Livelihood System Analysis II

of Selected Villages
in the Provinces Sar-e Pul and Jawzjan
in North Afghanistan

FINAL REPORT

Commissioned Study of
Deutsche Welthungerhilfe Bonn/German Agro Action Kabul

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FOREWORD

Over the past years an increased interest from various sides to establish and to work more closely with the livelihood approach arose – also in Afghanistan.

How do people cope with continued severe crises such as in Afghanistan? How do they survive and make their living? What consequences does this have on programming, project design and implementation? Post-war planning and assessments are hampered by a lack of basic social, demographic and economic data after 23 years of war. This is confronting development organisations and institutions with the challenge: Do we really reach the intended target groups, the ones who are really in need? How can we improve on targeting? Are our projects relevant?

In August 2003 the first part of the Livelihood System Analysis was published and was taken up with great interest from various interested parties. In May 2004 the second part of the study – Livelihood System Analysis II - was carried out by two German consultants together with their Afghan colleagues.

With its publications, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action) wants to contribute to the development of viable data for situation analysis on a regional basis in North Afghanistan, although we acknowledge the need for common data, based comparable standards and indicators. The study is also a contribution to the methodological implications of working in Afghan communities and shows the difficulties to obtain viable data. But we think it is a good basis for improved monitoring and project evaluation as an imperative for transparency towards those who benefit from our projects and for those who support us in realizing these projects.

We are very grateful to the European Commission who has made this study possible.

We kindly invite you to share your experiences with us and to bring the discussion on putting an innovative concept such as the livelihood concept into practice.
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ABBREVIATIONS

c.a. Capital Asset
CfW Cash for Work
CoAR Co-ordination of Afghan Relief
CDC Community Development Council
DAP Di-Ammonium-Phosphate
GAA German Agro Action
ha hectare
IDP Internally Displaced Person
ir irrigated land
LSA Livelihood System Approach
MRRD Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NSP National Solidarity Programme
rf rain fed land
RRP Rural Rehabilitation Project (GAA)
SC US Save the Children, United States
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services

AFGHAN UNITS AND THEIR CONVERSION

Jerib: unit of area  ⇒ 1 yerib = ~0.2 ha

Jumbeshi: unit of currency in Northern Afghanistan until 2002:
  ⇒ 100.000 Jumb. = 1.04 $US (rate in Sept. 2002)

Afghani: national unit of currency after currency reform end of 2002:
  ⇒ 50 Afghani = ~1 $US (rate in Mazar in May 2004)

Paw: measure of weight  ⇒ 1 paw = 1/16 seer = 0.44 kg
Seer: measure of weight  ⇒ 1 seer = ~7 kg
1 INTRODUCTION

In September 2002, a first Livelihood System Study was conducted in the Sar-e Pul and Jawzjan provinces in Northern Afghanistan. This study was commissioned by German Agro Action (GAA), at the beginning of its project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure in Northern Afghanistan. The main components of this project - which started in the end of 2002 and is co-financed by the European Union - were the rehabilitation of streets, feeder roads and irrigation systems through public employment schemes (Cash for Work) in the above-mentioned provinces. Its overall objectives were to provide means of income to vulnerable population and to improve people's access to markets and health facilities and the access of relief organisations to the area.

As most emergency aid programmes, quickly set up in the aftermath of September 11th and as a reaction to the severe drought that struck Afghanistan in the years before, there was no time to gain a clear picture of people's livelihoods before commencing interventions. The livelihood study conducted two years ago aimed at contributing to fill this gap of information.

Meanwhile, as of September 2004, GAA's project activities have ended. Large stretches of roads and bridges are repaired improving the connections between rural villages and regional towns. Irrigation schemes in selected villages have been set up increasing the size of valuable irrigated farmland. At the same time, significant changes have taken place in the project region during the past two years. As in the entire Afghanistan, favourable weather conditions have led to exceptional harvests in 2002 and 2003, fuelling the rural economy and supporting the build-up of assets. Although the political situation remains fragile after many years of civil war, the sharp retrogression of armed conflict has further improved the conditions for development and livelihoods. But have livelihood strategies of rural people in the northern provinces really changed as a consequence of better frame conditions? How far and for whom has the asset base changed? What implications do these changes have for future activities of national and international organisations?

The objectives of the following report are twofold. Firstly and mainly, it should be seen as a second livelihood study, using the same Livelihood System Analysis approach as the first study, comparing the situation of the same villages and districts in Sar-e Pul and Jawzjan Province between 'then' (2002) and 'now' (2004). Secondly, it examines the impact of the project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure on the livelihoods of people in the project area. Activities and aspects of two other GAA projects, namely a Food Security Project and the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), currently implemented through GAA in Sar-e Pul province, are considered in this study also as they are partly carried out in the same area.

The study is structured as follows: Chapter 2 introduces the study area in question, and briefly sketches the Livelihood approach before presenting the practical methodology for the field research. In order to avoid repeating all the detailed descriptions of livelihood features within the study area, particularly since a number have shown little dynamic, Chapter 3 summarizes common features and the main findings of the first study conducted in 2002. Chapter 4, the main part of this study, presents the results of livelihood analysis in the research villages, focusing on a description of "changes", similarities and differences between the first study and the present field research. It includes a subchapter describing the livelihood system of women and ends with a summary highlighting the major changes of livelihood strategies and outcomes in the research region. Chapter 5 sums up the observations made in each village regarding the activities of the Project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure, assesses their impact and develops some recommendations for further development activities. Annexed are observations and remarks regarding the NSP and the Food Security projects and a summary of a 'longitudinal panel livelihoods monitoring' carried out in 2003/04 in three rural communities in Sar-e Pul Province by GAA in partnership with AREU.
2 STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Area

The pre-selected project area of German Agro Action’s Rural Rehabilitation Project in the north of Afghanistan covered three districts of Sar-e Pul Province (Sar-e Pul, Kohistanat, Sayyad) and two districts in adjacent Jawzjan Province (Darzob and Kosh Tepa).

Chart 1: Sar-e Pul and Jawzjan Province

Sar-e Pul =dark, Jawzjan =lighter

Chart 2: Districts in Sar-e Pul Province

In 2002, Sar-e Pul Province had 487,700\(^1\) inhabitants, of which 105,450 inhabited the city of Sar-e Pul, capital of the province, and its surroundings. The city is located ca. 60 km south of Shiberghan city, capital of Jawzjan province.

Sar-e Pul District consists of mainly hilly and pre-mountainous areas, extending in southern direction as far as 45 km. To the south, the road is heading to Kohistanat District. Along this road, two of the research villages are situated: Adring and Ziri Kamar, 22 and 28 km respectively south of the city of Sar-e Pul. Both villages are situated next to the river Daryai Sar-e Pul, which follows the same way as the road up to Kohistanat. This road has been rehabilitated through the project. Other project activities in these and the following villages comprise mainly rehabilitation of irrigation systems and are described in detail in the village chapters.

Kohistanat District with about 61,000 inhabitants, borders Sar-e Pul district to the south, and is situated in the mountains reaching an altitude of 3000 meters. The road continues to run parallel to the valley of the river Daryai Sar-e Pul. The project emphasised rehabilitating this road, as it is the only connection between the villages in Kohistanat valley and Sar-e Pul. Villages visited were Faizabad and Khaval; the latter situated about 100 km from Sar-e Pul centre.

Sayyad district has about 43,500 inhabitants and is located southwest of Sar-e Pul city. Hilly and very dry lands dominate it. Main town of the district is Sayyad Centre, which can be reached from Sar-e Pul on a flat, gravelled road in half an hour. Bazar Kami and Belanghor, the two villages visited in Sayyad district, are located only 30 km and 14 km respectively southwest of Sar-e Pul. The project has built a new road connecting Bazar Kami and other nearby villages to Sayyad Centre.

\(^1\) Figures are from WFP Afghanistan: VAM / Partners’ Countrywide Rural Settled Population Assessment, July - Sept 2002 An increased population of the provinces could be assumed as many former refugees came back within the last two years. However, the Central Statistics Office did not release any new demographic data.
In Jawzjan Province, project works have focused on improving the main road leading from the capital Shibergan to Faryab province with its capital Maimana, traversing the two districts of Kosh Tepa and Darzob.

Darzob district, a pre-mountainous area bordering Kohistanat in the south and Sayyad in the east, has around 95,000 inhabitants. Darzob town, the centre of the district of the same name was visited. It consists of eight villages situated along a river at an estimated altitude of 1700m and represents a major market and trading place in the area. Project work in Darzob focused on rehabilitating irrigation systems.

In Kosh Tepa district, a completely new road was built by GAA connecting various villages in the mountains with the main provincial road, at an intersection of approximately 20 Km from Darzob. Jegdalik, the village visited, is one of these villages.

2.2 Methodology

Village Selection

In the first livelihood study, research locations/villages were selected according to different features met in the area, such as climate/altitude, access to water, agricultural patterns, and ethnic variety. In this study, villages were selected according to the following criteria:

- research conducted during the first livelihood study allowing a comparison of data;
- villagers directly involved in project activities such as Cash-for-Work for road and irrigation rehabilitation works of the GAA Rural Rehabilitation Project;
- villages targeted by the National Solidarity Programme, particularly those where Community Development Committees (CDC) have been set up;
- villages in which the GAA Food Security Project distributed improved varieties of wheat seeds and fertilizers.

Table 1 shows that in addition to the research locations of 2002, two more villages, one in each province had been visited.

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2 These figures are according to the district governor.

3 This criterion evolved during the conduction of the study.
Table 1: Village Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Villages visited</th>
<th>Study 1 RRP/GAA</th>
<th>NSP/GAA</th>
<th>FSP/GAA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sar-e Pul</td>
<td>Ziri Kamar</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Athing</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kohistanat</td>
<td>Fayzabad</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jerghan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Khaval</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>Bazar Kami</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belanghor</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jawzjan</td>
<td>Darzob</td>
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<td></td>
<td>KoshTepa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jegdalik</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. In Jerghan, as in study one, brief interviews were only conducted to obtain information on market prices.
2. The visit of Belanghor was only possible as a short stop on the way back from Bazar Kami.

Livelihood System Analysis

Like the first Livelihood Study, this study has continued to work with the Livelihood System Approach as the underlying theoretical methodology for its investigation. The chart below visualises the systemic way of thinking of this model. The key question in the analysis of sustainable livelihoods is: In a particular frame condition (vulnerability context), what combination of livelihood resources (capital assets) result in the ability to follow what combination of livelihood strategies with what outcome? Institutional processes and structures mediate the ability to carry out such strategies (adapted from Scoones 1998).

Chart 4: Livelihood System Model

Source: adapted from Carney 1998 and Korf et al. 2002 (modified)
Qualitative Field Research Methods

Most of the research was conducted in the villages. In most villages, the researchers stayed for 1-2 days. In Jegdalik and Belanghor, only a short stopover of one hour was feasible. Within the village, the following methods were applied:

- In the beginning: group discussions with the local shura/malik, representatives of the newly set up CDC or the village elders.4
- Qualitative interviews with focus groups and/or individuals (e.g., people actively involved in project activities, women, landless farmers, elders, shepherds, CDC members, etc.)
- Participatory and visualization tools such as the Seasonal Calendar, Venn-Diagram and Pie-Diagram, highlighting trends and differences.
- Observations at points of interest such as rehabilitated irrigation schemes, farmers’ plots etc.

Other places, where interviews were conducted were:

- Local and regional markets of Sar-e Pul city, Darzob, Jerghan
- Afghan government/provincial and district institutions (MRRD, Irrigation, Agriculture)
- International aid organisations and NGOs
- Transport companies in Sar-e Pul and truck drivers on the road
- GAA project responsible and staff such as engineers and facilitators served as key informants too.

Secondary sources of information from literature included in the first place the data from the First Livelihood study. In addition, it was referred to GAA project information (logical frameworks, maps etc.), an AREU livelihood monitoring report facilitated by GAA and other studies conducted in North Afghanistan.5

Triangulation and crosschecking of information from different sources (rich-poor, men-women, donors-beneficiaries etc) was a continuous exercise. Biases encountered were firstly the more influential men dominating group discussions and/or exercising social control. Secondly, the researchers’ presence in the villages was unavoidably connected with the arrival of a “new project”. Consequently, figures stated, in particular in first discussions with elders, were often distorted in a way villagers expected to receive free relief assistance.

4 Each village has its own institutional setting of who is in charge of village affairs. This issue is detailed in the next chapter.
5 Please refer to the annexed literature.
3 SUMMARY OF LIVELIHOOD SYSTEM ANALYSIS IN 2002

The first livelihood system analysis was conducted in September 2002. The year 2002 was determined by two major frame conditions: firstly, it was the first year after the end of the Taliban regime. Political control in the aftermath was exercised through the Northern Alliance, which brought to end major fighting. Secondly, it was the first year after three years of severe drought (1998-2001). Due to civil war and drought within the former years, many people had left their villages, often several times. In 2002 still a remarkable number of people in the region lived in refugee camps of UNHCR - in Afghanistan or abroad -, or have only just recently come back to their villages. After more than 20 years of war and turmoil in Afghanistan, it was not clear at all how the people could cope with the current situation, how they could make their living, and which structures and processes would be relevant to them.

Due to both, the emergency situation and the fact that after September 11th large financial flows poured into the country, many international donor agencies appeared on the scene. Aid programmes ranged from food and seed distributions over infrastructure rehabilitation to school tent supplies, thereby shaping the capital assets of the people.

The first livelihood system analysis aimed to gain a clearer picture of people's livelihoods in the project area. As the first study is often referred to as a baseline, basic information about the region, common features that have not changed as well as its main findings are briefly sketched next.

3.1 Frame Conditions of the Study Area

Conflict

In the provincial capital Shibergan of Jawzjan Province, the Usbek general and leader of Jumbesh party, Rashid Dhostum, has his main residence. Sar-e Pul province was and is under General Dhostum’s governance too, but the political landscape here was more colourful and conflictive. Especially in upper Kohistanat district, temporary fights took place between commanders and troops of Jumbesh and opposing groups of Jamiat party. The latter party is under the regional leadership of General Mohammed Atta, then ruling Mazar i Sharif. At that time, most of the conflicts happened from Khaval village onwards where Jamiat had more influence, but occurred in other villages of the valley like Adring/Balghali in Sar-e Pul district as well. This regional conflict between the two former allies of the Northern Alliance intensified again in 2002. Its main impetus was the control of resources of the region. Within and between the villages, the conflict is furthermore entangled with local conflicts on land, water and old hostilities between families or clans. Although the Jamiat party is mainly composed of "Tajiks", and major parts of inhabitants of Kohistanat and Sar-e Pul districts classify themselves Tajiks, the conflict does not split entirely along the ethnical divide Usbek-Tajik.

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6 Jumbesh = Movement. The Jumbesh party (National Islamic Movement) under General Dhostum, and mainly composed of Usbek, is already one of the key players in the North of Afghanistan since the early 90s.

7 Jamiat = Society. The Jamiat party (Islamic Society) is the other big player in the North with a background in the Mujahedin movement against the Russians. Jamiat and Jumbesh were both fighting together in the Northern Alliance against Taliban under the leadership of the Tajik General Massoud who was killed two days before September 11th 2001.
Ethnic Composition

The ethnical structure of the research area was and is very mixed, composed of Tajik, Usbek, Pashtun, Turkmen and Hazara. The dominant ethnic groups are Tajiks and Usbeks, the first often sub-classified as Arabs and Aimok. A smaller group are Pashtuns who are discriminated at times because of the preferential treatment under or collaboration with the Taliban. Generally, the question of belonging to a certain ethnic group was of minor importance to the people with the exception of a few cases.

Climate/Drought

The climate of the region is arid to semiarid with cold winters and hot summers. Temperatures vary between –20°C in winter and 45°C in summer. Rain and snowfall can begin in October/November but are strongest in the months from January to March. The districts are differently blessed regarding the provision of water. A larger river flows through the Kohistanat, Sar-e Pul and Darzob districts, providing access to water all year round. On the other side, the dry Sayyad district has to rely on water from a river that only carries water seasonally, rainfall, and salty water of wells.

The drought from 1998-2001 significantly affected all people. Some surveys described a loss of 70-80% of the livestock in the region. Harvest failures resulting from the drought drastically reduced the availability of seeds for the following years.

Basic Infrastructure

Although UNICEF had remarkably covered all visited areas with school tents, enrolment of children was not the rule. Girls were not sent to school at all with some exceptions among the villages. Lack of teachers (nearly the entire population in the villages is illiterate), heating facilities for wintertimes and basic learning material were prevalent.

The bad physical and mental health status of people, particularly of children, was also eye catching. Basic health facilities and services were limited to the regional centre Sar-e Pul and Darzob, with the exception of a few nurses active and some medicine available in the rural areas.

Roads generally were in very bad conditions, with innumerable potholes and large stones narrowing the track. Roads were covered with thick dusty layers and at many points the river had to be crossed through the river bed. Bridges on the way to Kohistanat were partly too narrow or too light in order to carry the weight of cars and trucks. In some parts, the road crossed irrigation canals, which repeatedly were destroyed by the crossing. These circumstances hampered the access of aid agencies as well as the provision of regular and affordable services, such as transport or health services to the remote mountainous area. The higher the altitude, the higher the probability for the region to be cut off by snow, floods or land slides from lower situated villages and market centres.

Religion

Last not least, the Islamic religion was and is a frame condition which determined not only gender aspects and women’s role in society, but also economic institutions, such as the system of borrowing/lending and charity. Islamic religion, furthermore, constitutes religious institutions with power and influence in every village, i.e. the mullah. Other

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8 Aimok, meaning tribe in Turkish, is not an ethnic domination, but differentiates semi-nomadic herders and agricultural tribal groups of various ethnic origins that were formed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. According to Conrad Schetter, the term 'Tajik' originally referred to people who could not be ethnically grouped.
important structures and processes in the villages also derive from Koran respectively Shariat.

3.2 Livelihood Analysis

Agriculture

Agriculture was the main activity for all investigated areas, covering the following dimensions:

- horticulture: poplar, fruit trees, grapes, vegetables
- livestock: donkeys, goats, sheep, cows, oxen, camels, chicken, horses
- land cultivation on irrigated and rainfed land. Main crops: wheat, barley, melon, water melon, poppy, to a lesser extent: hashish, sesame, linseed/ flax, maize, alfalfa.

Agricultural activities are mainly determined by the supply of water and the altitude. Along the river, irrigated land or gardens for crop, fruit and timber production could be found especially in Sar-e Pul and Kohistanat district. Yet, the main agricultural land is rain fed land. However, in many areas rich loess soil could be observed, although the quality of the soil varies considerably between areas.

Although many people had fled from the region during former years, land ownership still seemed to be clear. At least the irrigated land was clearly distributed between bigger landlords and some small land owners. Both types of land either are cultivated by the owner or leased out to tenants. However, much land was kept idle due to the shortage of seeds and production tools or for recovery.

Most lacking natural capital assets found in 2002 were:

1. Water (especially access to drinking water in the dry Sayyad region)
2. Seeds, livestock, in particular oxen

Daily Wage Labour

Due to the drought, not much seed material was available for the 2001 winter wheat planting season. This reduced significantly the opportunity of landless people becoming sharecroppers and much rainfed land was reported to be idle. Therefore, people tried to find daily wage labour in the villages. As in 2002, the harvest for all crops was good, bigger landlords employed villagers for working on their fields or in their gardens. Salaries were usually paid in kind (wheat). Other work opportunities for unskilled labourers were hard to find in the villages. This was, besides security reasons, the major reason for migration of mainly young men.

Migration

Migration of men, temporarily within Afghanistan or leaving for some years to Iran or Pakistan, was a striking feature in all visited villages. For many families this income source was thoroughly important and sometimes the only means to get cash.

Accessing External Assistance

External assistance from international organisations became a main factor in people's livelihoods in 2002. Especially the most vulnerable groups of the population such as women headed households were dependent on free food distributions. People developed different strategies such as family members approaching temporarily different refugee camps in order to obtain as many starter packs (bag of seeds and some basic equipment for the household) as possible.
Collecting Herbs, Firewood, Relying on Charity and Begging

Main livelihood strategies of the poorest people consisted of collecting herbs and firewood, charity or begging. Within the Islamic religion, charity is an important institution. Very poor people interviewed in September 2002, reported that they received wheat from other villagers at the threshing points.

