

A young girl with a colorful, multi-colored headscarf and a pink dress is sitting on a stone ledge, reading a book. She is looking down at the pages. The background is a dark, ornate metal gate set in a stone wall.

Study of

# Barriers to Access Education for Afghan Refugees

in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa  
(KP), Pakistan

**Final Report**  
Executive Summary

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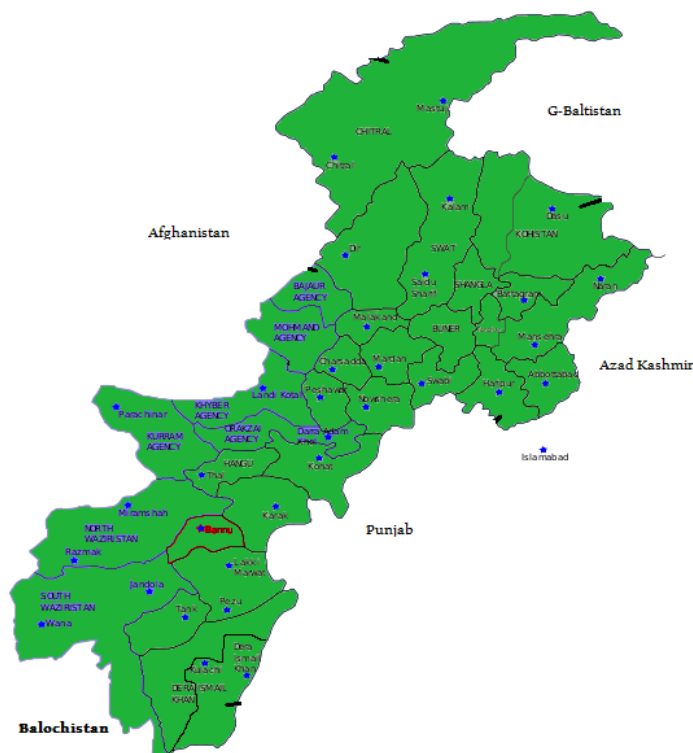
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# Acronyms

ACC	Afghan Citizen Card
ADSP	Asia Displacement Solutions Platform
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
ANR	Afghan National Registration Database
AR	Afghan Refugee
CAR	Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees
COPE	Community Oriented Participatory Education
COVID	Coronavirus disease
DA	District Administrator
DAFI	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (German Government Graduation Scholarship Program for refugees)
DRF	Document Review Framework
E&SE	Elementary and Secondary Education
EAQE	Enhance Access and Quality of Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOP	Government of Pakistan
GSP	Girls Stipend Program
HBS	Home Based Schools
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PITE	Provincial Institute for Teacher Education
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
PMEP	Prime Minister's Education Program
POR	Proof of Registration
PPS	Proportionate to Population Size
PSB	Primary School for Boys
PSC	Primary School Coeducation
PSG	Primary School for Girls
PTC	Parents Teacher Council
QCF	Qualitative Coding Framework
RAHA	Refugee Affected Hosting Area
RI	Relief International
RV	Refugee Village
SSAR	Support Strategy for Afghan Refugees
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WB	World Bank
RVA	Refugee Village Administrator

# Introduction and background

Pakistan has been hosting Afghan refugees for nearly four decades, with the first wave of refugees arriving in 1979, followed by subsequent influxes in 1992 and 2001. More than 4.4 million Afghans<sup>1</sup> sought refuge in Pakistan between 1979-2001<sup>2</sup>, with over 3.2 million refugees in the country at the height of displacement. As a result, Pakistan has ranked as the world's top refugee hosting country for 22 out of the past 37 years. In addition, approximately 3.9 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002, following the largest ever voluntary repatriation programme in UNHCR's history<sup>3</sup>.



As of 31 June 2021, Pakistan was hosting 1.44 million registered refugees<sup>4</sup>. Of this number, approximately 1.43 million are Afghan refugees who hold a Proof of Registration (POR) card. The majority of these Afghan refugees live in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. The primary research was conducted in four districts namely Peshawar, Nowshera, Kohat and Haripur (see map below).

An overwhelming majority (80 percent) of Afghan refugees are out of school. The remaining 20 percent of Afghan refugee children are attending public or private schools. Lack of identity documentation, a pressure to earn money to support their families, language problems, and poverty are just some of the reasons that keep refugee children out of school<sup>5</sup>.

Education is a fundamental right for all human beings, as set out in Article 28 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*<sup>6</sup>. The Government of Pakistan (GoP) has committed to providing education for all, including refugee children, as enshrined in Article 25A of the Pakistani Constitution.

This was reaffirmed in the *Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2012* that was adopted by Pakistan's National Assembly that stipulated "every child, regardless of sex, nationality or race, shall have a fundamental right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school"<sup>7</sup>.

Pakistan has the second-highest population of out-of-school children in the world, with an estimated 22.8 million children aged 5-16 not attending school. This represents 44 percent of the total population in this age group not receiving an education<sup>8</sup>. Amongst international partners, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the primary agency assisting Afghan refugees living in Pakistan to access education facilities – primarily inside the refugee villages<sup>9</sup>. UNHCR continue to assist students in obtaining quality education through the provision of textbooks, learning materials and uniforms, as well as scholarship support for those seeking higher education. UNHCR also supports teachers' salaries, education advisors and support staff (but does not support school property rentals in refugee villages nor the salaries of school watchmen).

- 1 M Ansari, 'Cities for Children', in *Refugee in Towns*, viewed on 25 October 2021, [https://www.refugeesintowns.org/islamabad#\\_ftn1](https://www.refugeesintowns.org/islamabad#_ftn1)
- 2 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Humanitarian Response Plan: Pakistan*, OCHA, April 2021, viewed on 10 October 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/pakistan-humanitarian-response-plan-2021-april-2021>
- 3 Abdul Quadir Baloch, 'Statement by His Excellency Lt Gen (R) Abdul Quadir Baloch, Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Pakistan 67th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme', in UNHCR, 3 October 2016, viewed on 11 October 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/57f252f67.pdf>
- 4 UNHCR, 'Operational Update Pakistan: January-June 2021', UNHCR, June 2021, viewed on 29 October 2021, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Pakistan%20operational%20update%20Jan-June%202021.pdf>
- 5 Department of elementary and Secondary Education Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2019, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25*.
- 6 UNICEF, 'What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?', UNICEF, 2021, viewed on 29 October 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-is-the-convention>, viewed October 2021
- 7 National Assembly Pakistan, *The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012* (No. XXIV of 2012), National Assembly Secretariat, p. 1329
- 8 UNICEF, 'Education', UNICEF, 2021, viewed on 16 August 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/education>
- 9 Pakistan's refugee camps are called refugee villages. They are open camps and have developed into fully-fledged settlements with hard infrastructure since their establishment in the 1980s. Currently, UNHCR is maintaining 54 refugee villages in Pakistan.

# Research objectives

The Asia Displacement Solutions Platform (ADSP) funded this research to assess the existing barriers to accessing education for Afghan refugees living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The research is aligned with and will support in advancing the objectives of the Global Compact for Refugees and the Support Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) in the region. Further, it will help to improve programming by development stakeholders, as well as provide recommendations to donors, UNHCR, and government stakeholders for designing future education programs for Afghan refugees.

