



33, rue Godot de Mauroy
75009 Paris
Tél. +33 (0) 1 42 65 33 33
Fax: +33 (0) 1 42 65 33 46
E-Mail: paris@acted.org

Street 63, House 8B
F7/3 Islamabad
Tel : +92-51-2206480
Fax : +92-51-2206481
E-mail: islamabad@acted.org

NARRATIVE REPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE VILLAGE SURVEY JULY/AUGUST 2001: KOHISTAN

Introduction

The district of Kohistan is located in the high mountains in the south of Faryab province, in the northern part of Afghanistan. The principal economic activity is rain-fed wheat cultivation. Kohistan district is among the most seriously affected by the drought that has been ravaging Northern Afghanistan for the last three years. The district is divided into 4 '*manteqas**', with a fifth region controlled by opposition forces.

The region is accessible on three vertiginous dirt roads via Sar I Hous to Bandar and Laulash and via Gorzewan to Zindon on opposition side. To access this district from the provincial capital Maimana, it is necessary to cross the Tirbandi Turkistan mountain range at the Aqebdal pass. This pass is dangerous even in favourable conditions, as the road is steep and slippery and there is a large drop to one side. The only vehicles able to negotiate this pass are four wheel drive jeeps and Gaz 66 trucks, the latter having a capacity of 4MT. Seasonal precipitation usually renders this pass non-traversable, thus Kohistan is cut off from the rest of the country from four to six months a year.

There is neither a bazaar of any importance nor any clinic, school or other facility in the entire district. Apart from a polio vaccination program by UNICEF, food distributions by SCF/US and ACTED no activities have been implemented by international organisations.

ACTED has conducted an in-depth village by village survey in July/August 2001. (see Annex for methodology) A total of 115 villages were surveyed, covering 10,669 families or approximately 71,816 persons. This permits a first clear picture of the different effects of the crisis composed of the ongoing drought, a civil war still raging and the remoteness and inaccessibility of the district.

The results of that survey form part of the database covering the crisis in Northern

* *Manteqas*: Areas

Afghanistan to harmonize international relief work, thus leading to more targeted activities to improve people's living conditions, to prevent further displacement by diminishing the push-factors and to resettle IDP's from over laden camps back to their villages of origin.

Summary

The lack of precipitation has cut down cereal production to less than 6 % of a good year (1998 – for detailed figures see chapters and annex). This translates into a grim lack of the basic food staple wheat, and along with the degradation of drinking water the deterioration of health, is the major concern of the population.

Rivers are a main water source for drinking, often quite far from the villages. Water borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid are spreading. Without a single clinic or doctor, most of Kohistan relies on the facilities of Maimana, 9 hours by jeep from the district centres, though in reality this is not an option for the majority of this district. Only the opposition side has one doctor and 2 nurses for it's 3999 families. Some villages claim to be 90% affected by cholera. With 57% of recent deaths, child mortality is especially high, due to diseases and malnutrition.

After 3 years of drought the coping mechanisms of Kohistan society are exhausted. The "bank", the flocks of livestock have shrunk to 35.4 % compared to 3 months ago. This affects the economy on different levels: the capacity for working the land is further reduced, mobility in that hardly accessible region is further hindered, raw materials once used for the home production of gilims and carpets become less available and more expensive, and last food reserves as yoghurt, milk and meat are disappearing.

There is still a pocket of resistance to Taliban control in the south east corner of Kohistan. Even though villagers can cross the frontline for access to commodities, the constant war scenario leads to insecurity and tense atmosphere, a huge amount of weapons and possibly fast changing security issues. About one third of Kohistan population lives on the opposition controlled side and is currently not directly accessible for sustainable aid.

The results of the survey point at different urgent activities:

- Food distributions to secure survival over winter.
- The upgrading of water and sanitation to reduce the spreading of diseases and secure peoples access to safe drinking water.
- The construction and rehabilitation of roads or certain parts of roads to allow a safe way for people and goods all around the year.

These projects can be realized in food for work programs with a reasonable cash component to allow sustainable work.

