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# **Evaluation of Community Grants Project Youth Empowerment Program (YEP)**

## **FINAL REPORT**

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**November 1 – December 12, 2009**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACSF	Afghan Civil Society Forum
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
CDC	Community Development Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization
LYC	Local Youth Council
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoICY	Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UN- HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YICC	Youth Information and Contact Center
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MoE	Ministry of Education

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The United States Agency for International Development in Afghanistan (USAID/Afghanistan) contracted the SUPPORT Program operated by Checchi and Company Consulting Inc. to conduct an outcomes evaluation of the Community Grants Project of the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), under USAID contract number GS-10F-0425M. The YEP was implemented by UN-Habitat under Cooperative Agreement number 306-A-00-08-00527-00. The evaluation was conducted between November 1 and December 12, 2009.

### **1. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION**

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the outcomes of the community grants component of the Youth Empowerment Program on participants and their communities. With the YEP's closure in April 2009, the evaluation had the relatively rare opportunity to assess the program's outcomes well after the end of any interventions by the contractor. Of interest were three sets of outcomes: those that relate to (1) civic-oriented behaviors and attitudes among youth participants; (2) other attitude/behavioral outcomes, such as youths' sense of confidence both individually and collectively, ability to communicate with adults, identification as a group, and the belief in their power to effect positive change; and (3) acquired project management skills (such as project design, funding proposal writing, project implementation, financial management and project reporting to UN-Habitat) and/or vocational or technical skills, and how both sets of skills affected actual or potential income.

While focused on the grants project, the study gave attention to the inputs made by UN-Habitat—hence, the report's analysis of the contractor's training, materials, technical assistance and monitoring of LYCs and their grant activities. The evaluation also examined the inputs of the Youth Department of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth (MoICY).

In addition to reviewing documents, the evaluation used a survey and structured interviews to collect data from LYC members and interviews alone from other stakeholders. The team prepared a questionnaire and interview guide for LYC members and separate interview guides for the other data sources. The intended sample consisted of eight LYCs in each of the six program provinces, divided equally between male and female, urban and rural LYCs, and including examples of good, mediocre and poor LYC projects. The study team also tried to interview two Community Development Councils (CDCs), the male and female provincial YEP coordinators, provincial youth directors of the MoICY, and the headquarters YEP staff of UN-Habitat, the Deputy Minister for Youth, and staff of some youth-oriented civil society organizations.

In practice, the evaluation was able to visit five of the six provinces and collected only partial data from three provinces. Farah Province was too insecure to permit the team's visit, and competing events and security concerns prevented full access to LYCs, CDCs, and UN-Habitat and/or MoICY staff in Kandahar, Kabul, and Nengarhar provinces. The Afghanistan presidential inauguration and the Eid holidays along with school exams created major scheduling difficulties for some interviews and delayed data collection.

## **2. UN-HABITAT AND MOICY INPUTS**

In terms of the evaluation findings, UN-Habitat delivered adequate and often excellent quality inputs to the YEP program. The YEP training program developed both civic and grants-related skills and knowledge among LYC members through experiential workshops organized around nine themes and supported by corresponding printed modules. UN-Habitat staff employed a cascade model to train two selected representatives from each LYC in every province who, in turn, were supposed to train the rest of their LYC members, using YEP-supplied materials—a comprehensive written module for themselves and provincial coordinators, and a smaller, more simply written booklet for the rank and file LYC members. The five-day trainings for each module’s theme, conducted first in Kabul for YEP provincial coordinators, and then in each provincial capital for LYC youth coordinators, inculcated a reasonably high level of understanding of program concepts and skills among the youth coordinators. A majority of LYC coordinators rated UN-Habitat’s training as effective in giving them needed skills. However, the youth coordinators’ inexperience as trainers, the booklets’ overly advanced reading level for younger LYC members, and the loss of some youth coordinators to university studies left many ordinary LYC members with a much lower level of comprehension and, thus, an uneven overall result for the training.

Similarly, the UN-Habitat’s monitoring of, and technical assistance to, LYCs was sufficiently regular and thorough to accomplish all the program’s major goals: establishment and registration of CDCs and selection of officers; facilitation of self-initiated projects; identification, design, and approval of grant-funded projects by all LYCs; and full accounting of all grant money. LYC members credited UN-Habitat coordinators with generally good support and monitoring of their projects. However, the problems faced by many LYCs in fully implementing the grants projects suggests that YEP provincial coordinators probably were not as available in assisting the LYCs during the final few months of the program. This was also revealed in the absence of action plans for some LYC projects. Also, the particular constraints faced by female LYCs in being able to select their preferred projects indicated a lack of focus by the all-male UN-Habitat senior management team on the predictable extra challenges that female LYCs faced and a lack of guidance and tools for female UN-Habitat provincial coordinators to help them assist female LYCs in overcoming entrenched cultural role expectations.

Federal and provincial MoICY staff participated in major project events in Kabul (such as project opening, midterm, networking conference, and project closure) but did not accompany UN-Habitat staff on LYC monitoring visits after the first few months, reportedly losing interest when per diem was not paid to them. Some Ministry officials, while acknowledging the value of LYCs as community organizations, criticized the small amount of the YEP grants as “too little to accomplish anything.” Efforts by UN-Habitat to build the government’s institutional capability were not successful. Despite the favorable attitude and support of a few provincial youth directors, the MoICY generally demonstrated little genuine capacity to lead an activity of the scale of the YEP.

## **3. OUTCOMES RELATED TO ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOR AND INCOME**

The grant-funded and self-initiated projects of the YEP produced observable changes in LYC members’ attitudes and behaviors about civic life, including a greater understanding of community assets and deficits and what is needed to rectify problems. Among the community problems identified by LYCs and addressed through non-grant self-initiated

projects were lack of shade trees, trash-strewn water channels, poor quality drinking water, absence of literacy training for older adults and lack of tutoring for younger students who are preparing for the university entrance exam. LYC members responded with organized volunteer street and canal cleaning campaigns, tree planting efforts, teaching literacy classes, and developing question-prepping materials for students studying for the university entrance exam. Likewise, LYC members exhibited a confidence in their capacity to change conditions for the better. This confidence sprang from perceiving a valid youth role in the community and from personal growth in being able to communicate with adults. LYC members cited instances of their group demonstrating its power to effect positive change on other youth, such as abstaining from drug use or behaving more responsibly in the community. The benefits of these behavioral and attitude changes appear to have continued despite the project's ending.

Nearly all interviewed CDCs praised LYCs as positive organizations for youth and their communities, often granting full moral support even when they lacked material resources to bestow on LYCs. Several CDCs in Balkh and Bamyan did give land for constructing a LYC meeting room or furniture, computers, fuel for generators, or building materials. Only one CDC expressed reservations about its community's male LYC, although that LYC appeared to be a very active and well functioning organization. Another male CDC forced the closure of a female LYC's computer project when the LYC asked for support.

The grant-funded activities of the YEP have enabled youths to further enhance their self-confidence as well as acquire new skills in diverse areas. Most apparent were skills among youth coordinators related to project planning and prioritization, proposal writing and financial management. Most LYC coordinators planned their projects methodically, consulted with elders (the CDCs), and prepared proposals that qualified for disbursements. Equally important, the activities funded by grants allowed LYC members to acquire technical skills and knowledge, such as computer operation, tailoring, English language and embroidery. In at least some cases, these skills allowed LYC members, particularly females, to make products that could be, and were in some cases, sold. For most LYC members, the ability to earn money from grant-acquired skills or the enhancement of their future income-earning power, was an important consideration.

The extent to which these behaviors and skills were acquired varied across different demographic features. The biggest differences were between male and female LYC members, wherein males demonstrated more robust changes in most cases. The lower average female LYC age and education level partly explains the difference (i.e., females had less life experience on which to draw and training materials were less accessible to many female LYC members), as does the wider range of educational levels within each female LYC (i.e., only a few members of each female LYC demonstrated significant enhancement of skills and confidence). Females were also more constrained by traditional gendered roles. Most disconcerting was a widespread pattern of female LYCs choosing grant projects such as tailoring or handicrafts, when interview statements suggested a strong interest in computers or English language. Relatively educated female LYC members often intended to continue their education into university and pursue professional careers, but were constrained in the selection of relevant grant projects by the lack of female resource persons and an interest in accommodating the needs of less-educated LYC members. Nonetheless, there were a few young female leaders within almost all LYCs who demonstrated the potential to assert themselves in fulfilling their aspirations.

An offshoot of grant project designs was combined projects in which male and female LYCs pooled their \$500 grants to create a greater potential benefit. Most often this was a joint computer center, for which the combined \$1,000 could purchase three or four computers (rather than one or two computers) along with furniture and a generator, or a joint library or youth meeting center. Female LYC members often participated significantly less in the design and management of joint grant projects and – because cultural norms required different days or times for males’ and females’ use of joint facilities, among other reasons – females appeared to receive less access than males to the resources they had helped fund.

Urban LYCs—predominantly Kabul-based— differed from rural LYCs (which were usually in semi-rural communities surrounding urban centers) in being somewhat less vibrant groups with less overt support from CDCs or other community leaders. The study team attributed this difference to the competing activities and attractions of the Kabul environment and the unfavorable comparisons Kabul youths may have made between the modest YEP grant amount and larger grants offered by other donors.

Differences between relatively secure and peaceful provinces and those, such as Kandahar and Farah, that are more directly affected by conflict or insecurity were difficult to assess but, in any case, did not adhere to expectations. Farah Province, although not visited by the evaluation team, according to reports and a former provincial coordinator and documentary evidence, did produce successful and innovative grant projects. In addition, interviews with two male Kandahar LYCs revealed no appreciable negative impact of conflict or insurgency elements on LYC activities there.

#### **4. SUSTAINABILITY AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES FOR THE FUTURE**

Some clear sustainability patterns emerged from the study. Many (especially male) LYCs themselves survived better than many of the grants projects they had started. Whereas grant projects often had fallen into disuse over time, the LYCs that started them continued to exist. The characteristics that brought the LYC members together in the first place—friendships, similar education levels, mutual lifestyles—tended to keep the group together despite an absence of external support. (Sustainability of female LYCs was more common in rural areas.) Projects, on the other hand, encountered unforeseen obstacles that limited their usefulness or even ceased their operation. Many (especially male) LYCs, in the opinions of both LYC and CDC members, showed every indication of remaining viable as community institutions, although in a largely inactive state without any external support.

The two biggest constraints to the sustainability of both male and female grant-funded projects were (1) the absence of a qualified instructor to teach LYC members beyond the bare fundamentals, and (2) the lack of a suitable space dedicated to the grant activity. The former applied mostly to computer courses or centers and occasionally to English courses. While LYCs often depended on a LYC member to teach them, these individuals usually possessed only slightly more knowledge than their colleagues, hence restricting training to little more than very basic computer operation and not software use. Moreover, some of these individuals went off to university in subsequent months, taking any expertise with them. Female LYC members suffered somewhat more of these effects than male LYC members due to the scarcer availability of female computer instructors, but this constraint did affect both male and female LYCs for many different kinds of projects.

Also, computer centers, libraries and tailoring courses located in individual members' houses rather than in more public spaces eventually became less operational and fell more under the control of the owners of those houses. This problem was somewhat more common for female LYCs, since females are largely restricted to home-based activities. Other constraints consisted of LYCs' inability (often, belatedly discovered) to pay for needed ongoing inputs, such as generator fuel or rent for a library space.

The report suggests several possible mechanisms to address some of the sustainability issues as well as broaden and better target the benefits of the LYC structure. The high level of youth interest in, and the absence of a qualified instructor for, project-funded skill acquisition—mostly computer operation—strongly suggest a need for external assistance in addressing this deficit. The same could be said for the lack of dedicated space for LYC activities. Resolving these challenges would demand a far bigger grant amount for future LYC-sponsored projects and/or more resource-sharing (such as one female computer instructor employed by several nearby LYCs) facilitated by the implementing contractor.

The difficulties of organizing and sustaining LYCs and their activities in concentrated urban areas like Kabul (and to a much lesser extent and only for female LYCs the other participating cities of Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad) suggest the need for different strategies in those areas compared to rural LYCs. Given the comparative success of rural LYCs, a future project might profitably expand coverage to rural communities farther from provincial capitals, which was suggested by one MoICY official. The tendency of most male LYCs to contain members at the older end of the 14-25 age range has left many LYCs with older membership bases, eventually reducing numbers as secondary school students move on to university (or marriage). This analysis offers a rationale for creating a separate community-based youth group for younger youths that would fill the gap left by the current LYCs' older age range, and by the absence of younger members, particularly males, in that current age range.

The particular barriers faced by female LYC members suggest the need to ensure that the senior program management team (at headquarters level) includes females and that female provincial coordinators are provided with the information and tools they need to help facilitate female LYC members' genuine educational aspirations, rather than assumed or imposed ones. The wider age and education range within female LYCs also calls for more discerning strategies to meet these females' varying needs and interests. There also is a clear case for considering introduction of some market-driven vocational skill training arrangements for both males and females. University-bound youths normally would not be interested in vocational training, but the extreme imbalance between the high youth demand for university education and the small capacity of universities and low availability of professional employment opportunities makes such skill training a desired option for many LYC members. The absence of vocational skill training programs and facilities in the country may force consideration of other innovative ways of delivering such skills.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**

The following represent a summary of important conclusions of the evaluation:

- Generally effective implementation of the YEP by UN-Habitat resulted in establishment of LYCs of the required number, and implementation of expected

outputs such as LYC grant projects and training and support of LYC members that yielded significant positive changes in civic attitudes, behavior and technical skills.

- Major weaknesses of UN-Habitat's programming include reports that lacked narrative detail, training materials with too-advanced reading levels for rank and file LYC members, less frequent site monitoring over the final project months and, especially for female LYCs, inadequate responsiveness to females' educational and professional aspirations or efforts to lower barriers to their use of project resources.
- LYCs continue to exist as groups, albeit less actively, and therefore constitute a good foundation for future community-based youth programming.
- The continued high youth unemployment rate and the lack of YEP coverage farther into rural areas put large numbers of youth in a continued state of vulnerability.

The following represent a summary of important recommendations from the study:

- Continue to fund community-based youth programming with expansion farther beyond provincial capitals and in new provinces.
- Consider creation of a second youth group for younger youths focusing on completion of education, early participation in civic life, and cultural and recreational activities.
- Females should receive special nurturing and separate and tailored materials and training to accommodate the younger ages, lower educational levels, cultural constraints, and gendered expectations facing female LYC members.
- Consider making available grant amounts of \$5,000 to permit more meaningful LYC projects and to provide for currently unavailable resources such as professional (sometimes shared) instructors and dedicated project space.
- The contractor should have a larger field staff to monitor/support LYCs effectively, including perhaps conducting some LYC-level training, and should partner with local NGOs to assist in delivering technical assistance.
- Collaborate more intensively with the MoICY youth departments, but without dispensing pay to government staff working on youth project activities.
- Consider linking LYCs with each other or with other youth associations for mutually beneficial workshops, conferences, campaigns, celebrations and awards ceremonies.

## II. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1. YOUTH CONDITION, MOICY-YOUTH DIRECTORATE PROGRAMS, AND OVERVIEW OF YEP

A long and protracted war, poverty and cultural isolation have prevented the people of Afghanistan from becoming a prosperous and unified nation, and as 68% of its population is under 25, youth have been particularly affected. Many youth in Afghanistan still do not have access to education (Figure 1); the national literacy rate among youth is 34% for both boys and girls, and only 18% for girls. In rural areas, where over 70% of youth reside, literacy among females is even lower at 8%. Although girls have a legal right to attend school, fears of being stigmatized, harassed or worth less in marriage deter many of them from attending school until the 4th grade, if at all.

Figure 1

YOUTH EDUCATION INDICATORS	Total	Male	Female
Youth Literacy Rates (15-24)	34%	50%	18%
Secondary school enrolments	15%	23%	7%
Population with access to higher education	0.1%		

Source: UNICEF, Best Estimates, 2006

Even youth who have the opportunity to attend school are faced with damaged infrastructure, limited electricity, few resources, unqualified teachers, outdated curricula, poor school managerial capacity and lack of access. Of the 100,000 youth who will take the national KANKOR university entrance exam, only 20% will be able to enter. Upon graduation of high school or university, nearly all youth are obliged to help support their families, but face a lack of employment opportunities with very low pay. Many will find jobs not in their fields of education or interests, but in construction, logistics or low-level jobs with NGOs, which offer a higher salary but little chance for advancement.

In addition to poor quality schools, the traditional conservative and male dominated hierarchical structure of Afghan society excludes youth from decision making at all levels. This disenfranchisement of youth begins at the family level where decisions regarding their marriage partners, educational opportunities, professional choices and social activities are all decided by senior male family members. Youth have little opportunity to express their views and speak in public gatherings. This leads to a loss of self-esteem and lack of confidence, critical thinking and decision making skills that are needed to build both the social and human capital of Afghanistan.

This absence of work opportunity, the cultural restrictions and widespread practice of early marriage cause youth to become frustrated, disillusioned and apathetic. Boys can become easy targets for insurgency, drug trafficking and criminal recruitment. Girls can be victims of human rights violations and domestic abuse such as forced and abusive marriages, with domestic responsibilities and pregnancy leaving no chance for educational opportunities. Today in Afghanistan, many urban youth reportedly spend inordinate periods watching DVD movies and television, while rural youth labor long hours to help their families survive poverty.

As the majority of the population, youth have considerable potential to help rebuild the country. In recognition of youth's cross-cutting status within the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), the Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth (MoICY) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) sought to address the national objectives of: (1) engaging Afghan youth in governance, democracy, social-political processes and enhancing their participation in community development, national rehabilitation, and peace; and (2) improving youth's education and employment opportunities, particularly through non formal education and skills development.

## **1.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (YEP)**

Responding to the above youth goals and building upon the success of the NSP, USAID initiated the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) and chose UN-Habitat as its implementing organization. One goal of the YEP was to mobilize youth to participate in civic, social, political and economic activities and, thus, gain the skills, awareness and confidence to take on leadership roles as young adults. Also, civic participation would enable young Afghan women and men to contribute to their country's reconstruction and advancement and promote good values like volunteerism and peace building. To achieve this goal, the YEP would create community-based female and male youth groups—labeled as local youth councils (LYCs)—and assist them to become actively involved in their communities' development, social, cultural, sporting and economic life. Over an 18-month period, the project would mobilize 2,400 youth, divided equally between males and females, in 60 urban and rural communities in Bamyan, Farah, Kabul, Kandahar, Nengarhar and Balkh provinces. Youth would learn how to conduct a participatory assessment of community needs and problems and how they could mitigate them. LYC representatives would have opportunities to link with similar youth organizations or networks within Afghanistan and in the region.

A second YEP goal was to improve youth's employment and income generation prospects through opportunities to enhance their education, technical and language skills. For this purpose, YEP would provide them with training in leadership, communication, proposal writing, and project implementation and management skills. Each LYC was expected to identify the need they wanted to address and, using their newly acquired skills, prepare a proposal for a \$500 small grant that would fund an activity or project selected by them alone. The YEP would guide them in this process but would expect LYCs to choose and execute activities that were feasible, effective and sustainable.

In addition, the YEP project expected that this youth training and empowerment would help inform the Afghan government, donors, non-governmental organizations and communities of the needs and possibilities for advancing youth in Afghanistan. The project also would build the capacity of the MoICY staff through training and participation in supporting these youth activities in participating provinces.

## **2. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION**

The objective of this evaluation is to assess the outcomes of the grants project of the YEP, managed by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Central and Provincial MoICY. The evaluation focused on accomplishments and challenges of the community-based male and

female Local Youth Councils (LYCs) introduced and facilitated by UN-Habitat. In evaluating outcomes, the study did closely analyze the contractor's approaches in five of the six provinces--Balkh, Bamyan, Kabul, Kandahar and Nengarhar--to understand its efforts to enhance community welfare and empower youth.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods that included a document review, structured interviews and a short survey conducted during site visits to participating communities. The evaluation included visits to five of the six YEP provinces (excluding Farah), and interviews with 21 male and 17 female LYC groups, representing 760 target beneficiaries; four male and two female community development council (CDC) members; YEP managers of UN-Habitat in Kabul and female and/or male YEP coordinators in each province visited; MIYC officials, including the Deputy Minister for Youth in Kabul and representatives of Youth Information and Contact Centers (YICCs); and representatives of local youth civil society organizations.

