

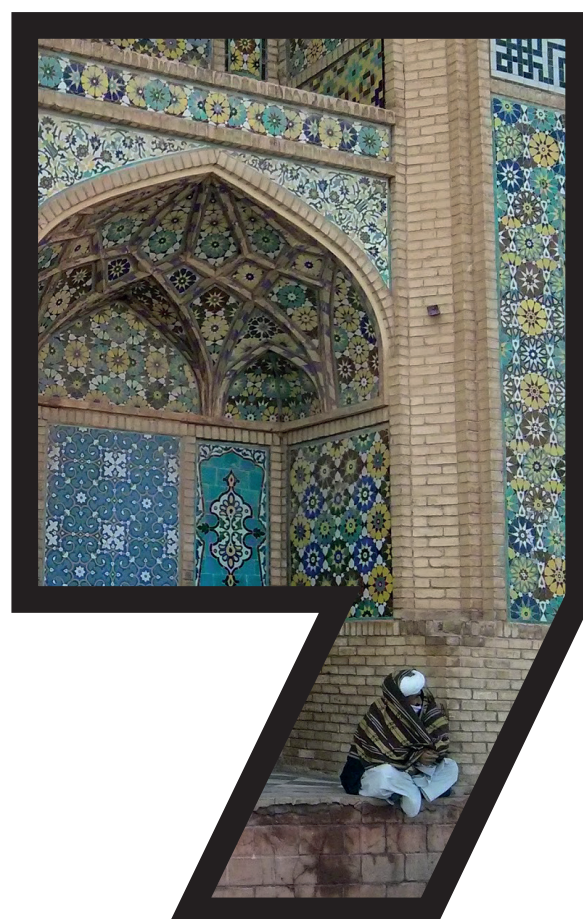
Researching livelihoods and
services affected by conflict

Livelihood trajectories in Afghanistan:

evidence from three
villages in Herat Province

Working Paper 54

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About us

Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) aims to generate a stronger evidence base on how people make a living, educate their children, deal with illness and access other basic services in conflict-affected situations. Providing better access to basic services, social protection and support to livelihoods matters for the human welfare of people affected by conflict, the achievement of development targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals and international efforts at peace- and state-building.

At the centre of SLRC's research are three core themes, developed over the course of an intensive one-year inception phase:

- State legitimacy: experiences, perceptions and expectations of the state and local governance in conflict-affected situations
- State capacity: building effective states that deliver services and social protection in conflict-affected situations
- Livelihood trajectories and economic activity under conflict

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is the lead organisation. SLRC partners include the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) in Sri Lanka, Feinstein International Center (FIC, Tufts University), the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Pakistan, Disaster Studies of Wageningen University (WUR) in the Netherlands, the Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research (NCCR), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

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Acronyms

ALP	Afghan Local Police
ALT	Afghanistan Livelihood Trajectories
ANA	Afghan National Army
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
CDC	Community Development Council
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
HHH	Household head
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
SLRC	Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium

Glossary

<i>Arbab</i>	Traditional village head
<i>Jirib</i>	Unit of measurement of area, approximately 1/5th of a hectare
<i>Kharwar</i>	Eighty seers of wheat
<i>Mudharebat</i>	A form of sharecropping of livestock
<i>Mujahideen</i>	A fighter in the resistance to the Russians and the communist government
<i>Nazir</i>	Supervisor of lands for a landlord
<i>Peshkash</i>	Bride price
<i>Seer</i>	Measurement for wheat; one seer is equivalent to seven kilograms
<i>Shura</i>	A community organization at the village level
<i>Toman</i>	Iranian currency

1 Introduction

Poverty levels in Afghanistan in 2011-2012 as assessed by the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (NRVAs, see CSO, 2014) have remained largely unchanged since 2007-2008 (World Bank, 2015). As the World Bank put it (World Bank, 2015: 6) this was 'despite a massive increase in international spending on military and civilian assistance, and overall strong economic growth and labor market performance.' These poor and in some cases worsening outcomes after more than a decade of international investment raise major questions about the design and focus of that investment (Pain, 2012).

For the World Bank (2015: 8), the lack of poverty reduction could be accounted for by rising levels of inequality, particularly at a regional level, which is a reflection of uneven donor funding, the concentration of economic growth in the service sector which created the most jobs (albeit largely on the basis of informal casual labour), and household vulnerability to a high level of shocks. Thus, 'due to the geographical targeting of aid and types of jobs that it generated, aid-led growth increased income inequality and did not decrease poverty.' With declining aid flows the World Bank argued that three new policy directions in Afghanistan were needed to support inclusive growth and decrease poverty. These required a focus on supporting the agricultural sector, ensuring greater equality of funding for public goods across the country and providing targeted safety nets to protect the poor from shocks.

This report contributes an in-depth examination of the proximate and deeper causes behind Afghanistan's unchanging poverty rates, levels of food insecurity and improved access to services found by the World Bank (2015), and assesses the policy measures offered to address these outcomes. It does so by drawing on a longitudinal study of a panel of households called Afghanistan Livelihood Trajectories (ALT). This panel was established in 2002-2003 by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) in partnership with seven non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and with European Commission funding (Grace and Pain, 2004). A panel of 390 households was established in 21 villages across seven contrasting districts in seven provinces with the objective of tracking their fortunes over time. The selected provinces and districts reflected a variety of agro-ecology and economic circumstances. The aim of the ALT research was to build an understanding of rural livelihood trajectories that was not specifically linked to project interventions in an effort to see what they might tell us about the drivers of household-level changes, the nature and degree of that change, and its effects on rural households' wellbeing. It also sought to bring to policy and programming practice an understanding of the context in which rural people live so as to counter various preconceptions of what people in rural areas do and the focus on the delivery of interventions. Thus the ALT study has aimed to bring an in-depth micro-level qualitative understanding to complement and engage with the large-sample representative cross-sectional data of the NRVA. This report examines household-level evidence from three villages in the Pashtun Zarghun district of Herat province to assess changes in livelihood activities, access to services, and engagement with local-level government.

Evidence from the first round of research in 2002-2003 called into question assumptions that rural Afghans rely on agriculture as their primary source of income, a policy assumption that still finds echoes in current agricultural policy documents (World Bank, 2014a). The research found (Grace and Pain, 2004: 1) that 'the majority of households, both rich and poor, have diversified income sources and many are involved in a combination of farm and non-farm activities.' Of the non-farm activities, labour migration to Iran was particularly important. The study also found that there was significant variability between villages in terms of access to education, health, and off-farm labour opportunities.¹

¹ The distinction is made between farm income, off-farm income and non-farm income.

In 2008, a second round of the study revisited a selection of the original sites and households in Kandahar, Badakhshan, Sar-i-Pul, and Faryab to trace what had happened to the panel households under variable but continuing conditions of insecurity. Five of the original seven provinces were selected for the restudy: Badakhshan, Faryab, Kandahar, Herat and Sar-i-Pul. Ghazni and Laghman were dropped at the design stage because of high levels of insecurity. Herat was abandoned after the restudy commenced because of insecurity in the Hari Rud Valley. In Faryab, the research was also modified because of security issues.

Based on the evidence from 64 households from eight villages in Badakhshan, Kandahar and Sar-i-Pul, the 2008 study found (Kantor and Pain, 2011) that while there were improvements in access to basic services, livelihood security had declined for the majority. Due to drought, the ban on opium poppy cultivation and the global rise in food prices, there had been decreases in agricultural production and food security had declined. Households had responded by intensifying the search for non-farm employment, saturating an already crowded labour market and depressing wages rates. Dependence on relatives and social networks to provide access to employment, assistance and credit increased. The 2008 study also drew attention to the significant variability in village contexts and the need to understand this better (Pain and Kantor, 2010) and to the important role of social relationships in providing livelihood security (Kantor and Pain, 2010). However, it also observed that these relationships were variable in quality, offering differing levels of privilege, power, obligation and reciprocity (Kantor and Pain, 2012), which suggests that the roots of inequality are to be found as much in the structure of Afghan society as in uneven donor funding.

A third round of the ALT study² was implemented in 2015 to 2016, this time under the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC), returning to a selection of the original households in Herat, Kandahar and Sar-i-Pul. As with the second round study, security considerations restricted access to many of the original districts and villages. In addition to having to exclude Faryab, Ghazni and Laghman, the Badakhshan sites were no longer secure. However, as well as being able to return to the Kandahar and Sar-i-Pul sites, it also proved possible to return to the original panel households in the Herat villages and it is a sub-sample (25) of the original 45 households that provides the evidence for this report. As will be discussed in Section 3, these three provinces provide distinct contrasts not only in terms of levels of reconstruction funding and conflict, but also in terms of access to public goods, poverty rates, and levels of inequality. Herat stands out not only for its high level of reconstruction funding but also for having the greatest level of inequality (in terms of the Gini index)³ of Afghanistan's 32 provinces (World Bank, 2014b), yet it is also ranked as having the highest net attendance ratio of girls to boys in primary education (103.6%). This is likely to reflect Herat's more liberal environment given the influence of Iran.

The household panel study has in this third round been nested within studies of wider institutional dynamics which have separately examined the performance of village institutions and the navigation of economic life (see Pain, 2016; Minoia et al., 2014; Minoia and Pain, 2015, 2016). These have been linked to broader understandings of provincial-level political dynamics (Jackson, 2016).

² The third round of the study was funded by the European Commission and as part of a cross-country programme, the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) led by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) with general funding from the UK Department of International Development.

³ 'The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of consumption among individuals differs from an equal one. A value of 0 represents absolute equality with everyone consuming the same amount, a value of 100 absolute inequality where all consumption is concentrated in one person' (World Bank, 2015: 19).

Five specific questions structured this third round of study of the ALT panel households:

- What are the livelihood trajectories and welfare outcomes of the Afghan case households over the last twelve years? How do gender, socio-economic position, community and context differentiate these?
- What practices have these households in diverse contexts of conflict implemented in relation to market choices and use of social and human capital to cope with insecurity? To what extent have these practices mitigated or reproduced insecurity and contributed to or undermined resilience? How has insecurity affected household strategies and welfare outcomes?
- What do these livelihood trajectories tell us about the meaning of local informal and formal structures and how households and contrasting communities have adapted to and engaged with government, aid agencies, markets and the private sector? What does this tell us about the nature of resilience, its scope, reach, and the inclusiveness of its mechanisms?
- To what extent do trajectories of change reflect path dependency⁴ determined by pre-existing structures or reflect the capacity of individuals or communities to bring about changes through collective action? If there have been shifts, where, for whom and how has it been possible?
- How do village institutions (both customary and introduced) perform in relation to public good provision, and how do they relate to and engage with district and provincial authorities and external interventions?

Three key findings emerge from this study. First, the majority of households, consistent with the findings of the 2011-12 NRVA (and see World Bank, 2015) find themselves no better off than they were in 2003, even though access to public services has improved. Many households have experienced shocks, and often these have been multiple. These shocks include a major or series of health events, a failed migration attempt to Iran, or in some cases a household member returning from work in Iran with an addiction to opium⁵. Survival for these households largely depends on informal networks of family and relations and an economy of distribution (Ferguson, 2015) rather than employment or other engagement in the productive economy.

Second, despite most households having experienced economic hardship, the provision of public goods has increased since 2003 – particularly the delivery of infrastructure. Through the National Solidarity Programme (NSP),⁶ wells have been installed in the three study villages within the last ten years, and schools have been built in two of the study villages. However, the behaviour of village elites is a key determinant of the extent to which this has improved access to these public goods. As will be seen, elite capture of a Community Development Council (CDC) project in village B essentially privatised a public well, and the approval of elders was crucial to girls' attendance in school in all three study villages.

Third, the case households come from villages with distinctive economies and institutional structures. In village A over 70% of the households are landless and derive most of their income from off-farm sources. In village B one landlord owns over 80% of the land and most households have existed in dependent relations with him in the past, although a few years ago he abruptly severed this connection. Village C is the most egalitarian but also the poorest, with only one household food secure from its own production. High rates of landlessness means that labour migration to Iran is the major source of income for most households in all three villages.

⁴ Path dependency is simply the idea that present activities and outcomes are affected by past practices and history

⁵ Opium addiction is common in Iran as it is readily available and often provided by employers as it is thought to make employees work harder (HHB31, male respondent, interview 2)

⁶ The NSP focuses on service delivery at the village level through elected community governance groups called CDCs (Community Development Councils). The programme is implemented by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) through partnerships with local NGOs.

Despite an enduring lack of work opportunities in villages, different access to public services, and intermittent bouts of conflict, few of the study households have permanently migrated out of the village. The reasons for this, as this report evidences, are tightly embedded social networks upon which people depend for access to credit, asset lending, and marriage arrangements, as well as long histories of living in the village. As Pain (2015) put it, 'the village, despite its shifting boundaries, remains for most of its inhabitants the most significant institution in their lives.' This remains true and the significance of that will be explored in this report.

This paper proceeds by first briefly presenting the methods used in the research followed by an account of Herat province and the specific context of the study district and villages. It then explores in detail the contrasting household trajectories – improving, declining and coping – across the case study households in three villages, before concluding. As noted earlier this paper is the first in a series of three investigating household trajectories in three contrasting provinces. These three provincial case studies will together provide the basis for a forthcoming synthesis report and accordingly the emphasis in each case study is on the specific provincial findings rather than the broader implications.

2 Methods

The notion of livelihood trajectories as a means of exploring processes and dynamics of change is well established, and longitudinal tracking combined with cross-sectional analysis (Murray, 2002) has provided a robust means of understanding processes of household livelihood change and outcomes. Ex-ante household histories (Davis, 2006) combined with longitudinal tracking (see Sen, 2003 for example), particularly with a focus on patterns of asset accumulation and dispossession (Barrett et al., 2006) can provide an exploration of contrasting household trajectories over time. Such trajectories have been variably characterised as coping, improving or declining; stepping in, stepping up or stepping out (Scoones, 2015), or more graphically as a game of ‘snakes, ladders and traps’ (Kabeer, 2004). But central to these analyses is the use of the *ex ante* lens to determine how households have or have not negotiated dimensions of hazard, risk and access (De Haan and Zoomers, 2005).

While the very small number of case households from which the findings in this paper are drawn cannot, and are not, designed to offer the generalisable level of understanding from large sample representative studies as has been carried out within the SLRC panel across five countries, their value lies in the provision of detailed contextual understanding of processes of change.

This research closely followed the methods of the second round study in 2008-2010 (Pain, 2010). Fieldwork was conducted in the original three villages selected in 2002 located in Pashtun Zarghun, a district east of Herat City located along the Hari Rud river. Between February and September 2015, three rounds of interviews were conducted: a preliminary one was planned with the original 15 sample households in each village. As some households had left and others could not be reached, 15 preliminary interviews were conducted in village A, 11 in village B, and 14 in village C. Two in-depth interviews were then conducted with a sub-sample of 8 households in village A, 9 in village B, and 8 in village C. The interviews were gender segregated with the male head of household and his wife being interviewed separately. A full account of the methods is detailed in Annex 1. Despite a time lapse of 12 years, the research team was relatively easily able to find almost all of the original study households. Of 45 households interviewed in 2002-2003, only three (two in village B and one in village C) had left their respective villages and lost connections with them and therefore could not be located. Four other households had moved to Herat City and were traced.

Contrasting households in terms of economic fortunes and wealth groups were selected for the in-depth study. The relative wealth group of each household was based on land and asset ownership, debt, and household composition. The wealth groups ranked from 1 (high – relatively wealthy) to 4 (low – relatively impoverished), and largely corresponded to land ownership, with large and medium land owners in the higher wealth groups (1 and 2) and small landowners and landless households comprising the lower wealth groups (3 and 4).

Table 1 lists the codes of the eight sampled households by village and wealth group. These wealth groups are relative to a specific village, and are not absolute measures. Information on household size and whether the household was joint (J) or single (S) is also indicated.⁷

⁷ Joint households refer to those that have more than one married couple while single households have one married couple.

Table 1: Summary of household codes with size and composition by villages and wealth groups

Wealth group	Village A	Village B	Village C
1	A12 (11; J)*		
2	A2 (11; J) A8 (9; S) A10 (13; J)	B31 (13; J) B34 (4; S) B35 (8; S) B38 (7; S)	C15 (12; J)
3	A1 (22; J) A14 (4; S)	B30 (11; J) B40 (10; J)* B41 (7; S)	C22 (14; J) C23 (8; J) C24 (7; S) C25 (8; J)
4	A7 (5; J) A9 (8; S)	B39 (20; J) B42 (8; J)	C18 (7; S) C27 (8; S) C29 (8; J)

*Widowed mother lives with the head of the household

3 Context

Herat Province

Herat province in the west of Afghanistan shares borders with Iran and Turkmenistan. It is one of four major centres that have historically made up Afghanistan's political strongholds, the other three being Kandahar in the south, Balkh in the north, and Nangarhar in the east (Jackson, 2016). What these centres have in common is a rich agricultural hinterland based on river-irrigated agriculture and a border location to the outside world. Economically, Herat is frequently portrayed as one of Afghanistan's most stable and prosperous provinces. While it has historically benefitted from a relatively open relationship with Iran – in terms of trade, material support during the Soviet war, and accepting labour migrants from Afghanistan, particularly during Iran's 1970s oil boom – like the rest of the country, Herat's economy is currently suffering from diminished international investment and foreign military expenditure (Leslie, 2015).

Herat's most powerful and well known governor was Ismail Khan. Khan was a *mujahideen* commander during the Soviet invasion turned politician who governed from 1992 to 1995 and again from 2001 to 2004. In 1979, Khan led the original insurrection against the Taraki regime's Saur Revolution. The state responded by attempting to quash the uprising with brute force, killing an estimated 24,000 Heratis in a single week. The following decade saw Khan waging war against the Soviet occupation. By the early 1990s, shortly before the Soviet withdrawal, Khan had managed to establish an administration with functioning healthcare and education, and by 1992 he had taken Herat from the Soviets (Johnson, 2004). In 1995, Herat fell to the Taliban and Khan fled to Iran; he was not able to reclaim the province until after the Taliban were ousted in 2001. Ismail Khan was able to retain his position until he was removed as Governor of Herat in 2004. While he was appointed to a ministerial position in Kabul, through strong networks in Herat he has managed to maintain significant influence on the province's government and business world, which successive governors have not been able to overcome (Leslie, 2015). As Jackson (2016) describes, Khan is still able to secure custom revenues, land, and keep subnational government beholden to him.

As with Balkh, because of the outward appearance of a more open and stable political environment, Herat has attracted considerable support from development funds although less from military funding because of its relative stability. It thus falls under the classification (World Bank, 2015: 11) of a high aid spending but low conflict province (see Table 2). This contrasts with the two other provincial settings for these panel studies: Kandahar, which is both high aid spending and high conflict, and Sari-i-Pul, which is low conflict and low aid spending. Herat's poverty rates and depth of poverty lie close to the national average (while Kandahar performs significantly better on these dimensions and Sari-i-pul substantially worse). On the basis of access to antenatal care and drinking water Herat outperforms the other two provinces.

