

Asia Foundation Border Study Analytical Report

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Study on Borderland Settlements in Afghanistan



May 16, 2019

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This report has been prepared by ACSOR-Surveys with the support of D3: Designs, Data, Decisions as part of the X-Border Local Research Network. The project is funded by The Asia Foundation, and by UK aid from the UK Government. The information in this report does not necessarily reflect the views of the Asia Foundation or the UK Government.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The livelihood strategies of borderland communities living within the vicinity of Torkham and Weash borders in both Afghanistan and Pakistan are distinctive to the region. Unlike elsewhere in Afghanistan, borderland settlements have close access to neighboring Pakistan. This proximity has facilitated a historical back and forth movement of Afghans residing on either side of the border to maintain a way of life. Sixty-nine percent of respondents in the quantitative survey of people living in the border region reported crossing the border at least once in the past year. Borderland communities are exceptional in their capacity to build and maintain social and trade networks across national borders. These networks have allowed for border area locals to combat the consequences of protracted conflict and poverty in the region by sustaining an informal economy and engaging in cross-border trade. The market systems in the local economy are unique to the border region's geographic position, which has enabled locals to cross the border and access resources otherwise not available to them. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that mobility and cross-border travel are critical functions of livelihood in border communities.

According to responses from key informant interviews, cross-border trade is one of the primary sources of livelihood in border settlements. In both the KII interviews and the quantitative survey, a majority of respondents considered the impact of cross-border trade to be positive because it creates employment and business opportunities in their respective border communities, although sometimes illegal. Border communities rely heavily on the border to maintain their social and economic livelihoods. 71% of respondents in the quantitative survey indicated that *all* or *a large part* of the business activities in their community depend on cross-border trade. More than half of respondents (56%) indicated that *all* or *a large part* of the well-being of their family is also dependent on cross-border trade. The fragile economy's dependence on the border makes it susceptible to disruptions and challenges that hinder their capacity to benefit from the border. These disruptions include, insecurity, border closure, and restrictions on border crossing. The requirement of passports and visas to cross the border as well as the recent construction of a barbed wire fence by Pakistani forces has introduced major obstacles to both formal and informal border crossing. These obstacles fueled by insecurity and political tension with Pakistan, threaten the transnational routine essential to the livelihood strategies of borderland communities.

Border settlements are also isolated and severely underdeveloped, receiving little access to basic resources or government aid (i.e. schools, clean drinking water, electricity, etc.). Respondents in the quantitative survey outlined a variety of problems in the local area, the most frequently mentioned include electricity (35%), drinking water (24%), and schools (22%). Although locals have requested government intervention, even arranging protests and meetings in an attempt to resolve local problems, respondents say that no action has been taken by the government to resolve their issues. Nevertheless, the people of the border region are committed to the reconstruction of the country, rejecting migration as a coping strategy for their challenges.

INTRODUCTION

The border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan is a particularly complex one, as the border between the two countries is notably porous and frequently traversed. Extensive trade networks, both formal and informal, run across the border, creating both challenges and opportunities for the people of the region. The people of the border region face numerous, interrelated challenges, including a long-running insurgency, drug smuggling, poverty, lack of access to resources and services, and weak governance. Yet their strategies in facing these challenges are little-studied and poorly understood.

This study focuses on the communities surrounding the two main transit points on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan: Torkham, located in Muhmand Dara District of Nangarhar Province, located on the road which links Kabul and Jalalabad with Peshawar in Pakistan through the Khyber pass, and Weash, on the road between Kandahar and Quetta through the Khojak Pass. Readers should note that Weash is often referred to as “Weash-Chaman”, “Pur Chaman”, or simply “Chaman” after the larger city on the Pakistani side of the border.

In order to better understand the challenges facing the border region and its people and to aid in developing strategies for assistance, the Asia Foundation implemented a study through a consortium of research partners in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The goals of the Border Study include enhancing understanding of local borderland economies and communities in Torkham and Chaman, the role of trans-national and trans-local networks in trade, business and investment as well as other livelihood strategies of border communities, and improve knowledge of how these livelihood strategies contribute to community resilience and adaptation in an environment of economic and political fragility.

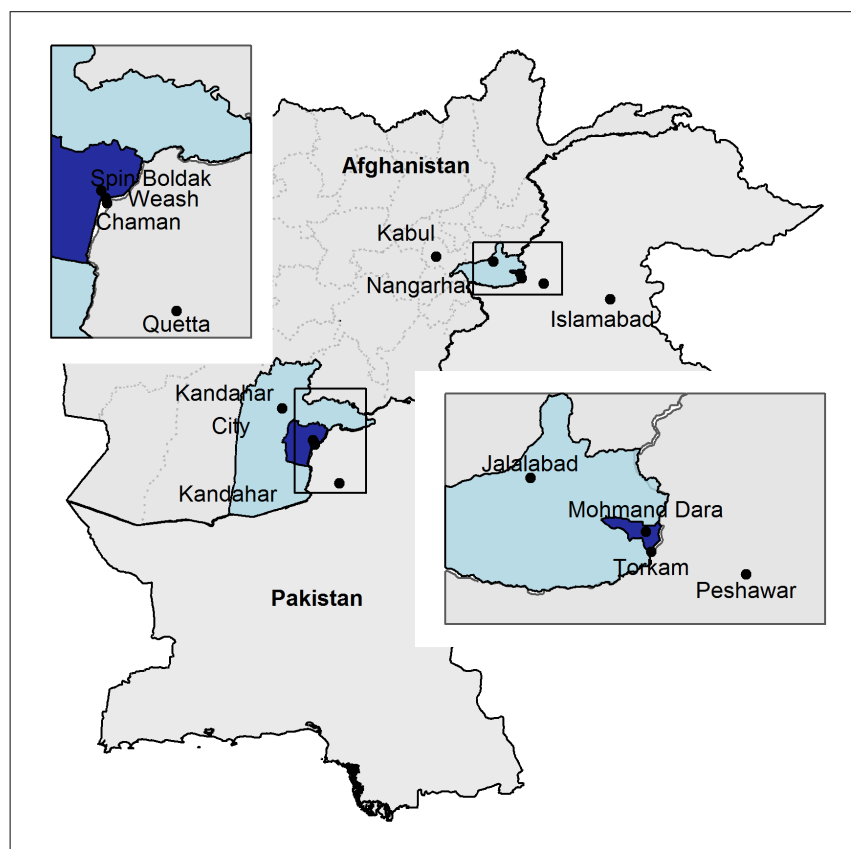


Figure 1: Map of the Border Region, including main cities and locations mentioned in the report

The research was conducted by ACSOR-Surveys, based in Kabul, Afghanistan, on behalf of the Asia Foundation. Funding for the project comes from the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID), and the research seeks to establish a baseline for future research in the border regions, as well as to guide future UK development programming. D3: Designs, Data, Decisions, ACSOR's parent company, provided support in terms of sample design, data review, reporting, and analysis.

BACKGROUND

Although they have been divided by the imposition of the Durand Line in the 19th Century, the Pashtun communities on either side of the border remain linked by trade, family ties, culture, religion, and history. Although relations between the two countries are often strained, people continue to cross the border for a variety of reasons, including for trade, such as buying or selling products, fleeing violence, medical treatment, marriage, and numerous others. From the 1980s to the 2010s, millions of Afghans crossed into Pakistan to seek relative safety, but since 2014, many have been returned, sometimes voluntarily but often not.

The harsh, mountainous geography and poor infrastructure of the border region makes imposition of rule of law by either state difficult. In such an environment, illicit movement of goods and people flourish, and outlaws and insurgents can find safe haven. These factors make economic development difficult, and most inhabitants of the border region survive at a subsistence or post-subsistence level. However, cross-border trade does create opportunities for at least some inhabitants of the border region. Afghanistan's formal economy is dependent on imports and exports that pass through the border crossings at Weash and Torkham, and its informal economy depends on unregistered, unofficial trade that traverses the border at or near the official crossings. Taken together, these facts make a better understanding of Afghanistan's border regions vital to understanding its current situation and its place in the region.

METHODOLOGY

The Asia Foundation partnered with ACSOR-Surveys, based in Kabul, to design and implement a mixed-method study that synthesized quantitative and qualitative analysis to study the social, economic, and political life of border communities, what challenges impact them, and how they respond to these challenges.

Quantitative surveys allow one to gather data from a large group of people via structured questions; whereas qualitative interviews allow one to go into depth on specific questions of interest. Responses to qualitative research are lengthy (i.e., words instead of numbers) and are typically gathered from a small sample size, therefore qualitative responses should not be generalized to the broader population. Data for the quantitative research was gathered by means of a population survey in the two border districts of Muhmand Dara and Spin Boldak, while qualitative information was gathered by conducting Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with senior officials in the government and defense forces, tribal and community leaders, and key business figures.

QUANTITATIVE BORDER SURVEY

1. Fieldwork for the quantitative survey was conducted between February 4-10, 2019. The field team consisted of 48 trained interviewers and 2 supervisors under the management of ACSOR.
 - a. Both men (n=783) and women (n=742) were interviewed. In compliance with Afghan culture, interviews were gender-matched.
 - b. The survey was fielded face-to-face. Due to the remoteness and security situation in some villages, as well as a relatively high number of open-ended questions, the survey was conducted using paper questionnaires.

2. Interviewer training for the quantitative survey was held in Jalalabad and Kandahar on February 3-4, 2019.



Figure 2: Jalalabad Interviewer Training

3. The questionnaire consisted of 32 management questions, 77 substantive questions, and 25 demographic questions. The questionnaire was translated into Dari and Pashto, but because the districts studied are all predominately Pashto-speaking, all interviews were conducted in Pashto.
4. The average interview was 31 minutes, with a range of 20 to 51 minutes.
5. For the quantitative survey, the target n-size was 1,500, with 700 allocated to Muhmand Dara and 800 allocated to Spin Boldak. In keeping with ACSOR's typical practice, an extra sample of 60 interviews was included to account for deletions during the quality control process (1,560 interviews were fielded in total: 740 in Muhmand Dara and 820 in Spin Boldak). The final achieved sample after all stages of quality control was $n=1,525$, consisting of $n=705$ in Muhmand Dara and $n=820$ in Spin Boldak.
 - a. Within Spin Boldak, because of accessibility challenges in the northeastern part of the district, 100 intercept interviews were assigned. In compliance with Afghan culture, only men could be approached for intercept interviews at locations such as bus depots, markets, and hospitals and

clinics in accessible areas. This resulted in a sample with a slight male skew: the final sample is 51.3% male (n=783) and 48.7% female (n=742).

- i. Villages in Spin Boldak that the ACSOR field team determined were inaccessible were removed from the frame prior to the sample draw. For intercept interviews, interviewers were required to write the name of the respondent's village in a special question only for these interviews, so that the supervisor and data management team could check and confirm that they were not conducting intercept interviews with respondents from accessible villages.
 - ii. The accessibility situation in Muhmand Dara was better, so no intercept interviews were necessary to complete fieldwork there.
- b. Per discussions between the Asia Foundation and ACOSR, a specific number of interviews were allocated to each border town: 80 interviews were allocated to Torkham in Muhmand Dara, and 80 were allocated to Weash in Spin Boldak.
- c. Each sampling point contained 10 respondents. For random walk sampling points, one male sampling point and one female sampling point were assigned to each.
- d. Districts were purposefully selected based on client research requirements, and villages, outside of the border towns mentioned above, villages in the remaining accessible portions of the district were selected by Simple Random Selection (SRS) due to lack of accurate population information at the settlement level for the whole of Afghanistan. However, due to the large sample size and small number of potential sampling points, the frame of accessible villages was saturated: such a large portion of all available known villages were selected that ACSOR could not follow its usual procedure of providing two replicate draws for replacements. However, in the event, no village replacements were required.
- e. Households were selected by random walk and respondents within households were selected by Kish grid. The Kish grid provides a random selection criteria based on which visit the household represents in his or her random-walk and the number of inhabitants living in the household. Column numbers in the Kish grid that accompanies the questionnaire are pre-coded in order to help prevent fraud or convenience selection based on available people. Interviewers are not allowed to substitute another household member if the person selected by the Kish grid is not available.

6. For the quantitative border survey, the Response Rate was 70.3%, the Cooperation Rate was 90.3%, the Refusal Rate was 2.3%, and the Contact Rate was 78.6%. High cooperation rates tend to be common for surveys in Afghanistan: because of high unemployment, large household sizes, and the fact that many people work on family farms or in household industry, they are more likely to be available. The relative novelty of survey research means that Afghans do not have the same reluctance to participate in surveys that is seen in the Developed World. Furthermore, ACSOR's experience has been that because Afghans are not used to being asked for their opinions by those with power and influence, they are often willing and even excited to participate in surveys when offered the chance. Similar dynamics are also seen in survey research in other countries in the region. Detailed information on all Contact Outcomes can be found in Appendix C.
7. Due to the nature of the sample and the manner in which sampling points were selected, the data was not weighted.
8. Various quality control procedures were employed throughout the project.
 - a. During field, interviewers were controlled through direct observation or back-check by supervisors. In total, 27% of interviews were subject to some form of field-level quality control.
 - b. During the data entry phase, approximately 20% of interviews conducted (310 out of 1560) were randomly selected by ACSOR to undergo double data entry, and resulting discrepancies were resolved. Key-punchers with high error rates are disciplined and provided with additional training. For all errors, questionnaires were then reviewed, and the correct data is included in the final data set. The average error rate was 0.2% with a standard deviation of 0.28%, which is relatively low and acceptable for quality control standards.
 - c. During the data cleaning phase, D3's Valkyrie program was used to search for patterns or anomalies in the data that may indicate an interview was not properly conducted by an interviewer.
 - i. The Valkyrie program includes three tests:
 1. Equality test – compares interviews for similarities, grouped by interviewer, within sampling point, province, or any other variable. Typically, interviews with an interviewer average of 90% or higher are flagged for further investigation.
 2. Non-response test – determines the percentage of 'Don't Knows' and refusals for each interviewer's cases. Typically,

interviews with 40% or higher DK responses are flagged for further investigation.

3. Duplicates test – compares cases across all interviewers and respondents to check for similarity rates. This test will flag any pair of interviews that are similar to each other.

Typically, any cases that have a similarity of 95% or higher are flagged for further investigation.

- ii. For this survey, 35 cases were deleted from the data set for having over 95% similarities in responses to another interview (i.e., failing the duplicates test). No cases were deleted set for high non-response (over 40% “don’t know” or “refused”) or for failing the duplicates test.
- d. Prior to the delivery of data to The Asia Foundation, ACSOR and D3 Systems, Inc. conducted a full review of the data set. This included analyzing the data for irregularities and data processing errors. To achieve this, ACSOR wrote SPSS syntax code to:
 - i. Identify incorrect coding
 - ii. Verify that filtering instructions were followed correctly
 - iii. Address any logical inconsistencies
 - iv. Identify outliers in the data
 - v. List questionnaires and interviewers for further review.

QUALITATIVE KII STUDY

1. The KII guide was formulated based on the results of the quantitative survey and the client’s research questions. The Asia Foundation gave ACSOR a list of target respondents to inform the study’s findings.
2. The guide consisted of 20 questions, not including probes and follow-up questions. The guide can be found in Appendix C.
3. Each moderator was required to complete a moderator guide after each interview with information about the overall atmosphere, respondent temperament, reaction to the questions, and other relevant information.
4. Target respondents were senior officials in the relevant provincial centers, districts, and border towns. Many of the target respondents were specific people recommended to ACSOR by the Asia Foundation.

5. In some cases, the Asia Foundation and ACSOR staff worked together to gain access to respondents, while in others, ACSOR used personal contacts and references to schedule interviews.
6. All KIIs were conducted in-person by trained ACSOR moderators. ACSOR called ahead to schedule interviews and arrange access.
7. ACSOR was able to complete 26 of 30 planned KIIs (see “Outcomes” below for more information). Basic information about participants is listed in Appendix A. This information is anonymized to some degree in order to protect participants’ confidentiality.
8. The KIIs were conducted between March 7 and April 21, 2019, with most of the KIIs conducted towards the beginning of the timeframe. ACSOR was committed to completing all 30 requested KIIs if any possibility still existed, and ACSOR continued its efforts until the first week of May, when it became apparent that the final four KIIs could not be conducted in time for inclusion in the report, and that sufficient information had been collected from the KIIs that had already been conducted to allow ACSOR to conduct comprehensive analysis and answer the Asia Foundation’s Research Questions.

OUTCOMES

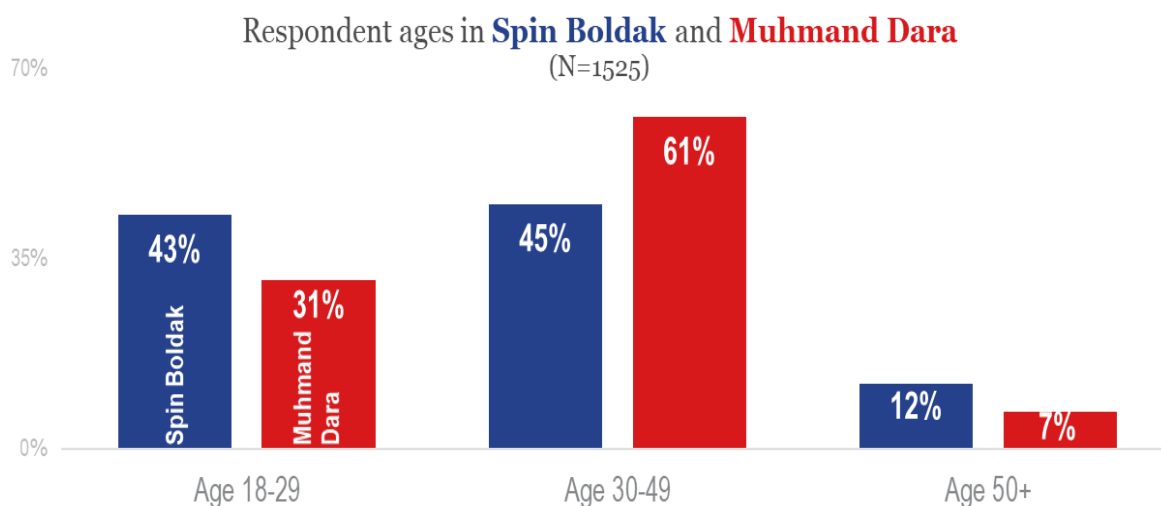
ACSOR encountered no major difficulties completing the quantitative work. However, because of the very different nature of target respondents and highly specific population studied in the qualitative work, ACSOR faced severe challenges in completing the required KIIs. Senior officials and leaders tend to be extremely busy with their responsibilities and will often protest that they do not have time to participate in research studies. The fact that several high-profile assassinations and assassination attempts have occurred over the past year likely contributes to the reluctance of senior officials to be interviewed. Another complicating factor is that in the uncertain political environment that characterizes Afghanistan at present, officials may be reluctant to share their views, even when ACSOR gives assurances of confidentiality. Many were also busy with travel between Kabul and their respective provinces, or to other countries in the region. The sensitive nature of the topic also contributed to reluctance of officials to participate: at least one official initially agreed to the interview but refused as soon as he saw the guide. In other recent projects, ACSOR has faced similarly high rates of refusal and non-cooperation from prospective KII participants. Future research will need to take this sort of reluctance into account.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the quantitative survey, a total of 1525 respondents were interviewed. 705 of those respondents were from Muhmand Dara and 820 of those respondents were from Spin Boldak. The gender distribution of the sample maintained a slight male skew: the final sample is 51.3% male (n=783) and 48.7% female (n=742). In Muhmand Dara, 49% of respondents were male and 51% of respondents were female. In Spin Boldak however, 54% of respondents were male and 46% were female.

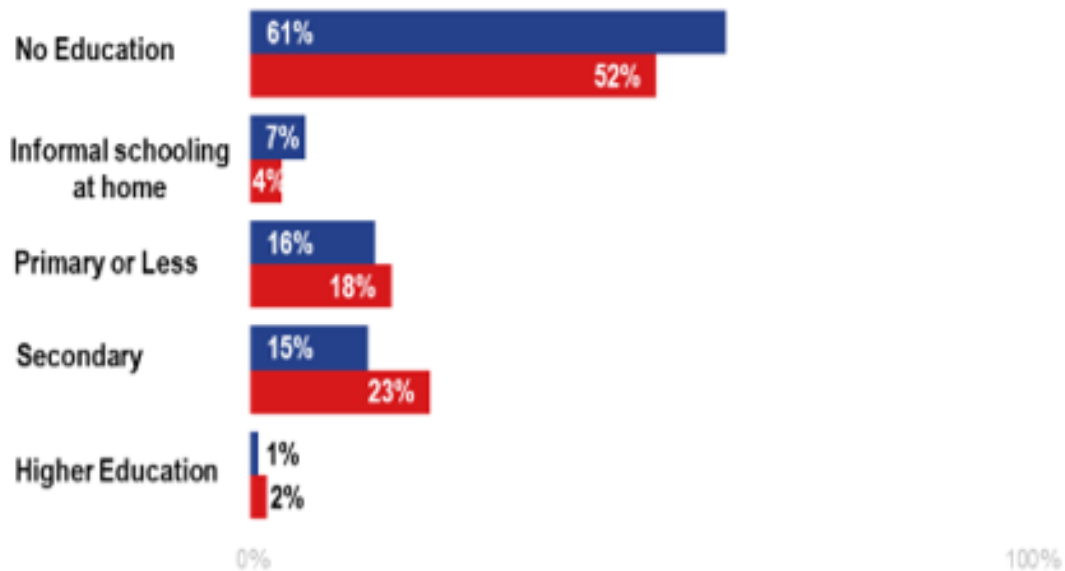
The overwhelming majority of respondents in the border region belong to the Pashtun ethnic group: specifically, 99.7% of respondents from Muhmand Dara and 99.8% of respondents from Kandahar are Pashtun.

Respondents ages ranged from 18 to 82 years old. The majority of respondents from Muhmand Dara (61%) were between 30 – 49 years of age. However, only a plurality of respondents from Spin Boldak (45%) were between 30 – 49 years of age.

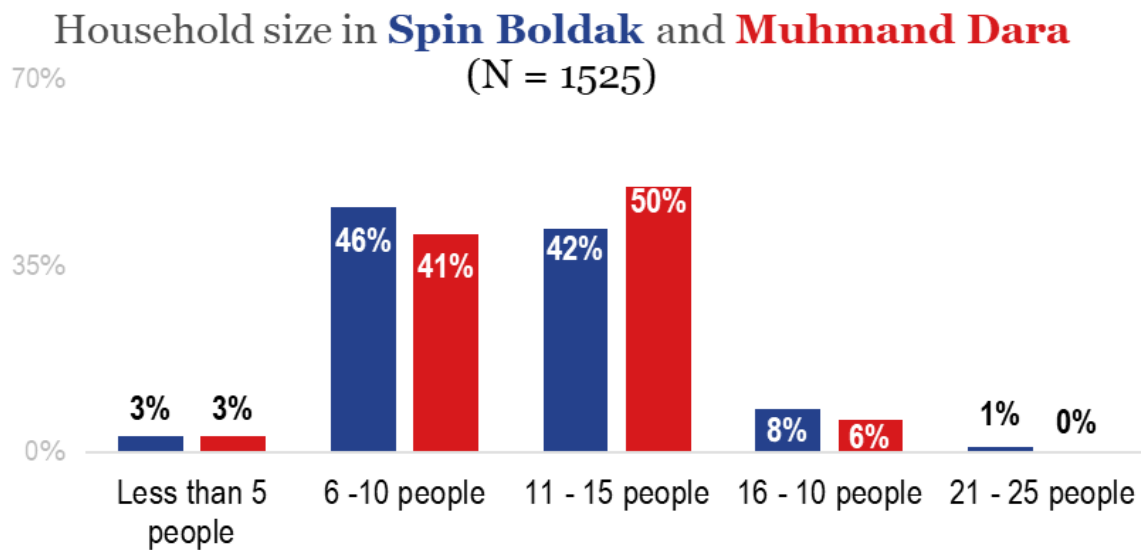


Quantitative survey respondents were asked the highest level of education they had completed, not including Islamic madrassas. The majority of respondents in both Muhmand Dara and Spin Boldak reported having no education. Many KII informants indicated that the border region lacks basic resources including schools and access to education. Informants even reported that some local children cross the border to Pakistan to receive an education. Obstacles to border crossing, long-running issues with lack of basic government resources, and harsh geography making it difficult to extend educational services or build schools may explain the low levels of education in the region.