In each province, the evaluation team aimed to interview four male and four female LYCs, including four LYCs in urban areas and four in semi-rural areas. In Balkh province, the team ultimately interviewed five male and three female LYCs because a strategic decision was made to meet with two male LYCs that had attempted to implement unusual and "unsuccessful" grant projects. In Kandahar province, the team was able to meet with only two male LYCs because of security, logistical, and time constraints.

With each group of LYC members, the evaluation team administered a self-evaluation questionnaire consisting of nine questions either in Dari or Pashto. The data from these questionnaires were analyzed by province, female and male LYCs, urban and rural LYCs, and educational level of respondents (completed 6<sup>th</sup> grade or lower, completed through 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and completed higher education). After participants completed the questionnaire, the interview team (consisting of two members meeting with each LYC) used an interview guide to conduct semi-structured focus group discussions with LYC members: mostly in Dari or Pashto translated into English. The team also visited the specific grant-funded projects. Interviews were also conducted with MoICY officials, various UN-Habitat personnel (including current and former senior HQ staff, provincial managers, provincial youth coordinators, training manager and grant manager), CDC members, and civil society representatives. Complete lists of the LYCs, communities, and provinces visited and individuals interviewed are included in Appendices 3 and 4.

The remainder of this report presents evaluation analysis and findings based on four research questions formulated at the beginning of the study period, which form the section headings under the Analysis of Results. The first section covers findings about the inputs of UN-Habitat and the MoICY, including the formation, training of and technical assistance to LYCs for their grant projects, and financial management of the grants. The second section analyzes the outputs and outcomes of the grant projects, including changes in attitudes and behavior among LYC members and CDCs, skills development by LYC members, and changes in income of LYC members. The third section of this analysis examines differences in outcomes between different demographic characteristics and provides a detailed analysis of the current sustainability of LYCs and promising ways to address sustainability concerns. The report ends with summary conclusions regarding the YEP, LYCs, and UN-Habitat management of the program and recommendations for future youth programming in Afghanistan.

### III. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

#### 1. WHAT TRAINING/MATERIALS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WERE PROVIDED BY UN-HABITAT AND THE MOICY YOUTH DIRECTORATE?

##### 1.1 UN-HABITAT INPUTS

###### a. Technical Materials and Training Design

###### *Training Modules*

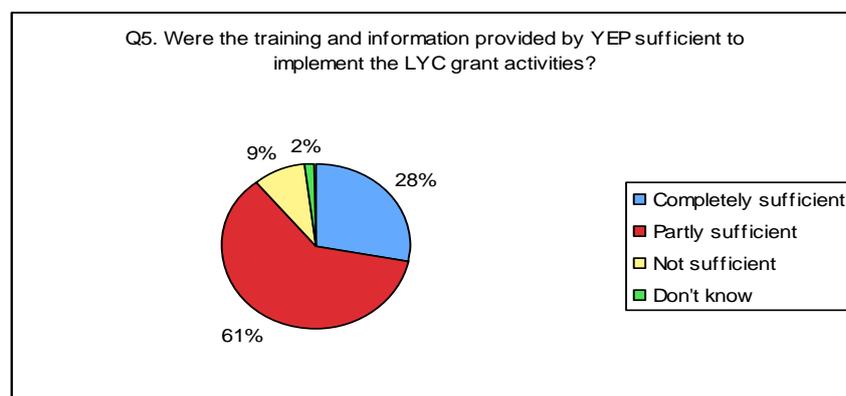
The UN-Habitat Training and Curriculum Development Unit designed nine YEP Civic Education Modules in Dari, Pashto and English, which directed both the practice service activities and the community grants projects. The YEP modules were adapted from materials used in the NSP and introduced aspects of governance, leadership, management, and peace building skills to youth. The nine modules (in addition to three refresher courses) included:

- Youth and Local Governance
- Youth Development Planning
- Youth Fund –raising
- Youth Project Design
- Youth Project Management
- Stop and Act Networking
- Communication
- First Refresher Workshop (Modules 1 and 2)
- Second Refresher Workshop (Modules 3 and 4)
- Third Refresher Workshop (Modules 5 and 6)
- Public Speaking and Leadership
- Open Space Methodology and Peace Building

The modules are overall well designed, well formatted with clear instructions and include drawings and photos. The modules incorporate participatory practices, interactive training methodology and incorporate Islamic and cultural beliefs and values. Each module includes a Training Manual and Handouts. However, because the materials were adapted from the NSP materials, they are quite advanced even for university students. These materials should be modified for high school students or students who are non literate. They could also reflect interests in youth culture and be formatted to attract youth attention.

Not only does each manual contain many new and sophisticated concepts, but each was delivered over a five-day training period, which was insufficient to cover the comprehensive material and effective teaching methodology. Of all the participants

Figure 2



who responded to the question, “Were the training and information provided by YEP sufficient to implement the LYC grant activities?” (see Figure 2), 28% responded that they were completely sufficient, whereas 61% responded that they were partly sufficient. Only 9% reported that they were not sufficient, and 2% said they didn’t know. Participants in the north responded more positively to the materials than those in Kabul or the south. In structured interviews, male LYC members Kabul and Kandahar responded that they gained new knowledge and skills from the first and fourth modules, which focused on the volunteerism, local governance and project design, even though they were new and challenging. Females responded more positively to Module 5, which incorporated theater.

### ***Cascade Training Methodology***

Apart from the content of the training materials being too comprehensive for the level and time period of the training, the cascade training model also proved problematic. Using the cascade training model, 12 provincial coordinators (6 male and 6 female) from six provinces and two people from the MoICY were initially trained and completed most of the training modules. They were then tasked to train 20 youth coordinators (10 male and 10 female) in each of the YEP provinces. The total number of Youth Coordinators trained was 120 (60 male and 60 female). Each of the Youth Coordinators then trained 20 LYC members which totaled 400 (200 male and 200 female) in each province. A total of 2,400 youth were trained in six provinces.

The cascade model of training is useful in that it allows a large number of teachers and participants to be trained in a short period of time using limited resources. However, often the concepts taught in the core training do not “cascade” to the recipients at the grassroots. This was the case of the YEP project. The Provincial Coordinators and the LYC Youth Coordinators responded that they learned a lot of knowledge and skills from the trainings, but were often unable to transfer these skills and train others due to lack of their own confidence with the material, training skills, time constraints of the members and no formal training space. What often occurred is that the LYC member merely summarized the main concepts in the trainings and focused on implementation of the expected activities like the self initiated projects, writing proposals etc. Another problem was that often youth of LYC participants had jobs and were unable to attend five days of training on a monthly basis.

## **b. Monitoring and Technical Assistance**

### ***Formation of LYCs***

In most cases, UN-Habitat facilitated the formation of LYCs by asking CDCs and other community leaders to nominate talented, educated youth as coordinators and deputy coordinators for male and female LYCs. In some provinces, the staff used competitive techniques to select youth coordinators, which in one case selected candidates on the basis of which candidate could write the best paragraph and had the highest education level. Those two individuals from each LYC attended orientation and training in Kabul by UN-Habitat (see above section on training). When they returned to their communities, the LYC coordinators and deputies worked with CDCs, other community leaders, and/or among their neighbors, family, and friends to identify the remaining members of the LYCs. It is not clear to the evaluation team how much guidance UN-Habitat gave to LYC coordinators and other officers or to the respective CDC in selecting LYC members.

The evaluation team was impressed with the enthusiasm and capacity of almost every interviewed LYC coordinator (and also most deputies). UN-Habitat and CDCs/community leaders seem to have identified a talented pool of educated young people to lead the LYCs. In a few cases, LYC coordinators were older members of the community (including one 37 year old female teacher with 12 years experience), which compromised the purpose of enabling youth to manage their own activities and projects.

The selection of other members of LYCs was less consistent. In some cases, a majority of LYC members had been fully engaged in LYC projects and remained enthusiastic about ongoing LYC activities. In some other cases, collective interviews with LYC members six months after the closure of the YEP program revealed that few of them could remember any aspect of the YEP training, and/or that few of them knew what their \$500 grant project had been about or had benefited in any way from the grant project.

Several factors help explain the limitations of some LYC members. First, it was not always possible to identify 20 educated (or still-in-school) youth in every community. Particularly among females, some or half of members of most LYCs were not literate or had left school after the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The selection of females with little or no education meant that the membership of female LYCs often included girls and young women with a wide spectrum of educational levels and, therefore, divergent capacities, needs and interests.

Second, some original members of LYCs no longer participated in their LYCs after the formal closure of the YEP. The evaluation team discovered in quite a few cases that the LYC members who gathered for interviews included the original coordinator and deputy coordinator, with several new LYC members who had not participated in any of the training or the grant project. This factor was found especially within female LYCs in Kabul and Jalalabad.

### ***General Technical Assistance***

UN-Habitat provincial personnel provided ongoing technical assistance to all LYCs throughout the YEP. One female and one male provincial coordinator were hired in each of the six provinces to train LYC coordinators (as above) and to provide guidance and support to the respective LYCs. In most provinces (with the possible exception of Kabul), UN-Habitat provincial coordinators visited each of the LYCs weekly to monitor progress, discuss issues being faced, provide advice, and help resolve any difficulties. These weekly visits and UN-Habitat technical assistance in general seem to have been most effective while the training workshops were ongoing and with regard to ceremonial / celebratory and self-initiated activities by LYCs.

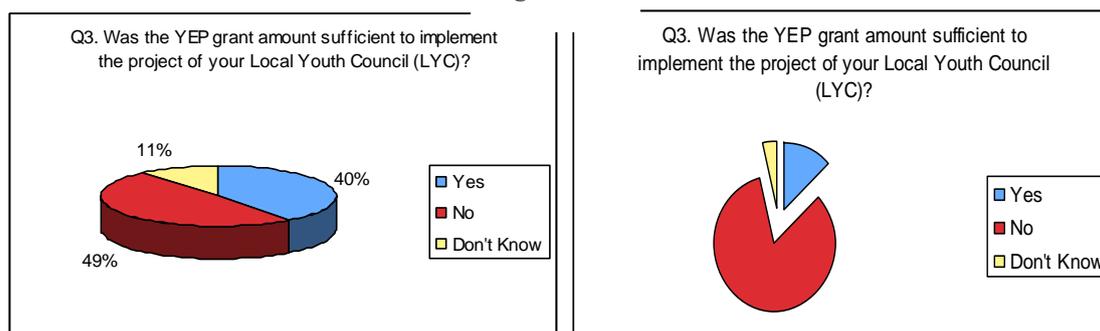
UN-Habitat technical assistance, however, seems to have diminished somewhat or been somewhat less effective during the last 6-9 months of the YEP cooperative agreement period, when small grant projects were being designed in the second half of 2008, and particularly after the first installment of small grant funds to LYCs were disbursed, approximately in early 2009. UN-Habitat provincial personnel may not have had all of the tools they needed to provide detailed support to the design of small grant projects. Once the bulk of grant funds were disbursed, they may have begun closing out the YEP or shifting to new responsibilities, or they may have believed that there was no continuing need for close supervision of YEP grant activities.

### c. Grant Project Development

LYC coordinators received training from UN-Habitat provincial coordinators on project design, development of Action Plans, project budgeting, and proposal-writing in order to prepare each LYC to submit a proposal to UN-Habitat for a \$500 (U.S.) small grant. It is not clear how much guidance and support UN-Habitat personnel gave to LYCs in designing their grant projects after the training modules on these themes were completed. While in most cases UN personnel do not seem to have interfered inappropriately in LYCs' decision-making about grant projects, most LYCs probably would have benefited from additional technical assistance and hands-on input into the grant project selection and planning process.

LYC projects had to be do-able within a \$500 budget, with two exceptions. First, LYC or community members could make additional financial or in-kind contributions to the implementation of the grant project. Second, the male and female LYCs in a community could choose to pool their funds and implement a \$1,000 joint project. In every case, LYCs submitted and spent budgets for exactly those amounts. Some LYCs found it challenging to design a project within a \$500 budget. When asked on the self-evaluation questionnaire (Q3) whether the grant funds were sufficient to accomplish their projects, female (left graph of Figure 3) and male (right graph) LYC members reported as follows:

Figure 3



Many LYCs reported that they did not submit a proposal for their highest priority activities because it would not be possible to implement the project with only \$500. For example, several female LYCs wanted to organize computer classes for their members, but decided that it would not be feasible since a female teacher would have to be hired from outside the community and the grant fund would not be sufficient both to purchase the computer and to pay the teacher. Other LYCs, on the other hand, and particularly male LYCs, were able to purchase one or more computers and learn from a volunteer male teacher, who was often one of the LYC members.

LYCs might have benefited from more technical assistance planning on how \$500 could be used effectively for a variety of project themes. For example, UN-Habitat could have helped female LYCs in a province to identify one female computer teacher to work with several communities, with her teaching fee and transportation budget shared among the LYCs. Other resources (an English teacher, a mechanism for ordering library books for economies of scale, etc) could have been shared among several LYCs, with help from UN-Habitat to facilitate such communal thinking and joint planning and action.

#### ***Kinds of Grant Projects Selected by LYCs***

Figures 4 and 5 indicate the number and kinds of grant projects implemented by male and female LYCs in the six provinces. The selection of grant projects may be indicative of

another important aspect of UN-Habitat technical assistance to LYCs. More than half of male LYCs' grant projects were related to computer courses and/or establishing computer centers, while more than half of female LYCs' projects were related to tailoring or handicrafts. It is not clear whether these gendered choices were influenced by LYC members' socialized priorities for themselves, perceptions about community expectations, UN-Habitat coordinators' explicit or implicit suggestions, or other factors. Probably all of these influences played a role. Other factors reported by LYCs, as noted above, include the lack of female computer teachers.

Figure 4

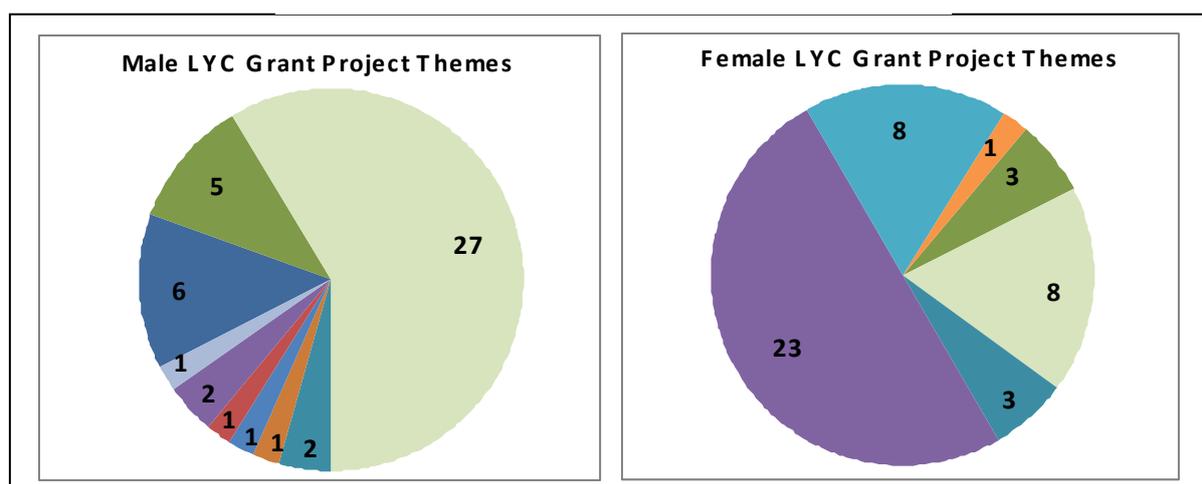


Figure 5

Grant Project	Male LYC	Female LYC	Joint Project <sup>1</sup>	Total
<b>STRUCTURAL PROJECTS</b>				
Youth Center / Meeting Hall	6	0	4	10
Library	5	3	2	10
<b>EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS</b>				
Computer center / course	27	8	7	42
English course	2	3	0	5
Literacy course	1	0	0	1
Cultural studies	1	0	1	2
Quran / religious studies	1	0	0	1
<b>VOCATIONAL PROJECTS</b>				
Tailoring project	2	23	0	25
Handicraft project	0	8	0	8
Agricultural project	1 <sup>2</sup>	0	0	1
Vocational studies	0	1	0	1
Totals	46	46	14	106 <sup>3</sup>

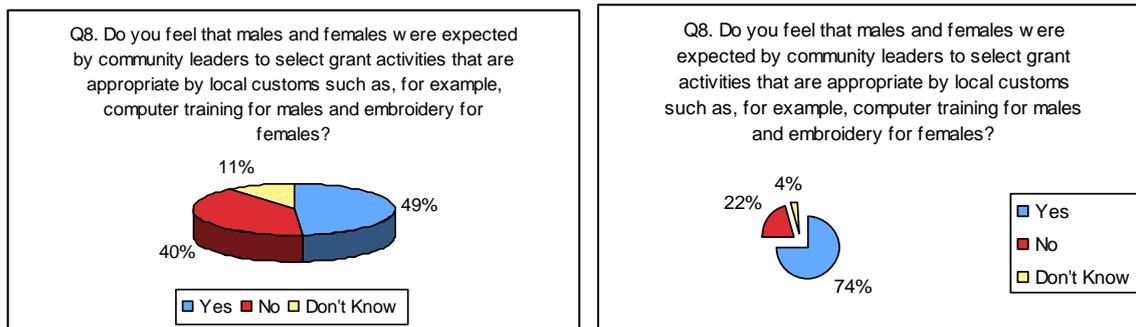
<sup>1</sup> At least two additional projects in Nengarhar province were implemented jointly by male and female LYCs, according to UN Habitat provincial coordinators. However, these joint projects were not listed as such in the UN Habitat final report to USAID or in the financial records at UN Habitat Kabul headquarters.

<sup>2</sup> One additional animal husbandry project was implemented by a male LYC in Balkh province. When the project failed, the LYC sold the animals and used the proceeds to purchase computers. This project is listed in UN Habitat documents as a computer center.

<sup>3</sup> This total represents 92 single LYC projects and 14 joint projects involving 28 LYCs, for a total involvement of 120 LYCs. However, in Bamyán province, the UN Habitat personnel indicated that two LYCs in one community were not successful in launching grant projects. This appears to be a reference to two agricultural projects that did not succeed but were later converted into other projects that were implemented.

When asked on the self-evaluation questionnaire (Q8) whether “males and females were expected by community leaders to select grant activities that are appropriate by local customs such as, for example, computer training for males and embroidery for females,” one half of female LYC members (left graph, Figure 6) and three-quarters of male LYC members (right graph) indicated that local customs (or gendered social expectations) were relevant to the decisions about grant project themes.

Figure 6



Regardless of LYC members’ beliefs or perceptions about the relevance of culture and community expectations on their choices, for most LYCs it is hard to imagine that local custom and related factors had no influence whatsoever. In Nengarhar province, to take an extreme example, all female LYCs chose to implement tailoring courses for their grant projects, despite the fact that the management team of each LYC consisted of highly-educated young women with professional goals. LYC members reported that they chose the tailoring projects because (1) it would not be possible for them to study computers or English with a male teacher, and no female teachers were available; (2) the grant amount was not sufficient to hire a female teacher to come from another location; and, importantly, (3) they might not be able or allowed to fulfill their professional ambitions, so they needed other (traditional, socially acceptable) skills in case they failed to reach their primary goals.

Neither the UN-Habitat provincial female coordinator nor the LYC members saw any problem with this analysis or the fact that all female LYCs in Nengarhar selected tailoring as their grant projects. At a minimum, the consistency of this stereotypically gendered choice indicates a missed opportunity for UN-Habitat to have encouraged female LYC members to think about other serious options and to have facilitated the realistic implementation of such options.