- Some help to restart agricultural activities through distribution of improved seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. Implementing a seed for food swap for multiplication of improved seeds.
- A veterinary program to assist the recreation of livestock.
- A reforestation program for soil stabilization, diversification of crops and economy.

- The setup of a clinic to provide basic assistance, coupled with basic health training.
- Assisting the implementation of basic home industry such as carpet weaving to diversify people's incomes and thus broaden their coping mechanisms.

The aim of all activities should be to lighten the burden of the current crisis, to reduce push factors to stop the emigration of parts of the population and to enhance pull factors to encourage displaced persons to move back to their homes. Particularly vulnerable families and groups (women, children) should be considered a priority.

SECTOR BY SECTOR ANALYSIS

Population general, IDP's, women, education

<i>Manteqa</i>	<i>villages</i>	<i>Families</i>	<i>population</i>	<i>Families that left</i>	<i>IDP's</i>	<i>Female headed</i>	<i>Children 0-12</i>	<i>Recent death</i>
Bandar	21	1651	10352	183=9.9%	138	675=40.8%	2202	569
Laulash	27	2196	14762	291=11.7%	234	534=24.3%	3215	622
Lafrai	20	1352	9503	181=11.8%	4	235=17.4%	2390	402
Mulghi	22	1471	9183	89=5.7%	9	251=17.1%	2878	426
Opposition	25	3999	28016	339=9.1%	1894	481=12%	10113	589
total	115	10669	71816	1083=	2279	2176=20.4%	20768	2608

Kohistan is divided into four *manteqas* Bandar, Mulghi, Lafrai, Laulash and a fifth region controlled by opposition forces. A total of 10,669 families or 71,816 persons live in the district.

20.4 % of the families are female headed and thus considered most vulnerable. With 40.8%, Bandar has by far the highest percentage of women headed households.

2279 IDP families have settled in Kohistan, of which 1894 are clustered on opposition side. Only Lafrai and Mulghi with 4 and 9 IDP families are hardly facing that problem.

In the last year 9.2% or 1083 families have left the district. The most affected by emigration are the *manteqas* of Lafrai (11.8%) and Laulash (11.7%), only Mulghi (5.7%) has a lower than average displacement rate.

About 23% of the families do not own land. Opposition side with 31% landless families is one extreme, opposed to Lafrai (10.3%) and Mulghi (11.2%). 30.2% (3228 families) of the population have no livestock. This quota is lowest for opposition side (21.5%) and highest for Bandar (49%).

To assess the seriousness of problems as perceived by the population, a range from 0 (no problem) to 3 (very serious problem) was offered. In total, lack of food (2.29) ranks most serious, followed by lack of drinking water and diseases (both 1.91) and lack of water for crops (1.59). Insecurity (0.2) ranks last in the concern of people. This pattern of concerns differs in the *manteqas*, with Bandar seeing diseases as major concern (2.6), Laulash the lack of water for crops (1.92) and Lafrai the lack of drinking water (2.45).

Of the 115 villages only 12 responded they would not leave their villages. All the others stated that if no food assistance came quickly they would be forced to leave.

With one doctor living in Ghazan, opposition is relatively better of concerning medical attendance. None of the other *manteqas* has any medical professionals, for treatment of serious diseases people have to go to Maimana. Of the total 2608 recent deaths, 1489 were children dying of intestinal diseases (cholera, typhoid, diarrhoea), pneumonia or TB, fever or malaria and malnutrition. 644 adults died recently of the aforementioned diseases.

With a total of 20,768 children between 0 and 12 (10,113 living on opposition side) no single school nor teacher is to be found in the district. Some madrassas provide a very restricted education.

Women work mainly in the houses and to a lesser degree (0 - 30%) in the fields.

Nutrition

93 villages report to have suffered a severe food shortage in 2000 and 2001, and 6 of those also listed 1999 as a year of severe shortage. 15 villages of which 11 are on opposition side call it a 'very severe' food shortage.

