

# Local Governance Project – Afghanistan (LoGo) Monitoring Report



Figure 1: A focus group discussion conducted with LoGo project participants, Bamyan, (photo credit: EPD)

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

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Empowered lives.  
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## Acronyms

ACTA	Afghan Coalition for Transparency and Accountability
CCNPP	Citizen Charter National Priority Program
CDC	Community Development Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoEd	Department of Education
DoPH	Department of Public Health
DoWA	Department of Women Affairs
DMM	Deputy Ministry of Municipality
EPD	Equality for Peace and Democracy
EU	European Union
GCCF	Government and Civil Society Coordination Forum
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
LoGo	Local Governance Project – Afghanistan
PC	Provincial Council
PGO	Provincial Governor's Office
PWN	Provincial Women Network
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



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# 1. Introduction

**Project background:** The Local Governance Project – Afghanistan (LoGo) is a multi-year, multi-donor project funded by the European Union (EU), Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project which started in October 2015 aims to improve service delivery by enhancing the accountability and transparency of the local government. The project provides support to the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), 13 Provincial Governors Offices (PGOs) and Provincial Councils (PCs), 22 Provincial and District Municipalities and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in 17 provinces.

The output results are:

- 1) Output 1: Capacities of PGOs and Provincial Councils improved for inclusive, accountable and transparent service delivery.
- 2) Output 2: Municipalities are able to generate more revenues and deliver improved services in a transparent, accountable and participatory manner.
- 3) Output 3: Civil Society and citizens have improved oversight capacity of local governance.
- 4) Output 4: IDLG is able to develop and implement policies to improve local government accountability and service delivery.

On 18 September 2017 EPD signed a one-year grant agreement with UNDP to implement the civil society component of the LoGo project in the 10 provinces of Paktia, Panjshir, Khost, Bamyan, Kandahar, Herat, Daikundi, Kapisa, Balkh and Nangarhar to support the development of a stronger role for civil society including citizens in local governance through three results:

- Building the capacity and networking of civil society organizations and interest groups (including women's groups) around the issues of service delivery, provincial planning and budgeting
- Ensuring that both women and men have improved knowledge of the responsibilities of their local government and are able to engage in local planning and oversight.
- Providing resources to allow interested groups to monitor service delivery that is provided at the provincial level and provide feedback to provincial planning and budgeting processes.

Under these three result areas, EPD, with support from the project, designed a number of activities focusing on capacity building, awareness raising, networking and advocacy to enable CSOs and associations to monitor local government service delivery. The project was extended to 31 December 2018 under a no-cost extension, granted by UNDP to facilitate additional social audit activities with CSOs.

## 2. Summary

**M&E Assessment:** As part of the grant agreement between EPD and UNDP, an assessment was conducted from 13 November to 19 December 2018 in five provinces: Panjshir, Kapisa, Khost, Paktia and Bamyan. The research unit sought to review the key activities under the project to determine the effectiveness of the project interventions, to collect a sample of successful initiatives as well as to determine areas for improvement. The key activities assessed are summarized below:

- Awareness raising - Live Radio Roundtable Discussions, Awareness Raising Campaigns, documentary film screenings
- Networking and Government and Civil Society Coordination Forum (GCCF) meetings
- Capacity building trainings
- National Conference.

**Awareness Raising:** The project conducted a wide range of awareness raising activities, such as awareness raising workshops and campaigns, radio talk show roundtables and documentary film screenings. EPD selected the topics for these activities from training manuals that were reviewed and approved by UNDP; including inputs from consultative meetings with the Deputy Ministry of Municipality (DMM). During the interviews with the Kapisa Municipality, the respondents stated that the project had the ability to increase the level of awareness about paying taxes, particularly property tax (*Mahsool Safaee*).<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: Details of the LoGo project (output 3) awareness raising activities**

#	Awareness program	# of sessions	# of participants reached	# of Female participants
1	Awareness raising workshops	20 (2 in each province)	1,652	676
2	Awareness campaign	20 (2 in each province)	1,027	324
3	Radio talk show	40 (4 in each province)	231	12
4	Film screening	40 (4 in each province)	3,692	1,513
Total			6,602	2,525

