Steps Towards Afghan Girls’ Education Success
A Case Study
Overview

Problem: Today, 74% of Afghan women do not have a formal education.

Solution: The Aga Khan Foundation is leading a consortium of partners to implement Steps Towards Afghan Girls’ Education Success (STAGES) to change this. Our partners include: Aga Khan Education Services, Care International, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, Afghan Education Production Organisation and Roshan Telecom.

Support: STAGES is a UK Department for International Development funded Girls’ Education Challenge project aimed at addressing obstacles to girls’ school enrolment, retention and learning. STAGES has received £34.9 million to run from 2013 – 2017.

Evidence: STAGES was designed based on the AKF’s previous work in girls’ education in Afghanistan from 2009-2013 that led to a 10-fold increase in girls graduating from high school over a four-year period, 700 of whom became new primary school teachers in their local communities.

Theory of Change: If girls in remote communities are provided with access to education close to their homes and in a context which recognises community values and concerns, they are more likely to go to school, stay in school, and learn.

Reach: Since 2013, STAGES has brought together more than 351,000 Afghan people to help improve girls’ education. This includes: 135,000 girls, 110,000 boys, 6,000 teachers, and 100,000 community members.

Strategy

1) Quality education: Supporting more than 800 community-based primary, lower secondary and accelerated learning classes in communities where there is no government school and improving the quality of education in some 200 government schools.

2) Flexible response funds: 803 community-designed grants have been made to enable 500 women to attend teacher training colleges and 21,000 girls to overcome barriers to access basic education.

3) Teacher apprenticeships: 900 women have been trained as community-based teachers through teacher training and apprenticeship training colleges helping to attract more girls to school.

4) Engagement of religious leaders: More than 7,000 shura members have been engaged in community messaging, dialogues, and advocacy to increase levels of access for girls’ education in villages.

5) Community engagement: £1.2 million from local community-based in-kind contributions have been made for girls’ education; the strongest sign of community buy-in and interest for sustainability.

Impact so far*

Access: 135,000 girls now in school.

Retention: High rates for all students - 99% in ECD and 96% in primary levels.

Quality: Girls have scored higher on Early Grade Reading Assessments and Early Grade Mathematics Assessments than girls in government schools for most comparable grades. STAGES appears to be closing the gap in learning among girls who do not speak the language of instruction, further illustrating the value of community-based education in reaching and making an impact on learning for the most marginalised girls.

*Based on a mid-line evaluation conducted between August-December 2015