Of the recent deaths, some were said to have died of malnutrition. Children with black legs, a symptom of vitamin deficiency and under nourishment, were numerous all over the district.

The staple food of Kohistan population is wheat (eaten as bread) with a listing of 2.98 (1=eaten rarely, 2=occasionally, 3=regularly). Rice (2.04), Yoghurt (1.84) and meat (1.76) are eaten occasionally, whereas fruit (1.33), beans (1.07) and vegetables (1.04) are rare on the diet. Salt (2.88) and oil (2.61) form part of the basic diet, whilst sugar (1.88) is scarce. This pattern varies little regionally.

Some fruit, vegetables and nuts such as almonds, apricot and walnuts, grapes, melon and watermelon, potatoes, onion carrots and squash are seasonally available locally. Food shortage has forced the consumption of wild plants as shirish, bijindak, tatron, kadogag.

The distance to the nearest bazaar varies from 18 hours by horse or donkey for many inhabitants of Mulghi, Lafrai and opposition, to between 1 and 5 hours for the more central *manteqas* of Laulash and Bandar.

When the survey took place there had been no food distribution on opposition side. The four other *manteqas* received once mixed commodities from SC/US (beans, oil, sugar) and wheat from ACTED.

Food distribution programs are urgently requested to keep people alive and in their villages.

Water and sanitation

	# families	Main water source per village			Aver. dist to main source	Wells		Water table	Latrines needed
		river	well	spring		Working	damaged		
Bandar	1651	9	0	12	30 min	0	2	31.4m	682
Laulash	2196	5	2	20	15 min	76	84	33.5m	1287
Lafrai	1352	16	0	4	2 hours	0	2	68m	761
Mulghi	1471	19	1	2	3 hours	10	17	33.5m	734
Opposition	3999	12	4	9	30 min	18	34	20m	1996
total	10669	61	7	47	75 min	104	139		5460

Due to terrain, the main water source varies considerably from *manteqa* to *manteqa*: Lafrai and Mulghi as the most remote and rocky regions rely heavily on rivers at considerable distance of an average of 2-3 hours walk whilst Bandar and Laulash use mainly springs not further than 30 min away. Opposition side is somewhere in between, with rivers making up half the main water sources. Here 4 villages obtain their water mainly from wells.

Wells are hardly used, the rocky ground not permitting any digging in many villages. (One village in Laulash with 60 operating wells is the great exception). Of the 243 existing wells 139 are damaged or dry. The extremes of water table vary considerably according to the ground: from 10m (opposition side) to 100m (Mulghi).

Clearly the reduced availability of, and increased distance to, water sources is a major reason for displacement. On our return to Mulghi and Lafrai at the end of August, some of the more remote villages of that area had moved to live closer to their restricted water supply.

5460 latrines are needed to provide a latrine per family in this district, which would improve the sanitation and reduce spread of disease.

Health

Apart from one doctor (in Ghazan) and 2 nurses, all of them on opposition side, no single doctor or clinic is to be found. The population relies on the facilities of Maimana or Qaisar, which are 6 hours jeep ride from the centers of the districts. For more remote villages, especially of Mulghi, Lafrai and opposition side, that can add up to a 36 hours journey, if one has a donkey and the means to pay for transportation. Most villagers can therefore not treat their diseases.

Diseases such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, other forms of diarrhoea, malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia, skin diseases, rheumatism are abundant, many of them due to lack of proper sanitation and safe water. In addition to the overall serious situation reported from all the 115 villages, there seems to be an outbreak of cholera in the most remote regions of Mulghi and Lafrai.. Black legs, a symptom of vitamin deficiency akin to scurvy, are frequently seen on children.

Children are especially affected by the multiple threat of malnutrition, contaminated water and abundance of germs: of the 2608 deaths in the past 3 months, 1489 were children, dying of diarrhoea, fever (possibly malaria, though many deaths pass undiagnosed), malnutrition or TB.

There has been a WHO/UNICEF Polio vaccination program covering all the villages of Kohistan. Apart from that, no health activities have taken place. The desire for medical assistance, for a clinic is therefore one of the most frequently articulated ones.