**Networking Activities:** In addition to awareness raising programs, the LoGo project built or increased civil society networks with the aim of monitoring, oversight and advocacy, some of which coordinated with government authorities. Foremost has been the **Government and Civil Society Coordination Forum (GCCF)**, whose membership ranges from 20 to 25 individuals. For the project, EPD utilized its existing network of women in seven provinces (out of 10 targeted provinces), referred to as the **Provincial Women Network (PWN)**. EPD further expanded its youth network, the **Afghan Coalitions for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA)** to three new provinces: Panjshir, Kapisa and Khost (3 out of 10 targeted provinces). Prior to this project, EPD had its ACTA platforms in three provinces of Nangarhar, Bamyan and Herat but in order to involve more women and girls, PWNs were targeted. In contrast, as

<sup>1</sup> LoGo-Kapisa-05

Panjshir, Kapisa and Khost were new areas under EPD’s coverage; ACTA networks were established with a mandate for good governance. All of these network members were chosen as representatives of their communities to actively engage with governmental sectors to lobby and advocate to solve community issues. EPD designed capacity building programmes on awareness raising, advocacy and policy planning topics to equip CSOs and municipal participants on oversight methods. The network composition is detailed in the following tables.

**Table 2: Details of the networks under the logo project (output 3)**

#	Network	# of networks	# of Members	# of Female members
1	ACTA	3	90 (each network has 30 members)	15
2	PWN	7	210 (each network has 30 members)	210
3	GCCF	10	145	48
Total			445	273

**Table 3: Details of the capacity building workshops conducted during the LoGo project (output 3)**

#	Capacity building workshop	# of sessions	# of Members	# of Female members
1	Policy/social audit	10	101	36
2	M&E/advocacy/Access to info	10	101	38
Total			202	74

Different networking and exchange sessions were also held to establish coordination among CSOs, governmental sectors and citizens. These platforms provided a means to successfully facilitate meaningful interaction between citizens and the governmental sectors.

**Table 4: Details of the exchange program and networking workshops held at the provincial and national levels**

#	Activity	# of sessions	# of participants	# of Female participants
1	Youth cross cultural events	30 (3 events in each province)	1,852	501
2	Central Exchange	1	180	60
3	Awareness raising and networking workshops	20 (2 workshops in each province)	1,180	461
Total			3,212	1,022

### 3. Methodology

EPD conducted the assessment's data collection from 13 November to 19 December 2018 in five provinces, Panjshir, Kapisa, Khost, Paktia and Bamyan.

The assessment team used individual key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGDs), as well as individual interviews of the project's participants for data collection. Separate questionnaires were created for the Provincial Coordinator, project participants and stakeholders which were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in the local languages and subsequently translated to English. A total of 77 respondents participated in the assessment. To ensure confidentiality, participants signed consent forms for the information they shared in the interviews and photos documenting the field work. Additionally, wherever applicable, case studies were collected to reflect (output 3 of) perceived results across communities in the targeted provinces.

In consideration of the limited time as well as insecurity in some areas, EPD used purposive sampling to select respondents and the snowball approach for the case studies. For respondent selection, with support from EPD's Provincial Coordinators, the data collectors communicated with the stakeholders who were actively engaged in the project initiatives. For each province, list of two or three GCCF's active members including governmental and CSO representatives were provided for interviews. The other interviewed cohorts were ACTA, PWN and panelists of radio talk show.

For the project participants, one FGD in each province was organized inviting (maximum seven) individuals of documentary screening, workshop/training, social audit, awareness campaign, and exchange programmes.

### 4. Findings and results

Throughout the monitoring assessment, it has been apparent that the project participants contributed tremendous efforts to enhance CSO capacity in monitoring and oversight of local service delivery. The data revealed that the GCCF forum in the various targeted provinces had notable achievements. The following sections highlight a few of these.

