Final Evaluation of Building Resilient Livelihoods Project

Glimpse of terracing and trenching in Nilli, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat from Oxfam

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Prepared for
Oxfam

April 2021

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAA	ActionAid Afghanistan
AACRS	Australian Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme
ACE	Afghanistan Centre for Excellence
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
ANPDF	Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework
ARM Consulting	Afghan Australian Research and Management Consulting
BRL	Building Resilient Livelihoods
CCPP	Contagious Caprin Pleuro Pneumonia
CDC	Community Development Council
CoB	Close of Business
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DoEC	Directorate of Economy
DoWA	Directorate of Women Affairs
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
GPS	Global Positioning System
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
KII	Key Informant Interview
MIS	Management Information System
MoIC	Ministry of Industries and Commerce
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHLP	National Horticultural and Livestock Project
NPP	National Priority Program
NSIA	National Statistics and Information Authority
ODK	Open Data Kit
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHW	Organization for Human Welfare
RCC	Reinforced Cement Concrete
SOW	Scope of Work
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
SU	Sampling Unit
TAF	The Asia Foundation
ToC	Theory of Change
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
WB	World Bank
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In partnership with Oxfam, Afghan Australian Research and Management Consulting (ARM Consulting) administered an external independent final evaluation of the Building Resilient Livelihoods (BRL) project in Daikundi province. ARM Consulting is grateful to Oxfam staff in Kabul and Daikundi for their assistance throughout the evaluation. In particular, ARM Consulting is thankful to **Mr. Mohammad Ali Roshan** (Project Manager) and **Ms. Fatima Yaqubi** (Deputy Project Manager) for their technical guidance and coordination during the inception and fieldwork phases of the evaluation. Without their tireless efforts, the evaluation would have not been possible.

ARM Consulting also extends its appreciation to the project beneficiaries, relevant government authorities, and other project stakeholders for taking the time out of their busy schedules to share inputs and perspectives with the evaluation team.

Last but not least, ARM Consulting is thankful to its team for the exemplary collaborative work demonstrated during the fieldwork. In particular, ARM Consulting is greatly indebted to the female and male field researchers for carrying out interviews with the community members despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2021, Oxfam contracted Afghan Australian Research and Management Consulting (ARM Consulting) to undertake an independent final evaluation of the Building Resilient Livelihoods (BRL) project. Under the Australian Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme (AACRS), the BRL project has been implemented in two separate phases, the foundation phase from January 2015 to May 2018, and the extension phase from June 2018 to June 2021. In the foundation phase, the project worked in 20 villages with 14,987 individuals in the Nilli and the Sharistan districts of Daikundi province. In the extension phase, it has targeted 12,857[1] individuals in 40 villages (20 from the initial phase and 20 new). The project's overall goal is to increase and broaden the income and livelihood assets for households in target communities that will enable them to create a buffer to shocks to their livelihoods system, increase their well-being, and invest in adaptation strategies.

The methodology adopted for the evaluation comprises a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The qualitative data was gathered through a literature review as well as key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions, and field observations with relevant project stakeholders. The evaluation involved 26 interviews with key informants (12 females and 14 males), including the project implementation team, government officials, direct project beneficiaries, private sector actors, community leaders, and others. Besides that, a total of 12 FGDs were administered with the direct beneficiaries to develop an in-depth understanding of various aspects of the project. Half of the FGDs were conducted with women and the other half with men. A total of 91 individuals (47 women; 44 men) attended the FGDs and shared their perspectives regarding the project performance. The quantitative data was collected through questionnaire-based structured interviews with 1,079 (544 women; 535 men) with direct project beneficiaries.

The evaluation indicates the following key findings on the project's performance:

1. **A notable increase in targeted households' income**: The median annual income for almond producing households is 102,500 AFN, approximately 83% higher than their income at the start of the project (56,000 AFN). The data also show the median annual income of 70,500 AFN for dairy-producing households, 69% higher than the beginning of the project (35,550 AFN). Likewise, vulnerable households reported their median annual income as 61,000 AFN, 3.2-folds higher than the income level reported during the baseline (14,800 AFN).

2. **Prevalent poverty in targeted communities:** Considering the poverty line defined as 1.90 USD per day per person[2] by the World Bank (WB), 93% of the surveyed households are living below the poverty line, which aligns with the national poverty level[3]. It is safe to conclude that despite a significant increment in the income level of the target households, they are trapped in a poverty cycle. Although poverty is high in the target areas, the data reveal a reduction in the Coping Strategy Index (CSI) score[4] compared to the start of the project, indicating improved food security among the target groups. The CSI score reported during the evaluation is 5.2, comparatively lower than the baseline value (6.5). More notably, there is a decline in the CSI score for all three types of households, which means that their food security situation has

[1] Based on the project management information system
[2] http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/global-poverty-line-faq
[3] According to the Afghan Ministry of Economy, In July 2020, 90% of Afghans were living under the poverty line. For details, please see: https://tolonews.com/business/ministry-confirms-90-afghans-live-below-poverty-line
[4] CSI was used as a proxy indicator to determine the resilience of the target households when they face shocks. Respondents were presented with nine coping strategies, which they might adopt when faced with shocks. The less severe strategies had a weighted score of 1, followed by severe (1.5) and most severe (2). Based on this weighted approach, the maximum possible CSI score for the most severe food-insecure household was 14. A higher CSI score reflects higher food insecurity and vice versa.

improved because of the project. The CSI score for almond-producing households stands at 3.6, a notable decline from the baseline (6.1), while the CSI score for dairy-producing households is 5.37, somewhat reduced compared to the start of the project (6.5). Similarly, the CSI score for vulnerable households is reportedly 6.57, lower than the baseline (6.9).

3. **Increased household spending on health and education:** The target households tend to spend 3,833 AFN per month on health and education, a 60% increase over the spending level at the start of the project (2,400 AFN). The almond-producing households spend the highest amount of 4,500 AFN per month on health and education, followed by dairy-producing households and vulnerable households with 4,000 AFN and 3,000 AFN, respectively. The increased spending on health is a reflection of people becoming more health conscious rather than of worsening health conditions in the target areas.

4. **Significant increase in household assets[5]:** The median household asset value for the target households is 614,766 AFN, indicating a 1.56-fold increase in the asset value compared to the start of the project in 2015 (239,350 AFN). The largest increment in asset value has been observed among the vulnerable households (eight-fold), followed by almond (double) and dairy producing households (double). Although the data suggest a significant increase in assets value for vulnerable households, it is still lower than the asset value for almond and dairy-producing households.

5. **Improved food security:** The respondents were asked, on average, how many days in a month they eat less than three meals per day. Approximately three-quarters (74%) of the respondents indicated that they had not experienced a time when they ate less than three meals per day; the remaining 26% reported that they did come across such a situation. The evaluation also shows that respondents from almond producing households are more food secure than the dairy-producing households and vulnerable households. About 78% of respondents from almond-producing households did not experience a situation where they had to eat less than three meals a day, higher than the dairy-producing (71%) and vulnerable households (68%).

6. **Social enterprises characterized by small-scale production, limited access to main markets, high packaging cost, and concerns regarding their future ownership:** The enterprises are currently producing at a small scale, and they have yet to reach their full potential. For dairy enterprises, the key challenge is the low supply of milk by the community members. A key challenge facing the enterprises is the long distance to major markets at the provincial and national levels, and a highly limited infrastructure, especially roads in the province. Additionally, the enterprise members are concerned about the future ownership of the enterprises. The government officials would like the enterprises to be handed over to the government once Oxfam winds up its operations in Daikundi province. The dairy-producing enterprises also indicated that the high cost of packaging adversely impacted their profit margins. Currently, the enterprises procure readymade packages and the printed brand names from Kabul, which are costly. It is worth stating that Oxfam has connected the enterprises with the Kabul-based packaging suppliers and the former can place orders without going to Kabul.

7. **Enhanced understanding of the market actors**: An absolute majority (96%) of the respondents in the almond value chain fully or partially agreed that they possessed an improved understanding of the provincial market for almonds. While regarding the national market, more than three-fourths of the respondents (78%) fully or partially agree with an enhanced

[5] Household assets referred to anything that has monetary value, which means the households can sell it and convert it to cash. Household assets include land, livestock, poultry, trees, wood, carpet, mobile phones, transportation means, and others.

understanding of the key actors. 78% of the dairy producers indicated full or partial agreement regarding their increased understanding of the provincial market actors. However, 84% of the dairy producers stated disagreement regarding an increase in their understanding of the national market actors. This is understandable given that the project's market linkage efforts in the dairy value chain were largely confined to Daikundi province rather than at the national level.

8. **Limited market access of almond producers despite an enhanced understanding of market actors:** Most of the households (60%) sold almond locally within the province, followed by 15% who sold it to the social enterprise, and 14% who sold or traded it with a villager. Approximately 11% indicated that they sold it to a merchant or trader outside the province. Comparing to the start of the project (one percent), more households (15%) tend to sell their almond produce to the enterprises, which is an accomplishment for the project. Nonetheless, most of the almond producers despite being linked to the enterprises have not sold to them. This is mainly because the enterprises are operating at a small scale and yet to become fully functional.

9. **Improved market access of dairy producers:** Compared to the almond value chain, there are notable changes in the sale methods of dairy products in the target areas. Two-thirds of the surveyed dairy producers stated that they sold milk to the social enterprises, followed by 19% who consumed it within the household and 11% who sold or traded within the village. The residual four percent indicated that they sold it at the local market within the province, while nobody reported selling it in markets outside the province. The fact that most of the target households sell milk to the enterprise is attributable to the fact that the dairy enterprises are functional, even though on a small scale. This is a key contribution of the BRL project to enhance their return from sales of dairy products. It is challenging to compare the current sales methods for dairy products with the beginning of the project because no numerical data is available.

10. **Increased engagement of women in almond and dairy value chains:** The mean household task index score[6] for almond households stands at 3.97, comparatively higher than the 2.9 reported at the start of the project (baseline 2015). In percentage terms, it is a 36% increase over the baseline index score. A higher index score reflects the increased engagement of women in the almond value chain. The mean household task index score[7] for dairy producing households is 7.3 out of nine. It is a notable improvement (55%) over the index score documented in the 2015 baseline (4.7).

11. **Amplified women's skills and income:** Approximately two-thirds (62%) of the respondents fully agree that women have more skills now than before the project, followed by 35% somewhat agreeing and four percent disagreeing. The data further exhibit that more than half of the respondents (54%) fully agree that women have more income now than before the project, followed by 34% indicating partial agreement. The residual 12% of the respondents demonstrated disagreement that women have more income because of the project.

[6] The almond producing household task index involves the participation of women in six specific tasks; (i) pruning, (ii) picking, (iii) sorting and grading, (iv) selling, and (v) buying almonds, and (vi) selling almond trees/saplings. The evaluation used an un-weighted approach to developing the index, involving one score per task performed by women in a household. A higher index score reflects increased engagement of women in the almond value chain.

[7] The dairy-producing household task index measures women's participation in the dairy value chain. The index consisted of nine tasks; (i) taking livestock to pasture, (ii) livestock feeding, (iii) milking, (iv) cleaning the barn, (v) selling milk, (vi) selling livestock, (vii) buying livestock, (viii) purchasing medical treatment and vaccination for livestock, and (ix) processing the milk into other dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, butter, etc.

12. **Enhanced women's social empowerment and participation**: The data suggest that more than half of the respondents fully agree (58%) and 38% somewhat agree that women have increased mobility and respect in families than before the project, while just four percent disagree. Similarly, 59% fully agreed, while 37% partially agreed that women have more role in decision-making within the household before the project, while five percent disagree. Regarding the increase in women's role in community level decision-making, 45% each exhibited full and partial agreement, while the residual 10% disagree. Additionally, 43% fully and 45% somewhat agree that women are more accepted by the community as leaders than before the project. The data further show that 53% of the respondents fully agree that women redistribute more household chores with other male household members than before the project, followed by somewhat agree and disagree with 31% and 16%, respectively. It is worth stating that the improved social empowerment and participation of women is directly attributable to Oxfam's work with community members in the area of women's social and economic empowerment. More specifically, the results are caused by the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training as well as capacity development of women in leadership, business development, marketing, advocacy, skill development, women's rights, and others. Besides that, social enterprises are managed and operated by women. This has directly contributed to positively shaping the attitudes of the community members towards women's social and economic participation.

13. **Improved social and economic empowerment for people with disabilities**: Around half (47%) of the respondents fully and 44% partially agree that people with disabilities have more skills to earn an income than before the project, while the residual nine percent exhibited disagreement. Similarly, 46% of the respondents reported full agreement, followed by somewhat agreement (45%) and disagreement (nine percent) with the statement that people with disabilities have more income than before the project. In terms of increase in mobility and respect of people with disabilities within the household, 47% of the respondents expressed somewhat agreement, 43% full agreement while the residual 10% stated that there is no change in the people with disabilities' mobility and respect within the families. Furthermore, when asked whether people with disabilities have more role in decision-making within the household than before the project, 41% expressed full agreement, followed by somewhat agreement with 49%. Just 10% of the respondents stated disagreement. Similarly, 39% of the respondents fully agree that people with disabilities' role in community level decision-making has improved, followed by half (50%) with somewhat agreement and 11% with disagreement. Furthermore, 35% of the respondents fully agree that people with disabilities are more accepted by the community as leaders than before the project, while those with somewhat agreement and disagreement stand at 52% and 13%, respectively. The socio-economic improvement in the lives of people with disabilities is attributable to the disability inclusion training provided by the project to the community members as well as the direct livelihood support such as training and in-kind contribution, to people with disabilities.

14. **Noteworthy increase in almond production:** The median almond production is 212 kilograms per Jerib, higher than the production at the start of the project (100 kilograms). This is a 1.12-fold increase in almond production per a Jerib of land. While there is a substantial increase in the almond yield compared to the baseline, it is still lower than the optimal production level (330 kilograms per Jerib). The data indicate that out of the 212 kilograms per Jerib produced, 68% of it is sold in the marketplace, which equals 145 kilograms per Jerib. The average price of a kilogram of almond is reportedly 907 AFN. The residual 32% of the almonds are consumed domestically or given as a charity to other people.

15. **Extensive replication of terracing and trenching method**: Oxfam rehabilitated 21.6 hectares of land in the foundation phase, and in the extension phase, it rehabilitated a further 22 hectares of land in the target communities. At the start of the project, the community members were suspicious about the effectiveness of the terracing and trenching method to rehabilitate hillside land, which was previously abandoned and regarded unfit for cultivation. The evaluation team through field observation and consultations with farmers gathered data on the amount of land rehabilitated through the terracing and trenching method in 10 target communities. On average, approximately 3.8 hectares of land 3 is rehabilitated in each of the 10 target villages by farmers through the replication of the terracing and trenching method.

16. **Considerable increase in dairy production:** The median weekly litres of milk produced by a goat is reported at 5.25 litres, while for sheep and cows, the production levels stand at 3.5 and 10.4 litres, respectively. A comparison with the baseline shows a significant increase in milk production. At the start of the project, the median weekly litres of milk produced by a goat was 1.75, substantially lower than right now. Similarly, the 2015 baseline indicates that a sheep on average produced 1 litre of milk in a week, more than two-fold lower than the milk production reported by the final evaluation. Furthermore, the median weekly milk production for cow stands at 10.4 litres, almost three-fold higher than the baseline value. The increase in milk production is associated with the distribution of improved goat varieties, livestock training, and improved access to livestock vaccination services. Out of all the milk produced in a household, 51% is consumed domestically while 49% is sold at an average price of 24.5 AFN per litre.

17. **Irrigation projects characterized by their high impact and extensive community participation:** The irrigation projects remain highly popular among the target groups. They have become more relevant this year when the province has experienced low precipitation, and there is a high likelihood of drought. One of the key features of these projects is their participatory approach. The communities provided labor – and in certain cases, even resources – to implement the projects efficiently. Besides that, it has resulted in a high degree of sense of ownership among the communities about the irrigation projects. The respondents further reported that the implementation of the irrigation projects has also contributed to a decline in the local water-related conflicts.

18. **Flood protection measures have resulted in remarkable impact:** On average, each flood protection project has protected 23.4 Jerib with an estimated worth of 15,290,909 AFN (197,302.05 USD) and annual recurrent revenue of 1,647,727 AFN (21,261 USD). It is worth highlighting that the stated data has been gathered based on consultation with farmers whose land was protected by the flood mitigation projects. The evaluation concludes that the flood protection projects are of immense economic value, as they directly contribute to the food security and livelihood of the target communities.

19. **Greenhouses generated a mixed result:** About two-thirds (62%) of the respondents who had received the greenhouses were using them for vegetable production, while the remaining 38% indicated that they no longer used them/those. The project stakeholder stated that the greenhouses distributed by the project were small and did not produce adequate yield compared to the required efforts. That said, the evaluation notes that a key purpose of the greenhouse distribution was also to build the capacity of women on how to grow different types of vegetables and to diversify and improve their food intake within the households.

20. **Vocational skills remain highly popular among the target groups**: Around two-thirds (62%) of the graduates reported high satisfaction from the training, followed by somewhat satisfaction

and dissatisfaction with 30% and eight percent, respectively. The respondents were also asked how did the vocational skill training assisted them with their living standards. 13% stated that the training assisted them in finding employment in the marketplace, while 23% reported started their own businesses because of the skills they gained during the training and the toolkits provided to them. Just three percent stated that they established their businesses upon graduating from the training and create jobs for other people. The training has not helped 10% of the respondents at all in terms of improving their livelihood. But most importantly, 43% indicated improvement in their skills, but they were not able to find employment.

The evaluation also examined and rated the project under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Development Assistance Criteria (DAC) criteria, namely relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, appropriateness, and inclusion[8]. On relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness, and inclusion, the evaluation rated the performance of the project as **Satisfactory**[9], while on Sustainability, it is assessed as **Somewhat Satisfactory**[10]. The project has not received any **unsatisfactory**[11] ratings on any of the criteria.

In terms of implementation challenges, the project was affected by delays in the supply of machinery to enterprises, high government staff turnover, the remote location of Daikundi province, substandard road infrastructure, low precipitation and a likely drought, low literacy of the target groups, and COVID 19 restrictions. Having said that, the evaluation concludes that the BRL project remains highly relevant to the needs of the people in Daikundi province. The project has made notable progress towards its intended goal, and the targets set in the M&E plans are accomplished. The evaluation concludes that the project has performed relatively better under outcome II as there is a notable increase in dairy and almond production. The project performance under outcome III has also generated tangible results as there is a notable increase in the income of the vulnerable households, targeted under the stated outcome. The project has performed relatively poorly under outcome I compared to other outcomes due to a marginal increase in the producers' access to market and social enterprises yet to become fully functioning business entities.

Based on consultation with a wide range of project stakeholders, the study presents the following recommendations to improve programmatic interventions in the target areas.

1. The provincial government, CDCs, and farmers strongly demanded a continuation of a similar project in the future. Daikundi is one of the less developed provinces in the country which is an extreme disadvantage due to its remote and hard-to-access location, combined with almost non-existing infrastructure. Thus, poverty and unemployment remain prevalent in the province.

2. If a similar project is implemented in the province, it is highly suggested to approach new communities and targets. This will be key to contributing to a broad-based development.

3. There is a strong demand for infrastructure projects in the target areas, especially flood mitigation and water irrigation projects. Given the mountainous geography of the province, there are plenty of communities whose food security and livelihood are at risk due to being prone to flooding. Similarly, the province is vulnerable to droughts which makes the management of the scarce water highly vital.

[8] The OECD/DAC criteria consisting of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability, have been used widely by development agencies for evaluating development projects since 1991.
http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm
[9] An area where the quantum of findings is of low substantiality and may not endanger the activities and gains of the project at risk.
[10] An area where the quantum of findings is substantial enough to partially put the project's activities and gains at risk.
[11] An area where the quantum of findings is substantial enough to put the project's activities and gains at considerable risk.

4. To facilitate the presence of enterprises in the main provincial market (Nilli), women enterprises need the support of the project to construct outlets. The government has provided the land on a complimentary basis. These representative sales outlets will help the enterprises to connect better with the market actors and contribute to their enhanced sales revenue and profitability.

5. It is recommended to consider larger greenhouses for commercial vegetable production in areas closer to the district and provincial markets.

6. Saffron is a high-yield crop and has the potential to generate a considerable income for the target households. Nonetheless, the saffron value chain remains underdeveloped in the province, despite high demand for saffron in national and international markets. The development actors should extensively engage in all stages of the saffron value chain.

7. At the scheme level, DFAT should include an M&E partner to work with the implementing agencies to perform standardized monitoring and evaluation functions. This will help in generating unified reports about the performance of the different NGO partners. The M&E partner could also play the role of third-party monitoring to gather credible and valid data regarding the scheme performance.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the project background and the scope of the final evaluation.

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Australian Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme (AACRS) is a rural development program of the Australian government. The scheme commenced in 2014 with the overall goal to improve the livelihoods and resilience of rural communities in Afghanistan. The AACRS works in partnership with the Australian Department of Foreign Aid and Trade (DFAT) and the Government of Afghanistan. The NGO partners involved in the scheme are Oxfam, ActionAid Afghanistan (AAA), Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), and World Vision. Care International was also engaged but only in the initial Phase. The Afghanistan Centre for Excellence (ACE) plays the role of the scheme coordinator in the AACRS.

BRL has been implemented in two separate phases, the foundation phase from January 2015 to May 2018, and the extension phase from June 2018 to June 2021. In the foundation phase, the project worked in 20 villages with 14,987 individuals in the Nilli and the Sharistan districts of Daikundi province. In the extension phase, it has targeted 12,857[12] individuals in 40 villages (20 from the initial phase and 20 new). The project's overall goal is to increase and broaden the income and livelihood assets for households in target communities that will enable them to create a buffer to shocks to their livelihoods system, increase their well-being, and invest in adaptation strategies. The project contributes to the stated goal through the following specific objectives and intermediate outcomes.

Specific Objective I: To increase household income from sales of almonds and dairy products;

- **Intermediate Outcome 1.1:** Producers are using their increased knowledge and understanding of market systems to improve their access to, and influence in markets;
- **Intermediate Outcome 1.2:** The two established women's dairy and two almond processing enterprises are linked, trained, and profitably selling their products;

Specific Objective II: To increase reliability, volume, and quality of production of almonds, dairy, and other agricultural products;

- **Intermediate Outcome 2.1:** 80% of targeted almond and dairy producers are applying new technologies, knowledge, and skills to their agricultural practices so that there is at least a 30% reduction in the incidence of disease in almond trees in project areas, and a 50% increase in the number of dairy livestock vaccinated;
- **Intermediate Outcome 2.2**: 50 hectares[13] of almond orchards rehabilitated and can be sustainably maintained;
- **Intermediate Outcome 2.3:** All almond producers in target communities and surrounds have access to high-yield and drought-tolerant almond saplings;
- **Intermediate Outcome 2.4**: 100% of targeted almond and dairy producers have access to technical support services;
- **Intermediate Outcome 2.5**: 50% of targeted livestock producers have access to sufficient fodder to maintain their goat/sheep herds;
- **Intermediate Outcome 2.6**: 80% of targeted almond producers are practicing better water management techniques;

[12] Based on the project management information system
[13] 20 hectares in phase I and 30 hectares in phase II

- **Intermediate Outcome 2.7**: Vulnerability of crops to floods is reduced in most flood-prone areas in target villages;
- **Intermediate Outcome 2.8:** 30% farmers practicing diversified agriculture;
- **Intermediate Outcome 2.9:** Increased local agricultural products in the market, particularly during the winter season;

Specific Objective III: To increase income generation potential and adaptation options for the poorest and most vulnerable households;

- **Intermediate Outcome 3.1:** Household income increased by 50% as a result of greenhouse vegetable production;
- **Intermediate Outcome 3.2**: Dairy production of 550 households[14] increased because of goat distribution;
- **Intermediate Outcome 3.3**: 150 poorest[15] have gained permanent employment;

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the BRL project has accomplished or made progress against its intended goal and objectives, as stated in the monitoring and evaluation framework, theory of change, and scheme level framework. The evaluation also documented best practices, lessons learned, and challenges encountered during the project implementation. More specifically, the evaluation was undertaken to accomplish the following objectives:

- Assess the overall performance of the BRL project to understand its potential impact, sustainability, and achievements against the project objectives, strengths, challenges, and lessons learned;
- Assess the progress against the intermediate outcomes of the AACRS program logic;
- Capture any unintended outcomes or significant changes;
- Apply a methodology that captures behavioural changes, especially women's economic empowerment, re-distribution of caregiving in households, and women's leadership as well as changes in key decision-makers;
- Assess how the extension phase has added value to the achievements in the foundation phase and particularly how it has strengthened both sustainability and resilience amongst communities, and;
- Using the evidence collected, analyse and comment on the project's impact against the overall principles of AACRS (resilience, women's empowerment, inclusive decision-making, and partnership).

The evaluation was administered based on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and appropriateness. More specifically, the evaluation has focused on the following key evaluation questions:

1. **Effectiveness**
   - To what extent were the results (impact, outcomes, and outputs) achieved?
   - To what extent did the project results contribute to AACRS outcomes for improving resilience, partnership, inclusiveness and women's economic empowerment, and investment in adaptation strategies?

[14] 400 in phase I and 150 in Phase II
[15] 100 in phase I and 50 in phase II

- To what extent has the project put in place measures to minimize the negative effects of frequent natural disasters, increasing environmental degradation, decades of conflict, and contribute to security on resilience, food security, and livelihoods/increase the economy of vulnerable groups?
- To what extent has the project contributed to addressing insufficient production of food crops, livestock production, and insufficient water sources for irrigation, job creation, low household income, and low wage earnings?
- What has been the impact of the project on women and girls, women-headed households, and/or women leaders?
- How has the project approach to partnership (public, private, government) and collaboration contributed to the effectiveness of the activities?
- What are the future intervention strategies and issues?

2. Relevance

- To what extent was the project targeted at the most relevant audiences?
- To what extent was the project design and implementation participatory?

3. Appropriateness

- Were project activities as per the project design appropriate to the cultural and economic realities in the selected villages?
- To what extent did project activities and implementation strategies contribute to project results and objectives?
- Were project activities and implementation strategies coordinated with efforts from other actors on the ground?

4. Efficiency

- To what extent was the project delivered on time, and in a cost-effective manner?
- Were there other alternatives that could deliver the same activities more efficiently?
- Was the implementation of activities in line with the seasonal calendars?
- To what extent did the Project's M&E mechanism contribute to meeting project results?
- What was the unit cost of delivering the project per result?
- How were research and learning integrated into the project?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the project implementation process?
- Did project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions? Are there more efficient ways and means of delivering more and better results (outputs and outcomes) with the available inputs?

5. Inclusion

- To what extent did the project considered the needs of women, people with disabilities, vulnerable households, and other marginalized demographics in the target areas?
- What measures did the project design and implement to promote inclusiveness?

6. Sustainability

- To what extent are the project outcomes likely to be sustained after completion of all project activities?
- What changes has the project contributed to regarding women's economic empowerment, including changes in attitudes and behaviours amongst men and women at the household level and the community level? How sustainable are these changes?
- What are the key factors that will require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes?

- Has the project the potential to be up-scaled and/or replicated? Why? Which component(s) of the project would offer the best opportunity for replication or upscale?
- How were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level (including contributing factors and constraints)?

The evaluation has also capture data on the scheme level indicators, which are focused on resilience, women empowerment, inclusive decision-making, and partnerships. On top of that, unintended positive and negative effects of the project were assessed, and recommendations are provided to inform the design and implementation modalities of similar interventions in the future.

The evaluation has tried to capture the cumulative outcomes of the project at the end of the extension phase and make comparisons with the baseline which was concluded in late 2015. The evaluation exercise was undertaken in the Nilli and Sharistan districts of Daikundi province where the project has implemented interventions.

CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This section presents the evaluation framework, the data collection tools, the sampling strategy, and the ethical considerations that the evaluation team has adhered to in the exercise.

2.1 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

During the inception phase, ARM Consulting developed a detailed evaluation framework, setting out the scope of the evaluation. The framework has provided the foundation for the development of the evaluation tools. The framework focused on the following aspects of the project. **Please refer to Annex II for the detailed evaluation framework.**

1. Project relevance;
2. Almond value chain;
3. Dairy value chain;
4. Vulnerable households;
5. Project sustainability, and;
6. Knowledge management and M&E system.

2.2 EVALUATION TOOLS

The evaluation methodology comprises a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection tools including literature review, structured interviews (survey), KIIs, and FGDs with the project implementation team, relevant government officials, and community members.

