



AFGHANISTAN CASH TRANSFER EVALUATION



Evaluation of cash transfer components of two ACF projects in Samangan and Day Kundi Provinces

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Humanitarian Aid

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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre La Faim
AOG	Anti Government Group -
CDC	Community Development Councils, - 'new' administrative entity that comprises of several villages and then also has a committee of community development representatives.
CFW	Cash for Work
CTP	Cash Transfer Programming
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EMMA	Emergency Market Mapping & Analysis tool
EPG	ACF Evaluation and Policy Guideline
ERM	Emergency Response Mechanism
FFW	Food for Work
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FSCO	ACF Food Security Coordinator
Hawala	Informal system of money changers in Afghanistan
Hawalador	The person who moves/changes money
LRRD	EU delegation name for specific grant
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
M-Pesa	M for mobile and Pesa, Kiswahili word for Money. This is a money transfer mechanisms that works through mobile phone network which was started in Kenya.
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PM	Project Manager
Roshan	Mobile phone operator in Afghanistan
Shura	Arabic word for consultation, in Afghanistan used for Community Representative Committee, official and non-official ones.
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNIFM	United Nations Fund for Women - UN Women

Executive Summary

ACF commissioned the evaluation of cash transfer components in two Food Security projects in Afghanistan. ACF was interested in understanding the effectiveness of the cash distribution methodology using the *hawala* system of moneychangers. Furthermore, ACF wanted to know whether specific targeting of women was appropriate and effective. The teams capacity to undertake quality assessments, develop suitable projects while managing these projects remotely, was also reviewed.

The system of multiple and occasionally overlapping projects was confusing and hampered impact analysis. In this case, cash programming was an appropriate mechanism to target both acute and chronic needs in the two project areas. Interestingly, the communities consulted preferred Cash for Work to Cash Grants, as it would have a wider benefit. The *hawala* system for distribution of cash is the most safe and efficient mechanism to move large sums of money. In the context of Afghanistan, where banks do not function beyond the regional capital and M-Pesa systems using mobile phone networks do not cover enough of the country, this is the most effective transfer option. The payment of cash instalments was a core best practice. This reduced the risk of conflict in the community and adverse impact on the market. In the case of Cash for Work it improved the quality of community works. Food Aid or Food for Work projects would have been more expensive and time consuming to implement and likely to have had less impact. The 'community sensitization' work in Samangan District was very effective and another key area of best practice. It provided ACF with security in a volatile area. Project monitoring mechanisms are in place and relatively effective though a lack of quality baseline data is an issue. Operationally ACF is strong, the projects run well. In general, systems are organized and efficient.

The impact monitoring needs to be used to adapt the project to the changing context in the field. It is not clear how the monitoring data feeds into the project and leads to changes in project design and implementation. Project design is a crucial step and seemingly absent from the process. For example, the value of the Cash Grant and the payment rate for Cash For Work has been calculated based on the cost of ACF 'standard food ration'. Cash grants and CFW projects need to be budgeted according to the actual needs and expenditure patterns families have at that time of year. For example, how much do they spend on food 'normally' during the pre-harvest season? Households' actual expenditure on food and cost of a food basket is not the same as the cost of the 'ideal' food basket. Based on discussions with the field teams, it seems that the needs in project areas were wider while ACF has chosen to target a 'standard' number of 2,000 families. Given ACF's strong organizational capacity it does not take much to cover more beneficiaries with the same activity. ACF could improve impact by covering a wider area without increasing the operational costs.

There are significant limitations in the remote management model and this is worsened by key staffing gaps and a lack of management continuity. However, remote management is possible, and most large INGOs in Afghanistan do it. There is inadequate analysis to underpin the project formulation, specifically with regards to addressing chronic livelihood issues. The links between the various components are weak leading to multiple grant allocations within certain families. Targeting was poorly structured with limited justification and lacked historic record. This was apparent at the project design phase where criteria are not determined based on assessments of the impact of shocks on

different socio-economic groups but rather on standard criteria. Gender analysis was weak and targeting of women was poor reflecting a fundamentally low level of knowledge about gender and gender equality goals. In Afghanistan, where gender is one of the most significant and challenging issues facing the population, this is a major concern.

These issues could be addressed by stronger analysis and local project design, as opposed to project proposal development from the main office. Local teams need to be enrolled in the project design, not simply in the implementation. Program design must take into account the institutional and historical knowledge of stakeholders and local staff, not simply be driven by donor agendas. Clearer analysis and justification for choice of project modality and targeting are needed. Gender analysis is weak, especially the links between cash and gender. ACF must undertake more analysis in this area and develop some clear strategic goals with regards to gender at country and project level. This must then inform future analysis, project development and monitoring. More serious consideration must be given to sustainability, exit strategies or program transitioning. To be more effective, ACF needs to invest in remote management skills for field based and head office staff. At the very least, this requires skilled and supported staff, continuity in project management from the country office as well as an investment in the capacity of national staff.

Given the context of chronic malnutrition and insecure livelihoods, ACF could have explored some innovative cash transfer projects clearly aimed to increase communities' resilience and ability to cope with regular shocks. The link between the short term and longer-term interventions are evident, however tenuous, and need to be improved. It would make sense to move towards a Disaster Risk Management/Reduction program strategy that integrates ACF's core competencies across Food Security, Nutrition and WATSAN. ACF also has a strategic position within the Food Security Cluster, which can be increased to advocate for best practices in Cash Programming. ACF can also create a national learning environment across agencies involved in Cash Transfer Programming.

Overall the cash elements in both projects have been relatively effective at the basic level of reducing vulnerability, but there is much room for further growth. This may be a critical time for ACF to pause and truly reflect on the kind of impact and program it wishes to have and how best to bring this to fruition.

1. Background Information

1.1 Outline of the Two Projects

In Afghanistan it is estimated that 7.3 million people (31% of the total estimated population of 26 million¹ are food insecure with another 5.4 million people (23%) vulnerable to food insecurity. Compared with the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment of 2005, the food security situation (NRVA 2007/08) had deteriorated in 25 of the 34 provinces. The vulnerability of the population is further exacerbated by recurring natural disasters which affect considerable numbers of people each year. Malnutrition is extremely high in Afghanistan, and there is a high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, especially iodine and iron, caused by insufficient diet, often the result of poverty and lack of knowledge.

Action Contre la Faim (ACF) has been operating in Afghanistan since 1995 and in the Food Security sector in Afghanistan since 2000. ACF is working in the drought prone rural areas to reduce the vulnerability of the poorest households. The ACF Food Security strategy operates within three overlapping spheres of influence, namely Social Protection, Food Security and Livelihood Promotion

Samangan and Day Kundi provinces

Day Kundi forms part of the mountainous region in the centre of Afghanistan and is a marginalized province with a structural food deficit due to the climatic conditions, geographical isolation and water management. There is strong dependence on agriculture (farmers form 85% of the population) and few possibilities for additional income. The chronic malnutrition rate among children aged under 5 is close to 48%.

In Samangan, issues such as, remoteness, decreasing productivity, rising food prices and increasing levels of water stress are major constraints for the vulnerable population resulting in a lack of human, physical and financial capacity to carry out proper food production (in quantity and in quality) to cover their basic needs. In addition to the limited food access and availability for the poor households, the low level of education is leading to a poor utilization of the food through bad hygiene and nutrition practices increasing the risk of malnutrition and illness.

Poor cereal yields hit both provinces in 2009, the causes being: poor quality agricultural inputs, extreme variability of the climate, increase in erosion, exhaustion of soil nutrients, lack of water management facilities and limited access to new technologies. In May 2010, the two provinces were hit by major and repeated flooding generating the loss of agricultural production and the destruction of infrastructure such as protective walls, irrigation networks and water points. The consequences of these floods are worsening the already precarious food situation presented previously with reduced food production in 2010. Samangan was also hit by an earthquake in 2010.

As a result of these successive shocks and of the structural poverty, the population has lost its capacity to: cover their basic needs with their reduced livelihood assets; recover

¹ No recent census data exists for Afghanistan, so all population figures are estimates are based on projected figures in the CSO 2011.

from previous shocks or stress; cope with additional shocks or stress using safe coping strategies; exit from the vicious circle of losing their assets.

Table 1 : Overview of Projects covered in Evaluation

PROVINCE	DAY KUNDI	SAMANGAN	
DISTRICT	Ashterlay	Dare i Sufi Bala	Dare i Sufi Payin
E5K : FOOD AID	To prevent a worsening of nutritional and food security via food aid in the provinces of Day Kundi and Samangan, Afghanistan. (in response to floods May 2010)		
Specific Result 1	2,000 families at risk have had their access to food increased thanks to food aid in the Day Kundi province (safety net for LRRD)	2,000 vulnerable families have had their access to food improved thanks to food aid in exchange for work in the province of Samangan.	
F7C : PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION	To reinforce fragile livelihoods against shocks that lead to food, nutrition and livelihood crises		
Specific Result 3	2,000 households have reduced their food insecurity through cash for work (CFW) undertaken in hunger gap 2011 (in response to flood May 2010)		

Project 1: Promotion of Women's Education and Protection of Fragile Livelihoods in Dare-i-Sufi Payin and Dare - I Sufi Bala Districts, Samangan Province

This project attempts to strengthen the human and financial capital of the vulnerable households. As the markets in Samangan are functioning and food is available, the projects aim to reach out to the vulnerable households through 'cash for work' (CFW). This will not only enhance the financial capital of the vulnerable households but also give impetus to the local market. The specific objective of the project is to prevent deterioration of food and nutrition security through social transfers and livelihood protection in Dare-i-Sufi Payin District, Samangan Province.

The project has a specific focus on women because of their specific and additional vulnerabilities around limited access to education and knowledge, low literacy, isolation, and lack of access to economic resources. In addition, there are no programs or campaigns dedicated to women related to nutrition, and care practices in the project areas. As a result of this lack of education and awareness, knowledge on nutrition, hygiene and care, practices is poor within the community leading to unsafe practices putting particularly at risk vulnerable population such as children pregnant and lactating women.

This is a three year project which started on 01/03/2011 and will end on the 28/02/2012 with the components being: CFW, nutrition (including gardening) and hygiene promotion.

The evaluation focused only on the cash transfer component. Within this 2,000 households in Dare-i-Sufi Payin District are being targeted with two rounds of cash for work - in Autumn 2010 and Spring 2011. 2,000 households in Dare-i-Sufi Bala District are being targeted with one round of cash transfer and work in spring 2011.

Project 2: Food Aid in the Provinces of Samangan and Day Kundi

The specific objective of the project is to prevent a worsening of nutritional and food security via food aid in the provinces of Day Kundi and Samangan, Afghanistan.

In Samangan both food and for work and direct food aid will be provided to communities. The “**food for work**” component will allow families to cover their food requirements during the pre-harvest phase, while enabling the renovation or construction of the community infrastructure destroyed during the floods. **Direct food aid** will be provided to extremely vulnerable families not strong enough to work. In Day Kundi, **direct food aid** will be provided to families taking part in the Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) project. ACF is implementing long term programs (LRRD type) and short term programs (cash based) in parallel in Day Kundi. Involvement of poor families in a LRRD type project is a challenge when they do not have the financial means to cover the basic needs; the outputs of such a project aren't immediate while requesting an involvement in labour and time. Short term cash based activities should complement the long term program; immediate benefits guarantee that vulnerable beneficiaries cover their basic needs and keep on participating in the longer term project.

The households involved in the LRRD project will benefit from a cash transfer in three rounds: one in Autumn 2010 and two in Spring 2011. This will on the one hand allow families to meet their food requirements over the winter and the pre-harvest phase. This aid will also support the activities of the LRRD project. 4,000 households will be targeted for four months. The dates of the project were 01/09/2010 to 31/08/2011.

1.2 Background to the Evaluation

The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) is a collaboration of five organisations (Oxfam GB, the British Red Cross, Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Action Against Hunger / ACF International) who came together to gather lessons from the Indian Ocean Tsunami response in 2005. The Cash Learning Partnership aims to improve the quality of emergency cash transfer and voucher programming across the humanitarian sector. The 5 steering committee organisations have come together to support capacity building, research and information-sharing on cash transfer programming as an effective tool to help deliver aid in times of crisis. ACF, as a member of the CaLP has received a grant to undertake regular project and program evaluations and through these to contribute to ongoing global learning and program improvement in the sector. This evaluation is part of that program of on-going evaluations.

ACF has been implementing Food Security programming in these areas for some time and the organisation is keen to examine the effectiveness of continuing these interventions year after year. There is a specific interest in examining the cash distribution methodology ('hawala' system) and whether this is appropriate. The organisation is also keen to examine whether specific targeting of women is appropriate and effective. Additionally ACF wishes to look at its own capacity to undertake quality assessments, develop suitable projects based on these assessments and whether it has adequate infrastructure to manage and monitor these projects in a somewhat remote manner in the field - given security constraints.

It was chosen to evaluate these two projects due to their recent history their geographical overlap as well as the fact that they had long term and short term components.

2. Methodology and Limitations

2.1 ACF M&E approach

ACF developed its Evaluation Policy and Guideline (EPG) in 2007 with the aim of providing a standardised framework for the planning and implementing of evaluations across the ACF International Network. It also aimed to increase the uptake of external evaluations by ACF members and to introduce a common set of criteria (based on the OECD DAC Evaluation criteria) to facilitate comparative analysis and learning across the network. The EPG was revised in 2011 and the overall objective is to maximise the use of evaluation findings at all levels of ACF and the ACF International Network as a whole. The EPG is also designed to ensure greater consistency and quality across individual evaluations and the use of common standards across ACF programs. The EPG promotes utilisation-focus evaluations. This means that utilisation should be the driving forces behind an evaluation, evaluations should be user-oriented, the user must be identified and involved and their interests acknowledged.

2.2 DAC Evaluation criteria

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed a set of criteria for evaluating development assistance in 1991. In 1999 these were expanded and adapted to be used for Evaluating Humanitarian Action (EHA). These criteria are widely accepted as a core set of common criteria for evaluating projects and programs in the development and humanitarian sectors. The DAC Evaluation criteria are considered to be at the heart of the evaluation of humanitarian action (Beck, 2006). ACF has chosen to adopt these as one of the core elements of their overall evaluation framework.

2.3 Methodology for the Evaluation

The objectives of this evaluation are based on the ACF Evaluation Policy and Guideline, which includes the OECD DAC criteria as well as specific project proposal indicators in the initial proposals.

Within the framework of ACF's Evaluation Policy and Guideline² on types of evaluations this evaluation is defined as a Mid-term Food Security Evaluation focused on cash programming components, cash for work and cash grants. Based on the key principles of the ACF EPG, the determination of the users was a critical first step. The users are the country team, the program team and the Food Security Advisors. The broader CaLP and ACF International Network community are also deemed to be users, but in a more indirect sense. The involvement of users in the framing of the evaluation was considered critical by the consultants, in line with ACF's EPG, and this philosophy was followed as best as possible in the undertaking of the evaluation.

An assessment framework was developed by the consultants using the framework of questions in the TOR. The field-based consultant on arrival in Afghanistan further narrowed these down with the country team³. From the onset the evaluation has been participatory process where ACF and CaLP team take on an active role in the review, such

² See table on page 7 of ACF's Evaluation Policy and Guideline

³ Head of Mission, Food Security Coordinator & Food Security Coordinator Assistant.

that the lessons and observations are jointly owned and taken on. At the country level each step was taken jointly, focused questions developed together at Kabul level. In the field team members actively conducted interviews and were part of the analysis of the outcomes. At the final stage in Kabul, key project staff from all field areas (*Samangan, Day Kundi, Ghor*⁴) and the head office based Food Security team discussed the findings, recommendations and best practices.

