Background

In this brief we present qualitative findings regarding CBE teachers' motivations. Although community-based education (CBE) is used to achieve quality education for all children in Afghanistan, challenges exist to integrating CBE teachers into the MoE system and little is known about them as a group.[1] Research on teachers writ large shows that their motivations affect many educational outcomes including, for example, student motivation, successful implementation of reforms, and job satisfaction. Teacher job satisfaction, in turn, is associated with lower absenteeism and turnover (Jesus and Lens 2005).[2] Thus, understanding teacher motivations can offer insights into factors that help CBE teachers do their jobs well. This is important because there are an estimated 7,000 CBE classes across the country and numbers are growing.[3] Our findings suggest interventions to improve the sustainability of these classes and the eventual integration of these teachers into the public system.

Methods

We used purposeful sampling including the following criteria: location, age, gender, and educational attainment to select 20 CBE teachers who exemplify the diversity of ALSE's larger sample of 156 CBE teachers. Table 1 below presents the demographic characteristics of these 156 teachers by province.[4]

Province	Number of Teachers	Average Age	Gender		Received 12th grade diploma
			M	F	
Kapisa	29	25.31	48.28%	51.72%	86.00%
Parwan	44	29.95	90.91%	9.89%	40.91%
Herat	7	33.57	85.71%	14.29%	42.86%
Ghor	26	25.65	57.69%	42.31%	69.23%
Bamiyan	16	30.69	56.25%	43.75%	25.00%
Daykundi	34	22.32	47.06%	52.94%	38.24%

Table 1: Teacher demographics across ALSE's larger sample (n=156)

We used semi-structured interviews to: 1) understand how different educational inputs and conditions affected teacher motivations, and 2) obtain additional unsolicited perceptions from the teachers regarding the factors that motivated them professionally. We analyzed data using MAXQDA coding software and coded both deductively (drawing on literature related to public service motivations) and inductively to capture emerging themes that reflected the teaching context in Afghanistan.

Our data captures the experiences and perspectives of the teachers themselves. As such it offers rich insights into the factors that motivate and demotivate teachers working in some the most rural areas of Afghanistan.

Findings

Four main themes emerged from our data: teacher salaries, teaching materials, training and professional development, and organizational processes and procedures. Table 2 below indicates the relative importance of these themes based on the number of times they were discussed by respondents across the 20 interviews. We discuss each theme in detail.
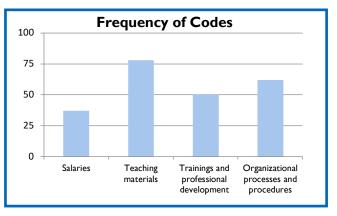

Table 2: Frequency of codes across the 20 teacher interviews

Teacher salaries: CBE teachers are roughly paid on par with government school teachers. Most said their salaries were sufficient for basic living costs. However, three factors undermined their financial security and are likely to negatively affect teacher retention. First, teachers felt vulnerable to

[1] Burde, D., and L. Linden. 2013. "Bringing education to Afghan girls: A randomized controlled trial of village-based schools." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 5 (3): 27-40.

[2] Neves de Jesus, S., and W. Lens. 2005. "An integrated model for the study of teacher motivation." *Applied Psychology* 54 (1): 119-134.

[3] CBE estimate based on a preliminary CBE mapping exercise by SIDA.

[4] The teacher demographic data presented in Table 1 was collected during ALSE's Phase One Endline data collection in December 2015.

external shocks. Salaries left little room for unforeseen life events or increases in the costs of basic household goods. Second, some teachers used their salaries to cover basic class costs, effectively reducing their take home pay. Most notably, two teachers reported paying classroom rental fees from their salaries. Third, for teachers living outside the communities in which they taught, the transportation costs were a significant financial burden, and one that was not adequately covered by existing allowances.