***Technical Assistance for CDC Consultation in Selecting Grant Projects***

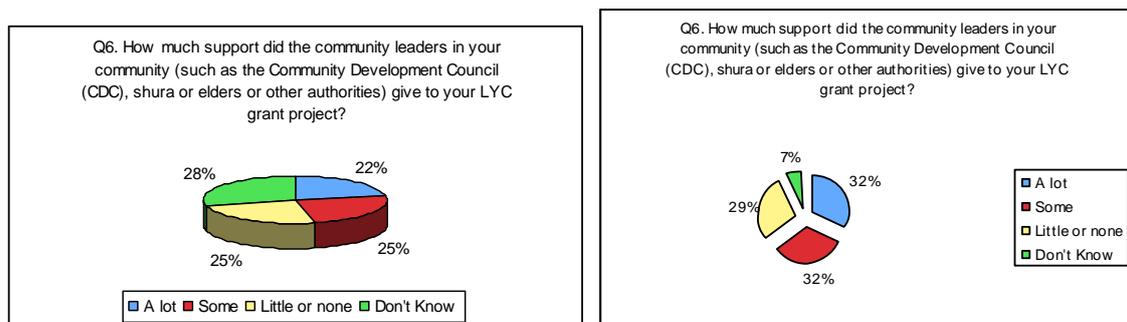
Ideally, LYCs were supposed to consult with their respective CDCs (or other community / neighborhood leaders in urban areas) as part of the process of selecting their grant projects. This consultation would help ensure the support of adult community leaders (or, at a minimum, would help avoid any conflict) and might enable LYCs to benefit from in-kind or other contributions from the broader community towards their projects.

UN-Habitat coordinators in some provinces (Bamyan and Farah, in particular) reportedly gave significant effort to meeting with CDC members at the start of the YEP and encouraged or facilitated LYCs to do so throughout the program period and especially when grant projects were being designed. Where this consultation was strongest, grant

projects seem to have thrived, such as in a rural village in Bamyan where the CDC donated land and labor for the construction of a youth center, and several other locations where part of the CDC building was donated for LYC meetings, trainings, and computer or other courses.

In some locations, however, including Kabul province, UN-Habitat facilitation of CDC and community leader consultation seems to have been significantly weaker, which might have impacted negatively on grant project success. In particular, most female LYCs in most provinces indicated that they did not consult with female or male CDC members in the development of their grant projects, though they often got support from one or more adult members of their communities. In several communities (in Balkh, for example), one or more CDCs provided the male LYC with a room in the CDC building but did not provide space to the female LYC, possibly because they had less interaction with the female LYC. UN-Habitat technical assistance might have helped overcome this disparity. When asked on the self-evaluation questionnaire whether their CDC was supportive of their grant projects (Q6), about 50-60% of both female (left graph of Figure 7) and male (right graph) LYC members indicated that they were very or somewhat supportive.

Figure 7



### ***Proposal Writing and Approval***

Provincial UN-Habitat personnel indicate that after receiving LYC project proposals, they often needed to go back and forth with each LYC several times to clarify or adjust the proposals. In one notable example in Balkh, a female LYC indicated that the UN-Habitat provincial coordinator essentially wrote the proposal for them. In most cases, however, it seems that additional support from UN-Habitat coordinators for writing proposals might have been useful to LYCs. In particular, LYCs were supposed to develop Action Plans or practical, step-by-step plans for the implementation of their proposals. Most LYCs do not seem to have written an Action Plan, which would have been helpful in anticipating difficulties (such as the need for generator fuel) and planning for sustainability. In two extreme examples in Balkh province, animal husbandry projects failed because the LYCs failed to anticipate the full need for feeding and caring for the animals over many months. Additional UN-Habitat technical assistance at the proposal-writing and project planning stage would have been beneficial.

All LYC proposals ultimately were approved by the UN-Habitat provincial office and forwarded to the Kabul headquarters. The UN YEP program manager reportedly vetted and approved each proposal and then submitted a request for disbursement of funds to the YEP Finance Officer, who ensured that paperwork was in order (for example, that no proposal was for more than \$500) before disbursing 80% of the grant project funds to the provincial office. Despite a requirement in the USAID Cooperative Agreement, UN-Habitat did not submit grant project proposals to USAID for approval or seek

authorization to bypass this step from USAID. It is not clear whether USAID made any request to UN-Habitat relevant to approval of grant proposals.

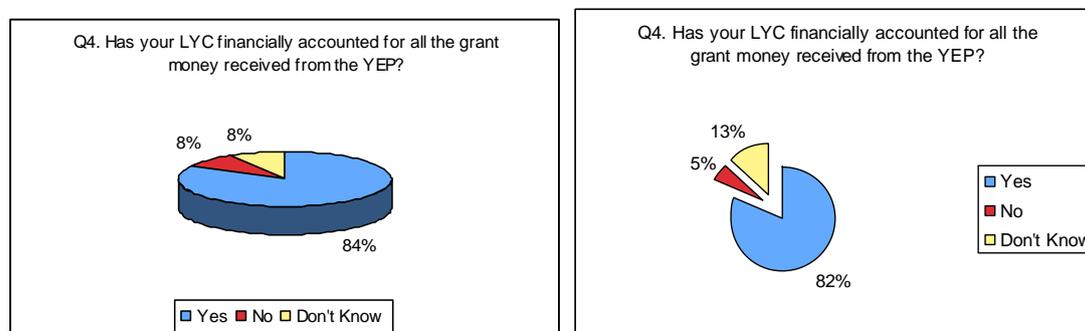
### ***Funds Disbursement and Accountability***

After approval of their proposal, each LYC coordinator (often accompanied by the LYC cashier) collected and signed for 80% of their grant project funds at the UN-Habitat provincial office. The final 20% of grant funds was disbursed in the same way after the LYC submitted a one-page financial accounting form and receipts for all expenditures. Recognizing that receipts are not usually available from most vendors, UN-Habitat provided a standardized receipt form for use by LYCs.

UN-Habitat's financial accountability system was not rigorous. The receipt format surely facilitated LYCs, and no system is (or should be expected to be) perfect in a context where receipts are generally unavailable, especially for such small grants. However, any standardized receipt system is open to abuse since any person can fill out an acceptable receipt for anything whatsoever. Nevertheless, the evaluation team has no reason to believe that there were abuses of the system or that any small grant funds were misspent. In almost all cases, LYCs were able to articulate how their funds were spent, and in many cases they were able to show at least some of the tangible items purchased (books, computers, sewing machines, etc) and/or the results of their project (handicrafts, etc).

When asked on the self-evaluation questionnaire (Q4) whether their LYC had accounted for all funds from the grant project, most female and male LYC members believed that they had done so (Figure 8, left and right, respectively). UN-Habitat confirmed that this was the case, and the evaluation team did not find any evidence to the contrary.

**Figure 8**



Sometimes LYC members mentioned details about their grant funds that indicated a high level of transparency (such as that there was not enough money for transportation of purchased books from Kabul, but community members provided this service without cost). However, in other cases, one or more community members did seem to take advantage of the LYCs by encouraging them to select a grant project (such as a particular handicraft) and pay for their services as a teacher. In quite a few cases, particularly with female LYCs, the family of the LYC coordinator (usually an influential family in the area) seems to have benefited from the grant project by housing the computer or sewing machine in their private home, ostensibly for the use of all LYC members and others, but realistically for their own long-term ownership (See Figure 9).

Figure 9



Sewing Machines and Computer Purchased with Female LYC Grant Funds, in Private Homes

#### d. Grant Project Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

Perhaps the most important weakness in UN-Habitat's management of the grant projects was the failure to require LYCs to submit any kind of narrative project report. The one-page financial reporting form has space for a sentence describing the project as well as the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries. However, no other reporting about the details of project implementation, challenges faced and how they were overcome, community involvement and support, successes or lessons learned was required.

The pilot YEP would have been significantly strengthened if UN-Habitat had requested this kind of reporting, for several reasons. First, such reports would have solidified LYC members' clarity of accounting for the funds received, in particular, and transparency and accountability as civic education themes, in general. Second, they would have solidified LYC members' understanding of how two years of YEP activities – training workshops, exposure visits, self-initiative projects, etc – culminated in the grant project implementation. Third, narrative reports would have provided UN-Habitat (and the Youth Directorate) with success stories to publicize the capabilities of youth in civic leadership and project management for themselves and their communities.

Fourth, requiring narrative project reports from would have enabled UN-Habitat, the Youth Directorate of the MoICY, and USAID to extract lessons for future youth programming, which is part of the purpose of any pilot project. The UN-Habitat final report to USAID includes a single paragraph and a two-page summary table about the grant projects, with a bare minimum of information. This level of reporting should not be acceptable for such a significant pilot initiative.

### 1.2 MOICY / YOUTH DIRECTORATE INVOLVEMENT IN YEP

The partnership between UN-Habitat and the MOICY/Youth Directorate was reportedly strong in some provinces (Nengarhar and Farah) but weak in others (Bamyan, at least in the initial phase, and Kabul). Although the YEP program document was signed by Government Line Ministry officials, their participation and contributions to the program—and UN-Habitat capacity-building of the Ministry—were not as robust as anticipated in the UN-Habitat Cooperative Agreement.

Decisions regarding the YEP were supposed to be taken jointly with the Provincial Youth Directorates, include planning the implementation of activities, conducting joint monitoring, and so on. It seems clear that the Ministry was not involved in the development and planning of activities in any meaningful way at any level (except reportedly in Farah, which the evaluation team cannot confirm).

UN-Habitat attempted to involve the Ministry from the beginning of the YEP. It is less clear whether UN-Habitat personnel kept Ministry officials at the national level and in the provinces involved in later aspects of the YEP or reported progress to them. Ministry officials in Kabul and elsewhere complained that UN-Habitat did not provide them with any reports or information about YEP progress, despite multiple requests. On the other hand, the Ministry published at least one glossy report that includes significant information and photographs of the YEP, indicating that the Ministry did receive information from UN-Habitat, but that the Ministry does not acknowledge or remember this communication. One or more interlocutors indicated that the Ministry regularly complains about lack of information from UN-Habitat, but consistently takes public credit for the success of LYCs and the YEP in general.

In most cases, Ministry/Youth Directorate officials attended the launching of the project in Kabul, the mid-term review meeting, and the closing ceremony of the project, but did not participate in other aspects of the program or attend any training sessions, despite being invited and having transportation provided. In some cases (for example, Bamyan and Balkh), the primary interaction/communication between the Youth Directorate/Ministry and UN-Habitat was that the Ministry complained regularly to the UN about wanting more information about financial matters and, indeed, desired the budget itself and did not trust UN-Habitat's financial management. Despite its complaints about a lack of information, the Youth Directorate in one province distributed a glossy booklet that extols the progress of the LYCs as its own achievements.

Provincial Ministry/Youth Directorate officials typically only attended project launch activities and other ceremonies, but did not visit LYCs despite being invited and offered transportation, etc. In other cases (perhaps somewhat in Balkh and Nengarhar), Ministry/Youth Directorate officials did occasionally accompany UN-Habitat personnel to monitoring or other visits to LYCs or participate in the project in other small ways. In Farah, the Ministry was reportedly more involved and supportive, but the evaluation team was unable to confirm this report.

As noted above, Ministry / Youth Directorate officials did not participate in the majority of training sessions. In general, UN-Habitat does not seem to have invested significant efforts in the provinces in enhancing Ministry officials' capacities or transferring management of the program to the Ministry, as required in the Cooperative Agreement. It is not possible that the Ministry could manage future similar program activities at this stage, particularly with the substance/content of the training components or management of small grants.

## **2. WHAT ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR CHANGES AND/OR INCREASED INCOME RESULT?**

### **2.1 CHANGES IN ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOR AND INCOME**

Measurement of behavior and attitude changes is complicated by the need to have valid comparison groups and accurate instruments for detecting possibly subtle changes over time—an option not available to this study. Nevertheless, self-reported and observed behaviors and structural changes do provide strong indications of the effects of UN-Habitat interventions and their application within LYCs.

#### **a. Civic values/volunteerism: implementation of projects for community benefit**

The most basic evidence of positive behavioral outcomes from the YEP is that local youth councils were, in fact, created in the expected number of community sites in all six covered provinces and that all LYCs implemented self-initiated and/or grant-funded projects in their communities, thereby demonstrating a commitment to civic responsibility and volunteerism. Self-initiated projects are those activities planned and implemented by LYC members that addressed some identified public need or deficit using only locally available resources and their own efforts. Grant-funded activities, on the other hand, are an approved set of coherent activities that provided a benefit to the applicant youth and/or their community and were funded by a UN-Habitat-supplied \$500 grant to the applying LYC. They both offer the most palpable evidence of changed behavior among youths participating in the YEP. Significantly, LYC members, generally, defined the impact of the YEP experience in relation to these explicit projects and the capacity that was built through them.

Implementation of an organized project requires an array of skills and behaviors that were focused and strengthened by UN-Habitat interventions. Indeed, the fact that these youths could recognize the existence of community, or their own, needs and collectively agree to take concerted action indicates an effect of the contractor's earliest intervention with youth: technical assistance in "mapping" a community's assets and deficits. According to the first YEP chief of party, this activity was instrumental in enabling LYC youths to conceptually understand their communities as orderly collections of people and support systems. Doing so also facilitated an awareness of where their communities lacked adequate resources, whether those consisted of schools, water points, tree-provided shade, or health care access.

LYCs demonstrated their capacity to turn an identified need into a feasible, time-limited activity that would, upon completion, make an observable difference in mitigating the community problem. They designed grant projects both on their original needs assessment and on ongoing discussions on what would be of greatest use to them and their communities. In a large sense, one could say that LYC's actions on community welfare spoke louder than their words. By planting trees and teaching literacy classes to community elders without obvious public advocacy or fanfare, youths showed a bias toward taking quiet actions that they knew would be appreciated and would not upstage community elites or arouse jealousy. This is not to say that LYC members failed to acquire explicit civic values but only that they tend to perceive them in terms of actions rather than expressed sentiments.

## **b. Confidence, Group Identity, and Other Empowerment Attitudes**

While the rhythms of farm life or schooldays were familiar to many of these youths, being part of a group that meets regularly, discusses practical (rather than academic) topics, and plans and executes systematic activities of their own choosing is not familiar. According to both the interviewed youth and UN-Habitat staff, there are no organized extracurricular groups intended for children or youths in Afghan communities. Likewise, according to limited interviews with civil society organizations, only a few associations sponsor activities that focus on youth. Their reach tends to be limited and their activities confined to specific events (often celebratory) rather than on development activities. Many LYC members and CDC member confirmed that there were no other youth organizations in their communities. Thus, the LYC provides the first contemporary community organizational setting in Afghanistan where young people can learn and practice productive new attitudes and behaviors.

Among the most important new acquisitions was a sense that youth are capable of demonstrably addressing some of their community's or their own problems. Such confidence is not prevalent in a culture that strongly values the opinions of older adults over those of youths. LYCs have confirmed that even passive youth can be facilitated to find their voice and take on unlikely challenges. As one MoICY provincial Youth Director stated,

The LYC was an opportunity for youth to show the community what they could do. Youth were escaping from each other and were not taking their responsibility for the community. The idea of getting together and discussing their problems was new to them. In the past, youth were losing hope. Now, they were seeing how they could be involved in the community in the future.

A UN-Habitat female provincial coordinator also observed that ~~the~~ experience of youth showing the rest of the community that they have abilities gave them a sense of empowerment.”

LYC members agreed that they had acquired desirable social behaviors as a result of participation in the projects. On the survey, an overwhelming majority of respondents said that LYCs had been ~~useful~~ and good for youth in the community.” Interview data revealed similarly positive views. In a Kabul Province male LYC, for example, members cited their LYC's positive effect on combating drug use. As one member said, ~~Y~~outh who used drugs before are now exercising with LYC members and are coming to the meetings.” In one Bamyan province community, the female and male LYCs said they work together closely with each other and they met jointly with the evaluation team. Both females and males voiced opinions of their respective activities, with one female noting, ~~It~~ was not common for mixed groups to meet here, so doing this gave us a lot of courage.” While specific attitudes and behaviors varied, their belief in the power of their actions did qualify as a positive sense of group identity.

## **c. Acquisition of Skills Related to Project Planning, Management and Implementation**

The skills related to selecting grant projects were very new to many youths. Among the many respondents who spoke of the project selection process, the response of one male LYC member in Bamyan province was typical: ~~O~~nce we went to UN-Habitat and

learned how to prioritize our needs, we came back here and prioritized them. There were many projects like well-digging, library, and road improvement, but we decided on the library. The library would help us with our school subjects, and the [\$500] budget was inadequate for the other projects.” This kind of careful deliberation of project options was common among the sampled LYCs. Indeed, 14 male LYCs pooled their grant money with the 14 female LYCs in their communities to try to overcome the gap between their goals and their funds.

Some members of almost all LYCs reported learning three major skills: (1) writing a proposal for the grant project, (2) implementing and managing the grant-funded activities, and (3) accounting for all the disbursed funds. The evaluation team did not see copies of most written proposals, but the leaders of almost all male LYCs--and, sometimes, the respective CDC--stated that the LYC prepared their grant proposals. UN-Habitat required a proposal in order to receive a small grant, so the ability to write one was, no doubt, acquired by at least the LYC coordinators. Perhaps a quarter to a third of the LYC leaders mastered proposal writing particularly well, as evidenced by their preparation of additional proposals for other needed inputs and submission to such donors as the Coalition Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). A few LYCs managed to leverage funds from two or three other donors, including the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a Member of Parliament, Afghan businessmen, and/or an international adviser, to purchase such items as a generator, additional computers, tables and chairs, and library books.

Every sampled LYC had put in place the required funds caretaker (cashier) and expenditure authorizer (usually the coordinator or LYC chair/manager). According to the provincial UN-Habitat YEP staff and Kabul headquarters former program Grants Manager, LYC grantees properly accounted for all of the \$500 grants awarded them. LYC leaders also adhered to suggested project management and implementation procedures in the UN-Habitat training modules. LYC members indicated the same in their survey responses. Their skills were easily documented by the fact that computers and sewing machines were purchased and set up for use, rooms built or donated to serve as meeting rooms or libraries and books put on shelves, and articles of clothing produced out of cloth purchased with grant money. Most, and especially male, LYCs had brought their plans to fruition and were proud of the results.

Self-initiated projects spurred the acquisition of a slightly different constellation of skills. Financial resources were, generally, not involved in their execution, eliminating the need for a written proposal. However, the wide variety of community-oriented projects did require an action plan and particular sets of implementing skills. For example, a Kabul LYC with strong interests in athletics wanted to open a gym for their members, which meant finding space, some rudimentary equipment, along with a trainer, who happened to be one of their members. Tree-planting, an activity done by many LYCs, involves obtaining saplings from the Ministry of Agriculture and learning correct planting techniques. A Bamyan male LYC implementing 12 self-initiated projects described how it persuaded the provincial Ministry of Education (MoE) to advertise a literacy course for older women that was to be taught by a LYC member in a nearby mosque. A leader in a female LYC in Bamyan was so highly regarded as a spokesperson for her group that she was invited to deliver a presentation to the visiting then-president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick.

#### **d. Acquisition of Skills from Project Content**

Among the variety of grant-funded projects, most fit into a few categories: group infrastructure (e.g. building a group meeting room); educational (e.g. English learning, library, culture studies); vocational or entrepreneurial (e.g. tailoring, embroidery, poultry raising); and technological (e.g. computer course). By far, the largest number of projects for males was computer courses and, for females, tailoring. The site visits allowed the evaluation team to observe the existence of many, although not all, of these projects. Male LYCs were generally eager to show the observable products of their projects and especially their computer centers. Female LYCs were in some cases eager to show the results of their crafts grant projects and in other cases less inclined or unable to do so.

In contrast to skills gained from obtaining and managing grants, the content of projects created learning experiences in which skills were acquired--often, within the education or vocational training area. Computer training, English language courses, and tailoring training, for example, imparted tangible skills. Some self-initiated projects, such as publishing a youth newsletter or operating an exam-tutoring program, produced similar results. A few LYCs in both Balkh and Bamyan provinces started regular youth newsletters that, in one sampled community, published nine editions over the last year, and after the close of YEP. Consisting of articles, poems, and graphics, the newsletters required skills like computer formatting, drawing, and article writing. LYC members mentioned their need for additional journalistic training. Another LYC undertook a self-described "tutoring" or exam-prepping activity. LYC members scoured school textbooks and books in their libraries for questions that seem likely to appear on the KANKOR university qualifying exam. The questions along with the correct answers were then supplied to pre-exam students.

