Mapping Governance Systems in CARE Target Provinces

- A Study to inform the Formulation of a Governance Strategy for CARE Afghanistan

Final Report

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDC  Community Development Council
CSO  Civil Society Organization
DNH  Do No Harm
FGD  Focus Group Discussion
IDI  In-depth Interview
IDLG  Independent Directorate for Local Government
KII  Key Informant Interview
M&E  Monitoring & Evaluation
MAIL  Ministry of Agriculture and Livelihoods
MRRD  Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NGO  Non-Governmental Organization
PC  Provincial Council
PG  Province Governor
PLD  Provincial Line Department
PGO  Province Governor’s Office
SNG  Sub-National Governance
SSI  Semi-Structured Interview

DEFINITIONS

Jirga  Ad-hoc gathering of informally appointed representatives at community or area level convened to resolve disputes between community members or communities
Khan  Influential member of the community
Malik  Traditional Community Leader
Shura  Informal representation mechanism at community, format and selection can differ for the geographic areas
Qalantar  Traditional leader informally appointed to represent the community in dealings with local government, common in Afghanistan’s Northern region
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Finally, CARE thanks the local communities, their representatives and residents, for their cooperation. The continued support of the local population is essential for our work, and we deeply appreciate their trust and cooperation.
1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a governance study conducted on behalf of CARE Afghanistan. The aim of the study is to inform the formulation of CARE’s governance strategy as components of CARE’s recently reviewed overall country strategy. In order to develop a strategy that fits the socio-cultural context and institutional framework set in the provinces CARE operates in, CARE established the need for a structural mapping exercise of governance mechanisms, the systems of power that support and shape it, as well as the role of individual stakeholders. Whilst this report will outline in detail the methods and findings of the study, only its key findings will be transferred into the strategy paper. This serves to ensure that the strategy paper meets the limitations in space typically assigned to documents that are meant to guide senior management and implementation staff alike. Findings in this report will be presented aligned to the three dimensions of CARE’s inclusive governance concept.

The study also comprised a second component that turned focus inside, and assessed the capacity of CARE’s internal governance structures to accommodate the proposed governance strategy. The findings of this component will be processed in the last chapter of the report.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Since its establishment, reducing poverty and its effects on local societies has been a driving force for CARE in its operations across the world. In the past decade, however, CARE observed that rapid change in social, economic, political and technological fields transformed fundamental patterns of poverty, confronting CARE with an entirely new set of challenges. Instead of affecting countries and local societies on broad scale, poverty increasingly is defined by inequality in development in between and within countries.

Based on this observation, CARE undertook a comprehensive review of its work to formulate a strategy which reflects CARE’s vision for ‘a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live in dignity and security’ and formulates approaches that ensure CARE’s programs around the world works towards this objective in an effective and efficient manner. Released in 2014, CARE’s 2020 program strategy marks an important shift in approach for the organization, as it emphasizes the relevance of understanding and conceptualizing power relations in all aspects of program design and implementation.

CARE however acknowledges that especially in the area of governance, social and cultural-political contexts differ significantly for the countries the organization works in, and no one-size-fits-all format can be developed. Providing the overall framework, thus, CARE decided to delegate responsibility to the national agencies for tailoring the general concept to local conditions.
1.2 About Inclusive Governance

The governance concept developed by CARE International is centered around the concept of 'inclusive governance'. Described in more detail in the 'CARE Governance Programming Framework' the notion of inclusive governance thereby entails three key areas of change:

- Marginalised citizens are empowered;
- Public authorities and other power-holders are effective and accountable to marginalised citizens; and
- Spaces for negotiation between power-holders and marginalised citizens are expanded, inclusive and effective.

According to CARE’s governance strategy, programs will be designed and measured for their performance with regard to each of the three dimensions of inclusive governance.

2. Study Outline

Before turning to the findings of the research, the following chapter shall outline the methodology employed in order to provide a better understanding of the data collected that inform the analysis.

2.1 Research Approach

The research approach is informed by the underlying concept of inclusive governance, and thus oriented to capture the three distinct dimensions of change, and their interrelations. This implies mapping out in detail:

- The forms of marginalization encountered in CARE’s areas of operation;
- The relationships between citizens and state institutions, and the underlying factors that shape it; and
- The challenges encountered by public service providers in responding to the needs of the local population.

One particular challenge for the analysis thereby was to separate the three spheres, as in local governance public institutions often overlap with informal customary mechanisms of governance. In fact, the nature of this interdependence and its relevance for development programming can be expected to adopt an important element in the governance strategy to be developed. Furthermore, the analysis needed to consider that governance is a multi-layered system which consists of the local (community), district, provincial and national levels, often connected by relationships between actors from the individual levels.

In order to capture patterns in marginalization of citizens and in local governance two analytical concepts were applied as suggested by CARE:
1. Stakeholder Analysis/Main actors -
   - Relevance/Degree of influence
   - Motivation/Levels of activity
   - Attitudes/Levels of support
   - Relationships between stakeholders

2. Power Analysis
   - Sources of power
   - Forms of power
   - Levels of power

In addition, the analysis incorporated an assessment of local social structures. In order to understand how marginalized citizens can be integrated into decision-making - and in fact what criteria define marginalization - programs require knowledge on how community structures are organized around power holders. The degree of community cohesion and hierarchical versus horizontal community organization represent key criteria for informing advocacy on inclusive governance at the local level. Essentially, this just represents an expansion of the concept of power analysis.

In applying these concepts, the study obtained detailed information on local patterns in governance and community structures for the target areas. Simultaneously, the application of the concepts served to standardize an analytical framework which can be applied by CARE Afghanistan in the future as standard tool of program implementation.

2.2 Research Design

The inception phase of the study incorporated an extensive literature review. Documents consulted for the study included:

- CARE strategy and concept papers;
- CARE Afghanistan program documentation (Do No Harm, Conflict Sensitivity);
- CARE Policies (security, partnerships, advocacy);
- Literature and documents - Governance mechanisms in Afghanistan;
- Literature and documents - Legitimacy/power, accountability and responsiveness in Afghanistan.

Based on the findings from the literature review, the analytical concept was finalized. Data collection then took place in three separate phases. First, CARE staff from all departments and senior management were interviewed in Kabul to provide further insight into programming as well as experience with local governance.

Utilizing the findings from these interviews, research instruments for the field work in the provinces were finalized and teams dispatched to conduct data collection on provincial, district and community levels. At the provinces interviews were conducted with senior management,
CARE Governance Strategy - Governance Assessment

program and M&E staff of CARE, as well as selected beneficiaries and community representatives. Documents were also reviewed where suitable to gather information on governance mechanisms employed by the programs. In addition, government representatives and members of formal and informal governance bodies, such as province and district councils were interviewed. Selected NGOs operating in the area also were incorporated into the target groups for the research.

All of the seven provinces in which CARE operates - Balkh, Parwan, Kapisa, Kabul, Ghazni, Paktia and Khost - were covered by the study. In each of these provinces, a stakeholder and power analysis examining province, district and community-level was conducted. That implies that aside from field work at the provincial centers, data was also collected in a sample of districts and communities. For each of the 12 rural districts covered by CARE programming, three communities were included in the research. Although CARE’s target areas are primarily rural, the research also covered 3 urban districts from Balkh and Kabul to expand the perspective of the study. Communities were selected from CARE project lists based on security situation. In total, 45 communities were covered by the community-element of the study.

A third phase of key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders - such as representatives of NGOs, CSOs, government and donor agencies - was conducted in Kabul to enable CARE placing findings of the study in context.

The detailed research design is listed in table 1 below.

Table 1. Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Quantity/Province-District-Community</th>
<th>TOTAL Interviewee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kabul level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Programming (Department head/mid-level)</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Security Manager</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Province Office Representatives</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject Matter Experts</td>
<td>Governance/DNH</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer INGO</td>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donor Agencies</td>
<td>World bank, EU and Dutch Emb and DFAT</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government/Line Ministries</td>
<td>IDLG/MRRD/Municipality</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Province level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Head of Office</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Program Staff</td>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Implementing Staff</td>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>M&amp;E Staff</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local NGO/CSO</td>
<td>Provincial program management staff of selected NGOs</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>CARE Beneficiaries</td>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 RESEARCH TOOLS

To guide data collection, a set of research tools was developed. This included tools which were to be applied directly, such as semi-structured interviews, household surveys and focus group discussion guidelines:

- CARE_GovStrat_Community_FGD_Village Leaders (08052016)
- CARE_GovStrat_Community_Household Survey (08052016)
- CARE_GovStrat_District SSI (08052016)
- CARE_GovStrat_IDI Care Province Staff (08052016)
- CARE_GovStrat_IDI Stakeholders (08052016)

An additional instrument devised for the field work comprised profiles which were developed to summarize findings from the individual interviews and focus groups. The community, district and province profiles also constitute the key documents that are suggested to CARE to be employed for regular analysis and knowledge management in future.

- CARE_GovStrat_Profile_Community (08052016)
- CARE_GovStrat_Profile_District (08052016)
- CARE_GovStrat_Profile_Province (08052016)

2.4 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The execution of the baseline faced similar challenges as experienced for other studies earlier, including:
1. **Scope of Work** -

Studying governance systems in a country like Afghanistan where multiple complexes of state legitimacy compete with each other, and the institutional system has been developed rapidly from a formerly primarily informal system - leaving gaps and inconsistencies on all levels - implies that no comprehensive mapping can be completed within the limited time and resource allocated to this study. The question of 'capacity' in a governance system where formal and informal structures intersect alone justified a large-scale, multi-annual research study. Hence, this assessment can only aim at sketching the challenges to be encountered by governance programming, and raise questions to be processed by CARE over the period of its programs. The initial guidance on governance programming that this study may produce certainly has to be considered as a subject of consistent review and revision.