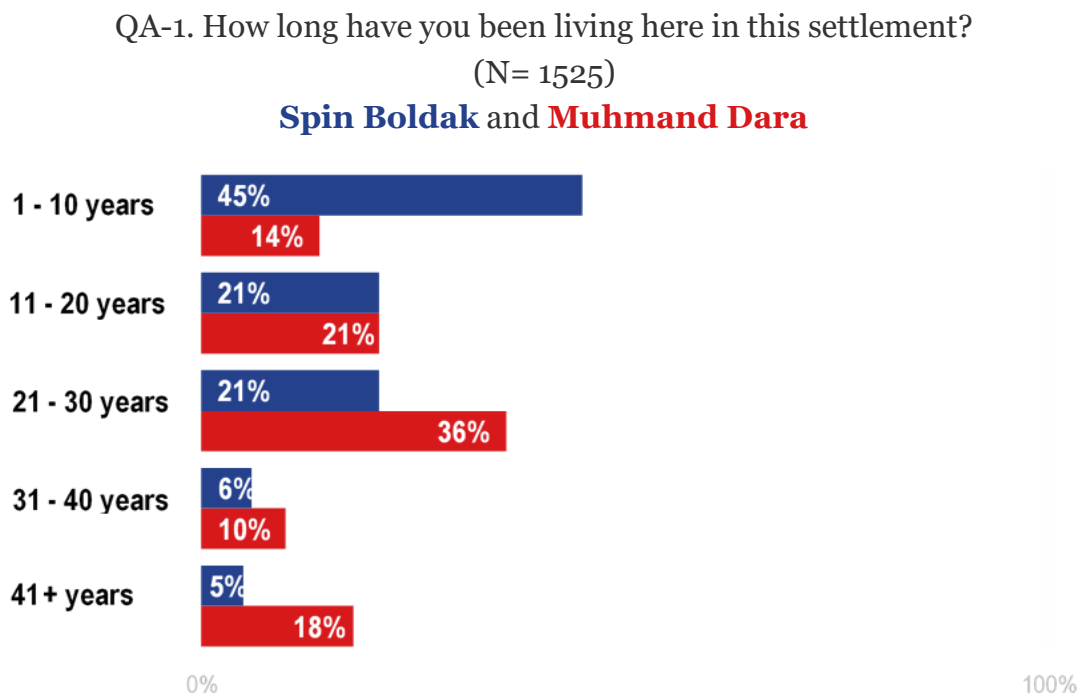
Highest level of education in **Muhmand Dara** and **Spin Boldak** (N = 1525)



The majority of respondents in both Spin Boldak (90%) and Muhmand Dara (95%) live in their community with their family. Household sizes in Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara are similar. Half of respondents in Muhmand Dara (50%) reported a household size of 11 – 15 people. In Spin Boldak the plurality of respondents (46%) reported a household size of 6 – 10 people.

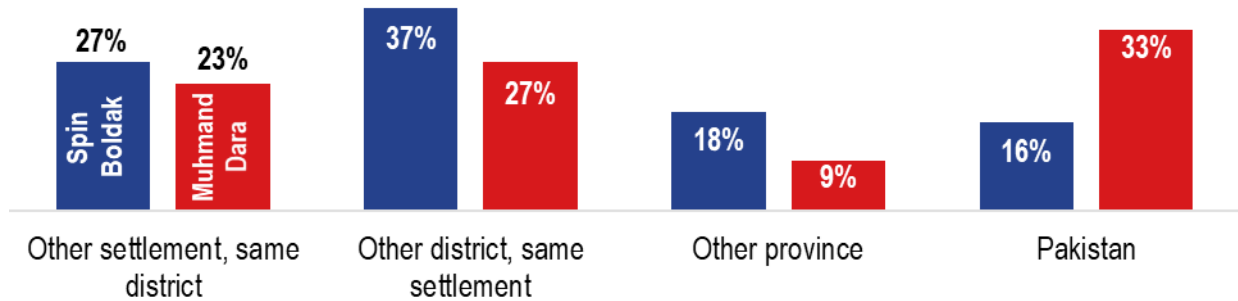


The length of time that respondents have lived in their respective border settlements varied between the two districts. In Muhmand Dara, the majority of respondents (85%) reported that they have lived in their settlement for over 10 years. In Spin Boldak however, only about half of respondents indicated that they have lived in their settlement for over 10 years.

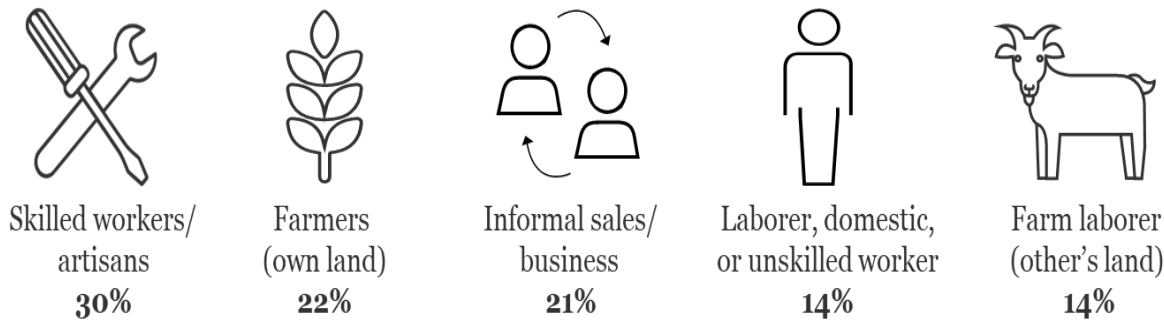


In the aggregate, among respondents who have lived in the settlement for less than 20 years (n=731), the plurality (34%) moved from another district in the same province. 25% lived in another settlement within the same district, and 21% resettled from Pakistan. Disaggregated analysis of resettlement between Muhmand Dara and Spin Boldak indicates that more respondents from Muhmand Dara (33%) have resettled from Pakistan than respondents from Spin Boldak, only 15%. The graph below illustrates the dichotomy between where respondents lived last before resettling to their respective settlement in Spin Boldak or Muhmand Dara.

(Filtered, if 'less than 20 years ago' in QA1) Where did you live last before resettling here? (N=731)



About half of respondents (48%) indicated that they engage in an activity that generates money. Among those who conduct activities that generate money, the plurality work as skilled worker or artisan (N = 735, total of two mentions).

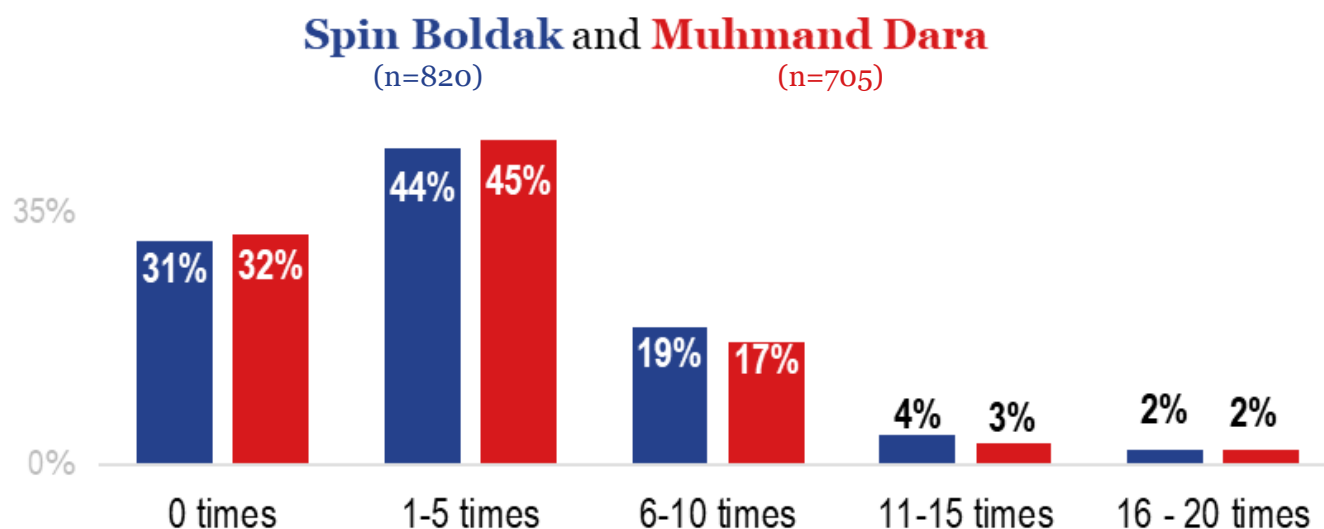


KEY FINDINGS:

The purpose of this study is to research the livelihood strategies of borderland communities living within the vicinity of the Torkham and Weash border crossings. The fragile local economy, livelihoods, and market systems of borderland communities are unique to their geographic location. Mobility and border crossing are critical functions of livelihood in border communities.

People living in borderland communities depend on the border for a variety of reasons. According to our quantitative survey of 1525 respondents from the borderland areas of Muhmand Dara and Spin Boldak, about half of respondents (45% in Muhmand Dara and 44% in Spin Boldak) indicated that they have traveled to Pakistan 1-5 times within the past year. According to survey respondents, an average of two crossings per year were for business purposes, and an average of four crossings per year were for personal reasons. Although almost half of respondents in either border community have traveled across the border, the relatively low rates of border crossings can be explained by the political tension and insecurity highlighted by respondents of the key informant interviews.¹

QB-9. Within the past one year, how many times have you crossed the border and travelled to Pakistan? (N=1525)



¹ See section on the impact of political tension and security on the border for more information.

REASONS FOR BORDER CROSSING

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with academics, border area locals, and government officials offered insight into the reasons for border crossing among locals in the Torkham and Weash areas. The primary reasons for border crossing identified in the KIIs include trade/business, medical treatment, and visits to relatives across the border.

Like many of their counterparts, P7 and P28 listed the reasons for border crossing for locals in their respective border towns. Responses like those listed below indicate that the circumstances for border crossing remain consistent across the Torkham and Weash border towns.

“There are different reasons that people cross the border. For instance, some individuals pass it in order to visit their family members that live in Pakistan. A number of them cross the border because they work and conduct their business on that side of the border. Others cross the border to take their patients to Pakistan for treatment. Residents of border communities on both sides of the border are involved in cross-border trade which they conduct in cooperation with each other.”

- [P7, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Executive Manager, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Rodat, Nangarhar]

“They go because of work, some people go for business, some take their patients to Pakistan, some have friends and relatives there. There are not good doctors in Kabul.”

- [P28, 40 years old, Male, Illiterate, Tribal elder, Pashtun, Unemployed, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

Twenty-four of the 26 KII participants indicated that crossings were business or trade related, while 17 of the 26 respondents mentioned visiting relatives on the other side of the border, and 11 of the 26 key informants mentioned medical treatment as a reason for crossing the border.

Trade/business is the most prevalent reason for border crossing among KII participants. This heavy emphasis on trade in the border region is established across the KIIs.

Statements from P25, the Border Police Chief, describes the frequency of business-related border crossing: *“thousands of people cross the border for business on a daily basis.”* P7 further explained that cross-border trade is the main economic activity of border communities because they do not have access to agriculture and employment opportunities like the rest of the country.

Due to the remoteness and harsh geography of the border region, making a living through agriculture is more difficult in these regions than elsewhere in Afghanistan, and due to these factors as well as the security situation, the efforts of the government and its international partners to improve the infrastructure of the border regions have met with little success. However, the proximity to the border and the number of people who pass through create opportunities in trade, retail, and related sectors that do not exist elsewhere in the country.

P31’s statements demonstrate that trade and business conducted across the border is critical to the livelihood strategies of locals in the area because *“without trade, people would have to leave Spin Boldak and Chaman because there are no other means of livelihood in the border region.”*

Visiting relatives across the border is the second most prevalent reason for border crossing. This exemplifies the popular sentiment among KII participants that people on both sides of the border are relatives and share an ethnic group. P10, a former refugee in Pakistan explained that people cross the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan because *“on both sides of Durand Line people of one ethnic group live.”* He explained further that there are *“many parents whose daughters got married in Pakistan and vice versa therefore they cross the border to visit and see them. As already stated, people living along the both sides of the border are brothers because they are Pashtuns and belong to same tribes.”*

The concept of a shared ethnic group across the Pakistani border is not limited to residents of Nangarhar. KII participants from border areas in Kandahar also shared this perspective. P24 of Spin Boldak affirmed that the reasons for crossing the border and particularly highlighted the tribal and ethnic links existing on both sides of the border:

“People cross the border to visit their relatives that live on the other side of the Durand Line. Besides, they are Pashtuns and affiliated to the same tribes. Some individuals cross the border to find work or conduct businesses. They have family ties and friendly relationships. Pashtuns live on the both sides of the border.”

- [P24, 31 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Private business, Pashtun, Self-employed, Kandahar, Kandahar]

A lack of medical treatment in Afghanistan is another common reason for border crossing among KII participants. In the quantitative survey however, few respondents mentioned medical treatment as a reason for crossing the border. This may be because poorer or non-elite survey respondents are either not aware of medical treatment available in Pakistan or cannot afford it even if they are aware of it. However, most quantitative survey respondents (73%) feel that people living in the Pakistani districts on the other side of the border have better access to healthcare services, though 69% also feel that people living elsewhere in Afghanistan have better access to medical care, so it may be easier and more cost-effective for non-elites to go to major cities within Afghanistan for medical treatment, rather than to Pakistan.

Furthermore, by travelling for essential services such as medical treatment within Afghanistan, border region inhabitants would not face the border obstacles mentioned in the survey, such as border closures or harassment by Pakistani authorities. KII participants however, belong to the wealthier or elite strata of border region society, as such they were more prone to highlight a lack of good medical care and hospitals as a necessary reason to cross the border into Pakistan.

“The main reason people cross the border is for treatment. People face problems here because the treatment they need is not here.”

- [P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“We cross the border when we take patients to Pakistan for treatment, because there are not modern and well-equipped hospitals in Afghanistan.”

- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“Mostly, when I ask people why they cross the border, they typically answer that they go for medical treatment and say that treatment in India or other countries is too expensive. They say that Pakistani currency (rupee) is cheaper than the Afghani, and say that there are no good medical facilities available in Kandahar. Hence, the main reasons they cross the borders are medical treatment, trade and visiting their relatives.”

*- [P32, 43 years old, Female, 16 years of education,
Member of Parliament of Kandahar, Pashtun, Member of
Parliament, Karte Seh, Kabul]*

It is evident that people in border communities travel across the border for a variety of reasons. The location of border communities gives them access to business and treatment opportunities on both sides of the border. The livelihoods of repatriated and settled communities along the border are also dependent on border-crossing. Comments from P10 indicate that returnee and refugee communities develop familial and community links across the border, resembling trans-border communities that have existing familial and tribal links across the border. These familial ties facilitate border crossing for locals in their efforts to visit family members who live on the other side. These tribal and familial links are critical to the relationship between border communities with people living on the other side of the border.

RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS ACROSS THE BORDER

The traditional economy of the border region is unlike most modern, formal economies prevalent elsewhere in Afghanistan. Informal trade and cross-border familial relationships are the lifeblood of the border region’s local economy. More than half of respondents (53%) in the quantitative survey indicated that they have close relatives living in Pakistan. Among these respondents however, only 15% reported doing business with their relatives in Pakistan more than once a month. The low levels of business with relatives in Pakistan reported in the quantitative survey can be explained by the high cost and obstacles that poorer survey respondents face upon crossing the border.

The quantitative survey includes responses that are representative of the entire border settlement population in Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara, which generally includes respondents from lower socio-economic strata than KII respondents. This explanation

is by other survey results that among 86% of respondents that have relatives who live in the same settlement, 42% reported doing business with those relatives who live nearby. Moreover, relatives who live within the same settlement are more accessible to locals of lower economic status than relatives who live across the border, which explains the higher reported rates of business with relatives living in the same settlement.

The small sample of KII participants are of a higher socio-economic status compared to the general population represented in the quantitative survey, meaning that they are likely to have better access to their relatives and associated business opportunities across the border.

KII participants emphasized that their strong, personal relationships with relatives across the border have a positive impact on cross-border trade as it facilitates robust, transnational trade networks. Twenty-five of the 26 respondents indicated they had positive, familial and/or business relationships with people across the border. This overwhelmingly positive perception of their border neighbors can be explained by the tribal, familial, and ethnic networks that link cross-border communities.

Such connections are even cultivated among refugee and repatriate groups, as they build and maintain relationship ties in their home and host countries. These ties facilitate a strong and positive relationship between residents on either side of the border and strengthen trade networks that are critical to their livelihoods.

KII participants explained the relationships with people living on the other side of the border and the factors that contribute to their strong relationship, which include a common language, ethnicity, tribal group, culture, and familial ties.

“People living in the border communities on the both sides of the border have economic, social and cultural relationships. Besides, they have family ties and are related to each other by marriage. Moreover, they have common ethnicity, language, culture, and religion.”

- [P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

“People living in border communities on the both sides of the border have a friendly relationship with each other. They had relations and ties among themselves even before the creation of Pakistan, because they

belong to the same tribes, and have common language, culture and religion. According to the Durand agreement, people affiliated or belonging to Muhmand, Afridees and Shinwar tribes are not required to have passport or visas to cross the border.”

- [P7, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Executive Manager, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Rodat, Nangarhar]

“Residents of border communities have very positive views and opinions about the people that live on the other side of the border, because they have been affiliated with the same tribes and have blood relationships as well as relationships by marriage. Besides, border communities on the other side of the border are part of our territory. However, it is the fault of Afghan government which does not raise this issue (of the Durand line) so that it can be solved.”

- [P23, 28 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University Lecturer, Pashtun, Kandahar University, Kandahar, Kandahar]

“They feel good about them because they are all relatives of each other. Our people have good thoughts for the people on that side of the border because of the relationship they have with each other. I would like to give an example; there’s a village by the name of Haji Karimullah, half of which is located in Pakistan and half of which is located in Afghanistan: therefore, the separation of the people of this village is impossible. This is a single village, having the same Masjid (where they offer prayers), and all are inter-connected with each other in terms of trade, agriculture, and livestock.”

- [P25, 33 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Border Police Chief, Pashtun, Ministry of Defense, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

KII participants asserted that cross-border family ties shape the trade networks and livelihoods of people in the border region. Many explained that close relatives on the other side of the border are able to provide business opportunities, accommodations, and other forms of support to their kin crossing from the other side.

“Mutual relationship between families living along both sides of the border has very positive impacts on their businesses, commerce and work. Those of individuals who have family members in Pakistan are able to conduct and run their businesses and economic activities more effectively. It helps them to reduce their expenses as well, because they do not need to live in hotels to provide them accommodation, food and drink for which people are charged to pay a lot of money. However, those businessmen and traders that do not have families in Pakistan face a lot of problems.”

- [P10, 33 years old, Male, 16 years of education, University Professor, Pashtun, Institute of Vocational Training, Khuganee, Nangarhar]

“They have good relationships because if some of families are living in Pakistan and some of them in Afghanistan, it has good role in business issues. Mostly it happens that one brother is living in Afghanistan and another is living in Pakistan so if they have trade, it is a positive point for their business.”

- [P33, 45 Years Old, Male, 16 years of education, Member of Provincial Council, Pashaye, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

“Family ties between them facilitate conducting their trade and businesses. Their mutual cooperation helps them to strengthen their informal economy and illicit trade”

- [P23, 28 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University Lecturer, Pashtun, Kandahar University, Kandahar, Kandahar]

While robust trade networks and familial ties can help strengthen the local market of the border region, the fragile economy faces numerous obstacles that may prevent cross-border trade. Political tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan, border closure, and general insecurity hinder cross-border mobility and disrupt the livelihoods of people living in border communities.

While all of the KII participants reported a positive perception of people living on the other side of the border, some border locals added caveats to their responses. Respondents like P17, a Torkham businessman, indicated that while family ties have positive impacts on trade and livelihood, there are other competing factors that disrupt the local economy of the border region.

“Family ties have positive impacts on trade and livelihood of people living in both sides of the border. However, there is some political tension between these two countries and that is why big trade with Pakistan is almost zero right now. If political and commercial relationships stay the same, it will have bad effect on economy and livelihood of both sides. This is the family ties that keep small trades alive between two countries though there is not official trading among them because of political problems.”

- [P17, 42 years old, Male, 2 years of education, Torkham businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Self-Employed, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

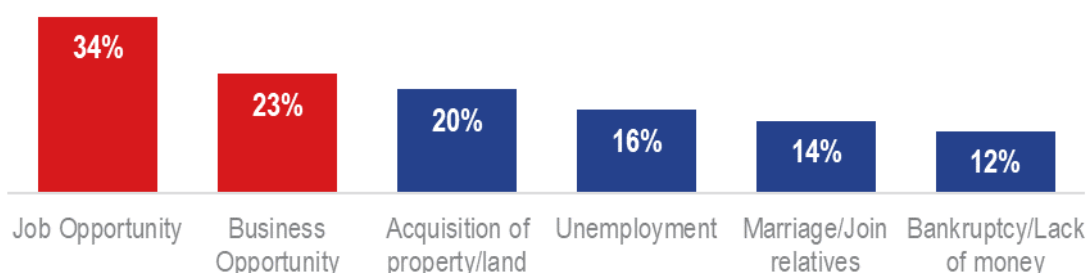
“As you know economy of Afghan people is a traditional economy and in traditional economy people try to do their trade in traditional ways. If the trade and economy was modernized like in other countries, the tradition couldn't help in trading and now family ties are very important and effective in the trading. The border between Pak-Afghan is a problematic border and I can say that the most important problem in our country is the relations between people on the two sides.”

- [P5, 26 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University professor, Hazara, Alama University, Kabul]

MAIN SOURCES OF LIVELIHOOD

Livelihood strategies along the border have developed in the context of the region's significant transnational networks and trade opportunities. In fact, a majority of respondents (57%) in the quantitative survey indicated that they had resettled to borderland communities for a job or business opportunity. An additional 16% indicated that they had resettled because they were unemployed, which may indicate that these respondents resettled to seek jobs or business opportunities along the border.

QA-2B. (Filtered, if 'less than 20 years' in QA-1) And what was the main reason for you to resettle here? (Total of two mentions)
(n = 731)



The resettlement of individuals to border areas for the purposes of economic gain is supported by statements made in the KIIs. A number of respondents indicated that the border region was better off than the rest of Afghanistan, with access to markets in neighboring countries. While this perception is contentious among KII participants, its discussion offers insight into certain perceptions of livelihood in the border region. P27 and P29 indicated that proximity to the border has allowed for better employment opportunities and security in the area.

"This area is the main branch of business in Afghanistan, traders bring goods in containers here, while they do not open or bring goods or containers in other parts of Afghanistan... People in other parts of Afghanistan face security problems and limited employment opportunities while people in border communities have good security

and better employment opportunities. There is no explosion [i.e. attacks or bombings] at the border communities.”

- *[P29, 30 years old, Male, 8 years of education, Government employee, Pashtun, Customs department, Takhta Pul, Kandahar]*

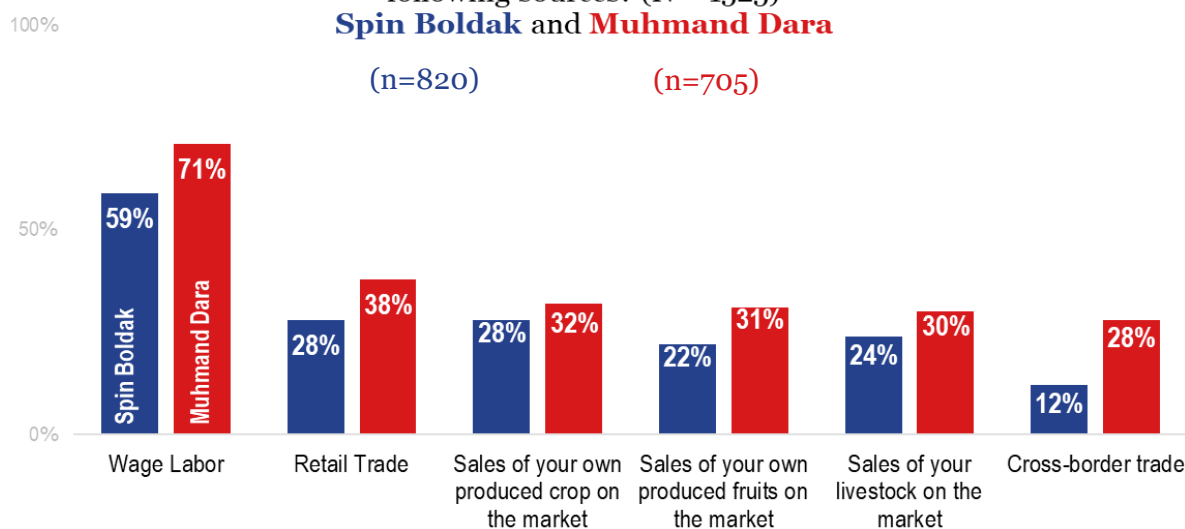
“Traders bring materials from other countries, collect them here and then people come to take materials from here to other areas in Afghanistan. Traders have improved the local economy in Spin Boldak. Boldak does not have gardens, water and lands, so this trade is the difference between the economy of the border region compared to elsewhere.”

- *[P27, 53 years old, Male, 4 years of education, Business Trader, Pashtun (Achakzai), Self-Employed, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]*

The back-and-forth movement of Afghans across the border with Pakistan indicates that Afghan border communities maintain a heavy reliance on a “transnational routine.” Cross-border trade and mobility serves not only as a business opportunity for those seeking capital, it is at the core of the livelihood strategies of borderland communities.

Responses from the KIIs indicate that trade is the main source of livelihood among border communities, followed by smuggling as the second most frequently mentioned source of income. The frequent mention of trade as a source of livelihood in border communities signals a heavy reliance on cross-border trade. It is worth mentioning that these results differ from those in the quantitative survey. In the quant survey, wage labor and retail trade were reported as the most common sources of household income. This reflects the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People in which wage labor was also a main source of household income for the majority of respondents nationwide.