The evaluation used a combination of documentary analysis (key project documentation), key informant interviews (both within the ACF country team, the ACF global team, the beneficiary community and the wider humanitarian and development community in Afghanistan) and focus group discussions within communities and with ACF staff. A list of documents reviewed and individuals and groups consulted is included at Annex V, VI and VIII. Initial findings were then discussed with key staff in the country team who had input into their formulation and revision. Out of this process core best practices were defined and recommendations were made jointly for each key area of inquiry. A final debriefing was held in the country office with key staff, including other sector leads and a second debriefing was held with key headquarters staff in Paris.

2.4 Focus Questions

Prior to the commencement of the field research phase some time was spent narrowing the very broad scope of the original terms of reference into the key focus questions which ACF wanted answered through the research process. This was done in consultation with the manager of the evaluation, the Senior Food Assistance Advisor and the country team. What resulted was the following set of questions for analysis.

- 1 **Focus on the cash transfer process**
 - Analyse the use of the *hawala* system in delivering cash to communities. Is it appropriate? Are there other alternatives?
 - What is the impact of CTP on long term program approach (e.g. LRRD) to rural development?
 - What is the justification for giving cash? Why cash transfer methods and why not other methods to improve livelihoods?
 - What processes were undertaken with regards to community/beneficiary sensitization? What messages were given to the community and what was/is the community perception of CFW?
 - What impact is the project having on market & social structures? Would it have been different if seeds/food were distributed or another alternative mechanism?
 - What did the cash provided make possible - whether cash grant or CFW? What obstacles or negative impact did it create, if any?
 - Is cash a tool for both chronic & acute situations?
 - ACF's cash program strategy: is it funding driven or country strategy driven?

- 2 **Relevancy and appropriateness of this system given the context of Afghanistan**
 - As ACF has been working in *Samangan* since 2008 with CFW, is it appropriate to keep targeting the same beneficiaries? What about blanket distribution vs. targeted distribution?
 - Is there adequate focus on preventative activities within a DRM or DRR framework?

⁴ Though *Ghor* was not part of the area of coverage it was felt that in terms of learning and sharing of experience it was useful to have the Project Manager participate in the final discussions at Kabul level, given that his area had managed similar projects.

- Was enough analysis done of the market and likely impact of cash prior to implementation? Has there been enough on-going analysis during the project of market impact?
 - What are the potential issues of targeting the population with cash? What is the risk of abuse of beneficiaries? Should there be blanket targeting for cash, as opposed to with food that has a 'self-targeting'⁵ mechanism. +
 - How was beneficiary selection undertaken?
 - What mitigation strategies are included in the two projects that build resilience & coping capacity?
- 3 Comparing the short term and long term CTP approaches and their linkages: complementarity & synergy**
- Look at the relationship between the LRRD project components versus Emergency Response. This is the programmatic link between long term and short term Food Security projects.
- 4 Assessments and Monitoring mechanisms**
- What is the current capacity within ACF & what has been the process since the recommendations given by the Food Security Monitoring Officer in 2009 -2010⁶?
 - Does the current monitoring & assessment system cover the information needs for the cash programs?
 - Review the monitoring tools: Post Distribution Monitoring vs. Impact Assessment - can this be simplified?
 - Review basic food security data collection, entry & analysis
 - Is there assessment/survey fatigue in the target areas?
 - Are there data overlaps with what the ERM (*Emergency Response Mechanism*) team is collecting?
- 5 Understand better the relationship between CTP and gender in Afghanistan**
- Was there adequate analysis and planning for the gender component of the long-term project?
 - What investment was/is required to bring women on board - long term vs. short term response?
 - Is the gender context in *Day Kundi & Samangan different?*
 - What capacity exists for gender analysis and gender sensitive programming in ACF? Are there any internal issues?
 - What are the implications for the projects objectives if, despite targeting, women don't directly receive the cash (e.g. they do not come to collect grant, a relative comes with a letter)?
 - Within the cultural context has there been adequate analysis about what is actually possible? Who needs to be involved in the analysis and planning and were they?
 - What effort has ACF made to learn from others in planning and implementing these projects and the gender implications (e.g. Oxfam/UNIFM/Ministry of Women's Affairs guidelines).
- 6 ACF Capacity**
- What capacity does ACF have for food security data collection, including entry & data analysis?

⁵ Those community members who really don't need food, will not be interested in participating in food for work, however there is an assumption that 'everyone' in the community wants and can use cash.

⁶ The Food Security Monitoring Officer spent one year 2010 - feb 2011 with the Food Security team in country to set up and train the team in monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

- How has ACF dealt with vacant strategic positions and the high turnover of staff? Was there an adequate strategy in place to deal with this chronic problem, including simplification of project/handovers?
- Were the projects too complex in their formulation and execution for the impacts desired and given the staff and capacity available and the remote monitoring model?

7 Recommendations & changes for programme & strategy

- Does a Disaster Risk Management (DRM) strategic focus make sense? Is the ERM project a first step in this direction?
- What opportunities exist for ACF in relation to their engagement in/leadership of the livelihoods cluster, especially with regards to advocacy?

2.5 Limitations and Challenges

The *access issue* was twofold. Firstly there may have been time to do a flash visit to both; however the planning and security process was only completed for Day Kundi. This meant that the Samangan results were based on interviews with Kabul based staff and the Samangan Project Manager. The first week in Kabul it was difficult to meet with external stakeholders due to the security risks associated with the *Loya Jirga* - a presidential meeting with grand council of elders and representatives from all over the country. Many organizations had closed offices as a preventative security measure.

Due to *limited field time* allocated to the evaluation there was only sufficient time to talk to communities in one project area. Given an extra 3 days it would have been possible to visit the Samangan project. This was seen by the team as a missed opportunity. In the provincial capital of Day Kundi, Nili, it was unfortunate that *some key external stakeholders were not available* during the time that the team was in Nili. Hence the understanding of external perspective on ACF's project is limited. It was unfortunate that most of the Kabul based staff had not been involved in the design of the projects. The *available institutional knowledge and history* of the project was mainly kept by two staff members, the Food Security Coordinator assistant and the Samangan Project Manager. It was very unfortunate that the Day Kundi Project Manager had left about a month prior to the evaluation.

The *timing of the evaluation* meant that the evaluation was conducted while one project was finishing and the other was into the first of three years. Though most of the cash activities had been completed it was challenging to put these together with the other project components that are still ongoing. *Both projects were only small components ACF's overall program experience of cash* in Afghanistan. There were other similar activities, currently in response to the drought, going on that are relevant but had not been included. Particularly the fact that ACF has been doing CFW in Samangan since 2008 would have been an interesting area to investigate the value of over that length of time.

Narrowing down the evaluation from its very wide scope down to *focus on specific cash activities* helped give the evaluation a very clear focus. It also meant that it did not really cater for the space to look at the longer-term Food Security components that were integral in the project design.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Cash Transfer Process

In general the operational process of delivering cash to those families that ACF targeted went well. The use of the *hawala* system worked very well and appears to be the best option available to get cash safely to the field. There is no obvious evidence of cash being misused, diverted, or 'taxed', or of beneficiaries or project staff being 'in danger'. The biggest question is concerned with targeting is the justification of who is targeted and why. In response to the flood and given the scale of the cash distribution, the choice of cash grants and/or CFW was appropriate. However whether the scale of the project matched the needs of the area is not clear. For the cash grants in Day Kundi it is questionable whether the way the grant was calculated was appropriate as it was based on the cost of 'ACF standard' food basket rather than on households' 'normal' expenditure on food during the time of distributions. The same can be said for the CFW projects, as in CFW it is usually important to adjust the labour wage in such a way as to 'target' specific workers; otherwise it is merely an employment scheme.

3.1.1 Hawala system

ACF chose to use the *Hawala* system to transfer cash to the project implementation sites. This is a system that is used by the Other NGOs and UN agencies in country, not only in CTP related projects but also to transfer funds to their sub-offices.

This system has worked well for ACF. It minimized the risk to ACF staff that carrying large sums of money into remote and in some cases insecure areas would bring. Cash was not directly handled by ACF staff, which built trust and transparency with the community through the development of the ACF cash committee. This committee, *shura*, was elected and represented the community for this particular project. The

distribution was done per CDC (group of villages). The money would be delivered by the Hawalador in most cases to the *shura* in front of ACF staff. The *shura* would count it, verify it and hand it to ACF to verify. This would happen in the mosque while beneficiaries were waiting outside. After the verification process the cash was distributed systematically through a system of beneficiary cards (which were received two days prior

The nuts & bolts of the *Hawala* system

The *Hawala* system has its origins in ancient Islamic law. All forms of these systems are based on social and religious networks of trust. This allows for a system of debt and credit that is constantly negotiated within the network without money actually needing to move. *Hawaladors* are brokers and the only information they require are the name of the receiver, the name of the sender and a corresponding 'order' number. There is no paper work or paper trail other than the check or transfer. The commission is determined based on the amount and the area to which the money is being sent. Higher amounts will get lower commission; areas with more security risks will have higher commissions. The actual trail of contacts is a 'secret of the trade'. *Hawaladors* enable families to transfer their remittances to their villages. In the case of Afghanistan money is transferred from Iran, Dubai, Pakistan, Irak. In these cases often no commission is charged as the *hawalador* makes a profit on the exchange rates, often using unofficial markets.

Quoting Wikipedia, *The unique feature of the system is that no promissory instruments are exchanged between the hawala brokers; the transaction takes place entirely on the honor system...it can operate even in the absence of a legal and juridical environment. Trust and extensive use of connections, such as family relations and regional affiliations, are the components that distinguish it from other remittance systems. Informal records are produced of individual transactions, and a running tally of the amount owed by one broker to another is kept...and need not take the form of direct cash transactions.*

In the case of Afghanistan the risk with using the Hawala system is known to be one that also deals with financing of the Taliban and AOG groups as well as in the illicit opium trade. Given the lack of transparency in this system it is difficult for an aid organization to know if their Hawalador may be an accomplice in the conflict. After the September 11 attacks CIA attempted to close and monitor some of these networks. In Afghanistan as well as Somalia.

In complex environments such as Somalia and Afghanistan this system provides a safe, efficient and economic way to transfer money to inaccessible areas where no banks or other forms of cash transfer systems are in place. In Afghanistan the network of banks doesn't reach beyond the provincial capitals. The paper work and time required to transfer funds is much more cumbersome. In some areas the mobile phone provider *Roshan* has an MPesa system, however the coverage is very limited.

to distribution). The money was given in manageable denominations, particularly for grants in Day Kundi (2 bills of 1,000 Afghani), thus easy to monitor. The interviews with community members' reveal that they were unaware of the *hawalador* or moneychanger, which is critical for the safety of that individual. Only the committee knew their identity. The cash was successfully distributed, and the operation went smoothly.

In the case of Afghanistan it seems there is really is no other option to distribute cash apart from using the Hawalador. As the closest banks to communities are at the regional capitals it would still require putting ACF staff at risk by carrying and transporting large amounts of money by 'hand'. The *Roshan* telephone provider does have a system of MPesa, where cash can be transferred by phone, however their geographical coverage is limited and does not cover ACFs current areas of intervention.

The *Cash Distribution Process* itself is one of ACF's best practices. It is efficient and effective and targets those that have been selected without causing any conflict in the communities. Using the Hawalador works well. This means the actual system with beneficiary cards, a community *shura*, and public distribution, is transparent.

3.1.2 Who received the grant

In both Day Kundi and Samangan it seems that the beneficiaries selected were those that received the grant. This was only verified in the field in Day Kundi. No one reported that they had been asked/forced to give their grant to somebody else, nor did they pay a percentage. Due to community sensitization process, particularly through the *shura*, villagers accepted selection process. Even in interviews with villagers who did not receive a grant there was no feeling of animosity or unfairness present.

On later discussion with the team it was found that in Day Kundi almost 80% of the village received a cash grant. This large scale distribution may have been chosen as it was felt that this would prevent any animosity within the community. This virtual blanket targetting strategy, however, was not justified in the project documentation. It was just stipulated that families taking part in the relief and rehabilitation project would be selected. During community interviews with men and women who did not receive grants they did not labour any point on how it was 'unfair' that they were not included. There was a sense of acceptance for the method of targetting. While in Samangan the only villages selected were those that did not have any other ACF activities. The criteria written in the proposal are those areas with; rain fed agriculture, no or limited access to road to major towns, affected by flood of 2010 (loss of harvest and of infrastructure). Of these villages about 60% of the population was part of the CFW project. They had no problems within the community, however the CFW mechanism is very different to a cash grant, which is seen as 'free cash', while CFW activities are useful for the whole community.

The targetting was based on the criteria in the proposals, however these criteria are questionable as they did not focus on the response to the drought and supporting those 'most affected'. The project proposals did not go into further detail of targetting at village level. In Day Kundi the community were not aware of why they were targetted. According to the Food Security Coordinator this may have been a contradiction or omission in the proposal because it talks on the one hand of flood affected households, and on the other hand of LRRD beneficiaries. The correlation between both is not given. During

implementation, it just became all LRRD beneficiaries. So from that point of view, no beneficiary selection needed as was already done.

From field interviews in Day Kundi it was found that 10-20% of families received more than one grant, in a few cases even as many as three. This was explained by the fact that more than one family member could separately be a participant of one of the various activities of the A3H project (long-term Food Security project). For example it is possible that a widow, and her two sons had a 'card' each for each project component (gardening, livestock, farming). This was mentioned by almost all the interviews with the community. Obviously it meant that these few families received two or three times more income than the others. According to the team this issue was raised after the first distribution in November 2010 and where possible small corrections were made for the second and third instalments. They felt this was not fair, and would exclude the 'double' beneficiaries. This was not the case in Samangan where there was no overlap in beneficiaries as the CFW was only in areas where there were no other ACF activities. However it may still have been possible that one or more members of the family were engaged in CFW, this could not be verified by the Project Manager. Though ACF's global practices have comprehensive checks built in to ensure that this does not happen, where field teams double check through household visits, from the evidence of the community interviews - it seems that this was not implemented.

Cash was distributed in parts, this is a key best practice. For the cash grants in Day Kundi this was done in three installments; the first one was before the winter, the second one just after the winter and the last one at the end of spring. In the case of CFW, beneficiaries were paid upon work completed and also in parts. This encouraged the work to be completed properly and the communities to continue what they had committed to do. There were less drop outs than in an Food for Work project and the quality of the community works was higher. Though the total amount of cash distributed in both areas is relatively small, the installments still ensure that the cash doesn't flood the market. This particularly important if ACF is going to scale up their projects and cover more people with more money.

3.1.3 Why cash

In the Day Kundi project the cash grants were given in response to the floods of March 2010. It is not clear who within ACF actually chose to give grants and which ACF team members were involved. From discussions with the current team and from the project documentation it seems evident that ACF was concerned that the on-going longer term Food Security project (A3H) would be affected. Villagers would need to recover from the flood and be unable to participate in planned activities. It was assumed that they were affected; however there was no evidence for this. From interviews with beneficiaries none of them mentioned the impact or recovery from the flood.

Although the market access in Day Kundi is very limited and small in scale, with only few trading centres scattered throughout the mountains, villages are dependent on shopkeepers for their staple food needs and key household items such as sugar, tea and oil. The area depends on imports from Kabul or Kadamah depending on season. Although the assessment information doesn't illustrate this, from discussions with external stakeholders it seems that in general in Afghanistan almost 50% of households' annual food

needs come from purchase. This means that no matter what the market situation is, they rely heavily on buying food, particularly in the lean periods when they have run out of their own stocks. According to the team, to deliver food instead would have been expensive and time consuming, and it may not have reached the area in time for the winter. In A3H activities communities were offering their 'free' labour for community works as part of the LRRD activities. Running a CFW project would have given mixed messages. However from interviews it seems that the community understood that the cash grant was their payment for LRRD activities and they did not see it as a separate intervention in response to floods.

