

# Learning Away from Home

A Foundation Book in Refugee and Emergency Education

Cases: "Basic Education for Afghan Refugees" - BEFARe  
and other refugee and returnee education activities in  
Pakistan and Afghanistan  
1980 - 2005

Expanded Volume



Atle Hetland

alhamra

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*Distribution:* Complementary copies of the book have been distributed to Pakistani libraries, educational and research institutions and organizations, refugee organizations and institutions, embassies, United Nations organizations, the media and other organizations and institutions. (Organizations/institutions abroad may order review copies of the book directly from the publisher, which will charge for the direct expenses incurred, i.e. postage and handling.)

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## Note to the Reader

### Facts and Figures

At the opening of each chapter we have included a few *Boxes*, giving summary facts and figures as background to the reader. Some of the information is basic for the reader to benefit fully from the text that follows. However, some readers may already have good general knowledge of Afghanistan refugee issues, in general and in Pakistan, and refugee education in general and in Pakistan. To such readers, the Boxes are mere reminders and contain little new information.

### Debate and Opinions

The book comprises empirical data, descriptive facts and figures, and related information. It is mainly a documentation of BEFARe's work and some other refugee education activities in Pakistan. It contains some analysis. Social science studies and research are never neutral and this book includes opinions and interpretations. However, we have tried to give a balanced picture of the BEFARe project and other refugee education activities. Yet, we also argue for increased funding and continued support to refugee and returnee education and other sectors, thus bordering on action research and, clearly, advocacy on behalf of education for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) anywhere; in particular Afghans in Pakistan.

### Sources

The book has been based on open written sources in GTZ and BEFARe's files and archives in Pakistan; mainly annual reports and other more formal reports and books, but also mimeographed and more informal reports etc., available in English. Furthermore, we have made use of literature in the libraries in the non-governmental, United Nations and other organizations, ACBAR's Resource and Information Centre in Peshawar, now moved to Kabul, and public libraries and bookshops. Other important sources are the electronic materials and comments provided by current and former staff members, pupils and others. Oral interviews with a vast number of individuals, representatives of organizations, institutions and others have been most valuable; other formal and informal information added insight. Discretion has been shown where data needed to be treated confidentially. Sound judgment has been exercised when the validity and reliability of data can be questioned. Although much time was spent on trying to collect statistical data, only limited statistical and other quantitative data have been presented in the book since we are not certain if it is entirely correct. Further research is needed to ascertain this aspect as well as a number of other aspects of the large German assistance programme to Afghan refugee education in Pakistan. Although data is available, it is not always easily retrievable. We have not sought access to data from the Embassy of Germany in Pakistan (or Afghanistan) or GTZ Headquarters in Germany. The data available in GTZ's country office in Islamabad was limited.

### Abbreviations

We have not included a List of Abbreviations in the book but instead given the name in full the first time an abbreviation or acronym appears. We have repeated the explanations/names when they appear in different chapters.

Throughout the book we have used BEFARe as the name of all refugee education activities implemented by the German government aid agency, GTZ, even if the *exact project name may have differed*. Especially in the initial years in the 1980s, the project names used externally were many: Pak-German Bas-Ed, AG Bas-Ed, Pak-German Technical Training Programme (PGTTP), Community Based Primary Education (COPE) and, last but not least, Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe). From the late 1980s/early 1990s, some projects ran parallel. After 1996, the project name is BEFARe, but even that is not quite accurate since COPE and other sub-projects have been included under GTZ-BEFARe, but such names/acronyms have mainly been used internally in the organization. After 2003/2004, when BEFARe became a local Pakistani organization, a number of sub-projects have been implemented. For simplicity and clarity, we believe it serves the purpose to use the name GTZ-BEFARe and, today, simply BEFARe.

### Literature and References

Endnotes have been included in each chapter. They include essential references and data. We have not prepared a complete bibliography but only given some suggestions (at the end of the book) on further reading and sources of information. Today, websites of various organizations and networks are often more useful than bibliographies. In our context, the main networks are the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) at UNESCO, Paris, now moved to UNICEF, New York, and the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), Peshawar and Kabul, including the Education Cell in Peshawar. ACBAR's Afghan Resource and Information Centre (ARIC), is a unique collection for historians, planners and implementers.

### Summary Volume

The author of the current book has prepared a "Summary and Advocacy Volume" of this book, also published by Alhamra. Several of the chapters in this "Expanded Volume" also appear in the summary volume with some abbreviations and minor changes. The summary volume focuses more directly on BEFARe and pedagogical issues. The expanded volume in addition attempts at discussing broader historical and current issues. Some emphasis is placed on education before and after repatriation, and today's education efforts in Afghanistan.

1 USD=60 Rupees (Pak. Rs.) 2006.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the funding organizations and all those who have contributed to realizing this project. Special thanks go to the people with whom the author has worked particularly closely, notably Dr. S.B. Ekanayake, Ms. Fiona Torrens-Spence and Mr. Salman Beenish. Special thanks also go to Mr. Shakir Ishaq, who has been consistently encouraging, to the other staff at BEFARe; including the Division and Department Managers and the Afghan and Pakistani teachers and pupils, who provided the required information, gave interviews and helped in various ways. I am deeply indebted to all and wish I had space to mention each by name. I am also indebted to officials who provided information and gave me access to databases in various local and international organizations and institutions. Of the international organizations, UNHCR and UNESCO should be mentioned. During the project the author was professionally affiliated to Hazara University, Mansehra, Pakistan; sincere thanks should be extended to the then Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Mohammad Daud Awan for his interest and advice.

I would like to use this opportunity to express sincere thanks to my family and friends in Norway and Kenya for patiently enduring my many periods of absence since the project became much larger than anticipated and hence took much longer to complete than anybody could have foreseen. I hope it was worthwhile.

Last but not least, let me thank the young Afghan refugees who hold the future in their hands. I wish them prosperity. But let me also thank the old and tired refugees who, over decades, have managed to give their sons and daughters a home, a good upbringing and education in exile in Pakistan, thanks to organizations like BEFARe, GTZ, the Pakistani authorities and kind-hearted Pakistani and Afghan individuals and organizations.

There are many unknown heroes among the old Afghan men and women whose sons and daughters, and grandsons and granddaughters have been given hope in their hearts for a better future through education at home and in school. Hopefully, most of the old people, and certainly the young ones, will be able to find permanent homes in the land of Afghanistan. May God give these people blessings, peace, progress and prosperity. Those of us who have been associated with Afghan refugees during the long, sad refugee era have become the richer for it, especially those of us who have dealt with education. We are grateful and we treasure the memories.

*Atle Hetland*

## Dedication

*This book is dedicated to all the world's refugees other displaced people - and specifically the current and former staff and pupils of BEFARe and other Afghan refugee education organizations and schools in Pakistan, and to the parents and communities to whom they belong.*

*The book is also dedicated to the Pakistani refugee host communities, whose many kind people never distinguished between creed or cradle, nationality or tribe, but shared what they had and lived their daily lives as true brothers and sisters in God.*

*Last but not least, the book is dedicated to the Government of Pakistan, UNHCR and other donors and implementing partners in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan.*

## *Acknowledgements by the GTZ Country Director*

*Among many success stories in technical cooperation, BEFARe deserves special mention. It is one of the largest education projects for refugees worldwide, and it is the largest one in Pakistan. After its long-standing association of over two decades with the project, GTZ now appreciates seeing BEFARe being able to face new and competitive challenges as an independent organization; a Pakistani trust. I am confident that with BEFARe's expertise and know-how it will be able to establish itself well in the development field.*

*I wish the new BEFARe good luck in its continued efforts working for refugees, as long as it is needed, and for poor and needy people in refugee-hosting areas. I hope that GTZ can and will still be of help in providing advice, encouragement and support.*

*Atle Hetland has been able to summarize major aspects of the 25-year history of BEFARe and other assistance in a readable form to reach teachers, current and former pupils, parents and other readers on both sides of the Pakistani-Afghan border and elsewhere.*

*On behalf of the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ), I would like to thank all those who have made their contributions to making BEFARe and affiliated GTZ projects in refugee education in Pakistan a success.*

*GTZ is proud and grateful for having had the opportunity to help the Afghan and Pakistani people in difficult circumstances over this long refugee era – both the refugees and members of the host communities in Pakistan.*

*Last but not least, I would like to thank the Pakistani government authorities at federal, provincial and district levels, and the international donors, especially the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other donors and partners for their continuous support.*

*Dr. Ingolf Vereno, Country Director  
GTZ Office, Pakistan*

## *A Foundation Book in Refugee and Emergency Education BEFARe and Other Organizations*

*Although this book is mainly about BEFARe (earlier GTZ-BEFARe) - Pakistan's and the world's largest refugee education project - the book also includes presentation of broader issues and activities implemented by other NGOs and the Government of Pakistan. Furthermore, the book includes material of interest to educationists and social scientists anywhere, especially as related to Afghanistan and other conflict and post-conflict situations. Hence the book can be seen as a foundation book in refugee and emergency education, with cases from the Afghan refugee history.*

*The "new BEFARe" was registered as an independent organization in 2003, with its main activities being a continuation of GTZ-BEFARe's activities in Pakistan. However, as repatriation continues and the international funding from the international community through the main donor UNHCR decreases, BEFARe has diversified and expanded its activities in new areas. Education in refugee host-communities, including Afghan and Pakistani populations, is given attention. Non-education activities are also prioritized. From 2006, BEFARe has begun some activities in Afghanistan. Refugee educationists elsewhere in the world can learn from BEFARe's history as a project and transition into an independent organization.*

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## Foreword by Professor Dr. Mohammad Daud Awan

### Sad History – Good Neighbourliness

*In this book Atle Hetland describes and analyses the history of the world's largest refugee education project, notably that of BEFARe in Pakistan. Broader refugee issues are also discussed, in particular related to education. I hope the book will be read in organizations dealing with emergency education, including politicians, civil servants, donors and staff members in non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The book is invaluable for students and teachers at universities and colleges.*

*I am sure that the Afghan refugees will cherish this book, and that the authorities and NGOs in Pakistan and Afghanistan will be pleased with the documentation and analysis presented. Afghanistan has gone through a sad and turbulent era since the 1970s, which includes a major refugee segment. Yet, there are many aspects in the way Pakistan and Afghanistan handled the refugee crisis, which we should be proud of as a neighbouring country and brothers and sisters. In education, particularly important work was done to benefit the future of the Afghans.*

*When reading the book, I was touched by the human sides to many of the stories, the kindness of Pakistanis and Afghans, the way the poorest of the poor helped each other and created some kind of happiness and normalcy to uprooted community. Yet, most of the*

*time, it was hard work and "dreams of a better future", for the children, parents, teachers and others in the camps/villages and urban settlements.*

*The author emphasizes that education is a right for everyone, and that refugees and earthquake victims should not be neglected. All girls and boys, including handicapped, marginalized and vulnerable should be given access to basic education and further education should be made available for a much larger portion of the refugees than in the past, in line with the objectives of the Education for All movement and the Millennium Development Goals to be realized by 2015. Literacy and skills training should also be provided for adolescents and adults, in line with the objectives of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012).*

*The author shows that Pakistan has been a good host for millions of Afghan refugees for the last quarter century, and that the international community has done a fair job, but more could have been done so that better educated and skilled Afghans could have returned to rebuild their home country at this time when repatriation is taking place.*

*In the coming years, we should give greater attention to assisting the refugee hosting areas and communities where a large number of the poor Afghans have lived side by side*

*with poor Pakistanis.*

*I share the author's hope that in the future we can see establishment of long-term, normal cooperation and educational linkages between Pakistan and Afghanistan, benefiting both countries. In particular, I find it important that higher education institutions establish linkages and professional cooperation across the borders, in fields like teacher training, vocational and technical training, nursing and other health sciences including the various university disciplines. We should also involve other countries of the region and overseas in such cooperation.*

*Girls and women must get a fair share of*

*education at all levels from pre-school, through primary, secondary and university. It is important to get more women into teacher training, professional jobs and politics in order to get more women to become role models for young girls. Yet, we must also not forget the young boys and their difficult time in finding solid footing in a new and peaceful Afghanistan, which also needs gender equality, democracy and a number of other new things.*

*Islamabad, May 2006*

*Professor Dr. Mohammad Daud Awan*

*Former Vice-Chancellor, Hazara University, Mansehra*

*North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan*

## Preface by BEFARe's Chief Executive Learning from the Past – Building the Future

*It is with great satisfaction that I contribute to this unique and important initiative of documenting some of the major achievements of Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe) over the last decades, especially the last decade, but also during BEFARe's preceding projects from the early 1980s. I am also glad that BEFARe's activities, as implemented by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), are seen in relation to general education issues and refugee education activities in Pakistan during the whole period of the Afghan refugee era of close to a quarter century.*

*BEFARe has now become an independent Pakistani organization. The new and independent organization is a direct continuation of what began as bilateral development aid projects between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Federal Republic of Germany in the early 1980s.*

*Following a decade of initial project activities, GTZ-BEFARe sprung directly out of two bilateral projects in the early/mid 1990s; one in vocational training and the other in basic education, supported by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Those projects were highly reputable and GTZ-BEFARe soon established its positive reputation as it expanded and provided quality education to large numbers of Afghan*

*refugees in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).*

*The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been the most central partner outside BMZ and GTZ, especially after 1996, when UNHCR's allocations became much larger than the bilateral ones. However, the German bilateral aid organization maintained the technical leadership and oversaw project implementation.*

*Over the last five years, several other donors have chosen BEFARe to implement educational projects for Afghan refugees on their behalf, making GTZ-BEFARe the largest refugee education project in the world. Such organizations have included the British aid agency DFID, the Canadian aid agency CIDA, The World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), USAID, and others.*

*Upon its transformation into an independent organization, the legacy of implementing the largest and longest lasting sustainable refugee education project in the world forms part and parcel of the new BEFARe. This heritage makes BEFARe a unique project. BEFARe has become independent from GTZ, but maintains support from most of the old donors, with UNHCR still being the largest by far.*

*In the nascent days of BEFARe as an independent organization, we were faced*

*with two main challenges. Firstly, it was essential that the new organization maintained the high quality standards developed during the GTZ years, and it was important that this was seen to be the case by donors, staff, beneficiaries, and sister organizations. Secondly, it was important for BEFARe to work towards long-term sustainability of the organization. Now, a few years down the road, the organization is still searching for strategies and methods to maintain and develop its services and standards further, including in new fields.*

*With highly trained and committed professional staff, with a sense of ownership of the organization, BEFARe's quality of service delivery has continued to improve and we have installed a new Quality Management System (QMS). A testimony of BEFARe's success is that Moody's International in 2005 awarded its "ISO 9001:2000 Certification" to BEFARe.*

*Moving towards the long-term sustainability of the organization, BEFARe continues widening its operations thematically as well as geographically. In the thematic areas it has been able to cover other realms in addition to refugee education, and has planned and implemented projects for Afghan refugees as well as Pakistanis in ordinary local communities, or refugee hosting communities. The new areas encompass development and implementation of integrated adult literacy and vocational skills training courses for the local communities; development of accelerated teacher training courses, including production of a new manual; development of condensed curricula, based on Pakistani text books and approved curricula for out-of-school and street children; training*

*in democratization fields, poverty alleviation, devolution support, and health awareness. BEFARe is expanding further in other areas, such as micro finance, environment, energy conservation and capacity building of other NGOs. Geographically it has been able to expand its operations into the Punjab province of Pakistan and is planning to expand further, nationally as well as regionally. BEFARe is providing advice and other assistance to the disaster areas affected by the 8 October 2005 earthquake in Northern Pakistan. I am pleased to announce that from 2006 BEFARe also has activities in Afghanistan.*

*Monitoring and evaluation have become keywords in BEFARe's operations and great emphasis is placed on these fields to keep learning from experience and to be able to report as well as possible to the donors.*

*When the organization was transformed in 2003, I strongly felt that the unmatched experiences and achievements of BEFARe as a project and organization needed to be documented. This initiative of documenting BEFARe's achievements has a distinct role in the context of its transformation. The documented achievements, best practices and scrutiny of its work in general will help BEFARe to learn from the past, share its experiences with partners, donors, development aid professionals and others, and build on these gains and replicate where applicable. Naturally, there are also shortcomings in our work, but we believe they are relatively few. However, I am glad that this book does not shy away from asking questions and pointing out fields where we could have done better, be it BEFARe, other implementing partners, the donors or other partners. The*

*author has had a free hand to use his professional judgment and he is responsible for all interpretations and analysis. Especially this Expanded Volume contains details and discussions, which the author seems to have handled carefully and with the required "Fingerspitzengefühl".*

*I appreciate the support from GTZ-Pakistan, whose Country Director, Dr. Ingolf Vereno, kindly agreed to provide partial sponsorship to this initiative, which was originally taken by Atle Hetland, an international consultant and researcher in development and refugee education. We jointly agreed to support the book project, including printing costs of the Summary and Advocacy Volume. However, the project became more comprehensive than expected as the author began digging into it, and it resulted in two volumes. The Expanded Volume has been developed and printed with sponsorship from other sources outside GTZ.*

*Atle Hetland has worked tirelessly to build up a comprehensive summary of the history and current status of the organization, attempting to give a true and fair picture of the work, and present it in a readable and pleasant form, with a number of interviews, stories and photos. History is facts and figures, but it is also personalities, people, organizations, and presentation of the*

*time and atmosphere under which the work took place. I believe that this book can help create interest for further research and studies into BEFAre's work and other refugee education activities in Pakistan and other countries. The book has become a general foundation book in refugee and emergency education, which I hope will benefit many individuals and organizations dealing with the world's refugees.*

*Last but not least, BEFAre's team deserves thanks for their help to the author of the book. More so, they deserve my sincere appreciation for the meticulous work they have been carrying out year-in and year-out. Without the commitment, tireless work and perseverance, BEFAre could not have succeeded.*

*I hope this Expanded Volume of the book will provide interesting reading to all, including government officials, professionals from development aid and humanitarian assistance organizations, and indeed the Afghan and Pakistani refugee teachers and managers, former refugee pupils and staff, some of whom shoulder top posts in various fields of Afghanistan's reconstruction work. I expect that the book will also have international interest.*

*Peshawar, March 2006  
Shakir Ishaq*



## Preface by the Author

# Refugee Education

# Giving Hope in Despair

*This book is mainly about one refugee education project, Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe), and its predecessors, funded mainly by the German government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It is also about other education activities for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and some aspects of refugee education in general. It includes issues related to the refugees' return home and aspects of the new life in Afghanistan. Using all this information more as "case studies" the book can be seen as a foundation book in refugee and emergency education.*

*Since BEFARe is by far the largest refugee education project in Pakistan, and also in the world, the task of summarizing its quarter century history became larger than foreseen when we started the work just over a year ago. We soon discovered that to document and analyze such large and varied activities over a quarter century was comprehensive and not quite the part-time job we had foreseen.*

*Furthermore, refugee education, and other education in and after emergency and crisis, notably education related to wars, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other man-made or natural disasters is a step-child in the education sector and in development and emergency/humanitarian aid.*

*These facts added to the seriousness with*

*which we approached the task. Besides documenting BEFARe's excellent work, we also wanted the book to play an advocacy role in elevating the place refugee and emergency education has on the development aid agenda as well as in professional and academic institutions, inter alia, in educational courses in teacher training colleges.*

*The fact that the Afghan refugee situation is one of the world's largest and longest lasting, having the dubious honour of marking its quarter century, made the task almost overwhelming. In addition the main donor was in a great hurry to get the Summary Volume of the book released, making us question what we understood about German 'Grundlichkeit' (thoroughness). Naturally, we are appreciative of the assistance received from German and other sources.*

*This book is the Expanded Volume, which is almost twice as long as the Summary and Advocacy Volume, published earlier in 2006. Still, we only consider this book an 'introduction' to the field, which deserves more focused and specialized research-oriented studies. Other organizations (implementing partners) should also be included in new works. BEFARe and other organizations in Pakistan, including the ACBAR/ARIC Documentation Centre in Peshawar/Kabul, are treasure chests for educationalists interested in refugee education,*



*and for students and researchers interested in other refugee fields.*

*It is also our hope that other sectors of the Afghan refugee history in Pakistan between 1979/80 – 2005 and beyond will be documented, in scientific and popular forms, and possibly even fiction. Nowadays, we should also make use of other media and BEFARe has already made some DVDs.*

*We have tried to give due weight to presenting BEFARe's unique refugee education activities in a form which makes the history, with the various topics, stories, persons, and so on, interesting to the reader. This was a key point emphasized by the main donor and we endorse it wholeheartedly. If we have succeeded only the reader can judge; the material is certainly fascinating, although it is also sad.*

*The long duration of the refugee crisis is one aspect that makes the history sad. Trauma, loss, suffering and often hopelessness are characteristics of the lives of refugees and something that they will have to carry with them for the rest of their lives. Many have physical and psychological illnesses and scars. In refuge, irrespective of how well refugees are hosted, they have a difficult life. "The refugees are disinherited; they are frozen in time. "We have no importance", one says.*

*Until just a few years ago, nobody knew when the Afghan refugees could begin thinking of returning home. Now, many have returned home, others are going, and many others are contemplating and planning when to go.*

*Education is a key factor throughout the 'refugee cycle', from exodus, refugee life,*

*repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration at home, or sometimes resettlement in another country or integration in the host country.*

*Education gives hope in misery, as we have said in the heading to this Preface. This is true for the many children who have had the opportunity to attend BEFARe's good primary schools, and some adolescents and adults who have attended vocational and skills training courses, literacy training and other adult education programmes, such as 'mother and child healthcare'.*

*However, even in its own target areas BEFARe could not provide education for all children in the communities, notably the refugee camps/villages in Peshawar and elsewhere in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) bordering Afghanistan, where BEFARe operated. The percentage of enrolled girls kept going up, but there were never more than about thirty-five percent of girls among the more than one hundred thousand pupils, and a similar percentage of female teachers and a lower percentage of female managers. In adult education and in the home schools (for girls and boys), there was a majority of women and girls in most of the courses.*

*These are important model examples, 'good practices', from BEFARe's work from which Afghanistan's education authorities and NGOs can draw lessons when continuing to rebuild its education system. Another important field is BEFARe's improvement of curricula and production of supplementary teaching materials for pupils and teachers. The training courses for teachers are essential, and of more recent data, BEFARe's involvement in development activities outside the education sector.*

*The author would like to express sincere thanks for having had the opportunity to work with Afghan refugee education in Pakistan for the last five years, mainly in United Nations organizations, and for having had this special opportunity to study BEFARe in some detail during part of last year and this year.*

*It has been a privilege to learn to know so many unique Afghans, Pakistanis and foreigners.*

*I pray that there will be no more despair but only happiness and joy in the Afghan homes and classrooms in the future, for the refugees who are still here in Pakistan and for the returnees and the Afghans who have lived at home over the war decades.*

*May BEFARe and other organizations in Pakistan, perhaps with sister organizations in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, continue to provide assistance to refugees/returnees and Pakistanis in the refugee hosting communities and areas in Pakistan. May we express the wish that by 2015, when the world is expected to have reached Education for All (EFA), that all refugees/returnees are included, and all other children in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Recent monitoring reports, however, indicate that both countries are lagging behind in planned targets. Naturally, Afghanistan faces tremendous challenges ahead - and without education for all Afghans the country is doomed to remain*

*among the world's very least developed countries and may be termed a 'failed state'.*

*Finally, may BEFARe's widened activities benefit Afghans and Pakistanis in the future, so that more needy people can gain livelihoods and be able to look after themselves and their families. Basic education and skills training are important aspects, but also other incentives are needed in addition to ordinary education. Over the recent years, BEFARe has ventured into additional, non-educational projects, including assisting in preparing for refugees to vote in the Afghanistan Presidential election in 2004, and training related to the local governments in Pakistan. After the devastating earthquake which hit northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005, BEFARe quickly began education assistance to victims in selected areas in NWFP.*

*In all its activities BEFARe maintains its focus on the underprivileged and needy people. Let me add that when doing such work we need practical and professional people in charge, we need administrative procedures in place, and, last but not least, we need people who have commitment and their heart and soul in what they are doing. BEFARe has all this - and we should learn from their efforts and use their 'good practices' worldwide.*

*Peshawar/Islamabad, March 2006  
Atle Hetland*



*Painting by Professor Ch. M. Shabnam Ghaznawi  
"War Results" (oil colour)*

# Part I

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## Donors and Partners

About BEFARe and Refugee  
Education in Pakistan

### Chapter

# 1



# Donors and Partners

## About BEFARe and Refugee Education in Pakistan

*This chapter presents an overview of the roles and tasks of the main donors and partners in refugee situations, with emphasis on the education sector, in Pakistan and BEFARe. The most important partners are the host-country Government, UNHCR and its implementing partners. A number of other partners are also included; multi- and bilateral donors, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and various self-help groups and organizations, sometimes termed community based organizations (CBOs). In this chapter we are only able to draw brief attention to this vast network of partners and donors providing assistance to refugees. We should always bear in mind that assistance and service provision can only be 'topping-up' of what the refugees and the people in the refugee-hosting areas do themselves. Their struggle for survival and progress can only be alleviated, never taken over by any partners or donors.*

*In this chapter we are proud to present a number of statements by some of the senior national and international civil servants who have dealt with Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and in education in particular, over the quarter century of the Afghan refugee era. We are presenting a statement by Hasim Utkan, a UNHCR expert on Afghan refugee issues in Pakistan. He served three terms in Pakistan, starting with an assessment mission before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and finally serving as Representative in 1999-2003.*

*Each statement includes important information about the work of the various donors and partners and sheds light on the organization's work, with comments about cooperation with GTZ-BEFARe and its work. We hope that the reader will find it interesting to read the statements and our related comments and questions.*

*This chapter shows that a fair amount of good work has been done by many donors and competent partners. A chapter like this cannot provide quantitative and qualitative details. Yet, we know enough to be reminded that we do not live in a perfect world, and that much more should have been done for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, not least in education. It is our hope and belief that education for all (EFA) will also include all refugees in the course of the next decade and that it will become a 'humanitarian demand' and simply be considered unacceptable and unethical not to provide every boy and girl with basic education, and every adult with opportunity to be given literacy and skills training. All of us who have worked in refugee education must collectively take responsibility for the present situation - donors, partners, experts and the refugees themselves. We have been able to get away with giving less than half of the Afghan refugee children the opportunity to get basic primary education, and less than a third of the pupils have been girls.<sup>1</sup>*





*This collage includes samples of logos of major partner organizations which BEFAre has cooperated with, selected by the author; additional partners could have been included if space had been available.*

The Government of Pakistan (SAFRON/CCAR), with UNHCR, UNDP and other UN organizations and major NGOs, has recently initiated the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative. The international community should soonest provide funding so that actual projects and programmes can be prepared and implemented to assist Pakistanis and Afghan refugees.

By early 2007, over 2 million Afghans in Pakistan, most of them refugees, had registered with the Government of Pakistan, receiving the **Proof of Registration card (PoR Card)**, allowing them to reside in Pakistan for three years. This highly successful exercise included the majority of the Afghans who were included in the Census carried out a year earlier. The exercise was an important step towards regularizing normalising migration between the two countries, and ending the long Afghan refugee era in Pakistan. However, there are still at least 0.5 million Afghans living in Pakistan who have not registered, and the figure may be higher. There are also many who travel back and forth between the two countries.

Repatriation of Afghans continues, but some groups are either unwilling or unable to return soon. The registration exercise, and the PoR Card with 3-year residence validity in Pakistan, takes into account the need for many Afghans needing some time to sort out their future lives. Such individuals and groups may include elderly and sick refugees and other particularly vulnerable persons, and they may include young Afghans who are born and bred in Pakistan and would find it difficult to "return". Without special programmes for such groups, including incentives and funding of long-term humanitarian and training programmes, sustainable durable can hardly be foreseen.

As we mentioned above for Pakistanis in refugee hosting areas, we consider that the international community still has a responsibility to fund activities for refugees/returnees. It is not reasonable that the Pakistan and Afghanistan governments and people carry the burdens without international support. It is also essential that the long refugee era is brought to a successful and dignified end, which may also include integration of some Afghans in Pakistan, or in some cases, in third country. Programmes enabling refugees to return to Afghanistan and have realistic possibilities to make it there need to be implemented as soon as possible.

It is important, too, that the relations between the two countries remain good. In 2006 and at the beginning of 2007, some **strains on the relations** have come out into the open. For example, the Government of Pakistan has expressed concerns over the current relatively slow speed of repatriation and closure of camps. The reasons given have been the need for greater security in Pakistan as well as Afghanistan, in particular in the border areas. Pakistani authorities have expressed worries about refugee camps in the country sometimes becoming "hiding places" for extremists or even terrorists.

There are needs for greater control of travels between the two countries, including refugees and ordinary migration and travels, which go both ways. Pakistani businessmen travel to Afghanistan, supplying goods and services in connection with reconstruction of the country. Tens of thousands of Pakistani skilled workers and professionals have found temporary work in Afghanistan. Naturally, the travel, residence and work of Afghans in Pakistan is much larger than that of Pakistanis in Afghanistan, the first is in thousands, maybe in the range of one hundred thousand, while the latter is in millions.

In any event, it is in both countries interest that the cooperation and contacts are many, multifaced and good, and in accordance with regularized practises and procedures to be expected between good neighbours. The international community, too, should play their role in order to reach a successful and dignified conclusion of the Afghan refugee era.

## INTRODUCTION

As introduction to this chapter on donors and partners we shall discuss some aspects of the role of **UNHCR**,\* because it is the main donor and partner in refugee situations anywhere in the world, next to the Government of the host country, which has sovereignty over its territory and decisions. In the case of GTZ-BEFARe we will also review aspects of German bilateral aid and assistance from other donors.

UNHCR has a unique role as the coordinator of international donor assistance. It advises on policy issues; it appeals for funds; it advises on use of funds, and often takes part in decision-making concerning implementation and other issues.

UNHCR is different from most other United Nations organizations as it often plays a direct role in implementation. However, some other UN organizations dealing with emergencies also take direct part in implementation, such as the World Food Programme (WFP). It falls under the mandate of the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to play a proactive role at an early stage of refugee crises. Other UN organizations also participate, with intergovernmental organizations, such as the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and bilateral donor agencies, but they are usually less involved in implementation, which is handled by NGOs, with the host-government.

Like other implementing partners, in education and other fields, supporting refugees, BEFARe has received most of its funding for its primary education activities from UNHCR; usually about eighty percent of the budget, which peaked at over three million Dollars annually in

2004 but has since decreased considerably in 2005 as repatriation continues.<sup>2</sup>

About twenty percent of GTZ-BEFARe's budget has come from the German Government, through the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). However, BMZ has now terminated its ordinary contributions.<sup>3</sup>

BEFARe has managed to attract additional donors for specific projects implemented over one or a few years. Such donors are The World Bank, the British Government Department for International Development, DFID, the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, and some others, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Vision Pakistan and the European Union. BEFARe has also cooperated with UNICEF, UNESCO, and others but funding has been limited. Finally, BEFARe has enjoyed professional cooperation, with limited or no funding involved, with a number of partners, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) for peace education in 2004.<sup>4</sup>

In Pakistan, formal and informal *Afghan donor coordination groups* played active roles as advisers and in decision-making on funding and other issues during the peak periods of the large and long-lasting Afghan refugee crisis. Now, such coordination has been transferred to the Government of Afghanistan and donors and partners in Kabul.<sup>5</sup>

*International non-governmental organizations* play key roles, sometimes at similar level as the multi- and bilateral donors, but more often as *implementing partners* for the funding organizations, of which UNHCR is always the largest

\*For some further details about UNHCR, the host Government and NGOs, see the Boxes at the introduction of Chapter 3.

donor in all refugee situations.

As mentioned above, UNHCR plays an active role in mobilization of funds, which are channeled through its regular budgets and they may be earmarked for specific crisis and refugee situations, decided by the donor countries. In addition, some donors will add funds at local level to what they channel through UNHCR's and other agencies' headquarters. In Pakistan, U.S.A. has been a major contributor of direct local funding to UNHCR's country (branch) office and to a limited number of international NGOs.

**Local NGOs** also play important roles in advocacy and in implementation, but their funds are much more limited than those of international NGOs. However, their running costs are also much lower. In Pakistan, numerous Afghan and Pakistani groups have sprung up providing support to needy refugees, especially urban refugees. Urban refugees receive minimal international and other donor assistance. Such groups may be informal or they may be registered as NGOs or CBOs. Some catalogues list a few hundred in all fields.<sup>6</sup>

International NGOs, and many local NGOs and some CBOs are highly professional and specialized organizations, without which the Government, UNHCR and other donors could not have implemented their work.

In the education sector the main implementing partners are the following: *GTZ-BEFARe*, *Save the Children (US)*, *International Rescue Committee (IRC)*, *Ockenden International (UK)*, *Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)*, *Basic Education and Employable Skills Training (BEST)* and *Society for Community Support for Primary Education*.

The main **coordinating organization** in education is the *Education Sub-Committee of the Afghan Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR)*, Peshawar.

Although we are concerned about education, it should be appreciated that education is only one of several important sectors providing assistance to refugees, and education is often

referred to as the **fourth pillar**, after the basic sectors of protection, shelter, food and health. In recent years, education is increasingly being seen as a fundamental tool cutting across other areas, including protection; UNHCR's most fundamental concern.

Since UNHCR's mandate is broad, with unclear beginnings and ends to its responsibilities, debate is going on concerning how to limit the agency's tasks. Many want the agency to focus mainly on its 'core mandate' while other tasks could be out-sourced or taken over by other partners, UN organizations or NGOs.

Many will see education as a sector, which can relatively easily be handled by other UN agencies, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and others, together with international and local NGOs.

It can be argued that provision of education for refugees, especially in refugee camps, is not very complicated, as seen from an organizational and implementation point of view. Refugee education should, after the first initial months, gradually be regarded as *ordinary education* and second class education should be unacceptable. It seems that *UNHCR is not giving the education sector high enough priority* and it can be argued that other UN organizations, which have education as part of, or their sole mandate, could do better than UNHCR.

The current record should be recalled; in developing countries on average, including Pakistan, less than fifty percent of school-going age refugee children are given primary education and a considerably lower percentage of girls. Only five to seven percent continue to secondary level and very few reach college and university level.

At a time when Education for All (EFA) is the professional slogan, forming part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be reached by 2015, we need to find strategies to do better than the mentioned figures indicate. Furthermore, refugees and other children living in crises and emergencies, often caused by wars and other conflicts, constitute a large proportion

of the out-of-school children in developing countries. Recently it has been estimated that the proportion may have grown to be as high as seventy percent of the group while it was earlier commonly thought to be about fifty percent.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas UNHCR may be able to reduce its direct involvement in certain fields, it is likely that it in other fields will have to add tasks. UNHCR uses the term '*other persons of concern*' for the gray zones, i.e., persons who have traditionally not been defined as being under its mandate. However, UNHCR's mandate has kept being widened.

Forced migration and movement of people within a country's borders, due to natural or man-made disasters or conflicts, is likely to become a major field of UNHCR's work in the future, and the agency is already working in these fields. In Afghanistan hundreds of thousands have been forced to move within the country to seek security, protection and livelihood. They have not crossed any national border but their situation is quite similar to that of refugees who have entered neighbouring countries. The situation of IDPs can be worse than that of refugees

because of lack of recognition and assistance.<sup>8</sup>

The devastating earthquake that hit Pakistan on 8 October 2005 is a case in point; UNHCR is one of many specialized donors with practical expertise, especially on protection and camp management. With access to funds, UNHCR, with the host Government can play a unique and impressive role in emergency work, including in education. Few UN agencies can match UNHCR's understanding of the totality of emergency situations.

Let us add that whether it is UNHCR or other UN organizations that will coordinate refugee education in future, there will be continued dependence on support from donor countries to the UN organizations and directly to the refugee-hosting countries. Some support will come from other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector, but as a proportion of the total aid it is likely to continue to be relatively modest.

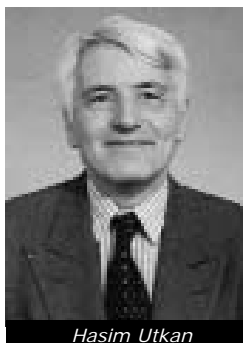
As we will discuss below, the role of the host-countries in crises is always essential, and so is the role of the refugee producing countries; in our case, Pakistan and Afghanistan, respectively.



*Dr. Imran Zeb Khan*



*Dr. Nanguyalai Tarzi*



*Hasim Utkan*



*Ingeborg Breines*



*Guenet Guebre-Christos*

The photos include two senior Pakistani and Afghan officials and three United Nations representatives in charge of refugee and returnee issues in Pakistan: Dr. Imran Zeb Khan, Commissioner, CCAR, Government of Pakistan; H.E. Dr. Nanguyalai Tarzi, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan; Mr. Hasim Utkan, Regional UNHCR Representative, Bangkok, and former Representative of UNHCR in Pakistan; Ms. Ingeborg Breines, Director of UNESCO' Liaison Office in Geneva, and former Representative of UNESCO in Pakistan.

At the time of printing of this book Dr. Khan is still holding his key post, while H.E. Dr. Tarzi, Breines and Utkan have been transferred to other duty stations. Breines was in Pakistan for less than three years, but she managed to get a number of new activities in refugee education up and running, such as peace education, art and culture, and assistance to poor urban refugees in Islamabad, which had been 'swept under the carpet' earlier. But nobody can beat Utkan's distinguished and long international service in the refugee field in Pakistan. He served three terms in the country, including as UNHCR's Deputy Representative and finally as Representative. He had interest in, and deep knowledge of, all fields pertaining to Afghan refugee issues, including some which are once again becoming topical, notably *assistance to refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan* and *skills and vocational training for Afghan refugees before they return home*.

Guenet Guebre-Christos took over as UNHCR Representative in Pakistan in 2003 when Utkan's term was over. In cooperation with the Government of Pakistan, she is handling particularly difficult tasks notably the large programme of assisted voluntary repatriation of refugees home to Afghanistan, in addition to continued, and often reduced assistance to the refugee sector in Pakistan since the number of refugees is decreasing.

*Note: The selection of the sample of representatives included in the photos, and the issues highlighted, were made by the author of this book to the best of his judgment. Additional Government and UN organizations could have been added if space had been available.*

# Section I

## GOVERNMENT AND UNITED NATIONS PARTNERS

Over the quarter century of the tragic Afghan refugee era, UNHCR, other United Nations organizations and partners have assisted Pakistan and Afghanistan with funding, advice and service provision to millions of refugees. After “9/11” there were about 5.5 million Afghans in Pakistan and most of them were refugees.<sup>9</sup>

Currently, UNHCR’s offices in Islamabad and Kabul are advising Pakistan and Afghanistan on difficult issues related to *repatriation* and how to *regularize* the status of Afghans who wish to stay on in Pakistan after their refugee status has terminated. Some may never have been *refugees* but economic or other categories of *migrants*. The on-going repatriation is the largest in UNHCR’s history.<sup>10</sup>

However, not all refugees can, or want to, return home or they may not find that it is possible to do so immediately, due to reasons beyond their control, such as *security*, *housing* and *livelihood* at home. They may not have land to cultivate or the land needs to be *de-mined* before it can be used for agriculture or horticulture. Reasons for prolonging their stay in Pakistan can also be *educational*. Some parents may want their children to complete their education in Pakistan before returning; especially at *post-primary level*. In Afghanistan availability and quality of education is in general much lower than in Pakistan. Vocational, skills and professional training is particularly important for returnees because they need qualifications for employment upon return home.

It should also be borne in mind that a large proportion of the young refugees were born in

Pakistan and many only know Afghanistan from what they have been told, or from short visits ‘home’. Many refugees may consider themselves as much Pakistani as Afghan.

These are examples of some of the important and difficult humanitarian and legal issues, which the two neighbouring countries must find solutions to, with the assistance of UNHCR and the rest of the international community.

The NGOs are partners of special importance in this connection because they have first-hand knowledge from working closely with the refugees in camps/villages or in mixed refugee-hosting areas or communities in cities, towns and rural areas. The issues have clear educational aspects.

BEFARe is one of the large partners which continues to play a key role in education and related fields; notably basic education at primary level and various fields of non-formal education for older children, adolescents and adults, including skills training, literacy, mother and child health-care, and peace and civics education.

On the following pages, we present four statements by Pakistani and Afghan Government representatives, and UNHCR and UNESCO representatives. The statements show the importance the senior officials attribute to education and the work of GTZ-BEFARe.

The Pakistani and Afghan Government representatives, **Dr. Imran Zeb Khan**, Commissioner at CCAR, and **H.E. Dr. Nanguyalai Tarzi**, Afghanistan’s Ambassador to Pakistan, underline the importance of education for refugees during exile and in rebuilding Afghanistan upon return home. The importance of education in refugee-

hosting areas in Pakistan is also mentioned.<sup>11</sup>

Both representatives express thanks on behalf of their Governments to the United Nations, bilateral donors and NGOs for the work they are doing.

The United Nations representatives, *Hasim Utkan*, UNHCR, and *Ingeborg Breines*, UNESCO, express their admiration for the work carried out by GTZ-BEFARe. Yet, both also express regrets about fields where more and better work could have been done if funds had been available. Utkan regrets that more wasn't done in the fields of vocational and skills training. Breines notes that we are not providing education for all refugees. "Obviously, EFA includes refugees, too", she says, and she stresses the importance of education for refugee girls at all levels, and women in leadership posts.<sup>12</sup>

We believe that the statements by these four senior officials are quite representative of Government and UN opinions although scientifically we cannot generalize on the basis of relatively few statements/comments. If we had more space in this book, we could have asked other donors for their comments, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and others. There are many important UN and other organizations that could and should have been mentioned

because they have carried out essential assistance to Afghan refugees in education and related fields.

