Final Report

Conflict and Fragility Study

Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project (CCAP)

Submitted by ATR Consulting
November 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

TABLE OF TABLES

TABLE OF MAPS

ABBREVIATIONS

ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Forces
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ASOP	Afghanistan Social Outreach Program
ATR	Assess Transform Reach
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
CBR	Capacity Building for Results
CC	Citizens' Charter
CCAP	Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project
CCNPP	Citizens' Charter National Priority Program
CCDC(s)	Cluster Community Development Council(s)
CDC(s)	Community Development Council(s)
CDD	Community Driven Development
CDP(s)	Community Development Plan(s)
CPM	Community Participatory Monitoring
CCSA	Conflict Case Study Analysis
DCCMC	District Citizens' Charter Management Committee
DDA	District Development Assembly
DP	District Profile
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP(s)	Facilitating Partner(s)
GA	Gozar Assembly
HRAIS	High Risk Areas Implementation Strategy
HRAIU	High Risk Areas Implementation Unit
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(s)
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
MCCMC	Municipal Citizens' Charter Management Committee
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NCCMC	Nahia Citizens' Charter Management Committee
NSP	National Solidarity Program
PDC	Provincial Development Committee
PMU(s)	CCAP's Provincial Management Unit(s)
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

SO(s)	Social Organizer(s)
ToR	Terms of Reference
VP	Village Profile
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes research done in five provinces on the relationship between conflict, fragility and Afghanistan's Citizens' Charter Program (CCAP). The research was conducted between the summer of 2018 and the winter of early 2019, a period of significant political upheaval due to parliamentary elections, and increased fighting between the Afghan government and various anti-government forces. The study is meant to serve as a kind of baseline, looking at CCAP one year into program implementation with the aim of studying initial project interactions in conflict areas and learning from early field activities. A follow-up study is expected in the next two to three years. As such, this study does not aim to determine whether CCAP is "working" or not, but instead looks at the ways in which CCAP, as it has been implemented thus far, has reduced, contributed to, and / or reshaped both conflict and fragility in the areas studied, while highlighting emerging risks that will require attention for the future of the program. This research does not claim to be representative of all 13,000 CC communities across Afghanistan, but it does seek to identify issues worth further exploration in areas outside the scope of this study.

Methodology

As outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the study: "The long-term goal of the Government of Afghanistan's Citizens' Charter Program (CC) is to reduce poverty and deepen the relationship between citizens and the state. In the medium-term, the Citizens' Charter aims to improve the delivery of core infrastructure and social services to communities through strengthened Community Development

Map 1: Study districts
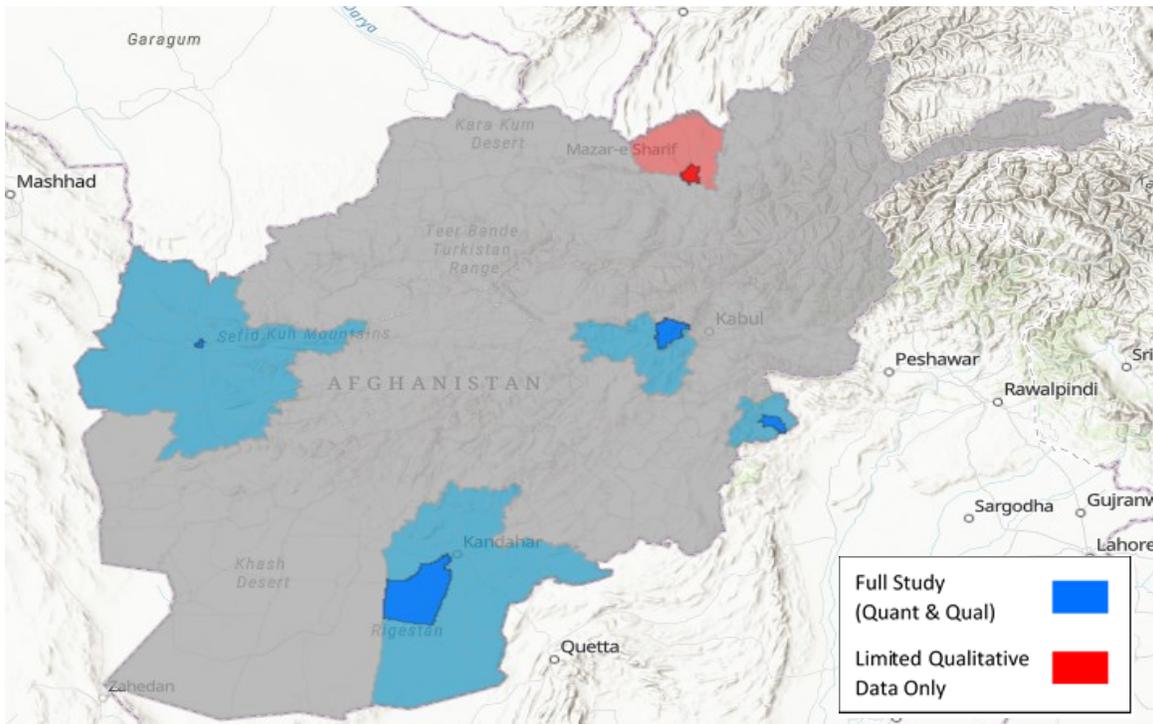
Councils (CDCs)."[1] In support of these objectives, ATR carried out an in-depth, qualitative study in sixteen CC target communities across five districts,[2] and a quantitative study in 100 communities in four of these five districts, to examine the community-level drivers of conflict in CC communities and to explore the links between the CC, social cohesion, service delivery, citizens' trust, and state legitimacy. The study districts — Panjwayi in Kandahar province; Matun in Khost; Jalrez in Wardak; Herat City; and Ali Abad in Kunduz — reflect a variety of contexts. Selection criteria included: regional diversity, topographical differences, ethnic diversity, security, potential drivers of conflict (criminality, insurgency, ethnic cleavages, resources), fragile situations (influx of IDPs/returnees, governance issues), and urban/rural considerations.

The central questions of this study are:
1. What key factors differentiate the conflict dynamics in one area as compared to others?
2. What builds or breaks social cohesion at the local level?
3. How are returnees and former combatants being integrated into communities and CDCs?
4. What are the drivers of conflict at the local level and what pathways lead to conflict resolution or conflict expansion?
5. How do service providers deal with conflict risks?
6. How does conflict affect public service delivery and vice versa?
7. What is the relationship between improved service delivery and citizens' trust and belief in the state?
8. How do major events outside the community, such as national elections or major security incidents, affect political dynamics within communities?
9. What differences appear for each of the present research questions along the urban / rural divide?

These overall questions are complemented by a series of 30 sub-questions organized according to the following themes: (1) CDCs and conflict resolution, (2) reintegration issues, (3) state agencies and local reconstruction, (4) Citizens' Charter, and (5) service delivery and state legitimacy.

In order to address these questions, ATR took a holistic, multi-methods approach to the study. The qualitative research took place from August 2018 to January 2019, with additional questions and callbacks until May 2019. Four communities were selected in each district based on different characteristics and cleavages. The quantitative survey took place in February and March 2019. The survey was administered to 400 respondents across 25 communities in each district, with a total of 1,600 respondents and 100 communities sampled (with equal male and female sampling).[3]

---

[1] "For Consultancy Services: Conflict and Fragility Study under the Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project (CCAP)," Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Afghanistan, full ToR.

[2] Ali Abad district was partially covered under this study through a lighter qualitative study, focusing on the meso (subdistrict) and macro (district) levels rather than the community level.

[3] This sample allows for a disaggregation by district, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of less than 5.

Key Findings

The three most significant findings of this study are as follows:

1. CC is largely recognized across studied districts as a program that reduces tensions and resolves grievances. This is especially true in Panjwayi (82 percent with positive opinions) and Herat (59 percent with positive opinions). The CC does not appear to be creating conflicts. The quantitative data also shows that respondents have a relatively positive view of CDCs. As many as 59 percent of men across the study areas claim that they trust their CDC "a lot." While this is lower than for traditional leaders (as expected, since the CDCs are new), it is much higher than any other parts of government.

2. CCAP shows potential to contribute to social cohesion by increasing the resilience of communities, and to state legitimacy, if some conditions are met.

3. In some areas, however, the extremely challenging context in which the program is delivered is jeopardizing the impact of CCAP. It is possible for local actors to use CCAP to exploit preexisting conflicts. The meaningful participation of women in several study areas also needs quite a bit of attention and work. For CCAP to live up to its ambitions, both the implementation strategy and the management system should be adapted, beyond what has already been laid out in the High Risk Area Implementation Strategy (HRAIS).

These findings are further expanded under the various study themes below.

Conflict Dynamics

The study included an in-depth review of the drivers of conflicts in order to better understand the context in which CCAP is delivered and to better understand risks. The qualitative data identify four main drivers of conflict across study locations: land, water, political leadership, and access to government resources. Issues related to land ownership are particularly sensitive in rural areas. The last two categories are related, as both formal and informal positions of power and connections to political leaders at the district, provincial, and central levels remain important for patronage purposes. The survey shows that the urban setting (Herat) features a much lower proportion of local conflicts than in rural contexts [4] The manifestation of conflicts depends on a series of variables, including the historical relationship of communities to each other, the relationship of local communities to the state, levels of insecurity, and a series of other socioeconomic factors, including migration patterns and availability of resources.

While conflicts are numerous, there is also significant willingness and effort to resolve these conflicts and the survey showed a strong positive involvement of local elders, religious leaders, and local officials, including the district governor (specifically in Panjwayi). Elders remain critically important to efforts to resolve conflict throughout study locations, but their role is particularly influential in the rural communities. In Herat, CDC members were seen as the third most positive actor intervening in local conflicts.

---

[4] It should be noted that Herat is not representative of all urban CC areas, and findings on Herat should thus not be extrapolated to all urban CC areas.

Conversely, the Taliban and various militias are identified by survey respondents as major spoilers. Specifically regarding the CC, Taliban opposition to the project tends to be primarily about the role of women and public processes, such as elections and the establishment of subcommittees, while there is less resistance to the implementation of infrastructure subprojects.

CCAP's Role in Conflict and Fragility

In 15 communities out of 16, it was found that CCAP did not create conflict. The quantitative data confirm this major finding, with a negligible average of 7 percent of respondents selecting "The CC program creates tensions or fuel existing conflicts" as a statement best describing the program. Similarly, 73 percent of male respondents completely agree or somewhat agree that "the CCAP helps communities decrease tensions." One of the reasons for this positive assessment likely comes from the fact that CDC members have already succeeded in obtaining a relatively positive reputation in their communities. In fact, the quantitative survey recorded levels of trust in CDC members that were higher or at least on par with the trust accorded to elders in Herat and Panjwayi, and a large majority of respondents in all districts except Matun described CDC members' positive attitudes. The exception of Matun likely has to do with the particularly prominent role of elders in the district, which may have contributed to preconceived notions about the CDCs that will take time to overcome, and that would likely require stronger mobilization efforts.

Rather than creating conflicts, CC processes have simply reshaped ongoing local conflicts. For instance, the CDC election and clustering process were reported in qualitative interviews to be the main avenues by which the tensions from existing local conflicts were appearing in the CC processes. These risks could probably be mitigated or prevented if the role or capacity of social organizers was strengthened.

Macro-level events — including parliamentary elections, the insurgency, and displacement — also fed into local-level conflicts that complicated the environment in which CCAP was being rolled out. In addition, meso-level politics and competition over resources among main political figures impacted Panjwayi, while a micro-level conflict (around CCAP elections) built up at the meso level in Herat.

Because of the strong Taliban influence in Jalrez and Ali Abad districts, the social mobilization process was mostly guided by the conditions they imposed. These conditions included replacing elections by consensus-based appointment of CDC members, attempting to prevent women's participation, or removing all references of CC as a government project, such as logos from documents (Ali Abad).

Facilitating partners were also found to adapt implementation in response to the local social norms. Those involved at the ground level generally prioritized delivering services, regardless of the community's performance on social mobilization. It is unclear whether social organizers made all possible efforts to convince communities to respect the standards set by the program. However, it appears that field staff perceived an incentive not to report to the provincial or national level these deviations from the operational manual (or even from the High Risk Area Implementation Strategy), whether due to the fear of losing one's job or of having the funding for the local project withheld. Such adaptations were noted

almost exclusively in rural areas and, considering the districts sampled in rural areas (socially conservative or insecure), interpretations of the study's findings should take into account these specific contexts.

Legitimacy

One of the main findings of the study is that the perceived impunity of government officials continues to undermine government legitimacy across all districts where the research took place. This appeared in both the quantitative and qualitative data, irrespective of the type of services that citizens valued, which varied depending on the study area.

The perception that service delivery is linked to patronage is another finding that appeared repeatedly throughout the study. Connections to prominent figures are still perceived as critical to unlocking benefits — including those to be delivered via CCAP. In other terms, the population tends to attribute to local power brokers or prominent elders the delivery of certain or all services. As such, multiple actors end up competing for legitimacy, with legitimacy based not so much on the kinds of services delivered, but on the individuals who are perceived to be delivering them — including local officials and influential political figures who are often erroneously singled out as service providers — both in urban and rural areas. The Taliban were also found to be competing for legitimacy (as a group rather than through individuals) in Ali Abad, where they had crafted the narrative that, by granting access to the government to deliver the CC program (under their terms), they were the ones to be credited for the benefits of this program. Moving forward, CCAP needs to be aware of the ways in which various actors compete to deliver services and build legitimacy.

Finally, an interesting finding emerged: only one specific service, the government's provision of security, was shown to trigger trust and the perception of legitimacy among citizens. This trend was represented in both quantitative and qualitative data and suggests that when the government does not have a monopoly on violence, development projects are less likely to bear fruits, at least during times of high instability.

Perception of CDCs

Almost all respondents with knowledge of the National Solidarity Program (NSP) — and particularly those involved in both NSP and CCAP — suggested that CCAP had been more resistant to elite capture than NSP. While progress still needs to be made, especially to increase the inclusion of women, interviewees who were aware of the two systems praised the more transparent and more inclusive election system under CCAP.

CDCs seem to have succeeded in building a relatively high level of local legitimacy. In all study areas except Matun, at least 60 percent of respondents claimed they felt they were treated with respect by CDC members, and CDCs enjoy the same level of trust as *maliks* (village heads) or *wakil-i-gozars* (representatives of a gozar, the smallest administrative unit in a city). In Matun, CDCs will need more time to show their relevance, considering the strong role of elders in this district.

Social Cohesion

What elements influence social cohesion varies by region and context, but there are also a few major factors that can be broadly seen to build or break local social cohesion. First an overarching external insecurity, such as insurgency presence, can reinforce social cohesion, as it deters communities from allowing smaller disputes to escalate. Second, elders and functional tribal governance systems maintain and build cohesion by allowing communities to air grievances and resolving village-level conflicts. Third, a common goal — for example a communal project — can bring people together while the project is being implemented.

Conversely, competition for limited resources, disparities in resources, a growing divide between rich and poor, and the social pressures and changes associated with large-scale migration tend to diminish social cohesion at the local level.

Recommendations

The authors of this study make a series of recommendations, outlined in more detail in the report below. These recommendations fall into the following categories:

Recommendations for forging a common vision and monitoring outcomes

Currently, there is a disconnect between the objectives of CCAP as stated in its manuals and other literature, the expectations of senior management, and the priorities of frontline workers who are regularly altering the program implementation in practice. There is a need to establish a shared vision of CCAP's objectives.

- The World Bank and the government should agree on what outcomes are to be expected from the mobilization process, in order to provide a common vision toward which all actors will align. For accountability purposes these outcomes should be accompanied by a series of well-defined and easily verified indicators. This could include outcomes such as: "communities have made and implemented decisions to decrease vulnerabilities" (a footnote would include a clear definition of vulnerabilities) or "communities report having increased positive interactions with education and health government officials";
- Once a common vision regarding outcomes is forged, it is recommended that this be clearly communicated to all FPs and CCAP staff. The delivery of quality trainings on this topic to relevant staff is recommended;
- Outcome level indicators should be measured on a regular basis (ideally every six months) to identify what challenges might slow down or jeopardize the realization of these outcomes. This should also become a tool to measure the performance (beyond the basic monitoring of outputs) of FPs. Indicators could include: percentage of eligible CDCs with a functioning grain bank (with a definition of what a functioning grain bank is); percentage of CDCs reporting a positive change in education / health-service delivery following the implementation of scorecards; percentage of

CDCs that have set community-level rules that effectively mitigate the risks that cause families to fall into poverty (such as rule on spending for marriages or funerals, the use of loans with high interest rates, etc.); percentage of CDCs members who report their cluster CDC actively advocates to the government on their behalf.

Recommendations for improving transparency

It was observed during the course of the study that, when confronted with difficulties, the actors of the program (FPs, PMUs, and CDCs) had a tendency not to report these difficulties and/or to alter the reality in their reporting. This happened despite efforts by CCAP to encourage FPs to communicate any issues they faced and to engage as partners with the program to address challenges. This tendency is detrimental to the program and, as explained above, risks jeopardizing the achievement of long-term objectives. In order to enhance transparency and ensure the integrity of the program, a number of principles and measures could be affirmed and enforced:

- The Operational Manual and the HRAIS do not clearly lay out a procedure to deal with stakeholders who are responsible for creating or allowing deviations. There is thus no proper mechanism to enforce the principles laid out in these two documents. The CCAP leadership should develop a policy that lists sanctions (including soft sanctions) for various levels of violations, including violations in the accuracy of the reporting, and establish a structure for implementing this policy;
- Because the situation is often very complex — and to ensure that there is a possibility for the FPs to voice their concerns before starting a formal reporting of issues to the Ministry — the World Bank, MRRD, and IDLG should create a platform to discuss the best ways forward in difficult cases. This platform could gather FPs working in difficult areas, the HRAIU, and other relevant actors, before presenting recommendations to the donor for validation (including revisions of the HRAIS, if deemed necessary);
- The CCAP leadership should establish a stronger monitoring system, providing more resources to better identify irregularities in a timely fashion, including through varied sources of information and options for triangulating data. This should include an increase in human resources to perform the monitoring function in a manner that is adapted to the particular context (such as by hiring local monitors — including women — at the district level, on a short-term basis to supplement the reach and capacity of fulltime monitoring staff).

Recommendations for promoting state legitimacy and improving service delivery

CCAP has established new linkages between the CDC, district, and provincial levels, including through the creation of subcommittees, clusters, CCMCs at various levels, and scorecards. In comparison to NSP, the changes introduced by CCAP — a comprehensive mobilization process, scorecards, grievance management, and a more inclusive electoral system — should contribute to state legitimacy, in addition to enhancing service delivery efficiency.

The strengths of the CCAP model can, however, be jeopardized by weak or partial mobilization, the risks of which are not understood by all CCAP stakeholders in a uniform way. As different compromises are made without proper consideration for the long-term objectives of CCAP, one of the core objectives of social mobilization — to build community resilience, a key factor for peace and economic stability — could be jeopardized through the failure to properly implement the inclusion and participation aspects of the mobilization.

Additionally, by creating demand for specific standards in public services, CCAP risks raising expectations among the population that the local administration may not yet have the capacity or the authority to meet, ultimately fostering resentment and frustration directed toward the state. This could also serve to alienate the local administration from the program, as they may be held accountable for issues they might not be able to solve at their level, placing them in an uncomfortable situation vis-à-vis the population they serve.

- CCAP should build bridges with projects implemented in relevant ministries, to promote de-concentration and build new, efficient systems at the subnational level. If such de-concentration initiatives do not already exist or cannot presently be implemented, CCAP needs to address the barriers resulting from the centralized nature of the state;
- Addressing these barriers could involve supporting the district or provincial-level government in finding solutions that can be decided and implemented at the local level, within the limited authority that district / provincial officials have. To do so, CCAP could design an additional capacity-building activity for CDCs / CCDCs and local administrations that focuses on developing local solutions to local problems, and which can be implemented within the existing centralized system;
- CCAP should work to improve its communication with the citizens targeted by the program. Efforts should specifically aim to counter the tendency of the Taliban and existing patronage networks to claim credit for CCAP programming in place of the state and its representatives.

Recommendations for high-risk areas

When faced with resistance, whether pressure or actual threats, the program actors in the study locations tended to adapt the program's implementation to the environment at the expense of the guiding principles of the program and without consultation with the CCAP's management. To address that tendency, as well as the genuine challenges that program actors face during implementation, measures need to be taken to ensure that adaptations do not run counter to the ultimate objectives of the program.

- The HRAIS, as it stands, sets clear and reasonable redlines (elections should happen, mobilization should include the participation of women and all *mohallas* / neighborhoods, and a certain number of mobilization steps are mandatory);
- As explained above, crossing these redlines should be addressed with sanctions. There should also be a platform for discussing the difficulties that arise and for learning from the successes of various stakeholders;

- CCAP should redesign the menu of subprojects so that there is a financial incentive for communities to mobilize properly. If additional grants are possible, this could include allocating a greater number of grants to communities that accept more mobilization requirements;
- CCAP should train FPs and PMUs on conflict sensitivity and should raise awareness about the multitude of risks that can arise from the CC implementation;
- CCAP should take certain sensitive decisions (regarding disbursement, etc.) out of the hands of frontline workers and social organizers. As long as these individuals have direct control over the flow of money, they will be vulnerable to pressure from the Taliban and other armed groups;
- CCAP should consider doing a district-by-district conflict-mapping and risk-assessment exercise that would lead to the design of a systematized approach, when necessary, for the adaptation of requirements to the specificities of the district;
- CCAP should request an exception from the MoF regarding the education standards that are required under CBR for female social organizers, in an effort to encourage the recruitment of more female social organizers with greater access.

Recommendations for urban areas

The linkages at the municipal levels seem more likely to be successful, especially in the case of Herat, where the clustering is done at the gozar level, a preexisting administrative level in which a representative (wakil-i-gozar) is already responsible for liaising with service providers. Based on this potential, as well as on the risk that social cohesion may be further weakened by rapid urbanization and migration of IDPs into urban centers, it is all the more important that CCAP invest in fostering increased participation. This should include further efforts to increase women's participation, based on further research regarding the barriers to their participation that exist in relatively liberal urban centers. Similarly, the program could envisage organizing activities, through the CDCs and/or subcommittees, to strengthen participation, whether through the organization of town hall meetings, promotion of volunteerism, or partnership with the local police system (such as the *police-i-mardumi[5]*).

---

[5] Community-based policing initiative under the Ministry of Interior Affairs

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

A. Objectives of the Research

As outlined in the ToR:

> The long-term goal of the Government of Afghanistan's Citizens' Charter Program (CC) is to reduce poverty and deepen the relationship between citizens and the state. In the medium-term, the Citizens' Charter aims to improve the delivery of core infrastructure and social services to communities through strengthened Community Development Councils (CDCs). These services are part of a minimum service standards package that the Government is committed to delivering to the citizens of Afghanistan.[6]

The CC, as implemented thus far, allows for testing various development hypotheses that are important for Afghanistan as well as other fragile and conflict situations. This study provides an in-depth analysis of the conflict and political dynamics of different CC locations in a mix of rural, semi-urban, and urban areas, and examines the role of CDCs in working with district and provincial governments and local communities to build social cohesion at the local level. The research aims to illuminate the contextual dynamics of local conflict and the relationship between service delivery and state legitimacy, and to provide the CC with recommendations to enhance the potential for positive social and governance impact.

By revealing issues with the implementation of the CC, this study also constitutes an occasion to reflect on the extreme challenges faced by MRRD and its partners throughout the implementation process: in a number of districts, CC is delivered under the control or influence of the Taliban, and the level of social and economic fragility in target areas significantly increases the risks of conflicts.

For the purpose of this study, ATR carried out an in-depth, qualitative and quantitative study in 16 CC target communities in four different districts, with additional research input from a fifth district over the course of eight months,[7] to examine the community-level drivers of conflict in CC communities. The study districts — Panjwayi in Kandahar province, Matun in Khost, Jalrez in Wardak, and Herat City — are representative of a variety of contexts, including secure and insecure urban and rural areas. Over consecutive and complementary iterations of data collection, research consisted of 1,600 quantitative household surveys and around 1,000 gender-segregated qualitative interviews with households, CDC and other community members, civil servants, and FPs, followed by hundreds of follow-up discussions with various stakeholders in these areas.

---

[6] "For Consultancy Services: Conflict and Fragility Study under the Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project (CCAP)," Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Afghanistan, full ToR.

[7] Ali Abad district was partially covered under this study through a lighter qualitative study, focusing on the meso (subdistrict) and macro (district) levels, rather than the community level.

The central questions of this study are:

1. What key factors differentiate the conflict dynamics in one area as compared to others?
2. What builds or breaks social cohesion at the local level?
3. How are returnees and former combatants being integrated into communities and CDCs?
4. What are the drivers of conflict at the local level and what pathways lead to conflict resolution or expansion?
5. How do service providers deal with conflict risks?
6. How does conflict affect public service delivery and vice versa?
7. What is the relationship between improved service delivery and citizens' trust and belief in the state?
8. How do major events outside the community, such as national elections or major security incidents, affect political dynamics within communities?
9. What differences appear for each of the present research questions along the urban / rural divide?

These overall questions are complemented by a series of 30 sub-questions organized according the following themes:

▪ CDCs and conflict resolution;
▪ Reintegration issues;
▪ State agencies and local reconstruction;
▪ Citizens' Charter;
▪ Service delivery and state legitimacy.

The following questions were designed to provide information to develop specific recommendations:

1. What linkages can be made between CDCs, districts, and provinces to address local conflict and improve service delivery and state legitimacy?
2. What role can the Citizens' Charter service delivery play in building state legitimacy and trust?
3. What operational recommendations regarding conflict mitigation, improved government service delivery, and local governance can be derived from the study to improve the Citizens' Charter?

B. Structure of the Report

In order to address these questions, ATR collected a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data and analyzed these sets of data, along with secondary data, with a focus on studies that covered community-driven development in fragile states. Special consideration was paid to social dynamics in communities resulting from influxes of displaced persons, the inclusion of women in CC processes, and the roles of former combatants.

This report begins with a methodological overview (PART 2 – STUDY METHODOLOGY). It then provides an overview of the context in the districts under study and of the CCAP implementation status in these areas

(PART 3 – STUDY AREAS AND CC IMPLEMENTATION STATUS). It then provides comparative findings, first about service delivery and state legitimacy more broadly (PART 4 – GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CC PROCESS, CONFLICT, AND FRAGILITY), and then on the CC process specifically, addressing each research question in sequence (PART 5 – FINDINGS ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS). The last part draws general conclusions and offers a series of recommendations that complement those articulated under the three research questions that focused on recommendations (PART 6 – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS).

Annexes to the report present key data from each district, including district profiles, village profiles, and conflict case study analyses. Additionally, they include the data collection tools used, a complete explanation of methodology and analysis, the full literature review, and the results for each of the survey questions, disaggregated by district.

PART 2 – STUDY METHODOLOGY

To better understand the issues surrounding CCAP implementation, ATR conducted several iterations of qualitative research in a sample of five districts (with the full iterative process conducted in four of the districts and more limited, supplementary data collection occurring in the fifth), as well as one round of a comprehensive survey in four districts, which were selected in consultation with MRRD, IDLG, and the World Bank in order to assess how the CC is functioning in an array of areas.

This section focuses on the aspects of the study's methodology that are critical to understanding the source of the data analyzed in this report. Detailed information covering additional aspects of the methodology, including field staff recruitment, training, quality assurance, etc., can be found in the annexes.

In addition, all individual GPS points of the survey respondents can be found here.

A. Target Districts and Communities

As the sample relies on data from just five of Afghanistan's provinces, it is not meant to be representative of the entire country. Instead, the areas were chosen because of the way in which they might reveal certain dynamics that will help elucidate the range of responses to the CCAP (e.g. from secure areas versus insecure areas, and more ethnic homogeneous areas versus more diverse areas). Furthermore, ongoing fighting and shifting economic conditions mean that no part of Afghanistan is currently entirely stable, and conditions that were present during the selection of provinces could — and did — vary throughout the course of the study. In Jalrez, for instance, security worsened significantly during the period studied — a trend with parallels in other parts of the country, as well. As such, this research is merely meant to provide a baseline for the CCAP at a specific point in time, with a geographical scope limited to five districts.

The four main target districts were selected according to several criteria, including levels of security and relative levels of development, as represented in the chart below. The qualitative research also included an additional district, Ali Abad in Kunduz province, where ATR has conducted numerous pieces of research under other studies. In this additional district, not all of the tools of the study were used, but enough data was gathered to create a district profile and provide some results comparable with those of the other four districts.

Table 1: Target district selection matrix

	Panjwayi	Herat	Matun	Jalrez	Ali Abad
Affected by insecurity	■			■	■
Secure		■	■		
Urban or semi-urban		■	■		
Rural	■			■	■
Diversity of ethnicities		■		■	■
Homogeneous ethnic population	■		■		
High level of education		■	■		
Lower level of education	■			■	■
Region: South	■				
Region: West		■			
Region: East			■		
Region: Central				■	
Region: North					■

In each of the four districts, four villages (or urban neighborhoods, for Herat) were selected for analysis. The four communities from each district were selected (typically from two different clusters, where clusters had been established) based on different characteristics and cleavages. The features considered included ethnic and tribal makeup, distance from a community to its district and provincial centers, population size (number of households), resources, presence and status of IDPs/returnees/in-migrants, presence and status of former combatants, socioeconomic features, and, for rural communities only, access to education and health services (with some communities close to a clinic / school and other communities several kilometers away from health and education facilities — see Table 15 for more details). The selection of conflicts was made to reflect the diversity of factors or implications at the micro, meso and macro levels, highlighting different cleavages of interest. The factors considered included the levels (community, district, or provincial) of the conflicts, the lifespan of the conflicts, and the source of the conflicts (resources, access to power, gender issues, etc.). Almost all conflicts are impacting the CC process, even when the direct cause is not CCAP.

Table 2: Main characteristics of selected communities below summarizes some of the selected communities' most pertinent characteristics for the purposes of this study. The maps of these districts and communities are found in Part 3, Section A: Presentation of the Areas of Study.

Table 2: Main characteristics of selected communities

District	Village and CDC name	CCDC / GA name	Distance from center of district in km	Distance from center of province in km	Number of households	IDP households (%)[8]	Ethnic composition
Herat City	Mahmoodi	Shohaday-e-Inqelab-e-Islami 2	3	3	245	9	Mixed population Mostly Hazara, followed by Tajik, Pashtun, Uzbek
	Jamshidiha		3.5	3.5	250	7	Mixed population Mostly Tajik, followed by Hazara, Pashtun
	Qala-e-Shater	Khaimadozan	4–5	4–5	215	9	Mixed population Mostly Tajik, followed by Hazara, Pashtun, Uzbek
	Pir-e-Darwishan		2–3	2–3	232	36	Mixed population Mostly Tajik, followed by Pashtun, Hazara, Uzbek
Panjwayi	Armara	No clustering yet	1	21	54	0	Multiple Pashtun tribes Mostly Alizai, followed by Alokozai, Nurzai, Babur, Barakzai, Yaqubzai, Mohammadzai
	Badwan		5–6	25–26	32	31	Multiple Pashtun tribes Mostly Popalzai, followed by Alokozai, Mohammadzai, Nurzai, Kakar, Taraki
	Haji Mohammad Karimdad		5–6	25–26	43	0	Pashtun from Nurzai tribe
	Haji Agha Lalai		7.5	27.5	68	0	Multiple Pashtun tribes Mostly Nurzai, followed by Taraki, Saydan

---

[8] Source: CCNP website (http://www.ccnpp.org/)

District	Village and CDC name	CCDC / GA name	Distance from center of district in km	Distance from center of province in km	Number of households	IDP households (%)[8]	Ethnic composition
Matun	Mandokhail Star Kalai	No clustering yet	1	1	273	0	Multiple Pashtun tribes Mostly Mandokhail, followed by Mangal, Tani
	Pass Manai		1	1	217	20	Multiple Pashtun tribes Mostly Matun, followed by Tani, Gurbuz, Shobri, Lakan, Zadran, Mangal
	Ghondai Mangas		6–7	6–7	124	0	Pashtun from Matun tribe
	Ponakzay		8–9	8–9	161	0	Multiple Pashtun tribes Mostly Mangas, followed by Mangal, Totakhail, Khostwal, Konde
Jalrez	Qala-e-Now	Markaz-e-Jalrez	2	22	203	0.49 (1 household)	Tajik
	Masjid-e Jame Deh	No clustering Yet	1	21	194	0	Mixed population Mostly Tajik, followed by Hazara, Pashtun, Uzbek
	Dar-Sarai	Sayed Shah Mohammad Khan	10	30	98	0	Mixed population Mostly Sadat, followed by Hazara
	Raast Dara		22	42	59	0	Mixed population Mostly Sadat, followed by Hazara

B. Methodology for the Qualitative Research

1. Data collection tools

Before starting data collection, the research team developed 17 data collection tools for facilitating the collection of qualitative data. Each instrument focused on specific aspects of the CCAP potential impacts. In particular:

In each village, household interviews were conducted with both male and female participants using the following tools:

1. Education question set
2. Health question set
3. Social cohesion question set
4. Justice question set
5. Governance question set
6. Security question set
7. Conflict mapping
8. Stakeholder mapping
9. Case study on conflicts

In addition to this, in-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted based on the following guiding questionnaires:

1. IDI with CDC members
2. IDI with power holders
3. IDI with civil servants
4. IDI with facilitating partners and PMU

Taking the data collected through these instruments, the research teams interviewed numerous additional informants and used less structured guidelines to develop:

1. Village profiles
2. Village-level project database

Finally, using data from these interviews, researchers designed observation tools for:

1. Service delivery
2. Scorecards

2. Household selection

In order to identify households at the community level, field researchers were first introduced to the CDCs in the selected communities by the relevant PMU, before they introduced the research to CDC members and other community leaders, such as the malik (or wakil-i-gozar in Herat) and elders. During this introduction meeting, field researchers reviewed the well-being analysis and randomly selected at least one household in each of the wealth categories. If the following criteria were not met, the field researchers replaced one or more of the selected households to ensure that all groups of population were included in the sample:

1. In communities where there were IDPs or refugees, at least one of the sampled households needed to represent this category.

2. Households had to be from different ethnic groups in communities with ethnic diversity.
3. The households were located in different parts of the village (or neighborhood).

Selected households were then approached and asked if they would consent to provide a significant amount of their time to responding to multiple waves of interviews. When a household refused, it was replaced by another randomly selected household with similar characteristics. When only one household member (the male or the female) refused to take part in the study, another household with similar characteristics was selected, from which only one household member was then selected (a male if the male in the previous household had refused to take part in the study, or a female if the female member of the previous household had refused).

3. Case study selection

In each of the areas studied, specific conflicts or an intertwined series of conflicts were selected for deeper analysis in order to understand a wide range of tensions that both directly and indirectly shape the CC process at both the micro and meso levels.

In Jalrez, Herat, and Matun, the case studies were selected at the village level. Some of these conflicts were primarily local, while others had wider district-level implications. In Panjwayi, in part to better understand politics, particularly at the meso level, and in part because conflicts appeared more intertwined across the district, the conflict chosen for the case study was district-wide. Similarly, the conflicts studied in Ali Abad were general to the district, instead of being specific to a particular village. A synthesis of the conflicts is included in the analysis below, and the complete conflict case study analyses can be found in the annexes.

Table 3: Presentation of selected case studies

District	Village	Brief description of conflict in case study
Jalrez	Masjid-e Jame Deh	Conflicts arising from the links between local feuds
	Raast Dara	The inclusion of women in CDC elections and the successful implementation of the six development projects by the CDC.
Herat	Jamshidiha	A dispute between two communities over the CDC election process and sub-projects.
	Pir-e-Darwishan	A dispute between the head of one CDC and the head of the cluster CDC.
Matun	Mandokhail Star Kalai	A dispute between CDC and PMU over a water tank project.
	Ghondai Mangas	Manipulation of CDC election by the addition of an electoral unit and the solidification of one family's power over the CDC.

District	Village	Brief description of conflict in case study
Panjwayi	Various villages	Manipulation of various aspects of the CC process by local commanders and power holders, particularly the district chief of police, who uses corrupt means to profit off of CC projects.
Ali Abad	Various villages	Status of women in the CC process.

4. Qualitative data collection process

Qualitative data collection was conducted from 15 July 2018 to 7 February 2019. Efforts were made to systematically update information over the course of data collection. Since CCAP processes have been ongoing throughout data collection and during the drafting of the report, any references to the status of the CC process in this report are accurate as of the dates presented in Table 6.

Table 4: Number of people interviewed for qualitative data collection, by groups of stakeholders and by district

District	Households[9]		CDC members		Power Holders/prominent figures		Case study stakeholders		PMUs	FPs	Civil servants	Service delivery observation	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female[10]	Male	Female					
Herat City	97	84	4	4	1	0	10	9	1	2	2	2	216
Matun	107	106	4	4	1	1	14	1	0	6	3	4	251
Jalrez	100	100	4	4	4	4	11	4	2	3	3	3	242
Panjwayi	97	97	4	4	4	4	7	10	2	3	3	3	238
Total	401	387	16	16	10	9	42	24	5	14	11	12	947

In addition, and in order to confirm, triangulate, and complement data, several hundred follow-up interviews were conducted during the research, either face-to-face or through callbacks.

C. Methodology for the Quantitative Research

The survey questionnaire was designed by ATR and reviewed by MRRD, IDLG, and the World Bank and is annexed. The survey aimed to gather information that shed light on the study's research questions from the perspective of ordinary citizens. Respondents assessed access to service delivery and levels of trust in various local and national institutions. The survey also collected data on security conditions and on social

---

[9] Male and female interviewed were sometimes from the same household, sometimes not, based on availability of potential participants and on their interest / willingness to participate in the study.

[10] In this category, female respondents were selected based on their role in the community (including those mediating conflicts involving women), be it at the community level, or within the most powerful families of the community.

cohesion, including questions on major grievances and concerns with regards to governance. In areas with IDPs / returnees and/or former combatants, survey questions addressed public opinions on reintegration and conflict resolution.

