



About ADSP

Introduction

The Asia Displacement Solutions Platform is a joint initiative launched by the Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council and Relief International, which aims to contribute to the development of comprehensive solutions for displaced persons across the Afghan and Rohingya displacement axes.

Welcome to the December 2020 newsletter from the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform. These newsletters are intended to shine a spotlight on the work done by ADSP members to improve outcomes for persons affected by displacement, and also to provide updates on global or regional processes which may otherwise go unexplored.

Each newsletter will contain articles from members in ADSP focus countries, exploring interesting programme developments and regional migration trends. As we move into 2021, editions will revolve around areas of thematic focus, and we encourage you to share ideas or information.

The newsletter relies upon content created by member organisations, and everyone is welcome to contribute. If you have an idea for an article, on any subject, please feel free to contact me to discuss. We would love to publish overviews of your activities, interviews with staff, and photos which give an idea of the work being carried out in the field.

These newsletters are intended to improve information-sharing between ADSP member organisations, and to highlight the work of the platform more publicly.

A message from the ADSP Steering Committee:

A year of change and adaptation

By Mikkel Trolle, Asia Regional Director (Danish Refugee Council) and ADSP Steering Committee Member



There's no doubt: 2020 has been an extraordinarily challenging year for everyone. Whether it be ADSP members, colleagues in the not-for-profit sector, and those that we serve – refugees and asylum seekers – 2020 will be remembered as a year of change and adaptation. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced changes in the way we interact with our fellow human being, across communities, and across borders. Life as we knew it seems gone!

Despite these challenges, I've been incredibly proud to see the work of ADSP members continue, with operations pivoting and adapting to ensure that services and support for refugees continue with minimal disruption. This approach serves as a testament to each of our respective agencies, and our commitment to saving lives and alleviating suffering. It is this approach that makes me proud to work with the Danish Refugee Council, and to be affiliated and support the work of the ADSP.

As for many in the humanitarian sector, the last few months have been hectic also for ADSP. The Secretariat and members have finalised research pieces, coordinated advocacy, engaged in high-level events, and strategic planning for the year ahead. Notably, in October and November, ADSP was actively engaged in the two key events – Sustaining Support for the Continued Rohingya Refugee Response and during the 2020 Afghanistan Conference which were both pledging conferences. The latter was co-hosted by the Governments of Afghanistan and Finland with the United Nations. It took place on 23–24 November 2020 and provided DRC's Secretary General Charlotte Slente the opportunity to speak on reintegrating Afghan refugees and returnees during the session Sustainable Peace Building. In the week prior to the Conference, ADSP hosted the side event Durable Solutions for Displaced Afghans.

The year has also included a change of guard on the ADSP front. I am pleased to see the work of ADSP gaining new momentum through Evan Jones who joined us mid-2020, and to follow the steady stream of research reports published on both the Afghan and Rohingya displacement axes. Such research has, and continues to contribute to ADSP's evidence base, used by members for programmatic improvements and developing a sound platform for advocacy. Thank you to all members who have engaged actively, and who have provided the support and input necessary to make these initiatives a success.

On this note, I wish to thank each of you for the year that has gone and wish you all the best for 2021. I look forward to seeing you all fresh and rejuvenated in the new year, as we continue to build upon our collaborative efforts to support refugees and other displaced groups to access durable solutions.

Best wishes for the holiday season,

Mikkel Trolle

Asia Regional Director, Danish Refugee Council
ADSP Steering Committee Member

Dreams and Hopes: Access to Education for Afghan Refugee Children Amidst COVID-19 in Balochistan

By Asia Displacement Solutions Platform



Even after more than 40 years, Afghan refugees in Pakistan continue to face uncertainty. The over 1.4 million registered Afghans in Pakistan not only include refugees who crossed the border to flee conflict in their home country in 1979 or nearly two decades ago in 2001, but also two generations of Afghans born in Pakistan.

