Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade:

Inquiry into the administration, management and objective of Australia's overseas development programs in Afghanistan in the context of the 'Transition Decade'

Organisation: CARE Australia

CARE Australia

Submission to the
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade:

Inquiry into the administration, management and objective of Australia's overseas development programs in Afghanistan in the context of the 'Transition Decade'

17 September 2012

Overview

CARE Australia is an Australian charity and international humanitarian aid organisation fighting global poverty, with a special focus on empowering women and girls to bring lasting change to their communities. Consistent with this focus, in our submission we particularly wish to highlight particular issues and challenges facing women and girls in Afghanistan. We seek to highlight some of the specific ways in which the Australian Government, through the Australian Aid program, has contributed to advancing the interests of women and girls in Afghanistan, and to urge continued action.

Since the fall of the Taliban, clear and measurable gains have been made in advancing the social and economic status of women and girls. Many for the first time have been able to claim their rights and access to services such as health and education. However, as the security situation in Afghanistan becomes more uncertain, gains made over the past decade are in jeopardy. The withdrawal of international forces, handover of security responsibilities to Afghan forces, and manoeuvring of power-holders ahead of the presidential elections in 2014 generate challenges to security and stability. Aid agency staff and the communities we work with fear that increasing and new forms of conflict and instability will emerge.

This brief 4-part submission focuses on Australia's development assistance programs for Afghanistan:

- Why might our input matter? CARE's experience in Afghanistan
- What has been achieved? CARE's results in partnership with the Australian Aid program
- What are our concerns for the future? Some general perspectives on aid to Afghanistan, particularly as it relate to women and girls, and the role of non-governmental organisations
- Summary of recommendations

1. CARE in Afghanistan

CARE International has been present in Afghanistan since 1961, with a 10 year period of non-operation during the Soviet occupation. CARE was fully operational during the civil war and Taliban regime, providing humanitarian support and basic services to vulnerable Afghans across the country including in sensitive areas of education and economic development. In recent years, programs of CARE Afghanistan have reached more than 1.5 million people annually. The organisation is recognised in Afghanistan as a leader in community-based education, particularly for girls, and support to maternal and newborn health. We also provide assistance to improve livelihood opportunities for vulnerable women and work with them to fulfil their social, legal and economic rights, through the establishment of solidarity and action groups, for thousands of war widows and their families. Many take part in vocational training, livestock rearing, micro-finance programs, and

advocacy on rights issues, including inheritance and property issues and gender-based violence. CARE has also provided shelter for refugees returning from Pakistan and Iran.

CARE Australia, a member of the CARE International family, has been programming in Afghanistan since 1998. CARE Australia has undertaken work in humanitarian relief, refugee assistance and capacity building of Afghan NGOs, with a particular focus in the education sector. CARE Australia is currently contracted by AusAID to implement the AUD 3.3 million Empowerment Through Education Program (Oct 2010 - Feb 2014), a community-based education (CBE) program with an emphasis on empowering girls and women. In April 2012, CARE Australia also received funding from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to implement the Ghazni Livelihood Enhancement Project for IDPs, Returnees and those Vulnerable to Displacement. This AUD 570,000, 12-month project is working to enhance livelihoods for IDPs and returnees in Ghazni province, and is funded under DIAC's Displaced Person's Program for 2012/13.

2. Achievements

Consistent with the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, we seek to provide information on the results of CARE's work in Afghanistan in Partnership with the Australian Aid Program.

2.1 CARE's Results with AusAID – Community-Based Education

Program Context

As a result of the Taliban's control of the country from the mid 1990s until 2001 and a strict ban on girls attending schools and females teaching, an entire generation of girls was denied formal schooling. By the end of the 1990s, only 5 percent[1] of girls, compared to 60 percent of boys were going to school. In March 2002, the Afghanistan Interim Authority launched the "Back to School" campaign, which resulted in some three million children and 70,000 teachers returning to schools. Today an estimated 7 million children attend some form of learning; however the vast majority is at the primary level. Nationally girls now account for approximately 37 percent of student enrolment.

