



## Mitigation of Migration Causes by Strengthening Livelihoods and Local Coping Strategies in the Provinces of Balkh, Bamyan, Daikundi, Ghor and Herat in Afghanistan

AA-Grant Number: S 05-32-321.50 AFG 06/16

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### Final Evaluation

January until May 2019  
in Afghanistan March 31 until April 17, 2019



Figure 1: Beneficiary Group in Sherabad Ulia, Dehdadi, Balkh - Scoring and Ranking Exercise

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**May 14, 2019**

## Executive Summary

### **The Project**

Between August 2016 and December 2018, the project “**Mitigation of Migration Causes by Strengthening Livelihoods and Local Coping Strategies in the Provinces of Balkh, Bamyan, Daykundi, Ghor and Herat in Afghanistan**” has been implemented. The project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office through German Humanitarian Assistance with an overall amount of € 5 million (including the 6% contribution of Caritas Germany). Responsibility for the project rests with Caritas Germany. The actual implementation is carried-out by the international partner organizations *Catholic Relief Services* (CRS) and *Cordaid*, US-American and Dutch Caritas respectively. CRS has executed the project with its own staff, Cordaid subcontracted the task to the Afghan NGO *Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan* (RRAA).

Two partner organizations with different implementation modes have resulted in significantly different approaches. CRS covered the bigger part of the project by working in the Central Highlands (Provinces of Bamyan, Daykundi, and Ghor) as well as in the Province of Herat, whereas Cordaid covered the Province of Balkh.

The project aimed to reach around 50,000 people in around 114 villages in the following sectors:

- **Agriculture and Livestock:** various support mechanisms will be offered to increase productivity in agriculture and animal husbandry. Nutrition training complements the aim to improve food security.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction:** the establishment of DRR Committees along with training inputs and demonstration projects (e.g. contour trenches, pasture management, etc.) is foreseen.
- **WASH:** a combination of constructing drinking water systems, promoting water treatment and offering hygiene training is planned under this component.
- **Income:** households will receive training on financial management (including household savings) and marketing of agricultural products. In Balkh the formation of so-called “Loans Groups” will complement this initiative.

### **The Methodology**

The evaluation follows the logic of the OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria and will try to judge the project performance on the basis of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability. To receive a mix of quantitative and qualitative data a set of methods has been identified. This set consists of standardized more quantitative approaches and rather flexible yet structured group discussions delivering more qualitative insights. In this way 156 standardized questionnaires have been collected. Together with the questionnaires a so-called *Change Matrix* has been filled as well. In 13 villages so-called *Scoring and Ranking Exercises* have been conducted. This method is a participatory approach where project components are ranked according to the preferences of the beneficiaries. A group discussion analysis the result of each exercise. Village walks complement the approach. This methodology has been applied in two districts, namely Dehdadi (Province of Balkh; Cordaid) and Yakawlang (Province of Bamyan; CRS).

## **The Main Findings and Recommendations from CRS in Yakawlang**

### *Theory of Change*

CRS is providing little physical input but focussing on training in relevant areas for smallholder farmers. In this way variations to current practice should be promoted. Generally, each beneficiary can access the entire project support mechanism. Small improvements in a number of relevant areas (agriculture, livestock, DRR, WASH) can add up to possible impact. The theory of change has a coherent logic.

### *Targeting*

The villages in Yakawlang are relatively small, therefore targeting the entire village community is possible and feasible. The selected villages represent the remoter or more disadvantaged ones in the valley systems of Yakawlang. In general, targeting makes a solid impression.

### *Agriculture and Livestock*

Training in wheat and potato cultivation combined with the demonstration effect through the so-called *Farmers Field Schools* (FFS) led to a high appreciation by the beneficiaries. This result can be considered a remarkable success as CRS did not distribute seeds or fertilizer. Improved potato storage in winter time was successful in some but not all villages. The promotion of vegetable cultivation resulted in more vegetables and bigger variety. The distribution of tree saplings was less successful. Livestock training has not been valued that much; the demonstration units for improved stables generally have low replication rates.

### *Disaster Risk Reduction*

DRR Committees have been formed and farmers trained. The protection of micro-watersheds with the construction of contour-trenches in Cash-for-Work modality was appreciated. Improved pasture management through grazing restrictions is still continued by the farmers.

### *WASH*

The construction of water-related infrastructure met a significant demand and was appreciated accordingly. The pilot of introducing bio-sand filters failed, hence, this project component was dropped in Yakawlang. Hygiene training complemented this sector.

### *Income*

The training on household financial planning and savings as well as the training on business and marketing did not lead to any visible results in the villages analysed.

