

CHILD LABOUR ASSESSMENT IN BALKH AND SAMANGAN PROVINCES, AFGHANISTAN

AN ASSESSMENT REPORT

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

ROADS TO JOBS (R2J) PROJECT



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ABBREVIATIONS

ACCI	Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
AFG	Afghani (the local currency)
AKDN	Aga-Khan Development Network
AAEPII	Afghanistan Agriculture Extension Project II
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
CARD-F	Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development – Facility
CPAN	Child Protection Action Network
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSO	Central Statistics Organisation
DWCP	Work Country Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMFB	First Microfinance Bank, Afghanistan
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HH	Household
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NHLP	National Horticulture and Livestock Project for Afghanistan
NRVA	National Risk Vulnerability Assessment
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRODOC	ILO Project Document for R2J Project
R2J	Roads to Jobs
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	UN Children’s Fund
USDOL	United States Department of Labour
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour

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Child Labour is a concern of both the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the ILO. However specific data on the numbers of working children and the conditions under which they work in a country that has experienced conflict over a long period of time remains scanty. This study was designed to address this gap.

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I hasten to admit all errors and omissions appearing in this report as being entirely my own.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Afghanistan has made great strides in economic and social development since the return of relative peace following the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Yet it still remains one of the world's least developed countries. The country has a young population with 50% of the citizenry being under 15 years of age. The country's economy is mainly agrarian with agriculture and natural resources contributing over 80% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The country also faces a demographic challenge where over 400,000 new entrants enter the job market each year, which are hard to find. In regard to education, it is noted that the country has an acute shortage of human capital resources. The World Bank reports that 78% of employed Afghans aged 16-60 years have not been to school. The situation is worse in rural areas where 75% of the men have not been to school and almost all the women have not been to school.

In regards to child labour the Government has ratified key international conventions and enacted domestic laws and regulations including the list of hazardous and prohibited jobs for children. However, children in Afghanistan are still engaged in child labour, including in agriculture, carpet weaving, domestic work, street work, brick making, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), and smuggling of drugs. Children also continue to be recruited and used for military purposes by non-state groups. In February 2014, the Afghanistan Government released a list of 29 hazardous jobs and working conditions prohibited by the Government. The list included mining, begging, agricultural production and processing of narcotics, working for more than 4 hours in the carpet sector and bonded labour.

The child labour assessment was done in Balkh and Samangan Provinces. Three districts were selected; Balkh and Samangan representing the rural population and Mazar e Sharif representing the urban population. The study was designed to provide estimates and document the situation of child labour in the two provinces. The study used mixed study design, with both quantitative and qualitative techniques being applied. The rationale for deciding to use a mixed study design model is derived from the need to understand not only the magnitude of children engaged in child labour but also the circumstances that push them to work. Data and information was collected using three approaches i.e. community profile survey, key informant interviews and a household survey.

Agriculture is the main economic activity with fewer people involved in crafts, retail and provision of services. The communities in Balkh and Samangan use their land for crop production and animal husbandry as their main resource, but the land is in small pieces of 2 jiribs per family. In addition, their main source of water is rivers and streams with few houses accessing piped water while the main energy sources are diesel oil and firewood. Many household members, including children, are therefore preoccupied with fetching water and firewood. In terms of education the communities reported that though schools are available,

the demand far outweighs the infrastructure. Children attend school for only 3 hours per day in 3 shifts. Additionally, some schools are located at a distance and many children, especially the very young and girls are unable to attend due to security concerns. Secondary and high schools are fewer than primary schools and there are very few technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions. There are also hospitals and dispensaries but they are few and far between and often lack certain services and medication. Overall, there has been an improvement in the provision of social services in these communities since the return of peace.

A gender analysis reveals that there are many factors that constrain women and girls from participating in education, training and economic activities. These include lack of access to education, low vocational skills levels, preferential treatment of boys, household chores, assisting in family enterprises, lack of land ownership or capital, low confidence and the cultural expectation to remain as home makers. However, while women felt that all these and other factors were highly constraining, the men and boys felt that only some of these factors were highly constraining. This reflects a culture that is highly patriarchal and women and girls have limited rights at the household level. They also have limited access and control of family resources. Gender inequality is therefore high and women have lower economic status, lower levels of literacy and rarely work outside of the family enterprises. This also has implications to girls' access to education. Early marriages are allowed by law at 16 years or younger for girls, if their fathers approve. Also, due to their while due to culture, girls are not allowed to go out by themselves, resulting in their dropping out of school at an early age. Few of them have the skills or the capital to start their own enterprises and they remain home as housewives.

In regards to children, the community defines children as those aged below 10 years or those who have not reached puberty. Few of the community members were aware that the Government has set the age of majority at 18 years. Families therefore expect those above 10 years, and sometimes even younger, to fend for themselves and to contribute to the household income. This is made worse by the fact that children attend school for only 3 hours a day leaving them with lot of free time. Children work in agriculture, retail, construction and in the streets. In the course of working, they are faced with verbal, physical and sexual abuse; working long hours; carrying heavy loads; exposure to drugs; and low or no pay. Most of the child labourers are boys and most of them work in the family businesses. Many of the children aspire for a better life, to complete their education and proceed to universities. They recognize, however, that only a few can proceed and those in rural areas are most likely to drop out before attending secondary or high schools. The decision regarding their future is however in the hands of the male members of the family and they determine how resources are allocated and if children can proceed with their education.

Many children especially girls drop out because of the economic situation at home or because the head of the household may not value education.

Recent developments in the economic, social and security spheres have had an effect on families and children in the two provinces. In the economic sphere development of roads and other construction, and improvement of agriculture were cited by some families as the cause for better economic situations with increased incomes and jobs. The social sector has also experienced growth especially in health and education, although it has not been fast enough to cope with the demand. In terms of security the two provinces have experienced relative peace that has resulted in the return of those who had migrated from the region. Demand for services has increased, specifically in education as people have realized its value. On the other hand, the uneasy security situation in the country has had many people migrating from the region to such areas as Europe.

The household survey found that the survey population in the three districts is fairly young with those aged below 18 years accounting for almost 50% of the total population. The distribution of the population by sex was almost even at 50/50 for males and females. The mean age is 22 years. A younger population comes with the challenges of increasing pressures on work related opportunities and increases the age dependence ratio especially where opportunities for employment are not readily available. The age dependency ratio is fairly high at an average of 64. The survey population has fairly large families with an average of 8 persons per household, with very slight differences across the districts. All households were headed by men, suggesting a highly patriarchal society with women not being involved in the household decision making process as well having no access to and control of, family resources.

The results of the education attainment analysis show that 37.7% of the household population in all the districts has never attended school. Balkh and Samangan (rural districts) have the highest population of household population aged 5 years and above that have never attended school at 48.7% and 45.2% respectively. The number of those with skills training or have reached university is almost insignificant at 0.4% for TVET and about 3% with university level of education. Only 4.2% of the school going children had been reported as having missed school the week prior to the interview. In Balkh, the main reason for missing school was domestic work for 41.7% of the children who missed school. In Samangan however, the main reason for missing school was work in the family farm or business. Other reasons included the fact that the children did not want to go to school as well as lack of school uniforms.

Of all the children aged 5-17 years, 15.3% had engaged in some form of work one week prior to the study. Overall according to sex segmentation, male children were more engaged in work than their female counterparts in all regions. 35.8% of all the children reported

having collected firewood or fetched water for household use. The other activities that children were commonly engaged in included working on the family farm or garden, doing construction or major repair work at home as well as running or doing any other business big or small for themselves. A further look at the results show that more than 70% of the children worked for more than the 35 hours every week allowed by law for those aged 15 years and above. This is quite a lot of time spent at work and may interfere with the children's education performance. The main reasons why children were working were to supplement family income and to help in household enterprise. About 30% of the children who were engaged in work for pay did so to supplement household debt. Importantly, 4% of the children worked for debt redemption raising concern of forced labour. Majority of the children who engaged in work for employers however belonged to the 10-14 and 15-17 age categories. In 40% of the cases, the children's wages are received by parents across all the regions and 33.3% by guardians, while 20% of the children who are engaged in employment received the wages themselves. 6.7% of the children's wages were received by someone else other than themselves or their parents/guardians. This could point to exploitation or that those children's wages are used for debt redemption.

The number of child labourers was determined through a filter process using age, hours of work and the type of job the children were working in. Over 60% of all children worked for more than 35 hours per week. In addition children aged 5-12 years were all working for more than 1 hour per day indicating that these children were in child labour. Another 19% of working children worked in the evening or at night exposing them to various risks and dangers. The sectors where child labour was reported included construction and repairs; work for wage salary or commissions; and in domestic work. Children were also found to work for family debt redemption.

From the analysis, the worst forms of child labour can be identified as those that include having children working for debt redemption, working at night and working for longer hours than what is allowed by regulation. The key sectors in which child labour occurs include construction, domestic and agriculture. Further study in these areas is therefore required.

In conclusion, though the Government of Afghanistan has put in place various policies and regulations, child labour still persists. Recommendations to the R2J Project include: awareness about children's rights/child labour/child protection among parents/communities, children and even organisations; support for families through livelihoods' support; support for youth aged 15-17 years through vocational skills and entrepreneurship training; and support for children below 12 years to access and be retained in schools through material support for education.

Broadly, the recommendations to the Government of Afghanistan and ILO include:

1. Awareness and sensitization campaign to explain/define a child and explain the impact of child labour on children and on communities.
2. The Government should ensure that its capacity to deal with child labour is strengthened through consistent deployment of relevant staff such as labour inspectors and child protection officers. Also, structures such as the Child Protection Action Networks (CPAN) should be strengthened and provided with resources.
3. A national policy and an action plan on the elimination of child labour should be developed to guide future action on the fight against child labour. A policy would also guide the resource mobilization efforts both within the government and from other partners.
4. A continuous review of the education system that would allow children to attend school for longer periods of time each day should be conduct. Attending school for 3 hours a day leaves children with too many free hours and by default therefore leaves them at risk of engaging in child labour including its worst forms. A review of the education system would include further investments in educational infrastructure and teachers.
5. The government should implement youth empowerment and employment programmes that would include vocational skills and entrepreneurship training with a special focus on the 15-17 year age group. Many youth do not have opportunity to acquire skills in conditions that are safe or modern and have to rely on local apprenticeship where child abuse and exploitation has been reported.
6. The government should ensure there is continued economic growth and improved livelihood opportunities in order to reduce poverty which is a major cause of child labour. In particular, government should continue working towards ensuring that peace is restored throughout the country.
7. More targeted information/data on child labour should be collected through surveys, research and studies. Specifically, assessment on hidden and worst forms of child labour such as CSEC, street work and domestic work should also be included.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Country Profile: Geography and Economy

Afghanistan is a country in South Western Asia that is situated on a landlocked plateau between Iran, Pakistan, China and several countries in Central Asia. Rocky mountains and deserts cover most of the land with little vegetation anywhere except the mountain valleys and northern plains. The country experiences hot and dry summers as well as very cold winters. The capital city is Kabul and is also the largest city in the country. Afghanistan has a population of 30.6 million citizens with the unemployment level standing at 8.5% and the inflation rate at 7.5%.¹ The country has a young population with 50% being under 15 years of age and 57% being youth aged below 25 years. The country's economy is mainly agrarian with agriculture and natural resources contributing over 80% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).² There has been a notable decline in the GDP in the past two decades. The contributing factors have included disruption in trade and transport and loss of capital and labour. The civil war and Soviet Invasion has also caused massive destruction of the country's limited infrastructure. Although Afghanistan is rich in natural resources, very little has been done to explore them due to the country's rugged terrain and lack of transportation network which has limited trade activities. Some of its resources are extensive deposits of natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones.

