Adolescents in Afghanistan: A Portfolio Evaluation with a Gender Lens (2015–2019)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACO	Afghanistan Country Office
ADAP	Adolescent Development and Participation
AEPO	Afghan Education Production Organization
ALC	Accelerated learning centre
ALCS	Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey
ATR	Assess, Transform, Reach
AWLI	Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative in Support of Adolescent Girls
AYN	Adolescent and Youth Network
CBE	Community-based education
CBS	Community-based school
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CP	Country Programme
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DMoYA	Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ER	Evaluation Report
FGD	Focus group discussion
GATE	Girls' Access to Teacher Education
GBV	Gender-based violence
IALA	Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KAP	Knowledge, attitude and practices
KII	Key informant interview
MAG	Multi-purpose adolescent group
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MHM	Menstrual hygiene management
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHW	Organization of Human Welfare
OOSC	Out-of-school children
RAM	Results Assessment Module
RC	Reflect Circle
RFP	Request for Proposals
RMNCAH	Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health
ROSA	Regional Office of South Asia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPEAR	Social Policy, Evaluation and Research
SMS	School Management Shura
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WASSA	Women Activities and Social Services Association
WHO	World Health Organization
WIFS	Weekly iron and folic acid supplementation
WinS	WASH in Schools

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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report reflects the findings of the portfolio evaluation with a gender lens of the programme for adolescents, commissioned by the Country Office of UNICEF Afghanistan. The inception mission was conducted in February 2020 and data were collected in June and July 2020. The object of this portfolio evaluation is the work of UNICEF on adolescent girls and boys (aged between 10 and 19 years) in Afghanistan from 2015 to 2019 and includes specific adolescent programmes as well as the part of the sectoral programmes that focus on adolescents. UNICEF operates two adolescent-focused programmes, the Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative in Support of Adolescent Girls (AWLI, 2015- 2020), and Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan (IALA), which is implemented in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Furthermore, adolescents are part of the overall goal of the UNICEF Country Programme document and targeted by various sectoral activities.

Context

Afghanistan has been affected by more than three decades of conflict and 52 per cent of people live in multi-dimensional poverty, which is even worse for children at 56 per cent. As a result of the conflict, children and adolescents face many challenges, which include poverty, ill health, poor education, child labour, violence, child marriage, the risk of becoming orphaned or disabled, a limited right to identity and an absence of juvenile justice. There is high gender inequality, with the country on the 143rd place among 166 on the Gender Inequality Index. The unemployment rate is high (41 per cent for men versus 18 per cent for women). Child labour is relatively common, especially for boys (33 per cent versus 20 per cent of girls are engaged). Children, especially boys, are also often involved in street working, making them additionally vulnerable.

Since 2001, progress was made in rebuilding the education system. The National Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021 (NESP III) aims at addressing barriers to access to education. Moreover, Afghanistan subscribes to the global Girls' Education Challenge. The Government has supported Community Based Education (CBE) to complement formal schooling for two decades. Despite the progress, in 2017, only 56 per cent of adolescents attended school. Though supply-related reasons contribute to this, financial reasons are very important in terms of lack of money for school necessities as well as the need for children to contribute to household income. Girls face even more constraints because of cultural norms and parents' reluctance to expose them to unsafe situations.

Violence remains an issue and includes a high prevalence of domestic violence, corporal punishment and harassment; girls and women are particularly vulnerable. Child marriage is still highly prevalent despite the existence of a National Action Plan to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage (2016) and a Child Act. In 2016, 28 per cent of women (20–24 years) were married before age 18. Socio-cultural norms, insecurity, lack of education as well as financial reasons are often cited as underlying causes. Early marriage regularly results in early pregnancy, an additional threat to a girls' health and position. Boys suffer from early marriage but less than girls. They are more exposed to other types of violence, such as recruitment by armed groups or gangs, unsafe migration and living up to the expectation of becoming bread winner. Also, boys and young men may suffer from *bacha bazi*, referring to practices between grown-up men and adolescent boys, including sexual slavery.

Afghanistan has multiple strategies and policies on food security and nutrition and is a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement. Nutrition indicators are very poor, with stunting at 41 per cent ranking among the highest in the world. Adolescents are not a specific target group in national nutrition policies and strategies. The Government has included adolescent health in the National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy 2017–2021. Nonetheless, the adolescent birth rate of girls aged 15–19 years remains high and only 19 per cent of adolescent pregnant women (under 20) attended the fourth antenatal care visit with a skilled provider in 2018.

The use of improved water sources and improved sanitation facilities has sharply increased in the past decade, but in public schools, almost half still lack safe drinking water. Linked to this, many adolescent girls face challenges because of menstruation, which include missing school and ultimately risking dropout and self-isolation.

Methodology and Approach

A range of stakeholders has been identified by the evaluation, which includes, besides sub-offices and the regional office, adolescents and the people around them in the community (parents, teachers, community leaders and community health workers), CSOs, NGOs and local authorities at provincial level, the Afghan Youth Network, and at national level various ministries, international NGOs and United Nation agencies.

The evaluation purpose is stock-taking of the current programming focused on adolescents in Afghanistan, with a clear focus on the interventions targeting adolescent girls and boys, considering the respective gendered risks and vulnerabilities. The objective is to map existing programming on adolescents' rights in Afghanistan, using a gender lens, to identify how well aligned and mutually reinforcing programmes are with respect to achieving shared results for adolescents. The geographical scope is seen as nationwide.

The evaluation has followed (slightly reformulated) evaluation questions in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and works along the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coordination and coherence. Gender considerations have been included along UNEG principles and humanitarian principles were observed. The evaluation was conducted in four provinces and combined a desk study with Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) were initially foreseen, but these had to be replaced by phone interviews due to the COVID-19 crisis. The evaluation selected four provinces (Bamyan, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Ghor) for field research based on a set of predefined criteria, and districts, villages and respondents were selected in consultation with UNICEF. The field team interviewed 261 respondents, 96 of them adolescents. For analysis, the team used thematic narration, qualitative iterative data analysis, case studies and to the extent possible, contribution analysis. Having to use phone calls considerably decreased the number of respondents and the length of the questionnaire, and hence the body of available information. An institutional ethics review, which had to be conducted since children and adolescents were interviewed, approved the research. Appropriate protocols were put in place to guarantee safety, confidentiality and data protection.

Findings

Under relevance, it was found that most respondents perceived the UNICEF programme as appropriate from the viewpoint of beneficiaries' needs and contexts, specifically for adolescent girls. The participative approach of UNICEF was praised; 56 per cent of respondents said they were consulted prior to the interventions. UNICEF is seen as one of the organizations with a relatively good outreach to marginalized areas, but it was also observed that UNICEF did not always reach the most vulnerable youth, who live in abject poverty and in remote and conflict-ridden locations. Access to education is acknowledged as an important challenge for youth, and the access of UNICEF to education programmes fits well within this need. Access for girls is hampered more severely than for boys and for different reasons; the GATE programme aims to solve one of the underlying reasons: the lack of female teachers. For boys, financial reasons were often brought up as hampering them from going to school as they work the land or livestock more often than girls. Poverty was seen as an underlying constraint for many of the challenges that the youth face.

The prevalence of violence against children (including adolescents) is considerable in Afghanistan, and therefore UNICEF's support to protection is relevant. It was acknowledged by 54 per cent of respondents and it was seen as more prevalent for girls, including violence on the way to school. Child marriage, still highly prevalent, according to respondents, hampers girls from going to school and puts them at risk of early pregnancy. Boys reportedly run the risk of recruitment by armed groups. These topics are part of awareness raising and empowerment processes in the multi-purpose adolescent groups; also, UNICEF supports

child protection units within police recruitment centres, where staff are trained in age assessment to prevent child recruitment. Unemployment for youth was brought up by 69 per cent of the respondents and is perceived as problematic even for well-educated youth, but it does not figure prominently in the adolescent support of UNICEF. Access to youth-friendly health services is low and also underrepresented in the programme of UNICEF. As for nutrition, UNICEF supports weekly iron-folic acid supplementation, but there is no comprehensive nutrition package for adolescent boys and girls.

The adolescent programmes of UNICEF are meant to induce youth-led activity and decision-making to improve their own situation. Respondents perceived this as an aspiration for youth that needed support. Furthermore, youth needed to have more opportunities for sports, which was brought up by a large majority of respondents, and the sports for development of UNICEF in Bamyan was seen as very suitable.

Under the coherence criterion, it was found that the programme design for adolescents was reasonably convergent, because youth are seen as change agents in all areas of their life. Respondents acknowledged and brought up various linkages between the various adolescent programmes and sectoral programmes. Within sector programmes, however, convergence that benefits youth is limited, as the (Government) partners often prefer their own, siloed approach. Since the challenges addressed under each sector are often underlying a specific issue (like child marriage), the support from multiple sectors remains beneficial, but opportunities are missed. On a small scale (50 schools), UNICEF managed an example of convergent programming by combining girls' education iron-folic supplementation, and menstrual hygiene management (MHM).

As per the implicit Theory of Change (ToC), the evaluation found programme theories and results to be reasonably coherent with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021, but nutrition lacks the strategy's broad approach, and children with disabilities have not been visibly included. As for the Gender Action Plan, the support to adolescents is aligned with all outputs.

The work of UNICEF in adolescent programming is aligned with relevant national policies and frameworks and is simultaneously implemented at provincial and local level. Nonetheless, there is often no comprehensive package of services for youth available. As for the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs (DMoYA), UNICEF does not yet have a working relationship with them, despite their strong mandate in the area of youth. Coordination in various areas is limited, but improving, among others through the newly established "Adolescent and Youth Task Force". Provincial and central level youth steering networks that the government planned to establish in 2017 face practical challenges. UNICEF is working on strategic partnerships in particular for child protection, for instance on the Spotlight Initiative.[i] In other areas partnership is limited, including with UNFPA a United Nations agency also very actively working with youth. Under the sectoral programmes, UNICEF has managed to build good relations with government and civil society. The existence of sub-offices helps in this regard.

Under effectiveness, it was observed that the targets were either partly reached (AWLI) or reached/exceeded (CBE and IALA). The cash transfer component under AWLI was delayed and monitoring had to be redesigned. Under IALA, though the midline evaluation did not produce hard data on improved healthy lifestyle and empowerment, respondents did report such improvements, even if they also stated that lack of education, employment and poverty hampered them in the execution of their rights. On the other hand, girls especially highlighted the "courage" that they had gained through UNICEF programmes which allowed them to talk to their parents and community members.

[i] The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/

Though awareness on child marriage increased, the prevalence did not notably decrease[ii]. Furthermore, more CBEs had been established than planned, but dropout rates remained high. Under nutrition, coverage of girls with iron folic acid was 85 per cent of plan, but compliance was only 76 per cent. The MHM programme is gathering speed and under child protection, normative work has been completed including the support to adoption of the Law on Protection of Child Rights. However, this evaluation was not able to establish which part of child protection specifically benefits adolescents.

Interviewed adolescents demonstrated a knowledge of their rights and the inclusive nature of the programme, which also targets communities seems, to have created a conducive environment. In more conservative provinces like Nangarhar, with deep poverty, the situation was more difficult for youth in that regard. As for the reduction of inequalities, progress was made in terms of strengthening gender integration, but less so for other marginalized groups. People with disabilities were often brought up as being excluded from programmes. Moreover, the number of adolescents in need was reportedly far higher than those that could be supported.

Insecurity, conflicts, natural hazards, and partner capacities are among the external factors that may have hindered the attainment of results. The COVID-19 situation has only served to aggravated them. For internal factors, recruitment of qualified staff, limited data availability and coordination issues were among the most important ones.

Under efficiency, it wasn't possible to isolate financial resources or evaluate the use of human resources for adolescents in sectoral programmes for the main reason that UNICEF monitoring and financial reports do not disaggregate data by age group and do not include an analysis from target group perspective. In adolescent programmes there were insufficient data to calculate cost-efficiency. It is difficult to evaluate whether better results could have been achieved, without a clear-cut adolescent strategy and budgets dedicated to adolescents. Though positive results have been achieved, it is unclear whether these were the best possible.

There is a mixed picture in terms of monitoring systems and their use for decision making within programmes benefitting adolescents. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is still quite conventional and driven by UNICEF and its implementing partners. Furthermore, it lacks age-related disaggregated monitoring data. The monitoring of IALA and CBE is more robust and includes baseline and midline or endline surveys. Nonetheless, the extent to which CBE data are included in EMIS is unsure.

In general, apart from AWLI, programmes had been implemented according to the intended timeline, but COVID-19 started to create delays and the full impact on expected outcomes and overall programme goals is yet unclear. UNICEF has a string partnership with the Ministry of Education for working with adolescents, as well as with various NGOs. Key partners are adolescent girls and boys, their parents, communities they belong to and those surrounding them.

Conclusions

The interventions of UNICEF are fully relevant to the needs of Afghan adolescents and the national framework; however, the needs are too vast for UNICEF or any other development actor to cover. Not all needs are sufficiently included in the programme and approach though; youth unemployment is perceived as one of the direst needs, even for educated young people, and the engagement of UNICEF in this regard is limited. Convergence at design level is reasonably good, but at implementation level partners stick to activities relevant to their own sector, which leads to missed opportunities, since the challenges are all interlinked. UNICEF has good strategic and working relations with relevant partners but has not managed to set up collaboration with DMoYA.

[ii] Midline evaluation of the IALA programme in 2019

In the adolescent programmes, empowerment comes up as one of the strongest achievements, judging by respondent feedback, especially for girls. Nonetheless, actual impact, for instance in decreasing child marriage could not yet be established. Though awareness has also increased, more and longer-term support may be needed to address such a complex issue and its underlying causes. With the comprehensive approach and focus on girls, UNICEF has considered girls' empowerment and worked towards closing the gaps that girls face in education, nutrition, protection and sports, among other. In health and nutrition, specific support to adolescents (apart from iron folic acid supplementation) is limited.

Lessons Learned:
Investing in adolescents with a focus on girls has appeared a sensible approach with a good potential. Looking at the current situation, there is a large need for increased investment. Adolescent girls shared their increased sense of empowerment as a first step toward addressing multiple challenges. Adolescents in Afghanistan have a high appetite for their voices to be heard, which is a reason for UNICEF to step up its engagement and partnership.

Some issues like violence against women, child marriage and *bacha bazi* are hidden in society and difficult to address. People have already started to realize that these are wrong and need to be eradicated, but as long as underlying factors such as poverty and insecurity continue to exist, this will be difficult to achieve and will take a long time.

Afghanistan is a large country with a dispersed and remote population and addressing its needs is too much for one development partner, even for its Government at this point in time. Strong partnerships built on comparative advantages and capacities are therefore essential.

Recommendations
Recommendation 1: Stronger coherence in the programme for youth (medium-term, addressed at all UNICEF CO unit heads and management)
Convergent programming needs to be strengthened in the approach to adolescents and UNICEF needs to develop an explicit ToC as a basis. The upcoming Adolescent Strategy is a good entry point. This includes opportunities for specific interventions for adolescents and more linkages in sectoral programmes. Stronger engagement of various stakeholders in a synergistic programme for youth should also be ensured, and UNICEF must lead and advocate for more local-level coordination and cooperation for adolescents, notably between sectors.

Recommendation 2: Ensure the upcoming Adolescent Strategy is participative and inclusive (immediate, addressed at CO management and the Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist)
The planned Adolescent Strategy should be used to address adolescents more strongly as a group with specific needs. This includes disaggregating M&E data by age group in sectoral programmes and developing adolescent-specific output/outcome-level indicators. Adolescents must be engaged more strongly in the design and monitoring of programmes and policy, including the upcoming Adolescent Strategy. Boys' specific challenges must be better addressed in the Adolescent Strategy as well. Furthermore, UNICEF needs to include suitable targeting mechanisms to reach vulnerable and/or hard-to-reach adolescents.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen UNICEF partnerships and coordination (short to medium-term, addressed at CO management, other United Nations agencies and government partners)
UNICEF needs to strengthen its partnership and coordination when working with and for adolescents, and develop sustained, long-term collaboration on institutionalizing engagement and participation. UNICEF needs to participate in all relevant coordination mechanisms with United Nations agencies, notably UNFPA. UNICEF also needs to forge a partnership with DMoYA and further strengthen their engagement with CSOs and INGOs in community and adolescent empowerment.

Recommendation 4: Continued emphasis on girls' education (long term, UNICEF education unit, addressed at CO management, CBE implementing partners)
UNICEF should continue supporting girls' education in an evidence-based manner. UNICEF needs to contribute to CBEs becoming a more permanent part of the education system and pre-empt dropout through complementary activities on girls' rights and empowerment with these girls and their families, households and communities.

Recommendation 5: Comprehensive adolescent nutrition and health programme (medium term, addressed at CO nutrition & health unit, management, MoE, Ministry of Health)
There should be a comprehensive adolescent nutrition programme, which can become part of an overall nutrition programme. Activities targeting nutritional behaviour and dietary diversity potentially through behaviour change communication, should be considered. Adolescent health, including their reproductive health, also needs to be addressed in programming and strategy in a comprehensive way.

Recommendation 6: Continued strong focus on ending child marriage (long term, addressed at UNICEF CO management and protection unit, M&E unit, UNFPA)
Efforts to eradicate child marriage should continue and be strengthened and/or scaled up. This includes working in better collaboration and coordination with other development partners, notably UNFPA, and for areas that are beyond the reach of UNICEF, such as addressing overall poverty. Increased investment in adolescent empowerment is recommended to contribute to this. Decreasing child marriage should become an intrinsic part of each and every programme. Moreover, UNICEF needs to design activities for adolescent girls, who have been married early and/or who became pregnant. On a parallel trail, UNICEF needs to support data collection and launch in-depth studies into ongoing child marriages in order to research which factors keep hampering its eradication.

Recommendation 7: Provide more livelihood/employment support to adolescents (medium- term, addressed at UNICEF CO management and education unit, stakeholders/development partners working on livelihoods)
It is recommended that UNICEF incorporates a stronger programme component on employment for adolescents, with a focus on suitable employment for adolescent girls and young women, while simultaneously trying to be gender- transformative. Scaling up livelihood activities in adolescent programmes could be considered. Also, policy advocacy and technical support to further develop government policy and programming on adolescent skilling and employability will help to ensure sustainability. The GATE programme needs to be continued and expanded, and UNICEF should build a partnership with DMoYA to support them in implementing the youth policy and strategy, especially for the younger cohort of youth (up to 19 years of age). Partnerships with relevant education institutions at local level such as TVET institutions, also need to be established.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

1. This Evaluation Report (ER) is for the portfolio evaluation with a gender lens of the programme for adolescents, consisting of various interventions implemented by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Afghanistan. This evaluation is commissioned by the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office (ACO) and has covered the period from January 2015 to December 2019. The evaluation was meant to help strengthen the focus on adolescents in Afghanistan in line with the current corporate focus of UNICEF on the second decade of life of children. The results of this activity will be used to inform age-appropriate and gender-responsive programme development, raising awareness on adolescent issues based on their gendered needs in the country and mobilizing partners and resources. The Terms of Reference (ToR) have been included in Annex 1. A reference group was established to oversee the evaluation, provide inputs to the evaluation deliverables, and validate findings.

2. The evaluation team conducted an inception mission to Kabul between 9 and 14 February 2020. The purpose of the mission was to further define and agree on the approach and data collection tools, to be used during the main evaluation mission. The mission was also used to gather relevant background information on the various adolescent related programmes and the context in which it is being implemented; to gain insights from different stakeholders on adolescent programming and the situation of adolescents boys and girls in Afghanistan, taking strong cognizance of their different gendered needs and concerns; to agree with UNICEF on the focus of the assignment; and to begin making detailed plans for the data collection and analysis phases of the process. A number of representatives were already interviewed (from ministries, United Nations agencies and others; see also Annex 2), with the intention of using the results in the evaluation phase.

Case studies	Kandahar, Ghor, Nangahar and Bamyan
Number of documents reviewed	102
KII in provinces	261 (34% female, 37% adolescents)
KII in Kabul	37
Total KII	298

2. Object of the Evaluation

2.1 The work of UNICEF on adolescents in Afghanistan

3. The object of this portfolio evaluation is the work of UNICEF on adolescent girls and boys (the group of the population aged between 10 and 19 years) in Afghanistan during the period 2015–2019. This includes the parts of sectoral programmes that focus on adolescents, as well as specific adolescent-focused programmes. The attention of UNICEF, globally and in Afghanistan, increasingly focuses on adolescents as subjects of programmes and actors of change. UNICEF's increasing attention to adolescents is reflected in how treatment and consideration of this target group has evolved over the years in UNICEF programming in Afghanistan. The work of UNICEF is also aligned to the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action particularly Commitment 5: "*Adolescents, young children and caregivers access appropriate life skills programmes and information about the emergency, and those who have missed out on schooling, especially adolescents, receive information on educational options*" which is relevant for programming for adolescents.

4. In addition to the mainstreaming of adolescents under ACO programmes and the emerging attention of UNICEF to the needs and rights of this population group (as acknowledged already in the 2011 Midterm Review[iii]) at the time of the Country Programme (CP) design, UNICEF did address adolescent needs throughout its different core programmes and it included one adolescent-focused programme, the Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative in Support of Adolescent Girls (AWLI), which was planned for

[iii] Paragraph 20 of the UNICEF Country Programme 2015–2019 notes that the Mid-Term Review acknowledged that "UNICEF also took the lead in implementing a broader agenda on adolescents, initiated through collaboration with actors working in nutrition alongside early and child marriage".

implementation from 30 September 2015 to 31 December 2020. The other adolescent-focused programme, Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan (IALA), a multi-country initiative supported by IKEA Foundation in three countries (Afghanistan, India and Pakistan), started in 2017. Both programmes share the overall objective to end child marriage. While they share awareness-raising approaches, IALA leans towards the empowerment of youth to increase their autonomy over decisions impacting their lives and AWLI focuses more specifically on the prevention of child marriage and supporting girls to have a safer and more empowered transition from childhood to adulthood. The two programmes are also implemented by different partners in different regions. Table 1 below provides further insight into the programmes. Annex 3 provides more details.

Table 1: IALA and AWLI Programme Summary

Geographic coverage/ Implementing partners	Objectives	Main focus/ approach
IALA (evaluated at mid-term in October 2019, reported in May 2020) May 2017–July 2020; Budget: US$3,529,115.89,[iv] funded by IKEA Foundation The goal of the IALA programme is to create opportunities for adolescents in Afghanistan and enhance their ability to participate in community life and within their homes and schools. Direct beneficiaries: 52,334 adolescents; 60,651 elders, parents, and community members (including 500 religious leaders); and 190 CPAN members and CSO regional child protection focal points.		
Bamyan (8/8 districts)/Aga Khan Foundation; Badghis (3/7 districts)/World Vision Afghanistan	1. Reducing child marriage 2. Lowering incidence of teenage pregnancy 3. Enhancing female educational outcomes through increased secondary school enrolment	Pillar 1: Adolescents, organized into groups, as change agents, knowledgeable about their rights and entitlements, participating in forums and discussions Pillar 2: Families, communities and decision makers as knowledgeable protectors of adolescents from rights abuses Pillar 3: Public authorities equipped with skills and able to provide services, as upholders of adolescents' rights.
AWLI September 2015 to December 2020; Budget: US$6,949,735,[v] funded by US Department of State Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (US/SOGWI) through UNICEF and implemented by the civil society consortium led by Action Aid Afghanistan Direct beneficiaries: 200,000 adolescent girls and 80,000- 100,000 adults including parents, teachers, elders, religious leaders and community members.		
Nangarhar (4 districts)/Organization for Human Welfare (OHW); Samangan (4 districts)/ ECW; Ghor (4 districts)/ OHW; Herat (4 districts)/Women Activities and Social Services Association	1. Change perceptions on acceptability of child marriage and mobilize communities to delay marriage by raising awareness on adolescent girls' rights, the laws in place to protect them, the negative consequences of child marriage, and the importance of educating girls. 2. Empower adolescent girls to make informed life choices through education, vocational and life skills	To enable adolescents, especially girls, to fully enjoy their childhood and adolescence by reducing the risk of marriage and to have a healthier, safer and more empowered life transition from childhood to adulthood.

[iv] UNICEF contributes US$642,000.

[v] The Project Document reflects a budget in Afghanis (290,757,707) converted to US dollars for the purpose of consistency, but it may not reflect accurately the US dollar amount at the time of programme approval. UNICEF contributed 89.57 per cent of the budget; the rest was contributed by the civil society consortium.

(WASSA); Farah (4 districts)/WASSA	training, and peer support networks.[vi] 3. Map and document the status of adolescent girls in Afghanistan.	

5. From a gender perspective, as indicated in the CP Midterm Review of 2017, with the exception of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programmes, the CP lacked a comprehensive review of gender equality and identified weaknesses such as weak review of progress and constraints regarding gender equality and lack of sufficient targeting of girls. It also recommended the conduct of a Gender Programme Review which was subsequently conducted in 2018. Both the Midterm Review and the Gender Programme Review informed the design of the 2019-2021 Gender Strategy for Afghanistan. This strategy considers the UNICEF corporate Gender Action Plan (GAP) II (2018—2021) dual approach: (i) integration of gender across strategic goals and (ii) specific targeted gender priorities focused on empowerment of adolescent girls and aims at contributing to the GAP II goals through a number of strategies to address gender equality in Afghanistan and key interventions per strategic area. As part of the strategies, it should be noted that UNICEF Afghanistan includes targeted priorities on empowering adolescent girls and women. In this sense, the UNICEF Gender Strategy for Afghanistan indicates that*:* "Focus will be on supporting girl-oriented and women specific interventions to delivery results for children in the areas of: girls education, child marriage, adolescent girls nutrition, menstrual hygiene management for girls in school and at community level, including an investments in approaches that promote women agency in MNCH and rural water supply and sanitation", in addition "UNICEF Afghanistan will strengthen and explore new partnerships to promote both advocacy and programming related to critical gender issues which are related to work e.g. girls education, adolescent programming on health, nutrition, child marriage and menstrual hygiene" Although out of the scope of the evaluation, it is worth noting that UNICEF continues to strengthen its work specifically on adolescent girls through the Spotlight Initiative, intended to start in Afghanistan in 2020.[vii]

6. Adolescents are part of the overall goal of the UNICEF CP document for the initial period of 2015–2019, then extended to 2021[viii] "to address inequity so that all children, adolescents and women have access to services necessary to fulfil their rights to survival, development, protection and participation". The CP 2015–2019 recognized that "*patriarchal societal norms weaken women's and children's participation in family and community decision making, especially among adolescent girls*",[1] and the CP has consistently addressed some adolescent needs under its programmes, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2: Adolescents in the Country Programme 2015–2019

CP 2015-2021 Programmes	Dimensions Addressing Adolescent Challenges
Nutrition	-Contribution to improving the nutritional status of adolescent girls (among other target groups) -Weekly iron and folic acid supplementation (WIFS): UNICEF supports the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the distribution of iron and folic acid tablets to adolescent girls in classes 5 to 12 of public and private schools. The programme also equips teachers, headmasters and principals to educate adolescents aged 10 to 19 years about anaemia prevention and control. -Essential information and counselling support services to adolescent girls (among other target groups)
Child Protection	-Adolescents targeted as part of child marriage prevention -Children on the Move (including adolescents)

[vi] Total 472 households with adolescent girls (age 10-15 years) received an unconditional, unrestricted cash transfer of 19,500 AFN (about USD 255) to support girls' education in Herat Province.

[vii] The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

[viii] A two-year extension of the 2015–2019 CP was approved by the Executive Board in February 2019.

	-Children affected by conflict (including adolescent)
Education	-Access to community-based education, including the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme (2015–2019). The Community-Based Education (CBE) programme targeted adolescents (10–15 years) to enrol in accelerated learning centres (ALCs) and community-based schools (CBSs) to be able to complete primary education. The programme targeted 100,000 out-of-school children in community-based schools and 20,000 out-of-school children (OOSC) in accelerated learning centres annually. -Support to professional development of female teachers through the Girls' Access to Teacher Education (GATE) project. -Safe water and separate toilets and hygiene facilities for boys and girls -Menstrual hygiene management (MHM)
WASH	-Specific attention to adolescents under maternal, newborn and child health: UNICEF started MHM support in 2010/2011 with the Ministry of Education (MoE).[2]
Health	-Support to effective policies, strategies and plans, informed by timely and accurate information and useful analysis -Strengthening primary health care systems to reduce neonatal, infant and child mortality -Increasing immunization coverage through procurement of vaccines and supplies -A sustainable, environment-sensitive immunization cold chain system -Health response in emergencies[ix] -Adolescent health • Increasing community awareness on health-related issues including ANC, PNC, institutional delivery and essential new-born care • Improving access to basic health services in hard-to-reach areas through mobile health teams for women and children including adolescents. • Reducing shortage of skill birth attendants (SBA) by enrolling adolescent girls and women in community midwifery programme. • Support implementation of community-based health services by community health workers for referral and community cased management.
Social inclusion	-Adolescents are targeted as part of the group vulnerable to drug use -Adolescents are targeted as part of the group vulnerable to child migration and urbanization
Cross-sectoral Approaches	
Gender	-Elimination of child marriage -Improving access to education for adolescent girls -Improving access to health services for adolescent girls -Improving adolescents nutrition - Improving gender/age sensitive Child Protection Case Management and referrals for adolescents - Addressing violence against women and girls - Support adolescent girls' empowerment and participation

7. In addition to the programmes, UNICEF applies the core programme implementation strategy, Communication for Development (C4D) in Afghanistan. This implementing strategy, also referred to as Social and Behaviour Change Communication, is an integral part of the programmes and utilizes a mix of communication tools, channels and approaches to facilitate dialogue, participation and engagement with children, families, communities and networks for positive social and behaviour change in both development and humanitarian contexts.[x] As such, a C4D officer and the communication resources at CO have systematically supported all UNICEF programmes in Afghanistan. The results of C4D are not assessed in isolation, but as a joint effort with other components of the above programmes that aim at awareness raising and messaging in order to attain behavioural change, for instance in child protection (community sensitization) and other sectoral programmes. Two specific initiatives target adolescent populations: 1) The Adolescent and Youth Network (AYN) initiated in 2017 and supported by the Department of Social Affairs, aims to mobilize

[ix] Mid-Term Review of UNICEF Country Programme 2015–2019.

[x] UNICEF Communication for Development Programme Guidance, 2018

adolescents as agents of change.[xi] As such, their ambassadors convey key messages through arts, sports, participation and organisation of debates and awareness raising activities and participation in international gatherings for youth; and 2) The Sports for Development is a pilot project that started in 2019 to encourage girls to engage in sports (softball, volleyball and cricket).

2.2 Geographic Coverage and Convergence of UNICEF Adolescent Interventions

8. Interviews conducted during the inception mission allowed an initial mapping of the geographic coverage of the various UNICEF interventions around adolescents, which was used as input for the ER. As Table 3 shows, 18 provinces in Afghanistan account for the highest concentration of interventions. Additionally, Annex 4 shows a map of the overall input of UNICEF in Afghanistan. The overlapping of activities shown served as the initial starting point for the evaluation to assess potential synergies between activities.

Table 3: Eighteen Provinces in Afghanistan with the Highest Concentration of Programming for Adolescents

Province	Kabul	Bamyan	Badghis	Farah	Ghor	Herat	Balkh	Samangan	Daykundi	Helmand	Nangarhar	Laghman	Badakshan	Kunar	Kandahar	Paktia	Paktika	Zabul
Field Office		O	X		X	X	X		X		X		X		X	X		
IALA/MAG[xii]		X	X															
AWLI				X	X	X		X			X							
WASH in Schools/MHM		X	X		X				X	X	Overlap	X		X	X	Overlap	X	X
Girls' Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	X	X	X	X	*	X	X
Community-Based Education		X	X	D	X	D	D	D	X	X	D	D	D		X			X
Female Teachers (GATE)					X				X	X	X			X	X	X		X
WIFS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Adolescent and Youth Network (AYN)	X					X	X				X				X			
Sport for Development	X	X							X									
Spotlight (not started)						X									X	X		

O=Outpost D=In some deprived districts *In 25 schools X=Active in province

3. Context

3.1 Demographics and Economic Situation

9. Afghanistan has one of the youngest and fastest-growing populations in the world. Almost 64 per cent of the population is below 25 years of age and 46 per cent is under 15.[3] Since 1990, the population of adolescents aged 10–19 has increased by 193 per cent.[4] Three quarters of the population live in rural areas, but at the same time the country faces rapid urbanization, providing both opportunities and challenges to economic development, access to food and education provision.[5]

10. More than three decades of conflict in Afghanistan have badly affected families' abilities to earn a decent livelihood. In 2016, 55 per cent of the population lived below the national poverty line. Fifty-two per cent of people live in multidimensional poverty[xiii] in Afghanistan. The rural poverty rate is considerably higher than the urban rate at 61 per cent versus 18 per cent. Among the Kuchi population,[xiv] it is highest, at 89 per cent. Differences between

[xi] Which means that adolescents are engaged in influencing adolescent programming and policies

[xii] Multi-Purpose Adolescent group.

[xiii] The Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index complements the monetary poverty measure and uncovers the deprivations experienced by the Afghan people in various aspects of their life. The A-MPI has 18 indicators grouped into five dimensions: Health, Education, Living Standards, Work and Shocks.

[xiv] Kuchi are nomadic or semi-nomadic people, mostly from a Pashtun background, who are often displaced. It is estimated that 2.4 million Kuchi live in Afghanistan.

provinces are considerable as well with the highest poverty rates in Badghis (86 per cent) and Nooristan (80 per cent). Linked to poverty, in 2016 45 per cent of people were found to be food insecure and 28 per cent severely food insecure. Only 5 per cent of the population had an account with a financial institution or a mobile money service provider.[6]

11. For children aged 0–17 years, the poverty rate is even higher than average at 56 per cent, and children face deprivations in more areas than adults.[7] Women and girls in Afghanistan have also been disproportionately affected by the decades of economic and political instability. The Gender Inequality Index in Afghanistan was 0.575 in 2018, putting the country in 143rd place among 166 countries.[8]

12.One factor that influences the situation of the population, including adolescents, and access by the evaluation team is whether an area is government-controlled, non-government-controlled or contested. Details cannot be provided here – not only is the situation different per province and per district, but it is fluid over time as well. What has badly affected everyone in Afghanistan though is the long-term and violent nature of the continuous conflict.

3.2 The Sociocultural and Legal situation of Children, Adolescents and Youth

13.Afghanistan is a very difficult place for children and adolescents to be born and grow up in. Due to the protracted period of conflict, they are especially susceptible to violence, abuse and an insecure environment at a young age, perpetuated by cultural and traditional practices.[9] Children and adolescents face many challenges, which include poverty, ill health, poor education, child labour, violence, child marriage, the risk of becoming orphaned or disabled, a limited right to identity and an absence of juvenile justice.[10] Girls and young women are particularly vulnerable due to the prevailing norms and perceptions (further elaborated in the succeeding sections). Constrained by tradition, they are often overlooked in turbulent times; they run higher risk of becoming traumatized and kept out of school and they are more vulnerable to, among others, forced marriage, Gender Based Violence (GVB), intimate partner violence and other types of domestic violence.

14.The Government of Afghanistan has demonstrated its commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Beijing Platform for Action. In 2009 the Government adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) without reservations. In March 2019, the law on the protection of child rights was launched.[11] One of the important points in the law is the stipulated equality in the age of marriage for girls and boys. Afghanistan also has a National Youth Policy,[12] which covers the areas of employment, health, technical and vocational education and training, and participation. The policy contains commitments towards and guidelines for adolescents aged 12 to 18. Adolescents are mentioned as a specific age category in relation to recruitment for employment, prohibition of hazardous labour and their criminal liability once they reach the age of 18.

15.Gender is covered in the Afghanistan National Youth Policy (2014) as a cross-cutting topic. Some strategic directions are included there, meant to increase gender equity and girls' empowerment. The policy itself is not very gender-responsive, apart from the emphasis that is given to education for young women. The National Youth Strategy Update (2017–2021) is structured along the same lines with an added strategic direction on sports.[13] The strategy is more gender sensitive, bringing up gender-responsive governance, the elimination of barriers to reduce gender inequality and women's leadership and empowerment as priority areas. Nonetheless, under the various components, no specific attention is paid to the gendered differences between adolescent boys and girls.

3.3 Employment

16.In 2016, the labour force participation rate of women was at 27 per cent, much lower than for men (81 per cent). Unemployment, which was 24 per cent at the national level, was 41 per cent among women and 18 per cent among men. Outside agriculture, informal labour

makes up 67 per cent of employment. Employment by itself is insufficient to keep a household out of poverty, as is evident from the finding that 51 per cent of employed persons live in a household whose members are estimated to be below the poverty line.[14] Youth unemployment was higher than the national level at 31 per cent (24 per cent male, 47 per cent female), while 42 per cent (17 per cent male, 68 per cent female) were not in employment, education or training.[15]

17. Child labour[xv] is a relatively common issue in Afghanistan, with children as young as five years being engaged in work. Although boys are more likely to be involved in child labour (33 per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls are engaged in labour), girls are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Moreover, girls are much more likely to avoid school due to their involvement in child labour than boys (56 per cent).[16] Girls are more likely to be involved in unpaid housework due to prevailing gender norms; on the other hand, boys may be engaged in more hazardous work.[17] Although the trend is reducing, boys are still being recruited by the Armed Forces; surveys done in 2019[18] revealed that one in every hundred respondents had at least one child in the armed forces. The most important drivers for child labour are perceived to be limited household income and a lack of understanding of children's rights.

18. Children who work on the streets are the most vulnerable, facing physical and psychological risks. An evaluation in 2018 estimated that at least 60,000 children work in the streets of Kabul, the majority of them boys.[19] Apart from this work being illegal, such children often get easily acquainted with other illegal activities including crime and robbery. Afghanistan has a national strategy for such children, but implementation is lacking.[20] The last project of UNICEF ended in 2016[21] and there is no ongoing intervention for street children.

3.4 Education

➢ Policy and Strategy

19. Since 2001, the government has made significant achievements in rebuilding the education system, with support from development partners. The number of children in school has risen by a factor of almost nine and 38 per cent of students were girls.[22] Nonetheless, in 2018, 46 per cent of functioning government schools did not have appropriate premises. The responsibility for the construction of schools in rural areas has been shifted from MoE to the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD)[23] and it is expected that 6,000 schools will be built in 2019–2020 under the World Bank–funded Eqra Project.[24]

20. The National Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021 (NESP III) aims at addressing barriers to education access and specifies five main reform areas, namely strengthening the human resources directorate, establishing comprehensive enterprise resource planning, privatizing the printing and distribution of textbooks, implementing school-based management, and strengthening and encouraging private education. Afghanistan's Girls' Education Policy (2019–2021) aims to overcome the challenges and obstacles related to the education of girls. Notwithstanding the commitment of the government in the development of policies and strategies, implementation is still weak.

21. Afghanistan subscribes to the global Girls' Education Challenge,[xvi] with community-based education, technical and vocational education and training and support to government schools, and initiatives by the Education Quality Improvement Programme (providing teacher training and grants for school improvement), which contributed to the growth of Afghanistan's education system.

[xv] Usually defined as children aged 12–17 years engaged in non-hazardous economic activities for more than 14 hours per week; when engaged in fewer than 14 hours, they are called working children.
[xvi] An initiative supported by USAID and DFID.

22. The development of CBE mechanisms has been a response to limited access to education in the context of emergency and post-conflict situations, to help reach under-served geographic areas. For nearly two decades, the Government of Afghanistan has supported CBE mechanisms to complement the existing formal schooling system with CBSs and/or ALCs for adolescents. ALCs are available to girls and boys between 10 and 15 years to be able to complete their primary school cycle in three years instead of six years.[xvii] The CBE mechanisms have been part of NESP since 2003, including the current NESP III (2017–2021). Regulatory frameworks for out-of-school children include the revised CBE Policy, the newly developed Girls' Education Policy and Strategy and the Social Mobilization Strategy within the MoE.[25]

23. In 2017, an Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee report on a Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment of MoE pointed to 36 different types of corruption within the education sector, highlighting that corruption has become endemic in the last 15 years and that malpractice is systemic within the ministry.[26] The ministry now has developed a plan, based on the national strategy for combatting corruption, with specific action points.

➢ Access to Education

24. There are many reasons for non-attendance in schools, including poverty, damaged and inadequate numbers of classrooms, a shortage of teachers, (particularly of female teachers) and relevant learning and teaching resources, a lack of inclusive facilities at schools and long distances to schools. Other constraints include physical access, as the Afghan National Security Forces and the Taliban often occupy or use schools for military purposes.[27] In 2017, only 56 per cent of adolescents (aged 12–18) attended school.[28] This situation equally hampers the MoE in providing support and ensuring quality.

25. Financial constraints also have a decreasing effect on access since children have to contribute to the household income and because school-related expenditures weigh down on their meagre income. The relationship between poverty and education is however less unequivocal than one would expect; for instance, net attendance rates[29] of girls in secondary education are sometimes higher in provinces with high poverty rates and lower in better-off provinces.[30]

26. Schools, teachers and students have also been deliberately targeted and attacked, which has led families to withdraw their children from school.[31] At least 500 attacks on schools took place between 2013 and 2017, as well as 90 UN-verified incidents in the first half of 2018.

27. Girls' education is targeted with violence more often than boys', with attacks on girls' schools accounting for around 40 per cent of all incidents and mixed schools accounting for 32 per cent.[32] Parents are often reluctant to allow girls to walk long distances out of concern for their safety.[33] For girls, access is disproportionately low as well because of cultural norms that deprioritize education for girls, so constraints have more impact on girls than on boys. In some areas, parents want their daughters only to go to religious school, or not to go to school at all. Poor WASH conditions in schools are an additional constraint for girls. Child marriage is the second most important reason for girls to dropout and, notwithstanding their wish to do so, girls rarely return to school after being married.

28. As a result, completion rates for girls are increasingly lower than for boys, from primary (40 per cent vs 67 per cent) through secondary (26 per cent vs 49 per cent) to the tertiary level (14 per cent vs 32 per cent). Only 32 per cent of female youth (15–24 years of age) are literate, against 62 per cent of males.[34] Also, around 59 per cent of female adolescents are neither employed nor in school or vocational training.[35] A key intervention strategy of NESP III is to increase the availability of female teachers. Though the proportion of female teachers in 2015 was on average 32 per cent nationwide,[36] there are disparities between

[xvii] According to the UNICEF databases, this is considered up to Grade 6.

provinces, ranging from 2 per cent to 74 per cent. Non-availability of female teachers is an important factor that prevents girls from going to school.

29. Child labour also hampers access to and affects results from education. Child labour prevents children from going to school and weakens their performance if they do still go. Whereas long distances to school and parents' reluctance to send children to school are most often cited as a reason for not starting school, child labour (to help the household achieve a minimum standard of living) and the perceived irrelevance of further education, including vocational training, are the commonly cited reasons for terminating education.[37]

30. Approximately 3.7 million children are estimated to be out-of-school, with 60–75 per cent being girls.[38] In some southern provinces, 85 per cent of girls do not attend school. In primary school, the risk of dropping out is almost equal for boys and girls (8.9 vs 9.1 per cent), but at lower secondary level, girls start to be more likely to drop out than boys (8.3 per cent vs 4.1 per cent).[39]

31.The literacy rate for Afghan women is among the lowest in the world.[40] On average, for people over 15 years of age, the literacy rate is 35 per cent (50 per cent for men, 20 per cent for women). For adolescents aged 15–24 years, the rate is higher than for adults but still low at 54 per cent. In this age range, it is 68 per cent for men against 39 per cent for women.[41]

3.5 Protection

➢ Violence

32. Violence remains an issue in Afghanistan and includes a high prevalence of domestic violence and corporal punishment and harassment.[42] Gender-based violence is highly prevalent in Afghanistan. Among ever married women in 2015, 53 per cent had suffered from spousal violence (46 per cent have suffered physical abuse, 6 per cent sexual abuse and 34 per cent emotional abuse).[43] Furthermore, 87.2 per cent of Afghan women reported experiencing at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological violence or forced marriage in their lifetime.[44] Afghanistan has a law against domestic violence,[45] but corporal punishment is lawful.

33. Girls are particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of violence. Traditional sociocultural perceptions of gender norms lead to various manifestations of discrimination against women and girls. Social norms are gendered, with the low perceived value of the girl child and the low position of women in Afghanistan society as a consequence.[46] Violence against women, child marriage and harmful practices therefore remain of serious concern, including for youth.[47] Nonetheless, the anti-violence legal/policy framework does not provide specific mechanisms to identify and support adolescents.[48] Moreover, the humanitarian crisis has increased the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence, its protracted nature detrimentally impacting the already-compromised protection environment for women and girls, further increasing their exposure to violence.[49]

➢ Child Marriage

34. The National Action Plan on Elimination of Early and Child Marriage, drawn up in 2016[50] aims at decreasing the prevalence of and ultimately eradicating child marriage. Under the leadership of the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs (DMoYA) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), it addresses the drivers in five strategic areas: (i) empowering girls with information, skills, service provision and support networks; (ii) educating and mobilizing parents and community members; (iii) enhancing accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; (iv) offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and (v) fostering and enabling legal and policy framework. Other ministries are part of the steering committee to oversee progress on the interventions under each area.

35. The national action plan identifies drivers at individual, community, organization and policy levels that lead to the continuation of child marriage and formulates actions to address these. Apart from having signed up to other important international conventions

such as CRC and CEDAW, in 2005 Afghanistan signed the United Nations Protocol for the Elimination of Child Marriage.[51]

36. The Child Act prescribes the age of marriage for boys and girls in Afghanistan at 18, but it is still a matter of contestation. A girl who is 15 years old can be married with the consent of her father or a court, while the marriage of a girl aged below 15 is never permissible.[52] From a legal perspective, girls are therefore far more vulnerable to child marriage than boys are because the age viewed as "appropriate" for marriage is much lower for girls. Nonetheless, some boys are also married off young, which puts them at risk of economic pressure, child labour and unsafe migrations, as they are seen as the provider of the household.

37. According to the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS 2016–17), 28.3 per cent of women in the age group 20–24 years were married before age 18 and 4.2 per cent were married before 15. In 2019, the State of the World's Children reported even higher numbers for these groups for 2012–2018, at respectively 35 per cent (versus only 7 per cent for men) and 9 per cent.[53] The ALCS also reported child marriage for this group to be more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas at 31.9 per cent against 18.4 per cent. Geographical variation among provinces was also found to be high in a knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) survey.[54] The IALA baseline survey[55] reported that, in the programme areas in 2017, 0.85 per cent of married women were under 18 and almost half of them had children.

38. Child marriage is acceptable in religious teachings and as per social norms in Afghanistan. Religious leaders play a key role in community perceptions and the practice of child marriage, but the final decision appeared often to be taken after consultation with family members. Health workers are also cited often as trusted sources.

39. In a KAP survey, economic reasons were also cited as a main cause of child marriage. Many households reported having had to finance the high bride prices through loans. Thirty-one per cent of respondents reported that a better economic situation would be essential for abolishing child marriage. Nonetheless, quantitative data did not provide any evidence of a correlation between income and debt and the prevalence of child marriage, so the economic motivation is perhaps more linked to expectations for the future.[56]

40. The state of the country's civil registration system, incomplete legislative frameworks and enforcement mechanisms, the security situation and the existence of sometimes contradictory traditional and religious laws supporting the practice of child marriage make it difficult for the government to influence child marriage.[57] Also, since births are often not registered, the age of the girl is frequently unknown.

41.Marriages are rarely registered since many people see it as a private matter. This hampers the government in applying the existing regulatory framework. People perceiving marriage as "none of the government's business" is a stumbling block for decreasing the rate of child marriage. Additionally, many people are not aware of the minimum ages as stipulated in the law.

42. Insecurity and conflict can lead to increased violence against women and girls, which may lead to parents marrying them off young to try and protect them. It is also related to school dropout if insecurity affects the road to school or the situation inside school. War and militarization have led to an increased number of forced marriages of young girls.[58]

43. Violence against women is often connected to or exacerbated by child marriage.[59] Early married girls are more likely to be abused sexually, physically and emotionally.[60] Almost half of the IALA survey respondents had safety and security concerns for girls who were married at a young age, mostly from poor treatment or physical abuse in their new home. This is of significant concern, if one considers that one of the reasons parents give for marrying off daughters at a young age is the wish to protect their daughters from insecurity and violence. Women in particular understand that young girls are not physically or mentally prepared for the burden of marriage. Nonetheless, though they personally oppose it, they do not appear to be able to prevent it, as male family members are in most cases ultimately the ones to decide.

