

Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign and Action Research

2014 Afghan Presidential and Provincial Council Election

Assessment Report



December 2014

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Informed by the 2012 electoral security assessment, in 2014 Creative Associates International (Creative) worked with OTI as part of the Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI) to develop and implement the Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign focused on promoting a peaceful 2014 electoral process.

The Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign was a collaborative effort with OTI, the U.S. Mission, the United Nations (UN) and the Independent Election Commission (IEC) all working together to deliver a credible and peaceful election in Afghanistan. It contributed to the peaceful electoral process through provision of voter information and civic education, principally to the project's strategically important provinces of Kandahar, Hilmand, Ghazni, Khost and Kunar. These provinces were identified in a mapping exercise performed to inform CCI programming choices for preventing electoral conflict around the 2014 elections. The mapping exercise identified Zabul, Khost, Uruzgan, Wardak, Kandahar, Kunar, Kapisa, Ghazni, Hilmand, Paktika, Herat, Kunduz, and Nangarhar as provinces at a higher risk of electoral conflict or violence. Along with this mapping exercise, CCI conducted targeted small action research activities to help understand what "credible and legitimate" meant for the Afghan electorate. In addition to the five target provinces, the research was also conducted in Uruzgan and Kabul.

The purpose of this assessment report is to provide OTI with a document that reviews and analyzes these activities conducted under the country objective "support peaceful electoral processes and outcomes." The report includes analysis of the available data from the focus groups, face-to-face meetings, footprint of the media and printed materials. It is coupled with and informed by the review of conflict factors in Afghanistan's 2009 and 2014 elections. The review served as an update to the 2012 electoral security assessment and provided the basis for the formulation of the conflict profile for future electoral programming in Afghanistan.

Altogether, Creative views CCI's efforts to minimize and mitigate violence a success, but proving causality from our programmatic input is challenging as this was a collaborative effort with many stakeholders contributing to the same goal and the very broad nature of the program goal. With that said, built-in assessments of the project, such as focus groups and interviews, provide strong evidence that activities positively influenced Afghans to participate in elections while engaging in peaceful behavior. The project was also successful in identifying valuable data to mitigate and prevent electoral violence such as identifying security hot spots for electoral incidents, but the opportunity was missed to transfer that data to the key electoral stakeholders such as election management body or security forces, thus reducing the intended impact. Also, the project activities did not cover the entire electoral cycle from pre-electoral planning through to the transition of power, but instead focused primarily on the first round of elections. This was both due to the project design – programming expanded in a phased approach with multiple add-ons to the initial project – and to the nature of the electoral cycle (which included a second round presidential run-off and subsequent ballot audit). As a result, no comprehensive work plan or indicators were developed for all electoral programming pertaining to the electoral cycle. This led to the dissemination of messages that were not evaluated within the changing context of the cycle. Messages that worked in a generally positive electoral context might have been less effective following the contentious second round, resulting audit, and the general loss of credibility in the electoral process among the public. While they constituted the core of the project, messages were not combined with other activities identified in the 2012 electoral security assessment to mitigate electoral violence. Therefore, the key recommendation of this assessment report is to validate the data against other efforts to contribute to peaceful elections in Afghanistan and combine any future efforts with a more comprehensive set of activities to support peaceful electoral processes and outcomes.

II. INTRODUCTION

Background

The April 5, 2014 Presidential and Provincial Council Elections and June 14, 2014 Presidential Second Round elections proved the Afghan people could manage and participate pro-actively in an electoral process. The process saw an increase in participation relative to the 2010 elections and a relative calm at a majority of voting centers. However, what started as an open and competitive process, with 2,591 candidates nominated for the 458 Provincial Council seats, and eight men competing for the Afghan Presidency, ended with numerous claims and at least some proof of fraud committed by key electoral stakeholders, and was only brought to a peaceful conclusion through a political settlement. Despite many challenges, the IEC made significant progress in organizing and conducting the electoral process. However, technical irregularities which continued throughout the electoral period and allegations of fraud, culminated in an unprecedented full election audit and involvement by external political interests, most notably the UN and United States Government (USG).

Following the first round, voters remained calm despite a slow counting process and lack of updates from election authorities. However, the IEC missing the April 24 preliminary results announcement deadline prompted legislators in the Wolesi Jirga of the Parliament to publicly express their concern about the counting process. Disregarding legal due process, members issued a statement expressing lack of confidence in the counting, which some observers saw as an effort to assert pressure on the IEC and the Independent Election Complaints Committee (IECC), and possibly interfere in the process. Both electoral bodies shrugged off the allegations, with the IEC later releasing first round results to a largely patient population.¹

While the second round reported a higher number of violent acts, the overall outcome remained positive in terms of operations and participation.² The IEC improved its performance during the runoff, reducing its response time and markedly improving communication channels. It maintained closer cooperation with electoral stakeholders, including observers, security forces and media outlets, providing real-time information and updates. However, serious fraud allegations which among others, involved a top IEC official, resulted in the decision to conduct a comprehensive audit of all eight million ballots.

Overall, the 2014 elections were notable not only for the implementation of an unprecedented comprehensive audit but also for the serious charges of widespread fraud leveled by candidates and observers. Despite these challenges, Afghanistan witnessed its first peaceful democratic transfer of power in the post-Taliban era.

Program Components

Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign

CCI's election related programming assessed in this report consisted of the Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign and Action Research components. The Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign addressed specific threats to electoral peace identified in the 2012 electoral security assessment.³ The goal was to develop and disseminate messages to counter electoral violence and support peaceful behavior through the entire electoral cycle. These messages were labelled 'peaceful election' messages. The messages were designed and validated in focus groups which involved participants from all walks of Afghan society and the key electoral stakeholders. Messages were then disseminated in print format and through various media, primarily radio and television, but also social media such as You Tube, in provincial level dialogues, and in stakeholder meetings with the IEC, Afghan National Police (ANP), Provincial Governors (PGs), and

¹ Based on the draft report by Pablo Galarce, International Elections Advisor.

² Conflict Profile 2009 v. 2014, July 14, 2014, Desk Study by Patrick Quirk

³ Creative conducted an electoral security assessment in March 2012 that provided USAID with a profile of potential risks for electoral conflict as well as a plan and program for preventing, managing or mediating conflict.

District Governors (DGs). The campaign was implemented by Afghanistan Amputee Bicyclists Recreation and Rehabilitation (AABRAR) in Ghazni, Kunar and Kandahar, and by AidTrends in Hilmand and Khost, provinces that were highly susceptible to electoral violence. Alongside the AABRAR and AidTrends activities, most of the media campaign was CCI-led using messages/themes from the AABRAR and AidTrends focus groups. This project component also sought to build these civil society partners' capacity to design and disseminate peaceful messages in the future and build relationships among them and the government stakeholders. In so doing, it created a sustainable electoral peace infrastructure in place to de-conflict future electoral cycles—beginning with the 2015 process.

Action Research

Alongside the Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign, CCI also conducted Action Research activities to better understand the Afghan elections landscape. The purpose of this component was two-fold. First, it was to conduct a series of predictive analyses of electoral violence and elections dynamics based on past elections, and second, to conduct research to understand what Afghans mean by credible and legitimate elections. The main goal was to produce analysis that would inform CCI programming choices for preventing electoral conflict around the 2014 elections. For geospatial analyses, CCI contracted DigitalGlobe (DG) which drew on a wide range of open-source databases and accompanying narrative analysis. The analyses started at a national level covering a range of previous election dynamics, identified 13 target provinces as high-risk for electoral violence which catalyzed a more detailed analysis of the risk characteristics of these provinces. Finally, DG analyzed the actual electoral dynamics of the 2014 April 4 election across the 13 at-risk provinces (the data for the second round and audit, i.e. 'through to the transition of power' per NAT0011C (procurement clearance form) was not made available for this assessment report). Targeted small action research activities were conducted by experienced research firms to help understand the concept of "credible and legitimate" within the Afghan electorate. Eureka Research and Evaluation (Eureka) conducted research in Hilmand, Ghazni, and Kunar, ATR Consulting in Kandahar and Kabul, and The Liaison Office (TLO) in Uruzgan and Khost.

Figure 1: CCI election related programming by component, implementing partner, and province.

	Implementing Partner	Province
Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign	AABRAR	Ghazni, Kunar, Kandahar
	AidTrends	Hilmand, Khost
	CCI - <i>certain TV and radio stations</i>	Afghanistan-wide coverage
Action Research	DigitalGlobe	Zabul, Khost, Uruzgan, Wardak, Kandahar, Kunar, Kapisa, Ghazni, Hilmand, Paktika, Herat, Kunduz, and Nangarhar
	The Liaison Office	Uruzgan, Khost
	Eureka Research and Evaluation	Hilmand, Ghazni, Kunar
	ATR Consulting	Kandahar, Kabul

2015 Electoral Conflict Profile Development

In 2012, two international advisors completed an initial electoral security assessment that led to the development of electoral programming under CCI. The resulting program components described above aimed to promote a peaceful 2014 electoral processes mainly by designing and distributing 'peaceful' messages and conducting research based on past elections in Afghanistan. In addition to the Action Research component of the project implemented through partners, Creative elections team conducted a desk research of their own to update the 2012 electoral security assessment with information from the 2014 electoral cycle and develop a conflict profile for the 2015 election. This research provided a brief synopsis of past electoral conflict dynamics, reviewed vulnerabilities identified for the 2014 election, summarized conflict trends in the pre-election, Election Day (first round), and post-election (second round/runoff vote and subsequent presidential election ballot audit) phases, as well as the implications of this conflict for future programming; particularly the 2015 electoral cycle. The desk research and the resulting report were finalized prior to the completion of the election audit and a final political agreement, which formally

concluded the 2014 electoral process. Both resulted in recommendations for a more comprehensive electoral reform, prior to the 2015 parliamentary elections.

