



Integrated Agri-Livelihood Need Assessment Report

Western Region of Afghanistan – Herat, Badghis, Farah, and Ghor



A Joint Assessment by:

Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe in collaboration with UNFAO, RSDO, and OSAA

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
ADSP	Asia Displacement Solutions Platform
AFN	Afghan Afghani
CDC	Community Development Council
CFW	Cash-for-Work
DIEM	Data in Emergencies Monitoring
DSWG	Durable Solutions Working Group
EESC	Employee Entrepreneurship Service Center
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income-Generating Activity
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
KOBO	KoBo Toolbox
LCI	Livelihood Coping Index
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSAA	Organization for Sustainable Aid in Afghanistan
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSN	Person with Specific Needs
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
RSDO	Razi Social Development Organization
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNOCHA / OCHA	(United Nations) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WR-DSWG	Western Region Durable Solutions Working Group

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Integrated Agri-Livelihood Needs Assessment is to collect, analyze, and interpret data on the Key livelihood, agricultural, and market-related challenges primarily affecting recent returnees from Pakistan and Iran, with additional insights from host community members in western Afghanistan. The assessment employed context-specific, gender-inclusive, and participatory methods, integrating mixed-method approach and community-driven approaches to ensure locally relevant, evidence-based findings that reflect diverse perspectives. Within the households surveyed it specifically aims to:

- I. Identify immediate needs such as access to agricultural inputs, livestock feed and veterinary services, and livelihood capital.
- II. Examine medium-term opportunities for resilience building through innovative vocational skills utilization, women’s economic inclusion, and local market participation.
- III. Assess food security, income sources, and production capacity to inform targeted interventions.
- IV. Provide evidence-based guidance for designing integrated, gender-responsive, and market-informed programs that strengthen self-reliance and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid.

This assessment ultimately supports Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO), Razi Social Development Organization (RSDO), and Organization for Sustainable Aid in Afghanistan (OSAA) in designing programs that link integrated Agri-livelihood activities to long-term sustainable systems strengthening, fostering durable and inclusive recovery pathways for vulnerable populations.

1.2 Summary of Finding and Key Recommendations

Thematic Area	Key Findings	Recommendations
<u>Agriculture and Land Use</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Only 36 % of households own or have access to cultivable land; most rely on sharecropping or rental. Landlessness is highest among recent returnees. II. Wheat, barley, vegetables and pulses dominate; less than half of cultivated land is irrigated and dependent on seasonal rainfall and aging canals. III. Top constraints: lack of improved seeds (88 %), fertilizer (84 %), and irrigation water (65 %). IV. Limited storage and market access depress farm-gate prices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Promote Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) through drought-tolerant crops, conservation farming, and integrated pest management to boost productivity and resilience. II. Strengthen community-based seed and knowledge systems by establishing Community Seed Banks and Farmer Field Schools for local seed production and adaptive learning. III. Expand climate-resilient irrigation by introducing solar and drip systems and forming Water User Associations for equitable management. The scale-up of solar irrigation should incorporate appropriate safeguards, including groundwater monitoring, abstraction guild lines and promotion of efficient water use practices to mitigate risks of aquifer depletion and ensure long term resource sustainability IV. Enhance farm mechanization and input access by providing technical support, small-scale equipment, and conditional input vouchers linked to farmer training and monitoring. V. Support value addition and market linkages through saffron processing, improved post-harvest handling, modern packaging, and collective marketing for smallholders. VI. Rehabilitate traditional canals and karezes, degraded farmlands and rangelands through cash-for-work (CFW) soil and water conservation projects to restore productivity and generate rural employment. Recognizing the occupational hazards inherent in karez rehabilitation, programming should incorporate structured risk assessments, safety training, technical oversight, protective equipment, and safeguarding protocols to mitigate risks and ensure safe participation of workers.

<u>Livestock</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Livestock is a key livelihood asset but faces feed shortages, disease and limited veterinary coverage II. Over 60 % of households lost part of their herds in the past two years; only 1 in 5 districts have functional vet services. III. Female-headed households depend heavily on livestock for income and coping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Provide Integrated Livestock Support Packages (fodder seed, feed mills, silage training). II. Train and equip Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) through structured competency-based training programs, including periodic refresher sessions and ongoing technical supervision, and formally link them to district veterinary offices to ensure quality assurance, reporting, and sustainable service delivery. III. Introduce Livestock Early Warning Systems (LEWS) for pasture and disease monitoring. IV. Support smallholder dairy value chains (collection points, processing kits, cold-chain micro-grants) through transparent, criteria-based micro-grant mechanisms that include clear eligibility requirements, proposal evaluation processes, and post-award monitoring to ensure accountability and sustainability. V. Rehabilitate watering points and construct climate-resilient animal shelters through community cash-for-work.
<u>Livelihood and Market Systems</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Main income sources: daily wage labor (37 %), borrowing (26 %), small-scale agriculture (16 %), petty trade (7 %). II. Most households have vocational skills but lack capital and equipment. III. Markets operate but are weakly integrated with high price volatility. IV. Women's market participation is minimal, and formal jobs are scarce (93 % unemployed or irregular income). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Adopt the Graduation Approach combining asset transfer and business coaching for returnees and other vulnerable HHs. II. Apply Market Systems Development to strengthen private input dealers and producer associations. III. Support gender-inclusive value chains (handicrafts, dairy, food processing). IV. Provide matching grants or revolving credit to micro and small enterprises through transparent, criteria-based selection processes that include defined eligibility requirements, business viability assessment, and post-award monitoring to ensure accountability and sustainability. V. Link cash-for-work to market-enabling infrastructure (storage, irrigation).

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Communities possess skills in tailoring, carpentry, mechanics and livestock management but training access is low (< 20 %). II. Barriers include low awareness, cost, distance and gender restrictions. III. Provincial centers (mainly male) exist in Herat and Farah with limited reach; INGOs/NGOs are main providers. IV. Skills mismatch and weak linkages with enterprises reduce employability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Undertake Labor Market Assessments to align training with local demand. II. Introduce dual training systems (enterprise apprenticeship + classroom modules). III. Integrate entrepreneurship, business management, financial and digital literacy into courses. IV. Establish TVET graduate tracking and mentorship platforms linked to micro-finance and business incubators. V. Expand community based, mobile and home-based TVET models for women and persons with disabilities. VI. Provide innovative and market-driven vocational programs, Strengthen TVET–market linkages through digital e-business opportunities
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Climate Resilience</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Herat and Badghis experience drought; Ghor faces chronic water scarcity; Farah faces both drought and floods. II. Traditional karez and canal systems are deteriorating with weak community maintenance. III. Few households’ practice soil conservation or use drought-resistant varieties; only 9 % are trained in climate-smart techniques. IV. 83 % of KIIs report no early-warning mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Rehabilitate traditional irrigation (karez, canals) and construct check dams, gabions, terraces through CFW. II. Establish Argo-meteorological Early Warning Systems that generate localized weather and climate advisories and translate them into actionable guidance for farmers through extension services and village information boards. Which supports informed decision on planting, irrigation, and livestock management. III. Promote agroforestry and rangeland restoration (vetiver grass, fodder trees) for erosion control. IV. Introduce solar-powered irrigation, drying and cold-storage units to reduce losses. V. Conduct climate-risk profiling per province and integrate resilience indicators (CSI, FCS, rCSI) into MEAL systems.

Table 1: Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

2 INTRODUCTION

The Integrated Agri-Livelihood Assessment was led by Help to generate a holistic understanding of the factors influencing household livelihoods in western Afghanistan. Going beyond basic socio-economic profiling, the assessment explores the interlinked dimensions of agriculture, livestock, technical and vocational skills, market systems, and climate resilience to identify the opportunities and constraints shaping income generation, food security, and resilience. The study was implemented with technical support from the FAO and data collection carried out in collaboration with RSDO and OSAA, Help's local partner organizations operating across the region. The findings will serve as a baseline for planning integrated recovery and resilience building programs, bridging immediate humanitarian support with longer-term economic empowerment and resilience strategies across the western provinces.

2.1 Objective of the Assessment

The assessment was designed to address key challenges and identify actionable opportunities across five thematic areas:

1. Agriculture and Land Use:

To assess and improve agricultural productivity and sustainability by identifying key constraints to production, evaluating land access, input and irrigation systems, and exploring opportunities for improved seed systems, crop diversification, and adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices.

2. Livestock:

To analyze livestock ownership patterns, productivity barriers, and animal health management systems in order to strengthen resilience through improved veterinary services, feed and fodder availability, and sustainable livestock production practices.

3. Livelihoods and Market Systems:

To assess household income sources, market functionality, and coping mechanisms of returnees and host communities, while identifying pathways for market revitalization, inclusive economic participation, particularly of women, youth and micro-enterprise development.

4. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET):

To assess the relevance and accessibility of vocational skills in relation to market demand, identify barriers faced by women and youth, and explore strategies to align TVET initiatives with livelihood recovery, employment creation, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

5. Climate Resilience

To assess the impacts of climate change and recurrent droughts on agriculture, livestock, and livelihoods, identify existing coping mechanisms, and promote integrated, sustainable solutions, such as early warning system, to strengthen community resilience and natural resource management.

2.2 Geographical Scope

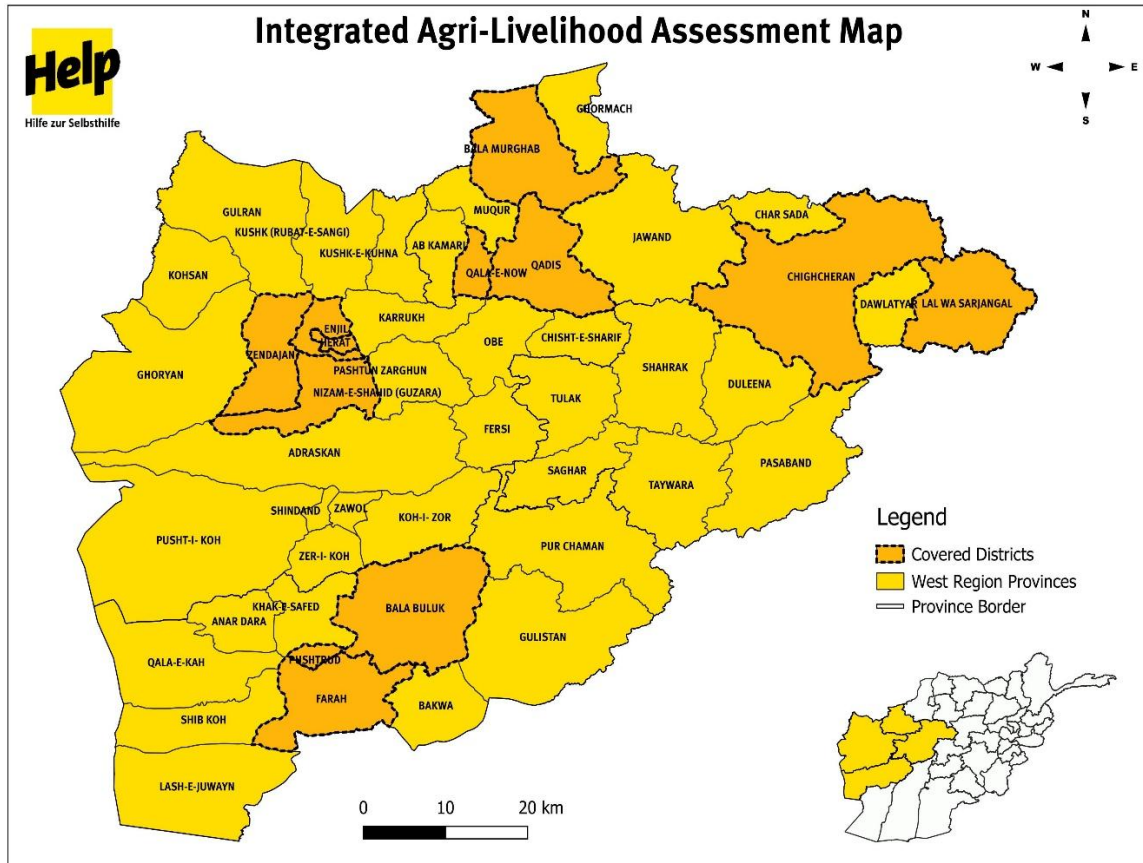


Figure 1: West Region Integrated Agri-livelihood Assessment Map

The Integrated Agri-Livelihood Assessment was conducted across four western provinces of Afghanistan Herat, Badghis, Farah and Ghor representing diverse agro-ecological zones and livelihood systems. These provinces were selected based on the high concentration of returnee populations, the prevalence of agriculture-based livelihoods, and the strategic operational presence of Help and its implementing partners RSDO, and OSAA.

Within each province, districts were chosen based on the density of returnees and in close coordination with the respective stakeholders and local authorities. The assessment covered urban, rural and peri-urban communities, enabling comparison between traditional farming systems and emerging livelihood dynamics in returnee-hosted areas.

Target Provinces and Districts

Province	Districts Covered	Key Features
Herat	Injil, Guzara, Zindajan	Irrigated agriculture and dairy; vegetable and wheat production; cross-border market access with Iran.
Badghis	Qala-e-Naw, Qadis, Bala-Murghab	Rainfed cereal and horticulture production; strong livestock base; high drought exposure.
Farah	Farah Center, Bala-Buluk, Pusht-Rod	Wheat and melon cultivation; reliance on groundwater irrigation; recurrent droughts.
Ghor	Firooz Kooh, Laal wa Sarjangal	Highland mixed farming system; limited irrigation; dependence on livestock and rainfed crops.

Table 2: Target Province and Districts

3 METODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The Integrated Agri-Livelihood Assessment adopted a mixed-methods approach to capture both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of livelihood systems across the western region of Afghanistan. The methodology combined household surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), and secondary data analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of livelihood challenges, agricultural dynamics, and recovery opportunities among returnees and host communities.

Operational Definition

For clarity and consistency in interpretation, the following definitions were applied in this assessment:

- **Working-age population:** Individuals aged 18–49 years.
- **0 working-age member (household level):** Refers to households with no individuals aged 18–49 years. Such households consist exclusively of children (under 18) and/or elderly members (above 49 years), and do not indicate empty households.
- **Currently working member:** A working-age individual who reported being engaged in any form of income-generating activity at the time of the survey (formal or informal).
- **Peri-urban area:** Settlements located on the outskirts of district or provincial centers characterized by mixed rural–urban livelihood patterns and partial access to services.
- **Persons with Specific Needs (PSN):** Individuals with disabilities, chronic illnesses, elderly dependents, or other vulnerability-related conditions that increase care burdens and limit earning capacity.
- **Market access:** Refers to household ability to physically access local markets for purchasing essential goods and inputs and/or selling produce, livestock products, or services.

3.1 Primary Data Collection

3.1.1 Household Survey

A structured household questionnaire was administered to 543 households across the four provinces. A stratified random sampling approach was used to select participating households, ensuring proportional representation across provinces and residence type (see section 3.1.3 for further details) The survey, developed by Help with technical review and feedback provided by FAO, RSDO, and OSAA, was designed and deployed through KOBO Toolbox to ensure accuracy and standardization. Data was collected by trained enumerators from Help and partner organizations.

who received pre-deployment orientation on ethical data collection, PSEA and informed consent.

3.1.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

To complement household-level data, **52 Key Informant Interviews** were conducted with community elders, agricultural and livestock officers, local market actors, and NGO representatives. Key informants were purposively selected based on their roles, sector expertise, and geographic representation across the targeted districts to ensure diverse institutional and community perspectives.

The KIIs provided deeper insights into:

- Local agricultural practices and irrigation systems.
- Barriers to input access and market participation.
- Gender dynamics in livelihoods and decision-making.
- Institutional support mechanisms and coordination among actors.

These qualitative findings contextualized the survey results, enabling a richer interpretation of observed patterns.

3.1.3 Sampling Strategy and Coverage

The sampling process followed a two-stage approach.

First, target districts were purposively selected based on verified returnee concentration data from the Western Region Durable Solutions Working Group (WR-DSWG) Returnee Data Validation & FGD Report (July 2025), as well as agricultural and livestock potential, exposure to climate-related shocks, and operational feasibility. The WR-DSWG report identified districts and locations with the highest concentration of recent returnees across Herat, Farah, and Badghis provinces, which informed geographic targeting of this assessment.

Second, within the selected districts, a stratified random sampling approach was applied at household level. Households were stratified by residence type (rural, peri-urban, urban) and returnee/host status. Within each stratum, households were randomly selected to ensure proportional representation and minimize selection bias.

For the purpose of this assessment, peri-urban areas were defined as settlements located on the outskirts of district or provincial centers characterized by mixed rural–urban livelihood patterns and limited formal service coverage.

Efforts were made to ensure gender-inclusive data collection. Both male and female respondents were interviewed, with female respondents representing 33.6 % of the total sample.

The sampling frame targeted returnee and host community households across the four provinces.

Districts were selected in coordination with provincial authorities based on:

- High concentration of returnees.
- Agricultural potential and livelihood diversity.
- Exposure to climate-induced shocks (drought, floods).
- Accessibility and partner operational presence.

3.2 Secondary Data Review

In addition to field data, the assessment drew upon secondary information from reliable humanitarian and development sources to contextualized findings. Key references included:

- FAO Food Security and Agriculture Monitoring Reports¹
- FEWS NET's Food Security Outlook².
- UNHCR Post-Return Monitoring (2025)³.
- ADSP Durable Solutions Analysis (2025)⁴.
- OCHA Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (2025)⁵.
- IOM Climate Vulnerability Assessments (2025)⁶.
- UNDP reports on skills development (2024)⁷.

These sources provided regional benchmarks for validating household-level trends and understanding broader livelihood and market dynamics in western Afghanistan.

3.3 Data Management and Analysis

Collected data were cleaned, validated, and analyzed using Power BI and Microsoft Excel. Quantitative analysis focused on descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, means, and medians), while qualitative data from KIIs were coded and thematically analyzed to identify patterns and cross-cutting issues. Findings were triangulated across data sources to ensure accuracy, validity, and representativeness.

3.4 Quality Assurance and Ethical Considerations

To ensure reliability and ethical compliance:

- Enumerators participated in a structured one-day pre-deployment training covering the objectives of the assessment, detailed review to the questionnaire, use of Kobo Toolbox, interview techniques, neutrality and bias mitigation, informed consent procedure, and protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

[1 Hunger Hotspots: FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity, June to October 2025 outlook](#)

[2 FEWS NET \(Famine Early Warning System Network\)](#)

[3 UNHCR Afghanistan: Post-Return Monitoring Report \(April 2025\)](#)

[4 ADSP: Research Brief: Durable Solutions Analysis in Herat \(July 2025\)](#)

[5 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025](#)

[6 Afghanistan Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#)

[7 UNDP Learning Skills for the Future](#)

- A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted prior to full deployment to validate question clarity, sequencing, and functionality of the digital data collection tool. Feedback from the pilot was incorporated into final tool adjustments.
- Field supervision was provided by team leaders throughout data collection to ensure adherence to protocols and provide on-site guidance where necessary.
- All participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the assessment, with no personal identifiers collected.
- Data verification, real-time monitoring through KOBO dashboards, and random back checks were conducted during collection and cleaning.
- Gender-sensitive approaches were applied in line with local cultural norms. Female enumerators were not deployed and participation of female respondents required prior consents from the male head of household. Where consent was not granted, interviews were conducted with male household members. These constraints limited female participation in the survey, which is acknowledged as a methodological limitation.

3.5 Limitations

Despite strong data quality controls, several limitations were recognized:

- Seasonal timing may have influenced responses to agricultural production and income.
- Gender representation was constrained in some districts due to cultural barriers.
- Self-reported income and expenditure data may be subject to recall bias.
- Access constraints in a limited number of remote communities particularly in hard-to-reach rural areas of Badghis and Ghor posed logistical challenges during data collection. However, the overall sample size of 543 households was achieved across the four provinces, and district-level representation was maintained.

4 SECONDARY DATA FINDING

4.1 Overview of the Secondary sources

The secondary data review for this assessment integrates information and analytical insights from a range of credible national and international sources related to agriculture, food security, livelihoods, climate resilience, and market functionality in western Afghanistan.

The FAO and WFP Food Security and Agriculture Monitoring Reports (2024–2025), along with FEWS NET’s Food Security Outlook, provided valuable insights into the prevailing food insecurity, agricultural production trends, and the impact of climate shocks such as drought and floods on household livelihoods.

The UNOCHA Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) 2025 and UNHCR Post-Return Monitoring Report (2025) offered cross-sectoral perspectives on returnee reintegration, displacement patterns, and economic vulnerabilities among households in Herat, Farah, Badghis, and Ghor. These sources emphasized the increasing reliance on negative coping mechanisms, limited access to productive assets, and high rates of debt accumulation among returnee and host populations.

The ADSP Durable Solutions Analysis (2025) and Western Region Durable Solutions Working Group (WR-DSWG) FGD Analysis (2025) provided context-specific findings on the socioeconomic challenges facing returnees, including limited employment opportunities, poor food consumption, and the scarcity of livelihood support initiatives.

Livelihoods and market system insights were drawn from Relief-Web Market Updates, World Bank Afghanistan Economic Monitors, and FEWS NET Market Price Bulletins, which illustrated persistent inflationary pressures, limited liquidity, and declining purchasing power among rural households. These reports highlight the fragility of local market systems and the need for interventions that restore demand through cash-based and production-based assistance.

On the climate front, the IOM Climate Vulnerability Assessment (2025) and UNOCHA Drought Response Plan (2025) documented severe water scarcity, recurrent droughts, and land degradation across western Afghanistan, particularly in Badghis and Ghor provinces. The findings underscore the urgent need for climate-adaptive agriculture, improved water management, and soil conservation efforts.

Finally, UNDP reports on skills development (2023–2024) provided an overview of Afghanistan’s vocational landscape, emphasizing the mismatch between training programs and market demand, and the importance of linking TVET with local economic recovery strategies.

Collectively, these sources establish a robust contextual framework for interpreting primary data findings, ensuring that local trends are understood within broader national and regional patterns of agricultural production, market functionality, and livelihood resilience.

4.2 Secondary Data Finding by Sector

4.2.1 Agriculture

- Afghanistan’s cereal production remains below average due to drought and elevated input costs. (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) GIEWS Country Brief on Afghanistan). ([Link](#))
- Rain-fed cultivation dominates across western provinces, making production highly vulnerable to rainfall variability and inadequate irrigation. (FAO “Worsening drought – Urgent call for assistance,” August 2025. ([Link](#))
- A large proportion of households report difficulties accessing improved seeds and fertilizer, as highlighted in FAO’s DIEM monitoring system. ([Link](#))
- Drought, pest infestations and deteriorating irrigation infrastructure have significantly reduced yields of wheat and vegetables, notably in provinces like Ghor and Badghis. (“Another Drought Year for Afghanistan...”, Afghanistan Analysts Network .([Link](#))
- Market-oriented agriculture remains limited: many smallholders sell produce informally at low farm-gate prices due to transport and storage constraints. (FAO “Agriculture Saves Lives” report). ([Link](#))

4.2.2 Livestock

- Livestock remains a critical livelihood asset for rural and agro-pastoral households across Afghanistan, serving as a primary source of food, income, and savings — particularly for vulnerable and returnee households ([Link](#)).
- Productivity is severely constrained by chronic feed shortages, recurrent droughts, and limited access to veterinary and extension services, resulting in declining milk output and weakened animal body condition ([Link](#)).
- Pasture and rangeland degradation has been widely reported, especially in Badghis and Ghor provinces, where successive dry seasons have depleted natural grazing resources and increased dependence on purchased fodder ([Link](#)).
- Livestock losses have been widespread over the past two years, as many households resorted to distress sales or experienced herd mortality due to inadequate feed and water availability ([Link](#)).
- Veterinary service coverage remains limited, with many rural districts lacking fully functional facilities or trained animal-health workers, constraining disease prevention and vaccination efforts ([Link](#)).
- Despite these challenges, livestock continues to function as a key coping and recovery mechanism, especially among female-headed and landless households, providing small but vital income through the sale of dairy products and poultry ([Link](#)).