D-6. For the past one year has your household received income from any of the following sources? (N = 1525)

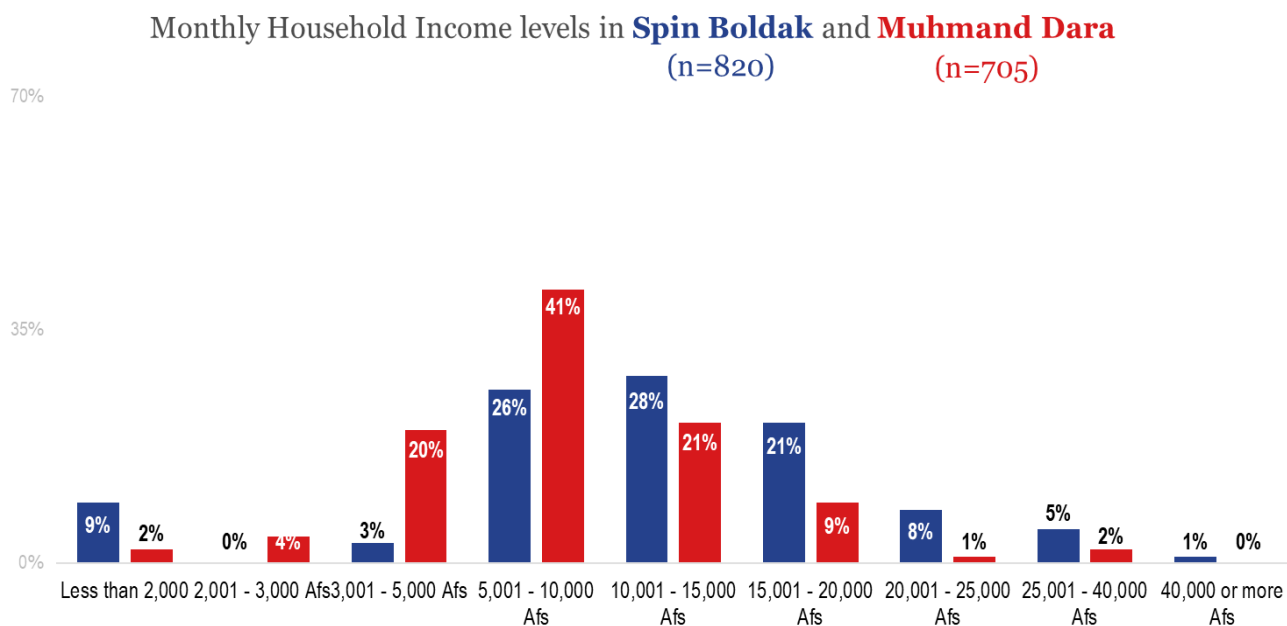


While this conflicts with the perceptions recorded in the KIIs, a number of responses indicate that wage labor is prevalent in the region. KII responses indicate that wage laborers work for traders along the border. Since trade is the main source of livelihood among KII participants, it is natural for employment opportunities to arise from the industry. P30's response in the KII alludes to the high prevalence of wage labor in border communities.

"The population of this border area is greater than the population in the provincial center because of the good security. Economic situation isn't that improved. It is because more than 10 to 15 thousand people are laborers. The traders, who were supposed to pay 500 AFN per day wage, are now paying 200 AFN per day."

- [P30, 57 years old, Male, Illiterate, Businessman, Pashtun, Self-employed, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

The various sources of income and livelihood in the border region contribute to the income of individuals who reside along the border. Despite the lack of resources in the border region, the average monthly income levels in Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara is comparable to the average national income found in the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People, in which the majority of Afghans (62%) reported an average monthly income of AFN 5,001–20,000.



LOCAL ECONOMIES IN THE BORDER REGION

According to KII participants, cross-border trade is the main economic activity of border communities. Many respondents explained that the region is heavily dependent on transnational trade because locals do not have access to agricultural land, employment opportunities, and other critical resources to the extent that they perceive to be available in the rest of the country. Responses from the KIIs offer insight into how the local economy operates. According to the participants, border regions are far less economically and infrastructurally developed than the rest of the country. In both Torkham and Weash, wholesale goods are imported to the border region and then distributed to retail markets in the rest of the country. It is evident that despite the lack of infrastructure in the region, cross-border trade offers border locals at many levels of socio-economic status the ability to engage in trade and business.

“People living in the border communities have access to free trade and business. They store imported commodities in their markets and sell them to their clients in different provinces of Afghanistan. They sell their goods wholesale to other businessmen and shopkeepers.”

- [P24, 31 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Private business, Pashtun, Self-employed, Kandahar, Kandahar]

“The local markets in the border near to Pakistan differ from those elsewhere in Afghanistan. The main difference is that the markets in border areas import goods as wholesale and then distribute them to other provinces in the country and they sell them as retail. The other main difference is that the markets in border areas don’t have good infrastructure and facilities but markets in the cities have good buildings and facilities.”

- *[P17, 42 years old, Male, 2 years of education, Torkham businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Self-Employed, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

“In border areas, people think about what people, especially those who cross the borders, need. If we compare a market in a city with a market in border region, the market in the city will provide all the things the families need, but in border regions a market will provide the things mainly needed by passengers/commuters. Markets in border areas don’t have good infrastructure. In other areas the markets are stable and have infrastructure, but in border areas they even can sell things in a tent.”

- *[P5, 26 years old, Male, 18 Years of Education, University professor, Hazara, Alama University, Kabul]*

“Some people take commercial goods there and some bring commercial goods here from that side. People go there to work and their life is better. The important point is that poor and rich people can do these things.”

- *[P28, 40 years old, Male, Illiterate, Tribal elder, Pashtun, N/A, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]*

INFORMAL ECONOMY

The term “informal economy” refers to economic activities, jobs, and workers that are not regulated or taxed by the state. Though this term is sometimes used as a euphemism for practices such as the trade in illicit drugs, human trafficking, or smuggling, activity that falls within the scope of the informal economy is not necessarily illegal.

Depending on their social and political station in the border region, KII participants express competing perceptions of the local economy. One of the defining characteristics of the local market cited by many KII participants is the lack of government regulation on markets in the border region. According to an article on regional war economies by the International Peace Academy, in a post-conflict or conflict situation, marginalized populations living along borderlands often rely on illicit networks and other “shadow activities” for subsistence.² Illicit economic activity has been incentivized by the political dynamics of the border region. The more open trade regime of Afghanistan, as opposed to the more restrictive trade regime of Pakistan, facilitates the widespread smuggling and tax evasion that occurs along the border.³ Smuggling and other forms of illicit activity are exacerbated by corruption among customs officials and police.⁴ Another study by the Afghan Evaluation and Research Unit (AREU) found that near the Chaman/Weash border, border guards actually condone smuggling and charge a minimal “fee” or bribe of Rs. 10 per trip.⁵ This corruption is confirmed by KII responses, in which participants note corruption among customs officials.

“The money of illegal trading is more because smuggling work does not have tariffs by the government. Some people bribe government officials, so they are free to do their illegal works.”

- [P31, 40 years old, Male, Illiterate, Tribal Leader, Pashtun (Kakozai), N/A, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

It is evident that the border region of Afghanistan maintains a prevalent, informal trade economy. In its qualitative study, AREU observed that the trade economy in the border

² Studdard, Kaysie. *War Economies in a Regional Context: Overcoming the Challenges of Transformation*. International Peace Academy. March 2004.

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *Afghans in Quetta: Settlements, Livelihoods, Support Networks and Cross-Border Linkages*. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). Collective for Social Science Research. January 2006.

region, specifically near Weash and Quetta, operate in three main segments: established companies that are responsible for the large-scale movement of goods (i.e. trucks), smuggling, small-scale back and forth trade conducted by border area locals. A paper published by the Bonn Center for International Conversion (BCIC) in 2017, highlighted these informal trade systems in even more detail. The report indicated that most business along the border is carried out by small-scale transporters that are generally family owned with family members working as drivers or assistants.⁶ Local merchants often use their networks in Pakistan to arrange a shipment of goods. These traders often specialize in a few specific goods that they transport across the border, whether licitly or illicitly. These haulage companies, especially those based in Pakistan, require drivers and wage laborers for loading and unloading. As such, they often hire border locals on either side of the border as wage laborers.⁷ The presence of these elements is confirmed by the qualitative component of this study. 22 of the 26 KII participants named trade as the primary reason for crossing the border. 11 of the 26 KII participants named smuggling as a reason for crossing. Six participants named transportation as a reason and five mentioned wage work as a reason for cross border travel. The implications of these open-ended responses by KII participants further illustrate Afghanistan's informal border economy outlined by AERU and BCIC.

Goods including flour, cooking oil, blankets are smuggled into Pakistan on a regular basis.⁸ Smuggling is condoned by locals in the Chaman region because of the limited economic opportunities in the area.⁹ Men transport goods in small quantities at a time and may make up to seven trips per day across the border.¹⁰ Similar to the KII results, AERU found that these smugglers are often of a lower socioeconomic status, commonly referred to as Laghris (which literally means 'naked', emphasizing their socioeconomic status). Laghris typically work for an established network of cross border traders to transfer goods from Weash to Chaman and vice versa.¹¹ Results from our quantitative survey indicate that wage labor is the largest source of income among respondents. The

⁶ Grawert, Elke, Rabia Nusrat, and Zulfiqar Ali Shah. *Afghanistan's Cross-border Trade with Pakistan and Iran and the Responsibility for Conflict-sensitive Employment*. Bonn Center for International Conversion and International Alert. April 2017.

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *Afghans in Quetta: Settlements, Livelihoods, Support Networks and Cross-Border Linkages*. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). Collective for Social Science Research. January 2006.

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

majority of respondents (63%) reported that their household had received income from wage labor in the past year. These results parallel a previous UNHCR report on border populations near Spin Boldak and Torkham, which found that most Afghan border locals (67%) work as unskilled or low skilled labor in the agriculture sector (15.6%), construction (14.6%), wholesale and retail trade (14.2%), transportation (5.7%).¹²

General goods like flour or cooking oil are not the only reported items smuggled across the border. Cross-border political and military networks also contribute to the informal economic profile of the border region.¹³ The US Institute of Peace reported that transborder political and military linkages not only facilitate the informal economy but are enabled by it. The lack of government regulation and the general nature of the informal economy allows for the trafficking of drugs, arms, and other items across the border.¹⁴ The report notes that the borderlands have already become a “land bridge for the criminal (drugs) and criminalized (transit trade) economies of the region.”¹⁵ Since borderland communities rely heavily on the smuggling and cross border trade, the border region of Afghanistan has become a natural host for this activity. These transnational economic actors exploit the weak government to pursue profit. These profits often serve as funding for various military and insurgent actors, whom often fight to protect the informal trade that takes place along the border.¹⁶

LACK OF GOVERNMENT REGULATION

According to P19, a Senior Advisor in the Chamber of Commerce in Kandahar, the long war in the region has prompted the evolution of the border region’s informal economy. He explained that the protracted conflict in the country has caused severe damage to all of its financial, legal, social and administrative institutions. Therefore, it is “impossible” to impose laws and regulations on Afghan border communities similar to the ones enforced in the USA and European countries. P19 specifies even further that it is impossible to enforce these laws in Spin Boldak. His further clarification indicates that

¹² Majidi, Nassim, and Eric Davin. *Study On Cross Border Population Movements Between Afghanistan And Pakistan*. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) in Kabul. June 2009.

¹³ Studdard, Kaysie. *War Economies in a Regional Context: Overcoming the Challenges of Transformation*. International Peace Academy. March 2004.

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Rubin, Barnett, and Abubakar Siddique. *Special Report: Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate*. United States Institute of Peace. October 2006.

¹⁶ *ibid*

the alternative economies that have been cultivated in the border region are deeply entrenched in the local society, and the government has limited means to regulate them.

P5, a professor at Alama University in Kabul explained that informal economies in border regions are less expensive and easy to maintain. The lack of infrastructure in border communities makes an informal local economy more conducive to the situation in region and allows for the sale of goods more easily. The professor caveats that the small businesses, which are prevalent by the border are often unable to compete with the illicit trade and smuggling widespread in the informal, local economy.

Further, the lack of government regulation fosters an environment with lower quality imports. The alternative, informal economic markets created in the region are to unique the border area. Many respondents like P11, a businessman from Lalpor, indicate that elsewhere in Afghanistan, people conduct business formally and in accordance with the law.

“Local markets in the border region are not regulated by the government. Their goods and merchandise are not often taxed formally. However, markets in other parts of Afghanistan are regulated by government and their commodities are taxed according to the law. This is the only contrast between local markets in the border region and markets in other parts of the country.”

- [P7, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Executive Manager, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Rodat, Nangarhar]

“In other villages of Afghanistan government can enforce the law easily and enforce tax over the residence, but in Torkham government cannot do that easily because Pakistan also has a lot of influence here.”

- [P9, 38 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Human Resource Manager of Customs, Pashtun (Shinwari), Ministry of Finance, Shinwar, Nangarhar]

“Most markets in the border region store and trade goods and products that are brought illegally. However, markets in other parts of Afghanistan are involved in lawful businesses and trade. They are not involved in informal and illegal economic activities. Everything they import is taxed by the government according to the law.”

- [P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]

SMUGGLING AND ILLICIT TRADE

Cross-border communities operate in a fragile context. The fragile political and security conditions paired with the lack of government regulation has contributed to the evolution of alternative economies. The neglect of border communities by the national government often encourages many locals to engage in livelihood strategies that are illegal, which often include smuggling and illegal migration as informal labor across the border. Moreover, many participants contended that smuggling plays a key role in the local economy.

“Smuggling or illicit trade plays an important role in the economy of the border region because most people living in the border communities, especially those which are not under the control of the government, are involved in these illegal activities and the informal economy.”

- [P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

“Smuggling or illicit trade is the only source of income of people that live in border region, because they do not have access to legal businesses and employment opportunities. Smuggling is their main activity and main source of their income.”

- [P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]

“Smuggling is one the reasons which motivates people in the border region to conduct cross-border trade. In general smuggling is the main source of their income. It is informal and illegal economic activity which provides 70 percent income to people living in the border communities.”

- [P6, 47 years old, Male, 18 years of education, Hazara, University professor, Gharjistan University, 3rd district/Kabul city, Kabul]

Responses indicate that social and economic status often determine socio-economic mobility at the border, meaning that poor people engage in smuggling and wage work across the border, while wealthier individuals engage in trade. Some respondents said that poor people are often “exploited” and hired by wealthy traders to engage in illicit activity. P19 explained that people in the border region face unique economic and subsistence challenges that force them to engage in illicit activity. He said: “they do not have access to electricity, agricultural land and drinking water. When their challenges are addressed, and they are provided with access to all facilities, services and opportunities they will never conduct illicit trade and smuggling.” Moreover, P19 contends that if the government works to meet the basic needs of communities in the border region, the economy would become less reliant on illicit activity and trade.

“Smuggling or illicit trade in the border is a source of livelihood for some poor and needy families living in the border communities.”

- [P14, 42 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Mayor of Torkham, Pashtun, IDLG, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“I think common people are harmed very much because they are exploited by wealthy and rich persons who are involved in illicit trade and smuggling. Poor and needy individuals are exploited by the rich and wealthy because they cannot find other work to meet the basic needs and requirements of their families.”

- [P23, 28 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University Lecturer, Pashtun, Kandahar University, Kandahar, Kandahar]

The impact of smuggling and tax evasion entrench cross-border communities in illicit or informal operations, which deprive the state of tax revenue. IPA research asserts that this illicit activity weakens the capacity of the state.¹⁷ As such, KII participants who work for the government often denied the presence of a local “informal” economy in the border region. They argued that all trade is subject to taxes at customs, and therefore should not be considered informal trade. KII responses indicate that specifically, government officials are the most frequent deniers of the presence of local informal economy.

A prime example of this denial is P25, a border police chief who noted that informal economies are prevalent everywhere but denied the presence of a local informal economy in the border area because “*the government is strong here and there is no informal economy here.*” The only illegal thing that occurs in the border region, according to the Border Police Chief is the import and export of goods using bribes since many individuals do not have the proper ID and travel documents necessary to cross the border. He went further to assert: “*illicit trade doesn’t play any specific role in the economy of the border region.*”

Similar to the border police chief, P13, the District Governor refuted claims of illicit trade in the region citing the amount of taxes collected from traders at the border. “*Our revenue manager collected about 5.5 million AFN tax this year. This was the most enormous amount of tax we have ever collected so far. Tax means to collect the tax from the traders against their trade.*” According to P13, this taxation is an indication that smuggling and illicit trade in the area has been decreased to a great extent. P13 stated that the local economy consists mostly of businesses that do not have big buildings to sell product, rather that goods are transported to bigger markets elsewhere (products in the local area are wholesale and sold at retail in rest of country).

¹⁷ Studdard, Kaysie. War Economies in a Regional Context: Overcoming the Challenges of Transformation. International Peace Academy. March 2004.

“The local economy is dependent on trade however, there is no illegal economic activity or illicit trade because all of the goods go through customs at the border and are subsequently subject to taxes. The border region has a specialized market compared to the rest of Afghanistan which has “general” markets. Spin Boldak does not have gardens, water, or land, so the trade is critical to the local economy.”

- *[P27, 53 years old, Male, 4 years of education, Business Trader, Pashtun (Achakzai), Self- Employed, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]*

“I do not accept that our economic activities, businesses and trade are informal or illegal. However, a small number of shops are involved in informal economic activities and they do not pay taxes to the government. As already mentioned, people in border communities have spare parts and lubricant shops in Torkham town. They pay taxes to the government on a regular basis. We cannot call cross-border trade illicit because those who are involved in it have permits to take goods to Pakistan and from there to Afghanistan. It is the fault of our customs and financial department that they do not tax their commodities and goods. It is the responsibility of the government to regulate this trade and tax all articles and goods that they bring from Pakistan. It will increase income of customs and the financial department. On the other hand, this trade will become formal and legitimate.”

- *[P7, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Executive Manager, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Rodat, Nangarhar]*

“People in the border region are not involved in informal or illegal economy because all imports are taxed. They are also taxed when they are transported to other provinces. Businessmen and traders obey all rules and regulations of the government. Smuggling is only a source of livelihood for some poor border families.”

- [P14, 42 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Mayor of Torkham, Pashtun, IDLG, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“Smuggling does not play an important role in the local economy because only a few individuals are involved in it. However, illicit trade is still conducted and there are some commodities which do not have market in Afghanistan therefore they are smuggled to the other side of the border.”

- [P19, 65 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Senior advisor of Chambers of Commerce, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Kandahar, Kandahar]

IMPACT OF INFORMAL ECONOMY

KII participants have conflicting opinions on the impact of the informal economy. Some respondents state that locals benefit from the informal economy, because they are able to profit from the lack of taxes. The informal economy also allows for individuals who may not have an education or technical skills to pursue a livelihood strategy that would otherwise not be available to them had they not lived near the border. Moreover, these respondents believe that proximity to the border and its supplementing informal economic opportunities benefit the border region.

"We go in the morning and we come back in the evening to bring our materials with us. The difference is that other provinces borders are far away. We are happy because the border is near to us and it is economical for us. The government also takes taxes from those people, but we are free of tax."

- *[P17, 42 years old, Male, 2 years of education, Torkham businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Self-Employed, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

"Individuals in the border region do not need an education or to be literate in order to conduct their business activities. No matter their educational background, people of the border area are busy with their business. However, in other cities, there are many literate and educated individuals who work as teachers, directors, managers, students, etc."

- *[P32, 43 years old, Female, 16 years of education, Member of Parliament, Pashtun, Member of Parliament, Karte-se, Kabul]*

"[Smuggling] plays important role in the economy of the border region because people in the border do smuggling and earn their livelihood through smuggling. If the official border is closed then people of the border region can carry goods materials through illegal crossing points and this is their main income."

- *[P17, 42 years old, Male, 2 years of education, Torkham businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Self-Employed, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

"It has positive impact on people who are living there because their economy situation will improve. It plays a big role because most of people income is from smuggling trade. One of the crimes in the border region is smuggling trade so it has a big role in the life of border people."

- *[P33, 45 Years Old, Male, 16 years of education, Member of Provincial Council, Pashaye, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]*

While illicit trade and smuggling may benefit some, other KII participants consider the informal economy and smuggling to be a hindrance to the border region. Respondents stated that illicit trade is a form of theft and that it introduces harmful substances and activities to border communities.

"The border region is the primary source of trade and business in Afghanistan. Traders bring goods to the local area and then distribute them to other provinces across Afghanistan. Illicit trade and smuggling while it may have benefits for some people, "it is a kind of robbery of the government because they are not paying taxes to the state."

- *[P29, 30 years old, Male, 8 years of education, Government employee, Mako, Customs department, Takhta Pul, Kandahar]*

"Informal economy and smuggling have a negative impact on the community. Drugs hinder community health and informal economic activity facilitates economic inequality. The rest of the country engages in legal economic activities and businesses with government regulation."

[P10, 33 years old, Male, 16 years of education, University Professor, Pashtun, Institute of Vocational Training, Khuganee, Nangarhar]

“This is something that has made them busy. You may have information that there are many people who do smuggling. A few days ago, a Laghari (a person who does illicit trade or does smuggling) was killed by the Pakistani police forces and then people did strikes against Pakistani police. He was killed because of this illicit trade. Well, they do this illicit trade because they find more profit in it. You saw a person who was smuggling flour on bicycle. They try to smuggle things which are more profitable for them.”

- *[P34, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Deputy Director of Border and Tribes, Pashtun, Ministry of Borders and Tribes, Kandahar, Kandahar]*

“It (smuggling) is harmful for the government. People do smuggling and it is not good for the government and it is theft. These people should be arrested and they should pay tariffs to custom. When they do these illegal works, the government should prevent them.”

- *[P31, 40 years old, Male, Illiterate, Tribal Leader, Pashtun (Kakozai), N/A, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]*

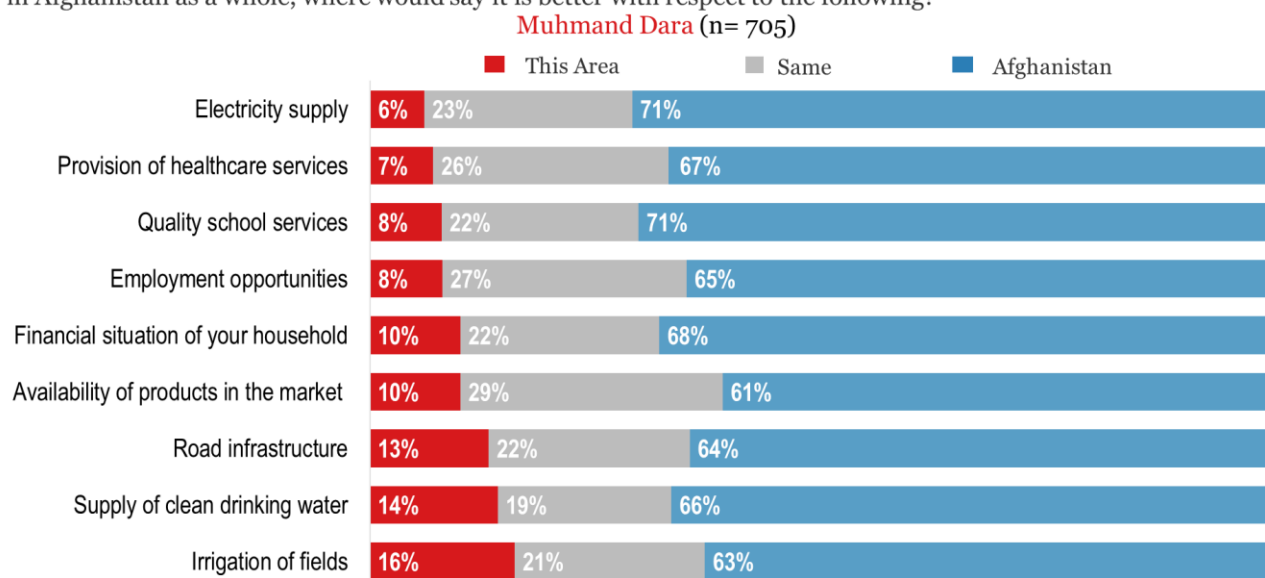
“Smuggling and illicit trade has a big impact on the economy. It is better for the local economy because it allows border traders to make more money, even though that money is illegal. Nonetheless, smuggling in the border region can have negative impacts on the local area, for instance: “the medicine business; those medicines which are imported and taxed, are good for health. However those medicines, which are not taxed and are smuggled are harmful for health and can even cause deaths.”

- *[P32, 43 years old, Female, 16 years of education, Member of Parliament, Pashtun, Member of Parliament, Karte-se, Kabul]*

LOCAL ECONOMY COMPARED TO ELSEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN

Quantitative respondents were asked to compare the lives of people living in the local area with the lives of people in Afghanistan as a whole. Respondents were asked about a variety of local livelihood indicators ranging from financial situation to road infrastructure (n=1525). In Muhmand Dara, the majority of respondents reported that the life of people in Afghanistan as a whole are better than the lives of people in Muhmand Dara. This is the case across all of the quality of life indicators tested, which are displayed in the graph below.