## Research methodology and scope

This research study is based on a mixed method social research approach, primarily for its ability to provide a better understanding of the research problem and complex phenomena, when compared to applying a single qualitative or quantitative research method<sup>10</sup>. The primary data was collected in person through 16 (50 percent male, 50 percent female) focus group discussions (FGDs) and 44 key informant interviews (KIIs – see annex-2 for details). A total of 71 adult males and 63 adult females attended the FGDs, whereas 23 of the KII respondents were male and 11 were female. Altogether, the primary data was collected from 168 individuals (94 males (56 percent) and 74 (44 percent) females). The research team conducted primary research in Peshawar, Haripur, Kohat and Newshehra districts.

The research team commenced the research by reviewing a range of existing documents and literature. Annex 3 contains the complete list of documents. The KIIs were conducted with a variety of stakeholders including government officials, civil society, UNHCR, community actors (both women and men) and schoolteachers / headteachers. The FGDs were conducted with parents / caregivers of Afghan refugee children.

## Data analysis

The qualitative data derived from KIIs and FGDs were analysed through a **“Qualitative Coding Framework (QCF)”**. The secondary data was analysed through a “document review framework (DRF)”, and extracted key themes such as: needs, skills, challenges, types of education, enabling and hindering factors, inclusion, exclusion, dropout, barriers, access, and disability.

## Research ethics

The research team and the research report followed ethics of social research mainly but not limited to: anonymity of respondents, providing the research purpose to respondents, voluntary participation in the research, clarity that respondents can withdraw from the research at any time, that respondents can refuse to answer any question(s), and that the research team has declared no-conflicts of interest. The report has listed key limitations to ensure transparency of the research findings.

## Research limitations

The community perceptions towards different aspects of education such as access, quality, barriers, and affordability are the views of adults (male and female). No interviews or FGDs were conducted with students due to an inability to access the population directly. The research team did not collect primary quantitative data due to time and budget constraints and the research methodology was agreed with the ADSP. However, UNHCR and the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees (CAR) provided the quantitative data of the number of refugees’ schools with students’ enrollment

10 J. Creswell & V. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, SAGE, London, 2007, pg. 606

and staff / teachers information. Broadly this research is based on qualitative methods and hence the findings are not statistically representative.

# Key findings

## Research Area 1: Available education interventions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Afghan refugees and host communities in urban centres and refugee villages

Following is a broad-based desk review which determined that there are a range of education programs available for Afghan refugee children. Some of these education programs include:

### 1.1 UNHCR refugee village schools

UNHCR is one of the key actors who have been running education programs for Afghan refugee children since the early 1980s. It has set up camps, and now operates schools in registered refugee villages (see annex 4 for the list of 43 refugee villages in KP). Some of the predominant modalities include home-based schools, community oriented participatory education programmes for Afghan refugees and accelerated learning programmes especially for girls. The focus of these education programmes has been to provide education opportunities for Afghan refugee children living in KP and Baluchistan. Currently, UNHCR is providing primary-level education in refugee villages under the program title **“Enhancing Access and Quality of Education (EAQE) for Afghan Refugees”**. Two implementing partners, namely the Initiative for Development & Empowerment Axis (IDEA) and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)<sup>11</sup> are running these refugee village schools. As of June 2021, UNHCR has established 100 refugee village schools and is providing education to 31,266 Afghan refugee children from kindergarten to grade 6<sup>12</sup>.

Table 1: Enrollment of children under UNHCR EAQE for Afghan refugees (as of June 2021)

School type	Girls enrolled <sup>13</sup>	Boys enrolled	Total enrollment
Boys school	472	15,421	15,893
Co-education school	3,146	4,776	7,922
Girls school	7,288	163	7,451
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>10,906 (35%)</b>	<b>20,360 (65%)</b>	<b>31,266</b>

### 1.2 Formal education in public, private and Afghan consulate registered schools

Afghan refugee children have access to Pakistani public institutions, Pakistan private schools, Afghan private schools and Afghan Consulate registered schools that are locally called “Lesas”. Various KII respondents and FGD participants reported a number of education options for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. They referred to institutions both inside and outside of refugee villages. Options for Afghan refugees to access education inside refugee villages are at UNHCR refugee village schools, UNHCR Accelerated Learning Programme centres and some other small education programs provided by various donors. Outside of refugee villages, Afghan refugee children have several options to access education including Pakistani public schools, Pakistani private schools, Afghan private schools, Madrasas for religious education, and the Lesas.

### 1.3 Strengthening Education and Health Services (SEHS) for Afghan refugees

The GIZ has recently initiated the SEHS program for Afghan refugees. The education component of SEHS includes strengthening districts’ education development plans, as well as capacity building for education officers and manage-

11 ICMC has ceased many activities in Pakistan as per directives from Pakistan’s Interior Ministry. UNHCR is in the process of replacing ICMC as an education partner, but at the time of this research, UNHCR yet has not finalized the selection of a new partner.

12 UNHCR EAQE project data, June 2021

13 Despite being designated for girls, the UNHCR and school management have allowed boys to enroll. The same is true for girls being allowed to enroll in boys schools.

ment. It focuses on primary and secondary school education in Peshawar, Nowshera and Haripur. SEHS is working with 20 schools in each district (14 primary, 4 middle and 2 high schools). These will be the schools where Afghan refugee children are enrolled.

#### 1.4 UNHCR Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) centres for girls

As of August 2021<sup>14</sup>, UNHCR is running 18 primary-level accelerated learning centres in various districts within KP, and has enrolled a total of 457 girls. One female teacher runs each centre, and on average there are 25 girls enrolled in each ALP centre (with a student to teacher ratio of 25:1). The community and students prefer female teachers for female students, and this is also aligned to the social norms of the community.

#### 1.5 UNHCR tertiary-level scholarships for Afghan refugees

Through the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), UNHCR facilitates scholarships for Afghan refugees across a range of disciplines including medical and health sciences, commercial and business administration, engineering, social and behavioral sciences, education science, and teacher training<sup>15</sup>. Beneficiaries of the DAFI scholarship are generally aged between 17-30 years old. In 2019, a total of 536 students including 90 (17 percent) girls received the DAFI scholarship. Pakistan is amongst the top five countries for persons receiving DAFI undergraduate scholarships.

#### 1.6 Relief International education program

With the support of the United States Government's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), Relief International's education program in Pakistan works to improve Afghan refugees' equitable access and enrollment in primary education in Pakistani government schools. The programme has a particular focus on Afghan refugee girls and vulnerable families and seeks to increase their enrollment and retention in Pakistani government schools. The program operates in Swabi, Nowshera, and Peshawar districts of KP, and supports students and teachers in 70 government schools.

## Research Area 2: Capacities and gaps in accessing primary education institutions in refugee villages & government institutions, particularly for Afghan children

### 2.1 Existing capacities in accessing education

Inside refugee villages, UNHCR funded schools are currently the main option available to Afghan refugees to access education. As of June 2021, UNHCR has 100 primary schools across the 43 refugee villages in KP. A total of 31,266 Afghan refugee children (65 percent boys, 35 percent girls) are enrolled in these schools<sup>16</sup>. Enrollment is free, and students are provided with stationery, books, school bags and uniforms. The teachers are qualified and have received teacher training from the Provincial Institute for Teacher Education (PITE).

There does not appear to be any significant barriers to registration and enrollment of Afghan children in refugee village schools. A distinct precondition is that the child must be a Proof of Registration (PoR) card holder. The school administration – through Parent-Teacher Committees – run enrollment campaigns and sensitize parents to enroll their children in refugee village schools.

