

A photograph of a woman wearing a white headscarf and three children in a rustic, possibly rural, setting. The woman is in the background, looking towards the camera. In the foreground, three children are visible: one on the left wearing a dark headscarf, one in the center wearing a light blue hooded jacket, and one at the bottom wearing a dark patterned top and a beaded necklace. The background shows a wall with peeling plaster and wooden beams.

**OPERATIONAL  
ASSESSMENT  
OF SOCIAL  
MOBILISATION  
AND BEHAVIOUR  
CHANGE TRAINING**

**MAGENTA**

April 2020

unicef  | for every child



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**BDM:** Behavioural Drivers Model (UNICEF)

**CDC:** Community Development Council

**DED:** District Education Department

**DFID:** UK Department for International Development

**DHS:** Demographic and Health Survey

**DSMS:** Directorate for Social Mobilisation and Shura

**EQUIP:** Education Quality Improvement Program (World Bank)

**FGD:** Focus Group Discussion

**KII:** Key Informant Interview

**MoE:** Ministry of Education

**NESP:** National Education Strategic Plan

**NGO:** Non-governmental Organization

**PED:** Provincial Education Department

**SM:** Social Mobilisation

**SMS:** School Management Shura

**SSI:** Semi-Structured Interview

**ToT:** Training of Trainers

**UNEG:** United Nations Evaluation Group

**USAID:** US Agency for international Development



# **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

## 1.1 INTERVENTION OVERVIEW

The importance of community participation and local ownership of education in Afghanistan is articulated clearly through the 1387 Afghanistan Education Law (MoE, 2008) as well as in the Government's National Education Strategic Plans (NESP). Since 2004, the World Bank has supported the development and reform of Afghanistan's education sector through the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP I & II) to support access to quality education for all children, especially girls. One of the key activities of EQUIP has been the establishment and strengthening of School Management Shura (SMS) in order to build demand for education, increase community involvement in decision-making, ensure inclusivity in education governance, and manage day-to-day operations of education services for girls and boys at local level.

Government and non-governmental education service-providers alike, organise SMSs that function as school-community councils, serving to manage schooling of local children, promote enrolment and retention in education and build relationships between the school and the community. SMSs are comprised of school staff, parents and community members and while they are mandated to include women, for many reasons in practice many SMS are all-male committees.

UNICEF is committed to supporting the Government of Afghanistan in its effort to increase access to good quality education, in particular for girls. UNICEF partnership with the Ministry of Education to build the capacity of SMS members represents one form of support to advance access to education, especially for girls. Social mobilisation is a Social Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) intervention that seeks to change behaviours and the related social norms that affect decisions made by household and community members. Successful social mobilisation increases the adoption of behaviours that benefit both the target audience—in this case mainly but not exclusively parents—and those around them, including their children.

In June 2017, the MoE published a new Social Mobilisation Strategy driven by the Directorate of Social Mobilisation and Shuras (DSMS), a unit created in 2014 by the EQUIP program, now tasked to act as a hub to streamline and coordinate social mobilisation activities in Afghanistan. The DSMS has provincial social supervisors at the Provincial Education Department level (PED) and district social mobilisers at the District Education Department (DED) level to decentralise social mobilisation efforts. The DSMS' role is to build long-lasting relationships with communities by supporting SMS at the school level.

In its social mobilisation strategy, the MoE recognises that DSMS's supervisors and social mobilisers often have limited capacities in terms of communication, project management and leadership skills which prevents them from working with SMS effectively. To address this, UNICEF supported the MoE to organise and implement a five-day social mobilisation Training of Trainers (ToT) in Kabul from October 30<sup>th</sup> to November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. The purpose of the training, called "Capacity building training on Artistry of Social Mobilization" was to build the capacity of 55 DSMS Social Mobilization Trainers from 19 provinces on the institutional role and purpose of SMS, as well as give them tailored social mobilisation techniques to support education enrolment, retention and completion for girls and boys. Following this training, the same group of 55 trainers received a 4-day ToT in May 2017 to enable them to cascade the content to local SMS members in 19 provinces. Master Trainers were selected based on a list provided by the DSMS department to UNICEF, against a set of defined criteria. All of the Master Trainers were working for the DSMS under joint MoE-World Bank EQUIP program as Provincial Supervisors and had been working as trainers on various topics with an average experience of 5 to 8 years.

The objective of this training intervention was to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to mobilise their communities in support of education, especially for girls, including how to identify and address nuanced barriers to education in local communities and motivate parents to enrol and keep their children in school. In order to achieve this, UNICEF supported MoE with technical and financial support, including an international

expert to design the training content, and co-lead the implementation of the Master Training session. UNICEF also provided financial support to implement the Master Training, cascade trainings in 19 provinces. One year after cascade trainings, UNICEF also supported the delivery of a subsequent training session to enable 100 DSMS Master Trainers and staffed officers to monitor the implementation of SMS activities in the field across Afghanistan.

The training approach included a cascaded training model in two languages (Dari and Pashto), whereby following master-training, each trained DSMS Master Trainer would return to their respective locations and replicate the training with their peers. While a one-off activity, this cascaded model was designed to be institutionalised based on the premise that the trained Master Trainers would continue providing regular coaching support and monitoring as part of their daily tasks for the DSMS, extending beyond the lifespan of UNICEF's original support to MoE for this training. Following this Master Training Session in Kabul in 2016, UNICEF internal reporting indicates that DSMS SMS trainers subsequently conducted local training sessions reaching 5,279 SMS members (4,916 males and 363 females) in 19 provinces.<sup>1</sup>

A theory of change was not available for the intervention, however, based on training programme documents and discussions with UNICEF, the MAGENTA Assessment Team reconstructed a simple **theory of change**<sup>2</sup> for the SMS training as follows:

*Communities of parents/caregivers, as well as community-leaders do not always value or understand the importance of education, especially for girls. If MoE provides quality training to SMS members and builds their communication skills, and if that training enables them to work better with communities and successfully promote the benefits of education, then more girls and boys, particularly the most vulnerable, will be enrolled in and complete basic education.*

## 1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Following implementation and prior to considering how best to support DSMS and SMS in the future, UNICEF and the MoE sought to understand more about the implementation of the training, and its subsequent activities in the field, especially in terms of effectiveness and relevance to the needs of duty-bearers (SMS, PED/DED etc) and rights-holders (caregivers and parents, girls and boys).

Building on the original Terms of Reference discussions between UNICEF and MAGENTA in the inception phase led to refinement of the scope of work to maximise the opportunity of the Assessment to build the evidence-base around household-level decision-making processes around education, and to map and coordinate with other actors. This was designed to support future sector-wide collaboration and partnership, as well as strengthen evidence-based decision-making across education stakeholders in Afghanistan.

The **geographic scope** of the Assessment is national based on a representative sample of four provinces; Balkh, Badghis, Kandahar and Nangarhar<sup>3</sup>. The **chronological scope** of the Assessment includes the period since training took place in August- November 2018 through to February 2020 when fieldwork was completed.

Accordingly, the **objectives** of this assessment were refined as follows:

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1 Final SMS Training Report, February 2019.

2 Please refer to Annex 7 for a detailed Theory of Change diagram

3 Provinces account for the geographical and ethnic diversity of Afghanistan with Badghis in West (mostly Uzbeks and Turkmen), Balkh in the North (mostly Tajik and Uzbek), Kandahar in the South (mostly Pashto) and Nangarhar in the East (mostly Pashto). Badghis and Balkh were chosen in priority for the larger number of female SMS members trained in order to ensure their representation in the sample.

1. To assess and determine if and how the DSMS training and subsequent social mobilisation efforts supported or led to the intended positive social and behavioural change among participants and communities in support of primary education.
2. To document and expand the existing evidence about household-level decision-making processes related to education for girls and boys in Afghanistan;
3. To support broader collaboration and coordination around social behaviour change communication programming across the education sector in Afghanistan;

The main **purpose** of this Assessment was to question the reconstructed theory of change, assessing the design of the training and its implementation according to evidenced needs and determinants. The Assessment Team tried to understand what has influenced implementation and identify possible ways to improve future interventions.

The **outputs** of this study include 1) a set of lessons learnt and recommendations related to future efforts by UNICEF and MoE to support SMS through social mobilisation training in Afghanistan (Section 5 and 2) documented evidence about household-level decision-making processes related to education in Afghanistan (Section 3 with full details in *Annex 4*). The intended use of these outputs is to inform decision-making around replication of the DSMS training on social mobilisation. The primary **intended users** of this study are senior MoE officials and technical staff from DSMS, UNICEF and partners. Secondary intended users include other stakeholders (mainly NGOs and donors) working to increase education enrolment, retention and completion rates in Afghanistan such as the Aga Khan Foundation, Save the Children, CRS, CARE, DFID, USAID etc.

The study is guided by the following **key questions**:

1. Was the design of the trainings appropriate given the needs of the target communities and the operating context?
2. To what extent did the training succeed in transferring the desired knowledge to the target participants?
3. Did the knowledge attained from the trainings enable participants, especially women, to implement successful social mobilisation activities in target provinces?
4. Are there alternative strategies that might be considered to achieve the objectives of the trainings?

Further details including sub-questions belonging to each question are included in *Annex 1 Assessment Matrix*.



A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair and eyes, smiling slightly. The image is partially obscured by a large, semi-transparent blue rectangular overlay that covers most of the frame. The word "METHODOLOGY" is printed in white, bold, uppercase letters across the center of the blue overlay.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This piece of operational research was not commissioned nor designed as a formal evaluation. However, this Assessment uses elements of formal evaluation to ensure its outputs are credible and well-constructed. In this way, the assessment draws from the principles and steps of a **theory-based process evaluation, with a utilisation focus**. The design is non-experimental and no attempt was made to create a counter-factual scenario. Baseline data was not available, and so there is no comparative element to this assessment design; only formative assessment is being conducted.

As mentioned briefly in the Inception Report, the Assessment Team drew from UNICEF’s Behaviour Drivers Model (BDM) for this theory-based assessment.<sup>4</sup> This model incorporates a multitude of existing theoretical models that seek to understand why individuals including household decision-makers do or do not practice certain behaviours.

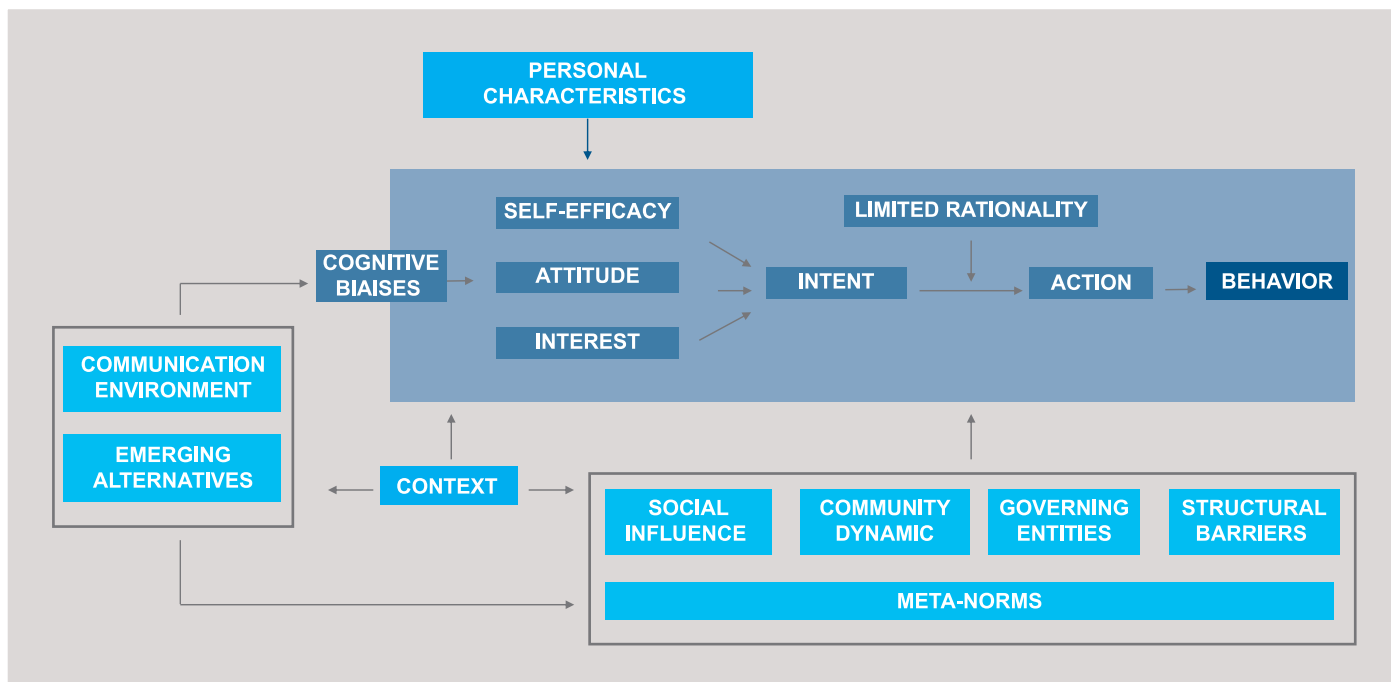


Figure 1: The Behavioural Drivers Model simple overview. Source; Behavioural Drivers Model, UNICEF 2019

The BDM states that behaviours are driven by explicit/conscious and implicit/subconscious decision-making processes that are influenced by a range of different psychological, social and environmental factors. The BDM includes the Social-Ecological Model, through which it is possible to identify and map the different factors that influence decision-making at the household level around education, in order to understand what decision-makers (and to some extent their influencers) believe, expect and prefer, and eventually, do – and why. The BDM was used as a reference tool throughout, from inception to data analysis.

The Assessment Team developed the Assessment Matrix based on the OECD evaluation criteria of **Relevance (including Coherence) and Effectiveness**.<sup>5</sup> The assessment was designed to understand the results of the intervention in terms of Outputs achieved, capturing realisation of Intermediate Outcomes where possible. The exercise did not assess the impact of this intervention on outcomes for children. In the absence of baseline data, assessment of impact of the intervention on outcomes for SMS members was limited to collection of data reflecting self-perception before and after the training. In line with the Terms of Reference, *Efficiency* was

4 Behavioural Drivers Model, UNICEF 2019

5 The inclusion of Coherence as a [new, standalone OECD criteria for evaluation of development assistance programming](#) was made public on 10 December 2019, following initial planning for the design of this assessment but prior to implementation of field-work. As a result, the Assessment Team adjusted some of the sub-questions in the Assessment Matrix to strengthen the approach and better-reflect Coherence with the work of other actors in Afghanistan in relation to social mobilisation for education in Afghanistan.

considered only as compared to feasible alternatives in the context implemented by other education partners in Afghanistan. The OECD criteria of *Sustainability* was not included as the training was designed to be one-off. However, considering the purpose of the assessment to inform potential replication of this training (as well as inform other stakeholders working on similar training in Afghanistan), the Assessment Team has captured *Sustainability* through the inclusion of **Replication** in the Assessment Matrix (See Question 4, *Annex 1*).

In summary, the focus of the assessment has been organised as to address the following questions:

<b>What?</b>	<p>What are we seeing? What does the data tell us about household decision-making processes around education? What patterns are emerging?</p> <p>What happened at the training and after the training – in communities and for school management shura members themselves? What were the outputs of this training, and how likely is the achievement of intended outcomes?</p>
<b>So what?</b>	<p>What do the findings mean? How has the situation affected stakeholders? What could these findings mean now for the implementation of this training intervention, and for the future in terms of other training interventions?</p>
<b>Now what?</b>	<p>What are the options now for main partners to pursue and focus on? What are the resources and risks? When and how does action need to be taken to optimise opportunities and reduce risk?</p>

**Equity concerns** were central to the design and implementation of the study. The MAGENTA Research Team explicitly sought information on whether and how equity, gender equality and human rights issues were integrated into the design and implementation of the SMS training. Furthermore, the study used a collaborative approach throughout; the Assessment Team consulted with all key stakeholders directly in order to ensure the Assessment captures their insights and their experience of the intervention accurately. This was purposefully designed to ensure that the perspective of all the stakeholders was sought, triangulated, analysed and reflected in the assessment, thereby ensuring equity.

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UNICEF guidelines on the **principles and ethics of evaluation** including research involving children were rigorously followed as detailed in *Annex 3*.

## 2.1 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was designed according to a mixed-method approach so that the findings could be triangulated from multiple qualitative and quantitative sources. This approach enabled the Assessment Team to develop robust and well-evidenced conclusions about implementation and effectiveness, and to ensure equity and inclusion in the course of the assessment. The Assessment relied on a combination of primary and secondary data collection methods.

### 1. Literature review of program files

- Literature review on social mobilisation through SMS in Afghanistan

In order to establish a strong foundational understanding of the topic in hand, the MAGENTA Assessment Team conducted a **desk review** of existing literature and reports on factors that affect the demand and supply of education in Afghanistan, and social mobilisation efforts to support education in Afghanistan. In particular, the desk review examined existing evidence around the correlation between support received by SMS from various organisations and their ability to mobilise communities on girls' education issues.

## 2. Primary data collection included:

- Survey and storytelling with 379 trained SMS members using Sprockler<sup>6</sup>
- 24 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with trained SMS; parents and community members; adolescent girls and boys, both in and out of school
- 84 Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI) with parents and community members; adolescent girls and boys; DSMS trainers, school staff and PED/DED staff.
- Key Informant Interviews (KII) with program stakeholders (UNICEF, MoE, NGOs working on SM for education in Afghanistan)

MAGENTA worked with its national partner ATR to implement a series of data collection activities using a range of purpose-built tools. Full details about these tools and their use in the course of this assessment are included in *Annex 2 Primary Data Collection Overview*.

The MAGENTA Assessment Team also conducted **interviews with key informants** in Afghanistan, in particular with UNICEF and social mobilisation experts working with other national and international stakeholders in order to understand alternative approaches and their results. These consultations were used to both gather insights on the factors affecting school enrolment and retention, and to gather further evidence about effectiveness in social mobilisation for education in Afghanistan, as well as challenges and opportunities in this regard.

## 3. Sampling strategies for provinces and individual respondents

A **purposive**<sup>7</sup> approach was used to identify the sample provinces. The four provinces of **Balkh, Badghis, Kandahar and Nangarhar** were selected as representative sample for this national-level Assessment based on the following criteria:

- **Number of SMS members trained, in particular female members** to look into their specific role and what they gained from the training: Over 300 SMS members were trained in each of the provinces selected<sup>8</sup>, including 79 female SMS members in Balkh and 49 in Badghis. There were no or very few female SMS members trained in Southern and Eastern provinces but Nangarhar and Kandahar was selected to look specifically at areas with more conservative social norms preventing girls from accessing education and how SMS can drive change in their communities.
- **Security and access:** With the escalation of conflict in Afghanistan since the withdrawal of most NATO forces

6 [Sprockler](#) is a research tool that enables the collection of quantitative and qualitative data that can be visualised in a quantitative manner. A demographic overview of SMS members surveyed through Sprockler can be found in Annex 6.

7 Purposive sampling is when a researcher uses their own judgement rather than statistically significant methods to identify the sample from the sample frame. In the case of this assessment, the sample was discussed and agreed between UNICEF and MAGENTA based on a set of agreed criteria listed in the inception report.

8 Total numbers of trained SMS members are as follows: 352 in Balkh, 440 in Badghis, 352 in Nangarhar and 220 in Kandahar.

in 2015, insurgents have regained access to large parts of the territory, making it dangerous for research teams to access many districts where the training was conducted. At the time of this inception report, all four selected provinces are rated as accessible by the ATR's team based on their experience and the latest security reports.

- **Geographic area:** Provinces from different areas of the country were selected to enable a comparison among contexts and ethnicities, providing insights into varying factors affecting school enrolment and retention—such as social norms, language or climate. Balkh and Badghis cover the North and West with Tajik and are dominated by Uzbek and Tajik populations; Kandahar and Nangarhar represent Southern and Eastern regions with a majority of Pashtuns.
- **Both rural and urban areas:** The context of education varies widely between urban and rural areas of Afghanistan. Therefore, it is important to include both areas in the study. Balkh, Kandahar and Nangarhar have large urban centres as well as rural areas, while Badghis is more uniformly rural.

Two sampling strategies were used at intervals to guide the selection of individual respondents in this Assessment. For key informants, DSMS, education authority representatives, parents and children a **purposive convenience** approach was used based on a set of individually tailored criteria for each type of respondent (See *Annex 2 on Primary Data Collection*). A **census approach** was used in identifying trained SMS members – all trained SMS from each of the selected sample districts in each of the sample provinces were included in the sample frame for primary data collection through Sprockler. Individual SMS members were selected using a **purposive and convenience approach** for SSI and FGD based on key criteria as described in *Annex 2*.

#### 4. Quality Assurance

Prior to, during, and following data collection MAGENTA employed various quality assurance mechanisms and checks, including:

- **Number of completed Sprockler surveys:** The number of surveys completed was checked once a week to ensure the data collection was proceeding according to plan.
- **Survey duration:** The duration of the surveys was checked against the field test. Absent a valid explanation, any surveys that are 30% longer than or shorter than the maximum and minimum of the agreed-on range were excluded, and the data collection team was asked to repeat the survey.
- **Review of sample quota:** MAGENTA reviewed the profile of the sample—including gender, ethnicity, literacy, education levels and other characteristics as needed—to ensure that the sample aligns with the data collection plan.
- **Review of too many “Do not know” responses or other red flags:** A high proportion of “Do not know” responses may indicate that respondents do not understand the question or are getting fatigued. While these possibilities were mitigated during the survey design and review process, adjustments were made where made when concerns remained.
- **Debrief with enumerators:** MAGENTA conducted an informal de-brief after day one and two of data collection to discuss any issues, including problems with question comprehension and sampling.
- **Internal consistency:** The internal consistency of responses was checked to ensure that the survey is not being completed randomly by someone other than the respondent. The questions identified in the design phase as

relevant for the internal consistency check were reviewed during data collection.

## 2.2 LIMITATIONS

There were a number of limitations that affected the implementation of the Assessment:

- **Accessing SMS members and response rate:** As shown in Table 1 in Annex 2, when arriving in government schools to speak to trained SMS members, a number of SMS members were not available, in particular women in Balkh and men in Kandahar. It should be noted that in most of the provinces, schools were off on winter break when this assessment was conducted. This led to the sampling size being slightly smaller than planned (379 instead of 400) and this also led to the inclusion of fewer female members. This was a challenging limitation as female SMS were already very low in number, representing a small proportion to begin with.
- **Rural/urban disaggregation:** This limitation was identified in the inception phase and discussed with MAGENTA research partners ATR. In absence of an official classification of all communities published by the government, the categorization of communities being in an urban or rural area was made by ATR team. This categorization was based on their and respondents' appreciation of accessibility to public services, population size and existence of basic facilities (school, universities and health centres mainly). Any community located 10km or more from the nearest government school was automatically considered as rural.
- **Income disaggregation:** This limitation was identified in the inception phase and discussed with MAGENTA research partners ATR. Classification of wealth in Sprockler survey and FGDs was based on respondents' appreciation of the level of income in their community, which is pragmatic given the nature of this study but not as rigorous as other methods. The Assessment Team developed a wealth index based loosely on the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) approach.<sup>9</sup> To determine the level of income of households, SSI respondents were asked a series of questions about their ownership of TV, phone, radio, fridge, vehicle or motorbike, home, land, livestock, small business, and if their homes had running water and electricity. Anyone only possessing a phone, renting a house or owning only a little land and a small number of heads of livestock was classified as low-income (the majority), the others who had access to one vehicle and a small business or more land and livestock was classified as middle-income. Based on the objective of the Assessment and selection criteria agreed for each respondent no upper income criteria were set, nor reported missing in fieldwork.
- **Attribution/contribution:** This limitation was identified in the inception phase and tools attempted to seek information about prior trainings in order to mitigate that. About 30% of SMS members surveyed through Sprockler and interviewed stated having previously participated in related training, some of it on very similar topics. Many responses regarding the training under assessment showed that there may have been a degree of confusion among SMS members, and several referenced trainings other than the one provided by UNICEF. This is particularly relevant considering most SMS members would have received just 3 days of training more than 18 months prior to this assessment, and had difficulty recalling the training and its content. As a result, the Assessment faced limitation in separating attribution and contribution of UNICEF's training in a confident way to the changes identified by trained SMS members through self-perception data.
- **General research capability in Afghanistan:** This limitation was identified in the Inception Report and the

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<sup>9</sup> The DHS wealth index is a composite measure of a household's cumulative living standard. The wealth index is calculated using easy-to-collect data on a household's ownership of selected assets which are locally categorised into distinct wealth quintiles.

MAGENTA Assessment Team and partners ATR worked to reduce the impact of this reality on the quality of the research. The data collection tools were developed by an international team including specialists from different countries including Afghanistan, and tested locally by ATR, and revised with MAGENTA. Despite best efforts and tailoring, some data transcripts showed that in spite of receiving training and daily support, some enumerators were not able some of the time to use the tools and guidance as intended and in relation to the research purpose. This was in evidence where researchers struggled to probe respondents to gain meaningful insights, which during quality assurance efforts were found to be affecting data quality. MAGENTA and ATR reacted swiftly and decisively to implement an additional 10% of surveys and SSIs in order to ensure a well-developed, relevant and credible database was established.

A photograph of a group of children, likely in a cold region, wearing heavy winter clothing and hoods. The image is overlaid with a large, semi-transparent blue rectangle. The word "FINDINGS" is centered in white, bold, uppercase letters within this blue area.

## FINDINGS



Unlike a traditional evaluation which is required to provide structured answers to each of the research questions in systematic order, this report presents Assessment Findings based on priority and in line with the themes and narratives emerging from the data analysis.

The Assessment Team has organised the report in this way so that it best meets its objectives of supporting programmatic and technical decision-making around social-mobilisation training for education in the future. The Team acknowledges that programmatic and technical decision-making are different, involving a variety of people who require diverse inputs with different levels of detail. Accordingly, priority findings are presented in this Section of the main report, while full details of the data analysis and discussion are included in *Annex 4 Household Decision-making Processes about Education in Afghanistan*, and *Annex 10 Detailed Data Analysis Report*.

## RELEVANCE OF THE TRAINING DESIGN

### Summary:

- Overall, the design of the training is partly relevant against the needs of duty-bearers (MoE staff including DSMS officials and trainers, SMS members, PED and DED officials) and rights-holders (parents and children, other community members) within the operating context.
- However, the design is not relevant to the prioritised needs of target SMS members and rights-holders in their operational context in terms of:
  - The low level of localisation, specificity and granularity of the training content in terms of segmentation and profiling of key decision makers, and mapping of key determinants for education at household level in order to better support SMS members in their role.
- Absence of training content geared towards inclusive education and child protection to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable children.
- Absence of focus on gender equality in SMS member training content
- Constraints associated with the design of the training implementation model (cascade training) in terms of dose including duration, intensity and frequency.

Relevance is usually understood as the extent to which an intervention is doing the right thing, given a realistic assessment of identified needs of duty-bearers and rights-holders, as well as the requirements of the operating context. The Team assessed the design of the social mobilisation training in terms of its **content and implementation strategy** against the needs of duty-bearers and rights-holders, as well as the operational requirements of the context.

In terms of its **content**, the MoE staff and officials at the central, regional and district level stated that the training content was relevant to build the capacity of SMS, and they appreciated the technical support provided by UNICEF, generally finding the content of the training to have been appropriate and useful. In addition, for 70% of SMS members surveyed, this was their first official guidance or training on social mobilisation, and their role as SMS members in the community. The trained SMS members generally expressed appreciation for the guidance on their role which many stated was unclear. **Many respondents reported that, in the absence of any other training or organised and systematic guidance, the training content matched the needs and priorities of SMS members against their work with the SMS.** Trained SMS members clearly state that the training has supported improved organisation and implementation of the SMS role in the community.

Analysis of the training content indicates a heavy focus on communication skills, motivating the community

and other social mobilization aspects as well as examples of UNICEF-supported programs that need community support, for example the distribution of folic acid tablets. While the training content does include references to decision-makers and some orientation in how to address decision-makers, **the content lacks depth, local specificity and granularity in segmenting and profiling of decision-makers and influencers.** For full details on the profiles of decision-makers and influencers, please see Annex 4 and 8. While SMS members appreciated the use of local examples to demonstrate elements of social mobilisation in practice, data analysis reveals that some trained SMS members recall more about the programming aspects of these examples than the social mobilisation techniques the examples were intended to demonstrate and convey. Moreover, while all trained SMS members reported that the training was useful and 72% reported some increased capacity in terms of techniques and knowledge about behaviour change, few SMS members are actually able to give specific examples about techniques they learnt. Combined, this indicates that while efforts were made to tailor the training to the Afghan context, **the content of the training was not adequately specific, adaptive and localised to be fully relevant to the needs of SMS members and appears not to have been retained.**

In addition, **the training content was not grounded in the complex determinants that influence education related decisions at the household level.** For full details on the profiles of decision-makers and determinants, please see Annex 4 and 8. As a result, findings suggest that the training did not include sufficiently targeted and adaptable strategies to guide SMS members on how and when to engage optimally with which stakeholder on key determinants and at key decision points. This lack of technical specificity and corresponding strategic guidance is important as findings around school shura's ability to influence demand for education is mixed<sup>10</sup>. Most respondents indicate that decision-making processes related to education at the household level are intricate and complex in nature, and the value of the SMS hinges on its ability to act as a bridge between parents, teachers, school authorities and provincial and education directorates. SMS members themselves believe that they are able to solve problems related to education in their community through different social mobilisation activities that require engagement with such intricate processes and complex household decision-making processes.<sup>11</sup> However, findings in this Assessment demonstrate that while 90% of education authority representatives interviewed think that SMS are useful, active and particularly good at identifying and finding solutions to local problems, just 40% of parents and adolescents believe this to be the case. **In the absence of content related to the skills and knowledge required to develop tailored and locally grounded strategies to address segmented and profiled decision-makers based on recognised determinants, it is unclear how relevant this training was to the SMS members in raising awareness and addressing education issues in their communities.**

The training content also missed an opportunity to address the needs of community members, and in particular the most marginalised and vulnerable boys and girls, through important social mobilisation topics such as inclusive education and child protection that should be embedded with more general messages about children's right to education. UNDP estimates that nearly 200,000 <sup>12</sup>school-aged children have a severe disability in Afghanistan and the National Disability Action Plan 2008-2011 states that 73% of children with disabilities are not in school. This means that all communities in Afghanistan are concerned and should be sensitized to the fact that disability should never disqualify a child from attending school, in particular girls who are at risk to be considered a heavier burden than boys since she will never be able to marry. In addition to issues about inclusive education, several respondents mentioned violent and abusive behaviours within household or communities, pointing to a need to communicate about child protection and peaceful conflict resolution, which was not included in the training content.

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10 Characteristics and Effectiveness of School Management Councils (Shuras) in Afghanistan

11 SMS members listed these as persistent home-visits (40%), brokering solutions with community members (35%), working with religious leaders (27%) and awareness-raising activities (20%)

12 Booklet for the Afghan Disability Rights Conference 2017, Georgetown university

*“When girls are at the 5th grade and are at the age of 12 or 13, they drop out school because their parents say that people will look inferiorly at them and will talk badly in absence of them. Some households beat their daughters if they want to attend school, so it prevents them from attending school”, **SSI with an adolescent boy in Kandahar province.***

**In absence of topics aiming at improving SMS members’ capacity to communicate on issues of inclusive education and child protection, the training failed to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable children in communities.**

Finally, the **relevance of the design was undermined by its lack of targeted content to address gender equality in SMS.** This is a critical finding about the design of the training considering the importance of attracting and building the capability of female SMS members.<sup>13</sup> There is a significant gender imbalance among SMS members, with female SMS members constituting 19% of the total number of SMS members engaged in this study – with stark differences across the four provinces.<sup>14</sup> Despite these facts, **the training did not include any specific module promoting female SMS members’ role in an effort to drive demand for their inclusion.** Respondents overwhelmingly state that female SMS members play a critically important role in their perceived ability to access domestic spheres and address many different types of decision-maker. UNICEF sees them as a key actor, the only ones able to support girls’ retention in school at adolescence by addressing issues related to menstruation, access to appropriate sanitary facilities in schools and advocate for their health through iron and folic acid supplement distribution in school. Moreover, there was a consistent level of encouragement across respondents of both genders to increase the number of female SMS members, based on this accessibility as well as their importance as role-models for active female participation in their communities. Lastly, this study finds that female SMS members are less active than their male counterparts for several reasons<sup>15</sup>, suggesting that they need additional and targeted guidance and support to overcome gender inequality and discrimination in their operating context.

Against this backdrop, **the relevance of the training is undermined by the absence of targeted content addressing gender inequality in SMS. This constitutes a missed opportunity to support and retain existing female SMS, while also stimulating male-only SMS members to engage more actively to diversify their SMS membership.**

In terms of the training **implementation strategy**, the design of the training was partly relevant. The training model included a cascade training of five days Master Training by a team of international and national trainers in Kabul for DSMS Trainers, followed by 3 days training of SMS members delivered in the provinces by DSMS Master Trainers. While the majority of Master Trainers and the SMS members were satisfied with this implementation model and believed it was relevant to their needs, the Assessment has identified some areas for reconsideration.

13 According to research carried out by BRAC, mixed-gender shuras are a lot more successful at carrying out social mobilisation activities leading to enrolment than single gender shuras, in particular male-only shuras, showing the urgent need for more female shuras in government schools.

14 According to the sampling method for SMS members, all available trained SMS members were contacted for participation in this study. While in Badghis, there were 60 male and 40 female SMS members, and in Balkh there were 70 male and 30 female, in Kandahar there were 77 male to just one single female SMS member, similar to Nangarhar with 100 male and, again, one single female SMS member.

