



Strengthening Women's Economic Empowerment (SWEEP) in Afghanistan

Women's Groups in South Asia:
Landscape, Impact, and the Future |

May 25, 2022

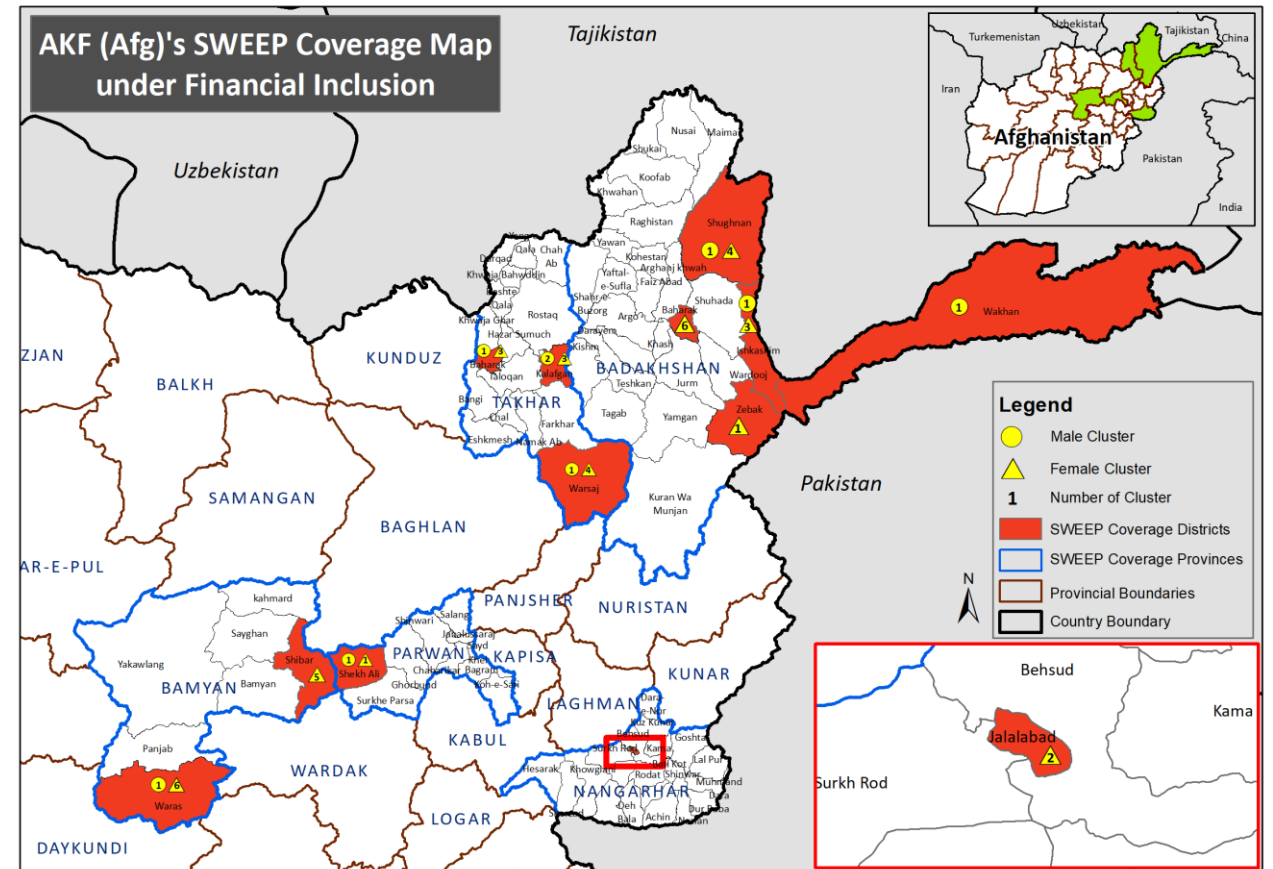
What is SWEEP?

Objective: To increase and enhance the participation of women in business support services and income-generating activities.

Beneficiaries: Poor women in select rural and peri-urban areas. Total of 4700 people, of which 70% women.

Coverage: 47 communities in 12 districts of Afghanistan, spread across 5 provinces.