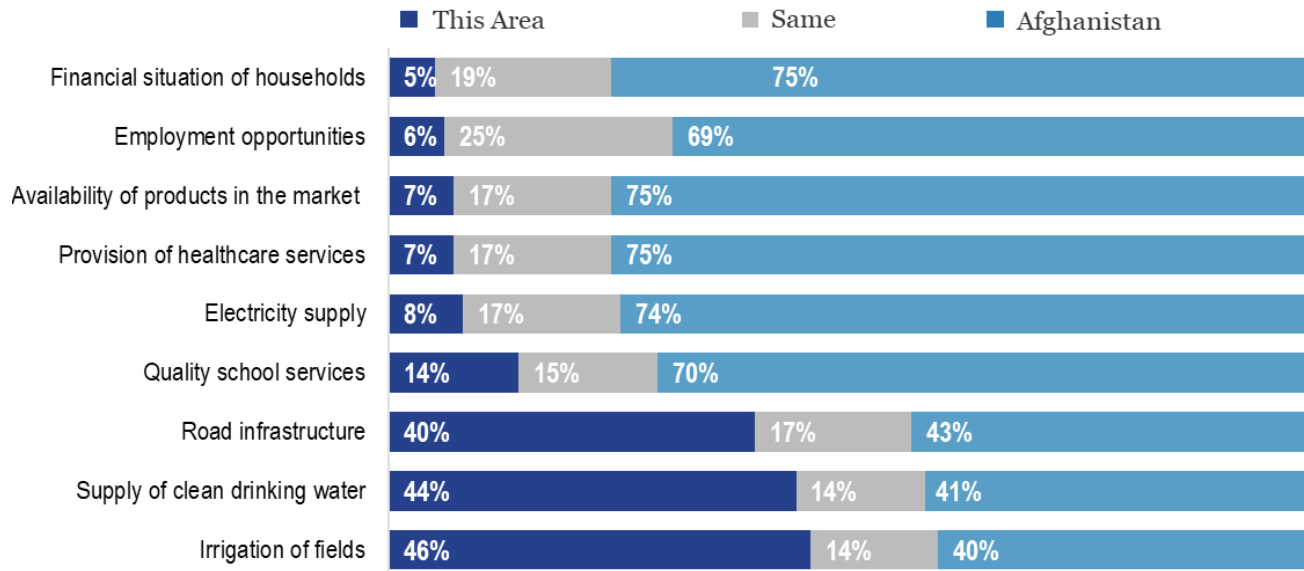
QC-8. Now, if you have to compare the life of people living in this local area (Muhmand Dara), and the life of people in Afghanistan as a whole, where would say it is better with respect to the following?



There is some variation in the conditions of livelihood between the two districts. In most cases, like financial situation, healthcare, and employment opportunities, respondents in Spin Boldak held similar perceptions to their counterparts in Muhmand Dara – that the lives of people in Afghanistan are better than the lives of those in their local area. However, unlike Muhmand Dara, the majority of respondents from Spin Boldak consider the road infrastructure, supply of clean drinking water, and the irrigation of fields to be the same or better than Afghanistan as a whole. Moreover, it seems that more respondents from Spin Boldak have access to certain resources like roads or drinking water compared to respondents from Muhmand Dara.

QC-8. Now, if you have to compare the life of people living in this local area (Spin Boldak), and the life of people in Afghanistan as a whole, where would say it is better with respect to the following?

Spin Boldak (n= 820)



Similar to the quantitative survey, it is the consensus among the majority of KII participants that the local economy and economic infrastructure of the border region is far less developed than the rest of Afghanistan. While there is a severe lack of district-level data on human development and government and international spending on development and infrastructure below the national level, regional Human Development Index (HDI) data suggests that the regions the two target districts are located in have worse HDI scores than the national average. In 2017, the most recent year for which figures are available, the HDI score for the South, which includes Kandahar and Spin Boldak, was 0.426, the worst score among the country's regions. The HDI score for the East, which includes Nangarhar and Muḥmand Dara, was 0.479. Both scores were lower than the national figure of 0.498.¹⁸

The primary dichotomy between the economy of the border region and the other local economies in Afghanistan is the prevalence of unregulated, unlawful economic activity in the border region. It is evident that the alternative livelihood strategies introduced by the community's proximity to the border is exclusive to the border region.

¹⁸ Global Data Lab, Institute for Management Research, Radboud University, Online: <https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/shdi/>. Retrieved May 31, 2019.

“In my opinion, people in all parts of Afghanistan except border communities conduct lawful businesses and trade. For instance, some individuals therein work as shopkeepers, carpenters, farmers, gardeners, backers and drivers. They never conduct informal economic activities. They are also not involved in smuggling narcotics and illicit drug. Their goods, food items and products are taxed by government according to the law. In addition, they work as tailors, masons, and barbers in order to improve their economic state and earn their livelihood.”

- *[P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]*

“Markets in other parts of Afghanistan, especially in cities and urban areas are constructed according to standards with all modern facilities and conveniences. However, markets in border region are nonstandard and without modern facilities and conveniences.”

- *[P14, 42 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Mayor of Torkham, Pashtun, IDLG, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, people have access to agricultural lands and gardens. They also keep shops but border communities conduct illicit trade.

- *[P18, 50 years old, Male, Illiterate, Torkham tribal leader, Pashtun, N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

Elsewhere in Afghanistan there are bigger markets that can meet the demands of customers, and typically those businesses are run legally.

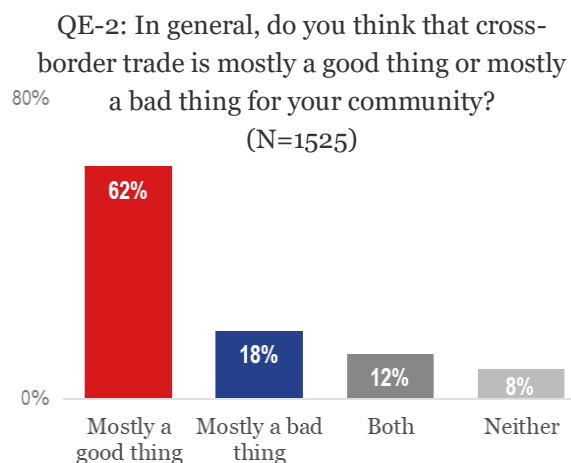
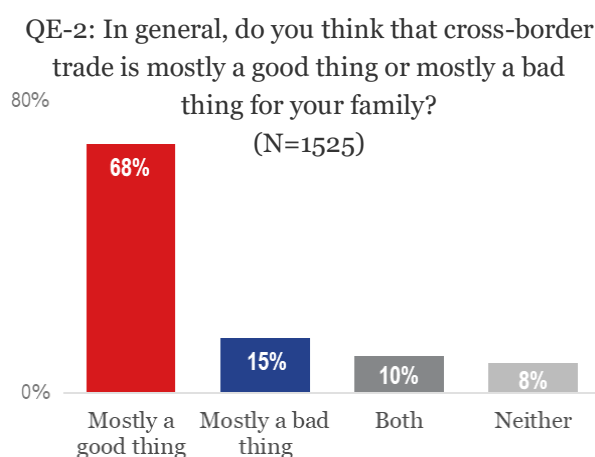
- *[P16, 40 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Security Manager, Pashtun, National Directorate of Security, Alingar, Laghman]*

Access to better resources and opportunities that border communities are deprived of. Products in local markets include smuggled and wholesale products, unlike the rest of the country.

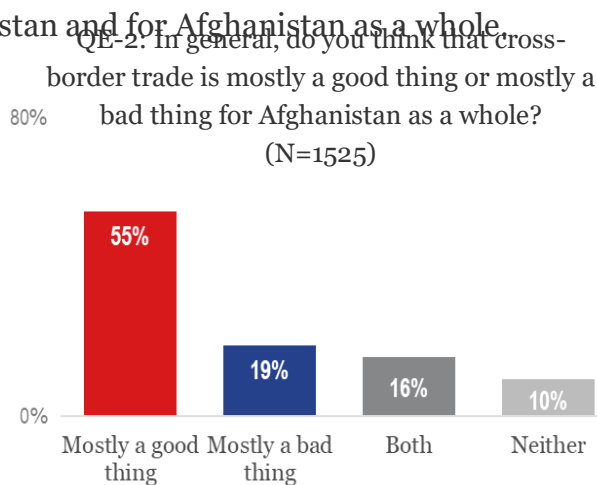
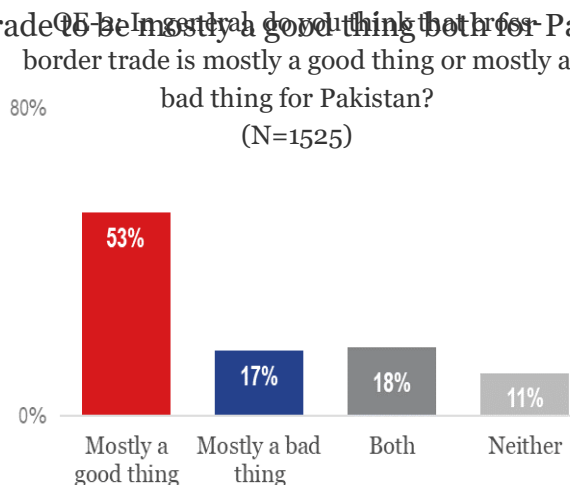
- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

IMPACT OF CROSS-BORDER TRADE ON BORDERLAND COMMUNITIES

Respondents from both the quantitative survey and the KIIs indicate that cross-border trade has a positive impact on the livelihoods of borderland communities. In the quantitative survey, the majority of respondents in both Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara considered cross-border trade to be mostly a good thing for their family and community. Respondents from both districts hold similar perceptions of cross-border trade, with less than 10% variation between responses between the two districts studied.



More than half of respondents in the quantitative survey also considered cross-border trade to be mostly a good thing both for Pakistan and for Afghanistan as a whole.



The majority of KII participants also indicated that cross-border trade has a positive impact on border communities because of the employment and business opportunities it creates in the region (although sometimes illegal).

“It has a very positive effect, if people of both sides engage in trade it will create jobs for people, and both sides can earn money and support their families.”

- [P9, 38 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Human Resource Manager of Customs, Pashtun (Shinwari), Ministry of Finance, Shinwar, Nangarhar]

“Cross-border economic trade and smuggling have positive impacts on the economy of border communities.”

- [P16, 40 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Security Manager, Pashtun, National Directorate of Security, Alingar, Laghman]

“Trust me, I have seen a boy 10 years of age buying things on this side of the border and selling them out on that side of the border. This means all the men of the border areas are busy in trade except women. Women don’t do trade there. Hence, cross-border economic trade positively impacts border communities.”

- [P32, 43 years old, Female, 16 years of education, Member of Parliament, Pashtun, Member of Parliament, Karte-se, Kabul]

In addition, some KII participants suggested that the impact and potential of cross-border trade is positive, but hindered by illicit trade.

“If cross-border economic trade is regulated and conducted in accordance with the government law, it will have more positive impacts on border communities because it is the only source of their livelihoods and income. It also will have positive impacts on our national economy.”

- [P6, 47 years old, Male, 18 years of education, Hazara, University professor, Gharjistan University, 3rd district/Kabul city, Kabul]

“The heavy dependence on trade facilitates illegal trade [and] causes economic inequality.”

- [P10, 33 years old, Male, 16 years of education, University Professor, Pashtun, Institute of Vocational Training, Khuganee, Nangarhar]

KII participants made it clear that cross-border trade is main source of income for people in the border region and that livelihood strategies are heavily dependent on the border. The assertion that the border region is heavily dependent on cross-border trade mirrors the results of the quantitative survey.

“It has positive impact on border people because the border is the main source of their income. Most of the border people work in border and get some money to feed their children. People work in Torkham to find some money otherwise they don’t have other work. Businessmen do trading here to find their daily money.”

- [P17, 42 years old, Male, 2 years of education, Torkham businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Self-Employed, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“Cross-border economic trade impacts border communities very much because it is the main source of their income. Merchandise and products which they smuggle are not taxed by the government.”

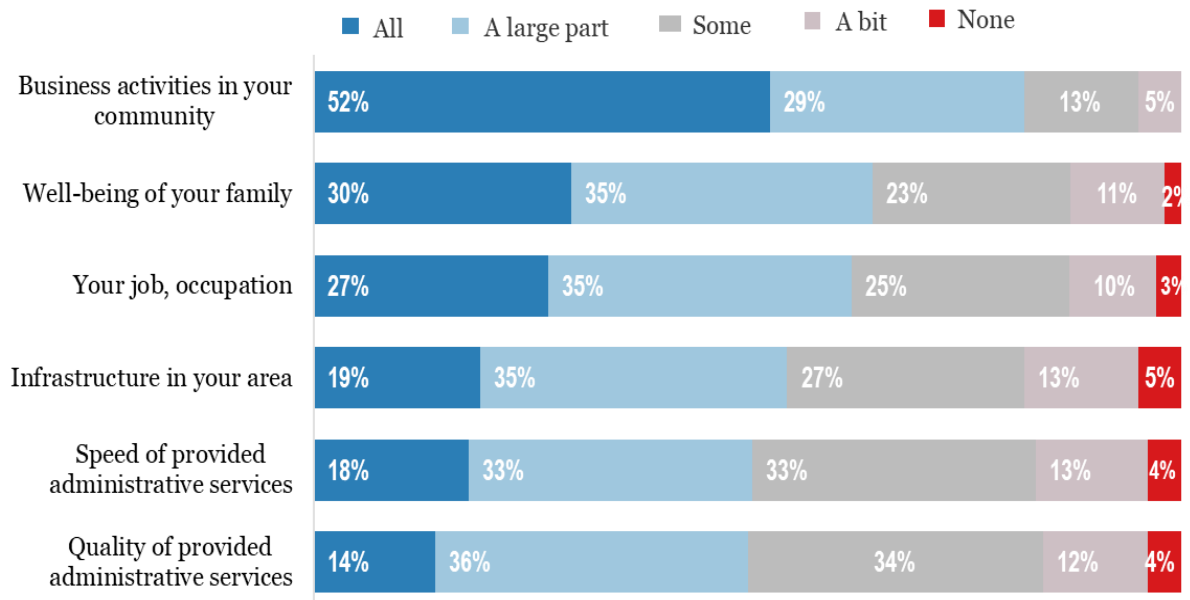
- [P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

“Most people living in the border communities are involved in cross-border economic trade and smuggling because they do not have agriculture land to grow crops, vegetable and fruits. Besides, they do not have access to legal businesses and employment opportunities. Cross-border trade or smuggling is conducted with close cooperation of people that live in the communities on the other side of the border.”

- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

Results from the quantitative survey indicate that respondents from both Muhmand Dara and Spin Boldak, reported a large dependence on cross-border trade. Compared to Muhmand Dara, respondents from Spin Boldak perceived a larger dependence on cross-border trade in their lives. The majority of Spin Boldak respondents reported that *all* or *a large part* of their business activities (81%), well-being of their family (64%), job/occupation (62%), local infrastructure (52%), and the speed of provided administrative services (51%) are dependent on cross-border trade.

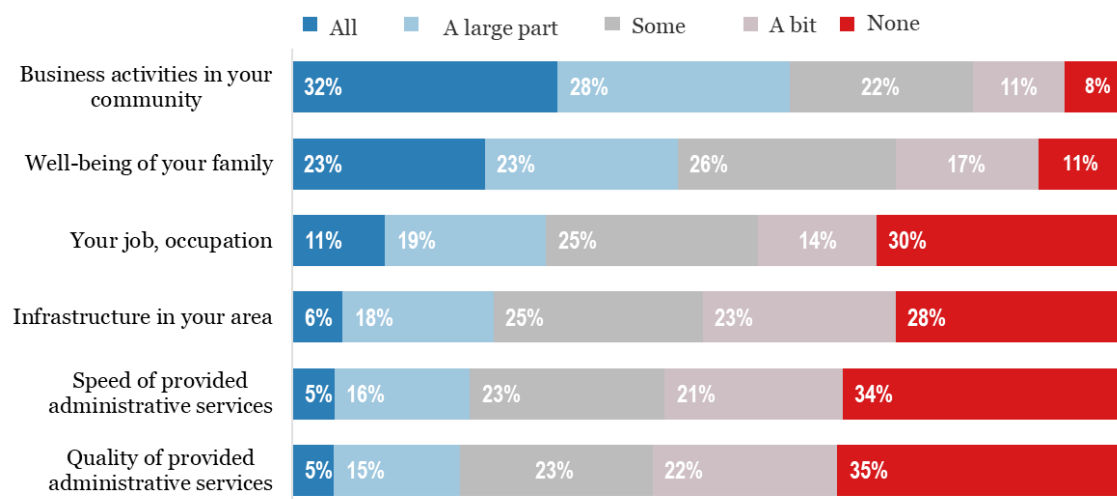
QE-1. Now would like you to think of the cross-border trade and its impact on the livelihood here. How much of the following depends on the cross-border trade? Would you say that it's all of it, a large part of it, some of it, a bit of it, or none of it? **Spin Boldak (n=820)**



Respondents in Muhmand Dara indicated that *business activities in the community* and *the well-being of family* are most dependent on cross-border trade.

QE-1. Now would like you to think of the cross-border trade and its impact on the livelihood here. How much of the following depends on the cross-border trade? Would you say that it's all of it, a large part of it, some of it, a bit of it, or none of it?

Muhmand Dara (n=705)



POPULATIONS MOST DEPENDENT ON THE BORDER

While many border communities are dependent on the border for their livelihoods, there are some parties that benefit from the border more than others. When asked who benefits most from the border, 23 of the 26 KII participants mentioned traders/businessmen. Traders/businessmen were most frequently mentioned because of the profit that they make by engaging in cross-border trade.

“People living in and around the border benefit most, they are the ones who work and have business here. Traders and businessman also get max benefit because they sell goods and import goods from other side.”

- [P9, 38 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Human Resource Manager of Customs, Pashtun (Shinwari), Ministry of Finance, Shinwar, Nangarhar]

“In my opinion businessmen and traders benefit most from the border, because they import and export goods to Pakistan and from Pakistan to Afghanistan. A lot of people are involved in this trade and benefit from it on a regular basis.”

- [P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]

“Residents of the border region benefit most from the border. They conduct cross-border trade with the help of people that live in border communities on the Pakistani side of the border because they have family ties with each other and it has positive impacts on their economy.”

- [P7, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Executive Manager, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Rodat, Nangarhar]

Participants in the KIIs indicated that border locals are most harmed by the presence of the border. 10 of the 26 respondents indicated that the same people who benefit most from the border are most harmed by it because of the fragility of their dependence on the border. Traders and other individuals who depend on the border for their livelihood are also vulnerable to the recurrent disruptions at the border, particularly insecurity and border closure that may prevent them from engaging in their cross-border livelihood

strategies. Nine of the 26 respondents indicated that ordinary people or locals were most harmed by the border. Five respondents mentioned that poor and needy people living along the border are most harmed because they are exploited and forced into smuggling due to their poverty. Two respondents mentioned that people who live closest to the border are harmed the most because they are vulnerable to clashes and conflict that unfolds at the border.

“The ordinary people who are daily wage labors are mostly harmed. They face loss when there is no work for them. They start committing robberies when the border is closed and there’s no work for them. Also, when the border is closed, all of the people on both sides of the border region are harmed.”

- [P30, 57 years old, Male, Illiterate, Businessman, Pashtun, Self-employed, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

“Even children are forced into smuggling due to their poverty. On the Afghan side of the border, no one interferes with their business but on the Pakistani side, they are “they are beaten, mistreated and persecuted very much”

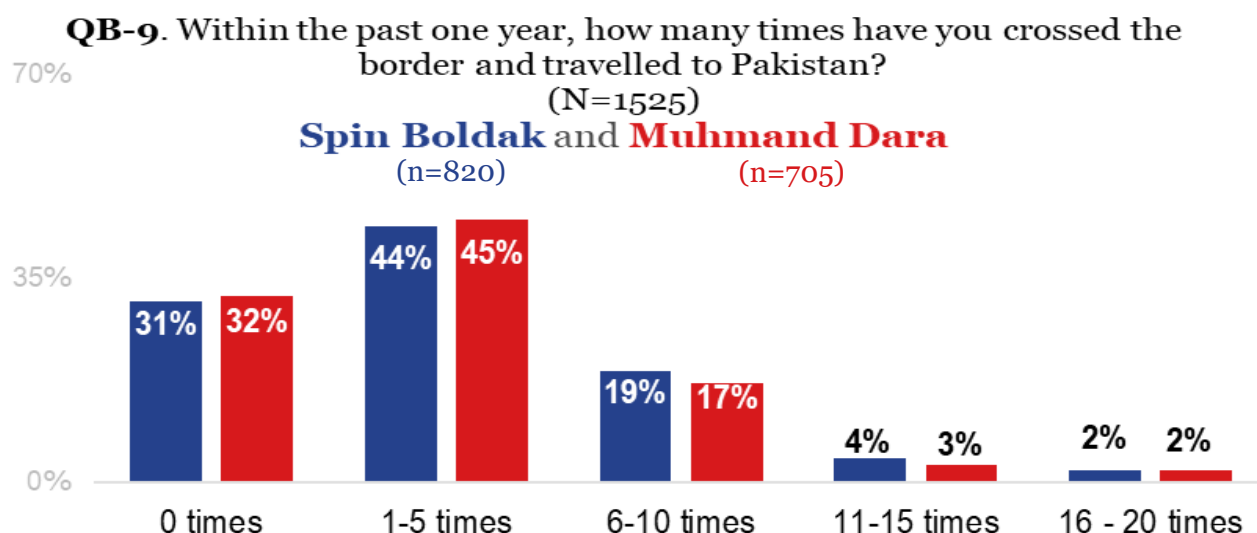
- [P14, 42 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Mayor of Torkham, Pashtun, IDLG, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“People who are located near to security points, police or army shells they are get most harm, because during army clashes and fights they also target villages and people houses. Because there are some villages and houses which are located in zero point of the border so sometimes it is very difficult to recognize that are they belongs to Afghanistan or Pakistan.”

- [P34, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Deputy Director of Border and Tribes, Pashtun, Ministry of Borders and Tribes, Kandahar, Kandahar]

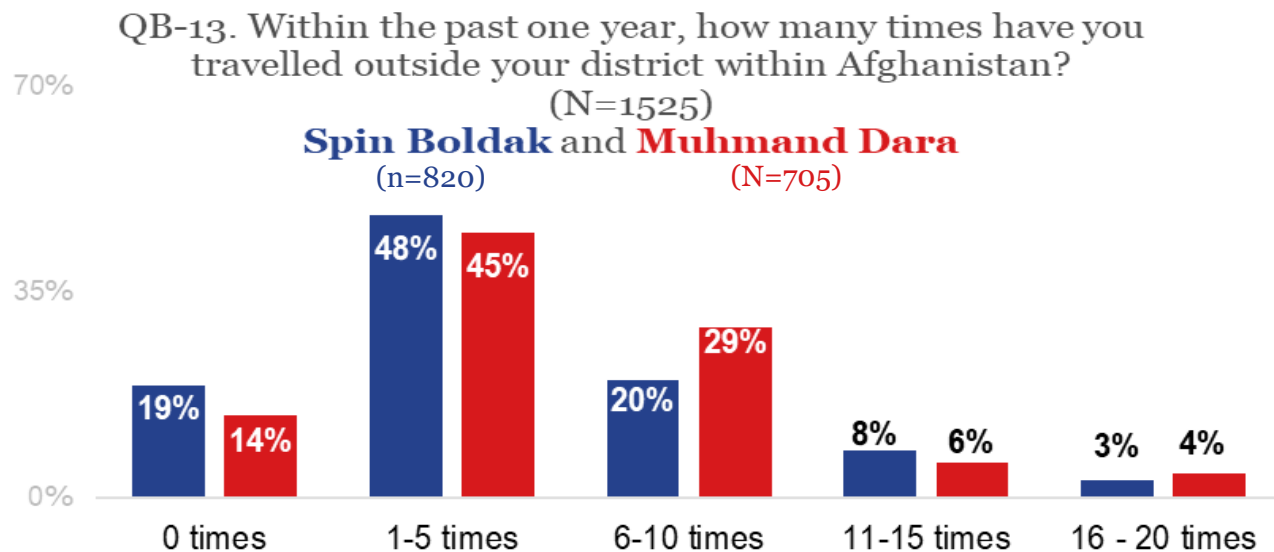
MOBILITY AND CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL

Mobility and cross-border travel are critical to the livelihood and well-being of border communities. Many individuals in border communities travel across the border regularly to engage in trade, visit relatives, or receive medical treatment. There are many factors that impact the ability of individuals in borderland community to cross the border including insecurity and political tension with Pakistan. Results from the quantitative survey indicate that respondents from both Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara travel across the border at similar rates. An average of two of these crossings into Pakistan were for business purposes (n=925). An average of four of these crossings were for personal reasons (n=925). These relatively low levels of border crossing can be explained by the impact of the political and security situation outlined in the next section.



*Less than 2% travelled more than 20 times in either district.

