

# Roqia Center Couples Literacy Programs in Afghanistan

5 May 2014 DRAFT

## REPORT ON CLASSES AND STUDENTS

2002 – 2014



مرکز رقیه برای حقوق، مطالعات و معارف زنان افغانستان

The Roqia Center for Women's Rights Studies and Education in Afghanistan

سواد آموزی والدین، آینده اطفال افغان را تأمین می کند.

“Parents’ Literacy Ensures Afghanistan’s Future”

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## INTRODUCTION

This report provides information on 50 literacy classes conducted by the Roqia Center each year since 2002 and includes two classes currently in session as of May 2014. Over one thousand beneficiaries participated in these year-long classes. 41 classes provided literacy training to approximately 800 students though the equivalent of the first three grades of Afghan primary education. 9 additional classes provided approximately 200 “First Year Graduates” with a second full year of more advanced literacy training that also covered subjects such as math, history, civics, ecology and governance.

The classes were held in Kabul and Balkh Provinces, almost all in suburban or urban neighborhoods of Kabul City and Mazar I Sharif respectively. While only held in these two provinces, students came from more than 17 different provinces. There was a broad spectrum of ethnicities and religious sects of all students, who learned together in a single class room.

## ROQIA ADULT COUPLES POLICY

All classes except for one were restricted to adult married couples. While the Roqia Center’s primary mission is the empowerment of women, in the difficult social circumstances found in Afghanistan this can sometimes be best achieved by empowering the decision makers within the population while doing so in a way that mandates gender-neutral opportunities. Strictly enforcing the attendance policy of both husbands and wives being present for class ensured that wives were not going to be accused of participating in an activity that was in any way detrimental to the couple’s relationship and avoids the stigma sometimes attached to women participating in an activity outside the home without a male relative companion. While education of young girls and boys may be vital for the longer term future of a society, the education of adults as voters and community decision makers can have a much more immediate impact on the short term healing and development of a post-conflict civil society such as Afghanistan’s.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING

For information contact Nasrine Gross of Kabultek: [kabultec@gmail.com](mailto:kabultec@gmail.com)

## ABOUT THE ROQIA CENTER

The Roqia Center for Women's Rights, Studies, and Education in Afghanistan is an Afghan civil society organization officially registered in the Ministry of Justice. The Center assists the cause of women as an integral part of the country's democratization and reconstruction. Nasrine Gross, the founder, began her work in Kabul in early 2002. The Roqia Center has three divisions that conduct all in-country activities:

The **Education Division** runs the literacy program as described in this study. It began as a course on

reading, writing and arithmetic for a group of 13 to 21 year-old boys and girls who worked as apprentices in various trades. The couples-only classes -- comprised of only husbands and wives -- were soon added.

The **Rights Division** pursues women's and citizen's rights issues in Afghanistan. It organizes:

- Conferences in preparation for Loya Jirga (grand council) gatherings
- Public seminars on the Afghan Constitution, civic duties and citizens' rights, women's rights, democracy, and the electoral process
- Training seminars for female candidates for Parliament and Provincial Councils

The **Studies Division** publishes and distributes academic books and articles including:

- ***Women in the Koran***, a compilation of verses of the Koran that mention the word 'woman'
- ***Afghan Women's Guide to Winning in the 1389 (2010) Elections***
- Articles pertaining to women and Afghan society

In addition, the Roqia Center supports several orphanages and their associated schools along with ten low-income public schools.

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This is a general analysis of the Beneficiaries of these programs. It is intended to give information about the overall nature of this program. Every attempt was made to adhere to commonly accepted Afghan practices of education program record keeping and of internationally-recognized methods of data research and statistical analysis. However it is not intended to be an auditable report of individual participation and class records nor is it a fully academically rigorous research study.

## **REPORT METHODOLOGY**

Data for this report comes directly from records compiled for each class from the time of initial enrollment through graduation of each student. These paper records are all in Dari and were prepared at the time by the class teachers and Roqia Center managers, all of whom are Afghan. These paper records were then transliterated (student and place names, etc.) and translated into USA English by a two-person team consisting of a senior Kabultec / Roqia manager who is a Kabul University graduate and a USA English native speaking American with experience with Afghan culture, social science research and familiarity with these Roqia literacy programs.

## GENERAL NOTES:

**Students enrolled** in 2 year programs are listed twice. Once for each year. Total number of these students is 180

**Beneficiaries** are students enrolled each year so students completing a 2 year program are listed twice, once for each year. Total Beneficiaries is 1029

**2014 Classes** include only those started year-to-date as of the end of April

**Class Locations:** All Classes in Balkh Province were in Mazar I Sharif. All Classes in Kabul Province, except two held in Desabz in 2011, were held in Kabul City

**Statistics** are based on all beneficiaries for whom that specific information is available

**Province Residing:** Every beneficiary indicated that they were residing in the same province as the class location. Term may have been interpreted as where they are staying now, so unknown if actual residence or just temporary accommodation

## REPORT PREPARATION

This report, the data compilation and all analysis was prepared pro-bono for Kabultec and Roqia Center by TC Information Resources, Inc., NY, USA. For information on analysis methods and necessary limitation / assumptions, contact Philip Poullada: [afaphil@yahoo.com](mailto:afaphil@yahoo.com)