44. Young uneducated women are more than three times as likely to be married before the age of 18 than women with a minimum of secondary education.[61] The IALA baseline survey revealed that most people agree that *baad*, a pre-Islamic method of marrying a woman to bring peace and reconciliation among families, which was criminalized under the 2009 Elimination of Violence Against Women law, is still often acceptable.[xviii]

45. Early marriage often results in early pregnancy, which can affect the health and nutrition status of a girl negatively. Even though the adolescent fertility rate (for girls aged 15–19) has decreased considerably from 165 (per 1,000 women) in 1997, it was still 69 in 2017.[62] Adolescent girls face more health risks when giving birth, and this has most probably contributed to various forms of long-term morbidity as well as to the maternal mortality rate in Afghanistan, which, at 630 per 100,000,[63] is much higher than the average of 462 WHO measured in low-income countries in 2017.[64] However, the knowledge of adverse outcomes of adolescent pregnancy is limited.[65]

➢ Boys' and Men's Issues

46. Though in general girls are more marginalized than boys, boys also suffer from the above-mentioned factors, and they face specific challenges. Even if at a lower rate, they are also likely to drop out of school or not to access education at all and are more likely than girls to engage in child labour or hazardous work. Furthermore, boys run the risk of being recruited by armed groups or trafficked, which includes the likelihood of being wounded or killed. In 2016, the government criminalized military recruitment of Afghans under 18 years of age, but the practice continues nonetheless, most notably among the Afghan Local Police and pro-government militias.[66]

47. Unsafe migration severely affects boys. According to a 2017 IOM report on Afghanistan, there were 4.8 million Afghan migrants around the world, with around 48 per cent in Iran and 31 per cent in Pakistan. From 2016 onwards there have been huge numbers of unaccompanied children being returned from Iran and Pakistan. In 2019 alone, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 485,096 Afghans were returned from Iran, of which around 1,700 were unaccompanied minors.

48. Efforts have been made to change the position of women in Afghan society since the 1920s, but these have also been fiercely resisted at times. A key gap in the approach may have been the strong or even exclusive focus on women and girls, with little engagement of men and boys. Until recently, very limited programming accounted for men's needs and vulnerabilities and the expectations of masculinity placed on them.[67]

49. Gender roles are sharply defined for men, and they feel the pressure of high expectations from family and society, feeling a loss of integrity and worth if they cannot comply. Across all layers of society, people believe that men should be the breadwinners of the family, should provide security and "should fulfil their families' needs at all costs". Many people believe that men should always be more powerful than women.[68] Maintaining gendered respectability is a central expectation for both men and women, with men expected to play a more public role and women a private role.

50. Though conflict and fragility may empower some men, many men will have more constraints living up to societal expectations. New possibilities for women and girls may then lead to fear of loss of power and adverse reactions from men and boys. Understanding and addressing men's and boys' needs and vulnerabilities, as well the structural privileges they hold in comparison to women and girls, is therefore needed to transform gender dynamics.[69]

51.As for violence, boys and young men may suffer from *bacha bazi*, which refers to a wide range of practices between grown-up men and adolescent boys, including sexual slavery.[70] In some parts of Afghanistan, a number of local powerful individuals sexually abuse or harass one or more boys, usually between 10 and 18 years of age, who are from poor families and perform various low-ranking tasks.[71] *Bacha bazi* is not clearly defined in Afghan laws, but

[xviii] *Baadal* is the exchange of daughters between two families for marriage.

since it is child sexual exploitation and abuse, it is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution of Afghanistan and the religion. Nonetheless, it is a sensitive topic to address.

3.6 Nutrition and Health

➢ Policy and Strategy

52. As malnutrition has multisectoral and intersectoral causes, initiatives are ongoing to develop a multisectoral approach. On 26 September 2017, Afghanistan became a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement,[72] with the government focal point being the Director General of the Council of Ministers Secretariat. The Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda was launched, which is a multisector platform to address malnutrition. The Scaling Up Nutrition Movement rates the coherence of Afghanistan's policy and legal framework around nutrition at 40 per cent. In March 2019, Afghanistan launched the National Nutrition Strategy[73] as a roadmap for partnership, investment and action in nutrition. A nutrition policy and strategy had already been in place since 2015.[74]

53. Strategic Direction 1 of the Afghanistan National Youth Strategy[75] focuses on adolescent health and highlights youth-appropriate health services, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and the provision and improvement of reproductive health services for youth, which includes teenage pregnancy. In the National Action to Eliminate Child Marriage,[76] the detrimental effect on girls' health is acknowledged and one of the interventions proposed is "life-skills training to teach girls about health, nutrition". Alongside the above youth strategy, support to adolescent-friendly health services and reproductive health services are planned.

➢ Malnutrition Status

54. As a result of the unpredictable security situation, combined with recurrent natural disasters such as drought, nutrition indicators are very poor in Afghanistan, even though recent reliable data are scarce. In most provinces (22 out of 34), global acute malnutrition is above 15 per cent, which is classified as critical by WHO.[77] At an estimated 41 per cent, the stunting rate is one of the highest in the world.[78] Among adolescents (15–19), an alarming proportion of 51.5 per cent of girls and 37.2 per cent of boys are reported as underweight, despite a decrease over the past decades.[79] The proportion of overweight adolescents is estimated at 8.1 per cent; for women, it is 9.3 per cent.[80] Moreover, 30 per cent of the population is protein-deficient.[81]

55. Adolescents, though a group with specific nutritional needs and vulnerabilities (such as girls aged 10 to 19, who are vulnerable to iron deficiency), are not a specific target group in national nutrition policies and strategies.[82] The last national nutrition survey[83] was in 2013. Though there are a few smaller, more localized survey reports, these mostly focus on wasting and stunting of younger children as is the case for the nutrition data from the Demographic and Health Survey 2015. The 2013 survey data showed high and serious levels of micronutrient deficiencies among children and women; one in three adolescent girls was indicated as anaemic due to poor intake of iron and folic acid–enriched food, among other reasons. Though the survey is outdated, there is no evidence that the situation has improved.

➢ Adolescent Health

56. The adolescent birth rate of girls aged 15–19 years remains high in Afghanistan. Based on the 2010 mortality survey, over 21 per cent of all women in the 25–49 age group were married before the age of 15 and 53.2 per cent were married before the age of 18. By 19 years of age, one third of women have started childbearing. Ten per cent of women aged 15–19 have already given birth, and 4 per cent are pregnant with their first child. This high rate of teenage pregnancy is partially attributable to the high rate of child marriage. Child marriage and teenage pregnancy cause severe health problems for both the mother and her child.

57. Only 18.7 per cent of adolescent pregnant women (under 20) attended the fourth antenatal care visit with a skilled provider and only 57.6 per cent delivered with skilled birth attendants; 40.5 per cent of adolescent pregnant women delivered in public health facilities. Furthermore, 42.3 per cent of adolescent pregnant women received postnatal care within two days after birth. Only 25.8 per cent of pregnant adolescents received two tetanus toxoid

vaccines during their last pregnancy and only 47.8 per cent received iron folic acid supplementation during pregnancy (Afghan Health Survey 2018).

58. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has included adolescent health in the National Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Strategy 2017–2021. This involves seeking opportunities to reduce adolescent morbidity and mortality through raising awareness on young people–friendly health services, including primary, reproductive, nutritional and mental health conditions, with a focus on reducing early marriage, delaying adolescent pregnancy until at least 18 years of age, and reducing gender-based violence.

3.7 WASH

59. The use of improved water sources in rural areas increased from 53 per cent in 2011[84] to 66 per cent in 2015[xix] and use of an improved sanitation facility was 39 per cent in 2016, an increase of over 20 percentage points since 2000.[85] Among public schools, 31 per cent had no water, more than 50 per cent lacked safe drinking water and 33 per cent had no functional toilets.[86] There is no nationally representative data on handwashing practices in schools or health facilities, but at the household level, even if 79 per cent have a dedicated place for washing hands, only 29 per cent use water and soap.[87]

60. Many adolescent girls face challenges because of menstruation, which include missing school and ultimately risking dropout. Often, menstruation leads to their self-isolation. From two studies that UNICEF did with the MoE in 2010 and 2016,[88] it appeared that 70 per cent of girls do not bathe or shower during menstruation for fear of infertility. Moreover, girls sometimes hide their menstruation due to the fear that the families would stop allowing them to go to school or would marry them off early. The secrecy may also lead to an increased risk of infection. In 2010, 29 per cent of girls reported missing some schooldays when they were having their menses. One of the impediments that UNICEF is currently working on with the MoE is the need for female-friendly WASH facilities.[89]

61.The WASH in Schools (WinS) area of work has encountered a number of problems and delays. To address this, responsibility for contracting and construction has been transferred to the MRRD. The new WinS designs include separate toilets for boys and girls. The girls' toilets have covered bins, laundry sinks and laundry soap.[90] Also, MRRD,[xx] MoE and UNICEF are in the process of finalizing the WinS standards to enable stakeholders at various levels to have a harmonized, standard design for WASH in schools.

3.8 UNICEF Interventions Related to the Context

62. The programme and approach of UNICEF are very much based on the challenges for adolescents, as elaborated above. In the sectoral programmes on nutrition, child protection, education, WASH and health, various interventions with adolescents as a target group are included. The adolescent programmes IALA and AWLI aim at enhancing the ability of adolescent girls and boys to participate in community life and decision-making, in order to create youth led change to address the mentioned challenges.

4. Adolescent Programme Stakeholder Analysis

63. A range of stakeholders inside and outside of UNICEF have interests in the evaluation, and a sample of them played a role in the evaluation process. Adolescents, especially girls, and stakeholders working in Afghanistan to eradicate child marriage, including UNICEF, are considered the main stakeholders of the programme and were consulted along with relevant members of their community, including religious leaders.[xxi] Those directly and indirectly

[xix] The UNICEF website (https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/wash-water-sanitation-and-hygiene, accessed 31/01/20) indicates 65 per cent.

[xx] Through the Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Irrigation Programme.

[xxi] As part of preliminary interviews conducted during the Inception Phase, the team met with some adolescents from AYN and key external stakeholders. Their specific interests regarding the evaluation outcomes were noted and have been considered during the evaluation.

responsible for the design and implementation of the adolescent-related interventions – including UNICEF staff, DMoYA, representatives from MoE and MoPH (at national, provincial and district levels), implementing partners, and donors – were consulted.

64. Table 4 sets out the main stakeholder groups and explains their role within adolescent programming and their likely interest in the evaluation findings. A further analysis of stakeholders can be found in Annex 5. This analysis was the basis of sampling for the data collection phase of the evaluation. Based on this stakeholder analysis, the evaluation team developed a list of contacts – in consultation with the Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist, as well as the Social Policy, Evaluation and Research (SPEAR) Unit team in UNICEF – for ensuring broad-based stakeholder representation. Details of the sampling strategy are further elaborated in the methodology section.

Table 4: Summarized Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder	Involvement in Adolescent Programming
Internal (UNICEF) Stakeholders	
Afghanistan Country Office (particularly the Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist)	Responsible for country-level planning and operations implementation. The CO is called upon to account for performance and operational results internally as well as to its duty bearers and partners. The CO commissioned the evaluation and is responsible for signing off on the evaluation findings and formulating and implementing the management response. Learning from the evaluation will be incorporated into the upcoming ACO Strategy on Adolescents.
UNICEF Sub-offices in Provinces of Implementation	UNICEF staff directly and program technical extenders involved in the monitoring of activities at the sub-office level will benefit from potential recommendations around programme cohesiveness, increase of synergies, partnerships, implementation modalities, and monitoring and evaluation processes.
UNICEF ROSA Advisers/Specialists (Education Gender, ADAP, Health) and Advisory CO Units	Findings, learning and recommendations from the evaluation are of particular interest to the relevant ROSA units to inform their advisory and technical work regarding ACO and other countries where work around adolescents is being developed.
External stakeholders	
Village/Community Level	
Adolescents (especially girls)	Right holders targeted by the UNICEF programmes. Improvements in the programme and the approaches of UNICEF to the promotion of education, youth, supporting children on the move, child marriage reduction and empowerment of adolescents will directly benefit current and future adolescents in Afghanistan.
School teachers and School Headmasters	Right holders and duty bearers targeted by the UNICEF programmes. To the extent that school is a platform through which activities address improving adolescent well-being (WIFs, MHM, hygiene, etc.), the recommendations on the evaluation are likely to have an impact in further enhancing synergies around the schools.
Community Leaders, *Shuras* and Religious Leaders	Right holders and duty bearers targeted by the UNICEF programmes. Receiving training and awareness raising. Improvements in the programme and UNICEF approaches to adolescents' challenges will allow for better integration of their expectations, roles and needs.
Parents of Adolescents	Right holders and duty bearers targeted by the UNICEF programmes. To the extent that they are engaged in community awareness–raising activities.
Village *Malik/Mullah*	Right holders and duty bearers targeted by the UNICEF programmes. Potentially part of School Management Shura (SMS). Influence within the community.
Multipurpose Adolescent Groups	Girls and boys that have been grouped under IALA and directly benefit from UNICEF programming.
Community Health Workers and Staff of Local Health Centres for	To the extent they play a role in service provision to adolescents, they were consulted to provide their views on the evolution of services over time to adolescents.

Health/WASH/ MHM / WIFS /Sports/ Adolescent Empowerment (Children/Youth Clubs)	
Provincial Level	
Implementing Partners' Sub-office Staff in Target Provinces (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision Afghanistan, AEPO, WASSA, OHW and ECW)	Right holders and duty bearers targeted by UNICEF programmes. Implementing partner staff directly involved in the monitoring of activities at the sub-office level will benefit from potential recommendations around programme cohesiveness, increase of synergies, partnerships, implementation modalities and monitoring and evaluation processes.
District Departments of Education, Health, Women Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs.	Right holders and duty bearers targeted by the UNICEF programmes. As implementing partners directly involved in the technical aspects of sectoral and adolescent programme interventions and monitoring of activities at the sub-office level, they will benefit from potential recommendations around programme effectiveness, cohesiveness, increase of synergies, partnerships, implementation modalities and monitoring and evaluation processes.
Afghan Youth Network	Right holders and duty bearers targeted by the UNICEF programmes. To the extent that the evaluation will look into the relevance and performance of the support of UNICEF to the network, their members are interested in findings and potential recommendations affecting future actions.
National Level	
Action Aid (AWLI Consortium Leader)	The evaluation will provide an analysis on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the AWLI programme. Action Aid as consortium leader will be directly concerned with the results of the evaluation and may be engaged in follow-up actions.
Ministry of Education	As line ministry partner of the work of UNICEF on education, it will benefit from follow-up actions on the evaluation's recommendations in relation to enhancement of synergies and cohesiveness of work around adolescents.
Ministry of Women's Affairs	As line ministry for gender issues, it will benefit from follow-up actions on the evaluation's recommendations in relation to promotion of gender equality, women's empowerment, child marriage, GBV and girls' education.
Ministry of Public Health	As line ministry partner of the work of UNICEF on WIFS, MHM and WASH, it will benefit from follow-up actions to the evaluation's recommendations in relation to the enhancement of synergies and cohesiveness of work around adolescents.
Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs	To the extent that the evaluation will provide a full assessment of the approach and work of UNICEF on adolescents in Afghanistan, the DMoYA will directly benefit from findings and recommendations aimed at further support to the National Youth Strategy in Afghanistan.
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	Supports children on the move, ending child marriage and child labour, vocational trainings for adolescent boys and leading child protection policy
UNFPA	UNFPA plays a lead role in the promotion of youth in Afghanistan, including in coordination mechanisms. UNFPA has an indirect interest in the evaluation's results insofar as they help improve the role of UNICEF in inter-agency processes and in other workings groups relevant to adolescents. UNFPA is an important partner for current and potential future activity areas related to early marriage and pregnancy, youth-friendly health centres, and reproductive health rights for adolescents.

SECTION B: EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

1. Evaluation Purpose and Use

65. **Evaluation Purpose**: This portfolio evaluation is a stocktaking of the current programming focused on adolescents in Afghanistan, with a clear focus on the interventions targeting adolescent girls and boys, considering the respective gendered risks and vulnerabilities. The evidence gathered will is expected to inform age-appropriate and gender-transformative and -responsive programme development, raising awareness on adolescent issues based on their gendered needs in the country and mobilizing partners and resources. The timing of the evaluation was aligned to the need of UNICEF for information related to the development of an adolescent strategy and the design of the new Country Programme 2022–2027.

66. **Evaluation Use**: The portfolio evaluation has brought together the best current evidence from a range of sources and disciplines around programming related to adolescents' rights and their enjoyment or violation. It will inform debate, advocacy and programming both inside UNICEF and through UNICEF advocacy and action, among other primary users. It is envisaged as a powerful product to inform decision making on adolescents in Afghanistan, particularly as articulated by adolescents themselves.

67. The evaluation has also been conducted to support UNICEF ACO in developing an adolescent strategy, to feed into the next UNICEF programme of cooperation in support of the Government of Afghanistan and civil society, and to contribute to promoting and assuring respect of the rights of adolescents in the country, while paying attention to convergent planning and programming.

68. Expected users of the evaluation: The primary expected user of this evaluation is the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office. In particular, the Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist will use the outcomes of the evaluation to inform the drafting of the upcoming Strategy on Adolescents in Afghanistan. The Nutrition, Health, Child Protection, Education, WASH and Communication for Development Officers will use the evaluation to inform future programming decisions to increase cohesiveness and synergies within different UNICEF workstreams. Relevant UNICEF units (Gender, Communication for Development, and Adolescent Development and Participation) at the Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA) and headquarters are likely to take stock of the findings to increase the body of evidence on the agency's performance regarding adolescent challenges and learning from the Afghanistan experience for future programming in other countries and to enhance inputs to the Afghanistan programme. It is also expected that UNICEF partners will use the evaluation outcomes to make adjustments as necessary in programme implementation and future design. The evaluation will also serve to inform DMoYA, the Ministry of Health, MoE, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, MoWA, the United Nations Country Team, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and other United Nations agencies about the lessons learned in programmes addressing youth and adolescent challenges in Afghanistan.

2. Evaluation objective and scope

69. **Evaluation Objective**: The overall evaluation objective is to map existing programming on adolescents' rights in Afghanistan, using a gender lens, to identify how well aligned and mutually reinforcing programmes are in respect to achieving shared results for adolescents, particularly girls, and to priorities of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan.

70. **Time Period under Review**: The time period for review is from 2015 to 2019, though more recent findings were included if they occurred.

71. **Programme Focus:** The focus was on programme design and implementation, and evidence gathered in evaluations, studies and reports were taken into consideration.

72. **Geographical Scope**: Since programming for adolescents consisted of various programmes and parts of thematic interventions, the geographical scope is seen as

nationwide, although there is variation in intensity and number of programmes across districts. The evaluation has gathered information from internal and external stakeholders in Kabul, and in selected locations at the provincial, district and community levels.

73. **Thematic Focus**: Thematically, the focus was on the programme components of the UNICEF Afghanistan CP 2015–2021, namely health, nutrition, water sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection, social inclusion, humanitarian response and cross-cutting issues, including adolescent-positive development and participation processes across sectors. The focus is both on sector adolescent-inclusive programmes and specific adolescent programmes.

SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

1. Evaluation Questions

74. The four main questions addressed in this portfolio evaluation are:

1. Does available evidence point to what works and what does not work in adolescent programming (health, education, child protection, participation, etc.) in Afghanistan?
2. Are the current programmes designed suitably to tackle the key challenges faced by adolescents in the country? How effective are the programmes?
3. Are the various adolescent-focused programmes that cut across thematic areas cohesive and mutually reinforcing, both in terms of programming and results? Is there a shared Theory of Change (ToC)?
4. How can UNICEF do better in adolescent programming and programme delivery? How can UNICEF create more synergies and convergences?

75. The final specific evaluation questions are shown in the evaluation matrix (Annex 6). Additionally, Annex 7 demonstrates the process that was followed to arrive at the final evaluation questions.

2. Evaluation Criteria and Principles

76. The principles guiding the proposed evaluation approach rely on a framework drawing on a case study approach combined with an extensive literature review to generate a utilization-focused evaluation, to help with the analysis of results.

77. The team has developed an evaluation matrix (Annex 6) based on the key evaluation questions and the recently updated Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria. The Request for Proposals (RFP) proposed the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coordination and coherence. To align with the updated OECD/DAC criteria, coordination has been assessed under coherence (see also Annex 7). With a focus on suitability and future design of adolescent programming, impact and sustainability were not addressed; moreover, collecting credible data for impact would need a different approach, which is not feasible within the available resources.

78. **Integration of Gender**: The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidance on gender has informed the evaluation approach to ensure adequate representation of gender considerations in the processes and results assessment. The evaluation looked into whether the UNICEF Afghanistan gender strategy priorities and Gender Action Plan had been taken into account.

79. Gender-sensitive data collection went beyond simply assessing participation but also attempted to understand the nature of changes in girls' roles, their specific challenges and opportunities, and community cultural beliefs and behaviours. The evaluation applied gender analysis and assessed the extent to which the differential needs, priorities, voices and vulnerabilities of women, men, boys and girls had been considered. The evaluation explored the effect of gender equality principles on programming responses in terms of beneficiary selection and site selection. Gender equality was integrated into the evaluation matrix and subsequently into the interview guide for understanding the interventions.

80. **Humanitarian Principles**: Humanitarian principles provide consideration regarding how the methods will ensure neutrality, impartiality and independence in the generation of data, development of findings and recommendations. The sources of information used by the evaluation were pre-existing secondary information (mostly qualitative) from the literature review and primary qualitative information from stakeholders at Kabul, provincial, district and community levels. Before starting data collection, approval of the Independent Review Board was obtained.

3. Data Collection Methods and Tools

81. During the inception mission in February 2020, the team started their data collection. Following feedback on the initial draft of the Inception Report from UNICEF ACO, the original methodology included two approaches in view of the restrictions potentially imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The second option, comprising only telephone interviews, was agreed upon based on the deteriorating context and to ensure the safety of the team and respondents. The field data collection took place by Assess, Transform, Reach (ATR) Consulting in June/July 2020. The team used in-depth telephone interviews with beneficiaries and for key informant interviews (KIIs). The team relied on three different types of information resources:

- **Secondary Data from Literature Review.** The team studied programme documents, evaluations, studies, research (according to UNICEF taxonomy), including reports on adolescents in Afghanistan published by UNICEF since 2015. Annex 10a includes the list of 102 documents reviewed by the team and Annex 10b an annotated bibliography of a selected number of 30 documents.
- **Primary data** from key informants at province (Annex 12) and capital level (Annex 2) through KIIs. Evaluators from ATR conducted remote interviews with UNICEF and staff from partners in the United Nations and Government. A total of 261 KII were conducted in four provinces out of which 34 per cent were female and 37 per cent adolescents. The team also conducted interviews with 37 key informants in Kabul, including UNICEF staff, UNFPA staff, implementing partners and relevant ministries.
- **Case studies** were conducted in four selected provinces Bamyan, Kandahar, Ghor and Nangahar. The sampling criteria outlined under sections 3.1 and 3.2. The studies helped to generate in-depth, multifaceted understandings of the challenges of adolescents and the programming that is meant to address them. Thus, the team could analyse data of the country programme as well as in each of the provinces. The case study approach allowed for a deeper understanding of beneficiaries' and stakeholders' perceptions. The number of people interviewed by province was: 65 respectively in Kandahar, Ghor and Nangahar and 66 in Bamyan.

82. A semi-structured questionnaire based on the questions outlined in the evaluation matrix was used for KIIs. A general KII approach was developed for provincial and Kabul stakeholders, and adapted by the interviewer to the expertise and position of the respondent. A district and village KII was also developed. As FGDs could not be conducted, the originally developed FGD guides– one for community adults, including Shura and household members, and another for adolescents – had to be adapted. They were tailored to serve as guides for telephone interviews, meaning they had to be relatively short and simple. All formats are included in Annex 11.

83. Because of the gender- and age-related adolescent programming aspects, protocols integrated into interview processes ensured gender-sensitive consultation as described in the section on ethical considerations. Enumerators were male and female, so there was always a female enumerator to interview women and girls. Communication was in the language of the women and girls.

84. In terms of data quality assurance, to ensure consistency in understanding the objectives of the evaluation, a preliminary orientation facilitated by the team leader ensured a shared understanding of the use of the tools. Semi-structured interview guides with probes were used to ensure consistent formatting of the interviews. The notes were compiled into a standardized template for each of the beneficiary interviews and KIIs. ATR Consulting selected enumerators from a pool of candidates who had worked with ATR for a long time. ATR trained and supervised monitors, and all interviews were recorded and verified.

85. During the enumerator training with local context specialists (see Annex 8 and Annex 9), ATR Consulting validated and adapted the tools to ensure that they were understood

correctly and were appropriate to women, girls, men and boys at the village, district, provincial and Kabul levels.

3.1 Selection Process: Province, District and Sites

86. For case studies, the ToR prescribed a selection from programme components WASH, nutrition, education and child protection and empowerment strategies used in ADAP adolescent groups. The team selected locations where IALA and/or AWLI, the most important adolescent programmes, were implemented. In consultation with UNICEF, a variation of "extreme case sampling" was used: Among four selected provinces, at least one was difficult to access, one relatively easy, and one was of medium difficulty. This approach enables identifying factors that drove or hampered success. On the other hand, this approach presents more constraints to generalizing findings than typical case sampling.

87. In consultation with UNICEF, 32 villages were selected (four in each of the two selected districts in four provinces). Annex 12 provides a schematic insight to help understanding the approach. For each district, enumerators - one male and one female - were recruited by ATR, to conduct telephone interviews with beneficiaries and key informants. The consultation process through the remote approach lasted 27 days. See Annex 7 for a detailed table.

88. Target provinces were selected from the 18 provinces in Afghanistan with the highest concentration of programming for adolescents (Table 3**) based on information richness, overlap of programmes and thematic sectors, and differing degrees of access. The list of criteria for selection of target provinces for field data collection is as follows:

- Four provinces from a different context in terms of emergency and accessibility.
- In each province, either IALA or AWLI, as well as GATE activities, were implemented.
- Each province had to have an overlap with three sectoral programmes (WASH in Schools, girls' education, WIFS) through schools as a platform.
- Each province had to have districts targeted under ALCs.
- A UNICEF sub-office or outpost should be present.
- Afghan Youth Network should be present in at least one province.

89. Thus, the provinces Bamyan (good accessibility), Nangarhar (medium) and Ghor (poor accessibility) were selected for field data collection. UNICEF requested for Kandahar to be included since the SMS mobilization for back-to-school activities and girls' education was implemented here. Within each province, two districts were selected. Here, apart from ensuring a maximum overlap of UNICEF-supported activities and programme components, there was also a purposive aspect related to security and remoteness. The districts were selected with ATR's input and in consultation with UNICEF. In consultation with UNICEF, four provinces were selected from 18 based on maximum information richness, overlap of programmes and thematic sectors, and differing degrees of access. The final list of criteria for selection of target provinces for field data collection was as follows:

- Four provinces, from a different context in terms of emergency and accessibility: good, medium and poor.
- In each province, either IALA or AWLI, as well as GATE activities, must be implemented.
- Each province must have an overlap with three sectoral programmes (WASH in Schools, girls' education, WIFS) through schools as platform.
- Each province must have districts targeted under ALCs.
- A UNICEF sub-office or outpost should be present.
- UNICEF requested for the province of Kandahar to be included since the SMS mobilization for back to school and girls' education was implemented here.
- AYN should be present in at least one province among the selected three.

90. Annex 12 displays the details of the modality of data collection and the targeted categories of interviewees, including the planned and actually reached respondents.

3.2 Stakeholders Sampling

91. The final step was the selection of the stakeholder categories and persons within those categories to be interviewed. Annex 12 reflects the proposed details of the interviews, with inclusion of the gender of the various targeted groups. The target villages were selected with UNICEF staff from Kabul and sub-offices; respondents were from the following categories (in brackets are the numbers of KIIs, conducted by type):

a. Adolescents benefitting from or contributing to UNICEF interventions (72 girls and 24 boys)
b. District government staff engaged in education, nutrition, WASH, child protection and youth development and empowerment (32)
c. UNICEF focal points at sub-office level (4)
d. Implementing partners at provincial level (8)
e. School principals (8)
f. *Shura* members (48)
g. Adolescents' parents and caregivers (24 females, 8 males)
h. Teachers from schools associated with UNICEF-supported interventions (8)
i. Community leaders (*maliks* or *mullahs*) (24)

92. Respondents and their contact details were identified and collected through (1) support of UNICEF Kabul and sub-offices; (2) implementing partners in the target provinces; (3) directly through ATR field researchers in the villages (as per the COVID-19 prevention guidelines [Annex 13]) which should have helped mitigate potential bias to some extent in the identification of respondents by UNICEF and implementing partners.

3.3 Final Sample

93. A summary of respondent numbers has been captured in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Where possible, responses from the case studies have been quantified in the findings section. Since the survey was qualitative, however, not all questions have been responded to in a quantifiable manner by all respondents, so the quantification should be seen as a proxy.

Table 5: Respondent Numbers and Categories in the Case Studies

	Bamyan									Kandahar									Total		
	Panjab			Yakawolang			Total Bamyan			Kandahar			Daman			Total Kandahar			4 Provinces		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	F	Total	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Adolescents	3	9	12	3	9	12	64	96	24	3	9	12	3	9	12	6	18	24	32	64	96
Government Staff	3	1	4	4		4	3	32	8	3	1	4	4	0	4	7	1	8	29	3	32
UNICEF Local Staff	1		1	1		1	2		2	0		0			0	0	0	0	2	2	4
NGO Staff		1	1	1		1	1	1	2		1	1	2		2	2	1	3	6	3	9
Adults	12	3	15	12	3	15	24	6	30	12	3	15	12	3	15	24	6	30	104	16	120
Total	19	14	33	21	12	33	40	26	66	18	14	32	21	12	33	39	26	65	173	88	261

	Ghor									Nangarhar								
	Firozkoh			Lal Sarjangal			Total Ghor			Jalalabad			Kama			Total Nangarhar		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Adolescents	6	6	12	6	6	12	12	12	24	3	9	12	5	7	12	8	16	24

Government Staff	4		4	4	0	4	8	0	8	3	1	4	4	0	4	7	1	8
UNICEF Local Staff		1	1			0	0	1	1		1	1			0	0	1	1
NGO Staff	1		1	1		1	2	0	2		1	1	1		1	1	1	2
Adults	15		15	15		15	30	0	30	12	3	15	14	1	15	26	4	30
Total	26	7	33	26	6	32	52	13	65	18	15	33	24	8	32	42	23	65

94. **Prevention and Addressing of Bias**: To respond to issues of disaggregation and potential bias, firstly, the selection of stakeholders to be interviewed always aimed at a range of female and male respondents to ensure that the respective voices from each of the stakeholder categories – especially at the village level – were included in the data. The team made the utmost effort to include stakeholders from the most marginalized and most conflict-affected groups, including girls, boys, communities and service providers.

4. Data Analysis

95. The following types of analysis were used. The literature review relied on ***thematic narrative analysis*** for highlighting key themes identified in the documents and connecting them to the relevant points in the evaluation matrix.

96. ***Qualitative iterative data analysis*** was used to identify iterative key thought units related to each evaluation question from the interviews, organizing these thought units into clusters and identifying the key themes within each cluster. Clusters were grouped into categories and emergent themes. Themes or patterns were examined to determine if they were coming from multiple stakeholder levels and categories. Observations or comments from a single source or a single category of stakeholder were given less weight in the analysis.

97. ***Case Study Elaboration***. Case studies in four provinces helped assess the convergent youth programming of UNICEF. The case studies data were aggregated, compiled, collated and analysed in a way not only to identify the common patterns but also the differences which may be the cause or effect of different results of adolescent programming. The results were synthesized and reflected with reference to a specific province where relevant.

98. ***Contribution analysis* was foreseen to** help infer the degree to which programme actions had contributed to the perceived outcomes. However, the absence of a ToC underpinning the multiple adolescent-related interventions limited the consistency of the contribution analysis. In addition, the lack of consistent use of terminology such as outcomes, results, effects, outputs and objectives across documents including baselines, project documents and existing evaluations also hampered the clarity around levels of programme achievements. Instead, the evaluation has attempted to layout the building blocks of a preliminary scheme of an Adolescent ToC for ACO and has used it to inform effectiveness analysis, the relationships between the various linkages.

99. ***Triangulation***. Triangulation ensured validity and contributed to substantiating findings and developing conclusions and recommendations. This involved comparing information from different sources, collected by different evaluators and methods.

5. Limitations

100.Cost-efficiency could not be assessed, as it was not possible to exactly allocate budget and expenditure under thematic programmes to investments for adolescents. Efficiency, in the context of this evaluation, has looked into “programme efficiency” and assessed whether resources were sufficient, how well the programme was monitored, if there were delays, and how efficient partner selection was.

101. Having to use phone calls instead of face-to-face interviews and FGDs had a bearing on the quantity of data. In FGDs, roughly 10 people can be interviewed, but now almost the same amount of time had to be invested in one respondent, decreasing the number of interviewees. The team tried to collect as much data as possible, but a few constraints were met. The field team at times struggled with finding respondents for phone interviews. Especially in Ghor and Kandahar, finding female respondents proved difficult, and the team decided to select male respondents instead. Furthermore, phone connectivity was sometimes

limited, making contact difficult and leading to respondents refusing to accept a second phone call.

102. The phone calls had to be based on shorter questionnaires and led to different interview dynamics, limiting the interaction between researcher and interviewee, which influenced the richness of the data and the potential to probe. Respondents were more inclined to skip certain questions, where they would usually respond in face-to-face interviews. Nonetheless, this was the only possible modality, and a large body of data has been collected. So, despite the inevitable smaller body of data, this was agreed as the optimal or even only solution.

103. Finally, the team had planned to interview UNICEF staff in each of the districts but managed to interview only four staff members.

6. Quality Assurance

104. UNICEF uses GEROS (Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System) to uphold quality standards. The quality of the evaluation was addressed in several ways. First, through the application of core GEROS standards; second, through approaches supporting data reliability, consistency and accuracy; and third, through support, oversight and quality control provided by KonTerra's Quality Assurance advisor.

105. **Application of GEROS**. The team has created a checklist using key UNEG/UNICEF (2010) and GEROS standards (2016) for each report produced (i.e., inception report, draft/final report, synthesis presentation). The checklist has helped ensure that the report:

a. Specifies data collection, analysis and sampling methods.
b. Specifies data sources, their rationale for selection and their limitations.
c. Describes ethical safeguards undertaken to ensure confidentiality, protection of stakeholders'/participants' rights, informed consent, the provision of feedback to participants, and shaping/checking the behaviour of evaluators.
d. Incorporates to the extent possible a human right, gender equality and gender equity approach in the data approach, analysis and findings.
e. Adequately describes the scope and scale of stakeholder consultation.
f. Adequately describes the limitations and how they were managed.
g. Presents findings clearly and based on the evidence provided – this should also include a discussion of unexpected findings.
h. Addresses all main questions in the ToR.

106. In addition, the evaluation team has worked to ensure that the level of participation of the programme stakeholders is appropriate for the evaluability assessment. The GEROS quality criteria[xxii] that apply specifically to conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations have been included in Annex 7.

107. **Activities to support and ensure data reliability, consistency and accuracy.** The methodology was designed to support data reliability through mixed methods, diverse stakeholder engagement and triangulation, including the following:

a. Drawing information from various stakeholders to enhance data accuracy and reliability
b. Ensuring stakeholders are relevant and represent true key informants
c. Ensuring interview guides focus on interviewees' areas of expertise and maintain the quality of questioning in the key informant interview guides[xxiii]
d. Triangulation from multiple data sources, which safeguarded data analysis quality

[xxii] Included in Chapter 3 of GEROS (Assessment Standards), Sections E and F.
[xxiii] For example, ensuring questions are not leading, assumptions are explicit, research biases are mitigated, etc.

108. Specific measures for data security with a full remote approach are the following:

- ATR ensured data security by always keeping all mobile devices that contain research data password protected. Data was protected as described in paragraph 117**.
- Access to the web interface was protected by passwords, which restricted the data to the Project Director, Quality Assurance team, and the IT and Database Specialist.
- Paper research data was protected by data collectors. All data was de-identified when stored. ATR ensured proper data handling of any paper data that contained sensitive material, such as identifying information of the participant or survey data from participants, using locked file cabinets. Access was limited to only field team leaders who then put the collected data into the electronic database. The quality assurance audit process included two team leaders inputting the same data, and another verifying the accuracy of data that is inputted. The data was then stored and uploaded onto the server just as if it were collected electronically. ATR keeps paper copies of surveys in a secure location in Kabul that complies with international ethical standards.
- To optimize research outcomes and their validity, research data, records and primary research materials were stored, retained, documented and/or described, made accessible for use and reuse and/or disposed of according to legal, statutory, ethical and funding body requirements.

109. **KonTerra Supervision and Expertise.** KonTerra's Managing Director, Menno Wiebe, assumes primary responsibility for contract quality assurance. He is responsible for maintaining an effective working relationship with the team leader and members. KonTerra Quality Assurance have provided an independent review of all deliverables produced during the course of the contract. KonTerra is ultimately responsible to UNICEF for the quality of the evaluation products and ensures the quality of data (validity, consistency and accuracy) throughout. KonTerra will make the necessary amendments at their own expense to bring the evaluation products to the required quality level in case any standards are not met by the team.

7. Ethical Considerations

7.1 Institutional Ethics Review

110. Given the particular vulnerability of adolescents, especially girls, the evaluation design needed to consider special ethical limitations and risks. The evaluation has adhered to the "UNICEF Procedures for Ethical Research Involving Children". Because of the nature of the evaluation scope – collecting data from women and youth in insecure contexts – the evaluation design was approved in a formal institutional ethics review process as part of the design process. The approval has been included in Annex 14.

7.2 Protocols for Safety, Confidentiality and Data Protection

111. The evaluators have respected good practice principles by being independent, impartial, credible, accountable and transparent. They do not have any conflict of interest.

112. **Informed Consent:** Interviewees were informed at the start of the interview on the purpose of the evaluation, assurance of voluntary participation, and confidentiality of all responses. The evaluation team used the principle of mutual respect by ensuring that the interviews were as concise and as efficient as possible.

113. The evaluation has obtained interview notes from adolescents. In addition to the ethical review, the children consultation tool in the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis was a source for contextualizing the data collection process to the context and respondent category. For children and adolescents under 19, informed consent was requested from a parent or caregiver as per UNICEF protocol. Guardian consent was taken in three stages. First while taking their phone numbers and second during the interviews, since in all of the cases, the call centre agents called their parents. Upon their consent, the phone was passed to the adolescents and they were separately asked for their consent to take the interviews.

114. Many interviews were done in areas where female interaction with non-related males is strictly controlled. Women and girls would have been reluctant to participate in phone interviews if these were conducted by men who are not related to them. This was mitigated by making available sufficient female enumerators.

115. Protocols of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) were in place if a child protection case would have been revealed during the data collection process. Such a case was to be reported immediately to the social worker or Child Protection Action Network (CPAN) member, directly or through UNICEF field offices, who would then respond in line with the case management protocol, which consists of the six steps of case identification, case assessment, case plan, implementation of case plan, monitoring and evaluation of the case.

116. **Additional Measures for Working with Adolescents**: During ATR training, the capacity of the enumerators to work with adolescents was developed. They learned how to make them feel safe and comfortable and how to be aware of any potential risks to their psychological well-being. During the data collection, ATR used the following principles:

a. Informed Consent: ATR trained the enumerators to explain the research objectives in simple language (introduction protocol for adolescent discussion guides in Annex 11 and the consent form in Annex 15) and ensure that the adolescents know what is being asked and that they have the right to say no.
b. Do No Harm: Avoiding questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental or that may expose children to humiliation or reactive pain or grief.

117. **Data Protection Measures**: After data was collected, data protection measures were used to ensure respondent confidentiality. ATR system servers are secured by firewalls to prevent unauthorized access and denial of service attacks, while data internally was protected from virus threats using NOD32 anti-virus programming. Access to the web interface in Open Data Kit was protected by passwords restricted to the ATR focal point for the evaluation. Personal data, including phone numbers or parental names, were not recorded, but instead all respondents were coded with a unique identifier.

118. All interview notes from the evaluation team are kept electronically on password-encrypted computers. Data analysis was carried out only with the evaluation team members to ensure confidentiality. Data compiled in reporting was aggregated so that individual responses cannot be traced to specific locations or individuals. Quantitative and qualitative information will be kept on ATR and evaluation team computers only until the report is finalized, after which it will be deleted to protect individuals from possible identification.

SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS

119. The findings are reflected per evaluation criterion, divided into selected sub-questions (here in shortened form; full questions are to be found in the evaluation matrix in Annex 6).

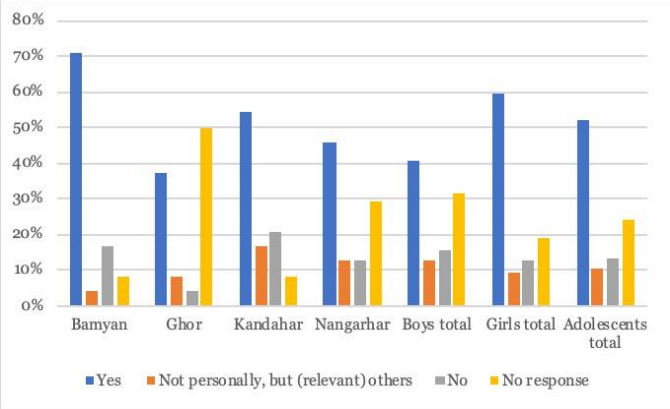
1. Relevance

1.1.a. Are the current programmes suitably designed to tackle key challenges of adolescents, with a focus on girls, in the different contexts of the country, especially the most marginalized?

120. The evaluation highlights the evolution of UNICEF regarding the increased attention paid to adolescent population. The transition initiated in 2015 from only addressing adolescent needs through sector programme (nutrition, health, child protection, etc.) to incorporating programmes that specifically target adolescents, namely AWLI and IALA, strongly supported by C4D approaches, and which were designed to complement sector interventions (see below on internal coherence) is seen by the evaluation as a strategic move to align ACO with the global commitments of UNICEF (UNICEF Global Strategic Plan 2018–2021) and enhance UNICEF positioning on adolescent matters in Afghanistan. However, the extent to which this strategic and programmatic evolution has resulted in a clear leadership on adolescent issues of ACO in Afghanistan cannot be confirmed by the evaluation at this stage.

121. Overall, the feedback on the quality of the programme and approach of UNICEF was positive. The activities are also perceived as appropriate, not only from the viewpoint of context and characteristics of the target population, but also specifically for adolescent girls. UNICEF has systematically addressed a number of priority issues that adolescents, mainly adolescent girls, struggle with, either on a regular basis or in a structural manner. UNICEF has good relations with local NGOs and government bodies, also through its sub-offices, and appears well informed of the needs of youth in the various provinces. The interviewed adolescents themselves confirm this. Among all respondents at community level, 56 per cent said that they or relevant others had been consulted for the activity that took place in their area and only 20 per cent said this was not the case. A number of the respondents reported that consultation and engagement of UNICEF had taken place through the Community Development Committee, a mechanism that they looked upon favourably. Among adolescents themselves, 52 per cent confirmed that they were consulted (always or most of the time) and that their view and needs were accounted for. Only one boy from Kandahar said he was consulted but his views were ignored. The positive responses were highest in Bamyan (71 per cent) and lowest in Ghor (38 per cent), but nonresponse was also high in this province. Positive perceptions were fairly equal between girls and boys (59 per cent vs 52 per cent). If one adds consultation of relevant others to direct consultation with adolescents themselves, the percentages vary between 46 per cent and 75 per cent. Only a small proportion (between 4 and 21 per cent) felt they had not been consulted. Looking at the sampling of respondents, this reflects positive feedback on the extent that UNICEF design has been participative. Details are displayed in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Response to "were you consulted prior to UNICEF starting the programme?"



122. In KIIs in Kabul, as well as through case studies, the need was highlighted for UNICEF to reach the most vulnerable youth in rural communities, where poverty and illiteracy rates are higher, and insecurity hampers daily life more strongly. The design of programmes often includes criteria to reach out to these remote areas. For CBE, for instance, according to the policy, 82 per cent of activities are established 3 kms or more from a formal school.

123. The same insecurity and remoteness, however, can prevent stakeholders from implementing interventions, including local government and national NGOs. In Ghor, for instance, according to respondents, Taliban control is strong and the situation is often fluid. The climate is harsh, meaning remote places often cannot be accessed in winter for many months and schools are closed during this period. Only those who are well-off (a handful) can send their children to schools in the province capital in wintertime. A complicating issue for young girls is that female staff are entirely unable to go to Taliban areas, contributing to the vulnerability of adolescent girls. There is no overall solution yet. Moreover, it is difficult to set up certain activities in sparsely populated locations without a critical mass of beneficiaries.

124. Many interviewees from different backgrounds praise UNICEF for its efforts to work in areas, where others cannot. Girls' education and WIFS are implemented at a nationwide level, but CBE in some provinces focuses on deprived districts only and many other interventions emphasize working in the most-deprived provinces. Still much of the work also focuses on city areas in the target provinces. It was brought up in field interviews that people in remote areas often remain marginalized and are not reached by anyone. In total, 17 per cent of respondents specifically mentioned people in remote areas and villages (one mentioned nomads) as most marginalized. The proportions were consistent between the provinces (17–18 per cent); however, among adolescents, only 5 per cent selected this category as the most vulnerable. UNICEF, having good working relationships with local NGOs/civil society, was seen by key stakeholders as a suitable organization to reach out to such areas.

125. The respondents also implicitly confirmed the need to focus on girls, without forgetting boys. Girls in general (without further specification) were brought up as the most marginalized by the respondents. Twenty respondents said so (8 per cent).[xxiv] Young boys were also considered the most marginalized, but only by two respondents.

126. Twelve respondents saw people with (potentially war-induced) disability as the most marginalized and they did not think that UNICEF or any other development actor reached them with tailored support. UNICEF has not conducted an analysis yet, looking into the causes and effects of disability among youth.

Education

127. When asked about challenges for youth, access to education figured prominently. Thus, the access to education programme of UNICEF is well aligned with this need. Sixty-six per cent of respondents identified access to education to be a problem for adolescents; this was lowest in Bamyan (56 per cent) and highest in Nangarhar (79 per cent). Among the youth themselves, 51 per cent shared that view. In total, 33 per cent said that the problem was identical for girls and boys; 32 per cent found that girls had more access issues and only 2 per cent thought the same about boys.

> Students sit on the dusty floor without carpet. There are no bathrooms and no board or chalk in the classroom. *Teacher, Nangarhar*

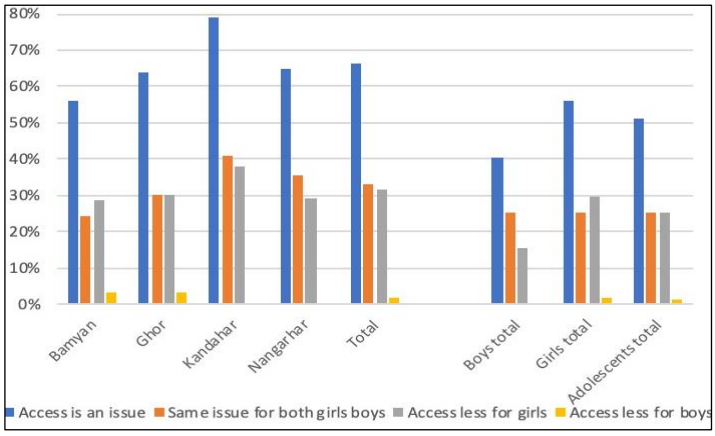
> When girls go to college, parents fear that they get out of the control of the family because they meet professors and classmates. *Teacher, Nangarhar*

128. Though the opinions on access were rather similar and fairly equal across provinces, people brought up various reasons. The most significant barrier to education for **both boys and girls**, mentioned by 22 per cent of respondents, was the actual challenge to get there, which included road

[xxiv] Other groups frequently mentioned as specifically vulnerable were people in remote areas (17%), ultra-poor (9%), and out-of-school children (9%).

conditions, harsh winters and insecurity. The second challenge was that schools were either unavailable or were of insufficient quality, lacked classrooms, etc. (mentioned by 13 per cent). Nine per cent said that parents could not send their children to school due to poverty, and 5 per cent mentioned COVID-19. Finally, 3 per cent found that once children dropped out of school, they could not return due to unavailability of suitable classes or because they were too old to be accepted.