While this shows considerable improvement in a relatively short period, there continues to be a lack of opportunities available to girls for continued education beyond primary school. The literacy rate of Afghan females between 15-24 year olds is only 18 percent[2]. According to the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007/8 the overall indicators of education and literacy in Afghanistan reflect an education system that has performed very poorly. In addition, they invariably show very large gender gaps. This manifests within the lack of human capital in the country, which is required for good public administration and strong private sectors in the economy. Of the 9.5 million illiterate adults in Afghanistan, 5.5 million are women and 4.0 million are men.

Afghanistan is now faced with a huge challenge to meet the basic human right of children to receive primary education. Access to basic education provides necessary life skills and provides the country with the human capital required to make progress towards the goals it has set for development. Past performance of the education sector has resulted in a very poor overall adult literacy rate of 26 percent and a very low educational attainment level, as only 17 percent of the total population aged 25 and over has attended any type of formal education. In addition, the difficulties faced by girls in accessing education is reflected in large gender gaps and female education indicator of present

[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Needs Assessment Report for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan-2008 under the title of "Where Literacy Stands".
[2] National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), 2008-2018.

enrolment figures remain among the worst in the world – net primary and secondary enrolment rates are, respectively, 52 and 16 percent.

CARE has been a major player in the education sector in Afghanistan for more than 15 years, with a number of projects providing educational opportunities for approximately 45,000 marginalized children, youth and adults in areas with no access to formal schools. With a focus on sustainable community-based education (CBE), CARE until 2010 directly implemented education projects in seven provinces and indirectly in 11 provinces. The primary vehicle for this program of support was the USAID-funded Partnership Advancing Community Based Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) consortium. Since 2004, CARE's work through PACE-A has been significantly supplemented by additional funding from AusAID, initially via the Community Organised Primary Education (COPE) Project (which commenced in 1998, with five phases of AusAID support from 2004 to 2011) and currently via the (renamed) Empowerment through Education in Afghanistan Project (2010-1013) (effectively Phase 6 of AusAID's support to COPE).

As lead member of the PACE-A Consortium, CARE was instrumental in the development of the CBE model in Afghanistan. CARE supported the government to draft and enact CBE policy to officially adopt CBE as a part of its education for all strategy (starting in 2006). CARE worked closely with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to establish a new CBE Unit to specifically support the CBE model. Starting in April 2011, CARE, as the lead member of the PACE-A consortium, was requested by MoE to propose a CBE Unit structure, take the lead to hire CBE Unit staff for Kabul and 18 targeted provinces, build staff capacities and facilitate the development of monthly planning for the new CBE Unit. From 2006, CARE has extended the CBE model to include the provision of lower secondary education (grades 7-9), especially to girls, who have completed primary education and cannot access the MoE secondary school system. With the sudden and unexpected end of USAID funding to the PACE-A Consortium in 2010, CARE, through its continuing support from AusAID, is currently the only CBE practitioner for lower secondary education in Afghanistan.

COPE/ Empowerment through Education in Afghanistan Project

CARE's Community Organised Primary Education (COPE) Project was designed to address the major obstacles that keep Afghan children, particularly girls, out of school. Firstly, access to educational opportunities is severely limited in many areas of Afghanistan, particularly for girls, due to remoteness, and cultural barriers, which impede female participation. While the demand for schooling by parents for both their girls and boys has dramatically increased in recent years, existing government schools are often farther away than many rural parents are willing to send their children, particularly girls, especially in insecure and lawless areas. At the same time, the government's capacity to build new school infrastructure, even with substantial donor support, has not meet the pace of demand. Children's school attendance is very sensitive to changes in the distance to the nearest school. Girls are more affected by school proximity than boys, so much so that providing a community based school virtually eliminates the gender gap in enrolment. Drawing on CARE's global experience with community-based education, the COPE project has successfully mobilized communities to set up classes and support them regularly, thereby expanding access for all school-aged children in its program areas.

Secondly, the high demand and need for education, juxtaposed with the limited availability of trained primary, particularly female, teachers, place Afghanistan in the worst position of any country in South and West Asia in terms of meeting teacher requirements to fulfil the MDG for Universal Primary Education. Currently, only a fraction of all teachers in the country meet the official qualifications of a grade 12 education and many are under-prepared to teach subjects like math and reading that are critical to raising the functional literacy and numeracy rate in Afghanistan. The lack

of qualified teachers is compounded by the fact that opportunities for professional development within schools is limited and supervision from the Provincial Department of Education is constrained by a lack of resources, particularly transport; these challenges are heightened in rural and remote areas where literacy levels fall dramatically. The COPE model focuses on recruiting female teachers where possible or educated male teachers in the community to maximize girls' enrolment. The COPE teacher training modules have been designed and tailored to the specific needs of under-educated teachers being prepared by the project. The teacher training is an opportunity for young teachers, particularly females, to be able to absorb new methodologies and succeed at putting them into practice, making their classrooms more child-centred.