2. **Limitations in geographic access** -

Acknowledging the potential consequences of deploying field staff in Afghanistan's high risk environment, CARE adopted a risk-mitigation strategy that ensures well-being of staff is considered a priority. However, this also generates limitations for programming as well as research studies. In the case of this assessment, for instance, the example of Ghorband district in Parwan province - one of the most insecure areas CARE has been operating in - could not be covered which entails that the sampling reflects higher levels of security than experienced in the provinces on average.
Development programs seek to foster social change in order to achieve a sustainable improvement in the living conditions of its benefits. In order to design and implement programs that can do so, and avoid unintentional effects, it is essential to understand local power structures. With CARE planning to implement a concept of inclusive governance that centres on linking community level to public service institutions, such understanding becomes even more important. The following chapter thus will focus on describing in detail the power dynamics within communities, and the relevance of individual actors, i.e. the first of the three dimensions included in CARE’s governance concept.

3. LOCAL GOVERNANCE - SYSTEMS AND POWER STRUCTURES

3.1 LOCAL POWER STRUCTURES - OVERVIEW

3.1.1 Power Distribution at Community Level

Data from the household survey describes distinct local governance patterns for CARE’s target provinces. Thereby, it is evident that traditional leaders remain the key actors in decision-making at the local level. Maliks - or Arbobs and Qalantars as they are termed in some provinces - represent the most dominant actor in the eyes of the local residents across all provinces with the exception of Ghazni (see table 2). In Ghazni, village and tribal elders fill this particular gap. Tribal and village elders also are of particular importance in all provinces. The CDC, a decision-making structure introduced by the National Solidarity Program, is ranked below the traditional leaders, and in addition displays a considerable divide between the ranking for its chairman individually and the institution as a whole. Mullahs exercise some influence in the community, as 37% of respondents counted them amongst the three most influential actors, yet remain well below the response rates received for maliks and village elders. The province where mullahs appear to be most crucial to decision-making at the local level compared to other target areas is Ghazni (58%). Another province-specific pattern is the influence of local commanders which featured strongly in Parwan - where they achieved second rank (67%) after the malik - and Kapisa (34%), whilst being assessed as moderate for the other provinces. Notable is also the low representation of district authorities from the community level, as only in Paktia and Khost the district governor received some acknowledgement and the chief of police rarely featured in the survey. External actors, such as opposition forces and NGOs/CSOs, were widely absent from the survey results.

Power rankings for the individual actors are generally consistent with the allocation of responsibility for resolving problems (see table 3), suggesting that the power allocated to these actors is met with a certain degree of social acceptance. Some discrepancies can be noted though as consistently most of the key power brokers lose several percentage points when being evaluated for their availability to resolve problems. District authorities and the local police whereas gain in relevance. Again, responses for opposition forces and NGOs/CSOs were negligible.
3.1.2 Sources of Power

As can be predicted with view on the actors identified as most powerful, tribal and ethnic relations proved to be the most relevant source of power for all seven provinces (see table 4). An exception again is Ghazni where family and tribal relations were allocated comparably little relevance.

In certain contradiction to the moderate results for mullahs as powerful actors, religious knowledge was ranked as second most important source of power, possibly indicating that respondents distinguish between Islam as concept guiding their lives and the degree to which local mullahs represent Islamic thought. This interpretation is supported by the fact that almost

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3 The research team came across many cases where influential individuals ‘wore two hats’, so to speak – where a person may be both a village elder AND a CDC member, a local malik AND the CDC Head, etc. In fact, this was more the norm than the exception. This is discussed further on p. 14 below.
the same percentage of respondents considered religious knowledge as very or somewhat important who had named mullahs as powerful actors (59%), as of those who had not (58%).

Money and wealth were the source of power with the most diverse result for the provinces. Whilst in Kabul, Balkh and Khost respondents evaluated wealth as less significant, Kapisa and Parwan ranked wealth as one of the most important sources of power.

Military power or force and political affiliations finally ranked low on the scale of relevance. Variations between provinces persist though, with Kapisa and Parwan respondents rating military force and political affiliation as more relevant than was the case in other provinces. Given that local commanders were allocated a central role in Parwan's power structure, the ratings for military force could be expected to be higher. Possibly, the desirability of a certain type of power plays a role in shaping perception and causes respondents to down-rank these sources of power lower, as they are deemed socially unacceptable regardless of the actual power they hold.

Table 4. Sources of Power - By Province [-2 = 'Not at all important', 2 = 'very important']*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Family Relations</th>
<th>Tribal/Etnic Relations</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Religious Knowledge</th>
<th>Money/Wealth</th>
<th>Military Force</th>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>-0.70</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
<td>-1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parwan</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>-1.36</td>
<td>-1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakita</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-1.57</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khost</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-0.74</td>
<td>-0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Blue colouring - Positive range of the scale; Red - negative range of the scale (Colour markings added for purpose of data visualization)

3.2 Local Power Structures - Actor Assessment

Having established an initial overview on power structures at the local level, a more detailed view on the key actors and their relationships is in order.

3.1.3 The Phenomenon of Elite Capture - Relationship between Traditional Leaders and CDCs

One of the most prominent development programs in Afghanistan is the NSP and its establishment of Community Development Councils (CDC). In installing elected local councils that are assigned authority in project management, the program aims at strengthening community structures and create access points for service delivery. Rolled out in most districts of Afghanistan, NSP is also the development program with the broadest geographic outreach. Subsequently, CDCs can be found in almost all areas of the study. Only in Nadir Shah Kot district of Khost province 24% of the respondents declared that no CDC existed in their community. Another exception are the urban areas included in the study - Bagrami, districts 8 and 13 in Kabul, and district 9 in Balkh -, as CDCs were exclusively established in rural areas.

The vast majority of negative responses originated from Abdul Qasem and Nawe Tut communities.
Despite being introduced as a new mechanism of local governance, CDCs by no means operate independently from the traditional decision-making structures. Instead, it is a general pattern that traditional leaders have become members of the CDCs as well (see figure 1). 53% of all respondents confirmed that the malik or khan of the village was part of the CDC, and 64% did so for tribal elders. In fact, in 30% of the cases either the malik or village elders were present in the CDC, and in 39% of cases, it was both. Only 31% of all respondents declared that in their CDC neither malik nor village elders were active, and the majority of those responses came from Kabul (where the malik and elder system is generally weaker).

Figure 1. Representation of traditional and professional leaders in CDCs - By Province

This phenomenon of informal and formal structures of community decision-making overlapping is widely acknowledged amongst Afghanistan's development community. CARE as well as other NGO and government staff regularly discussed the challenge of elite capture in the interviews conducted for the study. An aspect highlighted in these interviews that the household survey does not capture is that at least in some areas relationships between traditional leaders and CDCs have been shifting since the introduction of NSP. In Paktia and Balkh, for instance, NSP implementing partners noted a change in quality of the CDCs which in the beginning had been dominated by traditional leaders. After a cycle of re-elections, the local population was observed to have started internalizing the principles of CDC work and turned to select members based on their respective qualifications. Other provinces, such as Parwan and Kapisa, lack such progress, and instead face considerable challenges with CDC members refusing to organize elections they fear would lead to their removal. Hence, the relationship between traditional and formal community leaders is complex and undergoes a constant transformation process. As a result, CDCs are considered to vary significantly in their efficiency across and within provinces.

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1. Interview with NSP Implementing Partner for Paktia. Interview with NGO representatives and CARE provincial staff in Balkh.
2. Interview with NSP Implementing Partner.
3.1.3 Role of Mullahs

Taking on the function of representing Islam, a dominant factor of daily life in Afghanistan, mullahs are an attractive potential access point for NGOs who seek to reach the population with their services and programs. The findings of the household survey however somewhat contradict this view, as mullahs in almost all districts are counted as less influential than other traditional leaders. Mullahs also do not commonly engage in community affairs, as can be seen in their limited representation at the CDC (see figure 1). Moreover, asked about the influence on values and decision-making in daily life, maliks and community elders clearly outrank mullahs in all provinces (see figure 2). In consistency with earlier findings, the most influence yet is allocated to the mullah in Ghazni province (1.03). Even in Ghazni though maliks(1.63) are ranked higher still. The lowest result mullahs receive from Paktia, followed by Kapisa and Parwan.

Figure 2. Influence on values, thinking and decisions - Malik/Community Elders versus Mullah (By Province) - [-2 'not at all', 2 - 'very much']

3.1.4 Civil Society Groups as Actors at Community Level

Utilized by NGOs as forum to implement projects and facilitate the sustainability of the interventions, a multitude of CSOs have been formed on the community level in the past decade. This includes committees to oversee projects in the areas of education, water and sanitation, or livelihoods, or solidarity groups established for women to support each other, or youth shuras prepared to provide the young population with a voice in local decision-making. These efforts echo in the survey data, where almost half of the respondents (49%) confirm that CSOs exist in their community (see figure 3). Most prominent are CSOs in Balkh (78%) and Parwan (75%), followed by Khost (67%, see figure 3).

---

5 Two questions were asked in the household survey: Q1. How much do the malik/community elders in your community influence your values, thinking and decisions in daily life? (single answer)? - Very much, a moderate amount, a little, not at all, dk/refused; Q2. How much does the mullah in your community influence your values, thinking and decisions in daily life? (single answer)? - Very much, a moderate amount, a little, not at all, dk/refused;
As noted earlier, however, CSOs hardly feature in local power dynamics. Similar to CDCs, they are also subject to elite capture. 64% of all respondents declared that traditional leaders are an established member of local CSOs, and another 28% thought that at least some of the traditional leaders are represented in CSOs. Thereby, participation can be direct, yet more often takes on the form of indirect representation through relatives or appointed representatives. In the field work, this was observed for instance in the case of school management shuras in Kapisa which CARE staff reported to be often comprised of individuals appointed by local leaders. In women's empowerment projects, it regularly occurred that beneficiaries suggested by the community included relatives of the leaders.

