



Every Voice Counts (EVC) Program

National Advocacy Conference

Position Paper

OVERVIEW OF SITUATION:

While there has been continuous efforts and progress by the government of Afghanistan and Ministry of Education to provide educational facilities to all children in the country; and since 2001 the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has made significant achievements¹ with the support of the Development Partners (DPs) in rebuilding Afghanistan's education system. However there is still a huge demand for education and needs for further support; as there are leaving of 3.5 million ²children out of schools, 75% of whom are girls; inadequate sanitation facilities and boundary walls, hamper girls' attendance and retention, especially as they enter adolescence.

Afghanistan is one of the country in the world that needs more time to improve education and health services for its citizens even though lots of effort has been taken by the relevant ministries. Access to education and health services is the fundamental right of women and girls and need support and attention from the relevant authorities.

In the areas where CARE and its partners are working the access to education and health services is very poor and women's participation in the local decision making is gradually undermined; space for negotiation for women priorities and needs is unstable and women are still struggling for their right and their participation in community decision making. The diverse factors that contribute to this challenge include socio-cultural norms which is one of the key driver for women's marginalization, inadequate³ resource allocation for clinics and primary schools at community level. Lack of surveillance on personnel attendance, poor service delivery are other crucial drivers, absence of mechanism in information sharing between communities and authorities are some of the main causes that prevents participation of women in decision making processes and their access to health and education services.

1 NESP III 2017-2021

2 Girls' access to education for Afghanistan Education Summit, 28 November 2017

3 Community Score Card findings report

OUR POSITION:

The civil society has always been active even difficult times in the country despite the absence of government representative. Education and Health sectors being the main key to the development of a nation remains the focus of civil society since inception. Education and Health services are the substantive driver for people and community development. According to the latest EVC baseline assessment in rural area of Khost, Balkh, Parwan and Kabul provinces, education and health services need further improvement in order to meet and fulfill the women and girls' rights at the grassroots level.

CARE partners led and applied the community score card tool in number of targeted communities in mentioned provinces in order to identify the women and girls' needs for education and health services; to improve mutual relations, strengthen mutual accountability and accumulate community support to address obstacles around education system in community schools and health service delivery system in community clinics.

CARE and its partners WCLRF, AWRC and HRRAC are jointly implementing the Every Voice Count-EVC program in targeted provinces to advocate rights and the position of women and girls in order to enable the environment for their access and participation in education and health services; this is achieved via the implementation of the community score card and advocacy to promote inclusive governance and incorporate lessons learnt into policies, priorities and programs of the MoE and MoPH. Through this paper on behalf of women and girls from the communities we represent call on local and national authorities from education and health ministries to address the needs of women and girls at the community level.

Key Recommendations⁴ for Education Authorities:

1. Continued proper observation mechanism should be in place and regular monitoring should be conducted by Education higher authorities in order to ensure the quality of education for girls and boys student
2. Strengthening provision of text books and class equipment include of chair, table, board, computer and laboratory for community schools
3. Improve accessibility of safe drinking water to schools' students
4. Promoting observance from Teacher attendance and teaching time management
5. Improving the conducive environment for girls' participation in education at the community level
6. Make the high priority of the female teacher recruitment at the village schools
7. Extend capacity building program for village school teachers in order to be able to meet education standard methods

⁴ Community Score Card findings report

Key Recommendations⁵ for Health Authorities:

1. Strengthening of time management and attendance of doctors and nurses in the community clinics
2. Improve availability and accessibility of medicines and ambulance for patients at the community level
3. Enabling physical environment of clinics and it should be equipped with necessarily equipment for patients at the village level
4. Extend the hygiene and sanitation awareness raising program for villagers
5. Existing female section should be supported in the clinic and referral system should be available

Abbreviations:

CSC- Community Score Card

IG- Inclusive Governance

EVC- Every Voice Counts

MoE- Ministry of Education

MoPH- Ministry of Public Health

CARE- International Organization

Partners- Local Organization implementing jointly EVC program (AWRC, WCLRF and HRRAC)

AWRC- Afghan Women Resource Center

WCLRF- Women and Children Legal Research Foundation

HRRAC- Human Rights, Research and Advocacy Consortium

⁵ Community Score Card findings report