Literature Review

To comprehend the project, its activities, and its operational mechanism(s), the evaluation team undertook an extensive review of related literature. The documents that were studied in the literature review stage included:

- Project proposal;
- Project M&E framework;
- AACRS indicators;
- Project's theory of change (ToC);
- Progress reports;
- Case studies;
- Success stories;
- Learning assessments;
- Baseline reports;
- Mid-term evaluation report;
- Final evaluation report (phase I)
- Mid-term report (AACRS level), and;
- Statistics from the project's Management Information System (MIS);

The review process helped the evaluation team deepen its understanding of the project, ascertain the actual scope of the evaluation, and identify information gaps that needed to be filled, as well as any other areas that need particular attention during data collection. The literature review also assisted the consultants in mapping national and sub-national levels project stakeholders that needed to be included in the consultation process.

Key Informant Interviews

The baseline survey involved 26 interviews with key informants (14 male; 12 female), including project team members, relevant government authorities, and community members. **Please refer to Annex III for the list of key informants.**

All interviews were conducted with the guidance of pre-constructed KII protocols informed by the review of the project documents and secondary literature. The interview guide consisted of 72 open-ended questions, structured around 10 sections. The questions were focused on the various aspects of three key outcomes of the project as well as on the DAC criteria. Besides that, the KII guide included questions on the M&E system aimed at understanding the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation function during the project implementation.

Focus Group Discussions

A total of 12 FGDs were administered with the direct beneficiaries to develop an in-depth understanding of various aspects of the project. Half of the FGDs were conducted with women and the other half with men. A total of 91 individuals (47 women; 44 men) attended the FGDs and shared their perspectives regarding the project performance. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample participants for these discussions. The FGDs were used for homogenous groups where interaction between participants had the potential to enhance the depth of data collected. The evaluation team explored common and divergent views on particular issues and discussed improvement opportunities. The FGDs were facilitated by a team of two experts, taking help from a protocol of questions on a wide range of issues relating to the project.

Table 1: Breakdown of the FGD by the target population

No	Target group	Number of FGDs	Village and District
1.	Men (ages 25 and older) who are direct project beneficiaries	2	Payin Bagh Lazir (Nilli) and Chaprasak Dasht-e-Ulya (Sharistan)
2.	Men (ages 25 and older) who are indirect beneficiaries	1	
3.	Male youth (ages 16-24) who are direct project beneficiaries	2	Chardiar-e-Dasht (Nilli) and Helal Ghaf (Sharistan)
4.	Male youth (ages 16-24) who are indirect beneficiaries	1	
5.	Women (ages 25 and older) who are direct project beneficiaries	2	Petab (Nilli) and Helal Ghaf (Sharistan)
6.	Women (ages 25 and older) who are indirect beneficiaries	1	
7.	Female youth (ages 16-24) who are direct project beneficiaries	2	
8.	Female youth (ages 16-24) who are indirect beneficiaries	1	
Total		**12**	

Household Structured Interviews

Quantitative data was exclusively gathered through face-to-face structured interviews with project beneficiaries, using survey questionnaires. The evaluation primarily utilized a multi-stage random sampling technique for household surveys. Samples were drawn through the following formula where n is the desired sample size, z is the z-value yielding the desired degree of confidence; p is the estimate of the population proportion, and e is the absolute allowable size of the error.

$$n = z^2 (1-p)\, p/e^2$$

The sample size was determined in light of four parameters, a confidence level of **95%**, a margin of error of **three percent**, response distribution of **50%**, and the total number of beneficiaries **(27,844[16])**. Considering these, the proposed sample size was calculated at **1,028** individuals. The sample size was proportionately distributed across all respondents' categories using a stratified proportionate sampling method. Overall, 1,097 households were consulted during the evaluation. However, 19 interviews were dropped during the data cleaning phase because of quality concerns. Hence, the quantitative data analysis presented in this report is based on structured interviews with 1,079 households.

In terms of sex, it was planned to consult 501 female representatives of households and 527 male representatives. The evaluation team consulted 1,079 individuals through structured household interviews, 544 women and 535 men. The evaluation team interviewed more women than men because the BRL project is substantially focused on women's social and economic empowerment. As a result, 51 structured interviews were conducted higher than the planned sample size.

Table 2: Breakdown of the Sample Size by Sex for Household Survey

No	Sex	Population Phase I	Population Phase II	Aggregate Population	Sample Weight	Planned Sample Size	Actual Sample Size	Change
1.	Female	7,044	6,520	13,564	0.49	501	544	43
2.	Male	7,943	6,337	14,280	0.51	527	535	8
Total		**14,987**	**12,857**	**27,844**	**1**	**1,028**	**1,079**	**51**

Given that the project beneficiaries could be classified into three categories (almond-producing households, dairy-producing households, and vulnerable households), the sample size was further divided accordingly. Out of the 1,079 structured interviews, 569 were administered with almond-producing households (53% of all interviews), followed by dairy-producing households and vulnerable households with 342 (32%), and 168 interviews (15%), respectively.

In terms of geographical coverage, the data collection was conducted in 33 of the 40 villages targeted by the project, equivalent to 82.5% of all the target villages. Out of the 33 villages, 17 were targeted by the project for both the foundation and the extension phases, while the remaining 16 villages were only targeted in the extension phase.

2.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation team adhered to the following ethical principles of research.

- **Beneficence**: The principle of beneficence expresses an obligation to do good. To uphold this principle, ARM Consulting clearly articulated the likely benefits of the evaluation (and for whom) to the respondents as well as conducted a risk assessment of participating in the evaluation.

- **Non-malfeasance/ Do no Harm**: This principle implies that both researchers and respondents should not be put at risk of harm, either intentionally or unintentionally. ARM Consulting fully utilized the resources at its disposal to evaluate with minimal risk. This principle was upheld by fully adhering to ethical considerations and conducting a comprehensive risk assessment along with a mitigation plan. Besides that, the researchers received mandatory training on sensitive interviewing approaches to avoid the traumatization of the respondents and minimize the risks

[16] 14,987 (Phase I) and 12,857 (Phase II)

to the extent possible. Given the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, the evaluation team strictly adhered to the guidelines of the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and World Health Organizations (WHO) to uphold the principle of Do No Harm.

- **Respect for autonomy**: The respondents had the right to make free decisions about participation in the evaluation consistent with their values and preferences. To respect the respondents' autonomy, they were fully informed of the purpose and contents of the interviews and their consent was sought before proceeding. The respondents were assured of their right to refuse to answer all or any specific questions as well as to stop participating at any time if they want to do so without any repercussion. The informed consent of the respondents was received before conducting the interview.

- **Inclusiveness**: The evaluation adopted an inclusive and participatory approach involving consultation with women, men, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. The key project stakeholders were identified during the inception phase, and the evaluation team made a deliberate effort to reach out to all of them to make the exercise inclusive and participatory.

- **Voluntary participation**: The participation of researchers and respondents was voluntary, and nobody was forced in any way whatsoever to take part in the evaluation. The respondents provided informed consent and had the authority to stop the interview or decline to answer a particular question without any repercussions.

- **Respectfulness**: ARM Consulting fully respected the respondents' time and interviewed at a time that they prefer. The enumerators were highly trained to behave in a culturally sensitive manner throughout the different phases of the evaluation. An example of this was using a gender-matching approach to conduct interviews to respect the socio-cultural context of Afghanistan.

- **Privacy:** The interviews were conducted in a manner sensitive to the comfort of respondents and their right to privacy was fully respected.

- **Confidentiality**: The respondents were assured of confidentiality. Also, all collected information was kept strictly confidential and used only for Oxfam purposes. ARM Consulting is strongly committed that all original documents and data collected during the evaluation will not be used or reproduced in any manner without the prior written approval of Oxfam. The evaluation team also adhered to the safeguarding principle by not putting the researchers and respondents at any undue harm as well as the respondents were informed of their entitlement to refuse/withdraw at any stage of the interview.

CHAPTER THREE: KEY FINDINGS

This chapter presents the key findings derived based on extensive consultation with project stakeholders. The chapter is divided into eight sections.

- The first section contains respondents' demographic details about sex, age, disability, education, and others.
- The second section outlines the household income and consumption characteristics.
- The third section covers the household assets.
- The fourth section describes the livelihood coping strategies that the target households use in case of crisis or shocks to their livelihood system.
- The fifth section examines the project performance against its outcome I, which is about increasing the household income from sales of almond and dairy products.
- The sixth section contains the detail about the project performance under outcome II on promoting the reliability, volume, and quality of almond and dairy products.
- The seventh section describes data regarding outcome III of the project.
- The eighth and final section measures the project performance against the DAC evaluation criteria.

3.1 SURVEY RESPONDENTS PROFILING

This section presents the sex, age, disability, education, and employment profiles of the respondents. The section also contains details about the respondents' household size and composition by sex and age.

3.1.1 Sex and Age Profiles

The evaluation involved structured face-to-face interviews with 1,079 women and men in 33 target communities. The respondents comprised 50% women (544) and 50% men (535). Male respondents were mainly engaged in the almond value chain (7% women; 93% men) while female respondents were either in the dairy value chain (98% women; 2% men) or in interventions for vulnerable households (100% women). The sample size ratio (50/50) is in line with the total number of women and men that have directly benefited from the project. According to the project's Management Information System (MIS), the project targeted 13,564 females (49%) and 14,280 (51%) males. To maintain consistency and to achieve a statistically representative sample, the survey adopted the same ratio, in accordance with the project's approach to managing male and female beneficiaries. It is pertinent to mention that the evaluation team deliberately interviewed more women than men because the project heavily focused on women's empowerment.

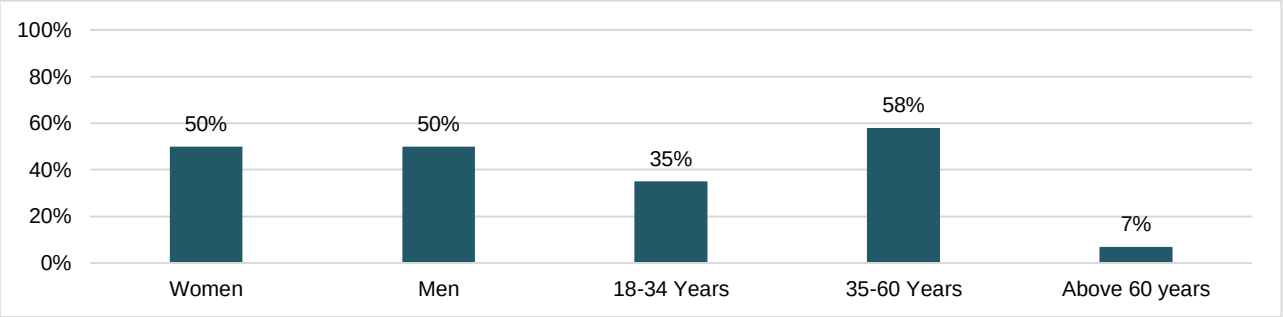

Figure 1: Respondents by Sex, Disability, and Age

Figure 1 also shows respondents' age profiles. One-third (35%) of the respondents are youth (18 to 35 years) based on the Afghanistan National Youth Policy[17]. More than half of the respondents are aged 35 to 60 years, while the residual seven percent are above 60 years. No respondent below the age of 18 years was engaged in the survey because the evaluation aimed at consulting the adult household members. The data further demonstrate that the mean age of the survey respondents is 40.3 years, while the median age stands at 40 years. The youngest respondents were 18 years old, and the oldest respondents were 80 years old.

3.1.2 Disability Profile

In line with Oxfam's policy on disability inclusion, the evaluation team made an informed attempt to consult a maximum possible number of people with disabilities. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD), people with disabilities are people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder full and effective participation of the individual with others on an equal basis[18]. Based on the planned sample size, the evaluation team was required to sample 32 people with disabilities from 1,028 individuals, equivalent to three percent. However, the evaluation consulted 87 people with disabilities making them eight percent of the total sample size.

Table 3: Breakdown of the Sample Size by Disability for Household Survey

No	Disability	Population Phase I	Population Phase II	Aggregate Population	Sample Weight	Planned Sample Size	Actual Sample Size
1.	Person with Disability	450	425	875	0.03	32	87
2.	Person without Disability	14,537	12,432	26,969	0.97	996	992
Total		**14,987**	**12,857**	**27,844**	**1.00**	**1,028**	**1,079**

The respondents were asked whether any member of their households qualified as a person with a disability. About one-quarter (25%) of the respondents indicated that there was a person(s) with disabilities in their households, while three-quarters reported negative. The mean female household members with a disability stand at 0.15, while for males, it is 0.23. Overall, the mean household members with a disability are 0.37. According to the 2019 Model Disability Survey of Afghanistan (The Asia Foundation [TAF], 2019), 80% of adults in the country have some form of impairments (24.6% mild, 40.4% moderate, and 13.9% severe)[19]. The evaluation acknowledges Oxfam's efforts for reaching out to at least a quarter of the households with a person with disabilities, considering that they remain one of the most vulnerable demographics in Afghanistan.

3.1.3 Education Profile

More than half of the respondents (56%) have no education, while two percent have been home-schooled/tutored instead of attending a formal education system. Of the literate respondents, 10% have primary level education (grade 1-6), seven percent have secondary education (grade 7-9), and 17% have high school education (grade 10-12); just three percent have grade 14 education, and four percent possess university-level education. In terms of sex, the education level of women is comparatively lower than men. For instance, more women (69%) have no formal education than men (56%). More men have completed primary (13%), secondary (nine percent), and high school education (22%) than women with eight percent, six percent, and 13%, respectively. Similarly, more men have grade 14 (four percent) or university (seven percent) education than women, of whom two percent

[17] http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/afg159770.pdf
[18] https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/disability-inclusion/background/definition-of-disability/
[19] https://asiafoundation.org/2020/05/13/disability-survey-is-afghanistans-first-in-15-years/

have grade 14 education, and one percent possess a university degree. The relatively better education profile of the male respondent reflects the national statistics regarding the education level of women and men at the national level: according to UNESCO, men's literacy rate in Afghanistan is higher (55%) than that of women (30%)[20].

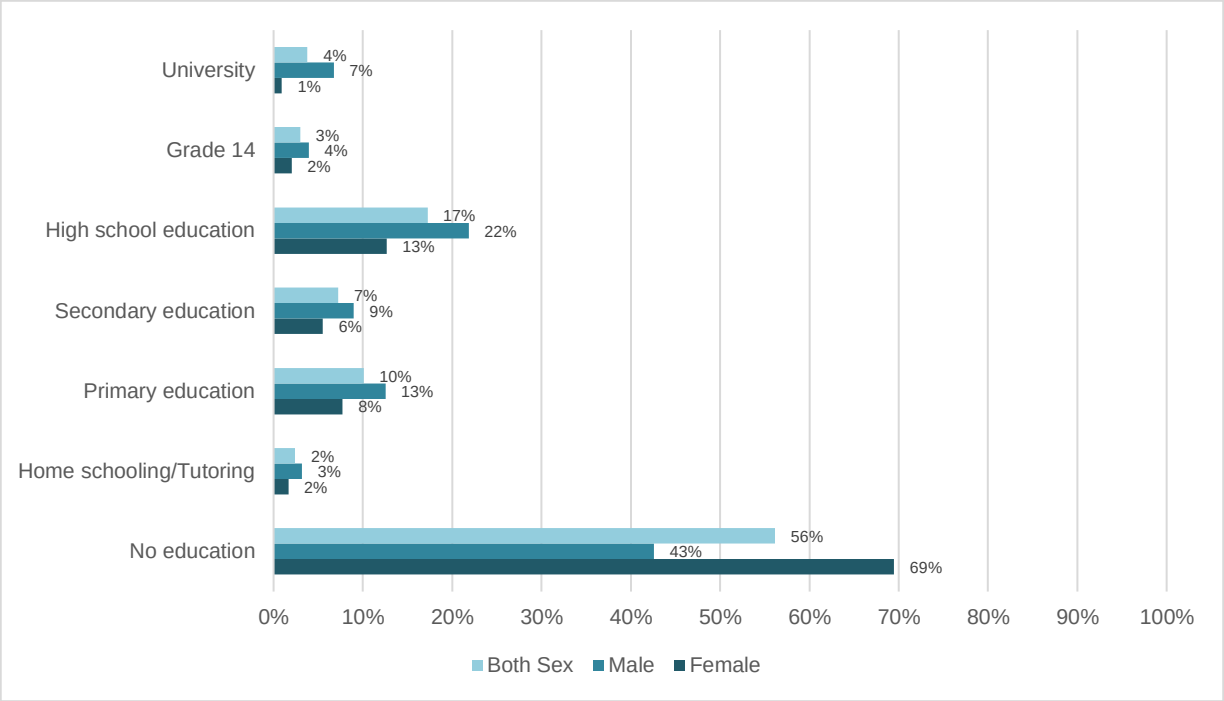

Figure 2: Education Level of the Respondents

One could say that Oxfam has implemented the BRL project in a context where more than half of the target groups did not have formal education. The low education level of the target groups has proven challenging as it evidently adversely affected the results of the project. For instance, the female social enterprise members struggle to effectively promote their products and run the enterprises as business entities, owing mainly to low education.

3.1.4 Household Composition

The mean household size in the surveyed areas stands at 5.88 persons while the median is six, which is lower than the national household mean of 7.7.[21] This is attributable to the fact that adolescents and youth generally leave Daikundi to more thriving urban centres like Kabul city or emigrate to access better educational and economic opportunities.

The average number of women in the surveyed households is 2.97, while the average number of male members is 2.91 persons. The median shows the female and male members as equal, each three per household.

The composition of the surveyed households resembles the national picture. As per the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), Afghanistan's population is 32.9 million, 51% men and

[20] https://uil.unesco.org/interview-literacy-rate-afghanistan-increased-43-cent
[21] https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-living-conditions-survey-2016-17

49% women[22]. The data further states that on average, there are 0.92 individuals in households below the age of five years, while the mean number of children between 5 and 18 years stands at 1.97. In addition, the average number of adults (those above the age of 18 years) is 2.99. On the other hand, the median number of children below the age of five years stands at one, while those between 5-18 years and adults are two and three, respectively. The target households' composition is in line with the national demographic structure of Afghanistan, as about half of the country's population (45%) is 15 or younger, based on 2015 data from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) [23].

Table 4: Household Size and Composition

No	Measurement Type	Household Size	Female Household Members	Male Household Members	Children below five years	Children between 5-18 years	Adults (18 or above)
1.	Mean	5.88	2.97	2.91	0.92	1.97	2.99
2.	Median	6	3	3	1	2	3

3.2 HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND CONSUMPTION CHARACTERISTICS

The project primarily aimed at increasing the income and livelihood assets of households in the target communities. Therefore, the evaluation examined the beneficiary households' current income characteristics and expenditure patterns. The evaluation team has also compared the current income and expenditure dynamics with the baseline of the foundation phase (November 2015), the final evaluation of the foundation phase (November 2018), and the baseline of the extension phase (April 2019). It is critical to consider that the baseline of the extension phase was undertaken with 20 new communities only targeted in the extension phase. Wherever possible, the evaluation team has compared the current state of livelihood of the target groups with the baseline assessments and evaluation to measure the magnitude of the change.

3.2.1 Household Income Sources

The evaluation shows that most targeted households earn their income from almond production, livestock production (including dairy production), and daily wage labor (Figure 3). Approximately 31% of the households rely on almonds for income generation, followed by livestock and daily wage labor with 22% and 19%, respectively. 11% of the target households rely on cereal crops as a primary income source, while 10% are dependent on fruits and vegetables for livelihood. Four percent each depend on formal employment and shopkeeping as a means of income generation. Just two percent of households rely upon remittances. A sizeable number of the target households generate their income from almond production is understandable because it is a strategic crop for Daikundi province[24].

The data further indicate that more households depend on almond production (36%) compared to the dairy producers (23%) and the vulnerable households (22%). This is mainly because almond-producing households have more land for crop cultivation than other targeted beneficiaries of the BRL project. Additionally, more dairy producers (27%) rely on livestock production as a primary income source compared to vulnerable households (18%) and almond producers (17%). This is also understandable because in the dairy value chain, the project targeted households that owned more livestock than other community members. Moreover, compared to almond and dairy producing households (17% each), more vulnerable households (24%) rely on daily wage labor for livelihood. This is primarily because these include landless households or those with relatively little land. These

[22] https://www.nsia.gov.af:8080/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Afghanistan-Statistical-Yearbook-first-Version.pdf
[23] http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/531281516915072603/pdf/122985-WP-P158055-PUBLIC-MLMAcFINALsinglepagesonline.pdf
[24] https://unama.unmissions.org/almond-festival-celebrates-vital-dai-kundi-cash-crop

households do not get adequate income from crop cultivation to meet their ends. Thus, they resort to daily wage labor as a livelihood strategy. No significant variation is observable in other income sources among the three types of households.

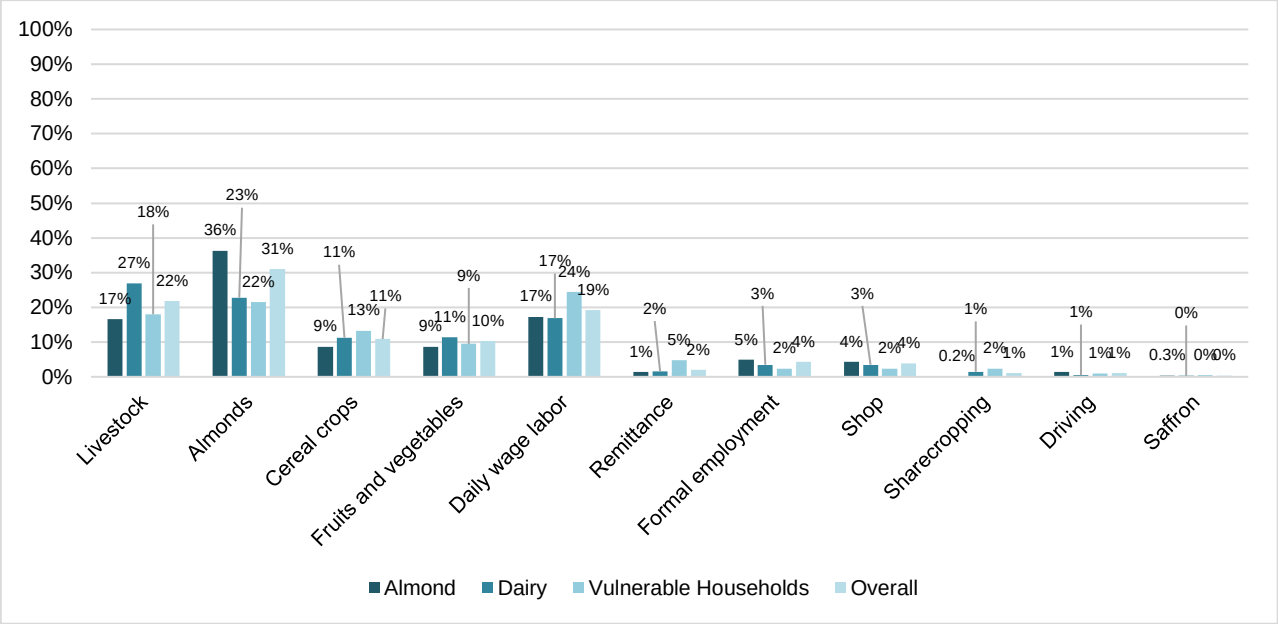

Figure 3: Household Income Sources

3.2.2 Household Income Level

The evaluation also assessed the annual median[25] income of households in the target communities. The median annual income for almond-producing households is 102,500 AFN, approximately 83% higher than their income at the start of the project (56,000 AFN). The data also shows the median annual income of 70,500 AFN for dairy-producing households, 69% higher than the beginning of the project (35,550 AFN). Likewise, vulnerable households reported their median annual income as 61,000 AFN, 3.2-folds higher than the income level reported during the baseline (14,800 AFN).

The evaluation team believes that there might be two limitations with the reported household income. Firstly, although the respondents were explicitly informed that they would not receive any assistance in return for participation in interviews, they could have nonetheless under-reported their income level in anticipation of some assistance from Oxfam. Secondly, households in Afghanistan hardly keep written records of their income. Thus the evaluation has relied on respondents' memory to recall their income for the last 12 months.

Considering the average household size of six as outlined in section 3.1.4 and the national poverty line defined as 1.90 USD per day per person[26] by the World Bank (WB), 93% of the surveyed households are living below the poverty line, which aligns with the national poverty level[27]. It is safe to conclude that despite a significant increase in the income level of the target households, they are

[25] Median is a type of average, which refers to the middle value in the list of numbers. To find the median, all numbers were listed in numerical order from smallest to largest. Median household income is the income cut-off where half of the households earn more, and half earn less.
[26] http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/global-poverty-line-faq
[27] According to the Afghan Ministry of Economy, In July 2020, 90% of Afghans were living under the poverty line. For details, please see: https://tolonews.com/business/ministry-confirms-90-afghans-live-below-poverty-line

trapped in a poverty cycle. It is imperative to consider that the project has been implemented in a fragile context; the national economy has become more precarious and has seen a sharp reduction in Gross Domestic Production (GDP) growth since 2013. For instance, the average annual GDP growth for 2013-2020 stands at 2.5%, over three times lower than for 2003-2012 when annual economic growth was around 9.4%[28].

Table 5: Annual Median Household Income

No	Timeline	Almond Producing HHs		Dairy Producing HHs		Vulnerable HHs	
		AFN	USD	AFN	USD	AFN	USD
1	Baseline (2015)	56,000	747	35,550	557	14, 800	195
2	End line (2018)	69,500	927	48,300	644	19,800	264
3	Baseline (2019)	45,552	588	35,550	459	14,800	91
4	End line (2021)	102,500	1,323	70,500	910	61,000	787

3.2.3 Household Income Sustainability

The evaluation also analysed whether the target households could sustain their income level (Figure 4). Overall, 28% of the surveyed households expressed high confidence to keep their current income level in the future, followed by 48% who were somewhat confident. Just two percent of the respondents reported that their households might not maintain their current income level, while 22% opted for "don't know".

Those who are not confident or responded with "don't know" are concerned about the lack of precipitation in recent months and the anticipated drought because it directly affects the crop yield for the target households. Across the three income streams, almond and dairy-producing households are relatively more confident about sustaining income than the vulnerable households. About 80% of almond-producing households and 79% dairy-producing households indicated either high or somewhat confidence to sustain their current income level, higher than 56% of vulnerable households. Notably, about 42% of the vulnerable households were undecided about the sustainability of their income; most of them were worried about the political instability, bleak macroeconomic context, and lack of employment opportunities in the labor market.

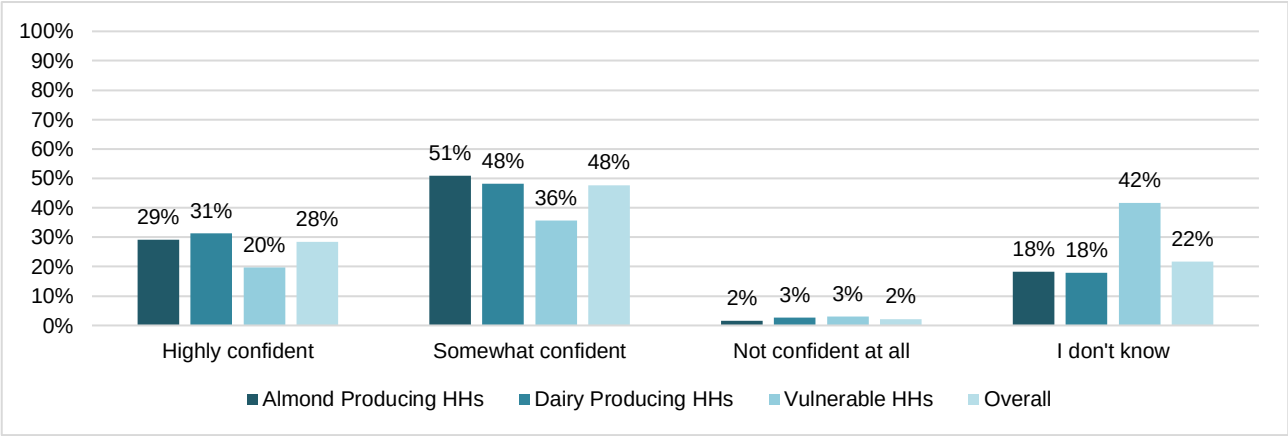

Figure 4: Sustainability of Current Income Level

[28] https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview

3.2.4 Household Expenditure Patterns

The evaluation also gauged the amount of money households spend on health and education to get an insight into respondents' quality of life and potential for upward mobility. The data show that the target households tend to spend 3,833 AFN per month on health and education, a 60% increase over the spending level at the start of the project (2,400 AFN). The almond-producing households spend the highest amount of 4,500 AFN per month on health and education, followed by dairy-producing households and vulnerable households with 4,000 AFN and 3,000 AFN, respectively. The increased spending on health is a reflection of people becoming more health conscious rather than of worsening health conditions in the target areas.