#### 4.1 Building trust and CSO coordination

At the project's inception, EPD carried out a CSO capacity assessment of 50 CSOs (5 per province) in all ten targeted provinces. During the initial capacity assessment, many respondents had indicated that the citizens had a negative image of CSOs in some of the provinces.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Radio Khurasan and Maihan Social Council, and Health hygienic organization of afghan in Panjshir, Nov 2017

The GCCF for many (target) provinces provided the first platform to bring CSOs and governmental sectors together to meaningfully enhance transparency and accountability and legitimize CSO involvement.<sup>3</sup> According to participants, the forum appeared to not only coordinate scattered CSO activities, but to also connect the citizens with different sectors, particularly provincial municipalities. Networking workshops and accountability meetings with local communities were among the means where people found a chance to meet and interact with authorities.

Regarding legitimizing CSO oversight, the LoGo project seemed to be a turning point in CSO's reputations in Panjshir province in particular. During the assessment, respondents said that LoGo proved CSOs can bring positive changes in building trust among citizens and the governmental sectors. A respondent from Khurasan media station in Panjshir shared his view during the M&E assessment:

*"Before this (project), people had a negative perception of CSOs, but with implementation of the LoGo project, this has proven that CSO activities are for the citizens' benefits ... The committee, in close coordination with locals, influential elders and the rest of CSOs, endeavor to solve community problems and monitor governmental service delivery"*<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, the respondent from Paktia municipality highlighted CSO's role in terms of oversight of governmental service delivery:

*"One year before, CSO did not take visible part in governance but now they are empowered to share community problem with authorities and work for transparency and accountability. They involve citizens in local governance and it can improve trust building."*<sup>5</sup>

The other civic group involved in LoGo activities was youth. It was particularly meaningful in Bamyan where through approaching municipality, the budget for organizing a youth tournament on 13 April 2018 was availed, the municipality also provided a football field in Yakawalang district.<sup>6</sup> The LoGo project was welcomed by the Paktia youth as well. A respondent from Paktia in this regard stated:

*"Before this (the LoGo project), youth were not involved in enhancing governance but now they are able to receive information from governmental sectors and encourage better service delivery"*<sup>7</sup>

## **4.2 Encouraging accountability and oversight of governmental sectors**

According to data tracked by EPD of issues raised during meetings, CSOs in the GCCF committee shared community problems with the relevant government sectors and in many cases, the issues have been addressed. The initiative enabled CSOs to hold the authorities accountable for the quality of their services. Feedback from the respondents indicated that the LoGo project provided a platform that encouraged the municipality to hold accountability meetings with citizens more frequently and in a more organized manner. A respondent from Municipality stated:

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<sup>3</sup> LoGo-Bamyan-04, 05, 06, LoGo-Panjshir-05

<sup>4</sup> LoGo-Panjshir-04

<sup>5</sup> LoGo-Paktia-03

<sup>6</sup> LoGo-Bamyan-08

<sup>7</sup> LoGo-Paktia-02

*“Now the monthly and quarterly accountability meetings with people are actively being held. We are accountable to people and everyone without any restriction can participate in these sessions and ask for information. The municipality is ready to address people’s complaints.”<sup>8</sup>*

The GCCF forum in some of the targeted provinces did not restrict their monitoring and advocacy efforts only to the municipalities but also included the rest of the sectors in the GCCF. In Kapisa before the forum’s establishment, there had been a number of complaints about low quality services of the department of education. According to the data, the education sector was able to address some of the issues identified by the forum.<sup>9</sup> A GCCF member from education sector in Kapisa stated:

*“When the issues regarding schools were shared during the GCCF meetings, I communicated with School Management Shura (SMS) Unit in the education department to address the issues. As a result, a very good coordination was facilitated to solve problems through SMSs in the relevant schools... there were schools which did not have any land to build a building and through this coordination, lands were allocated for them. In Kohband area, the SMSs did not hold their meeting and as a result of the GCCF’s advocacy, they started holding regular meetings.”<sup>10</sup>*

