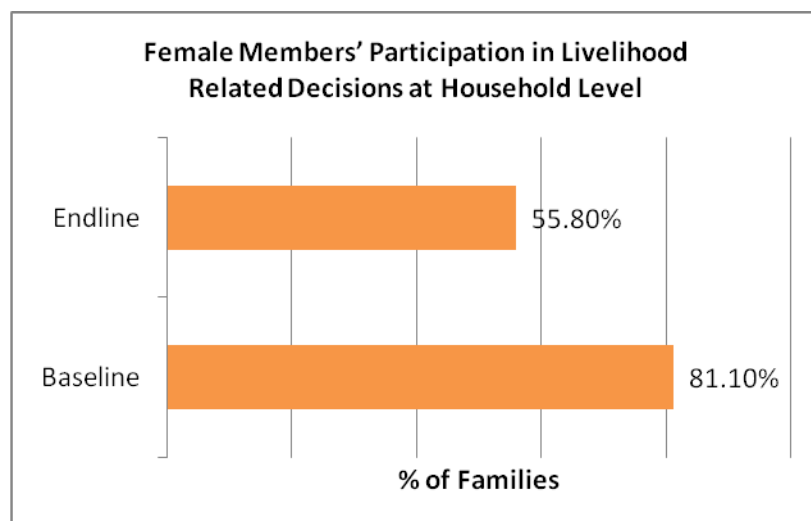


Table 4 Short-Term Output Achievement

Output		Indicator	End of Project Target	Achieved
Short term Output 1.1.1.1	Farmer Field Schools developed and operational	# of existing agricultural training modules adapted to meet new trends	6	5
		# of wheat seed demo plots established	120	120
		# of exposure or field days for participant agricultural HHs	30	28
Short term Output 1.1.2.1	Seed and fertilizer distribution	# of farmers receiving improved wheat seeds	300	489
Short term Output 1.1.2.2	Small scale irrigation and water saving structures	# of small scale irrigation and water saving structures constructed and/or rehabilitated	12	13
Short term Output 1.2.1.1.	Common Interest Groups formed and trained	# of CIGs formed and trained by CARE	30	10
Short term Output 1.2.2.1	Identification and analysis of extension services	Evidence of number of government agriculture and veterinary extension workers present in Khulm and Charkint and analysis of their capacity	0	25
Short term Output 1.2.2.2.	Agricultural and veterinary best practices developed	# of agriculture Training of Training (ToT) modules developed	6	6
		# of veterinary Training of Training (ToT) modules developed	6	6
Short term Output 1.2.2.3	Agricultural and veterinary extension workers are trained in best practices	# of agricultural and veterinary extension workers receiving Training of Trainers	180	272
Short term Output 2.1.1.1	Formation and training of VSLAs	# of training modules in savings and loan methodology updated and developed	6	3
		# of VSLAs formed	30	37

		# of landless and labour constrained women trained in VSLA methodology	450	857
		# of landless and labour constrained women participating in VSLAs	450	628
Short term Output 2.1.1.2.	Livestock distribution	# of women s receiving cows	60	160
		# of women receiving sheep/goats	60	None
Short term Output 2.2.1.1	Establishment of kitchen gardens for vulnerable groups	# of kitchen gardens established for vulnerable women (60) and # of kitchen gardens established for vulnerable men (40)	100	87 female and 13 male
Short term Output 3.1.1.1	Formation and training of solidarity groups	# of solidarity groups formed	30	33
		# of training modules developed for solidarity groups	6	8
		# of solidarity group members trained	450	533
Short term Output 3.1.2.3	Training for community leaders	# of training modules developed for power holders, decision makers	6	8
		# of leaders trained	120	248

Key Findings

- Though the Project has achieved significant success at the Intermediate Outcome levels, the study does not suggest any significant change at the general coping behaviour as demonstrated in the previous six months by the across all the segments of the target groups (for both EoP 1 and 2).
- The study finds remarkably improved coping behaviours related to food distresses as demonstrated in the preceding 7 days of the study. However, we need to revalidate the data to eliminate the risk of error as the study was conducted just after the Ramadan month.
- The Project has been impactful in terms of creating diversified livelihood opportunities through livestock, kitchen gardening and creating access to microcredit.

- Food Security and Resilience are much higher level impacts and should not be expected at the level of income and wheat productivity (as it is assumed in EoP Outcome-1). Further, EoP Outcome 1 alone can't create the conditions for food security and resilience. In fact, the composite effect of all three EoP Outcomes if targeted for the same cohort might lead to food security and resilience. In the project design, the second Outcome targets a completely different set of beneficiaries. The project can have different strategies targeted to different groups but these stand alone Outcomes might not meet the ambitious goal of the project.

Excerpts from the FGDs

"We grow vegetables which are highly nutritious. Livestock is very useful as we use its products for our own consumption and sell. Before we had to take loan from the bank whose interest was too high and we could not afford it but now we have VSLAs which has no interest."

"We didn't know about the vegetables and its benefits and now we have it in our kitchen garden to eat and sell it. There is little amount of cash in Charkint and whenever we need some money we can take it from the VSLA."

- The project has shown outstanding impact to enhance quality participation of the vulnerable groups including women in the community groups. The participants demonstrate better participation and influence the decision making process more effectively. The traditional Power Holders are sensitized and the Community Groups are more responsive and accountable.

Recommendations

- The Project Design should be revisited and consider putting Resilience and Food Security at the Project Goal level.
- The project should adopt a more holistic approach toward food security. It should incorporate more focused to address the issues like access to food (includes intra household equitable access), absorption and maintenance. This will need targeted and logical approach toward specific attitudinal and behavioural changes.
- CARE should integrate Community based DRR approach with the project to capacitate the community in dealing with the stressors and shocks related to natural hazards.
- The VSLA participants would need more hand holding support, reinforcements and skill upgradation to manage and sustain the VSLAs independently.
- CARE should consider improving productivity of the local horticultural activities and also to introduce other low water consuming crops like Barley to supplement supply deficit of wheat.
- As recommended by the community members, CARE should reconsider the strategy to promote poultry farming and assess the feasibility of cow rearing.
- It seems the extension workers need further capacity building to the farmers effectively.

Effectiveness

Within the scope of the evaluation study, this section makes attempt to examine the effectiveness of the projects in terms of achieving the End of Project Outcomes as assumed by the project design. However, as the project envisages the core impacts around the indicators of resilience and food security, while assessing effectiveness, we need to take account of the chronic conflict and drought situation prevailing in almost all the provinces including Balkh.

In 'Afghanistan Food Security Outlook' (October'17-May'18), FEWS NET estimated for aggregate 2017 domestic wheat harvests indicated a production of 14 percent below the five-year average, due to very poor rainfed wheat production in a number of provinces after below-average cumulative precipitation and extended periods of dryness during crop development. This is likely to have an adverse impact on household food reserves for many poor households in these areas as they enter the 2017/2018 winter. Provinces that were most severely affected according to MAIL production estimates include Takhar, Balkh, Badakhshan, Samangan, Jawzjan, Baghlan, Sar-i-Pul, and Ghor. The report further suggests that '...for some areas, this is the third consecutive year of poor performance in rainfed wheat production, due primarily to erratic rainfall distribution during the spring months. Large areas of the north and northeast were most heavily affected, as well as more localized areas in central and northwestern provinces'⁸.

The Northern region of Afghanistan (includes Balkh) that includes major rainfed production areas, the total output of the wheat harvest in June and July was less than last year and below the five-year average. The lower harvest has meant that even households that usually depend on sharecropping (*dekhani*) are not able to rely primarily on their own stocks of wheat. With below-normal income and household grain stocks that are lower than last year, much of the area is currently classified in stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. However, many conflict-displaced households are likely facing a crisis (IPC Phase 3)⁹.

In addition to below-average staple harvests, many poor households are facing increased constraints on food access for this time of year due to weakened labor opportunities, conflict, and displacement. Although the terms of trade for casual labor to wheat flour have gradually improved in major markets monitored since early 2016 and are currently near average to above average, declines in daily agricultural wage rates were reported in some parts of the country during the May to August period of high demand for agricultural labor, which many poor and landless households rely upon for immediate needs as well as for food access during the lean season and winter. This decline in wages was in part due to reduced employment opportunities in other sectors, which increased the supply of agricultural labor¹⁰.

⁸ Afghanistan Food Security Outlook, FEWS Net October 2017 to May 2018

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ *ibid*

Beside the stress created by the prolonged drought spell, the local economy is further pressed by the long-term and wide spread conflict situation. In 2016, Afghanistan experienced a greater rate of displacement than in any year since 2012¹¹.