In contrast to the baseline spending on health and education, there are noteworthy increments across all three streams of the beneficiaries. At the start of the project, almond-producing households tended to spend 3,000 AFN on health and education, but now they invest 4,500 AFN, reflecting a 50% increase in spending on health and education. Similarly, the dairy-producing households' median monthly spending on health and education at the beginning of the project was 2,400 AFN, 66% higher than their current spending. The vulnerable households' spending on health and education stands at 3,000 AFN, indicating a 66% increase over the baseline level of 1,800 AFN. In absolute terms, the amount of money spent on education and health seems to be on the lower end but comparing these expenditure levels with the income level of the target groups, more than half of the households' income is spent on education and health. This even though education up to high school level and public health services are provided by the government on a complimentary basis.

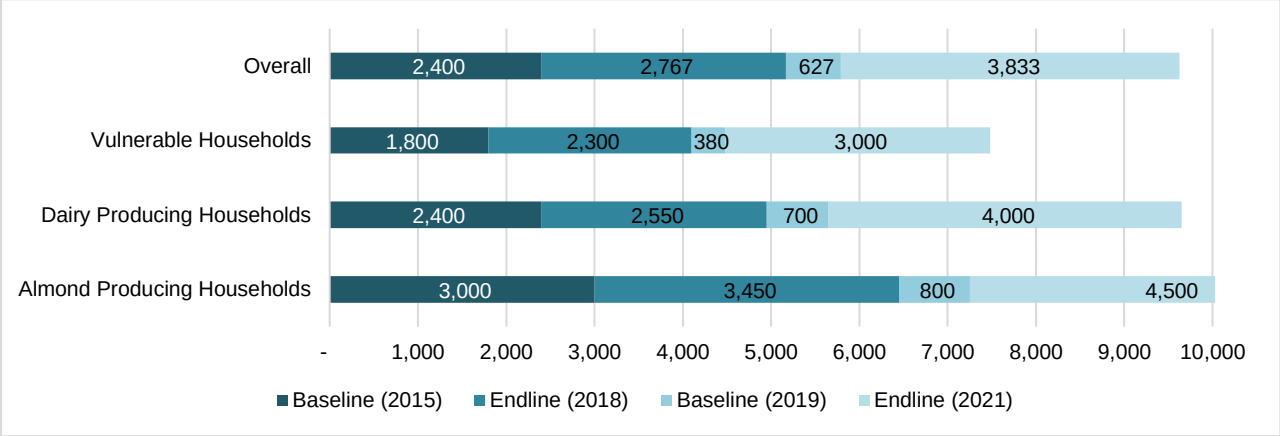

Figure 5: Monthly Health and Education Expenditure

3.3 HOUSEHOLD ASSETS

The evaluation also analysed the target household assets, which refer to anything that has monetary value, which means the households can sell it and convert it to cash. Household assets include land, livestock, poultry, trees, wood, carpet, mobile phones, transportation means, and others. The median household asset value for the target households is 614,766 AFN, indicating a 1.56-fold increase in the asset value compared to the start of the project in 2015 (239,350 AFN). The largest increment in asset value has been observed among the vulnerable households, followed by almond and dairy producing households. At the start of the project, the median asset value for vulnerable households was 54,500 AFN, while at present, it is 477,000 AFN, reflecting almost an eight-fold increase. The median asset value for almond-producing households has doubled because of the project with 841,698 AFN versus 399,800 AFN at the start of the project. The median asset value for dairy-producing households has almost doubled from 263,700 AFN (Foundation phase) to the current 525,600 AFN. Although the data

suggest a significant increase in assets value for vulnerable households, it is still lower than the asset value for almond and dairy-producing households.

Table 6: Median Asset Value

No	Timeline	Almond Producing HHs		Dairy Producing HHs		Vulnerable HHs		Overall	
		AFN	USD	AFN	USD	AFN	USD	AFN	USD
1	Baseline (2015)	399,800	5,331	263,700	3,516	54,550	727	239,350	3,191
2	End line (2018)	651,700	8,689	345,200	4,603	209,300	2,791	402,067	5,361
3	Baseline (2019)	417,000	5,381	316,600	4,085	96,770	1,249	276,790	3,571
4	End line (2021)	841,698	10,861	525,600	6,782	477,000	6,155	614,766	7,932

Among assets, land ownership remains key to the livelihoods of the targeted communities. The evaluation shows a substantial increase in land ownership of the surveyed households. As depicted in figure (6) below, on average, currently, a household owns 2.8 Jerib land, while at the start of the project, the mean land ownership was 1.3 Jerib reflecting a 1.15-fold increase. The data further show that almond-producing households own 5.2 Jerib of land on average, more than twice higher than at the start of the project (2 Jerib). Similarly, vulnerable households have 1.2 Jerib of land, many times higher than the baseline (0.3 Jerib). The change in land ownership among dairy-producing households is comparatively lower: currently, it is 1.9 Jerib, while the baseline value was 1.5 Jerib. Consultations with the project stakeholders reveal that the extensive replication of terracing and trenching method by the farmers has rehabilitated the hillsides land, which was previously uncultivatable and of no economic value to the households. Now that the farmers have rehabilitated the hillsides and have converted them into productive assets, land ownership has seen a tangible increase. For further detail, please refer to section 3.6.3.

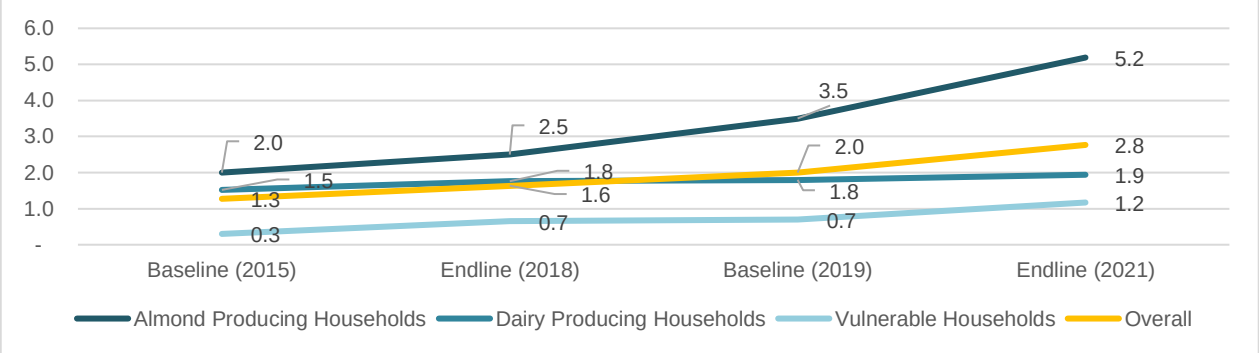

Figure 6: Change in Land Ownership

The evaluation also looked at the sustainability of the households' asset ownership (Figure 7). Its measurement is a significant indicator of whether the target households will opt for selling their assets to meet their ends in a crisis. More than a quarter of the respondents (27%) indicated that they are highly confident sustaining the current asset level in the future; 49% were somewhat confident. Just one percent expressed a lack of confidence to sustain their assets, and about a quarter (23%) were undecided at the time of the interview. The data also exhibit that almond and dairy-producing households are more confident about the sustainability of their assets than vulnerable households. A majority of almond-producing (81%) and (79%) of dairy-producing are either highly or somewhat confident in sustaining their current income level, higher than the 64% of vulnerable households demonstrating the same level of confidence.

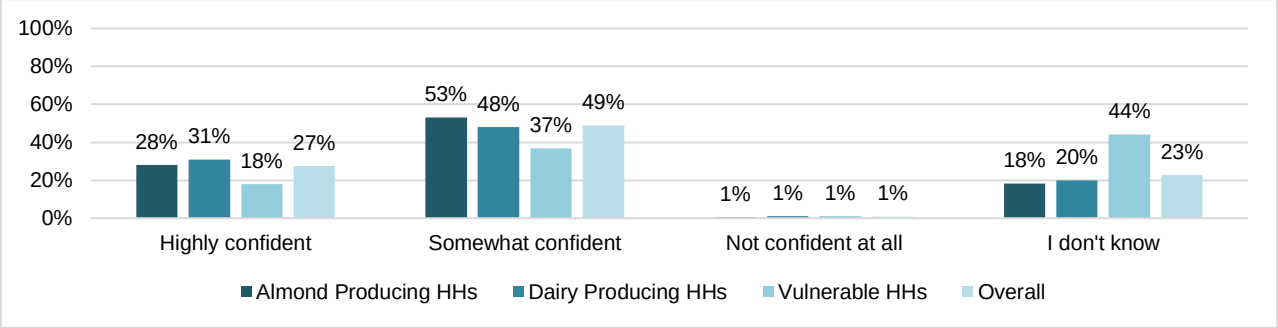

Figure 7: Sustainability of Households' Asset Ownership

3.4 FOOD INSECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD COPING STRATEGIES

The evaluation has assessed the extent of food shortage among the surveyed households and their coping mechanisms to deal with food shortages and livelihood crisis. Besides, the evaluation team has examined the sustainability of food security in the target areas.

3.4.1 Extent of Food Shortage

The evaluation team investigated the current state of food security in the target areas. The respondents were asked that, on average, how many days in a month did they eat less than three meals per day. Approximately three-quarters (74%) of the respondents indicated that they had not experienced a time when they ate less than three meals per day; the remaining 26% reported that they did come across such a situation. Out of the 26%, eight percent had faced two days with food shortage, followed by six percent (more than five days), four percent (three days), and three percent each with four and five days. Two percent stated that they experienced a food shortage one day a month.

The evaluation also shows that respondents from almond-producing households are more food secure than dairy-producing households and vulnerable households. About 78% of respondents from almond-producing households did not experience a situation where they had to eat less than three meals a day, higher than the dairy-producing (71%) and vulnerable households (68%). It is worth noting that 14% of respondents from vulnerable households reported eating less than three meals a day for more than five days a month, notably higher than the almond and dairy-producing households with four percent each. The evaluation also indicates that the mean number of days where the respondents experienced eating less than three meals is 0.8 days for almond-producing households, lower than 1.1 days for dairy-producing, and 1.8 days for the vulnerable.

Table 7: Extent of Hunger in Target Communities

No	Stream	Number of days in a month with less than three meals						
		Zero day	One day	Two days	Three days	Four days	Five days	More than Five days
1	Almond Producing HHs	78%	1%	7%	5%	4%	2%	4%
2	Dairy Producing HHs	71%	5%	9%	5%	2%	4%	4%
3	Vulnerable HHs	68%	2%	8%	1%	3%	3%	14%
	Overall	74%	2%	8%	4%	3%	3%	6%

Furthermore, the respondents were also asked whether in the last 12 months there were months in which they did not have enough food to meet family needs. About 30% of the respondents reported

food shortages in the last year, while 70% stated that they did not encounter food shortages to meet their family needs in the preceding 12 months. Among the three streams, 28% of almond-producing households experienced food shortages last year, lower than the dairy-producing (31%) and vulnerable households (37%). These findings also imply that almond-producing households are more food secure than dairy-producing and vulnerable households. This is attributable to the fact that almond-producing households reportedly have a higher income and asset ownership than dairy-producing and vulnerable households.

The 30% of the respondents who indicated food shortage in certain months in the last year were asked to identify the months in which they faced food shortage. Figure (8) below shows that January, February, November, and December are the months when most households faced food shortages. Between April and September, fewer households experienced a food shortage. In the context of Afghanistan, the winter season generally begins in mid-December and lasts until the third week of March. During the winter season, except for greenhouse production on a small scale, cultivation is stalled due to cold temperatures. Given that agriculture is a crucial part of the livelihood system of the target households, they become food insecure in winter when they are unable to generate an income from the sale of crop yield. The figure below also indicates that, in contrast to the almond and dairy-producing households, vulnerable households tend to face more food shortages in the spring, summer, and fall seasons.

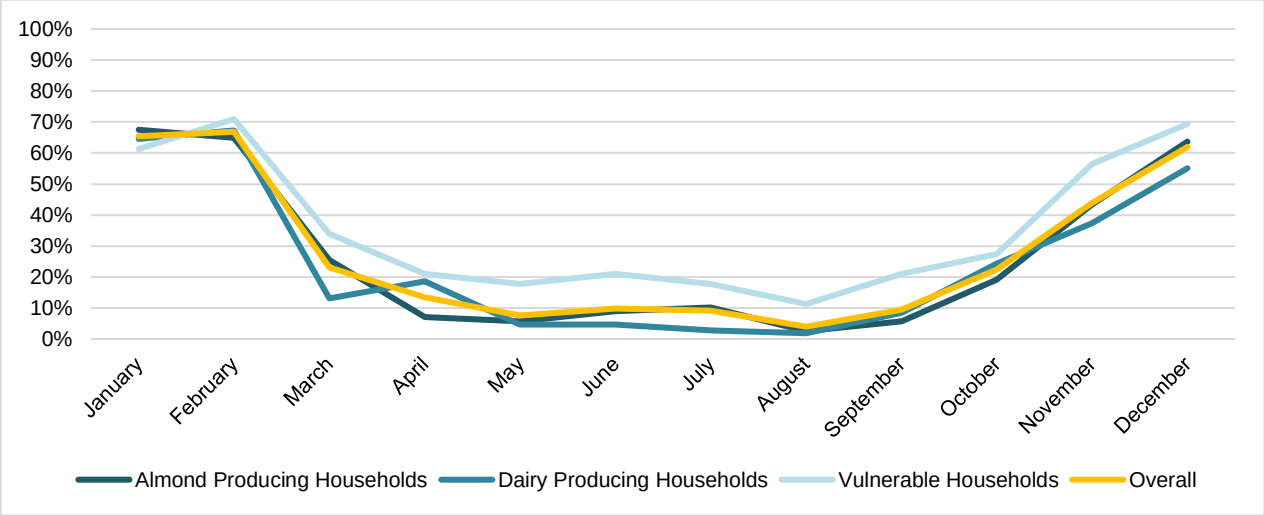

Figure 8: Food Shortage Months

3.4.2 Livelihood Coping Strategies

The evaluation measured the resilience of targeted households against livelihood shocks. The respondents were asked how they deal with shocks such as the death of a breadwinner, serious illness of a household member, earthquake, flooding, avalanches, and droughts that could have caused significant destruction. In other words, the survey gauged household food insecurity using Coping Strategy Index (CSI) as a proxy indicator (Figure 9). Respondents were presented with nine coping strategies, which they might adopt when faced with shocks. The first three strategies were considered less severe with a weighted score of 1. Strategies 4 to 6 were rated severe with a scoring of 1.5, and the last three scoring strategies were the most severe with a scoring value of 2. Based on this weighted approach, the maximum possible CSI score for the most severe food-insecure household was 14. A higher CSI score reflects higher food insecurity and vice versa. The team calculated the CSI score for each household and subsequently, simple arithmetic mean was drawn. This is in line with the methodology used in the previous baseline surveys and evaluations conducted during the BRL project.

1. Took a food loan
2. Took money from savings
3. Purchasing food during winter and paying interest
4. Took loan to buy food
5. Reduce the quality of food
6. Ate Nannwachi (Tea plus bread)
7. Skipped a meal
8. Sold cattle, goats, or sheep
9. Sold hens and/or ducks

The data reveal a reduction in the CSI score compared to the start of the project, indicating improved food security among the target groups. The CSI score reported during the evaluation is 5.2, comparatively lower than the baseline value (6.5). More notably, there is a decline in the CSI score for all three types of households, which avowedly means that their food security situation has improved because of the project. The CSI score for almond-producing households stands at 3.6, a notable decline since the baseline (6.1), while the CSI score for dairy-producing households is 5.37, a somewhat reduced compared to the start of the project (6.5). Similarly, the CSI score for vulnerable households is reportedly 6.57, lower than the baseline (6.9). It is worth highlighting that vulnerable households are more food insecure, followed by dairy and almond-producing households.

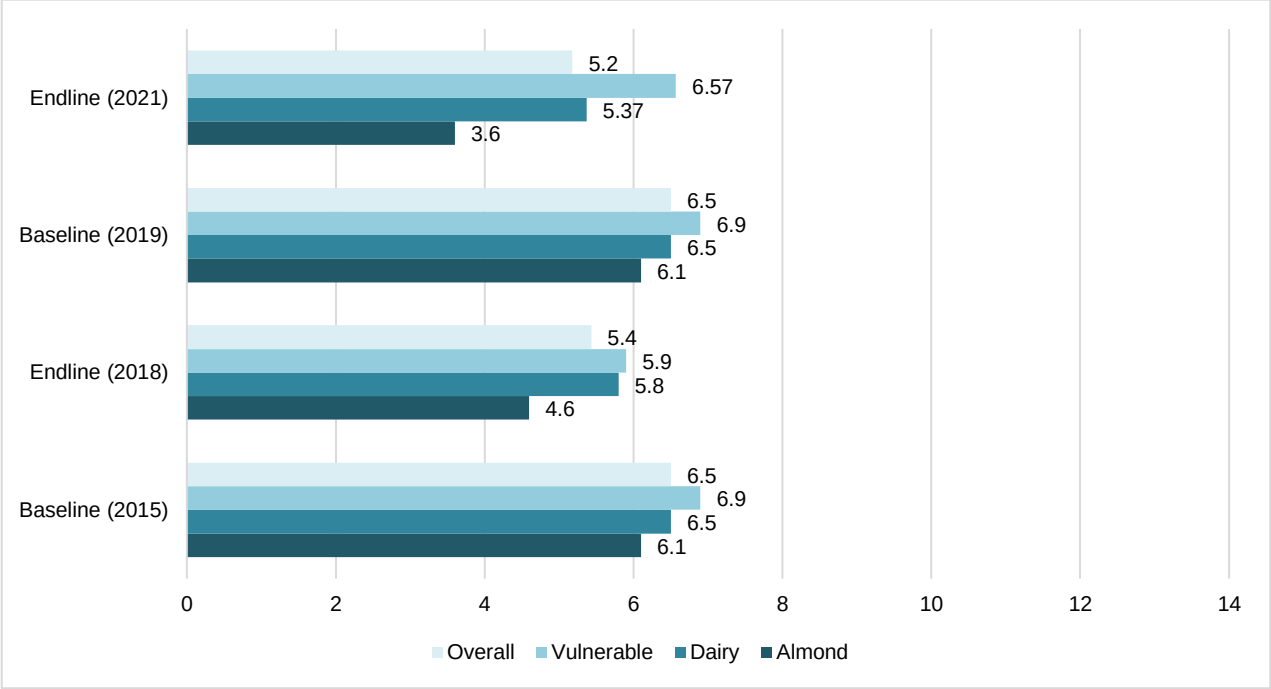

Figure 9: Mean Household CSI Score

There is a significant shift in the use of various livelihood coping strategies among the target groups. At the start of the project, using the most severe and drastic coping strategies such as skipping a meal or selling livestock or hens/ducks were considerably higher than currently reported by the surveyed households. For instance, the baseline shows that half of the households (50%) were skipping a meal to deal with a crisis, but presently, 35% of the respondents use this coping strategy, a notable reduction. Similarly, 69% of the households would sell their livestock – which is widely regarded as valuable to the livelihood system in rural Afghanistan – to deal with the crisis, more than twice higher than the current 32%. Likewise, 67% of the households would sell hens or ducks to meet their ends in crunch

situations, but now 20% are using such coping mechanism, a more than threefold decline. Hence, it is safe to conclude that using severe and drastic coping strategies has palpably declined among the target households.

The above decline is observable in all three types of households. More than one-third (34%) of the almond-producing households and around half (44%) of the dairy-producing households would skip a meal at the start of the project to deal with shocks. At present, 25% of almond-producing and 31% dairy-producing households skip a meal to deal with a crisis, a clear decline since the baseline in 2015. Additionally, 72% of vulnerable households were skipping a meal, significantly higher than the current 49%.

Similarly, selling livestock was reportedly higher among the almond producing (59%), dairy-producing (68%), and vulnerable households (81%) at the beginning of the project than the current 23%, 37%, and 36%, respectively. Likewise, 16% of almond producing, 24% dairy producing households, and 24% vulnerable households reported selling poultry to deal with the crisis. This is significantly lower than the baseline, where 44% almond-producing, 60% dairy-producing, and 80% vulnerable households used this coping strategy. Similar trends are observable across all other coping strategies.

Table 8: Use of Livelihood Coping Strategies

Coping Strategy	Baseline (2015)				End line (2021)			
	Almond	Dairy	Vulnerable	Overall	Almond	Dairy	Vulnerable	Overall
Took a Food Loan	86%	89%	85%	87%	25%	24%	43%	31%
Skipped a Meal	34%	44%	72%	50%	25%	31%	49%	35%
Took Money Loan to Buy Food	88%	81%	86%	85%	44%	63%	78%	62%
Sold Cattle, Goats or Sheep	59%	68%	81%	69%	23%	37%	36%	32%
Reduced Quality of Food	84%	89%	80%	84%	38%	53%	73%	55%
Took Money from Savings	44%	60%	51%	52%	23%	34%	30%	29%
Sold Hens and/or Ducks	52%	70%	80%	67%	16%	20%	24%	20%
Ate Nannwachi	90%	87%	95%	91%	37%	56%	73%	55%
Purchasing Food during Winter and paying Interest	71%	66%	61%	66%	10%	31%	30%	24%

Respondents further substantiated improved food security among the target households. When asked to what extent do they agree with the following statements, “If a crisis happens, my household is better prepared to continue feeding my family”, 43% of the households fully agreed, 48% partially agreed, and the residual nine percent disagreed. In other words, an absolute majority of the households targeted by the project reported improvement in their food security compared to the start of the project. The evaluation shows that despite a high poverty rate in the target areas, the respondents have reported an improvement in their food security. This is attributable to increased agricultural and dairy production in the almond and dairy value chains. For further detail, please refer to section 3.6.

3.4.3 Food Security Sustainability

When asked whether their households could maintain the current food intake in the future (Figure 10), 49% affirmed, one percent responded negatively, and 49% were undecided at the time of the interview. No significant variation is observable in the food security sustainability of almond, and dairy-producing

households as half of them are confident about maintaining the current food security in the future. However, 42% of vulnerable households are sure about maintaining their food security, two percent are unsure, while 57% are uncertain whether they will able to do it or not. The fact that a considerable number of the respondents from vulnerable households are undecided should be of concern as they are uncertain about their food security sustainability.

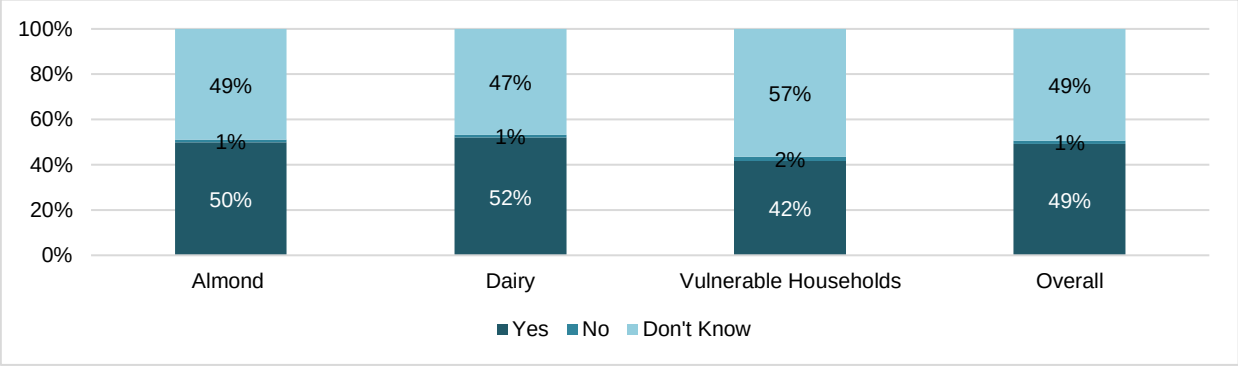

Figure 10: Food Security Sustainability

3.5 INCREASED INCOME FROM SALES OF ALMOND AND DAIRY PRODUCTS

Under its Specific Objective I, the BRL project has aimed to increase the household income from sales of almond and dairy products. To accomplish this, producer groups have been established and linked with four social enterprises, two each in almond and dairy value chains. These aim at maximizing the collective bargaining power of the producers and collectively meet the market demands. The enterprises were also linked with the market actors and advocacy was carried out with the local government officials to create a conducive environment for the locally produced products. The Specific Objective I essentially promotes space and opportunities for women to assume leadership of their livelihood security.

It is against this context that the evaluation has analysed the producers' access to the market and the added value from enhanced market access. The evaluation also presents an overview of the current state of women-run social enterprises. Besides, the evaluation team has collected information on the community attitudes towards women leading livelihood activities at household and community levels.

3.5.1 Current State of Community level Structures to Sell Almond and Dairy Products

In close collaboration with Community Development Councils (CDC) and relevant government entities, Oxfam has established 60 producer groups (30 dairy; 30 almonds) to improve the collective bargaining power of the producers to sell their products at more profitable rates. Most of the members of the almond groups are men because the almond value chain is overwhelmingly dominated by men, while the dairy group members are exclusively women. All 60 producer groups are currently functional. All dairy groups are linked with the dairy processing social enterprises in Nilli and Sharistan districts.

The dairy producers currently have a business relationship with the dairy processing enterprises in both districts. The enterprises procure milk from the dairy producers and subsequently process them into dairy products like yogurt, whey, butter, curd, cheese, and cream. The almond producers' groups in the Sharistan district also have a business relationship with the almond processing enterprise. The processing enterprise procures almonds from the producers and subsequently process, sort, package and sell them. However, at the time of the evaluation, the almond producers' groups in Nilli had no business relationships with the almond enterprise. This is because the almond from Nilli is lower in

quality than almonds from the Sharistan district. Thus, the Nilli-based almond enterprise has decided to procure almonds from producer groups in Sharistan rather than in Nilli to operate a viable business. The in-depth discussions with DAIL, DoE, and the almond producers indicate that in order for the almond from Nilli is to be competitive in the market, there is a need for opting for a low-price strategy. This pricing strategy will help to stimulate the market demand and gain market share in the provincial and regional almond markets.

The social enterprises were found functional at the time of the evaluation. The enterprises are registered with the Afghan Ministry of Industries and Commerce (MoIC), and the review of the accounting books shows that they have also paid taxes to the Afghan government. The enterprises have management structures, basic account records, and business plans. However, the evaluation found the enterprise members' limited understanding of the sales target set in the business plans and, therefore, in need of improvement.

The enterprises' building remains in solid shape. They have modern machinery for processing dairy and almond products. The enterprise members have also received training on how to use the equipment. The evaluation team observed the operations of the enterprise members and found them to have sufficient capabilities to operate the machinery. Yet, the enterprises are partially using the machinery because they are producing on a small scale and are yet to reach a large-scale production. The almond enterprise members and government officials also expressed concerns about the quality of the almond cracking machinery, which result in heavy kernel damages. However, it is worth noting that the machinery provided by the project is not available in Afghanistan. Oxfam has recently hired a contractor to adjust the machinery to reduce the kernel damages. Besides that, Oxfam has provided the almond enterprises with additional machinery to produce almond butter from the damaged kernel. The quality of the product is substandard experiencing low demand.

The evaluation characterizes the enterprises by small-scale production, long-distance to the main markets, and concerns regarding their future ownership. As mentioned above, the enterprises are currently producing at a small scale, and they have yet to reach their full potential. For dairy enterprises, the key challenge is the low supply of milk by the community members. To increase the supply of milk, the project has assisted a farmer to establish two cow dairy farms, one each in Nilli and Sharistan, which have helped somewhat increase the milk supply to the enterprise. Despite this, the milk supply is limited. The records of the Nawras Dairy Processing Women Social Enterprise show that, on average, it sells dairy products worth 35,000 AFN (452 USD) per month, with a profit margin of 34%. The sales of the ShafogaHa Almond Processing Women Social Enterprise in the last three months have been 28,840 AFN (372 USD), with a profit margin of 27%. The sales figures clearly articulate that the enterprises are yet to turn into fully functional business entities.

A key challenge facing the enterprises is the long distance to major markets, and a highly limited infrastructure, especially roads in the province. In Daikundi province, the major market is in Nilli, the provincial capital. The second major market is in the Sharistan district. The dairy enterprise in the Nilli district is more than half an hour drive from the Nilli market; even worse, the roads are of highly substandard quality, which negatively affects the quality of the dairy products when they reach the Nilli market. Similarly, the dairy enterprise based in the Sharistan district is faced with challenges to supply its products to the Nilli market because of long-distance, even though the road between the two districts is partially well-built. Supplying dairy products to markets outside the province is currently out of the question for two reasons. Firstly, there is almost no paved road that connects Daikundi to other provinces. Secondly, dairy goods are perishable. However, since almonds are durable, markets outside the province could be targeted. However, the long-distance, poor road infrastructure, and high transportation cost make the almond produced in Daikundi less competitive than other provinces known for almond cultivation such as Samangan and Balkh. To promote market accessibility, Oxfam

facilitated meetings of the almond social enterprises with market actors and development agencies at the national level. However, thus far, the meetings have not led to almond producers being able to find customers or clients.

