



International
Labour
Organization

BURIED IN BRICKS

A RAPID ASSESSMENT OF BONDED LABOUR IN BRICK KILNS IN AFGHANISTAN

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ACRONYMS

CBS	Community-based school
DoLSAMD	Department of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPEC	ILO Programme for Eliminating Child Labour
Moi	Afghan Ministry of Interior
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

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1 INTRODUCTION

At a rate of 600 bricks a day, working 6-days a week, 11-year-old Sima’s annual brick production is an easy calculation. Calculating the cost to Sima, however, is much more difficult, as the cost of child bonded labour is paid over a lifetime through the loss of health, education and opportunities.

This study is a rapid assessment of one of the most prevalent, yet least known, forms of hazardous labour in Afghanistan – for both children and adults – and one of the worst forms of labour for children in particular. Narrowing in on one sector, this report strives to provide an accurate depiction of bonded labour practices in brick kilns in two provinces of Afghanistan – namely, Nangarhar and Kabul – by looking at the supply-side, demand-side and structural factors that shape bonded labour. While studies on bonded labour in brick kilns have been conducted in other South Asian countries, little qualitative information and even less quantitative data on bonded labour has been gathered in Afghanistan prior to this study.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

This rapid assessment combines a bottom-up and top-down approach designed to connect policy makers with populations of concern by drawing evidence from the field and presenting it in a way that can be readily used to inform policy decisions. By establishing a better understanding of the nature of bonded labour in Afghanistan, this research will serve as a baseline for designing interventions and measuring the progress of implementation of ratified ILO conventions to eliminate forced labour and the worst forms of child labour in Afghanistan.

More specifically, this report seeks to:

1. Document the nature, extent and prevalence of bonded labour and child bonded labour in brick kilns in two Afghan provinces;
2. Identify the actors of the bonded labour market as well as the actors intervening to diminish this form of forced labour;
3. Evaluate the situations of specific vulnerable, and socio-demographic groups;
4. Assess the nature of debt bondage in brick kilns; and
5. Examine bonded labour dynamics and assess the ingredients of forced labour.

Structure of the report:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction: *Objectives, definitions and methodology*
- Chapter 2 – Kilns & Employers: *The demand side of bonded labour in brick kilns*
- Chapter 3 – Households: *The supply side of bonded labour in brick kilns*
- Chapter 4 – Focus on Children: *The reality of child bonded labour in brick kilns*
- Chapter 5 – The Bigger Picture: *Linking bonded labour to national policy priorities*
- Chapter 6 – Conclusion

BOX 1.1. USE OF AFGHAN BRICKS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Afghan brick kilns drew attention in March 2011 when a *New York Times* article claimed that NATO forces were using bricks made by children: “The use of child labour is also a concern of NATO forces in Afghanistan, particularly those involved in reconstruction programmes. Yet kiln owners and contractors say bricks made by children are routinely used in NATO projects.”¹

Bonded labour, notably child bonded labour, is so pervasive in the brick kiln industry throughout South Asia that bricks for any project in Afghanistan, large or small, are *de facto* coming from kilns that utilise child bonded labour. Indeed, NATO projects, as a result, are using bricks made by children, however, without any alternative sources than those described in this report, it would be almost impossible not to.

Although the relationship between brick kilns and NATO projects is unavoidably present, there is no direct link between brick kiln owners and NATO forces. Brick kiln owners rarely have contact with the final consumers of their bricks, as bricks may be resold several times before they reach their final destination.

1.2 DEFINING CONCEPTS

1.2.1 DEFINITIONS: FORCED, BONDED, AND CHILD LABOUR

Often overlapping and converging, depending on the context, the concepts of forced labour, bonded labour and child labour create considerable confusion. Beyond representing policy and legal concepts, what do they actually mean? In order to be operationalised at the field level, as a means of identifying harmful practices, these terms must first be clearly defined and understood.

This brief introduction into the concepts will provide a coherent basis from which to analyze the specificities of the Afghan context of bonded labour. Our desk review has shown a lack of a single or simple definition for these concepts, as each situation must be analyzed and addressed individually. Given the complexities of these concepts, this section provides a means for readers to discover or refresh their understanding of forced labour, bonded labour and child labour. It also provides a conceptual framework that will be used throughout the rest of the report.

Forced labour: “All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”

- Forced Labour Convention, 1930, no. 29

The first element of this definition of forced labour, the menace of penalty, can take multiple forms, the most extreme being physical violence and death threats while the subtler forms being those of a psychological or financial nature, including non-payment or loss of wages, or economic penalties linked to debt owed to the employer. The second element, the involuntary nature of work, can be the result of such coercive means as physical confinement, deception, birth into enslavement or bondage, or induced indebtedness. To be induced, indebtedness must result from practices such as excessive interest rates, dishonest accounting practices, or the reduced value of goods or services.

While many types of bonded labour fall under the definition of forced labour, it is important to note that not all cases of bonded labour meet the two necessary elements – menace of penalty and involuntary nature of work – to be considered forced.

Debt bondage (bonded labour): “The status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those

¹ Kamber, Michael (2011), “In Afghan Kilns, a Cycle of Debt and Servitude,” *The New York Times*, 15 March 2011.

services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined.”

-1956 United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery

According to this definition, a debtor agrees to pay off his debt by offering his services or those of another to work off the debt. However, these conditions alone – the presence of a debt and the pledge of labour or services – are necessary but not sufficient requirements to indicate a situation of debt bondage.² The worker or workers in question are held as collateral for the loan; thus, the movement and decisions of the worker are restricted until the debt is repaid.

The decision to become a bonded labourer may be voluntary or involuntary. In offering his or her own services, the debtor enters into the agreement voluntarily: “The bonded labourer is a technically free wage labourer whose state of servitude may be terminated on payment of the debt. So, although once bonded a worker is unfree, the act of choosing to be bonded is usually one freely made to avert acute poverty or starvation.”³

If the debtor offers the services of another person, the labourer in question may or may not be entering into the agreement voluntarily. The services of a child or of an entire family can be offered to pay off a debt. In some cases, debt can also be passed down between generations.

The final condition for debt bondage relates to the terms of the repayment of the debt. Either the worker is underpaid in such a way that he or she is unable to pay down the principal of the debt or the duration and type of work are not established. In the cases of Afghan brick kilns, both cases can occur.

BOX 1.2. EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE: BONDED BUT NOT FORCED?

“Most bonded labourers would fall within the ILO’s own definition of forced labour, but there are arguably certain exceptions.”⁴ Some cases, particularly those of adult males in Afghan brick kilns, raise questions about whether in fact they meet the two requirements to be considered forced labour: *i*) involuntary in nature and *ii*) extracted under the menace of penalty.

Adult men enter into situations of bonded labour in Afghan brick kilns voluntarily. While some may debate the voluntary nature of this decision, given the limited alternatives available, the 1930 Forced Labour Convention (no. 29) does not cover “situations of pure economic necessity, as when a worker feels unable to leave a job because of the real or perceived absence of employment alternatives.”⁵ Moreover, this report will demonstrate that the type of indebtedness found in most Afghan brick kilns may not be induced. This is in part due to Islamic rules and regulations, which prohibit interest on loans, and in part due to competition from other brick kilns, which ensures better terms. In fact, multiple cases were found in which households regularly paid off debts, only to request another advance the following year.

The fulfilment of the second element of forced labour – the menace of penalty – is a bit more ambiguous in Afghan brick kilns. If an individual stops working, the main consequence he or she faces is the loss of shelter provided as in-kind payment at the kiln site. However, the workers are not denied the right to seek shelter elsewhere. They are constrained, therefore, by their circumstances. Dependence is created when kiln owners provide such in-kind payments as shelter; this dependence could potentially be used as a means of coercion, but in-kind payments are not inherently coercive.⁶

² Based on interview with Eric Edmonds, Associate Professor at Dartmouth College, 21 October 2011.

³ Genicot, Garance (2002), “Bonded Labor and Serfdom: A Paradox of Voluntary Choice,” *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 67, Issue 1, 101-127.

⁴ ILO (2005), *A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour*, Geneva.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ For more on the dependence created by in-kind payments, see Sections 2.2.2 and 3.3.

TABLE 1.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD WORK AND CHILD LABOUR

		Light work <14 hrs/week	Regular work ≥ 14 & ≤ 43 hrs/week	Worst forms of Child Labour
Ages	15-17	Child work		Child labour
	12-14			
	5-11			

Source: Adapted from Altai Consulting (2008), "A Rapid Assessment on Child Labour in Kabul," Research commissioned by ILO-IPEC.

Child Labour: "Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development."⁷

International definitions for child labour remain somewhat vague as the specificities are often defined through national laws and local contexts. Greater clarity is offered by the distinction the ILO provides between child labour and child work. Whereas child work can reap positive results, child labour impedes a child's education and is dangerous or harmful mentally, physically, socially, or morally.⁸

Whether or not a specific job qualifies as "work" or "labour" depends on "the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries."⁹ Figure 1.1. provides a general overview of the types of activities allowed (child work) and those that are prohibited (child labour) according to ILO Minimum Age Convention (no. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (no. 182).¹⁰

Child Bonded Labour: While there is a considerable gray area of what constitutes work or labour when applied to circumstances on the ground, the work considered in this report – bonded labour in brick kilns – is a clear case of child labour for those workers under 18 years of age as it falls into a subcategory of this heading: worst forms of child labour (Box 1.3). This form of child labour meets two of the criteria to be considered one of the worst forms of child labour: First, it is a form of debt bondage; Second, work in brick kilns is considered "hazardous work," as it is likely to harm the health and safety of children.

BOX 1.3. ILO WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR CONVENTION, ARTICLE 3

"For the purposes of this Convention (C182), the term *the worst forms of child labour* comprises:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children."

Source: ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, No. 182.

⁷ ILO (n.d.), "About child labour," www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/, accessed 24 October 2011.

⁸ ILO (n.d.)

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Afghanistan ratified C138 and C182 on 7 April 2010; both conventions came into force on 7 April 2011.

1.2.2 LEGALITY OF CHILD AND BONDED LABOUR IN AFGHANISTAN

The main obstacle in Afghanistan is not policy making or establishing laws on bonded and child labour; rather it is one of implementation, monitoring and enforcement of said laws. Despite existing conventions and laws, the Afghan government has suffered from a lack of capacity (and sometimes willingness) to clearly understand, uphold and prioritize these standards. Despite the conventions and laws discussed below, it should be noted that Afghan government lacks the capacity to implement, monitor and enforce these standards.

National laws

The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) does not have laws that specifically address bonded labour. The Afghan Labour Law, however, does address compulsory work, which would be applicable in those cases of bonded labour that can also be deemed forced labour. Article 4 of the Labour Law prohibits compulsory work, which it defines as activities performed under threat or against the will of the worker.¹¹

The Afghan Labour Law has several articles related to children.¹² It establishes 18 as the minimum age for adult work. Children aged 15 to 17 are allowed to work under the following circumstances:

- The work entailed must not be physically arduous or pose a health or safety risk;
- Work must be a form of vocational training that teaches a skill for later employment;
- Working hours are limited to 35 hours per week;¹³ and
- Youth under 18 years of age may not be assigned overtime or night shifts.

International conventions

ILO standards unequivocally condemn forced labour and the use of children in slavery and/or debt bondage. ILO Convention No. 105 requires the immediate and complete abolition of forced and compulsory labour.¹⁴ Afghanistan ratified the 1957 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (no. 105) in 1963. However, it has not yet ratified the 1930 Forced Labour Convention. The Afghan Parliament claims to be currently studying the possibility of ratifying the convention.

Afghanistan ratified both the Minimum Age Convention (no. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (no. 182) in July 2010. ILO Convention No. 182 deems all forms of slavery and practices similar to slavery such as debt bondage as one of the worst forms of child labour that need to be eliminated as a matter of urgency.¹⁵ Furthermore, ILO Convention No. 138 establishes 14 as the minimum age for entry into employment for countries with insufficiently developed economies and educational facilities.¹⁶

¹¹ The Afghan labour law was last updated in 2007. There are plans to implement reforms to the labour law in the near future, but none of the proposed reforms relate to bonded or child labour (based on interview with Ghulam Mustafa Harooni, Director of Labour Law and Labour Rights, MoLSAMD). However, the MoLSAMD is currently working to establish a list of hazardous sectors for employment in line with ILO C182. An English translation of the Afghan labour law can be accessed here: www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/.../AFG78309.pdf.

¹² Refer to articles 13, 31 and 120-122 of the Afghan Labour Law for the key mentions of children's work and labour rights.

¹³ The normal workweek for adults is established at 40 hours per week according to the Afghan Labour Law.

¹⁴ ILO Convention No. 105 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957) Article 2.

¹⁵ ILO Convention No. 182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999) Article 3 (a).

¹⁶ ILO Convention No. 138 Minimum Age Convention (1973) Articles 3 and 4.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study uses quantitative and qualitative research tools to provide a detailed study of bonded in labour in brick kilns. Our research methodology takes into account both supply- and demand-side factors that lead to one of the worst forms of child labour in Afghanistan. It also adopts a balanced approach in looking at adult and child bonded labour, as the two are intertwined. In the Afghan context, children are rarely sent to the brick kilns alone but are rather informally bonded along with their households. While still placing an emphasis on issues pertaining to child welfare, this study examines households in debt bondage, in order to further understanding of one of the worst forms of child labour.

A research team of one international project director, one international consultant, and two national consultants collected quantitative and qualitative data with the help of five national interviewers (two women, three men).

Survey locations: Surkhroad district of Nangarhar province and Deh Sabz district of Kabul Province were selected as the two locations for the survey for two reasons:

- i) *Concentration of kilns:* both districts have high concentrations of brick kilns
- ii) *Migratory patterns:* significant numbers of brick kiln workers seasonally migrate between these two districts

The specific kilns were scouted through an initial brick kiln mapping process, which was used to identify concentrations of brick kilns within each district. The research team visited 48 kiln sites (24 per district) for the household survey.

FIGURE 1.1. TARGET PROVINCES: KABUL & NANGARHAR

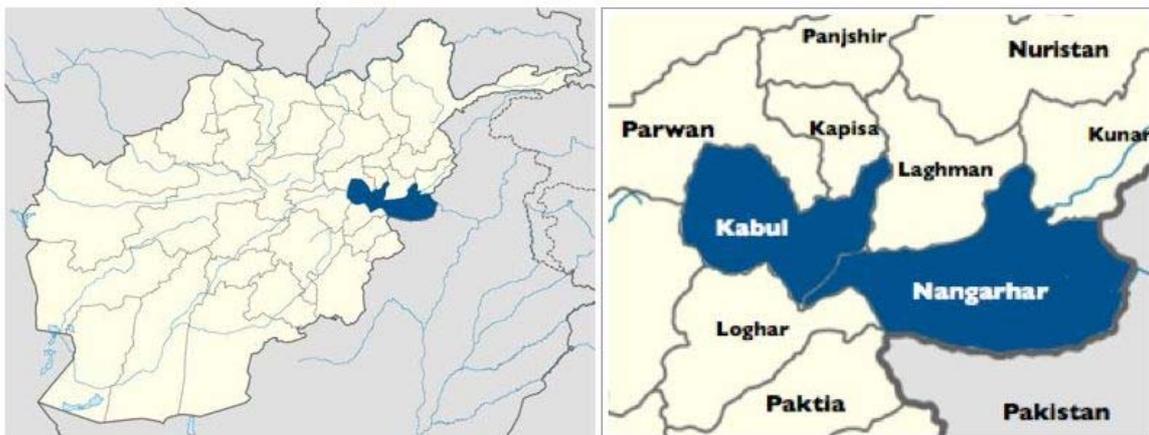


FIGURE 1.2. HOUSEHOLD SURVEY, SURKHROAD DISTRICT, NANGARHAR PROVINCE

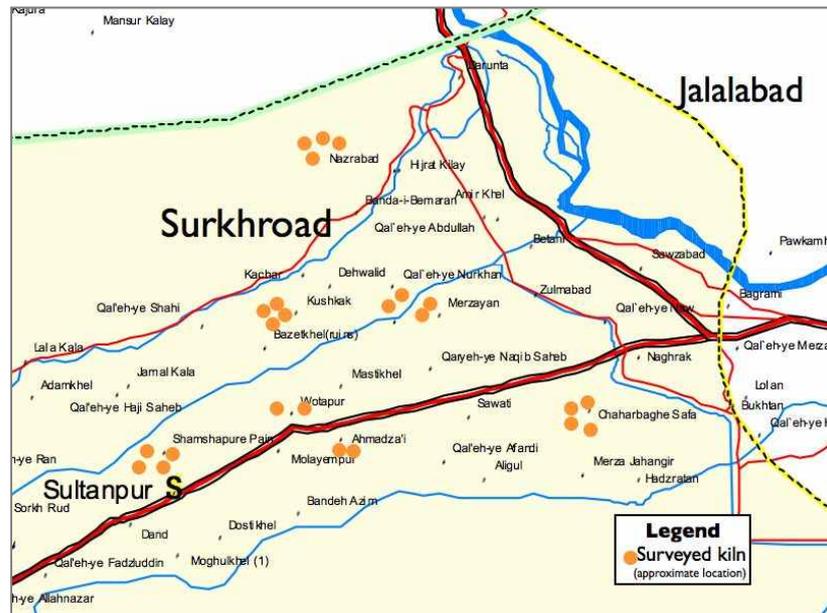
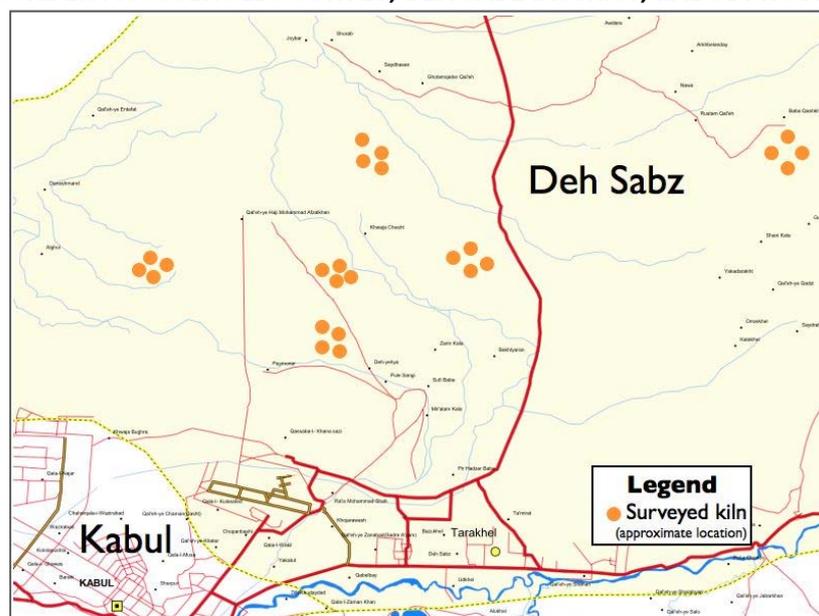


FIGURE 1.3. HOUSEHOLDS SURVEY, DEH SABZ DISTRICT, KABUL PROVINCE



1.3.1 MAPPING EXERCISE

The **mapping of brick kilns** was primarily used as a means of scouting locations for the survey and to obtain a listing of the brick kilns in each district: numbers, geographic spread, size of kilns, etc. The employers' organization of brick kilns in Surkhroad district (Nangarhar province) provided an efficient way to account for the brick kilns (estimated at 80). Only a rough estimate for Deh Sabz (800 kilns) was obtained based on interviews with individual employers, given the lack of any union in that location. However, it also yielded useful quantitative information, notably regarding the average monthly brick production per kiln, the number of employees per kiln, the break down of children and adults in each kiln mapped and financial data on income, expenditures and profit margins.

1.3.2 QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The **household survey** (Annex 7.3) of 190 workers provided the main source of quantitative information for the survey. A purposive-then-random sampling methodology was applied, as the goal was not to have a nationally representative random sample, but a targeted sample that would include a quota of child and adult workers in each district. A quota was not established for the number of male and female respondents, however the team of interviewers was encouraged to speak with female workers whenever possible. Of the child workers surveyed, 58% boys and 42% girls were surveyed. Of the adult workers, 98% were men. In contrast with the brick kiln industry of other countries, brick kilns in Afghanistan are male dominated. Only young girls work alongside their brothers and fathers in the brick kilns. As soon as they reach puberty they are kept in the home. Women's perspectives were also captured in the household portion of the surveys of child workers.

A section of the survey for children was designed to be answered by a non-working member of the household (typically the mother). By dividing the survey for children, the research team was able to compare the answers provided by children and adults in the same household, to gauge their understanding of the household's debt, wages, etc. It also reduced the burden on child workers, who often have trouble focusing and answering questions for extended periods of time due to fatigue, short-attention spans and the pressure to get back to work.

TABLE 1.2. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF HOUSEHOLD SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Adult Worker Survey The adult surveys (99) were conducted primarily with men as very few women work in the kilns.		Child Worker Survey For each of the child surveys (91), a woman in the household (often the mother) was also interviewed for a half of the survey.		
	<i>Men (≥18)</i>	<i>Women (≥18)</i>	<i>Boys (<18)</i>	<i>Girls (<18)</i>	<i>Women</i>
Surkh Road	47	0	32	15	47
Deh Sabz	49	3	21	23	44
Subtotals	96	3	53	38	91
Total Surveys: 190					
Information gathered on 1666 individuals within these 190 households					

Two **local actor surveys** were conducted with 25 brick kiln owners and 28 community members. The survey of kiln owners focused on gathering quantitative data about the demand-side of the brick kiln industry, which was then corroborated with information gathered through focus groups and brick kiln mapping. School teachers, *shura* members and elders were surveyed for the local actor survey of prominent community members. The survey focused on assessing community knowledge and perception of bonded labour in brick kilns.

1.3.3 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Nine **focus group discussions** were conducted with groups of child workers (4), adult workers (3) and brick kiln owners (2) in the districts of Surkhroad and Deh Sabz. Groups were kept small – not exceeding 7 individuals per group – in order to create a space in which individuals felt comfortable speaking openly about the sensitive topics related to bonded and child labour. Focus groups lasted 90 minutes to two hours on average. A **case study** was conducted to collect additional qualitative information for the study's analysis. It consists of interviews with child workers, households, an employer and a recruiter.¹⁷

The research team consulted with stakeholders and relevant actors familiar with the issues of bonded labour, child labour and brick kilns. These **key informant interviews** enabled the research team to build the framework needed for the study and provided valuable insights for the analysis and final report writing. In addition to collaborating with ILO staff in Kabul and Geneva, members of

¹⁷ For a full description of the case study, see Annex 7.1.

the research team met with government representatives of the Afghan Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled and the corresponding department in Jalalabad, UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF), the National Union of Afghanistan Employees (NUAE) and academics that are experts in the field of child and bonded labour.

A **desk review** of pertinent reports and document was conducted to provide the research team with background knowledge on bonded labour, notably in brick kilns, and to help focus the research. A special focus was placed on documents on bonded labour in Afghanistan and South Asia, with a specific look at the same dynamics in neighbouring Pakistan.

1.3.4 CURRENCY CONVERSION

All financial sums given in the local currency of Afghanis (AFA) are also given with their equivalent amounts in USD using the conversion rate 1 USD = 47.65 AFA and rounded to the nearest whole dollar. Amounts that total less than 20 USD are rounded to two decimal points for greater precision. All figures originally given in Kaldar (Pakistani Rupees) were converted into Afghanis using a conversion rate of 1 AFA = 1.82 Pra. All conversions were done using the exchange rates of 17 October 2011.



2 KILNS & EMPLOYERS

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the functioning of brick kilns in Surkhroad and Deh Sabz and explores how and why they bond labourers. The organisational structure within brick kilns is characterised by a rigid hierarchy in which the top and the bottom rarely interact; a greater role is attributed to middle-men, who play a crucial role in recruitment and retention of bonded labourers. There is limited economic profit – even for the top of the hierarchy – placing even more pressure on the wages and well-being of bonded labourers at the bottom. For instance, one case study illustrated an average profit margin of 200 USD per month. Meanwhile, the rising cost of raw materials and the high level of competition which keeps prices low have led to shrinking margins. Although they benefit from child labour, kiln owners do not feel complicit in the employment of children, as they feel the responsibility lies with the parents. A majority of interviewed kiln owners recognized that child labour negatively impacts child health and interferes with school attendance.



TABLE 2.1. AT A GLANCE: KEY FINDINGS ON BRICK KILNS

The methodology behind these calculations is explained in the body of the chapter.

NO. OF KILNS	Deh Sabz: 800 Surkhroad estimate: 80
EMPLOYEES PER KILN	30-220 employees kiln (10-30 families living on-site) Mainly adult men and children of both genders. Women and adolescent girls rarely work in Afghan kilns. More than half of employees under 18.
TOTAL EMPLOYEES	Deh Sabz estimate: 63,000 Surkhroad estimate: 8,375
MONTHS OF OPERATION	Deh Sabz: 6-8 months per year (spring-fall) Surkhroad: 12-months of operation feasible; some choose to operate less
BRICK PRODUCTION	400,000-1,200,000 bricks per month per kiln
CLIENTS	With the exception of small clients, bricks are often resold several times before they reach their final destination. Kiln owners sell to: i) individuals with trucks, who resell them to brick sellers in Kabul or Jalalabad, ii) small Afghan construction companies, and iii) individuals with small projects.
PROFIT MARGINS	Vary narrow and shrinking due to rising cost of coal.
PAYMENT: BRICK MAKERS	Payment method: in cash and in-kind. Cash payments: determined by piece rate. Deh Sabz average: 362 AFA (7.60 USD) per 1,000 bricks Surkhroad average: 251 AFA (5.27 USD) In-kind payments: housing, electricity and water.
RECRUITMENT	Primary sources: Nangarhar, Kabul, Pakistan, Balkh, Laghman
RECRUITER COMMISSION	Deh Sabz: 29 AFA (0.61 USD) per 1,000 bricks Surkhroad: 21 AFA (0.44 USD) per 1,000 bricks

Too often reports on child and bonded labour focus only on the families. Focusing on the supply side of bonded and child labour only tells half of the story. To understand the dynamics of bonded labour in brick kilns, we must also analyze the demand side of bonded labour. This chapter will provide an overview of the functioning of brick kilns in Surkhroad and Deh Sabz and explores how and why they bond labourers. In order to get a full picture of the workings within brick kilns, all worker roles will be discussed (e.g. kiln operators, transporters), however the focus will remain on those actors that are most intimately involved in the bonded labour dynamic, namely the kiln owner, the *jamadar* (recruiter), and brick maker households.

This chapter contains three sections that focus on the employer perspective of bonded labour:

- i) Section 2.1 presents the organisational structure within kilns;
- ii) Section 2.2 examines the operations of a brick kiln and how it uses bonded labour; and
- iii) Section 2.3 explores how brick kiln owners perceive and justify the use of bonded labour, both of adults and of children.

2.1 ACTORS: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE WITHIN KILNS

Regional comparison

The rigid, top-down hierarchy found within Afghan kilns is strikingly similar to the organisational structures found in brick kilns throughout South Asia, demonstrating regional consistency amongst brick kilns.¹⁸ Characterised by a lack of upward mobility, little skills development and intergenerational transference of debt, the industry perpetuates a cycle of dependency and indebtedness. Despite the inherent exploitation of the industry, there is limited economic profit – even for the top of the hierarchy – placing even more pressure on the wages and well-being of bonded labourers at the bottom.

There is considerable detachment between the top and bottom of the pyramid - employers and workers seldom interact directly - with a greater role attributed to middle-men (recruiters) designed to keep wages low. “Labourers cannot bargain for higher wages with the brokers who give them advances without interest – this in itself constitutes a great benefit and a service rendered to them. The broker thus exerts a moral pressure to prevent them from claiming an increase in wage”.¹⁹

There is little to no movement within the hierarchy of a brick kiln, even between low ranking positions (*i.e.* from brick maker to transporter). The one exception is for recruiters (*jamadars*). Some recruiters worked in kilns as children and then, in exceptional circumstances, were able to use their networks of brick makers to become *jamadars*.

The gender composition of bonded labourers is a major distinction between the organisational structures of Afghan kilns and those in other South Asian countries. Brick makers in countries such as Nepal and India are comprised largely of women and children.²⁰ Although households in Afghan kilns are suffering from extreme poverty, women and adolescent girls only work outside the home in the direst of circumstances. Even in neighbouring Pakistan, women can be found working in kilns, except amongst the households of Afghan refugees or migrants.²¹

Brick kiln hierarchy

There are 6 key roles that are essential to brick making: *i)* kiln owner, *ii)* recruiter (*jamadar*), *iii)* assistant/accountant, *iv)* kiln operator, *v)* transporters, and *vi)* brick makers. The most important of these actors, in determining the outcome for the workers, is the middle-man – the recruiter. This

¹⁸ Gupta, J. (2003) “Informal Labour in Brick Kilns: Need for Regulation,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 August: 3282–92.