As a point of comparison, More respondents in border communities travel within Afghanistan but outside their district than across the border to Pakistan. This is because political tension, insecurity, and other disruptions at the border do not prevent them from traveling within Afghanistan. Visa and passport requirements resulting from political tension with Pakistan may facilitate higher rates of travel within Afghanistan, since no documents are required for internal travel within the country. An average of two of these trips outside their district within Afghanistan were for business purposes (n=1204). An average of five of these trips were for business reasons (n=1204).



*Less than 3% travelled more than 20 times in either district.

IMPACT OF POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION ON ABILITY OF PEOPLE TO CROSS THE BORDER

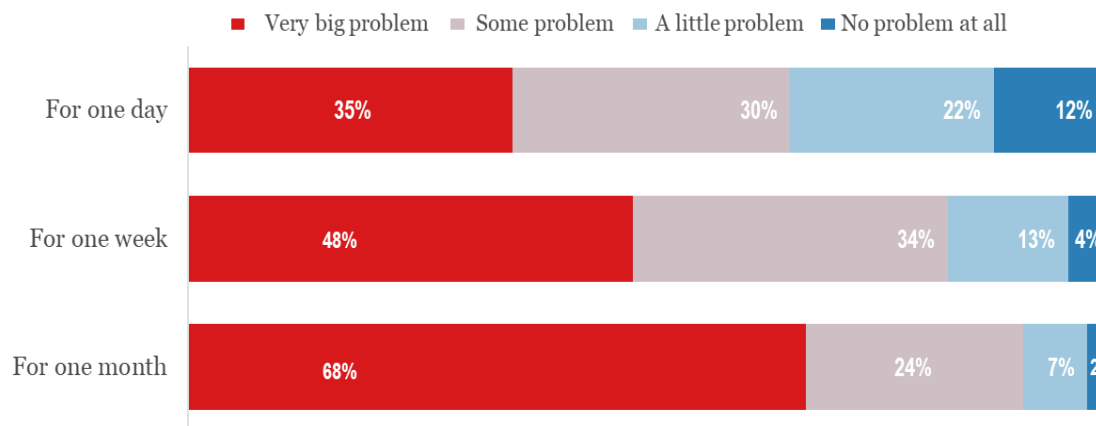
Border communities operate in a conflict-affected context, where the protracted nature of conflict has significantly contributed to the evolution of alternative livelihood strategies. The livelihood strategies of border communities remain vulnerable to shocks and stresses caused by economic and political factors. The disruptions are also linked to pre-existing conflict dynamics such as the region's political relationship with Pakistan, terrorist activity in the region, crime, etc. Results from both the quantitative survey respondents and KII participants indicated that both groups are impacted by political and security issues that often prevent border crossing.

Survey results show that while much of the general population may be unaware of the intricacies of the political situation between the two countries, locals nevertheless feel the impact of strained relations. Only 25% of respondents indicate that they have been prevented from crossing the border due to closure of the border by Pakistani or Afghan government officials. This low level of crossing can be explained by the high cost of visa and passport requirements that have been introduced at the border as the result of strained relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Results indicate that the general population has less access to border crossing than KII participants. Nevertheless, respondents who have been prevented from traveling to Pakistan were asked to identify the impacts of the border closure (n = 376, total of two mentions). 56% did not know the impact of border closure on their intended visit while another 20% identified increased

unemployment an impact of border closure. 17% indicated that a lack of food was an impact of border closure on their intended visit.

Beyond these impacts, the majority of 1525 quantitative survey respondents indicated that border closure for any period, spanning from a day to a month would be a problem.

QE-11. How big problem, if any, for your community would be if the official border crossing point is closed for some reason for one day? Would it be a very big problem, some problem, a little problem, or no problem at all? And what if the official border crossing point is closed for...? (N=1525)



Respondents from both Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara were able to identify alternatives for people to travel to Pakistan. The disaggregate responses provided by respondents of the quantitative survey are outlined in the table below. Most of the locations referenced refer to smaller crossings or villages along the border:

If the official border is closed, what are the alternatives for people in this area to travel to Pakistan? (n=1525)			
	Muhmand Dara (n= 705)	Spin Boldak (n=820)	TOTAL
<i>Shelman</i>	12.2%	0.2%	5.8%
<i>Gandab</i>	5.1%	0.2%	2.5%
<i>Sasobi</i>	16.7%	0.1%	7.8%
<i>Kichro</i>	3.5%	0.9%	2.1%
<i>Shamshad</i>	12.8%	0%	5.9%
<i>Goroko</i>	9.2%	0.1%	4.3%
<i>Saida</i>	0.9%	0%	0.4%
<i>Kulman</i>	0%	0.1%	0.1%
<i>Ghowarakai</i>	5.1%	0.1%	2.4%
<i>Door baba</i>	3.8%	0%	1.8%
<i>Daka</i>	5.2%	0.1%	2.5%
<i>Teera</i>	7.0%	0%	3.2%
<i>Soofi Kandaw</i>	1.3%	0%	0.6%
<i>Kokra</i>	2.1%	0%	1.0%
<i>None</i>	1.8%	1.0%	1.4%
<i>Momand Gandab</i>	3.1%	0%	1.4%
<i>Landi kootal</i>	0.3%	0%	0.1%
<i>Chaparhar</i>	0.1%	0%	0.1%
<i>Khaibar</i>	0.3%	0%	0.1%
<i>Nazar Posta</i>	0%	26.5%	14.2%
<i>Lokhman Posta</i>	0%	23.3%	12.5%
<i>Kohi</i>	0%	0.9%	0.5%
<i>By air</i>	0%	2.8%	1.5%
<i>Toobi</i>	0%	7.1%	3.8%
<i>Nangarhar</i>	0%	0.4%	0.2%
<i>Torkham</i>	0%	7.7%	4.1%
<i>Zyarat</i>	0%	0.5%	0.3%
<i>Simanahar</i>	0%	0.2%	0.1%
<i>Matakzo Kariz</i>	0%	0.2%	0.1%
<i>Kandahar</i>	0%	0.1%	0.1%
<i>Zor kalai</i>	0%	0.4%	0.2%
<i>Shinkai</i>	0%	0.1%	0.1%
<i>Refused (vol.)</i>	0.1%	3.4%	1.9%
<i>Don't know (vol.)</i>	9.2%	23.5%	16.9%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Nineteen of the 26 KII participants indicated that poor political conditions between Afghanistan and Pakistan can harm residents of border communities on either side of the border and prevent border crossing. P15, a Tribal Elder from Muhmand Dara indicated the political and security situation impacts every aspect of border crossing. He asserted that good security and a positive relationship with Pakistan would rectify all the issues that locals currently face when crossing the border. One of the major hindrances to border crossing raised by KII participants is the requirement of passports and visas to cross the border legally.

Other issues also mentioned include mistreatment by Pakistani authorities and the construction of a barbed wire fence along the border that prevents informal crossing. Moreover, these political and security conditions shape the economic patterns and livelihood strategies of the local population.

The responses listed below detail the impact of the political and security situation on the region. KII participants also noted the factors contributing to the fragility of livelihoods and market systems in the region, which are closely related to the ability of individuals to cross the border.

“The political and security situation in the border region creates a lot of difficulties for people who cross the border, including those who take their patients to Pakistan for medical treatment. It also prevents people in the border communities from conducting cross-border trade and smuggling, which are the main sources of their income. It has negative impacts on the economy and national interests of both countries. When there is fighting or political tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the border is closed and no one is allowed to cross it. It harms not only people in the border region, but all Afghans”

- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“Recent political tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan has increased the number of their challenges and problems. Now Afghan people do not want to go to Pakistan because they are mistreated and beaten by Pakistani Militia and Police. They take money from them and deport them back to Afghanistan.”

- [P16, 40 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Security Manager, Pashtun, National Directorate of Security, Alingar, Laghman]

“The political and security situation has very negative impacts on the ability of people to cross the border, because they are required to have passports and visas. Now it takes 8 or 10 hours to take patients to Pakistan for treatment through illegal ways and crossings along the border. Besides, political and security situation have paralyzed the cross-border trade.”

- [P18, 50 years old, Male, Illiterate, Torkham tribal leader, Pashtun, N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

Naturally, when somewhere security is not maintained no one can feel calm and secure. The political situation is also not good in the border region due to which no one can cross the border without passport and visa. In the past, people living in the border communities on the both side of Durand Line were not required to have passports and visas in order to cross the border.

- [P14, 42 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Mayor of Torkham, Pashtun, IDLG, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

Respondents in the KII interviews voiced their concerns about political tension with Pakistan, as well as their disdain for Pakistani authorities at the border. Respondents indicated that many Afghans traveling across the border are met with force by Pakistani police and militia. Afghans who engage in smuggling are particularly vulnerable to persecution and mistreatment by Pakistan authorities. P23, a lecturer at Kandahar

University, indicated that Afghans have become discouraged from crossing the border because of political tension that fuels intense discrimination, beatings, and humiliation by Pakistani police at the border.

“Due to security threats and political tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan, traders, businessmen and other wealthy individuals prefer to import goods and commodities from the Chabahar Border [with Iran] instead of Pakistan, where their lives are in danger. I would like to give another example in this regard: most Afghans take their patients to India for treatment though it requires more money compared to taking them to Pakistan, because they do not want to be mistreated, humiliated and beaten by the Pakistani Police, Militia and Army.”

- *[P23, 28 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University Lecturer, Pashtun, Kandahar University, Kandahar, Kandahar]*

“Pakistani Police, Militia and Army mistreat and persecute them in order to force them to stop cross-border trade and smuggling because they want to deprive Afghans of access to all sources of livelihoods and income.”

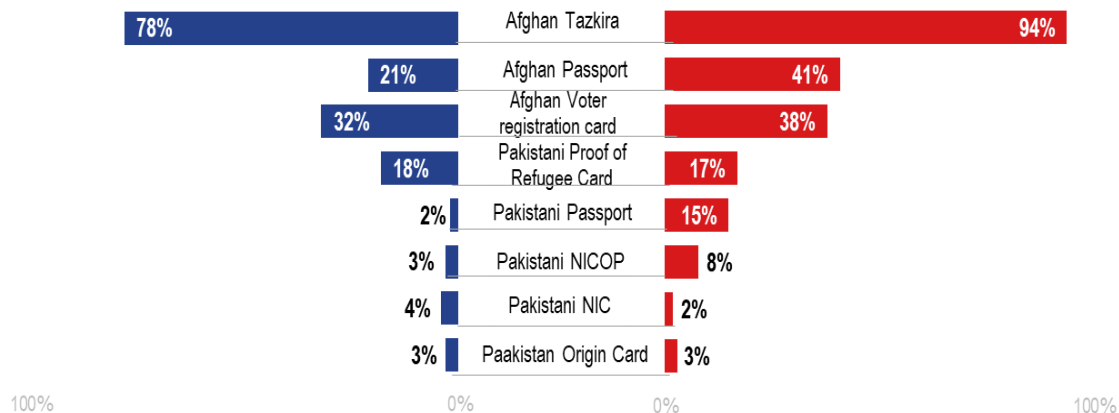
- *[P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

RESTRICTIONS TO BORDER CROSSING

A major impact of political tension and insecurity in the border region are restrictions on border crossing. Recent crackdowns by the Pakistani government on informal border crossing has posed a significant economic challenge to individuals in the border region. According to respondents, Pakistani officials have constructed a barbed wire fence that prevents individuals from crossing the border informally. In addition to this, recent restrictions imposed by the Pakistani and Afghan government requires that individuals' possess a passport or visa in order to cross the border. Many individuals indicated that the process for obtaining a passport or visa can be very costly, which precludes many border residents from crossing. These requirements make it difficult for locals to cross

the border and therefore hinders their livelihood and ability to engage in cross-border trade. Results from the quantitative survey indicate that less than half of respondents from Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara have an Afghan passport. This indicates that less than half of the population in Spin Boldak is able to cross the border formally and engage in the transborder livelihood strategies that are essential to the border region.

D-12. Do you have the following Afghan ID documents, valid at present?
(N=1525)



"We do not have any source of income. In the past when the Torkham Gate was open to all people without passports as well as visas and there was not barbed wire fence along the border people in this area were busy to conduct cross-border trade and smuggling. Now, in order to cross the border people should have passports and visas which are very difficult to get because it takes a lot of time and money. These restrictions and procedures have affected our trade and business very much."

- [P18, 50 years old, Male, Illiterate, Torkham tribal leader, Pashtun, N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

"Recent restrictions on crossing the border have had negative impacts on the economy of the people in the area because without passports and visas businessmen, traders and residents of border communities cannot cross the border. People have a lot of economic problems. They do not have access to employment opportunities. Even children work

hard to help their families to earn their livelihood and meet their basic needs and requirements. Besides, they do not have access to schools, electricity, clean drinking water as well as clinics, roads and other opportunities and services. Due to lack of schools many Afghan children cross the border to attend them on the other side of the border.”

- *[P14, 42 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Mayor of Torkham, Pashtun, IDLG, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

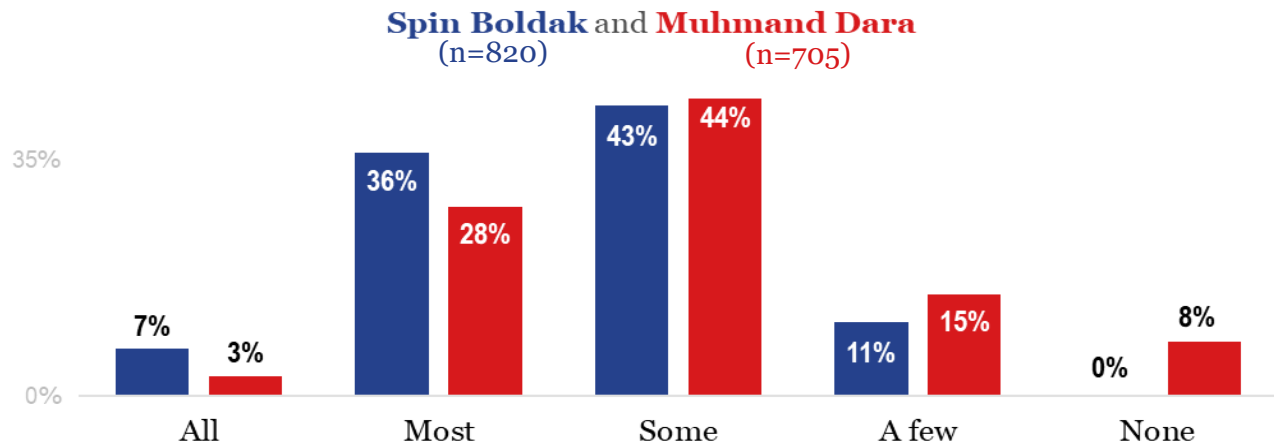
“Construction of barbed wire fence along the border is the biggest challenge people face in tribal region, because it has very negative impacts on cross-border trade and smuggling which is the main source of their income. It has increased the number of problems in tribal region.”

- *[P16, 40 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Security Manager, Pashtun, National Directorate of Security, Alingar, Laghman]*

INFORMAL VS. FORMAL BORDER CROSSING

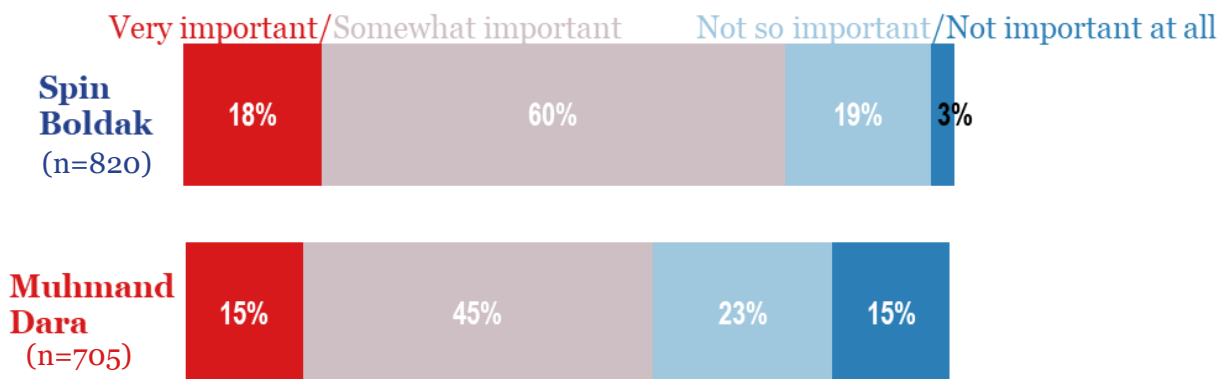
Border crossing can be made formally at official border crossings or informally at unregistered areas along the border. Respondents from the quantitative survey indicated that on an average day, some or most of all border crossings are informal (made not at the official crossing point). Respondents in Spin Boldak appear to be more likely than those in Muhmand Dara to believe that “all” or “most” border crossings on an average day are informal.

QE-8. On an average day, of all border crossings in your area, how many of them, in your opinion, would be informal, made not at the official crossing point but elsewhere along the border? Would you say they would be ...
(N=1525)



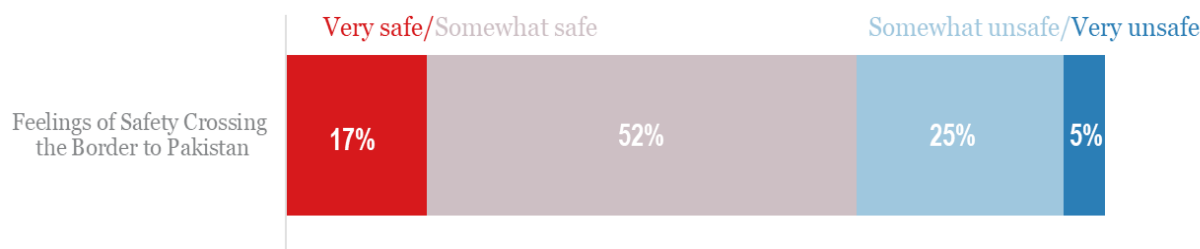
Most quantitative survey respondents considered informal border crossings to be very important or somewhat important to the livelihood of their community.

QE-10. And irrespective of how many they are, how important, in your opinion, are the informal border crossings for the livelihood of your community?
(N=1525)



The majority of respondents (69%) would feel very safe or somewhat safe if they had to cross the border.

QE-6. If you had to cross the border, how safe would you feel doing so?
Very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe? (N=1525)



KII participants offered differing opinions on the likelihood of formal and informal border crossing. Six respondents indicated that informal border crossings are more likely than crossing at the official border because it is less expensive and does not require a passport. *“Since people in the border communities are poor and have economic problems, they often make informal and unregistered crossings along the border. They do so because it is very difficult to get passports. Each person applying for passport must pay 6000 or 7000 AFS to the government bank. Many people travel to Pakistan for work to earn their livelihood and they do not have money to be paid to government for getting passports. Besides, now a person must pay 18,000 or 20,000 RS in order to receive Pakistani visa. Due to aforesaid causes and reasons people in border communities prefer to cross the border illegally.”*

- [P10, 33 years old, Male, 16 years of education, University Professor, Pashtun, Institute of Vocational Training, Khuganee, Nangarhar]

“All people are using informal crossing points in the border. Informal crossing is easy for people, if they let them to cross the formal crossing point without any passport they will use formal points, but they want passport, so people don’t use formal points.”

- [P31, 40 years old, Male, Illiterate, Tribal Leader, Pashtun (Kakozai), N/A, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

Other respondents indicated that it has become increasingly difficult for people to cross the border illegally because of the construction of the barbed wire fence and other security measures taken by Pakistani border officials. These 13 participants contended that few people cross illegally anymore because of the heightened risks associated with informal crossing.*“In the past it was very easy for people to cross the border using the unofficial crossing, but for the past 8 months it has become very difficult for people cross-border illegally. If people chose the legal point to cross the border it will be less complicated and will not have any consequences.”*

- [P9, 38 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Human Resource Manager of Customs, Pashtun (Shinwari), Ministry of Finance, Shinwar, Nangarhar]

“Now no one is able to cross the border illegally. All Afghans regardless of their ethnic group, tribe, language, age, gender, or religious sect must have passports and visas in order to cross the border formally. However, sometimes residents of border communities are compelled to take their patients to Pakistan for treatment through illegal ways or passes along the border, but it happens very rarely.”

- [P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

“Now, it is very difficult for everyone to cross the border informally and travel to aforesaid country via illegal ways and passes due to barbed wire fence and security checkpoints along the Durand Line. Now people cross the border formally by showing passports and visas to the concerned authorities and officials at Torkham Gate. However, those of individuals that are not able to get passports and visas make every effort to pass the border informally in case of need.”

- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

Two respondents indicated that people with legal documents cross the border formally, but if they do not have the necessary legal documents they cross informally.

“I think as they are living in the border region, they are aware of different ways of crossing than other people. If they have legal documents and visa, they will pass the formal border; otherwise, they will cross from informal border.”

- [P33, 45 Years Old, Male, 16 years of education, Member of Provincial Council, Pashaye, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

Other KII responses offered insight into other dynamics and disruptions of border crossing. P26, a University professor at Gharjistan University in Kabul indicated that people cross the border illegally because they do not recognize the Durand line as an official border and do not like to get passports and visas. In another case, P32 a Member of Parliament, indicated that people in Weash and Chaman make unofficial border crossings while people in Torkham make official border crossings with a passport and visa. P23, a University lecturer at Kandahar University stated that crossing formally or informally produces the same results, *“in both cases they are threatened, mistreated and beaten; therefore they are not willing to travel to Pakistan if they are not compelled by circumstances.”* These responses indicate that there are a great deal of nuances that impact the decisions of border area locals to cross the border formally or informally.

THREATS TO LIVELIHOOD

The most frequently mentioned threats to livelihood mentioned by KII participants are insecurity, border closure, and political tension with Pakistan. Participants also mentioned the barbed wire fence along the border that seeks to prevent smuggling and illegal border crossing. All of the main threats mentioned by participants have a common impact on the community as they hinder the livelihood strategies of border area locals. These threats are particularly damaging because they prevent trade and mobility along the border. P25, a Border Police Chief, explained that security concerns prevent people from conducting trade, meeting their relatives, or taking their patients for treatment. Traders often face a loss when the border is closed because imported and exported goods often expire when the border closes unexpectedly due to political tension or other relevant issues. Given that border communities are heavily dependent on the border, border closure and insecurity ultimately poses a major threat to their livelihoods.

“Insecurity and prevention of illegal crossing the border are the main threats to the livelihood of people in the border region.”

- [P16, 40 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Security Manager, Pashtun, National Directorate of Security, Alingar, Laghman]

“Insecurity and political tension between the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan are the main threats to our livelihoods. Security situation is not good in the area because there are always shelling and Pakistan launches rockets and missiles to our territory.”

- [P18, 50 years old, Male, Illiterate, Torkham tribal leader, Pashtun, N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“In my opinion the main threat to the livelihood of people in the border region is construction of barbed wire fence along the border, because it prevents them from trade and smuggling illegal goods and items. Besides, Pakistan army has built barbed wire fence on the territory of Afghanistan. It has very negative impacts on people's businesses and trade.”

- [P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]

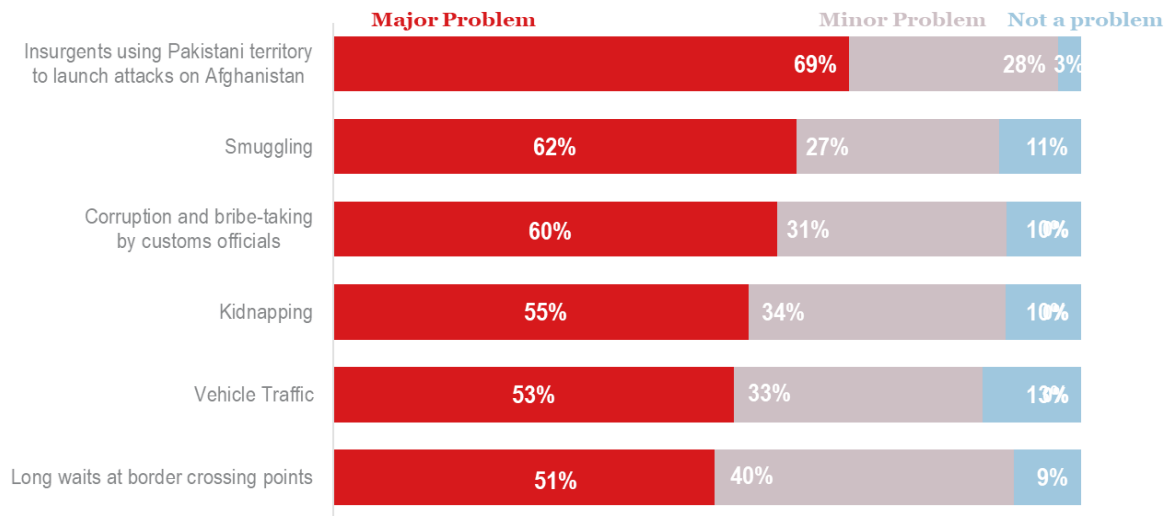
“The biggest challenge is closing of the border due to various reasons. It affects, as I told you before, businessmen, traders, smugglers and ordinary residents of border communities on the both sides of the border. Besides, there are security problems in the area.