The evaluation also shows that the dairy and almond enterprises do not have representative sales outlets in the Nilli market, a loss of opportunity to sell on a retail basis to consumers directly. As a result of the extensive advocacy efforts on the part of Oxfam, the government has granted land in the Nilli market where the enterprises could install sales outlets. The enterprises lack the financial resources to construct the outlets.

Additionally, the enterprise members are concerned about the future ownership of the enterprises. The government officials would like the enterprises to be handed over to the government once Oxfam winds up its operations in Daikundi province. Legally speaking, women community members are the owners, and the government should not claim them. Besides, Oxfam has a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding with the social enterprise members and the government. The MoU stipulates that the enterprises will be the ownership of the women community members while the government will only intervene when the enterprise members are unable to manage the operations of the enterprises. The government officials argue that the women enterprise members do not have sufficient capacity to successfully and sustainably run the enterprises. There are pros and cons of handing over the enterprises to the government. On the positive side, it is likely to increase its engagement, which is crucial to the sustainability and success of the enterprises. On the flip side, it will make it significantly challenging for the women who have invested time and efforts for the last several years in the enterprises, to remain engaged in the enterprises. This will deprive women of the opportunity to continue economic participation.

The dairy-producing enterprises also indicated that the high cost of packaging adversely impacted their profit margins. Currently, the enterprises procure readymade packages and the printed brand names from Kabul, which are costly. The transportation of the packages from Kabul to Daikundi further adds to costs and, thus, adversely brings the profit margins down. On a positive note, Oxfam has given enterprises solar panels for energy production. This has brought the operating costs down and is also environmentally friendly and sustainable.

COVID-19 also affected the enterprises. The enterprises had procured the raw materials at pre-COIVD rates, which they found it challenging to sell at the same rates because the prices fell because of the quarantine restrictions. The dairy enterprises reported that the livestock owners were unable to feed their livestock as many were hesitant to take them to pasture. This decreased milk production. Additionally, the dairy producers were not providing milk to the dairy enterprises during the outbreaks due to the fear of getting infected with the virus. During COVID, the enterprises were struggling to find an adequate supply of milk to sustain their operations.

3.5.2 Understanding of the Provincial and National Market Actors

Under Specific Objective I, the project put substantial efforts into enhancing the understanding of the almond and dairy producers and social enterprises through training, exposure visits, and market linking related measures. To understand the effectiveness of these interventions, the respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed with the statement that they had a better understanding of the provincial and national markets compared to the start of the project. As illustrated in figure 11 below, an absolute majority (96%) of the respondents in the almond value chain fully or partially agreed that they possessed an improved understanding of the provincial market for almonds. While regarding the national market, more than three-quarters of the respondents (78%) fully or partially agree with an enhanced understanding of the key actors. 78% of the dairy producers indicated full or partial

agreement regarding their increased understanding of the provincial market actors. However, 84% of the dairy producers stated disagreement regarding an increase in their understanding of the national market actors. This is understandable given that the project's market linkage efforts in the dairy value chain were largely confined to Daikundi province rather than at the national level.

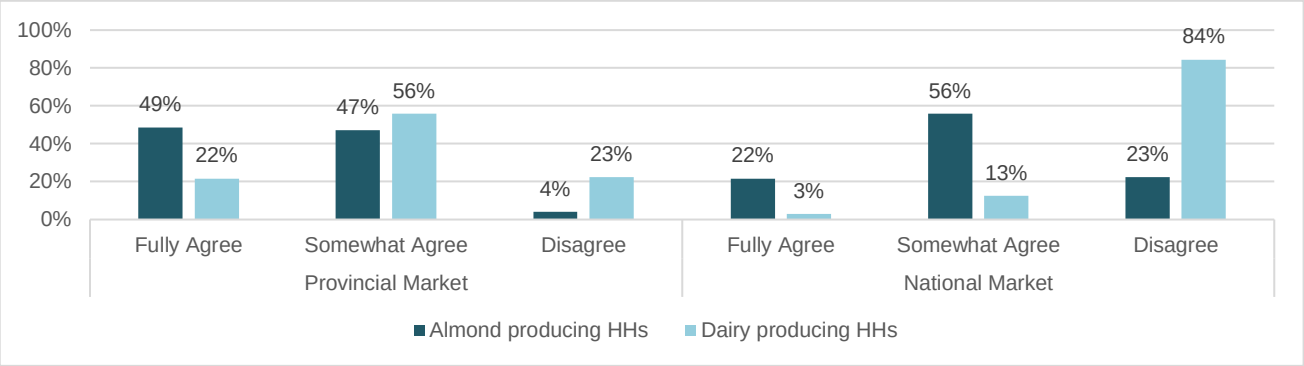

Figure 11: Understanding of the Provincial and National Market Actors

The in-depth consultations with the respondents demonstrate that the dairy social enterprises have found seven long-term customers because of the project's market linkage efforts. All these customers belong to the district-level markets. On the other hand, the almond enterprises have five customers, all within the province.

3.5.3 Prevailing Almond and Dairy Sale Methods

The BRL project assisted the almond and dairy producers and the social enterprises with market linkage supports to minimize the number of middlemen between them and the end-users. Generally, the middlemen tend to appropriate a considerable chunk of the profit in the value chain, and removing them would mean a higher profit margin for the producers. To assess the effectiveness of support for market linkage the almond producing households were asked how they sold their almond products (Figure 12). As shown in the figure below, most of these households (60%) sold almond locally within the province, followed by 15% who sold it to the social enterprise, and 14% who sold or traded it with a villager. Approximately 11% indicated that they sold it to a merchant or trader outside the province.

Comparing to the start of the project (one percent), more households (15%) tend to sell their almond produce to the enterprises, which is an accomplishment for the project. Nonetheless, most of the almond producers despite being linked to the enterprises have not sold to them. This is mainly because the enterprises are operating at a small scale and yet to become fully functional. Additionally, the almond enterprise based in Nilli has procured almond from producers in Sharistan rather than the nearby communities because the former produces better quality almond than the latter. Moreover, 11% of the target households sell their products to merchants or traders outside the province, higher than the baseline (0 percent). There is a notable decline in selling almonds at a local market from 95% at the start of the project to 60% now. Overall, the evaluation concludes that the project efforts to improve the almond producers' access to the marketplace to generate a better income are yet to fully materialize, even though there is an enhanced knowledge among producers regarding the market actors operating at the provincial and national markets. The inadequate transfer of enhanced knowledge into practice is because almond enterprises are yet to become fully functional and the long distances to markets in other provinces.

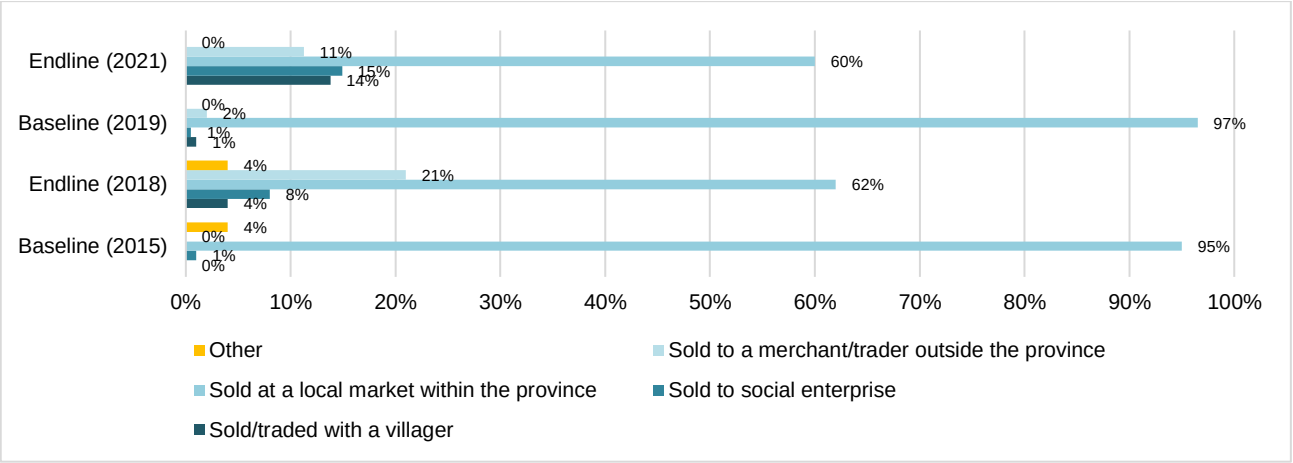

Figure 12: Almond Selling Methods

The evaluation also looked at the prices at which the almond producing households have sold Sangak almond, which is still widely cultivated in Daikundi province, through the different sales methods. The median sale price for a kilogram of Sangak sold or traded with a village is 80 AFN, lower than sold to social enterprise (90 AFN) or when sold locally in the local market (95 AFN). The median sale price for a kilogram of Sangak when sold to traders outside Daikundi is 100 AFN, the highest among all sales methods. This implies that if the producer groups can directly sell to major merchants and traders at the national markets (e.g., Kabul) and regional markets (e.g., Ghazni), they can earn 5-20 AFN per kilograms extra compared to other sales methods. In percentage terms, selling to traders in other provinces will bring 25% higher revenue than selling or trading it with a villager, 11% higher than selling it to social enterprise, and five percent higher than selling it in a local market.

Compared to the almond value chain, there are notable changes in the sale methods of dairy products in the target areas. Two-thirds of the surveyed dairy producers stated that they sold milk to the social enterprises, followed by 19% who consumed it within the household and 11% who sold or traded within the village. The residual four percent indicated that they sold it at the local market within the province, while nobody reported selling it in markets outside the province, which is understandable given the perishable nature of dairy products. The fact that most of the target households sell milk to the enterprise is attributable to the fact that the dairy enterprises are functional, even though on a small scale. This is a key contribution of the BRL project to enhance their return from sales of dairy products. A small number of households are selling milk or other dairy products in local markets because of the long-distance and underdeveloped road infrastructure, making it difficult to transfer the milk at an affordable cost while maintaining the quality.

It is challenging to compare the current sales methods for dairy products with the beginning of the project because no numerical data is available. The baseline survey 2015 report only states that dairy products are either consumed within the household or sold/traded within the village. Similarly, the 2018 End line evaluation has used a different methodology than the 2019 baseline and 2021 evaluation. The 2018 End line evaluation has not captured the household consumption of dairy products, which makes it difficult to develop a valid and credible comparison. Despite the methodological variation, it is crucial to note that no dairy producing households were selling their products to a social enterprise or at a local market at the start of the project, but now about 70% of them are using the stated methods to sell their dairy products. Similarly, no dairy producer households in the 2018 End line evaluation and 2019 baseline reported selling dairy products to enterprises because they were not operational back then due to the late arrival of the equipment and machinery. Overall, it is safe to conclude that

more households are selling their dairy products to generate an income. Likewise, there is a shift from selling or trading within the village towards selling to the enterprises.

Table 9: Prevailing Dairy Sales Methods

Sales Method	Baseline (2015)	End line (2018)	Baseline (2019)	End line (2021)
Household Consumption	N/A	N/A	59%	19%
Sold/traded with a villager	N/A	85%	38%	11%
Sold to social enterprise	N/A	0%	0%	66%
Sold at a local market within the province	N/A	8%	3%	4%
Sold to a merchant/trader outside the province	N/A	0%	0%	0%
Other	N/A	8%	0%	0%

Currently, the price of one kilogram of milk within the village is 25 AFN. The social enterprises also buy it at the stated price, convert it to various dairy products but mainly yogurt. The yogurt sells at 50 AFN. The price of milk in the local market is around 40 AFN per kilogram, while yogurt is around 60 AFN. This shows a 38% higher price for milk and 20% yogurt compared to other sales methods.

3.5.4 Extent of Women's Involvement in Almond and Dairy Value Chains

Under specific objective I, the BRL project has focused on changing the attitudes of community members about women's participation in livelihood activities, particularly in almond and dairy value chains. The evaluation gathered information on the current level of women's participation in the targeted value chains, using household index scores. The index involves the participation of women in six specific tasks; (i) pruning, (ii) picking, (iii) sorting and grading, (iv) selling, and (v) buying almonds, and (vi) selling almond trees/saplings. The survey used an un-weighted approach to developing the index, involving one score per task performed by women in a household. In the 2015 baseline survey, the index consisted of nine tasks. Thus, the index score generated from the six tasks has been adjusted to nine tasks to keep it consistent methodologically with the baseline assessment.

The mean household task index score for almond households stands at 3.97, comparatively higher than the 2.9 reported at the start of the project (baseline 2015). In percentage terms, it is a 36% increase over the baseline index score. A higher index score reflects the increased engagement of women in the almond value chain. The evaluation shows that women tend to be more involved in picking (91%), sorting and grading (85%), and less involved in selling almonds (23%), and buying and selling almond trees with 22% and 19%, respectively.

The baseline assessments and the 2018 End line shows that women are more involved in the upstream of the value chain, while men appear more engaged in the downstream. In other words, the engagement of women in economic decisions has been limited. The 2021 evaluation shows that this trend continues to exist among the almond-producing households, but to a lesser extent compared to the start of the project. For instance, 23% of women are presently engaged in almonds sale, higher than at the start of the project (10%). Similarly, 22% and 19% of women respectively are involved in buying and selling almond trees, many times higher than their participation in such economic decisions at the beginning of the project (three percent and five percent). This is an indication of the increased participation of women in economic decisions within their households, based on the qualitative data gathered through FGDs. Nonetheless, in more than three-quarters of the households, women have yet to find their place to engage in economic decisions.

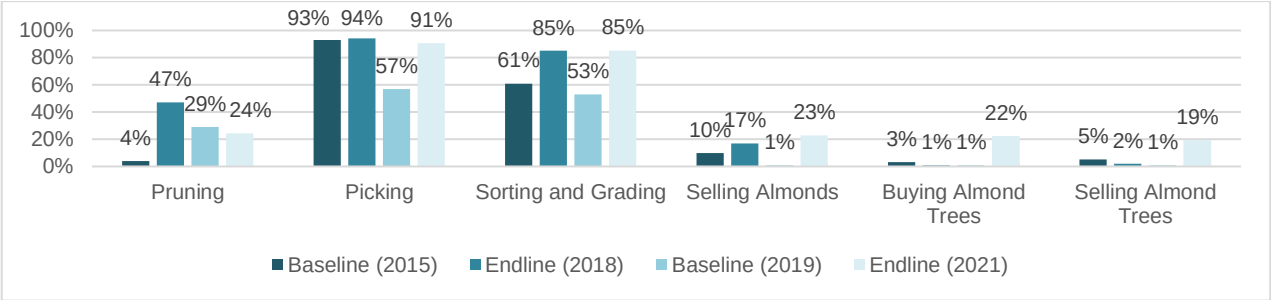

Figure 13: Women's Participation in Almond Production and Sale

The evaluation used a household task index to measure women's participation in the dairy value chain. The index consisted of nine tasks; (i) taking livestock to pasture, (ii) livestock feeding, (iii) milking, (iv) cleaning the barn, (v) selling milk, (vi) selling livestock, (vii) buying livestock, (viii) purchasing medical treatment and vaccination for livestock, and (ix) processing the milk into other dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, butter, etc. The mean household task index score for dairy producing households is 7.3 out of nine. It is a notable improvement over the index score documented in the 2015 baseline (4.7). It is a 55% increase over the baseline index score for dairy-producing households.

The evaluation suggests that women's participation is higher in milking (98%), milk processing to other dairy products (93%), cleaning the barn (87%), selling milk (86%), and livestock feeding (80%). On the other hand, their participation is lower in taking livestock to pasture (41%), selling livestock (44%), medical treatment/vaccination (38%), and buying livestock (31%). The previously conducted baseline assessments and evaluations exhibited that women tend to be involved in more labor-intensive tasks of the dairy value chain such as feeding livestock, milking, barn cleaning, and milk processing. While their engagement was restricted in key economic decisions such as buy and sales of livestock. The 2021 evaluation suggests that the trend of women's involvement in labor-intensive tasks rather than economic decisions continues to date, but to a lesser degree than the start of the project. For instance, 45% of women were engaged in selling milk, while currently, 86% of women make decisions related to selling milk. Similarly, just 12% of women were engaged in livestock selling, almost four times less than the current 44%. Likewise, 11% of women were involved in buying livestock, approximately three times lower than in the 2021 evaluation (31%). There is also a significant increase in the engagement of women in livestock medical treatment and vaccination (38%) compared to the beginning of the project (10%). Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the project has performed satisfactorily promoting the role of women downstream of the dairy value chain where economic transactions happen.

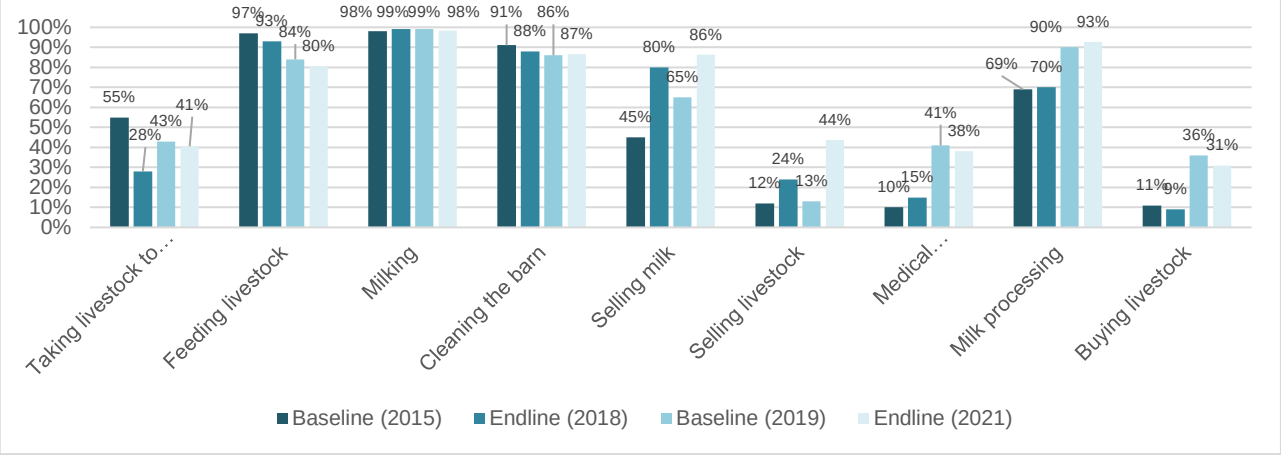

Figure 14: Women's Participation in Dairy Production and Sale

The evaluation has also looked at who generally performs household chores within the almond and dairy producing households. The data indicate that in 84% of the households, the household chores are performed by women while in the remaining households, men carry out tasks within the households. A majority of (80%) the almond producing households stated that women in their households generally perform household chores, while in the residual 20% of the households, they are carried out by men. On the other hand, 91% of dairy producing households indicated that women perform chores in their households, followed by men and children with eight percent and one percent, respectively.

3.5.5 Women's Skills Development and Income Generation Capacity

During the evaluation, the respondents were asked whether women had more skills to earn an income and whether they were earning more income than before the project. Approximately two-thirds (62%) of the respondents fully agree that women have more skills now than before the project, followed by 35% somewhat agreeing and four percent disagreeing. It implies that the efforts regarding the skill development of women, especially in the dairy value chain and in vulnerable households have yielded positive results as most of the respondents believe that women possess better income-generating skills now than at the start of the project. The data further exhibit that more than half of the respondents (54%) fully agree that women have more income now than before the project, followed by 34% indicating partial agreement. The residual 12% of the respondents demonstrated disagreement that women have more income because of the project.

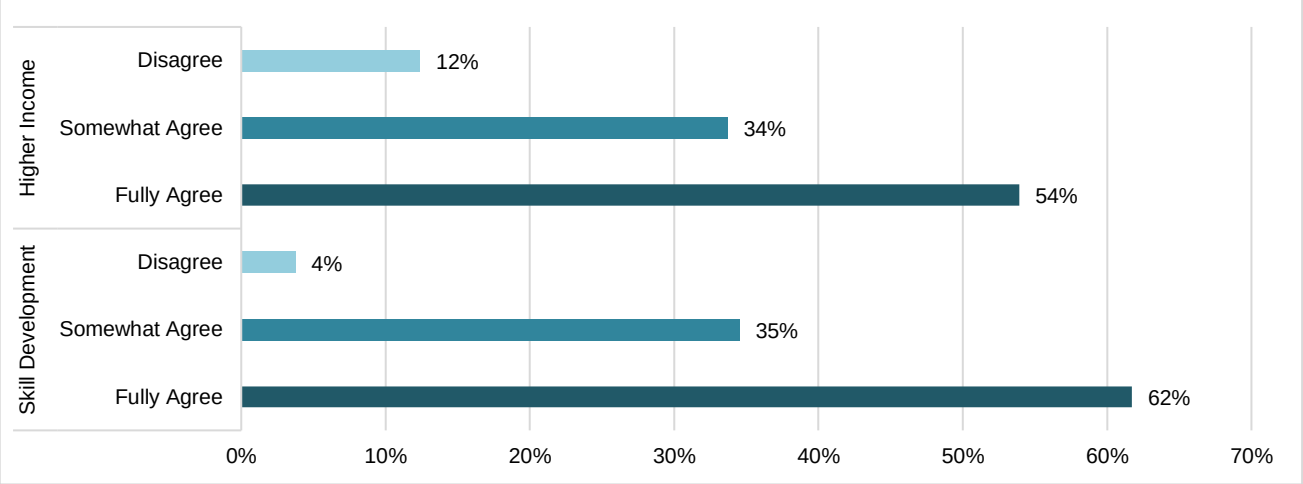

Figure 15: Women's Skills Development and Income Generation Capacity

Case Study I: Women's Economic Empowerment Increases their Social Participation

Nawras Dairy Processing Social Enterprise, Nilli, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat from Oxfam

Zahra Rezai is a 29-year old Afghan woman, a mother of two, and head of the Nawras Dairy Processing Social Enterprise in Nilli, the provincial capital of the province. Zahra was elected as the head of the social enterprise based on the votes of the community members. However, according to her, she lacked the confidence to speak in front of people including when delivering a speech in front of government officials and the community members at the inauguration ceremony of the Nawras Dairy Processing Social Enterprise. Zahra describes her inauguration speech: "I was very nervous. My hands and legs were shaking and I was unsure of what I was saying in front of people". Zahra has no income of her own and was dependent on her father and brother to buy basic items to meet her personal needs.

Since Zahra has been the head of a social enterprise, she has directly benefited from a wide range of training delivered by Oxfam including Gender Action Learning System (GALS), business development, marketing, and record-keeping. Oxfam has also facilitated her participation in advocacy meetings with government stakeholders at the provincial level and even beyond the province.

Presently, she is running the only women-led dairy social enterprise in the district which, despite the challenges of a limited supply of milk, inadequate access to markets, and substandard road infrastructure, supplies different types of dairy products (milk, yogurt, whey, butter, curd, cheese, and cream) of satisfactory quality to the market.

The enterprise has a mean monthly sales revenue of 35,000 AFN (452 USD) with a profit margin of 34%. Zahra is widely respected in the community by both women and men and regarded as a strong leader. According to her, women's participation in community level decision-making was minimal and largely symbolic. For instance, the community development plan was prepared by men without asking or even sharing it with women. However, Zahra and other members of the enterprise are now

influential actors and consulted in all key decisions related to the community. Zahra remains outspoken and regularly advocates for women's participation in decisions at the household and community levels. At the government level, Zahra is widely recognized as a bold leader who regularly brings the issues facing women, particularly of the social enterprise, to the attention of duty-bearers. She describes her development as the following, "I cannot believe how much I have changed. From not being able to speak in front of a few people at the inauguration ceremony of the social enterprise to someone who speaks with confidence in front of government authorities, including the Provincial Governor".

Within the household, Zahra's role and influence in key decisions have sharply increased compared to the start of the project. She has an income of her own and is no longer dependent on male member of the household to procure basic items to meet her personal needs. Zahra plays an instrumental role in the livelihood of her family, particularly, her two children. "I spend most of my money to buy food and clothes for my children and I am also saving for their education. I want them to study in good quality schools in Kabul".

3.5.6 Communities' Attitude towards Women's Participation in Livelihood Activities

Oxfam has conducted Gender, Action Learning System (GALS) training courses for community women to overcome the hurdles of gender inequality within the household to empower women to develop themselves economically and have their own vision, and define their individual and collective paths to reach their ambitions. The in-depth discussions with the producer groups and social enterprise members point to a high degree of satisfaction from the GALS training. According to the consulted women, the GALS training courses have helped them to think and develop their own vision and long-term goals. Women have developed vision statements for themselves and for their producer groups and social enterprises. The evaluation also shows that women have expressed more confidence to talk about issues within the household and at the community level, compared to the start of the project.

In light of this, the evaluation measured change in the attitudes of community members towards women's participation in livelihood activities. When asked whether they agreed with women in their households making significant contributions to the sales of almonds, 91% of the respondents indicated full or partial agreement, significantly higher than the baseline value (57%). Comparing these values with women's actual engagement in selling almonds (23%) as outlined in the above section, the evaluation points to a notable gap between the attitudes and practices. The attitudes are heavily positive, but these have not translated into practices as less than a quarter of women are involved in the sales of almonds among the target households. Similarly, 92% of the respondents indicated full or partial agreement with women getting involved in almond orchards-related decisions, higher than the baseline (61%). Moreover, 93% of the respondents fully or partially agree with women getting engaged in all stages of almond production, such as buying the saplings, almond cultivation, pruning, picking, sorting, and grading, disease monitoring and management, almond selling, and others. This is also higher than the 62% who demonstrated a full or partial agreement with women's engagement through the almond production process.

Comparing these values with the actual engagement of women in all stages of almond production reveals a clear gap in attitudes and practices. For instance, while 93% of the respondents agree that women should be involved in all stages, but in practice, less than a quarter of women are engaged in pruning, almond selling, and procuring and selling almond trees. Overall, the evaluation concludes that the community members' attitudes have positively changed regarding women's participation in the almond value chain compared to the baseline. It is vital to consider that the almond industry in Afghanistan is rigid in its gendered division of labor, as it is dominated by men.

Table 10: Community Attitudes about Women's Participation in Almond Value Chain

Statement	Baseline (2015)	End line (2018)	Baseline (2019)	End line (2021)
Women in your household making significant contributions to the sale of almonds	57%	98%	84%	91%
Women in your household involving in decision-making related to almond orchards	61%	91%	83%	92%
Women in your household involving in all stages of almond production	62%	89%	74%	93%

Community attitudes regarding women's participation in the dairy value chain are also positive. Almost all the respondents (99%) exhibited full or partial agreement with women's involvement in decisions related to livestock management, significantly higher than the 2015 baseline value (61%). Similarly, 96% of the respondents fully or partially agree with women making a significant contribution to dairy sales, higher than the baseline value of 57%. Additionally, 97% of the respondents fully or partially agreed with women getting involved in all stages of dairy production, higher than at the start of the project (62%). Unlike the almond value chain, the difference in attitudes and practices about women's participation in the dairy value chain is minimal.

Table 11: Community Attitudes about Women's Participation in Dairy Value Chain

Statement	Baseline (2015)	End line (2018)	Baseline (2019)	End line (2021)
Women in your household making significant contributions to the sale of dairy	57%	98%	84%	96%
Women in your household involved in decision-making related to livestock management	61%	91%	83%	99%
Women in your household involved in all stages of dairy production	62%	89%	74%	97%

3.5.7 Women's Social Empowerment and Participation

The evaluation team determined the impact of the project on women's social empowerment and social participation. In this regard, the respondents were asked whether there was an improvement in women's mobility and respect, household and community level decision-making and whether women are more accepted by the community as leaders. The data suggest that more than half of the respondents fully agree (58%) and 38% somewhat agree that women have increased mobility and respect in families than before the project, while just four percent disagree. Similarly, 59% fully agreed, while 37% partially agreed that women have more role in decision-making within the household before the project, while five percent disagree. Regarding the increase in women's role in community level decision-making, 45% each exhibited full and partial agreement, while the residual 10% disagree. Additionally, 43% fully and 45% somewhat agree that women are more accepted by the community as leaders than before the project. The data further show that 53% of the respondents fully agree that women redistribute more household chores with other male household members than before the project, followed by somewhat agree and disagree with 31% and 16%, respectively. The evaluation team is of the opinion that the improved social empowerment and participation of women is directly attributable to Oxfam's work with community members in the area of women's social and economic empowerment. More specifically, the results are caused by the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training as well as capacity development of women in leadership, business development, marketing, advocacy, skill development, and women's rights. Besides that, social enterprises are managed and operated by women which have directly contributed to positively shaping the attitudes of the community members towards women's social and economic participation.