Afghanistan has made great strides in economic and social development since the return of relative peace. Yet it still remains one of the world's least developed countries. According to the World Bank, poverty incidence was at 35.8% in 2011-2012 compared to 36.5% in 2007-2008. There was no significant change in the country despite rapid growth and improved social outcomes and service delivery.³ This lack of change was explained as due to sharp increase in poverty incidences in the North Eastern region, climatic shocks which impacted negatively on agricultural growth mainly in the North East and a demographic challenge where over 400,000 new entrants enter the job market each year. While measured unemployment rates may be low, the lack of decent work reflected in high underemployment, high precarious/casual employment and working poverty highlight the poor state of the Afghan labour market. The main challenges lie in creating work opportunities to absorb new labour market entrants, overseeing the transition of the large informal sector, improving the quality of employment and addressing the low educational and skill levels of the workforce, all amid growing concerns about political stability and

¹ Economic Freedom Index (2015)

² ILO DWCP (2010)

³ World Bank, Afghanistan Economic Update (2015)

security.⁴ Security continues to pose a significant risk for private investments and public service delivery, with the number of conflict related civilian deaths rising in 2014.⁵

It is in this context that policy-makers are looking at the potential of labour migration as a safety valve for local unemployment pressures, a means to diversify livelihoods and a source of income (remittances) to alleviate poverty and promote development. Labour migration to neighbouring countries has been a long-standing major livelihood strategy and safety valve for many poor Afghan households. A 2012 ILO commissioned study on the state of employment in Afghanistan made the following observation: labour migration is unlikely to end, as it is a key livelihoods strategy for Afghans. They perceive higher employment opportunities and more advantageous wage differentials in the Islamic Republic of Iran than in Afghanistan. Most of the migrants are adult men travelling alone, either the heads of households or the sons of the households. The main instigator for this migration, across different profiles, is the difficulty of families to meet basic livelihood needs. Migration becomes a way to provide for immediate needs, to diversify and to ease the strain put on family income.⁶

In regard to education, it is noted that the country has an acute shortage of human capital resources. According to a World Bank report, 78% of employed Afghans aged 16-60 years have not been to school and the situation is worse in rural areas where 75% of the men have not been to school and almost all the women have not been in school. Further, the World Bank notes that Afghanistan's ability to enhance her human capital resource will determine the course of the nation's future economic, human and social development. Hence the government is committed to getting children, particularly girls, into the education system.⁷ School enrolment is a major indicator of a country's progress in developing its human resource capital and Afghanistan's enrolment rates are low even in comparison with other conflict affected regions. Some of the factors affecting school enrolment according to the World Bank analysis include: availability and quality of schools; the quality of teaching; age and grades where the 7-11 cohort boys are more likely to be in school; parents especially the fathers are the primary decision makers; working children are less likely to go to school; illiterate parents; insecurity and migration where returning migrants have greater aspirations for their children's education.

Regarding women and their contribution to the economy, Afghanistan's women have long suffered from a lack of education, skills, security and adverse cultural barriers, all of which put them in a disadvantaged position in the labour market. Women earn, on average, 49% of the wages paid to men in non-farm occupations. Another manifestation of the

⁴ ILO Prodoc (2015)

⁵ World Bank, Afghanistan Economic Update (2015)

⁶ ILO (2013) Labour migration for decent work in Afghanistan: Issues and challenges

⁷ World bank (2013) Education attainment in Afghanistan: An economic analysis

disadvantaged position of women is the strong gender differentiation in employment status. Significantly, most unpaid family workers are female at 78%, while day labourers, salaried workers, employers and own-account workers are male. Because mobility outside the home is limited for cultural reasons, women in provinces and rural areas are primarily involved in home-based income generating activities like carpet weaving, sewing, tailoring, agricultural work, taking care of livestock and selling dairy products although the wage/income levels are often very low.⁸

1.2. Profiles of Balkh and Samangan Provinces

1.2.1 Balkh Province

Balkh Province is situated in the Northern part of Afghanistan, bordering Uzbekistan in the North, Tajikistan in the North-East, Kunduz Province in the East, Samangan Province in the South-East, Sar-e- Pul Province in the South-West and Jauzjan Province in the West. The capital city of the province is Mazar-e-Sharif, which is referred to as one of Afghanistan's biggest commercial and financial centre. Balkh Province is divided into 15 districts and has a population of around 1,245,100 people. Balkh has the largest population in the Northern Provinces. Around 66% of this population lives in rural districts while 34% lives in urban areas and 51 % of the population is male while 49% is female. In 2013 540,178 students, including 311,366 boys and 228,812 girls were enrolled in various training institutions.⁹

Balkh's Economy

Balkh Province and its Provincial Centre Mazar e Sharif are historically the political and economic hub of the north. They are seen to have thrived largely because of location, relative security and relatively effective administration. Balkh is famous for producing cashmere, wool, wheat, melons, tomato, onion, eggplant, alfalfa, cotton and opium. The livestock sector is also vibrant with cattle and sheep as the main animals kept. Construction companies make up more than half of the firms registered in the province indicating the weight of this sector as a driver of the provincial economy.¹⁰ The construction sector has attracted labourers not only from elsewhere in Balkh and its neighbouring provinces, but also from farther afield. Mazar e Sharif's casual labour market is an important part of the livelihoods picture for many households even in rural areas; informal estimates are that 80% of casual workers are from rural districts.

The main factors that continue to affect the economy of Balkh remain security and political uncertainty. The huge presence of international organizations and the military contributes to the relatively high security levels. However, road side and suicide bombs

⁸ ILO Prodoc

⁹ CSO-Afghanistan Statistic Yearbook 2010-2011

¹⁰ Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2013

cannot be fully controlled. The lack of confidence in the economy has affected both consumer spending and investments into the Province.¹¹ The majority of commercial activity in Balkh is related to agriculture and small businesses. Agriculture is the major source of revenue for 42% of households in Balkh Province according to the Balkh provincial profile. 70% of rural households and 6% of urban households own or manage agricultural land or garden plots in the Province. The commonly farmed crops include cereals and potatoes.

Table 01: Source of Income Reported by Households

Source of Income	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Agriculture	61	7
Livestock	29	3
Opium	12	2
Trade and Services	21	58
Manufacture	11	14
None-farm labour	25	35
Remittances	2	1
Others	2	3

Source: National Risk Vulnerability Assessment 2007-2008

Education in Balkh

The overall literacy rate in Balkh Province is 26.8%. While more than half of men are literate (54%), this is true for just about one-third of women as only 32% are literate. Overall, there are 470 primary and secondary schools in the Province catering for 449,286 students. Boys account for 59% of students and 95% of schools are boys' schools. There are 10,083 teachers working in schools in the Balkh Province, almost half of whom are women (49%).¹²

1.2.2 Samangan Provincial Profile

Samangan Province is situated in the North of Afghanistan, bordering Baghlan Province in the East, Bamyan in the South, Sar-e-Pul Province in the South-West and Balkh Province in the West and North. The Provincial Capital is Aybak. A total of 80% of Samangan is mountainous while the rest is flat land. The total population in Samangan is approximately 368,800 persons.¹³ Around 93% of Samangan's population lives in the rural districts while only 7% live in the urban districts.

The provision of basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation, energy, transport and communications is one of the key elements necessary to provide the building blocks for

¹¹ Afghanistan research and evaluation unit, 2013

¹² MRRD, Balkh Province profile

¹³ Afghanistan Statistic Yearbook 2010-2011

private sector expansion, equitable economic growth, increased employment and accelerated agricultural productivity. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) states that in Samangan Province, on average only 15.1% of households use safe drinking water. An average of 28.3% of households in the Province has access to electricity with the majority of these relying on public electricity. The transport infrastructure is not very well developed with some of the roads rendered impassable during the wet seasons while some areas do not have roads at all. The Government has employed 4,245 people in this Province. A total of 83% of this people are employees with the remaining 17% working as contract workers. Four fifths of the employees are men while one fifth are women.

Samangan Economy

The level of economic hardship in Samangan is reasonably high. Around 32% of the households in the Province reported having problems satisfying their food needs at least 3 – 6 times a year, and more than 29% of households faced this problem up to three times a year. However, majority of commercial activity in Samangan is related to trade in agricultural products and animal husbandry. Agriculture is a major source of revenue for 36% of households in Samangan Province. Industrial crops are grown in a comparatively few villages. Around 70% of these villages produce sesame, melons, pistachio, almonds, onions and cotton and tobacco. Other common crops grown in garden plots include grapes, nut trees, potatoes and wheat. Karakul sheep and goats are the dominant household livestock. There is a tradition of meat, dairy and wool production. Handicrafts are also common in some villages where they produce rugs, shawls, jewellery and carpets as a source of income.¹⁴

Education in Samangan

The overall literacy rate in Samangan Province is 23%, however, while nearly one third (28%) of men are literate this is true for one tenth (10%) of women. In the population aged between 15 and 24 years, the situation for men is a little better with 21% literacy, whereas for women the figure falls to 8%. The Kuchi population in the Province has particularly low levels of literacy with just 3 % of men and no women able to read and write. Just over one third (37%) of children between 6 and 13 years old are enrolled in school, however the figure is more than two fifths (43%) of boys and around one-third (29%) of girls. Amongst the Kuchi population, around two fifths (42%) of boys but no girls attend school in Samangan during the winter and summer months. Overall there are 251 primary and secondary schools in the Province catering for 87,134 students. Boys account for 68% of students and 83% of schools are boys' schools.¹⁵ Primary schools are the most accessible with just over one quarter (28%) of students having a primary school in their village,

¹⁴ MRRD, Samangan Provincial Profile

¹⁵ CSO/Afghanistan Statistic Yearbook 2010-2011

although similar proportions (30%) have to travel more than 10kms to reach their nearest primary school. Around one in ten (12%) of secondary students and one in twenty (5%) high school students have a school within their village, whereas over half (52%) of secondary students and more than 7% of high school students have to travel over 10kms to reach their nearest school. Around one person in five (20%) can access a literacy course within their village but more than half the population (56%) have to travel more than 10 kilometres to reach the nearest literacy course.¹⁶

1.3. Overview of Child Labour in Afghanistan

In 2014, Afghanistan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The Government of Afghanistan announced the adoption of a list of 29 occupations and working conditions prohibited for children. The Government also took steps to combat child trafficking by acceding to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking of Persons, and issuing a directive to improve enforcement of the current law on human trafficking. In addition, the Government passed a law criminalizing the recruitment of children under the age 18 years into state security institutions and the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Children and Armed Conflict approved a new roadmap to support efforts to end underage recruitment.

Afghanistan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labour as below:

- ILO C. 138, Minimum Age
- ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labour
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UNCRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict
- UNCRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons

However, children in Afghanistan are still engaged in child labour such as in agriculture, and in the worst forms of child labour, including in the forced production of bricks and smuggling of drugs. Children also continue to be recruited and used for military purposes by non-state groups, and in limited instances they are used by some members of state groups to carry out specific tasks.¹⁷

¹⁶ MRRD -Samangan Provincial Profile

¹⁷ <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/afghanistan.htm>

The United States Department of Labour (USDOL) further states that non-state groups routinely use children for military purposes in Afghanistan. In 2014, the UN verified 20 cases of the recruitment of children for use in armed conflict by non-state armed groups. Non-state-armed groups — such as the Haqqani Network, Hezb-i-Islami, Tora Bora Military Front, Jamat Sunat al-Dawa Salafia, and the Taliban — use children as soldiers. The Taliban and the Haqqani Network also use children to carry out suicide attacks, and to manufacture, transport and plant improvised explosive devices. Children, especially boys, are subject to commercial sexual exploitation throughout the country. The practice of *bacha baazi* (boy play), in which men keep young boys for social and sexual entertainment, is particularly prevalent. In many cases, these boys are dressed in female clothing, used as dancers at parties and ceremonies and sexually exploited. UN reports have indicated that some government officials, including members of the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the Afghan Border Police (ABD), use boys who work as tea servers or cooks in police camps for the purpose of *bacha baazi*.

Internally, Afghanistan children are trafficked and used for labour exploitation in carpet weaving, brick making, domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, begging and drug smuggling. According to a UN report, by mid-2014 there were 683,000 civilians internally displaced due to armed conflict. Out of this number, a good percentage is women and children. Studies have shown that children living in isolated conflict-affected areas and others who are internally displaced by conflict are at risk of being recruited into non-state-armed groups. Reports also note that children — particularly girls - in conflict areas have little or limited access to education. The UN Assembly Security Council verified 67 incidents of violence targeting education facilities and personnel in 2014. This included attacks on schools, teachers, staff as well as students. The insecurity led to closure of at least 365 schools throughout the country in 2014. These conditions make it difficult for children to attend school on a regular basis, which increases their vulnerability to exploitation in child labour.

Other studies have confirmed the existence of child labour in the country. A study on the situation of street working children in Mazar e Sharif City found that 40% of the children working in the streets, majority of them boys, were not attending school and that they experienced injuries, violence, abuse and worked for long hours and were therefore unable to pursue quality education.¹⁸ Another study reported that in 2007, over 30% of school age children were working and were often the sole source of income for their families. It also noted that social norms and the law prevented women from leaving their homes. Although the law has changed it is still not culturally acceptable in most circles for women to work.¹⁹

¹⁸ CPAN (2008) The Situation of Street Working Children in Mazar City (Balkh Province)

¹⁹ Reihing (2007) Child Labour in Afghanistan

In February 2014, the Afghanistan Government released a list of 29 hazardous jobs and working conditions prohibited by the Government. The list included mining, begging, agricultural production and processing of narcotics, working for more than 4 hours in the carpet sector and bonded labour. However, the list of hazardous works cannot be enforced as the labour inspectorate lacks the legal authority to enforce laws relating to child labour. ILO therefore has revised a version of the Labour Law which would strengthen worker protection and provide penalties for child labour violations. In 2014, the Afghanistan Government passed a law criminalizing the recruitment of child soldiers into the government's security forces and established a penalty of 1 to 7 years imprisonment for violations of the law.

