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Lashkar Gah City Focus Groups Report

Helmand Province

REGIONAL AFGHAN MUNICIPALITIES
PROGRAM FOR URBAN POPULATIONS
(RAMP UP) – SOUTH

Contract Number : 306-C-00-10-00527-00



May 25, 2011

Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban
Populations (RAMP UP) - South

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Program Overview

The purpose of Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations (RAMP UP) - South is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, accountable, and gender sensitive municipal governance in targeted municipalities throughout the country. RAMP UP - South is working to: **(1)** increase the capacity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIROA) municipal officials; **(2)** improve the delivery of municipal services to citizens in target municipalities; and **(3)** increase municipal capacity to enable, support, and sustain economic growth. As a result of RAMP UP - South, Afghan citizens will receive better services, understand the responsibilities of municipal leaders, play an active role in the municipal decision-making process, and see local governance structures as legitimate. The main GIROA counterpart for RAMP UP - South is the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). RAMP UP - South is supporting IDLG and the relevant sub-national entities (i.e., mayors and municipal officials) to increase institutional capacity to implement policy, provide resources that allow municipalities to deliver services, and increase revenue. All RAMP UP - South activities support the GIROA by building institutional capacity and systems within the Afghan Government.

RAMP UP – South Research Program

RAMP UP - South has begun a series of focus groups and polls across the southern cities of Afghanistan to collect both quantifiable and qualifiable data on municipal issues. The focus group results provide guidance in the drafting of knowledge, attitude, and perception research in six southern cities, further supporting municipal agendas and proposals.

The research provides data points that apply to municipal project design, service improvements, and income generation as well as strategic communications efforts targeted at specific populations. Many of the survey questions that RAMP UP - South asked had not been included in previous research; in many cases, public response will help the municipal leadership in their decision-making.

The focus groups probed reactions to municipal proposals. The results will assist in message creation and provide an external scorecard for the municipality. Without focus groups and polls, the municipal public relations team would have had to make their best guess in identifying citizen priorities. As an external scorecard for the municipalities and the programs that support them, the focus groups and surveys not only benchmarked local progress, but also gave voice to citizen satisfaction concerning municipal services, level of access to decision-makers, and priorities in local services.

The results of this public opinion research will be applied to program design and public relations. The results will be shared with mayors' relevant municipal staff and partners to ensure that the findings can refine program design and increase staff understanding of citizen viewpoints.

The final results are actionable across all municipal departments. The mayor, municipal leaders, and appropriate staff will be briefed and assisted by program staff in incorporating key findings into their work.

About Lashkar Gah Focus Groups

Wise Strategic Communication (WSC), sub-contracted by Chemonics International, conducted fieldwork to execute 15 focus groups in Lashkar Gah from April 17th to May 14th, 2011. The focus groups are a qualitative part of an assessment project that also includes a quantitative survey with a sample size of 1,100 respondents. Each focus group discussion lasted from one-and-a-half to two hours with six to ten participants from different social strata.

The following table illustrates the breakdown of the 15 focus groups:

Participants of Focus Group	Number of Focus Groups	Description
Religious Leaders	2	Mullahs and Islamic Scholars
Young Men	2	Young Adult Male Age 18 to 35
Older Men	2	Older Men Age 36 to 65
Young Women	2	Young Adult Female Age 18 to 35
Older Women	2	Older Women Age 36 to 65
Business Managers	3	Business Owners and Managers
Male Teenagers	1	Male Students Age 15 to 18
Female Teenagers	1	Female Students Age 15 to 18
Total	15	

WSC conducted training sessions for eight local facilitators, including six males and two females, for a week prior to fieldwork. To be field-qualified, all facilitators were required to conduct pilot focus groups. WSC's senior trainers reviewed each pilot transcript to assess the capability of facilitators before assigning them actual fieldwork assignments.

With assistance from local elders and teachers, senior trainers and a provincial supervisor recruited participants for each focus group. WSC's senior research officer monitored each focus group session and reviewed transcripts from each focus group to strengthen quality control. WSC hired specialists to translate the transcripts into English for further analysis. WSC's QC officers reviewed all transcripts and checked them against the voice recordings of each focus group.

Dr. Min Zaw Oo, Director of Research, Mr. Sayed Akhtar Sadat, Senior Research Officer, and Dr. Silvia Susnjic, Senior Analyst, were responsible, accordingly for the research design, fieldwork management, and data analysis that comprise this report.

Executive Summary

- Lashkar Gah citizen participants are politically interested. They engaged in lively conversation and open debates. Unlike Kandahar participants, Lashkar Gah residents felt free to discuss sensitive topics like corruption and were less guarded with their opinions on political institutions and figures. This reflects a level of free speech that does not currently exist everywhere in Afghanistan.
- People in Lashkar Gah city felt positive about municipal efforts to construct infrastructure including roads and sewage drains. Lashkar Gah residents also described a broader range of improvements and positive results than focus group participants from other southern cities, including more municipal projects and citizen's observation of planted trees, education programs, improved parks and overall cleanliness. **Citizens are optimistic, aspirational and see progress over the last year. They want more improvements.**

Woman, 16, District 2 “We witnessed a lot of improvements and hope to see more and more in the future.”

- Participants acknowledged an increased municipal effort in ensuring the well-being and cleanliness of the city. They said that the efforts are demonstrated by the municipality's initiative to plant saplings and take care of the existing trees throughout the city. Some participants mentioned the reconstruction of schools and clinics to be vital improvements in the social spheres in the city, and this was mentioned as a positive development.
- **The government as a generic category gets both the credit for the positive and the blame for the negative in the city. Like citizens across the country, those in Lashkar Gah want more services and improvements. Government is seen as the main driver here for change rather than international donors or NGOs.**
- Several issues elicited strong reactions in the discussions. These issues provide a strong narrative and should be considered important to address through reform and communications efforts: 1) corruption and anger towards the rich who have government access and benefits, 2) contractors who benefit from inside dealings and do not provide quality construction work, 3) careless or arrogant drivers who cause traffic accidents, and the police who take bribes to ignore them, 4) unfair land sales or registration transactions and bribery at the expense of poor families.
- Road issues are not just about pavement. Across all groups, participants voiced their concern with the state of the roads, which includes the quality of construction, the level of dust, and traffic problems. Residents expressed frustration in conditions for safely crossing the streets and the lack of speed limits on unpaved roads.
- Residents identified the lack of licensed or trained drivers as the main causes of traffic problems. The participants agreed that drivers should hold legal driver's licenses and that the traffic department should assist people in getting licenses and stop accepting bribes for licenses.
- A critical area of concern for the citizens of Lashkar Gah is the lack of cleanliness and the garbage residues in sewage drains. Although participants generally agreed that the cleanliness of the city has

improved, the lack of garbage cans, public latrines, and unclean sewage gutters are public health concerns.

- Issues of garbage collection and disposal were widely discussed in all of the groups. The participants believe that neighbors should be required to dispose of their garbage in designated areas. The participants also agreed that the municipality needs to provide people with garbage containers. The participants were pleased by viewing pictures of the garbage cans that the city will be providing, although some participants worried that the size of the cans was too small for their family.
- There were mixed responses about who should be responsible for hiring and paying the garbage collectors. Some felt the neighborhood should select the collector and others wanted the city to be responsible. Views on payment for garbage pick-up were mixed with some participants stating that city taxes should be used. Other participants were supportive of citizens making a small payment to the collector. In all groups, there were concerns about the poor being asked for something they cannot afford.
- Access to water seems to be dictated by residential neighborhoods. Some households use only one source of water for all purposes while others have access to as many as three different sources of water for different purposes. Water treatment done through chlorine, boiling or using deep wells is common.
- According to the participants, sewage problems are tied to garbage issues and are related to the health and well-being of the population. Respondents expressed opinions that additional sewage drains should be built and existing sewage drains should be cleaned in order to relieve the sewage problems.
- There was a direct tie to water and sewage being a source of illness in the city. All participants cited examples of sick family members needing to go to the doctor in major Afghan cities or in Pakistan. In Lashkar Gah there are issues with finding treatment for stomach problems. Many cited that the expertise, equipment and medicine are not available.
- The strongest motivation for citizens to pay taxes is the expectation that basic services will be provided through the tax revenue. Although the participants did not seem to have a problem with paying taxes in principle, they said that, at this time, the services they receive are not adequate to justify their tax payments. Tax payment directly tied to garbage pick-up was the most cited reason to pay taxes.
- The groups reported that the mayor and the municipality should make themselves more accessible to the public. There is a feeling that the Mayor is only interested in meeting with the rich, businessmen, and those with family connections. Security surrounding the municipal buildings, the inability to set up an appointment with the leader or staff, and the request for bribes are the main obstacles to citizen access.
- Older male participants, who are the household members responsible for land registration, stated that the major problem in land registration consists of non-responsive government employees and bribes for paperwork or expedited services.

- Many participants reported a high level of graft among the Mayor, District Administrators, municipal workers, and police officers. Virtually all participants demonstrated a similar impression regarding the level of graft in the city, regardless of their personal level of contact—if any—with municipal officials. Experience with municipal officials is shared within social circles.
- The business community expressed interest in receiving training from the municipality on how to effectively carry out business affairs. Business managers would like to receive training programs related to tax law in Afghanistan, government business law, proposal writing, and financial management.
- Religious leaders agreed that the city has rapidly improved and that there are now more services and resources in neighborhoods, but less for the mosques. Religious leaders felt that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent on building the city, but nobody has provided them with money needed for improving and rebuilding the mosques.
- The women's groups overwhelmingly welcomed the idea of having a women's municipality office or of the municipality hiring women to address women's concerns. All of the women's groups believe that such an office would help resolve women's issues since they will not visit the municipality office unless there is women's office.
- Youth and women cited parks and recreation as positive improvements that resulted in an improved impression of the municipality's performance. Women cited the family park as somewhere they go once a week. They cited a desire to have a variety of services in the park including internet, markets, salons, and other services.

