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Nili City Focus Group Report

Daykundi Province

REGIONAL AFGHAN MUNICIPALITIES
PROGRAM FOR URBAN POPULATIONS
(RAMPUP)– SOUTH

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



June 10, 2011

Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations (RAMPUP) – 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.

Table of Contents

Program Overview	3
RAMP UP – South Research Program	3
About Nili Focus Groups	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Focus Group Findings and Narrative.....	8
Positive Issues	8
Negative Issues	10
Services	12
Traffic and Snow Issues.....	14
Drinking Water.....	16
Health Impact water, bathes and sewage	17
Garbage Issues	18
Taxation.....	19
Municipal Governance	21
Registration Issue.....	22
Business Community.....	23
Religious Community	24
Women’s Issues	25
Teenagers.....	26
ANNEX.....	28
ANNEX 1 – Focus Group Questions.....	29

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The purpose of the 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 get 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 to 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 priorities, gathering citizen input, or creating materials for the media or citizens. 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. They 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 NILI FOCUS GROUPS

Wise Strategic Communication (WSC), sub-contracted by Chemonics International, conducted fieldwork to execute 15 focus groups in Nili from April 17th to May 14th, 2011. Nili focus groups are a qualitative part of an assessment project. Each focus group discussion lasted from one-and-a-half to two hours with six to ten participants from different strata of social groups.

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 a training session for six facilitators from the Hazara ethnic group, four males and two females. The training took place for a week prior to fieldwork in Nili. All facilitators were required to conduct pilot focus groups to be field qualified, and WSC's senior trainers reviewed each pilot transcript to assess the capability of facilitators before assigning them actual fieldwork. Facilitators completed two pilot-tests with Hazara participants.

A field coordinator from WSC led the facilitation team to Nili City to conduct fieldwork. The team, with assistance from local elders and teachers, recruited participants for each focus group. WSC's coordinator monitored each focus group session and reviewed transcripts from each focus group to maintain quality control. WSC hired translation specialists to translate the transcripts into English language for further analysis. WSC's QC officers went through all transcripts and checked them against voice recording of each focus group to reinforce quality control.

Dr. Min Zaw Oo, Director of Research, Mr. Sayed Akhtar Sadat, Senior Research Officer, and Dr. Silvia Susnjic, Senior Analyst, are responsible for fieldwork management and data analysis to complete this report. Kate Head, Director Strategic Communications with RAMPUP-South is responsible for the research design.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The participants that engaged in discussions were polite and provided modest answers to questions ranging from matters they would like to see resolved in the city; positive and negative changes that happened during the past year and; concerns with roads, snow removal, taxation, water supply and market construction.
- Nili residents feel ignored and forgotten by the donors and their government. Most said there have been limited improvements the previous year and there was no noticeable development in the city. The citizens hold the municipality responsible for roads and market improvements and snow and garbage removal. Participants did mention an increased effort by the municipality to ensure the cleanliness of the city by hiring a workforce dedicated to garbage collection particularly at the market.
- Participants from all groups do not believe the Mayor or municipality care about them, The Mayor was unknown to many participants, but the religious and business community made positive comments about the Mayor who is seen as trying hard to make improvements. She has the most favorable reaction in focus groups of any of the southern Mayors. Participants in each group who had met the mayor stated that the city's problems were not due to her performance, but the municipality's lack of money, staff or equipment.
- Isolation is a major issue in Nili and this impacts the cost and ability of people and goods to move to and from the city. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the amount of time it takes to travel to and from Kabul and the insecurity of the Kandahar road. As a result, many essential products such as fuel, food and clothing are not available at the market or are double the cost of those products in the Kabul market. Participants unanimously welcome the leveling of the road in Nili. From the participants' narratives, it was evident that the lack of proper roads affects their quality of life.
- Participants are excited about the municipal proposal to develop a new city and expectations are high for multiple services and buildings. Participants mentioned the population growth and the city crowding as a major reason for the construction. . Citizens want proper roads, markets, electricity and potable water in the new city. The participants talked about the importance of having 24-hour electricity available to them even though this is not currently available.
- Participants consider reconstruction of schools and clinics vital improvements for social life in the city. The number of medical facilities and the lack of professional teachers and doctors were mentioned as an employment shortage. Quality prescription drugs are also in short supply according to participants. Access to quality and updated drugs are also an issue.
- Participants would like the municipality to continue removing the snow from all roads in the province during the winter months. There was mixed reaction to last year's efforts as some were pleased with the clearing of the city center, but others thought that not enough was done by the city to clear pathways.
- Participants are distressed with the lack of potable water. This is especially felt in the summer when the drought is common. As a result, the water they consume is drawn from lakes, canals and shallow wells and is of decreased quality with salt and minerals.

- Participants understood that unclean water could be considered the main incubator of diseases. They agreed that diarrhea, typhoid and other gastrointestinal diseases can be contracted by the consumption of unclean water. Malaria is also a concern for residents who understand that mosquitoes breed in stagnant water. Knowledge does not translate to water treatment; many said they could not bother or afford to boil or use chlorine, but did hope the municipality would find better alternatives.
- Issues of garbage collection and disposal were widely discussed in all of the groups. Participants believe that, the municipality should take the lead on collection. Garbage collection in the city center was frequently raised as an issue.
- Shops pay taxes, but families do not. Although the participants do not reject paying taxes in principle, most feel that the services they receive from the municipality are not sufficient to justify paying taxes. Most participants argue that the municipality's ability to provide basic services is the strongest motivation to pay taxes.
- People have gone to the municipal building, but many have not had their problems resolved. Participants prefer that the mayor and the municipality make themselves more accessible to the public.
- Land registration is not an issue as the population has become stable over time and there is an understanding of inheritance and property lines among neighbors in the small city.
- There are many complaints about the Nili Bazaar including unclean latrines, narrow roads, garbage piles, dust in stores, crowded conditions and the slaughter of animals in the streets. Businesses would prefer ongoing pick-ups of garbage instead of one larger pick-up as this will help the smell and keep the garbage off the streets.
- Shopkeepers face difficulty preserving fruits and vegetables during the summer. They would like to learn methods for storing and transporting their products in a manner that will prevent them from spoiling, as they are being exported in summer and imported in winter.
- Business leaders identified lack of professionalism as a major concern and said training on trading skills and modern business practices would enable participants to improve their businesses.
- Religious leaders said the municipality's role is to provide and implement service, but their role is to provide religious guidance and educational support for the community. For example, they see the municipal role to pick up garbage, but the mosques' role to discuss the importance of garbage disposal in the home. They agreed that increased cooperation and coordination between the mullahs and the municipality is needed.
- Women welcome the prospect of having vocational education courses available to them. The training they mentioned includes sewing, carpet making and reading. Their goal is to obtain jobs and provide their families with additional sources of income.
- Focus group participants were reluctant to express opinions that differed from those of other group members. Unlike the participants in Lashkar Gah, who eagerly discuss and exchange

opinions, the Daykundi participants reached agreement on almost every issue fairly easily. This was particularly evident in the religious and the business leaders' groups where the most senior person's statement is followed and confirmed by the rest of the group.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS AND NARRATIVE

Positive Issues

Participants regard Daykundi province as the most undeveloped part of Afghanistan. They often refer to the province as being “backward.” Their narratives are reflective of a province that fails to meet the basic standards of living that other provinces in Afghanistan enjoy. Nili populations’ hardship is especially heartfelt during the winter, when snow and hazardous conditions prevent the inhabitants of this province from acquiring food, clothing and house supplies.

***Male, 48, Shopkeeper** “The Daykundi province and the Panjsher province were established at the same time. The Daykundi province has been forgotten. Because we are far away no one has paid any attention to us.”*

Participants are concerned about the frequent food shortages, inadequate roads, and lack of electricity and potable water. That said, many participants expressed hope that they can soon enjoy the living standards amenable to development-minded Afghanistan.