¹⁹ Bhukuth, Augendra (2005), “Child Labour and Debt Bondage: A Case Study of Brick Kin Workers in Southeast India,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 40, p. 287-302.

²⁰ Based on interview with Eric Edmonds, Associate Professor at Dartmouth College, 21 October 2011.

²¹ ILO (2004), “Unfree labour in Pakistan: Work, debt and bondage in brick kilns,” Working paper no. 24, prepared by the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research for the ILO.

creates a relationship of dependency between the workers and the recruiters; in focus groups, workers mentioned the *jamadar* (recruiter) much more often than the kiln owner, who has little to no contact with the workers at his kiln.

The **kiln owner** is the head of the operation. Unlike some kilns in other South Asian countries (e.g. India) where kiln owners only stop by from time to time, Afghan kiln owners spend much of their time at the kiln, dealing with sales and looking after operations. However, as is often the case in brick kilns, he rarely deals with the workers themselves, delegating this task to the recruiter. Kiln owners in Afghanistan rarely own the land on which they operate. For the most part, they rent the land from local landowners for 10-year periods. He has an **assistant or accountant** that keeps track of the number of bricks families produce daily in order to tabulate the wages earned on a weekly basis, based on a predetermined piece rate.

The **recruiter** or *jamadar*, has a central role as the middle-man between the owner and the workers. He is in charge of recruiting and retaining workers. Recruitment tactics vary according to the type of worker being recruited. Technical capacity is an important factor when looking for brick kiln operators, and the *jamadar* must negotiate the kiln operator's rate based on skill. In contrast, *jamadars* recruit brick makers based on productivity and reliability. While the piece rate for this work is predetermined, the *jamadar* must assess the productivity of a given household in order to determine the size of the advance he thinks the household would be capable of repaying over a given season. He generally recruits households with whom he has a family, ethnic or community tie, which helps ensure that the workers will not run off without repaying their advances, and which adds in a layer of coercion and control over the families. If families do not pay back their advances, the recruiter is held responsible for paying back the money to the kiln owner; knowing that he can easily locate them and their relatives avoids disputes and reinforces the hierarchy within the kiln. The recruiter is paid a commission, which is deducted from the workers wages by the kiln owner.

A majority of the labourers are bonded with the exception of the **kiln operator** and **transporters**. The most skilled of the labourers, the kiln operator is less vulnerable to situations of debt bondage because of his sought-after skills. This is the only worker paid a monthly salary as opposed to a piece rate. Kiln operators and their 4-5 helpers alternate 6-hour shifts, taking two shifts for every 24-hour period. A skilled operator can save a brick kiln money by efficiently using the coal needed for the firing process, whereas poorly skilled operators waste coal, an expensive input for the production of bricks.

A head transporter is paid a piece rate to carry bricks via a donkey or horse-drawn cart from the moulding sites to the kiln. He works with a team of 4-6 men or adolescent boys, with whom he shares the piece rate. As these tasks demand capital (*i.e.* animals and carts), the transporters are better off than the brick makers, and thus less vulnerable to debt bondage. They often live in their own homes off-site, making them less dependent on the kiln owner.

Almost exclusively bonded labourers, the **brick makers** are at the very bottom of the hierarchy. They work long hours performing the physically arduous tasks of preparing the clay and moulding the bricks. Kilns typically have 10-30 families of brick makers living on site. Although the head of household is the only member of the family officially contracted to make bricks, there is a tacit agreement between the worker, recruiter and kiln owner that the worker's family will also help in brick production. Each household, however, decides for itself how many and which of its family

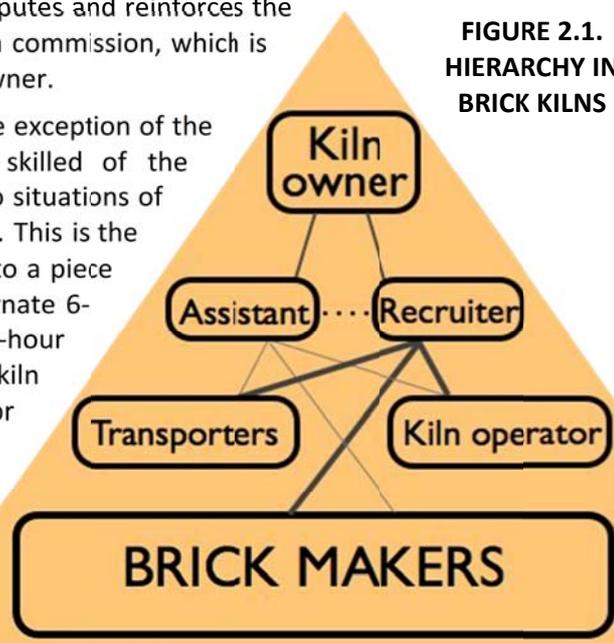


FIGURE 2.1.
HIERARCHY IN
BRICK KILNS

members will go to work as well as the working hours of each family member, based on the needs of the family. Brick makers are generally adult males, adolescent males, and children of both genders. More than half of the brick makers in Surkhroad and Deh Sabz are under the age of 18.²² Very few women and adolescent girls work in the kilns.

BOX 2.1. BRICK MAKING 101: BRICK MAKING PROCESS IN AFGHAN KILNS²³

Step one: Prep the clay

Brick makers head to the brick field adjacent to their homes as early as 4 or 5 am in the morning. There, adult and child workers perform one of the hardest tasks in brick making - turning and mixing the clay that was prepared the night before with shovels. They do this to make clay smooth and pliable enough to be moulded into bricks.

Step two: Mould the clay into balls

Squatting on the ground near a pile of prepared clay, young children often perform this task of moulding the clay into oblong balls, which they then roll along the ground to their elder household members.

Step three: Press the ball of clay into the brick mould

Children and adults alike press the balls of clay into one of two brick moulds: a 1-brick *Sancha* mould or a 4-brick *Ghalebi* mould. The 4-brick mould is harder to lift. It also creates a slightly inferior brick, which fetches a lower price. Those who use the mould feel they can compensate for the lower wage with a higher quantity of bricks. Workers pat an extra dusting of dirt/sand on the exposed side of the brick, as a baker flours a loaf, to prevent the brick from sticking to the ground. Workers perform this repetitive task while crouched on the ground for many hours at a time.

Step four: Remove the brick from the mould

Workers flip the mould over onto the packed dirt ground. Sliding off the mould, they leave behind one or four mud bricks stamped with the kiln's logo.

Step five: Dry the bricks in the sun and stack

The bricks must dry for at least two days, depending on the heat (bricks dry faster in hot weather). The bricks must be flipped, in order to dry evenly. The bricks are then stacked where they continue drying until the transporters come to collect the bricks. At this point, the brick makers' tasks are complete, and the cycle begins again with the preparation of clay for the following day, digging clay and mixing it with water. All tasks are done in the open with no shade or shelter from elements.

Step six: Transport bricks to kiln

Transporters with carts drawn by donkeys or horses deliver the unbaked bricks to the kiln, where they are stacked and coated with a mixture of clay and the dust of baked bricks.

Step seven: Fire the bricks

The bricks are fired in the kiln for a period of one month. Performing one of the most dangerous tasks in brick kilns, the kiln operators keep the kiln fires operating day and night. The firing process is shifted down the rows of bricks so that the firing process never stops; the bricks are added to one end and removed from the other. Once baked, the bricks are transported to a nearby place where they will be stored until they are sold (usually outdoor storage).

²² Estimate based on 190 household surveys in brick kilns compiling data on 1666 individuals, 731 of whom work in kilns.

²³ The process is very similar to that found in Pakistan. For a detailed description of the brick making process in Pakistan, see: ILO, 2004.

2.2 ECONOMICS: BRICK KILN OPERATIONS & USE OF BONDED LABOUR

Intense competition in the brick making industry drives down prices, and with them, profits and wages. Understanding the low profit margins of the brick industry is essential for understanding why this sector relies so heavily on the use of bonded labour. It also sheds light on the vulnerable economic positions of workers in the industry, as there is currently little room to negotiate for higher wages. Rising prices of raw materials such as coal will only place further pressure to maintain the status quo within the industry regarding the use of low-wage bonded labour. These characteristics of the brick industry are consistent throughout the South Asia region. The following description of Indian brick markets rings as true for Afghanistan as it does for India:

*In this highly competitive market, the price of bricks is very low. There is a competition among producers to sell the largest number of bricks. [...] The production of bricks necessitates some raw materials that are costly, such as clay and imported coal. Given that producers cannot reduce the prices of raw materials, they play on labour costs to reduce the price of bricks.*²⁴

This section will first look at the operations of a brick kiln – its income, expenditures and profit margins – before looking specifically at the specific economic aspects of the bonded labour relationship (contracts, advances, wages and deductions and in-kind payments).

2.2.1 KILN PROFIT MARGINS

The brick making industry has notoriously low profit margins, according to Bhukuth (2005), as the brick market resembles a pure and perfect competitive market (Box 2.2).²⁵ It is a low-margin business as the fixed capital needed to get into the market is very small. As a result, entry can be quite large, and can be prevalent especially in places with very unskilled populations. A side-effect of the high density of the sector is the fact that many kiln owners have difficulty simply breaking even. Margins, slim as they already are, seem to be shrinking in Afghanistan due to rising costs of coal. Additionally, the industry is highly dependent on the price of raw material, namely coal. Coal, in fact, is currently the costliest input in brick production, often totalling more than the next two inputs (land rent and brick maker wages) combined. Box 2.3 provides more information about the average costs of inputs. Several kiln owners blamed trade agreements with Pakistan for the increase in coal prices.

This year, the trade of coal to Pakistan has made domestic prices significantly increase. The sale of our bricks has not increased, so the percentage of our profits has decreased. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

Many brick kilns choose to sell bricks directly from their site, rather than transport them into the city where they can sell at higher prices. This is due to the prevalence of bribes that police demand at checkpoints to gain access to the city centres.

Average brick prices sold on site range from 1,500-2,500 AFA (31-52 USD) per 1,000 bricks. Prices vary based on the quality of brick and the season. Higher quality *Sancha* bricks made from 1-brick moulds fetch 2,000-2,500 AFA (42-52 USD), depending on the season. *Ghalebi* bricks, made from 4-brick moulds sell for 1,500-2,100 AFA (31-44 AFA) depending on the season. Kiln owners primarily



FOCUS GROUP WITH KILN OWNERS IN DEH SABZ

²⁴ Bhukuth, 2005. Also confirmed by interview with Eric Edmonds, Associate Professor at Dartmouth College, 2011.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

sell to individuals with trucks, who resell them to brick sellers in Kabul or Jalalabad, Afghan construction companies, and individuals with small projects (e.g. private homes).

Because of such low margins, many kiln owners cannot maximise their profits by waiting for peak seasons to make sales or by selling to bigger clients. Most kiln owners cannot afford to store bricks until brick prices go up in the off-season, but must sell what they can on a month basis to try to meet costs. Neither can kiln owners wait several months to be paid, as they would need to do with large construction companies. Instead, they have to conduct transactions with smaller clients that pay upon delivery.

If we had sufficient savings from previous months, then we would not have to sell at such low prices. I would prefer to keep our bricks to sell in the 'off-season' period, during the last months of the year (Afghan year) when we can sell our bricks at a higher rate. But we can't afford to, so we have to sell them cheaper. - Kiln owner, Deh Sabz

People from Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar come to purchase bricks from us for their private construction projects. We do not really like working with the big companies, as we do not have enough money to wait to be paid later. We need to be paid on time and upon delivery, so we prefer to sell to individuals rather than companies. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

The result of easy market entry, high dependency on raw materials, and the inability to increase prices due to the high level of competition, has direct negative consequences on the wages and work conditions of those at the very bottom of the industry – namely, the adult and children working in bonded labour situations as brick makers. The vulnerability of the market to increases in supply, prices of raw materials and decreasing demand will directly affect the vulnerability of bonded labourers.

BOX 2.2. BRICK MARKETS: PURE AND PERFECT COMPETITIVE MARKETS (PPC)

According to Bhukuth (2005), brick markets closely resemble pure and perfect competitive markets (PPC). Such intense competition keeps brick prices low. Brick kilns compete by trying to sell the most bricks, lowering prices as much as possible. “According to producers, it is due to this competition that some of them incur losses and for others there is no profit.”

Characteristics of a PPC	Corresponding characteristics of brick markets
Many enterprises of the same size	80 kilns in Surkhroad district and 800 in Deh Sabz – a majority of which produce between 600,000-800,000 bricks/month
Intense competition prevents collusion on prices or wages, even where associations exist	Prices and wages are fairly consistent within each district, but not due to price fixing or collusion, but rather because they have been pushed down to their lowest by competition. Kiln owners still use minor differences in wages and quality of in-kind payment to lure workers away from other kilns.
Easy market entry and exit by brick kiln producers	Limited capital is required to start a brick kiln, and leaving the market incurs no direct costs.
Perfect information	From brick makers to <i>jamadars</i> to kiln owners, most actors understand the terms and conditions of their activities, with the one exception of children, who are not always fully aware of the terms or reasons for their work.
Homogeneous product	Other than the imprinted logo, there is little that differentiates the bricks of one kiln from those of another.

Source: Bhukuth, 2005.

BOX 2.3. CASE STUDY: PROFIT MARGINS OF A BRICK KILN

Haji Aziz²⁶ runs a brick kiln in Deh Sabz district. His kiln produces 600,000 bricks per month, which he sells for 2,200 AFA (46 USD) per batch of 1,000 bricks, totaling 1,320,000 AFA (27,702 USD) in monthly income.

His biggest expenditure is coal, which he purchases for 5,500 AFA/ton (115 USD). He requires 111 tons to fire his monthly batch of bricks. Therefore, he spends 610,500 AFA (12,812 USD) per month on coal. The price of coal varies based on its quality, ranging from 5,300 to 6,600 AFA (111-139 USD) per ton. A higher quality coal is more efficient in firing the bricks, therefore, less is needed to fire the same number of bricks. Kiln owners need between 110-160 tons of coal to fire a batch of 600,000-800,000 bricks.

The second largest expenditure is the rent of the land. Haji Aziz rents 20 jeribs (4 hectares) of land for his kiln at 14,000 AFA (294 USD) per jerib, totalling 280,000 AFA (5,876 USD) in rent per month.

Haji Aziz pays his brick makers 380 AFA (7.97 USD) per batch of 1,000 bricks. Although he receives payments from workers paying back their advances, he charges no interest or fees, as it would be considered un-Islamic. Therefore, he makes no money off of the advance. It is simply used as a tool to guarantee regular labour. The brick kiln operator and his team of 4 men are paid a monthly salary 60,000 AFA (1,259 USD).²⁷ A head transporter is paid 120 AFA (2.52 USD) per 1,000 brick to transport bricks to the kiln from the moulding sites. He divides his wages with a team of 4 day labourers.

In order to provide water for the brick making process, Haji Aziz must run the generator to operate the water pumps. He has also wired the workers' housing with electricity, for which he runs the generator until 10 pm at night. At 2,000 AFA (42 USD) per day, he spends a total of 60,000 AFA (1,259 USD) per month for electricity.

Our calculations estimate that Haji Aziz makes a profit of only 199 USD per month, not accounting for sunk costs, such as equipment, construction of worker housing and the kilns, etc.

HAJI AZIZ'S BRICK KILN – MONTHLY INCOME AND EXPENDITURES

Item	Income	Expenditures	Balance	
			(AFA)	(USD)
600,000 bricks (2200 AFA/1,000 bricks)	1,320,000 AFA 27,702 USD		1,320,000	27,702
Brick maker wages (380 AFA/1,000 bricks)		(228,000 AFA) (4,785 USD)	1,092,000	22,917
Kiln operator salaries (Kiln operator + team)		(60,000 AFA) (1,259 USD)	1,032,000	21,658
Transporters (120 AFA/1,000 bricks)		(72,000 AFA) (1,511 USD)	960,000	20,147
Coal (5500 AFA/ton, 111 tons)		(610,500 AFA) (12,812 USD)	349,500	7,335
Rent of land (14,000 AFA/jerib, 20 jeribs)		(280,000 AFA) (5,876 USD)	69,500	1,459
Generator costs (2,000 AFA/day)		(60,000 AFA) (1,259 USD)	9,500	199
TOTAL MONTHLY PROFITS: 9,500 AFA/ 199 USD				

²⁶ Name has been changed.

²⁷ Kiln operator teams can make between 15,000-90,000 AFA (315-1,889 USD) per month, depending on their ability and the size of their team. The *jamadār* always pays the kiln operator in a lump sum, and it is up to him to distribute the wages amongst his team as he sees fit.

2.2.2 TERMS OF THE BONDED LABOUR RELATIONSHIP

Contracts

Jamadars coordinate the contracts, which are almost always verbal. The contract is technically between the head of household and kiln owner; kiln owners emphasized this point in several interviews to avoid responsibility for employing children. However, there is a tacit agreement that members of the household will also be helping in the production of unbaked bricks – unless there are no other household members fit to work in the kiln. Interviewed kiln owners admitted that *jamadars* evaluated the “productivity” of households (*i.e.* the number, age and ability of household members planning to work in the kiln) in order to determine the size of advances they would be capable of repaying.

We do not have direct agreements with the families. We only enter into agreements with the heads of households. But it is true that the heads of households, because they want to make more money, and because we offer shelter, water and electricity, prefer to bring their families with them and have them work with them. It is only profitable to them; it has nothing to do with us. – Kiln owner, Deh Sabz

The terms of the contract include a minimum number of months the household must exclusively work for the kiln. The minimum is set to recuperate costs spent on transportation to the site (from another province or from Pakistan), which the kiln owner pays for. If households want to leave before their minimum stay has been completed, they must repay the transportation costs.

Contracts in Deh Sabz run for 6-8 months. Advances that are not paid off during the brick making season are carried over to the following year. The minimum number of months for kilns in Surkhroad varies, but the longest minimum is one year, which is used for new recruits from Pakistan.

We took a 60,000 kaldar loan (33,333 AFA, 700 USD) from the recruiter when he brought us here from Pakistan. We had been working in a brick kiln in Pakistan, where we owned money to our employer. So this new loan that I took served to pay off the previous loan. My debts in Pakistan are now cleared. This new employer paid for our transportation from Pakistan to Jalalabad. Because of this, we have to work here for at least one year. If we work for one year, he does not take back the transportation cost; if we leave sooner, we will have to pay the fee. – Brick maker, 35, Surkhroad

Contracts are rarely bought and sold amongst kiln owners. Families that leave mid-contract are poached from another kiln that offers them better terms. The new kiln provides the household with an advance to pay off their current loan. Thus, their debt is essentially transferred between kilns.

Advances

Throughout the global brick industry, advances are commonly used to tie workers and their families to a kiln and keep wages low. “The spill-over of advances from one season to the next keeps the workers in place.”²⁸ In other countries, deceptive practices such as fraudulent bookkeeping are common in situations of debt bondage, particularly when workers are illiterate. However, this study did not detect any examples of such practices in Deh Sabz and Surkhroad, and a majority of workers, while illiterate, seemed to have a clear understanding of piece rates, the breakdown of their loans (initial loan, repaid amount, remaining debt), and recruiter commissions.²⁹

Jamadars use advances as enticement when recruiting households. All brick makers in Deh Sabz and Surkhroad are indebted to their employer. However, the advances and repayment are always handled by the *jamadar*, who receives a lump sum for all of the kiln’s advances from the kiln owner. He is in charge of distributing the advances and ensuring repayment. If the families do not pay back the advances, the *jamadar* is held responsible.

²⁸ ILO, 2005.

²⁹ Deceptive practices may still exist within Afghan brick kilns; however, worker knowledge of financial aspects of their debt bondage bodes well for the capacity of workers to detect potential fraud. While escaping debt bondage and the brick sector is extremely difficult, households are easily able to move between kilns if they suspect fraud.

All of the responsibility of the loan is with the recruiter. If any of the employees leaves without paying, it becomes his responsibility to pay back the employer. – Kiln owner, Deh Sabz

As kilns in Deh Sabz must attract workers to travel further distances, advances are often given at the end of a season, so that families are obligated to return the following spring. The *jamadar* keeps track of the families over the winter months.

Most of our workers ask for advances – and do not work without an advance loan. – Kiln Owner, Surkhroad

Workers can decide how quickly to pay back advances, as it is to the employer's advantage if they stay bonded for a longer period of time. As we will see in the next chapter, the cycle of debt is a common pattern among bonded labourers and their households, with debts dragging on over time, or new debts being taken out to repay old debts.

Wages and commissions

Wages and recruiter commissions are not negotiated for a given contract, as they are standardized within each kiln. Both wages and commissions are based on a piece rate, a set rate paid per unit produced, which is determined per batch of 1,000 bricks. Within each district, the piece rate is fairly consistent between kilns; however, there are differences between the rates of Deh Sabz and Surkhroad.

Kilns in Deh Sabz offer significantly higher rates to brick makers; they pay 370 AFA (7.76 USD) per 1,000 bricks, on average, compared with 270 AFA (5.67 USD) in Surkhroad. Commissions for recruiters are also higher: 29 AFA (0.61 USD) per 1,000 bricks in Deh Sabz vs. 21 AFA (0.44 USD) in Surkhroad.³⁰

I fix the price according to last year's price. If the demand is high, then I increase the price; if prospective sales are not high, then we use the same price as the previous year. The income does not vary with gender or age – it is one price for all. Since I have worked here, I have seen the price go up from 100 to 400 AFA – prices go up with time; but they do not go down. – Kiln Owner, Deh Sabz

Rates in Deh Sabz are higher for several reasons. First, they must convince households to uproot their families and travel greater distances.³¹ The kilns in Deh Sabz are also located farther from commercial areas, making it difficult to access markets for buying food and basic goods and even more burdensome to access public services (e.g. clinics, schools). Finally, the cost of living in Kabul province is higher than in Nangarhar province; thus, workers must be paid more to make it worth their while to make the trip for the summer season.

The proximity of Surkhroad to both the central provincial market of Jalalabad (30 min) and the regional market of Pakistan (1 hr from the Torkham border crossing, and 2 hrs from Peshawar), negatively impacts brick workers' wages. In Surkhroad, the kilns are located near the city of Jalalabad, where markets and public services are easier to access. Basic necessities are also more affordable, due to the influx of cheap goods from neighbouring Pakistan. Piece rates for brick makers tend to increase in correlation with the distance from the city and its conveniences. Those kilns located far from the city pay higher wages to compensate for the inconvenience for workers.

Piece rates also vary according to the quality of bricks. A one-brick mould (*Sancha*) produces a higher quality of brick than the four-brick mould (*Ghalebi*). Kilns pay brick makers approximately 50 AFA (1.05 USD) more per batch of *Sancha* brick. Although it pays more, some households prefer to use the four-brick mould, hoping to earn more with quantity rather than quality.

Besides recruiter commissions, the only other deduction from worker wages are payments against debt.

³⁰ See Section 3.3 for more information on household wages and daily production of bricks per household.

³¹ Travel expenses are usually covered by the kiln owner for the arrival but not the return trip.

In-kind payments

Employers around the world provide in-kind benefits, which have the potential to create dependence. In Afghan brick kilns, employers provide, shelter, water and electricity to bonded labourers.³² Although it holds the potential to be used as a coercive tool, dependence should not be confused with coercion. Workers can be dependent, for example, in the United States when employers provide health insurance, particularly if the worker in question has a pre-existing condition that would make it difficult to secure or afford insurance on his or her own.³³

The dependence created through in-kind payments is intensified in situations of extreme poverty (e.g. Afghan brick kilns). When employers provide shelter to families that would have trouble fulfilling this basic need elsewhere, then the dependence it creates becomes a potential tool of coercion. It does not in and of itself constitute an element of bondage, but it does exacerbate the dependency, vulnerability and bonded nature of brick workers' situation in brick kilns in Afghanistan.

Kiln owners and brick makers both recognise that these in-kind payments serve as a perk but also a constraint for families working in brick kilns. Coming from precarious, uncertain situations, many families are grateful to have shelter, electricity and water that they can count on for an extended period of time, even if it is low quality.

We do not have an incentive to leave because we do not have a home elsewhere. At least here they give us shelter. – Brick maker, 36, Surkhroad

Our main problem is that we do not have a house and cannot leave our children on their own, so we had to bring them here and have them work under our supervision. – Brick maker, 35, Surkhroad

However, by depending on the kiln owner for such essential goods, it makes it much harder for families to leave the kilns, as they depend on the kiln owners not only for their livelihoods but for basic goods (i.e. shelter and water). The cyclical pattern of employment in brick kilns, from one season to another, year after year, and from generation to generation, can be linked to the overall poverty and lack of access to land and housing which leads families to rely on their employers for these basic needs. Lack of land and shelter is a problem for all vulnerable populations in Afghanistan – however, the coping mechanism of seeking employment and shelter in brick kilns creates an added layer of vulnerability as it leads to a cycle of dependence that is hard to break, given the added interests of employers to nurture this relationship.

We prefer for them to live on site, otherwise it is less reliable for us: they might not come back. When they come with their families, when we know that they do not have any other shelter or housing, then we know they will stay here and work. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

We give them shelter, water, electricity because if we don't, then they will not work for us. Shelter is the best way to keep them happy – along with water and electricity. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

There are hundreds of brick kilns around here – they can go work wherever they want. We need them to stay. So we make sure to treat them well and keep them satisfied. We provide them with shelter (1 or 2 rooms), water, electricity, and one-way transportation. – Kiln owner, Deh Sabz



SHELTER PROVIDED AT A KILN IN SURKHROAD

³² For details about the in-kind payments provided to households, see Section 3.3.

³³ Based on interview with Eric Edmonds, Associate Professor at Dartmouth College, 2011.

2.3 PERCEPTIONS: EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF BONDED LABOUR

A key challenge for brick kiln owners is retaining labourers. Debt bondage (including its system of advance loans and in-kind payments) is used as a means of ensuring a regular workforce over an extended period or from one season to the next. Although they benefit from child labour, kiln owners do not feel complicit in the employment of children, as they feel the responsibility lies with the parents.

2.3.1 PERCEPTION OF BONDED LABOUR

Kiln owners do not profit directly from the loans they offer, as they do not charge fees or interest. However, they benefit in other ways from the provision of loans and the use of household members as collaterals. Interviewed kiln owners were very forthcoming about the business advantages of bonded labour practices.

The biggest advantage of offering advances³⁴ is that it ensures regular labour. Brick making is arduous; attracting and retaining workers is difficult. By loaning money to brick makers, kiln owners ensure that the workers will not spontaneously leave.

They also use the advance as a planning mechanism, notably in Deh Sabz, where the brick making season lasts for only 6-8 months. Offering advances before the winter seasons ensures that labourers will come back in spring for the following season.

We give them money in the winter to be sure that they will still work with us in the summer. But any chance they get to go to Deh Sabz in the summer, they go there. Some of them give an excuse such as a wedding or family visit to Kabul to leave for good. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

The highest amount of loan we gave was 200,000 kaldar (111,111 AFA, 2,332 USD). For the most part, they cannot pay us back. We also need more visibility (for long-term planning) because we rent the land for 10 years from the landowner. If a family works for the entire 10-year period, then the employer forgives the loan at the end of the 10 years; whatever remains to be paid is dismissed. But these are rare cases – most families do not stay on for that long in the same kiln. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

Advances are also essential for recruitment and increasing productivity. Kiln owners said they would be unable to recruit without the use of advances (Section 2.2). A tertiary advantage cited by interviewed kiln owners was an increase in productivity that they attribute to the bonded labour relationship. Surprisingly, only one kiln owner out of 25 thought that by bonding labour, kilns could ensure inexpensive labour. In general, kiln owners did not consider the kiln workers to be underpaid.

They earn a living better in the brick kilns than on any other daily or low-skilled job. At least this way they have a permanent job for 7 months – and all of their family members can work. Instead of having one person work for one day for 300 AFA (6.35 USD), in this sector, they can make 800-1,200 AFA (16.79-25.18 USD) per day, if they make 3000 bricks in one day.³⁵ It is clearly a better option for them. – Kiln owner, Deh Sabz



³⁴ According to 23 out of 25 kiln owners interviewed.

³⁵ The average daily wage per household is actually 854 AFA/ 18.01 USD in Deh Sabz and 605 AFA/ 12.69 USD in Surkhroad (Table 3.5).