As part of UNHCR's mainstreaming policy of teaching the Pakistan syllabus in refugee schools, UNHCR has hired new teachers who are more qualified and hold bachelor level degrees or higher.

Generally, refugee village schools (primary level) are located a short distance from refugee housing, and the route to and from school is considered quite safe. As the majority of teachers are local Afghans and Pakistanis, the community has trust in the refugee village school system. The certificates issued by refugee village schools are widely accepted for entrance into Pakistani public schools, Afghan private schools, and Afghan Consulate registered schools.

Schools operating outside of refugee villages are accepting Afghan refugee children for admission, subject to them

14 UNICEF, A review of Alternative Learning Programmes in Pakistan, UNICEF, viewed on 23 October 2021, [www.unicef.org/pakistan/reports/review-alternative-learning-programmes-pakistan-2014-15](http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/reports/review-alternative-learning-programmes-pakistan-2014-15)

15 UNHCR, 'DAFI Annual Report 2019 – Refugee students in higher education', UNHCR, 2019, viewed 29 October 2021, [www.unhcr.org/5f5a7b784.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5f5a7b784.pdf)

16 UNHCR EAQE project data and analysis conducted by research team



meeting the enrollment criteria. In this setting, Afghan refugee children have equal access to school facilities, they study the same curriculum, and they take part in the same exams as their host peers.

## 2.2 Gaps in accessing education

This research identified the following gaps in the capacities of education institutions inside refugee villages:

- **Gender disparity:** the education facilities available for Afghan refugees largely target boys. Access to education is far easier for boys than girls. Currently, UNHCR’s education programmes inside refugee villages broadly focus upon boys over girls e.g. (65 percent boys enrolled, 35 percent girls)<sup>17</sup>.
- **Closure of schools due to COVID-19:** During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were closed; remote learning was not available or accessible to marginalized children including Afghan refugee children as many did not have access to remote learning tools such as internet, computers, tablets, and smart phones. Also, at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year (April 2020), UNHCR directed all refugee village schools not to enroll new students in kindergarten due to the potential impact of COVID-19 on young students. The decision created a gap in grade 1 after the transition of grade 1 students to grade 2, as there were no students in kindergarten to be advanced to grade 1.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a deterioration of access to and quality education. As per government directives, during March 2020 to February 2021, schools in Pakistan were closed for a total of 137 days<sup>18</sup>. Under the same government directives, schools shifted to providing only three hours of instruction instead of the usual six hours to reduce physical interactions between students and teachers to mitigate the chances of COVID-19 transmission. This resulted in a truncated curriculum being offered, and hence students did not receive the same breadth of education they would have normally received.

- **Lack of conducive operating environments for INGOs:** The Ministry of the Interior recently directed UNHCR’s implementing partner ICMC to rollback all of their activities in Pakistan by June 2021. This decision meant that ICMC have not been allowed to visit and work in refugee village schools in Haripur, Mardan, Swabi and Dir beyond June 2021. Therefore, these schools are currently not monitored and facilitated by the partner organisations and are currently operating solely under the supervision of the school headteachers.
- **Lack of extracurricular activities:** None of the 11 refugee village schools visited by the research team (boys and girls) reported extracurricular activities being offered. This has limited the development of students’ skills in non-academic activities.
- **Lack of girl-specific schools:** Separate girls’ primary schools are not available in certain districts of KP where refugee villages are established (see table below). Instead, UNHCR has opted for co-education schools, however, many parents are not comfortable sending their daughters to co-education schools. The number of registered students in co-education schools is low (256 students of both sexes) when compared to single gendered schools for boys (378) and girls (276).

Table 2: UNHCR Refugee Village schools in KP

District	Number of schools			
	Boys school	Co-education school	Girls School	Grand Total
Bannu	0	1	0	1
Buner	0	1	0	1
Charsadda	1	0	1	2
DI Khan	0	2	0	2
Hangu	2	2	0	4

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR primary data, July 2021

<sup>18</sup> UNESCO and UNICEF, ‘Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia’, conducted jointly by UNESCO and UNICEF, October 2021, viewed on 29 October 2021, [www.unicef.org/eap/media/9316/file/Southeast%20Asia%20Situation%20Analysis%20of%20the%20Impacts%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20Education.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/eap/media/9316/file/Southeast%20Asia%20Situation%20Analysis%20of%20the%20Impacts%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20Education.pdf)

Haripur	11	3	7	21
Kohat	4	2	3	9
Lakki Marwat	1	1	0	2
Lower Dir	3	3	5	11
Malakand	0	1	0	1
Manshera	0	7	0	7
Mardan	0	4	0	4
Nowshehra	0	1	0	1
Nowshera	5	1	1	7
Peshawar	8	0	5	13
Swabi	7	2	5	14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

- Interrupted power supply at schools:** the refugee village schools are located in areas with severe power (electricity) shortages especially during summer. UNHCR provided solar panels and batteries to schools to ensure uninterrupted power supply during school hours and provide a comfortable environment for enrolled children. However, almost half of the visited refugee village schools reported that the batteries provided under UNHCR's solarization scheme are not functional.



Students sitting on the floor in a RV school; they have put off shoes outside of the classroom

- Lack of student furniture at schools and small classroom size:** There was no furniture (see picture to the right) for students in any of the visited schools. Resultantly, the students sit on the floor. Also, the class space is quite confined (small classroom size) relative to the number of students in each class, and it is difficult for the school management to ensure physical and social distancing in the classroom.
- High teacher-student ratio:** most of the visited schools had high teacher-student ratios that place extra pressure on teachers to manage large classes and meet students' individual academic needs. Resultantly, the quality of education that students receive is markedly below the country-wide, regional, and global grade average. Moreover, the number of schools in each refugee village is disproportionate to the population of the refugee village. For example, Shamshatoo refugee village has a total adult population of 10,000, but it has only one boy's school<sup>19</sup>. During the KII, the headteacher shared, "we have 376 students. A total of 5 teachers are teaching these students. This comes 1 to 75 teacher-student ratio." As of June 2021, UNHCR has 613 teachers who are responsible for teaching 31,266 students across all target resident villages<sup>20</sup>. On average, each teacher is responsible for 51 students.
- Delayed distribution of books and learning materials to students:** According to parents and teachers, distribution of books is also slow, and the number of books does not match the number of students.

19 KII with head teacher in Shamshatoo refugee village

20 UNHCR EAQE project data and researcher analysis

## Research Area 3: Existing and past education interventions – what worked and what didn't work in improving access to, retention and completion of formal primary education for Afghan refugee children.

