

Afghanistan Research Newsletter



An AREU Publication

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The purpose of this newsletter is to alert readers to new research being undertaken on Afghanistan and to help disseminate the results of research. It is AREU's goal to produce this newsletter quarterly. Copies of most published research cited here is available on the Internet; in other instances copies are available by contacting newsletter@areu.org.af.

Current Research & Resources

This section lists current and proposed research projects and related resources. The information appears as submitted by the individuals or organisations involved and the status of these projects may have changed since publication of this newsletter.

National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2005

The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and Central Statistics Office are coming to the point where there will be a public release of all the NRVA 2005 data. Provisional analysis has been done for food security and iodised salt, but these data will be reanalysed with the final household weights and clean data set.

There are plans, already well-developed, to mount the NRVA 2005 database on the web platform to allow users to define their own queries, graphs and map them directly from the website. It is hoped that this will meet the needs of many users directly, but for those users who wish to access the entire data set, please fill in the NRVA 2005 data request form on:

www.mrrd.gov.af/vau/NRVA_2005.htm or download directly from www.mrrd.gov.af/vau/

[NRVA%2005%20DownloadsNRVA%202005%20Data%20request%20form.doc](http://www.mrrd.gov.af/vau/Downloads/NRVA%202005%20Data%20request%20form.doc)

The district market prices collected from every district (except 6) in Afghanistan during the NRVA 2005 survey have been analysed in the following report: *National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, NRVA 2005: district market prices/* Central Statistics Office (CSO) (NSS Unit) and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) (Vulnerability Analysis Unit, VAU). Kabul: Central Statistics Office and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, 2006. 26 p.: col. maps; 30 cm. This is available from: www.mrrd.gov.af/vau/NRVA%2005%20Downloads/NRVA%202005%20District%20Market%20Price%20analysis.doc. (It contains a lot of maps hence its large size of 4 MB.)

AREU Research on Livelihoods & Informal Credit Practices

I am a widow and when my husband died, my son went to Iran. He didn't have money so he mortgaged our land. When my son was in Iran my brother paid our expenses. I married my young daughter and from the bride price I took back my mortgaged land. When my son came back he didn't bring money because he was drug addicted in Iran. He wanted to start a business so he borrowed money from friends, but he couldn't continue the business. He mortgaged the land once again. Now he is a shoemaker and one day he works and eats the earning in the other days. I am working on other people's land and I get wheat and other crops from the landowners. My son is also indebted to my brother who has a shop in the bazaar; the amount is 30,000 Afs. My brother gave us sugar, oil, and rice. (Fateme, 45-year-old widow from Herat)

From July 2005 to December 2005 AREU conducted a study of informal credit practices in rural Afghanistan within one village in each of the following four provinces: Balkh, Kapisa, Ghor and Herat. The study aims to understand the role of informal credit – i.e. loans occurring between

members of the village, such as between kin, or between shopkeepers and customers or landowners and the landless – in rural livelihood strategies, and particularly to draw out and understand the role of informal credit as both a financial and social asset. It thus will describe how informal credit relations function and how they are used to build and strengthen social relations.

The above mentioned case is an excellent example of the complex livelihood strategies households devise, the role credit plays in livelihoods, and what kind of strategies households use for repayment of those loans. This family earned its living in a variety of ways over time, from labour migration to self employment to agricultural labour. Credit through mortgaging land was used to support the labour migration strategy; when that did not pay off due to addiction, the daughter became the asset through which to take back the land. These experiences represent some of the common reasons why households take credit. Other reasons include: household daily expenses, health issues, to meet the cost of bride price, and sometimes for starting new businesses and migration. In some areas where the civil war

destroyed many houses, the people take credit to renovate their houses.

To have access to the credit they should have a guarantee, i.e. land, a young and single female in the household, or other valuable assets. The use of young females as assets through which to either obtain cash (bride price), and therefore avoid debt, or as a guarantee for credit (against future bride price) was not uncommon across the study areas. Sometimes when the people do not have this kind of guarantee, they should have a good social relation with their community and relatives; this acts like a form of guarantee and provides access to credit with often very low repayment pressure. For example:

I am indebted from my uncle; I couldn't pay his money in five years, however he gives me credit, if he doesn't I will ask from others and it is shame (Nange) for my uncle if I ask from other shopkeepers. (35-year-old woman in Herat)

Apart from family and friends, the next biggest source of credit is shopkeepers. Because shopkeepers lend to both the better off and the poor, the question raised is why are shopkeepers giving credit to households, particularly poorer households? The research found two reasons: 1) There are not many customers in the rural areas, so the shopkeepers need to have good relations with the people and should give credit to maintain these relationships and keep regular customers. 2) On the other hand, when the people are purchasing goods in cash they pay a lower price. However, if they buy goods on credit the prices will be a little more expensive than the regular rate, meaning the shopkeeper's profit is higher.

In some areas land is very important in relation to access to credit. If a household has a piece of

land and needs credit, everyone is keen to provide it through mortgage due to the possible benefit to be received from the land, a benefit some consider to be *sudh* (interest). So if a creditor takes the land as mortgage, he can use the product of the land as a benefit, essentially earning *sudh* (interest). While there is no explicit *sudh* system in Afghanistan, many people interviewed for this research did consider such profit-making from a credit practice as *sudh*, though others did not agree. This can also be linked to the profit shopkeepers make by selling goods on credit at higher rates than given to those paying cash.

The case study this article started with showed one rather common strategy of debt repayment – the use of bride price. Other common strategies the study identified included: paying off credit used for daily needs seasonally, after the harvest time; moving into off-farm or non-farm activities such as selling homemade products (*qurot*, animal cooking oil and sometimes embroidery); labour migration to neighbouring countries or the major cities of Afghanistan; and mortgaging land. The latter shows how sometimes people use one form of credit to pay off another, potentially entering a spiral of debt from which they cannot escape. Many people also maintained large debts, particularly with family members, highlighting how the social side of credit relations – the claims one can make on close relations – is very important to household livelihood security.