#### **e. Changes in Income for LYC Members**

Changes in attitudes and behaviors as well as skills were augmented for some LYC members by increased income or, at least, the capacity for income-generation through the YEP grant projects in several direct and indirect ways. First, UN-Habitat reports that many LYC coordinators and other members of the LYC management teams found jobs soon after the YEP ended, in part because of their participation in the LYCs. In particular, UNICEF and several other UN and donor offices hired LYC leaders because of their demonstrated leadership capacity and other skills gained through the YEP training and project implementation. These reports came from Farah, Kandahar, and Nengarhar provinces. Less directly, many LYC members reported that they wanted to learn computer skills or English language because "all professional jobs require this knowledge these days."

Second, many LYC grant projects were specifically related to skills-development for the purpose of income-generation, especially in female LYCs. Although female LYCs' choice of tailoring and handicraft training was stereotypically, and regrettably, gender-driven, their selection did contribute to the self-sufficiency and potential income-generation of those LYC members. This was particularly true for those with less formal education and less potential for professional careers. In addition, many educated female LYC members expressed a need to earn income to support their studies and that the grant projects contributed to that goal.

Most members of LYCs who chose vocational grant projects defended their choice by saying that, at a minimum, they would now be able to support themselves and their families in some practical way. Offering a more problematic, but realistic explanation, some educated LYC members said that if they were unsuccessful in gaining admission to universities or if they were not allowed by their families to pursue their chosen professions, at least they would have some skill to fall back on. A caveat to all of these justifications for choosing vocational skills for their grant projects is that most LYC members admitted that they did not learn the skill sufficiently to earn income from it immediately because the skills course was too short or there were too many people trying to learn from one teacher with too few resources (e.g. too few sewing machines or insufficient practice time). This problem was particularly true for computer courses, with access to computers especially affecting female LYCs.

Two “unsuccessful” vocational grant projects in Balkh province had another indirect benefit related to income-generation. Two male LYCs attempted to earn income from an egg-production project and a cow-raising project. Both failed because the LYCs failed to anticipate significant costs related to feeding and caring for the animals they purchased. However, both groups said that they learned important lessons about starting a new business, especially related to seasonal timing of animal husbandry or agricultural projects, and more generally about doing careful financial and contingency planning before investing in business opportunities.

#### **f. Caveats to this Overall Assessment**

The acquisition of these new attitudes, behaviors and skills, however, was not consistently robust across LYCs. Some LYCs, and some individuals within LYCs, progressed further than others in the extent of self-reported and observed change. Much of this variability is related to factors such as gender, age, and location—a discussion to be taken up below. As has already been discussed in Section 1.1 of the Analysis of Results, differences in the ability of, and certain practices by, UN-Habitat provincial staff account for a portion of uneven youth interest in and activity of LYCs.

In addition, despite genuinely admirable analyses of youth and community needs and careful selection of projects based on available resources, some LYCs, invariably, made crucial miscalculations in their selection, planning and implementation process. One of the most frequent mistakes occurred with computer centers and courses. Many LYCs correctly analyzed computer costs but failed to secure an affordable source of electricity or a reliable computer instructor. Even when they budgeted for a generator, some failed to consider the long-term cost of fuel for the generator. In another case, a LYC computer course foundered for lack of a replacement for a computer instructor who left for university studies. Two other LYCs that started agricultural projects under-estimated the cost of feed for poultry and cows, ultimately the projects to fail.

Nonetheless, these failures—or compromised outcomes—were not irredeemable disasters but, rather, learning experiences along a continuum of improving capability. In one of the animal husbandry projects, the LYC sold off the animals and invested their remaining funds in more feasible activities. Similarly, although some grant-purchased computers have sat idle for lack of electricity or space, the determination of these youths to enter the computer world may well stimulate inventive solutions to their predicaments.

## 2.2 ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR CHANGES OF THE CDC AND ADULT COMMUNITY

### a. Relationship of Youth to Elders and the CDCs

A majority of the sampled Community Development Councils (CDCs) stated their unqualified support for the male and female LYCs. Approval was shown in the form of moral support and, where resources permitted, some material resources. Only in a very few communities was CDC support lacking, which did impose serious limitations on the affected—mostly girls—LYCs. This overall pattern generally put male and many female LYCs in a positive position in relation to adult opinion leaders of community institutions.

The responses to the LYC questionnaire (Q6, see page 16 above for graphs) provide some insight into their perceptions of the CDC's level of support. A large majority of LYC members of both sexes felt that their CDCs gave at least ~~some~~ or ~~a~~ lot" of support to the grant activity. When asked about the relationship with adult leaders in interviews, LYC members tended to characterize their group's relationship with the CDC as positive and supportive. Virtually all LYCs consulted with the CDC about their project plans, both to fulfill UN-Habitat's expectations for this step and also to adhere to traditional norms of youth respect for adults and community leaders. And, most LYC members believed that their CDCs approved of both the grant project and their self-initiated activities.

Interview data from CDC members reveal, for the most part, a highly favorable opinion of LYCs. One male CDC chairperson said, ~~Members of the LYCs are our sons and daughters, so we have a close relationship with the LYCs. They were on the same page [as the CDC] 100%.~~" A member of a different CDC gave a typical view of a positive CDC-LYC relationship: ~~We appreciate the youth program. It is under the consultation of the Shura and the CDC. Youth are working to improve the community, and the CDC is helping them.~~" Such statements reinforce the wisdom of designing LYCs as independent entities linked to established bodies like the CDCs.

Curiously, the relationship of the LYCs to the respective CDCs in the above cases differed in important ways despite both CDCs' favorable opinions. In the former case, the CDC was proud of the independence of their LYC, noting that the LYC wrote its own proposal and implemented the project itself. Impressively, the CDC has invited two of the LYC leaders to join the CDC. In contrast, the LYC in the latter case was one of the few where the CDC had more direct involvement in the grant activity. At the request of UN-Habitat, the project manager for the grant activity was a member of the CDC and not the LYC (although the cashier was a LYC member). LYC members were comfortable with this arrangement and said they ~~now~~ feel confident in managing a youth project." These different attributes of, essentially, successful LYCs illustrate the variety and unpredictability of ideal LYC-CDC or LYC-elder relationships.

There was ample awareness among CDC members of the plight of youth. One Bamyan province CDC member stated. ~~Most of the youth are jobless. Youths not in school are working on farms. Most are in school. They can't find jobs after their school years and stay idle. Some boys go to the city for work while others just stay here to work however they can.~~" Moreover, some CDC members, at least in the Northern provinces, were quick to note the low quality of government schools, further handicapping their children's chances for employment opportunities.

This sympathy for current youth conditions led to widespread confidence in the capacity of LYCs to inculcate positive behaviors and skills and, eventually, assist youths to overcome these hardships. “Members of the LYCs have better habits and ethics than those not in LYCs. It is a good system that contributes to the community,” said one CDC member. A male CDC member from still another community saw the LYC in a larger context, “People who are not part of the CDC see the LYCs as part of the CDC. We are hoping to enhance their youth’s education, and we hope to have them as future CDC members.”

A small minority of male CDCs and elders expressed a far less favorable opinion of male LYCs and, in conservative communities, of certain kinds of grant projects considered by female LYCs. It is difficult to know the exact cause of their views in every case, but poor communication and consultation loom large among the possible reasons. The chairperson of a Balkh Province CDC appeared to speak for the entire CDC in saying, “The LYC did not consult the CDC—they just decided on their own. The project [the LYC did] was not good, and they did not study the project adequately. It was not successful.” CDC members repeatedly answered specific questions about the cause of the LYC’s lack of success as the latter’s “failure to consult the CDC.” In the case of affected female LYCs, the opposition by male elders was sufficient to limit their possible options for grant activities—a matter to be discussed in a following section.

Further probing of this CDC’s negativity to the LYC revealed some deeper issues not identified in other communities. As the CDC spokesperson observed:

The LYC structure is inappropriate. There are several kinds of councils: health councils, etc. All these councils bring disunity among people. We think there should a youth committee within the CDC rather than a separate youth council. Youth councils become negative if the competition with other councils is negative. . . . Youth challenges are different than youth responsibilities. They need to respect culture and respect people and elders.

In the CDC’s view, the LYC was wracked with internal dissension. Yet, the interview with the LYC members revealed no such discord. Indeed, the LYC members presented themselves as an active group, implementing five self-initiated projects in addition to their grant project. One of their activities, a student newsletter mentioned earlier, involved several members in various aspects of the production. The only indication of any obstacles was one LYC member’s statement that recent relations with the CDC “are not so good.” Significantly, they reported that the UN-Habitat coordinator was “very good for them.”

#### **b. Willingness to Make In-kind or Other Contributions**

According to both LYCs and CDCs, probably half of all CDCs could give their community’s nothing more than moral support. This was not by choice but because the communities were poor and enjoyed no outside funding or technical assistance from any donor, Afghan or international. CDCs usually wished they could provide material assistance and lamented their lack of resources. Of course, in conservative communities where influential elders opposed certain kinds of proposed LYC activities, CDCs, or their informal counterparts, would refuse to grant material support of any amount. In the

single case of male CDC opposition to the male LYC, the CDC chairperson said that his group had asked the LYC to return a donated computer.

Linking youth to adult community leaders brought new awareness to youth of the limitations within their communities, both financial and cultural. Several of the sampled LYCs had initial expectations of receiving some material resources from the CDCs but found there were none to spare. The youths' realization of their communities' meager finances, perhaps, granted them some stature in the eyes of the CDC.

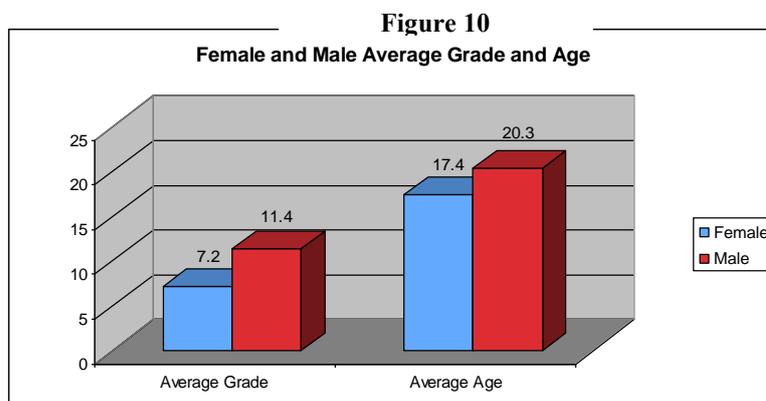
A substantial percentage of other CDCs did give their LYCs various kinds and levels of aid. The most generous were probably the donations of land for the LYC to build a room for the LYC meetings and project activities or for space for a LYC room in an existing building. Those LYCs that focused on obtaining a permanent meeting place, often, could take advantage of CDC members' ability to broker land donations or secure in-kind contributions of building materials from community residents.

In other cases, CDCs donated such items as chairs, tables and bookcases for libraries or computer centers. CDCs that received donated items from donor organizations, often, turned over to LYCs items such as computers. Even the CDC with strained relations with the LYC had donated a computer, which they claimed was requested back when relations soured. CDCs would, also, help with LYC campaigns to elicit book donations to their grant-funded libraries. Whether the CDCs' support was moral or material, the notion of receiving support from an adult entity—whether it was unheated space in the local mosque or a roof on the LYC's meeting room—signified that LYCs were beginning to be recognized as an important organized element of the community that were worthy of encouragement.

## 2.3 DIFFERENTLY MANIFESTED OUTCOMES

### a. Male and Female LYCs

Male and female LYC members differed significantly in terms of average age and educational level (see Figure 10), and male and female LYCs differed in terms of grant project choices and program outcomes. First, male LYC members were generally older than female LYC members in all provinces. It is possible that many females older than 18 might already be married and not available or willing to join a youth group. Second, the average years of education of female LYC members was less than the average of male LYC members in all provinces, both because of age and because many females had discontinued their education before graduating from secondary (middle) or high school.



One effect of both these patterns (as well as male cultural dominance in general) is that male LYCs consistently seemed to exert more influence over the grant project process when female and male LYCs collaborated on a single project. In joint grant projects, the female LYCs typically turned over their \$500 grant money to the male LYC and relinquished most control over decision making and management of the project.

The evaluation team interviewed these male and female LYCs separately (with one exception in Bamyan province), and all interviews confirmed that female LYC members had little understanding of the costs of the project or the details of implementation. They also usually did not benefit equally from the project activities, though there were exceptions to this rule. A typical example is that female LYC members found it difficult to use a joint computer center in Nengarhar province, both because there was no female computer teacher and because, despite the separate hours for females, they found the center less accessible for various reasons.

More generally, the differences in age and educational levels between members of male and female LYCs had implications for the groups' decision-making and outcomes related to the grant projects. Female LYCs generally included a few relatively educated members and a greater number of less-educated members, with significant variations in capacity to learn from the training modules and to benefit from computer and English courses or a library. Female LYCs, therefore, almost always faced difficult choices with regard to ensuring that their grant projects met the interests and needs of most members. Male LYCs, on the other hand, with higher average education levels, usually did not face the same difficult choices.

The lower age of female LYC members compared to their male counterparts also meant that the females had, on average, less sophistication and less life experience to draw upon in making all kinds of decisions related to their grant projects. This includes the choice of project, how to resist community or adult pressure to choose traditional activities, how best to design their project proposal, and how to implement each step of their activities.

More generally, female LYCs simply faced more cultural and societal pressure about their choices and actions. It is unclear, for example, whether more than half of female LYCs chose tailoring or handicraft projects because they thought such skills would be of greatest practical benefit or because they believed their families and communities would expect and support such stereotypically gendered activities, or a combination of these and other factors. What is clear from interviews with female LYCs is that they often wanted to select a different grant project, but perceived that the practical obstacles could not be overcome, such as access to a female computer or English teacher. This theme is addressed under the heading of UN-Habitat Technical Assistance in more detail.

Regardless of the reasons for choosing tailoring and handicraft projects, these female LYCs' grant projects seem to have made less of a lasting impact on the lives of the participants. Most LYC members did not really learn the skill well enough to use it, and the projects kept participants at home, rather than facilitating their engagement with the outside world in any way. A male family member usually purchased the items needed for the project, and if there were any items to sell, someone else did this for the LYC. This constraint applied to female LYCs for almost all of their grant projects. In most cases, a family or community member selected, bought and sold all relevant materials from the

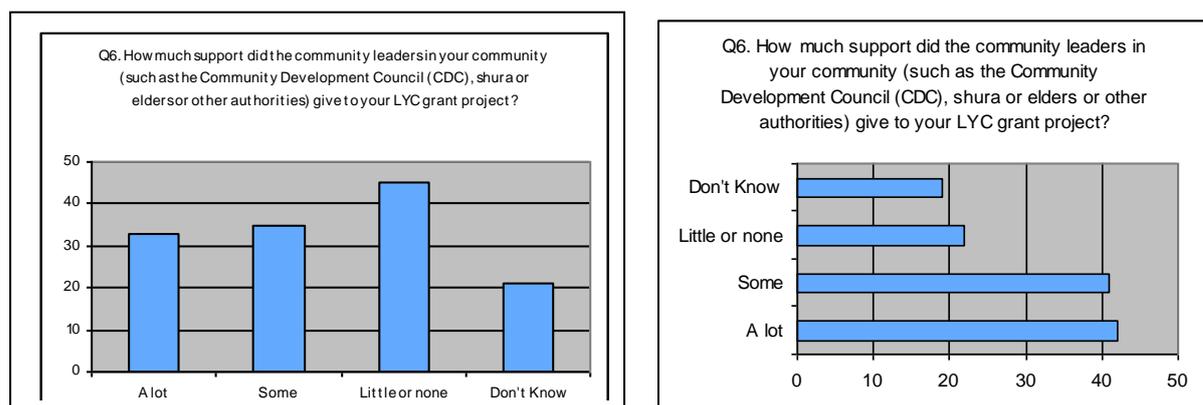
market, including library books and computers for the rare female LYCs that did select those kinds of projects.

## b. Urban and Rural LYCs

YEP may have been more successful in semi-rural and rural areas than in urban areas. First, UN-Habitat had more difficulty assembling original LYC members to meet with the evaluation team in urban areas, especially in Kabul and to a much lesser extent in Jalalabad. This difficulty applied equally to LYCs on the outskirts of Kabul and Jalalabad (categorized by the program as “rural”) and may relate to the fact that young people in and close to urban areas have more competing opportunities generally and more donor-funded or school-sponsored youth programs in which to participate. In rural areas (such as in Bamyán province), on the other hand, programs and opportunities of any kind for youth are rare, making the LYCs more unique and perhaps more appreciated. Many LYCs were still functioning in rural areas, and it was therefore easy to assemble their members to meet with the evaluation team.

Second, relationships with CDCs seemed stronger and more positive in relatively rural areas, and CDCs made more substantial in-kind and other contributions to LYCs in those areas. Community needs (and families’ inter-dependence on one another) may be greater in rural areas, such that adult community leaders have more appreciation for youth taking civic responsibility for their communities’ development. Adults in rural communities also may have more concern about the future of the next generation, since educational and employment opportunities are scarcer in these areas. CDCs might have, therefore, had greater incentive to encourage and support youth participation in the YEP as an avenue for learning vital skills that will help them earn a livelihood, either in their home communities or by finding jobs in more urban areas. On the self-evaluation questionnaire (Q6), rural LYC members (right graph of Figure 11) were more likely to say that community members were very or somewhat supportive than their urban counterparts (left graph) were.

Figure 11



Third, LYC members seemed more deeply engaged in YEP activities in relatively rural areas, and could articulate the specific impact of the program on their lives more readily and with more enthusiasm. This factor may be especially true for female LYCs, which organized more self-initiative projects in relatively remote areas, both for the benefit of the LYC members and for their communities. Examples include learning income-generation activities and organizing literacy classes, especially with more privileged or educated LYC members helping less privileged or less educated members. In urban areas, on the other hand, female LYCs reported almost no self-initiative activities.

Mutual dependence and a deeper sense of community in relatively rural areas may account for much of this difference. Another way in which rural LYC members seemed more engaged in YEP activities is that they were more able to readily remember the content of training workshops. LYC coordinators might have more consistently cascaded the trainings to other LYC members and LYC members might have more appreciation for the uniqueness of the learning opportunity, both for reasons given above.

### **c. Educated and Uneducated LYC Members**

Many female LYCs faced significant additional challenges because of the wide range of educational background of their members. As noted above, most female LYCs tried to choose their grant projects to benefit the majority of their members. Significantly different levels of education meant that some members could not benefit from computer, library, or English language projects, but other members did not need or want vocational projects such as tailoring or handicrafts. Therefore, female LYCs' choices were almost always an unsatisfactory compromise benefiting some members much more than others. The evaluation team did not encounter any complaints about this issue, however. In groups that chose computer courses or libraries, for example, uneducated members graciously said that they were very happy for the other members to have an opportunity to improve their future. In groups that chose vocational skills, at least some educated members took part in the classes and said that they valued the additional skills for self-sufficiency and support to their families.

LYC members with less formal education were, not surprisingly, less able to benefit from the unfamiliarity of the training workshop topics and inaccessibility of the complex training materials. In particular, project design, proposal-writing, and project management themes may have little resonance or relevance for individuals with less formal education. In LYCs with significant differences in educational level among members, a few were able to appreciate the training workshops and participate in follow-up activities (such as writing grant proposals), but others were not. This issue might have been more prevalent, once again, in female LYCs. The significantly lower average age of female LYC members was also relevant to their ability to learn from the training modules.

### **d. Provinces / Regions**

YEP outcomes varied according to province, but sometimes defied expectations. For example, in relatively isolated Farah province, where the evaluation team was unable to visit because of security constraints, program documents and an interview with the former YEP male coordinator indicate a dramatic success story. After demonstrating their competence and gaining confidence through their grant projects, the Farah LYCs collectively formed and legally incorporated a non-governmental organization that has received funding from several donors for various projects. The success seems to have been because of a particularly dynamic UN-Habitat coordinator and a provincial USAID official who took significant interest in the program.