Program Management

CCI comprised five technical assistance activities to develop and support the implementation of the elections portfolio, under the guidance of two international advisors engaged to undertake an initial one-month long program assessment. This resulted in the further development of CCI electoral programming that included establishing and coordinating elections implementing partners, and developing an overall work plan. Incorporated in this was the deployment of three international Senior Electoral Conflict Prevention Advisors, providing technical guidance for the implementation of the Peaceful Elections Advocacy Campaign. Finally, to support the Senior Electoral Conflict Prevention Advisors, three Afghan National Peaceful Election Advocacy Advisors were recruited to supply first-hand knowledge and understanding of local politics, as well as coverage of field activities. The international Senior Electoral Conflict Prevention Advisors worked closely with the three Afghan National Peaceful Election Advocacy Advisors, preparing strategies that were implemented by local implementing partners, following up on work plans, continuing to supervise focus groups and community dialogue trainings, and developing and deploying media messages.

The three national peaceful advocacy advisors provided technical assistance and oversight of the campaign activities throughout the electoral cycle including the pre-election period, Election Day and post-election period. The three advisors also provided technical assistance to the grantees on their outreach and media campaigns, and collected data on progress made in their peaceful advocacy campaign efforts. They also provided first-hand information and understanding of local politics and contributed greatly by traveling to the five target provinces to be present at the focus groups and training of trainers events sponsored by the program.

Implementing Partners

Creative partnered with two local Afghan civil society organizations, Afghanistan Amputee Bicyclists Recreation and Rehabilitation (AABRAR) and AidTrends, to develop and implement an innovative campaign in CCI's focus provinces of Kunar, Khost, Hilmand, Ghazni and Kandahar. The campaign was tailored to address specific election-related challenges faced in each province. In addition, CCI partnered with 13 radio and 5 TV networks to produce and disseminate media messages.

Creative also partnered with Eureka Research and Evaluation (Eureka), ATR Consulting and The Liaison Office (TLO) to conduct research on what constitutes credible elections in Afghanistan. TLO conducted research in Uruzgan and Khost, ATR in Kandahar and Kabul, and Eureka in Hilmand, Ghazni and Kunar. Each service provider facilitated 10 semi-structured individual interviews per province and 12 focus group discussions per province with 6-12 persons each. All activities took place over a period of 24 days.⁴

Finally, Creative contracted DigitalGlobe (DG) to provide geospatial analysis products on Afghanistan by conducting a series of predictive analysis of electoral violence and elections dynamics based upon elections in 2009 and 2010. The main goal was to inform CCI programming choices for preventing electoral conflict around the 2014 elections. DigitalGlobe identified Zabul, Khost, Uruzgan, Wardak, Kandahar, Kunar, Kapisa, Ghazni, Hilmand, Paktika, Herat, Kunduz, and Nangarhar as the 13 provinces most likely to experience setbacks and challenges during the 2014 elections, and assessed the likelihood of election-related violence and electoral fraud, as well as relative voter access and participation rates for each province identified. This then catalyzed a more detailed analysis of the risk characteristics of the 13 at-risk provinces. Finally, DG analyzed the actual electoral dynamics of the 2014 election across the 13 at-risk provinces.

⁴ CCI noted additional activities between the end of audit and results announcement, not covered in the IP reports.

III. PEACEFUL ELECTION ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

The Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign aimed to (i) decrease electoral violence; and through it (ii) increase peaceful participation of men and women in the elections; (iii) promote acceptance of the elections results peacefully by the residents; (iv) promote a culture of non-violent behavior among people in regards to the peaceful transition of power; and (v) support the IEC by amplifying its messages and distributing its printed materials. Messages were developed and disseminated in line with the electoral cycle approach.

The goals would be achieved by designing messages in focus groups composed of representatives of Afghanistan's diverse demographics (such as women, youth, etc.) and validating them by engaging key electoral stakeholders such as IEC, DGs, PGs, and local leaders. In order to convey the peaceful election messages, Creative and its partners used print materials, principally posters and leaflets; media, principally radio and television with some use of social media; community outreach events and face-to-face meetings. Employing these instruments, the messages were diversified by language, region, gender, and age. In order to extend the reach of all messaging, Creative also formulated a comprehensive media relations strategy, with messages tested before being delivered to communities, via a wide range of stakeholders experienced in the development of targeted messaging. The goal was to ensure that electoral messages addressed the motivations of varied groups in order to maximize impact.

For the second round of elections, in a collaborative effort with OTI, the USAID Mission, the U.S. Embassy, the IEC, and CCI's implementing partners, Creative reviewed its strategy, analyzed lessons learned, and refined its messaging. It was agreed that printed materials would be redesigned, featuring messages encouraging people to vote, again highlighting female involvement in the process. Posters were resized, featuring fold-down versions and convenient pocket size information sheets, for better distribution. Radio and television messaging expanded nationwide. In response to growing disenfranchisement and communal tension, national footprint was achieved through the use of national radio and TV broadcasters in tandem with regional and demographic-based broadcasters.

Program Activities

Message Design

Prior to the first round elections, AABRAR and AidTrends conducted a series of focus group consultations that engaged directly with populations in Kandahar, Ghazni, Hilmand, Khost and Kunar. The purpose was to develop localized, community-driven peaceful election messages, and inspire communities to participate peacefully. Focus groups were conducted in each province with the objective of engaging local residents to hear directly from them what messages were appropriate for the campaign process according to their specific context. By doing so, the messages would have all elements most citizens considered important to hear.

The focus groups were conducted in three phases or at three different periods of election operations (pre-election, Election Day, and post-election) and at each phase, one per province in Kandahar, Ghazni, Kunar and totally three per province including additional one for women in Khost and Hilmand at each phase. A total of 27 focus groups were conducted in the five provinces.

A total of 377 participants, 73 of which were women, participated in the meetings. Participants ranged from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), traditional/tribal groups, community leaders, Mullahs, women, village chiefs, and school teachers. All participants shared their ideas and suggested appropriate messages to encourage active participation in the elections and messages to counter electoral conflict and violence. These ideas constituted around 200 messages which were reviewed by the two local partners, AABRAR and AidTrends, and consequently analyzed and finalized into a smaller and more digestible number of 42 messages by the CCI elections team. These messages formed the basis for all of the campaign's further activities as they were disseminated through radio, TV and posters and discussed at the face-to-face community sessions.

The focus groups lasted about two hours each and were technically supported by the project advisors. Each meeting discussed the questions provided in Annex 1 of this report.

The pre-election and Election Day focus groups were meant to design different messages to correspond to the local context and that were appropriate for that phase. For example, while pre-election day messages focused on importance of participation in elections, Election Day messages included a message calling voters to wait for the results peacefully. Women were absent from some of the focus groups. Post-election focus groups investigated the effectiveness of these messages.⁵ The questions asked are listed in Annex 3.

The focus groups impacted the campaign positively by engaging local government officials, community elders, local women and regular citizens to share their ideas. The ideas developed in the focus groups represented the road map for design and development of the final messages. A total of 32 unique messages were identified in the lead up to the April 5 Election Day.

Message Dissemination

Together with its implementing partners, Creative conducted 800 community outreach events that provided information and briefings for the upcoming vote. Across the first and runoff electoral periods, a total of 285,155 posters were distributed, including 101,397 provided by the IEC that CCI collaboratively agreed to distribute. Early on Creative established a close working relationship with Mr. Ahmadullah Archiwal, the IEC's Director of Public Outreach, to ensure Creative's peaceful elections messaging themes were endorsed by the IEC and that Creative's work aligned with IEC election-related materials.

During the first round, Creative focused electronic media efforts almost exclusively upon Pashto and Dari radio messaging (the exception being AABRAR producing a locally made campaign consisting of four TV spots aired in Hilmand and Khost). Messaging commenced two weeks prior to Election Day, broadcasting to all five CCI core areas of operations: Hilmand, Kandahar, Ghazni, Kunar and Khost. The radio outlets selected for this service offered the flow-on benefit of messages also reaching listeners in Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar, Logar, Paktia, Paktika and Zabul.

Following consultation with OTI, Creative broadened the June 14 second round (runoff) strategy to include television advertising (encouraging voter turnout), broadcast to all 34 provinces. Radio again played an important support role, including the aforementioned twelve provinces and extending to incorporate Herat, Balkh, Kunduz and Nimroz. During the second half of June, television was phased out early and radio gradually reduced, with the aim of maintaining a post-election on-air presence, however with lighter saturation than previously, (encouraging patience as the runoff votes were counted). As applied from commencement of the elections campaign, scripts were recorded in province-specific accents with mixed gender and age variations, to maximize demographic reach and message variety.

As it became clear a final elections outcome would be some time away (and coinciding with the 12 July 100% vote audit announcement), messaging themes altered to include explanations why the audit was necessary, and again urging patience as this process was implemented. Creative simultaneously broadened the Peaceful Elections Advocacy Campaign by commissioning a series of four television PSA's (Dari and Pashto), aimed to further promote the peaceful elections process. PSA concepts underscored how elements such as improved health, education, infrastructure and job creation outcomes can occur under a peaceful and untied Afghanistan. The spots were designed to support the election process), however the overarching concept was a focus upon *nation building*, with the final tag line being "The future of Afghanistan is in our hands." This same theme evolved into a second tier radio campaign, backing the audit explanations and continually emphasizing request for patience.

Due to the subsequent electoral impasse and ongoing allegations cast by both candidates' parties the decision was made in consultation with OTI to phase out radio messages relating to the audit process,

⁵ "The focus of the discussion was on the messages we developed, the Accuracy of the messages, how we can improve the messages, the impact of the Messages over the people, which messages were more interested to people, and the benefits of the face to face messages." AABRAR Final Report, July 27

while simultaneously raising the profile of the nation building -- The future of Afghanistan is in our hands themes on TV and radios -- until the political situation became clearer.

Creative's Peaceful Elections Advocacy Campaign radio and TV component commenced March 26 and concluded September 30, in conjunction with the announcement of Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai as president on September 21. In total, 25,880 radio and 1,139 television PSA's were broadcast.

Provincial Dialogues

Following largely successful and peaceful voter participation in the April 5, 2014 first round of elections, CCI supported a series of provincial-level dialogue sessions in Kandahar, Kunar, Khost, Hilmand and Ghazni, to increase awareness of the peaceful electoral process. The aim was civic education for local leaders focusing on elections and peaceful advocacy, as well as empowering community leaders to disseminate this information throughout their home districts and communities.