> "…two years ago, we would buy a liter of natural gas at 35 afghanis and when it was very expensive it was 40 afghanis … Now even in summer we buy natural gas at 65 afghanis per liter. I used to buy gasoline for my motorbike for 40 afghanis per liter and now it has gone up to 50 afghanis…every year it goes higher. That's why our salaries are not enough." (CBE teacher)

Teaching materials: Interviewees received material support from the NGOs. This included textbooks, stationary, and learning materials. Most teachers felt that this support positively impacted their teaching and student learning. Some teachers also linked these resources to higher student motivations, which in turn, motivated their teaching and gave them a sense of pride. Unsolicited from our protocol, almost all the teachers we interviewed perceived the resources provided to CBE classes as much higher than the resources available in government schools. This perceived gap may complicate the future integration of CBE classes and teachers within the public system.

Training and professional development: The remote nature of CBE classes can make it difficult to recruit teachers with a 12th grade education (the professional requirement set by the MoE). To make up for this shortfall in credentials, NGOs often provide robust teacher orientations and ongoing pedagogical and content training. Teachers found this training motivating and directly applicable to their work. In some cases, it encouraged teachers to seek out additional formal education or informal learning opportunities. Again, however, in unsolicited responses, teachers compared these inputs to a perceived lack of professional development opportunities for CBE teachers within the MoE system. Many interviewees expressed concern about job security as a CBE teacher and the desire for a more secure and permanent teaching position within the MoE. Currently, few opportunities lead to formal recognition by the MoE and entrance into the *tashkeel* system.[5]

Organizational processes and procedures: Finally, teachers reflected on their experiences working for NGOs and the administrative procedures and policies of the MoE (that CBE schools and teachers also adhere to). Teachers were especially motivated by predictable and frequent monitoring visits. These visits created important connections between teachers, the NGOs, and the MoE, and increased feelings of professional support and recognition. Teachers appreciated

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[5] *Tashkeel* is the term used for Afghanistan's civil service under which government school teachers are hired.

the frequency of NGO monitoring and wanted more monitoring by MoE officials. Likewise, an absence of frequent contact with Ministry officials left some teachers lacking guidance regarding MoE procedures. Increased monitoring visits by the MoE could address this, while also improving the level of accountability CBE teachers feel vis-a-vis the MoE.

> "If the Ministry could visit us once a month to see the problems teachers face, they could provide us with advice…. Decisions about administration and teaching are made at the Ministry of Education, but we don't know about them. If they visit us more, they can inform us and consult with us. This would help us manage the challenges we face." (CBE teacher)

Recommendations

Our findings suggest several interventions and investments to support CBE teachers and enhance the sustainability of CBE classes as they transition to the public system.

- **Monitoring matters.** More frequent visits by the MoE to CBE classes can help teachers feel supported, included, and, crucially, accountable to the MoE. These visits also provide an opportunity for the MoE to learn about local education realities, which in turn can improve the Ministry's responsiveness to education challenges.
- **CBE teachers want to be recognized and included in the MoE system through professional development and training opportunities.** Activities could include inviting CBE teachers to government school teacher trainings or establishing learning circles or mentoring programs that bring CBE and government school teachers together. When needed and requested, NGOs could work with the MoE to develop quality teacher trainings to be delivered to both CBE and government school teachers. If trainings are standardized, the incorporation of CBE teachers may increase the MoE's recognition of CBE teachers and allow for their future integration into the government *tashkeel* system.
- **Perceived differences between resources in NGO and Ministry run schools may negatively affect teacher retention.** NGOs can help bridge this gap. In some cases, teachers and shuras are working together to identify local low-cost learning materials (e.g. sourcing low cost counting blocks or using local plants for science lessons). NGOs preparing to transition CBE classes may want to invest in trainings that focus on identifying and using sustainable resources.
- **Salaries *and* school-based resources are important for teacher motivation**. Salaries that provide financial security can support teacher retention. But the availability of classroom resources also matters. Resources improve feelings of classroom effectiveness and, along with adequate salaries, may increase teacher satisfaction and commitment.