LOST & FOUND

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE
ARMED CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN

“A generation has been lost to this war. Their schools have been minefields and their books have
been Kalashnikovs. We must find them again.”

---Elder in an IDP camp.

“A new Afghanistan should be built by a new generation.”

-----Youth leader in Kabul

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MAY 2002
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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This document summarizes factors key to the risks faced by Afghan young people aged twelve to eighteen, in any attempt for a peaceful future, as well as the protective factors that mitigate those risks. It recommends a programme to engage them in the process of rebuilding their country within the context of their overall protection and development, through support of those Afghan institutions that sustain them.

Peace treaties and laws are enacted in capital cities, but peace, or at the very least the absence of war, will be created or destroyed in Afghan villages. Peace is created as underage boys who would have been soldiers become occupied in building their futures. It is enacted as underage mothers are able to envision a non-violent future for their children through their own ability to realize educational and economic goals.

The paradox of Afghanistan lies in the fact that a careful, tradition bound upbringing has created a resilient generation now well able to envision a positive future. However defence of these vital traditions often militates against the creation of social and economic opportunities that would make that future possible. All attempts during the past hundred years to bring such changes have inadvertently rallied the population to war in order to defend against the imposition of alien ideas that could present a threat to the culture that has nurtured and preserved them. Thus the risk factors are embedded in the traditions that create resilience. Young people need the means to start rebuilding; existing social structures need strengthening so that change is developed from within rather than being imposed from without.

This document summarizes:
- the social and personal resources that have facilitated young people’s growth and development, despite the difficulties
- the key risk factors for girls and boys 12-18 years of age in the post-conflict period, especially those resulting in militarisation
- findings in regard to underage boys associated with the fighting forces are detailed separately

It elaborates a programme that engages the strengths of young people to minimize those risks and channel their energies toward peaceful development while preserving and strengthening the positive aspects of the existing social order.

BACKGROUND

Forty-nine per cent of the population of Afghanistan is under eighteen years of age. All 10.24 million of these young people were born into the conditions and consequences of armed conflict, natural disaster and political repression that characterized the last twenty-three years of Afghan history. Social indicators, never high, fell to among the lowest in the world, and the infrastructure has almost completely collapsed. Children and young people have been particularly affected by the massive displacement, war-related violence
and exploitation that have accompanied these disasters. Wide-spread human rights violations, especially discriminatory policies and practices, have denied girls and young women access to schools and employment. These factors have left many young people in abject poverty, working on the streets and in exploitative conditions, with very young boys becoming the primary breadwinner in female headed households. Boys under eighteen have been consistently recruited to participate in the hostilities by all sides. At least 105,000 of these have already been returned to their communities by commanders and local authorities and remain without reintegration assistance. ¹By contrast, young girls have been systematically excluded by all warring factions from participating in any meaningful way in their country’s life. Some risked imprisonment and beatings to study in home based schools, or worked secretly at home to assist the family’s income. Those who married in early adolescence find themselves presented with cultural barriers to returning to school. Others may be without either protection or livelihood, placing them at risk for exploitation, trafficking, substandard working conditions and other forms of abuse.

In spite of all of this, the social fabric has not unravelled. It is this Afghan resilience that must be appreciated and incorporated for any social program to succeed.

Lack of opportunity to change the difficult conditions of their lives is the major source of anger and frustration among young people. In the past they have gone to war to change the conditions that caused such anger and frustration. The challenge of the post conflict period is to create opportunities for peaceful development in ways that are sufficiently respectful of the factors that have preserved the social fabric as to be acceptable to the population as a whole.

The purpose of this document is to provide an analysis of the situation of young people, aged twelve to eighteen, in post conflict Afghanistan in order to elaborate a programme that will make the opportunities that they want a concrete possibility within the social reality to which they are also intensely loyal.

METHODOLOGY

The information necessary for the preparation of this document was compiled by a team of six UNICEF staff; two international protection officers, three national protection officers and a consultant specialist. The national officers also provided translation.

Each member of the team reviewed the available literature, and conducted unstructured interviews with knowledgeable persons at the relevant United Nations Agencies, the Interim Administration of Afghanistan and non-governmental organizations. In addition, interviews were conducted with key informants in each area of the country visited by the team including commanders, religious leaders, teachers, and intellectuals.

¹ This estimate is derived from estimations by commanders and police. It does not include those areas (such as in the Western and Central regions) where the commanders did not give any figure. Therefore, the number is considered low.
Finally, focus group discussions guided by a questionnaire were held with mothers, fathers, girls, boys, as well as elders and community leaders. A problem solution matrix was also used to get the views of the young people interviewed on the future of the society as a whole.

Visits were made to thirteen provinces. Cities as well as countryside areas were visited in each province. Both educated and uneducated persons from all ethnic groups living in the region were included.

Some provinces were not visited due to logistical constraints. Others were not visited due to an unstable security situation at the time of the assessment.

This document reviews the findings of this investigation.

Definitions

**Risk and resilience:**
Specific factors help children, families and communities to endure in spite of severe hardship and multiple stressors. This endurance, and even favourable growth and development despite extra-ordinary stress, is known as resilience.

A particular indicator of resilience is the way in which families are able to continue to undertake a careful upbringing of children despite hardship and disruption: i.e. provide constant caregivers in early life who give affection along with feeding, gradually impart the rules of the community and a sense of right and wrong, and support the gradual development of independence within culturally defined structures.

Among the key factors that promote resilience in Afghan society are:
- attention and care to upbringing
- a stable relationship with at least one significant and caring adult
- religious and spiritual life, participation in traditional activities
- group solidarity
- community support

**Young people:**
In order to plan programme for any age group, one should understand that age group as they are understood by their community and as they understand themselves. Growing up involves biological, psychological and social processes, all in continuing interaction with one another. Biologically, adolescence is marked by puberty or the development of secondary sexual characteristics and sexual capacity, as well as the capacity for complex reasoning and independent thought. In Afghanistan, there is no word for adolescence; however, the developmental course associated with that stage is clearly demarcated, as are the associated responsibilities.2 The word associated with this period, starting at twelve, is “shwanju” in Pashtu and “jawan” in Dari. Both translate as “young.”

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2 Ages are approximate as there is no birth registration, and illiterate people may count years in a variety of ways.
Independent cognition is understood by Afghan parents to come subsequent to puberty, at ages varying from twelve to fifteen. However, cognition does not bring the right to speak one’s mind or participate fully in community affairs. Usually that right is conferred to boys at twenty-two to twenty-five and to girls at the birth of the first living child. In Dari there is an expression, “jawan now” or newly young, which refers to the ages between twelve and twenty-two years of age.

It should be noted that the age of eighteen, an important marker in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is not a meaningful one in Afghan society. Rather, the period from twelve to fourteen, i.e., puberty constitutes one marker, and the age of twenty-two to twenty-five constitutes another. That is part of the reason that some military commanders, exhorted to no longer recruit twelve-year-olds, state that they will recruit only those over twenty-two.³

In this document, the term "young people" will be used for those twelve to eighteen years of age.

**Child soldiers:**

Child soldier refers to any person less than eighteen years of age who is part of any regular or irregular armed force or group. The category encompasses all child or adolescent participants regardless of function. Cooks, porters, messengers, those recruited for sexual purposes and other support roles are included as well as those considered combatants. Both those forcibly recruited as well as those who joined voluntarily are included here.

In this document, as during the assessment, the term underage participants is used whenever possible, since those over twelve or thirteen years are generally not considered children in Afghanistan, as stated above.

**ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS**

**Roles and responsibilities of young people in Afghanistan**

**The family context:**

Afghans, like many people throughout the world, live in extended families. These families are part of tribal groups, and each tribal group normally comprises a cluster of villages. In time of trouble, the extended family protects its members and accepts them back whenever they should need to return. Orphans and those who have been away are traditionally welcomed into the extended family. Despite the lengthy war, unaccompanied children are not a significant problem. Similarly, young people leaving the fighting forces are in contact with their families and expected to simply go home.