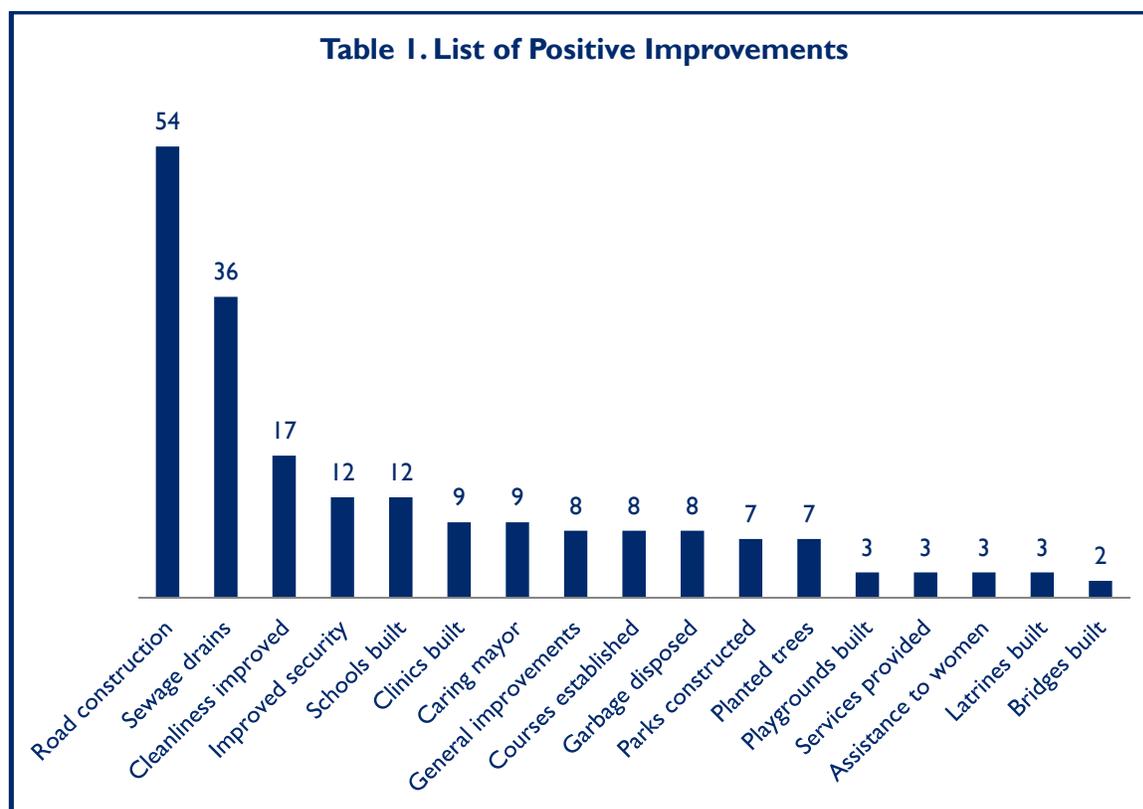
Focus Group Findings and Narrative

I. Positive Issues

The city of Lashkar Gah has been under pressure to provide inhabitants with the standard of services reflective of a development-minded Afghanistan. The municipality has put more effort in providing inhabitants with basic services. Those positive efforts were reflected in the participants' conversations.

When the participants were asked to think about the quality of life in Lashkar Gah, a few themes framed their narratives. As noted on page five of this report, the general satisfaction of the participants revolved around the positive efforts made by the government in ensuring that infrastructure construction took place in a timely manner. The Mayor has been applauded for some of the most notable developments presented in Figure I.

Tribal Elder, District I “The (municipal) Mayor has done a lot for this province as he has been able to pave and extend the roads. He has also constructed the latrine for the public use and has provided satisfactory facilities for the people of this (municipal) district.”



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the issues mentioned by the focus group participants.

As indicated in Figure 1, participants cited the construction of roads and the building of the sewage drains as major improvements. Upkeep is important, participants said, because infrastructure is more susceptible to damage during the heavy rains. The reconstruction of schools and clinics is considered to be a vital improvement in the social spheres of the city. Participants stated that there seems to be increased municipal effort in ensuring the well-being and cleanliness of the city, as demonstrated by the initiative to plant saplings and maintain the existing trees.

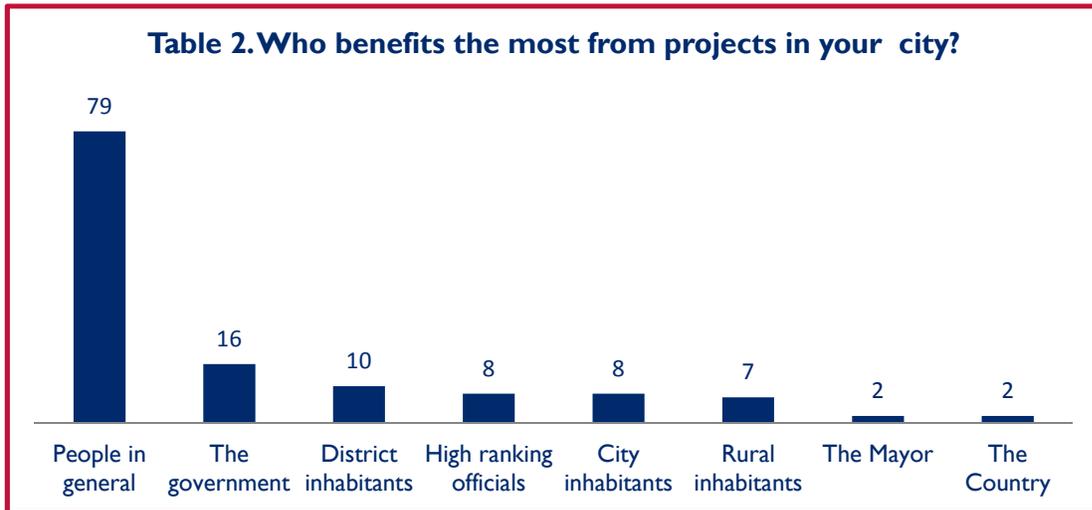
Male, 29, District 1 *“The roads have been asphalted and the diseases have been prevented. This means that there is not much dust and pollution in the city. The young trees have been planted along with wide and lengthy paths and way, which helped to add beauty to the face of our city.”*

The majority of the businessmen felt that the security of the city has increased in comparison to the previous year. Women frequently voiced their satisfaction with the opportunities provided for them by the mayor, as a student in District 1 commented:

Student, District 1 *“A lot of improvements have been achieved in comparison to last year. The mayor is a nice person. The female courses have been developed. In addition, more courses have been established to support the fight of illiteracy and ensure a greater degree of literacy.”*

When the participants were asked to identify the entities that will benefit the most from the positive changes, a consensus was reached within all groups that all citizens will benefit. Figure 2 illustrates the array of responses provided to this question. Most participants agreed that the general public would most enjoy such improvements. Participants also mentioned that such positive changes would affect the people visiting neighborhoods and simultaneously positively impact the population of the city. A Mullah from District 4 illustrated the manner in which these improvements would benefit society as a whole by stating:

Mullah, District 4 *“The benefit will go not only to the residents of this city and the province, but to all of the country. For example, if a school is built for the children then it will benefit all the country’s population.”*



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the entities that benefit the most from the new developments in the city.

When participants were asked to identify the entities responsible for the improvements in the city, they unanimously indicated that the government was responsible. In addition, the youth thought the improvements would increase the beauty of their city. Both the businessmen and the older women deemed the improvements beneficial to people’s health and well-being.

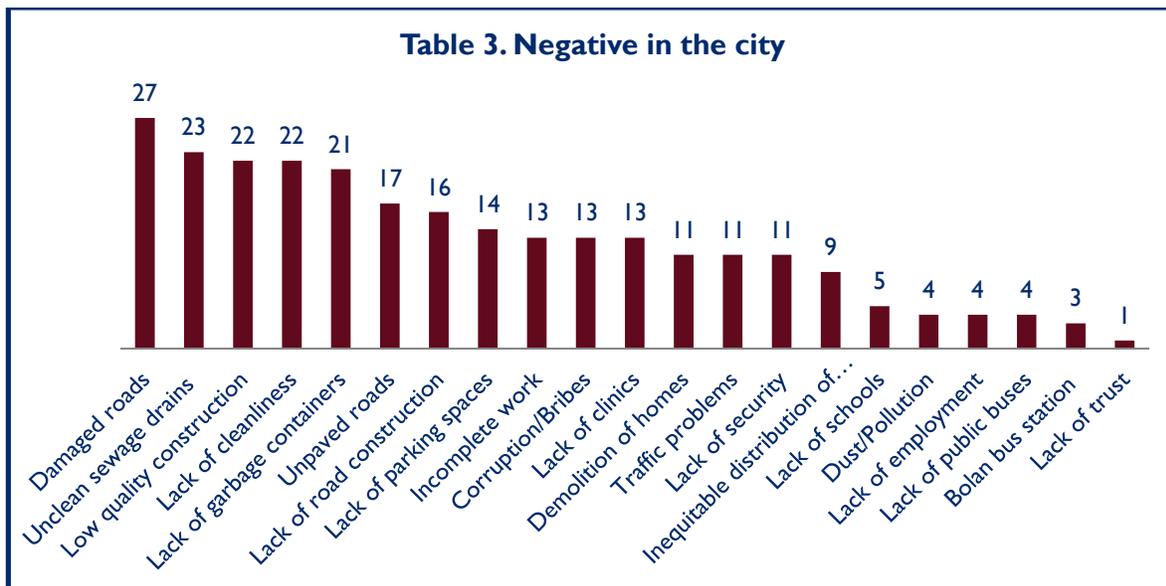
Car Salesman, Lashkar Gah Bazaar “A lot has been done. The parks have been built, the atmosphere has been purified, and that affects the people’s health in a positive way. Therefore, nobody will get ill as a result of these improvements.”

II. Negative Issues

While there seems to be a sense of general improvement in the services rendered in Lashkar Gah, there is still a desire to see increased city services and improvements, mostly for the state of the roads, low quality of infrastructure, unclean sewage drains, and the general lack of cleanliness.

Shopkeeper, 20, District 3 “The construction work has been completed for schools, roads and sewage drains, but the work completed is of low quality because these structures will be damaged in a period of one year. As a result we demand the municipality to do this work with a lot of care and in an appropriate manner.”

The participants listed the problems illustrated in Figure 3 as those they would like addressed and expeditiously resolved by government officials.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the issues mentioned by the focus group participants.

Concern for the quality and the state of the roads was voiced across all groups. The inability to safely cross the streets and the lack of speed limits on unpaved roads are concerns, particularly during the winter season where the combination of slippery, unfinished roads and careless drivers creates a danger to pedestrians.

The participants blamed the government for awarding contracts based on political connections instead of merit and commitment to construction standards. The participants see the linkage between government contractors, corruption and poor quality construction

Businessman, 23, Toor Tang *“The process should be cheap. The corruption and bribe should be avoided. The process is to be performed and completed in a proper manner.”*

Shopkeeper, 24, Kart e Lagan *“The contract should be forwarded to someone who would be capable of performing the contract terms properly. It should be clear at the beginning of the contact whether the contractor can build the road with the best quality materials or not.”*

A vital area of concern for the citizens of Lashkar Gah is the lack of cleanliness and the garbage residues found in the sewage drains. Although the general consensus of the participants was that the cleanliness of the city had improved, the lack of garbage cans and public latrines, as well as the unclean sewage gutters caused public health concerns. The groups were divided in assigning responsibility for the issues of garbage collection and general city cleanliness. One set of participants thought that it was the responsibility of each individual to ensure the proper garbage collection and disposal including the upkeep of the general cleanliness of the city. Others wanted help from the government in matters relating to general cleanliness.

