Gender Aspects of Development and Community Involvement

Examining Gender Differences in Data on Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Development Projects
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Integrity Watch Afghanistan

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About Integrity Watch Afghanistan

Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) was founded in October 2005 and established itself as an independent civil society organization in 2006. IWA’s aim is to evolve into a reference actor related to understanding, analysing and acting for transparency, accountability and anti-corruption issues.

IWA’s Mission

The mission of Integrity Watch Afghanistan is to put corruption under the spotlight by increasing transparency, integrity and accountability in Afghanistan through the provision of policy-oriented research, development of training tools and facilitation of policy dialogue.

About IWA’s Research Unit

IWA’s Research Unit undertakes research and advocacy on crosscutting themes. Its first objective is to develop new empirical research on corruption. Its second objective is to consolidate current knowledge on corruption, accountability, transparency and integrity. Thirdly, it aims to enhance research capacity for anti-corruption issues. Together, these objectives work to influence decision-makers, increase civil society engagement and raise public awareness of corruption issues.
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Preface

In December 2013 Integrity Watch Afghanistan published the report ‘If You Built Your Own House, Would You Then Destroy It?’ Community Involvement and the Sustainability of PRT Development Projects in Afghanistan after Transition. This research looked at the benefits of community engagement for the sustainability and accountability of development projects, specifically in the context of development projects done by Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. Report name] drew general conclusions based on this survey data, community focus groups, interviews with government officials at the district, provincial, and central level, and interviews with PRT-related actors at the central level. This report is a supplement to [Report name], looking specifically at gender differences regarding development and community involvement and participation in survey findings from the primary report. It is important to acknowledge that the original research design for the primary report focused on PRT development projects and community involvement, and did not include a gender component. As such, this report is limited to the quantitative data that was collected for that research. This limitation is discussed further in Section 1.3 and 1.4. However, this does not undermine the findings of this report, which provide a number of key insights for CIMIC development efforts and other development actors in terms of assessing performance regarding gender and a number of key departure points for further research and the construction of better gender-sensitive indicators in development practice. Furthermore, while the case studies for the research were PRT development projects, with a focus on community involvement, respondents were also asked questions about their involvement in any development projects in the community regardless of implementer and a number of other platforms for involving the community in projects, such as the CDC. As such, while this report addresses PRT policies regarding gender, it also includes other development actors such as NGOs and CDCs.
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Figures Key

**Correlations**

- $r$ value
- $N$
- $p < .05$
- $p < .01$
- $p < .001$
- Positive association
- Negative association

**t-Tests**

- $t$ value
- $df$
- $M$: Mean
- $SD$: Standard Deviation
- $F$: F-value
- $F$ value
- $df$
- $N$

- $p < .05$
- $p < .01$
- $p < .001$

**ANOVA**

- $F$ value
- $df$
- $N$
- $p < .05$
- $p < .01$
- $p < .001$
Executive Summary

In [month, 2013] Integrity Watch Afghanistan published the report [Report Name]. This research looked at the benefits of community engagement for the sustainability and accountability of development projects, specifically in the context of development projects done by Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. For the research, a survey was administered to communities for eight case-study PRT development projects—four schools and four health facilities. The sample for the survey was representative for the men and women populations of each community. The survey looked at a number of dimensions of development and participation: (1) development projects, community involvement in projects, and monitoring and oversight of projects, (2) perceptions of various institutions including government at all levels, PRTs, and NGOs, and (3) post-2014 transition issues regarding sustainability and addressing project and community issues. [Report name] drew general conclusions based on this survey data, community focus groups, interviews with government officials at the district, provincial, and central level, and interviews with PRT-related actors at the central level. This report is a supplement to [Report name], looking specifically at gender differences regarding development and community involvement and participation through sex-disaggregated quantitative research findings.

PRTs have been a part of development efforts in Afghanistan for over ten years, operating as civil-military units with mandates in security, development and governance. However, as 2014 approaches, the PRTs are transitioning and closing out, handing over responsibility for development projects to the Afghan government. The primary report focused on community participation, sustainability and accountability issues. While this report focuses on sex-disaggregated data in these areas, it also looks at the accountability relationship between donors and recipients regarding gender, PRT policy and practice regarding gender, and differences by gender in development perceptions and community participation. The key question is what the sex-disaggregated data on development and community involvement from this report can tell us about gender-based programming in Afghanistan and what lessons can be taken to improve gender-based programming in the future.

Research was conducted in three provinces (Parwan, Nangarhar, and Herat) at the provincial, district, and community level. There were eight case study PRT projects in these provinces, where community-level research was conducted. In total, the survey was administered to 495 respondents in the eight case study villages of the three provinces in February and March 2013. The sample size was representative for each village and a representative division of men and women over the age of 18. The survey was administered to 250 women respondents.

The case studies for the research were PRT development projects. However, with a focus on community involvement, respondents were also asked questions about their involvement in any development projects in the community regardless of implementer and a number of other platforms for involving the community in projects, such as the CDC.1 As such, while this report addresses PRT policies regarding gender, it also includes other development actors such as NGOs and CDCs.

Gender and Development in Afghanistan

Approaches to gender in development generally fall under one of three dominant perspectives: ‘Gender and Development’ (GAD), ‘Women and Development’ (WAD), or ‘Women in Development’ (WID). The WID perspective largely promoted agencies of socialization, encouraging trainings for women and girls, introducing equal opportunity programs, or freeing labor markets. WID approaches generally involved income-generating activities for women with training in areas like skills or crafts, often with a welfare aspect as well. WAD followed, with a very similar approach but more focus on women and development processes. GAD succeeded both of these schools of gender-based development theory, conceptualized as an approach that

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1 Community Development Councils (CDCs) are voluntary community development bodies that are part of the National Solidarity Programme, a program created by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in 2003 to develop the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own development projects.
would not look only at women, but at women in relation to men and the way that those relations are social constructed. GAD focuses on a removal of structural barriers, and concepts of ‘empowerment’ and ‘gender mainstreaming’ are products of the GAD approach that still guides much of development practice today.

‘Gender’ has become a dominant theme in development and human rights rhetoric of the 21st century, and Afghanistan is no exception to the rule. In the massive military and aid intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, rhetorically, reversing abuses of Afghan women’s rights was something of an explicit policy agenda. Aid organizations and development actors have declared goals including empowerment and liberation of women and gender mainstreaming across sectors. While much of the rhetoric regarding gender-based development initiatives in Afghanistan began with a GAD-centered approach, the implementation seems to have been much more in the tradition of WID, and PRT development policies regarding gender appear to fit into this larger trend.

PRTs and Gender

Despite the importance of gender to meeting PRT development objectives, much like the PRT policies reviewed in the primary report on development project procedures and monitoring and evaluation, PRT policy regarding gender appears to derive from a few general directives that are more rhetorical than implementable, implying that such approaches are largely ad hoc and at the direction of the PRT lead nation. Furthermore, there are no quantitative assessments of PRT gender impact and very few qualitative reports, which leaves official policy and communications materials as one of the few sources for attempting to review and assess PRT gender practices.

The ISAF PRT Handbook contains a one-page section titled ‘Gender’ in an appendix dedicated to directives for coordination with non-governmental organizations, and a two-page section on Women’s Affairs and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in the annex for governance, human rights, and diplomacy, totaling roughly three pages out of 283 dedicated to gender (or more accurately, women’s) issues. Far from concrete directives, the broad guidelines for PRTs leave a wide gap for inter-PRT policy variance for addressing gender inequality in their development programming.

In practice, it seems that the most concrete efforts at addressing gender in PRT activities were through Female Engagement Teams (FETs) and gender advisors. In 2009, the Swedish Defence Research Agency undertook a review of practice and lessons regarding UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan based on case studies of five PRTs. They found that approaches varied greatly, and that UNSCR 1325 was rarely considered systematically in executing daily PRT tasks. What’s more, despite UNSCR 1325 being summarized and explained twice in the ISAF PRT Handbook, PRT staff of three of the teams did not have any knowledge of UNSCR 1325. The highest percentage of women representation in PRT personnel was 14%, only one PRT had women staff among highest military PRT leadership, and only one PRT had regular contact with women’s organizations.

In a review of official communications materials published by the PRTs (i.e. press releases, blog posts, reports) Gender Advisors seemed to only be utilized on-staff by a handful of PRTs (namely the Swedish, Spanish, Italian, and Korean PRTs), with FETs or providing projects directed at women being a more dominant means of addressing ‘gender’ issues.

The first FET was established in 2009 in Farah province, after which all ISAF forces were ordered to generate similar units, with some PRTs embedding the concept as well. The teams were originally designed as force protection responsible for carrying out searches on women. However, the scope of their work expanded to include outreach to women at the local level, identifying needs and constraints for women, and gathering information about the situation in communities. There is little literature on the teams and no quantitative assessments, but much of the asserted benefits of the FETs is in information collecting and dissemination and intelligence gathering.

Many of the official communications materials from PRTs reviewed painted the PRT FET members as goddesses in headscarves, and were dripping with descriptive imagery depicting disempowered Afghan women—illiterate, young mothers, beaten and burned, veiled under the all-
encompassing symbol of women oppression: the veil or the burka—echoing the liberator image of the international community characteristic of efforts in Afghanistan. Accompanying photos showed women in military uniforms wearing headscarves and embodying typical women archetypes, holding and playing with Afghan children or teaching hygiene to young girls.

In these official communications, some of the PRT-sponsored programs described addressed genuine issues regarding gender inequality and gender-specific problems, such as women literacy programs, women police mentoring, and a medical civic action program for children. On the other hand, other programs described for addressing gender inequality included a coloring contest for schoolgirls, gardening projects, women military distributing clothing to orphanages, cooking courses, handicraft exhibitions, pen pal programs between US and Afghan schools for teachers and schoolgirls, gifting new scarves to Afghan women, sewing courses, and giving chickens to women to raise in an article titled ‘Poultry Empowers Afghan Women’.

A number of articles described holding women’s shuras and meeting with officials from the Department of Women’s Affairs or the Provincial Governor to discuss concerns as their approach to gender programming, without really addressing any comprehensive approach, programs, policies or tangible outcomes of such meetings. The review of PRT policy and practice regarding gender echoed the characteristics of much gender-based development in Afghanistan—GAD language and concepts but a WID approach, a strong liberator mentality, and an approach to gender focused almost exclusively on women.

**Key Findings from Gender-Dissaggregated Data**

With this overview of PRT policy and practice regarding gender as the backdrop, this research examined sex-dissaggregated data from the primary report on development projects, community involvement in projects, monitoring and oversight of projects, perceptions of various institutions including government at all levels, PRTs, and NGOs, and post-2014 transition issues regarding sustainability and addressing project and community issues. Looking at sex-disaggregated data and statistical correlations, the report had a number of key findings:

**Development Projects in the Community**

- Overall, men were more aware of development activities than women, and most reported projects in bridges, healthcare or educational facilities.
- In both genders, where facilities were perceived to have improved, maintenance was given more importance.

**Perceptions of the PRT and Development Projects**

- In both genders, most respondents rated the overall quality of PRT projects as average. However, regarding the case study PRT projects, men’s perceptions were significantly more negative than women’s perceptions.
- The research found evidence that where PRT projects were viewed as meeting community needs and implemented at a high quality, this was noted by men, and made them feel that project maintenance was therefore more important. However, the same relationship was not observed among women, perhaps because women are generally more marginalized from community decision-making and forums that address community development needs.
- While involvement improved men’s perceptions of the PRT, it had a lesser or no effect for women. In our focus group discussions and in communication with enumerators, we learned that whereas men CDCs, shuras, elders, etc. were involved and consulted for all kinds of development projects in the community, women CDCs and shuras were largely only consulted regarding projects directly or exclusively targeting women.
- Men’s perceptions of project community impact were significantly more positive than women, and more men than women felt the project was needed, had improved access to services, and that it was important that the project be maintained.
- While men with more personal involvement in community development perceived the PRT more positively, women with more involvement in community development perceived the PRT more negatively.
Men who had a higher knowledge of institutions also had more positive perceptions of the PRT, whereas women with higher knowledge of institutions had more negative perceptions of the PRT, perhaps suggesting that women felt that other institutions outperformed the PRT in providing for development or women’s needs.

Development and Perceptions of Quality of Life in the Community

- Women ranked the quality of life in their community better than men. However, findings implied that PRT activities had an effect on men’s perceptions of community quality of life, but no effect in women.
- Data suggested that while involvement influenced perceptions of quality of life in the community, the effect was stronger in women than in men, though in most other areas involvement had a lesser effect for women than men. Furthermore, it appears that involvement, awareness of involvement, and participation in community development was more strongly linked to beliefs about community quality of life for women than men.

Institutional Participation and Personal and Community Involvement

- Though more men than women were members of institutions (CDC, local shura/jirga, religious council, or government institutions) and had attended CDC meetings, there was substantial CDC and local shura membership among women respondents. Furthermore, 35% of men and 32% of women had attended a CDC meeting.
- CDC attendance explained 46% of variance in personal involvement in women, compared to only 28% in men, and 33% of variance in women respondents’ awareness of community involvement. Women who were involved in institutions or the CDC had more awareness of community involvement, but these platforms did not have an effect for men. These findings would support that much of women’s involvement and awareness of community involvement is through the CDC platform, whereas men’s avenues for involvement appear to be more diverse and less dependent upon the CDC platform.
- CDC meeting attendance explained 49% of variance in women’s knowledge of institutions, but it did not explain any variance in men, suggesting that involvement had a large impact on knowledge of institutions for women, but little effect for men.
- 44% of women reported never having any personal involvement in any aspect of a development project in their community, compared to only 30% of men.
- Men who had personal involvement appeared more likely to feel the project was needed, whereas women who had personal involvement were less likely to feel the project was needed. Additionally, men with more personal involvement also had more positive government perceptions, confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions, while women with higher personal involvement had more negative perceptions, less confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions. Furthermore, while men who were aware of community involvement felt that their community had benefited from institutions more, women who were aware felt it had benefited less. These findings suggest that women who had or were aware of involvement felt as that they were not efficacious, whereas men with the same experiences felt as though it had an impact.

Community Project Monitoring

- Data suggested that women who were aware of community monitoring had worse perceptions of the project. What’s more, while community monitoring had a positive effect on community-level perceptions in men, it had a largely negative effect on community- and macro-level perceptions in women.
- Personal involvement in development projects was a significant predictor of the impact of community monitoring in women, but the same predictor model was insignificant for men. This indicates that experiences in community development influenced perceptions of the impact of community monitoring in women, but had no effect in men.
Maintenance, Sustainability, and Solving Problems with Projects

- In both genders, an overwhelming amount would hold the Afghan government responsible if the project were to no longer function or provide services, although a sizeable number in both genders also believed the local community would share some responsibility. However, more men than women would also hold a foreign government or the international community responsible.

- If there were problems with the case study project, most respondents answered they would address the problem with community members without external help, but more women than men answered the community would address the problem, and more men than women answered they would issue a complaint to the government.

Government and Post-2014 Perceptions

- Men had a significantly higher overall knowledge of institutions than women respondents.
- While involvement in community decision-making forums and development projects generally had an increasing effect on men’s confidence in institutions, involvement in the same activities had a decreasing effect for women.
- Women felt that their community had benefited from institutions more than men.
- While benefit from institutions seems to have impacted perceptions of the government for men, but it did not have any significant impact for women.

Government Perceptions

- Men's overall perceptions of the Afghan government were significantly more positive than women’s.
- Project community impact was a significant predictor of government perceptions in both men and women. This would suggest that where the case study PRT projects had an impact in the community, perceptions of government were more positive in both genders, regardless of the PRT being the implementer.

Post-2014 Perceptions

- Post-2014 perceptions were largely average, although men’s perceptions were significantly slightly more positive than women’s perceptions.
- Men who had more involvement in their community development felt more optimistic about the future, whereas women who had more involvement felt less optimistic.

Discussion and Recommendations

From these findings, a number of gender-differentiated themes emerged. Whereas men’s involvement and awareness of development activities in the community did not appear dependent on any single platform, women appeared largely dependent on the CDC mechanism. Moreover, even where women were involved, it appears very likely that women are only involved regarding development that directly targets women, whereas men are involved on projects that affect the community as a whole. Findings repeatedly echoed the suggestion that women are largely marginalized from any sort of meaningful participation in or even awareness of development activities and decisionmaking within the community.

Perhaps most telling, while involvement appears to have had a number of positive effects for men, many findings suggested that involvement had either none or negative effects for women. Women with involvement felt more negatively towards the PRT and government institutions, had less confidence in institutions, perceived less benefit from institutions, felt that projects were less needed, and felt less optimistic about the future, to name a few. This is strongly indicative that what is being done by PRTs and development actors in these areas to involve women is not only inadequate, but could actually be causing more harm than good. Furthermore, these findings echoed many of those from the primary report. Development can play a key role in improving perceptions of institutions at all levels and bolstering the state. However, in as much as it can improve perceptions, if these projects are not sustained, it can likely erode them as well.
This research concluded that PRT development policy and practice has not adequately taken consideration of gender issues, and where ‘gender’ has been addressed, projects and programs are too strongly in the tradition of WID, which has largely been proven ineffective in addressing gender inequality. Men respondents were more aware of development activities than women respondents, had higher personal involvement in development, and were more aware of community involvement in the case study PRT project. Men respondents had a higher overall knowledge of institutions than women respondents, more confidence in institutions, more positive perceptions of the Afghan government, more positive perceptions of local institutions, and felt more optimistic about conditions after 2014.