***Male, 24, Student** “If change and progress occur, then people’s lives will change for the better. If the government repairs the roads, builds the new city and announces that jobs are available for the people, then people’s lives will improve and the province will progress. However, I haven’t seen any significant changes or progress being made since last year.”*

When the participants were asked to think about the quality of life in Nili, a few themes stood out. As illustrated in Figure 1, participants had a difficult time identifying positive improvements made by the government in ensuring that the population’s needs are satisfied. The government was urged to create projects that would aid in the development of Daykundi province.

***Female, 40, Housewife** “Roads, schools and wells are our priority. If schools are made then our children will have no need to go far for school.”*

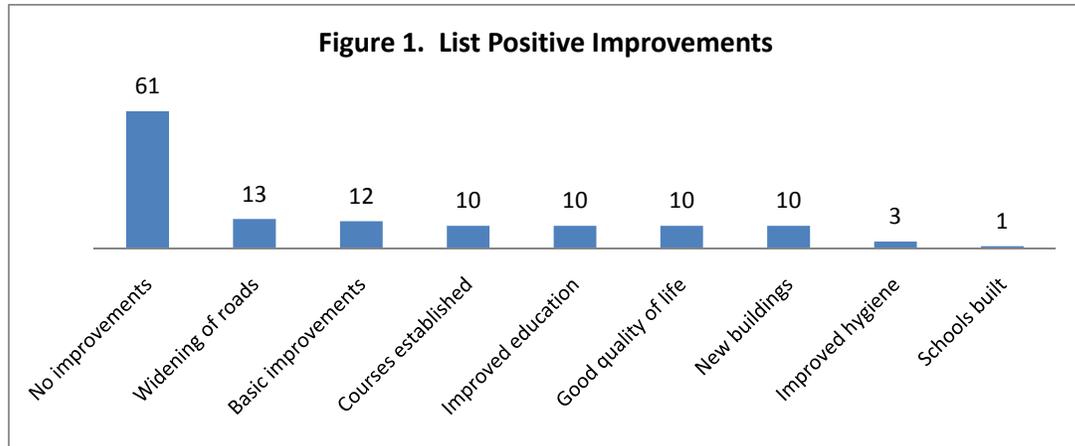
As indicated in Figure 1, most participants felt that there were no major improvements completed within the past year, although a few participants mentioned that the municipality put some effort into widening the roads around Nili. The municipality also provided basic services to the inhabitants that slightly improved their general quality of life. Some of the services mentioned included garbage collection service and improvements to the bazaar.

Participants are excited with the prospect of building a new city that would be developed alongside Nili. There are great expectations for this new city including a market and hotel. Participants agree that proper roads, electricity and potable water are essential components of a healthy city. Reconstruction of schools and building of hospitals and clinics are also necessary improvements in Nili city.

There seems to be an increased effort by the municipality in ensuring the cleanliness of the city. These efforts were demonstrated by hiring a workforce dedicated to garbage collection. As one student states:

Male, 15, Student “Life in Nili is good. The health and hygiene has improved. In general a term there was neither significant progress nor improvement made in the city compared to the past year.”

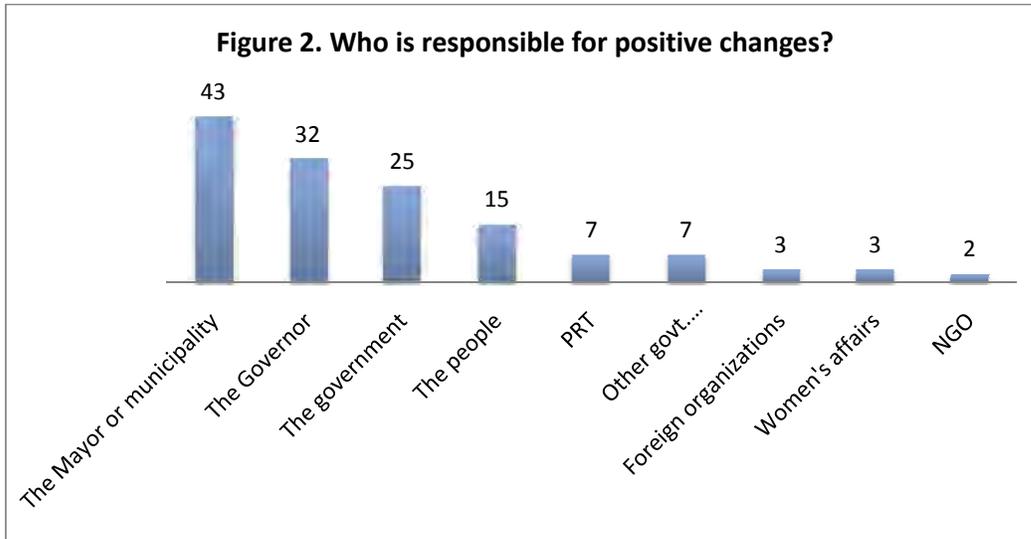
Figure 1: List of Positive Improvements



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.

When the participants were asked to identify the entities responsible for the positive developments, their answers varied across groups. If the change was city-based residents gave credit to the municipality or Mayor. Some mentioned the Provincial Governor as an overall government decision-maker and leader in making decisions for the city and province. Figure 2 illustrates the array of responses provided to this question. Primary responsibility for the few positive developments indicated by the participants tended to be assigned to the municipality, though the governing bodies and the people were also identified as having a role in engendering positive changes in the city. Several participants also mentioned the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and NGOs for their role in promoting development projects.

Figure 2: Entities Responsible for Improvements

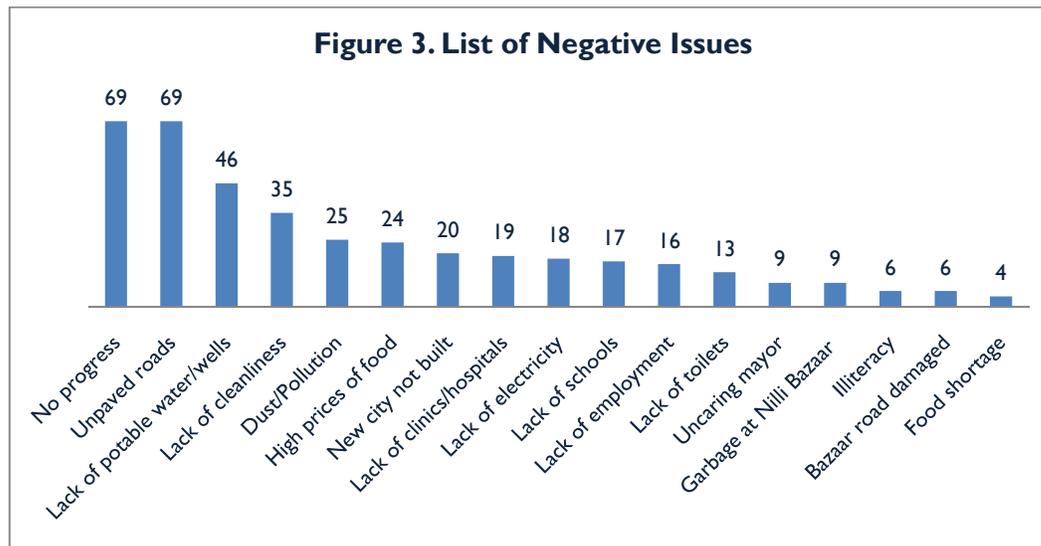


Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the entities that benefit the most from the new developments in the city.

Negative Issues

Participants voiced general dissatisfaction with municipal services they received during the past year. Figure 3 shows a list of problems participants identified as vital to increasing the standard of living in the Daykundi province.

Figure 3: List of Negative Issues



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.

Male, 20, Student “Nili city has more problems. You can’t find one meter of asphalted streets, no clean water and the municipality does not pay attention to the city. There is no special place for hewing the livestock which creates many problems.”