The provincial dialogue sessions were held in early June at the five provincial capitals, with about 967 participants, consisting of 845 men and 122 women. Topics included voter responsibilities, voter participation, peaceful election implementation processes, supporting women and youth participation, and discussing the difference between first and second rounds. Printed IEC materials were provided for further distribution within the participants' respective districts. In many instances, local media outlets covered these events, extending the communication of primary messages.

Radio and Television

During the first round of elections, the project focused efforts on radio messaging (although AidTrends produced and broadcast a small locally made TV campaign in Hilmand and Khost). Messaging commenced two weeks prior to the April 5, 2014 election, with activities designed to cover mainly Hilmand, Kandahar, Ghazni, Kunar and Khost. Radio outlets resulted in the Pashto and Dari messages reaching listeners in Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar, Logar, Paktia, Paktika and Zabul.

During the second round, the project broadened its strategy to include television advertising, reaching all 34 provinces. The radio campaign again covered the five provinces, and was extended to include Herat, Balkh, Kunduz and Nimroz.

In June 2014, CCI strategy reduced the number of radio outlets to two wide-reaching broadcasters (Arman FM and Salam Watandar), and substantially reduced the daily dissemination on those two networks. The aim was to maintain a message presence with lighter saturation.

The strategy for elections messaging activities included each script recorded in different versions, to provide province accent specific, mixed gender and age interpretations of wording, in order to maximize demographic reach and provide variation variety.

Figure 2. Illustrative Messages

Post-Election Radio 6 July onwards

Dear Compatriots! The Independent election commission is working on counting and processing the results. Let's wait peacefully for the result.
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Dear Citizens! You have voted peacefully in the second round of the elections. Let's wait peacefully for the results.

As it became clearer that the final elections outcome would be some time away and the complete audit was announced, the project commissioned a series of four TV PSA's in Dari and Pashto, aimed to build further public support for the electoral process. PSA concepts underscored how elements such as improved health, education, infrastructure and job creation outcomes can occur under a peaceful and united Afghanistan.

The spots were designed to convey benefits of the election process. The overall goal was to focus upon a nation building concept, with the final strap line being “The future of Afghanistan is in our hands.”

The television campaign was launched on August 13, 2014 on the country’s most popular broadcaster, Tolo TV, where TV spots in Dari and Pashto played at least four times nightly over a period of two weeks. The same spots commenced on the Khurshid TV network on August 21 on a less frequent rotation.



CCI commissioned two TV concepts in conjunction with the Roshan Afghanistan Premiere League (RAPL), an annual televised Afghan football tournament that enjoys wide-ranging popularity across the country. The first TV spot featured a number of young children approaching adults, presenting them with a rose and simply saying “Thank you.” Finally, an old man asks “Thank you for what?” The small girl replies, “Thank you for voting for my future.” The final sequence sees the appearance of a football hero appealing to his “brothers and sisters” to vote in the upcoming election, and to participate peacefully.

The second TV message was more focused on the RAPL stars, with the concept of the runoff being compared to the second half of a football game. The players emphasized how important this part of the game was, and how it was vital for everyone to return to the field and participate. Women were also reminded that it was important for them to take part in the election. The final sequence featured footballers endorsing a peaceful process. Each was recorded in Pashto and Dari, and run across five TV channels.

In addition to the above messages, CCI also selected other spots to run across five TV channels, including two produced by implementing partner AidTrends, featuring separate female and male Pashto voices over aspirational images, suggesting what a stable and democratic Afghanistan could achieve, and encouraging people to vote peacefully. The final spot featured a competition entry funded by United States Institute for Peace (USIP), involving creative animation promoting the peaceful electoral process. During the audit, “The future of Afghanistan is in our hands” spot¹ ran through September 21 on Khurshid TV.



In June 2014, the radio campaign spanned a range of stations, with various themes developed by election advisors in province-wide focus groups. Exclusive Pashto versions (usually recorded in alternate male/female voices to provide broader appeal), were broadcast in Kunar, Khost, Kandahar and Hilmand. Ghazni scripts were recorded in Dari and Pashto, again with alternating female/male voices. On average, 20 peak time broadcasts occurred daily on each radio station, building to 30 spots played on Election Day. Following the high rotation of election spots heading into and including the second round of elections on June 14, the strategy was to *rest* many stations for about one week, before fully launching the post-election spots. The exception was Arman, Afghanistan’s leading radio station, which commenced broadcasting post-election messages in both Dari and Pashto (alternating male/female voice versions) the day following Election Day.

Three pre-election scripts were developed that ran up to and including June 13, 2014. Two Election Day spots replaced these, which were broadcast on June 14, 2014. Beginning June 15, 2014, two election spots (Pashto/Dari in male/female voice versions) were launched.

Figure 3. English translation of the scripts developed for the campaign

Period	Script Content
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Pre-Election Concluded 13 June	Dear Compatriots! As you participated in the first round of elections and proved to the world Afghans will peacefully choose their government via election, let's vote peacefully again.
Pre-Election Concluded 13 June	Dear Compatriots! As you know, women represent half of the population. For our society to develop, peaceful participation in the second round of the election is important.
Pre-Election Concluded 13 June	Dear Compatriots! On April 5, Afghans voted in large numbers for 8 presidential candidates. On June 14, the two candidates that received the most votes will participate in a second round of elections. Let's participate again and vote in peaceful elections. Let's build upon our dream of a stronger and democratic Afghanistan!
Election Day 14 June only	- Supporting and participating in peaceful elections is every Afghan's responsibility. - Let's vote peacefully for our bright future!
Post- Election 15 June – 5 July	Dear Compatriots! The Independent Election Commission is working on counting and processing the results. Let's wait peacefully for the result.
15 June – 5 July	Dear Compatriots! You have voted peacefully in the second round of the elections. Let's wait peacefully for the results.

The Arman radio campaign concluded at the end of August and Salam Watandar concluded on September 8, 2014. Those campaigns included the “Let's wait peacefully for the results” audit-related spots. Due to the electoral impasse and various allegations being cast by representatives of the two presidential candidates, the decision was made not to run audit-related messages on Killid, but to focus on the nation-building “The future of Afghanistan is in our hands” spot until the political situation became clearer.

A radio version of “The future of Afghanistan is in our hands” spot was produced and ran between July 15 and September 30, 2014 on the Killid Network (Hilmand, Kandahar, Ghazni, Khost, Nangarhar, Kunar, Herat, Balkh and Kabul), designed to resonate with and expand upon the awareness of the television campaign. These PSAs consisted simply of the actual TV audio track (voice over, music and special effects) being transferred to radio. The two PSAs, each in Dari and Pashto, resulted in four radio spots.

As of September 16, 2014, there were a total of 14,959 radio PSAs and 1,001 television PSAs. In October 2014, the project broadcast two new “The future of Afghanistan is in our hands” PSAs on Tolo TV, utilizing final budget minutes and broadcasting on Killid radio. Messaging was similar to television themes.

Print Materials

A total of 285,155 printed materials were distributed. The 154,158 were printed by CCI and 120,246 were printed by the IEC.

Figure 4. Poster Distribution Breakdown

Poster Distribution	AABRAR/AidTrends Produced	CCI Produced	IEC Produced	Total
Hilmand	0	29,450	18,050	47,500
Khost	0	29,028	11,407	40,435
Kandahar	10,000	25,340	13,670	49,010
Kunar	10,000	24,940	20,870	55,810
Ghazni	10,000	45,000	37,400	92,400
AABRAR posters distributed	30,000			
CCI produced posters distributed		153,758		
IEC produced posters			101,397	
Total				285,155



Above: First Round posters translation (Left to Right)

- Your participation in a peaceful election ensures a bright future.
- By using your vote, you will fulfill an Islamic decree.
- Peaceful elections mirror a peaceful life.



Above: Second Round posters translation (Left to Right)

- Supporting peaceful election is each Afghan's responsibility.
- Supporting peaceful election is every Afghan's responsibility let's vote peacefully for our bright future.
- 1393 Afghanistan Elections

Beneficiaries

The categories are illustrative and the number of beneficiaries based on data available from AABRAR and AidTrends final reports as they included different categories of beneficiaries.

Number of person days of employment (female) created	1,200
People in focus groups receiving a meal	452
Number of employed in focus groups	72
Number of females exposed to messages	208,040
Number of males exposed to messages	219,450

Hilmand and Khost

Outreach events/attendees (pre-election)	18/781
Posters (Hilmand)	12,980
Posters (Khost)	14,000
Pre-election June 2 round outreach events	4
Participants per provincial dialogue	130

Ghazni, Kunar, Kandahar

Communities visited	4,992
People reached	124,800
Women reached	46,700
Project staff	121
Peaceful Election Messengers	96

Both AidTrends and AABRAR reported engaging local groups in developing messages but data on the exact numbers or breakdown by stakeholder other than the number of women in the events is not available. Additional ten focus groups were conducted by the CCI's Internal Monitoring Unit, which along with 1,499 surveys conducted (more details are available in the impact section below), confirmed the effectiveness of messages developed this way.

Program Impact

The assessment of the impact of the Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign component is based on three key sources: the analysis of the focus groups conducted by the CCI's Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU) and the resulting report prepared by Rahman Safi International (RSI) Consulting, an undated CCI's Face-to-Face Session Analysis report, and the surveys conducted by the IMU and analyzed by Creative's election team for this report. It is also informed by the review of historical conflict factors in Afghanistan's 2009/10 and 2014 elections which served as an update to the 2012 electoral security assessment. The review provided a brief synopsis of conflict dynamics surrounding the 2009 presidential election, reviewed vulnerabilities identified for the 2014 election and summarized conflict trends in the pre-election, Election Day, and post-election phases, as well as the implications of this conflict profile for future programming.

Face-to-Face Session Analysis

The reports concluded that face-to-face sessions were a very useful mechanism to directly reach large numbers of local people and conduct useful discussion of the messages of peaceful behavior during the election in the five target provinces. A majority of participants reported that they had no idea about peaceful elections until attending the face-to-face sessions where they were able to understand non-violent behavior during the elections and the importance of electoral processes. After attending the sessions, they learned how important elections were. For example, AABRAR on their peaceful messaging campaign concluded

“hence, in 2014 election, the participation was found to be very high compared with last three elections in these five provinces.” Despite this conclusion, participation does not appear to have increased in the five provinces relative to all three elections. Comparison between the turnout in the first round of 2014 elections in the five provinces, and 2009 and 2010 elections can be found in the DigitalGlobe reports and in the Geospatial Analysis section of this report.