Additional issues mentioned by the participants, listed below from most to least important, included:

A) Corruption. Corruption was mentioned several times as a detrimental issue that needs to be addressed. There seemed to be a general atmosphere of distrust when dealing with the municipality. Many participants had expressed concerns with being co-opted into offering a bribe every time they wanted to solve a problem or to get anything accomplished with the Mayor or the municipal authorities.

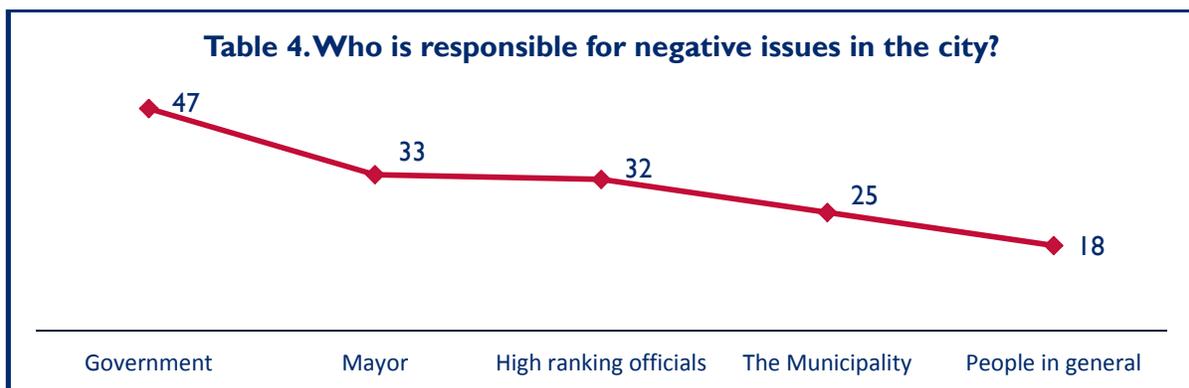
B) Lack of road safety and traffic control: When young students talked about security they discussed traffic related accidents around their schools. This concern is best exemplified by the following account:

Student, 18, District 3 *“There is no security provided. This is why young girls are often run over by vehicles on their way to school.”*

C) Lack of Clinics. Arising from the conversations was a clear need for improving staff quality, equipment and medicine to accommodate all patients – particularly for those with illnesses that must now be treated in Kabul or Pakistan.

D) Women’s Issues. The women felt that they were not given the opportunity to improve their lives. The female population of the city seemed to face more problems than the male population. The women in the Lashkar Gah voiced concerns resulting from a lack of services and places to advance their family’s circumstances.

The participants were asked to identify the entities responsible for the problems within the city. Figure 4 illustrates the entities in the order of prominence. The most responsibility was assigned to the government. The mayor was identified as the person responsible for the issues pertaining to the city.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the entities deemed responsible for the negative issues.

Housewife from Shahidghaltan *“In any organization the officials are the ones responsible for any negative issues in that organization. If it is dirtiness then the municipality staff is the one*

responsible. If it is security then the police headquarter is responsible. But generally government officials are the ones responsible.”

The participants in all groups reached consensus that both the municipality and the people were responsible when it came to ensuring the cleanliness of the city. They noted that the primary responsibility lies with the municipality and the secondary responsibility should be assigned to each and every resident of the city. One participant stated that the garbage and waste was not produced by the municipality. Rather, it was produced by the people. Therefore, there should be a joint effort between the municipality and the people when resolving the problems of garbage collection, transportation and proper disposal.

The youth groups made a proposition regarding the general lack of cleanliness. They agreed that the lack of cleanliness stems from people’s lack of knowledge and awareness and that cleanliness could be assured if people’s knowledge and awareness were increased. Finally, the participants proposed closer cooperation between the mayor, police commissioner, and other authorities in order to get rid of negative issues in the city.

III. Municipal Services

Student, District 2 “We would like to request that the municipality build the roads and transfer the garbage cans to be emptied in places outside the city. All the garbage and rubbish spoils and gives off a very bad and unpleasant smell in the city. In addition, the municipality is required to clean the sewage drains up.”

The participants were asked to provide a list of services they would like provided by the city. The list below depicts some of the most cited services that citizens would like to have:

A. Roads. There is a clear need for road reconstruction. The roads should be sprinkled with water in order to reduce the amount of dust in the city. The municipality should consider asphaltting and fixing all of the potholes. When building the roads, the city should ensure that the best material available is used to prevent the premature wear and tear of the infrastructure.

B. Sewage. Sewage drains should be built to positively address cleanliness issues. The water level has a tendency to increase, particularly in the Safian district during the winter season, thus the city is prone to flooding. Sewage drains should be installed in order to prevent this problem.

C. Traffic. The participants hoped that a solution would be found to better regulate traffic in the city through better signs and enforcement. The availability of proper parking spaces would relieve the problem of traffic jams and blocked roads due to improper parking.

D. Parks. For the purpose of reducing pollution, the municipality should consider planting more trees and increasing the availability of public parks.

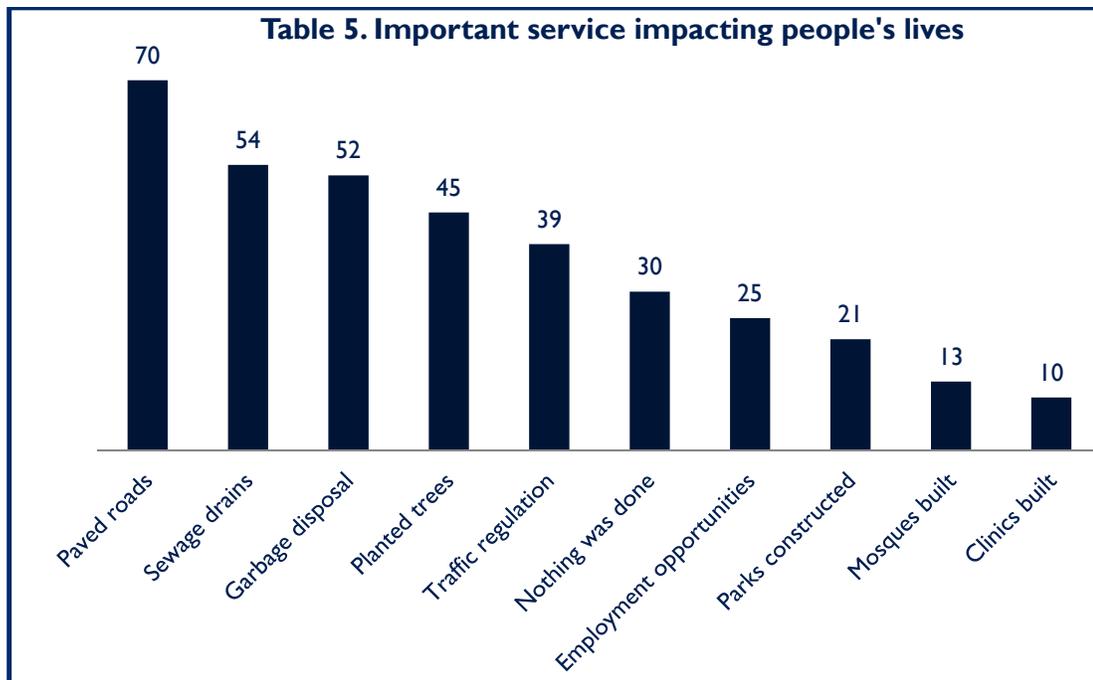
E. General Cleanliness. The youth asked the municipality to provide garbage cans at the schools. The availability of garbage cans is essential for health. Additionally, community bins are a high priority for each neighborhood.

F. Drinking Water. One of the most important initiatives performed by the municipality was the provision of tap water to residents' houses. One participant stated that the municipality made a positive move when they placed a water tank at the Lewanai Karam area, helping to bring water to the locals.

G. Greater Accountability. Authorities should consider paying more attention to various issues throughout the city. The participants were holding the authorities accountable for doing their job honestly and to the best of their capabilities. This was best illustrated by a Student from District 1:

Student, District 1, "The mayor has helped by building roads and sewage drains. This is an improvement seen in the city, but it is to be said that the sewage drains are so dirty that it gives off a very unpleasant and bad smell. That is why the mayor is required to pay attention to the whole city not only to his own house as I mostly walk through the street where the mayor's house is located. I can easily see that the municipality personnel are busy cleaning and sweeping the front of the mayor's house every day. Hence, I would like to ask the mayor to serve the city in the same way as he serves himself."

The table below represents the list of services that most impact the participants. The top priority seems to be the proper construction of roads and sewage drains, followed by traffic regulation and proper garbage disposal.



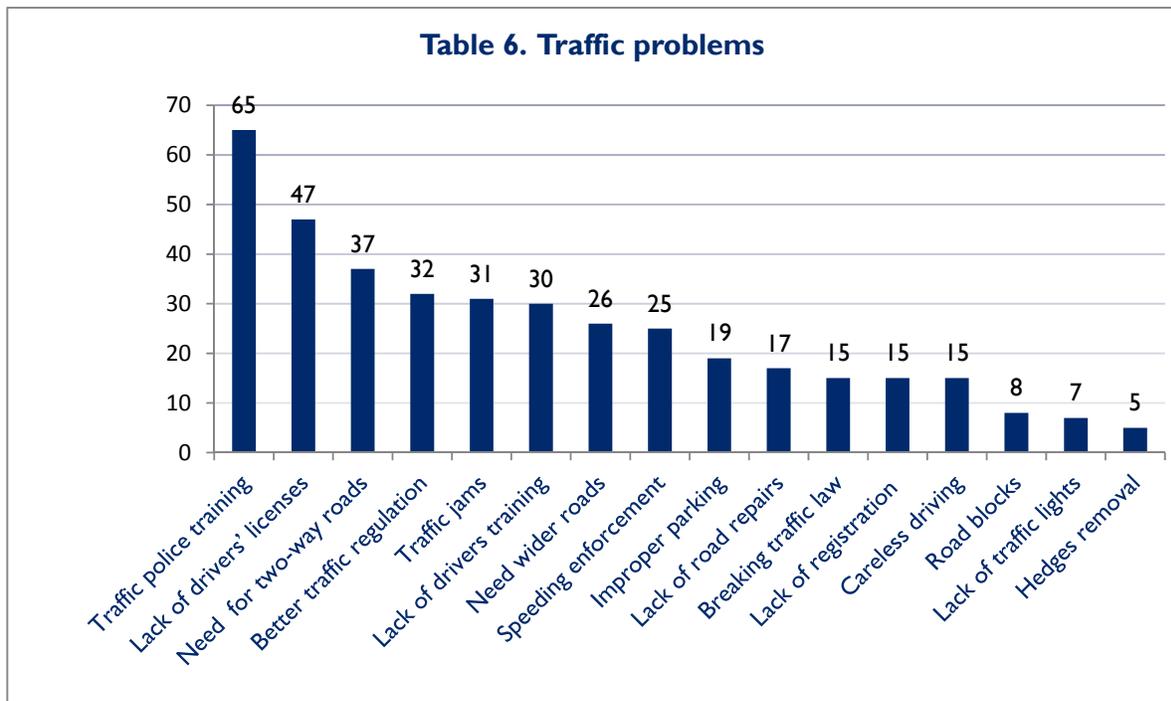
Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the services that have the most impact on people's lives.