### Aspects of the past interventions that went well

- Inside refugee villages, the UNHCR-funded EAQE programme is the main ongoing education intervention for Afghan refugee children. The program works well in terms of provision of access to education. At the time of this research, 31,266 students were enrolled in these schools including 10,906 (35 percent) girls. It has now adopted the full Pakistani curriculum.
- The Refugees Affected Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme was rehabilitating and, in some cases, re-constructing schools in hosting areas. The schools were supposed to enroll Afghan refugee students. However, in most cases, schools were a significant distance<sup>21</sup> from refugee villages. Later during the RAHA implementation, UNHCR began to rehabilitate and reconstruct schools nearer to refugee villages and the areas where Afghan refugees were living outside of refugee villages. This proved successful in terms of increasing access to education for Afghan refugee students. RAHA constructed or rehabilitated more than 700 schools and benefited over 590,400<sup>22</sup> students.
- Incentive-based education for Afghan refugees in the past proved successful in terms of enhanced enrollment, attendance, and retention. The Provincial KP Government currently operates a Girls Stipend Program (GSP) for host community children. The stipend of PKR 400/month is provided directly to the student's family, and, is conditional on enrollment and regular (80 percent) school attendance. Similar incentive-based education schemes have been used across the world to improve enrollment of male and female students, including in countries such as Turkey. Refugees in Turkey are supported by the world's largest cash transfer program for refugees, the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN). The results of an impact evaluation show a large effect on child labor and school enrollment among both male and female refugee children. Child labor was reduced by 89 percent, and, 62 percent of out of school children were enrolled in school.
- UNHCR is also running the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) in KP province. As of August 2021, there are 18 ALP centers with 457 girls enrolled (see section 1.4 of this report for details). The girls are provided with literacy and numeracy skills training along with some key technical skills such as embroidery and tailoring. Secondary research shows that ALPs are promising initiatives. For example, a study conducted by the Institute of Rural Management (IRM)<sup>23</sup>, Pakistan found that 100 percent of the ALP girls qualified for the state standard examination, and 992/1,000 were mainstreamed into formal education.
- Upgrading key facilities i.e., enough classrooms, safe and clean drinking water, gender sensitive latrines, and furniture & facilities for disabled children i.e. ramps and disabled bathrooms, will enhance enrollment in schools. For example, three schools in Swabi witnessed a 31 percent increase in students' enrollment after UNHCR's intervention and the provision of lacking facilities<sup>24</sup>.
- Long-term and consistent programmes help in supporting Afghan refugee education, enhancing their trust in the program, and ultimately help them stand on their feet. The DAFI has been implemented since 1992 and it has supported more than 18,000 young refugees to pursue their undergraduate degrees.

### Aspects of past unsuccessful education programs

- In terms of educational quality (please refer to 6.2 for details), the EAQE program fell well below expectations for most FGD and KII respondents, and they shared concerns over the quality of education in refugee village schools. One FGD participant shared, *"my child is in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but she faces hurdles in reading a paragraph or understanding and solving basic words and mathematics questions"*.

21 KII with senior UNHCR officer, 2021.

22 UNHCR, 'RAHA – Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas Programme', viewed on 22 October 2021, [www.rahapakistan.org.pk/sites/default/files/RAHA-Brochure-June-20161.pdf](http://www.rahapakistan.org.pk/sites/default/files/RAHA-Brochure-June-20161.pdf)

23 Institute of Rural Management (n.d)- "Accelerated Learning Program", Directorate of education FATA, viewed on 3 November 2021, <https://pdfslide.net/documents/accelerated-learning-irmedupk-of-rural-management-irm-in-collaboration-with.html>

24 UNHCR, 'Swabi schools witness 31 per cent increase in students' enrolment rate after UNHCR's intervention', UNHCR, viewed on 22 October 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/swabi-schools-witness-31-cent-increase-students-enrolment-rate-after-unhcr-s>

- Focusing on enhancing enrollment of host and Afghan refugee children, without first enhancing the physical capacity of public schools, produces insufficient results in terms of enrolling new students. This is primarily due to the lack of key facilities including physical space for additional / new students.
- There was a lack of complementarity and coordination amongst development organisations that provided interventions and programmes at refugee schools. As a result of these siloed approaches, the intended results of their interventions often remained unaccomplished. For example, some organisations installed handwashing stations in several refugee village schools to address health concerns related to COVID-19. However, in some instances these handwashing stations resulted in drainage and sanitation issues around the school.
- From 2004 to 2016, UNHCR through 'BeFare' operated schools in refugee villages up to grade 8. However, due to funding constraints, since 2016 the schools were reclassified to only offer primary level education. Parents withdrew their girls from schools because they perceived the schools inside RVs as degraded and they were not willing to send girls to distant schools outside of the refugee villages.
- The RAHA program remains the largest program in Pakistan in terms of funding (US\$ 220M)<sup>25</sup> and duration (over a decade) in different sectors including education. Since its inception in 2009, RAHA has benefited 12.4 million individuals including 85 percent Pakistani citizens and 15 percent Afghan refugees. However, most benefits went to host communities. For example, RAHA health projects benefited 6 million people but only 18 percent were Afghan refugees. The RAHA Education projects benefited 0.78 million people with only 16 percent Afghan refugees<sup>26</sup>.
- The Government of Pakistan also offers a variety of higher education scholarships for Afghan nationals (those who are either living in Afghanistan or who have valid Pakistani visas and are living in Pakistan). Two of the most important scholarships include the Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarship programme (operating since 2009) and the Prime Minister's Scholarship Program (operating since 2010). However, the number of scholarships currently offered to Afghan nationals who hold valid visas, and Afghan refugees, is quite distinct. For example, it is evidenced<sup>27</sup> that the GOP has offered thousands of scholarships to Afghan nationals, but just 14 scholarships to Afghan refugees.
- The ratio of DAFI scholarships for Afghan refugee girls is quite low (17 percent) compared to the ratio for boys (83 percent). Currently, 536 Afghan refugees are enrolled in Pakistani universities – 90 girls and 446 boys<sup>28</sup>.

## Research Area 4: In the context of COVID-19, what were the best practices to prevent truancy of Afghan refugee students that were studying in formal schools? What worked well in the collaboration between the Pakistani formal system, and local and international education actors during the pandemic?

In the context of COVID-19, the research highlighted the high truancy rates of students from school. Various factors played into this including:

### Long term closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic

The long-term closure of schools during the pandemic resulted in a significant increase in the number of students leaving school. For example, in Shamshatoo refugee village (PSB 143), the number of students reduced from 670 (pre COVID) to 270 (at the time of research team's visit-July 2021). This represents a 40 percent dropout rate of enrolled students in a one-year period. The head teacher of PSB 279 reported that about 140 (36 percent) of students did not return after the resumption of physical schooling. He further noted that the dropout ratio in higher grades was even more pronounced. According to him, the dropout rate of students for the 10th to 12th grades was nearly 80 percent.

The key factors that contributed to the marked dropout of students include poverty, inability to access a supportive

25 UNHCR, 'RAHA – Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas Programme', viewed on 22 October 2021. <http://www.rahapakistan.org.pk/sites/default/files/RAHA-Brochure-June-20161.pdf>

26 various RAHA projects factsheets.

27 M Khan, 'Pakistan's urban refugees: steps towards self-reliance', *Forced Migration Review*, February 2020, FMR 63, pg. 50-52

28 UNHCR, 'DAFI Annual Report 2019 – Refugee students in higher education', UNHCR, 2019, viewed on 29 October 2021, [www.unhcr.org/5f5a7b784.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5f5a7b784.pdf)

education environment at home, illiterate parents, migration, distance of schools from people's place of residence, and the preference of parents for children to work.

### **Distance of schools**

In some refugee villages, schools are located a significant distance away from residents' households. Therefore, it can be quite difficult for students – especially girls – to attend school on a regular basis. For example, a PSB (primary school for boys) teacher shared that their school was 5 kilometres away from some student households. The children from these households are either not enrolled, or are attending school irregularly (referring to high absenteeism). An FGD respondent in Baddbher shared, *“This RV has 6 clusters. There is only one refugee village school in cluster #3. This school for some Afghan refugee households is 15 km away”*.