- [P24, 31 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Private business, Pashtun, Self-employed, Kandahar, Kandahar]

BORDER CLOSURE

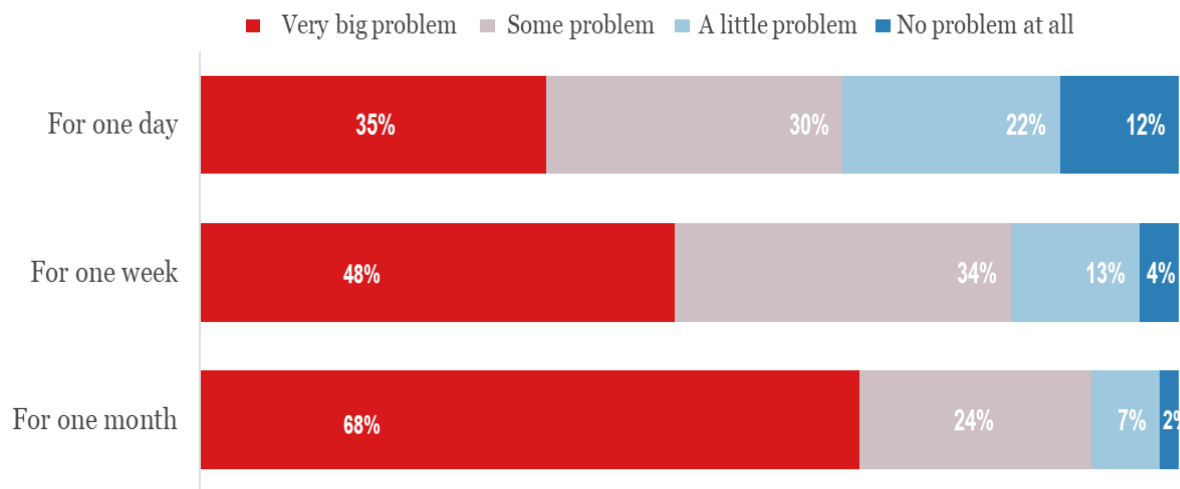
Respondents in the quantitative survey identified disruptions at the border which ultimately threatens the livelihoods of border communities. More than half of respondents indicated that major problems that arise at the border include, insurgents using Pakistani territory to launch attacks on Afghanistan, smuggling, corruption and bribe-taking by customs officials, kidnapping, vehicle traffic, and long waits at border crossing points. These issues prevent locals from traveling across the border and can even lead to border closure.

QE-7. Thinking about some problems that might arise related to the border, how much of a problem do you think each of the following things are: a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?
(N=1525)



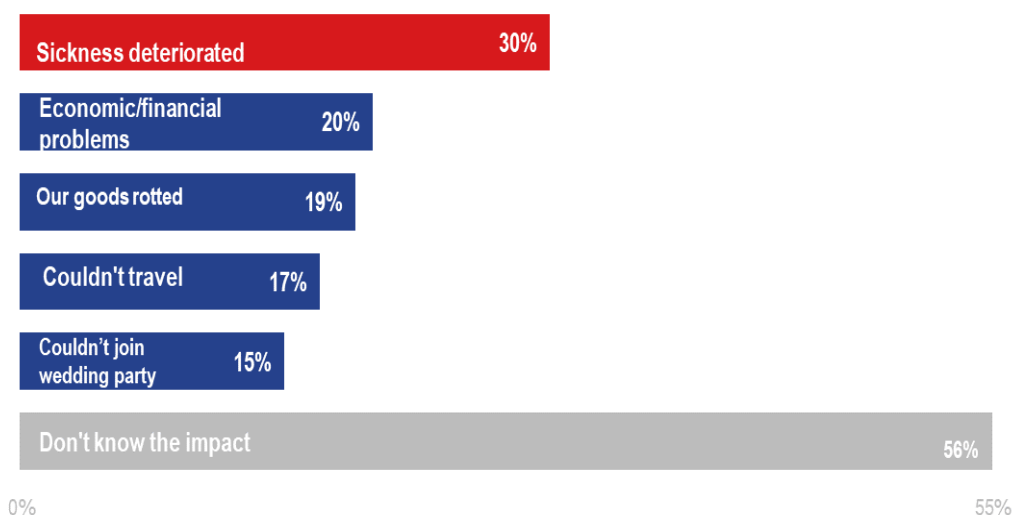
The majority of respondents in the quantitative survey also indicated that it would be a *very big problem* or *some problem* if the border was closed for any suggested period of time.

QE-11. How big problem, if any, for your community would be if the official border crossing point is closed for some reason for one day? Would it be a very big problem, some problem, a little problem, or no problem at all?
And what if the official border crossing point is closed for...? (N=1525)



The perception of damage from of border closure are less pronounced in the quantitative survey than in the KIIs. The majority of respondents in the quantitative survey (74%) have not been prevented from traveling to Pakistan due to border closure by Pakistani or Afghan authorities. Those respondents who had been prevented from traveling to Pakistan identified the following impacts of the border closure:¹⁹

QB-11B: (If code 1, ‘yes’ at QB-11A) What were the main impacts of the border closure on your intended visit? (Total of two responses)
(N=376)



KII interviews allowed for further insight into the impacts of border closure on borderland communities:

“When the border is closed, it is a threat and a big problem for people. Sometimes it is closed for 10, 20 or 40 days which is a big threat for us. In the past while the big border was closed, there were other ways people could cross it, such as Dera Pacha, Shaman and Janbora ways, but now barbed wire is a big problem for us.”

- [P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

¹⁹ Total of two mentions

“The main threats are security and closure of the border. When the security gets worse and the border is closed, goods like fresh fruit a trader wants to export get spoiled and therefore a trader faces loss. Also, traders and other people of the border areas face loss when the political situation between two countries (Pakistan and Afghanistan) gets worse. Due to bad political situations, the border gets closed and the goods of the traders are not exported, and their business goes down. Also, those who work in the currency exchange business face a lot of loss, especially when currency goes up and down due to bad political conditions in the country. In addition, there are robberies and kidnapping in border areas which also impact their economy.”

- [P32, 43 years old, Female, 16 years of education, Member of Parliament, Pashtun, Member of Parliament, Karte-se, Kabul]

“Even though there are other borders and ports opened now which has reduced the problem of inflation, border closure still has an impact over the prices of goods. But still, the closure of border can negatively impact local economy. In past, there were no other ports and when the border was supposed to get closed, the prices of goods would go much higher and it could greatly impact the economy of the people. Now, this problem has certainly reduced because other ports are opened and trade with other countries is increased.”

- [P13, 54 years old, Male, 12 years of education, District Governor, Pashaye, IDLG, Dar-e-Noor, Nangarhar]

“When border is closed, it has very negative impacts on businessmen and traders because their goods and products become spoiled and lose their value in market. Thus, the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan should resolve their political differences peacefully because they have negative impacts on border communities and their traditional business and trade.”

- [P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]

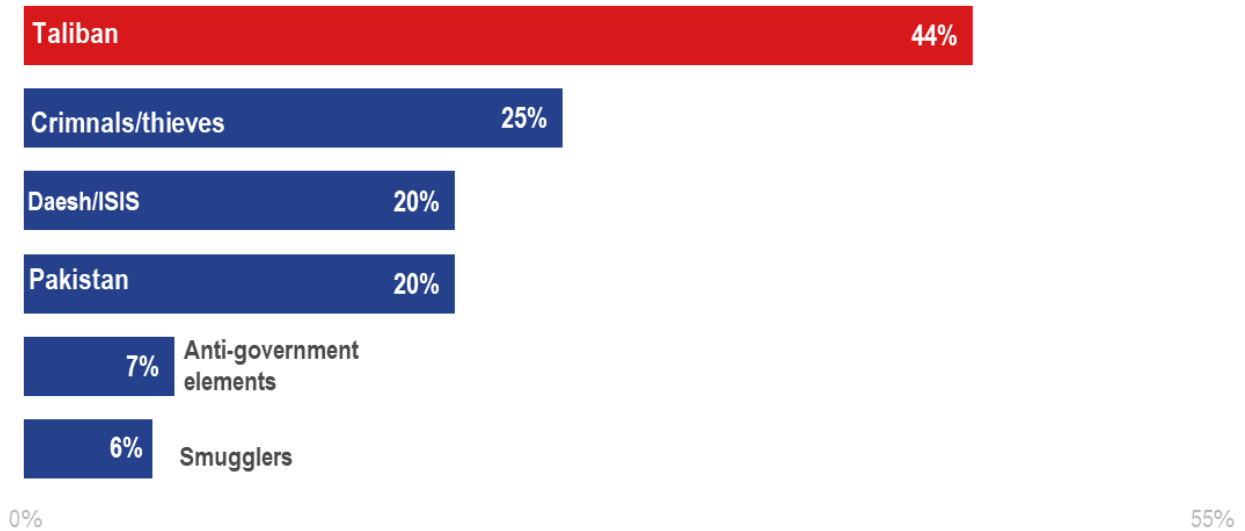
“Once, the Torkham border was closed for 40 days and it caused people in tribal communities to suffer financial losses because all their shops, trade, commerce and businesses were paralyzed and nonoperational.”

- [P10, 33 years old, Male, 16 years of education, University Professor, Pashtun, Institute of Vocational Training, Khuganee, Nangarhar]

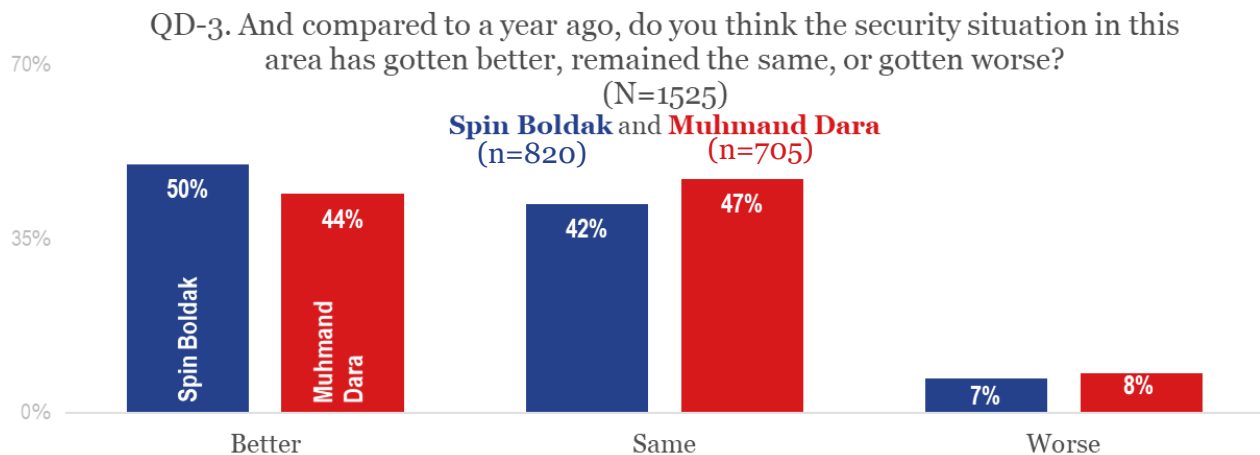
INSECURITY

Insecurity is prevalent throughout much of Afghanistan, but can be especially harmful to the livelihoods of those living in the border region who can no longer travel across the border for their most basic needs (i.e. food, work, trade, school). Quantitative survey respondents identified the greatest threats to security in border settlements. The plurality believe that the Taliban (44%) poses the greatest threat to security. This is similar to the national results from the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People, in which respondents most frequently named the Taliban as the greatest local security threat (68%).

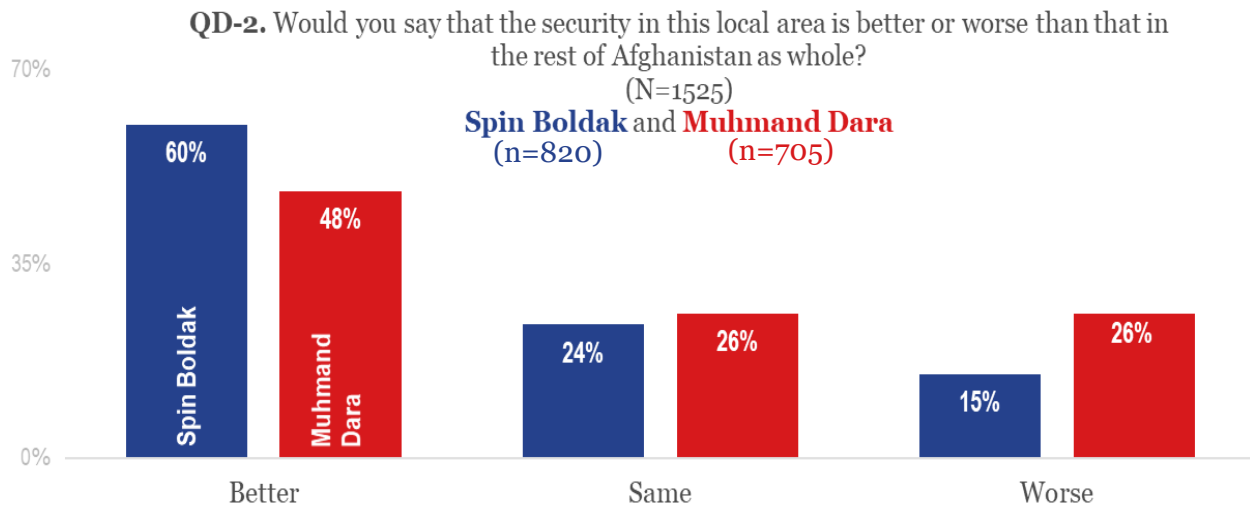
QD-6. And who do you think poses the greatest threat to the security of this area?
(Total of two mentions; N=1525)



Respondents in the quantitative surveys were relatively split about the progress of the local security situation compared to a year ago. In both Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara, respondents were about even split between believing that the security situation has gotten better and believing that it has stayed about the *same*.

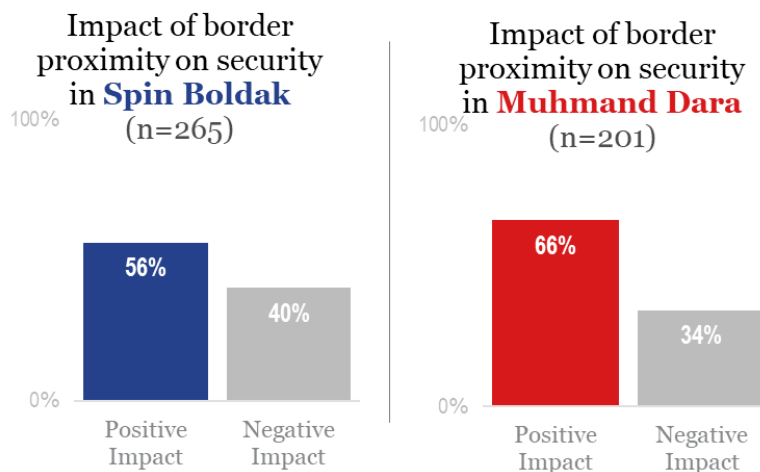


In regard to local security compared to the rest of Afghanistan, the majority of respondents in Spin Boldak believe that security in the local area is better than security in Afghanistan as a whole. The plurality of respondents in Muhmand Dara consider security in their area to be better than security in Afghanistan as a whole.



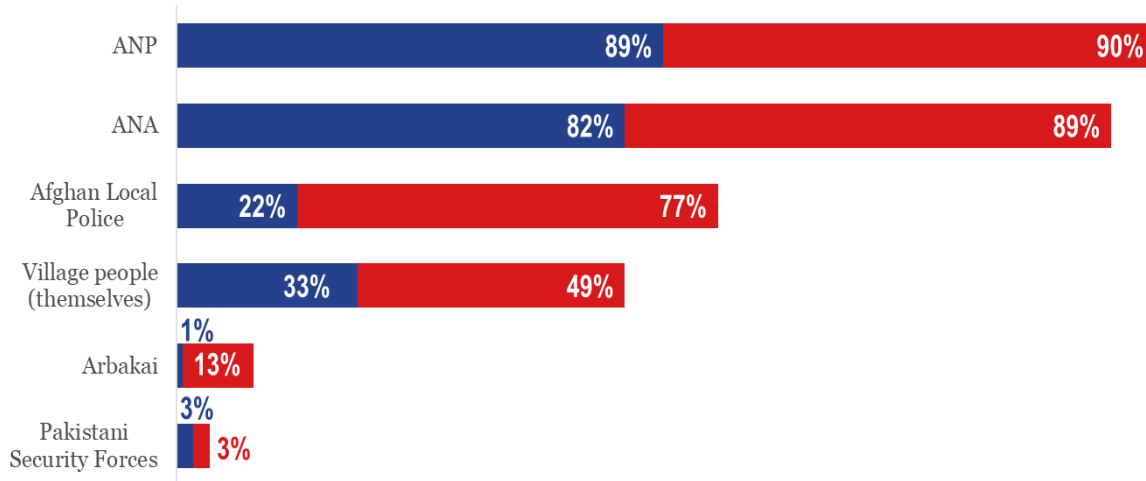
67% of respondents believe that their proximity to the border does not have any impact on the security of their community. Of respondents who believe that border proximity does have an impact on security (n=466), the majority indicate that proximity to the border has a positive impact on the security of their community.

QD-8. (if Yes in QD-7) Thinking of the past one year, would you say that proximity to the border has had a positive impact or has had a negative impact on the security of your community?



Among quantitative survey respondents, the ANP and ANA are most often mentioned as providers of security in both districts. This is similar to responses from the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People, in which ANP (69%) and ANA (46%) were identified as the primary providers of security. The Afghan Local police and Arbakai seem to be more prevalent in Muhmand Dara than in Spin Boldak.

QD-4. Do the following groups provide security in your village or community?
Spin Boldak (n=820) and Muhmand Dara (n=705)



KII responses allow for the further understanding of the impacts of these security threats in border regions.

“First of all security challenges are the main threats to their livelihoods because when security is not maintained and there is fighting in the region no one will be able to conduct their economic activities with confidence. Besides, political tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan has very negative impacts on the cross-border economic trade which is the main source of their income.”

- [P6, 47 years old, Male, 18 years of education, Hazara, University professor, Gharjistan University, 3rd district/Kabul city, Kabul]

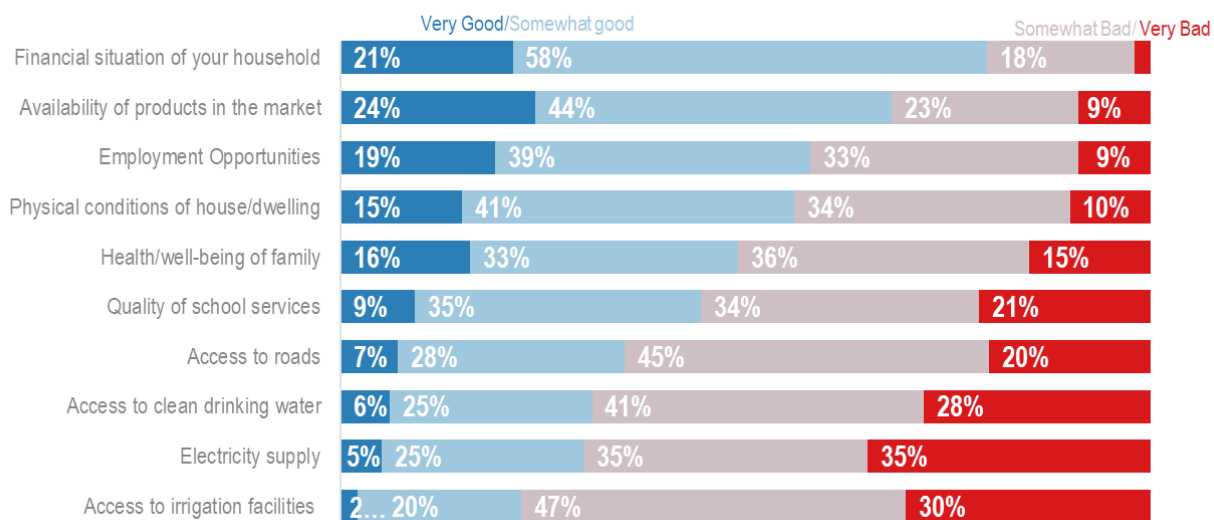
“The main threat to the livelihoods of people in the border region is lack of security because when security is not maintained somewhere businessmen, traders and other rich individuals do not make investment or do not invest money there. Security is not maintained in all border communities in the tribal region and it has negative impacts on cross-border economic trade and business.”

- [P19, 65 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Senior advisor of Chambers of Commerce, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Kandahar, Kandahar]

LIVING CONDITIONS AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Quantitative survey respondents were asked about their living conditions within their border settlement. Respondents from Spin Boldak identified electricity supply, access to irrigation facilities, and access to clean drinking water as primary areas of concern. Their perceptions of different local livelihood indicators are illustrated in the graph below.

QC-6. How would rate the situation for your household at present regarding the following?
Would you say that it is very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad?
Spin Boldak (n=820)

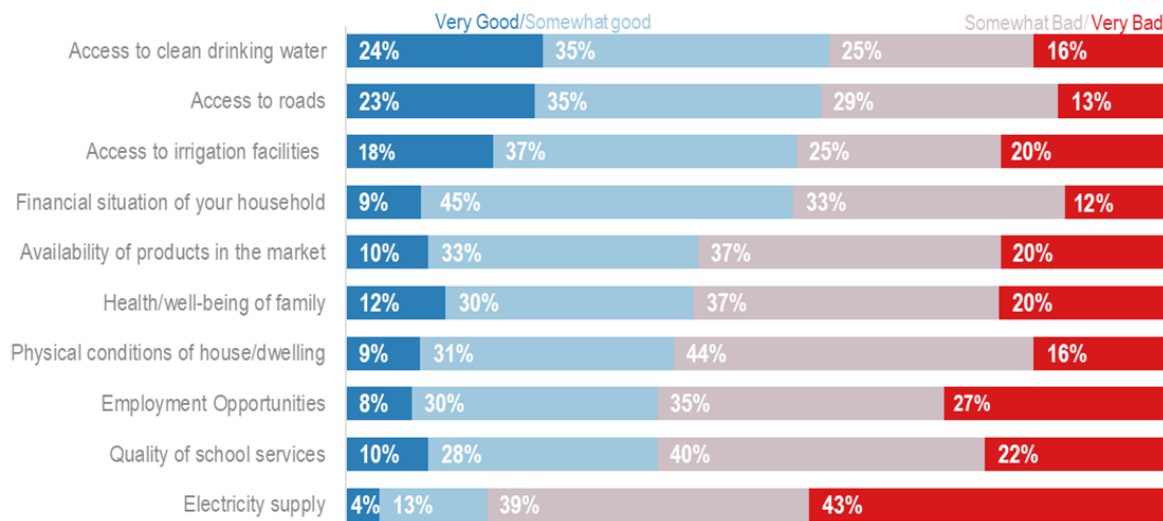


Unlike Spin Boldak, respondents in Muhmand Dara indicated that access to water and irrigation facilities is *very good* or *somewhat good* in their area. Respondents in Muhmand Dara were primarily concerned with lacking employment opportunities,

quality of school services, and electricity supply. The disaggregate analysis of the two regions offers insight into how the two border regions differ in their living conditions and economic challenges.

QC-6. How would rate the situation for your household at present regarding the following? Would you say that it is very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad?

Muhmand Dara (n=705)



The primary economic challenges identified by KII participants are similar to those reported in the quantitative survey: a lack of access to basic resources including but not limited to: electricity, drinking water, clinics, hospitals, roads, schools, employment (which are seen as being available to those who live in cities, urban areas, and provincial centers). There is a consensus among most KII participants that the border region of Afghanistan is often neglected by the government. The neglect is exacerbated by insecurity and border closure which adversely impacts the trade and livelihood activities that border communities engage in.

“One of the problems people in this area face is lack of the services such as telecommunication, clinics, schools, transport, justice etc. Though the government can't provide enough services even cities, border people don't have them at all.”

- [P5, 26 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University professor, Hazara, Alama University, Kabul]

“People face different types of challenges in the area. As I told you before, they do not have access to electricity, drinking water, roads, as well as to homes or shelter. Besides, they do not have access to clinics, hospitals and employment opportunities. The government should address their challenges and provide them with access to all aforesaid opportunities, services and facilities. It will encourage those residents of the border communities that still live as refugees in Chaman, Quetta and other areas on the other side of the border to return to their places of origin and take active participation in the protection and reconstruction of their country.”

- *[P19, 65 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Senior advisor of Chambers of Commerce, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Kandahar, Kandahar]*

“You know that economic challenges are in all parts of Afghanistan. But people in this area are much more suffered from economic challenges, because there are suffering from drought and there is no water for their farmlands and the water level has gone down. So I can tell you the main economic challenges that people in this area face is lack of drinking water, healthcare, education, lack of proper roads and etc.”

- *[P34, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Deputy Director of Border and Tribes, Pashtun, Ministry of Borders and Tribes, Kandahar, Kandahar]*

The main problem of the border region is that there are no electricity system, schools, clinics and canals. The flood destroyed all lands. The big problem of the border region is also with passports and visas. There are more problems that people in the border region face with.