Similarly, network members monitored the Kapisa province hospital and observed that some governmental medications, which were supposed to be distributed for free, were being sold in other pharmacies. Members discussed the issue during the quarterly meeting with the Department of Public Health’s representative to address the problem. According to research team’s interview with the DoPH, the issue has been controlled to some extent and the department is struggling to ban it completely.<sup>11</sup>

A similar practice was implemented in Panjshir province as there were complaints about doctors and nurses’ inappropriate behavior with patients in Anaba hospital, such as not accepting patients during night shifts and asking for fees in a public hospital. After ACTA member reported the issue, the Department of Public Health started monitoring the hospital and was able to solve the problem.<sup>12</sup>

The quality of service at private schools had been a concern in Bamyan province, which was raised during the GCCF meetings. For example, the work licenses of most of the mentioned schools were expired and their activities were not in alignment with the private school association’s Terms of Reference (ToR). Fortunately, an education sector representative was available and followed up on the issue. As a result, the DoEd issued an official letter to monitor private schools and ensure that legal procedures are in alignment of the education ministries’ policies and regulations.<sup>13</sup>

Another key Kapisa GCCF achievement related to their efforts in collecting expired medicine and foodstuffs. As an example of this advocacy, the municipality, besides collecting foods that didn’t meet minimum health standards, further controlled the importation of food from neighboring provinces. The

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<sup>8</sup> LoGo-Kapisa-05

<sup>9</sup> LoGo-Kapisa-FGD, LoGo-Kapisa-03, 05

<sup>10</sup> LoGo-Kapisa-03

<sup>11</sup> LoGo-Kapisa-04

<sup>12</sup> LoGo-Panjshie-03

<sup>13</sup> Bamyan-LoGo-01

Department of Public Health also checked the pharmacies for expired medicines. GCCF members and the relevant governmental entities collected and destroyed the expired items in the Sharizad area of Kapisa provinces as shown in figure 2.



**Figure 2: The GCCF coordinated to collect and burn expired medicines and food in Kapisa (photo credit: EPD-Feb 2018)**

As a result of war and insecurity, infrastructure has been damaged in various provinces and Alfath Boys School in Khost province is just one example. With an enrollment of over 2000 students, the school building was not appropriate as an educational facility, however the limited budget did not allow the government to reconstruct it. To address this, the GCCF committee then advocated to mobilize other resources for the school's reconstruction and finally located a businessperson to fund the initiative. He provided 160,000 Kaldar (US\$ 1,143<sup>14</sup>) to rehabilitate Alfath School (completed in early November 2018), afterwards the education department also painted the school (November 2018).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing the report, the rates for dollars and Kaldar were: 1 AFN=75.45 \$ and 1000 Kal=539.00 AFN

<sup>15</sup> LoGo-Khost-04



Figure 3: Alfath School building in Khost province, before rehabilitation (July 2018).



Figure 4: Alfath School building in Khost province, after rehabilitation (Nov 2018).

### 4.3 Enhancing local support of governmental projects

As indicated by the data EPD collected during the project<sup>16</sup>, land acquisition appears to be a major challenge for most of the service delivery projects particularly infrastructure projects. As the project was able to increase citizen's trust, locals showed support and cooperation in some cases. In Dashtak village in Panjshir province, a public hospital had been planned to be built, however the local community refused to provide land for the construction projects. To address this, the GCCF and ACTA network went to the area and spoke with the locals, including influential elders and convinced them to support the initiative. As a result of this coordination, a major problem was successfully solved, and the government began construction of the hospital meant to provide services to the community.

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<sup>16</sup> See data collected from Sept. 2018 LoGo Central Exchange event for more on this issue.