2.3.2 PERCEPTION OF CHILD BONDED LABOUR

Contrary to what one might assume, child labourers are not used in kilns because they are cheaper or perceived to be better suited for the work. In fact, kiln owners recognise that children are less productive than adults at making bricks, and children are paid the same piece rate per batch of bricks as adults. However, there are still benefits to kiln owners:

- **Maximisation of in-kind payments:** In-kind payments of shelter, water and electricity are the same whether two or ten members of a household are working. If multiple members of the same family work, the wages paid by piece rate will go up, but the in-kind payment stays the same.
- **Increased productivity of households:** Much of the work children do, especially young children and adolescent girls, is not readily evident, but their work helps increase the productivity of the adults they assist. In the kilns, children help carry water, sweep the workspace and roll the mud into balls for older relatives to mould. At home, they help with domestic activities such as cleaning, cooking, looking after younger siblings, and fetching water to free up time for other household members to devote their time to making bricks.

Although the kiln owners benefit from the use of child bonded labour, much of the pressure for children to work comes from the family, not the kiln owner. It is no wonder then that the kiln owners, generally speaking, do not feel complicit in the employment of children, and spoke rather openly with interviewers about its causes and consequences. They feel that it is up to parents and the government to improve the situations of children.

The government or some other organisation should provide a school closer to the kilns for the child workers, as well as a better clinic for all our workers. If they have access to education, I am sure that they will be happier to work. Just as I provide them with shelter, water and electricity, the government should give them education. Then they would be happy and have no reason to leave. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

Harmful effects of child labour

The kiln owners were purposely posed a slightly ambiguous questions about the advantages and disadvantages of using child labour, with no mention of whether the advantages and disadvantages were for the kiln owner, the family or the child. Interestingly, kiln owners most often cited the advantage to families – the increase in household income – that results from families bringing their children with them into the brick kilns. This recognition reflects a hard reality this study found to be true in the kilns: that the pressure to put children to work comes more often from the families than from the kiln owners.



Kiln owners identified interference with schooling, harm to health and development, and to a lesser extent, the lower productivity of children as key disadvantages of children working in the kilns. Whereas 14 out of 15 surveyed kiln owners in Deh Sabz believed working in the kiln interfered with schooling, only half of the kiln owners in Surkhroad felt the same. UNICEF has been actively working in Surkhroad to reduce the working hours of children and provide community based schools (CBS) on kiln sites, which explains why kiln owners in Surkhroad are less likely to see the brick kilns as an impediment to schooling.

Although kiln owners were initially suspicious of UNICEF's intentions when it began a pilot project in the Surkhroad kilns in 2010, many have since become willing partners.³⁶ It has been the families that

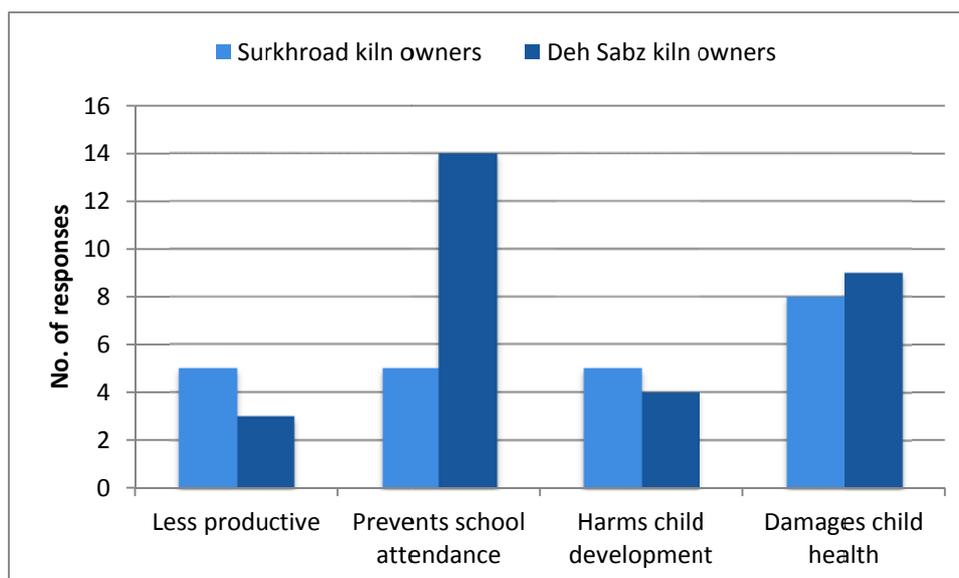
³⁶ For more on UNICEF's work in Surkhroad's brick kilns, see Box 4.1.

are reticent to send their children to the UNICEF schools, fearing it will only prolong the repayment of their debt and doubting the long-term benefits (particularly for girls).

Perceived causes of child labour amongst kiln owners

Kiln owners almost unanimously blamed lack of employment opportunities as the main cause behind children working in the kilns. Adult unemployment was the most cited answer, although a few kiln owners also selected underemployment of adults. One kiln owner identified lack of shelter as a reason for families bringing their children to work in the kilns.

FIGURE 2.2. KILN OWNER PERCEPTIONS OF DISADVANTAGES OF CHILD LABOUR
Unprompted question for kiln owners, multiple answers possible³⁷



³⁷ Question 36 of local actor survey for kiln owners: Do you think there are any disadvantages of having children working in the brick kilns? Responses gathered from 25 kiln owners (Annex 7.5)

3 HOUSEHOLDS

Chapter 3 examines bonded labour from a household perspective, focusing on the labour terms and conditions for average workers. Our data shows that households in debt bondage in brick kilns are generally illiterate (83% of heads of households interviewed are illiterate), low-skilled labourers who depend on child labour and advances from employers to meet basic needs. Ninety-eight percent of households were formerly in exile in Pakistan; their experience working in brick kilns in Pakistan has shaped their livelihood strategy on both sides of the border. They are trapped in a debt cycle that leads them to use child labour as a substitute for adult work. This labour pattern contains elements of coercion as none of the households can live or seek employment outside of the kilns; it is expected of them to put their children to work. With members working 70-80 hours per week, households produce roughly 13,800 bricks. While most households recognise the benefits of their situation (housing, electricity, water), interviewed households also recognized the sacrifices to their children's lives (health and education).



TABLE 3.1. AT A GLANCE: KEY FINDINGS ON HOUSEHOLDS

The methodology behind these calculations is explained in the body of the chapter.

FAMILY SIZE	8.8 people per household (avg.) 3.8 members/family work in kiln, a majority of whom are children
ETHNICITY	Pashtun: 80%, Tajik: 12%, Pashahee: 6%, Arab: 2%
MIGRATORY STATUS	98% formerly in exile in Pakistan (legal & illegal) 2% internally displaced persons (IDPs)
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD	98% male, average age 41 Education: 83% completely uneducated; only 2% graduated high school
BRICKS PER DAY	Adults: 1,100 bricks per day Children: Deh Sabz, 750 bricks; Surkhroad, 630 bricks Family totals: Deh Sabz, 2,320, Surkhroad, 2,240
HOURS	Children & adults: 10-15 hours/day, 6 days/week
WAGES	Household wages per day (with 3.8 members working): Deh Sabz: 854 AFA/18.01 USD Surkhroad: 605 AFA/12.69 USD
IN-KIND PAYMENTS	Shelter, electricity, water
ADVANCES OVER PAST 5 YEARS	No. of advances: 3.6 per household Total amount of loans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deh Sabz: 133,900 AFA (2810 USD) • Surkhroad: 115,600 AFA (2,426 USD)
CURRENT DEBT	Deh Sabz: 33,600 AFA, (1,053 USD) Surkhroad: 47,300 AFA (1,266 USD)
REASONS FOR DEBT	Most advances are taken to pay for basic necessities, illness/medical expense, and to a lesser extent, weddings.

We have seen in Chapter 2 why bonded labour is advantageous to employers. The arduous nature of the work makes worker retention difficult, even in a market with high unemployment and a surplus of low-skilled labour. Debt bondage enables employers to tie workers to their kilns, guaranteeing low-wage labour over an extended period.

But if the work is indeed so hard, why do individuals agree to submit themselves and their families to such hardship? Genicot (2002) explains that, “While seemingly exploitative, both bonded labour and serfdom are often not imposed on the labourers but voluntarily chosen. It is generally the lack of suitable alternatives, which makes workers opt for a life in servitude.”³⁸

This chapter will examine bonded labour from a household perspective, focusing on the terms and conditions of bonded labour for average workers. It will draw comparisons between the districts of Surkhroad and Deh Sabz as well as between child and adult workers. It should be noted that although distinctions are made between households working in Deh Sabz and Surkhroad, all of these workers spend their winters in Surkhroad and have nearly identical backgrounds. The distinctions are drawn not to demonstrate differences in these groups of people, but rather as a means of examining the work conditions, wages, burden of debt etc. that vary between the brick kilns of these two districts.

This chapter is split into four sections that focus on bonded labour from a household perspective:

- i) Section 3.1 presents the profile of bonded labourers and their debt;
- ii) Section 3.2 takes a look at the terms and conditions of bonded labour in kilns;
- iii) Section 3.3 examines the household economics of bonded labour (e.g. wages, debt); and
- iv) Section 3.4 investigates the perceptions of bonded labourers and the community.

3.1 ACTORS: PROFILE OF BONDED LABOURERS

Households in debt bondage in brick kilns are generally uneducated, low-skilled Pashtun labourers with large families and experience in Pakistani brick kilns. As we will see throughout the rest of the report, the cultural, educational, migratory and socio-economic backgrounds of these households are key to understanding the vulnerability of these families to bonded labour and their choice of who in the family will work in the brick kilns.

This section illustrates the fact that entire households are involved in the business of brick making in Afghanistan – with the head of household taking his children, both boys and girls, to join him in the various tasks of the brick making chain. As in other situations of bonded labour in the South Asia region, poor families supply child labour to increase their earnings, maximising their present income and either unaware, unable or unwilling to invest in their children’s education. Although they sacrifice future income by forgoing the education of their children, many poor households choose to maximise present rather than future income, “which involves higher opportunity cost of schooling and investment of time and income going in for the future income.”³⁹ As a result, the intergenerational patterns of illiteracy, and debt bondage, are inherently present.



LUNCH BREAK IN A KILN

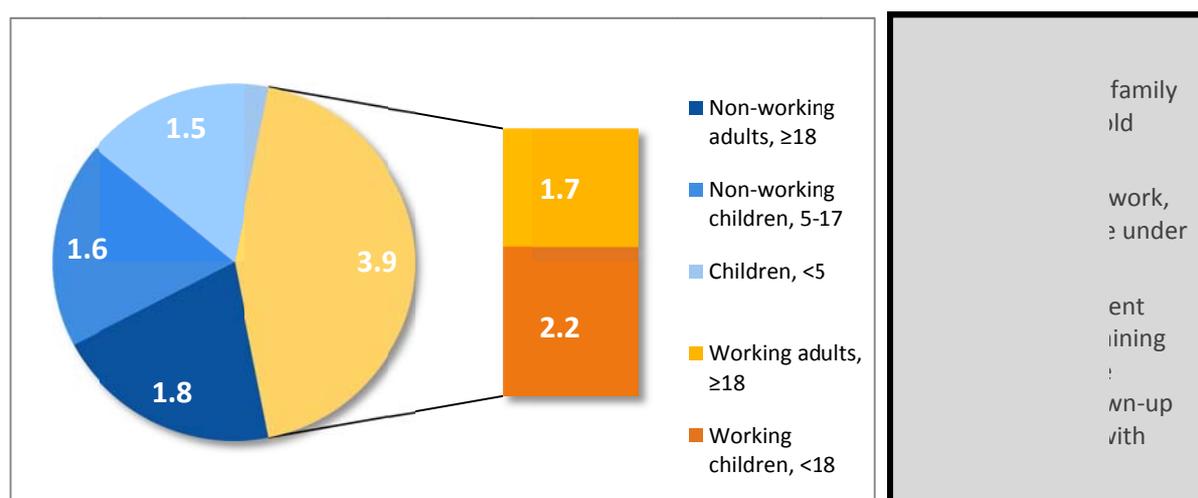
³⁸ Genicot, 2002.

³⁹ Hai, Akhtar Abdul *et al* (2010), “Socio-economic conditions of child labour: A case study for the fishing sector on Balochistan coast,” *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 37, No. 4, p 316-338.

Household composition and number of working members

Households in the kilns are large, averaging 8.8 people per family (Figure 3.1), which is above the average size of poor households in Afghanistan at 8.0.⁴⁰ Adult and adolescent males as well as children of both genders work in the kilns. The average number of adult workers per family is 1.7. As women are largely confined to the home due to strict observance of gender segregation in brick kilns, the additional adult labour is usually supplied by grown-up children that are bonded along with their families. The average number of child workers under 18 years of age per family is 2.2. Boys outnumber girls in the kiln, and the proportion of girls working as brick makers drops sharply as they reach puberty. At this stage, girls are confined to the home, like their mothers. They help with household chores and are soon married off to an adolescent boy or man from the kiln.⁴¹

FIGURE 3.1. AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: AGE & WORKING STATUS⁴²



Ethnic background and migration profile

Family members are low-skilled workers with experience in brick making. Nearly all (98%) of the households had been in exile in Pakistan where they worked in brick kilns. However, it remains unclear how many of the households were legally recognized refugees and how many were living in exile without any legal rights. According to previous studies on the refugee population in Afghanistan, and as corroborated by our own qualitative fieldwork, the period of exile ranges between 10 to 30 years, with different historical turns, from the Russian invasion to the Mujahideen years. As such, this represents a significant period during which the older generation relied almost entirely on brick work while in exile. Only a small portion of households (2%) are internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The ethnic background of households in brick kilns is also quite homogenous, considering the ethnic diversity of Afghanistan. Eighty percent of surveyed households were Pashtun, 12% Tajik, 6% Pashahee (a sub-group of Tajiks), and 2% Arab. This corresponds with broader migratory patterns, as most Afghans who fled to Pakistan were ethnic Pashtuns, due to the cultural, ethnic and religious affinities between the two countries.

Heads of household

Ninety-eight percent of households surveyed are headed by men,⁴³ with the few exceptions of households headed by widowed women. Despite the young age of marriage in the kilns,⁴⁴ only six

⁴⁰ Average household size of non-poor families is 6.9 in Afghanistan. (Source: National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2007/8: A profile of Afghanistan)

⁴¹ For more on the breakdown of age and prevalence of child labour, see Section 4.1.

⁴² Data was gathered on 1666 individuals in 190 households. See Annex 7.3 for a sample household questionnaire.

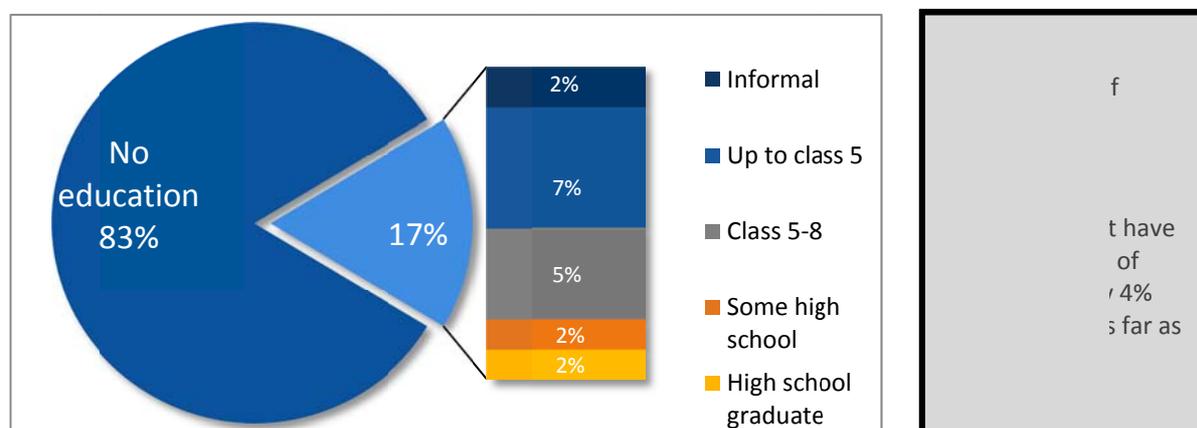
⁴³ Very few households surveyed are headed by women (only 2%). Female-headed households are extremely vulnerable in Afghanistan as women have very limited mobility and economic opportunities.

men in the age range of 18 to 22 were household heads, two of whom had taken over responsibilities for deceased fathers. Most young adults continue to live with their parents or in-laws, even after marriage. Ten percent of heads of household are age 60 and older.

Despite the physically demanding nature of the work, nearly all men continue to work in the brick sector through their 50's and even into their 60's, unless they are disabled. The working status of elder heads of household appears to be more common in the brick sector than in other sectors. In a 2008 ILO study of child labour in multiple sectors in Afghanistan, it was found that it is commonly believed that men in their 50's should not be working, and that it then becomes the children's responsibility to generate household income.⁴⁵

A majority of household heads have had no form of education (Figure 3.2); the education level of the 17% that did receive some form of education remains very low. All families in which the father had attended or graduated high school were still using their children as labourers in the kilns; of the 6 households, three are currently sending at least one of their children to school (mainly boys).⁴⁶ While other studies have found that highly educated families decrease their use of child labour and increase child education,⁴⁷ the incidence of child labour amongst families with low levels of parental education does not differ from that of families with no parental education.

FIGURE 3.2. EDUCATION BACKGROUND OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD



3.1.1 HOUSEHOLD DEBT

Household debt in brick kilns is primarily used to pay for basic survival needs (*e.g.* food, medical bills), as opposed to investments in shelter or entrepreneurial activities. As a result, debt is not a one-time issue but rather a more structural, longer-term cycle that keeps households continuously indebted to their employers. Within this cycle of indebtedness, families often take out additional loans before the previous advances are repaid; surveyed households took out an average of 3.6 advances over the past five years. Households also take out loans to pay back debt when switching from one kiln to another in search of better terms, which further perpetuates the cycle of debt.⁴⁸

As in Pakistan, where brick kilns "operate almost exclusively on the basis of debt bondage," Afghan brick kilns are heavily reliant on bonded labourers to work as brick makers;⁴⁹ 98% of surveyed brick

⁴⁴ It is not uncommon for adolescents to be married at 14 or 15 years of age.

⁴⁵ Altai Consulting, 2008.

⁴⁶ For more on child education in brick kilns, see Section 4.2.

⁴⁷ Hai, 2010.

⁴⁸ For more on the cycle of debt, see Section 5.5.2.

⁴⁹ HRW/Asia (1995), *Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Pakistan*, Human Rights Watch/Asia.

makers are currently working to pay off debts to their employers.⁵⁰ The main reason households take on debt in both districts is to pay for basic necessities:

We spend our money on food. Also, we sometimes use it for medical treatment and repaying our debt. But the jamadar does not force us to repay the debt. – Brick maker, 15, works with two brothers (23 & 22) and father (50) in Surkhroad

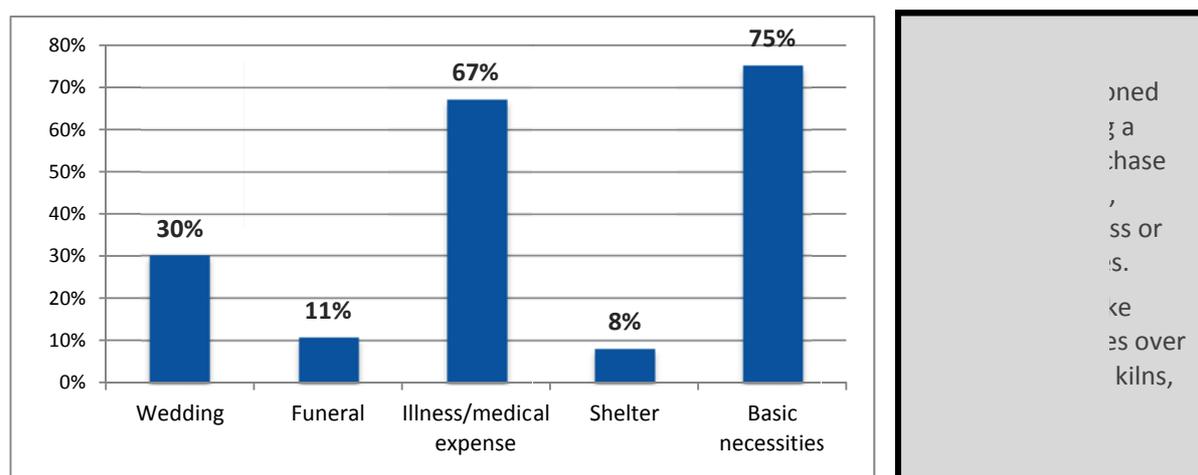
I took a 20,000 AFA loan from the recruiter; I have been paying him back every month and have cleared my family's debt just last week. I usually take loans to cover our expenses during the winter months, when we do not work and have no income. - Brick maker, 50, Deh Sabz

Medical bills represent the second most common reason for taking loans from employers; however, illness, weddings and funerals are often the initial impetus for families to enter bonded labour contracts. Once households are indebted, they continue to take out advances for various reasons.⁵¹

I first got a loan because my mother was sick. She was hit in the side by a stray bullet. We spent a lot of money on medical treatment. Unfortunately my mother died, and we had to take another loan for the funeral. I have taken a total of five loans. – Brick maker, 35, Surkhroad, has worked in kilns for 15 years

My little brother got very sick when he was 12-years-old with kidney stones. We took him to Peshawar for treatment. When my family was there, we did not have money for our expenses. I took a loan for our family expenses because we did not know anybody except the jamadar.- Brick maker, 20, Surkhroad, household 75,000 kaldar (41,209 AFA/865 USD) in debt

FIGURE 3.3. HOUSEHOLD REASONS FOR TAKING ON DEBT FROM BRICK KILN OWNERS⁵²



Of those surveyed,⁵³ households in Surkhroad borrow larger sums and have made less progress toward paying back loans than households working the summer season in Deh Sabz (Table 3.2). As a result, households surveyed in Surkhroad currently owe 20% more to their employers than families wrapping up the brick making season in Deh Sabz. More than half of households in Surkhroad have not repaid any of their current debt (51 out of 94 households). Only seven households (out of 96) in Deh Sabz had not yet paid back any of their debt.

⁵⁰ Based on data from 190 households. Of the remaining 2% (4 households), two families had recently paid off a debt and were still working in the kilns. The other two households had not been indebted to their employer, and are not bonded labourers.

⁵¹ Transportation costs – primarily for return from Pakistan or between provinces – are a factor that entices some families in the recruitment process. However, as most kiln owners cover the cost of transportation if workers agree to stay for a given period (usually a year), families do not typically take advances for this reason.

⁵² Based on the responses of 186 households. Children were largely aware of the reasons for which their families were in debt. Only one child out of 91 child interviewees did not know why his family was indebted.

⁵³ Based on responses from 37 households in Surkhroad and 76 households in Deh Sabz. Households that have not paid any of their debt or who did not provide the full details of their debt were excluded from calculated averages in Table 3.2.

We know that our employees cannot really work enough to pay off the debt. But we cannot add pressure on them; it might take more than 3 or 4 years for them to pay back what we lent them. In that case they can either work all those years or find another employer who will pay us the loan to see them released from their responsibilities here. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

Although progress is slow, many families steadily make payments toward debt; a comparison of the 5-year average of household debt with the current remaining debt demonstrates that families have paid back much of what they have borrowed over the past five years (Table 3.2). However, the perpetual need for more advances (often for medical purposes or basic necessities), keep most families bonded to their employers.

TABLE 3.2. BREAKDOWN OF AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD DEBT

District	Latest loan amount	Repaid amount	Remaining debt	Total loans 5-year avg. ⁵⁴
<i>Deh Sabz</i>	55,000 AFA 1,154 USD	21,400 AFA 449 USD	33,600 AFA 1,053 USD	133,900 AFA 2,810 USD
<i>Surkhroad</i>	64,800 AFA 1,360 USD	17,500 AFA 367 USD	47,300 AFA 1,266 USD	115,600 AFA 2,426 USD

3.2 TERMS & CONDITIONS OF BONDED LABOUR

Adult and child bonded labourers work 10-15 hours six days a week, 12-months a year,⁵⁵ performing physically demanding tasks in harsh conditions. Households depend heavily on the labour of children; even young children, by performing unseen tasks, increase the overall productivity of the household. A detriment to child health and development, kiln work creates a vicious cycle of debt where families have an increasing need for loans to address health issues brought on by their work and living conditions.

3.2.1 BRICK PRODUCTION ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

As we saw previously (Box 2.1), brick makers are responsible for preparing the clay, shaping and pressing the clay into 1 or 4-brick moulds, and drying and stacking the bricks. Much of the moulding process is done from a crouching position, and workers are constantly exposed to the elements (*e.g.* sun, heat and blowing dust). Preparing the clay is the most arduous activity, as it involves digging, mixing, and turning the heavy clay until it becomes malleable.

My task in the brick factory is preparing and reversing the moulds. They have us small children to do this task; it is very hard. Older workers prepare the clay, which is harder, and we prepare the bricks. We only do this work so that we have food to eat at home. – Kiln worker, 8, Surkhroad

There is no easy work in brick making. The most difficult work in brick making is mixing the clay. – Kiln worker, 15, Deh Sabz

⁵⁴ Households took out 3-4 loans on average over the last five years. Based on responses from 95 adult workers. Whereas all but two adult workers (primarily male) were able to provide a specific answer, a significant portion of women (often the mothers of child labourers) answering questions about the household for the child surveys were unable to provide this figure. Nine women in Surkhroad and 16 women in Deh Sabz were unaware of the total number of advances the household had taken in the past five years.

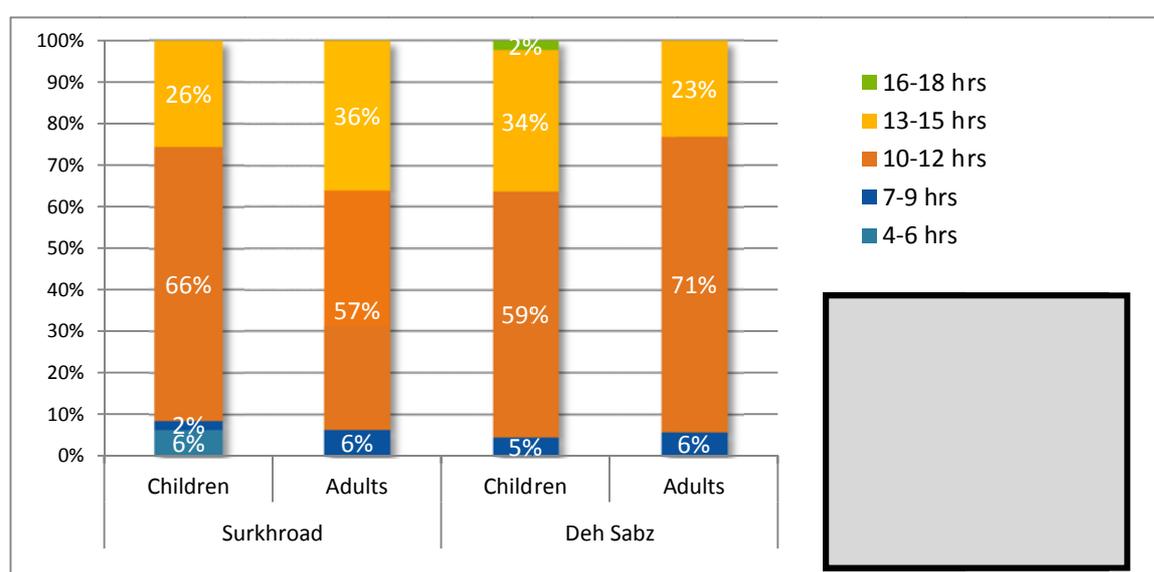
⁵⁵ Most adults and children work year-round in the brick kilns: 97% of children, 90% of adults. Of the adults that do not work year-round, 8 out of 10 worked in another sector for part of the year, primarily in construction as day labourers. The remaining two did not work for several months a year. Amongst the children who do not work year-round, one works in agriculture, one goes to school and one does not work in the months off from the brick kiln.

Most adult brick makers work 10-15 hour shifts six days a week (Figure 3.4).⁵⁶ Adults average 73 hrs/week in Surkhroad and 70 hrs/week in Deh Sabz. Adults begin their day at 4 or 5 am. With a quick break mid-morning for tea or breakfast and a longer break for lunch, their break time averages 80 min/day.⁵⁷ On Fridays, workers travel to the nearest bazaar to buy supplies (primarily food) for the following week.

Like adults, a vast majority of children work 10-15 hours per day (Figure 3.4). The burden of these hours becomes even more evident when examining weekly totals (Figure 3.5). Children in Deh Sabz work an average of 73 hours per week, whereas those in Surkhroad work 69.⁵⁸ The slightly lower average in Surkhroad may be attributed to the work UNICEF has done in the district to decrease working hours and provide community based schools (CBS) in brick kilns. Average break time for children totals 108 min/day, 48 minutes more than adult breaks.