The research also confirmed that there is great potential for community involvement in both genders, many of which are summarized in findings from the primary report. Sex-disaggregated findings also showed that involvement had a large impact on knowledge of institutions and that experiences in community development had a large influence on perceptions of the impacts of community monitoring in women respondents. Findings reinforced that development does have the potential to bolster support for government, and when implemented well and responsibly, can increase people’s feelings of confidence in government and belief in competence of government bodies at all levels. It would also suggest that perceptions of government are in some way tied to service delivery and immediate needs being met for citizens.

Furthermore, findings support theoretical assumptions that community involvement can help to build capacity, establish clear channels for community participation, and give people the opportunity to take part in processes that shape their lives, facilitating a sense of efficacy, ownership, and empowerment. The findings also corroborate that involvement increases people’s knowledge of institutions and government systems, enabling them to be more proactive in terms of advocating for themselves and holding the government accountable in terms of fulfilling its responsibilities. We found that personal involvement generally had stronger correlations with other key variables, which could indicate that simply having community involvement strategies is not enough. Rather, community involvement should be as inclusive as possible and encourage personal participation from all members of the community to maximize its potential benefits.

From this research, Integrity Watch Afghanistan issues the following recommendations:

**On Sex-Disaggregated Data and Gender and Development Research in Afghanistan**

- In the absence of adequate qualitative information, the findings of this report are largely exploratory in nature. However, the findings show a number of critical points that would warrant further research. Organizations and researchers should use these findings to guide further investigative research into gender and development issues in Afghanistan.

- The findings of this report provide a number of insights into differences between men and women regarding development and community involvement. These findings could be used to dramatically improve gender-sensitive indicators and goals in the context of Afghanistan, based in tentative statistically proven concepts.

- There is an incredible amount of quantitative data in Afghanistan that has not been sex-disaggregated. What’s more, where it is disaggregated, it is often only frequencies or at best crosstabulation of responses for men and women. Development actors and researchers should not shy away from in-depth statistical analysis, examining the differences not only in responses but relationships between responses in men and women. Sex-disaggregated data has the potential to tell us so much more that how many men and women said what, as this report shows.

**On Gender-Based Development Practices**

**Gender-Based Development Approaches**

- Gender equality is key to establishing and maintaining stability and development gains. When implementing any development initiative, gender (meaning men also—not just women) should be a central consideration, proactively rather than as an afterthought, and based
on well-informed ideas of what gender is and the best strategies for addressing gender inequality in the specific context at hand.

- Practitioners and theorists alike have concluded that WID is an ineffective and outdated approach. As such, if WID-style projects such as those reviewed in Chapter 2 are to be promoted and employed by donors or development practitioners, it should be done with caution, realistic expectations, and a thorough, well-informed consideration of better alternatives.

- Evidence from this report supports that men’s and women’s perceptions of development projects and various institutions are formed based upon different factors (for instance, men prioritizing need for project and women prioritizing visible improvement of services). Rather than operating on the simple principle that there are differences, donors and development practitioners should further investigate and consider what and why these differences are in implementing development programs in order to maximize benefits for both genders.

- It appears that in many development initiatives, gaining women’s perspectives is considered to constitute a gender approach. Just as ‘women’ does not equal ‘gender’, neither does a women’s perspective constitute a gender approach. Though talking to both men and women is an important component, development actors should understand that this is only a step in addressing gender rather than a means in itself.

**Gendered Aspects of Community Involvement**

- This report found that a gap between genders where women surveyed had less awareness of development activities, lower knowledge of institutions, less confidence in institutions, and more negative perceptions of the Afghan government. The primary report found that personal involvement in development activities is significantly associated with each of these areas. As such, personal involvement strategies should be employed in all development activities as a means of decreasing these gaps between men and women.

- Evidence from both this and the primary report suggests that personal involvement has much more benefit than just awareness of community involvement. As such, if women are not personally provided with avenues for involvement, community involvement can have little to no effect on a significant part of the community. While utilizing preexisting structures like shuras can be an effective approach to involving communities in development decision-making, if these preexisting structures are patriarchal, utilizing them can serve to reinforce a negative gender status quo.

- Evidence indicates that the ways that women have been involved in community development has not had as much effect as in men, and in a number of ways actually appears to have a negative effect. This would strongly indicate that the present means being utilized in development processes for involving women need to be further investigated and reconsidered, not only from a gender perspective but also through a Do No Harm framework. For instance, if women’s participation in CDCs were meaningfully integrated and they were allowed to participate in decision-making on all development projects in the community, perhaps it would have more positive effects than the situation at present where they are often allowed to be separate and marginalized, only participating in decision-making on projects that specifically target women.

- Findings show that even where women have personal involvement in development activities, it is likely often presence more so than meaningful participation. Furthermore, women appear to often only be involved in projects targeted at women, rather than on issues affecting the community as a whole, which could be a possible reason for the differences in involvement effects between men and women. Therefore, development projects and programs should focus on ways of directly involving women not only in projects directly targeted at women, but in all development issues in their community.

- Along those same lines, data on women’s participation should be less focused on quantity and more focused on quality of participation to identify further means of increasing the potential of community involvement in development processes.
On CIMIC Development Activities and Gender

While on the ground, development projects may look the same, this research acknowledges that there are differences between development and CIMIC actors providing projects. As such, this research issues specific recommendations for CIMIC actors such as the PRTs:

• Especially when operating outside standard area of activities such as development, CIMIC actors should employ the close advisement of experts to ensure proper planning, implementation, and follow-up on projects. The same applies for gender. A few Gender Advisors sparsely dispersed throughout the ISAF chain of command or among a select few PRTs is inadequate to ensure a gender-sensitive approach.

• PRTs and other CIMIC actors should understand that women and gender are two distinct concepts, and addressing women does not mean addressing gender. Female Engagement Teams, while perhaps serving a purpose from the military perspective, do not constitute a gender approach, and should not be promoted as such.

On Other Actors

• The Afghan government should make its own additional efforts at closing this knowledge and awareness gender gap, not only through efforts from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs but throughout all government bodies and agencies at all levels. To begin with, the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) should insist upon women’s meaningful participation in CDCs, especially given the findings from this report that indicate the massive benefit it can have for decreasing the gender gap in community development.

• Media should also play a role, ensuring that dissemination strategies, information availability, and distribution mediums are gender-inclusive.
1. Introduction

[Report name] was released by Integrity Watch Afghanistan in [month, 2013]. The research for this report looked at accountability, community participation and involvement, and sustainability in the context of Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) development projects in Afghanistan and Transition, with PRTs closing leading up to 2014.

PRTs have been operating in Afghanistan for over ten years as civil-military units mandated with projects in three areas: security, development and governance. With the 2014 troop withdrawal date looming, PRTs are in the process of transitioning and phasing out, and responsibility for the projects undertaken in these areas will have to be handed over to the Afghan government. There is much research demonstrating the benefits of participation and community engagement for the sustainability and accountability aspects of development projects. However, such a link has not been made in addressing the sustainability and accountability aspects of PRT projects. [Report name] makes these links, focusing on the accountability and sustainability aspects of PRT development projects after they are handed over to the Afghan government and the PRTs are closed down.

The primary report looked at accountability relationships between donors and recipients in terms of sustainability and building capacity, and included general findings on accountability, community involvement and participation, and sustainability, which are summarized in the next section. This report focuses on a different accountability relationship between donors and recipients (both host-nation and beneficiaries) in terms of gender and disaggregates the key quantitative findings from the initial report by gender. This approach examines differences in awareness of and inclusion in development processes, perceptions of institutions, and beliefs about the prospects for development and quality of life after 2014 in the eight case study communities surveyed for the primary report.

The case studies for the research were PRT development projects. However, with a focus on community involvement, respondents were also asked questions about their involvement in any development projects in the community regardless of implementer and a number of other platforms for involving the community in projects, such as the CDC. As such, while this report addresses PRT policies regarding gender, it also includes other development actors such as NGOs and CDCs.

Specifically, this supplemental report addresses the following questions:

- What is the accountability relationship between donors and recipients regarding gender?
- What are PRT policies and practice regarding gender?
- Are there differences by gender in development perceptions and community involvement and participation?
- What can sex-disaggregated data on development and community involvement tell us about gender-based development programming in Afghanistan?

These questions largely build upon the findings of the primary report, further examining the findings by assessing them through a gendered lens. Section 1.2 outlines these key findings as a fundamental underpinning of this report.

It is important to acknowledge that the original research design for the primary report focused on PRT development projects and community involvement, and did not include a gender component. As such, this report is limited to the quantitative data that was collected for that research, and explanations for trends observed cannot be fully explained due to a lack of qualitative information. This limitation is discussed further in Section 1.3 and 1.4. However, this does not undermine the findings of this report, which provide a number of key insights for CIMIC development efforts and other development actors in terms of assessing performance regarding gender and a number of key departure points for further research and the construction of better gender-sensitive indicators in development practice.
1.1 Structure

Chapter 1 provides an overview of key findings from the primary report, and discusses the methodology and limitations of this research. Chapter 2 provides a brief background on general approaches to gender in development practice and rhetoric in Afghanistan, and an overview of the gender accountability framework for development. Chapter 2 also includes an overview of PRT policies and practices regarding gender in development initiatives. Chapter 3 presents the sex-disaggregated findings from the quantitative survey used in the primary report, divided into five main sections: (1) development projects in the community and PRT perceptions, (2) community quality of life and development, (3) institutional participation and personal and community involvement, (4) maintenance, sustainability, and solving problems with projects and (5) government and post-2014 perspectives. In this chapter, key findings with gender-based inferences are delineated from the main text, which largely presents the raw data and variable relationships. Chapter 5 presents the final conclusions from this report and issues a number of recommendations based on the findings.

1.2 Key Findings from the Primary Report

The primary report covered a number of topics regarding PRTs, community involvement, and Transition. The report details PRT monitoring, oversight and evaluation, PRT development procedures, project quality issues, and positive and negative aspects of PRT activities from the perspectives of community members and Afghan government interviewees. It discusses community roles in development projects and processes (both for PRT projects and development projects in the community regardless of implementer) and the relationship between the PRT and the community. Lastly, the report addresses Transition and project sustainability issues, including PRT Evolution and the PRT Evolution Framework in Afghanistan, the precedent of PRT Transition in Iraq, project maintenance and sustainability issues, perceptions of government capabilities in this regard, and issues for PRT closure and development. As this report is designed as a supplement to the primary report, information on these subjects will not be repeated in this report except as is relevant to the sex-disaggregated analysis. Furthermore, detailed information on the case studies selected can be found in Appendix B of the primary report, along with the complete survey questionnaire in English and Dari.

The research found that the widely acknowledged reports on substandard project quality and contracting issues in PRT projects are not unwarranted. In implementing projects, a number of issues were identified, including poor quality, contractor and subcontractor issues, project plan and design, poor monitoring, and a lack of personnel and resources for the projects. Furthermore, the researcher encountered substantial reports that PRT coordination with government officials and local communities was lacking, creating a number of problems for monitoring, planning, and sustainability of projects.

The report presented a number of significant relationships between a number of facets of development, participation and sustainability. The researcher found that perceptions of the project’s impact in the community were positively associated with government perceptions, confidence in institutions, perceived benefit from institutions, and perceptions of the PRT. Perceptions of the PRT were also positively correlated with government perceptions, perceptions of subnational, provincial, and local institutions, confidence in institutions and perceived benefit from institutions. These findings reinforce that development does have the potential to bolster support for government, and when implemented well and responsibly, can increase people’s feelings of confidence in government and belief in competence of government bodies at all levels. It would also suggest that perceptions of government are in some way tied to service delivery and immediate needs being met for citizens; however, this would also presume that just as easily as development and improved services could improve government perceptions, their decline could similarly erode them.

In other research, community involvement and participation have been shown to be strongly related to accountability and project sustainability, enhancing demand-responsiveness, local ownership of projects, sense of responsibility for facilities and services in beneficiaries, project sustainability
and social accountability. Participation has been shown to make projects more efficient and familiarize people with concepts of planning, development, and maintenance. Participation also contributes to good governance, democratization and poverty reduction, and can improve people’s ability to negotiate with stakeholders and increase responsiveness. Participation reinforces transparency and can help establish institutional arrangements and social capital and can facilitate creating or reestablishing links between different levels of government.

Perhaps most importantly, this research showed a number of significant relationships with community involvement, and particularly personal participation. Involvement was found to be positively related to perceived community quality of life, feeling the government could be relied on to provide services and fix problems with projects, projects being followed up on to monitor quality after completion, and perceived overall community benefit from institutions. It was also positively associated with attending Community Development Council (CDC) meetings in the community and overall knowledge of institutions. Involvement was found to be a significant predictor of knowledge of institutions. We also found some positive associations between specific aspects of involvement and perceptions of government, provincial government and local institutions, perceived benefit from institutions and confidence in institutions. These findings support theoretical assumptions that community involvement can help to build capacity, establish clear channels for community participation, and give people the opportunity to take part in processes that shape their lives, facilitating a sense of efficacy, ownership, and empowerment. The findings would also support that involvement increases people’s knowledge of institutions and government systems, enabling them to be more proactive in terms of advocating for themselves and holding the government accountable in terms of fulfilling its responsibilities.

We also looked at two separate aspects of involvement separately—awareness of community involvement and personal involvement. We determined that personal involvement generally had stronger correlations with other key variables, which could indicate that simply having community involvement strategies is not enough. Rather, community involvement should be as inclusive as possible and encourage personal participation from all members of the community to maximize its potential benefits. While the research showed support for a number of positive benefits of participation in general, the researcher discovered that while the PRTs paid lip service to the concept, they did not systematically include strategies for effective and inclusive community involvement.

Lastly, the research examined accountability gaps and the importance of project sustainability, and conversely the risks if projects are not maintained. The rise of private sector, NGO, and other actors involving in the delivery of services that are theoretically the responsibility of the state has created an environment where shifting engagement and a lack of stable accountability relationships between service providers and recipients, resulting in accountability gaps when parallel or intermediate institutions disengage in these activities. Essentially, we found that PRTs have engaged in the areas of intermediary activities that are top-down in nature, and have to some extent failed to engage in the social and bottom-up activities. Furthermore, in the absence of training, capacity building, and community and civil society involvement, the intermediary role will be unfilled after PRTs leave.

The most adequate test of the success of a project or program is sustainability, where physical assets and capacity endure after external assistance is no longer present. Sustainable projects permanently increase a community’s resources, social initiative, and social capital. Moreover, once a program or project has made an impact in a community, the cessation of a project when need still exists is a waste of the time and money invested in the project and can lead to an erosion of trust in both the project provider and the government. Sustainability of development gains is a critical component of maintaining stability in post conflict environments. Sustainability has a critical relationship with donor accountability, project quality, government and citizen capacities, and community involvement. The research assessed the PRT to have fallen short in a number of these areas, putting the sustainability of development gains at risk. The findings also showed that if the projects the PRT has undertaken prove to be unsustainable, the Afghan government is likely to receive much of the blame,
which could be potentially destabilizing through an erosion of the already tenuous relationship between Afghan citizens and the government.

1.3 Methodology

Much like the key findings, the methodology of this report builds on the primary report. The research approach for the primary report was divided into two components. The first addressed Transition plans for PRTs and perspectives from relevant actors from the Afghan government at the central, provincial, and district levels, and relevant actors from the international community, including ISAF personnel and PRTs. The second part drew on community perceptions and the realities of project sustainability at a community level, employing a case-based approach of eight individual PRT projects.

In consideration of access to data and information, the IWA CBM program served as the starting point for this research. The IWA CBM program has monitored PRT projects in Balkh, Herat, Parwan and Nangarhar. As such, the provinces selected for focus in this research were determined according to CBM program location. Balkh province was excluded as only one PRT project was monitored through CBM in that province. Four specific projects (two health, two education) were selected from the IWA CBM database, and from these projects, four additional non-CBM monitored PRT projects were selected. Case studies were chosen based on theoretical, purposive sampling, whereby projects were selected according to their likelihood to yield the most information and enhance the theoretical development of this research.

The decision was made to focus on projects in more rural rather than urban areas within the limits of the projects that have been monitored, as presence of government officials is less likely to be as regular and as such there is likely to be a heavier reliance on community-based bodies and resources. It is also important to acknowledge that though the areas selected were all rural areas, they were in semi-close proximity to well-developed urban centres. As such, information may differ from that which would have been obtained in more remote or less secure areas.