Negative issues concerning basic services in the order of priority are listed below. Overall these issues were a priority for a wide audience of citizens and were not specific to one demographic or group.

A) Damaged roads

Concern about the quality and the state of the roads was voiced across all groups. Participants complain about the amount of dust present at the bazaar due to the roads not being asphalted. In their opinion, the municipality should consider asphaltting the roads, providing access roads to the bazaar and ensuring that the roads are clear of snow during the winter time.

B) Lack of potable water

Participants are worried by the lack of potable water. This is especially felt in the summer when drought affects the Nili residents. The water they consume in the summer is of decreased quality and contains increased salt and minerals from lakes, rivers and shallow wells. This is especially relevant for people who live in proximity to the bazaar because they often become ill and suffer from gastrointestinal discomforts.

Male, 20, Student “I think that the municipality has to dig deep wells for Nili city because the current wells in Nili are not too deep and during the summer when the weather becomes warm we are facing shortages of water. If the municipality is the responsible body then they should pay attention to this issue.”

C) Lack of cleanliness

Male, 51, Shopkeeper “Lack of hygiene is one of the major problems. Lack of clean water, dust and dirt at the bazaar that appears due to muddy roads are the problems that force the shopkeepers to shut down their businesses. We don’t have a slaughterhouse and the toilets are not good.”

The general lack of cleanliness and garbage residues found throughout the city are another vital concern for citizens of Nili. Although the general consensus of the participants is that the cleanliness of the city has slightly improved, the lack of public latrines and baths still cause public health concerns. A proposition was made in the business leaders’ group to broaden people’s knowledge and awareness about how to handle their garbage and where to put it.

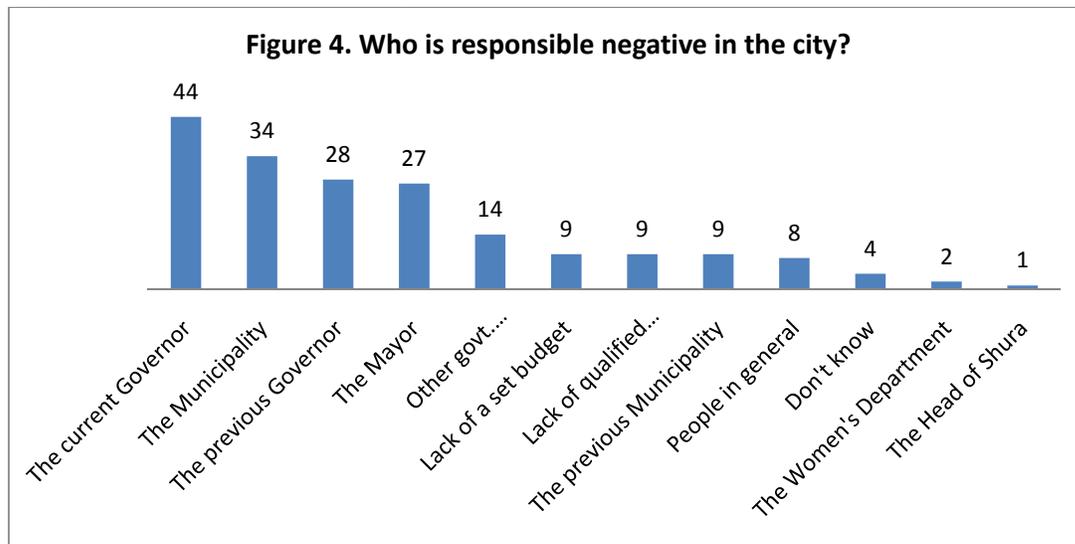
Participants said it is of the utmost importance to educate the people about the proper ways of collecting and disposing of the garbage. Participants also noted that there is a lack of slaughterhouses in Nili. Butchers are forced to cut and dispose of meat in the areas surrounding the bazaar. Participants would like the municipality to create a solution to this public health issue.

D) Lack of hospitals and pharmacies

There is a clear desire for the municipality to construct a hospital and pharmacy. Participants pointed out that the previous mayor made a promise to construct a one-hundred bed hospital five years ago, but it has not been constructed. Currently, when patients go to the doctor's office, they are given a note and are told to purchase the prescription medicine at the market. However, access to the market is limited for many residents, causing them to forgo the purchase of prescription medicine.

The participants were asked to identify the entities responsible for the negative issues. Figure 4 illustrates the entities in the order of prominence. The participants in all groups, except for the religious leaders' group reached a consensus stating that both the current and the past officials are equally responsible for the negative issues in Nili.

Figure 4: Entities Responsible for Negative Issues



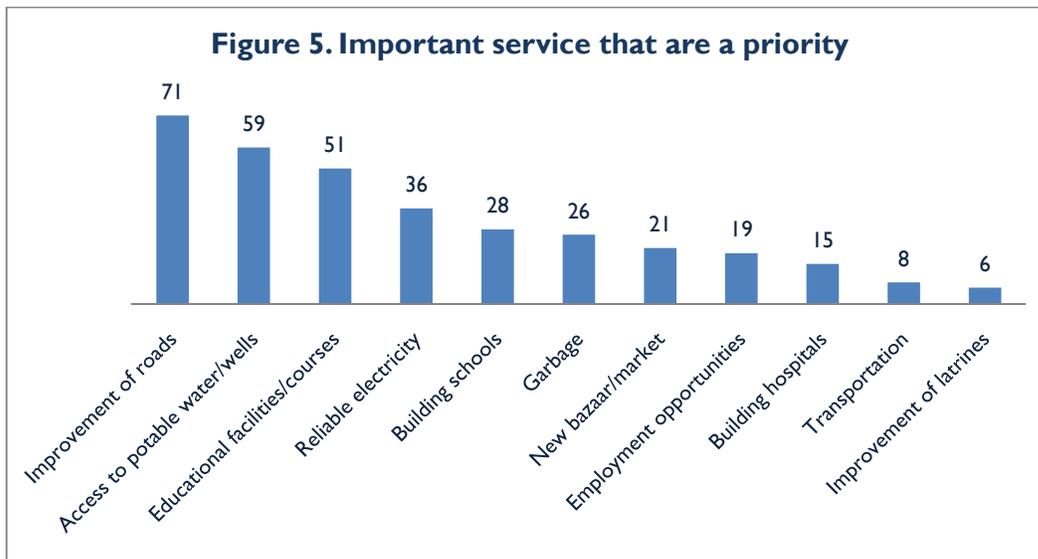
Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the entities deemed responsible for the negative issues.

Male, 36, Unemployed “The current governor and the previous one were not working. Everyone just does his own business. There is no electricity, water or built streets. There are a lot of companies starting to build then they leave it before the building is completed. The budget of other provinces is much higher, about seventy million, and our province budget is about six million and every day it decreases. We want Daykundi to be the same as the other provinces.”

Services

The participants were asked to think of a list of services that they would like to be provided by the city. Figure 5 represents the list of city services that impact the participants' lives the most. The top priority appears to be road construction/reconstruction, followed by access to potable water and educational facilities and reliable electricity.

Figure 5: Important Services Affecting People's Lives



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

A. New Roads. Participants expressed a desire for new roads to be built across the Daykundi province. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the amount of time it takes for them to transport goods from Kabul to Nili. They expressed hope that with the construction of new roads the current 48-hour journey to Kabul could be significantly decreased. This impacts the price of imported food, fuel and necessities and limits exports and travel opportunities.

***Male, 28, Shopkeeper** “As I know the first problem in Daykundi province is its road because lack of transportation causes other problems. We can buy a sack of cement in Kabul for 300 but it costs 600 Afghanis here. 7Kg wheat costs 100 Afghani, it costs 300 Afghanis here.”*

B. Drinking Water. Participants would like the municipality to provide potable tap water in private homes. Daykundi residents are forced to dig their own wells in order to gain access to water. Many consume water directly from lakes and rivers without ensuring that the water is purified for drinking.