### **Difficulties in reintegrating students who have dropped out, back into formal education**

For students that have officially dropped out of school, there are a range of challenges to reintegrate back into regular classes. Generally, children who have left school have done so either as a result of financial constraints, or because their parents have prioritized them joining the labour force. Some KII participants such as CAR and UNHCR partner organisations suggested that existing and future education programmes and projects should support and facilitate the re-enrolment of students that have dropped out of school.

### **Seasonal migration prevents continuation of students' education**

Seasonal migration amongst Afghan families is common, with movement in search of livelihood opportunities a regular occurrence. The enrolled children of these families are compelled to migrate with them to their new destination and resultantly, they discontinue their education.

### **Poverty and lack of affordability**

Afghan refugees, especially those living in refugee villages, are characterized by extreme poverty, with most refugee village inhabitants surviving on less than USD\$1 per day. In addition, 72 percent live in mud/temporary houses, 60 percent of men and 78 percent of women have no education, and 45 percent of the labor force are employed as daily labourers<sup>29</sup>. As such, many parents from underprivileged backgrounds prefer for their young boys to work and earn some money, and for their daughters to remain at home and perform household chores. Overall, this research found that education is not a priority for poorer families, and the 'opportunity cost' for education is high for households that fall in the low-income quintiles.

### **Other factors that contribute to discontinuation of education**

Cultural practices both of host and Afghan refugee communities discriminate between girls' and boys' education. Often parents either do not enroll girls, or parents/guardians withdraw girls from school when they reach puberty. The dropout of students rises with an increase in grade<sup>30</sup>. Generally, boys leave school and start unskilled work, whilst girls mostly stay at home and conduct domestic chores or get married. Early marriage is one of the primary reasons for girls dropping out of school<sup>31</sup>.

Furthermore, the pedagogical techniques used by teachers is quite rudimentary, with teachers generally reading from a textbook, and the students repeating the stated facts. The teachers generally lack experience and the ability to deliver lessons with engaging and innovative techniques. None of the respondents of this research reported the concept of “compensation classes or catch-up classes” in host and RV schools.

29 World Bank Group; UNHCR. 2019. Living Conditions and Settlement Decisions of Recent Afghan Returnees: Findings from a 2018 Phone Survey of Afghan Returnees and UNHCR Data. World Bank, Washington, DC. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31944>

30 A Yusufzai, 'School Dropout Rate Soars for Afghan Refugees', Inter Press Service, 2014, viewed on 23 October 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/school-dropout-rate-soars-afghan-refugees>

31 S Sikander, 'Afghan refugee girls: Child marriages stifling education plans, says UN report', The Express Tribune, 2016, viewed on 31 October 2021, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1112708/afghan-refugee-girls-child-marriages-stifling-education-plans-says-un-report>

## Research Area 5: Lessons learned for refugee education that can be drawn from education programmes in KP, Pakistan

This research identified the following lessons regarding the provision of access to education for Afghan refugees.

- UNHCR – under their current EAQE project – used existing boys’ primary schools for female students in the latter part of the day, once boys’ classes had finished. This allowed UNHCR to quickly provide education opportunities to marginalized girls and ensured the best use of scarce resources. It also managed to generate an improved ‘return on investment’ by reducing the average fixed costs of education provision<sup>32</sup>. Also, the said program proved that in the context of displacement and conservative cultural practices towards girls’ mobility and education, providing schooling opportunities is possible. The **EAQE program proved that co-education can work for primary level education**. The Government of Pakistan is now adopting a universal primary-level coeducation policy for all newly constructed schools. Under UNHCR’s EAQE program, 31 percent of all schools are coeducation in different refugee villages.
- EAQE is the primary education program that is currently providing education to Afghan refugees inside refugee villages. The program has ensured access to education, however, there remains a need to further improve the quality of education in these schools. To meet the educational needs of marginalized populations, education programmes should focus on both access and quality. Meeting one without the other is not sufficient. The equal focus on quality and access determines the true value of the investment and the resources being utilized.
- The frequent and long-term closure of schools due to COVID-19 meant that students were not able to complete their grade-specific syllabus/curriculum<sup>33</sup>. The schools’ management shifted to an abridged syllabus that covered only ‘core learning areas’. However, this has had a negative impact on learners, who have missed out on “non-core” curricula exposure and learning.
- UNHCR’s education programmes in refugee villages have an unequal gender representation in enrollment (65 percent boys VS 35 percent girls enrolled; and 42 percent boys’ schools, 27 percent girls’ schools, 31 percent co-education schools).<sup>34</sup> It is apparent that the programme requires additional resources and improvements to make it more inclusive. In addition, schools in refugee villages lack essential facilities for disabled children. UNHCR’s program is making a positive impact upon access to education, however, greater work needs to be done to support marginalized groups such as people with special needs and girls with designated toilets, wheelchairs, and ramps.

Various government policies and legislation (see research area 6 for details) currently support Afghans to access different levels of education. However, on-the-ground implementation of these policies and laws needs improvement. For example, there is a need to increase awareness amongst marginalised Afghan refugee communities about their legal right to access education in public institutions. The government should share policy briefs which promote education for Afghan refugees with district education officers.

The likelihood of enrolling children in schools is positively correlated with factors including reducing the distance to schools, parental education level, the confidence of parents and the community in the quality of education, and the trust that education will lead to economic gains. Enrollment rates for girls - especially for adolescent girls - are likely to increase if separate schools for girls are available. In the context of Pushtoon and Afghan culture, separate schools for girls and incentives to girls to attend schools is increasing the enrollment ratio of girls<sup>35</sup>.

Parental engagement with their children in completing homework and follow-up with the school management for the progress of their children in schools shows positive results on students’ performances especially related to improvement in learning outcomes, improved attendance, and retention and transition<sup>36</sup>.

32 Average fixed cost is fixed cost per unit of output. As the total number of units of the goods produced increases, the average fixed cost decreases because the same amount of fixed costs is being spread over a larger number of units of output

33 KIs with teachers and head teachers by the research team.

34 UNHCR primary data of EAQE project and the researchers analysis

35 N Chaudhury & D Parajuli, Conditional Cash Transfers and Female Schooling: The impact of the Female School Stipend Program on Public School Enrollments in Punjab, Pakistan’, *Policy Research Working Papers*, The World Bank, 2007

36 Hafiz Waqas M et al. 2013. *Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement; A Study on Secondary School Students of Lahore, Pakistan*, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 3 No. 8 [Special Issue – April 2013, viewed on November 3, 2021, [https://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_3\\_No\\_8\\_Special\\_Issue\\_April\\_2013/22.pdf](https://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_8_Special_Issue_April_2013/22.pdf)

Overall, access to education for children with disabilities both inside and outside refugee village schools is poor. This is due to the unwillingness of parents to educate disabled children, lack of school facilities for disabled students, and a lack of teachers' capacity and skills to teach persons with disability. This is quite evident from the situation observed at 18 refugee village schools (9 boys, 3 girls, 6 coeducation schools) in KP's southern region (Kohat, Bannu, DI Khan and surrounding districts). A total of 5,237 students (1,450 girls (28 percent), 3,789 boys (72 percent)) are enrolled and there are only 47 (9 girls, 38 boys) children with special needs enrolled. Overall, the research found low levels of inclusive education for children with special needs, and furthermore, that the likelihood of enrolling disabled girls at all is quite low.