Pakistan is host to one of the largest refugee populations in the world and the largest under UNHCR's mandate in Asia. The Government of Pakistan has continued to maintain a policy on voluntary repatriation and management of Afghan refugees. However, with decades of instability in the neighbouring country, the Government has also been advancing inclusive policies towards Afghan refugees to improve access to health, education, and livelihoods. This includes periodic extension of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards for Afghan refugees and allowing them to open bank accounts for greater economic inclusion. Among the PoR card holders

in Pakistan, an estimated 58% reside in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (and former FATA) province, followed by 22% in Baluchistan, 12% in Punjab, 5% in Sindh, 2% in the Federal Capital Islamabad and 1% in Gilgit-Baltistan / Azad Jammu and Kashmir. However, the sheer scale of the protracted situation affecting Afghan refugees has required international assistance over the past four decades, as humanitarian organizations have been endeavouring to play their part in catering for the multitude of challenges faced by Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

As hopes for an end to decades of conflict have revived, many young Afghans born in Pakistan know little about what to expect from their homeland, which many of them are yet to see. Before the dream of a peaceful Afghanistan is achieved, refugees across the border in Pakistan must continue to face the multitude of challenges that plague displaced communities. This includes maintaining social cohesion with host communities, access to livelihood opportunities, healthcare, and education.

Conflict is one of the major detriments of whether children belonging to a community are able to acquire education, or are left out of school. Afghan refugees are one of the largest and longest displaced populations in the world. Four decades of recurrent conflict has resulted in major disruption or lack of access to education for Afghan refugee children. This has deprived a large number of these children from their dreams and hopes tied to the pathway to their future, which lies with the access to education.



Afghan refugees can choose different providers of education in Pakistan, these include government schools, Pakistani private schools, Afghan private schools and madrassas. Unfortunately, improving access to education in Pakistan has been a longstanding challenge for the government, with an estimated 22.8 million out of school children according to the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM). This coupled with the burden of reaching out to refugee children in far flung areas of the country, makes it hard for the government alone to cater for their needs. Furthermore, the quality of education in Pakistan has been subject to much debate over the years, with a recent deliberation over a single national curriculum to mitigate the problem of lack of access to quality education.

During an endeavour to impart education to Afghan refugee children via an accelerated learning program, teachers working under IRC's ERMP project observed a significant deficiency in learning skills of not only refugee children who had received no prior education, but also children who have had some degree of access to educational facilities in the past. For example, many of them couldn't even write their names. The accelerated learning program also faced roadblocks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was adapted via home-schooling to avoid disruption in the educational progress of children from refugee and host communities. As schools reopened after 7 months, on 30 September 2020, IRC supported ALP centres were opened under strict SOPs to the delight of students. However, as the second wave of COVID-19 is expected in the coming months, schools have again closed with an expected resumption date of 11 January 2021. During this disruption of education activities, the ALP teachers are once more determined to keep the cycle of accelerated learning going for Afghan refugee children.

Amidst the outbreak of COVID-19, providing education for refugee children requires increased emphasis, with a need for additional accelerated learning programs to help refugee children transition to public or private schools. The continuation of education is not only important for refugee children but it also offers a ray of hope to their families, who may intend to return home after decades of conflict. With dreams and hopes, four decades in the making.





ERMP Project: Accelerated Learning Program for Afghan Refugee Children in Balochistan

Enrolment, Retention, Mainstreaming and Protection of Afghan Refugees and Host Children in Balochistan Government Schools (ERMP) is a project being implemented in Pishin and Chaghi districts of Balochistan province by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The project aims to enroll out-of-school children (OOSC) and provide them with safe, functioning, and responsive education services in targeted Government schools/Alternative Learning Program (ALP) centers. The project has been designed to protect refugees and host children from neglect, exploitation and abuse through school and community-based CP mechanisms and provision of case management services, with a target of reaching out to 34,415 beneficiaries.

The concept behind ERMP has been to improve access to education for Afghan refugee children and host families, with a specific aim to reach out to the worst affected segment within this cohort i.e. young girls. However, the plight of refugee children in 2020 was further exacerbated by the spread of COVID-19, disrupting educational activities. This made it even harder for Afghan refugees to access educational services amidst the spread of an even more unpredictable foe than the conflict and subsequent misery that they have become all too familiar with.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, ALPs were closed, and classes were shifted to home-based schooling, as IRC adapted to the 'new normal'. During this time, it seemed like an impossible situation to keep the cycle of education going for Afghan refugee children, however, the incredible hard work and perseverance of local community teachers made it possible to continue home-based classes under the shadow of COVID-19.