4.2.3 Livelihoods and Market Systems

- According to the UNHCR Post-Return Monitoring Report (April 2025), 75 % of surveyed returnee households reported being in debt. ([Link](#))
- Market functionality has only gradually recovered since 2022, yet price volatility, declining purchasing power, and limited women’s participation remain significant constraints (UNDP Socio-Economic Review 2023-24). ([Link](#))
- SMEs in Afghanistan face weak enterprise environment, limited access to capital, and subdued demand—though specific figures remain unavailable. ([Link](#))

4.2.4 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

- ILO progress report (2023–2024) reveal a persistent gap between available training programs and local labor market needs. ([Link](#))
- Women’s participation in the formal economy and vocational training remains extremely low; UNDP’s review notes that only 7 % of women were employed outside the home in 2024. ([Link](#))
- Many vocational programs lack robust follow-up support for job placement or business start-ups. ([Link](#))

4.2.5 Climate Resilience

- Western Afghanistan faces severe and recurrent droughts, with Badghis, Farah and Ghor among the most drought-affected provinces (UNOCHA) ([Link](#)).
- Western Afghanistan continues to face recurrent droughts and water scarcity, with significant impact on livelihoods and agricultural productivity (UNDP Socio-Economic Review 2023-24). ([Link](#))
- Limited access to irrigation and unsustainable land use practices have exacerbated soil erosion and reduced agricultural productivity. ([Link](#))

- Many communities in Afghanistan report limited awareness of adaptation options and weak early-warning systems for climate-related shocks, constraining their capacity to implement climate-smart agricultural practices. ([Link](#))
- FAO’s drought monitoring data indicates that seasonal water availability is 30–50% below normal in most rural districts. ([Link](#))
- Community awareness of climate-smart practices remains low; many households rely on reactive coping mechanisms such as asset sales or migration. ([Link](#))

5 PRIMARY DATA FINDINGS

5.1 General Information

5.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

The gender distribution of respondents shows a significant imbalance, with male participants (361) comprising the majority compared to female participants (182). This disparity where men represent nearly two-thirds of all respondents reflects common field realities in Afghanistan, where cultural norms and mobility restrictions often limit women’s participation in surveys and public consultations. Nevertheless, the inclusion of 182 women (approximately 33%) indicates a meaningful effort to capture women’s perspectives, particularly regarding household livelihoods, agricultural involvement, and coping mechanisms. The gender gap in participation underscores the importance of ensuring greater female representation in future assessments.



Figure 2: Gender of the respondents

5.1.2 Province of the Respondents

The chart shows that Herat has the highest number of respondents (174), followed by Ghor (129), while Farah and Badghis each have 120. This distribution suggests that data collection was more concentrated in Herat, due to its larger population, status as a major return area, and accessibility compared to the other provinces. The relatively balanced participation across the remaining provinces still provides a fair regional representation for comparative analysis.

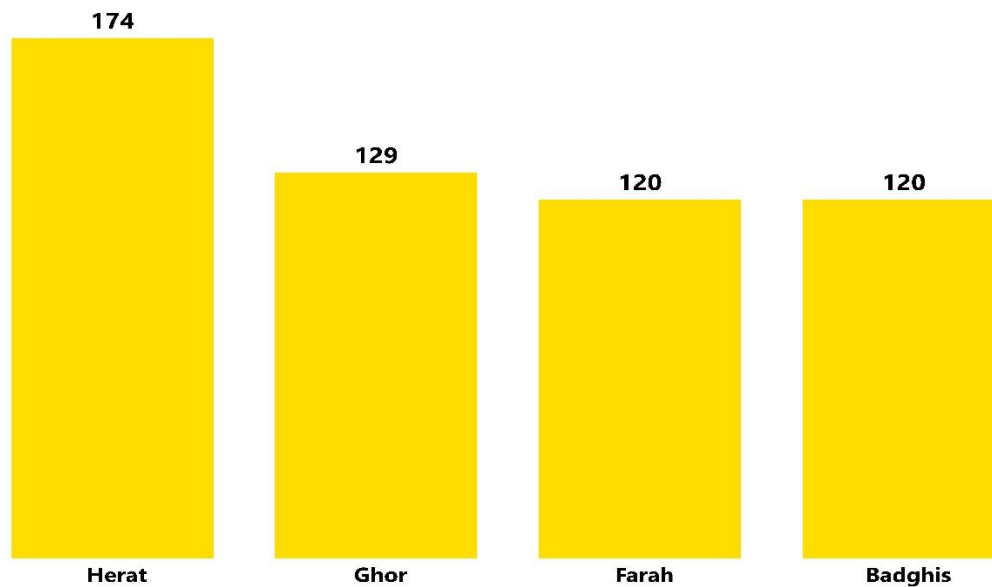


Figure 3: Province of the Respondents

5.1.3 Residence Type of the respondents

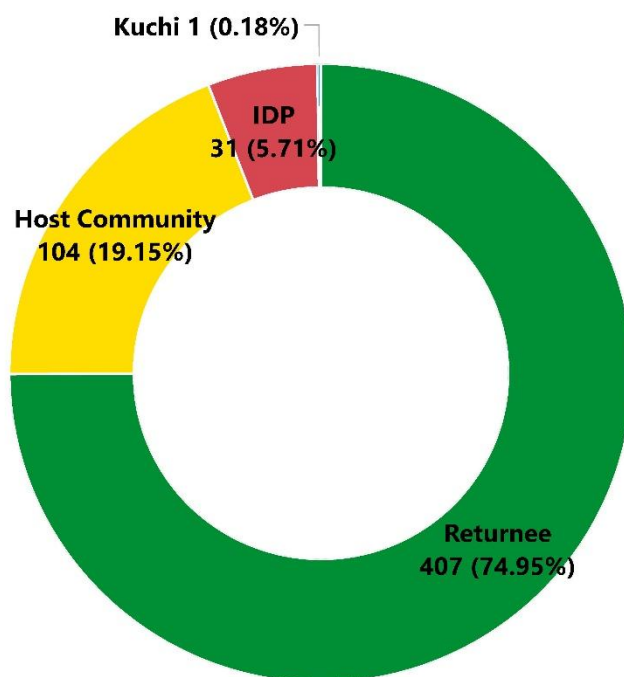


Figure 4: Residence Type

The majority of respondents are returnees (74.95%), followed by host community members (19.15%), IDPs (5.71%), and a very small proportion of Kuchi nomads (0.18%). Among the returnees, 357 individuals (nearly three-quarters) reported returns within the past year, indicating a recent wave of return migration. This underscores the need for targeted livelihood and reintegration support, as most households are still in the early stages of resettlement and recovery, while the inclusion of host and displaced populations ensures a comprehensive understanding of local dynamics and community cohesion.

5.1.4 Residence Area of the Respondents

No	Province	Urban	Rural	Peri-Urban	Total
1	Herat	52	60	62	174
2	Badghis	3	111	6	120
3	Farah	8	62	50	120
4	Ghor	32	66	31	129
Total		95(17.5%)	299 (55%)	149 (27.5%)	543

Table 3: Residence Area

The survey shows that most respondents (55%) reside in rural areas, while 27.5% live in peri-urban and 17.5% live in urban settings. This distribution reflects the predominantly rural nature of the assessed provinces, where agriculture and livestock are the main livelihood sources. Herat has the highest urban representation, whereas Badghis is largely rural. The presence of peri-urban respondents, especially in Herat and Farah, indicates growing linkages between rural and urban economies, emphasizing the need for context-specific livelihood and service delivery interventions across different settlement types.

5.1.5 Occupation of the Respondents

Among both returnees and host community members, the top five occupations are:

1. Unemployed/No current occupation (200 respondents), a major concern among both groups, especially recent returnees facing reintegration challenges.
2. Daily wage laborers (102 respondents) common among men in both returnee and host communities, reflecting reliance on unstable, low-income work.
3. Farmers (98 respondents) primarily from rural areas, highlighting continued dependence on small-scale agriculture.
4. Housewives/Homemakers (79 respondents) representing women engaged in unpaid domestic labor, more prevalent among host communities.
5. Skilled workers (22 respondents) including tailors, carpenters, masons, and electricians, showing limited but important vocational engagement.

Overall, high unemployment and reliance on casual labor are key challenges across both population groups, underlining the need for targeted livelihood and vocational support programs.

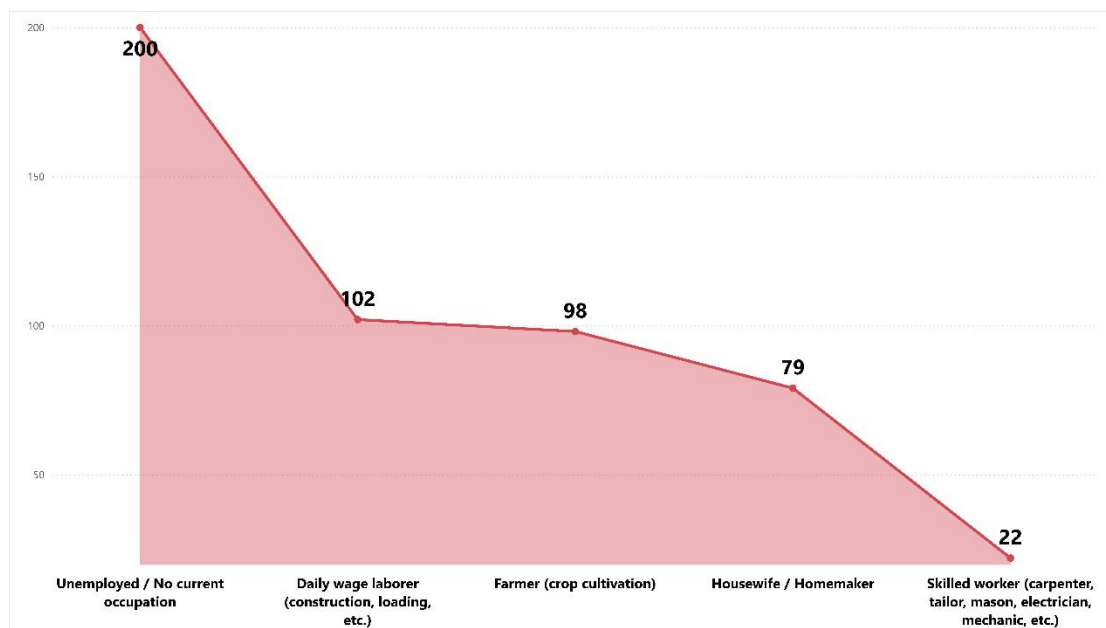


Figure 5: Occupation Status of the Respondents

5.1.6 Primary Source of Income of the Respondents

Among both returnees and host community members, daily labor without a contract (201 respondents) stands out as the most common source of income, reflecting widespread reliance on informal and unstable work. Borrowing and loans (139 respondents) rank second, highlighting economic vulnerability and the frequent use of debt to meet daily needs. Agriculture (84 respondents) remains a key income source, particularly for host communities with access to land and irrigation, while returnees often face obstacles in regaining agricultural assets. Small businesses (40 respondents) and livestock activities (35 respondents) contribute modestly to household income, whereas only three individuals reported formal employment.

Across the assessed provinces, the average monthly household income remains extremely low approximately 3,160 AFN (≈USD 45) in Herat, 4,207 AFN (≈USD 60) in Badghis, 2,968 AFN (≈USD 42) in Farah, and 2,766 AFN (≈USD 39) in Ghor, with an overall average of 3,256 AFN (≈USD 46) per household per month. As this figure represents household-level income, comparison with the national poverty line requires per capita estimation. Based on an average household size of 7 persons, consistent with national demographic estimates reported in the UNDP *Afghanistan Socio-Economic Outlook 2023* (which estimates an average household size of approximately 6.6 persons), the estimated per capita monthly income is approximately 465 AFN (≈USD 7). This level of income is well below Afghanistan’s national poverty line of 2,268 AFN per person per month (≈USD 29), as reported in the *UNDP Afghanistan Socio-Economic Outlook 2023*.

These figures demonstrate that most households particularly returnees are living far below subsistence levels, struggling to meet essential needs such as food, rent, and healthcare. Overall, both groups depend heavily on casual labor and informal borrowing, emphasizing the urgent need for livelihood diversification, vocational training, and financial inclusion programs to strengthen household resilience and promote sustainable income generation.

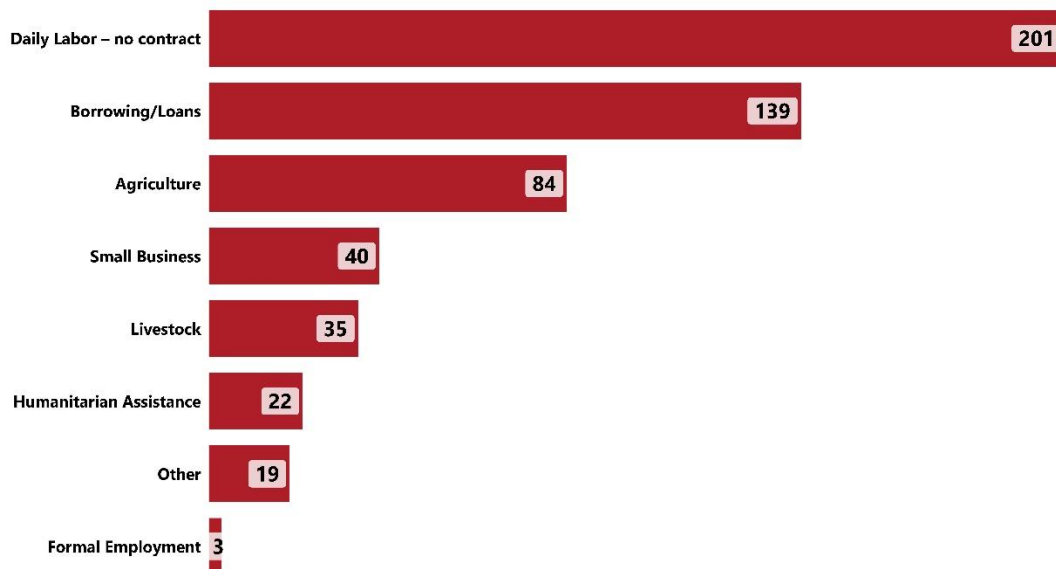


Figure 6: Primary Source of Income

5.1.7 Literacy Status of the Respondents

The literacy profile of respondents shows that a large majority (339 individuals) are uneducated, followed by 145 with primary education, 51 with secondary education, and only 8 with higher education. This indicates low overall literacy levels, particularly among returnees and rural populations, which

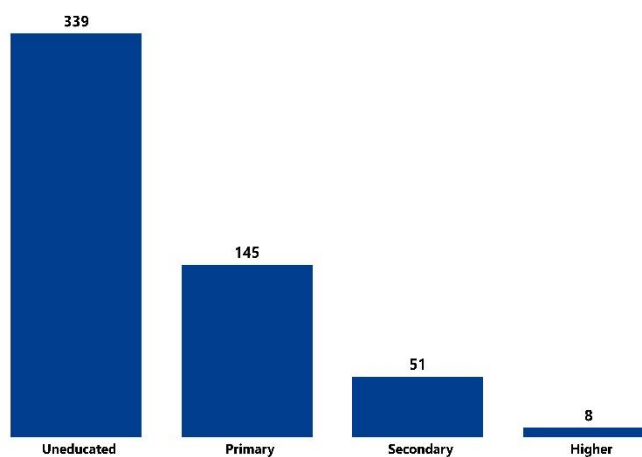


Figure 7: Literacy Status

significantly limits access to skilled employment and informed decision-making. The findings underscore the importance of basic education, literacy, and vocational training initiatives to enhance livelihood opportunities and community resilience.

5.1.8 Household Working-Age Population and Employment Profile

Category	Males (HHs)	Females (HHs)
0 working-age member	46	60
1 working-age member	323	321
2 working-age members	111	99
3 or more working-age members	63	63

Table 4: HH Working-Age Population

Table 4 presents the household-level distribution of working-age members by gender. The figures reflect the number of households reporting a given number of working-age males and females separately. For example, 46 households report no working-age male members, while 60 households report no working-age female members. The majority of households report one working-age member per gender category (323 households for males and 321 for females), indicating limited labor potential within many families. A smaller proportion of households report three or more working-age members (63 households in each gender category).

At the individual level, 693 working-age persons report being engaged in income-generating activities, representing 45.5% of the total working-age population. Employment outcomes differ markedly by gender: 522 males (67.7% of working-age men) report employment compared to 171 females (22.8% of working-age women).

5.1.9 Household Employment Profile

Category	Males (HHs)	Females (HHs)
0 currently working member	136	419
1 working member	329	95
2 working member	55	18
3 or more working member	23	11

Table 5: Household Employment Profile

Table 5 further illustrates this disparity at the household level. While 136 households report no working male member, 419 households report no working female member. Most households report one working male (329 households), whereas only 95 households report one working female. Households with multiple working members remain limited across both genders, indicating reliance on a single income earner in many cases.

Within the surveyed sample, these findings highlight a pronounced gender gap in labor participation and constrained economic engagement among women. Female employment is largely concentrated in informal or low-paying activities such as small-scale livestock care, home-based tailoring, or daily wage labor. However, given the scope and size of the assessment (543 HHs), these results should be interpreted with caution and are not necessarily representative of broader provincial labor market trends. A more comprehensive, province-representative dataset would be required to draw definitive conclusions regarding gender employment dynamics across the four provinces.

Investing in vocational training, women’s economic empowerment programs, microenterprise development, and improved access to financial services would significantly enhance the employability of working-age individuals. Furthermore, linking households with local markets and promoting home-based or agricultural value-chain opportunities could help unlock the untapped potential of both men and women, supporting more resilient and self-reliant communities.

5.1.9 Women Working Status, Access to Agricultural livestock and contribution to income generation activities

The findings reveal significant gender disparities in women’s economic participation and access to productive resources. Only 26.9% of women are engaged in any form of work, while 73.1% remain unemployed, reflecting limited opportunities and social restrictions. Similarly, just 23.6% of women have access to agricultural or livestock resources, indicating barriers to land ownership, asset control, and participation in

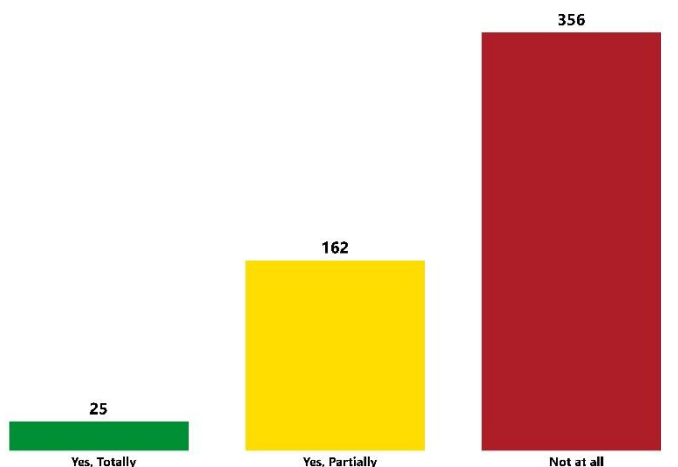


Figure 8: Women Working Status

farming activities. When it comes to income generation, the gap is even wider—356 women reported no access at all, 162 have partial involvement, and only 25 are fully engaged. These figures highlight the systemic challenges women face in employment, asset ownership, and decision-making, particularly in rural areas. The results underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions promoting women’s economic empowerment, including vocational training, access to microcredit, and inclusion in agricultural and small-business activities.

5.1.10 Current Skills and expertise of the Respondents

The data indicates that respondents possess a diverse range of agricultural, livestock, and vocational skills, with a clear dominance of farming-related experience. The most common competencies are in cereal production (155 respondents), goat and sheep rearing (129), irrigation (110), and cattle rearing (104), showing the central role of smallholder agriculture and animal husbandry in sustaining livelihoods. These core skills reflect strong traditional knowledge and the community's dependence on land-based income sources.

A substantial portion of respondents also reported expertise in vegetable cultivation (99), poultry and livestock management (88), and vegetable production and marketing (69), suggesting growing interest in market-oriented agriculture and diversification within the sector. Meanwhile, horticulture (56) and dairy processing (52) highlight emerging potential for agribusiness expansion if proper value chain support and training are provided.

Beyond agriculture, smaller groups of respondents demonstrated practical experience in masonry (34), dry fruit and food processing (32 and 30), wool weaving (29), and tailoring (21) skills that could serve as viable entry points for vocational or microenterprise development. However, advanced or specialized trades such as orchard management, beekeeping, and wheat milling were reported by fewer than 20 respondents, revealing limited technical diversification.

While the assessment identifies potential for agribusiness development and vocational skill expansion based on household livelihood patterns, it did not include a dedicated market or value-chain analysis. Therefore, prior to large-scale investment, a targeted market feasibility and demand assessment should be conducted to ensure that proposed goods and services can be absorbed by functioning markets at profitable margins.

Overall, the findings illustrate that while respondents are rich in traditional agricultural and livestock experience, there is a clear skills gap in non-farm and value-added sectors. Strengthening training opportunities in agribusiness, food processing, and vocational trades would significantly improve household income potential, resilience, and employment prospects, particularly for youth and returnees seeking reintegration into the local economy.

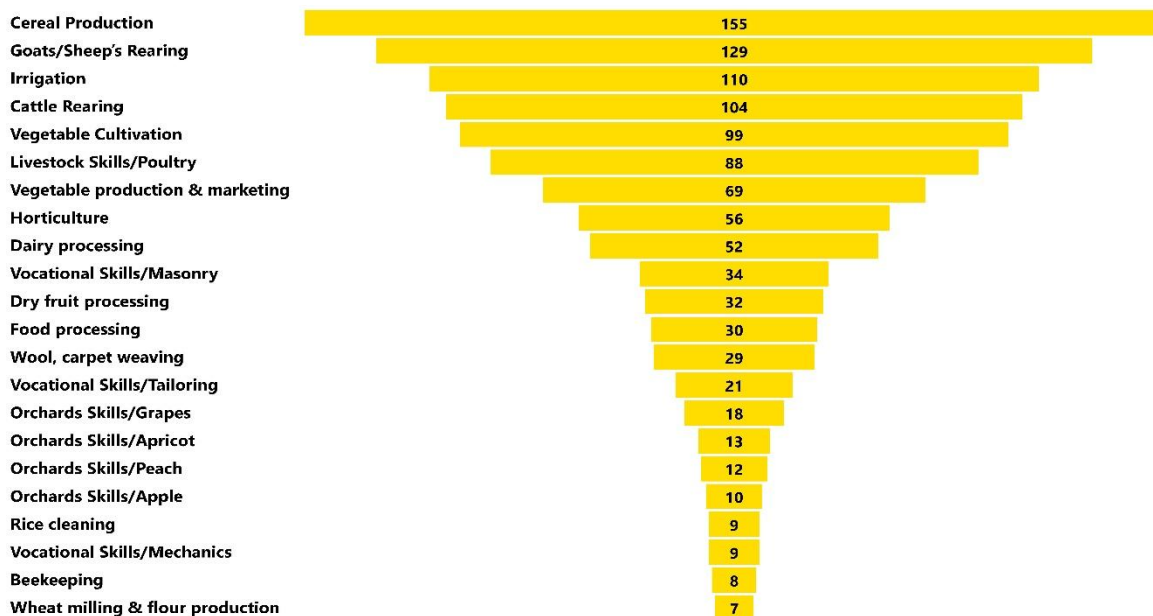


Figure 9: Current Skills and expertise of the Respondents

5.1.11 Main Barrier that prevents them from using their skill

The data shows that respondents face several key barriers preventing them from effectively using their existing skills to earn a livelihood. The lack of capital (285 respondents) stands out as the most significant challenge, indicating widespread financial constraints that limit the ability to start or expand income-generating activities. This is followed by the lack of equipment (240 respondents), which further hampers productivity, particularly in agriculture, livestock, and vocational trades.

Other major challenges include limited market demand (82 respondents) and lack of access to land (79), both of which directly affect economic opportunities, especially for returnees and landless households. Additionally, inadequate training and professional development (64 respondents) reflects the need for skill enhancement and technical capacity-building to make existing skills more market-relevant.

A smaller proportion of respondents identified mobility restrictions for women (14) and social exclusion (2) as key barriers, highlighting the gendered dimension of economic participation, particularly in conservative and rural areas. The findings underscore that despite having a foundation of practical skills, many individuals, especially returnees and vulnerable households, are unable to utilize them effectively due to financial, infrastructural, and institutional constraints.

Addressing these barriers will require integrated and sequenced implementation modalities. Detailed delivery mechanisms include structured training programs, provision of productive toolkits, apprenticeship linkages, and market exposure activities.

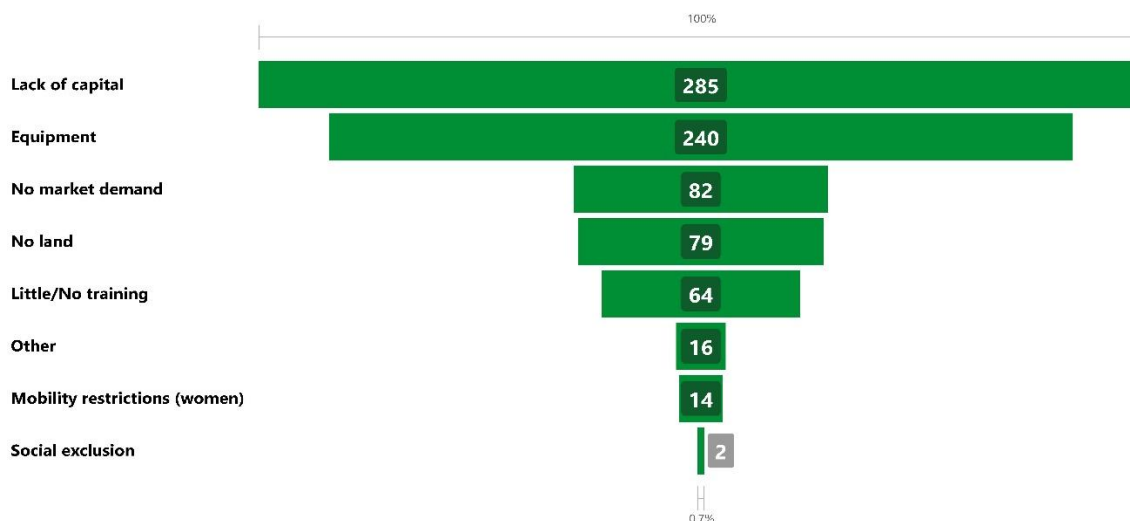


Figure 10: Main Barrier that prevents them from using their skill

5.1.12 Food Consumption Score of the Respondents

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) analysis reveals considerable variation across the surveyed households, highlighting widespread food insecurity. Herat shows a mixed situation, with 29 households (acceptable), 61 (borderline), and 84 (poor), indicating that nearly half the surveyed households struggle to maintain adequate dietary diversity and frequency. Ghor presents the most concerning situation only 4 households have acceptable food consumption, while 107 fall into the poor category, signaling severe food insecurity and limited access to nutritious foods.