In this book it is also our task to ask questions that are not often asked, especially not in writing, notably: Did the international community do its utmost to secure funds for Afghan refugees in general and for education? Did the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan do enough on their side in mobilizing funds? Could implementation of refugee education in Pakistan have been better, quality-wise and as regards enrollment, or should we be satisfied with what was achieved, bearing in mind that many poor Pakistanis lived under similar circumstances to the refugees?

We shall not try to answer these questions, but we would like the reader to consider whether *a good enough job* was done in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan. We must also be careful not to set standards too high since nothing is perfect, especially not in difficult emergency crisis and refugee situations. However, we have already in the introductory section identified fields where we ideally should have done better and in this section Utkan and Breines are also self-critical. Perhaps the standards should be higher when refugee situations last for many years and become *protracted* and *chronic crises*, such as in the case of the Afghan refugee crisis.

**Dr. Imran Zeb Khan** Commissioner, Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), Government of Pakistan

*"I believe that provision of basic, secondary, technical and vocational education is the most important help we as a host country can give to refugee children and adolescents. Education is also an essential tool in preparing refugees for returning home because education will give them a better chance of finding employment in Afghanistan."*

*"Pakistan is glad to have had organizations like BEFARe implementing major education activities for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. We are also grateful to the Germans, notably the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), which was the implementing partner until BEFARe became a local organization a few years ago, and the Government of Germany, for having provided a portion of the funding through its Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The majority of the funding always came from UNHCR, as is common for all our implementing partners in refugee education."*

*"I would also like to express gratitude for the German higher education scholarship programme for refugees, known as DAFI, and administered by UNHCR."*

*"I come from NWFP myself, the largest refugee-hosting province in Pakistan, and I have worked on refugee issues for many years. I remember BEFARe's work from the time they started and I have followed it over the years. I hope that they will continue working in the province. Although we seem to be at the end of the Afghan refugee era, there is still a lot of work to do. In the future, I hope that the refugee-hosting areas will be given more focus to include Pakistanis and Afghans alike. Organizations like BEFARe, with its proven track record, can be a key implementing partner in education and related fields."*

Dr. Imran Zeb Khan  
Commissioner, CCAR, Government of Pakistan

**H.E. Dr. Nanguyalai Tarzi** Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan (until the end of 2006)

*"I find education an essential element in rebuilding Afghanistan and it is important for the refugees to become active members in society. I would like to express gratitude to host countries and donor countries, bilateral organizations, United Nations and other multilateral organizations, and a large number of non-governmental organizations for the education they have provided to refugees over many years."*

Dr. Nanguyalai Tarzi  
Ambassador of Afghanistan, Islamabad

**Hasim Utkan** UNHCR Representative in Pakistan (1999-2003). Utkan also served in other posts in the same office twice before: when building up the office at the beginning of the Afghan refugee crisis in 1979 and the mid-1990s.

*"Throughout my long career in UNHCR, I have often had the pleasure of dealing with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In Pakistan GTZ was one of our major implementing partners in education for the Afghan refugees. I always found GTZ and the main project it set up in 1996, BEFARe, which followed other smaller projects, a particularly competent partner in project implementation. At its peak, BEFARe had over one hundred thousand pupils in its primary schools and adult education courses, and close to three thousand teachers and managers. I believe it was the world's largest refugee education project. Most of the funding came from UNHCR, which for some time also assisted vocational and technical training (VET). Unfortunately, we could not keep up funding in those fields, albeit important, but had to focus on primary education in the*



*campes, which is UNHCR's main field of responsibility in refugee education anywhere in the world."*

*"I am glad that BEFARe has been registered as a local organization so that its experience can be drawn upon in the future. I understand that BEFARe wants to focus on education and other social services in refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan. Thus, BEFARe will not only benefit Afghan refugees, as long as that is needed, but also Pakistanis."*

*"I would like to use this opportunity to thank GTZ-BEFARe for its service to UNHCR and the Afghan refugees in Pakistan."*

Hasim Utkan  
Regional Representative UNHCR, Bangkok

**Ingeborg Breines** UNESCO Representative  
and Director in Pakistan (2001-2004)

*"When I came to Pakistan in September 2001 as UNESCO Representative to Pakistan and Director of the office, I realized the great importance of doing more and better work in education and for the Afghan refugees and a Letter of understanding (LoU) with UNHCR was established. At the beginning of my three-year term in Pakistan, UNESCO's Islamabad office also covered Afghanistan, but soon UNESCO established its separate and important office in the country."*

*"With assistance from Japan, we quickly opened some school classes in the urban areas on the outskirts of Islamabad, near Rawalpindi, at the end of 2001. Until then urban refugees had received very little assistance from the international community."*

*"Teacher training and textbook issues are always important to UNESCO since we are concerned with quality aspects of education - as well as enrolment. Furthermore, girls' education and literacy issues are part of our work in the member states' struggle for relevant quality Education for All (EFA). Obviously, EFA includes refugees, too,*

*and we have, therefore, termed "Education in emergency and crisis" an EFA Flagship. Unfortunately, though, UNESCO's funding has been limited for those activities."*

*"In Pakistan, we worked closely with major NGOs and other partners in refugee education. BEFARe was a particularly close and professional partner. I don't think UNESCO could have achieved as much as it did in refugee education without such a large organization. We, at the UNESCO office in Islamabad, did our best trying to provide encouragement and support and guidance and international expertise, but it was usually partners like BEFARe that implemented the activities that made a change for refugee girls and boys, women and men."*

*"I would like to mention the work UNESCO did together with BEFARe to develop a database of Afghan refugee teachers in Pakistan, and also our liaison with education authorities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. BEFARe was a key member in that important work to facilitate the return of experienced teachers to Afghanistan. I recall with pleasure UNESCO's cooperation with BEFARe, Ockenden International and the International Rescue Committee, in an important professional development project in teacher training, funded by Canada's aid agency CIDA. Textbook development and improvement of curricula were other fields of mutual interest by UNESCO and BEFARe."*

*"I hope that BEFARe can continue its good work for refugees and other particularly vulnerable groups, and that girls and women are given even greater focus than in the past - in primary and secondary education, in vocational training, in special education, in literacy and other adult education, and even in higher education, and that there will be more women in leadership posts as head teachers and managers in the future, in BEFARe and eventually in Afghanistan."*

Ingeborg Breines  
Director, UNESCO Liaison Office, Geneva

# Section II

## THE UNHCR SUB-OFFICE IN PESHAWAR AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

UNHCR's sub-office in Peshawar plays a special role vis-à-vis BEFARe and it is that UNHCR office BEFARe relates to most frequently for all practical implementation purposes and field issues. UNHCR's sub-office in Peshawar has a much larger number of staff than the main office in Islamabad. However, there is also frequent contact between BEFARe and the UNHCR main office (called branch office) in Islamabad, especially as regards policy issues, planning of annual sub-agreements, reporting and overall monitoring of implementation.

BEFARe keeps in contact with the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) in Islamabad, and again more frequently with the Peshawar-based Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) and its Education Cell (EC). BEFARe also cooperates with the provincial government authorities in Peshawar, notably the Governor and the Minister of Education.

BEFARe has frequent contact with the Afghan Consulate-General in Peshawar and in particular its Education Department. Due to the nature of BEFARe's work there is less frequent contact with the Afghan Embassy in Islamabad.

Pupils who have attended BEFARe schools receive certificates, endorsed by the Afghan and Pakistani authorities in Peshawar, so that they can be recognized and admitted into the right class and continue their education, or take up work, upon return to Afghanistan, or elsewhere in Pakistan.

BEFARe teachers are also given letters, endorsed by the authorities, showing their education, BEFARe training and years of service. This is important for their further employment

in Afghanistan, or in Pakistan, if they do not return home immediately after they have left employment with BEFARe, either voluntarily, or because they have been laid off as part of the reduced funding of refugee activities in Pakistan.<sup>13</sup>

In this section we are only presenting one partner's statement, notably that of the Head of UNHCR's sub-office in Peshawar during 2000-2002, *Roy Herrmann*. In his thoughtful statement, he touches upon several important historical aspects of the Afghan refugee decades, including *achievements* and *shortcomings* in refugee education and several questions that were left unanswered, or issues that could have been handled differently.

Balancing of *secular and religious socialization and education* is mentioned. In hindsight, we can see that GTZ-BEFARe and other organizations providing education for refugees should have given these fields more focused attention. However, sources also indicate that there was quite close cooperation between religious and other community leaders and BEFARe.

The fields need further scientific studies and public debate so that the relative importance of religion in schooling can be agreed upon. There should be agreement on what teaching methods should be used for subject issues and how to create openness and tolerance towards other religions and customs. And that also includes foreigners' knowledge of and respect for Islam.

When reading Herrmann's statement we are reminded that it should be accepted that religious and moral issues are central in any society and culture and, hence, form fundamental parts of any country's socialization and education systems, whether spelt out

or being part of a 'hidden curriculum'.<sup>14</sup>

Herrmann takes up the field of *secondary education* and expresses concern about the fact that secondary and higher education has only been available for a tiny proportion of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, as is also the case elsewhere in refugee situations in developing countries.

These issues must be understood in a historical and geographical context, as must girls' education. In a not too distant future, it is our hope and belief that we will be able to provide Education for All at primary level, and further education in theoretical and practical subjects for a much larger proportion than today. Education for refugees in developing countries, including in cultures where formal secular education has had

limited space, is likely to see dramatic changes and improvements in the coming decade.

The *current backwardness*, with very few refugees continuing beyond primary school, which Herrmann draws attention to, is economically and socially negative. Educationalists and aid workers everywhere realize this, and in refugee situations it becomes clearest at the time of repatriation when lack of educated human resources for reconstruction is critical. For the individual refugees, men and women, further education and skills are required to make a living, rebuild their home country and reconcile and live in peace.

In his statement, Herrmann compliments GTZ-BEFARe for its consistency in providing "a decent quality of education, delivered professionally in difficult circumstances".



Roy Herman



Ahmed Warsame



Niaz Ahmad



Ifthikar ul Mulk Khan



Zeb Jan



Haji A. Khaliq Farahi

These photos include senior representatives of the UNHCR Sub-office in Peshawar, the Government of Pakistan and the Afghan Consul-General in Peshawar, Mr. Roy Herrmann, Head of UNHCR's Sub-Office in Peshawar, and earlier Deputy Head of the office in Quetta; Mr. Ahmed Warsame, Senior Programme Officer; Mr. Niaz Ahmad, Associate Programme Officer. All of these officers have since moved to other duty stations; Herrmann to UNHCR Headquarters; Warsame to South Sudan, where large numbers of long-term refugees from neighbouring countries have begun coming home; Mr. Ahmad has been promoted from national to international officer and serves in UNHCR's sub-office in Dadaab, Kenya, which mainly caters for Somali refugees.

Mr. Ifthikar ul Mulk Khan and Ms. Zeb Jan worked for many years in the Education Cell, Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (EC/CAR) in Peshawar, handling secondary education for Afghan refugees, funded by the Government of Pakistan and UNHCR under a sub-agreement. EC/CAR's secondary schools gave secondary school opportunities for many BEFARe primary school leavers, and had more than ten thousand pupils when the schools were closed at the end of the school year in 2005, due to unavailability of funds and as a measure to encourage repatriation.

Mr. Haji Abdul Khaliq Farahi, Afghanistan's Consul-General in Peshawar, is seen in the bottom right photo.

*Note: The selection of the sample of representatives included in the photos, and the issues highlighted, were made by the author of this book to the best of his judgment. Many others could have been added, for example from other years, if space had been available.*

**Roy Herrmann** Head of UNHCR's Sub-office, Peshawar (2000-2002). Earlier (1989-1991) he was Deputy Head of UNHCR's Sub-office, Quetta

*"I was the head of the UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar, Pakistan from August 2000 to March 2002. Earlier, 1989-1991 I had been the deputy of the Quetta sub-office. Peshawar sits at the end of the Khyber Pass and is a large centre for Afghans. Informal estimates claim well over one million refugees in the North West Frontier Province, and that number does not do justice to the many thousands of Afghans who live outside the camps and survive in small towns and cities across Pakistan."*

*"Over the years the Afghan refugee programme has been a major challenge for UNHCR, given the numbers involved and the fluidity of the situation. For a long time the Peshawar office was the organization's largest operational office. When I was in Quetta, Balochistan, it was the second or third largest refugee concentration in the World."*

*"During the jihad years, while there was a Soviet Union presence in Afghanistan, the refugee assistance programme was fairly well funded and services to refugees were extensive. However, when international attention shifted from Afghanistan support for the refugees still in Pakistan waned. Often the UNHCR offices had to make hard decisions about which sectors should be funded, at the cost of other activities."*

*"By the mid-1990s food assistance was ended for most of the refugee populations. This had significant impact on the refugees. Some refugees who felt insecure about returning to Afghanistan, were too poor to live in the camps without some food assistance. They left the camps and relocated all over Pakistan, wherever they could find work to sustain themselves. This was just one indication of the erosion of assistance to the camps from what they had been receiving during the 1980s. While conditions in the refugee camps inevitably declined, conditions for refugees who did not or could not live in the camps was considerably worsened."*

*"The tenacity of GTZ BEFARe throughout the years of its involvement was impressive. They consistently provided a decent quality of education, delivered professionally, in difficult circumstances. Classrooms in refugee camps were chronically crowded, with little support for maintenance. When a decision has to be made to prioritize essential services in refugee camps, water and health take precedence. Education, while very important, is not considered life sustaining, so it is often compromised."*

*"I can recall a couple of times when the safety of the programme managers was placed at risk when funds for teachers' salaries did not arrive on time because of budget problems or delayed agreements. Keeping teachers motivated despite the difficulties of working in remote villages, with minimal materials and support was another problem that had to be overcome."*

*"There were other problems that were encountered on a regular basis. Interesting parents in the value of a secular education was not always straightforward. For poorer families children are a source of income and sacrificing that for the long-term benefits of the classroom was not always popular. Girls' education was even more of a challenge for GTZ and the international community. In some communities apathy was overshadowed by resistance and, again, there were issues of safety and security involved."*

*"Secondary education, or the lack of it, is yet another frustration linked to promoting and supporting education among the refugees. For reasons of expediency UNHCR does not fund secondary education. Limited openings for refugees were secured for refugee students who qualified, but it does not begin to meet the demand. Undoubtedly it is difficult to promote continued education when the opportunities for advancing are so limited."*

*"In retrospect, one can ask oneself if secular education in the Afghan refugee camps had been better sustained, and supported at the secondary level, whether the GTZ BEFARe facilities might have counterbalanced the madrassas which have attracted so many earnest young men in search of learning."*

Roy Herrmann  
Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit  
UNHCR Headquarters, Geneva

In connection with our data collection for this chapter we interviewed several staff members dealing with education and other community services in UNHCR's sub-office in Peshawar. We present excerpts of interviews with a few of the senior and long-term staff members.

**Niaz Ahmad** began his work as education and public information officer in UNHCR's sub-office in Peshawar in 1988. When we spoke to him in November 2004, he was preparing to move to an international post in UNHCR in Kenya.<sup>15</sup>

Niaz gave BEFARe high marks for its work in general and, in particular, its leading role in teacher training.

"In some areas quality got better when the international organizations came in as implementing partners in 1996, taking over from the Government of Pakistan", Niaz recalls. "I was a member of the task force planning the new implementation system some ten years ago, and we had expected faster changes and improvements in many fields", he says. "For example, we had hoped that additional funding would have been secured from *donors outside UNHCR*, but that was not the case. This year, I am disappointed that Germany's bilateral assistance to the project has seized and that GTZ has almost completely pulled out of the project. UNHCR is again left with the responsibility for all funding to BEFARe."

Niaz adds that he would have liked to see even faster and better results in the field of *community participation* in the camps/villages, but admits that it has improved during recent years. Furthermore, he says that enrollment has improved but that it is still not good enough as he estimates that less than three quarters of the children of school-going age attend school in the camps/villages covered by BEFARe. (See other chapters in this book for further details concerning community participation and enrollment.)<sup>16</sup>

In his comments, the Senior Programme Officer at UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar, **Ahmed Warsame**, says that he finds BEFARe's work of high quality, both as regards *manage-*

*ment and provision of education and other support* to refugees in the camps/villages in NWFP. "BEFARe gives major qualitative inputs to refugee education in Pakistan, not only to their own project but to *the whole refugee education sector*", Warsame says. "However, BEFARe has recently become a local organization and *it should be supported by donors and other partners, not only UNHCR*. Having become a new entity BEFARe's performance needs to be *monitored* more closely than before, and *extra support given* in areas where it may have weaknesses. It is essential that BEFARe remains a credible organization since it will have a major role in fields related to refugees and refugee-hosting areas in years to come", Warsame says as he is himself packing his luggage as his three-year posting in Pakistan is over. He will move to UNHCR's important office in Southern Sudan, where repatriation, reconstruction and peace building are key fields after more than two decades of civil war in that country – not unlike the situation in Afghanistan. Warsame is from Somalia and his new and challenging post is near his home country.<sup>17</sup>

We held several meetings and informal interviews with staff members of the Education Cell of the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR/EC), including with **Ifthikar-ul-Mulk Khan** and **Zeb Jan**. As Government representatives, Ifthikar's and Zeb Jan's contact with BEFARe has been close, and to some extent CAR/EC has monitored BEFARe's work. However, CAR/EC has itself been an implementing partner, having had a sub-agreement with UNHCR for secondary education. Thus, it has also been a parallel organization to BEFARe. Many of BEFARe's primary school leavers have continued in CAR's secondary schools. Khan praises BEFARe's work but says that the implementing partner could also have done better in some fields, however without specifying in what fields.

CAR/EC's secondary school programme, which reached more than 10,000 pupils with over one hundred teachers, was closed at the end of the spring term in 2005 due to lack of funds.

UNHCR's Field Guidelines for Education gives priority to primary schools. The Guidelines define primary schooling as 8 years, not only 6 years as in Pakistan. Refugee pupils and parents, NGO staff and probably every teacher and educationalist will regret that the middle and secondary schools were closed *before* the refugees had returned home.<sup>18</sup>

In a meeting with the Afghan Consul-General in Peshawar, **Hon. Haji Abdul Khaliq Farahi**, we had the opportunity to listen to his opinions about overall refugee issues and in particular education issues. Hon. Farahi is the Afghan Government's highest-ranking representative in Pakistan's largest refugee-hosting area, NWFP. Entering the compound, which was crowded by Afghans seeking audience with the Consul-General and his staff in the various departments, including a separate education department, we realized that the office was busy and much larger than we had expected. At the time of our visit, many Afghans were applying for travel documents to go to Saudi Arabia for the holy Islamic pilgrimage known as *haj*.

Our audience with Hon. Farahi focused on his concern for the content of the refugee education provided in Pakistan, in BEFARe and other organizations. He was concerned about the importance of the *Afghan curriculum* being followed in refugee schools. He drew attention to the importance of teaching Dari, not only Pashtu, although most refugees in NWFP are Pashtuns. Afghanistan has two official languages and, therefore, both languages must be taught. Hon. Farahi said that he had been informed that BEFARe sometimes did not follow the Afghan curriculum to the letter.

He also emphasized that he would like to see as many *Afghan* teachers as possible employed in refugee schools, including in BEFARe's schools. He considered this important at a time when teachers

are being laid off as services are being reduced.

The Consulate-General endorses BEFARe certificates awarded to pupils and teachers, which is essential when they return home to Afghanistan, or if they stay on for some time in Pakistan, before returning, and need to attend urban schools as pupils or teachers.<sup>19</sup>

We would like to mention that the agreement between the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan indicates that up to *forty percent of teachers* in refugee schools can be Pakistani teachers and the rest Afghans. The percentage of Pakistanis is lower than the maximum allowed percentage. It should be noted that the reason for allowing a relatively high percentage of Pakistani teachers was originally that there were few Afghans who could teach certain subjects, such as English language, in earlier years.

As for languages, BEFARe is currently placing greater emphasis on Dari, in addition to Pashtu. It should be remembered, though, that the children have to cope with learning several languages, as English is also thought, and Urdu is taught, or at least spoken, by most pupils outside school. Thus, there is a limit to how many languages a child can learn as school subjects.

In long-term refugee situations it is seen as important that the refugees learn about the host-country, including its language and culture. Compared with refugee situations in Europe, East Africa and elsewhere, BEFARe and other implementing partners in Pakistan have been careful not to deviate very much from the Afghan curriculum. It is possible that it would have been advantageous to have gone further in modernizing the often outdated Afghan curriculum. However, a large number of supplementary teaching materials have been developed, especially by BEFARe and more recently also by Save the Children (US), Quetta, and other NGOs.<sup>20</sup>



*Nancy Hatch Dupree*



*Shahnaz Akhtar*



*Nayyar Iqbal*



*Sigurd Hanson*



*Hamish Khan*



*Sakena Yacoobi*



*Pilar Robledo*

These photos show the heads and other senior staff of some of BEFARe's sister implementing partner NGOs in refugee education. Ms. Nancy Hatch Dupree is the legendary 'grand old lady' and respected spokeswoman on behalf of all of them, in particular the Afghan refugees. She has for many years been the leader of ACBAR, the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, with the Education Sub-Committee, and the unique ARIC Library. ACBAR has offices in Peshawar and Kabul. Dupree is a member of BEFARe's Board of Trustees.

In the photos are also seen: Ms. Shahnaz Akhtar, Ockenden International (UK); Nayyar Iqbal, Save the Children (US); Mr. Sigurd Hanson, World Vision Pakistan, until 2006; Mr. Hamish Khan, Basic Education and Employable Skills Training (BEST); Professor Sakena Yacoobi, Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL); Pilar Robledo, International Rescue Committee (IRC), until February 2006;

*Note: The selection of the sample of representatives and organizations included in the photos, and the issues highlighted, were made by the author of this book to the best of his judgment. Many other NGOs could have been added if time and space had been available.*

# Section III

## SISTER IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

In this section we present comments by six of BEFARe's sister implementing partners and the main coordinating body in education and other refugee fields, ACBAR.<sup>21</sup> Unlike what we have done in the previous sections, we shall not attempt to summarize the comments and seek for commonalities and differences save for one, notably the comment by *Nancy Hatch Dupree*, ACBAR, about the importance of BEFARe's work in *developing teaching materials for pupils and teachers* and for carrying out some research-oriented tasks. She emphasizes the great importance of BEFARe's work in these fields.<sup>22</sup>

Before we leave the reader to study the comments by the various refugee education organizations we would, however, like to reflect on the roles of such organizations, i.e., implementing partners, NGOs, CBOs and other groups and even private companies and wealthy individuals, who can assist in refugee education and related fields.

Above, we asked if the UN organizations and the Government authorities did their utmost in securing funds and providing education for the refugees. We also questioned if UNHCR should continue being the main coordinator of refugee education. Here, we shall ask similar questions of the non-governmental organizations and the private sector: Did they do what they could to give education to refugee children, adolescents and untrained and illiterate adults? Could they have done more in advocacy awareness creation, for example to get more girls educated? Could they have done more vis-à-vis the various groups of donors? Could they have done better in implementation of projects and could

they have been more professional in their approaches and work in general? Finally, could they have cooperated more closely, possibly in a *consortium*, rather than competing for funds and sometimes keeping information from each other? Why were so few Pakistani (and Afghan) colleges and universities involved in refugee education – in the future, under normal and long-term circumstances, they will play key roles, not international NGOs?<sup>23</sup>

We shall not try to answer any of these questions but let them linger in the heads of the readers. In some other chapters of the book we come back to some of the questions, especially those related to cooperation and leadership, which we discuss in connection with teacher training and professional development.

In this section, besides asking critical questions and sounding like '*Besserwissers*'; we would like to celebrate the many good cooperation experiences that can be found. Every sister organization pays tribute to BEFARe's professionalism and its role as a leading organization in refugee education in Pakistan, especially in NWFP and Peshawar, the hub of the NGOs during the Afghan refugee era.

We would like to express thanks to the sister organizations, not merely for writing their statements in this section, but for the important work they are doing in refugee education and related fields, in Pakistan and in Afghanistan. GTZ has re-opened its education work in Afghanistan in 2005, and the coordinator is one of the pioneers from the agency's work in Pakistan, *Michael Hirth*. In the early years, when he was GTZ project head in Pakistan, one part of the project



moved to Afghanistan, where it is still known as AG BAS-Ed. The Pakistani AG BAS-Ed, with COPE as a key section and another vocational training section, became GTZ-BEFARe in 1996, gradually growing from 1990, and in 2003 it became BEFARe as it was registered as a local trust.<sup>24</sup>

The following list of sister NGOs could have been longer and included additional organizations. It is essential to underline that we have

included key implementing partners, which have sub-agreements with UNHCR. We have added one organization, notably World Vision, which has worked with BEFARe in 2005. It has been included because it points to one of BEFARe's major concerns for its future operations, notably to work in mixed Pakistani and Afghan communities in refugee-hosting areas, and also to expand its work beyond education and closely related fields, to other fields.<sup>25</sup>

**Nancy Hatch Dupree** Senior Consultant,  
Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief  
(ACBAR/ARIC), Peshawar and Kabul.

*cessor of BEFARe, AG Bas-Ed, which moved to Afghanistan many years ago, is still working well from its Kabul office.”*

Nancy Hatch Dupree  
Senior Consultant, ACBAR/ARIC, Peshawar and Kabul

*“BEFARe, and its predecessors, have always been essential in provision of education for the Afghan refugees in the camps in the NWFP province. Being such a large project organization, and having had some funds from other donors in addition to UNHCR, BEFARe developed a special status among the implementing partners in the host-country. BEFARe was a lead agency in refugee education, especially among the partners based in Peshawar. Sometimes, though, BEFARe operated independently and I tried to get all partners to work more closely together through the ACBAR Education Sub-committee.”*

*“Having spent much of my time on historical studies and documentation work related to Afghanistan and refugees, I would especially commend BEFARe for its work in developing additional teaching materials for pupils and teachers, and even carrying out some research-oriented tasks, publishing some books, a large number of reports and some video programmes.”*

*“The ACBAR Resource and Information Centre (ARIC) has built up a large collection of documents about Afghanistan and its history, which includes the refugee history in Pakistan. Save for the International Rescue Committee (IRC), no other refugee organization has as many books and reports as BEFARe in our library, and I think BEFARe has more than any other in the field of education. Their works on non-formal education issues are highly regarded by users.”*

*“I would like to mention that I felt quite honoured when I was asked to serve as one of the trustees on BEFARe’s new Board when it became a local organization a few years ago, and GTZ was dropped from its name. I hope that we will be able to make BEFARe a sustainable organization, which can serve needy Afghans and Pakistanis in education and other fields. A prede-*

**Hamish Khan** Managing Director, Basic Education and Employable Skills Training (BEST), Peshawar

*“In BEST we are particularly concerned about Basic Education, Vocational Training and Job Placement of our target group. The Pak-German Technical Training Programme and Pa-German Basic Education Project, which preceded BEFARe, paid special attention to the practical fields, and so did the short-lived VET project, under BEFARe, some five or six years back.”*

*“I feel a special relationship with BEFARe, since I worked in the organization earlier. I also did my engineering studies in Germany. Through GTZ, there is important German influence in many fields in BEFARe’s work. I would, in particular, mention such typical German ‘trademarks’ as thoroughness and attention to detail, not least in organizational matters.”*

*“However, now that BEFARe has become a local organization, like the one I am heading, I expect that we will both work more in fields related to mixed Afghan and Pakistani communities, mainly in the NWFP province. I hope that in the future we can develop common projects, or at least share experience and plans. BEFARe will remain our older brother!”*

Hamish Khan  
Managing Director, BEST, Peshawar

**Pilar Robledo** *Education Coordinator  
(until February 2006), International Rescue  
Committee (IRC), Peshawar*

*"I have only been working for IRC in Pakistan for a few years, but shortly after arriving I understood that BEFARe was a very important implementing partner. Many of the pupils who enroll in the Female Education Programme (FEP) schools have gone to BEFARe primary school. The shortage of secondary opportunities for Afghan refugees/returnees is alarming. Since IRC schools are registered with the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan, IRC schools are magnet schools that attract the top pupils applying from other organizations, in addition to those who have attended IRC primary schools."*

*"BEFARe and IRC are both based in Peshawar and we meet frequently at coordination meetings and in other settings. We have also worked together on special projects. Naturally, we exchange information. At IRC we are often impressed by BEFARe's multiple publications and child-centred materials and reports."*

*"The IRC has relied on BEFARe's literacy curriculum. This curriculum was developed to meet the specific needs of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. BEFARe has also provided materials to IRC's education projects in Afghanistan. BEFARe is the world's largest refugee education programme, and their contribution has been enormous."*

*"Gender equality issues, psychosocial well-being, child protection and peace education are key to IRC, and over recent years, BEFARe has given more attention to these issues, too. We have exchanged information and reports, and held meetings with BEFARe on these topics. These concerns will give repatriating teachers and students a chance to reconstruct a tolerant, democratic and peaceful Afghanistan."*

*Pilar Robledo  
Education Coordinator  
International Rescue Committee, Peshawar*

**Nayyar Iqbal** *Deputy Director for Refugee  
Programmes, Islamabad (from 2002), and  
former Programme Manager for Balochistan,  
Quetta (1996-2001), Save the Children,  
USA  
Islamabad*

*"Save the Children is the largest implementing partner for refugee education in Balochistan province and has always worked in close cooperation with BEFARe. The two organizations have exchanged information and learned from each other's expertise and experience. This was the case when developing home-based schools. We have also used each other's materials. For example, Save the Children uses some of the BEFARe developed textbooks in schools it supports in Balochistan refugee villages."*

*"Until 2002, when the new provisional Government in Afghanistan re-formed the Ministry of Education, both organizations were active in assisting in developing a strategy for education in Afghanistan, especially as related to returnees. This work took place under the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), with offices in Peshawar and Kabul."*

*"With the changed political situation in Afghanistan, BEFARe and Save the Children now work together as advocates for Afghan refugee children in Pakistan, and in ensuring that their refugee education programmes are as good as they can be, for as long as they are required, in meeting children's learning needs."*

*Nayyar Iqbal  
Deputy Director for Refugee Programmes  
Save the Children - USA, Islamabad*

**Shahnaz Akhtar** *Director for Pakistan, Ockenden International (United Kingdom), Islamabad (until the end of 2006)*

*"Before joining Ockenden International, I worked for GTZ for nine years in the provinces of Balochistan (BRSP) and NWFP (IRDP). GTZ has made major contributions to help Pakistan mobilize communities to help themselves. These achievements have been made through various projects in all four provinces in the country."*

*"I have always been impressed with the professionalism of staff sent out by GTZ as advisors, consultants and administrators. The organization here in Pakistan is a highly professional organization. My years with GTZ became the peak learning years in my career. Thanks to that experience, I have been able to head the Pakistan office of another international organization, notably Ockenden International."*

*"Over the years, GTZ started a number of activities. Yet, it has also created structures and prepared for the continuation of its development activities after it pulls out. BEFARe is the main example of a local organization having come directly out of GTZ's work. It is the world's largest NGO in the field of basic education for refugees with over one hundred thousand pupils in schools in the NWFP province. In addition, BEFARe also helps refugees prepare for sustainable repatriation and gives assistance for further education in Pakistan for those who are not ready for repatriation. Through numerous training courses, the teachers are also prepared for further work in refugee schools, and for work in ordinary schools at home in Afghanistan."*

*"Ockenden and BEFARe have been working together in refugee education in the north of NWFP, in Hangu, Thall and Kohat. Together, we succeeded in getting about fifty percent of the school-age refugee children enrolled in schools. The percentage may seem low, but it is not low for these communities, who, at home in Afghanistan, would rarely send their children to school at all. It was especially difficult to con-*

*vince them to send their daughters to school, and now about thirty percent of the pupils are girls. It has been very encouraging and rewarding to take part in this work."*

*"I believe that if the international community assists Afghanistan in the right way, in assisting in developing a strategy for education in Afghanistan, especially as related to returnees, the country can succeed in building peace. I don't believe that peace can be built through military and defense systems. I believe it can only be built through effective education. I also don't believe that the stick has any role in the school. Henceforth, we must develop content and teaching methods in our schools that contribute to creating peace loving young people."*

*"Some people argue that education takes a long time, and that we don't see the fruits of the investment for a long time. My answer is that education may take time, but that its results are long lasting. In education for Afghan refugees, I regret that we couldn't do more in the past. I feel passionate about continuing to expand our efforts in the future in the field of education for Afghan children and youth. I hope that Ockenden, BEFARe and other organizations can work more closely together in order to get more children into school. Human security, human rights and peace issues must be given a central place in our future education activities."*

*"Since international donors have started reducing their budgets to education already in 2005, we may have to seek new means and methods of provision of education. In order to do that, NGOs must work more closely together. I would also hope that BEFARe keeps receiving GTZ and other German assistance because in our type of work we rely on donor funding. In the years to come, I hope that all organizations dealing with Afghan refugees and poor Pakistanis in the refugee-hosting rural and urban areas can work more closely together. The cumulative competence acquired over many years in the NGOs and self-help schools and community services, is quite formidable."*

*"On behalf of the Pakistani community, I would like to thank GTZ for its contribution to the uplift of Afghan and Pakistani rural communities. I hope that the agency will continue its good work in Pakistan and in other countries. GTZ, as well as other organizations, can improve*

*work performance, based on experience and new knowledge. For example, I would suggest that components like the following ones are taken into consideration from the stage of project planning: (1) coordination and cooperation with sister organizations; (2) special attention should be given to gender issues; (3) phasing-out strategies should be developed; and (4) maintaining projects at a manageable size.”*

*Shahmaz Akhtar*

*Director for Pakistan, Ockenden International (UK),  
Islamabad*

**Professor Sakena Yacoobi** *Chief Executive  
Director, Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL),  
Peshawar and Kabul*

*“We, at the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), have worked with BEFARe and other organizations, such as IRC, UNICEF and UNESCO, in connection with development of curriculum and materials for teacher training. We have used BEFARe’s excellent literacy materials in our literacy programme.”*

*“It was wonderful to work in professional teams of trainers and scholars when we developed books and other materials for refugees. The materials that were developed have now become useful resources for Afghan teachers and students at home in Afghanistan. They have become a great help as we struggle to give today’s children high quality, world-class education so that they will be able to continue rebuilding Afghanistan. The children are the future of our country and tomorrow’s leaders. The books are part of what we need in order to provide them with quality education.”*

*“In Peshawar, I would like to say we were all impressed by BEFARe’s work. It is such a large organization and it has provided primary education to hundreds of thousands of Afghan children. It has also provided teacher training to several thousand teachers. The organization’s work has had a positive impact on the education of Afghan children and when more teachers and pupils return home to Afghanistan, we will reap even*

*more of the fruits of their work.”*

*“I would like to mention that AIL is an Afghan women’s NGO, established, led and run by women. Directly and indirectly, we serve 350,000 women and children annually in various locations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our programmes include teacher-training and other education activities from pre-school until university level. AIL has Women’s Learning Centers and provides health care education and a number of other courses. We also publish a magazine.”*

*Professor Sakena Yacoobi*

*Chief Executive Director*

*Afghan Institute of Learning, Peshawar and Kabul*

**Sigurd Hanson** *Country Director,  
International Rescue Committee (IRC),  
Peshawar (1999-2002) and from 2004,  
Country Director of World Vision,  
Islamabad (until 2006)*

*“During my time as the Director of IRC in Pakistan, based in Peshawar, I enjoyed close cooperation with the larger education organization GTZ-BEFARe. IRC complemented BEFARe’s activities because IRC focused, not only on basic education but also on secondary education and especially girls’ education and training of female teachers.”*

*“We worked with BEFARe putting together a large database of refugee teachers - about 5,000, I believe, and probably the largest such database that has ever been made. It was a great help for the Afghan educational authorities, NGOs and other organizations in Afghanistan when recruiting staff. It was also an important incentive to refugee teachers to help them to return home to Afghanistan and hopefully get employment as teachers or administrators with NGOs and other organizations there.”*

*“In World Vision I have also had the opportunity to work with BEFARe in a non-education field, notably an income-generating agricultural project, which was implemented in 2005. I believe that organizations such as BEFARe with long and broad experience, and with flexible approaches, can take on many types of projects.*

*Naturally, BEFARe has special competence in education for children, adolescents and adults, and community development, but it also has general development management competence. This experience is such that they can manage most types of emergency and development projects.*

*I am sure that education will remain their cornerstone in the future, but that they will also add other activities. I believe that BEFARe, and other organizations which have served Afghan refugees for decades, will develop their activities in order to include mixed Pakistani and Afghan target groups in future. There is great need for providing education, social services, vocational and skills training to the urban poor, whether*

*they are former refugees or poor Pakistanis.”*

*“I look forward to drawing upon BEFARe’s experience in possible future collaboration, and in some fields they may gain from working with a large international organization like World Vision, which focuses on children and marginalized people in more than 100 countries worldwide, irrespective of creed, religion or any other characteristic, as we believe we are all God’s creation. Whenever we can, we are glad to work with local organizations and authorities in alleviating poverty”, Sigurd Hanson says.*

*Sigurd Hanson*

*Country Director, World Vision - Pakistan*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> (a) We have taken up the general enrollment issues in various chapters in this book, and we have touched upon it even in this chapter. It is a sad fact that the majority of the refugee children could not even get primary school while in exile. All of us who have worked in the field of Afghan refugee education in Pakistan share responsibility, i.e., donors and partners, experts, researchers, etc. Still, a lot of good work was also done.

(b) We would like to *thank sincerely* all those who have contributed to this chapter, by writing statements and by giving comments and ideas that helped us to write our introductions to the chapter and the sections. All statements have been circulated to all those who have written statements. The statements were written in spring/summer 2005. The author's text has not been circulated to those who wrote statements.

<sup>2</sup> See, various GTZ-BEFARe Annual Reports. See also, other internal documents, UNHCR, Islamabad and Peshawar, and internal BEFARe documents.

<sup>3</sup> As above. See also internal documents in GTZ, Islamabad, and Economic Cooperation Unit, Embassy of Germany, Islamabad and Kabul. It should be added that there are persons and groups on the Pakistani, Afghan and German sides who would like to see assistance to refugees/returnees increased considerably, even at this time. Afghanistan receives considerable assistance from Germany and the two countries enjoy close cooperation.

<sup>4</sup> See, internal documents in BEFARe and NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council), Peshawar, 2005. See also NRC: *Pakistan Education Project*. (Final Report from project in Kurram Agency, NWFP, prepared by Fisher, Tove and Fran Qureishi.) Peshawar, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> There are major coordinating bodies for development aid to Afghanistan, which include the Government, multi- and bilateral organizations. In addition, there are sector groups, which also include international and local NGOs, experts, etc. During the years prior to the establishment of the Interim Government in Afghanistan, following "9/11" and the invasion at the end of October 2001, international organizations and diplomats were evacuated and operated mostly from Islamabad, Pakistan, where there were also top-level and sector coordination bodies for assistance to Afghanistan, planning of assistance and monitoring of developments.

<sup>6</sup> A number of catalogues listing organizations (NGOs)

and lists of projects were developed by ACBAR, Peshawar, about five-six years ago. They were of great help to donors and various NGOs. Also other coordinating bodies, such as ANCB, had networks of contact or member organizations. Some coordination took place on regional basis, i.e., Peshawar-NGOs, Quetta-NGOs, and so on. Documents are available at the ARIC Library at ACBAR.

<sup>7</sup> See recent statistics from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Montreal, Canada. [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org)

<sup>8</sup> See various United Nations documents related to humanitarian aid, refugee issues, migration, etc. There are old and new groups in the national and international migration pattern. IDPs belong to one, or rather several 'old groups', but more focused humanitarian, legal and other studies and response programmes are needed. Labour migration can be voluntary, semi-voluntary or forced. Child trafficking for labour, sex and other reasons is an increasing problem. So is other human trafficking for a number of reasons. Some of these issues fall outside UNHCR's mandate, others are inside, or on borderlines of what the organization could competently handle. Closer cooperation among a number of organizations will in future be needed in these growing fields.

<sup>9</sup> See Government of Pakistan and UNHCR: *Census of Afghans in Pakistan*. 23<sup>rd</sup> February – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005. Islamabad, 2005. See also UNHCR's three reports: *Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan*, 2003/ 2004 and 2005. UNHCR, Islamabad.

<sup>10</sup> (a) *Ibid.* (b) UNHCR: *Searching for Solutions*. 25 Years of UNHCR – Pakistan cooperation on Afghan Refugees. UNHCR, Islamabad, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Our main interview with Dr. Imran Zeb Khan was held on 30.12.04. Several other meetings and discussions took place.

<sup>12</sup> There is a vast amount of literature on girls' education. There is also a good amount of literature on skills and vocational training, 'second chance education', etc. See the Websites of various UN organizations, such as, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, and others. Plans and projects are also under way in Afghanistan and in relation to refugees in Pakistan. Reference is made to the NGOs and to the ARIC Library, ACBAR, Peshawar and Kabul. The GTZ-BEFARe Evaluation in 2002 reviewed all these issues. See, Johannessen, Eva Marion et al: *Evaluation of GTZ/Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe) in Pakistan*. Final report. UNHCR, Geneva, June 2002.

<sup>13</sup> In 2005 many refugee teachers have been laid off. BEFARe has had various planning figures in its contingency and specific (areas-based) plans. Some forecasts have estimated that up to 1,000 Afghan and Pakistani refugee teacher had to be laid off from BEFARe alone in 2005, which prove to be true. When the secondary schools for refugees under CAR/EC were closed, hundreds of teachers lost their jobs, or were transferred to other schools run by the Government of Pakistan. In the years to come, there will continue to be reduction in employment of teachers. Mechanisms for further training and employment of teachers who are being laid off should be developed urgently at such times of repatriation, or planning of repatriation. For the teachers who are Afghans repatriation, resettlement and employment assistance should be sought. Pakistani teachers, and Afghan teachers who do not return home immediately, should be given additional training to work among urban refugees and in refugee-hosting areas in cities and towns in Pakistani-Afghan communities, many of which are very poor settlements in great need of assistance. After the huge earthquake in Northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005 we assume many refugee teachers found temporary employment in fields they have special competencies.