The first case studies from this research should become available from AREU in late spring.

Authored by AREU Research Assistants Baser Nader, Fauzia Rahimi, and Saghar Wafa. For further information contact Paula Kantor, Senior Researcher at paula@areu.org.af

Market Studies from Altai Consulting

Altai Consulting has recently been working on an assessment of the opportunities on the international market for Afghan handicrafts, in the sectors of textiles, jewellery, furniture and decorative objects. This project involves documenting the current production level and processes, and contacting the main importers, retailers, wholesalers of this type of products to gather their impressions on the products. Due to the economic situation in Afghanistan, many producers are

struggling to maintain their crafts and sell their products. Therefore, the goal of this project is to help women producers create products that can be sold on the international market, which will provide them with additional income to support their families.

The website includes a number of illustrated PDFs giving short surveys of each handicraft area: <http://www.altaiconsulting.com/handicrafts/>

The handicrafts market assessment complements earlier research done by Altai for UNDP on the development of Small and Medium Enterprises in selected sectors of the Afghan economy.

The approach involved conducting in-depth analysis of the market dynamics to identify business opportunities in the following sectors:

- Poultry;
- Cumin and saffron;
- Gems;
- Services related to construction and small construction material;
- Wheat-based products;

- Cashmere; and
- Soap, shampoo and laundry detergent.

Findings from this research were published in the report: *Market sector assessments: SME development/ UNDP*; prepared by Altai Consulting. Kabul: UNDP, 2005. 255 p.; 30 cm.

Altai has also produced a number of survey and evaluation reports on topics such as the Kajakai Dam Reservoir area, education expenditure tracking, civic education, energy usage and the private sector.

For more information ,
visit: www.altaiconsulting.com

Featured Publications

This section highlights research publications recently received by AREU, or those forthcoming in late spring 2006.

Development

Afghanistan National Development Strategy: an interim strategy for security, governance, economic growth & poverty reduction: volume 1/ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Kabul: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2006. 231 p.; 30 cm. One of the most important strategy documents for the coming years in Afghanistan. Available from: <http://www.and.s.gov.af/main.asp>

National Area-Based Development Programme: phase two (2006-2008) Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, United Nations Development Programme. [Kabul]: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2005. 52 p.; 30 cm.

Phase two of the National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP) aims to contribute to the sustainable reduction of poverty and improvement of livelihoods in rural Afghanistan by empowering communities to give voice to their needs and priorities, and by enabling the government to support rural rehabilitation and development in an integrated, people-focused, inclusive and participatory manner.

Economy

The investment climate in Afghanistan: exploiting opportunities in an uncertain environment. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, South Asia Re-

gion, Finance and Private Sector, 2005. 65 p.; 30 cm.

According to this study, the key challenge is to broaden participation in the market by removing barriers to new investors and creating conditions that will encourage those already in the market to invest more. Based on a survey of 338 firms in five Afghan cities, this report analyses challenges for private sector development in Afghanistan. The most serious constraints reported by the surveyed firms are electricity and access to land. Corruption and access to finance were also mentioned as significant. Available from: <http://www.worldbank.org/af>

Papers from the Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation, Kabul 4–5 December 2005

As well as the Kabul Declaration (5 December 2005), the website for this conference makes available the following supporting documents based on research about transport and trade potentials for Afghanistan.

- *Findings of industry research on Afghanistan: presentation to Private Sector Development Donor Roundtable/ OTF Group* (November 2004, 82 p.). [Industry research on carpets, lambskins, wool, cotton, raisins, nuts, apricots, marble and essential oils].

- *Commercial Competition Commission of Afghanistan (CCCA): three cluster discussion document, September 14, 2005/* OTF Group (September 2005, 24 p.) [Industry research on dried fruit and nuts, marble and stone industry, Afghan carpets].
- *Report on border and customs related facilities and procedures in Afghanistan: prepared as a discussion documents for the Second Meeting of the Trade and Customs Working Group, Bangkok 13-14 December 2005* (60 p.)
- *CSATTF customs cooperation briefing report/* Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum (CSATTF), Trade and Customs Working Group (TCWG) (October 2004, 65 p.)
- *Toward harmonization and modernization of transit transport agreements among the Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum (CSATTF) countries: draft final report/* Asian Development Bank, Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum. (November 2005, 126 p.)
- *Report on the economic impact of Central-South Asian road corridors, March 2005/* Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum (CSATTF)/ this report was prepared by Mohiuddin Alamgir (79 p.)
- *Prospects for regional development and economic cooperation in the wider Central Asia Region: discussion draft (November 25, 2005): paper prepared for the Kabul conference on Regional Economic Cooperation, December 4-5, 2005* (29 p.)

All of these papers are available from: <http://www.afghanistan-mfa.net/RECC/index.html>

Elections

Bandoliers and ballots: security and the Afghan Presidential election of 2004/ Nur Laiq. Unpublished thesis (Master of Philosophy in Modern Middle Eastern Studies), Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University, 2005.

To an extent, the “electoralisation” theory has worked in Afghanistan. Relatively fair elections have been held, the Taliban exist on the periphery, and at least a façade of democracy exists. Yet none of this has translated into the existence of a secure landscape. Afghanistan is still marred by daily acts of violence carried out by

the very groups that the election should have either enmeshed into or eliminated from the system. Thus in the case of Afghanistan the US National Security Strategy and one version of democratisation theory which holds that democracy translates into security has not worked. Security has not been achieved, not necessarily as a result of any grand fault in the theory, but because of three inter-connected reasons specific to the current situation in Afghanistan.