Similarly, Badghis reflects a critical food security situation, with 94 households categorized as poor and only 10 acceptable, showing that most families face chronic food access constraints. Farah, while comparatively better, still shows vulnerability, with 41 poor, 50 borderline, and only 29 acceptable households, suggesting that a significant portion remains at risk of food insecurity.

Overall, based on the surveyed households FCS findings demonstrate that Ghor and Badghis are the most food-insecure provinces, while Herat and Farah exhibit moderate but persistent challenges. These results underscore the urgent need for targeted food assistance, livelihood recovery programs, and resilience-building interventions, particularly focusing on dietary diversification and sustainable income generation to improve household food security.

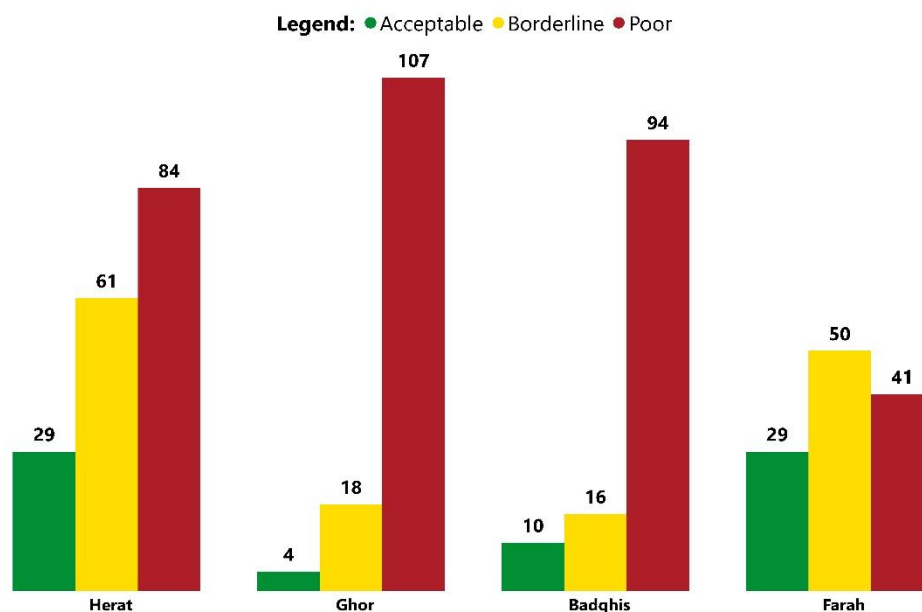


Figure 11: Food Consumption Score

5.1.13 Coping Strategies Among the Respondents

The coping strategy analysis indicates that households are heavily reliant on short-term and unsustainable measures to manage food and income shortages. The most common strategy is borrowing money or food from friends or relatives (134 respondents), reflecting widespread dependency on social networks for survival. Spending savings (72) and purchasing food on credit (54) are also frequently reported, showing erosion of financial resilience and increasing vulnerability to debt.

Many households are also resorting to reducing health or education expenses (41) and migrating for short-term or seasonal work (31), which can have long-term social and economic consequences. Additionally, 26 households reported selling productive assets such as livestock or tools, undermining their future income-generating capacity. More severe coping mechanisms include withdrawing children from school (19), engaging in high-risk activities (16), and begging or relying on charity (12) clear indicators of distress-level responses.

It is important to note that 181 respondents (33.3%) out of 543 households reported having a person with specific needs (PSN) within their household. For the purpose of this assessment, persons with specific needs include individuals with disabilities, chronic illnesses, elderly dependents, or other conditions that increase vulnerability and limit earning capacity. This subgroup is particularly vulnerable, often relying more heavily on negative coping strategies due to limited earning capacity and increased care burdens.

A smaller number of households reported selling non-productive assets (7), skipping entire days without eating (7), or selling breeding livestock (6), signaling extreme food insecurity for some families. Overall, the data underscores that most households especially those with members with specific needs are trapped in a cycle of short-term coping and asset depletion, emphasizing the

urgent need for livelihood support, debt relief, and social protection measures to prevent further erosion of resilience and promote sustainable recovery.

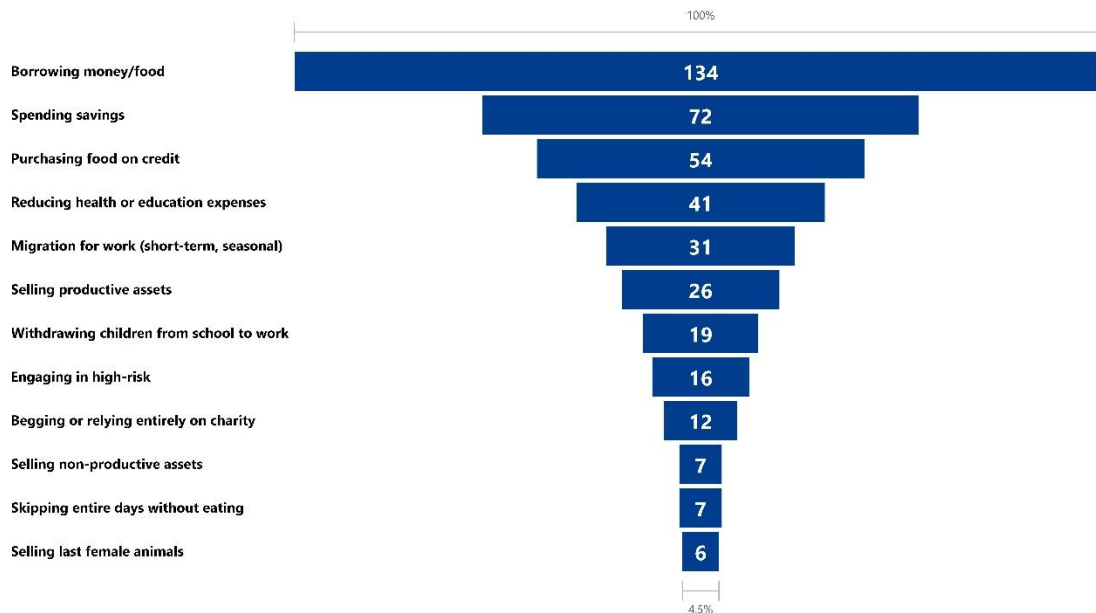


Figure 12: Coping Strategies Among the Respondents

5.1.14 Received Assistance

The analysis shows that the majority of respondents (471 households) have not received any form of assistance in the past 6 months, while only 72 households reported receiving aid. This highlights limited humanitarian and development outreach within the surveyed sample especially among vulnerable groups such as recent returnees and rural households.

Among those who did receive assistance, only 13 respondents stated that the support adequately met their needs, whereas 59 indicated that it did not. The assessment did not disaggregate the specific types of assistance received and therefore conclusions regarding the sectoral adequacy of support should be interpreted with caution. This suggests that even when aid is provided, it is often insufficient in scale, duration, or relevance to address household priorities such as food, shelter, or livelihood recovery. Overall, the findings point to significant gaps in coverage and effectiveness of assistance programs, underscoring the need for expanded, better-targeted, and context-specific interventions that respond to the diverse needs of affected populations and promote longer-term resilience rather than short-term relief.

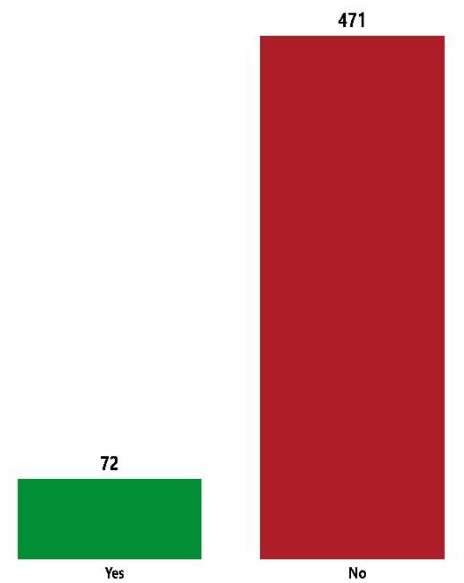


Figure 13: Previous Received Assistance

5.1.15 Major challenges Regarding the current Situation

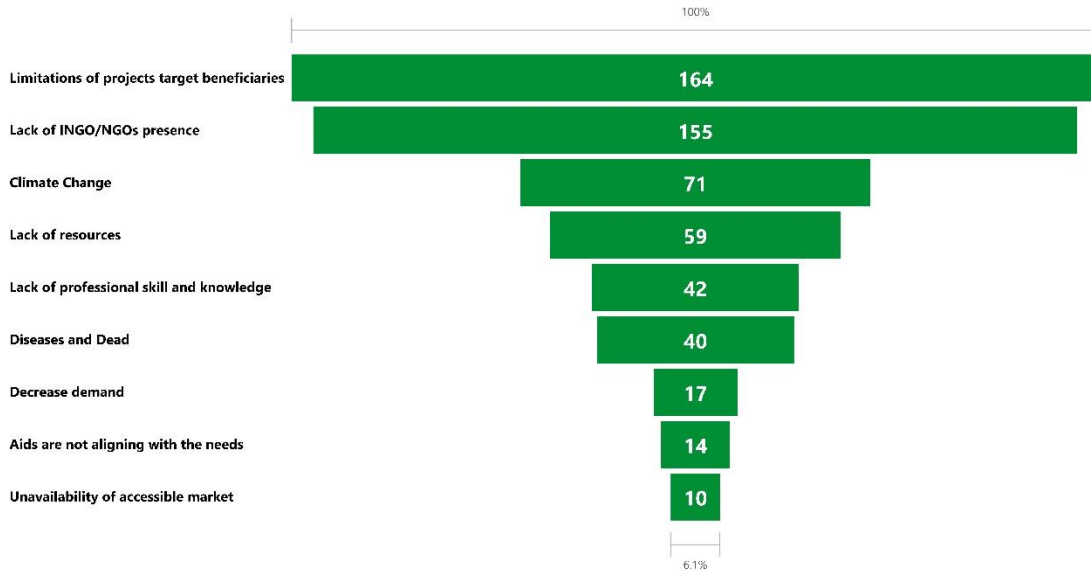


Figure 14: Major challenges Regarding the Current Situation

The analysis highlights several major challenges affecting communities' livelihoods, recovery, and resilience. The most frequently cited issue is limitations in project targeting (164 respondents), suggesting that many vulnerable households remain excluded from ongoing assistance programs. This is followed by the lack of INGO/NGO presence (155), particularly in remote and insecure areas, which restricts access to both humanitarian aid and development initiatives.

Climate change (71 respondents) emerged as another major concern, with respondents reporting frequent droughts, unpredictable rainfall, and water scarcity severely impacting agricultural productivity and livestock survival. Additionally, shortages of resources such as tools, cash, and livestock feed (59) further constrain livelihood recovery and reduce household coping capacity.

Other challenges include the lack of professional skills and technical knowledge (42), disease outbreaks and deaths (40) affecting both humans and livestock, and declining market demand (17), which limits income generation opportunities. A smaller proportion mentioned that aid is not aligned with actual community needs (14) and the absence of accessible functional markets (10) as contributing factors. These findings reflect a multi-dimensional crisis characterized by limited humanitarian coverage, economic hardship, and environmental stress. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated response that combines immediate relief with long-term development, emphasizing inclusive targeting, capacity-building, climate adaptation, and market revitalization to enhance community resilience.

5.2 SECTOR-SPECIFIC FINDINGS (PRIMARY DATA)

5.2.1 Agriculture & Land Use

The assessment findings reveal that land access remains a critical limitation among surveyed households. Out of 543 respondents, only 197 households (36%) reported having access to agricultural land, while the remaining 346 households (64%) indicated they had no access to land. This shows that a majority of families are either landless or dependent on casual labor and small-scale activities rather than agricultural production, reducing their ability to ensure food security or generate consistent income through farming. Among those who do have access to land, the tenure pattern demonstrates a mixed and often insecure structure. Of the 197 households with land:

- 122 households (62%) own their land,
- 52 households (26%) rent agricultural plots, and
- 23 households (12%) share land under informal or traditional arrangements.

In addition, the nature of cultivation highlights further disparities in productivity potential. Among the landholders, 65 plots (33%) are rainfed, while 132 plots (67%) are irrigated. The predominance of irrigated land indicates that, where water sources are available, farmers can sustain more reliable and productive agriculture. However, those relying on rainfed systems remain vulnerable to erratic rainfall, recurrent drought, and climate variability affected western Afghanistan in recent years.

Overall, these findings underscore the limited and unequal access to land and water resources, which constrain agricultural productivity and household resilience. The combination of landlessness, insecure tenure, and dependence on rainfed farming among a portion of households signals the need for targeted agricultural support.

5.2.2 Top Crop-Production Challenges

The assessment reveals that households engaged in agriculture face numerous constraints that collectively undermine productivity, profitability, and long-term sustainability. The most frequently reported challenge is the lack of improved seeds (173 respondents), which directly affects crop yields and overall production quality. Most farmers continue to rely on traditional or low-yield seed varieties, often recycled season after season, leading to declining productivity and vulnerability to pests, drought, and poor soil fertility. The second most reported issue is the shortage of fertilizer (165 respondents), indicating limited access to agricultural inputs due to high market prices and weak distribution systems. Many farmers expressed difficulty affording chemical or organic fertilizers, which has a direct impact on soil productivity and crop performance.

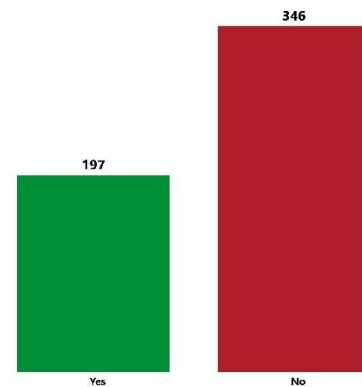


Figure 15: Agricultural and Land Use

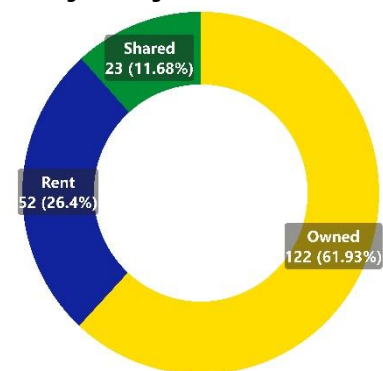


Figure 16: Land Ownership Status

Water scarcity remains another critical challenge, cited by 127 respondents, particularly in rainfed areas such as Ghor and Badghis. Frequent droughts and inadequate irrigation infrastructure have made water management a central constraint for both subsistence and smallholder farmers. In addition, pests and crop diseases (99 respondents) continue to threaten agricultural outputs, compounded by limited access to pest control measures and agricultural extension services. Similarly, the lack of agricultural machinery (98 respondents) and basic farming tools (50) restrict farmers from expanding or modernizing their cultivation practices. Other, though less frequently cited, challenges include lack of training and technical knowledge (29) and inadequate storage facilities (23), both of which contribute to post-harvest losses and inefficiencies in production cycles.

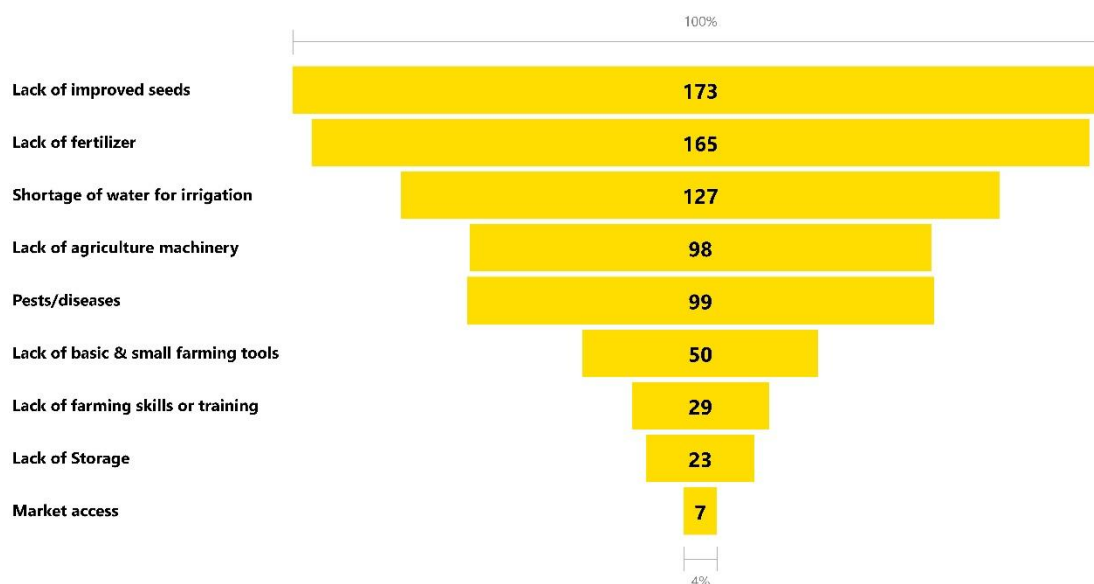


Figure 17: Top Crop-Production Challenges

5.2.3 Livestock

The findings show that livestock rearing plays an important, though unevenly distributed, role in household livelihoods. Out of 543 households surveyed, only 150 households (27.6%) reported that they currently rear livestock, while the majority—393 households (72.4%)—do not. This indicates that livestock production is a secondary or complementary livelihood activity for most families, with limited integration into broader household income strategies.

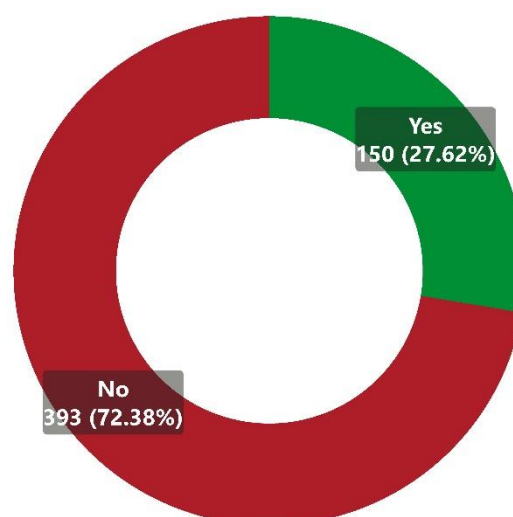


Figure 18 : Livestock Rearing

Among the households engaged in livestock keeping, 111 households (74%) own their livestock outright, while 39 households (26%) rent or share livestock through informal arrangements such as joint ownership or care agreements. These rental or shared systems reflect both economic

constraints and traditional coping mechanisms in rural areas, allowing poorer families to access limited livestock assets without upfront capital investment. The relatively small proportion of livestock owners underscores constraints related to asset ownership, fodder availability, veterinary access, and water scarcity, particularly in drought-affected regions. The majority of households lacking livestock depend more heavily on wage labor or agricultural employment, highlighting a clear opportunity to strengthen resilience through diversified livelihoods.

5.2.4 Top Livestock Challenges

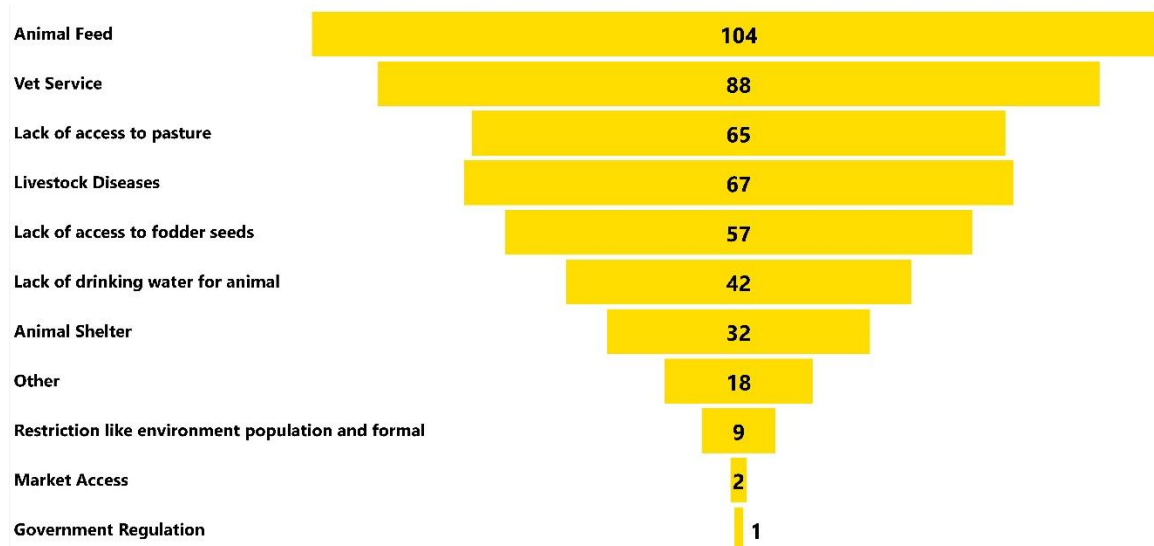


Figure 19: Top Livestock Challenges

Livestock rearing remains a key livelihood source across Herat, Badghis, Ghor, and Farah, supporting many rural households that depend on animal husbandry for income and food security. Most livestock owners raise their own animals, while shared ownership arrangements are less common. However, production across these provinces faces several constraints. The most critical challenges include the high cost and shortage of animal feed, limited access to veterinary services, and restricted access to pastureland. Farmers also highlighted livestock diseases and the lack of fodder seeds as significant issues limiting productivity. In addition, shortages of drinking water for animals and insufficient shelter, particularly during harsh weather conditions, further strain livestock management. Other factors such as market access barriers, government regulations, and environmental restrictions were mentioned but are comparatively less significant. Overall, the livestock sector in these provinces remains vulnerable, requiring improved feed supply systems, better veterinary coverage, and enhanced access to natural resources.

5.2.5 Livelihoods & Market Systems

5.2.5.1 Income Generation Activity

The findings indicate a diverse yet limited engagement in income-generating activities across surveyed households, reflecting both livelihood diversification efforts and persistent economic challenges. Out of 543 households, only 203 (37.4%) are engaged in agricultural income-generating activities, while 134 households (24.7%) are involved in non-agricultural income sources such as small businesses, handicrafts, or daily wage labor. The remaining 206 households (37.9%) reported having no active income-generating activities at all. This distribution highlights the fragile economic base of many households, where a significant portion of the population remains dependent on irregular or seasonal employment. Among those engaged in agricultural income, most rely on small-scale crop cultivation and livestock rearing activities highly vulnerable to climate shocks, water scarcity, and input shortages. Non-agricultural activities, though fewer, mainly include petty trade, tailoring, construction work, and transportation services, which are often informal and low paying.

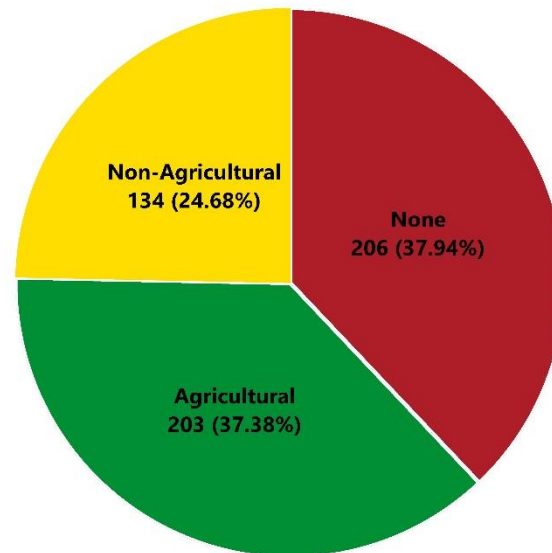


Figure 20: Income Generation Activity

5.2.5.2 Market Access and Functionality

The assessment examined household access to local markets for both purchasing essential goods and agricultural inputs and for selling produce, livestock products, or other goods and services. Findings show that the majority of communities have some degree of access to local markets, yet accessibility and functionality vary significantly based on gender and geographic factors. Out of 543 households, 424 (78%) reported having access to a market, while 119 (22%) stated that they have no access to any functional market in their area. Among those with access, 297 households noted that the market is accessible and functional for both men and women, reflecting relatively inclusive mobility and participation patterns in certain districts, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas such as Herat and Farah. However, 97 respondents indicated that the market is accessible only for men, showing that gender-based restrictions still limit women's economic engagement in a significant number of communities.