I start at 4 am when I can. We work until 6 or 7 pm; if we make good progress during they day, we might stop earlier at 5 pm. I take a break from 9-9:30 for tea, and again at noon for a one-hour lunch break. We usually eat eggplants, lentils and beans because these foods give us strength. – Kiln worker, 10, Surkhroad

FIGURE 3.4. HOURS OF WORK PER DAY, SATURDAY THROUGH THURSDAY⁵⁹



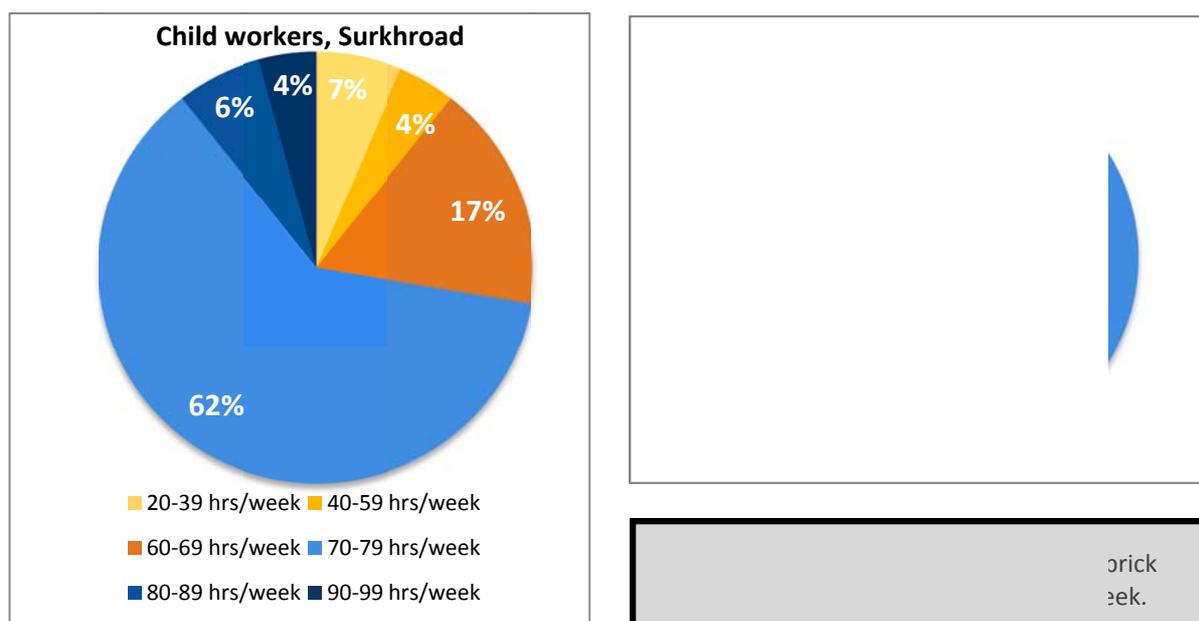
⁵⁶ Saturday-Thursday

⁵⁷ Break time is not included in the number of hours worked.

⁵⁸ Findings in line with statistics found on child brick makers in 2008 Altai study on child labour (80 hrs per week). The average hours per week is lower in this study as it includes a greater proportion of young children. Half of the brick makers in the Altai study were 15-17. (Source: Altai Consulting (2008), "A Rapid Assessment on Child Labour in Kabul," Research commissioned by the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC).)

⁵⁹ Surkhroad: Children, n=47, Adults, n=47; Deh Sabz: Children, n=44, Adults, n=52.

FIGURE 3.5. WEEKLY HOURS WORKED BY CHILD BRICK MAKERS



Surveyed adults produce 1,100 bricks on average per day.⁶⁰ Children that mould bricks prepare an average of 630 bricks in Surkhroad and 750 bricks in Deh Sabz. Those children who do preparatory work in the moulding process (e.g. rolling the clay into balls) are not counted in these averages. However, their work has an important impact on the productivity of their siblings and fathers. Thus, the total per individual, whether adult or child, fluctuates with the number of children assisting in the preparation stages of brick making.

I make the bricks, and my family helps by bringing tea and taking care of the home. Some of my children help me by preparing the clay and rolling the balls. – Brick maker, 35, Surkhroad

Total daily brick production for households range from 1,000-4,500 per day. The total depends largely on the number of family members working, their age and ability.⁶¹ The average total per family is 2,240 in Surkhroad and 2,320 in Deh Sabz.

3.2.2 WORK CONDITIONS & ASSOCIATED RISKS⁶²

Brick making is physically demanding work that involves repetitive tasks performed over long hours, with no shelter or shade from the sun and blowing dust. When asked about the difficulty of work in the kilns for children, 26 out of 28 prominent community members considered kiln work to be more physically demanding than work in other sectors.⁶³ The consequences of this work can lead to negative short- and long-term effects for both adults and children (Table 3.3). The dust inhaled by workers can induce life-long respiratory problems such as silicosis and asthma; when kiln owners use waste such as old tires as fuel, the health risks of inhaling toxic emissions are even greater. Seasonal diseases such as malaria are common, as the water used for brick making lies in stagnant, shallow pools ideal for breeding mosquitoes. Physical injuries result from the repetitive motions of moulding bricks and physically demanding tasks of mixing clay. Extended exposure to the elements provokes heatstroke and chapped skin, particularly amongst children, and contact with the clay can induce skin allergies for some. The extreme poverty of households living in brick kilns create a second

⁶⁰ Adults in their prime, with assistance from children performing preparatory stages, are able to produce as many as 1,500 in a single day; a small group of adults only manage to produce 500-800 bricks per day.

⁶¹

See

Figure 3.7 for more details on the correlation between the number and age of household members and wages.

⁶² For more on health and development risks for children, see Section 4.3.1.

⁶³ The remaining two respondents answered "somewhat harder" and "same level of difficulty." (teachers, *shura* members and elders)

category health and developmental risks, many of which manifest over the long-term, and are therefore not readily evident.

TABLE 3.3. HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL RISKS OF BRICK MAKING

Cause	Health & Developmental Risks
<i>Manual labour in kilns & work conditions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respiratory problems (e.g. asthma, chronic chest infections, silicosis) • Exposure to toxic fumes (when kilns use waste, such as tires, as fuel) • Seasonal diseases including malaria • Physical injury – back and leg pain and injuries • Heatstroke • Skin allergies and chapped skin from exposure to the elements
<i>Living conditions & poverty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness related to poor hygiene and sanitation • Stunted growth • Malnutrition • Shortened life-span

3.2.3 COERCION

Although a necessary condition, debt alone is not sufficient to qualify labour as bonded. The restriction of options, often related to freedom of movement and employment, and the use of deception or force, are also common characteristics of debt bondage in most countries. In other country case studies, force often refers to the threat or use of verbal or physical punishment, whereas, deception in bonded labour is predominantly economic in nature. In cases of deception, brick kiln staff purposely underestimate the number of bricks produced or to minimise costs or manipulate debts and repayments. While movement and employment are restricted in Afghan brick kilns, such cases of force and deception were not found in this survey.

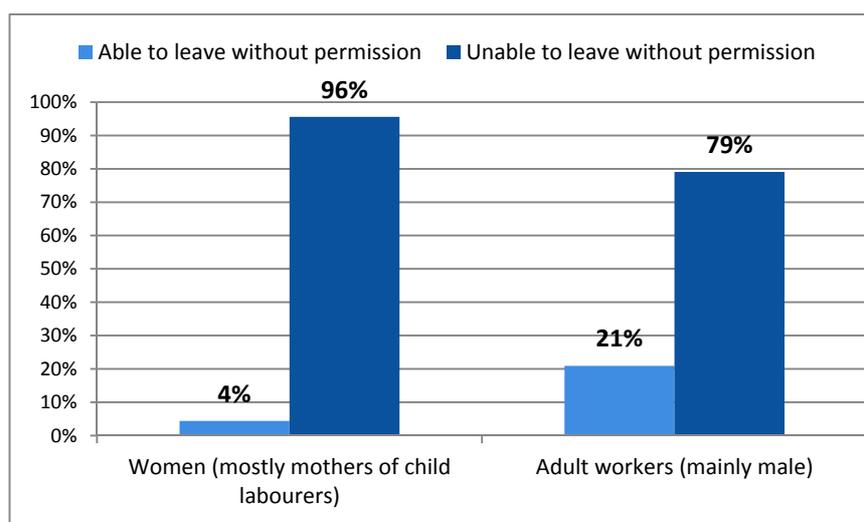
Freedom of movement & employment

At the heart of the contractual agreement between workers, recruiters and households, is a limitation on movement: it is an explicit prerequisite for all household members of working capacity to work on site; no family member is ever allowed to seek primary or secondary employment outside the kiln. Restrictions on mobility and secondary employment are the norm in situations of debt bondage and are common throughout the South Asia region (e.g. in Pakistan).⁶⁴ A majority of households report that family members are not able to leave the kiln whenever they wish (Figure 3.6).⁶⁵ When asked why family members could not leave, most respondent either said they had to ask permission from their employer or could not leave due to their debt. A small portion attributed their restricted mobility to a lack of employment alternatives. Even if they did find a better job somewhere else, half of workers (both child and adult) report that they could not leave their current job in the kiln. For 70% of households, all members of the family are restricted from employment outside of the kiln until the loan is repaid.

We prefer this system (debt bondage) as it ties the workers to us; we give them this advance so that we are sure that they will stay and work for us as we need workers all year round. Plus we tell them that they are not allowed to go and work elsewhere. They have freedom if they want to see a doctor, go to school, but that's basically it. – Kiln owner, Surkhroad

⁶⁴ ILO, 2004.

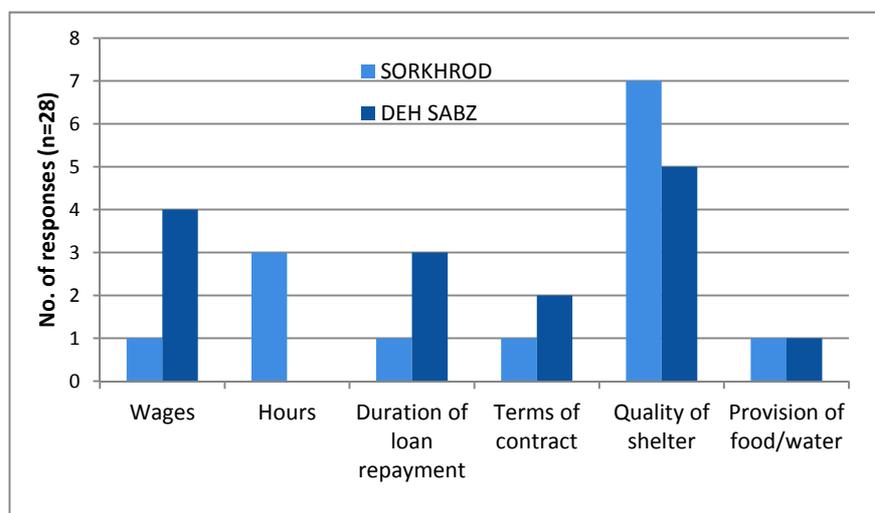
⁶⁵ Based on interviews with 190 households.

FIGURE 3.6. ABILITY OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS TO LEAVE THE KILN WHEN THEY WISH**At a glance:**

96% of women and 79% of men report that members of their household are unable to leave the brick kiln when they wish.

Deception and force

Most households in brick kilns did not feel they had been deceived or forced to work by their employer or the *jamar* who recruited them; however, given the lack of awareness about rights, this perception does not confirm whether or not deceptive practices are in use. Amongst those who did feel deceived in some way, a majority felt they had been misled regarding the quality of housing provided as in-kind payment (Table 3.4). Ten percent of adult workers felt they had been pressured to work through verbal abuse or intimidation. Nineteen percent of women (mainly mothers of child labourers) felt the household had been pressured to work through verbal abuse or intimidation. It appears that the decision to become a bonded labourer is indeed a voluntary choice, and for many, may be the best or only choice available, given their skills and socio-economic status. As explained in Genicot (2002), "It is generally the lack of suitable alternatives which makes workers opt for a life in servitude."⁶⁶

TABLE 3.4. CASES OF DECEPTION IN BRICK KILNS**At a glance:**

15% of survey respondents felt deceived in some way by the employer or *jamar*.

Of the 18 individuals with complaints, a majority felt deceived about the quality of shelter provided in kilns.

⁶⁶ Genicot, 2002.

3.3 ECONOMICS: BONDED LABOUR FROM A HOUSEHOLD PERSPECTIVE

Almost all brick makers are paid in cash and in kind.⁶⁷ Cash wages are determined by a piece rate; workers within each kiln are paid a set amount for every 1,000 bricks they produce. As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, workers in Deh Sabz make considerably higher piece rates than brick makers in Surkhroad (Table 3.5), due to distance families must travel upon recruitment, a higher cost of living and the inconvenience of being farther from markets and public services.

TABLE 3.5. DAILY WAGES OF BRICK MAKERS

District	Worker	Piece rate per 1,000 bricks	Bricks/day	Wage per day ⁶⁸
Deh Sabz	Adult	370 AFA (7.76 USD)	1,100	407 AFA/ 8.54 USD
	Child		750	278 AFA/ 5.82 USD
	Family		2,320	854 AFA/ 18.01 USD
Surkhroad	Adult	270 AFA (5.67 USD)	1,100	297 AFA/ 6.23 USD
	Child		630	170 AFA/ 3.57 USD
	Family		2,240	605 AFA/ 12.69 USD

Children make a huge contribution to household income in brick kilns, but not because they are more productive than adults. Although some sectors have the reputation of being better suited for “nimble fingers” (*i.e.* child labourers), adults are clearly more than adequate substitutes for children in the brick kiln industry.⁶⁹ An average child produces 57-68% as many bricks as an adult.

The dependence on child labour is rather due to the lack of economically active adults and large family size. Households in Afghan brick kilns only have one economically active parent. Whereas women work in the brick kiln industry in other South Asian countries, the exclusion of women from the work force in Afghanistan places a greater dependence on child labour. With one less working parent and an average household size of 8.8, more children equate more money, especially if the children are boys. Only boys are allowed to work in the kilns after puberty, and it is at this stage in life when the children start to make considerably bigger contributions to the family income.

I cannot repay the debt because my family is large and most of them are female or very young boys that cannot work. We have a low income and our expenses are high. When we cannot cover our costs, we take more advances from the jamadar. – Brick maker, 26, 54,945 AFA (1,166 USD) in debt

The dependence on child labour increases with the age and associated productivity of the child, notably for boys. While girls grow more productive with age, they cease to be economically active members at puberty and are thereafter kept in the home. While there is a slight correlation between the total number of family members working in the kiln and monthly income, the correlation becomes stronger when looking at working family members over a certain age (

⁶⁷ In a few exceptional cases, workers are only paid in cash, if they rent or own their own homes.

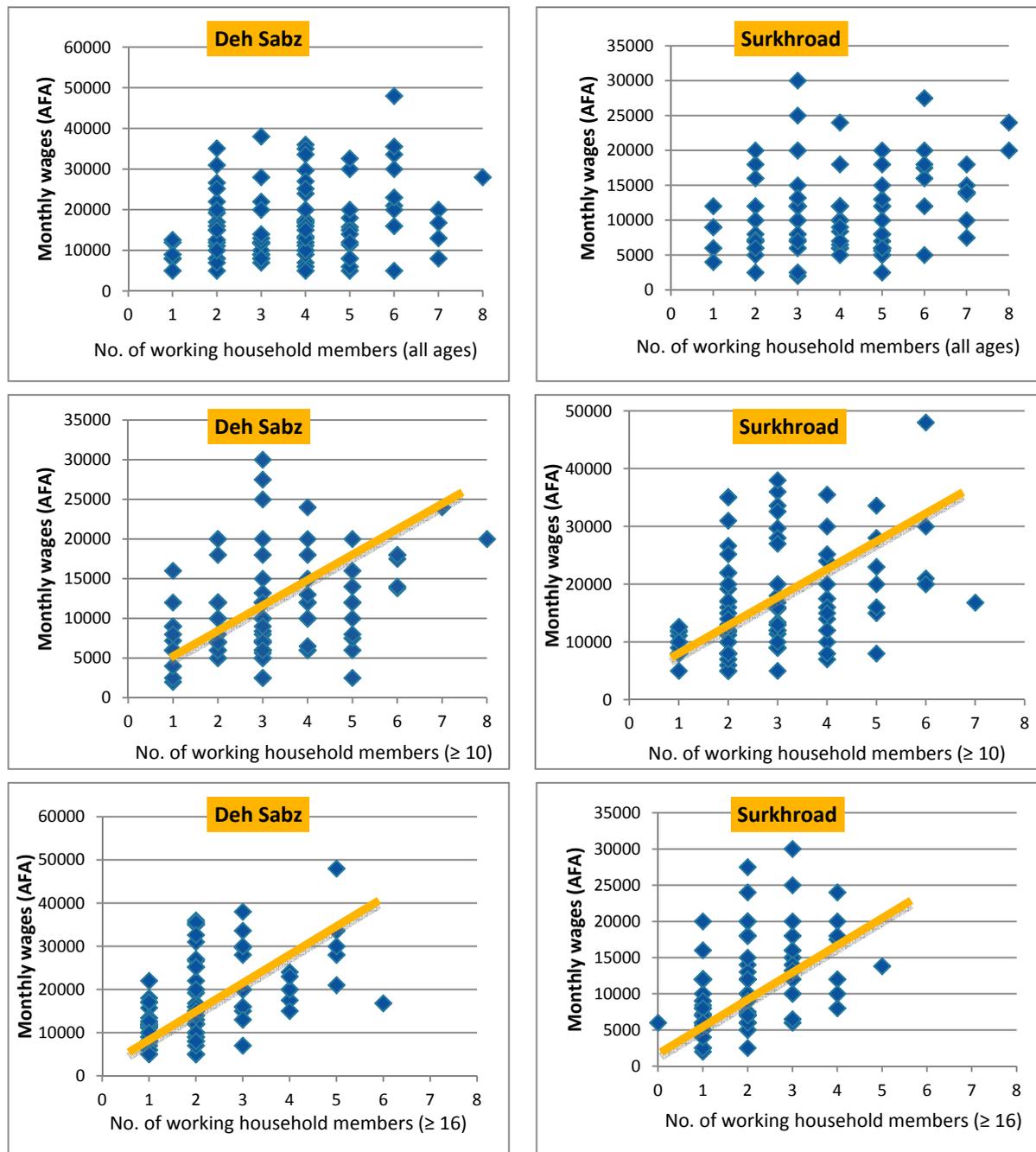
⁶⁸ Wage before commission to recruiter. The average piece rates provided by the 99 adult workers surveyed were used for the calculations in Table 3.5.

⁶⁹ Basu and Tzannatos, 2003.

Figure 3.7). As the ages and number of workers per family increases, so do the monthly wages of families. Already at the age of 10, each child is making a significant impact on the family income. At the age of 16, a child contributes almost as much as experienced adults to family income.

This correlation is often found to be true in industries that require low or unskilled workers. If jobs require greater skill, children contribute a smaller portion of family income, and thus demand for child labour drops. A study of working children in India in 1995 found a similar correlation between increased child labour and rising household income in jobs such as braiding plastic rope and cleaning plastic cement bags.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Swaminathan, Madhura. 1998. "Economic Growth and the Persistence of Child Labor: Evidence from an Indian City." *World Development*, vol. 26, no. 8, pp 1513-1528.

FIGURE 3.7. CORRELATION BETWEEN NO. & AGE OF WORKING FAMILY MEMBERS AND WAGES⁷¹

At a glance: The number of working household members has a positive impact on the household's income. However, this correlation only begins to emerge when we look at working members that are 10 and older, and it clarifies further with working members over 16. Clearly, older children make bigger contributions to household income.

⁷¹ This correlation is examined separately for Surkhrood and Deh Sabz as there is a significant difference in the monthly wages between the two districts. Households in Surkhrood reported an average monthly income of 12,163 AFA (255 USD), whereas those in Deh Sabz reported 16,595 AFA (348 USD). The data for these figures was drawn from 190 household surveys (94 in Surkhrood, 96 in Deh Sabz).

In-kind wages⁷²

In-kind wages are a common practice in areas plagued by extreme poverty.⁷³ Nearly all brick makers live in households provided by their employers.⁷⁴

We do not have a home. If we work somewhere else, we would need to rent a home somewhere. Here, they provide a home, and the home is near to our work. My father and two other brothers work in the kiln. My father does not force me to work in the kiln, but we have to work here to repay our debt. Until we find a better job, we will work here in the kiln. – Brick maker, 15, Surkhroad

The shelter provided by kilns in Deh Sabz and Surkhroad consists of a rudimentary 1-story buildings made out of unbaked brick. Each household is given a single room with cut-out windows and a small yard of packed dirt surrounded by a high mud wall for privacy.⁷⁵ A few households are given two rooms, if they have a large number of household members working in the kiln. Extended families working in the same kiln may share a block of two to four rooms that opens up onto the same yard space.

Water and electricity are also commonly provided as forms of in-kind payments in the brick kilns.⁷⁶ Most rooms are equipped with electricity and a compact fluorescent bulb; a generator provided by the kiln owner powers the electricity until 10 pm. Electricity is relative luxury for brick makers. Only 41% of Afghan households have access to electricity (33% in Nangarhar province and 86% in Kabul province).⁷⁷ The average distance to the community well is a 10 minutes walk. Families are aware of the need to boil water before drinking it, but many interviewees admitted to drinking the cold water after hours of hard work in the sun. As a point of comparison, only 26.8% of Afghan households have access to safe drinking water (56% in Kabul province and 33% in Nangarhar province).⁷⁸

Deductions

The only deductions from wages are for the recruiter commission and debt payments. There are no built-in deductions to account for broken or damaged bricks, as is the case in Pakistan. If bricks are damaged – most often due to rain – the kiln owner absorbs the cost.⁷⁹ Recruiter commissions are uniformly applied within a kiln (Table 3.6), whereas the size and regularity of payments against debt are determined by each household. More than half of households surveyed do not make weekly or monthly payments, either because they are unable or because they save money to make payments at irregular intervals. Families in Surkhroad have a harder time making payments, due to lower wages. Families in Deh Sabz are more likely to save up over a season and make a lump sum payment against their loan before heading back to Nangarhar province.

Families that are able to travel to Deh Sabz are able to pay back their debt more than twice as fast as families that remain in Surkhroad. However, families in Deh Sabz are not able to keep up this pace



⁷² For more on the provision of in-kind payments by employers, see Section 2.2.2.

⁷³ ILO, 2005.

⁷⁴ 97% of 190 households live in shelter provided by kiln owners. The remaining 3% rent or own their own homes.

⁷⁵ Privacy is essential, as women are not allowed to be seen by males outside of the family. Movement outside of the home is limited; when women do leave their homes, they wear the traditional blue burqa.

⁷⁶ 91% and 92% of 190 households receive water and electricity as in-kind payments, respectively.

⁷⁷ CSO/MRRD (2008), *National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment*, Afghan Central Statistics Office and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ ILO, 2004.

year-round, as the Deh Sabz brick making season lasts only 6-8 months. Families can easily fall further into debt over the winter months before they are able to try to dig themselves out the following spring.

TABLE 3.6. HOUSEHOLD WAGE DEDUCTIONS FOR RECRUITER COMMISSIONS

District	Recruiter commission (per 1,000 bricks)	Bricks/day per family	Recruiter commission/day	Recruiter commission/month (26 working days)
<i>Deh Sabz</i>	29 AFA (0.61 USD)	2,320	67 AFA (1.41 USD)	1,742 AFA (37 USD)
<i>Surkhroad</i>	21 AFA (0.44 USD)	2,240	47 AFA (0.99 USD)	1,222 AFA (26 USD)

TABLE 3.7. MONTHLY WAGE PER HOUSEHOLD (AFTER DEDUCTIONS)

District	Daily household wages ⁸⁰	Monthly household wages	Monthly recruiter commission	Average payment against debt ⁸¹	Monthly household wage for family of 9 (after deductions)
<i>Deh Sabz</i>	854 AFA	22,204	(1,742 AFA)	(3,740 AFA)	16,722 AFA / 351 USD
<i>Surkhroad</i>	605 AFA	15,730	(1,222 AFA)	(1,500 AFA)	13,008 AFA/ 273 USD

3.4 PERCEPTIONS: HOUSEHOLD & COMMUNITY

3.4.1 COMMUNITY TIES & COMPARISON

Families, particularly women and adolescent girls, in brick kilns have limited interactions with members of their community. Men from the same kiln may meet on a weekly basis; however, interviewed women were unable to give estimates of the number of families living in their kiln as they had no contact with all but their immediate neighbours. The lack of social interaction is indicative of the limited choices women are able to make in their daily lives.

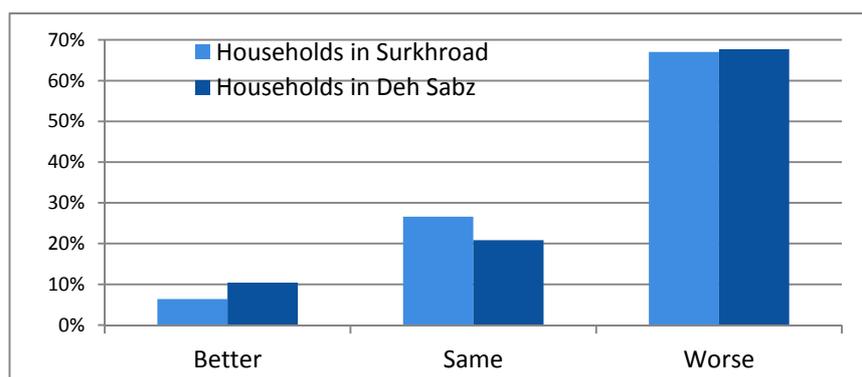
Children, on the other hand, are able to play outside of the home with other children from the kiln. However, their movement is often restricted to the home and the worksite, where they have few outlets for leisure activities. Girls are allowed to interact with other children when they are young, but as they reach puberty, they are confined to their homes, so as not to damage their reputation and marriage opportunities.

Household contact with extended family is more common, especially given that many *jamadars* recruit from their own families. Around half of surveyed households had members of their extended family living nearby. Despite limited contact with the community, many respondents still felt that their economic situation was worse than that of other members of the community (Figure 3.8)⁸²

⁸⁰ See Table 3.5.

⁸¹ Average payments against debt are calculated based on data collected from 38 households in Surkhroad and 56 households in Deh Sabz. The 96 households that do not make monthly payments were not included in this calculation.

⁸² Based on survey of 190 households: 99 adult workers (mainly male) and 91 women (in most cases mothers) in households of child labourers.

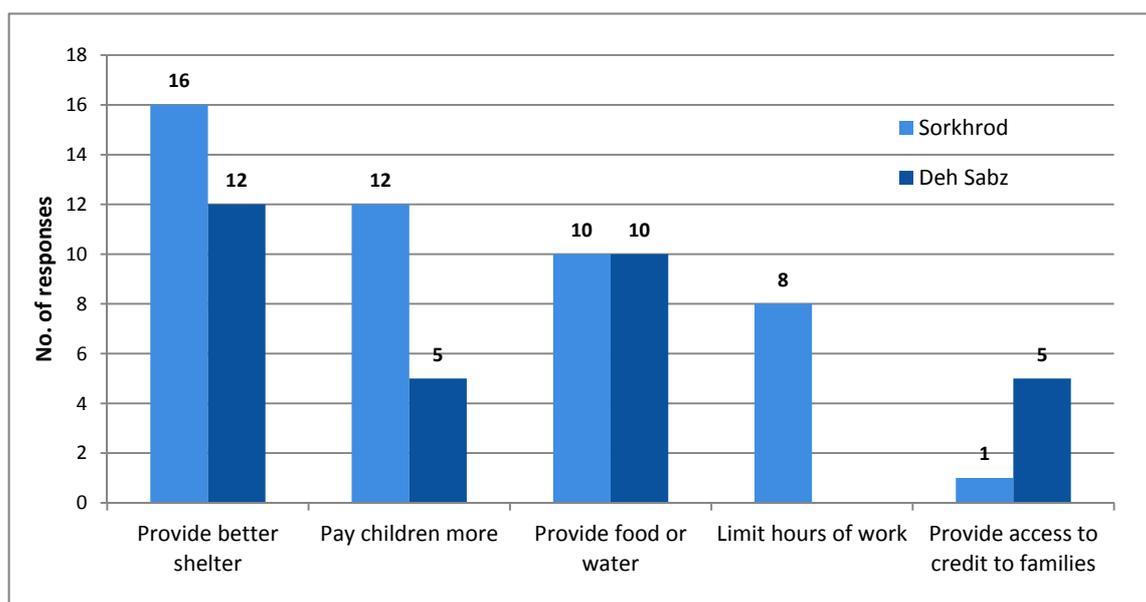
FIGURE 3.8. ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC SITUATION RELATIVE TO OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY**At a glance:**

A majority of households feel their economic situation is worse off than other members of the community.