More information can be obtained by writing the author at nurlaiq@yahoo.com

Family Law

Family structures and family law in Afghanistan: a report of the fact-finding mission to Afghanistan, January-March 2005. [Hamburg]: Max Planck Institute for Foreign Private Law and Private International Law, 2006. 22 p.; 30 cm.

The aim of this mission was to provide basic information about family structures and family law as practised in Afghanistan. Over 200 interviews were conducted, in particular with employees of national, international, and nongovernmental organisations. As this was the first field research in the ongoing project on family law in Afghanistan at the MPI, this research had an experimental aspect...

The mission visited nine provinces—Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Badakhshan, Bamyan, Nangarhar, Kunduz, and Paktia—from January to March 2005. The interviewees were judges, prosecutors, law lecturers of the faculties of law and Sharīa, employees of state institutions, members of various international organisations and NGOs, members of local *jirgas* and councils, and local residents. Sixty percent of the interviewees were male and 40 percent were female Afghans, ranging in age from 20 to 70 and coming from all social strata.

This report is available from: <http://www.mpipriv.hh.mpg.de/deutsch/Forschung/LaufendeProjekte/Afghanistan/afghanistan.htm> During 2006, a series of seminars in Afghanistan on family law and eventual production of a family law textbook are also planned. For more information contact: afghanistan.project@mpipriv.de

Food Security

Food security situation in Afghanistan. Kabul: Action Aid, Afghanistan, 2005. xi, 45 p.: maps; 25 cm.

Analysis of this report has been divided into seven different sections: conflict, food production/consumption, access/availability of resources, infrastructure, poverty and livelihoods, markets, and food aid. The prominent findings of the study are as follows:

- Twenty percent of the country's population consume less than or equal to 2100 Kcal/capita/day.
- Cereal production is largely rain-fed, with decades of war and years of drought having a profound impact on the irrigation systems.
- Limited storage and transportation facilities result in 13 percent of food loss, which is almost double the food deficit of the country.
- Unregulated food imports keep the prices low, making it difficult for farmers to carry on with cereal production.
- Number of people owning livestock fell by three million between 1995 and 2003, seriously threatening the livelihoods and food security of rural Afghans, especially Kuchi nomads.

For more information contact: 0799 043 656 or gb@actionaidafg.org

Health

Health seeking behaviour, health expenditures, and cost sharing practices in Afghanistan/ prepared by Johns Hopkins University Third-Party Evaluation Team. [Kabul]: [Johns Hopkins University Third-Party Evaluation Team], [2005]. vii, 52 p.; 30 cm.

This report presents national data on morbidity, health seeking behaviour, barriers to accessing care, out-of-pocket health expenditures, and cost sharing practices in Afghanistan, collected as part of the 2004 National Health Services Performance Assessment (NHSPA), which was conducted by the Afghan Ministry of Public Health in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University Third-Party Evaluation team. The report presents data nationally as well as specifically for 11 provinces...In addition, supplemental information on cost sharing practices of NGO health services providers is presented, from an informal survey of NGOs conducted in summer 2004, the

same time period as the NHSPA 2004. Due to the nature of the sampling used in NHSPA, the data presented in the report are not meant to be statistically representative of health seeking behaviour and expenditures in Afghanistan; this important caveat should be kept in mind when reviewing these findings.

La santé des femmes et la coopération hospitalière canadienne en Afghanistan/ Valéry Ridde. Published in *Revue Canadienne de Santé Publique = Canadian Journal of Public Health* v. 97 (no. 1) (January-February 2006), p. 60-62.

Recently, Quebec clinicians were asked to support a project to build and run a tertiary and highly-specialised hospital for women and children, in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. The goal of this paper was to analyse the challenges raised by participation in such a project. The major lesson learned was the need to resist the temptation to provide aid when it is attractive but ineffective.

Justice

Field study of informal and customary justice in Afghanistan and recommendations on improving access to justice and relations between formal courts and informal bodies/ Afghanistan Rule of Law Project, Checchi and Company Consulting. Washington, D.C.: Checchi and Company Consulting, 2005. 67 p.; 30 cm.

This study suggests that the informal system of justice found in *jirgas* and *shuras*, applying customary norms of dispute resolution, has much to recommend it for providing a wide variety of Afghans access, comprehensibility and legitimacy. However, many of the difficulties found in the formal government courts are also found in the informal system. The issue is not so much a choice between systems—which one will better guarantee enjoyment of universal norms of human rights and promote the rule of law and legitimacy of institutions—but rather a matter of bolstering the capacity of both sets of institutions to perform their respective functions in as professional and uniform a manner as possible.

Land Tenure

Informal settlements and land tenure issues: report on pilot project district #7: executive summary. [Kabul]: USAID Land Titling and Economic Restructuring in Afghanistan (LTERA), 2006. 8 p.; 30 cm.

USAID/LTERA has piloted a methodology to address the issues of informal settlement; a methodology that integrates the upgrading of basic services with the regularization of tenure and formalization of these settlements into the municipality. The pilot projects were designed to test an incremental, community-based methodology of upgrading and tenure regularisation. The pilots confirmed among other things that this methodology builds community cohesiveness, and demonstrated the willingness of community members to negotiate spatial requirements among themselves for the greater benefit of the community.

Livestock

Production and marketing of red meat, wool, skins and hides in Afghanistan: a case study from Kabul, Kandahar and Kunduz provinces/ Euan F. Thomson, Philippe Chabot, and Iain A. Wright. [Aberdeen, Scotland]: Macaulay Institute, Mercy Corps, 2005. vii, 56 p.; 30 cm. Bibliography, p. 43-45.