³ (The age of twenty-two to twenty-four for mandatory universal military service was in force during the reign of the late king.)
Family homes are built behind compound walls that provide privacy and security. Within the walls of the compound a woman can walk unveiled and a small child can freely toddle from place to place. City girls do exercises and play sports. Brothers and sisters of any age can laugh and play together if they choose. A general atmosphere of security and freedom prevails. Both in the cities and in the countryside, houses are large so that a number of families can live within, all guided by male elders.

While children begin to work along with their mothers at about four years old, and boys accompany the older boys at about seven, adolescence brings new restrictions and responsibilities.

Young people, (jawan now) are said to be characterized by impatience and by action.

**Work:** Young people are expected to contribute to the family income in most families. Girls do tailoring work as well as carpet weaving or embroidery (work done at home) in addition to schoolwork and household chores. Boys work with their older siblings, uncles or fathers. Landless boys are expected to sell their labour. Again, those who attend school may interrupt work for school hours.

**Marriage** Girls should marry from fourteen to sixteen years, unless they come from an educated family, where marriage is normally delayed until high school graduation. Boys marry when they or their family can raise the bride price, even in educated families. Boys from poor families must plan for this from twelve or thirteen onwards, if they don’t want to wait until “the beard is already grey.” Bride price can be the cause of indebtedness, loss of resources and a great worry, given the severe restrictions on sexual life outside of marriage, for impoverished young men.

**Participation in War:** Boys have traditionally been expected to follow their brothers into war at twelve or thirteen. Among Pashtun families, younger boys were taught to handle weapons, but twelve or thirteen was considered the right age to defend one’s family and community.

**Special restrictions on girls:** Girls are allowed to run and to play until the age of twelve. Some girls even work in the street before that age. When they turn twelve, they should begin to restrict their movements, and cover themselves when going out of the family compound unless it is for farm work. *A girl who is married cannot attend school with other girls, as her knowledge of sexual secrets will act as a temptation for them, and cause them to become promiscuous.*
Positive changes in the Post conflict Era

“We Afghans have been tricked --- we were told that we were brave fighters and then we had to fight everyone --- but now we are illiterate --- and all of the people who urged us to fight their wars for them are rich while we have nothing.”

-- Boy in an IDP camp Mazar-i-Sharif

“Collect all the guns. We don’t want them. In fact, sell them and buy us tables and chairs for our school.”

--- Teacher in Kandahar

Popular Support for a General Disarmament

In focus group discussion as well as meetings with key informants, the question “when is the right age for a child to first bear arms?” was greeted with a negative response. In Bamyan, a group of men insisted that the interviewer remove a question from her questionnaire, asserting that the right age to bear arms is “never.” In an IDP camp outside of Mazar-i-Sharif, spontaneous shouts of "no more guns!" resounded throughout the field where participants had gathered. A large group surrounded the vehicle and asked, through the elders, when the UN would come and collect all the guns so that they could live in peace and security. Young people in school asked if there was anything in the community that they didn’t like, often answered “men with guns.” Men in a hospital based focus group talked freely of the fact that having guns at home was normal, but that they did not want to continue the practice of encouraging their children to use them. “Let them go to school instead – let them outsmart the enemy!”

While this evidence is purely anecdotal, it denotes a marked difference from past practice among those living within Afghanistan.

Strong support for public education

There is great and burgeoning national enthusiasm for going to school. (Children, when asked what they like best in their day, uniformly answer makh'tav, or school.) The Ministry of Education/ UNICEF sponsored “back to school” campaign registered 1.5 million children. As of April 2002, attendance was estimated at 2.8 million. In 1980, Afghanistan had an illiteracy rate of 89% due in part to parents' refusal to send their children to school as part of a government campaign. The figures given here are said to represent over 75% of Afghan children over 7 who are believed to be attending school regularly, with the number increasing daily. (In the south and east, the numbers and percentage of those attending are considerably lower, but even there support for education is growing, at least for boys and girls under twelve.) In the central region, school officials say that they can no longer accommodate new students. In the Northern provinces and in Herat, the schools run four shifts a day rather than turn students away.
Community coping mechanisms/key protective factors

Like the wall around the family compound, community coping mechanisms in Afghanistan revolve around circumscribed structures within the confines of which people can express themselves freely. They fall into three categories:

Celebrations of joy, of the continuity of tradition, of holy places
- Weddings, births, children's first birthdays (complete with singing and dancing by women in their private quarters).
- Important religious feasts.
- Visits to shrines (often by women in groups) for walks, talks, and worship.
- Family picnics in parks or green spaces, which are themselves construed as structures that in keeping with Sufi tradition prevalent in the south and west honour God in nature.

Reliance on elders and institutional structures for problem-solving/ conflict-resolution and psychosocial support
- Elders resolve intra-family conflicts.
- The village shura or jirga, a council of elders, will listen to disputes between families and apply wisdom and equitable judgement to economic and community-wide problems as well. In the north, a separate women's shura can be convened to address women's problems.
- The community provides material support for families in dire straits; the extended family takes care of its own widows and orphans.
- Affiliation with approved societies, including literary associations, sports clubs for boys, and community organizations provide social outlets and support.
- Emotional problems of children and adults are resolved by mullahs who specialize in traditional healing techniques, as well as women healers sometimes called tawizgar, adagar, or bachshi

Creative expression in traditional form
- Story-telling, especially by grandmothers, who bear tradition with them.
- Reciting traditional poetry, or composing and reciting new poems adapting old forms.
- Studying the Koran (cited by at least one of every focus groups of girl respondents)

Mechanisms that are in place
Community organizations are very much in place. Afghan men in particular, like to meet and discuss things. Boys attend sports clubs, and traditional literary societies are prevalent among educated boys and girls in the west, north and central regions --- only boys attend in the south and east.

UN - Habitat community fora have been very successful because they are viewed as part of this tradition. A difficulty is that so are the many military factions, which have political wings and hold well attended meetings.
Mechanisms that have recently been restored
Families are beginning to sing and dance again at weddings. Women, forbidden to assemble during the Taliban years with the result that all normal outlets were removed to cumulative effect, are singing and dancing again, too, and playing the drum. Moreover, they are now freely visiting shrines and starting to go to parks, which are being repaired through voluntary effort.

Mechanisms that need to be strengthened
The shura and the elders were considered fair and equitable in the past. They were also repositories of information needed for family and economic life. Now people in some villages say that they are biased and selfish or connected with the interests of the more powerful. They are also often “out of the loop” in terms of being able to provide social protection to the community. Lack of belief in the shura has contributed to feelings of hopelessness.

Extended families are pressed to care for all of their members in the face of vast numbers of heads of households who have died, disappeared, or departed for other countries. Widows and orphaned children feel increasingly unwelcome in their extended families; still, they have nowhere else to turn.

Most young people report that there is no longer regular story-telling at home. Instead everyone works to the point of exhaustion and goes to bed; those in the city watch TV. Notably, however, both girls and boys who belonged to structured clubs and organisations that support action and self-expression were able to be more hopeful about the future.

Sources of war-related distress identified by young people
Young people were asked to delineate sources of ongoing distress. As this list indicates, loss and disability of male family members, combined with drought and destruction of infrastructure to create a widespread and disabling poverty. This poverty was made worse by prevention of adult women working outside of the home, and the removal of male supporters of previous regimes from government jobs.

While the last restrictions have now lifted, families who sold possessions to survive that period continue to suffer. Where death, dismemberment, illness or immigration of able bodied adult men were the cause, the families continue to suffer.

Further, those who return from displacement often find homes destroyed, land used by others, and possessions once abandoned now looted. All of this combines to cause the major and continuing stressors of war. The following items were delineated by young people in order of importance.

- Relentless Poverty
  - Lack of access to appropriate education
  - Lack of access to land or work
  - Early marriage of girls (twelve years)
Boys as primary breadwinner

- Loss of loved persons
- Fear of bodily harm
- Intrusive thoughts related to war and violence

Poverty, combined with the emotional stressors listed above cause stress among adults: parents and teachers.
- Distress or sadness of parents and teachers
- Quarrels in the family
- Feelings of aggressiveness that are difficult to control except through picking fights or smoking hashish⁴

Special issues for girls

While girls have traditionally been subject to seclusion, especially in the south and east, and have married young; the last years have excluded them from education and all work outside the home.