These components of the research design address the second research component—community perceptions and project realities. The researcher conducted focus group interviews for each case study composed of the local monitor/s for the project, community members, CDC and shura members, and personnel working at the project. The researcher also had informal meetings with officials and relevant actors in Kabul. Formal interviews were conducted with various Afghan government officials at the district and provincial levels and PRT personnel (with the exception of PRT Parwan). However, the researcher was often unable to speak with women. The research design of the primary report dictated focus group content, which included community leaders, current staff at the projects, and community members involved in development decision-making. Unfortunately, these community members were predominantly men, and nearly all government officials we interviewed were men. However, there were women participants in two focus groups (where there were women working at the school who were able to participate), and in each province we were able to interview women Provincial Council members. With consideration for this gender imbalanced source of perspectives, these qualitative approaches were complemented with an additional quantitative survey administered to a representative sample of men and women over 18 in each of the villages where case-study projects are located, providing a source of gender-inclusive perspectives.

In total, the survey was administered to 495 respondents in the eight case study villages of the three provinces in February and March 2013. The sample size was representative for the village and a representative division of men and women over the age of 18. The survey tools were designed by the researcher, and the survey was implemented by the IWA Quantitative Coordinator and carried out in Dari and Pashto by contracted enumerators.

The survey questionnaire was designed to measure perceptions and information according to three main

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1 PRT Parwan was further along in the transition process and had begun to reduce its staff and had closed its base. Though contact information was obtained, we were not able to reach officials from PRT Parwan.
facets: (1) development projects, community involvement in projects, and monitoring and oversight of projects, (2) perceptions of various institutions including government at all levels, PRTs, and NGOs, and (3) future issues regarding transition, sustainability and addressing project and community issues. Summary variables were created for knowledge of institutions, perceived benefit from institutions, confidence in institutions, PRT perceptions, government perceptions as a whole and by level (provincial, district, local), and post-2014 perceptions. These summary variables will be referenced throughout the report (noted by a superscripted s, i.e. PRT perceptions\textsuperscript{s}), and a full explanation can be found in Appendix B of the primary report.

1.4 Scope, Limitations and Delimitations

There are a number of limitations and challenges in this research approach that are important to acknowledge. First, the scope of the research is by necessity limited to the specific cases in question, and as such should be regarded as evidentiary rather than comprehensive in nature. The case study approach is sometimes criticized in that individual cases are not sufficiently representative to permit generalization to other situations. This criticism is addressed through the use of multiple case studies (three provinces, three PRTs, eight individual projects in eight different communities), which allows for cross-case analysis to strengthen findings and maximize generalizability within the parameters of project feasibility. Additionally, the employment of mixed methods and data triangulation strengthens the findings of the individual cases studies and increases the confidence level in individual findings and notional relationships.

Another issue to address is the non-representative sampling in the selection of case studies. The case study provinces were selected according to the parameters of the IWA CBM program. In selecting individual PRT projects, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the projects selected would enhance the development of this research. Furthermore, accessibility and safety were compulsory considerations. The number of individual projects to study was made with consideration to the time and resources for the project and the project information available.

The fieldwork and qualitative interviews were dictated by the original research questions from the primary report, which focused on development and sustainability issues and did not include a gender mandate. Because the individuals involved in these processes were predominantly men, the researchers were often unable to speak with women. However, the survey was administered to a representative number of men and women for the village, providing women perspectives. The qualitative interview questions did not address gender issues, which were beyond the scope of the primary report. As such, this report only utilizes the quantitative survey data, without qualitative information with which to triangulate findings, and so the findings should be regarded as exploratory. Also, though this report presents a number of positive associations between variables, it does not claim causation, and any explanations for associations should be regarded as hypothetical.

While the quantitative survey results are representative of the village in which the case study projects are located, it is important to acknowledge that these findings only have internal validity and as such cannot be said to be representative of all PRT projects and all communities in which PRTs operate in Afghanistan. Furthermore, given the varied nature of the PRTs themselves in terms of structure, lead nation, mandate, etc., they cannot be generalized to all PRTs. It is important to note that as the results are non-representative on this scale, neither does this research claim them to be. Nonetheless, the selection of multiple case study projects allows for meta-analysis of survey results across a number of cases in different project types by different PRTs in different areas to improve the generalizability of findings. Additionally, the policy and practice review in Chapter 2 utilizes publicly available materials from all PRTs across Afghanistan, furthermore enabling general assumptions about the overall policies and practices of PRTs regarding gender.

An additional clarification to make is on the use of the word “community” in this research. The word “community” itself is only loosely applicable, as distinct subgroups exist widely within each “community”. However, for practical
considerations, the scope of this analysis will not extend to these more specific levels of identification, nor will it delve into intra-group dynamics. For the purposes of this research, the word “community” will be restricted and defined as the individuals residing within the immediate vicinity of a project site, as delineated according to generally agreed upon boundaries of village identification, who obtain similar benefits from a project and can be reasonably assumed to have a shared interest in its operationality.

The report often refers to ‘involvement’ and ‘participation’, both on behalf of the individual respondent and the entire community. Conceptually, it is important to note that community involvement and participation are related but not entirely synonymous. Communities can be involved through means like consultation or pre-project surveying, but participation goes further in actively engaging community members and providing them a role in critical aspects of the project process. In this report, these terms refer to having a role in any of the following activities as defined in the survey questionnaire: decision to build, consultation about the project, implementation of the project, contribution toward funding the project, monitoring the building of the project, or maintenance of the project. However, where these terms are followed by a superscripted s, they are referring to the summary variables for personal involvement and awareness of community involvement used in the analysis.

Lastly, for the purpose of this report, gender can be defined as the differences in the position and experiences of men and women based upon sociocultural conditions and contexts related to various phenomena, for example, community involvement or knowledge of institutions. Therefore, while the data is disaggregated by gender (the biological men and women), there are gendered aspects and implications of findings and their hypothesized causation.
2. Background: Approaches to Gender in Development in Afghanistan and PRTs

This chapter serves to provide the general context for examining the sex-disaggregated data from the primary report. In brief, it discusses the general approaches to gender in development, and specifically examines the general approach to gender in development in Afghanistan. This is followed by an outline of the gender and accountability framework; why do gender, and for whom? The chapter concludes with a review of PRT policy and practices regarding gender.

2.1 Approaches to Gender in Development Practice

Approaches to gender in development largely fall under one of three dominant perspectives: ‘Gender and Development’ (GAD), ‘Women and Development’ (WAD), or ‘Women in Development’ (WID).

The Women in Development (WID) perspective was closely linked to the modernization and “trickle down” theories dominant in mainstream thinking on international development through the 1950s to 1970s. It was largely believed that “modernization”, generally equivalent to industrialization, would improve the standard of living in developing countries. WID also drew heavily on the language of liberal feminism, which promoted the idea that women’s disadvantages could be eliminated by breaking down the stereotyped expectations held by men and internalized by women, promoted through “agencies of socialization.” It was theorized that this could be accomplished by giving girls better training, introducing equal opportunity programs, or freeing labor markets. WID projects would typically involve income-generating activities involving some sort of training for women in areas like skills or crafts, often with a welfare aspect where women would be taught things like hygiene or literacy as well. The WID approach generally focuses on women in isolation, largely resting on the assumption that access to income will sufficiently empower women and gender relations will change on their own as women become economically viable members of society. WID was preceded by Women and Development (WAD), which was based on neo-Marxist feminism and focused on the relationship between women and development processes, but had a very similar approach to WID.

Gender and Development (GAD) followed these schools of thought. GAD was conceptualized as an approach that would “look not only at the category ‘women’—since that is only half the story—but at women in relation to men, and the way in which relations between these categories are socially constructed.” GAD adherents aim for gender equality, which is considered in terms of the removal of structural barriers—i.e. unfair laws, labor market practices, institutional management regimes, limits to women’s decision-making, and inequitable processes regarding time, schooling, and resources.

Concepts of ‘empowerment’ and ‘gender mainstreaming’ are products of the GAD approach. Gender mainstreaming includes two key elements: (1) “the ideological aspect of development and the institutional aspect of organizations,”

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5 Shahrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller, “From WID to GAD,” 3.
6 Ibid.
7 Eva M. Rathgeber, “WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice,” 492.
involving either integration of gender concerns into ongoing development practices, or (2) facilitating agenda setting by women in the development process, with the ultimate goal of gender equality.\textsuperscript{11} Empowerment is an approach to instituting fairness, in effect achieving equal power, participation, and distribution.\textsuperscript{12} Empowerment has come to take on many different meanings as a buzzword in gender and development practice.

“Gender” has taken a leading role in development and human rights rhetoric for the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Nearly every country has ratified international contentions on equal rights regardless of gender; the Millennium Development Goals name gender equality as a key aim; UNSCR 1325 (2000) addresses the impact of war on women and women’s contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace; the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Acora Agenda for Action (2008), and the Busan partnership for effective development cooperation (2011) all seek to maximize aid effectiveness and development cooperation with special consideration to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The military and massive aid intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 was not immune to the rhetoric of gender, or as it is often called, just ‘women’. Rhetorically, reversing abuses of Afghan women’s rights became an explicit policy agenda.\textsuperscript{13} In post-Taliban Afghanistan, aid institutions came to the country in droves, with women’s issues first and foremost on the program.\textsuperscript{14} Aid organizations and development actors have declared goals including empowerment and liberation of women and gender mainstreaming across sectors, espousing language and ideas from the GAD approach.\textsuperscript{15} For many donor governments, gender-based development initiatives in Afghanistan have taken the approach of facilitating the “reentry” of women into the public sphere as active participants in civil society and within governance structures with the intent to “undo” and challenge local patriarchy by encouraging and supporting Afghan women to take advantage of the new freedoms and opportunities they intended to provide.\textsuperscript{16} While much of the rhetoric regarding gender-based development initiatives in Afghanistan began with a GAD-centered approach, the implementation was much more in the tradition of WID, and PRT development policies regarding gender appear to be no exception.\textsuperscript{17}

\subsection*{2.2 Gender and Accountability in Development Projects}

According to Bovens, accountability constitutes a sort of social relationship in which one actor feels obligated to explain and justify their conduct to another.\textsuperscript{18} Accountability can take a number of forms; it can be internal or external, formal or informal, vertical or horizontal, bottom-up or top-down.\textsuperscript{19} According to Boven’s framework, determining accountability consists of answering four questions: (1) to whom is account to be rendered? (2) who should render account? (3) about what is account to be rendered? (4) why does the actor feel compelled to render account?\textsuperscript{20}

In implementing development projects, donors (in this case, PRTs) are responsible for the quality and financial control of their contributions and are responsible for basic standards of quality, management, financial and budgetary issues, and proper monitoring and evaluation.\textsuperscript{21} In this way, PRTs have a direct accountability relationship with beneficiaries to implement projects that meet beneficiary needs and adhere to acceptable quality standards, implemented with consideration to the social, economic, and political conditions necessary to sustainability. There is a second accountability

\begin{equation}
\text{\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.}
\end{equation}
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\text{\textsuperscript{12} Elaine Unterhalter, “Fragmented frameworks?” 22.}
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\text{\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.}
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\text{\textsuperscript{15} Lina Abirafeh, “Lessons from Gender-focused International Aid in Post-Conflict Afghanistan...Learned?” Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Division for International Cooperation, 2005, 5.}
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\text{\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 30.}
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\text{\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 454-455.}
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\text{\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 454-455.}
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\text{\textsuperscript{21} Peter Morgan, “Update on the Performance Monitoring of Capacity Development Programs: What are We Learning?” (paper presented at the meeting of the DAC Informal Network on Institution and Capacity Development, Ottawa, May 3-5, 1999) 7.}
\end{equation}
relationship between the donor and government, whereby the donor is responsible for implementing programs in a way that develops the capacity of the host-nation government to render accountability to its citizens rather than undermining its role in delivering projects and services. In considering gender and accountability, especially in a post-conflict environment, the definition widens.

In their study of the security of women and the security of state, Valerie Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli and Chad Emmett found that between level of democracy, level of wealth, prevalence of Islamic culture, or the physical security of women, the physical security of women was the best predictor of state peacefulness, state concern to the international community, and quality of relations with their neighboring states. While this does not suggest that gender equality is the only important factor to address in development and peacebuilding, it does confirm that negligence regarding gender inequality is unlikely to produce sustainable results in peace or security.

While much of the focus on gender is on women, research has demonstrated that working with men and boys in addition to women and girls is key to promoting gender equality and contributes to achieving development outcomes. The UN ICPD Programme of Action explains this concept:

Men play a key role in bringing about gender equality since, in most societies, men exercise preponderant power in nearly every sphere of life...The objective is to promote gender equality...and to encourage and enable men to take responsibility for their genderual and reproductive behavior and their social and family roles.

Therefore, while the oft-cited accountability relationship regarding gender and development is from providers to clients, there is a second facet of gender accountability. The PRT mission statement is:

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will assist The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts.

PRTs are accountable to their lead nation, i.e. the funding source and chain of command, to the Afghan government, their host-nation cohort and declared partner in all areas of operation, and in their development projects, to beneficiaries. The PRT explicitly aims to increase stability and security, for which gender equality is a critical predictor. However, actors with a military component such as the PRTs often measure success in terms of security, i.e. the number of attacks, enemy killed or captured, or total expenditures, without taking into account indicators sensitive to gender and development. Honoring the gender accountability relationship would require a reformulation of the concept of ‘success’ and effective policies and practices in addressing gender inequality, directed at both men and women, in the interest of meeting established objectives—not only in development, but in all areas of activities, including governance and security—and satisfying accountability relationships with all actors—lead nation, Afghan government, and beneficiaries. With a basic

22 Ibid., 112.
23 Ibid., 114.
understanding of why gender is important to development, and the accountability relationships of development actors in terms of gender, the next section contextualizes these within PRT development initiatives in a policy and discourse review.

2.3 PRTs and Gender: A Policy Review

Despite the importance of gender equality to meeting PRT objectives, much like the PRT policies reviewed in the primary report on development project procedures and monitoring and evaluation, PRT policy regarding gender appears to derive from a few general directives that are more rhetorical than implementable, implying that such approaches are largely ad hoc and at the direction of the PRT lead nation. Furthermore, there are no quantitative assessments of PRT gender impact and very few qualitative reports, which leaves official policy and communications materials as one of the few sources for attempting to review and assess PRT gender practices.

Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1

In 2009, NATO (the umbrella under which ISAF and PRTs fall) developed Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1, a comprehensive directive providing guidance to all levels of the military structure for implementing UNSCR 1325. Bi-SC 40-1 is meant to ‘afford the Alliance and NATO missions and operations the advantage of including female perspectives NATO, encouraging a policy of gender mainstreaming and protecting women and girls during armed conflict.’ The directive includes guidelines for manning principles (military and civilian), education and training, gender advisors, reporting, measures for the protection of women and girls in conflict, and operational concepts.29

However, starting with the culture at the top (ISAF HQ), it appears that gender has not been meaningfully incorporated into the mission in Afghanistan. In a 2013 review of UNSCR 1325 and NATO-led operations, the researchers found that there was poor awareness of the provisions and content of UNSCR 1325 and Bi-SC Directive 40-1 and a limited understanding of basic gender concepts. The majority of the respondents at ISAF HQ associated gender with women. Gender was generally considered a task and gender mainstreaming was defined as outreach to women.

ISAF PRT Handbook

The ISAF PRT Handbook contains a one-page section titled ‘Gender’ in an appendix dedicated to directives for coordination with non-governmental organizations, and a two-page section on Women’s Affairs and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in the annex for governance, human rights, and diplomacy, totaling roughly three pages out of 283 dedicated to gender (or women’s) issues.

The section dedicated explicitly to gender states:

Military and humanitarian actors should have an understanding of how conflict and disaster affect women, girls, boys and men differently, and that they have different coping strategies, roles, capacities and constraints. Their differing needs and capabilities must be identified to make sure all have access to services and information, and can participate in the planning and implementation of relief programs.30


29 Ibid.
This section then outlines key components of UNSCR 1325, which mandates that all peacekeeping operations “mainstream” gender issues. Specifically, it directs that: efforts should be made to involve greater numbers of women at all levels of decision-making and in field based operations; institutional arrangements should be made to identify the needs and capabilities of women and girls in conflict through participatory methods and incorporate them into activities; human rights of women and girls should be protected according to international and national law; special measures should be taken to protect women and girls from violence in situations of armed conflict; training, guidelines and materials should be developed to incorporate the need to protect and ensure the rights of women and girls.

Here, the “gender” section focuses almost exclusively women, and the emphasis is largely on protecting rather than promoting.

The section on Women’s Affairs begins “Given the particular challenges women face in Afghanistan, it is worth providing a brief overview of the government institution that has been established to address women’s affairs.” It briefly outlines the history and role of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) and the provincial Departments of Women’s Affairs (DoWA), and identifies the provincial department as the main mechanism for reaching women in the provinces and a key beneficiary partner for PRTs in terms of building their capacity to fulfill this role. The project identified in the Handbook as the most common PRT project in this category is funding an International Women’s Day celebration every March, which makes for a good press release but would hardly be considered to constitute an approach to addressing gender inequality by any gender expert.