Key Outcomes: Borrowing from RLF; Participation in income-generating activities; Earnings; Preservation of RLF core funds.



Adapting the SHG model in AFG

Forming Clusters of Savings Groups. Clusters of 4 to 12 pre-existing same-sex savings groups that have matured over 2+ years. ~100 members per cluster.

Introducing Cluster-Level Revolving Loan Funds. Grants of US \$5000 to establish loan fund managed by cluster, to support larger-sized loans for productive use. Compliant with Islamic finance principles.

Soft Skills and Business Development Support. Soft and business skills training for micro-enterprises. Each cluster has a trained business-resource person for follow-up support and coaching.

SWEEP Design Features

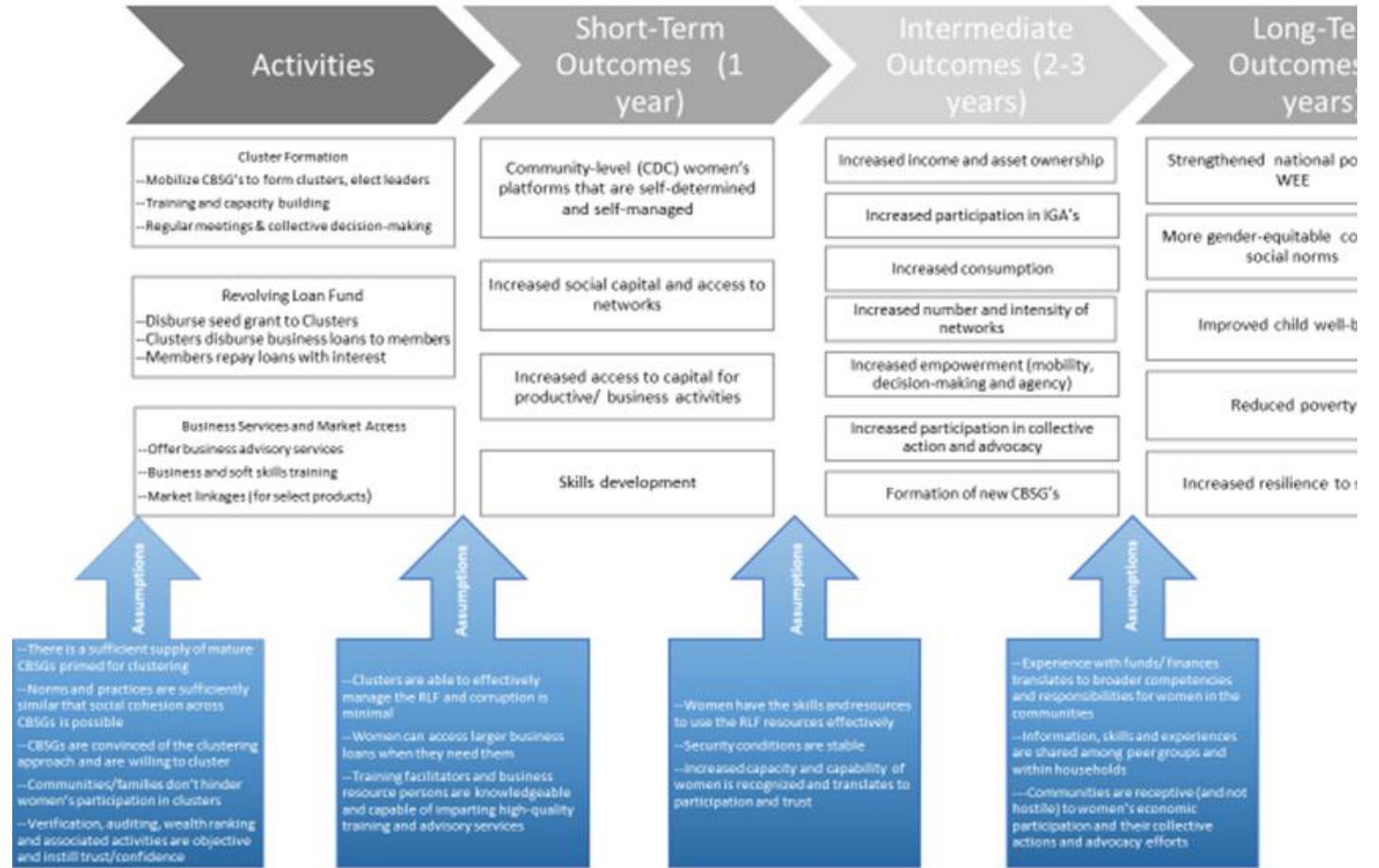
Capital Infusion to Revolving Loan Funds