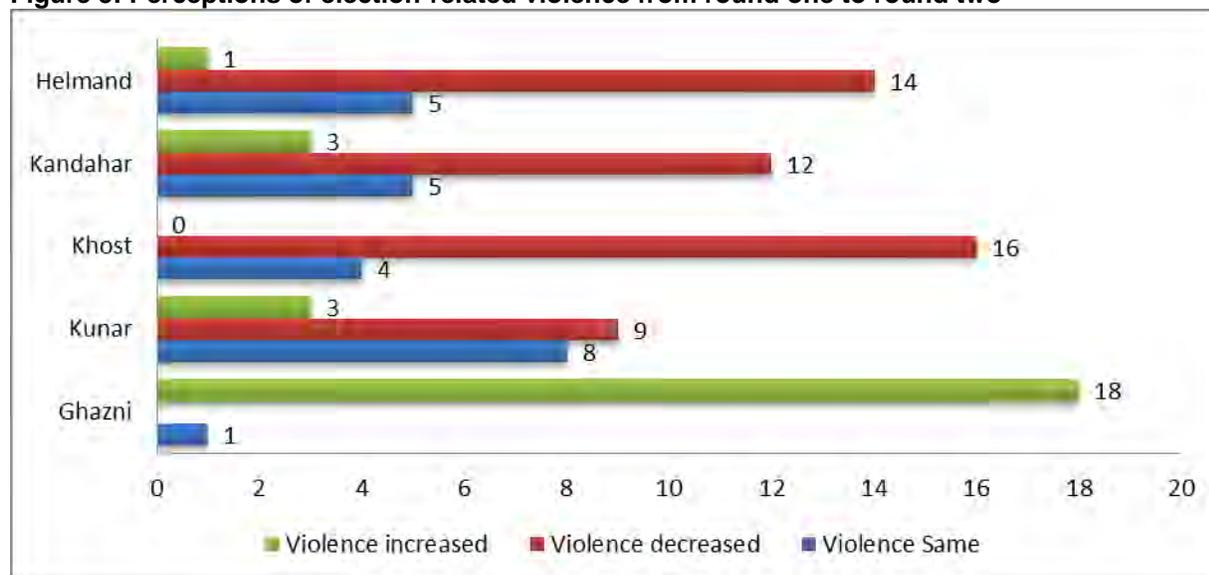
Focus Group Research

From July 6 - 9, 2014, the IMU assessed awareness and perceptions of election messages for the CCI. The IMU conducted ten focus groups in five provinces with 92 men and women, both voters and non-voters in the presidential elections in April and June 2014.

According to the focus groups, most voters participated in the election because they hoped it would bring positive change in the future. This may have been influenced, in part, by slogans such as “your vote, your future,” which was perhaps the most popular and best-remembered election message. In addition, many participants, particularly women, said voting is their “right.” This suggests that campaigns to raise awareness of women’s rights to vote were successful. According to the focus groups, women participated widely in the June 2014 elections. This was attributed to Pashtun men mobilizing for candidate Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, perceptions of improved security, and an effective get-out-the-vote campaign. Of those who failed to vote, the most frequently given reason was they had not registered to vote or lost their voter card. In addition, some participants did not vote because they were travelling at the time, feared for their safety, or the polling station was located too far from them. A number of women said they did not have permission from their families to vote. Some in Ghazni said that Anti-Government Elements (AGE) control of their village or area prevented them from voting or government forces, particularly ANSF, blocked their access to polling stations, which were reportedly due to ethnic rivalries in the province.

Across all ten focus groups, participants mentioned a total of 51 incidents of violence/intimidation. The highest numbers of incidents of violence/intimidation were reported from Ghazni (30), followed by Kunar (9), Kandahar (6), Khost (3), and Hilmand (3). Analysis by gender depicts that male participants reported 31 incidents of violence/intimidation and female participants reported 20 incidents. Of interest, some women said that intimidation/violence against them came from family members. Importantly, district government officials and ANSF were accused of fomenting insecurity, blocking polling stations and planting mines in Ghazni province to intimidate voters on both sides of the ethno-linguistic divide; reportedly civil society organizations did not intervene or advocate on voters’ behalf.

Figure 5: Perceptions of election-related violence from round one to round two



Overall, across all five provinces, the majority of participants (55%) felt that violence had decreased from round one to round two of the presidential elections, with another 25% saying it was unchanged. The notable deviation from this standard was in Ghazni, where nearly everyone thought violence had increased. If Ghazni province is taken out of the calculation, 70% of participants felt that violence had decreased from round one to round two. The reductions in violence were attributed to improved security at the polls by ANSF, the commitment of the local government in ensuring security, the vocal approval and encouragement by religious leaders to participate in the election process, effective media messages promoting peace and promising security at the polls and the widespread participation and determination of ordinary citizens to vote for the candidate of their choosing.

The vast majority of participants reported hearing and seeing elections messages, suggesting the elections messaging and campaigns were effective. Among the most cited and well-liked elections messages were “your vote, your future”, “your vote is a debt, give it to someone worthy/honest” and messages that advocated voting from an Islamic perspective. Several participants said they liked messages pointing out separate and secure polling stations for women. Indeed, many participants think religious scholars justifying elections, including women’s right to vote, will increase voter turnout.

Over half of people reported hearing messages regarding peaceful elections in particular (59% of men and 54% of women). A lot of participants could not remember the specific content of these messages, and some confused “peaceful messages” with other, general elections messages. The most effective were related to government promises related to keeping security at the polls, those that advocated for non-discrimination and those that talked about a brighter future through a peaceful elections process. On the whole, the concept of peaceful elections messaging was well-liked and many people reported that such messages were effective.

Many participants said that peaceful messages contributed to reduced violence or a general climate of tolerance/peace. Most credited the peaceful messages with an increase in voter turnout rather than specific reductions in violence; that is, the messages convinced people that the polls would be secure and they would be able to vote peacefully on Election Day. Overall, more than half (54%) felt that these messages contributed to reduced violence and/or inspired confidence in a peaceful atmosphere on Election Day and encouraged people to vote. Importantly, these messages also helped to embolden voters to claim their rights when faced with election-day intimidation. Because peace-related messages were interpreted as get-out-the-vote/election-day mobilization messages, it suggests that ordinary people do not see themselves or other citizens as perpetrators or participants in violent action, but rather bystanders in a process that may include acts of violence by outsiders or non-civilians. In fact, this was the case in Ghazni, where

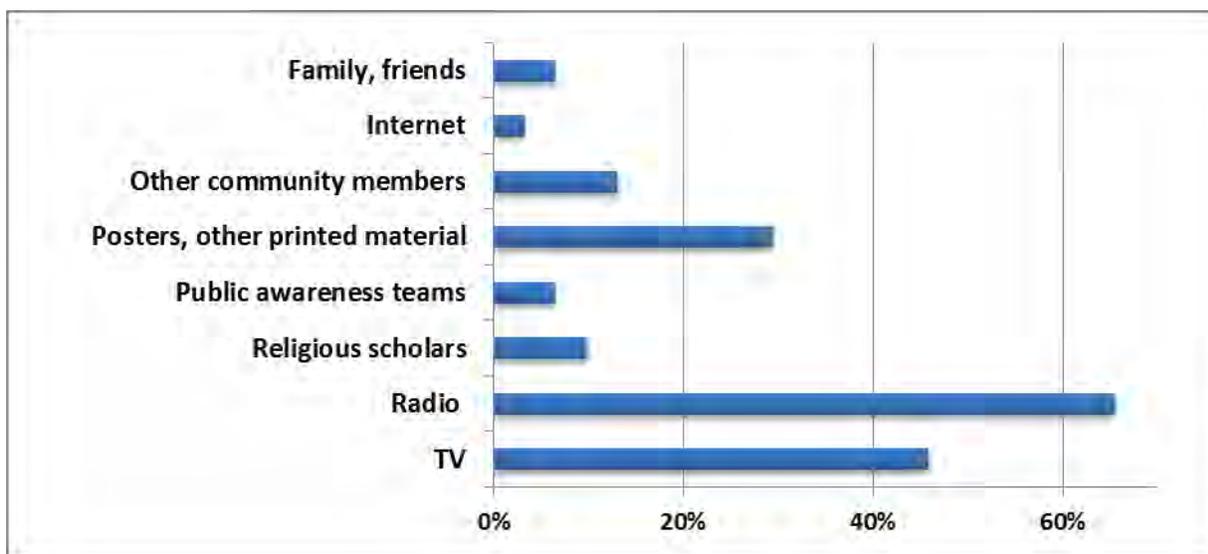
violence marred the polls. No ordinary people were seen as instigators of violence; instead, government officials, ANSF, and AGE were all seen as the perpetrators of violence. All three groups were said to have intimidated voters through threat of force or through overt displays of force (firing into the air, rocket attacks, beating up citizens, blocking entrances to polling sites), directed towards voters on both sides of the ethnolinguistic divide in the province.

The example of Ghazni highlights that peaceful messaging is a necessary but insufficient component to achieving peaceful elections. Without the commitment of the IEC and local officials to stand behind messages, peaceful messages alone are not enough. While the educational, rights-based messages reportedly emboldened voters to claim their rights when faced with intimidation, ultimately, the case of Ghazni suggests that peaceful messaging is most effective in areas where government can stand behind their promises to deliver uncompromised Election Day security. This is certainly outside the control and scope of the CCI activity, but a topic around which CCI and OTI can advocate during the elections' process and meetings/discussions with government counterparts during peaceful messaging campaigns.

A vast majority of the participants, including men, reported knowledge of messages that urged women to vote. The best-remembered messages stated something along the lines of "women make up half of the community" and "women have the right to vote." Many participants recalled messages affirming women have an "equal right," or the "same right as men" to vote. Several men and women remembered messages that mentioned separate polling booths for women, which would be staffed by female officials; this message was particularly well received. People also reported that religious scholars affirmed the rights of women to vote, which reportedly had a significant influence on the attitudes and actions of men across provinces in allowing the women in their households to vote. Despite gains, many women still faced obstacles from their families, and even reported instances of intimidation by their family members when asked to recall incidences of Election-Day violence.

