





# SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND SANITATION FOR CHILDREN AND RESIDENTS IN POOR SANITATION ENVIRONMENTS IN HEART, PROVINCE

# NICCO AND RSDO THIRD PARTY EVALUATION (TPE) OF JPF FUNDED PROJECT IN AFGHANISTAN





2024

# **Strategic Partner for Development**

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# Acronyms

CDC	Community Development Council
DFA	De Facto Authorities
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
НН	Household
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
JPF	Japan Platform Fund
Klls	Key Informant Interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NICCO	Nippon International Cooperation for Community Development
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
RSDO	Razi Social Development Organization
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

# Acknowledgement

The third-party evaluation of the project "Support for Improving Access to Safe Water Sanitation for Children and Residents in Poor Sanitation Environments in Heart Province, Afghanistan" implemented by Nippon International Cooperation for Community Development (NICCO) and Razi Social Development Organization (RSDO), with the financial assistance of Japan Platform (JPF) as part of the Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis Response Support Program, was conducted by ASK Aria Consulting Afghanistan from January to April, 2024. This project was implemented from March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023,

The technical and research teams of ASK to extend their heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Gökhan Erkutlu, Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Consultant-JPF and Mr. Yuki Goto, M&E Officer for their technical feedback and continued support throughout the completion of this exercise. Without their contribution, true objectives of this Evaluation could not have been achieved.

The ASK teams are also highly obliged to Mr. Bilal Yosuf, CEO ASK Aria Consulting for his expert opinions and supportive supervision in making this activity a full tilt.

Last but not the least, the hard work of Ms. Tasleem Ayaz, Lead Consultant and Mr. Haseeb Yusufi, Operations Lead is also acknowledged for the successful completion of this evaluation study.

# I Executive Summary:

The project evaluation highlights significant achievements in addressing community needs, inclusivity, adherence to humanitarian principles, and women's involvement in decision-making. Through comprehensive needs assessments, critical community needs were identified, primarily focusing on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools and vulnerable HHs. The project prioritized inclusivity by engaging both genders in decision-making and implementing gender-sensitive interventions. Collaboration among stakeholders, particularly with community elders serving as local implementation supervisors, ensured transparency and accountability.

While the project has achieved successes, challenges persist, notably in addressing the needs of students with disabilities. Some communities, such as Khwaja Qalandar, lacked relevant infrastructure despite requiring WASH practices. Adherence to humanitarian principles was evident in transparent beneficiary selection and community involvement, fostering trust and accountability. However, the complaint mechanism lacked effectiveness, underscoring the necessity for a transparent and accountable feedback system. The project has demonstrated effectiveness in maintaining good water quality in schools and increasing visibility through strategic branding. Beneficiary satisfaction was high, with significant improvements in sanitation facilities and hygiene behavior reported. Nonetheless, the absence of facilities for students with disabilities and an ineffective complaint mechanism remain notable issues. The project's sustainable solutions, including solar-powered water systems, indicate a positive shift towards community self-sufficiency.

To enhance effectiveness, addressing the needs of students with disabilities and implementing a transparent complaint system are crucial. Continued collaboration with stakeholders and a focus on inclusivity will ensure sustained impact and community satisfaction. The project displayed exceptional efficiency in delivering timely health care promotion, transparent beneficiary selection, and comprehensive project documentation. Collaboration with community members ensured effective resource utilization, while transparent beneficiary selection processes built trust among stakeholders. Despite challenges, including bureaucratic delays, the project's skilled teams and adaptive strategies ensured successful implementation.

Structured M&E frameworks, robust beneficiary selection processes, and participatory monitoring ensured accountability and transparency. Rigorous verification processes maintained the integrity of beneficiary selection, while proper installation, maintenance, and hygiene education programs ensured a safe and sustainable environment. The project's public awareness campaigns efficiently disseminated crucial hygiene lessons, with collaboration with community members streamlining implementation and adoption. Improved access to clean water in schools showcased efficient resource allocation, with responsibility and knowledge transfer initiatives empowering communities for sustained impact.

The project's commitment to transparency and fairness in beneficiary selection was evident through systematic processes and active community involvement. Clear criteria targeted assistance to the most vulnerable, while high confirmation rates of information sharing reflected efforts in ensuring transparency and inclusivity. Despite challenges like bureaucratic delays and technical issues, the project exhibited adaptability and resilience in addressing obstacles. Prompt action was taken to rectify substandard quality issues, highlighting the project team's commitment to overcoming challenges for successful implementation.

The project prioritized skilled teams and meticulous financial management, ensuring effective planning and execution. Proactive strategies addressed skill and capacity gaps, empowering NGOs to deliver impactful interventions and contribute to sustained improvements in WASH outcomes. The project's impact assessment revealed positive changes in access to water and sanitation, HH hygiene practices, and behavioral change among beneficiaries. Collaboration between schools and communities emerged as a cornerstone of sustained project impact, with heightened awareness translating into tangible behavioral changes. The sustainability of the project relied on community willingness, education, and shared responsibility in maintaining facilities. Proactive facility upkeep and education efforts by teachers, parents, and community members ensured long-term sustainability and preservation of WASH facilities for future generations.

Project Name	roject Name Support for improving access to safe water and sanitation for children and residents in poor sanitation environments in Herat, Afghanistan.						
Start date	MarchEndJuly 16, 2023Number123 days16, 2023dateof daysof days						
Name of organization	NICCO		Name of person	Ayumu Ka katsube@l	tsube kyoto-nicco.org		
(Name of Affiliated Organization)	RSDO		in charge (e- mail)				
Project Activities	5			Beneficiar how many	ies (who and )	TPE Results	
To improve acc appropriate hygie children attendir facilities such a washrooms, and v insufficient water conflicts, natural o	ne practices ng schools, is water s water storag supply and s	for app by pr upply e tanks anitatio	roviding sanitary facilities, toilets, , for schools with	Four (approxima children)	schools ately 4,000	100% (N=107/107)	
The project will promote basic hygiene practices by distributing sanitation supplies and holding hygiene education courses for 400 HHs living in the vicinity of schools where water supply and sanitation facilities are not functioning adequately due to conflicts, natural disasters, etc.				400 HHs (approximately 2,400)		100% (N=241/241)	
Desired outcome			Indicators and targets (identification methods) for measuring outcome achievement		TPE Results		
Approximately 4,000 children and 400 HHs (approximately 2,400 people) in poor sanitation in Kushki-Couna, Herat, will improve basic sanitation.					100% (N=348)		
output			to achieve	TPE Results			
4,000 children Sphere standards for both water location				tment at each	Completed		
(approximatelyquality and water supply volume):2,000males1-2. 6 toilets per school (one of which1-2. Selection of school					on of schools	Completed	

Findings Report: JPF-funded WASH project in Herat, Afghanistan

and 2,000 females) attending four schools in the	is for children with disabilities) I-3. Maintained water storage tanks: 4. (In I-1, I-2, I-3, confirmation of construction sites, submission of	I-3. Improvement of water supply and sanitation	Completed
target area will have access to safe water and sanitation. Understand correct	photographs and reports, water quality surveys) I-4. Students who understand and practice appropriate hygiene practices: 80% or more	facilities I-4. Promoting Appropriate Hygiene Practices	Completed
hygiene practices.	(questionnaire surveys, unannounced surveys) I-5. Revitalized school management committee members: 60 (list of	I-5 Maintenance and Management System	Completed
	participants of school management committee)	I-6. Monitoring	Completed
	$00^{\circ}$ 2-2 More than 80% of participants	2-1. Adjustment of each location	Completed
(approximately 2,400: 1,200 males and		2-2. Selection of Beneficiaries	Completed
I,200 females) in the target	acquire the correct understanding of appropriate hygiene practices.	2-3. Procurement of sanitary supplies	Completed
area will understand the correct hygiene practices.	<ul><li>2-3. HHs receiving sanitary supplies:</li><li>400 HHs</li><li>(Conduct post-course questionnaire surveys, photographs and reports of the course, lists of persons who</li></ul>	2-4. Distribution of sanitary supplies/implementation of hygiene education courses	Completed
	received hygiene supplies and signatures of receipt)	2-5. Monitoring	Completed

# 2 Introduction

# 2.1 Project Background

The WASH project undertaken in the Kushki-Cohna district of Herat, Afghanistan, represents a concerted effort to address critical humanitarian needs exacerbated by drought, conflict, and displacement. With nearly two-thirds of Afghanistan's population requiring humanitarian aid, including essential water and sanitation services, initiatives like the WASH project play a crucial role in improving the health and well-being of affected communities.

The project, implemented by NICCO, in partnership with local implementing partner organization RSDO, focused on two primary components. Firstly, it aimed to enhance access to safe water and promote appropriate hygiene practices among 4,000 school children across four schools in Kushki-Cohna. Secondly, it targeted 400 HHs in the vicinity of these schools to improve hygiene practices through education and the distribution of sanitation supplies.

# This project had two components:

- i) Improve access to safe water and promote appropriate hygiene practices
- ii) Promote basic hygiene practices by distributing sanitation supplies and holding hygiene education courses

#### Each component aimed at:

- i) Improving access to safe water and promote appropriate hygiene practices for approximately 4,000 children attending schools, by providing sanitary facilities such as water supply facilities, toilets, washrooms, and water storage tanks, for schools with insufficient water supply and sanitation facilities due to conflicts, natural disasters, etc.
- ii) Promoting basic hygiene practices by distributing sanitation supplies and holding hygiene education courses for 400 HHs living in the vicinity of schools where water supply and sanitation facilities are not functioning adequately due to conflicts, natural disasters, etc.

As an outcome of both components, the project aimed at improving basic sanitation of approximately 4,000 children and 400 HHs (approximately 2,400 people) in poor sanitation in Kushki-Couna, Herat.

# 2.2 Study Objectives:

This final evaluation report seeks to assess the overall effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the WASH project based on its stated objectives, outcome and outputs. By analyzing key performance indicators, stakeholder feedback, and data collected through various methods, this evaluation aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project's achievements, challenges faced, and lessons learned.

Through a combination of qualitative insights gathered from interviews and focus group discussions and quantitative data obtained from surveys and project documentation, this evaluation endeavors to provide evidence-based conclusions and actionable recommendations for future WASH interventions in similar contexts. The evaluation matrix outlined in this report serves as a structured framework to guide the analysis and interpretation of data across relevant evaluation themes such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Ultimately, this evaluation report not only aims to assess the immediate outcomes of the WASH project but also seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions and efforts aimed at improving humanitarian interventions, promoting sustainable development practices, and enhancing the well-being of vulnerable communities in conflict and disaster-affected regions.

# 2.3 About JPF

The JPF is an international humanitarian aid organization which offers emergency aid in response to humanitarian needs, focusing on issues of refugees and natural disasters. JPF conducts such aid through a tripartite cooperation system where NGOs, business communities, and the government of Japan work in close cooperation, based on equal partnership, and making the most of the respective sectors' characteristics and resources. JPF serves as an intermediary support organization providing various types of assistance to member NGOs in Japan to deliver quick and comprehensive aid on their own. JPF has supported aid activities of 46 member NGOs, each with its own set of diverse strengths. It has delivered humanitarian assistance to 50 nations and regions about 1,800 projects, with a total financial contribution of 72 billion yen. JPF has built a strong reputation based on trust by promoting cooperation among private sectors and NGOs and by accurately reporting all its activities.

# 2.4 About NICCO

NICCO is a humanitarian organization committed to providing timely assistance to individuals and communities affected by conflicts and disasters, both domestically in Japan and internationally. Their approach encompasses immediate response to urgent needs, alongside initiatives aimed at fostering long-term self-sufficiency. Through rural development projects focusing on environmentally sustainable agriculture, NICCO empowers vulnerable populations to overcome poverty and adversity. Central to their mission is the emphasis on human resource development, ensuring that local communities possess the skills and resources to sustain and expand projects beyond NICCO's direct intervention. With a vision of a world free from poverty and conflicts, NICCO operates under a strict policy of humanitarianism, maintaining a non-racial, non-religious, and non-political stance in all endeavors.