CASE STUDY

Taking up the Mantle to Educate Refugee Children

After the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a surge in nationwide cases, all education institutes were shut down in February 2020. During this time, Shukria from Killi Zareefabad in Pishin District aimed to tackle the dual challenge of continuing classes for her students, as well as to raise COVID-19 related awareness. While being a student herself, Shukria has been striving to complete her high school education from Degree College Pishin, while also educating Afghan refugee children in IRC supported ALP centers. To facilitate her students' learning during the lockdown, Shukria started by instructing both students and parents to adhere to COVID-19 precautions, explaining the use of masks, hand sanitizers, and the frequent need to wash hands. She established ground rules as a precondition for her students to continue home-schooling by following COVID-19 protocols.

Within a short period of time, Shukria was able to help students organize classes across different nearby houses while ensuring that only a handful of students attended each class, while practicing social distancing and wearing a mask. She also provided students with hand sanitizers and masks to further reinforce the COVID-19 protocols. During the lockdown, she taught over two dozen students by venturing to different community designated homes for classes. This was tiring - and at times - a nerve-racking experience for Shukria, as she reinforced COVID-19 protocols for students and parents alike. Pointing towards an important aspect of educational facilities for Afghan refugee children Shukria said:

"Most children in the ALP center have had no prior education, whereas the ones who have had some degree of access to educational facilities lag behind. Many of them could not even write their names when I started teaching at the ALP center, but my students have come a long way since. Their hard work and determination has given meaning to my work".

Shukria has for now taken up the mantle to lead the way to educate and protect children in her village from an invisible enemy. As she continues to ensure that children in her village are able to learn, even under the clout of a pandemic.

You can see Shukria's interview via the following link: <https://rescue.box.com/v/shukriya-from-pishin>

Will the Afghanistan Conference Deliver for Afghan Refugees?

By Evan Jones, Coordinator at the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform

Don't forget to ask Afghans what they really need.

2020 has been a year of extraordinary change, unprecedented challenges and – in some respects – a year of reflection for us all.



Photo: Enayatullah Azad/NRC

For the people of Afghanistan, it has once again been all of this and more. From the initiation of peace talks with the Taliban in February, coinciding with the agreement on the withdrawal of American troops and NATO forces after 18 years, to the continuous waves of return of hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees from neighbouring Iran, the shocks from severe seasonal droughts and flooding and the constant underlying ongoing political instability and fight for power – these are just a few of the 2020 milestones.

These challenges have been further compounded by the impacts of Covid-19, which have resulted in a huge blow to the economy, and rendered large swathes of the population food insecure. The hard-pressed population of this nation has certainly not been short of pressing issues to deal with. It is against this tumultuous backdrop, that from 23-24 November, representatives from more than 70 governments, and other international decision-makers will meet for the quadrennial Conference on Afghanistan.

Co-organised by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Government of Finland, and the United Nations, the 2020 ministerial-level conference is designed for international stakeholders to discuss key challenges and to pledge funding against the Afghan Government's development targets. Amongst others, key topics on the conference agenda include human rights and women's participation; reintegrating refugees and returnees; institutional and societal methods for fighting corruption; and economic priorities and aid effectiveness.

Whilst the issue of reintegrating refugees and returnees is crucial, and something that absolutely warrants discussion – not least as it remains a key component of Afghanistan's National Peace and Development Framework 2017-2021 – this must not be done in a vacuum and without linking to the need to support the broader range of long-term solutions for Afghan refugees. Equally as important is the need for donors and foreign governments to implement and work towards solutions for Afghans who are unwilling or unable to return.

With war and instability as the two common denominators throughout the past 40 years of Afghanistan's history, the country has seen a mass exodus of its citizens to neighbouring countries. Current figures estimate that there are between 1.5-2 million Afghan refugees in Iran, approximately the same number in Pakistan, and a further 170,000 in Turkey. For these refugees, many of whom were born into displacement, little incentive remains to return to Afghanistan, a country that many of them have never set foot in. Many were born in exile, with second and third-generation refugees residing in Pakistan and Iran.

With uncertainties around access to land, limited livelihood opportunities, and ongoing security threats, refugees have largely no choice but to stay where they are for the time being. As any casual observer of Afghanistan can see, the situation inside the country remains precarious at best. With a faltering economy, chronic food insecurity, and persistent conflict, the question remains - is Afghanistan at all ready and able to support the broad return and reintegration of refugees? In fact, in just the first half of 2020 alone, there have been more than 117,000 *new* displacements inside the country as a result of conflict and violence.

