



# **A Study of the Kuchi Population in the Kabul New City Area**

***Report commissioned by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency***



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## Executive Summary

Kabul City has experienced rapid population growth over the last ten years placing severe pressures on the limited land resources and local infrastructure. As a result, the area of Deh Sabz and Barik Ab has been selected as the intended site for the New Kabul City – a development that when completed will occupy a space 1.5 times the size of the current capital and include agricultural, commercial, industrial and residential developments. The intended development will therefore affect the current residents as well as migratory and sedentary Kuchi populations that have traditionally used the deserts of Deh Sabz and the pastures of Barik Ab to graze their animals in the warmer months.

Increasing numbers of Kuchi are leaving migratory life for sedentary living as access to pastureland nationally has become more difficult, a series of droughts have led to forced animal sales as coping mechanisms and greater access to education and health for sedentary communities have also incentivised numerous Kuchi communities to abandon their previously migratory lifestyle. In Deh Sabz, migratory Kuchi have also faced the additional challenges of diminishing pastureland as residential developments, brick kilns and infrastructure developments have further restricted access to pastureland.

The Kuchi population in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab suffers from high levels of illiteracy, poor access to health services and no apparent formal skills base. The transition to sedentary lifestyle regularly involves the sale of livestock to buy land and/or dwellings and therefore places many communities in a vulnerable position economically, which was apparent in several communities across Deh Sabz.

The majority of migratory Kuchi tribes arrive in early spring and use the pastureland in Dasht-e Deh Sabz, the lower mountain areas of the mountains bordering Kohi Safi and Barik Ab. The tribes return to the warmer climate of Laghman province in early autumn. Of both migratory and sedentary Kuchi, the Tarakhel tribe remains the most numerous and influential as Deh Sabz has traditionally been the pastureland of the migratory Tarakhel for at least a century, according to tribal elders.

Relations between local villagers and Kuchi tribes are largely positive and are predicated on trade and often several generations of interaction. More recently, however, as available pastureland has decreased isolated disputes have occurred over Kuchi livestock feeding on local agricultural land and crops though the disputes remain localised due to the role of tribal elders in conflict resolution. A possible area of contention in the ensuing years is the issue of land title, as several Kuchi tribes, in areas including Payminor report having bought land only to find that the title may in fact be fraudulent. There are also instances of Kuchi tribes commencing the sedentarisation process although occupying government land and expressing a strong determination to not be evicted.

The impact of the Kabul New City will significantly alter the land use of the district and virtually ensure the end of the existing pastureland, based on current planning. A transparent dialogue with Kuchi representatives from across the project area, focusing on a bottom up approach, should be an important first step towards informing the communities of the future development plans and assessing their needs in light of the inevitability of the first phase of development. Such measures should be taken in consultation with the Government of Afghanistan considering that the availability of pastureland is the primary concern of migratory Kuchi and is a resource that can be awarded by the government.

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# Introduction

The following introduction provides an overview of the Greater Kabul Development (GKD) project, the research objectives of this report followed by the research methodology utilised to reach the stated objectives.

## 1.1 Project Overview

JICA assists and supports developing countries as the executing agency of Japanese overseas development assistance (ODA). In accordance with its vision of “Inclusive and Dynamic Development,” JICA supports the resolution of issues of developing countries by using the most suitable tools of various assistance methods and a combined regional-, country- and issue-oriented approach. JICA is in charge of administering all ODA such as technical cooperation, ODA loans and grant aid in an integrated manner, except contributions to international organizations. JICA believes there are many issues in the world that must be addressed not by individual countries but by the international community. JICA is the world’s largest bilateral aid agency, and works in over 150 countries and regions and has some 100 overseas offices.

JICA has partnered with the Government of Afghanistan in the reconstruction and development efforts since 2002. As part of the international donor and support community, JICA has provided technical expertise, loans and grants and training opportunities to Afghan professionals. Currently, JICA is supporting the Rural Development and Greater Kabul Development projects.

The population of Kabul was 2 million in 1999. It has already exceeded to 4 million and was estimated to reach 6.5 million by 2025. Associated with this rapid increase in population is the parallel escalating number of urban problems, including dropping underground water levels, water, air and soil pollution, an increase in illegal residents such as the internally displaced persons, traffic congestions and the deterioration in sanitary conditions. Improvements in the infrastructures of roads, water supply and urban development have become important issues. To tackle such issues, JICA conducted the study for the development of the master plan, known as the Kabul Metropolitan Development Cooperation Program from 2008 to 2009.

In February 2010, JICA concluded an agreement with the Afghan government to implement a technical cooperation project entitled the Greater Kabul Development project, extending the Kabul city into Deh Sabz district. This large-scale, five-year project (2010-2014) to develop capacity to realize the master plan has gotten underway. In the project, JICA has been supporting improvement of Afghanistan’s capacity in the development of infrastructure, implementation of new city development and urban revitalization. JICA will build a solid foundation for the GKD scheme through

an appropriate combination of human resource development and steady urban improvement. The GKD project is comprised of the following sub-projects: 1) Capacity development to DCDA; 2) Kabul Municipal Council Master Plan development; 3) Improvement and construction of Kabul-Charikar Road; 4) Improvement of Kabul City main and residential roads (Districts 4 and 10); 5) Back design of Kabul outer Ring Road and preliminary design of Peripheral Road; 6) Ground Water Survey for Deh Sabz South Development; 7) Feasibility study on Urgent Water Resources Development.

The survey focused on three key questions, to help GKD in its strategic planning and decision-making process:

- Are there negative impacts on the short range or long range Kuchis in the construction of Peripheral Road and Ring Road within the GKD area?
- Are there any negative impacts on the short range or long range Kuchis in the development of new metropolitan city of Deh Sabz and Barikab districts?
- What are the potential obstacles in the consensus building on the new city development with Kuchi and proposed way of communication for the consensus building?

To answer such crucial questions, the review team developed a methodological mix of qualitative and quantitative instruments to better understand the effects of the GKD project on the local migratory and sedentary Kuchi populations.

## 1.2 Kabul New City Development Area

The Greater Kabul Development area is the geographical limit of plans to cater for the rapidly growing Kabul population and includes infrastructure, residential, commercial and industrial aspects. For the purpose of this report, the development of the Deh Sabz and Barik Ab area, will be referred to as the New Kabul City, the term used by the Dehsabz - Barikab City Development Authority (DCDA) and useful to differentiate between the larger GKD concept. Kabul New City is concentrated in Deh Sabz district of Kabul province, located to the northeast of Kabul city. The district centre of Deh Sabz is approximately a 40-minute drive from the centre of Kabul City. The population is estimated to be 50,900, with many residents living in the urban area of Tarakhel. Droughts in recent years have affected local agricultural production with many local residents working as day labourers in the brick kilns or in Kabul city or continuing to practice agriculture in areas with access to irrigation.

The Kabul River, located to the south of the district, previously provided an important source of irrigation water to the south and southeast of the district in spring, however as the river's flow has ebbed so has the supply of water for agriculture, exacerbating the underlying conditions from the drought. Dozens of brick kilns populate the southern areas of the district, although many have been closed in expectation of the future development. To the east is the Kohi Safi mountain range, separating Deh Sabz from the Parwan district of Kohi Safi, which provides an important source of drinking and irrigation water to the villages located in the foothills. In the west of the district is Dasht-e Deh Sabz or the Deh Sabz desert that many Kuchi have traditionally used as pastureland in the spring. The western edges of Deh Sabz border the Kabul districts of Shakar Dar, Mir Bacha Kot and Kalakan and to the north of Deh Sabz is the district of Qarabagh (Kabul Province).

Barik Ab, intended to be the 'agriculture, economic and industrial hub for Afghanistan and the region,' is a 120km<sup>2</sup> area located in the north of Deh Sabz district, which unlike the rest of Deh Sabz is land primarily owned by the government.

There are currently two primary roads connecting Jalalabad road with Bagram district in Parwan province and the site of the large international military airbase. The old Bagram road virtually dissects the district in half running north to south, while the new Bagram road commences opposite Pul-i Charkhi along Jalalabad Road and is designed to service the first phase of the new city development. Two further road projects are intended to link traffic along the Bagram road with the primary national northern highway between Kabul and Mazar-i Sharif via Charikar city (Parwan province). The first is the 'Kabul Metropolitan Area Outer Ring Road', which would dissect the district from east to west and connect the new Bagram road to the northern highway and a further 'Periphery Road' which will link the northern areas of the Deh Sabz City Development area with the Kabul to Charikar highway.

### 1.3 The Kuchi of Afghanistan

Kuchi is the word often deemed to be synonymous with nomadic Pashtun pastoralists, however it has a broader, more inclusive meaning. Kuchi, as defined by Frauke de Weijer, refers to "both a lifestyle (migratory), a production mode (animal husbandry), and a cultural identity."<sup>1</sup> The term has been more frequently utilised in the last thirty years by foreigners, Afghans and by the Kuchi themselves as a self-identifier in place of *maldar* (herd owner) in the west and north of the country as well as *powindahs* in the south to describe pastoral activities rather than to migratory animal herders.<sup>2</sup>

According to the 2005 National Multi-sectoral Assessment on Kuchi (NMAK), which has not been repeated since, the national Kuchi population is estimated to be 2,426,304 individuals or 239,859 households. The figure comprises long range migratory Kuchi (52%), short-range migratory Kuchi (33%) and sedentary Kuchi (15%).<sup>3</sup> Long range migratory Kuchi are defined as those that cross provincial boundaries as part of their migration, short range migratory Kuchi as migrating uniquely within a province and sedentary Kuchis do not migrate at all.<sup>4</sup>

The Kuchi fulfil an important economic and trading role both nationally, as they are reportedly responsible for approximately 10% to 15% of national exports (see Livestock Section 2.4), and at the community level, where Kuchi often trade livestock, skins, manure and dairy products in exchange for animal fodder and some non-food items.

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<sup>1</sup> De Weijer, Frauke, 'Microfinance for Kuchi,' report prepared for the Microfinance Investment and Support Facility Afghanistan (MISFA), April 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Barfield, Thomas, 'Nomadic Pastoralism in Afghanistan: Reconstruction of the Pastoral Economy,' April 2004, p.1. Prepared for the Bank Information Centre (BIC). See also: Adamec, Ludwig, 'Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan,' Entry for Powinda, 2003, pp.603.

<sup>3</sup> de Weijer, Frauke, 'National Multi-sectoral Assessment on Kuchi (NMAK),' Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs and the Central Statistics Office (CSO), May 2005. p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Definitions played an important part of the assessment as Kuchis that had settled prior to the 'last drought' were not considered as Kuchi even if they may self-identify as such and be represented by Kuchi leaders. Sedentary Kuchi were considered as previously migratory pastoralists that had settled since the last drought.



The Kuchi are not an ethnic group, as there are Aimaq, Arab, Baluch, Hazara, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbek Kuchi in addition to the majority of Kuchis identifying as Pashtun. Pashtuns also possess a traditional tribal structure arguably dominated by the Durrani and Ghiljai confederations, which have numerous sub-tribes often with only part of a tribe identifying as Kuchi.

The Kuchi are also not necessarily migratory, as some Kuchi populations have become semi-sedentary or sedentary and forgone animal husbandry while still maintaining a Kuchi cultural identity and self-identifying as Kuchi. Their traditional nomadic pastoralism has been challenged by numerous factors including internal and external political events, decades of conflict, a greater ethnic awareness susceptible to manipulation by political opportunists, natural disasters including drought, a reduction in access to pastures and a poor socio-economic position that has pushed many previously migratory Kuchi to sedentarise. These challenges are not solely a modern phenomenon and have occurred over the last two centuries.

In the eighteenth century, although primarily pastoral nomads, many Kuchi began to transport goods via 'caravan transport systems, often working for Hindu merchants and travelling to India.' The Kuchi embraced the trading role, expanding their internal trade routes in the nineteenth century. In 1880, Abdur Rahman became Emir of Afghanistan and consolidated power in Kabul via the forced subjugation of previously autonomous populations in the centre, east and north of the country – primarily rebellious or independent Pashtun tribes and ethnic minorities including the Hazaras, Uzbeks and Tajiks. The Emir passed a law in 1894 providing land grants or *firman*s on a tribal basis prioritising Pashtuns and by extension Kuchis as a method to ensure a loyal population in previously autonomous areas. In the Central Highlands, primarily inhabited by Hazaras, *firman*s were granted to Kuchi tribes that included both the low and high pastures, although in the 1920s, Kuchi were ordered to allow Hazaras access to the pastures around their settlements expanding in the 1960s to wider areas beyond the villages.<sup>5</sup>

Following the closure of the Soviet border with Afghanistan in the 1930s, Kuchi fulfilled an important trading role using camels to transport goods to the north of the country.<sup>6</sup> In the 1950s, the road system expanded resulting in both a shift from camel caravans to trucking and increased competition for those remaining Kuchi transporting goods by animals.<sup>7</sup> In the 1960s, the 'Pashtunistan' dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the formers irredentist claims to Pashtun areas in Pakistan led to the closure of the border and Kuchis being '*cut-off from their winter grazing grounds and ..... forced either to abandon pastoralism or relocate to winter grazing areas within Afghanistan,*' leading to a further number of Kuchis entering the transportation business.<sup>8</sup>

In 1978, the communist People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power in the Saur Revolution and almost immediately began implementing land and social reforms, which led to a backlash from wealthy landowners and religious conservatives culminating in a national insurgency

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<sup>5</sup> Wily, Liz, 'Recommended Strategy for Conflict Resolution of Competing High Pasture Claims of Settled and Nomadic Communities in Afghanistan,' United National Environment Programme, 2009, p.10.