## 4.4 Social audit

According to an agreement with UNDP and EPD, the project operated on a no-cost extension from 17 September 2018 to 31 December 2018 for the purpose of supporting CSOs in the targeted provinces to conduct social audits of the service delivery projects. According to agreements made by members of the GCCF forums, the following topics were selected to audit:

#	Province	Social audit topic	# of participants	# Women
1	Daikundi	Municipal Citizen Service Centre: construction work	37	24
2	Herat	Logistic issues of renting the municipality shops	30	20
3	Khost	Logistic issues of tax collection of the Khost province entrance gates which was delegated to a private company	32	2
4	Nangarhar	Logistic issues of renting the municipality shops	28	4
5	Bamyan	Municipal Citizen Service Centre: construction work	33	19
6	Panjshir	Funeral hall	30	6
7	Kapisa	Mahmood Raqi Municipal Citizen Service Centre: construction work	36	5
8	Paktia	Food provision for malnourished children	30	6
9	Kandahar	Garbage collection and transferring which was delegated to a contractor company	30	5
10	Balkh	Road construction of vehicle (Riksha) station in Khulm district	34	12
Total			320	103

In Panjshir, a social audit was conducted to monitor the building construction for a funeral hall. The CSOs involved used a community-based audit as a model to be copied in other community projects. Khurasan media CSO stated that along with the GCCF members and locals, they have implemented similar social audits in *Froba* village to monitor a drinking water well project funded by UNDP. He explained:

*“(Utilizing the access to information law,) we applied to receive the well proposal from the Municipality and noticed that the quality of the girders was not good and did not match the proposal’s requirement. We advocated and put pressure on the contractor to change the girders. As a result, the well is constructed with a good quality.”<sup>17</sup>*

<sup>17</sup> LoGo-Panjshir-04

## 4.5 Awareness raising

### Access to information

As part of LoGo's terms of reference (ToR), the civil society component in particular focused on Afghanistan's Access to Information Law and the project participants especially made use of it during the social audit to obtain information from various sectors. EPD found that the level of awareness, not only among CSOs and the citizens, but also among governmental entities has increased. Respondents reported that the Access to Information Law was a new topic for them, even among Khost municipality employees and they had not been aware of the process of sharing information.<sup>18</sup>

During the interviews representatives of various governmental sectors confirmed that in particular after participating in awareness raising sessions supported by LoGo, the fundamentals of the Access to Information Law is being observed in their offices.<sup>19</sup>

### Spreading tax paying culture

The project included awareness raising sessions through different approaches, and part of these focused on increasing awareness on *Mahsool Safaee*<sup>20</sup> (taxes) and how it functions as an income source for the municipality and how these funds were spent, appeared to be very welcomed by participants, according to EPD's data.

*"There was a reception unit in the municipality, but people were not aware of this. And now it has turned into a Citizen Service Centre. The awareness session helped people to get to know about it and now more individuals contact this centre to receive information".<sup>21</sup>*

EPD found that the awareness raising conducted on *Mahsool Safaee* helped to encourage a culture of paying taxes and support the municipality component of the project, in terms of increasing municipality revenue. For instance, KIIs noted examples and referred names of individuals who had come to pay after hearing about these issues, either directly or indirectly.

EPD followed up with an interview with an owner of a beauty parlor, she confirmed that the LoGo awareness raising sessions had inspired her to pay the *Mahsool Safaee*. The salon owner stated:

*"It is around four years that I have this beauty parlor. I am illiterate and was not aware of Mahsool Safayee and its process. My brother participated in one of your (LoGo project) awareness raising campaigns and learned about work license and taxes. He came to me and discussed it with me. He also helped me to renew my license and pay the Mahsool Safaee. I know that the tax that I pay will come back to me in form of municipality services and I am happy for that."<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Khost provincial coordinator

<sup>19</sup> LoGo-Bamyan-01, 07,

<sup>20</sup> A type of property tax

<sup>21</sup> LoGo-Kapisa-03

<sup>22</sup> Case study in Kapisa with owner of a beauty parlor-LoGo-Kapisa-07



Figure 5: The owner of a beauty parlor, an indirect participant of awareness raising (informed by a relative on paying Mahsool Safaee (photo credit: EPD, taken in Kapisa 13 November 2018)

These examples were seen in other provinces as well. Another project participant in Khost also learned of the benefits of tax paying through a LoGo awareness raising session. He stated:

*“I have three shops in Khost city, but I had not paid Mahsool Safaee for my properties. After participating in a (LoGo) awareness event, I become aware about the services of municipality. So now, I pay Mahsool Safaee for all of my shops and my house.”<sup>23</sup>*

In spite of increasing number of shop owners and individuals ready to pay property taxes, however there were still complaints that in comparison to rates on taxes, the municipality services were not enough to justify this.