It is worth mentioning the previous baselines and evaluations did not measure women's social empowerment and participation. Thus, it is difficult to determine the precise extent of change in women's social participation. Nonetheless, the respondents' perspectives regarding the change in women's social participation provide an insight into the project's contribution in empowering women and promoting their social participation.

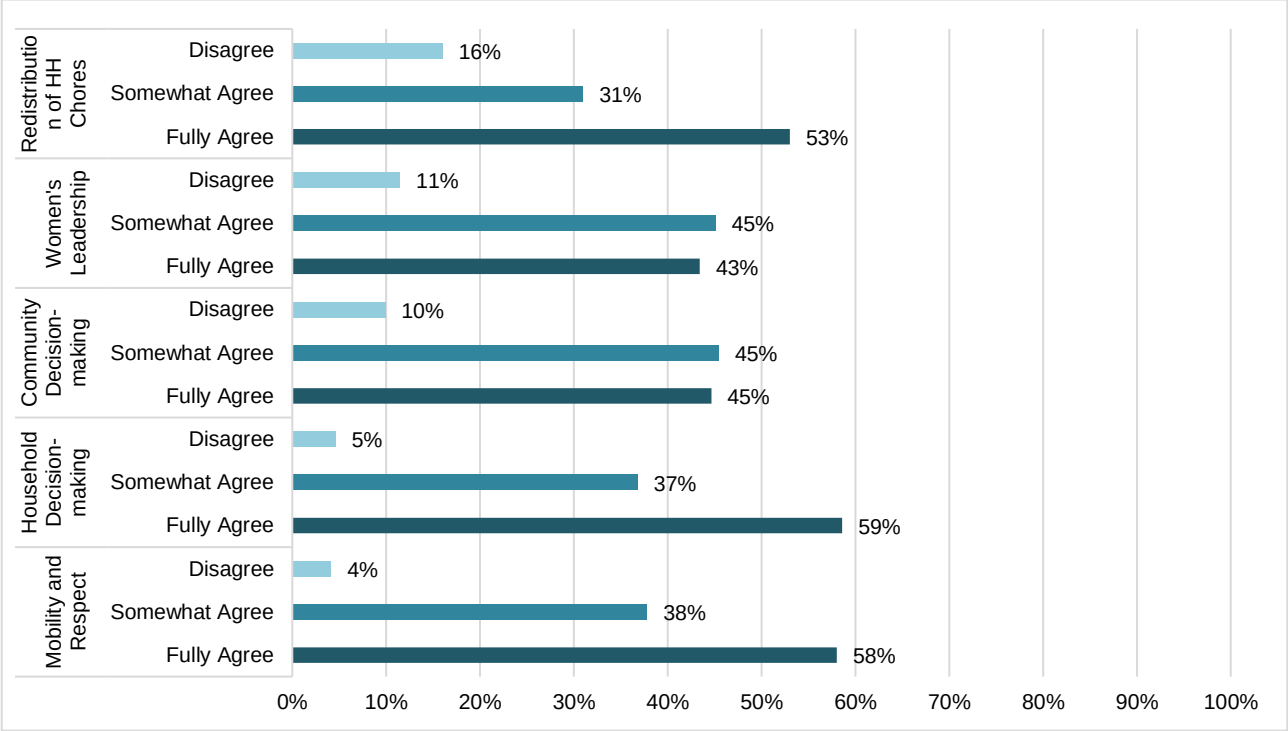

Figure 16: Women's Social Empowerment and Participation

3.5.8 Person with Disabilities' Social and Economic Empowerment

The evaluation analysed the extent to which there is a change in the social and economic empowerment of people with disabilities in the areas targeted by the BRL project. As outlined in the table below, 47% of the respondents fully and 44% partially agree that people with disabilities have more skills to earn an income than before the project, while the residual nine percent exhibited disagreement. Similarly, 46% of the respondents reported full agreement, followed by somewhat agreement (45%) and disagreement (nine percent) with the statement that people with disabilities have more income than before the project. In terms of increase in mobility and respect of people with disabilities within the household, 47% of the respondents expressed somewhat agreement, 43% full agreement while the residual 10% stated that there is no change in the people with disabilities' mobility and respect within the families. The data further highlight that there is a positive change in the participation of people with disabilities in decision-making within the household and community level. When asked whether people with disabilities have more role in decision-making within the household than before the project, 41% expressed full agreement, followed by somewhat agreement with 49%. Just 10% of the respondents stated disagreement. Similarly, 39% of the respondents fully agree that people with disabilities' role in community level decision-making has improved, followed by half (50%) with somewhat agreement and 11% with disagreement. Furthermore, 35% of the respondents fully agree that people with disabilities are more accepted by the community as leaders than before the project, while those with somewhat agreement and disagreement stand at 52% and 13%, respectively. The socio-economic improvement in the lives of people with disabilities is attributable to the disability

inclusion training provided by the project to the community members as well as the direct livelihood support such as training and in-kind contribution, to people with disabilities.

Table 12: People with disabilities' Social and Economic Empowerment

Statement	Fully Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
People with disabilities have more skills to earn an income than before this project	47%	44%	9%
People with disabilities have more income than before this project	46%	45%	9%
People with disabilities have increased mobility and respect in families than before the project	43%	47%	10%
People with disabilities have more role in decision-making within the household than before the project	41%	49%	10%
People with disabilities have more role in decision-making at the community level than before the project	39%	50%	11%
People with disabilities are more accepted by the community as leaders than before the project	35%	52%	13%

Case Study II: Empowering People with Disabilities through Skill Development

Chaman Gul's tailoring shop, Sharistan, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat from Oxfam

Gul Chaman is a 28-year old woman with a visual impairment, residing in the Sharistan district of Daikundi province. She comes from a vulnerable family of five, a father, a mother, a brother, and two sisters. Her father used to work as a coal miner in the north of Afghanistan, far from Daikundi, under extremely unsafe work conditions. Gul Chaman's family struggled to make ends meet as it regularly faced food shortages and had to rely on neighbours to deal with the food crisis. Gul Chaman used to

lack confidence and the self-esteem to attend social occasions at the community level due to the impairment in her left eye.

The BRL project in collaboration with the CDC offered Gul Chaman a six-month vocational training in tailoring in Nilli, the provincial capital of the province. Gul Chaman was hesitant to attend the vocational training as it was far away from where she was living and her household could not afford the transportation cost. Oxfam responded to this challenge by providing her accommodation in Nilli as well as a transportation allowance. Gul Chaman received training in tailoring for six months and upon successful completion of the course, she received a toolkit consisting of basic items needed to get engaged in tailoring.

Upon graduating from the training course, Gul Chaman established a tailoring start-up in the Shinia market of Sharistan district. She is the first female in the entire district to have established a tailoring shop in the marketplace. She has a monthly income of 8,000 AFN – 12,000 AFN from the start-up and her younger sister is working with her as an apprentice. Gul Chaman has been able to improve her households' food security as well as she is covering the educational expenses of her siblings, both of whom are currently enrolled in school. Besides that, her father is no longer working in a coal mine under life-threatening working conditions but is rather engaged as a daily wager within Daikundi province. According to Gul Chaman, she feels more empowered and reported a remarkable increase in her confidence and self-esteem. She also feels at ease when attending social events both at the household and community level.

3.6 RELIABILITY, VOLUME, AND QUALITY OF ALMOND AND DAIRY PRODUCTION

Objective II of the project exclusively aims at improving the production of almonds and dairy products in terms of quantity and quality. The project has implemented several interventions to enhance the quantity and quality of almond and dairy products. These include the extension of updated agricultural and livestock practices through demonstration plots, promote high-yield and drought-tolerant varieties of almond through the development of nurseries, and establishing agricultural and Veterinary Field Unit (VFU) to increase availability and access to agricultural and livestock services. A core activity under Objective II has been the hillside orchard rehabilitation using the terracing and trenching method. The project has also implemented small-scale irrigation and flood mitigation infrastructure projects to protect agricultural land from flooding and improve access to water for irrigation purposes.

3.6.1 Almond Production

The evaluation measured the production of almonds in terms of kilograms per Jerib[29] of land. The data indicate that the median almond production is 212 kilograms per Jerib, higher than the production at the start of the project (100 kilograms). This is a 1.12-fold increase in almond production per a Jerib of land. While there is a substantial increase in the almond yield compared to the baseline, it is still lower than the optimal production level. The consultation with farmers and government officials indicates that up to 66 trees of almond can be planted in a Jerib of land using modern almond orchard management methods. Each tree potentially produces an average of five kilograms of almonds. Thus, a Jerib of land has the potential to generate around 330 kilograms of almonds. The fact that the production is yet to reach the optimal level is because almond trees reach its maximum production on the fifth or sixth year after cultivation. This means that the new saplings that Oxfam already has distributed to the farmers are young and yet to yield based on their maximum potential. The data outline that, on average,

Key Highlight

The median almond production of the target households has witnessed a 1.12 fold-increase compared to the start of the project.

[29] 1 Jerib = 2,000 square meters

the farmers planted 54 trees per Jerib of land, lower than 80 saplings recommended by Oxfam. The average yield per tree was 3.97 kilograms of almonds.

The data indicate that out of the 212 kilograms per Jerib produced, 68% of it is sold in the marketplace, which equals 145 kilograms per Jerib. The average price of kilograms of almond is reportedly 907 AFN. The residual 32% of the almonds are consumed domestically or given as a charity to other people. The evaluation also gathered data on the various varieties of almonds currently cultivated by farmers in the target communities. Compared to other varieties, Sangak[30] is by far the most prevalent variety of almond with 83% of farmers producing it, followed by Kaghazi[31] (38%) and Sattarbayi[32] (23%). Six percent of farmers have also reported cultivating Abdul Wahidi[33] almond. Other types of almond varieties are almost non-existing in the target areas. It means that improved almond varieties, which could generate higher yields, are drought-resistant and carry higher market prices, is low in the target areas. The project has supported 10 nurseries (four in phase I; six in phase II) through the provision of improved saplings, provision, and application of fertilizer, technical assistance to nursery owners, fencing of the nurseries as well as grafting of the saplings. The four nurseries (two women-led; two men-led) established in Phase I have produced more than 20, 000 saplings each, all of which are either sold or used by the nursery owners themselves. The evaluation shows that the women-led nurseries have yielded positive results, while the men-led had performed below expectations due to lack of timely and regular irrigation. The owners of women-led nurseries intend to establish the nurseries again, while it is unclear whether the owners of men-led nurseries will continue investing in nurseries or switch to the cultivation of a crop. The field observation also confirms that nurseries have been replicated, although at a small scale, by other members of the community who did not directly benefit from the project.

The quantitative data show that 90% of the almond-producing households stated that nurseries of almond sapling are available at the district or provincial level, but 71% reported that they have procured saplings from the nurseries. Around 89% of all the 71% who have accessed the services reported high or somewhat satisfaction from the improved varieties of saplings.

The evaluation indicates that the adoption of improved almond varieties is on the lower side. Nonetheless, compared to the start of the project, there are considerable improvements. For instance, 91% of farmers were cultivating Sangak at the start of the project, higher than the current 83%. More importantly, four percent of the farmers were cultivating Kaghazi almond, while the evaluation exhibits that 38% of the farmers are cultivating this improved variety. This is almost a 10-fold increase in the adoption of Kaghazi almond for cultivation. Many farmers are yet to adopt new almond varieties as they lack financial resources to purchase saplings of improved and high yield varieties. Besides, at the start of the project, farmers were suspicious regarding the yield from improved varieties, but the issue was addressed to an extent when community members noticed the higher yield from new varieties. Nonetheless, farmers tend to cultivate Sangak along with the new varieties as a hedging strategy to sustain their livelihood.

Similarly, just four percent of the farmers were associated with the production of Sattarbayi almond, almost six times lower than right now (235). Furthermore, no farmer reported cultivating Abdul Wahidi, Qaharbai, and Qambari varieties of almonds at the beginning of the project in 2015. Presently, six

[30] Sangak almond has a hard shell and relatively small nut and difficult to break by hand.
[31] Kaghazi almond, literally translated as paper almonds has a soft shell and can easily be broken by hand.
[32] Sattarbai is a high-quality softshell almond known for excellent favor, and no bitterness.
[33] Abdul Wahidi variety originates from the Northern Province of Samangan with a very long length and width of the nut. It has a hard shell and difficult to break with a hand.

percent of farmers are producing Abdul Wahidi almond, followed by two percent Qaharbai,[34] and one percent Qambari.[35] Overall, the evaluation concludes that there is a notable improvement in the use of improved almond varieties, although there is still considerable room for improvement.

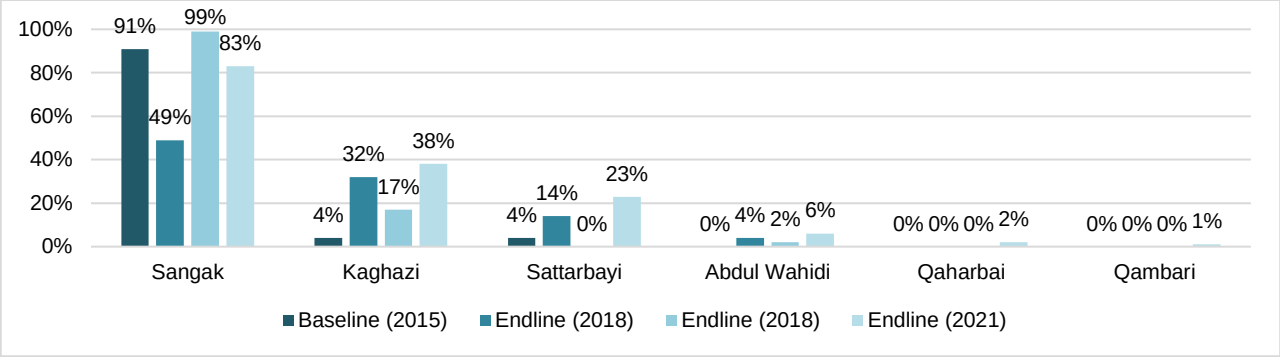

Figure 17: Cultivation of Almond Varieties

At present, the market price of seven kilograms of Sangak almonds is 650-700 AFN, the lowest among all almond varieties. Kaghazi almond is the second lowest-priced variety of almonds with a current market price of 1,500 AFN per seven kilograms, followed by Abdul Wahidi (2,000 AFN). Sattarbayi is one of the highest-priced varieties of almonds with a market price of 3,500 AFN. Qaharbai and Qambari were priced around 2,000 – 2,500 AFN per seven kilograms. The current market prices indicate that the cultivation of new and improved varieties can considerably increase farmers' income. It is worth highlighting that some farmers have recently begun the cultivation of new varieties, and it takes around three years until they will yield for the first time. This is also a reason that farmers are hesitant to switch to new almond varieties. That is, if they completely and immediately replace Sangak with a new variety, they would not have alternative livelihood means to meet their needs. The evaluation also examined whether the farmers were introduced to the new almond varieties by Oxfam or any other actors. Around three-fourths of the farmers (74%) who are cultivating the new almond, varieties stated that they learned about those directly from Oxfam, while another 22% reported that they learned it from farmers who were direct beneficiaries of Oxfam. The remaining four percent named government and other NGOs as the source of learning.

3.6.2 Dairy Production

The median weekly litres of milk produced by a goat is reported at 5.25 litres, while for sheep and cows, the production levels stand at 3.5 and 10.4 litres, respectively. It is worth noting that on average, dairy producing households have 3.57 goats (2.63 milk-producing), 3.10 sheep (2.13 milk-producing), and 0.92 cows (0.54 milk-producing). Furthermore, out of the 5.25 litres produced by a goat in a week, 2.9 litres is consumed domestically, while 2.33 litres is sold at an average price tag of 24 AFN per litre. For sheep, 1.6 litres is consumed within the household, while 1.87 is sold at a price of 24.6 AFN per litre. For cows, 5.3 litres is consumed and 5.1 is sold at an average price of 25 AFN. Out of all the milk produced, 51% is consumed domestically while 49% is sold at an average price of 24.5 AFN per litre.

Key Highlight

The target households reported a sharp increase in dairy production compared to the baseline. The increase is due to the distribution of improved goat varieties, livestock training, and improved access to vaccination.

[34] Qaharbai variety has a hard shell with long length and medium width nut.
[35] Qambari variety has a unique taste and very softshell, hence highly valued in the market.

A comparison with the baseline shows a significant increase in milk production. At the start of the project, the median weekly litres of milk produced by a goat was 1.75, substantially lower than right now. Similarly, the 2015 baseline indicates that a sheep on average produced 1 litre of milk in a week, more than two-fold lower than the milk production reported by the final evaluation. Furthermore, the median weekly milk production for cow stands at 10.4 litres, almost three-fold higher than the baseline value. The increase in milk production is associated with the distribution of improved goat varieties, livestock training, and improved access to livestock vaccination services. To calculate annual milk production, the dairy-producing households were asked about the average number of months in a year when the livestock give milk. The median number of milking months for cows is reported at 6.5, followed by goat and sheep with four months each. Considering the number of months the milk is produced and the weekly milk production, the annual milk production for goats is estimated at 90 litres per year, while for sheep, it is 60 litres. While a cow on average produced 290 litres of milk in a year.

Table 13: Weekly and annual milk Production by Livestock Type

Livestock Type	Weekly Production (Litre)	# of Milking Months	Annual Milk Production (Litre)
Goat	5.25	4	90
Sheep	3.50	4	60
Cow	10.4	6.5	290

3.6.3 Use of Improved Agriculture Practices

As stated above, a key project activity was the establishment of demonstration plots in the target areas through which almond producers and the officials of the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (DAIL) could learn modern agriculture practices. About 85% of the almond producers indicated that, in the last seven years, either they or their household members visited the almond orchard demonstration plots for training and learning purposes. The remaining 15% reported that neither they nor their household members had been to the demonstration plots.

The evaluation team determined the prevalence of improved almond production practices in target communities. The almond producers were asked whether they use any of the modern practices listed in the table below. The data reflect that just five percent of the farmers have not used any of the modern agricultural practices, while an absolute majority of them (95%) have used one or more practices. Based on the project's M&E plan, the target for the project was that 80% of the target almond producers apply new agricultural practices.

About three-quarters (73%) of the almond producers have adopted improved water management techniques, followed by using improved soil management (69%) and sorting/grading of almonds (68%). Almond producers who trade with the almond social enterprises sell their products to it, which then use the machinery provided by the project to sort the almonds. Farmers who do not engage with the enterprise, most of which are in Nilli, use manual methods for sorting almonds. 64% indicated pest and disease management, followed by terracing, and trenching, and new pruning methods with 61% and 54%, respectively. About 51% of the almond producers have been using improved packaging, while 38% reportedly use line cultivation when it came to the design of their orchard.

Table 14: Use of Improved Agricultural Practices among Almond Producers

Agriculture Practice	Baseline (2015)	End line (2018)	Baseline (2019)[36]	End line (2021)
None	N/A	7%	92%	5%
Improved water management	N/A	64%	8%	73%
Improved soil management	N/A	21%	8%	69%

[36] The 2019 baseline was conducted in 20 new communities where BRL did not implement any interventions in the foundation phase.

Sorting/grading of almonds	N/A	15%	2%	68%
Improved packaging	N/A	18%	1%	51%
Terracing and trenching	N/A	37%	2%	61%
Pest and disease management	N/A	23%	7%	64%
New pruning methods	N/A	93%	3%	54%
New orchard design	N/A	32%	1%	38%

Drip irrigation adopted by a farmer in Nilli, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat from Oxfam

The 2015 baseline has not captured the extent to which farmers used improved agricultural practices at the start of the project. This makes the measurement of the change in the adoption of new agricultural practices challenging to carry out. Nonetheless, the comparison of the evaluation data with the 2018 End line and the 2019 baseline shows that there is a significant improvement in the use of improved agricultural practices among the almond producers. The evaluation also explored the sources from which the farmers learned the new agricultural practices. 76% indicated that they learned it directly from Oxfam, while 22% stated that they learned it from farmers who were the direct beneficiaries of the BRL project. Just two percent have learned it from the government or other development stakeholders.

Moreover, when asked whether the adoption of the new almond production practices increased the yield, an absolute majority of the almond producers responded in the affirmative (82%). Two percent stated that there had been no change in their yield, while 15% were undecided at the time of the interview. This could be because some of the farmers recently started using the new agricultural practices, and it takes up to three years until they realise their potential. In other words, it is too early to muse about change in the yield.

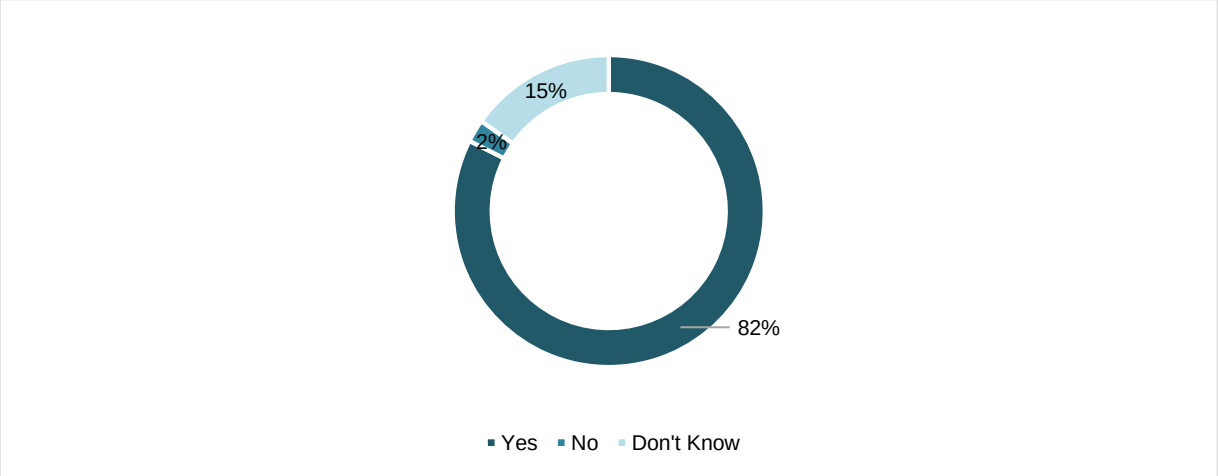

Figure 18: Change in Yield Due to Adoption of Improved Agricultural Practices

Through promoting disease monitoring and management practices, the project has aimed to achieve a 33% reduction in the incidence of disease in almond trees in the target areas. The evaluation shows that 37% of the trees are reportedly hit by diseases, while the 2019 baseline indicates that 81% of the trees faced diseases. This is a 44% decline in the number of trees hit by the diseases, higher than the target value (33%). The 2015 baseline and the 2018 end line evaluation have not captured the percentage of trees that were hit by the diseases, making it challenging to do the comparison. Out of the 37% trees reportedly struck by diseases, Safidak is the most common disease with 46%, followed by Shepeshak (21%), Aatshak (10%), and Chickak (nine percent). Eight percent of the trees are hit by Charbak (caused by aphids), four percent by Mur-e-Khaymasaz, and two percent by Mur-e-Pat-Dar.

Additionally, the almond--producing households were asked whether they had used the services of the agriculture services centres, to which 88% nodded in affirmative while 12% stated that they had not used the services. It is worth highlight that the project has established two agricultural service centres on a private basis, one each in Nilli and Sharistan districts. Both centres were found functional during the fieldwork. The data also point to an increase in the usage of the agriculture centres' services among the target almond producers. At the start of the project, no such centre existed which the producers could subscribe to. The 2018 End line demonstrated that 43% of the almond producers had used the services of the centres, while the 2019 baseline surveys indicated that 17% of the almond producers in the 20 new villages had utilized the services. Compared to the start of the project, the service users have substantially increased. Nonetheless, the project has fallen short of meeting its target of 100%. Based on the M&E plan, the project aimed that 100% of the targeted almond producers would access technical services, while the data show that 88% of the farmers accessed the centres' services.

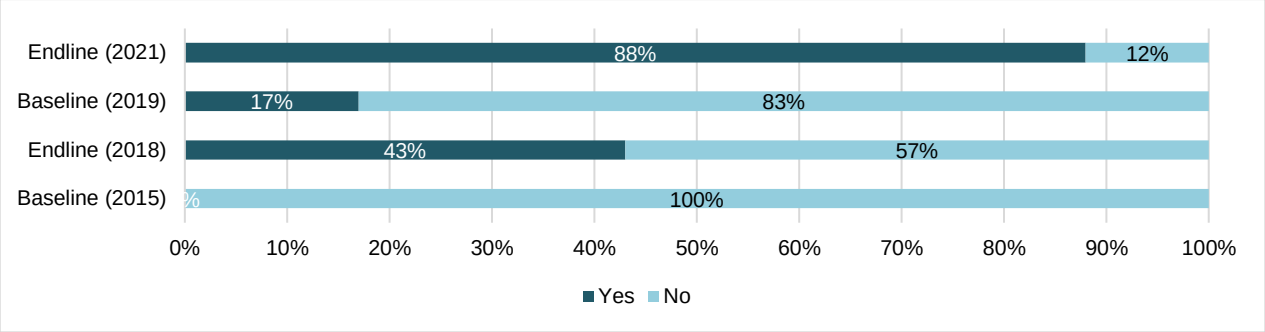

Figure 19: Use of the Oxfam-Supported Agriculture Service Centres

88% of the producers, who had used the services of the agriculture service centres, were probed about its service quality. More than half of them (61%) indicated high satisfaction from the services, followed by somewhat satisfaction (38%). Only a negligible one percent of the almond producers expressed dissatisfaction with the services. 12% of the producers who had not used the services were asked to outline the reasons for not utilizing the services. More than half (54%) of these producers pointed to its high treatment cost for not utilising the services of the centres, followed by poor services (24%), lack of knowledge about the centre (21%), and long-distance to the centre (19%). The mountainous terrain of Daikundi province makes it difficult for some producers to access the services of the centres. The villages are located far away from each other as well as the underdeveloped road infrastructure makes it challenging for farmers to access the agricultural services centres, which are established in mere two points, easily and economically.

Case Study III: Terracing and Trenching Widely Replicated in the Target Areas

Replication of terracing and trenching method, Nilli, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat from Oxfam

The evaluation shows that the trenching and terracing method is widely replicated by farmers in communities where Oxfam has implemented the BRL project. In this method, a terrace is a levelled section of a cultivated slope, designed as a method of soil conservation to slow the rapid surface runoff of rainwater. Less steep slopes mean the water runs slower and has more time to infiltrate, which helps to store water in the soil profile and keeps nutrients and soil particles from washing away from the field[37].

Oxfam rehabilitated 21.6 hectares of land in the foundation phase, and in the extension phase, it rehabilitated a further 22 hectares of land in the target communities. At the start of the project, the community members were suspicious about the effectiveness of the terracing and trenching method to rehabilitate hillside land, which was previously abandoned and regarded unfit for cultivation.

The evaluation team through field observation and consultations with farmers gathered data on the amount of land rehabilitated through the terracing and trenching method in 10 target communities. On average, approximately 3.8 hectares of land is rehabilitated in each of the 10 target villages by farmers through the replication of the terracing and trenching method. The field observations confirmed the widespread application of the method for almond cultivation and other crops such as apricot and pistachio. Sayed Ali Akbar, a farmer and a core member of the Kharjeel CDC in Nilli describes his experience with terracing and trenching as follows: “Oxfam supported a farmer in my community with rehabilitating his land using terracing and trenching. When I saw that the farmer was able to transform an abandoned hillside land that was never used into agriculture land. It encouraged me to use this method [terracing and trenching]. I had some savings and decided to rehabilitate 10 Jerib [equivalent to two hectares] of land and currently, I have planted Sattarbayi and Kaghazi almond saplings in it”.

Additionally, when asked to outline the most impactful activity of the BRL project, the Provincial Director of Agriculture responded with terracing and trenching. The Director further stated, “Land is critical to livelihood in Daikundi because of its mountainous geography and lack of adequate non-agricultural livelihood sources. Oxfam has successfully converted abandoned land on the hillsides into agricultural land, which has expanded the target groups’ asset base as well as directly improves their agricultural yield and food security”.

The farmers also reported that the application of the terracing and trenching method has proven effective in flood mitigation because it allows rains to soak into the soil rather than run off and cause erosion. The evaluation indicates that the extension of the terracing and trenching method, which did not exist in Daikundi province before the BRL project, remains one of the most notable accomplishments of Oxfam. The method is quite popular; it could be adopted for the rehabilitation of more hillsides.

