

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL END OF AWARD REPORT



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject, to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. ESRC reserves the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

Grant Reference	RES-167-25-0285		
Grant Title	Development in the 'raw': What livelihood trajectories and poverty outcomes tell us about welfare regimes and resilience in Afghanistan		
Grant Start Date	01/5/08	Total Amount	£245,260.80
Grant End Date	31/12/10	Expended:	
Grant holding Institution	University of East Anglia, School of Development Studies		
Grant Holder	Paula Kantor		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
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Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Adam Pain		Afghanistan Research & Evaluation Unit (AREU)	
Paula Kantor		UEA/AREU	

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. *[Max 250 words]*

Based on a detailed study of the lives of 64 rural Afghan households since 2002 in three contrasting parts of the country it was found that eight years on many struggle to meet day to day needs and are even worse off than before. While many have experienced improvements in access to basic services, livelihood security has declined for the majority. This has been largely due to factors outside their control such as drought, the ban on opium cultivation and rising global food prices. For the few who have improved their circumstances, largely living near Kandahar it has been mainly through diversifying out of agriculture rather than remaining in it. For those that have done best initial wealth and good political connections have provided them opportunities in the urban economy. While collective action at the village level could be supportive of poor people's lives this was strongest where economic equalities were least. Where economic inequalities were high, as in Kandahar, village elites were largely self interested.

Public policy in Afghanistan has placed a strong emphasis on market oriented agricultural production. But for many the risks of market engagement are too high and first food security needs to be assured. There is a need for more attention to promoting rural employment, improving support for saving and insurance and building on informal means of social assistance where collective action works best. Greater attention is needed to social inequalities in programme design and implementation.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC. *[Max 200 words]*

1. To build from a panel set of household data describing rural livelihoods in 2002-03 to rigorously examine processes of livelihood transformations and their poverty outcomes in rural Afghanistan, across varying social, political and economic contexts defined by varying degrees of formality and informality. This is a methodological innovation in a reconstruction/conflict context like Afghanistan where longitudinal research, particularly based on in depth study of processes of change, is practically nonexistent.
2. To examine the relevance and refine the application of the welfare regimes typology to rural Afghanistan, and to test and develop the Faustian bargain concept / i.e. discounting future rights and opportunities in favour of present security - to deepen understanding and explanation of livelihood trajectories of different households across different regional locations.
3. To apply the understanding developed through in depth study of livelihood transformations within the framework of welfare regimes, risk and trade offs to make evidence-based locally relevant policy recommendations regarding how to support existing forms of resilience and make access to new and existing mechanisms supporting rural livelihood security more equitable.

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

The original aims and objectives of the project were maintained through its duration. The only changes made were (a) a reduction in one research site due to insecurity and (b) the extension of the project through an agreed no cost extension. Paula Kantor resigned her lectureship from the University of East Anglia in July 2008 and became director of AREU with effect from August 2008. However she was appointed as a Research Fellow at the School of International Development and the grant remained with the University of East Anglia. No changes were made in project staffing or funding.

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. *[Max. 500 words]*

The study sought to understand the factors influencing rural livelihood change and how these varied across household, village and provincial contexts. It focused on investigating patterns of similarity and difference and why they exist and took a qualitative approach to collect in-depth information from a small number of carefully selected household cases. There was some variation in specific procedures as influenced by partner arrangements and security. The field teams applied retrospective in-depth interview techniques to explore household lives and livelihood from 2002 to 2009 to understand decisions making in response to circumstances and the effects of these. Interview teams were composed of two female and two male Afghan interviewers allowing men and women of the household to be interviewed separately. Two interviews were held with men and two with women, giving a total of four interviews per household. 64 households were interviewed across 3 sites. In a fourth site because of insecurity individual households could not be interviewed and group interviews were held on selected themes and the village rather than the household was the primary unit of analysis.

The household interviews involved six steps: development of a household profile based on the 2002-03 household data; introductory interviews to gain understanding on overall village and household economy changes; household selection based on the introductory interview evidence selecting a sub-sample of 8 households out of the original 20 household sample based on diversity according to wealth, household changes and livelihood portfolios; development of household interview guides structured around eight common themes (household composition, history, home and services, land and agriculture, income generating work, credit and savings, external links and the wider context) although the focus was often focussed to the particular household based on material from the introductory interview; household interviews, transcription and debriefing to inform and guide the second round of interviews and finally an overall debriefing to explore similarities and dissimilarities between households within villages and across villages in a site.

In support of the household case studies, and based on a week of fieldwork in each site, an investigation of the key contextual factors and drivers of change at province, district and village level was undertaken.

The key ethical issues that the project faced were those of physical security and these were managed and addressed through AREU's security procedures. One planned site was abandoned because of continuing insecurity due to a particular commander. In a second a rise in insecurity led to the abandonment of household interviews and a focus on group interviews held outside

the immediate location to reduce risk both the subjects and to the interview team.

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. Any future research plans should also be identified. *[Max 500 words]*

The study found that while many of the 64 study households had improved access to basic services since 2002, livelihood security has declined for the majority (Kantor & Pain. 2011. *Running out of Options: Tracing Rural Afghan Livelihoods*). Shocks including drought, the ban on opium poppy cultivation and rising global food prices, led to decreases in agricultural production or threatened food security. Many respondent households were wary of the risks of engaging with markets. Those involved in nonfarm employment intensified their work and /or diversified in response; they were joined by new entrants seeking ways to earn cash income. Dependence on those providing access to employment, charity, food aid and credit increased. As a result coping with ill-health or meeting the cost of vital social engagements such as weddings became increasingly difficult; some could no longer afford healthcare while others delayed marriages. Many households found themselves sinking deeper into debt; those without male labourers often had no choice but to marry their daughters young for bride price.