<sup>6</sup> Pain, Adam and Goodhand, Jonathan, 'Current Employment and Socio-Economic Situation and Prospects,' International Labour Organisation – In Focus Program on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, Working Paper 8, March 2002, pp. 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.5.

<sup>8</sup> De Weijer, Frauke, 'Afghanistan's Kuchi Pastoralists: Change and Adaptation,' *Nomadic Peoples*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 2007; pp.9-37. p.21.

or *jihad* led by *Mujahideen* factions and financed by foreign powers. The land reforms impacted Kuchi as the favourable land titles awarded to the Kuchi approximately 90 years before were overturned in the broad land reforms of the late 1970s and early 1980s. These land reforms combined with the emergence of ethno-centric armed *Mujahideen* factions and coordination councils, such as the *Shura-ye-Ittefaq* (Council of Harmony) in the Central Highlands, severely limited or denied Kuchi access to pastures.<sup>9</sup>

The Pashtun-dominated Taliban movement captured Kabul in September 1996 and were seen to actively support the land claims of the Pashtun Kuchi. In Hazarajat, Bamyán City was captured by the Taliban in September 1998 leading to the return of the Kuchi after an almost twenty year absence. Reports at the time suggested that migratory Kuchi leaders demanded '20 years' back rent from local Hazaras as compensation for losses incurred during Soviet occupation and the ensuing civil war.<sup>10</sup>

Access to pastures is intrinsically linked to Kuchi's livelihoods, and as has happened so often in the past, is affected by the national political environment. In the 1890s, the primarily Pashtun Kuchi received preferential land title under Emir Abdur Rahman's policy of installing loyal populations in rebellious or potentially rebellious areas. In the late 1970s, ethnic minorities were courted by the communist regime concurrently with the emergence of ethnocentric *Mujahideen* factions, resulting in reduced access for Kuchi to traditional pastures. Twenty years later, the Taliban regime re-exerted the primacy of (Pashtun) Kuchi claims to pastures across the parts of the country they controlled – a situation that was to change again in the post-2001 environment.

The fall of the Taliban regime was followed by the empowerment of the Northern Alliance – a loose coalition of armed factions primarily composed of ethnic minorities from the centre and north of the country. The transitional government and its successor administrations contained leading members of the ethno-centric factions who had defeated the Taliban with the assistance of international, primarily United States, military force. National patronage networks were promptly established as the international presence in Kabul began to expand and development funds began to flow. In areas including Hazarajat, the newly empowered ethnic minorities were again able to deny or limit access to migratory Kuchis, which coincided with large scale rehabilitation and development funds being committed to the national infrastructure as well as health and education, primarily targeting settled communities leading Kuchi leaders to complain of the marginalisation of the Kuchi communities due to the lack of dedicated clinics, schools and services catering to the Kuchi population.<sup>11</sup> According to the 2008, National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 54% of Kuchi live in absolute poverty, compared to the national average of 30%. Many Kuchi leaders believe that the poor socio-economic plight of the Kuchi is a result of the lack of access to pasture resulting from 'conflict, environmental, demographic, economic and social and political factors over the past three decades.'<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Rasanayagam, Angelo, 'Afghanistan: A Modern History,' I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, (2005), pp.131-132.

<sup>10</sup> Hunt, Luke 'Taliban leads Afghan gypsies back home after 20 years,' Agence France Presse, 19 June 1999, available at: [www.reliefweb.int/node/48575](http://www.reliefweb.int/node/48575)

<sup>11</sup> IRIN News, 'Kuchi nomads seek a better deal,' 18 February 2010. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=76794>

<sup>12</sup> IRIN News, 'Kuchi population complain of marginalisation,' 23 November 2010. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=91172>



## 1.4 Project Methodology

The baseline information was collected through a quantitative survey and focus group discussions during 10 days of fieldwork in the Kabul New City area, which included the districts of Deh Sabz and Qarabagh in Kabul province and Bagram and Charikar in Parwan province.

This quantitative fieldwork helped us identify (and benchmark) the specific political, sociological, and economic contexts in which the GKD project operates:

- A social and economic quantitative “Kuchi Questionnaire” of 30 close-ended and pre-coded questions covering personal profile, household income sources, migratory patterns and sedentarisation, nomadic way of life and seasonality, perceptions of insecurity and relations with local villages;
- A social and economic quantitative “Household Questionnaire” of 17 close-ended and pre-coded questions to local non-Kuchi village occupants covering personal profile, household income sources and relations with local Kuchi populations.

Upon finalization of the draft questionnaires with JICA staff, a series of two pilot tests was conducted in Dari and Pashto in Kabul (in *Company Livestock Market = 42% of Kuchi traders during Summer*) and included both quantitative and qualitative questionnaires and interview guidelines. As survey standards require, the results of the pilot tests were used to refine the research tools and produce final questionnaires.

The review team interviewed a similar number of respondents in two targeted areas. With such samples, we were able: 1) to provide indicative trends with a satisfactory margin of confidence; 2) to tailor our recommendations to the specific socio-economic profile of each targeted area; 3) to draw comparisons and do benchmarks between the two targeted areas.

Key informant interviews with government, NGOs and community leaders were also conducted in Deh Sabz and Kabul to triangulate the information from the surveys and focus groups.

**Table 1.1: Sampling per Targeted Area**

Targeted Areas	Kuchi	Non-Kuchi
Charikar, Bagram, Qarabagh	92	120
Deh Sabz	212	180
Sub-total	304	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>602</b>	

**Monitoring:** After completion of the quantitative fieldwork, an independent M&E team monitored 20% of the questionnaires (phone interviews).

**Data Entry:** The same team also monitored 20% of the questionnaires (after the data entry phase) to check that the questionnaires were correctly entered.

**Fieldwork Team:** The project commenced at the beginning of October 2011 and was completed by mid-December 2011. The fieldwork took place in the districts of Deh Sabz and Qarabagh in Kabul

province and Charikar and Bagram in Parwan province. The research team consisted of two international consultants, two national team leaders from Kabul, and two teams of national interviewers each totalling five people, selected on the basis of their previous experience as surveyors and researchers.

Nine separate focus group discussions evenly apportioned across the GKD area were organized with Kuchi community leaders. In addition, to the focus groups an international consultant held key informant interviews with Kuchi leaders, government officials and NGOs working in the GKD area.

## 1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is divided into five chapters and structured as follows. Chapter 1 provides the background on Kabul New City and the objectives of the research together with an introduction to the Kuchi population of Afghanistan. The second chapter details the socio-economic position of the Kuchi population in Deh Sabz, Qarabagh, Bagram and Charikar, including gender, household size, sources of household income and education.

Chapter 3 maps the Kuchi population within the Kabul New City area, the migratory routes of the Kuchi population and provides an overview of sedentarisation patterns of the Kuchi. Chapter 4 attempts to explain the local contextual dynamics between the Kuchi population (both sedentary and migratory) and the local residents with a specific focus on land and diminishing pastures.

Chapter 5 then details the possible impact of the project, together with a series of recommendations and proposed communication channels with the local Kuchi population.



**Photo 1: The Bagram Road through Deh Sabz**

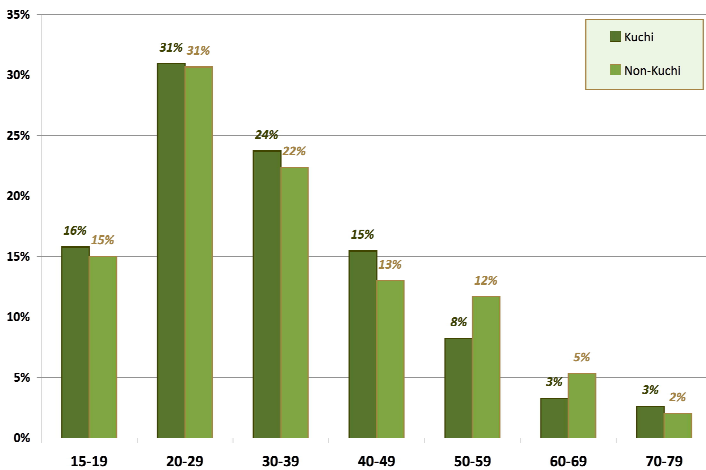
# 2.

## Socio-economic Overview

The following section provides a socio-economic overview of the Kuchi communities within the Greater Kabul Development area after having surveyed 304 Kuchi and 300 non-Kuchi community members in the districts of Deh Sabz and Qarabagh in Kabul Province and Bagram and Chaharikar districts in Parwan Province (for complete list of communities, please see Table 2.3).

### 2.1 Age Structure and Gender Breakdown

The average age of the Kuchi respondents is 32.5 years, slightly below the average age of the non-Kuchi population at 34.1. According to the UNDP, an estimated 68% of the Afghan population is under the age of 25 with the differences in the figures most likely a result of the survey being conducted during the daytime, when young working males from both Kuchi and non-Kuchi populations were reported to be either working as labourers in urban areas or tending fields or livestock in the surrounding pastures.<sup>13</sup>



As Figure 2.1 illustrates, respondents aged between 20 and 29 represent the largest group by age bracket approximating 31% of the total survey group. In several instances, numerous visits to the same Kuchi camps had to be undertaken in order to survey male Kuchi community members. Especially in nomadic camps, the young males were often with their grazing animals leaving only Kuchi women and young children in the camps.

**Figure 2.1: Age Breakdown by Respondent Group**

In place of random sampling, an attempt was made to survey women in both respondent groups and as Table 2.1 details, the number of Kuchi women amounted to 30%, while non-Kuchi women totalled 23%.

**Table 2.1: Gender Ratio**

	Male	Female	Total	Frequency
<b>Kuchi</b>	70%	30%	100%	304
<b>Non-Kuchi</b>	77%	23%	100%	300

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Development Program, National Joint Youth Program, [http://www.undp.org.af/whoware/undpinafghanistan/Projects/dcse/prj\\_youth.htm](http://www.undp.org.af/whoware/undpinafghanistan/Projects/dcse/prj_youth.htm)

## 2.2 Ethnicity, Tribe and Migratory Status

Of the 304 Kuchis surveyed in Deh Sabz, Qarabagh, Bagram and Charikar 100% declared themselves to be of Pashtun ethnicity. The term Kuchi is often deemed to be synonymous with Pashtun pastoralists, however Afghanistan's ethnic minorities also have sizeable nomadic populations. In contrast, the non-Kuchi survey group was comprised of 56% Pashtuns, 43% Tajiks and 1% Hazaras. In a 2002 rapid assessment of Deh Sabz by UNHCR, approximately 70% of the population was deemed to be Pashtun and 30% Tajik. Both figures suggest a large Pashtun majority in the district.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2.2: Surveyed Tribe by Location (breakdown by migratory status)**

Village / Area	Way of Life	Kabul		Parwan		Total	Tribe	Households <sup>15</sup>
		Deh Sabz	Qara bagh	Bagram	Charikar			
Baba Qashkhar	Nomadic	5				5	Tarakhel	5
Bakhtyaran	Nomadic	9				9	Tarakhel	10
Barik Ab	Nomadic		10			10	Tarakhel	45
	Sedentary		4			4	Tarakhel	5
Khumari Khel <sup>16</sup>	Nomadic						Khumari Khel	500
Dasht-e Barikab	Nomadic		16			16	Tarakhel	50
Dasht-e Deh Sabz	Nomadic	15				15	Tarakhel	10
Deh-yehya	Nomadic	19				19	Hussain Khel	33
	Sedentary	1				1	Hussain Khel	2
Isa Khel	Sedentary	8				8	Isa Khel	120**
Jaru	Nomadic	10				10	Tarakhel	20
Jeeran	Nomadic	13				13	Tarakhel	20
	Sedentary	16				16	Ahmadzai	20
Katakhel	Nomadic	13				13	Tarakhel	20
	Sedentary	8				8	Tarakhel	15
Khankhel	Sedentary	15				15	Khan Khel	120**
Kharoti	Sedentary	4				4	Kharoti	5
Nawabad Deh-e Meskin	Nomadic				25	25	Shinwari	175
	Sedentary				5	5	Shinwari	25
Paymonar	Sedentary	5				5	Pero Khel	120**
Pero Khel	Sedentary	2				2	Pero Khel	120**
Qala e Fazel	Nomadic	11				11	Ahmadzai	
Safed Blandi	Nomadic	6				6	Tarakhel	30
	Sedentary	25				25	Tarakhel	220
Sangab	Nomadic	8				8	Niazi	5
	Sedentary	16				16	Ahmadzai	15
Sar-i Pul Barikab	Sedentary			31		31	Kharoti	350
Shekho	Nomadic	4				4	Nasir/Omarkhel	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>211</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>1226</b>

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR Sub-Office Central Region District Profile, Deh Sabz, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> The Isa Khel, Khan Khel and Pero Khel tribes together comprise the figure of 120 households.

<sup>16</sup> The Khumar Khel tribe is located near the border between Qarabagh and Deh Sabz. Tribal elders were unwilling to answer survey questions as they believed that the results may lead to them be evicted from government land despite assurances as to the nature of the survey. A focus group discussion was held in place of the survey.

Of the surveyed Kuchi population, 54% considered themselves to be nomadic, while 46% were sedentary. As will be discussed in Section 3.2, migratory and sedentarisation patterns have been significantly altered in the past thirty years as a result of conflict, the politicisation of ethnicity and the socio-economic needs of the Kuchi population. In Deh Sabz, there appears to be a discernible trend towards sedentary or semi-sedentary livelihoods as distinct from a purely nomadic lifestyle. A deliberate attempt was made to survey migratory Kuchi populations in order to locate migration routes and understand the challenges associated with long-range migrations.