3.3 Outcomes of Livelihood Strategies

In 2002, considerable differences in livelihood conditions and strategies between big landowners and landless people were observed. However, due to the drought also the big landowners had lost many assets, which levelled the differences between the people. Besides agriculture, the cash from wage labour in Iran, Pakistan or inner Afghan areas was another main income source. Major differences between permanently staying households and returnees could not be observed. In the early stage of coming back, the returnees might even have been better off due to starter packets provided by relief organisations. Since all people had to reduce their livestock and other assets, differences between returnees and others seemed to be minimal later on. Very poor people and some refugees who had lost all their assets relied largely on external aid. They were at this point of time not able to develop adequate coping strategies.
This chapter is divided into six parts: Frame conditions as well as structures and processes are described in a summarised way for the whole study area in the first two sections. Then follows the main part: for each village visited, the capital assets, livelihood strategies and their outcomes are described. Emphasised are “changes”, similarities and differences between the first study and the present field research, including also descriptions of project activities and impacts identified by the villagers. The next section is a livelihood analysis of women, summing up main findings significant for the entire research area. A brief overview of changes in wages and prices of basic commodities follows. The last section highlights the major changes of livelihood strategies and outcomes as well as the major constant livelihood factors in the research region.

4.1 Frame Conditions

Conflict/Security

“Improved security” was the issue people everywhere pointed out first, when they reflected about recent changes in their livelihoods. In none of the visited villages, fights took place since September 2002 and various official sources and project staff confirm that the security situation has improved significantly in the two provinces. Villagers also referred to security as the most important factor for having faith in the future and for starting the (re-)construction of their houses and compounds, which is to be observed all over the region.

Nevertheless, the political setting remains fragile with competing Jumbesh and Jamiat parties. Both still struggle heavily over political and economical control of various areas within the provinces. However, there are no clear-cut lines between the two parties. Local commanders -still taxing the population in many areas visited and supposedly controlling the poppy economy- are only partly under direct control of the traditional political leaders (see 3.1).

Violent conflicts in April 2004 in Maimana, capital of Faryab province bordering Jawzjan, showed that the central government still faces many difficulties to exercise supreme authority in the territory. Neither in Sar-e Pul nor in Jawzjan province, are significant numbers of the Afghan National Army forces present yet. In Sar-e Pul, a British Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is based, providing updated security information to aid organisations. In Darzob district of Jawzjan, already described as calm by the villagers two years ago, the entire province without exception is under the governance of the Usbek Dhostum, who enjoys a very high reputation among the mainly Usbek population.

Hence, in spite of “improved security” the provinces are far from being pacified for the time being. The common availability of weapons, the knowledge of how to use them, and the fact that conflict management is often pursued via the use of weapons still affects peoples’ vulnerability. In contrast to the situation in 2002 however, several people stated that increased work opportunities and growing confidence of a peaceful future raised the number of men that prefer to join civilian life instead of being a paid soldier of a commander. In this context, also the positive impact of projects providing work opportunities in the last two years was mentioned.

9 Forces of General Dhostum invaded the northern province of Faryab in the beginning of April and took over the provincial capital Maimana, amongst others, because the regional pro-central government commander of Maimana had stopped to obey his orders. Additional troops of Afghan National Army were sent and secured the area a few days later.
The stability of the region as of the entire country will also depend on a swift conduction of presidential and parliamentary elections due in October 2004 and April 2005 respectively, and the central government’s ability to exercise state authority in the regions and to develop structures responding to the needs of the people. People also expressed some disappointment with the Karzai government as they expected it to push back the local commander system.

Population and Ethnicity

Although no formal figures exist, the population in the study area has increased significantly. Political stability and excellent harvests have both enhanced working opportunities and led to a decrease in seasonal migration. Many IDP and refugees from camps in neighbouring countries have come back to their villages. The last two years it was also reported that marriages and newly founded families increased considerably in the villages.

As mentioned in the first livelihood study, the question of belonging to a certain ethnic group was on the first glance of minor importance to the people. Pashtun people, however, often carry the legacy of having supported the Taliban. The villagers of Belanghor for example, entirely Pashtun, feel highly discriminated by upstream Usbek villages controlling their water supply. In Darzob where the only ethnicity is Usbek, several interviewees remarked positively that Usbek language became accepted as an official language within the last two years.

Economical Development

Favourable weather conditions in 2003 generated record harvests in Afghanistan. Wheat and poppy harvests were said to be the highest ever, creating many work opportunities and fuelling the local economy. Together with the general increase in economic development (economic growth in 2003 was estimated to be around 35 % in Afghanistan), this provided much better frame conditions for people improving their livelihoods compared to two years ago.

Agriculture and Water

Agriculture continues to be the main activity in the visited villages. The extraordinary good wheat harvest from 2003 allowed most people to store enough wheat for the winter. In May 2004, the large majority still had wheat available in their households. However, this positive development was dimmed by the fact that many people were concerned about a new drought arising since rainfalls in spring 2004 were not sufficient.

Another striking feature were the flowering poppy fields in gardens, irrigated and rainfed lands. This asset has become more important. According to different sources, poppy plantations popped up the first time in 2004 in many areas of the study region.

The provision of water, especially potable water, remained a serious problem in the visited villages, in particular in dryer Sayyad. Here, people still depend solely on the river carrying water seasonally, rainfall, and salty water from wells.

Infrastructure

School tents from UNICEF were again eye catching in every village, many of them now complemented with stone-built toilet houses. The same complaints were made regarding the deficiency of adequate school buildings, teaching material and qualified teachers. Illiteracy in the villages seemed to be as high as before. For adults no schooling possibilities existed.
Access to **basic health facilities** has slightly improved. In some places, small clinics were established and due to better road conditions, transport to the regional centres became easier. Precarious hygiene conditions and water-related diseases were still widely spread in all villages, especially in those with problems of access to water.

**Road conditions** improved as a result of road projects of different organisations in both provinces and provided better access for villagers to the centres and vice versa. The impacts of the *Rural Recovery Project* will be described in detail in chapter 5.

**Presence of Relief Organisations**

The presence of relief organisations in the visited region has increased, respectively those already present two years ago enlarged their activities. This presence did not lose its importance as an important frame condition as it determines many villagers’ access to land, food, agricultural inputs, labour opportunities and health services. Given the mostly emergency and short-term orientated aid programmes, many people expect to receive free goods. As these expectations become less fulfilled, frustration with aid organisations is growing. The difficulties to shift from an emergency to a more development oriented approach were encountered everywhere.

4.2 Structures and Processes

Apart from frame conditions, **structures and processes** shape and transform behavioural patterns of people. Referring to institutions, the following section describes institutions such as national and international organisations, laws, policies and informal power groups, the way these interact and affect livelihoods through incentives and disincentives. Although wars and different political regimes have shattered many institutions during the last decades, and new ones arose recently, traditional institutions still play a pivotal role in daily life.

**Provincial and District Institutions**

With the new government in Kabul and the recent restructuring of provinces, government structures – old and new - appear on provincial and district level. An administrative level coordinating the Northern provinces, which one could expect to be in Mazar-i-Sharif does not seem to exist.

The presence and visibility of **government institutions** in **rural areas** varies but is generally **weak**. Often, villagers find it difficult to distinguish between services of the government and international organisations, since many national reconstruction programmes such as the National Solidarity Programme are supervised and implemented by aid agencies.

The strongest appearance and influence have those institutions, which build upon traditional decision-making procedures such as the institution of the **governor (“wali”)**. Under the governor are the district representatives in the province, the **“waliswal”**: Acting as kind of “sub-governors” on district level, their tasks include representing the district, mediating and solving conflicts and taking cases to the next level (→ **wali**') if they cannot be resolved. Each district has its own capital (for Sar-e Pul, Sayyad and Darzob districts the eponymous cities/communities, in Kohistanat: Pasnai).

**Taxes** levied exemplify the general confusion in the transition of institutional powers and villagers are at times on the horns of a dilemma. Only in two villages it was reported that taxes (10%) from shops are given to the respective waliswal and then were forwarded to the governor’s office in the respective provincial capital. In one place, it was argued that this was according to the traditional rule of Shariat, and it was paid for security. Other villages denied paying any taxes to government institutions besides to commanders.
In order to improve its reputation the central government is also aiming at strengthening rural support services. Various ministries uphold line departments on provincial capital level. Some sub-divisions of provincial departments are also represented on district level, e.g. the road department in Pasnai and divisions of the agricultural department in Darzob. During the research study, only provincial departments in Sar-e Pul have been visited due to time constraints. The departments visited were Agriculture, Irrigation, and Rural Rehabilitation, each sketched next.

The Department of Agriculture consists of 8 divisions (forestry, planting, veterinary, co-operation, administration, land department, planning, development of agriculture/innovations). The eldest employee confirmed that the department is existing since the eighties. Usually the two divisions “Land department” and “Agricultural Development” are also represented on district level. In Sar-e Pul province, this is only the case in Balkhab district. The department is running a project in the surroundings of Sar-e Pul supporting landowners to create cooperatives. Many people are addressing the agricultural department for different problems. The departments’ employees explained that they provide consultation but due to very limited resources and lack of staff, requests often remain unanswered. Last year, some office furniture and working material was provided by FAO.

The Department of Irrigation is located in a small room in the same compound as the district governor’s office. Its responsibility is the supervision of irrigation schemes on province level. The miraab (see below) of Sar-e Pul joined the interview but he seemed not to be an employee of the office. The department is not running its own projects and has neither funds nor sufficient material at its disposal.

The Department of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) is situated in a new building financed by UNOPS. Before, it was located in a small shop in Sar-e Pul. The department was said to exist at least since the times of the Russians but the staff met was employed only in the last two years. Asked about their main responsibilities, interview partners described them as “cooperation with and supervision of other organisations”, mainly NGOs. MRRD is the nationwide implementing partner of the World Bank financed “National Solidarity Program” which will be referred to later on. NGOs are facilitating partners of and on duty to report to MRRD. Of the 40 positions planned (including radio operator, cleaning staff etc.), only 17 are filled. The salary for higher positions was at around 40 USD per month. Two engineers from Kabul were working in the office for some weeks. They had been told that in Sar-e Pul they would get the opportunity to receive a salary according to standards of international organisations. Since they have arrived in Sar-e Pul this did not occur.

All visited provincial departments have no own funds at their disposal. All decisions upon the budget are taken in Kabul. The lack of equipment and working material in the offices was obvious. Working atmosphere was not that present. In all three departments, the difficulty to find qualified staff was mentioned as a main problem, respectively the comparatively low salaries do not motivate people to work. Definitely, in terms of salaries they cannot compete with the international organisations which themselves face difficulties to find qualified staff for their projects. Poor co-operation and co-ordination on project planning and implementation of other organisations were lamented mainly by the departments of agriculture and irrigation.

Village Institutions

In all visited villages, traditional institutions are in place. There are however, different actors with different tasks, status and powers and each village has its particular procedures and structures of interaction and decision-making. Recently, a new village institution is appearing on the scene: the Community Development Councils (CDC), cornerstone of the central government’s effort within the National Solidarity Program.
(NSP) to strengthen formal institutional structures on local level. Observations and first findings whether the CDC reframes power relations and decision-making procedures on village level are found in the Annex.

The most important institution is the village shura, consisting of the village elders and people with important positions. They form the committee, which receives guests, discuss, propose and decide about community activities and gather people for public works.

Unlike two years ago, in no village a malik was presented as the head of the village, but only as a representative. These are usually highly respected rich men, most of them Hajji who have been to Mekka. In some cases, they were former commanders.

The mullah is the religious head of the village responsible for religious ceremonies and prayers. In most villages, mullahs are members of the shura and work as teachers in the mosque for boys and girls. The mullahs often see themselves as social consciousness of the village, privileging the poor for community work and organizing some kind of redistribution between poor and rich. In one village, every believer and student has to give one seer of wheat each year and/or work one day per year on his land or in his compound. Every believer has to bring additionally one donkey load of firewood per year to the mullah.

Problems and disputes are addressed mainly to the shura respectively to its members. Quarrels that are more difficult are declaimed to the arbob. The arbob is an institution derived from Koran and Shariat. He is the judge whom villagers approach in case of quarrels and he will make final decisions and judgements. In some villages, he is a former commander and seen even as the leader of the village. The arbob may get one seer of barley and wheat per year from each village family. In the visited villages, there was one arbob per village. The institution arbob was said to exist on district level too.

Local commanders are still very influential in the study area. They usually belong to either Jumbesh or Jamiat party although crossing sides happens. There can be one commander in one village or one commander ruling a broader area. Their function is to guarantee security. Differing numbers of soldiers are under their command. In most villages, it was reported that commanders take 10% ‘taxes’ from the harvest. That can refer to all harvests including e.g. the sale of poplars and poppy. In one village villagers claimed that every family had to pay an additional monthly head tax of 100 Afghani per son. In some places people complained openly about the taxing, as they did not see the necessity of “paying for security” any longer. As a general picture, the importance of commanders seems to be slightly decreasing but this varies locally. As it was stated in one village, people are still somehow afraid, as commanders have armed soldiers.

**Access to Land**

Besides the turmoil and migration that took place in the past, the distribution and ownership of land remained a relatively stable factor. It is eye-catching how this factor is key in determining individual livelihood strategies and stratifies local societies in the study region.

Major changes observed compared to two years ago are:

- more land is under cultivation\(^\text{10}\) → more share croppers
- prices for land have increased significantly. May 2004: 50 - 65,000 Afghani/1 jerib irrigated land, 1000 - 5000 Afghani/1 jerib rainfed land, depending on the location and quality

\(^\text{10}\) This development is closely linked with the increased number of oxen. It could not be evidenced by the researcher’s observations as most rainfed fields are situated on the ridge of the mountains with difficult access.
According to a representative in the agricultural department “Land Division” in Sar-e Pul, land is clearly divided between private and governmental land. All landowners are registered in the department in Sar-e Pul. Governmental land comprises pasture areas. Some of these lands, it was said, are rented to people; people unofficially use others. A land register exists, but since Sar-e Pul formerly belonged to Jawzjan province, it can only be accessed there. Also, it was not updated a long time. In no place visited, however, villagers referred to any governmental land. Pastureland “belongs to the community” and is free for use for village's herds after harvest. Internally, permission from landowners is needed for usage. If necessary, with shepherds from other villages agreements are made.

Generally, a small group of bigger landowner exists, often the same important persons of the village. Sometimes big local landowners do not live in the villages but in Sar-e Pul, Shibergan or Mazar if not abroad. Secondly, a group of smaller landowners from the village or neighbouring villages possesses small plots of irrigated lands (in villages situated at a river) and some rainfed land. The majority of people who have access to land own some jerib of rainfed land, or, if at all, work as sharecroppers. Systems of land leasing and share cropping regulations found in the villages are manifold. The box next mentions three typical categories, but other kinds of agreements have been found. Numbers of landless people differ among villages but reach up to 50% in a village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Land Lease Regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to information from other NGOs, i.) and ii.) are fixed in a written contract, while variant iii) is fixed orally:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ejaara/aijara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The farmer leases the land for 5-10 years of the land owner for a fixed rent per year, e.g. 20 seer*/jerib/year. He is fully responsible for the cultivation and the harvest stays with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The land is borrowed from the land owner for x years and a certain sum of money deposited at the land owner. This collateral is taken back after the expiry of the contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the most popular form in the villages. Contracts are oral and made for one year. Differences among the forms refer to the provision of seeds and fertilizer as well as to the ratios of the harvest splitting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated land: seeds + fertilizer are provided by the tenant ⇒ harvest divided 50:50 (owner/tenant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain fed land: seeds + fertilizer are provided by the tenant ⇒ harvest divided 25:75 (owner/tenant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain fed land: seeds + fertilizer provided by land owner ⇒ harvest divided 50:50 (owner/tenant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In case of harvest failure, there is no regulation on who bares the risk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other means of access to land is by inheritance or by purchasing land. Land is inherited to the sons by equal shares. After generations, this leads to division into very small plots, insufficient to feed one household on subsistence. Purchasing land is not affordable for the large majority of the villagers unless they have access to external financial sources.

Other institutional arrangements concerning agricultural activities are the sharing of oxen and work force for land preparation by smaller landowners or sharecroppers while bigger
landowners hire daily wage labourers. Access to international aid distribution schemes of agricultural inputs, especially seeds, are also linked to question of ownership of land and oxen (see chapter Wheat annexed).

**Access to Water and Irrigation**

Water is a scarce resource both for drinking and for agricultural production. Clearly, the villages in the low dry lands of Sayyad province (Belanghor, Bazar Kami) face serious disadvantages compared to the villages that are situated near a river carrying water throughout the year.

Irrigated land comprises land seasonally flooded (mostly found in Sayyad) and land regularly watered with irrigation canals from the river (in Kohistanat, Sar-e Pul and Darzob districts). A common traditional institution for water management is the Miraab. Miraabs exist on different levels. E.g. in Sar-e Pul the miraab is responsible for the inter-provincial arrangement organising an alternating shift which provides 10 days of water from the river to Kohistanat and Sar-e Pul and another 10 days to Shibergan. Upstream, the system of miraab's ends in Lachman (Kohistanat district). From here, no control on water take off exists. It was explained not to be necessary as the river has enough water in the upper parts the whole year through and in the narrow valley, only small sizes of irrigated land exist. On the other hand, it was mentioned in the department of irrigation that the amount of river water is not sufficient, especially not for the down stream parts direction to Shibergan. It was also stated that the size of the irrigated land area with the given amount of river water could not be enlarged.

On village level, generally two types of miraab's are in charge of distribution and supervision of irrigation water (see box). Nevertheless, village elders and commanders also play pivotal roles in deciding who has access to water for irrigation.

Maintenance is firstly organised by the miraab who approaches the village shura/elders. They gather the people benefiting from irrigation water, usually the landowners and sharecroppers. The department of irrigation does not see itself responsible for maintenance. Conflicts on water exist on different scales within villages and between villages and regional areas. In this case, the department of irrigation states it has no capabilities to monitor this issue.

**Migration**

Migration of men on a seasonal basis within Afghanistan or to Pakistan and Iran is still very common. People usually migrate abroad illegally and for crossing the border smugglers have to be paid. It was said that it takes at least three months of work in Iran to recover these costs.

In all villages people reported that migration had decreased in 2003 due to the excellent harvest and working opportunities. However, it was also confirmed that in 2004 migration has started to increase again. Especially when landless families expect a bad harvest, young men migrate in order to support the family's subsistence.
4.3 Capital Assets, Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes in the villages

The two villages visited in Sar-e Pul District, Adring and Ziri Kamar, are situated in the pre-mountainous area at the bottom of Kohistanat valley. The climate is dry and hot during summer. Between December and April, the villages expect rain or snow fall (15cm). Both villages are located next to the river and the main road leading up to Kohistanat. Access to/from Sar-e Pul Centre is still relatively easy.

**ADRING**

Adring has a considerable amount of arable and pasturelands. With 500 to 700 families\(^\text{11}\), it belongs to the bigger villages situated along the road to Kohistanat. The inhabitants are Tajik/Aimok. At the first talk with the village elders, the changes which occurred the last two years where assessed positively. They claimed, "The situation has improved by 30%".

**Security Situation**

Most families had left the village in 1985 due to the war. People slowly started to come back from 1991 onwards. Although in 2002 still some fighting occurred near the village, meanwhile most of the original inhabitants have come back. Families that stayed in the village during conflicts reported that the worst was that their livestock was repeatedly stolen or got lost. Since 2002, the situation has remained quite and at present, the village elders consider the place as safe. The commander is also undisputed authority of the village.

**Housing**

The elders remember that formerly the village only consisted of simple houses made of earth and dung. Meanwhile nicely plastered houses are eye catching at the village entrance. One of these houses right at the entrance of the village belongs to the commander. However, construction and renovation works such as painting, installation of new windows etc. was observed throughout the village.

**Water**

Inhabitants use the river water for drinking despite being considerably dirty as Adring is situated in the lower part of the valley. Within the last two years, the villagers started to dig for ground water on their own. Although they have so far reached levels of about 30 m. depth, they have not been successful. In addition, people from mountainous areas come to Adring to fetch water.