Table 2: Contrasts in provincial settings for the three livelihood panel studies with respect to relative aid spending, conflict status and poverty outcomes and relative ranking against Afghanistan's 32 provinces

	Ranking (1 is best, 32 is worst)			
	National	Herat	Kandahar	Sar-i-Pul
High Spending, High Conflict*			✓	
High Spending, Low Conflict		✓		
Low Spending, High Conflict				
Low Spending, Low Conflict				✓
Poverty rates (%) **	35.8	35.3 (14)	13 % (2)	59.1 (28)
Depth of poverty (%)	8.4	8.8	1.6	16.9
Calorie deficiency (%)	34.7	22.1(10)	29.0 (16)	56.4 (25)
Gini Index (%)	31.6	34.8 (32)	21.6 (8)	27.2 (20)
Underemployment (%)	18.6	15.7 (10)	10.9 (8)	16.1 (12)
Girls to boys Net Attendance Ratio, Primary (%)	67.4	103.6 (1)	65.1 (21)	83.7 (11)
Girls to boys Net Attendance Ratio, Secondary (%)	56.2	97.9	29.6	48.1
Access to skilled antenatal care (%)	51.3	64.9 (9)	26.5 (27)	73.2 (6)
Safe drinking water (%)	45.5	52.8 (9)	46.6 (10)	(25)

*World Bank (2015: 11) ** World Bank (2014b)

Pashtun Zarghun district context

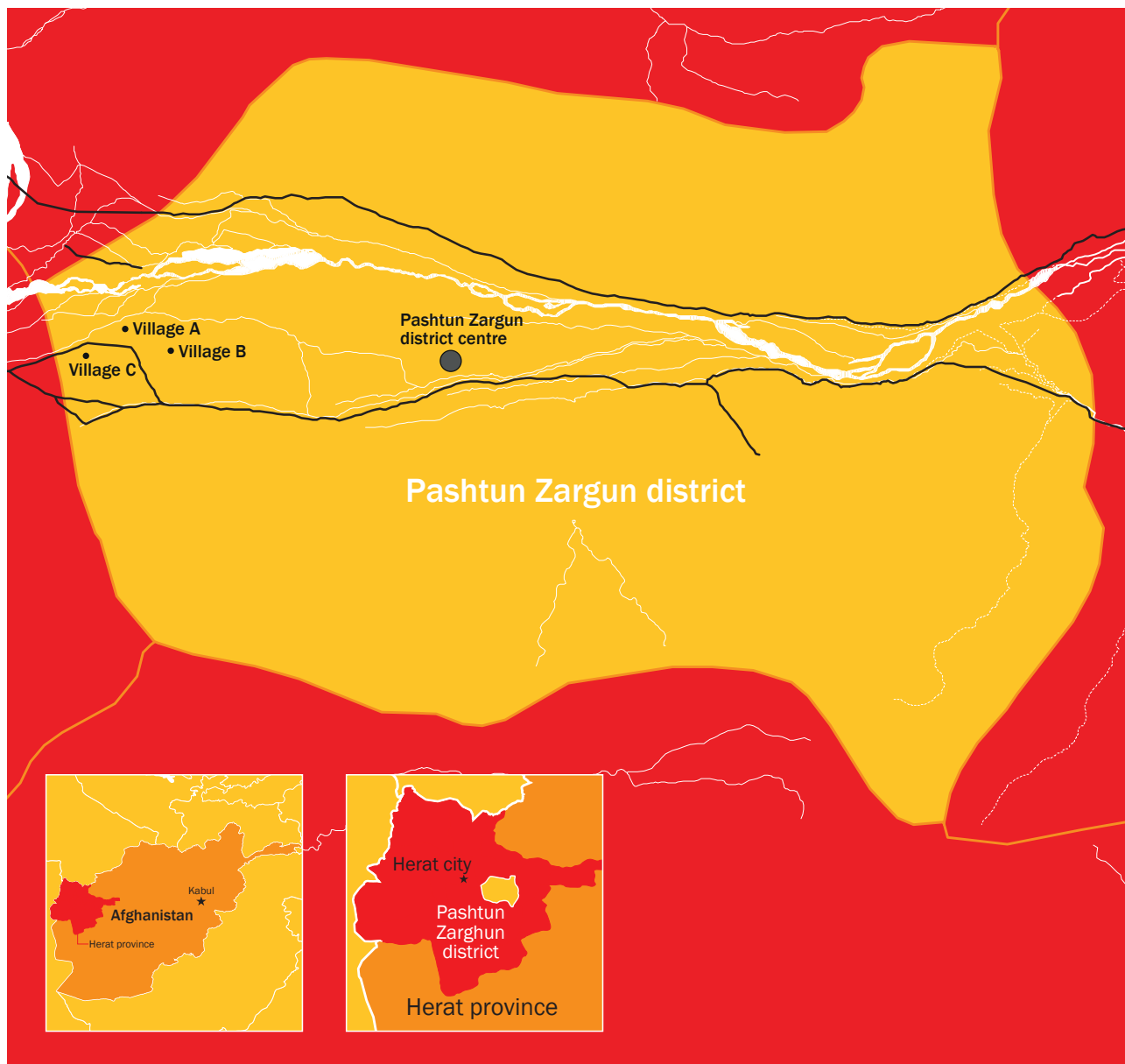
Herat has 15 districts, nine of which lie in the basin of the Hari Rud river and support irrigated agriculture. Although around 155,000 hectares (Naimi, 1994) are intermittently irrigated, the area of annually cultivated and irrigated lands is reported not to exceed 55,000 hectares as irrigation depends on the natural regime of the river which is subject to annual fluctuations. The upstream districts which lie east of Herat City are more reliably irrigated than downstream districts. Pashtun Zarghun, where the three study villages lie, is located upstream; however, even within districts the reliability of irrigation falls with distance from the river (Chokkakula, 2009) and the three study villages have significantly different access to water (see Table 3).

Table 3: Characteristics of three ALT study villages in Herat

Village	District	Geography and economy	Village location
Village A	Pashtun Zarghun	River plain on the Hari Rud river; irrigation from river and spring; agrarian economy; 45 km to Herat City	River edge
Village B			Edge of irrigation & unreliable water supply
Village C			Upstream, subject to river flooding

Source: Grace and Pain (2004: 11)

Figure 1: Pashtun Zargun district



Despite issues of irrigation reliability, the Hari Rud valley represents what the Afghanistan Agriculture Sector Review (World Bank, 2014a) sees as a location of high potential and a ‘first mover’ in a revitalised agricultural sector. It is seen to offer potential for productivity increases, employment creation and income growth given its proximity to markets. Yet, as noted above, Herat as a province has the highest level of inequality in consumption of all Afghanistan’s provinces, raising questions of if and how any benefits from agricultural growth might be distributed.

A contributory cause to this inequality in consumption is likely to be the highly uneven access to irrigation water within the irrigation systems of the Hari Rud (Chokkakula, 2009). This inequality of access to water in turn is linked to land-holding inequalities. Afghanistan’s land Gini coefficient has been estimated by one source (World Bank, 2005: 9) to be 0.57, reflecting the fact that an estimated 2.2% of the population holds about 19% of the land. In Injil district, which surrounds Herat City and lies to the west of Pashtun Zarghun, there is evidence that of the 7,000 households, some 3,000 (45%) are landless, surviving often as sharecroppers; 15% of the households are medium-sized landowners (around 2 ha, or 10 *jiribs*) with about 40% of the irrigated land; and some 5% of households are large

landowners with 20% of the land (SMEC International, 2005: 31-32). The remaining 35% of households are small landowners with landholdings of less than a hectare. These patterns of land inequality are also found in the Pashtun Zarghun villages, although there are differences between the three villages.

Pashtun Zarghun, as its name suggests, is largely ethnically Pashtun and household ancestors migrated to it around 200 years ago from Kandahar. However, the majority of the district's population now speak Dari. Despite being settled for generations, people still consider themselves migrants to the area. As 'non-natives' to the province, villagers have extremely close relationships. As put by several respondents, 'we share our sadness and happiness'.

Physical insecurity has been and remains a key factor in the lives of the village households. Among other descriptions of violence, many respondents – particularly from villages B and C – spoke of an insurgent group led by a man called Ghulam Yama that was present in the area about seven years ago and created considerable insecurity. This was the reason why the second study round was not carried out in these villages in 2008. The insurgents occupied the villages for a period, demanding food and shelter from the residents:

At that time the government [did not function in the village], the insurgents had full authority over the people. We could not get out of the village. They forced people to provide food for free, and they [stopped] girls from going to school.⁸

Respondents described a clash roughly four years ago between the insurgent group and the Afghan National Army (ANA) in which Ghulam Yama was killed. In response to more general insecurity at the national level, the government deployed the Afghanistan Local Police (ALP)⁹ and three years ago these were established in select villages in Pashtun Zarghun. Village A formed an independent ALP division, village B's ALP was formed jointly with a nearby village with which they also share an *arbab* (traditional village head) and a CDC, and village C has no ALP as it falls between two larger villages that both have police. The ALP was established with the *arbabs* managing the recruitment.¹⁰

Most respondents from villages A and B claimed that security had improved significantly since ALP was created, while it has proved more difficult for village C, with no police, to keep insurgents at bay.¹¹ Despite this, numerous instances of insecurity, both old and new, were reported in all villages: many respondents described having experienced threats or episodes of physical violence, abductions, deaths, and in one instance, arson, within the last 12 years. Placing *arbabs* at the head of the ALP has also strengthened their authority over village affairs. With around ten 'soldiers' constantly patrolling the village under their command, the *arbabs* were reported to control key village processes such as conflict resolution (sometimes demanding a fee) and managing NSP projects and associated funds. This, compounded by the widespread feeling of disconnect from district- and provincial-level government that informants reported, has consolidated the position of *arbabs* as political gatekeepers and gives them immense power at the village level, raising questions as to whose interests they actually represent:

⁸ HHC24, female respondent, interview 3.

⁹ The ALP are a local security force recruited from village which it seeks to protect. It started as a small US experiment but has now become a significant part of the security apparatus (ICG, 2015).

¹⁰ HH B 35, male respondent, interview 3.

¹¹ While in the field, after conducting two rounds of interviews in village C, the *arbab* contacted the SLRC Research Officer and informed him it was not safe for the research team to return to the village as an insurgent group had attempted to enter the village.

...during the night and day some people with covered face and guns cross from [another] village and sometimes they beat up the people... in another village they killed a person recently. Some people say that they are Taliban and some people say that they are thieves who do robbery with guns under the name of Taliban but still I don't know if they are Taliban or thieves. Nevertheless, we can't irrigate our lands during the night and we can't go to our lands early morning. There are lots of security issues all over Herat but in our district (Pashtun Zarghun) security is very bad: local police, Taliban, thieves all of them are active and we don't know who is for our protection and who is not. The person who killed in another village some people says that the *arbab* of [village A] who is also head of ALP was involved in this incident but I don't know what is right and what is wrong.¹²

Physical violence is one dimension of the context of insecurity that Pashtun Zarghun households face. However, structural violence – where power expressed through social structures or institutions can harm people – is also pervasive. The most striking example described below is of the sharecroppers of village B who were summarily ejected from the land that they were working as the landlord shifted to the cultivation of saffron, a semi-perennial crop. Other aspects of structural violence – arbitrary action by some *arbabs* for example – permeate the accounts of many of the case households discussed here. Finally, and as noted in the introduction, there are idiosyncratic or household-specific shocks such as health events, a failed migration attempt and destruction of land and houses from floods that also have to be contended with.

While access to public services has generally improved since 2002, there are some significant differences between villages A, B, and C, as will be discussed. All villages have gained access to drinking water through the NSP, which funded the construction of wells. Similarly, all households now have access to electricity as each one individually purchased solar panels within the past eight years. However in terms of the provision of education and healthcare, differences can be seen between the three study villages.

¹² HH C24, male respondent, interview 2.

4 Village economies, land classes and institutions

Village A has approximately 135 households and 700 *jiribs* of land, of which only 150 *jiribs* are irrigated. However it also has 150 *jiribs* of irrigated grape gardens and 400 *jiribs* of rainfed land, which in good years can be cultivated. It is therefore agriculturally the richest village but 70% of the households are landless. There is, as with village B, one major landowner who owns 67% of the irrigated arable land, but in the case of village B the large landowner owns over 83% of the land, much of which in the past has been cultivated by sharecroppers. Because of the large private land ownership, village B has the highest level of irrigation with 1020 of 1090 *jiribs* irrigated. Within this is 70-80 *jeribs* of saffron, belonging again to the major landowner. Village B has the largest land area and smallest number of houses (43). Village C, with 50 households and 170 *jiribs* of land, is the smallest of the three, with the most equitable land distribution, but suffers major problems of flooding and waterlogging.

Table 4: Land size (*jiribs*) and distribution in the three study villages

Landowners	Village A		Village B		Village C	
	N	Land holding range (j)	N	Land holding range (j)	N	Land holding range (j)
Large	1	100	1	850	3	5-6
Medium	10	10-15	5	15-20	30-35	3-4
Small	30	1-2	21	5-8	7	1-2
Landless	95	-	16	-	5-6	-
Total irrigated arable		150		1020		170
Total irrigated grapes		150		70-80		0
Total rainfed land		400		0		0
Total households	135		43		50	

Village A

Village A is one of the largest villages in the district, lying roughly 40 km away from Herat City and 20 km from Pashtun Zarghun district capital. Village A, in contrast to the other two villages, has access to water throughout the year from two sources - the river and an irrigation system drawing water from wells - and is the richest agriculturally of the three villages. On account of the reliable irrigation, the majority of landowners have converted their lands from irrigated wheat to grape gardens. Selling and trading grapes has come to shape the village's economy as landowners earn significantly more from this than wheat:

Compared to agricultural land, grape gardens have more income. For example, one *jirib* of good agricultural land can yield up to 800 kg of wheat. If you sell 8 kg of wheat at 80 AFN (USD 1.22)¹³ the total income of one *jirib* land will be 8000 AFN (USD 122). However, the annual income of grape garden is up to 100,000 AFN (USD 1525). It means that garden has ten times more income than agricultural (crop) land.¹⁴

¹³ 100 afghanis (AFN) is approximately equal to USD 1.50.

¹⁴ HH A12, male respondent, interview 3.

The large and medium landowners are income and food secure from farm production. Medium-sized landowners make sufficient income from the sale of grapes to purchase grain throughout the year and may also trade and draw additional income from household members in Iran. Small landowners can generate up to six months of grain supply from farm production and rely on wage labour and remittance income for the balance. Landless households can find wage labour in the grape gardens in the village but most have members who migrate to work in Iran and send remittances back, and this is the major source of income for this group.

Grape gardens are a valuable asset but costly in labour and time to develop, therefore a specific form of sharecropping called *Nema Kari*, has developed around them. The modalities of *Nema Kari* were explained by the head of household A12:

It is a kind of deal that the farmer makes with the landowner. For example, a *jirib* of land is divided into three parts. One part is given to the farmer and two parts still belong to the landowner. The farmer should work in the one-*jirib* garden for five to six years without any payment and the landowner does not pay any money for the fertiliser. When the garden starts yielding after five or six years a grape harvest, the one part – the harvest and the land – is fully owned by the farmer and the landowner cannot sell that part of the land.¹⁵

Because it requires a long-term investment, *Nema Kari* differs from other sharecropping arrangements and for the farmer it is an opportunity to accrue assets. For the landowner a grape garden is a core asset that can be mobilised at times of need for cash, and as will be seen, the leasing out of sub-plots or a row of grapes at a time to raise funds in times of need is common.

Village A is headed by a powerful *arbab* who inherited his position, has 20 *jiribs* of land, is the head of the ALP and the de-facto head of the CDC. He is a former commander of the *mujahideen* and therefore has links within the government. His connections are at both district and provincial level and enable him to act as a political gatekeeper for other residents of the village.

Village A's facilities are well developed compared to those of villages B and C. A boy's school was started during the *mujahideen* period and there are now secondary schools for both boys and girls, as well as a private health clinic. When the Karzai government began to build girls schools 12 years ago, residents – led by the village elders – requested that one be built in the village. Almost without exception, girls attend both primary and secondary school. The first female graduates were produced within the last five years and the village now has female teachers, a feature that is essential to girls' attendance at school. The private health clinic in village A was built by a doctor from the village and also serves people from the neighbouring village B. Although residents can access the clinic with relative ease, it was widely reported to be of poor quality. It has one doctor who comes in sporadically and rarely stays the entire day. The clinic charges 30 AFN (USD 0.46) to see the doctor, as well as additional fees for the medicine that he prescribes, which many poor households reported as prohibitively expensive.

Village B

Village B has approximately 43 households and 1,090 *jiribs* of arable land. Land ownership in the village is highly skewed, with one large landlord, Haji Rahim,¹⁶ owning 850 *jiribs*. The landlord comes from Herat City and is now employed in Kabul's Supreme Court. This village was founded by the landlord's father; 50 years ago he purchased about 1,000 *jiribs* of land, bringing around 20 migrants – nomads and landless families – from surrounding villages as sharecroppers. The families were each given a small piece of land and a house in which to live, and today 20 households are small landowners, 16 are landless, and a further five are medium landowners. The majority of residents

¹⁵ HH A12, male respondent, interview 2.

¹⁶ Name has been changed for the sake of anonymity.

(small landowners and landless) remained sharecroppers until about four years ago when Haji Rahim converted 70 *jiribs* of his land to saffron cultivation and mechanised wheat harvest on the remaining 780 *jiribs*. At present, only one male in the village, the head of household B38, remains in Haji Rahim's employment as the *nazir* or manager of the lands. This has had a major impact on many households as those formerly working as sharecroppers can now only work as seasonal and casual wage labour in the village and as a result most have a male household member working in Iran sending back remittances.

With the exception of Haji Rahim, whose land has two irrigation sources – a pump system from the river as well as a series of wells – the villagers can only rely on water for irrigation between November and May when the river is high from winter rainfall and spring runoff. Wheat yields are generally low as the water is only enough to irrigate one crop per season. This also means that the productivity and value of land in village B is considerably less than that of village A; villagers have less room to use their land as an asset for gaining credit, and are less likely to lease or sell land to use against debts, marry their sons, or make investments. Availability of work in the village follows the availability of water. Outside of harvest season, many respondents said that regular employment was nearly impossible to find in the village and most households (with the exception of B31, B34, and B41)¹⁷ combine on- and off-farm labour. As a result all households have, or have had in the past, a male family member working in Iran. In the summer many will travel to village A to work in the grape gardens. While medium landowners are food-secure all year, small landowners and landless households mainly depend on remittances from Iran. Small landowning households may gain up to eight months of food security from their lands.

Haji Rahim appears not to be directly involved in village government but as the major, if absentee, landlord he regulates economic opportunities in the village. He continues to recruit labour from within the village for saffron cultivation, but only women and children. As a companion study on saffron production found (Minoia and Pain, 2016), a number of social, cultural, and economic conditions allow women to work at various stages of saffron production but they are largely confined to low-rate piece work.

Village B shares an *arbab*, CDC and ALP with the village of Mina,¹⁸ which is 4 km away and not part of this study. Like village A, the Mina *arbab* is also the head of an ALP unit. When asked why the village did not have its own *arbab* the following response was given, highlighting the power that *arbabs* can have in a village:

It is not common [for villages to share *arbabs*]. Only if the villages are small will they depend on another village's *arbab*. From a long time ago, our *arbab* is from Mina. At that time our village was small, but if we select any *arbab* from our own village his life will be in danger from the *arbab* of Mina.¹⁹

The *arbab* was reported to have used his joint position as head of ALP and the power granted to him by this posting to enforce village management issues falling under his remit as *arbab*:

Two months ago we had canal de-silting work for all villages in the district. The *arbab* said, if you do not participate then you must pay a fine. I went...but my neighbours did not...so [the *arbab*] came to me and said, 'If you don't bring your neighbours then you have to pay instead of them.' I said, 'You are the *arbab* and you have to go ask them directly.' He didn't accept and took me to the District Governor and they put me in jail for half of a day... [The District Governor] told me, 'Don't forget one thing: whatever the *arbab* is saying, in the district it is right and the District Governor and Police Commander accept his decisions.'²⁰

¹⁷ HH B31 because their eldest son became addicted to opium in Iran four years ago; B34 because the household has only two members, the household head and his wife, who are 80 and 60 respectively; B41 is a small young household.

¹⁸ Village name anonymised.

¹⁹ HH B34, male respondent, interview 3.