- *[P17, 42 years old, Male, 2 years of education, Torkham businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Self-Employed, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

CHALLENGES OF THE BORDER REGION COMPARED TO ELSEWHERE

Twenty-two of the 26 KII participants indicated that those living elsewhere in Afghanistan have access to better resources and government services.

“Residents of provincial centers, other cities, and urban areas have access to different opportunities and services, while people living in the border communities are deprived of them.”

- [P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

“People of other areas have enough access to the services as I mentioned before, but unfortunately people of Spin Boldak district does not have enough access to them. For example: There is availability of electricity in Kandahar provincial center, but here is no electricity at all. There are better healthcare services in Kandahar provincial center, but unfortunately here are no better health care services.”

- [P34, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Deputy Director of Border and Tribes, Pashtun, Ministry of Borders and Tribes, Kandahar, Kandahar]

“People elsewhere in Afghanistan have a good life. There are factories and their economy is better. There are markets that people can use. They do not need passport and use their lands and properties, but we need passport because without it we cannot go anywhere. If we go without passport, police do not let us go.”

- [P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

Respondents were split on whether people on the Pakistan side fared better or the same as Afghan borderland communities. Some believe the Pakistan side is better off than the Afghan side, with more resources and job opportunities. Others said that people on the Pakistan side of the border share similar problems with Afghan border communities.

"I would like to mention that people living in border communities on this side of the Durand Line face more challenges due to the long war which has damaged all economic, social, cultural as well as administrative institutions and destroyed our infrastructure, factories and other means of production, livelihood and income. There are fighting, kidnapping, robberies, lawlessness as well as corruption and other illegal activities on this side of the border. However, people living on the other side of the border do not have aforesaid problems and challenges. They have access to electricity, potable water, roads, as well as schools, hospitals, businesses and employment opportunities."

- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

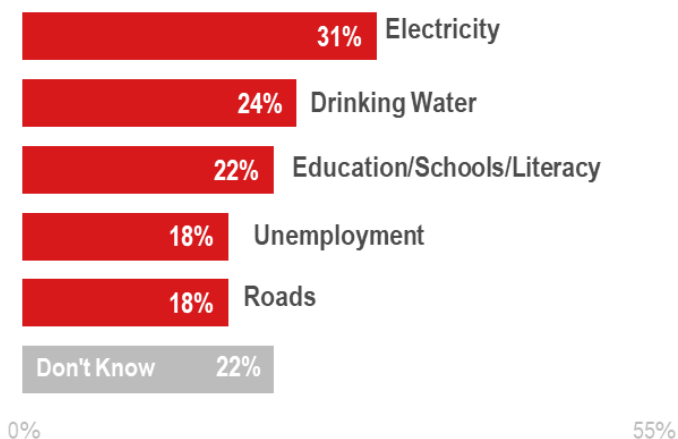
"People living on the Pakistani side of the border face the same challenges which we face. Their trade and businesses are also affected very much due to closing the border and building barbed wire fence along the Durand Line."

- [P18, 50 years old, Male, Illiterate, Torkham tribal leader, Pashtun, N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

MAIN PROBLEMS IN THE BORDER REGION

Despite abundant trade in the region, borderland communities face many economic challenges. Respondents in the quantitative survey indicated that the electricity, drinking water, education, unemployment, and roads are some of the biggest problems facing the border region. As a point of comparison, respondents at the national level in the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People similarly cited drinking water (22%) and electricity (20%) as the most common problems in their local area. The biggest local problems in Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara as found in the Border Survey are as follows:

QC-5. And in your view, what are the biggest problems in your local area? (N=1525)



Border closure and restrictions on border crossing are a few of the main problems mentioned by locals in the border region because it prevents people from doing business and obtaining medical care. Other problems named by KII participants included lack of good road conditions, electricity, drinking water, schools, hospitals and other basic government services. People in urban areas have better access to government services and resources often lacking in border regions. 24 of the 26 respondents noted a lack of basic resources like electricity, roads, drinking water, hospitals in their responses.

"The main problems are unemployment, insecurity, poverty, and there is no work. People cannot work to find food, so they raise their voices and create problems for the government. Our problems are that while there is rain, our agricultural lands do not have retaining walls and they get flooded. It will destroy our crops, and we do not have canals or electricity, and we do not have solar power either. The government has promised these services to us but still did not act accordingly. There are no roads, which is a big problem."

- [P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“The main problems of border region people are lack of education, schools, drinkable water and healthcare services. As you can see there is only one hospital in this area but in reality they do not provide better services to our people. If you take a look to the hospital so most of the people are waiting for hours and at the end they get only two kinds of tablets which are not enough for the patient. People are not satisfied from their services. Even it should be mentioned that lack of electricity is also another major issue.”

- [P34, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Deputy Director of Border and Tribes, Pashtun, Ministry of Borders and Tribes, Kandahar, Kandahar]

“The people living in the border region have many issues such as unpaved roads, no electricity, and no access to the wells of clean drinking water which has great impact over the health of the people. People get sick due to no access to clean drinking water. The difference with the center or other areas is that the hospitals are on international standard there which are not available here. People’s problems would be resolved if they have access to paved roads. No access to clean drinking water impact their lives. If they drink healthy and clean drinking water it would be beneficial for their health.”

- [P13, 54 years old, Male, 12 years of education, District Governor, Pashaye, IDLG, Dar-e-Noor, Nangarhar]

Twenty-one of the 26 respondents indicated that people elsewhere in Afghanistan are better off in terms of access to resources than border communities.

“The difference is that they do not have such problems as I mentioned. They have electricity and canals so compared to us, they do not have problems.... They have electricity, clean drinking water and good roads, but our roads are destroyed, we do not have clean drinking water, our children are malnourished, and they drink water from streams which is

not good for their health and make them sick. Their children are healthy, so we feel sad about our life. It will be easy to take our goods when the roads are good and if we have electricity, factories will be active, and there will be more job opportunities for us.”

- *[P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

“Those of people that live in urban areas benefit from different facilities and government services including their access to electricity, potable water, as well as education, hospitals and employment opportunities. However, people in border communities have a lot of problems in all aspects. For instance, they do not have access to roads, electricity, schools, as well as to hospitals and employment opportunities. The government does not do anything to address problems and concerns of people in border communities where very little progress has been made in the sphere of education due to shortage of schools teachers and textbooks. Most children and youths are involved in smuggling illegal goods and products. I request the government to pay due attention to border communities and address their concerns effectively.”

- *[P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]*

“People living in other parts of Afghanistan have fewer problems compared to residents of the border communities. Their economic situation is better and they have access to business and employment opportunities as well. Security situation is also better there.”

- *[P23, 28 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University Lecturer, Pashtun, Kandahar University, Kandahar, Kandahar]*

The majority of respondents indicated that proximity to the border plays a role in the problems that they face. Urban areas often have access to basic resources that border regions do not.

“The government does not provide those aids or assistance to their people. Right now an agreement on border management has been signed between Afghan government and Pakistan government, but people do not accept this agreement still they are crossing the border and do not take into account the laws and procedures. Even if the government provides drinking water, still people do not trust them, because they perceive that the government will not complete its project to provide drinking water to their people. In my point of view government is the only source who created problem in our area.”

- [P29, 30 years old, Male, 8 years of education, Government employee, Pashtun, Customs department, Takhta Pul, Kandahar]

“Electricity is provided in other areas, but people in the border face lack of electricity. They do not have access to clean drinking water, they do not have access to education so due to such issues people raised their voices that why the government does not pay attention to our areas. Sometime ago, people complained that the government have provided education to other areas but did not pay attention to our area. People in the border region face a lot of problem so it causes a gap between people and the government. Roads are another problem because all roads are destroyed.”

- [P33, 45 Years Old, Male, 16 years of education, Member of Provincial Council, Pashaye, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

GENERAL SITUATION AND SERVICES

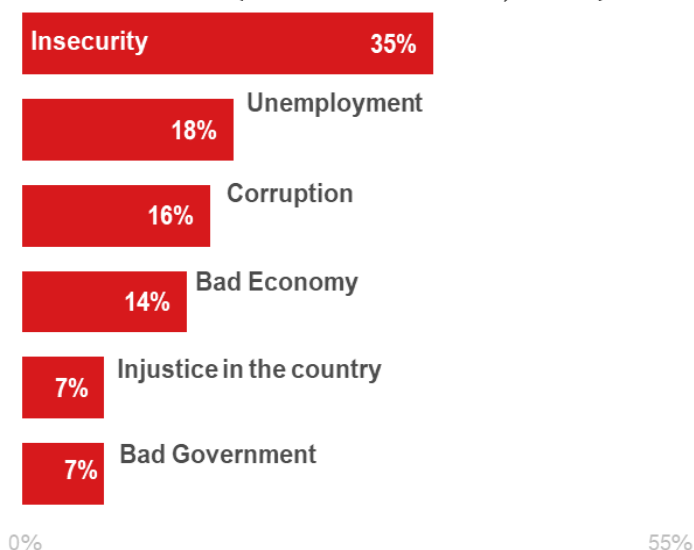
Respondents in the quantitative survey are pessimistic about the future of the country. In both border settlements, more than half of respondents reported that things in Afghanistan are going in the wrong direction (N=1525). This is comparable to the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People, which found that 61% of Afghans nationwide reported that the country is headed in the wrong direction.

QC-1. Overall, based on your own experience, do you think things in Afghanistan today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction? (N=1525)

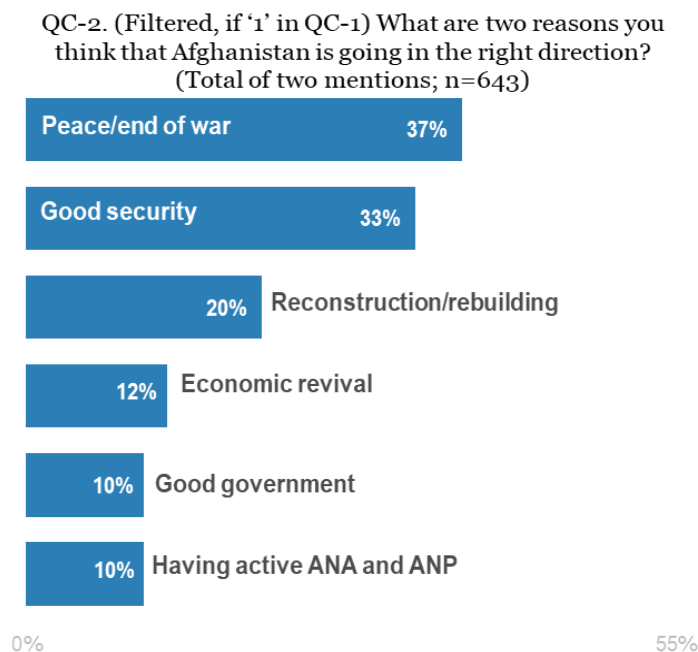


Among respondents who indicated that Afghanistan is headed in the wrong direction, insecurity (35%), unemployment (18%), and corruption (16%) were listed as the primary reasons for their pessimism (total of two mentions). This is similar to the results of the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People, in which insecurity (73%) and concerns about the economy (38%) were also the most frequently cited reasons for pessimism.

QC-3. (Filtered, if '2' in QC-1) What are two reasons you think that Afghanistan is going in the wrong direction? (Total of two mentions; n=820)



Among respondents in the quantitative survey who indicated that Afghanistan is going in the right direction, peace (37%), good security (33%), and reconstruction (20%) were identified as the primary reasons for their optimism (total of two mentions). As a point of comparison, responses from the border surveys are similar to those in the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People, in which improved security (52%) and rebuilding (48%) were the most frequently cited reasons for optimism.



Twenty-two of the 26 KII participants indicated that the government has done nothing in the last two years to address the challenges faced by people in the border region despite their requests for government assistance. Four respondents specifically indicated that they met with senior officials, held protests, and arranged shuras in an attempt to resolve their problems.

"They shared their challenges and issues with the concerned government officials to find solutions. Besides, their concerns and problems were discussed in the gathering of tribal leaders of border communities on the both sides of the Durand Line. However, the government has not adopted any practical measures or actions yet to address their challenges and find solutions for their problems and issues."

- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

"Yes, people have complaint over and over, they have met senior officials, they have had protests, they have arranged shuras, they have tried a lot to solve these problems."

- [P9, 38 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Human Resource Manager of Customs, Pashtun (Shinwari), Ministry of Finance, Shinwar, Nangarhar]

"Of course, they have tried to solve such problems. For example, they had complained to the government to provide education facilities and mentioned the other issues that we do not have such facilities that other people have in the cities. Sometime ago the shopkeepers closed their shops in the border and demonstrated. If such issue happened in the city, everyone would have paid attention to them, but here is border region and no one pay attention to. We suggest from the government to pay attention to the border region and solve these problems."

- [P33, 45 Years Old, Male, 16 years of education, Member of Provincial Council, Pashaye, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

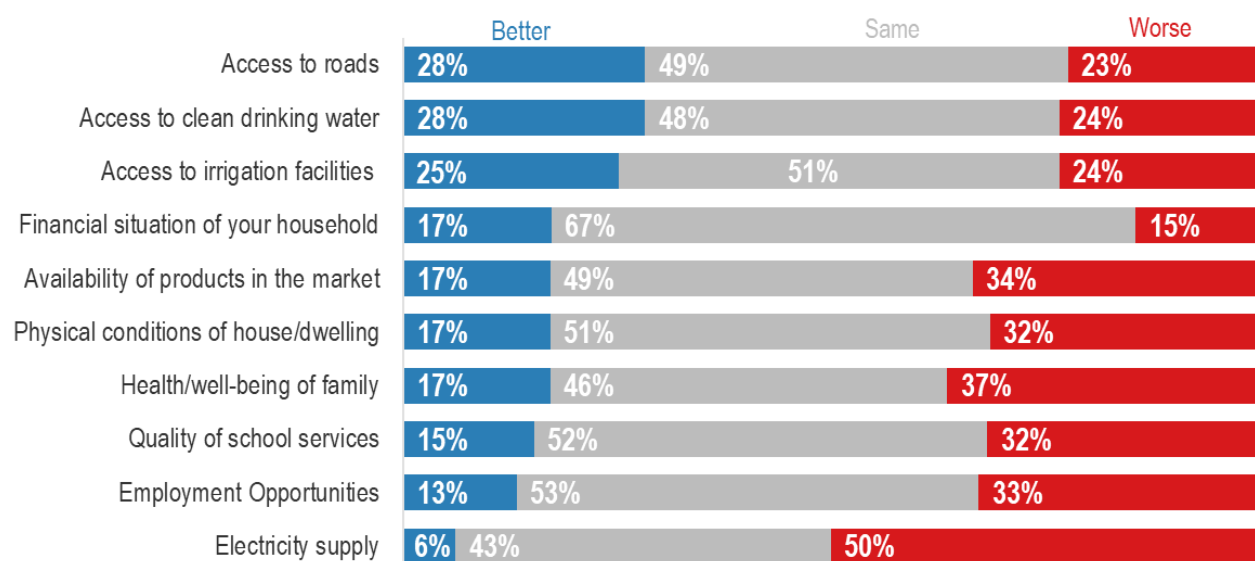
"Nothing has been done. The government and NGOs do not invest in border regions because of the unstable security situation."

- [P23, 28 years old, Male, 18 years of education, University Lecturer, Pashtun, Kandahar University, Kandahar, Kandahar]

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND SECURITY CHANGES IN THE BORDER REGION

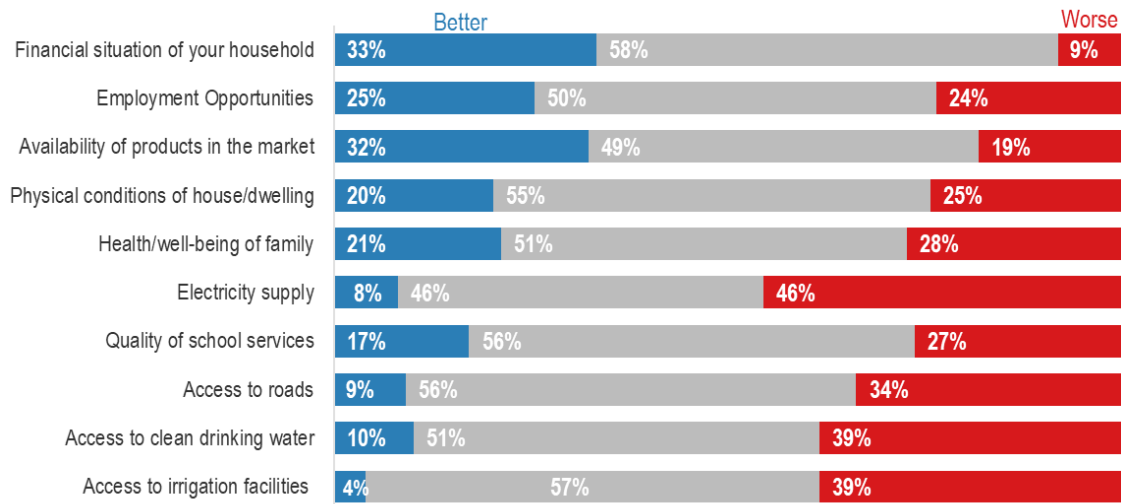
Quantitative survey respondents were asked to rate their living conditions compared to one year ago. Disaggregate analysis indicates that living conditions have not improved much in either area: less than 30% of respondents in Muhmand Dara indicated that living conditions had gotten better across the surveyed indicator variables. About half of respondents indicated that electricity supply in Muhmand Dara had gotten worse compared to a year ago.

QC-7. And compared to one year ago, would you say that the situation for your household has gotten better, remained the same or gotten worse with respect to the following? **Muhmand Dara (N=705)**



Similar to their border settlement counterparts in Muhmand Dara, less than 34% of respondents indicated that living conditions in Spin Boldak have improved. Across all local livelihood indicators, about half of respondents in both Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara indicated that living conditions have remained the same.

QC-7. And compared to one year ago, would you say that the situation for your household has gotten better, remained the same or gotten worse with respect to the following? **Spin Boldak (N=820)**



Similar to quantitative respondents, KII participants were asked about economic, social and security changes that people in the border region have faced in the last two years. KII participants had varying perceptions of the changes that have occurred in their borderland communities. Since KII participants were able to provide in-depth, open-ended responses, the data from the KIIs vary compared to data from the quantitative survey. Quantitative survey responses are operationalized differently than the qualitative data delivered from the KIIs, which may also explain the dichotomy between the results from the quantitative survey and the informant interviews.

The most frequently mentioned change by KII participants is a worsened economic situation in the border region. These changes are often directly related to disruptions at the border. P16, a Security Manager at the National Directorate of Security, explained that restrictions on border crossing (requirement of passport and visas) and the barbed wire fence constructed along the border has had negative impacts on the economic state of residents in border communities because now they cannot engage in trade or smuggle illegal items, goods and products from Afghanistan to Pakistan and vice versa. P16 also added that “*families are not able to visit their relatives living on both sides of Durand Line*”

Other respondents held similar perceptions of a worsened economic state in the border region.

“In the last two years the rate of unemployment has become higher. Besides, the new restrictions have decreased crossing the border by citizens of Afghanistan who are required to have passports and visas in order to pass the Durand Line. It has had negative impacts on people economic state and living conditions. However, cultural and social relationship between them have increased now compare to the past due to their access to internet and Facebook.”

- [P6, 47 years old, Male, 18 years of education, Hazara, University professor, Gharjistan University, 3rd district/Kabul city, Kabul]

“In the last two years the number of problems has increased in Torkham border. Cross-border trade has decreased 50 or 70 percent. It has increased the economic challenges of people. The border is closed, and it has negative impacts on businessmen, traders and residents of border communities on the both sides of the border. This is because they used to import and export their merchandise and commodities through Torkham Gate because Karachi is near, and it is profitable for all Afghan traders to use it for import and export of their goods and products. Political situation and tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan have caused traders and businessmen to suffer a lot of financial losses. It also has had negative impacts on economic state of residents of border communities on the both sides of the Durand Line.”

- [P7, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Executive Manager, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Rodat, Nangarhar]

“Naturally, when the border is closed for any reason, including the political or security situation, it causes a lot of problems and has negative impacts on cross-border trade and people's economic state.

Residents of border communities benefit from cross-border trade and smuggling, and when the border is closed, they face a lot of economic and social challenges. It also creates difficulties for those who take their patients to Pakistan for treatment. The security situation also affects our trade, because when there is fighting in the area, we cannot continue to run our businesses.”

- *[P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

The second most frequently mentioned change is the improvement of security along the border. A number of respondents explained that the reason for this improvement is because people in the border region came together and solved the issue of insecurity themselves. P17, a Torkham businessman asserted at the border improved after the tribal people protested and that *“people took responsibility for their security and solved their own problems.”* P31, a tribal leader from Spin Boldak shared similar sentiments, stating that security is better in the border. He said *“people here in this region are united and if someone come from other areas to do something wrong, we can easily recognize and prevent him, because our people are very cooperative with the government. However, the economy and business are not good.”*

“Besides, in the last two years, the security situation has improved in the border communities. In the past, security was not maintained and there was fighting and firing everywhere in the area. Now, the number of Taliban and Daesh fighters has become fewer in the border region due to air strikes and bombardments conducted by the Afghan air force. Now the security situation is much better in the border districts and communities compared to 6 months ago.”

- *[P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]*

“General Raziq, the former police chief of Kandahar and Pakistan Army senior officials in the area settled the dispute through peace talks and negotiation. Now, the security situation in Kandahar is better and peoples’ economic state has also improved compared to the past.”

- [P24, 31 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Private business, Pashtun, None, Kandahar, Kandahar]

Unlike the respondents above, some asserted that security in the border region had actually worsened. Some respondents blame the worsened security situation on Pakistan. P34, the Deputy Director of Border and Tribes explained that security changes happen because of the bad relationship and misunderstanding between the both governments. He added that the Taliban attacks Afghan border police checkpoints, which increase insecurity and badly impacts of the economy and daily lives of the local people.

“There is no improvement [in the border region], security has become somewhat worse. While Abdul Raziq was alive, security was better but now it is worse.” These changes are the result of thieves and corruption by public officials. “There is corruption among public officials as well. There is no improvement in Spin Boldak because the government does not serve the public”

- [P28, 40 years old, Male, Illiterate, Tribal elder, Pashtun, Unemployed, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

“Pakistan wants to install barbed wire on the border which we don’t accept from them, and therefore security gets worsened between us. People on both sides of the border face economic loss when insecurity increases. We have tried several times to overcome this issue (the issue of insecurity) because on both sides of the border, the people from same tribes live, and all are Pashtun.”

- [P25, 33 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Border Police Chief, Pashtun, Ministry of Defense, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

“The biggest concern is security here. Many people live on the border area. Hence, when fighting occurs, people face many casualties. You may have remembered that a fight between Afghan border police and Pakistani border police happened in recent days, as a result of which, many security forces of both sides and civilians on the border were killed. Well, about economy of the people, I would like to say that it has been good as people of the border area have maintained their trades well. And, during the last two years, whenever border gets closed, it makes people face huge loss. When there are security concerns in this area, people do face loss in their trades.”

- [P34, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Deputy Director of Border and Tribes, Pashtun, Ministry of Borders and Tribes, Kandahar, Kandahar].

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CHANGES

KII participants had varying accounts of the government’s response to changes in the border region. Some respondents considered the government’s response to be positive and helpful to the region.

“The government promised; it reacted positively to the people and assisted them. We are very happy that the checkpoints have increased because it is for the benefit of the people as well as the government. Governmental services will increase with security, and people will have confidence in the government and other people. As the security situation gets better, the government will increase its assistance. People suggested that the government build madrasas, schools, and mosques, so the government accepted our suggestions.”

- [P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

“The government does everything in its power to maintain security in the border communities. The Afghan national security forces conduct

ground operations and air strikes to improve the security situation in those of districts where there are Taliban and Daesh.”

- *[P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]*

The majority of respondents however, considered the government’s response to changes to be lacking.

“The government did not respond to these changes at all. However, it is responsible to protect independence, sovereignty and territorial integration of Afghanistan therefore it should have prevented Pakistan from building barbed wire fence on our territory which is a flagrant intervention in our domestic affairs.”

- *[P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]*

“They have had meetings with Pakistan aimed at removing security concerns along the border. People at the local level have also organized many meetings in an attempt to address insecurity. The government could respond better, however, they are not committed to the terms of agreement that they make.”

- *[P34, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Deputy Director of Border and Tribes, Pashtun, Ministry of Borders and Tribes, Kandahar, Kandahar]*

“The government did not respond to these changes strongly, because Afghanistan at the present time faces a lot of challenges in all aspects. Besides, our government wants to have friendly relationships with its neighbors, especially Pakistan, and settle its all problems and issues with them through peace talks and negotiations. Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbors and their residents have economic, cultural, social and family ties and relationships with each other. They should

resolve their differences peacefully because political tension between them causes a lot of problems for the citizens of both countries in all aspects of life, especially in the sphere of economy and trade. It also has negative impacts on our culture and social life. Due to the aforementioned reasons, our government makes every effort to keep a friendly relationship with Pakistan and settle its disputes and political tension with it peacefully through negotiation.”