This linkage between traditional leaders and CSOs established at the community level is a crucial factor for gaining community access and ensuring smooth implementation, and as such tends to be tolerated by NGOs. Its positive impact on internal coordination is also visible in the survey data where only a small minority observed 'some' (5%) or 'a lot of conflict' (1%) in between traditional leaders and CSOs. Instead, where traditional leaders participate in CSOs, relations are described as 'very cooperative' by 71% of the respondents. For the development of a profile as independent decision-maker at the community level, however, these relationships are not beneficial, as the survey data show.
3.1.5 Relationship between Actors at the Community Level

With multiple leaders being present at most communities, the question about their relationships becomes a key aspect of understanding local power dynamics. Analysing such relationships however proves difficult given the sensitive nature. One instrument developed for the study of relationships is social network analysis in which every relevant individual in the community is approached to map out frequency, direction and strength of relations. This however would have exceeded the timeframe and resources allocated to the study. Alternatively, it was decided to employ focus groups consisting of all potential community leaders to observe and assess their relations. After the focus group, researchers then were asked to categorize the structure of relationships between local power brokers within one of the four following options:

1. Monopoly - One clearly identifiable power broker dominates decision-making in the community;
2. Cooperative - A group of power brokers are closely interrelated and conduct decision-making collaboratively;
3. Fragmentation - Multiple power brokers exist in a community who each maintain their own sphere of influence in distinct separation from each other;
4. Division - Two or more of the local power brokers of the community are engaged in latent or active conflict, causing power structures to organize around these poles.

According to the observations of the field staff, the majority of communities selected for the research displays cooperative power structures (see table 5). Fragmentation was found to be the case in 30% of communities, whilst the remaining 25% were categorized as power monopolies. Communities in Balkh and Ghazni appear to be particularly prone to being power monopolies, whilst Kabul and Kapisa display the highest number of cooperative power structures.

It is important to note that none of the communities covered by the research was considered to be displaying division between power brokers, a finding that contradicts common knowledge.

Table 5. Power Structures at Community-Level - Categorization by Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Monopoly</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
<th>Fragmentation</th>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Khost</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pakita</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Parwan</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has to be noted at this point that the findings from the research team contradict alternative information sources, such as the interviews with CARE staff and other stakeholders at provincial level, to in part significant degree. Parwan and Kapisa for instance were typically classified as areas where maliks represent the major link between people and the government, and therefore power monopolies are frequent. On the other hand, as commander country, the same provinces...
also suffer from frequent conflict between power brokers. In Khost, the provincial assessment found tribal elders to be the power brokers, leading to clearly defined power structures that adopted cooperative structures, as opposed to the fragmentation noted by field research team. Findings from provincial and community assessments in Paktia in contrast complement each other, as both note cooperative power structures - i.e. tribes - to be the most prominent.

Leaving space for interpretation, part of the discrepancy in findings certainly can be allocated to the research tool employed. Nonetheless, the findings from the research teams will need to be discussed further at a later stage of this report before final conclusions can be drawn on the power structures shaping local decision-making in CARE target provinces.

### 3.2 Relationship between Leaders and Residents at the Community Level

Having mapped out the power structures at the local level, and the key actors in it, the report will now add the local population to the assessment, and examine their relationship with the community leaders.

To describe the relationship between leaders and local population, several criteria are relevant. First of all, information flow is an important precondition for balanced interaction between leaders and people. Hence, the readiness community leaders to share information about their activities and decisions with the public needs to be considered. Consultation is the next step, in which leaders not only offer information but demonstrate openness to the opinions of the local people. Finally, general perceptions on the level of fairness in which leaders consider the needs of their people shall be taken into account.

Accordingly, CDC chairmen received the most positive review of their interaction with the local population, mostly due to the high rankings their positions received in Balkh and Paktia (see figure 5). Maliks outperformed CDC heads in Kabul, Parwan and Khost, and acquired comparable rankings in Kapisa, whilst being assessed poorly in Ghazni.

Village elders showed strong leadership in Ghazni and received the best result of all power brokers in Khost. Thereby it is of interest to note the village elders in Khost - as well as in Paktia - received high approval rates for their information-sharing and fair consideration of interests within the community, however were marked down for their failure to consult with the local population. This hierarchical system of representation was confirmed by the provincial assessments from Paktia and Khost as well, where CARE researchers confirmed elders to follow clear principles on how to allocate resources within the community, achieving a general perception of fairness in community decision-making. Yet, in doing so village elders followed a traditional concept of decision-making that does not foresee providing information on the actual decision-making process and incorporation of public opinions. This is possibly one of the reasons why in Paktia community leaders, including village elders, received low ratings for their ability to interact with the community and consider the interests of the people.
Mullahs, finally, ranked considerably lower for all three criteria of interaction in all provinces, adding to the notion of earlier findings depicting mullahs as less strongly performing than other community leaders. Especially in Kapisa and Paktia, mullahs were seen as engaging rarely in information exchange and consultations with the population. Even in Ghazni where mullahs were assessed to have more influence than in other provinces they received low ratings for their interaction with the local population. Only in Kabul did mullahs achieve similar ratings to that of other community leaders.

Figure 5. Levels of Interaction and Participation between Leaders and Community - By Actor/Province (OVERALL) [-2 - Never; 2 - Always]

Table 6. Levels of Interaction and Participation between Leaders and Community - By Actor/Province (INDIVIDUAL RATINGS) [-2 - 'Never', 2 - 'Always']

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Information-Sharing</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Consideration</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Malik/Khan</strong></td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parwan</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Balkh</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paktia</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khost</td>
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<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.37</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khost</td>
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<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.14</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.03</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.40</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khost</td>
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<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.11</td>
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<tr>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Kabul</td>
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<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.06</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-1.37</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paktia</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khost</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Actors with >50% rating for being powerful in the community marked in red

### 3.3 Integration of Local Power Structures into Sub-National Governance Systems

Having described the internal decision-making structures in the community, the question now arises on how these interrelate and interact with sub-national governance mechanisms.

#### 3.3.1 Levels of Contact with Local Government

The household survey findings suggest that the target communities maintain close contact with local administrations. According to the household survey, 54% of all respondents declared that their household had been in contact with district or province governments over the past year. Particularly high were figures in Kapisa (98%), Parwan (95%), Khost (86%) and Paktia (86%), whilst respondents from Kabul were found to have the least frequent contact with local government, most likely the result of the urban environment from which most respondents in Kabul were selected (see figure 6).
Documentation and registration requests are the most prominent reason for the local population to approach the government (60%), followed by requests concerning the two primary public services provided by the government - education and health (see figure 7). Disputes or legal cases motivated only a minority of the contact attempts (8%). Requests for support in the area of construction and infrastructure (6%) was an issue that almost exclusively was reported from urban areas of Kabul and Balkh.

Figure 7. Reasons for contacting Local Government - Overall

3.3.2 Relevance of Community Leaders in Facilitating Contacts with Local Government

On how the contacts between communities and local administration are facilitated and managed however findings from the survey and key informant interviews diverge.

The vast majority of those respondents who declared to have had contact (81%) also stated to have established this contact directly. 11% had done so through family members or acquaintances, and only few (6%) reported to have gone through the CDC to submit their
request. NGOs or CSOs were not mentioned as platform to facilitate contact with local government.

Key informants whereas tended to emphasize the role of interlocutors in facilitating contact between population and administration. Government officials interviewed for the study in the vast majority declared to utilize specific points of contacts for any interaction with the community. With regard to who was the preferred local representative, however, patterns seemed to differ considerably across provinces and sectors. The Department of Rural Development for instance confirmed to utilize CDCs for any dealings with the communities. Other line departments in contrast refused cooperating with CDCs out of concerns over their efficiency, and preferred working with their own entities, such as agricultural cooperatives in the case of the Department of Agriculture.

At provincial level, maliks for instance adopt an interlocutor function for access to local government in Parwan and Kapisa. Local government in Balkh was described as being consistent in cooperating with qalandars as their main point of access to the community as well. In Khost and Paktia, whereas, provincial assessments identified tribes to be the key linkage between communities and government.

With the survey data lacking indications for such mechanisms, it can be speculated whether the local population in fact is not aware of the governance systems in place, not willing to comment on it or the survey instrument failed to capture this aspect of local governance and needs to be revised to reflect it in future data collection efforts.

### 3.3.3 Effectiveness Ratings for Community Leaders in representing the Community

An alternative means to assess interaction between local power brokers and local government are public perceptions on the effectiveness of community leaders in representing the local population. In that, similar patterns were observed as earlier for the interaction between community leaders and residents. CDC Heads again are perceived to rank highest, followed by CDC members (see figure 8). Mullahs in contrast received the lowest results, with the exception of mullahs in Kabul and Khost provinces. Interestingly, maliks and khans who had received first position for being the most powerful stakeholders in the community, but then were evaluated as weaker with regard to their ability to interact with and include the local population, also ranked last from all community leaders in the question on the efficiency of representing the local people. This underlines the hierarchical nature of the malik position and how the power assigned to it is disconnected from public approval, at least based on an understanding of legitimacy as resulting from service delivery.
These findings from the household survey were re-confirmed in the provincial assessments. In Parwan and Kapisa, various of the key informants noted that maliks had established them as the single representative of the community, whilst displaying substantial inefficiency in handling the position. A common problem for local governance in Parwan for instance was that citizens were forced to approach state authorities through the maliks who delayed the process and sometimes took six months to forward or follow up on citizen requests. In Balkh, the efficiency of qalan-tars were assessed to be more varied, yet follow similar patterns as in Parwan.

### 3.4 Power Structures and Sources of Power in Sub-National Governance

#### 3.4.1 Key Actors at District and Provincial Levels

The close cooperation between local administrations and selected community representatives suggests that power systems at the local and provincial levels are interconnected and share characteristics.

This is for instance evident in the power-brokers at district level as identified by the respondents from district administrations (see table 7). Similar to the community level, for instance maliks play a significant role in most provinces, though to lesser degree in Balkh, Ghazni and Paktia. Tribal elders represent key power brokers at the district level as before on community level for Paktia and Khost provinces. Especially in Bagram area of Parwan, local commanders are listed as influential. Only in Ghazni the district-level power structures do not reflect the findings from the community level where village elders and mullahs had been the actors identified as most influential.
### Table 7. Most Powerful Person - By District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Kabul</th>
<th>Mir</th>
<th>Parwan</th>
<th>Kapisa</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Ghazni</th>
<th>Paktia</th>
<th>Khost</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Bagram</td>
<td>Bacha Kot</td>
<td>Jabel saraj</td>
<td>Bagram</td>
<td>Hesa-e Awal</td>
<td>Charpent</td>
<td>Khulm</td>
<td>Sholgarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malik/Arbob</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village/Tribal Elders</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC Head</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC (General)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullah</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Commander</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Police</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Governor</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief of Police</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Forces</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO/Civil Society</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As observed for the community-level, furthermore, CARE staff primarily assessed districts to be composed of group power structures (46%). 23% of districts were categorized as 'monopoly' and 31% described as fragmented. None of the districts visited was classified as 'division'. Anecdotic evidence from the province-level research however suggests that at least Sholgarah is a candidate for such classification. The on-going conflict between two commanders in Kohband as well suggests that 'division' were the more accurate assessment for this district.