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<sup>23</sup> FGD-Khost-Dec 13, 2018

## 5. Challenges and lessons learned

**Legitimizing CSO Oversight:** Throughout the assessment conducted by EPD, it was apparent that CSO activities were hindered in many cases from a lack of official permission for monitoring from an authorized entity<sup>24</sup>. However, the presence of the governmental representatives in the forum was able to solve the issue to a great extent, yet its members were still confronted with this problem a number of times. This issue was in particular very serious for those sectors where no representatives were available in the forum. It is therefore unsurprising that respondents suggested that more governmental sectors be recruited in the forum.

Some respondents indicated that widespread corruption is also one of the main reasons why the service providers were not interested in monitoring and accountability. On the other hand, warlords and other influential individuals also hampered CSO monitoring. Respondents believed that most of these individuals were also involved in corruption and subsequently restrict the forum's activities.

**Increasing participation in LoGo:** Project participants in mountainous provinces, such as Daikundi and Panjshir, due to the geographical features and locations were confronted with transportation problems. This issue presented barriers especially for women in villages and rural areas. Respondents suggested that programmes for this level of society should be conducted in their communities to be more inclusive and enhance women's participation.

Insecurity in some districts was the other challenge, which limited the project's geographical coverage. Additionally, in some villages the project faced obstacles based on cultural sensitivities, unable to merge female and male individuals in the same activity and venue. To address this, Provincial Coordinators in provinces like Paktia and Khost had to hold separate sessions for men and women. This increased number of women participants and decreased cultural concerns.

**Coaching needed:** When asked for feedback on LoGo's capacity building initiatives, respondents requested for more practical sessions, besides the technical trainings provided. Respondents noted that coaching sessions are needed as well, as theory-based training has a shorter period of impact and participants tend to forget the knowledge acquired after a period of time. The data further revealed that respondents were more satisfied conducting field visits and social audits as they have more practical aspects.

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<sup>24</sup> Respondents indicated that governmental organizations say that there is no law which permits CSOs to monitor them. They claimed that for monitoring activities, at least the ministry in-charge or any other authorized governmental organization should provide an official letter.

## 7. Recommendations

### 7.1 Cooperation agreements between CSOs and Municipality

CSOs signed two Cooperative Agreements (otherwise referred to Memorandums of Understanding – MoUs) with the municipalities in Kapisa and Bamyan provinces. In Bamyan, the agreement was a great opportunity for the project. The forum was able to obtain the municipality’s support during the project, including using the entity’s hall without financial cost.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, EPD’s research team observed that the level of awareness on the agreement seemed to be rather low among CSOs, particularly for Kapisa.<sup>26</sup> The agreements for both of the provinces were signed before September 2017 (before EPD implemented the project) and some GCCF members were not aware of these. It would therefore be useful to share copies of the agreements with the GCCF, so its members can use this as a means of advocacy and to further legitimize CSO oversight.

### 7.2 Gender balance

EPD was able to successfully involve 37.1 percent of girls and women in different activities under output 3 of the LoGo project. It is worth mentioning that female inclusion was more successful in Daikundi, Balkh, Herat and Bamyan provinces where there are less cultural and social barriers for women. In culturally sensitive provinces, holding separate sessions for girls and women provided a way to be more inclusive in programming. Additionally, provinces with Provincial Women Networks (PWNs) were more successful in involving more women as these were better able to build networks with women-led entities.