IV. Traffic

Traffic regulation and inadequate roads seem to be the most prevalent problem in the region. The participants reported that the main road in Lashkar Gah City was satisfactory, but the streets in the Safiaan district and some roads connecting the villages should be paved or rebuilt. The roads should be widened, and two-way roads should be introduced in order to relieve the traffic jams and prevent accidents from occurring.

Student, 17, District I “There is often a traffic rush when we go to school. The road gets really blocked.”

Figure 6 indicates the most cited problems the participants encountered.



Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the traffic related issues.

The graph shows that the most commonly cited traffic problem was the lack of educated traffic police officers. Furthermore, the traffic police were asked to equally follow the laws they enforce and were encouraged to judge fairly when accidents occurred.

Tribal Elder, District I “One of the highlighted negative issues in the city include the vehicles that bear the government number plates and run very fast inside the bazaars and the city causing traffic accidents and hitting the innocent pedestrians. Nobody can complain or ask them for the cost of the accident because they have the power and firearms.”

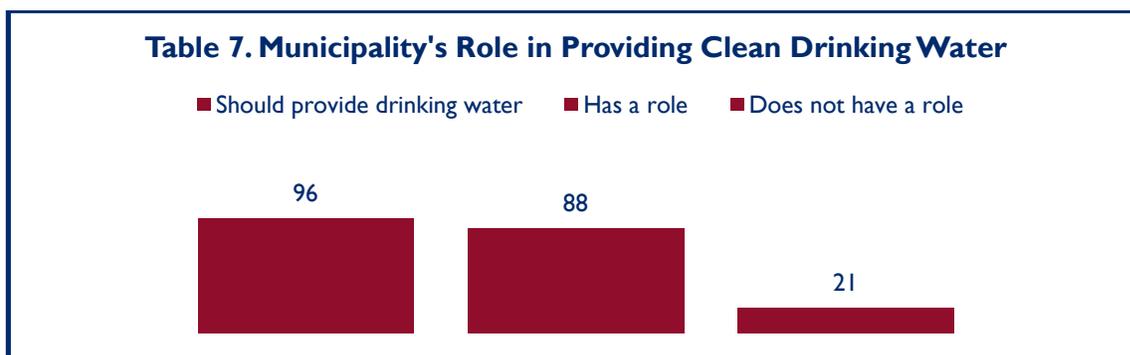
The participants also identified the need for traffic lights and signs to be installed throughout the city to regulate traffic and prevent excessive speeding. The women and the youth groups adamantly advocated for government vehicles to follow the speed limit since several accidents had occurred where government cars had hit school children. A traffic law education campaign was mentioned as important for safety.

Participants stated that a lack of driver’s licenses and training seemed to cause a lot of unnecessary traffic regulation issues. The participants agreed that driver’s licenses and training should be provided by the traffic department and that issuance of driver’s licenses would reduce traffic problems in the city.

V. Drinking Water

Housewife, District 2 *“The municipality plays a key role in providing clean drinking water to the city. But the municipality of Helmand did not do much to provide clean water to the city.”*

The participants came to a consensus regarding the municipality’s role in providing clean drinking water. A small number of participants thought that the Ministry of Rural Development should have a greater role in providing households with clean drinking water.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the role the municipality has in providing clean drinking water.

The municipality’s role in ensuring the availability of clean drinking water supported the need for stable electricity. The water pumps are powered by electricity which limits water availability during long power outages. The respondents gave a variety of reasons for the municipality to provide drinking water to their houses. Public health concerns were the most prominent and were depicted in the following account:

Teacher, District 2 *“The municipality is in charge of securing clean drinking water for the people. The clean drinking water is healthy thus it would play a supporting role for our good health and the prevention of certain diseases.”*

The best perceived method of providing drinking water to the public varied across groups. Some participants’ cited hand-operated pump well installation on each street corner. Alternatively, some suggested that the municipality should install water pipes in every house. A few participants voiced their

dissatisfaction with the municipality’s efforts in cleaning the water mains. There seemed to be a lot of problems with blocked water mains.

The participants were also asked whether they use the same source of water for cleaning, drinking, bathing or cooking purposes.

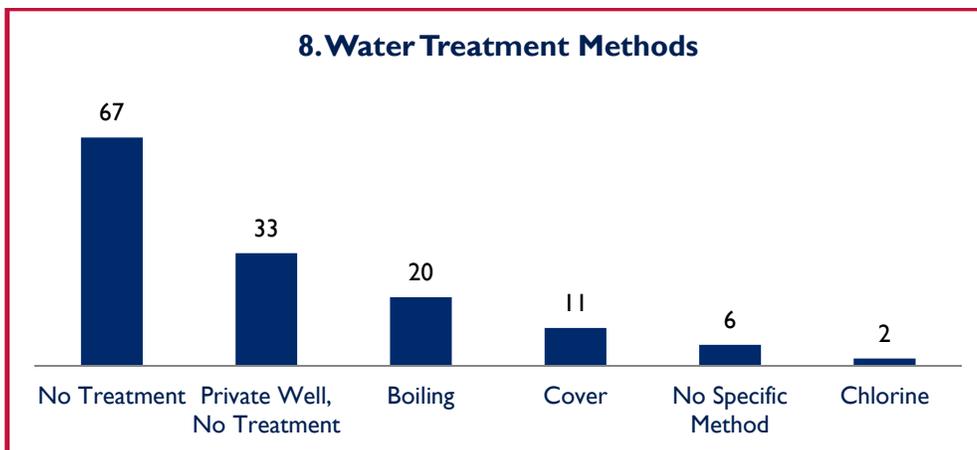
Homemaker, 62, District 2 “We use the outside pump for drinking and the inside pump for washing.”

Student, 18, District 4 “We use three sources of water for our needs, the bottled water, water taps and the river for the toilet’s use.”

Access to water seemed to be dictated by residential neighborhood as the more modern districts have access to water taps in homes. Some households reported using only one source of water for all purposes, while others used as many as three different sources of water. The ones that did not report having a direct access to potable water also reported having to walk far from their homes to retrieve it. The majority of the respondents used water from hand pumps for their daily consumption while others used the tap system installed in their homes. The respondents that did not have access to the hand pumps or tap water reported digging their own wells.

The majority of participants desire safe and potable water. When it came to the matter of cleaning or bathing, the participants used the wells or the rivers. The participants said that the proper governmental organization should provide households with hand-operated water pumps. Most importantly the government should consider introducing a steady water supply system to each house.

Shopkeeper, District 4 “The suburban population may use chlorine for purifying the water and those living in the urban areas may choose the boiling method for this purpose.”



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the treatment methods used to purify the water for drinking purposes.

VI. Health Impact

Tribal Leader, NahrSaraj “Clean drinking water is good for the digestive system, the human body and it prevents various diseases.”

The participants were asked to describe the impact that drinking water has on their personal and/or their family's health. A discussion on the best water treatment methods ensued in many groups. The importance of boiling and chlorinating water was discussed. Clean water was further regarded as beneficial for preventing gastrointestinal disorders as well as for avoiding disease and preserving long-lasting good health. Participants felt that water had an important role in food digestion.

When the question was asked about the methods used to treat the water in their homes, the participants were clearly knowledgeable about basic water purification methods. However, they felt that more effort should be put toward educating them about additional, safer methods of ensuring that their drinking water is free from bacteria and other heavy metals that cannot be necessarily seen, tasted or smelled.

Figure 8 shows that the majority of participants do not treat their water, but among those who do, boiling is the preferred method. There were a few participants who firmly believed that drilling deep wells will ensure the availability of clean potable water. Some believed that placing covers on water storage containers prevented debris and successfully treated water. A few participants believed that keeping water in tanks prevented spoiling. A few participants reported tasting water in order to determine whether it was safe for drinking.

The statements demonstrate that the participants understand the effects that clean drinking water has on people's health and well-being.

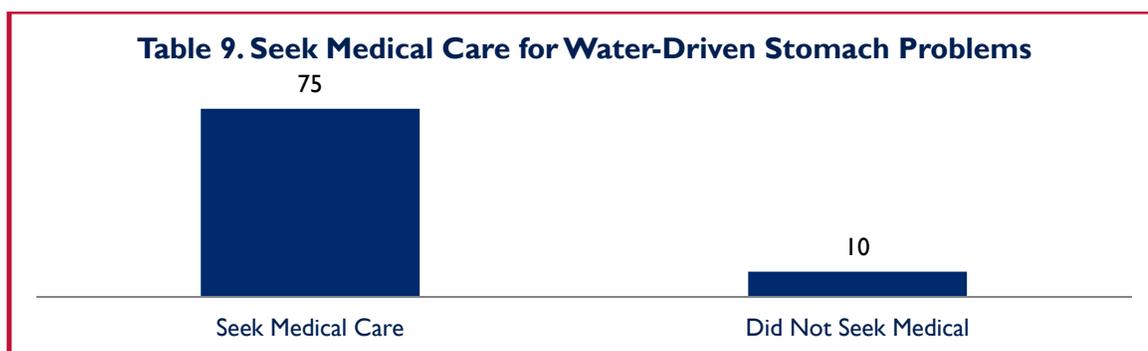
Cashier, District 2 *"I think that people must try to use the clean water so that they don't get sick. There are still poor people in our city that can't even see a doctor for treatment as they cannot afford the fee."*

The participants were also asked about the impact sewage had on their households' health. Participants agreed that unclean water was the main incubator of diarrhea, typhus, and other gastrointestinal diseases. Malaria from mosquitoes that breed in still water was also mentioned.

Seminary School Teacher Kart-e-lagan *"Sewage carries lots of microbes. Drinking water tainted with these microbes cause malaria epidemics."*

Student, District 1 *"I think if the unclean water is used for washing the body then it would cause skin diseases, but if it is used for drinking then of course it can cause the intestinal problems and microbe based illnesses."*

To further assess what health effects of sewage and unclean water, the groups were asked to state the frequency that members of their families sought medical attention based on stomach problems. The frequency is illustrated in Figure 9.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists whether or not they have received medical treatment due to stomach problems.

Dozens of participants also reported traveling to Pakistan in order to seek medical help, while fewer sought medical treatment in India. The main cause of participants’ maladies was attributed to high temperatures, unavailability of clean drinking water, and the proximity of sewage to their everyday living spaces.