<sup>14</sup> (a) Roy Herrmann's statement was written in the late summer 2005. He reflects on a number of challenging issues. Some of them have been dealt with in a book published by UNHCR in 2001. Crisp, Jeff et al: *Learning for a Future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*. UNHCR, Geneva, 2001. See also the Bibliography for books by Margaret Sinclair and others.

(b) Various types of Muslim education are being studied more in recent years. Donors have also shown interest in studying and assisting pilot and other projects. The American Government aid agency, USAID, is giving the field attention in Pakistan. The Norwegian Government aid agency, Norad, took up these issues several years ago. Donors are usually interested in finding ways of including secular subjects in the religious schools, modernizing teaching methods, and up-grading teachers' qualifications. It is generally appreciated that many poor children have no alternative but attending religious schools. Fewer girls than boys have opportunities to attend these schools (and social support institutions).

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Niaz Ahmad, UNHCR, Peshawar, on 24.11.04.

<sup>16</sup> BEFARe, with the assistance of UNHCR, Save the Children (Sweden) and others have given community development particular attention during recent years, and the organization has had major success in its efforts. Documentation can be found in BEFARe's internal documents.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Muhammad Warsame Ahmed, UNHCR, Peshawar, on 23.11.04.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with CAR/EC staff, Peshawar, 23.11.04.

(a) See UNHCR's *Field Guidelines*, 2003. (b) In "The News on Sunday", Islamabad/Lahore, Pakistan, 14.08.05, Dr. Dana Burde, Colombia University Teachers College,

New York, says in an interview entitled "Women in Crisis" that "Reducing funding for education activities in Afghan refugee villages in the absence of complementary plans to create viable education options elsewhere is a mistake. History shows that cutting basic services to refugees when security is still problematic in the country of their origin does not encourage repatriation. On the other hand, it may encourage more Afghan refugees to migrate to urban centers of Pakistan — this happened after aid was reduced in the mid-1990s and seems to be happening again now." (c) In the author's experience from Turkana, Kenya, which has for two decades hosted large numbers of mainly Sudanese refugees, the importance of primary and secondary education was emphasized in the "Turkana Development Forum", ICED, Nairobi, in the 1990s. However, the general understanding among donors for the key role of education was limited, especially for secondary and technical education, and its role at the time of repatriation and reconstruction. One reason for lack of understanding can be that many donor representatives only spend three-four years in a country and these issues need longer attention than that. In Kenya, the refugee camps are in remote areas where diplomats would fly up on brief day-trips, hardly letting the refugees problems get under their skin.

<sup>19</sup> Meeting with Consul-General Hon. Haji Abdul Khaliq Farahi, Peshawar, on 22.12.04.

<sup>20</sup> (a) Curriculum issues are complicated and there will always be various opinions among teachers, parents, and others. Major policy work has to precede the concrete curriculum and textbook development and production. Afghanistan is in the middle of its renewal and revision of the school content, including discussions about teaching methods and attitudinal orientation. UNESCO International Bureau of Education (UIB), Geneva, is one international center in this field. UIB is working with education authorities and international organizations in Pakistan. (b) Literacy and adult education issues are other complicated fields. UNESCO's Regional Office in Bangkok has specialized on literacy issues, mainly related to South-East Asia. (c) As an apropos to the language controversy in Pakistan, we would like to add that this is a relatively small problem compared to what other countries face. In East Africa, refugees from the Francophone Rwanda and Burundi would usually learn in schools using English as a medium of instruction. Yet, one plans that these refugees are also to return home but English is so strong in the country of asylum (and French only a school subject for a few middle-class secondary school pupils) that it is considered acceptable, or even an advantage to use English.

<sup>21</sup> Some coordination issues in refugee education has been discussed in articles by Atle Hetland in *Forced Migration Review* (FMR), Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford, Nos. 22 and 23, 2005. [www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org)

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Dr. Nancy Hatch Dupree, ACBAR/ARIC, Peshawar, 02.12.04. Teaching materials and research have been discussed mainly in other chapters in this book, since those fields, especially teaching materials, have



been given special focus throughout BEFARe's history.

<sup>23</sup> (a) See reference under Note 21. (b) See also internal documents in ACBAR and in most NGOs and UN organizations dealing with refugee issues. Improvement in coordination at local levels is a field where few achievements have been made in recent years. Initiatives have been taken at international level. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) was established in 2000, and other networks have also been established for example for livelihoods training. (c) The importance of including university institutions have been taken up by Hetland and Burde in articles in FMR, Nos. 22 and 23, 2005. Pakistani's Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad, has expertise in how to establish and run inter-university links. Most/all Pakistani and Afghan teacher training colleges and universities have competence, or can build up competence,

in fields relevant to refugee education and other refugee issues. In the long run it is always the country's indigenous institutions that must run the country's own institutions, with some benefits from linkages within the country, with neighbouring countries and overseas. (c) For a more comprehensive discussion of coordination issues, see, Sommers, Marc: *Co-ordinating education during emergencies and reconstruction: challenges and responsibilities*. IIEP/UNESCO. Paris, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> See various GTZ-BEFARe Annual Reports.

<sup>25</sup> BEFARe's future innovation and R&D ability will be tested in the coming years. Many changes have to be made, such as, to move from being an organization mainly for refugees to include mixed populations of poor Afghans and Pakistanis in refugee-hosting areas. Secondly, BEFARe wished to add other sectors to its main focus on education.



From a banner used at a photo exhibition in 2005, marking the 25 years of UNHCR - Pakistan Cooperation.

## Part II

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## Historical Background and Current Affairs

Afghanistan and Afghan Refugees in  
Pakistan

Chapter

# 2



# Historical Background and Current Affairs

## Afghanistan and Afghan Refugees in Pakistan

*The history of refugee education in Pakistan runs parallel with Afghan refugee history in Pakistan. Especially after 1996, the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR began using international organizations more directly as implementing partners for education projects, which UNHCR was the major funding agency for. The project we are studying in some detail in this book, “Basic Education for Afghan Refugees” (BEFARe) and its predecessors, has a twenty-year history in implementing education activities for refugees in Pakistan. As a background to learning more about that project and other educational activities for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, we shall in this chapter present a general overview of Afghanistan’s history, including the refugee era following the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in December 1979. Some refugees had come even earlier due to internal conflicts and uncertainty about Afghanistan’s future.*

*Although we attempt to give the reader an overview that can form a useful background when reading the other chapters directly related to education, we do not in any way attempt to give an exhaustive historical overview. We also assume that many readers will already have a good knowledge of Afghanistan’s past and contemporary history, including personal experience from the wars and conflicts over the last quarter century. Some of the readers will be refugees, who will know many aspects of the history better than the author of this book.*

*The chapter is descriptive and analytical. At the same time, we try to give some more personal glimpses of the land and people. We also hope that this short chapter will encourage further reading and debate.*



Afghan Kings from the signboard in a school in Jalozei Refugee Camp/Village. NWFP. 2005.

## Some Historical Data

1. Afghanistan has been ruled as a political entity since 1747 although an ordinary central government has hardly existed. The capital Kabul and major cities and towns along trade routes have developed with modern enclaves while the hinterland, the mountains and valleys, where most people live lag behind in most fields, such as water supply, health, nutrition, hygiene, education and economic livelihoods. Although most of the land is dry agriculture, horticulture and pastoralism are the major productive sectors in addition to trade, carpet weaving and handicrafts. Illegal opium poppy cultivation and smuggling accounts for at least 50-60% of the country's foreign exchange earnings. That income is obviously kept away from official taxation. It is a major factor in keeping corruption alive and it gives the warlords a possibility to maintain control over people in the vast remote rural areas and also in towns and cities outside Kabul. Afghanistan is listed as one of the world's five poorest countries in UNDP's Human Development Report 2004. The indicators for children especially girls and adult women remain particularly poor.

2. The monarchy was toppled in 1972 and turbulent years followed, including the take-over by a Communist friendly regime in 1978 allowing the invasion by the Soviet Union in the last days of December 1979. The USSR had to withdraw in 1989, towards the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the superpower a few years later. Again turbulent years followed, with half-hearted American and Western support. The ultra-conservative sectarian Islamic regime known as Taliban ruled from 1996 until the

American led and NATO/Western supported invasion in October 2001, following the tragic world events in New York and Washington D.C. on 11 September 2001, for which Osama bin Laden was made responsible. It was assumed he lived in Afghanistan, although he has not yet been found. In any case, the Taliban regime and Osama bin Laden's terrorist incitement through the Al Qaeda network were closely related.

3. The last 25 years of Afghanistan's history has seen one of the world's worst refugee crisis ever. One-third of the country's population became refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), and every household was either directly or indirectly affected. The majority of the refugees were forced to migrate to neighboring countries: Pakistan has hosted 5 - 7 million refugees and Iran has hosted 3½ - 4 million refugees. Some sought asylum or resettlement in other countries, including in Europe, North-America, and Oceania.

4. The successful voluntary repatriation from the neighbouring countries has been assisted by UNHCR since March 2002. Over 2.5 million people have returned home from Pakistan and 1.2 million from Iran. Relatively few have returned from countries further away. There are still close to 3 million Afghans living in Pakistan and more than 0.5 million in Iran, as repatriation continues. Several hundred thousand live in other countries. Returning home is the preferred durable solution, although it is not easy to return home either considering the general poverty level and the destruction of the country from a

quarter century of wars, and the fact that the majority of the refugees have lived in exile for 10-15 years, sometimes longer, and the young generation has never lived at home.

5. Life in Afghanistan is difficult for returnees as well as for the majority of the country's 25 million people who have lived at home throughout the war years. There is unemployment and shortage of housing; there are great problems in fields like security, health, education (especially post-primary education), electricity, transport, etc. However, in October 2004 the Afghans for the first time held a democratic presidential election, followed by parliamentary and local government elections in September 2005. H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai is Afghanistan's president. The former, elderly King Shah has been invited home from exile in Italy and has an honorary role only in the emerging "modern Afghanistan".

6. Cautious optimism exists as for future peace and development. Afghanistan has joined in on the war against terrorism. Aside from being important to its immediate neighbours, the country's strategic geopolitical position makes it important to the world's super, great and regional powers. The majority (80-90%) of the Government's budget for development and recurrent costs originates from development aid. The military and security assistance from the coalition forces is still required to avoid relapse into great uncertainty and chaos. The United Nations, bilateral donors and NGOs play key roles alongside the coalition forces to facilitate and support Afghanistan's own development efforts.

**Note:** See also the Table and Map at the introduction of Chapter 3 about the *Refugee History*.





## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan and Afghanistan share major elements of a common history, geography, culture and Islamic religion. Pakistan has a population of more than 160 million and Afghanistan's population is estimated at 25-30 million. An estimated one and half million Afghans have died as a result of the conflict in Afghanistan. It has been estimated that as many as a third of the country's people have been uprooted from their homes to live in exile or as internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to wars, insecurity, environmental, economic and social factors. Pakistan's territory is as large as the United Kingdom and France combined; Afghanistan is smaller, but still larger than France. The heterogeneous peoples of Afghanistan have been ruled as a political entity since 1747, when Ahmad Shah Durrani founded the monarchy that lasted until 1973.

Afghanistan has suffered from the expanding interests of its immediate neighbours for over a century, notably the Russian and British empires (including British India). During the Cold War era, United States of America, partly with its military and economic allies, including the military alliance of NATO (the European-American North Atlantic Treaty Organization), were competing for control. The Soviet Union occupied the country from the end of 1979 to 1989. This period was followed by internal conflicts and unstable regimes. The Mujahideens, a regime made up of several fractions of more moderate Islamic groups, ruled until 1994, when the Taliban captured Kandahar and gradually took over other cities and rural areas in the following years, and controlled most of the country from 1996. The Taliban was an ultraconservative

Islamic regime, but at the same time without a clearly defined basis or ideology. The West, or more specifically USA, did not play a proactive role in support of the Mujahideen, and the Taliban were supported secretly. Different alliances after the Soviet era could have changed the history of Afghanistan. Pakistan assisted and sympathized with the Taliban, especially at the initial stages.

Only three countries had diplomatic ties with the Afghanistan during the Taliban rule, notably Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The West soon became scared of 'the monster that came out of the bottle', and was particularly concerned that under the Taliban women were hardly allowed to work outside the home, and girls were banned from attending school in many areas. Criminals, minorities, opponents of all kinds and those not toeing the extreme and sometimes peculiar interpretation of Islamic laws and rules, were treated brutally.

After the tragic world events in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 ("9/11"), the United States with its allies moved swiftly to occupy Afghanistan as its Taliban rulers were believed to have harboured the leader of the attack, Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda terrorist network. It was also assumed that Al Qaeda and Bin Laden had been behind the late 1990s bombing of American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Whether these were the real reasons for the USA and its allies to occupy Afghanistan will not be clear until relevant documents are declassified, or other proof becomes available, but it gave an opportunity for the West to gain control of the

country, with its strategic geographical position of regional and international importance. One economic reason for the West's intervention is its interest in building and controlling an oil and gas pipeline from Central Asia to the ports further south; "the warm waters", as Russia has called them. Russia has had, and may still have interest in expansion and control southwards. This geopolitical conflict, which has also been termed the "Great Game", may not yet be over.

The reasons for the occupation of Afghanistan and whether it can be justified goes beyond the purpose of this chapter. "Great powers have long-term strategic objectives that are difficult to understand for ordinary people. Their perspectives are not in a few decades but in centuries", says Dr. Babar Shah, Associate Professor at the Area Studies Centre for Russia, China and Central Asia at the University of Peshawar.

Afghanistan now has an opportunity to develop into a stable and modern state, for the first time in its history, although it would be naïve to expect developments to be smooth and swift, considering two factors. Firstly, that the occupying force, with its allies, is likely to stay to 'oversee developments' for a long time to come, and that some groups, with or without external support, may sooner or later object to this. Secondly, it is a country with many internal conflicts, extreme poverty and low social and economic indicators. Afghanistan is today listed among the world's five poorest countries as per UNDP's Human Development Report. It is positive, that for the first time in its history, Afghanistan held democratic presidential elections in October 2004, and the Interim President, Hamid Karzai, became the country's President for a five-year period, with parliamentary elections in mid-September 2005.

Afghanistan receives support from its neighbours. Pakistan works closely with the West in the war on terror, which includes assisting the new rulers in Afghanistan. Elsewhere in this chapter, we have underlined the importance of close cooperation between neighbouring coun-

tries in general and Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular.

## PEOPLE, GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY

Pashtuns, who constitute about three quarters of the refugees in Pakistan, are about 50-60 percent of Afghanistan's population, mainly inhabiting the southeastern part of the country. There are also a large number of Pashtuns in northwestern Pakistan. Thus, the total number of Pashtuns in the two countries, including its various sub-groups, are about twenty million people.

The international border between the two countries, the Indo-Afghan border known as the 'Durand Line' is over 2,400 kilometers and demarcates Afghanistan's eastern and southern frontiers. The border was drawn quite arbitrarily in 1893 to separate the Afghan and British responsibilities in the Pashtun area. This was at the high tide of British colonial rule and British India included what is today Pakistan. The border, named after the British Indian Foreign Secretary, Sir Mortimer Durand, who chaired the British Commission, which determined the border, led to thorny border disputes between Afghanistan and British India, and, after 1947, between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

During the British colonial rule, Punjab province included large territories with populous rural and urban settlements, including such major cities as Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar in today's Pakistan, and at some stage, Jalalabad and Kabul in Afghanistan. The British fought three wars in Afghanistan, in 1838-42, 1878-80 and 1919, all of which led to massive casualties and retreat. Afghanistan has historically been targeted by several larger neighbouring countries and empires, and it has suffered from internal rivalry among central and regional royal and military leaders. In one sense it is surprising that such a large, diverse, and divided country actually remains one country. Whether Afghanistan is yet a nation is another issue but we believe it is on its way to further integration and nation

building, with more clearly defined roles of the central government and the regional leaders, who are often warlords.

Peshawar has been a commercial and trading centre for Afghanistan and Pakistan for many centuries. Further south in Pakistan's Balochistan province, Quetta plays a similar but lesser role to Peshawar, as a major border city, with Kandahar on the other side of the border in Afghanistan. Pakistan's former capital, the large port city of Karachi, with a population of at least 12 million people, has always been a melting pot of people from all over Pakistan, neighbouring countries, and further away in the region. Afghan refugees have settled in urban areas in Karachi and some in other coastal towns in Sindh province. Refugees have also settled in the city of Lahore and elsewhere, including in a refugee camp in Minanwali in Punjab province. Afghan businessmen have also settled in Pakistan, or they travel back and forth between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and also to other countries. The transport sector in Karachi, for example, is known for major Afghan operators.

In 1960, Pakistan's capital was moved from Karachi to Islamabad, on the planes below the Margalla Hills, on the outskirts of Rawalpindi in Punjab province, and the federal capital territory, which is growing rapidly, has developed into a substantial city of close to one million inhabitants. The twin-cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have more than four million inhabitants.

Such a major and growing metropolitan area hosts all kinds of people in search of livelihoods, education, and so on, including a large number of urban Afghan refugees. At its peak in 2001, the number of refugees in this area was estimated to be two to three hundred thousand poor urban refugees. Some were involved in illegal activities. There are also refugees from other countries, including from as far away as Somalia and other African countries.

When discussing Afghan history as related to Pakistan, which has a major migration and refugee problem, the Pashtuns should always be

given special mention. However, other ethnic groups also live in the major "Pashtun cities", especially in Kabul, being Afghanistan's capital and Peshawar. Quetta is also ethnically quite mixed. Karachi is said to house more Pashtuns than any other city. In our refugee context it should be mentioned that Quetta city has a colony of Hazara people, who migrated from Afghanistan in the 1950s. The refugees in Pakistan constitute other ethnic groups too. The tribal aspect has not been such a major issue and reason for conflicts in Afghanistan's history as we seem to think today. Geographic, resource and economic reasons are more important reasons for conflicts. However, in Afghanistan there will usually be one larger ethnic group in each area. In public debate today, the tribal or ethnic issue are probably given more attention than is justified.

There are two major official languages in Afghanistan, Pashtun and Dari; the latter closer to Persian and widely spoken in the north, in cities like Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif, and in the west and southwest. There are other languages and ethnic groups, related to the Central Asian neighbours, and in the west, the spoken languages or dialects have similarities with Turkish. All these aspects contribute to Afghanistan's multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism.

Interestingly, you can find indigenous Afghans with blue eyes and blonde hair, others have Chinese or Mongolian features, and yet others have features belonging to the Indian sub-continent, and Pashtun are more fair skinned than other people further south and east on the sub-continent and take pride in that. The variation and beauty of the Afghan people is admired - and envied - in neighbouring countries and beyond. Sometimes authors describe the men as cut out of Rudyard Kipling's novels and the women as beautiful and gracious as Hollywood movie stars. No wonder perhaps that the women have to cover themselves with a large headscarf, dupatta, or wear a complete burkha?

Afghanistan and its people, livelihoods, nature, geography, and so on, are a mixture, and

the country has all shades and facets of beauty, ugliness, kindness and ruthlessness, hardship and idleness, religious serenity and misunderstood extremism. Geo-politically Afghanistan is at the crossroads between east and west, north and south. The mountainous country, with ranges over 3000 meters, has limited natural resources. Only about one tenth of the land is arable, although irrigation is often required since water is a particularly scarce resource in most parts of the country. The environment and climate is harsh, especially in wintertime. The Afghans have traditionally been nomads, or semi-nomadic pastoralists and agriculturalists, who migrate seasonally with their animals to grassland on higher elevations over some summer weeks, and then back to the lower and milder valleys during the winter season. Some wealthier people from Kabul, Jalalabad, and other cities, along with tradesmen, have traditionally traveled to Peshawar and elsewhere in Pakistan, for a stint during the coldest winter months at home. Agriculture and horticulture, with forestry, form the backbone of the country's natural economy. Management and development of these sectors is highly required.

Afghans have traditionally been traders, carpet weavers and artisans, tinsmiths and goldsmiths and smugglers. They have lived under more or less despotic Kabul monarchs, who could not control the whole land behind the mountains and valleys. Other smaller kings and warlords ruled and dictated their territories from regional centres. Some succumbed and others did not; conflict and strife were rampant. Tiny elite groups or families developed in Kabul and other cities.

History has shaped the Afghans to become independent and unique people, for good and for bad. Afghanistan has never been and will probably never be a land of 'milk and honey'. Well, honey is actually one of the commodities Afghans do sell, along with dried apricots, wild berries, almonds and other products that require little water to grow.

## GENDER ISSUES

We have already mentioned that the Taliban discriminated against women and girls, making them second-class citizens, confined to the home. But how were women treated traditionally in Afghanistan and how do they fare today? The picture is mixed, as real life always is. Women were sometimes seen as the man's property, to bear his children and look after his homestead, cultivate the land, weave the carpets, bring up the children, and handle most of the daily



Many traditions affecting Afghan women need to change in the future. Education is a key 'change agent'.

*Photo: UNHCR Magazine "Refugees", Vol 1, No. 134, 2004.*

chores, including keeping order in the home. Women and children would take part in income generating activities, including carpet weaving, tilling the land, and do other things. There was not, and there is not, much of Western type gender equality, but we should also bear in mind that an Afghan woman's duties if she is in charge of major aspects of a large rural household went far beyond a housewife's duties in the Western world, although most women in Afghanistan lived a life under the men's control. Times are changing in Afghanistan albeit more slowly in remote and conservative villages, which have found and also got stuck in certain ways of living. Yet, the division of labour and the fact that often the women run the homestead gives women some responsibility.

Perhaps we should add, a bit poetically, that the women would have major duties because the men would have ridden on their horses beyond many hills and mountains - to return to get what would be their right - in happiness or otherwise, with nothing, or with gold and glitter! Well, this may have been the past. True, but to many Afghans in the rural and remote areas in this vast land, life is probably much the same today as it has been for generations. Time has not stood still, and there has been a lot of outside influence, not least through occupations and wars, and through refugees returning home. Yet, daily life and comfort has not changed much. Social and economic indicators show that Afghanistan is among the five poorest countries in the world, even when we take into consideration the income from the illegal opium poppy cultivation and sale.

Poverty affects women and children particularly severely, but also affects the men, directly and indirectly, psychologically and socially, as the men are usually the breadwinners in the families. Wars and conflicts have affected both men and women. Widowed women live in particularly difficult circumstances, even now after the Taliban regime's overthrow. Although the Taliban were extreme, many old fashioned and religiously conservative people in Afghanistan and else-



Sad past - happy future?

where may have a streak of their attitudes without being 'bad people'. The Taliban would argue that they did what they did to protect the women, not to keep them down. But can we be sure? Furthermore, the Taliban policies were at least a hundred or two hundred years behind the rest of the world, which has become a 'global village'.

Change will take time, but there is a wind of change and modernization blowing over Afghanistan, not least in the fields of gender equality and education. Afghanistan should also build on positive aspects of its own gender history, not just ape Western ideas of the day. It should be careful with the latter if and when they contradict deep cultural traditions and religious beliefs, which in Afghanistan almost always means Islamic religious beliefs. We should remember that the country is an Islamic state, and that includes certain gender rules and regulations that are different from Western ones.

Early in 2005, we had an interview with a group of young Afghan refugees, who were about to complete primary school in a refugee camp outside Peshawar. A twelve-year old girl, whose mother is a doctor and the father a policeman, said she would like to become a doctor. In Afghanistan, female doctors are normally only allowed to attend to female patients, and male doctors attend to male patients. More doctors, nurses and midwives are urgently needed in

Afghanistan. The young girl told us that the family had fled the Jalalabad area in Afghanistan to Pakistan at the end of 2001 when there was terrible bombing of the Tora Bora mountains and other areas of Afghanistan, especially near the border with Pakistan, to oust the Taliban regime and capture leaders, including Osama bin Laden.

We asked the young girl if it was her mother or her father who decided that they should seek exile in Pakistan. "It was my mother who made the decision", she said. "When we came to Pakistan my mother found work quickly as a doctor in the refugee camp. My father could not find work, so he moved back to Jalalabad after a year. Now, I live with my mother and five brothers and sisters in a refugee camp outside Peshawar."

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Since we are focusing on the recent history, in particular the recent wars and refugee issues, it should be emphasized that literally every household has been directly affected by the wars, conflicts and foreign powers' interference in the Afghan people's lives during the last quarter century. This period has certainly not led to any development and improvement of people's daily lives. It has indeed caused stagnation and regres-

sion. Millions of people have become refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), sometimes because of draught and nature's unpredictability, but mainly because of war and conflict. Over the previous quarter century, Pakistan has hosted about five to seven million Afghan refugees, and Iran three to four million.

The 'luckier ones', hundreds of thousands, or more, may have obtained refugee or resettlement status in richer countries in Europe, America or Oceania, where they have enjoyed better opportunities for education and work.

The drain and dislocation of Afghanistan's development at large and complete destruction of institutions, from the individual and family unit upwards to the provincial and national levels, are beyond quantification and comprehension. However, we get some idea of what has happened if we consider that in the range of one third of the population has been refugees or otherwise displaced persons - and as many as five million Afghans are still refugees or forced migrants in foreign countries. Every household has been affected by the horrible events of the country's last quarter century. We can only feel sorry for the Afghan people. Outside powers, which did not have any right to interfere in the country's internal affairs, should also feel guilty and play an active role in rebuilding the country. Internal groups, too, should take their responsibility for wrong policies based on misunderstood ideas or self-serving interests.

According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), "Throughout the civil war in Afghanistan, all of the major factions have repeatedly committed serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including killings, indiscriminate aerial bombardment and shelling, direct attacks on civilians, summary executions, rape, persecution on the basis of religion, and the use of anti-personnel mines." About the Taliban regime, HRW added that it operated, in the areas it controlled, as a 'repressive police state'.

We should bear in mind that Afghanistan, even without the sad history since the late 1970s,



Traditional Afghan town.  
Photo: Fiona Torrens-Spence

would have had a difficult time as a poor and underdeveloped country, with inequalities and lack of human, social and economic rights for the vast majority of the people. However, we cannot change history. We can only hope and pray that the future will allow the Afghan people a more normal development path. We have already mentioned that we believe there are clear indications that this will happen for women and children, especially girls. The participatory democracy, which is, however, in its infancy, will also give room for change in the interest of ordinary people, not only the elite and the military leaders.

We hope that the refugees will continue returning home and that they are welcomed and find security, livelihoods, social and economic development, so that they can begin rebuilding their lives and country in dignity and with pride - though, no doubt, in sweat and hardship, too. More than three and half million refugees have returned so far, about two and a half million from Pakistan. Many bring with them important new knowledge, ideas and attitudes from education exposure and experience abroad.

We hope that the international community continues supporting the country, and is not distracted by other tasks in Iraq and elsewhere, not least through education and training at all levels and in all forms, and in development of livelihoods and economic activities based on Afghanistan's natural and human resources.

## THE BORDER AREAS AND FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

The so called tribal areas in Pakistan, along the Western border with Afghanistan, have enjoyed major self-rule until recently, but are now being pulled more and more into the mainstream of Pakistan's development and rule. They are remote, backward areas, and sometimes quite lawless, where modern amenities and services like electricity, health and education lag far behind the rest of the country. Literacy, particu-

larly among women, is the lowest in the country sometimes as low as five percent. On the Afghan side of the border similar underdevelopment exists, often combined with extreme cultural and religious traditionalism.

In trade and commerce, on the other hand, extreme liberalism exists, giving room for smuggling and trade in illegal commodities. Cultivation and trade in opium constitute the most serious development problems in Afghanistan, and hamper enforcement of law and order, and regularized development in other areas of society. The income generated from opium poppy is much higher than from alternative crops, such as wheat, and it is estimated that more than half of the foreign exchange earnings originate from this illegal trade, which is obviously outside the central Government's control.

Much of the opium poppy cultivation and trade, and sometimes laboratories for refinement, are under the control of Afghan warlords and regional military and political leaders, who then operate independently and also in opposition to, the central Government's regulations since they have their own source of revenue. The central Government in Kabul has taken initiatives to curtail the independent regional leaders through inclusion in the official government.

It should be added that the smuggling routes are not only through Pakistan, but also through other neighboring countries, not least north and westwards through parts of the old 'silk route' to Turkey, Russia and Europe, and across to North America. Drug abuse (more than alcohol abuse) is a problem among Afghans, including Afghan refugees and returnees. With all its faults in other fields, it should be mentioned that cultivation and trade in opium poppy went down during the Taliban regime (1996 - 2001) although it still constituted the major foreign exchange earning and contributed significantly to keeping the regime afloat. The current Karzai government, assisted by international organizations, has declared that in 2005 and 2006 it intends reducing opium production by twenty to thirty percent. But it realizes that it will take time to



reduce the cultivation of this 'evil crop' significantly. Opium usually ends up as heroin among drug addicts, mainly in the industrialized world's metropolises. Recent newspaper reports have estimated that up to eighty percent of the world's heroin may well originate from Afghanistan.

In order to improve security significantly in Afghanistan, it is necessary to dramatically reduce, or eradicate opium production and trade - as well as the 'Kalashnikov culture', which refers to the widespread availability and willingness to use weapons. There is need for active public debate and educational courses for school children, adolescents and adults in order to create a 'culture of peace', to paraphrase a term and programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO).

It is our hope that institutions, organizations and private companies in Pakistan and Afghanistan harness their cooperation in the years to come. Already, cooperation exists, especially more informal cooperation between individuals and groups of people, who may often be relatives or have had long lasting business ties. In the future, we hope that many linkages can be established and existing ones deepened. For example, colleges and universities in Afghanistan and sister institutions in Pakistan would gain from cooperation. In the near future, the Afghan institutions have more to gain than Pakistani institutions, but over time, the cooperation will become more equally beneficial to both countries, and the people who have the opportunity to take part in cooperation arrangements. We hope that there is an open eye for these cooperation aspects in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that Afghanistan does not only look for cooperation with advanced Western countries, who would often be donor countries, but that it establishes close cooperation with its immediate neighbours. As we mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the two countries share major aspects of their past, as they will of their future.

## SOME FURTHER HISTORICAL AND CULTURA DATA

The conflicts in Afghanistan, leading to the sad quarter century history until the present time, originate from internal instability and conflicts in the 1970s. Or, if we want to go further back in history, polygamy and rivalries within the successive royal families from the end of the eighteenth century, the abolishing of the King in 1973, until the pro-Soviet communist coup in April 1978, played a major part.

Instead of pursuing a policy of peaceful competition for influence in Afghanistan, which factions within the Kremlin preferred, the Soviet Union opted for military intervention in December 1979. However, it ended disastrously for the Kremlin, which contemplated withdrawal from 1976 until 1979.

Although the great powers have competed for influence and control over Afghanistan, and the Russians had, prior to the invasion, exercised direct influence, experts claim that the Kremlin's knowledge of the country was limited. It has also been argued that other superpowers, including the only one left in our time, notably the USA, and its allies, also have limited understanding of the country and have short-sighted strategies for making friends in the region as a whole, Afghanistan included. However, others will argue that the great powers have their long-term strategies in place, but that details along the way are unpredictable and would demand deeper knowledge. In the past, this has led to costly involvement in Afghanistan, costly for everyone, but to the Afghans in particular. We may not yet know clearly the reasons for the geo-political involvement in Afghanistan and the region, which includes control of oil and gas reserves, building of pipelines from central Asia to the ports, the Indo-Pakistani rivalry, the Indo-Sino rivalry, and Russian, Arab, American and European rivalry and interests in the region.

We do not believe that religion is a major factor, but to some extent, cultural factors in the Arab and Islamic world may possibly play a role.

For example, the oil-rich Arab peninsula's rapid economic development in less than a century, with overspill on neighbours, was bound to lead to enormous social and cultural difficulties; the latter, also including religious aspects. Economic and infrastructure development is relatively easy, even institutional development if we 'transplant' foreign institutions like universities or hospitals into other countries, and run them by local staff trained abroad, or by a mixture by local and foreign staff, as for example Saudi-Arabia has been able to do.

To change people takes longer not just a few decades, especially if we want the people to participate in the changes and choices to be made, and which concern them and their children. The Arab world, with its neighbours, is in the midst of this situation in our time - with positive and negative external influences and direct interference, as we witness in Iraq today - and indeed in Afghanistan, although the latter is neither an

Arab nor an oil-rich state, but belongs to the geopolitical sphere in question.

## REFUGEES

Push and pull factors leading to exodus, return and prolonged exile

The end of 1978 and 1979 was the opening of a chapter of human miseries for a country of about 15 million people at that time. The invasion of the Soviet Union took place on 27 December 1979, or in the propagandistic language used, the Afghan communists invited the Soviet Union for assistance. Some refugees had begun fleeing before the invasion. Pakistan, being the next-door neighbour of Afghanistan was first to feel the brunt of the rapid and drastic changes taking place in its backyard. Let us mention that, contrary to general belief, the Afghan migration to Pakistan did not start off in 1980 and the subsequent period. Pakistan had in fact provided shelter to Afghan refugees earlier, too, albeit in smaller numbers, including, for example, when about 1500 Afghan refugees in 1973, fled their country due to atrocities committed by the Sardar Mohammad Daoud Khan regime.

However, Pakistan and Iran, and the wider world, had hardly seen such enormous refugee exodus as those of Afghans, and in particular Pashtuns, fleeing their country from 1980 onwards. The world was in shock. Peace movements sprang up in many countries. But this did not lead to the withdrawal of the occupier, the Soviet Union, or saving the Afghans from suffering, although it may have contributed to the final withdrawal in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet empire in 1991.

The 'reforms through repression' policies of the leaders of the Saur Revolution, Noor Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, during 1978-79 that was followed by the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, accelerated the process of population displacement inside Afghanistan. The Soviet 'scorched earth policy', aimed at depopulating



An Afghan refugee and his child arriving in North West Frontier Province in Pakistan in the early 1980s.  
Photo: M. Kobayashi/UNHCR/1983.

Afghanistan's Pashtun areas, mainly inhabiting southeastern and southern areas near the border with the Pakistani border, by massive, brutal and wanton use of airpower, was the first major reason for mass exodus of Afghans to Pakistan. As the war escalated, the proportion of war-related miseries of Afghans escalated, too. In the north of Afghanistan, full-scale war went on between a rebellious population and the Afghan-Soviet forces. Horrendous use of land forces and air power also compelled northerly non-Pashtuns mostly people of Tajik, Uzbek and Turkmen ethnicity, to move towards Pakistan and Iran in search of shelter.

Afghanistan's countryside came under full-fledged war by the end of 1980. Big cities that remained under the Kabul-regime's control had to withstand unprecedented pressure for shelter of the war-stricken rural population, since it would squeeze already minimal economic opportunities for the urbanites. Price-hikes, shortages of foodstuff and fuel, and non-availability of essential medicines, deteriorated the law and order situation in the urban centers, and it led to attacks of insurgents on civic infrastructure. All this further promoted the forced migration trend among Afghans, who became IDPs and more frequently refugees.

In 1973 a group of Afghans having anti-Daoud and pro-Islam leanings migrated to Pakistan for political reasons, yet, this was not the case in the post 1979 period. Only politically strong personalities like tribal chieftains, leaders of some of the political parties, interest and pressure groups who feared political victimization, migrated for political reasons.

Commoners moved to Pakistan because of the devastation of war and unforeseen threats to their honour and lives. Very few Afghans felt any kind of threat to their religion or customary way of life. Lack of livelihood was a strong factor for migration but at the same time the Afghans knew very little about the changes in the Afghan economy that were envisaged under the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) reform package.

The cumulative figures of Afghan refugees who came to Pakistan in search of shelter during the 1979 - 1999 period is listed below. The figures are from the end of each year and are based on official sources, i.e. the Government of Pakistan and UNHCR. It should be noted that figures of this kind are never accurate.

The *table* and *map* in *Chapter 3* give a picture of the situation of refugees in the refugee camps/villages. Data from Iran, and some comparisons between Iran and Pakistan, have been added in the text under the map.

Over the years a number of Afghan refugees and other categories of Afghans lived temporarily or permanently in Pakistan. After 9/11 the Government of Pakistan released estimates indicating that it housed about 3.3 million Afghans living in Pakistan. The Census of Afghans in Pakistan (see below), which was undertaken by the Government of Pakistan, assisted by UNHCR, in February-March 2005, registered well over 3 million Afghans in spite of the fact that about 2.5 million refugees had returned after 9/11. This calculation indicates that there were at least 5.5 million Afghans in Pakistan in early 2002 when the UNHCR assisted voluntary repatriation started. It also shows that the real numbers of refugees have been very inaccurate and, as we mentioned above, how difficult it is to estimate the numbers of refugees in long-term refugee situations unless actual registrations and censuses are undertaken.

Arrival and return of Afghan refugees remained heavily dependent upon the internal political situation and to some extent the climatic and weather conditions of Afghanistan. Very few Afghan refugees returned to their homes voluntarily from 1979 to 1990, with one major exception, notably in the early 1990s, or more specifically in 1992. Unfortunately for many it proved another false dawn as the situation was not yet stable in Afghanistan.

The reason for staying on in Pakistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, and the fall of that Soviet empire in 1991, was the dreadful war continuing between the Soviet-Afghan

forces, notably the Marxist-Leninist regime, which held out until 1992 (from 1978) and the Mujahideen Islamic resistance groups, receiving some support from the USA. After the defeat and withdrawal of the Soviet Union, there were periods of civil war in some areas, and at other times, there were periods of hope. The refugee numbers peaked in Pakistan and Iran in the late 1980s and early 1990s when each country hosted up to and over 3 million Afghan refugees

Whenever there was a pause in war, the refugees' repatriation showed an upward trend. For example, the Mujahideen victory over Dr. Najeebullah in April 1992, triggered off an immediate and massive repatriation, and it prompted more than 1.3 million refugees to return home between April 1992 and December that year. According to UNHCR data, during a one-week period in July 1992, more than one hundred thousand refugees repatriated from Pakistan. Until then, this was the largest and fastest repatriation programme ever assisted by UNHCR. That UNHCR assisted repatriation was overshadowed in 2002-2003, following the American led invasion in October 2001 and the establishment of Mohammad Hamid Karzai's interim government in Afghanistan, when more than 1.5 million refugees returned to their homeland from Pakistan, mainly Pashtuns from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).

The tragic history of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which defeated the Mujahideen in 1996 (with the quiet understanding of the USA and Pakistan) and lasted until the invasion led by the USA in 2001, is a particularly sad chapter in Afghanistan's recent history. Bloody battles between Taliban and their archrivals, the Northern Alliance forces, badly affected the UNHCR assisted repatriation programme in the mid-1990s. The fighting and Taliban takeover spurred new flows of refugees to Pakistan and Iran. The year 1996 saw the arrival of 40,000 new refugees to Pakistan. Though UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) had ended their food support programmes for the refugees with the consent of the Government of Pakistan

in 1995-96, and UNHCR stopped registering refugees in the camps/villages, the influx of refugees to Pakistan continued unabated. Many refugees settled with relatives in the camps, or they became urban refugees in Pakistan's major cities. Urban refugees were never registered by UNHCR and they did not receive any assistance.

It should be noted that from the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 until the fall of the Soviet empire in 1991, the international community's interest for Afghanistan diminished sharply. It became more difficult to receive aid for Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries and for rebuilding the war-torn country. This was a major oversight on the part of the international community with serious historical consequences, including the build-up of the Taliban. Throughout the Afghan refugee crisis Pakistan received more support from the international community than Iran did. (See Note 15, which gives reference to UNHCR's 50 years anniversary book.)

Taliban advances in the north of Afghanistan from 1996 to 1999 drove a large number of Afghans of Tajik and Hazara ethnic backgrounds to seek shelter in Pakistan. Until the end of 1999, an estimated 100,000 refugees had taken refuge in Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan received yet another wave of refugees in the 2000 due to the fierce battles between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in the north of Afghanistan. This time, about 170,000 refugees arrived in Pakistan.

Following the 11 September 2001 tragedy in the USA, and the invasion of Afghanistan in October the same year, led by the USA, with its allied forces, there was yet another wave of some 300,000 Afghan refugees coming to Pakistan across the border from southern Afghanistan to camps in Chaman, near Quetta city in Balochistan, and to tribal areas in Balochistan and NWFP, some four to five hours' drive from Peshawar city. Some of the refugees in this exodus were so simple that they thought the American attack on Afghanistan was yet another attack by the Russian forces on their country.

The severe bombardment, and prolonged 'spot bombings' that followed, of the border areas near Pakistan was carried out in order to eradicate the Taliban regime, its leaders and the Al Qaeda network, with its Afghan cleric leader Mulla Muhammad Omar and the 'brain behind it all', Osama bin Laden, who were accused of being behind the "9/11" attack on New York and Washington. Although it has not been proven beyond doubt that this was actually the case, the invasion that followed rid the Afghans of the ultraconservative Taliban regime. It has given room for the first ever democratically elected President, with massive reconstruction works of infrastructure and institutions. It has led to great optimism among the majority of the Afghans, who lived at home throughout the sad events of the recent quarter century, and also among many of the refugees, who have returned home in large numbers. A large number of the latter group still remains in exile, perhaps more than fifty percent, including a large number of the most highly educated refugees.

By mid-2005, some 2.5 million Afghan refugees had returned to their homeland under a joint voluntary repatriation programme between the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan, assisted by UNHCR. Some of those who returned home found it impossible to settle in Afghanistan and have been forced to return to Pakistan. In February-March 2005, the Government of Pakistan carried out a Census of Afghans living in the country. The Census showed that a total of close to 3.1 million Afghans lived in Pakistan. It is assumed that the majority of these are refugees. The Census showed that the majority has lived in Pakistan for 10-15 years, and some even longer. The figure for refugees in the camps was 1.1 million at the time. It could be added, based on anecdotal information and our general knowledge of the situation, that a certain number of Afghans may not have been included in the Census. Some may not have been visited by the persons carrying out the Census, while others may have avoided being available out of fear of pressure being put on

them to return to Afghanistan. Some Afghans, who have lived in Pakistan for a long time, may legally or illegally have obtained Pakistani Identification Cards.