3.4.2 COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD BONDED LABOUR

Community perceptions of bonded labour, confirm what we have learned throughout this chapter regarding the difficult conditions for brick making households in brick kilns. By looking at the solutions they offer for improving conditions for child bonded labourers in kilns (Figure 3.9), we can also see what they identify as being the key areas of concern (shelter, wages, food and water).

Community members perceive unemployment and underemployment to be the root causes of bonded labour. As a result, a large majority of interviewed *shura* members, elders and teachers felt job creation or income-generating activities would be the solution to decreasing the number of child bonded labourers.

FIGURE 3.9. COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS: IMPROVING CHILD BONDED LABOURERS' CONDITIONS⁸³

⁸³ Based on local actor survey of 28 prominent community members including shura members, elders and teachers.

4 FOCUS ON CHILDREN

Key findings from the field point to patterns that affect child development: First, families enrol their children in work, with boys and girls being “forced” to work not only by employers but by their parents, with our data showing a significant difference in gender breakdown until puberty (twice as many boys as girls). Second, 85% of children do not attend school, as they must help provide for their families. Third, children face a high risk of musculo-skeletal and respiratory problems related to their work. As for health problems related to poverty, 50% of households suffer from food insecurity throughout the year, with a higher percentage likely suffering from micromalnutrition. All of the above are obstacles to proper child development; several initiatives to partially address these issues will be discussed in this chapter.



With five years of experience, 11-year-old Sima is already a seasoned brick maker. She moulds 600 bricks a day, nearly one third of the family's total brick production. In a year of 6-day workweeks, Sima will produce 187,200 bricks. After her 13-hour shift with her two younger sisters and father in the brick kiln, Sima must help her family with chores around the house.

Sima may not have to work in the kiln much longer. As her mother, Kookoo Khanom explained, "We can allow our girls to work until they become adolescents. Then, we marry them so that they can start their own family." Sima will likely be married to a brick maker, as her family has little contact with the world outside of the brick kiln.

As an adult, Sima's life will most likely reproduce the pattern of her mother's life. Sima's older sister used to work in the kilns, before being married off two years ago to a man from her extended family who also works in the same kiln. She is no longer working but raising two children, with all her time being spent in the one-room shelter, due to the strict observance of gender segregation in brick kilns in Afghanistan.

The pattern in this family – from the mother, to the older sister, to Sima herself – illustrates the intergenerational patterns and lack of mobility, whether social, economic or professional, in brick kilns. Sima's story⁸⁴ illustrates that child bonded labour is not only an issue of what children are doing now, but what they will be doing in the future. As we will see in this chapter, the cost of child bonded labour is paid over a lifetime through the loss of health, education and opportunities.

This chapter is split into three sections:

- i) Section 4.1 looks at parental decisions and dependence on child bonded labour;
- ii) Section 4.2 education and leisure time of child bonded labourers in brick kilns; and
- iii) Section 4.3 examines the impact bonded labour will of on children's futures.

4.1 CHILD LABOUR IN KILNS

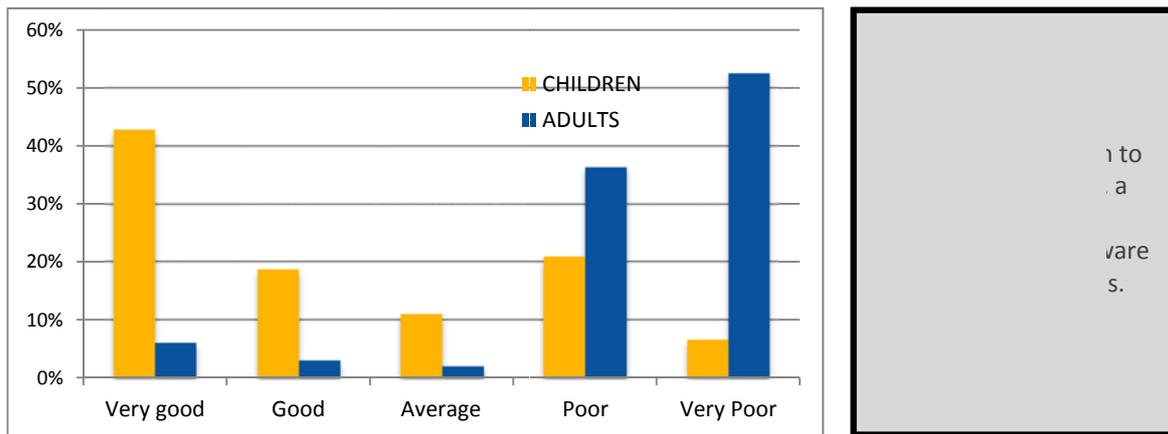
Children represent a majority of the brick making workforce in Afghan kilns (Figure 4.2).⁸⁵ At 5-years-old, many children begin assisting their elder siblings and fathers in the kiln, and at eight, most bonded children are clocking in nearly twice as many hours as the legal adult limit in many European countries. As we have demonstrated in Chapter 2, families depend heavily on the labour of children. This section will explore why parents depend on child labour, and how the type of dependence varies with the gender of their children.

Parents in brick kilns are not callous or less caring than other parents.⁸⁶ In fact, qualitative interviews repeatedly showed that parents prefer having their children work alongside them in the kiln, rather than sending them off unaccompanied to the unknown dangers of street work (exposure to drugs, criminality, and insecurity were specifically mentioned in interviews). Neither are parents unconscious of the effect brick work may have on their children. Whereas children in kilns are often unaware of the conditions in which they live and work, parents largely determine the working conditions of children in brick kilns to be "poor" or "very poor" (Figure 4.1).

⁸⁴ For more on Sima, refer to the case study in Annex 7.1.

⁸⁵ Children also represent majority of kiln residents (Figure 3.1).

⁸⁶ Although there are theories that postulate that, "parents are willing to have children only if they receive an adequate return on their investment," most child labour theory assumes a certain degree of parental altruism toward the well-being of their children. (Source: Brown, Drusilla K. *et al* (2002), "The Determinants of Child Labor: Theory and Evidence," Discussion Paper No. 486, School of Public Policy, University of Michigan.

FIGURE 4.1. PERCEPTIONS OF WORK CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN⁸⁷

According to the luxury axiom, “households send their children to work only when driven to do so by poverty. In other words, child non-work (schooling and leisure) is a luxury good.”⁸⁸ This was found to be true in brick kilns of Deh Sabz and Surkhroad: faced with a never ending debt, families feel they have to use all available labour sources, even if it is to the long-term detriment of the family, to make daily ends meet. It is out of necessity and extreme poverty that households enlist their children from an early age to work in the kilns.

Fifty-six percent of brick makers are children, and a majority of these workers are 14 and under (Figure 4.2).⁸⁹ Girls are mainly present in the 14 and under group, as cultural norms oblige them to stay at home upon reaching puberty (Figure 4.3). This does not mean that their work ceases; it simply shifts from market work to family work, which is unpaid and often undercounted by child labour statistics. As explained in Basu (2003), “unpaid and not-for-market work that is done in the household, such as household chores” is often overlooked.⁹⁰ Although household chores often fall into the category of “light work,” the number of hours, age of the child and interference with school can easily push family work into the child labour category.⁹¹ “The perpetuation of traditional female roles and responsibilities, within and outside the household, as well as the perception of domestic service as part of a woman’s ‘apprenticeship’ for adulthood and marriage, also contribute to the persistence of child domestic work as a form of child labour.”⁹²

The gender make-up of brick kilns represents a major difference between Afghan brick kilns and those found elsewhere. Kiln workforces in Nepal and India are comprised largely of women and children of both sexes.⁹³ Although households in Afghan kilns are suffering from extreme poverty, women and adolescent girls only work outside the home in the direst of circumstances. Even in neighbouring Pakistan, women can be found working in kilns, except amongst the households of Afghan refugees or migrants.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Based on the responses of 91 children and 99 adults in a total of 190 household surveys.

⁸⁸ Basu and Tzannatos, 2003.

⁸⁹ Estimate based on 190 household surveys in brick kilns compiling data on 1666 individuals, 731 of whom work in kilns.

⁹⁰ Basu and Tzannatos, 2003.

⁹¹ For more on the distinctions between child work and child labour, see Section 1.2.1.

⁹² ILO (2011), “Questions and answers on the hidden reality of children in domestic work,” ILO, www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/insight/WCMS_160515/lang-en/index.htm.

⁹³ Based on interview with Eric Edmonds, Associate Professor at Dartmouth College, 21 October 2011.

⁹⁴ ILO, 2004.

FIGURE 4.2. AGE & GENDER BREAKDOWN OF BRICK MAKING WORKFORCE⁹⁵

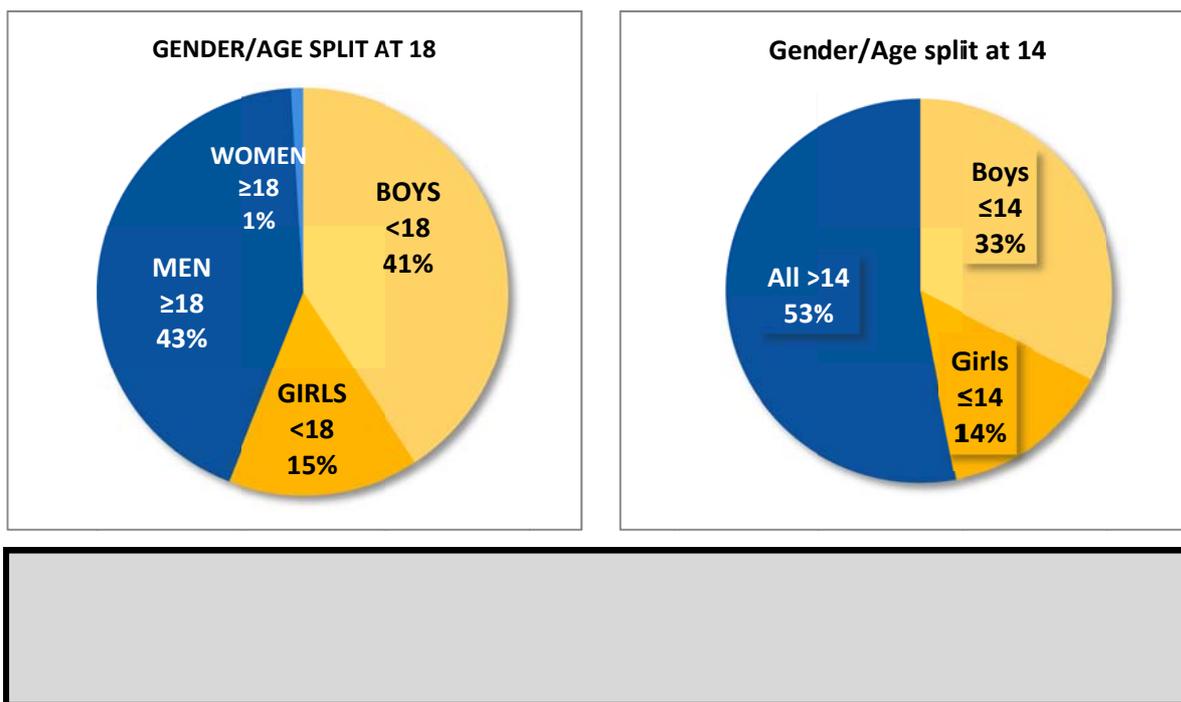
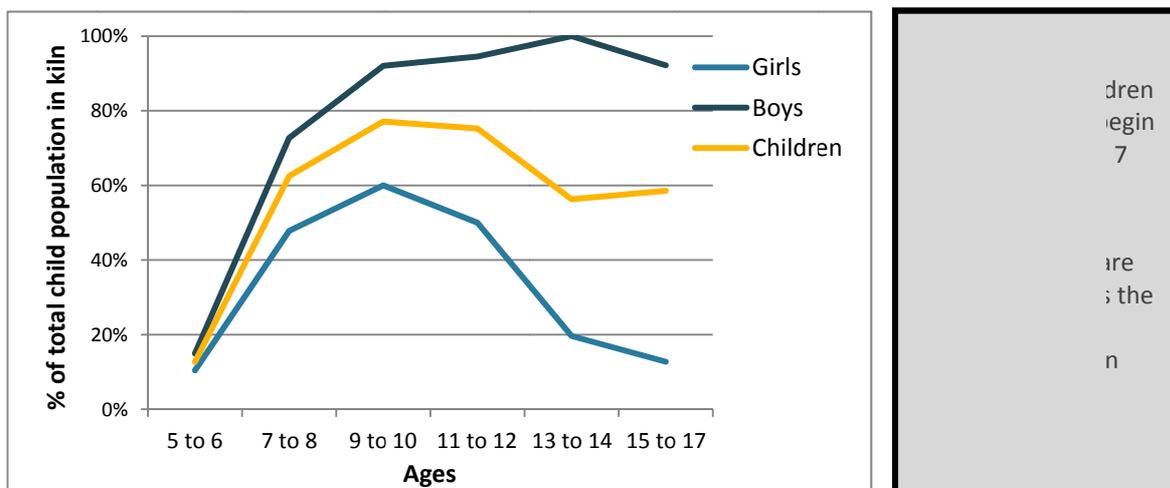


FIGURE 4.3. PROPORTION OF BOYS AND GIRLS WORKING IN THE KILN⁹⁶

Out of total number of children living on site (n=731)



4.2 LUXURY GOODS: EDUCATION & LEISURE

Education and leisure time are extremely rare in the brick kilns. Only 15% of children in surveyed households attend school, and those that do, are only able to attend school while in Nangarhar province for the winter, where schools are more accessible (Figure 4.4). While accessibility is an issue, the main reason children do not attend school is the need to help their families (Figure 4.5). Of those who do attend school, most children reported attending 6 days a week for several hours per

⁹⁵ Calculation based on 190 surveys in brick kilns compiling data on 1666 individuals, 731 of whom work in kilns.

⁹⁶ Calculation based on 190 surveys in brick kilns compiling data on 731 children, 409 of whom work in kilns.

day.⁹⁷ School attendance, while still marginal, has been greatly facilitated in Surkhroad district via a UNICEF pilot project that specifically targets women and children in brick kilns (Box 4.1).

FIGURE 4.4. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN IN BRICK KILNS⁹⁸

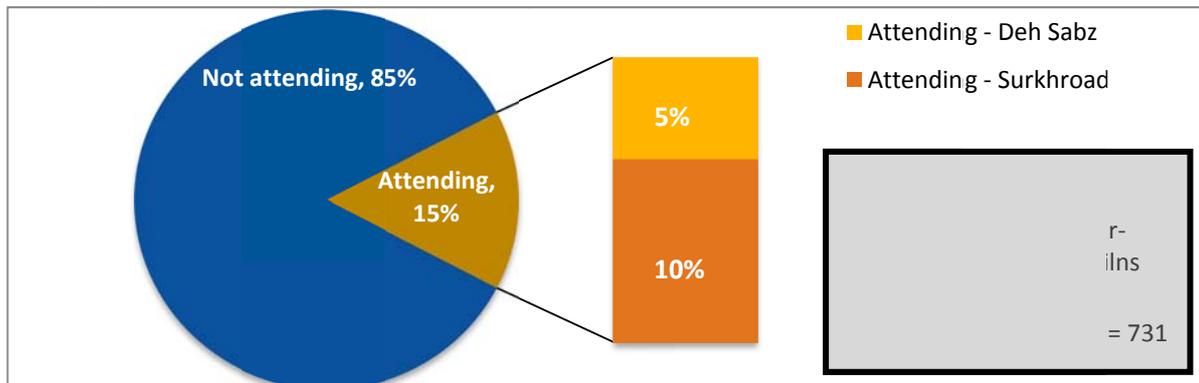
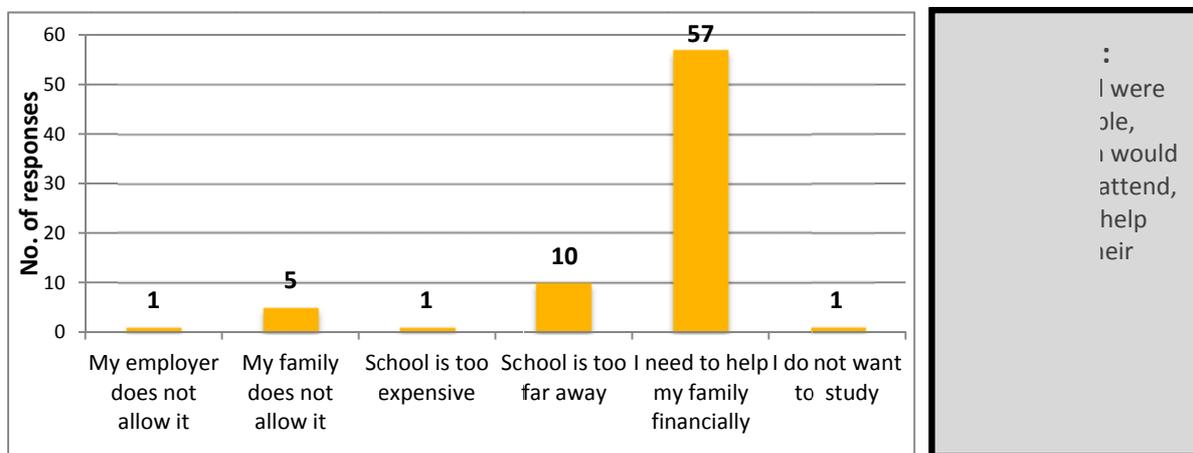


FIGURE 4.5. REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL⁹⁹



⁹⁷ Children reported attending school for 4-5 hours a day; however, community based schools provided by UNICEF offer courses for 3-hours a day.

⁹⁸ Based on 190 household surveys compiling data on 1666 individuals, of whom 731 are school-age children (5-17).

⁹⁹ Based on interviews with 75 children who currently do not attend school (35 in Surkhroad, 41 in Deh Sabz).

BOX 4.1. UNICEF EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAMME IN SURKHROAD'S BRICK KILNS

Coming from uneducated households¹⁰⁰ and extreme poverty, children can often be intimidated by school. The graduated system offered by UNICEF-Jalalabad's pilot programme eases children in brick kilns into the system, decreasing the likelihood that children will feel overwhelmed and discouraged, eventually dropping out. It also eases parents into the idea of sacrificing a few hours of child labour for the long-term benefit of the child and the family. Held on-site in the kilns, classes begin at just two hrs/day (peer-to-peer classes) and then expand to four hrs/day (community-based schools).

1. Peer-to-peer classes (20 established in 2010)¹⁰¹

Young children start out in a peer-to-peer class designed to prepare students for the classroom. Each class, taught by a secondary school student from the brick kiln, teaches children simple things such as how to introduce themselves and how to behave in a classroom setting. Children also learn the alphabet.

Held on kiln sites, the peer-to-peer classes demand minimal investment. The teachers (students themselves) volunteer their services in the afternoon after attending morning classes. The only supply provided by UNICEF is a reversible chalkboard/whiteboard with an attached mini-abacus for practicing counting and introducing math skills.

2. Community-based schools (CBS)

Separate classes of boys and girls meet in community-based schools for 4 hours a day, 6 days a week. Originally held in tents, kiln owners now provide rooms on kiln sites for classes.¹⁰² The classes cover standard subjects taught in 1st and 2nd grade. UNICEF provides small workbooks and pays teacher salaries. A reported 507 boys and 419 girls have been provided with access to primary education via the community-based schools in Surkhroad's brick kiln.¹⁰³

In one school visited by this study's research team, more than 40 young boys attended the class at the on-site CBS. However, only 19 girls attended the afternoon course, down from an initial enrolment of 36. The girls' teacher explained that many of the girls had been forced by their families to go back to making bricks. It would seem that while many families in the kiln saw the potential benefit of educating their sons, they were not convinced that educating their daughters would have a positive impact for the family in the long run.

Enrolment in public school

UNICEF's goal in implementing the peer-to-peer classes and community-based schools is to eventually enrol children in public schools. The organisation has succeeded in enrolling 309 children in public school since the programme's inception in 2010.

Leisure time is mainly limited to Fridays, the only day children do not work in the kilns. Time off from making bricks is most often spent performing household chores and resting (Figure 4.6). When focus groups of children were asked what they liked to do for fun in their time off, many children said they did not have much time for leisure activities with the exception of Friday.

We like playing games; but we don't have time for them. We work until 5pm and then we're too tired to play. I did not work before working in brick kilns; our situation was a lot worse back then. – Kiln worker, 12, Surkhroad

When we finish work we don't have time to play. We only have time on Friday, when we play with the children working in the kilns. – Kiln worker, 15, Surkhroad

¹⁰⁰ See Figure 3.2 for information on the education level of heads of household in brick kilns.

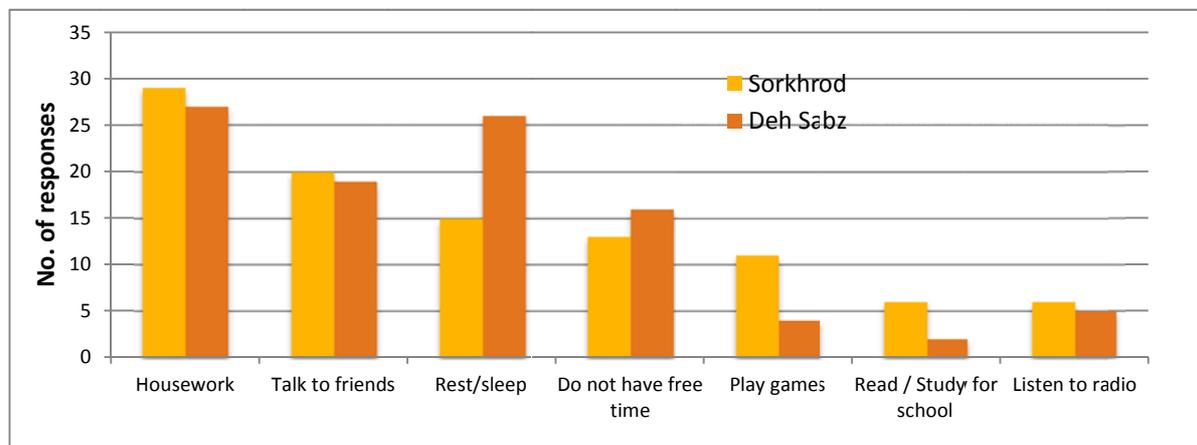
¹⁰¹ All classes held in kilns are segregated by gender according to local custom.

¹⁰² A few kiln owners also provide a room for children's leisure activities. The room is equipped with a small supply of books and educational games and activities provided by UNICEF.

¹⁰³ UNICEF (2011), "Surkhroad District Brick Kiln Project" Report on the second phase and recommendations for the third phase of UNICEF's pilot project in Surkhroad district, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

I like cricket, but unfortunately we don't have any time to play. Also, on Friday we don't play because there is no field to play in. The manager doesn't let us play because he says we will break the bricks. Before the family worked in the kilns they were in Pakistan, but the children were small and didn't work. Their situation was the same as it is now. – Kiln worker, 12, Deh Sabz

FIGURE 4.6. CHILD USE OF TIME OFF FROM KILN¹⁰⁴



4.3 CHILD DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT: SHORT- AND LONG-TERM COSTS

Accidents and injuries that occur to children have a much longer “cycle of disability” than for adults. The impact on a 40-year-old brick maker future will frankly play out over a shorter period of time than for a 12-year-old.¹⁰⁵ The 12-year-old is also more likely to get injured due to inexperience, and because of his or her young age, tasks in the kiln are simply more physically demanding for a child that has not yet fully developed.

Children working in kilns have a high risk of musculo-skeletal problems such as repetitive strain injury, lower back pain, neck and shoulder pain, frequent head aches and joint pain due to the “manual handling of heavy weights of mud and green (unbaked) bricks, long working hours with awkward posture, monotonous and repetitive work.” Children also run the risk of poor bone development, early-onset arthritis.

In terms of illness, respiratory problems such as chronic coughs and chest infections, silicosis, and asthma are common due to the constant inhalation of dust and emissions from the kilns. Some kilns also burn waste such as rubber tires; the toxic emissions of this practice have severe health consequences for children. The work conditions of brick kilns also increase the likelihood of malaria, due to the prevalence of stagnant, shallow pools of water used for mixing clay for bricks.

Poverty-related health and development risks, such as malnutrition and developmental stunting should be distinguished from the work-related risks, as they would be present whether or not households are bonded labourers in brick kilns. Although it manifests over an extended period of time, malnutrition and associated stunting were often mentioned by interviewed parents of child labourers, who recognised the tell-tale signs lightened hair and informed interviewers that children in the kilns did not grow as tall.

Half of households face food insecurity throughout the year (Figure 4.7), and a higher percentage of households likely suffer from micro-malnutrition. This “hidden hunger” is the result of diets that are not rich in nutrients and lack diversity; children miss out on essential nutrients (*e.g.* Vitamin A, zinc, iron) that can lead to eyesight problems including blindness, developmental stunting (both physical

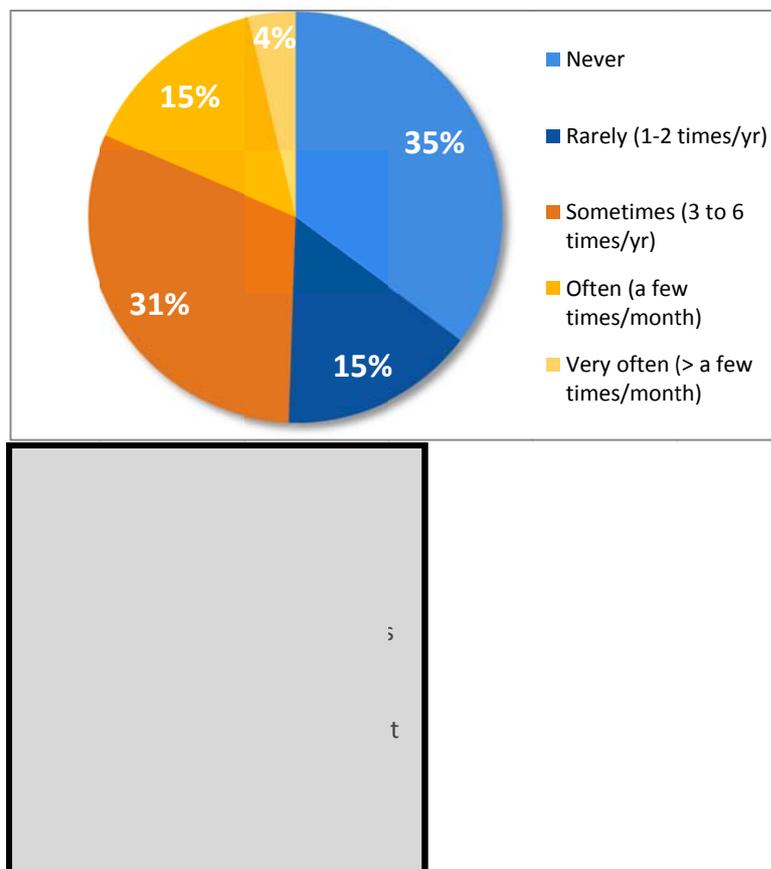
¹⁰⁴ Based on interviews with 91 children. Multiple answers possible per child.

¹⁰⁵ Based on interview with Eric Edmonds, Associate Professor at Dartmouth College, 2011.

and mental), anaemia, and a weakened immune system. Households in the brick kilns eat a lot of rice, beans, lentils and bread¹⁰⁶ with a few vegetables such as okra or green beans. Meat is a treat eaten once a week (usually cow head or feet), and fruits are rare.

Regarding health and developmental risks related to abuse, violence against children by kiln management did not appear to be a major problem within the kilns. As children work alongside their parents, physical abuse by an external actor appears to be limited. Both child and adults, did however, report instances of verbal abuse by kiln owners and recruiters.¹⁰⁷

FIGURE 4.7. HIGH PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY OF HOUSEHOLDS IN BRICK KILNS¹⁰⁸



4.3.2 OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Basu (2003) explains that “What some parents aspire to for their children is very different from what someone living on the edge of the poverty line could even conceive of.”¹⁰⁹ When interviewed in focus groups about future plans, fathers of child labourers nearly always began with the conditional “If I can repay my loan.” Many expressed the desire to build a home for their families or send their children to school, however, even the most modest plans often seemed more like aspirations than actual plans.

¹⁰⁶ Afghan flatbread is a variety of white bread with no dietary fibre or whole grains.

¹⁰⁷ Nine and 12% of children reported that respectively kiln owners and recruiters were verbally abusive of children; 16% & 18% of adults said kiln owners and recruiters were verbally abusive of children. Respondents were allowed multiple answers when asked who were the perpetrators of abuse (question 40, household survey). The type of abuse was specified in question 41. See Annex 7.3 for the household questionnaire.

¹⁰⁸ According to 190 households surveys: 99 adult workers (mainly male) and 91 women (usually mothers of child labourers).