Effectiveness of End of Project Outcome-1

EoP Outcome-1 envisages improved food security, income and resilience through improved agricultural practices and production (Intermediate Outcome-1.1) and increased access to agricultural information and networks (Intermediate Outcome-1.2).

The EoP Outcome-1 seems to have made an attempt to compose different levels of results in the same frame. The Outcome is based on the assumption that increased agricultural productivity (wheat productivity to be specific) in combination with increased information and networks would lead to food security and resilience. Wheat production might increase wheat availability and also might lead to enhance income and wheat stock of the farmers but it might not be sufficient to address issues like food intake diversity, food consumption behavior, intra-household equity to achieve food security. Similarly, resilience building would require much broader range of intermediary outcomes. We should also note that the second EoP Outcome targeted a completely different set of beneficiaries and the third EoP Outcome targeted only a portion of the beneficiaries covered through the first and the second EoP Outcomes. That means, the first and the second EoP Outcomes are stand alone outcomes with limited influence by the activities under the third EoP Outcome.

Hence, the study suggests significant success at the Intermediary Outcome levels but very insignificant or no achievement at the level of the EoP Outcome level.

The Project has been effective to enhance wheat productivity and income levels. The study suggests that 92.9% of the participants have increased wheat productivity and 55% of them have increased income (Table-1). Average productivity of wheat has increased from 228.6 KG/ Jerib to 302.8 KG/Jerib (Table-2).

The project has also achieved significant success in terms of improving agricultural practices and access to information and networks (Table-5.6.7).

However there is no significant impact of these changes on the coping behavior of the respondents in previous six months and food security related coping behaviors in the preceding 7 days (Table 3 and 4).

This shows that the Intermediate Outcomes (alone) can't be culminated to the EoP Outcome. Effectiveness of this EoP Outcome was limited to income and productivity levels.

We would also need to understand the cumulative effect of the chronic drought and conflict situations and consequential depletion of assets and capacities to analyze the coping behaviors of the communities.

Effectiveness of End of Project Outcome-2

The second EoP Outcome targets a completely different set of beneficiaries who are either landless or labor-constrained. It was envisaged that the community would enhance their on-farm and off-farm income through access to finance, entrepreneurship skills and livestock rearing. The community would

¹¹ ibid

also supplement nutrition through the vegetables grown in the kitchen gardens. Supplementary income and nutrition would help the landless and labor-constrained households to become more resilient to food insecurity and achieve better access to social and economic opportunities.

The qualitative study showed significantly positive response regarding the effectiveness of the VLSAs, Kitchen Gardens, Livestock distribution and skill building activities. Almost all the participants recognized that the interest free loans provided through the VSLAs were of great support for them not only to invest in on-farm and off-farm activities but also to meet other expenses of social festivals and functions, and health emergencies.

Both male and female participants expressed that the capacity building activities have been effective not only to enhance entrepreneurship skills but also has been instrumental to capacitate women to participate in the household and community level processes in more empowered manner. Some of the men respondents reported that they have started taking household decisions with their wives.

The FGDs indicated that most of the community members recognize the importance of kitchen garden activities for better nutrition. Most of the kitchen garden participants have also started processing vegetables to stock for the winter session. Some of the participants have sold surplus vegetables to supplement their income.

Dairy and animal husbandry promotion activities have been successful to a great extent. However, cow rearing seems to be not a feasible and preferred option for the community members. Due to high investment and risk involved in cow rearing, the community members would prefer sheep rearing and poultry farming. The community members expressed the need for better veterinary services including immunization of the cattle.

At the EoP Outcome level, the study indicates significant effectiveness in terms of building resilience to food insecurity. The percentage of people who had to reduce their number of meals due to food shortage has been reduced by 45% and 53.7% in the cases of Kitchen Garden and VSLA participants respectively. The percentage of people who had to restrict adults' food consumption to feed children has reduced by 20.9% and 14.8% respectively among the Kitchen Garden participants and VSLA participants. Borrowing food in the lean periods has reduced by 36.7% among the Kitchen Garden participants and 38.7% among the VSLA participants. In comparison to the base line data, number of people who had to rely on less expensive and less preferred food has been reduced by 40.6% in case of the Kitchen Garden participants and 55.2% in case of the VSLA participants (Figure-11).

However, the results of the non-food related coping behavior was contrastingly different in the previous six months. Among the VLSA participants, half of them had to sell off their reproductive cattle which is significantly higher (28.7%) than the baseline data. The study also shows that more VLSA participants sold off their houses and lands, outward migration has significantly increased (17.5%), begging and dependency on kin have also increased by approximately 3%. However, on the positive side, incidences of children pulled of schools have reduced by 7% approximately. Comparing to the baseline survey, number of respondents who had to deplete their savings have reduced by 8% approximately (Figure-8).

In comparison to the VSLA members, the respondents who participated in the Kitchen Garden Activities reported lower or negative progress in terms of coping behaviors. 37.9% of the kitchen garden

participants sold their reproductive livestock in previous six months while 25% of them sold reproductive livestock during baseline study. 6.9% of the kitchen garden participants had to sell their house and land to cope up with the financial stress. 31% of the kitchen garden participants had to cut their health and education expenses to compensate other essential and immediate needs; this is 3% higher than the baseline data. 16.3% more participants spent their savings during the last six months. The rate of child labor and the number of participants who sold their farm equipment marginally increased in comparison to the baseline data (Figure-11).

On the positive side, the labor participation rate among the kitchen garden participants has increased significantly by 33.5%, with the number of participants who had to sell their animals earlier and had to migrate outside under stress being marginally reduced. The number of participants who sold their household assets was lesser by 8.9% compared to the baseline data. The number of participants who pulled out children from school also reduced marginally compared to the baseline data (Figure-11).

While we need to understand the impact of the prevalent drought and conflict situations for such insignificant change in the non-food related coping behavior, we should also explore if the food security related data for the preceding 7 days was influenced by the Ramada fasting. The study was conducted immediately after the Ramadan month.

Effectiveness of End of Project Outcome-3

EoP Outcome-3 targeted two key sets of beneficiaries. Firstly, vulnerable households identified under EoP Outcomes 1 and Outcome 2, and secondly, community power-holders such as CDCs, religious leaders, and women sub-committees.

To empower the vulnerable groups to influence the decisions related to their livelihood, the project took a two-prong approach – to capacitate the vulnerable group and to work with the community leaders to make the community institutions responsive and accountable.

Though the community institutions (except the Common Interest Groups) existed in the community even during the baseline (Figure-18), the vulnerable groups, especially the women had limited participation and had nominal influence in the decision making process. The project has been immensely effective not only to capacitate the vulnerable groups to participate in these community groups in an empowered manner but also to impact the power holders and the institutional processes. It seems the VSLA and Kitchen garden activities have significantly complemented this outcome. EoP Outcome-3 would have a much wider and long lasting impact in building community resilience.

The evaluation study reveals that the members who could express their views and opinions in such community forums have increased by 43.8% over the baseline rate (Figure-19).

Participation of female family members in the CDCs has not only increased by 40.4%, 86% respondents reported that the female members concerns and interests were address in the community decisions (Figure-20).

The study also revealed that the project has been very effective to facilitate the community institutions to be more active, responsive and accountable. For instance, monthly meetings of the Solidarity Groups have increased by more than 70% (Figure-21). Two-third of the respondents were highly satisfied and

more than one-fourth of the respondents were satisfied with the responsiveness and accountability of the community institutions at the end of the project (Figure-22).

Surprisingly, despite the significant qualitative improvement in participation at the community decision making level, the study suggests women's participation in household level livelihood affairs has dropped by 25.3% in comparison to the baseline data.

Gender and Social Inclusion

Gender

The project strategies have been immensely effective to address the gender issue in the communities which are predominantly driven by patriarchal norms and values.

The targeted approach through the EoP Outcome 2 and 3 has successfully initiated a transformative process in the gender dynamics in the project communities. Livelihood skills and access to microcredit provided through the VSLAs have capacitated the women to step into the economic sphere which was predominantly occupied by the male members. The trainings and sensitization programs on gender and human right issues have been successful to a great extent to change the patriarchal mindset of the male members. In the FGD sessions, the male participants appreciated women's participation in the project.

The project strategies have created remarkable impacts on women's participation in community level decision making processes. The study suggest at least one female member of more than 48% of the families participate in the CDCs; which is a 40% increase over the baseline data.

In a traditionally conservative and male dominated society, such changes are revolutionary.

Disability

People with a disability (PwD) were prioritised during the selection process for beneficiaries. Reportedly, the project has selected and supported a total of 39 PwD directly (12 females, 27 males) and 69 PwD (44 females, 17 males) indirectly (member of the family) through improved wheat seed distribution, kitchen gardening, VSLA, livestock distribution and establishment of demonstration plots.