Chart 2: Proportion of respondents who found access to education an issue for adolescents



129. **Access for girls** was often hampered for different reasons than for boys. Even in cities, girls are often not allowed to school and, if they do, it is only up to a certain level – usually grade 6. Many parents are afraid that the community will look unfavourably upon girls aged 14/15 years that still go to school, particularly in rural areas. In the case studies, 21 per cent said that girls above a certain age(various ages and grades were mentioned) were no longer allowed to go to school; 13 per cent found that only remoteness and insecurity hamper girls' access to school; 6 per cent said that girls have to stay home to do household chores and 4 per cent said there were either no schools for girls or no female teachers. UNICEF working on access to education for girls is therefore relevant. The GATE programme specifically addresses the female teacher issue; adolescents (boys as well as girls), parents and teachers reported that girls are not allowed to attend classes with male teachers, so GATE helps with strengthening their access.

> Boys can learn from male and female teachers, but girls are often not allowed to school if there is no female teacher. *Adult, Bamyan*

130. Though less prominently, **boys** also have their access problems. Boys are generally allowed to go to school and are less hampered by remoteness and insecurity, since parents perceive that the dangers for boys on the road to school are less than for girls. Financial constraints, however, often prevent parents from letting them attend. First, they cannot afford school-related costs such as books and uniforms, though this is also a challenge when it comes to daughters. Second, boys more than girls have to contribute to the family income after grade 6/8 to help the family survive. In the case studies, this was also the main reason brought up by the four respondents who thought access was a bigger problem for boys. These boys either have to work the land or work as shepherds full-time at a young age, or have to combine school with hard labour, making them too tired to benefit fully from the education.

131. Some respondents brought up poverty as the main constraint, underlying a number of problems, including education and child marriage. In total, 18 per cent of respondents thought so; the highest proportion was from Bamyan (29 per cent) and the lowest from Nangarhar at 14 per cent (Table 6). Among adolescents, this was 21 per cent (similar in all provinces).

Table 6: Respondents Who Identify Poverty as the Main Challenge for Adolescents

Province	Bamyan	Ghor	Kandahar	Nangarhar	Total
Same for Boys and Girls	29%	23%	17%	14%	18%
Worse for Girls	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%
Worse for Boys	3%	5%	2%	5%	3%

Protection

132. Eight homicide victims among children and adolescents aged 0–19 years per 100,000 people in Afghanistan is a strong illustration of the existence of violence against children, including adolescents,[91] and UNICEF's inclusion of support to child protection is fully relevant in this regard. The effect of the protracted conflict is often stronger for girls, who apparently are less likely to be allowed to go to school, or to go out altogether, or are married off to keep them safe. The respondents in all provinces found that multi-purpose adolescent groups (MAGs) provide an excellent entry point to work with girls on protection-related issues, as they are able to strengthen their awareness and voice in a safe space. The position of parents also negatively affects the rights of the adolescents, as they sometimes perceive a child as a tool or that they "own" the child.[92] There is, however, according to some NGO partners and local government actors, less focus on good parenting activities that would directly influence the behaviour of parents to improve the protection of both daughters and sons, while at the same time ensuring equal access to their rights.

Table 7: Proportion of responses to questions on prevalence of violence against adolescents

Response	Bamyan	Ghor	Khandahar	Nangarhar	Total
Violence is an issue	44%	39%	100%	88%	54%
For both girls and boys	*12%*	*11%*	*20%*	*50%*	*18%*
More for girls	*32%*	*28%*	*80%*	*38%*	*36%*
Violence decreased or not an issue	56%	61%	0%	13%	46%
Number of respondents	25	18	5	8	56

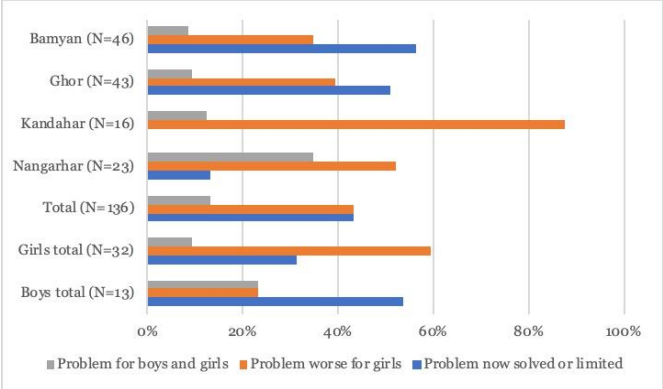
133. Both girls and boys encounter violence, but the problem is more stringent for girls. For girls, insecurity on the way to school includes harassment, which was not mentioned as a constraint for boys, which validates the point. Respondents were asked if they saw violence as an issue; probably due to the sensitivity of the question, only 56 responded. Among those, 54 per cent said violence is an issue for adolescents, and roughly two-thirds of those thought it was worse for girls. The other 46 per cent said there was no issue or no longer any violence. In Kandahar, there were only five respondents, but all of them reported violence as being an issue (Table 7). It should be noted, though, that the findings have to be interpreted carefully, because responses to this sensitive topic differ very much even within the same community (the same goes for child marriage). Whereas some say there is no violence at all, others say there is "lots of violence and women being stoned".

134. Child marriage has health, education, social and economic consequences for girls and their communities, and may lead to early pregnancy, social isolation, and a lack of education, skills and employability.[93] Thus, girls remain marginalized economically, socially and politically, reinforcing the gendered nature of poverty.[94] Early marriage is related to school dropout, but the relationship is multifaceted and bi-directional. Marriage may impact education, and education may impact marriage, and a range of other factors may influence both.[95] Married girls are usually found unable or unwilling to continue schooling after marriage, despite their hope to do so.[96] Lack of access to schools (which is already prevalent in rural areas due to other reasons such as finances, insecurity or remoteness) can also be a cause in itself for early marriage. UNICEF's engagement in both prevention of child marriage and girls' access to education, and trying to find synergy, is therefore fully relevant, since on the one hand lack of schooling influences the risk of early marriage, whilst on the other hand early marriage leads to school dropout, especially for girls.

> Here, girls cannot decide on their marriage and future husband, but boys can get married voluntarily; if the boy is not satisfied with his parents' choice, his parents cannot force him.
> *Adult respondent, Ghor*

135. Roughly half of the respondents provided an opinion on the existence of child marriage in their area (136 respondents). On average, out of these 13 per cent reported that child marriage was an issue for both boys and girls; 43 per cent found that the problem was more severe for girls as they do not have any choice and 43 per cent thought that the problem had disappeared or was very limited in their area. In Bamyan and Ghor, the highest proportions of respondents (57 and 51 per cent) believed child marriage to be virtually eradicated. In Nangarhar, only 13 per cent thought so and, in Kandahar, nobody believed child marriage had ceased to exist. Among the adolescents, boys estimated the prevalence of child marriage lower than girls; 54 per cent of boys found that child marriage was very limited in their area versus 31 per cent for girls; 23 per cent of boys perceived the problem to be more severe for girls versus 59 per cent of girls (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Responses related to child marriage in respondents' area



136. Eight respondents reported specifically that child marriage prevents girls from going to school – three of them were adolescent girls. In a previous KAP study, financial reasons appeared to be an important reason for parents to marry off their daughters.[97] In the case studies, a total of 6 respondents (out of 261) mentioned poverty as a reason.

> Some girls are given for marriage at the age of 10. Some are married to very old men; sometimes brothers mutually exchange their sisters for marriage.
> *Adult Respondent, Kandahar*

137. Boys on the other hand run the risk of being recruited into armed groups and gangs and are far more likely than girls to be engaged in unsafe migration to Iran, Pakistan and sometimes Turkey or Europe. The life-skills training and the Multipurpose Adolescent Groups (MAGs) in IALA were developed to mitigate this, among other objectives. Six respondents mentioned this risk for boys; they thought that these were boys who had not been able to find a job. Key drivers of such child recruitment were identified as poverty, destroyed school and education systems, a high rate of school dropouts and a lack of opportunities for employment. Though UNICEF often focuses on girls in terms of education support, it does not exclude boys and it can be assumed therefore that support to education and youth empowerment in general, including through adolescent groups and sports activities, is relevant to addressing this problem. UNICEF has, among others, supported an assessment on child recruitment[98] in 2019 to inform programme and policy at the national level. UNICEF is co-chair with the UN Resident Coordinator on the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting of Grave Violations, which oversees identification, verification and reporting of the Grave Violations.

138. UNICEF supports Child Protection Units within Police Recruitment Centres in all provinces in Afghanistan, where staff are trained in age assessment to prevent child recruitment. UNICEF has also contributed to advocacy for suitable policies and procedures, capacity-building and raising public awareness about child rights and protection and supported the development of a toolkit on age assessment guidelines. Nonetheless, though UNICEF can help discourage boys from enlisting with the army and other armed groups/militias, it is difficult to influence the approach of the armed forces.[99]

139. Another form of violence that boys face is *bacha bazi* (see also the context section). As this topic is very sensitive, it is hard to identify and address. This evaluation was not the right vehicle to do so and the topic did not come up in interviews. Nonetheless, it is clear from research that the practice still exists.[100] UNICEF has not included this issue in their awareness raising or other activities, and there was no evidence that others did.

Unemployment

140. Improving the socioeconomic condition of poor families is essential to solving many issues for adolescents sustainably, but directly doing so is beyond the scope and the mandate of UNICEF. Unemployment in general and for youth in particular, for instance, is not so prominently included in the UNICEF programme design. UNICEF has assessed the aspirations of youths (15–25 years of age) in relation to employment and education in a multi-country[xxv] assessment;[101] however, it is not clear if and how the results have been used in programming.

141. Unemployment was brought up by 80 respondents from all categories as a pressing need. Almost 70 per cent of them thought that it was an equal challenge for both girls and boys; 25 per cent thought it was worse for boys (highest in Ghor at 35 per cent, lowest in Bamyan at 18 per cent), and only 6 per cent found that girls suffer more (between 0 per cent in Ghor and 12 per cent in Bamyan). See Table 8.

Table 8: Number and Proportion of Respondents Giving Feedback on Youth Unemployment

	Bamyan	Ghor	Kandahar	Nangarhar	Total
Equal for Girls and Boys	71%	65%	76%	64%	69%
Worse for Girls	12%	0%	5%	8%	6%
Worse for Boys	18%	35%	19%	28%	25%
No.	**17**	**17**	**21**	**25**	**80**

142. Even well-educated youth, with training up to university level, are sitting at home without jobs. Adolescents who have missed classes due to insecurity and having had to move frequently often can no longer go back to school to continue where they left off, since they are too old. This makes them more marginalized because they have no appropriate education, no income and nothing to do. They are perceived as more likely to join armed groups or get addicted to drugs. Boys also feel more pressure, as they are seen as responsible for the household income. If girls suffer from being unemployed, most of the respondents think this is because of discrimination by employers, because many professions are not culturally acceptable for women or because parents, brothers or husbands do not allow them to work.

> Educated but unemployed boys just have to stay home, confused about what to do with their empty pockets. *Adult Respondent, Kandahar*

143. UNICEF programming in this area is limited; there is livelihood training, plus grants for girls under AWLI, and skills training under IALA but only for very small numbers of girls. Nonetheless, such livelihood training was appreciated and brought up a number of times as a contribution to resolving unemployment, especially for girls. Other options that were brought up in field interviews were school classes for young adults and providing education that allows combining work with school.

Health and Nutrition

144. The Ministry of Public Health is trying to improve access for youth to health, among others through youth health corners and a youth helpline with support from UNFPA. None of the respondents brought up the latter, though it should also be noted that the survey did not specifically ask. Twenty-two respondents brought up more structural issues in health access, such as the non-availability of a health facility in their neighbourhood or the long distance to reach it and lack of medicine, equipment and doctors. One highlighted the lack of female doctors.

> The roads are not paved, and the hospital is far away, so it is difficult to carry someone to the hospital. *Adolescent Girl, Ghor*

145. Access to health and nutrition rights and knowledge on health issues are low among adolescents. This issue concerns, for instance, family planning, antenatal care and the need for skilled birth attendance. One of the issues under adolescent health is early pregnancy, which is prevalent in Afghanistan and may lead to poor pregnancy outcomes among adolescents. Adolescent pregnancy and other issues related to access by adolescents to their health rights have not

[xxv] Project implemented in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

yet been included prominently in UNICEF interventions, even though they can be linked to child protection, education, gender and nutritional issues that require an integrated response across sectors.[102]

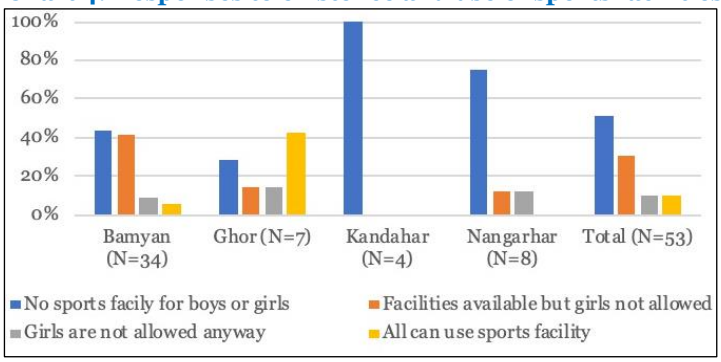
146. In the area of nutrition under WIFS, adolescent girls are provided with weekly iron folic acid supplements. In view of the high anaemia rates in this target group, this is certainly a relevant and gender-sensitive intervention, but it does not address all existing nutritional needs among adolescent girls. Moreover, as a result of the implementation through schools, OOSC are not reached. To reach OOSC with WIFS, the programme was expanded to ALC and CBE in 2019 although, a significant number of out-of-school adolescent girls are not yet reached due to difficult access. Gender-sensitive nutrition services are not available and nutrition-related issues, which probably exist also among boys, such as undernutrition, anaemia and deficiency of iodine, vitamin A and zinc, are currently not addressed.[103] Stunting, anaemia, and iodine deficiency in particular may impact pregnancy outcomes and the outcomes of the unborn child at a later stage, so adolescent girls are a relevant target group to prevent the perpetuation of the malnutrition cycle. In interviews, only a handful of people appeared aware of the WIFS programme and often did not fully understand it. Anaemia was brought up only twice.

1.1.b. Did UNICEF identify girls' and boys' adolescent aspirations in terms of their roles and capacities in the present and future, and did UNICEF incorporate these into its programming?

147. UNICEF programmes were appropriate to the context and the culture, while simultaneously trying to address adverse dynamics, most of the girls were allowed to participate in the programmes. Virtually all respondents answered positively to the question of whether UNICEF programmes were suitable for girls. Some of them would subsequently highlight different programmes as examples, with education figuring prominently, but they all found that those familiar programmes were designed in a way that catered to the roles and capacities of adolescents, notably girls.

148. UNICEF adolescent programmes were meant to induce youth-led activity and decision making to improve their own situation. Many youths reported that they have this capacity and wish to use it. One of the examples was under IALA, where UNICEF helped in establishing adolescent groups (MAGs) in Bamyan and Badghis to have youth themselves do awareness raising in the communities. In Bamyan, youth as well as adults reacted positively to these groups, acknowledging that adolescents should and indeed do utilize this right to use their voice, among others to influence decision-making at community level and to engage into the discussions about topics that affect their lives. Many of them felt sure that this had helped decrease the rate of child marriage in their community. Under AWLI, girls and women were not consulted on what sort of activities they would like to do under livelihood training, which was reflected in interviews as a missed opportunity.

Chart 4: Responses to existence and use of sports facilities



149. The questionnaires had no standard question on sports but nonetheless, it was brought up frequently by all respondents. In Kabul, Bamyan and Daikundi in 2019, UNICEF had also started sports for development activities for girls and boys. It was also in Bamyan where most respondents (34 out of 53) shared their view on the existence (or lack thereof) of sports facilities for youth. In other provinces, people had very little feedback to the question on whether a lack of sports facilities could be a challenge for adolescents. Overall, 51 per cent of respondents reported that there is no sports facility within a reasonable distance; 39 per cent

think that either there is a sports facility that girls cannot use or that girls cannot use sports facilities anyway.

150. According to many interviewees, including adolescents, there is a problem of drug abuse especially among boys, which girls are hardly or not at all confronted with. Boys often start smoking before the age of 13 and move to shisha and crystal meth later on. This often concerns jobless young boys. Some are well educated and are frustrated as they have nothing to do and cannot comply with their perceived role as household providers. Ultimately, drug users are perceived as one of the most marginalized groups and there isn't any kind of support for them. According to some respondents, those who have become parents are now perpetuating the cycle of marginalization for their children because of drug abuse.

1.2.a/b. Did UNICEF use methods to identify the differentiated needs, priorities and aspirations of adolescent boys and girls, with a focus on girls experiencing the greater exclusion or inequality? What evidence has been produced and used to inform adolescent programmes and strategy?

151. The snapshot produced by the Regional Office[104] demonstrates that youth are considerably marginalized in Afghanistan in terms of socioeconomic opportunities, governance, legal and policy environments, and equality. The snapshot produced by the Country Office[105] highlights that adolescent girls in Afghanistan suffer disproportionately, which underlines the relevance of UNICEF efforts towards comprehensive programming for youth with a focus on girls. This evaluation has also collected data from adolescent girls and boys and will thus help produce credible and diversified evidence.

152. UNICEF conducted various (joint) studies to inform adolescent programming in sectors under consideration. Preceding the 2015–2019 Country Programme, UNICEF conducted a situation analysis to ensure evidence-based programming.[106] A Mid-term review of the Country Programme[107] was conducted to update the situation of children in Afghanistan. The Mid-term review also summarized the progress and constraints towards planned results and assessed the various aspects of relevance and effectiveness. This review found the efforts of UNICEF too dispersed and suggested a stronger focus, which was done by further working along six outcome areas: Child Protection, Education, Maternal and Child Health and Polio Eradication, Nutrition, Social Inclusion and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

153. Over the years under evaluation, UNICEF conducted studies and surveys on various topics of importance for adolescent girls, such as education. A baseline was done for the Global Initiative for Out-of-School Children,[108] which assessed the barriers preventing children in Afghanistan from attending school, identified gaps in the current approaches to addressing these barriers, and provided policy recommendations to move forward. The baseline provided age disaggregated results but only looked at children up to 14 years of age. The evaluation on increasing access to basic education and gender equality[109] provided a rich body of information that was also used by the current evaluation.

154. For child marriage, useful data were taken from the situation analysis part of the National Plan against Child Marriage,[110] which also analyses the drivers of early marriage in Afghanistan and reviews the surrounding policy context. A UNICEF study[111] highlighted that one in three girls are married before their 18th birthday, and that girls are far more vulnerable to child marriage. It also found that religious leaders may be key influencers but are not the ultimate decision-makers around child marriage and that economic reasons are the key drivers for child marriage.

155. A study was done on the effects of menstruation,[112] which found that it limited access to school for half of the adolescent girls. This was linked to lack of awareness among students, teachers and parents, lack of privacy, inappropriate sanitation conditions and misconceptions about girls having to stay at home when they menstruate. Moreover, menstruation is an indicator for many families that a girl is ready to be married, which is an additional driver to keep them out of school. This is a strong evidence base to continue the MHM programme[113] but also for UNICEF to support WASH in schools (safe water and

separate toilets and hygiene facilities for boys and girls). Moreover, it highlighted the importance of UNICEF engagement in battling child marriage.

156. Under the AWLI programme, issues faced by and important for adolescent girls were identified through FGDs and dialogue with all categories of respondents, discussing topics such as child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, women's and girls' rights, and lack of access to education for girls, but also nutrition and vaccination. This information was used to work with girls, communities and service providers in community dialogues and in training with government staff, and included the provinces of Ghor and Nangarhar, where case studies were conducted.

157. Under IALA, UNICEF conducted a baseline assessment[114] and a midline assessment,[115] and there will be an end-line survey soon. The reports produced data on harmful traditional practices that adolescents in Afghanistan are exposed to, related to the objective areas of child marriage, teenage pregnancy and secondary school (re)enrolment. The midline assessment management response will demonstrate how and whether adaptations will be made to IALA. The end-line survey, if it is implemented, will compare the findings to the baseline and demonstrate to what extent IALA has been successful. Results, best practices and lessons learned from the assessed provinces could then be used to scale the programme into other provinces as well or inform the design of future adolescent-focused programmes.

158. UNICEF has used programme experience and evidence to produce fact sheets (such as "Anaemia, Causes and Prevention" and a brochure on Menstrual Hygiene Management) and press releases and publish reports, often together with government partners, which are used for awareness raising, further information dissemination and advocacy. Implementing partners and local authorities appeared often aware of such materials and were using them.

159. As described, adolescents often feel sufficiently consulted at the beginning of activities. Their opinions and perceptions had been registered in 2019 in an international survey.[116] On the other hand, there is no indication that they are actively involved in monitoring. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adolescents have the right to participate in and influence decision-making processes relevant to their lives and communities.[117] Adolescents are consulted preceding the design stage of the adolescent programmes, but their actual participation in general programme monitoring has remained limited. The monitoring approach is not very participative, and adolescents' input is not documented and used for adaptation to activities and programmes. There are no structured activities foreseen to capture adolescents' feedback and encourage them to engage in programme monitoring. On the other hand, adolescents are heard in all evaluations related to adolescent and youth, and they were the main respondent group in this evaluation.

2. Coherence

2.1.a. Are adolescent-focused programmes cohesive and mutually reinforcing in terms of programming and results? Is there a shared Theory of Change?

2.1.b. To what extent are the adolescent programmes guided by clear and relevant programme theories and programme strategies?

160. The evaluation looked at convergence (the effort of moving towards a common goal) and synergy (where interaction of two (parts of) programmes lead to a larger effect). The intended convergence and synergy between programmes at design level is clearly observed. Youth are seen as agents of change in the community, who can directly contribute to changes in all issues, as well as through influencing parents, teachers, service providers and community leaders. The programmes are based on C4D strategies, aimed to increase their knowledge and awareness, as well as empowering them through various channels.

161. Most respondents in the case study were aware of certain mutual linkages between issues influencing adolescents' health and well-being. Apart from access to relevant and adolescent-friendly information to enable informed participation and capacities for participation, empowerment and access to rights for youth are central, as they enable the influencing of all constraints and drivers. Additionally, awareness-raising of adolescents and

the adults surrounding them helps in creating an enabling environment. UNICEF has understood this well and has used it as a basis for the programme design, in particular for the adolescent programmes (AWLI and IALA) where adolescent empowerment plays an important role. Some relations are cyclic, such as between education and poverty. Parents who are not educated tend to see less importance in educating their children/girls, but when they have no education, it is also difficult to move out of poverty. Education has a central role anyhow. Ten percent of respondents from various backgrounds mentioned illiteracy as a direct or indirect driver for parents to use violence against their children and marry them off early. Moreover, if girls are not educated, there will be insufficient female health staff and female teachers, constraining them in other areas. With poor health and poor access to education, they are back to square one. UNICEF implicitly acknowledges these mutual linkages in their programme theories and addresses most of them, by tackling the sectoral barriers in health, nutrition, education and WASH, whilst at the same time working directly with adolescents in IALA and AWLI.

162. There is limited planned convergence or synergy through the sectoral programmes for results for adolescents, but since they all address one or more challenges, in the end they may have a synergetic effect on adolescent lives. Through the ToC in Figure 1, there are a number of mutually reinforcing avenues. The prevention of child marriage is expected to bring multiple benefits, which include a decrease in violence, better health and nutrition status of girls, better access to education, and ultimately decreasing poverty. Empowered girls will be able to spread awareness and convince parents, community members and husbands not to repeat this for other girls.

163. As for inter-sectoral interventions, IALA and AWLI are cross-sectoral in design, aiming to decrease child marriage and increase girls' enrolment in secondary education and protection of girls, among others. The programmes bring youth together and organizes community dialogues, facilitating young people to become agents, able to influence the quality of their own lives. Moreover, government agents are equipped with tools and skills to provide services as per adolescent rights.

164. In practice the convergence did not succeed. The implementation still goes along the parallel lines of the various sectoral ministries and this seems to be how government agencies want to continue, which was confirmed in interviews. As for sectoral programmes and CBE, apart from awareness-raising activities, these are mainly implemented within the individual sectors.

165. There are other good examples of intersectoral approaches. In general, both the Ministry of Public Health and MoE are engaged in providing adolescent girls with weekly iron and folic acid supplementation, and in MHM and WASH support. Nonetheless, opportunities for linking comprehensive nutrition with education and other sectors have been missed. There are no other nutrition-in-education activities – targeting, for instance, balanced diets – and comprehensive behaviour change communication for nutrition is not part of UNICEF interventions in Afghanistan. The capacity of service providers on comprehensive nutrition appears very low and is not addressed. Child protection is another topic that has not been visibly integrated into education packages.

166. In 50 schools (25 in Nangarhar and 25 in Paktia), UNICEF implements their girls' education with an active focus on comprehensive programming. Together with MoE and their zonal offices, the approach is used as part of school improvement planning to support girls' education. The approach is to deploy complementary actions such as hygiene (MHM), WASH infrastructure, nutrition sensitization, WIFS and awareness-raising to the same target group to strengthen the effect on girls' school attendance. This is an interesting and valuable approach, even though local stakeholders did not always understand the comprehensive nature of these interventions.

167. Korean funding has also enabled UNICEF to strive for more synergy, as it is used in various programmes with a youth component, including national policy development, girls'

education, GATE, WASH and health and nutrition/WIFS. In AWLI, for the cash grants activity, the selection targets girls (including out-of-school girls) to enrol and stay in secondary school and ALCs. Under IALA, work is conducted on "life debate", where mainly adolescents and sometimes parents talk about issues of importance in the lives of youth. The programme started with local radio in Bamyan but now reaches all over Afghanistan. Radio is a very suitable medium as it reaches all areas of Afghanistan, even Taliban-controlled areas. All programmes have a WASH component, which if correctly implemented, also covers the needs of adolescent girls. This includes decreasing their risk of school dropout.

168. At the beginning of the period under evaluation, various youth-related programmes were still housed under different sectors within the UNICEF office, e.g., under education or child protection. In 2018, the need for a stronger and more specific focus on adolescents in Afghanistan was acknowledged. The 2015–2020 Country Strategic Plan, however, did not incorporate integrated programming. It represented separated programmes with their own targets and objectives. By 2020, adolescent programmes were grouped as a separate programme area, directly under the Deputy Representative, with an appointed Specialist on Adolescents and Youth. This helped adolescent programming to gather appropriate attention and ensure that programme theories were better aligned, especially in terms of education, protection, awareness and empowerment. Nonetheless, the focus on health and nutrition for adolescents in the adolescent programme was limited (apart from MHM), whereas adolescents as a group did not receive that much emphasis under the sectoral programme. Also, a number of vulnerabilities, which include topics like child marriage, teenage pregnancy and issues affecting boys as adolescents were not yet sufficiently prominently included in and aligned between sectoral and adolescent programmes.

169. The ACO adolescent and youth strategy will be based on the UNICEF strategic framework for the second decade of a child's life with the focus areas of health and well-being, learning and skills, protection and participation and civic engagement. The work of UNICEF on adolescents in Afghanistan has so far not been reflected in a consolidated Theory of Change. To assess the coherence and synergy in adolescent-focused programming at ACO, the evaluation has reconstructed the implicit ToC that underpins the logic of interventions and intentions of the different workstreams of UNICEF around this population group in Afghanistan. The ToC, which is represented in Figure 1 is built on the reconstructed ToC of the IALA project as presented in the 2019 Mid-term evaluation, the AWLI project document, the 2015–2019 UNICEF CP and its Mid-term Evaluation (2017), and the global UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

170. The following elements of each document have been considered to recreate the building blocks of the ToC causal chain:

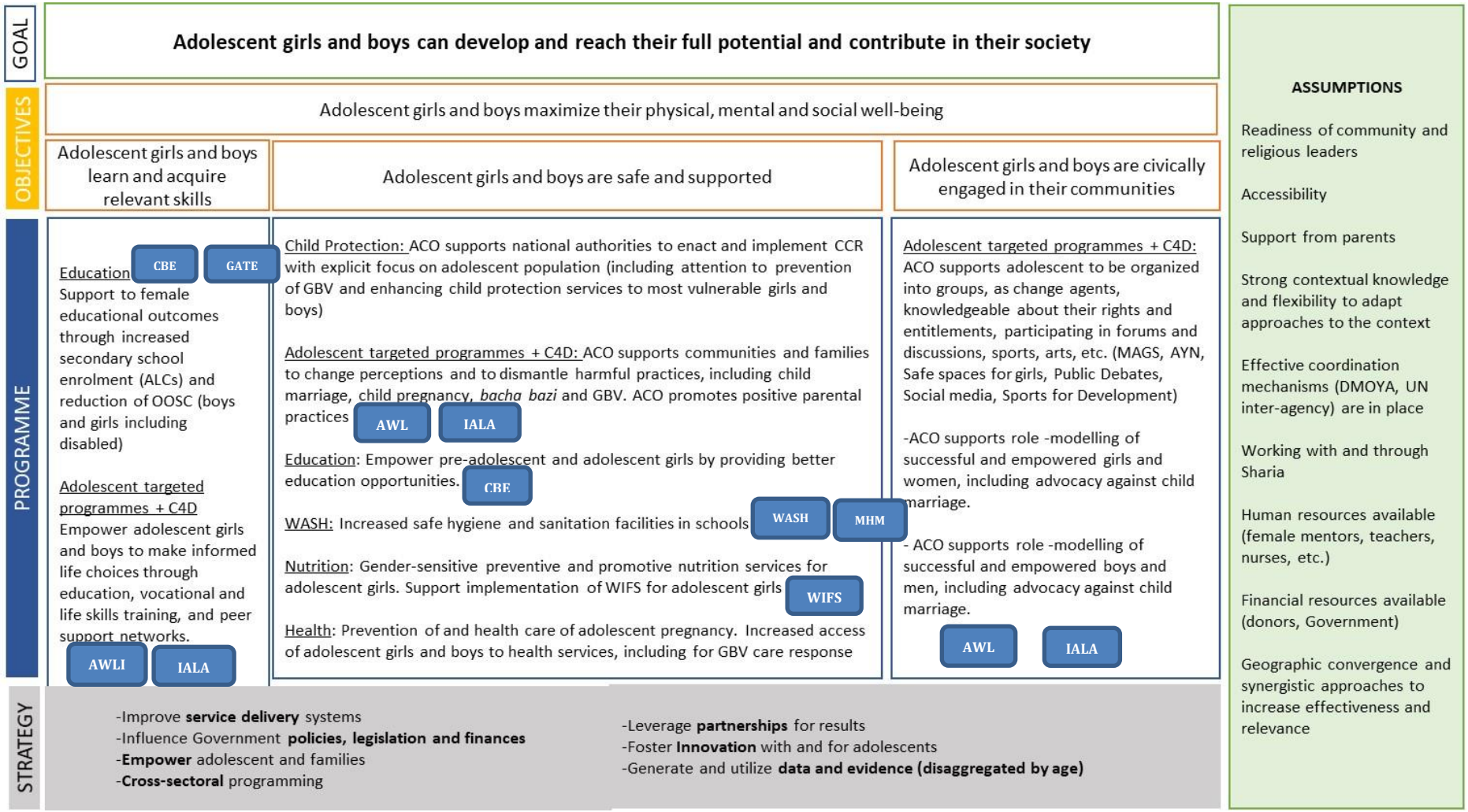
⇒ IALA-reconstructed ToC
⇒ AWLI goals, objectives and strategies[118]
⇒ UNICEF CP and 2017 Mid-term Evaluation
⇒ UNICEF Global Strategic Plan 2018–2021: Adolescents are considered an emerging potential and UNICEF will build on its cross-cutting advocacy and programme work for adolescents, focusing on greater attention to educational and skills training within a paradigm of adolescent social, political and economic empowerment.
⇒ To ensure the forward-looking perspective and with the aim of informing any future adolescent strategic and programmatic decisions, the proposed reconstructed ToC also considers more recent programming and strategic document most of which were developed after the time scope of this evaluation. These include: Programme Strategy Notes (PSN) of Nutrition, Child Protection, Gender, Education, Health and WASH, the Gender Strategy 2019-2021 of UNICEF Afghanistan and the UNICEF corporate Programme Guidance for the Second Decade (2018).

171. As per **Error! Reference source not found.**, programme theories and strategies are well aligned and work synergistically towards the that adolescent girls and boys can develop

and reach their full potential and contribute positively to their societies.[xxvi] This evaluation does not attempt to generate a full-fledged Theory of Change for adolescent work in Afghanistan, which should be a collective effort with inputs from all different ACO sectors to ensure the appropriate synergetic work across the board. Nonetheless, the next session is a first attempt to lay out the building blocks and emerging assumptions that this evaluation considers as constituting the implicit Theory of Change underpinning the adolescent-focused work of UNICEF in Afghanistan.

[xxvi] This is the overall goal established in the 2018 UNICEF Programme Guidance for Second decade that the evaluation team considers adapted to the changes sought for adolescent population in Afghanistan

Figure 1. ToC on UNICEF Adolescent Programme – Schematic Re-construction



2.1.c. Are programme theories, both strategies and results, coherent with the UNICEF Strategic Plan?

172. Based on the analysis of the ToC in Figure 1, the evaluation found the programme theories and results to be reasonably coherent with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021, but some gaps were also observed. The programmes for adolescents are a prominent part of the country programme and they focus on the "crucial second decade" under the life cycle approach. The five goals of the strategy[xxvii] are reflected in the various adolescent programmes and in sectoral programmes there are always two or more of the goals included. The Strategic Plan also highlights the fact that adolescent girls are more illiterate than boys, hence investing in girls' education in Afghanistan is appropriate. The effort to address violence against women and girls is aligned with the strategy. The adolescent programmes also honour the requirement in humanitarian action to focus on community engagement and accountability to affected people, also through adolescent platforms. Moreover, as per the strategy, the majority of the work is aimed at addressing barriers faced by adolescent girls in order to help achieve gender equality.

173. In nutrition, the country programme does not encompass the broad approach of the strategy; there are few or no activities to address stunting in adolescents. Also, even if the designs are aimed at the most disadvantaged children, the Strategic Plan also highlights the plight of youth living with disabilities, which has not been prominently included in the adolescent programmes. Lastly, United Nations interagency collaboration on adolescent health and gender equality, in this case for adolescent girls, is still weak.

2.1.d. Did programming and the ToC integrate gender and take into account the Gender Action Plan?

174. The UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2018–2021[119] describes how UNICEF intends to promote gender equality across its work and sets out corporate programmatic results to accelerate gender programming and achieve gender-equitable results at scale. These results are echoed in the Gender Toolkit by the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA).[120] The UNICEF Afghanistan Gender Strategy (2019–2021)[121] is based on UNICEF's global Gender Action Plan II (2018–2021) and is a roadmap for achieving gender equality results in programming. It has the following objectives: (1) to strengthen integration of gender equality issues across UNICEF ACO programme areas; (2) to enable/empower all staff and implementing partners to take on the responsibility of mainstreaming gender concerns in their work; and (3) to create an enabling environment for promoting gender equality. In the adolescent programming, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are identified as a guiding principle. By tackling the various barriers that adolescent girls face, gender equality becomes more likely. At the same time, a conducive environment is created by engaging adolescent boys, parents and communities. It should also be noted though that attention to specific problems faced by boys, such as unsafe migration and *bacha bazi*, is less prominently included. Finally, UNICEF commits to mainstreaming gender across their work also guarding the gender balance among their own staff and implementing partners.

175. The strategy also provides approaches to achieve gender equality over the remaining period of the current Country Programme: (1) ensure gender-responsive design and implementation of key programmes; (2) target gender priorities on empowering adolescent girls and women; (3) build institutional capacity on gender within UNICEF and that of partners; (4) reinforce institutional results on gender equality; and (5) position UNICEF as a strong gender-responsive organization within the national development and humanitarian context. This is done following the key actions in each strategic area and a Gender Action Plan 2019–2021, which includes outputs, corresponding interventions, indicators, time frames and responsibility in the areas of design, institutional capacity, institutional results

[xxvii] Every child lives and thrives, every child learns, every child is protected from violence and exploitation, every child lives in a safe and clean environment, and every child has an equitable chance in life.

and institutional mechanisms. The aim and approaches of the work of UNICEF for adolescents are fully aligned with the gender strategy and action plan.

176. The Gender Action Plan of UNICEF Afghanistan has the following outputs (partly echoing the global plan):

- Ensure gender-responsive design and implementation of key programmes which has been addressed by striving to identify key gender specific issues for adolescents and include them into the adolescent programmes.
- Build institutional capacity on gender within UNICEF and of partners which was done by building the capacity of partners to work in the adolescent programmes with boys and girls and address their specific issues.
- Reinforce institutional results on gender equality. This output has been addressed in a limited way in relation to programming for adolescents, by drawing attention to gender differences and needs and how to include these in programming
- Strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender equality. This relates to the Gender Task Force and recruiting female staff; the latter was done in relation to adolescent programming.

2.2.a. Are UNICEF interventions on adolescents complementary to other stakeholders' priorities and approaches (including policies and action plans)?

177. UNICEF works with various government bodies at capital and provincial levels to implement their adolescent programme. To better serve the hard-to-reach group of out-of-school girls, UNICEF works with the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Women's Affairs. For education, including CBE, UNICEF works with MoE. All activities are explicitly aligned with the priorities, strategies and policies of the Government of Afghanistan.

178. The CBE programme is aligned with national education policies and meets the existing need for community-based responses to education under the pillars of access, teacher capacity, community mobilization and government capacity. Nonetheless, the government still treats CBE as a temporary measure parallel to formal education in terms of human and financial resources, even if it is included in the revised CBE policy and the NESP III as a potentially permanent tool, which remains a challenge.

179. The work of UNICEF on girl's education takes place in all provinces at a more practical level, but there is also strong engagement at the national policy level, notably on strategy and policy on girls' education, including budget and action plan. MoE has finalized the education policy for girls in collaboration with UNICEF. The policy identifies poverty, tradition and insecurity as barriers for girls. UNICEF acknowledges that a policy for women's education is beneficial, assuming that the government pays more attention to facilitate education methods for girls. One of the steps taken by MoE was to increase the number of teachers in female schools, attracting them with higher salaries and the possibility of taking their family along with them to their duty stations, which is aligned with the GATE programme.

180. The work on child protection is aligned with the Child Act and corresponding national child protection policy and strategy. Coordination on child protection (which also includes harassment in schools) was perceived as weak by implementing partners and some local government staff. There is no comprehensive package of services available for adolescents. The locations for various forms of support are different, and comprehensive support and referral is not well regulated, for instance between health, education and police. The police do not have a special unit to follow this up.

181. DMoYA has the mandate for working with young people, but in practice UNICEF actions are mainly channelled through the sectoral line ministries (such as Education, Health and Social Affairs). In fact, coordination and cooperation with DMoYA is very limited, notwithstanding the fact that this ministry is responsible for implementing the Youth Policy. In the adolescent programme, UNICEF entirely aligns with the aim of the Youth Policy to

meet the needs of youth systematically through an inclusive approach, though the definition of age brackets is different. Nonetheless, in content, the policy is relevant.

182. The Afghan National Youth Strategy is meant to complement and reinforce the Afghanistan National Youth Policy by deepening the focus on youth across all areas of work. It aims to educate and equip young people with productive and employable skills for economic, political and social empowerment. The strategy provides direction for youth, increased employment, and active civic engagement in decision-making bodies and processes at provincial and national levels. The engagement of UNICEF in youth employment is not yet very strong, its approach is seen as less aligned to this strategy.

183. To implement the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, DMoYA and the MoWA, supported by UNFPA, UNICEF, United Nations sister agencies and others, adopted a 2017–2021 National Action Plan to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage. This action plan is very important for UNICEF, in its efforts to prioritize the fight against child marriage. The plan outlines five lines of intervention: (1) empowering girls with information, skills, service provision and support networks; (2) educating and mobilizing parents and community members; (3) enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; (4) offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and (5) fostering an enabling legal and policy framework. UNICEF has developed activities in all of the five areas. In general, design and priorities are aligned, but there is very little concrete coordination or cooperation with other United Nations agencies. Other United Nations agencies are not included as partners in the adolescent programmes and UNFPA reflected an interest but also said that cooperation was limited.

184. The work of UNICEF is obviously aligned with the Law on Protection of Child Rights, which reflects its core values. UNICEF supports the government in complying with their obligations to ensure child rights; provide children with quality health and education services and protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation; determine the responsibilities of parents; and accept the fundamental role of the child in building a society. The law is meant for children under 18, which is a large portion of the UNICEF adolescent target group.

185. Overall, whereas UNICEF tries to present their adolescent programme in an integrated manner to donors whenever possible, programmes are not always shared in such a manner with the ministries. Targets and objectives are mostly negotiated with the line ministries separately. The Ministry of Public Health covers health and nutrition for adolescents, but also the health aspects of child marriage, so this comprises a sub-selection of topics for adolescents. Since a number of the programmes go through schools, MoE is also responsible for a number of interventions. Nonetheless, the cooperation between ministries seems limited. Working on a sectoral topic is easier, since the ministries themselves focus their work on a specific area, and coordination mechanisms across them, including for youth, are weak or lacking.

2.2.b Does UNICEF participate actively in existing coordination mechanisms that address youth/adolescent challenges? To what extent does UNICEF contribute to the definition of priority actions to reduce the root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerability?

186. There used to be a Youth Task Force for AWLI and IALA in Herat, Ghor, Farah, Samangan, and Nangarhar in four districts per province, which has been replaced by the new and less project-focused "Adolescent and Youth Task Force" in April 2020, as per the UNICEF Afghanistan Annual Management Plan 2020. The task force presents a forum for discussions between stakeholders engaged in education, child protection, WASH, health, communication, advocacy, gender and communication. It allows addressing issues related not only to IALA and AWLI, but more broadly on adolescents with a focus on girls across all sectors.

187. Youth steering networks were planned to be established by the government in 2017 (one at central level, two per province) to work with various stakeholders engaged in

programming for youth. The steering group at central level did not materialize, but the groups at province level, who are supposed to meet each month, do meet regularly, at least quarterly. They share information, including progress and challenges under programmes and projects working for youth. One of the NGO staff in Kabul knew about this mechanism, but none of the government or NGO staff at province level was aware of this mechanism or could highlight any outcome. In KIIs, hardly any respondent was able to describe a local coordination mechanism.

188. For CBE, multisectoral programming is done regarding education, nutrition/WIFS and WASH, but other sectors are not included. The 2019 evaluation also noted that UNICEF must depend more strongly on multisectoral collaboration to leverage more resources and that strategic coordination and cross-sectoral communication was not yet sufficiently in place. In general, engagement with various ministries and other stakeholders has been outlined in the various Programme Strategy Notes (2019–2021) In practice the coordination and cooperation with international actors and United Nations agencies is weak, and the engagement at government level is mostly with the main sectoral ministry.

189. As for youth unemployment, which was identified by respondents in the provinces as one of the main challenges, the regularly held Youth Unemployment Executive Meeting could be an interesting platform. In this platform, government agencies and organizations working on youth employment, including UNFPA, get together on a regular basis. Regarding defining priorities, UNICEF helps to put child marriage in the spotlight by clearly communicating its importance and addressing the topic from multiple angles.

190. In 2019, UNICEF started the sports for development project, which was innovative in Afghanistan, especially for girls. Under this project, UNICEF provided sports materials and equipment, for instance in Badghis, and World Vision International facilitated tournaments in football and volleyball. As reflected also under Relevance, sports is perceived as important by youth and others, and, girls' participation in sports is especially seen as a challenge, which is important to address.

2.2.c. Is UNICEF working through strategic partnerships?

191. Some strategic partnerships are worth mentioning. As part of United Nations coordination on monitoring violence against children, UNICEF supports monitoring and reporting mechanisms related to children affected by armed conflict, and data are provided by other United Nations agencies. By 2018, the UNICEF-supported Child Protection Action Network (CPAN) 122, consisting of community-based child protection structures to assess and address the needs of children, an important contingent being adolescents, was active in 34 provinces.[123]

192. Furthermore, the joint programme of UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP under the planned Spotlight Initiative for Central Asia and Afghanistan, with the objective of improving the lives of millions of women and girls, and through them, of families and communities, is a good example of strategic UN interagency engagement related to youth, including on ending child marriage. However, the intervention has not started yet, and the evaluation was not able to assess it.

193. In general, the coordination on youth programming within the United Nations is perceived as weak by some government partners and other United Nations agencies. In 2015, an Interagency Network for Youth Development was established, with the aim of meeting on a quarterly basis. There had been no meeting in 2019 and only in February 2020 was there a meeting. There is no indication of a strong revival and the network therefore does not seem very active and operational. The government also indicated this weakness and suggested that coordinated United Nations support could help system strengthening, but at the same time admitted that the government is currently too weak to lead this due to limited capacity and resources.

194. UNFPA had assumed the lead role in working with youth and adolescents in 2015 and is assumed to be further ahead than UNICEF in their mainstreaming of work with youth and

adolescents. The coordination and cooperation of UNICEF with UNFPA is perceived as still weak, and the participation of UNICEF in coordination platforms and meetings is limited. Since late 2019, UNICEF has been working with UNFPA, UN Women and UNDP on developing and implementing an intervention for the EU Spotlight Initiative. The intervention will probably have a duration of three years, starting in Dec 2020.

195. In education, while supporting CBE, UNICEF provides a relevant comparative advantage through its coordinating role in supporting MoE, PED and DED as opposed to direct implementation. The work in upstream policy is also acknowledged by others in that sense.[124] As for health, in the Adolescent Health Strategy there are no services specific to adolescents, even though this is seen as important. The evaluation could not find evidence of UNICEF being active in coordination on this topic with UNFPA or others.

2.2.d. To what extent does UNICEF have and use a comparative advantage in addressing the root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerabilities? Are there opportunities missed?

196. UNICEF uses their engagement with children, for which they are well known in Afghanistan and beyond, to mainstream approaches such as access to education and WASH. Also, at regional and international level, UNICEF is engaged in regional cooperation and coordination in various areas, for instance through global campaigns on End Violence, Children Uprooted and CRC@30, which provided opportunities to focus the attention on Afghanistan's children. UNICEF also has youth ambassadors in various countries; Hinna Asefi Wardak as youth ambassador in Afghanistan advocated for "*Afghanistan as a country where all the children are in school and learning, their rights are respected, they enjoy their childhood and are always supported by their elders*".

197. UNICEF is the agency with the strongest focus on children within the United Nations family, and is therefore the most suitable agency to also have a strong focus on adolescents. Nonetheless, UNFPA is perceived as the lead agency in this area. Due to a lack of strong coordination with other United Nations agencies, however, there is no clear task distribution, mutual strengthening or exploitation of comparative advantages between the agencies.

198. The sectoral programmes have been implemented on the ground for a long time and have given UNICEF the opportunity to build strong relationships with various governmental and non-governmental partners and to build up an in-depth understanding of the context, the situation of youth and the way things work for them in the various sectors. This has helped UNICEF to design and implement their specific adolescent programmes in a good way, building forward on what was already there in the provinces and on their existing participation in mechanisms at the capital level and their engagement with ministries.

199. Especially at subnational levels, UNICEF has sub-offices which help to take activities and engagement forward under close supervision and with the presence of local staff and at the same time allow sufficient flexibility to ensure maximum participation by others – obviously adolescents themselves, local government actors that UNICEF has already worked with, civil society, adults and communities.

3. Effectiveness

3.1. Have activities been conducted as planned in the programmes (IALA, AWLI and CBE) and other sector-specific programmes (child protection, education, health)?

200. The following section will focus on IALA, AWLI and CBE, programmes designed to specifically target the adolescent population. For the activity level of other sector programmes (child protection, education, WASH, nutrition and health) relevant to the adolescent population, the findings of the evaluation are presented together with question 3.3 below.

201. Section A describes the different goals, approaches and expected results of the UNICEF IALA, AWLI and Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality (referred to as CBE) programmes. These programmes are specifically designed to target adolescents, with a

strong focus on adolescent girls. All three programmes have made considerable progress in implementing activities as planned, summarized in Table 9. A more detailed outline of progress against planned activities and results can be found in Annex 16.