### *Recommendations*

Caritas Germany has a long history in supporting projects in the Central Highlands. Substantial remoteness, significant demand, still few NGOs working there (esp. Daykundi), and relatively high levels of security make this area a good choice for Caritas Germany. CRS is an attractive partner in this area.

## **The Main Findings and Recommendations from Cordaid in Dehdadi**

### *Theory of Change*

The size of the villages is too big to address the entire community. Therefore, targeting a distinct sub-group is essential to formulate a theory of change. This has not been done. The project rests on distributions of small things with little to moderate relevance in order to reach more people. In this way the project tries to spread project benefits to satisfy a bigger target group. As a result, the project lost its punch and its theoretical ability to produce change.

### *Targeting*

Indications make it very likely that the project in Dehdadi was functioning especially well for the more important (and affluent) people. Project components were channelled through the local Shura and/or beneficiaries selected by “important people” or the head of the Shura. The “trickle-down” effect to poorer fractions of the population can be considered small.

### *Agriculture and Livestock*

Training on wheat cultivation has been combined with the distribution of improved wheat seeds and fertilizer. People appreciate this support, but the practice of using improved seeds has been in Dehdadi already for 10 years. Livestock training was appreciated. Cordaid/RRAA also supported young graduates to open their small veterinary shop. The distribution of chicken was not combined with a strategy for commercial chicken breeding. Hence, no impact resulted from this component.

### *Disaster Risk Reduction*

“DRR” was transferred into improving the local infrastructure in Dehdadi. Irrigation canals were improved, small erosion protection walls along gullies were erected, culverts added, and roads gravelled. All these activities got great reviews because everyone is benefitting and all activities represented local requests. However, it cannot be considered DRR.

### *WASH*

The construction of water-related infrastructure met a significant demand and was appreciated accordingly. Hygiene training and the distribution of various filter systems complemented this sector.

### *Income*

The training on household financial planning and savings as well as the training on business and marketing did not lead to any visible results in the villages analysed. However, the formation of so-called “loan groups” was highly appreciated. The impact of this activity was mixed in general: “loan groups” working collectively and consisting of female members continued somehow the economic activity after year one; “loan groups” with male members usually stopped the economic activity after year one.

### *Recommendations*

The pilot with Balkh cannot be considered a success. Neither the area nor the partner set-up with Cordaid and RRAA should be continued if we look at the strategic approach and the performance.

# 1. The Project

The title of the project to be evaluated is “Mitigation of Migration Causes by Strengthening Livelihoods and Local Coping Strategies in the Provinces of Balkh, Bamyan, Daykundi, Ghor and Herat in Afghanistan”<sup>1</sup>. The implementation period has been from August 2016 until December 2018. The actual project duration extends into May 2019. Originally this final period was only meant for reporting and evaluation. However, final activities are still under way in the district of Balkh.

The project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office through German Humanitarian Assistance with an overall amount of € 5 million (including the 6% contribution of Caritas Germany). Responsibility for the project rests with Caritas Germany, however, the actual implementation is carried-out by the international partner organizations *Catholic Relief Services (CRS)* and *Cordaid*, US-American and Dutch Caritas respectively. CRS has executed the project with its own staff, Cordaid subcontracted the task to the Afghan NGO *Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan (RRAA)*. Caritas Germany maintains a country office in Kabul and a regional program monitoring office in Nili (Daykundi). All three partner organizations have more than 10 years of work experience in Afghanistan.