3.6.4 Use of Improved Dairy Practices

According to the M&E plan, the BRL project aimed that 80% of the dairy producers would apply new technologies, knowledge, and skills to their dairy practices so that there was a 33% increase in the vaccinated livestock. The evaluation finds that only 12% of the dairy producers have not used any of the improved dairy production practices, but an absolute majority (88%) have adopted one or more of the practices listed in the table below. This means that the project has exceeded its target of 80%. There is an increase in the use of various dairy practices in contrast to the 2018 end line evaluation and the 2019 Baseline survey, while the 2015 Baseline has not captured the prevalence of dairy practices among the target communities, except for vaccination.

[37] https://waterportal.rwb.rw/toolbox/466

As shown in the table below, 76% of dairy producers indicated that they vaccinated their livestock, substantially higher than 20% at the start of the project. It is worth clarifying that the 2019 Baseline was administered at the start of the extension phase in the new communities, which were not targeted during the foundation phase. There is also an increase in livestock disease monitoring with 44% higher than the 2019 baseline and the 2018 end line with 31% and four percent, respectively. The use of artificial insemination remains on the lower end with 13% of dairy producers using it presently. This is primarily due to the inability of the dairy producers to afford artificial insemination given the prevalence of poverty in the target areas.

More than half (52%) of the dairy producers reportedly use improved feeding techniques, higher than the 2018 End line (33%). Furthermore, a quarter of the dairy producers stated that they used improved packaging for their dairy products, which is an 11-fold increase over the 2018 end line and the 2019 baseline. The use of portable milking machines remains highly restricted with just five percent of the dairy-producing households utilising it.

Table 15: Use of Improved Dairy Practices

Dairy Practices	Baseline (2015)	End line (2018)	Baseline (2019)	End line (2021)
None	N/A	42%	77%	12%
Livestock vaccination	20%	47%	14%	76%
Livestock disease monitoring	N/A	31%	4%	44%
Artificial insemination	N/A	2%	2%	13%
Best feeding techniques	N/A	33%	N/A	52%
Improved packaging	N/A	3%	3%	33%
Use of portable milking machines	N/A	3%	0%	5%

When asked who taught them the improved dairy practices, an absolute majority (88%) confirmed that they have it directly from Oxfam, followed by the private sector (eight percent). One percent stated that they learned it from the government and the residual three percent stated that they learned it from other sources such as the community members. This implies that the use of improved dairy practices is largely due to the contribution of the BRL project.

The 88% of dairy producers were subsequently asked about whether there was an increase in dairy products after the adoption of modern and updated practices. An overwhelming 91% responded affirmatively followed by four percent indicating no increase in the diary output, and six percent was undecided at the time of the fieldwork. The in-depth consultations reveal that livestock vaccination has played a key role in increasing dairy production. According to the dairy producers, vaccination services were not available in the past, and the livestock mortality rate was high, which directly impacted dairy production. With the establishment of veterinary clinics, which also offer mobile services, there is a notable increase in vaccination, thus lowering livestock mortality.

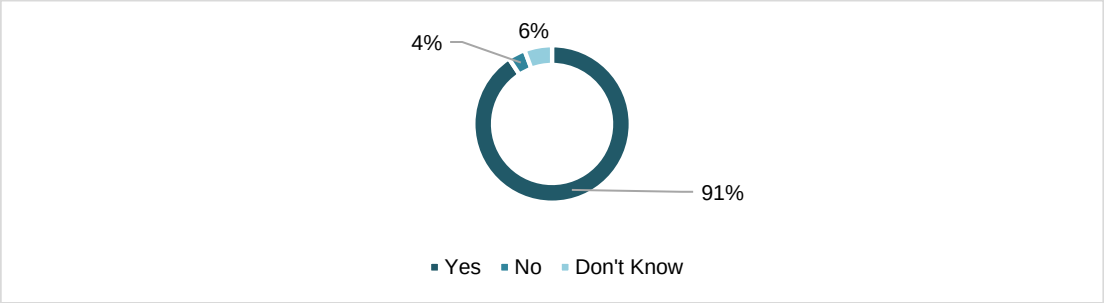

Figure 20: Change in Dairy Production Due to Adoption of Improved Practices

As mentioned above, the project aimed to achieve a 33% increase in the number of dairy livestock vaccinated. On average, dairy-producing households have 3.57 goats, out of which 2.76 are vaccinated, equivalent to 77% of all goats. The average number of sheep owned by dairy-producing households stands at 3.1 on average, 2.42 of which are vaccinated. These equal 78% of all the vaccinated sheep. On the other hand, on average, a dairy-producing household has less than a cow (0.92), meaning not every household targeted in the dairy value chain has a cow. Out of all the cows owned, 0.90 are vaccinated, equivalent to 97%.

These findings demonstrate that dairy producers tend to pay more attention to the vaccination of cows compared to goats and sheep. This is understandable given the higher milk production by cows, and they are more costly to procure in contrast to goats and sheep. Hence, it should not be surprising that the target households tend to vaccinate them so they do not lose them and maintain their milk production.

Table 16: Livestock Vaccination

Livestock Type	Average Number of Livestock	Average Number of Livestock Vaccinated
Goat	3.57	2.76
Sheep	3.1	2.42
Cow	0.92	0.90

To promote the use of dairy production practices the project supported the establishment of two veterinary clinics in the foundation phase, one each in Nilli and Sharistan districts. The project trained the owners of the clinics for six months and provided them in-kind support to kick off their clinics. Besides, the project has linked the dairy-producing groups with the para-vets for livestock treatment, vaccination, and other similar services. The para-vet based in Sharistan district runs the clinic successfully and has even facilitated the training of his spouse in veterinary to deliver services to the communities. This clinic reported a substantial revenue stream and with a client base beyond the province. A key feature of the clinic is that it offers mobile services to livestock owners, which has played a significant role in high demand for its services. In terms of sustainability, the clinic is highly likely to self-sustain beyond the project funding cycle.

Key Highlight

The veterinary clinic established in Sharistan district provides services not only in Daikundi but also in the neighboring Urozgan province, which is highly volatile with highly limited access to livestock vaccination and treatment.

Contrastingly, the individual who established the clinic in the Nilli district during the foundation phase had left Afghanistan for personal reasons. The clinic stopped working during the foundation phase, and the owner did not return the equipment to the project, despite multiple attempts by Oxfam. Given that there was a need for a veterinary clinic in the Nilli district, Oxfam supported another individual in the extension phase, though the level of support was limited. The clinic is currently functional, but being recently established, it is yet to be as successful as the one in Sharistan.

The evaluation also analysed the extent to which the dairy-producing households are using the services of the veterinary clinics established by the project. An absolute majority (89%) of the respondents in the dairy value chain stated that they had used the services of the Oxfam-supported veterinary clinics, while 11% had not. The project had aimed at 100% of targeted dairy producers to have access to technical support services. Given that 89% of the dairy producers accessed the services, the project has fallen short of meeting its intended target. The primary reasons that 11% of the respondents have not used the clinic services include high treatment costs and long distances. According to the livestock owners, it is challenging to move livestock in underdeveloped road

infrastructure to the clinics for vaccination or treatment. To address this issue, both veterinary clinics have started providing mobile services at the doorsteps of the dairy producers, even in districts not targeted by the BRL project. In exceptional cases, the para-vets even go to the nearby Urozgan province for service delivery.

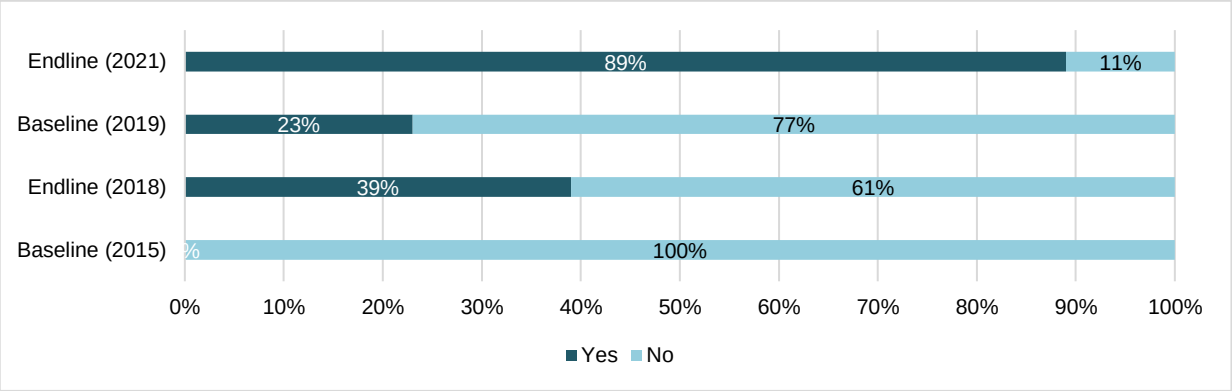

Figure 21: Use of the Oxfam-Supported Veterinary Clinics

The 89% of the dairy producers were asked how they rate the quality of the services they received from the Oxfam-supported veterinary clinics. More than three-quarters (76%) reported high satisfaction, followed by mere satisfaction and dissatisfaction with 18% and six percent, respectively. Those who exhibited a lack of satisfaction were probed to outline the underlying reasons behind this. They cited poor quality and limited range of services, and inflated prices as factors for poorly rating the clinic services.

Case Study IV: Promoting Livestock Vaccination and Treatment Services through Para-vet

Dr. Din Mohammad is a para-vet based in the Sharistan district of Daikundi province. He has completed high school (grade 12) and currently operating a successful veterinary clinic.

Veterinary Clinic, Sharistan, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat

Dr. Din Mohammad was jobless when he received an opportunity from the BRL project to get trained for six-month in veterinary aimed at increasing the availability of livestock vaccination and treatment in the district. Unemployment is the most pressing challenge facing youth in the province and a majority of youth tend to move to other parts of the country or migrate to neighbouring countries, particularly Iran to find employment to make ends meet.

Prior to the establishment of the project, there was no para-vet in the Sharistan district. The culture of livestock vaccination was almost non-existing, according to Dr. Din Mohammad. The mortality rate among livestock was also high because of a lack of access to modern livestock treatment practices and medicine.

Oxfam trained Dr. Din Mohammad for six months and supported him to establish a veterinary clinic. He received inputs as well as equipment including a

motorcycle as an in-kind contribution. He is currently regarded as one of the best para-vet in the province and is running a successful clinic with an estimated monthly profit of 50,000 AFM. Besides that, he has facilitated the training of his wife, who has recently established a veterinary clinic of her own in the Sharistan district. Despite the fact that his wife's clinic is newly established, it generates a monthly profit of 30,000 AFN. Both clinics are profitable and will remain sustainable beyond the project funding cycle.

A unique feature of the services offered by the couple is the mobile services. Dr. Din Mohammad uses the motorbike given to him by Oxfam to provide livestock services to customers at their doorsteps, which significantly reduces the transportation cost for customers and encourages them to vaccinate and treat their livestock. More notably, Dr. Din Mohammad's client base is extensive and includes livestock owners from Sharistan and also from other districts and even in certain parts of the neighbouring Urozgan province.

The establishment of the veterinary clinic has increased the availability of the livestock owners to livestock vaccination and treatment, which previously was highly limited. More than three-quarters (76%) of the livestock owners are reportedly vaccinating their livestock, almost four times higher compared to the baseline (20%).

3.6.5 Availability of Water for Irrigation

The project has aimed to increase the volume of available water for irrigation by 50% through improvements to sources and upstream capture in the target communities. To achieve this, the project implemented 131 small-scale irrigation projects, 80 in the foundation phase and the remaining 51 in the extension phase. These projects include water pools, reservoirs, pipe schemes, and other similar water management and irrigation measures.

The irrigation projects remain highly popular among the target groups. They have become more relevant this year when the province has experienced low precipitation, and there is a high likelihood of drought. One of the key features of these projects is their participatory approach. The communities provided labor – and in certain cases, even resources such as sand, gravel, and stones– to implement the projects efficiently. Besides that, it has resulted in a high degree of sense of ownership among the communities about the irrigation projects. The evaluation team noted numerous cases where the irrigation projects implemented by the project have expanded the agricultural land and by extension the agricultural output and income of the target groups. For instance, in Payan Bagh Lazir of Nilli, Oxfam provided a 1,000 meter-long high-quality pipe scheme to transfer water from the nearby community to irrigate the land of 95 households. The land was previously abandoned due to water shortage but since the implementation of the pipe scheme, it is rehabilitated and used by the households for cultivating almonds, vegetables, and other crops.

Key Highlight

There is a decline in the local water-related conflicts as a result of the irrigation projects implemented by Oxfam. An increase in water and just and fairer water distribution has reduced community conflicts.

The field observations highlight that water pool and pipe schemes have also been replicated by those farmers who can afford these measures. Individuals interested to replicate the water irrigation projects have also received technical assistance such as drawings on a complimentary basis. However, compared to terracing and trenching, the replication of water pool and pipe schemes is relatively less. This is largely because the farmers cannot afford to implement such projects.

The respondents further reported that the implementation of the irrigation projects has also contributed to a decline in the local water-related conflicts. According to them, an increase in water because of the irrigation projects and just and fairer water distribution has reduced the community conflicts over water.

The evaluation measured whether farmers had access to adequate water or not for irrigation. Less than a quarter (29%) of the almond-producing households stated that the water in their areas was enough for irrigation, while more than half (59%) indicated that the water was somewhat adequate. The residual 13% of the farmers stated that the water in their villages was not enough to irrigate their land. The 2015 baseline has not captured the adequacy of the water in the target areas. Thus, it is challenging to measure change compared to the start of the project. That said, the 2019 baseline shows that more than half (56%) of the almond producers complained about inadequate water, followed by "somewhat adequate" and "fully adequate" with 39% and five percent, respectively. It reflects a 43% improvement in farmers' access to water compared to the 2019 baseline survey. Despite this improvement, water shortage is significant in the target communities, which and will be felt even more this year as the precipitation level in Daikundi was reportedly lower than in the previous years. The communities demanded that the government and NGOs invest substantially more in water irrigation projects, focusing on check dams, water pools, and pipe schemes.

3.6.6 Flood Protection Measures

The target communities are highly vulnerable to flooding due to the mountainous topography of the area, which directly impacts the agricultural land, thus putting their food security and livelihood at risk. One of the most impactful interventions of the project has been the implementation of 52 small-scale flood protection measures, 34 in the foundation phase, and 19 in the extension phase. A key highlight of the flood protection measures has been the extensive contribution of the target community members. The projects are implemented through the CDCs, which contributes to the workforce. This has resulted in high ownership of the projects among the target community members. The underlying reason behind the community's high contribution is attributable to the fact that Oxfam has consulted the community members extensively and selected projects that are of high priority to their food security and livelihood.

To determine the extent of the flood protection projects on the livelihood of the target groups, the evaluation team gather the following data on 11 randomly selected projects. The evaluation assessed the projects in terms of the size of land protected, whether the land is cultivated by the farmers or not, the total worth of the land, and the potential annual revenue from the land. On average, each of the observed projects has protected 23.4 Jerib with an estimated worth of 15,290,909 AFN (197,302.05 USD) and annual recurrent revenue of 1,647,727 AFN (21,261 USD). It is worth highlighting that the stated data has been gathered based on consultation with farmers whose land was protected by the flood mitigation projects. Overall, the evaluation concludes that the flood protection projects are of immense economic value, as they directly contribute to the food security and livelihood of the target communities.

Table 17: Livelihood Impact of Flood Protection Projects

Mean Land Size Protected (Jerib)	Mean Land Worth	Mean Annual Yield
23.4	15,290,909 AFN	1,647,727.27 AFN
	197,302.05 USD	21,261 USD

The respondents were also asked about the effectiveness of the flood protection measures in preventing floods and securing the agricultural land and other economic assets of the target households. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents (64%) rated the flood mitigation measures implemented in their areas as highly effective, followed by somewhat effective (35%). One percent of

the respondents were undecided. Surprisingly, just one individual indicated that these projects were not effective at all in preventing flooding.

The application of terracing and trenching cultivation methods also contribute to flooding mitigation in the target areas. According to the farmers, terracing and trenching allows rain to soak into the soil rather than running off result in flooding.

Case Study V: Flood protection measures positively impacting food security and livelihood system

Agricultural land protected by a flood protection measure, Nilli, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat from Oxfam

Due to the mountainous terrain of Daikundi province, agricultural land is highly scarce and considered critical to the livelihood of the target communities. At the request of the community members, Oxfam designed a protection wall in the Lazir area of Nilli district. The community members advocated with the World Food Program (WFP) to fund the protection wall. WFP utilized the design and drawings prepared by Oxfam and constructed a high-quality Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) protection wall, which protected a sizable amount of land. Nonetheless, the protection wall was not long enough and a considerable amount of land was still vulnerable to flooding.

Oxfam, along with extensive contribution by the community members, funded the remaining 220-meter long protection wall. Due to budgetary limitations, Oxfam constructed a gabion retaining wall rather than the RCC which is several times more costly. A key feature of the retaining wall has been that the community members contributed labor and to some extent materials in its construction, which has resulted in a considerable degree of ownership among the community. The protection wall and the retaining wall combined have protected dozens of Jerib of land, which was previously abandoned. The land was destroyed more than half a century ago by a flood. A 78-year old community member recalls the flood: “I was 11 or 12 years old when the flood destroyed the land and since then nobody had made any attempt to rehabilitate it because it was vulnerable to flooding”. The farmers are cultivating

wheat, potato, onions, and other types of agricultural produce in the rehabilitated land, playing a vital role in their food security and livelihood systems.

Agricultural output from the land protected by the flood protection measure, Nilli, Daikundi. Photo by Mahtab Hikmat from Oxfam

3.6.7 Fodder Production

The BRL project has rehabilitated 39 Jerib of pasture in the target areas and established pasture management committees with a primary mandate to protect the natural resources. The project has provided communities with input support such as seeds (Atriplex, Camay, and Gheegho), alfalfa, wood, and fencing wire, and trained the committee members on better and new grazing methods. The evaluation shows that pasture rehabilitation has produced mixed results, as its success is mainly dependent on the climate and access to water. Areas hit more intensely by drought and lacking adequate water did not witness noticeable pasture rehabilitation.

The dairy producers were asked whether they were producing adequate fodder for their livestock, to which 57% responded in affirmative, but 43% were short of providing fodder for their livestock. Compared to the baseline, there is a marginal improvement in fodder production. Nearly half (48%) of the livestock owners indicated that, before the project, they had sufficient fodder for their livestock, marginally lower than presently (57%). 52% did not have adequate fodder at the beginning of the project, and currently, 43% reported the same. The in-depth consultations with farmers show that, in some communities, there is a decline in fodder, primarily due to high droughts and limited precipitation in recent years. Overall, there is a slight increase in the number of livestock owners who can produce adequate fodder for the livestock, while a considerable number still do not.

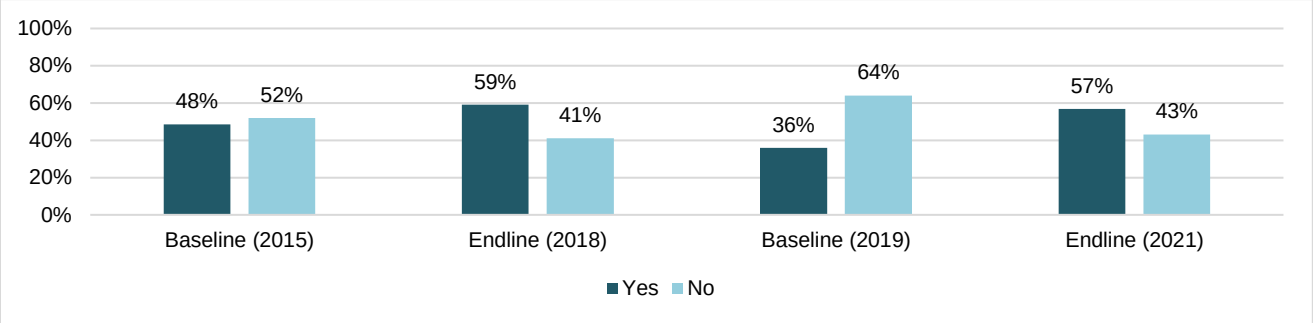

Figure 22: Sufficiency of fodder for livestock

3.7 INCOME GENERATION POTENTIAL AND ADAPTATION OPTIONS FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

Under objective III, the project has targeted the most vulnerable households to increase their income and well-being through an improvement in vegetable production, goat distribution, skill development, and saffron production. To accomplish this, the project has established 101 greenhouses, distributed 700 high yield goats to 350 households (two per household), and increase the vocational skills of 178 individuals to help them become more employable in the marketplace. The project has also created 31 demonstration plots of saffron in 20 communities to encourage farmers to cultivate it to potentially reap higher returns on investment.

3.7.1 Impact of Greenhouses on Vegetable Production

The evaluation looked at the extent to which the greenhouses distributed by the project remain functional. About two-thirds (62%) of the respondents who had received the greenhouses were using them for vegetable production, while the remaining 38% indicated that they no longer used them/those. The farmers reported that the number of vegetables the greenhouses produced was not large enough to sell in the marketplace to generate an income. Other farmers stated that they did not have adequate water to cultivate vegetables in the greenhouses.

The evaluation asked the respondents whether other households in the area replicated the greenhouses. Approximately two-thirds (62%) of the respondents stated that no one in their villages replicated greenhouses, followed by 23% who reported the replication of greenhouses by others in the area. The remaining 15% responded with “don’t know”. The limited replication of the greenhouses by other households is understandable given that the greenhouses did not produce the desired results. That said, the evaluation notes that a key purpose of the greenhouse distribution was also to build the capacity of women on how to grow different types of vegetables and to diversify and improve their food intake within the households.

Despite the relatively limited success of the greenhouses, there is a notable change in vegetable production in the target areas. At the start of the project, two-thirds (67%) of the target households were not producing any vegetable, almost twice higher than the current 38%. Similarly, the target households harvested six types of vegetables at the beginning of the project. At the time of the fieldwork, however, the target households produced 15 varieties of vegetables. It is a 2.5-fold increase in terms of the variety of vegetable production in contrast to the baseline.

Table 18: Involvement in Vegetable Production

Type of Vegetables	Baseline (2015)	End line (2018)	Baseline (2019)	End line (2021)
No	67%	0%	87%	38%
Carrot	17%	17%	3%	15%

Corn	0%	8%	4%	0%
Cucumber	0%	25%	0%	31%
Eggplant	8%	42%	5%	31%
Green bean	0%	8%	0%	0%
Lettuce	8%	92%	0%	46%
Onion	25%	67%	3%	46%
Radish	0%	67%	0%	54%
Tomato	25%	58%	6%	38%
Garlic	0%	8%	0%	8%
Turnip	0%	25%	0%	8%
Spinach	0%	25%	0%	15%
Mint	0%	8%	0%	15%
Green Pepper	0%	8%	0%	0%
Potato	0%	0%	7%	8%
Cauliflower	0%	0%	0%	8%
Pumpkin	0%	0%	0%	31%

The data indicate that, on average, the vegetable-producing households produce 24.8 kilos of vegetables. The baseline has not captured the vegetable production, making it difficult to measure the change in vegetable production. Out of the total produced vegetables, 22.2 kilograms are reportedly consumed domestically by the households, equivalent to 90% of the produce. The residual 2.5% is sold for income generation purposes, contributing 10% of the entire vegetables produced. The purpose of distributing the greenhouses was that the vulnerable households produce vegetables for household consumption, which would help them with their food security and diversification and to generate an income from the sales of the surplus production. Given that the vegetables produced are small and largely consumed domestically rather than sold, it implies that the greenhouses have played a role in diversifying the food intake of the target households. However, the income from the vegetables produced is almost non-existing. That said, vegetable production has contributed to diversified food and nutrition intake among the target households, compared to the start of the project.

3.7.2 Goats Ownership and Milk Production

The project has distributed 700 high breeds of goats (400 foundation phase; 300 extension phase) to 350 individuals (two per person) for extension purposes and increasing the milk production of the vulnerable households. The increased milk production by the vulnerable households would then support the operations of the dairy processing social enterprises. In the foundation phase, the project distributed 400 Pakistani beetal goats. These are widely known for their high milk production capacity and high fertility rates. However, soon after the distribution, 152 of the 400 goats (38%) died due to climate adaptability issues. Some respondents believe that the goats perished due to the outbreak of Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) disease in the province around the distribution of goats. The project redistributed 152 local hybrid breeds of goats to the households whose goats died. Similarly, 300 local hybrid goats were distributed among the vulnerable households in the extension phase.

The evaluation looked at whether the distributed goats have resulted in any offspring or not. An absolute majority (87%) of the respondents who received the goats stated that the goats gave offspring, while 13% responded said that the goats did not give offspring. The respondents reporting offspring were probed on the number of offspring produced by the distributed goats. On average, every household received two goats, and the data suggest that the median number of offspring by the distributed goats stands at two per goat.

The evaluation also collected data on the number of goats owned by the vulnerable households. The median goat number per household stands at three, two of which are milk-producing goats, and the residual one does not produce milk. In contrast to the baseline, there is a considerable increase in the number of goats owned by vulnerable households. At the start of the project, the median goats owned by a household was reported at 0.87, more than three times lower than the present. Furthermore, the respondents were asked that how many of their current stock are high breed goats. The median number of high-yield goats out of the overall goats owned by the households stands at two.

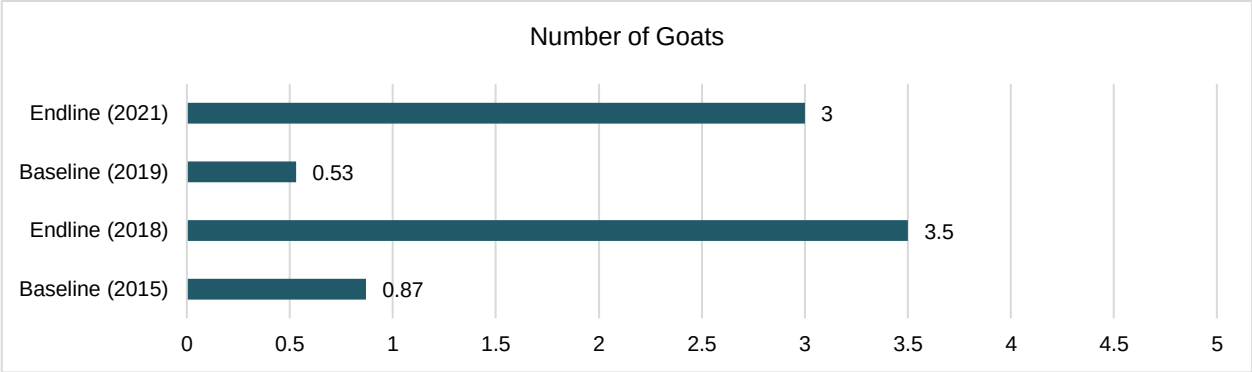

Figure 23: Goats Ownership by Vulnerable Households

The vulnerable households reported a median weekly milk production of 4.75 litres per goat, which is higher than the baseline value (1.75). When asked how many months in a year do the goats gave milk, the median number of months reported by the respondents stands at four. It implies that, on average, a goat can produce 81.4 litres per year.

A goat produces 4.75 litres of milk a week, of which 2.75 litres (58%) are consumed domestically and the rest (42%) is sold in the marketplace. The consumption of milk within the household directly contributes to the food and nutrition security of the target groups, especially for children, elderly, and ill members of the households. The median price for a litre of milk reported by the vulnerable households stands at 25 AFN. It means that the worth of milk produced by a goat in a week is 118.75 AFN. Given that the median number of goats per household is two, each produces milk worth 237.5 AFN. That said, given that the households sell 42% of the total milk produced, the actual revenue from milk sales is just 100 AFN.

3.7.3 Vocational Skills Training

The project has trained 178 individuals (100 women; 78 men) in a wide range of skills including, English and computer courses, vehicle repairing, mobile repairing, electronic repairing, and motorbike repairing, and tailoring. The project also gave the graduates toolkits to facilitate their entry into the labor market or starting their businesses. Vocational skills remain highly popular among the target groups, and the satisfaction of the graduates from the training courses is substantially high. Around two-thirds (62%) of the graduates reported high satisfaction from the training, followed by somewhat satisfaction and dissatisfaction with 30% and eight percent, respectively. Those who were dissatisfied with the training cited multiple reasons including, limited training duration, not learning a skill properly, and inadequate post-training support.

The respondents were also asked how did the vocational skill training assisted them with their living standards. As illustrated in the figure below, 13% stated that the training assisted them in finding employment in the marketplace, while 23% reported started own businesses because of the skills they

gained during the training and the toolkits provided to them. Just three percent stated that they established their businesses upon graduating from the training and create jobs for other people. The training has not helped 10% of the respondents at all in terms of improving their livelihood. But most importantly, 43% indicated improvement in their skills, but they were not able to find employment. The satisfaction from the training courses itself is overwhelmingly positive, but their impact on the livelihood of the graduates is limited.