IDEA (UNHCR's partner for the EAQE in refugee village schools) has enrolled about 15,000 students from August 2019 to June 2021 in 55 refugee village schools (40 formal and 15 non-formal/ALPs). There are 40-50 disabled students (0.33 percent) but still, the schools do not provide any special facilities to them<sup>37</sup>.

## Research Area 6: The significance of education for longer-term integration success and durable solutions

### 6.1 Political and legal perspective regarding the status of Afghan refugees and their access to different state services including education

Pakistan is not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, nor has it enacted any national legislation for the protection of refugees. This is despite the fact that Pakistan is host to the second highest number of refugees over the past four decades. Pakistan has also not established procedures to determine the refugee status of persons who are seeking international protection within its territory<sup>38</sup>. Such persons are therefore treated in accordance with the provisions of the *Foreigners Act, 1946*. While the *Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951* states that any person born in Pakistan shall be a citizen by birth, this has not been true for the children of Afghan refugees born in Pakistan.

In the absence of a national legal framework, UNHCR conducts refugee status determination under its mandate (Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees adopted by the General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950) and on behalf of the Government of Pakistan in accordance with the 1993 Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Pakistan and UNHCR. Pakistan generally accepts UNHCR decisions to grant refugee status and allows asylum-seekers (who are still undergoing the procedure) as well as recognized refugees to remain in Pakistan pending identification of a durable solution.

However, Pakistan does provide some services to Afghan refugees, primarily as a result of the country's ratification of various international treaties<sup>39</sup>. These include:

- The right to education as a result of Pakistan's ratification of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1990. Article 28 confers this right.
- Pakistan is a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in which Article 13 stipulates the right "*Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education*".
- Pakistan ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) in 1996 and is obliged under Article 10 to "... *take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education*". International treaties such as CEDAW do not accept discrimination on the basis of a child's status as a refugee.
- The Government of Pakistan renewed its commitment to ensuring unhindered access of Afghan children to Pakistani schools at the Leaders' Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis, hosted by the United States President on 20 September 2016<sup>40</sup>.

37 KII with IDEA Peshawar, June 2020

38 UNHCR, 'Asylum seekers in Pakistan', UNHCR, viewed on 30 October 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/pk/protection/asylum-system-in-pakistan>

39 R Tahir, 'Pakistan: Discriminatory rules preclude Afghan refugee children from attaining secondary education', (OxHRH Blog, September 2020), viewed on 23 October 2021, <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/pakistan-discriminatory-rules-preclude-afghan-refugee-children-from-attaining-secondary-education>

40 UNHCR, 'Pakistan - Mapping of Education Facilities and Refugee Enrolment in Refugee Areas', UNHCR, 2017, viewed on 29 October 2021, <https://>

## 6.2 Afghan refugees' access to education

This research found that according to the current policy and legislative environment, Afghan refugees with PoR cards have comparable access to education as host community populations in Pakistan. **This of course does not play out in implementation.** For example, the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) directs the state to provide the right to education to all persons within the nation's borders. Article 25-A of the Constitution states, "*The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.*"<sup>41</sup>. Access to education is irrespective of nationality and residence status. The Constitution also talks about its responsibility to eradicate illiteracy and provide free education at least up to the secondary level<sup>42</sup>.

The *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act 2017* focuses on inclusion for all types of children including Afghan refugees. This legislation theoretically guarantees access to education for Afghan refugees, however, there has been several issues that has precluded its effective implementation. For example, school head-teachers can restrict the enrollment if they believe that the school does not have enough space for new students.

The **Education Sector Plan for 2020/21 – 2024/25** of the KP Education Department is helping Afghan refugees in education. The key feature of this plan which promotes access to education for Afghan refugees are:

- Under **priority area I**-improving access to education, through the periodic survey (every 4 years) the KP Education Department provides an estimation for the number of Out-of- School Children (OOSC). To ensure access to education for Afghan refugees, the department will now explicitly include Afghan children who are out of school in this survey.
- As part of the inclusive education (**section 2.2.5 of the plan**) priority, the KP Education Department is focusing on inclusive education and aims to facilitate the enrollment of marginalised, disabled and refugee children. Further, it will ensure the provision of free textbooks to children enrolled in refugee village schools on par with local children and the enhancement of public-school infrastructure to accommodate more refugees in hosting areas. Also, as part of the inclusive education, the Government of KP has mandated the Education Department to integrate refugee children into public schools
- Under **priority area II** related to enhancing quality and relevance of education, the KP Education Department is focusing on capacity building of teachers working in refugee village schools (with the support of UNHCR and other development partners).
- The Single National Curriculum (SNC) is being developed to provide an equal opportunity to all children (including foreigners and refugees) to receive quality education. As part of the SNC and integration of refugees into public schools, the KP Education Department and UNHCR signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) in September 2019 to mainstream Afghan refugee children into public education. As part of this understanding, the KP Education Department has taken the following steps regarding the education of refugee children in its Education Sector Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25.
  - UNHCR in agreement with the KP Education Department has now adopted the Pakistani curriculum in all refugee village schools.
  - The department has allowed inclusion of Afghan refugee children during the school census which takes place every four years.
  - On par with host students, the department is providing free textbooks to Afghan refugee
  - The department has informed and oriented district education officials to facilitate admission/enrollment of Afghan refugee children in primary and secondary schools.
  - The GoP has directed all public schools to enroll the maximum number of students possible so that the GoP meets the target of SDG 4 to ensure inclusive and quality education for all. This proved an enabling environment for the enrollment of Afghan refugee children as schools are struggling to meet their respective enrollment targets.

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[data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/62554](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/62554)

41 National Assembly Pakistan, The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012 (No. XXIV of 2012), National Assembly Secretariat, p. 1329

42 National Assembly of Pakistan, The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Chapter No 2, Article 37-b, viewed on 30 October 2021, [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681\\_951.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf)



Schools do not have restrictions on the enrollment of children with disabilities. However, schools have no special arrangements such as separate toilets, or railings to assist with walking to meet the needs of children with disability. A teacher from Gamkol refugee village shared that he is required to accompany another student and the disabled child to help him visit the toilet.

### 6.3 Quality of education available to Afghan refugees

Respondents comprising mainly of teachers, CAR representatives, partner organisations and community members had mixed views regarding the quality of education in refugee village schools. They listed numerous factors that contribute to the oft low quality of education provided. Some of these factors include the unavailability of qualified and experienced teachers, and a lack of provision of grade and age-specific learning materials (books, workbooks, stationery).

Some respondents shared positive views about the quality of education. According to them, Afghan refugee children who received primary education from refugee village schools and then continued their education in public, private and Afghan Consulate schools, are now serving in different vocations as doctors, engineers, teachers, and other professional careers. One of the refugee village teachers shared, *"I am a graduate of this refugee village school, and now I am teaching at the same school"*.

A UNHCR official shared his concern on the quality of education Afghan refugees are receiving inside refugee villages. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 minimum and 10 maximum), he categorized the quality of education for grades 1 & 2 as a six, for grades 3 & 4 he assigned score of four, and for grade 5 he assigned a score of three. The majority of KII and FGD respondents showed dissatisfaction with the quality of education Afghan refugees have access to, and especially the education in refugee village schools. According to them, the teacher-student ratio is too high, with countless examples of there being more than 70 students in a classroom.