The Bamyan LYCs seem to have been relatively successful and sustainable, perhaps because of the relatively un-conservative culture of the area and because of the relative isolation of the province (see above regarding rural versus urban LYCs). Many members of LYCs gathered to meet with the evaluation team in every community; CDCs were tangibly supportive of LYC activities; LYC grant projects were very diverse and many had lasting results; LYCs undertook many dynamic self-initiative projects; and LYCs

reported that they were still meeting regularly and continuing to be active. On the other hand, the UN-Habitat YEP coordinators and trainers were not from Bamyan, so that little program memory or human resource capacity remains in the province.

Kabul Province's LYCs were disappointing. UN-Habitat had difficulty gathering LYC members for interviews, in part because of the unavailability of both the male and female YEP coordinators but also for the reasons described above regarding urban LYCs. Except for one male LYC, the groups did not seem to remain functional six months after the project ended, and the impact of program training and activities, including the grant projects, was harder to assess. Where there was evidence of a grant project, the resource, for example a computer, had sometimes ended up in the LYC coordinator's private home, serving as decoration rather than as a functional tool for use by a group. These limitations also applied particularly to female LYCs in relatively rural areas outside Kabul city.

The evaluation team's assessments of LYCs in Nengarhar were almost entirely different for male and female groups. All male LYCs selected computer centers for their grant projects, and all female LYCs chose tailoring as their projects, with two joint projects also undertaken. Some male LYCs were quite successful, including one ongoing computer center, and many male LYC members were confident and well-spoken about the benefits of their YEP activities. No female LYCs were still functioning and, with the exception of several educated and dynamic LYC coordinators, the few young women who met with the evaluation team were invariably not the original members of the LYCs. See the report section on UN-Habitat Inputs and Management for more analysis of the Nengarhar YEP.

Balkh province was notable in that seven out of 12 grant projects were undertaken jointly by male and female LYCs, including five computer centers, one library, and one gathering center for youth. Most female LYCs had more consistency among members in their high level of formal education, and at least some young women in each LYC were dynamic and vocal, ascribing their confidence and increased capacities to the YEP. At least some male and female LYCs seem to have been able to work well together as peers. Grant projects in Bamyan were relatively diverse, with two male LYCs attempting to earn income from animal husbandry projects that were ultimately failures, but from which the LYC members learned significant project (and business) management lessons.

### **3. TO WHAT EXTENT COULD LYCS, WITH PROPER SUPPORT, BECOME SUSTAINABLE YOUTH CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND VIABLE LIVELIHOOD OR TRAINING ENTITIES?**

#### **3.1 CURRENT SUSTAINABILITY: LYCS AND THEIR PROJECTS**

##### **a. Sustainability of LYCs vs. Projects**

###### ***Sustainability of LYCs***

Evaluating LYCs and their projects six months after the YEP's closure has the advantage of revealing whether, and to what extent, activities have continued in the absence of the contractor's interventions. Interviews with LYC members suggest some significant differences between the longevity of these organizations' activities and the organizations themselves. To a significant extent, LYCs have remained in existence even as their grant-funded activities may have run into barriers and fallen into disuse.

Impressively, at least four to five, and often six to twelve, LYC members showed up to be interviewed in every sampled community except one. In some communities in Bamyan and Balkh provinces, as many as 15 or more members came for interviews. This was the case even though no UN-Habitat staff had been coming to visit them for at least six months. In most of the sampled LYCs members continue to meet: sometimes as often as monthly, sometimes occasionally. The statements of LYC members and many CDC members who were specifically questioned confirmed that LYCs probably have a permanent place in their communities.

Most of the LYCs, both male and female, have at least partly transformed into, or continue to function as, social groups as well as civic youth organizations. Observed relationships among youths as well as their interview statements suggest that many of them had friendships that went beyond the group. In being targeted to educated youths, LYCs no doubt included many school friends. And, the LYCs' close connections with CDCs also meant that the friendships and family connections among CDC members were replicated among the LYCs. For example, the coordinator in one Nengarhar Province male LYC was the son of the head of the local CDC.

Kabul was the single setting that was not particularly sustaining for LYCs, *as constituted and resourced by the Youth Empowerment Project*. Only one member, who happened to be the coordinator, of a sampled female (urban-designated) Kabul Province LYC showed up, although, in fairness, the interview time competed with studying for and taking end-of-year school exams or the KANKOR university entrance exam. The report has already mentioned that the initial recruitment of LYC members within Kabul itself had proven difficult for UN-Habitat, causing its staff to make promises that could not be fulfilled. The, potentially, larger aid packages from other donors and other entertainment options available to older youths in Kabul, undoubtedly, made the LYC and its modest \$500 grant seem prosaic by comparison.

### ***Sustainability of Projects***

The outcomes of LYC grant projects also remain visible but, in many cases, in a less viable condition than originally envisioned. Although the purchased items, more often than not, were on display, library books were, sometimes, shelved in no meaningful order, sewing machines commandeered by certain LYC leaders, and computers placed in cramped rooms, with insufficient furniture or space for their proper use. Most LYC-initiated computer centers continue to function in a minimal form, but further questioning often revealed other limiting factors: lack of a knowledgeable instructor to continue training, cultural opposition to female computer use from some quarters. Purchase of used computers with pirated software could impair computer effectiveness. The inability to access software updates eventually makes computers less effective and increases their vulnerability to viruses. The lure of computer skills may decrease when youths do not have specific applications for their skills (such as jobs), while the learning value of computers is unrealized when users cannot connect to the Internet.

Library projects have faced their own constraints. The books that were purchased, perhaps, turn out to be less relevant to school subjects than originally believed. In at least one case, a well arranged, well stocked and conveniently located LYC library in Balkh Province faced the likelihood of losing its storefront space, which would force the boxing and storing of books in a member's home. As noted earlier, females often opted for

tailoring or handicraft projects rather than their preferred computer learning. Even these second choice projects failed to train all members uniformly well or to market sufficient volume for a business. Without the specific kinds of external assistance, the LYC members were likely to put on hold any efforts to refine their skills and produce larger quantities of goods.

### ***Self-initiated versus Grant Projects***

It is difficult to say what the relationship is between self-initiated and grant-funded projects, especially in terms of sustainability. In many ways, self-initiated projects represent the true essence of civic youth programming, in that they emerged to address an identified need solely through organized voluntary labor—before the idea of grant money was broached. But, self-initiated projects have dwindled in number as well. There is a clear and reasonably simple explanation for this: with no outside expert human intervention (in the form of a UN-Habitat youth development professional), the LYCs meet less often. As they meet less often, they have fewer opportunities to share information about their communities and organize corrective action to identified problems. Most importantly, as the members get older, enter university or start careers, they may begin dropping out of regular participation in LYCs or, at least, begin to feel that the kind of youthful collective actions they took as older teenagers no longer resonates in their lives. Unfortunately, as noted above, the grant activities that might have maintained their interest in LYCs as they age, have failed to progress to a more demanding, rigorous level of skill mastery and, hence, not been able to buttress the LYCs.

### ***Caveats***

Partly basing the sustainability of the LYC on the number of youths showing up for interviews risks possible bias, if those showing up did not represent actual LYC participants or were less active members. As noted in an earlier section, many of the respondents for one urban male LYC in Kabul Province appeared to be stand-ins for others who could not or were unwilling to attend the interview. Likewise, a few female LYCs in Nengharhar Province had poor turnouts for interviews, giving special weight to the opinions of the groups' coordinators who did show up. On balance, however, there were reasons to believe that the absence of full representation in a relatively few LYCs probably had more to do with the difficulty of organizing youths so long after a program closure than with any attempt to control the message by a community or by a UN-Habitat office.

## **b. Differences in Ages of LYC Members**

The LYCs show indications of “aging” with their members. Although only six months have elapsed since the program's closure, LYC members' statements reveal a desire for many of them to continue participating even as they may “age out” of the YEP's original age range. Some LYCs, as we discussed earlier, did admit youths who were in their later 20s or, in a very few cases, their early 30s. It could not be determined whether some, or many, would “move on” to other phases of their young adulthood. Of course, university admission, especially to an out of town institution, clearly removed members who had joined as secondary school students. But nearly all of the LYCs, both male and female, admitted that they had no mechanism for recruiting new, younger youths into the LYCs. To a great extent, the members saw no particular need to do so, since the lack of outside support. And, as discussed earlier, the males, after some probing, acknowledged that they did not have as much in common with boys between the ages of 14 to 16—usually responding that the latter “would not get that much out of being in the LYC.” Apart from raising a question about the logic of including such a wide age range in the LYCs, their

current attitudes toward the eventual need for “replenishment” suggests the need for a possible turnover requirement to avoid the LYCs simply becoming an gradually forming adult club.

### **c. Differences between Male and Female LYCs**

One important outcome that has been sustainable particularly among male LYC members is a greater ability to communicate comfortably and articulately with adults, whether their own elders or foreign individuals like researchers. Numerous LYC members, elders in affected community and UN-Habitat staff remarked on the more confident demeanor of male youths in meeting older males and engaging in or initiating conversation on substantive topics with them. Despite observing a few instances of this behavior among females, the same sustained and consistent level of assertive behavior was not observed among female LYC members as among males. Nearly everyone interviewed who was questioned about this change agreed that it was profound and had important implications for youth’s influence on their community’s policies and decisions.

In terms of LYCs, male and female LYCs exhibited similar sustainability at least in some provinces. Female youths who stay in school through at least the 10<sup>th</sup> grade have similar aspirations as males at that age/grade level: a desire to complete secondary school, attend university and, perhaps, become a professional. The YEP’s focus on school completion is congruent with these females’ personal priorities, and female LYC members appear to parallel those of male LYCs in the way they regard their particular groups.

The factors that made projects viable or nonviable in the first place usually outweighed gender in determining their sustainability. For example, projects without suitable places for the activity, often, did not thrive. Male LYCs in Jalalabad complained that their computer center training was interrupted because the rooms also served as guest bedrooms for paying visitors to the house owners. Similarly, female skill-training projects, notably tailoring, got waylaid when lack of suitable space resulted in sewing machines being taken by a LYC member’s family for safekeeping, thereby denying access to the other and more needy LYC members.

Joint male-female projects were a special category in that these, almost universally, computer centers started off with the intention of operating equally for males and females but reverted to a less equal form of participation in practice. According to the male LYC members, the male and female youths of a jointly funded computer center outside Jalalabad had set up an alternating schedule of male and female use of the computers. In practice, however, the female LYC members revealed less access than indicated by the males, perhaps because the females’ instruction was dependent on a single individual, the female LYC coordinator whose availability was not assured. Such disparities may have been less pronounced in some places than in others, but they offer reminders of the strong built-in biases toward gender-determined roles.

### **d. Rural and Urban Differences**

The grant projects of rural-based LYCs in a few respects were more sustainable than those of their highly urban counterparts, particularly those in Kabul. Youth in rural settings valued formal education as highly as urban youths, perhaps more because of their relative inaccessibility to good schools and the absence of jobs outside farms. But, as discussed earlier, some of the rural LYCs and their supportive CDCs sought to sustain their LYCs by providing resources to build or renovate a LYC meeting room. These

LYCs also chose libraries as their projects more often than urban LYCs. They sensed, perhaps, that, while computers are indeed the key technical innovation of the future, the absence of a computer instructor or sufficient funds to pay for fuel for the electricity generator would limit their value in the long run. In their view, it was better to have books, which are scarcer in rural than urban households.

The faster-paced lives of urban Afghan youths, particularly those preparing to attend, or are already attending, universities, place civic-oriented, volunteer youth organizations in a disadvantageous position in competing for youths' time and attention. The difficulty in arranging interviews as well as the poor attendance of Kabul urban LYCs suggest that most urban youth who remain in school will be interested only in activities that connect directly with their higher education aspirations. Any organization that cannot genuinely inspire university-bound youth or already admitted students to use their spare time to improve their communities or, even, national civic life will probably fail to lure them from more attractive youthful options.

#### **e. Differences among Regions / Provinces**

Assessing sustainability differences between provinces or regions, where subtle cultural differences are at work, is difficult in a relatively short study. The exception may be differences between Kandahar Province and the other four visited provinces. Although the reported activities of Kandahar LYCs are not noticeably different than those of LYCs elsewhere, the tense, more militarized atmosphere in Kandahar, possibly, could militate against the free, open discussions that are so crucial to empowering young project planners. Unfortunately, the contrived manner of data collection there—i.e. having to bring two male LYCs to the UN-Habitat compound for interviews rather than visiting their sites—made impossible any assessment of the LYCs' community context. The more sensitive nature of security in those communities might require a more nuanced or incremental introduction of interventions for a more ambitious future programming.

### **3.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL YOUTH PROGRAMMING**

The major thrust of this study is that LYCs provide a feasible and reasonably well functioning structure for involving educated older youth and young adults in civic life. They also offer the beginnings of a platform on which to introduce skill-training or educational activities that advance youths' own personal growth. But, the LYC concept and its inherent relationship with CDCs along with their governmental relationship to the MOICY raise questions about how to support these embryonic structures adequately. In short, without a strong base of collective activities, the LYC appears unlikely to survive as anything more than a social reference group with high standards of personal behavior and aspirations.

One could argue that a vibrant volunteer spirit could be sustained with timely, modest recognition of acts of public service. LYCs would continue to embody all the desirable values and attributes found in the best LYCs: the capacity to analyze community problems, idealism to do something about these problems, and eagerness to learn from the opportunities afforded them. In practice, whether a LYC structure can sustain itself, simply, by cultivating and extending civic virtue alone is a testable question. Youths in most LYCs appeared to need at least some attention to their economic futures.

## **a. Type of desired youth organization**

### ***Preservation of a Civic/Volunteer Orientation***

Continuation of a civic-focused LYC would require continued training along the lines done by UN-Habitat for the YEP. As noted in Section 1 of Chapter III, training of rank and file LYC members failed to reach the quality level of the higher cascade levels, even within LYCs with capable youth coordinators. Consideration could be given to introduction of a lower level of paid trainers—at greater expense, of course—to conduct the training of LYC members. This would be particularly important as LYCs recruit new members and lose their older members to university or full-time jobs.

One big question is whether a continued LYC system could go beyond the community cleaning projects of the past into more involved and systematic community welfare projects. LYC members are, by definition, school or university students, so their available time is limited by the school day and year. Evenings, weekends, holidays, and a 3-4 month long school vacation period provide sufficient time, however, for many kinds of volunteer activities. The missing ingredient appears to be creativity in identifying needs that youth can address and mobilizing the resources to undertake them. A few LYCs in Balkh have pointed the way with their projects to coach 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students on the KANKOR exam and a Kabul LYC with its gym project. Given the enormous problem of illiteracy among out-of-school youths, sponsoring literacy courses in Dari, Pashtu, or English could significantly benefit the former and give educated youth an important stake in their country's future.

An important incentive for institutionalizing youth-initiated service or public welfare activities is some form of official recognition. Some provinces have already experimented with such awards. The UN-Habitat staff in Nengarhar Province held large gatherings of LYC representatives in Jalalabad in which awards of supplies, food, and cooking oil were awarded to LYC teams who most successfully answered quiz questions on different topics. This same sort of forum could serve to recognize winning LYCs in the realm of civic knowledge and volunteer contributions.

### ***Structure and Goals: Future Role of CDCs***

The data gathered from CDCs, and about CDCs, provides some insights into how to use these bodies for any future programming for Afghan youth. CDCs did provide a means of legitimizing the organized efforts of youths and young adults in nearly all sampled communities and did indicate continued robust support.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there are reasons to question whether the CDC would, necessarily, be the best or the only community body for authorizing the existence of LYCs in all existing and new settings.

One senior UN-Habitat official who is familiar with the YEP said there were cases where CDCs had been influenced by undesirable elements that could possibly curtail LYC activities. Only one male CDC in this study's sample had articulated outright opposition to some of its community's LYC decisions. The potential that CDCs might not uniformly provide its imprimatur for the LYC could dictate a case-by-case assessment of community sentiment toward youth participation in civic life. In less supportive settings, a future program could adopt a more gradual introduction of youth training and organization.

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<sup>4</sup> The supportive framework for LYCs by CDCs in Kandahar and Farah Provinces could not be established due to the absence of any interviewing of those bodies and can only be estimated in Nengarhar Province due to a small sample.

### ***Larger Associations for LYCs?***

As noted earlier, the limited data on larger youth associations revealed only limited programming by civil society groups. A LYC experiment in Balkh Province and a youth federation in Nengarhar Province offer possible models for connecting the community-based youth model into a provincial network. The MoICY Youth Directorate in Mazir-i-Shariff organized a province-wide body of LYC representatives that, until the last October, met every week or two. These meetings informed the provincial Youth Director of the LYCs' activities.<sup>5</sup> His opinion that this provincial-level LYC body could help formulate policies for LYCs deserves consideration.

In Nengarhar Province, a rural male LYC reported that its coordinator had become a member of a province-wide "youth federation" coordinated by the provincial Youth Directorate. The exact nature of this body and its program could not be learned because of the team's inability to meet with the Nengarhar Youth Director. Members of the LYC claimed that the coordinator, through his membership, become exposed to several valuable learning experiences, including training at the Jalalabad hospital on prevention of communicable diseases and participation in at least one youth conference on an unspecified topic. The federation was composed of youth designees from various organizational backgrounds, with membership based on invitation by an adult committee. The LYC coordinator stated his current efforts to lobby for membership being granted to four other LYC members. The LYC members agreed that membership in this federation by several members would "ensure the continued survival of their LYC."

The very existence of such a youth association suggests the possible usefulness of integrating community youth organizations into larger groupings. Given the enthusiasm with which LYC members participate in the limited collective events sponsored by the provincial UN-Habitat or Youth Directorate, it would be wise for any future youth program to explore any feasible mechanisms for bringing together and reinforcing the program objectives and the groups' documented achievements.

### ***Can Female Autonomy and Participation be Enhanced?***

The far more sobering results of female LYCs, as covered in Chapter III Section 2.3a, would demand both a tailored intervention to reduce impediments to females' development and, possibly, a longer perspective on expectations for substantive change for females. Regarding UN-Habitat's female facilitation, the woman Provincial Coordinators did not, as noted earlier, depart far from the expected norm of female roles in their responsible communities. More measurable progress in facilitating female autonomy and realizing *actual*, rather than assumed, female aspirations requires trainers and facilitators who are willing to insist on such standards. At the same time, those who demand and expect rapid change on female self-determination must continually remind themselves of the starting point of these efforts and the deeply entrenched cultural norms that relegate females to subordinate roles. With such a dual perspective, future programs can firmly but judiciously push "the envelope" of change without unleashing forces that could set back female gains or endanger lives.

### ***Would an Additional Organizational Level Better Cover the Wide Age Range of "Youth"?***

The tendency of most LYCs to be weighted toward the higher end of the program's age range raises the question of how younger youths should best be served and prepared to participate in the LYCs. One could argue for creation of a separate level of youth organization that more effectively responds to these younger youths. Indeed, some

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<sup>5</sup> Despite the Youth Director's statement that he was not given a list of communities or informed of their activities.

analysts on this subject suggest that the Afghan context demands coverage starting as young as 12 for both males and females. Given that most children at this age are still in school but are susceptible to dropping out for a variety of reasons, the rationale for starting civic and volunteer-oriented activities is particularly compelling.

A possible scheme is to create a separate program level for younger youths aged 12 through 16 years—or some other age range—that would appeal specifically to their interests and maturity level. An over-arching goal would be to convince these youths to stay in school and, thus, build the foundation for a responsible role in their communities. This organization could not include “council” in its name because of the association of that term with adult decision-making. Whether referred to as a community youth “club” or other name, the organization would seek to attract highly persuadable youths into a desirable mindset of ever increasing responsibility and ultimate transition into LYC membership. The current LYC would continue as constituted but with a higher age range. At least one CDC head who was presented this idea endorsed the basic approach.

### ***Moving Beyond a Peri-urban Definition of “Rural LYCs”***

The close proximity of most rural-designated LYC communities to their provincial capitals has skewed the meaning of the term “rural.” Except in Bamyan and Kabul provinces, all rural LYC communities were located within a few kilometers of the capital center. A few Bamyan and Kabul province communities were farther away but still close enough for UN-Habitat staff to visit in half a day or less. In addition to enabling the contractor to service its sites, the YEP restricted its range in order to ensure the heavy moderating influence of urban culture on traditional norms.