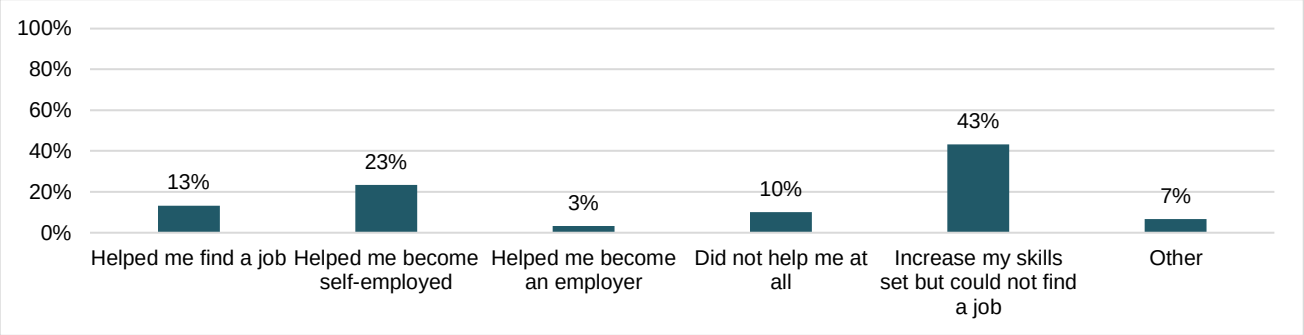

Figure 24: Contribution of Vocation Training on Target Groups' Livelihood

3.7.4 Saffron Production

The project has established 31 demonstration plots of saffron in 20 communities to encourage its cultivation as a commercial crop and for its potential to produce a higher return. At the start of the project, no farmer cultivated saffron; presently, 50% of the vulnerable individuals targeted by the project are cultivating saffron. The evaluation concludes that saffron production is still highly limited in the target areas. The interest of farmers in cultivating saffron remains extensive as they believe that it is a high-yield crop. There is substantial room for investment in promoting saffron cultivation, an area needing further exploration in future similar interventions.

3.8 PROJECT PERFORMANCE AGAINST DAC CRITERIA

The evaluation examined the project under a modified OECD's DAC criteria, namely: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Appropriateness, and Inclusion. Findings for each were rated based on the following assessment criteria.

Table 19: OECD/DAC Criteria Assessment

No	Ratings	Description
1	**Unsatisfactory**	An area where the quantum of findings is substantial enough to put the project activities and gains at considerable risk.
2	**Somewhat Satisfactory**	An area where the quantum of findings is substantial enough to partially put the project activities and gains at risk.
3	**Satisfactory**	An area where the quantum of findings is of low substantiality and may not endanger the activities and gains of the project at risk.

3.8.1 Relevance

The evaluation examined the project's relevance in terms of the need of the target groups and in terms of priorities of the government of Afghanistan. The relevance of the project goal, objectives, and activities, and the degree to which its implementation was sensitive to the local context, were also assessed under this criterion. Based on the following key findings, the evaluation rates the project's relevance as "**Satisfactory**".

- Oxfam extensively consulted government entities, CDCs, and community members in the design phase to solicit their inputs and incorporate them into the project proposal. The consultation was done in 2014 for one week through FGDs and workshops. The relevant stakeholders were also consulted before the extension phase. There is enough evidence to suggest that the design stage of the project was inclusive and participatory.
- The project remains highly relevant as it has contributed to addressing some of the most pressing challenges of the people of Daikundi province including prevailing poverty, food insecurity, management of scarce water, and vulnerability to flooding. Daikundi is one of the four provinces of Afghanistan which are considered to be in phase IV (People in Emergency) of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)[38].
- The project is also relevant in addressing the gender gap in Afghanistan, as it has invested substantially in women's social and economic empowerment. Afghanistan has scored the lowest on the 2021 Global Gender Gap Index in the world. The evaluation clearly points to a substantial improvement in women's social and economic empowerment because of the project.
- The project is also aligned with the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF). The project has directly contributed to the development strategy of ANPDF[39] as it helped to create jobs, reduce poverty, increase yields, open markets for farmers, and facilitated the social and economic inclusion of women. Moreover, the project is relevant with two National Priority Programs (NPPs) of the Afghan government, the Comprehensive Agricultural Development Program, and the Women's Economic Empowerment program.
- The project is consistent with the development component of the Comprehensive Long-term Partnership between Australia and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan[40]. Under this partnership, the Australian assistance to Afghanistan will support the development priorities and planning of the Afghan government. And, as stated above, the project contributes to ANPDF I and II. The partnership agreement also stipulates that the governments of Afghanistan and Australia will cooperate to build Afghanistan's capacity to develop and manage its natural resources and agriculture sectors transparently and effectively. The core of the BRL project involves the management of natural resources through community participation. The project is also in line with the five key strategic goals of the Australian government's aid policy: (i) saving lives, (ii) promoting opportunities for all, (iii) sustainable economic development, (iv) effective governance, and (v) humanitarian and disaster response[41]. The BRL project directly contributes to the second and third strategic goals of the Australian government's aid policy.

3.8.2 Effectiveness

The evaluation assessed the project's progress against its intended targets at the impact, outcome, and output levels. The evaluation also analysed the satisfaction of the quality of the programming. Based on the following key findings, the evaluation rates the project's effectiveness as "**Satisfactory**".

- At the impact level, there is a notable improvement in the income level of the target groups. The income of vulnerable households has increased 3.2-fold compared to the start of the project, while the increase for almond and dairy producing households stands at 83% and 69%, respectively. The project's M&E plan does not have a specific target for an increase in income level that it set out to accomplish, making it difficult to determine whether the project has

[38] https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/IPC_Afghanistan_AcuteFoodInsec_2020Aug2021March_report.pdf
[39] https://www.afghanembassy.us/contents/2017/12/documents/ANPDFEnglishWebsite.pdf
[40] https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/afghanistan/pages/comprehensive-long-term-partnership-between-australia-and-the-islamic-republic-of-afghanistan
[41] Ibid

achieved its intended goal or not. Nevertheless, given the significant increment in income, the evaluation concludes that the project has been effective in improving the income and by extension the livelihood of the target groups.

- There is an increase in spending of the target groups on health and education, an indication of improved livelihood and better economic situation compared to the start of the project. The data state that there is a 60% increase in the spending of the target groups on health and education over the baseline. The M&E plan does not contain a target value for an increase in spending on health and education. Thus, it is challenging to measure the project performance in this regard.
- Approximately three-quarters (74%) of the respondents have indicated that they eat three times a day in a month, a positive sign in terms of food security. The majority being food secure is a notable accomplishment in a province that is classified as being in phase IV of the IPC (People in Emergency). Likewise, in contrast to the start of the project, the project areas experience a reduction in the use of drastic and severe livelihood coping strategies to deal with the economic crisis.
- The project's efforts to enhance the almond producers' access to markets outside the province are highly restricted as most of them still sell their produce in markets inside Daikundi.
- The project has facilitated the engagement of women in almond and dairy value chains. The mean household index score for almond-producing households stands at 3.97, higher than the baseline (2.9), a 36% increase in percentage terms. The mean household index score for dairy-producing households is 7.3, higher than at the start of the project (4.7), a 55% increment.
- An absolute majority (97%) of the respondents either fully or partially agree that women have more skills than at the start of the project. Likewise, 88% expressed full or partial agreement that women have a higher income now than the baseline. This implies that the project has proven effective in terms of women's economic empowerment.
- Besides economic empowerment, the project has also facilitated the social engagement of women in the target areas. Around 96% of respondents fully or partially agree that, compared to the beginning of the project, women have more mobility and respect due to the project. Likewise, 96% reported the same level of agreement regarding women having more role in household decision-making than the baseline.
- There is also a positive change in the production of almonds and dairy compared to the start of the project. There is a 1.12-fold increase in almond production. The weekly milk production per cow is 5.25 litres, higher than the baseline (1.75), while for sheep it is 3.5 litres, several folds higher than at the beginning of the project (1 litre). For cows, the weekly production is 10.4 litres, three-fold higher than the baseline.
- Based on the M&E plan, the project envisaged that 80% of the target almond producers would apply new agricultural practices. The data show that 95% of the producers have applied one or more of the almond cultivation practices, hence performing better than the target.
- Through promoting disease monitoring and management practices, the project has aimed to achieve a 33% reduction in the incidence of disease in almond trees in the target areas. The evaluation points to a 44% decline, higher than the target.
- The project has also aimed that all the producers (100%) have access to technical services. According to the data, 88% of the almond producers have accessed the services of the Oxfam-supported agricultural services, short of the intended target. Similarly, 89% of dairy producers have accessed the services of the para-vets, lower than the target.
- One of the most impactful interventions of the project has been flooding mitigation measures, irrigation projects, and the application of trenching and terracing methods. All these activities have directly contributed to minimise the negative effects of flooding and remain highly environmentally friendly.

- Despite high turnover with the government entities, the working relationship of Oxfam with the provincial government entities was steady. This has helped to process the project's request without any major delays in the highly bureaucratic government system. The provincial project team, led by a dynamic female Deputy Project Manager, has established a close working relationship with the Office of the Provincial Governor, DAIL, Directorate of Women Affairs (DoWA), and Directorate of Economy (DoEC). The Provincial Governors rotated during the project life cycle, but each was personally involved in the project and even conducted visits to the project areas. Given the strong coordination with the government, the evaluation has found a strong sense of ownership among the consulted government entities regarding the BRL project.

3.8.3 Efficiency

The evaluation studied the extent to which the project had adequate resources at its disposal and whether the resources were efficiently utilized. Based on the following key findings, the evaluation as rates the project's efficiency as "**Satisfactory**".

- The project has had an adequate budget throughout the implementation. According to the project implementation team, at no point during the project implementation, an activity could be found that was under-funded. That said, the project did move funds from one budget line to another when needed.
- The project had adequate staff throughout the foundation and extension phases. The staff turnover rate was low, which kept the institutional memory alive to implement the activities without delays.
- Oxfam's working relationship with DFAT through the project was steady. Oxfam has found DFAT cooperative and responsive.
- Due to the contribution of the community members, the infrastructure projects have been implemented efficiently. The communities have contributed in terms of labor and even at times through locally available raw materials. It remains a key achievement of the BRL project.
- The procurement of machinery for enterprises had faced complications, resulting in higher costs. For instance, Oxfam imported the machines from India without knowing that legally, only business entities could import, not NGOs. This delayed the supply of machines by several months as they were stuck in the Karachi Port of Pakistan, resulting in penalty charges of more than 10,000 USD. Similarly, the almond machines require adjustments to process more than one type of almond variety. To do this, Oxfam has recently hired a local mechanic to fix the machines, which has made this activity less efficient compared to others.
- In terms of value for money, the flood protection projects remain a success. As stated in section 3.6, on average, the flood protection project has protected 23.4 Jerib of land with an estimated worth of more than 15 million AFN and an annual recurrent value of 1.6 million AFN per project.
- Oxfam has put adequate M&E resources to oversee the implementation of the project. At the provincial level, an M&E Officer was included in the team structure, who reported to the central M&E unit of Oxfam at the national level. During the evaluation, the figures of beneficiaries reported by Oxfam in its reports to DFAT were reviewed and verified. The evaluation team could not find glaring inconsistencies in the number of beneficiaries of the project's MIS.

3.8.4 Sustainability

The evaluation studied the sustainability of the project activities and gains beyond its life cycle. The criterion also looked at sustainability measures put in place by the project implementation team. Based on the following findings, the evaluation rates the project's sustainability as "**Somewhat satisfactory**".

- Over a quarter (28%) of the respondents are highly confident to sustain their current income, followed by 48% somewhat confident and two percent not confident. Notably, 22% of households were undecided about the sustainability of their income due to political instability, bleak macroeconomic context, and lack of employment opportunities in the labor market.
- In terms of sustaining the current assets level, 27% are highly confident, 49% somewhat confident and one percent not confident at all. The residual 23% were undecided at the time of the interview. This shows uncertainty about a quarter of the respondents regarding the sustainability of their current assets.
- In addition, when asked whether their households would be able to maintain their current food intake in the future, 49% nodded in affirmative, while a majority are uncertain. Agriculture serves as the backbone of food security in Daikundi province, and the respondents expressed concerns about the lack of precipitation this year and an anticipated drought.
- The sustainability of social enterprises is subject to their profitability in the future. At present, the enterprises are generating profit at a small scale and are yet to reach their future potential. If their profitability does not increase in the future, the enterprise members will likely lose interest in operating them. Besides that, the machinery provided by Oxfam to the enterprises is imported from India. This brings uncertainty whether the enterprises will find experts who could repair the machinery in case of issues in the future.
- There is a strong sense of ownership among the community members regarding the infrastructure projects. Therefore, the evaluation concludes that the community members have the will to mobilize resources either through their contribution or seek funding from government or development actors to repair and maintain the projects.
- There is also a change in the community attitudes regarding women's participation in livelihood activities. These changes are likely to remain beyond the project funding cycle and could play a key role in encouraging women to remain engaged in income-generating activities.
- The project remains viable for scale-up and replication. As stated above, there are already examples of replication of terracing and trenching and water irrigation projects among farmers who have not benefited from the project. The government officials consulted during the evaluation strongly demanded the continuation of the project and extending it to other districts of the province where almond and dairy value chains are highly under-developed.

3.8.5 Appropriateness

The evaluation looked at the project's appropriateness in terms of whether the project design and implementation were in line with the local cultural and economic realities of the target areas. Based on the following findings, the evaluation rates the project's appropriateness as **"Satisfactory".**

- The project has supplied imported machines to social enterprises, as they were not locally available. However, it is uncertain whether the enterprises will be able to find adequate technical expertise in the market to keep the machinery functional.
- Under outcome II, except for pasture rehabilitation, all the activities were in line with the local context. Pasture rehabilitation produced a mixed result and did not work in areas where there was a water shortage.
- Oxfam has opted for an appropriate implementation strategy, at the core of which is the engagement of the government entities. The working relationship between Oxfam and the government entities is steady, securing the latter's ownership towards the project, which is crucial to sustainability.
- The level of coordination between Oxfam and other development actors was adequate. No cases of duplication or waste of resources due to lack of coordination have been found. Oxfam has linked the nursery owners with the World Bank-funded National Horticulture and Livestock (NHLP) project. The latter procured high-yield saplings from the nurseries supported by the

project. Additionally, the project has had an exchange of lessons learned with other scheme-level NGOs through regular coordination meetings.

3.8.6 Inclusion

The evaluation looked at whether the project has targeted the most vulnerable segments of the society in its target groups such as people with a disability, women, vulnerable households, and others. Based on the following key findings, the evaluation rates the project's inclusion as "**Satisfactory**".

- Women remain a vulnerable segment of Afghan society, which is evident from the country's lowest rank in terms of the gender gap in the world. The project has made strides in promoting women's social and economic participation. As a result of the GALS training as well as other training administered for women and men in the target areas, there are positive changes in community members' attitudes towards women's engagement in livelihood activities. Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that women redistribute more of the unpaid care work within the household with other male household members than before the project. Oxfam had made deliberate efforts to reach out to women from vulnerable households through its interventions. For instance, in the foundation phase, the project supported two widowed females to establish nurseries, which successfully generated income. Having said that, men are still predominantly involved in the downstream of the almond and dairy value chains where economic transactions happen. Women on the other hand are mainly involved in carrying out tasks related to the upstream of the value chains.
- COVID-19 also affected women's economic empowerment. The operations of the social enterprises, which were operated by community women, were adversely impacted by COVID. The enterprises had procured raw materials at pre-COVID prices, while they found it difficult to sell it at the same rate during the COVID. The milk production also dropped due to COVID making it difficult for the dairy enterprises to remain operational.
- The project has also made an intentional effort to target people with a disability. About one-fourth (25%) of the respondents indicated a person with a disability in their household. The mean household members with a disability are 0.37. It should be noted that according to the 2019 Model Disability Survey of Afghanistan conducted by The Asia Foundation (TAF), 80% of adults in the country have some form of impairment (24.6% mild, 40.4% moderate, and 13.9% severe)[42]. As such the evaluation acknowledges Oxfam's efforts for reaching out to a considerable number of people with disabilities in the target areas.
- Through a wide range of programmatic interventions such as vocational skill development, demonstration plots, dairy production related training, and other, the project has helped people with disabilities with their livelihood skills. An absolute majority of the consulted individuals indicated that people with disabilities in their communities have more skills to earn an income than before the project. Similarly, as discussed in section 3.5.8, there is an increase in the number of people with disabilities who have an income now compared to the start of the project.
- As a result of the project's training and awareness on disability inclusion to community embers, there is a positive change in the social participation of people with disabilities. In contrast to the beginning of the project, people with disabilities are more respected and listened to, and by extension, their participation in decision-making has enhanced at the household and community levels.

[42] https://asiafoundation.org/2020/05/13/disability-survey-is-afghanistans-first-in-15-years/

CHAPTER FOUR: CHALLENGES

The project encountered the following challenges during its implementation.

- Procurement of machinery for the enterprises delayed by more than two years, which increased the cost of buying the machines than originally planned and affected the trust of the community members and the government in Oxfam's capability to operationalise the enterprises. The delays were largely associated with a lack of locally available high-quality machinery to process almonds and dairy. Besides that, Oxfam imported the machines from India without knowing that legally, only business entities can do import, not NGOs. This delayed the supply by several months as the machines were stuck in the Karachi Port of Pakistan, resulting in penalty charges of more than 10,000 USD.

- The high staff turnover rate within the government counterparts of the project has created hurdles. At the national level, the project had quarterly meetings with government agencies and due to high staff turnover within the government entities, different individuals would attend the meetings. In some cases, the individuals attending a meeting were not in the loop of decisions made in the previous meetings. At the provincial level, there was also a high turnover rate, especially at the leadership level of the province. However, the relationship at the provincial level was strong and steady. The provincial governor, the highest civil servant, was regularly engaged in the project activities.

- The performance of the project under outcome I is also undermined by the remote location of the province and by the poor road infrastructure. The project has aimed to link the producers in the dairy value chain with the actors in the provincial market. However, the transportation of dairy products on the substandard road infrastructure is costly. More importantly, dairy products are delicate, perishable commodities and poor transportation channels adversely impact their quality. Similarly, the project anticipated to link the almond producers with the national and regional markets at Kabul, Ghazni, etc. The long distance between Daikundi and the markets combined with non-existing physical infrastructure results in high transportation costs. This makes the almond produced in Daikundi less competitive in the national market.

- The limited precipitation and an anticipated drought post the most significant challenge to the target groups, whose livelihood has improved because of the project. Farmers have invested heavily in cultivating improved varieties of almond saplings, though they are yet to mature and deliver the yield. Their yield can be put at risk by the drought although the improved varieties tend to resist better to drought compared to Sangak. Besides, drought directly impacts general agricultural output, which is the backbone of livelihood in the target areas.

- COVID-19 also affected the project performance. For instance, the operations of the social enterprises were worse affected by COVID. The enterprises had procured raw materials at pre-COVID prices, while they found it difficult to sell it at the same rate during the COVID. The milk production also dropped due to COVID making it difficult for the dairy enterprises to remain operational.

- Oxfam has implemented the BRL project in a context where more than half of the target groups did not have formal education, which has proven a challenge and has adversely impacted the project performance. For instance, the social enterprise members, all women, are still struggling to effectively promote them as a business entity largely due to low education level.

CHAPTER FIVE: LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

- A key lesson learned from the BRL project is the following. Selecting infrastructure projects that are of high priority to the communities can help to secure their contribution. This has resulted in implementing impactful projects with little financial resources, achieving a high degree of efficiency. This has also created a strong sense of ownership among the community members, which is vital to the sustainability of a project.

- In Phase I, the pasture rehabilitation generated mixed results. Pasture cultivated in areas closer to water resources generated better results compared to those far from it. Future interventions in pasture rehabilitation should be aware of the challenges that BRL encountered.

- The size of a greenhouse plays a key role in terms of whether it will produce the desired output or not. Small greenhouses tend to generate small yields, which though enough for household consumption cannot produce yield for income generation. In other words, small size greenhouses can be effective in terms of food security and nutrition of target households but not in terms of income generation.

- The mortality rate of beetal goats was high in the foundation phase, primarily due to their lack of adaptability to the local climate. Oxfam replaced the beetal goats with the local hybrid breed of goats, which has low mortality and has proven useful. Future interventions in livestock should take stock of this dilemma and should import species that can easily adapt to the local climate.

- The engagement of government officials from the very design phase of the project can help to secure their buy-in. Oxfam rightly consulted relevant government entities while designing the project and helped to incorporate its inputs into the proposal. This combined with extensive coordination during the implementation phase has created a strong sense of ownership in government entities about the project.

- Given the complexities associated with the procurement of machines for social enterprise, the following key lesson could be drawn for NGOs. Before exporting and/or importing machinery etc. the organisation should consider the legal regime. For them to procure imported products or equipment, they should hire the services of private contractors. Additionally, it is vital to conduct resource analysis in the design phase to determine whether the inputs needed for an activity are available locally or not and at what costs. If Oxfam had done a resource analysis in the design phase, it would not have faced delays nor incurred extra expenses as a penalty in importing the required machinery.

- The terracing and trenching method of almond cultivation are highly successful in the target areas and has already been replicated massively in targeted districts. This technique has successfully converted abandoned hillsides into productive assets and has contributed to the livelihood system of the target groups. Given the mountainous geography of the province, terracing and trenching can be up-scaled and replicated in other districts of the province.

- The delivery of GALS and gender training has positively shaped the attitudes of the community members towards women's participation in economic activities. If the training was not delivered alongside the livelihood support then it may have been unlikely that women would be involved to the extent that they are in livelihoods.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation concludes that the BRL project remains highly relevant to the needs of the people in Daikundi province. The project has made notable progress towards its intended goal, and the targets set in the M&E plans are accomplished. The evaluation concludes that the project has performed relatively better under outcome II as there is a notable increase in dairy and almond production. The project performance under outcome III has also generated tangible results as there is a multiple folder increase in the income of the vulnerable households, targeted under the stated outcome. The project has performed relatively poorly under outcome I compared to other outcomes. A late supply of machinery to the social enterprises and issues related to access to markets undermined the work under outcome III.

Based on consultation with a wide range of project stakeholders, the study presents the following recommendations to improve programmatic interventions in the target areas.

1. The provincial government, CDCs, and farmers strongly demanded a continuation of a similar project in the future. Daikundi is one of the less developed provinces in the country which is an extreme disadvantage due to its remote and hard-to-access location, combined with almost non-existing infrastructure. Thus, poverty and unemployment remain prevalent in the province. Given the success of the BRL project from one end and the precarious livelihood opportunities in the province, there is a need for the continuation of similar projects. There are currently around 30 national and international NGOs operating in the province, some of which work in the almond value chain but none in the dairy value chain. This also makes the case stronger for DFAT to continue working in Daikundi province.

2. If a similar project is implemented in the province, it is highly suggested to approach new communities and targets. This will be key to contributing to a broad-based development.

3. There is a strong demand for infrastructure projects in the target areas, especially flood mitigation and water irrigation projects. Given the mountainous geography of the province, there are plenty of communities whose food security and livelihood are at risk due to being prone to flooding. Similarly, the province is vulnerable to droughts which makes the management of the scarce water highly vital. Therefore, there is a need for investing in water management infrastructure to store the water for seasons when it is in short supply.

4. To facilitate the presence of enterprises in the main provincial market (Nilli), women enterprises need the support of the project to construct outlets. The government has provided the land on a complimentary basis. These representative sales outlets will help the enterprises to connect better with the market actors and contribute to their enhanced sales revenue and profitability. In this context, Oxfam is encouraged to mobilize resources for the construction of outlets.

5. The evaluation concludes that small-size greenhouses have not proven effective in enhancing the target groups' livelihood as the yield is not large enough to sell it in the marketplace. Therefore, it is recommended to consider larger greenhouses for commercial vegetable production in communities which are closer to the district and provincial markets.

6. Saffron is a high-yield crop and has the potential to generate a considerable income for the target households. Nonetheless, the saffron value chain remains underdeveloped in the province, despite high demand for saffron in national and international markets. The development actors should extensively engage in all stages of the saffron value chain.

7. At the scheme level, DFAT should include an M&E partner to work with the implementing agencies to perform standardised monitoring and evaluation functions. This will help in generating unified reports about the performance of the different NGO partners. The M&E partner could also play the role of third-party monitoring to gather credible and valid data regarding the scheme performance.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: PROJECT PERFORMANCE AGAINST INDICATORS

Log-Frame Indicator	Baseline 2015	Endline 2021
OVERALL PURPOSE		
OVI 1: % of change reported in quantity and source of household income	Median reported total yearly income is: • 56,000 AFN (747 USD) for almond producing households • 69,500 AFN (927 USD) for dairy producing households • 45,552 (588 USD) for vulnerable households	Median reported total yearly income is: • 102,500 AFN (1,323 USD) for almond producing households • 70,500 AFN (910 USD) for dairy producing households • 61,000 AFN (787 USD) for vulnerable households
OVI 2: % of changes to how households cope with shocks to their livelihood systems (e.g. disaster) with their resources as measured by Coping Strategy Index	Mean Coping Strategy Index Score: • Almond producing households: 6.1 • Dairy producing households: 6.5 • Component three beneficiaries: 6.57	Mean Coping Strategy Index Score: • Almond producing households: 3.6 • Dairy producing households: 5.37 • Component three beneficiaries: 6.57
OVI 3: % Increased levels of household income being spent on health, education, housing, and activities in line with their aspirations and to mitigate their fears	The median amount spent on health and education in the past month: • Almond producing households: 3,000 AFN • Dairy producing households: 2,400 AFN • Component three beneficiaries: 1,800 AFN	Median amount spent on health and education in the past month: • Almond producing households: 4,500 AFN • Dairy producing households: 4,000 AFN • Component three beneficiaries: 3,000 AFN
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1		
OVI 4: % of the change in value-added by producers to their products and their profit margin	Not Available	• Almond: 25%[43] • Milk: 38% • Yogurt: 20%
OVI 5: % of producers have increased access to the market	• Proportion of almond producing households selling almonds to processors is 1% • Proportion of dairy producing households selling milk to processors is 0%	• Proportion of almond producing households selling almonds to processors is 15% • Proportion of dairy producing households selling milk to processors is 66%
OVI 6: % of people that have perceived improvements in their engagement with markets (by gender, well-being grouping, and vulnerability)	• Proportion of almond producing households selling almonds to trades outside the province is 0% • Proportion of dairy producing households selling milk to traders outside the province is 0%	• Proportion of almond producing households selling almonds to trades outside the province is 11% • Proportion of dairy producing households selling milk to traders outside the province is 0%

[43] For further detail, please refer to section 3.5.3

OVI 7: % of the extent to which enterprises are managing their business and performing in line with their business plan	Not available	• Since the business plans have not been updated by the enterprises, it is difficult to quantitatively measure the indicator. However, qualitative data show that all four enterprises are functional in terms of production and sales. However, they are operating at a small scale and yet to become a full functioning business entity.
OVI 8: % of the extent to which enterprises are applying skills learned, and utilizing equipment gained, through the project	Not available	• All four enterprises have received the machinery and got trained on them. Since the production is on a small scale, some but not all of the machinery is put into practice.
OVI 9: % of changes in attitudes of women and men to women leading livelihood activities at household and community level	• 63% of the almond producers fully or somewhat agree with women leading livelihood activities at the household and community level • 66% of dairy producers fully or somewhat agree with women leading livelihood activities at the household and community level	• 93% of the almond producers fully or somewhat agree with women leading livelihood activities at household and community level • 97% of dairy producers fully or somewhat agree with women leading livelihood activities at the household and community level
OVI 10: OVI 10 - # of Producer Groups are active and bringing benefits for members	• Number of almond producer groups = 20 • Number of dairy producer groups = 20	• Number of almond producer groups = 30 • Number of dairy producer groups = 30
OVI 11: # of linkage established between market actors are being leveraged for the benefit of producers	• Almond value chain = 0 • Dairy value chain = 0	• Almond value chain = 10[44] • Dairy value chain = 14
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2		
OVI 12: % of almonds producers with an increased annual crop yield of higher quality product compared to previous year production (by gender, vulnerability, and well-being grouping)	• Crop yield is a median of 100 kg of almonds per Jerib of land	• Crop yield is a median of 212 kg of almonds per Jerib of land
OVI 13: % of producers with increased annual dairy production and thriving goat herds compared to previous year production (by gender, well-being grouping, and vulnerability)	• Median weekly litres of milk produced per goat (1.75), sheep (1) and cow (3.4)	• Median weekly litres of milk produced per goat (5.25), sheep (3.5) and cow (10.4)

[44] On average, an almond social enterprise has established five linkages with market actors while dairy has established seven linkages.