In **Samangan** both Dare I Sufi Bala and Dare I Sufi Payin districts were affected by floods in March 2010. However the project proposal seems to have been submitted much later due to security problems in the area. ACF chose to respond with CFW in different CDC's (Community Development Councils) than those that ongoing had longer-term Food Security activities under the F7C project. This means that although a CDC may have been more affected by flood, if there was already an ACF activity (under F7C) present it would not be selected for CFW. ACF's flood response happened one year after the flood. The F7C was scheduled to start in February 2011, despite the security constraints it is unclear when the proposal was submitted or what really was the trigger for its submission. Was this due to the donor's (Swedish International Development Agency - SIDA), availability of funds which included a short and long term component? This question was left unanswered as the current team did not have the historical background.

In Samangan, due to the volatile security situation the team had to invest heavily in additional community sensitization to ensure they could run the project. This sensitisation paid off unexpectedly when some national staff were kidnapped by an AOG (Anti-Government Group or militia) in 2010. They were released with considerable apology when it was discovered they were ACF staff. In terms of the choice of CFW, the team had run CFW projects before and as part of that there is a small percentage of grants that is given to those households that are not able to work. In order for the community to accept this there has been a lot of discussion and negotiation, hence the idea of giving grants was not favoured. Markets in Samangan are close to the main grain market of the country in Mazar, which is only about 3.5 hours away by road. Though the area has a food deficit this is easily imported and readily available. In both Dare I Sufi Bala and Dare I Sufi Payin local markets are supported through local supply networks. Dare I Sufi Payin has weekly bazaars for grain and livestock, where people also trade their non-food items for grain, however cash has an equal value.

Table 2 : Overview of cost for key budget lines

Key budget lines	Total E5K	%	Total F7C	%
<i>HR costs</i>	101,828	13	190,590	28
<i>Running costs</i>	192,270	24	162,736	24
<i>Received by Beneficiary</i>	505,902	63	318,137	47
Total Budget⁷	800,000	100	671,463	100
<i>no. of beneficiares</i>	4,000		2,000	
<i>cost per beneficiary</i>	200		336	
<i>what each beneficiary receives</i>	126		159	

During the flood year, farmers were able to harvest. Therefore ACF chose not to do a Food for Work or food distribution, as this would have had a negative impact on their ability to trade and or sell their harvest. According to the Project Manager in Samangan who has been involved in different food assistance projects with ACF since 2008, the quality of community works under a FFW project are generally very poor. Cash for Work generally gives people a much better incentive to work well as they will be paid based on their achievements. The CFW work activities did not overlap with the community works for F7C, as they were focussed on flood rehabilitation. Given that some areas are only accessible by foot or motorbike, delivering food would be very impractical. The Project Manager explained that it is common when food is distributed and it is not needed by the group who receives it the food re-sells it. Not to mention that the delivery costs and procurement time for food is often, though not always, considerably higher thus would reach less people.

Table 2 above shows the costs and percentages of key budget lines for both projects. Unfortunately given the way the budgets are constructed it is not possible to compare the costs for CFW, cash grants or food. This is because all the budgets are based on the cost of food, priced according to ACF's food basket and the market prices of commodities at the time that the proposals were written. The table shows that E5K project was more efficient and spent less on overheads and HR and more on beneficiaries. It is likely to benefit from HR and supports costs covered elsewhere in the country budget. However the F7C project is less efficient, as it is longer term it covers more of the country running costs.

It is unclear why the thinking in terms of targeting CDC's was different for Day Kundi and Samangan. It is not clear why CFW was not undertaken in areas with long-term activities in Samangan? In Day Kundi the overlap seemed obvious, although the coverage of ACF in the district would be much less. From discussions with the team it seems that Samangan is much more vulnerable to shocks such as floods, droughts and insecurity. Day Kundi is more stable and people have a wider range of mechanisms to enable them to cope, mainly due

⁷ All numbers are in Euros. For purpose of calculation the 'amount received by beneficiaries' in includes tools for the CFW components. For the F7C project the calculation includes the Nutrition and Gardening components. These make up 30% of the budget and it was tricky to split this from the overall project.

the geography and security situation, even though access particularly in northern parts of Ashterlay is more remote. It is unclear why the choice of the project in terms of beneficiary size was the same that is 2,000 families.

In the process of trying to understand the justifications for both projects, it became apparent that most of the staff, apart from Samangan field staff, were new and had come into the project at the implementation stage. There was a gap in technical positions particularly at Kabul and Paris level. This would explain the lean history for understanding why these project choices were made. Lack of an actual base-line assessment and a full project design as opposed to a proposal is also be an issue.

Market prices were collected, however no market assessment had been done prior to implementation to assess the appropriateness of the Cash response. The Food Security Coordinator explained, *"We collect market prices regularly but we are behind in analysis. To my knowledge, no market assessment was conducted. For sure the cash grant was calculated against the price of food basket in both provinces and ACF market survey data was used to determine that. However, I cannot find any written justification for the change from food to cash. One reason was definitely because time was running out"*.

Given the evidence available in both cases, it appears that cash was an appropriate response. It can be argued however that the scale of response in Samangan could have been wider. From discussions with the Project Manager it seems that there are more needs, particularly in Dar I Sufi Payin. It was also felt that the amount that beneficiaries earned through CFW was not enough to cover their needs; however the actual assessment evidence does not exist. The actual amount of the grant as well as the amount paid for work is not based on market assessments. However prices for staple foods did not fluctuate greatly. There is an obvious tension between 'free community activities' under the long-term Food Security projects and the families being paid for the same work under a CFW activity. This is particularly the case for drought responses, where the activities may be similar.

3.1.4 Targeting and Community Sensitization

Where community sensitisation was done around the role of ACF, the aim of the project and the selection of beneficiaries, it appears that communities seem to be very comfortable with the project and happy with the outcomes. This was clearly the case in Samangan, where from discussions with the Project Manager ACF has been working very closely with the community. Communities appear to understand ACF and their work. However due to the field work constraints it was not possible to verify this. In Samangan the beneficiaries appeared to be clear that the CFW was in response to the flood. In Day Kundi the Project Manager is much more remote from the project implementation site than in Samangan. Though ACF has had a longer presence in Day Kundi, with the new Project Manager it was set up with new staff while in Samangan the team has been working for ACF in similar programmes since 2008 and are much more familiar with ACF, the area and the communities. This means that they know the area and communities much better. Given the security risks in the area this is a clear benefit. The security context is different for Day Kundi. Though ACF has a longer history in Day Kundi, at field level this was not reflected.

In all Food Security projects there is a system of setting up a community representative committee - also known as a *Shura*. For the cash activities in both Samangan and Day

Kundi community members elected a separate *Shura* (from the one established for the long-term Food Security activities). This was the committee that monitored the distribution of cash as mentioned in the section 3.1.1. There is no clear process for the selection of this committee for the cash activities. While for the other projects the CDC committee selection (where most members have an affiliation to the CDC) there is a clear assessment process, which also forms the census for the intervention area. This is important as there is very little population data available and district level data is not accurate. For example the beneficiary numbers and selection for the A3H project in Day Kundi was based on projected population figures, however it eventuated that the projected population data was much too high as meant that more than 100% of population of Ashterlay would be beneficiaries. This was adapted based on the teams' census done through CDC's. This is the same in both locations.

In Samangan the first step in the process of beneficiary selection for the CFW component, was to select the CDC's that were most affected by the flood and did not have any other ACF activities. Then at CDC level, with help of the *shura* most affected families were selected. This covered about 60% of families covered in each CDC. In Day Kundi all the beneficiaries of the A3H project were selected this covered about 80-85 % of families in each CDC.

In Day Kundi it appeared that the community were unaware of why they were targeted. They seemed to have limited understanding of ACF, and the organisation was primarily known by its activities as *Akshan*. The communities were not clear that the assistance to them was in response to flood and thought that it was in payment for their community work, being the activities in the A3H project. From the interviews and observations in the field it seemed that the targeted beneficiaries might not have been those communities most affected by flood, which puts somewhat into question the objectives of the project and beneficiary targeting.

There is no clear evidence from the assessment as to who was most affected by the flood and why? Without a detailed project design document, it is difficult to ascertain to logic. This was even the case in Samangan where communities were aware that the project was to support them to cope with the effects of the flood. How people are affected normally this differs per socio-economic group within an area. Each area's susceptibility depends on its livelihood profile. There appear to be no clear understanding of the livelihood profile of either area other than that from the FEWSnet report. This is a national level zoning and is not disaggregated to district level. From field observation and discussion with government representatives and the team, of the targeted CDC's in Ashterlay district, it seems that there may be two or three different livelihood zones, areas where households have slightly different livelihood options, where markets, agricultural activities, livestock holdings and land size are different. Perhaps the differences are not so big, however it is key for the team to have an understanding of the areas' vulnerability to different shocks and households coping capacity, particularly if there are long-term Food Security project activities. This will be discussed in more detail in the findings on assessments and monitoring.

On deeper discussion with teams to find out what the selection criteria in the proposals were based on. The teams said clearly that they used what was in the proposal. For example the age limit for labour activities between 16 - 65 years is what is written in Afghanistan labour law. Other criteria came from ACF internally. The field teams could

not explain the justification for the selection criteria. For F7C project in Samangan a rapid assessment was done in 2010, this was however not written up and no documents exist of it on paper (possibly due the shortage of technical staff at Kabul level). However the data was used to justify the project and was used to write the proposal, including the beneficiary selection criteria. The contract was signed February 2011, almost a year after the flood and a baseline assessment was done in July 2011. The Project Manager was hired late, but the team was able to catch up on the planned activities.

In general for both projects there seems to have been a blanket selection at CDC level with no clear justification for it.

Overall, it appears, from discussions with the Project Manager that there was high community acceptance of the project in Samangan. This was likely due to 1) transparency; 2) all activities involve the community; 3) the project ensured that the committee selected has no ties with local commanders/AOG's; and 4) staff have been trained and worked with ACF for long time in Samangan. The community complained that other NGOs had done a bad job, while ACF delivered what they promised. In Day Kundi the community was very happy with ACF's work and support even though their understanding of ACF and why ACF was supporting them was minimal, they reported 100% satisfaction. On further probing about 50% of the respondents felt that CFW would have been more appropriate than a cash grant as it would have a longer-term impact for a wider group of people.

In Samangan **community sensitization** was effective and protected the team in this volatile area. This is an important best practice in the complex context of Afghanistan. The time and effort spent on this, with a team that are consistent and know the organization well. This has given ACF a respected reputation, though a strategy of transparency and clarity on project objectives, methods and ways of working.

3.1.5 Cash Impact

Although there were minimal pre-intervention market assessments in either area, other than basic market prices that are regularly monitored, there is little project data available to understand the impact of the cash on the market. However from interviews in the project site in Day Kundi beneficiaries did not report any price changes since the distribution of the grant, which makes sense. The grant was comparatively small (6,000 Afghani = approximately 12USD) that was distributed in three times over the course of two seasons. It is unclear what proportion this is of normal household spending and therefore the overall impact for the household as well as for the market is unclear. From interviews with community members who received the grant and those that did not receive it, it appears that there was no animosity between those two groups. None of the beneficiaries reported any hostility or change in social standing as a result of receiving the grant.

In Day Kundi it appears that most recipients spent the money on repayment of debts. Most of them already had debts with shopkeepers (which is normal practice). The payment of this debt may have had some impact on their social standing in the community. Debt is a chronic issue in most of the country. The grant allowed children to continue to go to school, instead of helping families clear the fields and clean up after the flood. Though women reportedly spent the money on food and their children, the men spent the money

on debt repayment, food and agricultural inputs. As men are the main beneficiaries it could be assumed that most of the money was spent on debt relief.

When asked what they would have done if they did not receive the grant the men said they would have increased their debt, the women said they would have sold more livestock. In cases of extreme need they indicated that they would have decreased their expenditure (type and quality of grain) and/or emigrate within and outside of the country. Households did continue to participate in A3H project activities; however there is no evidence that without the grant this would have been different. This is because it is unclear how severely the flood affected the A3H beneficiaries. It is unclear what 6,000 Afghanis means in purchasing power for beneficiaries. There is no information on income and expenditure patterns in a normal year, let alone over the seasons. Thus it is unclear what purchasing power households have with three distributions of 6,000 Afghanis. A quick calculation shows that the grant is equal to the purchase of about six chickens (2 chickens for each grant distribution) or one sheep. Most households do own chickens and many have goats and sheep, however there is little information on how they use them.

It is likely that the purchasing power of the grant with this amount is different in each area. Given Samangan's proximity to Mazar market all year round it is likely that grains and basic food and household items are cheaper.

A negative impact of the cash transfers is that both men and women may be less resourceful in coping in the long run as they are expecting a cash input. This may particularly be the case for the beneficiaries in Samangan who 'know' that if there is a food shortage ACF will be there to help them. There is also the tension in the difference of approaches, where CFW pays for what communities would normally offer as free labour. The team felt strongly that the quality of the works were much better if community members were paid.

3.2 How does it fit with the longer term Food Security approach?

It was challenging to understand which project was in which location and which activities belonged to which of the two projects. The documentation appeared to be a jumble of reports and amendments, thus the actual history of each project is difficult to follow. This partly because one project covers both areas and the other covers only one, but also that there are follow up projects that have a similar names and activities and are funded by the same donor but in the current year. On top of this the institutional silo within ACF program management of Food Assistance and Food Security is confusing. It appears that the proposal development process in general lacked field input & ownership. There appears to be a lack of clear justification of the choice of scale of the two projects. Was it based on need or based on the available donor funding? Lastly, there appears to be an opportunity to create stronger synergy with two types of FS projects, the emergency response (Food Assistance) and the longer term Food Security activities.

In Day Kundi the community felt that CFW was more appropriate as this would have a wider and longer benefit than the cash grant. This is definitely the case for the type of grant that was distributed in Day Kundi. According to the Samangan team CFW in almost all cases is better than food for work because it supports households to relieve their debt as they are paid in Cash instead of food. In Samangan debt is chronic. However there seems to be space for ACF to experiment a bit with different modalities, different scales and different types of grants. In general the team feels reluctant to give grants.

Communities also seem to be more comfortable with CFW than grants. Is this because the emergency is not so serious that they do not really need the money? It seems critical to better understand the dynamics and implications of debt, including whether the debt is only on paper or whether it has real consequences?

Table 3 : Coverage of Cash Transfer Programming components

Population ⁸	Unit	Day Kundi	Samangan
Province		410,300	344,400
Ashterlay	people	42,400	
Dar I sufi Bala	people		58,500
Dar I sufi Payin	people		65,000
beneficiaries total	families/hh		2,000
	people		14,000
beneficiaries total	families/hh	2,690	2,000
	people	18,830	14,000
av. Family size ⁹	people per hh	7	7
% of pop district		44	11
% of pop province		5	8

The other key point is scale. ACF is working at a very small scale where the projects cover an estimated 5 to 8 % of the population of the province. There is opportunity to scale out and cover more areas, particularly as the 'operational' side works well. However in this scenario it will be key to undertake more comprehensive market assessments, as the likely impact on the market will be bigger as there will be more influx of cash.

3.2.1 Synergy

In Day Kundi there appears to be synergy, but ACF could be more experimental in building resilience, and to do this they need to understand actual vulnerability to food insecurity better. The grant is definitely effective as a 'quick fix' emergency response. However if this were given annually, then it is not an emergency response but a 'normal' response. CFW does go further to address longer-term needs, but this will depend on how it is used and what the community chooses to rehabilitate. It seems to have a logical place alongside gardening, farming, livestock and water source improvements.