A future youth program could broaden its contribution to youth engagement by expanding its reach beyond these outlying urban communities. Moving into authentically rural communities does, of course, pose certain challenges to a future contractor, including the management of, potentially, more rigid traditional practices and the provision of support services to more remote sites. Support for such a geographic expansion of program coverage exists in some quarters. A provincial Information Director of the MoICY endorsed the notion of a wider catchment area for any future youth programming. In his view, the problems with poverty and lack of education converting into criminal behavior and anti-government sentiment occur more readily in rural communities farther from cities.

### **b. Skill Training and Entrepreneurship**

As the earlier outcomes analysis reflected, both male and female LYC members, like their non-affiliated counterparts, expressed a strong desire for practical skills in technology, language and/or vocational trades that would improve their chances for a decent career. The grant-funded activities served as an initial and unfulfilled step toward that objective. Much greater skill mastery and depth of knowledge would be needed for the bulk of LYC members.

LYC respondents were generally conflicted on precisely what they wanted. Males who plan to enter university wanted sufficient computer skills or English language capability to obtain employment with acceptable salaries and admitted that the skills acquired from grant-funded computer centers were inadequate for this purpose. The poor financial status of the vast majority of these youths prevented use of commercial computer or language institutes. Lack of two important inputs—a qualified, affordable instructor and

an accessible place for training—were the main factors preventing LYCs from achieving this.

For female LYC members, the professed objective was for more advanced training or practice in such vocational trades as tailoring or embroidery. But, as the earlier analysis discussed, the hesitation and uncertainty with which females answered such questions suggests that, perhaps, they desired access to computer and/or English language training as much or more than these traditional crafts. As was the case with male LYCs, females usually lacked a qualified instructor to go beyond the very basics of the subject. Any intervention that would impart a more sophisticated knowledge of computer operation or of English could fill a considerable gap in advancing the access of both males and females to these skill areas.

### ***Determining the Meaning of Training for Potential Participants***

LYC members who suggested vocational skill training as a desired option usually gave less than explicit reasons, resorting to conditional replies based on unknowns. These generally secondary school educated youths expressed interest in skills that would lead to employment: that is, computer software use and computer troubleshooting or repair. More traditionally artisanal trades, such as carpentry, masonry, tailoring or auto repair, were perceived as a desirable option in the event that their primary goal of a well paying job did not materialize. These somewhat vague answers suggest mixed feelings about vocational training but also a great deal of genuine anxiety about their personal employment prospects.

On the other hand, the expressed interest of female LYC members in livelihood activities suggests a greater desire on their part for income supplementation, especially in the event that their plans for full education bare interrupted by early marriage and failure to gain admission to a university. Notwithstanding these statements, the possibility that such professed desires for typically feminine skills might not represent these individuals' true choices would be important to consider by program planners. Depending on the true aspirations of the participants, assistance for such entrepreneurial skill training could well be the first step to somewhat greater financial freedom or an unfortunate, and unwanted, capitulation to traditional gender roles.

### **c. Grant Amount, Accountability and Transparency**

The prevailing opinion among LYC members and UN-Habitat staff is that the \$500 grant amount was a small amount but acceptable to establish the groups' capacity to handle donated funds. Most of the interviewed MoICY officials considered the grant amount too small to be of any real use. Evidence from the evaluation supports both views but, in the end, vindicates the rationale for limiting funds in an initial youth development program. The first question for any follow-on project is whether disbursement of grants to community level youth groups and, possibly, initiatives that go beyond communities is justified. The balance of results from the YEP experience suggests a resounding answer in the affirmative. The role of external financial resources in sustaining this still-fragile new youth organization is vital.

The issue of how big a grant should be made available is a topic for careful analysis. A senior manager of UN-Habitat headquarters has stated that a grant size up to \$5,000 to each qualifying LYC should be seriously considered. While imposing a significantly larger budget for a follow-on project, this larger amount would enable an LYC to address

their goals of skill acquisition in computers or English far more effectively. This amount of funding would allow provision of a hall dedicated to youth activities, purchase of additional computers and, more importantly, new software, hiring of qualified computer or language instructors, and possible consideration of Internet connectivity to some locations. Perhaps, most importantly, a substantive amount of money would convey to all youth their importance in the community and the advantages of participation in a burgeoning youth movement.

With regard to accountability, the YEP's vetting and accounting practices, while transparent and accurate, would require more thorough documentation of results both from LYCs and from the contractor to the donor. This would be especially true were the grant amounts to be of the size that would actually allow meaningful outcomes for youths.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. CONCLUSIONS**

1. UN-Habitat implemented the Youth Empowerment Project in a sufficiently effective and timely manner to accomplish most of the YEP's major goals to, at least, an acceptable and, often, to an excellent standard.
2. The YEP's cascade training system kept down training costs and achieved a high degree of comprehension at national and provincial levels, but significant training content got lost by using LYC youth coordinators to train their own fellow members, with minimal technical assistance and supervision from UN-Habitat provincial coordinators.
3. Training materials developed by the YEP were substantive and at appropriate reading levels for older and educated LYC youth coordinators but were, probably, overly difficult for the comprehension level of younger and less educated LYC members, both male and female, indicating the need for better consideration of age-grade levels.
4. The YEP and some provincial Youth Directorates of the MoICY collaborated to apparently good effect, but close cooperation declined in some provinces, resulting in little capacity building of the Youth Directorates and a lower potential that the Youth Directorates could manage future community-based youth development programming.
5. The YEP's technical assistance services resulted in the formation and strengthening of LYCs in designated communities and the successful implementation of small grant projects by the councils, including a transparent and full accounting of all grant funds disbursed to LYCs.
6. UN-Habitat's reporting of the YEP's project activities, including those of the grant projects, lacked sufficient details about both the activities and the resulting outputs and outcomes to know what the grants actually accomplished.
7. The experiences of youths participating in the activities of their LYCs through both organized and informal activities produced significant behavioral improvements, in

the form of more active civic participation through volunteer activities, commitment to education, communication ability, confidence and other personal growth characteristics.

8. The experience of youths implementing and managing their own projects funded by \$500 grants from YEP resulted in the measurable acquisition of project and financial management skills, at least, among LYC leaders.
9. The LYCs, despite variations in their current activity levels, continue to exist as, at least, semi-permanent institutions in some of their respective communities, thereby presenting a solid foundation for continued civic-oriented and/or career-focused youth programming, particularly in relatively isolated or “rural” areas.
10. Relations between youth councils and their respective CDCs (and by extension, the wider adult community), except in rare exceptions, remained cordial and mutually respectful, indicating the compatibility of more confident, assertive youth with conventional cultural attitudes, at least, among males in communities.
11. The behavioral changes seen in male LYCs, such as enhanced self-confidence, community focus, initiative and communication ability with adults, were more mixed and less striking in female LYCs but did, nevertheless, demonstrate the potential for such changes over time and with consistent, progressive female mentoring and facilitation.
12. The LYC-initiated grant-funded projects funded, in all cases, created tangible products, ranging from libraries to computer centers to tailoring courses that did provide temporary and/or the beginnings of educational or technical skills, but caused disappointment because of insufficient resources to produce the skills or knowledge required to obtain employment or earn a regular livelihood.
13. The severe youth unemployment problem in Afghanistan strongly indicates the advisability of vocational skill training or other income-generating or entrepreneurial interventions for, especially, youths, and the existence of these newly created local youth councils may have a role to play as either a sponsor or partner in any such programs.
14. The strong tendency of LYC membership to be weighted toward older youths creates a potential programming gap among younger youths between 12 and 16 years of age, who are susceptible to dropping out of school and vulnerable to anti-government recruitment.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **a. Regarding the YEP Youth Development Model and the LYCs**

1. Any future youth program for educated youths should assume the existence of LYCs in YEP communities and build upon these structures. In non-YEP communities, future programs should strongly consider relying on this same model, with modifications suggested in other recommendations.

2. Any future youth program should carefully assess the compatibility of the male or female CDC in each prospective community before creating a new LYC. In the event that a CDC link with a LYC is unsuitable, the program should continue to work with the community in seeking to create a favorable climate for LYCs there.
3. Any program expansion should introduce LYCs in rural communities that are farther from the provincial capitals than under the YEP and should employ alternative structures for organizing LYCs in concentrated urban environments such as Kabul city.
4. A future community-based youth development should consider the following structural changes: narrow LYC membership to an older age range (up to 25 years maximum); and introduce an entirely new organization—labeled as a club or group—tailored to younger boys and girls ranging from age 11 or 12 upward.
5. A new program for younger youths should organize activities around two main goals: completion of secondary schooling; and early awareness of, and participation in, civic life/volunteerism, possibly in conjunction with older youths in LYCs, as well as in sports, recreational, theater, music, and cultural activities.

**b. Regarding Training and Technical Assistance Delivery to Community Youth Organizations**

6. A future contractor should provide more regular staff monitoring of LYCs and assistance to LYC youth coordinators in training of ordinary LYC members.
7. A future youth program contractor should consider sub-contracting to or partnering with appropriate and experienced Afghan NGOs to assist in implementing youth training, mobilization, and TA on civic education, project development, and grants management.
8. Future programming should link LYCs to each other and/or to existing youth civil society organizations whenever possible in the relevant provinces. The current linkage of some LYCs in Nengarhar Province with a youth federation run by the Youth Directorate is a possible model for such networks. Among the possible activities for such networks, for example, could be their mobilization as election observers in their local areas through FEMA during a national election process.
9. A future program should re-test current training materials for the LYC youth coordinators and LYC members and, if justified, modify content and formats for suitability to actual reading ability levels. In addition, materials should include experiential learning techniques such as demonstrations, games, and role-playing for reinforcement of training concepts, ensuring in particular that female LYC members get adequate opportunities to practice communication, leadership, and decision-making skills.
10. Female LYCs should be nurtured separately, with additional specialized training materials, well-prepared program managers and trainers as well as provincial

coordinators, and separate grant funds that can be pooled with funds of other LYCs only with proof that such resource pooling would specifically benefit females.

11. A future program should consider ways to localize training content for different regions or cultures, if appropriate, and possibly use district-level training of LYC members, provided that these are cost-efficient and logistically feasible.

**c. Regarding the Grants**

12. Future programming should use more rigorous practices than those of YEP in assisting LYCs, especially in preparing project action plans and reporting project progress. Vetting and approval of grant proposals and disbursement of and accounting for granted funds should be the exclusive responsibility of the contractor and any sub-contractors and be done in a timely manner and with full documentation.
13. Future contractor staff should attend to, and counteract, embedded stereotypic gender roles at the project selection and design phase, especially with an eye to avoiding female domestic activities when members prefer other activities.
14. Future *joint* grants to male and female youth organizations should require evidence of direct and equal participation of female youth leaders in discussions and decisions about project selection, design, and approval of expenditures. The procedures for accessing project-funded services and equipment should reflect equal treatment for females.
15. Any future program should focus on eliminating obstacles in current YEP projects, such as lack of dedicated space for projects and lack of qualified and reliable instructors to teach the desired skills to LYC members. In particular, where female instructors or other resource persons are unavailable locally, the contractor should facilitate provision of necessary resources, possibly through shared funding from several LYCs' grants.
16. For established LYCs, a future program should consider providing grant funds of an amount up to \$5,000 to allow development of meaningful training, education, or livelihood projects in communities, provided that adequate, feasible proposals and action plans are submitted and community support from CDCs and elders exists.
17. Any future youth vocational training schemes that use LYCs should strongly consider linkages with other creative ideas being proposed by UN-Habitat (or others), including apprenticing committed youths to established artisans (possibly with compensation) or creating new provincial centers for training youths. The latter training would focus on, at least, rudimentary trade skills (possibly with provision of tools), job readiness, basic computer software use, and/or entrepreneurial skills for self-employment.

**d. Regarding Capacity Building of the Youth Department Staff of the MoICY**

18. A future youth program should be designed in consultation with the Youth Department of the Ministry of MoICY and any other government entity that may have a stake in, or linkages with, a program component.
19. A future contractor should make a determined effort to train or improve the capacity of staff of the Youth Department of the MoICY and its provincial affiliates through mutually agreeable methods, including participation in ongoing project functions.
20. A future contractor, with budget provided, should involve all relevant staff of the MoICY Youth Department, provincial Youth Directorates, and implementing NGO partners in all training of trainer (TOT) events to the extent agreed upon by these cooperating organizations.
21. Any future project should continue the YEP practice of not paying government staff for participation in project events, except for valid *per diem* expenses. The program should budget sufficient funds for including Youth Directorate staff in all important training events, monitoring site visits, and provision of necessary materials to Ministry staff.

## **IV. APPENDICES**

- APPENDIX 1. EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK***
- APPENDIX 2. LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED***
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## **APPENDIX 1: EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Community Grants Projects' Assessment Youth Empowerment Project, UN-Habitat Cooperative Agreement # 306-A-00-08-00527-00**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

To conduct an Impact Assessment of the **Community Grants Projects** within the Technical Support to the Central and Provincial Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth for the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) project and make necessary recommendations according to findings. The outcome of this final evaluation will be used as a module and lessons learned for the potential future activities.

#### **II. BACKGROUND**

USAID/Afghanistan awarded Agreement No. 306-A-00-06-00527-00 to UN-Habitat on September 18, 2006. The Agreement was modified in December 2008, in order to extend the performance period of the Agreement from December 31, 2008, to April 30, 2009.

The objective of the YEP activity was to reinforce the capacity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) to serve the needs of the youth of Afghanistan. The original purpose of the Agreement was to pilot activities to increase the participation of Afghan youth in the reconstruction and advancement of their country, to establish a network of female and male youth groups in six provinces equipped with strong life skills, are actively involved in the social, cultural, sporting and economic life of their communities through the provision of small sub-grants, and are linked to similar youth networks throughout the world. The program also built the capacity of the Department of Youths in the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Youth (MOICY) to conduct effective youth development programs.

Through this agreement, YEP was implemented in six provinces (Kabul, Bamyan, Balkh, Kandahar, Farah and Nengarhar), through the creation of 120 Local Youth Councils (LYCs), each with a membership of 20 youth. Total numbers of beneficiaries are 2,400. As each member was required to conduct outreach to an additional 10 community members, indirect beneficiaries reached to 24,000 additional youth and adults.

In order to strengthen the capacity, practice, knowledge and awareness of the LYCs and what they learned from YEP, USAID through UN-Habitat granted \$US 500 to each LYC based on their identified developmental plan and projects to let them practice more their learned experiences.

Different projects, such as computer courses, training centers, tailoring, handicrafts, needlecraft, youth gathering centers, and tree planting projects were implemented.

The project achieved the following results:

- A participatory youth assessment completed to document the situation of youth and their needs, in both rural and urban areas, and initial database of youth

CSOs/NGOs compiled and distributed to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, donors and other CSOs/ NGOs in the country.

- A model for training of trainers for youth mobilization and empowerment developed and tested in 60 urban and rural communities and documented in training and operational manuals and toolkits.
- 132 youth trainers (50%) (Female) including provincial youth coordinators equipped to disseminate this model in 6 provinces.
- 60 youth CSOs organized and experienced in implementing community service projects.
- Over 2,400 youth in 6 provinces trained in leadership; governance; conflict resolution, community development planning, implementation and management; community education; networking and advocacy.
- Core group of the most dynamic youth leaders and activists exposed to models of successful youth movements and community education modules in other developing and/or post-conflict countries.
- Capacity built at the Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth through training of 42 staff and their participation in management of this project.

Another critical aspect of the YEP project is the Impact Evaluation of the Granted Projects: Under this item there will be an impact evaluation of the small grants component and its impact on the youth and their communities.

In the course of the implementation of civic education modules of YEP, and particularly after Modules Four and Five, much of the learning happened, and it was believed that the LYCs have had an improved capacity to plan and manage funds more than what was originally allocated to each LYC.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

Before initiating this evaluation, the consultant team will develop evaluation questions guiding the assessment process which will be approved by OSSD. The consultant team will use the following methodology to conduct the evaluation.

Document Review/Data Analysis: Team members will review the YEP agreement, YEP quarterly and annual reports, USAID/Afghanistan strategy documents, MOICY policies related to youth development, and other relevant documents.

Key Informant Interviews: The team will conduct interviews and focus groups with a variety of stakeholders including MOICY staff, LYC members and communities.

Self Assessment: The grantees will respond to a self assessment either through a questionnaire or standard interview put together by the assessment team and approved by OSSD before use. The team will review the answers and discuss with UN-Habitat management. The following are required evaluation questions (these can be refined, as required, by the consultant team):

**Suggested questions:**

- How has your life and the lives of those around you have been impacted as a result of running this small grant project?
- Can you give an example of how and what you have learned from the grant project that helped you and your community's life?
- Did you find the provisions of the small grant useful and why?
- With implementation of this project what areas of behavior do you see a change in?
- How do you see the results of this program in terms of contributions to the youth's lives in the community?
- Do you recommend any other option to make the project more successful in the future?
- According to the key stakeholders, what is the technical quality of the program's activities?
- How do you rate the success of the small grants project-related aspects of the project against the defined program objectives and what are your recommendations to help inform future plans?
- Where are the key areas of vulnerability within the project to corruption? What safeguards does the project already have against corruption?

The Evaluation must cover all 6 provinces and at least 4 urban and 4 rural LYCs in each province strong and weak female and male urban, strong and weak female and male rural. A total of 48 LYCs needs to be interviewed and assessed. At least 5 interviews with the stakeholders on provincial level with project coordinator male and female and the directorate of youth affairs department of culture, and at least 2 interviews with the community adult NSP Shuras and community leaders/mullah.

#### **IV. DELIVERABLES**

The team will be responsible for producing the following final deliverables:

- List of Assessment Questions provided to OSSD within two days of the start of work.
- Work Plan and schedule provided to OSSD within five days of the start of work.
- Questionnaire for self-assessment (either through a questionnaire or interview) provided to OSSD within five days.
- Power Point Presentations on the results and outcomes of the assessment at mid-point and upon completion of the evaluation.
- Assessment Report (following standard reporting format and branding guidelines), including clear and concise analysis and recommendations.
- The evaluation team will take at least six field trips.
- A draft Final Report will be due no later than five days of the evaluation completion, and said Final Report will be limited to 20 pages, excluding Annexes, and include a copy of the original Scope of Work for this activity.

An outline of the Final Report is provided below:

## V. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary will state the development objectives of the activity assessed, purpose of the assessment, study methodology, major findings, and recommendations.

### Table of Contents

#### Introduction

The context of what is evaluated including the relevant history, demography, socioeconomic and basic political arrangements.

#### Body of the Paper

1. The purpose and study questions of the assessment. Brief description of the activity in the context of the larger USAID/Afghanistan education program.
2. Evidence, findings and analysis of the study questions.
3. Succinctly stated analysis of findings.
4. Recommendations.

Appendices shall include:

1. Evaluation scope of work
2. List of documents consulted
3. List of individuals and agencies contacted
4. Schedule of activities in an Excel format.
5. Evaluation Team composition

## VI. TEAM MEMBERS

The assessment team shall consist of an expatriate Team Leader with experience in youth development programs, an expatriate M&E specialist, an expatriate community/youth specialist and two Afghan education or youth specialists. The expatriate team members will have a minimum of ten (10) years of education management, youth and evaluation expertise in low-income countries with USAID and/or other donors. The Afghan team members shall have at least 3 years experience implementing development projects, plus very good command of English and Dari (both written and spoken). Two members of the team will be female. Team members will be required to travel to pre-determined locations throughout Afghanistan to obtain an understanding of the program's field activities.

## VII. LEVEL OF EFFORT:

A six day work week is authorized for this activity. This activity is proposed to be conducted in Kabul on or about October 30 – December 12, 2009.