# 2.5 About RSDO

RSDO is an Afghan NGO founded on April 11, 2008, and registered with the Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan. It was established in Herat city but then set up sub-offices in Ghor and Daykundi provinces by delivering social development services to vulnerable and marginalized people in remote communities. RSDO firstly initiated the primary activities in 2002 under the name of "Abu Hanifeh Orphan High School", assisting orphan children who lost their parents and families during the long-lasting war in Afghanistan to learn and build their future. Later on, with the financial support of the Japan Embassy, it has constructed a high school building for orphans and expanded the activities of orphans with the support of HELP Germany as well.

Table 1: Key Project Dates					
Program Name	Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis Response Assistance				
Project Title	Support for improving access to safe water and sanitation for children and residents in poor sanitation environments in Herat, Afghanistan				
Implementing Entity	Nippon International Cooperation for Community Development (NICCO)				
Executing Entity	Razi Social Development Organization				
Amount and Duration	21,079,815 Yen for 123 days				
Project InceptionMarch 16, 2023Project CompletionPlanned for June 30 but was extended to July 16, 2023					

# 2.6 Key Project Dates:

#### Table 2: Key Project Outcome and Output

Desired outcome	Indicator: Monitoring of 440 out of 6,400 people supported, more than
Approximately 4,000 children	80% of whom report improved hygiene and related behaviours.
and 400 HHs (approximately	
2,400 people) in poor sanitation	According to our survey, these indicators have been achieved only for

in Kushki-Couna, Herat, will improve basic sanitation.	the duration of the project.	
Desired Output I. Approximately 4,000 children (approximately 2,000 males and 2,000 females) attending four schools in the target area will have access to safe water and sanitation. Understand correct hygiene practices.	<ul> <li>Indicators and target values (verification methods) for measuring achievement of output Four wells (one that meets Sphere standards for both water quality and water supply volume):</li> <li>1- 6 toilets per school (one of which is for children with disabilities)</li> <li>2- Maintained water storage tanks: 4. (In 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, confirmation of construction sites, submission of photographs and reports, water quality surveys)</li> <li>3- Students who understand and practice appropriate hygiene practices: 80% or more (questionnaire surveys, unannounced surveys)</li> <li>3-2-1. Revitalized school management committee members: 60 (list of participants of school management committee)</li> </ul>	Activities to achieve output 1-1. Adjustment at each location 1-2. Selection of schools 1-3. Improvement of water supply and sanitation facilities 1-4. Promoting Appropriate Hygiene Practices 1-5 Maintenance and Management System 1-6. Monitoring
2. 400 HHs (approximately 2,400: 1,200 males and 1,200 females) in the target area will understand the correct hygiene practices.	<ul> <li>2-1. A total of 400 persons (200 males and 200 females) received hygiene training from 400 HHs.</li> <li>2-2. More than 80% of participants acquire the correct understanding of appropriate hygiene practices.</li> <li>2-3. HHs receiving sanitary supplies: 400 HHs</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>2-1. Adjustment of each location</li> <li>2-2. Selection of Beneficiaries</li> <li>2-3. Procurement of sanitary supplies</li> <li>2-4. Distribution of sanitary supplies/implementation of hygiene education courses</li> <li>2-5. Monitoring</li> </ul>

# 2.7 Study Scope:

At ASK Consulting, we believe the TPE services will serve as an integral component of the broader Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Mechanisms within JPF. With this in mind, the primary responsibility of ASK Consulting is:

- Collecting and reviewing all project documents as well as relevant other documents
- Conducting preparatory discussions/meetings with the relevant stakeholders
- Designing qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, sampling methods, field survey schedules and division of tasks
- Arranging/appointing data collectors and orientation of the data collectors/enumerators
- Collecting data and information from different levels and stakeholders including the project beneficiaries and groups, community people, JPF, NICCO, and RSDO staff
- Processing field data collection and analyzing the data applying statistical software and MS Excel
- Writing draft report and arranging a presentation session on the draft report with JPF and collecting feedback on this report
- Finalizing evaluation report after incorporation of feedback and submitting to JPF.

# 2.8 Study Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, specifically in Herat province, and the impacts of interventions aimed at improving WASH, several limitations must be acknowledged:

- 1. The survey responses and feedback from beneficiaries might be influenced by their personal biases.
- 2. The study's reliance on sampling for selecting beneficiaries might limit the generalizability of the findings.
- 3. The evaluation period was relatively short, spanning from March-June 2023. This timeframe may not be sufficient to capture the long-term impacts of the interventions on WASH.
- 4. The rapidly changing economic and political landscape in Afghanistan, particularly following the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, introduces additional variables that could affect the study's findings. Inflation, unemployment, and policy changes might have influenced the results in ways that are difficult to disentangle from the effects of the intervention.
- 5. The specific context of Herat province, including its unique socio-political dynamics and demographic characteristics, may limit the applicability of the findings to other regions of Afghanistan or other conflict-affected areas globally.

Acknowledging these limitations is crucial for interpreting the study's findings accurately and for informing future research and intervention strategies in similar humanitarian contexts. Further studies with extended timelines, robust longitudinal designs, and more comprehensive data collection methods are recommended to build on the insights gained from this evaluation.

# 3 Study Design

This research assignment was designed to evaluate the NICCO's project in providing WASH services to four schools and nearby HHs in Herat province. The study focused on evaluating access to safe water and sanitation facilities for 4,000 children and promoting correct hygiene practices among 400 HHs through education and distribution of hygiene kits. Key objectives included evaluating community participation, assessing project documentation for transparency, and ensuring alignment with humanitarian principles. The study also emphasized inclusivity, especially regarding women and children with disabilities, in WASH facilities, education programs, and supply distribution.

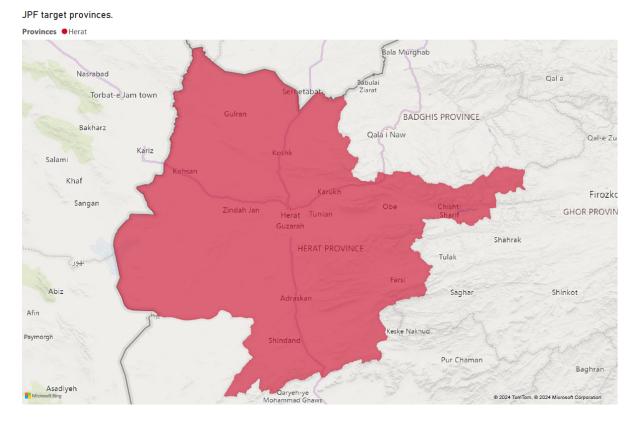
The study's objectives encompassed a wide range of assessments, including the adoption of hygiene practices among students, the effectiveness of maintenance systems for long-term sustainability, and the impact on HH behavior. It aimed to verify the accuracy of project alignment with proposals, fairness in beneficiary selection, and the success of location adjustments for sustained project impact. Stakeholder engagement and satisfaction, including evaluating the support of other donors in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus, were also crucial aspects. Furthermore, the study delved into the organizational effectiveness of NGOs involved, analyzing skills alignment, collaboration, and information reliability for enhanced project outcomes.

# 3.1 Geographical Coverage Area

The project has supported the community of Kushki-Couna. It is a district of Herat which has experienced massive inflows of internally displaced persons from rural areas within and outside Herat due to drought and prolonged conflict. 70% of the schools in this area do not have access to adequate water and sanitation facilities. In addition, the destruction of wells, water pumps, reservoirs and toilets due to conflict has resulted in the lack of access to safe drinking water and inability to promote adequate hygiene practices, plagued many children and populations with water-related illnesses. The following table provides a brief overview of the geography of the schools and areas where the project was implemented.

District	Village	School	Female Students	Male Students	Total Students
~~	Kariz Zaman	Kariz Zaman High School	840	0	840
oh:	Koklam	Koklam High School	0	1,153	1,153
Khushki- Kohna	Khaja Qalandar	Khaja Qalandar High School	646	466	1,112
	Joy E Sultani	Joy E Sultani High School	210	310	520
		Total	1,696	1,929	3,625 as per
					project plan

Table 2: Project Geographical Coverage as per Project Plan



# 4 Evaluation Framework

# 4.1 Research Methodology

The Evaluation was carried out in compliance with OECD –DAC Criteria and Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability were studied in detail to reach conclusion. The chosen research design for this study involved a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively analyze project activities in rural communities and provide informed recommendations to JPF. This approach was chosen to capture the complexities of the research topic by gathering rich qualitative data through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) while also obtaining objective quantitative measures. Qualitative methods provided deep insights into social, cultural, and gender aspects, while quantitative data offered broader perspectives and statistical relationships.

# 4.2 Sampling Strategy

This study required a robust sampling strategy for 6,400 beneficiaries, including 4,000 students and 400 HH members as direct beneficiaries, along with 2,000 HH members as indirect beneficiaries, with a 95% confidence interval. Ensuring the representativeness of the sample drawn was crucial to accurately generalize the findings to the entire population. To address the need for a representative sample in light of the population size, a stratified random sampling method was employed, with stratification based on relevant factors such as age, gender, or location. The sample size was calculated using the formula for estimating sample size in a population, considering a confidence level of 95%. The sample size was 364.

Methods	Stakeholders	Description	Targeted	Reached	Achievement Rate
	NICCO Staff	2 interviews with key NICCO Staff engaged in the project			
КІІ	RSDO Staff	4 interviews key RSDO Staff from top and middle management and field staff	14	14	100%
	School Staff	4 interviews with School Principals			
	Community Leader	4 Interviews with Community Leaders I leader from each school community			
Focus Group Discussions	The parents of students	8 FGDs each comprised of 10 members (2 per school with 1 male and 1 female participants)	8	8	100%
	Trainees	128 surveys with training participants			
Survey	HHs Members	108 surveys with HH members of training participants	336	348	103%
	School Students	100 surveys with students of schools where WASH facilities were built			

#### 4.2.1 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

A series of interviews were conducted with key personnel from various stakeholders to comprehensively assess the project. These interviews captured their experiences, perspectives, and knowledge related to the WASH project. This approach included, conducting two interviews with key NICCO Staff, and undertaking four interviews with RSDO Staff, covering top, middle management, and field staff. Additionally, grassroots perspectives on the project's impact were gathered through interviews with School Staff. These interviews aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project's implementation and impact, covering roles, contributions, and perspectives of personnel associated with NICCO, RSDO, and School Staff.

#### 4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were conducted with various community members to capture a broader range of voices and experiences. These discussions involved elders, male and female community members, and specifically included eight FGDs with the parents of students, ensuring gender diversity and inclusivity. Each FGD comprised at least one parent of a student with disabilities, totaling nine members per group. The aim was to gather insights into the project's impact on the educational environment for children and its influence on the broader community.

#### 4.2.3 Surveys/Questionnaires

Surveys in the form of questionnaires were distributed to a diverse sample, including trainees and their HH members, totaling 335 questionnaires distributed among participants. These surveys aimed to systematically collect quantitative data on participants' perceptions and experiences related to both the WASH project and the comprehensive JPF humanitarian program in Afghanistan. The questionnaires were divided into three groups: trainees (128 questionnaires), trainee HH members (108 questionnaires), and school students (100 questionnaires). Structured survey questions facilitated the measurement of specific variables, enabling quantitative analysis of trends, patterns, and overall insights. Surveys provided a systematic and efficient means of obtaining data from a large participant pool, complementing the qualitative data gathered through interviews. Adjustments were made to the survey distribution based on accessibility challenges highlighted by RSDO staff in certain villages. Specifically: The number of students and trainees was increased by 20% in Koklam and Joy E Sultani villages, resulting in 96 participants each. Conversely, the number of students and trainees was decreased by 20% in Kariz Zaman and Khawaja Qalandar villages, resulting in 73 participants each. These adjustments aimed to balance sample sizes across villages despite varying accessibility issues.

#### **5** Findings

#### 5.1 Demographic

Survey was conducted with three categories of respondents namely: HH members, Trainees and Students totaling 348 individuals. A total of 113 HH individuals were surveyed across four communities. Among these respondents, the distribution of gender across all communities were 54% females and 46% male respondents. Similarly, among trainee respondents out of 128 respondents across target communities approximately 49% were female and 50% were male.

In terms of age group, the largest age group represented fell within the 20-30 years bracket, constituting 33% of HH respondents and 39% of trainee respondents.