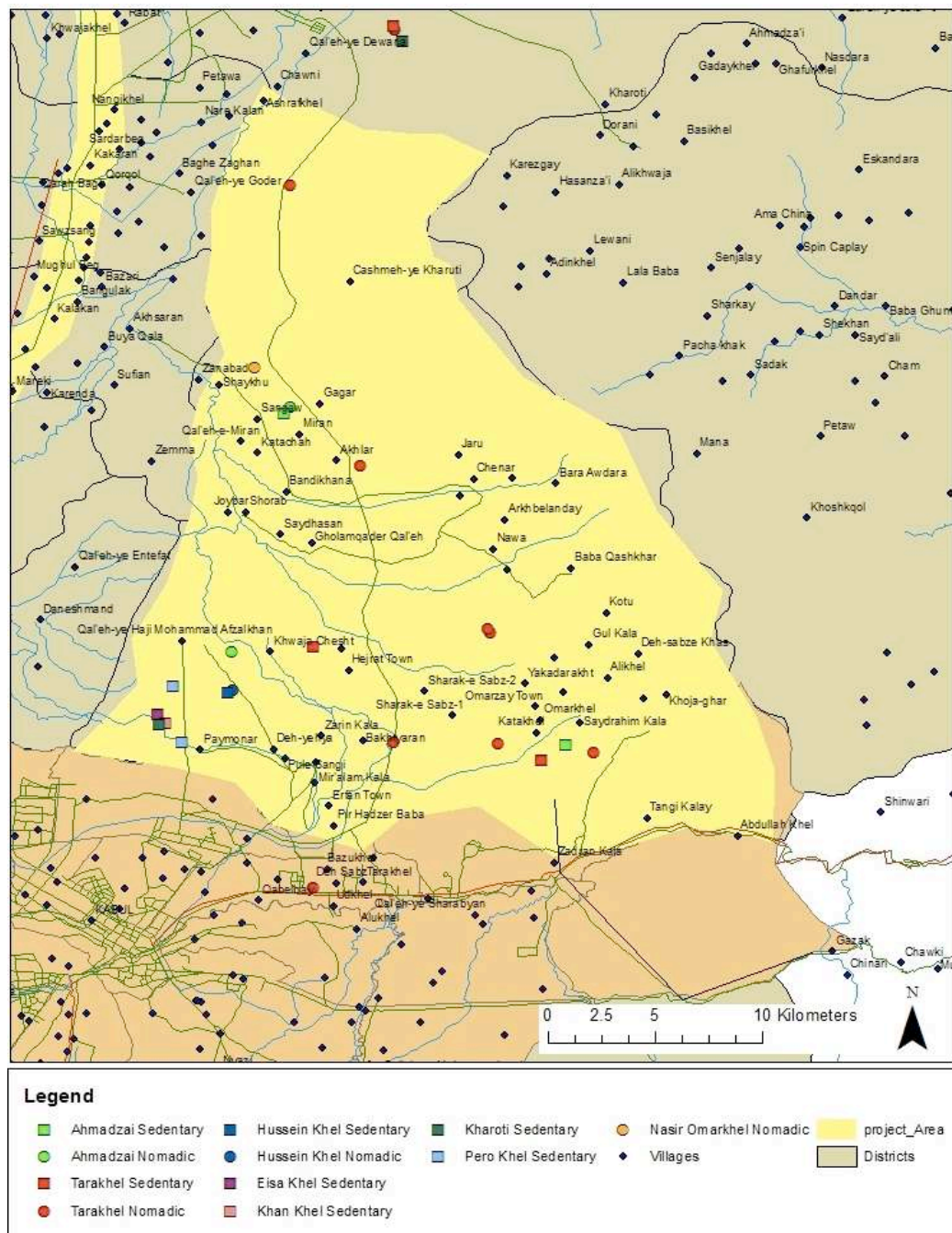


Figure 2.2: Location of Surveyed Kuchi (by tribe)



The survey was conducted in late September when many of the nomadic Kuchi tribes are on the verge of returning to warmer climates in Laghman and Nangahar provinces. A pre-survey mapping exercise was conducted to locate the Kuchi tribes prior to the commencement of the survey as in many instances the communities can number only a handful of households and are located in the more remote areas of Dasht-e Deh Sabz and Barik Ab.

As Table 2.2 and Figure 2.2 illustrate, Kuchi are primarily located outside of established villages and in the south of Deh Sabz district. The majority of Kuchi settlements are to be found in the Dasht-e Deh Sabz area to the southeast near Kata Khel and north to Baba Qashkar as well as in the Payminor area bordering Shakar Dara district. Further Kuchi settlements are to be found north of Bandikhana village in Barik Ab.

The number of households was calculated by asking tribal elders and triangulating the result by counting the number of tents or habitable structures with one tent or structure representing one household. In total, the number of households surveyed was estimated to be 1,226. Considering the timing of the survey, when some Kuchi tribes may have already returned to Laghman or Nangahar and others may be located in small and remote locations, the figure should be considered as a representative sample, rather than a comprehensive count of the Kuchi population.

## 2.3 Household Composition and Sources of Income

Table 2.3 (below) details both the average size of households among migratory and sedentary Kuchis as well as non-Kuchi residents. For both nomadic and sedentary Kuchis, the average household size is approximately 11.3 compared to 10.5 for non-Kuchis with slightly more than half (54%) of Kuchi household members below the age of 18.

**Table 2.3: Average Household Size (breakdown by age and respondent group)**

	Kuchis			Non-Kuchi
	Nomadic	Sedentary	Kuchi Average	
<b>Males (18+)</b>	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.9
<b>Females (18+)</b>	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
<b>Males (-18)</b>	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.7
<b>Females (-18)</b>	3.1	3.0	3.1	2.4
<b>Average Household Size</b>	11.3	11.4	11.3	10.5
<b>Frequency</b>	164	140	304	300

Table 2.4 provides an indication of the participation by gender and age bracket to household income. The figures have been calculated by dividing the number of household members that were reported to contribute to household income by the total number of household members by age and gender. The table shows the very low level of reported participation by women in formal or recognized income generating activities with the highest reported level reaching 0.8% among women over 18 in non-Kuchi households. Despite relative high levels of female respondents (30% Kuchi; 23% Non-Kuchi), traditional female income generating activities including embroidery and carpet making do not appear to be significant earners for families, which key informants declared



was a result of limited market access, declining quality over recent years and an inability of women to sell their own wares – a task that is normally undertaken by a male family member.

Nomadic Kuchi males had the highest participation rate at 87.7%. The low levels of reported participation in income generation activities by males less than 18 years is most likely explained in both nomadic and sedentary communities by their role assisting the head of the household in herding or other agricultural activities, rather than directly contributing to household income.

**Table 2.4: Percentage of Each Age Bracket Contributing to Household Income (breakdown by gender)**

	Nomadic	Sedentary	Non-Kuchis
<b>Males (18+)</b>	87.7%	70.9%	69.8%
<b>Females (18+)</b>	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%
<b>Males (-18)</b>	1.4%	1.0%	0.4%
<b>Females (-18)</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Frequency</b>	164	140	300
<b>Average Monthly Household income (Afs)</b>	11,238	9,579	12,339

The average monthly household income is also displayed in Table 2.5. From 300 non-Kuchi respondents, the average household income was reported as 12,339 Afs (US\$263). Among Kuchi households, nomadic households reported higher income levels (11,238 Afs; US\$239) than sedentary households (9,579Afs; US\$204). A possible explanation, which was supported during interviews with Kuchi families, is that the sedentarisation process often involves the need to sell livestock in order to buy land or construct dwellings, which will have the effect of reducing monthly income. Herd sizes are smaller for sedentary Kuchis (see Section 2.4) and supplementing this loss of income with alternative occupations, such as day labouring, is likely to involve a transition period.

**Table 2.5: Kuchi Income Generating Activities (male only)**

Income Activity	Nomadic	Sedentary
<b>Herder (Livestock Owner)</b>	72.3%	31.6%
<b>Daily worker</b>	22.7%	55.8%
<b>Trader / Dealer</b>	2.5%	1.1%
<b>Herder (Non-Livestock Owner)</b>	0.0%	2.1%
<b>Other</b>	2.5%	9.5%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Frequency</b>	119	95

As there was minimal reported female participation towards household income, Table 2.5 provides a breakdown of male income generating activities. Of those respondents who declared an income generating activity, 72% of nomadic Kuchi considered themselves to be livestock herders, whereas only 31.6% of sedentary Kuchis declared the same. The figures appear to confirm a reduced dependency on livestock as Kuchis become sedentary and explore other livelihoods alternatives. Nomadic households also rely on day labour to supplement their incomes, most likely due to the close proximity of Kabul City and the availability of short-term employment while either migrating through Deh Sabz or establishing settlements in the district for six months of the year.

Day labouring in Kabul City, the brick kilns of Deh Sabz or in agriculture was reported by 55.8% of male sedentary respondents as their primary source of income. Considering the high levels of illiteracy and absence of formal skill sets, such as carpentry and metalwork, day labouring remains the only option for many male family members. Other responses included small shop owners, mullahs, drivers, masons and one NGO worker.

## 2.4 Livestock

Livestock is integral to the Kuchi way of life. Both household income and wealth, particularly among migratory Kuchis, are highly dependent on livestock numbers. The Kuchi's traditional role as pastoralists is also important to the national economy. It has been estimated that 35% of all Afghanistan's exports are related to livestock and that Kuchis own 'around 30 to 50 per cent of the national herd.'<sup>17</sup>



**Photo 2: A Kuchi herder (top) near Katakhel area and a Tarakhel herder in Dasht-e Deh Sabz**



The size of a flock, beyond an indicator of wealth, is also a primary factor in the decision to sedentarise. According to a 2004 report on nomadic pastoralists, 'it takes at least forty sheep to support a family,' and households owning less than that number were 'forced to sell animals faster than they could reproduce them,' and 'were eventually forced to sedentarise and leave the pastoral economy.' Assuming that food, commodity and transport prices have risen at a faster rate than

<sup>17</sup> De Weijer, Frauke, 'Afghanistan's Kuchi Pastoralists: Change and Adaptation,' *Nomadic Peoples*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 2007; pp.9-37.

livestock, the size of a sustainable flock size has most likely increased above 40 animals.<sup>18</sup> The issue of livestock is intricately linked to the availability of pasture. A Taraki tribal elder, who has recently bought land to settle in Dasht-e Deh Sabz, explains the predicament facing the Kuchi:

*“If the Kuchis don’t have pastures they are like a carcass because we don’t have any other crops, income and trade to satisfy our family. We only have the animals to satisfying our livelihoods and we can’t buy food for 300 sheep ..... If we sell all the animals we can't find any job to satisfy us because we don’t have other skills because this job (raising livestock) was inherited from our parents. We have bought the land here to build a house and we’ve decided to live here permanently.”*

The difficulty of accessing pastures has also led to approximately 350 households of the Kharoti tribe deciding to settle in the Sarepul-Barekab area of Bagram district after previously migrating from Laghman through Tagab (Kapisa). A tribal elder, described the financial difficulties facing migratory Kuchis primarily resulting from the lack of available pasture:

*“If there are no pastures for Kuchis in the future, we will face lots of financial difficulties. Now we take our animals very far from here, and if there are no pastures we can’t afford grass, so our animals become thin and sick and we must sell them very cheap and it is a big problem for us. If we find pastures during the migration, the people don’t allow us to use them. For just one or two days it is not a problem but our animals need access to pastures more often than every two days.”*

Table 2.6 details the percentage ownership, average flock size for both 2010 and 2011 and the percentage change of the number of sheep, goats, donkeys, cows and camels among both migratory and sedentary Kuchis respondents.