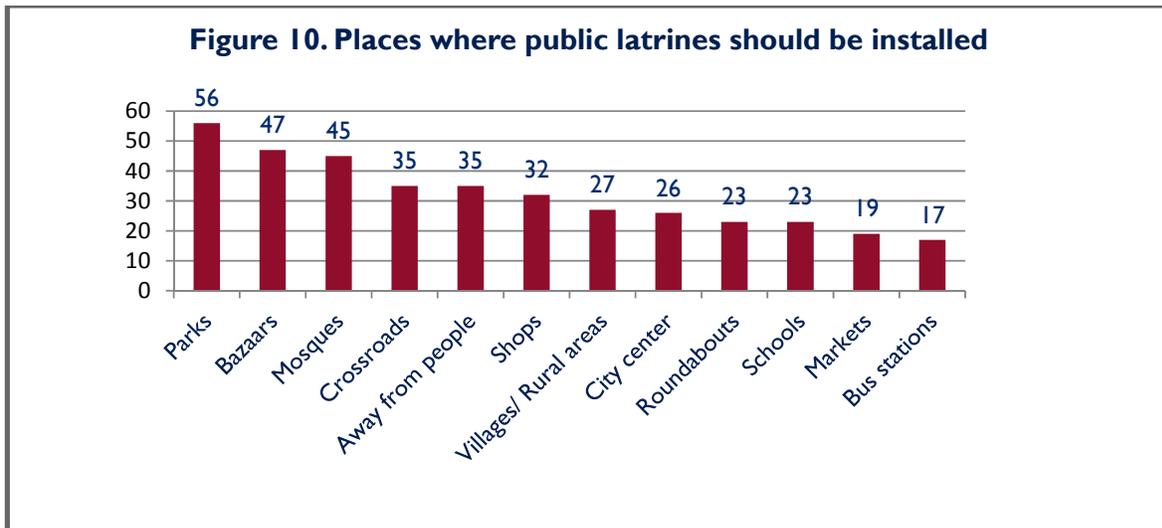
Shopkeeper, District 3 “This is very harmful illness. I am facing this illness. I visited the doctor several times and have taken the medicine. I feel well when I take the medicine and feel unwell when I am not taking the medicine.”

Sewage issues seemed to be the main theme in all of the focus groups. Along with the garbage issues, sewage issues tended to be critical for the health and well-being of the population. When asked what they would like to see done about sewage improvements in their homes or neighborhood, the participants agreed that the sewage should be at a distance from their homes due to its unhygienic properties.

Worker, District 1 “The sewage is better to be built somewhere far from the houses. It is to be built at a distance of 50 to 60 meters from the water wells. It is useful to keep the sewage as far as possible. It would be dangerous to have them inside our houses.”

Participants stated that they had built a separate place for sewage at the side of their houses. In such spaces, sewage was not deemed harmful to any of their family members or fellow residents. They stated that the municipality should consider installing proper sewage drains in people’s houses to ease their anxiety about sewage and to ensure that it is properly removed.

Finally, participants were asked to think about the places most suitable for the installation of public latrines. They agreed that latrines should be easily accessible to the public. Figure 10 shows that parks and bazaars followed by mosques and crossroads were the most frequently cited places where latrines should be provided.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists places where public latrines should be installed.

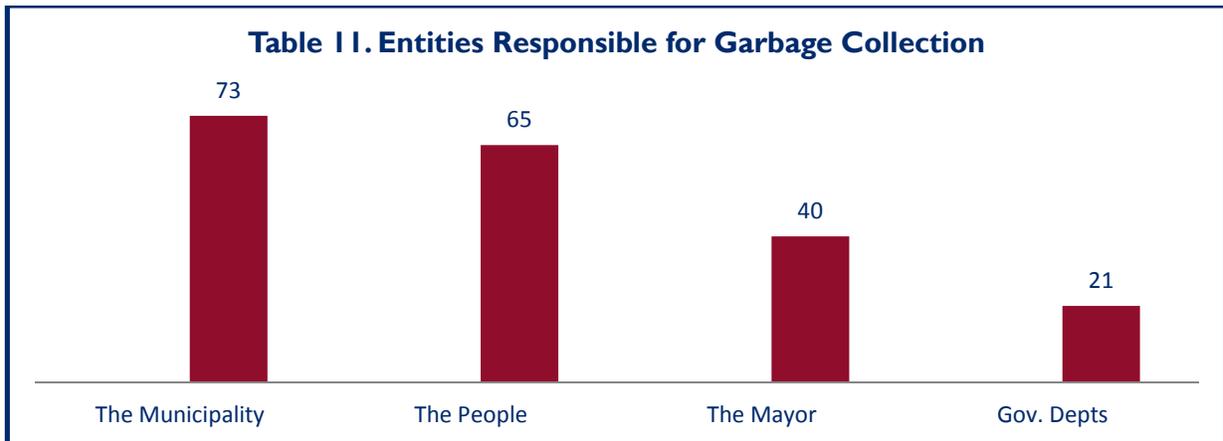
VII. Garbage Issues

Tribal Elder, District I *“It is an open fact. If we glance at the countries abroad we will see that they don’t throw peel of the fruit on the street. They have garbage cans provided in the city for this matter. Then the neighbors are also required to put all their garbage in those cans.”*

Issues of garbage collection and disposal were widely discussed in all of the groups. The participants were asked to describe the role their neighbors play in garbage collection. The participants believe that the neighbors were required to take garbage to designated areas for disposal. However, they also agreed that the municipality needed to provide each household with garbage cans. There was a general tendency to think that every individual should ensure that garbage is placed in appropriate bins instead of in sewage drains or streets to avoid severe repercussions for public health.

There were a few reports of neighborhoods where people organized and hired a person for garbage collection. Such activity was supported by most participants. Some of the participants felt that it is not their place to recruit the appropriate person for garbage collection. They preferred that the municipality assign one person to collect garbage for the neighborhood.

The following figure represents the entities that the participants held accountable for garbage collection.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the entities responsible for garbage collection.

Tribal Elder, 53, District 1 “The act of cleaning the city is a matter of public welfare. Therefore, the people should also work hand-by-hand with the municipality. I know that the Lashkar Gah City is a big one and it is very difficult for the municipality to take care of this big city using its 23 (garbage collection) personnel. They will not be able to afford this activity on its best.”

There was a clear division in the groups between those who assigned the responsibility of garbage collection to the municipality and those who thought that the public should be held responsible. Those participants who assigned the responsibility to the municipality also stated that it was their own job to collect the garbage and take it to a designated area. Conversely, those advocating that the public was responsible viewed the people’s role as crucial to solving the garbage problems. In their opinion, people needed to throw garbage in trash containers. The municipality was responsible to empty the containers. There were also a number of participants who envisioned garbage collection and disposal to be a joint effort.

Participants were presented with the following scenario: There is interest in getting neighborhoods to recruit someone to collect garbage from your door and take it to a centralized area for city truck pick-up. Citizens would pay this person and the city would provide the equipment. This would be organized by neighborhoods and streets.

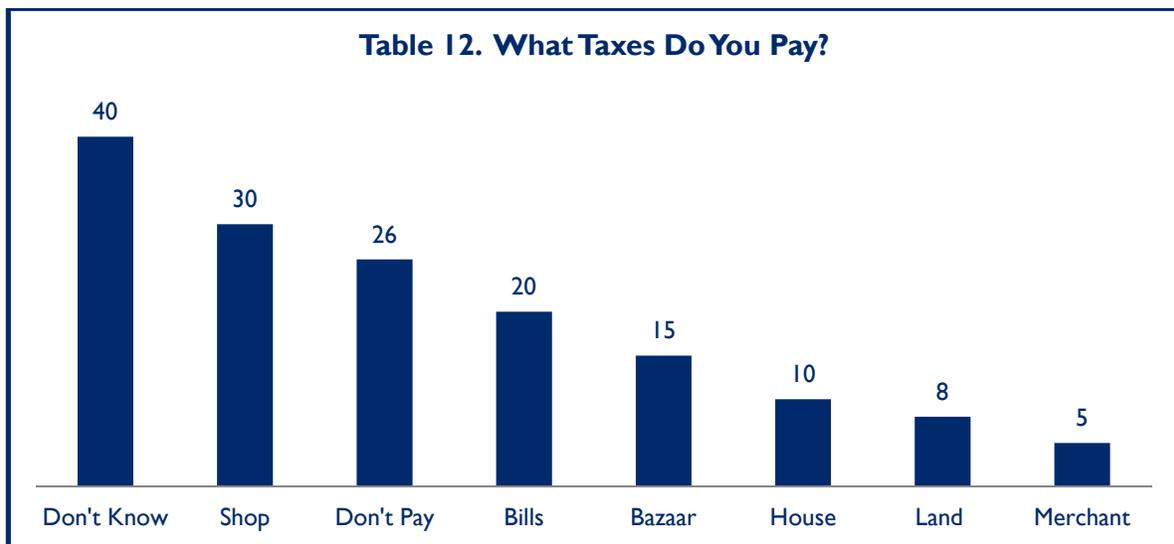
When asked who was responsible for providing the garbage collection service, the participants advocated that the city should assign someone for this activity. There was a recurring debate in each group among those who thought that the neighborhood was responsible to take care of the garbage and those who disagreed and stated that the municipality needed to put the system in place and the people should not assist them in this process. A few participants were willing to recruit a person designated for this purpose and even pay them for collecting the garbage and cleaning their neighborhood.

***Shopkeeper, District 3** “Collecting garbage and taking it to the garbage can so that the municipality’s big truck could pick it up and take it to an area outside of the city would entail assisting the municipality.”*

When shown a picture of a garbage container the participants expressed their opinions that it should be provided to people by the municipality, but that it may not be big enough to hold all a household's garbage.

VIII. Taxation

Businessman from Bazaar “The municipality personnel ought to impose and collect the same amount of tax on all tax payers. They should never ignore the legal tax amount for their personal connections. They charged some people less tax based on their family relations. We pay the shop tax.”



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists of taxes they are required to pay.

A large amount of participants, including religious leaders as well as women, were not knowledgeable about issues pertaining to tax payment. The women's group referred to their man for information on such issues. Similarly, the young males indicated that the older men take care of the taxes and could only speculate what kind of taxes they were required to pay.

The businessmen had more astute answers as they are usually required to pay a tax on their commercial business (the shop tax) as well as a fee at the bazaar to those renting stalls when they want to use the space to sell livestock like cows, sheep and goats.

The businessmen also expressed that they did not know the basis for the shop tax and indicated that they pay the commercial (shop) taxes based on how many doors the commercial entity has. They claimed that the problem occurs when they have single shops with two or three doors. When the taxes collectors noticed the additional doors on the shop they automatically raised the amount of taxes that the businessmen had to pay.