The majority of participants heard elections messages via radio, followed by TV. Many thought radio was the most effective way to deliver elections messages. A number of participants insisted religious scholars were the best, while several pointed out that public awareness teams, which go directly to houses, are the best way to reach rural women.

Figure 6: Ways participants reported receiving messages



In general, the CCI elections messages played for focus group participants were well liked and focus group participants agreed with their overall content. The majority recognized, understood, and interpreted the imagery on posters and TV commercials correctly. However, a number of women did not understand some of the imagery, such as a dove being a symbol for peace. Many men and women also interpreted the

messages, such as the right to vote, in a religious light. The only image that generated any negative opinions was a poster showing women's faces. In Kunar, both men and women in the province thought it would be more appropriate to show women with covered faces on the poster; indeed the presence of their faces took the focus away from the general message the poster aimed to convey, which was related to the rights of women to vote.

Survey Data

The CCI M&E team also conducted an internal survey to assess the impact of peaceful messaging campaign in Kandahar, Hilmand, Ghazni, and Khost. The team conducted 1,499 surveys, 271 in Kandahar, 298 in Hilmand, 302 in Ghazni, and 606 in Khost. Interviews were conducted in 32 different districts within these four provinces. The survey could not be conducted in Kunar due to the security situation. Those interviewed ranged in age from 12-83 with a majority between the ages of 18-35. Respondents were represented by both voters and non-voters. Of those surveyed, 79% reported that they did vote in the April election compared to 21% who answered that they did not vote.

The survey was conducted in May between the first and second round. Of all survey respondents, 86.7% responded that they had seen or heard election messages. Significantly, 87.3% of respondents answered yes in response to the question, "Did Message 1 encourage you to vote?" This response showed that the use of an election messaging strategy in this context was well regarded and effective. Furthermore, 73% of respondents answered yes in response to the question, "After hearing the message(s), did you encourage others to vote?"

Across all surveyed groups, radio was the most common communication medium through which participants received the election messaging, reaching over 83% of respondents. Posters were identified as the next most common way participants received elections messages with 39% of respondents stating they saw elections messaging posters. Respondents also identified community members and family/friends as ways they came across elections messaging; reaching 27 and 23 percent of respondents respectively.

In Kandahar, 271 people were surveyed, accounting for 18% of all survey participants. In this province 90% of respondents answered that they had seen or heard elections messages. Although still significant, Radio conveyed election messaging to just 76% of respondents in this province which is the lowest radio impact for the four provinces. Interestingly, poster messaging had the greatest reach in this province by reaching 65% of respondents. Also noteworthy is the high impact of communicative methods in Kandahar province. Forty-three percent of participants received election messaging through family and friends while 57% came across this messaging through community members.

In Hilmand, 298 individuals were surveyed making up 20% of all participants. In this province a very robust 95% of respondents answered that they had seen or heard elections messaging. Radio messaging reached a large portion of those surveyed in this province with 86% answering they received elections messaging through this medium. The impact of posters in this province was very low with only 13% receiving election messaging this way. The impact was very low for the other two social messaging categories, receiving messaging through family/friends and receiving them through community members, reached only 5% and 7% respectively.

In Ghazni, 301 people participated comprising 20% of the total number surveyed. All but three of the individuals responded they had seen or heard elections messaging which equals 99% of those surveyed in Hilmand. Radio messaging reached the most number of people in this province with 94% responding to having received elections messaging through this medium. Poster messaging was very strong in this province reaching 59% of respondents. Receiving election messaging through family/friends and through community members was also strong in this province reaching 41% and 44% of those surveyed respectively.

In Khost, 604 people participated in the survey comprising 41% of all those surveyed. Participants in this province reported the lowest response to having seen or heard elections messaging with 75% answering that they had received messaging. In this province, 81% of those who responded stated they heard election messaging on the radio. Poster messaging had a lower impact in this province, reaching 29% of those

surveyed. Social methods were also very low in this province with both family/ friends and community members conveying election messaging to only 11% of these respondents.

The survey helped shed some light on messaging tactics that are most effective for encouraging electoral participation in the target provinces. One useful survey question that could help guide future messaging campaigns was: "How would you like to receive messages in the future?" The most popular answer was community-level awareness, selected by 44% of respondents. Radio was the second most popular choice with 34% of respondents selecting it. Interestingly, posters were selected as the primary choice by only 3.9% of those surveyed. One could hypothesize that given the choice, Afghan voters prefer communication mediums that provide more depth on the candidates and issues surrounding the elections.

Those surveyed also shared perceptions about what they liked about the content of the messages. Respondents reacted very positively to the core message of "Your vote is your future, your right, select your candidate." Other messaging themes that seemed to resonate with participants were: key information on elections, presence of security forces to protect voters, elections will bring positive change, and Afghans have a duty to vote. Certain radio stations reached much wider audiences than others. The most cited radio stations by respondents for electoral messaging were Nan, Azadi, Sabawoon Radio, Kandahar, BBC, and Killid.

Figure 7: Illustrative messages



IV. ACTION RESEARCH

CCI election related activities included a Mapping Exercise to conduct a series of predictive analysis of electoral violence and elections dynamics based on past elections and Action Research to understand what Afghans mean by credible elections. The main goal was to produce analysis that would inform CCI programming choices for preventing electoral conflict around the 2014 elections.

Program Activities

Mapping of Electoral Violence

The purpose of this activity was to conduct a series of predictive analysis of electoral violence and elections dynamics based upon elections in 2009 and 2010. The main goal was to produce predictive analysis that would inform CCI programming choices for preventing electoral conflict around the upcoming 2014 Presidential Election. To accomplish this goal CCI contracted DigitalGlobe (DG), an experienced firm with proven capacity to provide high-quality geospatial analysis products on Afghanistan. The purpose of this activity was to understand where election related violence was most likely to occur based on historic violence and the surrounding geography. A key use of this information was to try to identify polling centers likely to experience violence.

The analysis provided by DG included geospatial products drawing on a wide range of open-source databases and accompanying narrative analysis for each. The focus area of analysis was on the areas with the most contentious / inflammatory / negative elections rhetoric in CCI-East; the most popular media for propagation and the most adequate media for countering pro-violence messaging around the elections. By addressing these questions through interactive reports, heat maps and other appropriate products, this activity was expected to provide actionable analysis on elections.

DG produced reports in January/February 2014 (Provincial Analysis of Election Related Challenges), in March 2014 (Provincial Analysis of Electoral Violence), and in May 2014 (Election Day Observations and Outlook). The analysis in this report combines and compares the findings by DG in all these three reports. In the January/February 2014 report, DG identified thirteen Afghan provinces most likely to experience setbacks and challenges during the 2014 elections. The thirteen provinces were Zabul, Khost, Uruzgan, Wardak, Kandahar, Kunar, Kapisa, Ghazni, Hilmand, Paktika, Herat, Kunduz, and Nangarhar.

In April 2014 report, DG assessed the likelihood of election related violence and electoral fraud, as well as relative voter access and participation rates for each province identified in Phase I. The likely geospatial distribution of election violence in each province was modeled using the predictive analytic tool, Signature Analyst™ (SA), which depicted high-risk areas based in part on the location of previous security incidents. Qualitative and quantitative assessments of Afghan media rhetoric, voter registration, and socio-political conditions supplemented the provincial SA outputs, as did analyses of provincial security and insurgent forces. When assessing the likely intensity of election related violence, key considerations included (i) the timing of the election relative to the insurgent fighting season, (ii) the type, quantity, and posture of security forces, and (iii) the relative saturation and influence of the local insurgency. With these considerations in mind, the DG maps below depict the assessed levels of violence in the 13 provinces analyzed (Jan/Feb 2014 report), and the actual levels of violence as recorded by DG in the first round of elections (May 2014 report).

While election related violence was not exclusively conducted by insurgent elements, according to the violence database compiled for this project, they conducted at least 57% of the election related violence reported during the past three election cycles in Afghanistan and were predicted to conduct 96% of the violence in 2014 elections.

Due to the drawdown of international security forces, shortfalls in Afghan security forces, and improved AGE organization in eastern Afghanistan, DG assessed the insurgency to be well positioned to conduct violence during the 2014 elections but also that it was highly unlikely that violence would approach the same levels as during the 2009 and 2010 elections. DG also did not anticipate the insurgency to be able to disrupt the overall electoral process, to include delaying the vote.

The insurgency elements were expected to use high-profile attacks in provincial capitals to garner media attention and intimidate urban voters. Such attacks would counter any overall reductions in election related violence, whether caused by the weather, the poppy harvest, or heightened security. To deter voter participation in rural areas, DG found the insurgency would likely depend on intimidation tactics, including the use of night letters, instead of wide-spread, overt violence. At the local level, insurgent violence and intimidation were expected to affect voter participation, especially in rural districts.

The poppy harvest had been expected to limit the intensity of violence, but also voter participation, in heavy poppy producing provinces like Hilmand, Uruzgan, and the surrounding provinces.

DG also provided province-by-province analysis. In Ghazni, high levels of election related violence and fraud, and low voter turnout were expected with violent events expected to surpass the average for March and April and approach the same number of incidents recorded leading up to the 2009 and 2010 polls. Pashtun-dominated districts of Andar, Qarabagh, Ghazni Center, Giro, Zana Khan, Muqur and Dih Ya were estimated to be at the most risk of violence, fraud, and limited turnout. On April 5, voter participation in Ghazni increased by 23.2% relative to the 2009 election and the number of complaints registered decreased by 54.3%. Nevertheless, fraud and violence tainted the electoral process. More complaints were registered in Ghazni than in over half the other provinces with most filed against provincial candidates and members of the IEC. With nine reported attacks, Ghazni was one of the country's most violent provinces in the first round of elections. DG also assessed that violence would increase ahead of the runoff. With the two top candidates from the first round, Abdullah and Ghani capturing 72.9% of the vote between them, participation in the second round was expected to mirror the first round. With a slim margin between the two candidates, such as in Qarabagh and Waghaz, there was an increased expectation of fraud.