15 Female SMS members report doing or participating in significantly fewer activities than their male counterparts: 54% of male and just 22% of female SMS met with community members to promote education; 36% of male SMS and 13% of female SMS met with influential members of the community. Similarly, while 20% of male SMS report conducting community mobilisation activities to donate land, cash, materials or space for education in their community, only around 5% of female SMS did. Likewise, 35% of male SMS monitored and visited teachers and classrooms, while only 14% of female SM reported doing so.

Some respondents stated that **the dose of the training model was not appropriate in meeting the needs of participants in terms of duration and intensity**. Many SMS members stated the length of the cascaded training session was inadequate to cover the required content and that they did not have enough time to go into details or have meaningful discussions.

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*“I think it is better if they add to the timings. Some contents and manuals were lengthy, and we could not review them with details”, **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Badghis.***

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*“First of all, the 3 days workshop that we received wasn’t enough because it is a short duration to talk about everything, and it was a long time ago that I don’t remember the details about it”, **SSI with a male SMS member in a rural area in Nangarhar.***

In addition, some trained SMS members stated that the training should accommodate all 15 instead of 11 members of the SMS in each school.

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*“Well as you know the school councils have 15 members. In the previous program all the councils are not part of this program. If possible, in the next program all the councils should be included in the program, it would be good”, **SSI with a DSMS trainer in Balkh***

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*“The days of training should be extended, and it should be provided for all SMS members”, **SSI with a female SMS member in a rural community in Badghis province***

In addition, some DSMS Master Trainers highlight how the training implementation model of cascaded training to SMS members in the provinces is incompatible with their needs and their role considering their financial limitations on the long term. As shown in the quote below, several DSMS Master trainers noted that they are unable to fulfil their role and provide continued training or support to SMS members as part of their daily job due to lack of transportation means and low salaries to cover the large territory of each province they are responsible for. They can only do so when programs such as the one implemented by UNICEF provide specific budget for them to conduct training or follow-up monitoring visits. This often leads to a one-time intervention that is insufficient to foster any tangible and durable change.

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*“Financial aids are the first need of us and the next one is the lack of transportation. We can’t pay for transportation, because we are not paid enough salary.” **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer in Badghis.***

Alongside, secondary sources including program evaluations<sup>16</sup> and key informant interview indicated that **providing SMS members with one-off training of this kind is the entry-point to build their capacity but is not sufficient to impact enrolment and retention of children.** Key informants from NGOs working on similar initiatives in Afghanistan stated that SMS operate best with high-frequency regular mentoring and support, mostly provided during school visits when NGOs take time to discuss SMS' work and issues encountered, refreshing their memory about training and their responsibilities. Other local SMS member training and coaching models also include exchange visits between SMS, pairing weak ones with successful ones to motivate them. With an array of options available in the field, the Assessment finds that **the relevance of the training implementation model is undermined by its one-off nature, intensity of training schedule using the cascaded model considering the scope of the training content, and the lack of continuous support or coaching of SMS members.**

## EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION

### Summary:

- Overall the training was effective in creating a common base for future development of the role of SMS members, and institutionalising key aspects of social mobilisation in the DSMS and SMS field structures.
- However, to be fully effective, the training demonstrates gaps in terms of:
  - Inclusion and gender equity in terms of supporting female SMS members
  - Insufficient support and tailoring to support illiterate SMS members
  - Lack of training materials and delivery in Pashto
  - Ability to support SMS members to implement the follow-up or post-training activities in a meaning full way

Effectiveness generally means the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results. The Assessment Team conducted an assessment of the design of the social mobilisation training in terms of **how well it transferred knowledge to and built skills of DSMS Master Trainers and SMS members**, and **how well-trained SMS members implemented their subsequent social mobilisation activities** in their communities.

The **training is found to have had many strengths in how well it transferred knowledge and skills to targeted DSMS Master Trainers and SMS members.** Several DSMS master trainers were able to explain well the techniques they used to train people in a practical and lively manner and around a third of respondents found the training to be practical, mentioning specifically the use of drama and role play techniques.

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*“The way of presenting the training was that the materials which were given by the UNICEF to us, we provided them to the participants. We trained them using the whiteboards, projectors, group works and individual activities. We had practical parts there as well. We had roll plays, acting and many more”, **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Nangarhar.***

16 GEC projects Baseline, Midline and Endline reports

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*“For example, there were acting of few events as example as well in that training. For example, we acted of absent students in that training. One was teacher, one was director and one was mother etc. so, we did such acts as well to learn it in a practical way”, SSI with a female SMS member in Balkh.*

**Most SMS members reported satisfaction with the level of interactivity, scheduled opportunities for discussion and use of local examples.** A large majority (72%) of respondents provided examples of the way the training increased their capacities, and overall, many SMS members reported learning mostly about their roles and responsibilities.

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*“We learnt many things in the trainings, we didn’t know about the responsibility of the Shura and how to encourage student for education and how to supervise the teachers and the students. We learnt all these things in the training”, FGD with trained male SMS members in a rural area of Nangarhar.*

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*“We learnt many things in the trainings, we didn’t know about the responsibility of the Shura and how to encourage student for education and how to supervise the teachers and the students. We learnt all these things in the training”, FGD with trained male SMS members in a rural area of Nangarhar.*

Alongside these positive findings, there are three specific points related to the effectiveness of knowledge transfer to targeted SMS members that emerged and were well-triangulated across sources and forms of data collection. These represent areas where the effectiveness of the training did not meet expectations of the design or the participating SMS members, and go some way to understanding why half of SMS members were not able to recall a lot from training or remember very little of it.

First, the **effectiveness of the design was undermined by a marked absence of efforts to ensure the inclusion of female SMS members, inhibiting knowledge and skill transfer among female SMS members.** All DSMS Master trainers were male. In provinces with many female participants, a separate training session was held for female SMS members led by a male Master Trainer. In provinces with a small number of female SMS members, female SMS members were invited to participate in a mixed training with male SMS members. Female SMS members did not receive specific support on the basis of positive discrimination such as a transportation allowance which might have made easier for them to access training locations. Finally, the scheduling of some training was not designed with sensitivity to the fact that many female SMS are prevented from or uncomfortable to travel long distances in the afternoon or evening.

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*“There was female members too so it would be better to change [the training] time to be from 8am to 2 or 3pm because we reached to home very late which is a little difficult for females.” SSI with a male SMS member in an urban area in Balkh province.*

The importance of female SMS is outlined clearly in the section on Relevance, and the same points apply here. Respondents across all provinces and areas are clear that female SMS are critical for girls’ enrolment and

retention.

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*“I think there must be more female members in school shura. If there will be a few member of female shura, they can't help the students. The girls can't share their problems and will remain illiterate. A woman can ask the girls about their challenges and problems. They must be the member of school shura and it is important”, **SSI with an adolescent boy from a middle-income, rural household in Balkh province.***

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*“If these women don't participate in this Shura then it will directly have effects on girl's education. If they came and participate there, it will improve the level of girls who have problems in this issue. If they involve our women who are from this area, it will be very useful”, **SSI with a father in an urban community in Kandahar province.***

The effectiveness of the training lies in its ability to provide tailored and equitable support to SMS members, especially female SMS members. As a result, while almost all male SMS members reported the training location to be appropriate and easy to access, only 1 in 4 female SMS members shared the same opinion. This **lack of sensitivity to the needs of female SMS members prevented many female SMS members from participating or fully benefitting from the training, undermining its effectiveness in supporting critical SMS members and raising ethical questions about gender equity and inclusion in the design and implementation of the training.**

Second, **the effectiveness of the training to support knowledge transfer was undermined by its limited local linguistic adaptation.** Although training materials were all available in Pashto, several participants in Nangarhar and Kandahar reported language issues in which the trainer was not proficient enough in Pashto and the materials used were only available in Dari; 22% of SMS members and DSMS Master trainers (all male) found that the training materials used were not adapted to the audience or presented language and translation issues (75% of them are located in Kandahar and Nangarhar in equal proportion).

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*“If they bring a trainer from Kabul who doesn't know our tradition, our problem and our language then we can't understand and learn from him.” **FGD with male SMS members in Nangarhar.***

**This aspect of the training's design was limited in its approach to the issue of Afghanistan's multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society.**

Third, **the effectiveness of the training was limited in its ability to transfer knowledge and skills to illiterate SMS members.** Considering the fact that SMS members need to be representative of and closely in touch with the communities where they work, it is critical that illiterate men and women join the SMS and are supported to engage fully and actively in their role. Data from this study indicates that around one-in-six SMS members are illiterate. However, a variety of sources indicate that more than half of illiterate members who participated in the training can only recall very little of the training and many of them reported that the training was difficult for them to understand and follow. Literacy appears to have been a significant influencing factor both on retention of information and on the perception of the training in terms of its value, and how interactive, useful and

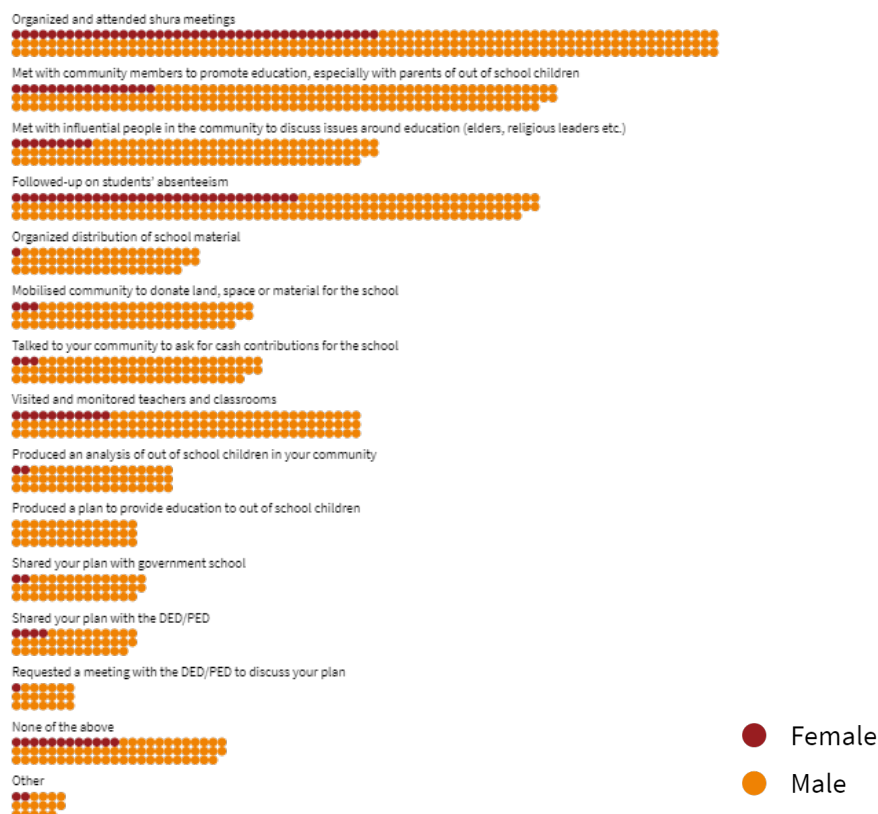
understandable participants viewed it. **Weak engagement with illiterate SMS members significantly reduces the effectiveness of the training in transferring knowledge to 15-20% of all SMS members.**

In terms of the effectiveness of the training in terms of **how well it supported SMS members to implement subsequent social mobilisation activities** in their communities, the findings are mixed. At the end of the training, participants were asked to develop a breakthrough plan for their community, including the four following types of activities:

- Hold meetings with community members to raise awareness
- Carry out an out-of-school children analysis
- Produce a proactive strategy to address identified gaps
- Mobilize community towards cash or in-kind contributions

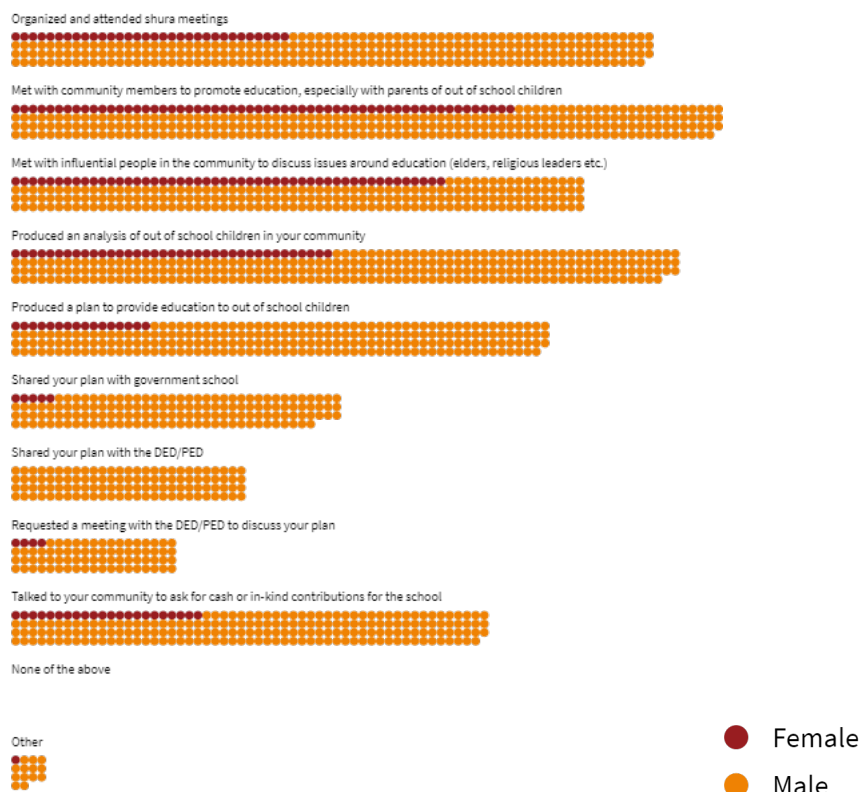
Quantitative data analysis collected through Sprockler shows that SMS members significantly improved their capacity to implement these four main post-training activities as illustrated by the two graphs below. The left-side graph shows the level of activity by type of categories before the training compared to the level of activities post-training on the right-side. Orange dots represents male SMS members’ responses and dark red dots female SMS members’ responses.

### SMS pre-training activities





## SMS post-training activities



Qualitative data aligns somewhat with analysis of these quantitative data.

*“During seminar a survey form had been distributed among the participants regarding to out-of-school children. They were assigned to collect information and report about the number of children. They reported it to school offices and had meetings in school. Then school principals shared the result with council members. Schools made an action plan to increase the number of students who are out of school. It had a positive result and impact. Through this survey they could bring back the out of school children”, SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer*

*“Before participating in the workshops, our capacity was low and we knew nothing, and after attending the workshop, we took serious actions to check the timesheets and follow up with the absent students’ families, and we provided facilities and cooperation to many poor students and encouraged them to keep up with their spirit of learning knowledge”, SSI with a trained male SMS member in a rural community of Nangarhar*

However, **there are gaps in effectiveness in implementing post-training social mobilisation activities.** For example, data indicate that female SMS members appear to have become more active following the training and have improved their capacity to carry out out-of-school children assessments. However, there is a disjunct in how well female SMS use these assessments as their ability to develop a plan, share it with authorities and request meetings with PED/DED is extremely low and improved by only 5-6% post-training. Female members’ ability to mobilize contributions in the community is also much lower than their male counterparts with a smaller progression after the training. **This suggests that while both male and female SMS members are activated to perform the four key follow-up activities, female SMS are not empowered or encouraged to lead and engage with MoE authorities in a meaningful way.**

The table below summarizes the categories of participation SMS members who benefited the most or benefited the least from the training according to both quantitative and qualitative findings.

Categories of participants	Training worked well	Training did not work well
Male SMS members	Male SMS benefited the most from the training: increased capacities and level of activities, in particular ability to implement post-training assessment and advocacy activities.	
Female SMS members	Female SMS members found the training more useful than men and significantly increased their ability to organize meetings to promote education in the community (+60%)	They did not benefit from the training as much as men with lower progression of ability to perform all other types of SM activities, in particular assessment and advocacy activities where they demonstrated very low capacities post-training.
Rural SMS	Most findings were equally distributed across urban and rural areas but rural SMS's level of SM activities increased by 7 to 10 percentage points compared to urban SMS after the training in all categories of activities, suggesting that they benefitted most from the training.	
Literate SMS members	Literate SMS found the training more useful, interactive and easy to understand than their illiterate counterparts. They can remember it better and give more concrete examples of what they learnt.	

Categories of participants	Training worked well	Training did not work well
Illiterate SMS members		A large proportion of illiterate SMS members cannot remember the training very well and found it difficult to understand, unless training was delivered in a very practical way through local examples acted in role plays, dramas etc. This appears to have impacted their ability to implement the follow-up activities.
Pashto speaking SMS		Several Pashto speaking SMS members complained about training materials only being in Dari and trainers not being fluent in Pashto, which impacted their ability to understand the content and implement follow-up activities.
SMS in Badghis province		SMS in Badghis reported the lowest level of post-training activity but still had a significant progression. While they might not have benefited as much as SMS in other provinces, the training still seemed to have a positive impact on them.
SMS in Nangarhar and Kandahar province	SMS in those two provinces are the ones who demonstrate the highest progression in SM activity level post-training, showing that the training was beneficial for them.	

Although quantitative analysis clearly shows that **most SMS members were more active after receiving the training, qualitative findings also suggests that many interviewed community members do not know who**

**SMS members are or what responsibilities they have.** Others find them inactive or unable to find solutions to their problems. This could be considered as a sampling error (perhaps selected interviewees are just not aware of the SMS and its role) however the pattern emerges strongly across provinces, wealth quintiles, type of respondent and between the rural-urban divide. This casts doubt about the authentic effectiveness of the training in supporting the SMS members to implement targeted and useful social mobilization activities in their communities.

Alongside, this study also found that SMS members were often confused between training sessions received, which both reflects a weakness in the training as forgettable, but also a limitation in determining the effectiveness of the training. **As highlighted in existing research and by SMS stakeholder interviews, a one-time standalone training such as this one is not believed to lead to substantial changes in attitudes and behaviours resulting in sustained implementation of follow-up activities.** Data shows that many trained SMS members do not recall the training very well, in particular illiterate SMS members who represented 20% of the total. Almost all surveyed SMS members stated that the training duration was not long enough for them to internalize all the information and many complained about the lack of follow-up and refreshers to truly help them solidify their knowledge. **As such the effectiveness of the training in supporting trained SMS members in implementing post-training activities as intended is not clear.**

## REPLICABILITY OF TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION

### Summary:

- Overall the training was effective in creating a common base for future development of the role of SMS members, and institutionalising key aspects of social mobilisation in the DSMS and SMS field structures.
- However, to be fully effective, the training demonstrates gaps in terms of:
  - Inclusion and gender equity in terms of supporting female SMS members
  - Insufficient support and tailoring to support illiterate SMS members
  - Lack of training materials and delivery in Pashto
  - Ability to support SMS members to implement the follow-up or post-training activities in a meaning full way

Replicability is understood as the institutional capability to replicate an intervention with similar or improved quality to achieve the same outputs and outcomes. For the purpose of this Assessment, the MAGENTA Team considered two aspects to determine replicability; **institutional capability of DSMS** and partners in terms of resources for replication and **collaborative potential of the intervention** to leverage all available resources.

In terms of the **institutional capability of the DSMS** to replicate the training alone, or in partnership with other actors, through interview with several DSMS Master trainers it emerged that **the number of Master Trainers is insufficient and DSMS does not have the financial resources to train additional people and conduct follow-up on the activities.** The existing DSMS Master Trainers are often responsible for hundreds of schools and cannot cover them all to provide training and support to SMS members.

*“Well, as I was not the formal employee of Ministry of Education, I didn’t have the responsibility to follow up the results. I had hired as trainer only for three months and I didn’t have the responsibility to monitor school council social mobilisation activities. I was not feeling comfortable to follow up such activities without any contract”,*  
SSI with DSMS Master Trainer in Balkh

*“No, we did not have any official affairs with the directorate of education nor we had any cooperation with the UNICEF without the training program so we cannot go to a school and monitor the activities of a shura on our own wish. We have not done any monitoring yet”, DSMS Master trainer in Nangarhar*

When the social mobilisation training was originally designed, UNICEF asked the DSMS to provide them with a list of their staff to invite to training and work with, which the DSMS did, choosing trainers working under the World Bank’s EQUIP program. UNICEF was not informed of the fact that this staff was not employed on MoE’s tashkeel<sup>17</sup> but only on contract from EQUIP program and that they would therefore not remain within the DSMS without World Bank’s support<sup>18</sup>. Once UNICEF provided the training to Master Trainers, the DSMS informed them that the trainers no longer had a job and that UNICEF should now hire them. This came as a surprise and a source of disappointment for UNICEF who realized that the training intervention including its cascaded implementation model would not be sustainable without ongoing financial support. Master Trainers were therefore hired on a 3-months contract by UNICEF to conduct cascade training but most of them did not continue to work for the DSMS beyond that point. Key informant interviews suggest that if MoE and UNICEF chose to extend the training to other SMS later, these trainers would be difficult to find and would probably be employed elsewhere. **The lack of institutionalized Master Trainers inhibits the DSMS capability to replicate the intervention.**

In terms of the **collaborative potential of the intervention** to leverage all available resources there are some clear gaps and bright opportunities. Stakeholder mapping of all actors engaged in social mobilisation activities was not conducted by UNICEF and the MoE prior to implementation of the Master Training sessions and subsequent cascaded training sessions in the respective provinces. **This lack of coordination diminished the capability of DSMS to build on existing skills, knowledge and lessons learnt, leaving it unable to harness all available resources to maximise potential for change.** As a result, the training implementation arrangements were exclusive of other actors working in the education sector, including those working to support SMS members with social mobilisation.

However, since the training was implemented, various attempts were made to better coordinate social mobilization efforts in Afghanistan. In 2019, the MoE conducted a social mobilization stakeholder mapping which helped inform a as well-developed database. The MoE then invited identified partners to a meeting in February 2020 to engage social mobilization practitioners and implementers across the country in a DSMS Technical Working Group which was launched in mid-March 2020. The purpose of this working group will be to harmonize and streamline everyone’s approach to social mobilization, in particular SMS training curriculum and additional support. **Until this or a similar platform for collaboration is identified and exploited, the capability of the DSMS to replicate the training effectively remains limited.**

There is high demand for training among DSMS and SMS members. Most trained SMS members found the training useful and all of them consistently asked to receive more training to increase their capacities. With the low level of education and the feeling that volunteer SMS members are left without direction and support, the appetite for learning and for training in general is very high among SMS and their members in Afghanistan.

There is strong quantitative evidence showing that the training was effective in improving the ability of trained SMS members to carry out regular social mobilization activities, especially when it comes to organizing meetings

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<sup>17</sup> The term “tashkeel” refers to regular employment with the Government, working with established contract, often permanent or tenured, and a defined set of ongoing terms of reference.

<sup>18</sup> As part of this report’s review, the MoE noted that aside from World Bank Master trainers, a few MoE staff on tashkeel were invited to UNICEF’s training to build their capacities and some of them are now able to train SMS members independently in the following provinces which were not part of this assessment’s sample except for Kandahar: Paktika, Khost, Maidan Wardak, Kandahar, Herat, Farah, Bamyan, Daikundi and Kunar.

to promote education or visiting homes to follow-up on absenteeism. SMS members also report much higher level of advocacy activities after receiving the training, which is important even if it applies only applies to male members.

Although qualitative evidence supports some of these findings, evidence is very mixed when it comes to SMS ability to drive change and solve education-related problems in their communities. As explained earlier, many respondents do not know who the SMS members are or what they do and do not find them very active. SMS face a variety of issues, in particular a lack of resources which does not allow them to solve problems, many of them related to physical barriers to education such as the lack of schools, infrastructure, material or teachers. In the absence of tailored support and mentoring, female SMS members also seem to struggle to engage families in a dialogue.

When asked specifically about what they learnt during the training, most SMS members are only able to give generic statements on how the training helped them conduct activities better. They are rarely able to point to communication techniques they learnt, specific scenarios helping them address certain categories of community members or segmented decision-makers regarding different types of issue. The only ones who do are SMS members who remember the training as being very interactive and based on real life examples acted through drama or role play. This suggests that the training content needs to be adapted to give SMS members refined and practical tools and scenarios to address specific issues with specific community members and segmented and profiled decision-makers.

In general, men benefited a lot more from the training than women and so did literate SMS members. Fathers and boys also appear to be more connected to SMS than the majority of mothers and girls who do not know who and what SMS are. This indicates that although the need of some male members of the community were met by this training, women's needs were not prioritised as much as necessary to ensure equity and gender equality.

As indicated in the Overview, and reflected in the report, the identification of effectiveness of the training in addressing communities' needs was made very difficult by the fact that many SM partners were already active in the areas covered by UNICEF's training such as Daman district in Kandahar where Save the Children works extensively or Kama district in Nangarhar where BRAC also trains a lot of government SMS. 30% of the SMS included in this research reported receiving prior training by other NGOs, which led to some obvious confusion between training received, making it impossible in many cases to attribute training benefits to UNICEF's training or to someone else's. This also poses the issue of duplication of resources. Some SMS who had never received any support before might have benefited more from UNICEF's training than SMS who were already being supported by other NGOs.

According to findings related to the main challenges affecting children's access to school as well as existing research, the idea that SMS priority should be the need to address low demand for education seems to be misplaced in many instances. The data indicates that if parents had the financial means to sustain their family and if there was a school close to home providing a safe environment and quality education, most Afghan parents would enrol their children, including their daughters. The main challenge that however needs more attention is the determinants behind girls' high level of dropout and removal from education at adolescence. This profile of out-of-school children appears to be influenceable by SMS members, in particular when it comes to delaying marriage, preventing harassment or reframing attitudes related to harmful gender norms, social economy and honour codes. SMS have an important role to play in mobilizing communities, in particular when it comes to engaging men who are the key to girls' access to education in a strictly patriarchal society. Respondents across the data collection activities stated clearly that the most effective way to ensure girls' access to education is by empowering women and girls, including female SMS members, and engaging pro-actively and skilfully with

men, including fathers and uncles as well as today's brothers, cousins and neighbours who are tomorrow's fathers and fathers-in-law.

A photograph of a woman wearing a blue headscarf and a blue top, holding a baby wrapped in a white blanket. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue rectangle. The text is centered within this blue area.

## **CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNED**



After careful analysis of the context, influencing factors of implementation of the training and its intended subsequent activities, the following recommendations are suggested.

## 5.1 TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRAINING CONTENT AND DELIVERY

The SMS training content would benefit from adaptation in several ways to meet the needs of its target participants:

### 5.1.1 Adapting training to the needs of SMS members:

Recommendations to review the training implementation model include:

1. Extend cascade training duration to be the same as the ToT, 5 days instead of 3. This would give SMS members more time to internalize information and encourage interactive participation.
2. Review the possibility of exploiting 96% access to internet among surveyed SMS members through smartphone by considering hi-tech based addition to the training or coaching model.
3. Explore possibilities of a local school- or community-based training and coaching model that works on the basis of key-SMS members (male and female) working together with school principals to train the other members of the SMS.

#### Recommendations to review the content of the training include:

Training content would benefit from categorising key decision-makers and influencers and key determinants driving their decision-making process. This would allow for a differentiation of specific barriers to address for SMS to adopt a more targeted approach.

- Identify determinants SMS can and should be able to influence such as social norms for example and develop scenarios and strategies of engaging with key decision-makers on these specific determinants (through role play, drama etc.) that SMS members can easily refer to in specific types of situations. (for example, recommending that for attendance issues they talk to mothers in priority about reducing house chores and what alternatives they can propose). While SMS cannot be expected to build a school for girls or hire teachers, they can mobilise communities around issues of harassment, talking about its consequences, encouraging fathers and uncles to talk to their sons, engaging with young boys etc.
- Since demand for education is very high for young girls in primary grades and does not need specific action from SMS, training should focus on supporting girls' retention in school through their adolescence and beyond with specific messaging adapted to the issues they face around that time: early marriage, perception of risk to reputation and honour etc.
- A short module on inclusive education should be added to the training, explaining why it matters and giving examples of solutions implemented by other partners in Afghanistan to increase disabled children's access to school. It should be mandatory for the post-training out of School children analysis conducted by SMS to include a specific analysis of disabled children in the community and how their needs could be met. SMS members should be encouraged to include this in their advocacy plan both with government school

administration and with local authorities.

- Consider a short module on child protection. Anecdotal evidence shows that there is a lot of violence inside the home (with girls reporting being afraid to ask their parents to go to school for fear of being beaten) or that sometimes solutions chosen by SMS lead to unforeseen violence (such as police beating young men denounced for harassing girls).

Since male members of the family have been determined to be key decision-makers and influencers in terms of girls' ability to enrol in school and continue their education,, training content should be geared towards engaging fathers, uncles, brothers and young men in general. Engaging men in a meaningful way is the most efficient manner to ensure that girls will be educated in the future at higher levels than they are now. This cannot be stressed enough based on this research but also on all other research findings existing in Afghanistan.

Include and engage with illiterate SMS members to develop more user-friendly tools and training content, including the use of more visuals in presentations (pictures, drawings etc). Video or audio recordings such as the ones developed by AEPO and used in STAGES program would also be an effective way to engage SMS members, in particular illiterate ones, on specific topics. This could cover early marriage prevention for example through specific scenarios adapted to the local context. These recordings need to be produced in local languages and could then be shared with SMS members who can use them during meetings in their communities to engage all members.

Revise ToT structure and approach to concentrate on providing trainers with techniques to use role play, drama, group work etc. based on local examples they can easily identify with. All the techniques and scenarios taught should focus on providing SMS with communication skills enabling them to engage with community members. Master Trainers should be asked to adapt these interactive exercises to the local context where they will cascade trainings in, using local language and examples participants can easily identify with. They should not use a Powepoint and theoretical examples, unless it contains visuals supporting the text on each slide.

Address gaps and weaknesses in terms of gender equality and equity in the design of the training content and its approach. More attention needs to be paid to female members' needs to support their participation. UNICEF and MoE should make sure to train, hire and empower female trainers and offer gender separate training, especially in the most conservative areas. In places where the training location is far from home, funding should be dedicated in the budget to pay for transportation fee and/or to include a mahram to accompany them. UNICEF and MoE should also consider inviting female CDC members<sup>19</sup> to future training to make them agent of change and build a stronger link between SMS and CDC.

Include a module on gender inclusion and female SMS members' role with a particular goal to drive community's demand for more female SMS members so that they are selected in higher numbers in government schools.

Revise all training materials in Pashto and make sure that trainers sent to Pashto areas speak the language fluently.

### **5.1.3 Use behavioural nudges within training content**

A nudge is a technique used by choice architects in order to change someone's behaviour in a very easy and

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<sup>19</sup> Under the Citizen Charter Program, 35,000 CDCs were created in Afghanistan to plan, negotiate and implement local projects under the oversight of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. 30% of CDC members are female and each CDC has an education Sub-Committee who could act as a link between local SMS, wider community and government.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

low-cost way, without reducing the number of choices available. It is recommended that training materials are designed to incorporate behavioural change nudges. The following principles can be included:

- Social proofing – highlighting instances where other similar communities are adopting the desired behaviours. This creates a sense that others, who are relatable, have already adopted the behaviour and encourages them to do the same. People want to be like everyone else and are heavily influenced by what they perceive everyone else is doing.
- Anchoring – The first fact, number, or figure a person hears will bias their judgements and decisions down the line. Therefore, presenting important facts and information at the start of any training will mean that the trainee will be more likely to absorb and adopt the desired behaviours
- Default -choice architecture: people tend to choose the easiest option to avoid complex decisions. Defaults provide a cognitive shortcut and signal what people are supposed to do. Therefore, presenting desired behaviours as default behaviours as opposed to behaviours someone needs to “opt-in” to makes a difference

## 5.2 OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In light of the findings and in a context where funding is decreasing, MOE, UNICEF and partners should build on the first training they delivered to 5,000 SMS members and provide additional support instead of extending the training to additional districts. As previously discussed, one training alone is not sufficient to bring durable change and increase capacities in a meaningful way but it is an excellent entry-point to do so. UNICEF and MoE could work on an approach combining a refresher training with parallel support through internet, phone or other means of communication. If budget allows, some extra support to SMS should be considered to help them solve some priority issues in their community through small grants for example.
- Monitoring must be carried out regularly in order to measure progress but also show commitment to SMS who feel abandoned when no one comes to see them after a one-time training. This is especially true if UNICEF or MoE decides to provide small grants which will need to be monitored closely to make sure the funding is used in a fair and transparent way. Ideally, monitoring should be carried out by MoE representatives such as DED or DSMS staff to build stronger relationships between communities and government. If this cannot be done, other avenues could be explored at the local level, in particular through Community Development Councils (CDCs) and their education sub-committees for example.

## 5.3 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

- UNICEF reported that a Social Mobilisation technical working group had been launched in Kabul in mid-March 2020, chaired by UNICEF and the DSMS and co-chaired by Save the Children for the next six months before it rotates. This working group will gather all actors involved in social mobilisation in an effort to harmonize and streamline practises, in particular SMS training curriculum. The goal is to use resources in a more effective way and avoid duplication which is currently happening all over Afghanistan. This is an excellent opportunity for UNICEF to share some of the findings and recommendations of this report and maybe team up with other partners working in the same areas to provide refresher training and more regular follow-up.

- The Social Mobilisation technical working group is a good opportunity for UNICEF, education partners and the MoE to discuss ways to improve participation of women in government school SMSs. Clear directions have to come from the MoE for government schools to fulfil the minimum 30% female member participation and work on increasing it to 50%. Female members are essential to access female members of the community and support girls' retention in school, particularly during adolescence. In addition to the issue of female participation in SMSs, technical working group partners should develop a strategy focusing on increasing adolescent boys and girls' ability to participate in education decision-making that concerns them directly. Qualitative findings show that they feel powerless when it comes to adults deciding for them. Social mobilisation activities should engage them as a group and identify ways in which they can participate and be heard.
  