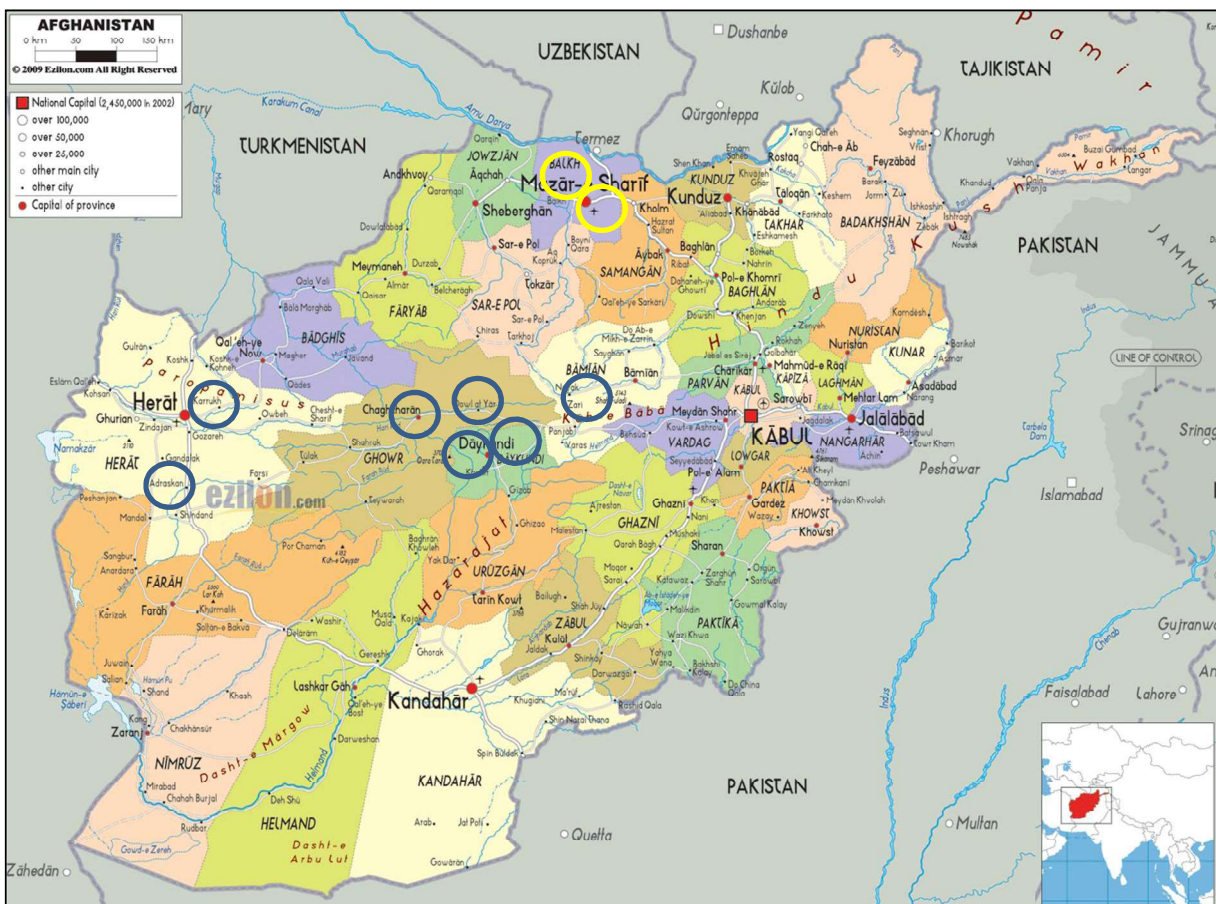


Figure 2: Project area in the Central Highlands and Herat (blue circles - CRS) as well as around Mazar-e Sharif (yellow circle – Cordaid)

<sup>1</sup> Original title: „Verringerung von Fluchtursachen durch die Stärkung der Existenzgrundlagen und lokalen Bewältigungsstrategien in den Provinzen Balkh, Bamyan, Daikundi, Ghor und Herat, Afghanistan“

Figure 2 shows the various project locations in the country. Each circle represents a program district. It is obvious that the project covers a vast area including five provinces and nine districts. CRS operates in the central highlands of Daykundi, Ghor, and Bamyan plus the province of Herat. Cordaid operates outside the city of Mazar-e Sharif in the province of Balkh. But not only that: the project covers districts in the outskirts of big cities like Herat and Mazar-e Sharif but also remote areas in Daykundi, Ghor and Bamyan. CRS is implementing the project with its own staff, Cordaid subcontracted the project to a the local partner RRAA. Working styles and program priorities differ widely between the two implementing partner, resulting in significantly distinct project components.

The main objective of the project is to improve food security and to strengthen local resilience. It is assumed that – by doing so – the main reasons for migration are tackled and eventually reduced in order to contribute towards the overall funding aim to “fight (or reduce) causes for flight”<sup>2</sup>.

To main indicators are supposed to shed light on achieving the project goal:

- At least 15% of the households have increased their income and increased their savings.
- By the end of the project the “Average Coping Strategy Index (CSI)” has decreased by 3 points.

In order to achieve the objective four project targets are put forth:

- **Result 1:** Food insecure households have increased and diversified **agricultural and livestock production**. Various support mechanisms will be offered to increase productivity in agriculture and animal husbandry. Nutrition training complements the aim to improve food security.
- **Result 2:** Food insecure communities have increased resiliency to ecological shocks. The establishment of **DRR Committees** (including NRM elements) along with training inputs and demonstration projects should serve this task.
- **Result 3:** Food insecure households have access to safe water for domestic use. A combination of **water source protection, water treatment and hygiene training** is offered in this field.
- **Result 4:** Food insecure households have improved financial management and marketing capacity. Households will receive training on **financial management** (including household savings) **and marketing** of agricultural products. In Balkh (Cordaid) the formation of so-called “**Loans Groups**” will complement this initiative.