## KEY FACTS

Beneficiaries: **1029**                      **508** Women    **521** Men                      Most Participating as **506** Married Couples

Duration of Program To-Date: **13 Years** (2002-2014)

Most Beneficiaries in a Year: **155** (2007)                      Least Beneficiaries in a Year: **20** (2012)

Number of Classes: **50**                      First Year Classes: **41**                      Second Year Classes: **9**

Kabul Classes: **35** in 15 different neighborhoods                      Balkh Classes: **15** in 11 different neighborhoods

Class Sizes: **20** students enrolled in each of 47 classes, **24** in 1 class and **40** students in 2 classes

Completion Rate: 1029 graduates out of 1044 enrollees = **98.6%**

Average Age of Male Students: **37**                      Average Age of Female Students: **31**

Youngest Student: **13**                      Oldest Student: **83**

Average Years Married: **16**    Newest Married: **Few Months**                      Longest Married: **50 Years**

Avg. Number of Male Children/Couple: **1.75**                      Avg. Number of Female Children/Couple: **1.52**

Most Boys Per Couple: **6**                      Most Girls Per Couple: **6**

Ethnicity: **50%** Tajik, **36%** Hazara, **8%** Pashtun, **6%** Other

Religious Sects: **56%** Suni, **44%** Shia

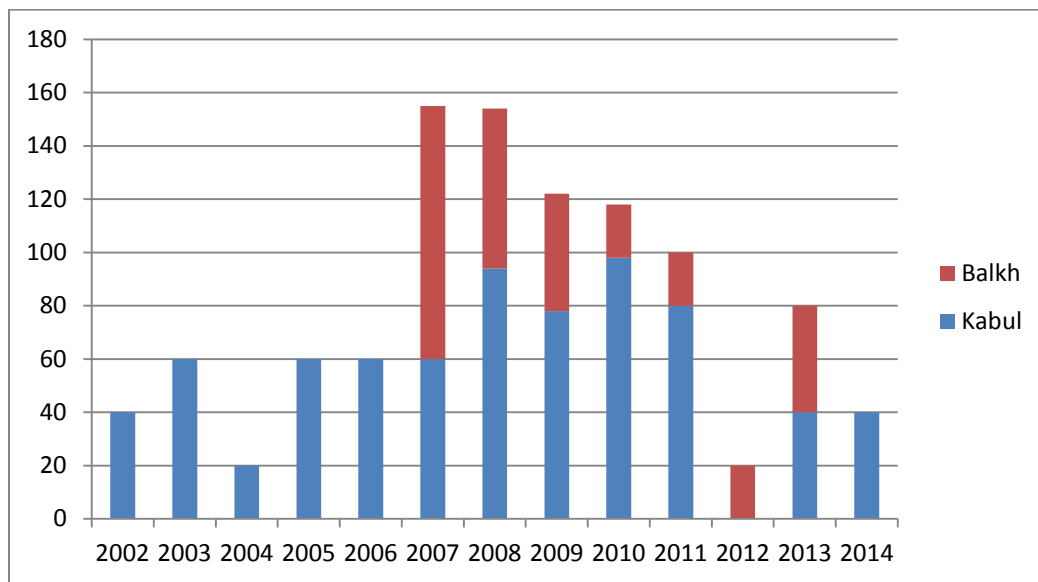
Men's Occupations: **35%** Day Laborer, **9%** Shopkeeper, **9%** Transporter, **7%** Construction, **5%** Servants,  
**13%** Other, **7%** Not Seeking Work, **15%** Unemployed

Women's Occupations: **3%** Various trades and apprenticeships, **97%** Housewife (*see notes*)

Average Income: **4175 AFS/Month** = 139 AFS/Day = **\$2.79/Day**

Province From (for Kabul Classes): 45% Kabul, 12% Ghazni, 12% Wardak, 7% Parwan, 7% Bamyan  
3% Panjshir, 2% Kapisa, 1% or Less from each of 10 Other Provinces