In the case of Samangan, where the team has experience in doing cash programs since 2008 and has documented which CFW activities were done where, it would be possible to look more in depth at the long term impact of CFW. It would be interesting to analyze over time which areas were supported, which community works were undertaken, whether

⁸ All figures based on extrapolated CSO data 2011.

⁹ Taken from ACF baseline.

the rehabilitation works still function, particularly as all the CDC level data is available from the team.

The start of integrating and developing **synergy between long-term Food Security projects and emergency response** is a promising development and can be considered a best practice. This is the start of exploring how cash programming can function as a safety net and support in both chronic and acute contexts. Though this relationship needs to grow stronger and mature, it has the foundations and technical support to become an effective way to bridge the divide between humanitarian and development programming.

3.2.2 Sustainability - is cash only appropriate as an emergency response?

In understanding the sustainability of cash programming it needs to be understood strategically. Does ACF Afghanistan have a cash program strategy, or is this a tool for emergency response? From field observations and conversations with external stakeholders there is an opportunity to explore more creatively the use of cash transfers. Currently the ACF project is doing this at a very small scale, where cash grants have been used to ensure that long-term projects can continue. This is a strategy in itself to combine both long and short-term programming. Particularly in a country where, although in a state of conflict, the picture of food insecurity is a chronic one, with stunting levels over 50% and acute malnutrition levels below 3% (compiled figures from ACF assessments 2011).

There appears to be a need to sensitize the communities that ACF will not be in the area forever. There needs to be a clear exit strategy, which was not apparent. Or if does not seem possible to envisage an exit strategy at present given the chronic poverty and repeat shocks, then a different intervention strategy should be developed which is not centred around repeat similar annual interventions.

The reverse side of ACF's longer engagement in Samangan and repeat cash interventions was a strong community sense that ACF will provide their emergency needs every year. For example when the community was asked - what will happen if the food is finished? The answer was "oh ACF will bring". The emergency cash distributions have very short-term impacts, however in the CFW projects the protection walls, rehabilitation of *Kandas* (water reservoirs) and clearing of irrigation channels lasts 5 years. The ACF WASH team could bring in technical expertise for community activities

3.3 Assessments and Monitoring

There is a good set of tools available that the team are conversant with and able to use, including the data input and analysis program. However data is being gathered without a good understanding of what is needed for why, & when and how the information is used. The data gathered does not seem to be used to improve program or shared across the team. The different tools have data overlaps and have not been adapted to needs, which is how the consultant designed them. The tools miss some key information such as analysis on socio - economic dynamics/income and expenditure and understanding of differences in livelihood zones. For example from external reports, it appears that rural households depend significantly on non-agricultural income such as non-agricultural labour and remittances, thus the project activities could support this, rather than only focusing on agricultural development.

There are several monitoring and assessment tools that have been developed for Food Security Projects (see table 2 below). Some of these are standard ACF tools and management reporting systems, while the monitoring consultant last year developed others. There seems to be a robust set of tools and systems in place, with an easy to use data input and analysis program (*Sphynx* software) that key staff in each area office has been trained in. The monitoring consultant introduced tools and templates that can be adapted to project needs; however it seems they are being used in their 'full' form. Teams are not clear why they are gathering the information and how to use the information and what it actually means for the current project. The basic analytical capacity is weak and is reflected in the unclear system of targeting as well as the understanding of social economic differences and vulnerability. Vulnerability is not a stand-alone concept; communities and areas are vulnerable to something (shock/changes/disaster). This does not mean the understanding is weak; it may never have been demanded from the field level teams, as most of the proposals and thinking seem to have been developed at Kabul level.

In Ghor and Samangan area offices there is a *data entry officer*, while in Day Kundi there is a *monitoring officer*. All monitoring positions report to the Project Manager. They are not integral in the area programs but attached to one or other project, as in each area program there is Food Assistance project and a Food Security Project.

Table 4 : Existing Monitoring & Assessment Tools

PDM - post distribution monitoring
Pre & post-harvest monitoring
Impact Survey (at end of project)
Baseline Assessment
KAP (knowledge, attitudes & practice) for training components (different ones for different activities)
Pre-training
Post training
APR - activity progress report (standard ACF across all missions)
Micro surveillance - FS indicators, humanitarian context, market prices at base level and provincial level. Shared with EW information groups in Kabul
Monitoring of community works

This highlights the somewhat confusing distinction between *Food Assistance* and *Food Security* projects. This division creates a split in the team as well as in HR resources. This division is particularly a problem at Kabul level - where the Assistant Food Security Coordinator is primarily tasked with advising the Food Aid teams, though could easily provide general support, particularly as over the last year there has been high turnover in staff at the Kabul level. Given that this is a national position, and more stable, it could be built up to be more strategic and perhaps take on wider responsibility - perhaps a key monitoring and assessment role. What is confusing is that Food Aid teams are, particularly in Day Kundi, operating in the same villages as the Food Security teams. It seems that this distinction may be superfluous.

Monitoring data collected by these officers isn't shared or discussed with the team. In some cases it is unclear if it is being analysed and understood to indicate the progress or change required in the project. More detailed investigation would be required to understand exactly what is collected, why, how, how is it used, if it is used, and so on. Not to mention that there are likely data overlaps and some crucial information isn't being collected, while other information may not be necessary. Is this information being fed into project to improve or adapt it, or is it just done as an activity? Together the team is supposed to analyse the data and it is the PM's job to share outcomes with the field teams and Kabul. Information takes time to get to the Paris level and it is difficult for HQ to assess the quality of data. Most of these mechanisms seem to be more of a donor-reporting requirement than driven by the need to understand areas and communities better. Data collection appears to be more reactive than proactive.

A new element now is the, Emergency Response Mechanism, ERM¹⁰ team. This team is only present in Day Kundi. If they are not responding to an emergency, their role is to conduct Hazard Mapping of shocks and disasters (natural & insecurity & market spikes) over last 10 years. They are to distinguish the five most frequent shocks, the coping capacity of communities, the impacts on men, women and children. In any response they will conduct a rapid assessment. However there are some unanswered questions. Is basic food security information being included in ER assessments? Is there monitoring of seasonal activities and weather patterns? Can the team explore to developing early warning/surveillance? This information is relevant for the overall vulnerability profile of the area. Again there appears to be a bit of overlap in roles here, let alone in data collection. For example the CFW components and cash grant components are in response to emergencies. Will the ERM team now be the team that is in charge of all responses? How this team fits with the other Food Security components is unclear as the responses to date have been kit distributions. However it does seem to make sense to have a response team and one that is perhaps multi-sectoral.

In Day Kundi, a comprehensive baseline exists that covers both E5K project (cash grants) and the A3H (long term FS project). It is a good start, however it is missing key socio-economic information and wealth dynamics of the area. There is no profile of different livelihood zones and corresponding socio-economic groups. Additionally there is sparse information on income and expenditure patterns for different groups throughout a 'normal' year, highlighting any seasonal changes. This information is crucial to justify and understand how much cash to give to who and when. There is also no market assessment available. Only prices of a few key commodities have been collected and are monitored. However the economy is wider and richer than that and some of the key value chains, particularly of those resources that households use to 'cope' (such as livestock and cash crops) would need to be understood. For example, it appears from discussions with external stakeholders and experts that about 50% of rural households' annual income in Afghanistan is non-agricultural. This is mainly from off farm labour and/or remittances. Also in 'normal' years, particularly in the lean period households food sources are from purchase and not from their own production. This means that half of their income is not agricultural related and investing only in improved agricultural production is missing half the story. There is a need an opportunity to explore ways of further building households resilience through non-agricultural livelihood strategies.

¹⁰A multi-agency response team where areas have been divided per agency. In Ghor and Samangan, Solidarites is the ERM lead, while in Day Kundi it is ACF.

As for communities' survey fatigue, this is difficult to assess from one visit to one area. However it was telling that in Day Kundi that interviews with both men and women who had and had not received grants said the similar things in terms of their needs as communities. Therefore sensitization and need to be cautious with method of programming as ACF (and other organisations) train communities to give the 'right' answers.

That a comprehensive **monitoring systems** in place is a best practice. This allows the team to watch the impact on of the project. Though the system is not being optimized it has the potential to work well and there is a commitment from the team to conduct them.

3.4 Cash and Gender

The context of gender in Afghanistan is particularly complex and challenging. However it is very surprising to find a project titled *Promotion of Women's Education and Protection of Fragile Livelihoods* where most of the activities are do not include women. From discussion at headquarters level it was explained that the title was a donor requirement. Nonetheless it seems that ACF has committed to focus on gender in its programme work, although what the specific gender goals are is not clear. Nor is it apparent what this means for ACF in the context of Afghanistan, there is no mention of this in the country strategy. In general there is an absence of gender analysis with the Food Security team and consequently a lack of analysis of the relationships between CTP & gender, or the role of gender in CTP. There is no mention of the specific situation of women apart from an introduction to the F7C project. This is not reflected the CFW activities. There is limited gender differentiated data collection and basic gender statistics at the project level are weak.

Neither project have specific goals related to gender equality or transformation. It also appears that a gender analysis did not inform the development of either project and this is a particular concern in the case F7C which is titled a so-called 'women's' project. This is a concern. As for actual targeted elements related to gender in the project, these are basically absent or very rudimentary and not that strategic. As a result it seems that the projects are mostly (though not entirely) gender blind, which is a significant problem in any context, but specifically Afghanistan. The projects are not really targeting women in any significant way, and even where they are, the projects and the staff do not appear to understand how to do this. This may be specific to these two projects, but it seems as though it may be symptomatic of a wider problem in ACF's Afghanistan programming.

In terms of the projects, Day Kundi specifically targets women for the cooking demonstrations. These are the same women that received the cash grant and make up 25% of the beneficiaries. Most of these women after receiving the grant give their money to their husbands to spend, 5 % of those interviewed spent as they like. This begs the question of whether targeting women for the grants has any purpose if the money is directly handed on to men and the women exercise no decision-making power. Again, if there were clearer goals around gender equality or changes in gender relations, then it would be clearer as to why certain mechanisms or targeting was chosen and then followed through to ensure that the project was having an impact on these gender goals. Otherwise it is only paying lip service to gender and women's rights. In Samangan less than 1% of women are beneficiaries for the cash component. These are the women that have been selected as the families who are unable to offer labour and are female-headed households and/or widows. It does need to be noted that in the Muslim tradition a widow will often

be taken in by her husband's brother or other relatives and female-headed households are not usually left 'on their own'. From interviews with the community in Day Kundi with both men and women there seems to be an improved impact of the cooking demonstrations. These are attended by anybody who is interested, this includes non-beneficiaries. How this works was not further investigated due to the scope of the project. Both men and woman were happy with their new diets of vegetables and some commented that they were healthier. Again it is hard to see how cooking and changes on nutrition would have an impact on broader gender equality of gender relations issues; it is really only a nutrition activity.

In Day Kundi where there are significant numbers of women beneficiaries, the community committee, *Shura*, does not have any female representation. According to interviews with external stakeholders, there are CDC committees with women representation and separate women's groups. Therefore it may be feasible to consider including women in this group. It is not clear whether ACF has requested this or recognises it as an issue.

The Project Manager for Samangan explained that cannot take women to the field, the beneficiaries and community leaders or the Taliban and AOG's will not accept it. It is a security issue for the team. He said "*in cash for work and food for work there is no need to have women in the team*". This is particular for the non-Hazara areas (Uzbek & Tajik). While in Dari Sufi Bala about half the agriculture work is done by women but the community don't want and/or trust them to interact with NGO staff. In Day Kundi, women play a significant role in agricultural activities and are much more able to participate and engage with each other and with ACF women staff. This indicates how the gender context differs greatly per area and a basic analysis of this could potentially allow ACF to adapt the project according to what is possible in each context and actually try to have some impact on gender relations.

From the perspective of ACF and gender awareness and human resource practices among its own staff, there also appear to be some shortcomings. There are few women in the ACF project teams, which is not uncommon in Afghanistan, but does not mean it should be accepted as the only way. As an example, there are no women in the Samangan team and there are four women in Day Kundi. These four women are at the lowest level on project specific staff and they lead the cooking demonstrations. These women do not really mix with the team, nor do they appear to be encouraged to do so. They stay in the 'women's room' until they are called to participate. They do not have a desk or office space and do not seem to be really included as part of the overall project staff. Part of this is because they spend a lot of their time in the field; however this is not an adequate explanation. This challenge with sex ratios among staff is reflected in the national staff at head office, where there are three women, who seem to prefer to eat and work separately from the men. This picture is quite the opposite with the expatriate staff who all mingle and of which the majority are women.

There is definitely space to explore activities or project elements which subtly but persistently work on women's empowerment and transformation of gender relations without challenging the prevailing norm to a level that puts ACF at risk. There more activities that women can do in the home, or areas of training beyond cooking that are livelihood related. Though women normally don't actually sell the family's livestock, they are in charge of taking care of it, or organising for it to be taken care of. This could be an entry point. Livestock dung also provides the main fuel for the houses in the winter in Day

Kundi. This may or may not be sufficient to cover winter fuel needs and could be area to look into as it is directly a women's activity that has impact on the whole family. In regards to care practices and hygiene promotion there may be an opportunity to engage and integrate with the WASH and Nutrition activities. Particularly in the long term Food Security project components there could be opportunities to look at other types of training, for example it was suggested to support women as the finance managers of the home, or training in household budgeting. They may not actually spend the money, but they are part of planning how it is spent. Perhaps there are means to combine with a social safety net approach that targets women for training and learning around the key activities they do in their home.

Particularly in Day Kundi, women's education, self-help groups, women type enterprises at a small scale could be part of longer-term strategy. These are activities that other organisations are experimenting with. There is a lot of activity around the issue of women's empowerment and gender relations in Afghanistan and there is an opportunity to learn from what others are doing. For example Oxfam has successfully enabled women to build gabions for rehabilitation of water systems. ACF could be more experimental with gender specific work in more liberal areas.

3.5 Organisational Capacity

Operationally the cash components of the projects are strong. The general management of projects seems effective. There is reasonable capability in undertaking basic assessments & monitoring, however this will need further investment to have it actually filter back into influencing the project and into developing new projects. There is a high turnover of expatriate staff. Although the previous Food Security Coordinator was in that position for almost two years, the Operations manager, an expatriate position created end of 2010, was filled from May until September 2011. This position will be filled again in January.

Given access constraints, projects which are run by remote management, sometimes 'double' remote - that is that the FSCO is remote who manages a PM who is also remote from the actual field and has restricted access. This provides a real challenge to keep a handle on how projects are progressing, as well as identifying and tackling challenges in the project implementation. This also means that the FSCO position ends up doing two jobs and prioritizes the operational management of the project over the more strategic roles. This is shame particularly as ACF is a key and recognized player in the Food Security cluster, with special links to the global Food Security cluster lead. At the moment under the secretariat of FAO the IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) is being launched for Afghanistan. This is an initiative that can provide, depending on organizations ability to engage, an advocacy platform for food security and livelihood issues in Afghanistan.

There is a basic capacity of national staff that can be further built up and developed. Given that this group is generally more of a constant in the project and hold more of the institutional memory, this is a core team that needs to be further supported. One possibility may be to support key national staff by having them shadow or accompany key expatriate staff such that in times of handover there is no gap, or a limited impact in changeover.

Currently a few key positions are vacant, such as a Project Manager for Day Kundi, an Operational Manager for Food Security at Kabul level . Despite this the basic operation of

the two cash projects is satisfactory. The main gaps are a deeper understanding of the need for assessment and analysis in really understanding whom ACF wants to support, why, and how. Part of the gap here may be due to the lack of involvement of field level staff in proposal development and design. It is key to bring the actually 'implementing' team on board from the onset.