A further 30,000 have been internally displaced as a result of natural disasters. These newly displaced are in addition to the more than 4.1 million other internally displaced people in Afghanistan. This staggering figure illuminates Afghanistan's precarity and instability, and the need for greater development support before a sustainable large-scale return can really be considered as a viable option.

Given the current unpredictable situation inside Afghanistan, for the vast majority of refugees in neighbouring countries, it is hard to imagine that they will be returning any time in the foreseeable future. Whilst the peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban have commenced, there is no timeline for conclusion or guarantee of their success. Even if the talks are able to achieve their intended outcomes, it will be many years before refugees are willing to forego safety and access to services such as education and healthcare in their country of asylum and risk returning to Afghanistan. As such, it is incumbent upon the international donor community to continue supporting Iran and Pakistan and the wider region to provide Afghans within their borders access to the requisite services and protection.

As these two countries have shouldered a huge responsibility for many years, it is even more essential for the international community to engage in responsibility sharing through financial support, multi-year development aid, and in cases whereby refugees are facing extreme vulnerability, resettlement. Should refugees in host countries not receive the required support, unfortunately, some of them may make the difficult decision to undertake dangerous migration journeys, in search of this support. And they will knock on the doors of the world – in Europe and the West, or further south through countries like Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, with a hope of reaching Australia.

One person who made such a journey was Hayat Akbari, who at the tender age of 17 – seeing limited opportunities in Pakistan and no ability to return to his native Afghanistan – made his way to Indonesia, where he was detained and spent the next year in an Indonesian detention facility, before finally being resettled to Australia. While Hayat's story has a happy ending, he represents just one, out of the more than five million Afghans that have been displaced from Afghanistan throughout the past four decades. He was lucky to find safety and to create a new life. But he is the exception.

With the average period of displacement for all refugees globally hovering around 27 years, it is simply wishful thinking that Afghans will be able to voluntarily return home en masse in the near future. As such, it is essential for donors at the 2020 Afghanistan Conference to commit to both immediate humanitarian funding, and to long-term development funding inside Afghanistan. This must be simultaneously supported by longer-term support for neighbouring countries such as Iran and Pakistan. Only then will Afghan refugees have what is needed to return home in safety and with dignity.

The full article can also be viewed on the TRT World website [here](#).

Noise pollution: Consequences of living close to an airport on Afghan & Pakistani children's hearing loss and education performance

Relief International, Pakistan

Last year, representatives from the US. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) conducted a routine site visit to Relief International's PEACE program in Peshawar district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The program, financed by BPRM, seeks to promote and empower education for out-of-school Afghan and host community children in the most impoverished districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The visit comprised meetings with school administration and management, visits to the Student Readiness Program centres and an opportunity to observe children's learning activities in a classroom setting. PRM representatives visited educational facilities located in close proximity to the Peshawar airport. During the visit, stakeholders were challenged by frequent disruptions to dialogue caused by airport traffic. PRM and RI subsequently agreed to conduct a health assessment of the children enrolled in schools close to the airport to understand the effects of noise pollution on the students' ability to learn.

To test the hypothesis linking noise pollution from airport traffic to hearing abilities of children residing in the vicinity of the airport, RI initiated a children's health assessment to illustrate quantitative evidence of the impact of loud noise on children's hearing. A total of 70 students of different age groups from RI's PEACE project were tested. Of these, 30 were Afghan, and 40 Pakistani students. According to the medical examiner, preliminary findings were conclusive: 56% of children assessed suffer from conductive (congenital) or sensorineural (environmental) hearing impairment in one or both ears. The 40% of children with sensorineural hearing loss, all live within .5km to 1km radius of the airport.

Sensorineural hearing loss caused by prolonged exposure to loud noise has a detrimental effect on child's development, particularly in his/her social interactions, speech and overall communication skills. In a classroom setting, the inability to hear properly, particularly among students that have been out of school for lengthy periods, undoubtedly affect their ability to understand lessons, comprehend concepts or differentiate between various sounds, severely impacting their learning and retention outcomes. Untreated, permanent hearing loss can have long-term effects on a child's behaviour, leading to low self-esteem, isolation and depression. Children living in abject poverty already face immense challenges and barriers to accessing quality education stemming from cultural, social and economic factors. Additional burden of ill health and lack of resources to afford timely treatment may seriously compromise the student's ability to learn systematically, compelling some enrolled in the PEACE program to drop out prematurely and losing the opportunity to enjoy a positive, safe and sustainable educational experience.