#### RESPONDENTS FEMALE TO MALE RATIO BY TYPE OF RESPONDENT

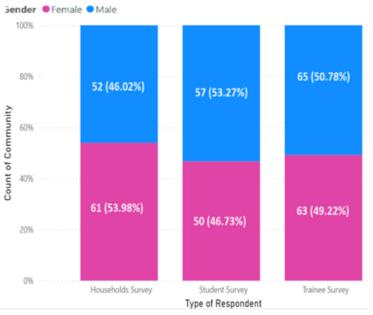


Figure 1: Respondents ratio by gender and type of respondents (N=348)

Females were more represented across both groups, comprising 23% (HH respondents) and 24% (trainee respondents) were female, compared to males at 9% (HH respondents) and 15% (trainee respondents). This indicates a deliberate targeting of young adults, especially women, for the training initiative. This approach aligned well with fostering knowledge dissemination within the community.

The majority of both HH respondents (59% - 67 individuals) and trainee respondents (54% - 70 individuals) reported unemployment, with almost all those who didn't report employment being women; 51% in the case of HH respondents and 49% in the case of trainee respondents. Self-employment was more prevalent among male respondents, accounting for 23% in the case of HH respondents and 34% in the case of trainee respondents, while only a few reported full-time employments; 14% in the case of HH respondents and 11% in the case of trainee respondents.

These findings suggest a notable gender disparity in employment status, with women being disproportionately affected by unemployment, aligning with broader societal trends and emphasizing the need for targeted initiatives to address economic opportunities for women in these communities.

Type of Respondent	Female	Male	Grand Total
HHs Survey	61	52	113
Student Survey	50	57	107
Trainee Survey	63	65	128
Grand Total	174	174	348

Table 43: # of respondents (N=348) by type of respondent and gender and community

Table 54: (N=348) Percentage of respondents by type and age category

Type of respondents/Age Group	Female	Male	Grand Total
HHs Survey	35.06%	<b>29.89</b> %	32.47%
20-30	14.94%	5.75%	10.34%
31-40	12.07%	6.32%	9.20%

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60+	1.15%	4.80% 5.17%	2.59% 3.16%
41-50 51-60	8.05% 0.57%	5.17% 4.60%	6.61% 2.59%
31-40	8.62%	11.49%	10.06%
20-30	17.82%	10.92%	14.37%
Trainee Survey	36.21%	37.36%	36.78%
21-25	0.00%	0.57%	0.29%
16-20	4.60%	6.32%	5.46%
10-15	24.14%	25.86%	25.00%
Student Survey	28.74%	32.76%	30.75%
60+	0.00%	6.32%	3.16%
51-60	1.72%	5.75%	3.74%
41-50	6.32%	5.75%	6.03%

Table 65: Employment status of Trainees and HH members (N=220) by gender

Type of respondents/Employment status	Female	Male	<b>Grand Total</b>
HHs Survey	<b>49.19</b> %	44.44%	<b>46.89</b> %
Employed	0.00%	13.68%	6.64%
self-employed	2.42%	23.08%	12.45%
Unemployed	46.77%	7.69%	27.80%
Trainee Survey	50.81%	55.56%	53.11%
Employed	0.00%	12.82%	6.22%
self-employed	0.00%	37.61%	18.26%
Unemployed	50.81%	5.13%	28.63%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The schools supported under the project showcase a diverse range of student and staff populations, highlighting unique challenges and strengths within each educational institution.

- I. Joy E Sultani School
  - Students: 1,304 (690 boys, 614 girls)
  - Teachers: 29 (21 male, 8 female)
  - Characteristics: Relatively large school community with a balanced teaching staff composition.
- 2. Khawaja Qalander
  - Students: 1,000 (350 boys, 650 girls)
  - Teachers: 18
  - Support staff: 5)
  - Characteristics: Maintaining a slightly lower student-to-teacher ratio.
- 3. Koklam Boys School
  - Students: 700 (700 boys)
  - Teachers: 21
  - Support staff member: I

EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY GENDER

status • Employed • self-employed • unemployed

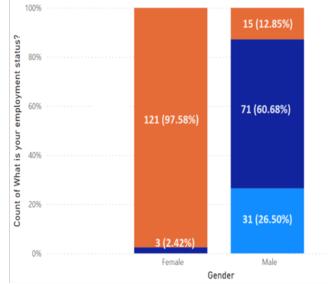


Figure 2: Respondents' employment status by gender.

Findings Report: JPF-funded WASH project in Herat, Afghanistan

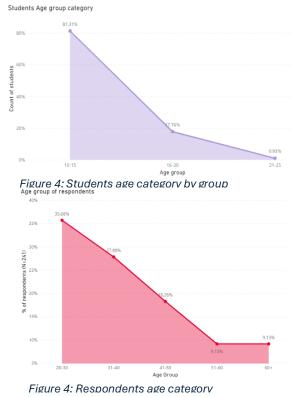
- Characteristics: Emphasizing a need for efficient teaching and management strategies with a sizable student cohort.
- 4. Kariz Zaman School
  - 675 students (675 girls)
  - Teachers: 13
  - Support staff: 3
  - Characteristics: Indicating a more intimate school setting with a focused teaching approach.

#### **Findings**

Survey target students: 107 students surveyed.

- 51 girls (47%)
- 10 to 15 years old students (87 81%)

This indicates that the project typically targeted primary level students, which increases the relevance of the project as this age range coincides with crucial stages of behavioral and habitual development. The schools supported under the NICCO project showcase a diverse range of student and staff populations, highlighting unique challenges and strengths within each educational institution.



#### 5.2 Relevance

The project's relevance was assessed through its focus on Addressing Community Need, ensuring Inclusivity, Adherence to humanitarian principles, and Women's involvement in decision-making. Based on the KIIs, the evaluation revealed significant achievements in these areas.

#### Responding to local needs:

The project addressed critical community needs in some communities by improving WASH facilities in schools and promoting hygiene practices among vulnerable HHs, especially women. This was accomplished through a needs assessment that identified gaps in services and highlighted challenges faced by vulnerable HHs in accessing safe water, sanitation, and hygiene education.

#### Ensuring inclusivity:

The project prioritized inclusivity by ensuring equal participation and benefits for all community members, particularly emphasizing women's active involvement in decision-making processes. Collaboration among various stakeholders, including community leaders, school management teams, and parents, was crucial in implementing these improvements.

#### Adherence to humanitarian principles:

The project's adherence to humanitarian principles was evident in its transparent beneficiary selection processes, gender inclusion strategies, and rigorous verification mechanisms, ensuring fairness, equity, and accountability.

#### Involvement of women in decision-making:

Women's involvement in decision-making was comprehensive and effective, starting from staffing to community consultations, ensuring their needs were integrated into the interventions. (Table X)

#### 5.2.1 Addressing Community Need

The evaluation probed into how the project addressed critical community needs, ranging from WASH facilities in school and hygiene practices among targeted vulnerable HHs. Project staff conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, pinpointing gaps in WASH services and hygiene practices. This assessment was developed into a baseline report and shared between RSDO and NICCO. This report highlighted challenges faced by vulnerable HHs, particularly in accessing safe water, sanitation facilities, and receiving proper hygiene education. (Table X).

#### Issues concerning the needs of people with disabilities:

School observations and community discussions revealed that, while the project successfully improved access to WASH facilities and sanitation sites for all students this access primarily focused on access to water and sanitation needs. However, specific needs of students with disabilities tended to not be comprehensively addressed, as evident by community elders' testimonials and the schools' observations. For instance, a community elder, praised the design of WASH facilities for students with disabilities, acknowledging that persons with disabilities could use the facilities in targeted schools. However, his acknowledgment primarily addressed access to water and not the overall accessibility of the facilities. He was concerned about the toilets for students with disabilities. According to RSDO staff, within the defined scope of the project, their sole responsibility was directed towards the repair of existing structures. It's pertinent to note that the original base of these structures did not include provisions for toilets catering to students with disabilities. Therefore, RSDO could not accommodate these structures for the students with disabilities.

Similarly, Abdul Zahir from Joy E Sultani Village emphasized the project's positive aspects but noted the lack of specific facilities for students with disabilities, stressing the need for future designs beyond addressing basic water consumption needs. In three out of four schools observed, it was noted that there were no designated toilets for students with disabilities.

#### Participation of both genders and community mobilization:

Community members, both men and women, actively participated in various project activities and contributed to the project design through their insights and feedback. During the needs assessment phase, men and women shared valuable insights into their specific needs and concerns related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. Project staff conducted consultations with the community, engaging both men and women in discussions to ensure that the project design addressed the community's unique requirements. Community mobilization efforts were also inclusive, involving both genders in raising awareness and garnering support for the project's goals. Through project sensitization activities, men and women were educated about the importance of WASH practices, encouraging their active involvement in promoting hygiene within their HHs and communities.

The role of community elders as local implementation supervisors was vital to the project's success. Based on interviews and feedback from community elders, it became evident that they played a key role in regularly monitoring activities such as well drilling progress and maintaining communication with school headmasters regarding project developments. This role was not only attributed to their experience and knowledge but also stemmed from local customs and the Community Development Council (CDC) structure prevalent in rural Afghan settings. In such settings, the shura head, often an elder, is viewed as a representative of the community in matters concerning development or social initiatives. Therefore, the role of local implementation supervisor evolved organically from traditional community leadership structures and was integrated into the project's implementation strategy to ensure effective oversight and communication within the community.

#### 5.2.2 Inclusivity

The evaluation assessed the inclusivity of the project as part of the relevance to assess how the project was relevant to different groups of people. The study found that the project prioritized inclusivity through strategies that ensured equal participation and benefits for all community members, particularly emphasizing women's active involvement in decision-making. According to a project's field staff, the selection process was done based on pre-determined criteria. These criteria focused on selecting individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged HHs, IDPs or returnees, female-headed HHs, families unable to afford hygiene kits, and people with disabilities. This inclusivity extended to schools, with considering different groups of people from different villages eventually benefiting diverse range students from different ethnic background.

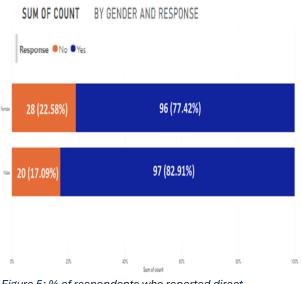
Collaboration among community leaders, school management teams, and parents was key to implementing these improvements. Gender diversity in the beneficiary community and hygiene training sessions, with a focus on female participation, underscored the project's commitment to inclusivity. The project managed to extend its support to women - comprising 50% of the beneficiaries.

Active community participation in decision-making processes and knowledge transfer for sustainable practices reflected the project's inclusive approach. Agha Mohammad, community elder from Ab Goji and Shaloji Village affirmed this inclusivity, stating, "**Hygiene trainings and public awareness were conducted by the project team twice per distributing the hygiene materials to community in close coordination with the village shura and it was very important for us to learn about hygiene system and improve health."** Likewise, Sheikh Ahmad, community elder from Koklam Village emphasized the impact of community feedback on project design and implementation, particularly regarding gender-sensitive facilities and practices such as separate female toilets in the school and the female hygiene practices. Moreover, the survey from the trainees and HH members revealed that a majority of the community members were directly involved in the selection process of beneficiaries with male 83% (103 individuals) of the respondent and female 77% (95 individuals) reporting direct involvement in the selection process (Figure 5).

#### Unmet support selections in alignment with most critical needs:

Despite the relevance of the project in some communities, some other communities needed assistance in different forms. Based on our field observation, the community of Khwaja Qalandar was in need of other priority support than WASH facilities such as classrooms and school building. Despite that, the project rehabilitated a total of 8 toilets at the school, however, these facilities were found to be insufficient considering the high number of students present at the school. Based on our field observation and conversations with female respondents, female students of the community, however, were sometimes studying in a madrassa and sometimes under the trees instead of a proper school facility.