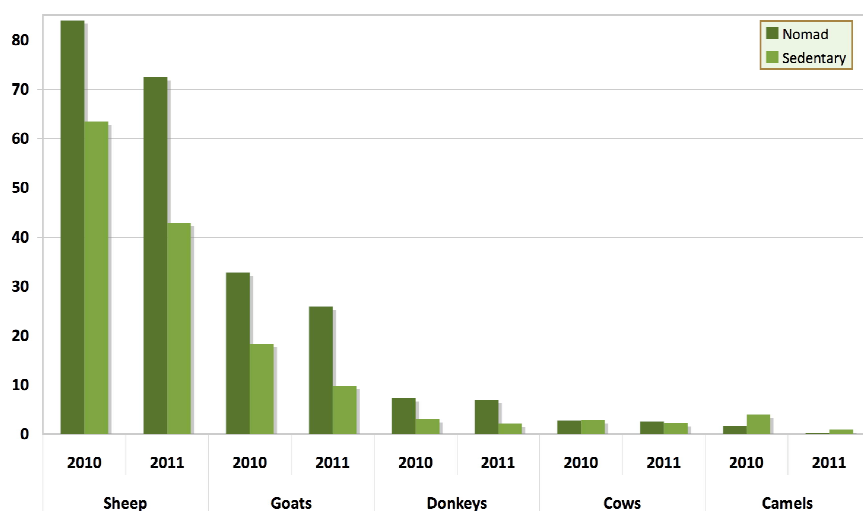
**Table 2.6: Livestock Ownership (breakdown by migratory/sedentary)**

Livestock		Migratory	Sedentary	Average
<b>Sheep</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	87.8%	52.1%	71.4%
	<b>2011 Average No.</b>	72.5	42.9	62.5
	<b>2010 Average No.</b>	84.0	63.5	76.6
	<b>% Change</b>	-13.7%	-32.4%	-18.4%
<b>Goats</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	47.6%	21.4%	35.5%
	<b>2011 Average No.</b>	26	10	21
	<b>2010 Average No.</b>	32.8	18.4	28.4
	<b>% Change</b>	-21.0%	-46.6%	-24.4%
<b>Donkeys</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	66.5%	12.1%	41.4%
	<b>2011 Average No.</b>	7.0	2.2	6.3
	<b>2010 Average No.</b>	7.4	3.1	6.8
	<b>% Change</b>	-4.9%	-28.9%	-6.5%
<b>Cows</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	28.7%	47.1%	37.2%
	<b>2011 Average No.</b>	2.6	2.3	2.4
	<b>2010 Average No.</b>	2.8	2.8	2.8
	<b>% Change</b>	-7.3%	-18.6%	-14.0%
<b>Camels</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	3.7%	0.7%	2.3%
	<b>2011 Average No.</b>	0.2	1.0	1.4
	<b>2010 Average No.</b>	1.7	4.0	2.0
	<b>% Change</b>	-90.0%	-75.0%	-28.6%

<sup>18</sup> D’Souza, Anna, ‘Rising Food Prices and Declining Food Security: Evidence From Afghanistan,’ Amber Waves, US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, September 2011. Available at: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/September11/Features/AfghanistanFoodSecurity.htm>

For all Kuchi respondents, livestock ownership has decreased, although the change is more apparent among sedentary Kuchis. A series of droughts over the past ten years is partially responsible reducing available pastures and increasing competition for the remaining accessible areas. As previously migratory Kuchis become sedentary, flocks are reduced to buy land and/or construct dwellings and the pastures in Deh Sabz are apparently unable to support large numbers of livestock for extended periods of time. For example, livestock ownership among sedentary Kuchis is significantly lower than migratory Kuchis with approximately one in two households owning sheep and only one in five having goats, compared to 87.8% and 47.6% of migratory Kuchis respectively. Similarly, the average flock size has decreased for both sheep (-32.4%) and goats (-46.6%) over the past 12 months. Goats, in addition to cows, provide an important source of income through the

production of cheese, yoghurt and ghee, which is often traded or sold with local villagers. The sale of livestock to local villagers is particularly pronounced during the important Islamic holiday of *Eid Al-Adha*, when primarily sheep and goats are sacrificed in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ismail.



**Figure 2.7: Livestock Ownership (breakdown by migratory status)**

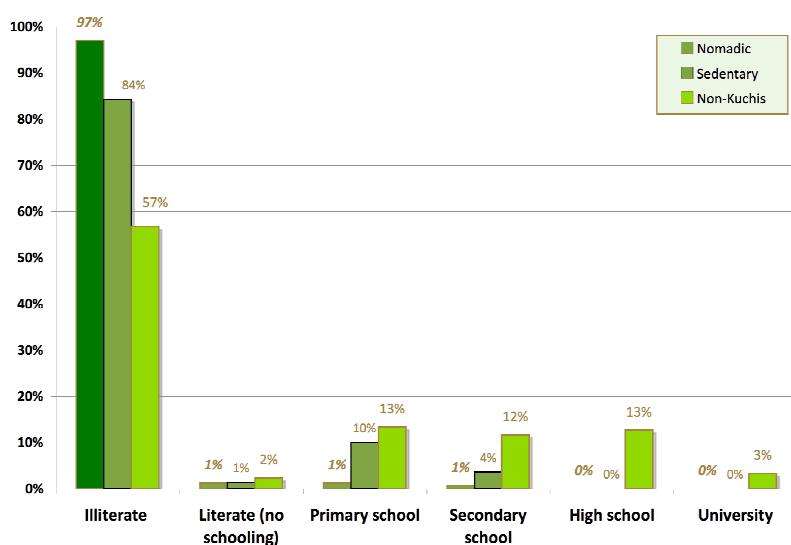
Donkeys and camels are primarily used for transportation during migration, to access the local bazaar and according to several Kuchi interviewed in Deh Sabz, to transport the sick to the clinic. Increasing numbers of Kuchi are using hired trucks to transport livestock and baggage between Laghman and Deh Sabz, which has meant that camel ownership has decreased in recent years. Approximately 4% of migratory Kuchis declared their ownership of camels and less than 1% of the sedentary population. Figure 2.3 graphically illustrates the decrease in livestock ownership among respondents from the sedentary and migratory Kuchi population.

## 2.5 Education

The migratory lifestyle of the Kuchis is not conducive to accessing a formal education. Although dedicated schools, occasionally complete with boarding facilities are present in numerous provinces, including Pul-i Alam, the capital of Logar province, in Deh Sabz there are only four dedicated classes for Kuchis in Payminor area. According to the Department of Education (DoEd) in Deh Sabz, there are an estimated 100 Kuchi children (believed to be migratory or recently sedentarised) attending formal schooling in the district out of a total number of 23, 477 students. The difficulty in accessing

education for migratory Kuchis is the timing of their migration. The Kuchis arrive in Deh Sabz in late April, a month after the commencement of the school year, and leave in late September, a month prior to the end of the curriculum and two months before the end of the formal examination period. Although dedicated Kuchi classes and schools take account of migratory patterns, including condensed learning and offering boarding facilities, households accessing the services remain limited in Deh Sabz.

For illiterate children under the age of ten that are from recently settled Kuchi communities, they are able to commence their education from grade two, while illiterate children over the age of ten are uniquely able to access literacy classes, according to the DoED. An elder from the Niazi tribe who intends on settling permanently in the Sangab area of Deh Sabz next year, claimed that the primary



reason for his community's decision to settle is that the *'only thing we care about is our children and that they should go to school.'* Access to formal education, however, may prove difficult as many recently sedentarised Kuchis have bought land in comparatively remote locations far from local schools. A similar sentiment was expressed by an elder from the Kharoti tribe that has recently settled in Sarepul-Barik Ab area of Bagram:

**Figure 2.8: Education Levels (breakdown by type)**

*"We have a permanent life here now, firstly we need a school, because nomads are backward and illiterate, we don't want education for ourselves because we are old now, but our youth need education, and now we pay for elders in the mosque to teach our children."*

Education for both girls and boys was reported in field interviews as among the primary motivators to sedentarise, which was viewed as creating opportunities beyond the traditional herding of livestock.

As Figure 2.8 illustrates, high rates of illiteracy were recorded for migratory (97%) and sedentary (84%) Kuchis, significantly greater than non-Kuchi respondents (57%). Only 2% of migratory Kuchis reported a formal education, while 14% of sedentarised Kuchis had attended either primary or secondary school, compared with 41% of non-Kuchis in the GKD target area.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), an NGO, is working to increase access to education for Kuchi children through community based schooling (CBS) and a co-ordination mechanism



between dedicated Kuchi schools at both ends of the migratory route.<sup>19</sup> Other methods to increase access to education under consideration by SCA for the Kuchi are condensed learning classes and rapid learning, with a particular focus on grade three, which may be expanded to grade five – commonly considered to be a gauge of ‘social literacy.’



**Photo 3: Interviews with Katakhel Kuchi and local residents near Shekho**

<sup>19</sup> The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) has recently received donor funds to implement education projects for Kuchi children. Please see: Swedish Committee for Afghanistan Press Release, ‘SCA receives big donation for education of Kuchi children,’ 22 November 2011. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/node/460747>



# 3.

## Kuchi Tribes and Migratory Routes

The Kuchi population of Deh Sabz is solely composed of ethnic Pashtuns. According to the Independent Directorate of Kuchi Affairs (IDKA) there are an estimated 40,000 Kuchi present in Deh Sabz during the first month of spring when the Kuchi are most numerous.<sup>20</sup>

In recent years there appears to be an apparent trend towards sedentarisation as the reported difficulties of nomadic life have meant many Kuchi communities have opted for the socio-economic security associated with sedentary living. At the same time both migratory and semi-sedentary communities (those that migrate within the province or district rather than across provincial boundaries) have faced increasing difficulties in maintaining current livestock numbers in the face of ever decreasing access to pastures.

This chapter discusses in detail the primary Kuchi tribes in Deh Sabz and the Barik Ab area, the reasons behind the trend towards sedentarisation and the migratory routes of migratory and semi-sedentary Kuchi.

### 3.1. Kuchi Tribes in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab<sup>21</sup>

Pashtuns possess an arguably greater sense of tribe or clan than other ethnicities in Afghanistan. Pashtuns will often self-identify via sub-tribe and tribal leaders commonly possess an intricate understanding of their lineage. The tribal system is a complex myriad of tribes, sub tribes and clans that are commonly divided into four tribal confederations: Sarbani; Ghilzai; Ghurghusht and Karlanai.

The **Ghilzai** confederation is reportedly the largest in Afghanistan, but it has been the Durrani who have held the most influence over the last 250 years. Kuchi in Afghanistan are mostly derived from the Ghilzai confederation and are particularly present in the triangle between Loya Paktia, Nangahar province and Kabul. Attempts at the 'Pashtunisation' of the north in the late nineteenth century by Shah Abdur Rahman, was undertaken by the forced and incentivised relocation of primarily Ghilzai

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<sup>20</sup> The Independent Directorate of Kuchi Affairs (IDKA) also estimated that the Kuchi population of Afghanistan was five million individuals – a figure that is approximately double the figure calculated by the 2004/5 government endorsed National Multi-Sectoral Assessment on Kuchi, which arrived at a figure of 2,426, 304. The figure provided by IDKA should be considered as indicative at best. The survey conducted by Samuel Hall in late September 2011 interviewed 29 Kuchi communities in Deh Sabz, Qarabagh, Bagram and Charikar districts, which accounted for a population of approximately 13,854 individuals. It is acknowledged that not all Kuchi settlements were surveyed due to the remoteness and size of some of the smaller communities as well as the likelihood that some of the communities may have already started the migration back to Laghman and Nangahar.

<sup>21</sup> A complete list of Kuchi tribes and the number of individuals surveyed per communities is to be found in Table 2.3.

Pashtuns in areas including current day Kunduz, Baghlan, Balkh and Baghdis. Within the GKD area the majority of the Kuchi tribes hail from the Ghilzai confederation:

- The **Tarakhel** tribe are the most populous and influential tribe in Deh Sabz. According to both Tarakhel tribal elders and IDKA, Deh Sabz has been the traditional migratory pastureland of the Tarakhel tribe for more than a century. The largest urban area in Deh Saba is named after the Tarakhel, comprised of a large sedentary as well as migratory population. The Tarakhel are a sub-tribe of the Sahak – an influential tribe in neighbouring Surobi. The Tarakhel comprised 49.5% of the total number of surveyed Kuchi.
- **Ahmadzai** Kuchi are located in the area near Jeeran. The Ahmadzai are a traditional nomadic population that are found across eastern, southeastern and northern Afghanistan. In the project area there are also several Ahmadzai sub-tribes including the **Isa Khel** (*Isa Khel Village*) and **Hussain Khel** (*Deh-yehya Area*).
- Other Ghilzai tribes include the **Kharoti** (*Kharoti Village, Deh Sabz; Sar-i Pul Barikab area, Bagram*), **Niazi** (*Sangab Area*) and **Nasir** (*Shekho*).

The Sarbani confederation is reportedly the largest Pashtun tribal confederation in Pakistan and Afghanistan and is dominated by the **Durrani** tribe. With only brief exceptions, the Durrani have held the reigns of power in Afghanistan since 1747 when Ahmad Shah Durrani was selected as Shah by a Loya Jirga – or council of leading tribal elders. The Durrani are geographically centred in the south of Afghanistan and more specifically in Kandahar province. In the GKD area the following Sarbani tribes were surveyed:

- The **Shinwari** tribe, originating from Nangahar province and viewed as Eastern Sarbani. There are both sedentary and nomadic Shinwari in the Nawabad Deh-e Meskin of Charikar district, Parwan. The **Pero Khel** is a sub-tribe of the Shinwari and have recently settled in the Paymonar area in the southwest of Deh Sabz.

The **Karlanai** (also Karlyani) confederation is present in the Loya Paktia area (Khost, Paktika and Paktia) with two of the larger and influential tribes including the Wardak and Zadran tribes, concentrated in Wardak and Paktika provinces, respectively.

- In the GKD area, the **Khumari Khel** tribe is located near the border of Qarabagh and Deh Sabz and are intending to permanently settle in the area according to tribal elders.

The **Gharghasht** confederation is less numerous and influential than the Durrani and are also primarily concentrated in the south with a large part of Ghurghast located in Pakistan. Some of the leading Gharghasht tribes include the Kakar and Safi tribes. There were no surveyed Gharghasht tribes in the GKD area.

## 3.2. Sedentarisation

Sedentarisation is the process whereby migratory Kuchi forgo nomadic life in favour of sedentary or semi-sedentary livelihoods. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions in Deh Sabz, Qarabagh and Kabul City suggest that an increasing number of previously migratory Kuchi have become sedentary in the last ten years due to several social and economic considerations. Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of the years that sedentary Kuchi claimed to have first settled in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab.

**Table 3.1: Year of Sedentarisation**

Year of Sedentarisation	Frequency	Percentage
1971-1980	1	0.7%
1981-1990	3	2.1%
1991-2000	16	11.4%
2001-2006	62	44.3%
2007-2011	58	41.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the 140 respondents declaring themselves to be sedentary Kuchi, 85.7% ceased a migratory lifestyle in the last ten years. Although sedentarisation is not an irreversible process, there appears to be few, if any, communities that returned to their former nomadic lifestyle. When the same respondents were asked whether they will remain in the same area,

move to another area within the district or return to a nomadic lifestyle, 94% declared that they will remain in their current location and not move, 6% stated that they will stay in the same area but move to a better location, while no respondents reported an interest in returning to a nomadic lifestyle.