At province level as well power structures often correspond to the patterns found for community and district-levels. Again, this particular visible in Parwan and Kapisa where the provincial assessment found strong influence of commanders at all levels of governance. Similar to the dominance of individual power brokers observed for Parwan's community level, the province features a number of informal leaders - mostly former jihadi commanders - who although not holding official positions each control part of the administration. Members of Parliament are another actor whom key informants considered to interfere into provincial decision-making. As a result, local administration in Parwan was repeatedly described in by key informants as 'mafia system'. The personal relations between key power brokers at the provincial level and local commanders in the various districts both constitutes the key pillar of the system as well as provides its individual actors with the power to sustain their position within their own area of influence.

Similarly, as much as tribal elders dominate decision-making at the community level in Khost and Paktia, they influence provincial politics in these provinces. Government officials and NGO representatives alike declared to cooperate closely with tribal representatives in facilitating their activities. In fact, similar to government bodies, tribes in these areas represent multi-layered structures of decision-makers, forming an informal system that interlinks with the formal government structures on all levels of governance in the province.

In Ghazni, the same pattern can be observed in the case of mullahs. Having been identified as one of the few provinces where mullahs exercise considerable levels of influence at the community level, the province is also known for their religious leaders exercising significant influence on provincial politics.

Balkh constitutes a more complex case, though eventually the same principle applies. As access to communities is more clearly structured and institutionalized through qalandars and the CDCs than in other provinces, Balkh's provincial government was described as more structured and coherent, and therefore efficient, than in the other target provinces. The provincial governor of Balkh enjoys a high degree of acceptance within the system, and achieved an internal organization of the province administration which is widely cooperative.

The mirroring of power structures across levels of governance can also be observed from the comparison of household survey results and the findings from interviews with government officials at the district level (see table 8). With minor divergences, community residents and government officials allocated similar levels of relevance to the various power brokers in their district.
Table 8. Most Powerful Person - Community vs. District Results (By Province)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Malik/Arbob</th>
<th>Village/Elders</th>
<th>CDC Head</th>
<th>CDC (General)</th>
<th>Mallah</th>
<th>Local Commander</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Local Police</th>
<th>District Governor</th>
<th>Chief of Police</th>
<th>Opposition Forces</th>
<th>NGO/Civil Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HH Survey</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI District</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HH Survey</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI District</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH Survey</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<td>43%</td>
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<td>56%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HH Survey</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSI District</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>22%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td>8%</td>
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<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSI District</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>HH Survey</td>
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<td>SSI District</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>SSI District</td>
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<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI District</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.2 Sources of Power

In contrast, on the question of power sources responses provided from communities and districts differed in part significantly. Whilst findings from Parwan and Kapisa still widely corresponded, the ratings of importance for individual sources of power received from the other provinces were often highly contradictory (see table 9). Especially in their assessment on the relevance of family relations, tribal and ethnic relations and military force community residents and district officials expressed different opinions. The information received from the research are not sufficient to pinpoint the reasons for the differences in assessment. Yet, it could be speculated that interviewer bias - as research teams represented were comprised of CARE staff who regularly interact with district governments - could have played a role. Possibly, district-level stakeholders may also simply hold different opinions formed by their specific experiences as representatives of the state. In any case, though, the findings underline the need to exercise care when using findings from key informant interviews for complex analysis, such as power mappings.

Table 9. Sources of Power - Household Survey and District Interviews compared (By Province) [-2 - 'Not important at all'; 2 - 'very important']*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Family Relation s</th>
<th>Tribal/Ethnic Relations</th>
<th>Educatio n</th>
<th>Religious Knowledg e</th>
<th>Money/Wealt h</th>
<th>Militar y Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>HH Survey</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>-0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SSI District</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parwan</td>
<td>HH Survey</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SSI District</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td>HH Survey</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SSI District</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nonetheless, the district-level result display a few interesting trends. Education for instance played a far more significant role in the urban areas of Kabul than in any other of the target districts (see table 10). The high ranking of religious knowledge in Malistan/Ghazni re-affirms the relevance of religion in that district which had been noted in the household survey, yet did not feature in the listing of influential figures at district-level.
Table 10. Sources of Power - Results from District Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kabul</th>
<th>Mir Bacha Kot</th>
<th>Parwan</th>
<th>Kapisa</th>
<th>Balkh</th>
<th>Ghazni</th>
<th>Paktia</th>
<th>Khost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Bagram</td>
<td>Jabel saraj</td>
<td>Bagram</td>
<td>Hesa-e Awal</td>
<td>Charkent</td>
<td>Khulum</td>
<td>Sholgarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Relations</strong></td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tribal/Ethnic Relations</strong></td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Money/Wealth</strong></td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military Force</strong></td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
<td>-1.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.3 Relationships between Key Actors at Provincial Level

As the case for communities, a power analysis for the provincial level also has to incorporate a review of relationships between the key actors identified in the governance system. Due to the larger number of actors involved in governance at the provincial level - such as representatives of the various government bodies (i.e. province governor, provincial line departments, provincial council as well as security forces), informal power brokers (as for instance tribal elders, commanders and families with economic power and non-governmental entities) - this is more complex and can only be completed at basic level for this report.

Some general patterns however could be observed. Some provinces for instance displayed substantial levels of social cohesion at provincial level, as had characterized them already at community level. As a result of the strong influence of traditional tribal structures, formal and informal leaders in Paktia and Khost for instance cooperate closely in decision-making and their enforcement. In Parwan and Kapisa whereas representatives of the government and informal actors were found to maintain a fragile balance, and governance systems were widely fragmented between the various power brokers. Political ties to decision-makers in Kabul are an important factor for shaping influence in the local administration, further fragmenting the governance system.

In Balkh, the longest serving province governor of Afghanistan is widely regarded to have formed a local governance system which incorporated most informal decision-makers, thus generating a cohesive governance structure over which he exercised a high level of control. Recently, however, Atta's status as acting governor after President Ghani attempted to replace him and Atta refused to leave his post slowly eroded his influence in the provincial administration. Conflict between the political party representing the province governor and Vice President Dostum's party over influence in one of Afghanistan's most wealthy provinces, that escalated at the beginning 2016, adds further tension, and enforces an increasing focus on ethnic lines in provincial politics. The decision of key leaders from Hezb-e Islami to increase their presence in Balkh also represented a concern for the established power brokers and is likely to exaggerate internal conflict. These external developments coincide with an internal trend in which the province governor grew to rely more heavily on a selected group of advisors within the provincial administrations who isolate him from other interest groups. This combination of external pressure and internal isolation threatens to turn a previously hierarchical yet inclusive governance system into a structure exposed to external and internal friction.

Ghazni's provincial governance system is difficult to describe. No visual conflict exists between the various key actors in the provincial administration. However, the previous centre of power in the province - the deputy governor - had just recently been replaced, and the well-liked chief of police who appears to have moved into his place as the figure the largest level of influence in province does not carry the formal authority to exercise this power. This generates a gap between formal and informal power structures, and it remains to be seen how this will affect dynamics in the province government.

Kabul finally cannot be analysed in the same way as the other provinces, as provincial politics is often over-ridden by national power structures in the capital. The presence of senior government
figures and informal leaders from all parts of the country overlaps with and occasionally suppresses formal local power structures in place. Simultaneously, Kabul's urban environment forms a social structure in which contact between government officials and citizens is diversified. Whilst interaction with implementing staff, such as police, teachers and medical personnel, is far more frequent, the decision-making level of government are further removed from the local population than in rural areas. Furthermore, high levels of migration from rural into urban areas generate structures in which pockets of traditional communities and social relations persist as parallel structures to the new social dynamics generated by the infrastructure and employment opportunities offered by the city.

### Table 11. Power Structures at Province Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Power Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Khost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pakia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Parwan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.5 Summary

The survey findings, re-affirmed by key informant reports from the provincial assessments, demonstrate the continued domination of traditional community leaders as local power brokers on all levels of sub-national governance. With minor variations for the individual target provinces, maliks and village elders proved to have maintained their role as central decision-makers in the community, a fact that is also reflected in the ranking of power sources analysed by the study. CDCs not only rank lower than traditional leaders, but often show signs of cooptation by the informal power structures. At district and provincial level as well, formal governance systems are interlinked with informal power structures to varying degree, generating a governance mechanism that is sustained by a multitude of sources for influence and power.

Although governance systems at the local level can vary in their structure and degree of cohesion within a province, the study observed consistency across levels of governance, with major characteristics being shared in between the provincial, district and community levels of a geographic area. This is the result of power structures at the community levels being deeply integrated with governance mechanisms, as traditional power brokers at the community level maintained a key role as interlocutor between the community and external authorities. Reflecting the hierarchical relationship between leaders and people and the subsequent gaps in information-sharing and consultation, though, the satisfaction of the local population with the performance of traditional leaders in representing them is often low. Hence, whilst the influence of traditional leaders and governance mechanisms generates a certain level of stability for local government, the research also clearly displayed its disadvantages for efficient administration. In contrast to their low ratings for influence, CDCs received more positive reviews for their interaction and consideration of the local population, whilst maliks and village elders were rated to perform on
average or below. This points to a substantial gap between those who are typically approached for decision-making due to their status as power brokers and the community. The survey data also demonstrated the significant isolation of mullahs both from central power structures as well as information sharing and consultation in many of the communities covered by the study, putting into question their potential role as mediators and interlocutors between development programs and residents.

Finally, the research findings highlight the distinct differences of power and governance structures in urban and rural areas. Influence of power brokers, sources of power as well as relations between power brokers and citizens showed specific patterns that differentiated the urban areas in Kabul and Balkh from the remaining areas included in the research sample. This observation can be expected to be of high relevance for programming and the application of governance strategies in future activities of CARE.