Irrigation is widely practiced. Adring is included into the general 10-days-shift of water for Sar-e Pul province, respectively Shibergan. This obliges them to close their irrigation canals every 10 days. A miraab looks after the correct distribution of water from the canals. He also organised the construction of water reservoirs in the last year. Through the rehabilitation of one main canal by the GAA project (described below) the irrigated surface was enlarged. Additionally it was reported that in the last year some people on own initiative installed water pumps in order to pump water from the river or the canals into their fields. Only landowners, who are also considered the proprietors of the canals, may give the permission for additional extraction of water from the canals. This leads to

\(^{11}\) Numbers given for households or families depend on if counting compounds as families or each subfamily.
disputes. If severe conflicts over water for irrigation arise, the commander is called to negotiate between the parties and takes final decisions.

**Agriculture**

The numbers of jerib of the village’s irrigated land differed considerably from one statement to the other, lying between 300 (information from commander) and 2000 jerib (as to some farmers). Mostly it is planted with wheat. About 100 jerib were said to be planted with trees in gardens, from this about 20% are fruit trees and 80% poplar. Vineyards in gardens comprise around 80 jerib. It was mentioned that during the drought, many trees had been cut down and the areas had been replaced with wheat. Rainfed land belonging to the villagers was estimated at around 15,000 jerib. Here, foremost wheat, barley and flax are planted.

![Chart 5: Production from irrigated and rainfed land according to villagers in Adring](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest 2003 (good year)</th>
<th>Harvest bad year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated</td>
<td>Rainfed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>雨润</td>
<td>雨润</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainfed</td>
<td>Irrigated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 5% of the people in Adring are considered bigger landlords. Some land belongs to rich families in Sar-e Pul and to Pashtun people (“Talebs”) now living in Pakistan. Sharecropping is common, the harvest on irrigated land usually being shared at a 50/50 ratio, on rainfed land at a ratio of 1/3 or 1/4. A typical example farmers said was that if one villager owns 5 jerib irrigated and some rainfed land, then usually 5-6 families work together and share the harvest. Including the sharing systems the elders stated that about 90% of the people have access to land. Compared to other villages, this is a high percentage. The chart above shows the importance of having access especially to irrigated lands given the frequent droughts over the years.

All interviewees stated that the planted area and production has increased considerably during the last two years. Reasons mentioned were besides the favourable climate the considerable amounts of distributed seeds by the GAA Food Security Project and the increased number of oxen.

Wheat, as in the entire study area, is the main crop, planted on rainfed and irrigated land. All people stated still having wheat stored from last year’s harvest, different from 2002 when no wheat storage was possible. However, people expect a bad harvest for 2004.

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12 For detailed information on wheat, please refer to the Annex.
The following diagram shows the general relation of different income sources as perceived by a large group of farmers. It shows the dominance of wheat when comparing income from agricultural production and the importance of below mentioned migration for household incomes.

**Chart 6: Different income sources and their relation in Adring**

![Pie chart showing different income sources]

It has to be noted that poppy has not been considered as framers draw the diagram. It was indicated however, that poppy could make up to 50% and more of a family income, a figure that was also confirmed by interviewed women. People said that everybody who has the chance plants poppy, foremost on irrigated land and within the compounds, some on rainfed land. It was mentioned that during harvest (April, May) it is very difficult to find labour for fieldwork since daily labourers can receive 300 - 400 Afghani/day for poppy harvesting.

Another exercise conducted with a large group of farmers in Adring was relating average workload, farmers’ income and general food availability in the households.

**Table 3: Timeline comparing work load, food availability and income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workload/activities</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food availability&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>little&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> The table was done in Adring in a group with about 50 men. Stones were used and circles drawn to indicate relations. The farmers discussed differences among them but then agreed to show their general picture.

<sup>b</sup> The ranking of food availability indicates (to the understanding of the people) how much of their own product is available.

<sup>c</sup> little income in this months mainly from melon, grapes and other fruits.
Livestock

"Today we have 200 pairs of oxen, at the end of drought only 10 pair were left" people proudly announced. Although these figures might not be exact, they show a common feature encountered everywhere: since the drought two years ago, livestock increased significantly. People have thus built up a major asset.

In Adring, about 20 shepherds are taking care of different herds. One interviewed shepherd outlined the following picture: last year he had 50 sheep and 50 goats, this year the herd has doubled. He hopes to have 70 more sheep and goats next year. He said that the other shepherds have similar numbers and have the same hopes. Shepherds of three different herds interviewed on the hills next to Adring gave the following information: One herd consists of 300-350 animals from different families, whereas some bigger herds are from one or two rich people only. They also herd for families that only have 2-5 sheep.

As the region is rather hilly than mountainous, people prefer sheep to goats. Sheep are mainly used for meat and wool. Milk is less important however and used by the shepherds themselves and is part of their salary. About 5-10 Karakul sheep are among the herds, but no special Karakul skin production takes place. The owners cut the wool themselves once a year. Lambs can be sold at Sar-e Pul market at fluctuating market prices (see chapter prices). Only male animals are sold. The shepherds currently receive cash 40-50 Afghani/day after the lambs are sold, respectively they receive the equivalent amount of lambs.

The pasturelands were obviously already very dry around Adring. The shepherds said that they will go up to Kohistanat, Qala-e Shahr region, within the next two weeks. On their way up, commanders sometimes take one or two sheep for passage. Correspondingly, in early spring starting from February onwards, shepherds from upper Kohistanat lead their herds down to this region and further using the pastures as their pastureland is covered by snow.

Cattle, which were not seen on the hills surrounding Adring is said to be kept on better pastures. It is not taken to Kohistanat because of daily milking.

Migration

During the drought many people migrated, most of them to Kunduz area. All these people are back now. The villagers stated that as a whole, from every second family in the village one or two men are working abroad, in Iran and Pakistan. As a tendency, since last year less people are migrating.

Other assets

The village disposes of three mills which are used by people from other villages too, e.g. from Ziri Kamar. There is no doctor in the village, but one nurse who learned her skills during her time with the Mujahedin in the mountains. For medical aid, most people go to Sar-e Pul. Asked whether any other especially qualified people could be found in the village, the elders neglected. On the other hand, when entering Adring villagers were seen repairing the bridge that connects the village to the main road themselves. Some small shops in the village exist but have not been visited.

Project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure

Adring has participated and benefited in two ways in the Rural Rehabilitation Project. People were firstly involved in the extensive nearby rehabilitation activities of the main road leading up Kohistanat valley (levelling, gravelling, building of bridges and causeways). Secondly, the project supported the rehabilitation of a main irrigation canal situated along the main road. Through the construction of a stone and concrete wall the
continuous flooding of the main road could be stopped. From this canal sub-canals split which provide irrigation water to some 500 jerib (numbers given differed).

60 people were involved in the Cash for Work scheme for road/bridge construction and 35 people for the canal rehabilitation. The road rehabilitation activities were announced through the mosque as a working opportunity for poor and needy people. During the harvest season, it was very difficult to find labour. Former workers said they received 100 Afghaniday as unskilled labourers. They also stated that they have learned some skills like plastering of small cracks with cement. The employment period varied from one man claiming that he worked 250, a second 90 and a third only for two days.

The responsibility for the maintenance of the canal remains somehow unclear. As people stated, and was observed, that further repairs of the canal intake and canal walls were necessary in order to protect the road from further flooding, this question is important. Villagers said that somehow, all people benefiting from the canal should be responsible but no one is directly in charge.

The road rehabilitation resulted in reducing travel time to Sar-e Pul from 90 to 60 minutes. Besides, today more transport facilities are available. From Adring presently three to four cars leave every morning to Sar-e Pul.

**ZIRI KAMAR**

Ziri Kamar is one of 14 sub-villages under the umbrella of Qala-e Sukhta village. It is situated along the river approximately 5 Km above Adring. The same approximate 50 (Tajik) families live here as two years ago.

**Security situation**

Villagers hailed the improvement of security as the last fighting dates back to 2002. Besides increased political stability also the reduction of the commander’s influence was perceived positively by some (see issue of taxing below).

**Housing**

Villagers stated that seven houses and the village mosque were built since last year. The village has three carpenters; one of them is in Iran however. Another one classifies himself as not very skilled but says that since the drought has deprived him from his income in agriculture and given that there is ongoing demand for construction in Qala-e Sukhta he makes his living from the new activity.

**Water**

In the village, neither wells nor kandas (water reservoirs) exist. The same as two years ago, river water is used for drinking and irrigation. In the villages of Qala-e Sukhta, two miraab are responsible, one for the upper, the other for the lower villages. The villages' elders elect the miraab responsible for Ziri Kamar every year. He receives a written contract that entitles him to receive payment (in kind) for his work from the landowners. As a principle, the elders do not elect large landowners in order to disincentive partiality and increase acceptance of the miraab's ruling by all. If he does a bad job, a new one is elected. His absence, villagers say, would cause trouble. If the miraab's orders are not followed or in case of conflict, then the miraab approaches the elders asking for a final judgement.
Agriculture

The size of the irrigated land has not changed significantly but some ownership of land. Landlords from Adring owning land in Ziri Kamar continue to sell lands since the drought to landlords situated in Sar-e Pul. Major crops on irrigated land are wheat, poppy, and to a lesser extent grapes, cotton, clover, maize, linseed, sesame, mung beans, and millet, depending also on the possibilities of planting a second crop after wheat. Rainfed land was estimated at 1100 jerib, this mostly owned by the villagers. Besides wheat, major crops planted are barley, flax and sesame. Fields lying idle during the drought are now under cultivation again. About 20 families in the village have no land, showing no improvement in the last two years.

A sharecropper from Ziri Kamar reports:

"I share hold 15 yerib of irrigated land, 13 yerib with wheat and 2 yerib with poppy. My landlord decides what I should plant. I received the contract because I provide the seeds myself, no technical means are provided by him. I have one ox. To plough the land I borrow another from my neighbour. In turn, he uses mine when needed. Seeds were given to me by the UN [means GAA]. I have a card for that. Last year I also got two bags of fertilizer [also distributed by GAA] which I applied on 1 yerib. This year I use no fertilizer at all [no more fertilizer was distributed], I plant the wheat and trust in Allah. Dung I don't put on the field, I need it all for making fire and heating in winter. Weeding I do not do, it takes to much time. The land is watered 4 times until the harvest of the wheat. Our Miraab watches that we use the irrigation water only for two days each time. I can only plant a second crop after wheat if there is enough water left for our region during dry season, this year probably not; anyway it's the landlord who decides. Land will lie idle until autumn wheat planting [winter wheat]. When I have threshed the wheat, the landowner comes to take his share, 50/50, both corn and straw. Before that, I give 10% of the corn-straw if he wants- to the commander. The miraab also comes to the same place as the landlord and the commander; he takes another 2 kg per yerib. Another 4 seer/family I have to give to the mosque after harvest, to the mullah. If we do not give that to the mullah, he will not teach our children. The corn left is only for own consumption."

Poppy harvest was described to be good that year. Four different varieties have been planted. Poppy requires seven times irrigation within the vegetation period. In average, the harvest is 4 Kg juice/jerib. Last year, the price per kg was approximately 14.000 Afghani/kg but decreased to 2000 Afghani/kg since. Supposedly, this decrease is due to some big traders that were caught lately. People from Ziri Kamar stated that last year several people in nearby villages made a lot of money with poppy, earning up to 10.000 USD each and having bought cars.

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13 All detailed figures and information on poppy should be handled with care, as people are aware of the fact that the production is not allowed. Therefore, the study team did not insist on questions on that topic. Information was given "by the way" and not crosschecked.
Gardens

Only a few gardens belong to this village part of Qala-e Sukhta. One garden situated directly at the village entrance is mainly planted with poplar. The owner inherited the land from his grandfather. Parts of the garden are prepared for planting new trees. A small part is planted with clover for feeding animals.

Livestock

One boy of the village takes care of the livestock. It was difficult to get clear figures as information differed considerably. One source said that there are 10 – 15 pair of oxen in the village, two years ago in the first study 7 pairs have been reported.

Migration

About 30 young men that have left the village some years ago are still abroad. Most of them work in the same place Iran, mainly in construction such as canalisation. Four men came back as last years harvests of wheat were good. The villagers claimed that per year one person sends an average of 30,000 - 100,000 Afghani to his family in the village.

Other assets

School tents exist in Qala-e Sukhta but not in the village part of Ziri Kamar. Only the boys attend classes, girls from Ziri Kamar are not allowed. Only one professional teacher is working in the school, which covers about 4000 households. In winter, boys from Ziri Kamar are taught classes in the mosque.

There is one new telephone in the village that allows inhabitants to keep contact to family members working abroad. One of the women reported that she received a call from Iran the day before.

For medical care, a doctor is present in Ziri Kamar. He was already there two years ago.

The “doctor” from Ziri Kamar reports:

“I have learned treating sick people many years ago in Pakistan where I was trained as a community health worker. I provide basic medical checks, give people advice and sell medicine to them. If I cannot treat my patients, I send them to Sar-e Pul. The government does not employ me. I do not charge for treatment, but make my living only by selling antibiotics. My patients come from 14 surrounding villages, 4000 families live there and some patients come 20 km by feet and donkey to my house. My patients are 60% women, 20% men and 20% children, both boys and girls. Women often have problems of anaemia after delivery. Main diseases encountered here are related to problems of water sanitation, for example Salmonella and Pneumonia. This year, nearly 300 people come to my house every month. The number has increased since last year when it was in average 200 people. I advise people to boil drinking water and not to eat food from the day before. However, they hardly follow my advice, mainly because gas is expensive for them, e.g. 200 Afghani for one bottle of gas, and wood is scarce and expensive too. The increase of patients last year was due to the good harvest in the villages and the availability of cash.”

Figures from a Poplar-farmer in Ziri Kamar

For a bigger tree, the owner gets about 500 Afghani. He sells it within the villages or to traders that come from Sar-e Pul with lorries. Since he needs money for his new marriage, he will now sell all his poplar trees. For all his trees, he will get 170,000 Afghani. For the sale, he went to the commander in the morning who receives 10% from this deal. Later he will plant new poplar.
Project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure

A big sub-project was the construction of a new bridge for the Kohistanat main road crossing the Daryai Sar-e Pul river in near distance of the village. People from Ziri Kamar have been involved in the CFW activities of the project. Ziri Kamar villagers themselves decided to share the work equally among the men organising a scheme that every ten days eight people from the village participated, then the next eight and so on.

Villagers (men) stated that the bridge is very helpful. Formerly, the route valley downwards was sometimes impassable (the bridge crosses the river on a very narrow place with mountains on both sides). Now they can pass also in winter and during the rainy season, either to Sar-e Pul or to the mills in Adring. Road rehabilitation guarantees the access to Sar-e Pul the entire year and travel time by car was reduced by half an hour. The new bridge additionally easies animal transports up and down Kohistanat. In addition, safety has increased since the difficult passage formerly attracted robbers too.

FAIZABAD

Faizabad is some 35 km further up the valley belonging to Kohistanat district. Faizabad with its approximately 170 households is situated 67 km south of Sar-e Pul and 4 km south of Jarghan, a major market centre of Kohistanat. Due to the higher altitude of about 1500 m above sea level, the climate is slightly different to Adring and Ziri Kamar. Peak temperatures are lower in all months and snow covers the fields in the mountains from January until March. This postpones the start of the cultivation period compared to the lower located research villages. Horticulture (fruit trees, poplar, grapes) plays a much more important role than in the lower villages.

Small excursus Kohistanat

Kohistanat is a remote and mountainous area, with plenty of springs and rivers in different valleys but very difficult access conditions. Villagers in Faizabad categorize the different areas and stretches from the lower valley upwards as follows:

- Adring – Lahman: main crops: wheat, barley, melon, sesame, flax, maize, vineyards, more irrigated lands
- Sardarreh – Pasnai: horticulture very important, then wheat
- Ganjia – Khaval: more rainfed land, more livestock, live 10% better then lower regions, important: wheat, horticulture
- Cherass onwards: only rainfed land
- During drought worst affected: Adring, Sardarreh
- In good years better harvests between Ganjia-Khaval
- Trade between villages: mainly onion, melon, potato

Security

All interviewed persons highlighted that security has improved significantly within the last two years. Some interviewees see this as a success of the central government.

\[14\] Former GAA food security project distributed seeds and inputs according to the number of oxen in a village.
Agriculture

Rainfed land is situated on both sides of the mountain ranges. According to farmers, prices for rainfed land increased significantly since the drought. Rainfed land is sub-classified into three categories: e.g.: 1st level: 5000 Afg., 2nd level: 3000, 3rd level 1000.

The size of irrigated land itself did not change, but through the canal rehabilitation of the project, idle land is presently again under irrigation. Asked about changes in agriculture, people answered that during the drought about 60°/o of villagers suffered from hunger, now everybody has some wheat stocked or can afford to buy it. Whereas during drought wheat was imported from the upper valley and abroad, last year wheat was traded in the village (60°/o) and sold abroad (40%)¹⁵. Selling it in Sar-e Pul makes not much sense to them as the price in the village is only little below those in Sar-e Pul market centre, the difference not covering transport costs.

Livestock

Especially numbers of sheep and goats have risen since the drought. A group of farmers assessed that numbers have tripled since. During day, the animals are pasturing in the nearby mountains. Cows and goats are brought to the village in the evenings for milking; sheep stay on the pastures for up to six months only used for wool and meat production. Sheep production is valued most. Lambs are mostly sold on the local market amongst the villagers. They only sell in Sar-e Pul, when no buyer is available and people need cash urgently.

Gardens

Study 1 lists the crops and fruits grown in gardens (peaches, apricots, grapes, almonds, walnuts, potatoes, vegetables, poplars, lucerne, hashish). Obviously, poppy has to be added to this list, as all gardens were full of flowering poppy plants. Although the demand (due to construction works) and the price for poplar respectively poplar has increased in the last two years, production has only risen slightly (villagers estimate a 4-5% increase in production). This was also related by some farmers to the price for poplar, which cannot compete with poppy.

A big poplar tree (13-14 years old) can be sold for 3000 Afghani, a smaller (6 years old) for about 400 Afghani. The latter is more commonly put up the market. Wood is sold within the village or to traders that come with trucks. Prices are roughly the same.

Generally, garden land has also increased a little due to better irrigation facilities. About 50% of the families from the village have garden lands. Besides poppy, cash income is from grapes/raisins, walnuts and poplar. This year, freezing in late spring will lead to a sharp decrease of grape and walnut harvest however.

Gardens can also be sharecropped, often long-term leasing agreement are applied. Then two third of the harvest goes to the landowner, one third to the sharecropper. Seedlings for trees are generally free; no buying/selling activities exist. A leasing agreement -a written contract, signed by witnesses- stipulates what is being planted. In case of quarrels, parties address the arbob.

Irrigation water for horticulture is said to be no problem as enough water in the river is available. In Faizabad, no regulations on water outtake from the river exist and there is no miraab in the village.

¹⁵ Keeping in mind that trading with wheat usually means bartering.
Social stratification and income generation

The village elders and the mullah classified the social stratification as follows: 170 households are divided into 30 richer, 50 middle-income and 90 poor households. The criteria for poor households were being landless or only accessing 1-1.5 jerib. A typical middle-income household is described as having few livestock and access to some land. Comparing these numbers to those of study 1, shows that no or only little changes within the stratification of the village have taken place since 2002.16

Landless people usually make their income as labourers on rf and ir land. As daily wage labourers, they receive 100 Afghani plus three meals each day. Sometimes they are also paid in kind. Besides working on land, they gather wood sold to other households. Most of them just have one donkey; meanwhile some managed to have some sheep.

The chart below shows general sources of cash income in Faizabad. It compares a good year to the current year where freezing has havoced harvest from fruit trees. Excluding poppy from this exercise, the village receives cash foremost from raisins, almonds, walnuts and poplar. One trader from the village brings the products to Sar-e Pul, Mazar and even to Kabul markets. Other crops are mainly used for own consumption respectively bartered within or with neighbouring villages.

In a group discussion with middle-income farmers, the following answers were given to the question: “What would you do in case of a new drought?”

1. Borrow wheat from richer people and pay back later (borrowed is at daily market price, but have to pay back double at harvest time)
2. Sell livestock (all)
3. Sell land (those who have)
4. Last option is to leave.