Though the project didn't adopted a targeted approach to address the disability issues, the implementation process ensured inclusion of the PwDs in the project activities.

Key Findings

- As discussed in the impact section, in respect to the EoP-1, the project has been effective at the Intermediate Outcome level and requires more sustained, strategic and comprehensive approach to achieve the EoP Outcome and eventually the project goal.
- The project has been significantly effective in terms of EoP 2 and 3. However, contrastingly, women's participation in household level livelihood affairs has dropped by 25.3%.

Excerpt from statements made by the male participants in the FGDs

"It wasn't normal to send the girls out of home but now they go out to participate in the training and even they were encouraged to go to school".

"We consult our wives after dinner what to do tomorrow".

- The strategies have been effective to initiate a transformation in the power dynamics in the community. The vulnerable people in the community have better access and influence to the community groups and decision making process.
- The VSLAs have been instrumental to create capacity and livelihood opportunities for the women to contribute to their family income. Access to finance and livelihood opportunities for women would be effective to create much larger impacts on gender equity.

Recommendations

- The project logical framework should be revisited based on causal analysis. A multifaceted and comprehensive approach targeting the same cohort might be more effective to create the resilience and food security level impacts.
- CARE needs to develop capacity of the project staff in disability issues and incorporate focused strategies to engage the PwDs in resilience building process.
- CARE needs to initiate non-farm based vocational trainings for women, people with disabilities and other marginalized participants.

Adaptation Based on the Mid-term Review Recommendations

The project has conducted a mid-term review and has addressed all the findings and recommendations to strengthen the project strategies. The MTR Recommendations were as follows:

Recommendation-1: Refresher orientation training to be conducted to CIG, FFS, VSLA, SGs members to ensure the beneficiaries understand fully the purpose of the respective community group structures and work towards maturity of the structures.

Refresher orientation trainings were conducted to CIG, FFS, VSLA, and Solidarity groups' members. The study found the members of these groups had reasonably good understanding on purpose, structure and functioning of these institutions. The members of FFS, VSLA, and SG groups have developed capacity and confidence. CIG group members are not mature since the project stopped working with them.

Recommendation-2: Awareness and civic education should be given to project beneficiaries about available social and economic opportunities at community, district, and provincial level and how to access them.

The evaluation study found that awareness on available social and economic opportunities at community, district, and provincial levels were given to the project beneficiaries along with the ways of accessing to such opportunities through exposure visits, field days, linking the beneficiaries with local and provincial markets and also linking them with relevant departments such as DAIL, DoWA, and DoLSAMD.

Recommendation-3: Food security should be explained and availability of food, accessibility of food, utilization of food, and stability of food should be discussed with project participants.

KIIs with the project staff and FGDs with the project beneficiaries confirmed that communication sessions were conducted on food security aspects like availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability.

Recommendation-4: More consultation and support should be provided to kitchen garden keepers to increase amount of vegetable product so the gardeners can sell their product and generate income, in addition to its consumption by household.

It was found that the project has generated awareness on improved techniques for vegetable farming. The project staff also conducted on-field demo and followed up with the kitchen garden beneficiaries on a regular basis. During the FGDs, the participants showed good understanding on vegetable farming and also the importance of nutritional diversity through vegetables. The survey showed that participants could even grow surplus vegetables and sold it to generate supplementary income.

Rocommendation-4: Further consultation and support should be provided to farmers to increase wheat productivity so farmers can sell their product and generate income, in addition to its consumption by household.

The farmer participants reported that the Project staff had regularly visited and guided them through the entire cycle of wheat sowing to cultivation, growth to harvesting, and wheat collection to storage. The FGDs suggested that the farmers received adequate consultations, support, and technical advices in agricultural norms and practices. The result was evident in the survey findings. The farmers achieved higher and generated surplus to save crops for future cultivations and usage, and also could sell surplus crops to the market.

Recommendation-5: Linkages of CIGs with cooperative, traders, and other wholesalers should be strengthened and further facilitation by CARE should be increased so farmers can support each other to increase their harvest and market their products and access quality seeds.

FGD respondents suggested that the CIG group members received required orientations and trainings, and functional linkages were established with cooperatives, DAIL, local market, agricultural technology and wheat seed production companies. However, due to the financial challenges, the CIGs could not collect the products of farmers, market their products and could not buy quality seeds.

Recommendation-6: Advocacy element within the project to be scaled up during implementation in year 3 of the project to ensure the project will achieve project End of Project Outcome 3 – that is focused on influencing decision-making processes at the community level.

The survey findings reveal that participation of the beneficiaries, especially for women in community level decision making process has significantly improved in terms of degree of representation and influence. The FGDs suggested that CARE has put in remarkable effort in sensitizing women, their family members and the community leaders in rights, responsibilities and entitlements of women and other vulnerable sections of the community.

Recommendation-7: AACRS partnership agreement to be updated and amended based on current requirements.

The Project Manager reported that it has been update and signed by all partners in May 2017.

Recommendation-8: CARE to conduct its planned cross-visits to enable good learning opportunities for AACRS NGO partners and project beneficiaries.

It was reported that CARE has conducted its planned cross-visit with AKF in Bamian province and both AACRS partner NGOs have shared their experiences and learning with each another and with the project

beneficiaries. CARE Staff and beneficiaries also conducted one day cross visit to Action-Aid project area in Jawzjan and exchanged knowledge and experience.

Coordination with Government

KII's with the officials of different Government officials and RLP Project staff suggested that CARE could effectively engage with the Government system for smooth implementation and leverage through the support, expertise and opportunities available. The following section narrates the key findings on coordination with some of the key departments.

Ministry of Economics (MoEc): Ministry of Economics mainly focuses on financial reporting and monitoring of projects. CARE has been successful to establish functional coordination with the Ministry officials at the national and provincial levels. CARE has submitted half yearly budget utilization reports to the Ministry on timely basis. The Project had established active coordination with the Directorate of Economics (DoEc) at Balkh provincial level.

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL): MAIL's focus is on planning, organizing, coordinating and forging collaborations in agricultural sector. MAIL monitors the NGOs' activities in agriculture sector to ensure effectiveness better productivity. MAIL leads in the implementation of the Government's agricultural projects at the national level.

- The RLP Project team had close and frequent coordination with MAIL for implementation of RLP project. Main focuses of coordination with this department were:
 - Consultation and engagement in project design
 - Sharing regular planning and reporting of activities and outcomes
 - Involving relevant MAIL departments in project implementation activities
 - Mobilizing technical support for project team at the provincial level

CARE has maintained a close and active coordination with MAIL at the directorate levels (DAILs) for the implementation of the project and also mobilized technical support in monitoring of RLP project activities, selection of improved wheat seeds, fertilizer and developing manual for ToT trainings. The project team and DAIL staff have collaborated in capacity building of extension workers and technical in the target areas. CARE RLP team participated in sectorian coordination meetings of MAIL to update and share project activities.

Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyr, Disabilities (MoLSAMD): MoLSAMD's focus is social protection. The ministry imparts trainings on skill development with priority to martyrs, disabled and women.

MoLSAMD and the Directorate of Labor, Social, and Martyr, Disabailities (DoLSAMD) extended full support and cooperation to successful implantation of project. The VLSAs are already successfully handed over to the ministry. MoLSAMD would conduct vocational trainings for the VSLA participants at the district and provincial levels. The ministry would also help to establish forward linkages of the VSLAs. However, the CARE project staffs expressed that the ministry's more active involvement at the design phase could have added significant value.

Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD): The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) develops and implements programs on responsible social and financial growth in rural areas, primarily in the non-farm sector.

RLP Project team had active coordination with MRRD for implementation of RLP project.

The project was successful in

- Involving MRRD in the selection of areas for construction of irrigation structures
- Mobilizing technical support for the construction of irrigation structures
- Engaging relevant MRRD departments in project implementation activities
- Keeping MRRD updated on project activities and the achievements through regular reporting

As a result of CARE's close coordination with the MRRD staff at the national level, relevant departments in Balkh province and Khulm and Charkint districts actively contributed to the project in terms of technical support in designing and construction of the irrigation structures. In addition, their staff at the provincial and districts levels participated in the monitoring process to ensure transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of project activities.

Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA): MoWA is lead agency for promoting women's rights and women empowerment through providing equal social and economic opportunities for woman.

The RLP team participated in different coordination meetings with MoWA at national and DoWA at the provincial levels. As a result of the good coordination, DoWA extended its active support especially in marketing of the women entrepreneurs' products by providing forward linkage networks.

The project staff felt that more active involvement of the MoWA officials at the project designing stage and in implementation level could have added significant value to the project.