Agriculture

	<i>Land-less fam in %</i>	<i>Rainfed land (jerib)</i>	<i>Irrigated land (j)</i>	<i>Cereal crop (ser)</i>			<i>Planted land</i>		<i>Animals</i>	
				<i>1998</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>last year</i>	<i>this y.</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>3 mts ago</i>
Bandar	28.3%	44295	1192	953340	45070	15040	19955	11080	6675	19969
Laulash	20.1%	20651	1805	498807	80078	28543	12009	7843	12278	27584
Lafrai	10.4 %	36023	12	1069760	20090	8313	12612	6402	1382	6368
Mulghi	11.2%	38767	75	1389196	56978	38406	19255	13164	3593	11082
Opposition	32.6%	27094	1784	591150	55015	13302	19144	11083	12095	38767
Total	23.4%	166830	4868	4502253	257231	103609	82975	49572	36023	103770

23.4% of Kohistan families do not own land. This quota is highest on opposition side (32.6%) and in Bandar (28.3%). 25.9% of families own a plot bigger than 10 jerib. Again, this varies for the different *manteqas*: with opposition side with 16.6% as lowest and 38.1% for Bandar as highest.

Agriculture is based on rain-fed wheat cultivation. Whereas Laulash, Bandar and opposition have some irrigated land (2-8%), Mulghi and Lafrai depend exclusively on rain for their crops. Local seeds are used throughout the district. Depending on soil and water, the average yield is between 140-280kg/jerib.

Apart the main crop wheat, barley, peas and maize are cultivated. Planting time is twice a year, in November and March/April. Harvest begins in June and goes on till November. Parts of the land is left barren for rehabilitation.

In the last three years, the amount of planted land and the amount of harvested crops have diminished dramatically. Farmers reported a cereal harvest for 1998 of 4,502,253 ser (31515 MT). In the year 2000, only 257,231 ser (1800 MT) were harvested, and in 2001 no more than 103609 ser (725 MT) or 2.3% of the harvest of a good year. 7 villages in Mulghi, 4 villages in Lafrai and 16 villages on opposition side report to have no harvest this year. For lack of rainfall, seeds and capacities for working land, only 49573 jerib or 59% of last years land have been cultivated this season.

The number of livestock has declined to 34 % of the heads three months ago. The breakdown indicates that “working animals” as donkeys and oxen are considered more necessary for life and work than the wool, milk and meat producing other beasts. The decline per species shows the sharpest drop for cows (28.5% left), goats (32.7% left) and sheep (33.8% left) whereas 37.9% of oxen and 53.2% of donkeys remain. Livestock represents one of the few capital reserves of Kohistans population. The mass selling has

lowered the price considerably, thus forcing the problem affected villagers to compromise for very low profit.

Trees are used for foodstuffs, construction and firewood and are therefore of economic and ecologic importance. Whereas Bandar as a whole has relatively many trees, they are more sparse in Mulghi and Laulash and few in Lafrai and on opposition side. Walnut, almond, mulberry, pistachio, apricot, apple and pear are the main fruit trees, willow, poplar and juniper the fire and construction material.

Programs

The survey indicates clearly that activities are urgently required to **keep the population alive** and to **stop them from emigrating**. The **integration of homecoming IDP's** to the assistance programs should be considered. Apart from short term relief work as food distributions, middle and long term engagement such as diversification of economy, some health and education program should be envisioned