²⁰ HH B35, male respondent, interview 3.

During the time of this study, village B was in the midst of attempting to establish an autonomous CDC. Two men from village B sit on the shared CDC as representatives, one of which is from household B38 and manages Haji Rahim's lands, and the other is a village 'whitebeard' or elder called Mullah Sharif.²¹ Respondents reported that while the CDC had been quite active in the other village, it had done little for theirs:

'...if we have our own CDC we will spend the budget for the development of our own village and will make projects based on the need of our own people - it is better that we make decisions for our own village. In the time we have had [a shared CDC] they took most of the budget for their own village and the money which was part of our village has been used corruptly by our CDC members.'²²

The example of the corruption was the construction of wells in the village. Ten years ago, three wells were built by the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) through the NSP. Locating the sites and supervising the construction fell to Mullah Sharif, who put one in front of his house, one outside his brother's home, and the last near the mosque – the latter being the only true communal well of the three. A few years later Mullah Sharif built an outside wall around his house and extended it so the well would fall inside his compound.²³ It now serves as his private well away from the use of other villagers.

It is probable that village B was joined to Mina's CDC during the earlier phase of NSP due to its small size, and as the village has grown it should now be eligible for an independent CDC (Pain, 2016). The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) has reportedly begun the process, although village B has not yet seen any funds.²⁴

Village B has no health clinic and residents instead have to travel either to the private clinic in village A or to Herat City hospital when in need of medical treatment. During the Taliban era (1996 to 2001) some boys would attend school in Mina. A school started in the village about eight to ten years ago²⁵ for both girls and boys (at different times of day). Students first took classes in 'ruined houses'²⁶ until 2008 when a school was built in the village. Both Haji Rahim and the elders played a crucial role in bringing girls education to the village:

With [the] coming of [the] Karzai regime, Haji Rahim said... 'I will bring a financial aid to make a school but you people should send your girls to school [because] all the subjects of school are based on our culture and custom as well as most of them are religious subjects.' ...After that the Mullah also said it is good to send the girls for education and some of the people during these times went to Iran other provinces of Afghanistan so they got some awareness and accepted to send their girls to school.'²⁷

There are no female teachers in the village, thus girls up to class nine are taught by the village *mullah*. However, once they are older they can no longer attend classes taught by a male for reasons of propriety; as put by one respondent: '...both of [my daughters] are engaged and if I send them to a school that has no female teacher people will talk badly and it will harm our reputation in the village.'²⁸

²¹ Name changed for the sake of anonymity.

²² HH B35, RH, male respondent, interview 3.

²³ HH B35, male respondent, interview 3.

²⁴ HH B35, male respondent, interview 3.

²⁵ Issues of timing are usually given by respondents as an approximation as people in rural areas do not typically know the exact years and dates events in their lives have transpired.

²⁶ HH B34, female respondent, interview 2.

²⁷ HH B39, male respondent, interview 2.

²⁸ HH B39, female respondent, interview 2.

Village C

The third and final study village is the poorest of the three. It is furthest from the Pashtun Zarghun district centre, lying closer to the neighbouring district centre of Guzara to the west. There are 50 households, 170 *jiribs* of land, and a more egalitarian landholding structure than villages A and B; ownership of five to six *jiribs* qualifies one as a large landowner in the village, three to four as a medium one, and one to two as small one. The *arbab* of this village owns only two *jiribs* of land.

Village C has irrigation from the river but land is often heavily waterlogged in the cultivation season as the river floods each spring. Harvests are therefore low and even large landowners in the village do not harvest enough wheat for their household's annual consumption. As a result, labour migration is vital and every household had a male in working in Iran:

[if I were to rank the income for people in the village] I would say working in Iran comes first, then working in construction (in Guzara) and lastly agricultural income. We don't have [so much] land in the village that people [can] totally depend on it.²⁹

The *arbab* of this village has been in the position for 23 years and was widely reported to be trusted and respected. He became *arbab* at the request of the villagers as he had been involved with a number of village *shuras* including a security *shura* or peace council that preceded the CDC and served as the contact point for dealing with insurgents in the area. He describes his duties as *arbab* as multifaceted, with the primary role of 'being a bridge or middleman between the government and the people'.³⁰ It is his job, he says, to 'convey the voices of our villagers to the government officials in the District Governor's [office]'.³¹ Lastly, he is openly involved with the village CDC, describing himself as its supervisor, while his son is the deputy.

In contrast to the *arbabs* from villages A and B, he did not describe connections beyond the district level. Also notably missing from his responsibilities is that of village security: he is not involved with ALP in the area. Whereas study villages A and B's *arbabs* derive their power at least partially from their joint positions as head of police (which means they have a group of armed men at their command), this *arbab* maintains his authority because he is known to be a man of good character:

arbab is the head of this village but he is not a powerful person, he is the same as us – he is not a rich man and he does not have a gun. Our *arbab* has never asked people to give him money or wheat... He is a very honest man and all villagers respect and accept that position for him.³²

Numerous examples of the *arbab* and the village elders working for the public good were provided by respondents. Many told the story about working-age males being given employment in rotation for the construction of the well, funded by the NSP roughly eight years ago:

When there is a construction project in our village, the head of CDC was making a schedule in which every person from our village is able to work in the construction site between eight and ten days and each and everyone in this village got up 3000 AFN [USD 45] for the project period. Because it was a collective project, each and every individual should get involved in these projects.³³

Despite not having a school or a health facility, village C has the longest history of education, including that for girls, of the three villages. Respondents said that girls from village C have been attending school

²⁹ HH C22, male respondent, interview 2.

³⁰ HH C15, male, respondent, interview 3.

³¹ HH C15, male respondent, interview 2.

³² HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

³³ HH C15, male respondent, interview 3.

in Bokah (a neighbouring village that is roughly a 30 to 40 minute walk away) since the time of the *mujahideen*. This stopped during the Taliban era but resumed soon after 2001. As in villages A and B, the elders played a vital role in the acceptance of education for girls,³⁴ and the majority of respondents see schooling for girls as very valuable.

The lack of ALP in village C has made it difficult for them to keep militants out. The head of household C27 described an incident from four years ago:

...the security of the village was not good and there was a checkpoint of police in the next village close to Bokha that Talibs attacked and cut [off] the heads of nine police. They warned all the villagers that if anybody supports the government we will cut their heads like this.³⁵

A recent incident with insurgents also led to the interruption of schooling for girls:

...a group of *mujahideen* had guns and [came to the village.] Even they ordered poor people to give them food, they talked [over] the mosque loud speaker, saying, 'If we see any girls going to school we will kill them.' After that they closed the school, therefore [my eldest daughter] and other girls from our village and other villages did not go to school. None of the government soldiers came to our village, because the *mujahideen* killed the government people. After some time the government came and fought with the *mujahideen* group and killed them. Today some of the girls are going to school... some are [even] in 11th and 12th grade.³⁶

For health services, residents of village C travel to Guzara to use a hospital built by the Chinese government.

The observations on the contrasts between the three villages of elite behaviour may well be linked to the differing land ownership patterns. Notably, in all cases there has been strong support for education, reflecting the more liberal environment of Herat, but in village A and B landed elite tend to act in their own interests. A companion study (See Pain and Sturge, 2015; Pain, 2015; Pain, 2016) has found evidence that where land inequalities are low and the elite are relatively economically insecure, they are more likely act in the interests of the village, as in village C rather than more in their own interests as in villages A and B.

³⁴ HH C22, female respondent, interview 2.

³⁵ HH C27, male respondent, interview 2.

³⁶ HH C22, female respondent, interview 2.

5 Changes in household composition

Table 5 summaries the changes in household composition of the case study households since 2003. The seventh column identifies changes since 2003 in terms of deaths (D), movement out through sons taking their new families away to form a new household or through marriage of daughters (O), births (B) and marriage (M).

Table 5: Changes in household composition of case study households since 2003

Village A

Wealth Group	HH Code	Sex of HHH	HHH age	# of married couples	# of HH members (Change since 2003)	Changes since 2003			
						-D	-O	+B	+M
1	A12	M	46	1	11 (+3)	0	0	3	0
2	A2	M	55	2	11 (+5)	0	2	6	1
	A8	M	42	1	9 (+4)	0	1	5	0
	A10	M	60	2	13 (+6)	1	0	6	1
3	A1	M	65	4	22 (+7)	1	3	14	3
	A14	M	57	1	4 (-2)	1	3	2	0
4	A7	F	45	1	5 (+1)	1	0	1	1
	A9	M	55	1	8 (+1)	0	1	2	0

Village B

						-D	-O	+B	+M
2	B34	M	80	1	4 (-4)	0	4	0	0
	B35	M	50	1	8 (+1)	1	4	6	0
	B38	M	60	1	7 (-1)	0	3	2	0
	B31	M	73	4	13 (+3)	0	5	5	3
3	B30	M	50	2	11 (+7)	0	0	6	1
	B40	M	48	1	10 (+5)	0	0	5	0
	B41	M	53	1	7 (+1)	2	1	4	0
4	B39	M	55	4	20 (+8)	4	1	10	3
	B42	M	50	2	8 (+1)	0	0	0	1

Village C

						-D	-O	+B	+M
2	C15	M	65	2	12 (+5)	0	0	4	1
3	C22	M	60	2	14 (+1)	0	3	5	1
	C23	M	40	1	8 (+3)	0	0	3	0
	C24	M	50	1	7 (-1)	2	0	1	0
	C25	F	42	2	8 (0)	1	4	4	1
4	C18	M	45	1	7 (-3)	4	1	2	0
	C27	M	40	1	8 (-1)	3	1	2	0
	C29	M	30	1	8 (+1)	1	1	3	0

The details and impacts of changes in individual household structures and composition are discussed below in examining the changing fortunes of each of the case study households. Ten of the households are joint households (these tend to be the larger ones) and two of the households are female headed. What is worth noting here is that over the 13-year period since 2002, 18 of the 25 case households have increased, one has stayed the same and six have reduced in size. The growth in size is largely due to births (in villages A, B and C case households, 39, 38 and 24 births respectively) and the marriage in of daughters-in-law (in villages A, B and C case households, 6, 8 and 3 respectively). Balancing these increases are the movement of individuals out of the household (in villages A, B and C case households, 10, 18 and 10 persons respectively and these are mainly daughters marrying out) and deaths (in villages A, B and C case households, 4, 7 and 11 persons respectively). Changing composition as households age has effects on consumption demands, labour availability and needs for social investments (e.g. marriage) as will become clear in the discussion of the individual households.

Five of the households have had a change in the household headship. Two households (A7 and C25) are newly female-headed due to the deaths of elderly husbands. Households B35, C2 and C27 also have new heads due to the death of the current head's father.

6 Household trajectories

The following section compares households that have improved, declined or coped relative to their 2003 position. The primary basis on which these assessments have been made are on what households reported and analysis of changes in land holdings. Wealth groups are a relative and subjective measure and it is not known how perceptions of these have changed since 2003; accordingly, shifts in wealth group memberships have only been used as a proximate indicator. Only four of the interviewed households had improved their economic circumstances since 2002, 12 had suffered a decline in fortunes and 9 had more or less maintained their economic position or coped. However, most of these coping households were poor (and in the bottom wealth groups) in the first place and had little room to suffer a further decline.

Analysis of household livelihood changes reveals varying degrees of asset loss and declining security. Many households have experienced a shock or stress that has tipped them into decline. These include a major health event, a costly social event such as a marriage of a son, a failed migration attempt to Iran, or a drug addiction in the family. What buffers households from shocks and allows them to absorb expenses without falling into decline are assets of land or labour or both. Practices to address declining fortunes draw on social networks and include the lending of land, assets and livestock and access to loans on relationships of trust. The marriage of daughters and the payment/receipt of significant sums of bride price (*peshkash*)³⁷ play a significant role in both buffering shocks and handling adverse circumstances, contributing both to investments and consumption needs.

Prospering households

Three of the four prospering households come from village A and one from village B. No household in village C has improved economically. While land assets have played a role in the rising prosperity of all four case households, the contribution of remittance income, income diversification to non-farm sources and social connections have all been significant factors (Table 6).

Table 6: Prospering households: asset changes and major drivers of change

HH	Land / asset changes since 2003	Primary reason for change	Secondary reason for change	Tertiary reason for change
A12	Converted six <i>jiribs</i> land to grape garden	Land ownership	Marriage of two daughters; collected <i>peshkash</i> for each	Selling food in Herat City bazaar
A02	No change – five- <i>jirib</i> grape garden and two <i>jiribs</i> of wheat	Salaried position as headmaster of school since 1993	Grape garden	Appointed family members to school; remittance income from Iran
A08	Purchased 3.3 <i>jirib</i> grape garden through remittance income	Labour migration – remittance income from Iran, Farah, and Guzara	Two plots of grape garden (1/3 <i>jirib</i> and three <i>jiribs</i>)	No weddings, funerals, or major social events to pay for
B38	Bought 10 <i>jiribs</i> land eight years ago; buys and sells livestock	Labour migration / remittance income	Land and livestock ownership	HHH supervisor of Haji Rahim's lands

³⁷ The term *peshkash* for bride price is commonly used in western Afghanistan.

Household **A12** has prospered since 2002 primarily due to a land inheritance and the marriage of two daughters. More than twelve years ago the household head inherited six *jiribs* of arable land from his father. In 2003 the household converted three *jiribs* to a grape garden, and with the income from the grape crops last year converted the remaining three to grapes.³⁸ The household head now works on this garden with his three sons. The household also married their two eldest daughters five and two years ago respectively, receiving *peshkashs* of 400,000 AFN (USD6,100) and 500,000 AFN (USD7,620);³⁹ after spending some for the daughter's wedding ceremonies, they also used the balance for household expenditure for two years, reconstructing their house and the purchase of four *jiribs* land near the Herat City airport for 200,000 AFN (USD3,000).⁴⁰ The third daughter is one of the few female teachers in the village. Although she is a high school graduate, she has no formal teacher training and was appointed to the position because the head of the school is her father's cousin. She is paid on an occasional basis as she is considered a voluntary teacher – for instance, she was paid 13,000 AFN (USD 198) for six months of work recently. Although a portion of her income contributes to household funds, her salary primarily remains in her possession and is spent on female members of the household. Secondary and tertiary incomes of this households are selling food items bought in Herat City in the village bazaar, and selling livestock, however both of these are part-time activities and the returns are generally quite small: 250-300 AFN (USD 3.80-4.60) per day for the food sales, and 5,000-7,000 AFN (USD 76-107) every few months for the livestock.

Last year the household head had a violent confrontation over water for garden irrigation with one of his neighbours that resulted in him being jailed for nine days. He paid around 80,000 AFN (USD 1,200) (from his garden income) to the District Governor to secure his release through the mediation of the village elders and the *arbab*. The payment was delivered to the District Governor by the *arbab* because, as the household head's wife said, 'I'm not familiar with government staff and I don't know how to talk with [the] Governor, that was why *arbab* helped us...and took my husband out of jail.'⁴¹

Household **A02** are also landowners. The family has a five-*jirib* grape garden and two *jiribs* of land for wheat bought nearly 20 years ago. The household head is a village elder, but the key to their prosperity has been above all else the head's employment in the village's boy school since 1993. This led to his involvement in the CDC: 'I was selected [for the CDC] through the vote of villagers when there was a general meeting in all village by DACAAR and MRRD, because...I am literate and supported the community all the time as their elder and instructed them when they needed.'⁴² In about 2007 he also became the head of the girls' school, which has allowed him to appoint both his sons and one of his daughters as teachers. The head and his eldest son earn 6,300 AFN (USD 96) each per month, his second son earns 4,800 AFN (USD 73) per month, whereas his daughter, like the female teacher in household A12, teaches primarily on a voluntary basis and is paid only sporadically. This has been transformative in regard to the household's income and ability to borrow and accumulate assets; as put by the head '...[because of my government job] I have honour and a good salary.'⁴³ His position, both as head of the school and with the CDC, has also connected him to the *arbab*, whom he says the CDC 'always supports...in resolving conflicts'.

His two eldest daughters were married six and four years ago, receiving *peshkashs* of 100,000 AFN (USD1,500) and 200,000 AFN (USD3,000) respectively. Two years ago the eldest son was married and

³⁸ HH A12, male respondent, interview 1.

³⁹ HH A12, female respondent, interview 3.

⁴⁰ HH A12, female respondent, interview 3; SLRC researchers were not able to gather more information on this land purchase as it was not mentioned by the male respondent and the female respondent did not know what was being cultivated on the land or what the returns were.

⁴¹ HH A12, female respondent, interview 3.

⁴² HH A02, male respondent, interview 3.

⁴³ HH A02, male respondent, interview 3.

the combined *peshkash* of 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) was spent on his wedding and ceremony.⁴⁴ However, the household has also had its shocks. During the Taliban rule the wife's brother was killed by militants. She described becoming ill after his death and though she couldn't add up the amount of money, they had spent a significant amount to treat her over the years.⁴⁵ One week before the interviews, a flood had damaged roughly twenty *jiribs* of grape gardens in the village – three *jiribs* and 400m of garden wall belonged to this household. The household head and his wife estimated it would cost between 90,000 AFN (USD 1,370) and 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500) to repair.⁴⁶

The last of the improving households in Village A, **A08**, has prospered through a mix of on- and off-farm activities, with income earned from labour migration being crucial to establishing the household economically. The household has two grape gardens, one parcel of 1/3 *jirib* on a sharecropping arrangement (*Nema Kari*) and a second parcel of three *jiribs*. In addition they have 1/3 *jirib* land for wheat, which is used for their consumption.

According to the household head, labour migration is an essential part of the village economy as 'there is no work available in the village except in spring season, therefore we are obliged to leave the village and go to the city for finding work'.⁴⁷ He travelled to Iran several times over an eight-year period beginning ten years ago, sending regular remittances to the family every two to three months. He earned roughly 935,000 AFN (USD 14,260). Seven years ago he spent 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500) to build their home in the village (on a small parcel inherited from his father) and three years ago bought 100 square metres of land in Herat City and built a house costing 400,000 AFN (USD 6,100). They rented the house for 2,000 AFN (USD 30) per month for a year, until the tenant left and rental prices began to drop in Herat City because of the economic slowdown in the wake of the military withdrawal. At this time (two years ago), the household head traded the house for three *jiribs* of grape garden in the village.

Seven years ago the head he also began working seasonally on opium poppy in Farah. He went for four consecutive years, stopping only two years ago when he had enough work in the village on his own garden. The terms of employment for poppy cultivation are the same as those of daily labour, with two major differences: the harvest lasts for 20 days and the labourer is guaranteed work for that duration of time. Secondly, the returns are higher. Whereas a daily labourer would make between 4,000 and 6,000 AFN (USD 60 and USD 90) for 20 days of work in the village, the head reportedly made between 6,000 and 7,000 AFN (USD 90 and USD 100). The household head also once worked in Guzara on the construction of a military base.

The fourth household that has prospered, **B38** is the *nazir*, or manager, of Haji Rahim's land in the village and treasurer of the CDC. He has held these positions for twelve and ten years respectively. As with household A08, labour migration and land ownership have underpinned the household's fortunes. The household head worked in Iran three times over the past 12 years, staying roughly a year and a half each time. He returned to the village permanently eight years ago and bought ten *jiribs* land from Haji Rahim. He has since converted one and a half *jiribs* of it into a grape garden. In addition, the head and his eldest son sharecrop twenty *jiribs* from Haji Rahim. The harvest is divided into five portions and he keeps three of these. The household head also sells livestock, purchasing around ten lambs each year, grazing them and selling them later. From this he earns around 20,000 AFN (USD 300) annually.

Three of their children, two sons and one daughter, got married and have left the household. The eldest son wed six years ago and paid a 600,000 AFN (USD 9,150) *peshkash*, 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500) of which came from working in Iran and the remainder from the household head selling five sheep, two

⁴⁴ HH A02, female respondent, interview 2.