Thirdly, the project's innovative design, which transfers "ownership" of the schools to the communities, ensures that local leaders and parents have an important stake in their children's education, which in turn helps overcome cultural barriers to girls' education. The COPE project has successfully mobilized communities to set up classes and support them regularly, by establishing Village Education Committees (VECs). Through expanded community activities, the VECs have been involved in education decisions and understanding the importance of their role within education. COPE has strengthened linkages of VECs with the District and Provincial Education Department. Additionally, the support to female VEC members and female teachers re-enforces the importance of women's active participation as decision-makers in their families and communities. Capacity building for MoE institutions has also strengthened the linkages between formal Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and VECs.

CARE's role in COPE is to provide technical assistance and classroom supplies, train school teachers, build the capacity of communities and Ministry of Education staff to administer the schools, and in limited cases, help communities build new classrooms. As the project has grown, VECs have taken responsibility for promoting girls' education and sustaining community financial and in-kind support. In more traditional communities these committees help to promote the role of women in managing community schools. Ultimately, as the provincial and district education departments obtain additional resources and capacity, CARE, in close collaboration with communities, transitions community schools into the government's public school system. Since 2011, the project has continued to strengthen the skills and knowledge of the MoE staff, particularly at the province level where the need is greatest. Capacity building activities have largely focused on management planning, resource allocation, monitoring of teacher attendance, the provision of quality education and improved gender equity in education, thus preparing the provincial departments to assume responsibility for CBE schools.

As more girls obtain a primary education, greater consideration must be given to the opportunities available for continued schooling. Currently girls are prevented from continuing their education by a lack of secondary schools for girls. To address this need, CARE, with AusAID support, initiated a pilot Lower Secondary Community Based Education (LSCBE) project within the broader COPE program in 2006. The overall objective of this LSCBE component is to provide sustainable access to quality lower secondary education for girls in rural areas who completed sixth grade. In addition to providing girls with a 7th-9th grade education, this component also offers para–professional trainings in teaching and health education. This provides girls the choice, upon graduation from the 9th grade, to either continue their education in formal high schools (if they have the means and access) or to choose to become a community-based teacher (thus helping to fill a critical gap in female teachers) or a community health worker working to improve health and hygiene in their communities.

Education Quality – key issues and responses

CARE's experience working in CBE education in Afghanistan has shown that the main issues affecting education quality are:

- High proportion of un-trained, inexperienced teachers, especially in rural areas, many of whom did not complete secondary school themselves.
- Lack of materials to support learning - including textbooks, reading books, blackboards and teaching materials.
- Very low literacy rates, especially in rural areas. Studies show children with illiterate parents are much less likely to become literate themselves.
- Lack of adequate school management capacity.
- A tendency for gender inequality and social norms in the community, to be replicated and perpetuated in classrooms.

CARE's evaluations of its work has demonstrated the effectiveness of a number of key strategies related to education quality in both CBE classes and in MoE schools, including: a more critical focus on early grade readiness; the use of student-centred active learning classroom teaching methods; a focus on extracurricular activities; and a school improvement planning (SIP) process to enable school managers to provide more effective leadership toward quality education in schools.

Achievements

In the 15 years since COPE was launched as a small pilot, it has helped 127,000 students (60 percent of them girls) attend primary school. In 2011, COPE was directly benefitting 11,209 students (70 percent girls) in 448 CBE classes in grades 1-6 in Khost, Logar, Ghazni, Wardak, Parwan, Kapisa and Balkh provinces of Afghanistan. Since the beginning of the project more than 1,900 CBE classes with a total enrolment of approximately 60,000 students (60percent girls) have been fully integrated into the Ministry of Education formal system. Furthermore, the project succeeded to train and build the capacity of more than 3,000 CBE school teachers and 2,600 VEC members to manage their schools.