- **Food distributions**, free for the most vulnerable and over the winter months, and through Food Ac until the roads are closed are urgently required and most compulsive.
- **Food Ac should be focused on water and sanitation projects**, thus approaching the basic need of water accessibility and safer water sources. Wells, canals, pools and latrines need to be dug, cleaned and upgraded. A solution such as water pipes should be sought for villages furthest from a water source. **Road improvement** for accessibility of the region and the most remote places should be the other focus of Food AC programs.
- **Health** is the other major concern of the region. A **clinic** is badly needed, and basic **health education programs** should be implemented. For the time being, some emergency program to halt current epidemics is required.
- For midterm assistance, a **restarting of agriculture** is needed. Provided there is some rain, **seed distribution** would allow some self-sustainability for the next season.
- With the decrease of **livestock**, it should be considered that land tending capacities are more restricted than they used to be. Some **veterinary assistance** for the restocking of flocks might be a way out.
- A **reforestation program**, depending on rain or irrigation would diversify the districts economy (fruit, construction, firewood) and at the same time have all known positive ecological effects.
- Assisting the **set up of home industry** for gillim and carpet production was frequently requested. This could be achieved by microcredits to allow purchasing wool, dye, thread, sowing machines or other material. Such a program would be focusing on women and requests a considerable assessment before implementation.
- Assistance for **education** is compulsory for middle and long term development.

ANNEX

ANNEX A

Methodology

6 teams with two surveyors per team went out to each village to meet with local authorities, representatives and farmers, usually in public places such as mosques. They confronted the present people with the questions, the answers were often result of longer arguments and discussions. The questions were put as little suggestive as possible, yet some of the answers should be treated carefully, as they may be influenced by specific interests. When possible the answers were checked, but on numbers (people, harvest etc) we had to rely on the given information.

The teams were trained and monitored by senior engineers and expat staff, with random checks in the field on the correctness of the filled out survey sheets. The survey sheets were drafted and improved from former ACTED surveys.

As only men were part of the teams, responses to women issues were scarce and very general. Another survey with mixed teams for a better understanding of women's situation seems appropriate

Tables

NUTRITION

Health: Nr. Of deaths, diseases, doctors, clinic, distance to clinic, projects

Agriculture: livestock breakup,

Nutrition data per *manteqa*.

	villagers diet: 1 eaten rarely, 2 eaten occasionally, 3 eaten regularly											
	wheat	meat	beans	rice	yoghurt	veget	fruit	salt	sugar	oil	food shortage 1- light 2 -severe 3- very severe	distance from basar average (longest- shortest)
Bandar	2.52	1.68	0.92	1.72	1.64	1.48	1.68	2.4	1.68	2.48	2	50min (2h-5min)
Laulash	2.93	1.81	1.22	2.18	2.04	0.89	1.74	2.89	2.04	2.85	1.72	2.75h (7h-10min)
Mulghi	3	1.86	1.18	2.04	1.82	0.73	0.81	2.77	1.91	2.72	2	11h (18h-5h)
Lafrai	3	1.65	1.35	1.85	1.5	0.9	1.25	2.9	1.75	2.1	2.15	11h (24-3.5h)
Opposition	3	1.52	0.6	2.04	1.84	1	0.84	3	1.72	2.36	2.44	9.5h
total	2.98	1.76	1.07	2.04	1.84	1.04	1.33	2.88	1.88	2.61	2.06	7h

Agriculture

livestock in detail per *manteqa*

Livestock per species per *manteqa* now and three months ago

	total families	fam without animals	oxen			donkeys			cows			goats			sheep			horses		
			now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left
Bandar	1651	729 (44.2%)	659	1217	54.1	758	1739	43.6	250	769	32.5	1945	5520	35.2	3060	10690	28.6	3	34	8.8
Laulash	2196	763 (34.7%)	754	1779	42.4	1332	2161	61.6	945	7139	13.2	3397	8370	40.6	7139	14150	50.4	66	179	36.9
Mulghi	1471	409 (27.8%)	276	764	36.1	622	1103	56.4	38	208	18.3	1058	3590	29.5	1599	5415	29.5	0	2	0
Lafrai	1352	544 (40.2%)	193	835	23.1	457	1161	39.4	43	302	14.2	390	1776	21.9	298	2270	13.1	1	24	4.1
Opposition	3999	863 (21.6%)	703	2216	31.7	2558	4593	55.7	360	1398	25.7	1947	7470	26.1	6292	21780	28.9	227	1270	17.9
total	10669	2579 (24.2%)	2585	6811	37.9	5727	10757	53.2	1033	3622	28.5	8737	26726	32.7	18388	54305	33.9	297	1509	19.7