Table 9: Progress Against Planned Activities for Programmes That Specifically Target Adolescents

	Progress against Plan	Description
IALA [xxviii]	Almost all activities have already either been completed or are on target to be completed by the end of the project	Targets for the following activities were all reached or exceeded by the end of 2019. - establishment of MAGs (176 MAGs established with 708 Sub-committees in place) - developing and delivering life skills training (1 life-skills training delivered to 77 master trainers, trainers and Community mobilizers and 3,520 adolescents (53% female)) - developing and airing a radio soap opera (890 scenes of New Home New Life Drama (445 in Dari and 445 in Pashto) and 26 programmes (13 in Dari/ 13 in Pashto) of Radio Educational Feature Programs; 36,000 Education messages) - providing creative self-expression opportunities to adolescents (training on self-expression delivered to 5 trainers, 53 trainers and Community mobilizers (38 Female); 3,582 adolescents (52% female)) - conducting a short story–writing competition (2) - facilitating sports for development activities (52,334 OOSC, ALC students and Government school students (36% female) and 176 schools reached) - live radio debates (161 participants (49% female); 2,000 CDs with radio debates distributed and 8 live debates aired through local radio) - mentoring religious leaders on child rights in Islam (166 Follow up visits with religious leaders, 1 ToT to 54 community members (41 female) and other 1,375 community members trained (23% female) - conducting community discussions (55 (42% female) master trainers and Community Mobilizers received ToT; 35,970(51 female) community members participated in community discussions. Modifications to the work plan included removing the activity to produce CDs of the radio production (since use of CDs is limited); and mentoring sessions with influential leaders on specific topics, which was merged with other mentoring sessions with the same target group.
AWLI [xxix]	A number of activities are already completed. Most of the activities planned have made progress, but some are unlikely to achieve target results due to challenges and delays.	Activities already completed include: - training facilitators (2,355 religious' leaders, 85 female religious scholars, 157 facilitators, 209 AWLI project staff and community officers trained, 197 change agents (50% female) participated in advocacy workshops)) - conducting FGDs (905 participants, 407 of which female) participated in 20 FGD; 1,832 community dialogues with 29,849 (50% female) participants in 20 districts) - organizing Reflect Circles (200 Reflect Circles formed in 20 districts, 428 RC quarterly meetings conducted with 13,493 (50% female) participants. - agreeing on a modality for cash grants - developing training on adolescent well-being and health (1 training package developed) - establishing safe spaces and networks for adolescent girls (5 safe space centres) - conducting secondary analysis and filling data gaps - monitoring progress - documenting lessons learned and good practice Ongoing activities (some are subject to delays and limitations) include:

[xxviii] Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan (IALA) Final Progress Report
[xxix] AWLI Half- Yearly Progress Report (15 November 2019- 15 May 2020)

		- conducting dialogues with communities - establishing mini-media clubs in boys' and girls' schools - printing and distributing communication materials - providing cash grants to beneficiaries - providing livelihood training for adolescent girls
CBE [xxx]	Almost all activities have exceeded their target results	Targets for the following activities were all **exceeded** by the end of 2019: - establishment of new community-based schools and accelerated learning centres (7,965 new CBS and ALC classes established) - enrolment of students (171,215 students) - distribution of textbooks and teaching and learning material kits (455,691 textbooks distributed; CBE student kits reached 241,050 students in 2017 and 245,475 students in 2018) - payment of teacher salaries (6,664 CBE teachers recruited and paid) - training of community members (1,724 community members trained) - capacity building for government staff (247 stakeholders from various categories reported trained in 2018) - development of policies/strategies (Revised CBE Policy and Girls Education Policy) - conducting of relevant research (Study on OOSC) The number of teachers and academic supervisors trained on formative learning assessments was slightly lower than planned for the end of 2019 (7,889 teachers trained on INSET; 4,105 CBE teachers and 955 academic supervisors trained on formative learning assessment)

202. The IALA and CBE programmes appear to have made more progress in implementing activities than the AWLI programme. This is to be expected due to the later end date of the AWLI programme (scheduled for 31 December 2020). One significant element of the AWLI programme is the provision of cash transfers. This component was delayed due to the need to conduct mapping and listing of beneficiaries. Furthermore, a redesign of the monitoring approach had to be done, in order to track and measure any correlation between increases in secondary enrolment rates of adolescent girls and changing social behaviour towards child marriage.[125] Cash disbursements will be implemented in October 2020, with a summative evaluation exercise to follow starting in December 2020.[126] This timetable is subject to further delays as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. So are other activities that involve community participation, such as community dialogues and mini-media clubs (see also question 3.5 on internal and external factors that have hindered the attainment of results and timeliness considerations under the efficiency section).

3.2.a. Have programme outputs and outcomes set in programmes (IALA, AWLI, CBE) been met?

203. Given the broad scope of the evaluation, covering multiple programmes and sectors, the evaluation team relied primarily on secondary data and results from adolescent- focused programme evaluations, studies and research to determine whether outputs and outcomes for adolescents had been met. The team found inconsistency in the use of terms to structure levels of performance such as outputs, outcomes, results and objectives. The evaluation has attempted to align levels of performance to the suggested building blocks of a ToC underpinning all of ACO adolescent-related interventions presented in Figure 1 but notes the limitations of the contribution analysis as indicated in paragraph 97.

204. The attainment of expected results was clearest in the case of programmes specifically targeting adolescent girls and boys, namely the IALA, AWLI and CBE programmes. For other programmes, it was only possible to analyse progress against target outputs/ outcomes where other reviews and evaluations had already taken place (further details under question 3.3). Community-level interviews were used to supplement the

[xxx] 2019 Midterm Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme (Afghanistan) (2015-2019), KonTerra.

documentation of programmes and provided anecdotal evidence of progress towards intended results from the perspective of an overall ToC as proposed in Figure 1.

205. The IALA programme has three key target outcomes: (1) reduce the prevalence of child marriage; (2) reduce secondary school dropout rates; and (3) reduce adolescent pregnancy. The programme also intends to promote more healthy and creative lifestyles for adolescent girls through the provision of life skills and safe spaces for young people to discuss topics related to their own well-being and overall empowerment. There is evidence within the programme of some progress towards its target outcomes, reported in the midline evaluation of the IALA programme in 2019,[127] which found that:

- The programme had so far been successful in improving adolescent education levels, with between 7- 9 per cent more adolescents engaged in the programme enrolled in formal education compared with the comparison sample.
- The incidence of child marriage had reduced as a result of the programme, but it was minimal and not statistically significant.
- In contrast, adolescent pregnancy was higher in the areas of intervention, though this may be due to the small sample used for observations.

206. While the IALA programme midline evaluation did not find significant evidence of increased knowledge of healthy behaviours and empowerment, interviews with adolescents and adults did indicate a degree of progress in this area (see Box 1).

Box 1: Promoting More Healthy and Creative Lifestyles for Adolescent Girls Through the IALA Programme

Interviews conducted with adolescents for this evaluation in Bamyan Province, where the IALA programme is operational, revealed positive results in a number of areas. Adolescent girls listed a series of benefits from their participation in the programme, notably increased awareness of the importance of education, literacy in particular; a better understanding of personal hygiene measures, including handwashing; and an appreciation of child rights, in particular around child marriage and violence. One of the most frequently mentioned benefits of the programme was increased self-confidence among adolescent girls.

207. At the output level, the AWLI programme aims to: 1) Change perceptions on the acceptability of child marriage and mobilize communities to delay marriage by raising awareness of adolescent girls' rights, the laws in place to protect them, the negative consequences of child marriage, and the importance of educating girls; 2) Empower adolescent girls to make informed life choices through education, vocational and life- skills training, and peer support networks; and 3) Map and document the status of adolescent girls in Afghanistan.[128]

208. A baseline study to establish the starting point against a series of key output-level indicators found that levels of awareness of child marriage among Shura members was already higher (84 per cent) than the initial target set (60 per cent). The proportion of Shuras that demonstrated an awareness of legislation protecting children and adolescents against early marriage was also high – 60 per cent compared with a target of 50 per cent. While the percentage of tribal elders and religious leaders who find child marriage acceptable was higher than expected (16 per cent compared with a target of 10 per cent), the percentage of families who find child marriage acceptable was significantly lower than the target (22 per cent against a target of 50 per cent).[129] Data is yet to be collected and analysed on the percentage of adolescent girls attending school (the target is 60 per cent) and those who state that life skills and livelihood sessions have improved their lives (target of 25 per cent). Similarly, data on increased knowledge within the government on the detrimental effects of child marriage is still pending. As such, it is too early to conclusively say what the effects of the AWLI programme have been. However, anecdotal evidence collected as part of this evaluation suggest several important initial benefits from the programme (

209. Box **2**). A number of respondents reported that child marriage had decreased in their area, and the majority of them noted simultaneously the influence of UNICEF interventions.

Box 2: Changing Perceptions on the Rights of Adolescent Girls through the AWLI Programme

Interviews with communities, particularly young people, in Nangahar Province revealed that the AWLI programme has already catalysed positive change. Youth networks have been important catalysts for stimulating dialogue within communities on important topics, including child marriage and the importance of education. Unfortunately, while perceptions on the rights of adolescent girls had begun to change for the better, a number of interviewees pointed to the lack of education and employment opportunities in their region, as well as overall poverty in the area, which prevented young people, particularly adolescent girls, from making more empowered life choices (see also the unemployment section under Relevance).

210. The UNICEF CBE Programme[xxxi] aims to achieve the following results at the output/outcome level: (1) increased access to primary education for out-of-school children in remote communities; (2) increased capacity of community-based teachers in CBSs; (3) increased awareness of communities and community leaders on the important of education and their responsibilities regarding CBE; and (4) increased government capacity to deliver education services to OOSC.

211. A Midterm evaluation of the programme in 2019 found that the programme had exceeded its targets in a number of key areas, several of which are critical for adolescent beneficiaries and adolescent girls in particular.[130] For example, at the time of the evaluation, 26 per cent more CBEs had been established than originally anticipated, accommodating 55 per cent more students than planned. ALCs accounted for around 25 per cent of all CBEs, allowing older students between 10 and 15 years of age (53 per cent of which were female) to complete the primary school cycle in three instead of six years. Overall, the evaluation found that the demand for CBE was such that the programme needed to focus "less on seeking to create demand, and more on seeking to meet demand". Dropout rates were high, however, with nearly one-third of students failing to complete the cohort; and higher still in the case of ALCs, where 42 per cent of students dropped out before the end of the school cycle. High dropout rates were thought to be driven primarily by insecurity, migration and early marriage respectively, in the five provinces that were sampled for the evaluation.

212. The evaluation did not find any evidence of unintended effects under any of the CBE programme interventions.

Box 3: Empowering Adolescents through the Adolescent and Youth Network

Interviews with members of the Adolescent and Youth Network illustrated the capacity of the AYN to promote self-confidence and empowerment of adolescent boys and girls to engage and overcome cultural barriers for adolescent development. For example, AYN ambassadors reach out to other adolescents, intervene in the communities, sensitize families and authorities on matters that are of interest to the youth (need to be heard by elders, employment, prevention of child marriage, sports, prevention of the use of drugs, etc.) and help other adolescents to organize themselves, plan sports events, festivals, and other artistic and intellectual activities (handicraft, poetry, debates, photography, etc.). Through the AYN ambassadors' action, other adolescents access adolescent leaders as role models on how to channel their energy constructively towards the realisation of their aspirations, for example, in the case of many girls, by engaging in sports activities, thereby transforming the usual initial rejection by families and communities. The AYN ambassadors also had the chance to travel to international youth gatherings. These were reported as life-changing experiences with a significant impact on their self- confidence, a tremendous expansion of their views and perspectives on the possibilities for their own development, and reinforced engagement to work for the development and empowerment of Afghan adolescents. The AYN was also highly engaged in the celebration events of the 30th Convention of the Rights of the Child.

[xxxi] Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality.

3.2.b. What gender specific results were obtained (based on the UNICEF ROSA Gender Toolkit)?

213. The linkages between the UNICEF GAP and the ROSA Gender Toolkit have been described under question 2.1.d (Coherence). The toolkit includes integrated gender results embedded across the UNICEF programming sectors, as well as five targeted gender results that focus specifically on the empowerment and well-being of adolescent girls. Results were then contextualized within the UNICEF Afghanistan Gender Strategy 2019–2021 and focus on: girls' education, child marriage, adolescent girls' health and nutrition, MHM, violence against women and girls in emergencies, and investment in approaches that promote women's agency in maternal and neonatal health, rural water supply and sanitation.[131]

214. The response to question 3.2.b already lists many of the gender-specific results that have been achieved in these areas, particularly in terms of girls' education, child marriage and MHM. The UNICEF ROSA Gender Toolkit provides guidance on reporting on gender results with examples of how to grade results across a spectrum from "good" to "best results". Given the number of adolescents reached through the IALA and CBE programmes in particular and the significance of the impact of the programmes on the lives of adolescent girls, many of the results could be classified as "best results". One of the most important results generated by the IALA programme, as well as the AWLI programme (albeit at an earlier stage of programme implementation), but one that is difficult to quantify or to rate, is empowerment and well-being for adolescent girls (see Box).

Box 4: Empowerment and Well-being for Adolescent Girls

A number of girls that had participated in the IALA programme and, to a lesser extent, the AWLI programme talked about the "*courage*" they had gained through taking part in activities, often through participation in group discussions and involvement in sports. This sense of empowerment had allowed them to talk to their families and community members about important issues in their own lives – such as continuing their education or delaying marriage until adulthood. In a number of cases it appeared to broaden their horizons beyond the scope of UNICEF-provided support, allowing them to envisage a more positive future in which they as women could be more ambitious about their role within the community (e.g. as members of councils), their work prospects and their right to choose their own life partner. Through the Sports for Development initiative addressed at adolescent girls, key informants reported on the transformative experience of newly engaging in softball competition, overcoming barriers and experiencing a sense of liberation that came through the act of competition, the focus on trainings, teamwork and playing matches. These created a safe space for them to evade the daily highly restrictive social norms (clothes, movements, exposure, etc.) allowing them to experience and see themselves from a different perspective. Key informants also reported on the huge gratification of achieving something for themselves which contributed very importantly to building of self-confidence.

Similarly, the Midterm evaluation of the CBE programme of UNICEF Afghanistan found high levels of empowerment among adolescents attending ALCs (boys and girls).[132] Within a survey conducted during the evaluation, 85 per cent of ALC attendees interviewed said that being able to attend a CBS had significantly increased their sense of empowerment.[133]

3.3. Have outputs and outcomes in other sectors (Child Protection, Education, Health) been met?

215. Activities conducted within programmes under other sectors are generally not specifically targeted at adolescent girls and boys. Nor are output- and outcome-level targets and results designed in such a way as to enable an analysis of how adolescents have benefited from activities. Adolescents are not isolated as a distinct beneficiary group within programme design or as part of regular monitoring and reporting. However, based on available data,[134] the evaluation team did manage to extract the following information for activities and outputs benefitting adolescents:

- **Nutrition** – UNICEF activities focused on improving the nutritional status of adolescent girls in Afghanistan through the distribution of iron and folic acid tablets in collaboration with MoPH and MoE. UNICEF also built the capacity of school personnel to educate

adolescents about anaemia prevention and control and to provide information and counselling support services directly to adolescent girls. End-of-year reporting for 2019 indicated that UNICEF had reached over 8.6 million children and adolescents with nutritional services that year, including over 1.1 million adolescent girls (85 per cent of those targeted) with WIFS.[135] This is slightly lower than but similar to the numbers reached in 2018 (1.2 million), suggesting a steady approach and consistency between years.[136] Third- party monitoring of the WIFS project in 2018 did however point to questions about compliance with taking supplements: 76 per cent of girls reported that they took their supplements weekly, decreasing considerably when not in school.[137] Preparations to extend weekly iron and folic acid supplementation distribution to adolescent girls attending accelerated learning centres in 2020 under the UNICEF CBE programme also began in 2019, including training of ALC teachers.[xxxii] Technical support and capacity-building activities with the MoPH and MoE such as upgrading the Government WIFS database and WIFS supply chain management – were well underway by the end of 2019.

- **WASH** – Within its WASH portfolio, UNICEF works with communities and schools to ensure adequate information on and appropriate facilities for menstrual hygiene for adolescent and pre-adolescent girls. During 2019, UNICEF fully achieved targets set for MHM (RAM 2019) and reported that it had built the capacity of over 0.3 million girls on menstrual health management through 839 trained teachers. MHM materials were distributed to target schools and provinces as part of a national rollout of MHM. Furthermore, segregated sanitary toilets, handwashing facilities and safe drinking water were provided to 43 schools in 11 provinces (benefitting almost 85,000 students). Plans were put in place to improve WASH in 92 ALCs and a further 50 schools through hygiene promotion and maintenance of WASH facilities (training of teachers and School Management Shura members). Through the WASH Improvement Planning Initiative, students accessed sanitary toilets and handwashing facilities in 135 schools out of 150 planned (Results Assessment Module (RAM) 2019). UNICEF also supported national awareness raising on MHM through its support of Girls' Hygiene Day in Afghanistan in 2019.[138] This is a significant step up from 2018 when MHM guidelines and information materials were under development, including teachers' guidelines, a speaking book and a comic book. Six schools and five health centres (out of a target 25) were provided with basic drinking water, sanitation, and handwashing facilities.[139]
- **Child Protection** – The UNICEF Afghanistan child protection programmes focus on protecting vulnerable girls and boys from violence, abuse and exploitation through strengthened institutional and legislative frameworks and improved child protection services and systems. The nature of the work is predominantly normative, for example, the adoption of the Law on Protection of Child Rights in 2019[140] – making it difficult to isolate adolescents as a target group. However, community-level activities to change behaviour and eliminate harmful social and cultural practices (such as IALA and AWLI programmes) came under the auspices of Child Protection until 2015, when the oversight and management was passed to the Education Section. Other work, such as the UNICEF leadership for child protection in emergencies through the Child Protection sub-cluster, and its leadership (with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)) of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in Afghanistan indirectly targeted adolescents alongside other children affected by armed conflict, displacement and unsafe migration. Other work on child protection, beyond supporting the development of upstream policy reported in the 2018 and 2019 RAMs includes:

Assistance to detained in juvenile rehabilitation centers (Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres)
Identification of cases of children in extremely circumstances – exploited, abused, neglected, deported from abroad, engaged in child labour, child marriage, survivors of sexual exploitation, and child recruitment

[xxxii] The CBE programme is formally known as Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality.

Referring children in extreme circumstance to case managers for extended support and follow up in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian settings
Child Helplines
Psychological Family mediation in relation to prevention of child marriage
Awareness raising at community level in relation to unsafe migration
Awareness raising at community level on major child protection issues – prevention of child marriage, child labour, illegal migration, child recruitment by armed forces, gender-based violence, bacha bazi, child exploitation and use
430 Child Friendly Spaces and adolescent clubs allowed approximately 9,574 young people to interact, learn about themselves and prevention of harmful practices, to study and get empowered
Psychosocial and other support to unaccompanied and separated minors (UAM) returning from Iran and Pakistan.
Explosive weapons risk education

216. It is not possible to determine which of the above interventions are addressed specifically to the adolescent population and the effects/ results of the interventions are not collected in the current M&E report for this group of population.

217. In 2018, UNICEF provided services for youths detained in juvenile rehabilitation centres, established child helplines, set up child-friendly spaces, provided protection services in emergency settings and generated evidence on relevant topics, including child marriage.[141]

218. Other C4D support under protection programme is deeply connected and intermingled with IALA and AWLI programmes. These activities include community mobilization (elders, religious leaders, children and adolescents) to change behaviours and eliminate harmful practices and norms to perpetuate child marriage, child recruitment, unsafe migration, exploitation and abuse of children and gender-based violence. The 2019 RAM of Child Protection refers to the following joint achievements between Child Protection and C4D under output 4. (It should be noted that it is not clear how these activities overlap with IALA and AWLI programmes).

Achievement
Religious leaders, families and children reached on programmes on preventing and responding to abuse, exploitation and violence, including child marriage, child recruitment and use,
Religious leaders trained on child rights in Islam
Messaging by religious leaders to community members on gender-based violence, prevention of child marriage, child labour, child recruitment, prevention of violence, exploitation and harsh discipline, but they also covered a number of health, education, nutrition and WASH related issues
Community members reached through broadcasting of 92 short radio drama on child marriage and girls' education
Life skills training, through participation in “adolescent clubs”, were given regular opportunities to discuss issues of interest (like, child marriage, interruption in schooling, domestic violence, parenting skills, etc.
Adult Community members participating in town hall meetings and discussions aimed at raising awareness on violence against children and negative coping mechanisms
Community members participating in Child Protection Action Network organised community dialogues on positive parenting and disciplining techniques, reducing violence against children, eliminating gender-based violence, child exploitation and use
Community leaders and influencers, members of local Shuras, Community Development Committees, and CPAN members who were trained on issues related to gender (including gender-based violence), child rights, and girls’ education

- **Education** – The UNICEF Afghanistan focus on adolescents is predominantly through activities within its CBE programme, as well as the IALA and AWLI programmes targeting adolescent girls (see Table 9). Activities that directly and indirectly reached adolescents also included building institutional capacity within MoE; efforts to improve the quality and relevance of education – for example, through the National Assessment Framework for Afghanistan (developed in 2019, to be rolled out in 2020–2021); training of female teachers through the GATE Scholarship Programme (682 female students received scholarships in 2018 and 887 in 2019); and the provision of education services in emergency settings (UNICEF reached 93,451 children in 2018 and 133,684 children out of a planned target of 160,000 in 2019).[142]
- **Health and Polio** – The UNICEF Afghanistan health and polio programmes specify adolescents as a particular target group, but it is difficult to differentiate adolescents from

other beneficiaries in the way that activities are reported. Still, a number of programmes clearly included activities that either directly or indirectly benefited adolescents, particularly adolescent girls. For example, its upstream work to strengthen capacities and systems at national and sub-national levels related to maternal, newborn and child health outcomes included a focus on adolescents, e.g., adolescent mothers. In 2018 and 2019, UNICEF also provided technical support to the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) in the Emergency Working Group to develop and operationalize RMNCAH in emergency standards.[143]

219. Considering all adolescent-related interventions and results assessed and described under evaluation questions 3.2 and 3,3 and presuming the validity of the pathway proposed in the ToC scheme in Figure 1, the evaluation confirms that UNICEF has made contributions to the realization of the overall goal *"Adolescent girls and boys can develop and reach their full potential and contribute positively to their societies"* through its programme contributions to the following objectives:

220. ACO has contributed clearly to realizing the objective that *"Adolescent girls and boys learn and acquire relevant skills"*. This is clearly the case for girls, through the CBE and its contribution to "*support female educational outcomes through increased secondary school enrolment (ALCs) and reduction of OOSC*. The contribution to the realization of that objective is also facilitated thanks to the initial results of IALA and AWLI on "*empowerment of adolescent girls and boys to make informed life choices through education, vocational and life-skills training, and peer support networks"*. The latter is more apparent in the case of adolescent girls.

221. Another objective of the proposed ToC scheme, *"Adolescent girls and boys are civically engaged in their community"* is clearly benefitting from AWLI and IALA results and contributions to two programmatic level objectives: "*ACO supports adolescent to be organized into groups, as change agents, knowledgeable about their rights and entitlements, sports, arts, etc. (MAGS, AYN, Safe spaces for girls, public debates, social media, sports for development)"* and "*ACO supports role-modelling of successful and empowered girls and women, including advocacy against child marriage*". The contributions to "*role-modelling of successful and empowered boys and men, including advocacy against child marriage*" are less apparent.

222. The contribution of ACO to the proposed programmatic level objective *"Adolescent girls and boys are safe and supported*" has benefited from sector specific activity. As such, Through WASH, Nutrition and Health, adolescent girls are accessing safe hygiene and sanitation facilities in schools, nutrition services for adolescent girls, and increased access to health services for adolescent mothers. ACO has also contributed through Child protection to that "*national authorities enact and implement CCR including adolescent population (with attention to prevention of GBV and overall enhancing quality child protection to most vulnerable girls and boys)*" and through IALA and AWLI to the programmatic objective to *"Support communities and families to change perceptions to dismantle harmful practices including child marriage, child pregnancy, bacha bazi and GBV. ACO promotes positive parental practices*". Contribution of ACO to the latter objective in relation to *bacha bazi* is not apparent. Despite achievements in relation to child protection, in particular increased awareness among the authorities, community, parents, religious leaders and adolescents, the impact on reduction of child marriage, GBV, *bacha bazi* and other harmful practices affecting specifically adolescent population is not clearly reported so far.

3.4.a. Did the adolescent programmes contribute to progress towards the achievement of their rights and empowerment and greater equality?

223. The first step to achieving rights is knowing what those rights are. Both the AWLI and IALA programmes have demonstrated considerable achievements in that regard. Many adolescents interviewed, as well as adult participants, spoke with some knowledge about children's rights and the importance of equal rights for women and men/girls and boys. There are signs that the inclusive nature of the programmes and their engagement of

families and broader communities in discussions about important topics such as child marriage, teenage pregnancy and girls' education have begun to create a more positive and progressive environment in which adolescents can first identify their rights and then begin to realize them and enjoy greater equality. That said, there are still a number of constraining factors that prevent significant progress towards adolescents (girls in particular) realizing their rights. Particularly in some parts of the country – such as Nangahar Province – interviews suggested that conservative opinions along with deep poverty have made it more difficult for young people to achieve their rights and benefit from greater equality than in other contexts.

3.4.b. Did the programmes contribute to reductions of inequalities and exclusion?

224. The goal of the UNICEF Afghanistan 2015–2019 Country Programme Action Plan is to address inequity in the provision of services to children, adolescents and women.[144] The CO has made considerable progress in strengthening gender integration within its programmes in the framework and approach set out in the UNICEF Afghanistan Gender Strategy 2019–2021 (see also the response to question 3.5).[145] It is less clear how programmes targeting adolescents are designed to reach other vulnerable, marginalized or excluded individuals and groups. During interviews, several adolescents and other key stakeholders at the community level pointed to the need for more targeted assistance for persons living with disabilities, as well as drug users and people living in particularly remote or otherwise inaccessible locations (see Box 5). In one case, a programme evaluation suggested a degree of bias in the targeting of participants, but this is not thought to be symptomatic of wider problems of bias in UNICEF's programmes and is considered an isolated example.[xxxiii,146]

Box 5: Limitations on the Inclusiveness of Programmes Targeting Adolescents

Young people living in areas benefiting from UNICEF adolescent programmes were asked whether UNICEF support had helped to decrease the exclusion of youth. Adolescents responded mostly positively. However, there were also references to individuals or groups within their communities who had not been able to participate in programmes. Persons living with disabilities were mentioned on a number of occasions as being excluded from programmes, as were drug users and people who were particularly poor and disadvantaged within communities.

225. On the theme of exclusion, a number of interviewees also raised the issue of lack of capacity within programmes to accommodate all those adolescents in need within communities. For example, in Nangahar Province where the AWLI programme is operational, several of those interviewed stressed that they wanted to participate in activities, e.g. sports teams, but were unable to do so due to restrictions on the number of participants. In the case of the UNICEF CBE programme, the Midterm evaluation found that 40 per cent more children were attending classes on average than had been officially registered, often the younger siblings of those formally attending. Moreover, the evaluation found that the number of requests in the system for CBEs was as much as three times beyond the capacity and budget of UNICEF and the MoE to deliver, leaving some parts of the country underserved and children and adolescents excluded from education systems.[147]

3.5 What are the internal/external factors having hindered/enabled the attainment of results?

226. Afghanistan is an extremely challenging working environment, and programmes can and have suffered from frequent interruptions and modifications due to a range of factors, including insecurity and outbreaks of violent conflict; disasters caused by natural hazards; displacement of populations; the remoteness of many communities and inaccessible terrain; extreme weather conditions; the variable capacities of local and national actors; a lack of professional women (female teachers in the case of education-related programmes but also

[xxxiii] An evaluation of UNICEF Afghanistan and War Child UK's Improving Street-working Children's Access to Education and Livelihood Support for their Families Programme found evidence to suggest a bias within the selection of participants, calling into question the positive impact of the programme. The project was a pilot initiative and not continued beyond its initial end date of 2016.

trained medical professionals and others); difficulties in ensuring a predictable supply chain; and corruption, including within humanitarian and development programmes.[148] Interviews with members of AYN and UNICEF staff indicated that motivation for adolescents to engage in mobilization and volunteerism may also be affected by unemployment and poverty conditions.

227. More recently, COVID-19 has had a particularly disruptive effect on all programmes. At the same time, peer networks established as part of adolescent-targeted programmes have been mobilized to help educate communities about the risks of the pandemic and ways of preventing its spread, providing opportunities to further empower young people within their communities (see Box 6).

Box 6: COVID-19 and its Impact on the UNICEF Adolescent Programming

COVID-19 and related lockdown/social-distancing measures have already had a significant impact on activities across all of the UNICEF programmes, including for adolescents. This has had a noticeable effect on the AWLI programme, particularly within activities that rely on community participation, such as community dialogues and mini-media clubs. Other programme aspects have incorporated COVID-19 as a new and important topic to catalyse additional discussion and participation. AYNs have conducted awareness-raising within their communities on COVID-19 preventive measures. It is yet unclear how long restrictions will remain in place, what the long-term effects will be on progress and to what extent programmes will need to be redesigned to adapt to changing needs and priorities under COVID-19.[149]

228. A number of internal factors have affected the attainment of results. Recruitment of qualified personnel to oversee the implementation of programmes is an ongoing challenge for the UNICEF Afghanistan CO (see also section 4 on efficiency). Other constraining factors include the difficulty of coordinating programmes for adolescents across multiple sectors and regions; limited data and/or difficulties analysing and using available data to inform programme decisions; delays to agreements and the implementation of agreements with implementing partners; decisions to redesign elements of programmes (for example, the cash component of the AWLI programme);[150] and in some cases, difficulties sustaining adolescents' engagement in programme activities due to boredom and competing demands on their time (noted as a challenge in IALA programme reporting).[151]

4. Efficiency

4.1.a. Are financial/human resources allocated to adolescent programmes appropriate to support the implementation of strategies and the achievement of expected results?

229. Budgets for UNICEF programmes specifically targeting adolescents are in the range of $6.9 million for the AWLI programme for 2015 to 2020 (of which just under $3.7 million had been received and $5.2 million spent and committed as of May 2020);[152] to $3.51[xxxiv] million for the IALA programme over three years from May 2017 to June 2020 (of which $3.32 million has been received and $ 3,08 million spent). It is not possible to identify how much of the CBE programme budget is allocated to adolescents. However, a simplistic analysis of the budget would suggest that $12.3 million is particularly targeted at adolescents for the Accelerated Learning Centre component of the programme (out of a total programme budget of $77.4 million over a period of five years from 2015 to 2019).[153] There is little available evidence on whether project outputs and outcomes were achieved cost-efficiently, and the evaluation did not include a detailed analysis of this aspect.

230. It was not possible to isolate financial resources for adolescents in other programmes, since budgets are not proportioned according to target groups. In any case, it is difficult to determine what an "appropriate" amount of financial resources for adolescent

[xxxiv] The budget was approved in afghanis for an amount of 270,011,289, which at the exchange rate of 27/08/2020 (1 USD = 76,8876 AFN) corresponds to US$3,511,768. The same exchange rate is applied in for the rest of the US$ figures on the amount transferred and spent.

programmes is without a full assessment and analysis of the needs of adolescents and a clear strategy setting out expected results for adolescents as a distinct target group.

231. As with financial resources, it was not possible to determine an appropriate or adequate level of human resources for initiatives targeting adolescents without a clear strategy in place for an adolescent-relevant approach. However, it was clear that recruitment of qualified personnel – particularly female staff and personnel prepared to work at the provincial level (see also question 3.5) – is a continuing challenge for the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office,[154] with an assumed negative impact on the ability of UNICEF's to work in a participatory way with adolescent girls. Efforts to increase the number of female staff within the workforce have begun to show results, but staffing gaps continue to impede programmatic progress.[xxxv]

4.1.b. Could the same or better results have been achieved using a different strategy?

232. Currently, there is no dedicated strategy for UNICEF work with adolescents in Afghanistan. The evaluation therefore reconstructed an implicit ToC (see also question 2.1.b). Many results achieved by UNICEF programmes (as described in the Effectiveness section) appear to be aligned with the goals and strategic objectives of the ToC. In particular, there is evidence that adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, are empowered as a result of the work of UNICEF (see Box on empowerment of adolescent girls); and adolescents that have participated in UNICEF programmes specifically targeting adolescents are more informed about child rights and gender issues (see question 3.4.a), albeit with considerable differences across different parts of the country linked to poverty and conservative attitudes. There is no available information on increases in completion of secondary school. However, the UNICEF CBE programme has considerably increased the enrolment of adolescents in areas not served by existing and appropriate schools, particularly adolescent girls in ALCs (see question 3.2.a). Early evidence suggests that the dismantling of harmful practices (child marriage in particular) can be partially attributed to UNICEF programmes, but it is too early to conclusively say more without further research.

233. While feedback from interviewees at the community level for this evaluation was generally positive about UNICEF programmes across all sectors, stakeholders did identify a number of gaps – or other priorities – that they considered as critical to adolescent health, well-being and protection (see Box). The evaluation does not consider these as gaps that UNICEF should necessarily seek to fill by itself, but there may be scope to work with others (government and non-governmental partners) to provide complementary support to adolescents and their broader communities.

Box 7: Gaps Identified in Comprehensive Support to Adolescents

Across all groups interviewed at the community level – adolescents, parents, teachers and Shura members – there was consensus that education was among the top priorities for allocation of financial resources. This included school buildings, school supplies and payment of teachers' salaries. Other highlighted priorities, not necessarily covered by UNICEF programmes, included community-level infrastructure,[xxxvi] libraries, WASH initiatives, sports facilities and equipment, and health facilities and services. A consistent priority coming up was more support for livelihoods and vocational training – allowing adolescents a pathway from education to employment. Some interviewees even questioned the logic of supporting adolescent education without viable work opportunities for young people post-graduation. This was raised particularly (even if not exclusively) by adolescent boys and by others mainly in relation to adolescent boys.

4.1.c. Is there duplication or overlap of activities (geographically and beneficiary-wise)?

234. The evaluation found no evidence of duplication of activities. Some programme activities were targeted at the same geographic locations, which was perceived positively by

[xxxv] Difficulties recruiting key personnel for programmes were frequently cited as a limitation in project progress reports, in particular for the AWLI programme.

[xxxvi] Such as bridges and roads, flagged as important for allowing children to get to school.

target beneficiaries. Bamyan stood out as a relatively well-served province among the four provinces selected for data collection as part of the evaluation, compared with the provinces of Ghor and Khandahar, where there was less visible UNICEF programmatic activity targeting adolescents. Indeed, interviewees in Ghor and Kandahar provinces were often unable to identify any past or present UNICEF programmes in their areas. In some cases, this may be due to a lack of UNICEF visibility (deliberate or otherwise) within programme implementation.

4.2. How have monitoring systems been used to gather evidence for programme progress (including from a gender perspective) and taking decisions? How are the monitoring reporting systems set up?

235. The evaluation found a mixed picture in terms of monitoring systems and their use for decision making within programmes benefitting adolescents. Evidence is emanating from the M&E system, but it is still quite conventional and driven by UNICEF and its implementing partners. There is little evidence that monitoring data are consistently analysed and utilized for decision making and feedback,[155] and key stakeholders from the field were not aware of this either.

236. The IALA programme and the CBE programme both appeared to have robust monitoring systems in place. In the case of IALA, this includes a baseline exercise to establish a starting point for the work, clear indicators with baselines and targets, consistent tracking against quantitative targets, and narrative descriptions with personal testimonials and challenges for qualitative monitoring of progress and learning. The CBE programme uses an extensive database to collect and organize monitoring information from CBEs. UNICEF regularly share this data to the relevant MoE in order to feed the Government of Afghanistan's Education Management Information System (EMIS), however, it is not clear how consistently CBE data is integrated within the EMIS. In this sense, the Midterm Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme conducted in 2019 indicates that "The Education Management Information System (EMIS) data and the UNICEF database are aligned in terms of required information and the collected data is relevant to both. However, the monitoring data is often inconsistently entered into the EMIS data system. Monitoring data appears to be used more often at District and Provincial levels for operational decisions but does not appear to be consistently used for Strategic decisions or operations at higher levels. The current monitoring information collected is primarily focused on access related dimensions and quality aspects such as tracking student learning outcomes, or specific teacher training needs, or Shura training needs have not yet been integrated into the data collection."[156]

237. The AWLI programme was approved to start in September 2018 (though actual implementation was delayed until August 2019), but it was not until 2020 that a strong baseline and a workplan for later data collection and evaluation was established.[157] Collectively, these three programmes provide the potential for building a strong evidence base on progress and the contribution of UNICEF towards positive outputs and outcomes for targeted adolescents.

238. A lack of age-related disaggregated monitoring data on other programmes makes it difficult to see what progress is being made for adolescents as a distinct group. This will be required if UNICEF has ambitions to monitor progress against a more coherent adolescent-oriented approach in the future, driven by a clear strategy.

4.3. Are the programme activities being implemented according to the foreseen timeline?

239. The evaluation found that programme activities have generally been implemented according to established timelines, with the exception of the AWLI programme, which was delayed by over a year until a baseline study was completed (extending the end date of the programme from September 2018 to December 2020). Particular aspects of the AWLI programme were also delayed as a result of a redesign of the cash grant component and delays in the start of the partnership with ActionAid Afghanistan.[158]

240. The outbreak of COVID-19 in Afghanistan was a significant factor impacting the timely delivery of a number of UNICEF programme activities, including those targeting adolescents (see Box 6). It is too early to say what impact those delays will have on programmes and whether timelines will need to be extended in order to deliver against aspects of programme deliverables.

241. While to some degree delays to some aspects of programmes are inevitable, the vast majority of people interviewed for this evaluation at the community level were unaware that delays had taken place. From their perspective, activities were implemented on time and according to plan other than interruptions to programmes as a result of COVID-19, as frequently noted during interviews. The timeframe of programmes described as too short-term with a preference for more sustained engagement by a small number of interviewees – is a somewhat different issue and considered outside the scope of this evaluation.

4.4. To what extent do UNICEF partnership strategies and stakeholder collaboration support the delivery of the programme results?

242. UNICEF has used different approaches for working in partnership with stakeholders to deliver programme results on behalf of adolescents. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations have been key for the implementation of IALA and AWLI (partnerships with the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan and World Vision in the case of IALA; and ActionAid Afghanistan, representing a consortium of NGOs, in the case of AWLI).[xxxvii],[159] As for the CBE programme, the key partnership is with MoE. The CBE programme has a clear objective of increasing national ownership and sustainability of community-based education by building government capacity and delivering education services through provincial and district-level education directorates to achieve results. Where access is limited for security reasons, UNICEF has engaged NGOs for implementation of CBE activities.[160] Partnerships with different ministries and NGOs for programmes targeting adolescents within other sectors are too numerous to list here.

243. There are pros and cons to the use of both government and non-governmental partnerships within programme implementation. While working with ministries can strengthen national ownership of initiatives and improve the sustainability of programmes, it can also compromise the ability of UNICEF to deliver according to strict timeframes (still, this was not noted as a particular challenge in relation to the CBE programme). Moreover, there are limitations in government access to opposition-held areas, as well as a degree of risk in terms of leakage of programme resources.[161]

244. In the UNICEF CBE programme, which works in partnership with both government and non-governmental partners, there have been differences in the quality of activities by different partner types. For example, NGO-managed community-based schools were more closely managed, with a perceived improvement in learning outcomes but at a significantly higher cost than those schools managed by government actors.[162] Interviews with individuals at the community level for this evaluation were more critical of initiatives implemented by government institutions at provincial and district level than those managed by NGOs. That said, the danger of working exclusively outside of government structures and systems was noted in an evaluation of the pilot UNICEF/NGO project to work with street-working children in Kabul, namely, limiting the ability of the initiative to generate learning for replication of further interventions targeting street-working children.[163] Overall, the evaluation found that UNICEF had struck the right balance in terms of selecting and working with the most appropriate partners for different purposes and in different geographical areas to deliver results as effectively and efficiently as possible.

245. Key partners across the work of UNICEF are adolescent girls and boys themselves, as well as their families and broader communities. While programme activities, by their very

[xxxvii] As well as ActionAid Afghanistan, the consortium includes WASSA (in Herat and Farah), OHW (in Ghor), ECW (in Samangan) and OHW (in Nangahar).

nature, closely involved the participation of adolescents, the evaluation did not find significant evidence of efforts to closely involve adolescents in project design and monitoring or adaptation of project activities, [xxxviii] even if they were often consulted at the design stage. That said, this evaluation as well as other evaluations had an consulted extensively with adolescent boys and girls, as well as other key informants within communities, providing them with an important opportunity to reflect and comment on the performance of UNICEF and providing an opportunity for UNICEF to learn from that feedback to strengthen the quality and accountability of its adolescent-targeted programmes.

[xxxviii] The evaluation took note of UNICEF guidance on participatory monitoring and evaluation (Adolescent participation in UNICEF monitoring and evaluation, 2019), but was not able to gather any significant evidence that the guidance had been applied in the Afghanistan context.

SECTION E: CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

1. Conclusions

Suitability of Programmes for Girls and Adolescents

246. Judging by the evaluation findings, UNICEF's interventions, the sectoral ones as well as the adolescent- specific programmes, have been, and still are, fully relevant to the needs of adolescents. Most respondents reported that programmes had been suitable for adolescent girls. Fifty-six per cent of the respondents (including adolescents themselves) confirmed that they had been consulted prior to activities, which is impressive. On the other hand, adolescents are not strongly engaged in programme monitoring. Moreover, the needs are so vast that neither UNICEF nor any other development actor is able to alleviate those in five years. Programmes are currently addressing key challenges in their design, but as a result of the vast group of adolescents and their huge needs, it had covered only a tiny proportion of the adolescents in need of support. Also, a number of population groups that are most vulnerable, such as people in remote areas, very poor people, people with disability and drug users, are perceived to be unreached or insufficiently reached.

Coherence

247.At the design level coherence was good, but at the intervention level coherence between the various issues that concern adolescents is not always optimal. Though it is not possible to provide hard data, it is expected that partners implementing activities in their own sector only prevent the best results from being achieved and hamper potential synergy. The lack of coordination of sectoral partners is one of the reasons contributing to this. There is no evidence of UNICEF providing coherent support encompassing multiple topics or with complementary value to adolescents. By means of its various adolescent and sectoral programmes, UNICEF has also succeeded in linking the various challenges to youth. Though the implicit ToC is coherent however in areas such as education and protection, alignment is missing for instance in nutrition and health, and in mainstreaming issues like child marriage, teenage pregnancy and specific boys' issues. On the other hand, understanding mutual linkages between topics such as poverty, education, child marriage, violence, WASH, engagement and participation, youth rights, etc. appeared to have trickled down, and these linkages are underlying UNICEF's programme strategies.

Coordination and Partners

248. UNICEF has struck the right balance in working with government and NGOs in the specific programmes; however, relationships with specific partners are still limited. This includes UNFPA, which has a strong role in youth programming and works in similar areas as UNICEF. Also, in the sectoral programmes, the focus is mostly on the work of the specific ministry, without including topics beyond that sector, thus missing the opportunity to reach out to the right target group in an efficient manner. Coordination overall is rather limited, at the central as well as the local level. Most key informants were not aware of coordination mechanisms that existed on paper, and United Nations inter-agency coordination and collaboration was perceived as suboptimal as well. Coordination between sectoral ministries is understandably weak, but as such coordination is essential to make UNICEF's coherent approach to youth successful, it also needs appropriate attention. The work of UNICEF is not strongly aligned with the Afghan National Youth Strategy of the DMoYA.

Education

249. Education is one of the largest programmes of UNICEF and this aligns well with the perception of it being the biggest need of adolescents. UNICEF was well on track under its programmes for adolescents (IALA, AWLI and CBE). Positive education-related outputs had been achieved under IALA. The CBE programme also allowed many more students to get appropriate education, and the ALCs were successful in supporting adolescents, considered in field interviews to be a forgotten and vulnerable group because they were too far behind in age to be in regular classes. More than half of them were female, which was an important achievement for an age group (10–15 years) in which a lot of girls already no longer go to school.

Adolescent Empowerment

250. Adolescents' and notably girls' empowerment is one of the most important achievements of UNICEF in Afghanistan. This observation is based on feedback from adolescent boys and girls, who reported such increased empowerment and how they benefitted. Many adolescents have already come to understand what their rights are and that these are equal for men and women. The activities to strengthen adolescents' empowerment, among other activities by raising awareness in communities against child marriage, seem to have borne fruit. This evaluation found improvements in adolescent girls' healthy behaviour and empowerment and girls appear to have stronger self-confidence. Adolescent girls (and boys) feel strong enough to discuss various issues, including their education, with parents and communities. A significant representation of girls and boys targeted by IALA and AWLI have experienced a change in the sense of becoming aware that they have a voice that they were entitled to use and that was being heard. Their empowerment opens the debate and is the first step towards youth-led change. UNICEF has apparently selected one of the good approaches that can ultimately lead to decreasing harmful practices and improving adolescent girls' lives. It should be noted that in areas that combine deep poverty with a conservative context, it still appeared difficult for adolescents to get access to their rights. Policies and systems still need adaptation to ensure inclusion of all adolescents.

251. Through engagement with youth in Afghanistan, UNICEF has also made a strong contribution to gender equality. Implementing acceptable and suitable interventions for adolescent girls has facilitated their understanding of what it means to have and use equal rights and gradual acceptance by the people surrounding them. Even if there is still a long way to go, the first steps on the way to gender equality have been made within the UNICEF target group of adolescent girls.

Protection

252.Awareness on child marriage has increased, partly as a result of the AWLI programme. Respondents specifically pointed to UNICEF when they mentioned this positive change. On the other hand, even in the ALCs, dropout rates were high, and child marriage was one of the reasons. Considerable improvement of actual child marriage and pregnancy rates could not be measured in a previous programme evaluation and was not measured now, as the size of the assessment would not have produced reliable data on this topic. Though the decision is usually taken by male family members, the interviews have shown that working on the empowerment of youth in general and adolescent girls in particular does provide them with scope to delay such decisions. We can therefore conclude that battling child marriage, even if awareness is on the increase, is also still constrained by poverty and lack of social protection. Continuous support by UNICEF and others remains necessary in order to create sustainable change and that working with youth on this topic is essential. Also, data on actual child marriage are essential to support this.

253. Related to violence, UNICEF has also included activities to raise awareness on violence against women and girls, which were appreciated and, in many cases, seemed to work – even though the evaluation could not establish the degree of reduction of gender-based violence following the increased awareness. Violence that concerns all adolescents was addressed by UNICEF support to institutional and legislative frameworks and improved child protection services and systems. Specific violence against boys on the other hand, including *bacha bazi* and harassment at schools, was not so prominently included. Moreover, most of the engagement was done through UNICEF programming, whereas engagement in policy and legislation development and institutional framework is still weak.

Gender Equality

254. With their comprehensive approach and the focus on girls, UNICEF has considered girls' empowerment and closing the gaps that girls are facing on many fronts. This obviously includes education, but also sectors such as nutrition, protection and sports, as described in the other sections. In the specific adolescent programmes, there was also a focus on girls (without side-lining boys), and these comprehensive programmes helped improve girls'

positions and future by addressing multiple causes. On the other hand, boys' issues were not so prominently addressed. As for adolescent health, the UNICEF design did not include any major activities, either for girls or boys.

Nutrition and Health

255. In nutrition, UNICEF reached large numbers of adolescent girls with iron and folic acid supplements. Nonetheless, compliance was imperfect and the knowledge and awareness on anaemia and other nutrition-related topics is low. UNICEF does not have a comprehensive approach yet towards adolescent nutrition, which leaves many topics untouched, including dietary diversity, stunting, overnutrition and other micronutrient deficiencies.

256. In health, the focus on adolescent of UNICEF does not emerge strongly. Even if adolescents benefit from health system strengthening, many of them still report that access is an issue. Youth-friendly health services, even if supported by UNFPA, are still in a fledgling state, but could be an important contributor to the rights and well-being of adolescent girls.

WASH and MHM

257. UNICEF had successfully implemented the MHM programme, which addresses an important barrier to the education of adolescent girls. The WASH in schools programme helps address this issue as well, and is also beneficial in general to all adolescents, including for their nutrition status, as hygiene is an important contributor.