16 At that time, elders divided the village into 50 rich, 50 middle and 100 landless households. They have applied very similar criteria.
As the same group was asked, “what would you do with some additional income?” Answers were marrying another wife, repairing houses and providing better comfort as buying carpets etc.

Among the interviewed farmers, some had debts during the drought but all of them managed to pay them back within the last year indicating that this group has recovered quickly from the last crises.

**Migration**

Overall, about 20 men from the village are in Iran. Two years ago, the respective figure was 50. This year some men decided to leave after the freezing of vineyards and fruit trees in spring.

**Other assets**

The mullah of the village, himself also teacher and head of CDC, started a girls school this year in a room within his compound. He teaches one class with girls aged between 6-9. Boys are taught in the mosque. Teaching includes the ABC, counting, religion, painting, Dari, sports.

Compared to 2002, the village lost one important asset. The water mill was destroyed during a flood. According to the villagers, it cannot be reconstructed because the water level for the intake is much lower than in former times. Nowadays people have to go to Jarghan. There however, besides having to pay higher usage fees (the miller receives one seer for each 20 seer threshed) they claim to have to pay bribes.

The number of village shops has increased. Two years ago six existed, today Fayzabad has ten shops more and one is under construction.

**Project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure**

Project activities in Fayzabad comprised the rehabilitation of the main road, rehabilitation of an irrigation canal (with concrete) and construction of a wall for riverbank protection as floods have continuously destroyed lands situated along the river.

30-40 people were involved in the road and canal works. Randomly chosen interviewees all confirmed that they have worked for the project, two men e.g. during 60 days, receiving 100 Afghani/day. One person called ‘master’ was involved in special works, learned dealing with concrete and building walls. People said that they applied skills learned after the end of the project in construction, e.g. building the fundament of a house and repairing the stonewall of the mosque.

Through canal rehabilitation about 200 jerib are irrigated additionally, increasing Fayzabad’s entire amount of irrigated land to 500 jerib. Irrigation is mainly used for the vineyard gardens. About 20 – 25 families benefit from this canal, from these the richest man alone has more than 50 jerib, and most of the others are sharecroppers.

Responsible for organising the canal maintenance is the master. Landowners benefiting from the canal selected him for this task. Sharecroppers might provide work force for the maintenance as part of their contract with the landowners. Only some weeks before, the master collected from each landowner 50 Afg./jerib and then organised reparation works for the canal.

Also due to the road rehabilitation, traffic and number of trucks increased. No one owns trucks in the village but it is easy to stop them on the road. The time from Faizabad - Sar-e Pul now takes ca. 4-6h by truck, before it could take from morning until dawn.
**CDC**

The CDC consists of six men and three women with the mullah as chairperson. They see themselves responsible for carrying out the NSP project and being the interface for organisations approaching the village. Internally the CDC holds weekly meetings in the mosque, where discussions about problems and difficulties in the village take place. Three members participated in a training provided by the project and referred to it as very helpful.

Four projects were explored in the context of the NSP programme: A better bridge connecting the village with the gardens on the other side of the river, water pools for collecting water in the village, an electric power station, and carpet weaving facilities for women. In a discussion amongst the CDC members, it was agreed to prioritise the water pools, so that the entire village has easy access to drinking water. Women in particular will derive benefits, as until now they have to fetch drinking water from the river down to the riverbed. Some go up to ten times a day, each stretch taking 20 min. forth and back.

To organise the maintenance of the pools in the future the mullah sees himself responsible being the chairperson of the CDC.

Female CDC members highlighted positively that they now have a forum where they can raise their issues such as the desire for support of carpet weaving.

**KHAVAL**

Khaval, furthest village visited along the main road and the river running down Kohistanat valley, is situated 97 km south of Sar-e Pul at 1800m altitude. It is approximately 10 km far from Pasnai, district capital of Kohistanat.

**Security**

Tow years ago people described the conditions in the village somehow martial as troops of Jumbesh and Jamiat commanders periodically clashed. This time, it was stated “people became more co-operative, with government and other institutions as well”. A reason stated for increased security was the good working opportunities in the last two years, including those provided by aid projects. Improved access through road rehabilitation allowing security forces from Sar-e Pul to reach the area within one day was also mentioned positively. Refugees from areas in upper Kohistanat, which lived in Khaval two years ago had left end of 2002 to their villages.

**Households**

Khaval is one of the bigger villages with about 500 families living there. Inhabitants increased since 2002 when about 420 families were reported. Last year, according to information of the village elders, 80 families came back as IDPs from other Afghan areas. Again, construction and renovation works were observed in the entire village.

**Agriculture**

The village has broad areas of rainfed lands, situated on the ridge of the mountains with good accessibility from the village. Mainly wheat is planted there. Irrigated land counts only about 300 jerib, including some small gardens. About 50 families have access to irrigated land, mostly the owners themselves work on the land, and about 15-20% is leased to sharecroppers.

Prices given for land are almost the same as in Faizabad: 50.000 Afg./1 jerib irrigated land, 5000 Afg./1 jerib rainfed land.
Gardens, directly attached to the houses, do not play an important role as in Faizabad. Only 1% of the families have timber to sell, others need the small amount they have for themselves. Mainly walnut and fruit trees are planted in the gardens with only around 10 families being involved in bigger production.

Livestock

Since the drought, livestock reportedly doubled every year. Two shepherds exist only for cows and bulls, there are numerous for sheep and goats. About 10 families gather and hire one person - often young boys - for herd keeping. The animals are presently in the upper mountains, only cows that give plenty of milk stay in the village. People prefer sheep, besides oxen for the work.

Social Stratification and Income Relations

Village elders stratified the village population in three tiers: 50 rich, 100 middle-income and 350 poor families. According to them, this relation has not changed within the last two years. Criteria for "middle-income" given were ownership of 10-20 sheep, at least one cow, and access to 20-30 jerib rainfed land. Classified as landless are only 5-10% of the village families, living from employment as daily labour.

A 'poor' man from Khaval reports:

"Parts of my compound are destroyed, because I sold wood from the roof during drought. But I am currently repairing it, some wood is placed in the yard. I worked in the project's intake and road construction, from the very beginning until the end. Normally, I work as a labourer harvesting wheat and barley. I get roughly 50 - 70 Afg per day and three meals. During harvest season, I receive 1.5 seer per day and the meals. I preferred the work in the project because it was paid in cash. I have two sons also working as daily labourers in the village. In spring, work opportunities start with construction. Usually I am paid in kind at 1 seer a day. Then comes the agricultural season/harvesting. Later I collect firewood for the winter. I have one donkey, my cow we had to sell two years ago in order to buy some wheat during drought."

Other assets

Three mills are in the village, all belonging to the son of the governor of Sar-e Pul. All villagers make flour there.

There is no clinic in the village but in the district capital Pasnai 10 km away. A problem encountered is that Pasnai clinic usually has no electricity and diseases that are more difficult cannot be treated there. For serious injuries, villagers therefore travel to Sar-e Pul. About five families have generators, which they also use for fishing with electricity. Others complain that they catch less fish since. The chairlady of the CDC is promoting the idea to start with fish breeding compounds.

Currently the school is in tents for the boys while the girls are taught in the mosque. Building a new school is the proposal selected by the CDC and construction is supposed to be finalised this year. An upper school is located in Pasnai, which approximately 50% of the boys attend afterwards.
20 small shops exist in Khaval, while two years ago there were 15, and during Taliban time 10. According to interviewed shopkeepers, business has improved a lot in Khaval, also because people had money from participating in the road construction.

A smith and a carpenter are also present in the village.

A restaurant/tea house has opened for travellers who want to eat and/or spend the night in Khaval. This clearly is a result of the increased traffic.

A shopkeeper in Khaval reports:

"My turnover doubles every year since I have opened three years ago. I live mostly from selling grains like wheat and rice, but also other goods for daily life. The goods I have sold over the years are basically the same, but some products diversify. Women for example, formerly only bought common black shoes (galosh), now I sell also purple ones they prefer. If people do not have money, I write it up. They pay me after harvest. This practice is continuously diminishing, but still exists."

Rural Infrastructure Project

Besides the rehabilitation of the main road, also in Khaval a main irrigation canal has been rehabilitated. The canal runs through the village and then some few hundred meters along a steep mountain. Project construction (with concrete) starts in the middle of the village. The previous stretch of the canal, villagers dug by hand. 70 people were working on road rehabilitation and canal construction each. Most labourers were former soldiers, who after laying down their arms had little other opportunity to earn money. As an own contribution they brought their donkeys to the work site. Wages were reportedly between 1.5 USD in winter and 2 USD during harvest season. As a comparison, rich landowners hire daily labour for up to 3 USD a day during harvest. All people employed were unskilled. Some learned how to mix concrete and building walls (stone masonry).

The canal works enlarged irrigated land from 100 to 300 jerib. Newly irrigated lands are situated at the far end of the village, valley downwards. It was stated that approximately 20 families own this land, with one so-called Pashtun man as the biggest landowner. He is never in the village but rents his land for a fixed price. Generally, it was reported that foremost the landowners initiated the canal works (project and village self-help).

Maintenance is a critical issue as the canal already existed once, but was destroyed by landslides. For canal cleaning, the village leaders say to gather the people that benefit from the canal. With smaller damages they can cope but for bigger ones external help is required.

The amount, frequency and safety of traffic increased significantly. At present, jeeps and trucks can pass anytime. Travel time to Sar-e Pul can be as quick as 6 hours by truck. Before, it could have been 18-20 hours, sometimes not possible to pass the river at all. The trucks – at times up to 30 pass through the village a day- mainly bring up goods and take timber or wheat on their way back. Meanwhile, also villagers in Khaval own two trucks. If 50 people gather then it makes its way down to Sar-e Pul.

For road maintenance, no responsible could be named. People said that in case the road is cut completely, then they would organise the reparation, not before.

CDC

The chairperson of the CDC is a woman, the wife from one mullah. As in Faizabad, mostly members of the traditional shura are represented in the CDC. Also some teachers have been elected however. For the time being, the village is waiting for the start of the chosen project, the building of the school. The women wanted frames for carpet weaving and for
repairing houses prioritised as projects. However, they agreed to the school building as it is also supposed to be for girls. Asked about the decision-making process in the village before the election of the CDC, people answered that there are not much differences. The same topics have been discussed, but there was no money available.

**BAZAR KAMI**

Bazar Kami belongs to Sayyad district and is located 30 km west of Sar-e Pul. The area is dominated by dry and hilly lands. The village comprises altogether 400 households and is divided into three parts, each situated next to a river, which at this time of the year does not carry water. A CDC has been established in the village.

**Security**

The last fighting was during the time of the Taliban when houses were burnt and looted and villagers from the upper part had to flee to the lower part. Nevertheless, general increased security within the last years was mentioned as a positive factor.

**Ethnicity**

Contrary to the first study when the lower part had not been visited, it was found out that in the big central part mainly Usbeks are living. In the small middle and upper part, people classify themselves as Arabs.

**Social stratification**

According to Shura members, the stratification in the village has not changed. In general, people said that living standards here have only increased a little during the past two years. One indicator for this indeed, is the significant increase in the number of marriages and the dowries which have to be brought up as the box below exemplifies.

**Marriages in Bazar Kami**

"There have been a lot of marriages last year". The price for marriage this year is 200,000 – 400,000 Afghani. Last year it ranged between 300,000 and 500,000. It is mostly paid in sheep and goats. It can take a man three to four years of work abroad to get the necessary dowry together. In a neighbouring village, there was a marriage this year, which had cost 1.5 millions Afghani.

**Water**

Lack of sweet water is the main problem of the village. Only during winter and early spring the river, rain and snow provide some water. Villagers reported that in former times a water reservoir existed. Around 25 wells, constructed by a donor agency, only provide salty water. Some of them have dried out completely.

Villagers cope with this situation applying several strategies:

- Collecting rainfall water with plastic sheets on the roofs of the houses could be widely observed in all village parts. The water flows into a storage within the compound. The storage in the visited compounds consisted of digged holes, covered by a wooden trapdoor and locked with a key. Water in these small places
looked rather dirty and was not enough to last for the summer. In another reservoir, water was caught from a hill slopes (see box below).

- Furthermore, men collect drinking water from Sar-e Pul and Sayyad by donkey. Depending on the number of donkeys, they have to go at least twice a week. However, the existence of the wells and of the reservoirs eases the situation, though still a lot of time and manpower is reserved for the collection of drinking water.
- People migrate seasonally to places where enough water is available.
- Villagers started own initiatives: In an upper village named Qaram Khanval, a spring exists. Together with people from Dari Band village, situated between Qaram Khanval and Bazar Kami, they want to construct a pipeline connecting the spring with the villages. Engineers from GAA have been approached to check the feasibility. Yet, first an agreement has to be achieved with Qaram Khanval village. Village elders respectively CDC is responsible for that.
- Prioritised projects within CDC were to dig wells or to bring potable water in tanks. The latter was not accepted by the NSP-program and equipment to dig wells is not available. According to villagers’ information, a well has to be drilled at least 170 m. in order to reach sweet water.

**Water reservoirs**

One family built a concrete reservoir in a hill at the end of the village. Plastic sheets spread out on the steep slope of the hill catches the rainwater running into the reservoir. The owners said that the amount of water would last for one family for an entire year. The carrying capacity is estimated to be at 50 m³. Construction costs were 2400 US$. The family built the water reservoir itself and other villagers admired this facility. As villagers where asked whether they had considered the option of replicating this experience within the CDC/NSP project, they said “we were just asked about our problems, not about the potentials.”

**Agriculture**

The mainly rainfed land is located on the hills around the village in walking distances of up to two hours. So-called irrigated land gets flooded in spring by rivers carrying sporadically water.

Fields are prepared in October or January/February. As everywhere, people reported that last years harvest was very good and they still have wheat stocked. Yields on rainfed land last year were around 30-40 seer/jerib (40 seer = 1.4t/ha). Some reported they have sold wheat at Sar-e Pul market. For 2004, they expect a very bad harvest. Besides the lack of rainfall, big problems with diseases exist.

Poppy is planted on irrigated land along the riverbed, dry canals and between compounds. Harvest has not been that good due to water constraints. The plants are still on the fields and used for fire material later on.

**Livestock Keeping**

Livestock has increased in the last two years. Besides owning some goats and sheep, several families in the village have cattle, oxen, horses and/or camels. Cattle and sheep are also kept on pastures far away. Cows and goats used for milking are mainly held close to the compounds. Children collect fodder for them in the surroundings. Some people remarked that their livelihood is based on livestock since relying only on rainfed land is too risky. As wheat harvest turns out to be bad this year, people already started to
sell livestock. Prices for livestock are consequently decreasing while wheat prices are increasing again.

Migration

Two years ago, villagers reported that still many people were in IDP camps or abroad. Many families have returned, which the increased number of inhabitants (about 50 households more) reflects. Nevertheless, still about 100 families are reported to live in Pakistan and Iran. Some interviewed persons announced to go back to refugee camps in case of a bad wheat harvest in 2004.

Seasonal migration comprises working abroad or in other Afghan areas. Interviewees stated that people use their social networks and especially send during the months of food shortage (Feb.-June) one member of the family to the cities in Northern Afghanistan (construction work) or Kunduz (rice harvest). Like in other villages, migration is increasing again in 2004 due to bad harvest expectations.

Summer tents

In one visited compound in the middle part of the village the women were constructing summer tents with raffia fibre. They are doing this every year. When harvest is collected (poppy and wheat), the family leaves with the tents to Sayyad Centre. There they find enough water and work every year for the same landlord. The men work on his fields, the women process wool. In autumn, they come back to Bazar Kami.

Other assets

The next clinic is in Sar-e Pul. Access improved within the last two years due to road rehabilitation and increased transport facilities. Villagers meanwhile assess services in the clinic as quite good. Hygiene conditions in Bazar Kami are precarious, especially due to lack of water.

School facilities consist of two tents in the lower village. After one has broken down, classes are also taught in the mosque. Girls are not going to school at all.

Peace Winds Japan is active in the village. Men could find work in the road rehabilitation project of CoAR within the last year. Nevertheless, people complained about lack of support from both, the international community and the government. Frustration seemed having increased as villagers are facing a continuous drinking water crisis.

Project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure

Within GAA’s rural recovery project, a new road from Sayyad Centre to Bazar Kami was built. The road links Bazar Kami and about 50 more villages situated in the upper hills to Sayyad Centre and from there to Sar-e Pul. From Bazar Kami no daily workers were involved in the Cash for Work activities. Workers all came from Sayyad Centre.

Since Sayyad Centre is not a market town most people from Bazar Kami still use the old road to reach Sar-e Pul. Reasons to go to Sayyad are for drinking water, threshing wheat at the mill or visiting the waliswal. Most people however, still go by donkey as the most common transport facility.

CDC

14 CDC members were elected, including two women. No interference from commanders was reported. CDC members highlighted the election process as a positive experience. They are all well informed about the NSP programme. The former village representative has been elected CDC chairperson. Meetings take place regularly 1-3 times per week. At the meetings, they discuss village problems such as water and school.
Members say that decision-making procedures within the village have changed through CDC/NSP. Formerly, various representatives from different clans, mainly divided into Usbek (lower part) and Arabs, existed. Now they have a forum with rules and only one head represents all groups.

The CDC prioritised the construction of water reservoirs and pumps as its project.

**BELANGHOR**

Belanghor became a settlement of people originating from Kandahar some 130 years ago. It is located only 14 km southwest of Sar-e Pul in Sayyad district (15 km from Bazar Kami). The dry climate is the same with low hills dominating the landscape.

The study team made only a short stop on the way back using the old road from Bazar Kami to Sar-e Pul. The road itself has improved obviously through the rehabilitation work of the CoAR Project. At a first glance, the village appears the same as two years ago. Many houses are still in ruins. Rarely any construction work was observed. Only a water pool built next to the road and a well with hand pump was eye-catching.

**Ethnicity**

The only ethnic group in the village is Pashtun. Pastoralism and livestock keeping with temporary absence from the village is of major importance to the villagers. During winter, Kuchi (see box below) come to the village. Therefore, the number of households in the village vacillates.

**Water**

Water has remained the overriding village problem. The new water pool is half filled with green water, which the village has to buy from Sayyad. The water is delivered through irrigation canals, which link Belanghor to Sayyad. People said in a few days it will become yellow, bad smelling and then they cannot use it for drinking any longer. Furthermore, people and members of the Shura complained that their discrimination is still the same: Upper Usbek villages water their fields abundantly while in Belanghor they receive no water at all because they are Pashtuns.

Similar to Bazar Kami, men have to spend a lot of time carrying water on donkey or camel from Sar-e Pul to the village. The described method collecting water with plastic sheets on the roofs could be observed in Belanghor too but to a lesser extent.

**Livestock**

Livestock is very important for Belanghor people for three reasons:

- Some rely on income as pastoralists, either as a semi-sedentary or as a (semi-)nomadic strategy.
- For Pashtuns livestock keeping is the most important livelihood strategy.
- Irrigated land is not available as risk buffer.

Livestock assets increased in the last two years, especially sheep and goats, with every family owning some. Mainly milk products are used and yoghurt is sometimes sold on the bazaars in Sar-e Pul and Sayyad. From February onwards, families that completely rely on livestock leave the village to better pasture areas.
Kuchi and other Semi Nomadic Strategies

Around Belanghor, one can find several Kuchi in their nomadic tents, herding their sheep, camels and chicken. During the dry season, they migrate to places where they can lease land or pasture their livestock. The number has increased in the last two years.

Income sources are:

- Sharecropping
- Dung collection/selling
- Milk products (qurut, yoghurt)
- Wool/wool products (tents)
- Sale of lambs

Qurut is the dried remaining part in buttermilk production, which is kept for winter and non-lactation periods as a protein source.

Agriculture

Like in Bazar Kami, people depend on rainfed land and on wheat as the main crop. They are expecting a bad wheat harvest this year too. Asked how they will cope with this situation, people responded that they first would sell livestock, than consider labour migration. Yet, some men stated that they could not leave their families alone because these cannot cope with the task of carrying the drinking water day by day from Sar-e Pul.