The survey was administered in a total 100 communities, covering a larger number of communities than did the qualitative research and assuring a high level of representation at the district level. Sampling points for the household survey were drawn from the full list of the communities in the targeted districts and were selected using a probability proportional to size (PPS) method. The primary sampling point was the district, for Matun, Jalrez, and Panjwayi, and the city for Herat. First, ATR randomly selected 25 communities per district (25 *mohallas* for Herat) using the PPS method, based on the estimated population size in each community.[11] In a second stage, and in order to compensate for the fact that bigger communities had more chance of being selected, ATR allocated the same sample size per community under the PPS method. This allowed for any individuals in the district to have the same probability of being sampled. More specifically, the method involved calculating the probability of each community being sampled, calculating the probability of each individual in each sampled community being sampled, and finally, calculating the overall weight of each individual in the population being sampled.

Next, ATR researchers mapped out an appropriate sampling path for researchers that covered all mohallas and contained a mix of central and remote households, stopping at random households at a fixed interval (typically every third or fifth household). For urban sampling points, urban areas were first segmented into blocks of roughly equal volume, then blocks were selected randomly. In each block, a step size was calculated (i.e. total number of doorways versus number of houses to be sampled), which determined intervals between houses.

A total of 1,643 surveys were conducted between 16 February and 3 March 2019 using electronic tablets and mobile phones and the data collection software ODK. This allowed for more stringent monitoring of fieldworkers and daily uploading of survey results, including the collection of GPS points for each completed survey.

Table 5: Sample size of collected surveys by district and gender[12]

	Female	Male	Total
Herat	209	204	413
Panjwayi	204	203	407
Matun	201	205	406
Jalrez	209	208	417
Grand total		1643	

---

[11] CCNPP databases (http://www.ccnpp.org/CC/Report/Shared/CDC/Coverage/Default.aspx)

[12] This table only accounts for surveys validated through the quality assurance process. Overall, a few surveys were rejected after review by the quality assurance team.

The maps below illustrate sampling at the city (Herat) or district (Jalrez) level (Maps 2 and 4, respectively) and at the neighborhood (West Herat) and village (West Jalrez) levels (Maps 3 and 5, respectively).[13]

Map 2: Survey points in Herat City
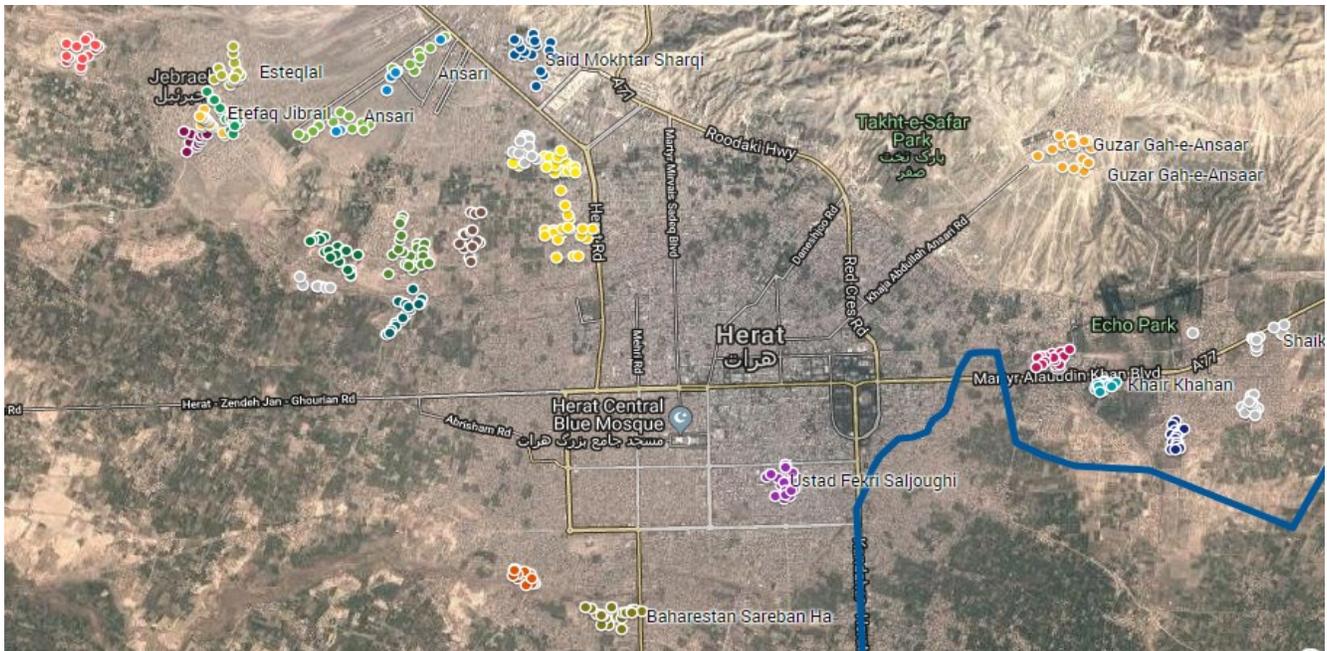
Map 3: Zoom on survey points in three neighborhoods in Herat

---
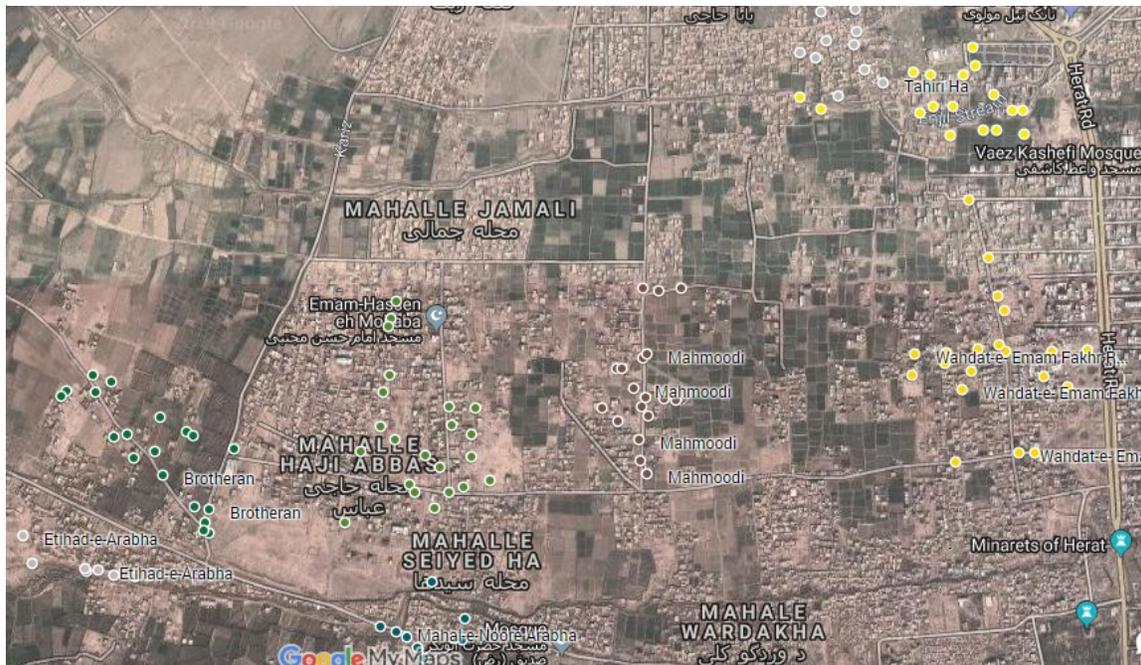
[13] All GPS points are accessible at https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1cNnELvy7VbR2KY-ZLWzHSYTW0UVweXz1&ll=34.43395800698376%2C68.50194222488949&z=15.

34

Map 4: Survey points in Jalrez district

Map 5: Zoom on survey points in three communities in Jalrez district

D. Analysis

Qualitative analysis was conducted in a series of manners. After an initial review of all data, which produced a series of themes and areas for further review, coding was done for all household interview tools, using ATLAS.ti. Researchers then began constructing village profiles to better understand the socio-

political context in each study community and to identify potential places where further data collection was necessary. Interviews were then reread while looking to answer the specific questions laid out in the inception report. Simultaneously, a comparative analysis was done between districts (for example, comparing the CCAP election process between areas, etc.). Finally, case studies were selected for further analysis, and initial data was then augmented through follow-up interviews and specific questioning of those involved.

The quantitative analysis of 1,643 household-level surveys included two parts — summary statistics by group and dependence analysis — all conducted primarily at the district level (each with a sample size equal to or greater than 400, allowing for a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of a maximum of 5).

- **Summary statistics by group:** The survey data were used to generate frequency tables from counts of categorical responses to single- and multiple-choice questions for groupings by metadata, such as gender, district, social category of respondent, etc. Subsequently, proportion tables and rankings were developed to allow comparison of these summary statistics across respondent groups, which was indicative of variation across different groups in CCAP's influence or purview. These summary statistics across respondent groups are annexed;
- **Dependence analysis:** Survey questions that represented specific topics of interest were selected and the counts of extreme responses to these questions were used to perform tests of dependence between pairs of variables. For example, counts of responses such as "somewhat true" or "sometimes" were ignored, but counts of responses such as "completely true" or "always" were included for the purpose of this dependence analysis. Using these counts, dependence between pairs of questions representing specific topics of interest was tested using chi-square or Fisher's tests.

The research questions were first responded to using the qualitative data, before the quantitative data was analyzed. When integrating the quantitative data under relevant research questions, the researchers analyzed how the quantitative data complemented or confirmed the qualitative data. Researchers did not identify major contradictions between the qualitative and quantitative sets of data, but in certain cases there were some differences. These differences were interpreted in the report. In addition to using the data collected under this study to respond to the research questions, ATR used, when relevant, some critical points of the literature review to enrich the responses to the questions. Overall, a significant amount of time was spent triangulating and cross-checking data to ensure all conclusions could rely on solid and verified data.

Finally, the research team members designed together the recommendations, based on the conclusions drawn, the ideas shared by stakeholders during interviews, and the experience of team members implementing or researching on similar community-driven programs.

PART 3 – STUDY AREAS AND CC IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Part 3 introduces the main characteristics of each of the districts, villages, and neighborhoods targeted under this study, including a comparison of their socioeconomic features (section A), followed by a presentation of the status of the CC implementation process at the time the data collection was finalized (section B). Part 3 thus provides the general and programmatic contexts in which the analysis was rooted. The description of the discrepancies, where they were identified, between how the CC was supposed to be delivered (according to the CC manuals) and how it was actually implemented, serves as a critical background to understand how these discrepancies sometimes occur as a byproduct of conflict, and sometimes as a means to avoid conflict.

A. Presentation of the Areas of Study

This section introduces each district and then reports on the status of the CC process in each area. Complete assessments of these areas are provided in the annexes in the district and village profiles.

1. Matun district, Khost province

While homogenous in terms of ethnicity (close to 100 percent Pashtun),[14] both district and village politics in Matun district are shaped by a long history of feuds and disputes between tribes, clans, and villages, particularly over land. In part due to the large number of sub-tribes and clans, a tallah system, which brings various tribes together based on geography rather than kinship, is considered more important than a tribal one. State officials are largely seen as corrupt and as being linked to land grabs and other forms of exploitation of their positions. Partially as a result of these factors, Matun has a largely hybrid form of governance, where power is shared and sometimes contested between state officials and local tribal elders, through both the tallah and tribal shuras. In none of the four villages studied are the elders autonomous (in the sense that they are working alongside the government), but most do resolve disputes internal to the village on their own.

The district shares a border with Pakistan, and this shapes the socioeconomic history of the area: Many families fled to Pakistan during fighting with the Soviets, and familial cross-border relations remain important. Smuggling is a key aspect of the local economy, and the Haqqani network operates on both sides of the border.

The area has historically been resistant to Taliban influence. In the period post 2001, it hosted a major contingency of international troops at Camps Salerno and Chapman. While the international presence has decreased substantially and Camp Salerno has been handed over to ANSF, some international forces

---

[14] In the survey, all but one of the 406 respondents identified themselves as Pashtuns.

remain and the Khost Protection Force, a paramilitary group set up with American support, remains a key local force. While there is hardly any presence of Taliban armed militants in the district, some civilian sympathizers are active in spreading their ideology within universities or through mosques. While this rhetoric does not attract significant numbers of people, it does spread a sense of fear in the minds of some residents.

Matun does not have a large number of IDPs (40,603 as of December 2018)[15] compared to most large urban areas, but it has been impacted by a long history of economic migrants, particularly those who move to the area to take advantage of work opportunities and agricultural lands. These various types of migrations are reflected in the survey, with almost half of respondents self-identifying as having migrated in some form in recent years (17 percent of respondents recognized themselves as IDPs, 15 percent as economic migrants, and 11 percent as returnees). The area and its economy benefit from remittances by a large number of men working abroad, particularly in the Gulf, but also in Turkey and Europe.

CC implementation in the area was contentious in some of the villages studied. In one area, the CC process has become intertwined in a longstanding land dispute between clans, and in another, there has been an ongoing dispute between the PMU and the village CDC. In all four of the villages studied, CDC elections have been held, and in three of the four villages studied, subproject implementation had begun, though clustering had not happened in any of the villages and there were accounts of the exclusion of women from CDC elections (for more details, see below).

Map 6: Selected communities in Matun, Khost province

---
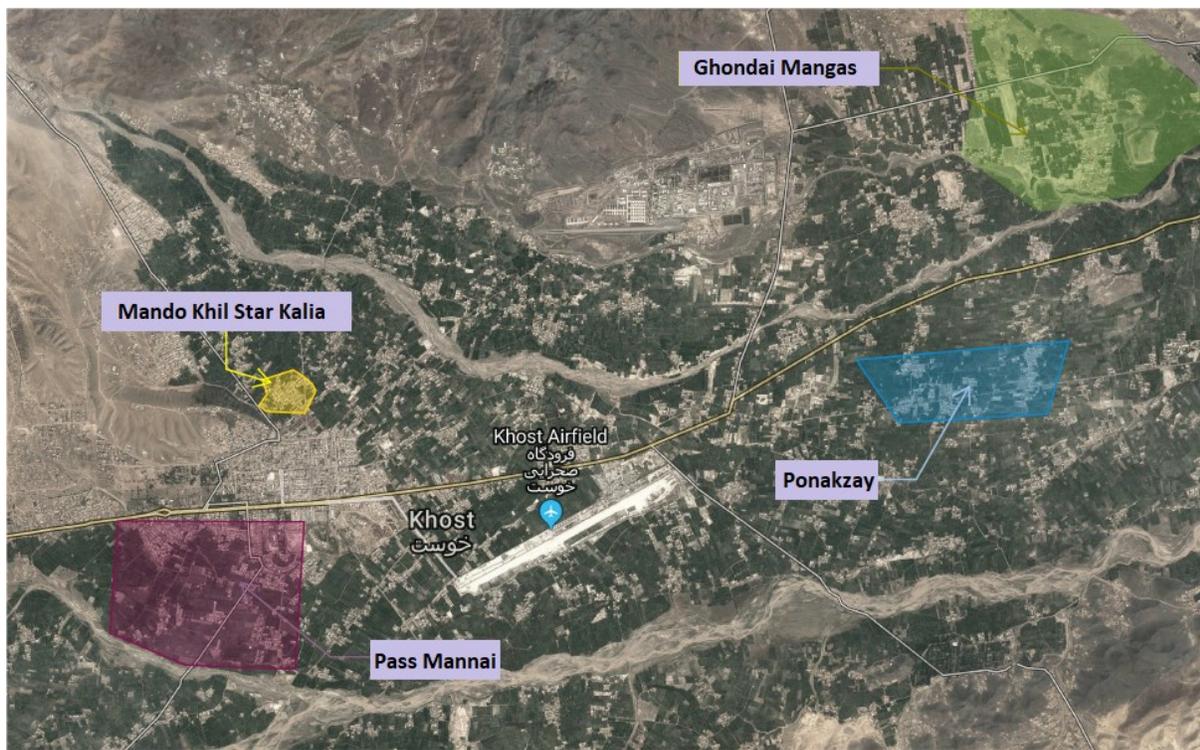
2. Jalrez district, Wardak province

The areas studied in Jalrez were significantly more ethnically diverse than Matun, with 57 percent of survey respondents identifying themselves as Tajiks, 25 percent as Pashtuns, 10 percent as Sadats, and 8 percent as Hazaras. Five percent of the survey respondents self-identified as economic migrants, and a smaller population claimed to be IDPs or returnees.

Of all the areas studied, Jalrez was the one currently impacted the most by instability. This included a high-profile Taliban attack on an NDS compound in Maidan-e Wardak during the research period, but also smaller skirmishes and tensions that shaped the everyday lives of villagers. In Village 2, an ANA air strike had damaged two shops, and kidnappings and banditry were common occurrences, with interviewees describing multiple specific instances of each in the past year. Because of both insecurity and poor economic conditions, there has been a serious outflow of residents leaving the district, with families moving from the villages of study to Kabul and beyond.

Interviewees in Jalrez were constantly critical of the services available to them. Schools were said to be in poor condition, and in some villages, girls had no education option beyond sixth grade. Health facilities were generally only available in the district center and were considered to be of low quality, only rarely having necessary medicines available.

A clear income divide was observed in Jalrez, with the rich having much better access to services, such as private clinics or health care in Kabul. Beyond increased access to services, wealthy households also demonstrated more entitlement to justice and were more knowledgeable of justice systems than poorer households.

Several interviewees noted that as an alternative to elders facilitating conflict resolution, the district governor would intervene in significant cases, often in ways that felt less transparent and open to manipulation than when the disputes were resolved locally. Perhaps because of this, the government was considered unreliable and untrustworthy by many respondents. This was particularly true of Villages 3 and 4, which were more remote than Villages 1 and 2. Jalrez was also one of the only areas where some respondents did express support for certain aspects of Taliban governance, particularly around dispute resolution, with some respondents positively assessing the Taliban's effectiveness as compared with the national government. This trend is confirmed in the survey, with the highest support for the Taliban among the four districts under study coming from Jalrez, with 40 percent of respondents admitting to trusting the Taliban "a lot" or "moderately," versus 8 percent in Panjwayi, 6 percent in Herat, and 1 percent in Matun.

On paper, the CCAP has made more progress in Jalrez than in Matun or Panjwayi, but when reviewing actual progress, this was also the district where more irregularities or discrepancies were identified. Insecurity and a lack of transparency greatly shaped the way that CC was implemented in Wardak, but this is perhaps not surprising, given that these districts featured the highest level of insecurity and external

pressure of those studied. The Taliban had instituted a ban on gatherings of any kind in the area, which has made meetings for community mobilization impossible. Instead, interviewees in all four villages explained that mapping had occurred in the FP office, without any representation from the community (when asked, the CDC members stated that they had no knowledge of any of the mapping processes). Due to the pervasive insecurity and the Taliban prohibition of meetings, elections in each of the villages studied were either not held or were conducted with serious irregularities (more below). A similar pattern was observed during parliamentary elections, when voters were forced to travel from Bazar-i-Jalrez to Hazara-dominated areas if they wanted to vote.

Map 7: Selected communities in Jalrez, Wardak province
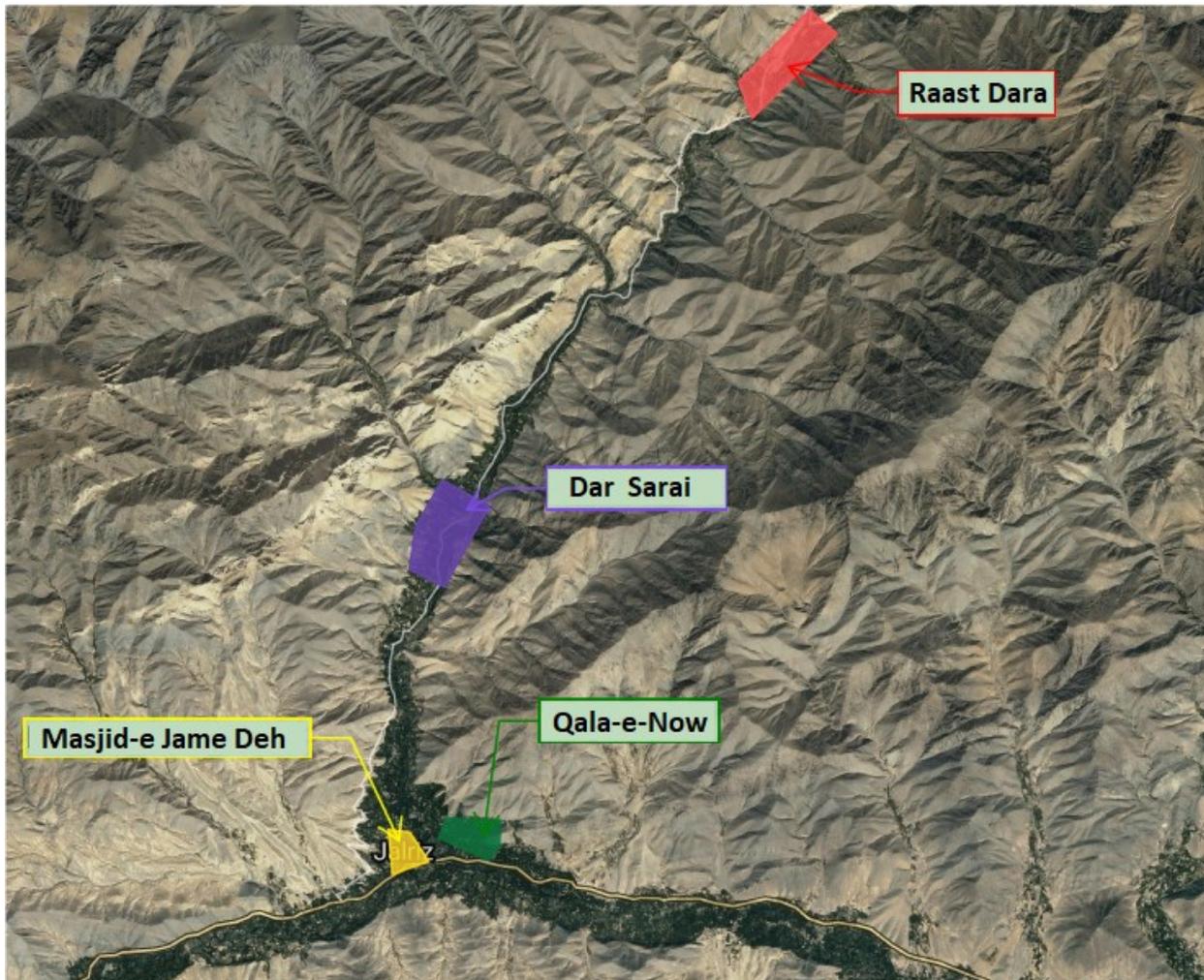
3. Herat City, Herat province

As the only urban area studied, Herat's population, diversity, and a relatively strong economy also set it apart from the other areas studied. Additionally, CCAP implementation is overseen by IDLG in Herat, whereas it is covered by MRRD in all other areas. While certain neighborhoods are dominated by

particular ethnic groups, the rapidly growing population, including economic migrants and IDPs, has overall made these neighborhoods more diverse than other areas studied. This is reflected in the survey data, which suggests that over 50 percent of all households have migrated in recent years, with 25 percent self-identifying as IDPs, 22 percent as economic migrants, and 8 percent as returnees. There is also growing economic disparity, with wealthy families benefiting from recent economic growth and newer arrivals often being very poor.

The area was dominated by a series of commanders during the jihad, civil war, and Taliban periods, and some of these figures, like Ismael Khan, have transitioned into politics and government. This makes the area more secure than other areas that have an active Taliban presence, but interviewees still complained about the continued influence of commanders and growing crime and narcotics abuse.
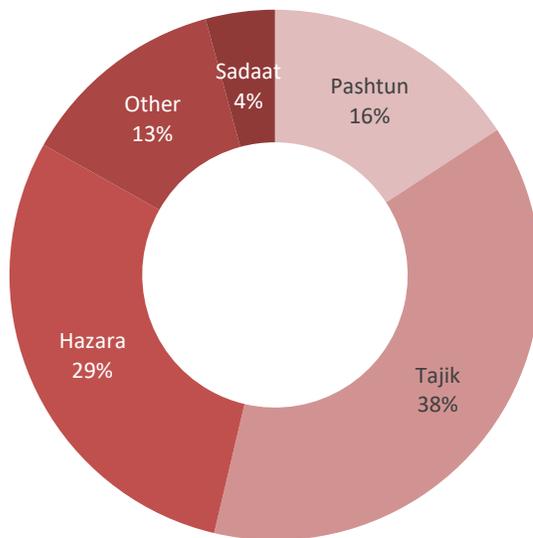
Figure 1: Survey respondents' reported ethnic affiliation in Herat City, survey

Heratis have better access to services, such as health care, than in other areas, with more choice as well. This, somewhat paradoxically, also led to more criticism about these services, since there are higher expectations for health care and education, and also an acute awareness that services delivered by non-state providers are often more effective than government-provided services.

As is often the case in urban settings, social cohesion in Herat was lower than in the other districts studied, and there was also a general sense among those interviewed that social cohesion was less important, since the state was present to arbitrate disputes. Relatedly, local elders and neighborhood heads continue to play an important role, but here, more than other areas, there is an understanding that elders can benefit more from securing roles on formal councils, such as CDCs, which are an effective way to access resources. As a result, there is active competition between influential community members who are attempting to secure CDC seats. The integration of women into CC processes was smoother in Herat than in other areas and CC implementation moved more swiftly.

Map 8: Selected communities in Herat City, Herat province
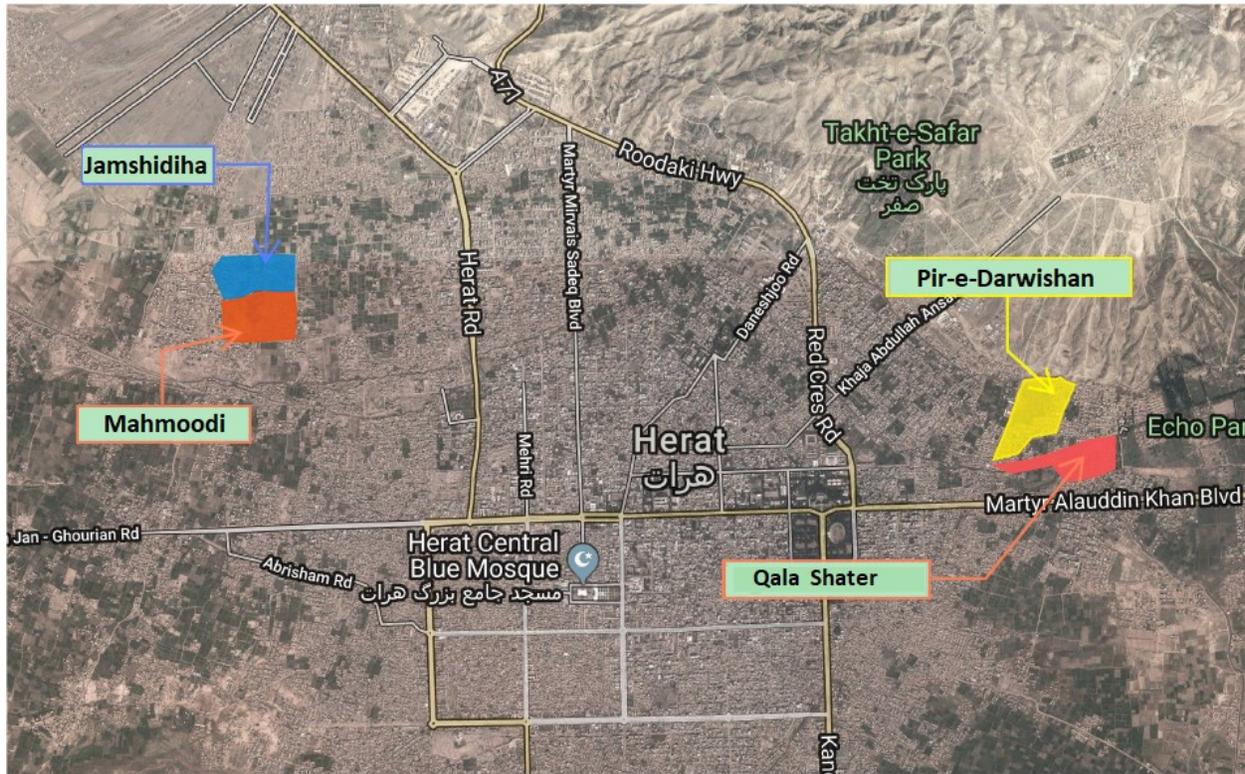
4. Panjwayi district, Kandahar province

Panjwayi is a Pashtun-populated district with significant tribal divides. Study areas were dominated by households belonging to the Alizai, Achakzai, Popalzai, and Nurzai tribes, among others. The district has undergone significant shifts in recent years and is far more secure than it was eight years ago, when there was active fighting between international forces conducting counterinsurgency operations and the Taliban. Despite this, insecurity continues to shape social dynamics in the district. In Village 2, for instance, the entire area was largely abandoned eight years ago during the fighting with international troops. Once the fighting stopped, many poorer families returned, while the wealthier households relocated to Kandahar City and elsewhere. In addition to the original population, other migrant households, particularly those from Helmand who worked as laborers for large landowners, had moved to the area, though they were largely said not to have yet integrated into the community. This has complicated local social cohesion, since many households are still tied together through sharecropping and land-rental arrangements. In these arrangements, poorer families work the land in exchange for proceeds from their work. These ties were, at the same time, juxtaposed to the social and political divides with those who were more recent arrivals.

Interviewees were critical of the government's failure to provide services. In general, the Taliban appeared less likely to be viewed as alternative service providers than they had been in recent years, and overall

trust toward the Taliban was significantly lower here than in Jalrez (five time less at 8 percent).[16] During household-level interviews, some justified their support of the insurgent movement by arguing that the Taliban's capacity to solve disputes or address problems was greater than that of the government.

In most of the villages studied, local elders provide most of the dispute resolution and are the key actors in local politics. In order to access other government resources at the district and provincial level, villagers often rely on wealthier figures who have left the village and settled in the district or provincial centers. Perhaps because of their influence, positions on the CDC, first under NSP first, and now under CC, are considered valuable and politically useful. District political leaders and former commanders have worked to control these positions, and disputes between these leaders have shaped CC implementation locally (more details on this in the conflict case study analyses in the annexes). In the various villages under consideration, tribal affiliation of these figures, particularly among Nurzai, Achakzai, and Popalzai,[17] did much to shape local and district level politics.

In all of the villages considered, women have limited mobility, which impacts their ability to participate in politics. They often complained that they feared asking their husbands questions but wished they could participate in political life. One woman summarized the situation, explaining why she had no knowledge of the CC program:

> *"My husband does not bring outside news in."*
> Female household member, Panjwayi

In only one of the four villages studied did women participate in the CC election process. In the other villages, small groups of women selected their representation through consensus or did not participate at all, a situation in line with the strict cultural norm of the district.

---

[16] Proportion of respondents selecting "a lot" or "moderately" to the question "How much do you trust the Taliban?"

[17] 99% of respondents to the survey declared themselves Pashtuns.

Map 9: Selected communities in Panjwayi district, Kandahar province
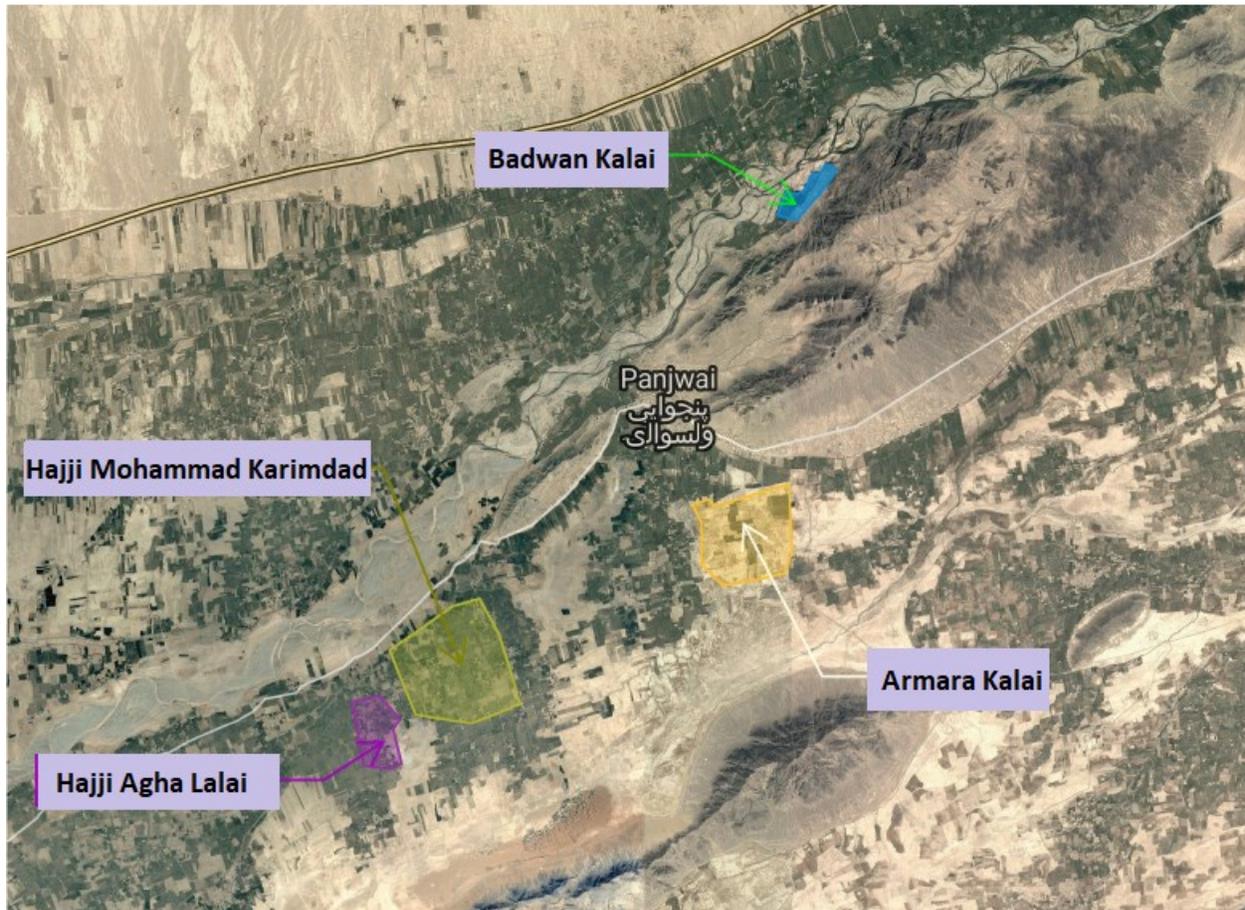
5. Ali Abad district, Kunduz province

While ATR did not conduct the same four iterations of research in Ali Abad, a literature review of material on the area were conducted in order to provide another comparative point to the more extensive research conducted in the other four districts. This included formal and informal interviews with elders, CDC members, and others in the province associated with the CCAP process.

Ali Abad is an ethnically diverse area dominated by Aimaqs, Pashtuns, and Uzbeks (with smaller communities of Tajiks, Hazaras, and Sadat), and this has led to a long and fractured political history. The Kunduz River delineates tribes, with Aimaqs and Uzbeks primarily in state-claimed areas to the east, and Pashtuns, who mainly arrived in the early half of the twentieth century, to the west. In recent years, the area has seen a significant insurgency and, since 2009, an active Taliban presence, particularly in the district's Pashtun areas. Aimaqs, associated with the northern alliance and allied with the US military presence, are the primary opponents of the Taliban. Non-Pashtun groups, however, also continue to feud among themselves, and there are tensions between the Tajiks and Uzbeks in the area.

The government currently controls the area along the main road but struggles to control other parts of the district. Insecurity has led to a weak Afghan government presence and a general disillusionment among the population with the national government. Service delivery is poor overall and there is a particular lack of health facilities.

In contrast, the Taliban have established a governance structure, and their justice system is considered particularly active. They collect development tax and receive regular income from charging fees on electricity and telecommunication antennas.

There are currently 69 CDCs in the district, with the majority of them being under the influence or control of the Taliban. In fact, MRRD engineers reported that only 18 out the 69 CDCs on the more secure side of the river are currently able to function in relative independence from Taliban pressure. In the areas where the Taliban have influence, they have also implemented a series of regulations for the CDCs. In particular, they state that CDCs cannot be formed through elections, women cannot be included, no large social gatherings are permitted, and the CC should not be called a government program (this includes their rejection of any sort of government logo on CC material).