Table 12. Power Structures in the Target Provinces - Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Level of Governance</th>
<th>Key Power-Brokers*</th>
<th>Sources of Power**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M/K V/TE CDC M C GOV O F T/E Edu RE M/W MF PR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>Community Province</td>
<td>X X X x</td>
<td>X X x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghazni</td>
<td>Community Province</td>
<td>X X X x</td>
<td>X X x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>Community Province</td>
<td>X x X x</td>
<td>X X x x x x X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kapisa</td>
<td>Community Province</td>
<td>X X x x X x</td>
<td>X X x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khost</td>
<td>Community Province</td>
<td>X X x</td>
<td>X X x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakhia</td>
<td>Community Province</td>
<td>X X x</td>
<td>X X x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parwan</td>
<td>Community Province</td>
<td>X x X</td>
<td>X X x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* M/K - Malik/Khan, V/TE - Village/Tribal Elders, CDC - Community Development Shura, M - Mullah, C - Commander, GOV - Government Representatives, O - Other
4. MARGINALIZATION WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND THE FACTORS THAT SHAPE IT

Thus far, the study has treated communities and provinces as uniform entities consisting of leaders and the general population. CARE’s inclusive governance model however puts emphasis on marginalization, i.e. groups that are excluded from distribution of resources and decision-making. For the study this requires a shift from the overview perspective on community and province to reviewing internal divide. Thereby, the study found several lines of marginalization that take effect in CARE target communities.

4.1 MARGINALIZATION IN SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

An interesting tendency observed in the study was the divide in perceptions of marginalization between governmental and non-governmental respondents. The latter, including CARE staff, primarily referred to social factors when discussing marginalization at the province. The most commonly acknowledged factors of marginalization by that category of key informants for instance were gender and age. Depending on the province, ethnicity - e.g. of the Uzbek minority in Balkh province dominated by Tadjik decision-makers - also played a role according to their observations. Furthermore, CARE respondents suggested profession, such as barbers, as a criteria causing groups to be excluded from community decision-making and resource distribution. Other key informants added specific social groups, such as kuchis (in Kapisa), tribal groups (Zurmat in Paktia), religious minorities (Sikh in Khost) and internally displaced people (IDP, in Khost), to the list.

Government officials whereas often adopted a geographic perspective on marginalization. Accordingly, the first comments of government staff on the subject of marginalization referred to districts and areas that were disadvantaged at receiving public service delivery, or completely excluded from it. Social marginalization only a played a secondary role for government officials.

Distance to the province centre and challenging conditions of transport infrastructure were seen to contribute to geographic marginalization. Insecurity however represented the most frequent reason identified for geographic marginalization, with prominent examples being highlighted in the research as Ghorband in Parwan, Tagab and Alesay in Kapisa, and several districts in Balkh (Chimtchal, Chahar Bolak, Sholgarah, Kishindeh). Often though the aspect of insecurity masked other factors of marginalization. The fact that government has almost no access to most Pashtoon-dominated districts in Ghazni for instance was explained by insecurity in these areas. However, one could imagine that it might be the result of a deep divide between the local population in these districts and the provincial government which is dominated by Hazaras. Representatives of Pashtoo communities are widely absent from the Province Government, including the Provincial Council where only four Pashtoon delegates from two districts that traditionally maintain better relationships with the centre are present.

Furthermore, as insecurity often was identified as the result of previous marginalization that left gaps which opposition groups were then able to exploit and occupy, the tendency of
organizations to concentrate program activities in secure areas in fact re-enforces marginalization. This was the case in the already mentioned Pashtoon areas of Ghazni, but also contributed significantly to the deterioration of security in Ghorband in Parwan (see box 2).

Box 2. Case Study - Conflict Evolution and Marginalization in Ghorband District/Parwan Province

Described by CARE staff and other key informants as initially a land conflict between two local power brokers, the conflict in Ghorband escalated after dispute resolution mechanisms failed and the parties to the conflict sought support from the government and opposition forces. Thus opening an access point for opposition forces to the district, insecurity then started to increase which was met with a successively accelerating withdrawal of non-governmental organizations from the district. Consequently, public service delivery decreased, fuelling the dissatisfaction of the local population and in turn undermining the legitimacy of the government in the area. At the time of the research, the initial dispute had transformed into a full-fledged conflict with external elements involved, as the district developed into a transition route for opposition elements. Few NGOs operate in the area, and government entities can only access the area to provide basic public services (education and health). Thus, whilst the decision of NGOs to exit the area was not the source of the conflict, it can certainly be considered to have been a contributing factor over the course of its evolution.

In general, Provincial Councils proved an important reference point for analysing as well as addressing marginalization. Offering citizens an alternative to the administrative government bodies for submitting requests and complaints, the PC can potentially be an important instrument for ensuring that marginalization is addressed. But, PCs themselves display signs of political marginalization, such as in the described case of Ghazni. Similar tendencies can be observed in Parwan where only one PC member hails from the insecure districts of the Ghorband area, and none is present from Koh-e Safi district, an area in the South-East of the province where the provincial government has almost no access.

Secondly, the integration of PCs into provincial decision-making is a strong sign for the inclusivity of provincial politics. Whilst the PC in Balkh for instance is comparatively well integrated into local governance, PCs in Parwan and Kapisa struggle to fulfil their function of representing citizens and serving as a balance to the provincial executive.

At the district-level, similar findings emerged, as government representatives interviewed tended to focus on geographic marginalization. In a number of districts government representatives noted limitations in access to communities (>50% of SSI respondents: 6 districts/ District Profile: 6 districts), due to insecurity, issues related to insecurity such as poppy cultivation, remote location or transportation challenges. Lack of representation in government bodies whereas was observed by CARE research team as a gap in only two to three districts.6 Awareness amongst government officials on social marginalization also focused on a limited number of districts. Whilst overall a surprisingly high number of government officials (34%) constituted that development projects and public services were 'always' or 'mostly unfair' distributed, most of these responses came from Kabul (60%), Khost (37%) and Balkh (35%).

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6 Results from District Profiles.
4.2 MARGINALIZATION IN THE COMMUNITY

At community level, residents - who themselves had described key community leaders as unwilling to share information and consult with the villagers - did not report significant levels of marginalization. 3% of respondents thought that 'a lot' of families were excluded from decision-making, and 17% thought it to be 'some'. One third of respondents insisted that no marginalization existed in their community, with the highest values received from Parwan (53%), Khost (48%) and Ghazni (38%). Overall, none of the provinces reached a level of more than a third of respondents reporting substantial levels of marginalization (see figure 6).

**Figure 9. Level of Marginalization ('Alot/Some') - By Province**

Furthermore, in the mind of local people, marginalization is predominantly the result of poverty. Poor households were the most frequently identified group (28%) who are subject to marginalization in the community (see figure 7). Being poor was also the dominant answer (36%) for why families in the community were excluded (see figure 8). Another point of interest is the fact that 22% of those respondents who confirmed that there are households that are excluded from decision-making thought this to be the choice of the respected households. Only 6% said that community leaders did not allow households to participate and 5% identified the community people as the source of the marginalization. In light of the gaps in information flows and consultation noted earlier in the report, this strongly suggests that the concept of marginalization itself is not well understood in the communities and the status quo of power-brokers making decisions without consulting the residents is accepted, unquestioned practice. Consequently, public perceptions will only be of limited assistance for efforts to measure marginalization as part of program evaluations.

One aspect that local residents did note in the household survey is the role some women play where marginalization is concerned. Women-headed households (17%) and widows (13%) made up a substantial percentage of the cases reported for marginalization. On the other hand, almost none of the respondents considered gender to be a general factor shaping marginalization trends at the community level, as women and girls were not listed as excluded groups. It could be speculated that in the aforementioned examples of marginalization involving women - widows and women-headed households - it was the economic implications of being a women in Afghan society - i.e. the access to livelihood strategies and local markets - that was the decisive criteria for triggering awareness of respondents. Gender thus is seen through an economic lens rather than as a criteria of relevance for social opportunities and participation.
Although residents lack awareness, the fact that women remain marginalized at the community-level is strongly highlighted by the survey results. Influential women who participate in formal or informal decision-making processes of the community exist only according to 35% of the respondents (see figure 12). Whilst Kapisa (61%) and Parwan (60%) display comparably high results, the situation in Paktia (0%) appears particularly precarious.
In the cases where influential women exist, they are fairly equally distributed between traditional roles (19%) - i.e. female relatives of traditional leaders or, as the case in some provinces, female elders - and women who are influential due to their position in formal decision-making bodies (22%), such as female members of CDCs or VEC. Another 6% of the women listed as influential were representatives of professions, such as teachers and nurses. The consideration of women integrated through family relations into traditional mechanisms of decision-making also explains the high results for Kapisa and Parwan noted earlier, as wives or other female relatives of maliks and local power-brokers make up a substantial part of the influential women identified in these provinces.

4.3 Marginalization at the Household Level

At the household level, the survey data as well displays a significant degree of marginalization for women and girls. Taken all household decisions on financial, social, community-related and political matters together, male household members who reached adulthood were reported to almost always be engaged in decision-making. Women whereas averaged at 53% involvement in all decisions, displaying a significant gender gap. Age, however, is an even stronger criteria of marginalization, as male adolescents were involved in decision-making in 24% of the cases, and an intersectional mix of age and gender factors resulted in the greatest level of marginalisation: girls rarely found an audience for their opinion (3%). Children were hardly ever were mentioned as participating in decision-making.

The role of women in household decision-making proved to be higher in Parwan and Kapisa, whilst South-Eastern provinces produced lower numbers (see figure 13).

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7 The remaining 30% of mentions for women influential in the community remained undefined, as only names were provided in the questionnaires without specifications on the role of the individual.
When it came to actual participation in community decision-making however the province profiles was almost reversed. Whilst Kabul, Ghazni and Balkh reported comparatively high levels of mobility and participation for women in the community, Parwan and Kapisa fell below the average (see figure). The seemingly contradictory findings from Parwan and Kapisa on the role of women in the household and in the community serves as a reminder that a strong position of women in the household does not necessarily directly translate into opportunities to actively participate in community decision-making.