The age for marriage has got younger, starting at twelve years instead of fourteen to sixteen years, and in some cases as young as eight or ten, although this is frowned upon by society.⁵

Those who have married must remain in relative seclusion and are denied the opportunities being made available to their peers. Unable to exercise agency in many areas, they run the risk of passing their anger on to their children and encouraging another generation to fight.

Some young mothers in the countryside are not only sad, but malnourished along with their babies. However, culture precludes them from staying in the feeding centres designed to help them. Instead, they take their portions of nutritional supplements and return home. Maternal sadness and lack of stimulation can lead to poor cognitive development on the part of their babies.

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⁴ Hashish is readily available in the market and as common in families as alcohol in the west. Drinking alcohol is illegal, and smoking opium considered dangerous.
⁵ In the western region, the custom of dousing oneself with petrol and threatening suicide to protest unwanted marriage is increasing.
UNDERAGE PARTICIPATION IN FIGHTING FORCES

Who joined:
- boys only
- twelve years and above
- from poor families

Reasons for joining:
- **Recruitment by fighting forces**
  - Taliban and other commanders demanded a son from each family who could not afford to pay a monetary tax. Families chose younger ones hoping that they would not be placed at risk. Families with land offered the son of their poorer tenants. Some were chosen as “wives” of commanders.
- **Lack of economic alternatives**
  - Areas stricken by drought left rural families destitute. Animals and land were sold. The industrial sector had already been destroyed and there was no way for civil society to absorb new workers. Association with the forces brought food and clothing to the child and in the south during the previous regime, money to the family.
- **Lack of alternative activities**
  - After 1992, there were few activities in rural areas to engage young people. Many joined the fighting forces for something to do that allowed them to participate in building the future.

Girls who are married young and locked indoors without social outlets or education can become angry and frustrated. Yet they have few places to air these frustrations. Whether the sadness registered in many young mothers can be shown as maternal depression or simply “maternal sadness”, it often is relieved by the transmission to boy children of the need and desire to fight, as the poem above, volunteered from memory by a girl student, illustrates. Boys’ have concurred, attributing their fighting to revenge. While the revenge is usually couched in terms of recent events, susceptibility begins at home. Mothers, who are unable to act violently or to beat their children, may be prone to encourage them to violence.

Research shows that these effects can be mitigated by economic opportunity and outlet --- economic activity is also aggressive--- and this may be more helpful than counselling.

*If you do not fall a martyr in the battle of Maiwand
Then darling the times preserve you for future disgrace.”*
Fragment of a poem by Malalai, Afghan woman poet and heroine
Quoted by a school girl in Taloquan, translated by the School Director)
- **Ideological commitment**
  Some joined out of an idealistic desire to contribute positively to the communities that they lived in. Some had witnessed atrocities and or had seen family members killed. They sought to save the rest of the community by heroic action. Such desires for contribution to society are among the development tasks of adolescence.

- **Accompanying family members**
  Many boys went along with brothers and other family members. In most parts of the country, boys and men going off to fight was a common cultural experience.

- **The call of the commander**
  Once in the command structure the commander has a powerful influence over the boys. They often admire him and feel close to him. Boys who were sexual partners, like girls, often feel strongly attached as well as disgusted and abused. Since October, commanders in areas where there is a renewal of active fighting have called men who were once boy soldiers back to resume the fight.

- **Sense of power and importance**
  Some young people went to the military because lack of opportunity, and extreme poverty made them feel inferior to others in the community. The gun they carried gave them a sense of power and importance.

- **Wanted an alternative to village life**
  A number of boys who were interviewed had been unhappy at home or had disliked farming intensely. While some followed family members to the frontline or went after an atrocity was committed, or both, this was also a motivation. The boys who cited this concern are all still with the forces.

- **Usually a combination of factors plays a role.**

**Nature of wartime experience:**
To some degree, the war time experience of underage participants differed along regional lines. The official “jihad” against the soviets, in which almost every family sent their sons, including more middle class and educated, ended in 1992, when these boys were eight years old or younger.

**North and Northeast**
The constantly moving frontline in this area required soldiers for many purposes. Atrocities, bombings and forced displacements took place in the cities as well as the countryside. Underage were recruited by all sides in these regions and most were utilized by all sides at one time or another in the course of the fighting. It is estimated that 75% of the boys between 12 and 18 in this region participated. Atrocities in 1998 and 1999 against the Hazara fuelled recruitment.

**East and Southeast**
During the Jihad, “everyone” sent their boys, as “everyone” wanted to participate. The real enthusiasts stayed in Peshawar with their commanders, leading to some suspected
abuse of the under-aged boys. The others went to the mountains and fought and died with their elder brothers.

Under the Taliban, this was the recruitment pattern:
1) Those who wished to play no role in the fighting pay money only—for city families in Nangahar known to oppose them (Nangahar)
2) in areas where population is loyal --- everyone must send people (close to the south, such as Helmand Nimroz)
3) In the countryside, poor families with many children sent them for feeding

Southern Region
The Commander estimated 35,000 underaged recruits had been disarmed and sent home. Some were recruited through a family tax requiring at least one child or a cash contribution. Some went along with older siblings. Some joined for something to do and something to eat. The drought meant that many families were starving. Others wanted to participate in a cause.

Sexual involvement with commanders and others in the fighting forces was assumed to be part of their duties in this region as this is a long well documented tradition. However the actual incidence should be studied.

None under 16 years had been to the front lines, according to the commanders. Those from 16 and over also had fought briefly with the NATO forces, reporting a positive experience

Western Region
The governor declined to give any numbers of underage who may have participated in the recent past. Officials state that they only accept those 22 and over as “nowa jowan” are considered too erratic to make good soldiers. There is no evidence of current underage participation in the fighting forces in the city, according to observation, UNSMA, ICRC, and NGO sources.

During the anti-Soviet period, most boys joined at 13 or 14 in non-combat roles, some for ideology, others for adventure, still others as a way out of poverty on the farm. However, poor children, especially in Ghor region, undoubtedly participated on all sides during all phases of the war. These were conscripted by the Taliban on a one family/ one son basis.

Activities of underage soldiers

Contact with family
All soldiers saw their families regularly. Those who were at the front went home between battles; those who were in the barracks were in compounds very near to home. Some slept there at night.
Those who were sexual partners did not go to the front line, but served tea to the commander and others at his residence. They were also free to visit their families frequently.

**Military training**

Only older boys who were close to the “high command” received formal military training. The others were taught to clean, shoot and to load ammunition into weapons if they did not already know how to do so.

**Scope of activities**

Many of the activities are common to all underage soldiers in other parts of the world and previous reports. Some are specific to the region.

- Cook and clean the barracks
- Guard and patrol
- Clean and maintain weapons
- Serve as sexual partners

Those that served on the frontline:

- Carry supplies, weapons and ammunition to the frontline
- Dig trenches
- “hold positions”
- Search for the wounded
- Search for dismembered bodies to bury
- Bury the dead

**Involvement in fighting**

- Those under eighteen denied direct participation in battle
- They did participate in dangerous frontline activities (see above)
- They were exposed to death, loss and dismemberment on the battlefield

**Current Status of Underage Soldiers:**

**Those who have returned home**

**Defeated forces:**

- In most regions, following the defeat of their command structure, the underage combatants were sent home
- 500 underage captured in the Northern region by Jumbish – i- Melli were imprisoned and released as part of a New Year’s agreement. They were taken to Kabul by bus and returned to their communities
- Where underage members were serving in home barracks, they were allowed to return home spontaneously.