- UNICEF's approach to train government staff in an effort to build capacities in a sustainable way should continue with a strong advocacy element to make sure that those trainers are hired on MoE tashkeel. This should be clarified and agreed upon at the beginning of projects with a commitment from the MoE or at least a long-term plan on how to retain skilled staff within the ministry. If this is not possible due to limited resources, UNICEF should coordinate with other donors to see how these trainers could work across several projects (focusing on large multi-year ones such as EQUIP, Citizen Charter etc.) with a plan for a continuation of contracts. That way these trainers would be easy to find whenever they are needed so that training is not lost and so that they can continue building their capacities through time.
  
- MOE and UNICEF could consider the establishment of a joint roster of trained Master Trainers to support the training and coaching of SMS in area of operation.
  
- MOE and UNICEF could consider the development of a SMS buddy system where weaker SMS are paired and supported with strong SMS in to enable peer-to-peer support across actors in local areas
  
- MOE and UNICEF could develop and generate a compendium of positive deviance and best practice or most effective strategies identified by field colleagues and staff to support household and community engagement in education.



## ANNEXES

# ANNEX 1. RESEARCH MATRIX

Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection instruments and sources
<b>Key Research Question 1-Was the design of the trainings appropriate given the needs of the target communities and the operating context?</b>		
<p>1.1 - What is household level decision-making process around access to and retention in education look like in Afghanistan? Who governs this process precisely? How is it different for girls and for boys, in rural or urban areas and across wealth quintiles, as well as for children with a developmental delay or disability?</p> <p>1.2 - What are the key determinants in that decision-making process? What equity considerations exist?</p> <p>1.3 - Who influences the key decision-makers in this process at the household and community level?</p> <p>1.4 - What social mobilisation strategies currently exist and demonstrate evidence in supporting education enrolment and retention for girls and boys in Afghanistan? Are there any indications of how and why some alternative strategies are more effective than others?</p>	<p>Identified needs of each target group</p> <p>Influencing aspects of the operating context related to social mobilisation interventions.</p> <p>Training objectives</p> <p>Alignment between design, content and implementation of training package with what is known about decision-making processes around education enrolment and retention, operational requirements and evidence of effective practice for social mobilisation in Afghanistan</p>	<p>1.1 Literature review, KIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, Community Mapping and FGD with SMS and parents, SSI with SMS, community leaders and parents</p> <p>1.2 Literature review, KIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD with SMS and parents, SSI with SMS, community leaders and parents</p> <p>1.3 Literature review, KIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD with SMS and parents, SSI with SMS, community leaders and parents</p> <p>1.4 Literature review, KI with education sector actors at central and local levels, Sprockler with SMS</p>

Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection instruments and sources
<p>1.6 - How did the training design and content support SMS in Afghanistan to engage with and address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ this key aspects of the decision-making process in terms of targeting, determinants and influencers</li> <li>▪ techniques and knowledge about behaviour change and support for community-engagement to identify common problems, seek solutions and mobilise communities to realise solutions</li> <li>▪ operational requirements and ethical considerations</li> <li>▪ M&amp;E for results-based management of training and subsequent expected post-training activities by SMS in local communities</li> <li>▪ Leveraging of partnerships to support coordinated and meaningful social mobilisation efforts to support education of girls and boys in SMS catchment areas</li> </ul>		<p>1.5 KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD with SMS and parents, SSI with SMS, community leaders and parents, Sprockler with SMS</p> <p>1.6 Sprockler with SMS, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD with SMS and parents, SSI with SMS, community leaders and parents,</p>



Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection instruments and sources
Key Research Question 2 -To what extent did the training succeed in transferring the desired knowledge to the target participants?		
<p>2.1 - Was the training program implemented in its complete form and as intended in all locations, on time and within budget with the participation of the required number and type of targeted male and female SMS?</p> <p>2.2 - What are the major influencing factors that affected achievement of the targeted learning outcomes of the training package for targeted SMS?</p>	<p>The extent to which the program was implemented as planned</p> <p>Evidence of enabling factors, barriers and bottlenecks that influence achievement or non-achievement of the intended learning outcomes for targeted SMS</p>	<p>2.1 - Literature review, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels</p> <p>2.2 - Literature review, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD with SMS, SSI with SMS, Sprockler with SMS</p>
Key Research Question 3-Did the knowledge attained from the trainings enable participants, especially women, to implement successful social mobilisation activities in target provinces?		
<p>3.1- To what degree were the intended subsequent activities to be implemented by male and female SMS carried out in targeted communities?</p> <p>3.2- What are the major influencing factors that affected implementation of the subsequent 4 criteria of training success?</p> <p>3.3- For whom has this program worked well and not worked so well? From the sample of SMS identified in this research what positive deviance practices or aspects of implementation exist?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The extent to which sampled male and female SMS can demonstrate 4 criteria of training success are present:</li> <li>▪ Hold meetings</li> <li>▪ Carry out an OOSC analysis</li> <li>▪ Proactive strategy to address identified gaps</li> <li>▪ Community mobilisation towards cash or in-kind contributions.</li> </ul>	<p>3.1 Literature review, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, SSI with SMS, Sprockler with SMS</p> <p>3.2 Literature review, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD and SSI with SMS, Sprockler with SMS</p> <p>3.3 Sprockler with SMS, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD and SSI with SMS, FGD and SSI with parents</p>

Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection instruments and sources
Key Research Question 4. Are there alternative strategies that might be considered to achieve the objectives of the trainings?		
<p>4.1- Based on the analysis of the context, the influencing factors of implementation of the training and its intended subsequent activities, what recommendations can be drawn about how to adjust the training program to maximise its value and potential for achieving results for children?</p> <p>4.2- How effective were the trainings in supporting SMS to leverage all available social mobilisation efforts in their communities to support enrolment and retention in education for girls and boys?</p>	<p>The extent to which the training represents a competitive model in terms of effectiveness and efficiency when compared with other available models for social mobilisation related to education enrolment and in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The extent to which sampled male and female SMS used the training to network with other actors sharing their goals, and build social mobilisation partnerships for shared objectives.</p>	<p>4.1 Literature review, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels</p> <p>4.2 Sprockler with SMS, KIIs with education sector actors at central and local levels, FGD and SSI with SMS, FGD and SSI with parents</p>

## ANNEX 2. PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Primary data was collected through the use of three different tools:

- Sprockler survey with 379 trained SMS members
- 24 FGDs with trained SMS; parents and community members; adolescent girls and boys
- 84 Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI) with parents and community members; adolescent girls and boys; DSMS trainers, school staff and PED/DED staff.

MAGENTA worked with its national research partners ATR to implement a series of data collection activities using a range of purpose-built tools.

### 1. Sprockler survey and storytelling

Outputs of the social mobilisation training were captured using Sprockler, a research tool that enables the collection of qualitative data that can be visualised in a quantitative manner. SMS members who attended the training were asked quantitative survey questions to assess the following:

- Participation and implementation of the training
- Quality of trainings (pedagogy, location etc);
- Relevance of trainings;
- Learning outcomes;
- Barriers to training;
- Follow up on action plans;
- Recommended improvements;

They were also asked to tell a 'story' about their experience (storytelling) and then give meaning to this experience *themselves* by answering a few questions concerning their story. These follow-up questions have a special form and provide the quantitative data with the qualitative data of the stories, allowing us to also collect data on the quality of the training itself. Stories can be collected through interviews and in Dari and Pasto. The interviews will then be back translated into English. These questions enhance authenticity and accurateness of the data and increase the commitment or ownership of the respondent.

	Male (planned)	Male (actual)	Female (Planned)	Female (actual)	TOTAL (actual)
Kandahar	100	77	0	1	78
Balkh	50	70	50	30	100

	Male (planned)	Male (actual)	Female (Planned)	Female (actual)	TOTAL (actual)
Badghis	60	60	40	40	100
Nangarhar	98	100	2	1	101
Total	<b>308</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>379</b>

**Table 1: Sprockler survey participants**

## 2. Focus Group Discussions

A Focus Group discussion is a qualitative data collection activity where a facilitator and a note-taker facilitate a discussion among a group of purposively collected participants to discuss a set of pre-determined guiding questions. Unlike a group interview, where the dialogue captured reflects discussion between researcher and participants, the purpose of the FGD is for the researcher to facilitate and document discussions among participants rather than lead a line of questioning for group response. Following completion of the Sprockler survey at each province, preliminary data was used to confirm the questions guiding the implementation of a series of Focus Group Discussions with trained SMS and parents. A total of 24 FGDs were conducted with SMS members/ teachers, and parents of school-aged children who are both in and out-of-school in treatment districts in each province. 2 FDGs were conducted in each province with a group of adolescent girls and boys (separately) so they can share their perspective on barriers faced by girls and the role they would like to see SMS members play. Both men and women will be included in the FGDs. Efforts were made to include both urban and rural perspectives in the FGDs.

Each FGD had six to eight participants and lasted for about 90 minutes.

Province	Target Group	Men/Women	
Kandahar	2 FGDs with SMS members/ teachers	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	6 FGDs in Kandahar
	2 FGDs with Parents	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	
	2 FGDs with adolescent girls and boys	1 FDG girls/1 boys	
Balkh	2 FGDs with SMS members/ teachers	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	6 FGDs in Balkh
	2 FGDs with Parents	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	
	2 FGDs with adolescent girls and boys	1 FDG girls/1 boys	
Badghis	2 FGDs with SMS members/ teachers	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	6 FGDs in Badghis
	2 FGDs with Parents	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	
	2 FGDs with adolescent girls and boys	1 FDG girls/1 boys	
Nangarhar	2 FGDs with SMS members/ teachers	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	6 FGDs in Nangarhar
	2 FGDs with Parents	1 Male FGD/1 Female FGD	
	Nangarhar	1 FDG girls/1 boys	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 FGDs in treatment districts</b>	<b>92</b>	

**Table 2. FGD Breakdown**

### 3. Semi-structured interviews (SSI)

Based on the key research questions and preliminary data from the initial literature review, MAGENTA designed a set of questions to guide 84 semi-structured interviews with trained SMS members, community leaders and parents of children who are enrolled and attending different forms of education services at local levels, as well as those whose children are not attending education services. A questionnaire was also developed to probe into findings from focus group discussions with adolescent boys and girls and 2 adolescent boys and 2 adolescent girls were interviewed in each province. Particular attention was paid to interviewing an equal number of male and female community members with about half of them having out of school children or in-school children with irregular attendance. In parallel, semi-structured interviews were be conducted with school staff, and PED and DED staff to better understand the challenges that students face from the perspective of teachers and school administration. Finally, DSMS master trainers were interviewed in selected provinces to understand their perspective on the training they received and their experience cascading its content to local SMS members.

	SMS members	Parents	Adolescent boys and girls	school staff/ PED/DED	DSMS Master Trainers	TOTAL
Kandahar	4	7	4	4	2	17
Balkh	4	7	4	4	2	17
Badghis	4	7	4	4	2	17
Nangarhar	4	4	4	4	2	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>84</b>

Table 3: SSI survey participants

## ANNEX 3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the objective of this study to assess and contextualise the 2018 Training of Department of SMS members in social mobilisation, this study followed UNEG ethical standards for evaluations, informed where relevant by UNICEF's Ethical Research Involving Children.

**The four UNEG ethical standards include:**

- Evaluators should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relationships with all stakeholders;
- Evaluators should ensure that their contacts with individuals are characterised by respect;
- Evaluators should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information; and
- Evaluators are responsible for their performance and conduct.

Conducting primary research requires high ethical standards to ensure that false expectations are not raised amongst respondents, confidentiality is maintained, and respondents are never forced to participate or encouraged to speak about subjects that may be traumatising. The MAGENTA Research Team and partners ATR drew on its experience in similar settings to ensure that these standards are met. Ethical considerations influenced the entire research process, including design, composition, recruitment of and contracting of individual or institutional support, and management of the Research Team; consultations and interviews with informants and respondents; as well as data storage and use.

Considering the extensive data collection with vulnerable people including children and adolescents, all ATR enumerators were trained for 1 day on child protection and safeguarding by a recognised and qualified Child Protection Specialist. All data collectors were briefed on guidelines for ethical research involving vulnerable populations as well as practical steps during field work to ensure adherence with ethical research standards. These included:

- **Ensuring the safety of participants:** this means that the environment in which research is conducted is physically safe.
- **Recognising the participants are vulnerable:** this means that the researchers and enumerators were mindful of local conditions and made reasonable efforts to ensure that the interactions were carried out in a manner that was considered respectful to all respondents. For example, power dynamics and points of potential discrimination between respondents on the basis of gender, ethnicity, area or perceived/actual ability were considered in advance and purposefully mitigated in planning and implementation of data collection activities by researchers and enumerators.
- **Ensuring that people understand what is happening at all times:** This was ensured through the use of local researchers, so that research was conducted in the appropriate language and dialect through fieldworkers who are familiar with local customs and terminology.
- **Clarifying the purpose:** this involved setting and communicating clear parameters for the interviews to the respondents, which includes clearly stating the purpose, the limits and what the follow up will entail.
- **Informed consent:** all respondents were given sufficient information about the purpose of the study and

the reason for their selection to participate in data collection. All researchers and enumerators were trained to ensure that there was no explicit or implicit coercion so that potential respondents were free to make an informed decision on their involvement in the fieldwork. Respondents were also informed that they can choose to not respond to all or any of the questions at any time. Explicit oral consent was sought from each respondent before carrying out any research activity.

- **Anonymity:** given that research respondents shared considerable amounts of personal information, MAGENTA assumes responsibility to ensure that their confidentiality is maintained, and personal information is protected. This is operationalised by ensuring that all datasets are *anonymised*, in the sense that all identifiers of people are removed before any data is shared beyond the research team.

All efforts were made to protect children, adults, households, and communities against any form of harm, manipulation, and malpractice following established ethical guidelines. All enumerators and researchers were trained on what to do if any respondent became distressed at any time throughout the course of the research data collection activities and were closely supervised to ensure that any instances involving ethical queries were responded to promptly and in full.



# ANNEX 4. HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES RELATED TO EDUCATION

**1.1 - What does the household-level decision-making process around access to and retention in education look like in Afghanistan? Who governs this process precisely? How is it different for girls and for boys, in rural or urban areas and across wealth quintiles, as well as for children with a developmental delay or disability?**

Household-level decision-making processes around education in Afghanistan are complex and there is a great diversity. **The “household” itself varies and is understood differently across different settings.** A household is commonly understood as a group of people living and eating together.

In Afghanistan the household ranges between nuclear families of three or four people, to 14 or more people representing multigenerational members of the same patrilineal family living altogether – averaging at 8 people per household. It is customary for women to move in with their husbands’ family at marriage. Adult children usually live in the family home of their parents or in-laws throughout their life. In extended family households, three or four generations may live together. This may be in walled compounds in which small domestic units (such as couples) have their own room, but the entire extended family shares a courtyard. In these communal living spaces, it is common that women are expected to and do in fact work together to take care of, discipline and educate their own and each-other’s children.

For these reasons, **for the purpose of this study the definition of household expands to accommodate family members who do not live together in the same unit but may live in the same compound (or not) but exert influence over the lives of other members of the family.**

Within this context, **two salient points of decision-making processes at the household level related to education are noted by respondents** in this study. The first constitutes a set of larger, overt decisions to determine whether or not a child is enrolled in or permitted to attend school. This point occurs when children reach school-age at around six years of age and caregivers decided whether or not to enrol the child in school. This point occurs again when a child, especially a girl, reaches adolescence from around 10 years of age. However, as discussed later in this Section, this point can also occur at any moment in a child’s academic career depending on a range of individual, social and environmental factors.

The second point in education decision-making processes related to education at the household level constitutes a set of smaller and covert but much higher-frequency decisions around whether or not a child who is enrolled in education actually goes to school on any particular day. This point in decision-making occurs daily at the household level but informs an incremental process of disengagement from education and schooling. **For the purpose of ease, these two points of decision-making related to education at the household level are referred to throughout this report as *enrolment/removal* and *absenteeism/drop-out*.**

While the ultimate outcomes for children are the same – denial of the right to education and exclusion from organised learning, with all the implications this bears – respondents frame these two points in decision-making quite differently. **Respondents characterise non-participation in education in the case of enrolment/removal in terms of non-acceptance or removal from school as a decisive, conscious or reactive decision. Respondents characterise non-participation in education in the case of absenteeism/dropout in terms of re/de-prioritization of schooling and learning resulting in a gradual process of disengagement that leads to dropout from school.** While the root-causes or drivers of the decisions made in these moments are broadly similar, there is a significant difference in prioritisation and salience of each factor.

Understanding who governs and who influences household-level decision-making in terms of enrolment/removal and absenteeism/dropout is foreshadowed by complex individual, social and environmental dynamics. **Household power dynamics that emerge in decision-making processes reflect not only the complexity of individual family structures and size, but also overarching cultural, social, economic and political realities in Afghanistan.** Notably, women’s engagement in household decision-making processes to both overt and covert decisions varies greatly, including in relation to education.

Afghanistan demonstrates a strong collectivist, hierarchical and predominantly patriarchal culture, has been instable and conflict-prone in many places for over a decade, and faces a range of deep challenges related to poverty. Against this backdrop, it is unsurprising that the majority of respondents and informants (64%) state that **fathers constitute the sole decision-makers in most homes with regards to the overt decisions of enrolment or removal of children from schools – both government or community-based schools.** This finding holds across wealth quintiles, provinces and rural-urban divide as reported by individual and groups of male and female respondents of different types. Most respondents characterise decisions to remove children from education as lasting or permanent and conscious decisions that are difficult to reverse.

Alongside this block majority there is some diversity. It is clear that in three out of four provinces, Kandahar as the exception, and particularly among urban areas, it is widely reported (53% of all respondents) that mothers and fathers discuss the decisions taken around their child’s education. Respondents often qualify this by stating that, while the decision is discussed between mothers and fathers, the father’s opinion on such matters typically weighs more than that of the mother. In this instance, **where fathers and mothers discuss decisions related to a child’s enrolment/removal, fathers can be seen as primary rather than sole decision-makers.** As stated succinctly by an adolescent boy during an interview in Nangarhar; “[f]athers have the main role in these decisions and the mothers also have role but not as much as fathers”. Just 12% of respondents stated that mothers could be the primary or sole decision-maker in matters related to enrolment of school-aged children in school, and only in the absence of the father or an elder brother.

While it is clear that the larger decisions of enrolling or removing children from school appear firmly in the hands of fathers, many sources confirm that **mothers constitute the typical day-to-day decision-makers on whether children – especially girls – attend school or not, on that day.** In line with socially prescribed gender roles in Afghanistan, respondents report that domestic issues including daily routines, allocation of housework, and school attendance remain women’s issues; mothers are children’s primary caregivers, responsible for getting children up, dressed and to school every morning. Mothers decide if they keep girls at home to complete housework rather than sending them to school, and mothers decide if the weather or the road looks unfavourable. **As such, mothers play a significant role in more covert or incremental decision-making processes around attendance, ultimately linked to retention and drop-out.**

“

*“After the father [has made his decision] the mother makes the decisions about their daughter. Because the mother is always at home, however the father is not at home all the time. Every day it is their mother who tells [the children] to go to school, and she gets [them and herself] ready and she goes to school every day”*  
**Adolescent girl, FGD, urban area in Badghis.**

Many respondents describe these day-to-day decision-making processes related to attendance as ad-hoc,

circumstantial and gradual, especially in their link to drop-out.

## 1.2 - Who influences the key decision-makers in this process at the household and community level?

- Mothers are key influencers at the household level

Respondents report that in the majority of households, fathers are the sole or primary decision-makers in relation to enrolment/removal, and mothers are often the primary decision-makers on day-to-day attendance, which influences drop-out.

Besides this role as primary decision-maker in the day-to-day sense, mothers constitute a significant influencer of father's in their decision-making processes. **Respondents state that many mothers are in a position to positively or negatively influence fathers as sole or primary decision-makers in decisions related to enrolment/removal from education for boys and girls.** Mothers' level of education appears to be a reliable predictor of positive influence of fathers in supporting enrolment of children in education, and completion of schooling, especially for girls. Conversely, mothers' levels of literacy not a predictable or reliable indicator since many respondents including illiterate mothers stated that illiterate mothers were keen advocates of their daughters' education in the hope that they can secure a better life for their daughters through education.

In terms of positive influence in favour of girls education, many respondents referenced how **mothers can influence by advocating with and persuading fathers to "delay the moment of drop-out** and allow their daughters to get a few more years of additional education" (Adolescent girl, FGD, Balkh province). With regards to negative influence against girls' education, many respondents highlighted how a mother's perceptions of their child's (particularly their daughter's) academic capabilities can influence father's decisions about enrolment in or completion of education. Respondents frequently state that **mothers who believe that their daughters have "learned enough for a girl" or are "not very good at school", are less likely to advocate with fathers for to ensure their daughter's completion of basic education.** As one interviewed female SMS Member in Balkh put it, *"Sometimes the mother's way of thinking is not good; she says that [her] daughter should stay at home and learn sewing and there are no benefits for her to attending school"*.

In a final and related point, **respondents uniformly link mothers' influence over the day-to-day or micro-level decision-making processes related to attendance, especially related to housework and girls' engagement in learning/school and dropout.**

“

*"Women in our area often do not allow their daughters to go to school, because they think it is better for their daughtersto help them with housework instead"* **SSI, father in a rural, middle-income household, Kandahar.**

Mothers are consistently identified by all types of respondents across different sources of data as the sole decision-makers in matters of household management in terms of unpaid work inside the home (childcare for younger children, caring for cohabiting or separately dwelling relatives, cooking, cleaning or seeking food/water). As such, **mothers are not only the decision-makers in daily school attendance for girls and boys – with, it appears, limited influence from fathers or family members – but they may also be uniquely positioned to regulate that decision independently.**

This finding holds across all settings both urban and rural, for girls and for boys, irrespective of household

wealth or province.

- **Uncles are key influencers at the household level, especially for girls**

In decisions related to enrolment/removal, especially for girls over the age of 11 or 12 years, fathers and mothers are particularly influenced by their brothers and brothers-in-law (the child's uncle). **Almost half of all respondents (48%) stated that uncles are the key influencers within the household or family related to education enrolment or removal, especially for girls. The uncle's education level is a strong predictor of their support for children's education**, neatly characterized by one respondent – an adolescent boy interviewed in a rural area of Kandahar – as “[e]ducated uncles or relatives encourage the households to send their children to school while uneducated uncles or relatives say that they do not deal with education of children”. In the case of decision-making processes involving girls, especially related to enrolment/removal, **there is uniformity across respondents that uncles are very powerful influencers of fathers' decisions about their daughter's education access and completion, and often block or curtail girls' education.** This holds across provinces, rural-urban areas and household wealth.

Uncles' influence over fathers' decision-making processes related to their children's education access and completion is stronger than mothers'. This is particularly noted by respondents in relation to girls' education, where uncles' influence overrides that of the mothers.

“

*“I was at school but my uncles did not let me to continue my education. My parents - especially my mother - told me that [I] have to go to school to continue [my] education, but my uncles were against me, therefore I was forced to leave my school. Now I can't go to school; I am at home and away from school.”* **SSI, Adolescent girl, urban middle-income family in Nangarhar**

Respondents, including adolescent girls themselves, often mention **the role and significant influence of uncles over decision-making process related to their nieces in terms of their critical importance as either current or future fathers-in-law.**

In this sense, considering the patriarchal, hierarchical nature of Afghan cultural norms, in which patrilineal practices mean women join their husband's family upon marriage, respondents categorise uncles not only as the brothers of a girl's mother or father, but as the head of their (future/)husband's family.

This finding appears to be exclusively related to education decision-making processes involving girls, and frequently girls over the age of 11 or 12 years, across all provinces, household wealth, and the urban-rural divide.

- **Brothers are key influencers in many education-related decisions in the household**

Elder brothers also exert significant influence over fathers and mothers' decision-making processes for the education of their siblings. Around 43% of respondents stated that elder brothers in particular were strong influencers of decision-makers in the home, particularly in relation to the educational careers and choices of their younger sisters. There are some examples of elder brothers using their position of influence to advance their siblings education, however the bigger picture indicates that **elder brothers typically prevent rather than enable on-time enrolment, continued attendance and completion of basic education for their male and female siblings.**

“

*“Girls are at the age of 12 or 13, they drop out school because their brothers say that people will [gossip] about them which will create other problems for them if they continue to go to school”. **Adolescent boy, FGD, rural area of Kandahar.***

As with mothers and uncles, the level of education of elder brothers’ themselves is once again a strong predictor of support for his siblings’ enrolment in school in favour of enrolment.

“

*“Educated brother also send their small brothers to school to get educated while uneducated father and brothers who do not know the importance of seeking education for the children in their home, [and so] do not send them”. **Adolescent boy, FGD, rural community in Kandahar.***

“

*“Educated brother also send their small brothers to school to get educated while uneducated father and brothers who do not know the importance of seeking education for the children in their home, [and so] do not send them”. **Adolescent boy, FGD, rural community in Kandahar.***

This finding is common across all provinces, in both urban and rural areas and more prevalent among girls than boys.

- **Grandparents and other relatives can be important influencers in many education-related decisions in the household**

Finally, almost a quarter of respondents (23%) stated that other relatives – particularly grandfathers as the head of the household, but also male cousins – are important influencers when it comes to decisions about children’s education. Critically, in the case of girls who are married while of school-going age (typically reported as age 14 or 15), husbands and parents-in-law assume the role of primary decision-makers in matters of education for that girl.

Respondents generally report that relatives including **grandparents and cousins exert predominantly negative influence over fathers and mothers in terms of decision-making practices, often seeking to curtail education** and learning opportunities for children, especially girls, for a variety of reasons. Similar to the indicative strength of influence among uncles – or rather the weakness of mothers’ influence over their husbands – grandparents are reported by some respondents in selected provinces, particularly rural areas, to bear more weight than mothers.

“

*“My father in law stopped my daughter from going to school and she was upset but she could not do anything. I wish there were something I could do to support her to go to school” **SSI, mother, rural community, Balkh***

The strength of influence of other relatives varies considerably according to individual circumstances, area, level

of education of the family member and community circumstances and practices.

- **Religious leaders, community elders, and council members are reported to be the strongest influencers of fathers and mothers in education decisions.**

Respondents report that the **biggest external influencers of fathers and mothers' decision-making processes from the community level are religious leaders mentioned by 35% of respondents (65% of them male), elders and council members (37%) and neighbours (8%).**

Religious leaders are equally influential in rural and urban areas and across provinces with a slight prevalence in Badghis, Balkh and Kandahar provinces. Household wealth do not seem to play a role in their influence across these provinces.

“

*“The elders of community, the religious scholars, the council members, and adult at the mosque say to the fathers that encourage your children to go to school, and if father doesn't hear that speech and doesn't tell it to his family, who else will inform the families about the value of education or the speech of council members. The elders and the religious scholars are so effective on encouraging children to go to school”.*  
**SSI, male SMS member, low-income urban community, Badghis**

Elders and council members are a lot more influential in Badghis and Kandahar provinces representing 67% of respondents combined (59% of them male and 67% of them from middle-income households) and are equally influential in urban and rural areas.

According to SMS members, religious leaders and elders play a very important role in raising awareness and encouraging community members to enrol their children in school, especially girls.

*“The decision of the religious scholars and the elder of village is more effective than [Shura Member] speech. If they tell the parents to let [their] daughters go to school, [then] parents will let their daughter to go to school. We are going from the city to the village and the words of the scholars specially on their fathers who go to mosque is more effective. When they heard the preach of religious scholar at the mosque and when they come back to home obviously they will tell to their daughter to go to school”.*  
**FGD with female SMS members in an urban, middle-income community in Balkh province.**

- **Neighbours and other families and community members influence fathers and mothers in education-related decisions.**

While respondents do not directly report this in a systematic manner, analysis indicates that mothers and fathers are heavily influenced by the opinions of their neighbours and immediate community members. There is a strong sense of social identity that pervades Afghan cultural life, and as outlined in the next section on determinants in decision-making around education, social economy and the perception of neighbours and community members matter to fathers and mothers in this regard.

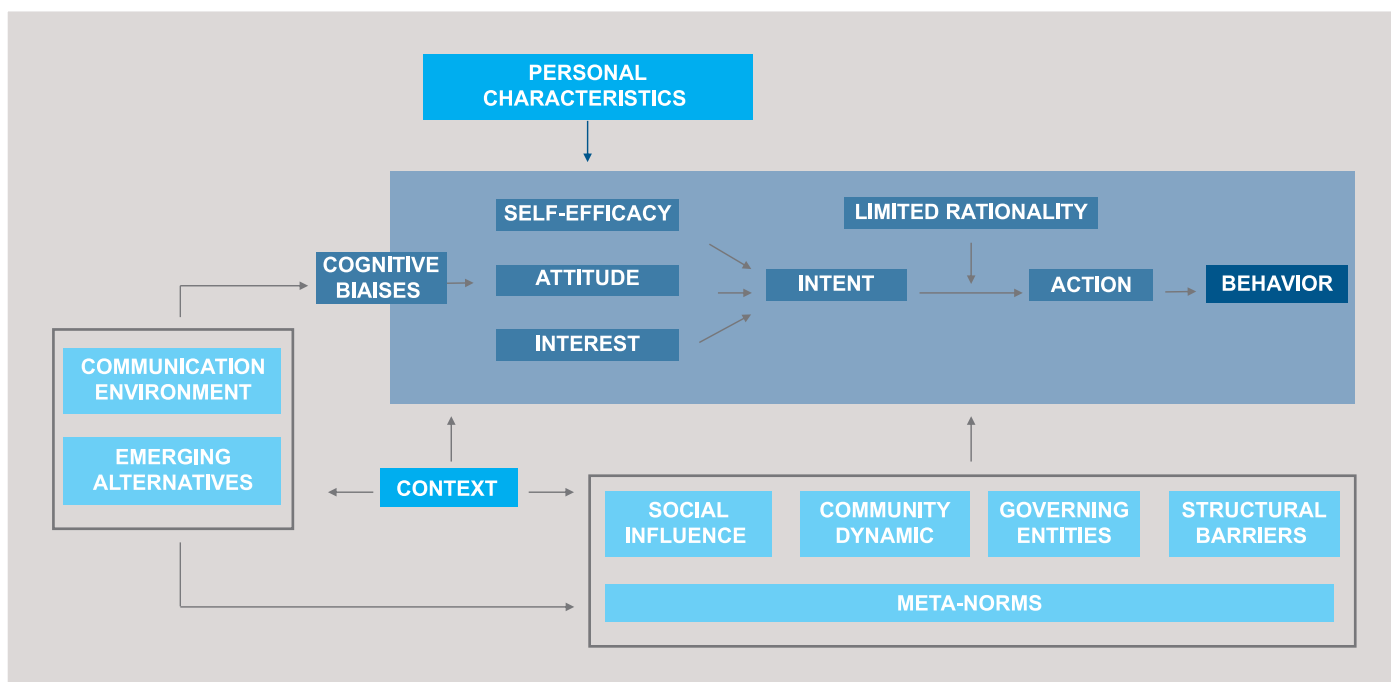
### **1.3 - What are the key determinants in that decision-making process? What equity considerations exist?**

Like most parts of the world, each family in Afghanistan operates with a unique set of characteristics and circumstances, which change over time. **Decision-making processes and their determinants are sensitive to**

**individual and internal family circumstances.** How caregivers and their influencers engaged in a decision-making process around the education of children in the household can vary significantly from child to child, with different results, based on a range of different internal individual and external social and environment factors. Household size and structure, power, gender and generational dynamics as well as individual characteristics influence the level and type of influence that household members have in the different decision-making processes. **Likewise, these decision-making processes and their determinants are also sensitive to external, community or socio-cultural dynamics related to gender, social economy and financial economic circumstances.**

Within this complexity, determinants involved in the decision-making processes around education at the household level can be understood as elements of inter-dependent and overlapping systems (e.g. layers of social, economic, cultural systems). As such **determinants can be mechanically isolated into influencing factors, and the drivers or root-causes propelling these factors.** To better inspect the determinants involved in the decision-making processes around education at the household level, it is useful to mechanically isolate and categorise determinants in a simplified way. By naming, categorising and spreading out the different factors that decision-makers consider when deciding if, when and how the children in their household go or stop going to school, it is possible to map and better understand the relationships between those factors, as well as common drivers that propel the saliency of these factors.

To better inspect these determinants, the Assessment Team employed UNICEF’s *Behavioural Drivers Model*, incorporating the *Socio-Ecological Model*. UNICEF’s *Behavioural Drivers Model* (BDM) is a conceptual framework for the study and practice of social and behaviour change. The Assessment Team used the BDM as an analytical framework through which to mechanically isolate and categorise determinants of household decision-making related to education in Afghanistan in a simplified way.