UNHCR's planning figure for assisted, voluntary repatriation in 2005 was 400,000, which was surpassed. Continued repatriation, which has slowed down in 2006, depends on a number of factors, some of which we have mentioned above. The Census reports lack of shelter as the main factor given by refugees for not returning, followed by lack of livelihood and security. To a rural refugee peasant the term 'lack of shelter' most likely also means lack of access to land which can give livelihood.

It is a general wish that the Afghans living in Pakistan do return home, but also that some, who may have deep roots in Pakistan, can be allowed to settle in the country. This is not yet a major issue, since the conditions in Afghanistan are such that the repatriation can go on, although it must take a slow pace in order not to destabilize the country, especially the cities, since many of those who return home find it impossible to settle in the villages and towns where they come from but gravitate to the major urban areas. Lack of shelter, land, livelihoods, security, social services, including health and education, make repatriation difficult. It is essential that repatriation takes place in a planned and realistic way - where authorities, international organizations and NGOs in both countries work closely together.

We are of the opinion that there has been some neglect on the part of the international community in offering too little education to Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Primary education has been given to less than half of the school-going age refugee children in Pakistan, and further education to some five percent. Today, there is great need for human resources in Afghanistan: people with skills, vocational and technical training, and specialists with higher education. In all these fields, more could and should have been done in Pakistan - and in Iran. This is one of the lessons that can be drawn from

this refugee education crisis which is one of the world's largest and longest. It is the purpose of this book to look into refugee education activities and projects in Pakistan, including the work of GTZ mainly through the BEFARe project.

We would like to add, in this chapter, that excellent work has been done by a number of organizations, including the Government of Pakistan, the NGOs and the international community, with UNHCR as the major funding agency. BEFARe is an example of one such project, with several sub-projects and activities. But also other organizations, including the Afghan refugees running self-help schools, and other organizations, have done unique work. There is need for further documentation of all these experiences and to draw lessons for the future in order to benefit other refugee situations that are bound to happen in the world we live in, and also for the remainder of the Afghan refugee era in Pakistan.

Some further questions concerning the voluntary repatriation of the 3 million Afghans in Pakistan and their return and settling-in at home, have been discussed in the two last chapters of the book. We also take up issues related to the return of refugees from Iran and overseas. It is important to note that some refugees and other Afghans living in Pakistan may wish to stay on in Pakistan for some years or for good. We hope that Pakistan, Afghanistan and the international community will be able to find solutions that are acceptable to all parties - and solutions that can become models for ending other large and long-lasting refugee crises elsewhere in the world. The United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHCR, will play a key role in this work, but the agency must pay particular attention to advising a process that is democratic, inclusive and future looking. The governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan should lead the process, assisted by UNHCR and the international community. The most important people in the process are the refugees, the people in the refugee-hosting areas, and the people in the villages and towns to which the refugees return. It is important to bear in mind that 1/3 of

Afghanistan's population were uprooted and forced to migrate within their home country and across the borders. Every household and family has been touched by the scourge of war and conflict in Afghanistan, and many people in the neighbouring countries, as victims or as helpers. They now deserve to be given the best assistance possible at this time in history so that the crisis to be brought to a dignified conclusion. Many need special assistance and care to continue their lives and build a new future. We must remember that each person affected, as refugee, host, or otherwise, is a unique human being.

## THE FUTURE

We have expressed hope and optimism concerning Afghanistan's future development. Whether we have been too optimistic or not the reader will have to judge. The ultimate answers lie in the future. But there is a lot that leaders and ordinary people can do - Afghans, neighbouring countries and their institutions, organizations and companies, the multilateral and bilateral organizations, various governmental and non-governmental organizations, and so on. The future lies in the hands and minds of people, in particular the great powers and leaders at all levels. It is our belief that everybody can and should contribute to shaping the future of Afghanistan. The better educated and trained people are, the better equipped they are to contribute. BEFARe's returning teachers and pupils are important, as are other returnees from Pakistan.

In the new 2002 edition of a book by Professor Johan Galtung et al, entitled "*Searching for Peace: The Road to Transcend*", there is a section on Afghanistan, giving the following prognosis, as it is termed: "Afghanistan will continue to be a battlefield among external powers and their allies among Afghan fractions, at the expense of the Afghan people. The 'humanitarian intervention for US bases' scenario is likely. This is because Afghanistan is weak, not militarily, but fragmented, dependent on foreign aid, with divisive identities, and neighbour quarrels."

The conclusion is drawn on a broader analysis of current and historical factors, most of which we have taken up above. While Galtung et al are stating that "Afghanistan is inserted in a complex conflict formation", one aspect can be highlighted from their list of factors, notably, "the US pincer move expanding NATO eastward and AMPO westward creating a strong Russia-China bond with ties to India-Iran-Iraq". (Note: NATO is the American-European defense organization. AMPO is the American-Japanese defense organization.)

Furthermore, on a more positive note, Galtung et al have a four-tier peace 'therapy' for Afghanistan, which includes, in exerts; development of a strong Afghan people; a basic-need oriented country, with a broadly based central government; development of a central-South Asian Community capable of resisting external pressure culturally, economically and politically; and a UN Security Council (SC) with cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), noting that the SC today has no Muslim member, but four Christian and one Confusian member.

Recently, we interviewed a political scientist at the Islamia College, University of Peshawar, Dr. Tauqir Alam, to get his views on the future of Afghanistan and the Afghan refugees.<sup>27</sup>

"I think Afghanistan will remain much the same as it is today for decades to come. I do not see any miracles happen. Afghanistan will continue to have some internal squabbling and the country's poverty will remain one of the worst in Asia and the world. I hope that the international community will continue helping in rebuilding what has been destroyed during the wars, much of it by foreign superpowers. The external interference in the local development affairs will continue, mainly due to long-term strategic and geopolitical reasons. I do not expect that the refugees in Pakistan, Iran, USA and elsewhere will return home. I think the majority will prefer to stay outside Afghanistan, also because many of them have lived abroad for so long that they would become strangers in their own land of ori-

gin if they were to return."

"I am also of the opinion that many of the refugees, for example in Peshawar, contribute significantly to Pakistan's economy. In our daily dealings with people in the city we are often unable to tell who originates from which country, even if we wanted to make such distinctions, which I don't think we really are. Many people, refugees and ordinary Afghans and Pakistanis have family ties across the borders", Dr. Alam says.

Today there are tens of thousands of Pakistanis working in Afghanistan, mainly in middle level but also in more senior functions in the private sector. Pakistan has a large export of goods to Afghanistan, especially of cement and other reconstructions materials. Meat and livestock are also exported due to drought in Afghanistan, and meat is the central in the Afghan diet. Pakistan will continue to have a huge trade surplus since Afghanistan has very limited export products. A prosperous Afghanistan is in Pakistan's interest as seen from trade and political perspectives.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter we have attempted to present an overall description and some analysis of historical and current issues concerning Afghanistan. We have discussed broad and complex issues and also given some more ordinary glimpses of the land and people. However, a short chapter like this has many shortcomings. Perhaps the chapter's incompleteness will encourage further reading and debate?

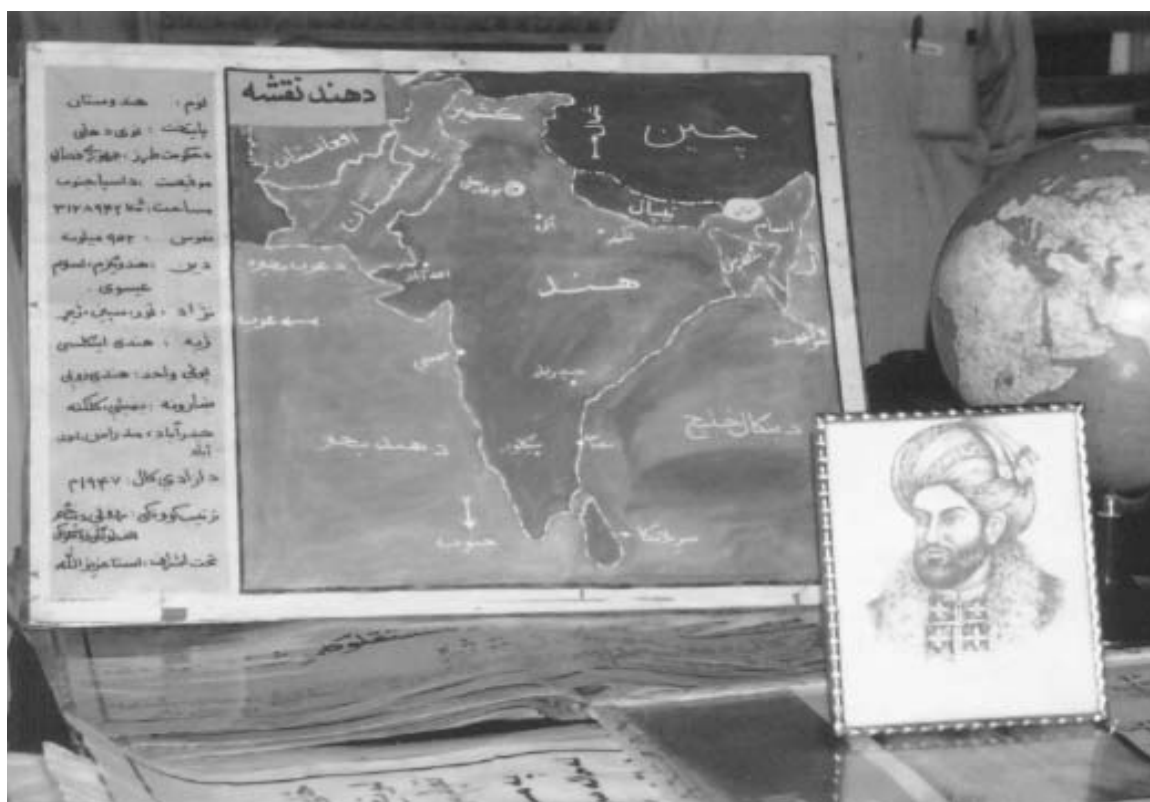
We hope that the chapter gives the reader an overview that serves as a useful background when reading the other chapters in the book, which will focus more specifically on refugee education and in particular the BEFARe education project for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and some other refugee education projects in the country.

The intention of the chapter was to put education in its broader context and to help create

sympathy for the difficulties that affect refugees, returnees, inhabitants of refugee hosting areas and Afghans at large in the current post-conflict situation. Heavy burdens rest on the education sector in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The better the education partners and service providers are in their work, the more useful they are to the users, the pupils and their families - and the better and more relevant education the users receive, the more successful we believe that the healing and reconstruction of Afghanistan and affected areas of Pakistan will be. Education can play a key role in the difficult processes ahead - for the countries, communities, families and indi-

viduals. Other sectors of the societies must play their parts as education, and again, the international community must contribute with funds and other support.

Afghanistan's future success in development is far from certain. The illegal production and sale of poppy opium (mainly for heroin in the West), the role of the independent regional leaders/worldlords, and the related insecurity hampers peaceful development and can derail the process. However, the cautions having been mentioned, the many positive achievements should also not be overlooked, especially in the social and educational sectors, not least for girls and women.



A homemade map of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries displayed in a Head Teacher's office in Jalojai Refugee Camp/Village, NWFP. 2005



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The figures for Afghanistan's population varies in different sources. In spite of the wars and many people becoming refugees the country has had a population growth. UNDP estimates that the population could be as high as 30 million. (a) UNDP: *Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2004*. Kabul, 2004. Our estimate is slightly more conservative, 25 million, and other sources use 20 million, or sometimes 20-25 million. (b) Girardet, Edward and Jonathan Walter: *Afghanistan. Essential Field Guides to Humanitarian and Conflict Zones*. International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting/Crosslines Communications Ltd., Geneva and Dublin, 1998. (c) Pocket books: (a) Medley, Dominic and Jude Barrand: *Kabul*. The Bradt Mini Guide. Bradt Travel Guides, Bucks, UK and Guilford, Connecticut, USA, 2003. (b) Xact Group Delhi: *Know about Afghanistan in 24 Hours*. Knowledge Incl., New Delhi. iii. Kamal, Yousaf: Pakistan 2003. *Statistical Pocket Book*. Statistical Division, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> There is a large number of books about Afghanistan's history. Most of them cover the recent centuries, with emphasis on last century and in particular from the 1970s up to the present time. See: (a) Saikal, Amin et al: *Modern Afghanistan. A History of Struggle and Survival*. I.B. Tauris, London-New York, 2004. (b) Magnus, Ralph H. and Eden Naby. Forward by Dan Rather: *Afghanistan. Mullah, Marx and Mujahid*. Westview, Cambridge, USA, and Oxford, UK, 2002. (c) Rubin, Barnett R. *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan. State Formation and Collapse in the International System*. Yale University Press, Yale, 2002. (d) O'Balance, Edgar: *Battles in a Hostile Land. 1839 to the Present*. Brassey's, London, UK and Book International, Herdon, VA, USA, 2002. (e) Dupree, Louis: *Afghanistan*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1973. (f) Article by Girardet, Edward and photographs by Steve McCurry: 'Afghanistan – Between War and Peace' in *National Geographic*, Vol. 204, No. 5, November 2003. National Geographic Society, New York, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> See the mentioned history books, such as Saikal, Amin: *Op.cit.*, p. 7, where the term 'Great Game' is mentioned as a conflict "from its onset in the Napoleonic wars". Reference is made to p. viii, in, Edwards, Michael: *Playing the Great Game - A Victorian Cold War*. Hamilton, London, 1975.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Dr. Babar Shah, Associate Professor,

Area Studies Centre for Central Asia, Russia and China, University of Peshawar, 14.05.05. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Shah at the Area Studies Centre and his colleague Dr. Tauqir Alam at the Islamia College, University of Peshawar, for their comments and contributions to this Chapter.

<sup>5</sup> UNDP: *Op.cit.*

<sup>6</sup> See various UNHCR reports and booklets. UNHCR Branch Office, Pakistan, 2000-2004.

<sup>7</sup> See above-listed history books. Special reference is made to the Introduction chapter, including a map, in Magnus & Naby: *Op.cit.*

<sup>8</sup> As for issues related to development of various livelihoods, see, for example, UNDP: *Op.cit.* See also reports from various other United Nations and bilateral agencies, such as, ILO, UNDP, FAO, WFP, JICA, and others. As for the fight against poppy cultivation and narcotics trade, see reports from the United Nations agency UNODC, WHO and UNAMA. UNESCO's 'culture of peace programme' and the '2001 – 2010 International Decade for A Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World' taking up many related issues.

<sup>9</sup> Interview in Kacha Garhi refugee camp/village outside Peshawar, 14.05.05. See also, Nancy Hatch Dupree: *The Women of Afghanistan*. ACBAR, Peshawar, with UNAMA, Kabul, 1998. The booklet also includes sections on Afghan refugee women and the future of Afghan women.

<sup>10</sup> Reference is made to (a) Documents made available at the University of Peshawar Area Studies Centre, including a UNHCR booklet article (undated) entitled 'Afghan Refugees Stunned and Scorned', p. 15. (b) Masood, Alauddin: *Impelled Afghan Migration to Pakistan 1978 – 84*. Ed.: Abdul Hamid Malik. University of Peshawar Area Studies Centre and Hanns Seidel Foundation, December 2000. (c) Various HR organizations, media and news agencies follow the HR developments in the country, including the situation of women. UNOCHA's news network, IRIN, regularly releases news and feature articles on a variety of humanitarian issues. On 11.07.05 it released an article about a recent report published by the Human Rights Watch concerning war crimes and the prosecution of perpetrators, inter alia, so that they cannot stand for elections or hold public office. Perhaps a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission', modeled on what South Africa had after the defeat of apartheid, could help build a new and better future in Afghanistan?

<sup>11</sup> See references under Note 8 above.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See the history books referred to above, such as Amin, Saikal: *Op.cit.* See also, Galtung, Johan et al: *Searching for Peace*. The Road to Transcend, Pluto Press, London, and Sterling, VA, USA, 1995 and 2002.

<sup>14</sup> See the article referred to in Note 10 above.

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR. Editorial Team: Cutts, Mark et al: *The State of the World's Refugees. Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*. UNHCR, Geneva, and Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000. pp. 115 – 121, incl. Map 5.2 and Figure 5.2.

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR: *Searching for Solutions. 25 Years of UNHCR – Pakistan Cooperation on Afghan Refugees*. UNHCR, Islamabad, 2005, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> See UNHCR's three recent repatriation booklets. UNHCR: Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan 2003, 2004 and 2005. UNHCR, Islamabad,

<sup>19</sup> See preliminary and final reports from the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), Islamabad, and UNHCR, Islamabad, May-August 2005. The Census was carried out by the Government of Pakistan, CCAR, assisted by UNHCR, in February-March 2005, followed by a data analysis period, which again will be followed by further analysis, policy and planning work. Actual registration of Afghans living in Pakistan will take place in the forth quarter of 2006.

<sup>20</sup> UNESCO and UNHCR planned joint projects in 2002-2003 but could not secure funds from the donors neither for the camps/villages nor for the urban refugees. Furthermore, UNESCO planned a relatively large project to up-grade the qualifications of refugee teachers before their repatriation, including facilitating their return home, continued training modules and employment in the education sector. The project has still not received funding. These issues are pondered on further elsewhere in the book.

<sup>21</sup> Community officers in UNHCR's offices in Pakistan and Afghanistan have good knowledge of the needs and also the lack of availability of resources in these fields. The NGO sector has data concerning urban refugees, and

some experience in providing assistance in refugee-hosting areas and in Afghanistan when the refugees have reached Afghanistan. The needs go beyond vulnerable groups to include many ordinary and sometimes educated refugees/returnees.

<sup>22</sup> Galtung, Johan et al., *Op.cit.*, p. 295.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 295 – 296.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Dr. Tauqir Alam, Asst. Professor, Area Studies Centre for Central Asia, China and Russia, University of Peshawar, 14.05.05.

<sup>26</sup> (a) For further historical literature we refer to the above references. The Bibliography includes additional publications. (b) For more academic and comparative studies related to refugees and forced migration we refer the reader to Websites of universities and research institutes, such as, the Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford University, UK. Website: [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk) RSC also publishes a journal/magazine entitled *Forced Migration Review*. Website: [www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org) For further information about UNHCR's book referred to in Note 15, see Website: [www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com) or E-mail: [cdr@unhcr.ch](mailto:cdr@unhcr.ch) for its availability in other languages. In 2006, UNHCR has published a similar book about the first five years of the new millennium and questions and challenges concerning refugees, IDPs and other groups of displaced people and migrants. (c) For more specialized studies into legal issues, we refer to, Chimni, B.S.: *International Refugee Law. A Reader*. Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, and Sage Publications, London. © UNHCR.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Dr. Tauqir Alam 14.05.05. In an interview in the *News on Sunday*, Lahore/Islamabad/Karachi, 26.02.06, Dr. Alam's colleague, Dr. Azmat Hayat too expresses pessimistic views as for Afghanistan's possibility for peaceful development. He draws particular attention to geopolitical issues and doubts that the great powers, including the super power, finds it in their interest that Afghanistan's situation becomes settled or that it indeed can be settled yet.



## Part III

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## Refugee Issues and Refugee Education in Pakistan

Past experiences, current situation and  
proposals for the future

Chapter

# 3



# Refugee Issues and Refugee Education in Pakistan

Past experiences, current situation and proposals for the future<sup>1</sup>

*This chapter is about Afghan refugees and refugee education in Pakistan, with some background data about Afghanistan's history. We describe and discuss issues, more in the form of an on-going debate than an analysis. Refugee education is placed in the broader context of refugee/returnee issues in Pakistan and Afghanistan. We also advocate an urgent short-term increase in funding for education for Afghan refugees to enable them to return home. BEFAre and other NGOs are capable of shouldering a major thrust over the next couple of years.*

*Refugee education is a neglected area of “Education for All” (EFA) in general and that includes Afghan refugee education in Pakistan. In spite of tireless work by BEFAre, other NGOs, and the Government and donors, refugee education is currently in greater difficulties than before. This is due to the international donor community, through the main funding agency the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR, reducing budgets to education in the refugee camps in the country by about thirty percent in 2005 with further reductions foreseen as refugees begin returning in larger numbers from the camps/villages. Currently, the reduction of funds is above the proportion of refugees returning home from the camps/villages, which we estimate at over 150,000 out of a total of about 500,000 returnees from the country in 2005. The total number of returnees is higher than expected; it has slowed down in 2006.*

*We argue for an **increase in allocation** of funds, not a decrease, as will be explained below. Education and skills training contribute to repatriation, not to keeping people in the host country. This is something which the donors don't seem to have grasped. Also, at this stage in the refugee history it is about time that the refugee host communities in Pakistan, not least in poor neighbourhoods in cities like Peshawar, get their fair share of assistance. BEFAre, with the support of the Government of Pakistan, continually argues for such essential assistance. Poverty feels the same irrespective of nationality, legal status, colour, creed, religion, or other characteristics that may separate people in the eyes of other people.*

*The marked budget cuts in 2005, which we expect will continue in the coming years, lead to **reduced education quality** for the refugees. Instead of keeping children and adolescents busy at school they may venture into antisocial activities and even develop an interest in extremist activities. They will become generally disillusioned and there could be a breakdown in the social fabric in the camps/villages. This is sad since Pakistan has reason to be proud of the way it treated the huge number of refugees over many years. Indirectly, the budget cuts are actually encouraging the refugees to leave the camps/villages, which may be premature. It is not certain that they will return to their homeland as they may prefer to trickle into the urban centers of Pakistan. To encourage or push refugees to leave their exile would be going beyond UNHCR's mandate, but the Government of Pakistan, and also Afghanistan, have the right to influence repatriation directly in any way they choose; whether we as humanitarian aid workers agree or not.*





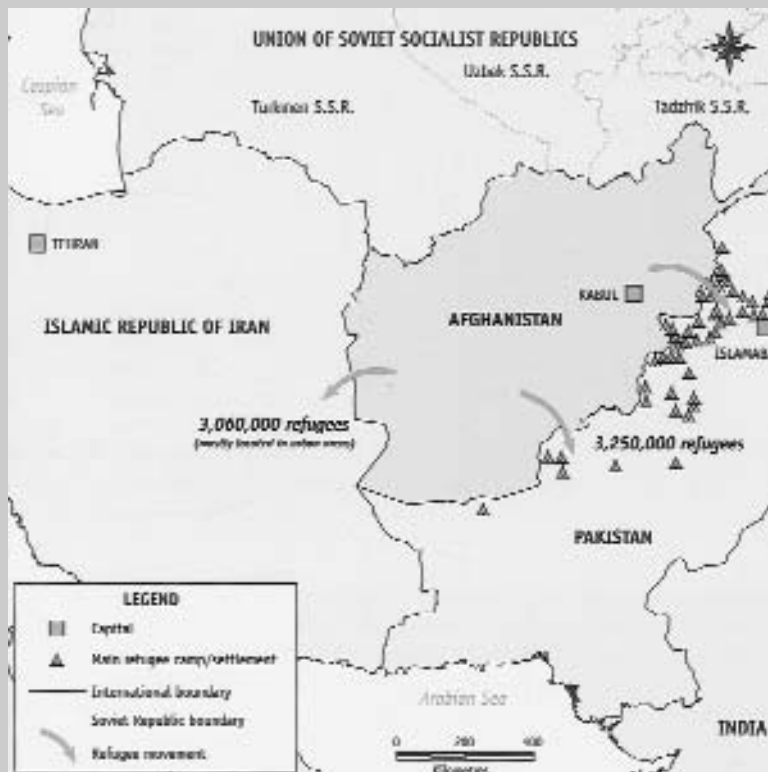
From Afghanistan. Photo: Fiona Torrens-Spence, 2003.

**Table 3.1** Cumulative Figures of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan, 1979 - 2005

1979: 0, 402,000	1980: 1,400,000	1981: 2,375,000	1982: 2,877,000
1983: 2,873,000	1984: 2,500,000	1985: 2,730,000	1986: 2,878,000
1987: 3,156,000	1988: 3,255,000	1989: 3,272,000	1990: 3,253,000
1991: 3,100,000	1992: 1,630,000	1993: 1,477,000	1994: 1,053,000
1995: 1,200,000	1996: 1,200,000)	1997: 1,200,000	1998: 1,200,000
1999: 1,200,000	2000: 1,200,000	2001: 1,300,000	2002: 1,700,000
2003: 1,400,000	2004: 1,200,000	July 2005: 1,100,000.	

Source: *The State of the World's Refugees 2000. Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*. UNHCR, Geneva, 2000. Figures for recent years added by the author.

## Main Afghan Refugee Flows, 1979-90



Source: *The State of the World's Refugees 2000. Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*. UNHCR, Geneva, 2000.

**Note:** The figures in the map include registered refugees only. In Iran the total caseload is fairly correct. In Pakistan, however, there was always a large additional number of unregistered refugees.

### Refugees in Iran and Pakistan

- More refugees have been hosted by Pakistan than by Iran. However, in Iran, UNHCR with the authorities, registered most of the refugees. In Pakistan, large numbers of refugees and other categories of Afghans in the country were not registered. Even in the two hundred or more refugee camps/villages in Pakistan the refugees were not always registered and other data about the refugees was missing, such as literacy rate, total number of school-age children, etc.
- From the mid-1980s particularly large numbers crossed the border into Iran and the figures remained high throughout the 1990s. For some specific years the numbers of refugees registered with UNHCR was as high in Iran as in Pakistan. The majority were urban refugees, i.e. non-camp refugees, but registered with UNHCR.
- In Pakistan, the urban refugees did not usually register with UNHCR or even the Pakistani authorities. In order to get a true picture of the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, as compared to those in Iran, the unregistered refugees, and other categories of Afghans, must be included in statistics or, estimates as they are. (See, Notes 4 and 5 for references to the Census of Afghans living in Pakistan carried out by the Government of Pakistan, assisted by UNHCR, in February/March 2005 and the Registration in the fourth quarter of 2006.)
- UNHCR's repatriation figures for early-2002 until mid-2005 show that about 1.2 million people have returned home to Afghanistan from Iran during that time. About three quarters million refugees still live in Iran as repatriation continues and tighter registration, residence and work regulations are applied. However, some Afghan refugees migrate back to Iran if they find it impossible to settle at home.
- Relatively many refugees who have gone to Iran have been men going into exile alone, sometimes almost as, or indeed as 'foreign workers', leaving their families behind in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, this has been more rare and whole families have usually fled and settled in exile, especially in camps/villages.
- In Pakistan men move on a periodic basis, i.e., daily/weekly/monthly, much more frequently than women do outside the camp to seek employment. They go to Peshawar city from camps elsewhere in NWFP; and they go to Quetta and Karachi cities from camps in Balochistan. As for the current repatriation we now sometimes find that the men return to Afghanistan alone to take up jobs, leaving their families behind in Pakistan in more secure circumstances, in better dwellings and with better education opportunities for children and adolescents.

## Mandate and Activities of UNHCR, Government and Partners

1. In refugee situations it is always the host country's government that sets the rules and takes all major decisions, in consultation with the sending country, when possible, and the international community under the leadership of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR.

2. In spite of Afghanistan having been one of the world's largest refugee sending countries and Pakistan one of the world's largest refugee hosting countries, neither of the two has signed the 1951 *United Nations Refugee Convention* or the 1967 *Protocol*. Few countries in the South-Asia region have signed the said documents although the refugee crisis following the 1971 separation of East and West Pakistan was the largest operation of UNHCR until then. Since 2002, the largest repatriation exercise that UNHCR has taken part in is the on-going return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. In practice, Pakistan has been a generous host country for huge numbers of refugees for an unprecedented length of time, and it is unlikely that it would have made much difference if it were a signatory to the international convention. However, it would have given the refugees a greater feeling of security and clear legal status.

3. It should be borne in mind that it is always the refugees, the host country's people and the host country's Government that carry the heaviest burdens in refugee situations. It is their daily lives, livelihoods and resources that are interrupted and often stretched. Environmental over-taxation is common, with long-term effects. The local authorities and the international donors are rarely

able to give sufficient support to the environmental sector, either during or after refugee situations.

4. In most refugee situations, and certainly in the larger ones, the host country requests international donor support, usually coordinated by UNHCR and other multilateral organizations. Emergency funding for protection, food, shelter, health, community services and education is needed when the refugees arrive, sometimes in cold winter weather, extreme heat of the summer sun, or desert climates with hot days and freezing night temperatures. Makeshift camps have to be established fast.

5. Most refugees settle in the refugee camps temporarily and many will live there during their entire time in forced exile. Other refugees will move away from the established camps and become urban refugees (or, non-camp refugees, since some will also live in rural areas). In the latter cases the refugees receive no (or irregular) assistance from UNHCR and the rest of the international community, but they usually have better opportunities to earn some form of income outside the camps, especially if the camps are in remote areas. In Pakistan more than half (and in some cases and at some times, up to two thirds) of the refugees have been urban refugees.

6. Refugee situations last for months, years and sometimes decades. On average, refugees live in forced exile for more than ten years. The latter has been the case as regards the majority of the Afghan refugees. Between five and seven million Afghans have sought refuge in Pakistan since 1979/80. Iran has also hosted millions of

Afghan refugees (3.5-4 million), and hundreds of thousands have traveled to other countries.

7. From March 2002 until the autumn of 2005 more than 4 million Afghan refugees have returned home; nearly 3 million from Pakistan alone, but Pakistan is still host to about 3 million Afghans. Many are urban refugees; about one million are refugees in camps/villages and others are other categories of Afghans living in Pakistan.

8. UNHCR is the funding organization; the policy and planning organization; the coordinator of operational activities; the monitor and reporter of developments and, last but not least, the Government's partner. *Pakistan's Ministry for States and Frontier Regions, SAFRON*, has a department handling refugee issues, the *Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, CCAR*, in Islamabad, with Commissionerate offices (CAR) in Peshawar and Quetta.

9. In addition to the above, coordination of refugee activities takes place in other major refugee hosting cities, notably Peshawar and Quetta, and also in Karachi and Mianwali. UNHCR has offices in the three cities but not in Mianwali town which is covered from UNHCR's office in Islamabad.

10. Overall coordination of all refugee activities is the responsibility of SAFRON and CCAR. UNHCR plays a key role as the main funding agency. Its international and local implementation experience is drawn upon by all partners. Unlike in ordinary development aid today, UNHCR often handles implementation outside

the Government system due to the emergency and (in theory) short-term nature of the work. UNHCR sub-contracts *Implementing Partners*, and enters into sub-agreements for the various projects with each of them.

11. In the first half of the Afghan refugee era, most refugee activities were implemented by the Government, with international organizations providing funding, technical assistance, training and some direct project assistance. Funding became increasingly

problematical in the 1990s, and from the mid-1990s the international donors requested the use of more international NGOs in implementation, hoping it would increase professionalism, efficiency and assurance of good use of funds. In education there has only been a handful of major implementing partners. Except for one NGO in special education (SWAJO) and the Commissionerate's Education Cell (CAR/EC), Peshawar, all implementing partners in education have been international organiza-

tions. After 9/11, a few additional local NGOs were added.

12. BEFARe has been the largest implementing partner in education throughout, working in the largest refugee-hosting areas of Pakistan, notably in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), with its head office in Peshawar. Over three quarters of the refugees in camps/villages live in NWFP.

### UNHCR's Education Policy Commitments

UNHCR has developed the overall Guidelines, which all NGOs and implementing partners (and UNHCR itself) strive to fulfill.

The summary below is from, *UNHCR's Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva, February 2003.

- UNHCR advocates for education as a basic human right in the context of the 1951 Refugee Convention and other related international declarations and instruments.
- UNHCR's Agenda for Protection and the Action Plan (approved by the agency's executive board in October 2002) specifically underline the importance of "education as a tool for protection".
- UNHCR is committed to the key principles of refugee participation, local capacity building, gender equality and addressing the specific needs of groups at risk.

#### In implementing education programmes, UNHCR will:

1. Safeguard the right of refugees to education and implement the six goals of Education for All (EFA) which include free access to primary education, equitable access to appropriate learning for youth and adults, adult lit-

eracy, gender equity and quality education.

2. Ensure the provision of basic education, for refugees and other persons of concern, to ensure their protection and security and to enhance the possibility of durable solutions.

3. Guarantee the availability of primary education (standardized as the first eight grades of schooling) as a first priority, including community based initiatives providing early childhood and pre-school education, where these are prerequisites for formal education.

4. Support the provision of lower secondary education (standardized as grades 9 and 10). In addition, UNHCR will support the enrolment and retention of achieving students in higher secondary (grades 11 and 12) as a prerequisite to post-secondary education. Moreover, UNHCR will advocate for tertiary education and will support effective use of resources donated for this purpose.

5. Provide low-cost adolescent and adult non-formal education linked to the psychosocial development and specific needs of the groups. Where appropriate, this will include technical and vocational education.

6. Promote quality of education as a high priority commitment through teacher training and the development of quality teaching and learning materials.

7. Support innovative enrichment programmes in life skills and values education that improve the quality of education.

8. Ensure early intervention and development of education programmes in the earliest stages of an emergency, and access to education programmes by children and adolescents upon arrival.

9. Co-ordinate local, national, regional and global inter-agency mechanisms and partnerships regarding refugee and returnee education issues including educational materials, certification of studies, teacher training and support for education. In addition, there will be inter-sectoral collaboration to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach.

10. Monitor and evaluate all refugee education programmes in line with the established standards and indicators, ensuring that these programmes receive the necessary human resources and appropriate funding at all levels and phases of UNHCR's operations.

## Implementing Partners and Coordination of Education in Pakistan

### Implementing Partners in Education in Pakistan

In the education sector the main implementing partners are the following:

- BEFARe
- Save the Children, United States (SC/US)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- Ockenden International (UK)
- Basic Education and Employable Skills Training (BEST)

- Society for Community Support for Primary Education

### Main coordinating body in Education in Pakistan

- Education Sub-Committee, Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), Peshawar
- ACBAR has a large Library, Afghan Research and Information Center (ARIC), which includes materials in education, Peshawar/Kabul

**Table 3.2 Number of pupils by gender in Afghan refugee schools (primary level) in Pakistan's three major refugee-hosting provinces in the late 1990s.**

Province	Type of school	Boys	Girls	Total
(NWFP)	NGO schools	117,617	58,262	175,879
	Private schools	12,108	4,500	16,608
Balochistan	NGOs schools	17,790	1,154	18,944
	Private schools *	-	-	-
Punjab	NGO schools	1,155	1,075	2,230
	Private schools	2,800	4,200	7,000
Total **	NGO/Private schools	151,470 (69%)	69,191 (31%)	220,661

#### Note:

• The data in this table is relatively accurate for the NGO schools, most of which receive UNHCR support. The data is tentative for the private schools. The definition of and distinction between private and self-help school is not clear. The quality of private and especially self-help schools can be questionable since they often lack basic funding and the parents are too poor to pay necessary fees.

• The NGO schools are mostly in refugee camps/villages. In NWFP the camps (often called villages) are in Peshawar city's outskirts and also in remote areas of the province. In Balochistan, the camps are mostly several hours' drive from Quetta city. In Punjab, the camp population is concentrated to Mianwali town.

\* This table does not have data for private and self-help schools in Balochistan. However, Quetta city has a large urban refugee population, and also an old Afghan migrant community, with many urban schools.

\*\* It should be noted that the number of refugee pupils is estimated to be lower today (end of 2006) than in the late 1990s when this table was compiled.

*Source:* The data was originally collected by UNHCR (advised by UNESCO) related to an Education for All (EFA) study, released in 2000. Dr. S.B. Ekanayake oversaw the work and used data from the survey in his book: *Education in the Doldrums. Afghan Tragedy*. Al-Noor Publishers & Printers, Islamabad, 2000. (Revised edition 2004.)

## Chronological Project Development of BEFARe

The project can be split into several periods, partly overlapping each other:

- 1979/80-1984: Initial assistance, assessment, mobilization, and training. A separate project in technical training started as early as 1982.
- 1982 - 1996: During this period the Pak-German Technical Training Programme (PGTTP) was the most dominant project, especially during the early years. BEFARe started gradually from 1990.
- 1984 -1996: Pak Bas-Ed, sometimes referred to as Pak-German Bas-Ed, was established in 1984 to provide basic education to Afghans and Pakistanis affected by the influx of refugees in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). In 1993, an Afghan off-shoot, Ag Bas-Ed (Afghan German Basic Education) was established in Afghanistan and it is still in operation.
- 1996 - 2003: In 1996, following changes initiated by UNHCR, which recommended international NGOs and other organizations as its implementing partners, GTZ-BEFARe was estab-

lished. The host Government became responsible for post-primary education and for overall planning and coordination.

- 2003/2004 - onwards: BEFARe gets established as a local Pakistani organization with its own Board of Trustees. Work continues much as in the past, but its ties with GTZ become looser and end in the autumn of 2005. BEFARe maintains its status as an implementing partner for UNHCR, which again welcome local NGOs as implementing partners. However, UNHCR's general budget cuts from 2005 affect organizations like BEFARe badly. UNHCR is the main funding agency for all primary education schools in the camps/villages in Pakistan, and in spring 2005 BEFARe ran schools for about 100,000 pupils with 2,500 teachers; in the autumn only 80,000 pupils and 1,700 teachers.
- Although large numbers of refugees repatriate, relatively few had gone from the camps/villages at the time of completion of this book. BEFARe is, therefore, in a difficult situation, depending on donor funding for all its work.

In 2005, BEFARe has had to lay off teachers and reduce its activities.

- Unlike most international NGOs, BEFARe does not have a head office abroad, which can contribute/top-up project/programme funding, and guarantee payment of salaries to office staff, house rent and other basic running costs.
- As a humanitarian aid organization BEFARe has a responsibility vis-à-vis its staff, teachers and, above all, the Afghan refugee children and their communities, which often also include Pakistani beneficiaries.
- BEFARe's leadership and management qualities will be tested in the current difficult period and in the coming years. BEFARe's approaches and fields of work will have to be adapted to the current and future environment. There is need for innovative approaches. Yet BEFARe should not compromise on the high quality of its activities, with main focus on basic education, adult education and literacy, vocational and technical education, and skills training for livelihoods. Other secondary activities can be added.

## BEFARe Project Leaders 1996 - 2005

Until 2003, the project was named GTZ - BEFARe, except for the initial years in the 1980s. Smaller projects had their own names used mainly internally. The Project Leader was named Chief Technical Adviser (CTA).

BEFARe became an independent Pakistani organization from 2003/2004 with

Shakir Ishaq as Chief Executive



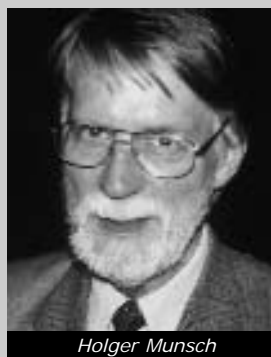
*Michael Hirth*

1996 - 1999



*Ulf Bartholomae*

2000 - 2001



*Holger Munsch*

2001 - 2003



*Shakir Ishaq*

2003 - present

Dr. Hirth was also CTA of an earlier project. There was overlapping between CTAs. Mr. Ishaq took over as Chief Executive in early December 2003 and Mr. Munsch, the last German CTA left at the end of the month.



## ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS

### Current Situation and Dilemmas

When refugees return home, dignity must always be maintained, and the returnees must be able to find livelihoods, accommodation, education for their children and adolescents, health services, and so on. In our case, when about *three million people* have already returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and more than a million from Iran, we must also consider the tempo in repatriation in relation to the home country's *absorption capacity*. For example, Kabul is estimated to have more than three and a half million inhabitants but the affordable housing is basically the same as when the population was a third of that number just a few years ago.<sup>2</sup>

The reconstruction of Afghanistan is ongoing, but there are relatively few tangible results yet, and the poor, who have lived at home during the quarter century of wars and instability, including returnees, are getting poorer. The country has been listed as the fifth or sixth poorest country in the world, even when illegal opium income has been included, which counts for more than half, or maybe as much as three quarters of the economy. Afghanistan's Government, with international assistance, actively works to curb the scourge, but it will take many years to achieve results since it requires alternative livelihoods with competitive incomes.<sup>3</sup>

Promotion of and support to repatriation and reintegration at home are important. Still we must consider carefully how it is being done in order to make it as successful as possible for governments, donors, various organizations and particularly the refugees/returnees.<sup>4</sup>

We find it difficult to justify funds being reduced to refugee education in Pakistan at this crucial time. We believe, based on empirical data, that funds should be increased – and should have been much higher earlier. We believe that this would contribute to repatriation and higher sustainability in the durable solutions.

### Difficult questions

How can the United Nations and the rest of the international community reduce its assistance to *refugee education* in Pakistan under the prevailing circumstances and nobody seems to say that it is wrong? Why are the NGOs, which are implementing the education activities not raising their voices more loudly? Are the refugees themselves too powerless, or have they given up vis-à-vis the all-powerful international donors? In which case, what are we teaching the Afghans and people in other countries in crisis and reconstruction about democracy?

The refugee authorities in Pakistan, such as the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) are concerned about the consequences of reduced services before the refugees leave. The provincial leaders in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and other refugee hosting provinces are concerned. UNHCR is also concerned and, since it is one of the best United Nations agencies we have, we expect nothing less. But then the Pakistan office seems not to be given enough funds for education from its Headquarters, who again, would probably pass the buck to the rich donor countries. Are they vigorous enough in trying to mobilize support for additional funding for education? Are the



NGOs vigorous enough in explaining the reality in the field?