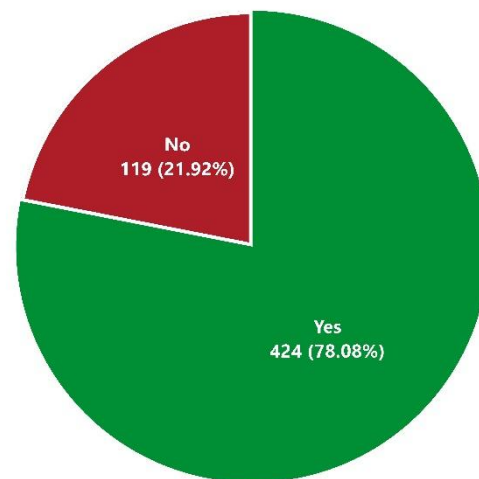


Figure 21: Market Access and Functionality

A smaller portion of respondents of 3 households reported that the market is not fully functional, likely due to distance, poor infrastructure, or insecurity, while 15 households stated that there is no market available in their vicinity. These figures are more pronounced in remote rural areas of Badghis and Ghor, where physical access and economic integration remain limited.

The findings highlight the strong relationship between market functionality and gender inclusion. Where markets are accessible to both men and women, households tend to report higher participation in income-generating activities and greater livelihood diversification. Conversely, in areas with gender-based mobility restrictions or poor infrastructure, women’s ability to sell products or access inputs remains minimal, reinforcing economic dependency.

5.2.6 Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET)

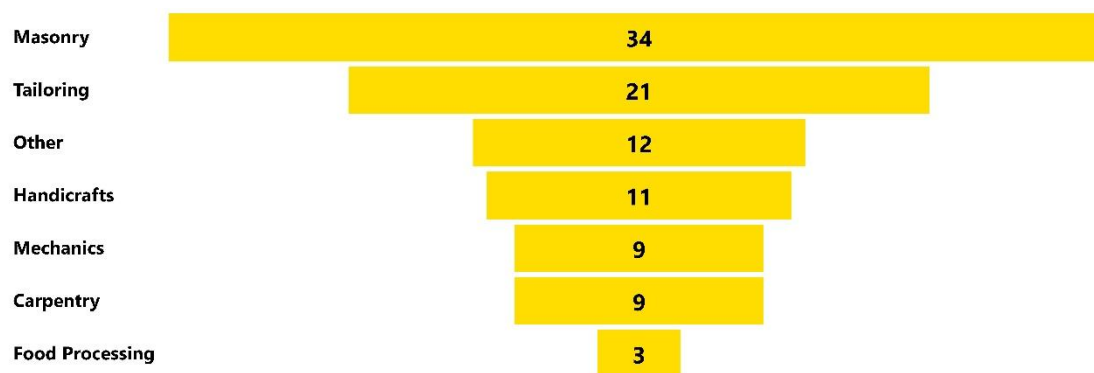


Figure 22: Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET)

The assessment findings show that the surveyed population possesses a modest but diverse range of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) skills, primarily concentrated in traditional and informal sectors. A total of 128 respondents reported having at least one form of vocational skill, reflecting both existing capacities and potential entry points for livelihood and employment interventions. Among the reported skills, masonry stands out as the most common, cited by 34 respondents, followed by wool and carpet weaving (29) and tailoring (21). These three skills together account for over two-thirds of the total vocationally skilled respondents, underscoring their prominence in the local labor market and their relevance to both men and women. Masonry and carpentry are predominantly practiced by men, while wool weaving and tailoring represent core income-generating activities for women, particularly in rural and peri-urban contexts.

Other skills mentioned include handicrafts (11 respondents), carpentry (9), mechanics (9), and food processing (3). These are generally practiced at a household or community level, often without formal certification or access to proper equipment. Limited exposure to structured training, poor market linkages, and lack of start-up capital remain key barriers preventing these skills from translating into sustainable livelihoods.

6. PROVINCIAL-LEVEL FINDINGS (PRIMARY DATA)

6.1 Herat Province

6.1.1 Province Survey Profile – Herat Province

Sample Size HH Survey				KII		Residence Area			Gender	
Herat	Guzara	Injil	Zinda Jan	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Peri-urban	Male	Female
52	41	41	40	۱۳	۳	52	60	62	83	91
174 Households				۱۶						
Residence Type										
Host Community				Returnee			IDP			
11				156			6			

Table 6: Province Survey Profile in Herat Province

A total of 174 households were surveyed across different districts of Herat province, covering diverse settlement types and ensuring gender representation. In addition, 16 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted four per district to complement household data with qualitative insights from community leaders, local authorities, and technical experts. The sample design aimed to capture variations in livelihood patterns, access to services, and socio-economic conditions across urban, rural, and peri-urban settings. The inclusion of both male and female respondents supports a balanced understanding of community perspectives and gender-specific dynamics within the assessed areas.

6.1.2 Income Generation Activity – Herat Province

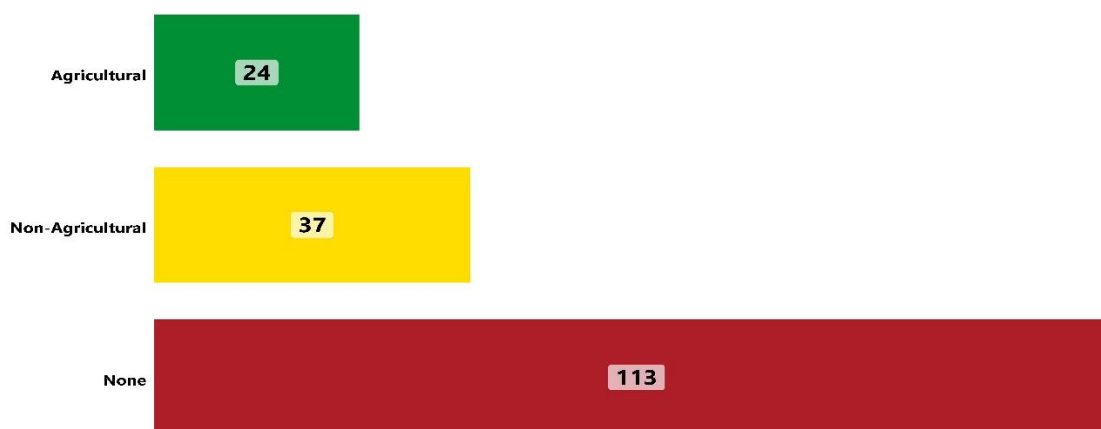


Figure 23: Income Generation Activity in Herat Province

Most surveyed households reported having no active income source, reflecting widespread unemployment and heavy reliance on humanitarian or informal support. A smaller portion of respondents were engaged in non-agricultural income activities, such as small-scale trade, daily labor, or tailoring, while a limited number depended on agriculture-based livelihoods. Key informants across Guzara, Injil, and Zinda Jan confirmed that limited income opportunities

are a major challenge, especially in rural areas where agricultural activities are seasonal and inputs are scarce. They noted that many families have lost their traditional sources of income due to prolonged drought, inflation, and shrinking market demand.

“Most young men are jobless now. Before, they could go to Iran or find work in the city, but now there is no demand and no cash flow in the market,” — KII participant, Injil District. Several participants mentioned that non-agricultural options like carpentry, handicrafts, and petty trade exist mainly in peri-urban areas, but lack of capital and unstable markets hinder their expansion.

6.1.3 Current skills and expertise – Herat Province

The assessment findings from Herat province reveal that community members possess a diverse range of skills and expertise, primarily concentrated in agriculture and construction-related sectors. The data indicates that cereal production and horticulture are the most common areas of expertise, each cited by 12 respondents, reflecting the province’s strong agricultural base and dependence on crop cultivation for both subsistence and income generation. This is followed by vocational skills in masonry (11 respondents), which highlights the availability of labor suitable for construction-related activities, a sector with significant potential for employment in both rural and peri-urban areas. Other important skill areas include vegetable cultivation (8 respondents), tailoring (7), and goat/sheep rearing (7) showing a combination of both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods practiced at the household level.

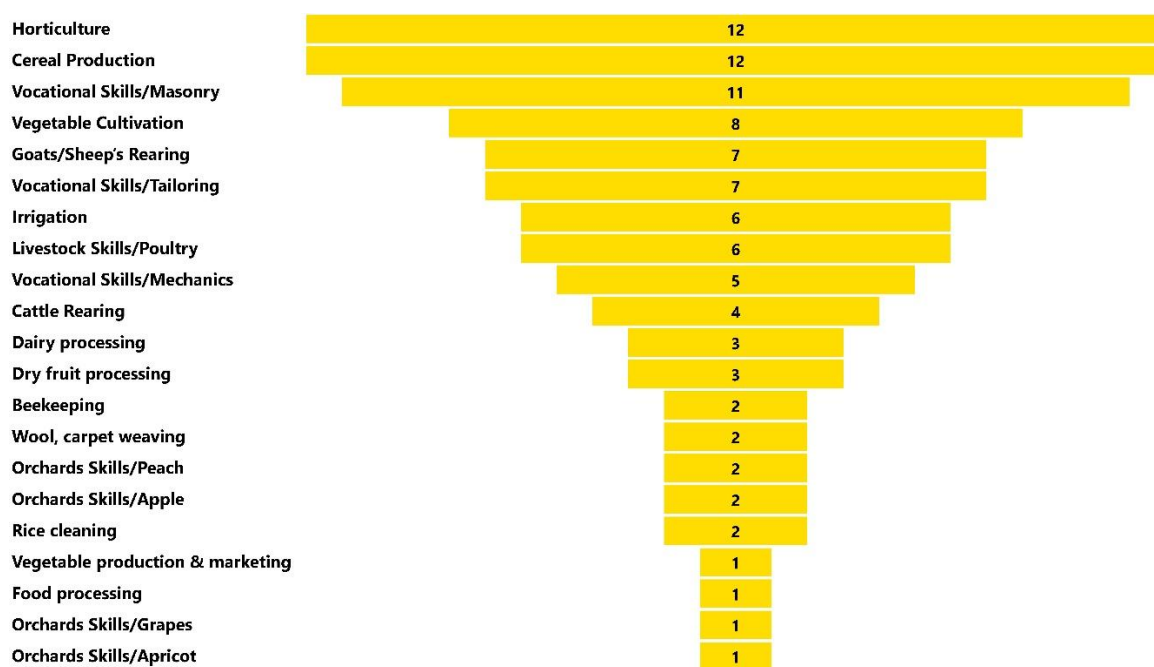


Figure 24: Current skills and expertise in Herat Province

6.1.4 Main Barriers that prevent them from using their skills – Herat Province

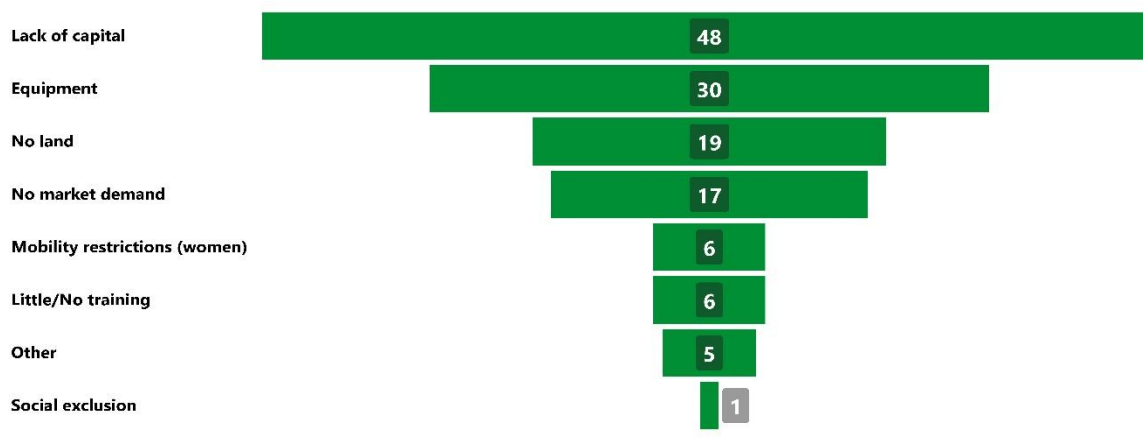


Figure 25: Main Barriers that prevent them from using their skills in Herat Province

The assessment findings from Herat province reveal that the most significant barriers preventing individuals from utilizing their existing skills are lack of capital, inadequate equipment, and limited access to land, followed by low market demand for locally available trades. Both male and female respondents noted that even those who have received vocational or technical training struggle to start or expand businesses without financial or material support. Key informants across all four districts confirmed that economic constraints and social restrictions particularly those affecting women—remain major obstacles to skill utilization. As one female KII respondent from Zinda Jan explained, “We learned tailoring, but we cannot open a shop women cannot move freely, and materials are too expensive.” Similarly, informants in Injil emphasized that despite having trained youth, weak local demand and limited market linkages undermine the sustainability of small enterprises, with one respondent stating, “Training is useful only when there is a buyer for what we produce. Otherwise, people return to daily labor.” These insights collectively indicate that both economic limitations and gender-based restrictions continue to hinder the translation of skills into viable income opportunities across Herat’s communities.

6.1.5 Primary Source of income – Herat Province

The findings reveal that most households in Herat province depend heavily on daily wage labor without formal contracts as their primary income source, exposing them to persistent employment insecurity and irregular earnings. Borrowing and informal loans emerged as the second most common coping mechanism, often used to meet immediate food or rent needs, followed by small-scale businesses such as petty trade, tailoring, or cart vending. Only a small portion of households reported agriculture or livestock as their main source of livelihood, while humanitarian assistance continues to play a crucial supplementary role. Very few respondents indicated formal employment, underscoring the near absence of stable or long-term livelihood options.

The household income data further highlights the extent of economic vulnerability—154 households earn between 0–300 AFN per day (approximately USD 4), and only 20 households earn between 300–700 AFN (USD 4–9), indicating that the vast majority live below subsistence thresholds and face chronic financial stress. Key informant interviews across Guzara, Injil, and

Zinda Jan reinforced these trends. Respondents consistently noted that most men rely on irregular day labor in construction, agriculture, or transport, with work availability dropping sharply during winter months. A female KII respondent from Guzara explained, *“Most men work by the day. Some days they find work, some days they come back empty-handed.”* In Injil, informants added that small trades and home-based work generate minimal but unstable income, as one participant remarked, *“People earn 200 or 300 Afghanis if they’re lucky. It’s never enough for the family.”* In Zinda Jan, several participants noted that seasonal migration to Iran and reliance on humanitarian aid are often the only survival strategies, with one respondent explaining, *“When there is no work here, men go to Iran for a few months or wait for food aid.”* Together, these insights illustrate a cycle of economic precarity, where limited livelihood diversity, lack of job security, and dependence on short-term coping strategies continue to define the economic reality of most Herat households.

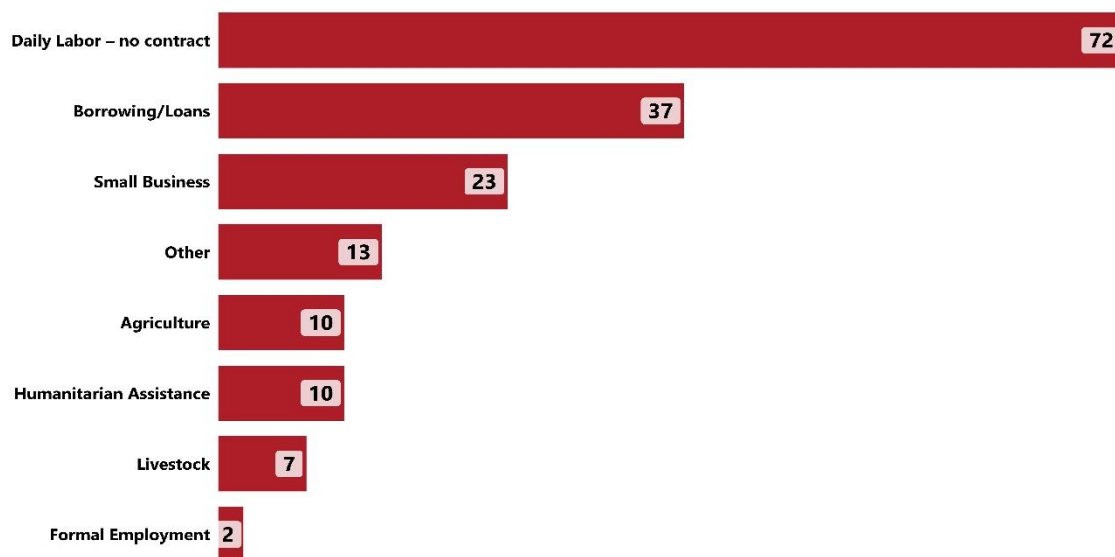


Figure 26: Primary Source of income in Herat Province

6.1.6 Agriculture and land Use – Herat Province

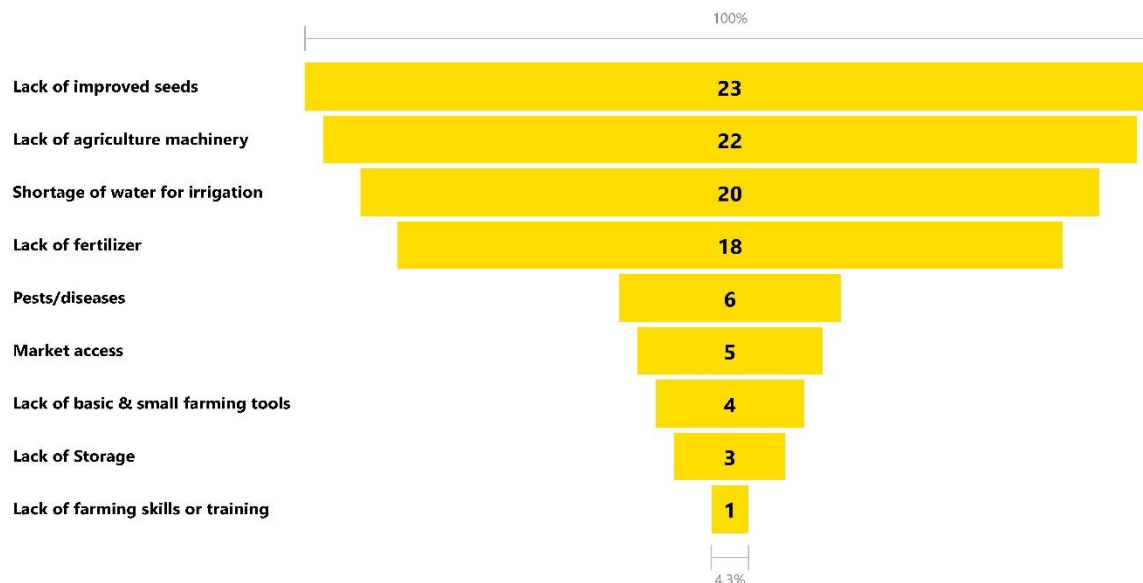


Figure 27: Agriculture and land Use in Herat Province

The findings show that only a small proportion of households (32 out of 174) in Herat have access to land, primarily in Injil, Zinda Jan, and Guzara districts, while the majority 142 households do not own or cultivate any land. This indicates a limited engagement in agriculture and a high dependency on informal and less stable income sources such as wage labor and petty trade. Among those engaged in farming, the main challenges include the lack of improved seeds, agricultural machinery, irrigation water, and fertilizer, which collectively hinder productivity. Additional constraints such as pests, plant diseases, poor market access, and inadequate storage facilities were also widely reported, further reducing profitability and discouraging investment in crop production.

Insights from KII reinforce these findings. Across all four districts, informants emphasized that smallholder farmers face growing difficulties sustaining agricultural activities due to rising input costs and recurrent droughts. In Guzara and Injil, respondents noted that traditional farming methods are still predominant because farmers cannot afford improved seeds or equipment — as one farmer explained, *“People plant with whatever seed they can find — no one can buy improved ones because prices are too high.”* In Zinda Jan, water scarcity was cited as the most severe constraint, with irrigation systems damaged or non-functional: *“The canals are dry most of the year; without rain, there is nothing to cultivate,”* noted one participant. Several informants also reported that weak market linkages and lack of storage discourage farmers from expanding production, as they often sell crops early at low prices. As one KII respondent from Injil remarked, *“Even if the harvest is good, there is nowhere to store it — people sell quickly at a loss.”*

6.1.7 Livestock Rearing – Herat Province

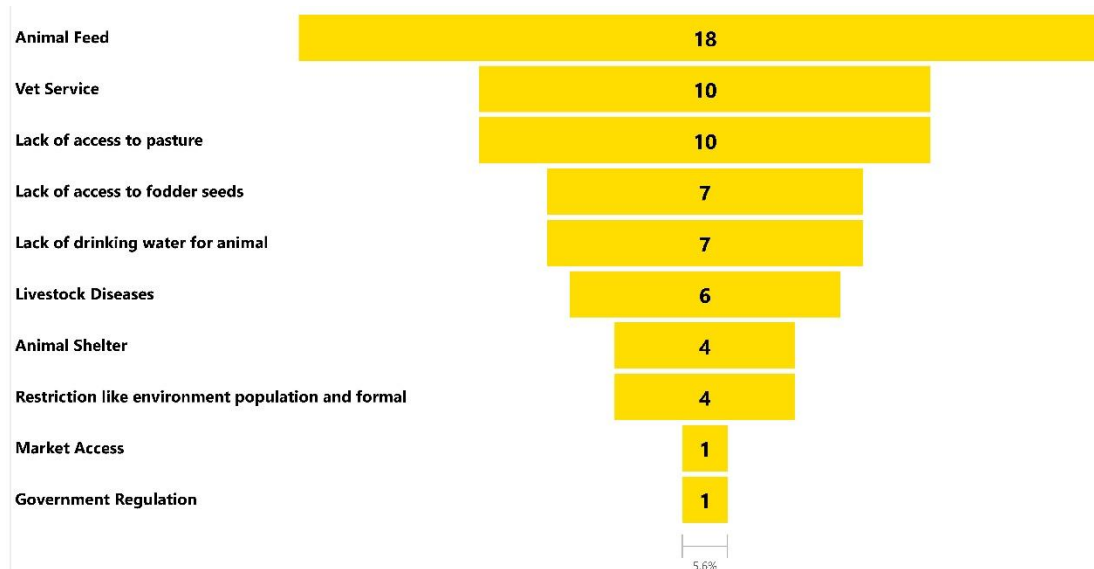


Figure 28: Livestock Rearing in Herat Province

Livestock rearing remains a limited livelihood activity in Herat province, with only 34 of 174 households engaged in it. 16 own animals and 18 keep them through shared or rental arrangements—while 140 households have none. This practice is concentrated in Zinda Jan, Guzara, and Injil, with no livestock activities reported in Herat city. Common animals include cows, goats, sheep, poultry, and occasionally camels, reflecting small-scale, rural-based production. Key challenges include the high cost and shortage of feed, limited veterinary services, restricted pasture access, and water scarcity, all of which reduce productivity. KII respondents confirmed that drought and rising feed prices have forced many families to sell their animals — *“Before, everyone had some animals. Now people sold them because they cannot afford fodder,”* noted one participant from Guzara. Others cited the lack of nearby veterinary services and the deterioration of grazing areas — *“There is no grass left in the common pasture; feed is too expensive,”* explained a respondent from Zinda Jan.

6.1.8 Market Access and Functionality – Herat Province

The assessment shows that market access and functionality remain limited across Herat province. Out of 174 households surveyed, only 123 (71%) reported having access to a functional market, while 51 households (29%) stated they did not. Among those with access, 57 households noted that markets are functional and accessible for both men and women, whereas 44 households said they are accessible only for men, reflecting persistent gender-based mobility restrictions. A small number 2 households mentioned that the market is not fully functional, and 10 respondents reported having no market at all in their area. Even where markets are accessible, low purchasing power, reduced cash circulation, and weak demand constrain income generation and small business growth. Insights from KIIs across Guzara, Injil, and Zinda Jan reinforce these findings. Informants consistently described markets as physically present but economically weak, with minimal trading activity. As one participant from Injil District explained, *“People can go to the market, but no one has money to buy anything.”* In Zinda Jan, women’s access is further limited

by mobility constraints and social norms, as reflected by a female respondent who noted, “Women cannot go to the market freely; usually, men buy everything.”