ANNEX B

NUTRITION

Nutrition data per *manteqa*.

	villagers diet: 1 eaten rarely, 2 eaten occasionally, 3 eaten regularly										food shortage 1-light 2-severe 3-very severe	distance from basar average (longest-shortest)
	wheat	meat	beans	rice	yoghurt	veget	fruit	salt	sugar	oil		
Bandar	2.52	1.68	0.92	1.72	1.64	1.48	1.68	2.4	1.68	2.48	2	50 min (2 h-5 min)
Laulash	2.93	1.81	1.22	2.18	2.04	0.89	1.74	2.89	2.04	2.85	1.72	2.75 h (7 h-10 min)
Mulghi	3	1.86	1.18	2.04	1.82	0.73	0.81	2.77	1.91	2.72	2	11 h (18 h-5 h)
Lafrai	3	1.65	1.35	1.85	1.5	0.9	1.25	2.9	1.75	2.1	2.15	11 h (24 h-3.5 h)
Opposition	3	1.52	0.6	2.04	1.84	1	0.84	3	1.72	2.36	2.44	9.5 h
total	2.98	1.76	1.07	2.04	1.84	1.04	1.33	2.88	1.88	2.61	2.06	7 h

ANNEX C

Agriculture

Land distribution

	# families	landowning families	landless families	families per size of land				agricultural land (jerib)		planted land	
				1-2jerib	3-5jerib	5-10jerib	> 10jerib	rainfed	irrigated	last year	this year
Bandar	1651	1202	449	81	147	280	629	44295	1192	19955	11080
Laulash	2196	1754	442	274	456	490	504	20651	1805	12009	7843
Lafrai	1352	1212	140	164	286	310	524	36023	12	19255	13164
Mulghi	1471	1311	160	182	273	302	524	38767	75	12612	6402
Opposition	3999	2696	1303	566	626	816	663	27094	1784	19144	11083
total	10669	8175	2494	1267	1788	2198	2844	166830	4868	82975	49572

Crops and harvest

	cereal crop (ser)			decline 01-98 in %	seeds	average yield kg/j	wheatprice	
	1998	2000	2001				now	3 mths ago
Bandar	953340	45070	15040	1.57%	local	187	230000	350000
Laulash	498807	80078	28543	5.72%	local	160	200000	360000
Lafrai	1069760	20090	8313	0.77%	local	340	220000	350000
Mulghi	1389196	56978	38406	2.76%	local	210	230000	360000
Opposition	591150	55015	13302	2.25%	local	180	270000	340000
Total	4502253	257231	103609	2.30%		215	230000	350000

Livestock per species per *manteqa* now and three months ago

	total families	fam without animals	oxen			donkeys			cows			goats			sheep			horses		
			now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left	now	3 mths ago	% left
Bandar	1651	729 (44.2%)	659	1217	54.1	758	1739	43.6	250	769	32.5	1945	5520	35.2	3060	10690	28.6	3	34	8.8
Laulash	2196	763 (34.7%)	754	1779	42.4	1332	2161	61.6	945	7139	13.2	3397	8370	40.6	7139	14150	50.4	66	179	36.9
Lafrai	1352	544 (40.2%)	193	835	23.1	457	1161	39.4	43	302	14.2	390	1776	21.9	298	2270	13.1	1	24	4.1
Mulghi	1471	409 (27.8%)	276	764	36.1	622	1103	56.4	38	208	18.3	1058	3590	29.5	1599	5415	29.5	0	2	0
Opposition	3999	863 (21.6%)	703	2216	31.7	2558	4593	55.7	360	1398	25.7	1947	7470	26.1	6292	21780	28.9	227	1270	17.9
total	10669	2579 (24.2%)	2585	6811	37.9	5727	10757	53.2	1033	3622	28.5	8737	26726	32.7	18388	54305	33.9	297	1509	19.7