It continues that some PRTs also construct buildings for DoWA because the Ministry has a very small budget, and that they sometimes support training for officials or provide vocational facilities or projects for DoWA to manage in the province. It also directs the PRT to coordinate with the DoWA director regarding the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan—a ten-year plan aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy for implementing programs in security, legal protection and human rights, leadership and political participation, health, economy, work and poverty, and education. It then also provides a brief summary of UNSCR 1325. However, in the section titled ‘UNAMA Recommended Best Practices’, the Handbook states that in some areas PRT support to DoWA did not take into account the Ministry of Women’s Affairs framework or the National Action Plan on Women’s Advancement, stating “This practice may have been the result of a unilateral initiative taken by the PRTs that did not take into account project sustainability, national strategies, long-and short-term impact, and a thorough needs-analysis.”

Women are briefly mentioned throughout the Handbook (though gender can only be found in the ‘Gender’ section), most notably in the section on Project Identification under ‘Sensitivity to Cultural Norms’, which instructs the PRT to take women’s access to public spaces into account in designing projects. In a section titled ‘Training’, the Handbook also tasks the UN with providing gender trainings, stating “The UN shall also ensure that there is specialised training on the protection, rights and particular needs of women and girls in conflict situations, the importance of a gender perspective in humanitarian, development and reconstruction activities, and the essential roles of women in peace-building and peace-keeping.” Far from concrete directives, these broad guidelines (or rather, summaries of key actors and external guidelines) leave a wide gap for inter-PRT policy variance for addressing gender inequality in their development programming.

**PRT Gender-Based Practices: Gender Advisors and Female Engagement Teams**

In 2009, the Swedish Defence Research Agency undertook a review of practice and lessons regarding UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan based on case studies of five PRTs (Dutch in Tarin Kowt, Italian in Herat, New Zealand in Bamyan, Norwegian in Meymaneh, and Swedish in Mazar-e Sharif). They found that approaches varied greatly, and that UNSCR 1325 was rarely considered systematically in executing daily PRT tasks.

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32 Ibid., 166.
33 Ibid., 71.
34 ISAF PRT Handbook Edition 4, 211.
35 Ibid., 263.
Of the teams they reviewed, only Sweden utilized a Gender Field Advisor and a network of Gender Focal Points.\(^{36}\) What’s more, despite UNSCR 1325 being summarized and explained twice in the ISAF PRT Handbook, PRT staff of three of the teams (Herat, Bamyan, and Meymaneh), did not have any knowledge of UNSCR 1325. The highest percentage of women representation in PRT personnel was 14% (Netherlands), only one PRT had women staff among highest military PRT leadership (Netherlands), and only one PRT had regular contact with women’s organizations (Sweden).\(^{37}\)

In practice, it seems that much of PRT practice regarding gender across Afghanistan was through the employment of Gender Advisors and Female Engagement Teams (FETs), which are identified by NATO as ‘gender enablers’.\(^{38}\) ISAF Joint Command gender advisor Major Steffie Goothedde provided a distinction between the two approaches:

I want people to know gender advising and women engagement is a completely different mission. FET is more of a tool that commanders use to accomplish their mission utilizing women to engage not only women, but men in order to gather intelligence. Gender advising is used to get the overall picture. It focuses on social differences whether it’s a men or women and it addresses how everything we do affects the people of Afghanistan.\(^{39}\)

This statement was made regarding a conference on gender mainstreaming for gender advisors and FET and PRT personnel in 2011, which only 60 people attended. In a review of official communications materials published by the PRTs (i.e. press releases, blog posts, reports) Gender Advisors seemed to only be utilized on-staff by a handful of PRTs (namely the Swedish, Spanish, Italian, and Korean PRTs), with FETs or providing projects directed at women being a more dominant means of addressing “gender” issues.

The first FET was established in 2009 in Farah province, after which all ISAF forces were ordered to generate similar units, with some PRTs embedding the concept as well.\(^{40}\) The teams were originally designed as force protection responsible for carrying out searches on women. However, the scope of their work expanded to include outreach to women at the local level, identifying needs and constraints for women, and gathering information about the situation in communities.\(^{41}\) There is little literature on the teams as a part of the PRT approach and no quantitative assessments, but much of the asserted benefits of the FETs is in information gathering and dissemination, or even further in intelligence gathering and affecting Armed Opposition Groups.\(^ {42}\) Though they can often be presented as tools for addressing gender issues, there are few success claims regarding closing gaps in gender inequality.\(^ {43}\)

To a lesser extent, Cultural Support Teams (CSTs) and Foreign Area Specialists (FAS) are also asserted as tools for addressing gender, also classified as ‘gender enablers’.\(^ {44}\) According to the same review of UNSCR 1325 and NATO cited above, CSTs ‘incorporate a gender perspective in their

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41 Helene Lackenbauer and Richard Langlais, eds., “Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions.”

42 Helene Lackenbauer and Richard Langlais, eds., “Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions.”

43 Ibid.

44 Helene Lackenbauer and Richard Langlais, eds., “Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions.”
support of special operations,’ including ‘discuss[ing] with
the government in order to involve it in developing projects
for women’ and ‘bring[ing] development projects directly to
women by asking women about their needs and about their
views on the Afghan Local Police’. Foreign Area Specialists
are deployed in RC North, with female FAS responsible for
‘meeting influential women in the area, understanding their
networks and mechanisms of decision-making mechanisms,
and advising COM RC North regarding cultural issues,
including the role of women and how to approach Afghan
women in a culture-sensitive manner’.  

Many of the official communications materials from PRTs
reviewed painted the PRT FET members as goddesses in
headscarves, and were dripping with descriptive imagery
depicting disempowered Afghan women—illiterate, young
mothers, beaten and burned, veiled under what was
often considered the all-encompassing symbol of women
oppression: the veil or the burka—echoing the liberator
image of the international community. Accompanying
photos showed women in military uniforms wearing
headscarves and embodying typical women archetypes,
holding and playing with Afghan children or teaching
hygiene to young girls. For example, one article titled ‘GIROA
and PRT Women Engagement Team: enhancing the future
for women in Afghanistan’ opens:

U.S. Army Sgt. Tiffany Dalagelis struggles with the strong-
blowing wind as she places her Afghan headscarf on
properly. The green threads and shining silver sparkles
wave freely in the air as she wraps the thin cloth around
her head, tucking in the loose edges along the way.
Three other women U.S. service members bear their
head scarves in the same manner, displaying vibrant
colors of blue, purple, and black in addition to Dalagelis’
green. The dynamic combination of bright scarves and
U.S. military uniforms highlights the respect of coalition
forces for the rich culture of Afghanistan and America’s
commitment to capacity building in the country.  

And another:

In a rural village in southern Nangarhar Province, a
teenage Afghan mother, weathered and weary beyond
her years, cradles her nursing infant daughter, ignorant
of the hardships her mother has had to endure. Looking
down at her daughter’s fragile form, the mother can only
hope to somehow defy the odds and give her child the life
she so desperately deserves. The young mother was one
of more than 150 women who attended an all-women
shura, in Shinwar District, Dec. 4, which was hosted by the
Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, Agribusiness
Development Team and the individual district support
team’s women engagement team.

Articles consistently described Afghan women as weak,
disempowered victims, elusive and difficult to reach. For
instance, “The process to speak to an Afghan woman can
be simple, but must be methodical….Once women are away
from men…the scarves come off, the hair comes down, and
chatting begins.” This article further outlined the author’s
perception of Afghan women’s capabilities:

They [Afghan women] are not to be underestimated
even though…They efficiently run the households behind
closed doors in unforgiving conditions, and are a
network of information through the villages and at water
collection points…Herein lies the problem: how do we
tap this deep well of information and support systems
when there are so many layers of obstacles involving
tradition, men, burkas and mud brick walls?

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45 Ibid.
46 Helene Lackenbauer and Richard Langlais, eds., “Review of
the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-
led Operations and Missions.”
47 See, for example: Rylan Albright, “GIROA and PRT Women
Engagement Team: enhancing the future of Afghanistan,” Captain Ann
Voght, “PRT Kapisa’s forgotten half: Female Engagement Teams,” Mat-
thew Stroup, “Women’s Rights and Empowerment Highlighted in PRT
Visit to Radio Television Afghanistan,” Captain John Stamm, “Poultry Em-
powers Afghan Women,” Sgt. Mike Andriacco, “US team opens shelter
for Afghan women.”
48 Rylan Albright, “GIROA and PRT Women Engagement Team:
enhancing the future of Afghanistan,” Defense Video & Imagery
news/52808/giroa-and-prt-women-engagement-team-enhancing-
future-women-afghanistan#.UeTsQzkryJ5.
www.army.mil/article/71272/.
50 Captain Ann Voght, “PRT Kapisa’s forgotten half: Women
51 Ibid.
In these official communications, some of the PRT-sponsored programs described addressed genuine issues regarding gender inequality and gender-specific problems, such as women literacy programs, women police mentoring, and a medical civic action program for children. On the other hand, other programs described for addressing gender inequality included a coloring contest for schoolgirls, gardening projects, women military distributing clothing to orphans, cooking courses, handicraft exhibitions, pen pal programs between US and Afghan schools for teachers and girls to write each other letters, gifting new scarves to Afghan women, sewing courses, and giving chickens to women to raise in an article titled ‘Poultry Empowers Afghan Women’. In this article, a PRT staff member asserts “This project is a huge success...they were happy to see us, and many said raising chickens has significantly improved the quality of their lives.”

A number of articles described holding women’s shuras and meeting with officials from the Department of Women’s Affairs or the Provincial Governor to discuss concerns as their approach to gender programming, without really addressing any comprehensive approach, programs, policies or tangible outcomes of such meetings. Some of the few outcomes discussed included a women’s health day at a local hospital or providing sewing machines so women could hold classes among themselves and learn to sew, and maybe also school subjects and languages. Rhetoric such as this from these official communications portrayed that in many cases, PRT personnel considered simply talking to women to be enough. For example, one report explained the low threshold for meeting women needs, “Sometimes, it has been enough for women PRT personnel to share conversation and tea with women in the workshops to verify their need and how grateful they are for the attention they receive.” The report on NATO and UNSCR 1325 echoed this observation:

The mere presence of “women’s perspectives” must not be mistaken for a gender perspective, however. Just as “women” should not be equated with “gender,” it must also be remembered that “an awareness of women’s perspectives” should not be mistaken as fully constituting a gender perspective.

The review of PRT policy and practice regarding gender echoed the characteristics of overall gender-based development in Afghanistan—GAD language and concepts but a WID approach, a strong liberator mentality, and an approach to gender focused almost exclusively on women. This review summates the basic context for examining the key findings from the initial report disaggregated by gender to examine differences in opinions on the PRTs and their projects, awareness of and inclusion in development processes, perceptions of institutions, and beliefs about the prospects for development and quality of life after 2014 in the eight case study communities surveyed for the primary report.


Rylan Albright, “GIRoA and PRT Women Engagement Team.”


1st Lt. Amy Abbott, “Women engagement team makes strides in Kunar.”

55 Rylan Albright, “GIRoA and PRT Women Engagement Team.”

Ashley Hawkins, “Nuristan PRT Reaches Out to Local Women.”


57 Helene Lackenbauer and Richard Langlais, eds., “Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions.”
The primary report looked at accountability relationships between donors and recipients in terms of sustainability and building capacity, and included general findings on accountability, community involvement and participation, and sustainability. This chapter presents the sex-disaggregated findings from the quantitative survey used in the primary report, divided into five main sections: (1) development projects in the community and PRT perceptions, (2) community quality of life and development, (3) institutional participation and personal and community involvement, (4) maintenance, sustainability, and solving problems with projects and (5) government and post-2014 perspectives.

Section 3.1 of this chapter presents findings related to development projects in the case study communities—i.e. what kinds, implementers, community beliefs about development improvements, etc. Section 3.2 discusses development as it relates to community quality of life and community perceptions. Section 3.3 presents findings on institutional participation and personal and community involvement in development projects and programs, including community monitoring. Section 3.4 will again discuss development projects, but addressing community beliefs about maintenance responsibility, sustainability, and delving into how problems with projects are actually solved. Section 3.5 addresses findings on community-level perceptions of government at all levels and the future after 2014.
development activities than women, with exceptions in a few development areas (see Figure 3.1a).

The survey also asked respondents about who they believed had provided the most funding for these projects, with the option for multiple responses. Responses were fairly similar between men and women, with the largest percentage selecting ‘reconstruction teams of foreign military’, and more women than men answering ‘don’t know’ or choosing not to respond (see Figure 3.1b).

Question 6 asked respondents ‘In the last two years, do you think that health/education facilities in your community have improved, worsened, or stayed the same?’ Women were slightly more negative in their responses than men, with more women selecting ‘stayed the same’, ‘to some extent worsened’, or ‘significantly worsened’ (see Figure 3.1c). This difference between men and women in terms of perceiving health/education facilities to have improved was significant, with men perceiving them more positively. Among women respondents, facility improvement was positively associated with the number of people in the household, but there was no significant relationship for men. Perceptions also varied according to education level in women, with illiterate women having more negative perceptions. This would posit that more educated women with larger households perceived more improvements in facilities. Perhaps this is because they would be using those services more often or because they have more involvement in household duties because of their education level or extra responsibility for larger numbers of dependents, whereas men traditionally hold these responsibilities regardless of education level or household size.

Figure 3.1d depicts sex-disaggregated correlations for perceptions of health/education facility improvement. It was positively correlated with confidence in institutions and benefit from institutions in both men and women, but the relationships were stronger in women. This would indicate that those who believed facilities had improved also had more confidence in institutions and perceived more community benefits, more so for women than men. The perception that facilities had improved was also related to government perceptions and perceptions of local

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58 \( t(413)=2.08, p<.05 \)

On a five-point scale, men averaged 1.88 (SD=.595), and women averaged 2.03 (SD=.867).

59 \( r(240)=.138, p<.05 \)
institutions for both genders and with PRT perceptions\(^1\) for women, suggesting that perceptions about the improvement of health/education facilities had an effect on perceptions regarding a number of different actors, including the PRT and government institutions, though again more so for women than men.

Perceptions of facility improvement was positively related with the perception that the case study PRT project was needed in the community among men. For both men and women, it was positively associated with the perception that the PRT case study project had improved access to services in the community, importance of the project being maintained, and project community impact\(^5\) but the relationship was stronger among women than men. This could suggest a gender difference in basis for believing facilities to have improved, where men felt this way when needs were met, whereas women felt this way where services had improved. Furthermore, it would suggest that where facilities were perceived to have improved, maintenance was given more importance in both genders.

More positive perceptions of the case study and overall PRT project quality were correlated with a higher level of importance of maintenance in men. This could suggest that projects being implemented at a high quality was noted by men, and made them feel that project maintenance was therefore more important. However, the same relationship was not observed among women, perhaps because women are generally more marginalized from community decision-making and forums that address community development.

**Perceptions of the PRT and Development Projects**

Besides asking general questions about development projects in the local community, the survey also asked respondents specifically about PRTs and their development projects, addressing factors such as confidence in and benefit from the PRT, quality of projects, and questions about the specific case study project.

The survey asked respondents about the overall quality of the projects that PRTs constructed in their community. Perceptions of overall PRT project quality were fairly consistent between men and women, with most rating them as average (see Figure 3.1e). Regarding the quality of the case study PRT project, men’s perceptions were more negative than women’s perceptions (see Figure 3.1f), and this difference was significant.\(^61\) There was a positive association between overall PRT project quality and case study PRT project quality in both men\(^62\) and women,\(^63\) indicating that the quality of the project in respondents’ immediate community was influential for perceptions of the overall quality of the PRT’s work.

\(^{61}\) t\((412)=2.95, p<.01\)

On a four-point scale, men averaged 2.14 (SD=.713), and women averaged 1.98 (SD=.484).

\(^{62}\) r\((221)=.368, p<.001\)

\(^{63}\) r\((172)=.210, p<.01\)
needs, and could be less likely to have knowledge of such issues.

Project improving services in the community was correlated with more positive perceptions of the case study PRT project in women. Perceptions of the PRT case study project need in the community was related to overall PRT project quality for both men and women, and with case study PRT project quality in men. For women, perception of overall quality of PRT projects was related to project community impact, whereas for men, it was more correlated with perception of improvement in facilities, case study project quality, and perceived benefit from institutions.

Furthermore, overall PRT project quality was positively related to perceived benefit from institutions in men.

A possible explanation for this observation is that often men’s position in the community is such that meeting community needs would be more observable (i.e. community elders, working outside the home, etc.), whereas often women’s assessment is based upon observations when actually personally using those services for themselves or their family. Additionally, where men perceived PRT work quality to be higher, they also placed more importance on maintenance.