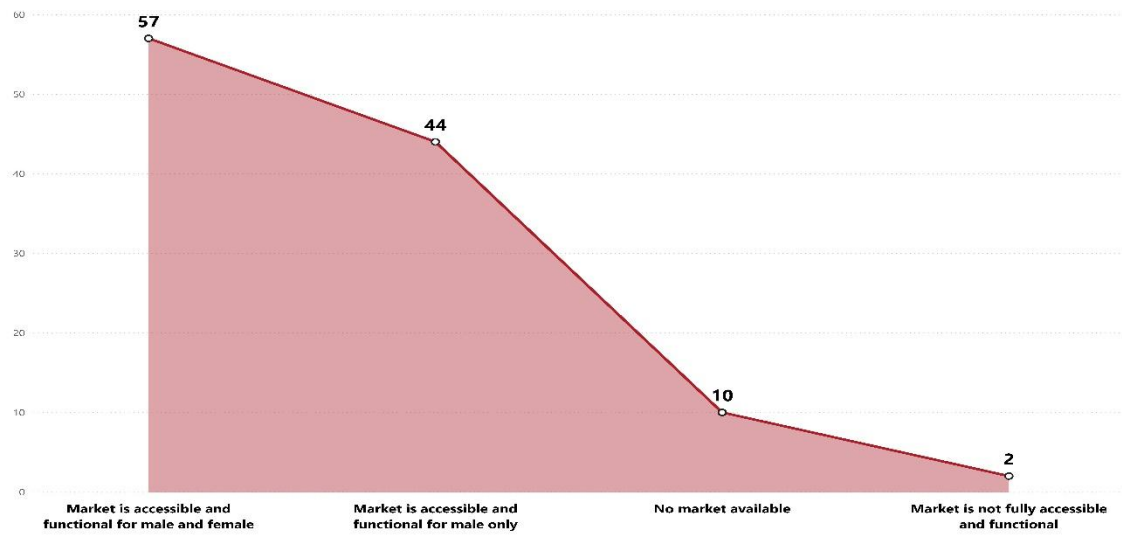


Figure 29: Market Access and Functionality in Herat Province

6.1.9 Food Consumption Score (FCS) Profile – Herat Province

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) findings reveal a concerning level of food insecurity among surveyed households in Herat province. Out of the 174 households assessed, 84 falls within the “poor” consumption category, 61 are classified as “borderline”, and only 29 have an “acceptable” food consumption score. This distribution clearly indicates that the majority of families consume limited, repetitive, and nutritionally inadequate diets, reflecting deep economic vulnerability and restricted access to diverse foods.

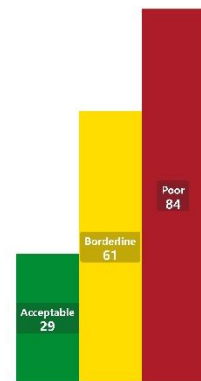


Figure 30: Food Consumption Score (FCS) Profile in Herat Province

6.1.10 Priority Needs – Herat Province

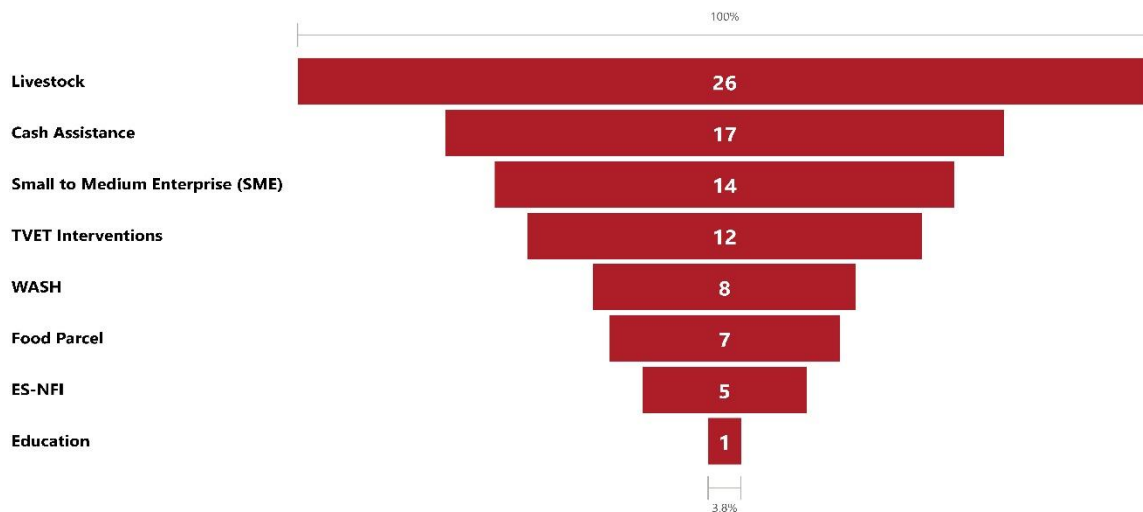


Figure 31: Priority Needs in Herat Province

The findings indicate that livestock support is the most urgently needed form of assistance among households in Herat province, followed by cash assistance, small and medium enterprise (SME) support, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs. Other identified needs include WASH services, food parcels, emergency shelter/non-food items (NFI), and, to a lesser extent, education support. The strong emphasis on livestock and cash assistance reflects both the rural livelihood structure of the province and the economic strain caused by prolonged drought, declining agricultural productivity, and shrinking market opportunities. For many families, livestock rearing and small business activities represent the most viable pathways toward self-reliance, while short-term cash or food assistance remains vital for meeting immediate survival needs.

KIIs across Guzara, Injil, and Zinda Jan reinforced these priorities, emphasizing the need for livelihood restoration and resilience-building interventions. In Zinda Jan and Guzara, respondents highlighted that livestock restocking, feed provision, and improved veterinary services would help families rebuild income and food security — as one participant explained, *“If people receive some animals again, they can produce milk and earn something — it helps more than one-time cash.”* Meanwhile, participants in Injil pointed out that cash assistance remains the most flexible and immediate form of support, especially amid inflation and high living costs: *“Right now, people need money to buy food, medicine, or pay rent everything else can wait.”* In addition, several informants across districts stressed the importance of TVET and SME support, particularly for youth and women, noting that skill-based and small-business livelihoods could help reduce long-term dependency on aid: *“Training and small business support can help people stand on their own feet instead of waiting for aid,”* said a respondent from Guzara District.

6.1.11 Major challenges related to current situation – Herat Province

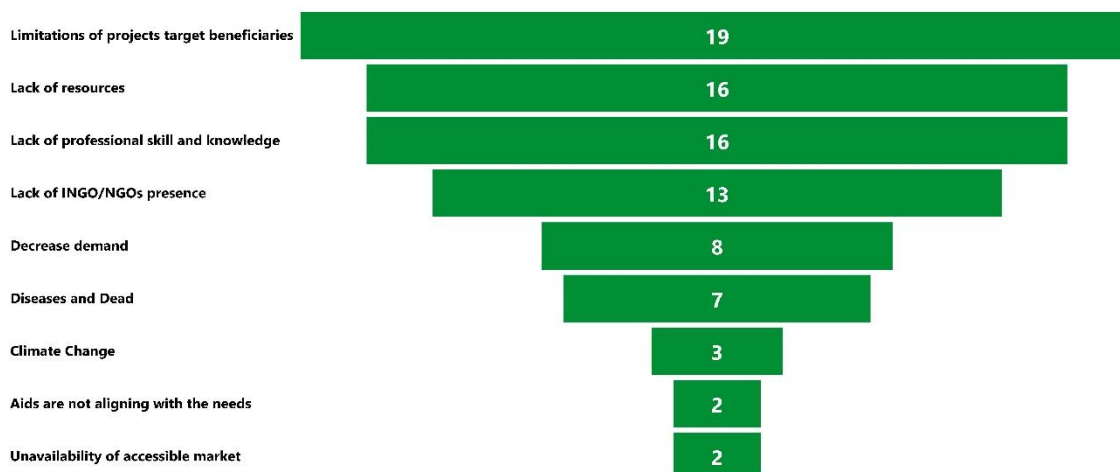


Figure 32: Major challenges related to current situation in Herat Province

The findings highlight a range of interconnected challenges that continue to affect households and communities across Herat province, exacerbating economic hardship and limiting recovery from prolonged crises. The most frequently cited issue is the limited coverage of aid projects, with many respondents stating that only a small portion of vulnerable families receive assistance, leaving others in similar conditions unaddressed. This is followed by the lack of essential livelihood resources, including tools, cash, and livestock feed, which constrain productive capacity and income generation. Respondents also reported a shortage of professional and technical skills, and a decline in NGO and INGO presence, which has reduced access to both assistance and capacity-building programs that previously supported community resilience. Other commonly mentioned challenges include reduced market demand, livestock diseases, recurring droughts, and the growing impacts of climate change. Additionally, respondents expressed concerns about poor coordination and misalignment between aid priorities and community needs, noting that some assistance provided does not reflect local realities.

Insights from KIIs across Guzara, Injil, and Zinda Jan reinforce these concerns. Informants consistently reported that limited project funding and narrow targeting criteria have excluded many households in need. As one respondent from Guzara observed, “Only a few families are selected each time most people are left out, even when they are in the same condition.” In Injil and Zinda Jan, participants emphasized that the reduction in NGO presence has worsened community hardship, particularly in areas that once benefited from livelihood and agricultural projects: “Before, there were trainings and projects that helped people. Now, most NGOs have left, and nothing is happening,” explained one informant from Injil. Respondents also cited climate change, drought, and livestock diseases as major factors undermining resilience, while some expressed frustration over the disconnect between aid distribution and actual community needs, with one participant noting, “Sometimes aid comes, but it doesn’t match what people need — they give items that are not useful for everyone.”

6.2 Badghis Province

6.2.1 Province Survey Profile – Badghis Province

Sample Size HH Survey			Residence Area			Gender	
Qala Now	Bala-Murghab	Qadis	Urban	Rural	Peri-urban	Male	Female
52	41	40	4	111	6	75	45
120 Households							
Residence Type							
Returnee		Host Community		IDP			
71		44		5			

Table 7: Province Survey Profile in Badghis Province

A total of 120 households were surveyed across Qala-e-Now, Bala Murghab, and Qadis districts of Badghis province, capturing a representative mix of settlement types and gender perspectives. The sample is predominantly rural, with limited coverage from urban and peri-urban areas, ensuring that findings reflect the realities of communities most affected by livelihood and access challenges. In terms of population composition, the majority of respondents were returnees (71 households), followed by members of the host community (44 households) and a small number of internally displaced people (5 households). This distribution highlights the province’s ongoing reintegration dynamics, where returnees and host communities coexist under similar economic pressures, often competing for limited livelihood opportunities and basic services. The inclusion of both male and female respondents strengthens the gender balance and the reliability of household-level insights across diverse population groups.

6.2.2 Income Generation Activities – Badghis Province

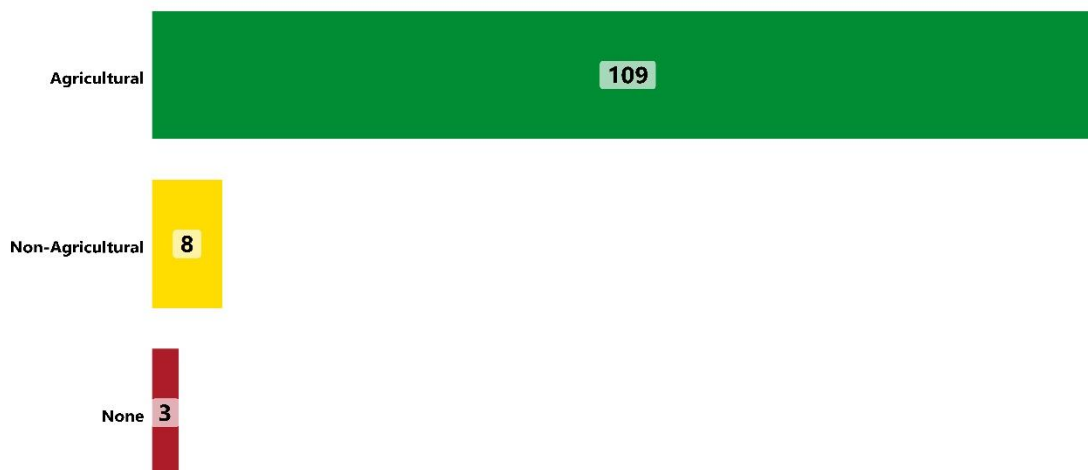


Figure 33: Income Generation Activities in Badghis Province

The findings clearly indicate that agriculture remains the dominant source of income across Badghis province, with the vast majority of households relying on crop cultivation and livestock rearing as their primary livelihoods. Out of 120 households surveyed, 109 reported engagements in agricultural activities, compared to only 8 households involved in non-agricultural work such as

small trade, daily labor, and handicrafts, while 3 households reported having no active income source. This heavy dependence on traditional agriculture underscores the province’s limited livelihood diversification and the central role that farming plays in sustaining household economies.

Insights from KIIs in Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab districts strongly reinforce these quantitative findings. Across all three districts, informants consistently emphasized that farming and livestock are the main pillars of household income, with nearly all families dependent directly or indirectly on these activities. However, they also noted that agriculture in Badghis is highly vulnerable to recurrent droughts, lack of irrigation water, insufficient inputs, and weak market linkages. In Qala-e-Now, participants described agriculture as the only viable livelihood option due to the absence of industries or alternative employment, stating, *“All people depend on farming – if the rain fails, everything fails.”* Similarly, in Qadis, farmers reported declining yields and profitability as a result of water shortages and lack of modern machinery, forcing some to seek seasonal labor elsewhere: *“There is no other job here except farming, and even that is weak because of drought.”* In Bala Murghab, informants highlighted that while agriculture and livestock remain central, small-scale trade in goats, wheat, sesame, and mung beans provides supplementary but uncertain income: *“We sell a few goats for wheat to manage household needs, but income is small and uncertain.”*

6.2.3 Current skills and Expertise – Badghis Province

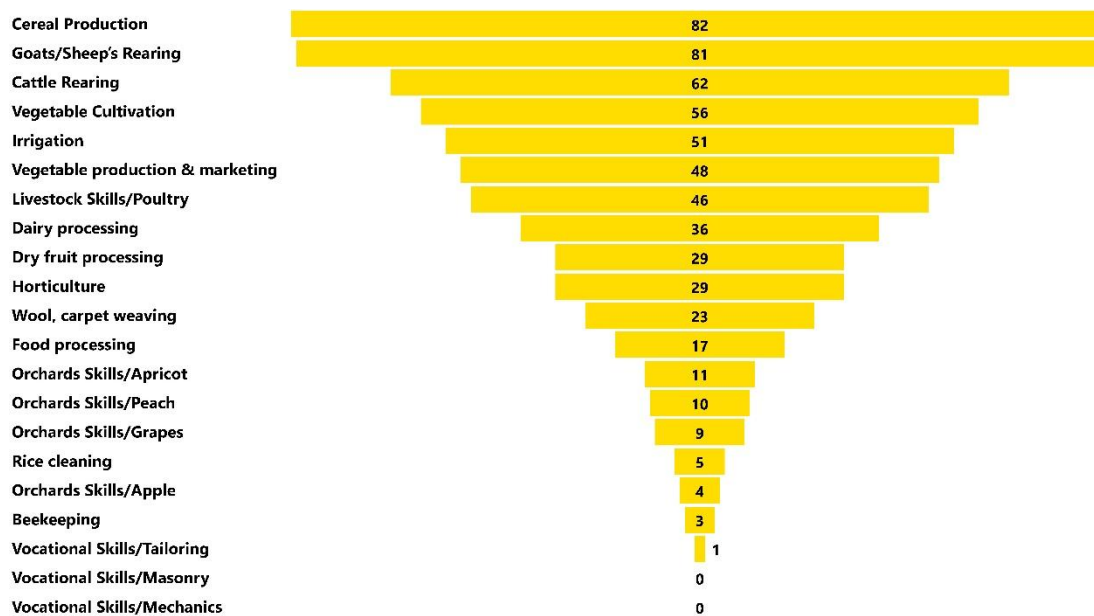


Figure 34: Current skills and Expertise in Badghis Province

The findings reveal that agriculture-related skills overwhelmingly dominate among households in Badghis province, reflecting the province’s strong agrarian character and dependence on traditional farming systems. The most commonly reported competencies include cereal production (82 respondents) and goat/sheep rearing (81), followed by cattle rearing (62), vegetable cultivation (56), and irrigation management (51). Additional, though less widespread, skills were identified in vegetable marketing (48), poultry (46), and dairy processing (36). Only a

small number of households reported experience in dry fruit processing, horticulture, wool and carpet weaving, or orchard-based food processing (such as peach, apricot, and grape).

These results point to a strong foundation of traditional agricultural knowledge, yet a limited presence of value-added or commercial agri-business expertise. While most households possess the skills needed for primary production, few are engaged in post-harvest processing, marketing, or modern farming methods—highlighting a major gap in the local value chain and income diversification potential.

Insights from KIIs across Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab confirm that agricultural and livestock skills are widespread but remain traditional and largely unrefined. In Qala-e-Now, respondents noted that most farmers rely on inherited experience rather than structured training: *“Our people know how to farm, but not with modern methods everything is by hand and rain.”* In Qadis, participants emphasized that although farmers are knowledgeable about cereal and vegetable cultivation, they lack technical know-how in irrigation management, drought adaptation, and seed selection, leading to low productivity: *“We have skills, but they are old. We need training on how to increase yield and protect crops from drought.”* Similarly, in Bala Murghab, informants observed that while many households are proficient in goat and sheep rearing, they often lack veterinary knowledge and access to animal product markets: *“People know how to raise animals, but not how to prevent disease or find good markets.”*

6.2.4 Main Barriers Preventing Households from Using Their Skills – Badghis Province

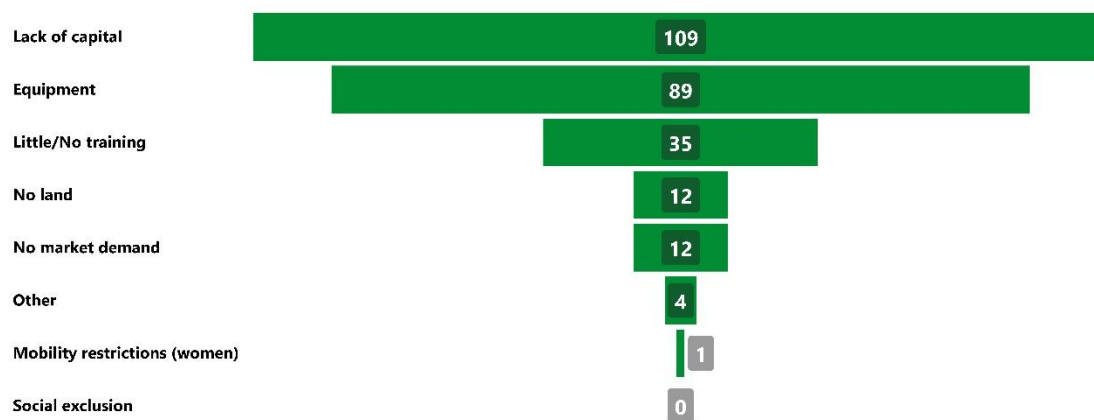


Figure 35: Main Barriers Preventing Households from Using Their Skills in Badghis Province

The findings reveal that the lack of capital is the most critical barrier preventing households in Badghis province from utilizing their existing skills, reported by 109 respondents. This is followed by insufficient equipment (89) and limited access to training opportunities (35). A smaller number of households identified lack of land (12), weak market demand (12), and mobility restrictions for women (1) as additional constraints. Collectively, these findings underscore that while most households possess valuable agricultural, livestock, or vocational skills, their ability to convert these skills into income-generating activities is severely constrained by financial and material limitations. KIIs from Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab strongly reinforce this pattern. Across all districts, participants consistently pointed to financial poverty, lack of productive assets, and

inadequate institutional support as major barriers to livelihood utilization. In Qala-e-Now, respondents noted that even skilled farmers and laborers cannot use their expertise effectively due to the absence of start-up capital or tools, explaining, “People have the skill to farm or weave, but they cannot start anything without capital.” In Qadis, both male and female participants highlighted that financial assistance, and basic equipment could significantly enhance income generation, particularly for women engaged in home-based activities: “If we had sewing machines or small grants, women could earn from tailoring at home.” In Bala Murghab, informants emphasized that equipment shortages, lack of irrigation, and weak market connections keep productivity low: “Without modern tools and water, our work stays the same every year — hard work but no progress.”

6.2.5 Main Source of income – Badghis Province

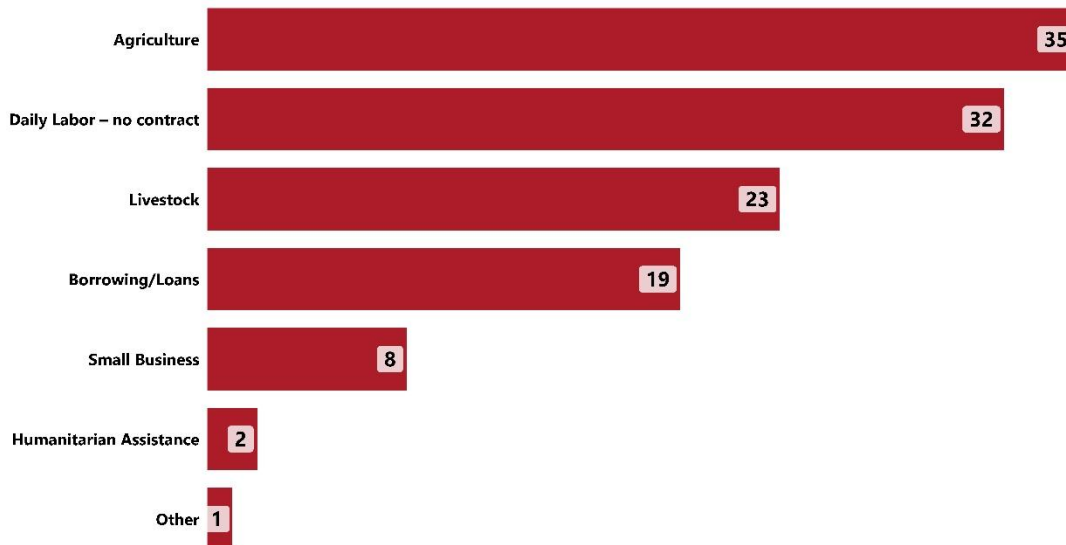


Figure 36: Main Source of income in Badghis Province

The findings indicate that agriculture (35 households) is the most common source of income among surveyed households in Badghis, followed by daily labor without formal contracts (32) and livestock rearing (23). A considerable number of respondents also depend on borrowing or informal loans (19) to meet household needs, while a small fraction relies on small businesses (8) or humanitarian assistance (2). This pattern shows that most livelihoods are seasonal, informal, and insecure, with minimal access to stable or diversified income sources. The average monthly household income is only 4,207 AFN, underscoring the precarious economic condition of most families. This amount is insufficient to cover basic needs, particularly given rising food prices and the lack of savings or alternative income streams. The combination of low income and unstable employment leaves many households reliant on debt, aid, or migration for survival.

6.2.6 Agricultural System and Land Use – Badghis Province

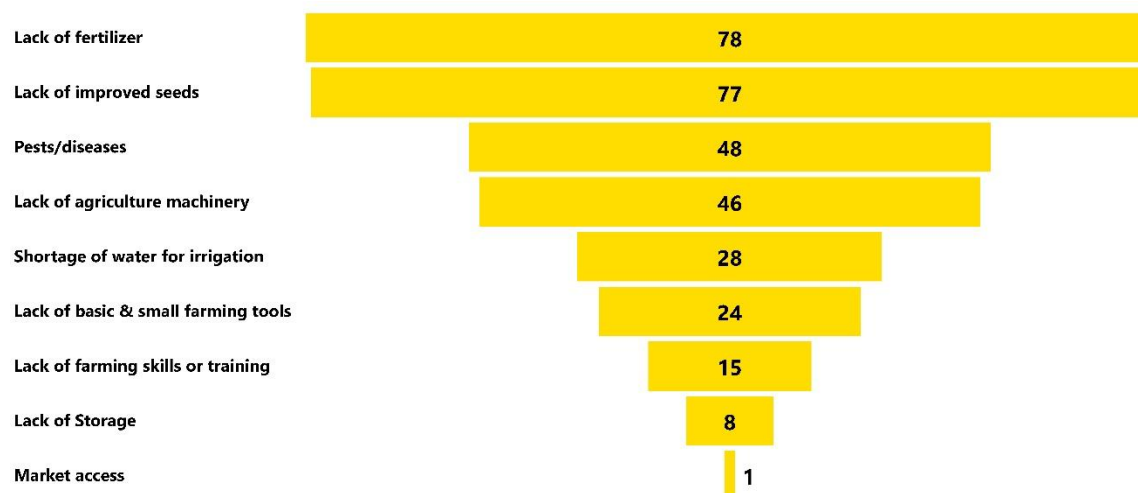


Figure 37: Agricultural System and Land Use in Badghis Province

The findings show that agriculture remains the main livelihood source across Badghis province, though productivity is increasingly constrained by environmental and resource-related challenges. Out of 120 households surveyed, 78 (65%) reported having access to land, while 42 (35%) do not. Among those with access, 57 households own their land, 19 rent plots, and 2 share land under informal arrangements. This pattern reflects both the agricultural dependence of rural communities and the limited availability of secure, productive land resources.