In Kabul and Balkh the inclusion of urban areas certainly is a key factor contributing to the results obtained for the two provinces. Moreover, both have been at the centre of women empowerment programs implemented by NGOs and therefore experienced higher levels of progress in the past decade than other areas of Afghanistan. In Ghazni, the survey focused on the province center - which are commonly more exposed to information flows and social innovations as well as have better access to economic resources - and Malistan - a district with a predominantly Hazara population -, thus, findings favourable conditions for women's empowerment.

Findings from Parwan and Kapisa may strike the observer as at odds with the general profiles of the provinces, which are relatively close to Kabul and therefore could be assumed to have benefitted from access to social and economic dynamics produced by the capital. However, key informants from the provinces as well as women's right organizations interviewed in Kabul confirmed that especially Parwan represents an unexpectedly difficult terrain for women empowerment to take place. Especially due to its proximity to Kabul, organizations find it
difficult to convince donor agencies to invest into the province. Furthermore, the strong dominance of individual power brokers and local commanders transformed the area into a highly conservative territory in which little space is allocated to women to participate.

The province which produced consistently negative results for both women's participation in the household and the community is Paktia. Undoubtedly a highly traditional area, the research provided little evidence for women's empowerment programs have taken an effect in the past years. The role of women remains strictly restricted to the household, and women are widely restrained from participating in external activities.

Figure 14. Inclusion of Women in Community Decision-Making - By Province* [-2 - 'Not at all'; 2 - 'Very much']

4.4 SUMMARY

Examining patterns of marginalization, the study found barriers to participation of citizens on all three levels of governance analysed - province, district, community and household. To which degree stakeholders and the affected population were aware of the mechanisms of marginalization though differed. At provincial level, two major categories of marginalization were identified - that of marginalization of social groups versus marginalization of geographic areas. The efficiency and integration of the Provincial Councils was identified as an important factor to understand the degree of marginalization given at a province. At community level, the earlier findings on the dominance of traditional leaders and their limited interaction with the local residents would suggest that the local population faces significant degrees of marginalization within the existing system. However, awareness levels on these issues were depicted in the household survey as low. It therefore has to be assumed that marginalization of social groups in

*Figures constitute average of responses on three statements to which interviewees were asked whether they agreed or disagreed - 1. Women from your household are allowed to leave the house; 2. Women from your household are participating in women's groups; 3. Women from your household are participating in decision-making in the community
the community is not only an issue created by the community leaders but the community as a whole. At least a limited understanding was displayed by respondents on the marginalization of women which starts from the household level and extends to the exclusion of women from community decision-making.

Utilizing the degree of marginalization, i.e. the absence of representatives from relevant social groups, the study can complete the categorization of power structures that started with identifying key power brokers involved in decision-making and the relationships amongst themselves (see table 13). Absence essentially is a relationship that thus far was just missing from the analysis. Accordingly, where representatives of relevant social groups are absent, it has to be concluded that the local governance system in that area suffers from division, a categorization which for instance would be the case for Ghazni province.
Table 13. Marginalization and Categorization of Governance Systems - By Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Level of Governance</th>
<th>Key Power-Brokers*</th>
<th>Degree of Marginalization**</th>
<th>Categorization of Power</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M/ K</td>
<td>V/TE</td>
<td>CDC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Community</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Province</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* M/K - Malik/Khan, V/TE - Village/Tribal Elders, CDC - Community Development Shura, M - Mullah, C - Commander, GOV - Government Representatives, O - Other
** L - Low, M - Medium, H - High
To complete the examination of the dimensions on which CARE’s inclusive governance approach focuses, the following chapter will discuss the responsiveness and quality of services provided by the local government in the target areas, and the challenges that limit responsiveness.

5. LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS - STAKEHOLDERS, CAPACITY AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

The majority of respondents who had been in contact with the local government in the past year expressed dissatisfaction with the responsiveness of the local authorities (‘poor/medium’ - 62%), as well as with the quality of the service eventually received (65%). Respondents in Kabul were the most positive about their experiences with the local government, whilst respondents from Parwan and Khost proved especially vocal about their dissatisfaction with the response they received from the government (see figure 14).

Due to the limitations of the scope that could be dedicated to the household survey, the experiences with public service delivery could not be discussed in more detail. Interviews with CARE staff and key stakeholders though point to a range of problems that occur in the delivery of public services and can be expected to have shaped responses in the household survey. Delays in the delivery of the services for instance was a common concern. Unfair distribution and the demand for bribes to facilitate the provision of the service also were frequently mentioned concerns. Lack of quality in the services itself was also noted, for example in the comparison of government schools and community-based schools operated by NGOs, and the quality of the teaching they offer.
This raises the question to which degree government institutions in fact would be able to respond to community needs and the demands of marginalized groups, if CARE were to support the local population in more efficiently communicating their needs.

5.2.1 Capacity Gaps in the Provision of Public Services

Indeed, key stakeholders as well as CARE staff expressed significant doubt about the ability of the government to facilitate additional requests. Limitations in the capacity of governmental bodies to respond to citizen requests and provide public services were described as the result of multiple structural challenges. A major factor for instance are patronage and clientelism which are prominent in Afghanistan's institutions. Internally, clientelism hampers recruitment and promotion of qualified staff, thus limiting the capacity of government bodies in the long term. Externally, it often results in corruption, undermining trust and acceptance for the government institutions amongst the population.

A second important factor limiting the ability of local governments to respond to citizens is the lack of resources they experience. This scarcity of resources at the provincial level - which for instance prevents government officials from travelling to communities - is the product of the high centralization of the state which entails that decision-making and resource allocation are controlled at the centre. Hence, provincial administrations suffer from chronic lack of funds, as well as being limited in their ability to plan for service delivery.

Other obstacles for effective operations of provincial administrations that had been mentioned during the research include lack of leadership and supervision, gaps in technical expertise - such as lack of the required professional and educational background, or insufficient knowledge on new approaches and methods - and inefficient administrative systems, to name but a few. The complex depiction of limitations in the capacity of provincial administrations underline the relevance of CARE’s inclusive governance concept which foresees the need to support local government in responding to community requests through the third dimension included in it. Simultaneously, it highlights the limitations of the concept, as gaps in government capacity often are the result of structural barriers which are difficult to address for NGOs such as CARE.

In addition to capacity gaps experienced by the line departments involved in service delivery, the efficiency of local government is also affected by barriers in the overall system of local governance and the interplay between its agencies. Lack of clarity on the role of the province governor for instance has been a constant source of confusion in provincial governance over the past years, an issue that only recently has been receiving more attention and is planned to be addressed in the new sub-national governance policy that is currently in the revision phase.

5.2.2 Capacity Gaps in Public Outreach and Interaction with Social Groups

The capacity gaps experienced by provincial administrations do not only affect their ability to manage and provide public services, but start from the ability to interact with the local population and register their interests and needs. As the case for the provincial line departments tasked with
providing public services, the platforms established to ensure close interaction with the local population and coordinated decision-making - the Provincial Councils and district-level councils - face structural problems arising from the legal framework in place as well as institutional barriers.

The role of the Provincial Parliament remained ill-defined until a law was prepared at the end of 2015 to confirm and specify its functions and authority. Having lacked this clarity for most of the time, though, the Provincial Parliaments found themselves marginalized in the provincial governance system, depriving the local population of an important platform to engage with the administration.

PCs also vary significantly in their capacity and ability to reach out to the local population. Of the PCs covered by this study, it could be said that the PC in Balkh is the most active. The PC in Parwan only recently gained weight with the appointment of the new PC chairman who enjoys a high level of respect amongst Parwan's influentials. In Kapisa whereas such a leading figure is missing, and fragmentation the most accurate description for the body in this province. PC members in Ghazni are generally considered powerful, yet are rumoured to employ their influence primarily for their own interests. The severe under-representation of delegates from Pashto-dominated areas also heavily undermines the ability of the PC to work towards inclusion in Ghazni province. In Khost and Paktia, eventually, overlaps between PC members and tribal networks provides the institution with a certain degree of influence. The integration of the PC into decision-making of government institutions however appears to be more efficient in Khost. In Paktia, PC members complained their lack of influence on planning processes and other forms of governmental decisions, as one interviewee from the PC expressed: 'We only go and hear their decisions, they don't ask for our input'.

At the district level, the same problem can be observed with the District Development Assemblies (DDAs). Whilst the constitution foresees District Councils to be elected and serve as a balancing mechanism to the district administration, these elections never were realized. In effect, the DDAs - established by MRRD as part of the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) - unofficially took on the role of the District Councils, however without having been assigned formal responsibility and authority. Unlike in NSP, only a few DDAs received block grants to mobilise their constituents to plan projects; the block grant system was not nationwide, and was not repeated over time. Many DDAs were established and then largely forgotten.

5.3 Civil Society Organizations - Role in Provincial Governance and their Limitations

Where governmental bodies failed to reach out to the local population and provide public services, NGOs and CSOs have filled this void in the past. In doing so they became an intrinsic element of the local governance system, and therefore exercise their own form of power. The role of non-governmental actors was further expanded by the efforts of international donor agencies to establish a strong civil society sector as a complementary mechanism in local governance to foster transparency and inclusion. Hence, the study requires expanding the analysis
to these quasi-governmental structures and their role in local governance in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of inclusivity and marginalization in the target provinces.

Accordingly, CSOs were present in all provinces covered by the study, though higher in numbers and more advanced in their operations in Balkh and Kabul provinces. Parwan nominally sees high levels of activities of CSOs as well, yet due to its proximity to Kabul does not necessarily pose the location of permanent residency for these organizations.

To what degree presence of CSOs also translates into influence on provincial decision-making is a question outside the scope of this research. General observations however suggest that whilst CSOs have become an indispensable part of local governance/service delivery, cooperation with the formal element of sub-national governance is wrought with tension. The lack of distinction between CSOs and NGOs for instance represents a significant obstacle in forming cooperation with public service entities. Formally, Afghanistan's legal framework does not differentiate between the two types of organizations. In practice, all CSOs interviewed for this study - both in Kabul and the provinces - display activity profiles that combine classic advocacy with project-specific development work. Having thus become active in public service delivery themselves, CSOs face a challenge to their credibility when pursuing their key function of advocating with the government for better services. As governmental agencies now perceive CSOs as potential competition to their authority in providing public services, they often respond abrasively and do not consider CSOs as a potential partner for cooperation. This becomes apparent in the reserved statements about the role of CSOs in facilitating public services and supporting marginalized groups in interviews with government officials, yet also is reflected in the limited efforts of CSOs to engage with representative bodies of the provincial government, such as the Provincial Council.