This paper reports the findings of a short, three-month project to “identify market opportunities for livestock and livestock products and constraints to producers receiving higher returns from livestock products” as a viable alternative to poppy production. It focused on sheep, goats and cattle and to a lesser extent buffalo, since these aspects received little attention in previous projects. It assessed the strength of the demand for, and the trade in red meat, wool, skins and hides and the main constraints to the participation of farmers in the market for livestock and livestock products. More information can be obtained from: euane.thomson@talk21.com

Opium

Exploring the “shades of grey”: an assessment of the factors influencing decisions to cultivate opium poppy in 2005/2006. London: Afghan Drugs Inter Departmental Unit, 2006. 32 p.; 30 cm.

This report moves beyond the common tendency to use aggregate levels of opium poppy cultivation as the primary measure for assessing performance on counter narcotics objectives in Afghanistan. This kind of nation-wide picture neither captures the diversity in opium poppy cultivation across the country, nor the qualitative shifts that are taking place at the local level. Instead, this paper looks at the more nuanced picture

beneath these headline figures. It maps out apparent progress in reducing opium poppy cultivation in the more accessible and asset wealthy districts of some provinces but also charts the expansion of poppy cultivation in the more outlying districts of these same provinces, peripheral areas where access to viable legal livelihoods, governance and security remains problematic. Available from: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/afghanistan/drivers2006>

Public Finance

Afghanistan: managing public finances for development/ Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Sector Unit, South Asia Region. <1> v.; 30 cm. [Washington, D.C.]: World Bank, 2005. Bibliography, p. 99-101. “Report NO. 34582-AF”–cover. Contents: Volume 1: Main report (ix, 101 p.).

The main objective of the Afghanistan [Public Finance Management] Review, conducted by the World Bank and partner agencies in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan, is to consolidate, deepen and present in an accessible, action-oriented form the knowledge base on Afghanistan’s public finance system, review recent progress, analyse key challenges, and put forward options and recommendations for moving forward. This main report is supplemented by four additional volumes, covering PFM performance and procurement (Volume II); key cross-cutting issues (Volume III); selected sector studies (Volume IV); and security sector expenditures (Volume V). – Vol. 1 Executive summary. Available from: <http://www.worldbank.org/sar>

Refugees

IDP return facilitation to Faryab: an assessment by the Norwegian Refugee Council. Kabul: Flyktninghjelpen, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2005. 28 p.; 30 cm. “November 2005”–cover.

The key objectives of the NRC assessment, agreed by a working group which met in Kabul in July 2005, were three-fold: 1) To identify means of addressing key obstacles to return and reintegration for IDP communities displaced in the south and west of Afghanistan who originate from Faryab Province, with a focus on legal cases and reconciliation issues. 2) To identify key partners and stakeholders with an interest in facilitating return, reintegration and reconciliation in the northern region of Afghanistan. 3) To make

practical recommendations for follow-up actions by NRC and other actors to facilitate return and reintegration.

The information collected for the assessment was taken from three sources: interviews with IDPs and IDP returnees; interviews with relevant agencies and government departments in the place of origin (Faryab) and place of displacement (Herat and Kandahar) and reference to written materials from the same sources; and review of legal casework related to IDP returnees and interviews with NRC counsellors. More information available from: mark.choonoo@nrcafpk.org

Statistics

The latest *Afghanistan statistical yearbook 1384* (2005) has been received by the AREU library. This book is the starting point for accessing government compiled figures about Afghanistan. Copies are available from the Central Statistics Office for official purposes for US\$20.

Statistics law: signed into effect 1st January 2006: unofficial English translation. Kabul: [s.n.], 2006. 9 p.; 30 cm.

When published in the *Official Gazette* this law will annul the previous law (*Gazette* no. 792, 1421) and establish the Central Statistics Office (CSO) as an independent government organisation working with a National Statistics Council composed of ten members. At the beginning of each financial year the CSO will publish the statistical tables of the most important new publishable statistics for that year. There will also be a full census of population every ten years and an agricultural census conducted will also be conducted each decade.

Water

"Lesson learning" from the transition between relief and development in Afghanistan: water sector institutional diagnosis/ Nicolas Rivière. [Kabul?]: Groupe URD, 2005. 47, 6 p.; 30 cm. "September 2005"—cover. Bibliography, p. 4-6 (second group).

The institutional diagnosis in the irrigation and overall water management fields aims to:

- analyse the current institutional context and set-up, as well as the changes over the past years (before 2001).

- review and analyse the type of current stakeholders, programmes and strategies applied to the Afghan water sector, and its evolution since 2001.
- study more specifically the case of NGOs, and the links between both water (irrigation) and agriculture sectors.

Finally, the analysis and synthesis undertaken in this study aims at making relevant information and specific findings on the water sector available. Thus this should serve decision makers and implementers in their planning process. This current report intends to present and analyse factual and basic elements. More information available from: abanzet@urd.org

Women

Afghanistan: national reconstruction and poverty reduction: the role of women in Afghanistan's future/ the World Bank. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2005. xvi, 133 p.: col. ill.; 23 cm. Bibliography, p. 129-138.

This report is intended to serve as an input for the government's efforts to address gender disparities. [It] synthesises existing information and identifies critical areas in which gender-responsive actions are likely to enhance growth, poverty reduction and human well-being. The extent of gender discrimination in Afghanistan is pervasive, and the present report focuses on a few key sectors deemed particularly important for both short- and long-term interventions.

Although dated "March 2005" this report seems only to have become available in January 2006. Available from: www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2005/wb-afg-31mar.pdf

New Laws

New laws published officially since the last newsletter.

863 2005/1384: Charter of Afghan Telecom joint stock company and amendments additions to the transport vehicles fuel expenditure.

864 2005/1384: Registration of commercial documents and trademarks.

865 2005/1384: Law of procurement.

871 2006/1384: Law of mass media.

Recent & Forthcoming Publications from AREU

Recent Publications

Opium Trading Systems in Helmand and Ghor. This paper examines the opium poppy market at the provincial and district levels in both a long-dominant poppy producing area (Helmand) and a relative newcomer (Ghor) to opium cultivation.