The primary challenges reported by farmers include the lack of fertilizer (78 respondents), unavailability of improved seeds (77), and shortage of agricultural machinery (46). Additional constraints such as pests and crop diseases (48) and insufficient irrigation water (28) further undermine yields. Smaller but still significant issues include lack of small farming tools (24), limited technical training (15), inadequate storage (8), and poor market access (1). Together, these findings depict a highly input-deficient and climate-stressed agricultural system, where low productivity and unstable harvests threaten household food security and income stability.

Insights from KIIs across Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab strongly reinforce these quantitative results. In Qala-e-Now, informants emphasized that farmers still rely on traditional seeds and hand tools, as they cannot afford improved inputs: *“Farmers cannot buy improved seeds or fertilizer. They plant what they have from last year’s harvest.”* In Qadis, participants highlighted irrigation scarcity and climate change as major challenges, with canals and karezes drying up: *“There is no water for irrigation — people wait for rain and pray.”* Meanwhile, in Bala Murghab, respondents reported persistent pest infestations and lack of machinery, compounded by limited access to pesticides or extension services: *“Wheat and barley get pests every year, but no one helps with treatment or advice.”*

6.2.7 Livestock Rearing – Badghis Province

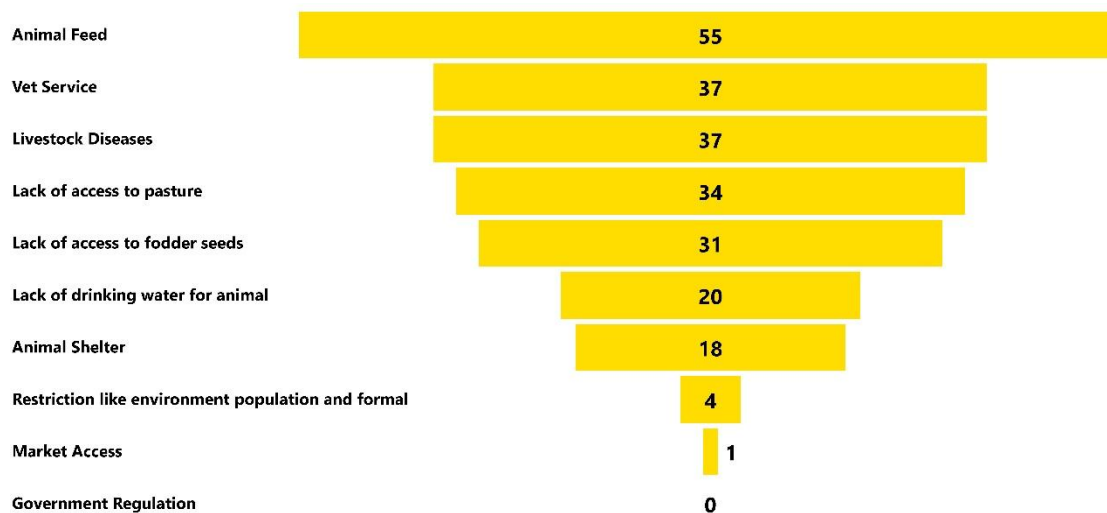


Figure 38: Livestock Rearing in Badghis Province

The findings show that livestock rearing remains an important but increasingly fragile livelihood in Badghis province. Out of 120 households surveyed, 47 (39%) reported raising livestock, while 73 (61%) did not. Among those engaged in livestock keeping, 30 households own their animals, and 17 maintain them through shared or rental arrangements. Livestock ownership is concentrated mainly in the rural areas of Bala Murghab, Qadis, and Qala-e-Now, where it continues to serve as a key source of food, income, and household savings.

However, livestock production faces multiple and interlinked challenges that have significantly reduced productivity and sustainability. The most frequently cited issues include shortage of animal feed (55 responses), limited access to veterinary services (37), and livestock diseases (37). Additional problems such as lack of pasture (34), unavailability of fodder seeds (31), and scarcity of drinking water for animals (20) further strain household capacities. Other reported constraints include inadequate animal shelters (18) and poor market access (1), collectively reflecting a system undermined by environmental degradation, weak service delivery, and financial limitations.

Evidence from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) across Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab strongly supports these quantitative findings. In Qala-e-Now, respondents described animal feed scarcity as the most severe constraint, with grazing lands dried up and fodder prices tripling in recent years: *“People sold many of their animals because they could not buy feed — the grass is gone.”* In Qadis, informants highlighted the lack of veterinary support and disease control, explaining that many families lose animals to preventable illnesses due to the absence of affordable treatment: *“When animals get sick, we have to treat them ourselves or they die — the vet is far and costly.”* In Bala Murghab, respondents stressed that pasture and water shortages have reached critical levels, noting, *“Even for drinking water, we compete with our animals — there is not enough for both.”* Across all districts, participants also raised concerns about shrinking grazing areas, rising input prices, and limited market access, which have forced many households to reduce or sell off their herds.

6.2.8 Market Accessibility and Functionality – Badghis Province

The findings show that while market access is relatively widespread across Badghis province, substantial challenges persist in terms of gender inclusivity and market functionality. Out of 120 households surveyed, 101 (84%) reported having access to a market, while 19 (16%) stated that they do not. Among those with access, 76 households indicated that markets are accessible and functional for both men and women, whereas 24 households reported that they are accessible only for men. This imbalance underscores a gendered gap in economic participation, where women’s engagement in markets, whether as buyers, sellers, or producers, remains restricted by social norms, mobility constraints, and security concerns. Moreover, even where markets are accessible, low purchasing power, weak demand, and limited trade activity undermine their ability to serve as stable livelihood hubs.

KIIs from Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab reinforce these findings, illustrating that while markets exist physically, their economic functionality is weak due to low consumer spending, poor connectivity, and limited cash flow. In Qala-e-Now, respondents explained that although the central market is active, price fluctuations and social restrictions limit participation, especially for women: *“Men go to the bazaar daily, but women rarely go — they depend on men to buy what is needed.”* In Qadis, participants described local markets as stagnant, with minimal trade activity: *“There is a market, but people don’t have money to buy — sometimes traders don’t even come.”* Similarly, in Bala Murghab, informants highlighted that distance, insecurity, and high transport costs significantly reduce profitability: *“The market is far and hard to reach — even if we sell, the profit goes to transport.”* Across all districts, female informants emphasized that mobility restrictions and the absence of safe spaces prevent women from engaging in market-related activities such as selling dairy, tailoring products, or vegetables. As one woman in Qadis noted, *“Women have skills but no access to sell their products. Everything must go through male relatives”*.

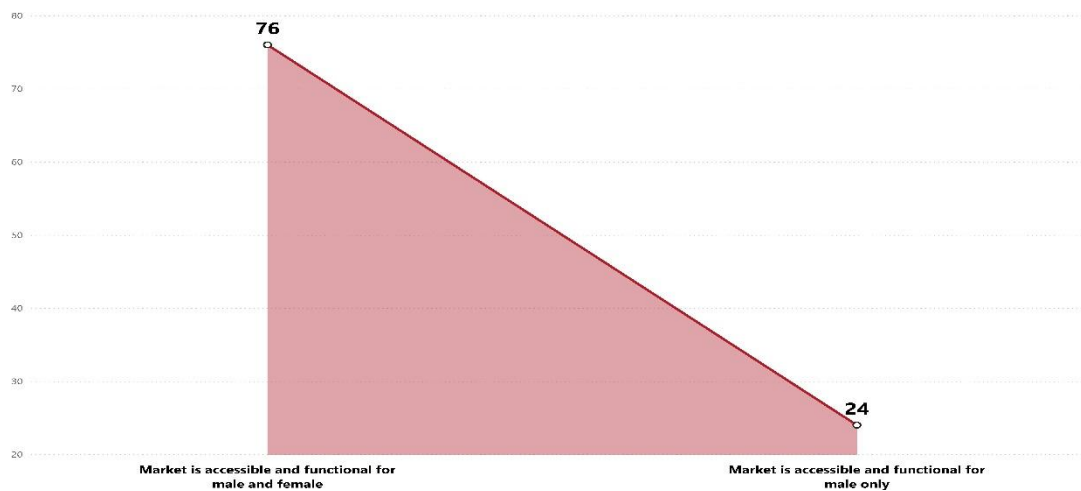


Figure 39: Market Accessibility and Functionality in Badghis Province

6.2.9 Food Consumption Score (FCS) – Badghis Province

The Food Consumption Score results indicate widespread food insecurity across Badghis province. The majority of surveyed households (94) fall into the “poor” consumption category, reflecting very limited dietary diversity and insufficient food intake. Only 16 households are in the “borderline” category, while just 10 have an “acceptable” food consumption score. These findings demonstrate that most families in Badghis consume a monotonous diet dominated by staple foods such as bread and tea, with minimal intake of vegetables, fruits, dairy, or protein-rich items. The results underscore a severe nutritional vulnerability, closely linked to low income levels, drought-related agricultural losses, and limited market access for diverse and nutritious foods.

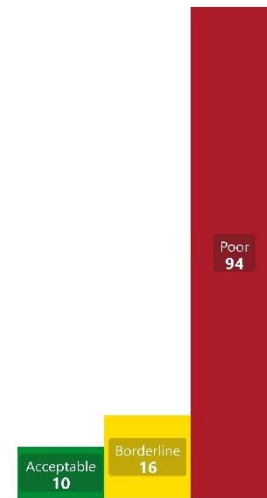


Figure 40: Food Consumption Score (FCS) in Badghis Province

6.2.10 Priority Needs – Badghis Province

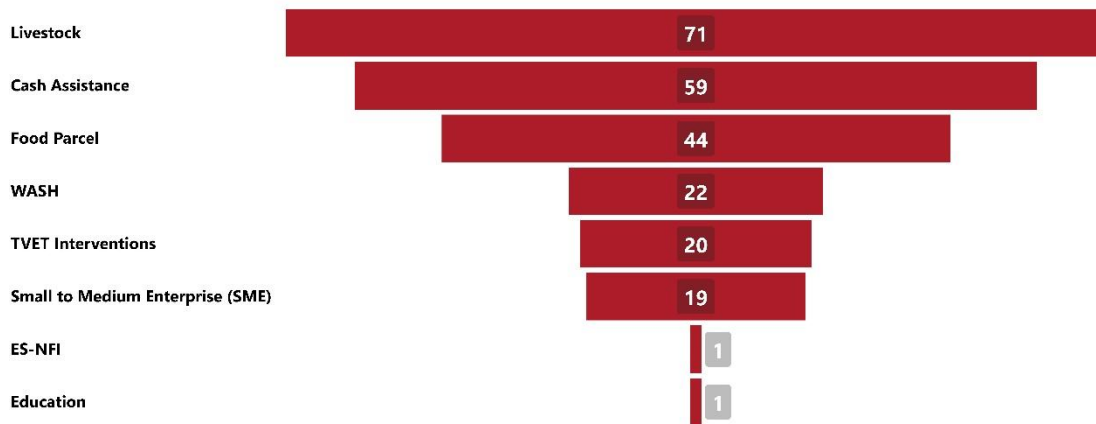


Figure 41: Priority Needs in Badghis Province

The findings indicate that livestock support is the top priority need among households in Badghis province, reflecting the province’s strong agricultural and pastoral livelihood base. Out of 120 households surveyed, 71 identified livestock assistance including restocking, feed provision, and veterinary services as their most urgent requirement. This was followed by cash assistance (59) and food parcels (44 households). Other identified needs include WASH services (22), TVET interventions (20), and SME support (19), while only a few respondents mentioned education and emergency shelter/NFI assistance (1 each). This distribution underscores a strong community preference for livelihood recovery and income generation rather than one-time humanitarian relief, demonstrating the population’s reliance on agriculture and livestock as core survival strategies.

KIIs across Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab districts echo these priorities. Respondents across all areas unanimously emphasized livestock and cash support as the most pressing needs for families struggling to recover from successive droughts, economic decline, and loss of productive assets. In Qala-e-Now, participants highlighted that restocking animals, feed provision,

and access to veterinary care would have the most lasting impact: *“People depend on animals. If they receive feed and medicine, they can survive on milk and meat again.”* In Qadis, both men and women stressed the importance of cash assistance to meet immediate needs such as food, rent, and medicine: *“Right now, the biggest help is cash. People can buy food or medicine as they need.”* In Bala Murghab, informants underscored that the loss of livestock due to drought has devastated rural livelihoods: *“Drought killed the grass and many animals. If we get some livestock again, families can earn and eat.”* Furthermore, participants across all three districts pointed to TVET training and small business support as vital for long-term resilience, especially for youth and women. As one KI respondent from Qala-e-Now noted, *“If there are trainings and small grants, people can start work and won’t need help every year.”*

6.2.11 Major Challenges Related to the Current Situation – Badghis Province

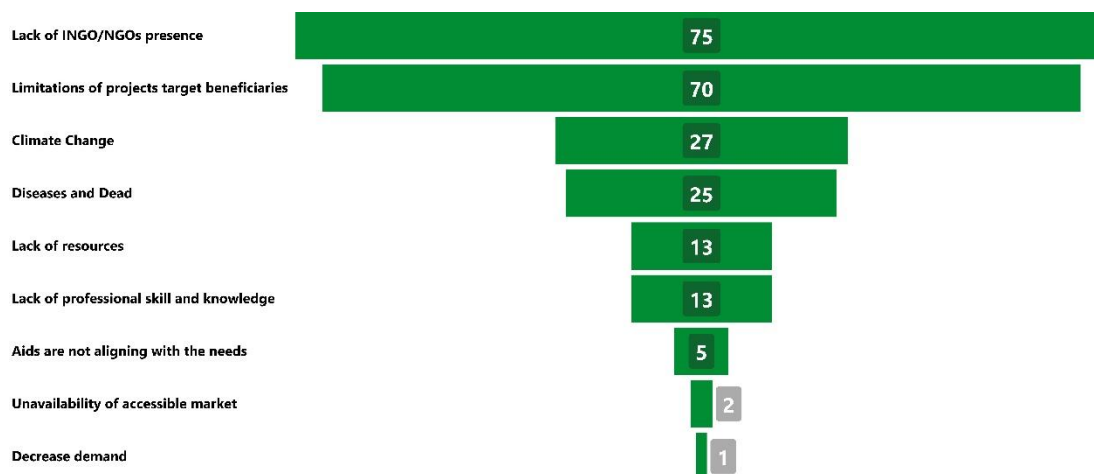


Figure 42: Major Challenges Related to the Current Situation in Badghis Province

The findings reveal that communities in Badghis province are facing a complex web of overlapping challenges, with the most pressing issue being the decline in INGO and NGO presence, reported by 75 households. This is closely followed by concerns about the limited coverage of existing aid projects and beneficiary selection (70 households). Other major challenges include the impacts of climate change (27), livestock diseases and deaths (25), and the lack of key resources such as tools, cash, and animal feed (13). Smaller but still notable concerns include shortages of professional and technical skills (13), misaligned aid programming (5), and poor market functionality (2). Together, these findings indicate that many communities perceive a sharp reduction in humanitarian and development assistance, leaving large portions of the population without consistent external support. The combined effects of prolonged drought, limited livelihood opportunities, and weak institutional presence have deepened household vulnerability and eroded local resilience.

KIIs from Qala-e-Now, Qadis, and Bala Murghab strongly reinforce this perception. Informants across all three districts repeatedly emphasized the withdrawal or downsizing of NGOs and donor-funded projects, noting that this has left many communities with few options for livelihood recovery or emergency support. In Qala-e-Now, respondents highlighted that while a few organizations remain active, project coverage is narrow, and many poor families are excluded

from assistance: *“Only a few families are selected for support — most people in the same condition get nothing.”* In Qadis, participants described the suspension of agricultural and development initiatives that previously provided seeds, tools, and technical support: *“There used to be projects giving seeds and tools, but now everything has stopped.”* Similarly, in Bala Murghab, respondents stressed that drought, livestock disease, and the absence of NGO programs have worsened living conditions: *“Animals are dying from lack of grass and disease — before NGOs helped, now there is no one.”*

6.3 Farah Province

6.3.1 Province Survey Profile - Farah Province

Sample Size HH Survey			Residence Area			Gender	
Farah Center	Bala-Buluk	Posht-Rod	Urban	Rural	Peri-urban	Male	Female
40	40	40	8	62	50	104	16
120 Households							
Residence Type							
Returnee		Host Community		IDP			
89		28		3			

Table 8: Province Survey Profile in Farah Province

A total of 120 households were surveyed across three districts of Farah province. Farah Center, Bala Buluk, and Posht Rod with 40 households interviewed in each district. The survey sample provides balanced geographic coverage of both urban and rural areas, though the majority of respondents (62 households) reside in rural settings, followed by peri-urban areas (50) and a smaller number from urban locations (8). In addition to the household survey, 12 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted four in each district to complement the quantitative findings with community and institutional perspectives.

Gender distribution among respondents is notably uneven, with 104 male and 16 female participants, reflecting the continued challenges of engaging women respondents in conservative or rural areas of Farah. In terms of population composition, the data show that returnees constitute the majority (89 households), followed by host community members (28) and a small number of internally displaced persons (3). This pattern highlights Farah’s ongoing process of reintegration and resettlement, where both returnees and host communities face similar economic hardships, limited access to services, and restricted livelihood opportunities.

6.3.2 Income Generation Activities – Farah Province

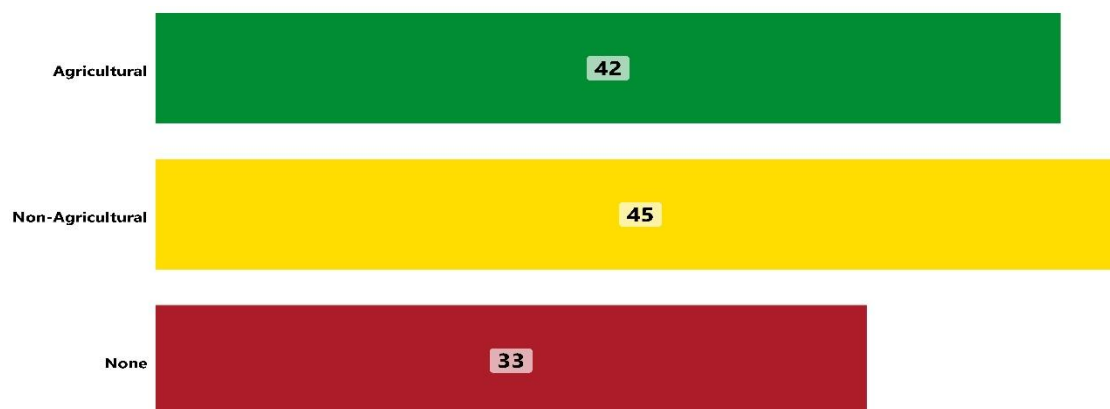


Figure 43: Income Generation Activities in Farah Province

The findings reveal a diverse yet fragile livelihood landscape across Farah province, characterized by a gradual transition from agriculture-based to mixed informal employment. Out of 120 households surveyed, 45 reported engaging in non-agricultural income-generating activities, 42 in agricultural-based work, while 33 households stated they currently have no active income source. This near balance between agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods reflects Farah’s shift from a primarily agrarian economy toward informal labor and trade-based livelihoods, including daily wage work, petty commerce, construction, and transport. However, the high proportion of households without any source of income highlights widespread unemployment, economic stagnation, and growing dependency, particularly among returnee and rural populations who remain vulnerable to external shocks and market fluctuations.

Insights from KIIs conducted in Farah Center, Bala Buluk, and Posht Rod further underscore these trends. Informants across all three districts emphasized that agriculture, though still central to rural life, has become increasingly unreliable due to chronic water shortages, low crop yields, and repeated droughts. In Farah Center, respondents explained that farming is now viable only for households with access to irrigation, while others rely on irregular day labor or migration to Iran: “Farming doesn’t feed families anymore — people work as daily laborers or send someone to Iran.” In Bala Buluk, participants noted that many farmers have abandoned cultivation because of damaged irrigation canals and unaffordable input costs, shifting instead to casual labor or petty trade: “People can’t afford seeds and water pumps; they try small shops or daily work instead.” Similarly, in Posht Rod, respondents reported that livestock losses and lack of water have left most households dependent on cash assistance or borrowing, as one informant described: “Before, we lived from the farm and animals. Now, there’s no water, no feed — most people have no job.”

6.3.3 Current Skills and Expertise – Farah Province

The findings indicate that most households in Farah province possess traditional agricultural and livestock-related skills, with very limited exposure to modern, technical, or vocational trades. The most commonly reported competencies include cereal production (36 respondents) and irrigation management (29), followed by goat/sheep rearing (18), cattle rearing (16), and poultry or livestock handling (15). Other skills such as vegetable cultivation (15), masonry (13), and

horticulture (11) were also mentioned. Only a few respondents reported experience in food processing (7), tailoring (4), or dairy and orchard processing (1–2 each). This distribution reflects a strong foundation of traditional, hands-on experience in farming and livestock, but a clear gap in value-added, market-oriented, and technical skills that could enhance productivity, employability, and income diversification.

Insights from KIIs across Farah Center, Bala Buluk, and Posht Rod further highlight that while communities have generational knowledge in farming and herding, they lack access to modern practices, training, and tools. In Farah Center, informants explained that most farmers depend entirely on inherited knowledge, with no access to training in improved irrigation or crop management: *“People know farming from their fathers, but they don’t know new methods — no one teaches them.”* In Bala Buluk, respondents noted that while some youth have basic construction and masonry skills, there are no formal training or certification programs to enhance employability or income potential: *“Some young men can do construction, but without training or tools, they can’t find steady work.”* Similarly, in Posht Rod, participants emphasized that although many households know how to farm or raise livestock, their skills remain underutilized due to lack of water, equipment, and financial support: *“People know how to grow or raise animals, but there is no water, no tools, and no support.”*

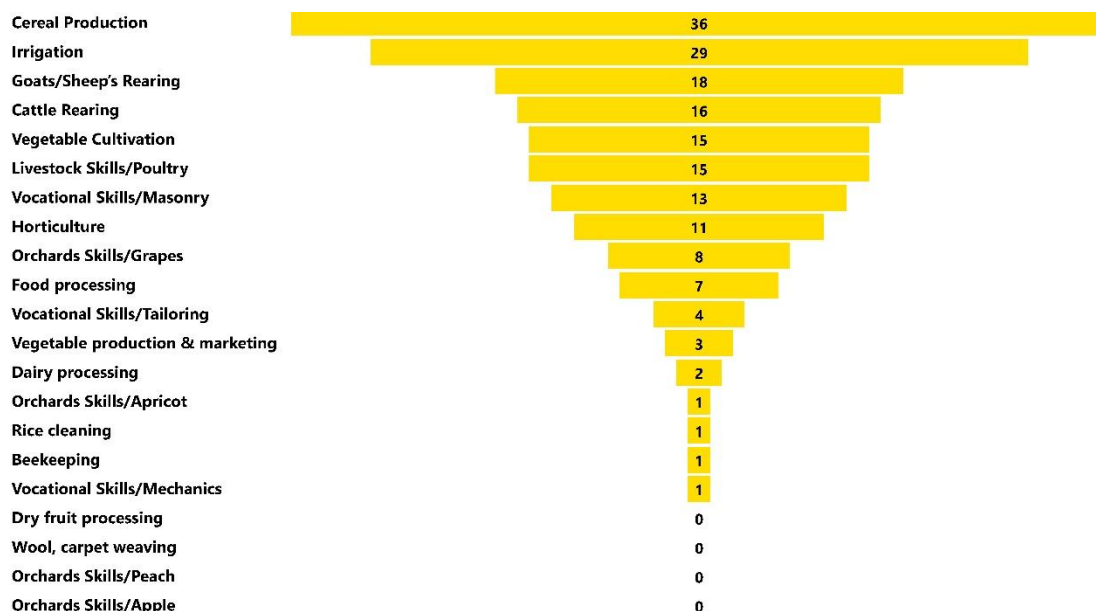


Figure 44: Current Skills and Expertise in Farah Province

6.3.4 Main Barriers Preventing People from Using Their Skills – Farah Province

The findings indicate that most individuals in Farah province are unable to effectively utilize their existing skills due to a combination of financial, infrastructural, and environmental barriers. The most pressing challenge identified is lack of capital (73 respondents), followed by lack of equipment (63) and limited access to land (39). Other notable constraints include low market demand (19), insufficient training opportunities (6), and mobility restrictions (1)—the latter primarily affecting women. This pattern demonstrates that while communities in Farah possess

traditional expertise in farming, livestock rearing, and manual trades, the supportive environment for applying these skills remains weak, constrained by poverty, lack of inputs, and weak market linkages.