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6 Holding positions involved being left in a recently captured location to “hold the position.” The youngsters reported that they normally surrendered to whichever force arrived, at which time they either fought with that group or were sent home. They were then normally re-recruited by another faction.
Other forces:
The other factions have also sent underage participants home in large numbers. Their motivations are:
- They are no longer needed
- The higher-ranking commanders wish to be seen as conforming to western norms.
- The new Afghan army, which will be formed and financed with assistance from foreign governments, will only accept older soldiers, and therefore it is best for each commander to fill his ranks with them
- Boy consorts to commanders are an embarrassment.7

Difficulties faced by returned underage soldiers
- Continuing poverty
- Lack of skills
- Lack of education
- Loss of status
- Loss of command structure
- Loss of comrades and friends

Those who fought on the “front lines”
- Psychological sequelae of violent experiences
- Psychological sequelae of death and loss

For those who were conscripted to fight against their communities
- Community suspicion
- Risk of criminalization
- Stigmatisation for presumed sexual abuse

Those who remain within the command structure

Reasons for remaining within the command structure:
- Satisfaction of being part of a victorious army
- Loyalty and attachment to their wartime commanders
- New shoes and uniforms make them feel important
- Sports and games instead of fighting
- Reluctance or unwillingness to return to farming
- Landlessness and lack of alternative income

New recruits8

Eastern region
- Underage younger brothers join commanders in support functions while they recruit former fighters for the war against Al Qaeda

7 A February 2002 ordinance by the governor of Kandahar forbid anyone under eighteen to sleep in or near the barracks.
8 While these appear to represent very small numbers, figures were unavailable
- Commanders support family members through performance of support functions
- Underage have been promised education in exchange for support services

**Southern region**
- “temporary armies” formed by those anxious to guard political power include underage
- Commanders have resumed liaison with former sexual partners

**Northern and North-eastern regions**
- Loyal young relatives are being recruited as bodyguards of commanders
- Young relatives are joining as cooks and cleaners for material assistance

**Central region**
- Recruitment by ideological factions outside of the current government include underage

These youngsters have only recently joined the military and therefore pose less risk upon being demobilised. For that reason it is urgent to return them to their former life.

The new recruits in the north and east say that they would be happy for other work and don’t want to fight. They are interested in what benefits can be provided to them. They have not been paid for their current work but do get uniforms and good food.

Of grave concern are the new recruits to various defeated forces, as these will be subject to ideological indoctrination.

**Key risk factors supporting return to war**

**Poppy growing/Poppy Eradication**
Poppy growing was cited by some underage soldiers as the only lucrative source of income in their home district. Illegal activity is in itself a dangerous temptation and can lead to a new kind of violence.

International and Afghan forces have now begun a program of poppy eradication. However, the eradication itself can also create instability where populations are threatened with a loss of livelihood. This creates a threat of popular militias taking up arms against the troops responsible for the eradication.

**The danger of recruitment and re-recruitment**
Fighting, or “jhiang” is an historic way of life in all parts of Afghanistan. When a young man wants to earn, redress grievances, or participate in solidarity with others, he gathers his brothers and goes to war.

A large number of underage young people who participated in the conflict are now at home. They lack skills, opportunities for age appropriate education and income generation. **Without opportunities to participate in peace building and development, they will have no option but return to war.**
Some of these young people have participated with factions now out of favour with either government or their home communities. Assurance of amnesty is vital to their reintegration rather than returning to war.

**The absence of the social provision**

The social provision has been notably absent from the public sphere in Afghanistan. Attempts throughout the twentieth century to address inequality and illiteracy were rebuffed by the population because they were widely viewed as the superimposition of external models and were not built around local and communal structures and concepts.

**Lack of opportunity**

However, just as the imposition of alien or imported ideas and values that oppose the essential structure of life represent risk and have promoted war in Afghanistan, so too the absence of opportunity has created dangerous degrees of disaffection among young people. For boys it is the risk of recruitment and re-recruitment. For girls there is the danger inherent in their level of anger and its effect on their role as mothers cited above.

*This paradox, coupled with the psychosocial stressors outlined earlier in this document, lead to anger, frustration and the need to resolve problems in some known way. Drug abuse and family violence are two outlets. The militarisation of society, as a personal and a political solution, is the other.*

**STRATEGY**

Since these risks are imbedded into the very structure of Afghan society which generations of young people have given their lives to defend, all interventions must be strategically imbedded in that structure to be effective and sustainable. At the same time it is essential to insure that those institutions supporting the structure be strengthened so that they are able to defend the rights of all young people for protection and development.

Right now, young men mobilize in order to meet the practical needs that they find in their communities and at home, both material, spiritual, and emotional. In order to counter that, they must not be de-mobilized, but rather re-mobilized into organizations that can solve their problems in a pro-social and pro-active way.

In order to insure the success of such programs, work must be done with local village structures, especially the shura. The elders of the community must feel part of the process from the beginning. If the complex roles that the shura is asked to take on become too onerous for a small group, that process will encourage the expansion of the group and may allow the inclusion of skilled women.

While urgent action is needed, Afghan institutional capacity must be built to sustain any programs that are developed, monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and build new ones as they are needed.
In order to address these issues appropriately, short medium and long term methods must be employed:

- **Short term:**
  
  *Action initiative*
  
  Support for the development of young people’s clubs in the countryside, and enlargement of their activities in the cities (where they already exist) to provide a basis of activity for vulnerable youth. While a separate program is elaborated for demobilised child soldiers, all vulnerable young people should have access to the same club on an age-group basis.

  *Institutional support:*
  
  Build the capacity immediately of the Department of Literacy in the Ministry of Education to resume its previous function in regard to the provision of second chance education in every district. In the countryside that education can form the basis for the young people’s clubs.

- **Medium term:**
  
  *Capacity building*
  
  Build the capacity of those who work with youth to understand their needs for protection and development so that they can provide a better level of on going care. This includes teachers, police, health care workers, and workers in non-governmental organizations

  Build the capacity of the existing social institutions that affect young people to support their rights for protection and development: the shura, the police and the military.

  Enhance the capacity of the shura or jirga to perform its function in the area of conflict resolution and community reconciliation through capacity building on family and community mediation and institutional mourning.

- **Long term:**
  
  *Institutional support for social work*
  
  Support the capacity of Kabul University, to educate Afghan professionals in professional social work and child development in order to provide guidance, monitoring and evaluation for youth development programs in the future.

  Support the development of an Inter-ministerial Committee on Youth whose goal is to coordinate social support for vulnerable young people and families.
PROGRAMME

PART I DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION OF CHILD SOLDIERS

Demobilisation in Afghanistan

The main aims of a demobilisation exercise in the Afghan context are:
- to propose a solution for the high militarisation and address the need for a general disarmament in the Afghan society;
- foster a durable peace and reconciliation, by re-establishing, among others, principles of justice and human rights promotion and respect;
- develop a preventive approach by trying to address the conditions that make enlistment as combatants the only option for youth at risk;
- Involve all actors that are likely to play a role within the process.

Three main areas are identified for the process of demobilisation and reintegration of under-18 involved with the fighting forces:
- establish a demobilisation and reintegration framework;
- support the reintegration of those who have returned;
- support the demobilisation and reintegration of those who are currently with armed groups.

Problem statement I: Child-appropriate demobilisation and reintegration framework

Under-age persons who are/have been associated with the fighting forces constitute a particularly vulnerable group throughout the process of demobilisation and reintegration. As they demobilise and return to their communities they may find themselves unable to earn a living or adapt to peaceful life and end up being involved again with armed groups. A child-focused demobilisation framework should provide for legal and social protection measures and guidance for a child appropriate process of demobilisation for these groups.

Phase I – Demobilisation framework

Recommendation:
Provide with a framework for the demobilisation, reintegration and protection of under-18 who have been associated with armed forces. This framework must include guiding principles for the demobilisation of those who are currently with the fighting forces and protect for those who have been already demobilised, ensuring the respect of the higher standards of care and protection throughout the process, independently from any political or other consideration that may guide the broader reconciliation process.
Interventions:

Elaborate a framework for the demobilisation, reintegration and protection of under-18 who have been associated with armed forces, to be used as only national reference to guide the demobilisation and reintegration process of under-eighteen.

The framework will provide for the following (indicative):
- Demobilisation process will be carried out according to the Cape Town principles and be based on best practices: no “one man one gun principle”
- The framework will include provision for amnesty for under-eighteen
- Spontaneous return to communities should continue and be encouraged
- All children regardless of the forces with which they were affiliated will be demobilised
- A civilian authority is responsible for the process with the support of child focused agencies, including providing with relevant information for reintegration
- Services will be provided to youth within the community without need for documentation.
- Monitoring and evaluation will follow the process
- A preparedness plan to respond to the eventuality of an official mass demobilisation.
- Provisions forbidding under-eighteen recruitment are included with consequences for those violating the provision
- Special provisions for groups that may be particularly vulnerable: disabled, IDPs, refugees
- A preparedness plan for different demobilisation scenario will be included

Action point:
- A working-group composed of child focused agencies, in collaboration with AIA and UNAMA, elaborates the child demobilisation and reintegration framework and plan of action. A child protection officer is associated to the national co-ordinating body throughout the process.
- The framework is officially adopted by the relevant authority and becomes part of the national DDR framework.
- Focal point for child DDR should be established at provincial level
- All concerned actors, at central and decentralised level, are trained and instructed to follow the provisions of the child focused process.
- Preparedness plan is elaborated by child focused agencies in case of official demobilisation.