⁴⁵ HH A02, female respondent, interview 1.

⁴⁶ HH A02, male respondent, interview 1; female respondent, interview 1.

⁴⁷ HH 1208, male respondent, interview 3.

cows, and five *kharwar* of wheat. Four years ago, a daughter was exchanged with a relative's daughter, who became the bride of the second son – as it was an exchange, the household received no *peshkash* for their daughter and paid nothing for their son's bride. An exchange of this type can be a last resort for families struggling to marry their children.⁴⁸ Their third son was engaged two years ago and is currently working towards his *peshkash* payment of 600,000 AFN (USD 9,150) – he went to Iran for one year two years ago, earning 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500). Another 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000) has been earned through the sale of 20 sheep and two cows and the remaining 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) will be paid over the next two years with income from their garden.

Five years ago their eldest son accidentally killed another villager with a tractor while cultivating their lands. The incident resulted in their son spending six months in jail and the family losing four *jiribs* of land and paying 80,000 AFN (USD 1,200) as compensation to the family. Though unable to recall the exact amount, the household also paid the District Governor to secure their son's release. The consequences of this for the family were major, as it cost them land, money, and a source of labour.⁴⁹

Customary authorities in the village helped resolve the dispute, determining the amount to be paid in compensation. Haji Rahim was also involved in releasing his son from jail:

...[my son was charged with] murder, and in these kinds of cases the accused person should be killed or put in jail for his lifetime...if we did not have support from Haji Rahim I'm sure my son [would] be in jail for life. But he supported me and told [the police] it was a traffic incident in which [my son] should only be in jail for six months.⁵⁰

In sum, what is clear from these four prospering households is that while land and agricultural income has contributed to their prosperity, other sources of income have been crucial to the leverage of that advantage. This includes remittance income, the marriage of daughters and the payment of bride price and diversification of income sources. As better-off households they have also been able to leverage social connections with others higher up the hierarchy – a case of elite inclusion (Kabeer, 2002; Kantor and Pain, 2012). This may have helped them to secure good positions (such as A02 being the head of both schools in the village and a CDC member), but more crucially access to social networks and patronage in times of need, as seen in the examples of the court cases involving A12 and B38.

Declining households

Twelve households, three from village A, four from village B and five from village C have experienced an economic decline since 2003 (Table 7). In the case of six of these households (Group 1: A01, A10, A14, B31, B30 and B39), there has been a significant loss of land assets to meet obligations, primarily through sale, which may not have caused them severe economic hardship but nevertheless has long-term implications for the future viability of the household as a farming household. The other six households (Group 2: B42, C15, C22, C24, C25 and C18) had few land assets to start with but various shocks have led to a decline in their economic fortunes. Group 1 households come from villages A and B while Group 2 households come almost exclusively from village C, with the exception of B42 which was a sharecropping household that lost access to land in village B. These two groups are discussed separately.

⁴⁸ Ihsan Ghaforri, unpublished notes on *peshkash* in Afghanistan.

⁴⁹ HH B38, male respondent, interview 2.

⁵⁰ HH B38, male respondent, interview 2.

Table 7: Declining households: asset changes and drivers of change

Village A	Land/asset changes since 2003	Primary reason for change	Secondary reason for change	Tertiary reason for change
Group 1: Declining households with land holdings				
A01	Inherited three <i>jiribs</i> land and one <i>jirib</i> garden; sold/leased two <i>jiribs</i> land two years ago to pay for medical expenditures	HH has 20 members but only one breadwinner	Loss of assets: sold land and livestock to pay for numerous medical expenditures	Two sons addicted to opium – HHH now responsible for wives and children
A10	Father had six <i>jiribs</i> land, HHH inherited 2.5 <i>jiribs</i> five years ago, has sold/leased 1.7 <i>jiribs</i> to buy a haul truck and a flour mill	Sold land to diversify into urban economy, suffered from post-2011 military withdrawal	Five grandchildren born to the HH (four girls and one boy)	
A14	Six- <i>jirib</i> garden in the 1990s, sold two <i>jiribs</i> for son's medical treatment in 1999, sold one cow for wife's medical treatment in 1999, leased one <i>jirib</i> two years ago for HHH's release from insurgents, sold one <i>jirib</i> two years ago to move to buy house in Herat City and buy back leased land – now have two- <i>jirib</i> garden	HHH abducted, lost salaried income with DACAAR and sold land to secure his return	Relocated to Herat City – cost of living is more	
Village B				
B31	40 <i>jiribs</i> land and five- <i>jirib</i> garden inherited; Sold 10 <i>jiribs</i> for marriage of second son 17 years ago; sold five <i>jiribs</i> for house expenditures. For marriage of fifth son four years ago sold five <i>jiribs</i> ; two years ago sold three <i>jiribs</i> for medical treatment in Iran; now has 17 <i>jiribs</i> land and five- <i>jirib</i> garden	Sold land to meet a number of social and medical obligations	HH has grown significantly, from four to 18 members; two sons joined families to HH	One son who joined family to HH addicted to opium
B30	Wife inherited 16 <i>jiribs</i> and house, 10 given as <i>peshkash</i> for his eldest son; lost house in arson attack six years ago	Loss of assets – house and land	Eldest son left 10 years ago due to opium addiction	Medical expenditure in Pakistan
B39	Inherited 20 <i>jiribs</i> from father 25 years ago, 11 years ago moved to Herat City to escape fighting, purchased another four <i>jiribs</i> six years ago, converted to garden two years ago	Loss of assets: several loans taken for medical needs; lost 16,000 AFN (USD240) paid to a smuggler as son was deported from Iran	Moved to Herat City 11 years ago, HHH & sons worked at construction company, but lost jobs with 2011 economic decline	One son with two wives and four children joined HH
Group 2: Declining households with little or no land holdings				
B42	Seven years ago lost 15 <i>jiribs</i> of sharecropped land – now landless	Removed from sharecropping tenancy	Sold assets and acquired debts to marry second son	Medical expenditure in Pakistan
Village C				
C15	No change – two <i>jiribs</i>	Two years ago and last year lost harvest in flood	Minimal land/asset ownership	
C22	Leased 0.5 <i>jirib</i> of three <i>jiribs</i> two years ago	Lost harvest in flood eight years ago	Broken engagement	Acquired debt in the form of leased land
C24	Inherited one <i>jirib</i> and sharecrops four <i>jiribs</i>	Lost home in flood eight years ago; medical expenditures	HHH's father died three years ago; land division; reduced harvest for HH	HHH's brother died five years ago and wife and children joined the HH
C25	No change – two <i>jiribs</i>	HHH died two years ago – HH lost key breadwinner and is now female headed	Lost harvest in flood eight years ago	Medical treatment for HHH (before his death) and daughter-in-law using daughter's <i>peshkash</i>
C18	Five years ago sold one <i>jirib</i> land in the village to relocate to Herat City; bought house in Herat City	Sale of land and loss of one income	Medical expenditures	

Group 1: Declining households with land holdings

The first of the declining households in Group 1 is **A01** in village A. It inherited three *jiribs* of arable land and one *jirib* of grape gardens more than 12 years ago, but has been forced to sell assets in order to pay for health shocks as well as other expenditures. The three eldest sons and daughters have all been married on exchange with relatives in the village, making it a large joint household with 20 members. Currently they live rent-free in a neighbour's house. Their primary income source is the grape garden, though because it is small it only gives them an annual income of 20,000 AFN (USD300).

Three years ago their eldest son, Hanif, died, leaving the head to take in his son's widow and five children. Around this same time, the third son's wife also fell ill and became paralysed. Before his death, Hanif was first treated at the clinic in village A, then in Herat City hospital and eventually in Pakistan, costing a total of AFN 42,900 (USD 655), for which the head sold a *jirib* of land for 190,000 AFN (USD 2,900). His daughter-in-law was taken to Pakistan for treatment before she became paralysed, which cost AFN 20,000 (USD 300).⁵¹ In order to pay for the growing family and medical expenditures the household leased out another one *jirib* of land for AFN 100,000 (USD 1,500) two years ago, leaving one *jirib* of arable land and one *jirib* garden under their control.

Three married sons and their families live with the household head. Only one, the third son, actively works. Before his wife became paralysed he worked in Iran, but for the past two years has been obliged to stay in the village to take care of his two children. He cultivates the land with his father and does daily wage labour when it is available. He is the sole provider for the family as his elder and younger brothers, who have four and three children each, became addicted to opium while working in Iran twelve and eight years ago respectively. While the younger son sent remittances totalling 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) to treat his eldest brother Hanif in Pakistan, the other son who was in Iran sent no remittances. He instead married, spending all his earnings on his wedding before coming back to the village.

There are major impacts for a household when they have a male family members addicted to opium. Firstly, it reduces the supply of male labour and creates additional dependents. As the head said, 'My two sons who are addicted to opium are not working to support their families. If they find work for a day they just spend the money for themselves.'⁵² Secondly, it tarnishes the household's reputation within the village, which can have effects on their ability to arrange marriages and draw on village credit networks. The head's wife described their efforts to borrow 16,000 AFN (USD 240) from her son's father in law to send their sons to a drug rehabilitation centre:

Because of our two addicted sons, our relatives and neighbours do not trust us. First [my son's] father-in-law rejected us, but my husband promised that he will pay back his money. He is a close friend of my husband so finally he gave loan for my son's treatment.⁵³

After being back in the village for a few months, both sons began using opium again. The family has not been able to pay back the loan of AFN 16,000 (USD 240) and they therefore cannot send them back to treatment. Shortly before the interview was held, one of their daughters needed stationery for school and her mother said that they planned to sell their ox to raise the needed cash. As she put it: 'Because we lost some of our land day by day we go further into debt. We have not completed one loan and have to take another.'⁵⁴ For the addicted sons, going back to Iran is no longer an option as smugglers refuse to transport them.⁵⁵

⁵¹ HH A01, female respondent, interview 3.

⁵² HH A01, female respondent, interview 2.

⁵³ HH A01, female respondent, interview 2.

⁵⁴ HH A01, female respondent, interview 2.

⁵⁵ HH A01 female respondent, interview 2.

The second household of this group is **A10**, which since 2003 has almost doubled in size. The head's grandfather had 30 *jiribs* in the village that was split evenly between his five sons, leaving them six *jiribs* each. The household head's father died five years ago and the six *jiribs* were split between our respondent, his nephew and his father's second wife (his first wife, the mother of the head of the household, died more than 40 years ago).⁵⁶ One *jirib*, following their father's instruction, was sold to pay for funeral costs.⁵⁷ This left a two-*jirib* grape garden and a half *jirib* of arable land to the household head. In addition, they sharecropped in two *jiribs* of land more than five years ago for wheat for household consumption.

The household has tried to leverage its limited but high-value land assets to diversify their income sources and move into Herat's urban economy. Five years ago the household began selling and leasing land assets to invest in off-farm economic activities, but these investments have recently suffered diminished returns in the wake of the international military withdrawal. The household sold one *jirib* of land for 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000) and used some savings from their garden to buy a transport truck for 550,000 AFN (USD 8,400), which was used to bring materials to construction sites.⁵⁸ The head's eldest son drove the truck for contracts with construction companies that were usually found through connections, particularly from those of the *arbab*.⁵⁹ Although the annual income that could be earned from the truck depended on specific contracts, one year ago they earned 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) working on the road construction between Herat City and Pashtun Zarghun.⁶⁰ In the past year, however, they have not been able to find work and the truck sits unused.

Three years ago they leased out seven ditches of grape garden and last year leased out another three ditches for a total of 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000). The money was used to open a flour mill – the only working mill in the village. They are paid in kind, being given a portion of the wheat that is ground. Around this time the head worked for a period in Iran, earning roughly 10,000 AFN (USD 150) and using it buy solar panels for the home. Lastly, two years ago their eldest son became a teacher in the village, earning 6,500 AFN (USD 99) per month.

Twelve years ago the household head married both his eldest son and daughter in an exchange with a relative in the village (his son married his niece and his daughter married his nephew). Although no *peshkash* was paid, his son went to Iran for one and a half years in order to pay for the ceremony. He earned around 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500), spending 70,000-80,000 AFN (USD 1,000-1,200) on the wedding and sending 20,000 AFN (USD 300) as remittance. After his marriage his son joined his household and now has four children whereas his daughter moved out, living with her husband in the village. One month ago he arranged the engagement of his much younger step-sister and will be receiving a total of 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) in *peshkash*.

In 2002, the third declining household **A14** was among the better off in the village now with four *jiribs* of grape garden and a salary from employment with the NGO DACAAR supervising labour hired for NSP-funded CDC projects. However, chronic illnesses, an abduction, and relocation to Herat City have reversed this household's fortunes. The head comes from a large landowning family in the village, who lost most of their land during Dawoud Khan's attempted land reform in Afghanistan:

My father had 300 *jiribs* of land in this village. During the regime of Sardar Dawoud Khan in early 1970s, they wanted to get rid of feudalism. Therefore, he imposed a higher rate of taxes for those who had more than six *jiribs* of land. Sometimes even the taxes of one *jirib* became more the

⁵⁶ HH A10, female respondent, interview 2.

⁵⁷ HH A10, male respondent, interviews 1 and 2.

⁵⁸ HH A10, male respondent, interview 2.

⁵⁹ HH A10, male respondent, interview 3.

⁶⁰ HH A 10, male respondent, interview 2.

actual price of one *jirib* land. We were not able to pay the huge amount of taxes; therefore, we were left with 18 *jiribs* of land for our three brothers, six *jiribs* for each.⁶¹

In 1999 two *jiribs* of the grape garden were sold for 150,000 AFN (USD 2,300) to seek medical treatment for their one-and-a-half-year-old son who had blood cancer.⁶² Although they admitted him to Herat City hospital more than ten times, he died after six months.⁶³ This caused the wife to become ill and the household sold their cow for 30,000 AFN (USD 450) for her medical treatment.⁶⁴

The most formative event for the household occurred two years ago when the household head was abducted by insurgents in the village. The incident cost the family a significant amount of land, profoundly impacted the head's mental health, and led to an eventual move to Herat City:

The reason behind shifting from village to the city was that my husband was kidnapped by Taliban. They were demanding 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) in order to release him... When my husband talked to me on phone, he told me to give the grape garden on lease and send them money otherwise they were going to kill him. When he was released, he was...fearful and was not able to go around easily. It was like this for about one and half years. Even I was afraid for my sons, when they had to go to school or somewhere else, I was feeling very worried. Finally we sold one of our gardens for about 700,000 AFN (USD 10,700). Of that, 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) we paid for the return of the lease [for the garden], and with the remaining 400,000 AFN (USD6,100), we bought this house [the house in Herat City]. We bought it for about 600,000 AFN (USD 9,100)...This year, we gave another piece of grape garden on lease about 200,000 AFN (USD3,000) to pay the remaining part for this house.⁶⁵

The head explained the reason for his kidnapping: '...it was because my life was good, I was working with DACAAR so they wanted to take some money. Because my economic situation was somehow better than some of the villagers.'⁶⁶

After his abduction and relocation to Herat City, he stopped working with DACAAR. Their current income is from their remaining two *jiribs* of grape garden in the village, which the head still tends and sells his grapes in the Herat City bazaar. Their oldest son finds works as a wage labourer in the winter with help from his relatives and other villagers. Although the cost of living is higher in the city, both respondents immensely value the ease of access to and quality of services – particularly healthcare and education. Their eldest son, in seventh grade, attends both school and private supplementary courses, whereas their youngest, in fifth grade, studies and takes religious courses. The household also appreciates the relative security the city provides:

The good thing for me is that we do not worry about people with weapons, because when we were in the village...all the time we were scared and afraid [of the] Taliban and people with guns... Now in the city we have a better life. If my husband and my son would not be in the house during the night I wouldn't be afraid of anything, because there are not any people with weapons so I will sleep without any punishment.⁶⁷

⁶¹ HHA14, female respondent, interview 2.

⁶² HH A14, female respondent, interview 2; male respondent, interview 2.

⁶³ HH A 14, female respondent, interview 2.

⁶⁴ HH A14, female respondent, interview 1.

⁶⁵ HH A14, male respondent, interview 3.

⁶⁶ HH A14, male respondent, round 2.

⁶⁷ HH A14, female respondent, interview 3.

Since 2002 the household has also married three of their daughters, the third daughter in 2002 with a *peshkash* of 150,000 AFN (USD 2,300), the fourth daughter in 2005 for 250,000 AFN (USD 3,800), and the youngest daughter in 2011 with a *peshkash* of 150,000 AFN (USD 2,300).⁶⁸ Their eldest daughter married around 15 years ago and divorced after one year because her husband was severely abusive: 'During the Taliban time a very old man [who was a Talib] married my daughter by force... He was a very unjust and oppressive man, he used to beat [her].'⁶⁹ After their daughter left her husband, his relatives implored them to return her but the household head 'understood that if they took [his] daughter they would kill her'⁷⁰ and refused. This led to a violent confrontation between the head and his daughter's husband's relatives, and he was imprisoned by the District Governor for two days.⁷¹ A relative from the village who sympathised with their daughter paid for the head's release, settled her divorce, and took her as his own wife two years later.⁷² Because of his assistance the household did not receive *peshkash* when they married.

The fourth household in Group 1, **B31** comes from village B. The household head was the former supervisor, or *nazir*, of Haji Rahim's lands – he tended them through President Najib's rule as well as that of the *mujahideen* (from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s). Although the head inherited 40 *jiribs* of arable land and five *jiribs* of grape garden from his father more than 20 years ago, the family has steadily sold parcels of land through the years in order to support themselves. More than 20 years ago, the head sold his house to his eldest son for 80,000 AFN (USD 1,200), building himself a new one with the proceeds. Because his eldest son was married on exchange with a relative, there was no *peshkash* to be paid. Three years later, however, he sold ten *jiribs* of land for 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) in order to pay for his second son's wedding, and shortly after that a further five *jiribs* for 150,000 AFN (USD 1,500) to meet a shortfall for daily household expenditures. Four years ago another five *jiribs* was sold for 500,000 AFN (USD 7,600) to pay for his third and fourth son's marriages, and finally, an additional three *jiribs* was sold for 295,000 AFN (USD 4,500) last year for the head to seek medical treatment for a stomach ulcer in Iran. Their youngest son went to Iran two years ago to save for his wedding expenses. According to the head, 'With the growing of the household, problems become more and more.'⁷³ This is due, at least partially, to the costs of marrying off his sons:

People become compelled to sell their lands, boys are compelled to take risks to go to Iran, and some have got loans just to provide for their son's wedding costs and *peshkash*. It is very difficult to provide for all the costs.⁷⁴

Remaining to the household is 17 *jiribs* of land and the five-*jirib* grape garden. They also sold a number of other assets when the Taliban came into power as they temporarily relocated to village A to escape fighting in their village. The household returned to the village once they felt it was secure but the head lost his tenure as *nazir* during their relocation.

Five children now live separately (two eldest sons and two eldest daughters married more than twelve years ago, and the youngest son went to Iran two years ago) but the third, fourth, and fifth sons joined their families to the household. With five children between them, the household has grown significantly, from four members in 2002 to thirteen in 2015. The third and fifth sons worked in Iran, ten and five years ago respectively, but both became addicted to opium.⁷⁵ This has had a profound impact on the

⁶⁸ HH A14, male respondent, interview 2.

⁶⁹ HH A15, female respondent, interview 3.

⁷⁰ HH A14, female respondent, interview 2.

⁷¹ HH A14, female respondent, interview 2.

⁷² HH A14, female respondent, interview 3.

⁷³ HH B31, male respondent, interview 2.

⁷⁴ HH B31, female respondent, interview 2.