Map 10: Communities where research was conducted in Ali Abad district, Kunduz province
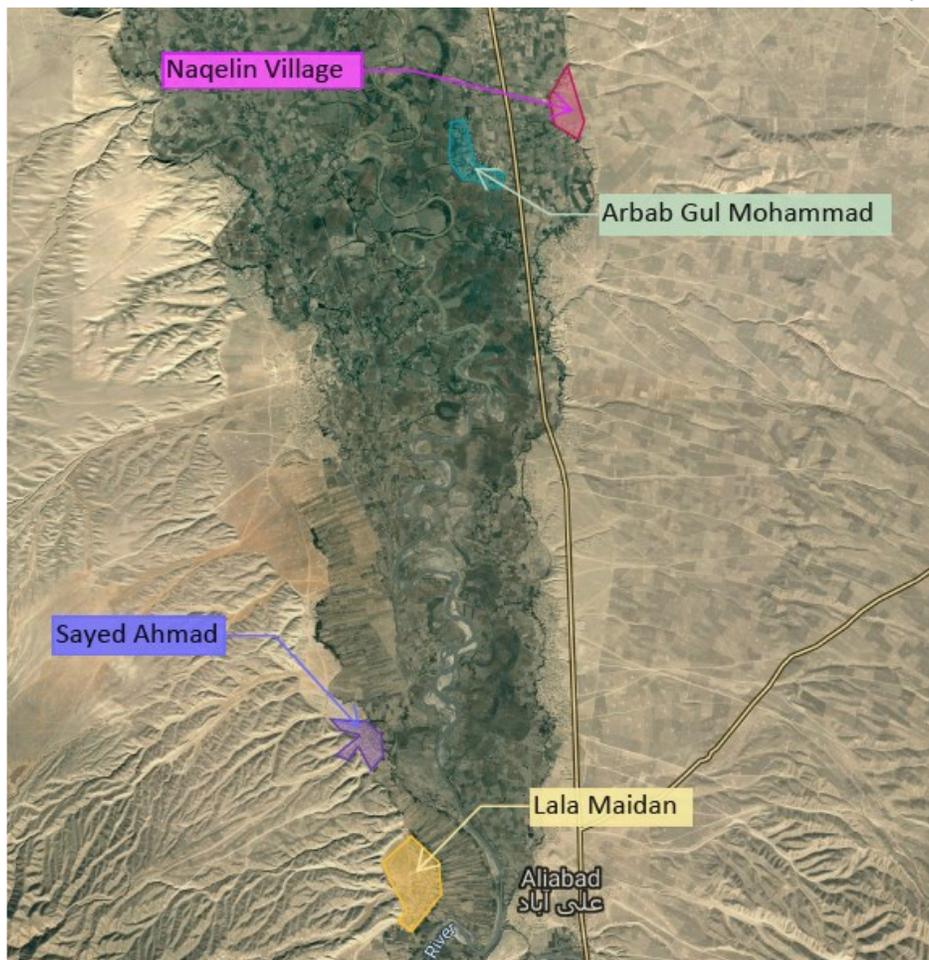
B. Comparison of Main Socio-Economic Features of the Four Districts

In order to conduct a comparative analysis, it is worth looking first at some of the main socioeconomic factors in the areas of study.

Unsurprisingly, the two areas studied where illiteracy is the highest are rural districts, where 70 percent (Jalrez) to 80 percent (Panjwayi) of the respondents never had a chance to attend school. As many as 34 percent of respondents in Herat and 22 percent in Matun reported having graduated from high school or attended tertiary education. This category of respondents represented less than 6 percent in the two rural districts. Among the four districts, Herat has the lowest proportion of illiterate population (28 percent).

Figure 2: Respondents' level of education by district, with emphasis on level of illiteracy, survey
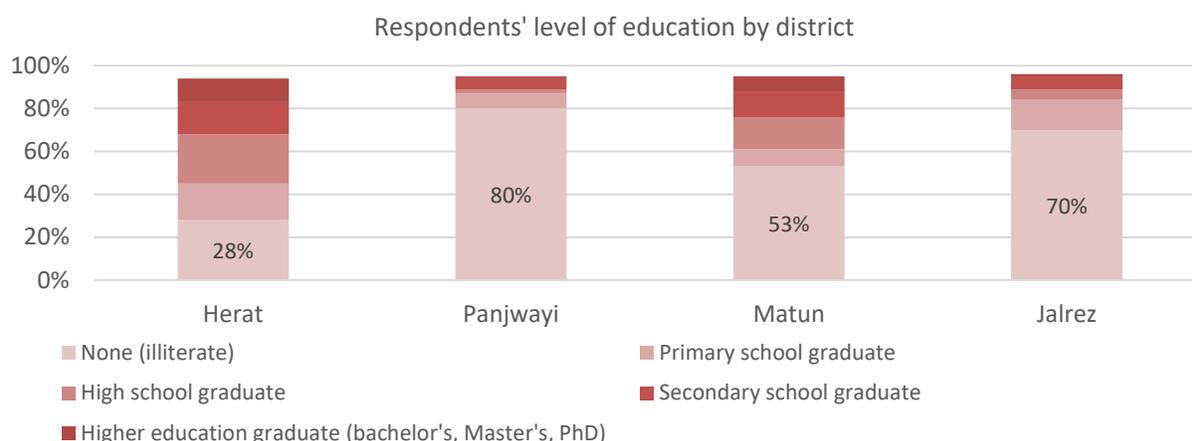
The urban-rural divide appears strongly once again when looking at migration patterns. Herat and Matun have both attracted returning refugees, IDPs, and economic migrants in relatively larger proportions. The two rural districts (Jalrez and Panjwayi) have far fewer incoming migrants (or IDPs) and a relatively low proportion of returning refugees. Sources of income also varied greatly by study area. Panjwayi relied most on the agriculture sector as a source of income. The lack of land in the valleys of Jalrez leads a significant proportion of residents (32 percent) to undertake daily labor as their primary source of income, a trend also visible in Matun, although a much smaller proportion of permanent residents undertake daily labor as compared to returnees or IDPs. The largest portion of small entrepreneurs are in urban or semi-urban areas, with 40 percent in Herat and 32 percent in Matun. In Panjwayi and Jalrez, 90 percent and 84 percent of their population, respectively, are engaged in either agriculture or daily labor / temporary work.

Figure 3: Proportion of IDPs, returnees, and economic migrants, by district, survey

Figure: Proportion of IDPs, returnees and economic migrants, by district
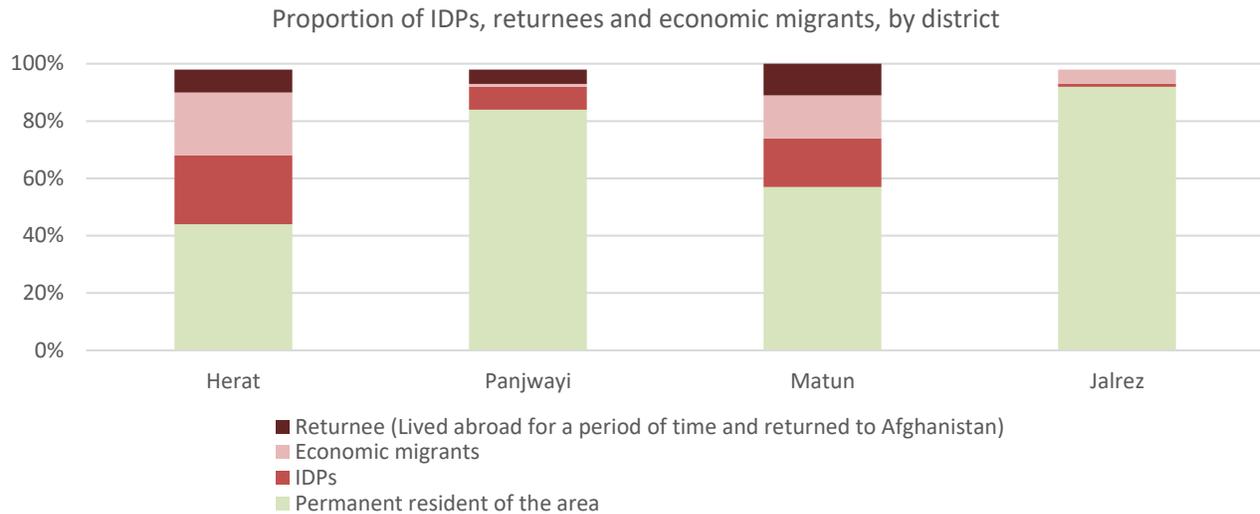
While respondents rarely reported remittances as a source of income, a large proportion of families across Herat (43 percent), Matun (24 percent), and Jalrez (20 percent) have at least one of their close relatives (parent, sibling, or child) living abroad.

Respondents from Panjwayi were the most optimistic about the economic situation, with approximately 48 percent claiming that their economic status had either improved or stayed the same compared to the previous year. Herat and Jalrez, two districts with completely different economic contexts, demonstrated pessimism, with approximately 57 percent and 55 percent of respondents respectively reporting their economic situation as worse than the previous year.

Figure 4: Main source of income at household level, by district, survey

Figure: Main source of income at household level, by district
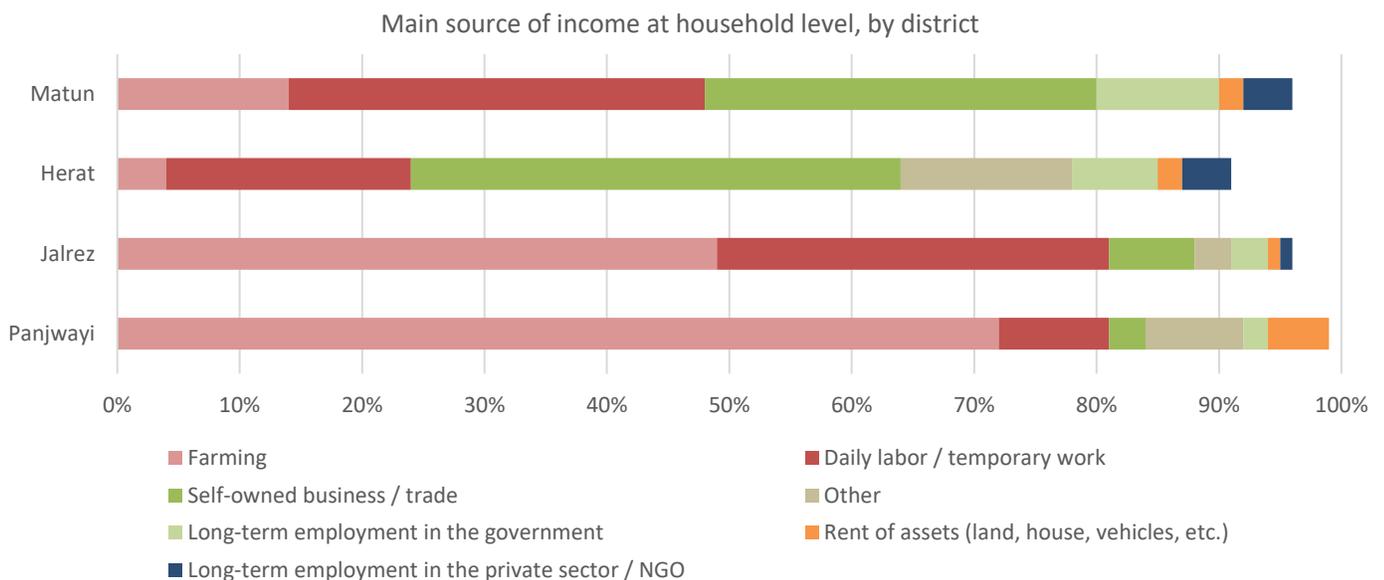
Figure 5: Perception of own economic status compared to previous winter, survey

Perception on own economic status compared to last winter

Legend:
- Has become a lot better
- Has become slightly better
- Has stayed the same
- Has become slightly worse
- Has become much worse
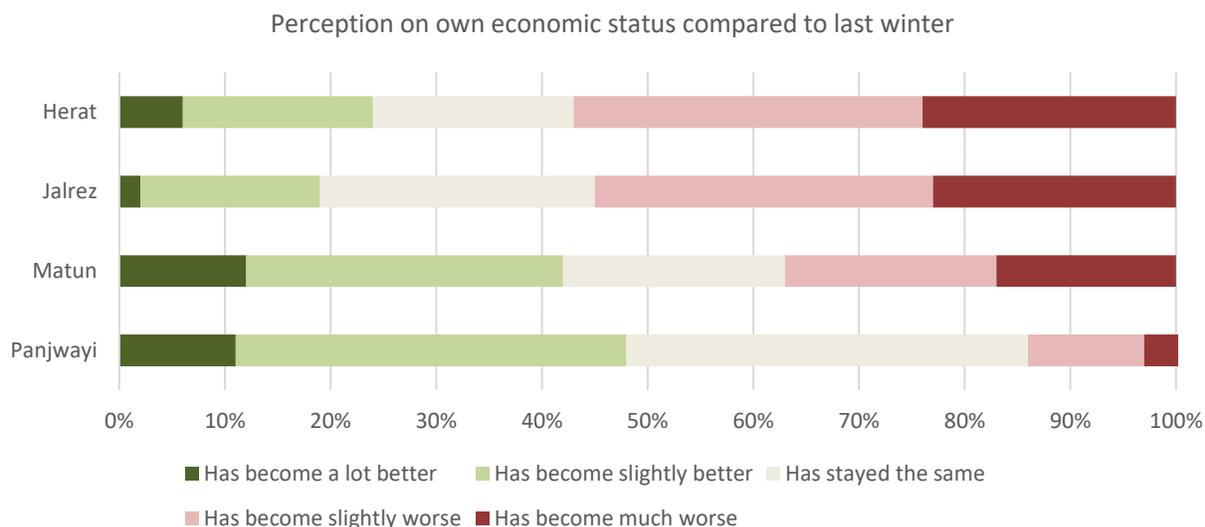
C. Status of CC Process in Areas of Study

1. Overall implementation status

During initial analysis of the 16 areas studied, it became clear that it was necessary to review the status of CCAP in each area first and to understand the ways in which implementation varied from district to district, and how it varied from the ways it is outlined in the CCAP manuals. This section focuses on the rather broad range of variations found in the implementation of CCAP, in part because it is necessary to understand how the process varied in each context in order to analyze the data, but also because these variations reflect some of the challenges the CC process has faced locally, and how the CC process has been adapted to work more effectively at the local level.

Social mobilization and CDC elections were accomplished in each area (though with different levels of inclusion and completeness, as will be discussed further below). Because CC is in its early stages of implementation in the field, clustering had occurred in three of the twelve rural communities as of 10 January 2019. CCDCs at the gozar level (that is, gozar assemblies) had been established in all four studied communities in Herat. Scorecards had not been implemented in any of the areas, and grain banks had been formed in two of the twelve areas where CCAP is implemented by the MRRD.

The primary stages of the CCAP processes are laid out below for each area:

Table 6: Status of mobilization activities, by CDC, CCAP MIS

Province	District name	Village / gozar name	CDC election date as noted on CCAP website[18]	Subcommittees formed (Y/N/partial)	Clustering implemented (Y/N)	Cluster shura election date	Scorecards (Y/N)	Grain bank (Y/N)
Wardak	Jalrez	Qala-e-Now	5 December 2017	N	Y	22 November 2018	N	N
		Masjid-e Jame Deh	22 April 2018	N	N	NA	N	N
		Dar Sarai	14 September 2017	N	Y	28 November 2018	N	N
		Raast Dara	22 August 2017	Y	Y	28 November 2018	N	Y
Herat	Herat	Mahmoodi	24 February 2018	Y	Y	12 July 2018	N	N
		Jamshidiha	6 September 2017	Y	Y	12 July 2018	N	N
		Qala-e-Shater	14 June 2017	Y	Y	16 September 2018	N	N
		Pir-e-Darwishan	22 June 2017	Y	Y	16 September 2018	N	N
Khost	Matun	Mandokhail Star Kalai	14 September 2017	Y	N	NA	N	N
		Pass Manai	4 October 2017	Y	N	NA	N	N
		Ghondai Mangas	10 May 2018	P	N	NA	N	N
		Ponakzay	8 March 2018	N	N	NA	N	N
Kandahar	Panjwayi	Armara	16 July 2018	N	N	NA	N	N
		Badwan	10 June 2018	P	N	NA	N	Y
		Haji Mohammad Karimdad	25 March 2018	P	N	NA	N	N
		Haji Agha Lalai	7 January 2018	N	N	NA	N	N

2. Social mobilization

Social mobilization has taken place in every community studied. Most respondents were aware of the CCAP in general, though they could not specifically describe the social mobilization processes. Respondents from Herat, in contrast with the other three areas studied, were better able to describe the goals and objectives of the CCAP in some depth. The social mobilization process was not linked to conflict

---

[18] The date of the election is the date recorded on the CCAP website, so in those instances when an election did not occur (as reported on the website), or was replaced by a consensus-making gathering, we have kept the date marked on the website, which was used to approximate the creation date of the CDC.

in the same extent that other aspects of the CC process were. Despite this, in multiple areas studied, the initial stages of mobilization did not take place as laid out in the CCAP manuals. In some places this is simply a question of ineffective communication with community members (this is more common with women in the community — for more, see below), but in several instances, more overt serious changes to the process were made.

One instance of such changes occurred in Jalrez. In all four villages studied, social mapping occurred in the offices of the FP, rather than in the village with community members, because of pressure from the Taliban, which had demanded that no gatherings take place in the villages. The FP and community members explained that this was done primarily for security reasons. Based on interviews with community members, the FP did discuss the mapping process and sought information from some of the villagers in Village 1. In the poorer and more remote Village 4, however, respondents stated that they had no input in the mapping process and that mapping was done entirely by the FP. While the decision taken by the FP is quite sensitive, considering the risk associated with violating the Taliban's orders, the FP reported that the mobilization process had taken place normally, without activating alternative measures, such as the application of the High Risk Areas Implementation Strategy.

Social mobilization proved to be particularly effective in one community in Herat (Urban Area 2), where CDC members: mobilized volunteers to clean streets, took decisions on marriage and funeral spending, and forbade use of loans with interests. This success, with mobilization leading to self-governance, shows the potential positive outcome of social mobilization. While the urban setting of the community might have helped ease the mobilization, the community features great ethnic diversity and has welcomed numerous waves of IDPs over the past decade, factors which are often assumed to make mobilization more difficult. Regardless, one can assume that part of this success should be attributed to excellent mobilization skills of the FPs.

3. Elections

i. *Elections and participation*

Elections for CDCs had occurred in each area studied. Levels of participation (and type of participation), however, varied broadly. Data gathered through quantitative surveys suggest that Kandahar had the highest proportion of people participating (55 percent) and Jalrez the lowest (33 percent). The difference between men and women was the least in Herat (14 percentage points) and the greatest in Panjwayi (62 percentage points) — followed closely by Matun (56 percentage points).[19] The level of male participation was particularly high in Panjwayi (86 percent) and Matun (70 percent), showing success in mobilizing men in these two districts. IDPs had lower participation rates as compared to permanent residents, with a general reported participation of 34 percent, while 54 percent of returnees claimed to have taken part in

---

[19] These results utilize a disaggregation by gender, thus using smaller samples, which led to a greater margin of error (around 6.8) compared to the margin of error of less than 5 for general district-level results (for a confidence level of 95%).

the CDC election, particularly those who had not been away from their homes for long or who had remained invested in local political processes.

Responses during qualitative interviews were mixed and reflect the various forms of participation. For instance, some respondents described having attended the election and participated actively, while it was not uncommon to hear that an interviewee had attended the election only because they were instructed to by a local elder and had voted for the candidate they were instructed to support.

ii.   Prevalence of consensus instead of election and exclusion of women

By far the most systematic variation in the CC implementation process involved the manner in which women participated. The number of variations were the lowest and subtlest in Herat: in three communities, the elections were consistently reported as having followed the operations manual (other than for the exact percentage of participation — see Figure 6Figure 6 below). In one community, the number of electoral units did not follow the operations manual guidelines, but this deviation might have been a simple technical error rather than a manipulation of the process. The most significant variation was the fact that one of the CDC candidates had stood for election in one of the studied communities and lost before moving to a different community and winning a CDC seat. Overall, the elections in Herat went much more smoothly than in the rural areas.

In rural areas, the most prominent variation was the tendency of communities, sometimes with the support of FPs, to convert CDC elections for women, and at times both men and women, into consensus processes, instead of real elections. This challenge is not surprising for various reasons: First, under NSP, elections were not organized in such a systematic manner as under the CDC, and it is difficult for FPs to introduce strict processes in traditional communities where changes are slow. Second, Panjwayi and Matun are very conservative areas where women have had an extremely limited role in public life. Third, the fear of the Taliban has clearly influenced decisions to exclude women from the elections in much of Jalrez, though part of the district is otherwise sufficiently liberal to have accepted women's participation in elections.

Confirming the actual participation of women in the CC process proved one of the most difficult things to do. In particular, it is clear that in many of the areas studied, most opposed the participation of women but also understood that if MRRD or IDLG knew that women were excluded, they would probably lose access to funds. This led some CDC members, PMUs, and FPs to state adamantly that women had participated, even while ATR researchers gathered evidence that they had not — evidence which was later confirmed through the survey results.

Figure 6: Participation in the last CDC elections by gender and by district, survey

Participated in the elections by gender and by district
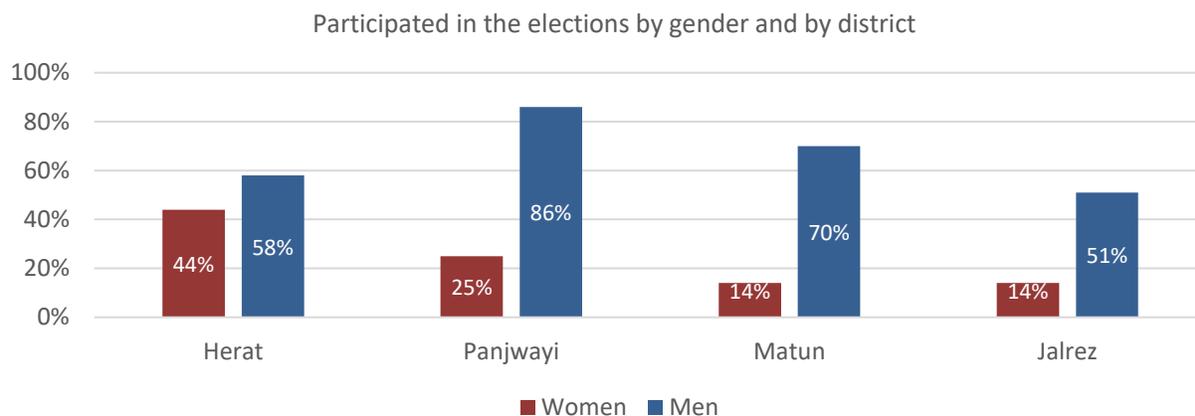
For example, in Village 1 in Panjwayi, the CDC chair and the treasurer claimed that women had participated in the election process. However, all four female interviewees in the village said that they had not. This included the female deputy of the CDC, who stated that men from the CDC came to her and told her she had been assigned the position of deputy, even though she was not involved in the election process. Similarly, in Village 4 in Matun, both the CDC chair and the FP claimed that female participation was slightly lower than male participation, but out of the four women who participated in the study, three affirmed that women had not been invited to the elections, and one explained that she was sick the day of the elections and had not attended. The woman who was eventually selected as CDC deputy also admitted that women had not participated in elections.

Particularly in more rural and conservative areas, to circumvent women's participation, which was reported by both male and female respondents to be inappropriate, interviewees often reported having participated in a consensus process that typically involved some women, but usually in numbers much lower than participated on the male side.

The inclusion of women in the CC process has been mixed, due to the divide between urban areas, which generally reported few issues with including women in CDC elections, and more rural areas, where women were less likely to participate in a meaningful manner. However, even in rural areas, there could be significant variation, with some areas having almost no female participation and others having some level of participation. In the case of Matun, no link could be found between the distance of the community from the provincial center and women's level of participation. Elections took place and included women in the village farthest away from the provincial capital (Village 4), while consensus-based selection included some women in Villages 1 and 3, and excluded them entirely in Village 2.

In general, Pashtun areas were more resistant to elections and to women's participation more specifically. In Panjwayi, for instance, CDC members were selected through consensus in villages 2, 3, and 4, without the participation of women. However, this should not be dismissed as simply an ethnic division. First,

there are two examples of elections that took place with some participation of women in Pashtun areas (Panjwayi Village 1 and Matun Village 4). Second, women participated in the elections in Herat, where the population is mixed. Quality of village leadership, community exposure to various mobilization programs, the competence of the social organizer and/or the social organizer's network and level of influence in the community may all be factors that enable processes to take place as planned. Another factor might be the clear understanding that women's participation, or at least the perception of their participation, is necessary to ensure funds continue coming to the area. Overall, the few examples of women's participation in the present study, even if they were limited by the study's geographic scope, show that change is possible.

In areas with a strong Taliban influence, there was also a reluctance to do anything that might be perceived as opposed to Taliban ideals. This was the case for three communities out of four in Jalrez. Two very similar communities in terms of ethnic composition (Hazara and Sadat) and livelihood dealt with the election process in totally different manners: elections took place with women in Village 4, where Taliban influence is very limited, and did not take place, having been replaced by a consensus selection without the participation of women, in Village 3, where the Taliban exhibit greater control.

> *"Everyone participated in election of CC. Both male and female members of the society actively participated in the election. And every village selected their own head and other members of their CDC."*
>
> Female respondent, Village 4, Jalrez

Including women in decision-making should be viewed as a slow process requiring significant social changes. It was apparent from interviews with FPs, PMUs, and CDC members that the inclusion of women in the CDC election and other aspects of the CC process could lead to the halting of the program. This led to accusations of tokenism, with women acting as if they were participating simply to give the impression to the FP or other outside observers that they were active in CC activities. As the chair of the CDC in Village 3 in Jalrez candidly stated:

> *"The women on the CDC are selected by the people. Since this is a rule of CC, there should be women members of the CDC, but they are not given any authority by the people to attend meetings or walk around the community. We don't allow our women to do these things."*
>
> CDC Chairperson, Village 3, Jalrez

In cases such as this, the inclusion of women is actually seen as potentially generating conflict, whether by attracting unwanted Taliban attention (see more on this below) or by creating more internal feuds and accusations of certain groups acting less honorably (i.e., by allowing their women to vote — perceived by some as essentially dishonorable), and it is clear that multiple communities and individual FPs used the potential of conflict as a means to continue excluding women.

Through social lenses rather than security ones, it appears that rural women often lack the confidence to raise their voices and participate in public life. Interviewed women from any ethnic background and in all areas except Herat, expressed regret that they lacked sufficient knowledge, capacity, and access to information to be engaged in their communities. They voiced their willingness to contribute to public life emphatically, but had not yet developed the self-confidence to take on initiatives and responsibilities — a self-confidence which grows slowly in rural areas where patriarchal norms rule society. In contrast, female CDC members in Herat are able to share opinions on policy issues, propose plans, and, very often, express their belief that they can make a difference. When comparing these two groups of women, it appears that education and exposure to information (in conservative rural areas, men avoid sharing outside information with their wife or daughters) are the most significant factors driving the differences in their participation.

It should also be noted that, while rural women often require more explanations and more support to gain the confidence they need to step into public affairs, they are offered less support than their urban counterparts. According to FPs and CCAP staff, this is because the number of female social organizers (SOs) is insufficient, and existing female SOs usually lack access to communities that are remote from the district centers. Consequently, in rural areas, where the need for female SOs is higher, the actual number of female staff who can visit all communities is very low. This issue is largely due to the Ministry of Finance's regulations for CBR staff (regulations affecting all CCAP staff, including among FPs), which impose educational and experience requirements that the vast majority of local women (who would have greater access to the communities in question than SOs from outside the community) cannot meet.

iii.   Other election irregularities

There were a series of other election irregularities and manipulations that seem to have been primarily aimed at allowing certain figures to seize power or manipulate the CC process. These irregularities included (in all of these cases additional details may be found in the attached annexes):

- Village 3, Matun: At the last minute, the number of election units was increased to allow a faction led by the future CDC chair to ensure that he won the election. This was facilitated by the fact that the representative of the local FP was a close family member and his sister was also elected to the CDC;
- Village 3, Jalrez: The election was held with the former chair of the NSP CDC winning the position of CC CDC chair. After this, several powerful figures in the community protested and refused to accept the election results, in part because the man had recently been bankrupted. Finally, he agreed to step down and another man who was selected by a group of elders through a consensus process replaced him;
- Village 4, Matun: After the election, one of the women elected to be CDC secretary was found to be an illiterate widow. Since she was unable to use her home for women to meet and discuss the CC process, she was removed from the position and replaced by the wife of the CDC head. When the FP and PMU were asked about this irregularity, they explained that they were aware of the fact that their being from the same household violated CC procedures, but that when they

approached the women in the village to find a new representative, the community refused and indicated they would not work with CCAP if the wife of the CDC head was not confirmed in her position;

- Areas 3 and 4, Herat: Gozar assembly elections were boycotted by CDC members due to a dispute over the initial CDC elections in one of the areas. Accusations of manipulation by one CDC member led to others refusing to participate (see the CCSA below for more details).

In addition to irregularities in election procedures, there were also certain irregularities in who was selected to the CDC executive committee, which often involved close relatives. These included:

- Village 1, Matun: The deputy and treasurer, who are women, do not perform their duties, and instead their husbands serve in their place;
- Village 4, Matun: The chair and vice chair are husband and wife;
- Village 1, Jalrez: The chair and deputy chair are husband and wife, and the secretary is mother of the deputy chair and mother-in-law of the chair;
- Village 2, Panjwayi: The CDC chair is a permanent resident of the district center, not of the village;
- Village 4, Panjwayi: The CDC chair is a permanent resident of Kandahar City, not of the village.

4. Subcommittees

The CCAP Conflict and Fragility Study was designed in part to look at the impact of higher-level CC processes, through subcommittees, management committees, and the deployment of scorecards. However, delays in the implementation of clustering and the revision of the scorecard process have meant that, in all areas researched, these processes had either not taken place or had taken place only shortly before data collection. This is reflected in the fact that this is a baseline study, occurring just one year into project field implementation.

Urban communities were more advanced in the establishment of subcommittees than rural ones. All four communities in Herat had operational subcommittees, while Matun had three communities with fully established subcommittees and one community where they had been partially established. Wardak, meanwhile, had one CDC with all subcommittees established, and Kandahar had two with partially formed subcommittees. The instances of partially set-up subcommittees resulted from rejection of certain aspects of the subcommittee process, particularly the participation of women. This is the case in Village 1 in Panjwayi, for example. Even where subcommittees had been formed, interviewees tended to struggle to describe their function and usefulness, in part because of a slow rollout of various aspects of the CC program and the fact that subcommittees had been formed relatively recently.

5. Clustering

The clustering of CDCs at the gozar level took place in all communities studied in Herat. In rural areas, cluster CDCs were formed in three of the four studied communities in Jalrez and in none of the

communities in the other two districts. According to interviewees, elections of the cluster CDCs in three communities in Jalrez went smoothly, with none of the tensions found in Herat (see below).

After elections, the clustering process in Herat was not always frictionless and had generated some conflict between rival local elders that suggests these figures see these positions as politically and potentially economically useful (more details in the case study in annex). This also suggests some of the ways in which micro- and meso-level conflicts may be linked in the CC process, which is analyzed further below.

6. Implementation of projects under grants

Of the 16 study areas, 11 had subprojects for which CCAP had disbursed funds as of the last data collection dates for each village, as indicated in Table 7.

No subprojects had yet begun in Matun, while in Herat all four communities had subprojects implemented. In Jalrez, two of the areas had subprojects ongoing. According to the CCAP website, in the case of Panjwayi, funds had been allocated for projects in Villages 1, 2, and 3, but the implementation of these subprojects had yet to begin. In one case, this is because the winter had delayed construction. In another case, however, the FP explained that the project had been halted because the community had refused to set up subcommittees. The FP stated that they could not establish these subcommittees since the communities involved refused to allow the participation of women. Community members, however, appeared not to understand that this was the reason subproject work had not yet begun, and household interviews blamed the FP and PMU for the lack of activity.

Table 7: Status of grant disbursement by CDC, CCAP MIS

District name	Village name	CC grant disbursed (Y/N)	Grant in AFN	Amount disbursed in AFN	Subproject work begun (Y/N)
Jalrez	Qala-e-Now	Y	710,559	497,391	Y
	Masjid-e Jame Deh	Y	1,839,600	1,287,720	N
	Dar Sarai	N	0	0	N
	Raast Dara	Y	2,531,163	1,771,814	Y
Herat	Mahmoodi	Y	4,690,000	3,283,000	Y
	Jamshidiha	Y	4,690,000	3,283,000	Y
	Qala-e-Shater	Y	4,690,000	3,283,000	Y
	Pir-e-Darwishan	Y	4,690,000	3,283,000	Y

District name	Village name	CC grant disbursed (Y/N)	Grant in AFN	Amount disbursed in AFN	Subproject work begun (Y/N)
Matun	No subproject has begun				
Panjwayi	Armara	Y	1,664,910	1,165,437	N
	Badwan	Y	1,673,190	1,171,233	N
	Haji Mohammad Karimdad	Y	1,659,600	1,161,720	N
	Haji Agha Lalai	Y	1,580,400	1,106,280	Y

7. Grain banks

Grain banks had been set up in two of the 12 communities covered by MRRD, Village 4 in Wardak and Village 2 in Panjwayi. The grain bank in Village 2 in Panjwayi was reported to have actually been established independently of the CCAP by Haji Padsha, a wealthy local power holder. He donated the space and some of the initial grain to start it.[20] This specific example demonstrates the high potential of the grain banks for building resilience and social cohesion.

> *"Local grain bank collects staple food items from different people and distributes them between the poor families. This committee has started recently, and this project is 100 percent successful."*
>
> Male respondent, Village 4, Jalrez

Other communities reported that FPs had informed them about the grain bank structure — and most were very positive about the potential for such an institution — but indicated that they had not yet been implemented. This led to raised expectations and some disappointment that the process had not begun.

The most extreme case of this was in Village 1 in Jalrez, where community members claimed that an engineer from MRRD had visited twice and collected money for the start of a grain bank, but had not returned, defrauding wealthy villagers of USD 2,000. Researchers could not confirm this story with the PMU, but it was repeated by interviewees, and it was not clear where these funds went.

The quantitative data shows a higher participation in grain banks than reported in the qualitative data. On average, across districts, 54 percent of respondents affirmed that people in their community "most of

---

[20] It seems that this project, though independent of the MRRD, may be confused locally with other CC initiatives, particularly since the person selected to determine how grain will be distributed is also the CDC chair.

the time" or "sometimes" supported grain banks. The highest level of support was in Jalrez (67 percent) and the lowest in Panjwayi (37 percent).

8. Scorecards

Scorecards were not deployed in the areas studied, and no data could be collected on this aspect of the project.

PART 4 – GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CC PROCESS, CONFLICT, AND FRAGILITY

Specific answers to the research questions are included below (PART 5 – FINDINGS ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS), but several more general conclusions emerged during the analysis that are important to point to before turning to these more specific questions. These key findings focus on conflict, fragility, and the CCAP, Taliban interference in CC processes, and discrepancies in information around the CC.

First, it should be noted that CCAP is being implemented in an increasingly challenging environment. Over the period of the research, fighting significantly increased in Jalrez and Ali Abad, while Taliban influence or control expanded in these two districts to almost all communities. While Panjwayi and Matun were relatively immune from insurgents' activities, the recent history (Panjwayi) or the distribution of propaganda materials (Matun) invariably leave these communities concerned about the possibility of future violence.

In some rural areas, the project has thus increasingly been subject to the rules of the controlling party — the Taliban — which forbids gatherings, democratic processes (but will accept selection by consensus), and the participation of women, all of which are seen as anti-Islamic, at least by significant portions of the movement. In other words, they forbid most aspects of the CCAP process, and project stakeholders have ended up having to choose between adapting the project so services could continue to be delivered or stopping project implementation altogether.

The stress imposed on CCAP stakeholders working under such pressure and violence should not be disregarded. It is further enhanced by increasingly tense relations among local power brokers, who struggle to hold onto their area of influence in a more violent environment with greater competition for control. Local politics is thus particularly fragile.

Despite these challenges, CCAP is largely recognized across studied districts as a program that reduces tensions and resolves grievances. This is especially true in Panjwayi (82 percent of positive opinion) and Herat (59 percent of positive opinion). It should be noted that, overall, a significant proportion of women (40 percent) either responded that they did not know whether the CC affects their community in these ways or refused to answer the question.

Figure 7: Level of agreement with the statement "The CC helps our community to reduce tensions and resolve grievances," survey

How much does this positive statement apply to your community: "The Citizens' Charter helps our community to reduce tensions and resolve grievances"?
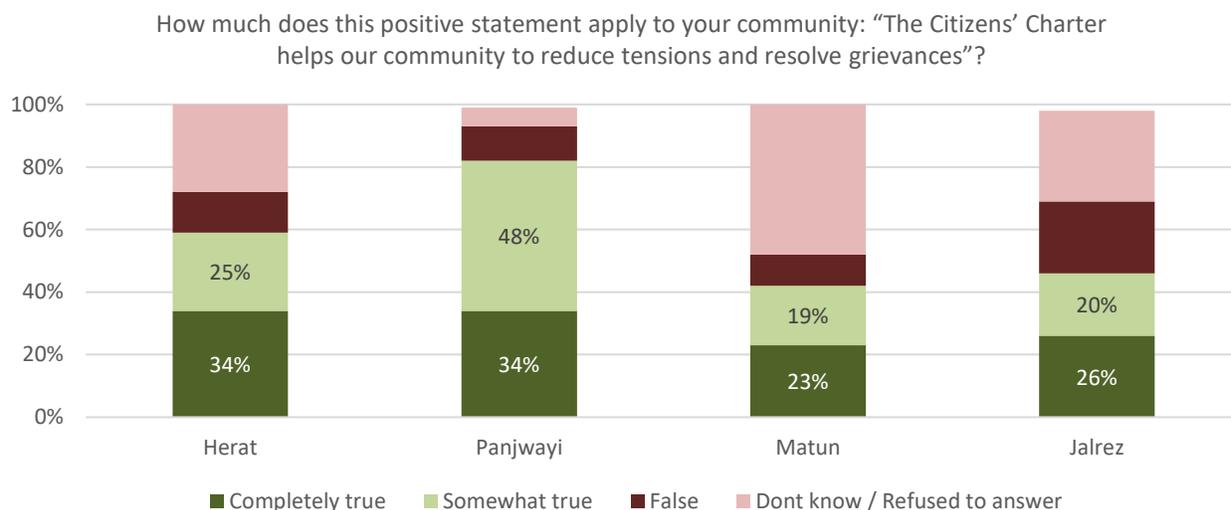
The following paragraphs highlight areas for improvement so that the CCAP can continue to have an increasingly positive effect on community tensions and grievances.