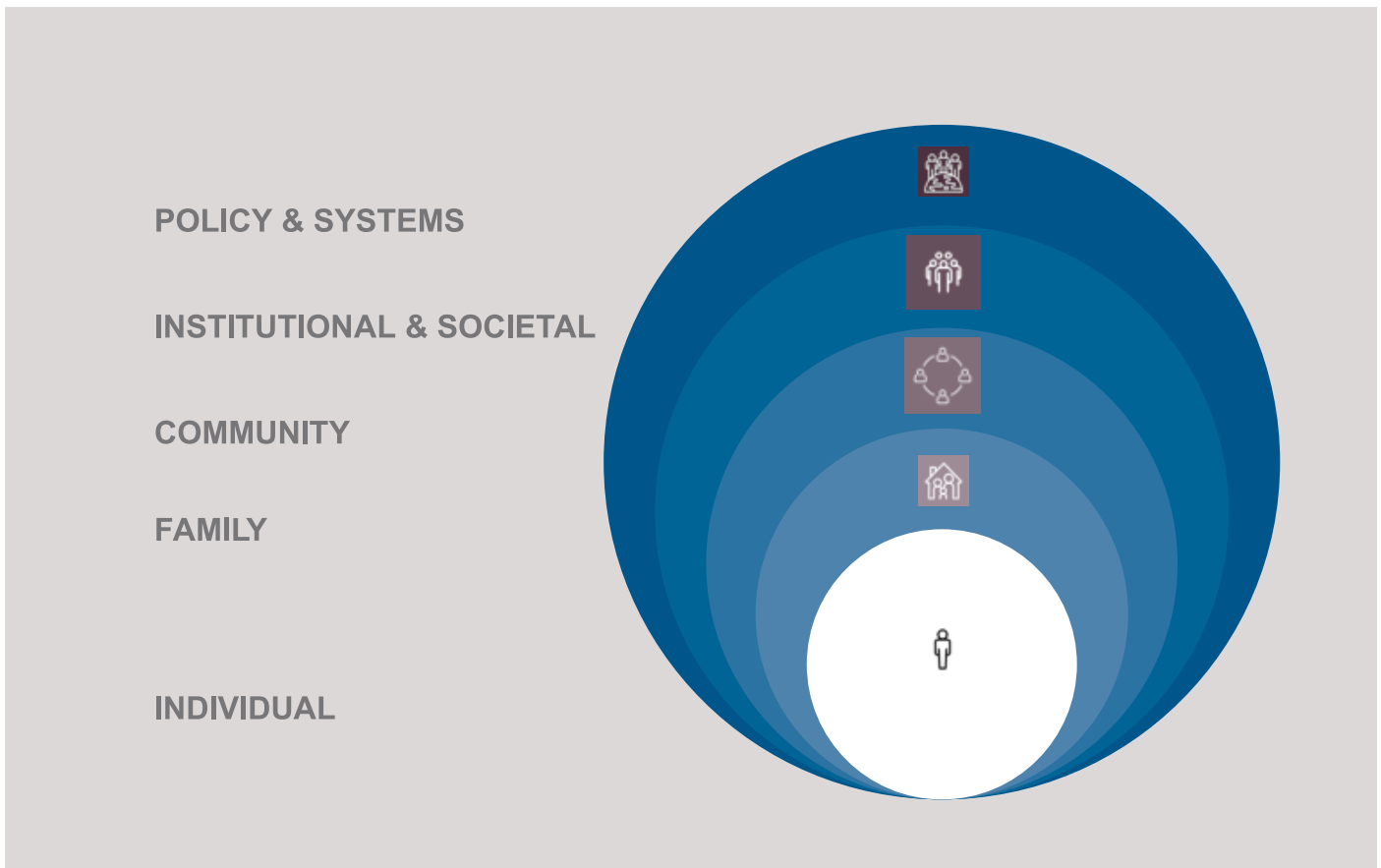


Image 1. [The Behaviour Drivers Model](#). UNICEF 2019, p25.

The BDM incorporates the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) in order to reflect the multiple layers of stakeholders that influence the lives of children and their outcomes.<sup>20</sup> The Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) is an analytical tool that maps together several levels of influence and factors that can shape a person’s behaviour.

<sup>20</sup> “There are five nested concentric layers, from inner to outermost: individual/intrapersonal (e.g., beliefs, knowledge, skills), interpersonal (e.g., family, friends and colleagues), community (e.g., relationships among organizations, social norms), institutional (e.g., organizations and social institutions, services), and societal (e.g., laws and policies)..” [BDM](#). UNICEF 2019, p52.



Category of barrier or enabler	Drivers (root causes)	Factors referenced by some or all respondents
<p><b>Individual/ psychological</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Household poverty</li> <li>▪ Individual gender bias and discrimination against girls in education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited financial access to pay for secondary costs of education (pens/ paper, clothes, shoes, transportation etc) means parents do not enrol their children or are forced to withdraw them – often prioritising boys over girls education based on gender stereotypes and socially-prescribed roles for men and women</li> <li>▪ Negative (socially-accepted) coping mechanisms including child marriage as well as paid and unpaid child labour inside and outside of the home</li> <li>▪ Use of negative, socially-acceptable coping mechanisms to mitigate household poverty. This includes not enrolling or supporting attendance or completion of education for both girls and boys in order to involve them in; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paid and unpaid child labour in order to support household income generation and housework. Respondents predominantly site unpaid domestic work as well as paid needlework or sewing among girls, as well as unpaid agricultural work and paid messenger/unskilled worker employment for boys.</li> <li>▪ Child marriage – predominantly affecting girls but also involving boys, particularly sons of widows.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Individual sensitivity and adherence to social practices and beliefs related to the payment of the bride-price, through which a groom and his family must negotiate a payment to the family of his bride in order to marry their daughter. This well-established and widespread practice is regulated through law and custom, and heavily influences decision-making practices around education at the household level, especially for girls.</li> </ul>

Category of barrier or enabler	Drivers (root causes)	Factors referenced by some or all respondents
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritisation of boys' over girls' education in resource-scarce settings, based on gender norms delineating the role of men and women in society</li> <li>▪ Commodification of girls as "strangers in the house", representing household-capital that will ultimately be exchanged with their future husband and family-in-law households for bride-price. Education is not considered valuable to girls in their role as wife and mother, nor valuable to families as negotiating factors in bride-price and so investing in girls education does not make sense. Conversely, after age 10 there is a perceived loss of potential financial capital (lower bride-price) related to diminished social capital (exposure to harassment, damaged reputation, lower value)</li> <li>▪ Child age – particularly for girls aged 10 or more</li> <li>▪ Level of education and experience of schooling of decision-makers (fathers, mothers) and key influencers (uncle, brothers, grandfather)</li> <li>▪ Individual understandings and interpretations of religious imperative of education for girls and boys</li> <li>▪ Perceptions about children's academic capabilities, especially for girls</li> <li>▪ Fathers, mothers, uncles, brothers and other relatives' individual beliefs about the quality of education services available</li> </ul>

Category of barrier or enabler	Drivers (root causes)	Factors referenced by some or all respondents
<p><b>Social</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social acceptance of negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage and child labour</li> <li>▪ Institutionalised gender bias and discrimination in prevalent social norms, social beliefs and practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gender bias and discrimination in social beliefs and practices that devalues girls as individuals and economic agents, demonstrating girls in terms of their potential financial value as brides</li> <li>▪ Widespread acceptance of societal honour codes that appropriate and commodify the sanctity and purity of women and girls – especially in terms of girls as honour-bearers for the collective family in the community</li> <li>▪ Social norms around caring for the family as the collective social unit (rather than caring for individuals within that family);</li> <li>▪ Social norms, as well as social beliefs and practices around loyalty, authority and respect for elders within a patriarchal power dynamic;</li> <li>▪ Accepted and widespread social beliefs and practices among many communities related to the transactional nature of marriage</li> <li>▪ Community influence in matters related to girls, marriage and purity</li> <li>▪ Social acceptability of cultural practices that allow for unregulated harassment of adolescent girls and young women by adolescent boys and men</li> <li>▪ The social belief around poor quality of education in government school</li> </ul>

Category of barrier or enabler	Drivers (root causes)	Factors referenced by some or all respondents
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Socio-political and economic disempowerment of women and systematic disregard for the equal enjoyment of human rights by women and girls</li> <li>▪ Education supply-side gaps and weaknesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Threat of/actual violent conflict, abuse and attack of both girls and boys</li> <li>▪ Low coverage of education services especially in rural and poorer communities with means long distances to travel between home and school</li> <li>▪ Lack of qualified teachers, affecting both boys and girls equally across all provinces with a prevalence in rural areas.</li> <li>▪ Specific lack of particularly female teachers which are viewed by parents and caregivers as very important for girls enrolment and retention especially in upper grades of primary and secondary</li> <li>▪ The lack of appropriate material and infrastructure in school</li> <li>▪ Mismatch between labour market requirements and formal learning objectives</li> <li>▪ High levels of unemployment among young people, and across generations – this undermines the perceived social beliefs in the value of education for boys and for girls</li> </ul>

According to the analysis of a question asked to SMS members in Sprockler, mothers and fathers both agree on the five main factors influencing their decision to enrol their daughters in school or not:

- Social norms
- Lack of female teachers
- Lack of female government schools
- Early marriage
- Girls must stay at home to help

The difference is in their order of priority. In line with earlier findings, mothers' decision is primarily driven by the need for girls to stay at home and help whereas for fathers, this factor comes last. Their priority is given to the respect of social norms and the lack of female teachers and appropriate infrastructure, something mothers agree with in their order of priority.

## ANNEX 5. SOCIAL MOBILIZATION APPROACH AND ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

This section will analyse the extent to which the training represents a competitive model in terms of effectiveness and efficiency when compared with other available models for social mobilisation related to education enrolment and in Afghanistan.

### Literature review of existing research on social mobilization

Most education and social mobilisation actors in Afghanistan work in the Community Based Education (CBE) field, establishing CBE classes in remote areas all over the country. They work in priority with CBE SMS, creating and training them to support CBE classes, mobilising resources, driving demand for education, monitoring classroom environment and supporting CBE teachers. In order to ensure smooth cooperation with government schools those CBE classes are registered at and support transition of CBE students to higher grades, they often also work with government school SMS in a smaller proportion. They invite them to participate in certain training, organize exchange visits and meetings etc.

A lot of research on social mobilisation has been conducted through the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) funded by DFID which currently funds education programs for some of the largest NGOs involved in this field in Afghanistan, namely Save the Children, CARE International, Save the Children International, CRS, The Agha Khan Foundation and BRAC.

In 2016, one of the projects under the GEC, a large consortium of seven partners called STAGES (Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Education Success), conducted a specific research on characteristics and Effectiveness of School Management Councils (Shuras) in Afghanistan, primarily looking at CBE shuras.

### Findings on SMS training

The research found that STAGES partners used a similar approach to build capacities of SMS in CBE communities through extensive training including topics such as school management, gender, conflict resolution, child protection and community organisation and participation.

However, the research found that many interviewed SMS members were unable to refer to the training sessions they had attended or talk about specific activities they had carried out as a result, suggesting that training may not be conducted in the most effective manner or that participants did not understand the relevance, preventing them from internalizing information. As per the findings of the UNICEF research, it was very clear that SMS members who remembered best the types of training attended were the ones who had participated in interactive sessions, using real life scenarios they could easily recognize and refer to. Likewise, SMS members consistently pointed to the fact that the limited number of training sessions did not enable them to solidify methodologies and concepts, which was often made worse by very low levels of literacy.

### Finding of SMS members' abilities

Regarding SMS members' ability to work effectively, the report highlighted the fact that SMS members' recruitment and selection is key. Findings showed that many SMS members only have a tokenistic role within the council, meaning that they do not have an active voice in decision-making, which is particularly true of female members. Members often seem to be selected regardless of their skills and how effectively they fulfil their tasks as SMS members. Illiteracy was often an important barrier for example. The report recommended

implementing key recruitment policies and reviewing SMS performance on a regular basis to make sure the most appropriate SMS members are involved.

### **Findings on social mobilisation activities**

In terms of social mobilisation activities, findings around school shura's ability to influence demand for education was mixed. Regardless of the existence of SMS, research found that demand for education in most places is already very high. The lack of enrolment in school is more the result of physical barriers such as distance and security threats or supply-side barriers such as lack of schools, infrastructure, teachers etc. For the minority families who did not recognize the benefit of education, in particular for girls, SMS however seemed to be able to encourage them to educate their children.

The main finding regarding social mobilisation was that SMS play an important role as a bridge between schools and communities, acting as a trusted source of information by families. Parents felt like they could talk to SMS members and share issues with them, showing the importance of having a trusted and localised source of support. Families recognize SMS as an important actor supporting and encouraging them to continue sending their children to school, suggesting that they have an essential role to play when it comes to supporting adolescent girls, when they are most at risk of dropping out.

### **Comparison between government school and CBE SMS**

In a midline report conducted in 2018, BRAC, the single largest CBE education provider in Afghanistan, noticed that SMS in government schools have lower capacities to visit schools weekly and raise awareness among parents on early marriage issues than in CBE communities. They also struggle more to mobilize resources for the school. This difference is partly explained by the fact that 92% of CBE SMS participated in BRAC's training compared to only 59% for government schools. About half of trained SMS members were only able to give general comments about the training they received but the other half was able to give specific details on what they learned, including techniques for monitoring the school, how to monitor and improve attendance, children's' rights and protection and gender awareness.

In line with all previous research findings, while all SMS members agreed that the trainings were useful, most of them could only give generic statements on how they had led to change (e.g. "now I do my activities better).

**Another interesting finding was that women's participation in SMS appear to strengthen capacities overall. In a school survey, mixed-gender SMS's capacity score were the highest whereas male-only SMS had the lowest capacity scores as compared to female-only SMS.**

### **Current social mobilization approaches implemented by other education NGO partners**

As mentioned above, most social mobilization actors mainly work with CBE SMS and implement the following activities:

#### **SMS training:**

All SM actors provide training on similar topics such SMS role and responsibilities, child protection, community mobilization, gender safeguarding, school and classroom management, school improvement planning etc.

All of them use different curriculum developed internally based on packages used in different countries and adapted to the Afghan context. CARE has developed specific forms SMS have to use regularly such as classroom

monitoring forms using only images to provide an alternative to illiterate SMS members. These forms could serve as a model to adapt more training content to the needs of illiterate SMS members.

Most training is given at the beginning of projects over the course of a year for an average total duration of 10 to 15 days.

Most SM actors provide refresher training once every 2 years on average.

BRAC program director insists on the fact that the training provided insists on participatory techniques, getting participants' perspective on the issues they are facing and using concrete examples from other communities to show best practice. BRAC then makes sure they understand and give their commitment through an action plan for their community. The most important thing is to mobilize them, motivate them, explain to them their role in the process, orient them (on how they can get information from the school, how to operate in a conflict environment, what they need to do at specific time of the year etc..) BRAC and other actors use pre and post training test to measure understanding and knowledge and then follow-up regularly, on a quarterly basis, on the action plan they committed to.

### **Training follow-up and monitoring**

All SM partners interviewed for this research stress the fact that training is only the beginning but is not sufficient to build capacities and drive change.

All of them follow-up regularly on SMS' activities, visiting classrooms at least once a quarter, sometimes even once a month, checking SMS logbooks summarizing their activities, meetings with them to discuss issues etc. These regular visits provide an opportunity to refresh their memories on training and remind them of their responsibilities.

BRAC notices that many SMS members forget about their action plan, so they need to be supported and pushed a little during quarterly meetings. Even with regular support, they are not always capable of doing everything independently.

- Aside from regular visits, some partners provide additional support through:
- Exposure visits where one SMS visits another one in a different community. CRS for example pairs strong SMS members with weak ones to inspire them. Some female SMS members can go with a mahram.

STAGES partners also added listening circles to the second phase of STAGES, bringing people together and making them listen to an AEPO (Afghan Education Production Organization) recording to start discussions. Save the Children's program director finds that it is an effective and a good way to engage. In remote areas, when we bring stories to listen to, everyone is really interested and eager to join in the discussion.

### **Gender approach**

Save the Children reported including a new gender inclusion training package in the second phase of STAGES which improved understanding of female SMS members' role.

BRAC does not differentiate between male and female SMS members in their approach. They have common goals and responsibilities so they both follow the same curriculum, they are only trained separately in more conservative areas. Aside from the fact that it is easier for female SMS members to speak to girls and mothers,

they have the same role and responsibilities and can achieve as much.

All partners note some difficulties in finding female SMS members and in insuring their participation in training. Training has to be provided very close to their home for them to be able to attend.

Save the Children's program, director stated that: *"in many cases, there might not even be any female shura members to work with because we cannot force government schools to select women. Even for CBE communities, it is sometimes difficult. Women are willing to participate but men won't let them"*.

However, over the years, all GEC partners have seen an important increase in the numbers of female SMS members and female staff across all provinces. When Save the Children started implementing STAGES in Kandahar 7 years ago, all of their field staff was male and today 80% of them are female, which is an important change to stress. According to management, teams understood that female staff were best placed to access girls' classes and discuss issues with mothers and adolescents and effort was made to recruit females in priority.

### **Advocacy**

All SM partners train SMS members on advocacy, encouraging them to carry out assessment and share their issues with government authorities. Everyone notes that SMS members are participating, they can point to gaps and ask for specific things, but progress is very slow. According to CRS, government resources are very limited, and they are not always ready to listen.

BRAC also notes that they have also been involving Community Development Council's sub-education committees in meetings and training but there is no specific change yet. Their participation has increased but there are no visible results.

An important point raised by CRS is that time is essential to the success of SMS advocacy activities. CRS is seen by the GEC fund manager as the most successful partners in terms of ensuring its CBE classes' sustainability through SMS and MoE support. According to CRS, this was made possible after working for the last 10 years in the same communities and with the same SMS, building capacities over time as well as relationships with DED, PED and MoE at the central level. It took ten years for the MoE to account for CBE classes in their budget and plan to take them over.

### **Coordination of SM approach among implementers in Afghanistan**

When asked about coordination efforts to harmonize everyone's approach to social mobilisation and SMS training, all interviewees declared that there was no coordination on this topic. They all reported being part of the CBE Unit who currently concentrates on streamlining approaches to teacher training. At the time of the interviews, there had been no discussion about streamlining approaches to SMS training and support.

When it comes to working with the DSMS office, most interviewees had never heard of them or the 2017 DSMS Social Mobilisation Strategy.

Save the Children reported that at the local level, there is supposed to be a DSMS staff in each PED but when they invite them to participate in workshops, training or monitoring visits, they don't come. People who were assigned to this position don't seem to know their responsibility and are therefore not active.



## ANNEX 6. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF TRAINED SMS SPROCKLER RESPONDENTS

- This section will provide an overview of the demographics of the two main groups surveyed and interviewed, namely trained SMS members and parents and adolescent children. A profile of the two respondents' groups will highlight the following:

### Gender

Female



Male



Province	Number of male	Number of female
Badghis	60	40
Balkh	70	30
Kandahar	77	1
Nangarhar	100	1
Total	307	72

### Urban vs. urban divide

Province	Rural	Urban	Total
Badghis	45	55	100
Balkh	41	59	100
Kandahar	45	33	78
Nangarhar	55	46	101
Total	307	72	

## Community socio-economic level

Province	Low Income	Middle Income	Total
Badghis	64	36	100
Balkh	55	45	99
Kandahar	38	40	78
Nangarhar	56	45	101

Low income



Middle income



Low income communities were found more often in rural areas (31%) than in urban areas (25%) and middle-income communities were more prevalent in urban areas (26%) than in rural areas (18%)

## Type of government schools SMS members work in

Gender	Pri- mary school	Sec- ondary school	High- school	To- tal
For boys	21	47	109	177
For girls	4	12	67	83
Mixed	42	46	31	119
Total	67	105	207	379

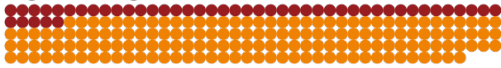
Primary (grade1-6)



Secondary (grade 7-9)



Highschool (grade 10-12)



### Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Sprockler
Arab	2%
Aymaq	1%
Hazara	0.25%
Pashtun	50%
Tajik	43%
Turkmen	0.25%
Uzbek	3.5%
Total	100%

Pashtun



Tajik



Hazara



Uzbek



Turkmen



Arab



Baluch

Aymaq



Pashai

### Size of shura

Between 9 and 16 members in each SMS with 15 being the norm. 194 SMSs have no female member and 61 have 1 to 3 female members.

### Education and Literacy level

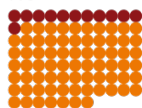
Type of schooling completed	Male	Female	Total
No schooling	83	1	84
Grade 1-6	21	18	39
Grade 7-9	18	4	22
Highschool to University or TTC	173	53	226
Madrasa	17		

Can you read and write well?

Yes



No



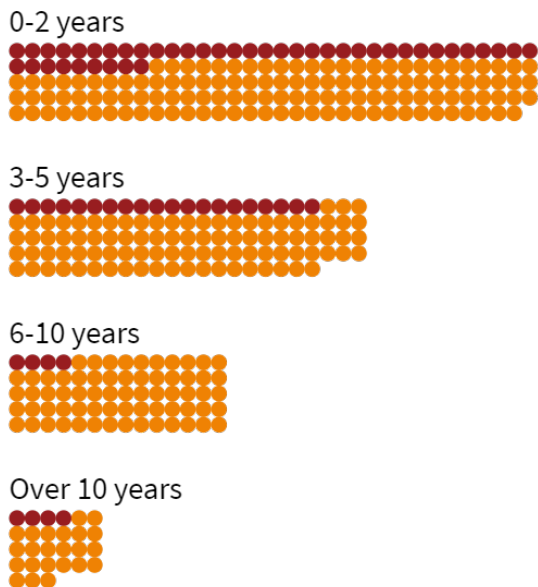
All SMS members with no schooling were found in equal proportion in Badghis and Kandahar provinces.

Most SMS members with highschool or university degrees were found in Nangarhar and Balkh provinces.

It is interesting to note that female SMS members are proportionally more educated than their male counterparts. This can be explained by the fact that a majority of them are accredited teachers or part of the school administration teams in the schools where they volunteer as SMS members.

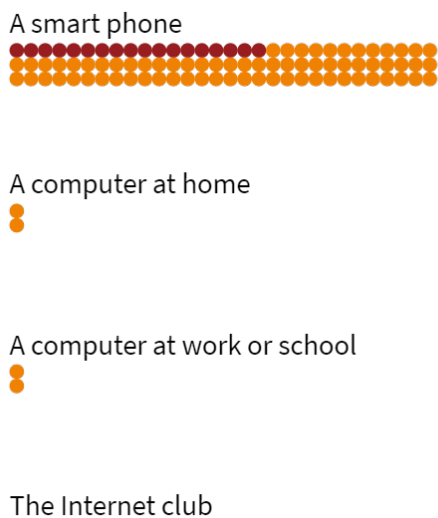
84 SMS members stated that they could not read or write (12% female) with all of them having not completed any type of schooling or only attended school until grade 3.

### Years of SMS experience



Over half of surveyed SMS members have up to 5 years of experience with an equal distribution among surveyed female and male respondents.

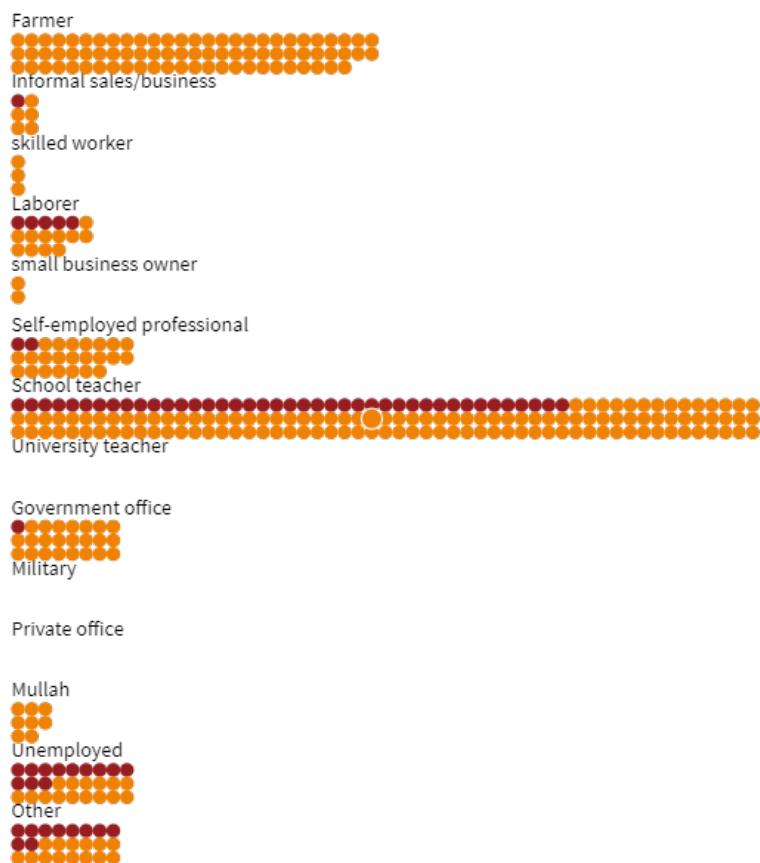
### Access to Internet



48 SMS members do not have access to internet (13% of the total) of which only 9 are female. Most of them are in Badghis and Balkh provinces.

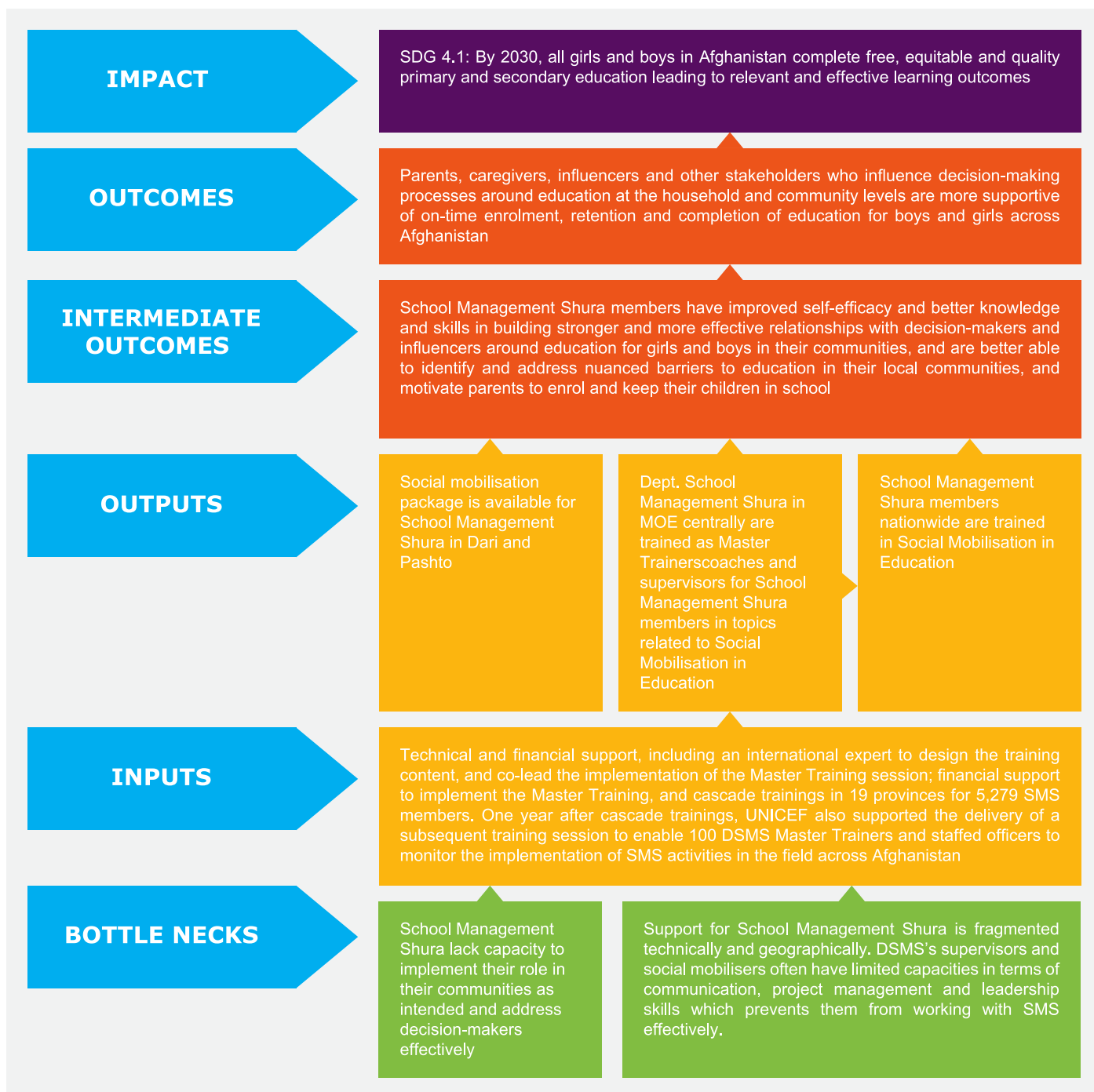
Almost all SMS members access internet on their smart phone as illustrated by the graph on the right-hand side.

## Occupation



Most male SMS members are school teachers and farmers and most female SMS members are teachers, with a few unemployed women and laborers.

# ANNEX 7. THEORY OF CHANGE DIAGRAM



## ANNEX 8. TERMS OF REFERENCE

### SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Operational research on social mobilization and behavior change trainings aimed at promoting girls' education in Afghanistan

### BACKGROUND

More than three decades of conflict have devastated Afghanistan's education system and completing primary school remains a distant dream for many children, especially in rural areas and for girls in the poorest and hardest to reach parts of the country. While the number of primary school students has jumped from just over one million in 2002, to over 9.6 million to date, an estimated 3.7 million children remain out-of-school and 60% of them are girls. Only 16 percent of all schools are girls' schools, many with inadequate sanitation facilities hampering girls' attendance; 19 percent of females under the age of 15 years are literate; the low number of female teachers (33 percent) is one reason why girls do not go to school.

Deeply rooted cultural norms, socio-cultural factors and traditional beliefs undermine girls' education. Girls continue to get married at early age (17 percent before the age of 15 years). Drop-out rates are high and 22 percent of children who are on the enrolment book are permanently absent in primary grades. Structural challenges and inefficient resource management further hamper the improvement of access to quality education. The multiple socio-political and humanitarian crises critically affect the already fragile education system; insecurity remains a concern for parents who worry about the safety of sending their children to school.

Besides systematic inequalities and deeply rooted cultural norms, beliefs, and discriminatory practices, supply-side bottlenecks are a paramount factor in negatively impacting girls' fundamental rights to education and learning. Obstacles include a lack of girls' schools and female teachers in remote areas. The lack of girls' schools means that girls have to walk long distances to school (often over 8 km), and as a result, girls over eight years old are often not allowed to leave their villages and face risks of violence/abuse on the way to/from schools or while in school. Around 37 percent of girls miss school for one or more days when they have their period and the absence of water and gender-separated toilet facilities is often mentioned as some underlying reasons for this. Around 70 per cent of schools do not have boundary walls, while 60 per cent have no sanitation facilities, both of which are critical to create a girl-friendly school environment.

Working at downstream level with communities, opinion leaders and religious officials is one of the key strategies to echo the political level to invest in girls' education agreed at the central level. Focusing on underperforming schools, UNICEF engages with school leadership, district education officials, parents, and SMSs to develop and implement school-community plans to ensure greater involvement of parents and communities in school management. This includes school-community members participating in tracking mechanisms to identify and reach-out to OOSC in particularly girls, to enrol girls at the right age, and to reduce their drop-outs. By strengthening school-community linkages, SMSs will promote vertical accountability between communities, schools, religious leaders and education authorities to mobilize resources, participate in school self-assessments, oversee attendance, enforce zero tolerance for teacher absenteeism, and make schools child-friendly. Minimum standards of engagement will be established for SMSs, providing them with decision making authority and accountabilities. In addition, community mobilization and community dialogues will increase the understanding and positive attitudes among parents and community members related to the right to education for all, the importance of regular school attendance, advocating especially for the education of girls.

Outreach and social mobilization efforts can contribute to this community support. As a result, UNICEF and the MoE have sought to build the capacity of key stakeholders to mobilise their communities to support enrolment and retention in primary education.



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Besides systematic inequalities and deeply rooted cultural norms, beliefs, and discriminatory practices, supply-side bottlenecks are a paramount factor in negatively impacting girls' fundamental rights to education and learning. Obstacles include a lack of girls' schools and female teachers in remote areas. The lack of girls' schools means that girls have to walk long distances to school (often over 8 km), and as a result, girls over eight years old are often not allowed to leave their villages and face risks of violence/abuse on the way to/from schools or while in school. Around 37 percent of girls miss school for one or more days when they have their period and the absence of water and gender-separated toilet facilities is often mentioned as some underlying reasons for this. Around 70 per cent of schools do not have boundary walls, while 60 per cent have no sanitation facilities, both of which are critical to create a girl-friendly school environment.

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Outreach and social mobilization efforts can contribute to this community support. As a result, UNICEF and the MoE have sought to build the capacity of key stakeholders to mobilise their communities to support enrolment and retention in primary education. From August to November 2018, 55 participants from the MoE and UNICEF took part in a four-day social mobilisation Master Training. This was followed by a series of Cascade Trainings reaching around 5,000 SMS members in 19 provinces. The objectives of these trainings were to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to mobilise their communities in support of primary education, especially for girls, including how to identify and address barriers to education in local communities and motivate parents to enrol and keep their children in school.

## BACKGROUND

### Purpose of Assignment

Thus far, the aforementioned social mobilization training has not yet been systematically assessed, nor lessons gathered on how to improve future trainings. At its core, social mobilization is an effort to change behaviours and the related social norms that affect decisions made by community members. Successful social mobilization will increase the adoption of behaviours that benefit both the target audience—in this case mainly, but not exclusively, parents—and those around them, including their children. In order to determine whether or not the training and subsequent social mobilization efforts successfully led to positive social and behavioural change (SBC) among participants and subsequently within communities in support of primary education, UNICEF now seeks to conduct operational research on the training and its results.

### KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following key research questions have been proposed to guide the work:

1. Was the design of the trainings appropriate given the needs of the target communities and the operating context?
2. To what extent did the trainings succeed in transferring the desired knowledge to the target participants?
3. Did the knowledge attained from the trainings enable participants, especially women, to implement successful social mobilization activities in target provinces?
4. Is the attainment and transfer of knowledge from the trainings consistent with the underlying design/logic/ToC of the intervention?
5. What are the key barriers to take up of the trainings and transfer of knowledge attained?
6. Are there alternative strategies that might be considered to achieve the objectives of the trainings?

## SCOPE OF WORK, METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION

### Scope of Assignment

Despite the trainings being implemented in 19 provinces, this research will focus only on a maximum of up to 5 provinces. The provinces that will be targeted for the research will be purposively selected according to a set of criteria that will be jointly defined.

### Research Design and Methodology

The programme does not have a defined Theory of Change but, a thorough desk review of background documents can be used to develop a suitable framework to underpin the operational research.

A mixed methods approach based on both primary and secondary data collection should be sought and consideration of cross-cutting issues such as gender, equity and human rights should be an integral part of the research design.

A critical stage before producing an inception report is to conduct detailed research on the programme documents that will be used to assess: a) the nature of the programme interventions; b) the availability of data and c) to develop adequate research design and sampling strategy. Activities in the inception phase will include: a) document reviews; b) consultations with key informant interviews both internally at UNICEF and with key external stakeholders at DSMS/MoE. Stakeholders at provincial and district level including members of the shuras and the communities, PED, DED and others will be contacted during the data collection phase.

### Data Collection

Data collection tools (surveys, interview and FGD protocols) must be culturally appropriate. The form and contents of the data collection tools should be sufficient for capturing correct information on the main indicators of the programme and deliver adequate level of analysis that will illustrate a measurable change. Surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with sampled groups must be anonymous, in the local language and documented with consent of the interviewees.

### Two types of data should be collected during the data collection phase:

1. Primary data through qualitative and quantitative methods, such as surveys, observation, key informant interviews (klls) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Data will be collected from the following target populations:
  - A. School management and school Shura's and parent committees that participated in the trainings
  - B. Members of the shuras
  - C. Teachers/educators
  - D. Families of students and community people were involved in the programme activities
  - E. MoE, PED, DED, implementing partners and other stakeholders.
2. Secondary data through the programme baseline database; programme documents and available Education Sector (such as EMIS) databases from MoE, from the DSMS and UNICEF. The programme documents that can be obtained from UNICEF Education Section are:
  - A. The programme description/progress reports,
  - B. Out of School Children Study
  - C. Girls' Education policy, Girl's Education Situation Analysis Report and Strategy development
  - D. Early Learning draft policy
  - E. Documents on awareness raising activities/communication strategies for awareness raising activities at the community level.

## SCOPE OF WORK, METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION

### Sampling

Purposive sampling is the preferred approach in selecting the target groups (UNICEF education staff, students, teachers, families, Shura's and Government partners - MoE/ DSMS) that will form the key sources of data for the research. Selection of key informants/data sources should put an emphasis on generating as much depth and breadth of information about the design and implementation of the trainings as is required to provide comprehensive answers to the research questions.

### Data Analysis

The vendor should clearly outline in their technical proposal their approach to synthesizing data from the various sources and methodologies. Data must be disaggregated by gender, location, ethnicity, income, language and ages of respondents.

### Ethical procedures

Researchers are required to identify any potential ethical issues and must disclose in writing any past experiences and their relationships, including of their families and friends to the object of the assignment. They must exercise independent judgement and not be influenced by statements of view of any party, including:

1. Be impartial and produce a comprehensive presentation strengths and weaknesses of the policy, programme and take due account of the view of stakeholders based on unbiased findings;
2. Illustrate evidence on verified findings and lessons learned;
3. Exercise honesty, integrity and respect for dignity and diversity;
4. Produce reports based on fair representation of knowledge, taking issues of gender, equity and human rights into consideration.

Researchers are required to receive consent from participants before involving them in the data/ information collection process and respect their right to provide information in confidence. They must inform participants about the scope and limits of confidentiality and ensure that their information cannot be found by anyone. It is mandatory to prepare risk management plans to minimize potential harm to participants before starting the fieldwork.

## Evidence Management & Governance

UNICEF is responsible for monitoring the dissemination of evidence (research, studies, evaluations) products and the uptake of findings and recommendations by Government and implementing partners. The results of this assignment must contribute to evidence-based policy making and programming for children in Afghanistan.

Evaluators must obtain permission from UNICEF to disclose any evaluation materials and keep raw data and protocols in concealment.

This assignment will be supervised and quality assured by the Education Specialist (Girls' education) with the support of the Evaluation Specialist (SPEAR section) under the supervision of the Chiefs of the education and SPEAR sections.

### Profile of Candidates/ Institution

The team should be composed of one Team Leader and a sufficient number of both international and national team members to ensure the successful implementation of the assignment. Team members proposed in any bidding document must be available for the duration of their assigned tasks. Experience in Afghanistan context and especially in the field of social mobilization interventions will be a strong asset as well as recognized experience in conducting and leading research and evaluation in the field of education and social mobilization worldwide and particularity in Afghanistan.

The contractor is expected to have onboard or sub-contract a national team to collect data in Afghanistan.

It is expected that the team will comprise some members who speak Dari/Pashto and can play a facilitating role vis-à-vis non-Dari/Pashto-speaking team members. Where necessary, interpretation services will need to be subcontracted. For the larger-scale surveys, it will be necessary to engage Afghan enumerators.

The Team Leader will oversee the entire process through working with team members and the UNICEF staff in the Education and Research & Evaluation Sections. The Team Leader will be responsible for timely and quality deliverables. The Team Leader must have:

- An Advanced degree in education, sociology, research, evaluation and other social science related field.
- At least ten years' experience in managing, designing and conducting complex research and/or evaluations of education programmes and interventions related to increasing children's access to education; increasing girls' access to education; increasing access of out of school children to education in conflict-affected settings.
- Experience in the education sector and evaluating education programmes in emergency contexts, including Afghanistan;
- In-depth knowledge of and experience in the work of UNICEF and/or other similar UN organizations or development agencies working on education programmes;
- In-depth knowledge of and experience in human rights, equity and gender-based approaches to education programming;
- Demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality written work in the English language, and to engage effectively with stakeholders at all levels.
- Members of the Evaluation Team should have a master's or bachelor's degree in education, sociology, statistics, human rights, anthropology, social work and other social science related field.
- Team Members must have at least 5 years of work experience in development research, evaluation, data collection management and analysis and reporting.
- All Team Members must have experience of working directly with children and commitment to meaningful child participation.
- All Team Members must have experience of using participatory techniques in data collection and child-friendly participatory techniques.
- Team Members must have experience working in managing data collection field work in conflict affected/emergency settings.
- The Team must be gender balanced and have experience in cultural contexts similar to or in Afghanistan.
- Fluency in English is essential.
- Fluency in Dari and Pashto is essential for the national/local members of the team.

## CONDITIONS OF WORK

UNICEF will support the selected team in desk research and data collection through provision of required documents and establishing contacts with stakeholders.

Cost quoted should include all the traveling expenses including air fare, transport, DSA and Insurance to Afghanistan and within Afghanistan. The contractor will be responsible for their own accommodation. UNICEF can assist in booking of UNHAS flights for travel within country. Please note:

1. All flights should be in economy class only).
2. All travel & accommodation is the responsibility of the bidder to arrange. UNICEF may assist in booking of UNHAS/UNAMA flights for travel within the country, where required.
3. All costs should be shown exclusive of VAT. In accordance with the exemption from Tax in article II, section 7 of the convention of the Privileges and Immunities of United Nations, 1946, UNICEF is exempted from all taxes + duties.

### **Nature of Penalty Clause to be stipulated in the contract:**

In all cases, contractor may only be paid their fees upon satisfactory completion of services. In such cases where payment of fees is to be made in a lump sum, this may only be payable upon completion of the services to UNICEF's satisfaction and certification to that effect.

### **LIQUIDATED DAMAGES**

For late delivery of items or for items which do not meet UNICEF's specifications and are therefore rejected by UNICEF, UNICEF shall be entitled to claim liquidated damages from the successful bidder and deduct 0.5% of the value of the items pursuant to the Purchase Order, per additional day of delay, up to a maximum of 10% of the value of the Purchase Order.

Liquidated damages for inferior quality or non-conformance of specifications will be assessed case by case in accordance with the severity of the problem.

The payment or deduction of such liquidated damages shall not relieve the successful bidder from any of its other obligations or liabilities pursuant to this Purchase Order.

## CONDITIONS OF WORK

### **Risks:**

- The quality of deliverables may not meet the standards of UNICEF.
- Some team members may leave or drop out.

### **Mitigation measures/planned risk responses:**

- The contractor will get acquainted with the standards of UNICEF and expectations before the commencement of the work
- The work of the contractor will be monitored and the quality of it will be assured by Research and Evaluation Specialist throughout the implementation process of the deliverables

The contractor will be obliged to have standby team members to replace those who will leave the work during the implementation process.

## Operation Procedures and Work Conditions

UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office will facilitate transport, accommodation, office space and other logistical support for institutions during in-country missions. The selected institution will be responsible for making their own insurance and international travel arrangements plus availing their own computers, phones, and related electronic devices. Additionally, all required arrangements for data collection support from national counterparts while in Kabul and in provinces will be the responsibility of the institution.

Deliverables/Outputs:	Timeframe	Payment Schedule
<b>Inception Phase</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct desk review of all documents, data, and information relevant to the subject of the research</li> <li>2. Undertake in-country interviews with key informants from programme stakeholders</li> <li>3. Develop sampling strategy and identify a valid study sample</li> <li>4. Define a Theory of Change for the intervention</li> <li>5. Refine research methodology, analytical framework, and data collection tools</li> <li>6. Produce Inception Report and submit to UNICEF for review and feedback. The vendor will be required to revise the inception report based on received comments. The inception report should meet UNEG quality standards and norms.</li> </ol>	20 Days	25%
<b>Deliverables:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sampling frame</li> <li>2. Valid methodology and analytical framework</li> <li>3. Finalized drafts of data collection tools</li> <li>4. Draft inception report</li> <li>5. Finalized Inception Report</li> </ol>		

Deliverables/Outputs:	Timeframe	Payment Schedule
<b>Data collection phase</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop training materials for data collection team</li> <li>2. Train recruited data collection team on evaluation methods, protocols, and specific data collection tools. It is essential that the trainings cover ethical and quality assurance procedures of UNICEF</li> <li>3. Assure the quality of the trainings for the fieldwork team members and their capacity to conduct quality data collection.</li> <li>4. Conduct pilot testing outside main study areas. Data collection tools should be tested properly and adjusted according to the pilot test results, if necessary.</li> <li>5. Supervise data collection, scrutinize and clean data, and submit progress reports to UNICEF.</li> </ol>	30 Days	50%
<p><b>Deliverables:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weekly fieldwork progress reports</li> <li>2. Clean datasets, interview/FGD transcripts, photographs, and any other data collection output</li> <li>3. Fieldwork summary with all relevant data collection information</li> </ol>		



Deliverables/Outputs:	Timeframe	Payment Schedule
<b>Analysis &amp; reporting phase</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Clean and analyze data</li> <li>5. Produce and share draft evaluation report with ERG</li> <li>6. Revise draft evaluation report based on feedback from ERG.</li> <li>7. Submit final evaluation report and present evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations to, ERG and other stakeholders.</li> <li>8. Present study findings, lessons learned, recommendations to stakeholders</li> </ol>	20 days	25%
<p><b>Deliverables:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Primary datasets</li> <li>2. Draft report for feedback</li> <li>3. Finalized report with study findings, recommendations, plus 2-4-page report summary/brief with infographics</li> <li>4. PowerPoint presentation of findings, lessons learned, and recommendations</li> </ol>		

## Evaluation criteria

The qualifications for the institution should be as follows:

- At least 10 years of experience designing, implementing and managing complex research work, both directly as well as through subcontractors and partners.
- Demonstrated in-house expertise on issues related to education, community mobilization, as well as experience in conducting research on such issues.
- Extensive international experience, with proven engagement in Afghanistan.
- Demonstrated ability to supervise and quality assure the work of national partners or subcontractors in a context that is politically and culturally sensitive and involves substantial security risks. In this regard, the specific sensitivities and circumstances of the participating countries, including governments and communities, need to be taken into account.
- Demonstrated ability to work at the community level and to conduct analyses and pitch recommendations at both the operational and policy levels.
- Demonstrated ability to engage with children in an appropriate and ethical manner.

In addition, the firm will recruit a national partner who will be mainly responsible for data collection in the field. The partner will contribute substantively to the work of the firm.

# ANNEX 9. FULL DETAILED DATA ANALYSIS REPORT

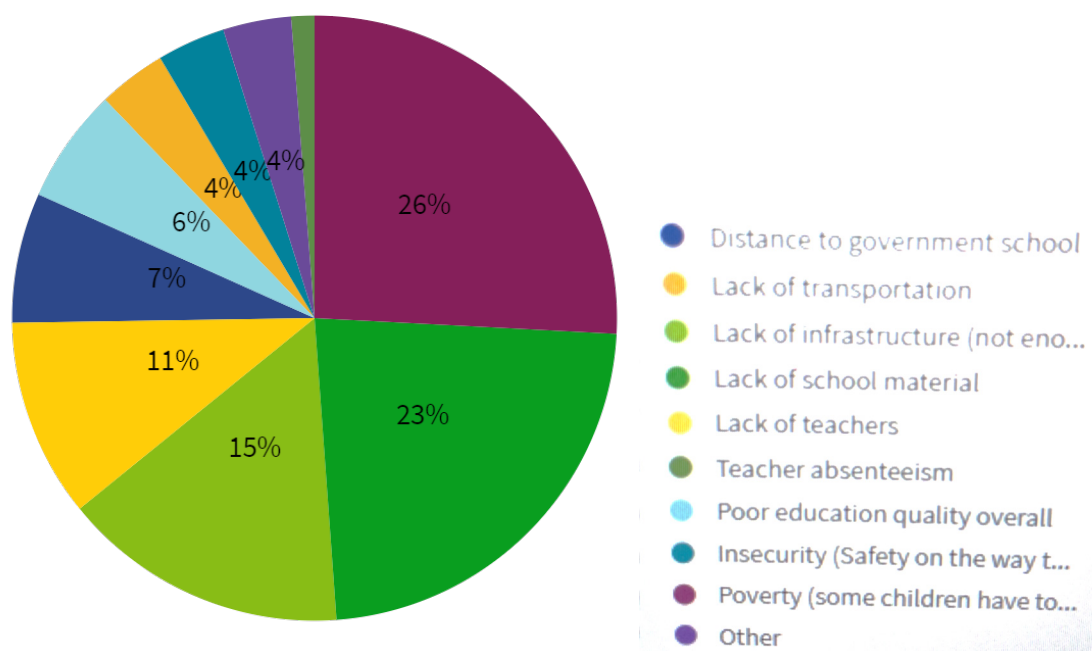
## 1. Decision-making process on education issues

This section will analyse communities' needs to ensure access to education for all children with a specific focus on how decisions around education are made at the community and household level.

### 1.1 Issues related to access to education

This section will first analyse key issues around access to education and how they affect boys and girls differently. Information will be disaggregated by gender, region, urban/rural factors as well as socio-economic level of families.

#### Key challenges hindering access to education according to surveyed SMS members (Sprockler)



#### Gender disaggregation

Male and female SMS members mostly agree that the lack of school materials and poverty are the biggest challenges to education in their communities.

37% of female SMS think that the lack of teachers is one of the biggest challenges in their community compared to only 17% of male, which might relate to the lack of female teachers which is a bigger barrier to girls attending school.

Male and female SM mostly agree that teacher absenteeism is not one of the biggest challenges to education in their communities

#### Provincial and ethnic disaggregation

On average, about 50%, 70% and 80% of surveyed SMS members cited the lack of infrastructure, the lack of school material and poverty as the biggest challenges to education in all provinces and across all ethnicities. Minorities such as Aymaq and Turkmen seem to be most affected by the lack of infrastructure.

The lack of teachers seems to be a much more important issue in Nangarhar (67% of respondents) as compared with other province ranging from 10 to 29% of respondents.

### *Rural vs. urban disaggregation*

63% of Rural SMs believe that infrastructure is also a serious challenge to education in their communities compared to 35% of urban SMS members, illustrating the lack of investment in more remote urban communities.

The lack of teachers is considered by both to be significant (82 and 83% respectively)

Teacher absenteeism is not believed to be a challenge in urban or rural areas Distance to gov school is reported as challenge in both urban and rural areas and was mentioned by about 20% of surveyed SMS members.

Urban and rural SMS members agree that poverty is the biggest challenge to education in their communities along with the lack of school material.

## 1.1.2 Different levels of challenges and how they apply to boys and girls

Quantitative data analysis through SSIs and FGDs allowed us to dig deeper into some of the challenges related to education, in particular when it comes to specific barriers to girls' education.

### Individual level

#### ▪ Poverty

In line with Sprockler findings, at the individual level, poverty appears to be the largest driver in terms of access to education.

**Cost of education** was mentioned by 71% all interview respondents, in majority fathers and SMS members. 31% of them were in Badghis, 25% in Balkh, 26% in Nangarhar and 18% in Kandahar.

*"We are migrant people and our life condition is very bad, we are living in this desert inside tent and even we don't have ability to buy a pill for our sick child. How we could give five or ten Afghani to our children to encourage them for going to school", FGD with fathers in a low-income, rural community in Badghis province*

Badghis seemed to be the poorest province out of all four with many respondents stating that they live in internally displaced and refugee communities in makeshift camps.

Many families adopt **child labour** as a negative coping mechanism to survive. The necessity for children to work and contribute to the household income was also cited by 66% of respondents, in majority fathers, adolescent boys and SMS members. Respondents were equally distributed across provinces and between urban and rural areas expect in Badghis province where 81% of respondents citing child labour were located in urban areas. Except for Badghis where 90% of respondents were from low income communities, in other provinces, it appears that children equally have to work, whether they live in low or middle income families or communities.

While girls are sometimes asked to contribute to the household income mostly by doing tailoring or embroidering work as illustrated by the quote below, boys are in fact the most common victims of child labour. Their mobility, which girls do not have, allows them to work outside the home more easily and be sent to work on markets, in fields, factories etc.

*“Girls [asked about absenteeism reply that they] are doing some sewing and handwork at home and these works are better than school because when we go to school we earn nothing. When we do sewing and hand work we received different amount of money from our work and it an income for us. School has nothing for us. These problems are also for boys because agriculture the same problems are for boys too. They boys take the cows, sheep for grazing to the green lands in the spring and the boys don’t come to school. The responsibility of boys are more than girls some of them go to Bazar and work, some of them are sales person, some of them go shops, or for other works to the city.”* **FGD with trained female SMS members in Balkh province.**

*“Some fathers do not allow their children to attend school regularly because they make their children to help them with farming operations which finally will result to their drop out. As households’ economic condition is not good and they have no choice other than having their sons to work in farmlands and gardens, so they prevent their sons from attending”* **FGD with adolescent boys in Kandahar province**

Poverty and child labour are often the result of years of conflict where male head of households are killed and sons have to take over in order to support their mothers and younger siblings.

*“These people are very poor and there is war in this area, and we gave a lot of martyrs, so some of the people’s lost their home elder, for this reason they have to work and get Monet for live, so they cannot study they have to work, they are not able to do study and work to gather, they have their home’s responsibility, most of the works are too hard and heavy, they are selling something and the other hard works like this.”* **FGD with adolescent boys in Nangarhar province.**

While boys are disproportionately affected by child labour, girls are the sole victim of **early marriage**, another widespread negative coping mechanism for a family to make money. This issue was mentioned in majority by mothers, adolescent girls and SMS members with a higher prevalence in Badghis (38%) and Balkh (36%) than in Nangarhar and Kandahar.

As explained in the quotation below, girls are given in marriage in exchange for a bridal price called toyana collected by the head of the girls’ household.

*“And also poverty is one of the reasons because the families are not able to supply notebooks, pen and other school equipment so they do not let their daughters to go to school, and says that if our daughter goes to school and finish the school, she does not have any benefit for us, so let’s give her to husbands and take toyana from the groom, and spend the money for our life, but they do not know that they are going to destroy their daughters’ future”* **SSI with an adolescent girl of a low-income family in Badghis**

*“When they reach 15 years age, they decide to give her to someone marry her. They take money from the boy’s family and spend that money”.* **SSI with adolescent girl in Kandahar**

#### ▪ Gender ideologies

In Afghanistan, strict gender norms and ideologies give very little space for girls to speak their mind, decide of their actions or future.

72% of respondents mentioned conservative gender norms as a barrier to education, only affecting girls. 29% of respondents were found both in Kandahar and Nangarhar, 24% in Badghis and 19% in Balkh, illustrating the fact that provinces with a Pashto ethnic majority are more conservative than others. In Badghis and Nangarhar, 50% of respondents lived in rural areas compared to 90% in Balkh. In Kandahar, 70% of them lived in urban areas. People living in low-income communities and households are more likely to mention more conservative representations and attitudes. Over half of respondents across all categories recognised conservative gender norms as a major barrier to girls' education which was mentioned 164 times in collected interview transcripts.

The same findings apply to the mention of negative perceptions of girls as an additional barrier to their access to education. Girls are seen a commodity whose value solely depends on her reputation and honour, which will in turn determine her price for marriage.

*"There are many differences between boys and girls, for example; my father spend money for my brother, but when we ask for notebook, book and pens to study at home, my father says that what are you doing with study, you are daughter and you will get marry soon and become a mother and you do not need for study, let your brother to study because he must have bright future and he will get marry and he will make a family".* **SSI with out-of-school adolescent girl in Badghis province**

From a very young age, a girl is already considered as being part of her future husband's household which means that there is no benefit for her parents to educate her as they will never get a return on their investment.

*"Most of the times parents think that girls are for other one's home, they are like strangers in their parent's home. Therefore, it is not necessary for her to study, so they do not care about it. Instead, they invest on their sons as they will be the future breadwinners of the family".* **SSI with an adolescent girl in Nangarhar province**

*"As I told you before, there are lots of challenges available for girls. They say that the girls are in fact member of other families. Therefore, we do not educate them. If we educate them anyhow, we will not be able to see their results. The boys are from our own house, if he became a Doctor, Engineer or someone else, he can perform his duty. But the girls will not. When we marry her with another person, he will not let her to do her job"* **SSI with an adolescent girl in an urban area in Kandahar province.**

Some families do not see any benefit in educating their daughters beyond very basic literacy and numeracy skills.

*"People send their girls to school up to six or eight grade and then they take her out of school because the families observe the environment and they fear from their honour. They just let the girls to educate until that time that she learns reading and writing and then the family will tell her that now it is enough for you and you should stop going to school because of situation".* **FGD with fathers in low-income rural area in Kandahar province.**

Moreover, several respondents mentioned the fact that educating a girls might lead to her forming her own ideas and challenging the patriarchal order she lives in, suggesting that the lack of education is used as a form of control on women.

*"They are scared that if a girl gets educated, then she will try to bring some changes in the family and society and stand against some harmful and nonsense cultural practices and the leading role in girls' education belong to the mothers because they think that if a girl gets educated then she won't be able to benefit them back once she got married and then she will be only beneficial to her in-laws; therefore, instead of wasting her time in school, she should help her with house chores."* **FGD with trained female SMS members in Nangarhar.**

- Age

Almost all parents, adolescent boys and girls and trained SMS members mentioned girls' age as a barrier to accessing school once they reach adolescence.

*"There are some differences between girls' and boys' education. For instance, boys can continue their education at any age, but as I mentioned earlier, once the girls become adolescents, then they get restricted by their fathers or other family members. Boys never get restricted", **SSI with an adolescent boy from a middle-income, rural household in Kandahar province***

This is linked to cultural beliefs that girls have to remain at home once they reach adolescence and learn practical skills to prepare and get married.

*"The families don't allow to girls, and it is the main problem, they become adult and should marry and leave school to don't experience annoying by men or boys and it happened most at when girls are 13 or 14 years old and at this age they are 5th or 6th grade", **FGD with adolescent boys in Badghis province.***

*"If they allow their daughters to school, it may be prolonged only up to 13th year of her age. After that, they reject their daughters from the school. They teach them sewing, cooking and other tasks", **SSI with an adolescent girl in a low-income, urban household in Kandahar province.***

Girls are further hindered to attend school by the lack of infrastructure considered socially acceptable for girls to continue their education after 13 years old, i.e. access to girls-only schools close to home, female teachers and adequate equipment such as boundary walls and access to latrines.

*When the girls get young their father or their brother will stop them from school because there is no separate building for girls and they sit with boys and they also have some transportation problem that they can't walk three kilometres to go to, **FGD with fathers in a low-income rural area in Nangarhar province.***

*When the girls finish the primary school, they will be more than 12 or 13 years old. At this age, their family will not let them to study in the school because they think that it is bad for the young girls to go to the school, **FGD with adolescent boys in Balkh province.***

- Family's education level

As shown across most research done in Afghanistan on this topic, the education level of the head of the household or parents in general is the biggest predictor of children's ability, in particular girls, to have access to education.

32% of respondents, in majority females (62%) mentioned *intergenerational access to education* as a very important factor in securing access to school for children.

Parents' illiteracy is associated with a lack of interest in children's schooling as well as a tendency to encourage religious studies over general education, sometimes perceived as spreading infidel culture.

*"When their parents are illiterate and when they don't know about the value of education how they could encourage their children for going to school. The parents don't trace the attendance of their children at school and they don't ask them about their school. The boys get out from their house and they sit on the alleys and don't go to school. If parents are literate, they never let their children become absent", **SSI with a male trained SMS from a low-income community in Badghis province.***

*“As I told you before, educated people make the decision of sending their children to school while uneducated people make the decision of sending their children to madrasa and they say that it will be useful for themselves and their children in after here and infidels’ lessons are taught in school”, **SSI with an adolescent boy in a mixed incomeruralcommunityinKandaharprovince.***

Related to this, 35% of respondents report a general **lack of awareness of the benefits of education**, often associated with parents’ illiteracy as shown in the quote below. This issue is more prevalent in rural areas and was mentioned more often in Balkh and Kandahar provinces.

*“Many of the parents are illiterate and they don’t know about the value of education. They say we didn’t study and if you study what would be the benefits? These are the problems that parent avoid their girls to go to school”. **FGD with female SMS members in an urban, middle-income community in Balkh province***

The lack of awareness of the benefits of education seems to particularly affect girls, a fact that comes up in many interviews with adolescent boys who are very aware of the issue. Indeed, 46% of interviewed boys mentioned this issue compared to 30% of girls.

*“They do not realize that there should be lady’s school, so that there could be woman teachers. They do not think that it would be better if there is a woman doctor in the society for the women. They are illiterate and they cannot realize the benefits of education. Therefore, they do not know that there is not any difference between the girls and the boys”, **FGD with adolescent boys in an urban community in Balkh province.***

## Community level

### ▪ Harassment

At the community level, unchecked harassment seems to be a major barrier to girls’ education. It was mentioned by 53% of respondents and is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas. Women mention harassment more often than men, but it is similar, meaning that it is equally recognized as an issue by both genders. Harassment is equally distributed among provinces with a higher incidence in Nangarhar.

Unchecked harassment has severe consequences on girls’ abilities to attend school or perform any task outside of home. It is perceived as a threat to her safety with parents worrying of potential harm.

*“There are some street types boys here that they do street harassment when girls want to go to schools. Also, there are shops (in girls’ way to school and back to home) and those shops also make issues for girls as well. there are many people in the shops and girls cannot cross their alone and go to school”. **SSI with adolescent boy in a low-income, rural community in Nangarhar***

But more importantly, it is perceived as a threat to her reputation and honour, putting her future and that of her family’s at risk.

*“When the girls are going to school, the boy’s harass the girls on the schools’ way, so if their uncles hear about that, then they go to the daughter’s father and say that today we heard that someone made problems for your daughter, so do not let her to go to school, we all shame on her”. **SSI with adolescent girl from a low-income urban family in Badghis province.***

*“The difference is for that, the boys can walk anywhere and do anything no body tell them bad, because they are for out of the home, but the girls can’t, we have a proverb in Pashto that, the women is just for home or grave*

*not for anywhere else, and they are just for home not for education".* **SSI with adolescent boy in Nangarhar province**

This constant harassment also poses a great threat to girls on their own self-esteem and motivation to go to school.

*"Some people are teasing the even the small girls during the ways. They are calling them by the bad names and words which are really hurting",* **SSI with adolescent girl in Balkh province**

#### ▪ **Community influence-gossiping**

A second barrier, closely linked to harassment and conservative gender norms is community influence. Community members such as neighbours, relatives living nearby, elders etc. have an important influence on access to education, in particular for girls.

*"Honestly in our community the main reason that most of the families are not letting their daughters to the school is that they worry about people's talk and speeches as it is a kind of shame for them to let their daughters to go to the school due to culture",* **SSI with an adolescent boy of a low-income rural household in Badghis**

As explained above, a girl's worth is determined by her reputation and parents are very likely to take her out of school if the collective opinion poses a threat to that reputation.

*"People send their girls to religious school at the term of Taliban but why people don't send their girls to school now, because the ground is not paved for them, for example when I go somewhere and I see that a young boy and girl are sitting together at school, or at work and then when I come back home from there, I would narrate it to my wife and my wife will share it with our neighbours in this way everyone might know about that issue and they won't send their girls to school."* **SSI with a father from a low-income, rural household in Kandahar**

In a culture where the collective opinion matters so much, parents are more likely to follow what their neighbours are doing, including when it comes to giving their children, in particular their daughters, an education.

*When a girl gets out of home in purpose of going to school, the person who is sitting with her father or brother will tell to the brother of this girl that I have already taken out my daughter or sister from school but your sister or your daughter still goes to school then her father will think with himself that this person gave me a taunt and I have to take my daughter or my sister out of school too,* **FGD with female trained SMS members in Nangarhar.**

Community gossiping is two to three times more likely to occur in rural areas, in particular in more conservative Pashto areas of Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces. It is mentioned more often by fathers, SMS members and adolescent girls. It is equally distributed across low and middle income household and communities.

## **Environmental level**

As shown in the graph below, at the environment level, the same trends emerge across all categories of respondents as with surveyed SMS members (section 2.2.1.1). The lack of school material, the shortage of teachers, in particular female and the lack of schools or distance to them are importance barriers to education. Insecurity also appears to be a major challenge which is more prevalent in urban areas in Badghis and Kandahar as well as in rural areas in Nangarhar.

### **Nvivo graph: Challenges at the environmental level**



Environmental Level			
Supply Side		Demand Side	
Lack of female teachers	Lack of material and infrastru...	Distance to school	Insecurity
Teacher shortage and absenteeism	Unemployment and Mig...		
Coverage	Poor quality of educatio...		

## Supply-side

### ▪ Lack of teachers, school material and infrastructure

By order of importance, **the lack of female teachers** was mentioned by 36% of respondents with 64 occurrences throughout transcripts. This particularly affects girls who have to drop out of school at adolescence because it is not considered suitable for her to be taught by male teachers beyond age 10. The shortage of female teachers is more acute in rural areas, in particular in Kandahar (28%) and Nangarhar (20%).

*“The government have to pay attention to bring female teachers here, and make special high school for girls, so the girls can go to school without any problem”, FGD with adolescent boys in a rural area of Nangarhar province.*

**The lack of appropriate material and infrastructure in school**, which particularly affects girls, was mentioned by 31% of respondents with a higher prevalence in Balkh province and in rural areas in general. Only 22% of the number of selected for SMS member surveys were for girls only compared to 47% for boys. This illustrates the gap in service provision adapted to girls in Afghanistan, especially in low-income rural communities. Moreover, when schools do exist, they often lack access to latrines or clean water which is particularly important for girls.

*“For young girls there should be separate latrines. Also there should be separate classrooms and female teachers for the girls”, FGD with trained male SMS members in Balkh province.*

*The girls schools do not have latrines. Our relatives told me that they won't send their girls to school unless we they build latrines for the girls' school. the latrine problem for girl schools is not solved, FGD with fathers in Balkh province.*

25% of respondents mentioned **general shortage of professional teachers and absenteeism** as a major challenge,

affecting both boys and girls equally across all provinces with a prevalence in rural areas.

*“Lack of professional teachers or at some points even if the teachers are present at school, they don’t attend the classes and sit all day in the office; therefore, the students lose their interest and escape from schools, and it causes the absence of students”, SSI with an adolescent boy in a middle-income, rural household in Kandahar.*

Respondents explain this issue mentioning the low salaries teachers receive or the fact that they do not have the necessary transportation means to get to schools in remote areas.

*“Teachers do not care about teaching and sometimes they do not attend to the school because their salary is less and they have another part time work afternoon”, SSI with an adolescent boy in a low-income, rural household in Balkh province.*

*“The teachers also face with the transportation problems. There are some teachers that they have not received their salaries yet despite of having their own other problems. They have no money and getting everything by loan. When they gather in school together, always talk about their salaries which they have not received yet”, SSI with a male SMS member in Kandahar province.*

- **Other**

The issue of **school coverage** was mentioned by 14% of respondents and is equally distributed across province. 13% of people also mentioned **the poor quality of education in government school** as a negative factor influencing children’s access to education. As illustrated by the quote below, if children do not seem to learn much in school, there is no benefit for parents to send them, taking risks on the way to school or depriving them of additional income the children could make otherwise.