**CLASSES AND STUDENTS BY YEAR**

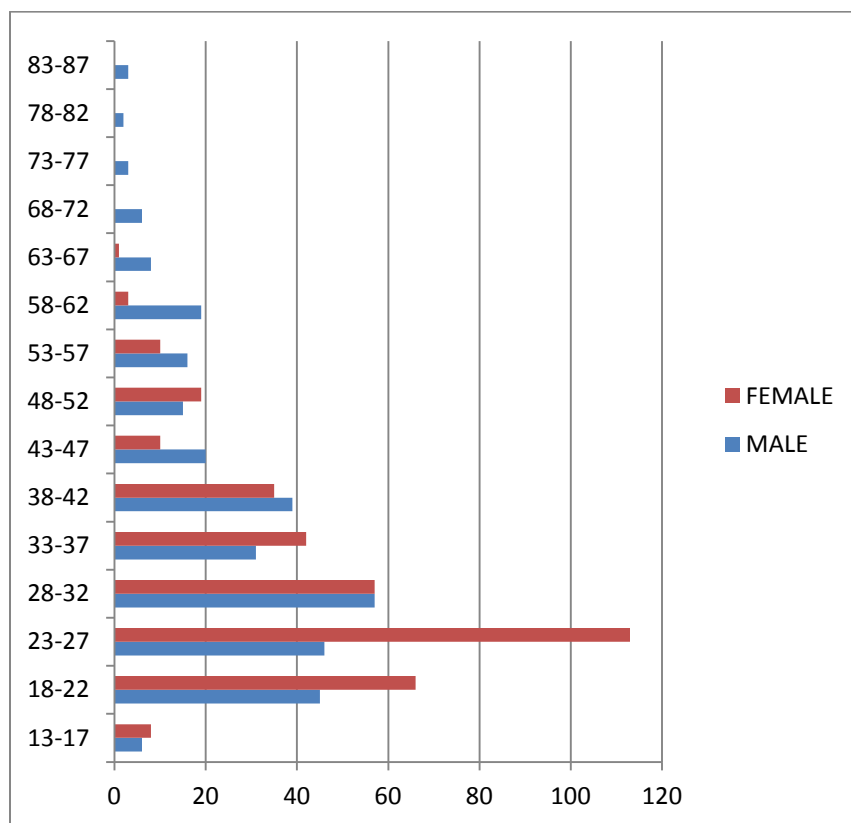


	Kabul	Balkh	TOTAL
2002	40	0	40
2003	60	0	60
2004	20	0	20
2005	60	0	60
2006	60	0	60
2007	60	95	155
2008	94	60	154
2009	78	44	122
2010	98	20	118
2011	80	20	100
2012	0	20	20
2013	40	40	80
2014	40	0	40
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>1029</b>

**NOTES**

Dates for 6 Classes are conversions originally listed only as Afghan Solar Calendar dates

**AGE OF BENEFICIARIES**



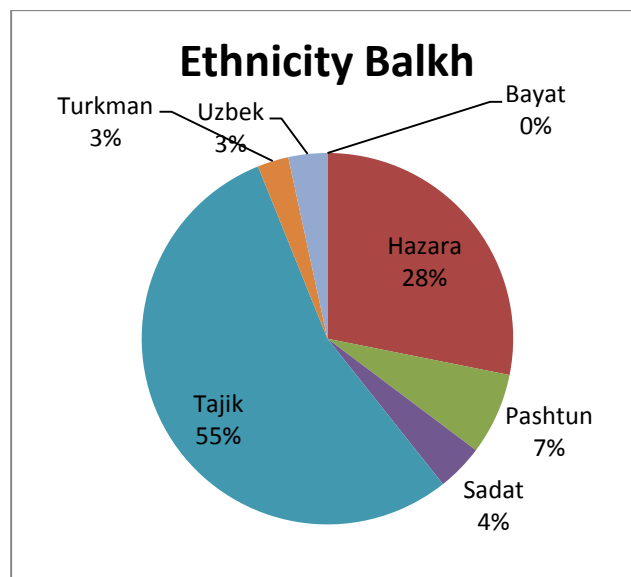
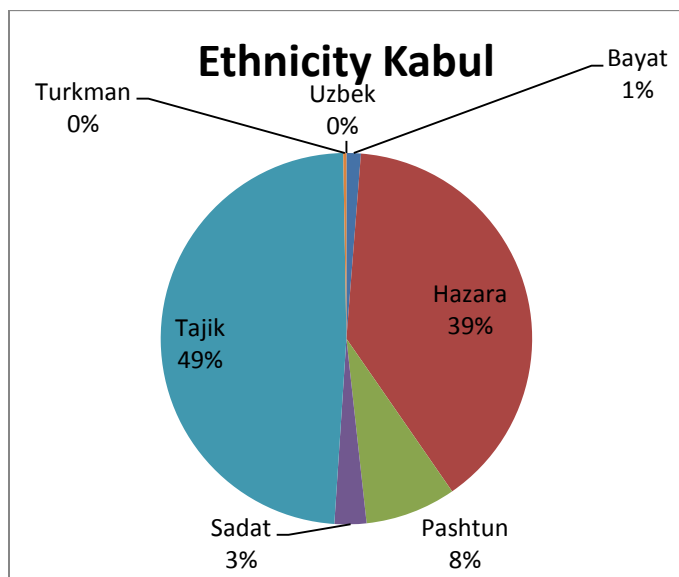
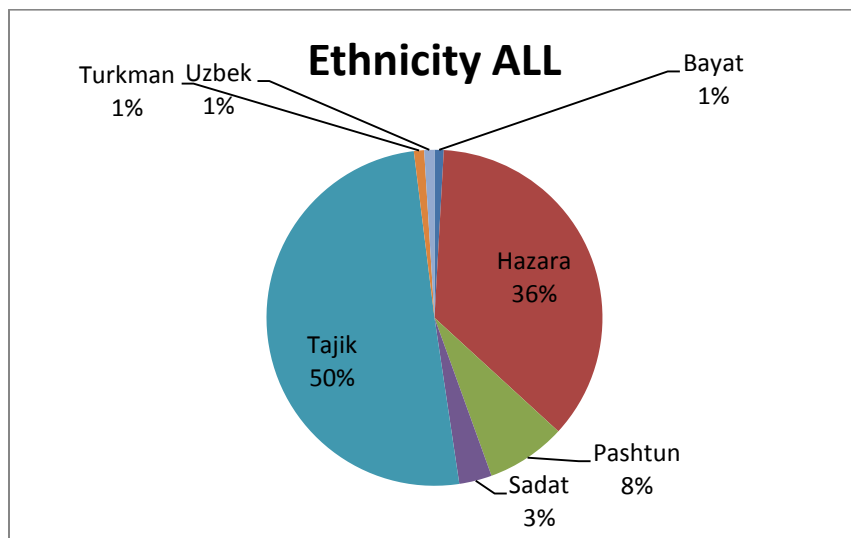
*Beneficiaries Recorded: 610 = 59%*