C. Educational Facilities and Courses. Female participants would like opportunities to study and become better educated in order to improve the social fabric of their society. Young women have a tendency to voice their satisfaction with the educational opportunities provided to them in the last ten years. A few women divulged their aspirations to become doctors in the near future. The need for additional vocational and graduate courses emerged as a common theme expressed across all groups.

Female, 14, Student *“My mother and father got upset with each other and fought because I wanted to study. They were disappointed but now they are aware that we need educational facilities. The priority is my education and becoming a doctor.”*

Education and gender equality was strongly emphasized across all groups as a positive development. Education is regarded to be the best means through which the youth can have opportunities and control their future. Both male and female students expressed a strong desire to reach their highest potential through education.

D. Reliable Electricity. Participants emphasized the importance of having 24-hour electricity. This will enable them to perform their daily tasks effortlessly.

E. Vendors in the Markets. The male participants prefer to have a market with fixed price goods, which is unusual in a country where haggling is a part of business culture. They also identified the need of having dry and cold storage areas for various food items. This would provide access to goods during the winter time when the transport of goods is limited due to the inclement weather conditions. As far as services they would like to see offered nearby the market, the participants identified hotels, parks, picnic areas and mosques.

Male, 38, Shopkeeper *“If there was a market, the prices could have been stable and people could sell their products. There should be parks and other picnic resorts.”*

Male 50, Shopkeeper *“There should be parks and also cold storages for fruits so that people could store their gardens fruits.”*

Male, 37, Teacher *“The market is an urgent requirement of the whole province where people could find and fulfill their needs. Unfortunately, due to lack of roads, there is no market and our products are sold at very low prices.”*

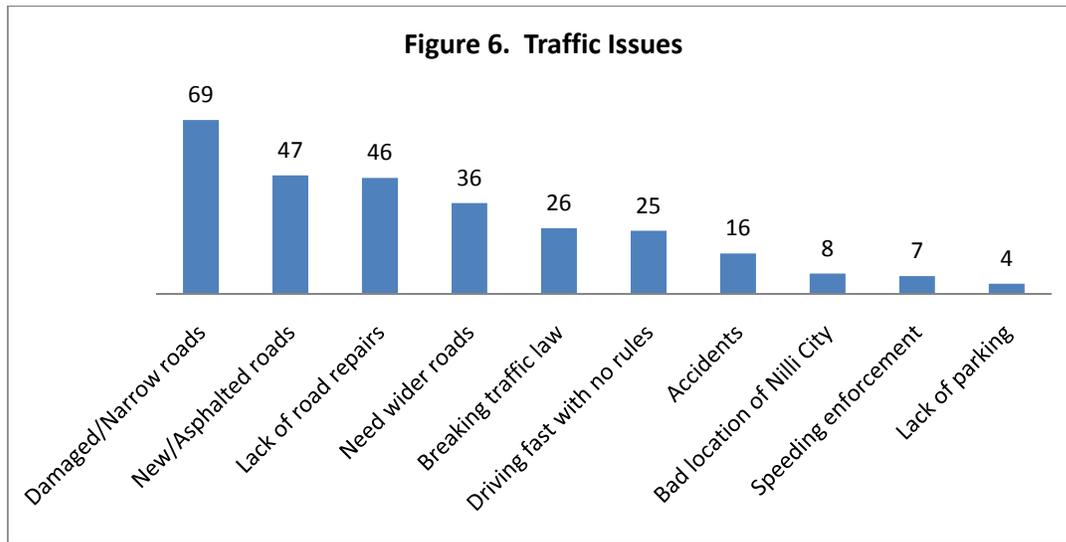
The participants were asked what vendors they would like to see in a market. The female participants were eager to have stores sell shoes, clothes, cosmetics, equipment and tools for sewing and tailoring, as well as bookstores and libraries. The female participants voiced their preference of having a market for women only. Many women find it difficult to buy female products in male-run shops.

Traffic and Snow Issues

Male, 21, Graduated Student *“The main problem is the snow. The snow completely destroys and makes the roads hard to travel on. The government built new roads and a bridge but they didn’t last a year as these structures got badly damaged.”*

Damaged, narrow and inadequate roads seem to be the most prevalent problems affecting the people in the Daykundi province. Figure 6 indicates the most cited problems the participants encounter when it comes to traffic and the roads.

Figure 6. List of Traffic Related Issues



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

The figure shows that the most commonly cited traffic problems revolve around the lack of high quality roads. Participants reported that the main road in Nili is virtually nonexistent. The streets in the Daykundi province, especially roads connecting the villages, badly need to be rebuilt and paved. Participants agreed that the roads should be widened so two-way roads could be introduced in order to prevent frequent accidents from occurring on single lane roads. Fatal accidents and disregard of traffic laws are other common issues in Nili.

Female, 55, Work Advisor “If it would be asphalted children will not go under cars, we will come and go easily. The space for roads are too limited and two cars cannot pass easily, one of them must stay in a bigger place then the next has to pass.”

Because of its remote location and lack of general development the residents of Daykundi province believe that they have a much lower quality of life than residents of any other Afghan provinces. When asked whether leveling the Nili entrance road is considered to be a priority for them, the participants virtually unanimously responded that such initiative would be heartily welcomed.

Due to unpaved or nonexistent roads, the inhabitants of Nili lack basic goods and services that are easily available in other Afghan provinces. For instance, goods at the Nili bazaar are two or three times as high as those in Kabul. When winter comes Nili residents are faced with severe food shortages because of the road blocks that often occur due to heavy snow. Access to the hospital and the bazaar is also limited by poor roads.

When asked whether graveling the road was a priority for them, virtually all participants agreed that the road must be graveled in order to prevent accidents and reduce the amount of dust. In addition to roads, the participants suggested that sidewalks should be built. When nearly all participants asked about the city’s role in snow removal, they agreed that it is the municipality’s responsibility to clean the snow from the roads and make them accessible during the winter.

Female, 20, Student “Bad roads, small roads, drivers are not driving well on the roads. There is a lack of municipal attention being paid to that issue, because there are a lot of accidents in Nili.”

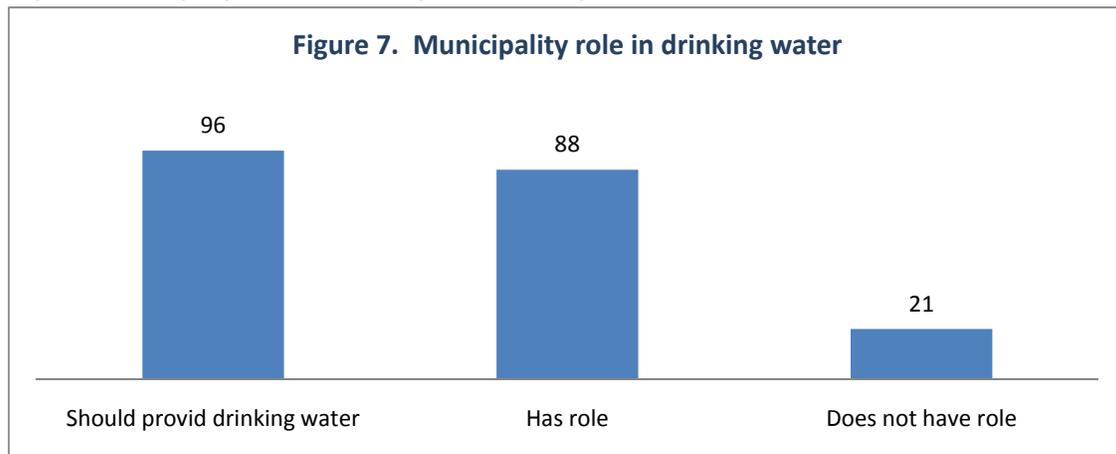
Drinking Water

Male, 42, Shopkeeper “The public health ministry should increase public awareness. One of the ways of cleaning the water is to boil it and add chlorine, but the people don’t have the means. There has not been such an outreach through publications and dissemination of information.”

