

## Documentation

### Dataset A3. Life history interviews in Nangarhar and Nimroz

30 Sept 2020

Data collection resulting from face-to-face life history interviews, using a question / topic list, with 10 people in Nangarhar and 13 people in Nimroz. Handwritten notes were taken during the interview and the interviews were later transcribed to MS Word and translated to English. Coding and analysis has been done using NVivo.

Dataset owner: Organization for Sustainable Development and Research (OSDR)

#### Context

The purpose of these life history interviews is to complement the semi-structured interviews with traders in the border sites of Nangarhar and Nimroz. In order to produce an initial borderland biography which provides a social and spatial history of the borderland spaces – as well as an overview of changing economic conditions -- it is necessary to conduct a number of in depth interviews (minimum of 10) with key informants who have an understanding of the changing social and political conditions in the borderlands.

It is assumed that the people selected will be:

- known and trusted by members of the research team
- women as well as men
- old enough to have direct experiences and memories of the different phases of the Afghan wars (from 1978 onwards), and perhaps also the pre-war period
- to the extent possible from different political backgrounds
- from rural and urban environments
- respected within their communities as 'people of knowledge' and insight
- long term residents of Nangarhar / Nimroz respectively, though they may have moved within and out of the province at various points in their lives.

The purpose of the interviews is to begin the process of collecting oral histories which will feed into our understanding of Nangarhar's and Nimroz' turbulent history, from the perspective of people who live there. We can relatively easily map out the different phases of the war and shifts in the political and economic landscape through secondary material. But we want to begin to capture through these interviews local people's perceptions of these changes, and how these may vary over time, and within the borderlands -- depending upon whether one is living:

- for Nangarhar in Jalalabad, on an unofficial border point, on a major crossing, such as Torkham or in a remote highland area.
- For Nimroz in urban area and other will be in remote distance from Zaranj border land or in other unofficial border area.

#### Methodology

Individual interviews, carried out in a relatively relaxed and informal way. The interviews took place in private.

The topics to cover discuss during the interview are as follows. These questions were indicative. The aim was to probe new and interesting material that emerges from the interview.

Personal background/history :

- Informant's personal background
- Their family, where they are from
- What they do for a living?
- How long they have lived in their current location.
- Key events in their life?
- Can you tell me about your life?
- What are your earliest memories?
- What was life like when before 1979, war time 1979 and after 2001 ....?
  - Zahir Shah time
  - Dawood Khan time
  - Comunist regime
  - Mujahideen time
  - Taliban Time
- Can you remember what life was like in Nangarhar / Nimroz before the war?
- Did people have many connections with Pakistan, Iran or Kabul in those days? Did they travel widely?
- What did people do for living in their village/locale?

War years (1979 – 2001)

- Life during the war
- How were they and their family affected?
- Did they get displaced? – to Pakistan, Iran, within their province, Kabul?
- When were the worst times for people living here?
- When were the key 'moments of change' i.e.
- When things suddenly got better or worse in terms of fighting or stability? (e.g 1987, 1992, 1994, 2001).
- Personal security
- Which places could/couldn't you go?
- Where did you feel most/least secure?
- How does that compare to now?
- Who were the main political parties and what were their relationships to the people?
- Did this change over time?
- What were the biggest changes you saw during the war period? (economic, social, political)
- How were people's livelihoods affected?
- What did people do to survive?
- Did some people or places become better or worse off during this period?

- Did some forms of economic activity become more or less important?
- If so what and why?
- What kinds of help did they receive during the war years? Government, international, relatives etc

#### Post 2001

- What have been the main changes for them since 2001? (security, livelihoods, local politics, social attitudes etc)
- What have been the main changes for them since 2001? (Education, Health)
- What have been the main changes for them since 2001? (Development )
- What have been the main changes for them since 2001? (Women life)
- Have they received support (govt, NGO, military etc)
- Which places have become more or less wealthy/more or less secure since 2001 and why?
- Do they have relationships/networks across the border and have these changed since 2001? If so how and why?
- Has their contacts/relationships with Kabul changed in any way since 2001?
- Have their expectations of the government (national, provincial, local) changed since the war years? If so how?

#### **Location**

Nangarhar and Nimroz

#### **Time period**

Interviews were carried out in Nangarhar during September – October 2018 and in Nimroz during March – May 2019 and October - November 2020.

#### **Sample selection**

People were selected for life history interviews based on the following criteria:

- Their experience with cross-border trading in the border area
- Knowledgeable about the border history
- Personal experience of migration
- Aged 50 years old or more
- Agree to be interviewed
- Trust between interviewee and researchers or previous relation the researchers have with interviewee
- Living in the border area

Some interviewees were recommended to the researchers by other community members.

All interviewees were male. The security situation in Afghanistan meant that only male researchers could visit the border areas and as a result only male people could be interviewed.

## Consent procedures

Before field work, the field research team is officially introduced by the ministry of economy to the provincial departments and a MOU is signed with the governor office and other relevant departments on provincial level. Then the team is officially introduced by the Ministry of economy directorate office to the targeted districts and the team meet with each district governor and brief them about the project activities.

Due to the sensitivity of the research subject and to safeguard the safety of respondents, written consent form cannot be used. Oral consent is asked from each interviewee, using the following wording:

*Good morning/afternoon Sir,  
My name is..... and I am working for the Organization for Sustainable Development and Research (OSDR). We conduct survey/research on the history of the border land. if you don't mind I would like to ask you some questions about the border history, type of trading and type of commodities trading across the border. So I would like to know that how the trading on the border affects the lives and livelihood of the people in this area. My questions will take about 60 minutes of your time. If you are not happy with any question to answer then you have the right of cancellation. If you agree I will start my first question and go ahead for next.*

## Pseudonymisation steps

The interviews have been pseudonymised by using codes for each respondent (instead of names). Village names were removed from the datalist.