AGE	MALE	FEMALE
83-87	3	0
78-82	2	0
73-77	3	0
68-72	6	0
63-67	8	1
58-62	19	3
53-57	16	10
48-52	15	19
43-47	20	10
38-42	39	35
33-37	31	42
28-32	57	57
23-27	46	113
18-22	45	66
13-17	6	8

**NOTES**

One class was for apprentices, male and female and not couples. This accounted for all 4 of the beneficiaries under age 17

**ETHNICITY**



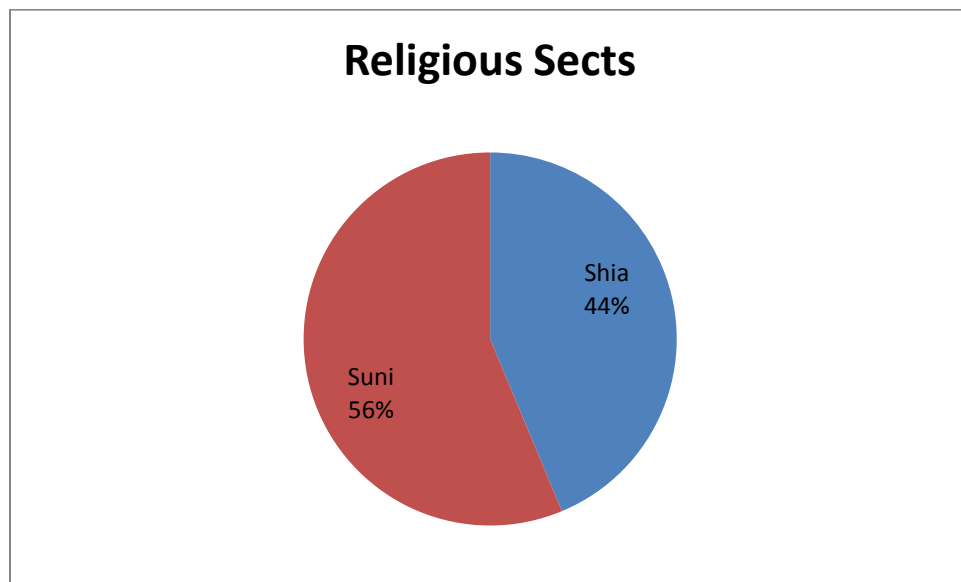
Total Beneficiaries Recorded: 1018 = 99%

**NOTES**

Two students not included in analysis: One recorded as “Iranian” and one as “Arab”



## RELIGIOUS SECTS

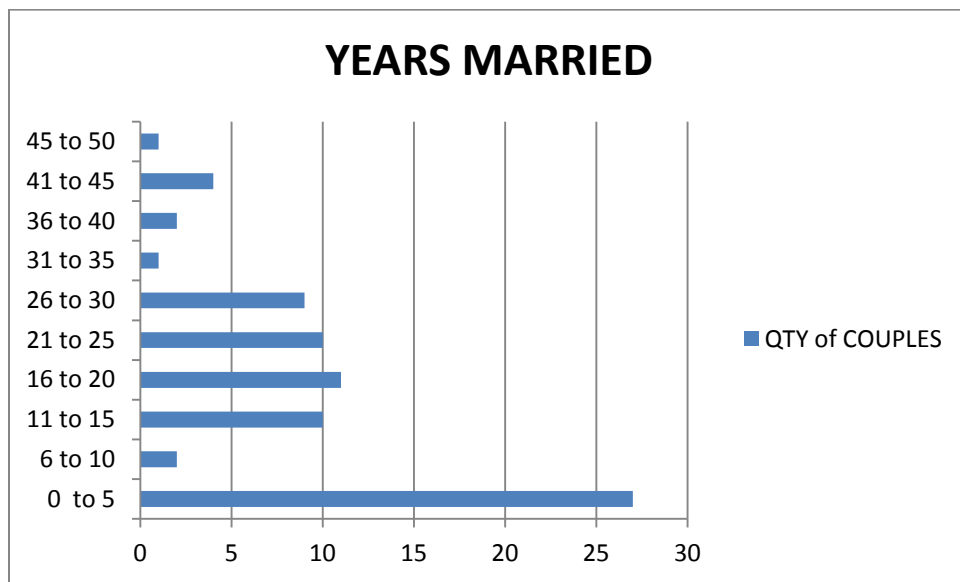


*Total Beneficiaries Recorded: 938 = 91%*

## NOTES

**Suni Religious Sect:** About 14% of beneficiaries who were Suni reported their sect explicitly as "Hanafi", however many of the remaining 86% who responded as simply "Suni" may also be Hanafi.