- [P12, 44 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Police chief, Pashtun, The Ministry of Interior, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

MIGRATION AS A COPING STRATEGY

In areas of protracted conflict, migration is often a key strategy to cope with challenges. Refugee movements have contributed to the labor migration and cross-border social and cultural exchange unique to border communities. The dynamics of migration further complicate the region's distinct combinations of ethnic, tribal, and political identities.

Although migrant movements have strengthened the transnational networks critical to the cross-border trade of the local economy, many KII participants do not consider migration to be a good strategy to cope with challenges in the border region. Twenty-four of the 26 KII participants asserted that migration is not a good strategy to cope with challenges.

P5, a professor at Alama University in Kabul explained that undereducated Afghans from border communities would simply face other challenges in their host country and that would be unable to adjust to the new culture or find employment. The majority of respondents indicated that Afghans should remain in Afghanistan and tackle local problems. Other respondents also specified that it is the responsibility of the central government to maintain security, eliminate poverty, and provide access to basic resources to people in border communities.

Despite the communal dismissal of migration as a coping strategy, 10 respondents indicated that sometimes people are compelled to emigrate due to the poor conditions at the border region.

"If there is fighting, lawlessness, chaos and injustice as well as corruption in a country, its citizens are compelled to migrate to other countries. However, migration is not a good strategy to cope with the challenges. The only way of solution of our problems and challenges is that we should have a strong central government to maintain security, eliminate poverty and provide people with access to electricity, water, schools and other opportunities and services. It should have specific and effective strategies, plans and policies for the economic growth and reconstruction of Afghanistan. I would like to repeat that migration is not solution of our problems and challenges."

- *[P7, 47 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Executive Manager, Pashtun, Chamber of Commerce, Rodat, Nangarhar]*

"No it is not the strategy to cope with the problems. It is our country and we have to combat with problems. If these problems are solved in our country, we get happy. Instead of leaving the country we should try to talk to district government, provincial government, the president, and to other elders to talk to them and find solution to these problems. Problems exist everywhere and we should try our best to cope with these problems."

- *[P17, 42 years old, Male, 2 years of education, Torkham businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Self-Employed, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

"No it is not migration. When people face problems, unemployment and poverty, migration is not the solution, but the government should assist people because most people are unemployed so the only solution is for the government to solve the problems."

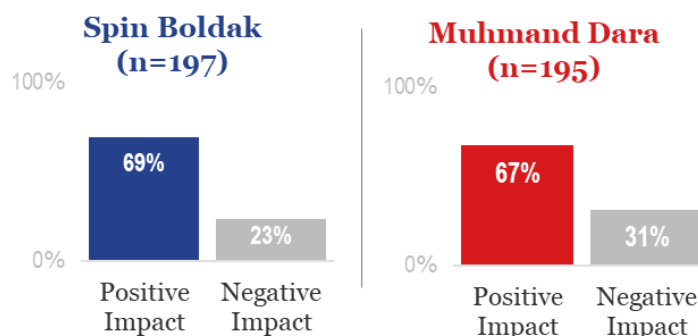
- *[P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

IMPACT OF REFUGEES AND REPATRIATES

In the quantitative survey, the majority of respondents in both settlements indicated that those who have moved into their community from *elsewhere in Afghanistan* or that have *returned from Pakistan* have had a positive community impact.

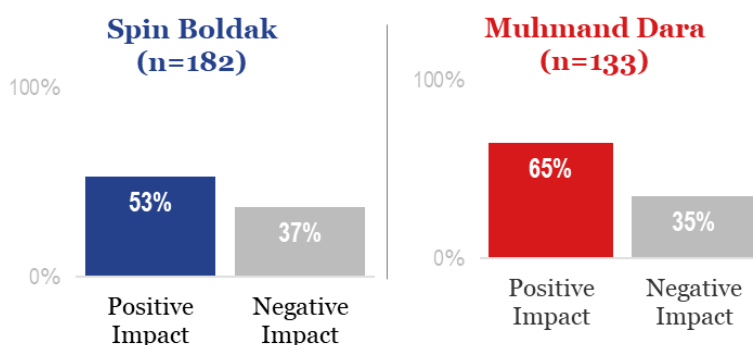
Perceptions towards those who have moved from elsewhere in Afghanistan.

QB-2: (If yes at QB-1) Do you think they (*those who have moved from elsewhere in Afghanistan to this area*) have a positive impact or negative on your community? (n=577)



Perception towards Afghans who have returned from Pakistan.

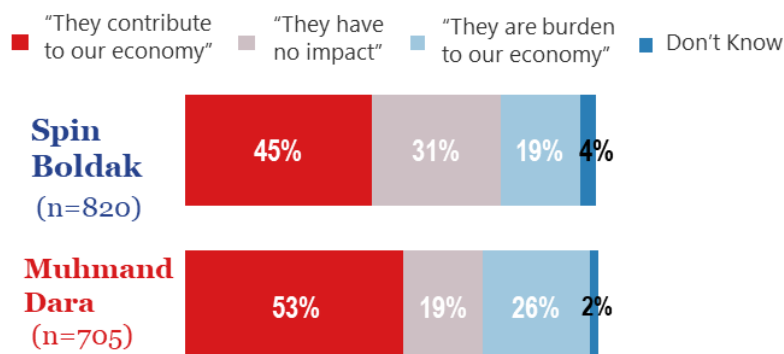
QB-6: (Ask if 1 in QB-5) do you think they (*Afghans who have repatriated from Pakistan to this area*) have a positive impact or negative on your community? (n=530)



The majority of respondents in Muhmand Dara perceived a positive economic impact from those who have moved into their community from elsewhere in Afghanistan or that have repatriated to their community from Pakistan. The plurality of respondents in Spin Boldak also perceived a positive economic impact of those who have resettled in their community.

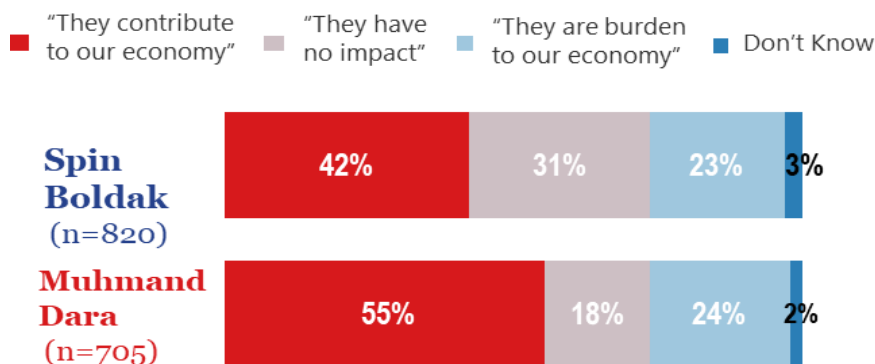
Economic impact of those who have moved from elsewhere in Afghanistan.

QB-4. Which of the following two statements regarding the economic impact people from elsewhere in Afghanistan coming to live in this area is closer to your view? (N=1525)



Economic impact of those who have returned from Pakistan.

QB-8. (Ask all) And similarly, which of the following two statements regarding the economic impact of Afghans repatriated from Pakistan and coming to live here is closer to your view? (n=1525)



The majority of KII participants also indicated that returnees have a positive impact on borderland communities. 19 of the 26 KII participants indicated that returnees have a positive impact on their communities because they learn skills abroad and bring them back to take part in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

"I also think returnees have a positive impact on our communities because those of them that had money created employment opportunities for families through income generating projects like carpet weaving."

- *[P11, 35 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Businessman, Pashtun (Muhmand), Private sector, Lalpor District, Nangarhar]*

"In my opinion, the returnees have had positive impacts on their border communities because they introduce and promote new types of businesses, crafts, and skills which they learned in Pakistan. They have apprentices who learn the crafts, skills and businesses by seeing and doing. Besides, they are paid as well for their work."

- *[P18, 50 years old, Male, Illiterate, Torkham tribal leader, Pashtun, N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]*

"Our country has developed and progressed after returning of the migrants."

- *[P30, 57 years old, Male, Illiterate, Businessman, Pashtun, Self-employed, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]*

Five respondents reported that returnees have a negative impact on border communities because they contribute to high rates of poverty and unemployment which can ultimately lead them to engage in illegal activities.

“In my opinion the returnees do not have positive impacts on their communities but on the contrary their return increases the number of their problems due to various reasons including high rate of unemployment and poverty due to which they will be compelled to conduct illegal activities including theft, robberies, kidnapping as well as moral crimes and indecencies.”

- [P6, 47 years old, Male, 18 years of education, Hazara, University professor, Gharjistan University, 3rd district/Kabul city, Kabul]

“Returnees have negative impacts on their communities because their return increases the number of those who do not have access to employment opportunities and live in poverty and deprivation.”

- [P8, 32 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Manager of the capacity building directorate, Pashtun (Muhmand), IDLG, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

One respondent indicated that returnees’ impact on the community depends on the level of skill returned to the country. These respondents contended that the returnees have a positive impact if they return with skills or education but a negative impact if they do not return with new skills of an education.

“The returnees impacted both positively and negatively on the border communities because those Afghans who returned back from other countries and learned a skill or started a business, it has positive impact on people living in the border because they can use from their experiences and improve their economy situation. If someone return to the country and did not learn anything, it will be a problem for people and the country.”

- [P33, 45 Years Old, Male, 16 years of education, Member of Provincial Council, Pashaye, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Jalalabad, Nangarhar]

NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN THE BORDER REGION

Given the economic and social challenges raised by respondents in the KIIs, it is evident that the people of the border region want change. KII participants were asked what they would change in the border region if they could. The most frequently mentioned change among respondents was access to basic resources including drinking water, electricity, roads, schools, clinics, hospitals, electricity, and roads. The second most frequently requested change among respondents was for open borders. Border crossing is essential to the livelihood strategies of the border region, restrictions to crossing often hinder the livelihoods of many border area locals.

"If I could I would provide people living in the border communities with access to clean drinking water, electricity, schools, as well as roads, clinics and employment opportunities. Besides, I would keep the border open day and night and allow everyone to pass it without passport and visa. However, now people do not conduct cross-border trade because they are prevented from it due to security situation and political tension. Eliminate the current procedure that requires passports and visas to cross the border. Destroy the barbed wire fence that prevents informal crossing."

- [P14, 42 years old, Male, 16 years of education, Mayor of Torkham, Pashtun, IDLG, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

"In terms of my political opinion, if I could, I would open this border because in the past we commuted, lived and had business and no one asked anything. So I would open this border because we have more problems without it, there is no work, and we cannot earn money, and all this happens when the border is closed."

- [P15, 55 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Tribal elder, Pashtun (Muhmand), N/A, Muhmand Dara, Nangarhar]

KII participants most frequently reported that the most important thing that people in border areas need but are not getting are basic resources including medical care, water, schools, electricity, etc. These responses demonstrate a perception that the Afghan

government neglects its border regions. KII participants repeatedly indicated that people elsewhere in Afghanistan fare far better than people that reside in border regions. The lack of local resources and employment opportunities is what makes cross-border trade and mobility so essential to the livelihood strategies of border area residents.

“People in border communities have a lot of problems including lack of their access to electricity, roads, clean drinking water and employment opportunities. Due to lack of modern and equipped hospitals as well as qualified doctors therein people take their patients to Pakistan for medical treatment.”

- [P16, 40 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Security Manager, Pashtun, National Directorate of Security, Alingar, Laghman]

“What people of this area need are access to clean drinking water, and most of the roads are unpaved and should be paved. All this can be done by the local government and only they can provide us with these services. They can build hospitals for us and can help us in education sector. Only government can do all this. People of this area can't do it because most of them are poor.”

- [P25, 33 years old, Male, 12 years of education, Border Police Chief, Pashtun, Ministry of Defense, Spin Boldak, Kandahar]

Despite these unfulfilled needs, results from the quantitative survey indicate that both the financial situation and the employment opportunities are perceived to be better in border settlements. Twenty-eight percent of respondents in the quantitative Border survey said that employment opportunities have gotten worse compared to one year ago. This is much less compared to the 57% of respondents in the 2018 Survey of the Afghan People who said that their employment opportunities have gotten worse compared to one year ago. Similarly, only 12% of respondents in the quantitative border survey indicated that their household financial situation had gotten worse (compared to one year ago). However, a much larger 34% of respondents in the 2018 Survey of the

Afghan People said that their household financial situation had gotten worse (compared to one year ago).

This dichotomy between border survey responses and national survey responses indicate that border area locals perceive their financial and employment situation to be much better than those interviewed for the national 2018 Survey of the Afghan People.

CONCLUSION

Borderland communities within the vicinity of Torkham and Weash borders have distinct access to neighboring Pakistan. Historically, borderland communities have engaged in transnational travel to maintain their social and economic livelihoods. The movement of border area locals paired with migration patterns have allowed for the construction of strong transnational trade networks. Although these networks help facilitate cross-border trade and travel, the region's heavy dependence on the border contributes to a fragile economy vulnerable to disruptions that are recurrent at the border. Border locals engage in various activities to combat these obstacles, however growing political tension with Pakistan paired with a lack of GIROA action have left border communities with little recourse.

The dynamics of the border region are complex. Results from this study give insight into the trans-national livelihoods and economic challenges that characterize the local borderland economy. Although this study offered considerable information regarding the motivations for cross-border mobility, borderland livelihood strategies, and the general context within which border communities operate, it has also uncovered other areas that prompt further research. The complex historical and political circumstances of the border region highlighted in this study demand further inquiry into the intricacies of borderland life. Research results suggest that border communities are the gateway of economic trade and prosperity for the rest of the country. Given their importance to the integrity of trade to the rest of the country, the additional analysis of these communities may lead to a better understanding of the economic dynamics of Afghanistan as a whole.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this research has offered significant insight into the local economy and livelihood strategies of border communities, the results have uncovered areas of ambiguity that should be supplemented in future research efforts.

The results from this mixed-methods study clearly indicate that political tension with Pakistan has had major social and economic consequences for people at the border. However, it has not queried into the historical context of the many issues border communities face. Responses from the KIIs indicated that there are long-standing tribal and ethnic dynamics that impact cross-border mobility.

In his response, P7, an Executive manager at the Chamber of Commerce, mentioned that according to the Durand Line agreement, people affiliated or belong to Muhmand, Afridee and Shinwar tribes were not required to have passport and visas to cross the border, however now members of those tribes are also required to have passports and visas to cross.

Many other respondents also backed these claims, stating that everyone, of all tribes and ethnic groups are required to carry to have the proper legal documentation to cross the border. P13, a District Governor, however, said that people in the Shinwari and Muhmand tribes have special cards that allow them to cross the border without a visa or passport. He stated: *“they [Shinwari and Muhmand tribes] had issues over visas in past which are now resolved, and they can freely move from one side to another without visa.”*

These conflicting accounts of cross-border mobility invites further research into the ethnic dynamics and regulation of border crossing. It is clear that political tension with Pakistan has produced obstacles for Afghans trying to cross the border. However, different accounts of current practice highlights gaps in the understanding of the trans-national mobility of border communities. Furthermore, mentions of the Durand agreement and its stipulations provoke inquiry into the legacy of the Durand line, the Anglo-Afghan war, and other past events on border communities.



Figure 3: Nangarhar Field Photo

Future research should also examine Afghans who live on the Pakistani side of the border. Respondents in both the qualitative and quantitative surveys examined Afghans living on the Afghan side of the border. Results from the KIIs indicate however, that migration and resettlement has prompted Afghans to live on both the Pakistan and Afghan sides of the border. The perceptions of Afghans living on the Pakistan side of the border may offer additional insight into the livelihood strategies of border communities and how they may compare to the populations surveyed in this study.

Another population that should also be further examined are wage workers residing in the border region. Results from the quantitative survey demonstrate that in both Spin Boldak and Muhmand Dara, wage labor is the most common source of household income in border settlements. Despite this, none of the KII participants interviewed worked as wage laborers. The perceptions of wage workers and how their livelihood strategies are contingent on trade may allow for a better understanding of the informal, local economy of border settlements.

It is evident that border closure and restrictions on border crossing has had an adverse impact on the local economy and livelihoods of border communities in the region. These disruptions to the fragile local economy should be studied further in order to determine how these disruptions materialize and provide an even closer look into how border communities interact and overcome these disruptions.

Supplementing this study with inquiry into the ethnic and historical dynamics of the border region and the causes of border closure and other economic disruptions may allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the border region and its inhabitants. An examination of border populations on the Pakistan side may provide an opportunity to better understand the transnational and trans-local networks that impact border livelihoods. Further inquiry into the way wage workers operate in the context of the local economy may offer a more holistic understanding of the components of local market systems and strategies in the border region.

APPENDIX A: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) PARTICIPANTS

Participant ID	Province	City/District	Title
5	Kabul	Kabul	University professor
6	Kabul	Kabul	University professor
7	Nangarhar	Rodat	Executive Manager of Chamber of Commerce and Industry
8	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	Manager of the Capacity-Building Directorate, Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG)
9	Nangarhar	Shinwar	Customs Department Employee
10	Nangarhar	Khuganee	University professor
11	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	Businessman
12	Nangarhar	Muhmand Dara	District Police Chief
13	Nangarhar	Muhmand Dara	District Governor
14	Nangarhar	Torkham	High-Level Local Government Official
15	Nangarhar	Muhmand Dara	Tribal Elder
16	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	District Security Chief
17	Nangarhar	Muhmand Dara	Businessman
18	Nangarhar	Muhmand Dara	Tribal Leader
19	Kandahar	Kandahar	Member of Kandahar Chamber of Commerce and Industry
23	Kandahar	Kandahar	University Lecturer
24	Kandahar	Kandahar	Businessman
25	Kandahar	Spin Boldak	Border Police Chief
27	Kandahar	Spin Boldak	Business Trader
28	Kandahar	Weash	Tribal Elder
29	Kandahar	Spin Boldak	Customs employee
30	Kandahar	Weash	Businessman
31	Kandahar	Spin Boldak	Tribal Leader
32	Kabul	Karte Seh	MP from Kandahar
33	Nangarhar	Jalalabad	Member of Provincial Council
34	Kandahar	Kandahar	Deputy Director of Borders and Tribes

APPENDIX B: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) GUIDE

TAF Border Research Project Key Informant Interview Guide

Date of the Interview:
Start Time of Interview:
End Time of Interview:
City:
Province:
Language:
Moderator:
Transcriber:
Translator:

ID #	Age	Gender	Education	Job Title	Ethnicity	Employer, Office or Ministry	District or City	Province

INTRODUCTION (Interviewer read): *Thank you for agreeing to today's interview. We are conducting a study on border communities in this region. Thank you for agreeing to speak with us. We are interested in learning your views on the lives and livelihoods of people in this region, particularly in terms of how these are impacted by the border. There are no right or wrong answers in our discussion. I have several questions I will ask you, and it is important that you share your honest opinion. Also, we have recently conducted a survey near the Torkham and Weash Border Crossings, and we will ask your view on a few of the survey findings during this interview.*

We are audio-taping this conversation, but your personal identity will never be shared. It is just so that we can have a complete transcript of what is said today.

I would like to begin by asking some general questions about the border region, and more importantly, the people who inhabit it.

1. What are the main reasons people cross the border?
2. What types of economic, social, or security changes have people in the border region experienced in the last two years?
 - a. Why have these changes happened?
 - b. How did the government respond to these changes? Could it have responded better?

3. What type of relationship do people in border communities have with people on the other side of the border?
 - a. How do people in think about in the districts in Pakistan directly across the border?
 - b. Our survey found that about half of respondents in the border communities have close family living in Pakistan. For comparison, about two-thirds have family living elsewhere in Afghanistan. How do you think cross-border family ties shape the trade networks and livelihoods of people in the border region?
4. What are the main sources of livelihood for communities living in the border region?
 - a. How do these differ from similar communities elsewhere in Afghanistan?
 - b. The term “informal economy” refers to economic activities, jobs, and workers that are not regulated or taxed by the state. Such activity is not necessarily illegal, though it sometimes is. How does the informal, unregistered economy in the border region differ from the informal economy elsewhere in Afghanistan?
5. How, if at all, do local markets in the border region differ from those elsewhere in Afghanistan?
 - a. What role, if any, does smuggling or illicit trade plays in the economy of the border region?
6. How does cross-border economic trade impact border communities?
7. What are the main economic challenges that people in this area face?
 - a. How, if at all, do these differ from those faced by people living elsewhere in Afghanistan?
 - b. And based on what you have seen and heard, how do these challenges differ from those faced by people living on the Pakistani side of the border?
8. Who, if anyone, do you think benefits most from the border? How so?
9. Who, if anyone, do you think is most harmed by the border? How so?

Now I would like to ask some questions about the political and security situation in the border region.

10. What are the main threats to the livelihoods of people in the border region?
11. At present, what impact does the political and security situation have on the ability of people to cross the border?
12. When a person living in the border region needs to cross the border, do you think they are more likely to do so at official border crossings, or do you think they are more likely to make an informal, unregistered crossing elsewhere along the border?
 - a. Probe: Our survey found that approximately two-fifths of people in the border communities think most or all border crossings are made informally. Why do you think people in the border area feel this is the case?

Next, I'd like to ask about how communities respond to threats and challenges, and how these might contribute to conflict.

13. What are the main problems people in the border region face?
 - a. How, if at all, do these differ from those faced by people living elsewhere in Afghanistan?
 - b. Our survey found that people living in the border districts identify issues with electricity, drinking water, and roads as the main problems in their area. How, if at all, do you think their proximity to the border impacts these problems?
14. What have people in the border region done to address these challenges in the past two years?
15. Is migration an important strategy to cope with the challenges? What alternatives to migration exist if migration is not possible?
16. Recently, migration has become more difficult, and many Afghans previously living in Pakistan have returned. What impact do you think these returnees have had on their border communities?
 - a. Our survey findings suggest that most people in the border communities think returnees have a positive impact on their communities. Why do you feel this is?

We are almost done. I would just like to ask some final questions in closing.

17. If you could change one thing about life in the border region, what would it be and why?
18. What do you think is the most important thing that people in this area need but are not getting, whether from the government, from local leaders, or from other people in power?
19. Is there anything else about the border that you feel is important but has not been covered in this interview?
20. Thank you again for taking your valuable time to speak with me today. It would be very helpful if you could recommend 2-3 other people we could speak to as we continue our research into the challenges impacting people who live in the border region. These can be tribal, religious, or community leaders, senior officials, academics or researchers, businesspeople, or anyone else likely to be knowledgeable about the social, economic, and political life of border communities.

Moderator Summary:

Moderator, please provide us with a detailed description of the interview, as best that you can. Any more information that you can provide for us regarding the following points would be very useful:

1. Main Ideas- what themes did the respondent continue to return to?
2. What takeaways do you have from the interview?
3. Were there any questions that caused respondent to become particularly involved?
4. Were there any questions that respondent refused to answer?
5. Were there any questions that seemed boring to respondent?
6. What was the general mood of the interview?
7. Could the interview have gone better? Could it have gone worse? How so?
8. Did they ask questions about the project?
9. Please provide us with any additional thoughts that you might have.

APPENDIX C: CONTACT OUTCOMES

CONTACT DISPOSITIONS			
ACSOR Code	AAPOR Code	Description	
Completed Interviews			
1	1.0/1.10	Interview was successfully completed	1560
Partial Interviews			
10	1.200	During interview, selected respondent refused (General)	66
11	1.200	During interview, selected respondent was not feeling informed to answer the questions	21
12	1.200	During interview, selected respondent got angry because of a question	18
13	1.200	During interview, selected respondent preferred head of household be interviewed	5
14	1.200	During interview, selected respondent was in a hurry/no time	6
		Total Partial	116
Unknown Eligibility			
20	3.130	No answer at door	88
21	3.200	No adults (18+) after three visits	141
22	3.170	Unable to access building or house	23
23	3.210	Outright refusal at the door	114
		Total Unknown Household	366
Non-contacts			
24	2.210	Selected respondent never available for interview	101
25	2.250	Selected respondent long-term absence for the fieldwork period	18
		Total Non-contacts	119
Others			
26	2.300	Selected respondent not allowed to participate in the survey	12
35	2.310	Selected respondent deceased	0
36	2.320	Selected respondent physically or mentally unable to complete the interview	3
37	2.332	Selected respondent unable to complete interview in languages available	0
		Total Others	15
Refusals			
30	2.11	Selected respondent refuses (General)	35
31	2.11	Selected respondent not feeling informed to answer the questions	5
32	2.11	Selected respondent got angry because of the subject matter	4
33	2.11	Selected respondent prefers head of household to be interviewed	6
34	2.11	Selected respondent in a hurry/no time	2
		Total Refusals	52
Not Eligible			
40	4.7	Does not meet screening criteria/not eligible for interview	0
41	4.500	Non-residential (business)/abandoned home	53
		Total Not Eligible	53
Total		Total Sampled Households	2281

DISPOSITION RATES		
RATE	FORMULA/CALCULATION	PERCENT
Value for e	estimated proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that are eligible	0.972
Response Rate 3	$I / (I+P)+(R+NC+O)+e(UH+UO)$	70.34%
Cooperation Rate 3	$I / (I+P+R)$	90.28%
Refusal Rate 2	$R / (I+P)+(R+NC+O)+e(UH+UO)$	2.34%
Contact Rate 2	$(I+P+R+O) / (I)+(R+NC+O)+e(UH+UO)$	78.59%

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