## TODAY AND TOMORROW

On a positive note, all organizations are involved in giving inputs to CCAR and UNHCR in developing *comprehensive solutions* for how to handle the situation of refugees and other Afghans living in Pakistan in the years ahead.<sup>5</sup> This is commendable. Let us hope that the international community will pay up when that time comes to safeguard durable solutions for all refugees and Afghans in Pakistan. Let us hope there will be acceptable systems developed for repatriation, resettlement for a few, and integration for others.

Education is the topic of this book and it is our duty to argue for educational activities for refugees, even at this late stage in the refugee era, in 2005 - 2006.

It seems not to have been realized by the good partners that we still need funding for Afghan refugee education in Pakistan – and we even seem to overlook that *education was already severely underfunded for many years*. There was also lack of sufficient involvement of professional international and local expertise and leadership. It is not possible to find comprehensive solutions unless education is a key component.<sup>6</sup>

In the years ahead, we need *Pakistani and Afghan institutions and organizations* to be involved much more, in addition to individuals, and in addition to overseas partners. We need to normalize the country-to-country cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, where terms like, *migration, labour exchange, academic exchange, etc.*, are becoming common vocabulary instead of the refugee vocabulary. However, we should also be realistic and remember that there are still almost three million Afghans in Pakistan, and more than half of them are refugees, although we have no accurate data. Such a large number of Afghans will not return overnight and bring the three-decade refugee era to a successful conclusion in a year or two. A

number of conscientious and planned mechanisms are needed. The above-mentioned policies and plans concerning *comprehensive solutions* will give us some help and some tools.

*Education is an essential tool* in all steps of a refugee era and in other disasters. It is essential in all steps of the traumatic years, including in preparing refugees for repatriation. This often includes skills training and education for livelihoods, information about the actual repatriation, and training and other support related to reintegration when the refugees reach Afghanistan, when they have to begin building *a new life and a new home*. Without skills and knowledge, and other assistance, the future will be bleak for the majority of the poor Afghans who have enjoyed Pakistan's generous hospitality for years and decades – certainly not in luxury but mostly in acceptable circumstances.<sup>7</sup>

In this introductory section, let us draw attention to the *devastating earthquake* on 8 October 2005 in the Kashmir, NWFP and the Northern Areas of Pakistan. There are many parallels between refugees and the victims of the earthquake. Currently, priority is given to the earthquake victims. This is the way it should be; the needy groups are not to be put up against each other. When possible, *refugees and earthquake victims should cooperate* for common funds, and, refugees could be employed in helping out the traumatized and suffering Pakistani earthquake victims.<sup>8</sup>

Afghan refugees have unique experience and competence in coping under difficult circumstances. In addition, in Mansehra and some other areas, *refugees were themselves victims of the earthquake*.<sup>9</sup>

BEFAre was assessing the situation quickly after the earthquake in several areas, including in Abbottabad, where it has a sub-office (resource center). BEFAre established about twenty schools as an initial response; with the help of UNESCO, the United Nations education agency. BEFAre also plans to be involved in other humanitarian relief and reconstruction work over the coming years.<sup>10</sup>

## MISSED OPPORTUNITIES?

In refugee education, we could have done better in the past, when the author of this book worked as a Refugee Education Consultant with UNHCR and UNESCO. In 2001, after '9/11', we all seemed to *forget* what we should be doing in Pakistan. Instead of providing *less education* to the refugees, we should have provided *more* to prepare refugees for returning home.<sup>11</sup>

The author of this book does not want to blame others only for the shortcomings. All who were involved in the past and present have to share the positive and negative outcomes. There is much to celebrate but also much left to be desired. Change and improvement rarely come from complacency, but from critical analysis, and persistent day-to-day efforts.

Thus, there is great need for the work of BEFAre and other partners in the education sector and related fields in the years to come, to serve refugees/returnees and refugee host communities.<sup>12</sup>

## 'EDUCATION FOR ALL' – ALSO FOR REFUGEES?

UNESCO is the UN organization entrusted with the task of monitoring implementation of EFA, with universal primary education (UPE) and other goals to be achieved worldwide in ten years' time. '*Education in emergencies and crisis*' has been termed an "**EFA Flagship**".<sup>13</sup> It is a good slogan, but we are waiting for action, in Africa, which is the main refugee-producing continent, and also in Asia, where the long-term Afghan refugee crisis is the largest one, in addition to the Palestinian crisis. The UN has coined another catching term of relevance here; notably '*inclusive education*', which mainly refers to special education for handicapped and education for nomads, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized groups. Refugees are to be included, too, as one of the most marginalized groups; they live at the mercy of their host countries, international civil servants and donors. The Afghans have a

particularly sad history over the past quarter century.

Before the refugees can return home in dignity, we need, even at this late stage, to provide basic education for all refugee children in Pakistan. There should be literacy classes for young women and men, and even older people; training in skills, vocational and technical fields, non-formal and informal civics education and orientation courses about the 'New Afghanistan', about peace and gender equality, about a variety of reconstruction and community issues, and about planning and leadership.

In addition, we need '*bridging assistance*' to help the refugees to return and get into employment at home, as we mentioned above. It is still not too late to do this, but we have no time to waste.<sup>14</sup> First, we need to ascertain that the education budgets are not reduced and, secondly, that they are increased in a **major education thrust** over the next few years. The international community can afford this and the Afghans deserve it!

Furthermore, *education, training and related settling-in assistance* may be the only *true incentives* we have to enable the majority of the refugees to return home. Otherwise a large number may try all possible ways of staying on in Pakistan.

## IS PAKISTAN BEING SHORT-CHANGED?

It is important to give large amounts of *aid to Afghanistan*, but it should not be given at the expense of *aid to the Afghan refugees*, who need to be *prepared and enabled to return*. What we need for the refugees in Pakistan (and possibly also in Iran) is a *fraction* of the rebuilding requirements inside Afghanistan. It is important to help in other crises, such as the tsunami victims in South-East Asia, and the reconstruction of South Sudan, and especially the earthquake victims in Pakistan, as mentioned above.

We are pleased that aid goes to tsunami, the Sudan, the earthquake, and other important

emergencies. But the international community should not aid other areas at the expense of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, who, for a limited number of years, need our care and increased support in many fields, and indeed in the various sub-sectors of education. The international community and local partners talk about ‘*comprehensive solutions*’; we await the operationalization, as they call it in office memoranda and seminar speeches. All partners need to contribute to this work. If we don’t contribute we are also responsible for possible shortcomings in the plans.

The responsibility for providing the required services for the refugees lies with the host government; in our case, the Government of Pakistan. Pakistan has hosted a large number of Afghan refugees over a quarter century, which probably totals in the range of 5-7 million, and still hosts more than three million refugees and other Afghans. However it is clearly impossible for the Government to provide all the support needed for the refugees without help from the international community. International assistance is always common in huge and long-lasting refugee situations of this kind. Why are donors so eager to cut it so quickly now – especially since reduction does not have the intended effect? Yes, it may be time for Afghans to return, but they should return in dignity and with a realistic possibility to make it, and to get a better and sustainable life for today’s and tomorrow’s generations - facilitating them through education and other incentives to finally begin a life and build a future in some kind of prosperity, with some hope, some comfort, some dreams come true... That cannot be asking for too much?

That is why organizations like BEFAre are so essential. They were essential yesterday and they are essential today and tomorrow, too. They know how to get the job done, but their activities are ‘donor driven’. Unless funds are provided from the international community and, of course, from the host country, its government and people, projects like BEFAre cannot do the work needed for the beneficiaries.<sup>16</sup>

## Pakistan – a generous host

Pakistan has always been a generous host to the Afghan refugees, often far beyond what was required of the country, but it is also in Pakistan’s interest to have a stable and prosperous neighbour to the West. The refugees should, and will, eventually return home, although it is expected that a good number of Afghans will continue to live in Pakistan – and one would foresee a larger number of Pakistanis than the estimated 60-70,000 foreign workers who are currently in Afghanistan, will live and work there in the future. Nationals from both countries will maintain family and business linkages across the borders. It would be useful to have research carried out in these fields, especially as regards the *costs and benefits* of the refugees to the host country, Pakistan. The international community has failed to provide funding for research and analysis.

## Refugees want to go home

It should be mentioned that, based on our general information, the majority of Afghan refugees seem to have a desire to return to their homeland, when conditions permit. “My heart is in Afghanistan”, we hear Afghans say. They are in Pakistan temporarily, although many young ones may never have lived in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, they have sought to find “a place to call home”, to use UNHCR’s theme for last year’s World Refugee Day. In 2005 the theme was “courage”.<sup>17</sup> Education is the most concrete and basic tool to *give people competencies and courage to return home*, to what should be called *the real home*.

## Education – a major tool in repatriation

The more education a person has, the better equipped he or she is to return home and become a successful returnee, who will remain at home and do well there. Education gives people knowledge, skills, competence, and so on, and through that, *self-confidence* and *courage*, so that

they can face harsh and difficult situations in rebuilding their lives and country at home in Afghanistan. The refugees need help to do this. They cannot do it with their bare hands. Without education and employable skills, and without other “bridging assistance” to go home and get into salaried employment or self-employment, repatriation plans just remain a desk officer’s impracticable dream. Help is needed, and that means *increasing budgets, not reducing budgets, to education and related fields*.<sup>18</sup>

## EDUCATION IN REFUGEE HOSTING AREAS IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, the international community, mainly through funding from UNHCR, provides services to the refugees in the camps, but very little to *urban refugees*, who have to fend for themselves. Many of them live in great poverty – often side by side with poor Pakistanis, or in neighbouring shantytown dwelling communities.

The majority of those who have repatriated up until now are urban refugees. If and when the remaining ones return home, poverty will be as bad as, or worse than in exile, and some will be forced to return to Pakistan for a second or maybe third time – as has happened to some of those who went over the last couple of years. Some NGOs work to assist the vulnerable and extremely vulnerable refugees (EVIs) and Pakistanis, such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), which we believe does excellent work.

Let us mention here that the repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran was the largest voluntary repatriation exercise that UNHCR has ever assisted. It is a major achievement, and shows that refugees are willing to return home.

The poor urban Afghan refugees should not be forgotten when we talk about increased assistance. They still constitute a large number of the refugees in Pakistan, perhaps more than half of the refugee population. Lack of statistics and research data and analysis are yet again a visible

shortcoming. The Afghan Census carried out by the Government of Pakistan in February-March 2005, assisted by UNHCR, has provided some further statistical details. However, sometimes we cannot wonder if data is gathered too late and in a self-serving form.

Since the international community has not made funds available for migration and refugee research, and UNHCR has hardly seen the rationale for scientific knowledge, we know little about the urban refugees in general – even the camp refugees.<sup>19</sup>

Some key questions would be: How much do refugees contribute to Pakistani society and the country’s economy, and in which fields? To what extent are they a burden on the host country? Are they more involved in crime and smuggling than locals? And so on.

We only have anecdotal knowledge about the various groups, and answers do not have scientific empirical foundations, unlike other refugee hosting countries. There is still time to document and learn in Pakistan. Let us remember, Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbours. They will always share part of their history and destiny.

The urban refugees have had to fend for themselves in the urban slums, and sometimes in rural poverty, where only rudimentary self-help schooling, literacy and skills training have been



Dr. Sabiha H. Syed, Director, Migration Research Centre, Islamabad, discussing with Waheeda Farouk at BEFARe, Peshawar, spring 2005.

provided to children and adolescents. Many Afghans live side by side with poor Pakistanis who also need help.

This being the situation, there is yet one more reason for increasing the education budgets at this particular time to these important groups of poor Afghans and Pakistanis, living on the fringes of society. Some donors have begun providing assistance to some refugee hosting areas, but it is far below requirements. This sector may be an important future area for the *bilateral donors*, to urban areas, rural areas and remote rural areas, including the tribal areas.

BEFARe is particularly concerned about *broadening its assistance* to include more Pakistani beneficiaries, and also to expand its work to fields other than basic education. Various types of skills and vocational training are obvious, but also micro-finance and management of projects in other development fields, with or without education components.<sup>20</sup>

## RETURNEES HAVE LITTLE EDUCATION

About *three quarters* of the returnees who have returned home have done so *without any formal education at all*.<sup>21</sup>

They are poor, illiterate, untrained and unskilled, and they lack general knowledge, and probably even quite a bit of *courage* and *self-confidence* – all of which are essential in rebuilding their lives and their home country. We should not forget, though, that *uneducated refugees are as intelligent as other people*, and many may have been able to learn through exposure and informal channels – but still, they have been denied formal education before and during their time as refugees. They have learned from people they have met and lived with, and on the job in Afghanistan and Pakistan. But in today's world, *everyone needs knowledge from schooling*.

The sad fact remains that the international community did not provide education for the majority of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The refugees have had to return with minimal formal

'old-fashioned' and 'modern-time' schooling and knowledge. Yet, we expect that they will be true to their *culture and heritage*, which every person should be. We also expect them to know when to embrace *modern ideas, like children's rights, women's rights, human rights, and other areas we believe are important*. We expect people to understand what democracy is, that the weak and poor have the same rights as the rich, powerful and perhaps we should add, the ones who possess arms and weapons, or even the owners of lucrative, illegal, but tolerated, opium poppy fields. We expect uneducated Afghans and returnees to be able to solve problems that none of us know the answers to, in spite of our degrees and Internet connections!

We know that *education and enlightenment* are helpful tools for solving the difficult problems that the Afghans will have to solve in due course, with international help. We also know that education leads to employment, which, together with other investments, leads to betterment of children's and women's situations; fewer children in a home; better nutrition, and better economic conditions for everyone. Over a couple of generations, *education is the main avenue out of poverty*. It is the main tool to develop a peaceful and 'New Afghanistan'. Education gives people an opportunity to cultivate their ideals and to live a life as law-abiding, ethical and democratic citizens – in accordance with people's wishes and religious beliefs.

We have already mentioned that about one million refugees live in refugee camps/villages in Pakistan. (See the boxes at the introduction of this chapter for details.) Until now, we have never had more than about 50-60 percent of the school-going age children actually enrolled in schools. They only get six years primary school, not eight years, as advised worldwide by the UNHCR Education Field Guidelines (Geneva 2003).<sup>22</sup> Only about a third of the pupils in refugee schools in the camps are girls. Less than five percent continues to *secondary level* and only a handful has received tertiary education. It could be mentioned that UNHCR administers a

German funded *higher education scholarship programme*, known as DAFI. However, it has only given higher education at Pakistani universities to about nine hundred refugees. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has provided loans (which in practice are scholarships) to several hundred students, and some other sponsors have supported individual candidates. Considering the large number of refugees, this has been a drop in the ocean. It is good for the individuals who have benefited, and good for Afghanistan to the limited degree that the candidates have been able and willing to return home.

*Post-primary education* falls outside UNHCR's main field of responsibility in the education sector, which is generally limited to basic education for children and adolescents, as per the above-mentioned UNHCR Education Field Guidelines. Special groups of young people shall be given priority, such as vulnerable boys, who may have been child soldiers or have used drugs, young unaccompanied girls and boys without family members, single mothers, the physically and mentally handicapped, and others. There is hardly any funding available from the international community for special education for refugees in Pakistan. How come?

We know from the United Nations Development Programme's National Human Development Report for Afghanistan that some 25-30 percent of the Afghans have been *psychologically scarred and traumatized*; many to such a degree that they have daily and ever-lasting difficulties in functioning and living normal lives. Many refugees have similar illnesses.<sup>23</sup> The education and health workers are expected to deal with them. The UN Children's Fund UNICEF has published estimates about the number of landmines in Afghanistan, and has said that there may be as many as 10 million – one per child. It is disturbing for us to think about these facts.

Various educational courses, training and awareness programmes, etc., are required for the *handicapped* and their families and communities before returning home and after they have come home. Teacher training is important in these

fields. If it is to be done at home, it may not take place and returnees may not be given priority.

On a positive note, UNHCR in Pakistan provides *mine awareness briefings*, limited as they may be, to all returnees before they travel home. However, mine awareness is one thing, another thing is how you till your land if there are still mines on it, or how you make a living if you can not till your land. Often, nobody knows where the mines are. Children are the first victims. Domestic animals also perish.

## WHY DO WE LACK RENEWED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT?

In trying to understand the lack of international support for Afghan refugee education in Pakistan, and also for funding of other social sectors, we must look beyond UNHCR. Actually, UNHCR is, within its limits, doing a fair job, but it seems they lack the support of other donors; both bilateral donors and multilateral agencies. The agency lacks an intellectual and research culture, which UNESCO has. Even at Headquarters level, UNHCR only has a rudimentary set-up of professionals in the education sector, and locally in Pakistan there are only a handful of employees. The UN agencies need to collaborate with local and international institutes and universities for research and analysis, but they also need to have a *core group of sector specialists within the agencies*. If we had had more specialists, within and without the UN agencies, the status of education would have been quite different.

Why is there so little support from the UN agencies dealing with education – for literacy, teacher training, vocational and technical training, education policy and other related fields? The main agencies mandated to assist in such fields are UNESCO, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization ILO, but we do not see their proactive participation. They may lack funds, but why do they not vigorously seek out funding? Even with the little funds they must have, they could play active support roles to help UNHCR in its work as the main agency

even in refugee education, although with limited theoretical expertise. We believe little, if any, such help is being given to the sister agency. Why has not UNDP in Pakistan been doing more in policy development and provision of funds to refugees and assistance to refugee hosting areas? Is the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), which has a liaison office in Pakistan, actively facilitating cross border initiatives, preferably in cooperation with UNHCR, UNDP and sister agencies?

The *bilateral donors* are doing very little for refugees in Pakistan, as far as is known. They are providing assistance to Pakistan, not to refugees, unless they happen to 'stumble across them' intermingled with Pakistanis when funding other projects and sectors. Bilateral agencies may explain the situation by saying that the Headquarters of their aid agencies and foreign offices in the rich countries transfer funds to the Headquarters of agencies like UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and UNDP, and it is those agencies' responsibility to distribute funds to the various countries, sectors and programmes, including to *refugee education in Pakistan*, if considered a priority area. This is true. But do



Overcrowded classroom as a result of the major cuts in budgets in 2005. It is normally recommended that the number of pupils per class/teacher does not exceed 40 – 45 pupils. Girls' education is particularly at risk when budgets are cut, as seen in BEFARe's schools in the second half of 2005 when enrolment of girls dropped markedly. Also older boys are at risk of dropping out.

the bilateral diplomatic missions know the local situation well enough to inform their capitals about the refugees' needs in education and other fields in Pakistan? Do they lack full understanding of the politics and dynamics of education in giving the refugees courage and competence to return, reintegrate at home and stay at home for good?<sup>24</sup>

## SOME QUANTITATIVE DATA ABOUT REFUGEE EDUCATION

The total number of children in refugee schools in Pakistan is now only in the range of 150,000. The largest project in Pakistan and, until now, in the world is that of *Basic Education for Afghan Refugees*, BEFARe, in Peshawar, with about **80,000 pupils** and about **1,700 teachers**. It has been reduced markedly as a consequence of the budget cut in 2005. In 2006, the enrolment will be down to about *60,000 pupils*, or less, unless they find some *magic formula*, such as increasing the class sizes or running half-day schools, although UNHCR recommends six-hours per day as advisable.

Medallions always have a reverse side; here that would mean reduced quality, and parents may not find it worthwhile to send their children to such schools. *Girls' enrolment* has gone down by some eight percent in 2005, from over 35% to about 27%. Already, some schools have over 100 pupils per class, although the average is still 40-50. BEFARe has already announced that it may have to lay off more teachers and supervisors since it is common in education that some 80% of the budget goes to paying teachers' salaries, called 'incentives' in our refugee context, as the teachers are not paid full salaries. The reasoning behind this is that the communities should contribute, which even the poor Afghan refugees somehow manage to do, if not to the teacher, then to the school compound, latrines, and such things.

It is not certain that the refugees will return home to Afghanistan immediately but rather trickle into the poor neighbourhoods in the large

cities in Pakistan. The *teachers* may return to Afghanistan and get employed there, which would be a positive achievement, since Afghanistan would then get needed experienced teachers. However, the teachers and other parents may be reluctant to return immediately, especially those with children in secondary education, since there are very few good secondary schools in Afghanistan. Even parents from the camps with primary school age children, both sons and daughters, may be reluctant to return because of the low quality of Afghan schools and special worries about girls' education. It should be noted that camp schools in Pakistan are generally of good quality thanks to UNHCR's support and good implementing partners, including BEFARe.

Women of child-bearing age may face severe difficulties in Afghanistan during and after pregnancy, and twenty percent of children die before they reach their fifth birthday because of the inadequate health system in Afghanistan.

These are just some examples. There are many factors, which warrant a delay in, and a well-planned, repatriation process which must include *education on both sides of the border and other 'bridging assistance'* to help the returnees into employment so that solutions will be comprehensive and durable.<sup>25</sup>

## EDUCATION IS AN ASSET, NOT A COST

*Education should be seen as an asset, not a cost.* Education is a tool, which can be used proactively to reach other goals. The refugees must be allowed to return and set up a new life and a new home in dignity and in ways which give realistic hope and mechanisms for a better life for today's and tomorrow's generations. Anything less is unworthy of the international community in 2005.

The United Nations organizations, with UNHCR being the lead agency in our context, have many goodhearted people. There are excellent NGOs in Pakistan, such as BEFARe, the

International Rescue Committee (IRC), Ockenden International (OI), Basic Education and Life Skills Training (BEST), Save the Children, World Vision and others including local NGOs. The country's government has competent institutions and people and there are also excellent Afghan refugee organizations, such as the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR). The UN education agencies and the bilateral donors seem to be slumbering, but they have important competence and we believe that UNESCO is planning to play a more proactive role.<sup>26</sup>

The *media* too have a role to play in advocacy and the spread of information, but they seem to focus on other crises, and on the overall situation inside Afghanistan rather than the refugees.<sup>27</sup>

The above does not give the full answers for our neglect of refugee education, but it sheds some light on the problems. Simple practical thinking, which UNHCR is usually good at, would tell anybody that not investing in education now, and even reducing funding, is wrong – as seen from moral, economic and educational perspectives. Instead of reducing funding at this critical stage, we should increase funding for implementation of education, and for documentation, research and analysis of experience and we believe that UNESCO is planning to take a more proactive role.<sup>28</sup>

Let us take one particular area of interest to all of us; notably *girls' education*. We have never had more than one third of female pupils in schools in the refugee camps, except for a brief period in BEFARe schools in 2005, and even less in urban areas. Why are not the Western women in Islamabad, and the well-to-do Pakistani women, holding seminars and meetings about this? We don't think they are. However, at the time of completing this book, we believe the various NGOs and private groups are active in soliciting support for the victims of the earthquake, which in some areas would include refugees.

Counting urban and camp refugees together, far less than half of the boys have been provided



with formal primary schooling. We have hardly provided any *literacy training and other adult education*, except for BEFAre's *non-formal education programmes* which are an exception which just goes to prove the rules. We have provided very little skills, vocational and technical training. Even the vulnerable and handicapped have largely been ignored.

Anybody who has tourist-level information about refugees and returnees can see that Afghanistan needs people with knowledge and skills of all kinds.

Without that piece of luggage, notably education and skills, the refugees remain hesitant about returning home, and if and when they go they will endure miserable lives in poverty, which they will rarely be able to get out of. Some will be forced to come back to Pakistan. Many may not try to return to Afghanistan at all.

## SOLUTIONS AND COSTS

It would not cost much to provide the education needed so that *all* refugees could go home with general knowledge, literacy, civics education and skills. 'Bridging assistance' is needed, beyond what UNHCR already provides, preferably together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Afghan Government Department of Refugees and Returnees. The returnees will need some reintegration training at home, following the training in Pakistan, and concrete assistance so that they can find livelihoods. We should be reminded that *education is a tool*, but *other tools and investments are required* for people to be able to make a living. Keep in mind, too, that people are re-starting their lives from scratch. Even educated people cannot rebuild a country with their bare hands, irrespective of how many degrees and skills they may have! This partly explains why very few highly educated Afghans overseas have yet returned.

What specifically should be done? An exhaustive answer requires another chapter, but let us give a few pointers: We suggest that for

*fifty to sixty million dollars* over the next two to three years, we can meet most of the needs for the Afghan refugees in the field of basic education, secondary education, vocational and technical training, and other training needed for employment at home, including 'bridging assistance' to help the returnees into permanent livelihoods at home. Specific documents for each project and programme, and costing of them, must be made. UN organizations and NGOs have draft plans ready.

Donors should be challenged to contribute at least modest amounts. A *donors' conference for refugee education* is urgently needed, with local preparatory meetings in Pakistan. We can assure the donors that there is ample expertise in the existing NGOs, consultancy firms and local institutions to plan and implement projects and programmes. Naturally, we also need to draw upon the know-how of the UN and the bilateral donor agencies; the latter mainly for funding. The problem is not lack of knowledge, but lack of funds, and lack of focus and passion. We also need the local Pakistani institutions to be included, and they should now begin establishing formal long-term, future-oriented linkages with sister institutions and colleagues in Afghanistan.

It is our challenge to the international donor community in Pakistan, and the capitals in the rich countries and to all the diplomats in Islamabad to roll up their sleeves and play a proactive role. If most of what we propose could be done, then the refugees/returnees and Afghanistan, and the long-term host country of Pakistan, will be able to meet a different future. That is the real achievement we all want.

Let us not only blame the current diplomats, but they should take their share. (The author of this book has above admitted to taking part of the blame himself.) It must be added that those who should have done much better in their jobs earlier, before '9/11', were the UN staff and diplomats, who had been evacuated from Kabul for security reasons and had to live and work in Islamabad in the 1990s. They must have had a lot of idle time on their hands and should have

ascertained better implementation of education and other activities for the refugees and returnees-to-be. They should have done better in planning repatriation of the refugees; their reintegration at home, and the reconstruction of Afghanistan. There were some exceptions, such as UNICEF/Afghanistan, with offices in Islamabad at that time, who actively engaged themselves in refugee education work. Improvement of girls' education is UNICEF's responsibility under the EFA movement.<sup>29</sup>

## COURAGE AND DEEDS

The 2005 theme for the *World Refugee Day 20 June* was **courage**, and in 2006 it was **hope**. We need to provide education to the Afghan refugees in order for them to *get courage to return home*. Without education there is not much of a future for them at home; many may resist going home, and many may come back to Pakistan; perhaps for good. Even worse, some of the refugees and the marginalized returnees in the major cities may engage in *destabilizing and antisocial activities*, or be hijacked into *extremist groups*, including *terrorism*. When that happens to young people, we as educators, parents and concerned citizens find it particularly saddening, because we have failed in our task in bringing up and guiding the future generation.

Providing education is a multifaceted task and it is basically a **moral obligation**, resting on *ethical principles*. Knowledge and skills come second. Powerful organizations and staff with impressive titles have great responsibilities, particularly those in the UN organizations, embassies and ministries. We hope they have **courage to do what is right**.

We know it was possible to receive funding for the terrible tsunami catastrophe. Governments and ordinary people all over the world assisted, which was the right thing to do. A donors' conference in Oslo for Southern Sudan also received what they needed to begin rebuilding the war-torn south of the country and establish peaceful relations with the capital. The

donors' conference in Islamabad in November 2005 succeeded in receiving a large amount for the emergency, medium-term and long-term response to the victims of the earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October 2005.<sup>30</sup>

We hope that the donors and planners gathered at the conferences realized the importance of education, including providing education for the millions of Sudanese refugees, so they can get courage and become able and willing to return home. This includes education for employment and 'bridging assistance' for the returnees; education for traumatized families in the north of Pakistan; the handicapped and war victims in Afghanistan; and just ordinary poor people in hosting or sending countries, of refugees and others affected by natural and man-made disasters.

Regarding South Sudan, what we did in the past decades, with five-six million refugees and IDPs, is a typical example of our short sightedness in the field of education. We educated far too few, especially at post-primary levels. This is not unlike what we have done with the Afghans in Pakistan. We never gave them the education they needed; basic education, skills, vocational and technical training, higher education, peace education and so on, all of which are required if people are going to manage their own lives and rebuild their country. This neglect is now realized at the time of repatriation and reconstruction - in South Sudan and in Afghanistan.

Let us mention, too, that the refugees are in general a resource to their home country, but to unlock the returning refugees' potential requires help and investment. After wars and long years in exile, some returnees will need medical, psychological and other help and social benefits for the rest of their lives. They can still contribute to rebuilding of their country.

The author of this book was part of the international workforce in the Sudanese and Afghan long-term refugee crises. Although we spoke up, we failed to get the results that were required. "*It is not words but deeds that count*", the former Norwegian Prime Minister Hon. Kjell

Magne Bondevik said in Oslo, at the opening of the donors' conference for South Sudan in April 2005. We wish he would also be our spokesman for Afghan refugee education in Pakistan, where

we are in a great hurry to implement education projects to enable the refugees to return home in dignity to rebuild their lives and country.<sup>31</sup>



The refugees are one of the most marginalized groups in any society and the international community has a great responsibility to give them courage and skills to return home in dignity, so that they have a realistic chance of re-building their lives and country, and are able to stay at home for good. They need education and skills. The international community should set up a special emergency education programme for Afghan refugees. Similar programmes can be set up for other countries and sectors.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> (a) This chapter includes some background information on Afghanistan's history, refugee history, opinions of donors and other partners, and other issues, which were not included in the Summary Volume. (b) The Boxes at the introduction of this chapter include some details about refugee issues and refugee education. (c) This chapter attempts to make a case for Afghan refugee education in Pakistan. (d) We would like to give special support to the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative by the Government of Pakistan (SAFRON/CCAR) and UNHCR supported by the UN and core NGOs. Needs assessment reports have been prepared in 2006. Donor pledges and project/programme preparation and implementation of actual activities to benefit Pakistanis and Afghan refugees are urgently needed.

<sup>2</sup> See various reports by the Government of Afghanistan and the UN, such as, UNDP: *Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2004*. Kabul, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Quantitative data about repatriation can be found in UNHCR's three repatriation booklets. (a) UNHCR: *Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan 2003, 2004 and 2005, respectively*. UNHCR, Islamabad. 2003. (b) See also, UNHCR: *Searching for Solutions: 25 Years of UNHCR – Pakistan Cooperation on Afghan Refugees*. UNHCR, Islamabad, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See various internal CCAR and UNHCR documents. See also the open documents from the Census about Afghans in Pakistan, carried out by the Government of Pakistan, assisted by UNHCR, in February-March 2005. In 2006 and 2007, UNHCR and CCAR, GoP, will prepare documents from the Registration exercise.

<sup>6</sup> See references in the substantive chapters about educational issues.

<sup>7</sup> In an evaluation study of a durable solutions project for vulnerable and extremely vulnerable refugees in Peshawar, carried out for the International Rescue Committee (funded by ECHO) in September/October 2005, we discussed some of the issues related to livelihoods, etc. See, Hetland, Atle: *Evaluation of the IRC-DSP Project*. IRC, Peshawar/Islamabad, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> The author touched upon some of these issues in a newspaper article entitled "ABC of post-disaster", *The News*, Lahore/Karachi/Islamabad, 30.10.05.

<sup>9</sup> Interviews with the Vice-Chancellor of Hazara

University, Mansehra, Professor Dr. Daud Awan, October and November 2005.

<sup>10</sup> A brief article is included in, *BEFARe Monthly Newsletter*, Issue 25, Vol. 3, October 2005. Peshawar. (That article does not include information about UNESCO-BEFARe cooperation, which we have obtained from other sources in the refugee education community.)

<sup>11</sup> The author discussed some of the issues in his internal report upon completion of his consultancy contracts with UNHCR, submitted to UNHCR, Islamabad and Geneva, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Discussions about BEFARe's future are included in several chapters in this book. See also, *Annual Reports for 2004 and 2005*. BEFARe, Peshawar, 2005 and 2006.

<sup>13</sup> See various UNESCO booklets and documents concerning emergency education. UNESCO, Paris, various years, mainly from 2000 onwards.

<sup>14</sup> The term 'bridging assistance' is frequently used in various BEFARe documents by Berthold Wohlleber, Technical Adviser.

<sup>16</sup> See internal documents in BEFARe.

<sup>17</sup> See UNHCR public information materials.

<sup>18</sup> In our report referred to in Note 7 above we discuss some issues related to funding, mainly related to vulnerable and EVIs.

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Sabiha H. Syed has taken initiative in establishing Migration Research Centre, Islamabad, and has taken up these issues in several seminar papers in 2004 and 2005. Recently, AREU, an Afghanistan based NGO has carried out several surveys and studies, *inter alia*, in Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta, and on cross-border migration.

<sup>20</sup> See our comments and references in Note 12 above.

<sup>21</sup> See data in UNHCR's booklet about repatriation in 2003. (For exact reference, see Note 4 above.)

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR: *Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> For exact reference, see Note 2 above.

<sup>24</sup> This debate is not new. Concerns about these issues have been discussed internally in the various UN organizations. In UNESCO, for example, several policy documents and reports have been prepared and some work on emergency and refugee education has been implemented in various countries, including Pakistan and Kenya. See the Websites of the various organizations.

<sup>25</sup> Except for IRC, Mercy Corps and Save the

Children, there seem to be few international organizations taking up protection issues publicly as seen from the refugees' own perspective. UN organizations like UNHCR, UNOCHA, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WFP and others discuss the issues in various surveys, reports and policy documents.

<sup>26</sup> We do not feel that we are unfair when expressing criticism about the performance of UN organizations in these fields. Surely, they are aware of their own shortcomings, but improved results seem to be missing.

<sup>27</sup> The English language print media in Pakistan give fair space to refugee issues. For example, *The News* has a separate page daily about Afghanistan, sometimes combined with Iraq and Kashmir news. However, the refugee issues seem to move more to repatriation issues, such as an excellent 'Special Report' on several pages in *The News* on Sunday 26 June 2005.

<sup>28</sup> See references in the substantive chapters about education.

<sup>29</sup> During the Taliban regime international organizations, diplomatic missions and most NGOs were housed temporarily abroad for security reasons, most of them in

Islamabad although some (NGOs) were in Peshawar.

<sup>30</sup> As for summary reports from the conference, see, for example, *The News* on Sunday 20 November 2005, including the editorial, "Gesture of generosity". We estimate that less than half of the pledges were grants. Thus a large amount was soft loans and implementation to take place over five years. Pledges don't always materialize in actual funds, goods or services. (Being a Norwegian citizen, and having worked in Africa and Asia for over 20 years, the author was proud of Norway's particularly generous and speedy response after the earthquake in Pakistan. Norway has granted more than USD 100 million and the figure keeps going up.)

<sup>31</sup> (a) A number of references of relevance to this chapter are included in the substantive chapters about education. (b) The evaluation of the response to tsunami has been released and it leaves a lot to be desired. For some aspects, see an early account in the journal *Forced Migration Review*, Special Issue, July 2005, published by the Refugee Studies Center, Oxford University, UK. The issue has the front-page heading, "Tsunami: learning from the humanitarian response".

## Part IV

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## Leaders, Managers and Advisers in BEFARe

Chapter

# 4





## Leaders, Managers and Advisers in BEFARe

*This Chapter presents leaders, managers and advisers in the GTZ-BEFARe project and its predecessors. It presents not only the people but also their work; the projects. The projects were, throughout, headed by Chief Technical Advisers (CTAs) recruited by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ); the leaders were German nationals, Pakistanis and Afghans, and some other nationalities.*

*GTZ-BEFARe, which became the project name as of 1 January 1996, was the major implementing partner in education for the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR in Pakistan for over ten years. Some other donors also contributed to the operations, out of which the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development was the major and most regular donor, while others joined in only for short-term activities, sometimes with a one-time grant, or a grant over a few years. "It was indeed serious work to run activities of this importance and magnitude", one of the German leaders told us.*

*The reader will discover that the German leaders, and the local staff, have been particularly conscientious and committed individuals. We learn about their efforts, achievements and shortcomings, and we are reminded that leaders always operate within structures. Unfortunately, the glimpses we can give of the persons behind the job titles are brief, and so are the tentative and analytical comments.*

*History about projects and organizations, and stories about leaders and their achievements, may make interesting reading, and there are always lessons to draw. However, Shakir Ishaq, BEFARe's new Chief Executive will still have to find his own ways and means in a new terrain without any blueprint for guaranteed results. The refugee aid climate and economic conditions are different and tougher now than earlier. This is indeed a challenge to Shakir's leadership and, we should add, to his staff, including the beneficiaries, especially the teachers and community leaders.<sup>1</sup>*

The German assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan gave attention to practical training during the initial years, and then again for a few years fifteen-twenty years later in the VET project. Lack of funds is the reason given for reducing assistance to the field, which is correct enough since primary school education was always given highest priority in accordance with UNHCR's guidelines, and UNHCR paid for the bulk of the expenses throughout the time GTZ was implementing partner. However, UNHCR's guidelines also emphasize training for adolescents and handicapped, and skills and vocational training shall be given priority. Germany is known for having top-notch practical expertise in these fields.

Several of UNHCR's leaders in Pakistan also wanted practical training to be expanded, in particular Hasim

Utkan, who spent three terms in high-level posts in UNHCR, Pakistan. Therefore, it remains puzzling why practical training was not given more attention than was the case. How come the otherwise excellent German project leaders, managers and advisers could not secure additional funding for such training, from German bilateral sources (BMZ), or from other sources? At the current time (2006), when refugees are returning home in large numbers, everybody can see that skills, vocational and technical training would have made a great difference for returnees in finding employment and rebuilding Afghanistan. It would also have reduced the number of refugees who have to migrate abroad again because they cannot find livelihoods at home.

Just like a piece of cake? "No, moving from GTZ-BEFARe to establishing the large project as a local organization, notably BEFARe, without GTZ, was far from easy", Holger Munsch says. "It was a difficult process and there were opposing interests and strong feelings among the staff and partners. However, I believe we reached the right conclusion and I am glad that the *new BEFARe* has become a Pakistani organization and is moving forward."

In this photo Holger Munsch takes a piece of cake and Shakir Ishaq, the new BEFARe's Chief Executive, seems to be pleased with the new state of the affairs. Peshawar, November 2003.



*See Chapter 3, Box 3.4, for a chronological description of the project development and photos of the project leaders, 1996 – 2005.*

## ESTABLISHING ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEE EDUCATION

The German assistance to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan dates back to the early years after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979. Various educational fields were considered important, including basic education, adult education, literacy and community services, vocational and technical training, and related training of personnel. Several German assisted assessment missions undertook surveys, case studies and planning work to explore the most relevant and effective fields for German assistance. Experts from other European countries, and from Pakistan and Afghanistan, also took part in this work and development of teaching-learning materials for pilot projects. The long list of names from the early years include, Messrs. Brarotzky, Peter Trott, Gottfried Marienfeld and many others. Gottfried Marienfeld, an engineer by training, was the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) of the *Pak-German Technical Training Programme (PGTTP)* from 1982.<sup>2</sup>

In 1984 the first broader basic education activities became more formalized with the establishment of *Pak-German Bas-Ed*, a GTZ-project under the Education Department of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). It often used a longer name, notably “Basic Education in Areas Affected by the Influx of Refugees, NWFP”. *Dr. Udo Bude* was the first Chief Technical Adviser from 1984-1987. He included a number of foreigners and locals (Pakistanis and Afghans) as consultants and advisers to establish this important project – which over the years became one of the world’s largest basic education projects for refugees, possibly the largest. In 2002, when the author of this book was a seconded education expert in UNHCR’s Pakistan office, Dr. Bude was recruited to be a member of the Evaluation Team, which looked into the performance and impact of the long-lasting project, which had throughout been managed by GTZ but mainly funded by UNHCR with some German assistance, through the German Federal

Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ). In the early years, the Advisers included Wilhelm Schuldt, who was involved in assessment of training needs and other issues, and Manfred Wehrmann, who in particular worked on development of teaching-learning materials, assessment of learning needs (with Schuldt) and various fields of non-formal education. Messrs. Schuldt and Wehrmann both came back to head the project some years later; Schuldt from 1987 – 1988, when Wehrman took over and stayed on for his two-year period until 1990. Mr. Schuchart was a frequently hired technical expert assisting Schuldt.

Throughout GTZ-BEFARe’s history, there have been relatively *few women* in senior posts and as advisers, but there have been some. Dr. *Gisela Frommer* from GTZ in Germany was involved in project planning in the early years, and Detlef Reuter and his wife, both accomplished teachers and teacher trainers, were consultants in the late 1980s.

There have been a number of *local project managers and advisers* involved from the early years, such as Dr. Zainul Abudin Mumtaz, Said Ahmed Mohmand, Hakim Taniwal, Prof. Habib-ur-Rahman and Ms. F.A. Bhatti. During the early years, several senior advisers were Afghans, while that seems to have changed somewhat over time, as more Pakistanis have been recruited into the permanent posts. Afghans have kept playing key roles, but more in second row rather than first row positions. It is probably natural, or at least common in long-term refugee-situations, that the host country’s experts and managers soon begin occupying the key managerial posts, with experts from the refugees’ home country playing second fiddle. But the Afghans have been invaluable sources of advice, especially about indigenous Afghan issues. At the end of a refugee era, emphasis changes, and the home country’s experts should increasingly take over leadership functions.

Although few women held key posts in mainstream fields of the GTZ education projects, women were usually in ‘women fields’ like home

economics, community development, mother and child health care (MCH), and similar fields. For example, as early as in 1987, there was a team of women (under the leadership of a man) handling key planning issues in community development. The team included, Mr. Alamgir Shah with Ms. Rubina, Ms. Sarvat, Ms. Fhima and Ms. Palwasha.<sup>3</sup>

Women have been involved as teachers, but relatively few have become head teachers and managers, although improvements have been made in recent years. With the expansion of girls' education more posts became available for women teachers and head teachers. Also in literacy, MCH and other non-formal education activities, the majority of the participants were women.<sup>4</sup> (See other chapters for substantive data.)