*“I think the teacher don’t teach her and him correctly and accurately and school is not interesting for children, and also it belongs to our country the teachers don’t have commitment and interest to teach student correctly and the girls don’t learn anything form school and when we ask her a question or his lessons they don’t have even ability to read, like grade seven student they don’t know how to read”, SSI with a mother from a low-income, urban household in Badghis province.*

In addition to the perception of poor education quality, 12% of respondents also highlighted **unemployment and migration** as a negative factor discouraging young people and parents to invest in education. As shown in the quote below, 70% of respondents mentioning this issue live in urban areas, mostly in Badghis and Nangarhar provinces, where they observe high level of unemployment among college educated youth, pushing them to migrate to find jobs abroad, sometimes putting their life at risk in the process.

*“They will say that there is no benefit from school, you can see bachelor or diploma people who are jobless or they are working in market or they do a tough job. When they observed educated people who are jobless or they are sitting at home doing nothing they it will be a good excuse for them and they say education is not useful for you. Many of our people go to Iran or Turkey because the government doesn’t pay attention about them. The government doesn’t pave the ground for the people to get employment. A parent suffers for twelve years and fulfil the requirement of their children and after they boys and girls graduate from school they won’t find any job there for they will go to some foreign country for seeking job. And during the way they confront with many dangers as I heard that hundreds of young sank in water or other problem of travel. This is the blame of government if they government provide job opportunities to people, they will get encourage and they will study at school”, FGD with trained female SMS members in a middle-income, urban community in Balkh province.*

## Demand-side

### ▪ Distance to school

46% of respondents mentioned long distances to school as one of the main barriers to education, affecting both boys and girls, especially at a very young age:

*Small children cannot attend school because the school is far from our area and it takes at least one hour or two hours to School, FGD with adolescent boys in a rural community of Kandahar province.*

Mention of long distances to schools were found for 33% in Balkh, 26% in Kandahar, 21% in Badghis and 19% in Nangarhar. They are equally distributed among rural and urban area with a slight prevalence in rural communities (51%)

### ▪ Insecurity

Insecurity was mentioned by 47% of respondents, mostly fathers and SMS members with 35% in Badghis, 25% in Nangarhar, 23% on Kandahar and 16% in Balkh. Respondents were equally distributed across urban and rural areas.

Insecurity often adds to long distances to school, driving parents to keep their children at home for fear of what might happen to them.

*“The schools are very far from here and the people of our village afraid that their child will be crushed by a car or someone kidnaps them. For example, from this area a boy was kidnapped by someone and after one week their family found him inside a grave. He had been killed and put in a grave”, FGD with fathers in a rural area in Badghis province.*

## 1.2 Factors influencing decision-making process

The analysis will then continue, looking at who governs the decision-making process, what factors influence it and how it is different for boys and girls.

### 1.2.1 Household level decision-making

Parents			
Father decision maker for enrollment and drop out	Parents decision makers together	Mother decision maker for enrol...	Father decision maker for ...
		Mother decision maker for attendance	Mother ...

#### Decision-making regarding enrolment in school

- Father as primary decision-maker

64% of respondents state that fathers are the sole decision-maker when it comes to enrolling their children in school with little variation across provinces (27% in Badghis, 25% in Balkh, 32% in Kandahar and 17% in Nangarhar). This was mentioned 127 times across transcripts.

*“This decision is usually taking by father among the parents because they don’t give women too much rights to take part in decisions and they don’t discuss with women and there is a proverb in here that says listen to the womentalksbutdon’tacceptit”, FGD with female SMS members in Nangarhar province*

The household’s level of income does not affect this response, nor does gender of the respondent or the fact that they live in an urban or rural area (48% urban and 52% rural).

*“My father will take decision about this, that who can go to school and who cannot go to school, my father encourages my brother so much to go to school but my father took one of my sisters’ toyana and sent my elder brother to India for getting high education and he dropped me out from school when I was at seventh grade”, SSI with an adolescent girl in a low-income, urban household in Badghis province*

*“I think mostly father make decisions. Because fathers mostly in favour of their sons but mothers are supporting their daughters. I think fathers are making more decisions in compare with mothers”, FGD with adolescent girls in Balkh province.*

- Parents as co-decision-makers

53% of respondents stated that fathers and mothers decide together. Although these responses were equally distributed (about 25%) between Badghis, Balkh and Nangarhar, only 19% of responses were found in Kandahar. 62% of respondents live in urban areas and 61% are from low-income households.

Many respondents note that although mothers play a role in decision-making, fathers' opinions still weigh more than mothers'.

*Fathers have the main role in these decisions the mothers also have role but not as much as fathers, **SSI with an adolescent boy from a middle-income urban household in Nangarhar province***

In fact, it is very interesting to observe that 62% of respondents were male and only 38% female, which might indicate that although men like to believe that mothers have an equal say, it does not necessarily reflect reality.

*"In my family my father decides more than my brother and mother. While I was going to school, my father was daily insisting me not to go to school. I finished my school years with facing many challenges and difficulties", **FGD with adolescent girls in Balkh province***

- Mother as primary decision-maker

Only 12% of respondents stated that mothers were the primary decision-makers but they only seem to be when the father or the elder brother is not available or they act as an influencer to their husbands' decision. 64% of respondents live in urban areas and most of them are female. Making decisions for mothers often seems to be a struggle and they have to do it in opposition to other family members to protect their daughters, as illustrated by the quote below.

*"I send them to schools. Even sometimes my son tries to stop my daughters from going to schools but I don't let him to do something like that", **FGD with mothers in an urban area of Nangarhar province***

*We got tired to force our sons and daughters to go to schools but they don't go, as I have said to my husband that we must hit them for not going to schools, **FGD with mothers in an urban area in Nangarhar province***

## Decision-making regarding attendance in school

- Mother as a strong influencer and decision-maker for attendance

Once children are enrolled in school, mothers play an important role in decision-making around attendance according to 22% of respondents against 16% for fathers.

*"After the enrolment sending to the school is responsibility of mother", **FGD with female SMS members in an urban middle-income area in Kandahar province***

Mothers can either play a positive influence, making sure that children go to school and supporting their children's, in particular their daughters' education:

*I myself is responsible for such decisions because my husband spend all his day in his work so I am always at home and I send my children to schools, **FGD with mothers in an urban area in Nangarhar province***

*After the father the mother take decision about their daughter. Because the mother is always at home but the father is not at home every time. Every day their mother tells them to go to school, and she becomes ready and*

shegoestoschooleveryday, **FGD with adolescent girls in an urban area in Badghis province.**

But, as shown in the quote below, very often mothers act as a barrier to their daughters' regular attendance, demanding that they stay at home to help with chores. This creates absenteeism which often leads to drop outs as girls get older and are expected to do more.

*"Because their mothers tell them that do not go to school today because you have to do or perform some tasks and tomorrow will go to the school. Then tomorrow the girl say that yesterday I did not attend my class so today I also want to miss my class, then after some few days she will become cold heart from the school and education",* **SSI with an adolescent girl in an urban, middle-income household in Nangarhar province.**

- Mothers decide for girls but not for boys

About 10% of respondents mentioned that mothers get to make decisions when it comes to girls' education but not for boys. 83% of respondents are from middle-income households, equally distributed across urban and rural areas and 67% of them were female.

Similar to the findings above, mothers can either be strong supporters for their daughters education:

*Many of the decisions are taken by mothers. Mothers want that their daughter become educated. Mothers can satisfy fathers that let their daughter to go to school and become educated,* **FGD with female SMS members in an urban, middle-income community in Balkh province**

Mothers' support is often associated with their own level of education. If the mother is educated, she is far more likely to encourage her daughter to go to school but if she is not, she is more likely to prevent her from enrolling and attending classes as added by the female SMS members in Balkh: *"Sometimes the think of mother is not brilliant and she say that my daughter should stay at home and learn sewing and there are no benefits for her at school when she graduate"*.

The level of mothers' literacy is however not a predictable and reliable indicator since many uneducated mothers support their daughters' education in the hope that they will get a better life than they did:

*"Because some mother claim that we were away from education but now we do not let other to make barrier in the way of our girls' education and in this situation girls can pursue their education to become a doctor, engineer or a teacher",* **SSI with an out of school adolescent girl in an urban, middle-income household in Nangarhar province**

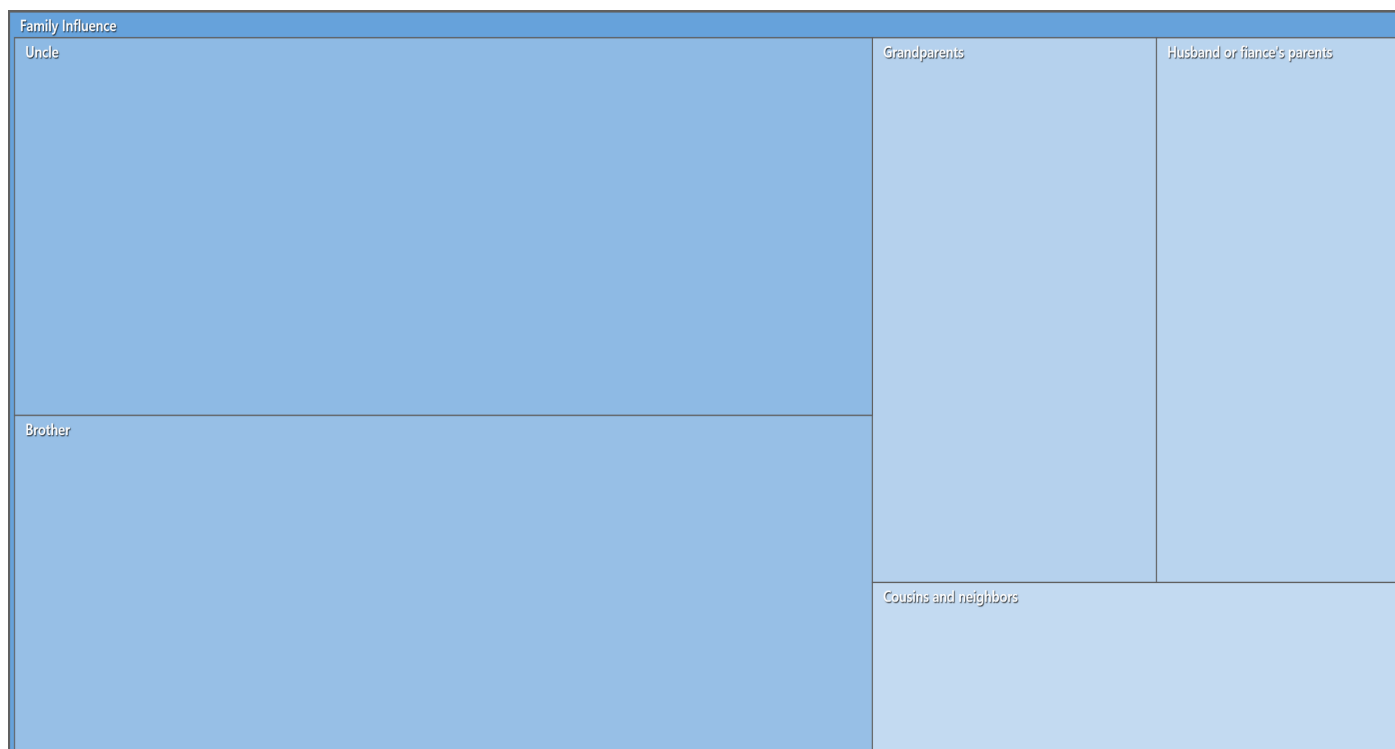
Even if mothers are not always able to make all decisions regarding their daughters' education, they can act as a strong influencer, delaying the time of drop out and allowing their daughters to get a few more years of additional education:

*"They (fathers) stop the girls gradually from going to school. Mother can influence father's decisions and can make the stoppage delay",* **FGD with adolescent girls in a rural middle-income community in Balkh province**

As mentioned in the section above, mothers can also play a negative role, especially in more conservative Pashto areas such as Kandahar province: *"Women in our area often do not allow them to go to school, because they think it is better for their daughters to help them with homework instead of going to school",* **SSI with a father in a rural, middle-income household in Kandahar province.**

## 1.2.2 Influencers at the broader family level

As shown in the graph below, at the broader family level, uncles and brothers are the most important influencers, followed by husbands and in-laws, grandparents and cousins and neighbours.



### ▪ Uncles

The main influencers and decision-makers are uncles as mentioned by 48% of respondents.

Similar to observed patterns with parents, the relatives' education level is a strong *predictor of their support for children's education as explained in the quote below:*

*"Educated uncles or relatives encourage the households to send their children to school while uneducated uncles or relatives say that they do not deal with education of children", FGD with adolescent boys in a rural area of Kandahar*

When it comes to girls, uncles always seem to prevent them from enrolling and attending school, regardless of geography, location or income level.

*"One day my uncle saw me on the way, and he came to my father and said that do not let your daughter to go to school, because she is young and she has to stay at home, and it was the reason that my father dropped me out from school", SSI with an adolescent girl from a low-income, urban family in Badghis province.*

They always act as a barrier to girls' education, often overriding mothers' own wishes.

*"For instance, I will share you my story, that I was at school but my uncles did not let me to continue my education. While my parents especially my mother told me that you have to go to school to continue your education but my uncles were against me, therefore I forced to leave my school and now I can't go to school and now I am at home but away from school", SSI with an adolescent girl in an urban, middle-income family*

*in Nangarhar province.*

- **Brothers' influence**

Elder brothers' influence is also very important according to 43% of respondents and can go both ways for girls.

Even if some adolescent boys stated that they were supporting their sisters' education such as in the quote below, this remained the exception:

*"If my father is trying to commit bad decision. For example, if he does not allow my sister to go to school, then I or any other member will talk with him that why you do not allow her and we will convince our fathers that allow or sister. Yes, we will not allow our father to commit negative decisions", **SSI with an adolescent boy from a low-income, rural household in Nangarhar.***

Similar to uncles, most brothers prevent their sisters from going to school and seem to be heavily influenced by their community's influence and opinion which might affect the girl's reputation.

*"Girls are at the age of 12 or 13, they drop out school because their brothers say that people will talk badly in absence of them and some other problems will be created for them in case if they send their sister to school", **FGD with adolescent boys in a rural area of Kandahar province.***

The brothers' level of education is once again a strong predictor of support for his siblings' enrolment in school with more support for younger brothers' enrolment over sisters'.

*"Educated brother also send their small brothers to school to get educated while uneducated father and brothers who do not know the importance of seeking education for the children in their home do not send them", **FGD with adolescent boys in a rural community in Kandahar province.***

- **Other relatives**

23% of respondents believe that grandparents are important influencers when it comes to children's education, followed by 20% mentioning husbands or husbands' parents and 13% cousins.

Although grandmothers sometimes play a positive role, encouraging parents to enrol their children in school, grandfathers, husbands, parents in-law and cousins almost always act as a barrier to girls' education, forcing them to drop out of school to preserve their reputation and protect them from harassment and people's talk.

As elders of the family, grandfathers often make decisions against parents and especially mothers' will, leading to girls dropping out of school.

*"My father in law stopped my daughter from school and she was upset but she could not do anything, I wish I could not do anything for her to go to school", **SSI with a mother in a rural community of Balkh province.***

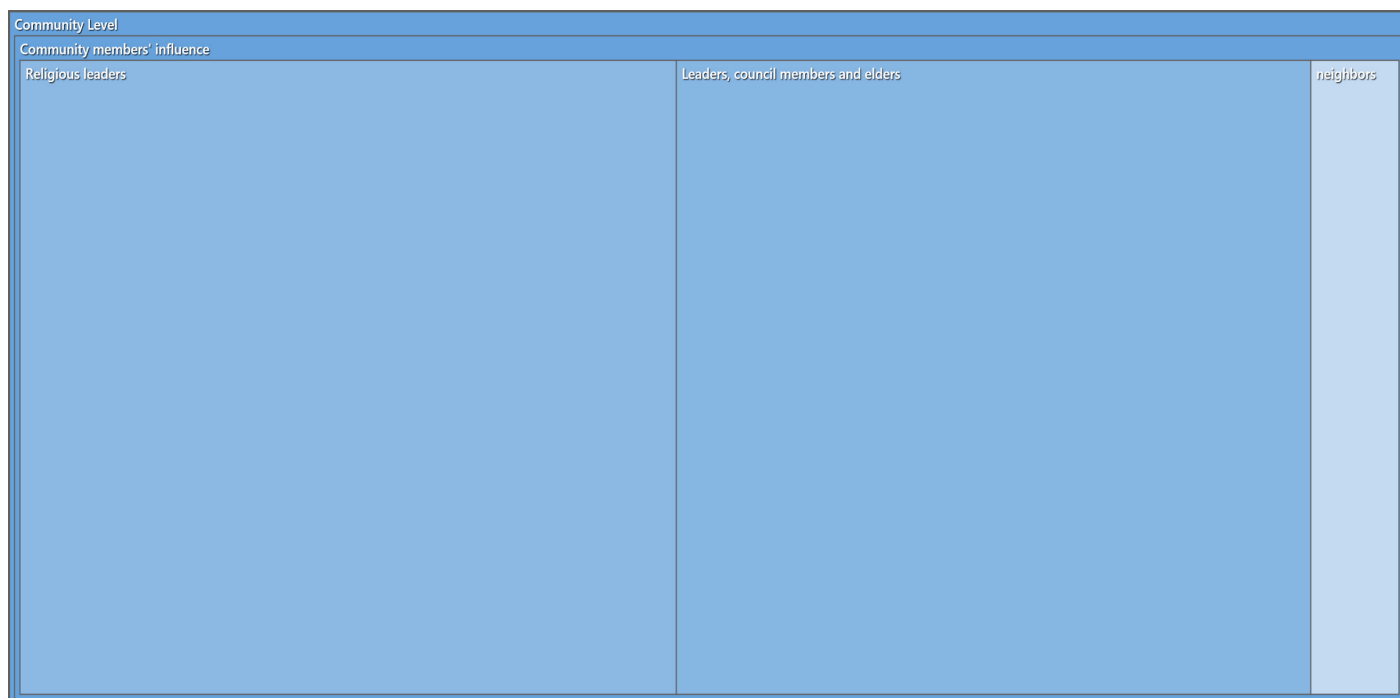
As soon as a girl gets engaged, mostly around the age of 14 or 15, especially in more conservative rural areas, she automatically drops out of school based on her husband and parents in-law's decision:

*"When girls are engaged or married, then her in-laws stop her from attending schools, and she gets dropped out, and when she learns how to read and how to write, then she gets dropped out considering*



it enough for girls by her family”, **FGD with adolescent girls in a rural area of Nangarhar province.**

### 1.2.3 Influencers at the community level



As shown in the graph above, the biggest influencers at the community level are religious leaders mentioned by 35% of respondents (65% of them male), elders and council members (37%) and neighbours (8%).

Religious leaders are equally influential in rural and urban areas and across provinces with a slight prevalence in Badghis, Balkh and Kandahar provinces. Income levels do not seem to play a role in their influence.

Elders and council members are a lot more influential in Badghis and Kandahar provinces representing 67% of respondents combined (59% of them male and 67% of them from middle-income households) and are equally influential in urban and rural areas.

*“The elders of community, the religious scholars, the council members, and adult at the mosque say to the fathers that encourage your children to go to school, and if father doesn’t hear that speech and doesn’t tell it to his family, who else will inform the families about the value of education or the speech of council members. The elders and the religious scholars are so effective on encouraging children to go to school”, **SSI with a male SMS member in a low-income, urban community in Badghis.***

According to SMS members, religious leaders and elders play a very important role in raising awareness and encouraging community members to enrol their children in school, especially girls.

*“The decision of the religious scholars and the elder of village is more effective than our speech, if they tell to the parents to let your daughters to go to school. The parents will let their daughter to go to school. We are going from the city to the village and the words of the scholars specially on their fathers who go to mosque is more effective. When they heard the preach of religious scholar at the mosque and when they come back to home obviously they will tell to their daughter to go to school”, **FGD with female SMS members in an urban, middle-income community in Balkh province.***

## 1.2.4 Factors influencing decision-making about education at the environmental level

Demand Side	
Perception of risk	Perception of academical weakness
Lack of interest and encouragement	Lack of future perspectives

In terms of demand-side factors, the most important one mentioned by 10% of respondents was the perception of risk, more prevalent in Badghis and Balkh provinces.

Many parents choose not to send their children to school, in particular their daughters for fear of what might happen on the way or at school. In insecure areas, insurgent groups constantly threaten the security of children at school, in particular girls who are a prime target.

*“The people don’t send their girls to school because of security, the mother scare that when I send my child to school, war might happen and he/she might die or injure. They scare because of Taliban’s threaten, the Taliban threaten that we will born the schools”, **FDG with adolescent girls in an urban area in Badghis province.***

In remote areas, danger comes from poor infrastructure putting children’s life at risk when they have to walk long distances on dangerous roads or cross bridges threatened by floods:

*“For instance, when I was a small girl I could not go to school because of the road and long distance. I was alone and could not go to school. Next, the road was bumpy. There was no bridge on the stream and heavy floods were destroying the roads. We were not able to cross the flood and my parents were worried about me”, **FDG with adolescent girls in a rural area in Balkh province.***

For many parents, the issue of unchecked harassment mentioned in earlier sections also increases the perception of risk, particularly affecting girls’ access to school.

*“We do not send our girls to the school because the school is far from here. Moreover, the way is not secure and the boys annoy the girls in the way of the school”, **SSI with a mother in a middle-income, rural household in Badghis province.***

Other factors influencing decisions mentioned by respondents in very small proportions were the lack

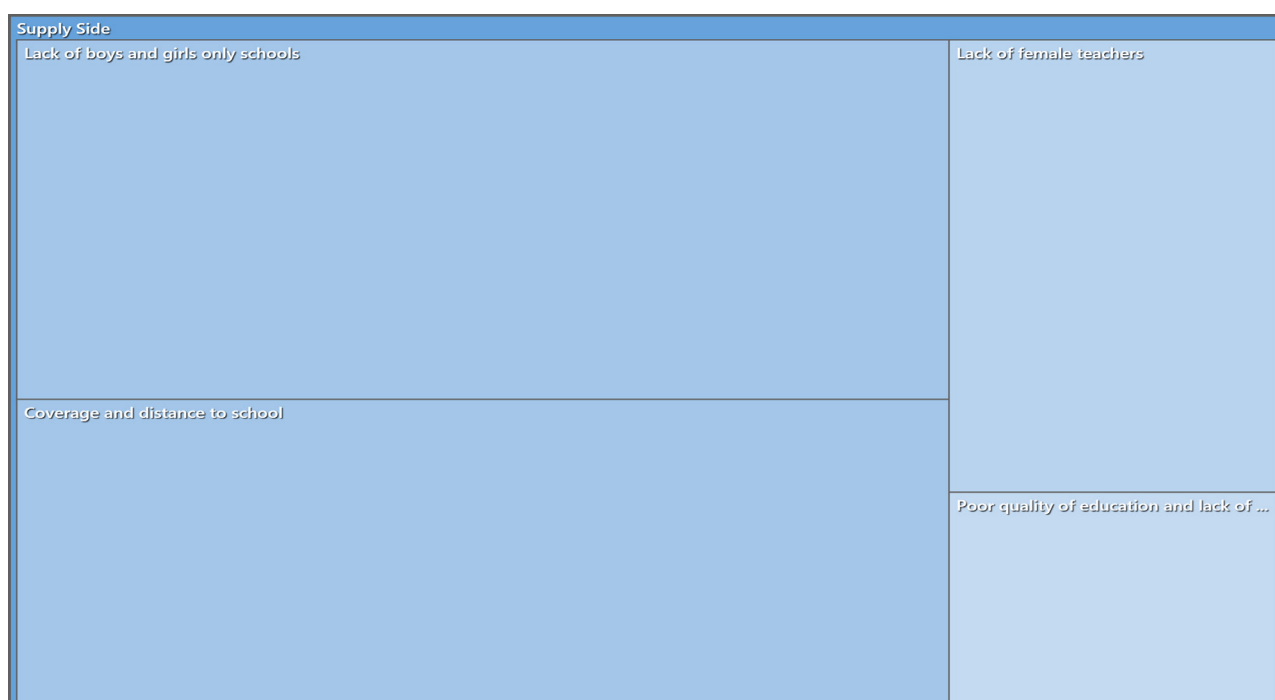
of interest of their children for school, the lack of future perspectives influenced by unemployment as mentioned earlier and the perception of academic weakness which comes from overall poor quality of education in government school.

*Some students are not a real fan of education; therefore, when they get a day off, then they skip school unnecessarily for a few more days, **FGD with adolescent girls in Nangarhar province.***

*“Some others who graduated schools are wandering around with having any jobs. They do not have any jobs. The people get hopeless. They ask why they should send their children to school”, **FGD with fathers in Balkh province.***

*If the teachers are careless, and after even 3 years, the parents ask the students to write their names, and they failed, it will disappoint them, **SSI with a male SMS member in Nangarhar province.***

## Supply-side



As shown in the graph above, on the supply-side, the two main factors influencing parents’ decision-making are the lack of gender separate schools as well as the coverage and distance to school mentioned by 29% of respondents for each.

As discussed in earlier sections, the lack of separate girls’ schools and long distances to school affect girls’ access to school disproportionately compared to boys and so does the lack of female teachers mentioned by 17% of respondents.

*“For sure if we have facilities and if we have girls high school most of the people including me will let their daughter to attend and continue”, **SSI with a father in a low-income, rural household in Badghis***

*“The ground is not paved for girls to go to school, they should separate the girls school from boys’ school at*

*the girls' school there should be female staff like teachers, headmaster, caretaker and other female people must be at the girls' school. no one is opposite of education neither in the village nor in the city, but the government hasn't paved the ground for girls, therefor, people don't let their girls to school", FGD with fathers in a rural, low-income community in Kandahar.*

## Difference between factors influencing mothers' and fathers' decision

According to the analysis of a question asked to SMS members in Sprockler, mothers and fathers both agree on the five main factors influencing their decision to enrol their daughters in school or not:

- Social norms
- Lack of female teachers
- Lack of female government schools
- Early marriage
- Girls must stay at home to help

The difference is in their order of priority. In line with earlier findings, mothers' decision is primarily driven by the need for girls to stay at home and help whereas for fathers, this factor comes last. Their priority is given to the respect of social norms and the lack of female teachers and appropriate infrastructure, something mothers agree with in their order of priority.

## 2. SMS members' role

This section will analyse the role of SMS members in this process, looking at how they interact with communities and how they are able to address some of the barriers mentioned earlier, in particular for girls. A sub-section will focus on female SMS members' role, determining unique ways in which they are able to influence communities to support girls' access to education.

### 2.1 Social mobilisation activities carried out by SMS members

#### 2.1.1 Type of activities carried out by SMS members by level of disaggregation

- Gender disaggregation

As shown in the graph below, prior to receiving UNICEF's Social Mobilisation training, the three top activities carried out by both male and female SMS members were organizing and attending SMS meetings, meeting with community members to raise awareness and promote education and following-up on children's absenteeism in school.

However female SMS members report doing or participating in significantly fewer activities than their male counterparts - 54% of male SMS but just 22% of female SMS met with community members to promote education prior to the training, 36% of male SMS and 13% of female SMS met with influential members of the community for the same purpose .

Only about 20% of male SMS report conducting community mobilisation activities to donate land, cash, materials

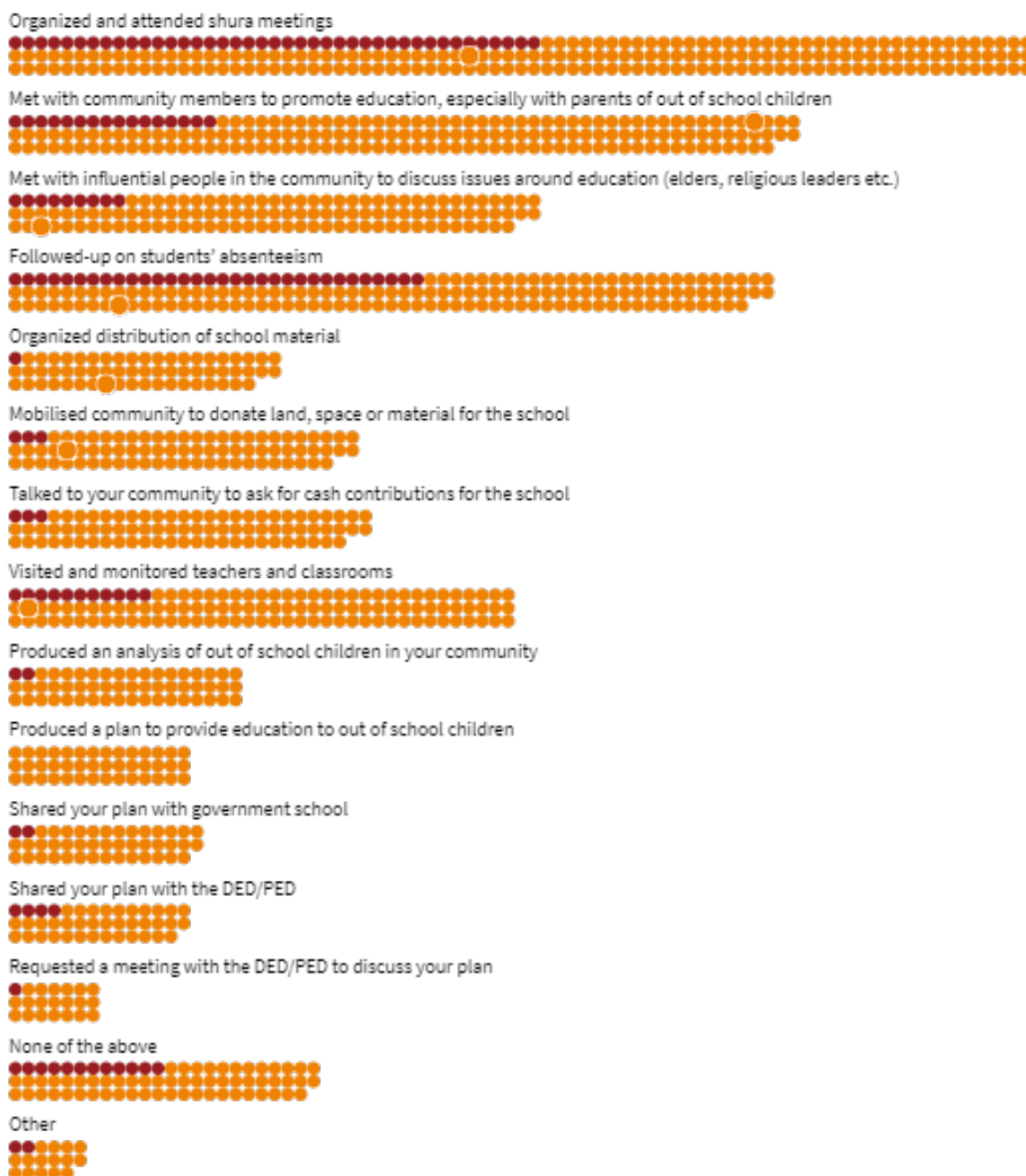
or space for education in their community with around 5% of female SMS.

Likewise 35% of male SMS monitored and visited teachers and classrooms, while only 14% of female SM reported doing so before the training.

Women do not seem to occupy leadership roles prior to the training.

Prior to UNICEF’s training, only 20% of SMS reported producing an analysis of out of school children in their community and 15% designed a plan to provide education to out of school children.

SMS in rural and urban areas report similar levels of the same kinds of activities across area prior to the training.

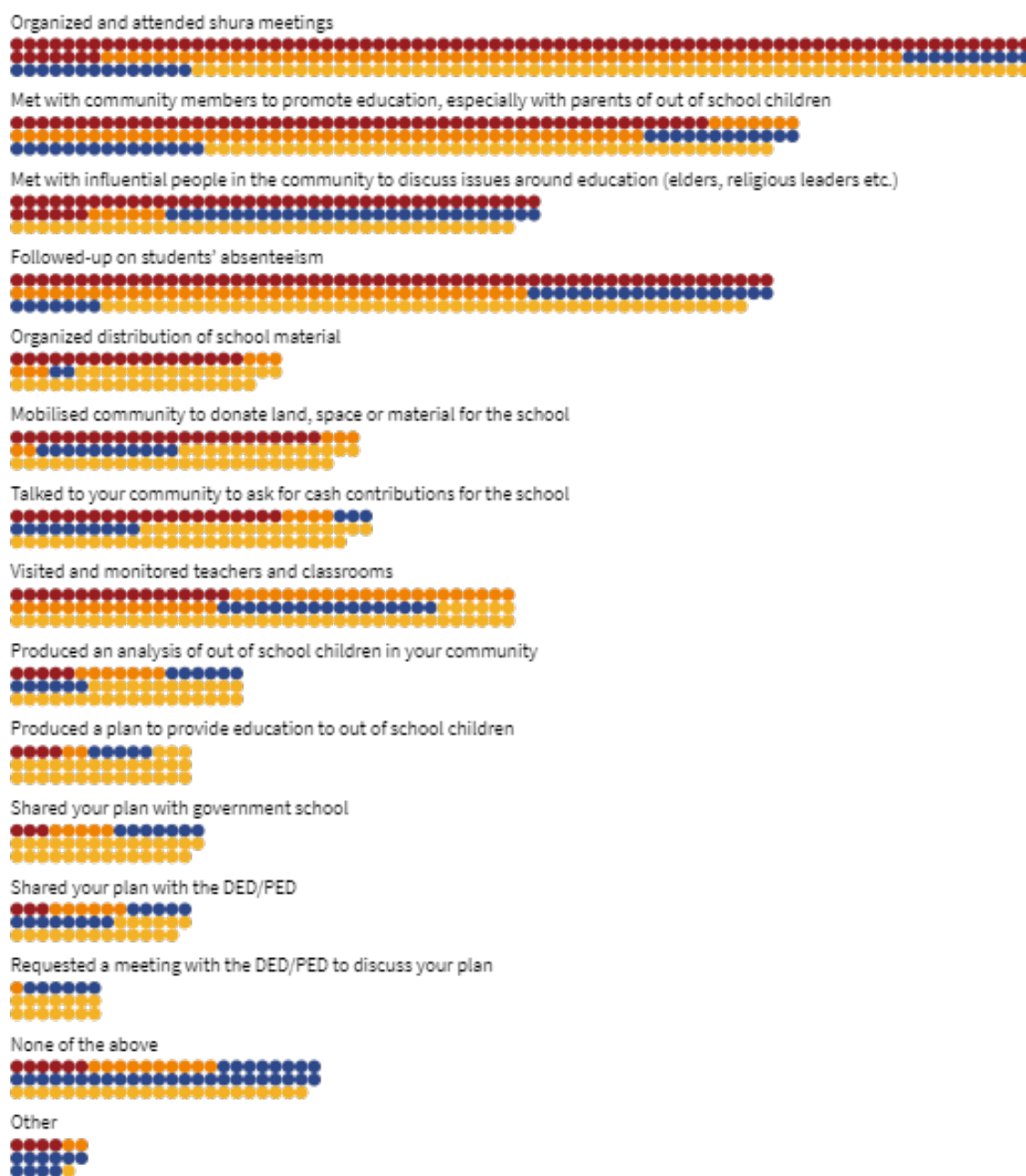


Province and district of the respondent?