The Government has also enacted Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labour in Afghanistan as shown below:

Table 02: Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labour

Standard	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	15	Article 13 of the Labour Law Ratified ILO C 138 and C 182 in 2010
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work/WFCL	18	Articles 13 and 120 of the Labour Law
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children		List of Hazardous and Prohibited Jobs for Children
Prohibition of Forced Labour		Article 4 of the Labour Law; Article 49 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Decree of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Concerning the Enforcement of the Law on Combating Abduction and Human Trafficking / Smuggling; Article 516 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Law on Elimination of Violence against Women
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		List of Prohibited Jobs for Child Labourers; Article 430 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	18	Presidential Decree, 2003
Hours of Work		Article 30 of the Labour Law set at 35 hours per week for youth aged 15-18 years
Equal Wages		Article 129 of the Labour Law
Compulsory Education Age	15	Article 43 of the Constitution
Free Public Education		Article 43 of the Constitution

Since 2008 the Government of Afghanistan accepted a monitoring a reporting mechanism led by UNICEF and UNAMA that oversee the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 12. Taskforces and Child Protection Action Networks (CPAN) have been

established at national, provincial and in some cases district level. They have been monitoring the 6 grave violations, and a decrease of violations has been reported countrywide, though there are still abuses especially by armed groups.²⁰

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Child Labour Assessment

As part of the ‘Road to Jobs’ (R2J) aim of unleashing the economic potential of the communities in Balkh and Samangan Provinces, the child labour assessment aims to research and document the situation with regards to child labour in the two Provinces. This will contribute to the identification of promising ways of tackling the larger agenda of ILO’s work and ensure that Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) concerns are taken into account. The information was collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Use of qualitative methods were used, recognizing that people’s working life choices are extremely complex in crisis situations, and are often negotiated within various constraining or enabling social and cultural environments. The basic aim of the exercise was focused on the need felt by the households to allocate children’s labour to different ends, their subjective perceptions, multifaceted elements of well-being and security. The finding of the study will provide the R2J Project, in particular with clear recommendations regarding child labour issues and actions required, in general, to be undertaken by ILO in advising and guiding child labour policy developments in Afghanistan.

1.4.1 Objectives of the Qualitative Component

The general overall objectives of the qualitative component are similar to the National Child Labour Surveys (NCLS) which are basically household surveys. The intent is to provide information on:

1. The extant situation of the Afghan households’ income generation activities targeting specifically their economic/subsistence strategies;
2. The sources and interrelationships of various basic and work related forms of obstacles and barriers which impede the realisation of adequate employment, economic security and social inclusion, i.e. work opportunities for adults and access to essential services such as schools and hospitals for the community as a whole;
3. The households (including the children) actual existing employment seeking strategies and the degree of control or autonomy they have in choosing options;
4. Normative perceptions of basic minimum levels of income, economic and social security and ‘decent work,’ and what is considered acceptable and unacceptable;
5. Normative perceptions of possible interventions which could most effectively and appropriately improve people’s lives, particularly of the children.

²⁰ Interview with UNICEF Official

1.5. Structure of the Report

This report is organized in eight chapters. **Chapter one** is an introduction and background and includes the country and provincial profile, the child labour situation in Afghanistan and the objectives of the study. **Chapter two** gives the concepts used in the survey and the report as well as a definition of terms applied herein. **Chapter three** describes the assessment techniques and methodology. In particular it provides details of the scope and coverage of the survey in terms of geographical area, sample size and principles of sample selection and distribution. **Chapter four** provides a profile of the community including the resources available to them, the types of child labour that exist, their perceptions about children and work as well as the sources and levels of their income. In **Chapter five** the issues covered include the main characteristics of the survey population, prevalence of children's economic activity by various background characteristics and school attendance while **Chapter six** looks at the characteristics of working children. **Chapter seven** zeros in on child labour and hazardous work for children. Finally, **chapter eight** presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Introduction

To reduce interviewers' bias, unfamiliar terms were defined and explained to the enumerators during the training. Below are the main concepts used during data collection and during analysis of survey results:

2.2 Concepts and Definitions

2.2.1 Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Conventions 138 and 182 on the minimum age of admission to work and worst forms of child labour (WFCL) consecutively designate individuals less than 18 years of age as children. This is also true for the local Afghan Civil Law Article 39 that states the age of majority is 18 years and the Labour Law Article 31 and Article 129 which provide protection for those below 18 years.

2.2.2 Working/economically active children

Working children are defined as persons aged 5 to 17 years old who performed some non-schooling activities during the reference period either for pay, profit or family gain. Child labour is a sub-set of working children.

2.2.3 Child labour

The term reflects the engagement of children in work that is prohibited, or, more generally, in work to be eliminated as socially and morally undesirable. Not all working children are considered to be child labour.

Child labour includes those in worst forms of child labour and children in employment below the minimum age, excluding children in permissible light work, if applicable. In other words, estimation of the child labour as per the above definition would imply:

- (a) Children in the 5-12 year age group: All children engaged in some form of economic activity on non-economic activity within a household that involves working long hours, using dangerous machinery etc.
- (b) Children in the 13-14 year age group: All children engaged in some form of economic activity excluding those who work 14 hours or less per week in non-hazardous activities.
- (c) Children in the 16-17 year age group: All children engaged in some form of economic activity excluding those who work 42 hours or less per week in non-hazardous activities.

The survey defines child labour as all persons aged 5-17 years who, during a specified time period, were engaged in one or more of the above activities.

2.2.4 Worst forms of child labour

A term defined in the ILO Convention No. 182. It comprises (Article 3):

- All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performance;
- The use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular, for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- Work which, by its nature or because of the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of the child. (Commonly referred to as hazardous work).

2.2.5 Light work

Work permitted by law for children of at least 12 or 13 years of age. The law may allow for specific activities which are not harmful to a child's health and development and do not prejudice attendance at school and participation in vocational training, nor "the capacity to benefit from the instruction received." For statistical purposes, ILO defines this as work which does not exceed fourteen hours per week.

2.2.6 Domestic work

Means work performed in or for a household or households

2.2.7 Domestic worker

Means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship (excludes work carried out by members of the family within their own household)

2.2.8 Child domestic labour

This refers to domestic work undertaken by children under the legal minimum working age, as well as by children above the legal minimum age but under the age of 18 years, under slavery-like, hazardous or other exploitative conditions. A form of "child labour to be eliminated" as defined in international treaties

2.2.9 Child domestic work

Domestic work undertaken by children under the age of 18 and above the minimum age of employment under non exploitative conditions

2.2.10 Child domestic workers

Children who carry out either child domestic labour, as explained above or permissible domestic work

2.2.11. Household

This is the unit of enumeration used in the survey and is defined as, a person or a group of persons residing in the same compound, answerable to the same head and pooling and sharing resources for common provisions such as food and house rent. It is limited to only one house in case there are many in the compound

2.2.12. Head of household

This is defined as the key decision-maker whose authority is acknowledged by other members of the household. The head has to be a usual resident in the compound who makes day-to-day decisions for the household.

2.2.13. Reference period

This refers to the time to which the collected data relates. Two reference periods were used in his survey, past week (the week prior to the interviewing week), and the past twelve months

2.2.14 Household tasks

Household tasks refer to unpaid services carried out by and for household members in own households, such as preparing and serving meals; mending, washing and ironing clothes; shopping; caring for siblings and sick or disabled household members; cleaning and maintaining the household dwelling; repairing household durables; and transporting household members and their goods. These are all classified as non-economic activities and also referred to as 'household chores'

2.2.15 Hours of work

These were categorized into usual/normal hours of work and actual hours of work. Usual/normal hours of work referred to hours of work fixed by or in pursuance of laws or regulations, collective agreements or arbitral awards, excess of which is paid for as overtime. Actual hours worked referred to the actual number of hours worked during the reference period.

2.2.16 Household income

Household income consists of all receipts that accrued to the household or its individual members. Information on income is sought from three sources: income from paid employment, own business/farm and income from other sources. Income from paid employment consisted of wages and salaries and other benefits and allowances given by the employer. Income from own business is taken as income from self-employment, and referred to sale of farm produce last month, plus income from other non-farm businesses last month. Income from other sources is taken to represent income that was not from paid employment or own farms and businesses, and included child alimony, insurance claims, remittances etc

2.2.17 Tenure

The tenure investigated in this survey is that of land on which owner-occupier dwelling units are built.

CHAPTER 3: TECHNIQUES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The child labour assessment was designed to provide estimates and document the situation of child labour in Balkh and Samangan Provinces. It was also intended to provide estimates on the nature, extent, and causes of child labour. This used both quantitative and qualitative techniques in a bid to triangulate the understanding of findings in the three selected districts in Balkh, Mazar e Sharif and Samangan. Mazar e Sharif was selected to represent the urban populations while the other two areas were rural populations. Triangulation of results in this study is an important aspect of study analysis to be able to understand in great detail the levels of interaction of the various combination factors that impact on the outcomes and status of child labour. The rationale for deciding to use a mixed study design model is derived from the need to understand not only the magnitude of children engaged in worst forms of employment but the contributing factors to the overall child labour situation in the three districts. Data and information was collected using three approaches i.e. community profile survey, key informant interviews and a household survey.

3.2 Data and Information Collection Approaches

3.2.1 Community Profile Survey

Community profile survey was conducted through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community representatives using a tool adopted from ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology (Annex 3a). The FGDs were held in two locations, one per province which were selected by the client. In Balkh, the FGDs constituted representatives of two villages, Joi Shiran and Char Qumbad, in Balkh City and in Samangan the FGDs were held in Larghan Village, Ayabak City. The community representatives included men, women and children. In accordance with the culture of the communities, separate FGDs were held for men, women and children. In total 6 FGDs were held, each with between 10-13 people and a total of 65 people were reached including 23 men, 22 women and 20 children (all boys). The interviews provided an overview of the community including the resources available to them and the potentials they have in improving their livelihoods and therefore contributing to the fight against child labour.

3.2.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

The KIIs targeted key officials of the various organisations dealing with children and labour issues. Key informants were purposively selected from identified experts and key persons in the respective organisations. The key informants were useful in aiding the consultant to synthesize and confirm pieces of information from different sources. A KII guide was developed (Annex 3b).

3.2.3 Household Survey

The quantitative design of the study utilized the malt stage stratified random sampling design, whereby the selection of the three districts was stratified to reflect equal proportions of the desired target sample size. The rationale for choosing the malt stage stratified random sampling technique is informed by the need for equal representation. The three districts are exposed to specific socio-economic conditions that define children involvement in the labour market.

Determination of the Quantitative Sample

In order to be able to provide reliable estimates, an appropriate sample size is a pre-requisite. As a rule, the sample size for this study was derived using the formula for the maximum error of the estimates which is solved for 'n.' The formula for the desired sample size which is obtained by solving the maximum error of the estimate formula for the population proportion for 'n' is given as;

Formula 1:

$$n = \left(\frac{Z_{\alpha/2}}{E} \right)^2 p q$$

Where;

n=Desired sample size

$Z_{\alpha/2}$ = Z value corresponding to the desired confidence level (95%)

p = Sample proportion with the desired characteristic

q = 1-p

E = Error term

Because the sample has not been taken nor was there an appropriate estimate i.e. no available previous study to provide for p and q, then to be able to arrive at the largest possible sample size at the desired accuracy level of 95%, a 0.5 for p and q was used to allow for the maximum error of the estimate, than to have too small of a sample size and exceed the maximum error of the estimate.

Using formula 1 above, a representative sample size of 96 was determined for the entire study. However during the actual data collection, the interviewers managed to realize a response rate of 83% reaching a total of 80 households. This was occasioned by difficulties in reaching out to households especially in the rural areas of Balkh and Samangan. The distribution of the households reached during the study for the specific districts is presented in figure 1.