Virtually all households who were able to maintain or improve their livelihood security did so by diversifying out of agriculture. Most declining households diversified away from agriculture into nonfarm work in Afghanistan or in neighbouring countries. The households with improving and stable livelihood security more often diversified based on skills or connections that gave them access to higher quality nonfarm employment, specifically salaried work. Both location and social connections mattered (Kantor & Pain, 2010. *Securing Life and Livelihoods in Rural Afghanistan: The Role of Social Relationships*). The majority of those with improving or stable livelihood security were found in Kandahar. Political connections and initial wealth helped drive some households to rapid improvements in livelihood security. For others, access to Kandahar's vibrant informal urban economy provided opportunities for small improvements. Household composition also played a role: those with more male workers were generally better placed to diversify more effectively. Limits on women's economic activities and girls' education constrain household diversification threatening women's individual security as well as household outcomes.

Many examples were found of inequality and dependence placing limits on the choices people have. These include gender norms, employment relationships, sharecrop arrangements, and the ability of local powerholders in some villages to co-opt public resources. Variation was found in the capacities of the villages to generate public goods and village prosperity depends on their success in building external patronage relationships (Pain & Kantor, 2010. *Understanding and Addressing Context in Rural Afghanistan: How Villages Differ and Why*). Variability between villages in supporting public goods is linked to existing levels of inequality. High levels of inequality reduce social solidarity. Conditions that generate social solidarity include low levels of inequality, subsistence economies and villages elites who are economically insecure. Where inequalities are high, economic surplus is generated and elites are economically independent, there are few incentives to promote provision of public goods or social solidarity. Interventions designed to provide greater access to resources cannot override these village preconditions, and programme outcomes are often subject to them.

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. *[Max. 200 words]*

The project was not part of a wider research programme or network.

3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [Max. 400 words]

The project has had a range of impacts through the written outputs and direct engagement with research users in the development community in Afghanistan. All of the publications related to the project have been made available via the ESRC Society Today website and through AREU's website and office. Each PI has made one conference presentation in the UK based on study findings, bringing the study attention in academic circles, and on February 15 2011 Co-PI Pain made a presentation to the House of Commons Parliamentary Group on Afghanistan.

A number of meetings and briefings were convened in 2010 with relevant stakeholders in Kabul to share project findings and in some cases, to build capacities of participants.

- In October, AREU held a roundtable in Kabul to discuss the potential of rural enterprise development as a pathway out of poverty, drawing from study findings. Participants represented NGOs, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and the Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme.
- In Nov/Dec the two PIs engaged with staff of the Afghan Ministry of Finance policy development and analysis unit, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (Afghanistan's PRSP) monitoring unit in the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock. A review of existing policies and programmes illustrated that they are planned with little consideration of the social or informal institutional context. The study findings illustrated the centrality of these factors to village life and to the potential effectiveness of aid programmes. Therefore, the PIs delivered training in order to raise the importance of these issues and provide staff with skills to integrate these issues into programme planning and implementation.
- In Nov/Dec the PIs convened two workshops for Afghan ministry participants from Kabul and provinces and from NGOs to raise the issues of social, institutional context and its relevance to program design and implementation. Approximately 40 people attended both day long events, which included dissemination of findings and their application to practical problems.
- A briefing meeting was held with DFID staff in the British Embassy in Kabul on December 6. This led to interest in the study on the part of the World Bank and DFID, and requests for further briefings. Both agencies have externally circulated the research reports.

The project's key findings on rural livelihood decline were disseminated via a press conference on 27 Nov 2010, that received considerable coverage including: National radio stations; regional BBC Dari radio; and a range of national Afghan TV stations. IRIN News provided coverage of the research: "[AFGHANISTAN: Marriage, ill health make you poorer](http://www.irinnews.org/News/Report.aspx?ReportID=9288)" IRINnews.org - Dec 1, 2010.

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

Two AREU papers are forthcoming in early 2011 and are expected to garner considerable interest in Afghanistan and amongst those working on Afghanistan. The PIs also expect to produce one to two academic papers in 2011, drawing from the study results and linking them to the wider development literature. Co-PI Pain is also preparing a paper for ODI based in part on the study findings.

AREU uses its research to inform policy making in the country. The papers produced through this project contribute significantly to this effort, particularly during this key phase of re-prioritising the country's poverty reduction strategy paper, and in this process, highlighting the role of agriculture in Afghanistan's growth. AREU plans to work with UEA during 2011 to develop a proposal for follow on ESRC communications funds to support further dissemination and engagement around the study findings and how to translate them into policy and programming.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

4. DECLARATIONS

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed.

Please note hard copies are NOT required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick ONE statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section.

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.

ii) Submissions to *ESRC Society Today*

Output and impact information has been submitted to *ESRC Society Today*. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.

OR

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to *ESRC Society Today* as soon as they become available.

OR

This grant is not listed on *ESRC Society Today*.

To cite this output:

Kantor, P, Pain, A, (2011) Development in the 'Raw': What Livelihood Trajectories and Poverty Outcomes tell us about Welfare Regimes and Resilience in Afghanistan
ESRC End of Award Report, RES-167-25-0285. Swindon: ESRC

iii) Submission of Datasets

Datasets arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service.

OR

Datasets that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the Economic and Social Data Service has been notified.

OR

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.