- Balkh- Khulm district
- Badghis- Qala-e-Naw district
- Kandahar- Daman district
- Nangahar- Kama district

Disaggregation of activities by province

As shown in the graph below, prior to the training, SMS report conducting quite different levels of the same activities.



More than half of most SMS in all provinces report organising and attending SMS meetings - but only 31% in Kandahar.

Between a third and a half of all SMS in the 4 districts report conducting meetings with community members to promote education.

Kandahar and Nangarhar SMS have significantly more engagement with the DED/PED and appear to be more active in all of the different types of activities prior to the training: up to 34% report organising sharing of school supplies in NK versus just 3% in Kandahar and 6% in Badghis.

The provinces with the most levels of SMS meetings, namely Badghis and Balkh do the least institutional or public-administrative support work (research, planning, engagement with DED/PED).

41% of SMS in Kandahar, 23% in Nangahar, 10% in Badghis and 7% in Balkh reported not doing any of these activities before the training. This should be taken with caution since the same SMSs who report being inactive tell stories of activities they are proud of and that might have happened before the training.

- Income level disaggregation

Similar numbers of SMS from both low and middle income communities report organising and attending SMS meeting, and following up on individual cases of absenteeism prior to the training.

Slightly more middle income area SMS report meeting with influential people, speaking with the community than in low income communities prior to the training.

Few SMS from either low or middle income communities requested a meeting with DED/PED prior to the training.

## 2.1.2 Efficient social mobilization strategies implemented by SMS members

According to qualitative findings, 40% of respondents highlight SMS' capacity to solve problems through persistent case-load management approach, 35% of them find that they are able to broker solutions to existing issues, 27% think that they work effectively with religious leaders and elders of communities and 20% find that they are able to raise awareness on the benefits of education in their community.

- Persistent case-load management

Under this category, 42% of respondents are SMS members, 20% are parents and 18% are adolescent boys and girls. 73% of respondents were male and 61% live in rural areas. They were equally distributed across provinces with a slight prevalence in Balkh and Nangarhar.

Respondents stated that some of the social mobilization success of SMS lies in their ability to pursue an activity in a regular manner until they reach a result. This includes:

- Holding regular meetings or household visits:

*"We hold meetings with parents and members of SMS. We provide fund to address school's problems. We, together with members of SMS, visit the households and encourage them to send their children to school", FGD with female SMS in Badghis province.*

- Constantly following-up on students' absenteeism, asking parents to come to school, visiting their homes or making phone calls:

*"In case if a student makes absentees or leaves the school, we call his father, brother and/ or his uncle and we ask them about the reason that the student makes absentees and they tell us the reason promise that the student will attend", **SSI with a male SMS in a rural community of Kandahar province***

- Finding allies to follow-up on an issue, leading to decreased drop out rates in some cases:

*"Well, there was our one villager and her daughter were not going to school. So, one of school SMS elder person went to his father house and asked him that why he is not allowing her daughter to school. His father said that I engaged my father and her husband family told me that they do not allow or give permission that this girl will continue her study. That girl father said that this is her future husband family decisions and he has to listen to them as his daughter will go to that house and she will find issues if he does not listen to their demand. After that explanation, some other elders also went to him (father) and influence her to allow her daughter to school. After so many visits and request, that girls father allow her daughter to go to school and that girl was going to school", **SSI with an adolescent boy in a rural community of Nangarhar province.***

- Brokering solutions to an issue

31% of respondents were SMS members, 32% parents, 20% adolescent boys and girls and 15% education authorities. They were equally distributed across provinces, locations and income levels. 69% of them were male.

Most respondents explain that SMSs' biggest strength is their ability to act as a bridge between parents, teachers, school authorities and provincial and education directorates to report issues, make requests and find solutions to them.

*"The council member takes the voice of people to district office, they ask from the teachers at school, they ask from headmaster and manager at school, they sit with students' parents and talk with them. They find the problem of school by asking from teachers, they ask about book, water and other problem of school from teachers, headmaster and manager and then the council member take these problems to the district office and the education administrative and then they find a solution for that problem. Through this procedure they solve the people's problem and many problems like water and other problem has been solved up to now", **FGD with male SMS members in a rural community in Kandahar province.***

*"Holding meetings with parents and SMS members is one of the activities through which we find solution to schools' problems. We request for things we need in school, for example, if we need toilets, we request it from directorate of education. We make the request of school building's rent from directorate of education", **SSI with a female SMS member in an urban community in Badghis province.***

Likewise, SMS members act as a bridge between community members and can sometimes find creative solutions to simple solutions to local problems such as creating groups of neighbouring children to walk to school together, thus decreasing the perception of risk enabling more girls to access or continue their education.

*"Some the new enrolled students who didn't come or their parents weren't informed about time of school, or because they were small girl and they didn't have any accompanier, then we said them that this person enrolled at school from your alley and this girl enrolled at school from your alley and you can send your daughter with them. We gave a list to the member of council that tell to the people who say my girl is alone and she can't go*



*to school, this person and this person are coming from your alley and your daughter can come with them,” FGD with female SMS members in an urban area of Balkh province.*

SMS members are also able to mobilise resources, either by donating their own or by collecting land, cash or in-kind donations from the community as explained below. This usually enables them to improve school condition and environment by providing access to better infrastructure, in particular school equipment and material as well as access to water.

*“The land of all our schools contributed by SMSs, they buy and considered for schools, in past year Tagab Esmail school SMS buy a water pump for school and donate two carpet to school and give a furniture package to office and have some program and association and also Dahan Qarqito school SMS, they have very excellent activities for making better the situation”, SSI with a DED representative in Badghis province*

More attention should be paid to support SMSs in finding solutions that are both effective and protect children from violence. In the example below given by a DED representative of a good action taken by SMSs, we can see that although SMS members tried to solve harassment issues in their community, they did it in a way encouraging violence against young men instead of changing their behaviour and attitude in a positive manner:

*“Mostly, they (SMSs) have returned out-of-school children to their schools which was very important, in addition, they have removed negative thoughts from the minds of people and government and have also supported us in this manner. For example, some silly youngsters of the community were doing negative actions against women/girls then we have informed the police head officer of our district and he arrested them, he beat them too much and those boys promised that they will not do such works again”, SSI with DED in Nangarhar province.*

- Working with religious leaders and community elders

SMS members working with religious leaders seemed to be more prevalent in Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces according to 27% and 37% of respondents respectively. 56% of respondents were male, 55% live in rural areas and come from slightly wealthier households in general.

43% of respondents were SMS members, 17% parents, 20% adolescent boys and girls and 20% education authorities.

Working with religious leaders and elders is seen by most respondents as an effective way to raise awareness about the importance of education, especially in remote areas where parents are mostly illiterate and go to the mosque for the Friday prayer.

*“Public awareness has more positive role in the community. The Mullah’s speech and the council’s advertisements about benefits of having access to education can change the peoples mind. If they continue their effort, these problems will be solved and they will be more successful”, SSI with an adolescent girl in a rural community of Nangarhar province.*

Religious leaders supporting girls’ education seem to be particularly successful at convincing families, in particular fathers, to let their daughters go to school.

*“Yes, they were successful, because in the evenings when the villagers went to mosque for praying the council chairman gather the elders and told them that, send your sons and daughters to school and let them to get education, and do not make difference between the boys and girls, and that’s why these changes and changed a little their opinions and they let their daughters to go to school”, FGD with adolescent girls in an urban*

## **community of Badghis province.**

Religious leaders and elders are seen as some of the most powerful community figures who can slowly change people's beliefs and mindsets when all else has failed.

*"The statements of the Mulla Emam is very effective on people. If the father of a child does not send his child to the school due to bad economic condition, the SMS has been able to convince him to send the child back to the school. The SMS members and elders have invited the parents of the student to the SMS, so that the SMSs could convince them. If the SMS was not able to convince the family, they asked the Mullah Emam to convince the family to send their child to the school. If the Mullah emam was not able to convince the family, the elders, teachers and principle have visited the family in their own house. Finally they have been able to convince the family to send their child back to the school. The have been able to return back 10 students who had left school,*  
**FGD with male SMS members in an urban area in Balkh province**

- Presenting education as social good

Another successful strategy used by SMS members is to promote education by speaking about social good and how girls will become teachers and doctors who are much needed in the community for example. Education for girls is also presented as a way to make them better mothers who will be able to support their own children's education in the future.

*One day I saw him and I asked him, why did you persuade Zarifa not to go to school? He answered me that school is not good for girls, then I said to him that in the future you will get married and you will take your wife or your sister to the doctor, and a man will check up your wife or your sister that is not shy? He said on that time your obligated then I said to him that if you let girls to study and complete her education then we would have a should go to a male doctor. Knowledge is obligated to every Muslim men and women. Then he said to me as she wished if she wanted to go to school or not. Then the girl came back to school. And it has been about two yearsthat she graduated,*  
**FGD with female SMS members in an urban community of Balkh province**

This strategy can be successful in convincing parents to let their children continue their education in the hope that they will be able to secure better jobs and lead an easier life than they have.

*We have conducted meetings with the parents of the students. We have told them to send their children to the school. Their children will have become teacher and government employee and doctor in the future, if they study in school. We have told them such things and then they have brought their children,*  
**FGD with male SMS members in a rural community of Balkh province.**

## **2.2 Perceptions of SMS members' role and work**

### **2.2.1 Perception of community members**

#### **Positive perceptions**

40% of respondents found SMS to be very helpful and efficient. Mothers found them most helpful in Badghis and Nangahar while fathers found them most efficient in a large proportion in Balkh and Kandahar. Adolescent boys only found them helpful in Kandahar and Nangarhar while adolescent girls represented a small percentage of respondents, only found in Balkh and in Badghis. Trained SMS thought they were most efficient in Badghis and Kandahar.

*“Yes of course it (the SMS) is very much successful in order to help more children to go to school and get very good and quality education” **SSI with an adolescent boy from a rural, low-income household in Badghis province.***

Only 11% of respondents were adolescent girls and 14% were mothers against 25% of fathers and 18% of adolescent girls, suggesting that women might not benefit as much from their help as men. Respondents were equally distributed across locations and provinces with a slight prevalence in Nangarhar.

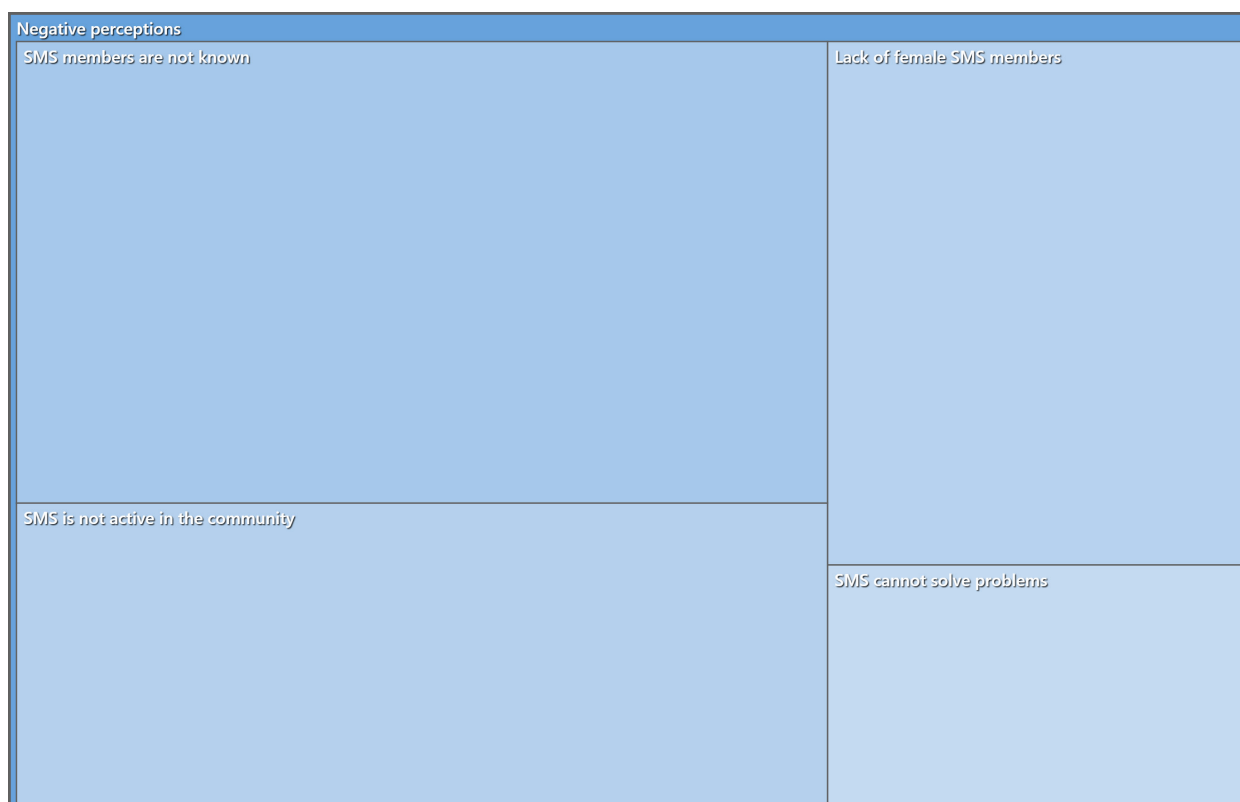
17% of respondents (62% male) found that they had a good awareness of SMS members’ role and activities.

*“I am aware of SMS and understand their role. When there is lack of schoolbooks, bags and stationery in school, SMS members make the request of providing them from directorate of education”, **FGD with adolescent boys in a rural area of Kandahar province.***

*“The SMS members find the roots of the challenges against girls’ education and try their best to reach out to the solution of those challenges”, **FGD with adolescent girls in a rural area of Nangarhar province.***

## Negative perceptions

As shown in the graph below, negative perceptions about SMS members’ work is largely driven by the fact that often, community members do not know who they are or judge them to be inactive in the community.



- No knowledge about the school SMS

27% of respondents claim that they do not know SMS members. 56% of them live in rural areas and most of them are found in Badghis and Kandahar. Adolescent girls (36%) and fathers (32%) are the ones who know least about SMS members.

*We have a school SMS. I do not know of its member. I don't know what kind of work they do, **SSI with an adolescent girl in a rural, low-income household in Kandahar province.***

*No, no I have not seen them yet. We do not know them. Once the children told us that some people had come from city. We do not know SMS and its role. We do not know what SMS is. I think sometimes the SMS members visits schools. We do not know about the aids provided by the SMS, **SSI with a mother in Kandahar province***

*No, I do not know the school SMS till yet, no I just hear this name from you, I do not know about the SMS members and activities, no I do not know about the roles of this SMS in our school, no body came from the SMS, and did not meet with us, **SSI with an adolescent boy in a rural area in Nangarhar province.***

- SMS is not active in the community

22% of respondents, in majority fathers and mothers, find that the school SMS is not active in their community and has not done anything to solve their problems. 45% of them live in Balkh and 25% in Kandahar, mostly in rural areas (60%).

*"they should take the problem to the elder of the village and then to the education administrative. We haven't seen anything from them. If the member of the council feel responsibility they can go to every house and ask people about their problems, or the council member should be the person who is trustable for people. in other case the member of the council doesn't try for the people very much like the current council. these people in the council are not active", **FGD with fathers in a rural area of Kandahar province***

*"Well, many of them like to attend one training and after that, they do not like to do something about it. They just go their own way without doing like in the past", **SSI with a father in a rural community in Nangarhar province.***

- Lack of female SMS members

32% of respondents mentioned that SMSs need more female members in order to solve issues, in particular when it comes to barriers facing girls. It is worth noting that 62% of respondents were male with 24% of fathers and 24% of adolescent boys. 46% of those male live in urban areas with a prevalence in more conservative provinces such as Kandahar and Nangarhar, suggesting that men might be more open to supporting female SMS members than is usually believed.

As shown in the quotes below, many fathers and adolescent boys believe that if there were more female SMS members, girls would face less barriers and have someone to turn to discuss their issues. They believe that it would be beneficial for the community as a whole.

*There are no female members in our SMS. If we had female members in our SMSs, we would have been a witness of significant positive changes in our education quality. For instance, if the quality and the positive changes in our education is 50%, that time it would be improved to 100% due to the presence of female members in the SMS, **SSI with an adolescent boy in a rural community in Kandahar province.***

*I think there must be more female members in school SMS. If there will be a few member of female SMS, they can't help the students. The girls can't share their problems and will remain illiterate. A woman can ask the girls about their challenges and problems. They must be the member of school SMS and it is important, **SSI with an adolescent boy from a middle-income, rural household in Balkh province.***

*If these women don't participate in this SMS then it will directly have effects on girl's education. If they came and participate there, it will improve the level of girls who have problems in this issue. If they involve our women who are from this area, it will be very useful, **SSI with a father in an urban community in Kandahar province.***

- SMS members cannot solve issues

17% of respondents (69% male) stated that in some case, SMSs cannot solve issues with a higher number of fathers and adolescent boys and a higher prevalence in Badghis and Nangarhar.

Sometimes SMS members recognize themselves that in spite of all their efforts, they have not been able to change people's mind and encourage them to enrol their children in school.

*Actually, we had very few students in our school and therefore, we have asked SMS to have people to send their children to school. Most of the people in our community say that we are sending our children to work in the working season. We had a lot of public awareness efforts but it didn't work too much. People in our community have promised us a lot about sending their children to school but they have not sent their children, **SSI with a male SMS member in a rural area of Kandahar province***

Community members also state that even after sharing their issues with the school SMSs, they have not observed any progress.

*Certainly the SMS member come to our village and visited the schools but the problems that we told for them they couldn't solve our problems, **FGD with adolescent girls in an urban area of Badghis province.***

Some respondents even feel like some SMS members are corrupt, taking everything they can from NGO programs and using it in their own interest without helping their community.

*Other than that, the NGOs work for themselves and they steal and theft for themselves. They haven't given anything to anyone. They just work for themselves. It is the fifteenth year that still our names are not registered in the list. All the people work and grasp all the things to themselves and they gather their relatives for it. They don't help us with anything, **SSI with a mother in an urban, middle-income household in Nangarhar***

## Suggestions for improvement

Most of the suggestions given by community members revolve around seven main themes:

1. SMS members should organize more meetings to raise awareness about the benefit of education in their community, gathering parents, teachers, elders etc. and they should go door to door if needed.
2. SMS members should work more with religious leaders, encouraging them to talk about education at the mosque and during Friday prayers.
3. SMS members should conduct regular assessments, listing all issues in school and in the community and then send a delegation to talk to the authorities for them to solve the problem.
4. SMS members should work in solving harassment issues affecting girls

*"Regarding harassment of girls on the way to school SMS can play a key role as they have to sit with the government and share this problem with them to solve this problem or if they cannot do this then they have it*

construct a high school here because mostly high schools are in the district, or they have to provide transport facilities to the girls”, **SSI with a father from a low-income, rural household in Badghis province**

1. SMS members should focus on talking to men (through meetings and workshops with fathers and boys) to raise awareness about violence against women, early marriage issues and women’s rights.

*“They have to make seminars for our fathers, and tell them about the violence against women, and about the equal right of man and woman, also should tell them that they do not marriage their daughters before of eighteen years old not at fifteen years old, also the equal right for sons and daughters, and tell them that the fathers should not make difference between them for example”, **SSI with an out-of-school adolescent girl in an urban, low-income household in Badghis province.***

2. SMSs should support female members by providing them with incentives for them to be able to join and work.

*“They have to make seminars for our fathers, and tell them about the violence against women, and about the equal right of man and woman, also should tell them that they do not marriage their daughters before of eighteen years old not at fifteen years old, also the equal right for sons and daughters, and tell them that the fathers should not make difference between them for example”, **FGD with female SMS members in an urban area of Kandahar province.***

3. SMS members should mobilise more contributions to fix issues in school and provide a better environment for learning.

*“SMS members should attract influential people to donate in the budget so that they get able to repair computers and buy new ones”, **FGD with adolescent girls in a rural area of Nangarhar province***

### 2.2.3 Perception of education authorities

#### Positive perceptions

90% of education authority representatives (DED, DSMS Master trainers, school directors and headmasters) found SMSs to be very efficient in their work with a slight prevalence in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces. 75% of respondents live in rural areas.

Education authorities usually praise SMSs’ efforts in two areas of work:

1. Their ability to raise awareness in their community leading to increased enrolment numbers and better retention.

*Yes, up to this stage their efforts became positive and gave conclusion. Their existence has given lots of favour in increasing the awareness of people which caused the amount of students to increase as well, **SSI with a DED representative in Kandahar province.***

2. Their ability to solve issues, often by contributing their own resources or mobilizing resources from the community to build surrounding walls, install a well or a water pump etc.

*Definitely, we ask SMS to discuss the issue with parents and they support us every time. On the other hand, SMSs have done lots of works by their own expenses and efforts, for example, they have assigned one clerk*

who was most needed for the Qala-e-Akhund High School and they pay his salary from their own budget. In addition, SMS members have constructed the wall of Khan Momand High School on their own expenses, **SSI with a DED representative in Nangarhar province.**

60% of respondents also found that SMSs cooperate with education authorities in an efficient way and provide great support to the MoE's work in local communities.

School directors and headmasters often report consulting and sharing school issues with SMSs to find common solutions.

*"If we have face with some problems or a matter exist, then we refer it to the schools SMS for consultation and solving", **SSI with a female headmaster in a rural area in Kandahar province.***

Some PED and DED representatives explain having regular meetings with school SMSs who share their assessments and requests regarding education needs.

*"They ask us and report us about the out-of-school children. Also, they report the strengths and weaknesses of the schools and teachers secretly with us. Or they report us the needs like not having school building or the school atmosphere are not safe and secure", **SSI with a PED representative in Badghis province.***

## Negative perceptions

Overall, education authorities only had a few negative perceptions of school SMSs around the following points:

- Lack of training and education: many SMS members are illiterate and have little skills so they need more training and support.

Members of SMS do not receive any training which at least they should receive one training per year like the one we had one about 3 year ago, SSI with a female teacher in Badghis province

*"Our SMSs aren't expert at this issue and for this should prepare more and more workshops to catch and learn everything better, the member of SMS are illiterate and might his knowledge level is so weak so they need workshops hundred percent", **SSI with a DED representative in Badghis province***

- Lack of resources: little access to financial resources to implement projects in communities but also as incentives for members who work on a voluntary basis.

*"SMSs do not have enough resources to address all challenges and problems, if government cannot resolve some problems then how can we expect them to make changes, **SSI with a DED representative in Nangarhar province***

- In some places, SMSs are not active

*"They do not come to us unless we request them to come here. we had a problem about a teacher last year and several times, we requested from members of SMS to come and solve the problem, but they never came", **SSI with a female teacher in Badghis province***

- Lack of female SMS members (stated by 20% of respondents) due to the difficulty to find educated women in remote communities and due to strict cultural and gender norms that do not allow women to participate in

leadership and decision-making roles.

“As you know our government structure is new and females don’t have high education and also they don’t have access to universities to learn more, our problems are at village level, we don’t have graduated female persons from that villages to get responsibilities”, **SSI with a DED representative in Badghis province**

“There several reasons regarding few members of school SMS are female. At least 30 to 50 per cent of the schools staff members must be females, because they are deprived of their rights. But in some places women are not allowed traditionally to participate in meetings or play a role in school activities, **SSI with a PED representative in Badghis province**

*“The activities and involvement of the women are a little weak in this district, and it is my slogan that we should remove the word Gender in our communities because there should not be any difference between men and women at all. We are all humans, and we have our individual rights. If our programs are inclusive, then there shouldn’t be the question of worrying about gender issues because neither men can reflect the needs and problems of women, nor do women can reveal the problems and challenges of men”, **SSI with a DED representative in Balk province.***

## Suggestions for improvement

Similar to suggestions made by community members, education authorities would like SMS members to improve on their communication skills and collaborate more with them, sharing issues and solving them together.

*“Councils don’t have another activity, just they should have better communication, collaborate and monitor from school, I think workshop is enough and if this workshops be for long term it helps more”, **SSI with a DED representative in Badghis***

SMSs should also focus on working with men and religious leaders to change their attitudes and behaviours, particularly towards women and girls’ rights in the community.

*“They should make aware the fathers and elder brothers because they are the heads of households. They can give awareness to the religious leaders as well. Then these people will gather the fathers and elder brothers of all the households in one single place and teach them the benefits of education. Give them general awareness of getting education”, **SSI with a female headmaster in Kandahar province.***

### 2.2.3 Perception of female SMS’s role

53% of all respondents had a clear opinion on the benefits of having female members in school councils which mostly focused on the fact that only women have access to mothers and girls in the community. Girls feel much more at ease sharing issues with female SMS members and they can visit mothers to discuss girls’ education benefits and encourage them to enrol or keep sending their daughters to school.

*If there were women in SMS, they would be able to visit the women in homes and encourage them to send their daughter, **SSI with an adolescent boy in a rural community in Kandahar province***

58% of respondents live in rural areas and 35% of them live in Nangarhar as compared to only 21/22% of them living in each of the other 3 provinces. Most respondents recognise that the lack of female SMS members is an issue that needs solving.



The number of female members are less in the councils than men. We need the female member in our councils because men can't go to house of people and talk with women at their house. Men can talk with the father of the children but not with their mothers. We need female member in our council to assist with us when we have a problem with mothers of children, **SSI with a male SMS member in an urban area of Badghis province.**

For sure less number of female in SMS can cause problems because male members are not allowed to talk with women, therefore to do better public awareness and talk with women increment of female members in SMSs are highly required, **SSI with a father from a low-income, rural household in Badghis province**

## 2.2.4 Factors that makes some SMSs more successful than others.

According to all categories of respondents, there are four main factors that make some SMSs more successful than other:

### 1. Having influential, motivated and active SMS members

*"The selection of SMS members is also very important that the school SMS members should be influencers because they can have more accomplishments than normal people",* **SSI with a female headmaster in Nangarhar province**

*"The reason for success of some council is their member. Some council members are active than the others and they get good achievements",* **FGD with female SMS members in an urban area of Balkh province**

*"I think the SMS which is more passionate will be more successful because if everyone wanted to serve the country he/she will be successful as some people are more passionate for serving the country",* **SSI with a female headmaster in Nangarhar province.**

### 2. Having a united and trusted council in the community; working together, coordinating between members and other stakeholders etc.

*"The council members are united , and the education problems which we have can be solved by them to some extent. They have had good progress and have been successful in solving some of the problems",* **SSI with an adolescent girl from a low-income, rural household in Nangarhar province.**

*"If we want to implement our plan properly it is important that all team members should have coordination and similar view of thoughts. All group member should have same view of thoughts try to put hands together to be able to address a challenge collectively in a group",* **FGD with male SMS members in an urban area of Badghis province**

### 3. Selecting literate and educated people to become SMS members

*"Some members of school SMSs are very clever and literate and they can track the problems and refer to the relevant institution",* **SSI with a female teacher in Badghis province**

*"If the member of a council will be educated, literate people and have a good plan that council will be more successful than other council",* **FGD with male SMS members in an urban area of Nangarhar province.**

### 4. Selecting SMS members who have the most resources to be able to carry out activities and drive change.

*“The main important factors that can make a SMS very successful are two things, the first one is the high-level economy of the SMS members and the second factor is the SMS members’ sense of humour and sense of knowledge for educating the children of its country”, **SSI with a PED representative in Nangarhar***

*“SMSs with more resources, coordination, and unity are more successful than others, and their achievement levels have been higher”, FGD with female SMS members in a rural area of Nangarhar province.*

## 2.3 Barriers to SMS success

Barriers to SMS members’ work are multifold but concentrate around the issue of access as described in the paragraph below.

### 2.3.1 Access restriction

Female SMS members seem to be the most affected by access restriction, both in a personal way where they are kept from participating in SMS activities and in their everyday work when community members deny them access to public spaces or their homes.

- Issues regarding female SMS members’ participation

*“The members of the council are approximately equal. Some of the women don’t participate because they are housewives and they have children and when we called them for the council session they will make excuses and they will say I have a work at home. And they don’t come. Their husband not allowed them or their son doesn’t allow them”, **FGD with female SMS members in an urban area of Balkh province***

- Community members are not ready to talk to female SMS members

*“Here in our community most of the people are not letting their daughters to go to school, and for the solution of that the only way is to carry out public awareness programs but still no one is ready to talk with us, **FDG with female SMS members in a rural area of Balkh province***

*“Well the main problems is that no one is giving us permission to meet their families to tell them the importance of the education and their behaviour is very bad with us, as they thinks that going to school can destroy their daughters future as they might face harassment in the way”, **FDG with female SMS members in an urban area of Kandahar province***

It should be notes that male SMS members also sometimes have access restriction due to community conflict, ethnicity or education level discrimination

*“There are some tribal conflict that haven’t solved yet, and there are some group opposition against us and also racism for example there are families who have a higher education and when we go to them they don’t listen to us because we have less education than them”, **SSI with a male SMS member in Badghis province***

- Opposition from tribal elders or religious leaders

*Unfortunately tribal elders and malik are making barriers for us instead of supporting us, **FGD with female SMS members in an urban area in Kandahar province***

## 2.3.2 Other

- Lack of resources preventing SMS members from solving issues or simply doing their job.

*“I did many things as council member, I have a car and I took the children to school but I don’t have any salary and I don’t have any money how can I do something”, FGD with fathers in a rural community in Kandahar province.*

## 3. Social Mobilisation Training Delivery and Outcome

This section will a) look at the way the training was successful or not in transferring the desired knowledge to target participants b) assess whether the training was able to support SMS members in implementing social mobilisation activities leading to behaviour change.

### 3.1 Training content and implementation

#### Main cascade training content

##### Day 1

- a. Definition of social mobilization (largely descriptive—lack local context)
- b. Active listening (to all community members—strengthen teamwork)
- c. Promoting positive thinking and appreciating community’s accomplishment (largely descriptive—lack local context)

##### Day 2

- a. Present management and forgetting the past
- b. Imagination and future expectations

- c. Education and lack of equal access to education

- d. Responsibility and role of local community (SMS) members

- e. Iron and folic acid supplements distribution plan

##### Day 3

- a. How to use local resources

- b. Innovation and workplan

- c. How to fill the social mobilization forms (*in total three forms were presented*)

#### Assessment of training content (language, adaptation to local context, techniques taught etc.)

Based on conversations with UNICEF and on the review of training material and reports, both the 5-day ToT for DSMS Master Trainers and the 3-day cascade training for SMS members focused on:

- Communication skills, motivating the community and other social mobilization aspects (80% of the time)
- Examples of UNICEF supported programs that need community support, for example the distribution of folic acid tablets, iron supplements, educational manuals or WASH projects (20% of the time).

The social mobilisation part of the training seemed to cover a wide variety of topics such as: defining social mobilisation and SMS’s roles, discussing barriers around access to education, promoting positive thinking and team work in the community, using local resources, establishing or maintaining CBE classes as an alternative to government schools, issues around early marriage etc.

The aim of the training was for SMSs to act as a bridge between schools and the community, implementing activities such as raising awareness about the importance of education in the community (by holding meetings with parents and religious leaders), encouraging parents to enrol their children, visit schools to assess the equipment etc.

At the end of the training, SMSs were asked to develop a plan for their community and were introduced to the use of three forms:

- a form to register local funds (monetary or otherwise),
- a form to record the drop-out students (personal information of the student, reasons for leaving, as well as names/contact info for two local influencers<sup>21</sup>)
- a form to register the names of boys/girls that have been enrolled in schools via SMSs' social mobilisation efforts

The training did not include a specific module on the role of female SMS members or on prevention of harassment in the community.

### **3.1.2. Assessment of training pedagogy (interactions with participants, adaptation to literacy level etc.)**

#### **Gender disaggregation**

- Both male and female SMS found the training interactive, with a lot of local examples and with useful group work sessions.
- While they broadly found the training to be interactive, 20% more male SMS than female SMS reported this to have been their experience
- Similarly, more than 85% of women found the discussions to have been useful, while just 52% of men found the same.
- While just 1% of women found the training to be mostly lecture style, 14% of men believed it was lecture style.

#### **Provincial disaggregation**

- More than 90% of Kandahar and Nangarhar SMS reported trainings were interactive, compared to 88% of Balkh and just 63% of Badghis SMS reporting the same.
- Around a third of participants from Nangarhar reported that the training was lecture style in contrast to 8% or less in the other 3 provinces.
- Badghis SMS in general reported lower proportional rates of interactivity, local examples and use of local examples in the training.