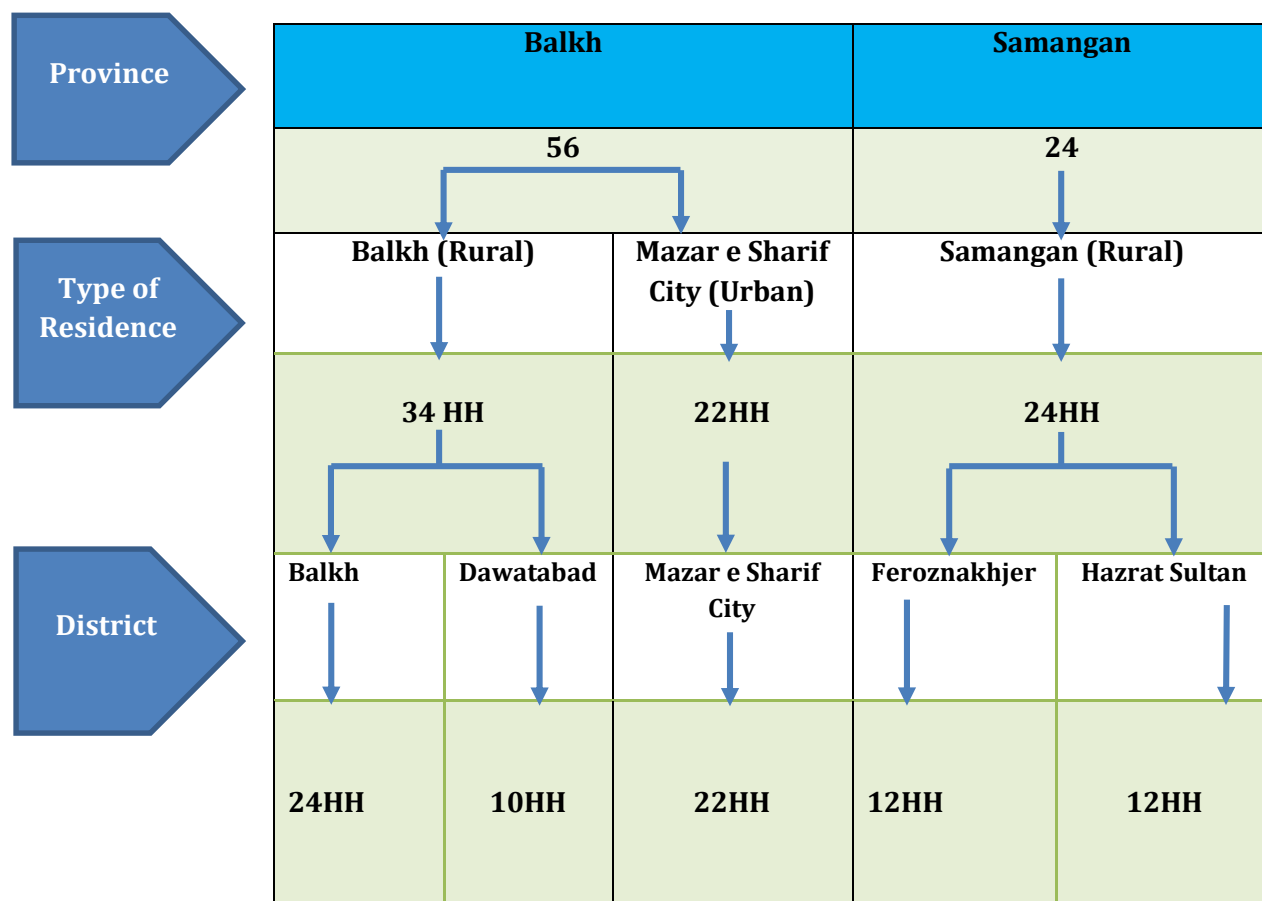


Figure 1: Distribution of Interviewed Households by Province, Residence and Districts

Selection of Respondents

Using local knowledge on the size of households in the different districts; households were randomly selected from which respondents were drawn. Sampling with replacement was used to select households for inclusion in the study. This was to boost the chances of realizing a favourable response rate in the event of non-response among households selected for the survey.

3.3 Quality Control

Specific measures were employed to ensure that both sampling and non-sampling errors were minimized in the entire data collection exercise. The measures were also intended to ensure efficient facilitation of the study team and cooperation of the respondents. The measures included the following:

3.3.1. Hiring and Training of the Data Collectors

The study lead consultant trained four data collectors and a supervisor over a period of one week. The training was intended to mainstream common understanding and standardization of data collection as part of quality control. During data collection, enumerators were trained to perform post interview questionnaire checks that ensured all incomplete data was duly corrected and completed at the household before the enumerator left the household compound.

3.3.2. Field Supervision

The supervisor was assigned the overall responsibility of supporting the entire data collection team to maintain highest standards of data quality. The supervisor was directly in charge of ensuring all data collection questionnaires were well completed before transmission to the lead consultant for further management and entry. The supervisor was also in charge of ensuring ground facilitation and also securing access to higher level respondents.

3.3.3. Data Capture

The study employed structured questionnaires that were administered through direct interviews by trained enumerators in the three districts. The structured questionnaire had sections covering household basic information including housing characteristics, socio-economic characteristics of household members including economic activity status for all household members. The study lead consultant facilitated the qualitative discussions with key informants to further understand child labour dynamics in the two provinces.

3.3.4. Data Entry

Each enumerator was charged with the responsibility of entering the data using a standard Epi-data platform specifically designed for the capture of data for the child labour study. The platform had been specifically designed for the study complete with range checks and skip patterns to minimize human errors during the entry process. The data collection tools were delivered to a central location every two days for expedited processing. This was to ensure that data entry progressed at the same pace with data collection such that any information gaps and discrepancies could be addressed while the team was still in the field.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was managed using two statistical software packages. Epi-data version 3.2.1 was used for data entry while actual analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The choice of Epi-data for data entry was desired due to the strengths of the program in the ability to set conditions that limit errors at the data entry point hence ensuring the presentation of quality data. The use

of SPSS for analysis was desired due to the strengths of the statistical software to generate new variables and record variables to specific desired conditional variables.

3.4.1. Techniques for Reporting

A combination of pros, tables and charts was adopted for reporting analyzed data. The choice of multiple data presentation methods was desired in order to enrich the report and give a holistic dimension in order to bring out the depth of information clearly and make it easy to follow.

3.5 Report Writing

A report synthesizing the findings from the various aspects of the study was produced as a team effort under the team leader. This report set out the background to the study, profiles the study provinces, study design and a complete section on triangulated study findings. The report also has a section on proposed recommendations to guide interventions to address the issue under study.

CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY PROFILE

4.1. Introduction

The information collected through the community profile survey utilised qualitative techniques of semi-structured interviews. Two communities were visited. In Balkh district two villages were represented i.e. Joi Shiran and Char Qumbad, and in Aybak City, Samangan the village was Ayabac City Centre. Both these communities were peri-urban. Due to challenges of time and security concerns, more communities could not be reached. In each of the 2 locations, separate FGDs were held with men, women and children. Unfortunately, only male children were present, hence girls were not represented. Additional information was collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) with staff members of relevant organisations working in these areas.

4.2. Community Resources

Natural Resources: In both communities, the main sources of water are rivers and streams and only a few households have piped water even for domestic use. The major source of energy for cooking and lighting includes diesel oil, solar, firewood and electricity for some households in urban areas. Community members are therefore involved in the search and fetching of water and firewood for their domestic use. Farming land is available in small pieces averaging 2 jrib (1 jrib=2,000 square meters) per household. Grazing land is also available including government/community land where residents can graze but not cultivate. Other resources include coal mining and quarrying in Samangan region though not in the town area, while there are no mines in Balkh. In both provinces, the rainy season lasts from January to May; the dry season runs from June to October while the months of November to February are winter months. In general, the natural resources available to the communities are very limited.

Social Infrastructure: In both areas there are both schools and hospitals. There are very few pre-schools and most children start their education at primary level. Some schools have all the three levels of schooling i.e. primary, secondary and high school. However, high schools are fewer. The communities reported that there are between 3-5 schools serving their communities and the distances to these schools range from 2-5 kilometres. In the rural areas, the community reported that schools are fewer and far between making access especially for the very young and for girls (who need to be accompanied to school due to security and cultural norms) very difficult. There are limited numbers of vocational training institutions (1 per town) and they are 3-5 kilometres away. There is a university in each of the towns, although they serve the large provinces.

With regard to health services, the community in Aybak reported they have one dispensary which is 5 kilometres away, while Balkh has 1 dispensary in the community and the district hospital which is 5 kilometres away. Access to medical services is limited due the

limited number of institutions and the distances. The community also reported that the hospitals are not well supplied with drugs and the community members often have to buy from private pharmacies. The community also reported that there are banks, Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and cooperatives that provide individuals and groups with short term loans. These are supporting such activities as small scale fruit and vegetable farming and other small businesses. Only a few members of the community reported accessing these services, some through their groups. There are also various programmes being implemented in the areas by various government ministries, donors and civil society organisations including FMFB, AAEPPI, AKDN, CARD-F, NHLP, Save the Children, Solidarity and Afghan Aid. These programmes provide support in the areas of agriculture, crafts, water, roads as well as children's rights and awareness.

4.3. Gender Concerns and Participation of Women and Girls

Asked which are the most common constraints to women's and girls' participation in education, training and economic activities, the different FGDs had differing opinions as shown in the table below. Women felt that 16 out of the 18 choices given highly constrained their participation. Men on the other hand identified 8 out of 18 while the children identified 9 out of 18. Only three reasons were commonly selected by all three groups i.e. child bearing and rearing responsibilities; lack of confidence; and unwillingness of family members to see women leave their traditional role as homemakers. Men did not feel that household chores; work burden not shared; or assisting husbands in family businesses or the fact that the traditional economic activities of women are not-for-profit as highly constraining for women. Interestingly, the children who were all boys did not feel that prevalence for boys or the fact that women do not own land were highly constraining.

In general, women felt that there are many constraints to women's participation ranging from low literacy; their reproductive roles; and the family/community expectations. The concepts of discrimination in wage employment and low pay for work of equal value were not seen as constraining by both men and women; this may be because most of the community members are not in wage employment. The men and boys seemed unaware that certain factors as well as the gender division of labour in the households and the community constrain women's participation. Gender sensitivity regarding women's and girls' roles and opportunities in the community is low and their plight is not recognized by the key decision makers in the community, that is, the men.

Table 03: Concerns in Women's and Girls' Participation

Most Common Constraint to Women and Girls' Participation in Education, Training and Economic Activities	Those Rated High		
	Women	Men	Children
Access to education	✓		
Low literacy and basic education	✓	✓	
Low technical and vocational skills	✓		✓
Preference given to boys	✓	✓	
Low gender sensitivity in training institutions	✓	✓	
Child bearing/raring responsibilities	✓	✓	✓
Lack of child care facilities and training sites	✓	✓	
Household chores leave little time for training and economic activity	✓		✓
Work burden at home not shared with spouse/other members of the family	✓		✓
Assisting husband in the family's main source of income	✓		✓
Traditional economic activities women do are not-for-profit	✓		✓
Women are discriminated against in the wage employment			✓
Low pay for work of equal value			
Women do not make decisions about themselves	✓		
Women do not own land	✓	✓	
Lack confidence to become entrepreneurs	✓	✓	✓
Family/spouse, in-laws unwilling to see women leave their traditional roles as homemakers	✓	✓	✓
Lack of capital	✓		

4.4. Working Children

Asked how the community defines a child, all the groups stated that a child is one below 10 years. It was noted that the communities use such factors as stature and reaching puberty to determine who a child is. Some of the community members are aware that the government has set 18 years as the age of majority. However the law also allows for marriage of girls at 16 years and boys at 17 years. With approval from their fathers girls can marry even at 15 years of age. Children are expected to fend for themselves and/or contribute to the family income from as early as 7 years of age. The priority is to meet basic needs especially food and energy for winter months, thus education is not prioritized. Particularly, boys are left to their devices with little protection from the family especially those in the streets and those working away from family businesses.²¹

In both provinces, many of the children, primarily those aged above 10 years, work. The community identified the key elements that drive children to work to include poor economic conditions in the households; instances where bread winners are dead, disabled or addicted to drugs; limited access to education due to limited numbers school, time spent

²¹ Interview with KI

in school and low value for education; insecurity and culture and traditions. In addition, the prolonged conflict has resulted in the death and disability of some of the bread winners, and some of the children have had to fend for themselves. The main sectors where the children are working, the tasks they undertake and the risks they are exposed to are shown in the table below. It is also noted that many children assist in family businesses/farms and are not paid. From the tasks they undertake and the risks they are exposed to, many of the children can be classified as being in child labour. Generally, boys are more affected by child labour than girls.

Table 04: Children Working by Sector, Task and Risk

Sector	Tasks Undertaken by Children	Risks
Agriculture	Cultivating, planting, harvesting, carrying to markets/stores, herding	Heavy loads, long hours, exposure to extreme temperatures, poor/no pay, injuries
Retail	Selling plastics, hawking, working in shops	Verbal abuse, long hours, exposure to extreme temperatures, sexual abuse
Street work	Begging, shoe shining, smuggling of drugs, theft, joining local gangs	Verbal abuse, long hours, exposure to extreme temperatures, sexual abuse, exposure to drugs, theft
Small business (workshops, garages, blacksmith, tailoring etc)	Carrying heavy items, cleaning, making items, weaving, pottery, colourings	Heavy loads, verbal and physical abuse, use of dangerous machinery, fumes and pressurized air, injuries
Food production	Cooking, selling, cleaning	Long hours, exposure to heat, verbal abuse, burns
Construction	Brick making, gravelling and paving, painting	Heat, heavy loads, long hours, burns
Mining	Coal mining, quarrying	Working under ground, fumes and gases, explosions
Transport	Pushing carts, loading	Heavy loads, verbal abuse, long hours
Domestic	Fetching water and firewood, cleaning canals	Heavy loads, long hours
Non state security/gangs (limited for this area)	Working for commanders as tea boys, use of weapons, smuggling of drugs	Sexual abuse, exposure to dangerous weapons

4.5. Developments in the Community and How It Has Affected Children

Regarding developments in the country/community and how it affects children the focus groups recognised that there has been growth in the economic, social and security spheres. In the **economic sphere** there has been development of infrastructure and agriculture. This has led to improved economic situation in some households making them better able to support their children's education.