**YEARS MARRIED**



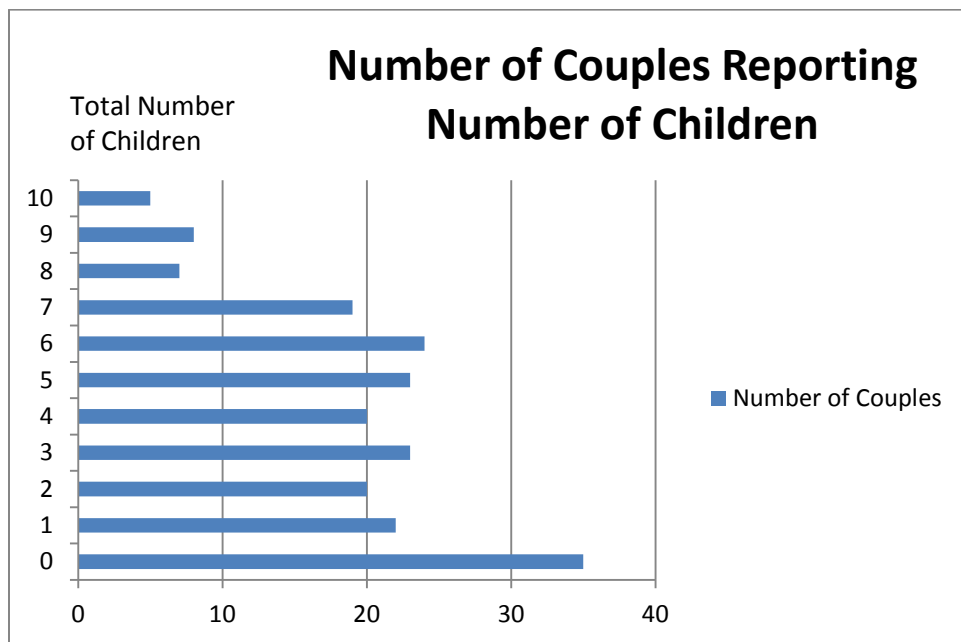
Total Beneficiaries Recorded: 77 = 15%

YEARS MARRIED	QTY of COUPLES	% of TOTAL
45 to 50	1	1
41 to 45	4	5
36 to 40	2	3
31 to 35	1	1
26 to 30	9	12
21 to 25	10	13
16 to 20	11	14
11 to 15	10	13
6 to 10	2	3
0 to 5	27	35

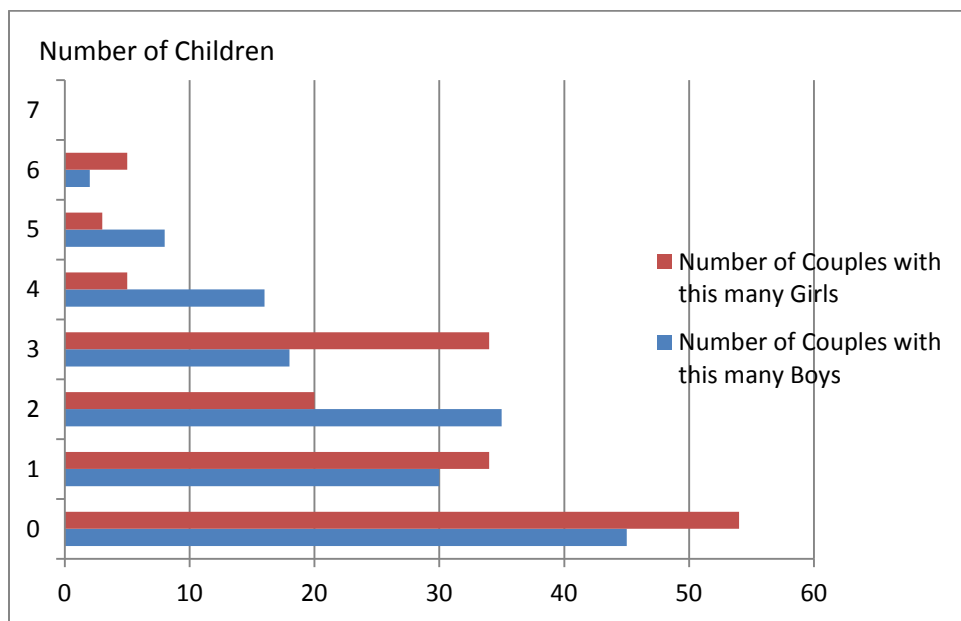
**NOTES**

**Couples Married 1 Year:** of the 8 couples listed as married "1 year", 3 actually indicated marriage for less than one year. The rest were less than 2 years. All other "Years Married" numbers are number of **completed** years of marriage

**CHILDREN**



Couples Recording Total No. of Children: 206 = 41% ; Recording Explicitly Boys and Girls: 155 = 31%