Insight from KIIs conducted in Farah Center, Bala Buluk, and Posht Rod strongly reinforce these trends. Informants consistently described financial incapacity as the single greatest barrier preventing skilled individuals from pursuing productive work. In Farah Center, respondents emphasized that even experienced farmers remain idle due to lack of cash and agricultural inputs: *“Even those who know farming cannot work — they have no money to buy seeds or rent land.”* In Bala Buluk, participants highlighted equipment shortages and rising market prices as major obstacles that have made both agricultural and small business activities nearly impossible: *“The equipment is too expensive, and no one supports poor farmers. So they just wait for aid.”* Similarly, in Posht Rod, several respondents pointed to the absence of capital, land, and consistent market demand as reasons why skilled individuals are unable to sustain livelihoods: *“People have experience but no opportunity — no capital, no land, and no buyers.”*

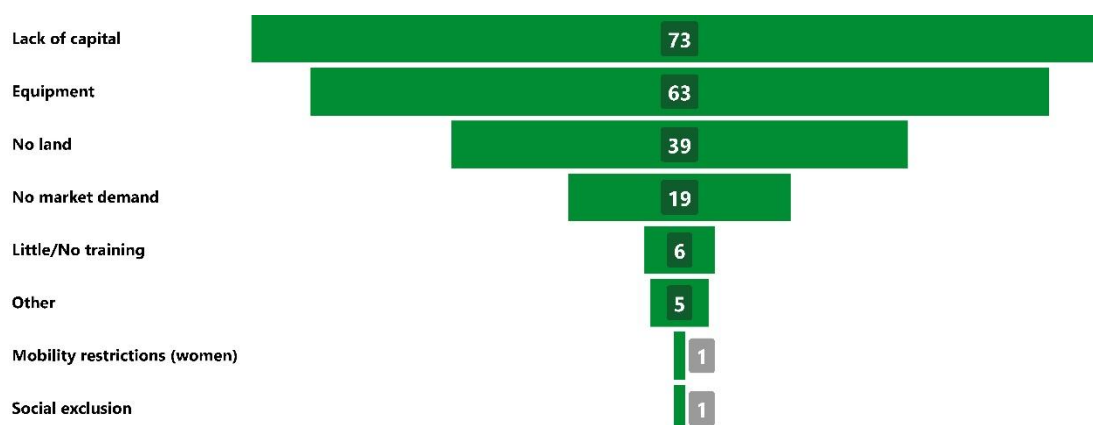


Figure 45: Main Barriers Preventing People from Using Their Skills in Farah Province

6.3.5 Main Source of Income – Farah Province

The data show that daily wage labor without formal contracts is the most common source of income among households in Farah province (45 households), followed by borrowing or loans (36) and agriculture (19). Smaller numbers of respondents reported humanitarian assistance (6), livestock-based income (5), small businesses (4), and formal employment (1) as their primary livelihood sources. This distribution demonstrates that Farah’s economy is largely informal and fragile, dominated by unstable day labor and reliance on borrowing. The average monthly household income stands at 2,968 AFN (approximately 41 USD), which is below Afghanistan’s national poverty threshold of 2,927 AFN per person per month (World Bank, 2024), indicating widespread poverty and economic vulnerability.

Insights from KIIs across Farah Center, Bala Buluk, and Posht Rod reinforce these findings. Respondents consistently emphasized that daily labor and borrowing remain the main survival mechanisms for most families, as steady employment and agricultural opportunities are scarce. In Farah Center, several participants explained that most men rely on irregular market or

construction work, with no guarantee of daily income: *“People wait in the bazaar every day, hoping someone will hire them, some days they go home without a single Afghani.”* In Bala Buluk, informants highlighted that many families now survive through borrowing or informal community loans due to declining agricultural income: *“Many borrow from shopkeepers or relatives; the debt keeps growing while jobs are disappearing.”* In Posht Rod, participants linked migration to economic distress, noting that many young men migrate to Iran in search of temporary work: *“Those who stay depend on borrowed money or aid; others risk their lives crossing borders to earn a little.”*

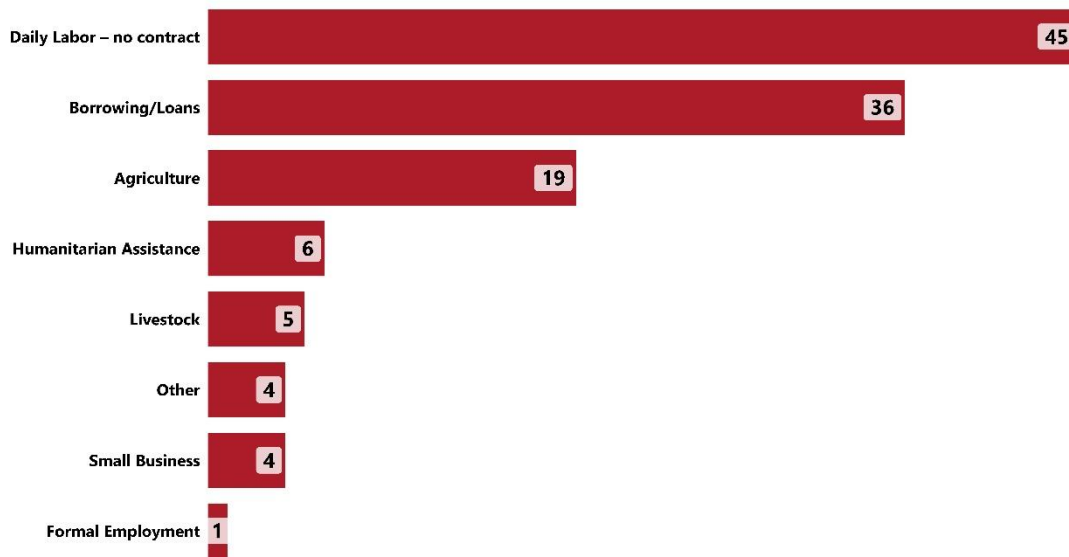


Figure 46: Main Source of Income in Farah Province

6.3.1 Agriculture and land use – Farah Province

Out of 120 assessed households in Farah province, 59 reported having access to agricultural land, while 61 households do not possess any cultivable land. Among those with access, 34 households own land, 17 rent plots, and 8 sharecrop. The majority of accessible land is irrigated (56 plots), while only 3 are rainfed, showing heavy dependence on irrigation systems that are now largely dysfunctional due to drought and infrastructure degradation. Agricultural production in Farah is severely hindered by water scarcity, lack of input, and limited technical support. Farmers face ongoing irrigation shortages, high costs of fertilizer and seeds, and minimal access to modern tools or machinery. Pests and plant diseases further reduce yields, while poor storage and market access limit income opportunities. As a result, even households with land struggle to make farming productive or sustainable. Across Farah Center, Bala Buluk, and Posht Rod, key informants echoed with similar concerns about the decline in agricultural productivity due to drought, high input costs, and reduced NGO assistance. In Farah Center, informants described water scarcity as a persistent threat: *“We used to grow wheat and vegetables, but now canals are dry, and people depend on expensive water pumps”*. In Bala Buluk, participants highlighted the unaffordability of agricultural inputs: *“Farmers can’t buy seeds or fertilizer anymore even if they find it in the market, prices are too high”*. In Posht Rod, informants emphasized the lack of pest control and technical

support: “Last year, most of our crops were destroyed by worms and drought; no one came to help,”

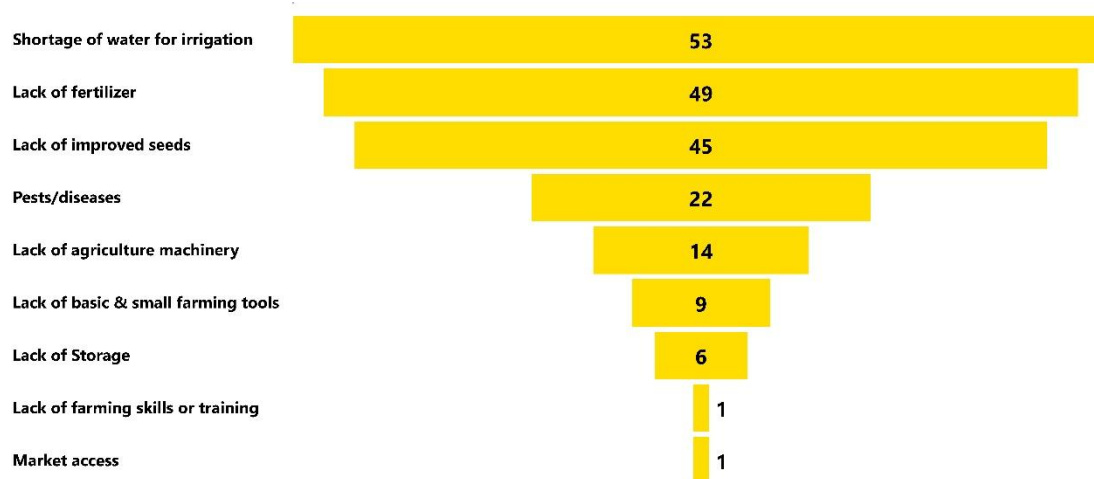


Figure 47: Agriculture and land use in Farah Province

6.3.∇ Livestock – Farah Province

Livestock rearing remains an important livelihood source for many households in Farah, though only a portion of respondents are actively engaged in it. Those who rear animals mainly own them, while shared ownership is rare. However, livestock production is constrained by multiple challenges, most notably the lack of veterinary services, high cost and shortage of animal feed, and limited access to pastureland. Farmers also reported difficulties in obtaining fodder seeds and maintaining adequate animal shelters, especially during extreme weather conditions. Livestock diseases are common, yet access to veterinary care and vaccination services is minimal. Water scarcity further aggravates the situation, leaving many herders unable to provide sufficient drinking water for their animals.

KII from Farah Center, Bala Buluk, and Posht Rod confirm that livestock rearing is central to household livelihoods but increasingly unsustainable due to widespread shortages and limited support. In Farah Center, several participants noted that livestock losses have risen sharply because of the absence of veterinary care and unaffordable medicine. *“When animals get sick, there is no vet or medicine available — we often lose them all,” — KII respondent, Farah Center.* In Bala Buluk, herders emphasized the lack of fodder and water, especially during the dry season. *“We have no grazing land left; the drought destroyed pastures, and buying animal feed is impossible for most of us”.* In Posht Rod, the deteriorating economic conditions were highlighted as a key factor limiting livestock investment. *“People used to keep more animals, but now they sell them to survive because there is no support or feed”.*

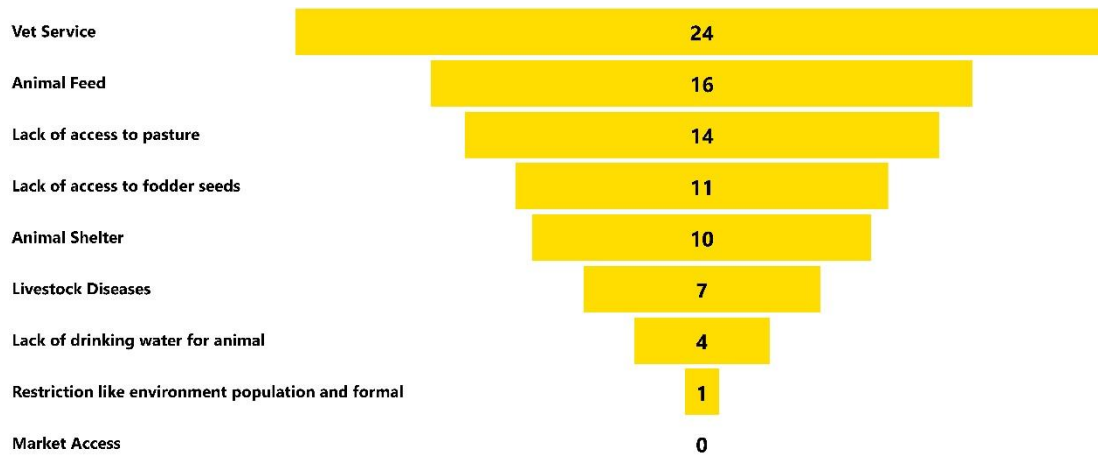


Figure 48: Livestock in Farah Province

6.3. [^] Market Accessibility and functionality – Farah Province

Access to markets in Farah province is generally available for most households, though with clear gender and location-based disparities. While the majority of communities report having functional and accessible markets, many note that only men can freely access them, and opportunities for women remain extremely limited. In most surveyed areas, markets were described as operational but lacking diversity of goods and fair pricing, which restricts their usefulness for both producers and consumers. Some rural and remote communities reported no functional market nearby, forcing families to travel long distances or depend on intermediaries for selling and purchasing goods. Key informant interviews reinforced these findings. In Farah Center, respondents noted that although the market is active, “*women rarely go there; it is not culturally accepted.*” In Bala Buluk and Posht Rod, informants emphasized poor infrastructure and insecurity as major obstacles: “The market is far, and transport is costly — sometimes people spend more on travel than what they earn from sales,”

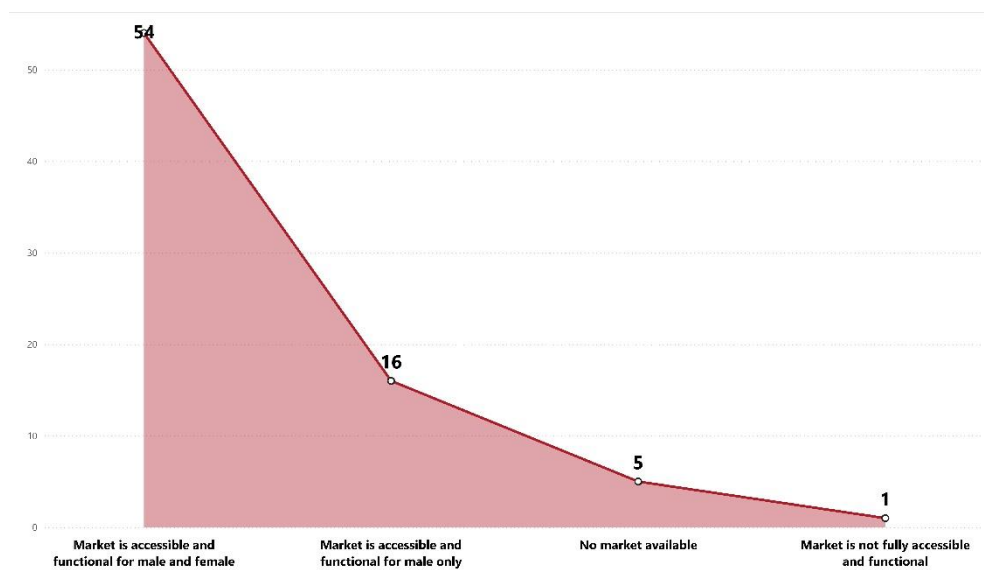


Figure 49: Market Accessibility and functionality in Farah Province

6.3.9 Food Consumption Score (FCS)- Farah Province

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) analysis for Farah province indicates that while a portion of households maintain acceptable food access, a significant share remains in borderline or poor consumption categories. The data suggests that food insecurity persists as a major concern, driven by low and unstable incomes, high food prices, and limited livelihood opportunities. Households with poor or borderline FCS often rely on monotonous diets, primarily consisting of bread, tea, and occasional vegetables, with very limited access to protein sources. Many respondents reported reducing meal portions or skipping meals during lean periods.

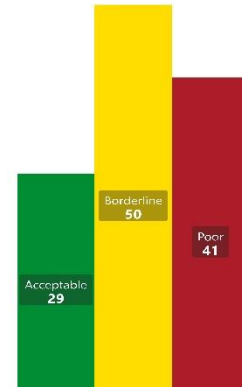


Figure 50: Food Consumption Score (FCS)- Farah Province

6.3.10 Priority Needs- Farah Province

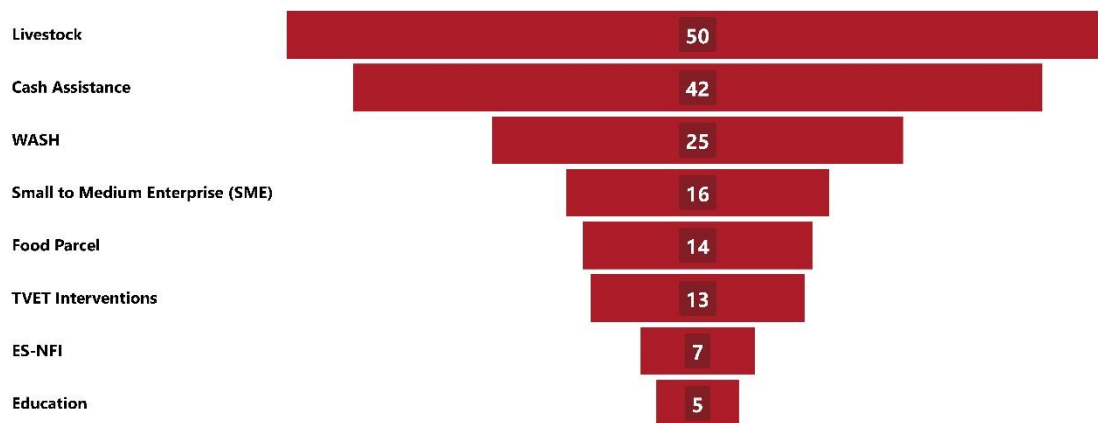


Figure 51 Priority Needs- Farah Province

The findings from Farah province highlight livestock support and cash assistance as the most pressing needs among households, reflecting the community’s reliance on mixed livelihoods and the erosion of coping capacity. Many families depend on small herds or daily wage income, both of which have been severely impacted by drought, inflation, and reduced employment opportunities. Requests for WASH and SME support further emphasize gaps in access to clean water and income diversification. Households also mentioned the need for food parcels, TVET training, and emergency shelter or NFI support, particularly in rural and drought-affected districts.

KII reinforce these priorities. In Bala Buluk, one respondent stated, *“If people had livestock and some cash, they could feed their families without waiting for aid.”* Similarly, in Posht Rod, a community elder explained, *“Most families have lost their animals or sold them to survive — they need livestock again to stand on their own.”*

6.3.1 Major challenges related to the current situation – Farah Province

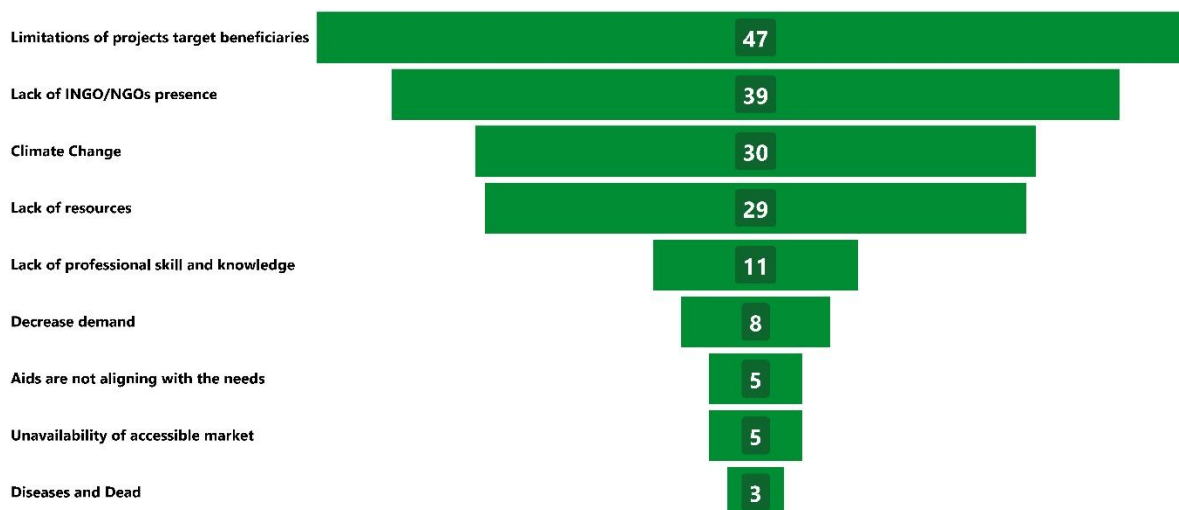


Figure 52: Major challenges related to the current situation – Farah Province

The current situation in Farah province is marked by limited humanitarian presence, shrinking livelihood opportunities, and climate-related shocks, all of which have deepened household vulnerabilities. Communities consistently highlighted that few aid projects are active, and even when they exist, their coverage is too narrow to meet widespread needs. Key informants repeatedly expressed frustration over the decline in NGO and INGO operations, noting that this has left many without essential support such as food, water, or livelihood inputs. One respondent in Farah Center stated, “There are too many people in need, but only a few are selected for assistance most are left out.” The lack of resources, including tools, cash, and livestock feed, was also cited as a critical constraint, alongside recurrent droughts and climate change, which continue to reduce agricultural yields and water availability.

6.4 Ghor Province

6.4.1 Province Sample Profile – Ghor Province

Sample Size HH Survey		Residence Area			Gender	
Firooz Kooh	Lal wa Sarjantal	Urban	Rural	Peri-urban	Male	Female
68	61	32	66	31	99	30
129 Households						
Residence Type						
Returnee		Host Community		IDP		
91		21		17		

Table 9: Province Sample Profile in Ghor Province

A total of 129 households were surveyed across two districts of Ghor province, Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjantal, ensuring a balanced geographic representation. The majority of respondents reside in rural areas, while smaller proportions live in urban and peri-urban settings, reflecting the province’s predominantly rural character. Gender representation shows 99 male and 30 female respondents, a gap largely influenced by social and cultural norms that limit women’s direct

participation in surveys, especially in remote areas. In terms of population composition, returnees make up the largest share (91 households), followed by host community members (21) and internally displaced people (17). This highlights Ghor’s ongoing challenges with displacement and reintegration, where both returnee and host families face limited livelihood opportunities and access to essential services.

6.4.2 Income generation Activities – Ghor Province

The findings from Ghor province reveal that a large portion of households lack any form of income-generating activity, reflecting widespread unemployment and economic stagnation. Among those engaged in livelihoods, non-agricultural activities—such as daily labor, small trade, and handicrafts—are slightly more common than farming. This is largely due to limited arable land, harsh climate, and low agricultural productivity, which restrict farming opportunities in many districts. The dominance of households with no active income source underscores the province’s high dependency on humanitarian assistance, borrowing, and informal coping mechanisms. It also highlights the erosion of traditional livelihood options as droughts, market isolation, and poor infrastructure continue to reduce economic participation, particularly for youth and women. Overall, the data points to an urgent need for livelihood diversification and skills-based employment opportunities, as agriculture alone can no longer sustain most households in Ghor.

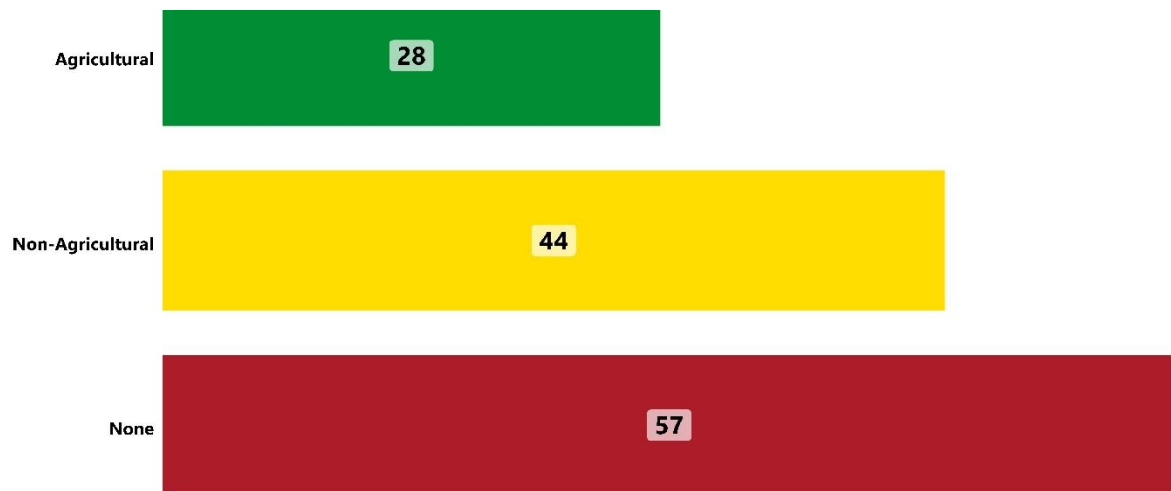


Figure 53: Income generation Activities – Ghor Province

6.4.3 Current Skills and Expertise – Ghor Province

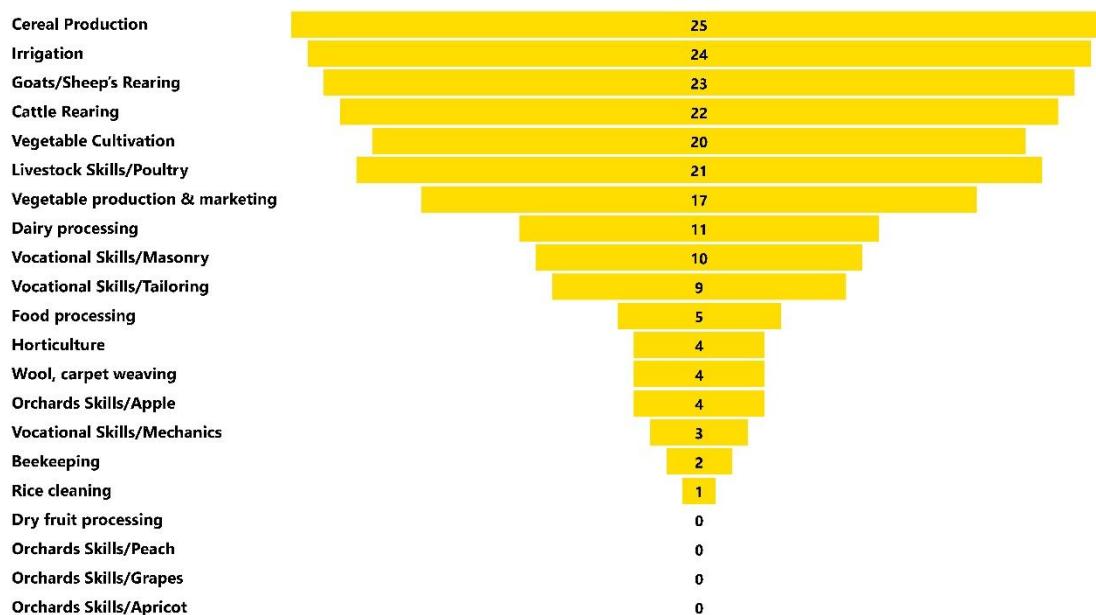


Figure 54: Current Skills and Expertise – Ghor Province

The data indicate that households in Ghor province possess a diverse range of traditional and agricultural skills, with the most common being cereal production, irrigation, and livestock rearing particularly goats and sheep. Many respondents also reported practical experience in vegetable cultivation, masonry, tailoring, and dairy processing. However, these existing skills remain largely underutilized due to lack of resources, limited training opportunities, and weak market linkages. The predominance of agriculture- and livestock-related skills reflects the province’s rural economic structure, yet harsh climatic conditions, inadequate irrigation systems, and limited access to modern tools continue to constrain productivity and income diversification.