Partners: UNAMA, WB, Child focused agencies National Commission for Demobilisation and Reintegration (Afghan New Beginnings Program)
Problem statement II: Reintegration of demobilised youth

Many underaged formerly associated with the fighting forces have already returned to their communities. As many have been fighting for a long time and have missed on normal development and educational opportunities, specific services and opportunities should be made available to them via community structures. Opportunities must be created as soon as possible to avoid risk of re-recruitment and build trust in the peace and reconciliation process.

Phase II – Support to the reintegration of demobilised youth who have returned to their communities

Recommendation:

Provide with a programme framework and specific community based interventions to support the reintegration of those who have been recently returned, including educational, economic opportunities and psychosocial support. The community based child protection committees or the local shura, if the committee is not established yet, is responsible for the process.

Interventions:

- The community based child protection committees or the local shura, is instructed and trained to support the process of reintegration of young people.
- A project in support to the reintegration of young people is designed and resources are made available. The project will include:
  - Through a focal person, community “Youth clubs”, will be developed former child-combatants, are provided with information about education and other opportunities and begin to engage in psycho-social activities including discussions regarding community service and sustainable income generation, sports and cultural activities.
  - Second chance education for demobilised and reintegrated youth is provided by the department of literacy programme
  - Provide with livelihood enhancement opportunities: a) A survey of economic and development opportunities in the selected regions; b) set up income generation activities with the involvement of local authorities. Eventually a local plan to support sustainable income generation will be developed
  - Youth enrol in community service projects and are trained on such issues as health promotion, environmental activities.
  - Youth participating in the program are provided with WFP ration card for full participation
  - Youth are given information about HIV/AIDS and develop methods of peer education
Action point:

- Implementing NGOs with appropriate expertise train local responsible authorities on the process.
- They negotiate and agree with local authorities on the project framework in support to youth reintegration.
- Agreements are concluded with implementing NGO partners to co-ordinate all aspects of the programme.
- Liaise with the local structure in charge of the national reconstruction and rehabilitation programme (Habitat, UNDP) to ensure youth participation both in the planning and implementation phase
- Through implementing partners, and based on existing experience (HABITAT) Youth clubs/youth clubs are set up. This includes the provision of recreation kit, training of youth leaders.
- Link with Literacy department to insure their capacity and readiness to provide the needed services in all areas.
- Necessary supply and material (for education, vocational training, recreation, and community service) is provided according to agreed plans.

**Partners:** UNAMA, HABITAT, UNDP, NGOs, (initially CFA, GTZ) Literacy Department, WFP, other youth organizations where they exist

**Problem statement III: Demobilisation and reintegration of under-18 currently with the fighting forces**

**Some under-eighteen are currently associated with armed groups.** Before and during the official demobilisation begins the under-eighteen will have to return home. Some are particularly difficult to reach and/or may prefer to remain with the military structure. Specific measures must be taken to prepare for and encourage their demobilisation and facilitate the process of reintegration and build trust in the peace and reconciliation. If alternatives are not provided the risk of re-recruitment is very high.

**Phase III – Demobilisation and reintegration of those who are currently with the fighting forces**

**Recommendation:**
- Carry out an advocacy and information campaign to encourage the demobilisation and return of under-eighteen and ensure that all newly demobilised children receive relevant information, including on the programmes available in the communities. Community committees, with the support of child focused agencies in case of massive official demobilisation, are responsible for receiving the former combatants and ensure their access to support services.
Interventions:

- An advocacy and information campaign to encourage demobilisation and return of under-eighteen will target military commanders, community leaders, youth still associated with armed groups.
- *All demobilized children to receive health screening*
- According to the type of demobilisation (official or spontaneous), child focus agencies/focal points or community committees will provide demobilised children with information on the process.
- In case of official massive demobilisation rapid response from child focused agencies will include: child-protection focal points at the demobilisation points to receive the children and inform them on the process; ensure that children receive appropriate information and are referred to the responsible for programme.
- Both in case of official and spontaneous demobilisation, they are offered the support programme provided as per phase II.

Action points:

- The campaign is organised in collaboration with central and local authorities, UNAMA and Human rights organisations, youth clubs for those already demobilized, other youth organizations.
- Central and local Radio and Television and other broadcasting agencies are involved.
- In case of official mass demobilisation child focused agencies implement preparedness plan (as per demobilisation framework).
- Existing programmes in support to the reintegration of youth are strengthened with additional resources.
- Young excombatants are referred to youth clubs for membership.

Partners: UNAMA, HABITAT, UNDP, Radio and Television, NGOs (CRS, CFA, Save/Alliance, AABRAR)

Problem statement IV: Monitoring the demobilisation and return process

Children who were associated with the fighting forces that have demobilised and return constitute a particularly vulnerable group. They are at risk of marginalisation, of being attracted by the military life again or by illicit activities. It is very important to monitor the reintegration process of demobilised groups.

Recommendation: Monitoring and Evaluation for phase I, II and III

- A monitoring mechanism must be set in place to monitor the movement of return of children associated with the fighting forces, how the process took place/was followed and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their reintegration process.

Interventions:

- At national level a focal point is identified to monitor the implementation and respect of the DDR framework for children, and the on going demobilisation, return and recruitment.
• At local level, community committees and NGO implementing partners monitor the reintegration via youth clubs/NGO
• Make sure that specific and appropriate indicators to monitor the situation of these groups are integrated in the Community based monitor and evaluation mechanisms and people are trained on their use
• All information is directed to the national focal point

Action points:
• Identify national focal point for monitoring and evaluation of the children demobilisation and reintegration process
• Develop/adapt appropriate indicators to monitor the demobilisation and reintegration process
• Train focal points at community level and NGO implementing partners on the use of indicators

SUPPORT TO OTHER WAR AFFECTED and VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

Problem statement V: Vulnerable youngsters in urban areas: boys

Many boys, because of the extreme poverty and destruction caused by the war and restricted cultural practices of the last years, are heavily burdened by the need to support their families. Most have never attended school due to their age, and cannot begin now. If they don’t make enough money they may be attracted by illicit activities or resort to armed groups

Recommendation:
• Provide a package of second chance education, peer support and psycho-social activities, opportunities for income generation and improved livelihood. Through locally created young people’s clubs where the boys can join and participate.

Interventions:
• Accelerated learning programme including life skills, conflict resolution, livelihood skills through the Department of Literacy in designated sites around the cities. Material is available.
• Psychosocial activities including but not limited to sport, expressive activities, cultural activities, opportunities for youth to discuss community needs how they could contribute
• Sustainable income generation
• Information about HIV/AIDS should be included in educational and psychosocial aspects of the program

Action point:
• In each local area, examine the existing youth organizations to see which ones are appropriate, and available for linkage.
• Link where possible with Habitat youth clubs which already provide these services, and strengthen them to allow expansion.
• Link youth club with an NGO where this has not happened already and support assistance to the club to include vulnerable youth
• Material for second chance education is made available through the Department of Literacy
• Link with the Department of Literacy and ensure that it is ready for this task (see capacity building component).
• Training of youth trainers on conflict resolution, including family and community mediation skills
• Additional resources and material is made available

Partners:
• Department Literacy
• HABITAT, NGOs (CFA, CRS, AABRAR, CHA, Save Alliance)

Problem statement VII: Vulnerable group--- urban girls

Girls over 12 are often denied the right to education and recreation opportunities. Girls 12 and over who have re-entered school are at cognitive disadvantage, from having been house-bound during the last years. They are limited in social interaction and face harsh working conditions at home.

Married girls are caring for young children are under difficult circumstances due to isolation and economic hardship. Their state places at risk the development of the cognitive capacity of their babies, for lack of maternal stimulation and interaction.