In Kapisa, DG assessed low to moderate election related violence, moderate electoral fraud, and low to moderate turnout in Kapisa with violence most likely to occur along primary roads and valleys in the northern portion of Tagab and southern part of Nijrab districts. On April 5, voter participation decreased by 0.3% and the number of registered complaints 12% relative to 2009. Nevertheless, more complaints were filed in than in nearly half the country. Violence on Election Day was limited but expected to significantly increase ahead of the runoff. Abdullah secured 73% of the votes in the first round, leading DG to conclude that his support base would buoy participation rates.

In Kunar, moderate to high levels of fraud, and low levels of voter participation with violence were expected to equal or slightly surpass April 2013 levels and electoral fraud expected to remain consistent with 2009 and 2010. Polling centers in Dara-i-Pech and Wata Pur districts were at most risk of insurgent attack. In the first round, voter participation declined by 7.2% and complaints registered with the ECC decreased by 57.9% relative to 2009. Kunar had among the fewest number of complaints but was one of the most violent provinces in the first round, and was expected to remain so in the runoff.

In Khost and Paktika, DG assessed a high likelihood of electoral fraud, low voter participation, and low to moderate levels of violence, highlighting Zarghun Shahr, Sharan, Ziruk, Urgun, and Sarobi districts in Paktika, and central districts surrounding the provincial capital in Khost as the areas of greatest concern.

On April 5, voter participation in Khost decreased by 90.2 and the number of complaints increased by 48% relative to 2009. In Paktika, voter participation and the number of complaints registered with the ECC

decreased by 14% and 25% respectively. Paktika was one of the more violent provinces on Election Day, with insurgents likely succeeding in increasing violence in the province ahead of the runoff.

In Nangarhar, DG assessed moderate to high levels of election related violence and moderate voter participation with election related violence most likely to occur in and around the provincial capital, Jalalabad. Voter turnout was expected to subsist in southern Nangarhar, particularly in districts such as Pachier Agam and Chaparhar. In areas with the heaviest insurgent presence, including Khogayani and Hesarak districts, limited voter participation had been expected. On April 5, voter participation and the number of complaints registered with the ECC decreased by 10.5% and 11.2% respectively. Nangarhar was one of the most violent provinces on Election Day, and was expected to remain so during the runoff.

In Wardak, DG assessed moderate levels of election related violence and electoral fraud, and severe limitations on voter access with districts in the south and east at most risk, including Chak-e Wardak, Jalrez, Jaghatu, Sayyid Abad, Diamir Dad, and Nerkh. On April 5, voter participation increased by 42.3% while the number of complaints registered with the ECC decreased by 10.8%. Electoral violence was limited to Saydabad District, but violence in the province was expected to increase ahead of the runoff.

In Hilmand, DG assessed low levels of election related violence, low voter turnout, and moderate levels of fraud with violence equal to or slightly higher than April 2013 levels, but not approaching the intensity of violence witnessed during the 2009 and 2010 elections. On E-Day, voter participation decreased by 24% while the number of complaints registered with the ECC decreased by 27.1%. Reported violence was limited to four attacks, but was expected to increase during the runoff.

In Kandahar, insurgent violence had been expected to surpass violence levels from April 2013, but not approach 2009 and 2010 levels. Election related violence was most likely in Lashkar Gah, the Upper Arghandab River Valley, and around Kandahar City. Voter participation will likely be low in remote districts, including Kajaki, Naw Zad, Washer, Musa Qala, Dishu, Baghran, Maruf, Arghistan, Spin Boldak, and Shorabak. Voter participation increased 4% while the number of complaints was 170, more than any other province, an increase of 21.4% relative to 2009. Violence was less widespread than alleged fraud, with only seven events reported across the province. Maruf District had the highest concentration of violence followed by Maywand. Violence was expected to rise ahead of the runoff.

In Uruzgan and Zabul, DG assessed low levels of election related violence most likely targeting polling centers in the Tarin Kot district on the day of or immediately prior to Election Day, a high likelihood of electoral fraud, and low voter turnout. In Uruzgan, voter participation decreased by 30.7% and the number of complaints by 32.3%. Uruzgan had the second lowest number of complaints behind Panjshir Province and no incidents of violence were recorded in the first round with insurgents unlikely to focus attacks in the province ahead of the runoff. In Zabul, voter participation increased by 29.6% while the number of registered complaints decreased by 34%. While there were relatively few complaints, more than half the complaints were classified as Category A. Violence in Zabul targeted polling centers, but was relatively limited.

In Herat, moderate to high levels of election related violence likely equal or slightly surpassing April 2013 levels were expected to be concentrated in Adraskan, Gulran, Herat, Koshki Kohna, and Shindand districts. Electoral fraud was expected to match 2009 and 2010 levels; and voter turnout equal or fall slightly below 2010 levels. Fraud and voting irregularities would be highest in Adraskan and Shindand districts. On April 5, voter participation increased 17.7% while the number of registered complaints decreased by approximately 11%. One third of the complaints were classified as Category A, behind only Kandahar in number. Violence occurred in Gulran, Koshk, and Shindand was expected to increase in the runoff.

In Kunduz, DG assessed a moderate to high likelihood of electoral related violence, moderate turnout, and low to moderate levels of electoral fraud. Analysis also indicated violence would most likely target polling centers in Kunduz district. On Election Day, voter participation increased by 123.9%, the largest increase of any province. The number of registered complaints decreased by 48.7%. Reported violence was limited to two attacks, yet four IEC employees were injured.

In all provinces, most complaints were filed against IEC staff members and provincial candidates.

Research and Analytical Services

In parallel to the predictive analysis, CCI conducted targeted small action research activities by contracting experienced research firms to design a rapid appraisal methodology to help understand the concept of “credible and legitimate” within the Afghan electorate.

CCI procured services, through Direct Distribution of Goods and Services awards, from Eureka Research and Evaluation, ATR Consulting and The Liaison Office (TLO) to conduct research. TLO conducted research in Uruzgan and Khost, ATR in Kandahar and Kabul, and Eureka in Hilmand, Ghazni and Kunar. Each service provider (SP) facilitated 10 semi-structured individual interviews per province and 12 focus group discussions per province with 6-12 persons each. All these activities took place over a period of 24 days.

Target groups for the research were all major social groups. The research explored generation- and ethnic/tribe-specific patterns, differences between urban and rural population, as well as the role of gender, literacy and wealth in attitudes on elections. The main criteria for inviting participants for focus groups were urban/rural, gender and ethnicity/tribe. Literacy and wealth were considered a sub-criteria to invite participants through random and diverse recruitment of participants for each of the focus groups.

To conduct the qualitative research, the study addressed the following questions:

- What are the key features of a credible electoral process and legitimate election outcome from the perspective of Afghans?
- What are the prevailing narratives and perspectives of those key features for the 2014 Presidential and Provincial Council elections?
- What are the community perspectives and narratives on key technical electoral processes, including but not limited to voter information and civic education, security, methods of campaigning, voter registration and voting?
- What are the community perspectives and narratives about key electoral integrity issues such as election-related violence, vote buying, misuse of state resources, ballot stuffing, and the like?

Uruzgan and Khost

In later June and in July 2014, TLO's carried out rapid election action research in Khost and Uruzgan on what makes a legitimate electoral process and what constitutes credible election outcomes in the eyes of the local population of these two provinces. These findings were illustrated through a comparison between the two provinces. As a continuation of the report, TLO was also commissioned to research the perceptions related to the audit process in order to provide a conclusive assessment of the elections overall, but the report was not made available for this report.

TLO conducted 24 focus group discussions with respondents of different age groups, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds as well as 20 individual semi-structured interviews for the two provinces of Khost and Uruzgan. TLO gathered data at different times and in different social situations (achieved by complementing primary data collection with opinion surveys and existing reports), as well as from a variety of people which involved data collection in different regions and different population groups. TLO conducted questionnaires in a way that internally crosschecked information making it easier to capture inconsistencies. The research team consisting of both Afghan and international staff, which assisted in avoiding and/or balancing out individual biases. Primary data collection was used along other existing sources such as UN and other reports.

Despite some serious incidents, the ANSF, IEC, election observers/agents and relevant stakeholders largely succeeded in providing security and a voting process that citizens felt was efficient, fair and transparent. The mostly positive voting experience contrasted sharply with past elections, which were marred by extensive fraud.

The pre-election phase was less successful and ultimately frustrated the ability of many people to vote because there was a lack of awareness-raising activities, insufficient voter registration outside of the

provincial capital and insufficient voting centers for a vast province. This contributed to an overall dismal voting rate of about six percent of the entire province's population.

At the time of the report submission, there was insufficient information concerning post-election activities in Uruzgan, but TLO noted the need for a political settlement following the contestation of the electoral results by the losing candidate which would serve to undermine the legitimacy of elections in the minds of Uruzgan citizens and bolster the propaganda of AGE.

Among positive findings, TLO stressed the following:

The ANSF were given high marks by citizens for providing security on Election Day and, for the most part, preventing AGE from disrupting elections around polling centers.

Citizens provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about IEC workers who opened and closed voting centers on time, were impartial, prevented voting irregularities and were generally knowledgeable.

Election observation/monitoring: Voters commented that the high number of candidate agents and observers greatly contributed to the transparency of the vote.

Lack of Government interference: Previous elections in Uruzgan were marred by overt and widespread provincial government interference on behalf of candidates. While voters expressed concern that such interference could occur after polling ended, the broader fraud of previous elections and government involvement was not evident in 2014 election. In Khost, governance interference was hardly presented.

Youth were consistently identified as the largest segment of society voting in the election. Interviewees felt that educated youth had a strong understanding of elections and were breaking with the practice of voting according to tribal affiliations to vote for the candidates they believed would best lead the country.

Areas Requiring Attention or Raising Concerns included:

Despite citizens giving high marks to the ANSF for the security it provided on Election Day, both Uruzgan and Khost reported interruptions due to a lack of security, but all agreed that in 2014 elections security was better than in 2009 and 2010.

AGE threatened citizens using letters and through sporadic attacks. In Uruzgan they appeared to have had a larger effect, while in Khost the majority of the respondents confirmed that threats were largely ignored.

Both in Uruzgan and Khost, citizens complained about lack of opportunities to register to vote. The vast majority of interviewees indicated that there were no outreach or awareness raising activities in Uruzgan. More outreach activities were reported in Khost, especially in the rural areas.