Tribal Elder, 52, District 1 *“The tax should be paid on the basis of the number of the shops not on the basis of the doors of the shops. People say that nothing has been done. This is not true, as the road has been built and some other work has also been done.”*

The participants did not seem to have a problem with paying taxes as much as with the services they received for the taxes paid to the municipality. The strongest motivation to pay taxes was the expectation of basic services to be provided. They felt that the tax collected should help the government to rebuild Afghanistan’s infrastructure and to further the country’s development initiatives. Taxes, in their opinion, should ensure the city’s order and general cleanliness. The issue of corruption was also reflected in the discussions, especially among the older men, who stated that the same tax should be applied to all individuals.

When asked whether they thought they received the services for the fees or taxes they pay, the participants were divided into the three groups listed below in descending order based on participant mention:

- (A) Those who did not think they received any services;
- (B) Those who thought that some services were provided, but not equal to the amount of taxes they paid;
- (C) Those that didn’t think adequate services were provided.

Some of the services provided as a result of tax collection were roads and sewage cleaning. The religious leaders seemed to be the most skeptical about the services provided by the government. In comparison to other groups, they had a hard time identifying the services provided to them by the government. There was a feeling among the youth group that the municipality was collecting the taxes only for personal benefit. Participants believed that the taxes collected were not spent on services to the extent that they should have been. There was a general perception that tax revenue goes into the pockets of tax collectors, instead of into projects benefiting the public.

The participants felt that the municipality was responsible for assigning a fair person to collect the tax. The collector should not differentiate the tax due to socio-economic status. The taxes should be dealt with in a legal and honest manner. The business community also felt that the municipality should implement and follow the tax laws.

Older male adults were asked to describe the taxes they paid and some included the shop tax, the property tax and the electricity payment. Most of the participants stated that they paid a business (shop) tax on an annual basis, and a few participants stated that they paid property tax. Across the groups, participants agreed that taxes are quite high. The most cited reason to reduce taxes was that the economic situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating as unemployment increases.

A common problem stated by participants was authorities asking for a much higher tax amount than required in the tax registry. The focus groups reached a consensus that the tax imposed on them was too high, and therefore the Ministers’ Council should reconsider their decision and lower taxes. The tax officials should put their fellow citizen’s interest before their own and ensure that the proper tax calculations and payment process was in place.

Driver, District I *“If the tax is paid then it is clear that it would have its positive effects on the life of the nation and will make it grow better. But in the case where taxes are not paid then it would harm the common ethics.”*

Finally, the participants were asked a question, “If you had decided not to pay property taxes, would increased fines would make you more likely to change your behavior and pay?” Participants stated that it is not a matter of changing behaviors. People should be required to cooperate. The participants said that people should be aware that the government will consider them in violation for not paying taxes and that penalties for tax evasion would be much higher than the tax itself.

Teacher, 45, District I *“We do pay the taxes that are required of us on the basis of our personal properties and goods. It is clear that not paying taxes to the municipality would be considered as the worst and unpleased action against the services that they provide us.”*

IX. Municipal Governance

The groups were asked whether they thought the mayor and the municipality care about their citizens. From the youth perspectives, the mayor successfully conducted business up to two years ago, and then started to reap more benefits for himself than for the people. A few participants blamed the government for the lack of services, stating that the mayor serves as a low ranking staff of the government; hence he had to abide by the rules of his superiors. Two participants disagreed with the allegation about the mayor and the municipality. They said that the mayor had built roads and sewage drains this year, therefore he did serve the city.

Student, District I *“No, they do not care about it. They have not provided us even 45% of the services required. They are seeking their own interests but ignore the public interests. They have obligations as per the law to take care of the city.”*

According to the businessmen, the mayor and the municipality staff did not seem to care about the city. The issue of the mayor expanding his own properties was brought to light in this group as well. Although the majority of businessmen were rather critical of the mayor, some had a few good words to say about the mayor’s and the municipality’s work. The participants who believed that the mayor had accomplished certain tasks this year expressed their concern with the fact that he had done a lot more for the city center and had neglected the outlying areas where a lot of infrastructure remained non-existent, destroyed or in disrepair.

Religious leaders made observations similar to those of the businessmen and the youth. They stated that the mayor paid the least attention to the city and that he was providing as many services as he could to help himself stay in this position. They described the mayor as a theorist and not a man of practice. They said that the municipality shouted slogans, but did not do anything in practice.

The participants were asked if they contact the municipal government to resolve problems. Figure 13 illustrates their responses.



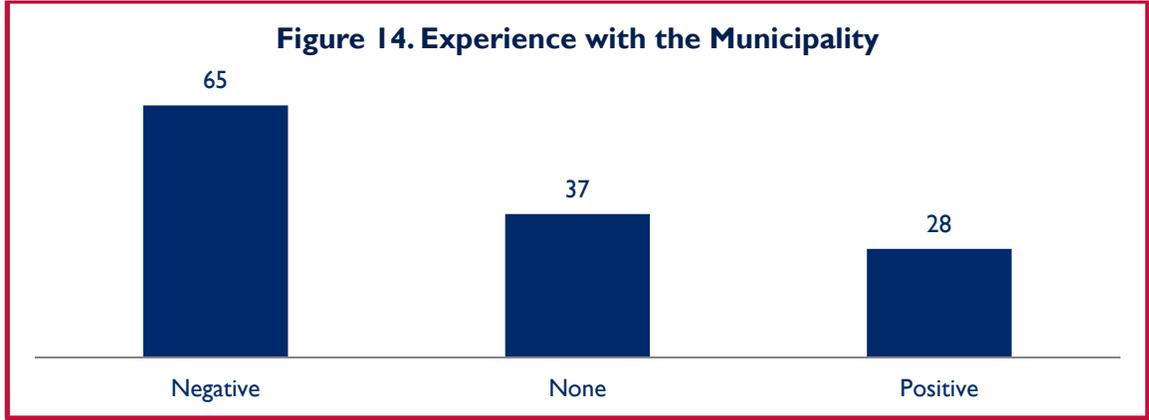
Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis list whether contact with the municipality was established.

Similarly, those participants who had interacted with the municipality were asked to rate their experiences (Figure 14). The businessmen’s group was disappointed that they had not been able to reach anyone in the municipality to help them sort out their problems. There was discussion of having to pay to have access to the Mayor and often there were scheduling delays or middlemen seeking payment to solve problems.

Businessman, 32, Bazaar “When we go to the municipality department for receiving assistance to our problems, then we are not allowed inside the department to visit the Mayor. We also don’t have the contact number of the Mayor to discuss our issues on the phone. I would like to say that we receive no care for the municipality’s side.

Shopkeeper, 31, District 4 “Whenever we enter the municipality we should give a bribe to the staff. People will experience how to give bribes.”

The majority of participants stated that they didn’t know how to establish contact with the municipality so the municipality should provide the public with opportunities to be heard. Word of mouth from trusted family and friends seems to contribute to a widespread dislike for the municipality, since most people do not have personal dealings with the Mayor or the municipality.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the experience with the municipality.

The participants were asked whether they felt the mayor, including the municipality staff and the district manager, cared about their respective groups of people. The youth respondents in the city were under the impression that their respective mayor's thinking revolved around his own personal interest and that he completely disregarded the happiness and satisfaction of the people. The religious leaders and the businessmen's groups confirmed this view.

An interesting finding was the older men thought that the mayor and the district manager only cared about the businessmen. The businessmen in turn thought that the officials only cared about the youth. Furthermore, the youth seemed to be convinced that the officials cared about their own personal well-being rather than the well-being of the country.

X. Registration Issue

The older male participants were asked about issues related to land registration at the property department as well as at the municipality's offices. When the participants applied for their property deeds (land registration letter), they faced problems. Participants stated that non-responsive governmental employees existed all over the country. Many participants reported a high level of corruption in the municipality and had been asked by municipal employees for money in order to expedite their registration process. As one respondent stated:

***Citizen, District 4** "I think that there is no way for people to get rid of these problems as they are forced to pay double cost for addressing their problems. When you refer to the departments then you will find all corrupt as all will ask you for bribe to do deals with your issue."*

Moreover, participants who did manage to get through the paperwork were faced with the issue of outdated registration books.

***Tribal Elder, District I** "I would tell you that I applied to the property department yesterday. The registration books are so old and torn that it causes problems when conducting the process of legal land registration."*

The registration process had a personal impact on the participants. Some were prevented from registering their land until they could afford a bribe. The lack of access to the municipality staff, especially the mayor, deepens the sense of helplessness when it comes to land registration.

***Tribal Elder, District I** "When you get your slip to the bank for registration then they will not do everything in turn. They would serve the rich people first and then you. This issue will depress any one facing it."*

The participants were clearly discouraged in the work of the municipality when it came to the registration of their homes.

Tribal Elder, District I *“The Helmand province has suffered enough robbery, stealing and land seizure issues. They are trying to seize others' land by being dishonest about it. The employees at the departments are claiming that this or that land is his property while it is a lie. But they think only for their own benefits not about anything else.”*

The challenges they mentioned were numerous, ranging from registering their land deeds as well as problems with finding the right municipality staff members to provide the necessary slips to complete a process. There was a general sense among the groups that the government officials are not available to assist them as they are unwilling, busy, or out of the office for extended periods of time. Overall, the participants stated that the municipality's staff is more willing to help solve problems if a person offers them something in return. The people who did not have the money to offer are continually asked to come back the next day.

Tribal Elder, District I *“There are some houses built on the land which is a state property, while other people have built their house on their own legal lands. The employees treat both categories in the same way and ask both categories for bribes in order to accomplish the process.”*

XI. Business Community

A conversation ensued between three participants in the business group when they were asked about the steps in the process of registering their business ventures at the municipality offices:

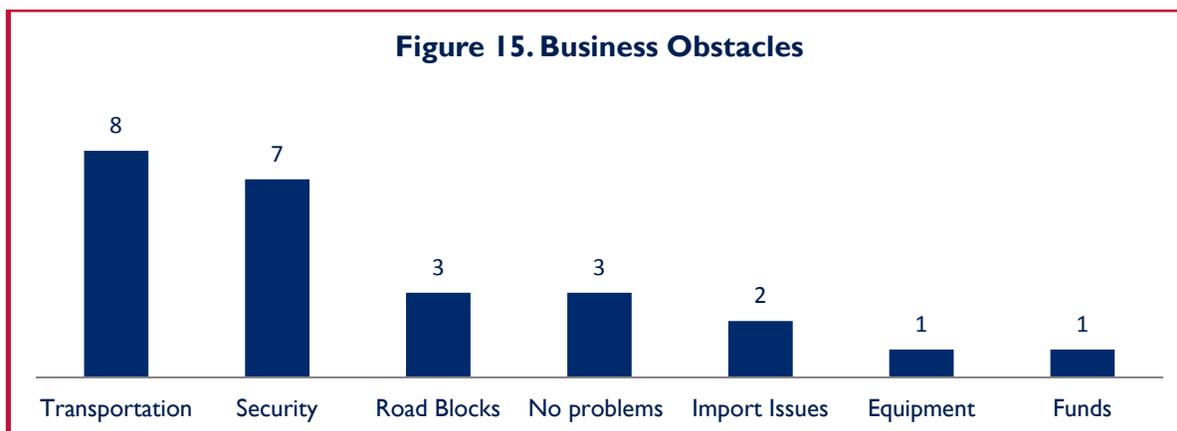
Participant 1: *“We have problems in the process when we are registering something with the municipality. They are double charging us, although we are paying them money too but they are not doing our work.”*

Participant 2: *“We thought the municipality will provide facilities but unless they cared about our problems, I am agreeing with him.”*

Participant 3: *“We have to register our businesses with the municipality. It is important that we provide services to the city. First we are going to the municipality to submit our application then the municipality gives us orders.”*

Shopkeepers, realtors and money exchange officers have to rely on the municipality to provide them with current market-rate goods or services. The need for the municipality to start issuing proper business licenses was evident. All of the participants agreed that it is of utmost importance to have their business properly registered.