Employment

258. Unemployment is one of the most important challenges faced by youth, especially boys. This is also a consequence of different expectations linked to traditional gender roles and the different perception of employment for girls. Unemployed non-educated or even well-educated youth sit idly at home, becoming (more) marginalized than before, undoing the UNICEF-supported achievements in empowerment and education. Instead, some boys are more likely to join armed groups or to become drug addicts. UNICEF has included some livelihood activities in their adolescent programmes, but this was perceived as UNICEF programming with a fairly limited focus. Others do not have strong support mechanisms to link education to employment either. Additionally, UNICEF currently does not have strong relations with DMoYA, which has the mandate to work on youth unemployment and has made it a priority in their policy and strategy.

2. Lessons Learned

259. Urgency still exists for further policy systems and programme investment for all adolescents in Afghanistan, both girls and boys. Nonetheless, investing in adolescents, with a focus on girls, has appeared to be a very sensible approach. This is probably true in general, as youth are the future but also even in the difficult context of rural Afghanistan, where gender indicators are poor, poverty is high, conflict keeps flaring up and all underlying factors, including infrastructure, education, health access and so on, need to be improved. Impact has not been measured by this evaluation and was not yet known for adolescent programming, but some successes can be brought up, such as increased enrolment under CBE and reported adolescent empowerment. All activities were rated as suitable to the context, to the needs of adolescents and for girls and boys specifically, by adolescents, parents and local government staff alike. Empowerment and enthusiasm were impressive, which are sustainable and priceless achievements that can go a long way and are the basis of subsequent improvements in adolescents' lives and well-being.

260. There is a vast demand for support to and services for adolescents. Adolescents want their voices to be heard, they want to become decision-makers and they want to have an opportunity to live a good life. This is natural at that age and the urge may be even stronger in the context of conservatism, poverty and lack of opportunities. Support provided to adolescents does not only fall under the mandate of UNICEF; its high potential success makes it an area where more partnership and engagement with others is essential.

261. Addressing sensitive issues is very difficult. Topics that can be addressed in the empowerment space, such as *bacha bazi,* are hidden in society and working on violence against women and girls, including child marriage, will need a long time to bear fruit. People will say that these issues have been addressed in their community or no longer exist, but this is not necessarily the case. It does mean that a step forward is made, since people realize that the practice is wrong and needs to be eradicated, whereas before it may have been considered an ordinary part of the culture. In order to reach real eradication, however, more effort and more time is needed. This is especially the case as long as underlying factors such as poverty and insecurity continue to exist.

262. Partnerships and strong coordination and cooperation are essential to address the major problems that adolescents, especially adolescent girls, in Afghanistan face. Afghanistan is a big country. The population is dispersed and live in remote areas, and the problems facing youth and adults are many and complex. Therefore, it is simply too much for one or even a few organizations to address and it is also too much for the Government. Cooperation and coordination, coupled with conceptual clarity, technical capacity, a strong task distribution linked to that capacity and a focus on comparative advantages are therefore the only way to achieve progress.

SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS

263. Recommendations were developed using a rigorous approach. The team looked into the needs in the context section and the design planned outputs and outcomes of UNICEF programmes. From there, it was analysed to what extent the design and implementation matched the needs and how successful implementation had been, and how it was perceived by various respondents. From there, conclusions were developed, based on the findings but interpreted by the team. The conclusions then led to the various strategic recommendations.

Recommendation No. 1 **Stronger coherence in the programme for youth (addressed at all UNICEF CO unit heads and management)**	**Supporting evidence**	**Timeframe**
Even though interventions were reasonably well designed, and the implicit ToC is coherent, convergent programming needs to be strengthened in the approach to adolescents by UNICEF as an organization**. UNICEF needs to develop an explicit ToC as a basis for their work with adolescents.** The upcoming Adolescent Strategy is an excellent entry point. If programming is more coherent and convergent, it will better enable tackling difficult issues such as child marriage and teenage pregnancy and reaching vulnerable groups. The TOC and the Adolescent strategy should take into consideration the following aspects: • There are opportunities in the specific interventions for adolescents to **strengthen the inclusion of activities** to address all current challenges, but also for **more linkages in sectoral programmes**, with positive youth development approaches that acknowledge **the interconnectedness of various social, political, cultural, economic and ecological factors that affect adolescent lives**. Where better access to rights and well-being of youth are aimed at, all challenges need to be addressed. • UNICEF can also be instrumental with their mandate to ensure **stronger engagement of various stakeholders in a synergistic programme for youth**. This **includes actively participating in central-level platforms and mechanisms, and leading and advocating for more local-level coordination and cooperation for adolescents, notably between sectors**. Such coordination should take place more regularly, and may be led alternately by different sectors to promote better synergy and understanding • A strong need for resources remains, in view of the vast needs of adolescents. **UNICEF needs to present their interventions for adolescents as one programme for youth when approaching donors and partners, to generate more interest and understanding for the need for a coherent approach and to leverage available funds**. Engaging in **joint programmes** with other UN agencies would also strengthen the approach and expected results and will gauge the interest of donors. • **Conceptual clarity on holistic, multi-sectoral convergent, rights-based and inclusive programming for adolescents** is essential.	Section Coherence Paragraph 228, 229,	Immediate
Recommendation 2: Ensure the upcoming Adolescent Strategy is participative and inclusive (addressed at CO management and Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist)	**Supporting evidence**	**Timeframe**

Outside the specific adolescent programmes, there is little evidence of adolescents being treated as a distinct group with specific needs. The planned Adolescent Strategy is a very significant step representing the determination and engagement of UNICEF. • To render this engagement transversal, **other sector programmes should disaggregate M&E data by age group**. Moreover, the Country Office needs to **develop adolescent specific output/outcome-level indicators for core programmes**. • **Adolescents must be engaged more strongly in the design and monitoring of programmes and policy, including the upcoming Adolescent Strategy**. The global UNICEF guidance on adolescent participation in M&E can serve as a guide. It brings up a number of examples valuable for the Afghan context, such as adolescents that helped identify OOSC and adolescents participating in situation monitoring action research to identify critical issues for adolescents. • Though the focus on girls has been fully understandable in view of the existing gap in gender equality**, boys also face specific needs, or issues that concern all adolescents but are more prominent for boys. These must be addressed in the Adolescent Strategy.** They include pressure related to boys' perceived role as household providers, along with drug abuse, unemployment, child labour and bacha bazi. • A number of **hard-to-reach groups, such as youth living with disabilities, youth living in very remote areas, and youth from ultra-poor households, have been insufficiently included in interventions up to now. UNICEF needs to improve on this by including suitable targeting mechanisms and activities for these groups.** Youth in the UNICEF programme and community members/bodies can be used to identify such "hidden" beneficiaries and enrol them in the programme. Where needed, adaptations must be made, or tailored activities conducted for youth with disabilities.	EQ 4.2 Para 212,213, 215, 227, 235 Para 158 Para 124, 136, 137, 138, 139-142, 149, 150, 212, 218, 219 Para 122, 123, 125, 128, Box 5, 222	Immediate
Recommendation 3: Strengthen UNICEF's partnerships and coordination (addressed at CO UNICEF management, other United Nations agencies, government partners)	**Supporting evidence**	**Timeframe**
The needs of adolescents are enormous, the target group is vast, and some of the needs are beyond the scope and mandate of UNICEF, but nonetheless it is essential that these are addressed**. It is therefore recommended that UNICEF strengthens its partnership and coordination when working with and for adolescents, and develops sustained, long-term collaboration on institutionalizing engagement and participation.** • UNICEF needs to **participate in all relevant existing coordination mechanisms** at both levels (with United Nations agencies, NGOs and government agencies) and lead those where possible and relevant. This will help better use opportunities at national and sub-national levels with governmental and non-governmental partners and strengthen implementation quality and coverage. • There is room to **strengthen collaboration and coordination with United Nations agencies, notably UNFPA, which has a strong role in youth programming**, is complementary in some areas and also works in similar areas. Therefore, collaboration may benefit both. Other United Nations agencies are also good partners, including those working in poverty reduction, education, health and social protection, and UNICEF should exploit these opportunities. • UNICEF needs to forge **a partnership with DMoYA, since this is the government body with the mandate to work with youth. Moreover, to address youth unemployment, this would be the appropriate government body to liaise with.** • Lastly, UNICEF may consider **strengthening their engagement with CSOs and INGOs in community and adolescent empowerment**.	EQ 2.2.b, 2.2.c and 4.4 and paragraph 230 Para 184-188 Para 189-193 Para 139-142	Short to medium- term

Recommendation 4: Continued emphasis on girls' education (UNICEF education unit, addressed at CO management, CBE implementing partners)	**Supporting evidence**	**Timeframe**
UNICEF has successfully supported girls' education through various modalities, which is acknowledged by stakeholders and beneficiaries and is linked to what is perceived as the largest need. **It is therefore recommended for UNICEF to continue doing so, but mindful of the things that worked and components that did not.** • UNICEF needs to work on **CBEs becoming a more permanent part of the education system, to balance the fact that the coverage of regular schools will not be nearly sufficient in the coming years.** There is a large need for CBEs, and participation is high, even higher than registered, and interest is considerable, so the number may need to be scaled up. Accordingly, UNICEF needs to advocate for more Government support. • Girls are doing well in UNICEF-supported education; however, even here they drop out. **Complementary activities with these girls and their families, households and communities on girls' rights and empowerment, may pre-empt such challenges from cutting their education short**. • Also, there are opportunities to **link girls in CBEs or ALCs to youth-friendly health services and sports activities.**	Para 126-130, 152, 208, 220, 221, 222,	Long-term
Recommendation 5: Comprehensive adolescent nutrition and health programme (addressed at CO UNICEF nutrition unit, management, MoE, Ministry of Health)	**Supporting evidence**	**Timeframe**
UNICEF supports provision of iron and folic acid tablets, but the needs of adolescent girls go far beyond that. **The nutrition indicators do not appear favourable: there is stunting and other micronutrient deficiencies besides iron, as well as the existence of overweight girls**. Potentially, there are also eating disorders. • In order to improve the nutrition status of adolescents, notably girls, and address the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition**, there should be a comprehensive adolescent nutrition programme, which can become part of an overall nutrition programme.** This evaluation is not well placed to exactly suggest which type of activities should be designed, but activities targeting nutritional behaviour and dietary diversity, potentially through behaviour change communication, should be considered. • Furthermore, **adolescent health should be addressed in programming and strategy in a comprehensive way as well**. Not only will this help improve the nutrition status, but youth health indicators in Afghanistan warrant action. **This should include improving access to youth-friendly health services in general, which includes the need for policy advocacy with the government to make these services available, as well as awareness raising among adolescents and the adults that surround them. Adolescents' access to health a should also include reproductive health services, with addressing teenage pregnancy, which often results from early marriage, as an important topic of focus**. • To make this suitable for adolescents, **schools could be used as a platform, and social media can make the activities more attractive**. At the same time, a mechanism needs to be developed to include the **hard-to-reach group of out-of-school children**.	Para 143-145, 154	Mid-term

Recommendation 6: Continued strong focus on ending child marriage (addressed at UNICEF CO management and protection unit, M&E unit, UNFPA)	**Supporting evidence**	**Timeframe**
UNICEF has managed good achievements in the awareness around child marriage, and potentially also in the actual rate, though that could not be confirmed by the data. Child marriage is a persistent problem, however, with multiple underlying reasons like poverty, the lack of an appropriate social protection system as well as the existing gendered perceptions, that are very difficult to change. **With its mandate, UNICEF cannot look away and needs to continue its efforts, and where possible even scale them up.** • This includes **strengthening of collaboration and coordination with other development partners, notably UNFPA**, especially for areas that are beyond UNICEF's reach, such as addressing overall poverty. • Increasing **youth empowerment has appeared a good avenue in the battle against child marriage**, so UNICEF should continue doing so and increase their investment in this area. • **Decreasing child marriage should become an intrinsic part of each and every programme**, since drivers are linked to many indicators such as poverty, health and education. These indicators are all interlinked and affecting the social situation of households, who marry off their daughters. Moreover, by including the topic as widely as possible, a larger group will be reached for awareness raising and finding solutions. • UNICEF should **design activities for adolescent girls who have been married early or became pregnant to ensure that they will be able to continue their education and get access to their rights and the appropriate services**. This will help them continue their lives in the best possible manner under the circumstances, but also contribute to **preventing their own daughters from being married off early**. • On a parallel trail, UNICEF needs to support data collection, including in intervention areas**, to monitor and assess what the real progress is, and launch in-depth studies into still occurring child marriages** in order to research which factors keep hampering its eradication and to be able to adapt the programmes accordingly.	Para 133, 134, 135, 153, 156, 203, 2016	Long-term
Recommendation 7: Provide more livelihood/employment support to adolescents (addressed at UNICEF CO management and education unit, stakeholders/development partners working on livelihoods)	**Supporting evidence**	**Timeframe**
The support of UNICEF in most cases reached up to the point in time where adolescents left school, with or without a completed education. Though interventions were in place to reach out-of-school children, this has appeared more difficult, especially for non-education related interventions. Stakeholders and beneficiaries stated their fear that all gains would be undone if adolescents are not able to find employment. **It is therefore recommended that UNICEF incorporates a stronger linkage to employment for adolescents, with a focus on suitable employment for adolescent girls and young women, while simultaneously trying to be gender transformative.** The following specific points may be considered:	Para 139-142, 180, 184-188, Box 2, 206, 220, Box 7	Medium-term

• **Scale up livelihood activities in adolescent programmes, with a focus on girls**. Ensure these activities are designed and selected in a participative manner. At the same time, inform and expose future participants to possible lines of work that are more profitable, but are not usually done by women. • **Strengthen policy advocacy and technical support to further develop government policy and programming on adolescent skilling and employability**, and ensure policies are in place that include transferrable skills including employability skills as part of employment training, • **Continue and further scale up the GATE programme**, as this programme provides suitable employment for young women, and at the same time increases access to school for girls. On a parallel trail, girls may be encouraged to select medical, education and related professions. • **Build a partnership with DMoYA to support them in implementing the youth policy and strategy** and help them reach out to the subnational level and focus on the younger cohort of youth (up to 19 years of age), as this is the target group of UNICEF's adolescent programming. • Establish and/or strengthen **partnership with relevant education institutions at local level** such as TVET institutions. • Link **beneficiaries to existing programmes on increasing employment** possibilities (and social protection, if these exist), with a focus on localized approaches and subsidiarity. Advocate with **development partners for more support to youth employment** and ensure UNICEF's visibility on this topic in platforms where youth employment is discussed, and within the United Nations family.		

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

UNICEF AFGHANISTAN
REQUEST FOR A CONTRACT FOR SERVICES (INSTITUTIONS)

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT		
Adolescents in Afghanistan – A portfolio evaluation with a Gender lens		
REQUESTING SECTION	Social Policy, Evaluation and Research (SPEAR)	
SUPERVISOR (CONTRACT MANAGER)	Manager SPEAR Section, UNICEF Kabul	
GRANT	Non-grant	
WBS		
PROPOSED DURATION		**NOTES / COMMENTS**
PROPOSED START DATE/END DATE	1 December 2019 – 31 March 2020 (tentative)	
TYPE OF PROCUREMENT **EOI, RFP, RFQ, ITB**		
SUPPLY PLAN LINE NUMBER		
LOCATION OF REQUIRED SERVICES	Kabul (two missions) with possible zonal travel	
ESTIMATED VALUE MAY EXCEED CRC THRESHOLD (Yes/No)	No	

Need for procurement of institutional services is reflected in the AWP/ Supply plan or is in response to a specific request	YES
The tasks cannot be completed by UNICEF staff or counterparts	YES
TOR is clearly defined with tangible, measurable deliverables or an end-product and with payments (contract fee) clearly linked to these	YES
TOR includes a description of the specific activities and timeframes for completion of the activities	YES
The TOR includes performance indicators for evaluation of results (e.g. timeliness or quantitative measures)	YES

SIGNED FOR AGREEMENT		
Recommended by …… Programme Chief Date/Time……	Reviewed by …… Supply Manager Date/Time……	Approved by Deputy Representative OR Chief of Operations Date/Time……

UNICEF AFGHANISTAN
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SERVICES – INSTITUTIONS

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Adolescents in Afghanistan – A portfolio evaluation with a Gender lens

BACKGROUND

SDGs and the potential represented by adolescents

There are 1.2 billion adolescents aged 10–19 in the world today and nearly 90 per cent of these girls and boys live in low- and middle-income countries. Realizing the rights of these adolescents, and investing in their development, contributes to the full participation of adolescents and young people in a nation's life, a competitive labour force, sustained economic growth, improved governance and vibrant civil societies, accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Adolescent development is a human right. By signing the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), States promise to ensure implementation of commitments for children during adolescence on issues such as evolving capacities, participation and age of consent, among others. Adolescence is also a second window of opportunity to influence developmental trajectories, including growth and cognitive development. Adolescence is a time when gender roles can either be consolidated or challenged and transformed. Influencing social and gender norms during adolescence shapes the life trajectories of adolescent girls and boys and the opportunities and vulnerabilities that they may face. Moreover, in countries with a large population of adolescents, this can have a positive or negative effect on the social and economic development, depending on how well and how quickly governments respond to their needs and enable them to engage fully and meaningfully in civic and economic affairs. If governments provide supportive macro-economic policies and strategic investments in education and health and promote gender equality, this demographic can contribute towards a demographic dividend. Indeed, investing in adolescence contributes to breaking cycles of poverty, violence and discrimination that pass from one generation to the next.

Adolescents in Afghanistan – A gender lens

Afghanistan has one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in the world with approximately 63 per cent of the population (27.5 million Afghans) below 25 years of age and 46 per cent (11.7 million children) under 15 years of age according to the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA). From about 2021, Afghanistan will enter the early-dividend stage of the demographic transition. In order to reap the dividends of this rare demographic opportunity, it is crucial that Afghanistan makes the necessary investments to anticipate the "adolescent bulge" entering the labour market in the coming years. Investing in adolescents, on their skills, on their capacity to participate in making decisions that concern them, is therefore key to unlocking this extra-growth potential for the country. Currently, around a quarter of the population (26%) are adolescents age 10 to 19, and the number of adolescents is expected to increase from an estimated 9.5 million in 2019 to 11 million by 2045. Three-quarters of the population live in rural areas, but the country faces rapid urbanization, providing both opportunities and challenges to the provision of education and to economic development (Source: AFGHANISTAN: Education Equity Profile for Adolescent Girls). About 54% of youth (15-24 years old) are literate (68% male, 39% female) but very few of them have access to productive and decent employment: youth unemployment is at 31% (24% male, 47% female) while 42% (17% male, 68% female) are neither in employment, education, or training (NEET) *(Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey 2016-17 (NSIA, 2018).*

More than three decades of conflict in Afghanistan has fractured the country's education system and shattered families' abilities to earn a livelihood. A 2019 study showed that more than 56% of children live in multi-dimensional poverty[xxxix] in the country.

[xxxix] The Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index complements the monetary poverty measure and uncovers the deprivations experienced by the Afghan people in various aspects of their life. The A-MPI has 18 indicators grouped in 5 dimensions: Health, Education, Living Standards, Work and Shocks. (https://mppn.org/new-afghan-multidimensional-poverty-report)

Girls are the most vulnerable group, being particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of violence including harmful practices and having more limited support systems and access to information than their male counterparts. Traditional socio-cultural perceptions of gender norms lead to various manifestations of discrimination against women and girls. Examples include, limiting girls' education (for example the net attendance rate in secondary education is 47% for boys and 24% for girls), limiting women's opportunities to participate in issues that concern them, underage marriage, forced marriage, practices of *ba'ad* and *badal*[xl] and so on.

In Afghanistan, the issue of child marriage is widespread. According to the Afghanistan Living condition Survey (ALCS 2016-17), 4.2 per cent of women in the age group 20-24 years were married before age 15 and 28.3 per cent were married before age 18. The ALCS further found that child marriage is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas. While 18.4 per cent of all women aged 20-24 are married before age 18 in urban areas, the figure is 31.9 in rural areas.

Child marriage has disastrous and life-threatening effects on the health, protection, economic, social and psychological development and wellbeing of young girls and their children. The intergenerational cycle of malnutrition shows the pathway of how low birthweight babies become stunted adolescents who have low weight gain during pregnancy, who in turn continue the cycle by giving birth to low birthweight babies. This cycle leads to impaired mental development, more frequent infections, as well as higher maternal and infant mortality rates. Young mothers have lower iron stores leading to iron deficiency resulting in adverse effects among their children in terms of growth, development, cognitive development, and learning capabilities as well as overall physical work capacity and resistance to infections. Married adolescent girls are more likely to experience domestic violence than those who marry later; there is a clear correlation between marriage in adolescence and vulnerability to intimate partner violence (IPV). Early and adolescent childbearing deprives women and girls of education and skills required to empower and transform their lives to participate in national development. Conversely, ability to delay childbirth by several years contributes to fertility decline, health and empowerment, plus social and economic liberation.

Apart from child marriage and early childbearing, adolescents face other rights violations in Afghanistan. Even for girls who are not married nor have a child, there are several barriers to the access to education and life skills, to nutritious diet, to menstrual hygiene; the barriers can be of a material nature, or due to norms and beliefs. Boys are also likely to drop out of school (or do not access education at all) and are more likely than girls to engage in child labour or hazardous work, and this is exacerbated in humanitarian settings; they also risk being recruited by armed groups or trafficked. Boys are also more likely to migrate. Both adolescent and young girls and boys might be vulnerable and struggle to have their voice heard, to participate in decisions related to their own life and communities, and to have their rights protected and respected.

The work on adolescents, including tackling child marriage, is necessarily multi-sectoral. Multiple actors in Afghanistan work already on adolescents' rights. Only a concerted effort, under the guidance of Afghan authorities, can lead to the improvement of the life conditions of adolescents, girls and boys, and to the full enjoyment of their rights.

UNICEF work on Adolescents in Afghanistan

UNICEF's attention, both globally and in Afghanistan, is increasingly focusing on adolescents, as subjects of programmes and actors of change. In Afghanistan, in particular, the attention is on the adolescent girl, considering the disadvantaged condition of females in the country and the necessity to break the intergenerational transmission of rights violations from mother to child, especially to daughters.

The UNICEF Country Programme, initially planned to last from 2015 to 2019, has recently been extended for two years, until the end of 2021. Although the programme is not going to change substantially, the adolescents' function will be consolidated with more convergent programming and revival of the adolescent task force. In recent years, UNICEF has been focusing on adolescents needs, especially the adolescent girl, particularly with respect to education and nutrition programming. The organization is aware of the need to work also on the adolescent boys as change agents for addressing the negative gender norms and behaviours, including toxic masculinity, as well as on the gendered vulnerabilities of boys including migration and child recruitment.

[xl] It is known as *badal* the practice to trade women and girls in a marriage exchanges between families; giving away girls to settle disputes is known as *ba'ad.*

UNICEF ACO implements several programmes with a focus on adolescents, namely on community based and girls' education, the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS) programme, the Menstrual Hygiene Management programme, programmes against child recruitment and on children on the move and setting up adolescent networks. Adolescent girls and boys are trained on skills for life, with the aim to strengthen their capacities to make better-informed decisions and voice their opinion on issues that affect their lives. Adolescent and Youth Networks (champions engaging with their marginalized peers) are involved in targeted awareness-raising campaigns at local, provincial and national levels.

OBJECTIVES

The evaluation is a stock-taking of the current programming focused on adolescents in Afghanistan, with a clear focus on the interventions targeting adolescent girls and boys, considering the respective gendered risks and vulnerabilities. This is a necessary exercise considering the focus on adolescents in Afghanistan, which is also in line with the corporate focus on the second decade of life of children (Generation Unlimited). The results of this activity will be used mainly for informing age appropriate and gender sensitive programme development, raising awareness on adolescent issues based on their gendered needs in the country and mobilizing partners and resources.

The overall objective of the assignment is to map existing programming on adolescents' rights in Afghanistan – using a gender lens – in order to identify how well aligned and mutually reinforcing the programmes are in respect to achieving shared results for adolescents, particularly girls. The evaluation seeks to answer the following key questions:

- Does available evidence point to what works and what does not work in adolescents' programming (health, education, child protection, participation, etc.) in Afghanistan (Government, UN and NGOs programmes)?
- Are the current programmes designed suitably to tackle the key challenges faced by adolescents in the country? How effective are the programmes[xli]?
- Are the various adolescent-focused programmes that cut across thematic areas cohesive mutually reinforcing both in terms of programming and results? Is there a shared theory of change?
- How can UNICEF do better in adolescents programming and programme delivering? How can UNICEF create more synergies and convergences?

The focus will be on programme design and implementation, but also evidence gathered through evaluations, studies, research and reports will be taken into consideration. The portfolio evaluation, thus, will bring together the best current evidence from a range of sources and disciplines around programming related to adolescents' rights, their enjoyment or violation. It will inform the debate, advocacy, and programming both inside UNICEF and ideally, through UNICEF's advocacy and action, among other key stakeholders in the country. It will be a powerful product to inform debates and decision-making on adolescents in Afghanistan.

This document in turn will support the Afghanistan country office in the development of the next UNICEF programme in support of the Afghan government and civil society to promote and assure the respect of the rights of adolescents in the country, while paying attention to convergent planning and programming.

SCOPE OF WORK, ACTIVITIES, TASKS, DELIVERABLES

This portfolio evaluation will cover programme documents, evaluations, studies, research (according to UNICEF taxonomy) and reports on adolescents in Afghanistan, published since the current country programme period commenced in 2015 – not only by UNICEF but also by other actors. In the case of UNICEF programmes, the selected institution will furthermore look into donor reports and the respective proposals and Implementing Partners (IPs)' Project Documents (PDs) and reports). Thematically, the focus will be mainly on the programme components of the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Programme 2015-2021,

[xli] There might be some limitations in assessing the effectiveness of existing adolescent programming, which will have to be taken into consideration. However, two adolescent-focused evaluations are already available (Community Based Education (CBE) programme mid-term evaluation and evaluation of WASH in Schools programme), and a mid-line evaluation (Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan (IALA) programme) and an evaluation baseline (the Adolescent Women's Leadership Initiative in Support of Adolescent Girls (AWLI)) will be available before the end of 2019.

namely: health, nutrition, water sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection, social inclusion, humanitarian response and cross cutting issues.

The study will be directly managed by the UNICEF ACO SPEAR Section, in close coordination with the adolescent and gender specialists and with the adolescents' task force.

The selected institution will be responsible for:

- At inception stage, developing a report based on detailed desk research and key informant interviews, that includes a protocol clearly defining the timeline, methodology, sampling strategies, data collection tools, key data sources, and analytical approach. A draft of the inception report will be shared with SPEAR and adolescents task force and feedback incorporated before delivering the final inception report.
- The institution will ensure that the methodology, sampling strategy, and analytical approach meet the highest standards of technical rigor and that the conclusions and recommendations are firmly based on evidence generated.
- The institution will be required to present preliminary findings and recommendations to improve adolescent programming in Afghanistan at the end of the fieldwork and data analysis.
- Compiling a draft report and incorporating feedback from SPEAR, adolescents task force, Regional Office and external reviewers before finalizing the draft.
- Presenting findings and recommendations to UNICEF and key actors in a dissemination workshop.

The activities and deliverables under this assignment will be:

Specific activities	**Deliverables**	**Deadline (indicative)**
Desk review of the materials that will be provided, research of additional documentation, interaction with the research manager, interviews of selected Key Informants (including adolescents (possibly members of the Adolescent and Youth Networks) who might also suggest sources to inform the study, and UNICEF Implementing Partners such as Action Aid, ECW, OHW, WASSA, AKF and WV) for shaping the methodology and the fieldwork plan. The data collection tools (for KKIs and FGDs) will be provided as an attachment of the Inception Report. UNICEF will provide a non-exhaustive list of documents and key informants, which will be finalised by the contracted company during the induction phase.	**Inception report**	**End-December 2019**
Literature review (evidence gathering will have to be non-partisan and inclusive, and bringing in diverse opinions/voices on adolescent status)	**Literature review of the available evidence**	**Mid-January 2020**
Conduct the field work according to the inception report. Before leaving the country, presentation of preliminary observations to stakeholders including adolescents (possibly members of the Adolescent and Youth Networks).	**Presentation of preliminary observations** to stakeholders.	**Mid-February 2020**
Write the report and share it with the research manager.	**Draft report** (max 40-60 pages, including 4-page executive summary)	**1st week of March**

Incorporate feedback received on the draft report. The report will be considered final once it satisfies UNICEF requirements and standards.	**Final report** (max 40-60 pages, including 4-page executive summary) The Final report must contain actionable recommendations. 4-page brief presenting main findings in accessible language and infographics	**31st March**

Inception and draft reports will have to go thought an external quality assurance/review process. Ethical clearance from an Independent Review Board will be obtained after the inception phase has concluded, but prior to the start of the fieldwork phase.

METHODOLOGY

A portfolio evaluation is defined as 'efforts to determine the cohesiveness of a set of programmes or set of linked investments. Cohesiveness means the degree to which all the programme parts reinforce each other or address critical parts of the theory of change and thus are working in synergy toward a common goal' (UNICEF taxonomy guidance note, 2018).

Although each institution interested in the assignment is expected to propose a methodology and analytical approach in their proposal, and refine and finalize them in the inception report, the core of the work will be a desk review of available evidence on adolescent rights, with a gender lens, with a focus on programming, evidence generated and lessons learned from successful programmes. UNICEF has several important programmes on adolescents – Community Based Education (CBE) programme, Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan (IALA) programme and the Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative in Support of Adolescent Girls (AWLI) programme. Some evidence (including evaluations) has been produced in the framework of those and other UNICEF and partners' programmes, all of which will be reviewed and consolidated in this study.

Undertaking a review of the literature is a key part of this study. Although, because of the subject and the expected available material, this evaluation is expected to be a narrative review, thoroughness is expected, as well as rigor and impartiality. The evaluation must go beyond the act of simply describing and summarizing the main features of included programmes. It should enable investigation of similarities, differences and synergies between programmes, exploration of relationships within the available data, and assessment of the strength of the evidence, which should result in a summary of knowledge that could be used to inform practice and policy. It will have to be clear what the available material is pointing towards, as the use of the review of the available evidence on adolescents to provide insights and guidance for intervention into operational needs of practitioners and policymakers is of primary importance. This evaluation has to help practitioners to make sense of the available potentially contradictory evidence, and to draw comprehensive conclusions to support decision-making and action, which can be used with confidence for policy formulation and implementation.

Interviews of relevant UNICEF staff and potential key informants from other agencies and partners will also be undertaken in the framework of this assignment.

Moreover, 3-4 case studies will be produced, collecting primary data through Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The thematic areas of the case studies (involving field visits) will be identified, depending on available evidence, from among the programme components of the CPD, possibly nutrition, education, WASH and child protection. During the fieldwork, actors involved in selected adolescents' programmes - including, of course, the adolescent girls and boys themselves - will be interviewed, individually or in a group, in order to contribute to answering the key questions of the study with original, new perspectives and insights. Since the fieldwork will be conducted subsequent to the desk review, KIIs and FGDs will also be utilized as an opportunity to discuss with adolescents' girls and boys the preliminary findings and recommendations.

The expected product is a report containing evidence-based findings and actionable recommendations,

based on which ACO will develop a Management Response.

The final report will be shared with relevant ministries and agencies and partners working on adolescents, and a dissemination workshop will be organized, with the presence of adolescents, where the selected institution will be expected to prepare and present findings and recommendations and steer the subsequent Q&A session/discussion.

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED

The institution must demonstrate availability of staff with the following characteristics:

- Team lead with an advanced university degree in child rights, social sciences, public policy, international development or related technical fields from a reputable institution;
- Team lead with at least 10 years of professional experience in evaluation or research related to adolescents, gender, child rights or related fields; experience in the development and/or implementation of development/humanitarian programme and projects, particularly with UNICEF/UN is an advantage;
- Excellent analytical and research skills, including a sound knowledge of qualitative (and quantitative) research methods and a strong technical experience in study design;
- Demonstrated experience of conducting participatory research and evaluations with adolescents on potentially sensitive topics;
- A successful track record in conducting evaluations and studies of a similar nature (evidence synthesis; adolescents) is required. Review of prior work products will be requested during the selection process;
- Experience in working with governments and UN agencies providing support on adolescent's rights and programmes;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English are required;
- Ability to work independently and respond to feedback in a timely and professional manner;
- Ability to work in a complex and high threat environment;
- Ability to travel to remote areas of Afghanistan for fieldwork;
- Strong interpersonal, communication and organizational skills;
- Previous experience working with or completing similar assignments with UNICEF is a distinct advantage.
- At least some team members with fluency in Dari/ Pashto for field data collection

The team members' profiles are part of the company contractual engagement. Once the contract is awarded, any change in the composition of the team has to be discussed with and agreed upon by UNICEF.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Payment will be made upon submission and acceptance of the specified deliverables and submission of an invoice according to the following schedule:

- 20% upon completion of the inception report
- 40% upon completion of fieldwork
- 40% upon completion of the final report

CONDITIONS OF WORK

The consultant will be working in close collaboration with the SPEAR section and the Adolescent and Gender specialists. UNICEF ACO will provide logistical, administrative and security support where possible both in Kabul and in the field.

ASSESSMENT OF CONTRACTUAL RISKS AND PLANNED RISK RESPONSES

Risk	**Risk response**
There may be insufficient evidence to draw conclusions	The assignment will draw on both UNICEF and external evidence and will be complemented with primary data collection with adolescents and stakeholders

Findings may not be relevant to the situation on the ground	The institution will be required to involve adolescents in discussing findings and recommendations

Operation Procedure and Work Conditions

UNICEF Afghanistan will facilitate accommodation, transport, office space and other logistical support for institutions' international consultants during in-country missions. The contracted institution will be responsible for availing their own computers and electronic equipment for the duration of the assignment. The selected institution will be solely responsible for the recruitment and management of any subcontractors (individuals or firms) required to complete the assignment. All international travel should be economy class.

Annex 2: Persons interviewed

Name	Position	Organization
Sheema San Gupta	Deputy Representative	UNICEF
Ivan Ssenkubuge	Evaluation and Research Specialist	
Aye Aye Than	Youth & Adolescent Development Specialist	
Stanley Gwavuya	Chief Social Policy, Evaluation and Research Unit (SPEAR)	
Susan Yazdani	Education Officer, Herat	
Dr. Mohammad Nawrooz Ibrahimi	Child Protection Officer	
Junita Upadhyay	Child Protection Specialist	
Zahida Stanekzai	WASH Officer	
Nahira Ahmari	UNV	
Jonathan Hunter	Wash Specialist	
Din Mohammad Nazim	Community for Development officer Central Region Officer	
Enas Obeidat		
Najiba Haidary	Community for Development Officer/Youth focal	
Veronica Njikho	Gender Specialist	
Ahmad Jan Nawzadi	Communication Officer	
Helena Murseli	Girls' Education Officer	
Peter Simon Aturia	Quality Unit Education Specialist	
Hussain Mohseni	Education Officer/ Adolescent Focal Point - Bamyan	
Anita Haidary	Education Specialist/ Adolescent Focal - Eastern Region, Nangarhar	
Dr. Noor Muhammad Murad	Adolescent and Youth Specialist	UNFPA
Dr. Zelaikha Anwari	Director, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health	Ministry of Public Health
Alawi Sayed Ali Shah	Head, Child & Adolescent Health Department	
XXX	Adolescent Health Manager	
Sajia Noorzai	Director primary and secondary education	Ministry of Education
Shakiba Amir	General Manager Girls Education	
Ahmad Farid	Business Development Manager	Afghan Education Production Organization (AEPO)
Samia Hamasi and Sohrab Samim	AYN member	Youth Network (AYN)
Rayana Fazli	National Manager, Education (Programme)	Aga Khan Foundation
Ghafar Wafa	Provincial Coordinator Ghor	Organization of Human Welfare (OHW)
Said Wase Sayedi	Executive Director Herat	WASSA
Faraidoon Osmani	Programme Manager	World Vision
Maliha Malikpour	National level programme implementation NGO - coordinator	ACTION AID
Jawed Arian	M&E Manager	

Reza Arman	Head of Programme	OHW
Abdul Rahim Asr	Programme Manager	EWC
Ahmad Naveed	Project Manager	ATR
Farkhonda Tahery	Research Officer	

Annex 3: IALA, AWLI and CBE programmes: Progress against planned activities

Programme	Description of activities	Targets[42]	Achieved[43]
IALA	Establishment of MAGs for adolescent girls and boys	176 MAGs and 528 MAG sub-committees established	176 MAGs and 704 MAG sub-committees established (completed)
	Conduct life skills training	1 training package developed and 77 trainings conducted	1 training package developed and 77 trainings conducted (completed)
	Deliver life skills training to adolescents	3,520 adolescents trained 3,520 adolescents receive peer-to-peer mentoring 52,334 receive peer-to-peer sessions on the life skills curriculum 3,520 adolescents in MAGs mentored to conduct peer-to-peer sessions	3,631 trained on core training; 3,655 on refresher training (completed) 2,875 adolescents (on track to reach target) 85,573 adolescents; 78,299 adults (completed) 2,875 adolescents (on track to reach target)
	Develop and air radio soap opera	890 NHNL scenes produced and aired 26 radio education feature programs produced and aired 52,000 NHNL magazines and wall calendars developed and distributed	818 scenes produced and aired (on track to reach target) 26 radio education feature programs produced and aired (completed) 8,000 wall calendars; 20,000 magazines printed and distributed (on track to reach target)
	Provide creative self-expression opportunities to adolescents	1 training packages on self-expression developed 5 master trainers trained on self-expression 51 trainers and community mobilizers trained in self-expression 3,520 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression	Training package completed (completed) 5 master trainers trained on self-expression (completed) 54 trainers and community mobilizers trained in self-expression (completed)

[42] Targets were for July 2020 according to…. (cite project document)

43 Results achieved are as of December 2019: UNICEF (2019) IALA Implementation Status as of December 2019

		52,344 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression	3,582 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression (completed) 48,735 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression (ongoing)
	Conduct a short story writing competition	2 short story writing competitions conducted	On track
	Facilitate culturally relevant Sports for Development (S4D) interventions	176 recreation kits and art kits distributed to hub schools 52,344 adolescents who participate in creative arts and sports activities	176 recreation kits and art kits distributed to hub schools (completed) 35,782 adolescents who participate in creative arts and sports activities (on track)
	Organize live debates via radio debate to be aired through local radio	180 adolescents trained to participate in radio debates 4,500 CDs with radio debates produced 9 radio debates produced and aired 225 adolescents and adults participating in radio debates	161 adolescents trained to participate in radio debates (on track) CDs removed from plan 8 radio debates produced and aired (on track) 199 adolescents and adults participating in radio debates (on track)
	Mentor Religious Leaders on Child Rights in Islam	Number of follow up visits with religious leaders conducted to be determined	166 follow up visits with religious leaders conducted (on track)
	Orient influential community elders to advocate for prevention of harmful traditional practices	1 training package on CR, Gender and GE 54 master trainers, trainers and community mobilizers trained on CR, Gender and GE 1,375 influential community leaders (CDCs and CPAN members) trained 7,028 mentoring sessions on gender, child rights, and girls' education conducted for influential community leaders (CDCs and CPAN members)	Training package completed (completed) 54 core trainings conducted and 48 refresher trainings (completed) 1,557 influential community leaders (CDCs and CPAN members) trained (completed) Mentoring sessions removed from work plan

	Conduct community discussions with parents and families	1 training package on conducting community discussions developed 54 master trainers, trainers and CM trained on facilitating community discussions 60,651 community members participating in community discussions 176 action plans on child protection issues developed and implemented by community members	1 training package on conducted (completed) 55 master trainers, trainers and CM trained on facilitating community discussions (completed) 35,970 community members participating in community discussions (marked as completed but under target) 176 action plans developed (completed)
Programme	**Description of activities**	**Targets**[44]	**Achieved**[45]
AWLI	Train facilitators at district level	20 project staff and 80 Community Officers; and 200 Change agents in 5 provinces	209 AWLI project staff and community officers trained; 197 change agents trained (achieved)
	Conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in targeted districts	20 FGDs with 1,000 participants	20 FGDs in targeted districts with 905 participants (UNICEF reporting)/40 FGDs (Summative Evaluation Baseline Report) (achieved)
	Community dialogue involving all stakeholders	5,000 Community Dialogue with 100,000 participants	1,832 community dialogues conducted with 29,849 participants in all 20 districts (ongoing)
	Organise Reflect Circles	200 gender segregated Reflect Circles – 10 RCs per district	200 Reflect Circles formed in 20 districts (achieved)
	Establish mini-media clubs	40 mini-media clubs established in schools for boys and girls	Schools for mini-media clubs selected; equipment for mini-media clubs procured (ongoing)

[44] Targets are for December 2020 and are drawn from information contained in: S/GWI: UNICEF M&E Plan, Support for Adolescent Girls through the United Nations Children's Fund; UNICEF (2020) Half-Yearly Progress Report (15 November 2019 - 15 May 2020), Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative (AWLI) in Support of Adolescent Girls; Samuel Hall (2020) Summative Evaluation and Randomized Control Trial of the Adolescent Women's Leadership Initiative Project in Afghanistan, Baseline report (Final) May 27, 2020

45 Results are drawn from information contained in: UNICEF (2020) Half-Yearly Progress Report (15 November 2019 - 15 May 2020), Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative (AWLI) in Support of Adolescent Girls; Samuel Hall (2020) Summative Evaluation and Randomized Control Trial of the Adolescent Women's Leadership Initiative Project in Afghanistan, Baseline report (Final) May 27, 2020

	Print and distribute communication materials	20,000 leaflets printed and distributed	Communication and information materials for girls' education and prevention of child marriage developed, field-tested and being finalized; anaemia and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) materials developed by UNICEF and MoPH reprinted and distributed in the AWLI project areas (ongoing)
	Design cash grants for adolescent girls to enrol and stay in secondary school	Cash Grant Modality developed	Cash Grant Modalities finalized for Herat and Ghor provinces along with communication strategy (achieved)
	Cash grants provided to adolescent girls out of school to enrol and stay in ALCs	Provide cash grants to 1,000 beneficiaries	Activity delayed due to closure of schools and movement restriction due to COVID-19 crisis (planned)
	Develop training package on Adolescent Health and Well-being	1 training package developed	Life skills training package developed and being implemented (achieved)
	Establish safe spaces and networks for adolescent girls	5 Safe Space Centres established	Five Safe space centres established in all five provinces and functioning; Activities on promoting girls' education and child rights through Adolescent and Youth Networks (AYNs) conducted in five regions (ongoing)
	Provide life skills education for adolescent girls	600 life skills education sessions conducted for 18,000 adolescents	60 Life Skills sessions conducted for 1,710 adolescent girls in project areas (ongoing)
	Provide community based vocational training for adolescent girls	2,760 adolescent girls trained	360 adolescent girls trained (ongoing)
	Conduct secondary analysis of recent surveys and studies	Analysis conducted	Desk review of secondary data integral part of inception mission for AWLI programme evaluation. Secondary data complemented primary data collected for baseline (achieved)
	Conduct complementary national surveys to fill data-gaps	Surveys conducted	Mid-Term Evaluation of Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme, Afghanistan (2015-2019) completed; Adolescents in

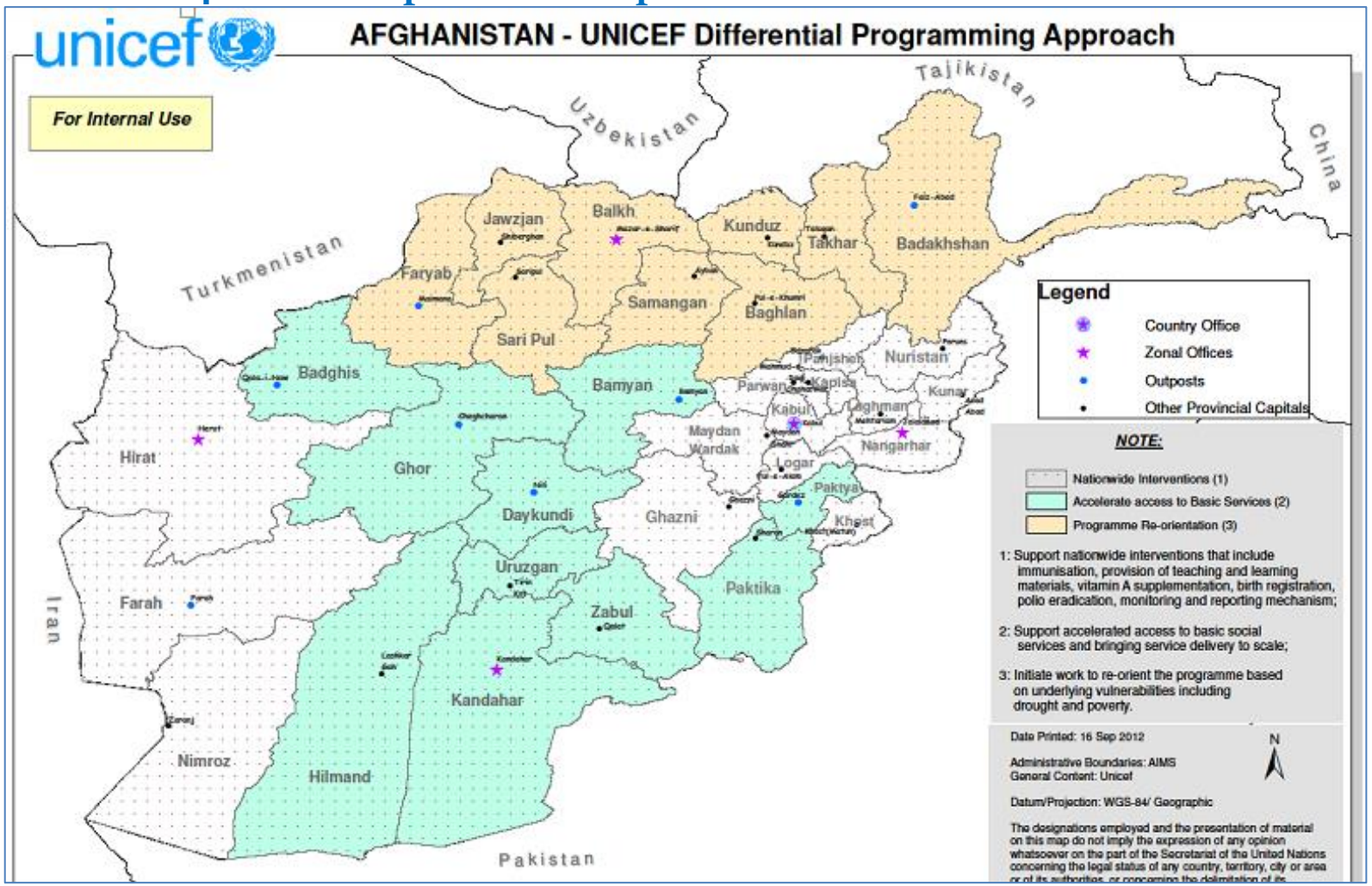
			Afghanistan: Portfolio Evaluation through Gender Lens – being conducted (ongoing)
	Documentation of lessons learned and good practices	Ongoing documentation	Lessons learned and good practices provided as part of half-yearly progress reports (ongoing)
	Monitoring and Evaluation	Functioning M&E system	Surveys and qualitative data collection methodologies built into evaluation design for data gathering to be implemented by an external consulting firm. First round of periodic monitoring completed in November 2019 while baseline data collection conducted in March 2020. A Summative Evaluation scheduled in November/December 2020, following completion of cash grant programme (ongoing)
	Description of activities	**Targets**[46]	**Achieved**[47]
CBE	Establish new community-based schools and accelerated learning centres	6,000	7,965
	Enrol students	148,000	171,215
	Distribute textbooks	100,000 CBS students and 20,000 ALC students to receive full set of textbooks	455,691 textbooks distributed
	Distribute teaching and learning material kits	240,000 CBS students and 48,000 ALC students to receive learning materials; 5,000 CBS teachers and 1,000 ALC teachers to receive teacher kits	CBE student kits reached 241,050 students in 2017 and 245,475 students in 2018

[46] Targets were for 2019 according to the Logical Framework, USAID (2015-2019) and summarized in: The KonTerra Group (2019) Mid-Term Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme (Afghanistan) (2015-2019), Final Report, May 2019.

[47] Results achieved are as of May 2019: The KonTerra Group (2019) Mid-Term Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme (Afghanistan) (2015-2019), Final Report, May 2019.