- External financing can weaken sustainability by changing the incentives for joining SG.
- SWEEP provided US\$5000 grants to establish RLFs.
 - Larger loans can finance productive investments of sufficient size to facilitate repayment.
 - Other risk mitigation: SGs were formed long before this project.
- IE will report on the survival and preservation of core RLF funds.

Soft Skills

- AKF engaged Women for Women International to adapt their existing curriculum for SWEEP.
- 2748 trainees (about 60% or trainees, 85% women) received 25 hours SS training (+20 Hours business skills)
- Modules:
 - 1) Self Awareness, Gender and Women's Rights
 - 2) Setting Goals and Making Decisions
 - 3) Leadership and Communication Skills
 - 4) Well-Being

Theory of Change



Timeline



Activity	Date Completed
Baseline data collection	November – December 2018
Cluster Formation Begins	December 2018
RLF Implementation	January 2020
Qualitative Study	October – November 2020
Skills Training	November 2020- June 2021 (Covid-19)
Project End	June 2021
End-line Survey	April 2021- August 2021 (~70% completed)
Afghanistan Gender Monitoring Survey	January -February 2022
End-line Phone Survey (planned)	July-August 2022
Finalize IE	September-October 2022

Preliminary IE Results: Income-Generating Activities (Paid Work)

	Income-generating Activity			
	Participation (1=yes)	Hours Worked	Total Earnings (in log of Afghanis)	Only Non-farm/livestock Work (1=yes)
Treatment × Endline	0.084* _{7/22} (0.045)	4.053 (13.450)	0.211 (0.294)	-0.028 (0.047)
Treatment	-0.067* (0.039)	-9.868 (9.741)	0.084 (0.204)	0.036 (0.039)
Endline	0.214*** (0.031)	25.441*** (9.754)	0.529*** (0.187)	-0.188*** (0.033)
Observations	3,115	3,116	3,116	3,103
Y Mean	0.62	103.25	1.60	0.48
Y Standard Deviation	0.48	150.16	3.30	0.50

Notes: Standard errors clustered at the *cluster* level are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Preliminary IE Results: Business Start-Up & Growth

	Business Initiation and Growth			
	Productive Assets (in log of Afghanis)	Run Business (1=yes)	Help in Business (1=yes)	# Employees
Treatment × Endline	0.046 (0.229)	0.051* (0.027)	0.080*** (0.029)	0.085 (0.110)
Treatment	-0.287 (0.378)	-0.012 (0.015)	-0.024 (0.019)	-0.050* (0.029)
Endline	0.630*** (0.176)	0.145*** (0.019)	0.145*** (0.020)	0.295*** (0.082)
Observations	3,142	3,128	3,116	3,142
Y Mean	4.33	0.14	0.19	0.18
Y Standard Deviation	5.20	0.35	0.39	1.23

Notes: Standard errors clustered at the *cluster* level are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Preliminary IE Results: Household Wealth

	Household Wealth (in log of Afghanis)				
	Household Savings	Non-food Expenses	Household Assets	Productive Assets	Household Livestock
Treatment × Endline	0.841*** (0.187)	0.145** (0.067)	0.042 (0.206)	-0.106 (0.227)	0.148 (0.242)
Treatment ^{9/22}	0.127 (0.122)	-0.143** (0.062)	-0.347 (0.348)	-0.209 (0.228)	-0.294 (0.374)
Endline	0.204 (0.165)	0.420*** (0.049)	0.943*** (0.158)	0.140 (0.163)	0.506*** (0.191)
Observations	3,138	3,142	3,142	3,142	3,142
Y Mean	7.44	8.35	4.05	2.04	4.09
Y Standard Deviation	2.77	2.31	4.82	3.55	5.15