## Research Area 7: Potential measures to ensure that displacement affected children are enrolled in schools and provided with learning opportunities

### Key barriers to education faced by Afghan refugees

This research found the following barriers faced by Afghan refugees in accessing education:

**High cost of education:** overall, for many displaced families, the cost of educating children is too high, and attending school also has a high 'opportunity cost' for families. Teenage males may often dropout of school to work and support their families.

**Expenses on various school items/factors hamper students' retention:** these factors include costs incurred on items such as uniforms, transportation and meals for school, but also indirect costs such as the opportunity cost<sup>43</sup> of a child's time spent in education. They are substantial barriers to retention, especially for poor families.

**Distant schools and poor school infrastructure:** many children dropout after the early years of schooling because there are no secondary schools or high schools in their area. Poor school infrastructure and sub-standard facilities also prevent children from staying in school. Many studies, including by the World Bank<sup>44</sup> found strong evidence that factors including the provision of and access to basic services, such as water, sanitation, waste disposal and electricity all positively increase the chances of pupils and teachers attending school, remaining healthy at school, and teachers staying in their profession.

**Poor school management and governance:** this affects the number of teachers in school and therefore learning. Poor supervision was cited by some respondents as a reason for low motivation and teacher absenteeism in government schools.

**Poor teaching skills:** The data collected from teachers, FGDs and KIIs shared that the main barrier to learning was a lack of teaching capacity. This is due to a lack of available teaching materials combined with outdated teaching pedagogy.

<sup>43</sup> Opportunity cost can be defined as value of what you lose when you choose from two or more alternatives.

<sup>44</sup> P Barrett., A Treves., T Shmis, D Ambasz., M Ustinova. 'The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning : A Synthesis of the Evidence', International Development in Focus, Washington DC, World Bank, 2019, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/30920/9781464813788.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

gy often referred to as the Ratta system (rote learning/memorization). This system consists of memorizing information through repetition. Concepts that are learned are not contextualized or explained further so children cannot apply them to real-life situations.

**Poor quality of education:** An NGO respondent who is working with Afghan refugees providing education programmes, shared that the poor quality of education is an important barrier to learning in Pakistan. Low teacher motivation, outdated teaching methods and an absence of teaching materials all reduce children's opportunities to learn and discourages them from staying in school. Those who complete a particular level of education are often lacking key skills and knowledge to successfully enter the job market.

**Poverty is one of the key barriers to education for Afghan refugees:** The costs of sending children to school and/or the opportunity cost of the children not participating in an income-generating activity are reportedly too high for some families.

**Adoption of a single national curriculum:** One of the major barriers reported by the Afghan refugee community is the shift to the Pakistani curriculum and the adoption of a single national curriculum. This research found different views regarding the adoption of a single curriculum. UNHCR has agreed to adopt the Pakistani curriculum in all refugee villages.

Generally, government officials and NGOs favor the Pakistani curriculum because it is aligned to priority area II of the *enhancing quality and relevance of education of the KP Education Sector Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25*<sup>45</sup>.

CAR, the KP Education Department and UNHCR are in favor of the Pakistani curriculum. They are of the view that running a parallel education system in the refugee villages and private Afghan schools is not aligned to the needs of the market, the interest of the KP Education Department, or the number of available resources. They are of the view that the quality of education of the Pakistani curriculum is superior to the Afghan curriculum.

Notably however, Afghan communities mainly favor the Afghan curriculum. They are of the view that their students perform well in this curriculum. Also, adults and parents are able to support children with any homework. It is either not possible or extremely difficult for them to do homework with children who are studying the Pakistani curriculum.

# Recommendations

## Recommendations for CAR, UNHCR and donors

1. **Set up separate girls' schools:** CAR and UNHCR should focus on refugee villages where there are no schools for girls. The lack of schools in refugee villages and the presence of far-flung schools mainly outside the refugee villages are the primary factors for low girls' education. Provision of schools for girls and co-education schools in refugee villages will tremendously enhance access to education. UNHCR may adopt the model of running two shifts (one for boys, one for girls) in schools. This way, girls will have easier access to education, UNHCR's approach will be made more inclusive for girls, and there will be a reduction in the average fixed costs of boys' schools.
2. **Making access to education inclusive for disabled children:** At present, refugee village schools have a negligible number of enrolled students with disabilities. The PTCs can play an important role and they should follow up with parents and include a message during the enrollment campaigns regarding enrolling children with disabilities. Also, UNHCR should take complete data of the disabled children in RV schools and should plan for filling the gap of key facilities especially lavatories for disabled children.
3. **Improve the effectiveness of Parent Teacher Committees:** Some of the visited schools (for example PSB 279) reported that PTCs exist, but they are not effective in maintaining school property, following-up with parents who are not sending their kids to school, and engaging with parents who don't actively participate in yearly enrollment campaigns. UNHCR through its implementing partner can work with

<sup>45</sup> Department of elementary and Secondary Education Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2019, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25

the school administration to enhance the effectiveness of PTCs.

4. **Reduce distance to schools:** UNHCR in consultation with CAR and its implementing partners should consider the issue of far-flung RV schools in each refugee village. They should jointly agree on a minimum average distance of the school from Afghan refugees' households and should communicate and plan jointly with the provincial government to set up schools at a minimum average distance. The idea of community-based education should be promoted, as in the past it has worked well especially in the context of insecurity and Afghanistan<sup>46</sup>.
5. **Capacity building of CAR staff:** The CAR staff work directly with Afghan refugees. The staff capacity especially of Refugee District Administrator (RDA) and Refugee Village Administrators (RVA) needs improvement. These people mainly focus on the movement of Afghan refugees inside and outside of refugee villages and grant access to and monitor the activities of visitors, researchers and development and humanitarian practitioners.
6. **Availability of data on disability:** the schools that the research team visited are not maintaining proper records relating to disabled students. UNHCR is in the process of compiling data on disability in refugee village schools. Overall, accurate data on the number of disabled students is not available. The availability of proper data on persons with disability will help stakeholders to develop interventions and design education programmes to better serve the needs of persons with disability. This will help policymakers, program designers and donor agencies to ensure access and participation barriers are mitigated for all disabled students.
7. **Including Afghan refugee students in Annual Status Education Report (ASER):** Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi (ITA) conducts an annual assessment countrywide regarding the access, quality and learning assessment of students. It publishes an annual report and disaggregates findings on gender, class/grade, academic subject, geography, age and district. However, ASER is administering its survey with Pakistani students only. The findings of ASER in many cases can be used as proxies for Afghan refugee children but proxies lack the potential to truly assess the education status of this cohort. UNHCR, CAR and E&SE of KP can play a role and should coordinate with ITA to include Afghan refugee students in its annual ASER assessment.
8. **Barriers to accessing post-primary education:** Afghan refugee children have access to primary-level education, however there are barriers to progress past this level. Donors such as UNHCR, USAID, FCDO and the EU should think of the provision of lower secondary (middle), secondary (grade 10) and higher secondary (grade 12) level education for Afghan refugee students. This will ensure the continuation of their education post-primary level. Future programme planning should prioritize access to all these different education levels.