The intervention logic of the project proposal formulates *Result 1 – 4* with its respective activities. However, CRS is not implementing *Result 1 – 4* in all villages but *Result 1 – 2* in 64 villages (so-called “Type 1 Communities”) and *Result 3 – 4* in 24 villages (so-called “Type 2 Communities”). The latter are the same villages supported through a Caritas Germany project between 2014 and 2016 (EU-funded LRRD-project implemented by CRS in Ghor and Bamyan and by the Afghan NGO RCDC in

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<sup>2</sup> “Fluchtursachen bekämpfen”

Daykundi). Coincidentally I have also evaluated this project two years ago. The program between 2014 and 2016 comprises of more or less *Result 1 – 2*. In that way *Result 1 – 4* is implemented in two phases and through two different projects by CRS. Cordaid is implementing the entire project (*Result 1 – 4*) in its 32 villages. However, certain modalities are different from the CRS approach, as well as certain program components. As a result, we receive somehow three different project variations to be evaluated.

The following project organigram (figure 3) summarizes the overall activity concept along the four sectors Agriculture & Livestock, DRR/NRM, WASH, and Income & Savings.

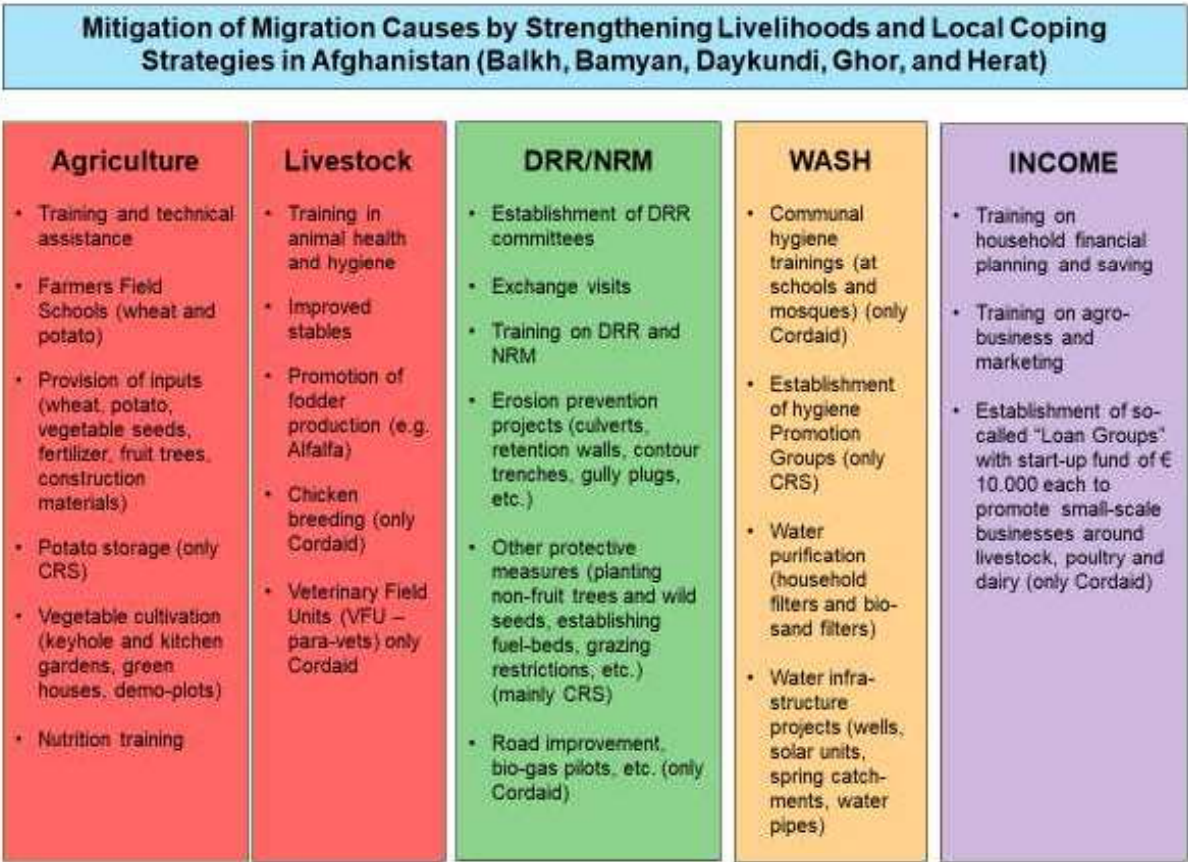


Figure 3: Project Organigram