Strategies Potential for Scaling up and Replication

The key strategies tested, evolved and validated through the RLP Project that have the potential to be replicated and scaled up are:

VSLA: The project demonstrated that the VSLAs could provide an effective platform to sensitize and organize women participants. Beside the livelihood activities, these platforms create new social structures for equitable participation based on common interests. The VSLAs also have the potential for creating opportunities for the people of disabilities to participate in the mainstream social process. The VSLA model has been validated through the project to be remarkably successful in the socio-economic context to be a replicable and scalable strategy for socio-economic transformation.

Extension Strategy and Improved Seed Supply Chain: The project has demonstrated significant success in terms of increasing wheat productivity and income. The extension strategy including the FFS activities and demo fields have been tested to be effective in improving farming techniques and the improved seeds have complemented the initiative to yield high productivity and generate more income. CARE has also initiated a scalable approach in seed procurement by establishing a supply pool through the private distributors and suppliers. The study found that the extension strategy including FFS and the seed supply chain are highly potential for creating larger impacts if replicated and scaled up in the food insecure context of Afghanistan.

Kitchen Gardens: Kitchen Garden activities have been highly effective in not only ensuring accessibility to supplementary nutritional inputs but also to generate supplementary income through sale of the surplus vegetables. This has also emerged as a meaningfully economically productive occupation for women. It highly recommended that the Kitchen Garden strategy should be scaled up in other food insecure areas of Afghanistan.

Equitable Participation in Decision Making: The strategies adopted in the third EoP Outcome have demonstrated a successful model to transform the traditional power dynamics across social groups and genders. The strategy demonstrated significant impact in terms of creating equitable opportunities and influence of the women and other vulnerable sections in the community level institutions and process. CARE should capture the process of this transformation and replicate the same in other areas.

Recommendation

- CARE should replicate and scale up the strategies of VSLA, Agricultural Extension (including FFS and demo field), Kitchen Gardening and Inclusive Community Structure and Processes in larger area of Afghanistan.

Sustainability

While understanding the scope for sustainability of the outcomes to achieve resilience and food security, realistically we need to consider the extremely vulnerable socio-economic and political context ravaged by decades of conflict between the Afghan Government and different extremist groups. Afghanistan is also prone to recurring and multiple natural hazards including droughts, earthquakes, floods, and land slides. Climate change has impacted Afghanistan's natural resources on which people are primarily dependent for their livelihood.

The project has been successful to create sustainable changes in terms of promoting improved farming practices and inputs, and introducing diversified livelihood options. The project has also achieved significant success to impact people's dietary practices by introducing kitchen gardening and live stock rearing. These behavioral changes would have long lasting impact on the process of building resilience to food insecurity.

The project has also been successful to initiate change in the gender equation among the project communities through the VSLAs and different capacity building and sensitization programs. By creating space and capacity for women in the economic activities, the project has initiated a larger and long term process of reducing gender gap in the community. The study also reveals that participation of women has considerably increased in the community groups and they are influencing the decisions more actively. These changes are transformative and will have spiraling effect on the social and economic fabric in the local communities.

The study suggests a major change in the power dynamics of the communities. The community institutions are much more inclusive and accountable than before. The vulnerable groups including women gained larger space and their concerns and interests are better heard in the community institutions.

CARE has successfully handed over the VSLAs to MoLSAMD for appropriate follow up and reinforcement to sustain the momentum created through the project.

CARE has also mobilized support to get DOWA support at the provincial levels to establish market linkages for the women entrepreneurs. Though in the nascent stage, such direct market linkages would enable the women producers to earn fair prices without any middlemen's involvement.

Key Findings

- The project has been successful to create sustainable impact on the agricultural practices, income generation skills and dietary practices.
- The impacts in gender equation and community power dynamics have the potential for long lasting and wider transformations.
- The strategic focus on capacity building, attitudinal and behavioral change has ensured that the impacts are sustainable and further prosper even beyond the project period.
- VSLA, Agricultural Extension and Seed Supply Chain are some of the key strategies that show potential for replication.

Recommendations

- AACRS and CARE should consider extending the project in a more comprehensive manner to consolidate the changes toward the project goal. The project has successfully set the process toward an ambitious goal which requires adaptation and sustained effort to build resilience.
- As the VSLAs are already handed over, MoLSAMD needs to ensure that the VSLAs are provided with continued follow up support and reinforcements to maintain the momentum created through the project.

Monitoring and Evaluation System Assessment

M&E Planning

The monitoring, evaluation and learning framework was developed in a participatory. The program team, M&E national and Australian teams, agricultural specialists and field supervisors participated in the development of the plan. The M&E plan is of good quality from the point of view of its components. The project implementers think that there have been too many indicators to monitor and the nature of the project which is multi sectoral made it difficult to monitor and MELF was utilized mostly in Kabul level. Usually 7% to 10% of the project budget is perceived to be sufficient to carry out M&E activities. RLP has allocated 10.15% of its budget for the M&E activities.

M&E Structures and Human Resources

Initially RLP was led by MEL Coordinator and RLP MEL supervisor for its M&E activities and supported by the Data Management Officer in Kabul and two admin/data entry officers in Provincial level. The MEL Coordinator's position was never filled following his departure from CARE and the RLP MEL supervisor was promoted to the project manager position. Therefore, the Data Management Officer was the only dedicated M&E staff. The DMO who was trained in basics of research, data analysis and report writing, has had the required skills to handle output level data. However, M&E staff's responsibilities were defined clearly, Admin/Data entry officers' annual performance appraisals did not include M&E component. DMO reports to the project manager but her annual performance appraisal was conducted by the program coordinator.

M&E Processes and Procedures

CARE Afghanistan's M&E practice is informed by CARE's M&E guide and CARE's MEL community practice. MELF is project specific guidance which include how M&E is conducted, reporting procedures, who is involved in M&E and the results framework.

Data and Information Management

Data collection tools were developed based on the output indicators and captured the data required for a certain indicator. Unintended data such as backlash or gender based violence in households were not recorded. The data collection tools were user-friendly. The data collection tools lacked written guidance on how to collect data but staff were oriented about the data collection. The M&E staff were equipped with necessary equipment to carry out their activities. The equipment include computers and cameras. The M&E activities did not require usage of statistical package but instead M&E staff used MS Office package which are user-friendly. Data was analysed on a monthly basis and informed responses to management questions.

The data analysis was based on the information needed for the indicators and the data can be analysed to provide information on different groups as per the request. In order to be sure that the reports are of adequate accuracy, the data is verified by the Data Management officer which are appropriate for different audiences. The reports are sometimes delayed not due to M&E inputs but financial requirements of the reports are not fulfilled on timely basis. The data is reviewed on a monthly basis with the head of the program in order to inform internal decision making. The data is also utilized for the development of new projects. The data helped us plan for the next year in annual review. Information dissemination was guided by the communication policy. Project progress was shared with the donor and sectoral ministries as per the schedule. The annual review paved the way for feedback to be heard from the staff in all levels. The donor provided feedback on the reports submitted to them. There was no structured mechanism for the beneficiaries to share their feedback in timely a manner.

Key Findings

- The overall M&E system is responsive to the requirements of the donor and assisted the internal decision making to a great extent.
- High staff turn-over has been a challenge for CARE Afghanistan as an organization and the DMO was the only dedicated M&E staff based in Kabul office. Therefore, field activities were not monitored by an independent or semi-independent M&E staff of the project in order to verify the activities.
- Annual performance appraisals were meant to evaluate employees' performance against the pre-determined activities which resulted in recognition subject to the quality of the performance. The Admin/Data Entry Officers' annual performance appraisal did not include M&E component. On the other hand DMO reports to the project manager but her annual performance appraisal was done by the Program Coordinator who oversaw several projects including RLP.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that staff performance should be appraised against the activities stated in their job description and appraisal should be done by the line manager who is fully aware of employees' strengths and weaknesses.
- It is recommended that field activities should be monitored by dedicated M&E staff who is independent in his/her activities to some extent. The field monitors will provide the management with first-hand information against the unilateral reports of the activities. Thus the outputs are verified and will add to the transparency and accountability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the backdrop of declining purchasing power, disruption of livelihood options and poor rain fed staple performance, most appropriately, the projects' outcomes intended to improve food security and resilience. The project attempted to ensure the availability of wheat which is the staple food in Afghanistan, diversify agricultural activities through dairy farming and non-farm based income generating activities to ensure food availability and increase diversified sources of livelihoods. The project also envisaged to complement dietary intakes with vegetables produced through the kitchen gardens. In a fragile economy where the formal financial institutions are almost non-existent, the VSLAs offered the most effective solution of financial access.