Nearly all participants report not having access to a source of potable drinking water. Several participants shared that they had to dig their own wells in order to satisfy the need for drinking water. Others reported using the water from springs and rivers without implementing any purification methods.

Participants felt that the municipality should take the lead on these issues either by providing households or neighborhoods with water or providing citizens with the means or support to treat water.

Figure 7: Municipality's Role in Providing 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.

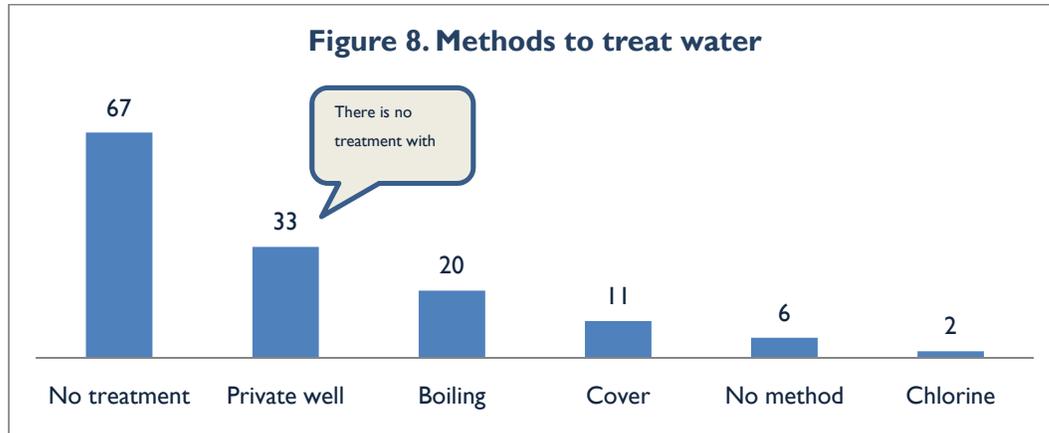
When people were asked about the methods used to treat the water in their homes, the participants were not knowledgeable about the basic water purification methods. As figure 8 demonstrates, most participants do not use any water purification methods.

Female, 55, Women’s Advisor “We drink it as is and don’t have any good things to clean the water due to economic problems”

Female, 40 Carpenter “We drink our drinking water as it is and we don’t have good method to boil it and drink it.”

A few participants are firm believers that drilling deep wells will ensure the availability of clean potable water. Those who managed to dig their own wells generally do not use any additional water purification methods. A few participants, primarily from business and religious leaders' groups, mentioned boiling the water before consumption. Placing covers on the storage containers to prevent debris from falling into the water appears to be another belief the participants have about successful ways to prevent water contamination. The doctors usually mention the use of chlorine.

Figure 8: List of Water Treatment Methods



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.

Health Impact water, bathes and sewage

The participants were asked to describe the impact that drinking water has on their personal and/or their family's health. Participants in virtually all groups came to a consensus that clean drinking water has positive impacts on their personal health and their family's health. Clean water is seen as beneficial for preventing gastrointestinal discomforts as well as for preserving long-lasting good health.

A general consensus was reached by the participants in terms of the need for building public baths. They described public baths as a necessary addition to the new proposals being developed by the municipality.

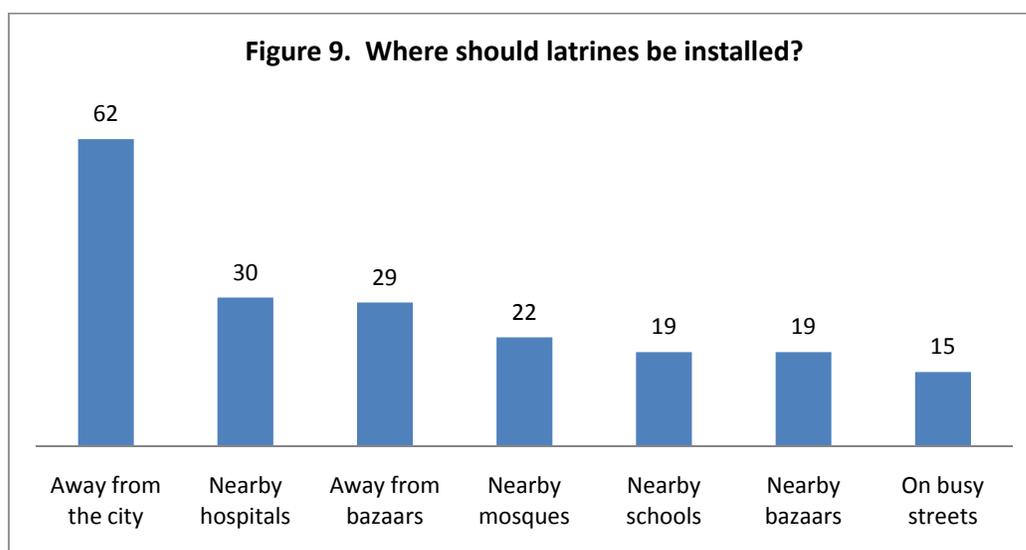
Participants were asked about the impact sewage had on their households' health. Participants understand that unclean, dirty water can be considered the main incubator of disease. Diarrhea, typhoid, malaria and other gastrointestinal diseases can be contracted by the consumption of unclean water.

Sewage disposal concerns and the location of water to houses/bazaar was an issue discussed in all of the focus groups. Along with the garbage issues, sewage issues tend to be pivotal to the health and well-being of the population. When asked what they would like to see done about sewage improvements in their homes or neighborhoods the participants agreed that sewage needs to be at a

distance of their homes due to its unhygienic properties, but citizens offered little else in terms of municipal or family activities.

Finally, participants were asked to think about the places most suitable for the installation of public latrines as depicted in Figure 9. Participants agreed that latrines should be provided in those areas where there are crowds so they could be easily accessible to the public. Nevertheless, the existing latrines are regarded as toxic, dirty and with foul order, so when this is discussed citizens also want them placed away from the city center, bazaars, water wells and populated places.

Figure 9. Places Where Public Latrines Should be Installed



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.

In the religious leaders' groups two opposing views regarding the location of latrines were presented.

Male, 50, Senior Mullah “The public latrines should be far away from the bazaar. The latrines should never be close to the bazaar and hotels. The toilets should have underground containers and tunnels and the storage should be transferred to a suitable place. The government and municipality should do a lot regarding the resolution of this issue.”

Male, 48, Senior Mullah “I am opposes to this opinion because it depends on the capability of the municipality. Latrines and toilets are important necessities of the city. If the toilets are placed far, people cannot find them. The toilets should be cleaned consistently.”

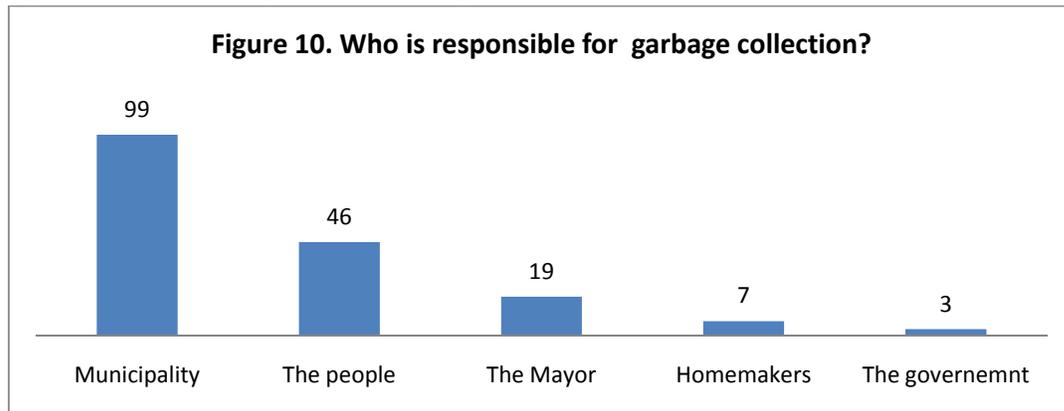
Garbage Issues

Participants were asked to describe the role that their neighbors play in garbage collection. Most participants believe that neighbors play an important role in garbage collection. Several participants

complained that their neighbors have not been doing a proper job collecting and disposing of their garbage. The majority of participants collaborate with their neighbors in order to solve garbage related issues. Nevertheless, there is a general tendency to think that every individual should ensure that the garbage is collected and disposed of properly.