¹⁰⁹ Basu and Tzannatos, 2003.

I cannot make any plans until I have paid off these debt; it is impossible to make plans beyond the day-to-day plan to pay off my loans. I would hope that I could have a house for my family, send my children to school, and have them start their own families. Bonded labourer, 45, Deh Sabz

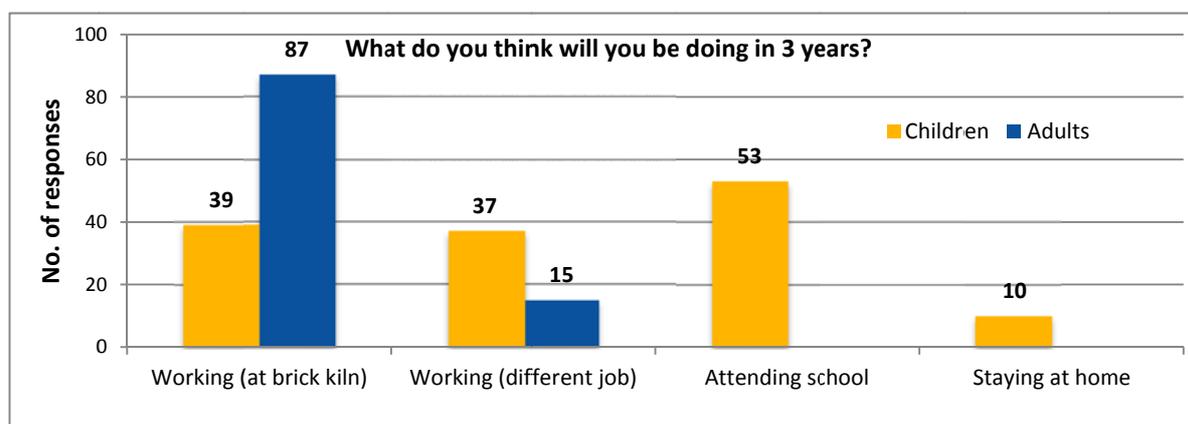
My first plan is to pay off the debt and stop working in this sector. My second plan is to then find a better job to be able to build a house for my family. How long can we live this way, in this poverty? Bonded labourer, 26, Deh Sabz

I don't have any choice right now for my future. If I finish paying back my debt, I would like to start farming and animal husbandry. Right now my children attend morning courses. I would like them to continue going to school. – Bonded labourer, 40, Surkhroad

If I can finish my debt, I want to start a fruit shop. I have a plan for my children to go to Islamic school. – Bonded labourer, 26, Surkhroad

Children seemed slightly more optimistic about attending school in the future, but like their parents, seem to accept that they will not stop working any time soon. While more than half of surveyed children expect to be attending school in 3 years, even more expect to still be working in the brick kiln or working a different job, either in conjunction with or in place of studies. Most adults seem resigned to the fact that they will still be working in brick kilns.

FIGURE 4.8. OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE: 3-YEAR PROJECTIONS OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN¹¹⁰



In focus groups, boys emphasised a desire for independence, education and an easier life as well as the stability of having their own homes.

When I grow up, I want to build a house for myself because we do not have a house of our own now. I want to have a calm life. I want to work in the city so that we know about everything that happens. I very much like school. If there is an opportunity, I will go to school. Otherwise, I would like to learn to own a shop. – Bonded labourer, 10, Surkhroad

When I grow up, I would like to live in Batkot where we are from, build a house there of our own, and attend school, if possible, so that I can live like literate people. They have better lives than us. – Bonded labourer, 10, Surkhroad

When I grow up, I want to build my own house, because it is our biggest problem. If it is possible, I will live in Nangahar, my homeland. I would also like to find a job where I am not dependent on a boss. I want to be my own boss. I would like to do anything besides work in the kiln. I also like driving because you can stop whenever you want. I want to buy a car and be a driver. Bonded labourer, 11, Deh Sabz

Girls, on the other hand, seemed to simply be dreading the inevitable: an arranged marriage and a restricted life in doors. Regarding married life, one girl explained, “I will be working in the home and

¹¹⁰ Based on survey of 190 households: 99 adults, 91 children. Multiple answers possible per interviewee.

will be locked inside the home.” Her sister was married a few years ago and the girl admitted that she does not envy her life.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ See case study on family 2 in Annex 7.1 for more on this girl’s story.

5 THE BIGGER PICTURE

Linking up to National Policy Priorities

Drawing on the findings from the previous chapters, Chapter 5 links the issue of bonded labour to macro policy issues within the broader context of Afghanistan in transition. An analysis of the economic context demonstrates that the demand for bricks will likely decline in the coming years, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of bonded labours. Both humanitarian and development actors need to consider the associated social risks involved, as bonded labourers will not be able to adapt to this changing economic context due to gaps in education, skills and access to services. Donors will also need to consider political challenges such as land tenure security and cross-border migration. Looking forward, a multi-level framework is proposed for addressing the problems associated with bonded labour in brick kilns, which takes into account the following issues: credit and personal finance, intergenerational poverty cycles, legal issues of land tenure security and political issues of migration and reintegration.



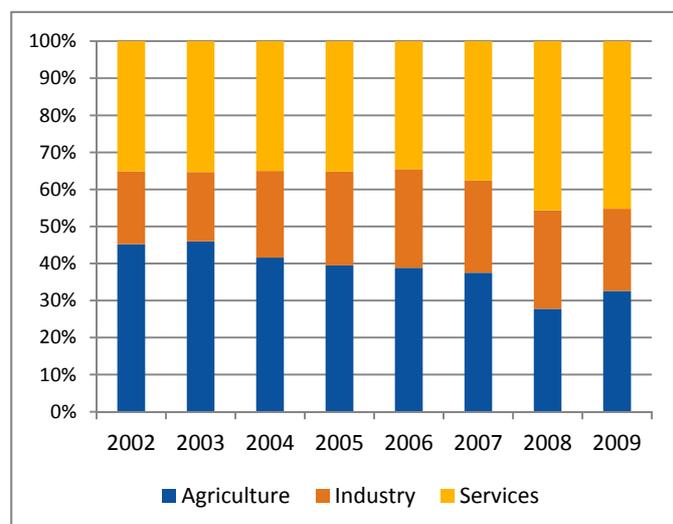
5.1 ECONOMIC CONTEXT ANALYSIS

In 2011, Kabul was ranked the fifth fastest growing cities in the world.¹¹² But behind this rapidly growing urban landscape, Afghanistan remains heavily reliant on agriculture. The relative contribution to GDP of industry and services has grown over the last decade, but one-third of GDP still derives from agriculture (Figure 5.1).¹¹³ Household reliance on agriculture as a livelihood strategy is even higher: 55% of households depend on agriculture as their main source of livelihood, and 68% of households own some form of livestock.¹¹⁴ Bonded labourers in brick kilns also share in this agrarian heritage; prior to exile in Pakistan, most bonded labourers interviewed worked as subsistence farmers.

While GDP growth currently remains strong, the Afghan economy will undergo a major transformation as donor funds are scaled back leading up to and following the 2014 transition. GDP growth for FY2011 and FY2012 – projected at 8% and 8.5% respectively – are expected to maintain growth levels seen in FY2010 (8.2%),¹¹⁵ although due to severe droughts affecting agricultural outputs, FY2011 may fall short of its projected growth rate. This growth is in large part fuelled by aid and military spending by donors; in FY2010, aid to Afghanistan totaled 15.4 billion USD and military spending totaled more than 100 billion USD.¹¹⁶ As donor spending is reduced, the Afghan economy will likely contract, particularly in those sectors most driven by aid and reconstruction spending.

Services, notably construction, are likely to be hardest hit by a decline in international aid. Sixty percent of the total value of construction services is estimated to be financed by civilian and military aid.¹¹⁷ Some of the negative impact of the reduction in foreign funds spent in Afghanistan will be mitigated by the fact that many of the skilled workers benefitting from the boom in the construction sector were non-Afghans. However, the blow to the brick making industry, which relies on low-skilled bonded labourers, will not be softened.

FIGURE 5.1. SECTOR PERCENTAGE OF AFGHAN GDP



Source: ADB (2011), "Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2011," Asian Development Bank.

¹¹² Pavgi, Kedar (2011), "The 7 Fastest-Growing Cities in the World," *Foreign Policy*, 26 October, 2011, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/26/worlds_fastest_growing_cities_?page=full.

¹¹³ ADB (2011b), "Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2011," Asian Development Bank.

¹¹⁴ CSO/MRRD, 2008.

¹¹⁵ ADB (2011a), "Economic trends and prospects in Developing Asia: South Asia," chapter from *Asian Development Outlook 2011: South-South Economic Links*, Asian Development Bank, p. 143-146.

¹¹⁶ World Bank (2011), "Issues and Challenges of Transition and Sustainable Growth in Afghanistan," Draft prepared by the World Bank Afghanistan Country Team.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*

5.2 ANALYSING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Within the context of these larger economic changes, the brick industry will also be transformed. Reduced demand for bricks, resulting from decreasing military and development aid, combined with inflation and a growing labour supply, will create a situation that is more difficult for both kiln owners and more exploitative of bonded labourers.

Already operating on razor-thin margins, many brick kiln owners will either be forced to shut down or lower worker wages in an effort to compete in price wars over the shrinking pool of brick customers. Inflation, currently projected at 8% and 9.1% for FY2011 and FY2012 respectively, will likely continue to increase with rising import prices.¹¹⁸ Kiln owners will be unable to compensate for the rise in the cost of raw materials (*e.g.* coal) by raising brick prices due to decreased demand for bricks. Fighting over customers, some kiln owners may shut down, while others may decrease wages in order to maintain low prices without operating at a loss.

While kiln owners and recruiters already hold an uneven amount of sway over workers, households are still able to switch between kilns if they feel they can get better terms (*e.g.* slightly higher wages, better living conditions). However, the inequalities of the relationship will be further tipped in favour of kiln owners if demand for bricks decreases, but the labour supply continues to grow. With an average household size of 8.8 members, bonded households provide the brick kiln industry with a renewable labour source that is growing faster than the national average.¹¹⁹ Supply may also increase due to the continued return of former refugees from neighbouring countries and a rising national unemployment rate (due to the predicted slow down in economic growth).

Indebted to their employers, bonded labourers will be unable to respond to market signals by moving to a different sector, as their mobility and employment opportunities are restricted. Even if they could move to another sector, the only realistic option for unskilled labour with no capital in Afghanistan is to work as day labourers in agriculture or construction. As we have already seen, the construction sector will not be capable of absorbing new workers, but will rather be employing fewer day labourers. Day labourer jobs are irregular, poorly paid, and do not provide in-kind payments such as shelter and water.

Increasingly dependent on employers, contract terms in kilns will grow more exploitative of households. Families will have a harder time paying back debts and meeting basic needs. Food insecurity will rise, and families will grow more vulnerable to even more extreme forms of exploitation (*e.g.* child trafficking).

5.3 SOCIAL RISKS

Without education, training or transferable skills, adult and child bonded labourers are ill prepared to do anything besides make bricks. Thus, a change in livelihood strategy will be extremely difficult. In the shifting economic context, two scenarios are foreseeable for households.

- In the more optimistic scenario, households would develop skills that are tailored to new labour demands that would allow them to break the cycle of poverty and bondage. Such a strategy would require outside assistance.
- In a more realistic scenario, households will continue their subsistence-based strategy with a higher likelihood of failure. If they remain in the brick kilns, the terms of their contract will likely grow more exploitative, as the balance of power shifts even more to the favour of employers. If they manage to leave the kilns, families will face a lack of shelter in addition to their current problems (food insecurity, low wages, etc.).

¹¹⁸ ADB, 2011a.

¹¹⁹ Average household size amongst poor Afghan families: 8.0 members. Average household size amongst non-poor Afghan families: 6.9. (*Source:* CSO/MRRD, 2008).

Development actors have the opportunity to help prepare families for hard times ahead with more sustainable solutions; however, short-term humanitarian aid is needed in conjunction with longer-term programmes, in order to help families make the transition to new livelihoods strategies. For example, returnee families qualify to participate in UNHCR's vocational training programmes, but unfortunately, many workers are unable to participate in such training because of the constraints of family needs. Labourers cannot take off enough time to participate in vocational training as they must continue to work to provide for their families' basic needs.¹²⁰ As several workers explained to the research team, a day not worked, is a day the family does not eat. As this example illustrates, a coordinated response from humanitarian and development actors is needed to help households meet basic needs (e.g. food, shelter) while they acquire skills that will help households in the long-run.

Households do not only need to acquire market skills, but also survival skills that can help decrease dependence on kiln owners. Skills such as home gardening, animal husbandry and sewing would help households in kilns meet basic needs without taking on additional loans. They are also activities that can be done by women in the home; adult and adolescent women currently represent an underutilized family resource due to the strict gender segregation observed in brick kilns. Such activities would also be permitted under the current terms of debt bondage, as they are non-market activities performed within the home.

The complex social and economic profiles keep bonded labourers locked into cycles of debt, poverty and dependency. Taking into account the economic and social dynamics at play, humanitarian and development actors need to work together with the GIRA to develop a creative, coordinated strategy for breaking these cycles and preventing a potential humanitarian crisis in the brick kilns.

5.4 POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Bonded labourers are denied many of their rights as Afghan citizens, due to the explicit constraints of their contracts and the implicit burden of their poverty. Contracts with brick kilns restrain the mobility of workers to destinations approved by management, as kiln owners and *jamadars* fear the workers may run out on their debt. Secondary and alternative employment opportunities are also restricted for all members of the household, including grown-up children living at home, until the household debt is repaid. Although they are not restricted by the kiln owners, families are often unable send their children to school due to the burden of poverty and debt.

The restricted rights of bonded labourers are directly linked with the vulnerability of their migratory background; 98% of surveyed bonded labourers were once in exile in Pakistan, either legally or illegally (Section 3.1). Before arriving in Pakistan, most of these households were subsistence farmers that were poor but able to meet their needs; they had to leave behind their homes and land due to conflict and insecurity. The precarious status of these displaced Afghans made them prime targets for bonded labour.¹²¹

Although bonded labour is banned in Pakistan, it persists at a large scale.¹²² By accepting to participate in this illegal system of employment, workers sacrifice certain rights in exchange for employment and shelter. Irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable in this position as they are illegally working in the country; several workers complained of police abuse and the threat of deportation from Pakistan.

When they return to Afghanistan, these households should enjoy greater rights as citizens than they did with a refugee or illegal migrant status in Pakistan; however, the brick making industry

¹²⁰ Based on interview with UNHCR-Jalalabad.

¹²¹ Although there are many returnees from Pakistan that are not bonded labourers, there are very few bonded labourers that were not in exile in Pakistan.

¹²² The largest concentration of brick kilns in Pakistan are in Punjab province where there are an estimated 5,000 kilns. (Source: ILO, 2004.)

perpetuates the constraints and vulnerability they experienced while in exile. Families are recruited directly from kilns in Pakistan to kilns in Afghanistan. This cross-border recruitment of brick kiln workers is currently not monitored. UNHCR picks up on several cases a month in the interviews it randomly performs with returning households; however, the scale of this migratory flow is unknown.

As a result of this cross-border recruitment, the reintegration¹²³ of these returnees and migrants in Afghanistan is a failure. They live at their work site, isolated from the rest of the community. Their mobility and employment options are restricted by the terms of their bondage. Their children are unable to benefit from government-provided education, and even health care services are difficult to access, notably for those bonded labourers in Deh Sabz for whom the nearest clinic is often an hour away. Debt bondage locks labourers into the position of second-class citizen, which is then transferred from one generation to the next.

5.5 BRIDGING POVERTY GAPS IN A TRANSITION CONTEXT

Faced with these challenges, eliminating child bonded labour in brick kilns is currently unrealistic in Afghanistan, particularly in a context of transition in which greater responsibility is being handed over to the GIROA. Taking a cue from UNICEF's pilot programme in Surkhrod, donors need to focus on realistic, low-cost means of relieving the burden of debt and dependence and improving the living and working conditions of bonded labourers. Interventions should be coordinated with government actors at both the national and provincial level.

5.5.1 OVERALL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Addressing bonded labour in brick kilns requires a strategic framework that employs tools that are tailored to the Afghan context, the capacity of the government and the particularities of the bonded labour relationship.

National policies on child labour and bonded labour often focus on command measures, which include restrictions or the prohibition of certain types of activities, as opposed to incentive-based policies that encourage individuals to change their activities.¹²⁴ Such measures would likely be ineffectual or unenforceable in Afghanistan, as has been the case in Pakistan.¹²⁵ If applied, restrictions or bans on child or bonded labour can actually make situations worse for the people they are intended to help, unless they are accompanied with social programmes that provide alternative means for households to meet their basic needs. Without alternative means of survival, a ban only succeeds in lowering household income. As a consequence, "children may become more likely to work, only in less easily prohibited ways."¹²⁶

Incentive measures, such as labour replacement and financial incentives, as well as poverty alleviation programmes would be more suitable for the Afghan context. Programmes should "acknowledge why children work and attempt to eliminate the household's need for child labour rather than simply trying to prevent children from working even if their household's subsistence depends on it."¹²⁷ Such measures should be designed keeping in mind the social and economic context in Afghanistan, notably the anticipated slow-down of the economy and shift toward a more agrarian way of life.

¹²³ Reintegration is here defined as a process that should result in the disappearance of differences in legal rights and duties between returnees and their compatriots and the equal access of returnees to services, productive assets and opportunities".

¹²⁴ Edmonds, Eric V. (2003), "Child Labour in South Asia," OECD Social, Employment and Migration working paper no. 5.

¹²⁵ A ban on bonded labour in Pakistan has had little impact on the number of bonded labourers working in brick kilns. Kiln owners maintain close relations with government officials and therefore, are rarely punished according to the ban's stipulations. (Source: ILO, 2004.)

¹²⁶ Edmonds, 2003.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Interventions should also take into account the particularities of the bonded labour relationship. While the terms of debt bondage – notably controls on movement and employment opportunities – create barriers for helping bonded labourers, the employer-employee relationship has certain elements that can be used to the advantage of improving conditions for child bonded labourers. For example, because kiln owners pay by piece rate rather than by day and allow households to set their own hours, they are quite open to the reduction of hours worked by children and the provision of education on site.¹²⁸

Keeping in mind these overarching elements, the following issues should also be addressed within this strategic framework: access to credit and microfinance tools, the intergenerational aspect of bonded labour, legal issues of land tenure, and the issue of migration.

5.5.2 MICROECONOMIC FACET

Credit lies at the heart of the bonded labour relationship, as advances and loans are the reason households enter into situations of debt bondage. Without access to alternative means of credit, families rely on internal assets (child labour) and agree to unfavourable terms of bonded labour (low wages, lack of mobility, etc.). “Poor families in particular face enormous barriers to the acquisition of debt, including uncertain future health and employment status and the large burden that servicing such debts would place on limited incomes.”¹²⁹

While they may be useful tools for preventing debt bondage, traditional microfinance products are often inappropriate for bonded labourers, as they would simply transfer dependence to microfinance institutions (MFIs). Bonded labourers are using loans for basic consumption needs, not to start entrepreneurial activities. Already deep in debt, more loans for consumption, even if given by a MFI, would not reduce the burden of debt for most bonded labourers. As a result, their vulnerability and lack of entrepreneurial opportunities would keep them in the same cycles of poverty and debt as bonded labour.

Nevertheless, there are some financial tools that, if combined with financial education and counselling, could help families break the cycle of debt and dependence and help those vulnerable to debt bondage avoid it altogether. Tools such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs) or Community Based Savings Groups (CBSGs), in addition to providing means of saving and borrowing, also create a social safety net within the community. “Besides assistance in starting alternative livelihoods, households vulnerable to bondage need financial services such as savings and emergency loans to smooth income and expenses, manage risks, and possibly pay for social obligations – in essence, creating a substitute or replacing the need for employer credit.”¹³⁰

Additional strategies that are not focused on financial tools can also be useful in minimising the burden of debt for bonded labourers. For example food for training or food for work programmes build human capital while reducing the need for additional loans to meet basic needs. Initiatives such as the World Food Programme’s food-for-training programmes, if implemented in the brick kilns, would make significant headway in helping to reduce household dependence on child labour and loans. Although food-for-training programmes can be criticized for destroying incentives for self-improvement, in the case of bonded labour, where both adults and children often cannot stop working in order to feed their families, these types of programmes may be necessary for the transition out of bonded labour. Such programmes combine humanitarian objectives of helping families meet immediate needs and development objectives of building capacity for future sustainability.

¹²⁸ Based on interviews with representatives of UNICEF-Jalalabad and kiln owners.

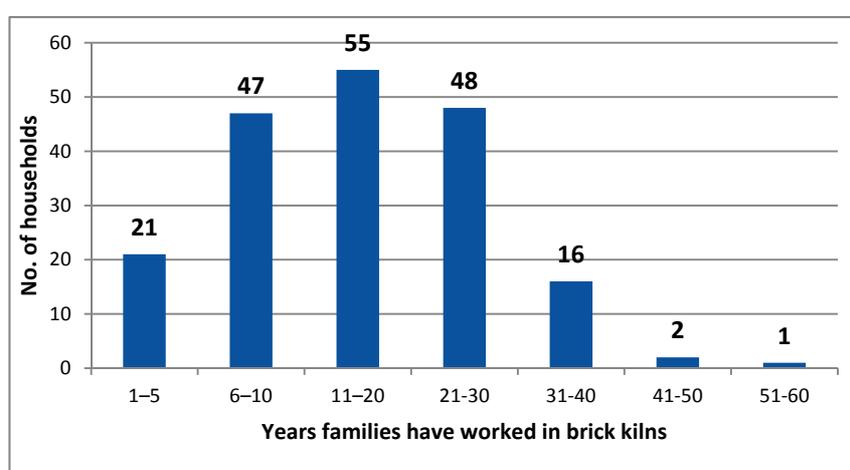
¹²⁹ ILO-IPEC (2003), *Investing in Every Child: An Economic Study of the Costs and Benefits of Eliminating Child Labour*, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), ILO, Geneva.

¹³⁰ Churchill, Craig and Isabelle Guérin (nd), “Microfinance-led strategies to eliminate bonded labour, ILO Working Paper, www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/finance/download/churchguer.pdf.

5.5.3 SOCIAL FACET

Child bonded labour cannot be addressed without examining the poverty cycle of the whole family. Driven to debt bondage by extreme poverty, households in brick kilns fall quickly into a “dynastic trap,” which perpetuates poverty, child labour, and in this case, debt bondage across generations.¹³¹ In addition to the intergenerational transference of debt common to all South Asian brick kilns, child bonded labour prohibits children from increasing their human capital through education. “A person who supplies more labour and gets less education as a child will grow up to be poorer as an adult. Following the logic of the basic model, this person’s child will also be sent to work, thereby perpetuating child labour across generations.”¹³² The dynastic trap is clearly evident in the Afghan brick kilns evaluated for this study; 64% of surveyed households have a family history in kilns of 11 or more years (Figure 5.2). As evidenced by the large number of 18 to 22-year-olds still bonded with their parents in the kilns (Section 3.1), the cycle is unlikely to be broken any time soon without intervention.

FIGURE 5.2. INTERGENERATIONAL HISTORY IN AFGHAN BRICK KILNS



As the dynastic trap demonstrates, parents are not unwilling, but simply unable, in most cases, to develop their children’s human capital by sending them to school. The value of school is perceived to be too costly, as the loss of child labour decreases household income that is required for basic needs. Therefore, the cycle of debt and poverty cannot be broken by simply improving access to schools (Box 5.2).

Strategies to break the cycle of debt and poverty should focus on reducing household dependence on child labour in the short run, in order to allow children to acquire the necessary human capital to improve the household’s situation in the long run.¹³³ If families are unable to break this cycle, it can hinder economic development on a larger scale. With a largely low-skilled, illiterate population, Afghanistan, cyclical poverty and the development of human capital are national challenges that extend beyond the brick kilns.

¹³¹ Basu and Tzannatos, 2003.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ UNICEF has already adopted a strategy of focusing on the barriers to education for out-of-school children, developing context specific strategies to breaking the cycle of poverty. (Source: UNICEF (2010), *UNICEF Annual Report 2010*)

BOX 5.1. INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFERENCE OF THE CYCLE OF ACCEPTANCE

Despite unemployment and poverty, the locals in Deh Sabz refuse to work as brick makers. The work is simply too hard for such low wages. Why do the workers from Nangarhar do it? Kiln owners say they are “professionals,” having learned the trade while in exile in Pakistan.¹³⁴ As labourers begin work as early as 5-years-old, one could hardly qualify brick making as professional in the sense that it is skilled. What the kiln owners are alluding to is the fact that the brick makers from Nangarhar can handle the work; they are not physically stronger or hardier than the people of Deh Sabz, but they have accepted the burden of performing physically demanding activities for 70-80 hours a week for little pay and a one room shelter. This psychological construct is passed from parents to children, creating a cycle of acceptance that mirrors intergenerational transference of debt.

BOX 5.2. WHICH CAME FIRST: SUPPLY OR DEMAND FOR EDUCATION?

Based on interview with Eric V. Edmonds, Associate Professor, Department of Economics at Dartmouth College, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), and the National Bureau of Economic Research

“Many people assume, notably those working in education, that a lack of education is due to a problem of supply. Poor performance or lack of attendance is blamed on school inputs. There is a long history of focusing on how to build more and better schools, but what is forgotten is that people need to see value in this education, and perceive it to be a value that they can afford. Having schools, and good schools, is a necessary condition for education. But if we do not pay attention to the issues associated with the costs of going to school, we run the risk of having a lot of empty schools or schools filled with kids who do not have the capacity to do well in them.

In the history of the United States and United Kingdom, a growth in schools and school attendance occurred with the decline of children’s competitiveness in agriculture and mills. The assumption tends to be that the increase in schools led to more education, but the demand to build more schools came about because other options declined substantially in value. Thinking about the provision of education as only a matter of supply is a very narrow perspective that does not have much historical backing.”

5.5.4 LEGAL FACET

Debt bondage is entrenched in Afghan kilns in large part due to the reduced access to land and shelter. Bonded labourers depend on their employers to provide shelter; this dependence limits their options to live and work elsewhere as most would be unable to secure land and shelter on their own. Access to land, whether to rent or own, is essential for issues of shelter and subsistence (e.g. food production, economic activity). Besides encouraging investments and improvements and investments in the land and shelter, “they can also enable people to access public services and sources of credit.”¹³⁵

Bonded labourers face three main issues regarding access to land and shelter. First, some bonded labourers found their land or dwellings had been taken over in their absence. Second, for those who have reclaimed their land, environmental degradation has made it much more difficult to make a living off of land that has not been properly cared for. Third, renting land to farm is more risky than it used to be, given the influx of inexpensive goods from neighbouring countries.

Reclaiming land or getting new land is extremely complicated. Despite the establishment of formal judicial structures for dealing with land tenure issues, “90% of Afghans rely solely on customary law,” which runs parallel to formal law. Customary law severely restricts the growth of the land sales

¹³⁴ Based on interviews with kiln owners.

¹³⁵ UN-HABITAT (2008), *Secure Land Rights for All*, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Nairobi.

market, as it requires “landowners wishing to sell their land to offer it first to their heirs and second to the neighbours. Only after both groups pass on their right of first refusal can the owner offer the land on the open market.”¹³⁶

With more than 2.4 million people living in informal settlements in Kabul alone, the question of access to land and housing has become a key development challenge in the country.¹³⁷ Land tenure security can be defined as confidence that one’s rights over land will not be arbitrarily removed and that others will recognize these rights and protect them.¹³⁸ The insecurity of Afghan land tenure in rural areas can be attributed to several reasons:

- i) “A history of inequitable relations within communities with regard to access and rights to land and water;
- ii) Multiple unresolved interests over the same land, including rights of nomads;
- iii) Failure to develop accepted principles governing holdings of non-agricultural land; and
- iv) Continuing violence and disorder, uncontrolled poppy production, warlordism, land invasions, and ethnic disputes.”¹³⁹

Land tenure issues, while difficult for many Afghans, are particularly problematic for returnees. Upon return to Afghanistan, former land owners often found their land or dwellings had been taken over in their absence. Reclaiming land or getting new land is extremely complicated. Despite the establishment of formal judicial structures for dealing with land tenure issues, “90% of Afghans rely solely on customary law,” which runs parallel to formal law. Customary law severely restricts the growth of the land sales market, as it requires “landowners wishing to sell their land to offer it first to their heirs and second to the neighbours. Only after both groups pass on their right of first refusal can the owner offer the land on the open market.”¹⁴⁰

In order to break the cycle of dependence, bonded labourers need help acquiring access to land which they can use both as a source of shelter and subsistence. Our research has shown that most bonded labourers are historically and traditionally from families that have survived on agriculture as their main livelihood strategy. Migration changed this pattern with a shift to the brick industry; however, these families, for the most part originating from the eastern provinces, either have land available to them in their area of origin, for which they may have lost their deed.