In Day Kundi it was unfortunate the Project Manager had recently disappeared in Paris after a training. This has happened three times with ACF Afghanistan staff and it means that there will be no more out of country trainings for national staff. None the less there is a lot that can be done in country and across the teams. The general knowledge of the staff is good, but ACF needs to capitalise on that knowledge by putting it into design of projects at a field level. Cross-area support and learning and be more strategic in the winter training opportunities.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Cash Transfer Process

The actual process of delivery to targeted beneficiaries goes well. The use of the Hawala system is efficient, cost effective and safe. From evidence of what other agencies are doing it is the only option without putting staff in danger with the transport of large amounts of money to the field. All agencies consulted, including the American funded ones like International Rescue Committee, are using the system of moneychangers. As the banking system and the mobile phone system do not reach far enough there are no other safe options. The main oversight in Day Kundi is that 10-15% of the households received 2 or 3 grants as different family members were beneficiaries of different longer-term ACF activities. All beneficiaries of the other project, A3H, were selected for cash grants.

The actually process of targeting and the justification for it is weak. In both project areas the objective was to support households food security situation in response to floods, however community members that were interviewed did not mention the floods. Neither team nor beneficiaries were aware why people were selected other than following the criteria in the project documents. As for Samangan, there is no evidence of how people were selected, though CDC's were selected based on the how sever the flood affected them. Neither area has analyzed who was affected most and why. It is thus unclear if they were actually 'most' affected by the floods in the area.

Cash for work in Samangan and cash grants in Day Kundi were appropriate responses at the scale they were implemented. Though markets are very isolated, especially in Day Kundi, the amount of cash did not influence the prices. Enough food was available, particularly as it was delivered in a time when households normally purchase food. Though households did not spend the grant only on food, a large proportion was used to relieve debt.

Recommendations

The design process is a critical and missing step in the development of both evaluated projects. It is tempting to do quick analysis and baselines and then move straight to a proposal, but proposals to donors do not usually include the full range of analysis of problem, justification of project modalities, program logic, intended impacts, linked to objectives and actions, means of verification and so on. ACF's cash programs in

Afghanistan would benefit from a proper design process not just proposal writing based on donor agendas. This does not to be onerous. There would be much clearer logic for all elements of the project and a clearer written record for the team, in the context of high staff mobility.

ACF needs to undertake much more robust analysis prior to designing interventions to be clear on why certain modalities were chosen and to achieve what ends. The community must also be consulted in this, as even in the case of the emergency response the community indicated that they preferred CFW rather than cash grants. The initial analysis and then the project designs must include the reasons why certain programs were chosen to achieve specific impacts and the monitoring and final reporting must explain whether this was realised through the project.

It is clear that analysis of markets and household expenditure and how this feeds into the development of project design is critical area needing development. ACF needs to go through a defined process to calculate the value of the cash grant, rather than converting the cost of food basket to cash. Given what people use the grant for, there needs to be a greater analysis of shortfalls in households and what cash is most needed for and the expected impact of the cash grant or CFW. As it seems most grants were used to pay off debts, was this the intended impact? If not, then ACF needs to examine this for future interventions.

Targeting is another area in need of work. ACF must undertake a more robust and specific targeting according to an agreed set of criteria with the community, in order to make sure the right people are reached, with the right amount to achieve the intended outcomes. The targeting needs to match the objective of the programme, i.e those most affected by flood as opposed to those participating in LRRD activities. A smaller amount spread more widely, while seemingly more equitable, and may mean that the intended outcomes are simply not reached.

Following on from this, project monitoring must include ongoing measuring of the project impact against the intended outcomes. Monitoring household data and markets alone will not provide sufficient information about the project and its intended impacts and the changes in people's lives and livelihoods.

There is a robust operational system in place that will allow the team to take cash programming to the next level. To experiment and explore how different modalities to different groups of people possibly with varied livelihood objectives can support communities coping capacity and build resilience. It would be good to understand better the concept of resilience, how is this measured and defined in the different project areas, with different communities. For this to work the team will have to invest in understanding much better the socio-economic dynamics and power relations in their areas. It is essential to understand who is affected most by a disaster and why. How they cope and how they cope differently, what the cost of coping is and what household's flexibility is, how long can they cope? Allowing a deeper understanding of the actually impact that cash will have, in whatever form, on the selected community is essential.

4.2 Sustainability of CTP across ER & Long Term Projects

It was a puzzle within the jumble of documents and reports to figure out how the projects fit together, their geographical scope and related components. This was also not fully clear at head quarter and field level. The organizational distinction between Food

Assistance and Food Security is not clear and perhaps superfluous, given the overlap between projects. This creates more confusion in the documents as part of the project falls under the Food Assistance pillar and the other part under the Food Security pillar.

A good start has been made, particularly in Day Kundi, to link the emergency response with the long-term projects. This is a good start but is very early in its development. There is room to think through this further and be more experimental and strategic. There is no exit strategy in place or messaging to the community as to what ACF's vision is in the long run. The communities are saying "don't worry ACF will be here".

Have the cash responses been triggered by funding available or possibly a current trend in cash programming, or are they country strategy driven? It seems that it has been driven by available funding mechanisms.

Recommendations

What will be key is the sensitization of the community in understanding that ACF may not be there to respond for the next disaster. To define exit strategies for different areas, where the goal is to build resilience and not just respond annual at the time of the hunger gaps. Given the synergy between the long term project and emergency response in Day Kundi, this could be replicated and developed further in all Food Security project areas. Particularly to look at how cash can be used as a mitigation strategy or even to build resilience of communities in DRR/DRM model. Take a broader livelihoods approach as oppose to a division between Food Assistance and Food Security.

The projects will be strengthened further by collaboration with the WASH and Nutrition teams. Not just for the quality support of community works, which are often water related, but also for a deeper impact in the area. Water and sanitation as well as Nutrition, particularly with the broad picture of chronic malnutrition, are key players in improving livelihood security. The Food Security team, country team, has the opening to look at wider strategy that can then be funded, rather than being driven the other way around.

4.3 Gender & Cash

It seems that ACF has no clear organizational or programmatic goals around gender, transformation of gender relations and the empowerment of women, despite all of these being significant to development, healthy families and communities. The analysis of gender in general, its mature embedding and targeting in projects, let alone the understanding of the relationship between CTP & gender is very limited and concerning. This is especially true in a context such as Afghanistan where gender relations and the very low status of women is pervasive issue. The status of women and gender relations in Afghanistan has a huge impact on the health and well-being status and poverty of women and their families and the community.

The project in Day Kundi specifically targets women who are part of the gardening project. However if this makes a difference is unclear as the majority of women report that they give the money to their husbands, which makes the targeting of women a farce to some extent. Though one of the projects in Samangan has women's education in as its title the cash for work component targets less than 1% of beneficiaries "widows & female headed households". It is clear that the gender context for each area differs, where in Samangan it is reported that women who are not from that area will not be safe and are

unwelcome. There is no gender analysis, even at a basic level, present for any of the projects reviewed.

At a human resources level the statistics are stark, only Day Kundi has employed female staff, though they are lower project level staff and are not actively encouraged to be part of the team. There is no desk or office space for them. In Samangan there are no female staff members and in Kabul there are three. While this is not highly unusual for INGOs in Afghanistan, that does not mean it is acceptable and ACF should be striving to change this starting from within.

Recommendations

A significant investment will be required to firstly undertake a gender analysis in ACF's working areas that looks at power dynamics, attitudes, vulnerabilities etc. ACF will need to develop some clear organisational goals around women's empowerment and transformation of gender relations, even if small and incremental. Guidance from other INGOs who have been working on this long term in Afghanistan should help. Then a next step will be to explore what is possible given the challenging context and actually bring gender into the projects, both in analysis, project development, activities and project goals, as well as monitoring, reporting and staffing. It makes no sense, however, to do this, without dealing with and discussing the internal gender disparities and attitudes and work to ensure that within the ACF team there is greater awareness of what is meant by gender. Only then will it be possible to start incorporating this into the projects and incrementally towards real change.

Once a basic gender framework is set there are opportunities to learn from other actors, as Gender is a richly discussed topic and there are some successful examples of projects that do work and innovative ways to deal with gender inequality in the complexity of Afghanistan. Within the long term Food Security projects there is space to explore activities women can do in 'liberal' project areas. For example at home, further livelihood related training (livestock, home budgeting), care practices and integrate with nutrition & hygiene promotion.

4.4 Monitoring & Assessments

A comprehensive set of assessment and monitoring tools are being used by the team. The team is able to collect and input data. However the data that is gathered is not always the data that is needed at that time. There appears to be a 'reactive' data collection habit rather than one that makes sense with the project needs at the particular phase of the project. The tools that are available are generic and were designed to be adapted to the project and area needs. This is not being done, the tools are being used in their entirety. The data that is collected is not necessarily shared by the team and used to adapt the project based on its findings. The different tools and project teams, such as the ERM team, gather similar sets of data and there are likely overlaps.

Despite the comprehensive set of tools available key data required at the onset and in the baseline of a cash intervention is not being gathered. Some of this needs to be done using more qualitative tools, while other information can be added to the questionnaires. This is the case for gender analysis, understanding of different livelihood zones and differences in vulnerability to food insecurity of different socio-economic groups, the relationships between socio-economic groups as well as basic income and expenditure data throughout the agricultural season. No basic market analysis is done, besides collection of price data

for the most common commodities. However to understand the impact of Cash on the market more investigation will be needed for some basic value chains. Which are likely to differ in each area.

Recommendations

ACF should adapt existing tools to cover more qualitative questions in the form of focus group discussions on community dynamics, socio-economic structures, power relations, gender, and vulnerability of different groups to different shocks. It will also be key to look more in depth at seasonality, particularly of household's activities and income and expenditure patterns. This will help to project the impact of the shock/change. Monitoring should also include examining the impact of the project, changes in attitudes, dynamics, household well-being.

The projects have basic data to analyze impact of Cash for Work over time, particularly in Samangan as this has been done since 2008. It would be useful to understand how much impact the community works actually have and still have, or is the employment aspect more important. This could be done by the whole team and could be a way to build understanding of the value of this kind of information.

It is important the whole team is involved, this will also allow them to actively participate in project and proposal development as this is normally done based on initial assessments.

Monitoring and assessments is required across all projects and really should be everybody's responsibility. It was suggested that the monitoring role become a separate one, however this would separate it from the project. It would be worth exploring what monitoring and assessments need to be done, when, and who should be involved. As the key responsibility is likely to change depending on the project's needs. It will be essential that the results and implications of these results are discussed as a team, from the field to Kabul level. This means it will actually influence and change projects with the results of monitoring.

4.5 Capacity

The operational capacity of the team across the project areas is strong. The basic management of project goes well. There are strengths in basic assessment and analysis of food security. However there is a gap in understanding of gender, socio - economic dynamics, income, expenditure and differences in livelihood zones. The turnover of expatriate staff and remote management due to accessibility of areas being constrained by security is a real challenge. Key head office based positions have been vacant for extended periods of time creating a double role. This coordinator role becomes much more focused on the operations than on the strategy, advocacy and program development. This is a shame as ACF has a key position and strategic position within the Food Security cluster, the NGO working group and is experienced in cash programming. The IPC project is also being set up under the FAO secretariat. At global level ACF is a key partner in the IPC and it can provide a platform for influence and understanding of the food security context in the country. These can be crucial areas of influence that affect the influence the approach to food security on a National level.

Recommendations

Given that there is less turnover in national staff and for the most part they are the key implementers of the cash projects it is important to invest more in their capacity. Particularly in understanding the data/information needs of the project and to deepen their assessment skills in the areas of gender, socio-economic analysis, livelihood zones and markets. It is worth exploring these elements further. They are incorporated in ACF's global *Food Security & Livelihood assessment* and *Cash Based Interventions* (CBI) guidelines. This includes 'basic' market assessments and methods of determining who to target for FSL interventions.

For staff with more management responsibility it is recommended to invest in remote management skills, even for PM's based in the field as they often have to manage remotely as well, depending on security constraints.

Further learning and sharing can be encouraged across the teams. Firstly by meeting more often and working through basic challenges and constraints in the project. Though areas are different in their operational context, the activities are the same and teams can advise each other on how to deal with problems. As well as further develop best practices. Area teams could monitor each other's projects, as way to understand why and give an 'outside' perspective. The winter time can be used more strategically to train teams; however on the job training is also effective and can be done more explicitly. Given ACF's experience in cash it is obvious to explore some way to set up a country level Cash learning group. At moment this doesn't exist, while many NGO's and some UN agencies are working with CTP.

4.6 A New Strategy?

From discussions with the Food Security team and the Head of Mission it seems that the project is ready for a new approach. The activities that ACF is doing in Food Security seem to fit well across a Disaster Management Model, where there are three main pillars namely; early warning and risk analysis, mitigation & recovery, and emergency response. Given that the country program has expertise these across areas and across the different sectors of WASH, Nutrition and Food Security (see diagram below) it could be an exciting opportunity to work closer together. It was not the scope of the evaluation to look into detail at the current relationships, however from a few discussions with members of each of the sectoral teams it appears that there is little coordination and synergy which is a loss.

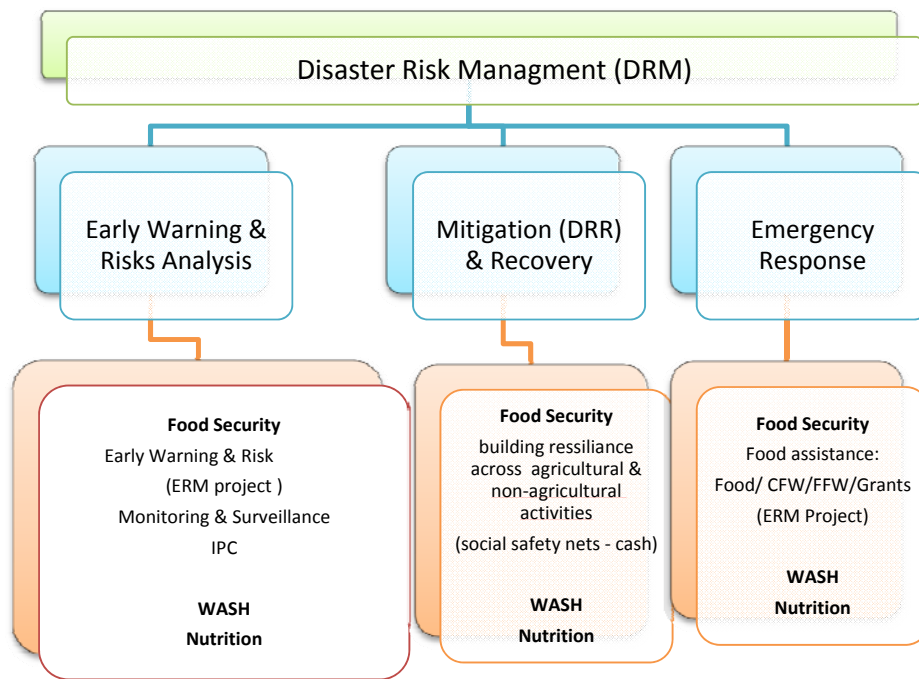


Diagram 1 Multi-sectoral DRM model

In terms of cash and cash transfer programming, ACF is attempting to use cash for different purposes across the 'emergency to recovery' spectrum. Many other organizations are also engaged in CTP and what seems to be missing is a forum or group that shares their experiences and explores innovative ways to use cash in this context. It may be much easier and cheaper to deliver than other types of aid and does not need to be only used under a Food Security banner; particularly emergency grants. Based on experience from ACF's projects and other Cash projects around the world, the money is used to meet basic needs beyond food. Also given that the situation of most communities is 'chronic' with a very high level of vulnerability, further exploration of how cash could be used to build resilience at household and community level and function as a safety net is key. From information from potential donors it appears that there is interest to fund, particularly DFID, some innovative initiatives. This can be further strengthened by ACF's role in the Food Security cluster, particular as a lead NGO. This is a strategic position that can be used much more effectively to advocate good practice of cash responses as well as the linkages to a response model that supports resilience.