#### Simultaneous critical needs requiring support:





According to RSDO staff, Khawaja Qalander School accommodates a significant number of students and is situated in a remote and underserved area of the Kushki Kohna district. Currently, the school caters to approximately 300 female students in addition to all male students. The school's location in

Findings Report: JPF-funded WASH project in Herat, Afghanistan

such a distant and deprived area underscores its vital role in providing education to the local community. The classrooms within the school compound are utilized to their fullest capacity and cannot accommodate more students inside its classrooms. Both female and male students studying in these facilities in separate classes. However, due to the high student population, there are some female students who are compelled to study outside of the school premises due to insufficient space within the classrooms, some of them study even in the open air or in a nearby madrassa. This underscores the pressing need for additional infrastructure to accommodate the educational needs of all students within the school compound. In addition, this school was in need of water since there was no water accessibility and the toilets were also in need of repairing. On top of that, the respondents said they did not have separate female washrooms either. The students were, however, trained by the project on WASH practices and suggested to use the facilities of Khawaja Qalandar. This finding demonstrates that the project needs a more holistic approach to respond to the needs of the communities and go beyond the WASH practices and trainings. The female students need a building and a proper study space along with the WASH activities.

On the other hand, the project design for students with disabilities was in question as proper toilets were not considered for them despite being an indicator in the logical framework. According to our field observation none of the schools supported had designated toilet facility for students with disabilities and the existing facilities were also observed to be poor in terms of user friendliness to the students with disabilities. Based on our online discussion with RSDO, they were not tasked with constructing toilets. Instead, they spent the project finances on repairing the toilets. Since some the toilets did not have existing toilets for students with disabilities were in the project proposal, and the project log frame mentions that at least one toilet among six toilets has to be considered for students with disabilities. But RSDO baseline survey revealed a low number of students with disabilities which did not necessitate the construction of toilets for students with also of leg, was not present in all schools. There is only one student in Khaja Qalandar school that has disabilities in his leg. Other types of disabilities were muteness, deafness, and blindness which still need toilets that offer special support.

# 5.2.3 Adherence to humanitarian principles

The study conducted the assessment of adherence to humanitarian principles to evaluate project's commitment to transparency, fairness, and community involvement. The project's alignment with organizational and JPF goals emphasized a humanitarian approach, prioritizing community health and well-being through access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene education. Transparent beneficiary selection processes, adherence to gender inclusion strategies, and rigorous verification mechanisms upheld humanitarian principles, ensuring fairness, equity, and accountability. Gender inclusion strategies in the project included maintaining a balanced ratio of approximately 50% female participants in trainings and providing female-only toilets. Verification mechanisms such as verifying Tazkira numbers, phone numbers, and addresses were employed to ensure accurate beneficiary selection and prevent misrepresentation or duplication. One notable aspect of the project's adherence to humanitarian principles was the transparent beneficiary selection processes and active community involvement in decision-making. This approach not only fostered trust but also enhanced accountability within the communities, as highlighted by a community elder from Koklam Village, who stated, "our community was selected because we have a large population of students and we faced lack of water in our school and our school is the center place in community level so this applying to select our school for the project."

#### Feedback from beneficiaries and community leaders:

Their feedbacks played a pivotal role in shaping project design and implementation, enhancing its overall impact and relevance to community needs. As noted by the Joy E Sultani village community

elder "We have been involved in the project. We oversaw monitoring and evaluation we were instructing them. I was personally not involved in selection process, but other community representatives such as the principal of the school were involved." The selection process for identifying eligible beneficiaries involved several steps and stakeholders. Firstly, a door-to-door survey was conducted to gather information and verify the list of potential beneficiaries provided by local communities. This survey aimed to ensure accuracy and fairness in beneficiary selection.

The selection criteria for beneficiaries were clearly defined and communicated to local community stakeholders. These criteria focused on identifying individuals and HHs with specific needs, including:

- Individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or poor families.
- Internally displaced persons (IDPs) or poor returnees to the area.
- Female-headed HHs requiring additional support.
- Families unable to afford essential hygiene kit items.
- Individuals with disabilities who may require specialized assistance.

Local community stakeholders played a crucial role in nominating potential beneficiaries based on these criteria.

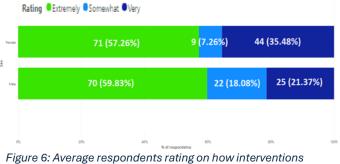
#### 5.2.4 Women involvement in decision-making

The project's approach to women's involvement in decision-making for WASH projects was comprehensive and effective, as noted in interviews with project staff. Women were engaged in staffing and community consultations, ensuring their needs were considered throughout project design and implementation. Their active participation during community consultations (community mobilization sessions, communications with the CDC shura) in the needs assessment phase ensured that their insights were integrated into tailored WASH interventions. A significant aspect of this involvement was evident in the selection process, with a high percentage of both female and male respondents reporting participation in decision-making processes related to trainee selection within their community. Specifically, 78% of females (N=124) and 83% of males (N=117) were involved, indicating substantial engagement of beneficiaries in project implementation decisions. This level of involvement speaks to the project's commitment to inclusivity and community-driven initiatives.

Moreover, when participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of interventions addressing women needs in their HHs, the majority rated 57% females (71 individuals) and 59% (70 individuals) males) them as "extremely effective." This response not only reflects the project's success in meeting community needs but also underscores its dedication to prioritizing women's needs within WASH initiatives. By ensuring women's active involvement at every stage, from consultation to implementation and evaluation, the project fostered a sense of ownership and empowerment among community members, leading to potential impactful and sustainable outcomes for women.

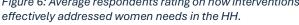
#### 5.3 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project was evaluated by considering aspects such as WASH facilities functionality in schools, effectiveness of JPF's strategies in increasing visibility, effectiveness of implementation mechanisms, and beneficiary satisfaction. Analysis findings revealed that while schools generally maintained good water quality. However, they faced challenges during peak demand due to reliance on single water sources. Furthermore,



Average respondents rating on how interventions effectively

addressed women needs in the HH



sanitation facilities lacked accessible-to-people-with-disabilities toilets, needing future upgrades.

The evaluation also revealed that the project successfully endorsed JPF's vision and values, with a significant percentage of beneficiaries 96% (123 individuals) females, 92% (119 individuals) males recognizing JPF's involvement and mission, indicating strong endorsement and visibility within the target communities. Implementation mechanisms were also found to be effective, showcasing structured monitoring frameworks, robust beneficiary selection processes. The project maintained safety and security by implementing rigorous safety protocols, supplying essential safety gear and training to staff, and liaising with local authorities for security measures.

Most importantly, beneficiary satisfaction was notably high, with a majority reporting being "Very Satisfied" (66% of students and 69% of HHs), highlighting the project's positive impact and overall effectiveness in meeting key objectives and ensuring stakeholder contentment. On top of that, sustainable solutions were also integrated in the project activities. The water systems were supported by solar power which indicates a shift towards energy self-sufficiency of the community.

Two issues pertained to effectiveness:

- I. Lack of facilities for students with disability which was discussed above and
- 2. Lack of a proper, digitalized, and fully functional feedback mechanism.

Project monitoring methods used by RSDO:

- Post-distribution monitoring: After conducting hygiene workshops and distributing hygiene kits, RSDO conducted interviews with 10% of recipients to assess the effectiveness of the educational program.
- Formation of School Management Committees: Committees were established to oversee and maintain project structures within schools, ensuring their proper usage and longevity. RSDO assessed the effectiveness of these committees
- Daily site monitoring: RSDO implemented continuous on-site monitoring to track project progress and ensure that activities were aligned with planned indicators and objectives
- End-line survey: Following project completion, RSDO conducted an end-line survey to evaluate overall achievements, identify successes, and gather insights on challenges faced and Lessons learned

# 5.3.1 WASH facilities functionality.

1. Joy E Sultani School relies on a single water source, a driven well, for its water supply built under the project. The water source's condition was observed as good and suitable for school use, ensuring the basic quality of the water available to the school community. Additionally, the school has a water tank and utilizes a solar water pump, indicating a sustainable and eco-friendly approach to water management.

School Name	Male Students	Toilets for Male	Female Students	Toilets for Female
Joy E Sultani	690	6	614	NA
Khawaja Qalandar	350	6	650	6
Koklam	700	6	NA	NA
Kariz Zaman	NA	NA	675	4

Concerns:

1-1. The peak demand for water

- During school hours, reaching up to 1800 students. This high demand might strain the water supply system, especially during peak times such as breaks when usage spikes. The absence of an emergency backup water storage system further highlights the vulnerability of the water supply, making it a potential area for improvement in ensuring continuous access to clean water. The school possesses six toilets, which, although a reasonable number, may not fully meet the needs of a student population consisting of 690 boys and 614 girls.
- 1-2. Lack of toilets and consideration for persons with disabilities
- Lack of toilets specifically designed for children with disability is a significant gap and reduce the level of effectiveness of the project.
- 1-3. Misconceptions regarding toilet repairs and demolition
- The design rating for accessible-to-people-with-disability toilets is notably low, marked as "Very Poor," indicating challenges in accessibility and usability for students with disabilities.
- According to RSDO, another reason for lack of toilets for students with disability was compliance with regulations set forth by the education department. This provoked RSDO not to demolish existing structures and would be costly as well and facilitate the construction of new toilets, as the project was only repairing the existing toilets.
- RSDO reported some demolishing activities in their monthly reports, however, they acknowledged that there were instances of mistyped words in their reports, leading to miscommunication. It came to their attention that terms such as "demolish" were used inaccurately. It is important to clarify that no structures were demolished except in the case of Joy E Sultani. In the instance of Joy E Sultani, only the ceiling of the toilets was (demolished) removed, and a new ceiling was installed in place of the old one. This action was taken because, technically, the old ceiling could not be repaired and required replacement. It's crucial to emphasize that this action was limited to the ceiling area and did not involve the demolition of the entire toilet structure. The resilience of the toilet at this school was removed and repaired.

#### Management and Cleaning of Sanitation Facilities:

- On the hygiene component, the school has designated handwashing stations, encouraging good hygiene practices among students. The observed frequency of handwashing, exceeding 500 times per day, reflects a positive engagement of students in maintaining personal hygiene. This active practice is commendable and indicates a good understanding of the importance of hand hygiene in preventing diseases and promoting overall well-being. The school has a system in place for monitoring the condition of sanitation facilities, with cleaners responsible for regular cleaning and maintenance. School headmasters reported that through quarterly inspections they further ensure that any repairs or maintenance needs are addressed. The indicates community ownership and effects of the project in terms of localization.
- 2. Khawaja Qalander School relies on a single driven well as its primary water source, supported by an electrical water pump built under the project. The reported condition of the water source was "good", serving around 400 people with clean water which not only proves effective but also sustainable. During peak times, the water source caters to 40-50 individuals, highlighting its efficiency even under increased demand. Additionally, the school has a water tank and an emergency backup water storage system, ensuring uninterrupted access to clean water even during supply disruptions.

# Concerns:

#### 2.1 Lack of toilets and consideration for persons with disabilities

The school has 8 toilets, 4 for girls and 4 for boys, available but lacks specific facilities for students with disability, reflecting a notable gap. The design rating for accessible-to-people-

with-disability toilets was rated as "poor", indicating the need for improvements in accessibility and user-friendliness.

- 2-2. The sanitation facilities
- Well-maintained and cleaned daily, enhancing the overall hygiene standards within the school.

### Handwashing stations:

- Handwashing stations are available outside the school premises, encouraging good hygiene practices among students. The observed frequency of student handwashing ranged from 100 to 200 times per day, showcasing a positive engagement in maintaining personal hygiene. A traditional system is in place for regular monitoring and maintenance of sanitation facilities, with cleaners responsible for daily cleaning and inspections conducted weekly.
- 3. Koklam School relies on a single driven well as its water source, supported by a solar water pump built under the project. The water source's condition is reported as good, serving both the school community and outsiders. During peak times, approximately 30 people utilize the water source, ensuring efficient use.

Concerns:

- 3-1. The absence of an emergency backup water storage system
- It is a notable concern in case of water supply disruptions.
- 3-2. Lack of toilets and consideration for persons with disabilities
- The school has toilets but lacks facilities for children with disabilities. The design rating for accessible-to-people-with-disability toilets is very poor, highlighting accessibility challenges.

#### Sanitation facilities:

- Sanitation facilities are well-maintained, cleaned daily, and inspected weekly, contributing to a hygienic school environment. While handwashing stations exist, the observed frequency of student handwashing ranges from 100 to 200 times per day, indicating a moderate level of engagement in hand hygiene practices. The school has a system in place for monitoring sanitation facilities, supported by solar systems. Regular inspections ensure prompt repairs and maintenance.
- 4. Kariz Zaman School relies on a single dug well as its water source, supported by an unspecified water pump. Initially, the water source had a good pumping rate.