Higher involvement (and both personal involvement and awareness of community involvement individually) was associated with more positive perceptions of overall PRT project quality and individual case study project quality in men (see Figures 3.1g and 3.1h). This finding implies that while involvement improved men’s perceptions of the PRT’s project quality, it had a lesser or no effect for women. This could be a reflection of the differing nature of men’s vs. women’s involvement. In our focus group discussions and in communication with enumerators, we learned that whereas men CDCs, shuras, elders, etc. were involved and consulted for all kinds of development projects in the community, women’s CDCs and shuras were largely only consulted regarding projects directly or exclusively...
targeting women, for example, a women’s community poultry program like that described in Chapter 2. Therefore, we can assume that while if men had experienced some form of community involvement, it is likely to have been in a wider range of projects in the community than women, and also more likely to have included engagement on a PRT-funded project.

In questions 14, 15, and 16, respondents were asked about the case study PRT project’s impact in their community in terms of whether it was needed, whether it had improved services, and how important it was that the project be maintained and continue to operate in the community. Men felt that the projects were more needed (83% of men respondents stated the project was ‘very needed’ versus 59% of women). Men also felt more that the project had improved access to services (37% of men stating ‘very much improved’ and 58% ‘improved’, compared to 15% of women stating ‘very much improved’, 51% stating ‘improved, and 27% stating ‘to some extent improved’). Men similarly felt it more important that the project be maintained (75% of men responding this was ‘very important’ versus 37% of women, and 23% of men responding ‘important’ versus 52% of women).

These variables were combined into a summary variable for project community impact. Though project community impact was mostly positive for both genders, men’s perceptions were more positive than women’s perceptions, and the difference was significant (see Figure 3.1i). Project community impact significantly differed according to marital status among women, where single women perceived the most impact and widows the least. It also varied according to age among both men and women, with those under 24 and over 55 perceiving the most impact. Project community impact was positively correlated with level of education in women and men.

More positive perceptions of project community impact was related to more positive government perceptions, provincial government perceptions, confidence in institutions, perceived benefit from institutions, and PRT perceptions in both genders, and with perceptions of local institutions in women. Project community impact was positively correlated with confidence and benefit from institutions in both genders. It was also strongly positively associated with PRT perceptions in women, and less

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64 Women’s enumerator for Nangarhar province, discussion with researcher, March 2013.
strongly in men. Project community impact was positively associated with personal involvement among men. These findings support that a project’s perceived impact in the community had an effect on perceptions, confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions at all levels, regardless of gender, and again, that involvement had a higher impact on project perceptions for men than women (see Figure 3.1j).

In the primary report, a summary variable was also utilized for PRT perceptions based on responses from questions 31 and 32 on confidence in the PRT and perceived benefit from the PRT. When asked about level of confidence in the PRT, responses were fairly evenly distributed by gender (see Figure 3.1k). When asked about how much their community had benefited from the PRT, responses were again fairly consistent between genders. 32% of men and 33% of women felt they had very much benefited; 53% of men and 54% of women felt they had ‘to some extent benefited; 4% of men and 10% of women felt they ‘did not benefit much’; 12% of men and 3% of women felt they ‘did not benefit at all’. Perceptions of the PRT appeared slightly more positive in women than men, though fewer women respondents had opinions on the PRT, and the variation between genders was not significant.

While PRT perceptions were positively correlated with personal involvement in men, it was strongly negatively associated in women respondents. It was also negatively associated with awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project in women respondents. PRT perceptions differed according to CDC meeting attendance for women, where women who had attended a CDC meeting had more negative perceptions of the PRT. Involvement was also strongly negatively associated with PRT perceptions in women respondents. These findings imply that while men with more personal involvement in community development perceived the PRT more positively, women with more involvement in community development perceived the PRT more negatively, perhaps much more negatively. This could be a reflection of the manner in which PRTs engaged with men versus women in the community, as discussed in Chapter 2, where women were primarily only consulted on projects targeting women, rather than projects that benefited the

$$t(115)=3.14, p<.001$$

Attended a CDC meeting $M=1.90$, $SD=.56$; Had not attended $M=1.57$, $SD=.54$
entire community such as the schools and clinics that were the focus of this research. It could also be a reflection of FET engagement, which were a component of efforts in both Nangarhar and Herat, and as such a very possible face of PRT activities for women in the community. Regardless, this finding is highly indicative of the quality of women engagement by these PRTs.

Contrary to associations regarding project quality, PRT perceptions was correlated with perceptions that the PRT case study project was needed in the community in women, and with the perception that the case study project had improved services in the community in men. This suggests that women’s expectations were that the PRT provide for community needs, whereas men expected the PRT to visibly improve services in the community, perhaps a point for more exploration on gendered difference in aid and development expectations (see Figure 3.1l).

In men, PRT perceptions was positively related to government perceptions, and less strongly in women. PRT perceptions was also positively correlated with subnational government perceptions in men and women and with perceptions of provincial government local institutions in both genders. PRT perceptions were furthermore positively related to confidence in institutions and perceived benefit from institutions in both men and women. However, while PRT perceptions were positively correlated with knowledge of institutions in men respondents, it was negatively associated in women respondents.

These findings indicate that better perceptions of the PRT were linked to better perceptions of government and institutions at all levels for both men and women. Men who had a higher knowledge of institutions also had more positive perceptions of the PRT, whereas women with higher knowledge of institutions had more negative perceptions of the PRT, perhaps suggesting that women respondents felt other institutions outperformed the PRT in providing for development or women’s needs. This again could be indicative of whom the PRTs were engaging in dealings at the community level, which we found were
often security-based or dependent upon existing male-dominated structures such as village elders or male shuras, and of the differences in the kinds of men’s and women’s involvement.\textsuperscript{72}

### 3.2 Development and Perceptions of Quality of Life in the Community

Besides examining how PRT activities may affect or be affected by community involvement and perceptions of other institutions, the research was able to draw a number of links between development projects and PRT activities and the perceptions of the quality of life among community members and survey respondents.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of life in their village. Though most respondents rated it as fair or poor, women felt more positively than men (see Figure 3.2a), and the difference was significant.\textsuperscript{73} Perception of community quality of life also appeared to vary in their relationship with other variables and strength of relationship for men and women. Perception of the overall quality of PRT projects and PRT perceptions\textsuperscript{2} were positively associated with community quality of life for men, implying that PRT activities had an effect on men’s perceptions of community quality of life, but no effect in women. This could again possibly explained by gendered roles in the community and differing degrees of engagement and involvement that would make PRT activities more visible for men community members.

Similar to associations for project quality, community quality of life was positively

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\textsuperscript{72} Interview with PRT Nangarhar senior military official and senior civilian official, telephone interview conducted by Marie Huber, 10 April 2013.

Interview senior military official from PRT Herat, interview by Marie Huber, 15 March 2013.

\textsuperscript{73} t(485)=4.26, p<.001

Men M=3.63, SD=.98; Women M=3.27, SD=.90
correlated with perceptions of case study PRT project need in the community for men but negatively associated for women, whereas community quality of life was positively associated with case study PRT project improvement of services for women. Similarly, it was positively associated with the perception that health or education facilities in the community had improved in the past two years for women. Perceptions of community quality of life were positively related to perceptions of the importance that the project be maintained and project community impact for men (see Figure 3.2b).

This could indicate that for men in the community, perceptions of quality of life were more tied to having needs met and ensuring that facilities are maintained, whereas for women in the community, quality of life perceptions were more tied to having an observed improvement in services, perhaps another indication of the different ways that men versus women engage with projects like schools and health care facilities.

Though the perception of community quality of life was positively associated with personal involvement in development projects, awareness of community involvement in the PRT case study project, and overall involvement for both men and women, the relationship was stronger in women. These findings indicate that while involvement influenced perceptions of quality of life in the community, the effect was stronger in women than in men.

In men, there were positive associations of community quality of life with confidence, perceived benefit from institutions, and overall government perceptions. However, in women, community quality of life was positively related to knowledge of institutions, but the relationship in men was weaker (see Figure 3.2b). Furthermore, where men felt community benefit and confidence in government, they perceived quality of life to be better, whereas where women had higher knowledge of institutions, they perceived quality of life to be better.

### 3.3 Institutional Participation and Personal and Community Involvement

This section presents findings on institutional participation and personal and community involvement in development projects and programs, including community monitoring. Survey respondents were asked if they were a member of a number of groups. Though more men than women were members of institutions (CDC, local shura/jirga, religious council, or government institutions) and had attended CDC meetings, there was substantial CDC and local shura membership in women respondents (see Figure 3.3a). The survey also asked respondents whether they had ever attended a CDC meeting. 35% of men respondents and 32% of women respondents responded ‘yes’, and 65% of men respondents and 68% of women respondents responded ‘no’ (see Figure 3.3b). Though CDCs are meant to be mixed (men and women together), they are often either mixed, separate (one men’s CDC and one women’s CDC), or all men (only men’s CDC). In the 2012 Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, “A Study of Gender Equity through the National Solidarity Prorramme Community
Survey of the Afghan People, the Asia Foundation found that of those who reported a CDC in their community, only 27% answered that women were a part of the CDC.\textsuperscript{75}


CDC meeting attendance and being a member of one of the aforementioned institutions were related in men\textsuperscript{76} and women.\textsuperscript{77} Personal involvement\textsuperscript{7} also varied according to CDC meeting attendance in both men and women, where those who had attended CDC meetings had more personal involvement. However, women who had attended CDC meetings also had more average awareness of community involvement\textsuperscript{7} in the case study projects. In both men and women, those who had attended CDC meetings also had better scores for overall involvement\textsuperscript{7} and perceived community monitoring to have had more positive effects, but this association was much weaker in men.

These findings could mean one of two things: (1) attending CDC meetings increases the likelihood of having personal involvement in development and awareness of community involvement in projects, or (2) having involvement increases participation in community development forums like the CDC, more so for women than men. Furthermore, those who had attended CDC meetings appear more likely to believe community monitoring has an impact, possibly because the CDCs or the elders that often comprise them are likely to be involved in or aware of the monitoring process.

In men, CDC meeting attendance varied according to level of education\textsuperscript{78} and age,\textsuperscript{79} where more educated and older men were more likely to have attended a meeting. These findings indicate that men who

\textsuperscript{76} \chi^2(1, 241)=48.25, p<.001

\textsuperscript{77} \chi^2(1, 232)=4.40, p<.05

\textsuperscript{78} F(7, 181)=2.771, p<.01

Civil servant/employee \(M=1.71, SD=.22\); Unemployed \(M=1.88, SD=.15\); Student \(M=1.80, SD=.00\); Shopkeeper \(M=1.69, SD=.21\); Farmer \(M=1.77, SD=.18\); Business \(M=1.67, SD=.12\); Laborer \(M=1.80, SD=.20\); Other \(M=1.78, SD=.15\)

\textsuperscript{79} r(187)=−.203, p<.01
were a member of institutions were more likely to attend CDC meetings, and that women who attended CDC meetings were more likely to be involved in or aware of community involvement in projects. Additionally, older men with more education were more likely to have attended a CDC meeting, but there was no association in women respondents, likely because older, more educated men have more command and influence as elders in the community, whereas the same principle is generally not as applicable for women.

Among men, CDC attendance was related to government perceptions, provincial government perceptions, confidence in institutions, perceived benefit from institutions, and knowledge of institutions, where those who had attended meetings had more positive perceptions for each category than those who had not attended CDC meetings. Of these variables, in women, it was only significantly related to knowledge of institutions (see Figure 3.3c).

These findings indicate that where women have been involved or become aware of community involvement in development projects, it is much more often through the CDC platform than for men in the community. What’s more, while these findings show that in men, those who had attended CDC meetings had more positive perceptions of government and more confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions, in women these variables did not correlate, and CDC meeting attendance only had an influence on knowledge of institutions. There are many possible explanations for this—perhaps it is a reflection of the kinds of projects that are brought to women vs. men in CDCs (often development projects for women are the focus of women’s CDCs), or perhaps the differing nature and means of involvement for each gender. It could also be indicative that where women are involved in CDCs, it is more so presence rather than meaningful participation.

A simple regression was conducted modeling CDC meeting attendance as a predictor for personal involvement, awareness of community involvement, and perceived impacts of community monitoring, respectively, for men and women. CDC meeting attendance was a significant predictor for personal involvement in men and women, but the model was stronger in women, with CDC attendance explaining 46% of variance in personal involvement, compared to 28% in men. CDC attendance was only a significant predictor for awareness of community involvement in the case study project in women, explaining 33% of variance in women’s awareness of community involvement. CDC attendance was a significant predictor for positive community monitoring impacts in both men and women, but again much stronger in women, explaining

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80 $R^2=.28$, $p<.001$
81 $R^2=.461$, $p<.001$
82 $R^2=.331$, $p<.001$
83 $R^2=.148$, $p<.05$
84 $R^2=.449$, $p<.001$
45% of the variance in women’s perceptions of community monitoring impacts compared to 15% in men. These findings would support the hypothesis that much of women involvement and awareness of community involvement is through the CDC platform, whereas men avenues for involvement appear to be more diverse and less dependent upon the CDC platform.

Questions 9 and 17 asked respondents about community involvement as well. Question 9 asked respondents about their personal involvement in any development projects that had occurred in their community, and question 17 asked respondents about their awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project. Regarding personal involvement, 32% of men and 41% of women reported that they had been involved in consultation about a project; 5% of men and 2% of women stated they had contributed funding toward a project; 18% of men and 5% of women had been involved in implementation of a project; 19% of men and 9% of women reported they had been involved in monitoring a project; 6% of men and 4% of women reported having been involved in maintenance for a project; 4% of men and 5% of women stated ‘other’, mostly paid or voluntary labor or donating land. 30% of men and 44% of women reported that they had no personal involvement with any development projects that had been undertaken in their community.

An overall variable for each respondent was computed for personal involvement to weight for the degree of involvement, where a score of ‘1’ would mean involvement in every aspect of a project, and a score of ‘2’ would mean no involvement in any aspect of any project. As previously stated, personal involvement was positively related to community quality of life in both genders. It was also positively correlated with CDC meeting attendance for both genders, and for men respondents it was also positively associated with being a member of institutions. Personal involvement was also positively related to the perception of whether health/education facilities had improved in both genders, and with overall perception of PRT project quality in men. In men, personal involvement varied according to level of education and age. This suggests that older and more educated men had more involvement in the case study PRT project.

### Figure 3.3d Personal Involvement Correlations

**Personal Involvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Involvement</th>
<th>Confidence in Institutions</th>
<th>Benefit from Institutions</th>
<th>Knowledge of Institutions</th>
<th>Government Perceptions</th>
<th>Local Institutions</th>
<th>Q3: Member of Institutions</th>
<th>Q14: Need for Case Study Project</th>
<th>Q16: Importance of Project Maintenance</th>
<th>Q15: Project Improvement of Services</th>
<th>Q14: Need for Case Study Project</th>
<th>Q15: Project Improvement of Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Institutions</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>- .415</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>- .279</td>
<td>- .405</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=190</td>
<td>N=194</td>
<td>N=197</td>
<td>N=112</td>
<td>N=239</td>
<td>N=237</td>
<td>N=236</td>
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</table>

**Personal Involvement t-Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Involvement</th>
<th>Q21: Project Monitored for quality after completion</th>
<th>Q18: Community members monitored building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: M=1.66, SD=27</td>
<td>No: M=1.87, SD=16</td>
<td>Yes: M=1.69, SD=27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df=98</td>
<td>df=94</td>
<td>df=48</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Involvement</th>
<th>Q21: Project Monitored for quality after completion</th>
<th>Q18: Community members monitored building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: M=1.76, SD=20</td>
<td>No: M=1.91, SD=14</td>
<td>Yes: M=1.85, SD=18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df=42</td>
<td>df=150</td>
<td>df=48</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Involvement</th>
<th>Q21: Project Monitored for quality after completion</th>
<th>Q18: Community members monitored building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: M=1.72, SD=.30</td>
<td>No: M=1.69, SD=21</td>
<td>Yes: M=1.76, SD=.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df=30</td>
<td>df=93</td>
<td>df=48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Involvement</th>
<th>Q21: Project Monitored for quality after completion</th>
<th>Q18: Community members monitored building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: M=1.76, SD=.26</td>
<td>No: M=1.85, SD=.18</td>
<td>Yes: M=1.76, SD=.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df=48</td>
<td>df=150</td>
<td>df=48</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Q21: Project Monitored for quality after completion</th>
<th>Q18: Community members monitored building</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes: M=1.76, SD=.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df=30</td>
<td>df=93</td>
<td>df=48</td>
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<td>Yes: M=1.72, SD=.30</td>
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<td>Yes: M=1.76, SD=.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df=30</td>
<td>df=93</td>
<td>df=48</td>
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<td>Yes: M=1.76, SD=.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df=30</td>
<td>df=93</td>
<td>df=48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
personal involvement, likely correlating with elder status in the community.