Annexes

Annex I - Best Practices

Title of Best Practice
A key best practice identified is the distribution of cash in instalments . This means that cash paid to beneficiaries is not given all at once. In the case of cash grants, ACF distributed part of the grant before the winter, a second part just after the winter and the last part at the end of spring. In the case of Cash for Work this was done after key milestones in the works were completed.
Innovative Features & Key Characteristics
This decreases internal conflict, and the immediate impact on the market. In the case of Cash for Work it encourages people to continue working, and reportedly improves the quality of the work. It provides an incentive for beneficiaries to show up.
Practical & Specific recommendations for roll out
This practice can continue to be applied, however the actual amounts of the cash paid will need to be adjusted to the beneficiaries needs. In the case of a grant it needs to be calculated to meet its actual objective; for example if it is to meet households basic needs then it should be calculated according to household's normal expenditure at that time of year. In regards to cash for work, it would need to be done based on project objective and community work completed. The payment in instalments will be even more important if a project is larger in scale (amount of money and number of beneficiaries)

Title of Best Practice
In Samangan community sensitization is a best practice. In this case ACF, due to the volatile security situation in the area, spent a lot of time sharing and consulting with the community. The team shared the objectives of the projects, discussed with community leaders the best approach and involved them at different administrative levels in the selection of CDC's and families.
Innovative Features & Key Characteristics
Though this was a timely process, it provided the team with security. It gave ACF a respected reputation, though a strategy of transparency and clarity on project objectives, methods and ways of working. It allowed them to work in a more insecure context. The clarity and transparency is even more important in an insecure area where there is a lot of mistrust. It also requires specific team competencies to understand the intricacies of an area.
Practical & Specific recommendations for roll out
Community sensitization was not done well across the project. The key reason that this was selected as a best practice is that its provision of security. It is important as a team to be very clear on the objectives of the project, who is targeted and why. The sensitization messages and related strategy needs to be adapted to the context of the area. This is not a 'generic' activity, and will only be effective if it is 'personalized'.

Annex II - OECD DAC Evaluation Rating Table

Criteria	Rating (1 low, 5 high)					Rationale
	1	2	3	4	5	
Impact			X			The intended impacts within the broad terms of the projects themselves, was largely met. The cash transfers to meet chronic humanitarian need and in response to the flood, appear to have assisted the community to manage the impact of chronic poverty as well as natural disaster. It is not clear how much though and as it appears most money was spent on debt, it could not be classified as life-saving. The project could have had broader ambitions about sustainable change in practices, livelihood security and gender.
Sustainability		X				As this stage it appears that due to the annual nature of ACF's cash interventions there is a degree of dependence by the community and no exit strategy. The impacts of the longer-term work are yet to be felt, so overall at this stage sustainability seems minimal.
Coherence			X			There is a clear link between the cash grants and the cash for work and longer term interventions, but is limited. There needs to be a much clearer program logic to indicate exactly the elements of the project are inter-linked and interdependent and how they will work to reach the overall goals of reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.
Coverage		X				The coverage within communities is good and strong efforts around community sensitization have meant that conflict is minimal if present at all. However, it seems that the targeting mechanism was questionable and in some cases is virtually blanket. It also seems that some families are dipping multiple times into the project 'pot' by nature of their engagement in different activities within the project, thus meaning overall coverage is uneven, it also seems that the scale of the projects was minimal and there is considerable scope to expand them and have wider coverage if the limit of donor funding is not seem as the major factor.
Relevance/Appropriateness				X		Overall cash is a suitable response in these areas. Interestingly most communities see CFW as preferable to cash grants because of the multiple impact of cash being injected, employment and community works. The value of the cash grant is somewhat questionable as it should have been devised by looking at the total household income and expenditure and shortfalls etc., rather than a direct conversion

					of the cost of food ration. The need to be much more strategic and have longer term goals and exit strategy, or different strategy, is critical.
Effectiveness			X		The project achieves its broad objectives. Though there is a key concern around if the 'right' people are targeted. The operational side works effectively; those that are targeted receive what they were promised. There are monitoring systems in place, though they could be used more effectively. The Day Kundi project met with the timeframe planned, the Samangan, due to security constraints was delayed by almost a year. Sensitization differed in each area; where one area was effective while the other much less so. The actual program did not have any major unexpected impact that can be measured at the moment.
Efficiency			X		Based on the calculations shared in table two, the budget proportions spent on overheads/HR versus directly to the beneficiaries are relatively well balanced. The high overhead costs, particularly for the long-term project is due to its need to carry more of the overall office running costs. The choice of cash delivery via the <i>hawala</i> system is the most efficient, and there are no other options to do this in the context of Afghanistan. However the method of budgeting based on the cost of a food basket does not enable a more in depth analysis of other programmatic options. This combined with the poor targeting may mean that more could be done for those in need, rather a small amount for almost all.

Annex III - Teams View of the Evaluation of Process

These are the outcomes of a brief evaluation with the core ACF team of seven people. Each member was asked to anonymously comment on the evaluation process; what worked well, what didn't work well, new insights/what they learned and their recommendation. The table below summarizes the teams' views based on their participation in the field work in *Day Kundi* and the preparation, analysis and recommendation process in *Kabul*.

😊	<i>Worked Well</i>	📄	<i>New Insights</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be part of the evaluation team • Happy to learn about what happens in a 'heavy' evaluation and what it looks like for someone from outside. • Good behaviour and communication with the team. • Good presentation and analysis of the problem. • Well-managed and finished on time. • Capacity building for the team. • Enabled a detailed review of the projects • Evaluation question very useful for the mission, not just for Paris. • Learned about new issues in our activities • Gave a good insight into our short-term cash interventions through field and beneficiary observations. • Workshop with the team very useful • Participatory approach helps to know the team better. • Go to the field and directly discuss with many women. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy way of FGD (focus group discussions) with different community members. To see that can work with separate groups of men and women and in some cases a mixed group. • Learned how to do a good evaluation. • Learned how to gather quality information through the community. • Learned how to analyse a problem and find out strengths and weaknesses. • How to adjust the wrong implementation. • Learned how to manage a short-term project. • Beneficiary feedback about knowledge/lack of knowledge of ACF. • Link between CTP and long-term programming clarified. • Opportunities for gender sensitive activities. • Gaps in socio-economic analysis. • Though I worked for many years in food aid CFW, after this process I understand it CFW and FS better. • Highlighted need for team support at the operational and strategy level. • Highlighted need for integration and reluctance and willingness of other members of the mission. • More focus on using cash in cash projects. • More work on Gender issues and how to include them in CFW projects. • Monitoring process needs • To think about other kinds of projects.
☹️	<i>Didn't work well</i>	👉	<i>Recommendations</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wasn't able to be part of all the interviews. • Too short time to do deep evaluation. • Missed a question in the checklist about people's preference to receive the full grant or in instalments. • No time/budget for Samangan fieldwork. • A lot of discussion on CTP process. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have more time for the fieldwork. • To do capacity building and training for internal staff. • ACF will continue to struggle to get better-qualified staff in agro skills. This will always be a limitation. • The same should have been done in Samangan. • Careful about judgement.

Annex IV - List of people consulted and interviewed

Institution	Name [♠]	Position
<i>ACF Afghanistan</i>	<i>Cecilia Blaustein</i>	<i>Food Security Coordinator</i>
ACF Afghanistan	Richard Thwaites	Head of Mission
<i>ACF Afghanistan</i>	<i>Akram Rasa*</i>	<i>Food Aid & Emergency Operations Assistant</i>
<i>ACF Afghanistan</i>	<i>Sayed Hussain*</i>	<i>Head of Monitoring - Food Security Day Kundi</i>
<i>ACF Afghanistan</i>	<i>Abdul Habib*</i>	<i>ERM Team Leader</i>
ACF Afghanistan	Tariq Khan	Nutrition Program Manager
ACF Afghanistan	Soraya Talib Hussein *	Nutrition, Gardening trainer mobilizer, Day Kundi
ACF Afghanistan	Salima Elias*	Nutrition, Gardening trainer mobilizer, , Day Kundi
<i>ACF Afghanistan</i>	<i>Mohammad Sabir Sahar</i>	<i>Food Aid Project Manager Samangan</i>
<i>ACF Afghanistan</i>	<i>Bashir Ahmad Bashemi</i>	<i>LRRD Project Manager Ghor</i>
ACF Afghanistan	Elena Virijevic	Administrative Coordinator
ACF Afghanistan	Fawad Shamim	Deputy Logistics
ACF Afghanistan	Najib Darwesh	CAP Logistics
ACF London	Ben Allen	Evaluations, Learning & Accountability Officer
ACF Paris	Julien Morel	Senior Food Assistance Advisor
<i>ACF Paris</i>	<i>Nathalie Wirt</i>	<i>Food Security & Livelihoods Advisor</i>
ACF Paris	Isabelle Moussard Carlsen	Responsable Géographique - Desk Officer
Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authorities (ANDMA)	Reza Sadiqi	Province Director Day Kundi
CARITAS	Zahir Ahmad	Program Advisor
Department of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR)	Mohammed Amin Rasa	Director Day Kundi Province
ECHO	Esmée de Jong	Technical Assistant
FEWSNET	Fazal Karim Najimi	Country Representative
IRC	Sam Duerden	Humanitarian Program Manager
KADAM BA KADAM INITIATIVES	Holly Ritchie	Independent consultant (focus on micro-enterprise, livelihoods, gender and value chains)
Ministry Agriculture Irrigation Livestock (MAIL)	Mohamadi Hussein	Head of Department Day Kundi
Ministry Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)	Sayed Zahir Rashmi	Dep. Director MRRD Day Kundi
OXFAM	Mohammed Ali Ali Zoda	Acting Regional Head Day Kundi
Solidarites International	Khayam Allen	Emergency Coordinator
Solidarites International	Helene Pasquier	Food Security Coordinator

[♠] Names italicized were part of Kabul analysis group

* Member of Evaluation team for Day Kundi fieldwork

Annex V - Assessment Framework for the Evaluation

Key learning question	If you could run this project again, how would you run it differently?	
<i>Methodology</i>	Participatory process learning for the country team. This will be based on key question <i>if you could run this project again, how would you run it differently</i> with group and individuals sessions. The team will actively participate in the interviews and analysis. This will include key moments for feedback and contribution to the findings while in the field.	
	This will focus on cash transfer components	
What (defined)	key question/s	coverage of key questions
Impact	Impact	
social, economic, technical, environmental - on individuals, gender- and age-groups, communities and institutions. Impacts can be intended and unintended, positive and negative, macro (sector) and micro (household).	Achievement of project goal and objectives for cash programming as written in log frames of E5K & F7C. What are the expected and unexpected outcomes. Can impact be measured and if possible, has impact been measured effectively?	monitoring of impact - compare eval FGD results to monitoring ass't results - impact on women/power relations - market & social structure impact - what did cash make possible/obstacles
Sustainability	Sustainability	
A measure of whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn and project activities officially cease.	Given the context in the field and the situation in Afghanistan, what are the prospects for the sustainability of cash components of the FS projects. What are the results/impact over the long term; how does this fit into the FS program as a whole and country strategy. Are there possibilities to scale up? To scale out? What are others (community/beneficiary/cbo/no /un/gov) perceptions of sustainability and scale up opportunities? Exit strategy involvement of local partners/authorities	relevance & appropriateness of CTP in afgh. Chronic & acute - actual sustainability of cash in long term work of cfw - and labour poor - community perceptions (measuring effectiveness of sensitizing) - market & social structure impact - preventative activities DRM vs. DR - mitigation strategy that builds resilience & coping capacity - LRRD vs. ER - both linked to It fs projects long term and short term - capacity for assessments & monitoring - capacity
Coherence	Coherence	
The need to assess existing interventions, policies and strategies to ensure consistency and minimize duplication.	Effective coordination and collaboration with partners, NGO's, UN consortium, FSL related groups & government, specifically on the use of CTP in Afghanistan. Linkages with CaLP partners. Internal coherence with ACF global & donor strategies and policies.	government policy - project design & justification - impact on women/power relations - cpt strategy donor or c.strategy driven/a tool for chronic & acute - LRRD vs. ER - both linked to It fs projects long term and short term - understanding impact of CTP on gender
Coverage	Coverage	

The need to reach major population groups facing life threatening suffering wherever there are.	Outreach and targeting through ACF; the level of coverage based on targeting criteria. Are those targeted the most vulnerable to drought & flood? How were the choices made in project area? Both socio - economics as well as age and gender should be considered.	Issue of targeting with cash - risk of abuse of beneficiaries - choose for blanket - different for food - beneficiary selection - community perceptions (measuring effectiveness of sensitizing)
Relevance/Appropriateness	Relevance/Appropriateness	
A measure of whether interventions are in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policies, thus increasing ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness).	Was the type of intervention appropriate and relevant to needs of population and context? Did beneficiaries and stakeholders participate effectively in project design, implementation & monitoring? What are others (community/beneficiary/cbo/ngo/un/gov) perceptions? Where people (staff/beneficiaries/stakeholders) aware of the programme set up, targeting criteria, was the process transparent internally and externally.	project design & justification - impact on women/power relations - community perceptions (measuring effectiveness of sensitizing) - market & social structure impact - ct strategy donor or c.strategy driven/a tool for chronic & acute - e.g. Samangan since 2008 CFW - keep targeting same beneficiaries - blanket vs. targeting -preventative activities DRM vs. DR - market impacts: before project impl. - issue of targeting with cash - risk of abuse of beneficiaries - different for food - beneficiary selection - mitigation strategy that builds resilience & coping capacity - LRRD vs. ER - both linked to It fs projects long term and short term
Effectiveness	Effectiveness	
The extent to which the intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? Were there specific challenges in the context of Afghanistan (climate, security, gender relations etc..) that limited the program's ability to achieving its goals. Did the monitoring systems, put in place work? What could have been done differently? Timeliness	monitoring - impact on women/power relations- operational design - actual transfer mechanics - community perceptions (measuring effectiveness of sensitizing) - what did cash make possible/obstacles - capacity
Efficiency	Efficiency	
A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. Efficiency measures the outputs - qualitative and quantitative - achieved as a result of inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving an output, to see whether the	Was the impact of the CTP justified by the costs? overall costs of cash delivery and cost of sensitization and training; comparison with potential alternatives How did the programme run with the available resources (financial & human). What could have been differently?	operational design - actual transfer mechanics - capacity in hr

<p>most efficient approach has been used.</p>		
	<p>Gender (cross cutting)</p>	
<p>Gender (cross cutting)</p>	<p>How was gender integrated and incorporated across the projects. Was there a basic analysis/understanding of gender issues in relation to food security & livelihoods and cash?</p>	<p>Investment required to bring women on board - long term vs. short term response - difference between Day Kundi & Samangan - internally in ACF an issue - even if women targeted - don't come to collect grant (relative comes with letter) - put into cultural context - what is possible, who need to be involved - learn from others: oxfam/unifm/ministry of women's affairs (guidelines).</p>

Annex VI - TOR for the Evaluation



Terms of Reference

Afghanistan Cash Transfer Program Evaluation

Project Title:

2 projects will be subject to current evaluation, which will mainly focus on cash transfers components:

- **Food Aid in Samangan and Day Kundi Provinces, Afghanistan;**
- **Promotion of Women's Education and Protection of Fragile Livelihoods in Dare-i-Sufi Payin and Dare-i-Sufi Bala Districts, Samangan Province**

Contracts:

- CIAA – n° SCAC/2010/40 (ACF internal code – AHE5K)
- SIDA – n° 520500 19-07 (ACF internal code – AHF7C)

1.