#### **Urban vs. Rural disaggregation**

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21 I don't understand why this has been placed on the form. No information or justification is provided to explain the reasoning.

- Over 80% of SMS from both rural and urban areas report the training was very interactive with many discussions, and just 10 and 13% of each believed the sessions were lecture rather than interactive in style
- Around 10% more urban SMS reported that there were some useful groupwork sessions than their rural counterparts
- Similarly slightly more rural SM (75% ) found the sessions used examples that helped them understand the concepts than urban SM (68%)

### **Disaggregation by literacy level**

- More literate than illiterate SM reported that the training was interactive with many discussions - with 18% difference
- While three quarters of literate SMS reported that the sessions used local examples that helped understand concepts, just 61% of their illiterate counterparts reported the same
- Both around 60% of literate and illiterate SM report that the training included useful group work sessions

Literacy appears to be an influencing factor in the experience of the training and perceptions among SMS about how interactive, useful and understandable it was.

### **3.1.3 Assessment of training logistics and attendance: venue, ease of access, budget respected, timeliness**

The training was delivered in each district centre in the same room (usually in a hotel) for 3 days. All DSMS Master trainers were male. In provinces with many female participants, a separate training session was held for female with the male Master trainer. In provinces with a small number of female SMS members, they were invited to participate in a mix training with men.

#### **Training attendance**

- SMS with different levels of literacy reported attending the training in full for the three days.
- More than half of illiterate and 40% of literate SMS participated in the training but recall only a little. Conversely around half of literate SMS versus 20% of illiterate SM recall the training very well.

Literacy is a very significant influencing factor on retention of information related to the training (1 in 6 SMS members are illiterate).

#### **Access to training**

- Almost all male SMS reported that the training location was appropriate and easy for them to access
- Almost one-in-four female SMS reported that the training local location was not appropriate and easy for them to access. Given the fact that provinces with a small number of female SMS members are often the most conservative in terms of prescriptive gender norms, the lack of female trainer and separate training venue is likely to have been an important barrier for them to attend.

Male SMS found it easier than female SMS to access the training.

- The majority of SM across provinces report that the training is appropriate and easy to access

The only exception is in Badghis where 18% of surveyed SMS report that the training location was not appropriate and easy to access, maybe due to deteriorating security conditions in this province.

- Almost all SMS in rural and urban areas reported that training location is appropriate and easy to access
- The vast majority of both literate and illiterate SMS reported that the training location was appropriate and easy to access

There is a 5 percentage point difference between literate and illiterate respondents' perception of the training location as appropriate and accessible in favour of the literate SMS

### **Participation in previous training**

- Less than 30% of male and female SMS reported prior training on social mobilization.

20% of women and 30% of men reported prior training - men appear to have slightly better access to training on social mobilization prior to this training

- Slightly more rural than urban SMS reported participation in prior social mobilisation training - 10% difference - with just half of both not having any prior training.
- SMS from Balkh report highest levels of exposure to prior training on social mobilisation at 38% while SMS from Kandahar report the lowest level of exposure to prior training on social mobilization at 17%. Badghis and Balkh report around 10-15% more than Kandahar and Nangarhar, replicating trend visible in provincial recall of content from 2.4.4.1

Slightly more SMS who are literate have had prior training on social mobilisation than SMS who are illiterate - with around 10% difference in favour of literate SMS.

## **3.2 Training strengths and weaknesses**

### **3.2.1 Training strengths**

All surveyed SMS members, male and female through Sprockler reported that the training had been useful, in varying degrees:

- Slightly fewer male than female SMS reported that the training was very useful.
- SMS from Badghis and Balkh report slightly more level of "somewhat useful response" than SMS in Kandahar and Nangarhar.
- More than 85% of SMS from both rural and urban areas report that the training was very useful.
- 3% more urban SMS report the training as somewhat rather than very useful.

- There is very small difference in how useful literate and illiterate SM reported the training to be - accounting for blanks, it looks like while the same number of people left this question blank, a much greater proportion of the illiterate than literate SMS left this blank (21 v 6%) indicating perhaps less useful but less inclined to reply directly.

According to qualitative findings, 56% of trained SMS members reported that the training was very useful with a majority of men. They were equally distributed across locations and provinces with a slight prevalence in Kandahar and Balkh.

*These trainings are hundred percent useful because it shows us the way of work for literate and illiterate people. The training is useful for illiterate people too. Although they don't have education, they can sit and listen to their speech. If these trainings implement in thirty-four provinces, I can tell you that we won't have any illiterate person in the future. Because people will send their children to school, **SSI with a male SMS member in a low-income, rural community in Badghis provinces.***

*Before the training, it was like going somewhere by walking, and after the training, it is like going somewhere through a vehicle. Before training we were not knowing anything, but now we almost know everything, **SSI with a male SMS member in an urban community in Kandahar province.***

- Example of increased capacities

72% of respondents (65% male) gave examples of the way the training increased their capacities. The majority live in Badghis province (38%) and the smallest numbers were found in Balkh (15%). 52% live in rural areas.

Overall, many SMS members reported learning about their roles and responsibilities.

*"We learnt many things in the trainings, we didn't know about the responsibility of the council and how to encourage student for education and how to supervise the teachers and the students. We learnt all these things in the training", **FGD with trained male SMS members in a rural area of Nangarhar province***

*"Most of them were doing their own tasks but even didn't know that what they are doing and what they are responsible for. We this program has been described to them, they felt that every one of them is the powerful person of the SMS. Also, they learnt that it is not only the job of the teachers to take care of the children's education. But in fact, it is the responsibility of all the members of the SMS as well", **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Nangarhar***

Most SMS members stated that this training really motivated them and that they are now able to better communicate with community members and encourage them to send their children to school.

*"They told us how to satisfy the people to send their children to school. then we encourage people to send their children to school, if any student doesn't come to school we talk with his elder brother and ask him about the problem why his brother doesn't come to school and we ask the headmaster and he share some problem with us", **FGD with trained male SMS in a rural area of Kandahar province***

*"We learn how to encourage people to send their children to school, and some students who become disappointed from the lesson how to bring them back to school", **FGD with trained male SMS in a rural area of Kandahar province***

Some give more precise indications of actions they were able to take after the training to address specific issues

such as early marriage to prevent girls' drop outs at adolescence.

*"We learn from this workshop very positive and great thing, we have some person who marry his daughters when they are ten or eight, we prevent this worse action and we start to reform people by this SMS. And second one we prevent some unknown and un-correct customs and third one, the women who are pass the workshop, they have excellent activity, they work in team and group and go to different home and talk with mothers and now no one don't have permission to marry his daughters before time come and our training that we get it have morerelatedwith", **FGD with male SMS member in an urban area in Badghis province.***

Overall, SMS members' comments on what they learnt during the training remain largely general, making it difficult to point to certain techniques of communication they acquired or specific scenarios that were given to them to help them address specific issues in their community.

- The training was interactive and interesting

30% of respondents found the training to be practical and interactive, mentioning theatre shows, role plays etc.

Several DSMS master trainers explained the techniques they used to train people in a practical way:

*"We gave training to the council member for three days and during these three days we had some theatre at the training and we showed them every problem by role play as we received such training in our own training and we repeat it to the other trainees. We had group work in our training with them and we had practical lesson for them. We gave them a good training and at the end of training every one of them understood how to serve for ourcommunity", **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Kandahar province.***

*"The way of presenting the training was that the materials which were given by the UNICEF to us, we provided them to the participants. We trained them using the whiteboards, projectors, group works and individual activities. We had practical parts there as well. We had roll plays, acting and many more", **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Nangarhar province.***

Which was reflected in some of the participants' experience of the training:

*"We could learn from the theatre show that how we can convince the people to let their children to study in school. Two years ago, the female children were not going to the school. We could convince their families to send them to school", **FGD with male SMS members in a rural area of Balkh province***

*"For example, there were acting of few events as example as well in that training. For example, we acted of absent students in that training. One was teacher, one was director and one was mother etc. so, we did such acts as well to learn it in a practical way", **SSI with a female SMS member in Balkh province.***

### **3.2.2 DSMS Master Trainers' experience of the training**

Most DSMS Master trainers had a positive experience of the training they received from the UNICEF expert in Kabul:

*"The best and complete training that we received was conducted by UNICEF and the teacher was an expert, professional trainer whose name was Nara and she was assigned as a trainer for us. I learnt many things from her in the field of training, she showed us every problem in the environment and area. We learn about all the existence problem between children, between father and mother or between the community or school from*



them. I myself learnt many professional lesson”, **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer in Kandahar province.**

Some of them also found the training materials to be very useful:

*“The materials were very perfect and very nice. The materials which we used in the trainings of Kama district of Nangarhar province, was prepared in good manners which were obvious to everyone. They were easy to understand for educated and non-educated people. Every topic was in written shape and in photographic shape”,* **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer in Nangarhar province.**

In line with previous findings on language issues with the training in Nangarhar and Kandahar province, a master trainer in Nangarhar noted some difficulty in being trained by a foreigner in Kabul:

*“A letter came to us and invited us to three or four days ToT training. We moved to Kabul for training and were trained by a foreign person in Kabul. There was a problem that he was speaking another language and someone else was translating those to us. We had some problems in understanding those things correctly. But for his body language and physically explanation we have gotten everything”,* **DSMS Master Trainer in Nangarhar**

Some master trainers confirmed receiving UNICEF’s refresher training last year including a module on activity monitoring:

*“We received the training at the Kabul by expert and professional teacher in section of teaching methods and social mobilization methods, in addition we also received training in section of monitoring, planning and plan providing for the council. we learnt these issues in that training and we taught the same training and lesson for the members of the council through the workshops that we launched”,* **DSMS Master Trainer in Badghis province.**

Some master trainers obviously deviated from the sole content of UNICEF’s training which should have focused only on social mobilization and should not have included any part on teaching methods or teacher monitoring.

- Deviating from the curriculum

*“In my opinion the workshop for the member of the council is a very good thing, because they could learn many things from the workshop like methods of teaching, methods that how to make a good and successful plan at school, and how to improve the talent of students at school. the participant at the training learnt many things, they learn the method of monitoring, and the learnt something about how to observe and monitor a school, they learnt how to observe the teachers and the method of their teaching, they understood the way of planning. The planning is a very important part of a work and for every work we should make a plan”,* **DSMS Master Trainer in Badghis province.**

### Special note on potential confusion of SMS members about the training they received:

As mentioned earlier in this section, about 30% of SMS members stated having attended other training provided by different NGOs. This might have led a number of SMSs to confuse the training provided by UNICEF with another one when answering questions:

*“For some of the councils we received some trainings and we understood that what should we do to get good opportunities and what should we do for education. How to give public awareness to people. We received trainings from different NGOs in our councils, **FGD with female SMS members in a rural area in Kandahar province**”.*

This is particularly obvious in the quotes below where SMS members talk about things that did not happen during UNICEF’s training or topics

that were not included.

*“That training was very good and it was very informative. There was a teacher with us and that teacher gave very good lessons to us. That teacher provided awareness to us. That teachers talked about training and unity in the school and in the class. I mean that teacher talked about training and motivation things”, **SSI with a female SMS member in a rural community of Balkh province.***

*“We learned teaching methods well. We did not know more teaching methods before receiving training, but we have learned a lot of teaching methods in training”, **SSI with a female SMS member in Badghis province.***

### 3.2.3 Training weaknesses

Training weaknesses reported by training participants revolved around four different aspects of the training related to the materials and tools, training pedagogy and duration as well as challenges to attend.

#### 1. Inappropriate training material and language

22% of SMS members and DSMS Master trainers (all male) found that the training materials used were not adapted to the audience or presented language and translation issues. 75% of them are located in Kandahar and Nangarhar (in equal proportion), showing that there were specific issue with the training delivered in Pashto.

Several DSMS trainers found that the training manual provided was difficult for SMS members to understand, in particular when it comes to the theory part for illiterate SMS members.

*“The manual that they provided for the council was a little difficult for the council members, there were some philosophic issues on the manual which were difficult for the trainees to understand and analyse it. The opinion of Einstein and other scholars was difficult for them to understand. In my opinion the content of the workshop should be simple and easy, **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Badghis***

*“The materials should be prepared according to the illiterate people because we have the majority of those people. Something should be prepared for them like a practical drama”, **DSMS Master trainer in Nangarhar***

In line with findings in section 2.4.1.3 above, many illiterate SMS members reported having difficulty following and remembering the training.

*“I participated in the training but I am an illiterate person and I couldn’t understand from the training. The training was many times ago and now I forget many thing”, **FGD with male SMS members in a rural area in Kandahar province.***

Participants in Nangarhar and Kandahar reported language issues in which the trainer was not proficient enough in Pashto or the materials used were entirely in Dari.

*“if they bring a trainer from Kabul who doesn’t know our tradition, our problem and our language then we can’t understand and learn from him. The time of the training should be adapted according to the issue”, **FGD with male SMS members in Nangarhar province***

*“The only difficulty was the materials which were in Dari language that we interpreted them into Pashto accordingly”, **SSI with a male SMS member in Kandahar***

## **2. Lack of interest and interaction**

Some training participants reported that the training sessions were delivered as lectures or repeated the same exercise all day, which made it every boring and difficult to follow.

*“In the first day, the trainer completely spoke. In the second day, they told about their experiences and the training became rather more interesting. In the first day of training, we were so sleepy because we were only listening”, **SSI with a female SMS member in a rural area of Balkh province.***

*“It was a little boring because they had divided their presenting time into two times, for example: one had presentation before noon and another had presentation after noon which was a little boring and they should manage their presentation like they should change their presenter after an hour”, **SSI with a male SMS member in Balkh province.***

Several respondents requested for the training to be more practical and interactive.

*“The trainer should be always present, and we should be always present too, the training should be done practically and group based”, **FGD with male SMS member in Nangarhar province.***

## **3. Training duration issue**

Some respondents stated that the content of the training could not be delivered within three days only and that they did not have enough time to go into details or have meaningful discussions.

*“I think it is better if they add to the timings. Some contents and manuals were lengthy and we could not review them with details”, **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Badghis***

*“First of all, the 3 days workshop that we received wasn’t enough because it is a short duration to talk about everything, and it was a long time ago that I don’t remember the details about it”, **SSI with a male SMS member in a rural area in Nangarhar province***

## **4. Challenges to attend the training**

Lastly, some respondents reported that SMS members had trouble reaching the training location on time due to transportation issues and long distances.

*We have the problem of transportation that they couldn’t reach on time, **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer in Nangarhar province***

*“It is long way to Mazar-e-Sharif so most of the teachers left the training in 3:30 p.m and we faced many problems while coming back to our district”, **SSI with a male SMS member in a rural community of Balkh province.***

It seemed to be a particular issue for female SMS members to attend:

*“Because there was female members too so it would be better to change its time into from 8 a.m. till 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. because we reached to home very late which is a little difficult to females”, SSI with a male SMS member in an urban area in Balkh province.*

### 3.2.4. Suggestions for improvement

An overwhelming majority of suggestions for improvement were about providing more training to school SMSs in general.

#### 1. Need for more training

30% of all respondents stated that school SMSs needed more training, of which 48% were SMS members. 75% of all interviewed DSMS Master trainers also recommended training SMS members further or organizing refresher training.

The suggestion for more training were mostly found in Badghis (37%) and in Balkh (22%) with a slight prevalence in rural areas (52%). Suggestions were made in majority by men but also by 37% of female interviewees.

- Increase duration and number of training sessions

Most of the time, respondents asked for more training in general without giving any specific details on the topics they would like to learn about or the type of skills they would like to acquire. They are simply eager to learn anything that organizations are willing to train them on.

*“I suggest having more workshops in order to make the people understand more about education. I suggest more programs similar to UNCEF training and workshops, SSI with a male school director in Balkh province”, SSI with a male SMS member in an urban community in Badghis province.*

*“They should increase the number of teachers for the trainings, they should increase the days of training, different teacher will teach different things and people become more familiarize and aware of the trainings and the goal of it. They should increase the days from three days to seven days and they should increase the number of teacher from one to two in this way the teacher won’t get tired”, SSI with a male SMS member in an urban community in Badghis province.*

- Extend training to more SMS members and more districts and provinces.

Many respondents wish that all 15 SMS members had been able to participate and not only 11 members per SMS.

*“Well as you know the school councils have 15 members. In the previous program all the councils are not part of this program. If possible in the next program all the councils should be included in the program, it would be good”, SSI with a DSMS trainer in Balkh*

*“The days of training should be extended and it should be provided for all SMS members”, SSI with a female SMS member in a rural community in Badghis province*

They also recommend expanding the training to all SMS members in Afghanistan.

*I request from you that if it is possible, these programs should be extended to every school in Afghanistan because it will raise their awareness and education level, **SSI with a male SMS member in an urban area in Nangarhar province***

They are often, once again, vague about the additional type of information they would like the training to include in the future.

*“If such training provided in year way to all over Afghanistan, then more people will get information. I have such trainings contents should be improved more and should have more information. If coordination and cooperation of school system, teachers and students increased, then education level will be very good and activities will be implemented very well. It will be in favour to all. All will get awareness and information and issues will be addressed. If trainings days increased, then it will be very good. Also, more information should be added. Also, there were more information provided in three days and I think it is not possible to learn many things in three days”, **SSI with a female SMS member from a rural community in Balkh.***

- Need for refreshers

Many SMS members also asked for refresher sessions to be held, explaining that they could not remember the content very well after a one-time 3-day training delivered 3 years ago. They also noted that new SMS members might join who also need to receive the training.

*“We can see that they give training to the council member in every three or four years and during this long period many changes might happen, the council member might change and other problems, they should launch the trainings after short break not three or four years, it should once a year”, **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer in Badghis province.***

*“At least the facilitators partners should provide us workshops like this once, twice per year to improve”, **FGD with male SMS members in Badghis province.***

## 2. Need to adapt the training approach

Several respondents stated that the training material and delivery needs to be adapted to the needs of SMS members with low literacy level.

They suggested using a more practical approach, based on role-play or dramas taken from examples in the local context.

*“We have most of the people that they are not educated and we present them the training through the projector. It may not be that much sufficient for them and they will know nothing from it. For them, the only perfect thing is to play a roll play. And to act for them, it will also work well”, **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer in Nangarhar province.***

*“As I told you before, there are lots of uneducated participants so there should be practical materials for them in the PowerPoint slides. If we focus on theory then it will be meaningless because SMSs are uneducated, therefore, we should focus on providing practical examples/materials that both literate and illiterate get enough information”, **DSMS Master Trainer in Nangarhar***

## 3. Need to provide participants with incentives

A few respondents recommended providing incentives to improve people's participation and motivation in the training.

Some of them recommend providing training participants with snacks and lunch.

*"We recommend to have some workshop and motivated people and they participate more or some regular workshops, regular meeting at this field to improve people awareness, and when we have meeting at least we need water, some cake to eat at break or lunch and people will encourage to come and participate", **FGD with male SMS members in an urban area of Badghis province.***

Others recommend providing a financial incentive so that people do not lose revenue on the days they attend the training. Support to pay for transportation would also help some SMS members have better access and come regularly and on time.

*"They should assist some money with the council member, because some of them are shopkeeper, some of them have a profession, if they don't assist with them materially, one day they will go to the seminar the next day they won't go to the seminar", **SSI with a female SMS member in an urban area of Balkh province.***

*"Financial aids are the first need of us and the next one is the lack of transportation. We can't pay for transportation, because we are not paid enough salary", **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer in Badghis***

#### 4. Include women in training

A few respondents also recommended making efforts to include women in the training by notifying them and organizing separate workshops for them.

*"And if we have more workshop from now and if they can by masjid notify the women or gathering her at a masjid and one person tell her all this issue or provide her a workshop and it will be so useful than now", **FGD with male SMS members in an urban area of Badghis province***

## 3.3 SMS members' capacities to implement SM activities post-training

### 3.3.1 Comparison of pre and post-training activities

As illustrated in the graph below showing pre and post training activities implemented by trained SMS members, it clearly appears that after the training SMSs' activity level has increased in all the categories. Before training, 71 SMS members (17% female) reported not implemented any activity whereas after the training, all of them were active.

While these findings are very encouraging in terms of training knowledge transfer, many disparities exist across different types of disaggregation.

At the end of the training, SMS members were asked to develop a breakthrough plan for their community and they were expected to implement the four following types of activities:

- Hold meetings with community members to raise awareness

- Carry out an out of school children analysis
- Produce a proactive strategy to address identified gaps
- Mobilize community towards cash or in-kind contributions

## Gender disaggregation

While female SMS members appear to have dramatically increased their ability to organize meetings with the community to promote education (+60% compared to +33% for male), they seem to be at a disadvantage for all other type of activities. Their ability to organize and attend SMS training even decreased by 16% while men's increased by 26%.

SMS members' ability to carry out an analysis of out of school children post-training increased substantially, +50% for female members and +71% for male. Their ability to then develop a plan increased by 20% for female members and 65% for males.

Women appear to have very limited ability, even post-training to carry out any advocacy related activity, probably due to prescriptive gender norms making it very difficult for them to request meetings with authorities and attend them. Only 8% and 7% of female SMS members reported being able to share their plan with school administration or request a meeting with PED/DED respectively (representing a 5% and 6% increase post-training). Men's capacities in these domains increased more substantially by 33 and 17%. Almost half of all male SMS members reported feeling confident sharing their plan.

An important disparity also exists between male and female SMS members' ability to mobilise resources from the community (64 and 30% respectively), representing a 23 and 38% increase post-training in favour of male SMS members.

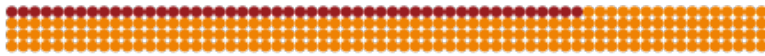
Organized and attended shura meetings



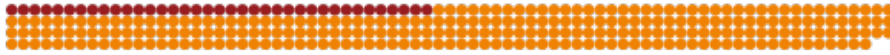
Met with community members to promote education, especially with parents of out of school children



Met with influential people in the community to discuss issues around education (elders, religious leaders etc.)



Produced an analysis of out of school children in your community



Produced a plan to provide education to out of school children



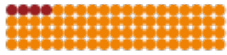
Shared your plan with government school



Shared your plan with the DED/PED



Requested a meeting with the DED/PED to discuss your plan



Talked to your community to ask for cash or in-kind contributions for the school

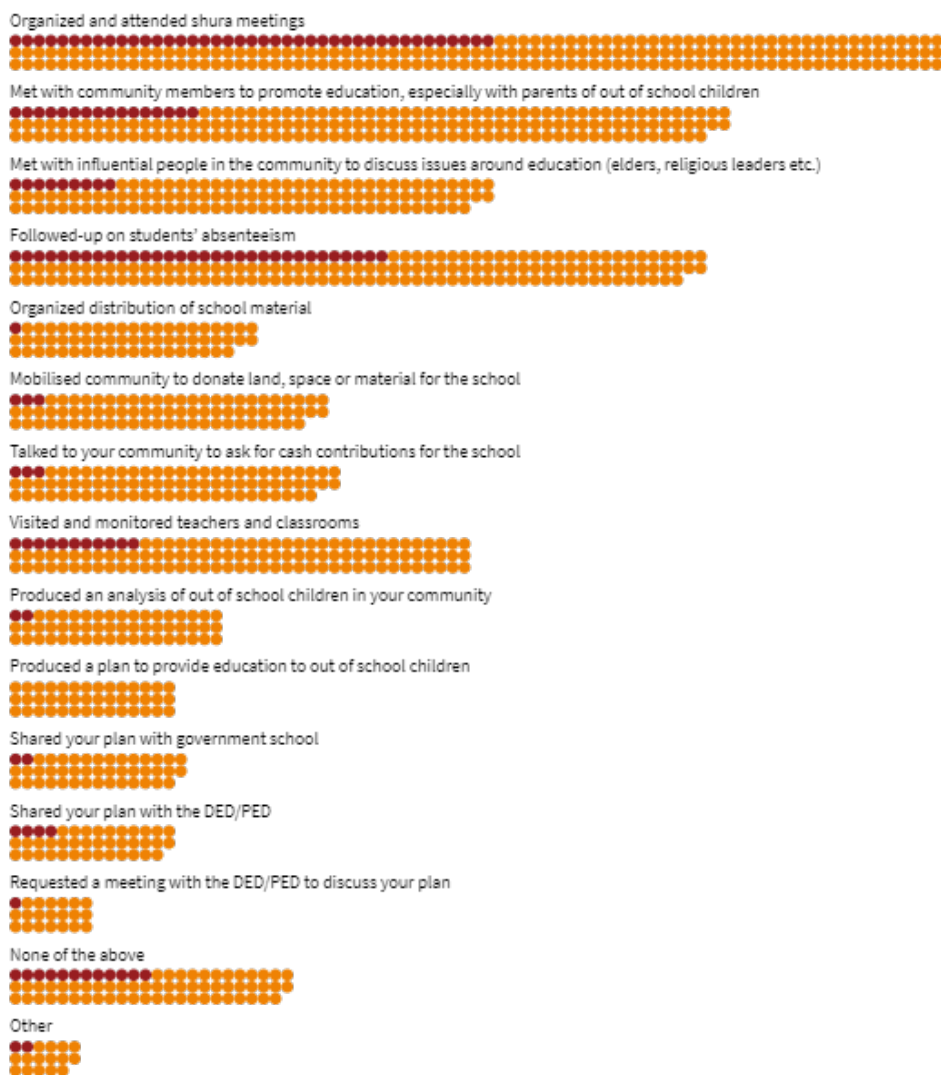


None of the above

Other







## Provincial geographic disaggregation

There was a steady increase across all types of activities pre and post-training in all provinces with significant differences in the level of activities implemented.

In Badghis province, SMS members present a significantly lower level of activities than in other provinces for all types of activities ranging from 20 to 40% lower than in other provinces. Only 27% of SMS members report being able to meet with influential people in their community to promote education versus 80% on average in other provinces. However, this still represents a 21% increase from the pre-training level.

Balkh scores highest in SMS' ability to conduct an out-of-school children analysis (96%) but lowest in meetings with community members (40%) which might be an error given that the pre-training level was 86%.

Kandahar and Nangarhar SMSs score very high in mobilizing community contribution (87 and 89%) as well as organizing meetings with 90% on average.

SMSs in rural areas are more active across all types of activities by 7 to 10 percentage points on average when compared to SMSs in urban areas. Before training, they scored either the same or lower than in urban areas, meaning that SMSs from rural areas particularly benefited from this training.

Community income level was not a predictor of the type of activity implemented and of the progress between pre and post-training.

### 3.3.2 Comparison between quantitative and qualitative findings

#### Comparison with qualitative findings

Qualitative data also shows anecdotal evidence that SMSs were successful in implementing post-training activities as illustrated by the quotes below:

*“The first thing to be considered as a first finding is that before this, there was no emotion related to schools but now there is. Secondly the members of the school SMS had a sitting and listed all the problems related to school. For the problems related to government, they have created a team of SMS members that they should see with the government. For problems related to those areas where they are active, they have found good solutions instead. Those students whether they are boys or girls that they have left the schools due to different kinds of problems”, **SSI with DSMS Master Trainer in Nangarhar.***

*“During seminar a survey form had been distributed among the participants regarding to out-of-school children. They were assigned to collect information and report about the number of children. They reported it to school offices and had meetings in school. Then school principals shared the result with council members. Schools made an action plan to increase the number of students who are out of school. It had a positive result and impact. Through this survey they could bring back the out of school children”, **SSI with a DSMS Master trainer.***

*“I told you before, that before participating in the workshops, our capacity was low and we knew nothing, and after attending the workshop, we took serious actions to check the timesheets and follow up with the absent students’ families, and we provided facilities and cooperation to many poor students and encouraged them to keep up with their spirit of learning knowledge”, **SSI with a trained male SMS member in a rural community of Nangarhar province***

#### Sprockler Storytelling analysis

All 379 SMS members participating in Sprockler survey were asked to tell us a story related to their work as SMSs, they could choose any topic they wanted.

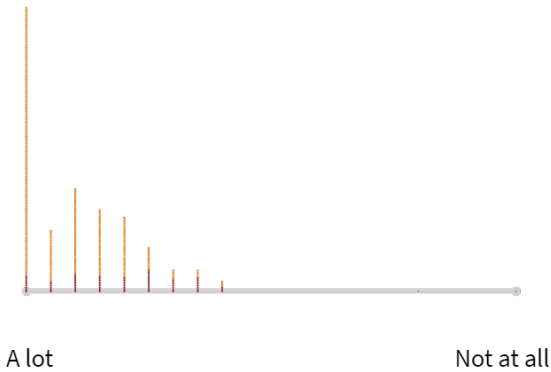
When analysing responses, the majority of SMS members, by order of importance, told a story related to:

1. Awareness raising home visits to follow-up on absenteeism and organizing community meetings mostly
2. Improving school environment: finding solutions to provide repair, school material and equipment or access to water and sanitation

Mobilizing resources: half of the stories were about mobilizing their own resources and half mobilizing them from the community, some also found local patrons

3. Advocacy: mainly with local authorities

To what extent do you think the training we discussed earlier relates to this story?



These responses correspond to the level of SMS activities observed in quantitative findings.

When asked to analyse their own story, most SMS members found that it was positive in relation to their job and most of them also found that it was related to the training, meaning that the training had a positive influence on their ability to carry out such type of activity.

#### 2.4.3.3 Training follow-up and monitoring.

It was relatively difficult to gather evidence around follow-up and monitoring activities carried out to support SMS members after the training.

##### 1. Training follow-up

Several respondents complained about the lack of training follow-up, feeling that a one-time training was not enough to build their capacities. This comes back to the large number of suggestions to increase training duration and sessions reported in a previous section.

*“From 2018 to now we just get one workshop and after that here is not any coordination for better awareness and everyone forget all lessons, as I forgot myself”, FGD with male SMS members in a rural area of Badghis province.*

*“Last year they received a training and after that nothing has been done to them. The member of the council economy is weak and they can’t do anything by themselves, the other people should support them, they don’t have anything to spend, the council should have some budget or the government should support them”, FGD with fathers in a rural community of Kandahar province.*

##### 2. Post-training activity monitoring

According to UNICEF’s Final training report from February 2018, trained SMS members should have been monitored on a quarterly basis but this was not made possible due to the fact that DSMS Master Trainers were not on tashkeel anymore and could not carry out monitoring activities outside of UNICEF’s budget and support.

A year after the cascade training, UNICEF organized a 5 day refresher training in Kabul for 100 DSMS Master trainer to send them back to the field and visit each SMS once. Not all original 55 contracted DSMS Master Trainers were among the refresher group.

In fact, very few interviewed DSMS Master trainers reported having received UNICEF's refresher training including a module on activity monitoring.

*"Of course, during trainings in Kabul, trainers talked about some monitoring social mobilization activities. It was about the activities after the training which trainees have to share with school councils. As I mentioned, with us there were participants from districts, the head of district offices of Ministry of Education. The main reason of their participation was to learn how to follow up and monitor the school councils and their activities", **DSMS Master Trainer in Balkh province.***

*"We went to the field for about one or two times when the program has been implemented. We have seen the schools from near. We have done our journeys for the implementation of the plans that we have made during the training. We have made sittings with those students whom have left the school due to some problems. Most of them were girls and their list was given to us by the SMS of schools. Now we have transferred our office and the other cooperators also have been gone to different places and done lots of things", **DSMS Master trainer in Nangarhar***

The quote below also suggests that the trainers might be talking about monitoring activities related to another project run by NGOs in their province:

*"At the end of the program I had the responsibility of the supervision and evaluation. We went to evaluate the program with the NGO employees. Sometimes, I personally go to evaluate and monitor because it is my birthplace. I do my personal evaluation", **DSMS Master Trainer in Balkh.***

DSMS Master Trainers raised many issues related to monitoring:

- The general lack of human and financial resources to conduct monitoring

*"I request from the UNICE that they should have one person at least at every province as a focal point and pay him a little salary that he could trace and monitor the job continually and in this case result of the task will be better", **DSMS Master trainer in Badghis***

Several DSMS Master trainers reported that they do not have the means to train people properly and follow-up on activities due to lack of human resources. They are often responsible for hundreds of school and cannot cover them all to provide training and support to SMS members.

*"My suggestion from the ministry and other NGOs is the same that they really focus on the trainings. Instead they should focus on the staff of the office that how much staff does it need. I am responsible for Nangarhar province, social part. I have 22 districts as well as with the centre. We have 905 schools. It is impossible for the principal that in same time do his job and go to field. We know that the training is very effective and very useful. But there we have a huge necessity of supervisors. We have no supervisors there.*

*We had training and we had no trainer for it. We asked for a master trainer. Our worker should be increased and their capacity should be built as well. Then, there will be no need of foreign trainer. He will be for a few days and will give just the specific training. But if our workers are trained well and their capacity got improved, it will be very efficient for the future", **SSI with a DSMS Master Trainer in Nangarhar province.***

- The fact that they were not involved in the post training monitoring under this UNICEF project

*“Well, as I was not the formal employee of Ministry of Education, I didn’t have the responsibility to follow up the results. I had hired as trainer only for three months and I didn’t have the responsibility to monitor school council social mobilisation activities. I was not feeling comfortable to follow up such activities without any contract”,*  
**DSMS Master trainer in Balkh**

*“No, we did not have any official affairs with the directorate of education nor we had any cooperation with the UNICEF without the training program so we cannot go to a school and monitor the activities of a SMS on our own wish. We have not done any monitoring yet”,*  
**DSMS Master trainer in Nangarhar.**

The lack of follow-up and activity monitoring was also highlighted by some DED representatives:

*“They (SMSs) are seeing trainings and also absorbing the assessments of their own activities. In my point of view the important issues is that when a task is given to a SMS, then it should be followed up. They should be followed that what they really have done”,*  
**SSI with a DED representative in Kandahar province.**