Figure 10 represent the entities that the participants' held most accountable for garbage collection. The role of garbage collection is assigned to women inside a house. The majority of participants assign the responsibility of garbage collection to the municipality who needs to make sure that the garbage is collected and disposed of properly. Others consider this to be a joint effort of the residents and the municipality alike.

Figure 10. List Those Responsible for Garbage Collection

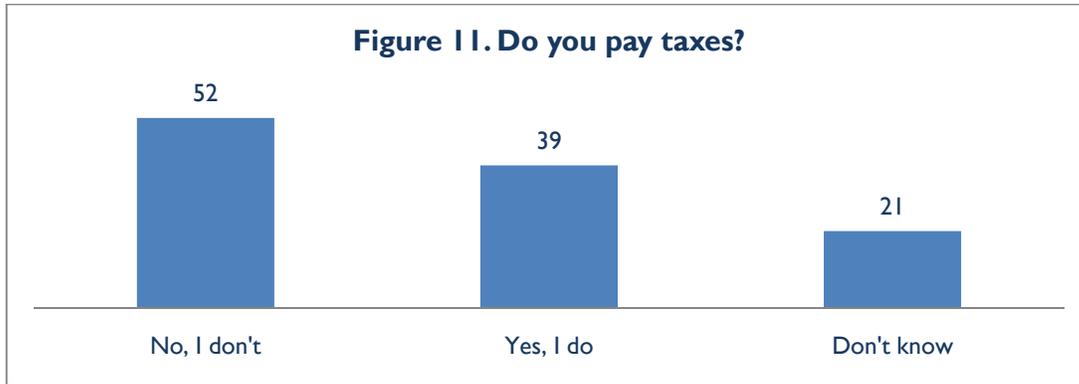


Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis lists the entities responsible for garbage collection.

Taxation

Citizens do not pay taxes, and none of the participants are knowledgeable about tax issues. The businessperson group provided more astute answers, as they are usually required to pay taxes for their shops and pass-through fees when market vendors ask for payment for livestock sales.

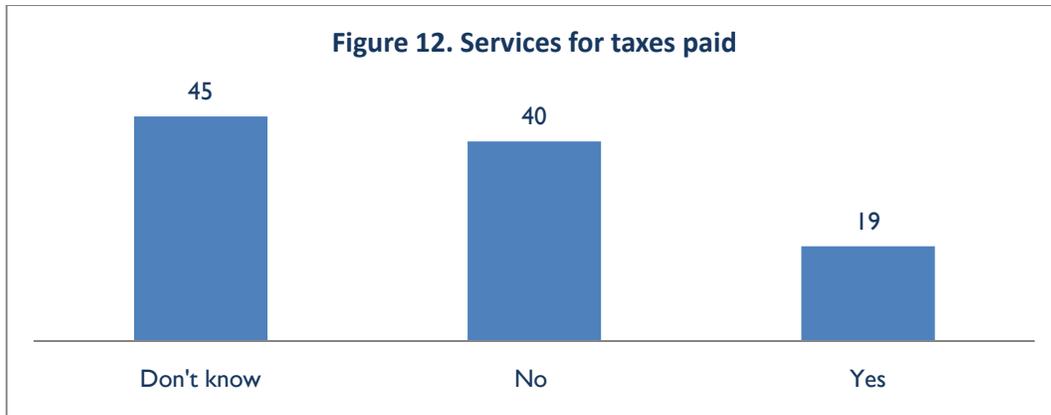
Figure 11. Do you Pay Taxes?



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.

Those who pay taxes do not seem to have a problem with the payment in principle, but they do have a problem with the inadequacy of the services rendered as a result of the taxes they pay. The expectation that basic services will be provided was reported as the strongest motivation to pay taxes. Participants feel that any taxes collected should help the government rebuild Daykundi's infrastructure. Tax money in their opinion should ensure that the roads are properly constructed and repaired and that the city's cleanliness becomes the first priority.

Figure 12. Do you Receive Services for the Taxes you Pay?



Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis refers to whether they receive the services for the taxes they pay.

When asked whether they receive the services for the taxes they pay the participants were divided into three groups:

- (A) Those that do not know whether they receive any services;
- (B) Those that think that no services are provided to them; and
- (C) Those that think that limited services are provided to them.

Participants feel that most of the annual taxes collected by the government are not spent for the use of the people, but the majority of the participants had a difficult time identifying the services provided to them by the government. Most businesspeople stated that they pay the store taxes either on a monthly or annual basis and did not see a corresponding amount of services.

When asked whether taxes should increase if the provision of services also increased the participants agreed that the only justification for raising the taxes would be the provision of significantly more services.

Male, 21, Student *“People need the government and the government needs the people. We are ready to pay high taxes if the municipality works for the people.”*

Additionally, the government was urged to stop ongoing corruption. The words of a Senior Mullah illustrate this concern:

Male, 48, Senior Mullah *“There are negative things throughout the country. In Daykundi, the most negative matter is the corruption and bribery at government’s offices. Even the president accepts these facts. Everything has a limit, but here it has passed the limit. None of the officials are loyal to their duty. The public works directorate has done nothing. The municipality does very limited work. The new city plan was intended to be ready for distribution but is not yet ready.”*

Participants were asked if increased fines would increase compliance with property taxes and citizens did not respond to this as a motivating factor. Instead, they responded that appeals for civic duty and increased improvements could be better motivators to pay taxes.

Municipal Governance

The groups were asked whether they think the mayor and the municipality care about them. There was a general tendency across groups to agree on the fact that the municipality and the mayor do not care about them and the lack of city improvements was their evidence. Citizens were not familiar with the identity of the mayor. Responses were more neutral than negative in Nili. In other cities, citizens said the Mayors care for the rich, prominent families, businessmen or their own agenda.

Female, 20, unemployed *“The municipality is responsible. She is the mayor of the city but is not taking part in the development and cleaning up of the city.”*

Teenagers, young males and females as well as older men and women all expressed their dissatisfaction with the way the municipality and the mayor serve the residents of Nili.

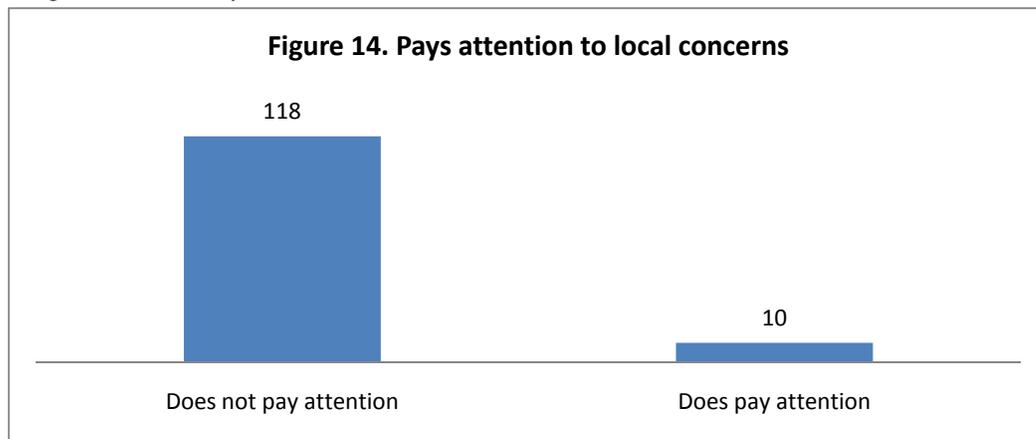
Male, 50, Senior Mullah *I think she does care about the Nili city but she doesn’t have the management team to implement her ideas.”*

The business community has a positive opinion of the work that the municipality and the mayor perform in order to keep the city functioning. None of the groups-- except for the businessmen and the religious leaders-- were aware that a new female mayor has been elected to serve their city.