In regard to **social development** they acknowledged that there are more dispensaries and hospital as well as schools. However, there were complaints about the health services given being substandard or lacking altogether. In regard to education, it was noted that though the government provides for free education there are other hidden costs such as books, uniforms and school bags which limit school access for children from poor families. Additionally, the infrastructure is still limited and there are few well trained teachers. Some teachers are hired after completing grade 12 and are only trained for short periods of time, sometimes as short as a month, before they are allowed to teach. Due to these reasons children attend school for only 3 hours per day and learning is in three shifts, suggesting a heavy workload for teachers. This affects children in all the grades from grade 1 to grade 12. The communities also felt that teachers are demotivated and underpaid. Some are involved in other businesses in order to make additional income. The well-to-do in the community take their children to private schools. There are also very limited opportunities for vocational skills training. Vocational training institutions are few and the most common method of acquiring skills is through apprenticeship. Unfortunately, it was reported that there are instances of abuse and exploitation during apprenticeship with children being abused verbally, sexually molested and even beaten.

In **security**, the two provinces have experienced relative peace and stability in spite of the conflict and violence in the rest of the country. The conflict has nevertheless affected their day to day lives in terms of the general economic situation. There has been a decrease in trade and employment opportunities leaving the people worse off as incomes have decreased. Insecurity has also resulted in internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have settled in the towns specifically Mazar e Sharif. The IDPs live in deplorable situations with poor housing, no basic amenities and no source of income. Their children are usually out-of-school and the UN agencies (UNICEF and OCHA) and civil society organisations have been providing support including food and education materials for these children.²² Improved security has seen a reduction of emergency assistance and withdrawal of security agencies from the area, reducing the resources and job availability in the region. The communities have had to adjust to dealing with their own security affairs without outside assistance. On the other hand improved security has also seen the return of some of those who had migrated from the area. With their return, the demand for services especially education has

²² Save the children supports about 700 IDPs per year in the area

risen, hence the overcrowding in schools. Also, there are no longer gangs terrorizing the communities, though there have been some reported cases of small gangs in the town.

4.6. Children's Aspirations and the Decision Making Processes

Broadly, the communities would like their children to acquire an education; they aspire for a better future for them. Most of the children, specifically those in urban areas, attend school. However, the community also expects the children to contribute to the household incomes either by working in the family enterprises or by working for others. All the children in the FGDs aged 12-17 years were working or in apprenticeship and they too expect and accept that they should be working. Their earnings were 100-500 Afghanis per week. From the discussions, it was estimated that over 70% of children above 10 years work and go to school.

Decision making in the household is largely left to men, husbands or older siblings. They make decisions about the children's future as well as allocation of family resources. In exceptional cases, mothers may also make decisions about their children. Children do not have any rights to make decisions about their future, especially girls. The decision on the route a child will take in life therefore depends on the knowledge and awareness levels of the decision maker. Those that do not value education or are illiterate, or those that have not been exposed to the outside world, do not encourage their children to further education. Those that are more exposed, such as returning migrants and those in cities, encourage the pursuit of education. Many of the parents as well as the children are unaware of children's rights. The cases of child neglect and lack of protection from abuse and exploitation are therefore not well dealt with. Through CPAN, creation of awareness of children's rights is ongoing and there is a marked increase in the reporting of cases of child abuse and neglect, though awareness is still generally low.

For the boys in the FGDs, their aspiration was to finish high school and go to university. They hoped to become politicians, engineers, doctors, businessmen and teachers. Asked what the girls' aspirations were, the boys stated that the girls too want to finish high school and become doctors, nurses and teachers. Girls attend school though cases of early marriages and dropout rates mainly in the higher grades are still high. Nonetheless, by creating awareness in mosques, cases of early marriages are decreasing. The children also noted that reaching university is very competitive and few are able to make it. They stated that very few children from rural areas are able to proceed to high school and universities. Many of the rural children drop out before high school and for a rural child to reach grade 12 is considered a great achievement.

4.7. Present Sources of Income in the Communities

The main sources of income are mainly crop production and animal husbandry which are practiced by both men and women. Crop production is a major activity for men while

animal husbandry is major activity for women. Men are also involved in other activities such as transportation, office work, retailing, brick making and provision of services in hotels, garages etc. Women on their part are also involved in crafts especially weaving and carpet making and food processing. Generally, men are involved in more income generating activities than women. Men are also involved in activities that generate more income than those that women are involved in including transportation, service provision and office employment. Below is a table showing the annual incomes for men and women in the two locations. It should be noted that some women did not know how much income they make as the men deal with all financial matters in some households.

Table 05: Sources of Income in the Communities

Source of Income	Balkh, Balkh City		Samangan, Aybak City	
	Annual Income in Afghanis (AFG)			
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Crop production	22,000	8,000	30,000	65,000
Animal husbandry	10,000	20,000	10,000	40,000
Food processing				30,000
Crafts				30,000
Transport	100,000		100,000	
Services			150,000	
Office	80,000		90,000	
Retailing	100,000		20,000	
Brick making	48,000		30,000	

For men their annual income ranges from AFG 22,000 to 150,000 (USD 345 to 2,344), while that of women ranges from AFG 8,000 to 65,000 (USD 125 to 1,016). These levels of income are generally below the per capita income levels of USD 1,177 especially for women, confirming that most of them have limited incomes and that poverty levels are high in these areas. There are opportunities in the various agricultural value chains to increase production and value additions especially in cotton, fruits and vegetables.

CHAPTER 5: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY POPULATION

5.1 Introduction

The information presented in this chapter as well as that in chapters 6 and 7 is derived from the analysis of the household questionnaire i.e. the quantitative data and it supplements and strengthens the qualitative data gathered through the community survey. This chapter details the survey population by various demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

5.2 Distribution of Population by Age and Sex

The three districts have a considerable high proportion of children aged below 18 years. 40.9% of the household population is comprised of children aged between 5-17 years while children aged less than 5 years comprised of 8.6%. The adult population comprised slightly above 50%. Largely, the household adult population is more or less equal to the child population.

There is however area differences on household age distribution in the 3 districts. Mazar e Sharif has the largest proportion of adult population aged 18 years and above at 64.9%. The adult population in Balkh and Samangan is just about 50% of the total household population.

The sex distribution across all the three districts presents a similar profile of almost 50/50 male and female representation. There are however small area differences in the three districts with Balkh and Samangan having a slightly higher population of males compared to Mazar e Sharif. In Balkh, the male household population is 51.7% and in Samangan it is 51.6% compared to the female population that is 48.3% and 48.4% in Balkh and Samangan, respectively. In Mazar e Sharif, the female household population comprises 52.6%.

Overall, the divorce rate is significantly low in all districts. This presents a situation of a very strong culture that upholds marriage stability. Majority of the household population have never been married and this is in line with the large proportion of household members below 30 years of age. 76.4% of the entire household population is comprised of people aged 30 years and below. Table 6 presents the study population characteristics segmented by the different provinces.

Table 06: Household Population Characteristic by Province

Population Characteristic	Region			Total
	Balkh Rural	Mazar e Sharif City	Samangan Rural	
Age				
4 years and Less	9.9% (34)	0% (0)	8.4%(16)	8.6% (50)
5-17 Years	42.9% (147)	35.1% (20)	39.1% (70)	40.9% (237)
18 years and Above	47.2% (162)	64.9% (37)	50% (93)	50.4% (292)
Sex				
Male	51.7% (179)	47.4%(27)	54.2%(97)	52.3% (303)
Female	48.3%(167)	52.6%(30)	45.8%(82)	47.7%(276)
Marital Status				
Married	33.9% (116)	35.1% (20)	40.2% (72)	36.0% (208)
Divorced	0.3% (1)	0% (0)	0.6% (1)	0.3% (2)
Widowed	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.6% (1)	0.2% (1)
Never Married	65.5% (224)	64.9 (37)	65.7% (106)	63.3% (366)
N	343	57	179	578

5.3 Mean Age

The household population is generally young with a mean age of 22 years. There are variations across the districts with Balkh having the youngest population with a mean age of 20.5 years as presented in figure 2.

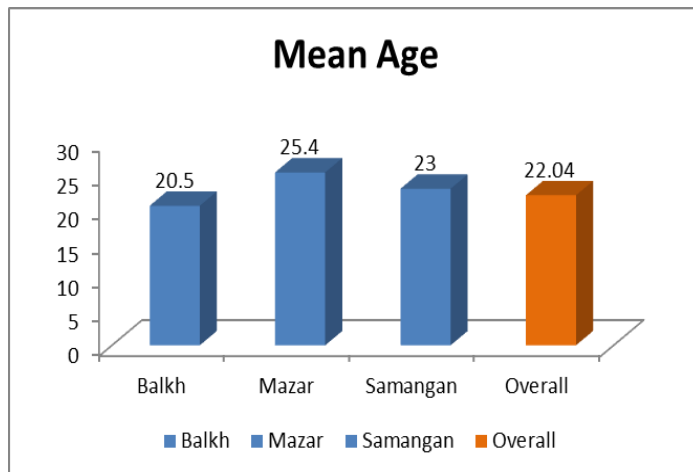


Figure 2: Mean Age Distribution by Distribution by Province

Generally, the three districts present a relatively young population which is a characteristic of all developing countries. A younger population comes with the challenges of increasing pressures on work related opportunities and increases the age dependence ratio, especially where opportunities for employment are not readily available.

5.4 Age Dependency Ratio

The age dependency ratio is the ratio of dependents - people younger than 15 years or older than 64 years - to the working-age population, those aged between 15-64 years. Data is shown as the proportion of dependents per 100 working-age population. The age dependence ratio is mainly used to measure the pressure on productive population of a given country or region. As the ratio increases there may be an increased burden on the productive part of the population to maintain the upbringing and pensions of the economically dependent. This results in direct impacts on financial expenditures on things like social security and other indirect consequences.

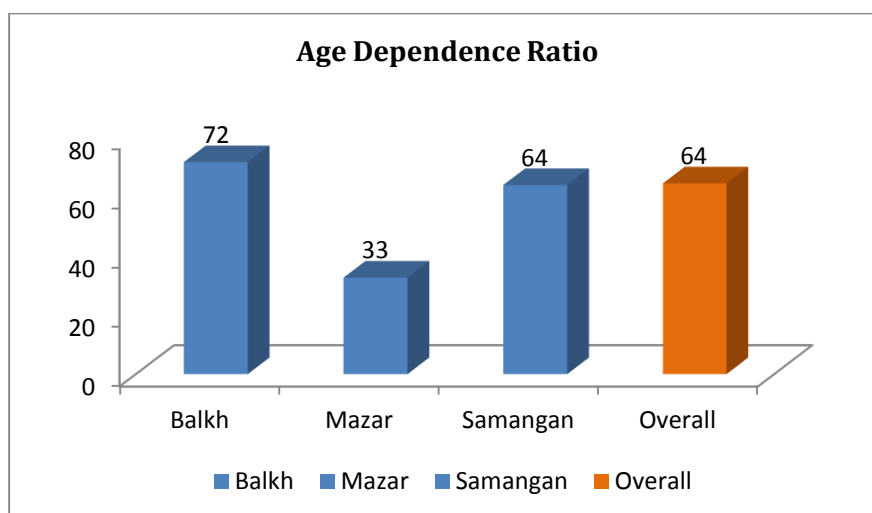


Figure 3: Age Dependency Ratio

Balkh Province has the largest proportion of dependents compared to Samangan and Mazar e Sharif. Mazar e Sharif has the least dependence ratio signifying less pressure on the productive population from those below the ages of 15 years and above 64 years.

5.5 Mean Household Size

The three districts have a relatively large household population size. The overall mean household size is 8 people, which is quite a large household population size.

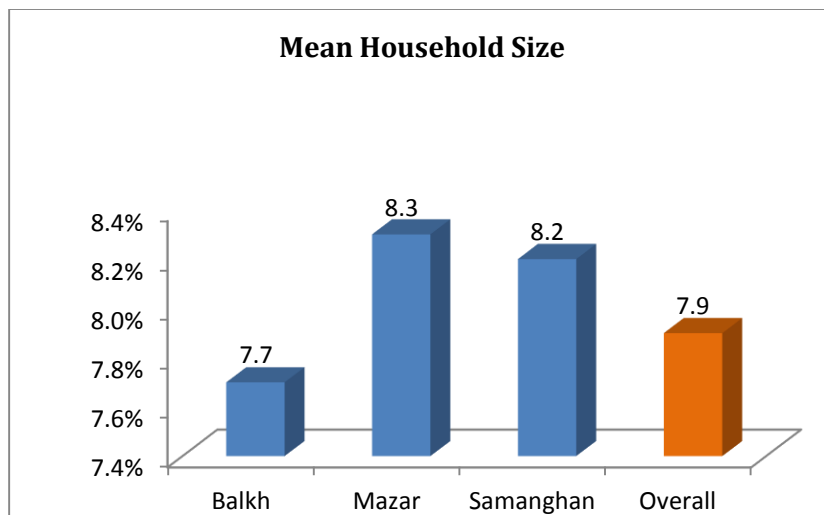


Figure 4: Mean Household Size

5.6 Sex of Household Head

The households in all the three districts are strongly patriarchal. All the households (100%) are headed by male household members and all married women assume the roles of housewives. This has quite a lot of implication when it comes to the decision making process. In a highly patriarchal society, women take a back seat when it comes to the household decision making process as well accessing and control of family resources. This therefore means that they do not have much say on generation and use of household income. In cases where they are actively involved in production of household wealth, they may not have the authority to decide on how such wealth is used.