Notes: Standard errors clustered at the *cluster* level are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Preliminary IE Results: Women's Agency

	Women's Agency			
	Mobility	Household Decision Power	Economic Decision Power	Gender Attitudes
Treatment × Endline	-0.038 (0.082)	0.141*** (0.045)	0.067 (0.043)	0.019 (0.038)
Treatment	0.012 (0.058)	-0.059 (0.038)	-0.032 (0.033)	-0.009 (0.025)
Endline	0.906*** (0.056)	0.159*** (0.031)	-0.071** (0.029)	0.046* (0.025)
Observations	3,140	3,141	3,141	3,141
Y Mean	1.90	1.73	2.91	3.06
Y Standard Deviation	1.03	0.68	0.56	0.46

Notes: Standard errors clustered at the *cluster* level are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

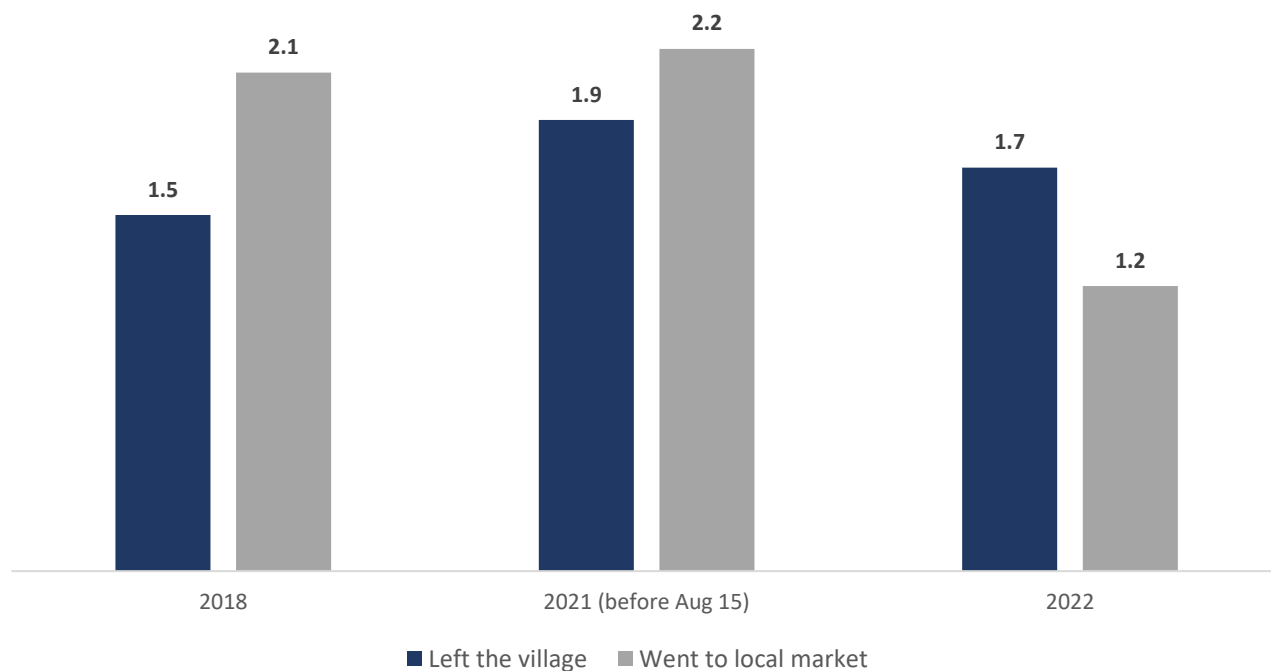
AGMS RESULTS: Mobility

Women remain mobile within villages and still meet in groups

Travel over longer distances (including to markets) is less frequent

Women more often accompanied (mostly men)

Figure 4 Number of days women left compound in a 30-day period (*N=545*)



Preliminary, not for citation

Thank you!



This presentation reflects the work of the project team at Aga Khan Foundation-Afghanistan, as well as of the SWEEP Impact Evaluation team (Shubha Chakravarty, Juliane Zenker, Matthew Morton, Sarah Haddock, Virginia Ceretti, Chiara Pasquini, and Sofoklis Goulas).

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