A. Local Conflicts, National Conflicts, and the CC Processes

Survey data suggest that most respondents do not link the CCAP with conflict. In fact, in the districts surveyed, the proportion of respondents who claimed that the CC creates tensions or fuels existing conflicts varied from just 2 percent in Panjwayi to 10 percent in Jalrez. There are several ways in which the CCAP either resolves, contributes to, or reshapes conflicts locally. Most of these tend to be around access to the resources provided by the CCAP. For example, in the case study from Mandokhail Star Kalai, Matun, the community expected the FP to deliver a water tank of a certain size, but they ended up receiving one that was much smaller. This case demonstrates how misunderstandings over project expectations or, more certainly, a mismatch between the community needs and the "package" offered by the CC can contribute to tensions between the community and government officials.

More common, however, were accounts of CC processes being influenced by and reshaping ongoing local conflicts. So, for example, in Qala-e-Shater in Herat, two local leaders had been involved in a long-standing dispute going back twenty years. During that time, they had feuded over control of local positions, the appointment of mosque officials, and land. This dispute carried into the clustering process, since both leaders had been elected as CDC heads of different neighborhoods, with one claiming the other had

manipulated the election process. As a result, several other members boycotted the gozar assembly meeting and effectively halted initiatives at the gozar level.[21]

Similarly, in the case of Ghondai Mangas, Matun, the CDC election was used as a means of solidifying one family's control over politics and resources in the community. This led to speculation that CCAP had not taken into account a well-known local conflict before organizing the elections, a clear oversight that presumably should have been avoided during preliminary planning and social mobilization. Here, a long-standing series of disputes over land was causing tensions and occasionally violence between prominent local families. As social mobilization began in the village, it was clear that key leaders from one family felt that positions on the CDC could help them in their dispute. As a result, this family worked with the social organizer, who was a close relative, to change the number of election units in their favor, in order to gain control of the positions they sought on the CDC — a course of events that was verified by various members of the community. This caused further conflict, along with the sense among other, less powerful households that there was little they could do to remedy the process, and thus the discord continued unresolved.

Researchers also found significant links between these local-level conflicts and national-level processes, which hindered the implementation of the CCAP. In particular, ATR research was impacted by the parliamentary elections, where in certain areas, key local leaders were heavily involved in campaigns leading up to the vote in October 2018. Much of this process was perceived locally as encouraging corruption and the reliance on patronage networks, ranging from the local communities to national-level figures. Since local leaders were heavily involved in these parliamentarian campaigns, some respondents formed the belief that CDCs were also involved in soliciting votes and other aspects of these processes. This is likely to have been even more prevalent in the presidential election of 2019, where the support of CDCs could be viewed as a key asset by various campaigns, and individual candidates may have attempted to manipulate the CC in their favor.

Beyond this, some respondents also linked the CCAP to international politics. Interviewees, without prompting, often referred to the fact that the CCAP is internationally funded and pointed out that this was further evidence of the dependence of the Afghan government on the international community. This was usually tied to comments about the weak nature of the current Afghan government, but was also occasionally interpreted more positively, with some respondents suggesting that development programs were more likely to be successful when tied to international organizations.

B. Taliban Interference in CC Processes

Taliban activity had both an indirect and direct impact on CC processes in some of the areas studied. In all eight areas in Panjwayi and Matun, for instance, Taliban impact was primarily indirect. This took the form

---

[21] For both cases, see more information in the attached CCSAs.

of communities struggling to deal with the social and economic impact of IDPs and economic migrants, many of whom moved, at least in part, to avoid conflict and the associated economic disruptions the Taliban caused. More generally, however, interviewees suggested that some of their decisions around CC processes were made intentionally so as not to provoke the Taliban. For instance, in Matun, the potential for retaliation by the Taliban was used to justify very conservative local practices.

In contrast with this, the impact of the Taliban presence was more direct in Jalrez and Ali Abad. The social mobilization process was mostly guided by conditions imposed by the Taliban. The changes made, even in villages not under Taliban control, but only Taliban influence, involved selecting members based on consensus instead of election; preventing women's participation; receiving pressure to hire people recommended by the Taliban; and removing all references to CC as a government project. In areas under Taliban influence, the risk of illegal taxation needs to be acknowledged, and mitigation measures must be put into place to prevent it. This is particularly needed in areas where Taliban influence on service delivery is more substantial, something that has been observed by researchers in communities across the country. In these areas, communities and NGOs have a long history of dealing with the Taliban. As a result, they were somewhat more adept (for better or worse) at minimizing conflict with the Taliban, but also at altering CC structures in order to avoid violence.

C. CCAP as Governance and Development

As stated in the ToR:

> The long-term goal of the Government of Afghanistan's Citizens' Charter Program (CC) is to reduce poverty and deepen the relationship between citizens and the state. In the medium term, the Citizens' Charter aims to improve the delivery of core infrastructure and social services to communities through strengthened Community Development Councils (CDCs).

As such, the CCAP combines service delivery aspects with mobilization processes aimed at supporting governance locally. Quite naturally, during the early stages of the project, the population considers CCAP solely through the lens of development, focusing on the infrastructure subprojects they expect to receive.

This perception of the CCAP appears to be shared by some of the PMUs and FPs interviewed as well. Perhaps as a result, the governance aspects of the project — which are a less visible and more long-term in nature — have been the most contentious (e.g., CDC elections), whereas development aspects (e.g., the implementation of subprojects) have been the most embraced and easiest to implement. These trends shape how communities interact with CDCs and with some of the practices of the CCAP.

D. Discrepancies in Information about and in the CCAP Process

ATR researchers had to work to understand the rather large discrepancies observed in the various forms of information gathered. Information on the CCAP website, as well as information that ATR has been given by MRRD and IDLG, oftentimes contradicts the findings of researchers on the ground. In some cases, after discussions with the PMU and CDC members, it was clear that a simple mistake had been made and the discrepancies could be reconciled. In a large number of cases, however, contradictions from various sources remain. Such discrepancies do point to widespread incentives for obscurity that damage the process and, most importantly, have contributed to tensions and conflict around the CC process in the study areas.

Disinformation and incorrect reporting manifested themselves, for example, in the consistently over-positive reports by male participants regarding mobilization and the participation of women. Community leaders insisted that these processes had occurred and that women had been involved, but these statements were contradicted in several parts of Matun, Jalrez, and Panjwayi by the women themselves. The overreporting such successes by men is understandable, as they want to ensure that programming will continue.

There were also incentives for FPs and PMUs, who were often deeply embedded in the local social context, to report upwards that there were not significant implementation issues, even when there were. In these cases, FPs may be fearful of losing their jobs by reporting challenges, or they may simply feel pressure from community members to send positive reports so that programming will continue.

As a result of these tendencies, when researchers encountered data they knew to be faulty, it was often not immediately clear whether this was due to communities misleading local FPs, local FPs misleading provincial offices, or provincial offices misleading the ministry. Some of these cases were fairly straightforward, such as with several villages appearing to have had a different number of households than appeared reported on the CCAP website.[22] Some of these could have been errors, but as will be discussed further below, there were some places in the CC process where the systematic obfuscation of information was helpful for multiple parties involved. Thus, for example, both the CDC chair, the PMU, and the FP all stood to gain by claiming elections had appropriate participation levels, even if they did not. More generally, however, issues with information could be divided into (1) issues with how communities understand the CC process and (2) issues with how those implementing the CC process gather information about the community.

In addition, some aspects of the project rely on declaration from the communities. This includes data on the number of households, the number of mosques, the level of wealth for each group, and the mobility

---

[22] Even where discrepancies seem due to error, this points to real issues with correct information being transmitted from CC implementers on the ground to the MRRD and the IDLG. For example, in 8 out of the 16 areas studied, the CDC chair reported household numbers in the area that differed from the numbers reported on the CCAP website, and in 6 of these areas, that difference was significant. See the annex for more details.

of women. There is very little FPs can do to correct misreporting from communities, but it is important to note such discrepancies, in case the data from the well-being analysis are used at some point for additional programming. Using a well-being analysis as-is for providing assistance could trigger conflict if not cross-checked beforehand.

In practical terms, communities and community members varied in how they attempted to portray themselves to outsiders, depending on their perception of what certain information might trigger in terms of aid or social standing, or simply depending on how inclusive the exercise was (if large gatherings did not happen, the risks of misreporting probably increased). In some instances, this may have included wealthy leaders who stated that they were poor (or at least less wealthy). For example, in Village 2, Matun, the CDC head was listed as "medium" in terms of wealth and the CDC secretary was listed as "poor." Despite this, both families owned extensive lands (the secretary claimed she owned 20 *jeribs*), and in interviews with other villagers, it was clear that both families were powerful, with significant wealth compared to others in the area. Similarly, in Village 3 in Kandahar, the CDC head's wealth was recorded as "medium," but he actually owned 60 jeribs of land and property in Dubai, which should have qualified him for the "rich" category.

On the other hand, there were times when community members stated that they felt ashamed telling officials about their poverty, and in Village 2 in Jalrez, 62 percent of families were ranked as "rich" or "medium." Follow-up research suggested much higher rates of poverty, due in part to the fact that families with wealth had already left the area to avoid fighting between ANDSF and the Taliban. Several respondents suggested that admitting their poverty was shameful, and as a result, they had lied about their status.

This misinformation was not unique to the CC process, and respondents noted that, more generally, keeping information from outsiders was useful, particularly for local leaders who could manipulate that information for their own or the community's gain. As one CDC member in Panjwayi explained at length:

> *The CDC shuras create more problems for people. Instead of mobilization, it provides more conflict for people inside the village. For example, during the counting of households in the village, the elders might not provide the correct number of families. They increase the number of families or mosques in the village to show that they have more power. This is helped by certain government officials. For example, there is a man named Shams who had a letter of support from the police commander, and during the CDC election, he was using this to tell people who to vote for. Even during the parliamentary election, a man named Haji Nadeer came to the village with police and collected certain people to vote. Together, the elders and police were working to ensure the election outcome turned out in a certain way.*

> CDC Member, Panjwayi

.

PART 5 – FINDINGS ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section systematically addresses all the research questions listed in the ToR (though, in some cases, the questions have been reordered for better analytical clarity). Also, this section covers one of the overall research questions — "What differences appear for each of the present research questions along the urban / rural divide?" — which is a cross-cutting question that is covered under each instance when the urban / rural divide is visible. Based on an analysis of the various drivers of conflict in each of the areas of study, the following conclusions can be made around a series of issues and political dynamics in which the CCAP has become involved.

A. Overall Research Questions

1. What key factors differentiate conflict dynamics in one area as compared to others?

Looking locally, there were several trends in each area that helped shape conflict and pointed to lessons about drivers of conflict. These tended to be determined by the history, socioeconomics, and security of the area, as well as relationships between local communities and between communities and the government. In each case, however, these factors manifested themselves in a somewhat different manner:

Matun: Conflicts here were mainly interfamilial and centered around resource competition (primarily over land and water), and were shaped by a series of long-standing, deep-rooted disputes between tribes or clans that continued to shape how families and villages interacted with each other. The situation in recent years had been aggravated by weak rule of law. While no villages in the study had complete access to formal justice, even the elders involved in Matun's dispute resolution were said to be corrupt (which stood in contrast to the other districts). The weakening of tribal decision-making bodies (due to decades of displacement and conflict) and the quasi absence of rule of law have led to a situation in which tribal conflicts are continuous and fragility is high. These conflicts, however, were not as impacted by external forces (as is more the case below). The district was largely absent of insurgent activity, as a result of the proximity to Khost City. The drawdown of active international forces had also contributed to stability, as active fighting and US military sweeps of the villages had ceased.

Herat: Conflict patterns in Herat were defined by urban criminality, drug addiction, and low social cohesion. In part because there were many recently arrived groups in Herat, there were not the same long-standing disputes found in other areas. As a result, key conflicts revolved around access to government resources and other sources of services. This meant that control of local councils, such as CDCs, was particularly important. This aspect is positive, as it led to high levels of participation in the CC process, but it also reshaped and deepened conflicts. At the same time, alliances appeared more fluid and in flux, since those families who have been in the area for generations were now outnumbered by new

arrivals. The lines of tension, nevertheless, seemed stronger along ethnicity than duration of residency in the city. Complaints of criminal activity were also much higher in Herat than elsewhere. Despite strong support from the communities for formal justice in principle, elders were responsible for dispute resolution, except in more serious criminal cases.

Jalrez: Jalrez was the most insecure study district, with active Taliban presence and fighting between insurgents and Afghan forces. The Taliban controlled large areas of the district and had established parallel governance structures through which they co-opted service delivery. Insecurity in the district was also fueled to a lesser extent by the influence of former mujahideen commanders still involved in politics. To a certain extent, the ongoing insecurity in the district meant that people were more focused on security rather than internal disputes, with some suggesting that communities were particularly likely to try to resolve disputes internally, without the involvement of either the Taliban or the national government. Fear of Taliban interference and attacks on their communities dictated many of the political and social decisions being made. Finally, the fact that many of the wealthier families had left the community, as in Panjwayi below, may have contributed to lower levels of internal conflict.

Panjwayi: Tribal politics determined much of the macro- and meso-level politics in the area, with the Nurzai historically supporting the Taliban, and more recent leaders from Zirak Durrani tribes allying with the government. Among local respondents, however, these tribal connections appeared less meaningful, and concerns were more centered on security. In particular, in the early to mid-2000s, Panjwayi was the site of extreme clashes between the Taliban and NATO. At present, the area is secure, with little Taliban activity, but past conflicts drove migration patterns that now characterize the area. Villages included families that had moved to the area in the past 20 years, as well as households of recent arrivals that had claimed the homes of those who left during the fighting. Though this occupation of abandoned houses generally happened with the permission and knowledge of the homeowner, disputes could still arise. Because government positions and access to weapons and militias were so important, most of the disputes in Panjwayi were between mid-ranking government officials over land, weapons, and other government resources. The government was said to discriminate against those from tribes historically loyal to the Taliban. At the provincial level, many of the disputes were organized along these tribal lines or based on political party affiliation (which was also often tribally based). Similarly, poorer families were less likely to have serious disputes with each other than wealthier families, many of whom had left but retained social and political ties in the area.

More comparative, thematic findings were reviewed in the conflict case studies (located in the annexes), but several findings are worth noting immediately:
- There are clear links between security and development, in which development actually incentivizes conflict in certain instances (especially the case studies from Jalrez), but there is also strong evidence of communities attempting to mitigate these conflicts;
- Taliban opposition to the CC tends to be primarily about the role of women and public processes, such as elections and the establishment of subcommittees, and there is less resistance to the implementation of CC subprojects. More generally, the Taliban systematically oppose processes

that provide a voice to the local population or that risk enhancing dialogue between citizens and the government;

▪ The line between micro-level and meso-level conflicts was often blurry, and a local conflict could expand to the district level fairly quickly. This is discussed further below.

2. What builds or breaks social cohesion at the local level?

A few factors, such as security and elders, affect social cohesion in a uniform manner across districts, while other factors, such as migration, affect districts differently.

i. Insecurity

More specifically, insecurity was perceived as the most critical factor damaging social relationships in all districts. Jalrez, where there has been an active conflict for several years, was most affected, while in Matun, which has remained relatively secure for the last decade or so, insecurity as perceived as less damaging.

Figure 8: Proportion of respondents perceiving as true the statement "Insecurity has damaged the social relationship in our communities," survey

Insecurity has damaged the social relationship in our communities
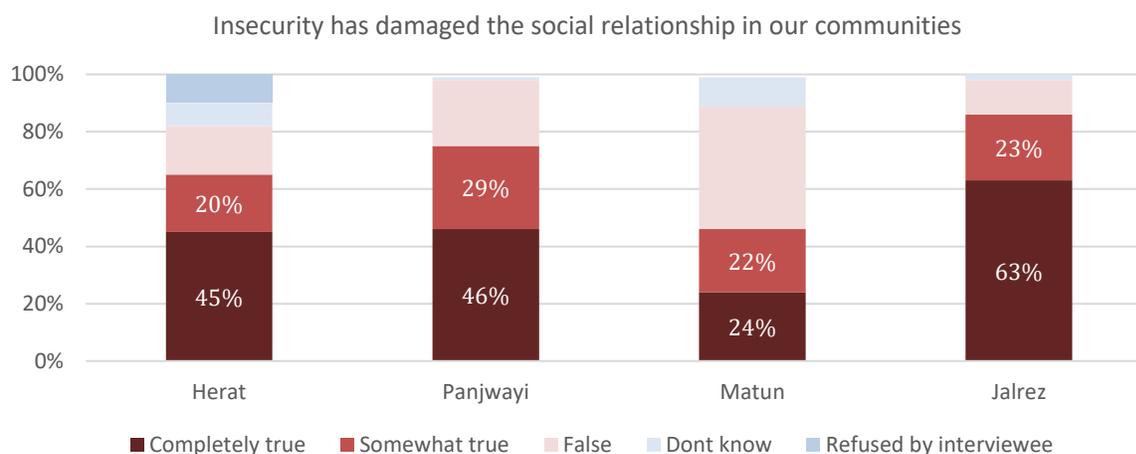
At the same time, perhaps surprisingly, qualitative data showed that social cohesion did not always align with the security factor. For example, Village 4 in Jalrez was one of the most insecure but was also far more unified politically and socially than some other areas. In this case, external threats, which make the political consequences of local divisions more serious, led to more incentives for cooperation. It is also worth noting that with over 40 years of conflict of varying levels and impacts in Afghanistan, communities often weighed physical insecurity against things like poverty and other challenges.

Other aspects of insecurity —local conflicts over resources and tensions created by local power brokers (local militias, Taliban, ALP, etc.) — were reported in the survey as the second and third most significant

factors breaking social cohesion. These issues affected more rural areas, with respondents in Jalrez complaining particularly of the negative interference from various local power brokers. Local conflicts over resources seemed to be affecting all non-urban areas, with around 40 percent of respondents perceiving local conflicts as a factor driving division within communities (see above, Figure 8).

Figure 9: Spoilers and conflict drivers by district, survey

Some power brokers create tensions and use the divisions with the community or between villages for their own benefit

People in this community are divided due to conflicts over resources (i.e. land, water, forest, pastures, etc.)
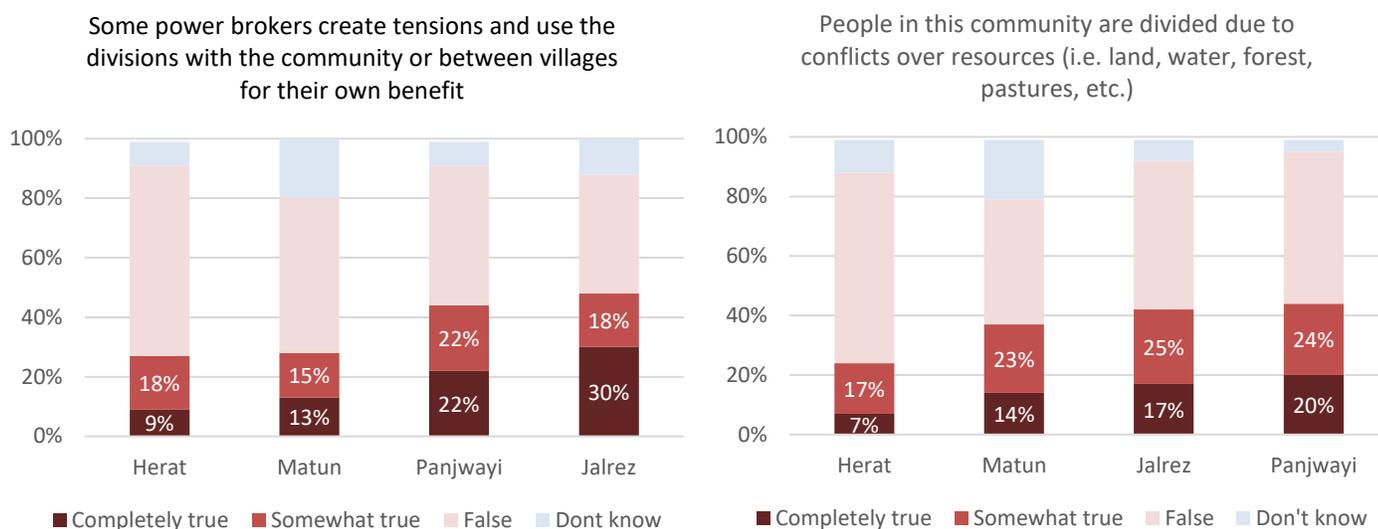
ii.   Migration

Migration affects different districts differently. While Herat has high levels of IDPs, returnees, and economic migrants, a low proportion of respondents blamed families newly settled in the community for triggering tensions (22 percent for IDPs and 17 percent for returnees). This does not mean, however, that there was cohesion in communities where IDPs and permanent residents lived side by side. In interviews, households often confirmed that there was no issue between IDPs and host communities, but they also reported very little social interaction and some degree of segregation, especially in the urban context of Herat. IDPs were accused of stealing by a few households, but generally this segregation between the two groups seemed to constitute a guarantee of peaceful cohabitation, rather than a source of tensions.

Returnees and the arrival of IDPs in Kandahar seemed to be creating more tensions than in other places, with 28 percent and 34 percent of respondents reporting returnees and IDPs, respectively, as sources of tension in their community. This trend was confirmed by qualitative data. There were numerous accounts of tensions or conflicts between IDPs and families from Panjwayi, including IDP families who got evicted from the houses they were occupying in exchange for working on agricultural lands, after the landowners decided to return to their home.

iii.   Ethnicities

IDP families often looked to their districts of origin to arrange marriages and to organize major social events. Some marriage relations between IDPs and locals had occurred in Herat neighborhoods, but these remained extremely rare. When examining social lines further, it appeared that ethnicity remained a strong divide within heterogeneous communities, dictating marriage ties and participation in social events. The main explanation for this segregation is the difference in culture, with traditions between various ethnic groups in Herat being reported as very different (resulting in markedly different positions on topics such as education for girls, freedom to choose life partners, women's mobility, *walwar* / bride price, etc.).

As reported in the case of IDPs, segregation in Herat did not automatically translate into tensions. While there were ethnic-based tensions reported (including one community in Herat reporting having tried to convince its Pashtun members to cut ties with Taliban), in general the various groups seemed to live in relative harmony, with education said to be the main mechanism for building unity between groups.

The situation in Jalrez was a notable exception, showing a tenser situation between ethnic groups. There were stories of communities that refuse to welcome Pashtuns into their villages because of presumed ties with the Taliban, and numerous accusations of violence along ethnic lines, including, for instance, the report of a Hazara militia having beaten civilians for alleged ties with the Taliban.

iv.   The divide between rich and poor

The greatest threat reported in almost every area is a perceived growing divide between wealthy families and poor ones. There was a strong sense that the past decades had enabled rich families to build wealth, while poorer ones' means had either remained the same or declined. This disparity was exacerbated by the fact that all villages in Panjwayi, and most villages in Matun and neighborhoods in Herat, had seen high levels of migration that affected the poor and rich unequally. So, in the case of Panjwayi, many of the better-off families left the area and resettled in Kandahar City, while poorer families could not afford to do so. These poor families were joined, in turn, by other poor families escaping conflict from Helmand and elsewhere. This both made the entire area poorer and decreased social connections, since new families and older families had some interactions but did not intermarry or forge other deep social bonds. The relationship described between the richest (most often large landowners) and poorest (most often IDPs) was one of high dependence, with the poorest taking loans from the richest and at continual risk of eviction while living in the homes of landowners in exchange for working their lands.

Across the districts, the poorest areas tended to have less income disparity. This was especially the case in Jalrez, particularly in Villages 1 and 2, where many of the richer households had moved away, while in Villages 3 and 4, poor land and the distance from the district center made the entire community impoverished. According to respondents, this decreased wealth disparity led to comparatively lower levels of conflict within the community (even while there were significant tensions between the community and the Taliban) and higher levels of social cohesion than in other districts studied.

Rural communities still experience some sort of wealth redistribution (whether it is *ad hoc* for supporting the poorest in crisis or more durable), with the highest reports of such practice in Panjwayi (33 percent) and Jalrez (24 percent). Yet, there is no evidence that the redistribution is fair (targeting the most vulnerable) or comprehensive (targeting other than the kin of the wealthier). The communities where such practices happened least often were in Herat (12 percent).

v. Tribal structure and elders

Social cohesion also happens on multiple levels that may not always align. In Matun, there were deep social divides locally along tribal lines that shaped marriage practices and economic arrangements. At the same time, Matun has a long history of arranging politics and social issues through the *tallah* system, which is unique to the area and brings tribes together geographically, oftentimes helping to mitigate inter-tribal tensions. Recent years of insecurity and the weakening of tribal structures, however, have made some of these dispute-resolution mechanisms less robust, and Matun had a higher number of local land disputes, which often occurred within tribes.

In Jalrez, elders were seen as the main builder of social cohesion, with as many as 76 percent of respondents fully agreeing with the statement: "Elders make a lot of efforts to keep our community united" (for comparison, this proportion was only 52 percent in Panjwayi and 46 percent in Herat and Matun). Jalrez was also the area where the highest proportion of respondents disagreed with the statement "The CC makes us work together in community toward one goal" (19 percent compared to around a maximum of 10 percent everywhere else). CCAP received a higher proportion of positive responses to this question in places where elders are less supported (41 percent strongly agreeing in Herat and Panjwayi).

vi. Dependence between participation in social activities and proxy indicators of social cohesion

Although there may be many different indicators of cohesion, for the purpose of the quantitative analysis, ATR ran Fisher's tests to check for dependence between responses to questions regarding participation in social activities (q37 and its sub-parts) with hypothesized causes of cohesion (q39 and q5).[23] These results confirm that the factors building or destroying social cohesion are highly contextual and very much shaped by the local culture, the level of urbanization, the history of the area, etc. In all cities, cooperation between neighbors seemed to emerge or be a symptom of all or some indicators of unity in the community. *Pulwanshariki* (collective work on private land among neighbors) seems to be a well-entrenched tradition in Jalrez and Panjwayi, keeping families close to each other at the community level.

---

[23] As with any analyses of dependence, only extreme responses were chosen for the purpose of the Fisher's test, i.e., responses such as "somewhat true" or "sometimes" were ignored.

Table 8: Dependence analysis between various indicators related to social cohesion

	Unity in community indicators (q39)	Similarity in economic outlook (q5)
Herat	Positive association with cooperation between neighbors (q37.3)	No dependence
Panjwayi	Positive association with cooperation between neighbors (q37.3); Positive association with Pulwanshariki (q37.4)	No dependence
Matun	Positive association between elders' efforts to keep unity in community (q39.3) and cooperation between neighbors (q37.4); Positive association between elders' efforts to keep unity in community (q39.3) and provision of help to poor (q37.1)	Positive association between similarity in economic outlook (q5) and cooperation between neighbors (q37.4)
Jalrez	Positive association between the recognition of economic growth bringing unity (q39.2) and cooperation between neighbors (q37.3); Positive association between CC seen as solidifying social cohesion (q39.4 and 39.5) and Pulwanshariki (q37.4)	No dependence

Social cohesion is complex and difficult to predict. It varies by region and context, but there are also a few major factors that can be broadly seen to build or break local social cohesion. As can be seen in Jalrez, overarching external insecurity or a common "enemy," such as the Taliban, can build social cohesion, as it deters communities from letting smaller disputes escalate. Tribal governance systems and elders maintain and build cohesion by resolving village-level conflicts and allowing communities to air grievances. This is, however, limited by how much trust people have in their elders' ability to fairly and impartially preside over disputes. Lastly, a common goal — for example a communal project — can bring people together in the short term. Migration, competition for limited resources, disparities in resources, and a growing divide between rich and poor tend to diminish social cohesion locally.

3. What are the drivers of conflict at the local level and what pathways lead to conflict resolution or expansion?

There are several key drivers of conflict, both internal and external, that ATR's research points to. These conflicts are often independent from the CCAP process but help us to understand some of the conflicts involving the CCAP that are analyzed further below.

Conflicts tended to center on certain themes that are common in local Afghan politics, and many disputes actually involved multiple issues simultaneously. As per the qualitative data, types of conflicts included:
- Land disputes — found in all areas, but particularly Matun;
- Disputes over water — found particularly in Jalrez and Matun;
- Family disputes over issues such as marriage and inheritance – found in all areas;
- Dispute over local political leadership — found in all areas, but particularly Herat and Matun;
- Disputes over access to government resources — found in all areas, but particularly Herat;

- Conflicts driven by narcotic use and sales — found particularly in Herat and Panjwayi;
- Conflicts created by other criminal activity — found particularly in Herat.

These qualitative findings were confirmed by the results of the survey, with most disputes in non-urban areas revolving around resources (water, forest, public land). In addition, in Panjwayi, issues around private property were also among the most frequent. This is in line with the many accounts collected among the qualitative data of IDPs' evictions, issues of lands with regard to returnees, etc. The movement of wealthier households into urban areas means that land disputes in Panjwayi have had broader provincial-level impacts, since some of those involved now live in Kandahar City and have become further embedded in the politics of the province and control of larger resources. Conflicts over development projects remained relatively frequent with around 18 percent of respondents reporting cases in all districts, except in Matun, where only 4 percent of respondents did. While not appearing in the figure below,[24] religious conflict was proposed as a possible answer in the questionnaire, an option which very few respondents selected: 5 percent in Herat, where there is the highest level of sectarian diversity, and 0 percent in Jalrez, the other district of those studied with some sectarian diversity.

Figure 10: Main categories of conflicts by district, survey
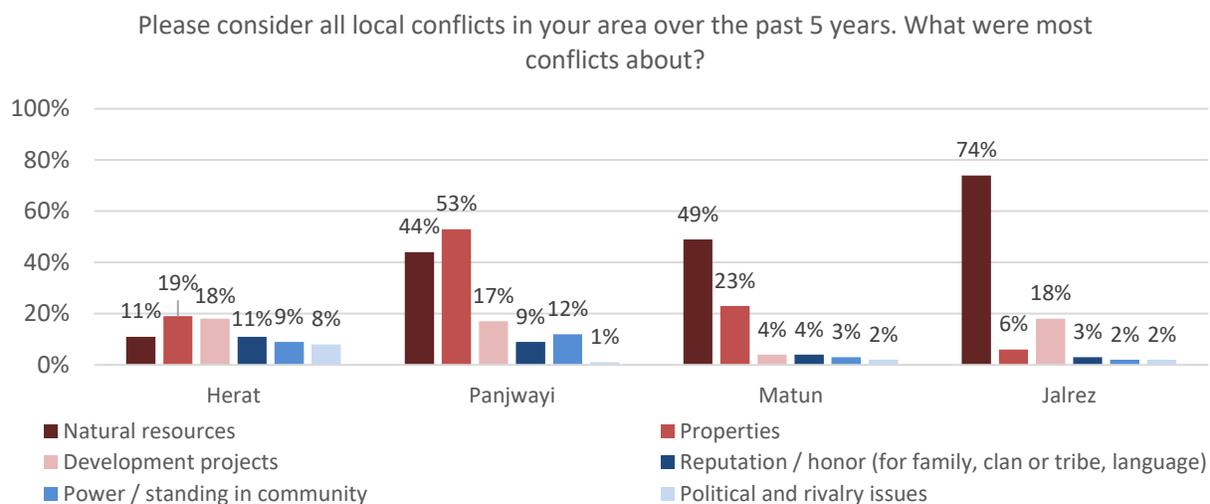
In contrast, poorer, more isolated areas have fewer resources, it seems, to fight over. Thus, in Jalrez, 74 percent of respondents reported they had heard of conflicts over natural resources in the last five years, while reporting very few other types of conflicts. The interviews revealed that there were higher levels of conflict in Villages 1 and 2, which were close to the district center, while the more remote Villages 3 and 4 had lower levels of conflict overall.

---

[24] For the sake of clarity, Figure 10 only presents the responses most often selected and does not present "I don't know" responses. Respondents could select as many responses as they wanted.

There are numerous pathways to local conflict resolution, most stemming from the desire of the community and its leaders to maintain stability locally. As a result, while some actors may be incentivized to encourage conflict, in each of the areas studied, a greater number of actors (though not always the actors with the most power locally), were incentivized to resolve conflict, and these figures helped create pathways to conflict resolution. These include:

- Close family members of those involved in a dispute;
- Local elders;
- Religious leaders;
- The district governor (primarily in Kandahar);
- Other local officials.

Based on the quantitative survey, these actors participated to varying degrees in each province and among the various categories of people, such as IDPs, permanent residents, and returnees. Across all provinces and groups, elders were consistently the group of people who were reported to intervene positively in local conflicts. They continue to have a prominent role in conflict resolution across all four districts and are, despite the increasing involvement of government authorities in Herat, still active even in an entirely urban area.

Figure 11: Out of all the following actors, which ones usually intervene positively in local conflicts?, survey

Out of all the following actors, which ones usually intervene positively in local conflicts? (Several responses possible)
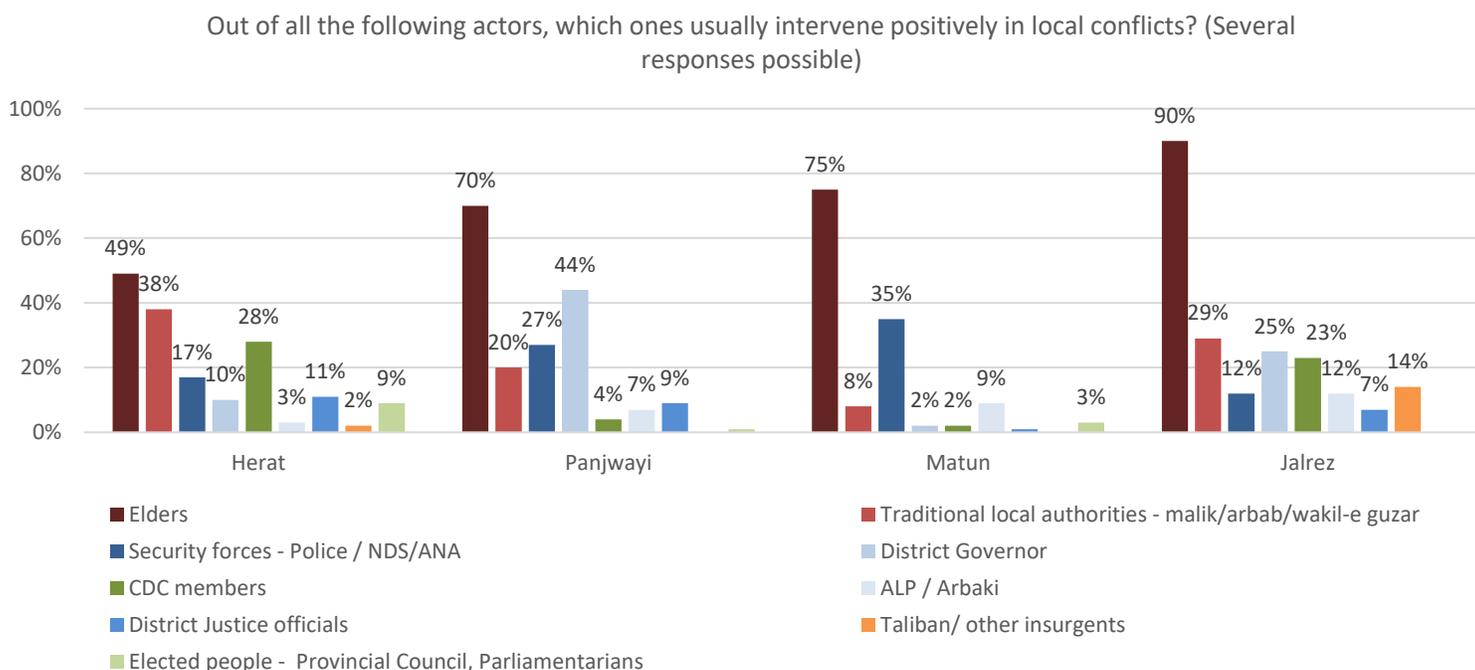
The Taliban were reported to play a positive role only in Herat and Jalrez, the two places where they have gained a higher level of trust among the four districts surveyed. CDCs are relatively popular for conflict resolution in Herat (ranking third, with 28 percent) and in Jalrez (ranking fourth with 23 percent). In terms of government involvement, it is interesting to note that district-level justice institutions were only reported as playing a marginally positive role, while the DG (44 percent in Panjwayi, 25 percent in Jalrez)

and district security forces (35 percent in Matun, 27 percent in Panjwayi, and 17 percent in Herat) were reported as being involved in successfully solving conflicts..

Each district presents different characteristics, both in terms of actors involved in resolving conflicts and of spoilers:

- **Herat:** After elders, traditional local authorities and CDC members rank second and third, respectively. Herat is the only province where elected people (parliamentarians, provincial council members) play a consistent, albeit small role in conflict resolution across all groups. The Taliban are seen as the biggest group playing a negative role in conflict resolution by Heratis (listed by 20 percent of respondents);

- **Panjwayi (Kandahar):** The district governor and security forces (police / NDS / ANA) rank second and third, respectively. Panjwayi is the district where the district governor is most frequently identified as positively affecting conflict resolution. The credibility of the district government is confirmed when looking at the response to the question "Which organization delivers the best justice / conflict resolution services," to which 83 percent of Panjwayi residents selected "government institution," by far the highest rate among all studied districts. Spoilers fueling conflicts in Panjwayi appear to be prominently powerful armed people or groups (44 percent agree with the statement "Some power brokers (local militia, Taliban, commanders, ALP) create tensions and use divisions in the community or between villages for their own benefit");

- **Matun (Khost):** After elders, security forces played a large positive role in resolving conflicts, especially among returnees and, to a slightly lesser extent, among permanent residents. The role played by security forces among IDPs in conflict resolution is not as significant, but the ALP / Arbaki wielded a higher positive influence in resolving conflicts among the IDPs as compared to other groups. Among economic migrants and returnees, security forces played a significant role in conflict resolution — larger than in any other province;

- **Jalrez (Wardak):** Traditional local authorities and CDC members played a positive role in conflict resolution. Jalrez was the only province in which a substantial number of respondents stated that the Taliban played a positive role in conflict resolution, an opinion shared in increasing degree by returnees, permanent residents, and former combatants. In Jalrez, as in Panjwayi, local power brokers were considered to be spoilers, fueling conflicts (48 percent of respondents in Jalrez agreed with this statement). More worryingly, the district justice officials (15 percent) and the district governors (10 percent) were accused of being the actors most often playing a negative role in conflict resolution.