⁷⁵ HH B31, female respondent, interview 1.

household as only the fourth (non-addicted) son works on the household's land along with the head. This lack of labour, combined with the distance from the irrigation canal in the village, means that the households' arable lands and garden cannot be reliably irrigated and do not yield well. The sons who are addicted to opium do sporadic daily wage labour but the income is erratic, placing the financial responsibility of their families on the household head.

The fifth household of Group I, **B30**, also comes from village B. The household head was originally from another village about 3 km away but he and his wife moved to village B to take care of his father-in-law's home after his brother-in-law was killed by a landmine in the *mujahideen* era.⁷⁶ Her father died a few years later and left her 16 *jiribs* of arable land as well as his house.

Eleven years ago the household gave ten *jiribs* of land to their eldest son's fiancée's family as *peshkash*. The bride joined the household and now has six children but ten years ago the son became addicted to opium while working in Iran. Upon his return, he began to steal from the head's house. This resulted in the head handing their son into the police; he was imprisoned for one year and has been separated from the family since.⁷⁷ He is now working in Iran again but his wife and children live with the head. Although his son sends money to his wife, the head claims that much of the financial burden of caring for the family still falls to him.⁷⁸ His son's separation has had two major consequences for the head and his wife; firstly, they have lost an income source, and secondly, it renders the head unable to step away from managing the family as he ages.

Although five years ago the head spent one year in Iran making bricks at a construction site, the main income source of the household is the six *jiribs* of wheat remaining to the household. Agricultural work in the village is limited to the summer season due to a lack of availability of water for the rest of the year. As a result the household just about makes ends meet but has been unable to make any investments.

Finally, six years ago the house was set on fire. The head's wife assumes it was done by a family member who felt she should not have inherited her father's assets. Asked why her cousins were angry about this, she explained: 'Being a daughter created this problem, nothing else... My husband is from another village and now he is working on my father's lands. They became upset that the lands have gone into someone else's hands.'⁷⁹

Their attempt to obtain justice from both customary and formal authorities proved to be futile, so they took a loan of 100-150,000 AFN (USD 1,500-2,300) to rebuild and replace their possessions:

We went to the *arbab* and to the District office... They said they would send a team to investigate the case but no-one came here to see the situation... Just leave all of them to hell. We referred to *arbab* and also to District Government, but no one heard us and solved our problems. All of them are corrupt.⁸⁰

Two explanations were given as to why the matter was not investigated. The first was that her cousin had simply paid the *arbab* and the District Governor to ensure his crime would not be investigated; the second was that her cousin paid a relative of the *arbab* to commit the act – the implication being that because the *arbab* oversees police activity in the village, his kin would not be subject to scrutiny.

⁷⁶ HH B30, male respondent, interview 1.

⁷⁷ HH B30, female respondent, interview 3.

⁷⁸ HH B30, male respondent, interview 2.

⁷⁹ HH B30, female respondent, interview 3.

⁸⁰ HH B30, female respondent, interview 2.

The last of Group 1 households, **B39**, moved to Herat City 11 years ago to escape fighting in the village and looked for urban employment, although keeping their land in the village. They had also moved 30 years ago when the family temporarily relocated to Mina village to escape fighting between the *mujahideen* and the government, staying for four years until the conflict ceased.⁸¹ For some time they prospered in Herat but the decreasing availability of work in the city, a failed migration attempt to Iran, and an increase in family size combined with a number of health shocks have pushed the family into economic decline. When they moved to the city, the head and his two eldest sons began working for a construction company managed by a friend and were paid monthly salaries of 15,000 AFN (USD 230) each, with which they bought a house. Two years ago, work in the construction industry began to slow following the international military withdrawal, and though the head would have preferred to continue raising his family in Herat City with its better public services, when employment became unreliable he felt obliged to return to the village where living costs are lower.

Upon their return to the village two years ago they built a house with their savings, costing 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000).⁸² The male respondent was also voted to be the village *Mirab*, or water supervisor, for which he receives an annual payment of seven *kharwar* wheat, and asked to be part of the CDC. The household has twenty *jiribs* of land which they inherited from the head's father 25 years ago, which is split between three sharecroppers who give him part of the harvest each year. Six years ago their earnings from Herat City allowed them to purchase an additional four *jiribs* land for 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500) and one year ago converted it to a grape garden. Their third son has been in Iran for two years and has sent a remittance of 70,000 AFN (USD 1,000), which partially funded the cost of the conversion – 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000). They have not yet seen a return from this as it takes a number of years for gardens to turn their first yields.⁸³

The household has grown from eight members to 20 in the last ten years. The two eldest daughters were married eight years ago and sons were married five years ago, each a few months apart. The daughters' *peshkashs* amounted to 200,000 AFN (USD3,000) and 400,000 AFN (USD6,100), which were immediately used for the son's bride payments amounting to 250,000 AFN and 400,000 AFN each. Two years ago their third son married, spending 800,000 AFN (USD12,200), 250,000 AFN (USD3,800) of which came from a loan for which they are still in debt and the rest from their savings.⁸⁴ While daughters left the household, the three daughters-in-law joined and now have four children between them. Additionally, the household head and his wife had another six children.

A number of shocks have cost the household significant resources. Seven years ago the family had twin babies who died at 20 days old. The wife described becoming 'mentally weak' and needing to seek medical attention in a hospital in Herat City.⁸⁵ Two of the eldest son's children died at just a year old, four years ago and one year ago. Last year the head's wife received treatment after some complications following the birth of her last child, to pay for which the family took a loan of 7,000 AFN (USD 100) from their relatives.⁸⁶ Last year the household again paid smugglers 16,000 AFN (USD 245) to take two of their sons to Iran but they were caught by border police, imprisoned for two months and sent home.⁸⁷ Lastly, for the last three years their 20-year-old son has been ill and they have repeatedly sought treatment for him at Herat City hospital.

⁸¹ HH B39, male respondent, interview 2.

⁸² HH B39, female respondent, interview 1.

⁸³ HH B39, female respondent, interview 1.

⁸⁴ HH B39, female respondent, interview 1; male respondent, interview 1.

⁸⁵ HH B39, female respondent, interview 1.

⁸⁶ HH B39, female respondent, interview 2.

⁸⁷ HH B39, female respondent, interview 2.

Group 2: Declining households with little or no land holdings

As noted earlier, Group 2 households that have suffered a significant economic decline since 2003 are characterised by having had few land assets to start off with. With the exception of the first household, they all come from village C. Household **B42** comes from village B and had no land as the head was a nomadic shepherd before moving to the village 50 years ago. In common with most of the villagers that settled in that period, he was a sharecropper on Haji Rahim's lands, working 15 *jiribs* for 40 years:

I was farming on the agricultural land of Haji Rahim. Most of the village agricultural and non-agricultural land belong to him... [When his father first bought the land roughly 50 years ago], Haji Rahim gave all the villagers a specific number of *jiribs*... I was given 15 *jiribs* and I had the responsibility of cultivating wheat.⁸⁸

He goes on to describe a change in the terms of the arrangement and ultimately the complete loss of his sharecropping rights when Haji Rahim began to cultivate saffron and mechanised wheat production four years ago:

At first I was giving two parts of the total five parts of the harvest because ploughing the land was [done manually with an ox]. Then Haji Rahim bought a tractor... then I was supposed to give him the half of the total harvest. In both cases he was buying fertilisers for the agricultural lands... Later on [seven years ago], he handed over all his agricultural lands to a supervisor who belonged to the Herat City. He started cultivating saffron alongside the cultivation of wheat in the lands... Recently Haji Rahim took back his land from the supervisor and he has employed salary-based labourers to take care of his agricultural lands.⁸⁹

For seven years the household head has also been a watchman in the village school, being paid a monthly salary of 5,500 AFN (USD84) despite risks from militants opposing education for girls. As he is no longer a sharecropper, this is now his primary employment.⁹⁰ In addition to his salary, those of his second and third sons are vital to the household. They are masons and work as daily wage labourers, whereas their youngest son is responsible for grazing the family's cow, which they have taken on *mudharebat*⁹¹ from another family. The household head's removal from his sharecropping tenure in conjunction with a growing household has dramatically changed the fortunes of the family, as he described:

Converting from a farmer to a watchman has affected my life negatively. I was getting a far better income when I was farmer... Now my salary has decreased and my expenditures have increased because my family members have drastically increased... I don't have my own agricultural land to get wheat from. I used to get two *kharwar* wheat per year [as a farmer], and we would buy just 1.5 *kharwar* for the rest of our consumption. Now we are buying everything.⁹²

Ten years ago the eldest son and daughter were wedded to the head's cousin's children on an exchange. Although no *peshkashs* were given, the son was still forced to go to Iran for one and a half years in order to pay for the ceremony. He earned a total of 200,000 AFN (USD3,000), 100,000 (USD 1,500) of which went to the wedding. Two years ago the second son also went to Iran for a year and a half to earn *peshkash* for his bride; 350,000 AFN (USD 5,400) of the 400,000 AFN (USD 6,100) he earned paid for *peshkash* and the rest with an additional 60,000 AFN (USD 915) earned from the sale of a cow, went to the ceremony.⁹³ The household has also spent 90,000 AFN (USD 1,400) over the past

⁸⁸ HH B42, male respondent, interview 3.

⁸⁹ HH B42, male respondent, interview 3.

⁹⁰ HHB42, male respondent, interview 2.

⁹¹ This is a form of sharecropping but of livestock where the offspring of the animal being cared for becomes the property of the animal's carer rather than its owner.

⁹² HH B42, male respondent, interview 3.

⁹³ HH B42, male respondent, interview 1.

two and half years on medical treatment for the head's wife as she has been ill with a kidney problem. One week before this interview she sought treatment in Pakistan, taking a loan of 25,000 AFN (USD 380) from the household head's cousin, Mullah Sharif.⁹⁴

The second of the six Group 2 households is **C15**, the head of which is the *arbab* of village C. Until five years ago, the *arbab* lived jointly with his father, two brothers and their families. They separated because 'the family of each brother had increased to the point where it was difficult to live together.'⁹⁵ The *arbab* now lives separately with his wife, children, and one married son with his family of four. The *arbab*'s father has one and half *jiribs* of land, but it was not split during the separation because his father is still alive. The household has two *jiribs* of land that were purchased 20 years ago for 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500) with the eldest daughter's *peshkash*.⁹⁶ In addition, the head sharecrops ten *jiribs* of his son-in-law's land. On both parcels he harvests wheat in the summer season. According to the head, most other villagers have their own agricultural land so it is difficult to sell wheat in the village. Therefore they keep half of the harvest for their personal consumption and sell the rest in Herat City *bazaar*. For income in the winter, the head cultivates vegetables and his son sells them in the Guzara *bazaar*. As noted earlier there is a severe risk of flooding for this village. Two years ago and again earlier this year the household's land was damaged by a flood. In both instances a portion of their harvest was lost and he had to borrow 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000) as a result.

The household's second and third daughters were married seven and four years ago bringing to the household *peshkashs* of 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000) and 250,000 AFN (USD 3,800) respectively. Their eldest son was married four years ago; his wedding expenses were 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500), which he earned working in Iran for two years as a labourer. The household head also worked in Iran twice around 40 years ago; the first trip lasted two years, the second for one year, and he stopped going when he was selected as the *arbab* 23 years ago. He became *arbab* at the request of the villagers because he had been involved with a number of village *shuras*, including a security *shura* in existence before ALP came to the district that served as the contact point for insurgents in the area. The household head and his wife are notably supportive of girl's education. While one of their sons attends an advanced Islamic school in Guzara, two of their daughters walk 30 minutes each day to attend sixth and eleventh grade classes in Bokah village in the neighbouring district of Guzara.⁹⁷

The third Group 2 household in village C is **C22**. The household head inherited three *jiribs* of land which he cultivates with his sons. Two years ago he gave half a *jirib* of land on lease for AFN 20,000 (USD 300) in order to meet a deficit in daily expenditures. The household has long been dependent on Iranian remittances. Their eldest son who is now 38 had worked in Iran from the time he was 12 to support the family. However, five years ago a conflict between his wife and his mother caused him to move his family to Herat City.⁹⁸ After an exceptionally large flood eight years ago that destroyed the household's harvest (along with many others in the village), the third son went to Iran for work and he is still there.⁹⁹ Three years later he was joined by one elder and one younger brother, all of whom work in the construction industry, and the family is almost completely dependent on these remittances:

⁹⁴ HH B42, female respondent, interview 1.

⁹⁵ HH C15, male respondent, interview 2.

⁹⁶ HH C15, female respondent, interview 1.

⁹⁷ HH C15, female respondent, interview 3.

⁹⁸ HH C15, female respondent, interview 1.

⁹⁹ HH C22, female respondent, interview 2.

The money sent...from Iran is the only source of income for the household. The harvest of wheat...is not sufficient for the household itself. From our lands we get three *kharwar* while our annual consumption is six, so we are buying three *kharwar* every year.¹⁰⁰

The second son was engaged to a girl child from household C23 seven years ago. Because she was young, they were engaged for years, during which time the family reportedly spent AFN 400,000 (USD 6,100) that he had earned in Iran on expenditures associated with marriage such as *peshkash*, and gifts for the girl and her family. Last year, reportedly because of an affair, the girl's family broke off the engagement and the money was lost:

[The girl] started an affair with her cousin... I tried hard to get her back for my son because it was a matter of prestige, dignity, and respect for my family. In the end I couldn't succeed because one of the girl's maternal uncles is a prosecutor, and the *arbab* is her paternal uncle, therefore people are afraid of them. Everyone supported the girl's family.¹⁰¹

The third son became engaged about one year ago and although he is now working in Iran to save the *peshkash* of AFN 550,000 (USD 8,400), the household also engaged their eldest daughter 18 months ago, requesting a bride price of AFN 550,000. They hope to be able to pay their son's outgoing *peshkash* with their daughter's incoming one.¹⁰² Their fourth son goes to university in Herat City – support for this again comes from their son's Iranian remittances.

Household **C24** is the fourth Group 2 household in the village. A number of shocks since 2003 have pushed them into debt, and they have sold and leased out land as well as other assets in the past 12 years. First, ten years ago they had a son who was born with 'crooked legs'.¹⁰³ For the first three years of the child's life the household head took him to the International Committee of the Red Cross clinic in Herat City every month where they set his legs with plaster.¹⁰⁴ Although the treatments were free, they spent roughly 20,000 AFN (USD 300) on transport over three years. Secondly, the female respondent had some complications after the birth of their son ten years ago. She was taken first to Tukehchi clinic, then to Guzara hospital, and finally Herat City hospital, where she had an operation that resulted in her becoming sterile. The family spent roughly 50,000 AFN (USD 760) on her treatment at that time, which they raised from selling two cows and taking a loan from the head's brother-in-law.¹⁰⁵

Thirdly, six years ago the head's brother became ill. They began seeking treatment for him at Herat City hospital and on the recommendation of the doctor then took him to Iran for treatment. Six months after returning home, he fell ill again, at which time their father sold one *jirib* of land for 200,000 AFN (USD 3,000) for him to seek treatment in Pakistan, where they stayed for one month. After another year he became ill again, and their father sold another *jirib* of land for another 200,000 AFN – again they sought treatment in Pakistan, but after three years he passed away and the head's brother-in-law paid for the funeral.¹⁰⁶ Two years after his brother's death his father succumbed to a longstanding illness (high blood pressure and diabetes) that for four years before his death they had attempted to treat at Tukehchi clinic, Herat City hospital, and eventually in Pakistan. The head spent 200,000 AFN on his father's treatment, using income from his land and loans from his brother-in-law. When the father died, the land was divided for inheritance – three *jiribs* to the head and one to his mother.

¹⁰⁰ HH C22, male respondent, interview 1.

¹⁰¹ HH C22, male respondent, interview 1.

¹⁰² HH C22, female respondent, interview 1

¹⁰³ HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

¹⁰⁴ HH C24, male respondent, interview 2.

¹⁰⁵ HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

¹⁰⁶ HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

The deaths of the head's father and brother have had a major impact on the household's economy. The head's family and his brother's family lived with their father when he was alive; the land was used to support all members of the household.¹⁰⁷ With both of them deceased, the respondent is now responsible for his mother and his brother's family. When his brother fell ill (before the death of their father), the household head was working in Iran.¹⁰⁸ Now the family has two major sources of income: their lands (their own lands of which they cultivate one *jirib*, since two are leased out, and four *jiribs* on sharecrop) and daily wage labour from their 14-year-old son, who goes to school three days a week and works three days a week.¹⁰⁹ There are two additional modest income sources: the female respondent tends the family's three goats, and their 16-year-old daughter¹¹⁰ does embroidery for one shopkeeper in Herat City. Through a connection that her relative had to one of the shopkeepers, the daughter began a partnership with him in which she sells him pieces every one to two months and he gives her fabric and pays her regularly.¹¹¹ She spends her income how she pleases and usually buy stationary for her siblings or some small amount of food for the household.

Household C24 has also had assets lost or damaged more than once in the village's recurrent floods. Their house was destroyed in a large flood eight years ago. In order to rebuild it, they leased out two of the three *jiribs* inherited from the head's father for 250,000 AFN (USD 3,800) and sold two cows, leaving them cultivating just one *jirib*. They have also lost their harvest twice to flooding; once three years ago and again last year. After losing each harvest the head spent 10,000 AFN (USD 150) on reclaiming the land. In order to mitigate the losses incurred by regular flooding events, the household head took on a sharecrop basis four additional *jiribs* of land. Now he cultivates one inherited *jirib* of land (the other two are leased out), one *jirib* of his mother's, and the four sharecropped *jiribs*.¹¹²

The head claims that government officials came to the village promising aid but in the end it was up to communal and individual efforts from the villagers themselves to repair the lands.¹¹³

The wife's brother is headmaster of Bokah school in Guzara. Beyond encouraging the family to send all of their children to school, he also pays for any additional costs that are incurred. All of their children go to the school, with the exception of their oldest daughter as she was of school age just after the fall of the Taliban and there was still some insecurity:

...during the Taliban they closed the girls' school. After the coming of Karzai our village was still not secure for a few years. It was difficult to send a girl alone to school... The school was far from our village and [students were injured a few times] due to fighting between commanders.¹¹⁴

The last of the Group 2 declining households is **C18**. The head of this household is the *arbab*'s brother. They lived together as a joint household until five years ago when the head sold his house and one *jirib* of land for 160,000 AFN (USD 2,400) and relocated to Herat City. Before the move, the household head's stepmother and two of his step-brothers were killed in a shelling attack:

About five years ago there was a fight between the Taliban and the Afghan National Army [ANA]. My stepmother was preparing food for some workers who were working on our land, and a shell came and hit the house. ...She and two of her sons were killed.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁷ HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

¹⁰⁸ HH C24, male respondent, interview 3.

¹⁰⁹ HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

¹¹⁰ HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

¹¹¹ HH C24, female respondent, interview 2.

¹¹² HH C24, male respondent, interview 3.

¹¹³ HH C24, male respondent, interview 3.

¹¹⁴ HH C24, male respondent, interview 3.

For the last 12 years the head has worked as a watchman for a flour company in the city earning 7,000 AFN (USD 100) per month. Their eldest son also began working there last year earning 6,000 AFN (USD 91) per month.¹¹⁶ Before the head worked in Herat City, he worked as a guard in Iran. It was reportedly too difficult for his wife to take care of the children and the household without her husband so they relocated to Herat City:

As he was not at home most of the time, I lost four children, three of them to diseases as they were not fed well and I couldn't get them to a doctor on time [because] my husband was not at home. Also my other children were growing up and I was not able to control them, especially my sons. Every day I thought my oldest son was going to school...then I heard from one of his teachers that he was mostly absent. Sometimes I was personally going to the street in the village to find out about my eldest son.¹¹⁷

With the money earned from the sale of their land in the village the family put 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500) towards the purchase of a 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) house in Herat City belonging to the father of their daughter's fiancé who is also the owner of the flour company. Although his total income has decreased as he no longer has his land in the village, the head claims their overall livelihood has benefited as he no longer has to share his income with his brother's family.¹¹⁸

In the past two years the family's largest expenditure has been on healthcare. Two years ago their second eldest daughter was sick and she received a painkiller injection from the doctor at Guzara clinic; however, incorrect placement of the needle left her paralysed in one leg. They treated her for over a year in Herat City hospital, which cost them 15,000 AFN (USD 230), and she regained her mobility. The head has arthritis pains and his wife has stomach problems, for which they buy medicine regularly.