Participants identified the bazaar cleaning as the most identified service in the municipality. They expressed gratitude for such an important service. Businesspeople generally see the mayor as a person who is trying to make improvements and has good morals and simply does not have the tools it takes to get the job done. They think she can manage the municipality well, but that she does not have the adequate funds and equipment to find a solution for many problems Nili faces.

Participants were asked whether the mayor cares about their problems (Figure 14).

Figure 14: The Mayor Cares about



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.

Businesspeople and religious leaders' groups reported having more access to the mayor as compared to the other groups who did not know much about her.

When asked what service they would like to see provided to them in a municipal center, participants quickly named a variety of goods and services they would like in a market. They first mentioned improvements in terms of roads, electricity and potable water. Hospitals, clinics, hotels and schools were of secondary concern, followed by pharmacies and parks. Stores selling electrical equipment, cars, clothes, and stationery were also mentioned.

Additional services such as educational courses were mentioned by many female participants. Women would like to have carpentry, tailoring and sewing courses available to allow them to contribute to the family finances. Female participants identified a need for literacy courses as well.

Registration Issue

Older male participants were asked about the issues related to land or home registration. The participants stated that land registration is not common, but some younger men mentioned they had registered their land with no difficulty. This is how older men responded to questions of land registration:

“Our house is not registered, no one registers his/her house. We didn't go there.”

“Our house is also not registered.”

“No there aren't obstacles, we didn't register our home.”

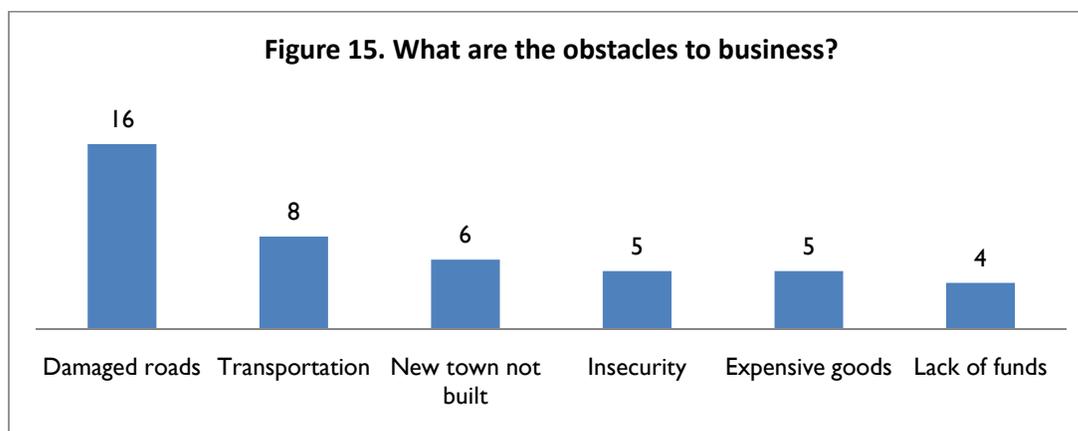
Business Community

Business group participants agreed that they never have difficulty going through the steps in the process of registering their business ventures at the municipality offices.

Male, 28, Shopkeeper “According to the declaration which has been announced from the municipality, everyone has to register his shop and in registering we didn't have any problems.”

The business group participants voiced their concern with a variety of issues preventing them from running their businesses in a more efficient way. Shopkeepers expressed difficulty preserving fruits and vegetables during the summer. They would like to learn ways of safekeeping and transporting their products in a manner that will prevent them from spoiling on their way from Kabul. Additionally, a few participants think that business transactions in Nili are conducted in an old-fashioned manner. Trading skills and professional trainings would enable them to improve their businesses. When asked what supporting businesses are missing in the city, the participants provided an array of responses presented in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Business Obstacles



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

Damaged roads coupled up with the lack of transportation are the main obstacles preventing many businessmen from smoothly conducting a business in trade and shops. Since the road to Kandahar is dangerous and the road from Kabul is damaged, the import of goods to Nili province is expensive

and time consuming. This impacts the price of all goods in the marketplace –some are double the amount that similar goods would cost in Kabul. Participants believe that supporting infrastructure needs to be in place in order for them to be able to compete in the business sector.

The participants were asked about improvements to the process of bidding on municipal or government contracts. The majority of businessmen did not bid on the contract because they were unaware that a bidding process exists. The main obstacle for not bidding on contracts was the lack of money and the general lack of information on the bidding process. As far as assistance was concerned the business community would like to receive trainings intended to improve their businesses.

Business leaders were asked whether there are any tax issues that need to be explained to them; however, they haven't specified any issues. Finally, the business community would like to be more informed about contract law as they have no information about this topic. One participant stated that the contract law can only be effective if it is applied equitably across the board.

Religious Community

Male, 50, Senior Mullah “We are Muslim and the clerics have religious importance for the Muslim society. The clerics have an important role in preaching Islam and its teachings. According to a quote, the mosques are the strongholds and they should not be left vacant. There should be mosques everywhere. Mosques should be in every district of Nili especially in the central district.”

Religious leaders were asked to describe the role of the mosque. The mosque is generally regarded as a safe place where people to come together in order to pray, discuss and solve problems. Mosques are intended to educate the people about social, political and religious teachings as well as to inform them of the new developments in their respective communities.

When asked what differences they see between the municipal government and the mosque the religious leaders agreed that the services provided by the municipality are essential for the smooth functioning of the city, but the main focus of the mosques should revolve around prayers and educating people about various topics. Religious leaders agree that more attention should be paid to rebuilding mosques as they serve a central role in Afghanistan's society.

According to religious leaders the city or the provincial government or agencies should consider assisting the mosques with the following services:

- A) Provide cleaning services to the mosques
- B) Ensure proper repairs are being done
- C) Provide carpets for the mosques
- D) Remove the snow form the premises during the winter
- E) Implement equitable laws

When asked how the mullahs and the municipality should handle discussion and coordination of local problems and new initiatives, religious leaders unanimously agreed that they need to work together in discussing the problems and cooperating on the resolutions of such problems.

“The municipality and the religious leaders should work together and cooperate with each other and discuss their problems together so that they could find a solution for their problems together.”

“Discussion is important between both so that they can help each other.”

“With cooperation and collaboration they (municipality and mosques) will be united.”

Women’s Issues

Both older and young women were asked a set of questions pertaining to their everyday life including services they would like to see offered to them.