AusAID support to COPE commenced in 2004, and has run for five phases. The fifth phase, (renamed the Empowerment through Education in Afghanistan Project), commenced in 2011. Quantitative achievements of the AusAID-funded components of COPE/ Empowerment through Education in Afghanistan Project since 2004 have included:

Phase One: June 2004 to May 2005 ($500,000)

- 14,856 (66 percent female) students in 481 classes in 9 Provinces;

Phase Two: June 2005 to August 2006 ($802,000)

- 21,636 (66 percent female) students in 227 classes in 9 Provinces;

Phase Three: February 2007 to April 2009 ($1,000,000)

- 11,740 (69 percent female) students in 480 classes in 9 Provinces;

Phase Four: April 2009 to March 2010 ($500,000)

- 3,655 (71 percent female) students in 141 Primary classes in 7 Provinces;
- 634 (364 in Paktya and 270 in Khost LSCBE) girls in 28 (15 in Paktya and 13 in Khost) lower secondary community based classes.

Bridging Fund: June 2010 to August 2010 ($150,000)

- 3,357 (66 percent female) students in 138 classes in 7 Provinces
- 221 girls in 10 Lower Secondary Community Based Education (LSCBE) classes in Khost province.

Phase Five ($3,534,645): May 2011 to April 2014 Empowerment Through Education (Parwan, Kapisa and Khost provinces) will support 8,419 (65 percent girls) students in 344 classes in Khost, Parwan and Kapisa provinces; in the first year of programming, the following results have been achieved:

- 2, 686 primary school children (79 percent female)
- 212 lower secondary students (100 percent female)
- 110 Primary School Teachers (20 percent female)
- 30 lower secondary teachers (37 percent female)
- All students have been equipped with classroom kits and text books and have access to library materials through the establishment of 87 libraries
- Local accountability an ownership has been an important element of the initiative with the establishment of 95 village education committees, made up of 280 members.
- Continued collaboration with local and national government (MoE)
- Strengthened local capacities for advocacy on education rights for children, particularly girls

Next steps

The Government of Afghanistan, through its National Education Interim Plan (2011-2013), has indicated that CBE must be a core part of its strategy for meeting its targets for increased access and improvements in quality education, as set out in its National Education Strategic Plan II (2010-2014). The Interim Plan clearly highlights the expected contribution and importance of local and international NGOs in delivering CBE:

> "Increasing access through formal and alternative delivery modes: The MoE and its partners will map the reach of existing schools at the district level and identify where children cannot access schools due to long walking distances. Local/international NGOs will establish CBE where government formal schools cannot function due to resource, capacity, and security constraints."

As the leading NGO in community-based education (CBE) in Afghanistan for almost two decades, CARE firmly believes that international donors, including AusAID, must continue their support for CBE. This call has become more urgent with the withdrawal of USAID support to the PACE-A program in 2010. As part of this support, efforts should focus on continuing to build the capacity of the MoE to institutionalise elements of the current CBE model in order to make CBE a more integral and sustainable part of the MoE strategy.

2.2 CARE's Results with DIAC – Displaced Persons

Program Context

Since the fall of the Taliban in December 2001, over 5.7 million Afghans have returned to their homeland. Many of them returned to their places of origin to resettle with family members with support from the international community. However, those returning to Kabul province have found

that due to the damage caused by conflicts, lack of governmental capacity to adjudicate land ownership, and influx of people seeking work, suitable housing has not been available. In order to facilitate the durable resettlement and reintegration of returnees and prevention of onward migration, the President of Afghanistan signed a decree for the distribution of governmental lands to the landless refugees and IDPs who return to their provinces of origin. As a result, a number of line ministries formed a commission to tackle the problem, including the Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation (MoRR), the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoAg).

Women returnees and IDPs, particularly widows and female heads of household, are in the greatest need of resettlement and reintegration assistance as they were formally and systematically excluded from education and employment during the Taliban's rule, and continue to be bound by social restrictions and a patriarchal society that limits their options, including income earning opportunities. Widows are often barred from inheriting their dead husband's property; evicted from the family home; lose custody of their children; cannot own or dispose of land and are subject to harmful traditional practices. There have been cases in Kabul of women being detained in prison, allegedly for their own protection, for having fled unwanted forced remarriage to a husband's brother or cousin. Furthermore, women living in poverty have fewer resources and much less access to opportunities that could lead to employment. Thus, poor women-headed households are particularly vulnerable,[3] and their plight and needs are typically overlooked or under-addressed.