**Table 3.2: Risks to Kuchi Communities (breakdown by current location and during migration)**

Risks	All Kuchi – in Deh Sabz/ Barik Ab	Migratory Kuchi during Migration
Commanders fighting	1.0%	1.6%
Illegal fee assessment	1.6%	2.6%
Insurgency activity	1.3%	1.6%
Landmines	2.0%	6.9%
Criminal theft of animals	3.0%	6.9%
ANSF activity	8.9%	3.9%
Conflicts with local communities	6.9%	7.9%
Land conversions	22.4%	23.4%
Animal diseases	48.0%	27.6%
Winter feed	64.8%	38.2%
Access to summer grazing	73.4%	37.5%
Drought	92.4%	50.3%
Access to water	96.4%	50.0%
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>164</b>

Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of the primary risks facing Kuchi in the area where they were surveyed as well as for Kuchi during their migration. The risks do not necessarily translate into reasons for migratory Kuchi to settle, but illustrate some of the most recognised challenges facing Kuchi communities – both migratory and sedentary. The risks associated with **insecurity**, as defined by local commanders fighting (1%), insurgent activity (1.3%), landmines (2%), ANSF operations (3.9%) and conflicts with local communities (6.9%), were reported to be a very minor concern in the GKD project area. For migratory Kuchi during their migration, insecurity was only reported to be a slightly higher concern.

For a Malik of the recently sedentarised Pero Khel tribe in Paymonar area, insecurity was a factor in their decision to settle in Deh Sabz: *'In this time nomadic life is difficult due to the security and*

*economic situation because along the migration road - there are land mines and some of our animals are stolen during the night and the road is dangerous.'*

Even though insecurity was not considered to be a particular concern or risk to Kuchi communities it was reported by 47.1% of Kuchi as a contributory reason as to why they decided to sedentarise (see Table 3.3).

**Land conversions** from pastoral land to residential or local agricultural use was viewed by almost a quarter of Kuchi in Deh Sabz as well as Kuchi during migrations as a major concern. More specifically, access to summer grazing areas was declared by almost three quarters of all respondents as a major concern in Deh Sabz (this will be discussed further in the following chapter) and by 37.5% of migratory Kuchi. An elder of the migratory Hussein Khel tribe with a camp in Deh-yehya sees a discernible break with the past: *'we didn't have any problems in the past because people were afraid of the desert and mountains and did not go there. Now our pastures are decreasing, which has created problems for us.'*



**Photo 4: The migratory Nasir tribe near Shekho**

**Access to traditional summer pastures** was also reported to be increasingly difficult as a result of widening ethno-political differences in Pansjhir, rising insecurity in the Ghorband Valley of Parwan province and a greater use of pastureland by local communities in both provinces. The almost yearly conflict between local Hazara communities and migratory Kuchi in Hazarajat in Central Afghanistan was cited during several interviews as an example of reduced access to pasture, though very few Kuchi tribes in Deh Sabz have a history of migrating to Hazarajat.

Within Deh Sabz, access to pasture is becoming an acute concern leading to tensions between local communities and Kuchi herdsmen as one migratory community leader from the Tarakhel tribe in Dasht-e Deh Sabz articulated, *'We didn't have any problems with the community before, but now we have merely because of the pasture. Day by day we are losing more pasture.'*

The reduced access to pastures, whether along the migratory route or within the Deh Sabz area also undermines the economic position of Kuchi households, thereby forcing some communities into sedentary living. For example, an elder from the Isa Khel tribe near the Payminor area, described the effect of the lack of pastureland for Kuchi:

*"All the people in Afghanistan know that Kuchi don't have a sedentary life and (they) also know that without pasture for our animals, our life becomes worse. If we don't have access to pasture our economy (finances) become weak because we can't feed our animals and our*

*animals are getting thinner and sick so that we will sell them at a low price. It harms our business and people don't buy the thin and sick animals."*

**Table 3.3: Reasons for Sedentarisation**

Reasons for Sedentarisation	Frequency	%
It was more and more difficult to cross borders	9	6.4%
We followed the decision of community leaders	28	20.0%
Increasing difficulty in accessing grazing land	32	22.9%
Did not like nomadic life anymore	63	45.0%
Nomadic life has become too dangerous	66	47.1%
For economic reasons	77	55.0%
We lost all our animals	97	69.3%
Frequency	140	

**Economic reasons** remain paramount to the decision to sedentarise. In Table 3.3 sedentary Kuchi respondents were asked which statements they agreed with. As the results show, the loss of livestock - the greatest determinant of

economic capital - was the factor mentioned by the largest number of Kuchi in their decision to sedentarise (69.3%), followed by the broader 'economic reasons,' (55%). The loss of livestock occurs due a variety of reasons including the aforementioned coping mechanisms during times of heightened food insecurity, such as prolonged droughts, but also due to theft during the migration, animals hit by vehicles, which apparently occurs somewhat frequently along the narrow Mahipar road through Surobi, as well as sickness due to the lack of adequate or formal veterinary care. Increased transportation costs of transporting animals and/or equipment between, for example Laghman and Deh Sabz, for Kuchi households no longer conducting the 10 to 15 day migration have also placed a heavy toll on household finances. For one household, varying dependent on the number of animals and/or equipment, costs can reach between 15,000 and 25,000 Afs ((US\$319 to US\$532).

Some of the greatest challenges facing sedentary and migratory Kuchi are the interconnected concerns of recurring droughts, **food insecurity** over the winter and limited access to water. As Table 3.2 illustrates 96.4% of Kuchi respondents in Deh Sabz and half of all migratory Kuchis listed access to water as a risk to their community – higher than any other risk option. The current drought and a series of droughts over the past ten years have placed severe pressures on household livelihoods and have often led to the force sale of livestock as coping mechanisms. In the Barik Ab area, a senior migratory Tarakhel elder, expanded on the challenges facing Kuchi:

*"The nomadic life was very good in the past time, but now it is very bad because there are many problems including insecurity, problems with local communities and access to pastures, fare problems, livestock illness. Before this every Kuchi household had 500 up to 600 livestock. Now the livestock of the Kuchi is half that of past times. It is because of the problems that we have. Due to this the Kuchi tried to buy lands and they have done it. And they live now in one specific place."*

Separately, in interviews in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab, recently sedentarised tribes or those intending to settle in the near future made a particular mention of **education** as an important factor in their decision. A tribal elder from the Niazi tribe in the Sangab area stated that the '*only thing we care about is our children and that they should go to school,*' which may explain why 45% of sedentary Kuchi agreed with the statement that they 'did not like nomadic life any longer.' A certain fatigue with nomadic life was also expressed by members of a small joint community of Nasir and Omar

Khel Kuchi in Sheko area of Deh Sabz, which was led by men primarily in their thirties, who wished to school their children and provide opportunities that were not made available to them by their parents and tribal elders. In a similar manner, access to **health** services along migratory routes or in often-remote summer or winter pasture areas remains limited. The issue was detailed by an elder of the nomadic Hussain Khel tribe in Dey Yehya, *'we have several social problems including the sickness of our women along the road of migration who give birth to a baby along the migration road.'* Sedentarisation was often viewed as a way to increase access and benefit from state education and health services following the difficulties of accessing such services as migratory Kuchi.

Finally, focus groups discussions also indicated that migratory Kuchi, whether previously in the refugee camps in Pakistan or via their migrations through Afghanistan, has witnessed the **comparative wealth of other communities'** increase, while their own communities had reportedly become poorer, creating a demonstrable incentive to sedentarise. The increase in the comparative wealth of other communities was believed to be a result of community development projects, such as the National Solidarity Program (NSP), but also a more positive economic environment for local villagers compared to the rigours of nomadic life.

### 3.3. Migratory Routes

Deh Sabz has traditionally been the summer pastureland of the Tarakhel tribe, according to both Tarakhel tribal elders and the IDKA. Kuchi tribes have reportedly been migrating to Deh Sabz for the last 400 years from the southeast and east of the country with the district reportedly being largely populated by sedentarising Kuchi, among other populations.<sup>22</sup> The Baba Khel tribe in Baba Qashkar village reportedly migrated from Khost province 400 to 500 years ago and were also most likely of Kuchi origin according to a number of elders interviewed, which would support the notion of a Kuchi migratory presence over the last several hundred years.

The Tarakhel tribe have historically accessed the summer pastureland in Deh Sabz through a series of informal agreements with villagers and authorities. According to the IDKA, a number of *firman*s or official decrees were also issued between 300 and 400 years ago although all of these documents have been allegedly lost or destroyed over time or during conflicts. Currently, the Kuchi in Deh Sabz that have not bought their own land are using the pastureland through the aforementioned informal agreements with local villagers. As the Tarakhel are the traditional occupants of the summer pastureland, other tribes that have for a long time or more recently began to access the pastureland in the area ask permission from the Tarakhel tribe.

Other tribes have migrated through Deh Sabz in the past, however this has generally been for short periods of time on the way to their traditional pastureland. Some of the larger tribes that migrate to pasture land in Hazarajat on a yearly basis include the Ahmadzai, Sultan Khel and Niazi. Tribes that access their traditional pastureland in the Ghorband Valley or Panjshir include the Kharoti, Khumari Khel, Gari, Rostan Khel and Isa Khel. When a Kuchi tribe's traditional pastureland is no longer accessible due to insecurity or land conversions, then alternative pastureland is sought often

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with the Director of IDKA and the Deh Sabz IDKA representative.



requiring permission from the tribe with claims, whether officially in the form of *firman*s or unofficially through agreements or a form of historical right, to the pastureland in the area.

Other tribes apart from the Tarakhel have also been accessing the pastureland in Deh Sabz for a considerable period of time, although most likely this originated with agreements or permission from the Tarakhel tribe. For example, elders from the Isa Khel tribe in Paymonar area claim that members of their tribe have been migrating to the same area for the last 100 years, while Hussain Khel tribal elders in Deh-yehya stated that their tribe have been migrating to Deh Sabz for the past 50 years.

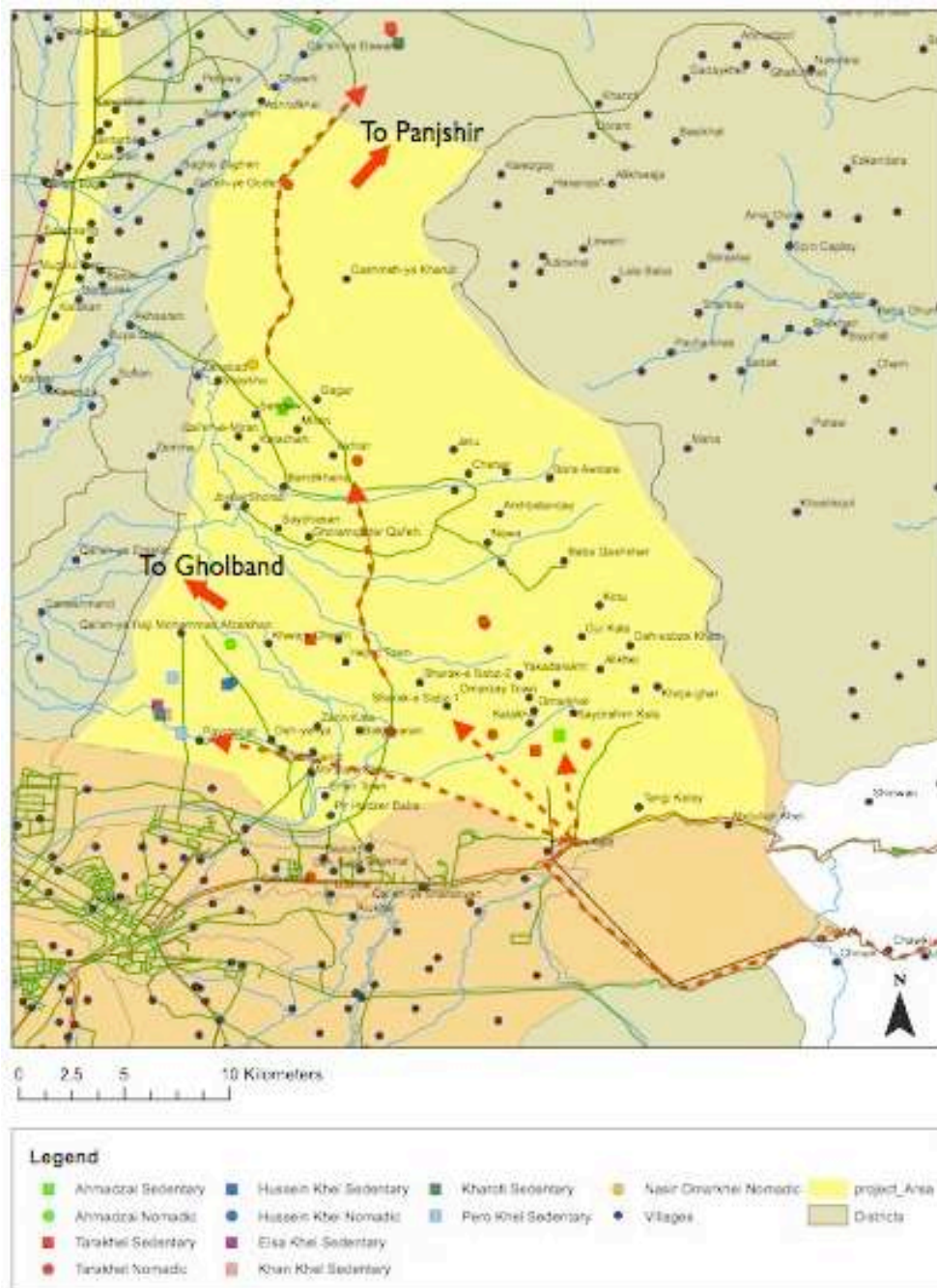


Figure 3.1: Migratory Routes in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab

Figure 3.1 (above) illustrates the migratory routes of Kuchi tribes in Deh Sabz. The information was derived from nine focus group discussions with various tribes in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab together with several key informant interviews. As the map illustrates, the vast majority of migratory Kuchi arrive in Deh Sabz from Laghman province with, for example, the Tarakhel in Jeeran originating from Alishang district; the Hussain Khel in Deh-yehya area from Alengar district; the Tarakhel in Bakhtyaran area from Mehtarlam district together with the Kharoti in Sar-i Pul Barik Ab.