As a critical priority, RI will undertake a comparative analysis of students with sensorineural hearing loss with those of normal hearing to gauge the impact the impairment has had on the learning outcomes to date. Where educational performance has been significantly impacted, RI will work with teachers to provide individualized lessons to students, so they can catch up with their peers. RI is currently mobilizing resources to ensure timely provision of medical aid and treatment - including corticoid steroids, hearing aids or cochlear implants depending on the severity and nature of the impairment - to children affected by sensorineural impairments, while actively advocating with stakeholders, including the private sector and donor community to prioritize investment in public health initiatives that have long term consequences on children's well-being and education.

RI-Pakistan is implementing a comprehensive, needs based and conflict-sensitive program to remove barriers to Afghan and host communities' children accessing education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The overall aim of the Promoting and Empowering Afghan Children through Enhanced Education project is to improve equitable access, enrolment and retention in primary and post-primary education in Pakistani government schools, with a particular emphasis on girls and vulnerable families. The project is achieving this by increasing access to safe, quality education for Afghan and host communities' children; and improving retention rates among these marginalized communities. Along with School

Readiness Program (SRP), RI is currently implementing its Post-Primary Readiness Program in 70 target schools, that focus on barriers to post-primary education & mainstreaming challenges to lower middle grades.

REGIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Surviving Fear and Uncertainty: Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia

Hanh Nguyen, Researcher, Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) Asia

"I sometimes dream of going back to Rakhine state when the situation gets better, only if there were no more killings, no persecution, no displacement, and only if I could live like other ethnic groups in Myanmar."

25-year-old Rohingya woman, interviewed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

"I hope that there will be safety for Rohingya people so that we can live with dignity and basic rights in Rakhine state. For now, I cannot go back."

28-year-old Rohingya man, interviewed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

It has been more than three years since Rohingya refugees fled en masse from Myanmar to neighbouring Bangladesh, escaping military-led violence, rape, and killings, as well as the widespread destruction and repossession of property. Today, nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees remain in camps surrounding Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, while the ongoing conflict in Myanmar continues to pose threats to the safety of around 600,000 Rohingya left in Rakhine state. With no durable solutions in sight, the protracted nature of the crisis, coupled with worsening conditions in the camps has led many Rohingya refugees to embark on risky onwards journeys from Bangladesh, mainly by sea, in search of greater safety, access to services, reunification with family and livelihood opportunities throughout the region.



Photo credit: Alexander Treves

The increasing reluctance of states in the region to allow entry to Rohingya arriving by boat has only added to the dangers of those making the journey. As many as 1,400 Rohingya were stranded at sea in the first half of 2020, sometimes for weeks or months, in a state of a protracted humanitarian crisis, vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by smugglers.¹ By July 2020, it was estimated that at least 130 lives had been lost.² The situation echoes the Andaman Sea Crisis in 2015, and reinforces the urgent need for regional frameworks facilitating responsibility sharing between states and ensuring safe disembarkation and adherence to non-refoulement principles.

For many embarking on secondary movements, Malaysia is their intended destination with the country currently hosting more than 150,000 UNHCR registered Rohingya refugees, 75% of whom live in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding states of Selangor, Pulau Pinang, and Johor.³ While Malaysia is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it has historically offered relative safety and stability for refugees fleeing persecution in the region, including the Muslim majority Rohingya. Malaysia offers better healthcare and education services, as well as an abundance of employment opportunities, compared to Myanmar and Bangladesh. However, despite these opportunities, Rohingya refugees are offered limited legal protections and are considered 'illegal migrants' under Malaysian law, exposing them to multiple risks and compounding existing vulnerabilities further.

The opportunities and challenges facing Rohingya refugees in Malaysia, along with other refugee and migrant populations, are highlighted in the **MMC-Asia's Kuala Lumpur Urban Case Study**, launched in November 2020. Complementing MMC's global annual Mixed Migration Review 2020 focusing on the role of cities in human mobility,

¹ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/07/malaysia-stop-plans-to-cane-rohingya-refugees-and-release-those-already-imprisoned/>

² See https://ec.europa.eu/echo/blog/rescued-rohingya-grateful-local-support-after-120-days-stranded-sea_fr

³ See <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance-in-malaysia.html>

the case study draws on primary data from 101 4Mi surveys, together with 6 in-depth interviews conducted with refugees and migrants about their experiences in KL.⁴ The study has been released against the backdrop of COVID-19 which has acted as a risk and threat-multiplier in the region. It highlights the rising anti-Rohingya sentiment in Malaysia, fuelling nation-wide immigration crackdowns significantly impacting the Rohingya community as well as other refugee and migrant groups in the country.