Background

ACF in Afghanistan

Humanitarian response in Afghanistan is complicated by the fact that acute needs related to conflict and disasters exist alongside extensive chronic vulnerabilities resulting from underdevelopment and impoverishment.

Some 7.3 million people (31% of the total estimated population of 26 million) are food insecure with another 5.4 million people (23%) vulnerable to food insecurity. Compared with the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment of 2005, the food security situation (NRVA 2007/08) had deteriorated in 25 of the 34 provinces. The vulnerability of the population is further exacerbated by recurring natural disasters which affect considerable numbers of people each year.

Malnutrition is extremely high in Afghanistan, with chronic malnutrition at 59.3% and underweight at 32.9%. Afghanistan also has a high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, especially iodine and iron, caused by insufficient diet, often the result of poverty and lack of knowledge.

Action contre la Faim (ACF) opened the mission in 1995 in Afghanistan. ACF has worked in Kabul, Parwan, Kapisa, Panjsher, Ghor, Bamyan, Day Kundi, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Zabul, Balkh, Samangan, Uruzgan, Saripul provinces of Afghanistan in initial stages while now it is functioning in Kabul, Day Kundi, Samangan and Ghor provinces. Initially the main focus

was on nutrition, and water and sanitation. Later on the component of Food Security was added to the programme in year 2000. Currently, the focus of the intervention is Food Security and Water & Sanitation along with integration of prevention of Malnutrition in both the sectors.

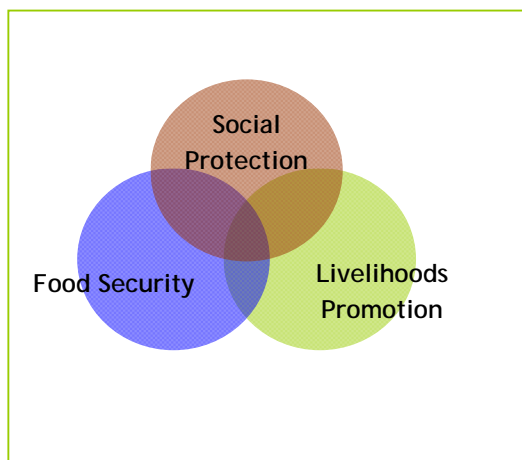
For the next years, ACF plans to continue working in the same fields (i.e. Food Security and Water and Sanitation), and to further strengthen integration of nutrition intervention.

ACF's Strategy in Afghanistan

Activities implemented by ACF aim at responding to the acute needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population. Targeted time bound operations are needed and developed, and they are integrated with a recovery - developmental strategy.

ACF is working in the drought prone rural areas to reduce the vulnerability of the poorest households as well as in urban areas that are not served by public services to improve the access to basic services (especially water & sanitation).

ACF Food Security strategy is to operate within three overlapping spheres of influence, namely Social Protection, Food Security and Livelihoods Promotion as shown below.



These spheres have a considerable degree of overlap and are not mutually exclusive. Hence, the interventions foreseen would have a significant impact across all the three spheres.

Instrument	Social protection	Livelihoods promotion	Food security	Support through	Province	Number of households targeted
Food assistance through - Food aid - Cash transfers	High	Medium	High	(a) Pre / post Winter 2010 : CIAA CFW (b) Post Winter 2010 : SIDA 2011	(a) SA & DK (b) SA	(a) 2,00 0 hh (b) 2,00 0 hh
Community infrastructures through: - Food for work - Cash for work	Low	High	High	(a) Pre / post Winter 2010 : CIAA CFW (b) Post Winter 2010 : SIDA 2011	(a) SA & DK (b) SA	a) 2,000 hh b) 2,000 hh

Good nutrition and hygiene practices promotion	High	medium	High	(a) <i>SIDA - March 2011- Feb 2014</i>	(a) SA	(b) 2,000 hh
Vegetable Gardens	Medium	Low / medium	Medium	(a) <i>SIDA - March 2011- Feb 2014</i>	(a) SA	(a) 1,000 hh
Targeted adapted inputs (seed, fertilizer, tools)	Medium	Medium	High	(a) <i>EC- LRRD _ May 2010 April 2013</i> (b) <i>Not funded for Samangan</i>	(a) DK	(a) 2000 hh
Adapted agricultural practices promotion	Medium	High	High	(a) <i>EC- LRRD _ May 2010 April 2013</i> (b) <i>Not funded for Samangan</i>	(a) DK	(a) 2000 hh
Water conservation	Low	High	High	(a) <i>EC- LRRD _ May 2010 April 2013</i> (b) <i>Not funded for Samangan</i>	(a) DK	(a) 2000 hh

Current context of intervention: Day Kundi and Samangan provinces

Day Kundi forms part of the mountainous region in the centre of Afghanistan and is a marginalized province with a structural food deficit due to the climatic conditions, geographical isolation and water management. There is strong dependence on agriculture (farmers form 85% of the population) and few possibilities for additional income. The chronic malnutrition rate among children aged under 5 is close to 48%.

The means of subsistence for the population of Samangan are characterized by a strong dependence on agriculture (essentially pluvial), lack of drinking water, low additional income and seasonal migration. Farmers form the majority of households with farms of under half a hectare in size.

Poor cereal yields hit the two provinces in 2009: the average wheat yield for irrigated and pluvial farming was respectively 3.03 tonnes and 1.18 ton/hectare on a national level; 2.62 and 0.88 in Day Kundi, and 2.5 and 1.05 in Samangan.

Several factors explain this level of productivity: use of poor quality agricultural inputs, extreme variability of the climate, increase in erosion, exhaustion of soil nutrients, lack of water management facilities and limited access to new technologies.

In addition, recurrent natural disasters such as drought or flooding have exhausted communities' traditional survival mechanisms, leading to acute vulnerability and a major lack of food security.

In order to cope with the deterioration of their means of survival, households have adopted various agricultural and economic adaptation mechanisms: adaptation of the land farmed on the basis of access to water, reduction in expenditure dedicated to agricultural input, reduction in food consumption, debt, migration, sale of livestock and mortgaging of land.

As a consequence, the population's capacity to cope with additional shocks and stress by using safe adaptation strategies has been compromised and therefore also its capacity to break out of the vicious circle of decapitalisation.

Sector of Evaluation [FSL/WASH/NUT]

The evaluation corresponds to Food Security & Livelihoods Sector.

2. Program Overview

Samangan

Remoteness, decreasing productivity, rising food prices and increasing level of water stress are major constraints for the vulnerable population of Samangan resulting in a lack of human, physical and financial capacity to carry out proper food production (in quantity and in quality) to cover their basic needs. In addition to the limited food access and availability for the poor households, the low level of education is leading to a poor utilization of the food through bad hygiene and nutrition practices increasing the risk of malnutrition.

The food security of the vulnerable households of Dare-I- Sufi Payin and Dare-I Sufi Bala is threatened as a result of structural limitations (land access, limited off farm income, rainfed area...) aggravated by the recurrent drought shocks. The capacities of the households have been severely affected by the 2008 drought and 2010 earthquake and floods leading them to a highly vulnerable situation.

As a result of these successive shocks and of the structural poverty, the population has lost its capacity to:

- To cover their basic needs with their reduced livelihood assets
- To recover from previous shocks or stress
- To cope with additional shocks or stress using safe coping strategies
- To exit from the vicious circle of decapitalization.

This projects attempts to strengthen the human and financial capital of the vulnerable households. As the markets in Samangan are functioning and food is available the projects aims to reach out to the vulnerable households through cash for work. This will not only enhance the financial capital of the vulnerable households but also give impetus to the local market.

2,000 households in Dare suf Payin District will be targeted trough cash for work project. Two rounds of cash transfer and of work will be implemented one in fall 2010 and one in spring 2011.

2,000 households in Dare-i-Sufi Bala District will be targeted trough cash for work project through one round of cash transfer and work in spring 2011.

Day Kundi

ACF implements in parallel long term programs (LRRD type) and short term programs (cash based). Involvement of poor families in a LRRD type project is a challenge when they do not have the financial means to cover the basic needs; the outputs of such a project aren't immediate while requesting an involvement in labour and time. Short term cash based activities come to complement long term program; immediate benefits guaranty that vulnerable beneficiaries cover their basic needs and keep on participating to longer term project.

The households involved in the LRRD project will benefit from cash transfer in three rounds: one in fall 2010 and two in spring 2011.

The Hawala system is used here for cash movements.

The cash transfers are done using the *hawala* system. The *hawala* system is used traditionally for cash transfer between provinces and from abroad. In addition to the use

of the *hawala* system, ACF has decided to involve the community through creation of “beneficiary committees” involved in the reception and the distribution of the cash. The following procedure is used:

Step 1: ACF in Kabul meet the changer, agreed on a planning of cash transfer including the following information for each distribution day: the dates of the distribution, the location of the distribution, the name of the targeted villages, the name of the beneficiaries committees members, the number of beneficiaries, the amount per beneficiaries and the total amount location;

Step 2: ACF transfer a first instalment to the changer corresponding to one or several close distributions;

Step 3: The changer in Kabul gives the order to his contact in the province to bring the money to the defined distribution point

Step 4: Committee members receive cash in the presence of ACF team at the site

Step 5: Distributions are conducted in collaboration with the committees, ACF staff in presence of the money changer. If some money is remaining at the end of the distribution, the money changer will take back the money.

Step 6: When the transfer of the cash to the beneficiaries is completed, ACF teams in the field informs Kabul team. ACF Kabul office transfers the commission to the Kabul changer and proceeds to a second instalment.

This procedure has been used, tested and improved by ACF during several cash for work projects in November 2007 with 939 beneficiaries and the transfer of 44,000 euros, in November 2008 with 3286 beneficiaries and the transfer of 497,000 euros and in 2009 with 1788 beneficiaries and 141,020 euros. From 2008, the operations were the first ACF experience of cash transfer project in Afghanistan without expatriate presence in the area. The good results of the projects with all the objectives reached prompts ACF to repeat these modalities of intervention. No incident happened in the time frame of these projects. The management team showed its capacity to gather and analyse necessary information and to provide the coordination team in Kabul with several options allowing a smooth implementation of the project.

Use of traditional money transfer system in remote areas where banking system is nonexistent proved to be highly effective, as well as cost-efficient and safe.

3. Objectives, Indicators and Activities

Objective 1 / Project 1: (CIAA)		Objective 2 / Project 2: (SIDA)
To prevent a worsening of nutritional and food security via food aid in the provinces of Day Kundi and Samangan, Afghanistan.		To prevent deterioration of food and nutrition security through social transfers and livelihood protection in Dare-i-Sufi Bala District, Samangan Province
Results 1	Results 2	Results 1
2,000 vulnerable families have had their access to food improved thanks to food assistance in exchange	2,000 families at risk have had their access to food increased thanks to food assistance in the Day	2,000 households have reduced their food insecurity through cash for work undertaken in hunger gap 2011, district of dares uf bala

of work in the province of Samangan, district of dare suf payin	Kundi province, district of Ashterlay	
Indicators		
<p><u>Indicator 1.1:</u> 1,800 households receive 250 kg of wheat flour, 10 kg of peas, 9.9 kg of oil and 2 kg of iodized salt, or the equivalent in coupons or cash, in exchange for 30 days of community work</p> <p><u>Indicator 1.2:</u> 200 households not strong enough to work receive 250 kg of wheat flour, 10 kg of peas, 9.9 kg of oil and 2 kg of iodized salt or the equivalent in coupons or cash</p> <p><u>Indicator 1.3:</u> 100% of households targeted have sufficient food stocks, or coupons or money to cover 50% of their theoretical needs during the 4 winter months and the pre-harvest period</p>	<p><u>Indicator 2.1:</u> 2,000 households receive 250 kg of wheat flour, 10 kg of peas, 9.9 kg of oil and 2 kg of iodized salt or equivalent in coupons or cash</p> <p><u>Indicator 2.2:</u> 100% of households targeted have sufficient food stocks, or coupons or money to cover 50% of their theoretical needs during the 4 winter months and the pre-harvest period</p>	<p><u>Indicator 1.1:</u> 100% of 1,800 targeted households with working capacities are reached through cash for work activities and have received 250 AFA per day for 24 days of work (6,000 AFA per household) in hunger gap 2011</p> <p><u>Indicator 1.2:</u> 100 % of the 200 households with no working capacities are reached through direct cash transfer and have received 66.6 AFA per day to cover their basic needs during 90 days (6,000 AFA per household) of the hunger gap 2011</p> <p><u>Indicator 1.3:</u> 100 % of the 2,000 targeted households have secured sufficient cash to cover 50 % of their theoretical food requirements for 3 months of hunger gap 2011</p>
Main Activities		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Baseline and Final Impact surveys (2) Identification of the floods affected valleys (3) Identification of the Beneficiaries Committees (4) Selection of the beneficiaries (5) Identification of work with community participation (6) Grouping workers, distribution of tools, Community work implementation and follow up (7) Cash distribution (8) Post distribution monitoring (Cash and tools) 		
Program Hypothesis ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food insecurity in the area is more related to problems of access than problems of availability ▪ Local markets are existing and functional in the area ▪ No major increase in food prices foreseen during the project period ▪ CFW shall guaranty an active participation of targeted communities 	

4. Aim of the Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are based on the standard ACF Evaluation Policy, covering the

¹¹ Program Hypothesis assume that the project has a particular objective to reach, for which cash was chosen as the most appropriate response tool over another response mechanism, e.g. in-kind, etc.

OECD DAC criteria as well as project proposal indicators agreed upon with the signature of the funds. In addition special attention shall be given to the facilitation of the cash grant transfer through Cash for Work or Direct cash transfer, the programme hypotheses, and the potential impact on the nutrition status and proxy indicators. Recommendations and lessons learned shall be well documented.

Specific attention will be given to the cash delivery mechanism set up and used by ACF in all its cash transfer projects in the country, based on the traditional *Hawala* system.

To evaluate the following aspects:

Overall Project:

- Project design - needs assessment, market assessment, partnership assessment (if need be), value of grants and frequency, grants vs kind vs vouchers; conditionality and restriction; participant targeting and selection process; cash disbursement/transfer modality, selection of monitoring indicators and tools; sensitization messages etc.
- Project implementation - against established proposal indicators, challenges encountered and solutions found, etc.. ; relevancy and efficiency of monitoring system ; efficiency of beneficiary/community sensitization to the project
- Project impact - against established proposal indicators; What direct and indirect evidence is available that the action taken contributed to the improvement of the food security and livelihood of the population? Have the stated project goal, specific objectives, and indicators - as shown in the project logical framework - been achieved, at least partly? actual change in household income, expenditure, consumption; food security and nutrition situation; influence on livelihood resiliency; change in knowledge, attitudes and practices; trainings developed and facilitated for project participants ; the use of cash ; impact on indebtedness; changes in livelihoods ; implications of cash availability to households ; implications on the work of other agencies; implications on local markets and trade ; impacts of public works asset creation on local communities ; unexpected implications externally and internally ; Are the systems or indicators used to evaluate the impact of the work adequate? Is there any way to improve the impact and its measurement?
- Project impact analysis - against participant baseline, follow up and final monitoring provided by ACF
- Up scaling - prospects of up scaling the initiative. Would this program be adequate for a massive response? Give specific consideration to disbursement/transfer modalities in case of up scaling. Potential change in business, prices, availability, etc

Additional project implementation criteria and aspects

- Sustainability - prospects for sustainability over the long term of the program as a whole and of components of the program. Is a cash for work program the best possible type of program to be implemented in order to achieve the stated objective? How long and under what circumstances will this be sustainable? Was the assistance provided in a way that took into account the longer-term context? Is there a possibility to be included into contingency plans for disaster preparedness? Did a rehabilitation or exit strategy exist in any form; was this utilized and adhered to? Do the team work out an efficient exit strategy in which local authorities and local actors are identified appropriately? Is this exit strategy process on going effectively? How is it integrated into the programme?
- Coverage - outreach and targeting through ACF; the level of coverage based targeting criteria ; Was there a fair identification and targeting of beneficiaries? Are the criteria for beneficiary identification in the different component of the programmes adequate and pertinent? Both socio - economics as well as age and gender should be considered.
- Coherence & Coordination - working relationships and collaboration with partners NGOs, consortium, government etc.; coordination with other food security and livelihood actors and local government; coordination with other relevant partners; collaboration with the transfer institution; coherence with country, donors, ACF own policies, etc.
- Relevance & Appropriateness - Was intervention appropriate to needs of population and context? Especially re. in kind vs cash vs vouchers modalities, conditionality, permitted use of cash (restriction or not), value of grant, cash delivery mechanism (*hawala*, vs other available options ?), security and control mechanisms, sustainability and scalability of the chosen transfer

mechanism. Appropriate in relation to customs, practices, social organization? Consultation process with beneficiaries on priorities? · Level of stakeholder participation in project design, implementation, monitoring? · Degree of satisfaction of beneficiaries with project? What are the challenges to ensure the proper implementation of the program? Are there recommendations and practical tools to better implement the program?