The majority of Kuchi travel between Laghman and Deh Sabz via the eastern Kabul district of Surobi. Those Kuchi tribes transporting their animals and equipment via truck take the windy and relatively new Mahipar route – the most direct route between the capital and Laghman province. For the Kuchi taking their animals and/or equipment by road, the older Lataband route is virtually the sole option through Surobi as the Mahipar route is the primary national road linking Kabul with the eastern city of Jalalabad and onward to Pakistan and hosts high levels of traffic. The walk from the eastern Laghman district takes approximately 15 days while from Mehtarlam district; the time is reduced to approximately 9 or 10 days.

The Lataband route leaves Surobi passing through Bagrami district before entering into southern Deh Sabz district as illustrated by the red line in Figure 3.1. The Kuchi then traverse Deh Sabz district to an area, which typically they have migrated to over the previous years. Kuchi tribes begin to arrive in mid-April and continue to do so until mid- May. There are reportedly numerous tribes who only spend a few days in Deh Sabz benefiting from the green pasture at the beginning of spring, while continuing their migration on the way to Ghorband Valley in the northwest or Panjshir in the north.

There are a smaller number of Kuchi tribes that arrive in Deh Sabz via the north while still originating from their winter pastureland in Laghman province, however this is primarily as they utilise pastureland north of the project area or graze their animals in Deh Sabz for several days before continuing their migration to the Ghorband Valley or Hazarajat. Sedentarisation has also meant that some tribes that used to access pastureland in Deh Sabz for short periods of time have settled in the district. The Kharoti originated their migration from Mehtarlam district and travelled through Tagab, Kapisa province, stopping in Bagram and Barik Ab area on their way to the Ghorband Valley, however they have become sedentary and acquired land in Sar-i Pul Barik Ab in the past year.



**Photo 5: A Tarakhel sedentary settlement near Jeeran**

# 4.

## Contextual Analysis

Relations between Kuchi populations and local villagers are widely reported to be positive and absent the animosity and politicisation apparent in the Hazarajat region. These relations have been primarily forged through generations of mutually beneficial trade and previously negotiated access to pastureland in the Deh Sabz and Barik Ab area. In recent years, however, residential constructions, brick kilns and the development of the new city have led to a reduction in available pastureland and placed increasing pressures on the traditional 'compact' between local villagers and the Kuchi.

In addition to increasing levels of residentialisation, a series of droughts over the last decade have pushed Kuchi herders to travel further with their animals in search of food and water. Disputes, rather than conflicts, have emerged between villagers and Kuchi over animals grazing on local villagers' crops and the right to access village water supplies. The problem is not unique to migratory Kuchi, but also to sedentary Kuchi who have retained a percentage of their animals. Approximately one half of sedentary Kuchi continue to maintain goats and one fifth sheep (see Table 2.7) and similar pressures of access to water and pasture are also a concern as competition for pastureland increases. In field interviews, it was apparent that Kuchi have settled either temporarily or permanently in areas with little or no access to water and generally poor quality pastureland. Both migratory and sedentary Kuchi populations reported greater difficulties in recent years in accessing pastureland and water.

The issue of land title is a particular concern for Kuchi populations. Migratory Kuchi have traditionally maintained informal agreements to access pastureland in Deh Sabz in place of formal *firman*s, or decrees by the government or Shah in Kabul (see Section 3.3). Although the IDKA stated that these *firman*s did exist a number of centuries ago, reportedly all Kuchi in Deh Sabz minus those who have recently bought land, have informal agreements with the local villagers to establish their temporary settlements and use particular areas for pastureland.<sup>23</sup> The majority of migratory Kuchi tribes return to the same pastureland year on year.

Tribal elders from both local villagers and Kuchi tribes overwhelmingly, if not solely, resolve local disputes over land and water, rather than reverting to the state. An area that will likely prove more contentious and problematic is the issue of land title. Despite an official decree in 2006 banning land purchases in expectation of the Kabul New City, land purchases continue to occur and according to the DCDA, the government was forced to close down numerous property dealers in Deh Sabz who were illegally selling land. 'Land grabbing' is particularly relevant for the Kuchi population, as several Kuchi tribes have reportedly bought land in Deh Sabz in the belief of the legitimacy of the owner, however, for example in the Payminor area, it is understood that the land is governmental land that

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<sup>23</sup> Land title refers to the purchase of land for residential use and is different to the *firman*s that were issued by rulers in Kabul granting access to Kuchi tribes to areas of pastureland.

was sold illegally by a relative of a leading national political figure. The following chapter outlines the existing relations between the Kuchi and local villagers and attempts to assess the likely impact of the GKD development.

## 4.1 Political Overview

Factions that were created to fight the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and their Soviet backers remain important sources of patronage and political influence across Afghanistan, including Deh Sabz. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the Pashtun-dominated *Mujahideen* faction, *Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami*, was influential throughout the eastern areas of Deh Sabz bordering the mountain region with Kohi Safi. In the western and southern areas of Deh Sabz, the largely Pashtun *Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin* (HIG) was the major force. In the 1980s, villages were virtually deserted as *Mujahideen* fighters fought the Soviet backed regime with many families fleeing to Pakistan or other provinces.

In the 1990s, *Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami* was one of the weaker factions to emerge in the post-Communist era, failing to gain a significant share of power in the *Mujahideen* regime of President Burhanuddin Rabbani. In contrast, the comparative influence of HIG increased as their leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was appointed prime minister but refused to assume the post in Kabul City, contributing to a power struggle that led to civil war. HIG was particularly strong in parts of Kapisa, Logar, Parwan, Wardak and the southern and eastern districts of Kabul province, including Deh Sabz.

The Taliban captured Kabul City in 1996 and many individuals affiliated with *Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami* and to a lesser extent HIG were sympathetic to the new regime. Deh Sabz largely avoided the wide scale fighting which affected the Shomali Plains, north of Kabul City – the scene of several years of fierce fighting between what came to be known as the Northern Alliance and the Taliban forces.

In the post-2001 era, some, although not all of the former *Mujahideen* factions have succeeded in transforming themselves into loosely defined political entities premised on the allure of patronage. In Deh Sabz, three factions are currently considered to have a noticeable presence. *Hizb-i Islami* retains influence in large parts of the district, although the political party with several members in the cabinet, has publicly distanced itself from the group, HIG, which is an active part of the insurgency. Mullah Tarakhel, the acknowledged political leader of the Kuchi in the national parliament is reportedly close to the *Hizb-i Islami*. *Jamiat-i Islami*, the most influential member of the Northern Alliance and the most successful at translating its armed capabilities in political control, retains support in Deh Sabz primarily among the ethnic Tajiks in the GKD project area. *Dahwat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan*, formerly known as *Ittehad-al-Islami*, was a *Mujahideen* party formed by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf during the 1980s and associated with the Northern Alliance in the 1990s. Rather than possessing a traditional influence in Deh Sabz, the faction has extended its influence in Deh Sabz from its stronghold in Paghman district, through Sayyaf's relatives and in particular the acquisition of land.

Conflict between the factions is not considered as a current threat by local villagers, Kuchi tribes, or government officials, though the patronage networks associated with the factions have actively

pursued economic interests in the project area, primarily in the form of land acquisitions leading to localised disputes over land title.

Security, more broadly, has improved in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab according to both the Deh Sabz Chief of Police and the Afghanistan NGO Safety Organisation, a security advisory body for NGOs operating throughout the country. Over the last eighteen months, a series of security operation involving both the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) and the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) have reduced the ability of armed opposition groups (AOGs) to use Deh Sabz as both a logistics base and as a platform to launch standoff or rocket attacks on nearby Kabul City. The main security issues in the district, stated the governor are ‘social problems,’ relating to youth and land disputes.

### 4.1.1 Relations between Kuchi and Local Villagers

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, relations between Kuchi tribes and local villagers are perceived to be largely positive, according to both groups and senior government district officials.

**Table 4.1: Regularity of Social Relations (Non-Kuchi)**

Social Relations	Freq.	
Yes, every day	70	23.5%
Yes, twice a week	61	20.4%
Yes, once a month	58	19.3%
Only if they come to our village	66	22.1%
Almost never	29	9.8%
Never	15	5.0%
Total	300	100%

As Table 4.1 illustrates, 43.9% of local villagers reported to interact with Kuchi populations at least once a week, while approximately 15% of respondents declared that they never or ‘almost never’ interact with Kuchi, which is most likely a factor of distance. Trade is a common link between local residents and the Kuchi and is seen as mutually beneficial as

articulated by a Kuchi elder from the Kharoti tribe in Sar-i Pul Barikab: *“We don’t have any problem with our village neighbours, they entertain us as much as they can, we are trading animals and animal excrements for fresh fruits like grapes and watermelon and now we have a good relationship with them.”* An elder of the Tarakhel Kuchi tribe in Safed Blandi expressed a similar sentiment:

*“We have a relationship with the people who are living in Khwaja Chasht village. Our people have married with them we are also buying and selling things with them. We also help each other by working without receiving money and we also we take and give loans between each other.”*

**Table 4.2: Type of Social Relations (breakdown by group)**

Type of Relations	Local Villagers	Kuchi Nomadic	Kuchi Sedentary	Kuchi Average
Friendly, we have known them for a long time	64.3%	92.1%	89.3%	90.8%
Economic, we often trade goods with them	63.7%	81.1%	67.9%	75.0%
Social, we like to get some news from them	33.0%	22.0%	32.1%	26.6%
Unfriendly, they don’t like us	19.7%	4.3%	1.4%	3.0%
Aggressive, sometimes we have arguments	10.0%	1.8%	0.7%	1.3%
Confrontational, we had some physical fights	0.3%	0%	0%	0%
Frequency	300	164	140	304



Table 4.2 further details the type of relationship between local villagers and nomadic and sedentary Kuchi. In answer to the multiple choice close ended questions, approximately two-thirds of local villagers and 90% of Kuchi stated that they have friendly relations, having known each other for a 'long time.' Nomadic Kuchi (81.1%) reported a higher level of trade with local residents as they have retained their herds and therefore are more likely to pursue the traditional trading relationships with local residents than recently sedentarised Kuchi (67.9%).

Interestingly one in five local villagers stated that they have unfriendly relations with Kuchi as 'they don't like us,' which is most likely a perception based on the denial of access to local pasture and in some instances, water. The figure should be contrasted with an average of only 3% of Kuchi who believed that the local villagers did not like them, possibly as a result of higher levels of tolerance to local concerns over pasture and water access. In a similar manner, 10% of local villagers also reported that they sometimes have arguments although this very rarely leads to a physical confrontation (0.3%).

**Table 4.3: Effects of Kuchi (responses by non-Kuchi)**

Presence of Kuchi	Very Negative or Negative	No Impact	Significant or Very Positive
Economic development of the area	19.7%	35.0%	44.0%
Security	13.7%	45.0%	41.0%
Reputation of the area	25.3%	41.0%	33.0%
Social unity of the community	15.7%	40.7%	43.0%
Travel and trade in the district	10.3%	33.0%	55.3%
Average	16.94%	38.94%	43.26%

The effect of the Kuchi presence in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab was widely seen as a being positive (43.26%) or having no discernible impact (38.94%). The highest level of negative sentiment was regarding the reputation of an area, rather than any issues regarding trade or security. Approximately a quarter of non-Kuchi respondents reported that the Kuchi negatively affected the reputation of the area. The typical causes of distrust or arguments between Kuchi and local villagers are primarily related to pasture and water, as acknowledged by both groups. For a Malik with the Khumari Khel Kuchi tribe along the border between Qarabagh and Deh Sabz:

*“In the past the Kuchi had good relations with the local people. We even sold our sheep to them as loans in the winter and when we came back in the spring we took back our loan. Now we have some problem with the local people because our animals are sometimes destroying their crops.”*

At issue are the aforementioned reductions in traditional pastureland and the increasing difficulties in accessing water as a result of the drought and use by brick kilns and local residents. For a Malik of the Tarakhel Tribe in Barik Ab, the relationship has changed between Kuchi and local residents as the availability of pastureland has decreased:

*“I am the elder of the tribe. I remember that in past years the people of the villages admired us and in everywhere that we put our tents the people of the village came to us and said, “How*



*can we help you?" and we didn't have any problems. Now our problem is the lack of pasture and lack of the water for our livestock and us. The problem between us is not too much that we will fight with each other, it is just that we are sad."*

As pastureland in Dasht-e Deh Sabz and Barik Ab becomes increasingly scarce there is a likelihood that greater competition for pastureland may introduce new tensions between local villagers and Kuchi populations. Kuchi herdsmen will be required to take their animals further distances and villagers are likely to become more protective of agricultural land and access to water. A lack of



alternative pastureland and existing difficulties accessing Ghorband and Panjshir have led some Kuchi to sedentarise according to the Deh Sabz Chief of Police, which was also acknowledged by approximately one-fifth of surveyed sedentary Kuchi (see Table 3.10). The loss of animals (69.3%) and economic reasons (55.3%) were the primary causes of sedentarisation of which reduced access to pastureland, according to focus group discussions, was one of the primary contributing factors.