# Concerns:

- 4-1. Shortage of meeting the school's needs
- During peak times, approximately 500 students utilize the water source, indicating significant demand.
- 4-2. No emergency backup water storage system in place, posing a risk during water supply disruptions.
- 4-3. Lack of toilets and consideration for persons with disabilities
- The school provides a total of 8 toilets (4 for boys and 4 for girls) but lacks facilities for children with disability. The design rating for accessible-to-people-with-disability is very poor, highlighting accessibility challenges.

# Sanitation facilities:

- Sanitation facilities are well-maintained and cleaned daily, contributing to a hygienic environment. Handwashing stations exist and the observed frequency of student handwashing ranges from 401 to 500 times per day, indicating a moderate to good level of engagement in hygiene practices.
- According to the school principal of Kariz Zaman, although the sanitation facilities are inspected weekly, there is no formal system in place for monitoring their condition regularly. However, according to the community elder of Kariz Zaman, they have created council, and

they arrange meetings about how to ensure the sustainability of improved hygiene practices. This person further claimed that they have informed, directed, and encouraged their students to protect these benefits of the project. This does show that localization efforts and community ownership may seem to have been effective across Kariz Zaman community. Perhaps, the school principal referred to RSDO that they were not monitoring the sites, whereas it is the community's responsibility to monitor the facilities once the support ends which the principal already claimed that they inspect the facilities on a weekly basis.

#### 5.3.2 Visibility of JPF

Based on interviews with NICCO staff, the project ensured the visibility of JPF through strategic branding and communication efforts. This included prominently displaying the JPF logo on various materials such as banners, leaflets, and brochures.

Moreover, the project acknowledged JPF in project documentation and signage at project sites, reinforcing their contribution. JPF's logo was also included on project materials like hygiene kits, further associating their support with tangible project outcomes. Public recognition of JPF's support was a key aspect, integrated into project events, workshops, and community meetings. This was complemented by active promotion through social media posts, extending the reach of JPF's brand presence beyond local interactions. Survey responses from beneficiaries provided concrete evidence of the effectiveness of visibility strategies. A significant percentage of both female (96% - 123 individuals) and male (92% - 112 individuals) respondents reported awareness of JPF's involvement in the project and recognized the JPF logo. This shows that humanitarian support of JPF is recognized at the community level and demands continuation of the practice.

% OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED AWARENESS OF JPF INVOLVEMENT

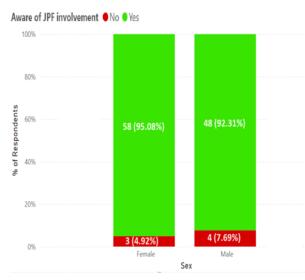


Figure 7: % of respondents who reported awareness of JPF involvement.

RSDO\_aff Accurate and door-to-door surveys were completed in Rabat Sangi district in Herat city to help 2000 poor families on April, 2022. This project of food aid packages was funded by the Japan Platform and was implemented with the cooperation of NICCO and RSDO organizations. #RSDO



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#### 5.3.3 Beneficiary satisfaction

Beneficiary satisfaction, as evidenced by feedback from communities, interviews with key staff, and surveys with beneficiaries, underscores the effectiveness of transparent and fair beneficiary selection processes. These processes were instrumental in fostering community trust and contentment by ensuring equitable resource allocation.

The analysis of satisfaction ratings for a project intervention among students and HHs reveals notable trends and insights. Overall, a significant proportion of respondents, particularly HHs, expressed high satisfaction levels with the intervention. Approximately

PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON THEIR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION FROM PROJECT ...

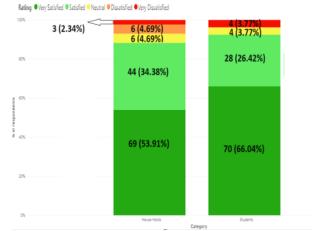


Figure 8: Satisfaction rate among respondents by type of beneficiary

69 HH members (54%) and 70 students (66%) reported being "Very Satisfied." Furthermore, satisfaction extended to the "Satisfied" category, with 44 HH members (34%) and 28 students (26%) indicating this sentiment. By aggregating both responses, we can infer an accumulated satisfaction rate among the respondents of 119 HH members (90%) and 102 students (92%).

Strategic public awareness campaigns and structured hygiene education programs:

These activities yielded significant improvements in the utilization of hygiene kits and water resources, according to assessments conducted among trainees and their HH members. When asked whether they have observed any positive changes in the community behavior, all of the household and trainee respondents believed they have witnessed positive change in terms of better water utilization and improved hygiene practices. This comprehensive approach not only enhanced community health practices but also showcased a positive correlation with improved hygiene behavior outcomes among respondents. Furthermore, student surveys and parents' response in FGDs highlighted a positive shift such as frequent hand washing, nail cutting and brushing in hygiene behaviors among students, attributing these changes to the availability of quality washrooms and clean water within school premises. The collective feedback emphasized a strong sense of community satisfaction, affirming the positive impact of the project on school enhancement and behavioral changes.

#### Concerns: Inadequate sanitation facilities and water access

The project's targeted interventions addressed longstanding challenges related to inadequate sanitation facilities and water access, particularly impacting the comfort and dignity of school attendees, as indicated by consistent feedback across focus group discussions. With the implementation of improved facilities, beneficiaries reported increased satisfaction and a notable improvement in their overall well-being, aligning with the project's objectives.

#### Concerns: The complaint mechanism of the project

- According to a senior RSDO staff member, the beneficiaries were informed about the complaint mechanisms by the project team, however, the observations we made revealed that some beneficiaries had a few complaints about the distribution items and wanted to take their voices to the project team and higher-level stakeholders.
- In our interviews, very few beneficiaries claimed that hygiene kits were not distributed equally to the HHs. They claimed some HHs received one kit per HH member whereas some others did not even receive one kit for their whole HH. The beneficiaries said they did not know

where and how to complaint about their issues. However, according to RSDO, their field staff remained consistently present in the field, maintaining regular contact with beneficiaries and local communities. The RSDO team further conducted a post-distribution monitoring survey to record any grievances. However, no complaints were reported from either source. RSDO deployed a focal point in Kushki Kohna, which similarly did not receive any complaints. School Management Committees were established specifically to address grievances, yet no complaints were lodged through this avenue. Currently, RSDO remains accessible for any grievances via the contact numbers disseminated to community leaders, school principals, the Director of the Education Department, and the District Governor. However, no complaints have been received through these communication channels.

- Since too many traditional channels were available, it may have been the lack of awareness of the beneficiaries on the distribution process or the project operations as is the case in many humanitarian projects.

#### 5.4 Efficiency

Efficiency was analyzed through timely health care promotion, transparent beneficiary selection, comprehensive project documentation, skilled team performance, and successful navigation of challenges. The evaluation of project efficiency highlighted key factors contributing to effective service delivery and overall success.

The project excelled in implementing timely health care promotion strategies and collaborated closely with community members, leveraging local resources effectively. Transparency and fairness were evident in beneficiary selection processes, ensuring equitable resource distribution and building trust among stakeholders. Clear criteria, including economic status and disability status, targeted assistance to the most vulnerable within the community. Comprehensive project documentation based on baseline survey findings enhanced performance by tailoring interventions to community needs. Despite

challenges like bureaucratic delays, the team overcame obstacles through cooperation with local authorities, accelerating implementation to meet timelines. Skilled teams with diverse backgrounds and specialized training in WASH projects were crucial for successful planning and implementation, showcasing expertise in various areas.

#### 5.4.1 Implementation mechanisms

The implementation mechanisms carried out by the RSDO and NICCO team for WASH projects demonstrated efficiency through structured M&E frameworks, robust beneficiary selection processes. The project's M&E framework, overseen by the assigned M&E officer, facilitated consistent monitoring throughout the project lifespan.

Baseline and endline surveys provided crucial data for gauging project impact, while post-distribution monitoring (PDM) ensured beneficiary satisfaction and incorporation of feedback.



Regular progress reports, including monthly and final reports, along with survey reports, accurately documented project activities, fostering transparency, accountability, and a precise reflection of outcomes.

Before finalizing beneficiaries, a rigorous verification process conducted by the monitoring and evaluation team ensured the eligibility of selected individuals, maintaining the integrity of the selection process. Proper installation meeting safety standards, regular maintenance, hygiene education programs, supervised facility usage, and emergency response plans collectively ensured a safe and

sustainable environment created as a result of the efficient project management.

The organizational structure of RSDO and NICCO contributed significantly to effective planning, coordination, and implementation. Regular meetings, field presence, and monitoring activities led by RSDO's

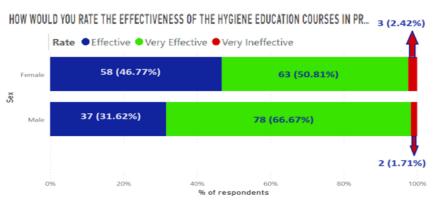


Figure 9: HH members and trainees in response in project effectiveness in improving hygiene practices.

director and project coordinator, in collaboration with NICCO, ensured project success and alignment with objectives. Post-distribution monitoring and engagement with community committees further enriched project effectiveness and informed future program improvements, emphasizing a holistic approach to project management and community engagement.

# 5.4.2 Service delivery.

Public Awareness and Education campaigns:

The campaigns were not only informative but also efficiently designed, reaching a wide audience and effectively delivering crucial lessons on hygiene practices. Both school and HHs hygiene training covered essential topics to promote good health practices. RSDO conducted hygiene training sessions for a total of 400 beneficiaries (200 women and 200 men) in four target villages (Kuklam, Kariz Zaman, Joy E Sultani, and Khwaja Qalander). The training included both theoretical and practical sessions which focused on helping the beneficiaries to have a better understanding of the training program. At the end of each training session, the beneficiaries received a full hygiene training book that consists of instructional topics related to keeping hands clean, the importance of nail hygiene, water storage, proper sanitation, proper use of the toilet, and other matters related to personal hygiene. Upon completion of the training, NICCO and RSDO distributed the procured hygiene kit for all 400 beneficiaries.

Students learned about regular handwashing, safe water consumption, and personal hygiene habits like bathing regularly and wearing clean clothes.

In addition, workshop aimed to raise awareness among participants about puberty, menstruation, personal and environmental hygiene, menstrual cycle, starting menstruation, causes of delayed menstruation, solutions for delay, and raising awareness for teenage girls. By aligning hygiene promotion efforts with actual needs, the project ensured that resources and messaging were targeted where they would have the most impact. This strategic approach also enhanced the overall effectiveness of hygiene education initiatives.

#### Collaboration with Community Members:

It was instrumental in maximizing efficiency. According to feedback from communities' active involvement of community members in learning and decision-making processes regarding hygiene kits and practices, the project ensured that interventions were relevant, culturally appropriate, and well-received. This collaborative effort streamlined implementation and adoption, reducing potential inefficiencies. The provision of Improved Access to Clean Water in deprived schools showcased the project's efficient resource allocation and focus on priority areas. The project placed the need of targeting water access, a fundamental aspect of hygiene, the project directly addressed root causes of waterborne diseases, leading to significant improvements in community health and hygiene outcomes. This is evident in the total number of times students use the facilities to wash their hands and keep themselves clean outdoors.

#### Responsibility and Transfer of Knowledge initiatives:

It did not only empowered community members but also leveraged their networks for efficient knowledge dissemination. This was exemplified by FGD with communities, for instance participants in Khawja Qalandar school shared insights in community undertaking the responsibilities of maintaining and repairing the facilities. It can be inferred that the project encouraged community members to take ownership of hygiene promotion and share their knowledge with others, the project created a self-sustaining mechanism for continued behavioral change, maximizing long-term efficiency gains. Ensuring School Facilities demonstrated proactive planning and execution, ensuring that essential resources for hygiene were readily available where they were most needed. Teachers' roles in Usage Monitoring and Responsibility further reinforced efficient utilization of hygiene kits and facilities, minimizing wastage and ensuring sustained impact within school environments. The Visible Positive Changes such as being more considerate of their personal hygiene, discussing sanitations practices with classmates observed in children's hygiene practices and their extension into Home-Based Learning underscored the project's comprehensive approach to efficiency, where gains made in one context (school) seamlessly translated into broader community benefits, creating a multiplier effect for efficiency and effectiveness.