From those people that had witnessed a conflict in the past five years, the survey specifically asked about the role of the government at the beginning and end of conflict. The responses aggregated at the district level were coherent with the findings that ranked the role of each of the players that intervene positively. The relatively more positive responses in Panjwayi regarding the government (46 percent, compared to 22 percent in Herat and around 11 percent in other places) seem to point to the strong district governor and the general optimism created by a decrease in direct security threats. At the same time, the lower numbers in Jalrez and Matun seem to point to the relative weakness of the government in these areas.

The primary differences between urban and rural areas in terms of conflict are largely associated with lower levels of social cohesion and a more robust government presence in urban areas, and fewer resources but more social cohesion in more rural areas. Some of these patterns are simply determined by the nature of resources available. Thus, for instance, water disputes are more common in rural areas, whereas disputes around criminality are more common in urban areas.

In terms of how this rural-urban contrast shapes the implementation of the CCAP, in Herat City, roll out has been faster and smoother than in rural areas. This seems to be driven primarily by the strong government presence and the availability of services beyond the CC subprojects. At the same time, however, lower levels of social cohesion mean that there are not robust local informal governance structures. This may contribute to higher levels of buy-in for new state-sponsored governance structures, such as CDCs.

Researchers found far lower levels of expectations around CCAP resources in rural than in urban areas, largely because rural communities did not have a history of receiving such benefits. As a result, in some of these areas, there were also higher levels of cooperation, as individuals worked together to ensure that their community was benefiting from the resources made available by the CCAP.

4. How do service providers deal with conflict risks? How does conflict affect public service delivery and vice versa?

How service providers deal with conflict risks varied and depended most immediately on the degree of active conflict in the area. Providers made day-to-day shifts in implementation as necessary, based on the security situation. In this regard, there was a reactionary aspect to how service providers dealt with conflict risks: schools in Jalrez Village 1, for example, routinely closed during fighting between the Taliban and the ANA. This has further encouraged service providers, both governmental and NGO, to clump in district centers and other urban areas, further exacerbating the rural-urban divide. For instance, the education department of Jalrez district has, at times, been moved to Maidan Shahr for varying periods of time due to security reasons.

Issues with service provision were significantly worse in the most insecure district (Jalrez) and particularly in the most remote villages of Jalrez (Villages 3 and 4). Here, insecurity made travel on the road dangerous, meaning it was difficult for villagers to even access services in the district center. This was compounded by the district-wide prohibition on the use of motorcycles,[25] further restricting citizens from accessing services. This was also a major complaint from the representative of the clinic in the district center: he regretted that most often patients could not reach the clinic to get treatment because of insecurity, and if they needed additional treatment, such as a surgery, patients were usually prevented from travelling to Kabul or Maiden Shahr, also for security reasons. He explained that the clinic had ambulances on call day

---

[25] This interdiction, which is widely enforced in highly insecure districts across the country, aims to increase the visibility of Taliban's movements, so they can easily be apprehended.

and night, but that vehicles were often arrested by parties to the conflict. No strategy seems to have been devised in order to deal with these risks, and the district representative for health services showed a high level of defeatism and helplessness.

> *"[The district administration] is 19 to 20 km away from us. When we have any problem, they don't come. When we asked them why you don't visit us, they are saying that way is insecure."*
>
> Male Community Member, Village 4, Jalrez

Insecurity and fighting have had further impacts on service delivery, including through the destruction of schools in Panjwayi during the years when the district was contested by the government and the Taliban. As a more indirect consequence, some of the school buildings (Jalrez) were also reported as crumbling because of a lack of monitoring during the construction phase, probably worsened by the high insecurity in the district. Another risk to service delivery in Jalrez related to the Taliban's request to change the curriculum on Afghan culture to a curriculum focusing exclusively on religious studies. It was unclear whether this request was positively received by the Ministry of Education.

More generally, the presence of violence has been found to close off access for institutions and to discourage educated professionals from working in the area (Echavez, 2016). This translates into various constraints at the local level: absenteeism of civil servants (with most of those who work in Jalrez living in the provincial center or Kabul) because of insecurity on the road, difficulties in recruiting qualified staff (mostly in Panjwayi because years of wars have gravely affected residents' level of education), difficulties in interacting with local residents, etc.

At times, services and projects contribute to conflicts locally. For instance, the Jalrez education department postponed the construction of a school for months because of an associated land issue. (For additional examples of conflicts related to CCAP, see case studies below on Herat and Matun.) Somewhat surprisingly, however, insecurity can actually lead to less conflict around service delivery in certain instances. In Jalrez, for example, where services were severely limited, there was more evidence of communities cooperating internally and externally with groups like the Taliban to ensure these limited resources did reach them.

Pressure to deliver resources may lead to complex, and sometimes unexpected, forms of cooperation between communities and the Taliban. This could not always be documented in the present research because stakeholders, particularly in Jalrez where the risks are highest, were sometimes unwilling to discuss the topic.

5. What is the relationship between improved service delivery and citizens' trust and belief in the state?

In large part because CCAP is in its early implementation, it is difficult to determine how it will impact perceptions of the state and state legitimacy in the long term. At this point in the areas covered, there is a visible trend of enhanced perceptions toward CDCs, but the larger impact on state legitimacy will only be assessable in the longer term.

i. Key findings on service delivery and the attitudes toward the state

Patronage and service delivery

In all of the areas studied, service delivery was not directly linked to state legitimacy in most interviews. It was very rare to find respondents who appeared to consider a suite of resources being delivered by the government (or other service providers), and then had that dictate their opinions about the government. Instead, respondents tended to discuss resources on a case by case basis (e.g. separating out infrastructure projects from public health initiatives for instance). In most instances where resources were successfully provided, they were not considered a credit to the effective working of the state, but were instead largely attributed to the government official — or, oftentimes, informal leader — who was perceived as providing these resources.

Similarly, when resources were channeled through NGOs, it was often local government officials or informal leaders who were perceived as steering these resources to a community rather than the national government. In the case of Herat, for instance, the study area with the widest array of public services, most interviewees pointed to the influence of Ismael Khan, who is no longer the governor, as the most important figure in delivering services to the city. Here, improved services have not improved opinions of the government, but have rather increased public opinion of Ismael Khan's wider patronage network and its ability to respond to community needs.

This supports other research (see below) which suggests that in such a political-economy, resources are largely perceived as being delivered primarily through patronage networks, and even when there was little evidence of patronage-based delivery, respondents tended to perceive patrons as the source of these resources. The implication for CDCs is that, as demonstrated in most interviews, residents' perceptions of who are the most effective CDC members were likely to align with those members who were best able to access already existing patronage networks through government officials, particularly district governors or members of parliament, and other influential figures, such as former commanders.

Security

The one consistent exception to the tendency not to link resource delivery to the government, but rather to a series of individuals, was a pattern of connecting views of the state to senses of security, as opposed to insecurity. Perhaps because security situations are seen as being produced by a wider range of actors,

sometimes on different sides of a conflict, the government is seen as more influential on security matters. While security might be shaped by the presence of the Taliban, NATO, the ANSF, and other formal and informal groups, in repeated cases, interviewees emphasized the role of ANSF in stabilizing a region and providing security (or, conversely, respondents tended to blame the Afghan government when an area was unstable, even if other groups contributed to that instability).

The clearest case of this was in Panjwayi, where people spoke negatively about the state's ability to deliver concrete resources (as suggested above, provincial-level leaders often received misplaced credit for this), but were much more positive when it came to the state's role in providing security. The fact that security conditions had improved relatively rapidly (compared to other parts of the country) from a very low point a few years back was largely attributed to Afghan forces, and this led to household interviews that were more positive about the national government than those in other areas. In contrast with this, in Ali Abad, where security has worsened in recent years, there was more criticism of the national government and its inability to provide security.

In Jalrez, the provision of security is a piecemeal service, involving various ALP commanders, government security forces, local commanders, and the Taliban, all of them being perceived differently by different residents, leading in most cases to an overall frustration toward the government for its inability to keep the district secure. This translated into the highest trust toward the Taliban among all studied districts and the lowest trust toward the government, as presented in the figures below.

Finally, these findings in Jalrez are corroborated when using the Fisher's test: those who think that security is the best service delivered are more likely not to trust the Taliban at all, as compared to those who think that security is the worst service delivered. This hypothesis was confirmed when tested through the Fisher's test, with a p value smaller than 0.01.

Perceived impunity of government officials

The research uncovered another factor that seems to determine how much trust citizens might have toward the government: in the two study areas that experienced a level of legitimacy crisis, a high proportion of respondents (35 percent in Herat, 42 percent in Jalrez), as compared to the two other study districts (26 percent in Matun, 16 percent in Panjwayi), believed that government officials were never punished for the crimes they committed.

In general, legitimacy and trust were described by respondents (and particularly CDC members) as based on an incredibly complex set of factors, generally deeply rooted in the history of the area. At the same time, however, most also described legitimacy and trust as dynamic processes, suggesting that, in the longer term, continued expansion of services through CDCs could greatly increase perceptions of both the CDCs' legitimacy and the legitimacy of the state more generally.

Figure 14: Comparison of proportion of respondents trusting '"a lot" the provincial government and the Taliban, survey
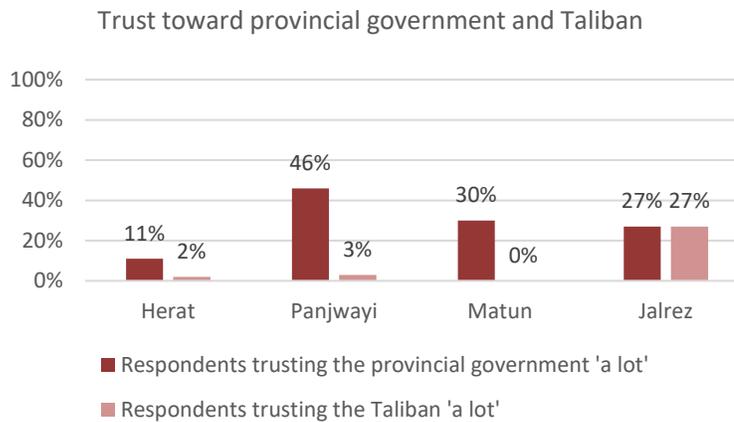
Figure 13: Respondents' perceptions of whether the Afghanistan State deserves support, survey

Trust toward provincial government and Taliban

■ Respondents trusting the provincial government 'a lot'
■ Respondents trusting the Taliban 'a lot'

The current state of Afghanistan, with its problems, deserves the people's support?

■ Totally agree or agree   ■ Totally disagree or disagree
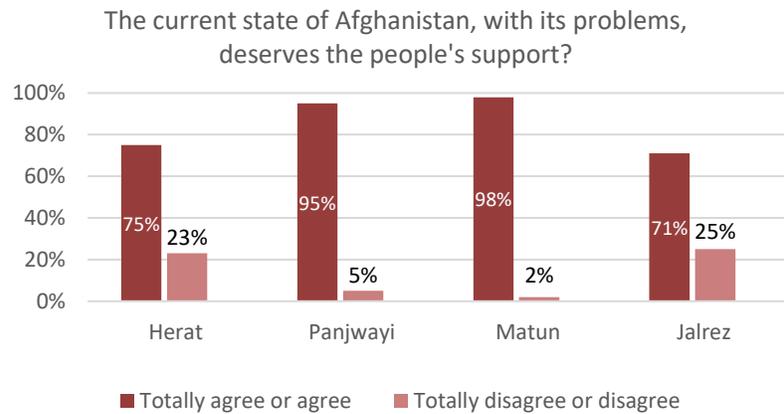
Figure 12: Comparison of top three best and worst services delivered by district, survey

Top three best delivered services by district

■ Security   ■ Education   ■ Health

Top three worst delivered services by district

■ Security   ■ Justice   ■ Education
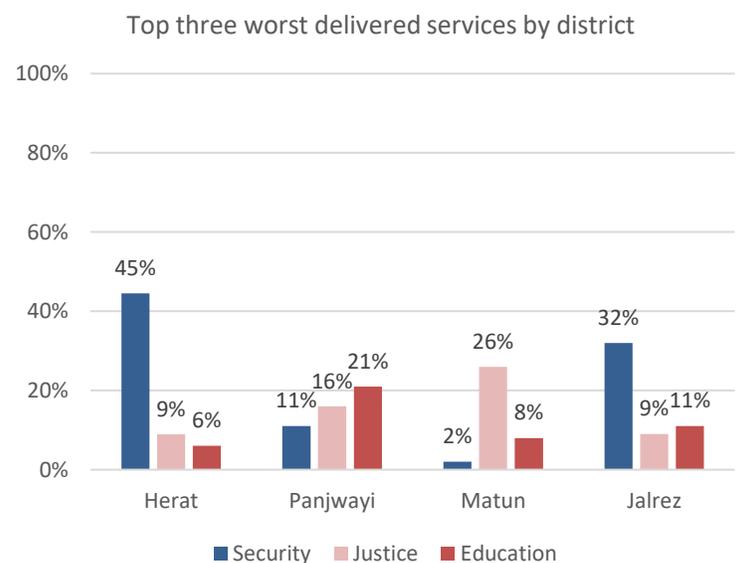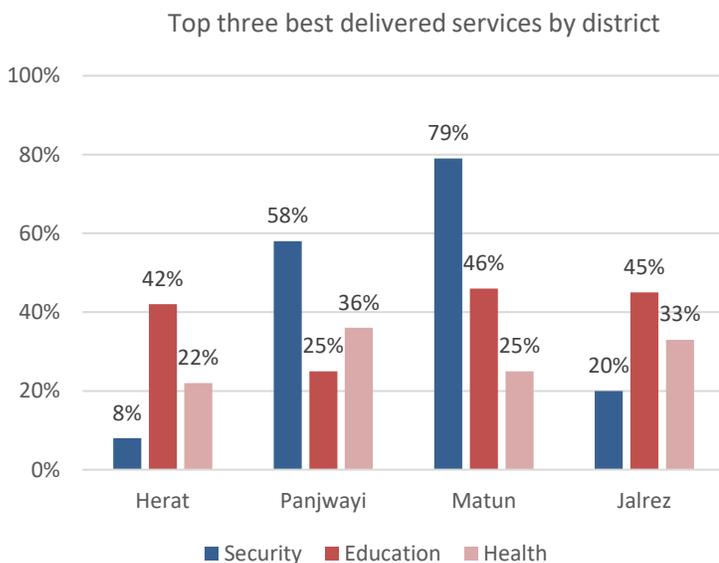
ii.   Comparison with key findings from desk review

Beyond this evidence, there is a wide body of evidence from Afghanistan and elsewhere that illustrates the complicated relationship between service delivery and legitimacy. Research contends that access to services (proximity to schools or clinics, for example), and high satisfaction with services (with the exception of health) do not fundamentally alter perceptions of the state (Mcoughlin 2015b; Nixon and Mallett 2017). There are, however, contextual factors relating to service delivery that do have the potential to impact views of the state, the first being how services align with the judgments and values of the community (Mcloughlin 2015b; Weigand 2017). Second, positive perceptions of the state result when

people view services to be inclusionary and fairly distributed. Inclusivity on the lower end comprises participatory measures that include grievance and accountability mechanisms, and on the higher end, involvement in community meetings, being consulted about services, or being somehow involved in provision (Nixon and Mallet 2017). In that sense, the CCAP was designed in perfect alignment with the recommendations provided by these various pieces of research, and the organization of local-level institutions offers great potential for developing and strengthening consultations, accountability, and participation. The need for accountable and fair service delivery is further illustrated by the findings of the present research: here, the research team checked the hypothesis that the perception of fairness constitutes a critical factor that impacts state legitimacy. Figure 15, below, confirms this hypothesis, with greater proportions of respondents perceiving the government as fair in Panjwayi and Matun — the two districts with the highest level of government legitimacy, and greater proportions of respondents perceiving the government as unfair in Herat and Jalrez, the two study areas where legitimacy is the lowest.

Figure 15: Perception of the government's capacity to treat people equally, despite their ethnic affiliation or wealth, survey

Interestingly, and in line with the findings from Panjwayi and Matun, even relatively low-level legitimacies based on process and participation require the state's monopolization of violence (Weigand 2017). This is what the data from Jalrez confirms: when the government does not hold a monopoly on violence, well-designed projects are less likely to bear fruits, at least during times of high instability.

In addition, durable acceptance of the state's authority is increasingly seen to be granted through relational aspects, such as shared beliefs, norms, and expectations (Lottholz and Lemay-Hebert 2016; Mcloughlin 2015b). Substantive legitimacy is based on belief of rightness; it is underpinned by shared values and is required for the long-term acceptance of an authority (Mcloughlin 2015b; Weigand 2017). This perspective is also extremely interesting when looking at the relatively high legitimacy of CDCs: what may be seen as program staff's disregard of the rules as defined in the operational manual might be, in a number of cases, an attempt to align their processes with communities' beliefs, norms, and expectations,

to build their legitimacy. The challenge for the program thus resides in balancing the need for respecting local norms on the one hand and imposing rules for participation and inclusiveness on the other.

6. How do major events outside the community, such as national elections or major security incidents, affect political dynamics within communities?

i. Macro-level events

While the majority of conflicts reported on and analyzed were primarily local conflicts over local issues, such as land disputes and family difficulties, these local issues were sometimes tied to conflicts at the district and provincial levels. This happened both when local actors attempted to mobilize political allies at the provincial level to support them and when conflicts were large enough to attract the attention of such actors on their own. This also includes instances when a set of conflicts were triggered or reshaped by external forces or processes, such as insurgent activity or national elections. Analyzing these external drivers is productive, since they are most analogous to conflicts shaped by the CCAP, which is similarly perceived in most areas as an external force that impacts local conflicts.

The section below details in more depth the relationship between some of these external forces and the CCAP, but the key forces include:

- **The Taliban and other anti-government groups:** By far the most significant driver of conflict in some areas was the Taliban. This was particularly true in Jalrez, where there was ongoing fighting, but fear of these groups, outstanding feuds previously caused by the conflict, forced displacement, and economic disruptions caused by the war clearly impacted all three of the other areas of study, as well. Even in areas with no anti-government activity, IDPs from other conflict areas and more general concerns about the Taliban's reassertion of power meant that all study areas were at least indirectly affected by the role of anti-government groups;
- **The ANA and other government forces:** As the inverse of the previous cause, while most respondents were fairly supportive of the ANA, some were critical of other aspects of government forces, particularly the ALP. In Panjwayi, local men had been arrested by ANSF, causing resentment and fueling conflict in the area. Complaints about the Khost Protection Forces were also very common in Matun. Most of those interviewed would be considered supporters of the current government, but even supporters were still fairly critical of some aspects of the government's work. Considering how much security and monopolization of force influence building state legitimacy and enable the success of participatory processes (see the preceding question), the government should ensure that the role of the ANSF remains a positive one that supports the success of other programs rather than jeopardizing them;
- **Parliamentary elections:** Parliamentary elections, which occurred during the period of research, were another cause of conflict. This generally involved local conflicts that were reshaped when local figures supported one candidate or another. This gave ordinary voters a rather negative view of elections. As one male household interview from Matun summarized:

"No, people do not like to vote or participate in elections because even the candidates are enemies of each other. The candidates are a big reason for insecurity. On the other hand, people are made hopeless by these candidates; they now believe that voting for such people is not beneficial."

Male Household Member, Matun

Elections were intertwined with other conflict. In some places in Matun, for instance, the Taliban, through mullahs who are sympathizers to the movement, attempted to discourage people from voting;

- **Other national-level political processes:** Ongoing uncertainty about US-Taliban negotiations, the state of the National Unity Government, and other national-level political processes also shaped conflict locally. In particular, in several non-Pashtun areas, respondents suggested that due to the fact that President Ghani is Pashtun, their communities were being discriminated against. This generally decreased trust in the government;

- **IDPs and economic migrants:** The high numbers of both IDPs and, more frequently, economic migrants in each area impacted local disputes. In some cases, these led directly to conflicts over land or, as was the case in Herat, exacerbated such conflicts, as land had become more valuable. More generally, migration has lowered social cohesion and made dispute resolution more challenging;

- **Narcotics:** In several villages and neighborhoods, particularly in Panjwayi and Herat, narcotics were seen as both an internal and external problem. As narcotics have become more common in study areas, they have been seen as increasing violence and crime more generally.

As a part of ongoing local disputes, it is also clear that there are emerging links between micro, village-level disputes and the meso-level, district-wide, and sometimes even provincial-level disputes and national political issues. In some instances, conflicts at various levels blended together, and it was difficult to delink village- and district-level issues (for instance in Ghondai Mangas, Matun, discussed above, land disputes between families in different villages were tied to feuds between families within the village studied — and it could not be said that this was either a village-level or more district-level conflict). In general, however, these types of conflicts may be divided between meso-level politics which generate local conflicts and micro-level conflicts that build on meso-level political divides.

ii. *Meso-level politics generating micro-level conflicts*

The clearest example of the link between meso-level politics and micro-level politics involving the CCAP was found in Panjwayi. Here, as discussed extensively in the CCSA below, provincial-level figures were involved in a series of ongoing power struggles, seeking to take advantage of the resources being generated by CCAP. This included the district police commander, the district governor, and other, informal leaders, including one who had previously been the secretary of Gul Agha Sherzai.

Politics in the district in general is dominated by tensions between the Nurzai and other tribes, including the Popalzai, Barakzai, and Ishaqzai. Each of the figures mentioned above, has used tribal affiliation to muster support for their own political allies. During NSP, different tribes dominated the different NSP CDCs, and now the process has repeated itself, with each of these figures attempting to control as many CC CDCs as possible. In turn, for those CDCs that they control, the CDC is required to implement subprojects through specific contractors who overcharge, generating kickbacks for the political leaders. The FP is rumored to be involved at least marginally in such practices, though this could not be confirmed.

In these cases, the ongoing political disputes between these figures has led to an erosion of public support for the CDCs and complaints about the projects being implemented. In this instance, it is clear that district-level politics are creating further conflicts and reducing the efficacy of CCAP on the village level. At the same time, the involvement of the Taliban, particularly in Jalrez, in micro-level political issues, such as the implementation of CC subprojects, discussed extensively above, is another example of meso-level politics shaping issues at a more local level.

iii.   *Micro-level conflicts building on meso-level politics*

In other instances, there are related trends in which local political figures involved in CC processes have used meso-level politics to strengthen their positions, occasionally leading to further conflicts. Thus, in the case of Pir-e-Darwishan, Herat, the CDC chair has long-standing ties to former minister and commander Ismael Khan. In the meantime, the chair has had an ongoing feud (considered in the CCSA below) with another CDC chair, who is from the same area but was elected CDC chair for an adjoining neighborhood. This man has connections to a key parliamentarian and is rumored to also have ties to officials within NDS. As Ismael Khan's power has waned in recent years, the first CDC chair also appears to have lost some of his standing in his feud with the other CDC chair. However, since both men have powerful allies still, there appears to be a reluctance to challenge each other directly. As a result, the first CDC chair has organized a boycott of the gozar assembly, which has essentially prevented the assembly from moving any projects forward at this time.

B. CDCs and Conflict Resolution

1.   What is the local legitimacy of the CDCs?

The local legitimacy of CDCs depends on a series of factors. This includes the degree to which people benefit from and are included in CDC activities, and if CDC representatives are trusted and seen to be working for the good of the community. As suggested in some of the analysis above, the CCAP is struggling in certain parts of its processes to maintain its desired levels of inclusivity. This is particularly true of the inclusion of women and the poor. The CCAP has been more successful in the 16 areas studied with including and integrating former combatants and IDPs than it has been with women, except in Herat, where women's participation was very high (with a gender gap of only 14 percentage points).

At the same time, in several interviews, respondents suggested that as long as the CDC election (or selection, which replaced elections in certain areas) process chose the "right" people, the CDC was considered legitimate, even if the election process had been altered or was not considered inclusive. Oftentimes, these figures who were the "right" ones were elders who had previously represented the community and not exploited their positions. In contrast with this, if individuals who were seen as ineffective were selected to the CDC, even if the process was considered transparent, this could greatly undermine local views of the CDC.

Quantitative data shows first that respondents have a relatively positive view of the CDCs. 30 percent of respondents affirmed that none of the negative characteristics applied to CDC members, while that proportion is lower for elders (23 percent). Also, as many as 59 percent of men across the study areas claim that they trust their CDC "a lot." While this is lower than for traditional local leaders (as expected since the CDCs are new), it is much higher than for any parts of the government (between 23 percent and 32 percent with full trust toward the government, depending on the level of government assessed). When looking across study areas, trust is particularly high in Kandahar (74 percent) and low in Khost (28 percent), where the local governance structure of the tallah is very strong.

Second, with the understanding that CDCs are able to gain public trust in a short amount of time, it is important that their work gain more exposure in their communities, as still a large proportion of respondents feel they do not know enough to comment on CDC members' attributes. For instance — and not surprisingly, given that elders are well known to people — almost all respondents across the study areas (except in the urban environment of Herat) could respond on how much they trusted the local elders or the local religious figures (less than 2 percent responded "I don't know," except in Herat, where it reached 11 percent for elders). When asked the same question of CDC members, as many as 18 percent of respondents selected "I don't know." This trend was highest in Matun (40 percent) and lowest in Kandahar (3 percent), with major gender disparity overall (28 percent for women and 7 percent for men). A similar trend was observed through the question that asked whether certain local leaders exhibited nice behavior, with a much higher "I don't know" rate for CDC members (21 percent) than for elders (4 percent) and maliks / wakil-i-gozars (8 percent).

Third, the survey showed that CDCs have attained a relatively high level of public trust, considering the fact that they were newly established. It is expected that, over time, this level of public trust will be reinforced and come closer to meeting that seen with traditional local leaders. The potential for greater parity of trust can be seen in Figure 16. CDCs have overall been very successful in displaying respectful behavior toward the community. Matun is an exception, where the tribal system is especially strong, and so CDCs face more challenges in gaining public support there than in other places.

Figure 16: Level of trust toward local leaders by district, survey

Level of trust toward local leaders

- Trusting elders 'a lot'
- Trusting religious figures 'a lot'
- Trusting CDC 'a lot'
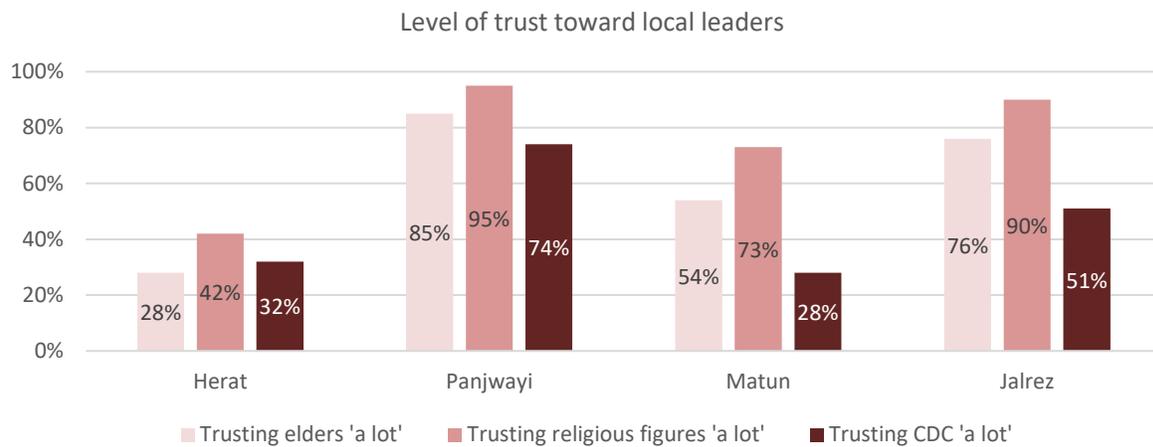
Figure 17: Proportion of respondents who find local leaders displaying a nice behavior, survey

Proportion of respondents who find local leaders displaying a nice behavior

- Elders have a nice behavior towards you
- Malik / wakil-i-guzar have a nice behavior towards you
- CDC members have a nice behavior towards you
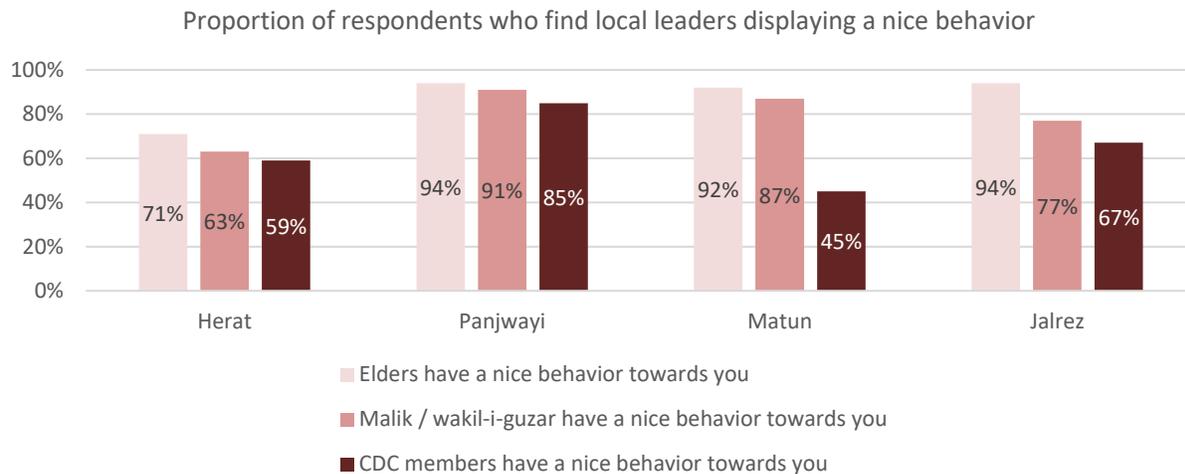
When testing the hypothesis that participation in the CDC elections leads to "a lot" of trust toward CDC members, it was confirmed in all study areas.[26] This reinforces the idea that mobilization is a critical aspect of the CDC elections and participation quotas could be more strongly enforced. Interestingly, it appeared that there was a strong correlation in Jalrez and Herat between people trusting their CDC and affirming that the current Afghan state deserves support, linking some sort or legitimacy between the local and national levels of governance.[27] Though, particularly as the case of Jalrez suggests, many respondents do not view the Taliban and Afghan government as an either/or proposition, and over the past decade of insecurity, have come to perceive each as having some forms of legitimacy at the same time.

---

[26] For all districts except Matun, $p<0.01$ on both the chi-square and Fisher's tests. For Matun, $p<0.05$ for both tests.

[27] $p<0.01$ on both the chi-square and Fisher's tests.

2. Are there key processes, incidents, or leadership actions that seem to set the path for successful or unsuccessful conflict resolution? What are the strengths and weaknesses of CDCs as a means for dispute resolution with new arrivals?

As outlined above, in most instances, the CCAP has not caused new conflicts so much as it has become an important part of the local political landscape, which has made CDCs and other parts of the CC process vehicles for the reshaping of ongoing disputes. While CDCs have no formal mandate to resolve conflicts, in some instances they have contributed to dispute resolution. In part, this is because certain respected elders who already have reputations as dispute resolvers have been elected to CDCs, effectively imparting on that body the reputation of being a good place to bring disputes. This positive finding also appears in the quantitative data, with as many as 73 percent of male respondents finding that the statement "The CCAP helps communities decrease tensions" is either completely true or somewhat true.

In some instances, community members — including CDC members — work to minimize disputes. In the case of Pir-e-Darwishan in Herat, community members were initially reluctant to contribute to the proposed CC road-paving subproject. In particular, community members pointed to a previous irrigation project in the area that had been implemented by the municipality. This project, interviewees stated, had been done poorly. They stated that they rejected the new proposal, since now the CC wanted to institute another such program and also wanted people to contribute 25 percent of the project cost.[28] This figure was cited as too high for the poor households in the community, and for the richer households, there was a lack of trust in the CDC members and FP. Finally, however, the CDC chair convinced some key community members to support the project; in particular, one community member contributed 400 square meters of land where the road was to be expanded. After this, other community members decided to support the subproject.

That being said, CDCs also serve as a venue for disputes, as the case between two local Herati leaders, analyzed above, suggests. Similarly, in Matun, in Ghondai Mangas, the CDC election became contentious when feuding clans saw it as a place to advance their own grievances about land allocation. Likewise, CC personnel can contribute to ongoing disputes depending upon their historical relationship with the community, as was the case in Khost (reviewed below), where a PMU staff member of Hazara ethnicity was accused of cheating the Pashtun community out of resources they claimed were owed to them. This could potentially be perceived as a newly created conflict, but in many ways grew out existing tensions, using CCAP as a justification to criticize a process lacking transparency.

In addition to this, several of the cases involving the Taliban in Jalrez suggested that CDCs could be used to work around conflicts between anti-government groups and the government, and that local communities are very adaptable in such processes.

---

[28] In urban areas, the required community contribution can be up to 25%, while the contribution is limited to 10% in rural areas.

As the case in Herat suggests, conflict resolution also depends significantly on the role of political leaders in a specific area. So, for instance, in Kandahar, where the provincial elite tend to have a strong grasp on power, these leaders seem particularly effective at resolving disputes, since it is in the best interest of local leaders to preserve stability and, thus, their own power. Some evidence suggests there are opportunities for CDCs to expand their influence in this area. In particular, in Panjwayi, some CDCs have come to be considered useful conduits to ANDF and the ANP regarding security issues, even though this is technically beyond their remit.

There are also instances in which CDCs work to mitigate the risk of external conflict (i.e., with the Taliban) by shifting implementation. In some cases, exclusionary practices are pointed to directly by participants as a means for decreasing conflict, such as in Jalrez, where women are routinely excluded from CC processes. In interviews with CDC members, this exclusion is usually explained as a direct result of the Taliban's opposition to women's participation. In contrast with this, when women are excluded in Panjwayi, this is sometimes described as stemming from fear of the Taliban, but was more typically described as a cultural or religious decision. While it is also possible that the presence of the Taliban in Jalrez is an excuse for leaving women out in some cases, there are real concerns about the safety of communities and deliberate targeting by anti-government groups.

Looking at interaction with IDPs, the CDCs' ability to resolve disputes with new arrivals is likely to continue to be limited by the general community's attitude toward the new arrivals. In places where there are tensions between the local community and new arrivals, it is unlikely that the CDC will be able to bridge this gap and, in fact, as representatives of the community, may be more likely to exacerbate it. It should also be noted that IDPs tend to keep a low profile in the communities into which they have newly settled, avoiding social relations with neighbors and in some cases not using available public services, either because of their own poverty or *de facto* exclusion (such as having difficulties accessing education because of a lack of school transfer documents). These tensions were most often described in Matun. In Herat, permanent residents did not refer much to disputes with IDPs, however there were accusations of petty theft.

3. How do CDCs resist or succumb to capture by interest groups?

Since CCAP is in its early stages, it is somewhat difficult to determine the extent to which elite capture has been an issue. It is possible, however, to analyze some initial data, particularly when comparing the mobilization process with that of NSP. Almost all respondents with knowledge of NSP, and particularly those involved in both CCAP and NSP, suggested that CCAP has been more resistant to elite capture than NSP. As the section above suggests, however, certain groups have still been more broadly successful in mobilizing the resources generated by CCAP, while others, like women, have been more systematically excluded. In particular, men and members of the locally dominant tribe or ethnic group have, in certain instances considered below, been able to seize resources or, more frequently, to position themselves in a way so as to seize resources in the future.

Previous programs, including NSP, were criticized because of the way they allowed certain members of the community to seize power. Below is a typical description of this by a housewife in Jalrez:

> *"The wheat and fertilizers which are delivered to our village, the people who are power brokers [and NSP CDC members] and the people who are working in government, they are taking it. We are not even aware of the things which are delivered to this community."*
>
> Housewife / Community Member, Jalrez

This kind of manipulation has made people more alert to the prospects of elite capture.

Since subproject implementation had only occurred in a minority of study areas, direct opportunities for the capture of resources had thus far been limited. The one major exception to this was in Panjwayi, where government officials and commanders had become involved in the CCAP process and are reported to be demanding that CDCs implement subprojects relying on specific suppliers. Interviewees affirmed that these suppliers then paid the officials and commanders a kickback. This case is discussed more fully in the section below on the ties between micro- and meso-level conflicts, and in the CCSA for Panjwayi. In a smaller incident in Herat, there were accounts of the CDC head working to ensure that a paving project started in front of his home first (with a close relative confirming these accusations).

In other areas, in part because the CC process was in its initial stages in many of the study areas, some respondents reported that the CC process had not been captured by elites, but they were concerned that it would be. For example, as one CDC member in Panjwayi stated:

> *"The CDC is not beneficial for the low-level people like farmers. The CDC is only beneficial for those who are known and have power. You may think the implementation of a project will benefit the public, but this is never so."*
>
> CDC Member, Panjwayi

This was particularly evident in the CDC election process where elites struggled to ensure they would directly (in Herat) or indirectly (particularly in Panjwayi) control the CDCs. Interviewees seemed to feel that this was a deliberate attempt to prepare for the eventual distribution of some type of resources.[29] In part, interviewees suggested that this was made worse by the staged roll out of the CC in each area, which had high levels of community participation in earlier stages, but then moved towards processes like subproject implementation, which involved a much smaller number of community representatives. For instance, one interviewee from a poor household in Neighborhood 2, Herat described how she had participated in the CDC election and in one of the early mobilization efforts. In general, however, she said

---

[29] This is another area where disinformation about the CCAP is damaging its reputation.

poor households had been excluded from further aspects of the CC process in the neighborhood. Similar trends were found elsewhere, particularly Panjwayi.