**Photo 6: A Focus group meeting with Tarakhel tribal elders in Dasht-e Deh Sabz**

The government appears to be regularly petitioned by Kuchi tribes over the issue of pasture, however there is no authority at the district level to ensure access to pastureland in other districts or alternatively to set aside land within Deh Sabz or Barik Ab due to the impending expansion of urban areas, starting with phase one in 2012. A palpable sense of frustration was expressed by an elder of the Tarakhel tribe in Deh Sabz after previously approaching the government: *"We referred our problems (over pasture) to the local authorities and they said 'we will always help you' but they didn't. If the government doesn't do anything and we have to fight with them it will be very dangerous."*

#### **4.1.2. Land Title**

In a similar manner to the issue of access to pasture, land title is likely to prove as contentious. According to the DCDA, President Karzai issued an official decree in 2006 banning the sale or development of land in the Deh Sabz and Barik Ab area due to the intended construction of the new city. The Land Clearance Committee (LCC) was created within the DCDA to assess land claims and award compensation for properties that will revert back to state land for the construction of the new city. The LCC is comprised of members from the Ministries of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock,

Finance, Energy and Water, Cadastre and Supreme Court and according to DCDA, has been operational since August 2008.<sup>24</sup>

The difficulties of assessing land claims nationally are well known as decades of conflict and poorly kept records have created an environment where predatory actors have been able to illegally sell government land to unsuspecting buyers, among other schemes. Ascertaining ownership rights, therefore, is an extremely difficult task. Despite the 2006 decree, it appears that property has changed hands and development continues in some areas. Residents in Baba Qashkhar village in the east of Deh Sabz stated that increasing numbers of people had been buying land in the area in recent years in expectation of rising prices resulting from the GKD.

Land grabbing is reportedly 'very popular' in Deh Sabz according to the DCDA. Simplistically explained, land grabbing involves influential individuals creating falsified land title documents or alternatively claiming that government or private land is their property and then selling the land to unsuspecting buyers. As numerous Kuchi tribes have sedentarised many have bought land in Deh Sabz and reportedly some Kuchi have fallen victim to the practice. To acquire property, formerly nomadic Kuchi have sold their main assets – livestock – and acquired the necessary capital to construct permanent dwellings. The practice of selling their main source of income has made the Kuchi particularly vulnerable in case of land seizures by the government or alternatively predatory property dealers. During interviews, several Kuchi reported to have bought land in good faith only to be challenged by the government when they began to construct buildings. The issue is not only one for sedentary Kuchi, as some migratory Kuchi tribes, such as the Tarakhel in Jeeran have bought land in the area even though they continue their nomadic lifestyle.

In the Payminor area, an elder from the Isa Khel tribe expanded on the current dilemma following the acquisition of land from local villagers: *"We have some problems with the local authorities because they don't let us build houses and they come in the night and destroy the foundation of the house although we bought the land from the people of the village."* Another Kuchi tribe in the same area linked the issue to corruption, *"we have a problem with the local authorities as they don't let us to build our houses .If we pay the bribe they let us to build otherwise they don't let us."*

Senior representatives from the IDKA confirmed that land grabbing has indeed affected Kuchi populations who have bought land unknowingly. Seeking redress, according to the same officials, will be difficult as land authorities such as DCDA's LCC, will not recognise fraudulent land titles and land grabbing is primarily undertaken by influential individuals affiliated with former *Mujahideen* factions.

Separate to fraudulent land titles, Kuchi occupying government or private land is also likely to lead to increased tensions between residing Kuchi populations and the authorities. For the Chief of Police of Deh Sabz the settlements start as small scale, and then assume an aura of permanence; *'Once on illegally occupied land, they will first make a tent, then a settlement and then a mosque.'* Within Deh Sabz, local residents and the ANP report that the only current land issue concerning the Kuchi is that of the Heda Khel, totalling approximately 40 households, who are allegedly occupying government land on the border of district 19 of Kabul City. Contact between district authorities and the Kuchi have reportedly been established.

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<sup>24</sup> DCDA, Land. Available at: [www.dcd.gov.af/land.html](http://www.dcd.gov.af/land.html)

A larger settlement of Kuchi is currently residing in Qarabagh near the border of Deh Sabz and comprises between 500 and 550 households. The Khumari Khel tribe, while willing to answer focus groups questions refused to answer survey questions as they have answered similar household surveys before to no effect and it was felt by tribal elders that the answers could contribute to government efforts to remove them from government land. Semi-permanent structures had been erected, including houses, a mosque and a *jirga* or meeting room. The Khumari Khel have settled in the area in the Spring of 2011 as according to one elder, they *'were tired of nomadic life.'* The tribe reported to have migrated to the area for the last 80 years and a factor in the decision by the tribal elders to settle permanently was, according to one of the Maliks, *'if we leave the area in the winter the government will destroy our houses and won't let us in here again.'* In August 2011, a confrontation took place between ANP and the Khumari Khel over their occupation of the land after the ANP asked them to vacate the area. In a meeting in the *jirga* hall with numerous tribal elders and other males, the elders expressed a vocal opposition to remove them from the land stating that they would never leave their land despite the forces that the government may send.

Pastureland holds a special significance to Kuchi tribes as it determines the health of their livestock and hence both their wealth and income. The reduction in pastureland in Deh Sabz has had a detrimental effect on Kuchi livelihoods and has contributed to the decision of several Kuchi tribes to sedentarise. The transition to a sedentary lifestyle is an area that has received little attention from the government and NGOs, according to Kuchi and NGOs operating in the area. Kuchi have high levels of illiteracy and a skillset, which is wholly consumed with livestock. Many Kuchi have sold their herds to buy land and construct dwellings, often unknowingly acquiring land of questionable title. The lands they have acquired generally have no access to water and have poor quality adjoining pastureland. Day labouring, therefore, becomes the primary livelihoods activity among illiterate households, ensuring that the families remain socially and economically vulnerable.

The issue of compensation for land is likely to be particularly contentious issue due to the vulnerability of recently sedentarised Kuchi tribes that have bought land and for those Kuchi that have declared their intent to occupy government land permanently.



**Photo 7: Kuchi children in Dasht-e Deh Sabz**

The DCDA reported that there is a police force of approximately 40 men available to clear land and that *'army teams are also supporting.'* The Chief of Police also declared that his men have confiscated many heavy weapons from the Kuchi as they arrive in the district and that what remains is for their *'personal safety.'* Although the new city has created a sense of inevitability, even among the Kuchi communities who understand that a 'new city' is going to be constructed, a confrontational approach to land clearance is very much likely to ensure that the end result is confrontational and lead to insecurity. In the area of Payminor, where land grabbing and the illegal

selling of government land is reportedly occurring, a Malik of the Isa Khel tribe summarised the attachment to the land:

*“In the past the people of the village liked us. Now they don’t like us because they took our pasture and they sell it on our people again and our relations are getting worse. We want to solve this problem by a community Jirga and if don’t solve this problem we will wait for an Islamic government in the future.”*

# 5.

## The Potential Impact on Kuchi Communities

The intended master plan for Kabul City, when implemented, will fundamentally alter the Deh Sabz and Barik Ab landscape. The project, in its entirety, will be 1.5 times the current size of Kabul city and comprise 250,000 housing units.<sup>25</sup> The effect on the Kuchi population will be considerable.

The first phase, in the south of the district, will commence in 2012 and will have an impact on a minority of existing migratory and sedentary settlements as well as the migratory routes through the district from Surobi and the neighbouring province of Laghman. An active and regular communication with the Kuchi is strongly advised to limit the potential negative affects on the community's livelihoods.

### 5.1 The Impact of the Development on Kuchi Communities

Kuchi community leaders interviews for this report possessed a limited knowledge of the Kabul New City development. The majority of communities were aware of impending residential and infrastructure projects that are related to the expansion of Kabul City, however the timing, scale and likely effects remain largely unknown.

According to DCDA, the 'development process' for Phase One (between 2010 and 2015) is the following:

- Development of approximately 80,000 housing units to accommodate 400,000 people in Dehsabz South. The urban structure plan for this is already complete. Within this area, the procurement of Parcels 1 & 2, accommodating a total of 18,400 housing units with some commercial, soft-industrial and public facilities was launched in early 2011.
- Development of Barikab Agricultural Economic Zone, which covers approximately 33 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Development of main infrastructure to the entire new city, including water, electricity and transportation.
- Preservation of existing villages in Kabul New City Area, development of Central Park, Greenbelt and other minor projects.

Phase One, although concentrated in the south of Deh Sabz, will also have an impact throughout the project area as infrastructure is developed and areas are cleared for the intended 'Central Park' and green belts as well as other projects. The New City, therefore, will have an inevitable impact on the availability and accessibility of both pastureland and land to establish summer settlements. In the

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<sup>25</sup> Dehsabz - Barikab City Development Authority, Master Plan, overview available at: <http://www.dca.gov.af/the-master-plan.html>



last ten years, Kuchi elders have witnessed discernible and rapid changes across Deh Sabz as increasing levels of residentialisation and infrastructure development and a concurrent decrease in pastureland have pushed many Kuchi settlements into the north of the districts, according to both Kuchi and residents in villages in the north of the district.

Parcel One is an 828-hectare development involving commercial, light industry, recreational and residential projects, which has been estimated to have a population of 42,000 people. Similar land use patterns will be developed throughout the Phase One development ensuring that pastureland will become non-existent during the construction phase as land is cleared for future development.

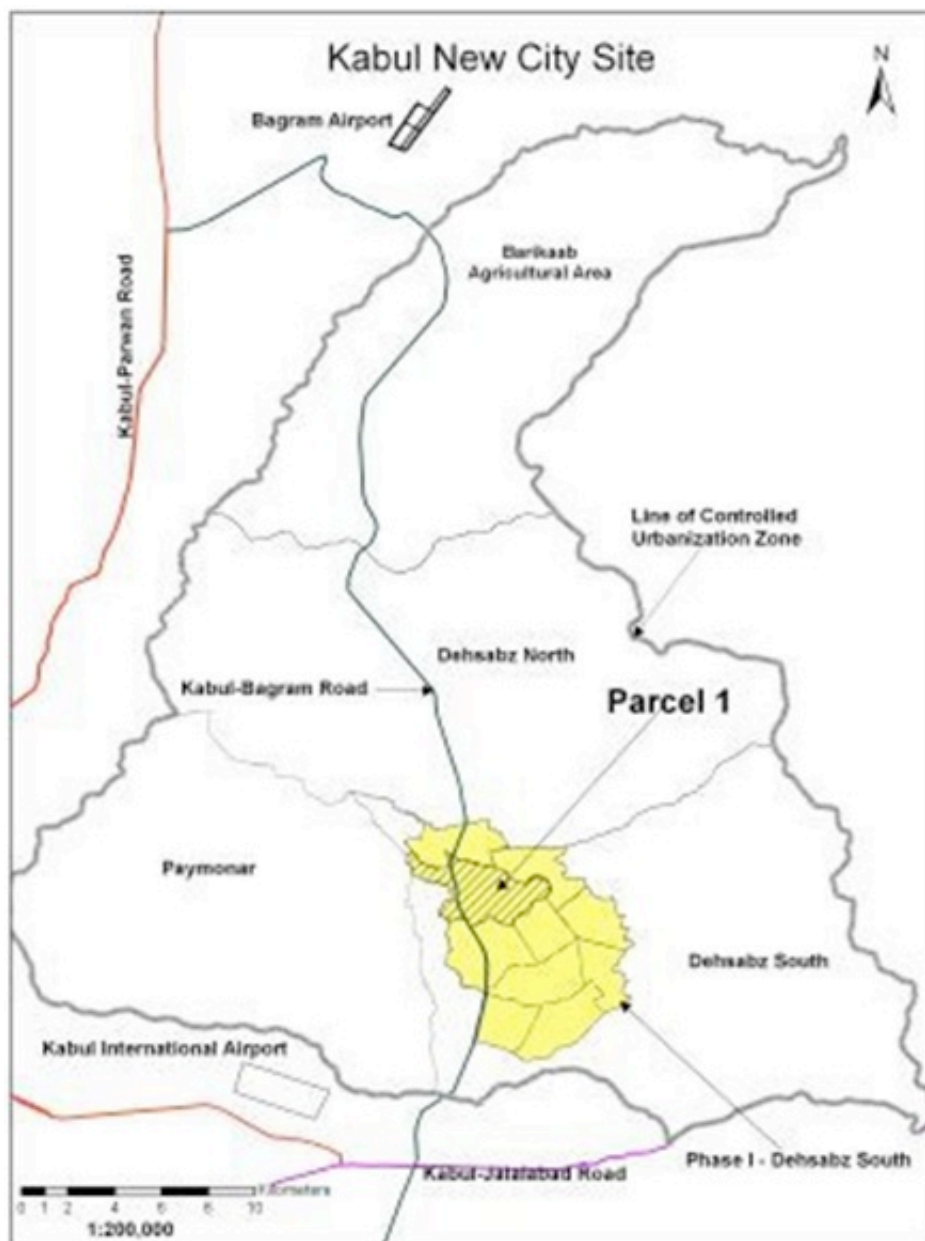


Table 5.1: Phase One Development<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Source: DCDA. Available at: <http://www.dca.gov.af/parcel-1.html>

The impact of the Kabul New City will be wide ranging and affect both sedentary and migratory Kuchi communities. Other factors that will likely determine how communities are affected include their level of reliance on animal husbandry and therefore use of pastureland as well as the legitimacy of their legal title to the land they may currently occupy/own.