# 5.4.3 Transparency and fairness

The project's commitment to transparency and fairness in beneficiary selection was evident through its systematic approach and active community involvement, which promoted equitable resource distribution and built trust among stakeholders. Clear criteria were established, including economic status, displacement status, female-headed HHs, affordability challenges for hygiene kits, and disability status, ensuring that assistance targeted the most vulnerable individuals within the community.

According to available information from RSDO staff, specific criteria for school selection were as follows:

- Schools with inadequate or poor-quality WASH infrastructure;
- Availability of clean water sources;
- The condition of sanitation facilities;
- The prevalence of hygiene related illnesses among students;
- Accessibility to project staff and resources;
- A large number of the students;
- The technical feasibility of the project implementation;

Criteria for Hygiene Kits Distribution and Training Selection is as follows:

- Individuals from poor families.
- Internally displaced persons (IDPs) or poor returnees.

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- Female-headed HHs.
- Families unable to afford hygiene kit items.
- People with disabilities.

From surveys with project beneficiaries, the evaluation probed the level of information shared with them regarding beneficiary

selection. Out of 241 responses (including both trainees and HH heads), 124 females (92%) and 117 males (67%) confirmed that adequate information on beneficiary selection was shared with them. This moderate to high confirmation rate somewhat reflects the project's efforts in ensuring transparency and inclusivity

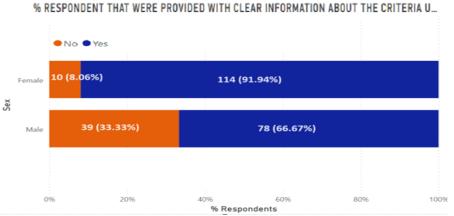


Figure 10: % of respondents who confirmed receiving information on beneficiary selection.

by keeping beneficiaries well-informed throughout the process.

The project's verification processes, managed by dedicated monitoring teams, further upheld fairness and integrity. Eligibility checks and thorough assessments ensured selected beneficiaries met criteria, minimizing errors and misallocations. Through participatory meetings and feedback mechanisms, community members felt empowered and had a voice in shaping project outcomes. This collaborative approach not only enhanced transparency but also encouraged accountability and ownership among beneficiaries, ultimately contributing to sustainable and impactful project implementation. "The project's transparent selection process was transparent and considered those who most in need." -Agha Mohammad, Community Leader, Ab Goji and Shaloji Village.

Community involvement was pivotal in validating the fairness of the selection process. Through participatory meetings and feedback mechanisms, community members felt empowered and had a voice in shaping project outcomes. This collaborative approach not only enhanced transparency but also encouraged accountability and ownership among beneficiaries. "We were involved in the beneficiary selection process. We used to come together to establish the committees and supervise the project activities to directly ensure quality of work." - Abdul Zahir, Community Leader, Joy E Sultani Village. "There was transparency during beneficiary selection. Those people who are selected, will be able to transfer their knowledge to 10 other male and female people from our community." - Abdul Zahir, Community Leader, Joy E Sultani Village.

#### Concern: Complaint Mechanism

 Complaint mechanism was not efficiently used. Pen and paper system was in place to formally register complaints which is vulnerable to being lost or being worn out. To enhance accountability and responsiveness, future programming should focus on establishing a robust complaints mechanism and increasing the capacity of community-level institutions to handle complaints and mediate community expectations. A digital solution is proposed as part of this study's recommendation.

#### 5.4.4 Project documentations

NICCO staff took a comprehensive approach to project documentation and implementation strategies, as revealed in interviews. They stressed the importance of using baseline survey findings to

tailor interventions to community needs, improving project performance. End-line survey findings played a crucial role in evaluating project impact and guiding decision-making for future projects. Structured documentation practices were emphasized to ensure accuracy and transparency, including progress reports, beneficiary data, and case studies. Details such as plans, reports, and project changes such as scope of drilling, changes in the beneficiary if they were ineligible were systematically recorded throughout implementation. Additionally, digital tools and photographic documentation were used to capture construction activities, reflecting a comprehensive and detail-oriented approach to project management.

# 5.4.5 Challenges and project response

The project faced several challenges and obstacles, but the RSDO team effectively managed to overcome them.

#### Preventing Delays in Overall Project Progress:

Initially, bureaucratic processes within the De Facto Authorities (DFA) delayed project approvals. However, close cooperation with local authorities in Herat and Kushki Kuhna districts allowed preparatory activities to begin pending final approval. Procurement processes were also delayed due to interference from the DFA, impacting the deployment of service contractors to the field. Despite these challenges, RSDO compensated by accelerating implementation to meet timelines efficiently. Specific challenges during implementation included delays in project approval and construction start dates due to bureaucratic hurdles within the government. However, these delays did not significantly impact the project's overall progress because the local permissions granted for initial activities. The project timeline was adjusted to accommodate delays, ensuring successful completion.

#### Drilling wells to address water access issues:

The failure to reach the water table at Joy e Sultani village initially. Despite drilling two wells, the water

level was not reached in the first attempt. However, RSDO's persistence led to drilling another successful well, ultimately resolving the water access issue at the school. During implementation, specific gaps were encountered, such as substandard quality issues in construction and the use of inferior pipes in the latrine



sewage system. Prompt action was taken to rectify these issues: substandard pipes were replaced with superior one's meeting industry standards, and the inadequately constructed reservoir foundation was dismantled and rebuilt to established standards. Furthermore, the challenges of not reaching the water table in the first attempt at Joy E Sultani village were overcome by drilling another successful well, ensuring access to water for the school.

These experiences highlight the project team's adaptability and resilience in addressing technical and logistical challenges encountered during implementation.

#### 5.4.6 Skill and resource readiness of member NGOs

The analysis of Skill and Resource Readiness of member NGOs revealed a strategic approach to project staffing and financial management. NICCO prioritized skilled teams, ensuring diverse expertise crucial for WASH project success. RSDO Staff exhibited proficiency in engineering, public health,

community mobilization, project management, risk assessment, coordination, and stakeholder engagement, all vital for effective project planning and execution.

Allocation and utilization of project funds were meticulous, aligned with planned activities including infrastructure development, training, community programs, procurement, and monitoring. Financial monitoring mechanisms-maintained transparency and alignment with project goals, despite limited flexibility for budget adjustments.

Interviews with project staff uncovered proactive strategies employed by member NGOs to address skill and capacity gaps. These strategies included staff training through workshops and partnerships with experts, enriching the workforce with relevant skills and knowledge. While rudimentary trainings such as project orientation and safety training were part of their approach, the NGOs primarily relied on selecting experienced team members due to budget constraints, rather than allocating resources for professional training.

These initiatives not only ensured project efficiency but also empowered NGOs to navigate challenges and deliver impactful WASH interventions to communities effectively, contributing to sustained improvements in water, sanitation, and hygiene outcomes. On top of that the project coordinator was in full coordination with WASH cluster leads including UNICEF and DACAAR. RSDO's participation in monthly cluster meeting is a capacity building initiative to stay updated or share concerns at the cluster level.

# 5.5 Impact

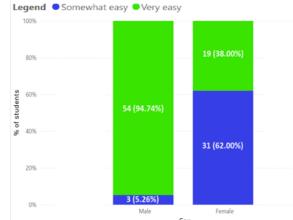
The project's impact assessment focused on key areas: Improved Access to Water and Sanitation in schools, better HH hygiene practices, Behavioral Change among beneficiaries, and a scenario-based assessment of hygiene knowledge. The analysis revealed positive changes across intended areas. Improved access to water and sanitation facilities in schools addressed longstanding challenges, promoting regular handwashing, and reducing sanitation-related issues among students.

Concurrently, heightened awareness of hygiene practices within the community led to improved health outcomes, with individuals adopting healthier behaviors like proper use of hygiene kits and water resources.

A pivotal aspect of the project's success was the strong commitment shown by community members towards sustainability. They actively engaged in knowledge transfer and facility maintenance, recognizing their role in ensuring continued functionality beyond the project's duration.

#### 5.5.1 Improved Access to Water and Sanitation

During community-focused group discussions (FGDs), it was highlighted that in the past, students faced challenges as they had to bring water from home due to the lack of adequate facilities in schools. This situation affected both boys and girls, creating difficulties in terms of hygiene, relief, and sanitation. However, with the introduction of facilities such as water points and washrooms within the school premises, students can now easily access these resources. This positive change has not only led to improved hygiene practices like regular handwashing but has also alleviated the previous struggles related to accessing toilets and water. As a result, both boys and girls can now experience a more comfortable and hygienic environment at school, positively impacting their overall well-being and educational experience.



HOW EASY IT IS FOR YOU NOW TO USE WASH FACILITIES WHEN NEEDED?

Figure 11: Students response on accessibility of WASH facilities.

#### Concerns: Gender-related challenges

During the student survey, when asked about how easy it was for them to use the WASH facilities when needed, 95% of boys (54) responded that they accessed the facilities very easily, with only 3 boys (5%) indicating they somewhat easily accessed them. In contrast, among girls, 38% (19 girls) reported accessing the facilities easily, while 62% (31 girls) found it somewhat easy. This discrepancy in responses suggests that there may be gender-related challenges or differences in accessing these facilities comfortably. Factors such as the design and location of the facilities, privacy considerations might have contributed to these differences in perceived ease of access.

Across all four schools, Joy E Sultani School, Khawaja Qalander School, Koklam Boys School, and Kariz Zaman School — the primary water source was derived from driven wells, ensuring a baseline of good water quality.

#### Concerns: Emergency backup water storage

The absence of emergency backup water storage systems in Joy E Sultani School and Koklam Boys School presented a notable vulnerability, especially during peak water demands or disruptions in supply, necessitating the installation of backup storage systems for uninterrupted access to clean water.

#### <u>Concerns: Insufficient toilet availability for</u> <u>students with disabilities</u>

There were variations in the number of toilets available, ranging from six in Joy e Sultani School

#### How many WASH facilities do you use in the school?



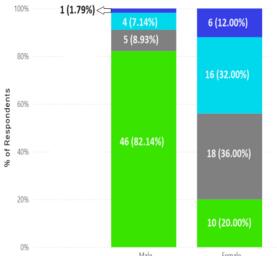


Figure 12: Students response on accessing type of WASH facilities in school.

to twelve in Koklam Boys School. Despite these differences, a common gap across all sites was the lack of facilities for students with disabilities, with design (from user friendly perspective) ratings for accessible-to-people-with-disabilities toilets generally poor or very poor. According to the RSDO staff,

Joy E Sultani has 20 students with disabilities, Khawja Qalandar has 8 (5 males and 3 females), and Koklam has 60 (38 males and 22 females). However, in our survey, we were not able to capture any student with disabilities. This inference is based on the absence of any reported disabilities among the surveyed student population, specifically observable disabilities such as vision impairments or physical handicaps.

# Concerns: Emergency storage system

On the maintenance front, all schools followed regular cleaning schedules for sanitation facilities, with cleaners responsible for daily upkeep and inspections conducted either weekly or quarterly. While this proactive approach contributed to a hygienic school environment, there was room for improvement in terms of standardized protocols and increased attention to accessibility features and emergency preparedness. As an example, Koklam Boys School is sharing a water source with the community, there was a lack of handwashing stations within the premises. Emergency water storage systems were notably missing, highlighting potential risks during water disruptions. We notified that the emergency storage system was not included in the project proposal.

# Concerns: Challenges with WASH facilities

Specifically looking at Joy E Sultan School, with its large student and staff population, challenges in WASH facilities were evident, including the absence of emergency backup water systems and inadequate facilities for students with disabilities. Similarly, Khawaja Qalander School faced challenges with limited toilets due to a very high number of students and no provision for accessible-to-people-with-disabilities facilities, despite maintaining good water quality from its driven well. The reason for lack of facilities for students with disabilities were adequately explained in the above sections. The school have a total of 8 toilets available for use. Given the approximate population of 1,000 students, along with 18+ teachers and 6 administrative staff members, these 8 toilets may not be sufficient. It's worth noting that 2 to 3 toilets are typically designated for staff use only, leaving 5 to 6 toilets for student use. This limitation in the number of toilets has led to observed differences in toilet usage frequencies across schools. For example, in Khawja Qalandar School, where the observed student usage was lower at 100 to 200 students per toilet. The primary reason for this difference is likely the high population of students coupled with the lack of adequate toilet facilities, creating challenges in meeting the sanitation needs of all students and staff effectively.