Table 07: Relationship of Household Member to the Head of Household

District	Relationship of Household Member to Household head	Sex of Household Member		Total (N)
		Male	Female	
Balkh	Household head	26.8% (48)	0.0% (0)	48
	Wife or husband	0.0% (0)	32.2% (53)	53
	Son or daughter	72.1% (129)	68.9% (113)	242
Mazar	Household head	18.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	5
	Wife or husband	0.0% (0)	23.3% (7)	7
	Son or daughter	81.5% (22)	76.7% (23)	45
Samangan	Household head	24.8% (25)	0.0% (0)	25
	Wife or husband	0.0% (0)	29.2% (26)	26
	Son or daughter	72.35 (73)	69.7% (62)	135
	Niece/nephew by blood	3.0% (3)	1.1% (1)	4

5.7 Education Attainment

All household members were asked about their education attainment status during the interviews. Out of the 590 household members, 78.3% of the household members provided their education attainment status, while 21.7% did not have provide data on their education attainment status. Table 3 below presents data on the levels of education attainment for the 462 respondents who provided data on their education levels.

The results of the education attainment analysis show that more than a third of the household population in all the districts have never attended school. Of the population aged 5 years and above 37.7% have never attended school. Balkh and Samangan (rural districts) have the highest population of household population aged 5 years and above that have never attended school at 48.7% and 45.2% respectively. The number of those with skills training or have reached university is almost insignificant at 0.4% for TVET and about 3% with university level of education.

Table 08: Education Attainment per Province

Current Education Attainment Level				Overall % (N)
	Balkh % (n)	Mazar e Sharif % (n)	Samangan % (n)	
Pre-primary	0.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.4% (2)	0.6% (3)
Grade 1	3.6% (10)	0.0% (0)	3.4% (5)	3.2% (15)
Grade 2	4.7% (13)	2.6% (1)	6.2% (9)	5.0% (23)
Grade 3	6.5% (18)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (7)	5.4% (25)
Grade 4	7.6% (21)	2.6% (1)	3.4% (5)	5.8% (27)
Grade 5	5.8% (16)	7.7% (3)	6.2% (9)	6.1% (28)
Grade 6	4.0% (11)	2.6% (1)	6.2% (9)	4.5% (21)
Grade 7	4.3% (12)	7.7% (3)	7.5% (11)	5.6% (26)
Grade 8	5.8% (16)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (1)	3.7% (17)
Grade9	4.7% (13)	12.7% (5)	4.8% (7)	5.4% (25)
Grade 10	5.1% (14)	0.0% (0)	2.1% (3)	3.7% (17)
Grade 11	2.9% (8)	0.0% (0)	2.7% (4)	2.6% (12)
Grade 12	4.0% (11)	10.3% (4)	1.4% (2)	3.7% (17)
TVET	0.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (2)
First Degree	1.4% (4)	5.1% (2)	2.1% (3)	1.9% (9)
Second Degree	1.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (3)
Post Graduate	0.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (2)
Never Attended (All Population)	36.8% (102)	48.7% (19)	47.3% (69)	41.1% (190)
Never Attended (Population 5 years and above)	32% (82)	48.7% (19)	45.2% (61)	37.7% (162)
Total (N)	277	39	146	462

5.8 School Attendance

Information was requested for all school going population on whether they missed school and the reasons for which they missed school. Only 4.2% of the school-going children were reported as having missed school the week prior to the interview. School-going children in Balkh and Samangan districts were reported as missing school while those in Mazar e Sharif had not missed school the week prior to the study.

The main reason for missing school was reported as work for family farm or business as stated by 32% of the children who had missed school the week prior to the study. The second most common reason for missing school was reported as domestic work as indicated by 24% of the children that missed school the week prior to the study. Table 4 presents the

proportion of school going children who missed school a week prior to the study by the different reasons of missing school in the two provinces of Balkh and Samangan.

There are significant area variations in the two provinces with regards to reasons why children missed school the week prior to the study. In Balkh, the main reason is domestic work as stated by 41.7% of the children who missed school the week prior to the study. In Samangan, however, working in the family farm or business was the main reason for missing school. In Balkh, 8.3% of the children missed school because of working for employers while in Samangan 30.4% missed school because they did not want to attend. The latter has serious implications on the value placed on of education for such households. Lack of school uniform was also a common reason for missing school in the two provinces.

Table 09: Reasons for Not Attending School by Province

Reasons for Not Attending School	Province		Overall
	Balkh	Samangan	
Domestic work	41.7% (5)	7.7% (1)	24% (6)
Work for Family Farm/Business	33.3% (4)	30.4% (4)	32% (8)
Work for Employers	8.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (1)
Did not want to go	0.0% (0)	30.4% (4)	16% (4)
Mistreated at school	0.0% (0)	15.4% (2)	8.0% (2)
Funeral/Wedding ceremony/Family Function	8.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (1)
Lack of School Uniform	8.3% (1)	15.4% (2)	12% (3)
Total (n)	12	13	25

CHAPTER 6: WORKING CHILDREN

The employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful should be discouraged. This chapter presents the characteristics of working children as derived from the analysis of the data collected.

6.1 Population Aged 5-17 Years Engaged in Work at least 1 Hour a Week

All children aged 5-17 years were asked if they were engaged in any kind of work one week prior to the study. According to the results of the study, 15.3% of the children had engaged in some form of work one week prior to the study. Figure 5 presents the proportion of children aged 5-17 years who were engaged in any form work one week prior to the study.

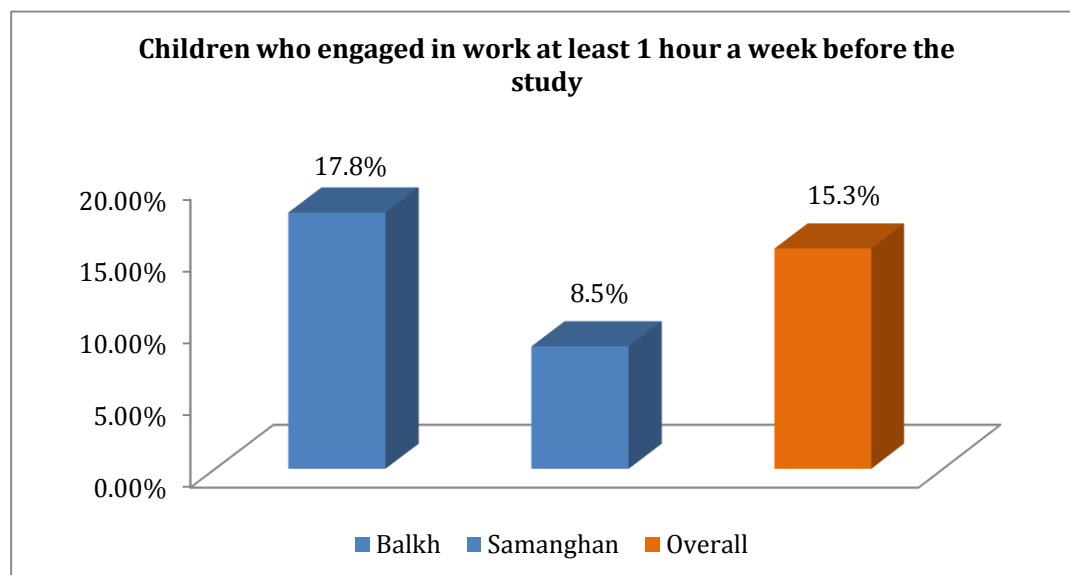


Figure 5: Proportion of Working Children by Province

Of the 15.3% children who engaged in work at least one hour a week before the study, 45.5% resided in Balkh rural region. 39.4% resided in Mazar e Sharif City while Samangan had the least proportion of children who engaged in work at 15%.

6.2 Distribution of Working Children by Sex

Overall, according to sex segmentation, male children were more engaged in work than their female counterparts in all regions. In Balkh, there were more male children across all categories who were engaged in work compared to their female counterparts. Table 10 presents the proportion of working children by gender categorized by area of residence.

Table 10: Distribution of Child Labourers by Area of Residence and by Sex

Age	Residence								
	Balkh Rural			Mazar e Sharif City			Samangan		
	Male % (n)	Female % (n)	Total (N)	Male % (n)	Female % (n)	Total (N)	Male % (n)	Female % (n)	Total (N)
5-12 years	75.4 % 4)	20.0% (1)	5	100% (3)	100% (1)	4	100% (1)	100% (1)	2
13-17 Years	68.9% (4)	35.7% (2)	10	44.4% (4)	55.6% (5)	9	100% (3)	0.0% (0)	3
Total (N)			15			13			5

6.3 Distribution of Population Aged 5-17 Years by Activity Status

Fetching water or collecting firewood for household use was the main activity children engaged in spending at least 1 hour one week prior to the study. 35.8% of all the children reported having collected firewood or fetched water for household use. The other activities that children were commonly engaged in included working on the family farm or garden, doing construction or major repair work at home and running or doing any other business big or small for themselves. Importantly, 4% of the children worked for debt redemption raising the concern of forced labour. Figure 6 presents the type of work children were engaged in at least one hour a week before the study.

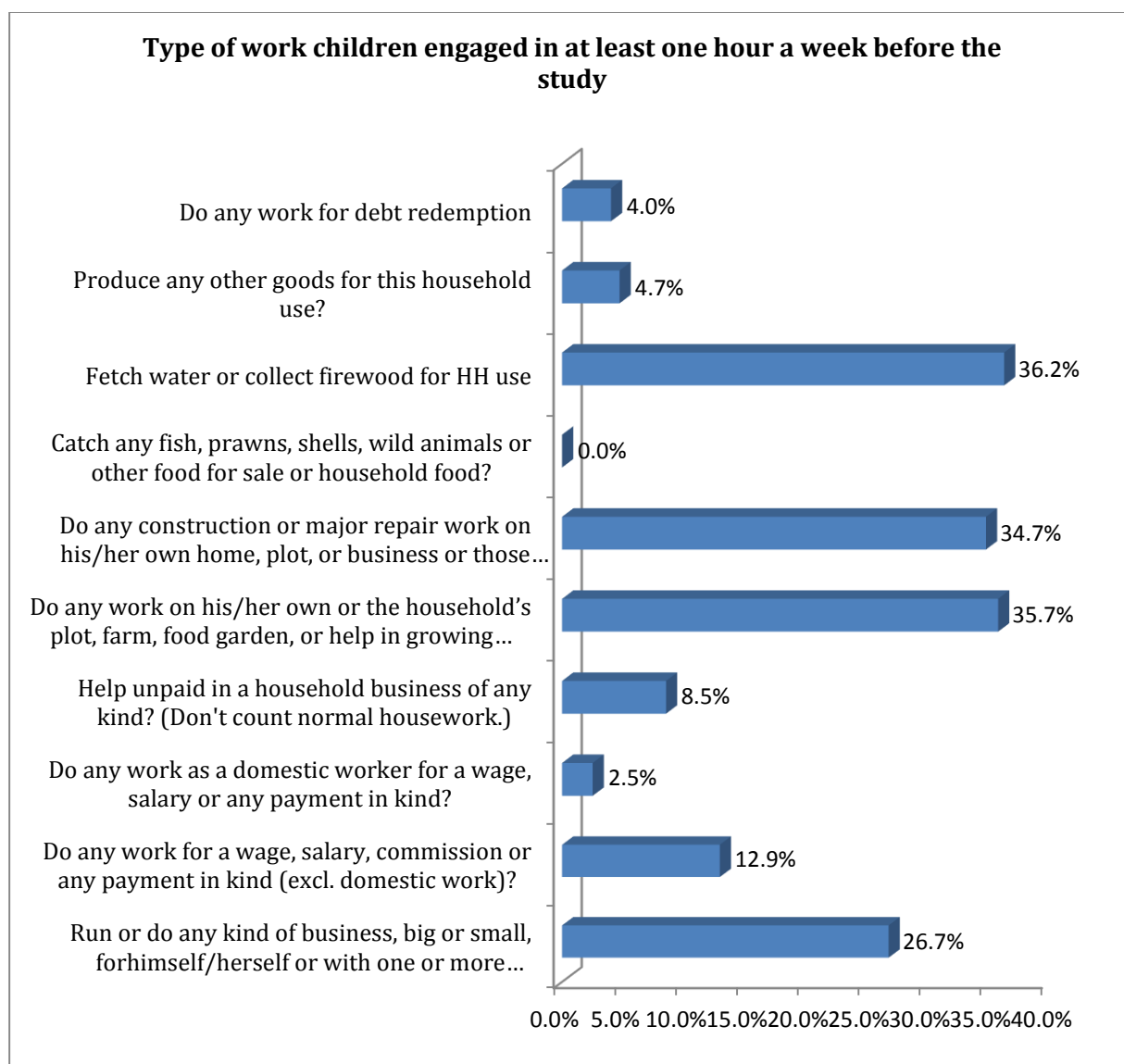


Figure 6: Type of Work Children were Engaged in at least One Hour a Week before the Study

6.4 Distribution of Working Children by Age and Household Headship

The proportion of working children is directly proportional to their age. The older a child is the more likely they are to engage in work. Of the children aged 5-9 years, only 2.7% were engaged in work at least one hour a week prior to the study, while 15.3% of those aged 10-14 years were engaged in work. Those aged 15-17 years on the other hand were the most affected with 31.0% of them engaged in work at least one hour a week prior to the study. Figure 6 presents the proportion of working children by age.