CDC

It was reported that people from international organisations came to the village and—in the eyes of the villagers—had promised many possible activities such as digging wells. Elections were held with voting cards. After the elections, the same people came again and announced to the villagers the elected chairperson and CDC members. Since then, nothing has happened.

DARZOB

Darzob, capital of the district of the same name is located in Jawzjan Province, ca. 100 km south of Shiberghan. It lies in a mountainous area at an estimated altitude of 1,700 m. Darzob town is a market and trading place. Since road rehabilitation has taken place, especially connecting Darzob with Maimana in Faryab Province, trade between Jawzjan and Herat increased, intensifying traffic in Darzob, even at night time.

Darzob district has 170 villages. From these, eight villages form the District Centre, called Darzob town. The main village, where also the Governor’s office is situated, is “Avlod” with about 800 households. The district Governor said that around 95,000 people populate the entire district.

Ethnicity

The only ethnicity in Darzob is Usbek. In several interviews, people remarked positively that Usbek language became accepted as an official language within the last two years.
Security

The situation was already described calm two years ago and still is. The district as the entire Jawzjan Province is without any exception under the governance of General Ghostum. He enjoys a very high reputation. The district commander is closely working with the governor and responsible for security. In the district, taxes are collected from every economic activity and transferred to the provincial capital Shibergan.

Housing

In Darzob, a lot of construction work is under way, and contrary to other villages, a remarkable number of large houses was built with concrete. Eye catching are also plenty of TV antennas on house roofs, which were not seen two years ago. According to interviewed people, up to 40% of people have a TV-set, 10% of them digital. TVs are run with generators since there is no public electricity supply. The existence of many generators was confirmed as at night many houses had light.

Water

Darzob is directly situated near a river and has a number of wells. Water is used for drinking and irrigation. Many people from other villages also come to fetch water from the river, some carrying it for 15 hours to their home places. There is one spring a little above Darzob town. Close by, the Rural Rehabilitation Project has rehabilitated a large intake for the irrigation scheme. The villages composing Darzob town altogether share approximately 4000 jerib of irrigated land. According to district officials, several springs and underground water exists in Darzob but need to be developed. Their main problem is the lack of equipment and skilled people.

Water rules between Darzob and Kosh Tepa

The river from Darzob flows down to Kosh Tepa district, an obviously dry and drought-prone area. In Kosh Tepa, the river is the only source for drinking water. Generally, when the river reaches larger villages in Kosh Tepa there is not much water left. There is an agreement between the districts saying that Darzob opens its intakes from the main canals for 15 days, and then they are closed for 13 days for water use in Kosh Tepa. On the day the study team visited Darzob, the miraab from Kosh Tepa arrived complaining that in Darzob water is taken from the river although it is the turn of Kosh Tepa. The miraab said that at times but not regularly, he gets in contact with the Department of Irrigation in Shibergan. However, in case of difficulties he says, the usual way is to approach the commander, who then deals with the respective institutions.

Agricultural Cultivation

Agriculture is the major activity in the district. From 40000 ha in the entire district of Darzob, 90% is rainfed land with wheat and barley being the most important crops. Other crops are melon/water melons, peas, linseeds, sesame, and pistachios as well as tomatoes and maize within the compounds.

Similar to the other visited regions, poppy is grown mainly in the gardens but also on some plots on the agricultural lands.
Livestock

Livestock plays an important role in Darzob and increased in the last years. Villagers estimated that after Taliban time and the drought only 10% of all animals remained. Until today, they were able to restock their herds reaching approximately 60% of former livestock numbers.

This year, people fear a new drought and worry about fodder becoming scarce. Whereas last year animal stocks were increasing, this year people rather start to sell animals. Prices are going down for livestock in Darzob too. Another mentioned problem by a group of farmers is the need of veterinary services, as they want to improve livestock breeding.

Some farmers are also involved in Karakul sheep production but they described it not highly specialised. Their most important problem is again the lack of veterinary services as Karakul skin production is demanding.

A livestock market exists in Darzob serving also by nearby villages.

Migration

During Taliban times, 70-80% of the village population fled. Since then, in general migration decreased. During the last two years, around 3000 families have come back to Darzob district. Last year, most people stayed restraining even from temporary migration, as they could find good working opportunities. This year, more people leave again expecting a bad harvest and insufficient daily wage labour opportunities.

Market and Small Businesses

Darzob is a market centre for the district, if not for the region, as Kohistanat inhabitants also cross the mountains to sell and buy products, namely dried fruits, wheat, barley and other garden products. Important agricultural products traded locally are Karakul skins, wool, beans, sesame, and flax. Last year also some wheat was sold. The estimated number of 75-100 small shops existing in 2002 has increased. The shopkeepers buy products in Mazar, Shibergan, close by from the farmers and frequently from traders passing by after road rehabilitation. A station for trucks exists as well. Besides all kind of goods for daily life offered here, also two electronic shops have opened lately (see box).

Other assets

According to the district governor, two clinics are in the town, one run by the government for many years and the other established by 'Save the Children's Fund US'. Services were said to be sufficient. Yet, for serious diseases, people go to Shibergan.

More than 20 schools with 6000 - 10.000 students exist in the district, according to information from the district governor's office. However, only two of these schools are
equipped while the others consist of UNICEF tents. A high school (12 years schooling) is located in the centre. Boys and girls attend classes.

Additionally, 150 mosques are existing in the district with a new big one under construction in the central village next to the governor’s office.

A project of the Irish NGO Goal supports women in handicrafts and carpet weaving. Carpets are for their own use but some are also sold in Shibergan.

**Project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure**

The road from Shibergan to Darzob has been partly rehabilitated by the Irish organisation GOAL already two years ago. Additional works on this stretch have been carried out by the GAA project. GAA also supported the improvement of the road leading over the mountains to Faryab province. Two years ago, this road was impassable most of the year. Travel time by car to Shiberghan has meanwhile been reduced to 3-4 hours and to Maimana/Faryab Province 7-8 hours.

The traditional irrigation scheme in Darzob has been partly destroyed by a big flood a few years ago. Due to project rehabilitation of an intake (concrete) and a main canal with two bigger sub-canals supposedly 1000 jerib can be additionally irrigated adding up to 4000 jerib totally for the eight villages of Darzob town. The additionally watered fields and gardens were already watered before the flood. Detailed information on land ownership could not be obtained during talks with district governor, commander and shura members. The deputy district mayor estimates that 4000 households profit from the additional water. The miraab claimed that four villages with around 2000 families are benefiting. Others mentioned mainly Avlod families with their small gardens benefit from the canal. Yet, water is used not only for irrigation purposes but also for drinking and washing.

For the construction of the intake and canals, 40 people were involved in the Cash for Work programme. The poorest people were chosen for the work opportunity and reportedly received 2 USD per day.

The governor and miraab claim that by themselves, they can only provide maintenance for small damages. In such cases, the village elders respectively the governor organises the people and activities. Usually smaller landowners participate themselves and bigger landowners hire workers. If a flood would destroy the scheme again, then the maintenance has to be carried out by NGOs again. They claim not having the financial and technical means to do it themselves.

**JEGDALIK**

On the way back from Darzob to Shibergan, the study team made a short trip to Jegdalik village situated in a mountainous area. After road construction, it takes 40 minutes to reach the village from the main road, and 75 minutes from Darzob. The new and only road linking Jegdalik and six other villages to the main road was built by GAA.

Jegdalik has 50 compounds with around 200 families living there. Mostly they rely on rainfed land. Small parts of irrigated land exist watered by a spring from the mountains. A reservoir collecting water from the spring was built in the village by another project for storing drinking water. This reduced drastically the availability of irrigation water and therefore villagers were unsatisfied with its construction.

**Project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure**

The new road has connected seven villages to the main road from which Jegdalik is the first. Altogether 1700 families profit from the road. Before, the only mean of transport to reach Darzob was by donkey, which took 3 hours. Villagers had approached the district
governor of Darzob many times lobbying for a road. As GAA started its project activities and approached the governor, he pleaded for prioritisation of this road construction.

They have no car in the village, but meanwhile a jeep passes regularly once a day taking people to Darzob and back. Every second day, there is a jeep available to Shibergan. In emergency cases, they call a jeep by Thuraya satellite phone. Renting a jeep costs 3000 Afghani.

People highly appreciate the new road. Jegdalik elders said that the road connection has raised their living conditions by 40%.

Besides reducing the travel time to Darzob town, other mentioned effects of the road are:

- “Before people came here and bought our goods. Now we bring it on a larger scale to the market and sell them ourselves”.
- Prices of land have doubled since road construction.
- One villager plans to build a small restaurant since he expects traffic to increase further.

Asked about maintenance, villagers acknowledged that heavy rainfall could destroy parts of the road. The village representative said he personally would organise people from all seven villages to repair the road. Since the road is vital to them, he has no doubt that people from all villages would participate in the rehabilitation works and work free.

“...the road has already saved three lives. Recently a pregnant woman was facing serious problems giving birth to twins. We brought her urgently to the hospital in Shibergan where the babies were born safely. The doctor said if she would have arrived an hour later, all three would have died.”
4.4 Changes in the Livelihood System of Women

Frame Conditions

Particular frame conditions for women in the remote rural areas did not change so far. Still traditional, conservative and patriarchal patterns, Islamic culture and the impact of Taliban policies determine women's access to capital assets and their livelihood strategies.

Nevertheless, livelihoods of women are of course affected by the general changes of frame conditions mentioned in the former chapters. Increased security and economic growth in the last two years also allowed for women to stabilise their livelihoods. Better access to health care facilities is especially important for women due to frequent pregnancies and their responsibility for children's health. Projects also influenced women's livelihood in a general way as food security for households was improved. In some villages, for example in Darzob, projects specially targeting women have been implemented, supporting income opportunities through small handicrafts.

Structures and Processes

Decision making in the village

Traditionally women have no access to decision making bodies. This definitely changed at least "by law" with the establishment of the CDC in some of the visited villages. Women are given the opportunity to be represented in an officially registered and accepted decision-making body of the village. During the interviews with members of the CDC, women and men joined, and often women assumed initiative in the dialogues. In some cases, women started to talk and complain much more openly only after the men had left (see box).

Another impression was that selected CDC project priorities did not match women's priorities - mostly mentioned were health services, carpet weaving frames, chicken farming - except in those villages with overwhelming lack of drinking water. Yet, women continue to push their ideas, for example in Khaval asking the study team to support them establishing fish breeding compounds.

The household

The compound (in summer including the gardens) is the area where women exercise strong influence although they are sometimes working on the fields too and are allowed to shop close-by. Mostly, in one compound different wives from brothers of one family live together with their children in several houses or rooms, depending on the income of the family. Decision making rights among the women of one family differ substantially. The mother of the head of the household (usually the eldest son) protrudes the newly married girls. The latter have to obey her concerning all household duties. Usually also the first wives are hierarchically positioned above the second or third wives. This is not a fixed rule however, and depends also on individual relations. According to Islam, the first wife can be declared khalifa what frees her from sexual duties towards her husband and lifts her officially into a position of being in charge for the other wives and children.

"He visits us, tells us about our misery, but in the end, as always, only the big boss will eat".

Women complained that the mullah from the neighbouring village is in charge of distributing the money, which they have a right to receive as widows if their sons or husbands were killed as shahids (people who died fighting for Islam). They claim however only receiving part of the sum. In addition, they have to pay for the transport of the mullah coming to their village.
Typically, the decision making power about income earning activities, the structure of expenditures and the handling of money lies in the hands of men. Leaving the village is very unusual for women. This hinders them to sell their own products like yoghurt or carpets at the bazaar. Yet, they can have their own working relations with traders coming to the villages or employers.

Women can own land and animals if the husband or son is not present or if they have died. The land can be lent or cultivated by relatives, such as the brother in law. When men leave the family for daily wage labour, women sometimes wait for years for their return, respectively for some money to be sent. Usually in all these cases, brothers of the husband take over decision-making. Exceptions are women headed households with no close male relatives directly in charge.

**Marriage**

Rules of marriage probably pose the most decisive structure in a woman’s life. The parents arrange marriages early. Often the girls are not elder than 15 years, sometimes only 10 years old. According to Islam, men can have up to four wives. When a girl gets married, she has to leave her parents house and belongs from that day on to her husband’s family. Preparing the endowment (carpets, blankets etc.) for future marriages in the household is a main task for women and can take months or years of work.

Marriages definitely increased in the visited villages due to better income possibilities for men in the last two years. Prices for girls are usually paid in sheep and goat, richer families pay in cash. The price depends on the status of the family, the age of the woman, and on the circumstances, whether she will be the first wife or comes from within or outside the village. In the last case, the deal becomes more expensive. Averages prices encountered in the villages varied between 4000 – 6000 USD in 2004 compared to 1000 – 4000 USD in 2002. For men it can take years of work until they can afford to pay the bride’s price.

Women can be divorced under Islamic law through the decision of the husband. Women are usually the most vulnerable and less influential villagers but they are not excluded from the village community in terms of working opportunities and charity given to them.

**Education**

It was found that compared to the year 2002, in more villages girls attend school classes while in all villages boys have access to schooling. In one village, the Arab families send their girls to school while the others do not because of the 2 km distance, which the girls are not allowed to walk. Often, school tents were encountered outside the villages.

In every village, schooling activities took place also in the mosque (besides religious teaching in the context of madrassa). Mullahs are usually teachers in the small villages. Several times, it was said that girls were taught in the mosque in the morning.

**Capital Assets of Women**

Capital assets have increased for women too. Yet, it is important to note that not all women have benefited the same way. While some women/wives from influential men enjoy additional jewellery, clothes and household articles as well as the access to electricity through generators, others simply are a little more food secure in terms of having more wheat stored.

Generally, as physical assets women use the housing facilities including the compound area with the oven. The extensive construction and rehabilitation work of houses in the villages is influencing and improving women’s daily living conditions significantly. Additionally, women benefit from increased household income, purchases of food and
household items, clothes and medicines. Nevertheless, many complained lacking assets that are of special importance for women work, such as weaving frames or sewing machines. Only in Darzob, a project is reported to support the building up of these assets.

Regarding **natural** capital assets, women benefit from the substantial increase in livestock as they can make more use of milk products. Besides, women have access to the gardens next to the house - in Fayzabad also to gardens situated far away from homes. Within the compound, natural assets can include chicken, vegetables, trees and poppy. Most women interviewed however, considered increased wheat availability as the most important improvement to them within the last two years.

Regarding **financial** assets, women in the villages stated neither earning any money nor having access to credit. Daily work in the villages is usually not paid in cash but in food or wheat and can be bartered in the shops. Women depending on daily labour opportunities, also directly benefited from increased working/income options during the last years. Very poor women told that charity given to them increased within the last years too.

The **social** capital assets comprise the family, especially other wives and sisters, together with other women from the village, which form the basic social network for women. Besides, they stay in loose contact with their own families. Visits to relatives, accompanied by men were reported to be very common.

**Human capital assets** in general comprise the knowledge of all household related activities. This includes taking care of animals, milking and production of dairy products, horticulture and agriculture activities as well as handicrafts (weaving, tailoring, spinning, embroidery) and skills like construction of summer tents. Other skills like production of soap from flax oil are still existing but not used anymore because soap is bought at the market. Some women have specialised skills as nurses respectively midwives. No considerable changes have been observed with regard to this aspect.

**Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes**

Livelihood strategies of women have not changed as traditional structures hinder women's access to assets. However, confirming the general picture of livelihood changes, differences between poor, divorced women or widows and better off women from influential families rose considerably. The first wives in rich families, which have younger female family members and/or ordinate employees for household tasks, represent one extreme end. On the other end are poor single women, which have to meet all living expenses by themselves. In between, there is a large variety of combined livelihood and coping strategies. These vary also among women from the same household.

In general, bringing up the children and integrating the family structure is the task of all women independent of their social position. Running the household, milking, processing milk and collection of water from nearby sources are also tasks that in the majority of households (owning a compound and animals) are carried out by its female members.

Richer families frequently employ poorer women for cleaning, washing clothes, baking bread and sometimes also for agricultural related activities (processing wool).
Consequently, poorer women work as employees conducting the above-mentioned tasks. Collecting dung and herbs additionally can count to their activities. Relying on charity and begging are other coping strategies for food scarce poor women.

Tailoring, weaving, spinning and embroidery are traditional women skills which most of them learn as girls. These activities can be carried out in groups of neighbouring women. Presently, it depends on the availability of sewing machines and weaving frames whether girls can learn these skills. Blankets and embroidery were produced for the own household and for future marriages in most of the visited middle and richer households. It was not observed in the poorer, women headed households.

For spinning, no special tools are necessary. Consequently, spinning wool from ones own cotton or women being contracted as daily wage labour for this activity is commonly found. For poor women, this is a major income opportunity. Some interviewed women complained that they have to do the usual household work during the day and the spinning or other handicraft work in the evening and at night leading to eye problems and constant fatigue.

Women’s agricultural and horticulture activities are diversified. Women from families owning gardens at riversides (usually the better-off ones) often spend the whole summer in the gardens taking care of fruit trees and poppy for example. The small vegetables or poppy plots within the compound comprise another working area of women. Working on the fields, seems to be rather a task of women from poor families, as these need all available work force there. Again, the distribution of labour among women in one household can differ (see box above).

Conclusions

Women in Afghan villages and even in one household are not a homogenous group. Social differences among them continued to increase within the last two years. Due to very strict traditional structures, opportunities for further development are limited also for better-off women from influential families.

Women from influential and/or better-off families could play an important role in representing women interests and issues in official bodies like CDCs. Due to the position of their families, they might have more freedom to raise their voices if their husbands allow so. They might also be innovative, creating and pushing ideas for income generating activities. However, this group of women also profits most from the traditional setting. Projects might also consider focusing on the other group of women, those who are economically forced to make their living by themselves and continuously have to develop coping strategies without many assets.

Impact of the GAA Rural Recovery Project

This project did not intend to target women in a special way and consequently impacts for women are rather indirect. Women could benefit from additional household income through increased irrigated land or CFW as well as from increased trade. The road rehabilitation/construction became extremely important for women in cases where this improved access to health care facilities (new constructed roads and far away situated villages) and where women and families can afford the use of transport. For many other reasons, women only very seldom travel far distances on the main roads. Consequently, the rehabilitation is not influencing their livelihoods in a noteworthy manner.
4.5 Prices for Labour, Livestock and Wheat

This chapter gives a brief overview of prices for labour, wheat and livestock. It was planned to compare the figures collected at the research sites during the first livelihood study with those from this study. Due to the currency reform that occurred shortly after the first study - replacing the national currency Jumbeshi with Afghani - the comparison of prices would have given a distorted picture however.

Labour

The table below shows local wage rates for agricultural labour found in the villages of Khaval and Faizabad. People reported many different forms of payment between landowners, sharecroppers and daily wage labourers, including the payment of cash, in kind, and often including meals into the daily wage rate. As in study one, people reported that prices for daily wage labour fluctuate considerably within the season, reflecting demand and supply for labour. In addition, higher salaries are paid for working on irrigated land compared to rainfed land. Data gathered in all villages confirm that wages have increased within the last two years. Especially poppy harvest is a lucrative employment opportunity.

Table 4: Wage Rates for Agricultural Daily Labour (unskilled) found in the villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Afghani/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preparing fields</td>
<td>50 - 100 (+ 3x food)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during harvest</td>
<td>100 - 300 (+ 3x food)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poppy harvest</td>
<td>300 - 400 (+ 3x food)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Livestock

The following table lists prices for selected livestock sold at Sar-e Pul livestock market during the past two years. Traders working at the local market for many years gave the figures. Interviewees were asked to estimate average prices for the entire years of 2002 and 2003. Since figures for 2002 were given in Jumbeshi, for 2003 onwards in Afghani, numbers have been transferred into US$ for the purpose of comparison.

Interviewees at the market place stated that the formation of prices is solely based on supply and demand. Farmers bringing their livestock to the market place may sell directly to buyers on place (butcher, consumers from Sar-e Pul, and other farmers) or to the traders, which is mostly the case. Latter stated that they “have their prices”.

Table 5: Prices (US$) for Various Livestock at Sar-e Pul Market, 2002-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Goat</th>
<th>Oxen</th>
<th>Donkey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“2002” 2)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“2003”</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2004</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>340</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>177</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) This was the price for a four months old calf.