The corruption and patronage which blocks operations of the provincial administrations also deters CSOs from cooperating with the local government more closely, as they are concerned about deepened cooperation carrying the risk of being vulnerable to illegitimate attempts of influence by government officials. A case in point is Khost, where NGOs expressed suspicion about recent efforts of the government to obtain detailed project reports due to earlier experiences in which bribes were demanded. These reservations about cooperation in turn are felt by the local administration, and further deepen the gulf and mistrust between the two entities. Eventually, it can be said that the mutual mistrust formed into a local culture of institutional separation that defines how the actors perceive each other.  

Some of the challenges however CSOs also share with provincial administrations. Confronted with a provincial administration which is left without any authority in the planning process and lacks resources to maintain basic operations, CSOs in the provinces are also limited in their ability to operate by the centralization of the state. In order to successfully promote agendas and

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9 During the research, personal relations of CARE staff were often instrumental in arranging for interviews with government officials, at least in sectors and government institutions CARE does not interact with on regular basis. As a result, personal relations proved to be also a key factor in determining who participated in the research. Similarly, cooperation with government institutions was described as particularly efficient where personal relations existed, such as through relatives of CARE staff, or - also quite popular - former CARE beneficiaries working in government positions. These are just a few examples underlining the relevance of informal networks for NGO-government interaction.
influence decision-making, CSOs are forced to turn to the Kabul level which on the one hand exceeds their area of influence determined by their specific constituency, and on the other tends to be met with bureaucratic barriers and the delays resulting from it.

Finally, effectiveness of CSOs is also limited by internal barriers. Having received substantial levels of support over the past years, for instance, CSOs developed into an attractive field for profit-seeking actors to engage in. As a result, CSO representatives noted a split of the CSO community into genuine CSOs and organizations that serve only as vehicle for acquisitioning projects. In some cases, CSOs also are reported to be informally linked to government officials for the purpose of generating a profit for those involved. A key informant in Balkh who termed such organizations 'governmental non-governmental organizations' estimated that of the 60 CSOs active in Balkh (total registration numbers are higher, but include various organizations that are not functional), approximately 10 CSOs fall under this category. The presence of such NGOs first of all distorts the overall performance of the CSO sector, and secondly undermines its credibility with government entities as well as the local population.

Furthermore, it needs to be kept in mind that CSOs, as much as any other organization involved in politics, are subjects to internal dynamics that can undermine their public mission. As a visit to a youth organization in the context of the field work showed, CSOs prove to be a powerful vehicle for influencing local politics, as their activities assigns importance to those involved in the management of the CSO and provides them with a public profile. This generates a significant temptation to utilize the status gained from CSO involvement for personal agendas. Social accountability hence is not only a subject for governmental entities, but should be applied to CSOs as well.

5.4 Summary

In mapping local governance mechanisms, the study noted a substantial gap in the interaction between local population, especially specific social and geographic groups, and the local government. Reviewing the capacity of provincial administrations, the analysis sought to identify the factors that cause these gaps. Thereby, a combination of administrative, technical and structural barriers was identified to impact on the effectiveness of local administrations in interacting with the local population and responding to its needs.

Civil Society Organizations which developed into an integral element of local governance and often are seen as essential in compensation for the gaps of the formal governance mechanisms, however, also face internal and external barriers that hamper effective cooperation with the formal elements of local governance. In fact, it could be argued that the disconnect between the formal and non-governmental entities of local governance constitutes a major reason for the gaps in local governance observed in this study.
6. ASSESSMENT OF CARE GOVERNANCE CAPACITY

Whilst the first chapters of the report focused on mapping local governance and the challenges it faces, the final chapter will aim at assessing CARE Afghanistan's capacity in accommodating and addressing governance issues through its programming. Particular emphasis will be placed on the requirements that would be posed by implementing CARE's new inclusive governance concept.

6.1 DEFINING GOVERNANCE CAPACITY

First, the study needs to outline the analytical concept with which governance capacity can be conceptualized and assessed. Thereby, the study will draw on general approaches to capacity which identifies several organizational components that shape capacity (see box 1). Starting from the level of information available to an institution to base decision-making on, capacity is formed in a gradual process, first by generating knowledge. Whilst information constitutes data present at the organization, knowledge comprises the ability to structurally draw on and utilize information. Knowledge then needs to be transferred into capabilities by forming expertise and developing standardized concepts and approaches. These again need to be integrated into and supported by the organizational structure in order to be applied effectively.

Box 1: Model of Organizational Capacity

These elements shall now be reviewed individually for CARE's mechanisms to engage in local governance.

6.2 INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE LEVELS

When donor agencies were asked in the course of this study about their guidelines on best practices for how to access communities and effectively mobilise without re-enforcing traditional power structures, the standard response was that donors have trust into the experience of their
implementing partners. Most NGOs, including CARE, again refer to the expertise of their local staff in approaching local communities as guiding principle for community mobilization. However, to what degree does local staff in fact comprehend local power dynamics, and communicates their insight to program decision-makers. From the interviews conducted for this study, a mixed picture was obtained. Local staff without doubt enjoys prime access to local communities and therefore often has in-depth understanding of the dynamics that shape local society. A case in point are the CARE staff in Paktia and Khost who provided detailed overviews on tribal structures and their impact on provincial politics. The efficient cooperation between CARE and informal leaders is another indicator that points to high levels of awareness on local politics at the side of CARE province staff.

Overall, descriptions of the communities noted down by CARE field staff based on their observations from the focus group research conducted for the study also widely correspond with the results obtained from the household survey (see figure 15).

For individual provinces however findings can differ quite substantially. In Kapisa for instance CDC chairmen were identified as powerful in all communities visited, very much in contrast to the findings from the household survey.

CARE field staff also tended to evaluate selected sources of power as more important than had been indicated in the household survey. Whilst naming family and tribal/ethnic relations as most important in determining local power - both factors also received the highest ranking in the household survey - field researchers proceeded to rate education as the third most important (see figure 16). However, in the household survey education was only assigned a marginal role.
During in-depth interviews as well in Parwan and Kapisa CARE staff failed to explain key elements of local governance when interviewed for the study. Especially the role of commanders in local politics and conflicts generated by the influence of local commanders did not find mentioning in the interviews, or were only discussed in very general terms, although in discussions with other key informants high importance was placed on their role in shaping local power dynamics. In Kapisa, the actual background of a local conflict that was earlier mentioned to have impacted on CARE operations in the area could only be clarified after interviews with external stakeholders. This raises the question whether local staff lacked awareness on the details of the power dynamics, or felt hesitation to share their insight. In any event, it has to be concluded that there are areas and subjects where local staff may not provide comprehensive information on local power dynamics.

Apart from the personal experience and insights of local staff, furthermore, CARE does not possess mechanisms to structurally capture information on local governance trends. Knowledge on power brokers, their roles and relations with each other are not systematically explored and recorded. Needs assessments incorporate power or governance mappings only in exceptional cases. Moreover, little exchange of information and experience appears to take place between sectors and provinces. Thus, CARE lacks the capacity to manage information on governance within its current system.

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10 In Kohband district of Kapisa province, a conflict between two commanders escalated to hamper public service delivery as well as NGO operations in the affected communities. Both personal histories of the two commanders as well as their political affiliations were said to fuel the conflict. As a result of the conflict, schools and other services had been forced to be disbanded at the time of reporting. For CARE the conflict entailed to have to close down a community school established in the area. Due to the involvement of political parties, the resolution of the conflict had occupied the district governor as well as senior government officials of the province (province governor, DoPH director) without having found a resolution by the time the interviews had been conducted.
6.2 EXPERTISE, CONCEPTS AND THEIR APPLICATION

As CARE did not yet engage in inclusive governance, there are no concepts yet that could be assessed to establish levels of expertise and its application. However, some related fields that display similar characteristics to governance programming can be used to produce case studies on CARE's general capacity to develop and implement such concepts. The most suitable concepts for such examination the study found in 'conflict sensitivity' and 'Do No Harm' (DNH), both approaches that have been integrated into CARE's country strategy. Although not directly linked to inclusive governance, these two concepts touch on subjects of local power dynamics and require similar institutional arrangements for their implementations as would have to be put in place for inclusive governance.

Of the two concepts, DNH clearly proved to be the more successful thus far. Almost all of CARE staff interviewed was able to re-call having heard about DNH and most were capable of explaining the concept in their own words. DNH's key message - that development programs need to take into consideration their own effects on the local population and should take into account potential negative unintended effects when planning activities - resonates well with local staff, and is easily remembered. Asked to provide specific examples, key informants also seldom hesitated to produce actual incidences in which they applied DNH. However, a closer examination of these examples reveals that the understanding of unintended effects is broad and unstructured, leaving it to the sophistication of individual programs to determine to which degree DNH was applied in fact.

Whilst questions about DNH were generally met with a positive response, 'conflict sensitivity' was recognized by the respondents far less often. Few respondents were able to explain the meaning of the term, and even less were aware of related concepts such as conflict mappings. Asked about how CARE staff was responding to notions of pre-existing conflict in their area of operation, furthermore, it crystallised that in some provinces, such as Kapisa, 'conflict sensitivity' translated into 'conflict avoidance' for local staff. At the occasions they noted local conflict, CARE staff declared to refrain from including these communities into their programs. The fact that none of the communities selected for this study - chosen to represent CARE’s full spectrum of local target areas - was categorized as suffering from division (see figure in chapter 3) is another indicator that in CARE's selection of beneficiary communities security concerns prevail over inclusion of groups that suffer from high degrees of marginalization. It should be highlighted that this was not the case in all provinces, as examples of active conflict mitigation were provided from Khost for instance. It however demonstrates the lack of structured approaches to the subject of conflict sensitivity.