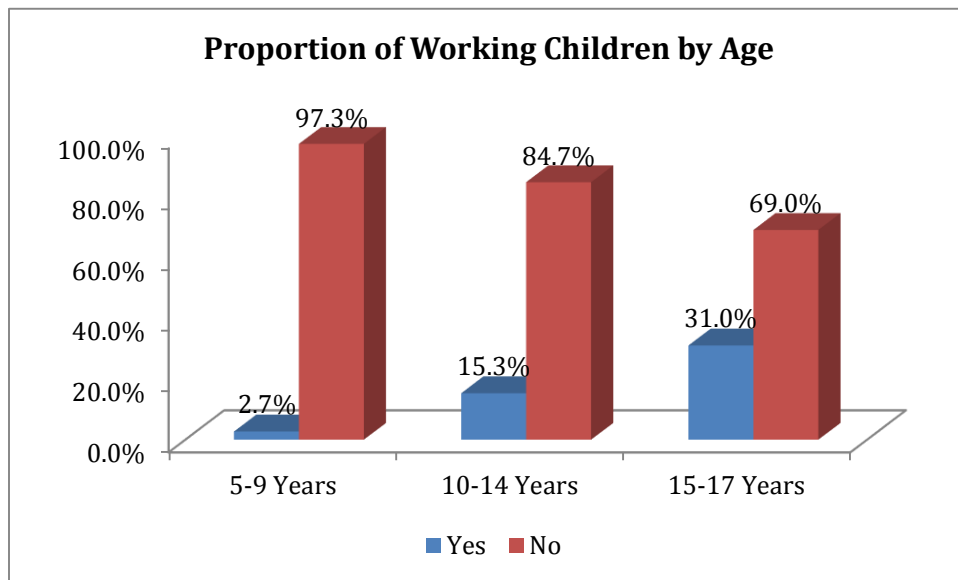


Figure 7: Proportion of Working Children by Age

6.5 School Attendance and Work Status

In general, the number of days a child missed school is not a strong determinant of the type of work a child did. The results of the study showed that majority of the children engaged in work, actually attended school for 5 days and more, which is the standard requirement of school attendance days for children. The study, thus shows, that children do still work outside school hours. This raises the question of how much time do children have to be children out of school for such activities as play and leisure if they get engaged in work after or before school.

The study further shows that children who are likely to be engaged in working on the household farm or engage in doing household chores are most likely to miss school at least one day in a week. Table 11 below correlates the proportion of school days attended and the type of work done.

Table 11: Number of School Days Attended and Type of Work Performed by Children

Type of Work	Number of Days Child Attended School			Overall
	3 days	4 days	5 days and more	
Run or do any kind of business, big or small, for himself/herself or with one or more partners	100%	20%	30.2%	30.4%
Do any work for a wage, salary, commission or any payment in kind (excl. domestic work)	100%	0.0%	14.1%	14.4%
Do any work as a domestic worker for a wage, salary or any payment in kind	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.0%
Help unpaid in a household business of any kind (Don't count normal housework)	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%	9.5%
Do any work on his/her own or the household's plot, farm, food garden or help in growing farm produce or in looking after animal for the household	0.0%	80%	40.9%	43%
Do any construction or major repair work on his/her own home, plot, or business or those of the household	0.0%	100%	38.7%	41.2%
Catch any fish, prawns, shells, wild animals or other food for sale or household food	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fetch water or collect firewood for HH use	0.0%	80%	36.8%	37.9%
Produce any other goods for this household use	0.0%	0.0%	4.9%	4.7%
Do any work for debt redemption	0.0%	0.0%	5%	4.8%

6.6 Distribution of Working Children by Age and Sectors

Of the 216 children aged 5-17 years, 15.3% had engaged in some work at least one hour a week before the study. The study sought to understand the distribution of working children according to the various sectors segmented by the age categories of the children.

The most common type of work for all age categories was farm work on the household plot, farm, food garden, or help in growing farm produce or in looking after animals for the household that accounted for 37.6% of all working children. The second most common type of work was doing any construction or major repair work at home, plot or business for the household. Children as young as 5-9 years old are involved in major repair work more than

those aged 15-17 years old. This exposes younger children to dangerous trades that could easily harm them physically. The table below presents the common work sectors where children mostly work segmented by age.

Table 12: Work Sector by Children Age Category

Work Sector	Age Category in Years			Overall
	5-9	10-14	15-17	
Run or do any kind of business, big or small, for himself/herself or with one or more partners?	23.3%	22.2%	36.1%	26.7%
Do any work for a wage, salary, commission or any payment in kind (excl. domestic work)?	8.6%	12.7%	17.6%	12.9%
Do any work as a domestic worker for a wage, salary or any payment in kind?	0.0%	2.0%	6.1%	2.5%
Help unpaid in a household business of any kind? (Don't count normal housework.)	8.8%	3.8%	16.1%	8.5%
Do any work on his/her own or the household's plot, farm, food garden, or help in growing farm produce or in looking after animal for the household?	45.5%	46.9%	13.3%	37.5%
Do any construction or major repair work on his/her own home, plot, or business or those of the household?	42.1%	41.5%	13.3%	34.7%
Catch any fish, prawns, shells, wild animals or other food for sale or household food?	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fetch water or collect firewood for HH use?	29%	40%	39%	36.2%
Produce any other goods for this household use?	5%	1.8%	9.1%	4.7%
Do any work for debt redemption?	3.9%	3.4%	4.9%	4.0%

6.7 Distribution of Working Children by Number of Hours Worked

Overall, the highest proportion of the children aged 5-12 years worked for an average of 5 hours in a day across all the provinces. Mazar e Sharif – the urban area - had the highest proportion of children who worked more hours than the rural areas of Balkh and Samangan. 77.8% of the working children aged 5-12 years in Mazar e Sharif worked for more than 45 hours in a week. This translates to an average of 6 hours per day. In Balkh rural and Samangan Province 45.5% and 33.4% of the working children respectively worked for a similar number of hours in a week.

A further look at the results show that more than 70% of the children worked for more than the 35 hours every week allowed by law for those who are 15 years and above. This is quite a long period of time spent at work and may interfere with the children's education performance.

Table 13: Proportion of Children by Number of Hours Worked per Area of Residence

Hours Worked per Week	Children 5-12 Years		
	Balkh Rural	Mazar e Sharif	Samangan

10 hours and less	36.4%(4)	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)
11-24 hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)
25-34 hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
35-45 hours	18.2% (2)	11.1% (1)	33.3% (3)
45 hours and more	45.5% (5)	77.8% (7)	33.3% (3)
Total (N)	11	9	9

6.8 Distribution of Working Children by Age and Usual Working Time

Generally, majority of the children across all age categories engage in work after school. According to the study, 26.7%, 27.1% and 40% of children aged 5-9, 10-14 and 15-17 years respectively were reported to have been engaged in work after their school hours.

The results of the study point to the fact that most children engage in work outside school hours during the day and not at night. The most common hours of work are either before or after school. Even though there are quite a number of children who were reported to have generally worked during the day (between 6 am to 6 pm) we can correctly assume that these children worked during off school hours due to the high proportion of children reported to have worked outside school hours. Also of concern are children who worked after 6 pm all of them below 15 years i.e. 6.7% of those aged 5-9 years and 12.5% of those aged 10-14 years. Table 14 below presents the usual working hours for children.

Table 14: Usual Working Time and the Age of Children

Usual Working Time	Age Category in Years		
	5-9	10-14	15-17
During the day (between 6 a.m. and 6 pm)	13.3% (2)	21.7% (13)	17.5% (7)
In the evening or at night (after 6 pm.)	6.7% (1)	12.5% (6)	0.0% (0)
During both the day and the evening (for the entire day)	0.0% (0)	8.3% (4)	10% (4)
Sometimes during the day, sometimes in the evening	0.0% (0)	2.1% (1)	5.0% (2)
After school	26.7% (4)	27.1% (13)	40% (16)
Before school	13.3% (2)	12.5% (6)	15.0% (6)
Both before or after school	20.0% (3)	4.2% (2)	10% (4)
On the week-end	20.0% (3)	2.1% (1)	2.5% (1)
During missed school hours/days	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)

6.9 Distribution of Working Children by Age and Employment Status

Work is directly proportional to age. The older a child becomes, the more likely it is that he/she is engaged in some kind of work at least one hour every week. According to the study children progressively become more involved in work as their age progresses as well. Of the children aged 5-9 years, only 8.6% were engaged in work at least one hour the week

prior to the survey compared to 12.7% and 17.6% of children 10-14 years and 15-17 years, respectively.

While there are a higher proportion of elder children engaged in work, it is of great concern that 8.6% of children aged less than 10 years should already be engaged in work at such a tender age. Considering children of this age category comprise almost a quarter of the population, 8.6% of such a population engaged in work is quite a concern. Figure 6 below presents the proportion of working children by age group.

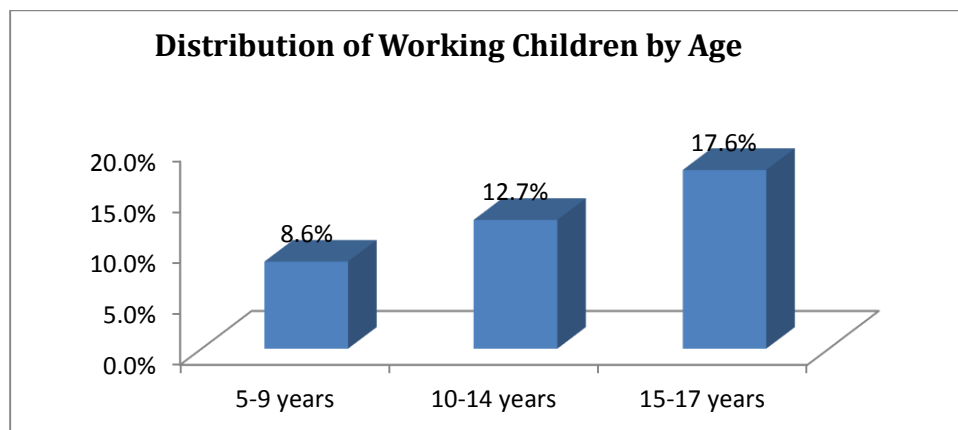


Figure 8: Proportion of Working Children by Age

6.10 Distribution of Working Children by Age and Reason for Working

According to the analysis of the study all the children who engaged in work for employers did so to supplement family income. The second most common reason for engaging in any other work included helping in household enterprise such as the household farm or family business.

About a 30% of the children who were engaged in work for pay did so to supplement household debt which indeed puts a lot of responsibility to children to start fending for household income. Majority of the children who engaged in work for employers however belonged to the 10-14 and 15-7 age categories. All the children aged 5-9 years were engaged in family work either household work or working in the family farm.

6.11 Distribution of Working Children by Who Receives their Wages

For 40% of working children their proceeds are received by parents across all the regions where children are working for employers. 33.3% of the children's employment wages are received by guardians while 20% of the children who are engaged in employment receive the wages themselves. 6.7% of the children engaged in employment have their

wages received by someone else other than themselves or their parents/guardians. This could point to exploitation or that those children's wages are used for debt redemption. Figure 9 below represents the different categories of persons who receive the wages of working children.

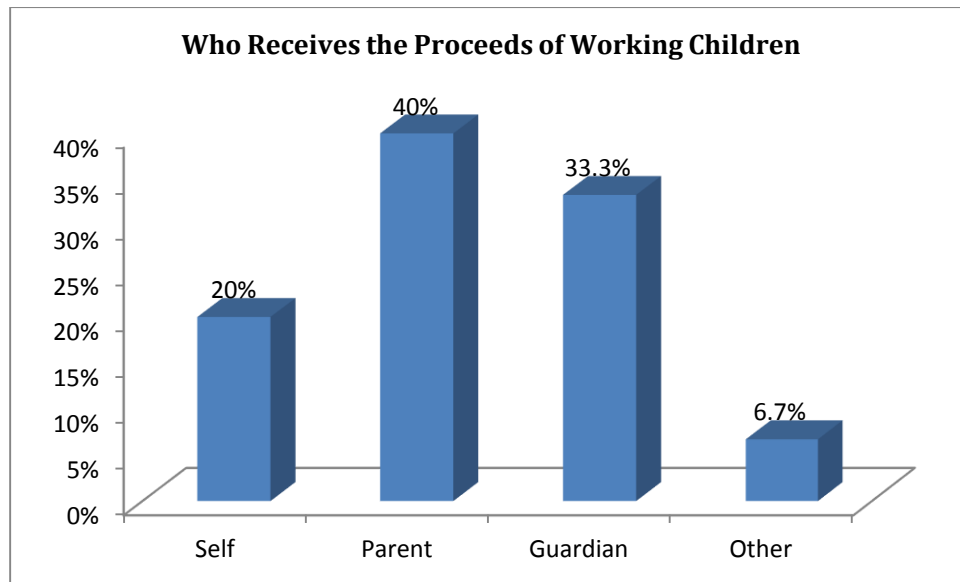


Figure 9: Persons Who Receive Proceeds of Working Children

CHAPTER 7: CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR

7.1 Introduction

This survey focused on working children aged 5-17 years in the two provinces of Balkh and Samangan. This chapter presents the results of the analysis of child labourers aged 5-17 years in these provinces including their schooling status, sex and broad age groups.