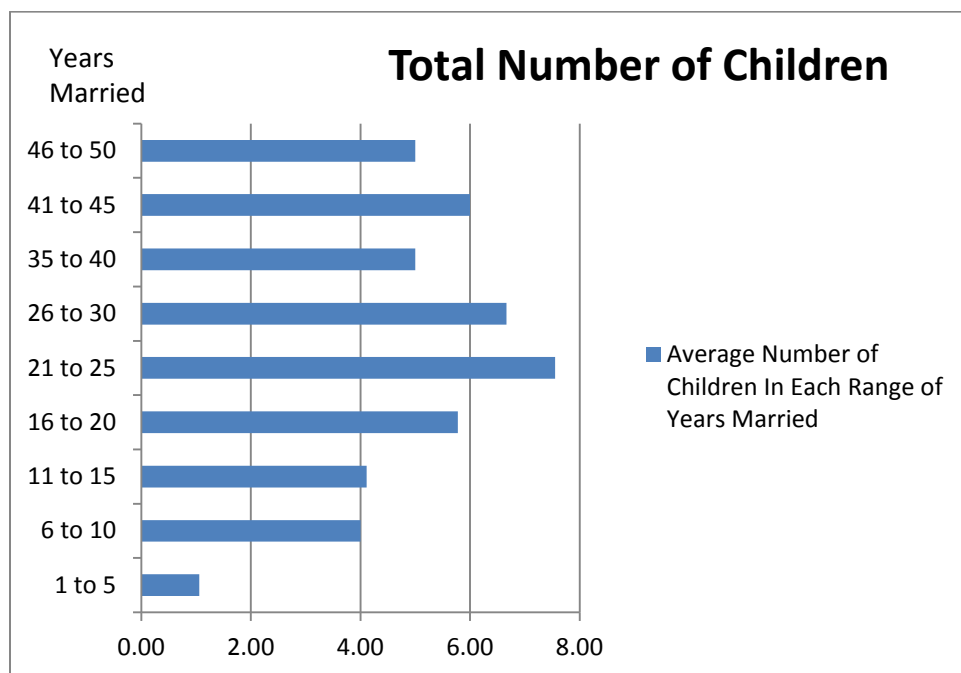


**NOTES**

**Definition of "Children":** The records make no attempt to show how many children are from both current parents, how many may be from prior marriage (e.g. 19 year old wife married for 2 years to a 35 year old husband and they report 5 children). Additionally, some children may be adopted or the result of some other custodial arrangement (e.g. 10 Boys no Girls reported by one couple and not included in the above statistics.)

**Underreporting Girls:** While somewhat less common in urban settings, there is a well-documented country-wide trend of some parents not including any or all "marriage age" girls in surveys of household children to protect them from outsiders

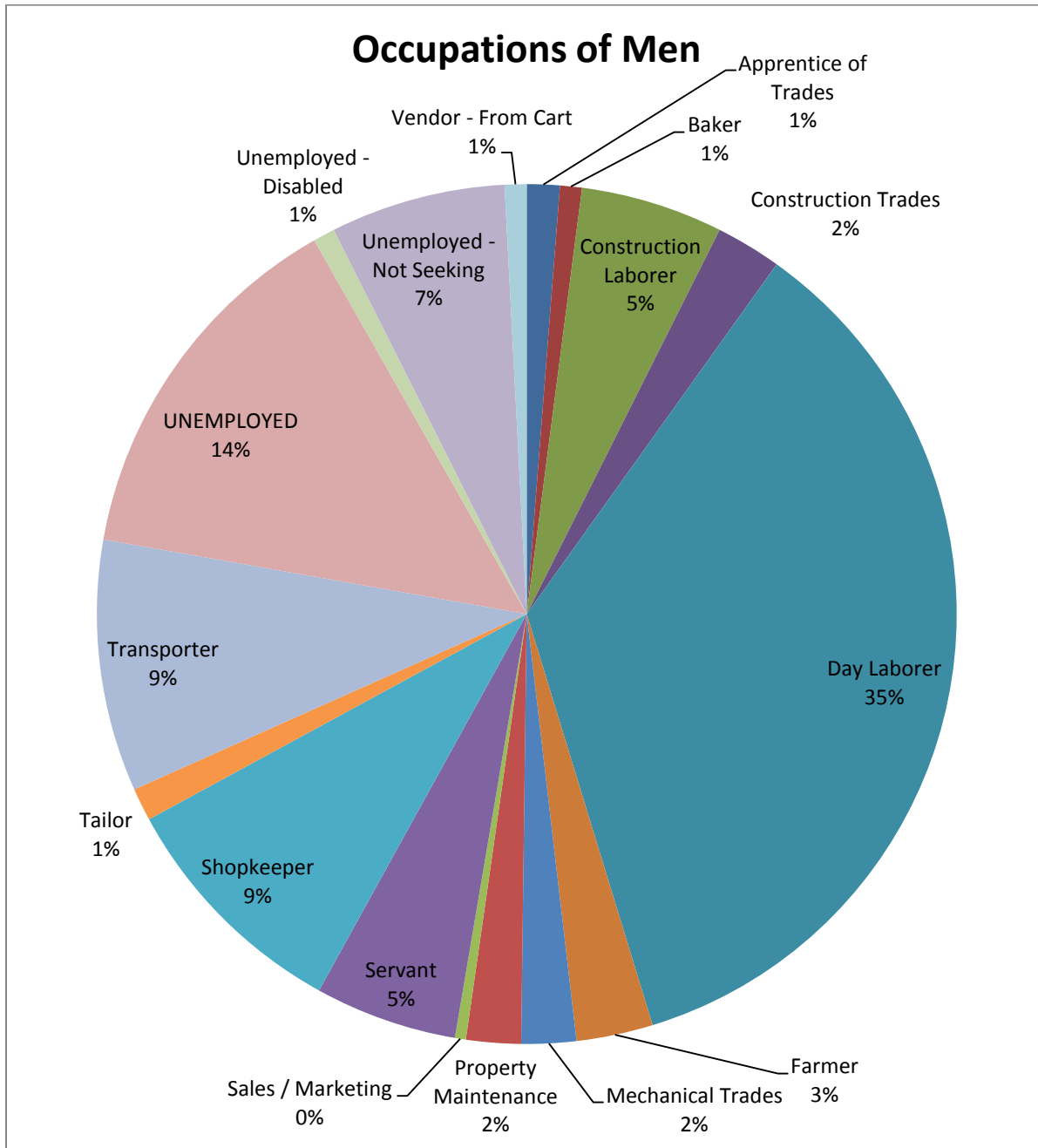
**YEARS MARRIED CORRELATED WITH NUMBER OF CHILDREN**