In Herat City the family enjoys access to better-quality services and facilities, in particular education, healthcare facilities, and electricity.¹¹⁹ Their eldest daughter did not go to school as she married when she was 13 years old. The female respondent stopped the second daughter from going to school in fourth grade as she needed help with the household chores and with taking care of the younger children.¹²⁰ Since coming to the city, their youngest son (aged 14) stopped attending school in class five so he could begin working as wage labour. He recently started attending again, but has joined in class three at the request of the principal in the city. Their second eldest daughter is 12 and in class four; the female respondent is beginning to worry that her daughter will not be able to finish school. If they receive a proposal for her, she says it would be extremely difficult to turn it down given their current financial situation: '...because we are poor people, the bride price solves a lot of problems for us.'¹²¹

In sum, what do we learn from the declining fortunes of these 12 households? All the households have faced various severe shocks that have forced them to realise assets or seek additional income, primarily through migration to Iran. This is not without its risks as there is the chance that the migrants turn to opium, resulting in addiction and becoming a net cost to the household as in the cases of A01, B38 and B30. Three of the households moved out of their villages to seek better prospects in Herat city, one driven by the experience of being kidnapped (A14). The economic decline has forced one of these to return, but savings from the city allowed him to invest in his lands, buffering his move back. A fourth household (A10) tried to diversify into the urban economy and succeeded for a while but with the

¹¹⁵ HH C18, female respondent, interview 1.

¹¹⁶ HH C18, female respondent, interview 1.

¹¹⁷ HH C18, female respondent, interview 3.

¹¹⁸ HH C18, male respondent, interview 2.

¹¹⁹ HH C18, female respondent, interview 2.

¹²⁰ HH C18, female respondent, interview 3.

¹²¹ HH C18, female respondent, interview 2.

downturn has suffered. Health shocks are common and in some cases (C24) a series of them have had major economic consequences for the households.

For those lucky enough to have land, primarily those households in village A and B, it can be sold or leased out and in some cases there have been a sequence of land sales (B31), although in this case it has been partly to meet the costs of marriage, an issue along with the role of *peshkash* that will be returned to in the final discussion. For those without or with little land (the second group of households in this category), the options are more limited. Migration combined with bride price payments may become the only options. There have been very few employment opportunities within Herat's rural economy to offer much for these households.

Coping households

Nine households (Table 8) have remained more or less in the same economic position that they were in 2003. Most have had various shocks which they have had to respond to by realising assets, migrating to Iran for work for additional income or drawing on bride price payments. The households are discussed on a village basis. As with the previous group, the households can be divided into two groups: those with significant land assets (two households from village B, B34 and B35 fall within this group) and seven households that have little or no land (A07, A09, B40, B41, C23, C27 and C29).

Table 8: Coping Households

	Land/asset changes since 2003	Primary reason for position	Secondary reason position	Tertiary reason for position
Group 1: Coping households with land holdings				
B34	Inherited 10 <i>jiribs</i> of land and a seven- <i>jirib</i> garden, leased six ditches five years ago and sold one <i>jirib</i> last year for costs of son's legal case and illnesses of wife and daughter	Large land ownership	Children grown and live separately – only HHH and wife in the house	Labour migration / remittance income
B35	21 <i>jiribs</i> of land, 10 inherited, and 11 bought with Iranian earnings	Large land ownership	Labour migration / remittance income	
Group 2: Coping households with little or no land holdings				
A07	Female headed; last year bought house in Herat City with daughters <i>peshkash</i>	Landless	Labour migration / remittance income from Iran	HHH's husband died 10 years ago
A09	Inherited one <i>jirib</i> , leased it to buy another <i>jirib</i> , paid back debt with <i>peshkash</i> – total land two <i>jiribs</i>	Son became addicted to opium in Iran five years ago – HHH supports his wife and children	Minimal land/asset ownership	
B40	Landless	Landless /minimal resource ownership	Debt from opening a shop	Labour migration / remittance income
B41	Inherited nine rows of grapes; sold cow two years ago for medical expenses	Minimal land/resource ownership	Medical expenditures	Labour migration/ remittance income from Iran
C23	Inherited 0.5 <i>jiribs</i> of land	Minimal land/assets	Diversification into urban economy	Labour migration / remittance income
C27	Father died 15 years ago, split three <i>jiribs</i> of land between brothers, HHH received one <i>jirib</i> ; two years ago bought house in Herat City and two calves	Minimal land/resource ownership	Bought house in Herat City and rented to family from Farah until six months ago but rental prices fell	Labour migration / remittance income from Iran
C29	Inherited one <i>jirib</i>	Minimal land/resource ownership	Medical expenditures	Labour migration / remittance income from Iran

Group 1: Coping households with land holdings

The first landed household in this group is **B34** from village B. Now 80 and 60 years old respectively, the household head and his wife have five sons and four daughters who have all married and formed their own households. His grandfather had owned 100 *jiribs* in the village but the household head inherited only ten *jiribs* of arable land and seven *jiribs* of grape garden from his father more than 20 years ago. Ten years ago the household also received two *jiribs* of arable land and 50,000 AFN (USD 760) as *peshkash* when their youngest daughter married.¹²² Eight years ago their youngest son married, earning the 150,000 AFN (USD 2,300) that was spent on *peshkash* and the ceremony through working in Iran for two years. The household's primary income source is from their grape garden, which provides around 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) per year. At the beginning of the season, potential buyers come from the city and agree on a price with the household head which is then paid in instalments as the grapes are sold:

...traders come and observe the harvest of the garden, then give their [price]. I will give the harvest to the person who gives the highest rate and they pay me in two or three instalments as the grapes sell gradually.¹²³

Two of their teenaged grandsons live with them and tend to their lands, so only four people now live in the house. The income from the garden is seasonal but this is of little consequence as this is a small, aging household with few dependents. The household has used its land assets to deal with shocks and financial stresses. Five years ago a relative's child was abducted, and the family accused the household's four eldest sons of the crime. They spent one year in prison and the household was forced to sell land to deal with the event and the aftermath. The head describes the incident:

Five years ago one of my relatives was abducted by someone in the village, and the family accused my sons of planning the abduction. Four of my sons were arrested by the ALP and taken to the District Governor ... They started an investigation and for seven months could not find any evidence that my sons were related to this issue. Whitebeards went to the District Governor two or three times to say that my sons are innocent and after one year my sons were released...after the family who accused us joined [insurgents] in the area.¹²⁴

They spent 400,000 AFN (USD 6,100) over the year trying to resolve the matter, some payments going to the District Governor, some costs on transportation, and some payments to the family they were in conflict with. In order to fund this, the household leased out six rows of the grape garden for 150,000 AFN (USD 2,300) paying the rest through savings from the garden.¹²⁵ After this incident his wife fell ill; by her own account, she 'suffers from [a] mental disorder and has a joint disease'.¹²⁶ Last year, after repeated visits to Kondor clinic and Gozrah hospital, the head sold four *jiribs* for 280,000 AFN (USD 4,300) in order to take her to Pakistan for treatment.¹²⁷

The second landed coping household, **B35**, has retained its landed assets. Eleven years ago the former head of household passed away. As his son became the household head, his stepmother (his father's second wife – his first wife died more than 20 years ago) went to live in another village with her family. The household has 21 *jiribs* of land on which they grow wheat, ten of which were inherited from the head's father and the remaining 11 *jiribs* were purchased 12 years ago with earnings from the head's past work as a contractor in Iran. Two to three years ago the head converted a small portion of this land to grape garden but has not yet received a harvest from it. Though the head mainly cultivates the land

¹²² HH A09, female respondent, interview 1.

¹²³ HH B34, male respondent, interview 2.

¹²⁴ HH B34, male respondent, interview 2.

¹²⁵ HH B34, female respondent, interview 2.

¹²⁶ HH B34, female respondent, interview 1.

¹²⁷ HH B34, female respondent, interview 2.

himself with his third son, when it is needed he also employs casual daily wage labour. Although the head did not mention it, his wife said he took temporary employment in Farah lancing opium poppies.¹²⁸

In addition to land, the household receives significant levels of remittances. The household head's second son has lived in Iran for seven years, going to university and taking two jobs – working on construction site as a mason by day and waiting at tables in a wedding hall by night. Four years ago the remittances paid for their eldest son's marriage, which cost 500,000 AFN (USD 7,700), less 30,000 AFN (USD 460) that was borrowed from a relative. About one year after getting married, however, the eldest son took his wife and child and left the household due to a conflict between his wife and his mother.¹²⁹

The second son has also funded the purchase of an ox for their land for 50,000 AFN (USD 760) two years ago, as well as medical treatment costing 250,000 AFN (USD 3,800) for the head's wife and youngest daughter, who for the past six years have both had chronic pain. The household head has also worked in Iran; the first time more than 12 years ago, and the second seven years ago to offset losses incurred by crop losses due to water scarcity in the village.¹³⁰ When he attempted to cross the border seven years ago he was caught by Iranian border police and jailed for 20 days. He was able to cross the border on his second attempt and spent 14 months working in Iran.¹³¹ The head no longer needs to travel to Iran to replace lost production as last year he began buying water from Haji Rahim's wells through Mullah Sharif for 600 AFN (USD 9) per hour. Although he hoped to continue buying water for this year's harvest, Mullah Sharif has refused to sell water as he claims it is having an impact on their water pump. It is not yet clear to the head what kind of impact this will have on their annual harvest. The third son, also combining work and studies, makes bricks in village A whereas their fourth son grazes the household's sheep: he is the only one not attending school as he was 'too dull to learn anything'.¹³² Lastly, the household head's brother was killed around three years ago in an insurgent attack that was most likely targeting the District Governor:

He was a police officer and his duty station was near the District Governor of Pashtun Zarghun's house. My brother was driving to his duty station and someone fired at his car and brutally killed him. We tried hard to find out who the killers were but couldn't succeed. My brother had no enemies but there were rumours that the Taliban might have been involved in this incident.¹³³

Group 2: Coping households with little or no land holdings

The first of these land-poor households, **A07**, has no land and has remained economically poor since 2003 even though as will be seen its circumstances have modestly improved. The household is now female headed as the head's husband died ten years ago, but even when he was alive it survived primarily through the charity of other villagers. Her husband 'sang traditional poems' for charity, and received 10,000 AFN (USD 1,500) per year in 'martyr payments' from the government as his son from a previous marriage was killed in combat. They lived rent-free in the female respondent's brother's home.

Although her husband was quite sick before his death, she could not afford to seek medical attention for him, and people in the village collectively paid his funeral expenses. When her husband died, she was left with two children – an 11-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter – so she moved to Herat City to live with her step-son. Once there, she began looking for work and found employment with a 'pistachio businessman' who she was introduced to through a woman living in her neighbourhood. Since then she has been breaking pistachios as a full-time job; she breaks 4 kg per day and is paid

¹²⁸ HH B35, female respondent, interview 2.

¹²⁹ HH B35, female respondent, interview 1.

¹³⁰ HH B35, male respondent, interview 2.

¹³¹ HH B35, male respondent, interview 2.

¹³² HH B35, male respondent, interview 2.

¹³³ HH B35, male respondent, interview 1.

30 AFN per kilogram. Pistachio breaking is reported to be common employment for women as they can do it in their own homes. The work is done on a casual basis and on 'mutual trust and relation [with their employer]'.¹³⁴ Despite the low wages which are not negotiable, and certainly not a living wage, the head is extremely pleased to be working for the first time in her life:

I am really happy with that job opportunity as it's helped me a lot to earn money and feed ourselves. It's good that I do not need someone to help me and I do not need charity or other aid ... I [have] spen[t] my life in the village with help and charity of the villagers.¹³⁵

Last year she married her daughter and bought a house in Herat City from the *peshkash*. Paying 140,000 AFN (USD 2,000) of the house's total cost of 270,000 AFN (USD 4,000), she still owes the house owner 130,000 AFN (USD 2,000) which she will pay back with her son's Iranian remittances. Now 21, her son has worked in Iran as a construction labourer for the past four years despite having faced multiple obstacles. On his first attempt to get to Iran he was stopped at the border and deported. Six months later he made the journey again with a human smuggler. The smuggler detained him for ten days and demanded 160,000 AFN (USD 2,400) from his family in order to free him. The head negotiated with the smuggler, finally giving him 32,000 AFN (USD 490) borrowed from her son-in-law. Her son subsequently spent two years working in Iran, earning 162,000 AFN (USD 2,470) that he used to get married before returning to Iran where he remains today.

The second of the land-poor households, **A09**, has struggled with limited assets and has remained impoverished since 2003. The household inherited one *jirib* of grape garden from the head's father, which they leased out ten years ago to buy an additional *jirib* from the head's uncle for 135,000 AFN (USD 2,000). Two years later their eldest daughter married and with her *peshkash* they were able to pay back the lease bringing their total land to two *jiribs*. Their second daughter was married four years ago and the household has relied on the *peshkash* of 300,000 AFN (USD 4,500) for daily expenditures. One year ago they again leased out one *jirib* for their second son's wedding which cost 300,000 AFN. In addition to their garden, the household head and his eldest son do daily wage work when it is available in the village, one daughter does embroidery and sells it to shopkeepers, and the head is one of the few vine pruners in the village (after the grape garden has been harvested the vines must be pruned). Because pruning is specialised work, those who do it are in a better position to negotiate their wages and rather than being given wages for only one day as with wage labour, they are generally guaranteed weeks of work until the entire garden has been pruned. Our respondent is paid 6,000 AFN (USD 91) for three weeks' work cutting vines.

Finally their eldest son has been working semi-permanently in Iran for 12 years, returning periodically, including eight years ago for his marriage. Afterwards he returned to Iran earning 120,000 AFN (USD 1,800) to pay the debt from his wedding. However, on the journey home when trying to cross the border he was jailed for three-and-a-half years and became addicted to opium. This event changed life dramatically for the household. Their son eventually returned home and joined his wife and two children in the house, but does not work. His wife does embroidery but the income from this is meagre and it falls mainly to the household head to support his son's family. He commented:

For our household, [going to Iran] had a negative impact. I lost my son, addiction to opium is equal to losing your son ... Before the wedding of my son I had good work and I had a good life with my family. After sending of my son to Iran everything has changed negatively and now I must lease my garden and my debt is more than that 400,000 AFN.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ HH A07, female respondent, interview 2.

¹³⁵ HH A07, female respondent, interview 2.

¹³⁶ HH A09, male respondent, interview 2.

Last year their son robbed another home in the village, for which the household head had to pay 6,000 AFN (USD 91). As with household A01, this affected their reputation in the village, which has in turn affected their ability to borrow money. The addicted son's son fell ill with typhoid, and his wife was not able to get even a small loan of 500 AFN (USD 7) from their uncle.

The third household in this group, **B40**, is landless and has faced various challenges. The head of the household was originally from a neighbouring village in Pashtun Zarghun. His father had one *jirib* of land in their home village but a drought in the 1970s made it impossible to cultivate. His sister married and moved to Badghis when he was a child, and his father, unable to farm, moved the family there as well. The head remained in Badghis until he was married. Roughly a year later another drought forced the head and his wife to migrate. They intended to move back to the village of his birth in Herat, but the head's cousin, Mullah Sharif of household B38, implored him to move to village B and offered him a house to live in.¹³⁷ They have been in the village for the past 18 years.

Despite being landless, the household has coped through a brief period the head spent working in Iran. Thirteen years ago the head was working as a daily labourer in the village, in deep financial stress. Although the head was underemployed and unable to properly support his family, he needed to stay in the village in order to manage his young family, a point he made a number of times throughout the interviews. These factors drove him to open a shop in the hope that he would create a reliable income within the village. In order to fund his shop, the head took loans from Mullah Sharif as well as some relatives in Herat City totalling 50,000 AFN (USD 760). However, he quickly ran into financial trouble and decided to seek employment in Iran. The head sold the goods in his shop and moved his family to his sister in Herat City, paying her 50,000 AFN (USD 7,600) for two years' worth of expenses. Though he initially lost money, the time spent in Iran restored his fortunes. Since returning to the village they have reopened their shop and have been more financially stable.

Household **B41**, the fourth in the group, also started life with very few assets and have remained quite poor. They have had four children since 2002, none of whom are married. The household head's father migrated to village B from village A 25 years ago as they were landless.¹³⁸ At that time his father bought nine rows of grape garden, which the head inherited. For income, the head tends his land and does daily wage labour tending to others' grape vines in the village, and ten years ago he spent ten months in Iran earning 70,000- 80,000 AFN (USD 1,000-1,200). Last year the head began sharecropping four *jiribs* of land to meet his family's annual consumption of wheat, dividing the annual harvest of 2.5 *kharwar* with the landowner.

The household has had numerous medical expenditures over the past 12 years. The head's earnings from Iran were spent when two of his children fell ill; his son eight years ago and his daughter nine years ago. He spent a total of 60,000 AFN (USD 900) for their treatments in Guzara hospital, but both died.¹³⁹ In addition the household head's wife had to abort a baby one-and-a-half years ago due to complications with her pregnancy. This cost 15,000 AFN (USD 230) and was paid for by the sale of one cow for 12,500 AFN (USD 190) along with a small loan from a relative in the village.¹⁴⁰

The fifth household **C23** comes from village C and has remained relatively poor since 2003 with labour migration holding household finances together for many years. The household head is the brother of the village *arbab* (C15) and head of C18. Five years ago their household separated from the head's father's household as the family was becoming unmanageably large. From seven years ago the head began working semi-permanently in Iran as a watchman for a construction company, returning to the village

¹³⁷ HH B40, female respondent, interview 2.

¹³⁸ HH B41, male respondent, interview 2.

¹³⁹ HH B41, male respondent, interview 2.

¹⁴⁰ HH B41, female respondent, interview 2.

only periodically. It was the family's primary source of income and also a contributing income to the household he shared with his brothers and father. Two years ago he relocated his family to Herat City and found work in the construction industry through his cousins. They still have half a *jirib* of land cultivating wheat in village C, which his brother cultivates, but the head was never heavily reliant on on-farm activities for income.

Before he began travelling to Iran he was a cook for DACAAR in the village receiving a monthly salary of 4,000 AFN (USD 61). As work has dwindled in the construction industry since the withdrawal of the military, the head and his two eldest sons now sells vegetables in Herat City and makes between 200 and 250 AFN (USD 3 and USD 3.80) per day. He has one cart on which he sells tomatoes, and his sons have one cart on which they rotate duties as they attend school at different times of day making an additional 80-100 AFN (USD 1.20-1.50) per day. The capital required to become a street vendor is very low, just 5,000 AFN (USD 76), and the head claims his income is better selling vegetables in the urban market than it was farming in the village. Another benefit to the work is that it is done all year; it is regular work with a reliable income.