Afghans in Pakistan: Broadening the Focus. This briefing paper looks at the situation of the roughly 3 million Afghans currently residing in Pakistan, and argues that the current refugee framework no longer adequately addresses the reality of this transnational population.

Two new case studies, ***Afghans in Peshawar: Migration, Settlements and Social Networks*** and ***Afghans in Quetta: Settlements, Livelihoods, Support Networks and Cross-Border Linkages***, examine the experience of Afghan refugees in those two cities and their feelings toward repatriation and settlement.

The briefing paper ***Looking Beyond the School Walls: Household Decision-making and School Enrolment in Afghanistan*** discusses the reasons parents do or do not send children to school, and what influences these decisions.

The first two in a series of five case studies about the urban poor ***Poor, Poorer, Poorest: Urban Livelihoods and Vulnerability in Mazar-i-Sharif and Dwindling Industry, Growing Poverty: Urban Livelihoods in Pul-e Khumri***, examines the particular strategies families in these two areas have employed to mitigate the stresses of poverty and underemployment.

Forthcoming Publications

Upcoming releases from AREU include:

- Papers from AREU's governance research team on local governance, NSP and provincial structures of government;
- A paper synthesising the findings from six commodity chain studies;
- Case studies from AREU's ongoing urban vulnerability and livelihoods research in Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad;
- Studies on debt and informal systems of credit; and
- Initial findings from AREU's long-term research into water management, the opium economy and livestock.

New & Forthcoming Books About Afghanistan



Kabul in winter: life without peace in Afghanistan / Ann Jones. New York : Metropolitan Books, 2006. 321 p.; 22 cm. ISBN 9780805078848, 0805078843. One of the very few books yet published about conditions in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Available from: www.annjonesonline.com

Women, quotas and politics / edited by Drude Dahlerup. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 2006. (Routledge research in comparative politics; 10). Includes a chapter entitled: Gender quotas in post-conflict states: East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq/ by Julie Ballington and Drude Dahlerup.

Featured Web Sites & Listservs

Web Based Clearinghouse for Applied Research on Agriculture and Rural Development in Afghanistan

<http://community.eldis.org/afghanistan>

Initially launched in the fall of 2004, the Afghanistan Agriculture and Rural Development Community Platform has recently been updated with a large number of additional materials. Over 50 new papers, studies, and reviews have been posted on the site in the areas of food policy and food security, livestock and pastoralist issues, rural finance, and other topics. There are 3 main areas of focus on the site:

- The first focus area is devoted to different agricultural sub-sectors such as cereals, livestock, horticulture, and related.
- The second focus area is devoted to thematic issues such as gender, conflict, institutions and development, and other topics.
- The third focus area is an attempt to capture in one place all documents that focus on a specific geographic region of Afghanistan.

The purpose of the site has not changed. The site was started as an attempt to facilitate the exchange of the increasingly large amount of information developing on different facets of agriculture and rural development in Afghanistan. Currently the site is an informal work in progress by a number of parties who have been working on different aspects of Afghanistan agriculture and rural development. The site currently does not receive external financial support but rather operates as a pro bono effort by interested individuals. For questions about the site, or if you have related documents that you would like to have loaded onto the site, please contact Philippe Chabot at philippechabot@earthlink.net.

Online Development Practitioner Community

<http://topics.developmentgateway.org/afghanistan>

The *Afghanistan Reconstruction* page on the Development Gateway portal is an online community that promotes knowledge-sharing and collaboration among development practitioners where you can: find more than 3,000 reports, news articles, and other resources; post your own information; join in discussions; connect with nearly 6,000 practitioners; find job announcements and tender notices; and access 1,700 records on Afghanistan-related development projects. Sign up for membership to receive regular updates (it's free!).

New listserv on Civil Society Afghan National Development Strategy

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NDSAfg>

The Civil Society Afghan National Development Strategy (CSANDS) resource group is made up of a coalition of international and Afghan NGOs and social movements to respond to the Afghan Government's Afghan National Development Strategy – ANDS (also known as a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper). The CSANDS working group works to educate and mobilise Afghan civil society organisations to allow them to better engage in the ANDS process. The group aims to have as many civil society actors engaged in this process as possible.

Correction: Fawad Muslim Daily

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/afghanistanNewsCenter>

In the April 2005 edition of the newsletter we listed some newsgroups and listservs useful to keep up with what is going on in Afghanistan. The correct address for Fawad Muslim's daily list compiled from news services is above (apologies for the error).

Feature: Achieving the Environmental Millennium Development Goals

by Belinda Bowling and Dr Asif Ali Zaidi

Afghanistan is an agrarian-based, arid country, the population of which is highly dependent on environmental resources, in particular natural resources. In a country where over 80% of the population relies directly on the natural resource base to meet its daily needs, widespread environmental degradation poses an immense threat to livelihoods. More than two decades of conflict, military activities, refugee movements, collapse of national, provincial and local forms of governance, lack of management and institutional capacity, and over-exploitation have heavily damaged Afghanistan's natural resource base.

A failure to address environmental degradation would negatively impact on the population's health and increase poverty and hunger. Environmental degradation, besides hampering economic growth in the agriculture sector, impacts in a particularly negative way on the lives of the poor, and more specifically on female-headed households, households with physically impaired members and the landless or those farming small rain-fed plots only. Economic development that leaves out the poor and enhances distributive injustices is not sustainable and will be a source of subsequent conflicts. Environmental degradation in Afghanistan, often the consequence of socio-economic inequities, thus is to be seen as a factor contributing to prevalent insecurity.

Environment in Post-Conflict Development Planning

The effective implementation of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Seven on environmental sustainability is of particular importance in the context of development planning and poverty reduction. Environment was recognised as an important cross-cutting issue as part of the 2002 National Development Framework (NDF). In this regard, an Advisory Group on Environment was established whose purpose was to mainstream environmental issues into the development agenda. The success of this structure was, however, regrettably limited.