LOE Days	Team Leader – Youth Education Specialist	M&E Specialization	CCN	CCN	Community/Youth Specialist
Prep work	1	1	0	0	0
Travel Days	2	2			
Afghanistan	38	38	37	37	18
Travel Days	2	2	0	0	0
Total	43	43	37	37	18

## ***APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED***

- 1. Cooperative Agreement #306-A-00-08-00527-00**
- 2. National Youth Joint Program Report, 2007**
- 3. Youth Empowerment Project Completion Report, 2006-2009**
- 4. YEP Monitoring & Evaluation Plan Final Version, May 2008**
- 5. UN-Habitat YEP Project Midterm Review Report**
- 6. UN-Habitat YEP Project Quarterly Reports**
- 7. UN-Habitat YEP Farah Province Success Stories PowerPoints**
- 8. Annual Report YEP, 2006 -2007**
- 9. YEP Annual Report, 2007-2008**
- 10. YEP Training Program Manuals: Module 1-9**
- 11. YEP Training Modules Handouts: Module 1-9**
- 12. YEP Project Description Section: B, 306-A-00-06-00527-00**
- 13. PowerPoint Presentation on Situation of Afghan Youth, UNICEF, UN-HABITAT and ACSF**
- 14. Afghanistan's National Solidarity Program (NSP): Overview and Challenges**

### APPENDIX 3: INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES CONTACTED

Name	Title	Affiliation	Address	Contact Information
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Bibi Aysha	Former YEP Female Coordinator	UN-HABITAT	Kandahar	Mobile: 0797 558 005
Abdullqadie Patyall	Former YEP Male Coordinator	UN-HABITAT	Kandahar	

**APPENDIX 4: SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS WITH LYCS**

Province	Date	Community	Serial No of LYCs	Type of Group	S. No. CDCs	Time	
Bamyan	Nov 8, 2009	Sayed Abad	1	Female LYCs		9:00 – 10:30 am	
			2	Male LYC			
				Female CDC	1	10:30 – 11:10 am	
				Male CDC	2		
		Hyder Abad	3	Female LYC		11:10 – 12:30 pm	
			4	Male LYC			
	Shashpool	5	Female LYC		1:30 – 2:30 pm		
		6	Male LYC				
			Male CDC	3	2:40 – 3:15 pm		
			Nov 9, 2009	Bamsaray	7	Female LYC	
	8	Male LYC					
	Sang Sorakh	9	Female LYC		1:30 – 2:30 pm		
		10	Male LYC				
	Nov 10, 2009	Molaghulam	11	Female LYC		9:00 – 10:15 am	
Male CDC			4				
12			Male LYC				10:15 – 11:00 am
Female CDC			5				
<b>Bamyan Province TOTALS</b>			<b>6 Female LYCs 6 Male LYCs</b>		<b>2 Female CDCs 3 Male CDCs</b>		
Balkh	Nov 15, 2009	Etifaq-e-Ali Sina	1	Male LYC		2:00 - 3:30 pm	
			2	Female LYC			
	Nov 16, 2009	Kar Malik	3	Male LYC		9:20 - 11:00 am	
			4	Male LYC			
		Dehdadi	Male CDC	1	1:00-2:00pm		
			5	Female LYC		10:00 – 11:30am	
		6	Male LYC				
		Ulmarab Ha	7	Female LYC		3:00-4:00 pm	
8	Male LYC						
<b>Balkh Province TOTALS</b>			<b>3 Female LYCs<sup>6</sup> 5 Male LYCs</b>		<b>1 Male CDC</b>		
Kabul	Nov 23, 2009	Parachi, Paghman Main Bazaar	1	Male LYC		10:30 – 11:30 am	
			2	Male LYC			
	Nov 24, 2009	Chahar Rahi Qambar	3	Male LYC		10:00 – 11:30 am	
			4	Male LYC			
	Chaltan				10:30 – 12:00 pm		

<sup>6</sup> The evaluation team learned of two male LYCs with unsuccessful grant projects and decided to prioritize visiting those two LYCs. Therefore, the team was unable to interview four female LYCs in Balkh.

	Dec 2, 2009	Maltani	5	Female LYC		1:30 – 3:00 pm
		Najaraha	6	Female LYC		
		Qala Baba Noor	7	Female LYC		
	Dec 3, 2009	Chara-e-Qamber	8	Female LYC		10:40 – 11:50 am
<b>Kabul City TOTALS</b>			<b>4 Male LYCs 4 Female LYCs</b>			
Nagahar	Dec 5, 2009	Camp Tow	1	Female LYC		3:00 – 4:30 pm
			2	Male LYC		
	Dec 6, 2009	Gowmish Bel	3	Male LYC		10:30am–12:00pm
			4	Female LYC		
		Toap Ghondi	5	Male LYC		2:00 – 3:30 pm
			6	Female LYC		
	Dec 7, 2009	Tameerat	7	Male LYC		9:30 – 11:00 am
			8	Female LYC		
<b>Nagahar Province TOTALS</b>			<b>4 Male LYCs 4 Female LYCs</b>			
Kandahar	Dec 7, 2009	District 6	1	Male LYC		11:00am – 1:00 pm
		Mirwais Meena	2	Male LYC		4:00 – 5:00 pm
<b>Kandahar Province TOTALS</b>			<b>2 Male LYCs</b>			

## ***APPENDIX 5: LIST OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS***

- 1. LYC Members' Interview Guide**
- 2. CDC Members' Interview Guide**
- 3. UN-Habitat YEP Kabul / Provincial Coordinator Interview Guide**
- 4. UN-Habitat YEP Training Manager Interview Guide**
- 5. MoICY Representatives' Interview Guide**
- 6. INGO / Other Youth Organization Interview Guide**
- 7. LYC Member Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (English version)**

## 1. LYC Members' Interview Guide

### Introduction

Thank you for coming to participate in this group interview. My (our) name is(are) \_\_\_\_\_ and I am from the U.S. I(we )have come here to ask you about the Youth Empowerment Project, particularly about the grant provided for the LYC activity. First, I would like each of you to fill out a short questionnaire, which has some questions about the YEP grant activity. Second, I would like to ask some questions to the group and ask you to give your answers aloud. There are no right or wrong answers. I want you to be open and honest in expressing your opinions. I am going to write down what you say, because I might forget otherwise. But, even while you see me writing, I am listening to what you are saying. So, please tell me your opinions so that I know whether this program works well and what should be done to improve it. Does anyone have any questions? [Give them the survey questionnaire, explain instructions and go through questions one at a time. After all questionnaires are collected, begin group interview.]

1. Would any of you like to tell me about the activity that has been implemented by your Local Youth Council with a grant from the Youth Empowerment Project? What are the objectives of your grant project? Who participates in (or uses) the project?
2. Why did your LYC choose this particular activity for a grant? Were other activities also considered? If other suggestions, what were they? Why were those other suggestions not chosen? Did the LYC reject (or decide not to pursue) any ideas because of cultural or social restrictions?
3. By what process did your LYC select this particular activity? Did everyone in the LYC agree with this choice?
4. Has your grant project achieved its objectives? If not, why not? What were the limitations or obstacles?
5. Speaking for yourself, how has your life been affected by participating in the grant activity? Can you give an example of what you learned or how you benefited from the project?
6. Do you think the grant activity has affected the lives of other community members besides you? If yes, in what ways? How many people in the community participated? Are there any records of their participation (for example, library users)?
7. Is the grant project still going on? If yes, does it continue as planned? Did you get any other funding, or is the activity continuing without external support?

8. Do you think the training modules provided by the Youth Empowerment Program gave you the necessary knowledge and skills to do this grant project effectively? Please explain. What would improve the training? What else is needed?
9. (In **Kabul**, where there are no CDCs) Did the LYC have any contact with elders in this neighborhood or community? If yes, who were they, and what was your relationship with them? Did they support your grant project?) Did the Community Development Council (CDC) and other elders support your YEP grant activity? Have there been any barriers within the community to your choice of activity or to your efforts to implement that activity? If yes, what were those barriers?
10. Did the YEP grant project suggest any other kind of activity that you, as a group, could do, or want, to do in the future? By project, I mean an activity that could benefit the community or might provide employment or income to your group? If yes, please explain your ideas.
11. Who coordinated the implementation of the grant project? Who managed the money from the grant? Was there any controversy or problem about how the money would be managed? How were these leaders chosen? Was there any problem or controversy about who was in charge or how the project would be managed?
12. Finally, was there anything at all that made you uncomfortable about the grant program, the way the grant money was spent in your community, or the UN-Habitat's role? (If female LYC) Did you feel any concerns about attending the meetings of the LYC or choosing your grant project? If yes, please explain.

Other areas to probe, depending on the nature of the LYC and the particular path of the discussion:

- Process of obtaining, safe-keeping grant funds, authorizing expenditures, obtaining receipts for expenditures, reporting of expenditures to Provincial UN-Habitat, etc.
- Role of, relationship with, the Community Development Council in choosing, implementing and managing the grant-funded project (or self-initiated projects).
- (If females) Choice of future grant project, why funds were turned over to the male LYC (joint projects), how much control they had over funds.

## 2. CDC Members' Interview Guide

### Introduction

Thank you for meeting with us regarding the Youth Empowerment Project and the Local Youth Councils in your community. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_. We are part of a team hired to evaluate the Youth Empowerment Project that was implemented from 2007-2009 by UN-Habitat with funds from USAID. In particular, we are interested in the grant projects implemented by male and female LYCs in your community. We would like to ask you some questions to learn about your perspective of the YEP and their grant projects. I hope you won't mind if we take careful notes of what you say during the meeting so that we don't forget any of your important input. We will not use your name or quote you personally in our report. We want you to be as honest as you can in telling us your views. Our goals are to learn how well the grant program worked and how it might be improved. First, do you have any questions for us about the purpose of our team or this evaluation?

Our first questions have to do with your knowledge of the YEP grant program.

1. **General.** How aware are you of the activities of both the male and female LYCs here?
  - a. What projects have the LYCs done here for the community or themselves?
  - b. Are you aware of the grants the male and female LYCs received from the YEP to implement their planned activities?
  
2. **Consultation and Coordination.** We would now like to ask you about any relationship you or your group had with these LYC projects.
  - a. Did the LYC consult with you at all when they were deciding what kind of project to undertake? If yes, what did you tell them? If no, do you know why they did not consult you, and do you think they should have consulted you?
  - b. What did you and your group think about the projects selected by the LYCs? Did you communicate your views to the LYC? If yes, how did they react?
  - c. In your opinion, did both the male and female LYCs select activities that are useful and positive for the LYC and for the community? Please explain. Did female and male LYCs select different kind of projects? Why do you think male and female LYCs chose different kinds of projects? Did any female groups want to select an activity not considered appropriate for women?
  - d. Did the LYCs involve you or your group in the application, development and management of their grant activity?
  - e. Please describe your involvement through the grant project.
  - f. Were you kept informed of progress on the activity?
  - g. Did the LYCs cooperate with any other youth organizations, such as youth associations, or programs and institutions run by the government or started by other donors?
  - h. Did male and female LYCs get equal support from community leaders? Did female groups have any extra challenges in getting this support?
  
3. **Implementation.** Now, we would like to know about the actual development of the project.
  - a. In your opinion, how well have the male and female LYCs implemented their respective grant projects? If not well, what could have gone better?

- b. Have these grant activities continued to function? If no, why not? What remains?
  - c. Do you think that the UN-Habitat staff provided them with sufficient training, funds, and support to make their grant activities a success? If no, what was missing?
  - d. (If applicable) How would you explain any differences between the successes of the female and male LYCs' projects?
4. **Impact.** Lastly, we would like to ask you about the difference, if any, these projects have made.
- a. In your opinion, how have these projects affected the members of the LYCs?
  - b. How have these projects affected other community members who had some connection to the projects (such as students in literacy classes)?
  - c. Have the grant activities affected the relationship of youth, both the LYC members and other youth, to the conditions and welfare of the community? If yes, please explain.
  - d. What needs of young people remain unaddressed in this community?
  - e. Can the LYCs play any role in addressing these continued problems? If yes, how? If no, what type of structure would work better?
  - f. What kind of external assistance could best make a difference in addressing these youth needs and problems?
  - g. Do female youth face specific challenges that require different interventions than for males? What are your recommendations for supportive programs or mechanisms?

### 3. UN-Habitat YEP Kabul / Provincial Coordinator Interview Guide

#### Introduction

Thank you for meeting with us regarding the UN-Habitat Youth Empowerment Project and Local Youth Councils. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_. We are part of a team hired to evaluate the Youth Empowerment Project that was implemented from 2007-2009 with funds from USAID. In particular, we are interested in the grant projects implemented by male and female LYCs in your province. We would like to ask some questions to learn about your perspective of the YEP and the grant projects. I hope you won't mind if we take careful notes of what you say during the meeting so that we don't forget any of your important input. We will not use your name or quote you personally in our reports. Our goals are to learn whether this program worked well and what are your recommendations for improvement. First, do you have any questions for us about the purpose of our team or this evaluation?

1. **Grant Projects.** Could you tell us about the LYCs and the grant projects that were implemented in this province? [Ask in advance for preparation of an overview presentation, if possible.]
  - a. Assuming that UN-Habitat's training on the grants was the first step in the grant program, does your office have records of the number of LYC members from the various communities who attended each training module? Did all female and male LYC members attend all training? Did they have equal access to training resources?
  - b. How many of the LYCs actually submitted a proposal for a grant and how many implemented a grant project? Were there equal for female and male LYCs?
  - c. Could you describe some of the grant activities that were implemented?
  - d. How many of those grant activities were –successful,“ in your opinion? Were female and male LYCs equally successful?
  - e. Although the program is officially closed, do you know how many of these grant activities are still functioning? Did any of them receive follow-up funding from another source? Did both female and male LYCs receive such funding?
2. **Coordination.**
  - a. Were LYCs registered with the Ministry of ICY in any way?
  - b. Did the LYCs coordinate or connect with any other agencies, offices, or groups to implement their grant projects (including the CDCs)?
  - c. Was there any formal coordination between LYCs and these organizations? How about with youth associations or youth groups started by other donor organizations?
3. **Grant Process.**
  - a. How did LYCs prioritize / decide what grant project to implement? Was anyone else consulted? Did male and female LYCs select different kinds of projects? Why do you think male and female LYCs chose different kinds of projects? Did any female groups want to select an activity not considered appropriate for women? If yes, how did you handle the situation?
  - b. Did male and female LYCs get equal support from CDCs and other community leaders? Did female groups have any extra challenges in getting this support?
  - c. How did the LYCs design the specific details of their grant projects? Again, was anyone else consulted?
  - d. How did the LYCs implement and manage their grant projects?

**4. Gender.**

- a. Does UN-Habitat have a gender focal person in Kabul and/or this province? Was s/he involved in this program, and how?
- b. Please describe the gender aspects of the YEP and LYC grant projects. How did the program reflect attention to gender in each aspect? (E.g., Were male and female LYCs trained separately? How was training for male and female LYCs different? Were there female trainers?)

**5. Monitoring.**

- a. Who in the provincial UN-Habitat team monitored the LYC grant activities?
- b. How did this monitoring take place? What records were kept?
- c. Did UN-Habitat databases for monitoring etc take account of gender?
- d. Did anyone from the Provincial MOICY also monitor the grant activities?

**6. Challenges.** What were the challenges at each stage of the YEP grant cycle, relating to the following?

- a. Training about the grant and its requirements
- b. Applications for grants
- c. Implementation or management of grant-funded projects
- d. Financial management
- e. Monitoring of results
- f. Reporting of results
- g. Challenges specific to female LYCs?

**7. Impact.**

- a. What were the outcomes of the grant program for the youth who implemented the projects and/or for the communities where they were implemented?
- b. Did anyone try to measure the outcomes? Are there any written reports?
- c. Was there a difference in the outcomes of male and female LYCs' grant projects? What kind of differences?

**8. Future.**

- a. From your perspective, were these grant activities a good use of your agency's time and USAID's resources?
- b. Are there other more important priorities that should be focused on, or do the activities of YEP deserve continued support?
- c. What obstacles remain to effectively address challenges facing Afghan youth?
- d. Do female youth face specific challenges that require different interventions than for males? What are your recommendations for supportive programs or mechanisms?

## 4. UN-Habitat YEP Training Manager Interview Guide

### Introduction

Thank you for meeting with us regarding the UN-Habitat Youth Empowerment Project and Local Youth Councils. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_. We are part of a team hired to evaluate the Youth Empowerment Project that was implemented from 2007-2009 with funds from USAID. In particular, we are interested in the grant projects implemented by male and female LYCs in your province. We would like to ask some questions to learn about your perspective of the YEP and the grant projects. I hope you won't mind if we take careful notes of what you say during the meeting so that we don't forget any of your important input. We will not use your name or quote you personally in our reports. Our goals are to learn whether this program worked well and what are your recommendations for improvement. First, do you have any questions for us about the purpose of our team or this evaluation?

1. **Your Role.** Could you tell us about your role in the YEP training process?
  - a. How were you selected as a trainer? What was your previous experience?
  - b. Were you involved in developing the training materials?
  - c. Did you lead the Training of Trainers (ToTs) for the LYCs? Lead other training sessions? Were you involved in the refresher trainings?
  - d. Were you a trainer for the sessions related to designing, applying for, and implementing the grants?
  
2. **Description of the Training.**
  - a. How many male and female LYC members did you train from how many LYCs? (Did you report this data to UN-Habitat?) Were male and female LYCs trained separately? Were there any differences in training for male and female LYCs? Did male and female LYC members participate in training equally?
  - b. Were there any representatives from the Directorate of Youth in your trainings?
  - c. How many other trainers worked with you during each session? How many female trainers were there in this province?
  
3. **Quality of Training Materials.**
  - a. What is your opinion of the training materials provided by UN-Habitat, especially related to the grant projects? Did materials take gender issues into account? How?
  - b. Would you recommend any changes to improve these materials?
  - c. Do you have a copy of those training materials that we could see?
  
3. **Quality of Training and its Application.**
  - a. How were you prepared by UN-Habitat to train the LYC members? What is your opinion of that preparation process?
  - b. Did anyone from UN-Habitat or the Directorate of Youth monitor the training sessions? What did their evaluations say?
  - c. Did participants fill out evaluation forms to give their opinion about the quality of the trainings? What did those evaluations say?
  - d. What is your opinion of the quality of the training sessions (by you and other trainers)? Did you have enough time, too much time? Did you have all the resources you needed?
  - e. Did female trainers participate / lead sessions equally with male trainers?
  - f. Did you get the support you needed from UN-Habitat?

g. From your knowledge, how well did the LYC participants apply the training concepts and skills to the grant projects? Please explain.

**4. Future.**

a. What suggestions do you have to improve YEP training in the future, especially the sessions about the grant projects?

b. In your opinion, do females have any special training needs that should be considered in future programs?

## 5. MoICY Representatives' Interview Guide

### Introduction

[Allow the Ministry official to begin the meeting.] Thank you for meeting with us regarding the Youth Empowerment Project and Local Youth Councils. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_. We are part of a team hired to evaluate the Youth Empowerment Project that was implemented from 2007-2009 by UN-Habitat with funds from USAID. In particular, we are interested in the grant projects implemented by male and female LYCs in your province. We would like to ask some questions to learn about your perspective and knowledge of the YEP and the grant projects. I hope you won't mind if we take careful notes of what you say during the meeting so that we don't forget any of your important input. We will not use your name or quote you personally in our report. Our goals are to learn how well the grant program worked and whether you have any recommendations for improvement. First, do you have any questions for us about the purpose of our team or this evaluation?

1. **General.** Are you aware of the YEP that was implemented in your province? What were the objectives of the YEP, from your understanding?
2. **Ministry Involvement.**
  - a. Were you or anyone in your Ministry directly or indirectly involved in the LYCs or the grant project? If so, how were you involved? Is there a Ministry gender focal point in this province? Was s/he or the Kabul-based focal point involved in the YEP?
  - b. Is the YEP (or the LYC grant activities) in any way being implemented through the Ministry? Are the LYC's registered with the Ministry?
3. **Grant Projects.** What can you tell us about the design and implementation of the grant projects that were undertaken in your province?
  - a. What kind of grant activities were implemented?
  - b. Was anyone in the Ministry consulted about the type of projects selected?
  - c. Was anyone in the Ministry consulted about the specific details of the grant projects and how the LYCs would implement and manage them?
  - d. Did male and female LYCs select different kinds of projects? Why do you think male and female LYCs chose different kinds of projects? Did any female groups want to select an activity not considered appropriate for women? Did the Ministry have any opinion about the situation?
4. **Monitoring.**
  - a. Who from the Ministry monitored the LYC grant activities?
  - b. How did this monitoring take place? What records were kept? Do those records include information disaggregated by gender?
5. **Coordination.**
  - a. Was there any coordination or connection between the YEP and other youth programs in your province?

b. Did the LYCs coordinate with any other agencies, offices, or groups (including the CDCs, Youth Associations or youth groups of other donor organizations) to implement their grant projects?