Recommendation:
• Educated girls should be assisted to join clubs at school or, where possible, participate in existing the existing young people’s clubs out of school. (See recommendation above). They should be encouraged in expressing themselves (e.g. verbally and in writing).

Interventions:
• Support girls’ participation in young people’s clubs where that is possible
• Support existing literary and other youth expression clubs that are acceptable for girls to join
• Assist girls’ schools to establish after school clubs for girls who cannot attend clubs outside
• Develop curriculum points on HIV/AIDS awareness

Action points:
• Support Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to establish after school clubs for girls
• Provide technical assistance and training of trainers through NGO partners (AED, Save US, CHA, CFA)
• Provide support to locally initiated youth clubs for girls or that include girls
• Provide stationery and equipment to the clubs

Recommendation
• Out of school girls should be assisted with opportunities for second-chance education, livelihood skills enhancement, recreational and social activities

Interventions:
• Piloting Peer education (e.g. educated girls go visiting the out of school girls) under the supervision of Ministry of Women’s affairs and the Department of literacy Habitat and other local youth organizations
• Where youth and women’s groups exist establish partnership, especially through Habitat and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or Ministry of Women’s Affairs.
• Girls who are permitted to do so (especially in the northern, central and western regions) are supported to attend literacy and livelihood activities at youth clubs.
• Where women’s centres exist, support expansion of their program for out of school girls so that the other girls can attend those activities.
• Train trainers to incorporate psycho-social activities and HIV/AIDS information through curriculum points developed (see above).

Action points:
• Technical and material assistance provided to youth organizations and women’s centres to reach out to out of school girls
• Support directly to Department of Women’s affairs or via NGOs to set up centres where they don’t exist. Strengthen them where they exist.
• Support Department of Literacy to re-establish its accelerated learning program for girls and provide these skills at Women’s Centres
• Identify NGO for income generation where they are not in place.

Partners:
• Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Habitat, Department of Literacy
• NGOs, esp. ACTED, Mercy Corps, VARA, GTZ

Recommendation:
• Married girls and their babies should be provided with a programme that includes literacy, opportunities for income generation and assistance with early childhood stimulation. Women’s centres, where they exist, are already established to provide a base for these activities.

Interventions:
• Accelerated learning program including life-skills, livelihood skills and other assistance provided by the Department of Literacy
• Appropriate infant development material developed in Co-operation with early childhood teachers of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
• early childhood teachers train older women to work with the girls and their babies and provide child care while the girls are at literacy classes
• Information should be given about HIV/AIDS
• Identify NGO for sustainable income generation

Action points:
• Support for production and dissemination of early childhood material
• Support directly to Department of Women’s affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or via NGOs to set up centres where they don’t exist. Strengthen them where they exist.
• Technical support for Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs early childhood programs to train the older women
• Existing women’s centres already work with NGOs for sustainable income generation. Seek other NGO partners for new programs.

Partners:
• Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Department of Literacy, Habitat
• NGOs including ACTED (income generation in Women’s Centres in north), GTZ, SERV, Mercy Corps, Save UK Terre des Hommes

Problem statement VIII: Vulnerable youth in rural areas – boys

Many boys in rural areas have missed on educational opportunities. Because of the extreme poverty and destruction caused by the war and restricted cultural practices of the last years, are heavily burdened by the need to support their families. They have not been to school and feel too old to begin now. Many are land-less and lack employment. They are at risk of recruitment, illegal activity and abuse.

Recommendation:
Boys should be encouraged and supported to participate in the community based project for reintegration according to their needs. (See above interventions for Problem statement IV and V)
Problem statement IX: Vulnerable youth in rural areas – girls

Girls in the countryside are often excluded from education and opportunities for social interaction. The traditional and conservative culture in rural areas and less availability of services make access to opportunities for girls more difficult. Those who are married with babies have the burden of caring for the child the situation of isolation, exclusion and hardship places girls in rural areas at risk for exploitation.

Recommendation:

Unmarried girls are encouraged to attend school. Married girls are provided with second chance learning opportunities and income generation accompanied by social outlets. Older women are trained by Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs early childhood teachers to support early childhood development.

Interventions:

Proposed interventions are the same for girls and married girls in urban areas. However, in rural areas there are no women’s centres and youth clubs are not available for girls.

In addition:
- Feeding programme and maternal child health centres may provide space for married girls for education and early childhood interventions
- Youth clubs advocate for unmarried girls to attend school.

Action point:
- Discuss with NGOs (ACF, MSF) and other feeding centre providers opportunities for supporting young mothers and their babies
- Provide technical support for their staff if needed
- Organize for Department of Literacy to activate their program of accelerated learning for rural girls.
- Seek additional NGO partners
- Explore link to child friendly spaces

Partners:
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Public Health
- NGOs, especially MSF, ACF, CFA, Save Alliance
PART II PSYCHO SOCIAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Problem statement X. Lack of institutional mourning can lead to revenge and aggressivity.

All Afghans have lost someone or something during the war: home, loved ones, limbs, childhood. These losses, un-mourned, tend to lead to aggressive solutions, including the domestic violence and the perpetuation of conflict. All parties to the conflict must participate without regard for previous affiliation.

Recommendation:

- Mourning is the process by which people metabolise grief and loss, experience it, and become ready to leave it behind. International literature shows that mourning is essential to resolving aggressivity which otherwise accumulates in the population as a result of war stress. Local mechanisms to cope with and overcome the sense of loss should be re-established and/or encouraged. This mourning should be for all members of the community regardless of affiliation.

Interventions:

- Discussion of mourning is raised on the community level through child protection committees or the local NCDR when that is created
- Training of trainers among youth leaders, child protection committees and religious leaders to address this issue
- Awareness raising on radio, through the mosques
- Communities decide on projects for community mourning

Action point:

NGO partners are located. Capacity building materials are translated and piloted

- As part of the psycho-social capacity building, psycho-social specialist insures that a module on mourning is part of training of trainers among youth clubs, teachers, health workers, law enforcement, etc
- Necessary material support is provided

Partners: Community leaders, NCDR, Habitat, mosques, NGOs such as CFA, Save Alliance, CHA, AABRAAR, TDH, Children in Crisis Habitat

Reach out to Red Crescent Society, Relevant Departments of the AIA, UNAMA
Problem statement XI: Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution need strengthening

One of the consequences of the long war is frustration leading to interpersonal violence, as well as a retreat to small group identity that leads to inter-group rivalries. Children report high levels of conflict within the home, while human rights organisations report repeated incidents of inter-group violence. While the country is entering a new phase of peace and as new opportunities for education and socio-economic integration are made available it is important to address the remaining symptoms of conflict and aggressivity. Traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution are not sufficient or not working any more. Conflict resolution mechanisms should be strengthened/re-established.

Recommendation:
- Support the re-establishment and/or strengthening of traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution within the communities.

Interventions:
- Train respected members of the community, especially the shura on techniques of conflict resolution, including family and community mediation.
- Train young people on these techniques so that they can serve as peer mediators.

Action point:
- Recruit experienced NGO partners, (consider Save the Children Sweden community mobilizers where available.
- Support the partners to translate and adapt/or have modules for training of trainers translated and adapted
- Reproduce material
- Co-ordinate with WFP for assistance with incentives for trainers
- Work with NGO partners to combine some psycho-social support into the conflict resolution training

Partners: NGOs, WFP, Habitat, CRS, CCF Save Alliance

Problem statement XII: Teachers are in need of psychosocial support to enhance their functioning

Teachers are very important actors in the growth and development of young people. Their role as educators goes beyond the teaching itself and their potential in helping youth with difficulties is to be supported. Teachers have greatly suffered, along with the rest of the population during the years of war. At times they have been victims of deliberate violations, in many cases they were simply not allowed to exercise their profession. Not only today they carry the scars on themselves, but are also unable to provide their student with adequate support in case of need. Teachers should receive psycho-social support for themselves and be trained in providing it for their students.
Recommendation:
- Provide teachers with psycho-social support for themselves through mentors as part of their training and enhance their capacities for psycho-social support for their student.