Documentation provided by CARE for the application of conflict sensitivity without exception concerned other countries, and no specific case study for the application of conflict sensitivity could be obtained. In fact, the observations from the study suggest that CARE's understanding of the subject most likely is informed by seeing DNH as sufficient prism through which conflict

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11One example given for such case was a community in Kapisa province that had been included into the pre-selection of locations for community-based education classes. After establishing that a neighboring community that controlled access points to the first community harbored enmities with the other community and may attempt to interrupt the program, CARE refrained from working in that community.
sensitivity can be approached. This however ignores the active dimensions of conflict mitigation through development programs entailed in the idea of conflict sensitivity.

It will be essential to understand why CARE succeeded in sensitizing staff for DNH, yet failed to achieve a comprehensive, unified approach to conflict sensitivity. At this point it can only be speculated that both the complexity of the subject and type of messaging, as well as the mechanisms in which the concepts were introduced to the staff - for DNH CARE organized trainings as well as included specific guidelines into the documents to be signed by each CARE staff upon their recruitment - shaped the differences in levels of success.

6.3 STRUCTURES

This leads the analysis to its final stage, the structures put in place to guide planning and implementation at CARE, and the degree to which they support the application of an inclusive governance strategy.

Several elements of organizational structures are key in determining the ability of an organization to enforce strategy. This includes:

A. Policy framework, i.e. the effective integration of new strategy into existing organizational policy and procedures;
B. Internal governance mechanisms and their efficiency in managing the application of policy;
C. The availability of resources required for implementing policy (including the expertise and qualifications of staff involved in the implementation).

6.3.1 Policy Framework

In terms of the policy framework, the study noted several potential conflicts between inclusive governance as a future strategy and existing regulations at CARE. Whilst inclusive governance for instance would require close coordination and cooperation with local government, CARE's security and outreach strategies demand a low profile approach and distance from governmental entities. Similarly, inclusive governance which centres on working with marginalized groups is likely to point programming towards insecure areas, since as previously noted insecurity and marginalization often overlap. This will be difficult to be accommodated with CARE's security policy which already to date restricts operations to the more secure districts and areas.

6.3.2 Internal Governance Mechanisms

CARE’s internal governance mechanisms prove to be strong and well-defined. Programs follow clearly structured procedures for planning and implementation of activities, and produced various guidelines for their staff through terms of references, project outlines, and directions for project management and reporting.
In between sectors however procedures can vary and even contradict each other. One case in point that featured in this study for instance is the aspect of community mobilization. During key informant interviews in Kabul it was noted that approaches on how to interact with local communities vary significantly across sectors and provinces. CARE’s NSP and rural development (H-RAP) component for instance declared to always work through CDCs in identifying stakeholders for program cooperation. CARE’s women’s empowerment program whereas described variations in the community mobilization approach, in which for instance informal leaders or religious figures were involved. In one occasion, where working through mullahs produced counter-productive results CARE resorted to government authorities to counterbalance the influence of the mullahs. The education program again follows its own operating procedures, and engages community leaders as deemed relevant for the program.

Furthermore, at the local level the application of these guidelines can become less stringent within individual programs as well. There were for instance significant discrepancies in how education teams approached community mobilization in the two neighbouring provinces of Kapisa and Parwan.

These contradictions in between programs and target areas suggests that whilst internal governance mechanisms are sophisticated and are currently being further enhanced by CARE, issues that remain that call for continued advancement of the systems in place. Part of this would be to strengthen the Monitoring & Evaluation of overall objectives of CARE and key strategies applied by the organization to achieve these. Another organizational capability that would be of importance, yet to date lacks sufficient strength, is information management. Only in recording and processing data on local power structures regularly CARE will be able to inform its decision-making and track progress.

6.3.3 Resources and Staffing

Finally, if CARE should succeed in de-conflicting policies and establish effective governance mechanisms and procedures to guide programs in the application of the inclusive governance approach, it would still rely on the ability of local representatives to implement the guidelines. This will require first of all experienced and qualified staff. Observations from the field work strongly suggest that this will not be an area of concern for CARE. However, as the case of DNH demonstrated, in order to introduce new cross-cutting concepts, local staff will have to be exposed to it through regular trainings as well as formal commitment to its application.

Another resource relevant to implementation of inclusive governance will be relations with government entities. Looking at the challenges CSOs face in cooperating with government entities described in the previous chapter, a carefully balanced approach will be needed. Interviews with senior management staff as well as observations from the management of the field work showed that whilst provincial representatives of CARE and their staff usually maintained good relations with the local government, they often relied on personal relations to do so.12 This provided them with different degrees of access to the various line departments. A more

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12During the field work, one provincial representative complained about the lack of responsiveness from the local government and emphasized that meetings obtained could only be realized through the personal relations
coordinated and structured approach to maintaining relationships with provincial administrations may be recommendable to ensure that all aspects of the inclusive governance concept can be facilitated.

6.5 SUMMARY

CARE Afghanistan's long-standing experience in the target provinces and established contacts with communities and government bodies alike provide the organization with excellent conditions to integrate inclusive governance concepts into its operations. As shown by the case of DNH, CARE also features past experiences for successfully disseminating strategic guidelines across layers of management and operations. However, disconnect between the individual programs and weaker guidelines at the local level present challenges to the uniform enforcement of strategic considerations, such as inclusive governance. One important step to resolve these issues would be to de-conflict existing policies and the inclusive governance approach, and prioritize principles for the individual stages of implementation. Whilst being assessed as generally strong, CARE's internal governance mechanisms also display areas that would benefit from being strengthened in order to effectively support the implementation of inclusive governance, such as information management and M&E.
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7. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the report was to provide a mapping of local governance and power structures that can assist CARE Afghanistan in informing the formulation of its inclusive governance strategy.

Focusing on CARE’s seven target provinces in Afghanistan, the study produced a detailed overview on dominant power brokers at community level, their sources of power as well as the relationships between them. The study also related local power structures to governance systems at the provincial level and identified general patterns in how power structures integrate across levels of governance. The findings of this multi-layered analysis thereby suggest that traditional power brokers remain dominant in most areas assessed, and serve as key focal points for decision-making at community level. As traditional leaders simultaneously prefer a hierarchical approach in interacting with the local population, marginalization of individual social groups is a common phenomenon at the community level. The findings however also demonstrate that this form of marginalization is barely understood by the local population, and traditional leaders continue to enjoy high levels of respect despite their in part poor performance in representing the local community.

Another important feature of marginalization that the report shed light on was the distinction into social marginalization - on which CSOs and NGOs focused primarily - and geographic marginalization - a major concern for government officials. This discrepancy will also be of significance for CARE which thus far has been concentrating on more secure areas within the seven target provinces. Allocating special relevance to marginalization as concept of governance will require CARE to review its procedures of selecting beneficiary communities in order to avoid contributing to the marginalization generated by NGOs when dedicating development aid to secure areas of a province.

Finally, the report reviewed CARE’s capacity for facilitating governance programming, focusing on the various components of institutional capacity - information, knowledge, capabilities, systems, structures and resources. Portraying CARE as an organization generally well-prepared to adopt inclusive governance as guiding principle, the assessment however identified several areas that required adjustment or strengthening in order to be effective in enforcing inclusive governance as cross-cutting theme, including de-conflicting policies, coordinating approaches across programs, strengthening information management and M&E capabilities.

Recommendations

Key findings of this study will be transferred into CARE Afghanistan's inclusive governance strategy and further processed to generate a strategy paper that provide guidance to all levels of CARE implementing staff. General recommendations that flow from the assessment presented in this report include:

1. **Facilitating Social Change** -
   Local power structures differ substantially for CARE provinces, and province-specific approaches to social change are required.
2. **Building Capacity in Governance Systems** -  
   1. Local and provincial power structures are intrinsically interwoven, demanding a multi-layered approach to development that works with all relevant levels of governance.

   2. Governance structures in urban and rural areas differ substantially, calling for two separate approaches by NGOs for the interaction with communities and stakeholders.

3. **Access Points for Social Outreach and Programming at the Community Level** -  
   CDCs represent the most inclusive platform for local governance available, and received the highest rankings with regard to transparency and responsibility. Hence, development programs should focus on working through CDCs when engaging with the community.

4. **Counter-acting Power Crapping in local Governance Mechanisms** -  
   Despite the positive reviews CDCs received, they were found to suffer from power crapping of local elites. Development agencies should ensure that project implementation includes instruments that enforce transparency and accountability of local governance mechanisms.

5. **Capacity-Building for Local Government Institutions** -  
   Local governments face multiple barriers to building their capacity and increasing responsiveness to citizen requests, which only partially relate to problems in accountability. NGOs should explore opportunities for supporting capacity-building of their governmental counterparts to the extent possible, and standardize these to ensure that programs are applied coherently (i.e., the development of capacity-building approaches). On the other hand, NGOs should be careful when raising expectations amongst the local population, the government is unlikely to be able to fulfil.

6. **Strengthening Civil Society** -  
   CSOs represent valuable platforms to facilitate interaction between people and the government. Yet, their relationship with government institutions is hampered by mutual distrust that became a part of organizational culture. More attention to careful selection of local CSOs as partners for implementation, trust-building measures - including the introduction of accountability mechanisms for CSOs -, and building platforms for the two spheres to re-connect could improve relations. This would benefit the capacity of the overall local governance system.

7. **Incorporating Province Councils as Stakeholders** -  
   As CSOs, Province Councils are understood to serve as 'bridge between the people and the government'. Interaction between PCs and CSOs/NGOs however is minimal in many of the provinces visited. Exploiting opportunities to cooperate more closely may help strengthening overall accountability of local governance.
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9. APPENDICES

A- Interview Questionnaires and Profiles

Appendice1- Community FGD Questionnaire

Appendice2- Community Household Survey-HH Questionnaire

Appendice3- Community Profile

Appendice4- District SSI Questionnaire

Appendice5- District Profile

Appendice6- CARE IDI Questionnaire

Appendice7- Stakeholder IDI Questionnaire

Appendice8- Province Profile

B- Database Tools

Appendice9- Community Profile Tool

Appendice10- Household Survey Tool
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Appendix 11 - District SSI Tool