There are an estimated 50,000 widows in Kabul, most of whom lost their husbands in the decades of fighting. A household survey conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC)[4] in 2003 revealed that while average monthly household income was USD 48, the monthly income of women-headed households was just USD 16. In some cases women resorted to sending their young children to work as daily labourers or begging in order to supplement their low monthly income. Such coping practices create a cycle of poverty in which uneducated children are effectively chained to a life of subsistence, unable to obtain the skills required by the labour market.[5]

In response, CARE Afghanistan established its Vocational Training for Afghan Widows program. The Program ensured vocational training is a viable and sustainable approach to income generation by:

- developing a model for identification and provision of vocational training based on market assessment,
- establishing and facilitating linkages between trainees and the market; and
- providing follow up support to ensure trainees were receiving economic benefit from the training received.

Social Economic Reintegration of the Displaced Afghan Women Project ($670,266)

Under the Vocational Training for Afghan Widows program, CARE implemented the Social Economic Reintegration of the Displaced Afghan Women (SERDAW) project. SERDAW was funded by DIAC in two phases:

- SERDAW 1 April 2009 - March 2010 (vocational training), and
- SERDAW 2, December 2010 – May 2011 (business, marketing and entrepreneurship training).

---

[3] VTAWP Project Implementation Plan,

[4] *"Afghanistan Labour Market Information Survey*", International Rescue Committee (IRC) in association with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, September 2003.

[5] VTAWP Project Implementation Plan, p. 9.

The project targeted both returnees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) resettled into Albironi formal settlement site in Ghazni Province, well as vulnerable households in Nawor District to help prevent future displacement and stabilisation of the population. Through addressing the needs and improving livelihood security of vulnerable households, the project aimed to support the permanent resettlement of IDPs and returnees as well reduced the vulnerability associated with displacement and migration. In this way the project sought to contribute to stability and reduced risks for vulnerable communities in Ghazni Province.

Since the inception of SERDAW in 2009, a total of 173 trainees (62 percent females) graduated from seven trade training programs which have enabled them to acquire marketable skills in metal works, technical drawing, house wiring, plumbing, carpentry training among younger male trainees, whilst flower making and design and beautician, bag making, sewing and embroidery for female trainees as these are trades women can undertake in their homes.

Prior to graduation, target trainees identified different employment support sectors they wished to pursue, including home based business, producer and service groups, formal employment and on-the-job training and strengthened linkages with 36 enterprises, of which 16 participated in the National Skills Development Program (NSDP) and supported IPOs in the development of the Business Program curriculum.

During the implementation of SERDAW 1, six Producer Groups (PGs) were formed, with an additional five formed subsequently during SERDAW 2. At the completion of the project the 11 PGs were operational with a total of 44 members (18 females and 26 males). On average, PG members are generating a monthly income which ranges from USD 70 to USD 172. In addition, 50 members accrued sufficient savings to shift from a small-scale to a medium-size enterprise which has both enabled them to hire the support services of a Business Development Officer (BDO) and Marketing Officer.

At project completion, a total of 120 former beneficiaries of SERDAW 1 (85 females and 35 male) completed the Business Training Program as well as Life Skills training. Each Implementing Partner Organization (IPO) delivered a total of 45 sessions (3 ½ hours per session, per day) to a group of 22 graduate trainees per class. Community Mobilizers (CMs) continued to offer extensive awareness-raising and information sessions to potential trainees, their families, community members and both civil and religious local authorities and supported 26 Savings and Credit Groups (SCGs).

Such social platforms and public engagement mechanisms have proven very effective in increasing the acceptance of women working outside the home and working (from home) in non-traditional trades. Among other aspects, a tracer study assessed the attitude of women and men as it relates to responsibilities, decision-making and division of labour in the household. According to the findings of the study, it is evident that women (wives and other female family members) have acquired an influential role in joint decision-making and division of household chores amongst all members at the household level. Information sessions on Gender and Women's Rights were mandatory to the Additional Life Skills Training that all trainees (males and females) attended prior to their graduation. The sessions were also offered to family members, shura members, and local community representatives. Sessions on Gender Equity (GE) were also part of the Vocational Training and Business Program, 5 Gender and Women's Rights sessions were delivered to members of the families in each of the five districts, covering 233 participants (comprised of 107 females – 46 percent).