Interventions:
- Provide Psycho-social support for teachers
- Training on psycho-social support as part of teachers training

Action Points:
- Children in Crisis (International NGO) produce module for training of supervisors from the Ministry of Education as “teacher mentors”, and train trainers of teacher mentors.
- Mentors provide on-going psycho-social and practical support to teachers in their work.
- UNICEF prepares a one day module for psycho-social support to insert into regular teacher training. This module also teaches affects of war on development
- Module is translated into Dari and Pashtu
- UNICEF trains trainers of teacher trainers on the use of this module
- Teachers receive psycho-social support as part of their training.
- Teachers are trained on psycho-social issues affecting students as part of regular training in child development

Partners
- Ministry of Education,
- UNICEF Education Section
- Children in Crisis/ other NGO partners if needed

Problem statement XIII: Need for capacity building in the community to support the psychosocial components of programme recommendations

The specialized programs for young people affected by armed conflict described above all require elements of the program to meet the psychosocial needs that present themselves. In order to do that in a way that supports existing community coping mechanisms, all actors will need training and support. While national training capacity is built in the long term, there is a need for training of all relevant actors to provide these services in the short to medium term

.Recommendation:
- Capacities to understand the psychosocial element of community programmes should be developed in all relevant actors.
Interventions:
- Support NGO partners to integrate psycho-social care into community programs
- Train teachers to integrate psychosocial care into classroom programs
- Train appropriate Ministry personnel at community level to understand basic concepts of psychosocial care.
- Support Habitat and other partners to integrate psychosocial care into their programs

Action points
- Appropriate materials to be developed, translated and piloted
- Capacity building (training of trainers) for NGOs partners (to begin with) and others in techniques of embedding psycho-social support into community development activities.
- Other actors are trained on relevant community psycho-social approaches
- NGO partners with expertise are supported with funds and logistics to fulfil these tasks
- Community based monitoring and evaluation system is developed to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures

Partners:  Children in Crisis, CCF, Terre des Hommes, CHA, Save Alliance, IRC

Problem statement IV: Law enforcement officers who work with young people often lack sufficient information on the psychosocial aspects of their work with young people

Law enforcement officers who work with young people often try to do what is best for them, including sending them home and contacting elders and family members. However, they lack specific training in understanding the psychosocial roots of the young people’s behaviour. Children may end up in difficult situations, included in detention because of insufficient trained personnel able to identify the root cause of their problems and to arrange for appropriate assistance

Recommendation
- Provide training to law enforcement officials on the community and precinct level in the psychosocial concepts necessary for their work especially in areas of youth diversion from court and appropriate community interventions.
- Special modules are developed, translated and tested for police, judges and other personnel assisting children in conflict with the law
- Trainers are trained among police and other authorities to recognize psychosocial problems of children in conflict with the law and assist families appropriately
- Trainers carry train those who work directly with children on the local level
- UNICEF provides logistical and monetary support to this process

Partners:  Ministry of Justice, NGOs especially CCA, Save Alliance, Terre des Hommes, Children in Crisis
Problem XV Insufficient capacity to provide specialized treatment of emotional distress when it is needed. Lack of contact between the health care system and the traditional system of care

Due to the long period of war, psycho-social stress is ubiquitous. There are also cases of mental illness. The capacity to distinguish between the two and to provide both competent psychiatric care, psychotherapy when it is needed and effective psycho-social care needs to be built in the short term, even while national training capacity is built in the long term

Recommendation:

- A system of specialized care should be created for the small percentage of those who require specialized care.

Interventions:

- Support Kabul University and Health Net to establish a curriculum for rapid and ongoing training of health workers to provide care in the community, including beginning to pilot a site for clinical supervision
- Support collaboration at community level between trained professionals and traditional healers
- Capacity building (training of trainers) is provided to MOPH health workers in recognising psycho-social stress and responding appropriately including making referrals where services are available
- Insure that health care professionals at the community level can recognise and respond appropriately to psycho-social distress

Action points:

- Co-ordinate with Kabul University and NGO partners (Health Net)
- Support the University and partners to develop curriculum
- Support clinical training at pilot site (Jalalabad)
- Health workers trained to link with traditional healers and add them to the treatment team
- NGO and University partners provide clinical supervision.
- Modules developed to equip health workers to recognize psychosocial distress and provide referrals Provide funds for all aspects of the program
- Coordinate with monitoring and evaluation unit to provide program evaluation component

Partners:

- University of Kabul
- Ministry of Health
- Health Net
- Traditional healers
Part III STRENGTHENING THE SUPPORT STRUCTURE

Problem statement XVI: Need to develop institutional capacities at central level

**Insufficient structure at national level for planning and co-ordination of services for vulnerable groups and for young people.** Currently no appropriate support structure exists with capacities to provide services including identification, planning, co-ordination and service delivery components.

**Recommendation:**

- Capacities of institutions dealing with issues related to vulnerable young people at national level should be strengthened in view of facilitating the design, development and co-ordination of service delivery planning at the national level.

Three main interventions are suggested in this area.

**Interventions:**

I. **Inter-ministerial working group:** Form an inter-ministerial working-group that will be responsible for identifying the service gaps and proceed with national planning and co-ordination of services for youth. This group will intervene at national and provincial level.

- Members of the working group should be from: Ministry of Education; Department of Literacy; Ministry of Women’s Affairs; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; Department of Urban and Rural Planning; Ministry of Public Health.

**Action points:**

- Provision of technical support, as needed through an advisor, for the setting up of the working group and provide with necessary start-up support.
- The advisor will provide with appropriate training on planning for social services and social service delivery. The training will include psychosocial component.
- National strategy and plan of action for social services, including for vulnerable group, is elaborated.

**Partners:**

- Partnership with UNAMA and AIA in the framework of the national capacity/institutional building strategy.
- Others

II. **Department of Literacy:** Build the capacities up to their former level, e.g. to provide the full programme of second chance education, which is to include accelerated learning, life skills training, livelihood training, peace education. This department will provide second chance education to war affected youth, out of school youth, including girls and other vulnerable children. It will co-ordinate available non-formal educational and other opportunities to young people, families and communities in every province.
Action points:
• Provision of funds for restoration of services
• Funds for recruitment of teachers
• Support for teacher training on the entire curriculum
• Logistical support
• Support to ongoing teachers training, training of trainers
• Production of material and service delivery
• Support with stationery for teachers, students
• Support development of systems for transport and start-up especially in the countryside

Partners:
• IOM, UNHCR, NGOs will refer trained teachers from refugee population and abroad
• NGOs assist on a project and area basis
• AED can support capacity building of teachers

III. Institute for Psychological Research - Kabul University: Support the creation of a faculty (e.g. school of social work) for short term training, undergraduate and graduate education in social services and child development. The Institute for Psychological research will develop a cadre of social work and child development professionals who will:
• Provide research on best practices for the social provision in the Afghan context
• Develop standards for monitoring and evaluating the quality of social service and child development programs in Afghanistan
• Develop social services and child development policies and priorities for the future
• Provide direct service
• Develop short term workshops for service providers

Action points:
• Consultation with lead professionals at Kabul University, development agencies and selected resource persons for further development of concept and program design
• Appointment of a task force of national and international professionals to develop a detailed framework for the department in collaboration with the University and the Ministry of Higher Education
• Develop a project proposal
• Support an intermediate process of short term training courses and workshops
• Support for travel and conferences necessary to the development of curriculum
• Provision of technical assistance and co-ordination of funding for the recruitment of students and establishment of the courses
• Support for translation of texts and importation of appropriate educational references to begin

Partners:
• Kabul University
• Ministry of Higher Education
• UNICEF regional office
• Health Net and other partners with technical expertise
• International Federation of Social Workers
• Regional and International University Partners

Problem statement XVII: Absence of protection support structure within the community

Authorities and relevant actors within the communities (e.g. those responsible for ensuring the well-being and protection of youth) have not articulated an Afghan vision of the rights for protection and development of Afghan youth. If responsibilities are not identified and capacities are not built at community level it will be difficult to ensure that protection extends to young people between twelve and eighteen years, and that youth benefit from appropriate support and are able to participate in the life of the community.

Recommendation:
• Set up community based child protection committees linked to the Shura at provincial level to be responsible for the well-being and protection of youth within the community, including through the management/supervision of appropriate projects. Insure that local officials are aware of the rights and needs of people twelve to eighteen for protection and development.