*Couples Recording Years Married and Total No. of Children: 77 = 15%*

Years Married	Avg. No. of Children
46 to 50	5.00
41 to 45	6.00
35 to 40	5.00
26 to 30	6.67
21 to 25	7.56
16 to 20	5.78
11 to 15	4.11
6 to 10	4.00
1 to 5	1.06

**OCCUPATION**



Above chart based on 244 Men = 47% of Male Beneficiaries ; Total Beneficiaries Recorded: 493 = 48%

**Women’s Occupations**

Just 8 out of 249 = 3% of women who reported their Occupation, listed one other than “Housewife” (see notes). These 8 included: 1 Baker, 1 Servant, 2 Tailors, 2 Apprentice Tailors, 1 Apprentice Carpet Maker and 1 Apprentice Embroider

FOR NOTES ON OCCUPATION SEE FOLLOWING PAGE

**NOTES ON OCCUPATION**

**Occupation Indicated:** Without a list of finite choices to select from, beneficiaries may have been describing how they make a living, or what money making activity they are best at, their professional title or their traditional family occupation

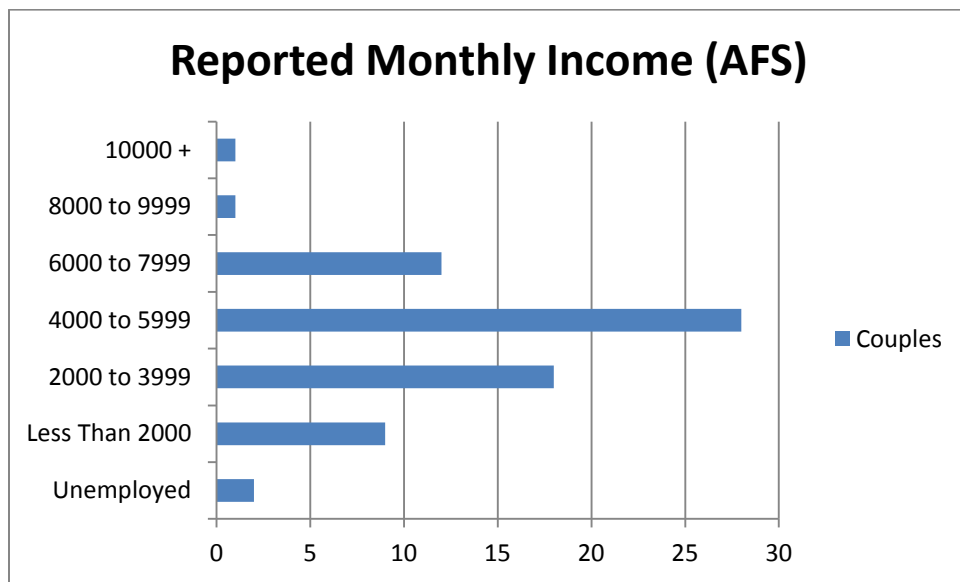
**Housewife** is not clearly defined and wives used various Dari terms to describe themselves. It is an acceptable “occupation” for women in all parts of Afghanistan. For this reason It is possible that some or many of the wives that agreed to this description – Especially in the presence of their husbands - in fact have other skills and perhaps even in-home work that earns some money for the household

**Notes on Male Occupations – Condensation into fewer categories to list**

OCCUPATION	NOTES
Apprentice of Trades	Mostly mechanical including automotive repair
Construction Laborer	No particular specialty listed – Most likely lesser skilled manual laborer
Construction Trades	All had specialties listed - e.g. Window and door maker, Electrician
Day Laborer	Usually unskilled and / or willing to accept variety of short-term jobs
Farmer	Could be either unskilled field worker or knowledgeable farmer
Mechanical Trades	Mostly automotive repair
Property Maintenance	Guards, superintendents of property, painters and general handymen
Sales / Marketing	One student lists Occupation as “Automobile Salesman”
Servant	Usually housekeepers
Shopkeeper	Could be business owner, manager or paid attendant
Transporter	Mostly Drivers (vehicle unspecified), also freight handlers
UNEMPLOYED	Looking for work
Unemployed - Disabled	Cannot work because of disability – Traditionally relying on charity
Unemployed - Not Seeking	Almost all are over 62 years old – Some may have general infirmity
Vendor - From Cart	A specialty requiring skills very different from shopkeeper