In a recent assessment of Albironi settlement (one of the project locations), 80 percent of beneficiaries who received vocational training in 2009 were found to be generating income from these skills.

Next steps

According to the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (2007/2008) there are 526,000 widows in Afghanistan. In a country with some of the worst poverty indicators in the world, widows and their children are among the poorest of the poor. CARE firmly believes that international donors, including the Australian Government, must continue to support targeted programs that aim to reduce the vulnerability of widow's and their families.

3. General Perspectives on aid policy

CARE's longstanding engagement in Afghanistan provides us with a strong insight into the broader issues and challenges facing both the Afghanistan Government and the international community as they plan for the 'Transition Decade'. Drawing on our extensive work in both development programming and humanitarian response, our strong ties to both communities and government, and specifically on our understanding of the challenges and issues facing the women of Afghanistan, we offer the following comments in relation to broader aid policy and programming, as well as the processes that will underpin them.

3.1 Ensure governance reforms protect gains in women's participation and ensure meaningful voice and participation of women at the grassroots

Women in Afghanistan have made impressive gains in decision-making on household, development and community affairs at the village level. Considerable progress has been made over the past decade in involving women in community affairs and decision making at the local level – such as through village community development councils (CDCs) supported by programs like the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). However, current proposals before the Government of Afghanistan to reform and strengthen provincial and district governance involve engagement with tribal structures and political compromise that pose challenges for women's rights and participation.

The NSP has enabled women to participate in decision-making on how project funds are spent and thus opened up the space for women's participation in governance at community level. Agencies have experimented in clustering the CDCs and linking them to district level governance, and have developed concrete insights into what makes local governance structures sustainable. The key challenge is to ensure those gains are not lost in transition and mistakes are not repeated. A key concern is that some of the proposed models for sub-national governance reform raise potential challenges in terms of enabling women's participation or protection of their rights. Women need to have a meaningful voice in new sub-national governance structures and processes.

In a published report entitled *Resolution to Reality* (2010) CARE put forward the challenge to **regain and capture the potential of UN Security Council Resolution 1325** to transform both peace and security policy and the lives of women affected by conflict. CARE believes ensuring perspectives and priorities of women from the grassroots level are reflected at higher levels is central to achieving this resolution.

Recommendations in the report included:

- The need to adopt a holistic approach to women's participation in peace and security policy and practice – aimed at addressing women's competence and potential as well as the structures and relations that condition their choices.
- Support to a strategic approach to consolidating peace by connecting grassroots peacebuilding up to national and international peace-making efforts.

- Prioritising the protection of women who participate in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance from violence, intimidation and stigmatisation.

The Women's Declaration[6] that was produced with CARE's support in the run-up to Bonn, and which summarized that perspectives of hundreds of Afghan women from across 22 provinces, is an example of CARE's ongoing commitment to support to the representation of women's voices in decision making.

Recommendation: *That the Australian Government, through its development cooperation program strategy and its engagement in relevant bilateral and multi-lateral fora, commit to actions that ensure women in Afghanistan have a meaningful voice in new sub-national governance structures and processes*

3.2 Inclusive and effective aid frameworks and management

The Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) agreed at Tokyo includes potentially important indicators related to gender, governance and management of natural resources and refers to civil society involvement in taking the agenda forward. Precise details for monitoring of the MAF will be articulated in a new Aid Management Policy (AMP) which the Afghan government is currently developing and consulting donors and NGOs. The AMP will also set the framework for aid effectiveness principles and processes. The initial draft shared for consultation did not include any specific guidance on gender mainstreaming. Furthermore its guidance on accountability focused more on national level processes involving line ministries in Kabul, and does not outline sufficient guidance on how monitoring and accountability processes at sub-national level will function, or the role of civil society or Afghan citizens in monitoring and accountability at those levels. This AMP is still in development until December 2012 and there is scope for AUSAID to work with Afghan government and its partners to clarify and strengthen these components.