The third EoP Outcome of the project empowers vulnerable groups, particularly the women to participate in the collective decision making processes. In society with predominant biases and gender norms, these changes are transformative and would have wide and long lasting impact to build inclusive growth based resilience.

Food Security and Resilience are much higher level impacts and should not be expected at the level of income and wheat productivity (as it is assumed in EoP Outcome-1). Further, EoP Outcome 1 alone can't create the conditions for food security and resilience. The composite effect of all three EoP Outcomes if targeted for the same cohort might lead to food security and resilience. In the project design, the second Outcome targets a completely different set of beneficiaries. The project can have different strategies targeted to different groups but these stand alone Outcomes might not meet the ambitious goal of the project.

The project has achieved significant impact at the Intermediate Outcome levels in terms of enhanced productivity and income, diversified farming and dietary intake, empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups and equitable decision making processes. However, the higher level changes in terms of food security and resilience would require sustained effort to emerge. The study also confirmed that the project objectives were aligned with and contributing to the four pillars of AARCS's theory of change-1. Diversified Livelihood 2. Access to Market 3. Natural Resource Management and 4. Production.

The study validated that the strategies of VSLA, Agricultural Extension (including FFS and Demo Fields) Improved Seed Supply Chain, Kitchen Gardening and Inclusive Community Structures and Processes as replicable and scalable models for larger impact.

Recommendations

- The Project Design should be revisited and consider putting Resilience and Food Security at the Project Goal level.
- The project should adopt a more holistic approach toward food security. It should incorporate more focused to address the issues like access to food (includes intra household equitable access), absorption and maintenance. This will need targeted and logical approach toward specific attitudinal and behavioural changes.
- CARE should integrate a community based DRR approach with the project to capacitate the community in dealing with the stressors and shocks related to natural hazards.

- The VSLA participants would need more hand holding support, reinforcements and skill upgradation to manage and sustain the VSLAs independently.
- CARE should consider initiating non-farm based vocational trainings for women, disabled and other vulnerable section in the community.
- CARE should consider improving the productivity of the local horticultural activities and also to introduce other low water consuming crops like Barley to supplement the deficit supply of wheat. This will help in further diversifying the farm economy and create a risk buffer.
- As recommended by the community members, CARE should reconsider the strategy to promote poultry farming.
- It seems the extension workers need further capacity building to support the farmers more effectively.
- The project logical framework should be revisited based on causal analysis. A multifaceted and comprehensive approach targeting the same cohort might be more effective to create the resilience and food security level impacts.
- CARE needs to develop the capacity of the project staff in disability issues and incorporate focused strategies to engage the PwDs in resilience building process.
- It is recommended that field activities should be monitored by dedicated M&E staff who are independent in his/her activities to some extent. The field monitors will provide the management with first-hand information against the unilateral reports of the activities. Thus the outputs are verified and will add to the transparency and accountability.
- CARE should take the learning from VSLA, Kitchen Garden, Agricultural Extension (including FFS and Demo Field) and Inclusive Community Structure and Process Building Strategies for further replication.
- AACRS and CARE should consider extending the project in a more comprehensive manner to consolidate the changes toward the project goal. The project has successfully set the process toward an ambitious goal which requires adaptation and sustained effort to build resilience.

APPENDIX

ENDLINE SURVEY – HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE																																																				
<p>Sample Point Number: _ _ _ </p> <p>Hello. My name is _____ and I am representing CARE Afghanistan, an international non-governmental organization, carrying out Endline survey. I ensure you that your identity will not be shared with anyone. The result of this assessment will help us to understand about the change in living condition of people in this community. “Are you willing to spend approximately 20 minutes with me carrying out this assessment?” 1= Yes 2= No</p> <p>A1.Name of Enumerator: _____</p> <p>A2.Date of interview: -----/-----/-----/</p> <p>A3.Time interview starts: -----:-----</p> <p>B1.Name of the respondent: _____</p> <p>B2.Sex: - 1=Male 2=Female</p> <p>B3.Age: _ _ _ </p> <p>B4.Head of family: <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50px; text-align: center;">1-Yes</td> <td style="width: 50px; text-align: center;">2-No</td> </tr> </table></p> <p>B5.District: <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50px; text-align: center;">1-Khulm</td> <td style="width: 50px; text-align: center;">2-Charkint</td> </tr> </table></p> <p>B6: Beneficiaries</p> <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Farmer</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Kitchen Gardening</td> <td style="text-align: center;">VSLA</td> </tr> </table> <p>Type:</p> <p>B7.Community/C DC: _____</p> <p>B8. No of Family Members: _ _ _ </p> <p>Please describe sex and gender disaggregated data of your family?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th>Sex</th> <th>< 6 Yrs</th> <th>7-18 Yrs</th> <th>19-64 Yrs</th> <th>+ 65</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>B8a1=[]</td> <td>B8a2=[]</td> <td>B8a3=[]</td> <td>B8a4=[]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>B8b1=[]</td> <td>B8b2=[]</td> <td>B8b3=[]</td> <td>B8b4=[]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>					1-Yes	2-No	1-Khulm	2-Charkint	1	2	3	Farmer	Kitchen Gardening	VSLA	Sex	< 6 Yrs	7-18 Yrs	19-64 Yrs	+ 65	Male	B8a1=[]	B8a2=[]	B8a3=[]	B8a4=[]	Female	B8b1=[]	B8b2=[]	B8b3=[]	B8b4=[]	Total																						
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<p>C2: What are the main sources of the food this household consumes? (Multiple response)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">1) Food aid</td> <td style="width: 50%;">5) Food purchases</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Borrow from relatives/neighbors</td> <td>6) Own crop product</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) collecting wild foods</td> <td>7) Other1.....</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) Own livestock products</td> <td>8) Other2.....</td> </tr> </table>					1) Food aid	5) Food purchases	2) Borrow from relatives/neighbors	6) Own crop product	3) collecting wild foods	7) Other1.....	4) Own livestock products	8) Other2.....																																								
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<p>C4.How many times the following foods have been taken in the last 7 days?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th> _ time(s)</th> </tr> <tr><td>C4a</td><td>Any cereals, e.g. rice, bread, wheat, corn bread, barley, pasta?</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4b</td><td>Any vegetables e.g. pumpkin, carrots, squash, spinach, okra, pepper, tomato, snap bean, leek, eggplant, cauliflower, cucumberetc.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4c</td><td>Any foods made from roots and tubers e.g. potatoes, onion, turnip?</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4d</td><td>Any fresh fruits e.g. peach, apple, grapes, melon, water melon, fig, pomegranate, apricot, plum or other fruits?)</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4e</td><td>Any meat, such as beef, poultry, lamb, etc.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4f</td><td>Any eggs?</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4g</td><td>Any dairy e.g. milk, yogurt, cheese, butter, Kurt,</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4h</td><td>Any cooking oil e.g. animal fat, vegetable oil, butter...etc.</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>C4i</td><td>Any legumes/pulses, e.g. kidney beans, green beans, pea, mung bean, lentil?</td><td></td></tr> </table>							_ time(s)	C4a	Any cereals, e.g. rice, bread, wheat, corn bread, barley, pasta?		C4b	Any vegetables e.g. pumpkin, carrots, squash, spinach, okra, pepper, tomato, snap bean, leek, eggplant, cauliflower, cucumberetc.		C4c	Any foods made from roots and tubers e.g. potatoes, onion, turnip?		C4d	Any fresh fruits e.g. peach, apple, grapes, melon, water melon, fig, pomegranate, apricot, plum or other fruits?)		C4e	Any meat, such as beef, poultry, lamb, etc.		C4f	Any eggs?		C4g	Any dairy e.g. milk, yogurt, cheese, butter, Kurt,		C4h	Any cooking oil e.g. animal fat, vegetable oil, butter...etc.		C4i	Any legumes/pulses, e.g. kidney beans, green beans, pea, mung bean, lentil?																			
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+ 65	C1a4: []	C1b4: []		C4j	Any sugar, honey or candy?	_ time(s)
				C4k	Any dry fruits e.g. nuts such as walnuts, pistachio, almond, peanut, raisin, dry fig...etc.	_ time(s)

Household Hunger Scale (HHS)

C5a: In the past [4 weeks/30 days] was there ever no food to eat of any kind in your house because of lack of resources to get food?

0 = Never	1 = Rarely	2 = Often
-----------	------------	-----------

C5b: In the past [4 weeks/30 days] did you or any household members go to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food?

0 = Never	1 = Rarely	2 = Often
-----------	------------	-----------

C5c: In the past [4 weeks/30 days] did you or any household member go a whole day and night without eating anything at all because there was not enough food?