# Concerns: Water supply and accessibility

Finally, Kariz Zaman School's struggles with water supply from its dug well emphasized the need for improved water infrastructure or backup systems to meet peak demand periods. Like the other schools, Kariz Zaman also lacked facilities for students with disabilities, indicating a common theme across the schools in terms of accessibility challenges.

#### 5.5.2 Better student behavior post-WASH project

The evaluation of hygiene practices across schools based on observations reveals varying levels of engagement and areas for improvement in promoting good hygiene habits among students. At Joy E Sultan School, the availability of handwashing stations across all sites has contributed to promoting good hygiene practices. The observed frequency of handwashing was the highest among the schools, exceeding 500 times per day. This high engagement is commendable and underscores the importance placed on hygiene. However, there remains a need to ensure consistent and higher frequencies of handwashing to further enhance disease prevention and overall student well-being.

Concerns: Handwashing Stations and Frequency in Khawaja Qalander and Koklam Boys Schools

On the other hand, Khawaja Qalander School faces challenges due to the location of designated handwashing stations, resulting in lower observed handwashing frequencies (100 to 200 times per day). Based on KII with school Principal, it was noted that Khawaja Qalander School had handwashing stations outside of the school. Despite

Legend Always
Frequently
Never
Occasionally
Rarely 14 (13.08%) 28 (26.17%) Male 2 (1.87%) 12 (11.21%) (0.93%) Sex 9 (8.41%) 21 (19.63%) Female 18 (16.82%) 2 (1.87%) 0% 5% 10% 15% 25% 20% % of respondents

HOW OFTEN DO YOU TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS OR TEACHERS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF H...

Figure 13: Students discussion of hygiene topics with friends and teachers.

BRUSHING TEETH HABIT FREQUENCY AMONG STUDENTS



Figure 14: Brushing teeth habit frequency among students.

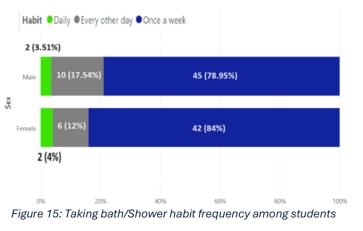
a significant daily footfall of over 1,000 individuals, observed handwashing frequencies were lower at 100 to 200 times per day compared to other schools averaging 400 to 500 times per day.

Similarly, Koklam Boys School has designated handwashing stations outside the premises, contributing to observed handwashing frequencies ranging from 100 to 200 times per day. While there is moderate engagement in hand hygiene, there is room for improvement to increase frequencies further, enhancing disease prevention efforts. In contrast, hygiene practices such as handwashing in Kariz Zaman School are relatively well-maintained, with observed frequencies ranging between 400 to 500 times per day.

#### Hygiene habits among students:

The hygiene habits among students were assessed across nail cutting, tooth brushing, bathing, or showering, and discussions on hygiene importance. It was found that all respondents, both male and female, reported a weekly nail-cutting routine. Likewise, the majority of students reported brushing their teeth twice a day, in the morning and at night. However, there were notable differences between male and female students in this regard. While 28 boys (49%)adhered to twicedaily brushing, a slightly higher percentage of girls (26 - 52%) followed this routine. Similarly, the majority of respondents,

#### TAKING OR SHOWER HABIT FREQUENCY AMONG STUDENTS



both 45 boys (79%) and 42 girls (84%), reported showering once a week. Lastly, the analysis delved into discussions surrounding the importance of hygiene among students. 46% of respondents, both boys and girls, indicated frequent discussions on hygiene with friends or teachers. 21% reported always discussing hygiene topics, showcasing an active engagement in learning and knowledge-sharing regarding hygiene practices. This positive trend suggests that educational efforts or initiatives within the school environment have been successful in creating a platform for ongoing discussions and awareness about hygiene.

#### Lack of disease prevention knowledge among students:

The assessment aimed to understand students' knowledge of disease prevention, focusing on measures like handwashing, mask-wearing, and proper coughing/sneezing etiquette. Findings showed that among boys, 51% demonstrated a great understanding, 31% were rated as average, and 18% were rated as having a poor understanding. Among girls, 48% demonstrated a great understanding, 23% were rated as average, and 29% were rated as having a poor understanding. These results emphasize the need for targeted education and reinforcement of hygiene practices, particularly among female students, to ensure comprehensive knowledge and promote a healthier school environment during outbreaks of communicable diseases like COVID-19.

### 5.5.3 Better HH hygiene Trainees' Reported positive changes observed within their House holds after the project

The project's impact on promoting better health practices among targeted beneficiaries was found to be successful and interconnected, fostering a notable step towards sustainable health behaviors within the community. The evaluation revealed that significant positive behavior

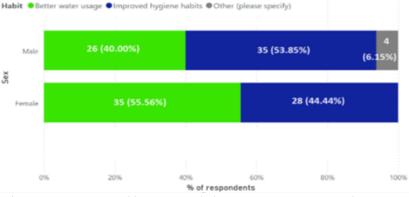


Figure 16: Reported positive change within households after the project.

changes among HHs, particularly in water and hygiene practices, reflecting the project's success in promoting sustainable health behaviors. 35 female respondents (55%) noted improved water usage practices, showcasing a heightened awareness of water conservation and efficient management.

Additionally, 28 female respondents (45%) highlighted enhanced hygiene practices, indicating a conscious effort towards maintaining clean and healthy living environments.

Male respondents also reported positive changes. 26 male respondents (50%) were emphasizing better water usage practices and 35 male respondents (53%) noting improved hygiene practices. Furthermore, 4 male respondents (7%) mentioned increased awareness of sanitation methods, showcasing a deepened knowledge of effective cleanliness techniques.

#### Empowering communities through knowledge transfer and collaboration:

The transfer of knowledge and skills empowered community members to protect, repair, and pass down maintenance protocols, ensuring the long-term functionality of essential facilities. The collaborative efforts between schools and the community emerged as a cornerstone of sustained project impact. Schools played a pivotal role in educating children about hygiene and health practices, acting as catalysts for behavior change within families and the broader community. This collaborative approach ensured that hygiene practices learned at school were reinforced and implemented at home, creating a seamless continuum of health promotion efforts.

#### Awareness campaigns:

The project's emphasis on awareness campaigns significantly contributed to raising consciousness about hygiene and health care This heightened practices. awareness translated into tangible behavioral changes, with participants adopting proper hygiene practices and efficient resource management techniques. The project's holistic approach addressed not only immediate health concerns but also empowered individuals with the knowledge and tools for long-term health maintenance. A fundamental shift was observed in how community members

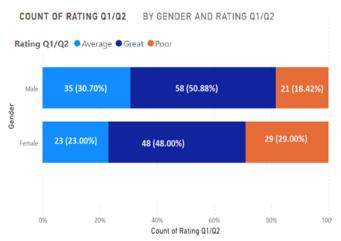


Figure 17: Students evaluation on common hygiene

perceived their role in sustaining health practices and infrastructure. Beyond the project's lifespan, participants recognized the ongoing need for protection, care, and maintenance of WASH facilities. This collective responsibility underscored a shared commitment towards safeguarding community health and well-being for future generations.

#### 5.6 Sustainability

The sustainability of the project depended on the community's willingness in maintaining the facilities, their education and awareness levels, responsibilities.

#### <u>Community Engagement in WASH Facility Maintenance</u> and Education:

The evaluation highlighted the shared responsibility of the community in taking care of WASH facilities by keeping them clean, preventing damage, and ensuring appropriate usage. From observations of the schools, it was found that all schools had maintenance staff and conducted quarterly and needs-based repairs. The study



found that teachers, parents, and community members played a vital role in educating students about the benefits of the facilities and the importance of using them with care.

#### Community Responsibility for Sustainable WASH Facility Management:

As the study found, community members recognized that the sustainability of knowledge transfer and facilities depended heavily on their proper care and maintenance. The emphasis on caution and the avoidance of damage to facilities such as windows and fixtures was identified as crucial for ensuring long-term sustainability. The evaluation highlighted the shared responsibility of the community in taking care of WASH facilities by keeping them clean, preventing damage, and ensuring appropriate usage. This responsibility extended to promptly repairing facilities when needed and informing others about their significance in maintaining a healthy environment. From observations of the schools, it was found that all schools had maintenance staff and conducted quarterly and needs-based repairs. This proactive approach to facility upkeep further ensured the long-term sustainability of the WASH facilities by addressing maintenance issues promptly and comprehensively. The study found that teachers, parents, and community members played a vital role in educating students about the benefits of the facilities and the importance of using them with care. Understanding the benefits encouraged responsible usage and contributed significantly to preserving the facilities for years to come.

### 6 Conclusion

The project's success was evaluated through five key lenses: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

- Relevance measured how well the project addressed community needs and aligned with core values like inclusivity and empowerment.
- Effectiveness looked at outcomes such as improved WASH facilities and high beneficiary satisfaction, showcasing the project's ability to meet goals and gain community trust.
- Efficiency examined resource use and timely service delivery, highlighting optimized processes.
- Impact focused on tangible changes like better hygiene practices and knowledge transfer, indicating real improvements in health behaviors.
- Sustainability emphasized long-term community involvement and responsible resource management, ensuring lasting positive impacts beyond the project's lifespan.

#### **Relevance:**

The project demonstrated high relevance through its multifaceted approach in addressing critical

community needs, ensuring inclusivity, adhering to humanitarian principles, and promoting women's involvement in decision-making processes. It effectively improved WASH facilities in schools and promoted hygiene practices among vulnerable HHs, especially focusing on women. A thorough needs assessment highlighted gaps in services and challenges faced by vulnerable HHs in accessing safe water, sanitation, and hygiene education, leading to targeted interventions. Inclusivity was a key priority, with strategies ensuring equal participation and benefits for all community members, particularly emphasizing women's active involvement in decision-making. Collaboration among stakeholders such as community



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leaders, school management teams, and parents facilitated tailored improvements aligned with diverse community needs.

The project's adherence to humanitarian principles was evident in transparent beneficiary selection processes, gender inclusion strategies, and rigorous verification mechanisms, fostering trust, fairness, and accountability within communities. Women's comprehensive involvement from staffing to project implementation decisions ensured their needs were integrated, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and empowerment.

#### **Effectiveness:**

The evaluation findings indicate the effectiveness of the project across various dimensions, including WASH facilities functionality, visibility of JPF, implementation mechanisms, and beneficiary satisfaction. Regarding WASH facilities, schools maintained good water quality but faced challenges during peak demand due to reliance on single water sources. Sanitation facilities lacked accessible-to-people-with-disability toilets, highlighting areas for future upgrades. Despite these challenges, the project's focus on sustainability, eco-friendly water management practices, and hygiene education positively impacted student engagement in maintaining personal hygiene. The visibility of JPF was effectively promoted through strategic branding efforts, documentation acknowledgment, and active community engagement, as evidenced by high recognition rates among beneficiaries.

Implementation mechanisms, including structured monitoring frameworks, robust beneficiary selection processes, and safety measures, ensured project success and alignment with objectives. Regular monitoring, transparent beneficiary selection, and safety protocols contributed to the project's overall effectiveness. Beneficiary satisfaction was notably high, with a majority expressing high levels of satisfaction with project interventions. Improved sanitation facilities and hygiene education initiatives led to positive behavioral changes among students and HHs, reflecting the project's positive impact on community well-being and satisfaction.

#### **Efficiency:**

The evaluation of project efficiency highlighted several key factors contributing to its successful implementation and overall impact. Firstly, the project demonstrated efficiency in timely health care promotion strategies, effectively targeting resources and messaging where they would have the most impact. This strategic approach, aligned with actual health care needs, enhanced the effectiveness of hygiene education initiatives and contributed to improved community health outcomes. Collaboration with community members played a crucial role in maximizing efficiency by ensuring interventions were relevant, culturally appropriate, and well-received. This collaborative effort streamlined implementation, reduced potential inefficiencies, and encouraged community ownership of hygiene promotion activities.