As evidence of the difficulties in ensuring inclusion of marginalized groups in the CCAP, it is worth pointing out, that of the 16 CDC heads from the areas studied, not a single one was reported as being from a poor household, with seven from rich households and nine from medium households (though ATR researchers found repeated instances of office members underreporting their wealth out of concern that this might somehow disqualify them, which was rumored in certain areas, suggesting that the number of wealthy CDC heads might be higher). Furthermore, out of the 64 total CDC office holders, 13 (20 percent) were from poor households and only one (2 percent) was from a very poor household, suggesting again a concentration of power among richer families.

In almost every instance, elites strongly denied trying to capture resources through the CC. In fact, some even pointed to the ways in which the CC process was costing them both time and money:

> *"Since I have become the head of shura six months ago, I have spent 30,000 Afghani from my pocket for serving the people [by inviting them to his house and doing projects to clean the streets] so far, and I have not received even one Afghani from CDC under the CC."*
>
> CDC Head, Herat

The quantitative data shows that CDC members have a reputation similar to local shuras, maliks, and religious leaders, all of whom have been accused to a similar extent of working in their own interests. Other criticisms are less common and included reports of inefficiency (around 7 percent for all groups across districts) and disrespect (less than 5 percent)

Figure 18: Percentage of respondents characterizing various local leaders as "working for their own interest," survey
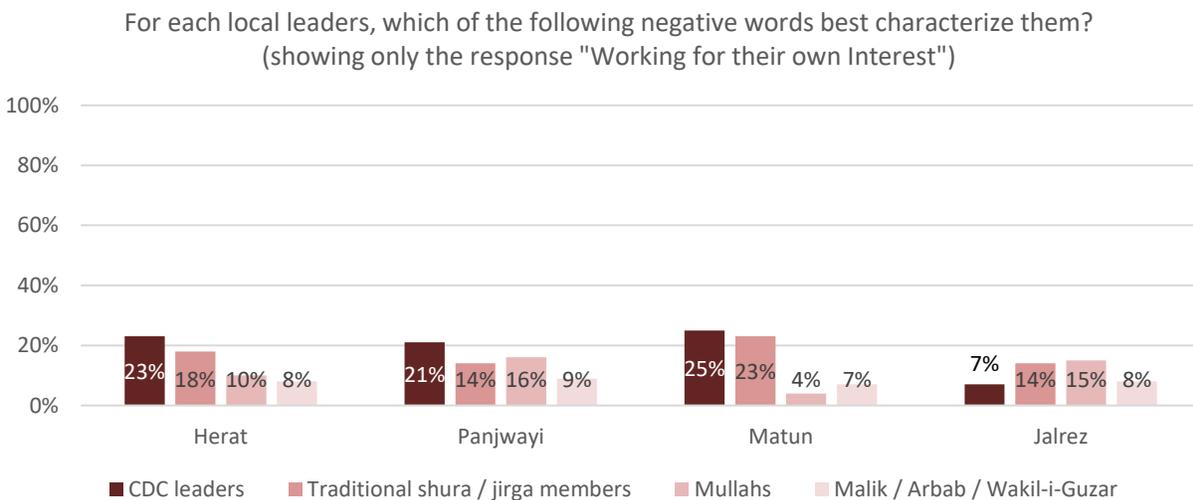
Table 9: Percentage of respondents who find various local leaders inefficient and disrespectful, survey

		Herat	Panjwayi	Matun	Jalrez
Inefficient	CDC leaders	8%	4%	9%	10%
	Traditional shura / jirga members	8%	5%	14%	5%
	Mullahs	6%	1%	2%	1%
	Malik / Arbab / Wakil-i-gozar	6%	4%	10%	4%
Disrespectful	CDC leaders	11%	2%	5%	7%
	Traditional shura / jirga members	11%	2%	7%	3%
	Mullahs	11%	1%	1%	0%
	Malik / Arbab / Wakil-i-gozar	11%	2%	3%	2%

4. What role can CDCs and all the mechanisms in which they participate (clusters, DDA, former ASOP shuras, and upcoming DCCMC and M/NCCMC) play in addressing conflict in communities?

Survey respondents did not consider the role of CDC to be to address conflicts, showing that community members understand this is not a part of the CDC mandate. In addition, with the exception of Herat, where 28 percent of respondents saw the CDC as playing a positive role in conflict resolution, behind elders (49 percent) and maliks (38 percent), CDCs are not considered a main positive influencer in the districts studied (for more details see Figure 19). On a positive note, a maximum of only 5 percent of respondents accused the CC of fueling tensions (with Jalrez constituting an exception, reaching 10 percent). Similarly, only 1 percent of respondents across study districts believed that CDCs intervene negatively in conflicts.

Figure 19: Positive features attributed to CDCs by district, survey

Legend:
- CC is responsive to people's needs
- CC is a participatory process
- CC is advantageous for poor program
- CC has a clear explanatory process
- CC has a transparent process
- CC helps women
- CC helps resolve or prevent conflicts
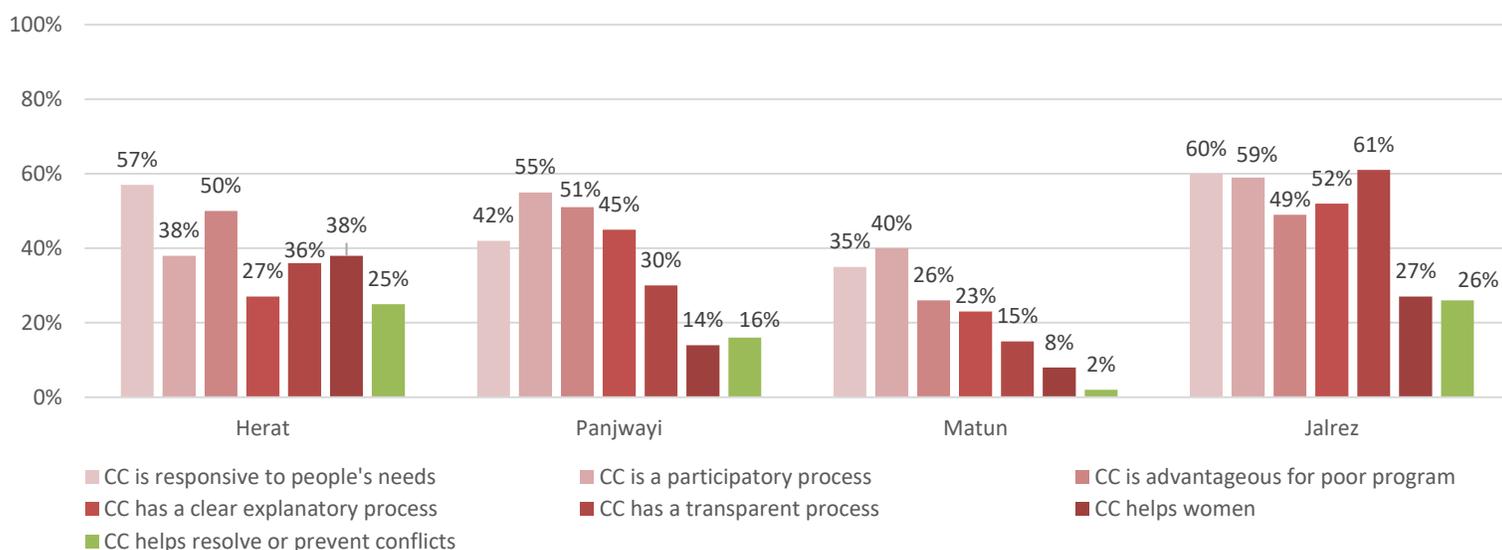
Despite the popular perception that CDCs do not contribute to conflict resolution, there are several ways in which CDCs can play a more active role in addressing development-related conflict in local communities. At present, this role has been greatly undervalued. The case of Panjwayi, where CDCs had increased interaction with security officials, suggests avenues for CDCs to expand upon their current roles. The simplest of these is to have CDCs participate in some of the local dispute-resolution processes that many of their members are already involved in. The second is to set up a mandate for CCDC, along with the district administration, to support conflict resolution, to solve conflicts that could not be resolved by other means and that are linked to service delivery or CDC activities. Such initiatives would need to be discussed and designed in coordination with IDLG and the Ministry of Justice, to ensure they do not harm other approaches.

C. Reintegration Issues

1. How are returnees and former combatants being integrated into communities and CDCs? And how do host communities and former combatants and returnees, respectively, rank their grievances and concerns?

Migration, displacement, and reintegration have been defining features of many study villages' histories. In Matun, Kandahar, and Wardak it is typical for many or most of the households to have left and returned. Around half of the households in Matun Village 1 for example fled to Pakistan during the Taliban era and began returning around 10 years ago. Consequently, returnees are common and there are no major difficulties in reintegration, however in Matun Village 2, one respondent stated that both IDPs and returnees from Pakistan were sometimes unable to continue with their studies, as they did not have the proper educational certificates from their earlier schools.

The quantitative survey data of the research also finds, in varying degrees in the four districts surveyed, that there are differences in the perception of tensions among permanent residents and incoming groups such as returnees and IDPs, though these numbers remain fairly low. (The number of former combatants in the sample was too small to draw any relevant conclusions from the quantitative data, and in interview data, most combatants describe their grievances in a fairly similar manner to other respondents from the same study area.) In Panjwayi and Matun, there were more tensions reported between the permanent residents and returnees as compared to Herat, which has a high proportion of new arrivals and, in general, is a more mobile population.

Comparing the grievances of IDPs and other returnees to those of populations that have remained in the area thus reveals only minor differences in terms of how grievances are ranked. (Qualitative interview data suggest that the difference in grievances between rich and poor and those living in insecure areas versus secure areas is much greater.) There are still some more minor differences that can be pointed to on a district-by-district basis, with most of the differences probably coming from the level of exposure to various services in IDPs' places of origin or returnees' places of refuge:

- **Herat:** Across all categories, the highest number of respondents thought that security is the "worst delivered" service. Among the IDPs in Herat, the delivery of Citizen's Charter was the second highest response for the worst delivered service by the state. A relatively high proportion of permanent residents stated that potable water and sanitation are worst delivered in Herat, as compared to respondents in other categories (IDPs, returnees);
- **Panjwayi (Kandahar):** There are differences between the perception of the worst delivered service — IDPs and permanent residents opined that education was the worst delivered service; returnees thought that justice was the worse delivered, constituting approximately 33 percent of the total responses;
- **Matun (Khost):** Approximately 50 percent of the permanent residents indicated that justice and the judicial sector were the worst delivered services in Matun, while IDPs (usually coming from rural areas with either very little or no access to formal justice) were less likely to complain about justice (24 percent);
- **Jalrez (Wardak):** Security was considered to be the worst delivered service among both permanent residents and IDPs, followed by large-scale infrastructure. Among permanent residents, approximately 13 percent of the respondents classified education as the worst delivered service — significantly higher than among returnees (about 3 percent).

The reintegration of former combatants was not considered one of the primary political issues in any of the areas studied. In the quantitative survey, very few respondents self-identified as former combatants. More expansive interviews and other conversations often revealed that individuals had been involved directly in previous conflicts, oftentimes as combatants but sometimes in more marginal roles, supporting fighters and providing supplies for example. For many, however, this previous experience did not define their political and economic orientations.

There was a noted difference between former mujahideen fighters and former combatants from more recent conflicts between the Taliban and NATO. The majority of ex-mujahideen commanders are fully integrated into their communities, involved in local politics, and are part of CDCs. This is much less the case for former Taliban fighters (though the number of former Taliban combatants was extremely low, perhaps due to the fact that these combatants are attempting to downplay these past experiences, or perhaps since many are still active members). In Panjwayi and Herat in particular, former combatants are primarily from the Soviet period and are now fully integrated in the CC, with some actively serving on CDCs.

More specifically, on a district-by-district basis:
- In Matun, most former combatants are from the jihad period and fought against the Taliban. As a result, most now support the government and are involved in local political affairs, according to their age and reputation. Some have supported specific candidates for CDC positions, but few are said to be directly involved in the CC process;
- In Jalrez, there are former combatants who opposed the Taliban and have been integrated into the ALP. Those who supported Hezb-i-Islami are less vocal in their opposition to the Taliban, in

part because many of their supporters are living in areas that are currently under Taliban control and overt political support for government would cause their followers problems. There are also some active combatants due to the ongoing fighting in the district. Compared to other areas, it appears former combatants have relatively less interest or involvement in CC processes, in part, it was said, because the ongoing insecurity means there are larger issues to concern themselves with;

- In Panjwayi, there are some former combatants who now work mediating between communities and local government officials. These combatants might have previously had ties with the Taliban, but due to the decrease in popularity of the Taliban in the district, have shifted their affiliation. They are said not to be particularly involved in the CC process, in part due to their advanced age;

- In Herat, many former combatants are at odds with some of the new leaders who have gained political and economic power in recent years. In general, however, due to the strong government presence, these new leaders tend to be stronger than the former combatants (see the CCSA from Herat below, for an example of a conflict involving a former commander).

In general, interviewees rarely identified problems with integrating former combatants into communities and CDCs, as suggested by the cases of former combatants who are very active politically, either on CDCs or, more commonly, supporting specific candidates. As a result, respondents did not report one simple method for reintegration, and this tended only to be seriously problematic in the cases of combatants who retained weapons and/or ties to groups that were actively fighting. This was most common in Jalrez, where active fighting with the Taliban was ongoing, and, to a lesser extent, Panjwayi, where the conflict was still fairly recent.

2. Who are the main figures who resolve conflict between host communities, former combatants, and IDPs? How does reintegration evolve over time?

Few issues were found between former combatants and host communities, and while there were more issues between returnees and IDPs and host communities, these were still only reported by a small minority of respondents in the survey, data that were echoed in the interviews. For former combatants, this meant that, once reintegrated into the community, the same elders who resolve other community-level disputes would address any issues that did arise.

The qualitative data revealed no significant conflict that specifically involved IDPs, returnees, or former combatants. These findings indicated, rather, that both returnees and former combatants especially have integrated relatively well into their communities. The same is true for economic migrants after they have spent a certain number of years in their new settlement, especially when migrating to an urban center, like Herat. IDPs and newly arrived economic migrants seemed to be living discretely, avoiding interactions and tensions alike.

In the case of IDPs, in areas where there was an appreciable population, a specific elder might be chosen to represent all IDPs when they had conflicts with the host communities. This was the situation reported

in Herat. More common, however, was for IDPs to simply rely on an elder from their households to negotiate with other elders locally. In some more extreme cases, as with non-IDP, non-returnee populations, disputants may approach a government official, particularly the district governor. In general, this suggests that the dispute resolution mechanisms that are already present in most areas were primarily being deployed to resolve disputes between former combatants and IDPs and host communities, as well.

Reintegration has shifted over time, based primarily on (1) socioeconomic conditions and (2) security. In areas where there is competition over resources, including land, jobs, and development funds, reintegration has been more difficult. In areas like Herat, where there has been economic growth in recent years, reintegration has been reported as becoming easier. Reintegration has a more complex relationship with security, and in some areas where there were security concerns, reintegration has become more difficult due to suspicions about outsiders. In Jalrez, however, there were small migrant groups (coming from other provinces) that had not faced the same challenges with integration, perhaps in part because so many former residents have left the area, meaning there is a need in local farming for the labor of these groups.

3. **What role do other local formal and informal authorities from the community and local government, such as district-level *malik shuras* and sub-district-level *manteqa shuras*, or any other formal, semi-formal, or informal associations within the districts, play in resolving conflict between returnees and communities?**

In all four provinces where the quantitative survey was conducted, government institutions were considered to provide the best justice and conflict resolution services when compared to the CC program, NGOs / international community, private sector, or the Taliban. (Interviews suggested that what respondents refer to as "conflicts" in surveys are generally large-scale conflicts, and follow-up questions often revealed the tendency to resolve more minor, local conflicts, particularly around land and family issues, using informal leaders.) Within the government, there are primarily four formal or informal local authorities that were included in the survey — district governors (formal), district justice officials (formal), powerful local people (informal), traditional local authorities (semi-formal). Their influence and degree of influence varied by province and by group of population within the province. In Panjwayi, the local governor was strongest, followed by traditional local authorities. In Herat and Jalrez, traditional local authorities (malik / arbab / wakil-i-gozar) played the largest role after community elders.

Among IDPs in Panjwayi and Matun — where there were tensions between permanent residents and returnees — elders, the district governor (Kandahar only), security forces, and traditional local authorities such as malik / arbab (Panjwayi only) played a role in solving conflicts. In Jalrez and Herat, where tensions between permanent residents and returnees existed but were more marginal than in the other provinces, the CDC members also played a role in conflict resolution, in addition to local authorities and the formal / semi-formal / information associations mentioned above.

As interviews with both community leaders and households suggest, these dispute-resolution mechanisms are very likely to continue to evolve, and respondents suggested different approaches to these issues had been used during different eras. For instance, jihadi groups were spoken of as influential in resolving disputes within communities during the war with the Soviets, but they were later perceived as corrupt and no longer effective at these processes. Similarly, particularly in Panjwayi, there were several households that spoke of the Taliban as delivering justice effectively during earlier periods, but there was a general consensus that during the war with the Americans, they had moved away from these practices and were no longer as effective as they had been. These interviews largely suggested that such mechanisms are dynamic and that, as the CC is increasingly perceived as a more permanent part of the Afghan governance landscape, it could take on a more important role in such processes locally.

4. In communities with large number of IDPs / returnees, how do service providers adapt? Are displaced families able to access the same services as host communities? Why or why not?

IDPs and returnees were not systematically denied access to services, but there were sporadic reports of discrimination with regard to schooling, health care, and justice. In interviews, however, most respondents emphasized that it was not a household's status as an IDP or returnee that led to the denial of resources. Instead, they said, poverty and financial issues were the major barriers keeping IDPs from accessing services (Village 1 in Matun), which was similar to responses for poor households in the host communities. For example, there were reports that IDP children in Herat would not go to school so that they could work, or that families could not afford health services. IDPs in this study tended to be poorer than the host community, which compounds this barrier.

There was little evidence of local service providers adapting to large numbers of IDPs or returnees. Some, like schools or clinics, have only the capacity to attend to a certain number of students or patients, and this remains largely unchanged despite growth in population or changes in population demographics. The increase in population simply leads to a decrease of quality of services, with more children in a class, more wait time at the clinic, or fewer free schoolbooks distributed. Communities often tried to adapt to the situation by adopting alternative strategies regarding access to school, jobs, and health services, including forgoing the service or, when they could afford it, using education or health services provided by the private sector. Interestingly, in some cases (mostly in Matun, where families migrated because of job opportunities), migrants were wealthier than locals and were reported to be utilizing mostly private services (Village 2).

D. State Agencies and Local Reconstruction

1. How are local representatives of the state perceived and ranked?

Household interviews in all areas of study suggested overall low satisfaction of service delivery and quality of services. General opinions about services tended to be slightly higher in the most urban areas studied, where there were generally more resources available, and in the most remote areas studied, where expectations about services were lowest. In interviews, insecurity was also closely tied to service provision.

Universally, opinions about health and education officials were more positive than about other government officials, and most interviewees tended to describe health and education service providers as under-resourced first, bringing up incompetence and corruption later. School principals were in some cases, in Matun and Panjwayi, seen as individuals to whom parents could go to discuss concerns. This was less true of officials working for other departments, who were more likely to be accused of stealing resources meant for the people.

In general, respondents were somewhat more positive about their relationships with education officials. While many complained that schools were in poor condition and lacked necessary supplies, education officials appeared to be the only officials that interviewees felt they could approach to have a real conversation with (about school policies, etc.). They were also the officials with the most local knowledge about the communities they were working in. Other government officials could be approached to request resources, but this would rarely constitute an actual dialogue about services and policy.

Despite these more positive assessments, respondents were dissatisfied with services across the board — including education and health services — with a clear consensus among all respondents on the fact that all services are characterized by high corruption. With regard to education, absenteeism of teachers and a lack of resources, including books, desks, and chalkboards, were the most common issues described. School operations were interrupted for a variety of reasons, such as in Wardak, where schools were temporarily closed for the apple harvest; Panjwayi, where they closed for periods of the grape harvest; and in two villages where they were closed due to local fighting between ANDSF and the Taliban. Nepotism and other non-merit-based recruitment practices was described as a main reason for teachers not fulfilling their responsibilities.

There were significant differences in attitudes toward education, and girls' education in particular. In Herat, families oftentimes placed a higher value on education than those in rural areas and, in some cases, disparaged new arrivals for not sending their children to school and for emphasizing work over education. In contrast with this, in all four villages in Kandahar, people had fairly negative views on the education of girls, particularly past the primary level.

In the health sector, there were complaints about the professionalism of health works and the absence of medicine and equipment. There was an urban-rural divide here, with those living closer to urban centers reporting higher quality of health services, but also reporting higher expectations. Private and NGO health facilities are seen as far superior in quality to government services and were considered preferable when available and should finances permit.[30] The need to visit multiple providers regionally for a single health issue was common, and in many instances would end with more extensive travel to Kabul, India, or Pakistan, an expenditure that can financially cripple a household.

The quantitative data confirm these findings. First, teachers were perceived, by far, as having the best behavior with locals, in all districts except Panjwayi, where both the police (confirmed throughout the study) and CC staff enjoy a very good reputation.

Figure 20; Local service providers with a reputation of having a nice behavior, survey
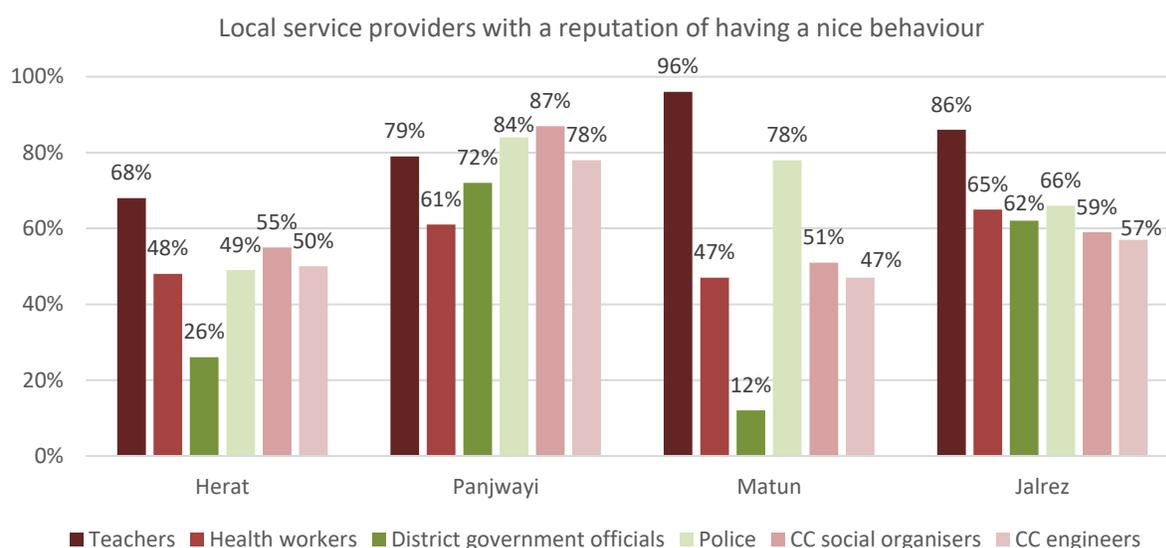
In terms of what people perceived as being the best or worst services delivered in their area, these rankings follow trends presented earlier in this report and are overall aligned with perceptions on staff behavior presented above. Security remains the most critical service, with respondents tending to have very strong opinions about quality of service, either ranking as the best, far above all other services (Panjwayi and Matun), or the worst, by far (Herat and Jalrez).

---

[30] NGOs that are not BPHS implementing partners, such as MSF in Khost.

Table 10: Ranking of three best and three worst services by district, survey

Best services	Worst services	Best services	Worst services
Herat		**Panjwayi**	
Education (24%)	Security (45%)	Security (29%)	Education (21%)
CC (20%)	Justice (9%)	Health (18%)	Justice (16%
Health (12%)	CC (8%)	Education (12%)	Agriculture (14%)
Matun		**Jalrez**	
Security (47%)	Justice (26%)	Education (26%)	Security (32%)
Education (27%)	Health (13%)	Health (19%)	Agriculture (15%)
Health (15%)	Infrastructure (13%)	Security (11%)	Education (11%)

2. What are the different service providers' views of the local population? How — and how well — do state representatives come to understand their client populations?

With very few exceptions, government officials knew their responsibilities very well and had a perfect understanding of what issues the population was facing. Many government officials speculate that it is challenging to communicate with citizens because of their low level of literacy and their lack of exposure to civic life. Civil servants' attitudes range from compassion toward local residents (sometimes highlighting the fact that their complaints toward the government are legitimate) to arrogance, with some officials citing their frustration with patients' lack of gratitude (Matun) or citizens' lack of understanding about how systems or services work.

While most government officials interviewed had day-to-day interactions with residents, they had much closer relationships with maliks and elders who often served as intermediaries for:

- Solving issues (land allocation for projects);
- Selecting beneficiaries (distribution of fertilizers, fodder for livestock, etc.); and
- Prioritizing projects and presenting them to government officials for funding (a different mechanism than the CC to cover other community needs).

In general, the role of these local leaders filled was perceived as helpful, but observations in provincial or district administrations showed a trend that points to the limits of this system: in the agriculture departments (especially in Matun and Jalrez), most, if not all, of the visits from citizens consisted of complaining about a malik who had distributed seeds and fertilizers from the Ministry of Agriculture only to close friends or relatives, including some who did not have land. While civil servants sympathized with the situation, there was little they could do to address citizens' grievances on such a matter.

Most civil servants were seen as behaving well in terms of listening to and understanding their clients' problems. But the level of satisfaction from clients very much depended on the capacity of the institution (for typically constraints were institutional, rather than individual) to solve their problem. For instance, a

parent coming to change their child's school (an easy process) was more likely to be satisfied by his interaction than a farmer complaining that he had not received fertilizer because the malik had stolen it.

Several civil servants shared in their clients' frustration but felt helpless to resolve issues within the heavy bureaucracy, as explained by the head of planning in the education directorate of Herat:

> *"The perception of the people toward civil servants is negative, and they perceive civil servants as very weak and unable to make timely decisions. In the years when I was not working as a civil servant, my perception about the civil servant was also negative (…) but the truth is against my perception and the people's perception (…). The main reason why people have negative thoughts about civil servants is because civil servants are not able to address their request, but instead report them to the higher authorities in the Directorate of Education and in the Ministry of Education."*

> Head of Planning, Education Directorate, Herat

In addition, several officials from the public health department were quick to feel sympathy with patients because of the acute lack of medicine, but they could not address this issue because they had no authority over the NGOs implementing the BPHS package.

Overall, civil servants understood well the issues that the population faces, and they were able to articulate quite precisely the challenges they were facing in their sector. They had reliable knowledge of the specific needs of specific parts of the district or province. Yet, as much as state representatives understood citizens' complaints, they rarely solved them. The first reason pertained to their lack of authority to do so. Civil servants often adopted the position of citizens, complaining about the weaknesses of the administration they belong to and highlighting what could be done better to respond to citizens' needs. For instance, several education officials recognized that late and incomplete book distribution to schools was detrimental to students. Officials from the agriculture department shared frustration with the national Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) for the delay in sending seeds that should be planted a month or two before they even reach the district. Similarly, as much as health officials underscored the weaknesses of the BPHS implementing partners, they had no authority (perceived or real) to hold their NGO partners accountable.

The second reason is linked to the fact that the social risk for civil servants using their authority would be greater than the social capital they would gain from doing so. For instance, while there were numerous complaints heard during household interviews about absent teachers, officials from the education directorate almost never took the risk of firing the offenders or decreasing their salaries. Similarly, in the agriculture sector, civil servants knew that maliks sometimes favor individuals who do not meet the criteria for receiving free seeds, fertilizers, or animal fodders. State officials did not view entering into a conflict with maliks, elders, or even a dishonest CDC as an option. The government system is sometimes so much at odds with the local culture that civil servants find themselves in a very difficult position. For

instance, MAIL plans distribution of seeds based on vulnerability, but most communities expected seeds to be distributed to all farmers, or at least equally amongst all tribes (Matun).

Interestingly, researchers noted several instances in which the specific needs of minority groups were taken care of:

- Prisoners' health: prisoners were visited by health officials in Panjwayi every two weeks;
- Agriculture support to nomadic communities: the agriculture directorate of Panjwayi distributed animal feed to dozens of nomadic livestock owners;
- Pakistani migrants: special order was given in the Khost health directorate to ensure that Pakistani migrant workers be treated the same way as Afghan citizens.

In Panjwayi, a representative of the MoPH explained at length how he tried to avoid conflicts or tensions with patients who do not actually have medical conditions (a reportedly recurring situation), by distributing them folic acid or multivitamin tablets so that they would feel respected while being prescribed medicines that would not negatively impact their health. This interesting anecdote, which shows how civil servants try to build good relationships with citizens, also probably demonstrates that while health services providers responded to patients' short-term needs, they were unable to identify and treat complex medical issues.

3. After an area is cleared of conflict, how do state representatives go about establishing their presence and credibility? How do the different state representatives (service providers, security, justice) assess constraints on and opportunities for building confidence amongst the population?

In districts like Jalrez, state officials have really struggled to establish any sort of presence or credibility. Doing so is difficult because simply accessing some of the villages studied without a police escort is dangerous, both for an official personally and for the community as a whole due to the possibility of Taliban retribution.

Rather than going to visit these areas, government officials generally force local residents to take these risks on themselves by requiring residents to come to them in district centers. In general, officials in situations like these have decided that such security constraints mean the only real way of building confidence is through the use of local representatives. This has greatly undercut the legitimacy of government officials. Security forces, on the other hand, have more freedom of movement and can better access these areas.

Overall, ATR could find no evidence of a coordinated strategy, or even a department-based strategy, to reenter zones that have shifted from insurgency control to government control.

Interestingly, interviewees working in the education and health sector did not present the situation as "before" and "after" Taliban, but rather presented a continuity of service delivery in both Taliban and

non-Taliban controlled areas. Schools and clinics are said to function in these areas, but civil servants were reluctant to provide details on how monitoring was done, or on how much the Taliban interfered in service delivery. They argued that communities were supporting them.

> *"So far, we don't have any weapon in which the Taliban fear of us, but our weapon is the people; the people tell the Taliban, 'If you want to govern over here hence, I want to have healthy / sound children and staying of both of us need to consider each other problem not to make tensions, and on the other hand, doctor is a health care employee which brings health for me and my children, nothing else."*
>
> Deputy Head, Directorate of Public Health, Herat

Discussions with elders in Jalrez and Ali Abad confirmed that such services were delivered in most parts of the districts, but that the Taliban were able to market themselves as the ones responsible, and to gain both credibility and legitimacy thanks to these state services.

4. What aspects of their work give state representatives job satisfaction?

Most government officials responded to this question by what is socially expected from them. For instance, several pointed to the fact that they were fulfilling their "duties" by performing the tasks assigned to them. Others expressed some sense of pride in helping their fellow Afghans or promoting development. They also pointed to a sense of nationalism and Afghan pride as dictating many of the choices they made.

Beyond this, a sense of personal pride in delivering a service or solving people's problems often featured in the stories they narrated to the researchers. They were particularly proud to report the level of respect they receive from citizens in general, or elders especially, when they go to visit communities. The official interviewed in the health directorate in Herat emphasized how eager people were to cooperate and support health delivery, due to the efforts made by civil servants. Such respect toward civil servants was also described in other line ministries and districts.

> *"When we go to their area, they respect us very much for providing education services for them, although they are older than us."*
>
> Head of Education, Panjwayi

Another finding that emerged from the interviews with state representatives was related to the fact that, very often, their ToR was not in line with what the duties they actually performed on a daily basis. A lot of their work consisted of dealing with complaints for which, as explained above, they have very little leverage to address these complaints, which included:
- Complaints from teachers who were not paid on time;

- Complaints from farmers who were not listed as beneficiaries by their community malik for receiving seeds and/or fertilizers;
- Complaints from patients about lack of medicines, etc.

State officials expressed regret that their supervisors (at the provincial or national level) failed to see their efforts and the difficulties they encountered, in most cases because of institutional weaknesses. They also complained that they were not paid on time and that it impacted their capacity to concentrate on their work significantly, due to the effects it had on other areas of their lives, for instance, worries around not being able to send a sick family member to the doctor because of the financial strain of going unpaid.

5. How do state agencies convey local concerns upwards?

Government officials who work in direct contact with citizens appeared to be in a very similar position to citizens who put forward their concerns or requests to those same government officials. They provided countless examples of projects they had prioritized based on citizens' requests and following the prioritization criteria set by their line ministry, but for which they had never received any feedback from Kabul. This led civil servants to share the same frustration around unresolved issues expressed by elders or other local leaders interviewed.

Government officials described how they communicate local concerns upwards, and then wait endlessly, just as citizens do, for a response from Kabul:

> *"[The people] always cooperate with us in reporting the problems in the schools and make suggestions for building schools in their areas, but building a school is related to the Ministry of Education [Kabul level], and we only report their suggestions to the Directorate of Education [provincial level], and the Directorate of Education reports the suggestions to the Ministry of Education."*
>
> Head of Education, Panjwayi

Some of the civil servants no longer bothered passing on local concerns when dealing with what were considered national-level issues requiring policy decisions:

> *"The shortage of female doctors is an issue, but it is an issue all over Afghanistan. Hence it is up to the Ministry of Health especially and the policymakers to tackle the issue. So, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Higher Education need to sit together and get a country-wide solution."*
>
> Deputy Head, Directorate of Public Health, Herat

In other instances, the issues at stake were supposed to be solved at the district level, but when state officials did not find solutions, they simply gave up rather than passing on the issue to the upper level. For

instance, in Panjwayi district, there was a village with a high need for teachers. Since no local residents had sufficient education to take on these posts, the posts remain vacant, despite the many interactions between residents and the education department.

When looking more broadly at reporting information, there were some issues with information flows at all levels of the Afghan government. Officials themselves generally identified few issues with the actual reporting of information upwards; however, they did voice significant complaints about the lack of response from the national government.

> *For example, when some people in some areas suggest making of school in their area or they want that school in their area is promoted to middle and high school, the directorate and departments are not able to respond to their suggestions soon. Their suggestions should be reported to the Ministry of Education, and they should approve the making of school and the budget for its making. When their suggestions are reported to the Ministry of Education, it takes more time until the minister and other authorities in the ministry approve making school and the budget for its making.*
>
> Head of Planning, Directorate of Education, Herat

Similarly, from interviews with both government officials and local community leaders, it is clear that most respondents felt that the most effective way to gain access to government officials is through personal connections. Thus, officials and local leaders might not use predictable reporting channels for accessing those above them in the government structure. For instance, parliamentarians, who are not formally linked to government ministries, were often perceived as effective conduits for information. Similarly, parliamentarians were perceived by civil servants as efficient advocates for getting a project funded.

6. What strategies do local state representatives use to mobilize resources?

Most state representatives described the planning process in a very consistent manner, across study areas. They generally estimated that a project was prioritized over a two-month period before the request was sent to Kabul, the last step performed at the sub-national level to get the project funded. Under this process, community leaders first submit a request to the district administration, which checks whether the project meets the requisite criteria (number of households covered by a clinic, number of students, distance from closest facility, etc.), before the request is passed on to the relevant provincial directorate. The provincial director presents the request to the Provincial Development Committee (PDC) or to one of the subcommittees. If the green light is given at the provincial level, an assessment is conducted. The result of the assessment is presented at the next PDC meeting, where it is then decided whether the project should be prioritized and passed on to the national level.

State representatives showed a high level of frustration at the lack of follow up by officials at the national level. However, parliamentarians and, to a lesser extent, provincial council members were characterized

as being extremely helpful in securing funding from line ministries. Such positive reports came mostly from Herat.

When looking at local fundraising, the options seemed limited. Most government officials seemed very familiar with the NGOs and donors operating in their geographic areas and appeared to enjoy favorable cooperation (none of the respondents complained about the activities funded by local donors or local NGOs), but it was difficult to understand to what extent government officials influence NGOs' or donors' decision-making.

7. What kinds of inter- and intragovernmental conflicts are there and how are they resolved?

Government officials were often initially reluctant to describe any inter- or intragovernmental conflicts. In longer interviews, however, a couple of officials provided examples that involved line ministry staff complaining about district governors or security forces, who they saw as sometimes impeding their work. These figures often exerted an authority beyond their legal remit, which could create tensions and resentment. A specific example pertained to security forces using a school from where they would fight against the Taliban.

Yet, in the great majority of cases, state representatives described an atmosphere of cooperation which was corroborated by ATR observation. Cooperation did not only include sharing information, but also providing lands for building schools or providing security support. The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission was referred to in mixed terms, with some civil servants applauding the large number of civil servants being recruited and some blaming the commission for being too slow in filling vacant positions.

E. Citizens' Charter

1. How is information about the Citizens' Charter shared within the community?

The highest level of awareness about the CC was in Herat and Panjwayi, with an average of 74 percent and 73 percent, respectively. The lowest level of awareness was in Jalrez (49 percent), a result which is not very surprising considering that most mobilization processes in this district were reported to have taken place in the office of the facilitating partner. The lowest gender gap was in Herat (19 percentage points) and the greatest gap was recorded in Matun (47 percentage points). No specific differences could be observed among age groups, except in Herat and Jalrez between the least aware age group, 18–25-year-olds, and the most aware, those over 60 years of age (with a difference of 19 percentage points and 21 percentage points, respectively). Certainly, as a direct consequence of the gender gap, the lowest awareness rate for CCAP was among illiterate citizens in all districts. Households whose main source of

income was daily labor constituted the group with the lowest level of awareness. The level of awareness among IDPs (53 percent) was lower than the overall average (64 percent).