Such consultation could be linked to consultations on the National Priority Programme (NPP), as these should in principle establish the operational framework for monitoring and reporting in different sectors of relevance to the MAF indicators. For the framework to be effective it must link with monitoring and accountability processes at the sub-national level, involve the meaningful participation of civil society (especially women), and include the development of indictors.

CARE believes deliberate steps must be taken to finalise implementation plans for each NPP to articulate the specific and practical ways in which gender and women's rights will be addressed. The NPPs also need to take into account the roles that NGOs can play in service delivery, accountability efforts and capacity-building at different levels of state institutions. Clearly outlined or improved consultation and coordination mechanisms between the state and civil society are required for effective implementation and monitoring to ensure accountability.

As the process to design implementation plans begins, civil society could offer significant value in ground-truthing these plans, and developing effective indicators for monitoring their success.[7] Given

---

[6] http://www.ifuw.org/docs/2011_bonn_awn.pdf

[7] In the education sector CARE and partners made a number of recommendations in a briefing paper entitled *High Stakes: Girls Education in Afghanistan* (February, 2011), including;

- Increase the number of female-friendly, well equipped schools for girls, especially in rural and remote areas
- Increase the number and quality of female teachers, especially in rural or remote areas
- Focus on improving safety and security of schools
- Redouble efforts to improve the quality and accessibility of secondary and higher education,

the difficulties of ensuring meaningful engagement of civil society since the inception of NPP development, CARE believes this is an opportune moment to review and revise the consultation process, with the aim of strengthening it considerably in the next phase. Such a process would help to broaden and enhance the effectiveness of national ownership by ensuring that engagement extends beyond central line ministries to civil society and beneficiary communities on the ground. Data should be consistently disaggregated by gender, and specific plans designed to meet the greater challenges of providing effective, equitable services to Afghan women as well as men. As stated at Tokyo, the NPPs, directly paired with the MAF, provide a fresh opportunity to hold line ministries and sub-national governance structures to account on their responsibilities, including those in relation to the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA).

Further, CARE believes that shifts towards on-budget aid through the government should be sequenced on the basis of demonstrated progress against sector-specific benchmarks in state capacity and accountability at central and, most importantly, sub-national levels. A pragmatic dialogue is required between government, donors and NGOs on how this can be achieved in each sector. Civil society and NGOs can play roles in sustaining and expanding service delivery at the same time as building government capacity and supporting monitoring and accountability efforts. Information on women's and girls' access to services in a safe, effective and accountable fashion should inform the design and monitoring of these benchmarks. Women's organisations and coalitions, such as the Afghan Women's Network, should be involved in the monitoring process.

Recommendations: *That the Australian Government commits to ensuring the following specific follow-up action on the Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) agreed at Tokyo:*

- *Work with the Government of Afghanistan and other partners to ensure that the final Aid Management Policy (to be finalised by December 2012) includes specific guidance on gender mainstreaming, as well as sufficient guidance on how monitoring and accountability processes at sub-national level will function, including the role of civil society and Afghan citizens in monitoring and accountability at those levels.*
- *Civil society consultations on the MAF should be linked to the NPP consultation process, which should be reviewed and revised. Such a review should aim to broaden and enhance national ownership of policy and programs by ensuring that engagement extends beyond central line ministries to civil society and beneficiary communities on the ground, especially women.*
    - *Implementation plans for NPPs should be finalised in consultation with civil society and need to articulate the specific and practical ways in which gender and women's rights will be addressed.*
    - *Indicators on gender, including violence against women and participation in governance, should become part of the monitoring framework.*
- *Ensure that shifts towards on-budget aid through the government are sequenced on the basis of demonstrated progress against clear sector-specific benchmarks in state capacity and accountability at central and, most importantly, sub-national levels.*
    - *Information on women and girls' access to services in a safe, effective and accountable fashion should inform the design and monitoring of these benchmarks.*
- *Recognise and commit to the essential roles that civil society and NGOs must play in sustaining and expanding service delivery, at the same time as efforts continue to build government capacity and support monitoring and accountability efforts*

---

with an enhanced focus on learning outcomes

3.3 Interaction and effectiveness and safety of aid workers: Challenges associated with government to government aid support

Most analysts predict that transition will result in increasing violence, political fragmentation and a retraction of central government reach across large parts of the country. This is likely to result in ever increasing numbers of displaced people. The Tokyo declaration makes a welcome acknowledgement of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, notably chronic conflict-related population displacement. Further follow-up is required to ensure that Afghan and international policies address concerns like forced evictions, identity cards and the access of IDPs to services.