A first step would then be to target these households by providing them with information and legal counselling services. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has developed and implemented a programme to address the legal needs of returnees in Afghanistan through its Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) Program. Its offices on both sides of the border – in Pakistan and in Afghanistan – have allowed the NGO to factor in the weight of migration in problems of land access and land tenure security. A cooperation between ILO and NRC could therefore ensure that bonded labourers are informed of their rights and can redeem their land – which they would then be able to use for subsistence and to generate an income, thus offering them a more viable solution than the brick work and debt cycle they are nurturing in this industry.

5.5.5 POLITICAL FACET

The challenge of bonded labour relates to broader national policy priorities and to an evolving context of transition that will lead to increased economic and social vulnerability for the population of concern in this study. However, the problem reaches beyond the national boundaries of Afghanistan: it is a regional challenge, as it often begins with vulnerabilities and exploitative work conditions in Pakistan, creating a cycle of debt and dependency that extends to the return migration

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ World Bank (2005), Kabul Urban Policy Notes Series, No. 4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ USAID (n.d.) “USAID Country Profile: Property Rights and Resource Governance, Afghanistan,” USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Portal, <http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidtprproducts/country-profiles/afghanistan/>.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

of these households. As a result, the regional dimension (Pakistan/Afghanistan) is key to unpacking the political issues at the heart of the brick kiln industry and of the practice of bonded labour.

Intermediaries – in this case, recruiters or *jamadars* – are, as illustrated in this study, key actors that facilitate and sometimes drive return migration across the Pakistani/Afghan divide. They provide information, extend services, and financial and in-kind incentives for families to return when return would otherwise be too costly. Despite the value, their intervention comes at a cost for migrants, from the coercive measures to lack of freedom to seek other types of employment, sometimes up to one year. There is room for policy makers and stakeholders to act on these intermediaries and enable them to have a more positive influence on migrants' lives and work choices. This can be done in part by providing a framework that offers more information, access and employment opportunities to refugees and migrants willing to return home, voluntarily. Ensuring that return is voluntary and dignified is the first step; second is ensuring that these families have a chance to break out of their dependence on brick work. Parallel efforts will necessarily have to be centred on the monitoring of these intermediary agents, and drafting migration policies that reflect the realities on the ground.

Part of this reality links back to the politics of the Durand line and the porous and unofficial border dividing Afghanistan and Pakistan. Careful negotiations on the regional dimension will be key for agencies such as ILO, UNHCR, IOM or NRC to improve their understanding, and actions on, the dynamics of the brick industry. This will require to first recognise the important role fulfilled by these intermediaries, while ensuring that the conditions of work are deemed to be satisfactory in proper human rights terms. However, these agencies can step in and provide some of the role played by intermediaries until now: organizations with presence on both sides of the border can play a critical role in sharing information about places of origin, transit and destination, and helping migrants expand their range of choice. It will be a matter of seeing how intermediaries can become “agents of development”¹⁴¹.

There are different options to limit the control of intermediaries and brick kiln owners on the bonded labourers. This can be dealt with using *i)* regulation, *ii)* border control, *iii)* employer-led changes, and *iv)* cross-border initiatives. Given the difficulty of enforcing regulation or border control between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the last option – cross-border initiatives – holds more of a promise. This is where international and national organisations with a regional scope have a role to play. Both UNHCR, IOM and NRC have a solid representation on both sides of the border that will allow them to focus on bonded labour as early as Pakistan, providing information and counselling in Pakistan, while following up on return patterns in Afghanistan through the country-specific desk offices. For the moment, information on border crossing, jobs and credit¹⁴² comes through the migrants' own networks – which always includes the *jamadars*. This can be reversed if ILO pairs up with UNHCR, IOM or NRC to tailor specific cross-border programmes to accompany returning families.

Finally, the monitoring of this return migration and economic migration to brick kilns is needed if ILO wants to critically and accurately capture the realities of the ground. Beyond its direct help to beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation will ensure that information is made available and shared between stakeholders. For the moment, data on migration and bonded labour in Afghanistan is lacking; UNHCR might release numbers that will remain inaccurate if the monitoring mechanisms are not adapted to the specific challenges and vulnerabilities identified in bonded labour situations. An exercise in monitoring will need not only to address the regional dimension but also the local dynamics of bonded labour, tracking the link between migration and bonded labour, as well as tracing the movements of bonded labour in and out of brick kiln and bonded labour situations. This

¹⁴¹ Aunias, Dovelyn (2009), *Guiding the Invisible Hand: Making Migration Intermediaries Work for Development*, Human Development Research Paper, UNDP.

¹⁴² Dolfin, S and Genicot, G. (2010), “What do Networks do? The role of networks on Migration and Coyote Use”, *Review of Development Economics*, Vol. 14, No. 2.

study is a first attempt at monitoring the trends; however, more systematic monitoring efforts will need to be implemented to measure these trends in a more dynamic and interactive manner to be able to put forth numbers that will inform governments', donors' and organisations' policy decisions.

5.6 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Each question answered in this report seemed to invite several more. Here are is a brief list of topics related to bonded labour that we feel would be interesting areas for other researchers:

- An economic analysis of the impact of forced / bonded labour on GDP in Afghanistan
- An economic study of forced / bonded labour in the construction sector in Afghanistan
- An economic assessment of migration and forced labour in Afghanistan
- A study of the links between bonded labour and land tenure security
- Impact of gender segregation on bonded labour dynamics across South Asia
- Investigation of bonded labour in other sectors in Afghanistan

6 CONCLUSION

What this report has demonstrated is that the problem with bonded labour lies not only in the conditions endured by bonded labourers on a daily basis. Rather, this issue merits attention because of the cycles perpetuated by this labour relationship of bondage and servitude.

Cycle of debt: The most obvious cycle is that of debt. With intergenerational transference of debt, children have no choice but to follow in the footsteps of their parents. At the same time, basic poverty issues and subsistence needs force families to take loan after loan, often paying for their winter's food with a loan that they spend an entire season paying back.

Cycle of vulnerability: Families in brick kilns fell into debt to meet basic needs when seeking refuge in Pakistan. The vulnerability these households experienced as migrants is perpetuated by the exploitation of the brick kiln industry to the point that families, upon return to Afghanistan, have little chance of reintegration – defined as a process that should result in the disappearance of differences in legal rights and duties between returnees and their compatriots and the equal access of returnees to services, productive assets and opportunities.

Cycle of dependence: Bonded labourers depend on their employers for shelter as well as their livelihoods. With little access to land or shelter due to their migratory background and their lack of land tenure security, households are bound to their employers not only by the terms of their contracts but also by the fact that they cannot obtain shelter by other means. They are therefore dependent on employers at the most basic level: to provide for a roof for their families, which acts as a big incentive and also a form of implicit coercion. The most extreme and widely cited penalty these bonded labourers can be subject to is the loss of their shelter.

Cycle of poverty: Faced with the challenge of meeting basic subsistence needs, the cost of education, in terms of lost income from child labour, is too high for most families. Due to this lack of investment in human capital, child bonded labourers do not acquire the necessary skills to break the cycle of poverty and repeat the same cycle with their children as adults; the same is true with adults who have no access to any skills development or training beyond the work that they have been repeating each work season. As a result the cycle of illiteracy and lack of skills ties into the cycle of poverty, debt, vulnerability and dependence.

From what we have learned about the low-margin brick industry, these cycles will not be solved on their own through economic growth and development, and given the projected contraction in the construction sector, conditions will likely get much worse. Therefore, eliminating child bonded labour in brick kilns is currently unrealistic in Afghanistan, particularly in the current context of transition. Donors need to focus on realistic, low-cost means of relieving the burden of debt and dependence and improving the living and working conditions of bonded labourers. Interventions should be coordinated with government actors at both the national and provincial level.

The authors of this report suggest the creation of coordination network, under ILO leadership, that will meet first to discuss the findings and recommendations of this report, and second that will coordinate targeted partnerships and mainstreaming of bonded labour in each organisation's overall programming strategy. Chapter 5 has illustrated the link between the issue of bonded labour and broader national policy priorities to illustrate the fact that bonded labour in brick kiln touches upon all the different facets of humanitarian and development work. No one organisation can address the multitude of issues associated with bonded labour; intervening in an uncoordinated fashion could do more harm than good. Donors should coordinate and consult closely with UNICEF, as it is currently the only actor currently working with bonded labourers in the field in Afghanistan. UNICEF's pilot project in Surkhroad district has laid groundwork that will be invaluable for interventions from other donors.

7 ANNEXES

7.1 CASE STUDY: BRICK KILN IN DEH SABZ

The following is a collection of interviews with child workers, households, employers and recruiters in Deh Sabz. The interviews for this case study were conducted on 6 October 2011.

FAMILY 1:

Sima's mother, Kookoo Khanom, is a 35-year old mother of six. Their family is originally from Jalalabad, and after 15 years of exile in Pakistan, returned to work in brick kilns in Afghanistan. Three of her daughters – Sima, Basmina and Negina, work alongside their father, the head of household, in the brick kiln. They are finishing the work season in Deh Sabz, Kabul province, before heading back east at the end of October.

A typical day in the kilns. Eleven-year old Sima works six days a week. Her 13-hour shift begins at 4 am and she takes a 2-hour break during the day for lunch and tea. She has worked for five years in brick kilns, and three years in this specific kiln. Sima is illiterate and has never attended school. In Deh Sabz, none of the children appear to be attending school. A teacher came for 3 days about 5 months ago, but has not returned since.

The majority of the girls' time is spent working alongside their father in the kiln. Sima explained how they all worked: her father prepares the clay; her 5-year old sister Negina makes balls out of the clay which she rolls to Sima and 10-year old Basmina; Sima and Basmina pat the balls of clay into the brick moulds and flip the moulds over, leaving a neat line of unbaked bricks behind them. With their father, they earn about 2,500 AFA (52 USD) every week. Her family produces 2,000 bricks on average every day, of which Sima is responsible for about 600.

After work hours, Sima goes back home and helps around the house, fetching water, taking care of her younger siblings, and helping to prepare the meals. She did not complain about the recruiter or the employer, saying that there is no violence or punishment in the kiln. Her only complaint was that she is very tired.

A family-based livelihoods strategy that includes young girls. They are 8 people in their household, which includes the mother, father, 6 daughters, and 1 son. "We can allow our girls to work until they become adolescents. Then, we marry them so that they can start their own family," explained Kookoo Khanom. The eldest daughter stopped working in the kiln about 2 years ago when she was married off at the age of 15 to someone from their community. She had worked in brick factories for about 8 years. She still lives and travels with her parents and siblings, and her husband works in the same kiln.

The other children are between 2 to 11 years old. The three oldest daughters (11, 10 and 5 years old) work in the brick kiln, with their father. When they returned to their homeland from Pakistan in 2001, her husband did not have any other skills. He began working in the brick kiln alone, but eventually took along the eldest daughter for assistance. With time, more of the girls in the family were brought into the kiln to help make bricks.

The only son (age 7) is not forced to work for reasons that are not quite clear. As the only boy, he holds a revered position in the family; the family claims he is too rambunctious and cannot focus in the kilns. Therefore, his younger sister works while he stays at home.

Brickwork – a legacy from exile in Pakistan. This is the second generation of their family to work in the brick sector. Their legacy of brickmaking began about 20 years ago in the Peshawar District of Pakistan, where the head of household first learned brickwork. Kookoo Khanom's brothers also worked in brick kilns there. The system set up in Pakistan involved the provision of loans, shelter,

water and electricity by the kiln owners; the same system has been replicated in Afghanistan. In Deh Sabz, they have electricity, and generators, that provide them with light until 10pm.

Health hazards: some common visible, and less visible, trends. Kookoo Khanom's daughters get sick often with respiratory problems, evidenced by their persistent coughs, and with reports of malaria. As for the head of household, "at times, his blood pressure drops, and he falls to the ground. He is quite old, he is a 'white beard,' I would say about 60 years of age. He never complains but I know his back and legs hurt him at night, and he does not sleep! As for my daughters, I am worried about Sima; she has become very quiet in the past few months."

Loans. "We have 20,000 AFA (420 USD) in loans from this employer. The season will be over in two weeks and we have not paid him back yet, but we will. I am not worried. Either we will have saved enough money, or we will take another loan to pay this debt. We received this loan before coming to the kiln, to help us pay for our transportation from Jalalabad. At the end of the season, it is expected that we pay back the recruiter. But we also have other loans in Jalalabad: about 30,000-35,000 AFA (630-735 USD) from relatives, which we borrowed last winter."

Wages. "We get along well with the recruiter. He has been honest and forthright. He leaves it up to us to decide how many bricks we make per day; there is an assistant who comes to check and count the number of bricks at the end of each day. They then pay us every week. In seven months, we have earned 56,000 AFA (1,049 USD), of which we have to pay back 20,000 (420 USD) and use the rest for our daily expenses. But we will have to borrow more to cover our winter months." Although they are satisfied with receiving 350 AFA (7.35 USD) per 1,000 bricks made, they complained that they never get out of debt.

Social life in the kilns. When asked how many families live and work in the kiln, Kookoo Khanom and her children were incapable of estimating, not because of the numbers, but mainly because they had no sense of who else lived outside of the walls of their home. "We don't know because we don't leave home to socialize with other families. I know who our neighbours are, but that is it." Kookoo Khanom complains because other families are better off, as they have elder sons to help them earn more money; "I just have my 7-year old son and a 60-year old husband, which leaves us quite worse off compared to others in the community. Our situation is getting increasingly difficult as my husband is getting older. My husband doesn't even have enough money to keep an active SIM card; we no longer have a phone."

Post-season plans – moving back "home." "In a week, right before Eid, our work will be done in the kiln and we will go back to Jalalabad. We do not have any concrete plans for our return. We might need money for the return travel, in which case we will ask the recruiter to lend us some money. Otherwise, my husband will look for daily jobs in Jalalabad. We will see, but I do not think that we will work in the kilns this winter."

FAMILY 2:

Simingol is 12 years old, and the fourth of 6 children. She is smiling and says that what she likes about her life is that "we all do the same work, whether we are boys or girls, and we work together. My father is sick, he has an ulcer, so we are all working now." She works from 4 am to 3 pm every day except Fridays, and half days on Thursdays. She remembers their home in Batia, Pakistan, which was destroyed because of a landslide and floods two years ago. That is when the family returned to Afghanistan.

Khesht zadan, maktabe mast!¹⁴³ Simingol has no time to go to school. "Making bricks is our education!" She started working in brick kilns in Pakistan, where her family lived and worked for 20 years. She worked for 2 seasons there, before leaving and working another 4 seasons of brickwork in Deh Sabz. Each season in Deh Sabz lasts 7 months due to the cold winter climate. Every day she

¹⁴³ Translated from Dari, Khesht zadan, maktabe mast means "Making bricks is our education."

makes between 600 and 700 bricks, and the family altogether makes about 2,500 bricks on good days.

Lack of savings and loans. Simingol's mother, Nikbibi, explains that they started taking loans initially to pay for incidents such as deaths in the family. She lost one of her children a few years ago. Since they never had any savings, they are forced to take out more loans if anything happens to them. Now that her husband is sick, they are getting into more debt. "We now have about 2,000 AFA (42 USD) in expenses per week, and an income of about 2-2,500 AFA (42-52 USD) a week. If we get sick then we have no choice but to ask more money from the recruiter to pay for the medication and visits to the doctor."

"I do not know how many loans we have taken these past years. We are permanently in debt, with so many loans that I have stopped counting. We get money from one person, then from a second person to pay the first person, then a third person, and the list goes on".

Bonded labour, not forced labour. "No one forces us to work in the kiln. The worse that can happen if we cannot pay is that he (the kiln owner) kicks us out of this shelter. The recruiter does not force us to work more; if we work more it is better for us because we earn more money. We put the pressure on ourselves. It is up to every family to decide whether to work more or less. So we determine our own schedule." Their life evolves around their family's work and their neighbours. They do not have much of a social life, and do not know more than seven of the households living around them. Men have gatherings weekly; but women only meet up occasionally.

Future plans. Simingol does not want to get married in a few years. She says that being married is as much work: "I will be working in the home and will be locked inside the home". Her sister got married a few years ago and she does not envy her life. She also says there is nothing good about working in the kilns. Simingol anticipates that will continue to do this work for many more years to come.

EMPLOYER

Abdul Samed, 30 years old, is the owner of 20 jeribs (4 hectares) of land on which he operates a brick kiln. His family used to rent the land through 10-year contracts, but 3.5 years ago, when Abdul was ready to run his own business, the family helped purchase the land for Abdul to use for his operations. Most brick kiln owners do not own their own land but rather rent the land for their kilns. He explained that his land could be rented out for 20,000 AFA (420 USD) per jerib, totalling 400,000 AFA (8395 USD) per month. Although he could make money as a landowner, he prefers to run the brick kiln himself for now.

The price Abdul quotes for the price to rent his land is quite high compared to what other kiln owners are paying in the area; however, as the kiln owners often lock in their prices for 10-year periods, it is possible that the current price for new leases has gone up.

The main customers of this kiln are people who purchase bricks for private construction projects, to build their own homes for the most part. He has not seen any military, whether afghan or international forces, coming here nor is he in contact with construction companies.

Production, revenue and profit margin. This kiln produces, per month and on average, 850,000 bricks; it can range anywhere between 600,000 to 850,000 bricks per month, at a rate of 2 AFA (0.04 USD) per brick. The maximum average revenue can reach is 1,700,000 (36,677 USD). Abdul estimated that his profit margin ranged from 25-40% depending on the workforce; however, this calculation is exceptionally high considering the notoriously low profit margins of the brick kiln industries. It can be attributed to the fact that Abdul owns his own land, which costs most brick kiln owners 12,000-15,000 AFA (252-315 USD) per month per jerib. For 20 jeribs, Abdul would be spending 240,000-300,000 AFA (5,037-6,296 USD) per month on land rent.

Abdul currently has 22 families working for him, with up to 100 child and adult workers in total. "If we don't sell all our production every month, it is better for us; then we store the bricks and sell

them in the 'off-season' when the rates go up. We have storage space and can keep them stored for 10 years if we want to. In the spring, when new construction projects start, then we can sell the same brick for 1.5 times the price."

Rise in the price of charcoal affecting profit margins. This year, he expects to have a lower profit margin with the rise in the price of coal. It has become very expensive for the brick kiln owners, each ton of coal costing anywhere between 5,400 to 6,600 AFA (113-139 USD).

Brick maker wages. "In Deh Sabz, every kiln is free to set its own brick price for brick makers. In Surkhroad, it is determined collectively; they usually agree on 200 or 250 AFA per 1,000 bricks. Here, it depends first on the type of brick – either it is made in a one-brick mould (*Sancha*) or four-brick mould (*Ghalebi*). The *Sancha* is of higher quality and more expensive; the *Ghalebi* is 50 AFA cheaper as the production is higher."

Traffic fees and bribes. "Everyday, we have trucks transporting our bricks to neighbouring communities or to the city. Traffic agents take a fee from every truck, with at least 100 AFA a day per truck, with 5 to 10 trucks going out every day. Some of the fees are even illegal; we have complained to the municipality and to the district governor, but no one seems to be doing anything about it!"

The role of the "jamedar," the recruiter. Abdul relies on recruiters to hire families, disburse advance loans, count the number of working age people in the family to estimate the potential production capacity, and supervise the workers so that none of them go to work elsewhere once they have been recruited. "The recruiter usually hires people with whom he has worked in the past; They are either his relatives or from the same ethnic group or community, so that he can track what they do and exert some pressure on them if they do not pay back their loans. But that happens very rarely. He is responsible for the money loaned to the families, which I give him at the beginning of every year. The amount of loan depends on the capacity of each family to work and on the expected production level (numbers of bricks)."

Contracts. "The agreement is that families have to work the entire season – about 7 months. Families know that they cannot work elsewhere during this time. The families decide themselves on what hours they want to work each day. Whether or not they decide to work day or night shifts mainly depends on the weather. If it is warm, they prefer to work at night. There is no weekly fixed amount or instalment schedule to repay the loans. Every Thursday, my assistant calculates the overall numbers produced, we pay them their fee, and the recruiter gets his cut. It is up to the families to decide when they want to repay their debt. All in all, families are happy because they have a stable source of income for 7 months. They know how much they will earn as the price is fixed, and they are given shelter, water, and electricity close to their workplace. On the negative side, they only earn enough to feed their families and pay their loans, they end up taking new loans regularly, especially to pay for unexpected incidents or for their winter consumption."

On the cycle of debt. "99% of the families have loans before coming here. There is no disadvantage for me to give advances to the families. It helps me estimate the number of workers I will have for the year, and it means that the families will not be able to cancel out their commitment. They *have* to work for me. We also know that being in debt will make them work harder than others. It is entirely beneficial for us, no disadvantage. If one family does not work well or does not produce enough, we can always get another family to replace them, or in addition to them. We can fit up to 40 families here, and we currently have 22. The numbers are now low because we are nearing the end of the season; some have left already. Those who were able to repay their debts have left; they pay earlier and leave earlier. Once they have paid back what they owe the recruiter, they are free to leave."

On health hazards. "Injuries are rare. Those who work with donkey carts can fall from their carts and donkeys. Otherwise, there are no other risks besides the usual leg and back pains, malaria and chicken pox. If they fall ill, it is their own responsibility to get treatment. "

Future plans? “I am not very hopeful. Our profit margins are decreasing. The Japanese want to create a new city here over the next 15 years. If you look at Bagrami, the kilns there no longer work because all around it are new homes and residential areas. The government has restricted and forbidden buying and selling of land here, but people still do it amongst themselves. If they decide to make a new residential area here, what work will all these people have? In each *bati* (kiln), there are about 200 workers. There are maybe 800 to 900 *batis* in Deh Sabz. That means a lot of people will be left with no job as they have no other skill.”

No union in Deh Sabz. Surkhroad has a union, but not Kabul. “In Kabul province, each kiln owner uses his own strength. Here, we need employees, so we are good to them and pay them better. In Jalalabad, they complain that their workers leave to work in Kabul in the spring and summer. But it is a competition, and that is how the market works.”

THE RECRUITER

Family backgrounds. “I know all of the families that I have hired. They are all from one tribe, and one community. I know who they are and where they are from. They have years of experience working in kilns, sometimes 10, 20, and even up to 30 years. We hire the best. They learned this work in Pakistan. For the most part, they were farmers in Afghanistan, had lands or worked on other people’s lands. With the war, they left to Pakistan where they had no other option but to work in brick kilns. I used to work there myself in a kiln at the age of 14, where I earned 25 kaldar (0.29 USD) for every 1,000 bricks!”

“Some of those we hire, a small number, come directly from Pakistan. We pay for their transportation back from Pakistan, and hire them on a 1-year contract. If they leave before, then they have to pay us back for the transportation. So, I go to Pakistan from time to time to see if families want to return and come to work in Kabul.”

“The families that work here all have homes in Jalalabad that they go back to after the season in Kabul. Most will not continue to work, besides daily jobs. Some have land to cultivate, so they take a few months to take care of that. They work in Kabul for 7 months, starting around the Persian New Year (*from March-October, or April-November*).”

“Some end their contracts after 3 months, they pay their dues and loans, and leave. It is bad for us because we have to replace them; if there is a big slack then it becomes a problem. But in general, things run smoothly. It is easier to recruit for Deh Sabz than Surkh road because the salaries here are higher and the working season is limited to 7 months. In Jalalabad, there is no season. The brick kilns are active year-round, for 12 months.”

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7.3 HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

<p><i>Filter question:</i></p> <p>(18 and above): Are you able and willing to provide responses for the household portion of the survey, or, willing for us to speak to an adult member of your household for this purpose?</p> <p>(17 and below): Are you able and willing for us to speak to an adult member of your family for the household portion of the survey?</p>	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. No (END INTERVIEW – SELECT OTHER RESPONDENT)</p> <p>A. Phone Number: _____</p> <p>B. Contact name: _____</p> <p>C. Address _____</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

No.	Question	Answers
D	Interviewer name (Code between 1 and 07)	_____
E	Date of interview	_____
F	District	1. Sorkhrod 2. Deh Sabz
G	Gender of interviewee	1. Male 2. Female

WORKER PERSONAL PROFILE		
1.	Age	_____
2.	Ethnicity Do not prompt: One answer	_____
3.	Can you both read and write? Do not prompt: One answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q5)
4.	If yes, what is the highest education grade you have achieved? Do not prompt: One answer	1. Informal education 2. Up to class five 3. Through grades 5-8 4. Some high school 5. High School diploma 6. Other [specify]: _____
5.	CHILDREN ONLY (17 and below): Do you currently attend school? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q7) -1. Not applicable – respondent is adult (SKIP TO Q8)
6.	If YES, how many days per week and hours per day do you attend class? Do not prompt: One answer/ line	a. No. Days/week _____ b. No. Hours/day _____ (SKIP TO Q8)
7.	If NO, what is the main reason why not? Do not prompt: One answer	1. My employer doesn't allow it 2. My family doesn't allow it 3. School too expensive 4. School too far away 5. I need to help my family financially 6. I don't want to study 7. Other [Specify] _____

DESCRIPTION OF WORK									
8.	What is your main task at the brick kiln? Do not prompt: Multiple answers possible	1. Brick maker (prepares clay, moulds bricks) 2. Carries water for brick preparation 3. Transport and/or stack bricks 4. Kiln operator 5. Load bricks for customers 6. Other (Specify) _____							
9.	Have you suffered any serious injury or illness due to your work in the brick kiln? Prompt: Multiple answers possible	1. Respiratory illness/cough 2. Fever 3. Headache 4. Seasonal illness 5. Skin irritation or allergy 6. Body pains/injuries 7. Broken bones: Specify: _____ 8. Serious burns to skin 9. Other [Specify] _____							
10.	a. How long have you worked at this brick kiln? b. How long have you worked at brick kilns in total? Do not prompt: One answer per line (MONTHS)	For calculation purposes					a. Total _____		
		a. _____ Years _____ Months b. _____ Years _____ Months					b. Total _____		
11.	a. How many days do you work per week? b. How many nights do you work per week? Do not prompt: One answer per line							a. _____ b. _____	
12.	How many hours did you work per day/night in the previous week (a-g)? Total for week (h)?	a. Sat	b. Sun	c. Mon	d. Tues	e. Wed	f. Thurs	g. Fri	h. Total
Explain definition: Break time is time that you have for yourself to rest, eat or do other leisure activities during a work shift									
13.	How much break time do you get per day? (minutes) Do not prompt: One answer only	_____							
14.	How many months per year do you work at a brick kiln? Do not prompt: One answer only	____ (If 12, SKIP TO Q16)							

15.	When you are not working at the brick kiln, what is your main income generating activity? Prompt: One answer only	1. Skilled labour: Sector _____ Activity: _____ 2. Unskilled labour: Sector _____ Activity: _____ 3. None, I don't work the rest of the year 4. Other: Specify: _____																
16.	How are you paid at the brick kiln? Prompt: One answer only	1. Fully in cash 2. Fully in kind (SKIP TO Q18) 3. Both in cash and in kind 4. Other (Specify) _____																
17.	How much are you paid in cash for your work? Do not prompt: One answer only, AFA	_____ per 1000 bricks																
18.	What in-kind payments do you receive? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Shelter 2. Food 3. Water 4. Electricity 5. Home supplies (bedding, furniture, etc.) 6. Other [specify] _____ -1 Not applicable, answered 1 (in cash) in Q16																
19.	How much is deducted from your salary per month for the following: Prompt: multiple answers possible, AFA	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1. Payment against advance/debt</td> <td>1. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Commission to recruiter</td> <td>2. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Payment to other kiln workers</td> <td>3. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Fee for broken bricks</td> <td>4. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Deductions for equipment</td> <td>5. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Accommodation</td> <td>6. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. None</td> <td>7. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8. Other [specify] _____</td> <td>8. _____</td> </tr> </table>	1. Payment against advance/debt	1. _____	2. Commission to recruiter	2. _____	3. Payment to other kiln workers	3. _____	4. Fee for broken bricks	4. _____	5. Deductions for equipment	5. _____	6. Accommodation	6. _____	7. None	7. _____	8. Other [specify] _____	8. _____
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2. Commission to recruiter	2. _____																	
3. Payment to other kiln workers	3. _____																	
4. Fee for broken bricks	4. _____																	
5. Deductions for equipment	5. _____																	
6. Accommodation	6. _____																	
7. None	7. _____																	
8. Other [specify] _____	8. _____																	
20.	a. How many bricks do you make per day? b. Including your bricks, how many does your family make? Prompt: One answer per line	a. Alone _____ b. Family _____																