Table 5: Percentage of female participation in the activities

Activity	# Women or girls participating	Total participants	% Women and Girls
Social audit	103	320	32.2
Network members (PWN, ACTA & GCCF)	273	445	61.3
Participants of the workshops	74	202	36.6
Awareness raising participants	2525	6,602	38.2
Participants in the exchange programmes (Networking workshop, youth cross cultural events and national conference)	1022	3,212	31.8
Total	3,997	10,781	37.1

Some of the respondents suggested that Department of Women Affairs (DoWA) should be added to the structure of the GCCF to encourage women’s participation. Insecurity and cultural barriers are among the limitations that restrict women’s participation. For instance, a respondent in Panjshir stated:

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Bamyan Provincial Coordinator also interview code: LoGo-Bamyan-03, 06, 08, 09,

<sup>26</sup> None of the respondents in Kapisa were aware of the cooperation agreement.

*“The forum should recruit more female CSO members. Furthermore, the orientation workshop for women’s topics should be held separately at the community level so that women can become aware of the objectives and value of the project. It can highly increase women participation”.*<sup>27</sup>

Given that Afghan women’s overall marginalization has the negative impact of decreasing the consideration of their needs in initiatives; the respondents stated that linking the project with the following groups could further enhance gender inclusion:

**Women Community Development Council (CDC):** As a part of the Citizen Charter National Priority Program (CCNPP), both women and men CDCs and CDC clusters have been mapped, created and engaged to reduce poverty by enhancing local service delivery.<sup>28</sup> Including women CDCs in the project could both balance gender inclusiveness as well as ensure the sustainability of the project. Community-based monitoring of governmental service delivery is a part of the CCNPP and familiarizing them on topics such as social audit and community-based score card methodologies could further contribute to the CCNPP and also increase number of girls and women involved in the project.

**Female school teachers:** The respondents insisted for further enhancing participation of women, the project should consider the inclusion of female teachers. This could support raising awareness among a greater number of participants, including female students and members of communities.

### 7.3 GCCF composition

According to the respondents, the merging of CSOs and local government representatives in the GCCF provided a bridge between the community and government, however, some of the respondents believed that including the Provincial Governor Office (PGO) in the forum could further increase the political will and power for solving community issues. The respondents confirmed that representatives of this entity have always been involved in the programs but presence of the Governor or high-ranking officials from PGO increase effectiveness of the taken measures to improve service delivery and accountability.<sup>29</sup>

Respondents also suggested that Provincial Councils (PC) should be added to the GCCF structure. Due to its wide engagement with people from different levels of society, the PC can add a stronger civic image to the forum and reflect community problems more practically. Towards this, a respondent in Panjshir stated:

*“We want to be more engaged with people. We have some proposals and plans that need cooperation of citizens thus requires involvement of the Provincial Council’s. In some other cases, we need the engagement of the Governor’s Office. It is good to add these two entities in the forum’s structure.”*<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> LoGo-Panjshir-02

<sup>28</sup> MoRRD retrieved on Dec 25 from:

<http://mrrd.gov.af/en/page/69/citizens-charter>

<sup>29</sup> LoGo-Panjshir-05, LoGo-Bamyan-04

<sup>30</sup> LoGo-Panjshir-05

The respondents also suggested that including the department of the economy could further facilitate the forum's activities as this governmental entity has a monitoring and coordination role between the rest of the governmental offices. It could further link the forum with other important meetings and platforms, like the PDC and meetings with the governor.

The legal framework for the CSOs' monitoring was still a concern for forum ACTA and PWN's members. For example, respondents said that during oversight activities, its members were frequently asked about their right for conducting monitoring. These members further complained that in some cases, regular citizens, including shopkeepers, did not cooperate with their work claiming that the forum does not have the right to monitor their activities. Respondents suggested that adding police to the forum's structure could encourage various stakeholders' cooperation.<sup>31</sup>

#### **7.4 Kabul Central Exchange Conference**

The benefits of the Central Exchange concept were widely supported by the respondents and there was a consensus among them that it can function as a platform to both connect the forums from different provinces and also hold the government accountable at a higher level of ministries. However, at the same time, the limited time (one day) allocated for the national conference was frequently criticized, as it did not provide enough opportunity for the participants to become familiar with each other and share their experiences. Respondents also stated that the unresolved issues discussed at the event should be followed up with the relevant stakeholders to obtain the result.

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<sup>31</sup> LoGo-Bamyan-05, LoGo-Panjshir-03, 06