As seen from a gender perspective, it was encouraging that the only external evaluation ever undertaken of the GTZ project work had a woman team leader, notably Dr. Eva Marion Johannessen, a Norwegian Psychologist and specialist in emergency education, but that was as late as 2002, and all the other team members were men.<sup>5</sup>

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND BASIC EDUCATION

Let us now go back to the initial years of German assistance to Afghan refugee education in Pakistan, with particular emphasis on vocational and technical training. The first project to start was in these fields, notably the PGTTP project, as mentioned above. Its implementation activities went on until 1996, with **Engineer Marienfeld** as the first CTA, and **Dr. Jarik Lette** as the chief over the last three years.

For several years, the Pak-German Technical Training programme and the Pak-German Basic Education were parallel projects; one focusing on technical, vocational and skills fields, the other one on formal, community based primary education (COPE). PGTTP was more oriented towards non-formal education, but it never gave compre-



Textbooks displayed in a BEFARe school in Jalozaï Camp about one and half hour's drive from Peshawar city. BEFARe has developed much over one hundred books/booklets and supplementary materials for pupils and teachers. The publications are listed in a Catalogue prepared by Atteeq Ur Rahman, GTZ-BEFARe. Peshawar 2003. The catalogue includes a one-page summary of each title. In addition to the textbooks and supplementary teaching materials, BEFARe's backlist includes research-oriented studies and other publications in formal education, non-formal education, teacher training, pedagogical and methodological fields, and so on.

BEFARe, Pakistan, and GTZ worldwide, should be proud of the quality curriculum and textbook work it implemented. As long as there are refugees in Pakistan, BEFARe's textbooks will continue to benefit Afghan pupils and other beneficiaries in schools in Pakistan. We also hope Afghanistan's educators will make use of the materials.

For further information, contact BEFARe's R&D Section.  
E-mail: [befare@befare.org](mailto:befare@befare.org) (See also Chapter 7.)

hensive attention to *functional literacy and ordinary adult education programmes*. Considering the long-lasting and significant German involvement in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan, there could have been room for developing this field further, but then there was always competition for funds between formal education for chil-

dren, which fell well short of reaching all school-going-age children in the target areas, and the non-formal fields. However, BEFARe did increasingly include NFE in its work, but it was an uphill struggle to find funds and to get recognition for the field. The only woman at managerial level in BEFARe, *Waheeda Farouk*, finally managed to get NFE more recognized towards the end of the GTZ era, when BEFARe became a local Pakistani organization in 2003. (See the NFE Chapter.)

Although non-formal education, in a traditional sense, was not given major attention, we should recall that the first 15 years saw major focus given to *vocational and technical training*, and then for a short two-year period around 2000, with the **VET project**, under BEFARe, which was temporarily funded by UNHCR (not by BMZ or GTZ). This shows that there was a clear will to include non-formal education and indeed the VET fields, but there must have been some lack of understanding of the importance of these fields in the central donor quarters.

PGTTP had several international, mostly German advisers, including Messrs. Peter Trott, Horst Metzger, Pott, Zingler, Schubert and others. The last chief of the project was *Dr. Jarik Lette* (1993-1996) with D. Betz as international technical adviser. Pakistani experts also played key roles, with German-educated *Engineer Hamish Khan* as a particularly competent and persistent adviser, with clear leadership and management qualities. He took with him his experience when he left PGTTP at project close in 1996. For some time Hamish worked with GTZ-BEFARe but could not fit into the new set-up and left, and some years later he established BEST, Basic Education and Employable Skills Training, which initially had operations only in NWFP in Pakistan and now increasingly operates in Afghanistan, with offices in Kabul and Jalalabad.<sup>6</sup> (See Chapter 1, where Hamish Khan's statement about the good work of GTZ and BEFARe has been included.)

Hamish Khan's success is partly a credit to

the German assistance to Afghan refugee education to Pakistan, and a product of Khan's own hard work. Shahnaz Akhtar, currently Country Director of Ockenden International (UK) in Pakistan, is similarly a product of many years of GTZ experience. (She mentions this herself in her statement in Chapter 1.) While working for GTZ in Pakistan, Shahnaz did not work in refugee education, but moved to that field in her next post. She is the only Pakistani to head an international NGO in refugee education, and she is the only woman at such a high level.<sup>7</sup>

Several Afghan nationals, affiliated to GTZ in the early years, have done well in connection with the on-going reconstruction of Afghanistan, working in NGOs, United Nations and other international organizations, Government posts and politics. One example is Hon. Hakim Taniwal, who has served as a Minister in President Karzai's Government in Afghanistan.

The vocational and technical training project for Afghan refugees in Pakistan started as early as 1982. We find it natural that a German administered project started with vocational and technical training since these are fields where the German educational system has unique expertise. The country has its own model for vocational training in schools and apprenticeship work places. Other countries still 'look to Germany' to learn from the country's model, and we find that aspects of the model are particularly relevant in long-term emergency situations and early reconstruction phases. As we mentioned above, it was unfortunate that the practical training project for refugees was closed in Pakistan in the mid-1990s due to lack of funding and that similar training activities could not be provided for many years. In our context, we would have liked to see expansion of the training activities of the kind PGTTP offered, and possibly included a scholarship programme for vocational and technical training similar to the German-funded and UNHCR-administered DAFI Scholarship Programme for Higher Education. (See Chapter 7 for a brief description of DAFI.)

Even if GTZ's vocational and technical training work did not lead to long-lasting results of the kind we mention, the project can definitely be listed as one of the good practices of GTZ's work in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan. In addition to the thousands of skilled Afghan graduates from the training courses, PGTTTP's results should also be measured in the ideals and models it provided, which can be built on in future refugee and reconstruction situations. Perhaps some of the leaders who were involved in the project, and whom we have named above, could be encouraged to write articles and interest *German and local students and researchers* in getting involved?<sup>8</sup>

## FROM PROJECT TO ORGANIZATION

We shall now present the primary education activities and their many leaders, managers and advisers. Pak-German Bas-Ed started in 1984 and ran as a project until 1996 when GTZ-BEFARe took over. But some years earlier, starting in 1990 and going on gradually until 1993, in a part of the project known as *AG Bas-Ed, Afghan German Basic Education*, had been established in Kabul with Dr. Y. Noristani as its leader. AG Bas-Ed is still in full swing in Afghanistan.

The first leader of Pak Bas-Ed was Dr. Udo Bude, who was CTA from the end of 1984 to the end of 1987. He was also a member of the team evaluating the project in 2002. (See exact reference in Footnote 5.)

The various project leaders, managers, advisers and other staff members made their mark on the project. Among the particularly strong-headed and let us hasten to add, competent and passionate German leaders was **Dr. Michael Hirth**, who started out in PGTTTP in 1992 before becoming CTA of Pak-German Bas-Ed from 1994 until 1996, after which he became the first Head of the new and reorganized project organization, **GTZ-BEFARe**, from its establishment in 1996 until 1998. When we spoke with Michael in the autumn of 2005, he was just back in the

region; this time as GTZ's Senior Education Adviser in Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup>

"It is important that a leader of a large project like BEFARe has a clear vision for the project. To have a *clear vision and long-term goals* are important in any project but it is particularly important in *large-scale projects and not least in refugee situations where the environment changes all the time*. We had no blueprint for how to reach our vision, but we worked together and developed our vision into *strategies and plans, which we then turned into practical and operational activities*", Dr. Hirth says, and we can sense that he is quite satisfied with the achievements made during his term as the GTZ refugee education chief in Pakistan.

"I believe we managed to establish good project activities. We developed BEFARe with its many activities into an organization based on solid foundations with clear vision. This was needed in order to be able to expand and improve the project and its outputs, notably tens of thousands of children and adults whom we provided quality basic education for in the ordinary schools and the non-formal education programme. We managed to do this thanks to joint efforts by all our staff, including the Afghan and Pakistani teachers in the classrooms."

## GROWTH, TURBULENCE AND CHANGE

By the time Dr. Hirth's term was over, the project had grown to include about 80,000 pupils and adult learners and more than 2,500 teachers and staff. The project continued to grow during **Dr. Ulf Bartholomae's** two-year period as CTA, from 2000 to the autumn of 2001, and peaked with more than 100,000 children and 20,000 youth and adult learners before the "9/11" events shattered the world and the local scene.

"9/11" led to the invasion of Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Taliban regime and the beginning of the largest repatriation exercise that UNHCR had ever been involved in, from early spring 2002. Finally, there was hope for some sort of normalcy in Afghanistan, even though it

was fragile and uncertain. Huge numbers of refugees in Pakistan did take the chance and returned home to Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Bartholomae's tenure was made difficult from the time he came in 1998 by various factors, and at a time when nobody could predict that '9/11' would happen, that Afghanistan would be invaded by America and the West, and that refugees would indeed be able to return home from the turn of the year 2001/2002.

When Dr. Bartholomae came there was an atmosphere of resignation and people saw no end to the Taliban regime and hope of going home. The international community was also not proactive in supporting new initiatives in education and other fields. Since the Afghan tragedy had gone on for so long, there was also a feeling of 'donor fatigue', especially within UNHCR. On the part of the beneficiaries, i.e. the refugees, there were groups who had become impatient: they wanted assistance which could give them and their children an acceptable life in exile since they had little hope of returning home.

Some of those who wanted better conditions were the teachers and staff in BEFARe, who felt they should be paid *better salaries*. Technically, teachers were never paid salaries but *incentives*, using UNHCR's terminology, however the teachers saw their monthly pay as salaries, which was about PKR 2,200 at the time. It was increased to over PKR 4,000 a few years later, but that was after Dr. Bartholomae had left. He became the GTZ leader who had to face teachers' demonstrations, sometimes threats, and other difficulties in daily operations. He was willing to reason with the teachers, parents and community leaders about what was fair pay for hard and important work. Yet, he also had to explain to the teachers that it was difficult for him to convince the main donor to pay more. Dr. Bartholomae rightly thought the teachers deserved better pay, but the main donor, UNHCR, did not have the money, and the Head of the Programme Section at that time was unwilling and unable to understand the seriousness of the problem. This shows that a project leader, even in the world's largest

refugee education project run by GTZ, can be trapped in an impossible situation if the donor/s do not have the required competence to pledge funding and other resources.

It should be recalled that these difficulties happened at a time when it was a known fact that only about half of the children of school-going age were enrolled in primary schools in BEFARe's target areas and in other camps/villages in Pakistan, and less than 1/3 of the pupils were girls. Hence, there was an objective need to increase, not decrease project activities. UNHCR's own field guidelines for education stipulated at that time, and it has been re-emphasized in the new guidelines (2003), that *all children* should be given primary education and that further education should also be made available on merit. Formal and non-formal skills and vocational training should also be provided, especially for handicapped and vulnerable men and women.

Let us mention that UNHCR's Country Representative to Pakistan until 2003, Hasim Utkan, was always keen on arguing for increased allocations to education, including vocational, technical and other secondary level education, in addition to primary education and education for the handicapped. Although the quality of the education provided to refugees in Pakistan was seen as high, not least in GTZ's schools, it did not reach all children in the refugee camps/villages in Pakistan. Very little was done for urban refugees, who actually constituted about 50% of all Afghans in Pakistan, but statistical data about this was not available at the time.

The above problems marred Dr. Bartholomae's term as head of BEFARe, although they were not of his making. He received little support from his GTZ country office, as far as we know, but we believe the *Embassy of Germany*, which oversees all aid activities and makes proposals for allocation of aid, played a more positive role. Dr. Victor Matz was, at that time, the Head of the Economic Development Cooperation Section at the Embassy, and was proactively seeking additional



funding for refugee education, i.e. GTZ-BEFARe, which in many ways was a *flagship of German development aid in Pakistan and in refugee education worldwide*. However, after “9/11”, the world outlook of the Embassy swiftly changed focus, from refugees in Pakistan to reconstruction in Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup>

Although we know from a professional point of view that this was a wrong approach, it was not ill intentioned. The aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan should have been increased markedly for some years parallel with major assistance to Afghanistan, so as to enable refugees to prepare to return home with knowledge and skills. Experience from elsewhere in the world teaches us that this is the *preferred result-oriented action, which promotes repatriation and reconstruction*.<sup>12</sup> If the donors had been more farsighted, and better advised, they would also have allocated *increased funds* to vocational and technical training (cf. GTZ’s initial assistance to refugees in Pakistan). We believe German development aid historians will be critical of the bureaucratic decisions taken at the time. Perhaps it could be added that education and training is still not seen as an essential field of the basic assistance to refugees.<sup>13</sup>

Since Dr. Bartholomae knew that UNHCR was unlikely to increase its funding to GTZ-BEFARe, and the same was the case with the German bilateral source, BMZ, he proactively sought additional assistance from other donors. Thus, GTZ-BEFARe succeeded in receiving allocations from The World Bank (partly thanks to UNHCR’s support), the British government aid agency DFID and the Canadian government aid agency CIDA. Furthermore, this also opened internal discussions in BEFARe about funding from other sources, i.e. loosening its dependence on UNHCR, with some assistance from BMZ.

Innovative discussions also began about expanding BEFARe’s activities to fields other than education and training and to include Pakistani recipients, not just Afghans. These were all farsighted actions, which the CTA and his senior staff should be given credit for having



Some of BEFARe’s recent annual reports. The reader will notice that from the 2003 annual report, GTZ’s logo is not included, only BEFARe’s logo, since the project from that time became a national Pakistani entity. BEFARe continues working for refugees and more and more also for Pakistani beneficiaries, especially in poor urban refugee host communities and in areas affected by the devastating earthquake in northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005.

Left, cover page of BEFARe’s original project description from 1996, and one of its publications in teacher training from 1995, prepared in cooperation with UNESCO. Thoroughness was always a trademark of BEFARe, in project planning, selection of areas of work within the education sector, selection of geographic areas within NWFP, additions and minor alterations of curricula and textbook development, teaching methods, and so on. The large number of studies, reports and books is proof of the project’s thoroughness. However, it is less than five years ago since a professional R&D section was established in BEFARe. One would have expected such a large project having done that earlier.

addressed, in particular Syed Junaid Shah. He has worked in BEFARe since its early years, dealing in particular with project preparations and fund-raising. He is a lawyer by training and a Canadian citizen of Pakistani origin. During Dr. Bartholomae’s time, few external consultants were employed. Ms. Kate Smith was the only international one.

## CREATING A NEW ORGANIZATION

*Holger Munsch*, an Engineer and Sociologist, took over as CTA in the mid of 2001 and stayed

until the end of 2003, when BEFARe became a Pakistani Trust, and GTZ only funded a part-time adviser from savings made during Munsch's time. Berthold Wohlleber, an agriculturalist and project administrator, mainly with experience from Africa, was recruited to spend about six months per year at BEFARe, split into short blocks of about 6-8 eight weeks per visit, upon completion of Munsch's term as CTA.

When Munsch was CTA he included several international consultants in his team, of whom *Jurgen Wintermeier* was probably the most prominent, with long experience as a manager in the German Development Service (DED) and as a consultant for various organizations, including GTZ and UNHCR. Wintermeier's particular strength was his innovativeness, especially as related to BEFARe's future operations after the GTZ affiliation had ceased.

Together with another international consultant, *Dr. S. B. Ekanayake*, a Sri Lankan teacher-training specialist who had retired from posts in refugee education in UNESCO/Pakistan and UNHCR/Afghanistan, Munsch, Wintermeier, Junaid and other local management staff, spent considerable time discussing and planning how to organize BEFARe as a viable local organization for the future so that it could not only continue its work in refugee education, but also take on additional tasks related to Afghans and Pakistanis alike.

*Dr. Mehmooda Rehman*, a retired Professor in Education from the University of Peshawar, was recruited to head a unit for professional development and innovation. (See Chapter 7.) All the local management staff, mostly Pakistanis and some few Afghans, continued performing their duties and preparing themselves for their tasks in the new BEFARe as a local organization. In addition to Junaid, we should mention Tanvir Ahmad Awan, Head of Administration and Finance, who played a proactive role in this transition period. (In the two chapters about Formal and Non-formal Education we have presented the heads of those departments.)

Munsch was a particularly committed proj-

ect leader, and could not easily let go of this important project. In fact all GTZ and BEFARe leaders, managers and advisers we have got to know, either in person or through reports and project records, have become absorbed in the importance of refugee education projects, with workloads far beyond normal office hours and greater responsibilities than chiefs of main UN offices and comparable organizations. GTZ should be commended for having chosen such high quality personnel. Let us add, though, that none is faultless, and we should not exaggerate the importance of foreigners in aid projects. We should be reminded that without the good work of the local Pakistani and Afghan staff, the Germans would not have been successful.

A few more words could be added about the work and time of the 'good man Holger Munsch', a characterization applied by several of his colleagues and staff; Afghans, Pakistanis and foreigners. The author of this book dealt with Munsch on behalf of UNHCR and UNESCO. We implemented several collaborative projects, including, for example, the development of a "Database of Afghan Refugee Teachers in Pakistan".<sup>14</sup> We recall that Munsch would always 'go the whole mile' and a bit more to reach the goals set out.

Munsch has continued to come to Pakistan and Afghanistan after his GTZ contract was over, as a consultant for various multilateral organizations. Munsch has visited BEFARe whenever possible and offered support and advice to the new Pakistani Chief Executive, Shakir Ishaq, who took over the large BEFARe project and organization at a time when funding for Afghan refugees in general, including for education, began to face severe reductions. Since most of the funds had come from UNHCR, it was UNHCR's reduced funding that was most noticeable. In the past, about 20% of the regular budget for education and educational advisers, including the CTA, had come from BMZ, through GTZ. BMZ's allocations ceased in 2004 and there was only limited contact with GTZ after that time, mainly through the Adviser (TA)

Wohlleber during his part-time consultancy. We believe UNHCR was appreciative of GTZ keeping some international presence in this long-term and large project. It is normal that UNHCR's implementing partners/NGOs have international staff when their projects receive large funding. BEFARe is by far UNHCR's largest implementing partner in education in Pakistan, receiving about two million dollars annually in 2005, reduced by about 30% from the previous year, when all implementing partners faced similar reductions in education.

GTZ's Country Office in Islamabad monitored BEFARe's project activities through the CTA, who seemed to be given quite free hands, yet great responsibility. The various Country Directors in Islamabad only paid occasional visits to the project, usually if BMZ in Germany or the Embassy in Islamabad wanted to come. After BEFARe had become a local entity, from 2004 (with all preparations having been made in 2003), the role of the Germans was actually over. However, the new dynamic Country Director of GTZ, Dr. Ingolf Vereno, who came in 2004 played a proactive role in increasing GTZ's aid portfolio in Pakistan, and he also explored possibilities for continued support to refugee education and related fields. It was encouraging for BEFARe that he paid several visits to BEFARe's Peshawar office and discussed various other refugee and returnee issues with staff and consultants. At the end, though, it seemed impossible for GTZ to secure new funding for this or other projects related to refugees, returnees or refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan. The latter may still be possible, but it is not entirely certain that assistance would be channeled through BEFARe since GTZ also manages another large education project in the area through the Ministry of Education, NWFP.<sup>15</sup> However, it is BEFARe that has the expertise in the field.

After the earthquake in Northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005, GTZ has played a proactive role in various fields of implementation of assistance. BEFARe on its part implements activities, notably in education in Abbottabad in NWFP.

## THE FUTURE

Much of the German development aid still runs many of its larger projects with German staff, or at least a German CTA, at a time when most other aid organizations have handed over implementation to the recipient country's organizations and institutions.<sup>16</sup> However, in connection with UNHCR's type of work, notably refugee issues, the German model is quite common. GTZ's model has proven useful after the earthquake.

In the mid-1990s UNHCR agreed with the host country Pakistan that it would implement all its project activities through international partners/NGOs rather than the Government to increase quality and accountability vis-à-vis the donors and reduce corruption, or suspicions about corruption. On the other hand, international organizations often run their projects and programmes outside the host Government's structures, and the costs usually become higher than if local organizations and institutions run them, mainly caused by costly international staff and consultants and various other overhead costs.<sup>17</sup> In GTZ's case, it is a general fact that most of its projects are large, otherwise there would be no need to include GTZ as technical expert organization and overseer of implementation.

However, the fact that projects are large also creates problems, especially at the time of handing over to the local partners (Government and/or NGO).<sup>18</sup> Currently, when GTZ has pulled out, we believe it is unavoidable that BEFARe will face a difficult transition period with many challenges, which it is left to solve on its own. It is a fact that without GTZ's good work over more than two decades, BEFARe as an organization would not have come into being. We hope that BEFARe will manage to establish itself as a sustainable Pakistani NGO, otherwise some of GTZ's investment will be wasted, and that it will be made good use of in education and related fields, not only for Afghans but also Pakistanis.<sup>19</sup>

We have praised the high caliber of the staff

the Germans sent to the GTZ refugee education projects in Pakistan, from 1982 until 2005. However, it is not easy for a local organization, notably BEFARe, to take over without having GTZ in front of its acronym. It does not have the strong GTZ leaders and organization to lean on any more. We should always bear in mind, as mentioned above, that leaders, projects and

organizations work within specific *structures*. Thus, the German CTAs, TAs and advisers all operated within the official GTZ structures, with BMZ support. They performed well, but would they have been as successful outside these structures? The new BEFARe has to find its own way in the new world without any parent organizations behind it.



No project or organization can succeed without secretaries, IT specialists, drivers and other support staff. They are essential in the day-to-day work of the administrators and professionals. Many support staff stay for many years and often become unnoticeable members of the institutional memory. GTZ-BEFARe has been able to attract good support staff.

*Freshta Pamri* is the current Secretary to the Chief Executive. Freshta is an Afghan from Bamiyan and was a refugee in Iran for many years before she came to Pakistan and joined BEFARe.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This chapter has to a large extent been based on data collected through communication with current and former GTZ and BEFARe leaders, managers and advisers. The author has held a number of formal and informal meetings with staff members in the early autumn of 2005, discussing issues related to this chapter. Correspondence through e-mail was essential to receive invaluable comments from former CTAs. We extend our sincere thanks for the help provided. Yet, all interpretations remain the responsibility of the author.

<sup>2</sup> (a) See *PGTTP Progress Reports* for the initial years. GTZ, Peshawar. (b) See also substantive documents, mainly issued by Pak-German Bas-Ed. GTZ, Peshawar. Selected reports: i. Habib-ur-Rahman and Udo Bude: *Construction and Utilization of Lesson Plans, teaching Units and Teaching Modules (Workshop Report)*. September 1985. ii. Udo Bude: *Information Seminar for Headmasters/Headmistresses of Pak-German Bas-Ed Schools, September 7th – 10th, 1985*. November 1985. iii. *Case Study: The Situation in 24 Pilot Schools in North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan*. December 1985. iv. *Developmental Approach to the Acquisition of the Pashto Language*. DAPL. March 1986. v. Udo Bude/Habib-ur-Rahman: *What did you learn in school today? Monitoring Classroom Interactions in Pakistani Government and Afghan Refugee Schools in the North-West Frontier Province*. 1987. vi. Manfred Wehrmann: *Community Survey. An attempt to assess the learning needs of 18 communities in the North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan*. April 1987.

<sup>3</sup> See reference in Note 2vi, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> The issue of girls' education and female teachers is recurring in many documents by GTZ and other implementing partners. It concerns refugee/emergency education and ordinary education in developing countries. Headway has been made in recent years and more females are coming in at all levels, but we are far away from the Education for All (EFA) goals about gender parity at primary level, originally aimed at by 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Johannessen, Eva Marion, Udo Bude and S.B. Ekanayake: *Evaluation of GTZ/Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe) in Pakistan*. Final Version. UNHCR, Geneva, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Mr. Hamish Khan, Executive Director, BEST, in Peshawar, 21.12.04, and in Islamabad, 25.09.05.

<sup>7</sup> Special thanks go to Ms. Shahnaz Akhtar for her

constant encouragement and professional inputs during the work with this and other chapters of the book. Her experience from work for GTZ and in a top post in another international organization, Ockenden International (UK), made her comments particularly useful. Yet, all interpretations remain the responsibility of the author.

<sup>8</sup> We hope that the Embassy of Germany and GTZ's Country Office in Islamabad will consider this proposal. Germany has an excellent organization for university cooperation and exchange of students and teachers, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), which it may be possible to get help from for the mentioned work. Here, we recommend that studies be made of vocational and technical training, which are often neglected in educational research; also other fields of German assistance to Afghan refugee education should be studied further. For example, issues related to human resources, which is the topic of the current chapter.

<sup>9</sup> (a) Interview with Dr. Michael Hirth in Islamabad, 25.09.05. (b) Reference is made to a particularly useful document prepared at the beginning of the new project phase: *BEFARe Project Description*. GTZ-BEFARe, August 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Assessment made by the author on the basis of frequent professional contact with GTZ-BEFARe from the end of 2000 onwards. Reference is also made to internal documents in UNHCR/Pakistan.

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO and UNHCR organized a *Donors' Meeting to refugee education* in Islamabad in the autumn of 2002. At that meeting Victor Matz and Hasim Utkan exchanged views on the importance of GTZ's contribution to refugee education in Pakistan. Matz was quite self-critical while Utkan maintained that good work had been done by GTZ in practical training and in basic education. "It was not all wasted", he jokingly said. (Internal minutes from the meeting are available in UNESCO and UNHCR, Islamabad.)

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, an interview with Dana Burde, Columbia University, New York, USA, by Muhammad Badar Alam, *The News*, 14.08.05, Lahore/Islamabad, entitled "Women of Crisis".

<sup>13</sup> (a) As for the first remark, notably the need for research into the project, reference is made to Note 8 above. (b) As for the second remark, we refer to UNHCR and UNESCO documents, including various policy documents. Reference should also be made to initiatives taken by INEE, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies,

which was established in 2000 as an open network of individuals, organizations and institutions. One of its tasks is advocacy.

<sup>14</sup> GTZ-BEFARE with UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF and NGOs: *Afghan Refugee Teachers' Profile Database NWFP and Balochistan*. GTZ-BEFARE, Peshawar, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> This is the author's assessment based on reading of numerous reports and documents, and attending various meetings and discussions, with members of the professional Afghan refugee education community in Pakistan, with GTZ-BEFARE as one of the prominent partners.

<sup>16</sup> This is the author's assessment based on more than 25 years of experience in development aid and research, working for key bilateral and multilateral organizations. See also debates about development aid issues in various publications and journals, such as, for example, the German aid journal *D+C*, and *GTZ Annual Reports* and booklets, Eschborn, Germany. The three-volume Norwegian Development Aid History (in Norwegian) has taken up these issues in greater detail, in particular Vol. 3, Part 3,

"The Internal Economic and Administrative Framework: Implementation of the Principle about the Recipient's Role and Responsibility." Liland, Frode and Kirsten Alsaker Kjerland: *Norsk utviklingshjelps historie. Bind 3*. 1989-2002. "Paa bred front". Fagbokforlaget, Bergen, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> See internal documents in UNHCR, Islamabad, and in other multi, bilateral and non-governmental organizations. See also documents by recipient governments. For a broader debate, see, Bolid, John and George M. Thomas (Eds.): *Constructing World Culture. International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, USA, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> See a model for sustainability of development projects developed by Jairo Morales-Neto, currently with UNHCR, Pakistan. September 2005. The model will appear in his forthcoming book on key aspects of development economics and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

<sup>19</sup> See internal working documents in BEFARE. The author has held numerous discussions with Mr. Shakir Ishaq, Chief Executive, and senior staff about these issues.





## Formal Education in BEFARe

Chapter

# 5





## Formal Education in BEFARe

*Whereas **Non-Formal Education** is the cornerstone in any early response, and part of the long-term response of a refugee crisis and early reconstruction, **Formal Education** is the cornerstone of regular education provision in crises, which last for more than 3 to 6 months. The sooner structured activities can be organized for refugees, in camps/villages and or urban settings, the better. Often, refugees settle in poor shantytowns on the outskirts of cities, such as Peshawar, and the children in the host communities should also be included in the education activities. In the Afghan refugee situation in Pakistan, where many refugees have stayed for many years, even decades, and many children were born in exile - education should be considered an obvious part of every-day life.*

*As we have pointed out frequently in this book, the host country has not been able to receive enough international funding to realize the goal of **Education for All** (EFA) and the education provision has been particularly poor for the poor urban refugees. In the camps/villages the situation is better. In BEFARe's target areas, notably Peshawar and the North-West Frontier Province, which hosts some three-quarters of the refugees, the organization can pride itself of the highest primary school enrollment of refugee children in the country. Since figures are rarely accurate, especially not at a time of repatriation, we have to estimate the enrollment rate and use 50-60% of the school-age children. In certain areas (camps/villages) it is higher, and in others lower. Recently, more than 35% of the pupils have been girls. This is an impressive achievement considering earlier resistance to girls' education in many groups, and also restrictions over how it should be provided. Unfortunately, the primary school cycle has remained six years for boys and girls, not eight years as recommended by UNHCR. However, some have also been able to continue to middle and full secondary schools and even college and university.*

*We begin this chapter by paying tribute to the excellent work BEFARe has done in including the local community in its education activities. This means that each and every school, and there have been over 300, has a school management committee (SMC). The community participation and development work (CP&D), with the involvement of the SMCs, is multifaceted, and now, at the time of repatriation, the usefulness of the knowledge and skills acquired is recognized. Parents and other community members know how to organize a school, even a very rudimentary self-help school, in a refugee community in Pakistan or at home in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>*

## Some Facts and Figures about Formal Education

### HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

1. BEFARe and its predecessors have provided education for hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugee boys and girls. The statistics show that over **600,000** pupils have completed primary school. In addition close to **100,000** have gone through various adult education programmes.

2. In the 1980s and first half of the 1990s, vocational training was given more attention than later and a total of about **70,000** youths completed training courses with employable competencies in vocational fields. In addition, various courses have been organized for groups in the communities, school management committees and others. Pre-service and in-service orientation and training courses have been provided to more than **6,000** teachers.

3. Thus, we approach a total figure of nearly **one million individuals** who have benefited directly from BEFARe's education. If we add the 'indirect beneficiaries', which is common practice, using a multiplication factor of six, i.e. six family members benefit per direct beneficiary in the home, we reach a total number of **5-7 million** beneficiaries from efforts of BEFARe and its predecessors over a period of more than twenty years.

4. Without being able to quantify the results, we should also acknowledge that BEFARe has had a major impact on the totality of the local refugee communities, the camps/villages and the urban neighbourhoods. BEFARe has been the major 'change agent', as the largest refugee education project in Pakistan, which has benefited sister NGOs and United

Nations organizations. It has had a direct impact on attitudes and opinions of tens and hundreds of thousands of refugees and members of host communities. It has also influenced Pakistani host communities. In short, BEFARe has contributed significantly to parents' understanding of the need for educating their sons and daughters.

5. BEFARe has advocated quality standards in its work, and the schools are on a par with, or better, than most government schools in Pakistan or Afghanistan. BEFARe has provided quality teaching materials, improved curricula, textbooks and supplementary materials, improved teaching methods, with a view to modern pedagogy and psychosocial issues. Teacher training, professional development and innovation have received a more central place over recent years.

6. The majority of pupils were always boys but in recent years about a third of the pupils have been girls. Home schools were used for girls and also for boys, who for cultural and other reasons could not attend ordinary schools. Sometimes, they would be older than other pupils and begin at a home school, with a condensed programme and in some cases complete the full primary school at an ordinary BEFARe school, or from a home school.

### CURRENT SITUATION

1. *Budgets* are being cut as donor funding goes down in accordance with, or before repatriation takes place. BEFARe cannot provide the same services as earlier, although it tries to use innovative and cheaper methods, but the *unit cost for a child in a BEFARe school* is only on average about 1,500 Rupees per year. Few further savings can be made without affecting the quality. The unit cost of USD 22 to 25 per pupil/year seems very low. Alternatively, parents' contributions can be increased, but again that is problematic since the refugees are poor, often living below the so-called *poverty line* or *absolute poverty line*.

2. However, if BEFARe considers it impossible to run a quality school, there are examples of refugees establishing private *self-help schools* so that their children get some education. In the midst of such a crisis, there is also a positive message; notably that parents and refugee communities have learned to appreciate the value of education. It is a pity that full or partial donor contribution is not available.

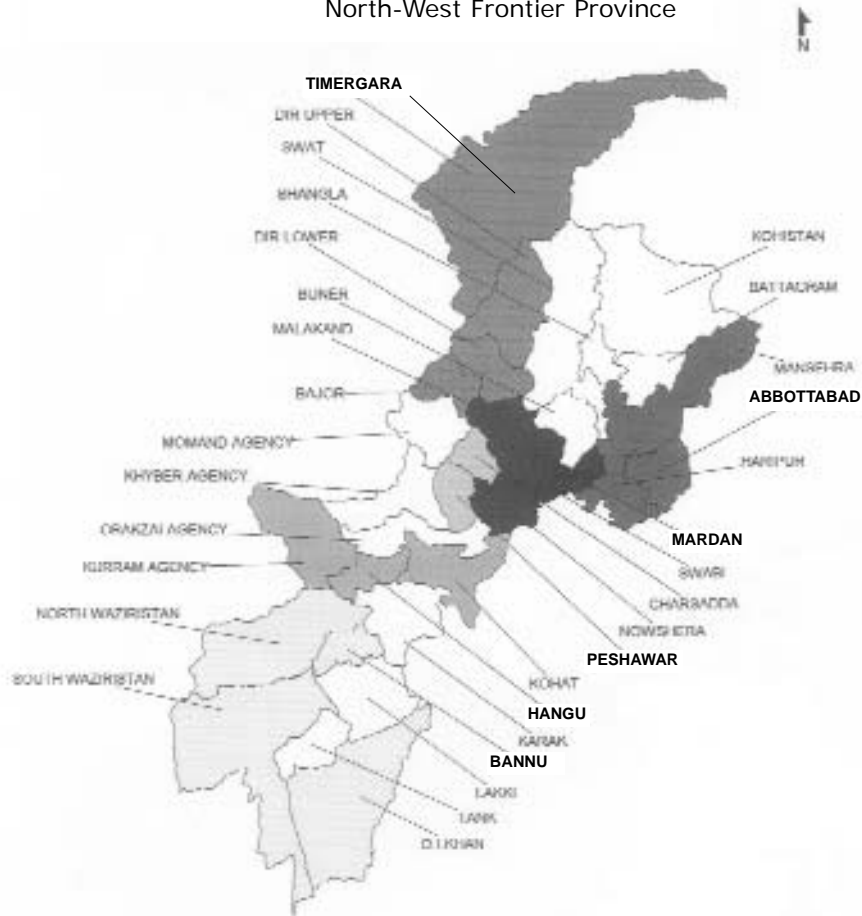
3. BEFARe has already noticed marked reduction in *girls' participation* in 2005. It had grown to over 35% but in the autumn 2005 was down to an average of 27%.

*See also BEFARe's monthly statistical summaries.*

**BEFARe's six sub offices (resource centres)**



Six sub offices (resource centres) in  
North-West Frontier Province





# Section I

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION – THE FOUNDATION OF REFUGEE EDUCATION

### INTRODUCTION

The term community-based education is used to describe fundamental aspects of refugee education, such as non-formal education, teacher training and teachers' tasks. The community-based, or community-oriented aspects are not least important in formal education, *inter alia*, since that usually becomes the most important education activity in long-term refugee situations. This means that the host country, in our case Pakistan, supported by international and local non-governmental and community-based organizations, play key roles in provision of education in various refugee situations. Beyond the initial emergency stages, when some outsiders may intervene and provide temporary school tents, equipment, materials like 'school-in-a-box', and possibly some teachers or community leaders from outside to begin education, or education-related activities of more recreational and healing nature, the continued education activities soon become joint efforts with major involvement from the community's side. Funding is often received from outside sources, and local and international NGOs and other implementing partners are essential. However, without formalized cooperation with the communities, the parents, elders and the community at large, refugee education activities cannot succeed. The teachers are usually drawn from amongst the refugees and the community wants to be involved in deciding on curriculum and how to organize the schools.

The key document for everybody who deals with refugee education is *UNHCR's Education Field Guidelines*.<sup>2</sup> Although the agency does not possess deep expertise in the field of education, it does possess broad experience from more than

five decades dealing with refugees and other emergencies and, at least over the last two decades, UNHCR has also been dealing with education. Still, UNHCR will need technical assistance from various organizations and institutions, such as the specialized United Nations agencies with education as part of their mandate, mainly UNESCO and UNICEF, and others like ILO, WFP and UNFP. It should be underlined that even if UNHCR's education expertise is shallow, UNHCR's Guidelines are the most authoritative ones. They can be enriched if supported by some UNESCO background, policy and strategy documents, and common documents issued over the last five years by the INEE Network.<sup>3</sup> UNHCR's Guidelines have made community-based refugee education a cornerstone from day one of its operations in protection, education, and community services.

Since we discuss community-aspects of refugee education in BEFARe in other chapters, the current section will be relatively brief.

"When I came to BEFARe from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) in 1995 the importance of efforts to involve the community in our education activities was higher than before. GTZ was clearly in a lead role in the work, which was also evident, for example, by the name of its main project, *Community Oriented Primary Education (COPE)*. When BEFARe was established, from January 1996, COPE was still used, and even today, the correct name is COPE. However, BEFARe has become the name commonly used, since it is also the name of the organization. It is more an internal issue to distinguish the projects by their specific

names”, says **Azad Khan Khattak**, the Project Manager for Community Participation and Development (CP&D).<sup>4</sup>

“COPE’s activities, which are the formal primary school activities are by far the largest activities of BEFARe even today. Let me just remind you that we tipped over 100,000 pupils some years ago but the number has gone down recently by over 30,000 pupils due to UNHCR’s budget cuts, and since UNHCR is our main donor that influences directly our activities.”

“On a positive note, let me add that in spite of schools being closed and teachers laid off, and sometimes children left without any schooling at all, we also have many teachers who have now established schools on their own. There are about seventy such self-help or private schools at the moment.”

“I am proud of this fact”, Azad says. “I feel it is a direct result of the tireless efforts of BEFARe as an organization and the refugee teachers, enlightened parents and other community members, and current pupils and former pupils. Today everybody is interested in education. That is part of the result of our community mobilization work, which doesn’t only include education, but also other fields like nutrition, health, civics education and information, and other issues, including awareness-creation about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, how to avoid getting communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS, and so on. We also help the refugee communities in preparing themselves for the future, either in exile or, for the majority, as returnees in Afghanistan.”

“When BEFARe was established, it was originally the plan that all schools should be handed over to the refugees themselves and run as self-help or private schools. Food-aid ceased to the refugees in the camps/villages, and the international community also hoped to pull out of the education sector. However, this was unrealistic in our situation and after the then High Commissioner for Refugees, *Mrs. Sadako Ogata*, had visited Pakistan and the refugee settlements in BEFARe’s target areas in 1996, the immediate

plans were put aside. Instead, greater emphasis was placed on community development, including establishment and development of **School Management Committees (SMCs)** in every school.”<sup>5</sup>

“This has meant a lot of focused work over many years, including training of the members of the committees. The head teacher is the secretary to the committee, but otherwise we want a mixed group of parents and community members. Considering the cultural traditions there are only men on the SMCs for boys’ schools and only women for girls’ schools. I cannot see that changing quickly. I don’t even think people are ready for having men and women on the teaching staff in the same school. However, attitudes do change. For example, when it comes to girls’ education, most parents are now glad to send their girls to school. Some schools are even co-educational.”

“I think that all these, often small and quite invisible, things we have done in community development, including the SMCs, are things that the Afghans will appreciate when they move home to Afghanistan. They have developed an interest in education and they know how to organize a school.”

“In most places in Afghanistan they will have to do most of the work themselves, I believe”, Azad explains. “There are still few government schools or private schools, or if there are schools, the quality is often low. Good, then that the refugees have learned how to build a school, or add a few classrooms, build toilets and wash-rooms for girls and boys, maintain the rooms and compound, and so on. Perhaps not least important, is that parents and other community members have learned how to mobilize all community members for a common cause.”

“In the BEFARe schools we ask for modest contributions; usually 5-25 Rupees per child per month, but it varies depending on how poor the family is and how many school children they have. However, through this system we have managed to collect quite large sums of money for the aforementioned self-help activities.”

“It makes me happy to have had this opportunity to help Afghan refugees in this way. I have also learned a lot from it myself, and I think we can learn from BEFARe’s work to benefit Pakistani schools as well”, says Azad Khan Khattak.

He explains that over the last 10 years, more than 15 million Rupees have been collected by the SMC’s in BEFARe’s schools. Every year the collection was between 1.5 –2.0 million Rupees, and it increased over recent years, with 2002 and 2004 showing collections of over 3.0 million Rupees per year. The SMCs have spent most funds on building extensions and repairs, payment of rents, electricity, fans, and so on. Many new schools saw the light of the day thanks to the work and funds of the School Management Committee. The most recent expense is payment of salaries (or incentives, as they are termed in UNHCR’s terminology) to teachers and watchmen.<sup>6</sup>

In this short Chapter we shall not attempt to judge the roles and functions of the community participation, including SMCs. However, we would like to note that it is beyond discussion that a school should be integrated in the community to which it belongs.<sup>7</sup> Yet, a school must also be liberal and open-minded, as is only natural for institutions seeking knowledge and education. This means that a school must encourage *tolerance and openness* to other cultures and ways of thinking, and ways of doing things. Yet, a school is also the community’s main *socialization agent* outside the home.

We mention these aspects here, perhaps in particular, since *girls and women* have traditionally not had much say in the public sphere of Afghan society, or Pakistani society. Some particularly backward areas in these respects, are the tribal areas in Pakistan and Pashtun areas inside Afghanistan. These are examples of fields where the community must not stifle the school. The community must ‘*allow the bird out of the cage*’ so that it can become the real bird it was meant to be.