While the Malaysian government initially responded to the pandemic with positive measures such as free testing for Rohingya refugees in Selayang, the situation has progressively deteriorated. Since May 2020, government rhetoric and public discourse has increasingly portrayed refugees and migrants as a source of virus transmission, fuelling discrimination and hate speech, and underpinning the arrest, detention, and deportation of thousands of undocumented migrants and refugees. As highlighted in MMC's study, nearly half of Rohingya interviewed through 4Mi (n=78) reported rising xenophobia in the face of the pandemic, with over three quarters reporting an increased risk of arbitrary detention.

"I heard about the hate campaigns against us. It made me feel depressed. We already faced xenophobia and discrimination in Rakhine state and that's why we left our country. We expected it to be better here, but many local Malaysians don't accept migrants, especially Rohingya people."

30-year-old Rohingya woman, interviewed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Meanwhile, the temporary closure of key migrant industries as well as the informal sector in Malaysia due to COVID-19 has resulted in widespread job loss and increasing destitution for many migrant workers and refugees. According to the majority of Rohingya interviewed via 4Mi, loss of income amid the pandemic has resulted in the inability to afford basic goods, loss of housing and increased worry and stress.

"We haven't paid our rent for so many months. If it continues, the landlord will drive us out. We also cannot send any money back home. But I know a lot of people are also in our situation."

25-year-old Rohingya woman, interviewed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Thus while Malaysia has offered many Rohingya relative safety and security, the systemic lack of legal protection frameworks poses great risk and heightened vulnerabilities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. MMC's Asia's Kuala Lumpur Urban Case Study puts forward a list of key recommendations, including to enshrine legal protections for refugees, implement the objectives and actions of the Global Compact for Migration, adopted by Malaysia, include refugees and migrants in the centre of COVID-19 response plans, and ensure humane border management whilst upholding people's rights to seek asylum.

For more information about MMC's research, please contact Hanh.Nguyen@mixedmigration.org and Jennifer.Vallentine@mixedmigration.org

⁴Secondary data sources, as well as key informant interviews with CSOs and advocates, are also incorporated.

REGIONAL UPDATES

Mixed Migration Monitoring Initiative ([4Mi](#))

As part of the MMC global network, MMC Asia works towards the objectives of the MMC by engaging in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. MMC Asia's main activity to date has been 4Mi data collection among Afghans on the move in Afghanistan, Europe and South/Southeast Asia. 4Mi has expanded more recently to include data collection on the movements of other groups of migrants and refugees across Southeast Asia. 4Mi data collection is currently taking place in Afghanistan, India, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Snapshot: the impact of COVID-19 on smuggling in Afghanistan

In October MMC released a [4Mi snapshot](#) exploring the impact of COVID-19 on the smuggling of refugees and migrants from Afghanistan. The snapshot, available in both English and Dari, is based on 450 interviews with returnees across 7 provinces and 3 border points in Afghanistan, collected between July and August 2020.

Key findings include:

- **The need for smugglers has increased, yet access to their services has become more difficult.** 42% of those interviewed reported an increased need for smugglers amid the pandemic; 53% reported access to smugglers had become more difficult; and 70% reported smuggler services had become more expensive.
- **Harshly policed borders and increased securitisation means more vulnerability for Afghans en route.** 85% consider smugglers to be taking more dangerous routes amid pandemic-related border closures and 48% of those interviewed highlighted government officials as one of the most likely perpetrators of protection incidents, followed by criminal gangs (36%), armed groups (26%) and smugglers (23%).
- **Continued uncertainty and instability in Afghanistan amid the pandemic will likely increase pressure to re-migrate.** 42% reported they were planning to re-migrate once the COVID-19 situation improved and 19% indicated their intention to stay in Afghanistan.

For any questions, or to request further access to our data please contact Jennifer.vallentine@mixedmigration.org, and Abdullah.mohammadi@mixedmigration.org