OVI 14: % of change in agricultural practices as observed through monitoring and reported by farmers	Not Available	• Almond producers using improved agricultural practices = 95% • Dairy producers using improved livestock practices = 88%
OVI 15: % of changes in number of almond trees reported by farmers to be diseased	Not Available	• Percentage of trees reported to be diseased = 37%
OVI 16: % of farmers accessing Agri Service Centres and their level of satisfaction with range and quality of extension services	• Percentage of farmers who have visited the Agri Service Centre = 0 percent • Satisfaction level: Not applicable	• Percentage of farmers who have visited the Agri-Service Centre = 95% • Satisfaction level = 61% highly satisfied, 38% satisfaction, and one percent not satisfied
OVI 17: # of farmers visiting demonstration plots and finding it useful	• None since the demonstration plots were not established	• Percentage of farmers who have visited demo plots and found it useful = 85%
OVI 18: # of hectares of hillside rehabilitated	• Number of ha of hillside land rehabilitated = 0	• Number of ha of hillside land rehabilitated = 36.8
OVI 19: # of proven high yield and drought tolerant varieties of almond saplings available in nurseries	• None since the nurseries were not established	• Five (Kaghazi, Sattarbayi, Abdul Wahidi, Qaharbai, and Qambari)
OVI 20: # of improved varieties of almond trees planted in rehabilitated orchards and flourishing at end of project	• None since the nurseries were not established	• 36.8 hectare of land has been rehabilitated, equivalent to 184 Jerib. Each Jerib of land has the potential for 66 almond trees to be planted. This adds up to 12,144 trees.
OVI 21: % of changes in amount of fodder produced, gained by exchange and bought by livestock owners over the project period	• Percentage of dairy producers who consider the fodder produced adequate = 48%	• Percentage of dairy producers who consider the fodder produced adequate = 57%
OVI 22: % of farmers demonstrating use of improved water and soil management practices (by gender, well-being grouping and vulnerability)	Not available	• Percentage of farmers using improved water management techniques = 73% • Percentage of farmers using improved soil management techniques = 69%
OVI 23: % of farmers practicing diversified agriculture practices	• Percentage of farmers cultivating saffron, grapes or other products = 0 percent	• Percentage of farmers cultivating saffron, grapes or other products = 50%
OVI 24: % increased access to storage facilities of agri-producers	• This indicator belong to construction of storage facilities, which was dropped from the scope for work	

OVI 25: % of changes in water available to farmers to irrigate their lands in communities where water sources and capture have been improved by project	• Percentage of farmers with adequate water for irrigation = Not available	• Percentage of farmers with adequate water for irrigation = 88% (29% fully adequate; 59% somewhat adequate)
OVI 26: # of appropriate trainings of satisfactory quality have been conducted and inputs provided to producers	• Not available	• Not available
OVI 27: % of effectiveness of flood protection measures in response to a flood event	• Not available	• 99% (64% highly effective and 35% somewhat effective)
OVI 28: # of farmer in targeted communities experiencing diversified agriculture products	• Percentage of farmers producing saffron and grapes = 0 percent	• 10%
OVI 29: # of farmers have access to improved agriculture practices	• Not available	• 95%
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE III		
OVI 30: % of changes in means, and amount, of income for the most poor and vulnerable	• Median income of vulnerable households is 14,800 AFN	• Median income of vulnerable households is 61,000 AFN
OVI 31: % of changes in the quantity and types of vegetables produced because of introduction of greenhouses	• Percentage of vulnerable households producing vegetable = 33% • Types of vegetable produced = 6	• Percentage of vulnerable households producing vegetable = 62% • Types of vegetable produced = 15
OVI 32: % and type of goats distributed, and amount of offspring produced post distribution	• Mean number of goats owned by vulnerable households = 0.53 • Mean milk production per week = 0.26 litres	• Mean number of goats owned by vulnerable households = 3 • Mean number of offspring produced per household = 2 • Mean milk production per week = 4.75 litres
OVI 33: # of people trained in appropriate vocational skills	• Number of trained people = 0	• 178
OVI 34: # of people equipped and supported to gain employment (including self-employment)	• Number of people equipped to gain employment = 0	• 39% of the trained individuals who found employment, equivalent to 69 individuals.

ANNEX II: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
Relevance	● How relevant is the project with the target groups' needs?	● How relevant is the project to Daikundi? How important are the almond, dairy, and vulnerable group value chains to the economy of Daikundi? ● Does the project meet the needs of the target people? What needs and problems of women, the elderly, and people with disabilities are addressed by the project? ● Were the target communities provided the opportunity to identify their needs and priorities? ● To what extent the project has taken into account in its design and implementation, the human rights and gender equality perspectives? ● Have there been any changes in the project design since its start? If yes, what changes, and why? What consequences (if any) the changes have had on the project implementation – positive or negative?	● Oxfam; ● Government counterparts; ● Direct project beneficiaries;	● Key informant interviews; ● Focus group discussions;
	● How coherent is the project with the policies and strategies of the Afghan government?	● How does the project fit into the priorities of the Afghan government at the national and provincial level? ● Which National Priority Programs (NPP) are addressed by the project? ● To what extent the project has been relevant to the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF)?	● Oxfam; ● Government counterparts; ● Direct project beneficiaries;	● Key informant interviews; ● Focus group discussions;
	● How relevant is the project with the DFAT's development priorities for Afghanistan?	● How does the project fit into DFAT's priorities for Afghanistan? ● How does the project compliment other DFAT-funded development interventions in Afghanistan?	● DFAT; ● Direct project beneficiaries;	● Key informant interviews; ● Focus group discussions;
	● Were project activities and implementation strategies	● To what extent the project has been complementary to other development efforts in the province or vice versa? ● What measures (if any) were taken to avoid duplication and create synergy? What was the outcome of these measures?	● Oxfam; ● Government counterparts; ● Direct project beneficiaries;	● Key informant interviews; ● Focus group discussions;

[45] Evaluation questions are inspired by the terms of reference and the project logical framework.

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
	coordinated with other actors?	• What has been the level of coordination between the project and other development projects? What was the coordination mechanism? Were any joint activities conducted? What was the outcome of such activities?		
Almond Value Chain	Is there any change in the quantity and source of almond producing households' income in the target communities?	• How many[46] of the almond producing households report a change in their income in contrast to the start of the project? What is the percent change? • To what extent the almond producing households are likely to sustain their current income level? • What are the primary and secondary income sources for almond producing households and how are they different from the start of the project? • How many of the almond producing households are spending more income on health and education in contrast to the start of the project? What is the percentage change?	• The project MIS; • Almond producing households;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	How has the project impacted the productivity and nutrition, of almond producing households?	• How many and what percent of the almond producing households indicate a change in the annual yield from high-quality crops? • What is the change (if any) in the almond production (particularly high-quality), measured as the number of KGs per jerib[47] of land? • How much of the produced quantities are consumed by the households? • What is the level of change in domestic consumption?	• The project MIS; • Almond producing household members;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	To what extent are the almond producing households able to cope with shocks to their livelihood system with their resources?	• How many of the almond producing vulnerable households report a change to their coping strategies against shocks as measured by the Coping Strategy (CSI) Index score? What is the percent change? • Have the almond producing households increased their economic assets in contrast to the start of the project? Have women and men increased their economic assets? What type of assets? Are the economic assets likely to be sustained? • How has the project improved the almond producing households' resilience? How many and what percent of the target households	• The project MIS; • Almond producing households;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;

[46] It is worth highlighting that data regarding the number of beneficiaries for various project activities will be collected from the M&E system of the project. However, where the data is not available or unreliable, the estimated numbers will be calculated based on the finding of the evaluation sample. This is because it is not possible to use a census approach for the evaluation, due to resource constraints.

[47] 1 Jerib = 2,000 Square Meters

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		are now more resilient compared to the start of the project? How many women and men are now more resilient? ● How did COVID 19 affect the resilience of the almond producing households to cope with shocks to their livelihood system?		
	● Is there any value added by almond producers to their products and their profit margin?	● Compared to the start of the project, is there any change in the price level of almonds[48] supported by the projects? If yes, what is the percent change in the price? ● How many almond producing households report a change in the price level, in comparison to the start of the project? ● What is the percent change in the profit margin for almond producers? ● How many almond producing households report a change in profit margin? How many women and men producers? ● How many linkages are established between the almond producers and the market actors? How do these linkages contribute towards higher sales and profit for almond producers?	● The project MIS; ● Almond producing households;	● Literature review; ● Household survey questionnaire; ● Focus group discussions;
	● Do almond producers have increased access to the market?	● How many and what percent of the almond producers have an understanding of the various market actors at the community, district, provincial and national levels? What is the percent change compared to the start of the project? ● How many and what percent of the almond producing households indicate selling almonds to processors? ● How many and what percent of the almond producing households report a change in the quantities of almonds consumed by households versus sold commercially to processors? What is the percent change?	● The project MIS; ● Almond producing households; ● Government counterparts;	● Literature review; ● Household survey questionnaire; ● Focus group discussions; ● Key informant interviews;
	● To what extent the almond enterprises are managing their business and performing in line with their business plans?	● Do the almond enterprises have business plans? If yes, to what extent the plans are understood and implemented by the enterprises? ● What are the annual revenue and profit/loss volumes for the almond enterprises since the start of the operations? ● To what degree the almond enterprises would be able to sustain their operations without the support of the project?	● Business accounts; ● Members of almond enterprises;	● Direct Observation; ● Household survey questionnaire; ● Focus group discussions;

[48] The price for almond is measured per 7 KG or widely known as siar in Afghanistan

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
	• To what extent the almond enterprises are applying skills learned, and utilizing equipment gained, through the project?	• How many of the almond enterprises possess the technical know-how to run the business operations? Are they implementing business, marketing, and management strategies? • How many of the almond enterprises have an updated and credible bookkeeping system to determine the extent of success/failure in their business operations? • Are the training interventions delivered to almond enterprise members adequate? Is there still a need for further training? If yes, in which area? • To what extent the equipment provided by the project to almond enterprises are adopting local technologies which could be sustained beyond the project life cycle? • To what degree the almond enterprises can operate and maintain the equipment?	• Members of almond enterprises;	• Direct Observation; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• How has your project improved almond producing household access and the sustainable use of natural resource use?	• How many almond producing households have benefited from the project activities aimed at improving access and sustainable use of natural resources? How many women and men? • Who is managing the natural resources interventions in the target communities? Is it managed by the households or community groups, or both? • How many individuals in the almond value chain are involved in making key decisions related to the use of natural resources? How many women, men, and people with disabilities? • How many and what percent of the target households report a change in their crop area compared to the start of the project?	• The project MIS; • Almond producers;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• Is there any change in attitudes of women and men to women leading livelihood activities in the almond value chain at the household and community level?	• How many and what percent of the target women in the almond value chain experienced empowerment in terms of a greater role in decision-making at household and community levels and participation in livelihoods? How much more empowered do they feel? • Do women in the almond value chain feel more confident at addressing issues that concern their wellbeing, livelihoods, or their community? If yes, how much more confident? • How many and what percent of women in the almond value chain are involved in the management and leadership roles within their households and communities?	• Almond producing households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		● What is the degree of ease at which women in the almond value chain can access productive resources such as seed, extension, land, water, etc.? ● What changes in gender norms, attitudes and behaviours have taken place among women and men at the individual, household, and community level as a result of the project work in the almond value chain? What have been the reactions among women and men at the individual, household, and community level to these changes? ● To what extent is caregiving in the household being redistributed to other almond-producing household members as a result of this project? ● What challenges do women in the almond value chain encounter while participating in economic activities and as leaders? Are these challenges specific to women's economic participation? ● How did COVID 19 impact women's economic empowerment in the almond value chain?		
	● To what extent the almond producers are using updated agricultural practices?	● What agricultural practices were targeted by the project? How many and what percent of almond producers are using these practices? What is the percent change in comparison to the start of the project? ● What are the effects of using agricultural practices on almond production and productivity? How many almond trees are reported to be diseased in the target areas? What is the change compared to the start of the project? ● How many and what percent of almond producers can access services from the agriculture service centres supported by the project? How many and what percent are satisfied with the range and quality of the extension services provided by the centres? ● How many almond orchard demonstration plots have been established by the project? How many almond producers have benefited from the demonstration plots? How many and what percent are satisfied from what they have learned in the demonstration plots? ● How many and what percent of the producers have applied what they have learned in demonstration plots?	● Almond producing households;	● Household survey questionnaire; ● Focus group discussions; ● Key informant interviews; ● Direct observation;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		• How many hectares of hillside rehabilitated with terracing and trenching methods of almond cultivation? How many of the improved varieties of almond trees planed and how many are flourishing? • Are there cases of replication and upscale by almond producers in the target areas? If yes, in how many hectares of land? • How many and what percent of almond producers have access to high-yield and drought-tolerant varieties of almond sapling? What is the percent change? What challenges do almond producers face to access high-yield and drought-tolerant varieties?		
	• To what extent the project targeted the most relevant audiences in the almond value chain?	• What criteria (if any) were used for the selection of the beneficiaries in the almond value chain? • To what extent vulnerable and ultra-poor households have been targeted by the project? How many of the total number of the targeted almond-producing households are vulnerable and ultra-poor? • To what extent women, men, the elderly, and people with disabilities have been targeted in the almond value chain? How many?	• Project MIS; • Oxfam; • Government counterpart; • Almond producers;	• Literature review; • Key informant interviews; •
	• How efficiently were the project activities in the almond value chain implemented?	• To what extent were the project activities in the almond value chain delivered on time, and in a cost-effective manner? What delays if any were faced by the project? What caused the delays? How did the delays impact the implementation of activities related to the almond value chain? • How did COVID 19 affect (both positive and negative) implementation of activities related to the almond value chain? Did it cause delays? If yes, how? • Were there other alternatives in the almond value chain that could deliver the same activities more efficiently? • Was the implementation of activities in the almond value chain in line with the seasonal calendars?	• Oxfam; • Government counterparts; • Almond producers;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;
	• To what extent will the results related to the almond value chain be sustainable?	• To what extent are the project outcomes related to the almond value chain likely to be sustained beyond the funding cycle? • What are the key factors that will require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes in the almond value chain?	• Oxfam; • Government counterparts; • Almond producers;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		• Has the project components related to the almond value chain have the potential to be up-scaled and/or replicated? Why?		
Dairy Value Chain	Is there any change in the quantity and source of dairy producing households' income in the target communities?	• How many of the dairy producing households report a change in their income in contrast to the start of the project? What is the percent change? • To what extent the dairy producing households are likely to sustain their current income level? • What are the primary and secondary income sources for dairy producing households and how are they different from the start of the project? • How many of the dairy producing households are spending more income on health and education in contrast to the start of the project? What is the percentage change?	• The project MIS; • Dairy producing households;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; Focus group discussions;
	• How has the project impacted the productivity and nutrition, of dairy producing households?	• How many and what percent of the dairy producing households indicate a change in the annual yield from high-quality crops? • What is the change in the milk production, measured as weekly litres per livestock (cow, goat, and sheep)? • How much of the produced quantities are consumed by the households? • What is the level of change in domestic consumption?	• The project MIS; • Dairy producing household members;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• To what extent are the dairy producing households able to cope with shocks to their livelihood system with their resources?	• How many of the dairy producing vulnerable households report a change to their coping strategies against shocks as measured by the CSI Index score? What is the percent change in the CSI score? • Have the dairy producing households increased their economic assets in contrast to the start of the project? Have women and men increased their economic assets? What type of assets? Are the economic assets likely to be sustained? • How has the project improved the dairy producing households' resilience? How many and what percent of the target households are now more resilient compared to the start of the project? How many women and men are now more resilient? • How did COVID 19 affect the resilience of the dairy producing households to cope with shocks to their livelihood system?	• The project MIS; • Dairy producing households;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• Is there any value added by dairy	• Is there any change in the price level of dairy products supported by the projects? If yes, what is the percent change in the price? • How many dairy producing households report a change in the price level?	• The project MIS;	• Literature review;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
	producers to their products and their profit margin?	• What is the percent change in the profit margin for dairy producers? How many dairy producing households report a change in profit margin? • How many linkages are established between the dairy producers and the market actors? How do these linkages contribute towards higher sales and profit for dairy producers?	• Dairy producing households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• Do dairy producers have increased access to the market?	• How many and what percent of the dairy producers have an understanding of the various market actors at the community, district, provincial and national levels? What is the percent change? • How many and what percent of the dairy producing households indicate selling dairy products to processors? • How many and what percent of the dairy producing households report a change in the quantities of dairy consumed by households versus sold commercially to processors? What is the percent change?	• The project MIS; • Dairy producing households; • Government counterparts;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions; • Key informant interviews;
	• To what extent the dairy enterprises are managing their business and performing in line with their business plans?	• Do the dairy enterprises have business plans? If yes, to what extent the plans are understood and implemented by the enterprises? • What are the annual revenue and profit/loss volumes for the dairy enterprises since the start of the operations? • To what degree the dairy enterprises would be able to sustain their operations without the support of the project?	• Business accounts; • Members of dairy enterprises;	• Direct Observation; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• To what extent the dairy enterprises are applying skills learned, and utilising equipment gained, through the project?	• How many dairy enterprises possess the technical know-how to run business operations? Are they implementing business, marketing, and management strategies? • How many dairy enterprises have an updated and credible bookkeeping system to determine the extent of success/failure in their business operations? • Are the training interventions delivered to dairy enterprise members adequate? Is there still a need for further training? If yes, in which area? • To what extent the equipment provided by the project to dairy enterprises are adopting local technologies which could be sustained beyond the project life cycle? • To what degree the dairy enterprises can operate and maintain the equipment?	• Members of dairy enterprises;	• Direct Observation; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
	• How has your project improved dairy producing household access and the sustainable use of natural resource use?	• How many dairy producing households have benefited from the project activities aimed at improving access and sustainable use of natural resources? How many women and men? • How many individuals are involved in making key decisions related to the use of natural resources? How many women, men, and people with disabilities? • How many and what percent of the target households report a change in the livestock that they own, in contrast to the start of the project?	• The project MIS; • Dairy producers;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• To what extent the dairy producers are using updated livestock and dairy production practices?	• What livestock and dairy practices were covered in the project? • How many and what percent of the dairy producers are using updated dairy production techniques? What is the percent change? • What are the effects of using updated dairy production practices on dairy production? • How many and what percent of the target groups are vaccinating their livestock? What is the percent change? • How many and what percent of the target groups can access services from the veterinary clinics supported by the project? What is the percent change? • How satisfied are the target groups with the quality, range, and prices of services provided by the veterinary clinics? Can the clinics sustain without the project support? • Is there any change in the amount of fodder produced, exchanged, and bought by livestock owners in the target areas? If yes, what is the change and how is it different from the start of the project?	• Dairy producing households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions; • Key informant interviews; • Direct observation;
	• Is there any change in attitudes of women and men to women leading livelihood activities in the dairy value chain at the household and community level?	• How many and what percent of the target women in the dairy value chain experienced empowerment in terms of a greater role in decision-making at household and community levels and participation in livelihoods? How much more empowered do they feel compared to the start of the project? • Do women in the dairy value chain feel more confident at addressing issues that concern their wellbeing, livelihoods, or their community? If yes, how much more confident? • How many and what percent of women in the dairy value chain are involved in the management and leadership roles within their households and communities?	• Dairy producing households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		• What is the degree of ease at which women in the dairy value chain can access productive resources such as fodder, vaccination, etc.? • What changes in gender norms, attitudes and behaviours have taken place among women and men at the individual, household, and community level as a result of the project work in the dairy value chain? What have been the reactions among women and men to these changes? • To what extent is caregiving in the household being redistributed to other dairy-producing household members as a result of this project? • What challenges do women in the dairy value chain encounter while participating in economic activities and as leaders? Are these challenges specific to women's economic participation? • How did COVID 19 impact women's economic empowerment in the dairy value chain? What measures were taken by the project in this regard?		
	• To what extent the project targeted the most relevant audiences in the dairy value chain?	• What criteria (if any) were used for the selection of the beneficiaries in the dairy value chain? • To what extent vulnerable and ultra-poor households have been targeted by the project? How many of the total number of the targeted dairy-producing households are vulnerable and ultra-poor? • To what extent women, men, the elderly, and people with disabilities have been targeted in the dairy value chain? How many?	• Project MIS; • Oxfam; • Government counterpart; • Dairy producers;	• Literature review; • Key informant interviews;
	• How efficiently was the project activities in the dairy value chain implemented?	• To what extent was the project activities in the dairy value chain delivered on time, and in a cost-effective manner? What delays if any were faced by the project? What caused the delays? How did the delays impact the implementation of activities related to the dairy value chain? • How did COVID 19 affect (both positive and negative) implementation of activities related to the dairy value chain? Did it cause delays? If yes, how? • Were there other alternatives in the dairy value chain that could deliver the same activities more efficiently?	• Oxfam; • Government counterparts; • Dairy producers;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		• Was the implementation of activities in the dairy value chain in line with the seasonal calendars?		
	• To what extent will the results related to the dairy value chain be sustainable?	• To what extent are the project outcomes related to the dairy value chain likely to be sustained beyond the funding cycle? • What are the key factors that will require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes in the dairy value chain? • Has the project components related to the dairy value chain have the potential to be up-scaled and/or replicated? Why?	• Oxfam; • Government counterparts; • Dairy producers;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;
Vulnerable households	• Is there any change in the quantity and source of vulnerable households' income in the target communities?	• How many of the vulnerable households report a change in their income in contrast to the start of the project? What is the percent change? • To what extent the vulnerable households are likely to sustain their current income level? • What are the primary and secondary income sources for vulnerable households and how are they different from the start of the project? • How many of the vulnerable households are spending more income on health and education in contrast to the start of the project? What is the percentage change?	• The project MIS; • Vulnerable households;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• Is there a change in the quantity and types of vegetables produced because of the introduction of greenhouses?	• How many and what percent of the vegetable producers are using the greenhouses? How many women and men are using the greenhouses? • How many and what percent of the vegetable producers report a change in the quantity (measured in terms of 7 KG) and types of vegetables due to their access to greenhouses? What is the percent change in quantity and types of vegetable production in contrast to the start of the project? • Are there cases of replication of greenhouse technology in the target areas by community members who did not benefit from the project? If yes, to what extent?	• Vulnerable households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• To what extent are the vulnerable households cultivating saffron?	• What is the extent (if any) to which vulnerable households are cultivating saffron in the target areas? • What is the percent change in saffron cultivation since the start of the project? • Are there cases of replication in saffron cultivation in the target communities? If yes, to what extent?	• Vulnerable households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
	• Is there any change in the amount and type of goats distributed to vulnerable households?	• How many vulnerable households receive high-yield goats such as beetal and hybrid from the project? • How many and what percent of the vulnerable households own high-yield goats? How many high-yield goats on average per vulnerable household?	• Vulnerable households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• Is there any change in the livelihood skills of individuals who received vocational skills training?	• How many women and men were trained and equipped by the project? • How many and what percent of the trained and equipped women and men are employed, self-employed, or operating as employers? • How many employment opportunities were created by the trainees? • How is the access of women and men invocated in vocational skills to the market?	• Vulnerable households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions; • Key informant interviews;
	• To what extent are the vulnerable households able to cope with shocks to their livelihood system with their resources?	• How many of the vulnerable households report a change to their coping strategies against shocks as measured by the CSI Index score? What is the percent change in the CSI score? • Have the vulnerable households increased their economic assets in contrast to the start of the project? Have women and men increased their economic assets? What type of assets? Are the economic assets likely to be sustained? • How has the project improved the vulnerable households' resilience? How many and what percent of the target households are now more resilient compared to the start of the project? How many women and men are now more resilient? • How did COVID 19 affect the resilience of the vulnerable households to cope with shocks to their livelihood system?	• The project MIS; • Vulnerable households;	• Literature review; • Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;
	• Is there any change in attitudes of women and men to women leading livelihood activities in vulnerable households and community levels?	• How many and what percent of the target women in vulnerable households experienced empowerment in terms of a greater role in decision-making at household and community levels and participation in livelihoods? How much more empowered do they feel compared to the start of the project? • Do women in vulnerable households feel more confident at addressing issues that concern their wellbeing, livelihoods, or their community? If yes, how much more confident?	• Vulnerable households;	• Household survey questionnaire; • Focus group discussions;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		• How many and what percent of women in vulnerable households are involved in the management and leadership roles within their households and communities? • What changes in gender norms, attitudes, and behaviours have taken place among women and men at the individual, household, and community levels as a result of the project work with the vulnerable households? What have been the reactions among women and men to these changes? • To what extent is caregiving in the household being redistributed to other members in the vulnerable households as a result of this project? • What challenges do women in vulnerable households encounter while participating in economic activities and as leaders? • How did COVID 19 impact women's economic empowerment in vulnerable households? What measures were taken in this regard?		
	• How efficiently was the project activities in the vulnerable households implemented?	• To what extent was the project activities related to vulnerable households delivered on time, and in a cost-effective manner? What delays if any were faced by the project? What caused the delays? How did the delays impact the implementation of activities related to vulnerable households? • How did COVID 19 affect (both positive and negative) activities related to vulnerable households? Did it cause delays? If yes, how? • Was the implementation of activities related to vulnerable households in line with the seasonal calendars?	• Oxfam; • Government counterparts; • Vulnerable households;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;
	• To what extent will the results related to vulnerable households be sustainable?	• To what extent are the project outcomes related to vulnerable households likely to be sustained beyond the funding cycle? • What are the key factors that will require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes related to vulnerable households? • Has the project components related to vulnerable households have the potential to be up-scaled and/or replicated? Why?	• Oxfam; • Government counterparts; • Vulnerable households;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;
Knowledge Management and M&E	• How effective the knowledge management and M&E system have been?	• Did the project have in place adequate monitoring systems? What M&E tools and methods were used to determine the project progress towards its intended impact and outcome? Who was responsible for M&E? • What system of data collection existed and used?	• Project MIS; • Oxfam; • Government counterparts;	• Literature review; • Household surveys;

Evaluation Theme / Lens	Evaluation Questions[45]	Data Needed to be Collected	Data Source	Tools to be used
		• Does the project have a management information system? • To what extent the monitoring data has been completed and credible? • To what extent did the Project's M&E mechanism contribute to meeting project results? • What best practices (if any) has the project adopted from other similar initiatives? • What lessons have been learned from the project?	• Direct project beneficiaries;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;
Sustainability	• To what extent will the results be sustainable?	• To what extent are the project outcomes likely to be sustained after the completion of all project activities? What are the key factors requiring attention to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes? • Has the project the potential to be up-scaled and/or replicated? Why? • To what extent the project activities were appropriate with the capacity of the key stakeholders (community members, government, etc.)? • How were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level (including contributing factors and constraints)?	• Oxfam; • Government counterparts; • Direct project beneficiaries;	• Key informant interviews; • Focus group discussions;

ANNEX III: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

No	Name	Designation of the Key Informant	Gender	Organization	Location
1.	Mohammad Ali Roshan	Project Manager	Male	Oxfam	Kabul
2.	Fatima Yaqubi	Deputy Project Manager	Female	Oxfam	Daikundi
3.	Mahtab Hikmat	M&E Officer	Female	Oxfam	Daikundi
4.	Shir Mohammad	Farmer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
5.	Zahra Rezai	Director	Female	Nawras Dairy Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
6.	Saira Rezai	Cashier	Female	Nawras Dairy Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
7.	Fatima Alizada	Deputy Head	Female	Nawras Dairy Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
8.	Ali Khan Amiri	CDC Head	Male	Kharjil CDC	Daikundi
9.	Said Ali Akbar	Community Influencer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
10.	Ghulam Hussain	Community Influencer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
11.	Mohammad Ismail	Community Influencer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
12.	Khadim Hussain	Farmer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
13.	Lal Mohammad	Farmer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
14.	Habibullah	Farmer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
15.	Ali Mohammad	Farmer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
16.	Nadir Mohammad	Farmer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
17.	Ghulam Mohammad	Farmer	Male	N/A	Daikundi
18.	Ewaz Ali Poya	Director	Male	DoE	Daikundi
19.	Abdul Wahid	Director	Male	DAIL	Daikundi
20.	Benazar Jafari	Director	Female	DoWA	Daikundi
21.	Fatima Hussaini	Deputy Head	Female	Shagofta Almond Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
22.	Masuma Jawadi	Member	Female	Shagofta Almond Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
23.	Zuhra Qalabzada	Member	Female	Shagofta Almond Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
24.	Fatima Mohammadi	Record Keeper	Female	Shagofta Almond Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
25.	Khadija	Member	Female	Shagofta Almond Processing Enterprise	Daikundi
26.	Karima	Cashier	Female	Shagofta Almond Processing Enterprise	Daikundi