Personal involvement was positively related to case study PRT project need among men, but it was negatively associated in women. It was also positively correlated with perceived importance of case study project maintenance in men. Personal involvement was positively associated with feeling the case study project had improved access to services in both men and women, and with project community impact among men. (see Figure 3.3d).

These findings would adduce that men who had personal involvement were more likely to feel the project was needed, whereas women who had personal involvement were less likely to feel the project was needed. This could again be a reflection of the differing nature of men versus women involvement in community development decision-making. Whereas men are often involved in decision-making on issues that affect the entire community, women are often involved and allowed to participate in decisions that affect women. Therefore, it follows that men would feel more that the project that was implemented was needed when they have had personal involvement, because they were more likely to have had some form of involvement in the project request or decision. Conversely, it follows that the relationship would be the inverse for women, as it is likely that they did not have input into the community-wide projects such as the schools or clinics in this research.

Personal involvement differed between those who reported that community members had monitored the building of the project among men and women respondents. However, while men who were aware of community monitoring had higher average personal involvement scores, women reporting the same had lower scores. Personal involvement varied between those who reported that someone had visited the case study project to monitor its quality since its completion in both men and women, indicating that involvement could increase the likelihood of follow-up on a project.

In men, personal involvement was positively associated with government perceptions, perceptions of local institutions, confidence in institutions, perceived benefit from institutions, and knowledge of institutions. However, in women personal involvement was negatively associated with perceptions of local institutions, confidence in institutions, and perceived benefit from institutions. Personal involvement was positively related to knowledge of institutions (see Figure 3.3d).

These findings would posit that whereas more personal involvement had a positive effect for men, affecting their perceptions of government and confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions, women with higher personal involvement had more negative perceptions, less confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions. These findings, in addition to sex-disaggregated associations regarding CDC meeting attendance, would support the hypothesis that the nature of involvement differs by gender, and that perhaps the means of women’s involvement are inadequate or non-beneficial.

Respondents were also asked about their awareness of any community members’ involvement in the case study PRT project (see Figure 3.3e). An overall variable for each respondent was computed for this question to weight for the degree of involvement, where a score of ‘1’ would indicate community involvement in every aspect of the project, and a score of ‘2’ would indicate that the community was not involved in any aspect of the project. Overall awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project did not significantly differ by gender, though women respondents were more aware of community consultation. Awareness of community involvement was positively correlated with personal involvement in both men and women. In women, awareness of community involvement differed by membership in institutions, where those who were a member of some institution (CDC, local shura/jirga, religious council, or government institutions) had more awareness of community involvement. The same trend was seen in association with CDC meeting attendance, which was positively related to awareness of community involvement for women but not significantly associated for men (see Figure 3.3f). In men, awareness varied by

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87 $r(239) = -0.405, p<0.001$

88 $t(185) = 2.72, p<0.01$
employment, where shopkeepers and businessmen had the most awareness, and students, laborers and unemployed men had the least.\textsuperscript{89} It was negatively associated with age in women\textsuperscript{90} and men,\textsuperscript{91} indicating that older men and women had more awareness of community involvement.

These findings would indicate that those who were personally involved were more likely to be aware of community involvement as well. Furthermore, they would suggest that women who were involved in institutions or the CDC had more awareness of community involvement, but these platforms did not have an effect for men. This could again be a reflection of differing community roles, where men are able to get information on development projects and community involvement through more diverse avenues, i.e. personal and social interaction, employment, interaction with local leaders, etc., whereas women rely more on formal channels like local institutions and the CDC that facilitate their access to these areas of information. More educated men and older men and women were more likely to be aware of community involvement, perhaps indicating that older women are more likely to be involved in institutions or the CDC, increasing their likelihood of being aware of community involvement.

Awareness of community involvement differed among those who reported community members monitoring the building of the project in both men and women, where those who reported community monitoring had more awareness. It was also strongly positively associated with perceived impacts of community monitoring in both men and women. In both genders, it was also related to reporting someone had visited the case study project after completion to monitor its quality, where those who reported follow-up had more awareness. A linear regression was conducted modeling awareness of community involvement\textsuperscript{4} as a predictor of monitoring for quality after completion for both genders. The model was significant for both men\textsuperscript{92} and women,\textsuperscript{93} indicating that awareness of community involvement explained 10% of variance in men and 27% of variance in women reporting someone visiting the project after completion to monitor its quality. This implies that community involvement had an impact on community-level perceptions and increased the likelihood that the project would be followed up on to monitor its quality after it was completed.

Community involvement was positively correlated with

\begin{align*}
\text{Civil servant/employee} & \quad M=1.71, \quad SD=.22; \text{Unemployed} \\
& \quad M=1.88, \quad SD=.15; \text{Student} \quad M=1.80, \quad SD=.00; \text{Shopkeeper} \\
& \quad M=1.69, \quad SD=.21; \text{Farmer} \quad M=1.77, \quad SD=.18; \text{Business} \quad M=1.67, \\
& \quad SD=.12; \text{Laborer} \quad M=1.80, \quad SD=.20; \text{Other} \quad M=1.78, \quad SD=.15
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{r}(187)=-.203, \quad p<.01 \\
\text{r}(181)=-.156, \quad p<.05
\end{align*}
perceived benefit from institutions in men, but negatively associated in women, suggesting that while men who were aware of community involvement felt that their community had benefited from institutions more, women who were aware felt it had benefited less. Again, this is perhaps because women’s involvement and forums for gaining awareness of community development issues are mostly through male-dominated channels. On the other hand, in women, community involvement was positively associated with knowledge of institutions, indicating that women who had access to information about community development also had a higher level of awareness of institutions at all levels.

In the primary report, we found that personal involvement outperformed community involvement on most variables. This finding held true in sex-disaggregated analysis as well, which strongly indicates that having community involvement does not have as many positive effects unless the community members (whether men or women) are personally involved, encouraging a more inclusive approach to community involvement and participation. Knowledge of institutions was positively related to CDC attendance, personal involvement, and awareness of community involvement in at least one or both genders. A linear regression was conducted modeling involvement and CDC attendance as predictors of knowledge of institutions for both genders. The model was statistically significant for women, but the model was not significant for men, indicating that while involvement and CDC attendance explained 49% of variance in women knowledge of institutions, it did not explain any variance in men respondents. These findings strongly indicate that involvement had a large impact on knowledge of institutions for women, but little effect for men, perhaps because the gender gap in knowledge of institutions placed women much lower to begin with, allowing involvement to have more of an impact. Moreover, while it appears that men likely have a variety of channels for gaining knowledge of institutions, women largely rely on the CDC or other mediums of community involvement in development activities.

### Community Project Monitoring

Besides asking about general personal and community involvement, the survey also asked respondents a number of questions specifically about community monitoring of projects. Respondents were asked specifically if community members of their village monitored the building of the case study PRT project. In this question, 70% of men and 63% of women responded ‘yes’. Those who answered yes were also asked in an open ended, multiple response question to name the institution with whom the community monitors worked (see Figure 3.3g).
Reporting community monitoring of the case study project was related to membership of institutions in men. Personal involvement varied among those who had reported community monitoring in women, where those who had less personal involvement were actually more likely to report community monitoring. However, in both men and women, those who were aware of community monitoring had more awareness of community involvement. Reporting community monitoring was also related to reporting that the case study project had been monitored for quality after completion in both men and women. This would suggest that men with more involvement were more aware of community monitoring, but the same relationship was not true of women.

Reporting community monitoring was a significant predictor for monitoring for quality after completion in both men and women, explaining 6% of variance in men and 15% in women. This indicates that community monitoring at least somewhat increased the likelihood of follow up for monitoring quality after project completion. Reporting community monitoring was associated with level of education, where more educated men were more likely to report community monitoring. In women, those who did not report community monitoring felt that facilities had improved more. Reporting community monitoring was associated with project need in women respondents, and with perceiving project improvement of services in both men and women. However, whereas men who reported monitoring perceived more improvement of services, women who reported monitoring perceived less. This data would suggest that women who were aware of community monitoring had worse perceptions of the project, possibly because monitoring is most often carried out by men or because women are less likely to be involved in or aware of monitoring processes.

Reporting community monitoring was correlated with perceptions of local institutions, confidence in institutions, and perceived benefit from institutions in men. However, in women respondents, reporting community monitoring was related to government perceptions, where those aware of monitoring had more negative perceptions (see Figure 3.3h). This would suggest that community monitoring had a positive effect on community-level perceptions in men respondents, but a largely negative effect on macro-level perceptions in women respondents. This may reflect lower personal involvement in the community in women; when looking at correlations only in women with personal involvement in community monitoring, none of the negative relationships were significant.

In women, those who did not report community monitoring felt that facilities had improved more. Reporting community monitoring was associated with project need in women respondents, and with perceiving project improvement of services in both men and women. However, whereas men who reported monitoring perceived more improvement of services, women who reported monitoring perceived less. This data would suggest that women who were aware of community monitoring had worse perceptions of the project, possibly because monitoring is most often carried out by men or because women are less likely to be involved in or aware of monitoring processes.

Figure 3.3g
Q19: Who did the community monitors work for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDC/NSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Shura</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Public Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Elders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/ No response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2(1, 134)=7.07, p<.01$

$\chi^2(1, 97)=6.15, p<.05$

$\chi^2(1, 100)=15.40, p<.001$

$R^2=.062, p<.05$

$R^2=.154, p<.001$

$t(131)=2.72, p<.01$

Yes $M=3.41, SD=1.76$; No $M=2.54, SD=1.60$
Respondents who reported that community members had monitored the case study PRT project were also asked about the impact of the community monitoring. Similar to questions 9 and 17, a total value was created for this question to weight respondents’ perceptions of total impact. Perceptions of community monitoring impacts did not differ significantly according to gender, and respondents most commonly felt that it either improved the project’s quality or increased awareness of development in the community (see Figure 3.3i).

Personal involvement\(^1\) was strongly positively associated with community monitoring impacts\(^1\) and awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project and varied according to CDC meeting attendance in both women and men. A linear regression was conducted modeling personal involvement\(^1\) as a predictor of community monitoring impacts\(^1\). The model was found to be significant for women\(^{101}\) and men\(^{102}\) indicating that personal involvement in development projects explained 71% of variance in women responses regarding the impact of community monitoring in women respondents, and 29% for men. This indicates that experiences in community development heavily influenced perceptions of the impact of community monitoring, though more strongly for women than men.

Impacts of community monitoring\(^1\) was strongly positively correlated with community quality of life and perceiving health/education facilities to have improved in the past two years in women respondents, and with perceiving

\(^{101}\) \(R^2=.707, p<.001\)
\(^{102}\) \(R^2=.401, p<.001\)
the project had improved services in the community in both men and women. Community monitoring impacts was strongly positively correlated with knowledge of institutions in women, and less strongly in men. However, it was negatively associated with perceived benefit from institutions and PRT perceptions in women respondents.

These findings suggest that while women with positive perceptions of community monitoring impacts had better community-level perceptions and higher knowledge of institutions, they also felt less benefit from institutions and had worse perceptions of the PRT, perhaps suggesting that women felt that the credit and responsibility for projects was with the community rather than external or at higher levels. For men, community monitoring impacts did not appear to have much effect on these perceptions either positively or negatively.

3.4 Maintenance, Sustainability, and Solving Problems with Projects

With a focus on the future of development projects after 2014, the research also focused on maintenance and long-term sustainability of PRT projects and the means by which communities address problems with projects, i.e. maintenance or funding issues. Respondents were asked whether anyone had visited the case study PRT project since its completion to monitor its quality; 35% of men and 36% of women answered ‘yes’. Those who answered ‘yes’ were also asked who had come to monitor the quality of the project with open-ended, multiple response option, to which most responded ‘government’ generally or a specific government department (see Figure 3.4a). Those responding with ‘other’ included answers of CDC/NSP, local shura, Provincial Governor, Provincial Council, District Governor, local elders, line ministries, Parliament member, and district government.

Respondents were also asked a number of questions in terms of their perceptions of who was responsible for the case study project, how problems with the project would be addressed, and who they would believe to be responsible.
if problems with the project were not adequately addressed. All respondents were asked who was responsible for the case study PRT project in terms of maintenance and ensuring it continued to function in the community, with the option for multiple response selection (see Figure 3.4b). Further, respondents were asked if the case study project were to no longer function and provide services, who would they believe to be responsible (see Figure 3.4c).

In both genders, most respondents believed the Afghan government would be responsible if the case study PRT project were to no longer function or provide services. A sizeable number in both genders also believed it was the responsibility of the local community. However, more men than women would also hold a foreign government or the international community responsible.

Question 29 asked respondents if there were problems with the case study project, for example lack of funding or infrastructure problems, which action they or someone in their community would be most likely to take. Most respondents answered they would address the problem with community members without external help, but more women
than men answered the community would address the problem, and more men than women answered they would issue a complaint to the government (see Figure 3.4d). Of those who answered they would issue a complaint to the government, 8% of men and 2% of women said it would be to the Provincial Governor; 0.4% of men and no women to the Provincial Council; 0.4% of men and no women to MRRD; 14% of men and 7% of women to other line ministries; 0.4% of men and no women to local government officials; 15% of men and 4% of women to the District Governor.

Respondents were also asked a number of questions to discern how they generally solve problems in their community. Respondents were asked if, in the past year, their community had a problem they could not resolve on their own and had to ask for help from a government or non-government person or group. 44% of men and 21% of women answered ‘yes’. Of those who responded that the community had a problem it needed external help to solve in the past year, more men than women asked for help from the local shura or Provincial Governor, whereas more women than men asked for help from the district government (see Figure 3.4e). ‘Other’ answers included PRT, President Karzai, Provincial Council, Parliament, Ministry of Economy, CDC/NSP, MRRD, Police, local authorities, and courts. Of those who answered ‘yes’, 70% of men and 69% of women answered that their problem had been resolved.

Question 38 asked respondents, ‘In the future, if your community has a problem that you have to ask for help to resolve, who will you approach or ask to solve the problem?’ with an open-ended, multiple response option. Common answers for both genders were ‘government’ or local elders or shura. More men than women answered the District Governor or Provincial Governor, whereas more women than men answered district government or police. However, roughly two thirds of both men and women respondents
did not know where to go with community problems in the future (see Figure 3.4f). ‘Other’ answers included community members, court, God, local commander, mullah, President Karzai, local government, PDC, line ministries, NGOs, and MRRD.

3.5 Government and Post-2014 Perceptions

Lastly, the research looked at post-2014 perceptions, and as the Afghan government will assume responsibility for maintenance and sustainability of development projects, at people’s perceptions of their capabilities in doing so. Survey respondents were asked a number of questions about their perceptions of Afghan government as a whole and of specific bodies at different levels, and about their post-2014 perceptions. Question 4 asked to what extent respondents rely on the Afghan government to provide services and infrastructure in their local community; question 5 asked the same, but regarding the extent to which respondents rely on the Afghan government to fix problems with infrastructure and facilities in their community (see Figures 3.5a and 3.5b). Reliance on the Afghan government to provide and fix problems with services and infrastructure was generally equivalent between genders, with most feeling they could to some extent rely on the government.

Questions 24, 25, and 26 asked about government perceptions and post-2014 perceptions. Both genders to some extent agreed that if the Afghan government is responsible for the case study PRT project in terms of maintenance and ensuring it continues to function, the project’s quality will be the same or better and it will continue to operate after 2014. Overall government perceptions included all questions regarding government responsibilities and capabilities.

For question 30, a summary variable for knowledge of institutions was created. For questions 31 and 32, summary variables were computed, measuring overall confidence in institutions and perceived community
benefit from institutions. The values were only computed where respondents answered at least nine out of the thirteen categories. Summary variables were also created for overall perceptions of subnational government, perceptions of provincial government, perceptions of local institutions, and perceptions of the PRT. Subnational and provincial government perceptions and local institutions perceptions included confidence and benefit variables from questions 31 and 32. A summary variable was also created for post-2014 perceptions.

Cronbach’s alpha could not be computed for these summary variables because of the selective treatment of missing cases in using respondents who had answered at least nine of the thirteen categories. In these cases, the missing values were treated as ‘0’ by SPSS, which means that some of the mean values calculated in the summary variable are skewed more positively, as from one to four answers were computed to be ‘0’ where they were actually missing. For all other summary variables, the composite was not calculated with any missing values.

For subnational government perceptions, this included confidence and benefit variables from questions 31 and 32 for NSP/CDC, district government, the Provincial Council, Provincial Development Committee, provincial government, and Ministries (α = .842).

For provincial government perceptions, this included the Provincial Council, PDC, and provincial government (α = .842).

For local institutions, this included community shuras/jirgas, NSP/CDC, and district government (α = .808).

Post-2014 perceptions included all questions that asked about perceptions specifically after 2014 (Q2, Q11, Q24, Q25).