Figure 21: Respondents who have heard of CCAP by gender and by district, survey

Respondents who have heard of CC

	Herat	Panjwayi	Matun	Jalrez
Men	83%	87%	84%	65%
Women	64%	59%	37%	33%

■ Men ■ Women
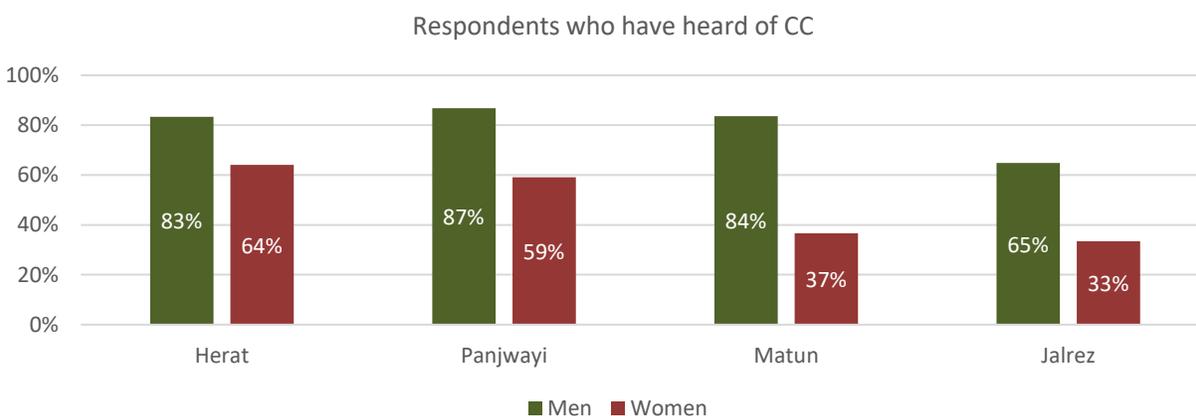
In all districts except for Matun, respondents reported having heard about CC through the CDC, with no indication about whether this occurred during the CDC elections, or if they had heard about the CC once the CDC had been elected. In Matun, the two main sources of information were relatives and the local malik. The role of the FP in informing citizens about the program seemed limited, with around 20 percent of the respondents who were aware of the CC in Herat and Jalrez claiming to have learned about it from the FP, and around 10 percent in Panjwayi and Matun.

FPs and PMUs tend to directly communicate primarily with community leaders and not with other members of the community. The fact that fewer respondents had heard of the CCAP in Jalrez, for instance, is indicative of the way in which the ongoing conflict has disrupted information flows from the government and other bodies, in the provincial center and communities themselves. These community leaders, in turn, tended to communicate with others in the community, though primarily first with other older men. These men then communicated with others in their household.

CCAP has thus succeeded in making the program known across the various groups of the population. Making sure that citizens understand how the program works is the next challenge for CCAP. CDC members tended to understand the details of the CC process better than ordinary citizens, but it was clear that social mobilization needed to continue so the process would continue to become better understood. Rural women should be specifically targeted through more frequent sessions, as they are the ones who struggle the most in understanding how CC works.

This gap is as expected, given that at the time of the research the project had only started recently, and the low literacy rates in rural areas constitute a considerable challenge for the community mobilization processes. However, it remains an issue that should be addressed to the greatest extent possible, as it has

led to misunderstandings and concern among villagers. For instance, in both Village 1 and Village 2 in Panjwayi, community members did not appear to understand that the involvement of women in subcommittees was mandatory for the CC process to proceed. They refused to allow women to participate, but then were angry that subproject work had not yet started. This appears to have been a case of poor explaining by the FP, since this confusion was widespread in these particular villages, but generally understood elsewhere.

2. What are local expectations from the Citizens' Charter?

i. General expectations

When looking at respondents' feedback on the CC process, community members appear to be relatively pleased with the process. First, the CC is perceived as responding to people's needs, especially in Jalrez and Herat (60 and 57 percent, respectively). Even if this is less strongly stated in Panjwayi and Matun (42 and 35 percent, respectively), less than 10 percent of respondents complained that the CC was not responsive to needs (see Figure 23). The program is also viewed as a participatory process by the majority of respondents in Panjwayi (55 percent) and Jalrez (59 percent). Inclusiveness is noted by a large portion of respondents in Herat (50 percent) and Panjwayi (51 percent), who believe the program is advantageous for the poor. The benefit of the program for women was less obvious to respondents, except in Herat where 38 percent of respondents believed the program helps women.

Figure 22: Positive attributes of the CC process, survey

Which of these positive sentences best describes CC's process and activities?

- ■ The Citizens Charter program is responsive to people's needs
- ■ The Citizens Charter program is a participatory process
- ■ The Citizens Charter program is advantageous for the poor
- ■ The Citizens Charter program has a clear explanatory process
- ■ The Citizens Charter program has a transparent process
- ■ The Citizens Charter program helps women
- ■ The Citizens Charter program helps resolve or prevent conflicts

Figure 23: Negative attributes of the CC process, survey

Which of the following [negative] words best describe the Citizens' Charter process and activities?
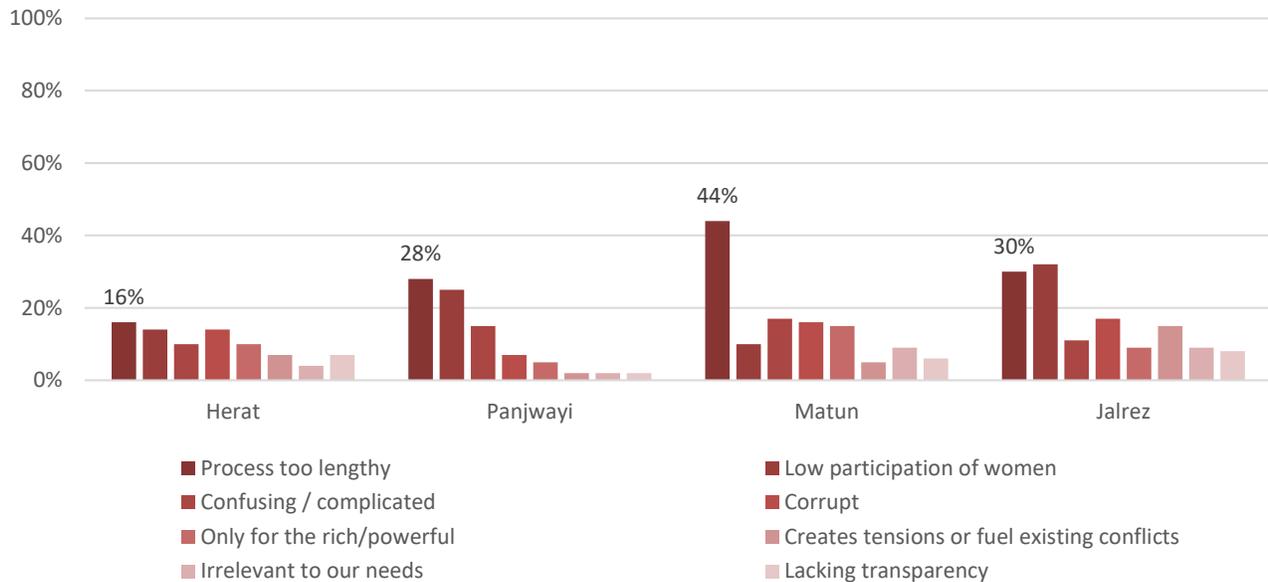
The reverse question confirms the overall positive attitude toward the program and is also aligned with the qualitative data, which often contains complaints on the fact that the process is slow and lengthy. Except in Herat and Matun, respondents (mostly female) also highlight women's low participation.

From the qualitative data, it appears that expectations for the CCAP were high among almost all of those interviewed. The only cases where interviewees expressed very negative expectations about the CCAP were those who had had a negative experience with NSP. Notably, however, almost all expectations revolved around service delivery and, in particular, the delivery of infrastructure subprojects or, in fewer cases, jobs.

One of the issues with the lengthy and in-depth social mobilization processes, has been the tendency to disappoint those who had expectations for the quick implementation of subprojects. This situation has been particularly stressful for CDC members who feel like they are potentially letting down community members. As one CDC member from Panjwayi stated:

> *People have more problems than ever. We had four [mobilization] meetings in a month. There were reporting meetings, consulting meetings, meetings with youths, meetings with schools, and meetings about complaints. Most of the complaints are about the market and issues related to shopkeepers, as well as other problems about the streets and streams. Some of the problems have been solved, but we are going slowly ahead and cannot manage all problems at once. This has created more demand and disappointment from the people.*

While CDC members spoke of CDCs as continuous bodies that would serve into the future, ordinary respondents were more likely to report that CDCs had been set up primarily to deliver certain projects to the community and were unlikely to continue after a set period of time. In general, there was confusion over the scope of the CC process. As one CDC member in Herat stated:

> *"Some people say that [the CDC] will last for five years, some say that it will last for nine years, or some other say that it will last for 10 years. We do not have any job description to know whether it is for long term or short term."*

CDC Member, Herat

Balancing the majority of positive or neutral outlooks towards CCAP, a few interviewees who expressed certain concerns about the potential impact of the CC process tended to focus on issues around elite capture. This concern was stated in Panjwayi more regularly than other areas, perhaps because of the growing perceived distance between elites and ordinary people in some of the study areas in that district.

Expectations among interviewees were particularly high around the establishment of grain banks. In part, it seems, the grain bank program is far more easily grasped than some of the social mobilization processes. Thus, most of the community members who were aware of the initiative had a positive view of it and, consequently, high expectations. In some ways, however, this also proved problematic, because there were more misunderstandings around the grain bank process than others.

As a result, in several villages, including Village 4 in Jalrez, community members felt that the FP had failed to keep their promises about the grain bank program. In an even more extreme case, in Village 1 in Jalrez, some thought that local elders along with the FPs were attempting to steal money from the community through the establishment of a grain bank. In contrast with this, in Badwan in Panjwayi a local elder had heard about the grain bank project, but once it failed to materialize in the area, he went ahead and established a local grain bank on his own.

As this and other issues highlight, some of the confusion around the CC processes, particularly around mobilization and the delivery of CC subprojects, have created an uneven set of expectations that have in some cases damaged local perceptions of the CC process.

ii. Development over governance

As expected, in almost all interviews, respondents focused on what types of subprojects their community would receive. Elections were also discussed, but this was perceived primarily as how representation would be chosen to select these subprojects (or, in some more pessimistic cases, determining which groups would actually benefit from the subprojects). The social mobilization activities were not described as encouraging better, more thoughtful local governance or community involvement. Even CDC members

who were better at describing the various steps in the CCAP process, such as how election units were selected, rarely said that these aspects of the mobilization had been useful.[31]

One issue is that one of the key mechanisms of the CCAP meant to encourage government responsiveness to citizens, the scorecard program, had not been rolled out in any of the areas studied. A few CDC members did have preliminary knowledge about it, but they did not know yet how the process was supposed to work and described it as a "gotcha" program, or a way of trapping dishonest officials.

Since it takes time to change attitudes and public perceptions of how politics works on a local level, it is expected that with more time, some of these attitudes will change and that the governance aspects of the project will come to be better understood by the recipients.

iii.   *Longer-term impacts of the CC*

Thus far, because the program is still at an early stage, the CC has generated expectations of more immediate impacts through service, rather than a focus on the long-term benefits. This leads communities, FPs, and PMUs alike to deemphasize important aspects of mobilization that have long-term benefits in order to support more immediately the short-term goals of securing development projects. This contributes to many of the practices mentioned above, including the exclusion of certain underrepresented groups and the tendency to ignore certain CCAP structures. These practices, as well as the capacity of the FP and the level of insecurity, vary from district to district. Where these factors are positive (low insecurity, good FP capacity, operations manual properly applied), the CCAP is likely to show results sooner, as already shown in this study, with more positive findings in Herat than in Jalrez, for instance

In interviews, CDC members were more likely to understand and emphasize the need to consider the impact of the CCAP in the long term. This understanding, however, is not always effectively reaching more ordinary observers of the CC program. Going forward, improving the general public's understanding of the CCAP would be helpful in changing expectations about the program

3.   **How does a community's past history of NSP and other service delivery initiatives affect preferences and expectations in the present?**

For many of those interviewed, the CC was described in direct comparison with NSP. In fact, in many of the household interviews in particular, ordinary respondents confused NSP and CCAP, though this did not happen in interviews with CDC members. (It is also worth pointing out that in a few instances, those interviewed had absolutely no knowledge of CCAP or assumed that CCAP was an extension of NSP. This

---

[31] Yet, it should be noted that the positive traits survey respondents attribute to the CCAP show that, to some extent, the mobilization activities have had a positive impact on citizens' perspectives, notably through raising their awareness regarding the need for inclusiveness, pro-poor approaches, etc. Usefulness can thus not be measured uniquely from the direct perspective of interviewees.

was particularly the case in Jalrez, which seems logical considering the fact that social mobilization appeared to be much thinner here than in other districts considered.) In the quantitative data, 40 percent of respondents who had heard of NSP felt that the two programs were similar, and 34 percent believed CC was better than NSP.

Opinions about NSP varied but were largely negative. Even within a specific village, however, it was not surprising to find one interviewee who praised NSP, while three others criticized it. This divide was particularly pronounced in Panjwayi, where the implementation of NSP had been controversial. Here, certain elders benefiting significantly from the program, while the general population stated in interviews that they had received little (for more details, see the conflict case study analysis from Panjwayi). The situation in Kandahar, however, could have come from the fact that there were two tracks of NSP funding in the province: the standard implementation through FPs contracted by MRRD, and the UN-Habitat approach, funded by CIDA and off-budget. The second track provoked more criticisms at the time and is likely to have influenced or triggered the criticisms under this study.

The divide between the opinions of those who benefited from NSP and those who did not, points to one of the central criticisms of the program: many interviewees stated that NSP was highly uneven in terms of who benefited, and it was thus open to manipulation by leaders. Interviewees repeatedly stated their hope that CC processes would not be similarly manipulated. As one man in Herat explained:

> *"The NSP created many problems and conflicts for the people, and we are hopeful that this new CDC will not create conflicts among the people. If it is a program like NSP, we do not want this program here."*
>
> Male Community Member, Herat

Based upon the initial steps of the CC process, most CDC members felt that CC was more transparent than NSP, however, respondents also suggested that this transparency meant that CCAP was much slower and had more steps than NSP. As a CDC head from Matun explained:

> *"NSP programs were rapid and people reached their hopes in a short time, but now this process is somehow slow, and people are therefore not as hopeful."*
>
> CDC Head, Matun

In particular, interviewees were critical of the timing between initial mobilization and the implementation of subprojects. As one CDC member from Herat stated:

> *"We are not satisfied with our CC CDC. The shura was created six months ago and has not done any practical work yet. I do not know why the work process is very slow. I have gone to the CC office, which was in the municipality building, and made some*

suggestions. The people are willing to pay their 25 percent of any project implemented, but not until this work has started."

CDC Member, Herat

4. How do former combatants view the Citizens' Charter and how do they perceive the roles of CDCs? How do IDPs, former combatants, and returnees experience the services provided by Citizens' Charter?

i. IDPs and returnees

The involvement of IDPs in local political processes and their experience of discrimination varied from study area to study area, and this shaped the role of IDPs in CC processes. The approximate number of IDPs in study areas is laid out below, though it is worth noting that interviews with community members suggested that the actual number of IDPs in several areas is higher than the reported number. The table below only covers communities where there were IDPs.

Table 11: Number of IDP households in communities with IDPs, CCAP MIS

Province	District	Village name	Number of households	Approximate number of IDP households[32]	IDPs in the community (%)
Herat	Herat	Mahmoodi	245	21 (CDC chair states 30)	9
		Jamshidiha	250	18	7
		Qala-e-Shater	215	19	9
		Pir-e-Darwishan	232	83 (CDC chair states 40–50)	36
Khost	Matun	Pass Manai	217	43 (CDC chair states 50)	20
Kandahar	Panjwayi	Armara	54	10–15	23
		Badwan	32	10–12	34
		Haji Mohammad Karimdad	43	2	5

As one CDC member in Panjwayi described:

---

[32] Numbers extracted from CCPNP website.

> *"The IDPs are discriminated against on small issues, like water, farmland and other small issues, since they are poor and have nothing, so that's why they are discriminated by the villagers."*
>
> CDC Member, Panjwayi

This was particularly the case in areas where IDPs have not been as socially integrated. One of the major variables here is time, and in a study area like Village 2 in Panjwayi, where most of the IDPs are fairly new, they appeared to have been treated more negatively and to have had more difficulty accessing resources. Similarly, in Study Area 2 in Herat, interviewees suggested (without evidence) that IDPs were more likely to be involved in criminal activities than other people.

In the CC process itself, this seems to have led to more deliberate exclusion in villages where IDPs were less politically and socially integrated (particularly Village 2 in Panjwayi above), whereas there were not issues with integration found in areas where IDPs had clearer social and political relations with those who had resided longer in the community. This is also driven by the fact that in many cases, IDPs try to move to areas where they have relatives or other connections, though insecurity may make this more difficult. So, IDPs in Panjwayi, who were uprooted and displaced rapidly, appear to have fewer connections to the local community and have been less well integrated into CCAP in the areas where they are now residing.

In several cases, respondents suggested that IDP participation was lower, not due to deliberate exclusion, but instead to other social and economic factors. In Study Area 1 in Herat, for instance, IDPs were reported as having lower participation rates in CC elections and in other CC activities due to the fact that they were day laborers and were said not to have the time to participate. When asked directly, the IDPs also reported that they were not as interested in participating in community affairs, but that there were no other direct hindrances to their participation.

It is also important to note that in many areas, the category of IDP is not clear cut. For example, in the villages studied in Panjwayi, many fled to Pakistan during the fighting with the Soviets. Some of these villagers later returned, but most families now have members in Pakistan as well, some of whom continue to return sporadically and reclaim their land. Later, most of the residents again fled their homes during fighting between the Taliban and the US-ANA coalition. Afterwards, some returned, but many did not. At the same time, migrants from Helmand and other parts of Kandahar have moved into the area, due to both security and economic concerns. In most of the interviews in these areas, villagers did not actually view IDPs as a separate category, but rather as a more recent manifestation of the decade-long, ongoing internal migration in Afghanistan.

ii. Former combatants

In contrast with women, in particular, there were fewer accounts of former combatants struggling to access resources or being excluded from CCAP processes. In all areas studied, there were some form of former combatants involved in local politics. In Panjwayi, in particular, former combatants were primarily

from the Soviet period and are now fully integrated in CC, with some actively serving on CDCs. Similarly, in Herat, where former commanders like Ismael Khan continue to dominate local politics. Here, local political figures, including those running for CDC positions all clearly aligned themselves with or against Ismael Khan, depending upon their political orientation, and this was considered a normal and predictable aspect of the political process.

When considering the role of former combatants, respondents noted a major distinction between the treatment of former combatants from the Soviet and Civil War periods and more recent former combatants. For example, in Panjwayi, it was widely considered normal for a middle-aged man to have fought against the Soviets. In fact, households from the villages studied, particularly Village 3, migrated during the Soviet period to Pakistan with men returning to do jihad. The men then resettled in the area and brought their families back from Pakistan.

In contrast with this, former combatants from the more recent war between the Taliban and the United States and ANA have had more trouble integrating. After contrasting the recent combatants with those who had fought in earlier periods, the CDC treasurer in Village 2 in Panjwayi said of these more recent combatants:

> *"People hate former combatants. People don't treat them well. Their economic condition is not good, and people humiliate them because of their crimes."*
>
> CDC Treasurer, Village 2, Panjwayi

In this village, a former combatant came home to find the major landowner in the village had confiscated his land. Since the landowner is involved in the CC process, his positions were said to have helped justify this theft. It was only after the former combatant approached the district governor that he was able to reclaim his land.

It is important to also realize that in some of the study areas, respondents were not just concerned about the potential role of former combatants, but were more concerned about the role of those currently involved in conflict. This was particularly the case in Jalrez, where in Villages 3 and 4, Commander Alipour was seen as a positive force in terms of "defending his people." While not directly involved in the CC process, many of the elders in these areas did ally themselves with him and were members of the CDC. This inherently politicized the CDC, creating the appearance of an anti-Taliban body, though members worked hard to downplay this aspect of their alliances to avoid scrutiny by the Taliban (by abiding to some of their requirements on how the CC should be implemented for instance).

5. What recommendations can local leaders and authorities provide on ways that the Citizens' Charter can improve social stability?

There were a limited number of concrete recommendations from local leaders and authorities on the ways in which the CC can improve social stability. Improving social stability was not part of any of the discussions, with this concept not understood as an objective of CCAP. More specifically:

- Since many compared (and in some cases, confused) CCAP with NSP, there were general calls for more NSP-like subprojects;
- While mobilization had occurred in all areas, there was still an overwhelming sense that CC work had just begun, and the primary desire articulated was the need for the program to move more quickly and to have fewer stages during the implementation process.

Some local leaders did have more general recommendations linked to their desire to see improved transparency in their interactions with the CC and other government bodies, or to enhance cooperation within their communities. In other instances, local leaders called for FPs or PMUs with more ties to the local community. These recommendations, however, tended to remain very broad with few specifics.

F. Service Delivery and State Legitimacy

1. How do citizens' expectations for service delivery differ over time / across different regions / subgroups?

First, when examining survey findings on the question "How well do you think the government responds to what people want?," the most critical toward the government were, following the trend identified in this study, respondents from Herat and Jalrez, with 22 percent and 26 percent, respectively, stating that the government was not responsive at all. As usual, residents of Panjwayi and Matun were more positive, with only 7 percent and 10 percent selecting this option, respectively. No specific gender gap was noticed under this question, except in Herat, where the proportion of women (30 percent) judging the government unable to respond to people's needs was twice as large as that of men (14 percent). Looking at these findings, it appears that citizens' satisfaction does not automatically emerge from access to service delivery (high in Herat and low in Panjwayi) but from other factors.

When looking more specifically at the kind of services respondents feel would likely be instrumental in building people's trust toward the government, the first choice was 'security' in both Herat and Jalrez. In none of the study areas did infrastructure (small scale or large) make it to the top four of services that needed government focus. Only five options are in the top four across all districts (out of 11 possible options), showing a rather high level of homogeneity in perception. Similarly, there was hardly any difference between genders.

Table 12: Top four priorities for the government to increase people's trust, survey

Herat	Panjwayi	Matun	Jalrez
2. Security	1. Job opportunities	1. Education	1. Security
3. Job opportunities	2. Security	2. Health	2. Education
4. Education	3. Justice	3. Security	3. Health
5. Justice	4. Education	4. Jobs	4. Jobs

2. Are particular public services more significant for state legitimacy? Are these preferences different for different constituencies?

One key theme from many of the interviews that presents a challenge for the improvement of state legitimacy in the eyes of ordinary Afghans was the fact that the provision of security was far more important to most than either governance or development. This meant that even while some respondents may have a negative view of some aspects of the government, in districts that were secure (especially Panjwayi which had been recently stabilized), there were more positive things said about the state than in areas that were insecure (particularly Jalrez). As one female CDC member in Matun stated:

"If the government is not able to stabilize the county, then what is the government for?"

Female CDC Member, Matun

Similarly, a female CDC deputy chair went through a long series of complaints about the government and its shortcomings, but then finished by concluding:

"The government hasn't disappointed us, and it is all due to the government that we are safe in this village (…) We are satisfied with the government."

Female CDC Deputy Chair, Matun

The government's provision of security can, however, also lead to conflict. In Village 3 in Panjwayi, for instance, government forces were generally praised for preventing the Taliban from operating in the area. At the same time, aggressive government tactics led several of those interviewed to describe a case of cousins attending a funeral who were seized at a checkpoint by government forces and detained until their family could pay a bribe and secure their release.[33]

While state legitimacy was less tied to service provision than security, there were certain services that were loosely linked to positive perceptions of the state. This was particularly true of education and health during qualitative interviews, but less so in quantitative findings. Other research on services and state legitimacy has found that high levels of satisfaction with services do not consistently influence people's

---

[33] The link between security and state legitimacy was presented at length under Section A, question 5: "What is the relationship between improved service delivery and citizens' trust and belief in the state?"

perception of the state (Nixon et al. 2017), with the exception of performance in the health sector, which is almost universally seen as a necessary and important system (Mcloughlin 2015b; Nixon and Mallett 2017). At the same time, there was a sense that both NGOs and private practices were also potential providers of these services, and individuals in certain areas, such as Matun and Herat, were more likely to use private health clinics than government-provided services.

In some interviews, certain government officials were singled out as praiseworthy. For example, in Village 4 in Panjwayi, the CDC treasurer discussed the effectiveness of the head of the local education directorate. In such instances, however, it was almost always the individual in the position, rather than the office itself, that was considered effective. With the rollout of the scorecard program, it is possible that other officials may be singled out as particularly praiseworthy, but in part due to the reliance on FPs (instead of government officials), attitudes about government officials do not seem to have made noteworthy improvement.

Put another way, the kinds of services delivered matter less than the individuals involved in delivering them. This patronage-based legitimacy, a concept which does not guarantee any sustainability with regard to how the state is perceived and supported is presented under Section A, question 5: "What is the relationship between improved service delivery and citizens' trust and belief in the state?," above.

3. To what extent is the relationship between service delivery and state legitimacy qualified by who delivers services and how services are delivered?

i. Dependence between variables on trust toward local leaders or state representatives, their respectful behavior, and other variables and support to the state

First, the research team looked at dependence between trust toward specific people or institutions[34] and support for the government.[35] The dependence was tested through both the chi-square test and Fisher's test. No dependence could be found in Matun between the trust variables and support for the government. As shown in the table below, there is a dependence in Herat between trust in community leaders and support for the government. In Jalrez, the dependence is established between state representatives and support for the government. In both Herat and Jalrez, trust in the CDC is linked to government support.

---

[34] People responding "a lot" to the question "How much do you trust the following institutions?" List of institutions included elders, religious leaders, CDC, district government, municipality, provincial government, NUG, parliamentarians, maliks (or wakil-i-gozars).

[35] Respondents who strongly agree with the statement "Our system, the Islamic Republic, even if it runs into problems, deserves the people's support."

When testing the dependence between respectful treatment of citizens by these people or institutions[36] and support for the state, the link appears in both Herat and Jalrez when it comes to the behavior of CDCs. In Panjwayi, the strong influence of maliks and elders is confirmed.

Table 13: Chi-square and Fisher's test results on dependence between various variables and support for government, survey

District	Positive link between support for the government and trust in:	P value	Positive link between support for the government and respectful treatment of citizens by:	P value
Herat	Maliks	P<0.05		
	Elders	P<0.05		
	CDC	P<0.01	CDC	P<0.01
	NUG	P<0.05		
Panjwayi	Maliks	P<0.01	Maliks	P<0.01
	Elders	P<0.01	Elders	P<0.05
	NUG	P<0.01		
Jalrez	CDC	P<0.01	CDC	P<0.01
	DG	P<0.01	District government officials	P<0.01
	Provincial	P<0.01		
	NUG	P<0.01		
	Parliamentarians	P<0.01		
			Nice behavior of police	P<0.01
			Nice behavior of CC social organizers	P<0.01

The absence of a link between the following variables is notable:
- No link found in any study areas between trust in religious leaders and support for the state;
- No link found between respectful teachers and health workers and support for the state.

In addition, no link could be found between the perception that some services are delivered well and support for the state. Only in Herat did a link appear between the perception that government funds are well spent and the support for the state (P<0.05).

ii. *Preferences on service delivery actors*

The quality of service delivery of different organizations varied for different services and in each district. The quantitative survey characterized entities into five groups — Citizens' Charter program, government institutions, NGOs/international community, the private sector, and the Taliban. In general, respondents felt that government institutions (whether the government in general or government-run programs such as CCAP) provided the best level of consistent service, as presented in the table below.

---

[36] Respondents who chose "yes'" to "Do you feel treated with respect by the following people?" List of individuals and institutions included teachers, health workers, district government officials, CDC members, maliks, elders, police, CC social organizers, and CC engineers.

Table 14: Best service provider by service and by district, survey

	Herat	Panjwayi	Matun	Jalrez
Support to agriculture	Government (25%)	Government (56%)	Government (36%)	Government (48%)
Water and sanitation	Government (31%)	Government (46%)	Private sector (50%)	CC (43%)
Health	Government (47%)	Government (79%)	Government (54%)	Government (64%)
Security	Government (58%)	Government (95%)	Government (86%)	Government (78%)
Justice / conflict resolution	Government (44%)	Government (85%)	Government (44%)	Government (56%)
Education	Government (54%)	Government (89%)	Government (67%)	Government (80%)
Construction of large-scale infrastructure	Government (50%)	Government (43%)	Government (46%)	Government (55%)
Construction of community-level infrastructure	Government (32%)	CC (51%)	Government (44%)	Government (39%)

The private sector had the best reputation in Matun, ranking first for water and sanitation and second for agriculture (35 percent), health (33 percent), and education (33 percent). The Taliban got credit mostly for security in Herat and Jalrez, and for justice and conflict resolution in all study areas (10 percent in Jalrez, 7 percent in Matun and Herat, and 8 percent in Panjwayi), ranking second in all districts.

From this data, the main trend emerging is that no clear link seems apparent between service provider preference and support for the Afghan state. Jalrez, which under other questions shows the highest level of support to the Taliban, valued the services provided by the state more than two other districts (Herat and Matun). Matun, which offered a balanced view of the various strengths of service providers depending on the type of service (government, NGOs, private sector, and even Taliban), has shown a very high level of loyalty toward the government, both in the quantitative and qualitative data. The situation of Panjwayi is different, as respondents overwhelmingly ranked the government as the best service providers across all services, probably for a mix of reasons, including quality of services provided, lack of alternative, and general optimism because of the high level of security.

iii.   Assessment of how services are delivered

While the government was considered to be the "best" service provider, it was not always the preferred choice when looking at specific attributes. The four figures below illustrate how citizens ranked various service providers based on their level of respect toward citizens, their fairness, their efficiency and their integrity. The most respected actor in Matun is the private sector (second in respect, first for all other criteria). In Herat, CCAP got a lot of credit, with first position under all criteria. The government had a very positive image in Panjwayi, ranking first under all criteria except integrity, where CCAP was first. Finally,

no clear trend appeared for Jalrez among the top three service providers, but the Taliban were seen as demonstrating all these characteristics by at least 20 percent of respondents.

Figure 24: Who has the best behavior in terms of integrity?, survey

Integrity

Legend: CCAP ■ | Government institutions ■ | NGOs/Inter. community ■ | Private Sector ■ | Taliban ■
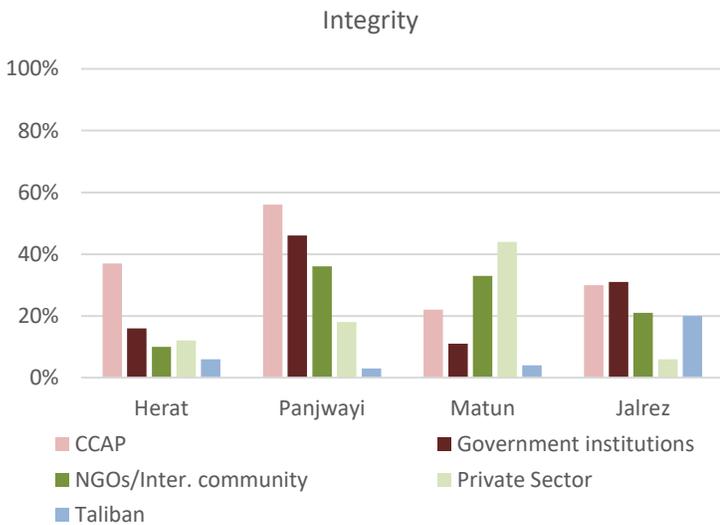
Figure 27: Who has the best behavior in terms of efficiency?

Efficiency

Legend: Government institutions ■ | CCAP ■ | NGOs/Inter. community ■ | Private Sector ■ | Taliban ■
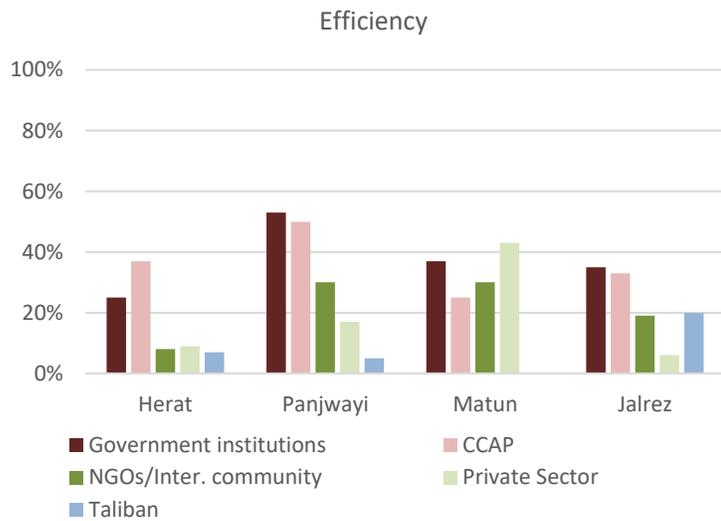
Figure 25: Who has the best behavior in terms of fairness?, survey

Fairness

Legend: CCAP ■ | Government institutions ■ | NGOs/Inter. Community ■ | Private Sector ■ | Taliban ■
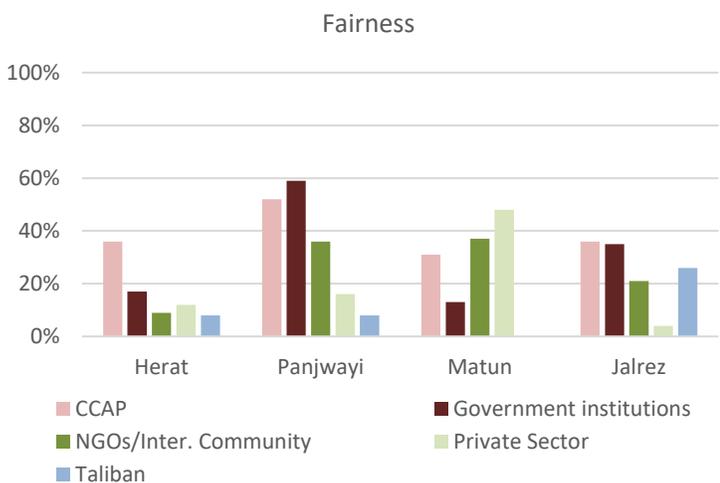
Figure 26: Who has the best behavior in terms of respect?, survey

Respect

Legend: Government institutions ■ | CCAP ■ | NGOs/Inter. Community ■ | Private Sector ■ | Taliban ■
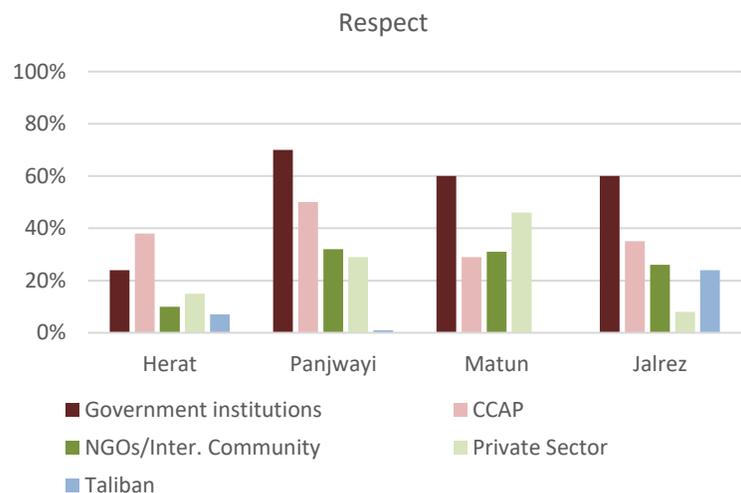
When looking closely at the results, it appears that the government was hardly ranked above the Taliban in Jalrez. While the respondents in Jalrez ranked the government best for delivering all services, they had a negative perception of the government on its efficiency, integrity, and fairness (but find government officials respectful). In Jalrez, there seems to be a correlation between support for the Taliban and a low perception of the fairness, efficiency, and integrity of the government. The very positive perception of the respondents in Panjwayi toward the government is related to the provision of security. The link between how services were provided (with integrity, efficiency, fairness, and respect) and state legitimacy is much less clear in Herat and Matun, where no trend appears.

119

4. Does information about funding sources and management affect people's preferences?

There is no evidence to suggest that information about funding sources or management impacts people's preference in service providers, but an overall transparent approach about funds does make people view initiatives more positively. For all services, and in all study areas, a large majority of respondents claimed that the government funds the services. This is the case for school-building, education services, building of health facilities, delivery of health services, and the construction of any other infrastructure. The only exception lies with the Citizens' Charter, where respondents in Panjwayi believed the CC was funded by NGOs (41 percent against 38 percent for the government). In all other study areas, the CC is also understood as a government-funded program. In all instances, NGOs or the international community were selected in second or third position, far behind the government.