In insecure environments such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, Australian Government aid is increasingly being delivered through Defence and other government departments, to support whole-of-government political and military objectives. Unifying political, military and humanitarian objectives may strengthen policy coherence in government, but it can have significant negative implications for humanitarian activity unless applied carefully. For example, an increased emphasis in Afghanistan on stabilisation and state-building activities has diverted attention from a growing humanitarian crisis and the goal of assistance based on assessed need.

Further, an integration of development activities to achieve overall campaign objectives reduces the 'independent and impartial' space in which humanitarian actors, including NGOs, operate. In Afghanistan, military involvement in aid can also draw aid projects into the conflict, with projects that are directly associated with one warring party placing aid workers and beneficiaries at risk, and reducing aid effectiveness. A 2009 study demonstrated that schools constructed by "Military Provincial Reconstruction Teams were more vulnerable to attack than other schools" (see: CARE, Afghan Ministry of Education and World Bank (2009) *Knowledge on Fire: Attacks on education in Afghanistan*). As more available funding to NGOs is linked with political and military objectives in such contexts, the opportunities for community based, needs-driven aid and development are decreasing and NGO workers and projects are placed under increased security risk.

Given the increasing humanitarian needs that are likely to accompany transition, humanitarian access to displaced people will be as important as ever. There is a growing recognition that Afghan NGOs and national humanitarian organisations within civil society will play an increasingly important role in the years to come. For this to be effective, continued efforts must be made to include local organisations in humanitarian coordination and funding mechanisms in Afghanistan. This will need to be supported by increased effort on the part of the humanitarian community to ensure these organisation have sufficient capacity to be able to work in an accountable, efficient and effective manner. This will include training and certification centres, modules and mentoring fora, which have been proposed by the humanitarian community and warrant continued attention and support by international donors.

Recommendation: *That the Australian Government, through its program strategy, commits to providing clarity around how funding will reach operational humanitarian agencies, including Afghan local NGOs, with access to affected populations on the ground. To facilitate the independence required for humanitarian access in many areas, some of this funding will need to be distinct from development and State-building budgets.*

Summary of recommendations

1. *That the Australian Government, through its development cooperation program strategy and its engagement in relevant bilateral and multi-lateral fora, commit to actions that ensure women in Afghanistan have a meaningful voice in new sub-national governance structures and processes*

2. *That the Australian Government commits to ensuring the following specific follow-up action on the Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) agreed at Tokyo:*
    - *Work with the Government of Afghanistan and other partners to ensure that the final Aid Management Policy (to be finalised by December 2012) includes specific guidance on gender mainstreaming, as well as sufficient guidance on how monitoring and accountability processes at sub-national level will function, including the role of civil society and Afghan citizens in monitoring and accountability at those levels.*
    - *Civil society consultations on the MAF should be linked to the NPP consultation process, which should be reviewed and revised. Such a review should aim to broaden and enhance national ownership of policy and programs by ensuring that engagement extends beyond central line ministries to civil society and beneficiary communities on the ground, especially women.*
        - *Implementation plans for NPPs should be finalised in consultation with civil society and need to articulate the specific and practical ways in which gender and women's rights will be addressed.*
        - *Indicators on gender, including violence against women and participation in governance, should become part of the monitoring framework.*
    - *Ensure that shifts towards on-budget aid through the government are sequenced on the basis of demonstrated progress against clear sector-specific benchmarks in state capacity and accountability at central and, most importantly, sub-national levels.*
        - *Information on women and girls' access to services in a safe, effective and accountable fashion should inform the design and monitoring of these benchmarks.*
    - *Recognise and commit to the essential roles that civil society and NGOs must play in sustaining and expanding service delivery, at the same time as efforts continue to build government capacity and support monitoring and accountability efforts*

3. *That the Australian Government, through its program strategy, commits to providing clarity around how funding will reach operational humanitarian agencies, including Afghan local NGOs, with access to affected populations on the ground. To facilitate the independence required for humanitarian access in many areas, some of this funding will need to be distinct from development and State-building budgets.*

For further information on CARE's work, visit www.careaustralia.org

Julia Newton-Howes
Chief Executive