- **Effectiveness** - overall costs of cash delivery and cost of sensitization and training; comparison with potential alternatives
- **Efficiency** - timeliness of program adaptation and responsiveness; staff response times to program needs and to address problems ; cash disbursement systems ; application of monitoring tools
- **Accountability & Transparency** - level of community involvement from stakeholders; reporting to stakeholders; pro-activeness in sharing with stakeholders and availability to respond to questions from stakeholders; following appropriate financial accounting protocols; relevancy and efficiency of monitoring system ; sharing of data collected in monitoring activities; etc.
- **Community perceptions** - perceptions of the program by beneficiaries and non beneficiary populations; community leaders, other community members, money changer, vendors, other stakeholders; partner NGOs and local government officials
- **Transfer mechanism** : how has been assessed and chosen the transfer mechanism, amongst different options ; How has the system been adapted to the project needs ; Is it efficient ? ; Is it effective ? ; Is it adapted to the context and secure ? ; what is the perception of the beneficiaries of the project ?
- **Monitoring**: Which tools are developed to monitor the progress and impact of the project? Are they implemented effectively? How can they be improved? Were appropriate and relevant indicators developed for this? How is the monitoring process formalized? Is it adapted? Is the information delivered in time (monitoring data / financial follow up) in order to facilitate decision-making? If not what are the constraints and how could they be released? How have lessons learned from monitoring / evaluation been incorporated into the program, and shared with partners? Was there a mechanism which dealt with complaints / dissatisfaction in relation to the program? Are outcomes used to improve the quality of the programme?
- **Gender**: Include an analysis of the integration and participation of men and women in the project. Is gender considered in ACF's need assessment, and in the implementation of the program? Did the program include special components for women and if so, were these systematically monitored? Is the program team balanced in term of men and women?

5. Evaluation Activities and Deliverables

The evaluator will take the following steps:

- To review existing information/documentation of the project
- To undertake site visits and conduct interviews/discussions with beneficiaries, community leaders, the community at large, government officials, market actors, and relevant program partners .
- To analyze and synthesize information from the existing databases of baseline, monitoring and follow up; interpret findings; develop and discuss conclusions and recommendations; draw lessons learned
- To discuss preliminary findings of the evaluation to staff at base, capital and HQ
- To prepare a draft final report including an executive summary, a list of key lessons learned, and prioritized recommendations
- To receive, analyze and incorporate comments from ACF staff on draft report
- To submit the final report in English including:
 - DAC Table - ACF-IN subscribes to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluation: Impact, Sustainability, Coherence, Coverage, Relevance / Appropriateness, Effectiveness and Efficiency. ACF-IN also promotes systematic analysis of the monitoring system and cross cutting issues (gender, HIV/AIDS etc). All external evaluations are expected to use DAC criteria in data analysis and reporting. In particular, the evaluation must complete the following table and include it as part of the final report.
The evaluator will be expected to use the following table to rank the performance of the overall intervention using the DAC criteria. The table should be included either in the Executive Summary and/or the Main Body of the report.

Criteria	Rating (1 low, 5 high)					Rationale
	1	2	3	4	5	
Impact						
Sustainability						
Coherence						
Coverage						
Relevance/Appropriateness						
Effectiveness						
Efficiency						

- Best Practices - The evaluation is expected to provide one (1) key example of Best Practice from the project/programme. This example should relate to the technical area of intervention, either in terms of processes or systems, and should be potentially applicable to other contexts where ACFIN operates. This example of Best Practice should be presented in the Executive Summary and/or the Main Body of the report.

6. Workplan & timetable

The evaluation is planned to be implemented in June or July 2011.

Activities	Working Days
Briefings, review of documents and preparation	2
Travel to the mission (Kabul)	1
Briefing Mission, collection of secondary information and review, preparation of field work	2
Travel from capital to base (<i>Samangan Province in priority, Day Kundi if Samangan is not possible</i>)	0.5
Field Work	4
Meeting with others actors in the Field	1
Travel back from base to Capital	0.5
Meeting with other actors in capital	1
Data Analysis and preparation of the draft report	3
Debriefing in country on the basis of the draft report	0.5
Travel home	1
Finalisation of the draft report and submission	1
Debriefing HQ on base of the draft report	0.5
Inclusion of Mission and HQ feedback (feedback within 5 working days)	1
Finalization of the report on the basis of Field & H, comments	2
Mission/ HQ approval of final report (2 working days) = Invoice payment	N/A
TOTAL	19

7. Evaluator profile

The evaluator should correspond to the following profile:

- Master degree in international development, socio-economics sciences, economy,

- agronomy, project management, monitoring and evaluation
- Experience with the implementation and evaluation of cash transfer programmes, and latest developments in cash transfer programming etc.
- Experience and knowledge on ACF programme implementation and integrated approach.
- Excellent capacity to analyze, develop recommendations and capture lessons learned
- At least 5 years experience in humanitarian and development agency
- Experience in implementing or evaluation projects managed in remote and/or in unsecure context would be an asset
- Knowledge of the country and local languages is an advantage
- Ability to work autonomous, flexible, analytical and under restricted circumstances
- Fluent in English

8. Conditions & Budget

The ACF/CaLP contract is charged with the cost for this evaluation. Payment will be done on the basis of the above mentioned time table, daily fees shall be negotiated. 20% of the fees will be paid upon signing of the contract, 40% after reception of the draft report and 40% will be paid after validation of the final report. Travel, accommodation and food will be provided at ACF guesthouses at field level.

Application for the visa is the responsibility of the consultant, however these costs will be reimbursed in full upon receipt of the expenses. Evaluation costs (in country transport, evaluation team, translator...) will be covered. Insurance costs will not be covered, and the evaluator shall manage his/her own insurance, and provide the details of this cover to ACF-UK before departure.

3.4. Evaluation Criteria

ACF subscribes to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluation: Impact, Sustainability, Coherence, Coverage, Relevance / Appropriateness, Effectiveness and Efficiency. ACF also promotes systematic analysis of the monitoring system and cross cutting issues (gender, HIV/AIDS etc). All external evaluations are expected to use DAC criteria in data analysis and reporting. In particular, the evaluation must complete the following table and include it as part of the final report.

The evaluator will be expected to use the following table to rank the performance of the overall intervention using the DAC criteria. The table should be included as an Annex to the report.

Criteria	Rating (1 low, 5 high)					Rationale
	1	2	3	4	5	
Impact						
Sustainability						
Coherence						
Coverage						
Relevance/Appropriateness						
Effectiveness						
Efficiency						

3.5. Best Practices

The evaluation is expected to provide one (1) key example of Best Practice from the project/programme. This example should relate to the technical area of intervention, either in terms of processes or systems, and should be potentially applicable to other contexts where ACF operates. This example of Best Practice should be presented as an Annex to the report.

3.6. Evaluation Outputs

The result of this evaluation should be presented in a written report and through several oral presentations:

- One on the mission (to Head of Mission and relevant technical staff)
- One at HQ (in person or via teleconference).

3.7. Methodology

3.7.1. Briefing

Prior to the evaluation taking place, the evaluator is expected to attend a briefing at HQ level, and at field level with the Head of Mission and/or the relevant technical focal point. Briefings by telephone must be agreed in advance.

3.7.2. Field activities

Consultants are expected to collect an appropriate range of data. This includes (but not limited to):

- Direct information: Interviews with beneficiaries - Visit to project sites and to the facilities provided to the beneficiaries
- Indirect information: Interviews with local representatives; interviews with project staff expatriate and national staff; meeting with local authorities, groups of beneficiaries, humanitarian agencies, donor representatives and other stakeholders. For indirect data collection, standard and participatory evaluation methods are expected to be used (HH interviews and FGDs with beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, key informants - health workers, teachers and leaders)
- Secondary information analysis: including analysis of project monitoring data or of any other relevant statistical data.

3.7.3. Report

The report shall follow the following format.

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary: must be a standalone summary, describing the programme, main findings of the evaluation, and conclusions and recommendations. This will be no more than 2 pages in length.
- Main Body: The main body of the report shall elaborate the points listed in the Executive Summary. It will include references to the methodology used for the evaluation and the context of the action. In particular, for each key conclusion there should be a corresponding recommendation. Recommendations should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible; that is, they should take careful account of the circumstances currently prevailing in the context of the action, and of the resources available to implement it both locally and in the commissioning HQ. Annexes: Listed and correctly numbered. Format for the main body of the report is:
 - Background Information
 - Methodology
 - Findings & Discussions
 - Conclusions Recommendations
 - Annex I (Best Practice)
 - Annex II (DAC-based Rating Table)

The report should be submitted in the language specified in the ToR. The report should not be longer than 30 pages excluding annexes. The draft report should be submitted no later than 10 calendar days after departure from the field. The final report will be submitted no later than the end date of the consultancy contract. Annexes to the report will be accepted in the working language of the country and programme subject to the evaluation.

3.7.4. Debriefing & Learning Workshop

The evaluator should facilitate a learning workshop:

- To present the draft report and the findings of the evaluation to the Mission and other stakeholders.
- To gather feedback on the findings and build consensus on recommendations.
- To develop action-oriented workshop statements on lessons learned and proposed improvements for the future.

3.7.5. Debriefing with ACF HQ

The evaluator should provide a debriefing with the relevant ACF HQ on her/his draft report, and on the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. Relevant comments should be incorporated in the final report.

Annex VII - Interview log & Community FGD checklist

Date	When	Team	Where	Who
17th Nov 2011	am	Akram & Soraya	Giro - Awarnew	Women -
	pm		Giro - Ziratulya	Men +
	am	Sayed Hussain & Abdel Habib	Giro - Bandamorda	Men +
	pm		Giro - Ziratsufra	Men -
	am	Floor, Kubra, Salima	Giro - Nayqol	Women +
pm			Men +	
18th Nov 2011	am	Akram & Sayed Hussain	Petap - Morghak	Men +
	pm	Akram & Abdel Habib	Quchanghi - Dahane	Women +
	am	Abdel Habib	Petap - Zardsang	Men +
	pm	Sayed Hussain	Quchanghi - Dahane dewanqol	Men -
	am	Floor, Kubra & Soraya	Petap - Ghochan	Women -
	pm		Quchanghi -Dahaneqol	Men + Women +
19th Nov 2011	am	Akram, Sayed Hussain, Floor, Kubra,	Quchanghi - sub-base office	Village Committee representatives

(note: - sign notes community members who did not receive a grant and + sign notes those who did)

Checklist Community Focus Group Discussions

Introductions

- introduce each other
- check if you have the right group
- explain the purpose:
 - o The purpose is for this team to understand the impact of ACF's program in the area.

Points to cover in your discussions

(ask open questions and probe for discussion)

- What do you know about ACF ?
 - o What works well
 - o What doesn't work well
- What do you know about the cash grant that ACF distributed?
 - o Why did ACF distribute cash
 - o What worked well
 - o What didn't work well
 - o Why were they selected/not selected?
 - o How much money did they receive/or do they know was distributed
 - o When did they receive this/do they know when it was received
 - o How did the distribution work
 - Who was present
 - Representative committee
 - Money changers
 - o What did you do with the cash received (skip if they didn't receive cash)
 - 1st, 2nd & 3rd distribution
 - o What would you have done if you did not receive the cash (skip if they didn't receive)
- Where they consulted in the design/set up of the programme
- What was the impact of the cash? Positive and/or negative

- Men
- Women
- Children
- What if ACF had distributed food? What do you think?
- Have you been part of other ACF programs? Which ones?
- Are any other organizations doing a similar program in the same area?
- Do you have any recommendations for ACF?
- Do you have any questions?

THANK YOU

Annex VIII - List of Documents

General Reference Texts

- ALNAP & CHANNEL RESEARCH (2003) *Evaluation of Humanitarian Action (EHA); Course Reference Manual version 1.30.*
- BECK, T. (2006) *Evaluating Humanitarian Action using the OECD-DAC criteria*, ALNAP.
- CSO (2010) *Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2010-2011 Settled Population by Province and District*. Central Statistics Organization.
- FEWSNET (2011) *Livelihood Zoning "Plus" Activity in Afghanistan*. FEWSNET & USAID.
- FEWSNET, USAID, UKAID & WFP (2011) *A Regional View of Wheat Market and Food Security in Central Asia with a focus on Afghanistan and Tajikistan*, July.
- HARVEY, P. & BAILEY, S. (2011) *Good Practice Guide Cash Transfer Programming in Emergencies*, No. 11, Humanitarian Practice Network, 2011.
- OECD DAC (1999) *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies*.
- OXFAM (2011) *A place at the Table: Safeguarding Women's rights in Afghanistan*.

ACF General, Country and Project Documents

- ACF (2007) *ACF Evaluation Policy and Guideline (EPG), Enhancing Organisational Practice through an Integrated Evaluation, Learning & Accountability Framework*
- ACF INTERNATIONAL NETWORK (2007) *Implementing Cash Based Interventions, a guideline for aid workers*. ACF International.
- ACF INTERNATIONAL NETWORK (2010) *Food Security and Livelihood Assessments, a practical guide for fieldwork*. ACF International.

ACF Afghanistan

- ACF Afghanistan Country Strategy 2012-2014
- ACF Afghanistan Food Security Organisational Chart
- ACF Afghanistan General Information Strategy
- ACF SCAC (2009) 13 Final Financial Report
- Final Synthesis Afghanistan Strategy 2010-12
- HOUSE, S. (2011) *Humanitarian support to vulnerable households in the most water and sanitation scarce and cold regions of Afghanistan, Ghor Province July 2010 - June 2011*, End of Project External Evaluation.

E5K Documents

- AH E5K Apr-July
- E5K Cash PDM Questionnaire
- E5K Cash PDM Report
- E5K Contract
- E5K Proposal
- FFR E5K Financial Report
- LRRD Baseline Day Kundi
- Narrative Activity Progress Reports
- Post Distribution Monitoring Report Day Kundi
- Samangan Impact Survey

F7C Documents

110808 - SIDA Amendment Request FV

ACF AFGHANISTAN FOOD SECURITY LIVELIHOODS DEPARTMENT (2011) *Promotion of Women's' Education and Protection of Fragile Livelihoods in Samangan Province, Interim Project Report March - August 2011.*

EFK F7C SAM Monitoring Reports

F7C Budget

F7C Contract

F7C Project Proposal

Narrative Activity Progress Reports

Post Distribution Monitoring Report