0 = Never	1 = Rarely	2 = Often
-----------	------------	-----------

HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE [Coping Strategy Index (CSI)]

C6: Please indicate if you had used below behaviors within the last six months (select as many responses as you like)

	List of behaviors	Yes	No
C6a	Sold Reproductive	1-Yes	2-No
C6b	Sold House or Land	1-Yes	2-No
C6c	Sold animals earlier than	1-Yes	2-No
C6d	Worked to feed self	1-Yes	2-No
C6e	Migrated to look for work	1-Yes	2-No
C6f	Increased daily labour	1-Yes	2-No
C6g	Decreased expenditures	1-Yes	2-No
C6h	Increased collection and	1-Yes	2-No
C6i	Spent savings or	1-Yes	2-No
C6j	Sold household assets	1-Yes	2-No
C6k	Sold Income Generating	1-Yes	2-No
C6l	Rented out Land/House	1-Yes	2-No
C6m	Begging/Relying on	1-Yes	2-No
C6n	Sold Farm Equipment	1-Yes	2-No
C6o	Sent Children for labour	1-Yes	2-No
C6p	Pulling Children out of	1-Yes	2-No

C7: Please indicate if you had used below behaviors within the last 7 days (enumerator should read the list)

	List of behaviors	Yes	No
C7a	Rely on less preferred and less	1-Yes	2-No
C7	Borrow food or rely on help from	1-Yes	2-No
C7c	Limit portion size at mealtime	1-Yes	2-No
C7	Limit portion size at mealtime	1-Yes	2-No
C7e	Restrict consumption by adults in order for children to eat	1-Yes	2-No
C7f	Reduce number of meals eaten in a day	1-Yes	2-No

C1	Daughter				
----	----------	--	--	--	--

C8.How do you heat your room during cold winter if there is shortage of heating materials?

1. Take loan	4. Go for work to other district
2. Selling assets	5. Seek assistance
3. Go for work out of Mazar	6. Other.....

C9.How do you cover your family expenses if your family income is not enough?

1. Take loan	4. Go for work to other countries
2. Selling assets	5. Seek assistance.
3. Go for work out of Mazar	6. Other.....

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

C10: How much income earned by following household members;

		1	2	3	
	Relation ship	Source of Income	Income in AFN	Yearly, Seasonally, Monthly, Weekly, Daily	Total Income Yearly
C10a	Respondent				
C10b	Father				
C10c	Mother				
C10d	Spouse				
C10e	Sister				
C10f	Brother				
C10g	Son				

0					
h					
C	Other (specify)				
1					
0					
i					
C	Other (specify)				
1					
0					
j					
Total Daily Income AFN					

If source of income is daily wage, below questions needs to be responded;

C11a. How many days you can find job in a month? _____

C11b. How many months you're unemployed in a year? _____

HOUSEHOLD AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES

C12. How much land you had under cultivation of wheat crops during recent agriculture cycle?

1= Jerib or 2= TokhumRez

C13. How much wheat harvested from your own land in recent agriculture cycle? Amount harvested: _____ (Specify Unit)

C14. What is the monetary value of (Unit) wheat produced during recent agriculture cycle?

_____ Afs

What agriculture practices you have used during recent agriculture cycle for each crop?

C15a - Land preparation and turning the soil loose with the help of ploughs, spade & other mechanical implements

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15b - Selection of quality improved seed

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15c - Preparing a seed bed and growing seedlings when plants are transplanted like paddy

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15d - Application of manures and fertilizers

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15e - Spraying pesticides in a safely manner to protect crops from pest and diseases

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15f - Harvest of crop (wheat) using machine

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15g - Storage of dried crops in air tight containers like gunny bags in moisture proof, rat proof godowns or warehouse.

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15h - Protection from weeds or weed control

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C15i - Considering crop rotation

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

AGRICULTURE INFORMATION & SUPPORT

C16: Are there agriculture or veterinary workers working with your community?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C17. If yes, has the Extension (Agriculture) Workers provided you any information related to agriculture?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C18. If yes, to what extent you're satisfied of updated agriculture related information provided;

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied	I don't know

C19. Has Extension Workers introduced you any new technology or practices related to agriculture?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

C20. If yes, to what extent you're satisfied from extension services/supports (sharing of improved agriculture technology and

agriculture practices) provided;

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied	I don't know

C21. Have you used new technologies in agriculture in recent agriculture cycle?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

KITCHEN GARDENING

D1: Are you using backyard land for kitchen gardening?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

D2: If yes, for what purpose you have used kitchen gardening;
(Circle as much responses as you like)

1= to provide a basic food subsistence
2= to sell its products in market for income
3= to sell in the market and for food subsistence
4= to have nutritious meals

D3: Is it worthwhile for you and your family to work on the kitchen gardening?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

D4: Do you process kitchen gardening vegetable products?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

VILLAGE SAVING AND LOAN ASSOCIATION (VSLA)

D5: Are there any opportunities for women in your neighborhood to deposit their money or take loan when you need?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

D6: If yes, select from which groups of the following you have taken loan?

1) Bank	4) Friends/ relatives/neighbors
2) Aid Agency (NGOs)	5) Clubs / CBOs
3) VSLA	6) Other.....

D7: How many times you have taken loan during last year?

|_|_|_|_|Time(s)

D8: For what purpose you have taken loan?

1) Livelihood support	5) Education expense
2) Food purchase	6) wedding/funeral
3) Health care	7) loan repayment
4) business	8) Other.....

E. EoP OUTCOME 3

E1. Please indicate which group(s) of the following established in your community?

1= Common Interest Group (CIG)
2= Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA)
3= Water management Group (WMG)
4= CDC/WSC
5= Advocacy group (Solidarity Groups)
6= Cooperatives
7= Local Shura

E2. Please indicate in which group(s) of the followings any member of your family have participated in the last 3 months?

1= Common Interest Group (CIG)
2 = Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA)
3= Water management Group (WMG)
4= CDC/WSC
5= Advocacy group (Solidarity Groups)
6= Cooperatives
7= Local Shura

E3, If yes, has she spoke at any of those meeting?

1-Yes	2-No
-------	------

E4. Is any female from your family participating in management position of CDC or any other community groups?

	1-Yes		2-No

<p>E5. Have your concerns and interest been addressed in community decisions in the past 3 months?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">1-Yes</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">2-No</td> </tr> </table> <p>E6. Is any female member of your family involved in decision making about your livelihood at household level?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">1-Yes</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">2-No</td> </tr> </table> <p>E7. If a Advocacy group (Solidarity Group) exists, how often do they gather to discuss and decide about community issues;</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Daily</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Weekly</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Monthly</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Ad hoc</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">I don't know</td> </tr> </table> <p>E8. Is there any economical or social case that negatively affected your livelihood/life?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">1-Yes</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">2-No</td> </tr> </table> <p>D9. If yes, have you referred your case to decision making bodies for solving?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">1-Yes</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">2-No</td> </tr> </table> <p>E10. Please indicate level of your satisfaction on accountability and responsiveness of head of groups;</p>	1-Yes	2-No	1-Yes	2-No	1	2	3	4	5	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Ad hoc	I don't know	1-Yes	2-No	1-Yes	2-No	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%; padding: 5px;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Strongly dissatisfied</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Dissatisfied</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Satisfied</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Strongly Satisfied</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">I don't know</td> </tr> </table> <p>E11. How many meetings were conducted in different groups for the last 3 months that addressed your concerns and interests?</p> <p>Number of meetings: _ _ _ </p> <p>A5. Time interview ends: -----:-----</p> <p>A6. Duration of interview: _ _ _ </p> <p>A7. Method of quality control/back-check</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Back-check by supervisor 2. Back-check by Team Leader 3. Back-check by phone 4. Not back checked <p>Enumerator's Signature: _____</p> <p>A8. Supervisor Name and Signature _____</p>	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied	I don't know
1-Yes	2-No																												
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1	2	3	4	5																									
Strongly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied	I don't know																									

FGD Guide

Name of the interviewer:

Name of the note taker

District:	Village:
Date FGD conducted:	Time FGD started:
Time FGD ended:	Method used for recording the answers:
Consent obtained and the consent form signed	# of Participants: _____
a) Yes b) No	

Please ask the following questions and note the answers on one blank sheet provided

Please number the blank sheets before you start

Please write down the question numbers at the beginning of answers to each question

There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said.

I would like to read the consent form which explains the aim of this study, how we use this data and confidentiality of the information you provide us with.

Let's begin by knowing each other. Tell us your names and what you do?