The participants unanimously agreed that the unqualified labor force and lack of education critically prevented them in finding the best available candidates for the jobs they offer. When asked what businesses were missing in order for them to run smoothly, the participants provided an array of responses presented in Figure 15.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists of business obstacles.

As indicated in the conversation below, the import and export of goods tends to be a very problematic venture due to lack of security and numerous road blocks.

Participant 1: *“The problem that I face is that I am not allowed to import my materials and goods from Pakistan. I have nothing to sell in my shop since I have not been able to get anything for sale here as the roads are blocked.”*

Participant 2: *“I also face a problem in my business. As I take goods from here to the districts I face challenges as a result of the blockage of the roads and the lack of security along the road going to the districts.”*

Participant 3: *“I was involved in importing the spare parts of the vehicles from Karachi, Pakistan to here. Nowadays the blockage of the roads has put a negative impact on my business and my business has come to a stand these days.”*

The participants were asked about the improvements to the process of bidding on contracts. Participants supported the general notion that a contract should be awarded to the contractor who is able to provide the best quality work, that contracts should be awarded to specialized firms who have experience conducting specialized work, and that government should be involved in the supervision of projects. A suggestion was given to hire a person specialized in drafting such contracts in order to increase the chances the best contractors being awarded and performing the terms of a contract.

Businessman, District 4 *“We should have professional internal and external engineers and employees, and that we follow government’s law and go through the municipality’s rules and regulations.”*

The main obstacle for not bidding on contracts was the lack of professionalism and education of the staff. In the participants’ experience, the quality of the contractor was not important as long as his bid amount was the lowest.

Retail Seller, Toor Tang *“No you can’t win bidding unless you pay them. Therefore we often try to get into the bidding process with the help of our friends so that we can win the contract easily.”*

As far as assistance was concerned, the business community would like to receive trainings on how to carry out business affairs. They agreed that the municipality should provide training for all those who are doing business in the city. The participants would like to see additional training and workshops offered on tax law in Afghanistan, government business law, proposal writing, and financial management.

When it comes to contract law, all of the participants agreed that if the law was applied equitably, they would have no problems signing and executing contracts with governmental authorities. However, this did not seem to be the case when the businessman from District 4 stated:

Businessman from District 4 *“Whenever the municipality is contracting with us, they take 50-60% of the money for their purposes. If we disagree, they do not award us the contracts. They have their own team and companies, and are awarding the contracts to them.”*

XII. Religious Community

Mullah, District 4 *“The mosques have a positive role in the city. We would like to see the number of mosques increase in the city as the city’s mosques cannot fit all the people who want to perform their prayers there.”*

The religious leaders were asked to describe the role of the mosques. The mosque was generally regarded as the most sacred place in the city, or God's home. It provided people a safe space to come together in orders to discuss and solve problems, and get important information about events or issues pertinent to their communities. Mosques were also places to handle for dispute resolution.

Tribal Elder, Nahresaraj *“The mosque has its key role for both lives. It has its usefulness for our life in this world as well as for the life in the other world, which is the eternal life. In addition, it is the sign of the development of Islam. It would be better to see the number of mosques increased in the city.”*

The religious leaders were asked to consider the services provided to the citizens and state what differences they saw between the role of the municipal government and that of the mosque in the city affairs. The religious leaders agreed that the district has seen more improvements in comparison to the mosques. They felt that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent on building the district, but nobody provided them with money needed for improvement and rebuilding of the mosques.

Tribal Elder, Bazaar *“The mosques have been constructed in an old fashion manner. But nowadays, the districts have been built in a modern style. It means that if you spend the amount used to build one district to build the mosques, it would result in building numerous mosques.”*

It was reiterated that the mosques were places where disputes are resolved in a traditional way. However, any disputes that people might have with the municipality should not be dealt with in the mosques. Nevertheless, as one religious leader stated, all collaboration and work needed to benefit the people of Afghanistan because *“they all have to work for the people. At this time, Afghanistan needs to mobilize its entire population to improve its situation.”*

Additionally, the religious leaders were asked to describe the priorities needed in order to improve their neighborhood. The city or the government should consider assisting the mosques in descending order of mention:

- (A) The roads should be built in order to connect the mosques with the other parts of the city. In addition, roads should be asphalted to ease the access which will in turn increase the number of people gathering in mosques.
- (B) Money should be allocated to the reconstruction efforts of the mosques.
- (C) It is important for the improvement of the neighborhood to clean the drains in front of peoples' houses. The mosques should coordinate with the municipality in order to accomplish such a job.
- (D) Mutual respect between the government, the municipality, and the mosques should be a priority.
- (E) Mosques should be provided with loudspeakers and other relevant facilities.

When asked how the mullahs and the municipality should handle discussion and coordination of local problems and new initiatives, the religious leaders were divided in their opinions. One group advocated the mullah's involvement in governmental affairs while the other group was cautious and regarded the mullah's role as the teacher of Quran. While the religious leaders were not in favor of the municipality working with mullahs, they were in favor of them working with tribal elders. A proposition was made that the municipality forms a joint committee through which the populations' problems should be shared with the stakeholders.

Mullah, Toor Tang *"The mullahs must not be involved in these issues. Based on their profession, the mullahs are to be involved only in teaching the students since other people will manage issues not related to the mosques."*

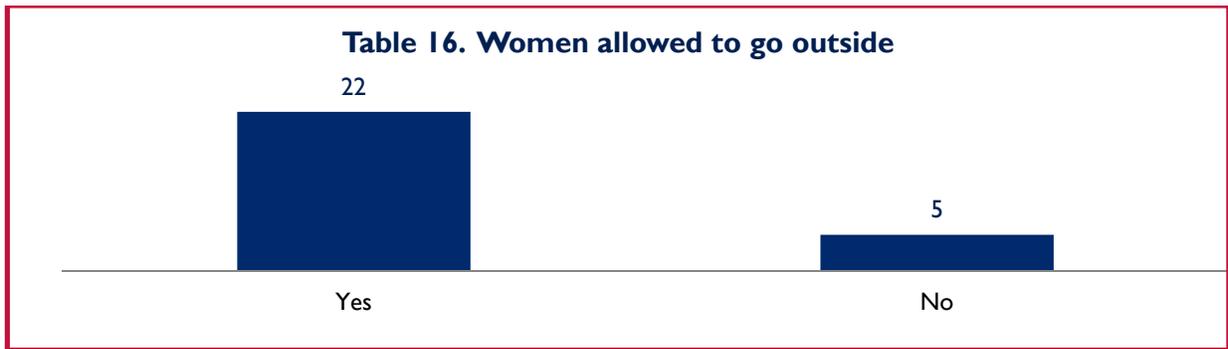
Mullah, Kart-e-Lagan *"As the mullah is a man of mosques then there is no problem if he is going to be in contact with the municipality as far as he will inform the people about things related to the municipality. He will let the people know about things and issues that the municipality would like to accomplish."*

In short, it was important for mullahs to have contact with the municipality because most of the time people come to the religious leaders in order to solve land disputes. The religious leaders then send the disputants to the municipality where such problems should be solved.

XIII. Women's Issues

Both older and younger women were asked a set of questions pertaining to their everyday life and what services they would like to see offered to increase the quality of their lives.

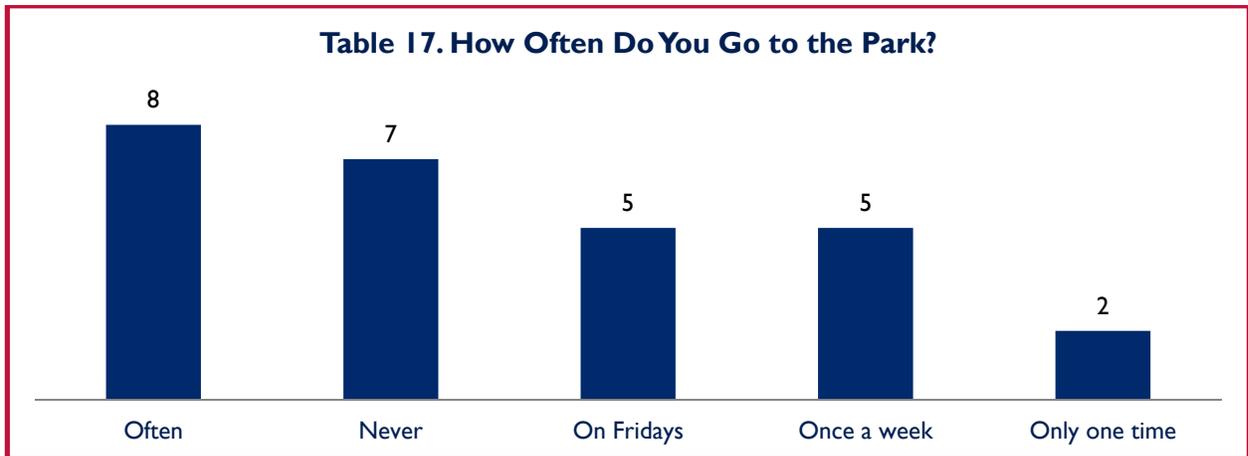
The women's group was asked how they get the things they need from the store. The ranges of responses are illustrated in Figure 16.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis states whether a woman is or is not allowed to go outside of the house.

Most women had the permission to go to the market and get whatever they needed for themselves and for their home. Those women who were not allowed to go outside of their homes stated that their husbands tell them that “women are created to be at home and they cannot be outside of the homes.” Some husbands did not let their wives go outside of their homes due to the fragile safety of the neighborhood.

Figure 17 represents the amount of times women visited the park.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis indicates the number of times they visit the park.

The women participants said they would like to see more services in the park. The women’s group agreed that they would like to see a women’s computer and internet center be available to them. The older women stated that although they may not use such facility, such a facility should be available to their daughters. The women’s group reiterated the importance of having such facilities available to them in order to help them learn more about computers and have access to the world through the internet. They agreed that such a facility would be important for their personal and social development.