Apart from seeking employment in Herat City, the family was driven to move after they broke their daughter's engagement to the son of household C22 and feared that the family would try to harm her. At the time of her engagement she was 11 years old and had become severely depressed:

My daughter was going to school and madrassa. She was very intelligent and able to teach younger children...but her finance's family told her to stop going to school and madrassa because they didn't like that their [future] bride studied. Also her fiancé was a lot older than her. As she grew up she started to hate him and she tried to commit suicide twice.¹⁴¹ ... Her father was not happy to break this engagement. Her beat her many times to marry ... [Her] grandfather cursed her, saying it was the most dishonourable case in his family's history.¹⁴²

Through the head's wife was being reproached by her relatives and friends in the village for supporting her daughter, her brother-in-law, the *arbab*, helped her end the engagement:

...the *arbab* said it would be better that my daughter's fiancé's family should cut off the engagement without any problem, because the girl was not happy, so how could they continue their long life after marriage? He said it's better to stop that relation.¹⁴³

Though the family appreciates access to better facilities – both the male and female respondents talk repeatedly of the incomparable quality of education and health clinics in the city versus that of the village, they both view their quality of life as worse in the city, primarily due to the fact that the strength of relationships with their community has diminished.

Household **C27**, the sixth household of the group, had few resources in 2003 and has remained poor. As with household C23, remittances from Iran have been vital to its survival. Two years ago the household split from the head's two brothers and this eased the family's financial situation. As the eldest of three sons, after the death of his father 15 years ago, it fell to the head to take responsibility for the family. He had lived with his two brothers, their families, and his mother, sharing his income and paying for major expenses such as weddings: he married his first and second brothers eight and seven years ago respectively, spending 250,000 AFN (USD 3,800) and 240,000 AFN (USD 3,600).¹⁴⁴ Four years ago his mother died and two years ago he moved out of his brothers' household, so his income is now his own and goes directly to his own family's expenses.

¹⁴¹ HH C23, female respondent, interview 2, 3.

¹⁴² HH C23, female respondent, interview 2.

¹⁴³ HH C23, female respondent, interview 3.

¹⁴⁴ HH C27, male respondent, interview 2.

When his father died, his three *jiribs* of land was divided between his sons so the household head inherited one *jirib*. Before the head moved away from his brothers, he worked long-term in Iran. He estimates he has been to Iran ten times in the past ten years including before and after each of his brothers' marriages. Now, however, because the size of his family has reduced, the income he makes in the village is sufficient. Although the family has one *jirib* of land, their primary income source is the head's daily wage labour. He also sells livestock every six to seven months in the bazaar, buying them as calves, grazing them for six to seven months, and eventually selling them in the bazaar for a profit. Two years ago the head bought a house in Herat City for 900,000 AFN (USD 13,700) with savings from Iran, 240,000 AFN (USD 3,600) from their eldest daughter's *peshkash* (she married four years ago), and 16,000 AFN (USD 245) from the sale of two calves.¹⁴⁵ For one-and-a-half years they rented the house to a family from Farah for 3,000 AFN (USD 45) per month. However, because of the drop in rents the head had not rented the house out these last six months but keeps it in case he can find work in the city or his children wish to move there for school or work:

...a few years back when the international forces were here, the rent of the houses were high because many people were engaged with them, but currently the rent is very low so I am not renting my house to anyone.¹⁴⁶

The household head is a member of the village's 'peace council' and the *arbab* is its head. Eight years ago he was part of a different development council in the village that existed before the CDC and was responsible for village security and development projects.¹⁴⁷ Once the CDC was formed, the development council broke up, with most of its members moving to positions in the CDC. The CDC now has mostly or bi-monthly meetings (dependent on the season) in order to review village security and report to the district about village management.¹⁴⁸

The last household of the group, **C29** also has few resources, has been dependent on labour migration, and has been financially deeply insecure. The head's grandfather was landless but his father managed to purchase one *jirib* of land 16 years ago for 60,000 AFN (USD 915). However, the head's father died five years ago of stomach cancer after being treated in Herat City hospital and Pakistan. At this time the head was working in Iran. He returned home when his father fell ill and paid the medical expenses, which totalled 400,000 AFN (USD 6,100), from his Iranian earnings. 80,000 AFN (USD 1,200) was taken on loan from various relatives in the village to pay for his father's funeral.¹⁴⁹ Until his father's death, the head worked in Iran for 15 years. Now, however, he is no longer able to work there as he needs to be in the village to manage his family.¹⁵⁰

The head married ten years ago, spending 185,000 AFN (USD 2,800) in total from Iranian earnings. He now has three young children under the age of seven, and lives jointly with his two brothers and mother. The family has one *jirib* of land that was passed down from the head's father, but the majority of their income comes from daily wage work in the village. They sell only one *kharwar* of wheat in Herat City per year, and the rest is spent on household consumption. Additionally, the head sharecrops three *jiribs* of his aunt's land, the harvest is sold in Herat City and the income divided between them. Lastly, three months ago the head's brother began working in Herat City in the construction industry earning 250 AFN (USD 3.80) per day. Although there are several income sources, these combined earnings do not equal the head's past earnings in Iran.

¹⁴⁵ HH C27, male respondent, interview 1.

¹⁴⁶ HH C27, male respondent, interview 3.

¹⁴⁷ This may be the 'security shura' spoken of by the *arbab*.

¹⁴⁸ HH C27, male respondent, interview 2.

¹⁴⁹ HH C29, female respondent, interview 2.

¹⁵⁰ HH C29, male respondent, interview 1.

Aside from absorbing the cost of his father's medical treatments, the household head has experienced other fiscal shocks. Eight years ago, before the father's death, the family lost their home in a large flood. They rebuilt it through the head's earnings in Iran, with a contribution from the head's father (he could not recall the cost). Additionally, the head's son has a mental disorder which they have been treating for the past four years at Herat City hospital. So far they have spent around 100,000 AFN (USD 1,500) on his treatment.

Summarising, it is clear that the dividing line between coping and declining households is not very great and, as is apparent from the accounts, all nine coping households have faced various shocks linked to health events and drug addiction. Some have seen modest improvements in their prospects: the widow in household A07 has found work for the first time in her life, albeit paid at well below a living wage, and through her daughters' bride price has even been able to buy a property in the city. In the case of the head of household C27, moving his family has significantly reduced his financial obligations and the pressures. As with the households that have suffered economic decline, migrating for work in Iran for these coping households is their one lifeline but is not without its risks. Two of the households (A07 and C23) have also moved to the city, the second in part because they put their daughter's wellbeing above the reputational damage that they have suffered by breaking off her engagement. The support given by the girl's uncle, the *arbab* in village C, should be noted.

7 Discussion

The evidence presented in this paper on the fortunes of 25 rural households in Herat province since 2003 is consistent with the wider evidence from the NRVA analyses (World Bank, 2015) of unchanging levels of poverty. Only four of the case households have prospered since 2003 and the remaining 21 have either maintained the level of their household economy or suffered an economic decline. The four prospering households are relatively land-rich, although perhaps only in one of these cases has a household's (A12) prosperity come directly through agriculture. For the other three, non-farm income sources including labour migration have supported investments in land and agriculture. Of the balance of 21 households, seven have had sufficient land resources for agricultural production to make a significant contribution to the household economy. These land assets have buffered their position, although five of these seven households have over the years had to sell portions of their land in order to meet household needs, thereby diminishing their long-term viability as a farming household. The remaining 14 case households are those with little or no land, with crop production making at best a partial contribution to subsistence needs and as such being heavily dependent on remittance income from household members working in Iran.

Specific household trajectories over this period have been shaped by idiosyncratic factors such as changing household composition over time as well as shocks related to sickness and death, insecurity and the realisation of risks associated with migrating to Iran (discussed below). Environmental disasters, such as river flooding in the case of households in village C, have also been a significant hazard.

In terms of access to public goods there is a consistent story of improved access to education, particularly for girls, supporting the more general statistics on education access for girls in Herat Province. Access to health facilities is more mixed and the serious costs associated with a household member becoming sick has been a significant contributory cause to the economic decline of several of the case households (A01, A14, B31, B39 and C24 for example). It is not difficult to read concerns over the quality of healthcare provided into the accounts of multiple hospital visits that have no beneficial outcomes. A consistent report from those who have moved to Herat is that urban health and education facilities are better. A tarmacked road to the district has undoubtedly improved access to the city and there has also been significant investment in the provision of safe drinking water.

Set against these improvements, little evidence was found of major investments in the study district's agrarian economy. Structural investments, such as the one made to improve the Hari Rud irrigation system proposed by SMEC International (2005) and implemented under the Western Basin Project (2007-2014) funded by the Asian Development Bank, have not appeared to benefit the study villages or surrounding areas. The promotion of saffron as a crop in the district has had little effect on the study villages other than contributing to the decision of the major landlord in village B to terminate long-term sharecropping arrangements. A companion study (Minoia and Pain, 2016) has suggested that it is mainly larger farmers who have benefited from this programme and the claimed employment benefits for women are minimal. In sum, there is little evidence of effective investments for the productive economy in this district of Herat.

As the World Bank (2015) notes and the evidence from the household case studies supports, investments have largely driven a service and urban economy: six of the study households have either invested in or moved to the city for different reasons. One (A10) saw it as an economic opportunity, but its investment has not come good as the city's economy has declined with western withdrawal. A second (B39) was driven there by insecurity, prospered through finding employment, invested back into land and then, as the urban economy declined, returned to the village. The four other households

moved for various reasons of insecurity and loss of opportunity in their home villages. In short, it is difficult to find evidence of the levels of spending, strong economic growth or even labour market performance reported by the World Bank (2015) being felt in the study villages or benefiting the study households.

So how have these households made do? Leaving aside the four prospering households that have land, it is evident that there are insufficient employment opportunities within the districts for the rural economy to provide the jobs that are needed to keep households together. The statements on the lack of sufficient employment in the villages are common and clear and although a few can find work, it is rarely sufficient on its own to support a household. Two other major sources of income were reported: income through household members working in Iran and income coming from the bride price associated with the marriage of daughters. The need to marry sons and daughters are the linking factor.

With the exception of one household (A14), all case households at some stage in their history reported that one or more of their male members had migrated to Iran for work, and often individuals had migrated several times over the years (see Annex 2, Table 1). What is also clear is that although migration for work to Iran has deep historical roots and is not new, the need to migrate for work is greater than ever. The reasons for migration varied between having to raise the money needed to get married, to meet household debts associated, for example, with health costs, or to cover the living expenses of those living back in the village, particularly in the case of households from village C. In some cases, as in A8 for example, the money earned was used to invest in a house, or in the case of B38 to buy land.

Yet as the accounts from the households make clear, there are major risks associated with migration, but they are risks that have to be taken through lack of choice. One is the danger of being caught and imprisoned or deported, losing the money paid to the individuals who smuggle migrants across the border. Migrants in Iran are usually there illegally and without documentation. These might only be short-term costs, but the greater risk is becoming addicted to opium, which imposes long-term impacts on the household both in terms of lost income, maintenance costs for the drug addict's family and reputational damage within their social networks, which affects access to credit.

A core need to undertake migration is to raise the bride price or *peshkash* and meet the costs of the wedding. As the accounts from the households make clear, the costs of marriage may be the most significant of investments that have to be made by the household, with bride price reaching the range of 300,000 to 500,000 AFN (USD 6,000-10,000). If you have a household of sons this is a major investment to be made and may require the sale of land assets (see B31). If you have a household of daughters it may represent a significant source of income (A12) or perhaps one of the only means by which you can raise any form of capital (A07 or C18), particularly if you are poor. If you have both sons and daughters you may be able to make strategic arrangements so that the *peshkash* from your daughter meets the costs of your son's marriage or you may simply undertake exchange marriages with another household.

For some commentators these levels of costs for marriage are seen as irrational and incomprehensible. However, as Ferguson (2015) points out with respect to South Africa, these social investments are an indispensable part of maintaining the distributional economy that characterises both South Africa and rural Afghanistan: as he puts it, money is essential to the mutualities of poverty (2015: 132). In the absence of sufficient employment and decent work, the ability to be able to make claims on the resources of other households becomes essential and these relationships require investments that are built through marriage ties. As the evidence on household debts makes clear (Annex 2, Table 2) there are few households without debts and where households have few assets that can be mobilised for cash needs, recourse to borrowing from neighbours and relatives is essential.

The need to prioritise the household good over that of individual rights has consequences, as Smith (2009) makes very clear in her assessment of marriage practices in Afghanistan. However, she also points out that there is not a simple dichotomy between choice and force: often both elements come into play, affecting both women and men, and can lead to violence against women. As the case of C23 makes clear, where both the girl's mother and uncle supported her resistance to being married despite considerable social pressure from elsewhere, individual rights can be prioritised even if as in this case it was a strong contributory reason for the household to move out of the village. The pressures to support the household good over one's individual interests also arise for men given the challenges they face in supporting a joint household where it would be in their interests to move their own family out. The head of household C23 made clear that this was a factor in splitting away from his brother's household and the benefits he felt from making this separation.

While the households provide clear evidence of girls going to school and strong parental and community support for girls to access education, the case households do not provide much evidence of girls finding productive employment despite this better educational access. Two daughters had found work as voluntary teachers in village A's school and there are in the household stories, accounts of women generating income through traditional handicraft activities. But it is clear that this is seen as secondary employment and used primarily to provide for women's expenditure with a contribution to household expenses. Minoia and Pain's study (2016) found examples of women with access to land growing and managing the production of saffron, but none of the women in the case households reported this.

Gender is one axis of inequality. Class is another and a core structural element of Afghanistan's rural society in terms of relations between those with land and those without. As the village and household data makes very clear, land inequalities in two of the villages are very marked, particularly in village B. Those without land are often in dependent relations with those that have land and where there are such inequalities those with land exert authority over those without it as the accounts of the behaviour of *arbabs* and the landed elite in villages A and B make clear. One example was of the way in which the supply of public goods – drinking water wells – were privatised by a powerful figure in village B. Moreover, it is the landed who have the key connections to district and provincial authorities which may be needed in times of conflict. Consistent with other evidence (Pain, 2016), where landownership is more egalitarian, as in village C, village leadership behaviour is more supportive of the public good.

Yet despite the inequities of village life, as household C23 made clear commenting from the vantage point of city living with its better access to quality education and health services, the quality of life in the village is seen to be better because of the relationships within the community. As various households described, these relationships provide not only forms of solidarity but access to marriage partners, informal credit and labouring opportunities. But as A01 noted, keeping one's reputation within the village is essential for continued access to this support, and in this household's case a drug addict within the household had cost them their reputation. Dealing with external authorities usually requires mediation by village whitebeards, without whom dispute resolution might be difficult.

8 Conclusion

For the World Bank (2015), supporting agricultural growth is one of the three policy measures required to support inclusive growth and decrease poverty. The Agricultural Sector Strategy (World Bank, 2014a) argues for a focus on high potential areas to lead that agricultural growth, the Hari Rud valley being such an area. Is the evidence from these case household trajectories supportive of this aspiration of inclusive agricultural growth?

It is striking that in only one case has a household's prosperity come directly through agriculturally generated income. In the other three cases, investments in agriculture have come from income generated from non-farm sources. But it is also clear that these prospering households are a minority of households and in the village in which they live the majority of households do not have land and do not find much employment within the village.

It is also evident for many households their land assets have been reducing in size across the generations; even within the lifetime of the existing households, they have had to sell off land to meet household needs. The next generational division of land will further reduce the land available for households created out of that division. The demographics of households – and here one should remember the increase in household sizes since 2003 – mean that new generations will be looking for work in the near future. If the current generation of workers cannot find sufficient work in the Hari Rud valley to meet their survival needs, it is unclear that even if agricultural growth did take off and absorb labour – and here we should remember the labour-displacing mechanisation of the large landlord in village B – that it would keep pace with labour supply and the demand for work.

Agricultural growth is needed, not least to meet food security needs, but it will require major investments in infrastructure and support for market development beyond what is currently provided (Minoia and Pain, 2016). For the case households, village life remains a poverty trap and their only way out will be through migration, both short and long term.

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Annex 1: Field methods

Household interviews were undertaken by an experienced team of two male and two female field researchers, supplemented at times by additional team members. Interviews commenced in village A in February 2015, and were completed in village C in September 2015. Three field trips were undertaken for each study village (nine in total), first for the purpose of introductory interviews with the 15 households who made up the original sample in the 2002 study and general focus group discussions. Two subsequent field trips were undertaken to conduct two rounds of household interviews, both with the male and female heads of the eight households selected for this in-depth interview stage. A period in between the two rounds of interviews was taken to review and analyse the information collected and ensure optimal targeting of questions, and therefore data quality, for the second interviews. The household interview procedure followed a number of stages, summarised as follows.

Household profile: In the original 2002 study the households within the villages (15 households per village) were selected out of a village wealth ranking exercise with the guidance of local elders and community leaders. The number of households selected from each wealth group was roughly proportional to the relative number of households in each wealth group in the village. Using the 2002 household data, a household profile was prepared for each of the original interviewed households summarising basic data on household composition and economy in 2002-2003.

Introductory interviews: The AREU interview team introduced themselves to the village, holding a focus group discussion with both men (ordinarily elders) and women in order to collect general information about the village itself, and changes in livelihoods since 2002-2003. A series of introductory discussions then followed with all the original sample households that were present in the village. These preliminary interviews, informed by the household profiles, explored changes that had happened in the household (in household composition, economy etc) and looked for evidence on changing household fortunes (improving, maintaining or declining). These preliminary interview transcripts were then translated and comparisons made with the 2002 base household profile.

Household selection: On the basis of the preliminary interview evidence, a sub-sample of eight households, proportional to the number of households in each wealth group in the original 15 household sample, were selected for further interviews. The criteria for the selection was first to find household contrasts in terms of changing fortunes across and within the wealth groups and then within these choose households of contrasting size, structure and age. This selection was made by lead researchers, informed through consultation with the field researchers.

Household interview guides: Detailed household interview guides were prepared for each household selected for interview. The interview guides identified key themes and issues to be followed up over the four interviews held – two with the responsible man and two with the responsible woman of the household. Although the content of each interview guide was structured around eight common themes,¹⁵¹ each was tailored to the specific household drawing on changes reported by the household in the preliminary interview. Particular issues of interest, such as village histories, shopkeeper credit and NGO project activities, were followed up with relevant individuals in supplementary ‘key informant’ interviews.

Household interviews: Household interviews were carried out by the male and female teams usually with the head of the household and the oldest woman (in the case of joint households). Occasionally, sons, daughters or daughter-in-laws were interviewed where the head of the household was away, or

¹⁵¹ Household composition & structure, household history, home & services, land & agricultural production, income generating work, credit & saving, links with the state/ government & informal systems, wider context.

the intended respondent sick, and in a minority of cases, one longer interview was undertaken with a respondent due to their unavailability for a second. Care was taken to ensure that interviewers for each respondent remained constant, for the sake of continuity and to build on the trust and rapport built by interviewers with individual respondents. However, the teams rotated internally with the interviewer and note taker exchanging roles with each different household. Feedback on transcripts was provided regularly, and analytical discussions with the field teams were held at the end of each working day in the field, facilitated by the lead author.

Debriefing: Debriefing sessions were held in-between field missions and at the end of data collection for each study site, for the project team to contribute to joint analysis on emerging themes based on collected information and observations made in the field. Some of the debriefing sessions involved clarification of key issues for particular households, while others involved systematic household comparisons in relation to key themes. Discussions were held regarding the meanings of particular local terms and the way in which ideas were articulated by respondents.