Knowledge of Institutions

Fundamental to solving problems with projects and assessing government capabilities is a basic knowledge of key institutions, at the local, district, provincial and central levels. The survey asked respondents about whether they knew a number of institutions at these levels, for which a summary variable was created to gauge overall knowledge of institutions. 18% of respondents did not answer enough knowledge questions to compute a summary variable. Men had a higher overall knowledge of institutions than women (see Figure 3.5c), and the difference between men and women was significant.

In both genders, knowledge of institutions was positively correlated with community quality of life—more strongly in women than men. Furthermore, knowledge of institutions was positively associated with the perception that health/
education facilities had improved in the past two years and with project improvement of services in women. It was positively related to perceptions of need for the case study PRT project in men, but negatively associated in women. These findings suggest that having knowledge of basic institutions influenced the perception of quality of life in the community in both genders. However, while in women those with more knowledge of institutions also felt that facilities had improved more and the case study project had improved services, the same was not true of men. Conversely, men with more knowledge of institutions were more likely to feel that the case study project was needed, whereas women with knowledge were less likely. Again, this is possibly due to the manner of women’s involvement and general removal from forums for making development decisions that affect the community as a whole.

While knowledge of institutions was positively related to personal involvement and CDC meeting attendance in both genders, it was much stronger in women. Furthermore, knowledge of institutions was positively correlated with awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project, impacts of community monitoring, and overall involvement among women. Knowledge of institutions was positively associated with government perceptions, provincial government perceptions and confidence in institutions in men. These findings show that involvement had a large impact on knowledge of institutions for women, but this knowledge did not necessarily have the same correlation to improved perceptions of government institutions that it did for men, which serves to provide more possible insight into the manner of involvement for women versus men discussed in previous sections.

Confidence in Institutions

After asking whether they knew institutions, respondents were asked about their level of confidence in the institutions they knew, again using a summary variable to gauge overall confidence in institutions. 41% of respondents did not answer enough confidence questions to compute a summary variable. Men appeared slightly more confident in institutions than women respondents, but the difference was not significant (see Figure 3.5e). Confidence in institutions varied according to level of education in men respondents, where the more educated men were,
the more confidence they had, indicating that older women had more confidence in institutions.

Confidence in institutions was positively correlated with community quality of life in men, and positively associated with the perception that quality life would improve after 2014 in women. It was positively related to project need and importance of project maintenance in both men and women, and with perception of project improving access to services in men. It was positively related to project community impact the perception of improvement of health/education facilities in the past two years in both men and women (see Figure 3.5f). These findings would posit that men with confidence in institutions felt that community quality of life was better, and women with confidence felt more positively about community quality of life after 2014.

In both genders, confidence in institutions affected various aspects of perceptions regarding development projects, or, conversely, development projects and their need, quality, and improvement affected confidence in institutions in various ways for respondents of both genders.

Confidence in institutions was related to being a member of institutions and CDC meeting attendance in men, but there was no significant association in women. While it was positively associated with personal involvement in men respondents, it was negatively associated in women respondents. It was positively correlated with impact of community monitoring in men respondents. Confidence in institutions was positively related to reporting the project had been monitored after completion in men respondents, but not significantly associated in women respondents (see Figure 3.5f). This indicates that while involvement in community decision-making forums and development projects generally had an increasing effect

Figure 3.5e
Confidence in Institutions

![Confidence in Institutions graph]

Figure 3.5f Confidence in Institutions' Correlations

![Confidence in Institutions correlations graph]

---

111 $F(6, 195)=2.56, p<.05$

Illiterate $M=2.45, SD=.72$; Semi-literate $M=2.31, SD=.69$; Primary school $M=2.09, SD=.75$; Secondary school $M=2.12, SD=.68$; High school $M=2.00, SD=.80$; Bachelors $M=1.81, SD=.60$

112 $r[98]=.230, p<.05$
on men confidence in institutions, involvement in the same activities had a decreasing effect for women. Once again, this could be a reflection of the means by which men are allowed to engage in decision-making forums and have a say in development activities, whereas women are often marginalized from such community-wide efficacy. That no means of involvement increased women’s confidence in institutions is a strong indication that the means by which they are involved are inadequate.

Similar to knowledge of institutions, confidence in institutions was positively associated with government perceptions and knowledge of institutions in men, and with perceived benefit from institutions in both men and women. This would indicate that for men, confidence levels influenced perceptions of the government, benefit from institutions, and knowledge of institutions. However, among women, confidence was only associated with perceived benefit.

Benefit from Institutions

Lastly, respondents were asked how much they felt their community had benefited from the institutions they knew, with a summary variable for overall perceived benefit from institutions. 41% of respondents did not answer enough benefit questions to compute a summary variable. Women respondents felt their community had benefited from institutions more than men respondents (see Figure 3.5g), and the difference was significant. Perceived benefit from institutions was also associated with age in women respondents, indicating that older women perceived their community to benefit less from institutions than younger women.

Benefit from institutions was positively related to community quality of life in men, and with perceptions that the overall quality of life in the community would improve after 2014 in both men and women. It was also positively associated with perceptions of improvement in health/education facilities in the past two years in both genders, indicating that the amount that both men and women perceived their community to have benefited from institutions was directly tied to the amount of improvement they perceived in development in their community and their confidence about the quality of life in their community after Transition (see Figure 3.5h).

Benefit from institutions was positively related to perception of overall quality of PRT projects in men, and with beliefs regarding the quality of PRT projects after 2014 in both genders, although stronger in men than women. Further, it was positively correlated with project need in women, and with project improving access to services from the project and importance of maintenance in men. Benefit from institutions was positively related to project community impact in both genders.

These findings support that the PRT projects had a significant impact on perceptions of community benefit from all institutions, not only the PRT. However, while for men perceived benefit was affected by the quality of PRT

\[ t(296)=3.29, p<.01 \]
\[ \text{Men } M=2.49, \text{SD}=.72; \text{Women } M=2.28, \text{SD}=3.7 \]

\[ r(96)= -.271, p<.01 \]
projects, the same was not true of women. Similarly, while perceiving more benefit from institutions would appear to make men more likely to see maintenance of projects as important, the same relationship was not seen in women.

Benefit from institutions was related to membership of institutions and CDC meeting attendance in men. While it was positively associated with personal involvement and awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project, impact of community monitoring, and involvement, it was negatively associated in women respondents. Benefit from institutions was positively related to government perceptions in men respondents, but not significantly associated in women respondents, showing the same trends as knowledge and confidence (see Figure 3.5h).

Similar to the findings in several other areas, this provides more evidence that the involvement mechanisms available to women community members do not have as much of an effect as those available to men community members; women who had various forms of involvement actually felt that their community had benefited less from institutions. What’s more, while benefit from institutions seems to have impacted perceptions of the government, similar to knowledge of and confidence in institutions, it did not have any significant impact for women, lending additional support to the previous hypothesis.

Government Perceptions

The various institutions that respondents were asked about regarding knowledge, confidence, and benefit were divided by level—overall perceptions of government based on questions regarding the Afghan government, and further for different levels of government (subnational, provincial, and local institutions) based upon responses regarding confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions at these levels.

Men had significantly more positive overall perceptions of government than women, but on the whole respondents’ opinions of the government were generally average (see Figure 3.5i). In men, government perceptions varied significantly according to level of education, where generally more educated men perceived government more positively. Among women respondents, it was positively associated with household size, indicating that women in larger households viewed the government more positively.

Government perceptions was positively associated with community quality of life in men, and with perceptions that community quality of life would improve after 2014 in women. It was positively related to perceptions of improvement of health/education facilities in the past two years in both genders, though more strongly in women. This would indicate that where facilities had improved, regardless of whether government was the implementer, beneficiaries felt more positively toward the government, showing that development activities can play a role in bolstering government. That this relationship was stronger in women and that in women better government perceptions was also tied to more confidence about the future could

\[ t(388)=4.32, p<.001 \]
\[ Men \ M=2.22, SD=.51; Women \ M=2.46, SD=.56 \]
\[ F(6, 211)=3.85, p<.01 \]
\[ Illiterate \ M=2.38, SD=.51; Semi-literate \ M=2.19, SD=.50; Primary school \ M=2.17, SD=.45; Secondary school \ M=2.25; SD=.55; High school \ M=1.98, SD=.50; Bachelors \ M=1.88, SD=.23 \]
\[ r(178)=.175, p<.05 \]
perhaps be a reflection of the differing degrees to which men and women interact with government officials, where men are likely to have more personal experience upon which to base opinions, whereas women likely have fewer such interactions.

Furthermore, government perceptions\(^5\) was positively correlated with perceptions of project need in men, and with perception of project improving access to services in both men and women. It was also positively associated with importance of project maintenance in both men and women, and with project community impact\(^6\) in both men and women (see Figure 3.5). A linear regression was conducted modeling project community impact\(^6\) as a predictor of government perceptions in both genders. The model was significant for both men\(^{118}\) and women,\(^{119}\) indicating that project community impact explained 13% of variance in men and 8% of variance in women regarding government perceptions. This would suggest that where the case study PRT projects had an impact in the community, perceptions of government were slightly more positive in both genders, regardless of the PRT being the implementer.

Government perceptions\(^5\) was related to membership of institutions, CDC meeting attendance, and personal involvement\(^7\) in men. It was positively associated with awareness of community involvement\(^8\) in the PRT case study project in men, but negatively associated in women, following the same trends as earlier findings regarding the effects of men and women involvement in projects and development forums in the community, and again showing that while involvement had positive effects for men, it largely had either no or negative effects for women regarding government perceptions.

Government perceptions\(^5\) also varied according to those who reported

\(^{118}\) \(R^2=.125, p<.001\)

\(^{119}\) \(R^2=.080, p<.001\)
follow-up monitoring for quality after project completion in women, where those who reported follow-up had worse perceptions, and with reporting community monitoring of the project, where again those who reported monitoring had worse perceptions. This could perhaps be due to who is doing the monitoring or follow-up, or the nature of it.

Subnational, Provincial, and Local Perceptions

Besides gauging overall government perceptions, institutions were further broken down categorically to create summary variables based on confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions at the subnational, provincial, and local level. Though perceptions of subnational and provincial government differed, with overall subnational perceptions slightly better than provincial in both genders, relationships between subnational and provincial government perceptions with other variables were largely similar. Relationships with perceptions of local institutions differed in some aspects, indicating that factors for perceptions of institutions differs with increased distance from and differing level of interaction with institutions.

Perceptions of subnational government were largely equivalent in men and women respondents (see Figure 3.5k). However, perceptions of provincial government were more positive in women respondents than men respondents (see Figure 3.5m), and the difference was significant. Correlations for subnational and provincial government (see Figures 3.5l and 3.5n in Appendix A) also suggested that a project’s impact in the community appears to have a significant impact on perceptions of provincial and subnational government in both genders. What’s more, it appears that opinions of government influence perceptions of quality of life, or vice versa that quality of life influences government perceptions. Relationships further indicated that PRT activities had a large footprint at the subnational and provincial level for both genders, where the opinions of the PRT were directly related to government institutions at these levels.
Perceptions of local institutions were more positive than those of subnational and provincial government in both men and women, and opinions did not differ significantly by gender (see Figure 3.5a). Perceptions of local institutions was positively associated with likelihood that community quality of life would improve after 2014 in women, and with project improvement of health/education facilities in both men and women. It was positively correlated with perception of project need and project community impact in women, and with perception of project improving services in men. From this, it appears that better perceptions of local institutions increased confidence in the future for women, and that community development had a much more significant effect on perceptions of local institutions for women than men, perhaps a reflection of the level at which women are able to engage compared to men, where development activities may be more attributable to the local rather than higher levels for women.

Perceptions of local institutions varied by membership of institutions in men, where those who stated they were members of an institution had more positive perceptions, and with CDC meeting attendance in women respondents. While perceptions of local institutions was positively correlated with personal involvement and overall involvement among men, it was negatively associated among women. In men, perceptions of local institutions was positively associated with impacts of community monitoring and differed according to reporting that community members monitored the case study project and reporting that someone had monitored the project for quality after completion. There were no significant associations with these variables among women, again showing that while involvement seemed to improved perceptions for men, it actually may have negatively affected women.

Perceptions of local institutions was positively related to government perceptions in both men and women, and with provincial government perceptions in men. Perceptions of local institutions was positively associated with PRT perceptions in both genders (see Figure 3.5p in Appendix A). These findings could suggest that those with more positive perceptions of their local institutions also viewed the government and PRT more positively, or conversely that more positive views of the PRT led to more positive views of local institutions, likely due to development impacts in the community.

**Post-2014 Perceptions**

With the ultimate research focus of the post-2014 (Transition) condition of development projects, the final area the survey covered was post-2014 perceptions. Respondents were asked a number of questions gauging perceptions on specific aspects of issues after 2014. While the first question asked respondents to rate the quality of life in their community, the second asked how likely it is that the quality of life in their community would improve after 2014 (see Figure 3.5q). Question 11 asked respondents to gauge how the quality of PRT-constructed projects in their community would be after 2014, in effect how they believed government responsibility would affect the quality of the projects (see Figure 3.5r). These questions, along with questions 24 and 25 discussed in the previous section, were combined into a summary variable for post-2014 perceptions. Post-2014 perceptions were largely average, with men perceptions significantly slightly more positive.
Post-2014 perceptions\textsuperscript{1} was positively associated with level of education in men respondents,\textsuperscript{122} indicating that more educated men felt more optimistic about the future after Transition.

Post-2014 perceptions\textsuperscript{5} was positively related to community quality of life in men, and with improvement of health/education facilities among women. Post-2014 perceptions\textsuperscript{5} was positively associated with project community impact\textsuperscript{4} in both men and women. It was positively related to importance of project maintenance in women (see Figure 3.5s). These findings would support that people felt more optimistic about the future where there had been notable development in their area that had significantly impacted services and facilities in the community. Moreover, in women, optimism about the future appeared connected to project maintenance.

Post-2014 perceptions\textsuperscript{5} was positively associated with perceptions of local institutions\textsuperscript{2} in women, and with PRT perceptions\textsuperscript{5} and confidence in\textsuperscript{6} and perceived benefit from institutions\textsuperscript{5} in both genders. This would suggest that those who perceived conditions in their community to have improved and who had more confidence in institutions also felt more optimistic about the future, likely based upon a belief that trends experienced over the past few years will continue into the future as well. It also augments the hypothesis that PRT activities had a significant impact on community-level perceptions, even where they were not necessarily directly regarding PRT activities, reiterating the wide range of secondary impacts of development actors’ activities and the impact they can have on perceptions of the government.

Post-2014 perceptions\textsuperscript{5} differed according to membership of institutions and was positively associated with personal involvement\textsuperscript{6} in men. Among men, those who had attended a CDC meeting were more optimistic about the future than women.\textsuperscript{121} Post-2014 perceptions\textsuperscript{5} was positively associated with level of education in men respondents,\textsuperscript{122} indicating that more educated men felt more optimistic about the future after Transition.

\textsuperscript{121} t(357)=2.62, p<.01
Men M=2.57, SD=.58; Women M=2.74, SD=.68
\textsuperscript{122} r[186]=.231, p<.01
after 2014, but the opposite relationship was observed in women, where those who had attended were less optimistic. Similarly, it was positively related to involvement in men, but negatively associated in women. This would suggest that though men who had more involvement in their community development felt more optimistic about the future, women who had more involvement felt less optimistic, yet another reflection of the possible different nature and means of involvement between genders and their impact.
4. Conclusion

‘Gender’ has taken a prime role in development and human rights rhetoric, and Afghanistan follows the same trend. The past 12 years of massive aid influx to Afghanistan have been marked by an explicit agenda for gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and women’s issues. While much of the rhetoric regarding gender-based development initiatives in Afghanistan began with a Gender and Development (GAD)-centered approach, the implementation was much more in the tradition of Women in Development (WID), and PRT development policies regarding gender appear to be no exception.

In practice, it seems that much of PRT practice regarding gender across Afghanistan was through the employment of Gender Advisors and Female Engagement Teams (FETs). Gender Advisors seemed to only be utilized on-staff by a handful of PRTs, with FETs or providing projects directed at women being a more dominant means of addressing ‘gender’ issues. A review of official communications materials published by the PRT (i.e. press releases, blog posts, reports) found that gender practices were similarly discouraging. Though some programs and projects they described could perhaps be considered as legitimate efforts to address gender inequality, many of the projects were much more in the vein of ‘hearts and minds’ rather than constituting any sort of comprehensive gender approach. The review of PRT policy and practice regarding gender echoed the characteristics of overall gender-based development in Afghanistan—GAD language and concepts implemented more like WID, a strong liberator mentality, and an approach to gender focused almost exclusively on women.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

When looking at the sex-disaggregated data, there were a number of findings that would support these observations, and a number of finding on differences between men and women respondents regarding: (1) development projects, community involvement in projects, and monitoring and oversight of projects, (2) perceptions of various institutions including government at all levels, PRTs, and NGOs, and (3) post-2014 issues regarding sustainability and addressing project and community issues that can inform better development and Transition policies and practices.