In the coming year the NDF will be replaced by the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), a five-year strategy that complements the MDGs. As part of the ANDS, the government will draft plans for full rural development to benefit the poor and for the building of infrastructure to manage the country's water and provide connections to markets. Although the strategy remains a work-in-progress, it is important to note that environment has been highlighted as one of the key components of Pillar 1 on infrastructure and natural resources, which would indicate that it has been mainstreamed to a priority issue within the development agenda, in line with the MDG approach.

Achievement of MDG Goal Seven

MDG Goal Seven focuses on environmental priorities related to sustainable development and poverty reduction. The Global MDG Goal Seven framework includes three targets and eight indicators for monitoring the status of forest cover, biodiversity protection, energy use, emissions of carbon dioxide and consumption of ozone depleting substances, use of solid fuels, access to safe drinking water and sanitation systems, and access to secure tenure.

Afghanistan faces two major obstacles in the achievement of Goal Seven: a lack of baseline data on environmental indicators, and a shorter time period within which it ought to attain the MDGs (owing to the late adoption of the Millennium Declaration). Much of the data has been in the hands of international organisations, not the government, and mostly pre-dates the 1979 Soviet invasion. Even if the data were robust, the government would encounter significant hurdles in meeting those targets within the shorter period of 12 years.

Accordingly, the government has "Afghanized" the MDGs and defined the globally agreed objectives into country specific targets, which balance ambition with realism and incorporate national development priorities. As such, the baseline years for each indicator for Goal Seven have been amended to complement those baseline years for which data exist. In addition, some of the indicators have a 2020, rather than a 2015, achievement target.

Another major obstacle to achieving MDG Goal Seven is that international aid assistance has been spent primarily on security and democratisation. Within the development sector itself, most donors do not see environment as a priority. Regrettably, a mere fraction of the national development budget has been allocated directly to environment.

Instability in relation to environmental governance has also been an obstacle to the achievement of environmental sustainability. The environment mandate is a new one, and in May 2005, the mandate was transferred from the former Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment to the newly established National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), a standalone agency that reports directly to the President. The sector mandates for water, energy, agriculture, minerals, forestry, biological diversity, public health, urban planning, water, waste and sanitation services, and the like are split among the line ministries, unfortunately sometimes with a degree of overlap. Like most fledgling institutions, NEPA now requires time to establish itself properly within the new government structure, and to determine the nature of its relationship with these relevant line ministries.

The absence of any environmental policy or regulatory framework also has paralysed government efforts to achieve environmental sustainability. The imminent promulgation of the Environment Act, framework environmental legislation for Afghanistan, will go some way towards alleviating this development encumbrance, however. In addition to vesting NEPA with institutional identity and regulating the relationships between different government actors in the environment sector, the Act also sets out frameworks for biodiversity and natural resource conservation and management, water resource conservation and management, integrated environmental management (including environmental impact assessment), pollution prevention and control, and environmental information and education. Importantly, the Act also contains the compliance and enforcement provisions required to allow NEPA to effectively enforce it.

Donor-funded environment focussed programmes, which will hopefully assist the government in the achievement of the MDG Goal Seven indicators, also exist. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is assisting the government to develop an integrated policy, regulatory and institutional framework (the cornerstone of which is the Environment Act), which will encourage sustainable use and management of natural resources and conservation and rehabilitation of the environment. UNEP is also assisting the government to implement the multilateral environmental agreements to which Afghanistan is a party, most notably – for the purposes of MDG 7 – the Climate Change Convention (relating to carbon emissions) and the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances, which will similarly assist in the achievement of this target. Significant investments are also being made in reforestation initiatives and renewable energy.

The achievement of a single development planning framework for Afghanistan that meets its own unique needs, environmental and otherwise, and also meets its international obligations (including those under the Millennium Declaration) is within reach. Although achievement by 2015 of the MDG on sustainable development is unlikely, significant progress towards its realisation is now almost a certainty.

Belinda Bowling is the Environmental Law and International Conventions Expert for the UNEP Capacity and Institution Building Programme for Environmental Management in Afghanistan. She is based in Kabul, and has been working for the past seven years in the field of environmental law and policy in developing countries. Dr Asif Ali Zaidi is UNEP's Kabul-based Programme Manager. He has worked in the development field in Central Asia for the last fifteen years for UNEP, the World Conservation Union and the Aga Khan Development Network.

Other Publications

In addition to the recent publications noted previously, several organisations and individuals submitted the following publications.

Agriculture

Agricultural rehabilitation: mapping the linkages between humanitarian relief, social protection and development/ Catherine Longley, Ian Christoplos and Tom Slaymaker. London: Overseas Development Institute, 2006. 66 p.; 30 cm. ISBN 0850037859. Bibliography, p. 59-65. Includes case studies of Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. Available from: www.odi.org.uk/hpg

Elections

2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections/ Joint Electoral Management Body Secretariat. Kabul: Joint Electoral Management Body Secretariat, 2005. 33 p.: col. ill. ; 30 cm. [Summary overview of all the activities of the JEMB]. Available at: <http://www.jemb.org/>

Afghan National Assembly and Provincial Council Election Results 2005 [electronic resource/ Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB). [Kabul]: Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), 2005. 1 computer disc; 12 cm. Contents in Dari, English and Pashtu. Contents: Meshrano Jirga: Meshrano Jirga results—Provincial Council replacement—Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Councils—Wolesi Jirga [arranged by province] Elected candidates: certified results—Provincial councils [arranged by province]—Elected candidates—Provincial Council replacement members—Provincial Council replacement.