Efficient resource allocation was evident in the provision of improved access to clean water in deprived schools, addressing fundamental aspects of hygiene and directly impacting community health positively. Transparency and fairness in beneficiary selection processes further contributed to efficiency by promoting equitable resource distribution and building trust among stakeholders. Clear criteria and systematic verification processes minimized errors and misallocations, ensuring assistance reached the most vulnerable individuals within the community. Despite challenges such as bureaucratic delays and technical issues during implementation, the project team demonstrated resilience and adaptability, overcoming obstacles to meet project timelines efficiently. Skilled teams with diverse expertise and proactive strategies to address skill and capacity gaps contributed significantly to project efficiency and effectiveness.



#### Impact:

The impact assessment of the project highlighted significant positive changes across various key areas, reflecting its success in promoting sustainable health behaviors and improving overall well-being within targeted communities. Improved access to water and sanitation facilities in schools addressed longstanding challenges faced by students, leading to more comfortable and hygienic environments and positively impacting their educational experiences. Despite challenges like gender-related differences in perceived ease of access and the absence of emergency backup water systems in some schools, the project's interventions laid the groundwork for sustained improvements in water and sanitation infrastructure.

Better student behavior post-WASH project was evident in observed hygiene practices among students, such as handwashing frequencies and adherence to hygiene routines like nail cutting and tooth brushing. While there were variations across schools, the overall trend indicated a positive shift in hygiene awareness and practices, emphasizing the success of educational efforts within the project. The impact extended beyond schools to HHs, with notable improvements in water usage practices, hygiene practices, and sanitation methods among beneficiaries. The transfer of knowledge and skills empowered community members to take ownership of maintaining hygiene standards and essential facilities, ensuring long-term functionality and sustainability. Collaborative efforts between schools and communities emerged as crucial factors in sustaining project impact, reinforcing hygiene practices learned at school within HHs and the broader community. The project's emphasis on awareness campaigns and comprehensive health education contributed significantly to raising consciousness and fostering behavioral changes that promote health and well-being.

#### Sustainability:

The sustainability evaluation of the project underscores the crucial role of community engagement, education, and responsibility in ensuring the long-term viability and effectiveness of WASH facilities and hygiene practices. Community involvement emerged as a cornerstone of sustainability, with the study emphasizing the shared responsibility of community members in maintaining WASH facilities. This responsibility extended beyond mere usage to include keeping the facilities clean, preventing damage, and ensuring appropriate utilization. The proactive approach of promptly repairing facilities when needed and conducting regular maintenance checks demonstrated a commitment to sustaining infrastructure functionality. The study's observations across schools revealed consistent efforts in facility upkeep, including the presence of maintenance staff and scheduled repairs based on quarterly assessments. Such structured maintenance practices not only addressed immediate issues but also contributed significantly to the long-term sustainability of WASH facilities.

Education and awareness played a pivotal role, with teachers, parents, and community members actively involved in educating students about the benefits of the facilities and the importance of responsible usage. Understanding the significance of clean water, sanitation, and hygiene practices encouraged students to use the facilities with care, contributing to their preservation and overall sustainability. The emphasis on caution and damage prevention highlighted in the study underscores a proactive mindset among stakeholders towards preserving infrastructure integrity. By instilling a sense of ownership and responsibility, the project fostered a culture of sustainable practices that are vital for maintaining positive health outcomes and community well-being.

#### 7 Recommendation

- Supporting the communities with humanitarian aid should be based on relevance across all the beneficiary communities. Some communities like Khawja Qalandar did not have adequate space for classes while WASH facilities were built for them. This implicates a design deficiency which requires excessive dialogue between the donor and the implementing partners whether to move forward and spend time and resources to complete a project. Because of the specific needs each community has, JPF partners should conduct thorough needs assessments.
- Capacity building programs and on-the-job training and support should be frequently
  provided to field teams. They are the frontline of information for the update and progress
  of activities. These capacity building programs should revolve around communication,
  report writing, effective coordination, documentation, digitalization, and grant
  management. These recommended capacity support topics will ensure accuracy in all
  future documentation. Since a lot of changes in the project were not documented, NGOs
  should be supported through capacity building programs for transparency and consistency.
- Inclusivity is a requirement of the humanitarian projects and must be included in the LFA. WASH facilities could not support accessibility and usability to students with disabilities. This demonstrates that some beneficiaries may not be able to properly use the WASH facilities and face hardships at school. This might even result in dropping out of the students with disability due to a lack of facilities. Since projects need to be inclusive, NGOs must ensure support to all groups in the community.
- Developing targeted hygiene education programs emphasizes handwashing, sanitation
  practices, and disease prevention, fostering healthy behaviors among students and
  communities. Establishing dedicated handwashing stations in deficient schools encourages
  consistent hand hygiene practices. NGOs should conduct regular hygiene awareness
  campaigns that involve stakeholders, reinforcing hygiene importance at home and school.

- Strengthening community involvement through participatory decision-making and responsible maintenance builds ownership, trust, and sustainability within WASH initiatives. Organizing capacity-building workshops empowers stakeholders with skills for effective project management and resource utilization. Forming partnerships with local entities leverages resources, expertise, and community networks for impactful and sustainable outcomes. Additionally, communities should be encouraged to take ownership in maintenance of their facilities.
- Instead of merely repairing the existing facilities, it is crucial to assess and address the
  overall capacity needs of the schools. This includes considering the total number of
  students, the number of toilets and water distribution points per student, and the total
  water storage available per student. By evaluating these factors, efforts can be made to
  ensure that the capacity of the schools meets a minimum standard, thereby providing
  adequate facilities and improving the overall effectiveness of the WASH initiatives.

#### 8 Human-Interest Stories

#### **Message from Omeia**

For more than a year and a half, students across Afghanistan had to stay home due to COVID-19 related school closures. And just as schools were reopening again, the turmoil in Afghanistan extended school closures for even longer.

In mid-September, schools were finally open for girls and boys in grades 1 to 6, and millions of primary school student were ready to rejoin classrooms. Yet the months of closures due to the impact of COVID-19 meant that there were still hurdles facing the safe return of children to schools.

Ten years old Omeia from Koklam village of Kushk-e-Kohan district had spent the past months at home like many of her friends away from school. After months and years of waiting, Omeia got to know that their school is open again, however she found out that the water and sanitation facilities were not working due to the lack of maintenance for years. Omeia had to struggle with challenge of not having access to safe drinking water. Omeia suffered a lot from the lack of water in her school, and she used to stay thirsty for hours upon hours every day and she wasn't able to focus on her studies at all.

"Our school didn't have a place where I can wash my hands and we did not have clean drinking water. My classmates and I were getting sick because of the dirty water." says Omeia.

Due to the severity of the situation, she started drinking water from the contaminated steam water close to her school during the breaks of his class because her house was too far from the school to get cleaner water and she would get really thirsty. The poor hygiene and sanitation conditions contribute to the high spread of diarrhea, fever, and vomiting diseases among children, which affected their studies and school attendance, and Omeia was one of those children.

Omeia was often complaining about her health condition to her parents, her father was hardly managing to get medicines for his children because of his low income. After drinking unsafe water from the stream multiple times, she got extremely sick that she had to stop coming to school. Her family took her to the clinic to treat her but it had limit access to high quality medicine so she didn't get well and was sick for a long period of time.

After seeing this bad condition, her family stopped her from going to the school and she didn't go to school for weeks. Her family were thinking about not letting her go to school at all, or save up money and go to somewhere else that has access to clean water so she doesn't get sick all the time.

"I was very sad; I was not allowed to go to school. If I go to school, I will get sick but If I don't go to school, I can't study and I will lose my future. I really wanted to become an engineer, but now I might not be able to even go to school." Says with sadness Omeia.



Figure 18 Omeia standing sadly next to an old water pump which is not working next to the ruins of her school building.

Amina was very sad for all of these challenges she was going through, however around During its implementation from March to July 2023, the WASH project, funded by Japan Platform and carried out by NICCO and RSDO, sought to enhance access to safe water and sanitation in the Kushki Kohna district of Herat, Afghanistan. The project specifically targeted 4,000 school children in villages impacted by conflicts or natural disasters, aiming to improve water supply and sanitation infrastructure. This initiative involved installing water supply systems, toilets, and handwashing facilities, alongside conducting hygiene awareness programs and establishing school management committees.

"Thanks to JPF and NICCO, with the installation of hand washing station, I now have access to clean drinking water. My parents were so happy when they knew my school was equipped with clean drinking water. They will no more worry about my health anymore." says Omeia

After her family knew about this condition, they allowed her to go back school. She became really and is very grateful for it. "I am very happy that I can go to school. I am going to study every day and hopefully become an engineer in the future and help my community." Says Omeia with happiness.

The WASH project has not only transformed Omeia's life but also brought a positive change to the entire village. Access to clean and safe water, improved sanitation facilities, and hygiene knowledge have improved the well-being and future prospects of the entire community. The impact of this project extends far beyond Omeia, benefiting the health and happiness of all villagers. Thanks to the generous support of JPF and NICCO, the learning environment of 4,000 students are improving with clean water and hygiene facilities, WASH and health guidelines as well as learning supplies, sensitization and capacity building for school staff.



Figure 19 Omeia happily using the newly built hand wash station

#### Message from Jama Khan

In Afghanistan, villages in the most rural and hard-to-reach areas are in dire need of WASH support because they lack access to clean water, sanitation facilities and hygiene items. Among these areas, include Kusk-e-Kohna district in Herat province where people suffer daily because of these issues.

Jama Khan is a 40 years-old man living in the Kuklam village, situated in the underserved community of the Kushk Kohna district that suffers from these challenges as well. His life, like that of his fellow villagers, was once marked by the chronic impact of contaminated water on his health and well-being.

Nazir Ahmad is the head of a family of 9 people and he faced this daily challenge of collecting water from a distant and unsafe source of water. He used non-standard, low-quality buckets to gather water from a stream that was far from his home. The water from this source was not only unclean but also posed serious health risks. It often led to frequent illnesses, including diarrhea, stomach pain, and other waterborne diseases that affected her family's well-being.

"Every day I had to go the steam and bring those dirty and muddy water to my home. We would have to then gather wood to burn, and boil the water for hours to even make them edible. I would have pain everyday either in my foot or back because I was bringing water from a long distance." Says Jama Khan.

His family, much like others in the encountered financial village, difficulties that prevented them from affording sanitation equipment and proper water containers. This lack of access to essential resources further exacerbated the challenges Jama Khan and his family faced regarding hygiene and health.

"I have more than 150,000 Afghanis in debt and it is really hard to find a job all the time so I can pay



Figure 20: Jama Khan while going to bring water from the steam

that. If I had a job consistently or had more money, I could drill a well or buy soap and handwashing liquid for my family so I don't see them become sick a lot of times" says Jama Khan.

With the completion of the WASH project which was funded by the JPF platform and was implemented by the NICCO and RSDO organization, the entire village, including Jama Khan's family, witnessed a significant positive change in their lives. He can now use the clean and



safe water from the newly *Figure 21: Jama Khan while taking water from the steam in a non-standard water container* established water system at the school, making his daily water collection task remarkably easier and he can focus on work and make progress in that regard as well. He no longer has to worry about the health risks associated with the contaminated water from the distant stream and it is very close to her house as well.

Jama Khan also attended the hygiene and sanitation training session and he learned all the things to stay healthy and clean. He also taught all the things he learned during the session to his family members and friends. He also received a hygiene kit which had standard water containers, soup, hygiene items like soup, brush, shampoo, toothpaste, etc. Now he



can use the clean water containers to bring Figure 22: Jama Khan while receiving the hygiene kits water from the water tap of his house which is close to his house.

He expresses his joy and gratitude, saying, "Now, I can easily get clean water from the school water tap, and I am not worried about my family getting sick anymore. My family is healthier, and I can focus on my work and live my life without the burden of fetching dirty water."

The rehabilitation of the school toilets has further improved the sanitation and hygiene conditions in the village. The WASH project has not only transformed Jama Khan's life but also



Figure 23: Jama Khan while receiving hygiene and sanitation training

brought a positive change to the entire village. Access to clean and safe water, improved sanitation facilities, and hygiene knowledge have improved the well-being and future prospects of the entire community. The impact of this project extends far beyond Jama Khan, benefiting the health and happiness of all villagers.



## Assignment Date: Jan-May 2024 Location: Heart Province

# Third-party Evaluation of JPF Funded Projects in Afghanistan

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