We found that men were more aware of development activities than women, though findings suggested that improvement of facilities had a larger effect in women than men. There were a number of findings indicating differences between genders in the basis for perceptions on development issues and various institutions. For instance, findings supported that men respondents perceived facilities to have improved where needs were met, whereas women respondents perceived facilities to have improved where services had improved. Similarly, findings implied that men assessed the general quality of PRT work based on meeting community needs, whereas women opinions were more based on observing improvement in services. Further supporting this hypothesis, community quality of life was associated with project need in men respondents, and with project improvement of services in women respondents, suggesting that for men in the community, perceptions of quality of life were more tied to having needs met and ensuring that facilities are maintained, whereas for women in the community, quality of life perceptions were more tied to having an observed improvement in services. These findings would cumulatively infer that men placed higher priority on meeting community needs, whereas women place higher priority on improving services in the community.

Findings indicated that the quality of the project in respondents’ immediate community was influential for overall perceptions of the overall quality of the PRT’s work in both men and women, and in both the research found that a project’s perceived impact in the community had an effect on perceptions of, confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions at all levels. Findings suggested that better perceptions of the PRT was linked to better perceptions of government and institutions at all levels. However, findings also suggest that while women based their opinions of the PRT’s work more on their perceived impact of PRT projects in the community, whereas men based their opinions more
on improvement of facilities, quality of projects, and general perceptions of community benefit from institutions.

Perceptions of the PRT were slightly more positive in women than men, though fewer women had opinions on the PRT. While findings indicated that men with more personal involvement in community development perceived the PRT more positively, they suggest that women with more involvement in community development perceived the PRT more negatively, which could be a reflection of the differing nature of PRT engagement with men versus women.

Though more men than women were members of institutions (CDC, local shura/jirga, religious council, or government institutions) and had attended CDC meetings, we found that there was significant CDC and local shura membership in women respondents. Findings suggested that men who were a member of institutions were more likely to attend CDC meetings, and that women who attended CDC meetings were more likely to be involved in or aware of community involvement in projects. Additionally, findings indicated that involvement in community development had more of an impact on community-level perceptions for women and more of an impact on macro-level perceptions for men.

The research also found evidence that much of women’s involvement and awareness of community involvement is through the CDC platform, whereas men’s avenues for involvement appear to be more diverse and less dependent upon the CDC platform. In women, CDC attendance explained 46% of variation in personal involvement, 33% of variation in awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project, and 45% of variance in perceived impacts of community monitoring. Furthermore, CDC attendance, personal involvement, and awareness of community involvement explained 49% of variance in knowledge of institutions in women respondents, but the model was not a significant predictor among men. These findings imply that involvement had a large impact on knowledge of institutions for women, but little effect for men.

Overall, men had more personal involvement in development projects in their community. Findings suggested that men with more personal involvement also had more positive government perceptions, confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions in men respondents, while women with higher personal involvement had more negative perceptions, less confidence in and perceived benefit from institutions. These findings, in addition to sex-disaggregated associations regarding CDC meeting attendance, would support the hypothesis that the nature of involvement differs by gender, and that perhaps the means of women involvement are inadequate or non-beneficial.

Men were also more aware of community involvement in the case study PRT project. Findings showed that in both men and women, community involvement was tied to community-level perceptions and the likelihood that the project would be followed up on to monitor its quality after it was completed. In the primary report, we found that personal involvement outperformed community involvement on most variables. This finding held true in sex-disaggregated analysis as well, which could indicate that having community involvement does not have as many positive effects unless the community member is personally involved, which would encourage a more inclusive approach to community involvement and participation.

In both men and women, findings suggested that community monitoring increased the likelihood of follow up for monitoring the project’s quality after it was completed. Findings indicated that community monitoring had a positive effect on community-level perceptions in men, but a largely negative effect on perceptions of institutions at all levels in women. This was posited as reflection of lower personal involvement in community monitoring in women. Additionally, personal involvement, awareness of community involvement in the case study PRT project, and CDC attendance explained 71% of the variance in women responses regarding community monitoring impacts, but the model was not a significant predictor in men. This would indicate that experiences in community development influenced perceptions of the impact of community monitoring in women, but had no effect in men.

In both men and women, most respondents agreed that the Afghan government is responsible for maintenance of the case study PRT project and that the Afghan government would be responsible if the case study PRT project were
to no longer function or provide services. A significant number in both men and women also believed it was the responsibility of the local community. However, more men than women would also hold a foreign government or the international community responsible.

When asked what they would do if there were a problem with the case study PRT project, more women than men answered the community would address the problem, and more men than women answered they would issue a complaint to the government. Both genders felt they could to some extent rely on the Afghan government to provide and fix problems with services and infrastructure, and that if the Afghan government is responsible for the case study PRT project in terms of maintenance and ensuring it continues to function, the project’s quality will be the same or better and it will continue to operate after 2014. However, roughly two-thirds of both men and women did not know where to go with community problems in the future.

Men had a higher overall knowledge of institutions and were overall slightly more confident in institutions than women. However, women felt their community had benefited from institutions more than men. There were overall more positive perceptions of government in men than women. Perceptions of local institutions were more positive than those of subnational and provincial government in both genders, but men’s perceptions were slightly more positive than women’s perceptions. Findings showed that where projects had an impact in the community, perceptions of government were more positive in both genders, regardless of the PRT being the implementer.

Generally, men had more positive post-2014 perceptions than women respondents. Findings for both genders suggested that those who perceived conditions in their community to have improved and who had more confidence in institutions also felt more optimistic about the future. However, findings also indicated that though men who had more involvement in their community development felt more optimistic about the future, women who had more involvement felt less optimistic, again possibly reflecting different nature and means of involvement between genders.

From these findings, a number of gender-differentiated themes emerged. Whereas men’s involvement and awareness of development activities in the community did not appear dependent on any single platform, women appeared largely dependent on the CDC mechanism. Moreover, even where women were involved, it appears very likely that women are only involved regarding development that directly targets women, whereas men are involved on projects that affect the community as a whole. Findings repeatedly echoed the suggestion that women are largely marginalized from any sort of meaningful participation in or even awareness of development activities and decisionmaking within the community.

Perhaps most telling, while involvement appears to have had a number of positive effects for men, many findings suggested that involvement had either none or negative effects for women. Women with involvement felt more negatively towards the PRT and government institutions, had less confidence in institutions, perceived less benefit from institutions, felt that projects were less needed, and felt less optimistic about the future, to name a few. This is strongly indicative that what is being done by PRTs and development actors in these areas to involve women is not only inadequate, but could actually be causing more harm than good.

Furthermore, these findings echoed many of those from the primary report. Development can play a key role in improving perceptions of institutions at all levels and bolstering the state. However, in as much as it can improve perceptions, if these projects are not sustained, it can likely erode them as well. Accounts as to who is responsible for projects and how maintenance and sustainability issues will be addressed are garbled at best; about two-thirds of respondents did not know who to go to with a problem with the case study project in the future.

4.2 Epilogue and Recommendations

Without well-informed policies addressing gender inequality, development gains are unlikely to produce sustainable results in peace or security. This research concludes that PRT development policy and practice did not adequately take consideration of gender issues, and where ‘gender’ was
addressed, projects and programs were too strongly in the tradition of WID, which has largely been proven ineffective in addressing gender inequality. Men respondents were more aware of development activities than women respondents, had higher personal involvement in development, and were more aware of community involvement in the case study PRT project. What’s more, men personal involvement was related to more positive PRT perceptions, whereas women personal involvement was correlated with more negative women PRT perceptions. Men respondents had a higher overall knowledge of institutions than women respondents, more confidence in institutions, more positive perceptions of the Afghan government, more positive perceptions of local institutions, and felt more optimistic about conditions after 2014.

The research also found great potential for community involvement in both genders, many of which are summarized in findings from the primary report. Sex-disaggregated findings also showed that involvement had a large impact on knowledge of institutions and that experiences in community development had a large influence on perceptions of the impacts of community monitoring in women respondents. Findings reinforced that development does have the potential to bolster support for government, and when implemented well and responsibly, can increase people's feelings of confidence in government and belief in competence of government bodies at all levels. It would also suggest that perceptions of government are in some way tied to service delivery and immediate needs being met for citizens. Furthermore, findings support theoretical assumptions that community involvement can help to build capacity, establish clear channels for community participation, and give people the opportunity to take part in processes that shape their lives, facilitating a sense of efficacy, ownership, and empowerment. The findings also corroborate that involvement increases people’s knowledge of institutions and government systems, enabling them to be more proactive in terms of advocating for themselves and holding the government accountable in terms of fulfilling its responsibilities. We found that personal involvement generally had stronger correlations with other key variables, which could indicate that simply having community involvement strategies is not enough. Rather, community involvement should be as inclusive as possible and encourage personal participation from all members of the community to maximize its potential benefits.

**Recommendations**

From this research, Integrity Watch Afghanistan issues the following recommendations:

**On Sex-Disaggregated Data and Gender and Development Research in Afghanistan**

- In the absence of adequate qualitative information, the findings of this report are largely exploratory in nature. However, the findings show a number of critical points that would warrant further research. Organizations and researchers should use these findings to guide further investigative research into gender and development issues in Afghanistan.
- The findings of this report provide a number of insights into differences between men and women regarding development and community involvement. These findings could be used to dramatically improve gender-sensitive indicators and goals in the context of Afghanistan, based in tentative statistically proven concepts.
- There is an incredible amount of quantitative data in Afghanistan that has not been sex-disaggregated. What’s more, where it is disaggregated, it is often only frequencies or at best crosstabulation of responses for men and women. Development actors and researchers should not shy away from in-depth statistical analysis, examining the differences not only in responses but relationships between responses in men and women. Sex-disaggregated data has the potential to tell us so much more that how many men and women said what, as this report shows.

**On Gender-Based Development Practices**

**Gender-Based Development Approaches**

- Gender equality is key to establishing and maintaining stability and development gains. When implementing any development initiative, gender (meaning men also—not just women) should be a central consideration, proactively rather than as an afterthought, and based
on well-informed ideas of what gender is and the best strategies for addressing gender inequality in the specific context at hand.

- Practitioners and theorists alike have concluded that WID is an ineffective and outdated approach. As such, if WID-style projects such as those reviewed in Chapter 2 are to be promoted and employed by donors or development practitioners, it should be done with caution, realistic expectations, and a thorough, well-informed consideration of better alternatives.

- Evidence from this report supports that men’s and women’s perceptions of development projects and various institutions are formed based upon different factors (for instance, men prioritizing need for project and women prioritizing visible improvement of services). Rather than operating on the simple principle that there are differences, donors and development practitioners should further investigate and consider what and why these differences are in implementing development programs in order to maximize benefits for both genders.

- It appears that in many development initiatives, gaining women’s perspectives is considered to constitute a gender approach. Just as ‘women’ does not equal ‘gender’, neither does a women’s perspective constitute a gender approach. Though talking to both men and women is an important component, development actors should understand that this is only a step in addressing gender rather than a means in itself.

**Gendered Aspects of Community Involvement**

- This report found that a gap between genders where women surveyed had less awareness of development activities, lower knowledge of institutions, less confidence in institutions, and more negative perceptions of the Afghan government. The primary report found that personal involvement in development activities is significantly associated with each of these areas. As such, personal involvement strategies should be employed in all development activities as a means of decreasing these gaps between men and women.

- Evidence from both this and the primary report suggests that personal involvement has much more benefit than just awareness of community involvement. As such, if women are not personally provided with avenues for involvement, community involvement can have little to no effect on a significant part of the community. While utilizing preexisting structures like shuras can be an effective approach to involving communities in development decision-making, if these preexisting structures are patriarchal, utilizing them can serve to reinforce a negative gender status quo.

- Evidence indicates that the ways that women have been involved in community development has not had as much effect as in men, and in a number of ways actually appears to have a negative effect. This would strongly indicate that the present means being utilized in development processes for involving women need to be further investigated and reconsidered, not only from a gender perspective but also through a Do No Harm framework. For instance, if women’s participation in CDCs were meaningfully integrated and they were allowed to participate in decision-making on all development projects in the community, perhaps it would have more positive effects than the situation at present where they are often allowed to be separate and marginalized, only participating in decision-making on projects that specifically target women.

- Findings show that even where women have personal involvement in development activities, it is likely often presence more so than meaningful participation. Furthermore, women appear to often only be involved in projects targeted at women, rather than on issues affecting the community as a whole, which could be a possible reason for the differences in involvement effects between men and women. Therefore, development projects and programs should focus on ways of directly involving women not only in projects directly targeted at women, but in all development issues in their community.

- Along those same lines, data on women’s participation should be less focused on quantity and more focused on quality of participation to identify further means of increasing the potential of community involvement in development processes.
**On CIMIC Development Activities and Gender**

While on the ground, development projects may look the same, this research acknowledges that there are differences between development and CIMIC actors providing projects. As such, this research issues specific recommendations for CIMIC actors such as the PRTs:

- Especially when operating outside standard area of activities such as development, CIMIC actors should employ the close advisement of experts to ensure proper planning, implementation, and follow-up on projects. The same applies for gender. A few Gender Advisors sparsely dispersed throughout the ISAF chain of command or among a select few PRTs is inadequate to ensure a gender-sensitive approach.

- PRTs and other CIMIC actors should understand that women and gender are two distinct concepts, and addressing women does not mean addressing gender. Female Engagement Teams, while perhaps serving a purpose from the military perspective, do not constitute a gender approach, and should not be promoted as such.

**On Other Actors**

- The Afghan government should make its own additional efforts at closing this knowledge and awareness gender gap, not only through efforts from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs but throughout all government bodies and agencies at all levels. To begin with, the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) should insist upon women’s meaningful participation in CDCs, especially given the findings from this report that indicate the massive benefit it can have for decreasing the gender gap in community development.

- Media should also play a role, ensuring that dissemination strategies, information availability, and distribution mediums are gender-inclusive.


Rathgeber, Eva M. “WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice.” The Journal of Developing Areas 24, no. 4


Appendix A: Additional Figures

Figure 3.5i Subnational Government Perceptions' Correlations

Subnational Government Perceptions

Q1: Community Monitoring

Impact

Community Monitoring

Impact

N=65

N=80

.306

.247

Q16: Project Improvement of services

Project

Community

Impact

N=32

N=32

.437

.586

Positive Association

in males

Negative Association

in males

Positive Association

in females

Negative Association

in females

Correlations

- .657

- .425

- .422

Personal Involvement

Involvement

Involvement

N=29

N=32

Q1: Community Quality of Life

Provincial Government Perceptions

Provincial Government Perceptions

Q3: Member of Institutions

Yes: M=1.96

N=65

No: M=2.63

SD=.59

SD=.78

CDC Meeting Attendance

Yes: M=2.21

N=82

No: M=2.58

SD=.55

SD=.28

4.76

2.58

t = t-value

df: Degree of Freedom

M: Mean

SD: Standard Deviation

N=31

N=39

3.15

Positive Association

in males

Negative Association

in males

Positive Association

in females

Negative Association

in females

Tests

Figure 3.5n Provincial Government Perceptions' Correlations

Provincial Government Perceptions

Q1: Community Monitoring

Impact

Community Monitoring

Impact

N=65

N=80

.306

.247

Q16: Project Improvement of services

Project

Community

Impact

N=32

N=32

.437

.586

Positive Association

in males

Negative Association

in males

Positive Association

in females

Negative Association

in females

Correlations

- .657

- .425

- .422

Personal Involvement

Involvement

Involvement

N=29

N=32

Q1: Community Quality of Life

Q16: Project Improvement of services

Q1: Community Quality of Life

N=43

N=37

N=47

N=41

.349

.227

.472

.454

Positive Association

in males

Negative Association

in males

Positive Association

in females

Negative Association

in females

Local Institutions

N=105

Project Community Impact

Impact

Knowledge of Institutions

N=109

.473

- .334

- .499

- .460

Awareness of Community Involvement

Awareness of Community Impact

Q14: Need for Case Study Project

N=110

N=100

N=47

N=43

- .258

Positive Association

in males

Negative Association

in males

Positive Association

in females

Negative Association

in females

Tests
Figure 3.5p Perceptions of Local Institutions' Correlations

Perceptions of Local Institutions:

- Personal Involvement
- Community Monitoring Impacts
- Government Perceptions

Q16: Project improvement of services
- Correlation: -0.456
- N: 150

Figure 3.5p Perceptions of Local Institutions' t-Tests

Q3: Member of Institutions
- Yes: M=1.59, SD=0.59
- No: M=1.91, SD=0.73

Q1: Project monitored for quality of completion
- Yes: M=1.68, SD=0.66
- No: M=2.15, SD=0.79

Q18: Community members monitored building
- Yes: M=1.70, SD=0.57
- No: M=2.00, SD=0.85

Q2: Quality of life after 2014
- Government Perceptions
- Project Community Impact
- Need for Case Study Project

CDC Meeting Attendance
- Yes: M=2.09, SD=0.42
- No: M=2.26, SD=0.42

* t-value, df: Degree of Freedom, M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation.