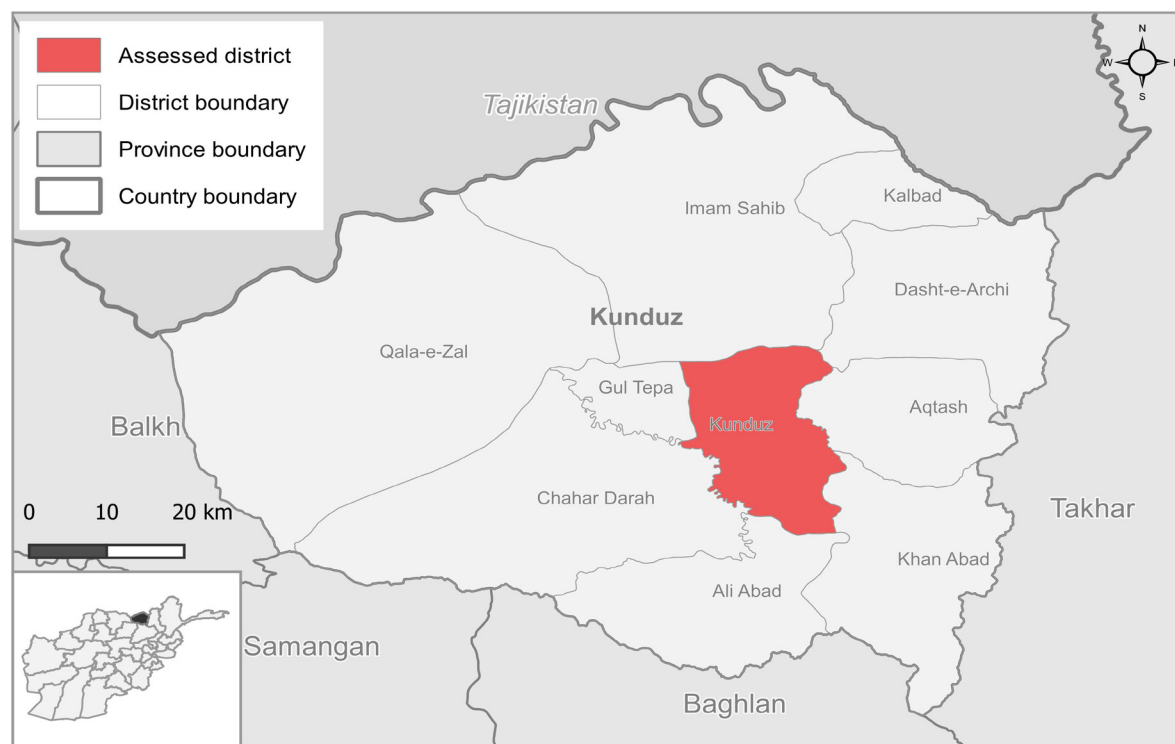


KUNDUZ DISTRICT MAP



METHODOLOGY

This SO draws on three assessments with Key Informants (KIs) conducted in Kunduz district in Kunduz province, including: the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) conducted from 28 July 2021 to 04 August 2021, prior to the transition to IEA governance, the Whole of Afghanistan Assessment in 2021 (WoAA 2021) conducted from 16 August 2021 to 13 September 2021, after the transition to IEA governance, and the Humanitarian Situation Monitoring pilot (HSM pilot) conducted approximately four months following the transition, from 22 December 2021 to 11 January 2022. KIs consisted of community leaders and were identified using a snowball approach.

KI interviews were conducted in every basic service unit (BSU) within the district of Kunduz in Kunduz province. BSUs are defined as economic/geographic service units which rely on the same services (i.e. healthcare clinics and schools) and common public spaces (i.e. markets and roads). To determine a BSU, face-to-face participatory mapping of settlements and services available in Herat province were conducted by enumerators in June 2021. A minimum of 1 interview was conducted in each assessed settlement within the BSU. At least 10% of settlements in each district were covered in each of the three districts. All key findings from these three assessments are indicative and are **not statistically representative** of the settlements assessed.

CONTEXT

Endemic poverty and conflict coupled with waves of COVID-19, drought, government transition and related economic regression heightened humanitarian need across Afghanistan throughout 2021 and are likely to continue doing so in 2022. Concurrent to the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, active conflict escalated from May 2021 onward and culminated in the transition to Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) governance across the country on 15 August 2021. This active conflict and the later political transition drove new internal and cross-border movements, and, coupled with relating disruptions to service provision and international funding, crippled the Afghan economy. In parallel, the former Afghan government declared a severe drought across 80% of the country in June 2021 impacting the agricultural and livestock sectors. Separately, reported COVID-19 cases spiked from May – July 2021 and from November 2021 – January 2022.

The following Situation Overview (SO) aims to contextualize these shocks and their influence on the evolution of humanitarian needs, access to services and displacement in-country via a case study on Kunduz district in Kunduz province. Between 2021 – and early 2022, Kunduz district directly experienced active conflict, displacement, lack of rain and two COVID-19 waves. The following SO includes key findings across three REACH assessments conducted between July 2021 and January 2022 in Kunduz.

KEY FINDINGS

Economic precarity has reportedly influenced need, service access and population movements in Kunduz across the reporting period. Kunduz KI findings suggest declining availability of sustainable income opportunities, increasing prices and high dependence on unsustainable income sources and debt to meet basic needs in-district during the reporting period. Economic conditions in Kunduz may have driven households to move in search of greater economic stability, impeded service access and shelter repair, increased food insecurity and protection risks. Broadly, the trends in Kunduz are in line with the KI findings across Afghanistan from August 2021 to January 2022.

SHOCKS¹

ACTIVE CONFLICT

- Despite the cessation of active conflict in large swathes of the country, including Kunduz, whose control was assumed by IEA on August 8, almost all Kunduz KIs (92% to 100%) reported conflict as a major event affecting the district regardless of data collection period. Findings suggest that this active conflict strongly blunted income generation across the district - with all (100%) KIs reporting that active conflict led to a decrease or the complete loss of income.² This income loss, in turn, likely exacerbated pre-conflict socio-economic vulnerabilities and contributed to current economic precarity in Kunduz.
- KI findings also indicate that active conflict impeded access to education, adequate shelter and physical safety – which correlates with external reporting of [school closures](#) and [damage to infrastructure, roads, shops and shelters](#) in-district. Findings further suggest that the impact on education, shelter and physical safety declined between July – August 2021 and December 2021 – January 2022. KI reporting of injury/death to active conflict declined from 93% in July – August 2021 to 68% in December 2021 – January 2022, KI reporting of decreased access to or complete loss of shelter declined from 100% in July – August 2021 to 67% in December 2021 – January 2022 and KI reporting of decreased access or complete loss of access to education declined from 87% in July – August 2021 to 71% in December 2021 – January 2022.
- Despite the different data collection periods, the ripple effects of active conflict appear to continue driving humanitarian needs in-district, although this is expected to progressively decline moving forward.

COVID-19

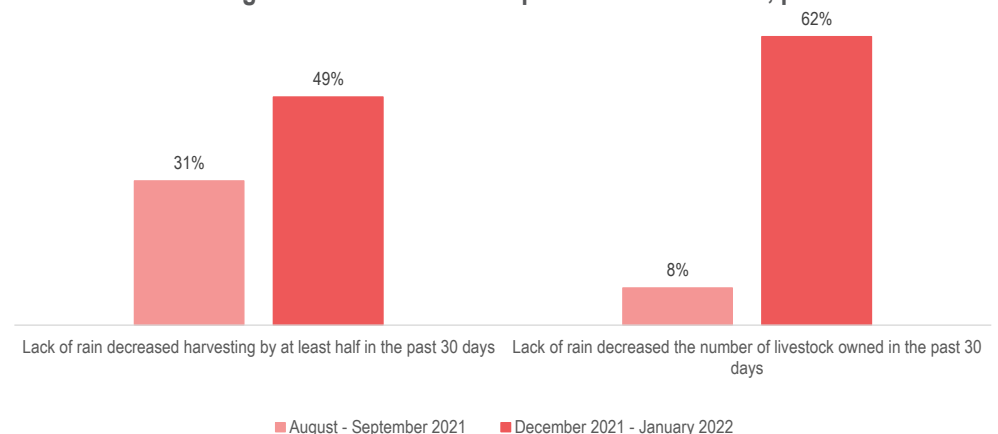
- Two COVID-19 waves affected the country during the reporting period, with the number of cases spiking in [May - July](#) 2021, leading the former government to close schools, and again in [November](#) 2021 – [February](#) 2022. [External reporting](#) indicates that Kunduz was among the provinces with the highest concentration of cases.
- Reflecting the above, Kunduz KIs reporting of COVID-19 as a major event almost doubled between July 2021 and January 2022 (52% in July – August 2021, 71% in August – September 2021 and 100% in December 2021 – January 2022). By increasingly suppressing income generation, findings suggest that COVID-19 contributed to the broader economic crisis: 99% of KIs interviewed in December 2021-January 2022 reported complete loss or decrease income as major impact of the pandemic.

- By contrast, following [school closures](#), the loss of or decreased access to education as an impact of COVID-19 progressively decreased from 100% in July – August 2021, to 97% in August – September 2021 to 79% in December 2021 – January 2022, reflecting the [reopening of some schools](#) in the district.

LACK OF RAIN

- Coeval with active conflict and two waves of COVID-19, low rainfall and winter snowpack triggered a [drought](#) in the northern, southern and western regions of Afghanistan. While a drought was not declared in Kunduz, external reporting indicates that lack of rain hindered agricultural production during back-to-back planting cycles in-province, with the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reporting 30% lower wheat yields in [June 2021](#) and farmers reporting that lack of rain impeded crop growth in [December 2021](#).
- The impact of lack of rain on livelihood opportunities was progressive: in December 2021-January 2022, among KIs reporting agriculture as a primary income source, almost half (49%) reported that lack of rain caused a decrease in half or more than half of agricultural production in the 30 days prior compared to 8% in August – September 2021. Livestock sector findings were similar: among KIs reporting livestock as a primary income source for the settlement, more than half in December 2021 – January 2022 (62%) reported that lack of rain drove livestock owners to sell livestock in the 30 days prior compared to 31% in August – September 2021.
- The effects of lower-than-average rainfall in the 2021 – 2022 winter planting season could continue to impact incomes in-district in the coming months, with reduced crop production affecting food availability and market dynamics.

Decrease in Harvesting or Livestock Ownership Due to Lack of Rain, per % of Kunduz KIs³



DISPLACEMENT

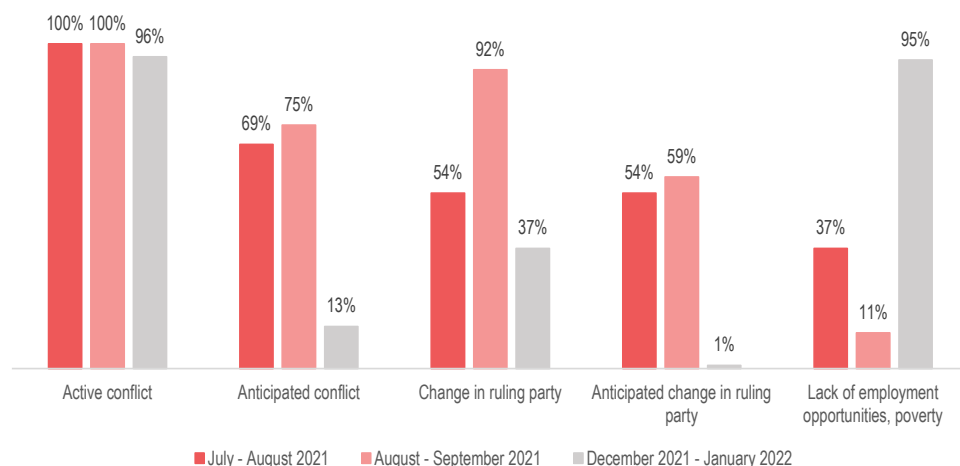
In parallel to [external reporting](#) regarding movement in Afghanistan, KI findings suggest that displacement into Kunduz overall increased across the reporting period. The reported presence of internally displaced persons (IDP) households in assessed settlements increased between July – August 2021 (67%) and August – September 2021 (86%) to stay constantly high in December 2021 – January 2022 (83%). Coeval with this reported rise in IDP households, KI reporting of crossborder returnee households, mostly from Iran, in assessed settlements increased between July – August 2021 (35%) and December 2021 - January 2022 (64%).

Assumed safety or security following the transition to IEA governance may be increasing cross-border returns from Iran, and poverty in other areas may be driving IDPs into the district. Newly arrived IDPs and crossborder returnee households without the socio-economic resources to re-settle into sustainable income activities could be increasingly dependent on unsustainable income activities – which, in turn, will exacerbate poor economic conditions in-district.

DRIVERS OF IDP DISPLACEMENT

- Among Kunduz KIs reporting presence of IDP households within the settlement, the most frequently reported drivers for IDP displacements (regardless of whether the IDP households were recent or non-recent) was consistently active conflict. However, poverty as a driver of displacement sharply increased across the reporting period.
- Poverty, as a driver of IDP movement, increased from less than half to almost all KIs (37% in July – August 2021, 11% in August – September 2021, and 95% in December 2021 – January 2022) – indicating that ongoing economic crisis, rather than active conflict, may be driving more recent displacements.⁴

Most Frequently Reported Drivers of IDP Displacement, per % of Kunduz KIs



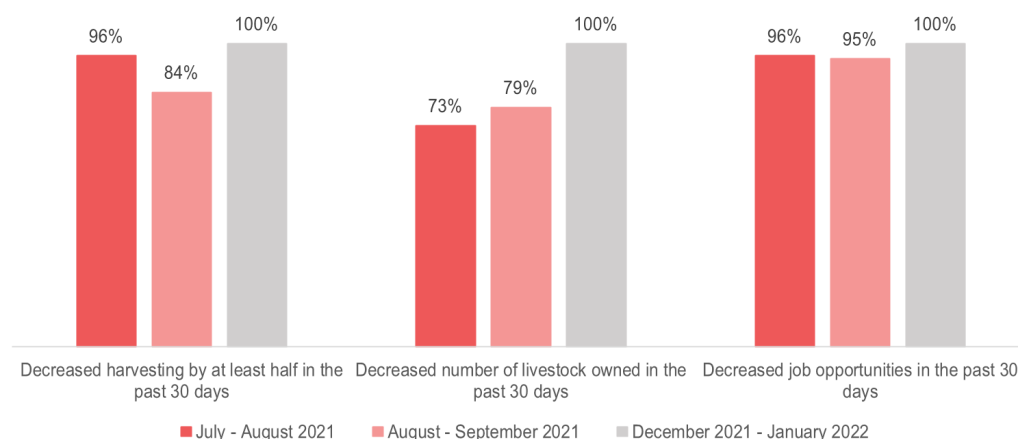
ECONOMY

KI reporting on debt, livelihoods and prices suggests protracted economic decline in Kunduz coeval with [rising economic vulnerability](#) across Afghanistan including declining sustainable income opportunities, increasing prices and reported dependence on unsustainable income sources and debt. The confluence of these factors could reflect that household purchasing power is declining – which could impede household ability to cover basic needs – and households' ability to cope with future shocks may be undermined.

LIVELIHOODS

- KI findings suggest that the availability of sustainable income generation activities is declining overtime in-district, with all KIs reporting decreased harvesting, livestock ownership and job opportunities in December 2021 – January 2022.

Decreased Sustainable Income Activities, per % of Kunduz KIs



- In parallel, KI findings suggest an increasing reliance on unsustainable income sources. Selling household assets (58% in July – August 2021, 19% in August – September 2021 and 77% in December 2021 – January 2022) and borrowing loans (50% in July – August 2021, 21% in August – September 2021 and 69% in December 2021 – January 2022) steadily rose across the research period to become the most frequently reported income sources alongside daily labour by December 2021 – January 2022.⁵

PRICES

- KI findings further suggest that prices of key staples rose concurrent to declining income opportunities. All Kunduz district KIs (100%) in July - August 2021, August - September 2021 and December 2021 - January 2022 reported an increase in the price of food staples - which

ECONOMY, CONTINUED

reflects external findings from the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) in-province and the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative ([JMMI](#)) in-district.^{6,7} This includes an approximate total increase of 20% between July - December 2021 of the sum total of all assessed food staples by WFP in Kunduz, and an approximate total increase of 32% between July - December 2021 of the Food Basket by JMMI in Kunduz.

SERVICES

Similar to [country-wide trends](#), KI findings indicate that poor economic conditions are increasingly preventing access to basic services among assessed settlements in Kunduz district – including access to markets, health, and education. Humanitarian response efforts placed in securing provision of services may be at risk of being undermined if households are unable to afford them, as a consequence of economic precarity.

MARKETS

- In parallel to food price increases, reported access to markets with NFIs and winterization materials decreased by approximately half across the reporting period (96% in July – August 2021, 85% in August – September 2021 to 51% in December 2021 – January 2022) with high prices becoming the most frequently reported barrier by Kunduz KIs in December 2021 – January 2022 (50% of December 2021 -January vs 31% in August – September 2021).

EDUCATION

- In parallel with the marked decrease in access to markets, access to education also declined. KI reporting that less than half of school-aged children in the assessed settlement are enrolled steadily rose to 80% in December 2021 - January 2022 (from 33% in July – August 2021). Barriers to education also shifted, with economic factors (cost and need for children to work) gradually replacing insecurity as the most reported impediments to access and with cultural factors (bans on girls' education and restrictions on girls' movement) impeding specifically girls' access to education.^{8,9}

HEALTH

- In contrast to reported declines in access to markets and education, KI findings suggest an overall increase in access to healthcare (60% in July – August 2021, 94% in August – September 2021 and 79% in December 2021 – January 2022) possibly linked to the cessation of active conflict. Once again, financial factors have been increasingly reported as barriers to access with the proportion of KIs reporting high costs of services and medicines rising from 65% in July – August 2021, to 71% in August – September 2021 and 83% in December 2021 – January 2022.

WATER

- In contrast to lack of rain as an increasing barrier to more water-intensive agricultural and and livestock activities, water access for household basic needs (cooking, drinking and hygiene)

seems to have improved. KIs reported an increase in access to sufficient quantities of water (44% in July – August 2021, 56% in August – September 2021 and 78% in December 2021 – January 2022) and price as a barrier to water access concurrently decreased (63% in July – August 2021, 44% in August – September 2021 and 35% in December 2021 – January 2022). As the district shifted into the [wetter winter months](#), seasonality may be a possible driver for the observed findings.

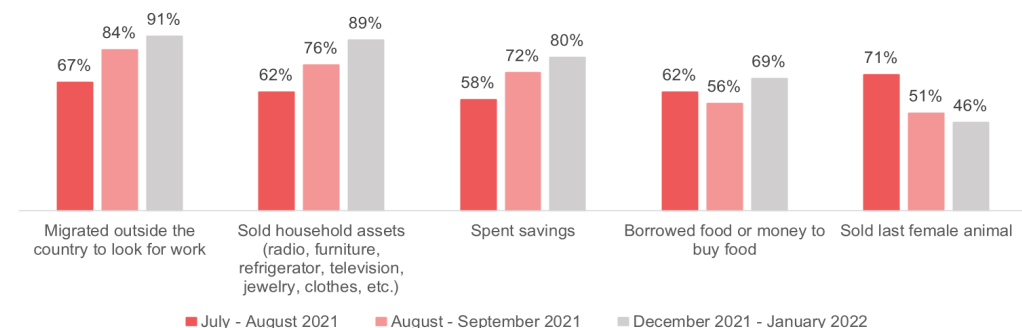
HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Kunduz KI findings suggest persistently high needs in food and shelter. Aligning with KI findings [across Afghanistan](#), hunger and reliance on negative coping strategies to mitigate a lack of food or money to buy food is increasing. Households in assessed settlements may be prioritizing immediate needs (i.e. food) over reconstruction despite extensive shelter damage from active conflict in May – August 2021. While protection needs in-district [reflect national trends](#) and are reportedly low, the ongoing economic crisis could drive future protection need as households increasingly rely on high-risk negative coping strategies (i.e., child labour or child marriage) to meet immediate needs.

FOOD

- Almost (98%) all KIs reported that hunger is bad or the worst it can be for most households in December 2021 – January 2022 compared to 71% in July – August 2021 and 69% in August – September. Similar worsening trends were found for food access - with only 13% of KIs reporting in December 2021 – January 2022 that most households in the assessed settlement are able to access enough food.¹⁰ Reported rising hunger and falling food access further occurred during the harvest season, when food security tends to normally improve. If poor economic conditions persist, then the 2022 lean season could contribute to broader food insecurity in-district - particularly if households are unable to afford market prices for food staples to compensate for declining supplies of home-grown food.

Most Frequently Reported Coping Strategies, per % of Kunduz KIs



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS, CONTINUED

- In parallel to increasing food insecurity, findings suggest an overall rising reliance on negative coping strategies to mitigate a lack of food or money to buy food within the 30 days prior to data collection (79% in July – August 2021, 93% in August – September 2021 and 100% in December 2021 – January 2022). Many of these coping strategies are tenuous or result in asset depletion at the household level, lowering household resilience and creating the potential for further decreases in the ability to meet basic food needs in the longer term. The most frequently reported negative coping strategies were migrating outside the country, selling household assets and spending household savings across the reporting period.

SHELTER

- Kunduz district KI findings indicate that shelter need remains consistently high across all three assessments. Despite the widespread shelter concerns (reported by 86% to 100% of KIs across the three assessments) and the [extensive shelter damage](#) which occurred during the spell of active conflict in May – August 2021 (75% of KIs reported significant shelter damage in July – August 2021), few or no shelters with significant damage have been repaired across the reporting period. While KIs did not report on barriers to shelter repair, high prices and the prioritisation of immediate needs (i.e. food) may be forcing households to delay reconstruction.

PROTECTION

- KI findings suggest that protection incidents declined across the reporting period, with almost all December 2021 – January 2022 KIs reporting no protection incidents for any age/ gender groups (76% in August – September 2021 and 91% in December 2021 – January 2022). In parallel, overall KI reporting of safe areas for women and girls increased (53% in August – September 2021 and 83% in December 2021 – January 2022) and KI reporting of child marriage within 3 months of data collection decreased across the reporting period (42% in August – September 2021 and 23% in December 2021 – January 2022).^{11,12} While the reduction in protection concerns may be linked to the overall increase in security across the district or to underreporting among KIs, monitoring of protection risks associated with the economic crisis will be crucial over the next months.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information regarding WoAA 2021 can be found [here](#), and further information regarding the HSM pilot can be found [here](#). Formatted analysis from WoAA 2021 KIIs can be found [here](#), and formatted analysis from the HSM pilot KIIs can be found [here](#). A presentation of the HSM findings can be found [here](#). Analysis and methodology regarding the RNA are available on request.

ENDNOTES

- The recall period for questions regarding shocks for the July – August 2021 assessment was 3 months. The recall period for the August – September 2021 and December 2021 – January 2022 assessments was 12 months.
- Among those KIs reporting conflict as major event affecting the district.
- Results regarding decreased harvesting due to lack of rain are among Kunduz KIs reporting agriculture as one of the top three livelihoods that households in the assessed settlement rely on. Results regarding decreased livestock ownership due to lack of rain are among Kunduz KIs reporting livestock as one of the top three livelihoods that households in the assessed settlement rely on.
- This includes both recent and non-recent IDP households.
- Household assets include radios, furniture, refrigerators, televisions, jewelry, clothes, etc. Household assets do not include livestock, land or buildings.
- Assessed food staples by WFP include rice (high quality), rice (low quality), wheat, wheat flour (high quality), wheat flour (low quality), salt, sugar, oil (cooking) and pulses.
- The JMMI Food Basket includes wheat flour, local rice, vegetable oil, salt and pulses – following the Afghanistan Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC) recommended standard for the Food Basket in Afghanistan.
- Cost reported by 32% of KIs in July – August 2021, 6% in August – September 2021 and 80% in December 2021 – January 2022; need for child labour reported by 54% KIs in July – August 2021, 30% in August – September 2021 and 74% in December 2021 – January 2022.
- Bans on girls' education: reported by 3% of KIs in August – September 2021 vs 34% in December 2021 – January 2022; Lack of female teachers reported by 11% KIs in August – September 2021 vs 20% in December 2021 – January 2022), and Restrictions regarding girls' movement reported by 4% of KIs in August – September 2021 vs 24% in December 2021 – January 2022.
- This is the proportion of KIs reporting that at least one coping strategy was used by a household to buy food or acquire money for food in the last 30 days of data collection.
- KIs were not asked about child marriage (children 16 years and younger) or unsafe areas for women/ girls during July – August 2021 data collection.
- During August – September 2021 data collection, KIs were asked if they were aware of any GIRL under the age of 16 years getting married. During December 2021 – January 2022 data collection, KIs were asked if they were aware of any CHILD under the age of 16 years getting married. This gender difference in the question asked, coupled with previous exhaustion of this non-regenerative strategy, may partially explain the decrease in reporting.

ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF:

Afghanistan Inter-Cluster Coordination Team



Afghanistan
Education in Emergencies Working Group (EIEWG)
گروپ کاری تعلیم و تربیه در شرایط اضطراری، افغانستان



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Organization for Sustainable Aid in Afghanistan



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Women Activities
and Social Services
Association

موسسه خدمات اجتماعی زنان (واسا)