## Recommendations for government and policy makers

9. **Recruiting and training female teachers:** Girls are less likely to transition to lower secondary education and specific measures to improve their completion of the basic education cycle are crucial. One particular concern in the Afghan context remains the relatively low percentage of female teachers. Recruiting and training female teachers for both primary and secondary levels would strongly contribute to improving the perception of schools among communities and households.
10. **Developing pilot Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes** to address vulnerable households for whom economic challenges and ancillary costs are the primary drivers of OOSC. Several studies on cash transfer (incentives-based education) for improving enrollment in schools have proven a positive correlation between enrollment and incentive-based education<sup>47</sup>.
11. **Re-integration of former students into education:** A significant number of students ceased their edu-

46 Community based education in Afghanistan-<https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/community-based-education-cbe>, accessed 9 December 2021

47 Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Samuel Hall, *All in School and Learning: Global Initiative on Out-Of-School Children – Afghanistan Country Study*, Ministry of Education, UNICEF, Samuel Hall and USAID, Kabul, 2018

cation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sizeable resources have already been spent on educating these students, however they discontinued their education due to school closure. Present and upcoming education programmes should seek to re-engage with these former students. They should take guidance from the UNESCO worldwide “girls back to school campaign”<sup>48</sup>.

12. **Tracking Afghan refugees’ education status:** The district Education Department conducts regular reviews of the education system and its development. However, it has no specific indicators for Afghan refugee students. Since most registered Afghan refugees live in KP, it is important that the district government develop and track key indicators for Afghan refugees living in the province and especially in the context of education for displaced people.
13. **Focus on improving both quality and access to education:** currently, refugee village schools have a primary focus on access to education rather than quality of education. This approach seems less effective in terms of enhancing the learning outcomes of students, their retention, and the community trust in the education system. The program managers of education interventions and policymakers should focus on quality of education as well as access to education.
14. **Create a supportive legal framework to encourage the incorporation of migrant/refugee children into formal schools:** Residency status and documentation requirements should not be barriers for migrant/refugee children to enroll in school. Standardized placement exams can be used to determine the grade level of migrant/refugee students who lack records of past studies and/or proof of age and earlier qualification. The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) has now legally adopted the concept of ‘Recognition of Prior Learning’ (RPL) for assessing the technical capabilities of persons and awards technical education levels accordingly. Similar initiatives with the help of UNHCR can enhance the transition and enrollment of Afghan refugee children who are unable to provide a certificate of previous education.
15. **Teacher training related to selected and prioritized curriculum:** The closure of schools due to COVID-19 resulted in significant lost time from the academic year. After schools reopened, teachers were unable to cover the full curriculum/syllabus and hence they had to teach selected and trimmed syllabus/prioritized topics. Teachers need training to select the most important topics, prepare lesson plans, and deliver the selected syllabus.

## Recommendations for the school administration

16. **Ensuring girls’ learning facilities meet basic security and facilities:** schools should have walls, closed toilets, handwashing stations and stable and easy access to drinking water. Lack of toilet facilities at schools is the single largest barrier to girls’ inclusion in education. This is a priority in girls’ schools. The school administrators should coordinate with the District Education Department for the release of funds to operationalize WASH facilities at schools.

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48 UNESCO (August 2020) Building back equal-Girls back to school guide.

# Annexes

## Annex-1 Summary of KIIs and FGDs

District and Activity	FGD	KII	Grand Total
Haripur	4	5	9
FGD with female community members	2	0	2
FGD with male community members	2	0	2
KII AR	0	1	1
KII with CAR representative-DA Haripur	0	1	1
KII with NGOs/INGO	0	1	1
KII with teacher/head teacher	0	2	2
Kohat	4	6	10
FGD with female community members	2	0	2
FGD with male community members	2	0	2
KII AR	0	1	1
KII with NGOs/INGO	0	1	1
KII with teacher/head teacher	0	4	4
Nowshehra	4	3	7
FGD with female community members	2	0	2
FGD with male community members	2	0	2
KII with CAR representative	0	1	1
KII with teacher/head teacher	0	2	2
Peshawar	4	13	17
FGD with female community members	2	0	2
FGD with male community members	2	0	2
KII Afghan refugees	0	3	3
KII with CAR official	0	1	1
KII with CAR representative	0	1	1
KII with NGOs/INGO	0	3	3
KII with Refugee Village Administrator	0	1	1
KII with teacher/head teacher	0	4	4
Islamabad	0	1	1
KII with NGOs/INGO	0	1	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>44</b>

## Annex-2 List of documents reviewed

1.	DAFI 2019 Annual Report
2.	Education in Places of Temporary Asylum: The Case of Afghan Refugees Living in Peshawar-MA Education Thesis at University Montreal, Quebec, Canada by Maryam Kakar, 2000
3.	Effectiveness of Prime Minister’s Education Reform Program: A Case Study from Pakistan, published in September 2017 by Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, Pakistan
4.	IBT (Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi,2017) Baseline Study on State of Girls’ Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
5.	Impact Evaluation Report of FCDO funded IIM Ideas II program, prepared by Tetra Tech International (formally known as Coffey International), September 2019
6.	UNHCR RAHA Fact Sheets Papers (different components including education)
7.	Letter of Understanding between UNHCR and KP Elementary and Secondary Education Department), September 2019
8.	Lifting Barriers to Education during and after COVID-19 by UNICEF, March 2021
9.	Market Systems Analysis for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan by UNHCR and ILO, 2018
10.	The World Bank’s Education Response to Covid-19, December 2020
11.	UNESCO Inclusion of Afghan Refugees in the National Education Systems of Iran and Pakistan, 2019
12.	UNHCR Covid-19 Refugees’ Return to Schooling Guidelines, December 2020
13.	UNICEF Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, 2018
14.	World Bank project appraisal document of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project, June, 2020
15.	UNHCR Mapping of Education Facilities and Refugee Enrolment in Main Refugee Hosting Areas and Refugee Villages in Pakistan
16.	UNHCR COVID-19 Refugees’ Return to Schooling Guidelines
17.	Save the Children Strategy Paper on Education for Afghans, 1998
18.	UNHCR 2021 Funding Updates
19.	UNHCR 2021 Operation Updates Pakistan

### Annex 3 list of refugee villages and population numbers

District	RV Name	No. of Individuals
Peshawar	Khurasan	2,996
	Kababian	8,407
	Badaber	17,600
	Khazana	4,908
	Mera Kachori	2,882
	Naguman	2,482
	Shamshatoo	36,009
Charsadda	Utmanzai	3,347
	Munda	5,248
	Hajizai	0
Nowshera	Akora Khattak	30,419
	Khairabad	14,209
	Turkmen	0
Hangu	Lakti Banda	4,158
	Kata Kanri	6,926
	Kahi	4,237
	Darsamand	3,574
	Thall	9,311
Kohat	Gamkol	31,860
	Oblan	9,316
	Ghulam Banda	8,926
	Chichana	3,588
Mardan	Jalala	9,845
	Baghicha	1,870
Swabi	Barakai	21,210
	Gandaf	11,281
Malakand	Zangal Patai	118
Lower Dir	Chakdara	13,267
	Timer	10,850
	Toor	3,389
Upper Dir	Barawal	301
Chitral	Kalakatak	1,796
Mansehra	Khaki	9,448
	Ichirian	2,437
	Bareri	7,243
Bannu	Bizen Khel	1,685
Lakki Marwat	Gandhi Khan Khel	4,655
Haripur	Panian	44,060
	Basu Mera	4,561
	Padhana	7,740
Tank	Dabara	778
D. I. Khan	Zafarabad	3,424
Buner	Koga	8,968
<b>Total KPK- Refugee Villages</b>		<b>379,329</b>

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