2) Conversion of Jumbeshi into US$ at the rate used in study 1 (1 Mio Jumb.= 10.40 US$, 09/02)

During the last drought until its aftermath two years ago, prices were extremely low since many farmers had to sell their livestock in order to get hold of cash needed to cover basic
needs such as buying wheat. 2003 then was a year with excellent harvests and farmers took the opportunity to restock their herds. Turnover in Sar-e Pul livestock market was extremely low, as market traders complained. Thus, prices for all kind of livestock went up. In 2004, prices tend to fall again corresponding with the mediocre to poor harvest that has been reported from some regions. At the same time, the wheat price is slowly going up. Consequently, the prices of livestock, especially for sheep and goat, main cash assets of farmers, on the one hand, and the wheat prices on the other are proxy indicators for the status of well-being of villagers in Sar-e Pul province.

**Prices for Wheat**

The table below compares wheat prices found in Sar-e Pul and two villages of Kohistanat. The prices for wheat vary considerably between the research locations. The largest differentiation of and the highest wheat prices are found in Sar-e Pul, reflecting transportation costs, but perhaps mainly the best quality offered there (see also Chapter Wheat in the Annex).

**Table 6: Prices of Wheat at Various Research Locations, May 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sar-e Pul</th>
<th>Fayzabad</th>
<th>Khaval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In AFG/seer</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices for wheat change on a seasonal basis depending on supply and demand. In autumn, the price is therefore lowest. The table below also shows that the price during the drought was extremely high in comparison to the last two years.

**Table 7: Fluctuation of the Average Prices of Wheat at Sar-e Pul Grain Market**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>summer</td>
<td>autumn</td>
<td>winter</td>
<td>spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afg.</td>
<td>100-130</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Interviewees said the price in this period was “continuously high” between 2 and 2.8 lack. 1 Lack corresponded to 100,000 Jumbeshi, or $1,04 US$. As traders were asked to compare those figures with the current currency Afghani, they said it was equivalent to 100-130 Afghani.

**Relation between Wheat and Livestock Prices**

Prices of wheat and livestock are related in a diametric way to each other, at least in the present context of food insecurity. If wheat is scarce and hence at a high price, a lot of livestock is sold on local markets leading to a steady decrease of prices for livestock. In turn, if people become food secure with the option of stocking sufficient wheat and additionally start restocking their livestock, prices for animals on local markets go up. It is remarkable, that contrarily to the price increase of consumer goods and wages during the past two years, wheat prices went down in the same period. This again reveals that drought or its absence is still the overriding factor that determines the state of the local economy.
4.6 Summary: Changes in the Livelihood Systems

The first livelihood study conducted in September 2002 identified water and agricultural assets the most important factors determining the livelihood systems in the study area. The most deficient natural capital assets were found to be water, seeds and livestock, in particular oxen; these can be considered the pillars of agricultural production and critical for securing basic needs.

In 2004, a different picture can be found. Frame conditions, most notably increased security and good harvests have favourably affected changes on the asset base in the research region. Except water, villagers generally do not consider the other two most deficient natural capital assets mentioned in the first study as main bottlenecks for agricultural production any longer. Farmers have enough wheat stocked to cover consumption needs and enough seeds for cultivation are available. At present, farmers rather ask for quality seeds. Increased seed availability results also from international projects distributing seed material after the drought.

Livestock increased significantly in every place confirming a hypothesis from the first study: the first asset people opt to restore after crisis is livestock. Livestock is crucial for social and economic needs; it acts as a currency in arranging marriages; it can be sold quickly for medical treatment access funds and is sold first in times of crisis such as drought.

Compared to the above-mentioned changes, the availability of water has only improved slightly. The provision especially of potable water remained a severe problem in dryer lowland areas such as the villages in Sayyad. They still have to count on rivers carrying water seasonally, rainfall and salty water from wells. Yet, an increased number of self-help strategies were observed such as the construction of water reservoirs and rainwater catchments.

Poppy is another natural asset strongly influencing livelihoods. Nearly every family profits from its cultivation, whether it is homegrown in gardens, sharecropped or whether people are employed as daily wage labourers during its harvest. Salaries during poppy harvest are paid in cash and are the highest salaries paid for any agricultural activity in the region. Although people are aware that poppy production is prohibited, and that its illegal trade might in the medium-term have some negative consequences for security of the region, it strongly influences changes in land use patterns and the cash economy.

Poppy might be the main reason for the increased financial assets exemplified through the considerable purchase of assets (cars, TVs etc.) and shopkeepers’ increased turnover in the study area. Cash for Work activities of projects have only contributed to a lesser extent to economic growth.

Social assets like family and village networks have not changed substantially but might have stabilised through safer living conditions. Coping strategies of very poor people, such as relying on charity from mentioned networks and begging are presently functioning and more effective than two years ago.

Concerning human assets, few changes have also been observed. Men who have migrated back to their villages perhaps make the biggest difference as they apply new skills acquired abroad, mainly in construction, besides bringing cash with them. Regarding education, some progress has been achieved but some missing assets are still apparent such as basic education for adults, knowledge and awareness about hygiene, health and agricultural practices (e.g. animal and plant diseases).

The substantial increase of physical assets however, is eye-catching in the study area. Construction work for housing is in progress at a fast pace. Families own TVs, generators and mopeds, in some places satellite antennas have popped up on many houses and
every village has a phone connection. These assets were not seen at all in the villages

While many assets have obviously increased, the *livelihood strategies* remain rather the
same as before, e.g. agriculture (mostly share cropping), daily wage labour (mainly working on others' land), migration, trade, and relying on charity. There are changes however within this pattern. For example, daily wage labour opportunities increased considerably due to good harvests and construction work. This in turn resulted in a lower migration rate. In fact, the relation between daily wage labour opportunities and migration is very direct. For example, as people in spring 2004 only *expected* bad harvests, the number of men migrating increased immediately. In addition, trade activities have increased the last two years indicated by the increased number of village shops and their respective turnovers.

Overall, the *outcomes of livelihood strategies* have increased substantially. Yet, the picture has to be differentiated. The first study confirmed that drought had led to a certain levelling of income differences in the villages. At present, however, there are some considerable disparities as to the question of *who* could improve *how much*. In general terms, it can be concluded that the group of people who always were considered to belong to the better-off, in terms of land possession and status, are those who have increased their assets the most, while the more vulnerable/poorer groups of people just have managed to improve to some smaller extent their food security.\(^{17}\) In other words, the *differences among people increased considerably*, foremost in terms of *income* and *vulnerability*. A smaller number of people have managed to restock their livestock and enjoy higher living standards with satellite TVs, and perhaps even cars. The majority have only some wheat stored in their houses and still depend entirely on favourable frame conditions in order to feed their families even the day after tomorrow. In this context, it is remarkable that even villagers themselves do not refer to any notable alterations in village stratification or changes in the composition of social groups within the last years as one might have expected.

*Coping strategies for future droughts* can be sketched for the time being as follows: Better-off people managed to build up enough assets to cope even with several years of crisis. Farmers, who the villagers refer to as middle-income or average (mainly described as having built up larger herds of livestock) can probably cope with at least one or two years of drought. Poorer groups have little food security and are quick at referring to migration or "leaving to refugee camps" as possible livelihood options. Certainly, this broad picture has to be differentiated further. One of the challenges for future projects is thus selecting target groups carefully.

Opportunities for building up assets and diversifying livelihood strategies are (still) strongly defined by mostly very *constant structures and processes*, such as *access to land*, the traditional *institutional setting* and *gender relations*. Big landlords dominate the tenancy pattern and the vast majority of people work under share cropping agreements, mostly on unfavourable terms. Yet, many kinds of local agreements exist and vulnerability and dependency patterns are complex. For example, a small landholder of two jerib might produce less for subsistence than a family working on a sharecropping basis on five jerib of land.

In this context, *external assistance* and the presence of projects are *important structures* for villagers too, determining their access to assets. While dependency on project inputs seemed to be lower than two years ago, expectations and frustrations increased. Projects moving from an emergency aid to a longer-term development oriented

\(^{17}\) The outcome of migrating abroad is not measured in this equation
approach, strengthening institutional capacities (at governmental and community level) and preparing for a sense of ownership are a chance to fill this gap\textsuperscript{18}.

\textsuperscript{18} For a further discussion of possible future development approaches, see also Chapter 5.
5 GAA PROJECT ‘REHABILITATION OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE’: OBSERVATIONS, IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Main Objectives and Intervention Area

The main objectives of the project Rehabilitation of Rural Infrastructure in Northern Afghanistan were to provide means of income to vulnerable population during the project period and to improve people’s access to markets and health facilities and the access of relief organisations to the area. For this purpose, streets, feeder roads and irrigation systems were rehabilitated. Income should be directly generated through the organisation of public employment schemes (Cash for Work) for the construction activities. Meanwhile as of September 2004, project activities have been concluded: roads have been gravelled, culverts and small bridges constructed, anti-erosion measures undertaken, irrigation schemes rehabilitated and newly built.

The maps in chapter 2 show the areas and districts where GAA project activities have taken place. With respect to roads, the most important activity in Sar-e Pul province was rehabilitating the only road connecting the city with the villages in Kohistanat valley, located at a distance of up to 100 km. In Jawzjan Province, the focus was put on improving the main road leading from the capital Shibergan to Faryab province, crossing the two districts of Kosh Tepa and Darzob. In both provinces, completely new rural feeder roads have also been constructed. Activities for rehabilitating and setting-up irrigation schemes have been carried out in villages situated along the roads where road rehabilitation was taking place.

5.2 Impact, Attribution Gap and Methodological Approach

As sketched previously in this study, livelihoods have improved considerably in the last two years in the study region: income has been generated, assets restored and local economies are bubbling. Within this picture, the overall objective of the project has been achieved. How much of this positive development, however, is a result of two years of good harvests, the growing poppy economy and the absence of conflict – and how much is a result of new roads, employment in Cash for Work (CFW) schemes or new irrigated lands?

Clearly, a major difficulty in assessing the impact of the project is the attribution gap. During the conduction of the livelihood study, the consultants also developed a particular guideline questionnaire, which attempted to link project results and its underlying hypotheses to the manifold statements of interviewees about felt “changes”. Hence, next to hard data (roads constructed, reduced travel-time etc) also soft data was obtained revealing various perspectives from different stakeholders. Additionally, a number of proxy indicators have been developed. It was hoped that analysing the combined findings with these indicators will lead to a proximate impact assessment. Given the wider angle of this study, the findings do however not replace an in-depth evaluation of the project with its wide array of activities.

Next, the results firstly of the road rehabilitation/construction, secondly of irrigation scheme rehabilitation, and thirdly of CFW activities are looked at and assessed. Indicators and key questions applied are mentioned for each of these areas. In the end, the findings are summed up in a chart, followed by a brief discussion tempting to develop some recommendations for further activities.

19 For details, please refer to the project document GAA AFG 1029.
20 Partly derived from the I. Livelihood Study.
5.3 Road Rehabilitation

Changes looked at were in the areas of:

- Transport: time, fares for people and goods, frequency, traffic safety
- People’s access to markets and development of the local economy
- People’s access to health facilities
- Other institutions’ access to the region (aid organisations and governmental institutions)
- Regional and local security
- Road maintenance

In the first Livelihood study, the researchers have compiled data regarding transport fares for people and goods between the market centres and villages. Prices however, where given in the Jumbeshi, the currency circulating that time in Northern Afghanistan. In the end of 2002, a new national currency was introduced: the Afghani. Since after its introduction the Afghani was rated much higher to the US$ then the Jumbeshi, a comparison of prices in US$ is distorting. Consequently, it was opted to ask interviewees to compare transport fares, duration of transport and the frequency of transport from the period ‘before rehabilitation’ (which generally was 2002/03) with the period ‘after rehabilitation’ (as of May 2004). The table below sums up information collected from random interviews with villagers and drivers in the market centres as well as in the villages from Kohistanat valley. The data collection does hence not fulfil requirements of a thorough statistical analysis. The figures crossed with other information, however, lead to some interesting findings sketched below.

Table 8: Duration and Costs of Transport for People and Goods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stretch (distance in km)</th>
<th>Before / After Road rehabilitation</th>
<th>Fare/Person in Afg</th>
<th>Fare/Good in Afg/seer</th>
<th>Duration in hours</th>
<th>Frequency of traffic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sar-e Pul - Khaval (98)</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10, up to 20</td>
<td>4 (^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30 (^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sar-e Pul - Fayzabad (67)</td>
<td>Before jeep</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;Much more&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>truck</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After jeep</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>truck</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>&quot;Much more&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sar-e Pul - Ziri Kamar (28)</td>
<td>Before taxi</td>
<td>2000 (^4)</td>
<td>1,5 - 2</td>
<td>&quot;Much more&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darzab - Shiberghan (-100)</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>&quot;Doubled&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) As to “before”, interviewees generally referred to 2003 (prices) and the years before (transport duration). As to “after” they referred to the time when interviews were conducted (May 2004);

\(^2\) Duration for vehicles (villagers’ estimates); can vary with regard to vehicle, number of passengers & stops on the way;

\(^3\) Nr. of vehicles per week;

\(^4\) Fare for complete taxi;

\(^5\) Road was rehabilitated by GOAL and GAA
Another method for assessing project impact is the comparison of one region where project activities took place with another where no activities were carried out. The table below compares transport fares from the market centre Sar-e Pul to two different villages, one in Kohistanat, rehabilitated by the project, the other in an adjacent valley where the road has remained unaltered in the past years. The distance in Km and altitude between Sar-e Pul and both villages as well as former road conditions were said to be the same. Figures were obtained from the manager of a private transport company in Sar-e Pul providing transport to both areas.

Table 9: Costs of Transport (taxi/jeep) comparing ‘with’ and ‘without’ project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/stretch</th>
<th>“With project”</th>
<th>“Without project”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sar-e Pul - Jarghan</td>
<td>Sar-e Pul - Kata Qal'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in Kohistanat valley</td>
<td>in neighbouring valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years ago (2002)</td>
<td>2 lack</td>
<td>2 lack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This year (after road rehab.)</td>
<td>150 Afg.</td>
<td>200 Afg.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes due to road rehabilitation

Inhabitants from all villages stated that considerable changes have taken place after the project has rehabilitated roads, in particular in Kohistanat valley. The main findings from the above tables and from many interviews conducted in all research areas are:

- **Travel time** on rehabilitated roads was reduced significantly. For distant villages in Kohistanat valley it was reduced by 50% or more. Especially passenger transport has become quicker, given that improved road conditions allow far more jeeps to pass the road. Many people also stated that travel time has especially improved in wintertime, when floods and snow have formerly cut off roads or destroyed weak bridges.

- Generally, **traffic** has increased significantly. Villagers in Kohistanat valley report that meanwhile jeeps leave on a regular daily basis from the villages to Sar-e Pul and back. In Sar-e Pul, during the last two years, two new private transport companies with trucks and jeeps have taken up services increasing the total number to three. One company owner stated that since last year only, he doubled his transport facilities going to Kohistanat.

- **Fares** for the transport of people and goods have, according to villagers, basically remained the same, both in Kohistanat valley and on the stretch from Shibergan to Darzob. For distant Khaval, the price for the transportation of goods has been halved. Contradictory to villagers’ statements, the owner of a transport company in Sar-e Pul stated that his fares for passages to Kohistanat valley have decreased due to road improvement compared to the road leading to the neighbouring valley where conditions have remained poor. Nevertheless, it could be assumed that general cost savings resulting from timesaving and fewer breakdowns were compensated by higher prices for fuel and inflation. Perhaps also the economic savings have simply remained with the private transport companies or the local owners of trucks and jeeps.

- **Road safety** has increased. People report that there are far less accidents because of improved road conditions. In addition, there are less robberies taking place since formerly, when a road was cut off after flooding or landslides, cars and passengers had to spend the night ‘on the road’ and became easy targets for assaults and thefts. In this context, it was also considered that better roads ease the quick access of security forces from Sar-e Pul to the region.
• Many people in Kohistanat also claim that the road has to some extent helped to improve the security situation. They link better roads to increased activities of aid agencies (national and international), to the quick access of security forces from Sar-e Pul, and to generally improved communication lines between the villages and Sar-e Pul.

• People’s access to health facilities certainly depends on many different factors. Road rehabilitation has made it possible to reach the hospital in the regional centres faster. In certain circumstances, such as reported in the village of Jegdalik, this factor is lifesaving.

• The same holds true for villagers’ access to markets. A higher frequency and more regular transport facilities improve the conditions for marketing and save costs, whether for wheat brought to Sar-e Pul or goods of daily life brought to the village shops. In Khaval, for example, two years ago the preferred market centre was Darzab, which is across the mountains. Darzob can only be reached with donkeys at a travel time of about 1-1.5 days one way. After road rehabilitation, villagers prefer to market at Sar-e Pul.

• Local economies profit from improved market access. Shop owners report that sensitive goods such as electronic equipment reach the villages in better conditions. A larger variety of goods is offered in village shops. Their number has doubled in many villages during the last two years. Small guesthouses and restaurants for a steadily increasing number of bypassing travellers appear. Driving forces behind the improved economic conditions in the villages are however other than rehabilitated roads.

• There was no practical test yet for road maintenance. It is a critical issue however, given that in nearly every interview villagers stated either that the government is responsible for maintenance or that GAA or other international donors should help maintaining the roads in the future. Clearly, state structures are not prepared yet for any significant road maintenance activity (as they claim to have no funds).

New feeder roads: the cases of Jegdalik and Bazar Kami

Two completely new rural feeder roads have been built by GAA. For each, villagers perceive very different gains. One new road is in Kosh Tepa district. It is a stretch of 20 Km, connecting seven villages with 1700 families to the town of Darzob. Formerly, Darzob could only be reached by foot/donkey. One of the seven villages is Jegdalik, which was visited during research. The villagers of Jegdalik, who have lobbied intensively for road construction with local authorities, hail the road as an immense improvement in different terms. They highlight the access to clinics and the quick and cheaper access of people and goods to the market. The statement from one elder, “before people came here and bought our goods, now we bring goods on a larger scale to the market and sell them ourselves”, reveals the gained bargain power of this rural community. The villagers of Jegdalik also reported that the inhabitants from all seven villages would do everything possible in order to maintain the road in case of landslides or alike.

A slightly different scenario is revealed in Bazar Kami in Sar-e Pul province. The village is already connected to Sar-e Pul town through a sandy road. The additional road built by GAA connects Bazar Kami with the district centre of Sayyad at approximately 14 km distance. Here, villagers stated that 90% of the current traffic still goes along the old road (rehabilitated by another NGO). Compared to Jegdalik, villagers consider the benefits of the new road less important. They mention timesaving of 30 Min. as it eases the transport of goods and water by donkey with which they travel across the mountains. Thereby, they use one stretch of the new road.
5.4 Irrigation Scheme Rehabilitation

Traditional irrigation schemes have existed for centuries in the project area and play a vital role in the village economy. As was shown in the previous chapters, access to irrigated land is a major asset as recurrent droughts put at risk the livelihood of many villagers who entirely rely on rain-fed agriculture for subsistence. Traditional irrigation schemes are sophisticated, mostly organized by miraabs, but often also destroyed because of strong rainfalls, landslides and flooding. The project rationale behind rehabilitating irrigated lands was to increase agricultural production and hence, as stated in the overall objective, food security in the region. Besides cleaning drainage systems, irrigation works included building large intakes and canal walls with concrete. This requires sophisticated engineering skills such as static calculations. In comparison to road rehabilitation, less financial resources were spent for the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes. Major works were conducted in the visited villages of Darzob, Khaval and Fayzabad.

Key questions/indicators looked at, were:

- Amount and % of increased irrigated land as a result of project works
- Whose land was irrigated? Who did not profit?
- Who decided about the access to and the distribution of water for newly irrigated lands?
- Who will maintain the canals?

Access to water and landownership are complex and sensitive issues (see chapter 4.1). Interviewees have been cautious giving information. In addition, they had difficulties estimating sizes and numbers. Figures within the same village (and within the same interview) could vary considerably, at times they were contradictory. This bias should thus be kept in mind regarding the figures listed below.