Insights from KIIs across Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjangan districts reinforce these findings. Informants in both locations emphasized that while communities possess a strong traditional knowledge base, the lack of tools, capital, and technical training prevents them from using their skills effectively. In Firooz Kooh, participants explained that traditional farming methods are insufficient in the face of worsening drought and water shortages: *“People know farming, but without water and fertilizer, their skills don’t help.”* In Lal wa Sarjangan, respondents pointed to the need for vocational training and enterprise support, especially for women, to create viable income opportunities: *“We have tailors and carpet weavers, but no raw materials or buyers. Training alone is not enough without support.”*

6.4.4 Main Barriers Preventing the Use of Skills – Ghor Province

The findings indicate that despite a strong foundation of traditional and vocational skills, most people in Ghor province are unable to effectively utilize their abilities due to a combination of financial, infrastructural, and market-related barriers. The most significant constraints include the lack of equipment, limited access to capital, and weak market opportunities, all of which restrict income generation and active economic participation. Many skilled individuals—particularly

farmers, artisans, and tailors—lack essential tools, raw materials, and financial support, making it difficult to maintain their livelihoods or expand small-scale production. At the same time, the absence of investment and low purchasing power has weakened local markets, while vocational training opportunities remain scarce, especially for youth and women, who are often excluded from formal economic activities.

Insights from KIIs across Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjangal districts strongly support these findings, showing that poverty, remoteness, and poor market connectivity are the main factors preventing communities from turning skills into sustainable livelihoods. In Firooz Kooh, one respondent explained that financial hardship and lack of resources have made people dependent on aid rather than self-reliance: *“People have the skills, but they can’t afford the tools or materials to work. Everything depends on external help.”* In Lal wa Sarjangal, participants highlighted the absence of demand for local goods and the inability of households to engage in trade due to widespread poverty: *“Even if we make something, there’s no market to sell it — people here are too poor to buy.”* Additionally, women in both districts face mobility restrictions and cultural limitations, which prevent them from participating in training sessions or marketing their products publicly.

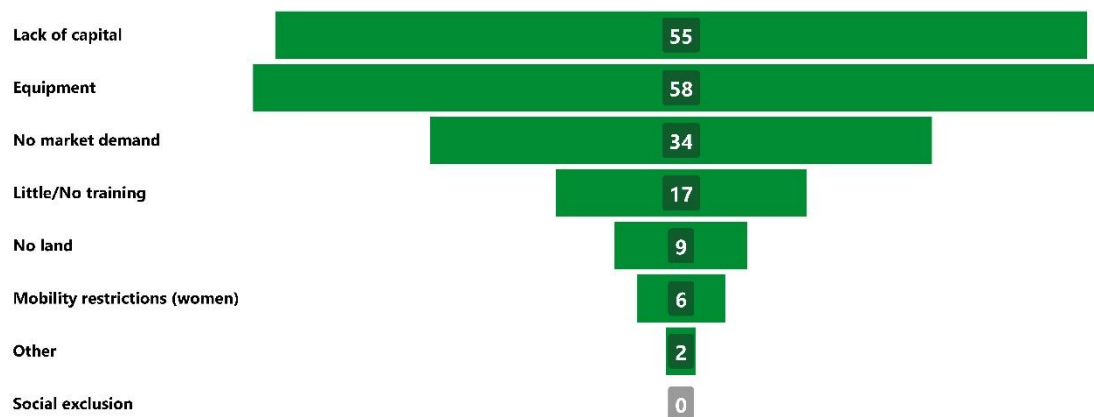


Figure 55: Main Barriers Preventing the Use of Skills – Ghor Province

6.4.5 Main Sources of Income – Ghor Province

Households in Ghor province face significant economic fragility, with the average monthly income estimated at just 2,766 AFN, reflecting widespread poverty and limited livelihood opportunities. The majority of respondents depend on daily wage labor without formal contracts, while many others survive through borrowing or informal credit arrangements.

Agriculture contributes modestly to household income but remains highly unreliable due to poor irrigation infrastructure, erratic rainfall, and limited access to quality seeds and fertilizers. A very small portion of households sustain themselves through small businesses or humanitarian assistance, emphasizing the lack of income diversification across the province. Ghor’s economy is dominated by informal, low-paying, and unstable sources of income, leaving most households vulnerable to economic shocks and unable to meet even basic living expenses.

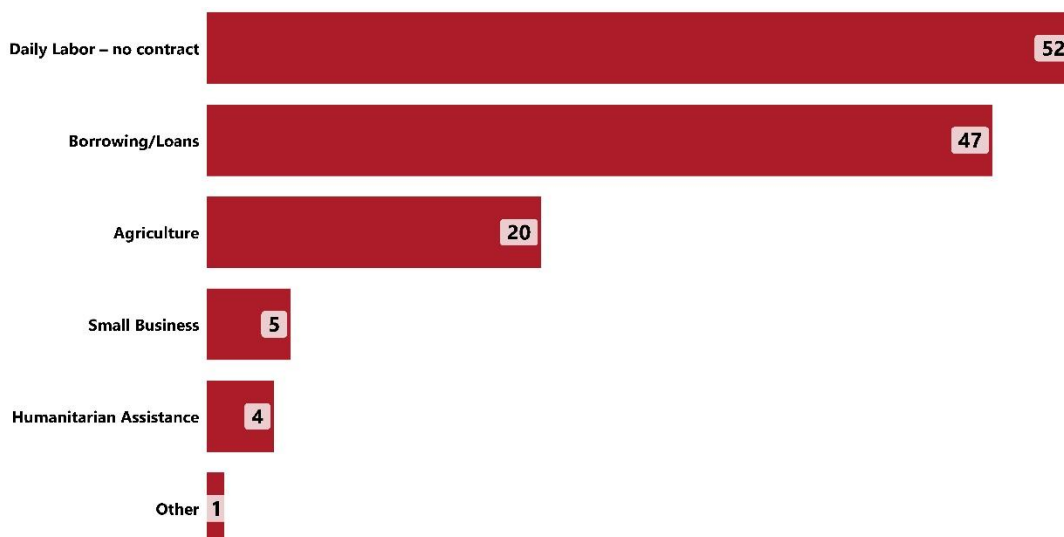


Figure 56: Main Sources of Income in Ghor Province

٦,٤,٦ Agriculture and Land Use – Ghor Province

The findings show that agriculture plays only a marginal role in household livelihoods across Ghor province, as most families lack access to cultivable land. Out of the 129 households surveyed, only a small portion reported having agricultural plots — mainly irrigated land, with a few rain-fed fields — while the vast majority (101 households) do not own or access land for farming. Among those who do, most are owner-farmers, followed by a smaller number who rent or share land. However, land access does not necessarily translate into productivity, as the sector faces significant structural barriers, including the scarcity of improved seeds and fertilizers, limited irrigation infrastructure, and widespread pest and disease infestations. These challenges, coupled with the absence of modern farming tools, poor storage capacity, and lack of market access, have led to low yields, reduced profitability, and declining investment in agriculture.

Insights from KIIs conducted in Firooz Kooch and Lal wa Sarjangal districts reinforce this picture. Informants in both districts emphasized that drought, high input costs, and lack of technical support have made farming increasingly unsustainable for rural families. In Firooz Kooch, one farmer described the persistent struggle with irrigation and fuel shortages: *“We have land, but water is the biggest problem — the canals are dry, and we can’t afford fuel for irrigation pumps.”* Similarly, in Lal wa Sarjangal, respondents pointed to the high cost of inputs and the dependence on rainfed farming, which have made agriculture unprofitable: *“Farming is not profitable anymore; the seeds and fertilizer are expensive, and most of our land depends on rain.”*

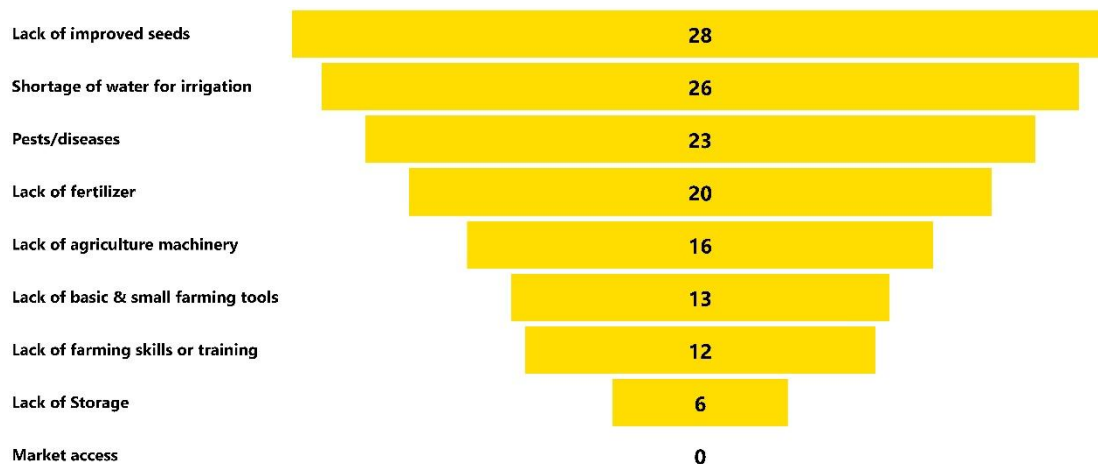


Figure 57: Agriculture and Land Use in Ghor Province

6.4.7 Livestock Rearing – Ghor Province

The findings show that livestock rearing plays a limited yet vital role in household livelihoods across Ghor province, with only 21 out of 129 households reporting engagement in animal husbandry, primarily through self-owned herds. Despite its importance as a traditional and potentially resilient livelihood source, livestock production remains severely constrained by a combination of environmental, infrastructural, and service-related challenges. The most commonly reported issues include poor access to veterinary care, high prevalence of livestock diseases, and shortages of animal feed and grazing land. Many herders also face water scarcity and limited availability of fodder seeds, which collectively threaten animal health, reduce productivity, and erode the economic viability of livestock keeping.

Insights from KIIs conducted in Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjangan districts reinforce these findings. Informants across both areas emphasized that livestock disease outbreaks and the lack of veterinary services are among the most pressing challenges confronting herders. In Firooz Kooh, one respondent explained the scale of losses caused by the absence of timely treatment and veterinary support: *“People lose many animals each year because there are no vets or medicine available in time.”* — KII respondent, Firooz Kooh District. In Lal wa Sarjangan, participants pointed to the impact of drought and high fodder prices, which have forced many households to reduce or sell off their herds: *“The grasslands have dried, and fodder is too expensive. Without feed and water, people are selling their livestock at low prices.”*

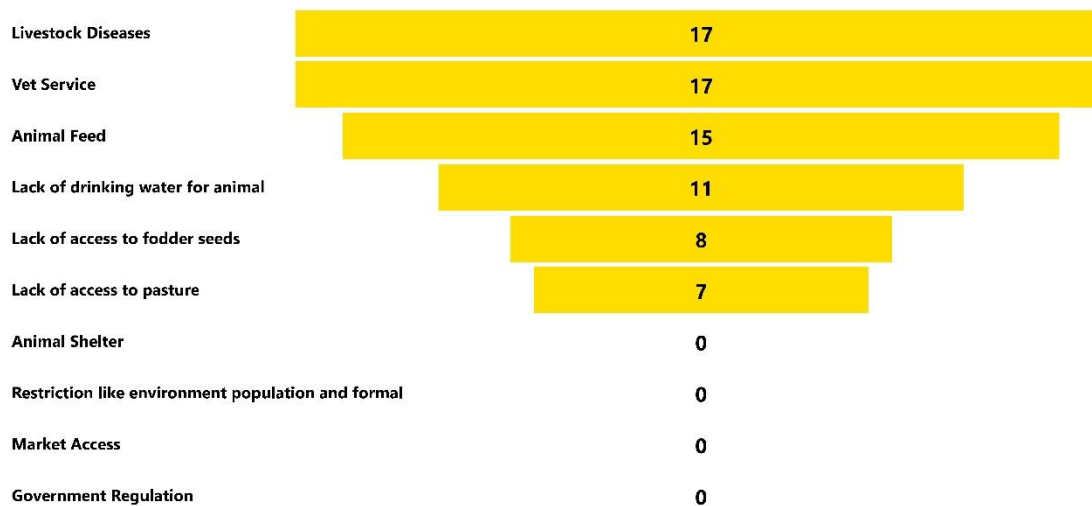


Figure 58: Livestock Rearing in Ghor Province

6.4.8 Market Accessibility and Functionality – Ghor Province

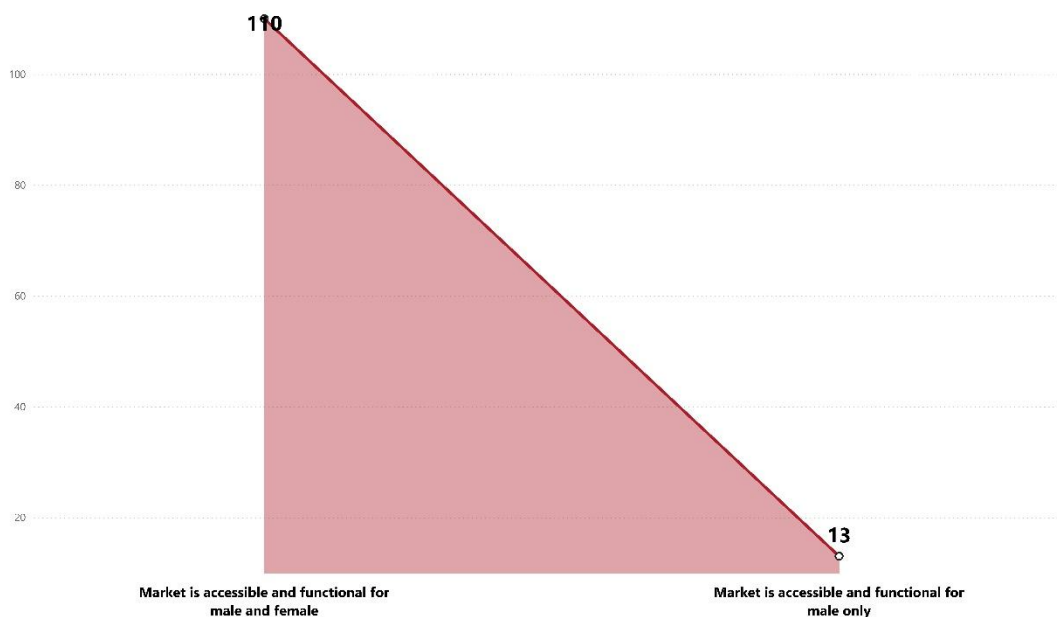


Figure 59 Market Accessibility and Functionality in Ghor Province

The findings show that market access in Ghor province is relatively widespread but remains uneven in inclusivity and functionality. Nearly all the households surveyed (124 out of 129) reported having access to a functional market, indicating good overall market presence. However, gender disparity continues to define participation: while most markets are open to both men and women, a smaller number are restricted to male buyers and sellers, limiting women’s ability to independently purchase or trade goods. These markets serve as crucial centers for food supplies, livestock exchange, and agricultural inputs, yet their economic potential is weakened by distance, poor road conditions, limited purchasing power, and seasonal inaccessibility due to harsh weather.

Insights from KIIs across Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjanganl districts reinforce these observations. Informants in both districts confirmed that markets exist but are difficult to reach, particularly for residents of remote villages. Poor transportation infrastructure, high fuel costs, and heavy snowfall during winter months isolate many communities, reducing both trade and access to essential goods. In Firooz Kooh, one respondent described the logistical constraints faced by rural households: *“We have markets, but they are far and hard to reach, especially in winter when roads are blocked”*. In Lal wa Sarjanganl, participants emphasized that social norms and mobility restrictions limit women’s market participation, further reducing household income opportunities: *“Women rarely go to the market. In some areas, only men can sell or buy; women depend on male family members”*.

6.4.9 Food consumption Score (FCS) – Ghor Province

Food security conditions in Ghor are alarmingly poor, with the vast majority of households falling into the “poor” consumption category. Only a very small share of respondents reported acceptable dietary diversity, while a moderate portion remains in the borderline range. This pattern signals a widespread struggle to meet daily nutritional needs, heavily driven by low income, high food prices, and limited livelihood opportunities. Most households rely on monotonous diets dominated by bread and tea, with minimal access to protein sources or fresh produce. The lack of agricultural production, weak purchasing power, and limited humanitarian assistance further exacerbate food insecurity across both Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjanganl districts.

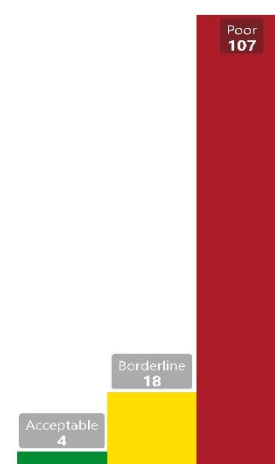


Figure 60: Food consumption Score (FCS) in Ghor Province

6.4.10 Priority Needs – Ghor Province

The findings indicate that households in Ghor province identified livestock support as their top priority need, underscoring the province’s heavy dependence on pastoral livelihoods and the increasing vulnerability of herders to drought, disease, and feed shortages. In addition to livestock-related assistance, respondents expressed a strong preference for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) interventions, signaling a growing interest in sustainable income-generating opportunities over short-term relief aid. While cash assistance and WASH support were also mentioned, these were viewed as secondary needs, primarily serving immediate coping purposes rather than long-term recovery. The relatively low prioritization of food or NFI assistance reflects a clear community aspiration toward self-reliance and resilience, emphasizing the importance of training, small enterprise support, and livestock protection to rebuild local livelihoods.

Insights from KIIs across Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjanganl districts reinforce this trend. Informants widely agreed that livestock rearing, and vocational skills development are seen as the most practical and sustainable pathways to overcoming chronic poverty. In Firooz Kooh, one respondent emphasized the need for productive, rather than consumptive, support: *“People don’t just need food; they need animals to raise and sell, or skills to earn a living”*. Similarly, in Lal wa

Sarjangal, participants highlighted the role of enterprise development and small business support in strengthening household resilience and reducing aid dependency: “If small businesses are supported, people can help themselves instead of waiting for aid”.

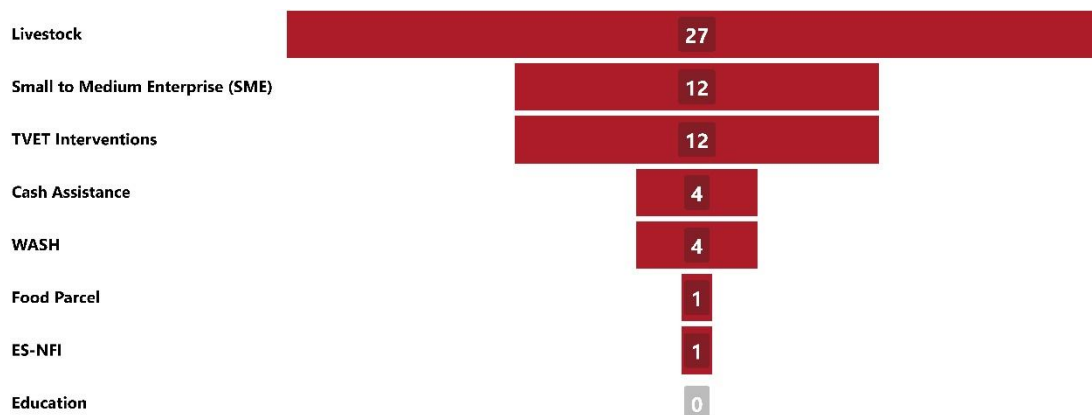


Figure 61: Priority Needs – Ghor Province

6.4.11 Major challenges related to the current situation – Ghor Province

The findings reveal that the most pressing challenges in Ghor province center on limited humanitarian coverage, the declining presence of NGOs, and the intensifying impacts of climate change. Communities across the province reported that only a small fraction of vulnerable households receive assistance, while many others remain excluded from aid programs despite facing similar or even greater levels of need. The scarcity of active organizations, particularly in remote and mountainous areas, has deepened the crisis, leaving families with minimal access to essential services, livelihood support, or protection mechanisms.

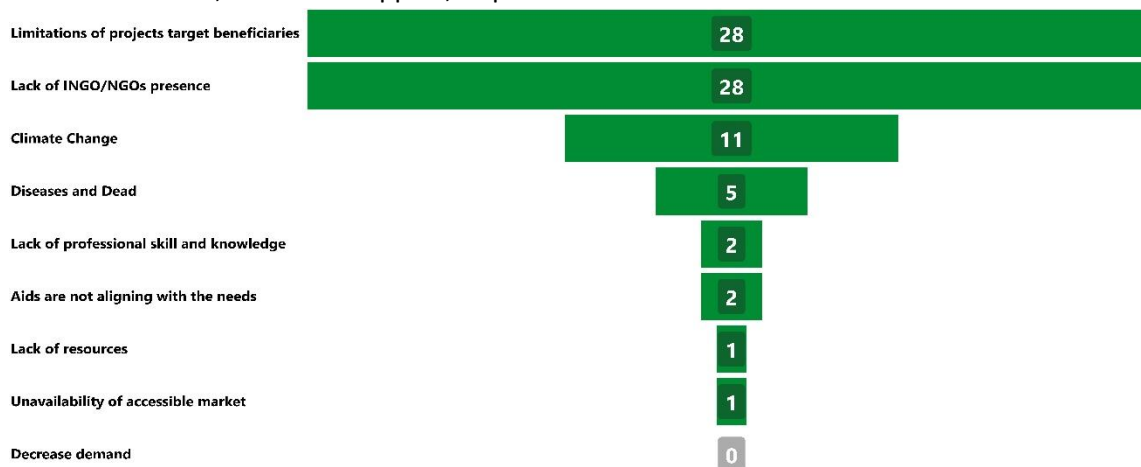


Figure 62: Major challenges related to the current situation in Ghor Province

At the same time, climate change has compounded existing vulnerabilities, with erratic rainfall patterns, recurring droughts, and prolonged winters severely affecting both agricultural productivity and livestock survival rates. These environmental shocks, coupled with livestock diseases, limited technical skills, and misaligned aid interventions, have further undermined community resilience and self-reliance.

Insights from KIIs across Firooz Kooh and Lal wa Sarjanganl districts strongly reinforce these observations. Informants in both areas highlighted the absence of consistent, long-term support and the decline in NGO engagement as key contributors to worsening poverty and food insecurity. In Firooz Kooh, one local representative expressed frustration over uneven aid coverage: *“Aid only reaches a few families. The rest are left to struggle without any help. We feel forgotten.”* In Lal wa Sarjanganl, respondents emphasized the devastating effects of drought and weak humanitarian presence, noting that households have lost both crops and livestock with little external support to recover: *“When drought hits, people lose both crops and animals. NGOs used to help, but now very few are active here”*.

7. Annexes

- Annex A. Power BI Dashboard Snapshots (figures) ([Integrated Agri-Livelihood Assessment](#))
- Annex B. Questionnaires (HH, KII) – English/Dari/Pashto ([Data Collection Forms](#))