**INCOME**



*Beneficiaries Recorded: 71 = 14%*

	Couples	%
10000 +	1	1
8000 to 9999	1	1
6000 to 7999	12	17
4000 to 5999	28	39
2000 to 3999	18	25
Less Than 2000	9	13
Unemployed	2	3

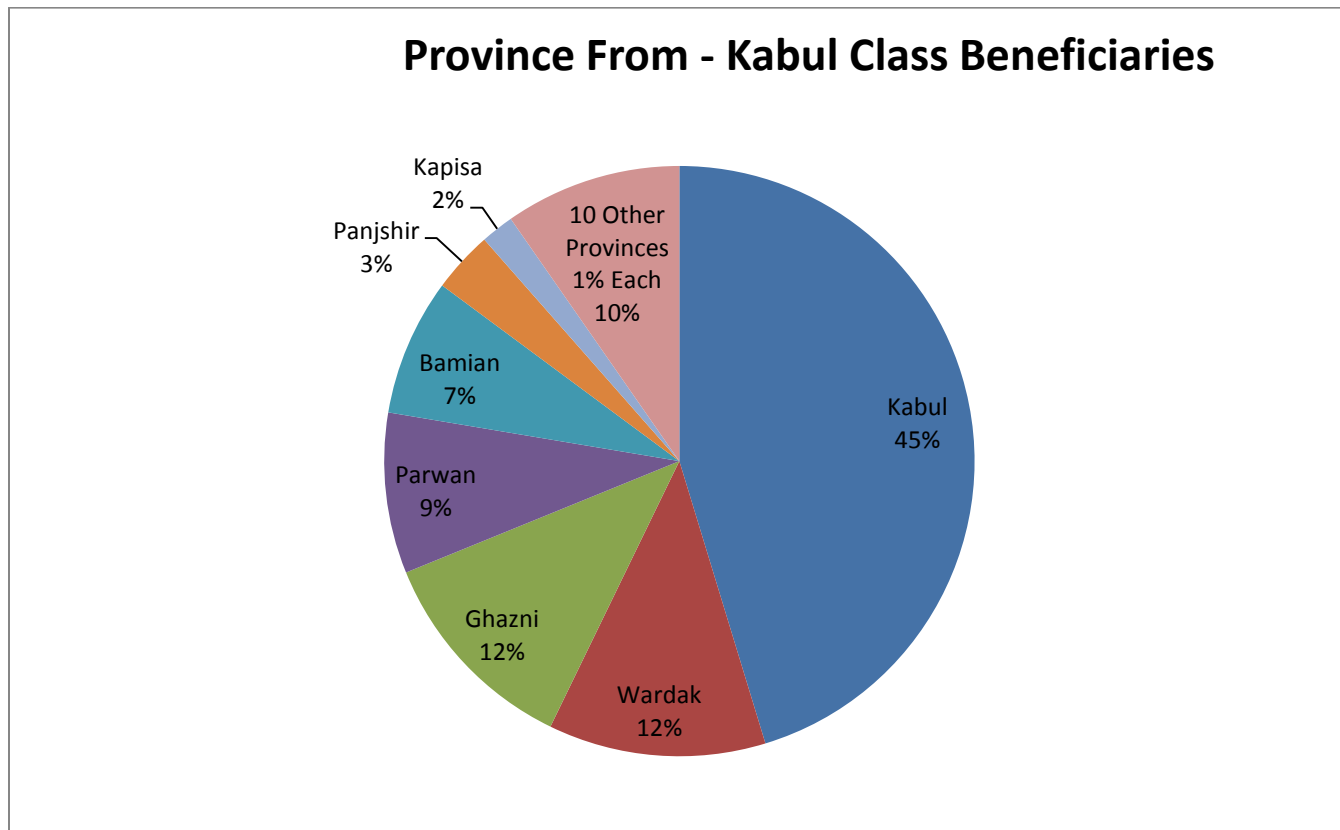
**NOTES**

UN World Bank Poverty Line	1.25 \$/Day	37.5 \$/Month	1875 AFS/Month
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**World Bank Poverty Line** is controversial. The \$ 1.25 figure was established in 2009 and many organizations feel it should be increased to account for various factors. Some say it should be as high as \$ 2.50/Month = 3750 AFS/Month

**Cost of Living:** In urban or suburban Afghanistan the cost of living can be multiple times greater than in rural communities

**PROVINCE FROM**



*Beneficiaries Recorded: 374 = 36% - All data from Kabul Classes; no such data collected in Balkh*

Provinces with Approx. 1% Each
Ghor
Daikundi
Badakhshan
Kandahar
Kunar
Logar
Paktia
Samangan
Uruzgan
Farah

**NOTES**

Many Afghans, especially ones who have lived most of their life away from their place of birth or lived in more than one place, will state where their **father** was "from" when asked "Where are you from?"