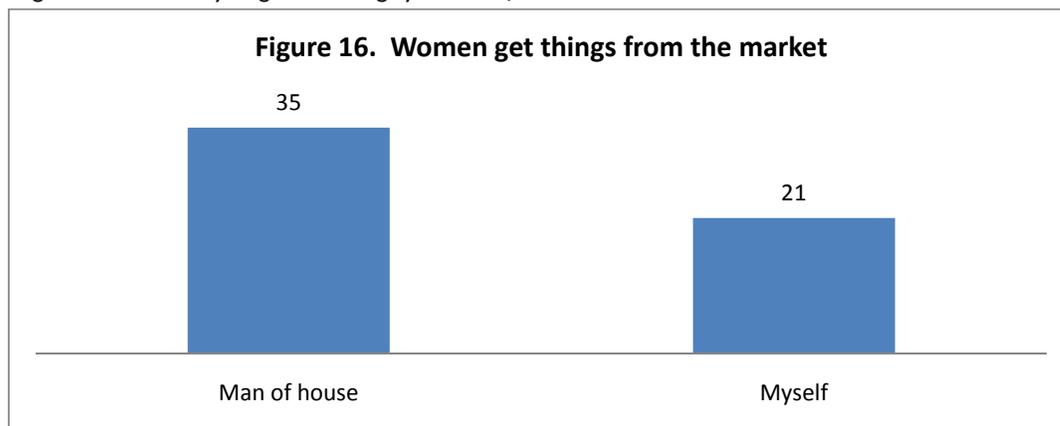
Figure 16 shows the responses to the question of how women get the things they need from the market. More than 3/5 of the female participants state that their male counterparts are responsible for buying the things they need. Slightly more than a third of women were allowed to get the things they need on their own. There was support for a women-only market, a broader selection and transport to and from the market as is shown by a conversation among 20-year old women.

“If there would be such a market all of our needs would be covered because now we have many problems. The things which we need are not found in the shops.”

“The market with fixed prices would be good. We don’t know where the shops for clothes and shoes are located especially for the women. It would be better to have the market of women because women are ashamed to buy their things from male run shops.”

“In a market everything should be available. If there were other services provided such as a car that can help us transport our materials, it would be helpful. The example is Kabul city which has buses and the fare is 2 or 3 Afghani.”

Figure 16: How do you get the things you need from the market?



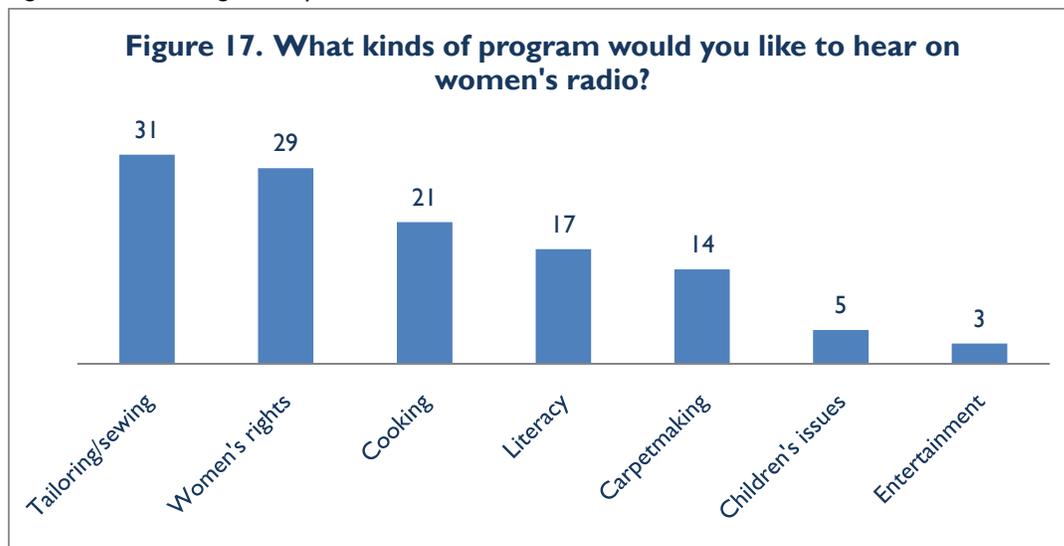
Y Axis refers to the number of individuals that mentioned the theme in their respective groups. The X Axis states whether a woman is or is not allowed to go outside of the house.

When asked what they would like to see included in a women’s market, female participants identified clothes, shoes, kitchen utensils, women’s goods, libraries and stationary stores. Virtually all of the respondents agreed that they would be more comfortable buying their needs from a female shopkeeper.

The women’s groups were asked if there are any questions or issues that they would like to raise with the mayor. The most important messages women would like to bring to the Mayor’s attention is sanitation, garbage collection and removal. The mayor is also asked to work diligently for the people of Nili and ensure that the Daykundi province benefits from the developmental projects that other provinces in Afghanistan are enjoying.

Figure 17 represents the top choices participants shared when asked what programs they listen to during the radio time allocated for women.

Figure 17. Radio Program Topics



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

The women’s groups reported having a variety of radio programs available to them. Some of their favorite programs discuss tailoring and sewing skills, followed by women’s rights, cooking, literacy, carpet making, children’s issues and general entertainment.

When asked whether there are educational or vocational issues that will ensure an income source, women identified a few courses such as carpet making, tailoring and ball sewing (top dozi).

Teenagers

Teenagers were asked what would motivate them to water trees in the neighborhood that the city planted. The biggest motivation for participants revolved around keeping their city green. Participants were willing to water the trees in order to help improve the image of the city. In addition, the fruit bearing trees provide an economic incentive to the city as the fruits could be harvested and the proceeds from the sale could generate income for the people.

Finally, the male teenage participants were shown a picture of a new type of two-holed toilet where everything in the toilet could be used faster as fertilizer as it is designed with two holes, one for liquid and one for solid waste. There was a general agreement among the teenage group regarding the usefulness of such toilet.

Male, 17, Student *“They are very good and clean and it would be very good for the people if they get these kinds of toilets.”*

ANNEX

ANNEX I – Focus Group Questions

1. When you think about the city and the quality of life here in Nili, 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 city services impact your life most in the city? Or what is your priority?
6. What is the worst thing about traffic or roads?
7. Is road leveling of the Nili entrance road a priority for you?
8. What is the city's role in snow removal? What would you like to see done each winter?
9. When it comes to a market, what vendors would you like to see included, and what other services would you like near the market?
10. What is the municipality's role in drinking water?
11. Do you do anything 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. Where would you like to see done about sewage improvements in your home or neighborhood?
15. Where have you noticed a public latrine is needed in the city?
16. Do you think a public baths are needed in Nili?
17. How do neighbors play a role in garbage in neighborhood and cleanliness?
18. Who is accountable for garbage collection?
19. What taxes and fees does your family pay?
20. What is your strongest motivation to pay taxes?
21. Do you think you get services for the fees or taxes you pay?
22. What do you think the Mayor and municipality care about?
23. There is a discussion about building a municipal center. What service would you like to see provided to help you?
24. When you encounter problems, how often do you ever contact the municipal government to resolve the problems you are facing?
25. For those of you who have interacted with the municipality, how was that experience?
26. Do you feel like the Mayor and municipality staff care about people like you? (Youth, business, women, teenagers).

Questions for Religious Focus Groups

27. What do you think is the role of the Mosques in the city?
28. Considering services provided to citizens, what differences do you see between the municipal government and Mosque in your city?
29. 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?

30. How should the mullahs and the municipality handle discussion and coordination of local problems and new initiatives?

Questions for Business Groups

31. For those of you who registered their business with the municipality, what was the process for you? Walk us through steps.
32. What skills important to your business are missing in the workforce? (What recruitment problem are you having?)
33. What businesses are missing in the city that could help you in running your business? (Sometimes transit, accounting, equipment repair, etc).
34. For those of you who have bid on contracts, what would you do to improve the process?
35. 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?
36. Would you be interested in any training or assistance from the city?
37. Are the legal or tax issues that you might need explained? Does it matter to you?
38. Do you feel protected by business or contract law in dealing with the city or other business?

Questions for Men Only

39. What are the issues related to land registration that concern you?
40. What registration issues will impact you personally?
41. Are there any barriers to registering your home?
42. Do you pay property taxes? For those of you who pay the property tax is it too high for you?
43. When city services increase, should taxes be enforced and raised?
44. 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

45. How do you get the things you need from the store? What is missing in the markets?
46. What would you like to see included in a women's enclosed park / market in terms of buildings or equipment?
47. Are there any questions or issues that you would like to raise with a women's' municipal office and service desk if it existed?
48. What would you like to listen to during radio time allocated for women?
49. Are there education or vocational issues that would be helpful for you to make some money?