	Pay teacher salaries	5,000 CBS teachers and 1,000 ALC teachers	6,664 CBE teachers recruited and paid
	Train teachers	5,000 CBS and 2,400 ALC teachers 6,000 teachers trained on formative learning assessment	7,886 teachers trained on INSET 4,105 CBE teachers & 955 Academic Supervisors trained on formative learning assessment
	Train SMS members	2,400 communities trained	1,724 SMS members trained; training of 5,000 SMS members ongoing (with complementary funding)
	Build capacity of government staff at decentralized levels	10 PEDs trained on planning and monitoring	247 stakeholders from various categories reported trained in 2018
	Develop strategy/policy	Support MoE to develop CBE Policy & Girls' Education Policy	Revised CBE Policy completed Girls' Education Policy completed
	Conduct research/build evidence	Study on OOSC	Study on OOSC completed

Annex 4: UNICEF Operational Map



Annex 5: Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholder	Involvement in the programme	Role in the evaluation	Who
Internal (UNICEF) Stakeholders			
Afghanistan Country Office	Responsible for the country level planning and operations implementation. The CO is called upon to account internally as well as to its beneficiaries and partners for performance and results of its operation. Learning from the evaluation will be incorporated into the upcoming ACO Strategy on Adolescents lead by the Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist	Key informants as developers of strategic approach to adolescents as well as programme implementers. Commissioners of the evaluation, responsible for signing off on the evaluation findings and formulating and implementing the management response.	• Country Representative • Deputy Country Representative (Head of Programmes) • Evaluation and Research Specialist, SPEAR Section • Technical staff working on education • Technical staff working on nutrition (WIFS and WASH) • Technical staff working on gender • Technical staff working on child protection • Partnerships and Donor Relations Section • Staff working on Communications for Development
UNICEF Sub-offices in provinces of implementation	Direct beneficiaries. UNICEF staff directly involved in the monitoring of activities at sub-office level will benefit from potential recommendations around programme cohesiveness, increase of synergies, partnerships, implementation modalities and monitoring and evaluation processes.	Key informants responsible for programme implementation follow up and coordination.	• Sub-office Coordinators and managers (Child protection, Health, Nutrition and Education)
External Stakeholders			
Village/Community level			
Adolescents (with a focus on girls)	Primary beneficiaries of the programme. Improvements in the programme and UNICEF's approaches to promotion of youth, child marriage reduction and empowerment of adolescents will directly benefit current and future adolescents in Afghanistan.	Key informants and participants in phone calls.	• Mix of male/female, different age groups, with a focus on those who have been engaged in UNICEF supported interventions
School teachers and school headmasters	Direct beneficiaries. To the extent the school is a platform through which activities addressed at improving adolescent wellbeing (WIFs, MHM, hygiene, etc.) the recommendations on the	Key informants.	• Mix of male/female teachers of ALCs and schools with WASH, WIFS and MHM interventions • School Principal

	evaluation are likely to have an impact in further enhancing synergies around the schools.		
Community leaders, Shuras and Religious leaders	Direct beneficiaries of the programme. Receiving training and awareness raising. Improvements in the programme and UNICEF approaches to adolescents' challenges will allow to better integrate their expectations, roles and needs.	Participants in phone calls.	• Mix of male/female (if no female members, mothers of adolescents to be interviewed as key informants).
Parents of adolescents	Direct beneficiaries of the programme. To the extent they are engaged in community awareness raising activities.	Key informants.	• Mix of male/female; parents of adolescents participating in IALA and AWLI, in ALCs as well as under sectoral programmes
Village Malik or Mullah	Potentially part of SMS. Influence within the community.	Key informants.	• Not necessary to interview separately if already part of SMS.
Local health centres or other respondents for health/WASH/MHM/WIFS/sports/ intervention	Indirect beneficiaries. To the extent they play a role in service provision to adolescents, they will be consulted to provide their views on the evolution of services over time to adolescents.	Key informants	• Responsible people at district level, to be further identified with support of UNICEF's Sub-offices at Provincial level and Implementing partners.
Child Protection Action Networks	Indirect beneficiaries. Present in 15 provinces to support children at risk and awareness issues	Key informants	• Though an acknowledged stakeholder, not interviewed as they were suggested after the mission had been finalised
Provincial level (Bamyan, Namangan, Kandahar and Ghor)			
Departments of Education and Health, Women's Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs	Key partners and implementers of the programme.	Key informants and providers of relevant background data/information.	• Staff engaged in UNICEF-supported activities and programmes
Implementing partners' sub-offices staff in the provinces of implementation (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision Afghanistan, AEPO, WASSA, OHW and ECW)	Direct beneficiaries. Implementing partners staff directly involved in the monitoring of activities at sub-office level will benefit from potential recommendations around programme cohesiveness, increase of synergies, partnerships, implementation modalities and monitoring and evaluation processes.	Key informants, providers of relevant background material	<u>Through case study</u> • Afghan Education Production Organization (Bamyan) • Aga Khan Foundation (Bamyan) <u>In Kabul or in remote interview</u> • WASSA (Herat and Farah) • World Vision (Badghis) • OHW (Ghor and Nangahar) • EWC (Samangan)

Adolescent and Youth Network (AYN)	Direct former beneficiaries. The evaluation will look into the relevance and performance of UNICEF's support to the AYN, and potential recommendations affecting future actions.	Key informants and providers of relevant data/information.	• Leaders/coordinators and members of the AYN at provincial level (present in Nangarhar province only)
National level			
Action Aid (AWLI Consortium leader)	Direct beneficiaries. To the extent the evaluation is likely to provide an analysis on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the AWLI programme, Action Aid as consortium leader will be directly concerned by the results of the evaluation and may be engaged on follow up actions.	Key informant	• AWLI Manager
MoE	Indirect beneficiaries. As line ministry partner of UNICEF's work on Education, it will benefit from follow up actions to the evaluation's recommendations in relation with enhancement of synergies and cohesiveness of work around adolescents.	Key informants and providers of relevant background data, information and documents.	• Relevant technical staff engaged in ALCs, girls' education and adolescent education
Ministry of Women's Affairs	Indirect beneficiaries. As line ministry fore gender issues, it will benefit from follow up actions to the evaluation's recommendations in relation with promotion gender equality, women empowerment, child marriage, GBV and girls' education.	Key informant	• Policy Advisor
Ministry of Health and Ministry of Public Health	Indirect beneficiaries. As line ministry partner of UNICEF's work on WIFS, MHM and WASH, it will benefit from follow up actions to the evaluation's recommendations in relation with enhancement of synergies and cohesiveness of work around adolescents.	Key informants	• Relevant technical staff working as a partner with UNICEF on WIFS, WASH and MHM
Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs	Important stakeholder. To the extent the evaluation will provide a full assessment on UNICEF's approach and work to adolescents in Afghanistan, the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs will directly benefit from findings and recommendations aiming at further support the Youth's National Strategy in Afghanistan	Key informant	• Policy Advisor
Donors	Interested in the evaluation outcomes namely in relation to aspects of relevance, effectiveness and	Key informant	• USAID (CBE programme) • Canada

	efficiency. Findings and recommendations from the evaluation are likely to be of direct relevance to IKEA foundation (as part of the broader multi- country IALA approach), and of indirect relevance to other donors who can potentially be interested in supporting adolescent work now or in the future.		• DFID • Sweden (IKEA) • Others as per UNICEF suggestion
UNFPA	Indirect beneficiary. To the extent UNFPA plays a lead role in promotion of youth in Afghanistan, including in coordination mechanisms, UNFPA is has an indirect interest in the evaluation's results insofar these help improve UNICEF role in inter-agency processes and in other working groups relevant to adolescent's promotion.	Key informants.	• Adolescent and Youth Specialist
UN Country Team and Resident Coordinator	Harmonized UN action should contribute to the government's developmental objectives. The RC and UNCT therefore have an interest in ensuring that the programme is aligned with UN efforts.	Key informants.	• UNRC • UNFPA • UNESCO

Annex 6: Evaluation Matrix

Main Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions	Indicators	Main Sources of Information[xlviii]	Analysis
1.0 Relevance- To assess the extent to which UNICEF's interventions in Afghanistan are appropriately designed to strategically address adolescent needs?			
1.1 a) Are the current programmes suitably designed to tackle the key challenges faced by adolescent girls and boys -with a focus on girls- in the different contexts of the country, especially the most marginalized? (RFP) b) Did UNICEF identify girls' and boys' adolescent aspirations in terms of the role to play and capacities to developed in their present and future and did UNICEF incorporate these into its programming?	– Level of understanding by UNICEF of adolescent vulnerability and aspirations by gender and region – Quality of programme design (clear logic of intervention, rationale for decisions, strength and validity of assumptions, clear ToC that links intervention logics to objectives, calendar, that is feasible, resourcing, existence of log frames, measurable indicators at all levels, etc.) and nature of objectives set – Level of appropriateness of activities planned and conducted to address root causes of vulnerability and foster empowerment in adolescent boys and girls – Rationale for geographic and beneficiary targeting – Inclusion/ exclusion gaps of target groups	– Needs assessments – Existing national indicators and data on youth- disaggregated by sex – Project documents (AWLI, IALA, CBE, and sector specific: Child protection, Health and Nutrition) – Existing programme evaluations – Perception from stakeholders (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, Government line Ministries) – Perception of young girls and boys, communities, parents, and religious leaders (survey at community level) – Perception of UNICEF staff at sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and surveys
1.2 a) Did UNICEF use methods in its programme development to identify the differentiated needs, priorities and aspirations of adolescent boys and girls with a focus on girls experiencing the greater exclusion or inequality, including through needs assessments, gender assessments and participatory consultations? (RFP and added) b) To what extent has evidence been produced and used to inform adolescents programme and strategic approach (both at design and at this point and time)? To what extent do programmes use available evidence on what works and doesn't for adolescent programming? (RFP)	– Number, type and quality of analysis of needs and gender assessments conducted prior to programme design and updates during programme implementation. – Number, and quality of analysis of monitoring reports – Extent to which participatory (including adolescent girls and boys, community members and services providers) consultation was conducted prior to programme design – Extent to which programme targeting, (geographic and beneficiary), activities and modalities used were based on assessments, studies and available evidence (literature review) on adolescent programming in and outside Afghanistan (produced prior to the	– Needs assessments – Project documents (AWLI, IALA, CBE, and sector specific: Child protection, Health and Nutrition) – M&E reporting – Existing programme evaluations – Perception from stakeholders (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, Government line Ministries) – Perception of adolescent girls and boys, communities, parents, and religious leaders (survey at community level) – Perception of UNICEF staff at national and sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and surveys

[xlviii] Otherwise known as Data Collection Methods

	design and throughout the period under scope) and participatory consultation		
2.0 Coherence- To assess the extent to which UNICEF's interventions focused on adolescents are internally and externally coherent (synergies, linkages, strategic partnerships)			
2.1 a) Are the various adolescents-focused programmes that cut across thematic areas cohesive and mutually reinforcing both in terms of programming and results? (RFP) b) To what extent the adolescents' programmes are guided by clear and relevant programme theories and programme strategies? (RFP) c) Are programme theories (if existing), both strategies and results, coherence with UNICEF Strategic Plan (New) d) To what extent the programming and the ToC has integrated gender and taken into account the Gender Action Plan, not only the mainstreaming objective but also the targeted priorities? (New) e) Is there a shared Theory of Change? (RFP)	– Level of intended convergence and synergies between interventions in the explicit or implicit ToC of programmes – Level of complementarity and synergies (mutually reinforcing strategies/ approaches, convergence, geographic complementarities, operational complementarities), between adolescent programmes (AWLI, IALA, CBE) and other mainstream interventions (Child protection, Health and Nutrition). – Evidence of mutual reinforcing dynamics between interventions, including coordination mechanisms – Coherence with broader UNICEF commitments as per Strategic Plan 2018-2021	– Needs assessments – Existing national indicators and data on youth – Project documents (AWLI, IALA, CBE, and sector specific: Child protection, Health and Nutrition) – Existing programme evaluations – Perception from stakeholders (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, Government line Ministries) – UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 – Perception of UNICEF staff at national and sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and surveys
2.2 a) Are UNICEF interventions on adolescents complementary and harmonized with other relevant stakeholders' priorities and approaches (including policies and action plans)? Namely with: Deputy Ministry of Youth, Public Health and Education Ministries, Women, UNFPA and UN Women. (New) b) To what extent does UNICEF participate actively in existing coordinationxlix mechanisms that address youth/ adolescent challenges? (New) To what extent does UNICEF contribute to the definition of priority actions to reduce root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerability? (New) c) Is UNICEF working through strategic partnerships (based on comparative	– Level of alignment of UNICEF's interventions on adolescents (AWLI, IALA, CBE programmes and sector specific- Child Protection, Health and Nutrition) complementary and synergetic with other UN agencies and Government initiatives – Level of alignment of UNICEF interventions on adolescents with national priorities (National policies: Youth, Health, Education, Gender, Child protection) and UNDAF (or similar) – Evidence of and type of participation in coordination mechanisms (inter-agency coordination, working groups, high-level meetings with Deputy Ministry of Youth, etc.) – Existence and content of partnership agreements with key stakeholders, including Ministry lines and UN agencies	– National policies strategic objectives and workstreams (Youth, Health, Education, Gender, Child protection) – UNSCDF document – Project documents (AWLI, IALA, CBE, and sector specific: Child protection, Health and Nutrition) – Existing programme evaluations – Perception from stakeholders (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, Government line Ministries) – MoU and other partnership agreements with key stakeholders – Perception of UNICEF staff at sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and surveys

[xlix] Coordination and harmonisation with other actors (including Government) is considered under external coherence under the updated OECD DAC Evaluation criteria

	advantage, complementarities, burden and responsibility- sharing, equitable and mutually beneficial, transparent and mutual accountability)? (New) d) Comparative Advantage: To what extent does UNICEF have and uses a comparative advantage in addressing root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerabilities? (New) Are there opportunities missed? (New)	– Perception of UNICEF stakeholders on approach to partnership and potential gaps – Perceptions of UNICEF stakeholders on comparative advantage – Evidence of comparative advantage in practice		
3.0 Effectiveness – To assess the extent to which the programmes were effective (TOR): extent to which results have been attained				
3.1	Have activities been conducted as initially planned in the programmes (IALA, AWLI and CBE)? (New) Have adolescent boys and girls- related activities been conducted as planned under other sector specific programmes (Child protection, Education, Health)? (New)	– Level of realization of activities foreseen in programmes with focus on adolescent (IALA, AWLI, CBE) and other UNICEF work addressed at adolescent boys and girls (Child protection, Health, Education). – Level of attainment of outputs and outcomes (sex disaggregated) of all programmes with direct focus on adolescent (IALA, AWLI, CBE) and other UNICEF work addressed at adolescents (Child protection, Health, Education). – Type and quality of evidence demonstrating improvements on further empowerment, reductions of inequalities and exclusion of adolescent girls and boys	– Project documents – Monitoring reports (generated both by UNICEF and by implementing partners) – Existing programme evaluations – Perception of young girls and boys, communities, parents, and religious leaders (survey at community level) – Perception of UNICEF staff at national and sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and surveys Contribution analysis
3.2	a) Have programme outputs and outcomes for girls and boys set in programmes (IALA, AWLI and CBE) been met? (New) b) What are the gender specific results obtained (based on UNICEF ROSA gender toolkit)?			
3.3	Have outputs and outcomes set in other sectors (Child protection, Education, Health) affecting adolescent boys and girls been met? (New)			
3.4	a) Did the adolescent's programmes contribute to progress towards the achievement toward their rights and empowerment and greater equality? (RFP) b) Did they contribute to reductions of inequalities and exclusion? (RFP)			
3.5	What are the internal and external factors that have hindered or enabled the attainment or non-attainment of results?			
4.0 Efficiency – To assess the programmes' timely implementation and efficient use of available resources [1]				

[1] Cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency analysis are discarded as agreed with ACO during the Inception mission.

4.1	a) To what extent are the resources (financial and human) allocated to adolescent's programmes appropriate to support the implementation of strategies and the achievement of expected results? (RFP) b) Could the same or better results have been achieved using a different strategy? (RFP) c) Existence of duplication of activities and effectiveness of the geographic and beneficiary overlapping?	– Extent to which resources allocated (human and financial) are commensurate with needs, dimension of the ACO and available resources in ACO – Perceptions on resource gaps (human and financial) to address the challenge of youth in Afghanistan, including staff and implementing partners' capacity issues and specifically knowledge on adolescent and gender issues – Existence of resource mobilization for adolescent strategy and perspectives of future funding – Perceptions on adequacy of strategies applied to attain results	– ACO organigram – Programmes budgets – Monitoring reports (generated both by UNICEF and by implementing partners) – Existing programme evaluations – Perception from stakeholders (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, Government line Ministries) – Perception of young girls and boys, communities, parents, and religious leaders (survey at community level) – Perception of UNICEF staff at national and sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation from document review and qualitative interviews
4.2	Monitoring: How have the monitoring systems been used to gather credible evidence on programme progress (including from a gender perspective) and for taking decisions? How are the monitoring and reporting systems of the programme set up? (New)	– Assessment of Monitoring and Reporting System setup – Evidence of monitoring system evidence base (including existence of regular sex disaggregated data) – Evidence of monitoring system informing decision making and identifying bottlenecks – Perceptions of users (UNICEF programme managers, M&E staff and implementing partners) on quality and timeliness of the evidence produced	– Programme documents – M&E system – Programme reports – Perception from stakeholders (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, Government line Ministries)	Triangulation from document review and qualitative interviews
4.3	Timeliness: Are the programme activities being implemented according to its timeline? (New)	– Comparison of target and achieved outputs – Identification of bottlenecks and adjustments	– Project documents' timelines – Monitoring reports – Existing programme evaluations – Perception of young girls and boys, communities, parents, and religious leaders (survey at community level) – Perception of UNICEF staff at national and sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation from document review and qualitative interviews
4.4	Partnerships: To what extent do UNICEF partnership strategies and collaboration with stakeholders at different levels support the delivery of the programme results? (New)	– Stakeholder perceptions of partnership strategies and relative efficiency	– Existing programme evaluations – Perception from stakeholders (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, Government line Ministries) – Perception of UNICEF staff at national and sub-office level and of implementing partners (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision, ECW, OHW, AEPO, Action Aid)	Triangulation from document review and qualitative interviews

Annex 7: Details methodology

Adaptations of questions RfP

264. Below is described how the questions in the RfP have been updated for optimal data collection and analysis.

- RFP question #2.1 (*How effective are they (the programmes))*? has been turned into the overall title of the Effectiveness Section.
- RFP question #4.1 (*Considering the necessary multi-sectoral answer to adolescents needs and aspirations, to what extent did UNICEF coordinate both internally and externally when developing and delivering adolescents programmes both in emergency and longer term modality)* was considered to be framed in a too complex manner covering aspects of coordination, coherence and efficiency and thus, was replaced by six other questions:
  - Existing: 2.1 a) Are the adolescents-focused programmes that cut across thematic areas cohesive and mutually reinforcing both in terms of programming and results?
  - New: 2.2 a) Are UNICEF interventions on adolescents complementary and harmonized with other relevant stakeholders' priorities and approaches (including policies and action plans)? Namely with: Deputy Ministry of Youth, Public Health and Education Ministries, Women, UNFPA and UN Women.
  - New: 2.2b) To what extent does UNICEF participate actively in existing coordination[51] mechanisms that address youth/adolescent challenges? To what extent does UNICEF contribute to the definition of priority actions to reduce root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerability?
  - New: 2.2 c) Is UNICEF working through strategic partnerships (based on comparative advantage, complementarities, burden and responsibility- sharing, equitable and mutually beneficial, transparent and mutual accountability)?
  - New: 2.2. d) Comparative advantage: To what extent does UNICEF have and uses a comparative advantage in addressing root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerabilities? Have opportunities been missed?
  - New: 4.4 Partnerships: To what extent do UNICEF partnership strategies and collaboration with stakeholders at different levels support the delivery of the programme results?

265. Four other evaluation questions of the RFP were framed rather as conclusions/ recommendation questions, which are expected to derive from the overall line of enquiry presented in the Evaluation Matrix and thus, are the subject of the Conclusions and the Recommendations sections of the Evaluation Report. To these four, an additional one has been added following ROSA comments to the draft IR:

- Relevance: RFP # 1.3 (*How can the adolescents programme objectives, approaches and modalities be most relevant and adapted to the country different contexts for the next adolescent's programme?*) will emerge under recommendations.
- Effectiveness: RFP # 2.1 (*Does available evidence point to what works and what does not work in adolescents' programming in Afghanistan?*) will be included among conclusions.
- Coherence: RFP # 5.2 (*How can UNICEF do better in adolescents programming and programme delivering?*) will come up under recommendations.
- RFP # 5.3 (*How can UNICEF create more synergies and convergences?*) will also be included under recommendations.
- How is empowerment foundational to adolescent programming and how is this articulated, including gender transformative adolescent empowerment?

[51] Coordination and harmonization with other actors (including Government) is considered under external coherence under the updated OECD DAC Evaluation criteria.

266. The evaluation included 14 additional evaluation questions to further disaggregate the line of enquiry in the following subjects:

Table 10: Additional questions proposed by the evaluation team

	Additional question proposed	Rationale
Relevance	1.b) Did UNICEF identify girls' and boys' adolescent aspirations in terms of the role to play and capacities to developed in their present and future and did UNICEF incorporate these into its programming?	Evaluation question 1 on relevance now includes a second sub-question to reflect better the extent to which UNICEF is also addressing adolescent girls' and boys' aspirations and does not have a "*deficit-based*" approach
Coherence	2.1 c) Are programme theories (if existing), both strategies and results, coherence with UNICEF Strategic Plan? 2.1 d) To what extent the programming and the ToC has integrated gender and taken into account the Gender Action Plan, not only the mainstreaming objective but also the targeted priorities	To assess coherence with broader UNICEF commitments on adolescents/youth and integration of gender
	2.2 a) Are UNICEF interventions on adolescents complementary and harmonized with other relevant stakeholders' priorities and approaches (including policies and action plans)? Namely with: Deputy Ministry of Youth, Public Health and Education Ministries, Women, UNFPA and UN Women. 2.2 b) To what extent does UNICEF participate actively in existing coordination52 mechanisms that address youth/ adolescent challenges and aspirations? To what extent does UNICEF contribute to the definition of priority actions to reduce root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerability? 2.2 c) Is UNICEF working through strategic partnerships based on comparative advantage, complementarities, burden and responsibility- sharing, equitable and mutually beneficial, transparent and mutual accountability)? 2.2. d) Comparative Advantage: To what extent does UNICEF have and uses a comparative advantage in addressing root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerabilities and contributing to developing of youth aspirations? Are there opportunities missed?	Replacing RFP question # 4.1 (as explained above)
Effectiveness	3.1. Have activities been conducted as initially planned in the programmes (IALA, AWLI and CBE)? Have adolescent-related activities been conducted as planned under other sector specific programmes (Child Protection, Education, Health)? 3.2. a) Have programme outputs and outcomes set in programmes (IALA, AWLI and CBE) been met? 3.2. b) What are the gender specific results obtained (based on UNICEF ROSA gender toolkit)? 3.3. Have outputs and outcomes set in other sectors (Child Protection, Education, Health) affecting adolescent population been met? 3.5 What are the internal and external factors that have hindered or enabled the attainment or non-attainment of results?	To explicitly address the enquiry line to capturing levels of implementation and performance including from a gender perspective

[52] Coordination and harmonization with other actors (including Government) is considered under external coherence under the updated OECD DAC Evaluation criteria.

Efficiency	4.1 c) Existence of duplication of activities and effectiveness of the geographic and beneficiary overlapping?	At the request of the CO (comments to the draft IR)
	4.2 Monitoring: How have the monitoring systems been used to gather credible evidence on programme progress and for taking decisions? How are the monitoring and reporting systems of the programme set up?	Understanding the readiness and performance of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system (including third-party monitoring) to report on adolescent interventions seems a strategic dimension of future programming and should be assessed in the opinion of the evaluation team
	4.3 Timeliness: Are the programme activities being implemented according to its timeline?	Aspects of timeliness were raised during the inception mission with a number of stakeholders, and therefore the evaluation considers this question as opportune
	4.4 Partnerships: To what extent do UNICEF partnership strategies and collaboration with stakeholders at different levels support the delivery of the programme results.	As part of the replacement of RFP question # 4.1 (as explained above)

Changes to the proposed evaluation criteria

267.The RFP proposed the evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coordination and Coherence. To align with the updated OECD/DAC criteria, coordination have been assessed under coherence. The criterion of coherence has been included prominently among the used OECD DAC evaluation criteria to better reflect on "synergies, linkages, partnerships, dynamics and complexity". This serves well the purpose of this Country Portfolio Evaluation, which focuses on assessing the extent to which programme parts reinforce each other to address critical parts of the ToC and whether to what extent they work together towards a common goal. This criterion includes both internal and external coherence with the latter covering also aspects of coordination as follows "*External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.*"[164]

Data collection process

268. The data collection process ultimately took 27 working days. The table below shows the details of the number of days, needed for each step in the process.

Table 11: Steps and time needed in data collection

Review of the tools	2	2
Translations of the tools	3	3
Testing of the tools	1	1
Phone numbers identification	4	0
Training	4	4
Interviews (15 operators)	6	6
Translations (15 translators)	17	11
Total working days		27

269. ATR's approach to engaging field researches was as follows:

- ATR recruited field researchers with whom it has previous experience, from the area where the respondents were collected from
- ATR shared adapted Covid-19 prevention guidelines for phone numbers collection with the field researchers.
- ATR shared details with the field researchers on the research, their sampling details, an introduction they can use to introduce themselves, the research and the need for phone numbers and a sample form containing all the information to collect per future interviewees.
- ATR trained the field researchers on the base of the documents described above
- The field researchers were instructed to sample more respondents than planned, in order to ensure that the call centre reaches its targets.

GEROS quality criteria

270. The specific criteria from GEROS, that were used in framing conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for this evaluation, are captured in Table 12.

Table 12: GEROS quality criteria applied to conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

Dimension	Criteria
Conclusions and Lessons learned	Do the conclusions present and objective overall assessment of the intervention? (i) Clear and complete description of the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention that adds insight and analysis beyond the findings. (ii) Description of the foreseeable implications of the findings for the future of the intervention (if formative evaluation or if the implementation is expected to continue or have additional phase) (iii) The conclusions are derived appropriately from findings Are lessons learned correctly identified? (i) Correctly identified lessons that stem logically from the findings, presents an analysis of how they can be applied to different contexts and/or different sectors, and takes into account evidential limitations such as generalizing from single point observations.
Recommen-dations	Are recommendations well-grounded in the evaluation? (i) Recommendations are logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions (ii) Recommendations are useful to primary intended users and uses (relevant to the intervention and provide realistic description of how they can be made operational in the context of the evaluation) (iii) Clear description of the process for developing recommendations, including a relevant explanation if the level of participation of stakeholders at this stage is not in proportion with the level of participation in the intervention and/or in the conduct of the evaluation Are recommendations clearly presented? (i) Clear identification of target group for action for each recommendation (or clearly clustered group of recommendations) (ii) Clear prioritization and/or classification of recommendations to support use

Annex 8: Qualitative Training Curriculum

Separately submitted

Annex 9: Field Researcher and Call Center Operator Training Curriculum

Separately submitted

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Annex 10b: Annotated bibliography

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Assessments

1. UNICEF Afghanistan. Formative Research on Menstrual Hygiene Management in Afghanistan - Knowledge, Perceptions, and Experiences of Adolescent Girls. Final Report. Kabul, Afghanistan. August 2016.

Purpose: the research aims to inform policy makers about the gaps and unmet needs on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in Afghanistan and provide the evidence needed to improve MHM policies and programs in the country.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The study was commissioned by UNICEF as part of the "WASH in Schools for Girls: Advocacy and Capacity Building for MHM through WASH in Schools Programmes" (WinS4Girls Project). The objective of the research is to assess the knowledge, behaviour and practices of adolescent girls (aged 12-16 years) regarding menstrual hygiene management. The study identifies where adolescent girls get information on menstruation, what support systems are present at home and at schools, and what challenges they face at school and at home during menstruation. The report summarizes current MHM practices in 12 purposively sampled schools in 6 provinces (Balkh, Ghor, Heart, Kabul, Kandahar and Laghman). The report is organized in four chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the research topic and discusses the purpose and objectives of the study. Chapter 2 discusses the research methodology; Chapter 3 shares the study findings including an analysis of variation between urban and rural schools and between intervention and non-intervention schools. Chapter 4 includes final conclusions and recommendations from the research participants, government institutions, and other key informants representing different organizations.

The findings present the challenges adolescent girls face when managing their menstruation at school and factors that determine these challenges. Overall, adolescent girls face many challenges at schools during menstruation including feeling of shame, discomfort, stress, and self-isolation. Challenges were determined by limited availability of school water, hand washing and sanitation facilities; limited access to education in addition to prevalent beliefs and practices within the society; and limited sources and choices of sanitary materials. Cultural norms and beliefs strongly influenced girls' behaviour. The study found that lack of knowledge and facilities is a major reason why girls often miss school while menstruating, sometimes even dropping out of school. Over half of the schoolgirls in Afghanistan did not know about menstruation before getting their first experience, leaving them shocked and frightened when it occurs. Moreover, less than half of the girls in Afghanistan are taught about menstrual hygiene in school and majority of adolescent girls never discuss menstruation with their mothers, teachers and classmates. The traditional society in the country considers a girl who starts her 'menarche' as being ready for marriage and childbearing. In some instances, girls reported hiding their menstruation from family members due to fear that families would stop them from going to school or marry them off. The findings also discuss impact on girls' health and education, resulting in stress, absenteeism, lack of concentration and poor performance.

The study proposes the following recommendations: interventions to address issues associated with menstruation need to take a holistic approach involving improvement of conditions and functionality of WASH infrastructure at schools as well as educating girls on correct MHM practices. While designing MHM interventions, it is important that certain cultural norms and practices are taken into account to produce desirable results.

2. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA). Adolescents in Afghanistan: Snapshot. May 2017

Purpose: statistical data on growing up as an adolescent in Afghanistan.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The factsheet presents key data on demography (e.g. 1/4th of total population are adolescents, aged 10-19); socio-economic opportunities (e.g. Afghanistan is ranked 89/108 countries for gender discrimination in social institutions); governance (e.g. 7% of government expenditure spent on primary education); equality (e.g. Afghanistan is ranked 166/188 in the world for inequality in society); and legal /policy environment (e.g. adolescents are a specific target group in sexual reproductive health and family planning; HIV/AIDs prevention; tobacco control policy documents).

3. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) and UNICEF. Child Marriage in Afghanistan: Changing the Narrative. Knowledge Attitude and Practice Study. July 2018

Purpose: The study was commissioned by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled (MoLSAMD) with the support of UNICEF Afghanistan to provide an in-depth analysis of child marriage in Afghanistan for improved programming for children.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: One in three young girls in Afghanistan is married before they turn 18, however gaps in knowledge regarding prevalence, practice and drivers remain. The primary objective of the report is to provide contextualised analysis in the knowledge, attitudes and practices of communities to inform the development of future programming to either mitigate the impacts of child marriage or prevent further engagement in child marriage across Afghanistan.

Section 1 of the report outlines the research methodology and discusses key concepts (childhood, gender, social norms, economic costs and drivers) that informed the research. A mixed methods research approach was used in five provinces across Afghanistan (Bamyan, Kandahar, Paktia, Ghor and Badghis), in urban, semi-urban and rural locations, and was based on household surveys, case studies, focus groups and interviews. Section 2 outlines key research findings related to prevalence and practice, including: prevalence of child marriage remains high; girls are far more vulnerable to child marriage; religious leaders may be key influencers but not the ultimate decision-makers around child marriage; economic reasons are the key driver for child marriage. Section 3 addresses the level and quality of knowledge around child marriage and its legal and religious frameworks, as well as attitudes to child marriage: interviewed people were aware of negative impacts of child marriage that were primarily related to health impacts; knowledge of the negative effects of child marriage does not always result in a change in the attitudes towards practice; many respondents had a vague understanding of legal and religious frameworks related to marriage; attitudes to child marriage vary, but are more negative at a personal level, while the communities generally allow or support it. Section 4 illustrates the decision-making processes around marriage in the Afghan context: families, particularly male family members, are key decision-makers, with fathers often being the final decision-maker; actors outside the family influence rather than decide (religious leaders and health professionals); drivers of child marriage are various, interrelated and often structural; preventing child marriage requires developing programs and solutions that acknowledge and address complex and interconnected drivers, and the role of multiple actors in collective decision-making processes.

The final Section 5 offers recommendations regarding future programming on child marriage: 1. Reducing impacts of child marriage on existing populations; 2. Improving knowledge over raising awareness (e.g. identifying and changing social norms that support child marriage, etc.); 3. Widening and deepening understanding of child marriage as a phenomenon in Afghanistan (i.e. targeted research); 4. Coordinating for complementary programming and policy; 5. Addressing drivers (e.g. economic drivers), empowering decision-makers in child marriage; and 6. Improving legal frameworks (e.g. removing barriers to registration of marriages). Recommendations also include suggestions for further research.

4. UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO). Progress on Household Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene 2000-2017: Special Focus on Inequalities. New York: UNICEF and WHO. June 2019

Purpose: The report presents updated national, regional and global estimates for WASH in households for the period 2000-2017.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP) produces internationally comparable estimates of progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and is responsible for global monitoring of the SDG targets related to WASH. This report presents updated national, regional and global estimates for WASH in households for the period 2000-2017. It analyses inequalities in WASH services at the household level between and within countries and identifies the populations most at risk of being "left behind".

The report focuses on the WASH sector objectives, which are reflected in the global SDG targets and indicators related to WASH: 1. Ending open defecation; 2. Reducing inequalities in basic water, sanitation and hygiene services; and 3. Reducing inequalities in safely managed water and sanitation services. The report finds that significant progress has been made toward achieving universal access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene: in 2017, the population using safely managed drinking water services increased from 61% to 71% worldwide, and from 25% to 35% in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs); the population using safely managed sanitation services increased from 28% to 45% globally, and sanitation services in rural areas increased from 22% to 43%; open defecation rates decreased from 21% to 9% globally; 60% of the global population had basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home. However, despite this progress WHO and UNICEF emphasize that the numbers of people lacking WASH access are still high: around 2.2 billion people worldwide do not have access to safe drinking water, 4.2 billion lack safe sanitation services, and three billion lack basic handwashing facilities. There are also huge gaps in the quality of services provided. The report reveals that 1.8 billion people have gained access to basic drinking water services since 2000, but there are vast inequalities in the accessibility, availability

and quality of these services. It is estimated that 1 in 10 people (785 million) still lack basic services, including the 144 million who drink untreated surface water. The report also says that 2.1 billion people have gained access to basic sanitation services since 2000 but in many parts of the world the wastes produced are not safely managed. It also reveals that 2 billion people still lack basic sanitation, among whom 7 out of 10 live in rural areas and one third live in the LDCs. Since 2000, the proportion of the population practicing open defecation has been halved, from 21% to 9%, and 23 countries have achieved near elimination. Yet, 673 million people still practice open defecation, and they are increasingly concentrated in "high burden" countries. In 39 countries, the number of people practicing open defecation actually increased, the majority of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, the report highlights new data showing 3 billion people lack basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home in 2017. It also shows that nearly three quarters of the population of the LDCs did not have basic handwashing facilities. Every year, 297 000 children under 5 years die due to diarrhoea linked to inadequate WASH. Poor sanitation and contaminated water are also linked to transmission of diseases such as cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A, and typhoid. The report includes a separate chapter on strengthening monitoring. There are extensive annexes with both national and regional and global estimates for drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene.

5. UNICEF. The State of the World's Children 2019. Children, Food and Nutrition. Growing Well in a Changing World. UNICEF, New York. October 2019

Purpose: This edition of "The State of the World's Children" report examines children, food and nutrition. It seeks to deepen understanding around the causes and consequences of children's malnutrition and to highlight how different stakeholders can best respond.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: For the first time in twenty years, UNICEF's edition of *The State of the World's Children (SOWC)* examines the issue of children, food and nutrition. Despite progress in the last decades, one-third of children under 5 worldwide are malnourished – stunted, wasted or overweight, while two-thirds are at risk of malnutrition due to poor diets. At the center of this challenge is a broken food system that fails to provide children with the nutrition they need to grow up healthy. This report provides new data and analyses of malnutrition in the 21st century and outlines recommendations to put children's rights at the heart of food systems.

Chapter 1 examines the changing face of children's malnutrition. It discusses the triple burden of malnutrition – undernutrition (stunting and wasting), hidden hunger (micronutrient deficiency) and overweight - worldwide, explores the lives of children affected by severe acute malnutrition, and investigates the cost of malnutrition to children. Chapter 2 investigates malnutrition across the life of the child, from the womb to adolescence. It explores the developmental impacts of malnutrition and the unique nutritional needs and influences at each stage of childhood: early years (the first five years of life); middle childhood (ages 5-9); and adolescence (ages 10-19), including adolescent dietary habits, food choices and risks. Chapter 3 explores malnutrition in a changing world. Globalization, urbanization, disasters, conflict and climate shocks are changing children's diets for the worst and worsen nutritional prospects for millions of poor and excluded children. Chapter 4 examines the current state of responses to children's malnutrition, including the increased attention (at the global and national level) to the importance of addressing malnutrition across multiple systems, with particular emphasis on the food system in synergy with the health, water and sanitation, education and social protection systems, and on how different stakeholders are responding.

Final Chapter 5 proposes a scaled-up approach that puts children's nutritional rights at the heart of food systems and prioritizes nutrition outcomes in other key systems. Five key principles are identified to mobilize government, business and civil society to transform children's nutrition in the 21st century: 1) Empower families, children and young people to demand nutritious food; 2) Drive food suppliers to do the right thing for children; 3) Build healthy food environments for all children; 4) Mobilize supportive systems – health, water and sanitation, education and social protection – to scale up nutrition results for all children; and 5) Collect, analyse and use good-quality data and evidence to guide action and track progress.

6. UNICEF. A Snapshot of Adolescents in Afghanistan (Infographic)

Purpose: overview of the adolescent situation, 10-19 years old, in Afghanistan.

Summary and key findings/recommendations: the factsheet includes data on adolescent population; education (e.g. 28% of girls aged 15-19 are literate); marriage/protection issues (e.g. 1 out of 5 girls (17.3%)); and adolescent health (e.g. nearly 1 in 3 deaths of girls aged 15-19 years are related to pregnancy).

7. Samuel Hall. Examining the Intersection of Child Marriage & Out-of-School Children.

Purpose: advocacy for research by Samuel Hall to investigate intersection between child marriage and school attendance.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: Through its research, Samuel Hall noted a strong intersection between child marriage and out-of-school children in Afghanistan. This link between school attendance and child marriage has been confirmed by several studies investigating education in Afghanistan, suggesting a clear influence on school attendance and dropout rates from child marriage. At the same time, it is a multidirectional relationship where marriage may impact education and education may impact marriage, and moreover, a range of other factors may influence both, such as safety and security in, and on the way to, school; social norms; economic constraints, etc. According to Samuel Hall, since data in the Afghan context is limited, it is not clear whether improving school attendance alone would decrease child marriage, or whether decreasing child marriage would return girls to school.

Samuel Hall suggests that further research, in the form of a briefing paper, a small-scale qualitative study, or a larger-scale mixed methods research project, is necessary to better understand the relationship between child marriage and school attendance or education in Afghanistan, in order to inform the future development of child protection and education programming.

Evaluations and Reviews

8. UNICEF - Samuel Hall. Evaluation of "Improving Street-working Children's Access to Education and Livelihood Support for their Families" Project. September 2017

Purpose: Endline evaluation of the project with lessons learned for upscaling the initiative.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: In light of the prevalence of street-working children in Kabul, War Child UK (WCUK) and the Women and Children Empowerment Organization (WACEO) implemented a 21-month UNICEF-funded project, entitled "Improving street-working children's access to education and livelihood support for their families" from 2014 to 2016. The goal of this project was to provide greater protection to street-working children from violence, abuse and exploitation and to protect their rights to education. The project covered three dimensions: 1) access to quality education; 2) enhancing the household economic situation; and 3) strengthening social protection for children. By taking a multi-pronged approach, the project sought to increase educational attainment by street-working children (through accelerated learning classes, recreational activities, nutrition and hygiene support, etc. and eventual integration into formal government schools for 300 boys and girls), as well as to work with families and communities to minimise the drivers of child labour (e.g. income constraints and cultural attitudes) through livelihood opportunities (vocational and business development skills training, and conditional cash grants) and through children's rights awareness campaigns for family members.

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine to what extent the project had achieved its goal and objectives and to investigate the possibilities for scaling-up programmes of this nature. It has also gathered information on the context of child labour and protection issues in Afghanistan as needed. Key findings related to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria include: 1) Relevance: the project was found relevant to the needs of the participant population and UNICEF priorities, but could be better formulated to match the implementation context; 2) Effectiveness: the project has been mostly effective in project activity implementation, but did not have strong coordination amongst key actors (including the government); 3) Efficiency: the project has questionable beneficiary targeting (due to unclear selection criteria, unqualified beneficiaries; bias in participant selection) and some minor issues related to efficiency of the timeline and budget; 4) Sustainability is of educational gains is likely, but the implementation of an exit strategy and vocational training programmes did not materialize; and 5) Impact: overall, the project was reported to have a positive impact on both the well-being of street-working children and the livelihood of their families. At the same time the impact has not been optimal - with differing results for boys and girls, and a bias in participant selection.

The evaluation study found the project to be an effective pilot for similar interventions suggested the following lessons learned for refinement of the program with a view of future programming to support street-working children: 1) Differing drivers of street work for boys and girls must be taken into account necessitating different approaches for intervention; 2) Multifaceted approaches are required to address these drivers; 3) Strong, transparent program management; 4) Responsibilities must be taken on by key stakeholders at each level. The study concludes with a set of recommendations for key stakeholders to support street-working children moving forward and a concise plan of action to improve two overarching components: program management (suggesting a more rigorous approach to project design and implementation) and program elements (to ensure program activities related to education, the household economic situation and awareness of children's rights address diverse and gendered drivers of child street work).

9. Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: Afghanistan Country Study. June 2018.

Purpose: The Study establishes a baseline of the number and profiles of OOSC, outlines factors that contribute to unsatisfactory enrolment rates, and provides recommendations to key stakeholders for overcoming barriers to education in Afghanistan.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: This study, part of the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children launched by the UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UNESCO UIS), seeks to identify the barriers preventing children in Afghanistan from attending school, identify gaps in the current approaches to addressing these barriers and provide policy recommendations to move forward. It is prepared by Samuel Hall with the Afghanistan Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

The Study has five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the country context, the Afghan educational system and its key stakeholders, and the report methodology. Chapter 2 presents the data sources used as well as the profiles of out-of-school children following the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) conceptual and methodological framework and the Five Dimensions of Exclusion model. Chapter 3 explores barriers and bottlenecks to education in Afghanistan alongside three key dimensions: 1) demand-side barriers that stem from insufficient demand from the population for education (these are further disaggregated between *socio-cultural* such as social expectations (child marriage), gender, parents' level of education and *economic* such as low household income, child labour, lack of employment opportunities, among others); 2) supply-side barriers associated with lack of educational opportunities offered (i.e. lack of early childhood education, quality/quantity of teachers, quality/quantity of infrastructure, among others), and 3) political, governance, capacity and financial barriers. Many of these barriers are closely interlinked and cannot be resolved at an individual level. Chapter 4 evaluates how existing policies and interventions contribute (or not) to the needs of OOSC.

Chapter 5 offers actionable recommendations based on the findings of the study to the MoE and other key stakeholders at the national and sub-national level on how to best support out-of-school children in Afghanistan and strengthen the educational system itself. These are clustered around five key areas: 1) Making the OOSC a multi-sectoral national cause; 2) Coordination: optimizing cross-sectoral approaches among all relevant stakeholders; 3) Governance: implementing structural changes (e.g. support for the new strategy, increasing public spending on basic education); 4) Education systems: targeting vulnerable groups (specifically, provinces with disproportionately high rates of out of school girls); and 5) Learning: addressing data and research gaps (e.g. implementing a HH census). The annexes include key data tables outlined in the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative Operational Manual on which the analysis of this study is based.

10. Ministry of Education, Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA). Education Joint Sector Review. 2018.

Purpose: annual review of progress in the education sector by the MoE against National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) III objectives.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The Education Joint Sector Review (EJSR) serves as one of the key tools to measure progress in the education sector. EJSR is a process in which the MoE reviews the main programs and projects, highlights progress and achievement against goals and objectives stated in its strategic and operational plans and also the challenges, and shares its findings with stakeholders. The purpose of the EJSR is to identify critical policy and implementation issues and reach consensus on practical solutions.

The 1397/2018 EJSR looks at progress against NESP III objectives and covers its three pillars (Quality, Access and Management). It reviews all MoE programmes (General Education, Islamic Education, teacher training, curriculum, TVET and literacy). This EJSR is structured in six chapters, where the first three offer the introduction, methodology, and policy and macro-economic framework. Chapter 4 looks at the overall progress made including the statistical trends and achievements against 2018 objectives, as well as challenges to the education sector. Chapter 5 provides a brief summary of the education reform, and Chapter 6 offers a review of focus areas identified for in-depth scrutiny, and provides recommendations.

The MoE notes the following achievements and shortcomings in 2018: since 2001 the number of children has risen by almost nine times, and constituted 9.6 million students, of which 38 % were girls; the number of educational centres has increased from 3,400 to 18,073; School Shuras have played a key role in community participation in the education of children at the local level; average pass rates in 1396/2017 stood at 66% for both sexes; significant progress has been achieved in curriculum development. Shortcomings include a remaining gap in terms of access and quality improvement between provinces and between urban and rural areas; lack of female teachers; inadequate provision of textbooks and teaching/learning materials. Additional challenges that affect MoE's service delivery include: security; insufficient budget; social and cultural issues; insufficient formal teachers; and lack of standard buildings for schools.

The report describes the education reform agenda initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2018. Key elements of the reform include: a structural reform of MoE; higher involvement of the local community and civil society in the supervision of educational service delivery; a focus on educational core functions and the outsourcing of other auxiliary functions; automation of processes and procedures; decentralization of many functions to district and school level. The following focus areas were chosen for analysis in 2018 under the Access to Equitable Education pillar: OOSC and girls' education; inclusive education and children with special needs; vulnerable children (internally displaced and returnees). Under the Quality and Relevant Education pillar: formative assessment and national exams; teachers (assessment, training, credentialing); curriculum and textbooks. Under the Education Governance pillar: building public and stakeholder trust; review of recruitment process; MoE organizational restructuring; integration and automation of information systems; and corruption. The report concludes with a key recommendation outlined in the Education reform approach, namely: the importance of coordination and communication among internal and external stakeholders in developing and implementing programs to achieve the education objectives.

11. The Konterra Group. Mid-Term Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme (Afghanistan) (2015-2019): Final Report. Commissioned by USAID. May 2019.

Purpose: mid-term evaluation of the programme to inform on the progress of the programme implementation and provide recommendations for improvement.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: This report provides the mid-term evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE) Programme funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by UNICEF Afghanistan. The evaluation was commissioned by the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office (ACO) and covered the period from January 2015 to December 2018; the programme continued until December 2019. The evaluation served to inform the Ministry of Education (MoE), USAID, UNICEF, and other stakeholders on the progress of the programme, lessons learned, and to present recommendations for improvement and scaling up of the programme.

The overall outcome of the programme is to provide equitable access to free and quality education to all Afghan children. Programme activities are organized under four pillars to increase access to education for OOSC in remote communities: a) Increased access to primary education for OOSC; b) Increased capacity of community-based teachers in CBS; c) Increased awareness of communities and community leaders on the importance of education and their responsibilities in regard to CBE; and d) Increased government capacity to deliver education services to OOSC. UNICEF's primary partner on the programme was the MoE, together with its sub-national representation at the provincial and district level. CBE initiatives were implemented through the MoE to ensure national ownership and sustainability. The focus population of the programme are OOSC, particularly girls, aged 7-9 years old and OOSC and youth, especially girls, aged 10-15 years old.