6. **Impact.**

- a. From your knowledge, did the LYC grant activities meet their objectives?
- b. What were the outcomes, positive or negative, for the youth who implemented the projects and/or for the communities where they were implemented?
- c. Were the outcomes different for male and female LYCs, and, if yes, how were they different?
- d. Did the Ministry try to measure the outcomes of the grant projects (For example, tracking the number of people who participated in grant project activities; the number of people now using skills or information they learned; the number of people still involved in the activities)?

7. **Obstacles.**

- a. From your knowledge, were any obstacles to successful implementation of the YEP grant activities?
- b. Were these obstacles different for male and female or for rural or urban LYCs?
- c. Did male and female LYCs get equal support from CDCs and other community leaders? Did female groups have any extra challenges in getting this support?

8. **Future.**

- a. In your opinion, were these grant activities the best use of your Ministry's time and USAID resources, or are there other more important priorities or programs?
- b. Do the activities of YEP deserve continued support?
- c. What obstacles remain to more effectively addressing the challenges facing Afghan youth?
- d. Do female youth face specific challenges that require different interventions than for males? What are your recommendations for supportive programs or mechanisms?

## 6. INGO / Other Youth Organization Interview Guide

### Introduction

Thank you for meeting with us regarding the UN-Habitat Youth Empowerment Project and Local Youth Councils. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_. We are part of a team hired to evaluate the Youth Empowerment Project that was implemented from 2007-2009 by UN-Habitat with funds from USAID. In particular, we are interested in the grant projects implemented by male and female LYCs in your province. We would like to ask some questions to learn about your perspective and knowledge of the YEP and the grant projects. I hope you won't mind if we take careful notes of what you say during the meeting so that we don't forget any of your important input. We will not use your name or quote you personally in our reports. Our goals are to learn whether this program worked well and what are your recommendations for improvement. First, do you have any questions for us about the purpose of our team or this evaluation?

1. **General.** Since the YEP is a project of another organization, are you aware that the YEP was implemented in this province? How did you know?
  - a. Are you aware of any details about the LYCs and the grant projects that were implemented in this province?
  - b. Was anyone from (your organization) consulted by UN-Habitat in the planning of the YEP grant program?
  - c. To your knowledge, did male and female LYCs select different kinds of projects? Why do you think male and female LYCs chose different kinds of projects? Do you know whether any female groups want to select an activity not considered appropriate for women? If yes, do you know how the situation was handled?
2. **Monitoring.**
  - a. From your knowledge, was anyone monitoring the grant activities in the communities? Do you know how this monitoring took place?
  - b. Did your organization have any role in monitoring the LYC grants? If yes, how?
3. **Coordination.**
  - a. Did the LYCs coordinate or link their grant projects with any relevant youth activities of your organization?
  - b. Was there any formal coordination mechanism, such as regular meetings? Did they involve Youth Associations or other youth groups?
4. **Impact.**
  - a. To the extent of your knowledge, what were the outcomes of the LYC grant activities for the youth who implemented the projects and/or for the communities where they were implemented? Do you know if there was a difference in the outcomes of male and female LYCs' grant projects? What kind of differences?
  - b. Were your youth organization's projects, if any, in these communities affected by the LYC grants, and, if yes, how were they affected?

**5. Future.**

- a. In your opinion, were these YEP grant activities a good use of time and donor resources or are there other more important priorities? If no, what are those other priorities?
- b. What obstacles remain to more effectively address the challenges facing Afghan youth? In your opinion, do female youth face specific challenges that require different interventions than for males? What are your recommendations for supportive programs or mechanisms?
- c. To what extent might there be a possible future connection between your organization's youth programs and the YEP grant program?

## 7. LYC Member Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (English version)

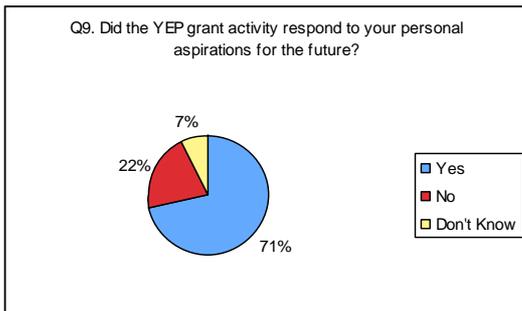
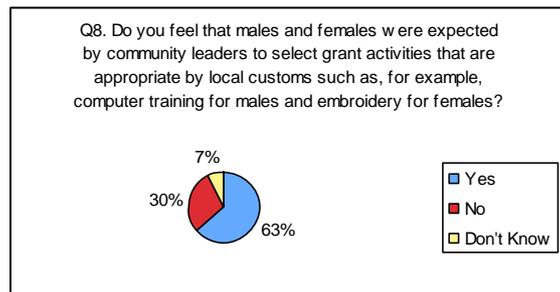
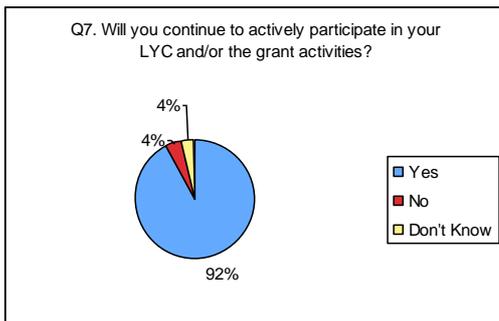
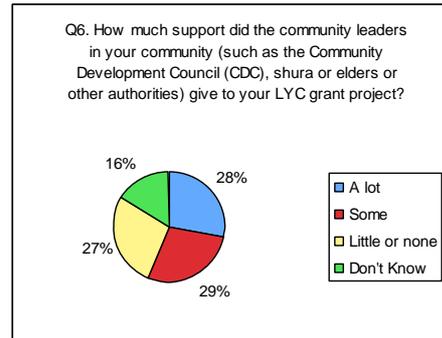
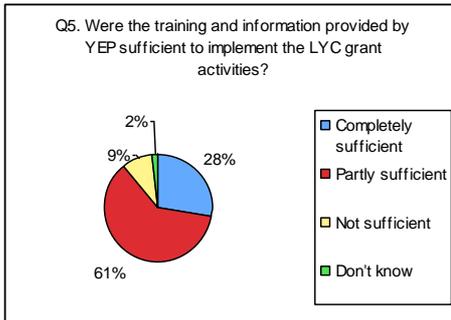
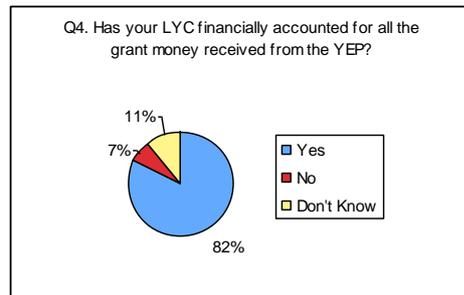
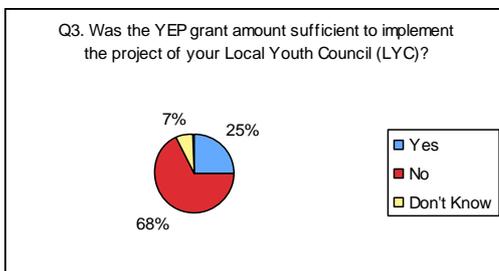
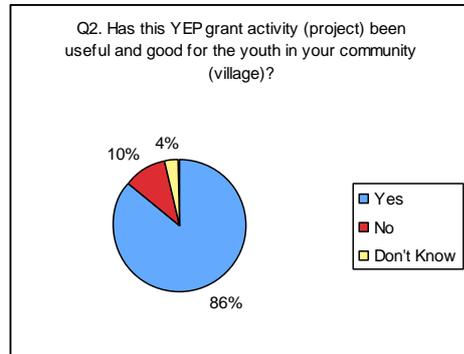
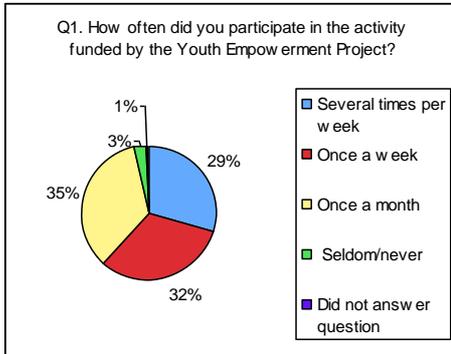
Province \_\_\_\_\_ LYC/Village \_\_\_\_\_ District Urban \_\_\_ Rural \_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ School Grade Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Sex Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

**Please select and mark only one answer for each question.**

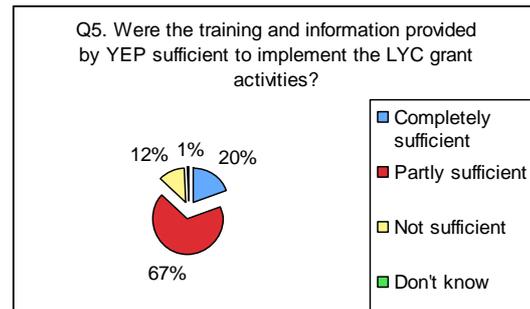
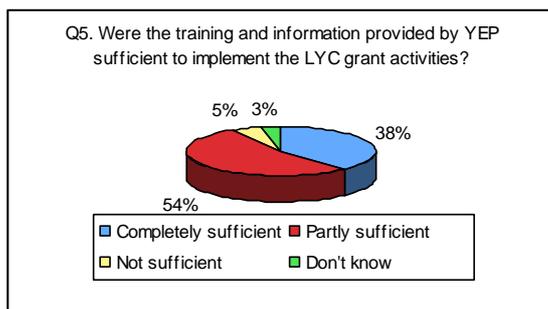
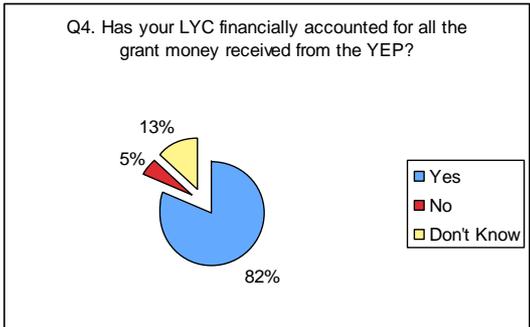
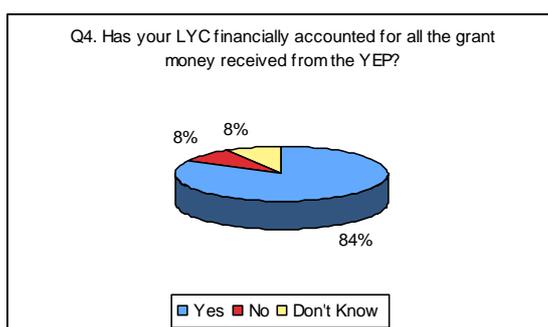
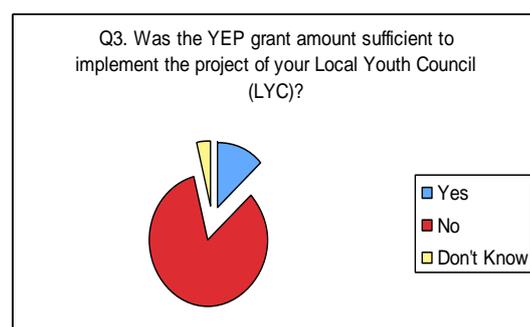
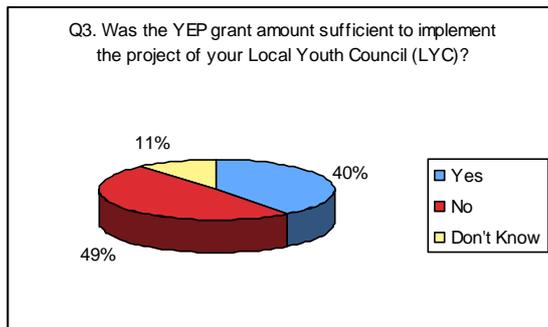
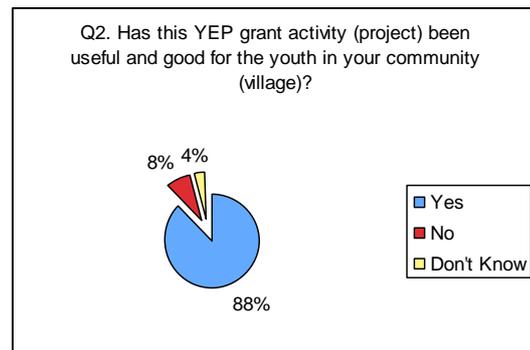
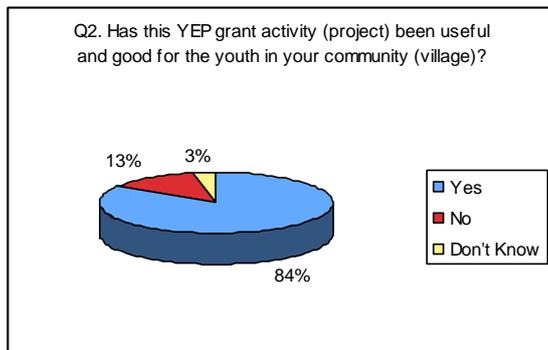
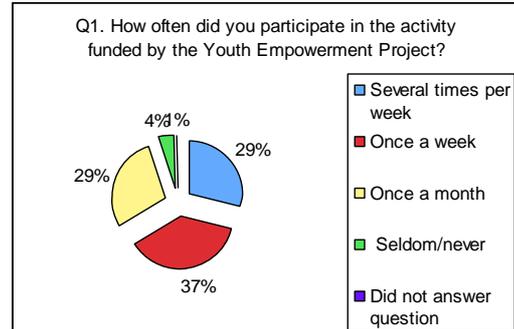
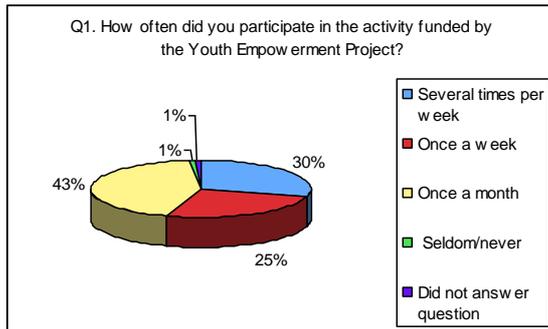
1. How often did you participate in the activity funded by the Youth Empowerment Project?  
 a. Several times per week  
 b. Once a week  
 c. Once a month  
 d. Seldom/Never
2. Has this YEP grant activity (project) been useful and good for the youth in your community (village)?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Not sure /Don't know
3. Was the YEP grant sufficient to implement the project of your Local Youth Council?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Not sure /Don't know
4. Has your LYC financially accounted for all the grant money received from the YEP?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Not sure /Don't know
5. Were the training and information provided by YEP sufficient to implement the LYC grant activities?  
 a. Completely sufficient  
 b. Partly sufficient  
 c. Not sufficient  
 d. Not sure/Don't know
6. How much support did the community leaders in your community (such as the Community Development Council, shura or elders) give to your LYC grant project?  
 a. A lot  
 b. Some  
 c. Little or none  
 d. Not sure /Don't know
7. Will you continue to actively participate in your LYC and/or the grant activities?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Not sure/ Don't know
8. Do you feel that males and females were expected by community leaders to select grant activities that are appropriate by local customs such as, for example, computer training for males and embroidery for females?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Not sure/Don't know
9. Did the YEP grant activity respond to your personal aspirations for the future?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Not sure/Don't know

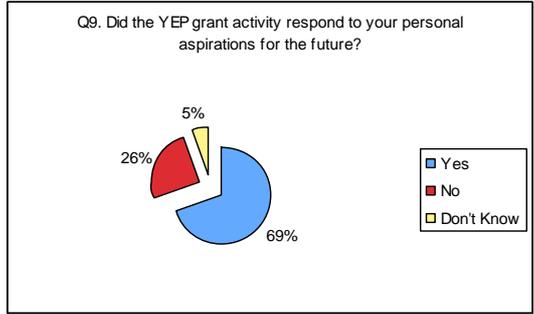
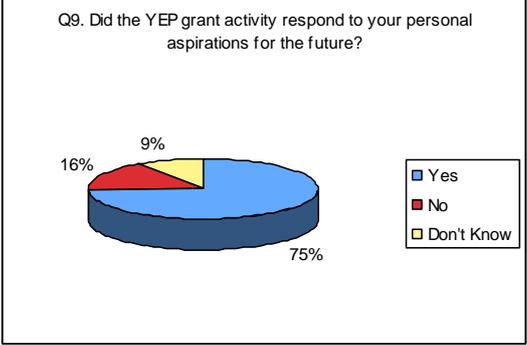
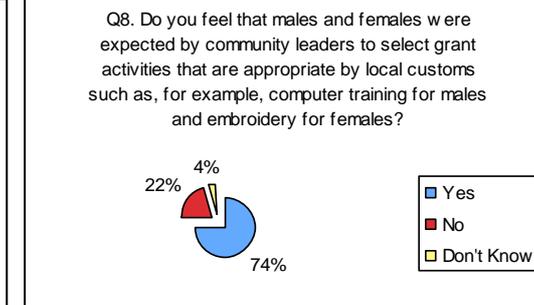
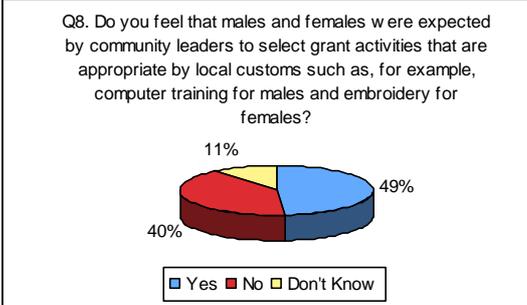
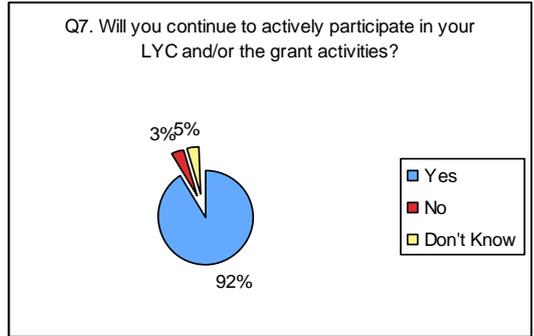
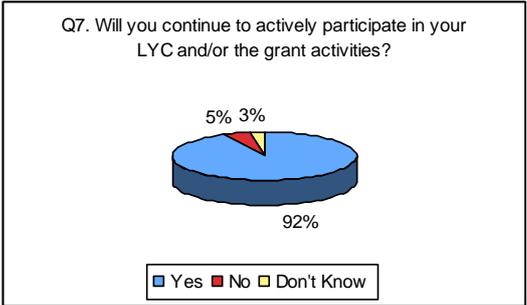
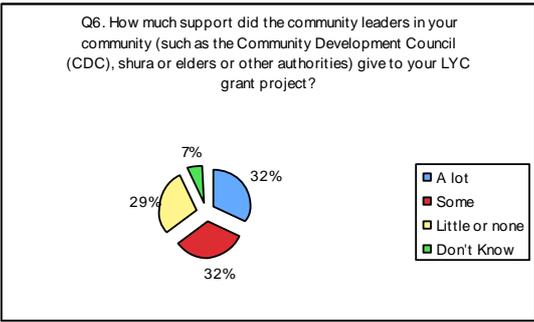
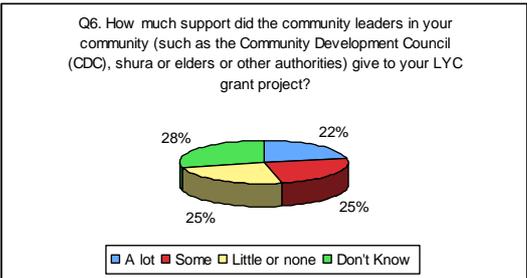
## APPENDIX 6. SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

### 6a. All Provinces



## Appendix 6b. Summary of Questionnaire Responses, Female (left) and Male (right)





## Appendix 6c. Summary of Questionnaire Responses, Urban (left) and “Rural” (right)