Former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1990-2000) Professor Sadako Ogata visited Pakistan several times, including in 1996, at a time when GTZ-BEFARe was shaping its programme. Mrs. Ogata supported strongly the involvement of the



refugee communities in education but thought it was unrealistic to expect the poor communities to take over full responsibility, including the cost, of running the schools. In order to increase enrolment, among girls and boys, it was necessary to support education, which UNHCR has kept doing throughout the long Afghan refugee era. For some time, incentives were also given (usually by WFP) to parents in form of eatable oil to encourage enrolment of girls. However, some evaluation reports were inconclusive about the effect of such incentives, and it ended almost ten years ago in NWFP, and more recently in Balochistan. Photo: UNHCR. *The State of the World's Refugees*. Geneva, 2000.

Guenet Guebre-Christos came from a UNHCR posting in Washington D.C. to take over as UNHCR Representative in Pakistan in 2003 when the legendary Hasim Utkan's third term in Pakistan was over. In cooperation with the Government of Pakistan, she is handling particular-



ly difficult tasks notably the large programme of assisted voluntary repatriation of refugees home to Afghanistan, in addition to continued, and often reduced assistance to the refugee sector in Pakistan since the number of refugees is decreasing. Whether Guebre-Christos attaches the same importance to education as Ogata did in UNHCR we do not know, but even if she does, there is probably not much room for changing the course of events, i.e. that refugees should return now, with or without education and skills for livelihoods at home. Will returnees in the future be entitled to minimum education standards before repatriation, or upon return home? Will the international community under the 2015 targets of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ensure that refugees are included too?



Likewise, we find it important to note that schools can rarely be run only by contributions from the communities they belong to without additional outside financial support. Better off communities can run their own schools, particularly if such schools have some special pedagogical or other approach which attract parents and pupils. Yet, in ordinary poor societies, which are the majority anywhere in our context, there is need for transfer of funds from the state, or from local and foreign donors.

Still, the way CP&D has managed to involve the communities in the schools' work can be used as examples for other schools and communities. Contributions and participation should, of course, not only be to the building fund, but must be broader and deeper by parents and other

community members to a number of material and non-material activities. It is not only the parents who gain from the close participation; the school also gains. For example, we would never have seen 35%, or even more, of the pupils being girls if there had not been active dialogue and parent-teacher-community participation. Sadly, the percentage has gone down recently due to budget cuts.<sup>8</sup>

CP&D states its philosophy in the following three sentences: *"No education comes to the community unless the community wants it. No development comes to the community until they participate in it. No quality education is achieved unless the community participates in the education process."*<sup>9</sup>

*Azad Khan Khattak is heading the Community Participation and Development Department in BEFARe, a job he was promoted to about five years ago. Azad's professionalism and enthusiasm for community participation is unique. It also proves that it is not only people with background in teaching who can do such work, or perhaps it is an advantage not to be a teacher in order to see issues from the point of view of the larger refugee community? Azad is a lawyer by training and he has dealt with refugee issues for the Government and BEFARe for almost twenty years.*

*Afghan refugee girls at school in Pakistan. BEFARe has actively promoted girls' education through cooperation with the local communities, parents and teachers. All schools now have school management committees (SMCs). Compared with 1996, there are now three times as many girls in BEFARe's schools. However, girls only constitute about 1/3 of the total number of all pupils.*



# Section II

## THE PIONEERING YEARS: LOCAL INTEGRATION

When the German assistance began in Pakistan in the early 1980s a thorough fact-finding period took place, bordering on research, prior to opening schools. In 1984, 24 schools were taken over and run through GTZ assistance and monitored by the organization. Shortcomings were identified, and improvements were made such as building improvements and repairs of content/curricula, teaching materials, teaching methods and training and orientation courses for teachers

Then it was done: GTZ had been ‘hooked’ and a long-lasting and successful bilateral donor relationship with Pakistan in the field of refugee education had been established. At that time nobody could have foreseen that GTZ-BEFARe in 2002, when the project peaked, would run about **330 primary schools** for over 100,000 primary school pupils and more than **3,000 teachers** and other staff. GTZ-BEFARe also, conducted teacher training courses, non-formal education programmes, and various other courses, including in peace education and, moving with the time and needs, courses specifically targeted on women.<sup>10</sup>

In its early years, the German focus was to provide education for deprived children/families irrespective of whether they were Afghans or Pakistanis. *“The project is therefore not a refugee project, but an area oriented programme which aims at helping Afghan refugees and their Pakistani hosts”*, the Community Survey Report presented in April 1987 stated.<sup>11</sup> Inclusion of host-country pupils was done in order to avoid creating further discontent among Pakistanis, who had begun feeling neglected by their own

Government as they saw that the foreign aid was primarily channeled to the Afghan refugees. Not that the hosts had any problems with that, but they also wanted a ‘fair share’. The above reports stated: *“They accept the refugees as Muslim brothers and agree to help them, but they feel that – in economic terms – they are neglected.”*<sup>12</sup>

Although the **local Pakistani community** has always been a concern of GTZ-BEFARe (and related projects/organizations), it was given less attention over the years until recently. Since most of the foreign assistance went to refugee camps/villages, and not to ordinary urban neighbourhoods, which had mixed Afghan and Pakistani inhabitants, this explains why Pakistanis were left out as direct beneficiaries of assistance. Naturally, through business and various activities, the host country and, to some extent, the refugee host communities in Peshawar and elsewhere, would have additional incomes because of the refugees. Such incomes were indirect and not at all obvious. In many cases, the Pakistanis and the Afghans would compete for the same jobs and resources in their neighbourhoods. In Peshawar and the mixed Afghan-Pakistani communities there has been little tension between the Afghans and the Pakistanis.

It should, be added that *refugees and locals should be treated equally* by donors and civil servants as far as possible, when they share the same resources, especially during long-term refugee situations in urban (non-camp) areas. At the initial stages, the new-arrivals need special assistance and care, including trauma healing and other help. The locals also need special assistance

to know how to handle an emergency situation, which places high demands on individuals and public services.

In Pakistan, UNHCR, in cooperation with The World Bank, provided assistance for three large income-generating projects for refugee areas in NWFP, Balochistan and Punjab from 1984 - 1996.<sup>13</sup> After '9/11' UNHCR, in cooperation with UNDP, tried to develop similar new projects, with special emphasis on income-generation, environmental issues and public services, but has had little success in attracting funding.<sup>14</sup>

It is only more recently that interest has grown for emphasizing *combined assistance to refugee-hosting areas and refugees*. The approach which GTZ and UNHCR/The World Bank applied in the early phases of the long Afghan refugee era has come full cycle. In education, we believe that organizations like BEFARe will serve needy people irrespective of nationality in the future. As refugee camps close, there will be little distinction between urban neighbourhoods/communities and camps/villages. However, some camps/villages are likely to be needed for several years to come, but the number will be much lower than today.<sup>15</sup>

## THE ROLE AND CONTENT OF EDUCATION

Although it is usually said that the refugee era started with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, many Afghans had already begun to flee in the 1970s, especially after 1973. As we have discussed in a chapter 2 (and in a separate booklet) most of the refugees who live in NWFP are Pashtuns.<sup>16</sup> Initially, most refugee children lost contact with formal learning. In addition, it should be mentioned, that there were groups indoctrinating the refugees, especially older boys and youth. During the turbulence in Afghanistan in the 1970s, there was competition for peoples' minds and souls, and when the Soviet Union invaded, its propaganda machinery was also fought by jihad counter-propaganda and indoctrination. The various groups would prob-

ably claim that they were involved in education, or training of 'freedom fighters'. As professional educationists we would consider most of it propaganda and antisocial behaviour from the side of the teachers, pupils as well as the parents, or the fathers, uncles, elder brothers, and or other adults who would be aware of and recruiting into these activities. The "Hizbi Group", receiving Pakistani assistance, trained for the Hikmatyar fighting group in Afghanistan, and is said to have had over two hundred schools, fifteen hundred teachers and up to forty thousand pupils.<sup>17</sup>

In Pak Bas-Ed's and BEFARe's connection, the task was to provide ordinary, good quality basic education, skills and vocational training, which parents would consider useful. It was not easy to change attitudes in groups of the refugee community and develop new, more relevant and acceptable content and curricula. It took surveys, studies, seminars, and many meetings and discussions with the concerned partners. Then came the process of writing the additional books and booklets, which were called supplementary teaching materials. The *core curriculum* was always *Afghanistan's own curriculum* with its own books and teachers guides. Over the years, changes and improvements were made to suit the Afghan authorities and elders. Perhaps we should add too, the foreign and local education experts, especially as regards teaching methods.<sup>18</sup>

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) in the United States of America came to play a particularly central role in assisting in improvement and change of curriculum and development of materials. The printing took place in Peshawar, where a printing press and newsprint had been available through donor funding. The administration and management of the press changed over the years, probably since it usually printed at a loss! However, the importance of the press should not be under estimated. For example during the Taliban regime, the UNO printing press in Peshawar was a key supplier of textbooks for Afghanistan's rudimentary education system.<sup>19</sup>

In this section we only draw attention to some aspects, or examples of, issues related to

the role and content of education in and after conflicts. These are broad and complex issues. BEFARe and its predecessors gave due attention to these issues, but it was often a thankless task because there are always strong opinions about these issues. Until recently, BEFARe has, for example, had to endure criticism for not having followed *Afghanistan's curriculum* to the letter. We have looked into those issues in some detail and cannot find that BEFARe has deviated more from the general standards than other implementing partners and NGOs in Pakistan.

Since BEFARe is so large, it sometimes becomes an easy target for criticism from competing organizations and authorities. From a professional point of view, we would have been more worried if there was silence about curriculum, teaching methods and policy issues. We also believe that other implementing partners should have done more of certain things which BEFARe has done, and been criticized for, such as teaching *Urdu*. After all that is the language of the host country and it is common for refugees and other outsiders to learn about the local culture and language. This is also mentioned in UNHCR's Guidelines.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the importance of *peace education*. BEFARe and other implementing partners have taken up peace issues, especially recently. Peace issues should always be included in training and orientation courses for refugee teachers. In formal education peace issues can be handled as special thematic projects, or, they can be included in ordinary subjects. UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF and other organizations have developed booklets and materials that can be used as advisory materials.<sup>21</sup> BEFARe has recently prepared a summary evaluation of its work in peace education.<sup>22</sup> Environmental studies were never given prominent attention but they were among the crosscutting topics included, alongside a number of issues such as health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and other issues.<sup>23</sup>

In attempting to define the basis for formal, basic education for refugees we would like to

emphasize that in addition to the 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic), social studies, history and the other basic education subjects, we find it important that the broader *character-building fields* are included, and also *psychosocial issues*. These are fields making refugee education a 'hyphenated discipline', with similarities to teaching of marginalized and underprivileged groups in general. Refugee education includes social and special educational fields.<sup>24</sup>



Pamela Baxter, a special education teacher by background, has become UNESCO's and UNHCR's peace educator. This photo is from one of her visits to Pakistan in 2004, when she gave a course for teachers and other staff from BEFARe and other refugee organizations.

2001 - 2010 is the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non - Violence for the Children of the World. Its slogan is: "Peace is in our Hands" .

## Profiles of a Handful of BEFARe School Children in Kacha Garhi Refugee Camp outside Peshawar

*Interviews on 14.05.05*

**Imal Sdalam** is 10 years old and in 4th grade in BEFARe School No. 160 in Kacha Garhi Refugee Camp outside Peshawar. His father, who has a small shop selling radios and TVs in the camp, and his mother, who is a housewife, fled their village in Kamar district near Jalalabad in Afghanistan some time after the Soviet Union invaded the country. Imal and his two brothers and two sisters were all born in the refugee camp where his parents got married and where the family has always lived.

"I have only visited Afghanistan once. We stayed with my grandfather and grandmother for about one month. My family is not rich but we have enough land for a small house and space to grow vegetables. I think my parents talked about the war when we were in Afghanistan, but when we are in Pakistan we don't talk about the war at home."

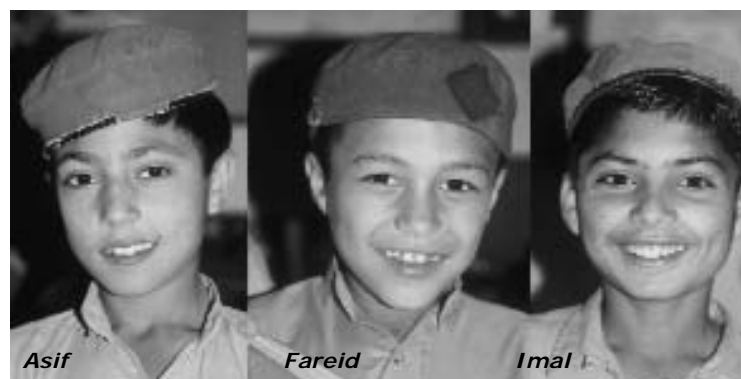
Imal says that he thinks his family will all go home to Afghanistan one day. "When the Government of Pakistan tells us to go, we will go", he says. But for the time being, Imal likes to live in Kacha Garhi and he likes his school and classmates. There are 49 boys in his class and he tells us that his favorite subjects are Pashtun and Mathematics. One of his younger brothers is also a pupil in the same school, and his two sisters are at the girls' school, which is in the next-door compound.

We ask Imal what he wants to do when he grows up. "I want to become a teacher at home in Afghanistan", Imal tells us. Why not a shop-keeper, we wonder? But he says that there is no future in that kind of work. He thinks that all the refugees will have to move away from Kacha Garhi Refugee Camp one day and there will be no customers then.

**Fareid Abdulrahman** is 11 years and in 5th grade. He is the son of a tailor and a housewife. There are eight brothers and sisters in his home; some older and some younger, and all born in the refugee camp in Pakistan. Fareid has one brother in the same school. "I have a sister who is a year younger than me, but she does not go to school. She is just helping my mother at home. The other sister is still little and maybe she will go to school later", he says.

"I went home to Afghanistan last year to visit my grandparents and my uncle. My uncle is making cement blocks for sale in Kas village in Laghman province. We stayed for three months last year. When I grow up I want to move back to Afghanistan and I want to become an airplane engineer and work in Kabul", Fareid tells us. "I also like living in Pakistan. At school I like Pashtun and Dari subjects most", he says.

**Asif Khialzama** is 12 years old. He is in 5th grade in the same class as Fareid. His father is a truck driver and his older brother is a turn



boy, helping his father, but he wants to become a truck driver, too. Asif's mother stays at home. She is looking after his three brothers and a sister.

“My parents came to Peshawar during the war. People died in Afghanistan at that time. We were lucky and none of my relatives died, but we all had to flee”, he says.

Asif wants to become a teacher. “I have to go to high school when I complete primary school next year, and the nearest school in this camp is Rahman Baba High School”, Asif explains. “I like all school subjects, especially languages”, he says.

“My parents say that we will go home to our village outside Jalalabad in Afghanistan when we have been able to complete building our house there. My grandparents live in the village already, but their house is very small and it only has one room. I have not been to Afghanistan at all in my life”, Asif says.

**Majan Dawood** is 12 years old and in 6th grade at BEFARe’s School No. 099 in Kacha Garhi Refugee Camp. She is the oldest child in her family with four sisters and two brothers. One younger sister is in the same school in Kacha Garhi Camp and a brother is in the boys’ school nearby.

Majan’s father is a daily labourer and her mother is a housewife. She has not decided what she wants to do when she grows up. She would like to become a teacher or maybe even a doctor or engineer. She likes English and Pashtu subjects in her class of 27 pupils. After primary school, which she will complete this year, she would like to continue with secondary education in Pakistan, or even in Afghanistan if her parents decide to return home. “I have two aunts living at home in Afghanistan, and I went home to visit them four years ago”, she says. “But we don’t have a house in Afghanistan so it will be difficult to move there. I like city life in Pakistan, too. I have a relative living in Peshawar city and I like to go there. The house is clean, there is electricity all the time and you can watch TV. Nearby there is also a nice park.”

Majan’s parents came to Pakistan as refugees about twenty years ago. They had to flee the war at home in Kama town outside Jalalabad city, and

several of their neighbours got killed. “I was born in Pakistan and so were all my brothers and sisters, but we always think of ourselves as Afghans, not Pakistanis. I want to work in Afghanistan when we move home”, Majan says.

**Zakia Saeed Muhibullah** is 14 years and in 6th grade, in the same class as Majan. Her father is a policeman and her mother is a doctor. She also wants to become a doctor when she grows up.

“My parents and my two younger brothers and two sisters came to Pakistan four years ago”, Zakia tells us. “My mother found work as a doctor in the refugee camp immediately. She had also been working at home in Jalalabad in Afghanistan, where we lived in a rented house that we got through my father’s job. My father could not find any job in Pakistan, so he went back to Afghanistan three years ago.”

“It was my mother who decided that we had to leave Afghanistan, and she still doesn’t think it is safe for us to live at home. But we will move back as soon as possible”, Zakia says. But she is also a bit worried about not finding any secondary school in Jalalabad and would like to attend secondary school in Peshawar. “Before we left, during the Taliban time, very few girls were given permission to go to school.”



Zakia tells us that she likes Pakistan and her school. “We have electricity in Kacha Garhi, and it is peaceful here, women are allowed to work and there is also entertainment. But when I am through with my education I want to go back to Afghanistan.”

# Section III

## BEFARe's WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN FORMAL EDUCATION

### OBJECTIVES

BEFARe's education activities follow the overall international and national policies and guidelines for refugee and emergency education, in particular those detailed by UNHCR,<sup>25</sup> including community-based education, as explained above in this Chapter. The overall objective (or mission statement) of the organization, as stated in BEFARe's Annual Report 2003, as it became an independent, Pakistani entity, reads as follows: "BEFARe provides basic education on a national and regional level to the identified vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This is achieved through a learner centered and activity based approach." (See also the Box at the beginning of this Chapter.)

It is worth noting that the term *refugees*, or *Afghan refugees*, is not used, as the new BEFARe wishes to cast its net wider to include needy beneficiaries irrespective of nationality. In addition to formal basic education, BEFARe wishes to expand its work to help formal and non-formal education (and often the difference between the two is blurred, especially at post-primary level). BEFARe also wishes to venture further into other *non-educational activities*. BEFARe's main activity is still likely to remain formal basic (i.e. primary) education for the foreseeable future.<sup>26</sup>

### QUALITY AND QUANTITY

The German assisted refugee activities for Afghan refugees in Pakistan have been quality-based since the initial work began in the early 1980s, as we have discussed elsewhere in this book. The work started with fact-finding and assessment surveys and studies, curriculum/content studies, development of materials, and

teacher training courses. These activities bordered on research, or were at least highly professional. The initial focus given to education, notably vocational and skills training and basic education, originated in *German educational traditions*, on the one hand, and in *the needs of the recipients* on the other hand. In addition to the livelihood-oriented training, ordinary basic education was given major attention in BEFARe's work and that of its preceding projects and organizations.<sup>27</sup>

BEFARe has always been known for providing *high-quality education*. This is also the main conclusion in the evaluation report, which UNHCR carried out in 2002. However, in some fields it was mentioned that improvements could be made, for example in fields related to dropout, repetition and examination forms.<sup>28</sup>

Although it falls outside the mandate of BEFARe, the progression rate to secondary education has always been limited due to very limited availability of secondary school places. Only five percent of adolescent Afghan refugees have had an opportunity to continue to secondary level.<sup>29</sup>

Girls often do well at school examinations. Yet, girls also drop out of school more frequently than boys. The aforementioned evaluation report concludes that BEFARe in general has done well in expanding education opportunities for girls over the last decade. The evaluation report shows that there were about three times as many girls in primary schools in 2002 as compared to 1996. The number of female teachers has increased accordingly. The percentage of girls in BEFARe schools went up to thirty five percent in the first half of 2005 but decreased to

about twenty seven percent in the second half of the year. The reason is budget cuts, which have led to closure of schools and reduction of services.<sup>30</sup>

The evaluation report mentions the value of BEFARe's home schools, giving education opportunities for older girls. In BEFARe there

are also home schools for boys, who for various reasons cannot attend ordinary schools. It should be noted that BEFARe has several co-educational schools.<sup>31</sup>

The table below summarizes some of the major aspects of BEFARe's formal education programme over the last decade.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 2.1 Quantitative Summary of BEFARe's Formal Education Programme, 1996 – 2005.**

*The Table shows enrolment of pupils, number of teachers and the pupil-teacher ratio. It also shows the number of schools. Finally, it shows the number of Field Education Supervisors (FES) overall and per teacher. (Although not shown in this table, about 30% of the pupils are girls, and the number has increased over the years, until it decreased due to budget cuts and school closures in the second half of 2005, as we have mentioned repeatedly.)*

Year	Enrolment of Pupils	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Number of Schools	Number of Field Overall	Supervisors per Teacher
1996	62,092	1,560	1:40	264	40	39
1997	69,254	1,627	1:43	274	50	33
1998	85,658	2,076	1:41	281	52	40
1999	98,351	2,180	1:45	284	53	41
2000	100,000	2,4292	1:44	289	60	40
2001	103,890	2,528	1:41	301	70	37
2002	117,749	2,844	1:41	327	78	37
2003	112,181	2,878	1:39	320	82	37
2004	106,834	2,526	1:42	264	51	49
2005 May.	99,528	2,056	1:48	235	35	59
2005 Sept.	77,368	1,707				

*Source:* Based on, "History and recent achievements of Formal Education Department", an internal BEFARe document, prepared by Wajid Ali Khan, Head of FE, 11.07.05, and BEFARe's monthly statistical summary report for September 2005. BEFARe, Peshawar.



Out-of-school boys outside a refugee camp/village on the outskirts of Peshawar, September 2005.



## CURRICULUM, CONTENTS AND TEXTBOOKS

We have mentioned that the German assistance to education for Afghan refugees and refugee host communities in Pakistan began with giving attention to curriculum and content issues.<sup>33</sup> Throughout the history of the German assisted projects, *teaching materials, curriculum and content* were important aspects. In addition to ordinary school subjects, crosscutting issues were also included, such as health issues, gender issues, drug awareness, mine awareness and more recently, HIV/AIDS and other issues. Peace education was also given attention.

Although the German assistance initially gave attention to *practical subjects*, those subjects were given less attention in the last decade. There are no practical subjects for boys or for girls in the formal education schools.

Revision and development of teaching materials were key areas of BEFARe's work related to quality improvement. The work was often connected with *teacher training* and improvement of teaching methods and pedagogical issues. BEFARe has developed, printed and distributed more than *one hundred and thirty five* titles in its *teaching materials programme*; mostly supplementary teaching materials and teachers' guides, but also some studies, research-oriented reports and books. Some of the books labeled 'supplementary teaching materials' are complete textbooks, updating the old UNO books (see above), which it was mandatory to use in all Afghan refugee schools in Pakistan. Most of the books and booklets are in Pashtu and Dari and we are, therefore, not including a complete list in this English-language book. *An annotated bibliography is available from BEFARe*. Textbook analyses have been made of some of the books/themes.<sup>34</sup>

Many issues related to curriculum, contents and textbooks were handled in cooperation between BEFARe and UNESCO.<sup>35</sup>

## ADMINISTRATION AND COST

German assistance to Afghan refugee education in Pakistan has always been *well managed*, and the new BEFARe organization continues in the same way. BEFARe is a large project and requires good administrative procedures. Questions can be raised about the magnitude of the project: Was it too large? Perhaps it should have been split between several NGOs or implementing partners, possibly in a consortium? Or, perhaps there were essential advantages and major savings to be made out of such a large project, run by one administration, split in six sub-centers?

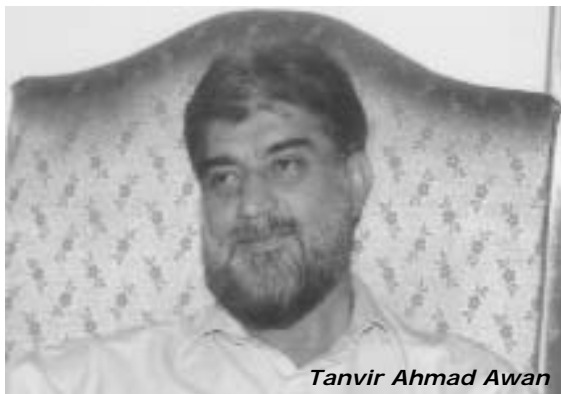
We shall not attempt to answer these questions here. However, it is important that consideration be made of these issues for future projects and for the future work of BEFARe. In Chapter 4 we have discussed some problematic aspects related to 'handing-over' and 'sustainability' of development aid projects. We believe that GTZ could have prepared the project better for becoming a local organization.<sup>36</sup>

However, we would not like to end this brief discussion on a negative note. We would like to underline that the administrative issues have been handled well in BEFARe. The team leader of the 2002 UNHCR evaluation turned the question the other way. She said that she sometimes felt that BEFARe gave more attention to administration than to professional, school-oriented issues, which are the end-purpose of the whole 'operation'.<sup>37</sup>

The unit cost could not have been as low if the project did not benefit from being a large-scale operation. Currently, it only costs about **USD 22-25 per pupil per year in primary school**. This is lower than similar projects implemented by other organizations we have compared with. The large scale of the project contributes to the low unit cost.<sup>38</sup>

It is likely that the unit cost will go up when there are changes in the coming years, unless there are some special cost-saving measures, which will also reduce quality, for example running schools in two or even three shifts.

We recommend that BEFARe itself and also other organizations dealing with refugee education study *cost and financing aspects* in refugee education further. Lessons can be learned from BEFARe, and from UNHCR's major role in the project. However, the dependence on one major



**Tanvir Ahmad Awan**

donor is a problem in a 'donor-driven' aid project, in this case, a long-term refugee education project, during the time of provision of assistance and in particular at the time of budget cuts and eventually project closure/completion.

**Tanvir Ahmad Awan** is the Division Chief of Administration and Finance. BEFARe handles USD two and half to three and half million per year, dependent on availability of donor funds. UNHCR's contribution to Formal Education, which is currently in the range of USD two mil-



**Syed Junaid Shah**

lion, is the most reliable, long-term assistance to BEFARe's work.<sup>39</sup>

Together with **Syed Junaid Shah**, the Division

Chief of Programme and Implementation, and Shakir Ishaq, BEFARe's Chief Executive and the Board of Trustees, Tanvir has the challenging task of reorganizing BEFARe from a project to a *sustainable organization*. Junaid is the most vocal one as regards broadening BEFARe's field of operation to become a broad project implementation organization in education and other fields.<sup>40</sup>

## BEFARe - CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

### Comments by the Managers

**Wajid Ali Khan** is the Manager for Formal Education in BEFARe, a post he has held for two years, but he joined the organization back in 1997. Qaiser Jamal and Nazir Mahmanad were his predecessors. Wajid is himself an engineer by training.<sup>41</sup>

"I am just back from Abbottabad to assess the situation after the devastating earthquake in



**Wajid Ali Khan**

Northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005. We will provide about 20 tent schools in that area. One of BEFARe's six resource centers is in Abbottabad and that is a great advantage for us. I also grew up in the town and that is again an advantage when trying to understand the situation on the ground and decide on how the most effective assistance should be provided. We are planning school projects in the affected areas further north, including in Mansehra town, which is in great need of assistance. In both cases,

BEFARe will receive special assistance from organizations like World Vision Pakistan, UNESCO, and others”, Wajid says.

“We believe we are well equipped to serve in emergency situations with our long experience, having provided education for refugees for more than twenty years. The majority of the victims of the tragic earthquake were Pakistanis, but there were also a number of Afghan refugees affected in the areas where we work. For example in Mansehra we plan to start with four schools, with equal numbers of Pakistani and Afghan pupils.”

“I also believe that experienced Afghan teachers have a special advantage teaching and managing schools in these difficult circumstances, including how to deal with loss, grief, trauma and psychological problems. Having been victims of wars, natural disasters (droughts), and decades as refugees, Afghans have learned how to cope and solve problems that go beyond the comprehension of most other people. Afghans and Pakistanis in the refugee hosting areas have unique experiences, which will be of great help in the immediate and longer-term rebuilding of the communities”, Wajid says.

*Mujadidi Agha Shah agrees.*<sup>42</sup> He is the Deputy Manager of Formal Education in BEFARe and an Afghan refugee himself. Wajid and Mujadidi also agree that BEFARe, and its predecessors have contributed significantly to educating refugees in Pakistan. They say, that as seen from a professional point of view in BEFARe, it is regrettable that the international funding is decreasing for refugee education. After the terrible earthquake, we fear that refugees will become still more neglected, and that the main funding agency UNHCR will focus on that important work. “We don’t want to compete for the same funds, but we would like refugee education to continue for as long as it is needed”, the two BEFARe education leaders emphasize.

They draw attention to education statistics, which show that girls suffer more from the reduced funding and that their enrolment

decreases faster than that of boys.<sup>43</sup> “This is unfortunate because girls have always had a tougher time in education, in spite of performing better at exams than boys do”, Mujadidi adds. He can refer to annual reports and statistics, which all support his statement. Furthermore, if we say that about one-third of the enrolled pupils are girls, then we have to take note of the fact that the percentage is higher at the lower levels and decreases over the years. This is due to cultural reasons, which are hard to change. Changes are coming, mainly in the urban and semi-urban areas, especially near Peshawar.

“Although most schools are separate for boys and girls, sometimes young teachers and even parents will say that this is perhaps a question to discuss now. Do the schools have to be single-sex schools? And teachers don’t always have to be the same sex as the pupils. This is easier to accept, and we have already done something in those fields”, Mujadidi says.

When the former BEFARe pupils and teachers return to Afghanistan, we are confident that we are sending home Afghans who can perform well. We believe nobody has as good competencies as our pupils and teachers have!” the BEFARe education leaders say. “But that does not mean that the returnees will not face problems. The question of approving the certificates and examination printouts of the pupils seem to have been sorted out after some problems a year or two ago. BEFARe’s service and training sheets given to their teachers before they leave are also accepted in Afghanistan, provided they are duly stamped and signed by the *Afghan Consulate-*



*Hon. Haji Abdul Khaliq Farahi  
Consul-General*

**General** in Peshawar.”

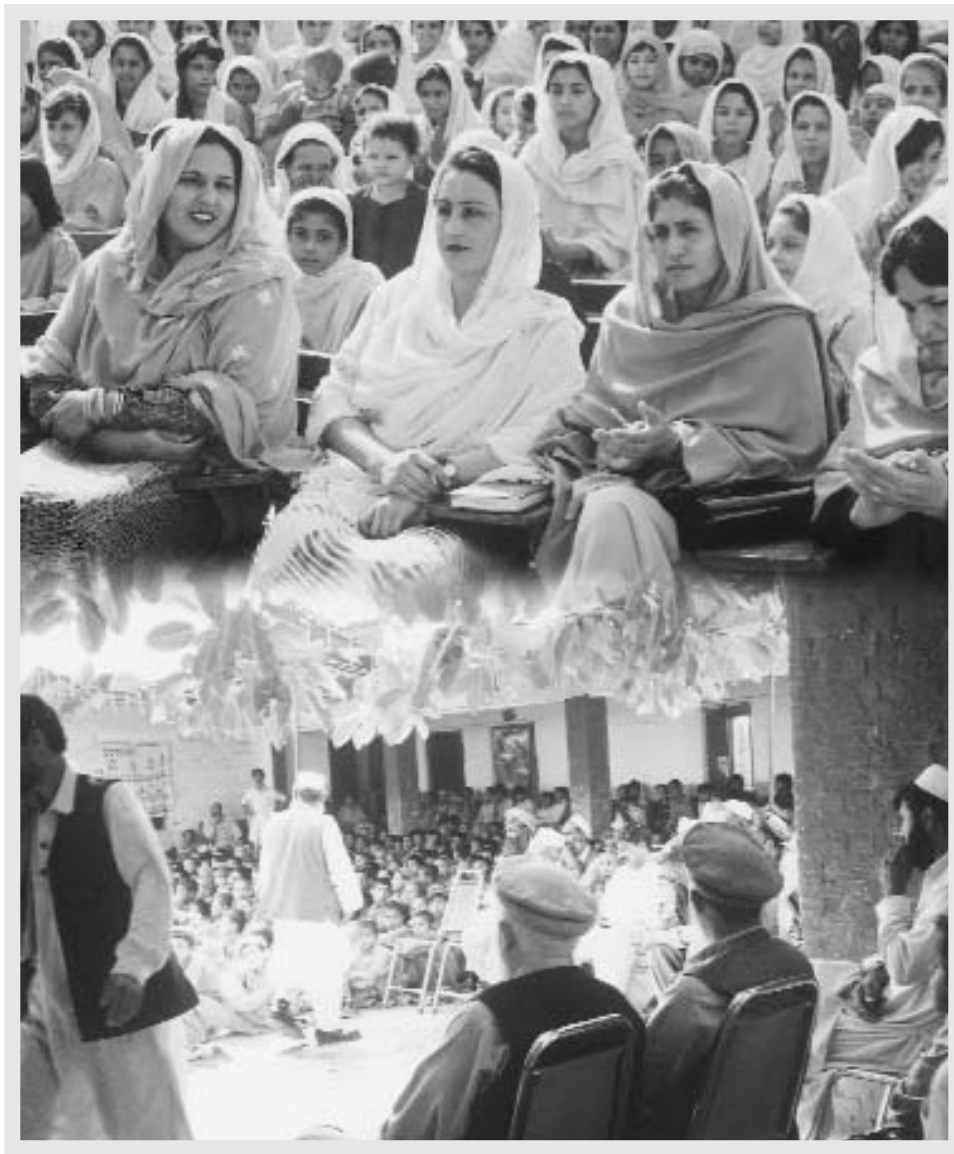
“As educationists, we are glad to have assisted hundreds of thousands of Afghans with formal basic education over the years, teacher training and a number of other community and non-formal educational skills. Now we are increasingly including Pakistanis in urban refugee hosting areas, mainly in Peshawar, in our work. There is a lot of work for experienced organizations like BEFARe, for vulnerable Pakistanis and Afghans who will continue living in Pakistan.”

Mujadidi adds that in Afghanistan, there is a great drive for provision of education for all. However, the main problem is *lack of quality education*. Parents and pupils who return from Pakistan discover that very soon. In a rebuilding phase, such shortcomings can be explained but not always accepted.

A former BEFARe teacher who returned to Afghanistan six months ago came back to visit his family in Peshawar recently.<sup>44</sup> He says that there are many schools in Afghanistan, but outside the main cities the schools are often just a name; the

teachers are not well educated and not well paid, so often they do not show up for work as they lack motivation or are simply forced to earn some money from other work.

“A vocational school teacher may just have completed secondary school training himself, and a university teacher may only hold a first degree, but still he prefers to use the title Professor, and so on. If NGOs run schools the quality is normally better. But if we want education for all we have to get the public school system working, not just the private one which will be for very few. New textbooks are beginning to be distributed this year. I think they are quite good, but the teachers need teachers’ guides and they need to be prepared for class. When I speak to my younger brother who goes to secondary school in Jalalabad he complains that he often suspects that the teacher reads the lesson in the textbook for the first time when he is in the class with his pupils”, the former BEFARe teacher explains on his visit back in Peshawar.<sup>45</sup>



BEFARe's achievements in increased enrolment of girls are impressive. In this photo, proud teachers, pupils, parents and other community members attend a graduation ceremony, and at the bottom, senior men on the podium. *"We shouldn't forget that older men still make most decisions in Afghanistan, including in Afghan refugee communities in Pakistan but we believe our CP&D efforts have led to men discussing issues more with women now than before, and we are sure that the young generation will have more modern attitudes to women's rights",* says Azad Khan Khattak, Head of BEFARe's community development work. *Photo: BEFARe Archives.*



Some young sportsmen entertaining age-mates and community members with their physical and artistic skills. Education is not only bookish knowledge and practical skills training. It is also physical training, sports and character building. Perhaps it should be added that soccer football too is becoming very popular in Afghanistan. Cricket is more popular, but then there is that fact that a top Afghan cricketer gives away the fact that he was a refugee in Pakistan, and he may not want everyone to know that. Where would he otherwise have had the opportunity to excel in that sport if not in Pakistan, one of the world's leading cricket nations? To beat Pakistan in cricket would be a dream come true for young Afghan sportsmen! *Photo: Azad Khan Kahhtak.*

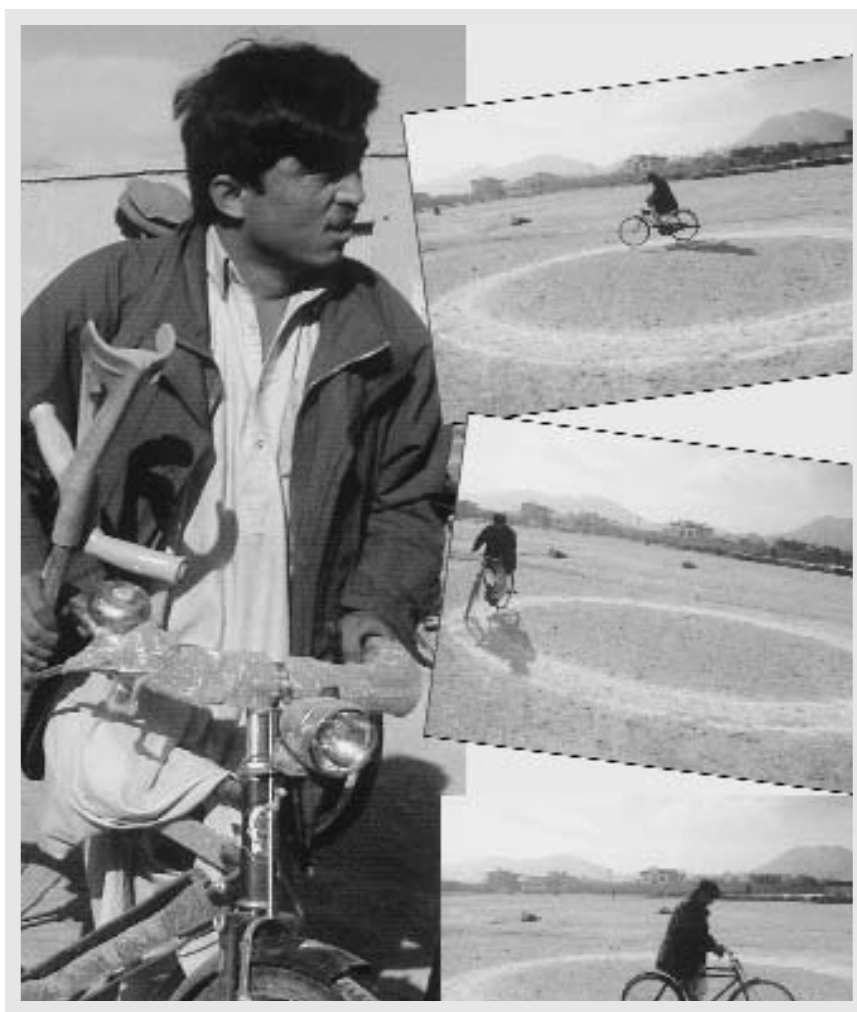


Photo: UNHCR Magazine "Refugees", Vol. 1, No. 134, 2004. Geneva.

This young Afghan, Mohammed Ali, 28, is one of many victims of the wars. He lost one leg in a landmine accident when he came home to Afghanistan after having been a refugee for many years. A few years ago UNICEF estimated that the country had up to ten million landmines and other undetonated ordinance. Just to clear the heavily mined area near Kabul airport takes several years, and a few weeks ago two Afghan mine clearers were killed.

Mohammed Ali is a determined man as this photo shows. With only one leg, even riding a bicycle can take weeks of painstaking practice. *"My life is like this circle"*, he laments practicing riding bicycle round and around on a piece of wasteland with his one good leg. *"Life turns and turns but it goes nowhere. Often in the morning I leave the house to search for work but I don't know where to go"*, he adds. *"But I am still lucky, I have a wife and two young children, I have a place to live and I get some help from good relatives. I am next week going back for fitting of the*

*artificial leg and shoe and then practice, practice... I haven't used it much because I find it difficult."*

Two weeks later when we come back, we find Mohammed helping in a stationery kiosk in Kabul. He has learned to walk a bit. *"Look"*, he says, *"at last now I have two legs an maybe a future."*

The special education needs are always important in refugee situations and after natural disasters. But few teachers and medical workers are available and both physical and mental treatment is usually very limited. UNHCR's Education Guidelines draw attention to special needs education. BEFAre has been able to give some attention to special education in teacher training and in a few cases for pupils in skills training. Psychosocial issues are given more room. In Afghanistan, ICRC (Red Cross/Red Crescent) provides equipment and training to physically handicapped.



Three generations Afghans: Father Syed Murad is head teacher in a BEFARe school in Peshawar, his son Javed is a teacher and computer specialist, and the young grandson, who just turned 6 some months ago attends first grade in grandfather's school.

The other pictures are from the family's Photo Album: At the top, Syed Murad in Herat in the mid-1990s when he worked for an NGO at home for a while, but was forced to go back into exile in Pakistan again. The next picture is from Jalabad in 1998 and the bottom one is from Peshawar in 2003.

*"Pakistan has been good to us", they say, "but we can never forget that we are in exile, and Jalalabad, where we come from, only some hours' drive from Peshawar, is where our hearts are."*

*"I have also left some of my heart here in Pakistan", the younger Murad says. "It is also a fact that without BEFARe, our income and my own education would have been very limited."*



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks for providing information and data for this chapter go to the Chief Executive of BEFRaE Shakir Ishaq and his staff, of whom we only name a few by title, notably the Heads, and often also the Deputies and other staff of the following Departments/Divisions; Community Services, Formal Education Programme and Administration. We would like to express appreciation to Berthold Wohlleber, Technical Adviser, for providing some background statistics, based on the data he was able to obtain, and furthermore, the many discussions we held with him. Thanks are extended to S.B. Ekanayake for compiling background notes for the book.

Special thanks go to a small group of Afghan teachers and Master/Lead trainers we had many discussions with, including, *inter alia*, Syed M. Tahir Murad, Head Teacher, his son Syed Javed A. Murad, Teacher, Baligis Rangg, Head Teacher, Mujadidi Agha Shah at BEFARe, and many others. We had a number of useful discussions with many female and male Afghan and Pakistani teachers, and many boys and girls in their schools.