The study explored evaluation criteria pertaining to Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability; Impact assessment was not part of this evaluation. Key findings under *Relevance* include: the study found the programme relevant to the context and aligned with National Policies and UNICEF strategic plans. The four pillars of access, teacher capacity, community mobilization and government capacity are very relevant for development of the programme. One relevance challenge has been the implicit treatment of CBE programming as a temporary measure parallel to MoE formal education programming. *Effectiveness*: the evaluation found the programme to be effective in producing tangible results for CBE establishment and access to education and exceeding the original targets for the Programme (e.g. 26% more CBEs established then targeted and attending to 55% more CBE students than anticipated). The integration of processes for managing CBE programming inside the MoE still appears to be under development. *Efficiency* assessed the programme timely and cost-efficient implementation and result based management. The study found that numerous areas of the UNICEF management of CBE programming have improved compared (e.g. improved monitoring capacity for CBEs and the development of UNICEF databases for tracking CBEs). However, the monitoring data is often inconsistently entered into the EMIS data system. The current monitoring information collected is primarily focused on access related dimensions while quality aspects such as tracking student learning outcomes, have not yet been integrated into the data collection. The two Programme activities that have timeliness implications for UNICEF are the delivery of the teaching and learning material kits and the teacher salaries. *Sustainability:* the overall conclusion is that sustainability is not yet achievable within CBE programming. Scale-up of the Programme is essential, but given the diversity of context, a multi-pronged, multi-sectoral application of CBE modalities and programming may be necessary. The MoE system capacity – especially for monitoring and data management – still needs to be developed. There are also significant funding and ownership concerns for sustainability that present barriers to handover of CBE programming.

The study proposes the following recommendations: the key recommendation is for UNICEF and donors to commit to continued funding and support of another CBE programme cycle in Afghanistan. The demand is great, and the systems are yet too fragile to realistically contemplate the re-allocation of resources away from community-based education. Within

the frame of a new CBE programme cycle, attention should be placed on developing exit and transition strategies with Government and the promotion of a shift to on-budget support for CBE programming. A set of 12 specific recommendations focuses on addressing evidence-base gaps in CBE programming (#1-3); developing the foundations for the next CBE programme cycle (#4-5); maximizing access (#6); strengthening capacity of the CBE Unit in the MoE (#7); strengthening capacities of CBE teachers, including female teachers (#8-9); developing guidance for MoE's academic supervisors (#10); developing a CBE transition package for the MoE (#11); and CBE Shura capacity building (#12).

National Policies and Strategies

12. Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Information and Culture, GoIRA. Afghanistan National Youth Policy. August 2014.

Purpose: the first ever Youth Policy in Afghanistan approved in August 2014.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The aim of the Afghanistan National Youth Policy (ANYP) is to systematically meet the needs of youth through an inclusive approach, involving all relevant governmental and non-governmental entities, and to design and implement short-, medium- and long-term strategies and programmes to develop youth talents, skills and potential in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres. The ANYP was developed through a consultation process that included civil society, government and youth and is designed to lead to sustainable change in the lives of young people at different levels and to address the lack of coordination between sectors involved in youth development.

The ANYP defines 'youth' as a person between the age of 18 and 35 (based on the Central Statistics Organization's (CSO) 2014 estimates, 63 per cent of Afghanistan's 27.5 million people are under the age of 25 and those between 15 and 24 years of age comprise 17% of the population). The policy also provides guidelines for adolescents (those between 12 and below 18 years of age) as this is a critical time of transition towards the youth phase of life and specifically identifies adolescents' education and health needs. The policy is based on eight values, including: "Preservation of and respect for national identity"; "Provision for social justice"; "Protection of Afghanistan's religious values and cultural heritage"; "Equal rights for youth"; "Empowerment of youth and adolescents"; among others.

Key policy intervention areas are: 1) Youth employment; 2) Adolescent and youth health (this includes revision of the existing Ministry of Public Health's National Child and Adolescent Health (CAH) Policy (2009–2013) and its associated Strategy to cover issues of adolescent and youth health rights; drug addiction; mental health; gender-based violence; and healthy lifestyles); 3) Education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET); and 4) Participation. Cross-cutting issues include gender equity in line with religious principles, peace and security, sports promotion (including development of a National Adolescent and Youth Sports Policy), and environmental sustainability. Oversight is provided by the National Youth Policy Implementation Oversight Commission, chaired by the Second Vice President.

13. GoIRA. National Action Plan to End Early and Child Marriage in Afghanistan 2017-2021. August 2016

Purpose: the first National Action Plan (NAP) developed to eliminate the harmful practice of early and child marriage in Afghanistan.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: To implement the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW), decreed in 2009, the Deputy Ministry for Youth Affairs (DMoYA) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), supported by UNFPA, UN sister agencies, sectorial ministries, and international and civil society organizations, developed and adopted a 2017-2021 National Action Plan to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage in April 2017. The NAP, to be implemented over a five-year period, from 2017-2021, complements and supports the implementation of the EVAW Law with an emphasis on early and child marriage.

The Plan includes a situation analysis of early and child marriage in Afghanistan with key statistical data; describes the consequences of early and child marriage; analyzes the drivers of early marriage in Afghanistan (including poverty, strong patriarchal values, poor access to education and cultural practices) and reviews the surrounding policy context. It adopts two approaches: 1) Outlines initiatives designed to prevent and end early and child marriage, and 2) Strives to improve the implementation of laws and provision of services to people affected by child marriage. The Plan proposes implementing comprehensive key interventions in five program strategy areas: 1) Empowering girls with information, skills, service provision and support networks; 2) Educating and mobilizing parents and community members; 3) Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; 4) Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and 5) Fostering an enabling legal and policy framework. The NAP includes the Early and Child Marriage Matrix that defines lead agencies and partners, performance indicators, timeframe and indicative budget for the proposed key interventions. The Steering Committee chaired by DMoYA with MoWA acting as co-chair is responsible for oversight of NAP implementation. Provincial NAP management committees oversee implementation at the provincial level.

14. Ministry of Justice, GoIRA. Law on Protection of Child Rights. Official Gazette, Issue # 1334. March 2019.

Purpose: Decree of the President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on Endorsement of the Law on Protection of Child Rights.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The key objectives of this Law are to determine government's obligations to ensure child rights; provide children with quality health and education services and protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation; determine responsibilities of parents; and accept the fundamental role of the child in building a society.

According to the Law, boys and girls who have not completed the age of 18 are considered children. The Law has 16 chapters and 108 articles. According to the Law, children have 34 basic rights, including: the rights to citizenship, identity, registration and birth; the right to be breastfed; the right to be prevented from any form of discrimination; the right of access to appropriate health services; the right of access to social services; the right to education and learning; the right to cultural development (including the right to freedom of speech and expression, access to information, and right to establish associations); the right to be protected from child labour and recruitment in military activities; the right to be protected from trafficking and sexual exploitation (including prohibition of Bacha Bazi (the illegal practice of misuse of boys under the age of 18)).

Oversight and evaluation of the law implementation are observed by the National Commission on Protection of Child Rights under the presidency of Vice President. Its work is supported by the Technical Committee on Protection of Child Rights at the national level and the Provincial Technical Committees at the provincial level.

15. Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Information and Culture, GoIRA. Afghanistan National Youth Strategy 2017-2021. 2015.

Purpose: the Afghanistan National Youth Strategy complements and reinforces the Afghanistan National Youth Policy by deepening the focus on youth across all areas of work.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The Afghanistan National Youth Strategy provides a national framework for implementing key policy interventions defined by the Afghanistan National Youth Policy. The vision outlined in the Strategy focuses on educating and equipping young people with productive and employable skills for economic, political and social empowerment. The Strategy provides direction for youth increased employment and active civic engagement in decision-making bodies and processes at provincial and national levels.

The Strategy enables the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs (DMoYA) to define priority areas, build agreements with partners and focus its activities. It encourages cooperation and coordination between DMoYA, youth organizations, and government and non-governmental organizations involved in issues related to youth and provides government, private sector and civil society with a common vision and a set of guiding principles for the execution of the strategy. The Strategy identifies six strategic directions (with five thematic areas and three cross-cutting themes), namely: 1) Adolescent and youth health; 2) Education; 3) Youth employment; 4) Participation; 5) Cross-cutting themes (gender equity, peace and security, and environmental sustainability); and 6) Sport. For each strategic direction, the Strategy provides a situational analysis, defines strategic objectives, proposes key interventions and a comprehensive implementation plan that includes activities, indicators, responsibility, partner(s) and budget.

Programme

16. UNICEF. Afghanistan Country Programme Document 2015-2019. September 2014.

Purpose: Overview of the Country Programme of Cooperation 2015-2019 between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNICEF.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The Country Programme of Cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNICEF was implemented from 2015 until 2019. The Country Programme Action Plan was signed in November 2014 with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after discussion with all partner ministries. The overall goal of the program is to address inequity so that all children, adolescents and women have access to services necessary to fulfil their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. Six program components/outcomes contribute to the overall goal: 1) Health; 2) Nutrition; 3) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; 4) Education; 5) Child Protection; and 6) Social Inclusion. The Country Program focuses on the most deprived provinces and aims to accelerate access of children, adolescents and women to basic social services and support national efforts to scale. At a national level, the programme supports sustainable changes in systems, policy and programme implementation. It is aligned to national priorities

including ANDS and National Priority Programs (NPP), UNDAF, and is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Partners include government at national and sub-national levels, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other civil society, bilateral aid missions, other UN agencies, and media partners.

The document provides a summary of the situation of children and women in Afghanistan and analyses the country's progress achieved over the past decade (since 2000). It reviews key results and lessons learned from past cooperation, 2010-2014 and outlines key interventions for 2015-2019 under the six programme components. Within each of the sectoral programs, UNICEF aims to reach adolescent girls for specific results, e.g., promoting maternal and newborn health under Health; for combating anaemia among adolescent girls under Nutrition; for completion of primary education, especially among out-of-school adolescents, and transition to secondary education under Education, with a specific focus on girls' education; and for preventing and ending early marriage and combating gender-based violence under Child Protection.

Implementation strategies include: a rights-based approach that combines sustainable development programming with risk-informed planning, emergency preparedness and humanitarian response; integration of security risk management; building national and local government institutional capacity; promoting innovative approaches, including use of mobile technology; and generating gender-sensitive creative solutions.

17. Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) and UNICEF. Mid-Term Review of the Country Programme 2015-2019. Summary Report. August 2017.

Purpose: Mid-term review of the Afghanistan Country Programme of Cooperation 2015-2019

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: A participatory mid-term review (MTR) of the Afghanistan Country Programme was conducted in 2017 in view of significant changes to the programming context (global, regional and country). The purpose of the MTR was to update a description of the situation of children in Afghanistan, summarize at the Country Programme mid-point the progress and constraints towards planned results, and assess the relevance and effectiveness of planned results, cross-cutting strategies and implementation choices and align the programme with key national strategies and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The MTR documented notable contributions by UNICEF, including technical support to governmental policies, strategies, planning, performance monitoring and generation, analysis and use of data. Joint World Health Organization (WHO)-UNICEF support to polio eradication was seen as a substantial contributor to the decline to only five cases by mid-2017. At the same time, the MTR found that the programme is contributing to many activities across the country, and that some activities had to be stopped in order to converge resources to make a difference on a large scale. The MTR suggested that the programme continue to have six planned outcomes in the areas of: Child Protection, Education, Maternal and Child Health and Polio Eradication, Nutrition, Social Inclusion and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. During the MTR process, programme staff and partners worked to streamline the results structure which resulted in a consolidation and reduction in the number of planned outputs and to ensure that it supported governmental priorities as per the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, ministry strategies and development plans.

The MTR made 40 strategic recommendations, including a much larger-scale humanitarian response that incorporates a nexus to development and resilience building and greater programme intensity to achieve four headline results: i) Eradicate polio; ii) Increase immunization coverage through strengthened routine vaccinations; iii) Decrease the number and percentage of girls out of school; and iv) Prevent all forms of malnutrition. Among the strategic MTR recommendations, eight recommendations suggested a significant shift in approach, namely: 1) Scale up humanitarian response for children affected by different types of emergencies; 2) Develop and implement a continuum approach of development-resilient systems, people and humanitarian response; 3) Integrate social cohesion and peace building objectives and actions into programmes; 4) Expand the current model of nutrition programming to have a much stronger emphasis on preventing malnutrition; 5) In every programme, focus more on reducing gender inequality and start a social movement for girls; 6) Focus more on getting out-of-school girls into school, and staying in school; 7) Integrate UNICEF programme activities within the Government's priority Citizen's Charter Afghanistan Programme; and 8) Achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness through convergence of as many sectors and cross-cutting strategies as possible.

18. UNICEF. Gender Strategy for the Afghanistan Country Office, 2019-2021.

Purpose: UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office's (ACO) first own Gender Strategy (2019-2021)

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: Informed by the ACO's Mid-Term Review (MTR) 2017 and a gender programme review (GPR) 2018, the Strategy was developed in line with UNICEF's global Gender Action Plan (GAP) II (2018-2021) and is a roadmap for achieving gender equality results within UNICEF programming. It has the following objectives: 1) To strengthen integration of gender equality issues across UNICEF ACO programme areas; 2) To enable and empower all staff and implementing partners to take on the responsibility to mainstream gender concerns in their work; and 3) To create an enabling environment for promoting gender equality.

The gender strategy is divided into three sections. Section I provides an overview of UNICEF's global programming on gender equality. UNICEF, through its Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021, emphasizes gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as a guiding principle, and commits to mainstreaming gender across the organization's work. It defines a dual approach of: 1) integration of gender equality outcomes across all programme areas, and 2) specific targeted gender priorities focused on empowerment of adolescent girls. Section II provides an overview of the gender equality issues in Afghanistan to provide context for gender equality programming in the country. The following gender issues in current Afghanistan context are discussed: 1) Access and quality of education including completion for girls; 2) Violence against women and children; 3) Child marriage; 4) Access to maternal, child health services; 5) Women participation in healthcare system; 6) Adolescent pregnancy; 7) Adolescent nutrition, and 8) Sanitation and menstrual hygiene management services for girls and women. Section III provides key strategies for gender equality over the remaining period of the Country Programme Document. These include: 1) Ensure gender-responsive design and implementation of key programmes; 2) Targeted gender priorities on empowering adolescent girls and women; 3) Build institutional capacity on gender within UNICEF and of partners; 4) Reinforce institutional results on gender equality, and 5) Position UNICEF as a strong gender-responsive organization within the national development and humanitarian context. The document further suggests key interventions per each strategic area and a Gender Action Plan 2019-2021 which includes outputs, corresponding interventions, indicators, timeframes and responsibility.

19. Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan (IALA) Project. Implementation Status as of end December 2018.

Purpose: Overview of project progress implementation between May 2017-December 2019 (33 out of 38 months).

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: IALA project, funded by IKEA Foundation and implemented over a period of 38 months in two Afghan provinces (Bamyan and Badghis) by the three-partner Consortium (Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision and Afghan Education Production Organization (AEPO)) in partnership with UNICEF, targets 350,000 adolescents and 100,200 parents, teachers, elders, religious leaders and other community members with the overall goal to improve the lives of adolescents by increasing the autonomy that adolescent girls and boys have over decisions affecting their lives.

Key interventions under Outcome 1, which aims at mobilizing adolescents as agents of change for themselves and their communities, include: formation and running of 176 multi-purpose adolescent groups (MAGs) in 176 communities, consisting of 3,655 (1,669 M/ 1,986 F) in-school and out-of-school adolescents as core group members; provision of life skills and self-expression training, and sports and arts activities for MAG members and their continued mentoring to become peer educators; MAG members conducting peer-to-peer sessions for adolescents on life skills and self-expression topics, organizing sports /arts events and awareness campaigns, and with these activities reaching a total of 85,573 adolescents (42,554 M/ 43,019 F) and additionally 78,299 adults (40,090 M/ 38,209 F) in their communities; developing and broadcasting radio dramas and educational feature programs as well as organizing radio debates among adolescents and decision-makers on topics concerning adolescents, such as early marriage, importance of education, child rights, etc. Key interventions under Outcome 2, which targets adults (families, communities and decision-makers) to provide support for adolescents to prevent their exposure to harmful traditional practices and participate in decision-making, include: training of 1,557 (1,189 M / 369 F) influential community leaders (community elders, CDCs and CPAN members) on child rights, gender and importance of girls' education to advocate for prevention of harmful traditional practices and support education for adolescent boys and girls; conducting community discussions in 176 target communities and reaching 35,970 (17,584 M/ 18,386 F) parents and community members with awareness sessions on harmful traditional practices and facilitating the development of 176 community action plans on child protection issues at community level.

The report notes that MAGs have the potential to support and sustain different types of development programs and learning opportunities as the project has unexpectedly grown a culture of volunteerism; MAGs have the potential and capacity within the community (if supported with basic materials) to eliminate illiteracy in their provinces; MAGs positively changed community perceptions of girls' participation in public spaces like sports, particularly adolescent girls. Community perception regarding girls' education, forced marriage, child protection, child rights and gender equality has changed significantly as a result of MAGs campaigns and workshops conducted for community members.

20. Centre for Evaluation and Development and ATR Consulting. Evaluation of the Programme on Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan. Baseline Report. December 2018.

Purpose: baseline evaluation of IALA programme.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: This baseline report for the evaluation of the Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan (IALA) programme, implemented by UNICEF Afghanistan with the financial support from the IKEA Foundation (IF) provides an overview on the key findings of the data that was collected within the baseline survey in October and November of 2017. These results present an insight into the key programme indicators. The overall objective of the IALA is to reduce the harmful traditional practices that adolescents in Afghanistan are exposed to and empower them as agents of change with the knowledge and confidence to reduce their exposure to the same. IALA has three overarching objectives - reducing child marriage, lowering the incidence of teenage pregnancy, and enhancing female educational outcomes in the form of increased secondary school (re)enrolment. This is meant to be achieved through training and knowledge building of adolescents in critical life skills, to improve their capacity to make decisions, thereby enabling them to be confident in expressing themselves or speaking about their opinions in public, or at least with their parents. The results from this report are expected to allow the evaluation team to compare the situation before and after the implementation of the programme. Results, best practices and lessons learned from the assessed provinces can then be used to scale the programme into other provinces as well.

The IALA baseline assessment report found that adolescents in the two regions were largely unable to counter harmful traditional practices (HTPs), which was often a result of poor information and low autonomy in actions that affect their lives. Only 7% of the adolescents reported knowing how to stay healthy, and as little as 17% of the adolescents knew the harms of child marriage. In terms of autonomy, only 11% considered themselves confident in making decisions that affect their future. Additionally, it was found that only 14% of the adolescents claim to have a say in decisions related to their marriage, schooling and public speaking. With regards to their own rights and how to protect themselves against violence, not even a tenth of the adolescents in the programme areas could state the measures they would take to protect themselves from violence. This is further aggravated by the low level of knowledge amongst key community influencers and parents - only 20% of the parents, around 45% of the religious leaders and 35% of the community leaders reported awareness of the harms of early marriage for adolescents.

21. Centre for Evaluation and Development. Evaluation of the Programme on Improving Adolescents' Lives in Afghanistan. Midline Report. October 2019.

Purpose: mid-term evaluation of the project to inform on the progress of the project implementation and provide lessons learned and recommendations for improvement.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: The IALA midline evaluation appraises the implementation of the IALA programme and the changes it has brought in the lives of adolescents in Bamyan and Badghis provinces. The report generates the results on key outcomes, and improvements in the mid-term outcomes and outputs included in the programme evaluation framework. This evaluation uses an impact evaluation approach to causally attribute changes in the intervention communities to the programme. The impact evaluation methodology is based on evaluating two of the three pillars of the IALA programme - adolescents themselves, as well as key community members between intervention and comparison villages selected in the same provinces. Four different questionnaires were created, each tailored to a specific subgroup, i.e. adolescents, parents, community leaders and religious leaders. It is important to mention that from baseline to the midline, a switch in the evaluation method was required.

The report has the following sections: 1) An introduction section; 2) Section 2 describes the programme design and outlines the theoretical chain of results that is expected under the programme activities and scope. It also describes the implementation within the two provinces; Section 3 describes the evaluation methodology and explains the impact evaluation strategy; Section 4 discusses the data collection and cleaning process; Section 5 describes key findings from the midline data, and the lessons learnt; Section 6 offers recommendations to be followed before the endline.

The evaluation showed that the implementation was successful in improving the adolescent education indicator, where nearly 7-9% more adolescents were found to be enrolled in some formal education institution in the intervention sample, compared to the comparison sample. The analysis also showed a reduction in the incidence of adolescent marriage as a result of the intervention. The indicator for adolescent pregnancy was surprisingly higher in the intervention areas, and also statistically significant. This could be explained by the small sample of 91 observations across only 56 villages (40 in Bamyan and 16 in Badghis), or the particularities of the sample that is analysed in the regressions. Some of the KPIs that were significantly different compared to baseline were the share of adolescents that know how to stay healthy as well as the steps they are to take, were they to face violence. In the second pillar of the programme, which covers the parents and the community members, the results are rather mixed. While in most indicators, parents are taking actions supporting the

adolescents (such as protecting adolescents' rights, or developing action plans in their favour), the community is often falling behind in the favourable resolution of the reported cases of harmful traditional practices (HTP) or early marriage in the community.

Based on the midline evaluation results, the report concludes that the adolescents appear to have been successfully mobilised and equipped in order to take actions and make decisions that support healthier lifestyles. On the other hand, parents, community and religious leaders have not been convincingly engaged to the same degree. Since this is the midterm evaluation, the report offers recommendations to be considered for improvement in the program implementation. High priority action points identified in the report are the adequate sharing of disaggregated information of programme implementation with UNICEF, in order to understand the scope of activities within each implementation village. On the programmatic side, revisions to the cascade approach, as well as additional refresher training and training material are recommended for the IALA communities.

22. Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative to Support Adolescent Girls (AWLI). Annex C - Programme Document.

Purpose: overview of the AWLI project described in the Project Document.

Summary and key findings/recommendations: Child marriage is a key impediment to girls being able to reach their full potential, including intellectually by preventing their access to education. Married adolescent girls suffer separation from family and friends, decreased opportunities for education, lack of freedom to interact with peers, and lack of livelihood opportunities. The Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative to Support Adolescent Girls (AWLI) project aims to enable adolescents, especially girls, to fully enjoy their childhood and adolescence reducing the risk of marriage and to have a healthier, safer, and more empowered life transition from childhood into adulthood. The project's objectives are to: 1) Advance engagement with communities and families to increase awareness and understanding of the costs and consequences of early marriage and the benefits of alternative options for girls; 2) Enhance and expand services, especially education and systems that invest in adolescent girls in terms of life skills and social protection; and 3) Provide more accurate data and research into the understanding of the correlation between child marriage and adolescent girls dropping out of school.

AWLI is implemented over a period of 29 months (August 2018-December 2020) by a consortium of four organizations led by ActionAid Afghanistan, funded by UNICEF Afghanistan. Other consortium members are Empowerment for Women (ECW), Organization for Human Welfare (OHW) and Women Activities and Social Services Association (WASSA). The project is spread over five provinces (Nangarhar, Samangan, Ghor, Herat and Farah) and 20 districts of Afghanistan and targets 350,000 adolescents and 100,200 parents, teachers, religious leaders and other community members as direct beneficiaries. It complements the UNICEF's Country Program outcomes outlined in the Country Program Document 2015-2019, UNICEF's multi-country project to reduce vulnerability of adolescent girls and boys to increase their autonomy over decisions impacting their lives, IALA, the GoA's National Education Strategic Plan III (NESP III 2017-2021) and other key adolescent and youth related policies and strategies. The focus of key interventions is to prevent child marriage and to support the needs of married adolescent girls which include: community members, especially parents and religious leaders understand the dangers of child marriage and adolescent girls; adolescent girls make the transition from ALCs to secondary level education (formal education); and adolescent girls have access to skills and training (informal education).

23. UNICEF Afghanistan. AWLI Project. Half-Yearly Progress Report (15 June 2019-15 Nov 2019).

Purpose: AWLI project semi-annual donor progress report (15 June 2019-15 Nov 2019)

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: This half-yearly progress report is an update on the United State Government's contribution to the project 'Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative (AWLI) in support of Adolescent Girls', for the period from 15 June to 15 November 2019. The United States Government (US State Department) made a total contribution of US$ 6,949,735.23 (2015–2020) to UNICEF to facilitate the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to reduce child marriage, mitigate its consequences, and support adolescent girls in 20 districts of five provinces. The key objectives of the project are: 1) Change perceptions on the acceptability of child marriage and mobilize communities to delay marriage by raising awareness of adolescent girls' rights, the laws in place to protect them, the negative consequences of child marriage, and the importance of educating girls; 2) Empower adolescent girls to make informed life choices through education, vocational and life skills training, and peer support networks; and 3) Map and document the status of adolescent girls in Afghanistan. Program strategies include: 1) Community dialogues to delay marriage and encourage girls' education; 2) Cash grants to motivate families to delay marriage and encourage girls' education, and 3) Map and document the status of adolescent girls in Afghanistan.

During the reporting period, key interventions under Objective 1 have included: advocacy trainings for 77 change agents in 8 districts of Nangarhar and Ghor provinces to improve participants' knowledge and skills on networking and taking collective action to conduct advocacy interventions to prevent early marriage; 200 gender segregated Reflect Circles (RFs) established as platforms for discussion of child marriage, gender-based violence and ending the harmful traditional practices among community members; 629 community dialogues in 20 districts of five targeted provinces with 6,200 community members and 20 FGDs with 905 community members conducted to support the identification of issues related to adolescents and finding solutions in line with customary and Islamic views. Action plans were developed with specific roles for individuals in the communities to raise awareness and address the identified issues. Under Objective 2, cash grant modalities for adolescent girls to enrol and stay in ALCs and / or secondary schools were modified to reflect the local context of target provinces and ensure an efficient disbursement of funds; the Life Skills training package for adolescent girls was developed; safe spaces have been selected in all project provinces in collaboration with relevant government ministries. Under Objective 3, the inception phase for the Summative Evaluation and Randomised Control Trial (RCT) of the AWLI Project was completed.

Other activities also contributed indirectly to the objective of the AWLI project in Afghanistan. These include the completion of the Voice of Youth online survey in Afghanistan, which allowed youth to share their views on access to skills, and the South Asia Youth Skills and Solution Forum's Call to Action in Mumbai, to ensure that every young person in South Asia is in learning, training, employment or entrepreneurship by 2030.

24. UNICEF Afghanistan. AWLI Project. Achievements and Fund utilization by Half-Yearly Donor Report (1 Jan 2016 to 15 Nov 2019). Overall progress update.

Purpose: This note provides a progressive update on results and targets since the beginning of the project, highlighting progress presented in six-monthly reports.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: Annex 1 to the AWLI Half-Yearly Progress Report (15 June – 15 November 2019), this document presents a progressive update on results and targets since the beginning of the grant. Key achievements for each half year include: H1 (Jan-June 2016): finalization of districts in the five provinces; adolescent programming workshop. H2 (July-December 2016): workshop to end child marriage in Samangan province with 152 participants; religious conference to end child marriage in the Western region (three provinces) with 121 key religious leaders; panel of experts on child marriage established for Western region; cash grant modality designed for all provinces. H3 (Jan-June 2017): mid-term review of UNICEF and GoA collaboration; review of the project's M&E. H4 (July-Dec 2017): child rights in Islam training for religious leaders; evaluation re-design. H5 (21 Jan - 15 Jun 2018): redesign of the implementation approach; a request for proposals requiring a consortium approach advertised, and the ActionAid Consortium chosen for a PCA. H6 (15 Dec 2018 – 15 Jun 2019): review and completion of training packages for mini media clubs, reflect circles, life skills; training of female religious scholars; 2018 annual review workshop with religious leaders. H7 (15 Jun-15 Nov 2019): advocacy trainings on prevention of early marriage for 77 change agents in Nangarhar and Ghor provinces; 629 community dialogues conducted in 20 districts with 6,200 community members (50% female representation); cash disbursement modalities developed for Herat and Ghor; 200 gender segregated Reflect Circles (RCs) established with adolescent boys and girls, women and men in 5 provinces, and 197 reflect circle quarterly meetings held in 20 districts.

25. Sayara Research. Third-Party Monitoring (TPM) and Assessment of the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS) Project. Final Report. November 2018

Purpose: a third-party monitoring (TMP) and assessment report of the performance and learning of the project meant for internal programme modification and advocacy.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: In 2015, the GoIRA Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and Ministry of Education (MoE) through technical support of UNICEF jointly started the supervised Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS) programme for school adolescent girls, 10-19 years of age, across the country to respond to widespread iron deficiency among this group and to improve their school performance and boost pre-pregnancy stores of iron for a healthy reproductive life. The programme also has a deworming component for all school-going adolescent girls in order to increase iron absorption and general health. The programme has been rolled out in all provinces in the country, except Urozgan at the time of the assessment.

The assessment had four key research objectives, namely: 1) Background characteristics on the demographic and socio-economic profile of programme beneficiaries; 2) knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) related to anaemia and iron supplementation; 3) Project implementation fidelity; and 4) Haemoglobin (Hb) levels among direct beneficiaries. A mixed-methods, stratified research approach was implemented across two intervention groups (a group of schools and communities with a longstanding WIFS intervention and a group with a recent WIFS intervention), comprised of two

provinces each. As part of the quantitative survey, blood samples from each school-based respondent were collected to measure haemoglobin. The study concluded that overall, the project had produced positive results increasing the uptake of iron and folic supplements to prevent anaemia among adolescent girls. Positive steps have been taken to increase the overall knowledge and awareness of anaemia as an illness among beneficiaries. At the same time, data highlighted that there were still some common misunderstandings about anaemia, its symptoms and prevention methods among family members of targeted beneficiaries. A decrease in retention of knowledge was also noted over longer periods of time across target beneficiaries from longstanding intervention groups in schools. With regard to project implementation fidelity, knowledge transfer among teachers, awareness of anaemia among families and community members and supplementation preparation, and instruction and supervision were measured. Haemoglobin measurement showed that that there was a higher mean Hb level among respondents who had been exposed to the WIFS programme longer than respondents with recent exposure which suggests that WIFS may have contributed to improved health outcomes for adolescent female students.

Based on the study findings, the report suggested the following recommendations: 1) Ensure that students are being continuously re-educated on anaemia on a regular basis. 2) Introduce "teaching" schedules to teachers, requiring them to continually share and review WIFS related information as well as monitor regularly. 3) Provide students more support about how to more accurately communicate their lessons to their family. 4) Better understand barriers, potentially track and encourage girls to continue to take their supplements outside of school days. 5) Considering the overall positive results of the programme reported, explore opportunities and feasibility to integrate WIFS into alternative learning platforms reaching adolescent girls as well as the feasibility to have a wider reach and integrate iron supplementation of boys.

26. UNICEF. Anaemia – Causes and Prevention. Fact Sheet. From the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation Programme.

Purpose: a fact sheet on the causes and prevention of anaemia

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: the fact sheet provides a background description of the problem of anaemia among women and children, particularly adolescent girls, in Afghanistan; it provides a description of iron and folic acid, explains causes of anaemia, its signs, symptoms and consequences. The fact sheet lists high risk groups for anaemia, describes how to prevent anaemia and provides information on the WIFS programme.

27. UNICEF. Health Promotional Materials. From the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation Programme.

Purpose: informational and promotional pamphlets containing information on anaemia and iron and folic acid tablet supplements.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: To support the consumption and use of iron and folic acid supplements, the WIFS programme developed instructive educational materials. Informative pamphlets have been prepared for four target groups: adolescent girls as peer educators, (female) teachers, families and religious leaders.

The pamphlet for teachers includes information on anaemia and its causes, how it affects adolescent girls, why adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable. It describes the national situation of anaemia in Afghanistan, explains how girls can protect themselves from anaemia and notes the responsibility of teachers to protect adolescent girls from anaemia. Information about the WIFS programme is also included. The pamphlet for adolescent girls includes information on the symptoms, causes and consequences of anaemia, explains why anaemia is common during adolescence and encourages girls to take one Iron and Folic Acid tablet each week and to have a rich diet. It also includes a monitoring table that the girls should use to track their iron and folic acid supplementation administration. The pamphlet for families describes the symptoms and causes of anaemia in girls and what happens to adolescent girls (daughters) when they are anemic; it explains the role of parents and where the girls can receive the iron and folic acid tablets. The pamphlet for religious leaders includes information on the national situation of anaemia in Afghanistan, explains causes and consequences of anaemia and why adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable, and notes their responsibility to protect the adolescent girls from anaemia.

28. UNICEF and Ernst and Young (EY). Voice of Youth – Key Insights. 3 October 2019.

Purpose: Research by UNICEF and EY to identify the aspirations, perceptions and attitudes of youths in South Asia towards education, skill development and employment.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: UNICEF and EY conducted research and analysis to identify the aspirations, perceptions and attitudes of youths in South Asia (SA) towards education, skill development and employment.

Research was conducted through surveys, open-ended questions and focus group discussions over social media and through in-person interactions with 32,000 youths aged 15-24 years in all 8 South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). The survey covered five key themes and produced the following results: 1) *Youth aspirations* are related to wage employment; education, skill development and apprenticeship; entrepreneurship; migration; work at home/housewife or househusband. 2) *Constraints to work/skill acquisition* included lack of work experience and lack of contacts/information as the top internal barriers; family pressure as a dominant factor across SA; lack of educational qualification; lack of confidence. Top external barriers to future employment included lack of job opportunities, employers demanding bribes and high cost to get to work; additionally, employers' hiring practices that are discriminatory and unfair. 3) *Youth looking for work*: most common ways included looking for jobs on media (internet and newspapers) and seeking help from personal networks. Entrepreneurship was undertaken by only 4% respondents across SA. 4) *Education and transitioning to work:* youth feel there are not enough support services available to improve employability; many youths had to leave school to work full-time to meet living costs, and others struggle to work while studying. 5) *Skill development and training:* among the SA youth, trainings received in IT, resource management and inter-personal skills were rated the highest. In terms of training required to increase employability, IT skills were the most sought-after skills.

29. UNICEF and Ernst and Young India (EY). Developing Skills in Youth to Succeed in the Evolving South Asian Economy. Afghanistan Country Report. South Asia Youth Skills and Solutions Forum. October 2019.

Purpose: Prepared for the South Asia Youth Skills and Solutions Forum, this summary brief covers Afghanistan's demographics, youth employment and training context and solutions to enhance training in the skills required to enhance employability in Afghanistan.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: This summary report includes information on the demographics and economic situation (e.g. the majority of Afghan population are rural and young; Afghanistan ranks among the world's least developed countries) and the skills building and search for employment (e.g. female labour force participation remains very low including in TVET; lack of transparency and guidance are often cited as serious constraints to find appropriate work; youth aspirations for decent work are frustrated). The report identifies potential solutions for your skills and quality employment such as: 1) Focus on enhancing employment standards in agriculture; 2) Develop vocational training opportunities relevant to the extractive industry sector; 3) Targeted investments towards improving the quality of training at vocational training institutes; 4) Facilitation of students to enter the labour market; 5) Developing alternative pathways of learning, i.e. employer-led training programs; 6) Distance learning and mobile workshops; and 7) Partnerships with other countries for vocational training.

30. UNICEF. UNICEF Guidance Note: Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation. October 2019.

Purpose: The Guidance note describes the steps to undertake for quality adolescent participation in M&E processes.

Summary and Key Findings/Recommendations: According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adolescents have the right to participate in and influence decision-making processes that may be relevant to their lives and their communities. Adolescent participation in monitoring and evaluation (APM&E) remains limited, while its benefits are widely recognized: gaining better, more authentic data on issues relevant for young people; fostering empowerment through evaluative thinking and involvement in a meaningful process; forging inter-generational partnerships leading to collective social change. The guide responds to recognition of the practical challenges in APM&E and is designed to help UNICEF staff and partners understand and explore: 1) What APM&E is and what form of APM&E can best add value; 2) If, why and how adolescents can be meaningfully and safely involved in M&E activities in different contexts; 3) Practical issues to consider when designing, planning and implementing APM&E activities; and 4) Existing tools and resources that can be used to support the APM&E process.

The guide has four chapters. Chapter 1 Introduction and Overview includes definitions of key terms (adolescent, monitoring and evaluation), reviews types of youth participation and how they relate to M&E (non-participative approach, consultative approach, collaborative approach and adolescent-led approach), and discusses added value of adolescent participation in M&E. Chapter 2 Preparatory Actions discusses six preparatory actions that need to be considered to involve adolescents in M&E. These include: meaningful participation; safe participation; buy-in and support; ethical and safe participation; resource mobilization; and building capacities. Chapter 3 Adolescent Participation in Monitoring (APM) reviews 9 steps in monitoring for results involving adolescents, including guidance and tips for each step, namely: 1) Review the theory of change; 2) Establish a monitoring core group (APM-specific step); 3) Develop a monitoring plan; 4) Define roles and responsibilities (APM-specific step); 5) Select monitoring tools; 6) Collect and analyse data; 7) Communicate and

report findings; 8) Document the APM process (APM-related step), and 9) Take corrective action. Chapter 4 Adolescent Participation in Evaluation (APE) reviews 7 steps engaging adolescents in evaluation, including guidance and tips for each step, namely: 1) Access utility, necessity, evaluability; 2) Plan and commission evaluation; 3) Manage the inception phase; 4) Provide ongoing support, including information collection; 5) Disseminate and use evaluation findings; 6) Prepare and track implementation of the management response, and 7) Use evaluation for learning.

Annex 11 : Qualitative Data Collection Tools

KII for stakeholders in Kabul, Bamyan, Ghor, Kandahar and Nangarhar

KII Semi Structured Interview Guides

Due to the COVID situation, KII interviews will be mostly done over phone, skype or another internet medium.

This guide is designed as a "semi-structured" interview guide. A semi-structured interview guide is one that is intended to provide some guidance to a conversation, but it is not intended to be read word for word nor followed exactly such as a fixed-response questionnaire.

A single guide has been developed, which is to be tailored to each stakeholder group. All notes are recorded in a response matrix and all responses for a particular evaluation matrix theme will be analysed in combination at the end of the field phase to determine emergent themes and patterns across the responses.

For the actual interview, the interviewers must re-phrase the questions as they see fit to make them appropriate for their audiences. Questions can also be omitted if they are not relevant to the respondent or if they do not seem to be generating good data and insights. Semi-structured interview guides should be seen as general skeletons, but it is up to the facilitator to provide the "meat" to the conversation. The semi-structured guide is organized as follows:

1. General, open-ended, questions that allow respondents to answer in whatever form comes to their mind first.
    a. It is important to note what people say first and to allow them to express themselves in their own words.
2. Underneath each open-ended question is a series of short checklists called "probes".
    a. These are not to be read as part of the question. Probes are intended to serve to remind the facilitator about items they may wish to inquire about more deeply as follow up.
    b. It is important to elicit concrete examples or instances from respondents as much as possible to be able to later illustrate themes identified in the evaluation report.

Each section covers a different segment of the Evaluation TOR and Matrix. The facilitator should only cover a segment if the respondent has sufficient experience or insights to address the segment.

Depending on the stakeholder and their knowledge/degree of engagement with programming for and the situation of adolescents, the interviewer should foresee about one hour on average for each KII interview.

The interviewer should introduce him- or herself and clarify the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the confidentiality of the interview (i.e. when quoting KIIs, attribution will be made to categories of stakeholders, not individuals or organizations)

KII Interview Data (Provincial and Kabul Level Stakeholders)

I am a staff member of ATR, commissioned by UNICEF to carry out a portfolio evaluation on adolescent programming in Afghanistan with a gender lens.

The review: The purpose of this review is stock-taking of the current programming focused on adolescents in Afghanistan, with a focus on the interventions targeting adolescent girls and boys, considering the respective gendered risks and vulnerabilities.

We are asking you to participate in the review because you are in a position to contribute a relevant and valuable perspective to the required information. If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by the individuals named above for a duration of maximally 1 hour.

Participation is voluntary: Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You can withdraw from the interview after it has begun, for any reason, with no penalty. You can also choose not to respond to one or more of the questions. Participating or not in the interview will not affect any benefits under programmes supported by UNICEF.

Risks and benefits: This review is designed to help improve UNICEF's engagement by learning from the perspectives of everyone involved. You may not benefit personally from being in this research review. You may report any problems to [_____*].

Confidentiality: The reports from this and the other meetings will collect and summarize the views and opinions of participants, without connecting them to specific individuals and without using names at any time. Any report of this research will be presented in a way that makes it as difficult as possible for anyone to determine the identity of individuals participating in the review.

To ensure all your feedback are properly transcript and so my boss can check the quality of my work, I would like to request your permission to audio-record this discussion. This audio record will not be shared with anybody else than the evaluation team members, who commits to keep any comments confidential.

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may call _____*

Are you willing to be part of this interview? (verbal response only requested)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Date: _____ **Enumerator: _____**

Province: **District (if applicable):** **Village (if applicable):**

Code number of participant(s)	Role or Title	Gender	Phone number

Guide for Key Informant Interviews

Relevance

- What are in your opinion the most important challenges for adolescent boys and girls? Are challenges the same for boys and girls? If not, which ones are specific to boys and which ones to girls? (*Probe for education, child marriage, violence and other protection issues, unemployment, space for sports and recreation, voice, nutrition, health etc.)*
- What programmes does UNICEF have to tackle these? Do they have a specific focus on boys or girls? If so, how?
- Do you know of any programmes for youth in your area by other organisations? If so, which and by whom?
- Are UNICEF's programmes suitably designed? If yes, what is the strong feature? If not, why not?
- Are the programmes suitable for girls? If yes, what is especially good? If not, why not?
- Who among youth are most marginalized? Are they reached with UNICEF support? If yes, how in particular? If not, who was missed?
- Do you know of any needs analyses or situation analyses that UNICEF did prior to designing its programmes?
- Have you been consulted by UNICEF prior to the development of the programme that you are currently engaged in?
- Does UNICEF consult you to check whether changes are needed to the intervention?
- Has any evidence been produced under your programme/area? Was it used to update the programme or approach?

Coherence

- Are you aware of the various UNICEF programmes to support adolescents? If so, which ones? (*Include also thematic programmes; if respondent does not know, skip next question*)
- Do you think the programmes are mutually reinforcing and cohesive? If yes, how? If not, why not?
- Do you think the various programmes together lead to a stronger result than one independent programme would have accomplished? If yes, please elaborate. If no, what is missing?
- Are you aware on any programme theories and strategies underling the adolescent programmes? If yes, please elaborate.
- Are you familiar with the broader UNICEF Strategic Plan? If yes, do you think that the current programmes reflect on this plan?
- Are you aware of any Theory of Change underlying the various programmes? If yes, does it follow the same path for all programmes? Can you briefly explain what it entails?
- Are you aware of other relevant stakeholders' priorities and approaches (including policies and action plans) for supporting adolescents? If yes, could you mention the most important ones?
- Are UNICEF interventions on adolescents complementary and harmonized with these? If yes, how? If no, what is missing? (*Skip if respondent does not know any priorities and approaches)*
- Do you know of any coordination mechanisms that address youth/ adolescent challenges? Which ones? Does UNICEF lead or participate actively in these?
- Can you think of any action by UNICEF that helped define priority actions to reduce root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerability? If yes, please elaborate.
- Do you know of strategic partnerships for adolescents that UNICEF is working with? If yes, please elaborate. Have important partners been missed? If so, which ones
- Do you think that UNICEF have and uses a comparative advantage in addressing root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerabilities? If yes, please elaborate. If not, why not?
- Do you think that UNICEF has missed any opportunities? If so, which ones?

Effectiveness

- Are you aware of progress of programme activities under IALA, AWLI and CBE? If yes, which ones? Have they been implemented as planned? If not, please elaborate.
- Are you aware of progress under sector specific programmes (Child protection, Education, Health)? If yes, which ones? Have they been implemented as planned? If not, please elaborate.
- Are you aware of programme outputs and outcomes set in programmes (IALA, AWLI and CBE)? If yes, do you think these have been met? If not, which ones not? Do you know why?
- Was the quality of implementation as expected?

- Are you aware of programme outputs and outcomes set in sectoral programmes (Child protection, Education, Health)? If yes, do you think these have been met? If not, which ones not? Do you know why?
- Was the quality of implementation as expected?
- Do you think UNICEF support to adolescents contributed to achievement of adolescents' rights, including to empowerment? If yes, can you elaborate which rights and how? If not, what was missing?
- Do you think UNICEF support to adolescents contributed to reductions of inequalities and exclusion of adolescents? If yes, can you? If not, what was missing?

Efficiency

- Do you have an insight into financial and human resources made available by UNICEF for adolescent programming? (*If respondent does not know, skip next question*)
- If yes, to what extent are these appropriate to support the implementation of strategies and the achievement of expected results? If no, what change is needed?
- Do you think UNICEF used the right strategy and approach to support adolescents? If not, what strategy or approach would have been more suitable?

- Are you familiar with UNICEF's monitoring systems? (*If not, skip next question*)
- Do you have a role in monitoring? If yes, please elaborate.
- Are the systems adequate in terms of gathering credible evidence on programme progress and to inform decision-making?
- How does the reporting system work?
- Do you know whether data from monitoring reports are used to inform decision-making? If yes, can you provide an example of something that was changed (or continued) based on monitoring data?

- Are you aware of the timeline of UNICEF activities? (*If not, skip the following question*)
- Do you know of any delays or postponements? If yes, please elaborate. Did UNICEF and its partners take appropriate action to avoid delays or to solve issues that led to delays? Can you give an example?

- With what organisations does UNICEF collaborate? (*Link also to question on strategic partnership under coherence*)
- Are these collaborations successful? If yes, how do they support the delivery of the programme results? If not, how could this be improved?

Response matrix

Relevance	Observations
– What are in your opinion the most important challenges for adolescent boys and girls? Are challenges the same for boys and girls? If not, which ones are specific to boys and which ones to girls? – What programmes does UNICEF have to tackle these? Do they have a specific focus on boys or girls? If so, how? – Do you know of any programmes for youth in your area by other organisations? If so, which and by whom? – Are UNICEF's programmes suitably designed? If yes, what is the strong feature? If not, why not? – Are the programmes suitable for girls? If yes, what is especially good? If not, why not? – Who among youth are most marginalized? Are they reached with UNICEF support? If yes, how in particular? If not, who was missed?	–
– Do you know of any needs analyses or situation analyses that UNICEF did prior to designing its programmes? – Have you been consulted by UNICEF prior to the development of the programme that you are currently engaged in? – Does UNICEF consult you to check whether changes are needed to the intervention? – Has any evidence been produced under your programme/area? Was it used to update the programme or approach?	–
Coherence	
– Are you aware of the various UNICEF programmes to support adolescents? If so, which ones? – Do you think the programmes are mutually reinforcing and cohesive? If yes, how? If not, why not?	–

– Do you think the various programmes together lead to a stronger result than one independent programme would have accomplished? If yes, please elaborate. If no, what is missing? – Are you aware on any programme theories and strategies underling the adolescent programmes? If yes, please elaborate. – Are you familiar with the broader UNICEF Strategic Plan? If yes, do you think that the current programmes reflect on this plan? – Are you aware of any Theory of Change underlying the various programmes? If yes, does it follow the same path for all programmes? Can you briefly explain what it entails?	
– Are you aware of other relevant stakeholders' priorities and approaches (including policies and action plans) for supporting adolescents? If yes, could you mention the most important ones? – Are UNICEF interventions on adolescents complementary and harmonized with these? If yes, how? If no, what is missing? – Do you know of any coordination mechanisms that address youth/ adolescent challenges? Which ones? Does UNICEF lead or participate actively in these? – Can you think of any action by UNICEF that helped define priority actions to reduce root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerability? If yes, please elaborate. – Do you know of strategic partnerships for adolescents that UNICEF is working with? If yes, please elaborate. Have important partners been missed? If so, which ones – Do you think that UNICEF have and uses a comparative advantage in addressing root causes and effects of adolescent vulnerabilities? If yes, please elaborate. If not, why not? – Do you think that UNICEF has missed any opportunities? If so, which ones?	–
Effectiveness	
– Are you aware of progress of programme activities under IALA, AWLI and CBE? If yes, which ones? Have they been implemented as planned? If not, please elaborate. – Are you aware of progress under sector specific programmes (Child protection, Education, Health)? If yes, which ones? Have they been implemented as planned? If not, please elaborate.	–
– Are you aware of programme outputs and outcomes set in programmes (IALA, AWLI and CBE)? If yes, do you think these have been met? If not, which ones not? Do you know why? – Was the quality of implementation as expected?	–
– Are you aware of programme outputs and outcomes set in sectoral programmes (Child protection, Education, Health)? If yes, do you think these have been met? If not, which ones not? Do you know why? – Was the quality of implementation as expected?	–
– Do you think UNICEF support to adolescents contributed to achievement of adolescents' rights, including to empowerment? If yes, can you elaborate which rights and how? If not, what was missing? – Do you think UNICEF support to adolescents contributed to reductions of inequalities and exclusion of adolescents? If yes, can you? If not, what was missing?	–
Efficiency	

– Do you have an insight into financial and human resources made available by UNICEF for adolescent programming? – If yes, to what extent are these appropriate to support the implementation of strategies and the achievement of expected results? If no, what change is needed? – Do you think UNICEF used the right strategy and approach to support adolescents? If not, what strategy or approach would have been more suitable?	–
– Are you familiar with UNICEF's monitoring systems? – Do you have a role in monitoring? If yes, please elaborate. – Are the systems adequate in terms of gathering credible evidence on programme progress and to inform decision-making? – How does the reporting system work? – Do you know whether data from monitoring reports are used to inform decision-making? If yes, can you provide an example of something that was changed (or continued) based on monitoring data?	–
– Are you aware of the timeline of UNICEF activities? Do you know of any delays or postponements? If yes, please elaborate. Did UNICEF and its partners take appropriate action to avoid delays or to solve issues that led to delays? Can you give an example?	–
– With what organisations does UNICEF collaborate? Are these collaborations successful? If yes, how do they support the delivery of the programme results? If not, how could this be improved?	–

Phone calls with Adults (Shura, Parents, Community members)

Semi Structured Discussion Guides

These guides are designed as a "semi-structured" discussion guide. A semi-structured discussion guide is one that is intended to provide some guidance to a conversation, but it is not intended to be read word for word nor followed exactly such as a fixed-response questionnaire.