For sedentary Kuchi, approximately half of the surveyed respondents reported owning sheep and only one in five having goats. The main livelihoods activity undertaken by sedentary Kuchi is daily work (55.8%) as manual labourers in construction, brick kilns or as market porters, while 31.6% stated that their main income source remains that of animal herders. The development of the district will therefore have a greater effect on Kuchi, whether migratory or sedentary, who continue to practice animal husbandry.

Many recently sedentarised Kuchi reported selling their animals in order to buy land in Deh Sabz and/or to construct dwellings in the district. These particular practices have placed many households in a vulnerable position in regards to economic shocks and ensuing food insecurity, as they are essentially reliant on unskilled day labouring to support their families.

Approximately three-quarters of migratory Kuchi are solely reliant on animal husbandry and therefore the diminishing level of pastureland will have an arguably greater impact on migratory Kuchi livelihoods.

When questioned about the impending impact of the development on their livelihoods, Kuchi elders saw both positive and negative impacts of the project. For a Tarakhel elder from a migratory Kuchi community in Barik Ab, echoed by several other elders, the development of local infrastructure, namely roads, is considered a positive as communities can access education and health services:

*“It (infrastructure) is very good for us and has a good effect on our life. In past times our elders were saying that destroy the mosque and build the way and we would be very happy that our road is built. Through this way we can solve our problems easily, but to find pastures for our livestock is very difficult because the pastures are too small now. If we go to the Deh Sabz district there are many brick kilns and we came to the Qarabagh district it is also difficult to find pastures here. If we do find pastures it is to other people’s annoyance.”*

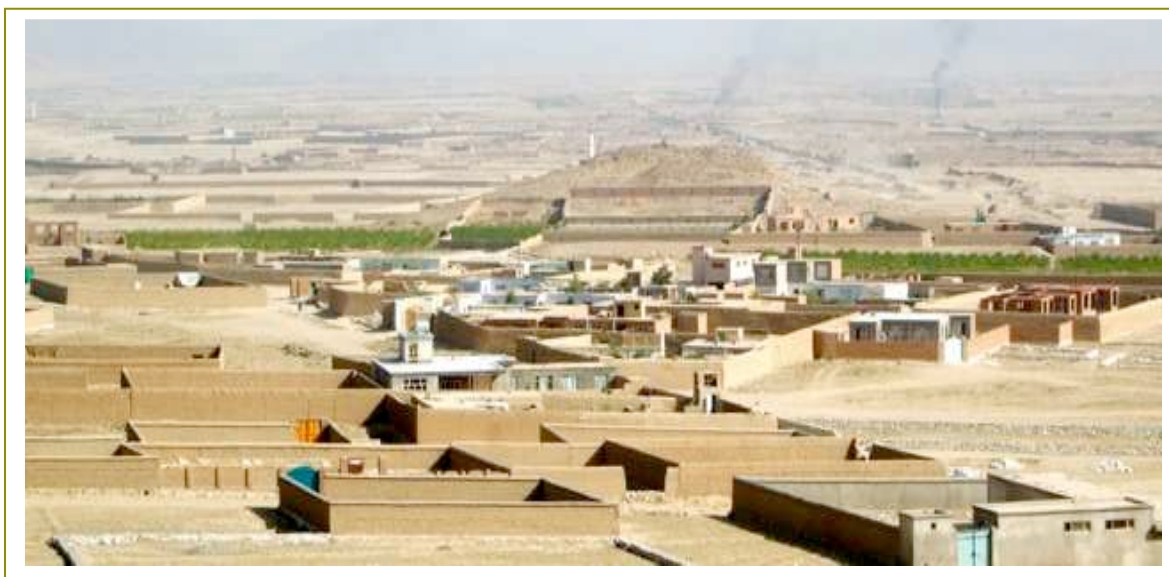
The Tarakhel in Barik Ab area had traditionally migrated to the Dasht-e Deh Sabz area, however residential projects, local agricultural use and the brick kilns forced them to move further north into Barik Ab, which will be developed as a national agriculture centre and therefore limit the possibility of migratory Kuchi to set up their summer camps in the area.

For another Tarakhel elder in Dasht-e Deh Sabz, access to pastureland has been a traditional right and the encroaching settlements have already significantly impacted on Kuchi communities:

*“We can’t access the pasture as we have lost the pasture day by day because of the construction and if we compare the pasture with six years ago it is very difficult to access the pasture. We have heard all the deserts are belonging to Kuchi but now they don’t allow us to use that as a pasture.”*

The issue of land title will also affect Kuchi communities, as the aforementioned issues over legitimate land title will increase as the Land Clearance Committee attempts to assess land titles prior to the commencement of the construction phase. For sedentary Kuchi communities that

have bought land or to a lesser degree migratory communities that have done the same, the legitimacy of their land claims may be questioned as existing demands to construct dwellings have been denied in some areas, such as Payminor. The greater the number of land claims that are called into question, then there is a greater opportunity of community mobilisation among the Kuchi at the district level, most likely leading to national Kuchi representations, including parliamentary or national leaders, such as Maulawi Tarakhel.



**Photo 8: The area between Tarakhel and Payminor, Deh Sabz**

Although the legitimacy of land title is one issue, the occupation of government or private land is another. The Khumari Khel tribe, located on the border of Qarabagh and Deh Sabz, has recently sedentarised and have already been subject to attempts at eviction by the ANP. Their unwillingness to depart the government owned land is a result of difficulties accessing pastureland in Ghorband and Panjshir, a fatigue with nomadic life and the reported destruction of their dwellings by the ANP as soon as they return to their winter pastures in Laghman. The tribe expressed a high level of reluctance to engage with any actors due to a fear that discussions may lead to their forced eviction.

In summary, the Kabul New City will dramatically reduce the available pastureland for Kuchi in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab and will also provoke an increasing number of land disputes as land titles are assessed by the Land Clearance Committee prior to the inevitable development of the area in the following years. Although Kuchi communities embraced the prospect of improved access to services, including health and education, the development of the area will ensure that the remaining pastureland and population pressures will be unable to sustain Kuchi communities and their herds.

The impact on the Kuchi, therefore, will disrupt the yearly migration to Deh Sabz for the Tarakhel and other tribes that stay in the district for five to six months as well as smaller tribes that migrate through the district for several days or longer on their way to Ghorband or Panjshir. As many Kuchi tribes have been migrating to Deh Sabz for several generations, the effect of the development will most likely lead to a deterioration in their socio-economic situation as a result

of the inability to access pastureland to feed their herds – the primary source of income for migratory Kuchi households.

## 5.2 Recommendations

- Support efforts to engage with Kuchi communities (expanded in following section):
  - Pursue a bottom up approach focusing first and foremost on local community elders together with representatives from the Independent Directorate for Kuchi Affairs (IDKA) and Kuchi political representatives.
  - Expand outreach efforts to provide a transparent timetable of the different phases of development to Kuchi communities or support government agencies, such as DCDA and/or IDKA, who could fulfil this role.
  - Any consultation meetings organised with Kuchi should be ideally organised in early spring in order to attract the largest possible number of migratory Kuchi elders.
- Transparency in land title:
  - Land title is likely to become an increasingly contentious issue as the construction phase approaches. Transparency and communication, in place of opaqueness and confrontation in land clearances, will reduce the potential for insecurity across the project area.
  - Support the Land Clearance Commission in outreach efforts within the district.
- Support programs that provide services to Kuchi communities, both sedentary and migratory. Kuchi, as shown in Chapter 2, have extremely high levels of illiteracy and poor access to health services.
  - For sedentary Kuchi populations, a lack of formal skills and high illiteracy levels ensure that the only viable income generating activities are manual labouring. Supporting vocational training programs, especially for the younger generation, would expand the available income generation opportunities and contribute to greater levels of economic security.
  - For migratory Kuchi populations, encourage efforts to provide education and literacy services to communities, such as that which Swedish Committee for Afghanistan is currently formulating.

### 5.3 Proposed Communications Channels

As part of a dialogue with the Kuchi population, it is strongly advised that JICA establishes communication channels with Kuchi leaders at the community, district and national level, with a particular focus on the community level.

Within each community of at least several households, a Malik, or community leader, adjudicates local conflicts, represents the community in any dealings with the government and is widely respected. The Malik often relies on the advice and support of several tribal elders and the position is usually hereditary or when the eldest son is too young to assume the post, then the elders select another figure to assume the mantle. For larger communities, there may be several Maliks, each representing a number of households within the larger community.

The Maliks, therefore, are intimately aware of the needs of their community and have often taken the decision, in consultation with tribal elders to pursue a sedentary lifestyle or migrate to alternative pastureland. Across Deh Sabz and Barik Ab, the Maliks have established an informal network of contacts with local villagers and other Kuchi communities and are especially well acquainted with their fellow Kuchi Maliks.

At the district level, the governor of Deh Sabz hosts a regular weekly meeting of Maliks on a Monday to discuss a range of issues, including development, local disputes and security. There are 46 Maliks or tribal elders in attendance, six of whom are Kuchi. The meetings are a particularly useful forum for Maliks to ‘bring any problems to the government,’ and for the government to communicate with senior elders from across the district.

At the national level, the Independent Directorate for Kuchi Affairs (IDKA) represents the national interests of the Kuchi population vis-à-vis the Afghanistan government and the international community. The IDKA has an individual responsible for the Deh Sabz area and is well acquainted with the migratory and sedentary Kuchi populations, but has only a limited understanding of the Kabul New City development and its likely effects on the Kuchi population.

Finally, national Kuchi political leaders, the most prominent of whom is the parliamentarian Maulawi Tarakhel, are important interlocutors and hold significant support from the Kuchi population. The process, however, should not be monopolised by senior national figures but should be driven by local Maliks and supported rather than led by national figures. This was a sentiment continually expressed by Kuchi elders in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab and would significantly enhance the chances of a successful dialogue with the Kuchi population.

The following is a list of senior tribal elders and Maliks in Deh Sabz and Barik Ab. The table should not be considered as a comprehensive list of all Maliks and tribal elders, but should be viewed as a gateway to the Kuchi population in the project area.



Table 5.1: Community Leaders

<b>Tribe(s)</b>	<b>Khumari Khel</b>				<b>Tarakhel &amp; Ahmadzai</b>	
<b>Village/Area</b>	<b>Khumari Khel</b>		<b>Hussain Khel</b>		<b>Jeeran</b>	
<b>Households</b>	<b>500</b>		<b>Deh-yehya</b>		<b>40</b>	
<b>Community Elders</b>	Khan Wazer	Malik	Salat Khan	Malik	Qaise	Malik
	Ghondi	Malik	Wulus	Elder	Shaker	Elder
	Gul Bad	Malik	Payenda Gul	Elder	Hajii Ghondal	Elder
	Mohamad Islam	Malik	Jalad Khan	Elder	Shikh	Elder
	Haji Malistan	Malik	Sayeed Wali	Elder	Hajii Sabrai	Elder
	Nik Muhamad	Elder	Sha Wali	Elder	Hazrat Khan	Elder
<b>Tribe(s)</b>	<b>Isa Khel, Khan Khel &amp; Pero Khel</b>		<b>Kharoti</b>		<b>Tarakhel</b>	
<b>Village/Area</b>	<b>Payminor</b>		<b>Sar-i Pul Barik Ab</b>		<b>Safed Blandi</b>	
<b>Households</b>	<b>30/4/04</b>		<b>350</b>		<b>250</b>	
<b>Community Elders</b>	Haji Mea Rasul	Malik	Malek Rahmatullah	Malik	Sha Dast	Malik
	Khand Agha	Malik	Mohin	Elder	Nik Muhamad	Elder
	Haji Badam	Malik	Shir Ali	Elder	Gulbuddin	Elder
	Sahar Gul	Elder	Khairullah	Elder	Haji Mohamad Ajan	Elder
	Mullah Mohamad Shah	Mullah/Elder	Mohammad Omar	Elder	Malang	Elder
	Haji Abdulllah	Elder	Maruf	Elder	Haji Ghulam Saeed	Elder
<b>Tribe(s)</b>	<b>Tarakhel</b>		<b>Tarakhel</b>		<b>Tarakhel</b>	
<b>Village/Area</b>	<b>Barik Ab</b>		<b>Dasht-e Sabz</b>		<b>Katakhel</b>	
<b>Households</b>	<b>48</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>35</b>	
<b>Community Elders</b>	Haji Sahib Mohammad Mohsin	Malik	Mohammad Hanif	Malik	Haji Allah Jan	Malik
	Haji Sahib Sulaiman	Elder	Lashti Gul	Elder	Mohammad Yasin	Elder
	Haji Sahib Mohammad Agul	Elder	Hajii Khalil	Elder	Rahimullah	Elder
	Ajab Gul	Elder	Rozadin		Hajii Rahmatullah	Elder
	Gul Mohammad	Elder	Hajii Shiren del	Elder	Mohmand	Elder
	Mullah Sahib Besmellah	Mullah/Elder				

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