Figure 28: Responses to the question "For each of the selected funding sources, how do you assess the way it has been spent?," survey
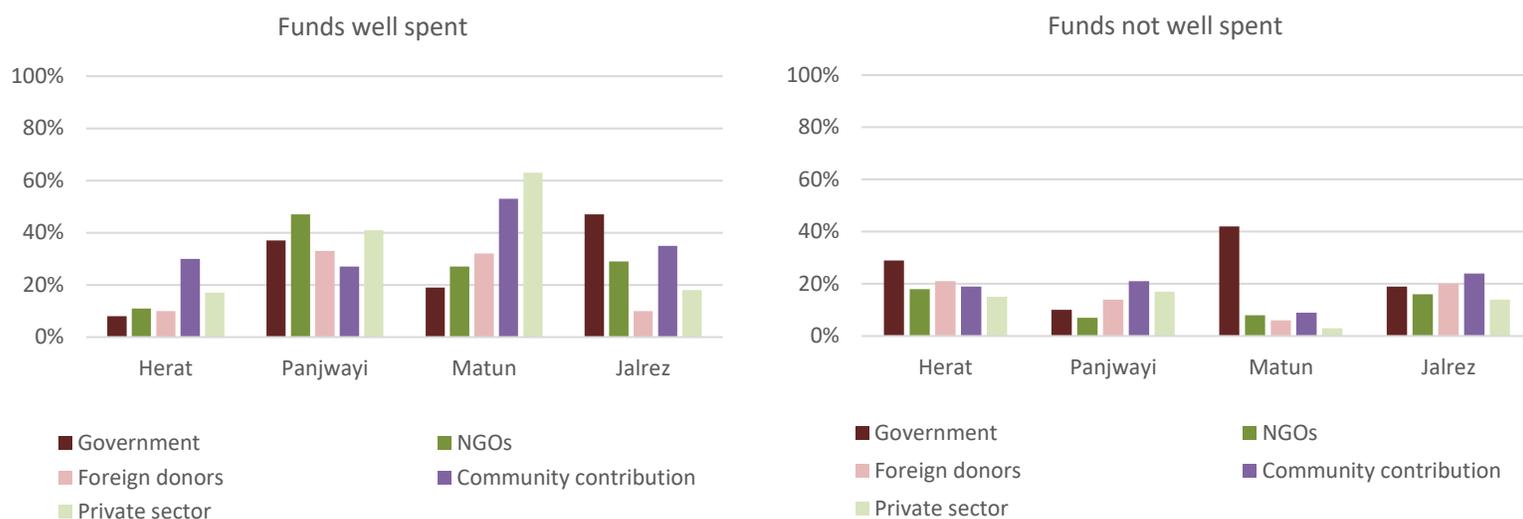
The assessment on how well the funds are spent confirms the general perceptions of the various actors involved in service delivery. Respondents in Matun remained very positive about the private sector, while the greatest positive attitude toward the government's capacity to spend funds was in Jalrez and Panjwayi — implying that there is no link between perceptions on sources of service delivery and state legitimacy.

5. How equitable and fair are the CDCs perceived to be in comparison with other sources of local authority?

Perceptions of CDCs varied from study area to study area, as reviewed in the annex. In general, however, interviews suggested that in areas where the community had a positive view of the local CDC (which was most, but not all CDCs), it was considered more equitable than government officials, but less so than local

religious figures and elders. In some places, such as Jalrez, where the district governor was viewed as effective at mediating between groups, this view was less consistently held.

The quantitative data showed that CDCs had not quite succeeded in gaining the trust that other local leaders have had. The difference remained marginal though, with CDCs' reputation approaching that of maliks (or wakil-i-gozars for Herat), a positive finding considering CDCs have been very recently introduced (see Figure 27). However, perhaps due to its long history of tribal institution, the findings in Matun reflected greater difficulty for the CDCs to raise credibility among citizens. For an area such as Matun, where tribal structures have always been at the core of local governance, it would be interesting to assess trends over time on how CDCs are trusted, to evaluate their capacity to gradually gain support, rather than focusing on the lower level of trust relative to tribal elders.

Figure 29: Proportion of respondents who feel treated with respect by these local leaders, survey
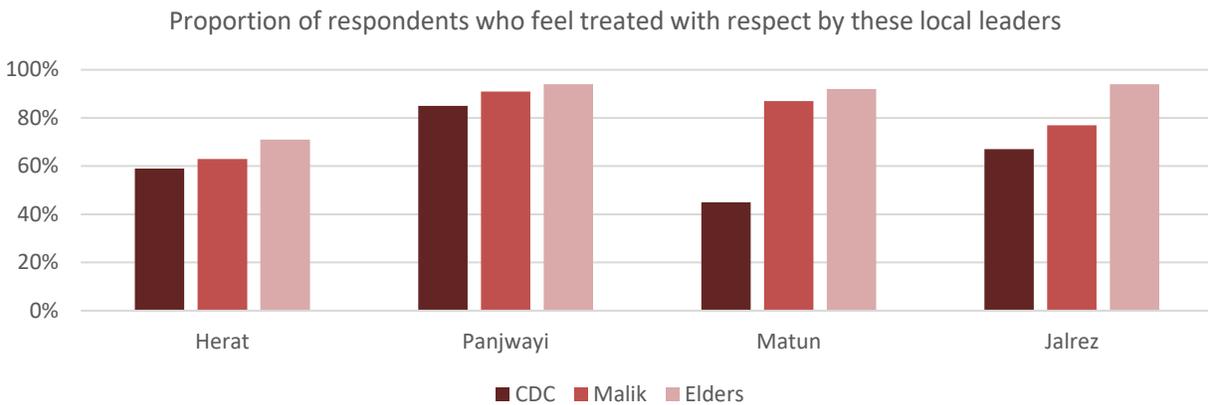

Proportion of respondents who feel treated with respect by these local leaders

Figure 30: Proportion of respondents who trust "a lot" these local leaders, survey

Proportion of respondents who trust "a lot" these local leaders

121
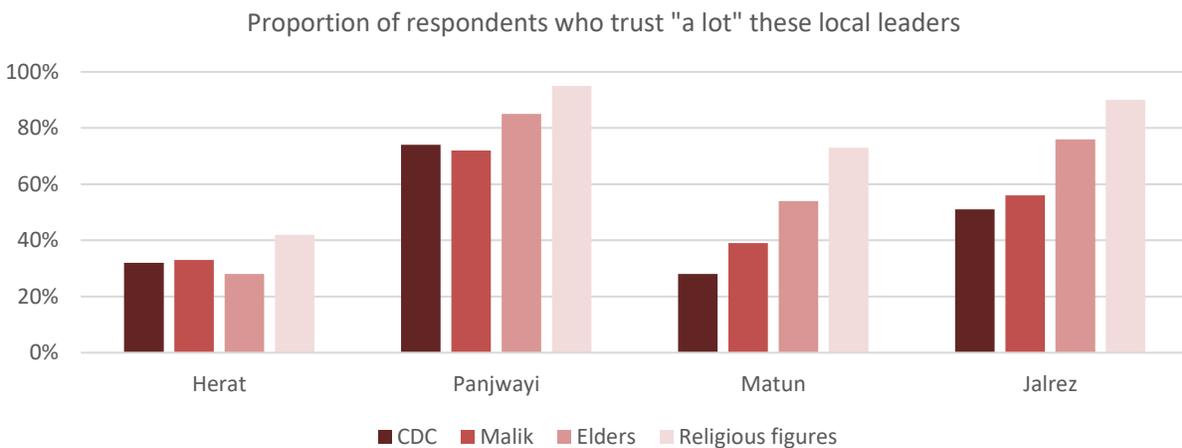
6. In the absence of state-provided services, what alternative strategies do communities use to provide public goods, if any? To what extent are these alternative strategies disrupted by service provision by the state, and what are the consequences?

i.   Presence of services

Below is a chart of the various services available in the areas studied. In general, communities had boys' schools, or they were available nearby. On the other hand, nine of the sixteen areas studied did not have girls' schools close by, while three communities could access them by foot. Only two communities had health clinics, but another five had clinics that were within a one- to two-kilometer distance.

The chart also suggests that communities had different expectations around how difficult it is to access services. For example, in Panjwayi, in the village of Haji Agha Lalai, where many community members had recently been displaced and are fairly poor, respondents described the local clinic as "close," even though it was seven to eight kilometers away. In contrast, although clinics in Herat were actually closer, because expectations around services were higher, residents did not describe these as "close."

Table 15: Access to education and health services by community, qualitative data

Province name	District name	Village name	Boys' school in village	Girls' school in village	Clinic in village
Wardak	Jalrez	Qala-e-Now	Within 2 km	Within 1.5 km	Within 3 km
		Masjid-e Jame Deh	Within 1 km	Within 0.5 km	Within 1.5 km
		Dar Sarai	Yes (primary)	Yes (primary)	7 km away
		Raast Dara	Yes (secondary)	Yes (secondary)	17 km away
Herat	Herat	Mahmoodi	Within 3 km	No	Within 1–2 km
		Jamshidiha	3.5 km	No	4–5 km
		Qala Shater	4–5 km	No	4–5 km
		Pir-e-Darwishan	Within 2–3 km	Yes	Yes
Khost	Matun	Mando khil Star Kalia	Within 1 km	No	Within 1 km
		Pass Mannai	Within 2 km	No	Within 2 km
		Ghondai Mangas	Within 30-minute walk	Within 20-minute walk	6 km away
		Ponakzay	Yes (primary only)	Yes, secondary run by NGO	Yes
Kandahar	Panjwayi	Armara Kalai	Within 1 km	No	Within 1 km
		Badwan Kalai	No	No	Within 8–10 km
		Hajji Mohammad Karimdad	Yes (primary)	No	Within 2–3 km
		Hajji Agha Lalai	Yes (primary)	No	Within 7–8 km

ii. Other forms of service delivery

Through interviews at the household level, NGOs were widely seen as more effective at delivering services than the government. In health care, using private-sector facilities or accessing health care abroad were also considered good alternatives for those who were wealthy enough to afford them, and, in almost every area studied, those who could would either travel either to Kabul or abroad to seek better access to quality health care.

The communities themselves also relied on mutual cooperation to deliver certain resources, particularly in more rural areas. This was done mostly on a small scale, including initiatives for the cleaning of irrigation ditches, for example. One of the exceptions to this was the building of mosques, which was often done either by a wealthy local villager or a collection of villagers. This practice is notable, as these mosques were usually built from resources that came from within the community, because villagers were aware that external sources, like NGOs, were highly unlikely to sponsor such projects. This suggests that periodic infusions of development projects and cash by NGOs and government programs might actually be disincentivizing other building projects, since it does not make sense to spend resources on such infrastructure if the local communities believe there is a chance such projects could be funded by external sources. Similarly, some communities without schools set up basic reading and writing classes in the village mosque. With regard to justice, villages commonly used elders and community-based dispute resolution rather than formal justice systems.

Finally, as suggested above, in a few villages, the Taliban were seen as more effective in the delivery of certain resources. This was true in a few instances in Panjwayi but was expressed more commonly in the more remote sections of Jalrez. In most of these cases, the Taliban were considered more effective at delivering justice and dispute resolution, as opposed to more concrete resources, such as education and health care. In terms of dispute resolution, communities oftentimes attempted to resolve their issues internally, but when they could not, they often explained that although government officials could assist in dispute resolution, they were likely to be biased and susceptible to corruption. The Taliban were seen in some interviews as more reliable and less likely to be influenced by money. While the Taliban were not perceived as effective at providing services, like infrastructure, as one respondent pointed out by way of explaining why the Taliban allowed certain projects to go forward, such as those analyzed in the CCSA for Panjwayi, they "want the country to develop too."

Finally, *waseta*[37] was seen as a necessary and important piece of service access. Connections were called upon in different ways depending on a household's available social and financial capital, but seemed to be a vital part of interactions with service providers. These connections could come from money, political affiliation, or through kin-based connections. As one man in Herat explained:

---

[37] *Waseta* generally translates to "connections," but refers more broadly to having a network of connections with influential figures, including those inside and outside the government, which allows an individual to access services.

> *"If you go to government institutions for solving your problems, you will be compelled to pay a bribe. Today two things are very important to a government official, and they are money and being the member of a political party. People who are members of the correct political party pay only half of their electricity bill. For example, if they have 1000 AFN electricity bill, they pay 500 AFN due to their relationship with a party. We cannot drive even an old car without documents, but there are some people who drive high-model cars without any document due to having money and relationships with these political parties."*
>
> Male Community Member, Herat

There were reports of needing and using such connections for things as simple as ensuring one's children receive books from public schools, as well as larger, more important things, such as being seen by a physician for an operation. Related to this, multiple respondents reported that in recent years, corruption had become less overt and more a natural aspect of interacting with state officials and service providers. As a result, many considered personal connections to be the only way of accessing certain services. As one female respondent from Herat stated:

> *"We have not seen any corruption or bribery with our own eyes, but there is always the need for waseta, and this practice has become very bad."*
>
> Female Community Member, Herat

PART 6 – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While CCAP is still in the very early stages of implementation and this study is not representative of the 13,000 communities CCAP covers, it is possible to draw some lessons from the ways in which local communities have interacted with the initial phases of the CC process, particularly with regard to conflict and fragility.

1. What linkages can be made with CDCs, districts, and provinces to address local conflict, improve service delivery, and increase state legitimacy? What role can the Citizens' Charter service delivery play in building state legitimacy and trust?

CCAP has established new linkages (using both new and previously attempted recipes) between the CDC, district, and provincial levels. These linkages are the subcommittees, the clusters, the CCMC at various levels, and the scorecards. In addition, as highlighted by the desk review, inclusion, participation, and grievance management are determining factors that set the conditions for an increase in state legitimacy, as building legitimacy has more to do with how services are delivered than what is actually being delivered.[38] From this point of view, the changes brought about by CCAP in comparison to NSP — a comprehensive mobilization process, scorecards, grievance management, and a more inclusive electoral system — should contribute to state legitimacy in addition to enhancing service delivery efficiency.

i. Improving service delivery and state legitimacy

The inherent complexity of setting up such systems coupled with the challenging environment in which the program is delivered (insurgency, low transparency and efficiency of service delivery, large population displacement, powerful local power brokers, etc.) have led to gaps in the implementation of the program. These weaknesses or gaps are then being exploited by various stakeholders, increasing the risks of fueling existing conflicts. To illuminate some of these trends, the most critical weaknesses are analyzed below to better understand the risks to which they could lead. Recommendations to address these specific points are presented under the next question.

- The importance and the expected outcomes of the social mobilization process are not understood in the same way by all stakeholders. Similarly, the risks of weak mobilization or partial mobilization have not been considered by all CCAP stakeholders in a uniform way. Because of this lack of a uniform understanding, different actors put different level of effort into negotiating with communities or non-state actors the application of the minimum standards required by the CCAP operational manual (or by the HRAIS). One of the objectives of social mobilization — to build

---

[38] United Nations and World Bank, "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict," Executive Summary booklet (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018), License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.
Hamish Nixon and Richard Mallett, *Service Delivery, Public Perceptions and State Legitimacy: Findings from the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium* (London: Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium, 2017).

community resilience, a key factor for peace and economic stability — could be jeopardized if the inclusion and participation aspects of the mobilization are not strictly followed;

- Since the delivery of the grant is based on a strict pass / fail system, under which social mobilization requirements have to be fully met for the grant to be delivered, CCAP stakeholders (FPs and communities in particular) have an incentive to report positively, even when requirements have not been fully met, knowing that any deviation could lead to the cancellation of the grant. This incentive is even greater when considering that FPs are paid according to the successful implementation of mobilization activities, an approach that does not encourage (financially speaking) FPs to spend more time and effort convincing communities to accept an evolution of social norms (such as the participation of women) or negotiating with the insurgency in order to get the program implemented properly (see below). Consequently, this system encourages stakeholders to sacrifice key components designed to promote resilience and counter fragility in their effort to ensure they receive funding for the project;

- Similarly, FPs and communities adapt their approach — leading to deviations in implementation of the project — to avoid conflict in the short term (for example, by not organizing elections to avoid unwanted attention from the Taliban). In the medium term, however, this might further fuel conflict by strengthening the position of the Taliban (who are perceived in such cases to be controlling the government, thereby gaining a degree of legitimacy at the expense of the state);

- Scorecards and DCCMCs were not yet operational at the time of data collection, so the study could not assess the extent to which people (including marginalized people) have benefited from increased access to effective public services or have had grievances redressed. However, as described above, the complexity of the environment means that the programmatic steps, which have been designed to ensure inclusion and participation of all, were not always followed closely in practice. In addition to direct disenfranchisement, these deviations can further exclude segments of the communities from the benefits of the various accountability mechanisms that CC has in place. More specifically, if women are not included in the elections and are not participating in the subcommittees, when scorecards are filled in, only the perspectives of men will be taken into account.

In addition, the program design might not have considered all necessary linkages for improving state legitimacy. As state legitimacy depends heavily on people's perception of the district leadership, it is recommended that CDCs (or CCDCs) contribute to holding the district government accountable, as well as to supporting the district government's efforts. While the scorecards and coordination mechanisms are meant to fulfill this accountability function, two risks should be considered:

1. By creating demand for specific standards in public services, these interventions risk raising expectations among the population, which the local administration may not yet have the capacity or the authority to meet, ultimately fostering resentment and frustration directed at the state.

2. The risk of negative blowback from community members could serve to alienate the local administration from the program. In other words, civil servants will be held accountable for issues they might not be able to solve at their level, placing them in an uncomfortable situation vis-à-vis the population they serve.

a. For example: While district level officials have the authority to recruit teachers, in highly conservative areas where hardly any women are literate, they have no tools to attract female teachers from other districts. Consequently, they must rely on national-level policies that could eventually include a special benefit package to attract educated women to work in other districts that have a lack of female teachers.

To address these risks, CCAP should build bridges with projects implemented in relevant ministries, to promote de-concentration and build new, efficient systems at the sub-national level. If such de-concentration initiatives do not exist, CCAP needs to address the barriers emanating from the centralized nature of the state. It is recommended that CCAP support the district- or provincial-level government to find solutions that can be decided and implemented at the local level, within the limited authority district and provincial officials have. To do so, CCAP could design an additional capacity-building activity for CDCs / CCDCs and local administration that focuses on developing local solutions to local problems and can be implemented within the existing centralized system.

Working within the existing system, this could include trainings to more effectively transfer information from scorecards to the appropriate line ministry and/or level of administration with the authority and capacity to address the issues they raise. More specifically, the scorecards are designed to control the quality of education and health and staff attendance and to pass on any grievances to the level of administration which has the authority and capacity to address them. However, in most cases, the district government either does not have the authority or the capacity to address grievance. CCAP could thus promote the design of local solutions for local problems. For instance, the district level education department and the CCDC / CDCs could design and implement solutions to attract and retain teachers in hard-to-reach areas (especially female teachers, who would come from other districts / communities), curb petty corruption in schools, and address harassment of female students, among other issues, by devising solutions such as mobilizing communities to provide specific benefit packages to teachers (a home for free, in-kind benefits, etc.); appointing a trusted community member responsible for listening to children's grievances (harassment, teachers using physical violence as punishment, etc.); and others. Such local initiatives have already borne fruit with other NGO-led projects implemented in Afghanistan, and they have also proven successful in other developing countries. It might not be possible to roll out such an approach in all communities, but it should be possible in communities where the social mobilization process followed the operational manual and where FPs have shown particular success in mobilizing communities.

ii. CCAP linkages to address local conflict

CCAP does not constitute a direct source of conflict. This should continue to be monitored but is an encouraging finding from the initial phase of CCAP. However, because CCAP is implemented in an extremely fragile environment, conflicts are likely to re-emerge or evolve because of its implementation. Addressing this risk might require stronger safeguards, such as the provision of additional time, resources, systems, and guidance for both PMUs and FPs to identify, record, and address local conflicts that might be created or fueled by CCAP.

Other interesting findings should be considered for strengthening the program and increasing its capacity to mitigate and avoid conflicts:

1. The challenge for the program will reside in balancing the need for respecting local norms on the one hand (an important aspect for preventing conflicts and ensuring the state is seen as respectful of specific groups and their cultures) and imposing rules of participation and inclusiveness on the other — a necessary approach to promote social justice, a pillar to state legitimacy.

2. The primary differences between urban and rural areas in terms of conflict are largely associated with, in urban areas, lower levels of social cohesion and a more robust government presence, and in more rural areas, fewer resources, but more social cohesion. The challenge for CCAP is thus to ensure the resources provided by the program do not negatively impact social cohesion and, if possible, even strengthen it, by better connecting various groups of the community.

On the question regarding CDCs and their role in local conflicts, respondents did not see CDCs as the interlocutors of choice to deal with local conflicts, nor has CCAP directly focused on conflict resolution. Yet, the survey reveals that the program shows potential for reducing conflicts. Indeed, when asked "How much does this positive statement apply to your community: 'The Citizens' Charter helps our community to reduce tensions and resolve grievances'?," as many as one out of three respondents in Herat and Panjwayi characterized the statement as completely true, and about one out of four did so in Matun and Jalrez. Such potential can be harnessed, if the CDCs are perceived as legitimate, a perception that comes through participation in the elections (see response to the question covered under Part 5, Section B: What is the local legitimacy of the CDCs?. The consistent implementation of the electoral steps described in the operations manual is thus critical for empowering CDC members to solve development-related conflicts efficiently. In addition, for CDCs to strengthen their role in resolving CCAP-related conflicts, it is recommended that their role be properly defined to avoid competition with the existing legal framework for community-based conflict resolution and for the respect of relevant laws (property law, criminal code, civil code, etc.) more generally. Finally, this might require increasing CCAP investment in training CDCs to successfully resolve disputes related to CCAP grants or to development projects more generally. This component will become all the more important in places where new, younger leaders emerge through elections, as this new local elite is not part of the traditional conflict-resolution framework.

iii. Linkages specific to "high-risk areas"

CCAP has designed and is implementing a Hard Risk Areas Implementation Strategy (HRAIS), which aims to address the major issues for project implementation in highly insecure areas. Yet, the present study allowed the identification of gaps in this strategy.

1. As seen in some areas of Jalrez (close to the highway), some communities cannot be categorized as insecure according to the criteria laid out in the HRAIS, yet the Taliban are able to exert pressure on these communities, forbidding large meetings from taking place and women from participating in the elections. Such cases should also be covered under the strategy.

2. If, after a maximum of three months, activities cannot be resumed (as described under section 9 of the HRAIS), the HRAIS plans that the management will decide to either permanently withdraw or shift to another area. The risk for an FP to have to close several communities or even a district

constitutes an incentive for the FPs to not report problems. As a last recourse, once the FP has implemented all possible mobilization efforts, it is recommended that CCAP automatically shift the project to another area, rather than just shutting it down. If the FP and its staff members have the assurance that they can retain their jobs, even if the mobilization process is not possible under the requirements of the Operational Manual or the HRAIS, this would probably increase the incentive to report challenges.

3. While the HRAIS lays out clear redlines, there is no clear consequences for anyone violating these redlines. The HRAIS has only one provision about fund leakages done by communities / community members, with clear consequences (withdrawal of funds from the community). The policy does not have any other clear and actionable provision to punish violations. It is recommended that punishments for any violations be clear, and easy to trigger (still guaranteeing due process), so they become a clear disincentive to misreporting.

Key informant interviews revealed that in some cases, communities have been able to convince insurgents to accept the CCAP social mobilization process. Such successes are in line with the recent research conducted by USIP, which recommends that stronger policies be enforced, as beneficiary communities are often able to shift or influence Taliban policies.[39]

This study recommends that CCAP ensures a strict enforcement of the HRAIS policy, which should include:

▪ A stronger monitoring system in hard to reach areas, where the risk of deviations is higher, including through local monitors who would be hired specifically for surprise visits, so that processes can be monitored directly, rather than through interviews with local leaders;

▪ A zero-tolerance policy on violation of redlines (elections at the mohalla level, secret ballot, participation of women, etc.) and the means to punish violations;

▪ Advisory support to relevant FPs on negotiations, including through the possible recruitment of local influential figures who could support the negotiations or trainings based on successful examples of similar negotiations that have taken place in similar contexts in the country;

▪ Redesigning the menu of subprojects so that there is a financial incentive for communities to mobilize properly. If additional grants are possible, this could include allocating a greater number of grants to communities that accept more mobilization requirements. Under this scheme, it is expected that grants would provide an incentive to communities to make more efforts to mobilize according to the CC standards, especially in conservative communities. The sustained presence of the project would also serve to consolidate gains and further reinforce the benefits of the project;

▪ The creation of an incentive for community members to support the mobilization steps by creating rewards for success, which could include a meeting with a high-ranking political figure (such as a minister), a certificate, a small symbolic grant, or other similar measures.

---

[39] Ashley Jackson and Rahmatullah Amiri, "Insurgent Bureaucracy: How the Taliban Makes Policy," United States Institute of Peace (USIP), November 19, 2019.

Considering the ongoing negotiations between the US government and the Taliban, and with the hope the process will eventually lead to peace, CCAP could already envisage prioritizing districts where peace (or at least a lasting ceasefire) is achieved, in the current phase (as a replacement district, if communities in a CCAP district do not accept to work according to the terms of the HRAIS) or in the second phase.

iv.   Linkages specific to municipal areas

The linkages at the municipal levels seem to be more likely to be successful, especially in the case of Herat, where the clustering is done at the gozar level, an already existing administrative level in which a representative (wakil-i-gozar) is responsible for liaising with service providers. Based on this potential as well as on the risk that social cohesion could be further weakened by rapid urbanization and migration of IDPs into urban centers, it is all the more important that CCAP invest in increasing participation. This should include further efforts to increase women's participation (after studying the barriers to their participation in relatively liberal urban centers). Similarly, the program could envisage organizing activities, through the CDCs and/or subcommittees, to strengthen participation, whether through the organization of town hall meetings, efforts to promote volunteerism, or partnership with the local police system (such as the police-i-mardumi).

2.   What operational recommendations regarding conflict mitigation, improved service delivery, and local governance, can be derived from the study to improve the Citizens' Charter?

The following recommendations focus on how CC's more immediate expected results can be improved and cover several key areas where government officials — at the national, provincial and district level — FPs, and local communities can work to improve the role of CCAP.

i.   Recommendations for forging a common vision and monitoring outcomes

As explained under the previous questions, there is not a common vision of what various activities are supposed to achieve. This is detrimental to the effectiveness of the program. It is recommended to take on the following steps:

1. The outcomes of the program should be better defined. For the moment, there is no consensus among stakeholders on what outcomes are expected through the mobilization process. FPs mostly see this process as a prerequisite for communities to plan and implement the grant. Some key informants envisioned greater governance outcome, including building state legitimacy. One key informant articulated the outcomes more precisely, as follows:

    a. Building resilient communities, which are aware of poverty gap issues, have systems in place for addressing such gaps (grain banks), and have a positive attitude, leading to a decreased dependency to external funding; and

    b. Reorganizing the lowest level of governance (as part of a greater administrative reform), by merging villages into clusters, so that the central state can more efficiently address local issues (with about 12,000 clusters instead of 45,000 villages).

It is recommended that the WB and the government agree on what outcomes are to be expected from the mobilization process, in order to provide a common vision toward which all actors will align. More importantly, it will allow CCAP to hold all program partners accountable to results other than at the activity level.

The authors of this study do not recommend redesigning the program, but rather better documenting (and, if necessary, defining) some aspects of the program that require further clarification, particularly at the outcome level. For accountability purposes, these outcomes should be accompanied by a series of well-defined and easily verified indicators.

2. Once a common vision is forged on the outcomes, it is recommended that this be clearly communicated to all FPs and CCAP staff. The delivery of quality trainings to relevant staff on this topic is recommended. Social organizers, especially, should understand what changes they are expected to produce through community mobilization. It should be perfectly clear for them that beyond the setup of the clusters, for instance, the program aims at creating a local governance body that will replace village representatives as interlocutor to the state (assuming this outcome is selected). This understanding, which appeared to be lacking in almost all of the interviews conducted with FPs, should lead social organizers to make more effort to ensure the sustainability of their mobilization efforts.

3. Outcome level indicators should be measured on a regular basis (ideally every six months) to better understand what challenges might slow down or jeopardize the realization of these outcomes. This should also become a tool to measure the performance (beyond the basic monitoring of outputs) of FPs, and ultimately ensure that FPs put forth all possible effort to ensure that mobilization reaches some level of sustainability, with communities becoming capable of and willing to take on initiative to promote social cohesion and hold the government accountable.

ii. *Recommendations for improving transparency, participation, and inclusion*

As explained above, it was observed during the course of the study that, when confronted with difficulties, the actors of the program (FPs, PMUs, and CDCs) had a tendency not to report these difficulties and/or to alter the reality in their reporting. This happened despite efforts by CCAP to encourage FPs to communicate any issues they faced and to engage as partners with the program to address challenges. This policy calling for transparency has probably been efficient to some extent (although this could not be verified due to the limited geographical coverage of this study). Yet, it is unrealistic to believe that all actors at the frontline level understand this policy.

This tendency is detrimental to the program and, as explained above, risks jeopardizing the achievement of long-term objectives. In order to enhance transparency and ensure the integrity of the program, a number of principles and measures could be affirmed and enforced:

1. It seems necessary to remind the key actors (FPs, staff of the MRRD, members of the CDCs) that all the steps of the social mobilization and of the delivery of the grants are compulsory and must be strictly observed, unless deviations have been discussed and formally approved by the management of CCAP. In short, creating exceptions (either to the Operations Manual or the HRAIS) should be a policy decision rather than done on an *ad hoc* manner at the field level.

   a. Infringements to the process that were identified under this study (participation of only a few elders to the social mapping exercise, absence or low participation of women in the elections, use of consensus-based selection of CDC members, etc.) had not been discussed with the management of CCAP. It appears that these deviations had either not been observed by the various levels of supervision and monitoring, or were deemed not serious enough to lead to sanctions. In some cases, given the complexity of the situation, it might just be difficult for the PMU and FP to make the right decision. The authors recommend establishing a platform to discuss the best ways forward in specific cases. This platform could gather FPs working in difficult areas, the HRAIU, and other relevant actors, before presenting recommendations to the donor for validation.

   b. Interviews with all stakeholders gave the impression to the research team that not all program rules were understood to have been made to be applied. Rather, respondents assumed that the program would be tolerant of infringements, provided that momentum could be sustained (with the outward appearance of proper social mobilization and the rapid provision of grants).

2. The program faces especially notable resistance when implemented in communities where strict traditional norms prevail (particularly regarding the role of women and democratic processes). Difficulties are even greater in areas either controlled by or under the influence of the Taliban, who not only vehemently opposed all mobilization components and (in Jalrez and Ali Abad) prevented them from being implemented as envisioned in CCAP, but also aimed to get financial resources or employment from CCAP.

   a. When faced with resistance, whether pressure or actual threats, the program actors in the study locations tended to adapt the program's implementation to the environment at the expense of the guiding principles of the program, without consultation with CCAP's management. This was particularly witnessed in Jalrez, where this approach jeopardized the principles of inclusion, participation, and democracy promoted by the program. In such cases, the program becomes solely an asset delivery program with limited genuine participation by community members.

   b. This will make the subsequent implementation of the more complex governance aspects of CCAP, such as the CCMC and the scorecards, more difficult, and it will limit their effectiveness.

   c. The study shows that facilitation can be successful in addressing resistance from communities (when they come from local norms rather than from Taliban rules): we found evidence that FPs (with the support of PMUs in certain cases) have succeeded in negotiating the implementation of certain rules of the program that were initially rejected

by communities. But more often, the issues are bypassed by giving up the requirements designed in the program.

d. It is difficult to understand the reasons why FPs (and PMUs to a lesser extent) do not take more advantage of the bargaining power of CCAP: the program brings valuable resources to poor communities that could encourage communities to follow the CCAP rules. The experience of several service-delivery programs in Afghanistan, as mentioned by the desk review, and the recent USIP publication mentioned above, demonstrate that programs that bring value to a community are in the position to negotiate the implementation modalities, and to impose some conditions or a phased delivery of services / assets (depending on how the community scores in the implementations of the different components of the program). The research team believes that the program could be implemented in a more consistent manner, if such a system of conditionality was put into place. In this case, FPs would make clear that certain aspects of the mobilization could be waived, or requirements decreased, within the list of redlines already listed in the HRAIS, and that grants would only be provided if none of these redlines are crossed. This approach is only possible if FPs are sure they will be able to implement the project in another district / community, if the community refuses to abide by the redlines.

e. Access to women remains a major problem in parts of the country. FPs usually have at least one female social organizer at the district level, but, in many cases, the challenge of finding female staff who are well educated means that the social organizer comes from another district (or sometimes even province) and hence lacks an established social network in the area. Consequently, it is impossible for her to visit communities other than the ones that are most secure (mostly in and around the district center). FPs cannot recruit women with a different profile (less educated, but with better access) because of the rules set up by the CBR project (Ministry of Finance), which regulate the recruitment of CCAP staff. It is recommended that an exception be requested from the MoF to allow for the recruitment of more female social organizers with greater access. There might also need to be additional training for staff with such a profile. For this study, ATR recruited and trained female field researchers who were chosen because of their capacity to access the areas where they were deployed. None of them would have met the standards of the CBR project but were selected and trained with care until they could fulfil their responsibilities.

3. The CCAP leadership is also not properly equipped to spot problems and to react adequately to these problems. It was observed that the leadership and the key divisions were either understaffed or underequipped to fully capture what was happening in the project. The need to draw conclusions and design appropriate and timely solutions based on a set of comprehensive and quality data requires significantly more resources.

a. During discussions with the management of CCAP, it appeared that the number of managers was not what was initially required and that the managers were overwhelmed.

b. When the interviews took place with the M&E division, the division only had two M&E personnel per province. Considering the number and diversity of communities, as well as the general security situation, the directorate made it clear that these resources were insufficient for proper monitoring of the program's activities. Because the security situation varies in extreme ways from one district to another in the same province, we recommend using local monitors (as described in the HRAIS) more widely, even in settings where the HRAIS is not enforced.

c. In order to increase the effectiveness of the M&E unit with limited resources, it is recommended that their scope of work focus less on following specific deviations and more on identifying larger trends that would require systemic or programmatic adaptations.

d. Similarly, the interviews with the finance and procurement divisions revealed that both divisions were aware that their systems were not made to systematically detect a certain number of potential frauds. For both divisions, the reporting from the field was limited to a few specific documents. Also, this reporting was done in parallel, with no connection between the two divisions, limiting their abilities to triangulate and detect anomalies. During these interviews, it appeared, for instance, that if a district engineer was making a deal with a member of a CDC, neither the CCAP management in Kabul nor that in the province would have the necessary documentation to detect the fraud with the system in place at the time.

Based on these observations, ATR would recommend CCAP adopt the following measures in order to make the program more efficient:

1. Develop a stronger monitoring system, with more resources to better identify irregularities in a timely fashion, including through varied sources of information and options for triangulating data.

2. Increase human resources to perform the monitoring function in a manner which is adapted to the difficult context (by hiring local monitors, for instance, including female monitors, at the district level, on a short-term basis).

3. Make sure that the potential problems identified by the M&E department are associated with some automatic reactions from the program. For instance, if doubt were cast on some elements of the social mobilization or on the proper implementation of a grant, the start of an inquiry should automatically lead to the stoppage of other project activities in order to make sure that the increase in the M&E capacity coincides with an increased capacity to stop, deter, and prevent low-quality delivery or fraud.

4. An organizational and institutional review of the key divisions should be implemented in order to evaluate if they are sufficiently equipped and supported to properly oversee the implementation of the program.

5. In the meantime, promote a culture of dialogue within the program, by organizing discussions with FPs, PMU staff, and other relevant stakeholders on specific challenges, including how to gain access in Taliban-controlled areas, how to deal with the risk of Taliban taxation, how to encourage women's participation in conservative areas using creative approaches, etc. Such discussions should be organized under the Chatham House Rule to ensure that no topics be seen as taboo and the conversations focus on finding solutions to challenges, rather than defending one's actions.

6. Work to improve communication between communities, PMUs, and FPs. Currently some FPs and PMUs are not prioritizing the explanation of CCAP's processes, or are simply communicating with the CDC chair, all of which makes CCAP appear less transparent to ordinary Afghans.

7. Work on improving the communication of CCAP toward the citizens targeted by the program. The study reveals that there is a tendency for Taliban or existing patronage networks to claim credit for CCAP programming in place of the state and its representatives.

8. Develop a policy that lists sanctions (including soft sanctions) for various levels of violations, including violations in the accuracy of the reporting. Set up the structure for implementing the policy. This policy will have to balance two major aspects: providing sufficient flexibility to not alienate the population toward the program, while setting up boundaries that cannot be crossed.

9. The program has worked under the assumption that women cannot travel to villages. While finding qualified women in some areas is indeed challenging, it is not impossible. In order to succeed, the research team recommends decreasing the education requirements for female staff working at the district level and adapting the system so they do not need, for example, to be involved in written reporting if they are not qualified to do so, but could instead focus on mobilization and oral reporting to a qualified male colleague. Also, in rural and semi-urban areas (especially in conservative areas), the mobilization period should be longer and better adapted, so it better aligns with their capacity, which is limited by their low level of exposure to public matters.

10. Also, it should be recognized that women in different areas have different priorities. Interviews with women at the household level highlighted that women in urban and semi-urban (Matun) areas were more interested in contributing to community development. This is expected as they usually have a life less impacted by the day-to-day challenges rural women face (urban women have better access to toilets, to doctors, to family planning options, and to information in general). Yet, in Matun, men were sometimes actively preventing women's participation. There could thus be various approaches to involve women in CCAP depending on their level of interest for the process, the social and logistical barriers they face, and their immediate needs. In places where women are not willing to participate, it might be best to provide small grants specifically aimed

at addressing women's priority needs (including the training of one community-based midwife, the availability of a social organizer or a psycho-social counselor, etc.).

iii.   *Minimizing conflict*

The majority of conflicts directly associated with CCAP stem from (1) the CDC election process and (2) the selection and implementation of local subprojects. But the risk of the CC fueling conflicts remains high throughout the process. The program design has not focused enough in developing safeguards to mitigate conflict and does not mainstream conflict sensitivity sufficiently, given the context of high fragility in which it operates.

In particular:

- CCAP should organize a consultative process with FPs to develop conflict sensitivity measures as part of the manuals;
- CCAP should consider doing a district-by-district conflict mapping and risk assessment exercise that would lead to the design of a specific approach, when necessary, for the adaptation of requirements to the specificities of the district;
- CCAP should train FPs and PMUs on conflict sensitivity and should raise awareness about the multitude of risks that can arise from the CC implementation. Topics to address include the risk of domestic violence potentially triggered by the requirement to involve women in decision-making processes, and the risk of the program funding the Taliban if their tax is paid;
- CCAP should develop avenues for discussing risks for conflict, including at the policy and programmatic levels;
- CCAP should review the MSS policy to include more flexibility (whether in terms of grant ceiling or types of subprojects) in order to accommodate specific community-level needs and avoid conflict. This flexibility should be offered in rare cases, when the village is saturated with small infrastructure. Specific additional criteria could require that the amount of the bigger subproject is no more than a specific percentage of the allocated grant and that the subproject is assessed by CCAP as providing social and/or economic benefits for the village as a whole (or at least for the poorest of the village), or other similar standards.