Both Khost and Uruzgan had a very low turnout of female voters, which was largely attributed to the prevailing societal values that restrict the movement of women. However, numerous respondents indicated that there were either no or only very limited outreach campaigns directed at women and polling centers were not set up if women did want to vote. In some areas, the IEC was not able to find female staff for the female sections of all the polling stations. The IEC staffed those female sections then with male staff, which resulted in female voters staying away, and a negative impression of elections by their male relatives.

Ghazni, Kunar, and Hilmand

Eureka confirmed findings from other studies and assessments conducted on the subject that the overall attitude of the Afghan population regarding elections was positive. The electoral process enjoyed wide-scale public support and was seen as compatible with religion and local customs. Exceptions were areas under the control of the Taliban, as for instance Musa Qala district in Hilmand or selected areas in Ghazni - where the local population's rejection of elections were an extension of the ideological opposition to the Afghan government system as a whole.

Support for the elections also reflected certain expectations on the outcome. One of the most common notions was that elections would facilitate peaceful, non-violent transition of power, as elections were seen as an alternative to armed conflict. The support for the elections furthermore appeared to be linked to the understanding that they would lead to a capable government qualified in managing development of the country. Finally, though not expressed directly in the focus groups, the process in which communities selected the candidate to vote for as well as the ethnic connotation of the run-off by labeling the contest between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah as 'Pashton' vs. 'Tadjik' illustrated that the local population regarded the elections as an instrument to ensure that local interests received attention by the future government.

Figure 10: Overview of the criteria for credibility of elections

No.	Criteria	Indicator
1.	Elections Process	Equal Participation (i.e. security)
2.		Transparency
3.		Limited Levels of Fraud
4.	Management of the Process - Role of the Independent Elections Commission	Independence of IEC
5.		Capacity of IEC
6.	Outcomes	Non-violent transfer of power
7.		Clear leadership
8.		Qualified leadership
9.		Long-term development of the country
10.		Representation/Facilitation of interests

In terms of processes, the 2014 elections initially satisfied the population in the three target provinces. Voter registration was conducted without causing major complaints, and focus group respondents generally viewed the elections as having run better than previous elections, although some problems remained.

Of the factors that shaped voter turnout, lack of security was one of the most important, as it both determined the establishment of polling stations as well as female voter participation. In Kunar, security improved significantly after the first round of the elections had still seen considerable levels of violence. Hilmand province remained divided between the secure areas surrounding the province center and the more volatile districts in the North. Nevertheless, Ghazni still experienced significant insecurity levels.

The security trends observed for the elections are a direct outcome of the fragmented approach of the opposition forces on the elections. After interrupting the elections in the first round, the opposition forces remained widely passive in most districts of Kunar during the second round. In Hilmand, the Taliban prevented the elections in the areas under their control, yet did not undertake significant efforts to disturb the voting process elsewhere. As threats had still been issued in both Kunar and Hilmand, yet were not followed up, a side effect of the elections was that the opposition forces lost influence in the perception of the population who interpreted the failure of the insurgents to interrupt the elections as a weakness. In contrast, Ghazni still saw the high activity levels of the opposition forces with large-scale intimidation campaigns targeting population and community leaders as well as attacks during elections day.

After the initially positive view on the elections, the ensuing conflict between the candidates over fraudulent votes threatened to undermine the credibility of the election process, as it questioned almost all criteria identified as key for the credibility of the elections.

The debate on fraud for instance contrasted the initial perceptions of moderate fraud levels established for the three provinces. Although cases of fraud had been observed in particular in Ghazni but also in Kunar, such as ballot stuffing, vote buying and collection of female voter cards, initially this did not impact on the positive perceptions of the elections. Eureka found that extensive media coverage of fraud allegations could change this state. The decision of Abdullah's campaign to question the process and introduce the option of announcing a parallel government shed a negative light on the capacity of the IEC to manage the process

and contradicted the public confidence in the election process. It also portrayed the elections as a source of conflicts instead of a peaceful mechanism of power transfer. Finally, in requiring the intervention of the US Secretary of State and the UN, the space was created for allegations of foreign influence. As a result, the audit of votes risked generating exactly the opposite of what it was designed to achieve - to re-install faith into the process.

The debate over the proposed 'unity government' also highlighted some internal contradictions in the public expectations on the elections. For instance, it demonstrated that a process aiming at facilitating peaceful power transfer has to ensure that the interests of the various political groups are taken into account which collides with the notion of having an uncontested winner of the elections. The research showed that these contradictory attitudes are particularly strong in socially and politically homogenous areas (i.e. Kunar and Hilmand), and it therefore can be expected that the 'unity government' will face opposition in these areas.

As a result of the debate over the 'unity government' Eureka concluded that it will be key for future outreach efforts to place elections in the wider context of the political process and provide additional information on the phase of coalition building and establishment of government following the elections.

Public outreach did play a significant role in encouraging public support for the elections and encouraging the local population to participate. Media coverage and advertisements, local gatherings and engagement of community leaders was acknowledged as important in initiating and shaping local debate on the elections. Yet, it proved difficult to distinguish the impact of the individual efforts, in part also since information on activities could not always be confirmed with the local population.

Eureka also cautioned that the limited scope of the research did not allow for an exhausting assessment of the outreach efforts conducted by the different organizations, and suggested that the IEC was most active and successful in Kunar. In the other two provinces, outreach of the IEC was limited to the province center and district capitals. As a result, the dominant factor of Hilmand's public decision-making was the candidate campaigns. Ghazni's population was influenced by a mixture of community leader engagement, media coverage and candidate campaigning.

The dominance of these actors in shaping public perceptions limited the information available on specific messages employed during the outreach. In Kunar for instance the messages reported by the respondents focused on technical aspects of the elections process. The mobilization of voters was achieved through the engagement of the community leaders which means that two levels of messaging were involved - 1. Engagement of tribal leaders, 2. Arguments adjusted by the multipliers to reach the general population. In Hilmand, mobilization was achieved primarily by discussion of candidate agendas.

Eureka also use an alternative way to identify successful messages is analyzing the general discourse on the elections and the key features reproduced. The successful messages consisted of a mixture of:

- A. Elections as consistent with Islam/local culture,
- B. Elections as mechanism of peaceful representation;
- C. Elections as facilitator of development;
- D. Elections as opportunity to obtain representation of interests.

Though not included in the official outreach efforts, Eureka pointed to ethnic arguments having an impact on mobilizing, in particular the Pashtun communities.

In terms of transmission strategies, engagement of tribal and community leaders proved to be highly effective, as the case of Kunar demonstrated. In engaging the local leaders, the IEC and local government secured a sharp increase in public participation and even managed to facilitate a change in opinions on women voting. The research however also showed that the concept faces limitations where hierarchical structure of local society prevents the information flow between the community leaders and the local base, as seen in Andar district of Ghazni, or where local leaders lost influence with the local population, which was the case in Hilmand.

Media coverage and advertisement also played a significant role, as they prepared the ground and reinforced the effect of other outreach efforts. Media - or more specifically: the radio - also was particularly important in reaching the population living in areas inaccessible to election teams.

Public gatherings were mentioned less frequently. Where they took place the local population considered them useful, yet the information gain remained limited due to time shortage. In areas where local leaders had limited impact as interlocutors though direct public gatherings represented a valuable alternative tool.

Kabul and Kandahar

ATR conducted a series of 24 focus group discussions and 20 key informant interviews. In various areas throughout the two provinces encompassing different geographical, socio-economic, ethnic and security contexts, local narratives regarding the elections were examined in detail.

Findings showed that there was a near unanimous perception that the volume of information received by voters had increased from the 2009 and 2010 elections which was less pronounced in rural areas in Kandahar.

A recurring theme was that messages received in the lead up to the elections had resonated with voters in the following key areas:

- building motivations to vote,
- building an awareness of how to vote and various electoral processes,
- building awareness of security measures and faith in the ANSF to maintain security on polling days

Sources of messages around the elections varied between areas; however the media, in particular television and radio, were the most prominent in Kabul and in urban areas of Kandahar. In areas further from district centres and in insecure areas in Kandahar, 'informal' sources of information such as Mullahs are more prominent, participants in Shah Wali Kot reported that local police had been a source of election information

Findings also suggest that the media had a profound impact on the perceptions of credibility of the 2014 elections, in particular building a widespread awareness of the extent of fraud and fuelling popular pressure to perform the audit of votes.

There was a widespread consensus that fraud had been pervasive throughout the elections, perceptions of fraud in Kabul tended to be focused on the institutional level, whilst perceptions in Kandahar were more focused on the local, polling station level. As such trust in election institutions such as the Independent Electoral Commission and Electoral Complaints Commission tended to be at its lowest in Kabul City and somewhat higher in Kandahar.

The increased participation of women in the 2014 elections was largely attributed to improved security, improved education and awareness among women and gender separate polling stations. The message that women had the right to vote appeared to resonate strongly with women in different areas of Kabul and Kandahar, to such an extent that women who had been prevented by their family from voting for security or other reasons reported that they had been 'robbed of their rights'.

There was a dominant perception that security had improved from previous elections and had exceeded expectations, these improvements were largely attributed to the improved capacity of the ANSF. The majority of participants perceived that violence had not had a significant impact on the elections result/negatively impacted credibility. A recurring theme was that the desire to participate was strong enough to overcome the fear of violence. Women in Kandahar were the most likely to report that they were not secure and that the threat of violence had prevented their participation, however this was not seen as negating the credibility of the electoral process.

Data collection was conducted between the July 12 and 17. The final day of data collection coincided with the first day of an official audit of all votes; the result of an agreement following allegations of widespread

fraud by both candidates in the final run-off. ATR noted in the report that the research is to be repeated following the audit's conclusion but the report or the data about such research was not obtained.

Program Impact

DigitalGlobe predictive analysis resulted in valuable data that could have been used to mitigate and prevent electoral violence, CCI advisors noted that while DG's analytical data was essential, it was not delivered to the IEC or security forces. By not informing the key stakeholders in electoral security of project findings an opportunity was missed to mitigate conflict surrounding the 2014 elections, dampening this activity's impact. Also, the reports did not cover the entire period from Election Day through to the transition of power (per NAT0011C) but primarily the first round of elections, including its lead-up and post-electoral period. Finally, some of the analysis and key conclusions such as the expectation for high levels of electoral violence in some provinces such as Uruzgan, or the turnout in the second round going down did not bear out.