Afghanistan parliamentary and provincial council elections, 18 September 2005: final report/ European Union Election Observation Mission. [Kabul?]: European Union Election Observation Mission, 2005. 63 p.; 30 cm. Available from: <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/VBOL-6MVFUY?OpenDocument>

Final report: National Assembly and Provincial Council Elections 2005/ Joint Electoral Management Body. Kabul: Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), 2005. 30 p.; 30 cm. Available at: <http://www.jemb.org/>

Media Commission final report: 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections. Kabul: Media Commission, Joint Electoral Management

Body, 2005. 25 p.; 30 cm. "6 November 2005"—cover. Available at: <http://www.jemb.org/>

Family Law

Preventing child and forced marriages: the role of shuras and community district forums: workshop, December 8, 2005: final report/ organised by Kabul Provincial Shura, Kabul Provincial Department of Women's Affairs in collaboration with Medica Mondiale at the Ministry of Women's Affairs Training Building. Kabul: Medica Mondiale, 2005. 22 p.; 30 cm.

Registration of marriage: a step towards justice for women: one day conference, Supreme Court Hall/ organised by The Supreme Court of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan & Medica Mondiale, Tuesday October 11, 2005/Mizan 19, 1384. Kabul: Medica Mondiale, 2005. 27 p.: ports.; 30 cm.

PDFs of all of these available from newsletter@areu.org.af

Finance

Islamic State of Afghanistan: staff monitored program: letter of intent and Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (February 11, 2006). 16 p. Includes quantitative indicators 2005/6-2006/7. Available from: <http://www.imf.org/External/NP/LOI/2006/afg/021106.pdf>

General/Country Updates

Amnesty International report on Afghanistan for 2005. Available from: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/afghanistan/document.do?id=ar&yr=2005>

Journal of Afghanistan Studies

Volume 1, no. 3 (Dec-Feb 2004-2005):

- Afghanistan on a knife's edge/ Derek Fraser p. 1-7.
- Education in Afghanistan/ Lutfullah Safi p. 8-62.
- The changing nature of the Afghan conflict: external actors, international consequences: the need for new system, competition or cooperation/ Nasrin Magda Katone p. 63-75.

- Pashtoonwali or Pashto (Pakhto) as a code of honour/ S. Kaimur p. 76-88.

Volume 1, no. 4 (April-June 2005):

- Islam and Christendom: the distorted relationship/ Dimitris Michalopoulos p. 1-17.
- Culture and tourism in Afghanistan: the other perspective/ Carlo Alberto Pinelli p. 18-23.
- Persian ancestry: significance through the family name/ Arley Loewen p. 24-61.
- Unveiling the feminine Afghan body/ Trish Stuhan p. 62-123. [Review of the film *Osama*]

This journal has now ceased publication, for more information contact A. Amin, Editor, *Journal of Afghanistan studies* (0799 010 128, 079 920 2076) afghanistanstudiesjournal@yahoo.com, Afghanistan@kurdland.com

World Bank *Afghanistan country update* released January 2006 in English, Dari and Pashto. Available from: www.worldbank.org/af

History

Afghanistan: a chronological fact sheet 1600-2004/ compiled and written by Juma Khan Sufi. [Khos?]: Independent Cultural Society of Khost, 2005. 124 p.; 22 cm.

Life journey [electronic resource]: *Afghan community oral history* / Refugee Communities History Project Team (RCHP). London: Refugee Communities History Project, 2006. 1 computer optical disc: col., sd.; 12 cm. The life journey CD ROM tells the remarkable stories of ten people who escaped the war in Afghanistan and built a new life in London. It covers their experiences of settling in a new country, their community and family lives, and their many achievements and contribution to UK society.

Language

Towards a historical grammar of Balochi: studies in Balochi historical phonology and vocabulary/ by Agnes Korn. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005. 469 p.: 2 maps, tab.; 25 cm. ISBN 3895003670. (Beiträge zur Iranistik; Bd. 26). Revised thesis (doctoral) – Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität, Frankfurt a.M., 2003.

Law

The Sharī'a in the constitutions of Afghanistan, Iran and Egypt: implications for private law/ edited by Nadjma Yassari. Tübingen, [Germany]:

Mohr Siebeck, 2005. 359, *212 p.; 24 cm. (Materialien zum ausländischen und internationalen Privatrecht; 45). ISBN 3161487877. Articles in English and Dari. Partial contents [English section]: Part I. Sharī'a in Afghanistan: Introduction/ Jürgen Basedow (p. 3-4) – The progress of constitutionalism in Afghanistan/ Mohammad Hamid Saboory (p. [5]-22) – Islam and its Sharī'a in the Afghan constitution 2004 with special reference to personal law/ Mohamad Hashim Kamali (p. [23]-43) – Legal pluralism and family law: an assessment of the current situation in Afghanistan/ Nadjma Yassari (p. [45]-60) – Building a post-war justice system in Afghanistan/ Ali Wardak (p. [61]-82) – The position of women in the Islamic and Afghan judiciary/ Irene Schneider (p. [83]-101) – Law of land tenure and transfer of property in times of war/ Bashir Ahmad Munib (p. [103]-106. – Part II The Iranian model: Afghan and Iranian women: sharing experiences/ Elaheh Kolaei (p. [109]-112)

Media

USAID's assistance to the media sector in Afghanistan/ Colin Soloway, Abubaker Saddique. Washington, D.C.: Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID, 2005. 31 p.; 30 cm. (PPC evaluation paper; no. 3). To access this report online, visit www.dec.org then enter PN-ADC-219 in the search box.

New to Afghanistan or not getting enough up-to-date information?

ReliefWeb is the world's leading online gateway to information on humanitarian emergencies and disasters. An independent vehicle of information, designed specifically to assist the international humanitarian community in effective delivery of emergency assistance, it provides timely, reliable and relevant information as events unfold, while emphasising the coverage of "forgotten emergencies" at the same time.