A single discussion guide has been developed which is to be tailored to respondents if needed. All notes are recorded in a response matrix and all responses for a particular theme will be analysed in combination at the end of the field phase to determine emergent themes and patterns across the responses.

A normal semi-structured discussion guide is organized as follows:

1. General, open-ended, questions that allow respondents to answer in whatever form comes to their mind first.
   a. It is important to note what people say first and to allow them to express themselves in their own words.
2. Underneath each open-ended question is a series of short checklists called "probes".
   a. These are not to be read as part of the question. Probes are intended to serve to remind the facilitator about items they may wish to inquire about more deeply as follow up.
   b. It is important to elicit concrete examples or instances from respondents as much as possible to be able to later illustrate themes identified in the evaluation report.

Each section covers a different segment of the Evaluation TOR and Matrix. The facilitator should only cover a segment if the respondent has sufficient experience or insights to address the segment.

The facilitator should introduce him- or herself and clarify the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the confidentiality of the conversation (i.e. when quoting statements, attribution will be made to categories of stakeholders, not individuals or organizations)

Community Phone Call Discussion Guides

Now FGDs cannot be conducted as a result of Covid-19 related restrictions, the interviews will take place through phone calls with one respondent per call (see phone interview questionnaire below). The phone call is foreseen to take 15-30 minutes. Female researchers will talk to women respondents, whilst male researchers will talk to men. The introduction and process will be equal to the FGDs.

Adult Shura or Community Members Phone Call Discussion Guide

Introduce the reason for the phone call.

My name is _____. I am a researcher working for an Afghan research company called ATR consulting, based in Kabul. ATR is conducting a portfolio evaluation for UNICEF on adolescent programming in Afghanistan with a gender lens. We are talking with a number of people from different backgrounds, who are engaged with adolescents and know about or benefit from UNICEF-supported activities for adolescents in Bamyan, Ghor, Kandahar and Nangarhar.

We would like to gather your thoughts and insights on this. Your experience is very valuable, and your feedback will help UNICEF to improve their support to adolescents in future. UNICEF very much welcomes positive feedback but also negative feedback, as it will help the organization improve. And none of your feedback will bear any negative consequences for future support from UNICEF, for your district, your community or yourself. It is recommended, however, to keep this conversation confidential.

If you agree to participate, we will have a phone interview. At any moment, you can stop participating without any penalty. The phone call will last less than half an hour. Your participation is voluntary, you can refuse to join, or you can withdraw after the meeting has begun with no penalty. You can also choose not to respond to one or more of the questions. Being in this interview or not will not affect any potential benefits from UNICEF.

In reports, we will just refer to you as Shura member, community member or parent. Your inputs will be kept absolutely confidential.

This review is designed to help improve programming for adolescents by gathering opinions from everyone involved. You or your community may not benefit personally from being in this discussion. If there are any problems with the way the facilitator has conducted the discussion, any problems should be reported to _____*

T to ensure all your feedback are properly transcript and so my boss can check the quality of my work, I would like to request your permission to audio-record this discussion. This audio record will not be shared with anybody else than the evaluation team members, who commits to keep any comments confidential.

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may call _____*

Are you willing to be part of this interview? (verbal response only requested)

Phone Interview Guide

Relevance

– What do you think are the most important challenges for adolescent girls? And for boys? Are they different? (*Probe for education, child marriage, violence and other protection issues, unemployment, space for sports and recreation, voice, nutrition, health etc.)*

- Do you now of UNICEF supported programmes in your area that support adolescents? (*Respondents may not know which programme is supported by UNICEF, so please explain*)
- Are UNICEF's programmes for adolescents suitably designed? If yes, what is the strong feature? If not, why not?
- Are all programmes suitable for girls? If yes, what is especially good? If not, why not?
- Who among youth are most marginalized? Why? Are they reached with UNICEF support? If yes, how in particular? If not, who was missed?
- Have you been consulted by UNICEF or its partners prior to the development of any of the programmes in your area?

Effectiveness

- Do you think progress under UNICEF supported programmes was as expected? If progress was not as expected, what are your observations? (*See above under relevance*)
- Are you aware of the rights of adolescents? If yes, which ones?
- Did the UNICEF-supported activities help adolescents to achieve those rights? If not or only partly, what right is still not fulfilled? How can UNICEF help or improve to fulfil that?
- Did UNICEF-support help to decrease the exclusion of adolescents? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Efficiency

- What was the best UNICEF had done for adolescents? Can you think of anything that would have been better or more important to spend the money on?
- Have you been engaged with the staff members of UNICEF's partner organisation? If yes, do you think they are sufficient in number and availability? Are they knowledgeable? Are they helpful?

Response matrix

Relevance	Observations
– What do you think are the most important challenges for adolescent girls? And for boys? Are they different? – Do you now of UNICEF supported programmes in your area that support adolescents? – Are UNICEF's programmes for adolescents suitably designed? If yes, what is the strong feature? If not, why not? – Are all programmes suitable for girls? If yes, what is especially good? If not, why not? – Who among youth are most marginalized? Why? Are they reached with UNICEF support? If yes, how in particular? If not, who was missed?	–
– Have you been consulted by UNICEF or its partners prior to the development of any of the programmes in your area?	–
Effectiveness	
– Do you think progress under UNICEF supported programmes was as expected? If progress was not as expected, what are your observations?	–
– Are you aware of the rights of adolescents? If yes, which ones? – Did the UNICEF-supported activities help adolescents to achieve those rights? If not or only partly, what right is still not fulfilled? How can UNICEF help or improve to fulfil that? – Did UNICEF-support help to decrease the exclusion of adolescents? If yes, how? If no, why not?	–
Efficiency	
– What was the best UNICEF had done for adolescents? Can you think of anything that would have been better or more important to spend the money on? – Have you been engaged with the staff members of UNICEF's partner organisation? If yes, do you think they are sufficient in number and availability? Are they knowledgeable? Are they helpful?	–

Phone interviews with adolescents

Semi Structured Discussion Guides

These guides are designed as a "semi-structured" discussion guide. A semi-structured discussion guide is intended to provide some guidance to a conversation, but it is not meant to be read word for word nor followed exactly such as a fixed-response questionnaire.

A single guide has been developed, which is to be tailored to each respondent group. All notes are recorded in a response matrix and all responses for a particular theme will be analysed in combination at the end of the field phase to determine emergent themes and patterns across the responses.

For the actual discussion, the facilitator should re-phrase the questions as they see fit to make them appropriate for their audiences. Questions can also be omitted if they are not relevant to the group or if they do not seem to be generating good data and insights. Semi-structured discussion guides should be seen as general skeletons, but it is up to the facilitator to provide the "meat" to the conversation. A normal semi-structured guide is organized as follows:

1. General, open-ended, questions that allow respondents to answer in whatever form comes to their mind first.
    a. It is important to note what people say first and to allow them to express themselves in their own words.
2. Underneath each open-ended question is a series of short checklists called "probes".
    a. These are not to be read as part of the question. Probes are intended to serve to remind the facilitator about items they may wish to inquire about more deeply as follow up.
    b. It is important to elicit concrete examples or instances from respondents as much as possible to be able to later illustrate themes identified in the evaluation report.

Each section covers a different segment of the Evaluation TOR and Matrix. The facilitator should only cover a segment if the respondent has sufficient experience or insights to address the segment. The facilitator should introduce him- or herself and clarify the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the confidentiality of the discussion (i.e. when quoting, attribution will be made to categories of stakeholders, not individuals or organizations)

Phone Call Discussion Guides

The phone call will take maximally half an hour. We are interested in having people talk about their impressions of the programme in terms of achievements, challenges, and aspirations. Anything respondents talk about is valuable information so feel free to create an informal conversational environment.

The purpose the interview is to get respondents to tell stories or to describe incidents that illustrate their perceptions. As such, a semi-structured discussion guide is being used. The facilitator should try and get respondents to describe a story that illustrates their points

The phone call is foreseen to take 15-30 minutes. Female researchers will talk to adolescent girls, whilst male researchers will talk to adolescent boys. The introduction and process will be equal to the FGDs.

Adolescent Discussion Guide

Introduce the reason for the phone call.

My name is _____. I am a researcher working for an Afghan research company called ATR consulting, based in Kabul. We are talking with a number of people from different backgrounds, including adolescents. We would like to know, whether and how you have benefited from UNICEF-supported activities for adolescents. We conduct our research in Bamyan, Ghor, Kandahar and Nangarhar.

UNICEF wants to learn how to better support adolescents in Afghanistan and we want to learn from you. We are talking with a number of other adolescents as well as parents, teachers and other stakeholders the mentioned provinces. We will then analyse the information provided by all respondents.

We would like to gather your thoughts as well. We are here to learn, so just be open with us. We will listen to any ideas you want to share with us. Your experience is very valuable, and your feedback will help UNICEF to improve their support to adolescents in future. UNICEF very much welcomes positive as well as negative feedback, as it will help the organization improve. None of your feedback will bear any negative consequences for future support from UNICEF, for your district, your community or yourself.

In reports, we will make sure that no one can identify which adolescent said what. We will not share your inputs with your teachers or parents or anyone else. So, feel free to be completely relaxed and share your thoughts. It is recommended, however, to keep the interview confidential.

If you agree to participate, we will have a phone interview. At any moment, you can stop participating without any penalty. The phone call will last maximally half an hour. Your participation is voluntary, you can refuse to join, or you can withdraw after is has begun with no penalty. You can also choose not to respond to one or more of the questions.

Also, to ensure all your feedback are properly transcript and so my boss can check the quality of my work, I would like to request your permission to audio-record this discussion. This audio record will not be shared with anybody else than the evaluation team members, who commits to keep any comments confidential.

This review is designed to help improve the adolescent programming by gathering opinions from everyone involved. You or your community may not benefit personally from being in this discussion. If there are any problems with the way the facilitator has conducted the discussion, any problems should be reported to _____*

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may call _____*

Please be aware that a Quality Assurance assistant from ATR office in Kabul might call you to verify that you participate in this focus group discussion.

Are you willing to be part of this discussion? (verbal response only requested).

DEMOGRAPHICS			
Date: _____	**Enumerator: _____**		
Province	**District**	**Village**	
Type of Activity:	**No. Boys_____**	**No. Girls_____**	
Code number of participants	**Grade**	**Gender**	**Phone number of Parents**

Phone Interview Guide

Relevance

- What are the most important challenges that you face in your life? Are challenges the same for boys and girls? If not, which ones are specific to boys and which ones to girls? (*Probe for education, child marriage, violence and other protection issues, unemployment, space for sports and recreation, voice, nutrition, health etc.)*
- Do you participate in UNICEF-supported activities? If yes, which ones? (*Please list UNICEF programmes in the area*)
- Which UNICEF-supported programmes in your area are most suitable to tackle the challenges you face? What is good about them? What do you find not so good? (*Respondents may not know which programme is supported by UNICEF, so please explains)*
- Are all programmes suitable for girls? What is especially good for girls? If not, why not?
- Which young people are most marginalized? Why? Are they reached with UNICEF support? If yes, how in particular? If not, who was missed?
- Did UNICEF or its partners ever come to your area to talk about your situation and challenges, before they started the programme?

Effectiveness

- Do you think UNICEF supported activities for adolescents made progress was as expected? If not, what are your observations? (*See related question under relevance*)
- Are you aware of what adolescents' rights are? If yes, can you mention some?
- Did the UNICEF-supported activities help you to achieve those rights? Which ones? If no or partly, what right is still not fulfilled? How can UNICEF help you or improve to fulfil that?
- Did UNICEF-support help to decrease the exclusion of youth? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Efficiency

- Do you think UNICEF spent its money well in their activities for adolescents? What was the best activity? Can you think of anything more important for UNICEF to spend the money on?
- Have you been engaged with the staff members of UNICEF's partner organisation? If yes, is it easy to reach them? Do you think they are helpful? If not, what needs to improve?

- Has there been delay in UNICEF activities? If so, did UNICEF's partner explain about it? Did UNICEF and its partners solve the issue?

Response matrix

Relevance	**Observations**
– What are the most important challenges that you face in your life? Are challenges the same for boys and girls? If not, which ones are specific to boys and which ones to girls? – Do you participate in UNICEF-supported activities? If yes, which ones? – Which UNICEF-supported programmes in your area are most suitable to tackle the challenges you face? What is good about them? What do you find not so good? – Are all programmes suitable for girls? What is especially good for girls? If not, why not?	–

– Which young people are most marginalized? Why? Are they reached with UNICEF support? If yes, how in particular? If not, who was missed?	
– Did UNICEF or its partners ever come to your area to talk about your situation and challenges, before they started the programme?	–
Effectiveness	
– Do you think UNICEF supported activities for adolescents made progress was as expected? If not, what are your observations?	–
– Are you aware of what adolescents' rights are? If yes, can you mention some? – Did the UNICEF-supported activities help you to achieve those rights? Which ones? If no or partly, what right is still not fulfilled? How can UNICEF help you or improve to fulfil that? – Did UNICEF-support help to decrease the exclusion of youth? If yes, how? If no, why not?	–
Efficiency	
– Do you think UNICEF spent its money well in their activities for adolescents? What was the best activity? Can you think of anything more important for UNICEF to spend the money on? – Have you been engaged with the staff members of UNICEF's partner organisation? If yes, is it easy to reach them? Do you think they are helpful? If not, what needs to improve?	–
– Has there been delay in UNICEF activities? If so, did UNICEF's partner explain about it? Did UNICEF and its partners solve the issue?	–

Annex 12: Site Selection Description

Enumerator	Day	Proposed Sites	Name district/village	Respondent category	Gender	Planned	Reached
Bamyan Province							
		District B1	Panjab				
1 (F)	1	Village B1.1	Tarbolaq	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
2 (M)		Province capital	Bamyan	UNICEF local staff	M	1	1
				NGO staff	F	1	1
				Government staff department level	F	1	1
1 (F)	2	Village B1.2	Mohr	Adolescents	F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
2 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
1 (F)	3	Village B1.3	Tarapas	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
2 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	M	1	1
1 (F)	4	Village B1.4	Tagab Barg	Parents/community members	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
2 (M)				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**33**
		District B2	Yakawolang				
3 (F)	1	Village B2.1	Kiligan	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
4 (M)		Province capital	Bamyan	UNICEF local staff	M	1	1
				NGO staff	M	1	1
				Government staff department level	M	1	1
3 (F)	2	Village B2.2	Dahan e Darachasht	Adolescents	F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
4 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
3 (F)	3	Village B2.3	Do Ab Shah Qadam	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
4 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	M	1	1
3 (F)	4	Village B2.4	Sabz Dara	Parents/community members	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
4 (M)				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**33**
Ghor Province							

		District G1	Firozkoh				
5 (F)	1	VillageG1.1	Bandgah Sahmal	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
6 (M)		Province capital	Chaghcharan	UNICEF local staff	F	1	1
				NGO staff	M	1	1
				Government staff department level	M	1	1
5 (F)	2	Village G1.2	Bahairi Olya	Adolescents	M/F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
6 (F)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
5 (F)	3	Village G1.3	Awlad Haji	Adolescents	M/F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
6 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	M	1	1
5 (F)	4	Village G1.4	Baba Nazar	Parents/community members	M	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
6 (M)				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**33**
		District G2	Lal War Sarjangal				
7 (F)	1	Village G2.1	Ghar Sangag	Adolescents	M/F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
8 (M)		Province capital	Chaghcharan	UNICEF local staff	M/F	1	0
				NGO staff	M	1	1
				Government staff department level	M	1	1
7 (F)	2	Village G2.2	Sari Qimaghi	Adolescents	M/F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
8 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
7 (F)	3	Village G2.3	Deh Amirdad	Adolescents	M/F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
8 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	M	1	1
7 (F)	4	Village G2.4	Naw Usman	Parents/community members	M	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
8 (M)				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**32**
Nangarhar Province							
		District N1	Kama				
9 (F)	1	Village N1.1	Basid khail	Adolescents	M/F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1

10 (M)		Province capital	Jalalabad	UNICEF local staff		1	0
				NGO staff	M	1	1
				Government staff department level	M	1	1
9 (F)	2	Village N1.2	Qalia Akhond	Adolescents	M/F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
10 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
9 (F)	3	Village N1.3	Merano Kala	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
10 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	F	1	1
9 (F)	4	Village N1.4	Miagano kalai	Parents/community members	M/F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
10 (M)				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**32**
		District N2	Jalalabad				
11 (F)	1	Village N2.1	Nahia 1	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	F	1	1
12 (M)		Province capital	Jalalabad	UNICEF local staff	F	1	1
				NGO staff	F	1	1
				Government staff department level	M	1	1
11 (F)	2	Village N2.2	Nahia 3	Adolescents	F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
12 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
11 (F)	3	Village N2.3	Nahia 4	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
12 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	F	1	1
11 (F)	4	Village N2.4	Nahia 5	Parents/community members	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
12 (MO				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**33**
Kandahar Province							
		District K1	Kandahar				
13 (F)	1	Village K1.1	District baba wali pump	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
14 (M)		Province capital	Kandahar	UNICEF local staff		1	0
				NGO staff	M	1	1
				Government staff department level	M	1	1

13 (F)	2	Village K1.2	Dist#12, Family	Adolescents	F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
14 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
13 (F)	3	Village K1.3	Nazar Mohammad, Awolya	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
14 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	M	1	1
13 (F)	4	Village K1.4	Mohammadi Masjid	Parents/community members	M	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
14 (M)				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**32**
		District K2	Daman				
15 (F)	1	Village K2.1	Haji Nani Agha Kalay, Malang Kariz	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
16 (M)		Province capital	Kandahar	UNICEF local staff		1	0
				NGO staff	M	1	2
				Government staff department level	M	1	1
15 (F)	2	Village K2.2	Abdul Razaq Kalacha, Supreme	Adolescents	F	3	3
				School principal	M	1	1
16 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Parents/community members	M	1	1
15 (F)	3	Village K2.3	Ghar	Adolescents	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
16 (M)				Shura members	M	3	3
				Teachers	M	1	1
15 (F)	4	Village K2.4	Pataq	Parents/community members	F	3	3
				Local Government staff	M	1	1
16 (M)				Adolescents	M	3	3
				Community leaders	M	3	3
					Sub total	**33**	**33**
					Total	**264**	

Selected districts/villages and UNICEF-supported activities for adolescents in locations

Province	District	Villages	Activities for adolescents	District	Villages	Activities for adolescents
Bamyan	1 Panjab	1 Tarbolaq	MAG, School, CLTS, MAG subgroup	2 Yakawolang	1 Kiligan	MAG, School, Community Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS)
		2Mohr	MAG, School, Clinic, literacy, CLTS		2 Dahan e Darachasht	MAG, School, CLTS
		3 Tarapas	MAG, school, Literacy, CLTS		3 Do Ab Shah Qadam	MAG, School, CLTS
		4 Tagab Barg	MAG, school, CLTS		4 Sabz Dara	MAG, School, CLTS
Nangarhar	1 Kama	1 Basid khail	WASH: Provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene promotion	2 Jalalabad	1 Nahia 1	AWLI: Community dialogue, Reflect Circle formation, change agent, FGD
		2 Qalia Akhond	Education: GATE Scholarship for female graduates to become teacher		2 Nahia 3	
		3 Merano Kala	AWLI: Community dialogue, Reflect Circle formation, change agent, FGD		3 Nahia 4	
		4 Miagano kalai	AWLI: Community dialogue, RC formation, change agent, FGD		4 Nahia 5	
Ghor	1 Firozkoh	1 Bandgah Sahmal	AWLI	2 Lal War Sarjangal	1 Ghar SaNGAG	AWLI
		2 Bahairi Olya	AWLI		2 Sari Qimaghi	AWLI
		3 Awlad Haji	AWLI		3 Deh Amirdad	AWLI
		4 Baba Nazar	AWLI		4 Naw Usman	AWLI
Kandahar	1 Kandahar	1 district baba wali pump	CBE	2 Daman	1 Haji Nani Agha Kalay, Malang Kariz	CBS
		2 Dist#12, Family	Education in Emergencies (EiE)		2 Abdul Razaq Kalacha, Supreme	CBS
		3 Nazar Mohammad, Awolya	CLTS, WS, Adam Darmal Health Facility Near to water Reservoir		3 Ghar	WinS
		4 Mohammadi Masjid	CLTS, Amirjan Health Facility		Haji Mohammad Shah	

Annex 13: COVID-19 Prevention Guideline

Separately submitted

Annex 14: Research Ethics Approval

unicef | for every child

Research Ethics Approval

8 June 2020

Hermania Majoor (Team Leader)
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700 12th St NW
Washington, DC 20005 USA

RE: Ethics Review Board findings for: *Adolescents in Afghanistan: A portfolio evaluation with a gender lens (2015–2019)* (Review #251EAFG20)

Dear Hermania Majoor,

Protocols for the protection of human subjects in the above study were assessed through a research ethics review by HML Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 26 May – 08 June 2020. This study's human subjects' protection protocols, as stated in the materials submitted, received **ethics review approval.**

You and your project staff remain responsible for ensuring compliance with HML IRB's determinations. Those responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring prompt reporting to HML IRB of proposed changes in this study's design, risks, consent, or other human protection protocols and providing copies of any revised materials;
- conducting the research activity in accordance with the terms of the IRB approval until any proposed changes have been reviewed and approved by the IRB, except when necessary to mitigate hazards to subjects;
- promptly reporting any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others in the course of this study;
- notifying HML IRB when your study is completed.

HML IRB is authorized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Research Protections (IRB #1211, IORG #850), and has DHHS Federal-Wide Assurance approval (FWA #1102).

Sincerely,

D. Michael Anderson, Ph.D., MPH
Chair & Human Subjects Protections Director, HML IRB

cc: Ivan Ssenkubuge, Minaa Rayan, Aye Than, Stanley Gwavuya, Penelope Lantz, JD

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Annex 15: Guardian consent form

Guardian Consent Form

My name is [.....], I am a researcher of ATR, and a member of an evaluation team, commissioned by UNICEF to carry out a portfolio evaluation on adolescent programming in Afghanistan with a gender lens.

We are asking your child to participate in this review, because he/she is in a position to contribute a relevant and valuable perspective to the required information. If you agree to your child's participation, he/she will be interviewed by the person named above for a duration of maximally one and a half hour (half an hour in case of telephone interview).

Participation of the child in the interview is voluntary. He/she can withdraw from the interview after it has begun, for any reason, with no penalty. He/she can also choose not to respond to one or more of the questions. Participating or not in the interview will not affect any benefits under programmes supported by UNICEF.

The reports from this and other meetings will collect and summarize participants' views and opinions, without connecting any of them to specific individuals and without using names at any time. Any report of this research will be presented in a way that makes it as difficult as possible for anyone to determine the identity of individuals participating in the review.

Your child's viewpoints will be treated as private and confidential by the researcher. This means that the information shared during the interview will be known by the researcher/s only and shared only within the research team.

During the interview, we will ask the children several questions. Please know that they do not have to answer any of the questions that they do not feel comfortable to answer. They may say that they 'Don't know' if they don't have an answer to a question. Many of the questions are about their opinions, so there is no right or wrong answer.

We do not anticipate any physical or emotional risks. However, should some questions evoke negative psychological emotions and the child participant needs help, please inform the researcher and s/he will get them the support they need.

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may call _____*

Annex 16: IALA, AWLI and CBE programmes: progress against planned activities

Programme	Description of activities	Targets[liii]	Achieved[liv]
IALA	Establishment of MAGs for adolescent girls and boys	176 MAGs and 528 MAG sub-committees established	176 MAGs and 704 MAG sub-committees established (completed)
	Conduct life skills training	1 training package developed and 77 trainings conducted	1 training package developed and 77 trainings conducted (completed)
	Deliver life skills training to adolescents	3,520 adolescents trained 3,520 adolescents receive peer-to-peer mentoring 52,334 receive peer-to-peer sessions on the life skills curriculum 3,520 adolescents in MAGs mentored to conduct peer-to-peer sessions	3,631 trained on core training; 3,655 on refresher training (completed) 2,875 adolescents (on track to reach target) 85,573 adolescents; 78,299 adults (completed) 2,875 adolescents (on track to reach target)
	Develop and air radio soap opera	890 NHNL scenes produced and aired 26 radio education feature programs produced and aired 52,000 NHNL magazines and wall calendars developed and distributed	818 scenes produced and aired (on track to reach target) 26 radio education feature programs produced and aired (completed) 8,000 wall calendars; 20,000 magazines printed and distributed (on track to reach target)
	Provide creative self-expression opportunities to adolescents	1 training packages on self-expression developed 5 master trainers trained on self-expression 51 trainers and community mobilizers trained in self-expression 3,520 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression 52,344 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression	Training package completed (completed) 5 master trainers trained on self-expression (completed) 54 trainers and community mobilizers trained in self-expression (completed) 3,582 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression (completed) 48,735 adolescents in MAGs trained in self-expression (ongoing)
	Conduct a short story writing competition	2 short story writing competitions conducted	On track
	Facilitate culturally relevant Sports for Development (S4D) interventions	176 recreation kits and art kits distributed to hub schools 52,344 adolescents who participate in creative arts and sports activities	176 recreation kits and art kits distributed to hub schools (completed) 35,782 adolescents who participate in creative arts and sports activities (on track)
	Organize live debates via radio debate to be aired through local radio	180 adolescents trained to participate in radio debates 4,500 CDs with radio debates produced 9 radio debates produced and aired 225 adolescents and adults participating in radio debates	161 adolescents trained to participate in radio debates (on track) CDs removed from plan 8 radio debates produced and aired (on track) 199 adolescents and adults participating in radio debates (on track)
	Mentor Religious Leaders on Child Rights in Islam	Number of follow up visits with religious leaders conducted to be determined	166 follow up visits with religious leaders conducted (on track)

[liii] Targets were for July 2020

liv Results achieved are as of December 2019: UNICEF (2019) IALA Implementation Status as of December 2019

	Orient influential community elders to advocate for prevention of harmful traditional practices	1 training package on CR, Gender and GE 54 master trainers, trainers and community mobilizers trained on CR, Gender and GE 1,375 influential community leaders (CDCs and CPAN members) trained 7,028 mentoring sessions on gender, child rights, and girls' education conducted for influential community leaders (CDCs and CPAN members)	Training package completed (completed) 54 core trainings conducted and 48 refresher trainings (completed) 1,557 influential community leaders (CDCs and CPAN members) trained (completed) Mentoring sessions removed from work plan
	Conduct community discussions with parents and families	1 training package on conducting community discussions developed 54 master trainers, trainers and CM trained on facilitating community discussions 60,651 community members participating in community discussions 176 action plans on child protection issues developed and implemented by community members	1 training package on conducted (completed) 55 master trainers, trainers and CM trained on facilitating community discussions (completed) 35,970 community members participating in community discussions (marked as completed but under target) 176 action plans developed (completed)
Programme	**Description of activities**	**Targets**[lv]	**Achieved**[lvi]
AWLI	Train facilitators at district level	20 project staff and 80 Community Officers; and 200 Change agents in 5 provinces	209 AWLI project staff and community officers trained; 197 change agents trained (achieved)
	Conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in targeted districts	20 FGDs with 1,000 participants	20 FGDs in targeted districts with 905 participants (UNICEF reporting)/40 FGDs (Summative Evaluation Baseline Report) (achieved)
	Community dialogue involving all stakeholders	5,000 Community Dialogue with 100,000 participants	1,832 community dialogues conducted with 29,849 participants in all 20 districts (ongoing)
	Organise Reflect Circles	200 gender segregated Reflect Circles – 10 RCs per district	200 Reflect Circles formed in 20 districts (achieved)
	Establish mini-media clubs	40 mini-media clubs established in schools for boys and girls	Schools for mini-media clubs selected; equipment for mini-media clubs procured (ongoing)
	Print and distribute communication materials	20,000 leaflets printed and distributed	Communication and information materials for girls' education and prevention of child marriage developed, field-tested and being finalized; anaemia and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) materials developed by UNICEF

[lv] Targets are for December 2020 and are drawn from information contained in: S/GWI: UNICEF M&E Plan, Support for Adolescent Girls through the United Nations Children's Fund; UNICEF (2020) Half-Yearly Progress Report (15 November 2019 - 15 May 2020), Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative (AWLI) in Support of Adolescent Girls; Samuel Hall (2020) Summative Evaluation and Randomized Control Trial of the Adolescent Women's Leadership Initiative Project in Afghanistan, Baseline report (Final) May 27, 2020

[lvi] Results are drawn from information contained in: UNICEF (2020) Half-Yearly Progress Report (15 November 2019 - 15 May 2020), Afghan Women's Leadership Initiative (AWLI) in Support of Adolescent Girls; Samuel Hall (2020) Summative Evaluation and Randomized Control Trial of the Adolescent Women's Leadership Initiative Project in Afghanistan, Baseline report (Final) May 27, 2020

			and MoPH reprinted and distributed in the AWLI project areas (ongoing)
	Design cash grants for adolescent girls to enrol and stay in secondary school	Cash Grant Modality developed	Cash Grant Modalities finalized for Herat and Ghor provinces along with communication strategy (achieved)
	Cash grants provided to adolescent girls out of school to enrol and stay in ALCs	Provide cash grants to 1,000 beneficiaries	Activity delayed due to closure of schools and movement restriction due to COVID-19 crisis (planned)
	Develop training package on Adolescent Health and Well-being	1 training package developed	Life skills training package developed and being implemented (achieved)
	Establish safe spaces and networks for adolescent girls	5 Safe Space Centres established	Five Safe space centres established in all five provinces and functioning; Activities on promoting girls' education and child rights through Adolescent and Youth Networks (AYNs) conducted in five regions (ongoing)
	Provide life skills education for adolescent girls	600 life skills education sessions conducted for 18,000 adolescents	60 Life Skills sessions conducted for 1,710 adolescent girls in project areas (ongoing)
	Provide community based vocational training for adolescent girls	2,760 adolescent girls trained	360 adolescent girls trained (ongoing)
	Conduct secondary analysis of recent surveys and studies	Analysis conducted	Desk review of secondary data integral part of inception mission for AWLI programme evaluation. Secondary data complemented primary data collected for baseline (achieved)
	Conduct complementary national surveys to fill data-gaps	Surveys conducted	Mid-Term Evaluation of Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme, Afghanistan (2015-2019) completed; Adolescents in Afghanistan: Portfolio Evaluation through Gender Lens – being conducted (ongoing)
	Documentation of lessons learned and good practices	Ongoing documentation	Lessons learned and good practices provided as part of half-yearly progress reports (ongoing)
	Monitoring and Evaluation	Functioning M&E system	Surveys and qualitative data collection methodologies built into evaluation design for data gathering to be implemented by an external consulting firm. First round of periodic monitoring completed in November 2019 while baseline data collection conducted in March 2020. A Summative Evaluation scheduled in November/December 2020, following completion of cash grant programme (ongoing)
	Description of activities	**Targets**[lvii]	**Achieved**[lviii]
CBE	Establish new community-based schools and accelerated learning centres	6,000	7,965
	Enrol students	148,000	171,215
	Distribute textbooks	100,000 CBS students and 20,000 ALC students to receive full set of textbooks	455,691 textbooks distributed

[lvii] Targets were for 2019 according to the Logical Framework, USAID (2015-2019) and summarized in: The KonTerra Group (2019) Mid-Term Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme (Afghanistan) (2015-2019), Final Report, May 2019.
[lviii] Results achieved are as of May 2019: The KonTerra Group (2019) Mid-Term Evaluation of the Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme (Afghanistan) (2015-2019), Final Report, May 2019.

	Distribute teaching and learning material kits	240,000 CBS students and 48,000 ALC students to receive learning materials; 5,000 CBS teachers and 1,000 ALC teachers to receive teacher kits	CBE student kits reached 241,050 students in 2017 and 245,475 students in 2018
	Pay teacher salaries	5,000 CBS teachers and 1,000 ALC teachers	6,664 CBE teachers recruited and paid
	Train teachers	5,000 CBS and 2,400 ALC teachers 6,000 teachers trained on formative learning assessment	7,886 teachers trained on INSET 4,105 CBE teachers & 955 Academic Supervisors trained on formative learning assessment
	Train SMS members	2,400 communities trained	1,724 SMS members trained; training of 5,000 SMS members trained under the Korean Fund
	Build capacity of government staff at decentralized levels	10 PEDs trained on planning and monitoring	247 stakeholders from various categories reported trained in 2018
	Develop strategy/policy	Support MoE to develop CBE Policy & Girls' Education Policy	Revised CBE Policy completed Girls' Education Policy completed
	Conduct research/build evidence	Study on OOSC	Study on OOSC completed

Annex 17: Team composition, work plan, timeline and deliverables

Team composition and work plan

The main evaluation team was composed of two members. In addition, an Afghan consultancy firm, ATR Consulting, has been in charge of conducting data collection at the community level using the tools prepared by the team and following the guidance of the team leader. Table 13 lists the members and specifies their primary roles and their anticipated participation in the various steps towards the deliverables, as well as expected coordination.

Table 13: Team composition and primary roles

	Specific tasks within the Evaluation	Deliverables / Dates
Herma Majoor. Team Leader, 70 working days	• Design the evaluation approach, and methodology, including data collection tools • Ensure evaluation incorporates gender analysis in its design and that team members are prepared for applying it throughout the evaluation • Coordinate evaluation process and lead team – including ATR- ensure that team members' activities are properly coordinated and that the team members are able to contribute to data collection, analysis and conclusion development. • Represent the team in meetings • Oversee collection and analysis of field (including remote) and desk data, including ATR (interviews, discussion groups meetings, focus groups, literature) • Lead the process for drafting and revision of the inception package, feedback presentation and draft and final evaluation reports in line with established standards • Present preliminary findings to key stakeholders from the evaluation reference group. • Provide feedback as needed on the evaluation process	• Literature review • Lead inception mission 8 to 14 February • Draft Inception Report – 28 February 2020 • Finalize (addressing comments from stakeholders) Inception Report – end May • Provide guidance and coordinate ATR remote data collection between, June - early July • Conduct KII remotely - June • Lead data analysis – June - July 2020 all through report writing • Lead Debriefing – TBD • Draft Evaluation Report end of July • Address comments from ACO and external QA stakeholders and submission of Final Evaluation Report – end of August/ beginning of September
Belen Diaz, International Evaluator,57 working days	• Conduct desk review • Contribute to inception process, including participation in the inception mission • Contribute to methodology design and tool development, focusing on areas of specialization • Ensure that gender issues are addressed in coverage areas • Conduct online KII as necessary • Contribute to drafting / revision of evaluation products: inception package, feedback presentation, evaluation report(s); • Provide feedback as needed on the evaluation process.	• Conduct Literature review • Participate in inception mission 8 to 14 February • Contribute to drafting Inception Report, including addressing comments from stakeholders – 28 February – end May • Contribute to addressing comments and finalizing the Inception Report – end May • Conduct KII remotely -June • Contribute to data analysis – July • all through report writing • Participate in Debriefing – 22 May 2020 • Contribute to drafting of Evaluation Report end of July • Contribute to addressing comments from stakeholders and submission of Final Evaluation Report – end of August/ beginning of September

ATR, Afghan Consultancy firm	• Translate tools and materials for data collection in four provinces (Bamyan, Ghor, Khandahar and Nangahar) • Prepare training for enumerators • Identify and recruit enumerators team in each of the provinces/ or prepare the full remote approach (call centre) • Coordinate mobilization of teams to Kabul • Conduct enumerator training in Kabul • Testing survey tools • Coordinate conduct of survey at field level/ remote telephone interviews • Conduct KII • Cleaning and verification of data • Translation and sending to core evaluation team members	• Contribute to drafting Inception Report, including addressing comments from stakeholders – 28 February – end May • Review of tools, translation and testing- 31 May - 5 June • Phone identification: June • Training of data collectors: June • Conducting interviews: June • Translations: June-9 July

Original timeline

The entire evaluation process was originally projected to cover 27 weeks starting from 21 January 2020, the date of the kick-off conference call between the evaluation team and UNICEF. It was envisaged to end on 24 July after the submission of the final evaluation report on 20 July. The process integrated the commenting phase requirements to allow for stakeholders to provide feedback and approval of all evaluation products. The dates were adjusted during the inception mission in consultation with UNICEF and other stakeholders. **Table 14** demonstrates the original planning. Due to the unexpected COVID-19 crisis though, the timeline and approach had to be changed, which will be further explained below.

Table 14: Proposed timeline, deliverables, and key dates

Phases, Deliverables and Timeline (January 21 – July 24)	Dates
Phase 1 - Inception	**6 January – 31 May**
Initial Virtual Briefing	Jan 21st
Inception mission	Feb. 8-14
Inception Report Draft 1 submission to UNICEF	Feb. 28
Comments from ACO	March 19th
Submission of Draft 3	April 16th
Consultation process with ACO and further adaptations related to Covid-19 pandemic/ Systematic Literature review	19 April-May 20th
Submission Draft 4	May 20th
Ethics review and final approval of IR	21st-29th May
Phase 2 – Data collection	**June – early July**
Option 1) ATR is able to travel to the field	
Preparation of materials, training and enumerator training (ATR)	31st May- 9 June
Data Collection ATR + KII Remote (core team)	10-20 June
Data Analysis (Evaluation Team & ATR)	22-28 June
Translation	28 June- 9 July
Option 2) Full remote	
Review of the tools, translation and testing	31st May- 5 June
Phone identification/ KII remote (core team)	7-12 June
Training of data collectors/ KII remote (core team)	14-19 June
Conducting interviews (centre call)/ KII remote (core team)	21-26 June
Translations	28 June- 9 July
Phase 3 - Data Analysis and Reporting	**May 2 – May 22 (TBD)**
Analysis and report writing (including Konterra QA against GEROS)	12-31st July
Delivery Draft 1 ER	31st July
Comments from Universalia (QA) and ACO and ACO Eval manager and Youth/ Adolescent Specialist	1-15 Aug
Addressing comments	16-21 Aug
Delivery Draft 2 ER	21 Aug
Comments from stakeholders	23-28 Aug
Addressing comments from stakeholders	30 Aug-3rd Sept
Delivery Final ER	4th Sept

Other potential materials on request	6-10 Sept

Data collection schedule

The schedule for data collection in the four selected provinces, Bamyan, Ghor, Kandahar and Nangahar was developed after it was agreed with UNICEF that data from the provinces would be collected remotely through phone calls.

Evaluation Mission Calendar (reflecting on the full remote approach)

Phase	Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Weds	Thurs	Friday	Saturday
Inception Phase	1	**19- January**	**20- January**	**21- January** Kick off call	**22- January**	**23- January**	**24- January**	**25- January**
	2	**26- January**	**27- 31 January** Desk review					**1-February**
	3	**2-February**	**3- 7 February** Preparation Inception mission/ desk review					**8 February**
	4	**9-14 February** Inception Mission						**15- February**
	5	**16- February**	**17- 21 February** Drafting of Inception Report					**22-February**
	6	**23-February**	**24- 28 February** Drafting of Inception Report (including internal QA by KonTerra)				**28-February** Submission D1 IR	**29- February**
	7	**1-19 March** Comments by ACO to Draft Inception Report						**7-March**
	8	**1-19 March** Comments by ACO to Draft Inception Report						**14-March**
	9	**1-19 March** Comments by ACO to Draft Inception Report					**20-March**	**21-March**
	10	**22 March-16th April** Review of comments and delivery of Draft 2 IR						**28-March**
	11	**22 March-16th April** Review of comments and delivery of Draft 2 IR						**4-April**
	12	**22 March-16th April** Review of comments and delivery of Draft 2 IR						**11-April**
	13	**22 March-16th April** Review of comments and delivery of Draft 2 IR					**17-April**	**18-April**

	14	**19-April – 20th May** Consultation process with ACO and further adaptations related to Covid-19 pandemic		**25-April**
	15	**19-April – 20th May** Consultation process with ACO and further adaptations related to Covid-19 pandemic/ Systematic Literature review		**2-May**
	16	**19-April – 20th May** Consultation process with ACO and further adaptations related to Covid-19 pandemic/ Systematic Literature review		**9-May**
	17	**19-April – 20th May** Consultation process with ACO and further adaptations related to Covid-19 pandemic/ Systematic Literature review		**16-May**
	18	**19-April – 20th May** Consultation process with ACO and further adaptations related to Covid-19 pandemic/ Systematic Literature Review	**21st – 29th May** Ethics review and final approval IR	**23-May**
	19	**21st – 29th May** Ethics review and final approval IR		**30-May**
Data collection	**20**	**31-May – 5 June** Review, translation and testing of tools		**6-Jun**
	21	**7-12 Jun** Phone number identification		**13-Jun**
	22	**14- 19 Jun** Training of data collectors		**20- Jun**
	23	**21-26 Jun** Interviews (call centre)		**27-Jun**
	24	**28- Jun- 9 July** Translations	**3-Jul**	**4-Jul**
	25	**28- Jun- 9 July** Translations	**10-jul**	**11-jul**
Analysis and report writing	**26**	**12- 31st July** Analysis and report writing		**18-jul**
	27	**12-31st July** Analysis and report writing (including internal Konterra QA)		**25-jul**
	28	**12-31st July**	**31st- July**	**1st Aug**

		Analysis and report writing (including internal Konterra QA against GEROS)	Delivery ER Draft 1	
	29	**1-15 Aug** Comments from Universalia (QA) and ACO Eval manager and Youth/ Adolescent Specialist		**8- Aug**
	30	**1-15 Aug** Comments from Universalia (QA) and ACO Eval manager and Youth/ Adolescent Specialist		**15- Aug**
	31	**16-21 Aug** Addressing comments	**21 Aug** Delivery ER Draft 2	**22- Aug**
	32	**23-28 Aug** Comments from stakeholders		**29- Aug**
	33	**30 Aug-3rd Sept** Addressing comments from stakeholders	**4-Sept** Delivery ER Final Draft	**5- Sept**

Annex 18: Evaluation Team Competencies

Experience category	Herma Majoor Team Leader	Belen Diaz International Evaluator
Formal education		
Academic level	MSc Economics MSc Applied Physics-Nutrition	MA Social and Corporate Responsibility BA Law, with Specialization Refugee & Asylum Law
General competencies		
Years of experience	20	20
Experience in evaluation or research/studies/desk research, working with UNICEF on similar assignments	Extensive experience in leading evaluations and evaluation designs – this includes methodology, matrix design and mixed methods. Very familiar with the UN. Similar experience in evaluation, include her work with the UN and UNICEF in Kosovo, Malawi, Uzbekistan	Extensive experience as an evaluator and researcher and has contributed to the development of mixed-methodologies for over 20 evaluations/ research and desk reviews. Very familiar with the UN. Selected experience includes: Evaluation of UNPBF portfolio (including UNICEF programmes) in Ivory Coast; Evaluated UNICEF (WCARO) Capacity Development and its Impact on Institutionalization of Emergency Preparedness and Response (ERP) and Conflict/ Disaster Risk reduction (Co/DRR) in the Education Sector in West and Central Africa (led Coṫe d'Ivoire and Chad's case studies). Evaluation manager and QA of the Rapid Response to Population Movement (RRMP) Programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2013).
Experience in design and/or implementation of development/humanitarian programme and projects, particularly with UNICEF/UN	Strong experience in programme design with UNICEF and WFP in social protection and nutrition, including for adolescents	Accounts for 4 years of programme design and implementation management with NGOs (Action Against Hunger, Oxfam, others.)
Experience in evaluations and studies of a similar nature (evidence synthesis; adolescents)	A number of similar evaluations which include a focus on adolescents; most recent one in Malawi (UNICEF / WFP/ UNFPA)	**Very strong**: a number of similar evaluations include leading author of twelve evaluation / evidence synthesis for WFP in LAC, West and Central Africa, Southern Africa and participated as team member in another system wide synthesis. Other significant experience includes: Meta-Assessment of Gender Integration in WFP's Evaluations in 2015; Evaluating Humanitarian Principles: Desk Review of recent practices and possible way forward commissioned by WFP on behalf of UNEG, 2016
Experience working in complex and high threat environment b) previous experience in Afghanistan	Good knowledge of the context and operational dynamics working in Afghanistan- conducted various assignments in Afghanistan- and in high threat environment	Field experience conducting research/ evaluation includes DRC, Eastern Chad and Southern Guinea during peaks of armed conflict.
Experience in participatory research and evaluations with adolescents on potentially sensitive topic	Strong experience in participatory research and evaluations – increasing the beneficiary voice- for UNICEF, DFID, academia, bilateral partners and INGOs	Evaluated UNICEF's projects in Coṫe d'Ivoire as part of the Peacebuilding Fund Evaluation. In particular assessed four projects that targeted youth/ adolescents (including ex-combatants) in order to enhance their role in social cohesion and

		peacebuilding through their social and economic integration, employment, participation in society such as with-U-Report, and peace committees, early warning systems, etc. The evaluation included participatory consultation (KII and FGD) UNPFB evaluation in Ivory Coast which looked into social cohesion, consolidation of peace, and creation of opportunities for youth and women including integration in labour market. The portfolio included evaluation of UNICEFs programmes in promotion of youth and gender equality.
Gender Expertise	**Strong: Particular expertise in gender and nutrition**. Experience in gender sensitive evaluations (ALL evaluations and Results Orientated Monitoring for EU, UN and other major donors and organizations include gender and youth as a major component). Methodology for covering gender is included in methodology of each evaluation and gender is mainstreamed in the implementation of the evaluation and in the reporting.	**Excellent.** Gender specialist for KonTerra. Experience of approaches and tools used for gender analysis, and ensuring that evaluations are 'gender sensitive'. She has in-depth knowledge of UN SWAP (including Evaluation Performance Indicator). Specific gender experience in evaluation includes: (i) IASC: Evaluator team member of Research Study to Assess How Gender Equality Programming Influences Humanitarian Outcomes. (ii) Meta-Assessment of Gender Integration in WFP's Evaluations in 2015; (iii) Evaluation of gender projects for peace consolidation of UN Women/UNFPA in the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio in Ivory Coast.
Writing and Communication skills	**Excellent**: Author of over a dozen national, regional, and global programme evaluations reports and external monitoring reports	**Excellent**: Lead author of eight synthesis reports, co- authored other 10 publications including evaluation reports, synthesis work and one books. In addition, as QA assurance responsible for evaluations of KonTerra, she systematically edits and reviews draft evaluation reports produced by KonTerra.
Qualitative and quantitative research methods and technical experience in study design, b. special focus in evidence synthesis	**Excellent:** as evidenced in many complex evaluations. Ample experience in research and synthesis evaluations (for UNICEF the Netherlands on their support in Syria and for FAO on their evaluations in Africa). Very strong knowledge of quantitative analysis and statistic as also evidenced by her degrees in Economics and Physics	**Excellent:** Good knowledge of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, data analysis, interpretation and presentation. Extensive experience in research and synthesis evaluations having led 12 evaluation / evidence synthesis which included: developing the methodology, conducting the full review documents, extraction, validation and systematization of data, calibration/ triangulation, analysis, aggregation and report writing.
Languages	English- Fluent Dutch- Mother tongue French- Good German- Intermediate Russian- Basic	English- fluent Spanish- Mother tongue French- fluent

Annex 19: References

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