Interventions:
• In collaboration with the inter-ministerial working-group for social services, and through NGO implementing partners, support the setting up of community based child protection committees at provincial level. At least one committee per province is set up. Sub-committees are established at district level.
• Assist the local committees to develop a local standard and vision of child protection and method for enforcement
• Train local officials, including law enforcement personnel on these standards

Action points:
• Inter-ministerial working-group for youth supports awareness raising on this issue
• Make agreements with the NGOs to set up the committees
• Adapt community based child rights and child protection awareness instrument
• Translate the instrument and reproduce
• The instrument is field tested by the NGO and then reproduced for use
• Pilot Community based child protection committees are set up
• Monitor the pilot initiative
• Communities are trained on child rights through the committees
• NGO partners train trainers on child rights in community context
• Trainers train law enforcement and other officials on child and young people’s rights in the community context
Action points:
- Meet with all relevant actors to raise awareness of need for child protection/child rights training, especially regarding young people 12 to 18
- Adapt and translate UNICEF child rights training manual
- Train trainers on its use

Problem statement XVIII: Insufficient awareness of the rights and needs of youth among law enforcement officers and the military

Law enforcement officers and military personnel are not aware of the protection and development rights and needs of children and young people

Recommendation:
- Law enforcement officers and military personnel should be trained on children and young people’s protection and development rights and needs, including understanding the root causes of criminal behaviour among under age persons.

Interventions:
- Training of trainers for military personnel on children and young people’s protection and development rights and needs.
- A child rights module should be integrated in the training module for the police and the military.

Action points:
- Liase with Ministry of Defence, ISAF, and UNAMA
- Identify expertise, consultant or NGO, to carry out the training
- Adapt existing child rights training manual for use in Afghanistan, including translation into Dari and Pashtu
- Provide training of trainers
- Identify strategy to reach all military groups
- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness

Partners:
- Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior
- Isaf, and UNAMA
- Human Rights organisations
LIST OF PEOPLE/AGENCIES MET

**Interim Administration of Afghanistan**

Ministry of the Interior, Dr. Ahmed Chetop Kakar  
Assistant for Juvenile Crime, Saiful Rahman  
Director of Juvenile Crime Division, Abdul Jelli  
Prosecutor General, Musa Faroddin Tajeli  
Ministry of Defence, General Zahir Akhbar, Head of Military Security  
Ministry of Defence, General Igbal Faizy 1st Deputy Military Security  
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Deputy Minister, Mr Bashir  
Engineer Mohamed Quit  
Ministry of Education, President of Literacy Department Nagae Zahal Zara  
Ministry of Higher Education, Dr. Mohammed Akhbar Popal, Deputy Minister

**United Nations Agencies**

International Labour Organisation, (ILO) Jyoti Tuecar  
United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Wuria Karadaghy  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-Director of Community Services, Jennifer Ashton  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, (UNESCO)  
Director Afghanistan Program, Martin Hudlow, Cultural Officer, Jim Williams  
United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), Andrew Cox  
United Nations Committee for Human Settlement – Habitat, Sr Community Development Advisor, Rohella Hashim  
Consultant, Richard Raglan  
Youth Coordinator, Hematullah Bijan

**Baghlan (Pul I Khumri)**

Deputy Chief of Police Pul I Khumri Habib-ul-Rahman Zazai

**Bamyan**

UNICEF-Bamyan, Dr. Attaei, Field Officer  
Foladi School for Boys  
Foladi School for Girls  
AWCP  
CFDO/Habitat

**Faryob (Maimana)**

MSF  
UNAMA  
ICRC  
ACTED  
President of Education  
Head Master Boys School
Head Mistress Girls School
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs/ Women’s Centre
UNHCR

**Herat City**
Governor, General Ismail Khan Governor
UNAMA, Jan Malekzade
Military Police Commander, Said Ahmed
Chief of Crime Branch, Faizal Ahmed
Ministry of Education, Literacy Department
Herat University-Professor of Linguistics, Parwin Faijeq, Golam M. Maahed
Poets and Writers Organisation, Anjumani I Adabi, M. Hakiki
War Child
IOM
MDM
ICRC Head of Mission Christoph Coeckleburgh
UNICEF-Herat, Thomas Davin, Emergency Officer
UNICEF-Herat, Merwies Fayez, Education Section
Amir Ali Sher Nawayee High School
Goharshad High School

**Jalalabad – Nangahar Province**
AABRAAR (Afghan Association for Bicycle Riding for Assistance, Athletics and Rehabilitation)
Chief of Security/Chief of Police Hadji Zeman (former commander)
Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
Youth Association for Afghanistan Rehabilitation (YAAR)
AREA
Radio and Television
Co-Commander Eastern Region, Hazrat Ali
International Committee of the Red Cross, Julian Harris
UNAMA Deputy Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator, Assadullah Muasafor
UNAMA Humanitarian Co-ordinator, Ann Wood

**Shreberghan – Jowzjan Province**
President of Security
President/Ministry of Education
International Committee for the Red Cross
Save the Children UK
Principle Girls School
Principle Boys School

**Kabul City**
Terre des Hommes, Nathalie Shuard
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Children in Crisis, Professor Hamidi and Dr. Maluk
Director Jonathan Rennison  
ISAF—Liaison for Demobilisation, Demilitarisation, and Reintegration, Major Jorgen Sandstrom  
Kabul University-Institute for Psychological Research, Director Dr. Hakim Mental Health Hospital  
Director Dr. Ahmed Khetab  
Deputy Director Dr Ahbdul Ahade Awara  
Ashiana Director: Engineer Youssef  
GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) Dr Uwe Kievelitz Conflict Prevention Advisor  
Academy for Educational Development: John Gillies, Moquin Rahmanzai  
Catholic Relief Services, Country Director, Paul Butler  
Children’s Fund Afghanistan (CCF), Senior Psychosocial Advisor Mike Wessels

**Kandahar City-Kandahar Province**  
UN Security Officer  
UNOCHA, Co-ordinator  
UNICEF Kandahar, Dr. Rabani  
UNAMA  
Special Advisor to the Governor and Mayor of Kandahar Mullah Naquibullah  
Interpreter the Special Advisor, Izzat Wasifi  
Area Commander, General Khan Mohammed  
Chief of Police, Commander Akram  
Dean and Deputy Kandahar University Rahmatullah  
Kandahar Women’s Association  
Director Gulalei  
Deputy Director Safiya  
VARA  
ASO  
ICRC Gianni Bacchetta  
Oxfam  
Mercy Corps  
Director of Prisons Saleh Mohammed  
Principle: Ahmed Shah Baba High School

**Mazar-I-Sharif – Balkh Province**  
Governor of Balkh Province, Isgkra Bahguzar  
Deputy Governor, Hadji Mohammed Abdul  
Hezb-i-Wah’dat Organisation, Commander General Saidi  
Harakat Islami, Commander Najib Najibullah  
Chief of Police Mazar City, Eisa Effekhari  
Psychiatrist, Dr. M. Nader Alemi  
Jumbish –i-Melli Islami Commander Abdul Majeed Rozi 1st Deputy to General Dostom  
Jamiat –i-Islami Political Affairs Secretary Zalmai Yonusi  
Jamiat-i-Islami Social Affairs Secretary Dr Habibullah Kohmand  
Children’s Voice Youth Organisation
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Director Kabir Alsamay
IOM
Habitat
UNHCR
Save the Children US/Lucien
Save the Children UK Erin Mone
Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
ICRC Simon Brooks
Catholic Relief Services
UNAMA Humanitarian Coordinator Farhana Falaqi
UNAMA Political Coordinator Merwyn

Parwan
Parwan Clinic, Director, Dr. Mohammed
HABITAT, Sayed Ghias, OIC

Taloqan/- Takhar Province/ Kunduz- Kunduz Province
Children’s Fund Afghanistan (CCF), Theresa Kornegay
ACTED (French Technical Cooperation)
MSF, Brice Delevingne
UNHCR
IOM
Mercy Corps
Principle Girls School
President/ Ministry of Education
President of Security: General Daud
IMC/ Clinic Director
Women’s Health Director/ Public Health Hospital
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Women’s Centre
Director and staff
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