On www.reliefweb.int scroll down to the bottom and select "Email services from Relief Web". When you register on the next page you can choose "Afghanistan" and then receive daily email notifications of new resources uploaded to this important site. Map releases are also available through this website.

Migration

War and migration: social networks and economic strategies of the Hazaras of Afghanistan / Alessandro Monsutti; with a foreword by Dale F. Eickelman; translated by Patrick Camiller. New York: Routledge, 2005. xviii; 328 p.; 24 cm. ISBN 0415975085 (alk. paper). Middle East studies (Routledge [Firm]).

Opium

Afghanistan: opium rapid assessment survey/ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Government of Afghanistan, Counter Narcotics Ministry. Kabul: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). V.: col. maps; 30 cm. New survey released in February 2006 Available from: http://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Afg_RAS_2006.pdf

Licensing Afghanistan's opium: solution or fallacy?/ Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy. Published in *Asia times*, February 1, 2006. (5 p.). Available from: www.geopium.org or by writing pachouvy@yahoo.com / pachouvy@geopium.org

Politics

The future of Afghanistan. Published in *Parameters: US Army War College quarterly*, Spring 2006 (v. 36, no. 1, p. 4-19). Available from: <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/06spring/contents.htm>

Random thoughts/ Juma Khan Sufi. [Khost]: Khost Independent Cultural Society, 2005. v, 249 p.; 22 cm. Collection of essays containing political and social analysis of Afghanistan politics; some articles are reprinted from other publications.

Reconstruction

Lessons in post conflict reconstruction from the new Afghanistan Compact/ by Peter J. Middlebrook and Sharon M. Miller. Silver City, New Mexico: Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF), 2006. 8 p.; 30 cm. (FPIF policy report). "January 27, 2006"—caption. Available from: www.fpif.org

Stabilization and reconstruction in Afghanistan: are PRTs a model or a muddle?/ Michael J. McNerney. Published in "Parameters" Winter 2005–2006, p. 32-46. Available from: <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/>

Security/Terrorism

Afghan insurgency still a potent force/ USIPeace Briefing. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2006. [4] p.; 21 x 30 cm. "February 2006"—caption. Available from: http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2006/0223_afghan.html

Are we winning the War on Terrorism?: a report from Afghanistan: transcript prepared from a tape recording. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2006. 62 p.; 30 cm. (The Brookings Institution. Foreign Policy Studies Briefing). "Thursday, January 19, 2006"—cover. Available from: <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20060119.htm>

The cost of Iraq, Afghanistan and enhanced base security since 9/11/ Amy Belasco. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2005. 19 p.; 30 cm. "October 3, 2005".

Urban Geography

Kabul: aspects of urban geography/ edited by Ghulam Jailani Arez, Andreas Dittmann. Peshawar: [s.n.], 2005. a-b, 158 p.: maps (some col.); 24 cm.

Women

The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan. New York, N.Y.: United Nations, Economic and Social Council, 2005. 19 p.; 30 cm. "Commission on the Status of Women, Fiftieth session, 27 February–10 March 2006, item 3 on the provisional agenda"—caption. Available from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw50/documents.htm>

United Nation[s] Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: two-day conferences, 12-13 November 2005, Marco Polo Hotel, Herat: final report. Kabul: Medica Mondiale, 2005. 17 p.; 30 cm. PDF available from newsletter@areu.org.af

Violence against women and the girl-child, the responsibility to protect: taking action, useful international and national instruments: final report, one day workshop, Sunday November 27 2005, Bharat Hotel, Mazar-i Sharif. Kabul:

Medica Mondiale, 2005. 21 p.: ill.; 30 cm. PDF available from newsletter@areu.org.af

Women in the Afghan civil service: undervalued & underused?: ministerial perspectives on women and employment. Kabul: Medical Mondiale,

2006. 24 p.; 30 cm. "January 2006"—cover. This research paper was commissioned to ascertain how ministries view women in the civil service and to raise awareness of the effects of the current reform of the civil service on women.

Research Published in Ministry Publications (Dari & Pashto)

AREU receives a number of serials in Pashto and Dari from government ministries and NGOs. This month we feature some of the recent issues received (full citations are found in the Dari and Pashto versions of this newsletter).

Adalat (Justice) is a monthly legal and cultural magazine from the Ministry of Justice: v. 7, issue 32/33 (2005) contains articles about women in prison in Afghanistan; a long interview about women's rights from the point of view of Islam; essays about violence against women and children; about crimes and punishment in Afghanistan; narcotics and a review of the law against counter-narcotics; child rights in the community; migration and children; prevention of torture in prisons; religion and human rights; activities of the Ministry of Justice for the preceding year. Volume 7, issue 34/35 (2005) contains articles on: Islam and human rights; discussions about the Afghan penal code; citizenship from the viewpoint of Afghan law; the history of Afghan jails; the legal relationship between an author and their work; pluralism, civil society and Islamic society.

Jirgah (from the Ministry of Tribes and Border Affairs) (issue 18, 1384) has articles on the legal status of the Durand line; an agreement between Afghanistan and India; the international human rights convention; women causing problems for other women in Afghan society. Issue 19 (1384) contains the annual report of the ministry; strategic cooperation between Afghanistan and the US on counter-narcotics; an article about specialised aspects of the Pashto language; information about the Kalasha community in Chitral.

Afghanistan today (*Afghansitan imroz*) is a journal focusing on the north of Afghanistan, published by Mediothek Kunduz. Volume 1, issue no. 7 (2005) has articles on the links between Afghan MPs and their constituents; the election of female parliamentary office holders; livelihoods and narcotics in Takhar; why people move from rural areas to urban areas in Afghanistan. Issue 8 has articles on the London conference; how the cabinet should be approved (individually or as a group); salaries for Afghans returning from overseas; criticisms of the handling of women's affairs in provincial areas.

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