Project Description

- 1) Please tell us about the Resilient Livelihood Project implemented by CARE (probe if necessary)
 - a. Objectives of the project
 - b. Target group and area
 - c. Activities
 - i. Agriculture
 - ii. Women empowerment
 - iii. Governance

Relevance

- 1) What are the needs and the priorities of your communities?
- 2) Was the project in line with the needs and/or priorities of your communities? How?
- 3) Who has benefited the most from the project? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Men
 - b. Women
 - c. Households

Effectiveness

- 1) How do you assess the effectiveness of the project? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - i. Food security
 - ii. Income
 - iii. Resilient
 - b. Women empowerment
 - i. Food security
 - ii. Access to social opportunities
 - iii. Access to economic opportunities
 - c. Governance
 - i. Influence decision making process
- 2) Which component of the project do you think was the most useful one? Why? (probe if necessary)

- a. Kitchen gardening
 - b. Provision of seeds
 - c. Village Loan and Saving Associations
 - d. Extension service workers in agriculture
 - e. Extension service workers in veterinary
 - f. Common interest groups
 - g. Small scale irrigation
 - h. Drought resistant seed distribution
 - i. Farmer field schools
 - j. Solidarity groups
 - k. Livestock distribution
 - l. Community elder training
- 3) If you were asked to choose some interventions to be repeated as they are in the next phase, which interventions would you choose? Why?
 - 4) If you were asked to choose some interventions to be scaled up in the next phase, which interventions would you choose? Why?
 - 5) If you were asked to choose some interventions to be adjusted in the next phase, which interventions would you choose? Why?
 - 6) If you were asked to choose some interventions to be dropped in the next phase, which interventions would you choose? Why?

Gender

- 1) How do you assess the effectiveness of CIGs
 - a. Access to agricultural information
 - b. Access to agricultural networks
 - c. Access to agricultural services
- 2) How do you assess the effectiveness of VSLAs?
 - a. Decrease in economic risks of the households
- 3) What were the strengths of CIGs in promoting gender equality and women voices?
- 4) What were the strengths of VSLA in promoting gender equality and women voices?
- 5) What were the Challenges of CIGs in promoting gender equality and women voices?
- 6) What were the challenges of VSLA in promoting gender equality and women voices?
- 7) Given the strength(s) of CIGs, has it changed behaviour of women in the groups and/or in the communities? What are the changes?
- 8) Given the strength(s) of VSLA, has it changed behaviour of women in the associations and/or in the communities? What are the changes?
- 9) How do you assess the effectiveness of the interventions in engaging women in decision making processes in community and households?
- 10) Which intervention(s) could increase women's engagement in decision making processes in community and household level? How?
- 11) Have men changed their attitudes and practices towards women? Which project interventions/activities do you think have caused the change?
- 12) Were women in your communities involved in the project? Explain in what capacity?
 - a. Designing project activities

- b. Project management
- c. Advisor

Sustainability

- 1) What results of the project will likely continue without the support of CARE? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance

Challenges and Recommendations

- 1) What were the challenges in this project? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance
- 2) What are your recommendations for CARE?
- 3) What are your recommendations for DAIL?

THANK YOU

KII Guide – CARE Staff

Name of the interviewer:

Name of the note taker:

Designation of the key informant:	Gender: a) Female b) Male
Date KII conducted:	Time KII started:
Time KII ended:	Method used for recording the answers: b) Audio Recording b) Note taking
Consent obtained and the consent form signed b) Yes b) No	

Please ask the following questions and note the answers on one blank sheet provided

Please number the blank sheets before you start

Please write down the question numbers at the beginning of answers to each question

Project Description

- 2) Please tell us about your role in the Resilient Livelihood Project.
 - a. Design
 - b. implementation
- 3) How long have you been in this position?
- 4) Please tell us about the Resilient Livelihood Project implemented by CARE (probe if necessary)
 - d. Objectives of the project
 - e. Target group and area
 - f. Activities
 - i. Agriculture
 - ii. Women empowerment
 - iii. Governance

Relevance

- 1) Please tell us about how the needs were identified in Khulm and Charkint.
- 2) Was the project in line with the needs and/or priorities of the communities? How?
- 3) Who has benefited the most from the project? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Men
 - b. Women
 - c. Households

Effectiveness

- 7) How do you assess the effectiveness of the project? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance
- 8) Which component of the project do you think was the most useful one? Why? (probe if necessary)
 - a. Kitchen gardening
 - b. Provision of seeds
 - c. Village Loan and Saving Associations
 - d. Extension service workers in agriculture
 - e. Extension service workers in veterinary
 - f. Common interest groups
 - g. Small scale irrigation
 - h. Drought resistant seed distribution
 - i. Farmer field schools
 - j. Solidarity groups
 - k. Livestock Distribution
 - l. Community elder training
- 9) Which interventions do you think should be repeated as they are in the next phase? Why?
- 10) Which interventions do you think should be scaled up in the next phase? Why?
- 11) Which interventions do you think should be adjusted in the next phase? Why?
- 12) Which interventions do you think should be dropped in the next phase? Why?

Gender

- 13) How do you assess the effectiveness of CIGs and VSLAs?
 - a. What were the strengths of CIGs in promoting gender equality and women voices?
 - b. What were the strengths of VSLA in promoting gender equality and women voices?
 - c. What were the Challenges of CIGs in promoting gender equality and women voices?
 - d. What were the challenges of VSLA in promoting gender equality and women voices?
- 14) Given the strength(s) of CIGs, has it changed behaviour of men and women in the groups and/or in the communities? What are the changes?
- 15) Given the strength(s) of VSLA, has it changed behaviour of men and women in the groups and/or in the communities? What are the changes?
- 16) How do you assess the effectiveness of the interventions in engaging women in decision making processes in community and households?
- 17) Which intervention(s) could increase women's engagement in decision making processes in community and household level? How?
- 18) Have men changed/improved their attitudes and practices towards women? Which project interventions/activities do you think have caused the change?
- 19) Were women employed in RLP? Explain in what capacity?
 - a. Designing project activities
 - b. Project management
 - c. Advisory

Challenges

- 1) Please tell us about potential barriers that affected delivery of the project.

Sustainability

- 2) What results of the project will likely continue without the support of CARE? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance

Recommendations and lessons learnt

- 1) Please provide recommendations for carrying out similar projects in Afghanistan
 - d. Please tell us about some lessons learnt from the implementation of this project?
 - i. What worked and how?
 - ii. What did not work and why?
 - e. What do you see as your needs for future programs?
 - f. What could be done to improve the project?
 - g. Your recommendations for CARE
- 2) Anything else you would like to add

KII Guide - DAIL

Name of the interviewer:

Name of the note taker:

Designation of the key informant:	
Date KII conducted:	Time KII started:
Time KII ended:	Method used for recording the answers: c) Audio Recording b) Note taking
Consent obtained and the consent form signed c) Yes b) No	

Please ask the following questions and note the answers on one blank sheet provided

Please number the blank sheets before you start

Please write down the question numbers at the beginning of answers to each question

Project Description

- 5) Please tell us about the Resilient Livelihood Project implemented by CARE (probe if necessary)
 - g. Objectives of the project
 - h. Target group and area
 - i. Activities
 - i. Agriculture
 - ii. Women empowerment
 - iii. Governance

Relevance

- 1) What are the needs and the priorities of the communities in Khulm and Charkint?
 - a. Was the project in line with the needs and/or priorities of the communities? How?
 - b. Was the project in line with the priorities of DAIL?
- 2) Who has benefited the most from the project? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Men
 - b. Women
 - c. Households

Effectiveness

- 13) How do you assess the effectiveness of the project? (Probe if necessary)

- a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance
- 14) Which component of the project do you think was the most useful one? Why? (probe if necessary)
- a. Kitchen gardening
 - b. Provision of seeds
 - c. Village Loan and Saving Associations
 - d. Extension service workers in agriculture
 - e. Extension service workers in veterinary
 - f. Common interest groups
 - g. Small scale irrigation
 - h. Drought resistant seed distribution
 - i. Farmer field schools
 - j. Solidarity groups
 - k. Livestock distribution
 - l. Community elder training
- 15) Which interventions do you think should be repeated as they are in the next phase? Why?
- 16) Which interventions do you think should be scaled up in the next phase? Why?
- 17) Which interventions do you think should be adjusted in the next phase? Why?
- 18) Which interventions do you think should be dropped in the next phase? Why?

Challenges

- 2) Please tell us about potential barriers that affected delivery of the project.