Findings from the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes

- Project works have increased the amount of irrigated land. In two villages, water-channels crossing the villages were constructed with the purpose of having better access to drinking water. In Darzob, where the largest project investment was made, it was said that 2000 - 4000 households from several downstream villages profit from improved water supply, especially with respect to horticulture and drinking water. In Kohistanat villages, project interventions also resulted in an increase of irrigated land, approximately between 100 and 300 additional jerib for each village visited. In the case of Fayzabad, villagers claimed it was an increase of roughly 30%. Very likely, additional irrigated land also resulted in increased agricultural production in the respective villages.

- At least in Kohistanat villages, it seems very much that access to newly irrigated land was unequally distributed among villagers. In Fayzabad, it was claimed that roughly 30 households - representing 15-20% of the village population - had access to newly irrigated fields. In Khaval, it was reported that the 200 additional irrigated jerib belonged just to 20 families (out of 500 in the village) and that no sharecroppers were working on these fields. One person, owning 20 jerib, is a rich man living in a city and leases the land on a long-term basis. In interviews with poorer inhabitants, often the general statement was made that it is the rich who profit from irrigated land. On the other hand, it has to be seen that in the entire rural Afghanistan unequal landholding and power structures exist. No project will change these structures quickly, especially no one which has been designed and implemented in a context of emergency aid. As also bigger landowners suffered heavy losses threatening their livelihoods during the 1998-2001 crisis, one should see positively that this group increased production and income. Many jobs have
been created as villagers were employed as sharecroppers or daily labourers on behalf of the landowners.

- Regarding the decision-making process for setting up the schemes and maintenance there is no clear picture. In Darzob, it seems that the district government planned the major intake. In Khaval, people say primarily landowners were involved in the decision-making process and are hence responsible for maintenance. As shown in the previous chapters, on the one hand every village has its traditional ruling concerning water management (water distribution, channel maintenance etc.). Responsibilities are shared in different combinations between miraab(s), landowners and sharecroppers. On the other hand, the traditional setting has been shaken in the past years and in some places, it was evident that no transparent local water/irrigation management was in place yet. In Darzob for example, a miraab was complaining that upstream villages were taking too much water. For GAA project staff, these were difficult conditions for planning lasting solutions.

- New techniques of channel construction (especially working with concrete) have been introduced by the project. This factor might have implications for operation and maintenance. In Khaval, villagers attempted to continue constructing a piping system that was set-up by GAA. One engineer from GAA however observed that those pipes laid by the villagers themselves were already leaking, and questioned their capability to carry out further works without any professional supervision. As to the hypothetical question raised in interviews 'who will maintain the irrigation system', often it was answered that 'this can only be done by the engineers'.

5.5 Income through Cash for Work (CFW)

A main objective of the project was to provide income to vulnerable population during project implementation through the employment of local work force in construction activities.

Key questions/indicators looked at were:

- Number and duration of people employed from villages (skilled and unskilled).
- What criteria have been applied for choosing workers for construction activities? On what grounds have people participated in the employment schemes?
- How did income from CFW relate to other sources of income?
- What skills have workers learnt and did they make use of them thereafter?

Main findings from interviews and project data are:

- The number and the duration of people employed in the CFW activities varied considerably from one place to another depending foremost on the kind of project activity carried out locally. Villagers were met who have been employed as unskilled labourers for just two days, others for more than 250 days over a period of one year. Totally, the project has spent approximately 650.000 US$ on labour excluding GAA staff. This sum was distributed amongst skilled and unskilled labour at a ratio of roughly 1 to 7. Irrigation works have required far more skilled labour than road rehabilitation. In the case of the rehabilitation of the irrigation scheme in Darzob for example, twice as much money was spent for skilled than for unskilled labour. Labour was paid on a daily wage basis, 8 US$ in average for skilled and mostly 2 US$ for unskilled labour.

21 GAA personnel raised this question shortly before the conduction of this study.
• The selection criteria for labour and the procedure of employment were the following: GAA engineers defined the profile and number of skilled labourers necessary for each operation. It was very rare that skilled labour was found in the villages. Consequently, skilled labour was employed on a longer-term basis in cities such as Mazar-i-Sharif and Shibergan. For each local activity, village elders were then asked to recruit labourers on a daily wage basis. Wages paid by the project ranged between 1.5 and 3 US$ (including meals), depending on the season and the availability of work force. In one case, it was reported that the imam from the mosque called the poor to participate. In another, villagers said that they rotated equally on the project scheme sharing "burden and income equally". GAA engineers reported that at times it was difficult to recruit labour since the salary offered for unskilled labour activities could hardly compete with salaries paid for agricultural daily wage labour at harvest times (2-6 US$ including meals). On this background, it can be assumed that particularly poor or landless people have asked for employment as unskilled labour. Interviews also revealed that hardly any wealthier person participated in project works. Consequently, the project's CFW component indeed successfully targeted the poor.

• In Khaval, a former commander was assigned the post of brigadier and most of the unskilled labourers were former soldiers under his command (roughly 70 people). They claimed that after laying down their arms they had hardly any opportunity to make a living. In this case, the project has also contributed to reintegration of militia into social life.

• The ratio of income from CFW compared to other sources of income is low in total numbers, even if for some poor people it was a helpful opportunity to make their living. Deducting the money the project spent for skilled labourers from the cities, then roughly 570,000 US$ were spent during project implementation for unskilled labour in the rural villages of the two provinces. On the background of the high economic growth in 2003, which also created many employment and income opportunities in rural areas, especially for agricultural daily wage labour, this is a comparatively small sum. The charts in the previous chapter, relating CFW to other sources of income, underpin this picture. In Ander and Fayzabad, where major project activities have been taking place and many daily wage labourers recruited, the average villager's income from CFW was estimated at 10% of total income, excluding income from poppy in this equation.

• Villagers reported that they have learned some skills during project work such as working with concrete and stone measuring. In Khaval, where GAA assisted in building up a canal system, villagers themselves completed a stretch of about 100m; and in Faizabad people said, they made use of acquired skills in repairing a channel and the mosque. GAA engineers however state that qualified personnel disposing of skills such as static design is still vital for proper project implementation.

5.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Without doubt, the reactions encountered in the villages and elsewhere shortly after completion of the project, especially with respect to road rehabilitation, have been very positive. As mentioned in the beginning however, attributing project activities and results to the manifold impressive changes that have taken place in the project region remains a tricky question. The next table summarizes the above findings as it firstly lists a set of indicators for impact assessment (derived partly from the project's logical framework) and secondly describes a trend for each indicator. Then, it is attempted to picture 'the intensity' of change within each trend and to assess the project's contribution to each change. Obviously, quantities are subjective estimates and relative, but help to assess the
relevance of single project components in relation to the achievement of different project objectives.

Table 10: Summary of trends, changes and impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators (referring to results and overall project objectives)</th>
<th>Description of trend</th>
<th>Change from 2002 to 2004</th>
<th>Attributed to project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel time</td>
<td>Decreased considerably</td>
<td>+++++</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of transports</td>
<td>“Doubled” in average</td>
<td>+++++</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport fares</td>
<td>Little less or comparatively lower</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road safety</td>
<td>Less accidents, less robberies</td>
<td>+ +</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Less conflicts in the region</td>
<td>+ +</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local economy</td>
<td>High economic growth, assets built up, more turnover in village shops etc.</td>
<td>+++++</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistribution</td>
<td>CFW targeted ‘the poor’</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food production</td>
<td>Increased due to more irrigated land</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term food security</td>
<td>Situation of landless and vulnerable people has modestly improved</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Issues that should require further consideration in future projects of this kind are the maintenance of roads and irrigation schemes, and the distributive effects of rehabilitating the latter.

Regarding roads, it is arguable who should be responsible for their maintenance, either government authorities or the local villages. From a technical point of view, it is unlikely that villagers will be soon able to acquire skills similar to those that project engineers applied in rehabilitating roads, bridges and culverts.

In addition, the rehabilitated roads seem to be less rural feeder roads but rather major provincial routes. The rehabilitated road stretch from Shiberghan to Darzob could be even considered an inter-provincial route. One could expect that plans exist to transfer responsibilities/funds for road maintenance from central government level to provincial authorities. Yet, state structures on provincial and district level are still weak and only in the process of being built up.

Clearly, for maintaining the roads in good conditions, it will be vital that someone feels responsible. Identifying and strengthening stakeholders that hold responsibility for road maintenance should be considered in future road construction projects. Whether it is opted for working closely together with government or village institutions, or both, each strategy requires an approach that next to technical components includes components such as participatory planning, institutional capacity building and training-on-the-job.
Regarding **water and irrigation schemes**, the above-mentioned should be considered yet more important. Dealing with water management is not only a technical but foremost a social intervention. Contrary to roads, it is unlikely that state structures will interfere and regulate access to water on village level at a soon point in time. Considering the conflictive nature of water management at village and inter-village level, target groups should be differentiated carefully and the active involvement of stakeholders (water-users) who have little or no voice in decision-making processes should be enhanced.

Considering the improved economic situation in 2002/03, the question could be raised whether landowners are able to contribute to the rehabilitation of irrigated land – whether in form of initial financial contributions, through water fees or by other means. In this context, the creation of water user associations is an option in order to involve local stakeholders (water-users) into the decision-making processes, including the regulation of maintenance. Another option would be to set up small credit schemes for rehabilitation activities.

The strengthening of structures on provincial and district level that regulate inter-village water distribution and manage watersheds are however important too. The development of a framework that involves the irrigation department and the Miraabs would be favourable.

Clearly, there is no quick lunch for a pro-poor approach. Given the difficult frame conditions during the past two years, the implementation of the Rural Recovery Project was very successful. Embedding future projects of this kind into a longer-term strategy and linking them to other regional programmes and actors (e.g. government authorities, NSP), is however vital for achieving sustainability and livelihood security.
ANNEX I: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS / NSP

The following annex sums up findings from interviews conducted in villages where the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) is carried out and Community Development Councils (CDC) have been set up. This was also a special request of GAA staff as the organisation is a facilitating partner of the NSP in Sar-e Pul province since 2003. Project activities began in two districts of Sayyad and Kohistanat.

Brief overview of CDC and NSP

The National Solidarity Programme is a World Bank funded project, run by the Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD). Besides directing government investments into rural areas, the NSP hopes to establish a framework for participatory decision-making and give local leadership experience interacting productively with other community leaders as well as government and aid agencies. Supported by international consultants, the ministry approves and frees block grants to rural villages for community projects (mainly infrastructure projects). Supported by facilitating partners, mostly NGOs like GAA, the villages shall plan, monitor and manage these projects themselves. In order to ensure a democratic process, it was decided that Community Development Councils should be set-up in every village on a step-to-step basis. The community should discuss and propose projects, the CDC then takes a final decision.

A CDC is elected through secret ballot voting of every villager (men and women over 18). The number of members differs for each village according to the number of inhabitants. In the visited villages in Sar-e Pul, CDCs had between 6 and 15 members. A quota for women ensures their representation in the council. The CDC members elect among themselves a chairperson, treasurer, deputy and secretary. The CDCs are registered in Kabul as the representative bodies on community level.

In the first project phase, GAA facilitates village elections and the identification and prioritisation of community projects. Next steps include for example trainings for CDC members in writing project proposals and accounting. Once approved, the money for a project is directly handed over to the village CDC. Villagers have to contribute to projects through work force.

Observations and findings

Of all the villages visited during the study, only three participated in this early stage of the NSP. Each of these villages had a CDC set-up, but none had a project approved yet. Hence, it would be too early to draw conclusions in this early stage of the programme. Therefore, only some findings and impressions are highlighted.

On a first glance, the CDC represents a completely new institution in the village. Yet, many villagers said, "The old shura is the new shura". This means, that it is very common to see the traditional representatives of a village, such as elders or the mullah, elected into a CDC and appointed as chairperson. Yet in one village, a woman was elected chairperson - the wife of the mullah. Villagers use the term "shura" for both the CDC and the traditional shura. For the researchers this was a little confusing. For many villagers however it seemed to make little difference, as no big personal differences were found between the two.

Most (but not all) randomly chosen interviewed people in the villages knew about the CDC, but its function was not always very clear to them. A majority of people perceives the CDC as the organism for carrying out the project, not more.

"Government and international organisations collaborate, and it has something to do with World Bank, it's under RRD...it's a credit, every family should get credit"
When people were asked whom in the village they would approach if they want to discuss a public concern, they generally mentioned the "traditional" village institutions.

Active CDC members too, define their role in the first place "to carry out 'the project of the NSP'". In addition, members emphasised that they are the village institution to be contacted if any aid organisation approaches the village. CDC members met were well informed about the NSP programme. The circumstance of the CDC being officially registered at the government in Kabul was considered important. Nevertheless, some members linked this fact to the unfulfilled- expectation to receive a salary from the government. On the other hand, the CDC was in several statements explicitly not seen as a political body. Waliswal, elders, commanders and arbob are those seen much more involved in local politics.

Some people linked the programme with the forthcoming national elections in 2004 referring to it as a first practice in holding elections. A CDC chairperson stated, "if only the money for the project will arrive soon, we can ensure that the entire village will vote for Karzai".

A large number of people had a positive impression of the election process. They consider that the CDC has some authority because it is democratically legitimised. Special reference was also made to women's vote. It was the first time that women voted, were voted for and elected as village representatives. Before, in many villages it was a small number of elders if not one person who took final decisions. In every village, it was reported that decision-making within the CDC is based on reaching a consensus through discussions. It is doubtful whether all members have the same voice. Nevertheless, the more pluralistic composition of the CDC strengthens the voices of new groups in the village. In Khaval, four younger teachers have been elected to the CDC. In Fayzabad, female CDC members stated that they now have a forum where they can raise their issues such as the desire for carpet weaving. Here, one of the three female CDC members is considered the chairwomen for women affairs, the other two were her assistants.

The participatory procedure of discussing village problems and prioritising projects during various village meetings valorised the CDC in many places. The absence of interfering commanders was also mentioned. In Bazar Kami for example, members reported that decision-making procedures have changed through the CDC. Before, various representatives from different clans, mainly divided into Uzbek and Arab, stood face to face. It was said, "Now, there is one representative for the entire village and all groups are represented". In Bazar Kami, CDC meetings take place regularly, once or three times a week. At the meetings, it was said, problems of the entire village are discussed such as water, lack of school and lack of a clinic. The same holds for Fayzabad, where at weekly village meetings in the mosque the CDC reports about the situation of the project.

In all places visited, the identification with the selected projects was high. It was claimed that a large section of the village population would benefit from the chosen projects (e.g. school, water pools). CDC members also insisted that villagers are ready to contribute with unpaid work force (as foreseen in the project contracts) as soon as the funds would be freed, although work intensive harvest time was approaching.

At the time of research, CDCs were waiting either for technical approval or for the transfer of the grant for starting the implementation of their selected projects. As these processes took more time than people expected, frustration increased. An often-encountered statement was that elections have been conducted, people participated in several
trainings and many meetings were held with project facilitators – “but until now nothing happened”. No CDC had started any other own initiative for community development.

Summing up the statements, the general impression is as follows: With the CDC, a new structure appears at local level. In every village, it overlaps differently with traditional institutions. Villagers and CDC members themselves interpret the role and function differently. Whether the institution CDC will reframe power relations and decision-making procedures at village level is difficult to assess at this moment. This will depend, amongst other, on political developments on national level and on the praxis of agencies facilitating the NSP at local level. Attempting to achieve two objectives at the same time, community solidarity and building up state structures is a challenge indeed.
ANNEX II: WHEAT VARIETIES, YIELDS AND DISEASES

The following information on different aspects of wheat production was collected and compiled on demand of GAA staff because a Food Security Project was implemented recently in Kohistanat, partly in the same villages where the livelihood research was conducted. It was hoped, that information on ‘new’ and ‘old’ wheat varieties, yields and diseases helps to better understand farmers’ reception of the project. Questions raised were whether distributed wheat seeds (main component of the project) have changed any agricultural practices in the project area and whether farmers have any other concerns, which might be considered for future activities.

The Food Security Project in Kohistanat began in August 2002 (first phase) and ended in March 2004 (third phase). In the first phase, mainly food was distributed for free responding to the emergency situation. In the second and third phase, mainly agricultural inputs on a credit scheme basis were distributed and some training conducted therefore. In the last stage of the project, farmers also received a tillage fee. The project distributed improved wheat seeds in Kohistanat in 2002 and 2003. Seeds consisted of F1 generation of four abroad bred improved local varieties.

Project beneficiaries were selected according to the following criteria:

- capability to plough rainfed land
- access to a pair of oxen
- enough manpower/ at least two persons had to work the land
- vulnerability (special emphasis on women headed households)
- innovative farmers

The excellent harvest from 2003 was partly traced to the good quality of distributed seeds. Farmers especially kept parts of the distributed seeds as sowing material for the following year and mentioned a strong interest in obtaining these seeds again. On the other hand, most interviewed farmers did neither know the variety of distributed seeds nor remember the organisation from which they had received them.

Wheat varieties

Most people call the new varieties “Basri” meaning “improved”. Another term used is “Masquiapak”, sometimes used for naming one particular variety, sometimes it refers to new seeds in general. The two local varieties mainly used are Safedak (meaning “white”) and Surkhak (“red”). Bokhtar and Mauri were other local varieties mentioned several times. The four varieties distributed by GAA were Zaranda, Amo, Roshan, Bakhtawar. From these Zaranda is improved Safedak and Roshan is improved Surkhak.

The following general feature was confirmed in all villages of Kohistanat:

- In comparison with traditional varieties, the yields of new varieties are higher on irrigated land and on rainfed land if sufficient rain falls
- The consumption quality (taste, baking quality) of the new seeds is better

But:

- Under dry conditions, farmers prefer the local varieties Surkhak and Safedak, as they experienced that these are more drought resistant.
- With wheat grown from Masquiapak more thresh is lost (mentioned in Khaval) if it is not harvested exactly in the right time because the wheat, according to farmers’ opinions, is not so strong. One farmer reported that he consequently only plants 2 jerib with Masquiapak because he cannot harvest all his wheat at once.
- Farmers stated that often only during the first two years new varieties give good yields, declining drastically afterwards.
Drought resistance was the most frequent criteria mentioned for the selection of varieties. Consequently, farmers prefer planting improved seed varieties on irrigated land. For seed multiplication, farmers usually select good seed material from their own harvest every year. Seeds are exchanged and bought/sold within the village and neighbouring villages. Farmers in Faizabad however denied the latter activity.

The table below shows different varieties of wheat sold in Sar-e Pul grain market in May 2004. Interviewees were traders in the market place. It highlights that quality of wheat is an important criterion for customers in Sar-e Pul city, and that customers are ready to pay a higher price for better quality wheat.

Table 11: Prices and Classification of Seed Varieties in Sar-e Pul Grain Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wheat variety</th>
<th>Region of origin</th>
<th>Price in AFG/seer</th>
<th>market sales/ customers preferences</th>
<th>Quality ranking by sellers</th>
<th>Problems with diseases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qizil Surkhak</td>
<td>Bainaghara</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/100 (American)</td>
<td>Chorbogh</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masquiapak</td>
<td>Sar-e Pul</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauri</td>
<td>Sar-e Pul</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surkha</td>
<td>Shiram</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safedak</td>
<td>Kohistanat</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamir</td>
<td>Saidobod</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = highest preference given, 6= lowest preference

Yields

Specifications on yields varied from one village to the other and also between neighbours from the same village. Figures below were mostly not crosschecked. Consequently, the following information has to be considered carefully.

The amount of wheat seeds planted varies on rainfed land between 1–3 seer/jerib, on irrigated land from 2 up to 6 seer/jerib.

Differences in yields were considerable also depending on the use of fertiliser as confirmed in several interviews.

Table 12: Comparison of yields from 2003, Ziri Kamar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>On rainfed land</th>
<th>On irrigated land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planted jerib in seer</td>
<td>Yield/jerib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safedak improved</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surkhak improved</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surkhak local</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokhtar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauri</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Faizabad, farmers also usually plant Safedak and Surkhak on rainfed and an “American variety” on irrigated land. If farmers chose yield as the main criteria, they prefer the improved varieties of Bokhtar. A group of farmers gave the following figures:

### Table 13: Yields in Faizabad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Planted seer/jerib</th>
<th>Yield seer/jerib</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bokhtar, irrigated and rainfed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghuri 1, irrigated only</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not harvested yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American 2, irrigated only</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safedak, rainfed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surghob, rainfed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masquiapak, irrigated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety distributed the year before /name they do not know, irrigated</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This variety has been distributed only in 2003 for the 2004 harvest. Farmers never had it before.
2 The „American“ variety, sometimes also called „1/100“-variety appeared according to farmers' information about 30 years ago in the so called Bangladesh-Year when the country suffered a severe drought.