RECRUITMENT & DEBT

21.	Who recruited you to work at the kiln? Do not prompt: One answer	1. Kiln owner 2. Recruiter 3. Family member 4. Not recruited/ came to look for job 5. Other (Specify) _____						
22.	Are you working to pay off a debt? Do not prompt: One answer	1.YES 2. NO (SKIP TO Q30)						
23.	Is the debt you are working to pay back personal debt or the debt of a family member? Prompt: One answer	1. Personal debt 2. Family member's debt 3. Other (Specify) _____						
24.	What were the reasons for this loan? Do not prompt: Multiple answers	1. Wedding 2. Funeral 3. Illness/medical expense 4. Shelter 5. Basic necessities 6. To pay for migration of a family member. Destination: _____ 7. Other [Specify] _____ 8. I don't know						
25.	To whom do you (or your family) owe this advance? Prompt: One answer	1. Kiln owner 2. Recruiter 3. Other [specify] _____ 4. I don't know						
26.	Loan/advance details Prompt: One answer per line	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>a. Loan amount (AFA)</td> <td>a. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Repaid amount (AFA)</td> <td>b. _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. Current amount (AFA)</td> <td>c. _____</td> </tr> </table>	a. Loan amount (AFA)	a. _____	b. Repaid amount (AFA)	b. _____	c. Current amount (AFA)	c. _____
a. Loan amount (AFA)	a. _____							
b. Repaid amount (AFA)	b. _____							
c. Current amount (AFA)	c. _____							
27.	How many months ago did you or your family take the advance? Do not prompt: one answer, 99=don't know	_____ months:						
28.	How long do you think you will have to work to repay the debt? Do not prompt: one answer	1. 1-6 months 2. 7-12 months 3. 1-2 years 4. 3-5 years 5. +5 years 6. I don't know 7. Other [Specify] _____						
29.	If you (or your family) do not repay your advance/loan or if your payment is late, do you face any punishment? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Verbal abuse 2. Fees or increased interest 3. Increased amount of work 4. Food or water withheld 5. Physical violence 6. Other [Specify] _____ 7. No punishment 8. I don't know						

COERCION		
30.	Do you need to request permission from the employer, manager or other kiln worker to leave the kiln site? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No
31.	If you had a better job somewhere else, could you leave your current job, if you continue to pay your debt? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes (SKIP TO Q33) 2. No 3. I don't know (SKIP TO Q33)
32.	If NO, why not? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Employer forbids it by use of force 2. Employer forbids due to loan unpaid 3. Dependence on employer for shelter 4. Dependence on employer for food and/or water 5. Dependence on employer for services (health care, education, etc.) 6. Other [Specify] _____
33.	Are you or your family members allowed to engage in a secondary employment with another employer? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know

LIVING CONDITIONS		
34.	Where do you live now? Prompt: one answer	1. Shelter provided by employer 2. Owned home 3. Rented house 4. Home of relatives 5. Other [Specify] _____
35.	Do you live with your family? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes (SKIP TO Q37) 2. No
36.	What is the main mode of contact with your family? Prompt: one answer	1. No contact 2. Go to visit my family in person: How often: _____ 3. Phone contact: How often: _____ 4. Letter writing: How often: _____ 5. Contact through relatives: How often: _____ 6. Other [Specify] _____
37.	CHILDREN ONLY (17 and below): How do you spend your free time? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Housework 2. Play games 3. Rest/sleep 4. Talk to friends 5. Read / Study for school 6. Listen to radio/watch TV 7. Other [Specify] _____ 8. Do not have free time -1. Not applicable – the respondent is 18 or older
38.	Which of the following services does your work/employer provide access to? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Access to food 2. Access to safe drinking water 3. Access to health services 4. Access to electricity 5. Access to transportation 6. Access to schools 7. Other: Specify: _____ 8. None

PERCEPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS		
39.	How would you rate the work conditions for children in this kiln? Prompt: one answer	1. 1.Very good 2. Good 3. Average 4. Poor 5. Very poor 6. No opinion
40.	Do you think children at this kiln are exposed to possible violence (verbal or physical)? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes, verbal abuse 2. Yes, physical abuse 3. Yes, both kinds of abuse 4. No (SKIP TO 42) 5. I don't know (SKIP TO 42)
41.	Which persons treat the children with violence at this kiln? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Kiln owner 2. Recruiter 3. Kiln workers 4. Family members 5. Other children 6. Other [Specify] _____
42.	How would you rate the work conditions for adults in this kiln? Prompt: one answer	1. 1.Very good 2. Good 3. Average 4. Poor 5. Very poor 6. No opinion
43.	What do you think you will be doing in 3 years? Do not prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Working at a brick kiln 2. Working in a different job 3. Attending school 4. Spending all of your time at home 5. Other [Specify] _____

END OF QUESTIONS FOR WORKER - OBSERVATIONS TO BE FILLED OUT BY INTERVIEWER

44.	Did the interviewee demonstrate any signs of stress or fatigue? Multiple answers possible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nervous 2. Afraid 3. Tense 4. Tired 5. Lacked concentration 6. Other [Specify] _____ 7. None of the above
45.	How would you evaluate the interviewee's health? Multiple answers possible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appears healthy 2. Coughs 3. Visible sores/bruises 4. Visible injuries 5. Eyesight problems 6. Appears malnourished (small size for age, discoloured hair, etc.) 7. Other [Specify] _____
46.	At any point, did the interviewee continue working while answering questions?	1. Yes 2. No

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION: DO NOT PROMPT, ONE ANSWER PER LINE

Line no.	47. Relationship 1. Self / Worker 2. Spouse 3. Child 4. Son/ daughter-in-law 5. Sibling 6. Parent 7. Relative 8. Non-relative	48. Head of household (add □ next to HH)	49. Sex 1. male 2. female	50. Age (years)	51. Marital status 1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Widowed	52. Working status 1. Works in kiln 2. Daily worker 3. Works elsewhere (Specify) 4. Doesn't work 5. Can't work/disabled 6. Too young/old	53. Education 1. None 2. Informal education 3. Up to class 5 4. Class 5-8 5. Some high school 6. High School diploma 7. Other [specify]	54. School attendance (current) 1. Yes 2. No -1 Not applicable (too young/old)	55. Serious illness/injury (past 12 mos) 1. Yes 2. No
01									
02									
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15									

ACCESS TO SHELTER, FOOD & SERVICES

56.	What is your current housing arrangement? Do not prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We own a house 2. We rent a single family house 3. We own a house that we share with other households 4. We rent a house that we share with other households 5. We live in a camp dwelling 6. We live under a tent 7. We live in a temporary shelter / shack 8. Other (Specify): _____
57.	Do you have a deed (evidence of ownership or lease agreement) recorded anywhere for this accommodation? Do not prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. Yes, in court / mazkan 3. Yes, in local official records 4. Yes, elsewhere (specify): _____ 5. I don't know
58.	Did your employer provide any part of your shelter? Prompt: multiple answers possible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provided shelter 2. Provided materials for shelter construction 3. Provided land 4. Provided home supplies (oven, bedding, etc.) 5. Did not provide anything 6. Other (Specify) _____
59.	How many rooms are there in your shelter? Do not prompt: one answer	_____
60.	Do you have access to safe drinking water? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No
61.	What is the primary source of drinking water for your household? Do not prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Private tap in the house (SKIP TO Q63) 2. Tap that is shared within the community 3. Private well 4. Community/shared well 5. River, lake, pond or stream 6. Bottled water 7. Other: Specify: _____
62.	How many minutes do you have to walk to access water every day? Do not prompt: one answer	_____

63.	What is the main light source in your home? Prompt: one answer	1. Natural Light 2. Kerosene 3. Gas 4. Generator 5. Public electricity 6. Candles 7. Other _____
64.	Do you have access to health care? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q66)
65.	If YES, how far is the nearest clinic or hospital? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Less than 15 minutes walk 2. 15-30 minutes walk 3. 30 minutes-1 hour 4. > 1 hour 5. Access to mobile clinic – distance varies 6. Other [Specify] _____
66.	How often in the last year did you have problems satisfying the food needs of your family? Prompt: one answer	1. Never 2. Rarely (1 or 2 times) 3. Sometimes (3 to 6 times) 4. Often (a few times every month) 5. Very often (> a few times/month)

FINANCIAL SITUATION

67.	Migration status of the household Prompt: one answer	1. Returnee (formerly legal refugee): Country of exile: _____ 2. Returnee (formerly irregular migrant) 3. Internally Displaced Person 4. Non-migrant (neither returnee nor displaced) 5. Other [Specify] _____																														
68.	What is your household's monthly income? Do not prompt: one answer, AFA	_____																														
69.	What is your household's main additional source of income (in addition to the brick kiln worker's activity)? Do not prompt: one answer for each column	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>a) Sector</td> <td>b) Position</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. Agriculture/livestock</td> <td>1. Day Labourer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Mining / Quarrying</td> <td>2. Salaried worker (private sector)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Road construction</td> <td>3. Salaried worker (public sector)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Construction</td> <td>4. Self-employed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Manufacturing</td> <td>5. Employer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Transportation</td> <td>6. Unpaid family worker</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Wholesale trade</td> <td>7. None</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8. Retail trade</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9. Health</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>10. Education</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>12. Public administration</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>13. NGO / International Org.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>14. Other : Specify: _____</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>15. None</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	a) Sector	b) Position	1. Agriculture/livestock	1. Day Labourer	2. Mining / Quarrying	2. Salaried worker (private sector)	3. Road construction	3. Salaried worker (public sector)	4. Construction	4. Self-employed	5. Manufacturing	5. Employer	6. Transportation	6. Unpaid family worker	7. Wholesale trade	7. None	8. Retail trade		9. Health		10. Education		12. Public administration		13. NGO / International Org.		14. Other : Specify: _____		15. None	
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15. None																																
70.	What is your household's total current debt? Do not prompt: one answer, AFA	_____																														
71.	What is the interest rate for the debt? Do not prompt: one answer, 99= don't know	_____ %																														
72.	How many advances and loans has your family taken in the past 5 years? Do not prompt: one answer, 99= don't know	_____																														
73.	What is the total amount of these advances and loans in the past five years? Do not prompt: one answer, AFA	_____																														
74.	Does your household have to pay any fees to the brick kiln owner, recruiter, or other kiln employees (not payments against debt)? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q76)																														
75.	If YES, how much do you pay per month? Prompt: multiple answers possible	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1. Shelter/rent</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Food and/or water</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Electricity</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. House supplies</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Fuel</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Transportation</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Brick making equipment</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8. Broken bricks</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9. Other [Specify] _____</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1. Shelter/rent		2. Food and/or water		3. Electricity		4. House supplies		5. Fuel		6. Transportation		7. Brick making equipment		8. Broken bricks		9. Other [Specify] _____													
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FAMILY POSITION IN COMMUNITY

76.	How many years has your family worked in brick kilns (past & current generations)? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No
77.	Do you think future generations of your family will continue to work in brick kilns? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No
78.	Do you have relatives that live nearby? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q80)
79.	How often do you visit your relatives? Prompt: one answer	1. < once a month 2. once a month 3. once a week 4. > once a week
80.	Do the men in your family participate in community decision-making? Do not prompt: one answer	1 Yes 2 No

81.	Do the women in your family participate in community decision-making? Do not prompt: one answer	1 Yes 2 No
82.	Do the women in your family interact with other women in the community? Do not prompt: one answer	1 Yes 2 No
83.	Do you think your household's economic situation is better, the same or worse than other members of the community? Prompt: one answer	1. Better 2. Same 3. Worse 4. I don't know
84.	Do you think your household's access to services is better, the same or worse than other members of the community? Prompt: one answer	1. Better 2. Same 3. Worse 4. I don't know
85.	Are members of your family able to leave the kiln site whenever they wish? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes (SKIP TO Q87) 2. No
86.	If NO, what prevents their freedom of movement? Prompt: one answer	1. Lack of transportation 2. Lack of resources 3. Lack of alternate work opportunities in area 4. Must ask permission from kiln owner 5. Use of force by employer 6. Unpaid debt to employer 7. Other [Specify] _____

RECRUITMENT, EXPECTATIONS & CONDITIONS

87.	Who recruited members of your household to work at the brick kiln? Prompt: one answer	1. Kiln owner 2. Recruiter 3. Family member 4. Not recruited/ came to look for job 5. Other (Specify) _____
88.	You may have had expectations before your household came here. Have the work conditions been better, worse or the same as your expectations? (for example, # of hours, wages, difficulty of work) Prompt: one answer	1. Better 2. Same 3. Worse 4. I don't know
89.	Have the living conditions been better, worse or the same as your expectations? (ex: the availability or quality of shelter, food, water, other services) Prompt: one answer	1. Better 2. Same 3. Worse 4. I don't know
90.	Did the kiln owner or recruiter ever lie to your household about the work or living conditions? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q92) 3. I don't know
91.	If YES, what did he/she lie about? Do not prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Wages 2. Hours of work 3. Duration of advance repayment 4. Terms of contract 5. Quality or availability of shelter 6. Provision of food/water/supplies 7. Other [Specify] _____
92.	Did a kiln owner or recruiter pressure or force your household to come work for the kiln? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q94) 3. I don't know
93.	If YES, what sort of pressure or force did he or she use? Prompt: multiple answers	1. Physical violence 2. Threats of physical violence 3. Verbal abuse or intimidation 4. Other [Specify] _____
94.	To your knowledge, does the kiln management use any of the following techniques to punish workers? Prompt: multiple answers	1. Verbal abuse 2. Fees or increased interest 3. Increased amount of work 4. Food or water withheld 5. Physical violence 6. Other [Specify] _____ 7. No punishment 8. I don't know
95.	How would you rate the work conditions for adults in this kiln? Prompt: one answer	1. Very good 2. Good 3. Average 4. Poor 5. Very poor 6. No opinion
96.	How would you rate the work conditions for children in this kiln? Prompt: one answer	1. Very good 2. Good 3. Average 4. Poor 5. Very poor 6. No opinion
97.	How would you rate the living conditions for your household? Prompt: one answer	1. Very good 2. Good 3. Average 4. Poor 5. Very poor 6. No opinion

FURTHER CONTACT

98.	Would you permit us to contact you if we have any follow-up questions? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No
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7.4 LOCAL ACTOR SURVEY – COMMUNITY MEMBERS

A	Interviewer name	
B	Date of interview	
C	District	1. Surkhroad 2. Deh Sabz
D	Profession/community role	1 Teacher 2. Elder 3. Shura member 4. Other (Specify) _____
E	Gender of interviewee	1. Male 2. Female

PERSONAL PROFILE	
1.	Name
2.	Address
3.	Phone number
4.	Age
5.	Ethnicity

BONDED LABOUR PRODUCTION		
6.	Which sectors in this area are known for using bonded labour? Do not prompt: multiple answers	1. Tailoring shops 2. Metal workshop 3. Auto repair shops 4. Brick kilns 5. Carpet weaving 6. Street work 7. Agriculture (farming, livestock) 8. Other [Specify] _____ 9. I don't know
Comments:		
7.	Is bonded labour in your area more common among adult workers or workers under 18? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Adult workers 2. Child workers 3. Equal numbers of adult and child workers 4. I don't know
8.	Are bonded labour contracts used mostly with individuals or with entire families? Do not prompt: multiple answers	1. Individuals 2. Entire families 3. Equal numbers of individuals and families 4. I don't know
9.	What are the dangers for workers of bonded labour in your opinion? Do not prompt: multiple answers	1. Exploits workers economically 2. Leads to verbal abuse of workers by employers 3. Leads to physical abuse of workers by employers 4. Damages the health of children (only) 5. Damages the health of workers (both children and adults) 6. Hinders child development 7. Prevents children from getting an education 8. Physically dangerous for children (not adults) 9. Perpetuates poverty 10. Other [Specify]: _____
Comments:		
10.	Is bonded labour an old practice in your area? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes, around for generations/old practice (SKIP TO Q11) 2. No, recent practice 3. I don't know
11.	If it is a new practice, why did it start in this area? Do not prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Returnees came back with no money or contacts and needed loans 2. High employer demand for very cheap labour 3. High demand for bricks for development projects 4. High demand for bricks for military projects 5. High demand for bricks for civil construction projects 6. Emergence of labour contractors that exploit for personal gain 7. Other: Specify: _____
Comments:		
12.	For how many years do you think bonded labour has been practiced in the area?	Number of years
13.	Is it possible for individuals or families to leave situations of bonded labour? Prompt: one answer	1. Yes, it happens frequently 2. Yes, but it is very rare 3. No, employers do not let them leave 4. No, families do not manage to repay the loans to be free 5. I don't know/No answer 6. Other Specify: _____
Comments:		
14.	In your opinion, how many bonded labourers are aware of or understand all of the conditions of their debt bondage when they enter into the contract? Do not prompt: one answer	1 All 2. Many 3. Some 4. Very few 5. None 6. Don't know
Comments:		

CHILD LABOUR		
15.	Which sectors do you think hire the most workers under 18 in this area? Do not prompt: multiple answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tailoring shops 2. Metal workshop 3. Auto repair shops 4. Brick kilns 5. Carpet weaving 6. Street work 7. Other [Specify] _____ 8. I don't know
Comments:		
16.	In terms of difficulty for children, how would you assess work in brick kilns compared to work in other sectors Prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Much harder 2. Somewhat harder 3. Same 4. Somewhat easier 5. Much easier 6. I don't know
Comments:		
17.	Do adults and children do the same types of tasks on the brick kilns? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes 2. No
Comments:		
18.	Where do the children and adults that work in the brick kilns come from? Prompt: multiple answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local province 2. Other Afghan province(s) – Specify _____ 3. Pakistan 4. Other [Specify] _____ 5. I don't know
Comments:		
19.	What is, in your opinion, the principal economic factor that pushes children to work in brick kilns in your area? Prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adults are unemployed (no income) 2. Adults are underemployed (lack of stable income) 3. Death/illness of the male head of household pushes children to work 4. High demand for brick work that is best accomplished by children 5. Desire by children to learn a work skill 6. No opportunity to go to school / Lack of schools in area 7. I don't know 8. Other: Specify: _____
20.	Is bonded child labour prevalent in brick kilns in your area?	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q22)
21.	What is the main social reason that makes child bonded labour so common in your area? Prompt: one answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poverty among households in the area 2. Lack of alternative work opportunities in the area 3. Lack of schools in the area 4. Illiteracy of population of the area 5. Construction companies located nearby and so large demand for bricks 6. Long tradition of child bonded labour in this work sector and area 7. No or little enforcement of law by the government / authorities / NGOs 8. I don't know 9. Other: Specify: _____
22.	a. Do you think there are more or fewer children working in this area's brick kilns than 5 years ago? Prompt: one answer b. Why has the number changed? Comments box only	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1. Many more 2. A few more 3. Same number (SKIP TO Q23) 4. A few less 5. Many less 6. I don't know
23.	What do you think is the main advantage to having children work in brick kilns? Do not prompt: one answer only	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children are more productive than adults 2. Children are more obedient than adults 3. Provides extra income for the family 4. Pays better than other sectors 5. Teaches children a work skill 6. Other [Specify] _____
Comments:		
24.	What do you think is the main disadvantage to having children work in brick kilns? Do not prompt: one answer possible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less productive than adults 2. Prevents school attendance 3. Harms child development 4. Damages child health 5. Exposure to severe incidents and death 6. Other [Specify] _____
Comments:		
25.	Does the use of child labour in brick kilns create any positive long-term effects for the community? If so, what is the main positive effect? Do not prompt: one answer only	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustains economic growth in our area 2. Strengthens our most viable industry in the area 3. Attracts families to come settle in our area 4. Attracts attention of the governments and organisations for assistance 5. Offers livelihoods to our community

		6. No positive long-term effects 7. Other: Specify: _____
Comments:		
26.	Does the use of child labour in brick kilns create any negative long-term effects for the community? If so, what is the main negative effect? Do not prompt: one answer only	1. Less educated work force 2. Poor health of work force 3. Families caught in cycle of poverty 4. Hurts economic potential of community 5. No negative long-term effects 6. Other [Specify] _____
Comments:		
27.	a. What is the main factor that could help reduce the number of child workers? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Provide free education to children 2. Ban child labour 3. Advocacy (directed at parents) 4. Other [Specify] _____
	b. What are the factors that could help improve the working conditions of child labourers? Do not prompt: multiple answers	1. Limit hours of work 2. Provide access to credit to families 3. Provide health care at workplace 4. Provide food and/or water 5. Provide better shelter 6. Pay children more 7. Other [Specify] _____
Comments:		
28.	Do you think the government should develop more laws that specifically address bonded labour? Do you think the government is enforcing current labour laws? Comments box only	
29.	Is your community currently doing something to help the children and/or their families working in brick kilns? Comments box only	
30.	Do you personally know children that are working or have worked in brick kilns? Could you describe how this work affected their lives? Comments box only	

FURTHER CONTACT

31.	Would you permit us to contact you if we have any follow-up questions?	1. Yes 2. No
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7.5 LOCAL ACTOR SURVEY – KILN OWNERS

A	Interviewer name	
B	Date of interview	
C	District	1. Surkhroad 2. Deh Sabz
D	Gender of interviewee	1. Male 2. Female

PERSONAL PROFILE

1.	Name	
2.	Address	
3.	Phone number	_____ - _____ - _____
4.	Age	
5.	Ethnicity	

BRICK PRODUCTION

6.	How many months out of the year does this brick kiln operate? Do not prompt: one answer	(If 12, SKIP TO Q8) ____
7.	What do you do in the off-season? Prompt: one answer	1. Operate a kiln elsewhere. Location _____ 2. Work in another sector. Specify _____ 3. Take time off 4. Other [Specify] _____
8.	How many bricks do you produce per month? Do not prompt: one answer	
9.	On average, how much do you sell a batch of 1000 bricks for? Do not prompt: one answer, AFA	
10.	Who are your main customers? Prompt: one answer	1. Individuals with small construction projects 2. Afghan construction companies 3. Int'l construction companies. Nationality _____ 4. Other [Specify] _____
11.	Do you know if any of your bricks have been used for development or military projects? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Yes, development projects 2. Yes, military projects 3. Yes, both development and military projects 4. Not used for these types of projects 5. I don't know
Comments:		

EMPLOYEES					
12.	How many employees do you have? Do not prompt: one answer				
13.	Age & gender breakdown Prompt: one answer per space	Men, ≥18	Women, ≥18	Boys, <18	Girls, <18
14.	Are many of your employees are returnees? Prompt: one answer	1. Many (more than half) 2. Some (less than half) 3. Very few 4. None 5. I don't know			
15.	How do you recruit workers? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Recruit myself 2. Use a recruiter 3. Recruit through other employees 4. Recruit through local authorities/officials 5. Purchase contracts from other kilns in Afghanistan 6. Purchase contracts from Pakistan 7. Other [Specify] _____			
Comments:					
16.	From where do you recruit your employees? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Local province 2. Other provinces _____ 3. Pakistan 4. Other [Specify] _____			
17.	Do you provide advances or loans to your employees? Do not prompt: one answer		1. Yes	2. No	
18.	What percentage of your employees has taken advances or loans from you? Do not prompt: one answer		_____ %		
19.	What do they need the advances or loans for? Do not prompt: one answer	1. Cost of migration 2. Wedding 3. Funeral 4. Health/medical costs 5. House construction/repairs 6. Daily household expenses 7. Food 8. Other [Specify] _____			
Comments:					
20.	Do you charge a fee or interest for the advance or loan? Prompt: one answer per line, include unit for fee	a. Fee 1. Yes _____ 2. No _____	b. Interest 1. Yes _____ % 2. No _____		
Comments:					
21.	Are there any penalties for late payments? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Fees _____ 2. Increased hours of work _____ 3. Increased interest _____ 4. Physical retribution 5. Other [specify] _____ 6. No penalty			
Comments:					

WAGES					
22.	How much do you pay brick makers for 1000 basic bricks? Do not prompt: One answer, AFN				
23.	How many bricks can one adult typically make in a 24-hour period? Do not prompt: One answer				
24.	How many bricks can one child typically make in a 24-hour period? Do not prompt: One answer				
25.	How many adults work days and nights in a typical week? Do not prompt: One answer		a. days _____	b. nights _____	
26.	What are the typical working hours for adults in 24 hours? Prompt: One answer per letter				
27.	How many workers under 18 work days and nights in a typical week? Do not prompt: One answer		a. days _____	b. nights _____	
28.	What are the typical working hours for children in a 24-hour period? Prompt: One answer per letter		Day shift	Night shift	
29.	a. Do you produce any other types of bricks or tiles? b. How much do you pay brick makers per 1000 bricks? Prompt: Multiple answers possible	a. Type	b. Payment/1000 bricks		
		1. Tiles			
		2. Higher quality bricks			
		3. Other [Specify]			
		4. None			
30.	Do you deduct any fees for the following? Prompt: One answer per line, AFN	1. Broken/damaged bricks			
		2. Fees for equipment			
		3. Commission to recruiter			
		4. Commission to other workers			
		5. Other [Specify]			
31.	How much are kiln operators paid per month? Prompt: One answer, AFN				

SERVICE												
32.	a. Do you provide any of the following for your employees? Prompt: multiple answers possible	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>a. Provided by employer</th> <th>b. Fees</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Shelter (constructed)</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Materials to build shelter</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Home supplies (bedding, oven)</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Food</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	a. Provided by employer	b. Fees	1. Shelter (constructed)	_____	2. Materials to build shelter	_____	3. Home supplies (bedding, oven)	_____	4. Food	_____
a. Provided by employer	b. Fees											
1. Shelter (constructed)	_____											
2. Materials to build shelter	_____											
3. Home supplies (bedding, oven)	_____											
4. Food	_____											

	b. Do you charge any fees for these services? Prompt: multiple answers possible	5. Water _____	
		6. Education/literacy courses _____	
		7. Health care _____	
		8. Transportation _____	
		9. None _____	
Comments:			
33.	Do any of the children (<18) that work here attend school? Prompt: One answer	1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q35) 3. Don't know (SKIP TO Q35)	
Comments:			
34.	If YES, do you know how many attend school? Do not prompt: One answer	a. number	b. Percentage _____%
PERCEPTION			
35.	Do you think there are any advantages to having children work in brick kilns? Do not prompt: multiple answers possible	1. More productive (Specify reason) _____	
		2. More obedient	
		3. Provides extra income for family	
		4. Pays better than other sectors	
		5. Teaches a skill	
		6. Other [Specify] _____	
Comments:			
36.	Do you think there are any disadvantages to having children work in brick kilns? Do not prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Less productive	
		2. Prevents school attendance	
		3. Harms child development	
		4. Damages child health	
		5. Other [Specify] _____	
Comments:			
37.	What are the business advantages of offering advances to employees? Prompt: multiple answers possible	1. Helps recruit employees	
		2. Ensures inexpensive labour	
		3. Ensures regular labour	
		4. Increases productivity	
		5. Other [Specify] _____	
Comments:			
38.	What is, in your opinion, the principal economic factor that pushes children to work in brick kilns in your area? Prompt: one answer	1. Adults are unemployed (no income)	
		2. Adults are underemployed (lack of stable income)	
		3. Death/illness of the male head of household pushes children to work	
		4. High demand for brick work that is best accomplished by children	
		5. To learn a skill	
		6. I don't know	
		7. Other: Specify: _____	
39.	What is the main social reason that makes child bonded labour so common in your area? Prompt: one answer	1. Lack of schools	
		2. Located near construction companies	
		3. Long tradition of child bonded labour in this area	
		4. No control from the government / authorities / NGOs	
		5. High number of female headed households	
		6. I don't know	
		7. Other: Specify: _____	
FURTHER CONTACT			
40.	Would you permit us to contact you if we have any follow-up questions?	1. Yes 2. No	
END OF QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYER – INTERVIEWER OBSERVATIONS			
41.	Did the person interviewed appear to have any of the following? Multiple answers possible	1. New model/nice car	
		2. New model mobile phone	
		3. TV in office	
		4. Air conditioning	
		5. Other: Specify: _____	
42.	How was the behaviour of the person interviewed towards you / your questions? Multiple answers possible	1. Comfortable	
		2. Uncomfortable	
		3. Did not want to talk about child workers	
		4. Did not want to show us his brick kiln	
		5. Did not want me to see or talk to adult workers	
		6. Did not want me to see or talk to child workers	

Contacts:

Samuel Hall is a research and consulting company with headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan. We specialise in perception surveys, policy and socio-economic research, evaluations and impact assessments for governmental and non-governmental organisations. Our teams of technical experts, practitioners, and researchers have years of field and research experience in Afghanistan. This has allowed us to i) acquire a firm grasp of the political and socio-cultural context of development in Afghanistan; ii) design data collection methods and statistical analyses for monitoring, evaluation and planning of programmes; iii) apply cross-disciplinary knowledge in providing integrated solutions for policy interventions. For more information, visit www.samuelhall.org or contact us at development@samuelhall.org.

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