7.2 Child Labour Filtering Process

The filtering process used a set of indicators related to child labour in general that were considered to be sufficient in identifying children engaged in the practice. The measurement framework for child labour was structure around two main elements namely: (i) the age of the child; and (ii) the productive activities by the child including their nature and the conditions under which these were performed and the hours of work.

Age: The Labour Law Article 31 provides for employment of youth aged 15-17 years.

Hours of Work: The hours of work precept is embodied in the child labour concept both at the lower and high risk WFCL levels. Children who work for long hours are considered to be exploited as this not only endangers their health, but also affects the school performance of pupils. A child may be considered to be in child labour when the total number of hours worked in employment and unpaid household service exceeds the provided thresholds. All children aged 5-12 years in the survey were categorized as having been in child labour if they engaged in any economic activity during the reference period irrespective of the hours of work. Those aged 13-14 years were classified as being in child labour if they worked for 14 hours or more, while those aged 15-17 years were classified as being in child labour if they worked for more than 35 hours in a week as provided in Labour Laws Article 31.

Other Criteria: Any child who worked in risky or hazardous occupations or undertakings especially those prohibited under the Labour Law (**List of Prohibited Jobs for Child Labourers**) was also classified to be in child labour irrespective of their ages or the number of hours they worked.

7.3 Distribution of Child Labourers by Age and Number of Hours Worked

When children are exposed to long working in any kind of work whether within their own household or employed, such work is classified as child labour. According to the analysis of the results more than 60% of the children across all ages worked for more than 35 hours per week. This is indeed above the required threshold of less than 35 hours allowable for children to work per week. Table 15 presents the distribution of child labourers by hours worked per week by age category.

Table 15: Distribution of Child Labourers by Hours Worked per Age Category

Hours Worked	Age of the Child in Years		
	5-9	10-14	15-17
0-14 hours and Less	36.4%(4)	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)
15-35 hours	18.2% (2)	11.1% (1)	33.3% (3)
35 hours and more	45.5% (5)	77.8% (7)	33.3% (3)
Total (N)	11	9	9

Total N=33

In addition, younger children aged below 12 years were found working for more than 1 hour a day in all the three districts and were therefore in child labour. Table 16 below shows the hours worked by children aged 5-12 years.

Table 16: Hours Worked by Children Aged 5-12 Years by Area of Residence

Hours Worked per Week	Children Aged 5-12 Years		
	Balkh Rural	Mazar e Sharif	Samangan
10 hours and less	36.4%(4)	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)
11-24 hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)
25-34hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
35-45 hours	18.2% (2)	11.1% (1)	33.3% (3)
45 hours and more	45.5% (5)	77.8% (7)	33.3% (3)
Total (N)	11	9	9

7.4 Distribution of Child Labourers by Time of Work

Overall more than 19% of the children aged 5-17 years old usually work in the evening or at night. This exposes children to many risks and conflicts with a child's resting and sleeping hours. The effects of children working at night may have great impact on their educational and social development. Besides, working at night exposes children to unseen hazardous conditions likely to exacerbate more harm and cause even physical injury to the children. The 10-14 years age category is most exposed to work in the evenings and at night compared to those aged 5-9 years and 15-17 years. Table 17 presents the distribution of child labourers by their usual working time.

Table 17: Distribution of Child Labourers by Usual Working Time and Age Category

Usual Working Time	Age Category in Years		
	5-9	10-14	15-17
In the evening or at night (after 6 p.m.)	6.7% (1)	12.5% (6)	0.0% (0)
Sometimes during the day, sometimes in the evening	0.0% (0)	2.1% (1)	5.0% (2)

Note that N=33

7.5 Distribution of Child Labourers by Type of Work and Hours Worked

Further analysis of the data shows that working for wage is the most common form of child labour, where more than 28% of the children were engaged for more than 45 hours per week. Domestic work is the second most common form of child labour where about 38.9% of the children were subjected to more than 45 hours of work per week. Table 18 presents the proportion of children subjected to child labour by number of hours worked.

Table 18: Type of Work by Number of Hours Worked

Type of Work	Hours Worked			Total (N)
	10 hours and less	35-45 hours	45 hours and more	
Do any work for a wage, salary, commission or any payment in kind (excl. domestic work)?	17.6% (3)	5.8% (1)	52% (9)	17
Do any work as a domestic worker for a wage, salary or any payment in kind?	29.4% (5)	0.0% (0)	38.9%	18
Do any construction or major repair work on his/her own home, plot or business or those of the household	30% (5)	0.0% (0)	30% (5)	17
Do any work for debt redemption	16.6% (3)	0.0% (0)	16.6% (3)	28

7.6 Some Identified WFCL

From the analysis above, worst forms of child labour can be identified. These include those children who were working for debt redemption, working at night and working for longer hours than what is allowed by regulation. The key sectors with WFCL include construction, domestic and agriculture. Further study in these areas is therefore required.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusions

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has made great strides in economic and social development since the return of relative peace; however the country is still faced with many challenges including insufficient social infrastructures such as schools. While access to education has improved, many children do not access quality education and many of them are out of school and in child labour. A review of the policy and legal framework shows that the Government is committed to protecting its children from all forms of abuse and exploitation including child labour. However implementation of policies and enforcement of the law has been slow.

The phenomenon of child labour has been identified as a significant threat to the development of children as well as that of a country. This study confirms that the trend of involving children in child labour is continuing to happen in both Balkh and Samangan Provinces. Although the majority of the working children are working within their homes, agricultural and other family enterprises, a large number of them were working for long hours many above 35 hours a day in activities considered hazardous. The child labour situation is complicated by the fact that the school day for each child is only for a period of 3 hours. It is also complicated by cultural norms and traditions that provide a different view of who children are and that expects women and children to remain in their traditional roles.

8.2 Recommendations

8.2.1 Recommendations to the ILO Roads to Job (R2J) Project

The following action points can be implemented by the R2J Project within the remaining period:

1. Creation and implementation of awareness raising programmes about children's rights/child labour/child protection targeting parents/communities, children, ILO partners and other organisations and groups.
2. The economic situation of families should be enhanced through livelihoods support, while ensuring that such projects do not lead to increased workloads for certain community members especially children.
3. Youth aged 15-17 years especially those who have dropped out of school, should be targeted for skills and entrepreneurship training so that they can acquire skills to start and run their own businesses, including along the value chains that the R2Js Project is working on.
4. Support for children aged below 12 years to access and be retained in schools through material support for the pursuit of education.

Below is a proposed implementation plan including some suggested outcomes, outputs and activities that the R2J project can support. However depending on the available resources the project will further confirm this and allocate targets and develop indicators as well as time frames. In addition, the project will need to carry out initial consultations with suggested collaborators.

Outcome	Outputs	Activities
1. By the end of the project awareness on child labour / child rights among stakeholders is raised	1.1: Training and sensitization programme developed and implemented	1. Training and sensitization seminars R2J staff on child labour/child rights 2. Sensitization seminars for R2J partners including trade unions and employers representatives, child protection structures e.g. CPAN 3. Consultations and Sensitization of community leaders, group leaders, women leaders etc 4. Include CL messages in other R2J activities (CL integration in the project activities) 5. Share the this labour assessment report with key stakeholders (develop a popular version)
	1.2: Awareness messages developed and circulated	1. In consultation with MLSSMD develop CL messages in local languages (fliers, Posters etc) 2. Distribute the materials to schools, groups etc 3. Identify and where possible worker with other partners such as the media
2. By the end of the project families / children/ youth affected by CL economically empowered	2.1 Family members especially women supported with livelihood support	1. Identify families affected by child labour 2. Include these families especially women in the empowerment programmes including VC entrepreneurship and vocational training 3. Refer children below 12 years out of school to other organisations such as UNICEF, Save the children and other NGOs for education support
	2.2 Youth 15-17 years (especially those out of school and in hazardous work) supported	1. Identify youth 15-17 years engaged in hazardous work 2. Include these youths in the entrepreneurship and vocational training programmes 3. Identify areas in the VC where they are best suited and assist them to start businesses there.

8.2.2 General Recommendations

1. The Government, with support from relevant partners, should as a matter of urgency mount an awareness and sensitization campaign that should explain/define a child and explain the impact of child labour on children and on communities, while promoting children's education.

2. The Government should ensure that its capacity to deal with child labour is strengthened through consistent deployment of staff especially labour inspectors and child protection officers. In addition structures such as the Child Protection Action Networks (CPAN) should be strengthened and provided with resources.
3. A national policy and an action plan on the elimination of child labour should be developed to guide future actions on the fight against child labour. A policy would also guide the resource mobilization efforts both within the government and from other partners.
4. Conduct a continuous review of the education system that would allow children to attend school for longer periods of time each day. Attending school for 3 hours a day leaves children with too many free hours and by default, therefore, leaves them at risk of engaging in child labour including its worst forms. A review of education system would include further investments in educational infrastructure and teachers.
5. The government should implement youth empowerment and employment programmes that would include vocational skills and entrepreneurship training with a special focus on the 15-17 year age group. Many youth do not have opportunity to acquire skills in conditions that are safe or modern and have to rely on local apprenticeship where child abuse and exploitation has been reported.
6. The government should ensure continued economic growth and improved livelihood opportunities in order to reduce poverty which is a major cause of child labour. In particular, government should continue working towards ensuring that peace is restored throughout the country.
7. More targeted information/data on child labour should be collected through surveys, research and studies. Specifically, assessment on hidden and worst forms of child labour such as CSEC, street work and domestic work should also be included.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of Prohibited Jobs for Child Labourers Announced by MoLSAMD

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled announced the list of jobs which are prohibited for child labourers in Afghanistan. MoLSAMD announced the list during the event on *Raising Public Awareness regarding Labour Law* on 9 February 2014 in Kabul. In attendance were representatives of ILO to Kabul, ACCI and Afghanistan National Labourers Union.

The disallowed jobs for child labourers are as follows:

- 1- Mining;
- 2- Using children in organized begging;
- 3- Garbage collection especially hospital wastes;
- 4- Working in the iron furnace;
- 5- Working in garbage recycling;
- 6- Working in slaughterhouses;
- 7- Working in planting, harvesting and producing narcotic drugs;
- 8- Working as bodyguard or any duties related to the combat;
- 9- Working at height of 3 meters above of the surface and collecting fruits;
- 10- Working in electric welding;
- 11- Working in workshops with dangerous washing liquids and petrol without using protective equipment for the hands;
- 12- Working with heavy machinery such as cranes and other repair equipment in workshops;
- 13- Working with heavy machinery in wood manufacturing factories;
- 14- Working for more than four hours per day in carpet production;
- 15- Working as porter in picking up and dropping more than 15 kg;
- 16- Working with ovens in bakeries;
- 17- Working as cleaner in public toilets and baths;
- 18- Working with fluid gas;
- 19- Working with brick oven tools;
- 20- Working in spraying, mixing, or selling insecticides;
- 21- Working in metal and iron collection especially unexploded ordinances;
- 22- Working as a cleaner in public shuttles;
- 23- Working in painting metal and wooden products;
- 24- Working in processing and mixing acid and also battery charging;
- 25- Working in grinding salt and packing;
- 26- Working as tractor driver or with any agricultural machinery;
- 27- Working in garment factories (textile) including painting and texturing;

- 28- Working as bondman while their parents get loan and force their children to work instead of the commitment;
- 29- Working on overtime during nights (between 1900 hours and 0600 hours).

According to Article 120 of the Labour Law and Articles of Convention No. 182, regarding job conditions for child labour, the heavy and hazardous works for children are prohibited.

Annex2: List of Key Informants

Name	Organisation	Position	Contacts/Email
Matehullah Matin	MoLSAMD, Balkh	In charge of the Province	
Kamela Atahi	MoLSAMD, Balkh	Manager	
Menhajuddin Hamed	UNICEF	Child Protection Officer	
Moh Hadi Athar	Save the Children		
Moh Hassan Kamran	Balk Employers Workers Union	General Secretary	0700 515 993
Najia Neyzi		Gender Officer	
Abdul Wodoud		Officer for the rights of workers	
Julius Mutio	ILO R2J Project	CTA	mutio@ilo.org
Khalida Yaqobi	ILO R2J Project	Gender and Livelihoods Officer	Yaqobi@ilo.orf

FDG Participation

Group	Balkh	Samangan	Total
Men	13	10	23
Women	11	11	22
Children	13	7	20

Annex 3 (a): Community profile survey form

Annex 3 (b): KII Guide

Annex 3 (c): Household survey questionnaire