### Fertiliser

Most farmers are familiar with the use of fertiliser, which can be bought at Sar-e Pul market. In all villages, Urea and Diammoniumphosphat (DAP) are applied if farmers can afford them. International organisations also distributed these two types. Villagers usually refer to them as white (Urea) and black (DAP) fertiliser.

**Prices at Sar-e Pul market:**
- Urea: 400 - 500 Afghani/bag (= 50 kg)
- DAP: 550 - 800 Afghani/bag (= 50 kg)

Farmers generally reported to apply DAP for sewing in autumn and Urea in spring and/or autumn as well. Some applied fertiliser on irrigated land only, others also on rainfed land. The advisors of the GAA project only suggested application on irrigated land. Applied amounts of fertiliser vary between 50kg - 100kg/ha, depending rather on the quantity distributed, respectively what farmers can afford to buy on the market, than on soil assessments.

Other chemical fertilisers have not been mentioned. Natural fertilisers are usually not used. Dung is needed for making fire and heating in wintertime. If at all, dung is applied in the gardens.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that traders on Sar-e Pul market reported that 90% of the fertiliser they sell is for poppy plantations.

### Diseases

Plant diseases represent a severe problem in wheat production in all visited areas. Farmers everywhere complained about shortages of pesticides. For this reason, pesticides often are also not applied at the appropriate time.

The study team did not explore wheat diseases in detail. The following information derives from observations and farmers’ statements that were not crosschecked.
Most common diseases:

- Villagers mostly named a disease called “black one” resulting in black corns. According to information from agronomists, this is *loose smut*. It turns the colour of the whole ear black. In the field, also black corns only have been observed. This points rather to the disease *common bunt* (*Tillecea Karies*), transferred through infected seed material.

- The second common disease, called “the red one” is said to be a rust according to agronomists. It was not observed in the field during the study. Problems with the first two diseases were said to be more common on rainfed, less on irrigated lands.

- Ears most probably affected by tripe have been observed.

- *Mur (= insect army worm)* was often mentioned by villagers, especially as a problem on wheat on rainfed land.

- An often mentioned but not identified insect called “*Kapachak*” seems to appear as a plague this year. People reported of a similar plague during *Taleban times* some 5-7 years ago.

Villagers wash the black seeds/corns and afterwards use them for baking as it gives a dark colour to the bread. According to information given in Faizabad, pesticides against this disease are available at Sar-e Pul market. Seeds have to be treated before planting. 1 kg pesticide costs 700 – 800 Afghani and serves for treatment of 30 – 50 seer of seeds.
ANNEX III: SUMMARY OF LIVELIHOOD MONITORING IN SAYAD DISTRICT
(AREU/GAA)
by Annette Wulf

1. Livelihoods monitoring in Sayyad district - a panel study

During a yearlong co-operation between Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) and German Agro Action in Saripul (GAA) between March 2003 and 2004 a longitudinal panel livelihoods monitoring was carried out in three rural communities in Sayyad district, northwest of Saripul town. The monitoring was part of a larger livelihood monitoring and capacity building project, involving other NGOs in other parts of the country, too. The overall project was funded by the European Union. Results of all partners were presented and discussed at a conference in Kabul in February 2004.

This summary intends to supplement the information gathered during the two studies carried out by Ibkendanz, Flämig and Bock in September 2002 and May 2004. It is subdivided into four parts, namely an introduction into the study method applied and some limitations, a short description of the villages and the households interviewed, the main results and main conclusions for implications on GAA’s programming in the area in the future. This summary will refrain from elaborating on the theoretical background of the livelihoods model, described in detail in the main report of this paper.

2. The methodology of the livelihoods monitoring

During the livelihoods monitoring, a household panel of 20 households per village was interviewed twice. All (adult) members of the households were interviewed, along a comprehensive questionnaire developed by AREU. Hence, more than 120 in-depth interviews were held over the study period. Sayyad district and here three villages (Sayyad Center, Engishka and Yamchi) were chosen as study area for both interview rounds. In each village, 20 households were chosen according to the sampling methods explained below. A first round of interviews was undertaken in June and July 2003 following initial training of three interviewers (one male, two females) and a person to be responsible for data entry into an access database developed and maintained by AREU. The interviewers also compiled the village descriptions prior to the interviews in the villages. The villages were selected with the help of AREU. A second round of interviews was done with the same households in November and December 2003 by the same male interviewer and one new female interviewer who had been trained by the male colleague before. Data entry of round I interviews took until autumn 2003, and subsequently AREU staff produced the analysis tables. Data entry for round II interviews was completed by January 2004.

Subsequently, AREU produced the analysis tables. Throughout the process, AREU supported the monitoring teams with recurrent training in Kabul and on site. The GAA M&E team analysed the data tables in late January 2004 in Saripul with the help of key questions provided by the AREU backstopping team in Kabul. However, due to some

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22 Annette Wulf has been working as a GAA expert in Sar-e Pul Province from 2003-2004. During this time, she was supervising the AREU Livelihood Monitoring Project in Sar-e Pul Province. Since September 2004, Mrs. Wulf is working at GAA headquarter in Bonn (Annette.wulf@dwhh.de)
problems with the access database not all quantitative data are reliable. Hence, preference is given to reporting the trends of change over the study period rather than focussing extensively on the quantitative reports. Despite these shortcomings, the trends have been corroborated by other monitoring information gathered in the field. Finally, the report and the presentation were compiled and drafted by the author of this summary.

Villages and panel description

An introduction into the agro-ecological zone is presented in the main paper, and Sayyad Center is one of the villages also covered there. Yamchi and Engeshka are in the same district, situated in the same ecological zone, and both not too far from Sayyad Center. Engishka was chosen for the fact of having a lot of rainfed land, while Yamchi has both, rainfed and irrigated land, as well as livestock. This is also the case for Sayyad, which has the largest area of irrigated land. In all villages, war and drought have led to repeated displacement of the larger part of the population. Some families stated to have lost all their assets severally. Sayyad and Yamchi are mainly inhabited by Uzbeks, while Engishka has Arab and Pashtoon population.

In each of the three villages, initial talks were held with the village elders and the arbob or head of the village. The villagers defined the wealth groups present in their villages and also classified the families into the respective categories. In order to determine the number of households to be interviewed (20 households per village in total) in relation to representation of this particular wealth group, a weighting approach was used. The village elders together with the GAA/AREU team identified each household to be interviewed. The following wealth groups (WG) were defined according to the following characteristics) by the villagers:

Table 1:  Wealth Group Characteristics as described by village elders for sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Oxen</th>
<th>Irrigated land (jerib)*</th>
<th>Rainfed land (jerib)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>WG 1 (wealthy)</td>
<td>100-120</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engishka</td>
<td>WG 1 (wealthy)</td>
<td>&gt; 100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamchi</td>
<td>WG 1 (wealthy)</td>
<td>100-150</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>100-120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>WG 2 (average)</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engishka</td>
<td>WG 2 (average)</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamchi</td>
<td>WG 2 (average)</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>10-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>WG 3 (poor)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engishka</td>
<td>WG 3 (poor)</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamchi</td>
<td>WG 3 (poor)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>WG 4 (very poor)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engishka</td>
<td>WG 4 (very poor)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamchi</td>
<td>WG 4 (very poor)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Irrigated land: mainly land flooded in spring (1 jerib = 0.2 ha)
Table 2: Sampling framework per village (total number of interviews, percentage) and sample size numbers in round 1 and 2 interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>(WG 1)</th>
<th>(WG 2)</th>
<th>(WG 3)</th>
<th>(WG 4)</th>
<th>(WG 5)</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englishka</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamchi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Sayyad 3 mosque districts out of 15 were chosen as basis group, based on the assumption that the distribution of wealth groups in these three mosque districts is representative of the whole village. For Englishka and Yamchi the total population served as the reference. This is the distribution of wealth groups in the villages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Total number of families per wealth group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WG 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayyad (183)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englishka (600)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamchi (180)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 1. and 2. show that wealth stratification is not very distinctive in any of the three villages. While wealth group 1 never even reaches one fifth of the total population, wealth groups 2 and 3 are more evenly represented, in Sayyad Center accounting for nearly half of the total population. Wealth group 4 can only be identified in Yamchi, where nearly one third of the population can be characterized as very poor. On average each household consists of 6 members.
Average household composition is shown for the three villages in figure 1:

With an average of 2-3 children per family and a rather even distribution of boys and girls within each family nothing indicates any particular family feature. The rather even relation of men and women in the households suggests that few men have second or third wives, which would entail a larger number of women per family. There are female-headed households. Most female-headed households in all villages are from wealth group 3.

Figure 2 illustrates household sizes per wealth group.
It is obvious that wealth group 2 has the largest families, followed closely by wealth group 3. There are only few differences among the three villages, but in Englishka it is striking to see that wealth group 1 families are very large with nearly 9 persons per family.

3. The main results

Physical assets: In all villages interviewed households owned their houses or shelters. To rent accommodation is not at all common in the rural communities. Many of the families (especially in Sayyad and in Englishka) had added one or two rooms over the study period. The richer families in the district center Sayyad usually have much larger houses than the same wealth groups in the other two communities, one indicator for the higher standard of living in the district center. Private access to well water is not common in any of the villages. While most households had access to public well or tap water, the quality of the water is questionable. Spring water is also collected in larger storages, with similar poor hygiene standards.

Access to irrigated land is limited to wealth groups 1 and 2 only (see above). Only richer families own orchards. Englishka does not have irrigated land at all. Farmers do not have regular irrigation, but access to flood water in spring. Over the past decades the institution of water distribution by the mirabashi, the person traditionally responsible for water distribution in the village, has suffered greatly, and inequalities in access to water have given rise to repeated conflict. Pasture land is common ground, but conflicts do arise over pasture rights of different clans. Land is neither sold, hardly is land mortgaged or rented.

Great differences occur between villages and wealth groups in terms of ownership of rainfed land. In Sayyad Center rich households on average own 8 times more rainfed land than the next wealth group. In view of such unequal land distribution, it is not surprising that sharecropping is a common practice in the area.

Usual sharecropping mechanisms are as follows: The in-sharecropper provides labour, seeds, fertilizer and draught power for cultivating somebody else’s land. He will receive 75% of the crop while the landlord receives the remaining quarter of the crop. In general households were sharecropping in wheat. It is less common to sharecrop out, and even richer families hardly sharecrop out. Sharecropping was most common in families belonging to wealth group 2, especially in Englishka village, where 80% of wealth group 2 respondents stated to sharecrop in. It seems that wealth group 2 also had better results than others in wheat production on sharecropped land.

Following years of drought and forced displacement livestock assets had been severely depleted. Significant changes occurred during the time between the interviews. In all wealth groups in all villages, the total and average number of sheep and goats increased significantly and wealth groups who did not own sheep and goats at the time of the first interview had been able to buy animals in the meantime. It is interesting to note that the number of draft animals hardly increased, neither did the number of donkeys, but

23 Sharecropping in: To work on somebody else’s land for a share of the crop. Sharecropping out: To give out land to somebody to work on it in exchange of a share of the crop.
only the number of sheep and goats increased. None of the households had more than four draft animals, and ownership of draft animals is by and large a characteristic of richer wealth groups. Hence, an increase in capital to buy livestock can be assumed and natural increase will be the case as well. It seems that people will rather invest in sheep and goats than in other animals. The gender pattern of ownership did not change during the six months between the interviews: livestock, apart from chicken, is primarily owned by men. It should also be noted that livestock sales were not (yet) very common in the area. People are still hesitant to sell their livestock in order to build their herds further.

A significant increase was noticed in ownership of chickens: During the study period many households interviewed doubled their number of chickens. In Yamchi village the change was most significant: The village with least physical assets obviously benefited from an NGO intervention during the study period, where poultry farming for women was initiated.

Other physical assets such as gillims, carpets, cash and jewellery is hardly worth mentioning, since hardly any changes occurred. Households did not respond to questions around cash and jewellery. From observations in the field it might be useful to add horses, motorcycles and TV/VCDs (in semi-urban and urban environments) as well as small generators as indicators for wealth to the questionnaire in the future. Obvious changes have occurred over the study period, but where not researched in detail.

Again WG 1 in Sayyad seems to be the richest wealth group of all villages. WG 2 seems to have the most diverse assets in this group in terms of physical assets. All households with more funds at the time of the second interview had increased their physical asset base by improving their housing conditions and by investment into productive assets, such as livestock.

In conclusion it seems that some improvement in the endowment with physical assets have developed in the three villages in the last six months, possibly due to a good harvest, remittances from outside labour, and peaceful conditions (and an increase in production of illicit crops?).

Human assets: In general it can be said that the skills base in the households in all sampled villages was rather low. In Yamchi it is only 43 % households of WG 2 that had more than 3 skills (e.g. gillim or carpet weaving, tailoring, sewing, masonry or carpentry). However, all households in all three WG there had at least 1 to 3 skills. In Engishka these wealth groups had all at least 2 skills, but only two thirds of WG 4 had at least 2 skills. While all households in WG 1 had more than 3 skills, this was much less in WG 2 to 4 (20 %, 40 % and 33.3 %). The number of qualified masons and carpenters is in general very low in the villages. The large majority of households interviewed were either illiterate or semi-literate. The highest level of school attendance was grade 3 (in a madrasa). Among the shopkeepers, a certain degree of functional literacy must be assumed, which were not adequately y reflected during the study.

Livelihood strategies pursued are diverse: Temporal labour migration especially of young men is very common in the area. Experience shows that people migrate to Baghlan, Pol-e Khumri, Kunduz, Mazar or other regions to work in rice harvesting. Some
also migrate for labour to Iran. In most cases the activities performed in exile or elsewhere is casual labour.

The village descriptions add that most migrants are young men. Some have been away for more than one year. Temporal migration is common in all villages, but to a lesser extent in wealth group 1 than in wealth groups 2 and 3. Villagers stated that income is remitted to the families at home; however, the households did not give the (quantified) information in the interviews. The results on residence and non-residence revealed that migration is a livelihood strategy in Sayyad district. The village descriptions informed about the regions and reasons for household members to migrate. However, the real gains from migration (labour and income gained) did not become very clear from the interviews. The fact that all households had been able to increase the value of their houses by adding rooms, however, suggests that the funds for this improvements might have come from such income earned during, for instance, work in a rice harvest elsewhere. Households would, of course, not state income from poppy cultivation, which did see a notable increase in 2003 also in Sayyad district.

Other strategies include livestock sales (only wealth group 1 in Sayyad), farming and sheparding, gillim weaving, casual labour, wild plant and firewood collection (especially in Yamchi village). The fact that a large number of respondents stated “non-farm labour” as main income source indicates a still to be determined important livelihood strategy, which was not sufficiently revealed during this study and needs further investigation. Food for work (FFW) was only mentioned by respondents of wealth group 4 as a means of supplementing livelihoods.

Households grain budgets shed some light on the food security situation in the area. Households interviewed stated that their stocks lasted for differing numbers of months. This pattern could be identified for all villages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wealth group</th>
<th>Months of stocks available approx.:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6-7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt; 3 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It also became obvious that wheat was hardly sold in the markets, but was maize. If wheat was not used for own consumption, it often served to pay off household debts (see under). Only wealth group 1 in Sayyad was able to cover wheat needs totally from own production. Other groups had to supplement their wheat stocks via FFW, paid labour or purchases in the market. In all villages, it was wealth group 2 concentrating most on wheat production.

Hence, it can be said that apart from some households in wealth groups 3 and 4 in Yamchi and Engishka (and some households in wealth group 2 in Sayyad) most households were self-sufficient in wheat production. The richer the groups the less wheat is used for own consumption. By the start of the autumn period, all wealth groups in all villages had some few wheat stocks left, although in general not more than 20 seers²⁴. Hence, it is safe to say that Sayyad did not have a period without access to wheat at all. However, some households bought grain and a small number of households

²⁴ 1 seer = 7 kg (local measure)
still had to beg. Hence, security in access to wheat had been reached, but some few vulnerable households in this respect have to be considered still for assistance.

Expenditure: The total amount of expenditures per household in the villages is not known and was not revealed in the interviews. Hence, here only relative statements can be made on expenditure.

In all three villages in all households of all wealth groups food took up the highest portion of expenditure throughout the year. Health took up the second largest portion of household budgets in many wealth groups throughout the seasons. Third expenditure priority is in general farm inputs. The population hardly spend funds on fuel, and if so mainly in spring and winter. Yamchi, the village where fuel wood collection is also used as an important income strategy, is covering its fuel wood needs by own collection. Education can hardly be mentioned as an important expenditure in the households.

Household debts: At the outset of the study the large majority of the households interviewed held cash or debts, mainly taken out from relatives and shopkeepers for food. Normally, debts were not older than 1.5 years. At the time of the second panel, many households had managed to pay off or significantly reduce their debts (especially wealth group 1). Debts were still prevalent in the poorer segments of the village societies, however in less households than at the start of the period.

However, it might be too early to talk of the debts “crisis” being overcome in the area. The fact that neither a large amount of agricultural produce nor livestock was sold in order to pay back debts suggests that other income sources were used to serve the debts. These can only be remittances from outside labour (or from the production of illicit crops). If secure livelihoods are understood to be resistant to external shocks and stress to some extent then these income sources might prove quite vulnerable in cases of recurring conflict preventing from either labour migration or the remittance of earnings (or an enforced ban on production of illicit crops). With a harvest failure and no access to income from labour migration these subsistence farmers might be back to taking out debts quite quickly again.

4. Conclusions for programming

Although food security levels in Sayyad district have improved greatly in 2002 and 2003 thanks to a good harvest and to availability of farm inputs (NGO provided) the area has reached food security only in part. Some households were still not able to cover all their wheat grain needs from own production. In wealth groups 3 and 4, a number of households are still quite vulnerable, since some still had to beg for food, to borrow or used FFW to fill gaps.

Hardly any wheat production being traded it is safe to assume that Sayyad district is not yet a surplus area. Moreover, due to the good harvest the wheat price fell considerably and thus did not encourage farmers to sell their wheat. Nowhere during the interviews were statements made regarding seed stocks. In how far farmers will have sufficient seeds to plant for the next season is not clear from the monitoring. Most interviewed households were having grain stocks at the end of the monitoring period, and maybe seed stocks are included.
The high incidence of health problems suggests that food intake is also not consumed and utilised most efficiently. Although a MUAC test among target groups for the returnee seed package carried out by GAA in mid-January 2004 did not reveal major prevalence of malnutrition, the dietary composition of household consumption needs further investigation to explain the high level of health problems among the population. One reason is clearly the lack of water, let alone the lack of safe drinking water. NGOs are already striving to address this issue.

In order to further strengthen the district in becoming less vulnerable to external shocks again livelihood strategies should be diversified. A number of entry points were revealed during the study:

- Further increase of agricultural production through improving access to irrigated land
- Improvement of seeds and their availability in the villages
- Support to livestock production and animal health
- Support to wool production and marketing
- Support to livestock production for women (e.g. chicken farming, other small animals)
- Support to further development of other trades (e.g. pottery for women, revival of silk production, sesame oil production, tailoring, embroidery) and the improvement of the skills base of the (younger) population (e.g. in vocational skills, such as carpentry, masonry, mechanical skills, welding and smithing)

Last not least further improvement of access to clean and safe drinking water and to irrigation water, combined with basic health and hygiene promotion.
REFERENCES


Further publications and information on ongoing research on livelihood systems in Afghanistan are found on the web page of Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU): http://www.areu.org.af

Maps:

Sar-e Pul:
http://www.aims.org.pk/country_profile/maps/district_maps/sari_pul/sari_pul.pdf
Kohistanat:
http://www.aims.org.pk/country_profile/maps/district_maps/sari_pul/kohistanat.pdf
Sayyad:
http://www.aims.org.pk/country_profile/maps/district_maps/sari_pul/sayyad.pdf
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