TLO's research team also traveled to Khost and Uruzgan to carry out rapid election action research focus on what makes a legitimate electoral process and what constitutes a credible election outcomes in the eyes of the local population of these two provinces. TLO reported findings as a part of their 'assessment' report but they were based on focus groups which discussed the content of the actual election. As a continuation of the report, TLO was also commissioned to research the perceptions related to the audit process in order to provide a conclusive assessment of the elections overall. However, that data was not made available for this report. This appears to be the case with other groups as well although it was not specifically noted in the reports.

Uruzgan proved to be one of the provinces with no violent incidents recorded and despite DG making an assessment that electoral violence was not expected in their May report, TLO conducted the analysis in July 2014. The findings appear to be based exclusively on observations of April 5 first round of elections, although the report was produced in July 2014 making references to and at the time when the complete audit started. It is with this in mind that one should read the conclusions of the report such as the one that this election stood in contrast to previous elections for its lack of fraud allegations. Taking into account the fact that serious fraud allegations were recorded in the second round and the complete audit started after TLO conducted the interviews, TLO's conclusions appear to be based on electoral developments from the first round of elections.

V. 2015 ELECTORAL CONFLICT PROFILE

Based on the profile of conflict developed in the 2012 electoral security assessment, several vulnerabilities were identified for the 2014 electoral process. Geographically, it was projected that the southern Taliban strongholds were most at risk. However, it remained possible for certain forms of electoral violence to occur nation-wide. For example, during the pre-election phase and on Election Day, Taliban and other insurgents were expected to attempt to target election workers and election-related physical targets with the motivation of discrediting the electoral process and intimidating stakeholders involved in its management from continuing their operations. Taliban were also expected to conduct attacks on candidates and their campaign staff in order to force their withdrawal from the race or limit their campaign's reach. Political rivals and local powerbrokers were also expected to use violence against candidates and their staff in order to force their withdrawal from the race or limit their campaign's reach. Such attacks were expected to potentially continue in the post-election phase. In the post-election phase, there was a potential for supporters and campaign staff to intimidate election workers into skewing vote tabulation in favor of threatening party's preferred candidate.

Afghanistan's 2009 and 2014 Elections: Historical Conflict Factors, Desk Study found that the overall level of electoral violence was lower during both rounds of 2014 Presidential election relative to the 2009 and 2010 electoral cycles.

The overall decrease was lauded and likely due, among other initiatives, to increased efforts by the ANSF and IEC to coordinate electoral security efforts throughout the entire electoral cycle. However, the decrease was placed in context, given that the preceding 2009 presidential cycle coincided with the highest levels of violence experienced during the 12-year insurgency.

The pattern of post-election violence for 2014 partially paralleled that experienced in 2009/10 and therefore took two core forms. The first form of post-election violence included candidates' supporters employing large-scale street actions to protest what they perceived as fraud and malpractice throughout the electoral cycle. These protests started soon after the second round of voting was complete and continued, in some fashion, through the agreement between Ghani and Abdullah on July 13 to a full audit of all second round votes.

And second, insurgent-initiated attacks continued following the April 5 and June 14 rounds of balloting and throughout the weeks of ballot tabulation. AGE continued to use suicide bombs and rocket attacks. In late June, 800 Taliban attacked various sites across Helmand—killing dozens—in an attempt to re-take the province. AGE continued such attacks through July. In two separate attacks purportedly carried out by AGE, bombings killed eight (in Kandahar) and two (in Nangarhar). Over the period of July 12-13, eleven were killed in separate Taliban attacks across Laghman, Herat, and Nangarhar provinces. Many of these Taliban attacks were part of the group's annual spring offensive and not onto election-related facilities. However, their purported motivation was to undermine the Western-backed government and process through which a new leader would be named.

The conflict profile resulting from the desk research suggests various implications for efforts implemented before the 2014 presidential election focused on preventing, managing, or mediating election-related violence. However, it attributed the decrease in electoral violence mainly to improved IEC and ANSF coordination of security efforts. The research recommended two key areas of focus and programmatic support to ensure a full transition of responsibilities in electoral security to Afghan stakeholders.

First, it recommended the UNDP to continue providing—at least through the 2015 election—an electoral security advisor to work with the IEC on this issue area.

It also recommended that UNDP should work with the IEC counterpart to ensure all electoral security related protocols and procedures are formalized and institutionalized within the Commission.

In addition to coordination mechanisms between the IEC and other relevant stakeholders—ANA, ANP, etc.—during the electoral cycle, this should include activities for non-electoral cycle periods.

The other key recommendation called for substantial portion of any subsequent USAID funding for electoral processes to focus on ensuring the IEC retains core competencies in electoral security coordination and planning. Any broader financial or other support for the IEC could be made conditional on the Commission agreeing to make electoral security a permanent, core pillar of its institutional structure.

To that end and going further, the USG and international community should urge the IEC to establish an Office of Electoral Security Administration.

Though the IEC has a Security Coordinator, the Commission should devote additional resources to this critical area and formalize it as an Office.

The report did not analyze the relationship between the CCI's Peaceful Messaging Campaign and electoral conflict in 2014 and did not identify peaceful messaging, the key component of this programming, as one of the ways to mitigate electoral violence in the 2015 elections.

VI. CONCLUSION

Electoral violence in the 2014 Afghan election is a complex topic to assess. AGE launched a large number of attacks on both the first and second round election days, but there are widespread reports of localized reductions of violence that allowed voters in generally disenfranchised communities in the South and East to participate in surprisingly large numbers. Turnout was high in both rounds and non-Taliban violence was low despite pre-election fear that candidate-related violence would be a serious problem. There was a serious risk of violence during the contentious post-election period, but these risks were not realized. Therefore, all efforts to minimize and mitigate violence must be judged a success, but attributing this success to specific programmatic inputs when so many different stakeholders contributed to the same goal is challenging.

One very useful outcome of the project is the data collected from structured interviews and focus groups on messages that enhance election credibility and minimize the risk of violence. These findings are the result of research conducted *before* the second round of the elections, and so it is essential that the data be validated before being relied upon. Messages that work in a generally positive electoral context may be less effective following the very contentious second round and the general loss of public credibility Afghan elections have suffered as a result.

While messaging and research constituted the core of CCI's electoral programming, it also contributed to the overall coordination among OTI, the U.S. Mission, the United Nations (UN) and the Independent Election Commission (IEC) all working together to deliver a credible and peaceful election in Afghanistan, especially during the unplanned audit phase, on all aspects of the election. Coordination between the IEC and program electoral staff represented another successful component and often went beyond those two components. International Elections Advisors repeatedly stressed the efficacy in coordinating with the elections authorities as a key element of CCI's campaign success. IEC's Head of Public Relations, Mr. Archiwal repeatedly expressed his gratitude for the CCI project fulfilling a void left by the IEC, and its complementary work.

The project was also successful in identifying valuable data to mitigate and prevent electoral violence, but less successful in transferring that data to the key electoral stakeholders such as the IEC or security forces, thus reducing the intended impact. Also, the project activities (as described in the reports) did not cover the entire period from Election Day through to the transition of power but focused mainly on the first round of elections, including its lead-up and post-electoral period. Finally, some of the analysis and key conclusions such as the expectation for high levels of electoral violence in some provinces such as Uruzgan, or the turnout in the second round going down, did not bear out.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall

1. Make Peaceful Election Advocacy Campaign a component of a more comprehensive effort (one that does not only focus on messaging but also on other aspects of peaceful elections recommended in various electoral security assessments) to support peaceful electoral processes and outcomes.
2. Validate focus group findings on effective messages following the second round and audit. Most findings are from focus groups conducted prior to the second round.
3. Develop 2015 Electoral Security Framework taking into account electoral reforms which are yet to be implemented. Rather than implementing a specific component recommended in such an assessment, consider implementing activities as a package e.g. training on preventing electoral conflict for poll workers combined with peaceful messaging.
4. Engage a dedicated/technical assistance provider or team for the entire duration of the project for easier coordination.

5. Make all project data available to key electoral stakeholders to mitigate violence and increase positive impact on overall electoral security.
6. Make electoral security a permanent, core pillar of IEC's institutional structure.
7. Strengthen electoral security coordination between key stakeholders by, among other things, providing International Electoral Security Advisor and continued technical assistance through the 2015 electoral cycle.

In addition, the following technical recommendations to improve the messaging were made in the CCI's IMU July 2014 Report on Perceptions of Presidential Election and Related Messages, and are echoed in this report:

Message Content

1. Consider using (IEC's) "your vote, your future" and "your vote is a debt, give it to someone worthy/honest" slogans, as well the CCI's "brighter future" messages. These were the elections messages that participants remembered and liked the most.
2. Rights-based educational messages should be included in any future elections messaging. This was also true with messages related to the rights of women to vote.
3. Employ Islam in messages to make people comfortable with and motivate them to vote.
4. Consider using well-known or trusted figures in messages. In Kandahar, one of the most remembered and effective get-out-the-vote messages was of a well-known Afghan singer.
5. Consider a common "brand", including a logo and short tag line for future peaceful messaging campaigns. This will help to unify varying messages and allow them to be remembered as part of a larger campaign.

Message Mediums

1. Mobilize religious scholars to advocate specific messages.
2. Use radio and TV to deliver elections messages.
3. Use public awareness teams, which go to directly to homes, more often.

Messages Targeted Towards Women

1. Continue campaigns that raise awareness of the rights of women to vote. In Kunar, change the poster showing women's faces to one showing women with covered faces or a poster showing a mix of women with covered and uncovered faces.
2. Target men in addition to women in campaigns to increase female voter turnout.
3. Use direct contact, spoken words and very literal images for materials aimed at women.

Target Government Counterparts and ANSF

1. CCI and OTI should advocate during the elections' process and meetings/discussions with government counterparts that they should be agents of ethnic neutrality, cooperation and peace within their communities. In Ghazni, use awareness-raising campaign and meetings for ANSF forces.

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ⁱ <http://youtu.be/bljoDtGRCv8> and <http://youtu.be/lGjgcAC8Sjw>