Annex 2

Table 1: Household migration patterns

Village A

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Type of work	Earnings	Outcomes	Risks faced	Assessment of Contribution to HH finances
1	A12	Second daughter's husband to Iran	1.5 years ago	Once – they now live in Iran permanently	Labour in the construction industry	AFN 500,000	<i>Peshkash</i> for his daughter (AFN 250,000) came from husband's income in Iran	Not mentioned	Minor – received payment of one <i>peshkash</i>
2	A2	HHH to Iran	During the revolution (the late 1970s)	Once – a few years to escape fighting (security)	N/A	N/A	N/A	None	N/A – he was not there for employment
		Eldest son to Iran	Five years ago	Once – 1.5 to two years to earn <i>peshkash</i> for his bride	?	?	<i>Peshkash</i> for his wife	None – 'fortunately he hasn't face any risk and he didn't get addicted to drugs, heroin and other things'	Minor – earned enough for one <i>peshkash</i> ; no negative repercussions
A8		HHH to Farah	Seven years ago	Four times – once a season for 25 days each time	Poppy cultivation	AFN 9,000 each season	HHH had a brick-making business, used earnings to pay his employee	Not mentioned	Minor – used to pay one employee making bricks; no negative repercussions
		HHH to Iran	Eight years ago to two years ago	Semi-permanently for an eight-year period beginning 10 years ago and ending two years ago. During this time he returned annually	Labour in the construction industry	55,000 <i>toman</i> = AFN 935,000 at that time	Built house in village seven years ago Used for daily expenditures	One of the group was injured travelling to Iran with smuggler – risk is being injured/ killed on the journey	Major – used to build house and was the HH's primary income source for eight years; no negative repercussions
		HHH to Guzara	10 years ago	Once – five months	Labourer in construction industry for a military base	?	HHH was unemployed in the village, income from Guzara was therefore the only income	Not mentioned	Major – HHH was unable to secure work in the village so this was only income during that period; no negative repercussions
A10		Eldest son to Iran	12 years ago	Once – 1.5 years for his wedding	Labour in the construction industry	AFN 70,000-80,000 used for wedding; AFN 20,000 as remittance to family	Paid for his wedding	None	Minor – earned enough to pay for his wedding; no negative repercussions
		HHH to Iran	1) More than 12 years ago 2) Three to four years ago	Twice – Duration unknown	Labour in the construction industry (making bricks in a brick field)	1) Amount unknown 2) AFN 10,000	1) Unknown 2) Bought solar panels for home	None	1) Major – was only income at that time 2) Minor – earned enough to pay for solar panels No negative repercussions either time

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Type of work	Earnings	Outcomes	Risks faced	Assessment of Contribution to HH finances
3	A1	Second son to Iran	1) 12 years ago 2) 10 years ago	Twice - 1) Two years 2) Eight years	Labour in the construction industry	1) No remittances – earnings unknown to respondent 2) Marriage in Iran – earnings unknown to respondent	1) None – money was spent in Iran on opium 2) Used earnings to marry a woman in Iran and relocate back to village A – cost of <i>peshkash</i> unknown to respondent	Became addicted to opium; HH lost a male labourer; HHH has to support family of addict	Minor – sent no remittances to the family and became addicted to opium. He no longer works and his family is supported by his father and brother (the only breadwinner in the house is the fourth son)
		Third son to Iran	1) Eight years ago for two years 2) Four to six years ago for two years	Twice – 1. Two years 2. Two years	Labour in the construction industry	1) Earnings unknown to respondent 2) AFN 300,000	1) Used to contribute to overall household finances 2) Three years ago HH borrowed AFN 350,000 to treat ill eldest son in Pakistan – paid AFN 280,000 back from earnings in Iran	Became addicted to opium; HH lost a male labourer; HHH supports family of addict	1) Moderate – was one contributing income to the HH 2) Major – became addicted to heroin. He no longer works and his family is supported by his father and brother
4	A7	Eldest son to Iran	1) Four years ago 2) Five months ago to present	Twice – 1) Four years ago on first attempt to cross the border deported by Iranian police. Tried again four months later and was detained by the smuggler, paid AFN 32,000 for his release. He stayed for two years and returned to marry 2) Five months ago to present	1) Labour in the construction industry (masonry) 2) Has not yet found a steady job – doing sporadic daily wage labour when available	1) AFN 162,000 2) AFN 5,000	1) Paid 160,000 of AFN 350,000 for <i>peshkash</i> (took the rest of loan from brother in law) Paid human trafficker 32,000 for his release 2) Given AFN 5,000 as remittance to HHH	Was deported by Iranian police and was detained by smuggler	Major – the HH is female headed and remittances from Iran are only major income. HH lost AFN 32,000 to the smuggler to release son
		A9 HHH to Iran	1) 15-20 years ago 2) Five to six years ago	Twice - 1) One year 2) Less than six months. He went to find his son who had been arrested	1) Labour in the construction industry	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Son was arrested by Iranian police	?
		Eldest son to Iran	1, 2). 12 years ago, twice for periods of about a year each time, then came back to village to marry 3) Eight years ago	Three times – twice before his marriage and once after 1, 2) Twice for periods of about a year each time, then came back to village to marry 3) After wedding eight years ago returned to Iran, but was jailed at the border for three years and became addicted to heroin	1) Server in a restaurant 2) Labour in the construction industry (worked for uncle) 3) Labour in construction industry (again worked for uncle but was fired because he was using opium)	1, 2) Sent a lump remittance of AFN 30,000 plus AFN 4,000-5,000 every three months 3) Nothing – used money for opium	1) Used 300,000 to pay for <i>peshkash</i> and wedding 2) Eight years ago HHH had to lease garden for AFN 250,000 to support addict's family, used AFN 6,700 to take his son to a treatment facility in Herat City last year, fund his trip to Iran to find his son	Became addicted to opium	Minor – the aftermath of the son's last time in Iran has dramatically changed life for the HH. They are now in severe debt, supporting the addict's family, and lost an important source of male labour

Village B

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Type of work	Earnings	Outcomes	Risks	Assessment of Contribution to HH finances
1	B34	Youngest son to Iran	Eight years ago for his wedding	Once – two years	Labour in the construction industry	AFN 150,000 for wedding 100,000-200,000 <i>toman</i> in four months remittance	Son was married- AFN 100,000 used for <i>peshkash</i> , AFN 50,000 for ceremony	None	Minor – earnings used for one wedding; no negative repercussions
	B35	Eldest son to Iran	Eleven years ago	Twice – three months and five months	No work: 'he simply wasted his time there'	No income –cost 1,000,000 and 2,000,000 <i>toman</i> to smugglers each time	None	None	Minor – brought no remittances and cost the HH a significant amount (3,000,000 <i>toman</i>)
	B35	Second son to Iran	Seven years ago to present	Once – seven years	Server in a wedding hall and studying	AFN 600,000 that respondent is aware of	Is the HH's primary income source Paid for eldest son's smuggler's fees twice Paid for eldest son's <i>peshkash</i> and wedding cost (AFN 500,000) Milking cow two years ago (AFN 50,000) Oxen for ploughing fields (AFN 28,000)	None	Major – it is the HH's primary income source
		HHH to Iran	1) 12 years ago 2) Seven years ago	Twice – 1) Not mentioned 2) 14 months	1) Daily wage labour 2) Labour in construction industry (digging ditches for company working for municipality) and unloading cement trucks	1) 4,000-5,000 <i>toman</i> /day 2) 25,000 <i>toman</i> /day for digging ditches and 40,000 <i>toman</i> total for cement unloading	1) Not mentioned 2) Used for food and daily expenditures after harvest was destroyed	He was detained at the Iranian border for 20 days when he crossed seven years ago	1) Not mentioned 2) Major – seven years ago went after they lost annual harvest due to water scarcity, HH was entirely dependent on Iranian income
	B38	Eldest son to Iran	Seven years ago	Once – one year for his wedding	Labour in construction industry	AFN 100,000	Put towards 300,000 <i>peshkash</i> (the rest paid by HHH selling five sheep, two cows, and five <i>kharwar</i> wheat)	None	Minor – earnings partially paid for <i>peshkash</i>
		Third son to Iran	One year ago	Once – one year for <i>peshkash</i> (engaged two years ago)	Labour in construction industry	AFN 100,000	Put towards AFN 600,000 dowry (HHH also sold 20 sheep and two cows for AFN 200,000 – AFN 300,000 remaining to <i>peshkash</i> to be paid over the next two years from farming)	None	Minor – earnings partially paid for one <i>peshkash</i>
		HHH to Iran	12 years ago to eight years ago	Three times – between one and 1.5 years each time	Labour in construction industry	Did not remember his earnings	Eight years ago bought 10 <i>jiribs</i> with earnings in Iran and did not go back	None	Major – enabled him to buy 10 <i>jiribs</i> of land in the village which became his primary income source

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Type of work	Earnings	Outcomes	Risks	Assessment of Contribution to HH finances
2	B31	Second son to Iran	16 years ago to present – lives there with his family	Once – 16 years ago to now	Not mentioned	Does not know earnings as financially separate from the HH	None	None	None – not financially joint to HH
		Third son to Iran	10 years ago	Four times, duration not mentioned	Labour in construction industry	None	Joined HH, sporadic daily wage labour	Addicted to opium	Minor – HHH lost source of labour; is financially dependent on HHH
		Fifth son to Iran	Five years ago	Three or four times, became addicted to heroin the second time; duration not mentioned	Labour in construction industry	Not mentioned	Joined HH, does not work, HHH paid for treatment	Addicted to opium	Minor – HHH lost source of labour; is financially dependent on HHH
		Youngest son to Iran	Two years ago	Once – two years ago to present	Labour in construction industry	Does not know earnings; not yet sent any remittances	None	None	None – no remittances yet
3	B30	Eldest son to Iran	10 years ago to present	Semi-permanently for 10 years (returning to Afghanistan periodically for a few months at a time)	Daily wage labour	Respondent does not know earnings – son is separated from his HH so only sends remittances to his wife and children	Became addicted to opium, imprisoned for one year in village, separated from HH though wife and children still live with HHH	Opium addiction and conflict in the family	Minor – son separated from the family and does not contribute financially. HHH responsible for wife and children of son
		HHH to Iran	Five years ago	Once – one year	Labour in a brick field	15-20,000 toman per week	Bought solar panels for AFN 7,000-8,000 Paid debt he had then from treating his ill mother-in-law (amount not specified)	None	Minor – contributed to a few specific expenses
	B40	HHH to Iran	1) During <i>mujahideen</i> (doesn't recall exact date) 2) Eight or nine years ago	Twice – 1) Two years for <i>peshkash</i> 2) Almost two years – to pay debt he was in from opening a shop in the village	1) Farming for someone who worked at Iranian immigration 2) Daily wage – labour in construction industry	1) 150 toman/day 2) AFN 600,000	1) Paid <i>peshkash</i> 2) Paid debts from his shop, saved money, moved back to village and reopened shop	None	Major – the second time he went to Iran took the HH from being in deep financial stress and lots of debt. They are now financially stable
	B41	HHH to Iran	10 years ago	Once – 10 months	Labour in construction industry	Sent AFN 10,000 and AFN s15,000; paid for children's medical treatments	Spent on daily expenses Son and daughter was ill and treatment cost AFN 60,000	None	Minor - two remittances that HH spent but did not remain dependent on
4	B39	Third son to Iran	Two years ago	Once – two years ago to present	Labour in construction industry	Sent remittance of AFN 70,000	Converted four <i>jiribs</i> of land to garden two years ago Spent on daily expenses	None	Major – funded conversion of land to garden which will become the HH's primary income source
	B42	Eldest son to Iran	Ten years ago	Once – 1.5 years for wedding	Labour in construction industry	AFN 200,000	AFN 110,000 on wedding	None	Minor – earnings paid for one wedding
		Second son to Iran	Two years ago	Once – 1.5 years for wedding	Labour in construction industry	AFN 400,000	AFN 350,000 on <i>peshkash</i> and AFN 100,000 on wedding ceremony (also sold cow for AFN 60,000)	None	Minor – earnings paid for one <i>peshkash</i>

Village C

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Type of work	Earnings	Outcomes	Risks	Assessment of Contribution to HH finances
2	C15	Eldest son to Iran	Four years ago	Once – two years for his wedding	Labour in the construction industry	AFN 300,000	Used for <i>peshkash</i> and wedding	None	Minor – earnings paid for one wedding
		HHH to Iran	40 years ago	Twice – two years and one year because there was no work in the village	Labour in the construction industry	Does not recall	Used for daily household expenditures	None	Major – was the household's primary income source
3	C22	Third son to Iran	Seven years ago	Once – seven years ago to present	Labour in the construction industry	AFN 550,000	Sends as regular remittances Engaged one year ago – using earnings to pay for <i>peshkash</i>	None	Major – the household is entirely dependent on the sons remittances
3	C22	Second son to Iran	Four years ago	Once – two years	Labour in the construction industry	AFN 400,000	Spent on engagement that was broken by HH C23		
		Eldest son to Iran	Four years ago	Once – two years	Labour in the construction industry	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	None	N/A
3	C24	HHH to Iran	Nine years ago	Once – seven to eight months	Labour in the construction industry	Did not recall	Used to contribute to HH's overall finances	None – he entered Iran legally	Moderate – used as a contribution to overall HH income
3	C25	Eldest son to Iran	Four years ago to present	Once – has been back to Afghanistan only periodically	Labour in the construction industry	Sending remittances every four months of AFN 7,000-15,000	Used to contribute to HH's overall finances	None	Major – one of the primary sources of income for the household
4	C18	HHH to Iran	Around twenty years ago	Semi-permanently for eight years – returned to village 12 years ago	Guard/watchman at a private company	Not mentioned	Only income for his immediate family; used to contribute to overall finances of the joint HH they lived in at the time (with his brothers – HH C15 and C23)	None	Major – the primary income source for the family
3	C23	HHH to Iran	Seven years ago to two years ago	Semi-permanently for five-year period – returned to village two years ago	Guard/watchman at a construction company	40,000 <i>toman</i> per month	Only income for his immediate family; used to contribute to overall finances of the joint HH they lived in at the time (with his brothers – HH C15 and C18)	None	Major – the primary source of income for his family
4	C27	HHH to Iran	Ten years ago	Semi-permanently for an eight-year period – returned to the village two years ago	Labour in the construction industry	Not mentioned	Only/primary income for his family and contributing income to the joint HH	None – 'I didn't face any risk but I can tell you that many people lost their money, lives, or became addicted to heroin...if the police arrest someone and put him in jail, he will be there for a long time and maybe die.' – int.2	Major – primary source of income for the family

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Type of work	Earnings	Outcomes	Risks	Assessment of Contribution to HH finances
4	C29	HHH to Iran	Twenty years ago to five years ago	Semi-permanently for 15 years – returned to the village five years ago	Labour in the construction industry	10,000 toman/day	Major contributing income to the HH (paired with his father's from three <i>jiribs</i> of land) AFN 400,000 for father's medical treatment AFN 185,000 on wedding Lost home in large flood eight years ago, contribution to rebuilding	Injury while working	Major – the primary source of income for the household

Table 2: Household Debts

Village A

WG	HH Code	Amount and method	When	Used for	Paid back?
1	A12	AFN 100,000 cash borrowed from brother-in-law in lan	Last year	Bought fertiliser for garden Medical expenditure – mother was sick and spent AFN 7,000 on her treatment	Plan to repay when harvest comes in this year
2	A2	AFN 25,000 cash borrowed from his neighbour	Six months ago	Medical expenditures – daughter was sick and treated in Heart City hospital for 10 days	Plan to repay gradually over the course of one year with HHH's salary as a teacher
2	A10	AFN 200,000 from leasing 10 rows of grape garden	Three years ago	Opened a flour mill in the village	No – garden remains on lease (out of their possession)
		AFN 10,000 cash borrowed from relative	Last year	Bought battery for mill	Yes – repaid gradually with eldest son's salary as a teacher
3	A01	AFN 100,000 from leasing one <i>jirib</i> of land	Two years ago	Medical expenditures (daughter in law was ill and became paralysed)	No – land remains on lease
	A14	AFN 300,000 from leasing half a <i>jirib</i> garden	Two years ago	Negotiated release of HHH when he was abducted by insurgents	Yes – sold one <i>jirib</i> last year for 700,000 AFN to repay garden lease (300,000 AFN)
		AFN 200,000 from leasing two rows garden	Last year	Remaining AFN 400,000 from garden sale of AFN 700,000 (see above) to relocate to Herat City after abduction – bought house for 600,000 AFN and gave two rows garden on lease for remaining house cost	No – garden remains on lease
4	A7	AFN 130,000 debt to owner of house	Last year	Partially purchased house in Herat City with daughter's <i>peshkash</i> – paid AFN 140,000 of total AFN 280,000 so is in debt to the homeowner	No – plan to repay gradually with eldest son's Iranian remittances
4	A9	AFN 150,000 cash borrowed from four or five relatives	Three years ago	Daily expenditures (feeding family) and medical expenses (wife was sick)	No – plan to repay gradually with income from daily wage labour
		AFN 300,000 from leasing one- <i>jirib</i> garden	Last year	Second son's wedding Son who is addicted to opium robbed a house in the village – paid AFN 6,000 to the family	No – garden remains on lease

Village B

WG	HH Code	Amount and method	When	Used for	Paid back?
2	B34	AFN 150,000 from leasing six rows of garden	Five years ago	Four eldest sons were accused of abducting a relative in the village and imprisoned for a year – family spent AFN 400,000 to resolve the issue, AFN 150,000 coming from leasing six rows of garden and the rest from savings	No – garden remains on lease
		AFN 280,000 from selling four <i>jiribs</i> of land	Last year	Medical expenditures (wife was sick and needed treatment in Pakistan)	No – no mention of plan for repayment
2	B35	AFN 45,000 cash borrowed from relative and debt owed to shopkeeper for food	Four years ago	Eldest son's marriage (borrowed AFN 30,000 from relative – the rest of the AFN 470,000 came from Iranian remittances) and AFN 15,000 to shopkeeper for rice	No – no mention of plan for repayment
3	B30	AFN 50,000 cash borrowed from relatives	Five – six years ago	Daily expenditures (feeding family) and medical expenses (wife was sick – as a result was sterile after birth of one child)	No – no mention of plan for repayment
3	B40	AFN 50,000 cash borrowed from relatives	Twelve – thirteen years ago	Opened a shop in the village	Yes – paid back with Iranian remittances
	B41	AFN 5,000 cash borrowed from relative	One and a half years ago	Medical expenditure – wife had abortion after complication with pregnancy	No – no mention of plan for repayment
4	B39	AFN 250,000 cash borrowed from relative	Two years ago	Third son's marriage (total cost was AFN 800,000, remainder paid from savings)	No – no mention of plan for repayment
	B42	AFN 55,000 cash borrowed from relative	Last year	Medical expenses (wife is sick, treatment in Pakistan cost 25,000 AFN) and daily expenditures (regular HH costs and feeding family)	No – plan to repay gradually from HHH's salary as a watchman

Village C

WG	HH Code	Amount and method	When	Used for	Paid back?
2	C15	AFN 200,000 cash borrowed from relative	Two years ago	Harvest lost in flood – used to repair land and buy wheat	No – no mention of plan for repayment
3	C22	AFN 20,000 from leasing half a <i>jirib</i> of land	Two years ago	Daily expenditures	No – no mention of plan for repayment
3	C24	AFN 250,000 from leasing two <i>jiribs</i> of land	Eight years ago	Rebuilt house that was destroyed in flood eight years ago	No – land remains on lease
	C24	AFN 30,000 debt to livestock owner	Five months ago	Purchased cow for AFN 30,000 but was not able to pay	No – plans to pay gradually with HHH's income from daily wage and land
3	C25	AFN 150,000 cash borrowed in two separate loans	Eight years ago	Harvest lost in flood – used to repair lands and buy wheat	No – no mention of plan for repayment
4	C18	AFN 200,000 debt owed to owner of their house	Five years ago	Put AFN 100,000 towards purchase of AFN 300,000 house in Herat City	No – plan to repay gradually with HHH's salary as a watchman
4	C29	AFN 80,000 cash borrowed from relatives	Five years ago	HHH's father's funeral	No – no mention of plan for repayment



SLRC Working Papers present information, analysis and key policy recommendations on issues relating to livelihoods, basic services and social protection in conflict affected situations.

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