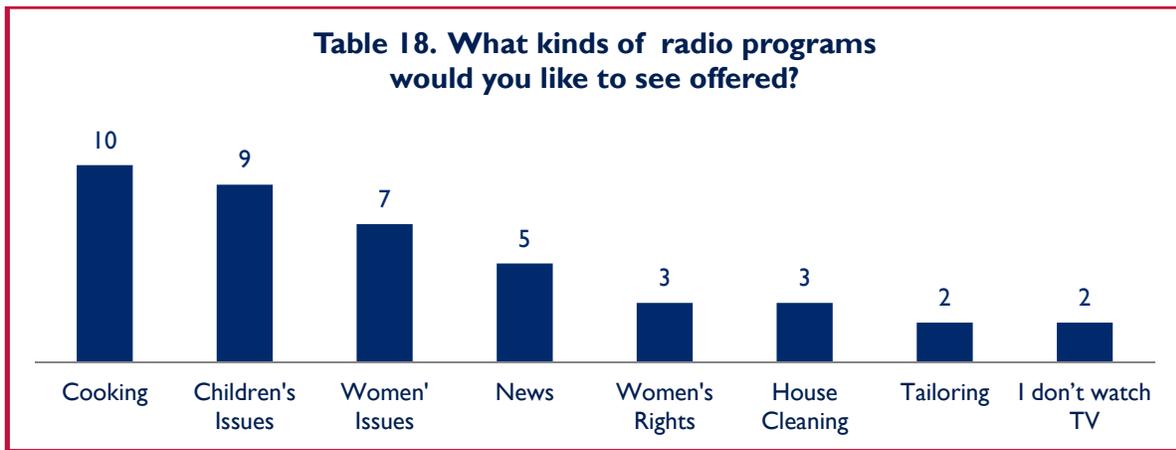
When asked what they would like to see included in an enclosed park or market, the women identified playgrounds for children, beauty shops and stores for clothes, shoes, and stationary and kitchen items

Women also express the desire for female shopkeepers and said they would be more comfortable buying from a female shopkeeper.

The women’s groups were asked if there are any questions or issues that they would like to raise with a women’s municipal department, provided that one is set up from them. The women were excited about the idea of having a women’s municipality office or to have women be employed by the municipality in order to address women’s concerns. They was agreement that such an office would be heartily welcomed as problems would tend to be resolved more easily with women. This issue was particularly pertinent to those families where the woman was the sole head of the household. There was a general feeling that women should have the opportunity to be employed by the municipality because they feel that they have the right to work in the government administrations as much as men.

Housewife, District 4 “The families who have lost their men and the women who feel lonely in such families would be happy to find the female staff in the municipality directorates so that they would be able to share their problems with women staff and get it done.”

Figure 18 represents the top choices participants shared when asked what they like to listen to during the radio time allocated for women.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists of programs.

Housewife, District 4 “I think there has to be educational programs for children as well cooking programs for the ladies to help those women who regularly stay at home and are not allowed to go outside the house.”

The women’s groups reported that they widely make use of useful TV or radio programs. Some of their favorite programs were concerned with children’s and women’s issues. They found educational programs to be very appealing. Participants also reported the usefulness of cooking and home decorating programs because they were able to learn the skills from professionals and could apply those skills to their daily lives. Several women regularly watched the lady’s program on Tolo TV and they followed cooking programs

aired on Shamshad TV. In addition, programs like “Shabkhand” and “Kajlichona” as well as “Narai Pa Warghawiki” were mentioned as their favorite.

XIV. Male Youth

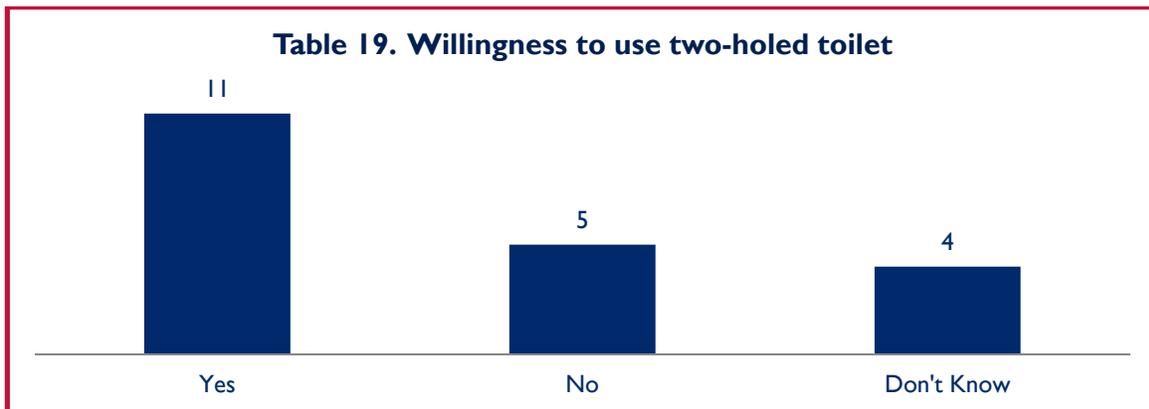
The younger generation is interested in educational opportunities and the overall environment. Among male youth, green spaces are important. Green spaces are one of the few things the municipality can provide that youth wants.

Student, District 1 *“Since the green trees would impact the environment in a positive way. That is why we take care of these trees and water them to keep the public park cleaned. At last, this activity is a type of the services provided for the reconstruction of the city.”*

The male youth were asked what would motivate them to water the trees that the city had planted in the neighborhood. The biggest motivation for watering the trees revolved around environmental concerns. The participants were willing to water the trees in order to help purify the atmosphere, prevent disease, and make the city more beautiful. In addition, the fruit bearing trees would provide an economic incentive to the city as a whole. The fruits could be harvested and the proceeds could benefit the city and people’s health.

Student, District 3 *“The green plants and bushes play an important role in environmental protection as it keeps the atmosphere purified and clean and would help to prevent diseases.”*

The youth male participants were shown a picture of a new type of toilet where everything in the toilet could be used in fields as it is designed with two holes, one for liquid and one for solid waste. They were asked whether they would use such toilet.



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists whether or not the participants would be willing to use such toilet.

The participants expressed a variety of opinions on whether this type of toilet would be useful to them. A student in District 3 argued against the use of such toilets by saying:

A student from District 3 *“It would not work here since the people come from villages. They don’t know about these new toilets. The people would throw stones in the holes of these toilets. These toilets shown in the picture cannot be used here.”*

Conversely, a student from District 1 argued positively for the use of such toilet by stating the following:

Student from District 1 *“I think that it would be a good idea to use these toilets but they need to be equipped with the water system in them since two holes cannot solve the problems.”*

ANNEX

ANNEX I – Focus Group Questions

General Focus Group Questions

1. When you think about the city and the quality of life here in Lashkar Gah, what do you think has improved over the last year?
2. Who is responsible for that improvement in the city?
3. (Security issues aside) When you think about the city, what has been negative in the city?
4. Who is responsible for negative issues in the city?
5. What services do you expect from the city?
6. What city services impact your life most in the city? Or what is your priority?
7. What is the worst thing about traffic or roads?
8. What action would reduce traffic problems?
9. What is the municipality's role in drinking water?
10. Do you clean, drink and bath and cook with the same source of water?
11. What is the best method to treat the water at home?
12. What impact do you think drinking water has on your family's health?
13. What impact do you think that sewage has on your family's health?
14. How often is someone ill enough in your family to take them to the doctor based on stomach problems?
15. Where would you like to see done about sewage improvements in your home or neighborhood?
16. Where have you noticed a public latrine is needed?
17. How do neighbors play a role in garbage in neighborhood and cleanliness?
18. Who is accountable for garbage collection?
19. I am going to share with you an idea and want to hear your reaction to it. There is interest in getting neighborhoods to recruit someone to collect garbage from your door and take it to a centralized neighborhood (centralized community local area) area for the city to pick-up with a big truck. Citizens would pay this local man and the city would provide equipment. This would be organized through neighborhoods and streets.

What do you think about this proposal? What questions would you ask about this program?

20. Show you a picture of a garbage container—would you use it for garbage?
21. What taxes and fees does your family pay?
22. What is your strongest motivation to pay taxes?
23. Do you think you get services for the fees or taxes you pay?
24. What do you think the Mayor and municipality care about?
25. When you encounter problems, how often do you ever contact the municipal government to resolve the problems you are facing?
26. For those of you who have interacted with the municipality, how was that experience?
27. Do you feel like the Mayor and municipality staff care about people like you? (Youth, business, women, teenagers).
28. Do you feel like the District Manager care about people like you? (Youth, business, women).

Questions for Religious Focus Groups

29. What do you think is the role of the Mosques in the city?
30. Considering services provided to citizens, what differences do you see between the municipal government and Mosque in your city?
31. What are your priorities if you want to improve your neighborhood? Among the services provided by the Mosque, what services do you think the city or the government should assist the mosque?
32. How should the mullahs and the municipality handle discussion and coordination of local problems and new initiatives?

Questions for Business Groups (cut water, women issues)

33. For those of you who registered their business with the municipality, what was the process for you? Walk us through steps.
34. What skills important to your business are missing in the workforce? (What recruitment problem are you having?)
35. What businesses are missing in the city that could help you in running your business? (Sometimes transit, accounting, equipment repair, etc).
36. For those of you who have bid on contracts, what would you do to improve the process?
37. For those of you who have not bid on contracts, what do you need to know about doing business or get contracts with the city?
38. Would you be interested in any training or assistance from the city?
39. Are the legal or tax issues that you might need explained? Does it matter to you?
40. Do you feel protected by business or contract law in dealing with the city or other business?

Questions for Men Only

41. What are the issues related to land registration that concern you?
42. What registration issues will impact you personally?
43. Are there any barriers to registering your home?
44. Do you pay property taxes? For those of you who pay the property tax is it too high for you?
45. When city services increase, should taxes be enforced and raised?
46. If you knew that fines would increase and you would have to pay more if you decided not to pay property taxes, would this change your behavior?

Questions for Girls / Women's Groups

47. How do you get the things you need from the store? Are you allowed outside?
48. How often do you get to a park?
49. What would you like to see included in an enclosed park / market?
50. If provided, would you use a woman's computer and internet training center?
51. Are there any questions or issues that you would like to raise with a women's' municipal office and service desk if it existed?
52. What would you like to listen to during radio time allocated for women?
53. Are there education or vocational issues that would be helpful for you?

Questions for Male Youth

54. What would motivate you to water trees in the neighborhood that the city planted?
55. I am going to show you a picture of a new type of toilet that means that everything in the toilet can be used in fields. This is future type of design with two holes –one for liquid and one for solids. What do you think about using this? Would this work here?