Sustainability

- 3) What results of the project will likely continue without the support of CARE? Why? (Probe if necessary)
- a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance

Recommendations and lessons learnt

- 3) Please provide recommendations for carrying out similar projects in Afghanistan
- h. Please tell us about some lessons learnt from the implementation project?
 - i. What worked and how?
 - ii. What did not work and why?
 - i. What do you see as your needs for future programs?
 - j. What could be done to improve the project?
 - k. Your recommendations for CARE
- 4) Anything else you would like to add

KII Guide – District Governor

Name of the interviewer:

Name of the note taker:

Designation of the key informant:	
Date KII conducted:	Time KII started:
Time KII ended:	Method used for recording the answers: d) Audio Recording b) Note taking
Consent obtained and the consent form signed d) Yes b) No	

Please ask the following questions and note the answers on one blank sheet provided

Please number the blank sheets before you start

Please write down the question numbers at the beginning of answers to each question

Project Description

- 6) Please tell us about the Resilient Livelihood Project implemented by CARE (probe if necessary)
 - j. Objectives of the project
 - k. Target group and area
 - l. Activities
 - i. Agriculture
 - ii. Women empowerment
 - iii. Governance

Relevance

- 1) What are the needs and priorities of your communities?
- 2) Was the project in line with the needs and/or priorities of your communities? How?
- 3) Who has benefited the most from the project? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Men
 - b. Women
 - c. Households

Effectiveness

- 19) How do you assess the effectiveness of the project? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment

c. Governance

20) Which component of the project do you think was the most useful one? Why? (probe if necessary)

- a. Kitchen gardening
- b. Provision of seeds
- c. Village Loan and Saving Associations
- d. Extension service workers in agriculture
- e. Extension service workers in veterinary
- f. Common interest groups
- g. Small scale irrigation
- h. Drought resistant seed distribution
- i. Farmer field schools
- j. Solidarity groups
- k. Livestock distribution
- l. Community elder training

21) Which interventions do you think should be repeated as they are in the next phase? Why?

22) Which interventions do you think should be scaled up in the next phase? Why?

23) Which interventions do you think should be adjusted in the next phase? Why?

24) Which interventions do you think should be dropped in the next phase? Why?

Challenges

3) Please tell us about potential barriers that affected delivery of the project.

Sustainability

4) What results of the project will likely continue without the support of CARE? Why? (Probe if necessary)

- a. Agriculture
- b. Women empowerment
- c. Governance

Recommendations and lessons learnt

5) Please provide recommendations for carrying out similar projects in Afghanistan

- l. Please tell us about some lessons learnt from the implementation project?
 - i. What worked and how?
 - ii. What did not work and why?
- m. What do you see as your needs for future programs?
- n. What could be done to improve the project?
- o. Your recommendations for CARE

6) Anything else you would like to add

KII Guide with DRRD

Name of the interviewer:

Name of the note taker:

Designation of the key informant:	
Date KII conducted:	Time KII started:
Time KII ended:	Method used for recording the answers: e) Audio Recording b) Note taking
Consent obtained and the consent form signed e) Yes b) No	

Please ask the following questions and note the answers on one blank sheet provided

Please number the blank sheets before you start

Please write down the question numbers at the beginning of answers to each question

Project Description

- 7) Please tell us about the Resilient Livelihood Project implemented by CARE (probe if necessary)
 - m. Objectives of the project
 - n. Target group and area
 - o. Activities
 - i. Agriculture
 - ii. Women empowerment
 - iii. Governance
- 8) Please tell us about small scale irrigation and water saving structures constructed and/or rehabilitated by CARE

Relevance

- 1) Was the project in line with the needs and/or priorities of the target communities? How?
- 2) Was the project in line with priorities of directorate of rural rehabilitation and development?
How

Effectiveness

- 25) How do you assess the effectiveness of the project?
- 26) How do you assess the effectiveness of the construction of small scale irrigation and water saving structures?

Challenges

- 4) Please tell us about potential barriers that affected delivery of the project specifically the construction of small scale irrigation structures.

Sustainability

- 1) How sustainable are these structures?

Recommendations and lessons learnt

- 2) Please provide recommendations for carrying out similar projects in Afghanistan
 - a. Please tell us about some lessons learnt from the implementation project?
 - a. What worked and how?
 - b. What did not work and why?
 - b. What do you see as your needs for future programs?
 - a. Should construction of small scale irrigation and water saving structures continue like recent phase, scale up or stop?
 - c. What could be done to improve the project?
 - d. Your recommendations for CARE
- 3) Anything else you would like to add

KII Guide – ACE

Name of the interviewer:

Name of the note taker:

Designation of the key informant:	
Date KII conducted:	Time KII started:
Time KII ended:	Method used for recording the answers: f) Audio Recording b) Note taking
Consent obtained and the consent form signed f) Yes b) No	

Please ask the following questions and note the answers on one blank sheet provided

Please number the blank sheets before you start

Please write down the question numbers at the beginning of answers to each question

Project Description

- 9) Please tell us about your role in AACRS Scheme.
- 10) How long have you been in this position?
- 11) Please tell us about the Resilient Livelihood Projects implemented by CARE (probe if necessary)
 - p. Objectives of the project
 - q. Target group and area
 - r. Activities
 - i. Agriculture
 - ii. Women empowerment
 - iii. Governance

Relevance

- 1) Was the project in line with the:
 - a. needs of the communities
 - b. priorities of the government
 - c. Priorities of AACRS?
- 2) Who has benefited the most from the project? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Men
 - b. Women
 - c. Households

Effectiveness

- 27) How do you assess the effectiveness of the project? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance
- 28) Which component of the project do you think was the most useful one? Why? (probe if necessary)
 - a. Kitchen gardening
 - b. Provision of seeds
 - c. Village Loan and Saving Associations
 - d. Extension service workers in agriculture
 - e. Extension service workers in veterinary
 - f. Common interest groups
 - g. Small scale irrigation
 - h. Drought resistant seed distribution
 - i. Farmer field schools
 - j. Solidarity groups
 - k. Livestock distribution
 - l. Community elder
- 29) Which interventions do you think should be repeated as they are in the next phase? Why?
- 30) Which interventions do you think should be scaled up in the next phase? Why?
- 31) Which interventions do you think should be adjusted in the next phase? Why?
- 32) Which interventions do you think should be dropped in the next phase? Why?

Gender

- 20) How do you assess the effectiveness of CIGs and VSLAs?
 - a. What were the strengths of CIGs in promoting gender equality and women voices?
 - b. What were the strengths of VSLA in promoting gender equality and women voices?
 - c. What were the Challenges of CIGs in promoting gender equality and women voices?
 - d. What were the challenges of VSLA in promoting gender equality and women voices?
- 21) Given the strength(s) of CIGs, has it changed behaviour of women in the groups and/or in the communities? What are the changes?
- 22) Given the strength(s) of VSLA, has it changed behaviour of women in the groups and/or in the communities? What are the changes?
- 23) How do you assess the effectiveness of the interventions in engaging women in decision making processes in community and households?
- 24) Which intervention(s) could increase women's engagement in decision making processes in community and household level? How?
- 25) Have men changed/improved their attitudes and practices towards women? Which project interventions/activities do you think have caused the change?

Challenges

- 5) Please tell us about potential barriers that affected delivery of the project.

Sustainability

- 5) What results of the project will likely continue without the support of CARE? Why? (Probe if necessary)
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Women empowerment
 - c. Governance

Recommendations and lessons learnt

- 7) Please provide recommendations for carrying out similar projects in Afghanistan
 - a. Please tell us about some lessons learnt from the implementation project?
 - b. What could be done to improve the project?
 - c. Your recommendations for CARE
- 8) Anything else you would like to add

Key Informant Interview with – Consent Form

Introduction: Hello my name is I am here on behalf of CARE Afghanistan to evaluate the impact of Resilient Livelihood Project implemented in Khulm and Charkint districts of Balkh province.

Objective: We request you to help us with this study which is conducted by independent consultants with the support of CARE through your participation. To do so, we want to explore different dimensions of this program via interviewing you and some of other stakeholders like representatives of Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, some NGOs and some of CARE staff.

Procedure: The interview will take 60 - 90 mins. If you agree we want to record the interview in order not to miss your thoughts during the interview. Because we value your opinions.

Risk and Inconvenience: We believe that participation in this interview is completely voluntary. In case a question disturbs you, or you don't feel comfortable to answer a question or you want to quit the interview, you are completely entitled to do so.

Data utilization: This study is conducted to evaluate the impact of the project on the lives of people in the target communities. CARE may utilize the collected information to generate lessons learned and inform future programming.

Confidentiality: We appreciate your participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is highly confidential. The information recorded in the tape and other information collected during the interview will remain confidential and are kept in computer safely. Only those will access the information who are involved in this study.

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can avoid participating any time you want. It will not affect you, should you not choose to participate.

Contact person: In case you have any question about this study or face any problem, feel free to contact Dr. Humayoon Iqbal through +93798952929 or via e mail: homayoon.iqbal@gmail.com

Consent Declaration: If you agree, please write your name down and sign it.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____