<sup>2</sup> *UNHCR Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva. February, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> See UNESCO documents, which can be found at the Website of the organization. See also INEE's Website, which includes references to a number of organizations.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Azad Khan Khattak on 11.11.05.

<sup>5</sup> Above interview and various internal documents in BEFARe and UNHCR.

<sup>6</sup> Figures provided in an internal write up by Azad Khan Khattak, entitled "*BEFARe Community Participation and Development*", CP&D, BEFARe, Peshawar, 15.07.05.

<sup>7</sup> See, *Ibid*, where the bottom-up approach is emphasized.

<sup>8</sup> See, *BEFARe Monthly Newsletter*, various months, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> See, the paper referred to in Notes 6 and 7 above, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> See various documents, such as BEFARe's Annual Reports. See also, Ekanayake, S.B. and Atle Hetland: Working Notes for the current book. Peshawar/Islamabad, 10.11.04.

<sup>11</sup> Pak-German BAS-Ed: *Community Survey*. Peshawar, April, 1987.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>13</sup> The World Bank: *Pakistan Evaluation Report. Income Generating Project for Refugee Areas*. (3 projects) June 28, 1996. Operations Evaluation Dept., The World Bank, Washington D.C, 1996.

<sup>14</sup> See internal documents in UNHCR and UNDP

Pakistan, especially 2000-2001.

<sup>15</sup> (a) BEFARe has prepared a number of Working Documents and Analyses on these issues. BEFARe is particularly interested in seeking durable solutions for urban refugees and provide assistance to Pakistanis in refugee hosting areas. It is unfortunate that these issues are taken up belatedly. (b) Various NGOs and UN organizations, including UNHCR and UNDP, are studying these issues. (c) The European Commission (EC) and ECHO, Pakistan and Afghanistan, are also concerned about providing assistance to refugees and returnees, including, *inter alia*, some durable solutions projects in NWFP and Balochistan to benefit vulnerable camp and urban refugees. Projects have been implemented by Mercy Corps (Balochistan) and the International Rescue Committee (Peshawar). For Peshawar, see the *IRC-DSP Evaluation Report* (final draft) prepared by Atle Hetland in October 2005. IRC, Islamabad/Peshawar.

<sup>16</sup> Hetland, Atle: *Historical Background: Afghanistan and Afghan Refugees in Pakistan*. Mimeo, Islamabad, May 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Ekanayake, S.B.: *Education in the Doldrums: Afghan Tragedy*. Al-Noor Publishers & Printers, Islamabad, 2000, p. 151. (Second edition 2004.)

<sup>18</sup> See, annual reports, surveys, studies, etc., prepared by the project organization in the 1980s. See also Chapter 4 in this book and the detailed list of Notes and References.

<sup>19</sup> For information about the history of UNO's assistance to education in Afghanistan, including the importance of Afghan experts at Omaha, see documents in the ACBAR-ARIC Library, Peshawar and Kabul.

<sup>20</sup> See, *UNHCR's Education Field Guidelines*. UNESCO, Geneva, February 2003. See, Section 2.1 concerning curriculum issues, and aspects concerning language of instruction.

<sup>21</sup> (a) The best common kit has been put together by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), c/o UNESCO, Paris. Pamela Baxter has been the team leader for preparation of the kit. (b) 2001 – 2010 is the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. Materials can be obtained from UNESCO, Paris.

<sup>22</sup> Munsch, Holger: *Grunderziehung für afghanische Flüchtlinge*. Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe). GTZ Fallstudie. Gutachten im Rahmen des Sektorhabens Bildung und Konfliktbearbeitung. Bremen, October 2004. (A summary booklet is being prepared in English.)

<sup>23</sup> BEFARe has prepared materials for teachers and pupils in the various crosscutting fields. In new fields, such as HIV/AIDS, only brief materials and teaching guidelines have

been developed.

<sup>24</sup> (a) For references and further considerations concerning these issues, the reader is referred to BEFARe's offices dealing with curricula, especially the Research and Development Department (R&D). (b) For discussion of attitudes, values, peace, etc., see, Sinclair, Margaret: *Learning To Live Together*. UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (IBE), Geneva 2004.

<sup>25</sup> See, *UNHCR's Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva, February 2003.

<sup>26</sup> The *BEFARe Monthly Newsletter*, Issue 25, Vol. 3, October 2005, takes up BEFARe's early response to the earthquake in the Northern Areas and NWFP.

<sup>27</sup> See reference mentioned in Note 18 above.

<sup>28</sup> Johannessen, Eva Marion, S.B. Ekanayake and Udo Bude: *Evaluation of GTZ/Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe) in Pakistan*. Final Version. UNHCR, Geneva, June 2002.

<sup>29</sup> These aspects have been taken up in various reports by BEFARe, UNESCO, IRC, RET, etc. The Refugee Education Trust for Post-primary Education (RET), which has a small office in Peshawar, has taken up various issues related to secondary education. In 2005, a major reduction took place in enrolment since the Government of Pakistan (CAR/EC) had to close its schools due to unavailability of donor funds.

<sup>30</sup> See, inter alia, Johannessen, Eva Marion et al: *Op.cit.*, Chapter 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>32</sup> The table and additional data are available in, Khan, Wajid Ali: "*History and recent achievements of Formal Education Department*", an internal BEFARe document, Peshawar, 11.07.05.

<sup>33</sup> See Note 18 above.

<sup>34</sup> BEFARe's R&D Department maintains detailed lists of materials. See, for example, the complete annotated bibliography of teaching materials, a textbook analysis funded by UNESCO (under the CIDA-AREP project) in 2004, and other analyses and studies.

<sup>35</sup> The UNESCO Office, Islamabad, gave special attention to refugee issues during the time when S.B. Ekanayake worked there, or, later, when he was with UNHCR OCM-Kabul, but had office space at UNESCO and UNHCR in Islamabad.

UNESCO's annual reports and library lists can be consulted to obtain exact references.

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>37</sup> Interviews and discussions with Dr. Eva Marion Johannessen in Islamabad, March 2002.

<sup>38</sup> The unit cost issue is important since the unit cost is so low and yet the quality is considered high. We have compared with similar projects and can not find any running operations for less – except for local self-help schools but there costs are 'hidden', i.e., personnel work for free or for much lower salaries than they would under normal circumstances. We have found projects on the other end of the costs scale (although for special groups of vulnerable beneficiaries) and unit costs may be 10 – 15 times as high.

<sup>39</sup> BEFARe prepared a detailed overview of its income, etc., specifically for our work, dated 22.03.05. We have chosen not to release details from the documents, which also give names of each donor, amounts and other data. Some of these data should be seen as confidential but they should naturally be released to auditors from the donors.

<sup>40</sup> Before BEFARe was established, a number of discussion meetings and seminars were held, and some studies were also undertaken, such as, Bohm, Axel: *Organizational Development at BEFARe. Preliminary Report*. PRO – Consulting & Training. Peshawar, February 2002. However, still BEFARe has not found its long-term organizational form. This is only natural since an organization like BEFARe will develop over time, most activities are donor-driven, and the organization must show flexibility in fields of work.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Wajid Ali Khan in early November 2005, and several earlier discussion meetings.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Mujadidi Agha Shah in early November 2005, and other interviews for other chapters in this book.

<sup>43</sup> See internal BEFARe reports and analyses. Data are collected continually and submitted to the head office on a monthly basis.

<sup>44</sup> The former teacher was back in Peshawar the second week of November 2005. He requested that we do not disclose his name.

<sup>45</sup> After this chapter was completed, Mujadidi has returned home to Afghanistan and has found a senior post in the education sector.





## Non-Formal Education in BEFARe

Chapter

# 6



## Non-Formal Education in BEFARe

*Non-formal education is a cornerstone in any early response, and also part of the long-term response of a refugee crisis and early reconstruction. BEFARe's Non-Formal Education (NFE) Programme started in 1989. Although some activities and support to non-formal and informal education had taken place since the Afghan refugees first began coming to Pakistan in 1978 and after the invasion of Afghanistan between Christmas and New Year in 1979 - shocking the whole world and beginning a quarter century of interruption of normal life in Afghanistan, with more than one-quarter of the population being forced to become refugees; the majority in Pakistan, followed closely by Iran. In addition, there were internally displaced persons (IDPs). Thus, it is considered that one-third of all Afghans were directly affected by the wars, and literally every household was affected, either directly or indirectly.*

*Various organizations, including BEFARe's predecessors, provided assistance from the beginning of the refugee crisis, but it took another decade before BEFARe's special non-formal education programme was established as a separate and systematic professional activity. Over the years, the NFE programme has been expanded in number of learners, the quality has improved as seen through better and longer teacher training courses, more and better teaching materials have been provided, and the scope of activities has been expanded. The NFE programme stands out as a well organized activity in BEFARe under the firm and committed leadership of Waheeda Farouk, the current NFE Head of the programme.<sup>1</sup>*

*The NFE programme includes a wide range of activities, such as functional literacy, civics education, mother and child health care (MCH), home schools for girls and boys, vocational and skills training, teacher training courses and community development activities for adolescents and adults. More recently special attention has been given to psychosocial aspects, human rights, peace education and conflict resolution. There seems to be gender parity in the number of participants in most of the NFE activities, although there are also many non-formal education activities that target girls and women.*

*Often, NFE activities are given lower priority by donors and implementing organizations than formal schooling, and this has also been true of BEFARe's programme. At the end of 2005, the NFE Programme has again been reduced to a side-activity with a small budget and number of learners. There aren't always clear barriers between NFE and FE activities. All education activities are part of the daily life and activities in a refugee community. At the end of the chapter, we draw attention to this through an interview with an illiterate woman who is the Chairwoman of a School Management Committee (SMC) of an FE school.*

## Some Facts and Figures about Non - Formal Education

1. Non-formal education forms an important element of refugee education. It is essential as an early response to a refugee crisis and other emergency situations and it is essential for children who cannot attend ordinary schools when they become refugees for many years, such as the Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

2. For adolescents and adults non-formal education is particularly essential including functional literacy training, life-skills training, vocational, technical and skills training. For young girls and women mother and child health care (MCH) and related fields, notably health, nutrition, hygiene and so on are important. Special education, early childhood development and education for vulnerable groups are also important elements in non-formal education activities.

3. More emphasis is today being given to psychosocial issues and values education including peace and human rights education. Training courses and discussions about political elections and democratic development of societies are important. Consideration of gender issues is essential in non-formal and formal education and in training and employment of teachers and managers. Environmental education is yet another relatively new field which is still not given enough attention. All these fields can be included in the standard field or subject known as 'civics education'. Aside from using common materials it is useful to develop content/curricula and materials which are specific for each refugee and post-conflict situation.

4. The general reference document for all practical refugee education is the UNHCR Education Field Guidelines from February 2003. UNESCO's policy, planning and strategy documents related to Education for All (EFA) from 2000 are important as background documents. The new concept 'inclusive education', which mainly refers to handicapped, minorities and particularly underprivileged persons and groups is useful when analyzing, planning and implementing refugee education. Community development activities are closely linked to non-formal education activities.

5. In this chapter we draw attention to some broader aspects related to non-formal education in Pakistan and in other countries and on other continents. Refugee education in general and especially non-formal education often lacks a theoretical foundation. In this chapter we emphasize the importance of formal and non-formal education working closer together. In BEFARe this has been more clearly realized in recent years. Today, ideas and experiences from non-formal education are being used in the formal education programme, whereas it in the past was always the other way around. Community development activities are closely linked to non-formal education activities, including establishing and running school management committees (SMCs) or parents-teachers associations (PTAs). Such committees are important in training for further development of democratic institutions.

6. BEFARe's success in the field of non-formal education has been achieved through deliberate, systematic and patient work over more than twenty years. The leader of BEFARe's Non-formal education department is given special credit for the achievements as we also acknowledge the efforts of all the staff and managers, especially the master/lead trainers. Many of the finest ones are women!

7. Lack of funding for non-formal education has remained a problem throughout the project's history. In the future, funding is likely to remain limited unless the field is recognized as important for instance in condensed 'second-chance education' (although admittedly it may sometimes also be 'second-class' education) Primary education is not only for refugees and people in refugee-hosting areas, but for poor people in general in the host-country.

8. Home schools for girls and boys too have a model function for rural and urban areas in Pakistan and Afghanistan. BEFARe will in the future be able to act as adviser in planning, monitoring and evaluating non-formal education programmes in Pakistan, or it can shoulder full programme implementation.

9. The statistics show that more than 70,000 men and women have completed BEFARe's *literacy training* courses, comprising 3 courses over 18 months, usually with parallel life-skills and practical vocational skills training. The literacy curricula and the teaching materials, with books, charts, audio cassettes, trainer's guides, etc., have been recognized by educators in other international and local organizations. The *MCH courses* are equally highly regarded. Since the programme started in 1996, almost 43,000 pupils have graduated from the home schools with close to gender parity in participation (about 45% women). The six-month *vocational and technical training courses*, which were run under a sub-project earlier, known as PGTT, trained 32,000 beneficiaries from 1982 to 1996, with about half of the participants being Pakistanis and half Afghans. Only a few thousand could benefit from the UNHCR-funded follow-up programme later, known as VET, due to lack of donor funding, which was regretted by the UNHCR office in Pakistan. Funding has otherwise mainly been provided by UNHCR but others have also contributed, such as BMZ/Germany, CIDA/Canada, DFID/UK, The World Bank, and others.

10. A large number of *adult education teachers* have been trained: About 3,500 teachers were given basic training for literacy teachers. More than 2,000 teachers received short basic training to become teachers in the home schools. Only about 1/3 of these teachers were women. In the MCH training programme, however, 100% of the about 2,800 trained teachers and instructors were women. Several hundred teachers were given training to become teachers and instructors in the practical training courses. Many of the teachers who received training have left BEFARe for various reasons and are now living and working elsewhere in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Hence they are benefiting new groups of learners and colleagues.

# Section I

## BACKGROUND TO THE FIELD OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

We shall begin this chapter with a section presenting broader data providing the reader with a better understanding of the cultural, social and economic background and lives of the refugees. Reference is also made to various publications in history, social and human sciences, especially in cultural anthropology.<sup>2</sup>

It should be emphasized that when we work with refugees, especially in a field like education, we are there to *serve the refugees* on their terms. We are not there to change them, even in a field like education, unless traditions and attitudes are directly in violation of the international human rights and related standards, for example as regards gender issues. However, new knowledge often leads to change and broadening of people's horizons. This we shall see below in BEFAre's non-formal education (NFE) programmes.<sup>3</sup>

We should bear in mind that the refugees have been forced into exile, and that they were not invited to come to Pakistan, although Pakistan has always been a generous host country. The refugees want to keep as much as possible of their traditions and culture, and ways of sorting out everyday problems. When refugees arrive in a camp, in a foreign country, even if the country is close and the people are of the same or similar ethnicity, language and traditions, they wish to believe the time in refuge will be temporary. Data from UNHCR shows that in developing countries the average time of a person being a refugee is as long as ten years.<sup>4</sup> When people arrive in exile, they all have plans for themselves at home, in the villages, towns and cities which they had to leave. They hope to return home as soon as possible and they find it degrading and

undignified to have to receive handouts in a refugee camp. In community services and education we should be particularly mindful of these aspects.

We want the reader to bear this in mind - in general when dealing with refugees and in particular when dealing with educational issues. We need to be especially sensitive when dealing with adolescents and adults. Thus, we want a kind attitude to be instilled in all of us, as a yardstick by which to measure our activities when we discuss issues related to non-formal education and community development for adolescents and adults, and elderly people. These are basic principles in all humanitarian, human rights, peace and aid work, and they need to be particularly visible when dealing with refugees, who are at the bottom of the ladder of all needy people.



What does the future hold for this Afghan girl?



## CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Following the introduction, we shall discuss and attempt to define non-formal education as distinct and different from formal education. We shall do so in a context related to the Third World in general, and then in a refugee context in those countries. Naturally, we shall include our local context of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, mainly in the camps and in the BEFARe target areas.

Non-formal education always has important activities for girls and women. So also in the current NFE programme in BEFARe. As a background, it is important to note that the programme caters for refugees who come from, and live in particularly conservative communities, where traditional interpretations of culture and religion are observed. For example, men and women, boys and girls, can hardly ever attend educational activities in the same classroom. In adult education, the curriculum or learning content often vary for the different genders and age groups. Sometimes, though, some unexpected liberal changes can also be observed, especially in the more recent years and usually in or near the big cities and towns. This can in general be seen as a result of the refugees' *exposure to new ways and other traditions* in the host country of Pakistan, and the direct effects of the educational activities in non-formal as well as formal education. Most of these changes should be seen as enlightenment and not as moral degradation although some people may disagree. After all, the refugee camps and villages where the BEFARe schools are located and the non-formal education activities are implemented are in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), which is not known for being very liberal and open to change. Ethnically, the majority of the refugees in NWFP are Pashtun, as are also most of the residents in the host country in this area.

For sake of comparison, it can be mentioned that the refugees in the camps in Balochistan, which are situated farther from the capital city Quetta close to the Afghan border are considered

to be particularly conservative, traditional and sometimes backward. Earlier the Taliban movement, or perhaps we should rather say, some orthodox sects of Islam had strongholds in the Afghan areas near these settlements. The refugees come from and continue to live in *conservative settings*.

In Balochistan, most of the men have to seek temporary employment in the city of Quetta or elsewhere in fruit orchards in the area or a days bus drive away in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city. Often, they can only afford to come home a few times in a year. The camps are run by older men, sometimes well educated, unable or unwilling to become labourers, and by women who have to stay with the children. Young adolescent men also reside in the villages, and they are often restless and idle. The camps have little to offer them in the way of secondary, vocational or skills training, and they have difficulties finding jobs, which are usually very badly paid.

In both of these two major refugee-hosting areas, there are variations in cultures and traditions, and also in the degree of conservatism. Especially in the two cities, there are pockets of more liberal and open-minded groups, as there can also be pockets of more conservative groups, especially in the camps. We should remember that there were until recently more than 200 refugee camps in Pakistan. About 80% of the camp refugees live in NWFP and the rest in Balochistan, and a separate, small settlement in Mianwali. In Jalozei Camp in NWFP, which is about one and a half hours' drive from Peshawar, the conservative traditions are particularly strictly observed so it is not always that it is the most remote areas that are most conservative. It is foreseen that Jalozei will soon be de-registered as refugee camp.

These cultural and religious aspects, and a number of other unique and diverse characteristics of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, should be seen as an important backdrop to BEFARe's education activities in general, not least in the field of non-formal education. Children can be shaped, but adolescents and adults are usually set

in their ways. This is particularly so for rural people and most Afghans and Afghan refugees, come from remote and rural communities where the pace of change is slow. Contact with the outside world has been limited, and the educational attainment very low, especially for girls. Life has been harsh for many as nature has rarely provided a 'Garden of Eden' with abundance of natural resources and well-organized rural, village and city life.

Yet, human life and communities are never static. There are always developments and change - sometimes people become more orthodox and conservative, as happened with the Taliban in Afghanistan. At other times, in other countries and on other continents, history has an abundance of examples of groups developing in opposition to the predominant paradigms and ruling groups and classes. For example, in Europe and America in the 1960s and 1970s, major radical and alternative groups, questioning most accepted truths, developed - and then the pendulum turned in some fields.

Education forms an integral part of any society. Its role is to *socialize* the young people into the ruling culture with its religious and moral norms. Yet, it must also help the young *pose questions* and be prepared for improvements and progress. True educationists pose questions cautiously and they also help the children and the adolescents to socialize in their culture at the same time as they point at possible alternatives.

When working in adult education, we must not underestimate the more philosophical, religious, existential and everyday questions. Adult education is very practical and very impractical at the same time. Even practical training has a superstructure.

Non-formal education has multifaceted functions of helping adolescents and adults in their everyday and future lives, so that they can lead more meaningful lives, intellectually, psychologically, socially, physically or practically. Much of the learning is of a practical, survival nature. It gives adolescents and adults access to knowledge, insight and skills which can enhance

the individual's sense of value and personal development and widen his or her scope for independent action and for cooperation at work, at home and in the community.

The breadth of non-formal education makes it a particularly fascinating field of refugee education. Below, we shall have a chance to see some of these issues in practice in refugee education at BEFARe and in other programmes.

## DEFINING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Let us now discuss and define non-formal education and its role, function and potential in refugee situations in general and in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan, particularly in BEFARe. In doing so, we will also present some relevant information about adult education elsewhere in the Third World.

The term non-formal education is frequently used in connection with refugee education. One of BEFARe's two main education programmes is the Non-Formal Education (NFE) programme. The term is mainly used in connection with educational activities outside ordinary schools, not leading to recognized certificates and exams. Non-formal education is mostly for adolescents and adults, who have attended very little ordinary school, or who did not have a chance to go to school at all. Sometimes it is also for out-of-school children. They are usually older children who have dropped out, or never joined the formal school system. These adolescents are then given a "*second chance*", or "*another chance*", in non-formal education programmes. Some of the children may be able to use the non-formal education as a springboard over to the formal system.

The term *non-formal education* became particularly popular in the 1960s and 1970s when many developing countries gained independence and there was not - and still is not - school places for many of the children who are in school-going age, i.e., children from 6-7 to 13-14 years, sometimes younger, from as low as 5 up to 10-11

years (the latter mostly in Asia). Afghanistan is such a country, which never had universal primary education, not even for half of their children, although the major cities did relatively well in the 1960s and 1970s, and in adult education when the Soviet Union had some success in their (often unpopular) literacy and other adult education programmes.<sup>5</sup>

When non-formal education is organized for children, it is done because the children in question for some reason or other cannot attend ordinary full-time school. Non-formal education is an alternative form of *condensed primary school*, which includes the most important parts of the main ordinary school subjects, notably the "3Rs", reading, writing and arithmetic, with some general knowledge and civics education. The latter is often termed life-skills. In addition, some practi-

cal or vocational skills are usually taught, with a view to salaried employment or self-/group-employment later, or even alongside the training.

On average, less than 5% of refugee children/youth in developing countries can continue beyond primary school. As for Afghan refugee children in Pakistan, primary school is only six years, slightly longer than the five years of primary school in government schools in the host country. It does not include what is considered upper primary school in most countries, which in Pakistan is termed middle school. Except for the select few who can attend regular secondary, technical and tertiary education, the standard form of systematic learning for *older youth and adults* is non-formal education.

Normally the post-primary learning that is organized in a somewhat systematic way can be termed non-formal education in addition to informal education, which is not systematically organized learning, but can nevertheless be very valuable. The term *informal education* is used for learning on the job, from colleagues, friends and family, and in various situations in one's spare time, and learning from life in general. All of us take advantage of this kind of life-long learning, although situations and circumstances may not be conducive to learning and what we learn is fairly haphazard.

Many adolescents and adults in developing countries are illiterate; among Afghan refugees in Pakistan the majority are illiterate, and many more women than men are illiterate.<sup>6</sup> Literacy training forms an essential part of non-formal education in developing countries and for refugees, including in BEFARe. It is usually argued that literacy training should be *functional literacy training*, i.e., it should include aspects related to civics education, life-skills training, and vocational, technical and skills training. Such training is important for refugees as literacy and other adult education should be related to what the adolescent and adult learner finds useful in his or her life. This is one of the areas BEFARe's NFE programme has given attention to since it



Afghanistan is a country of mountains and valleys.  
Photo: Fiona Torrens-Spence. 2003.

started in 1989, and from 1992 more systematically.

There are major differences in child and adult education *psychology* and *pedagogy*. Hence the teaching methods and curricula (learning content) for children and adults are different: Adults and older children are in a position to reason about the *utility* of what they learn. They will find it difficult to set aside time and energy on issues that they do not consider useful. It is easier for a teacher to "get away" with general explanations to children about why subjects and certain "boring" or difficult topics are important. Even children will ask why they have to learn things that seem of little relevance to them, but a child will accept even without understanding, perhaps hoping to understand more fully in the future.

The adult learner may not want to waste time on any content. On the other hand, adults may have been longing for knowledge in many fields, for example in literacy and a variety of civics education or general knowledge areas. Women will feel lack of knowledge about children's issues, nutrition, health, and other domestic areas or, may lack knowledge about societal issues. We can here women say: *"My husband never tells me anything about things outside the four walls of our home."* The men, although more discreet about what knowledge they admit they lack, will feel embarrassed if a young boy or girl or their own wife knows how to read and they don't. Seemingly self-confident and level-headed adult men may be conservative and old-fashioned, but they do not want to be backward and live with outdated ideas.

Adolescents and adults can also form particularly eager groups of learners and be particularly pleasant to work with for adult education teachers or instructors - as long as they understand each other, and the teachers have training in their field of work, and the teachers have open eyes to the learners' needs and interests. *Refugees are again particular sub-groups of adult learners*, and good teachers can be most important for adolescent boys and girls. Unlike the older

adults, the adolescents may not need to struggle too much with learning the details of reading and writing skills. Even if the older ones may not always be able to learn all details in reading and writing, especially not in writing, they will be able to learn the "atmosphere" and thus be key advocates in the refugee communities for their age-mates and for the young men and women, girls and boys, to take non-formal classes.

In BEFARe's NFE programme, the above principles have been taken into account from the time the activities started as parallel activities to the Formal Education programme (FE). Both programme activities are also known as Community Oriented Primary Education (COPE), building on the concept of "community education", which is the foundation of all refugee education programmes, stipulated in the Education Field Guidelines of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which, to a major degree, direct all education activities for refugees, especially in the refugees camps.<sup>7</sup>

As mentioned above, non-formal education was part and parcel of the refugee education activities from the early stages of the Afghan refugee crisis, i.e. since 1979/80, and at each interval of the influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan. (See figures in Table 3.1 and Map 3.1) The last major influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan was after "9/11", at the end of 2001 and in early 2002, when an estimated 300,000 people fled the American lead bombing and war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Those who fled were given temporary refuge in Pakistan, mainly in the tribal border areas near Afghanistan, such as Kurram Agency, NWFP, some five hours' drive from Peshawar, and near Chaman town, Balochistan, on the border with Afghanistan.

Education was a non-formal activity, especially since it was agreed among the parties (Afghanistan, Pakistan and UNHCR) that the refugees would return home as soon as conditions allowed, i.e. not more than a few years. In short-term refugee situations, it is acceptable that

education services for children are non-formal, but the duration should then be short, and usually not more than 6 months. However, in the current case, the implementing partners, like the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Kurram also provided formal education to the children.<sup>8</sup> NRC, BEFARe and others provided various special training courses for adolescents and adults, such as peace education and teacher training courses. BEFARe, running such large education programmes over a large geographic area in NWFP, could also enroll participants in its ordinary programmes. By the end of 2004, all the "new camps" had been closed and the refugees had returned home, some had moved to "old camps", or they had trickled into the Pakistani society as non-camp/urban refugees. In 2005, all camps in the tribal areas will have been closed, and later, it is expected that many other "old camps" will also be closed.

The *initial stage* of any refugee or other emergency situation, which can last for a few months to half a year, always includes aspects of non-formal and informal education. This is so because it takes time to organize a refugee camp or settlement. It takes time to identify, recruit and train teachers, and to give orientation to parents and children, and to integrate the whole community in education and other community development activities.<sup>9</sup>

It should be remembered that before we can begin talking about formal education in a refugee situation, the overall situation must be assessed. *Other basic needs* must be satisfied before education can be given major attention, or, if possible, education can be included as part of and parallel with other activities. This requires good management skills on the part of the donors, implementing partners and the refugees themselves.

At the early stages of a crisis, when *makeshift camps* are being established, various types of non-formal and informal education activities and social activities, sports, plays, games and so on, should be organized. Some of these activities are key to trauma healing, or simply to allow people's minds to be preoccupied with something

pleasant, keep the refugee situation under control and begin developing daily routines and structures, and develop some kind of "normalcy". The activities may be organized in amateurish ways but are no less important and useful because of that.

When people are uprooted and have had to flee from their homes and their country they often have terrible memories and experiences in their "luggage", and they need time to talk to somebody about these things in order to begin coming to grips with their past. Ideally, experts would help refugees with *counseling* so that they can have a better chance of healing trauma and solving issues in the past, but experts are often not available so the refugees have to rely on each other and on trained people, such as teachers, nurses and community workers. Well, provided there are some with full training in such fields, or at least some semi-trained ones. Organizations such as BEFARe give training at early stages, as soon as funds and equipment become available.

The broad *psychosocial, cultural, religious, and other related issues* are never given the attention they deserve, although more attention is now given to these issues than before. Every refugee crisis has a huge need for psychosocial attention, trauma healing and various other special education activities. Physically handicapped do indeed also need treatment, both physically and psychologically.<sup>10</sup>

Conflict situations and new refugee situations, before systems and structures have been established, are also breeding grounds for *abuse* of various types, including *sexual abuse*. These are not new problems. They were the main causes for the pioneering work of Eglantyne Jebb and the establishment of Save the Children. It is sad that leaders, including aid workers, may be involved in abuse; their stronger situation giving them an opportunity to take advantage of the weak, especially women, girls and young boys. Chaotic and difficult situations for everyone may lead to more abuse than in stable and transparent situations.<sup>11</sup>

More attention is being given to these issues

today in projects like BEFARe, not least in its NFE programme, community development activities and teacher training. UNHCR is now emphasizing that *education* should play a more prominent role in connection with *protection work*. It is expected that these issues will become key areas of non-formal as well as formal education programmes in the future.

We should add that although the more serious abuse cases get more attention when discovered, there are also more subtle forms of abuse that must be tackled which are sometimes intrinsic in cultures or sub-cultures. We need to watch out for such forms of abuse and get rid of them. That means that teachers and community workers should attend relevant training in issues related to *the rights of the child, peace and human rights education*, and other humanitarian norms, rules and regulations.<sup>12</sup> One particular case in point is institutionalized *corporal punishment* in schools, police stations and prisons, which we must work proactively against, because it is cruel and degrading, and because it creates violence in the minds of people.<sup>13</sup>

We get a glimpse of the seriousness of the



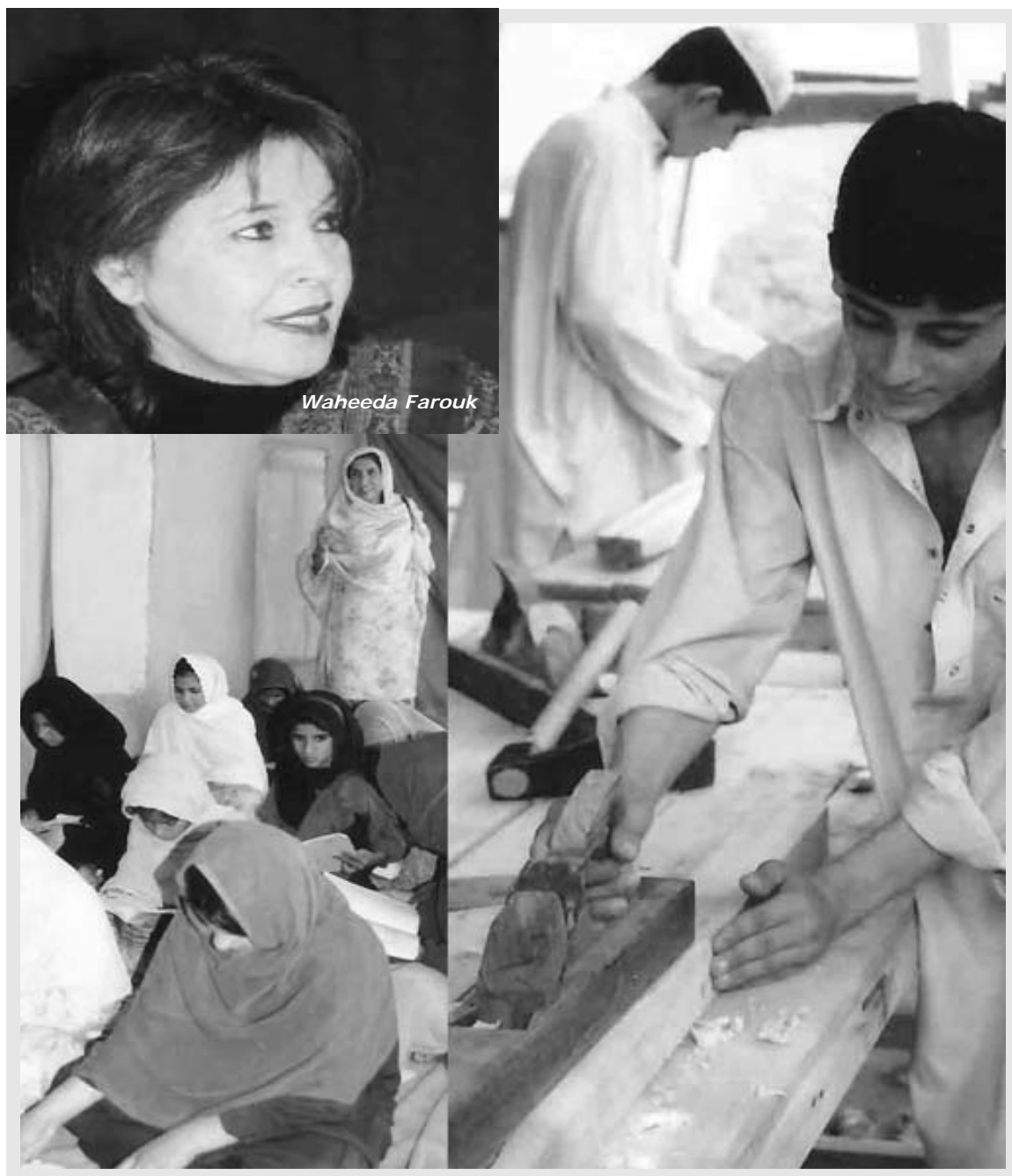
From an NRC school in Kurram Agency, NWFP. BEFARe and NRC cooperated on training of teachers in peace education. Photo: Tove Fischer/NRC. 2004

psychosocial problems among Afghan refugees and Afghans who have lived at home throughout the long war and conflict years from the following figures: The UNDP Afghanistan Human Development Report 2004 estimates that about 1/3 of the population in Afghanistan, including returnees, have some form of serious mental problems or psychological scars. Sample surveys among women in Kabul (in 2004) show that more than 95% of women have symptoms of forms of posttraumatic stress disorder.<sup>14</sup>

BEFARe and other organizations providing formal and non-formal education for refugees have over the years taken up psychosocial issues. However, it is only during recent years that these issues have been given more systematic and professional attention. Priority has been given to taking them up in teacher training and community development courses. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and BEFARe have given special attention to these aspects in some studies, training courses and teaching materials. Dr. Ekanayake has often in publications and papers at BEFARe used terms like '*teaching and learning under stress*' and '*stress-based management*'. Also, in his writings we seem to trace a development over the years, where he pays more attention to these issues in recent works.<sup>15</sup>

At the end of this section, we will draw attention to a recent study by Margaret Sinclair, who has completed a book entitled '*Learning to live together*'<sup>16</sup>, where she takes up the broad spheres of non-formal and formal education, community development and learning to build attitudes and values supportive of peace, respect for human rights, active citizenship, and healthy relationships and behaviours, including HIV/AIDS prevention.

At the beginning of BEFARe's NFE programme Margaret Sinclair was in charge of education and community services in UNHCR in Peshawar, and afterwards, she was the UNHCR Headquarters chief officer in the same fields. Her recent book shows that these NFE issues are still being debated and that we have not yet



Waheeda Farouk, Head of Non-Formal Education, with some of the learners in the important and successful NFE programme in BEFARe. The programme is currently facing funding difficulties at a time when NFE activities are more needed than before to equip the refugees to return home with training in literacy, general knowledge and employable skills. Also Pakistanis in refugee host communities need to be included.

reached standard curricula or content and teaching-learning methods.

About the objective of the book, Margaret Sinclair writes: "*It focuses on the skills, values, attitudes and concepts needed for learning to live together* rather than on 'knowledge' objectives. The aim of the study is to discover 'what works'

in terms of helping students to learn to become politely assertive rather than violent, to understand conflict and its prevention, to become mediators - as local, national and global citizens, to have balanced relationships with others and neither to coerce others nor to be coerced, especially into risky healthy behaviours."<sup>17</sup>





## Section II

### BEFARe's WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

We shall begin this section by drawing a parallel to adult education in Africa. To some readers it may not seem quite relevant, but we do this in order to draw attention to one of the great adult educators, who lived in one of the world's poorest countries, Tanzania, where they reached close to universal literacy in the 1970s. Many countries and groups are still far away from universal literacy, and in Tanzania many newly-literates relapsed back into illiteracy since there was no proper follow-up and very few reading materials in the rural areas at that time.

The second reason for drawing attention to an African country is that we consider that *comparative education* in general and *comparative refugee education* deserve greater attention. Currently, there are important parallels and lessons to be learned as regards preparation for return and actual repatriation of Afghans and South Sudanese refugees and other categories of people from neighbouring countries. Comparative studies should go beyond such required for the practical needs of UNHCR and the concerned governments to include academic and further professional issues.<sup>18</sup>

Let us first draw attention to the *United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD)*, 2003 - 2012, which aim at close to universal literacy. Literacy is also part of the Education for All (EFA) movement. Here, it should be noted that refugees and other marginalized groups, including handicapped, should be included in the UNLD and the EFA work. A new term has seen the light of day, notably "*inclusive education*".

In BEFARe's NFE work, these international instruments tie the practical project work to a

wider, international framework, which gives *Waheeda Farouk*, BEFARe's Non-Formal Education Head, a feeling of having support and not being alone, in spite of her daily struggle in a field of education, which is not always given the support it deserves. In the following pages, we shall rely on Waheeda's experience and success in her work in non-formal education for the Afghan refugees since the early 1990s. Waheeda herself moved to NFE only some years ago. Much more could and should have been done. Waheeda will be the first to admit that. Since 2005, there has been serious cuts in donor funding and difficulties in keeping up activities in the education sector in general, including in non-formal education.

It has been said that if we want to be successful in teaching an adult something, we should "*teach him/her as if we teach him/her not*" and we should "*propose new things as if they are things forgot*".

The wisdom in these words originate from the famous "*Mwalimu*" *Julius Nyerere*, Tanzania's first President after Independence of that country in 1962 and a great adult educator, henceforth his nickname "mwalimu" (in Swahili language meaning teacher, originating from Arabic). Nyerere managed to implement major functional literacy campaigns in his country in the 1970s, in a country, which was listed as one of the world's poorest and least developed, with very few educated people. (Figures show that only a little over 1,000 had secondary school or higher education.) In 2005, Afghanistan is listed by the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP), as one of the world's poorest countries, even when the informal sector economy (mainly the illegal drugs trade) is included, accounting for more than 50% of the economy.<sup>19</sup>

It was Nyerere's leadership in adult education, in primary education and in the social and political spheres, which gave dignity and optimism to his people. He used to say over 30 years ago that the educated people should serve their fellow villagers and rural brothers and sisters with the book in the same way as a farmer uses the hoe to till the land. And he told youths that if their poor parents have struggled and managed to give them education and schooling, and they go away for further education, but they don't come home to their village and land again, then they are to be likened to a man who has been sent from a starving village to collect food, but instead of bringing the food back, he eats it himself, and he gets a wife and lives well where he has found wealth. Nyerere also said that we need adult education to rid our people of ignorance, superstition and lack of skills, and since we don't have time to wait until children have been educated and can take over, *we need adult education* - also so that they can know how to help their children to get education.<sup>20</sup>

Non - formal education, and even formal basic education, can be summed up in four key words:

- Dignity • General Knowledge • Literacy
- Practical Skills

**Waheeda Farouk**, BEFARe's Non-formal Education Head, has studied the African educator and statesman Nyerere and other major educators in formal as well as non-formal education. Before joining BEFARe Waheeda was a teacher and principle at *Beacon House School* in Peshawar. Now, she is one of the veterans in BEFARe.

She says that some people may wonder what we in South and Central Asia have in common with East Africa and the teachings of "Mwalimu" Nyerere. "But it is a fact that we have a lot in common with Tanzania, which is, like Pakistan,

one of the world's main host countries for refugees. In Tanzania they came from Rwanda, Burundi, and from other countries, including South Africa and Zimbabwe (South Rhodesia) during the apartheid era and the white minority rule and sometimes even today. Repatriation exercises have been implemented. Furthermore, Tanzania was and still is, one of the world's poorest countries. There are many parallels and lessons to exchange between Tanzania and Pakistan, and perhaps in particular, lessons to learn for Afghanistan. Yet, there are of course also many differences."

Furthermore, Waheeda emphasizes that much in education, when dealing with children and adults as educators, is not only based on bookish knowledge. She knows that the "*art of teaching*", and its related administration and management, has to do with attitudes and values: how we look at ourselves and other people.

"We should try to help people to learn even if they don't know that we help them", Waheeda says. "This is especially important when dealing with adolescents and adults. Refugees include groups of adolescents and older people whom we should treat with special sensitivity so as to allow them to keep and enhance their dignity, self-esteem and value - in the midst of difficult and often miserable circumstances in a foreign country."<sup>21</sup>

When talking with Waheeda, we soon learn that she is that kind of person who has a "passion for her flock". She is one of the longest serving staff members in BEFARe, with 18 years of service. When she started, the project and sub-projects had different names, but the work was much the same although NEF was less recognized.

"It has been a constant struggle", Waheeda says, "because adult education and literacy training are the fields that have throughout been given lowest priority when it comes to funding and other resources. Now we call it non-formal education, and I am Head of a Department in that field in BEFARe, but it is still considered less important than the formal education programme. As late as the beginning of 2005, we

were not sure if we would receive funds from the donors for the term that had actually started. We didn't know if we could continue the adult education activities that we had begun, and take some new learners. In this latest case, it was a grant from The World Bank that helped us out. At the end of 2005 we were again without a donor for NFE but managed to receive some funds, which also included 2006."

"Let me add that it is probably natural that the NFE programme is *'a bit less important'* than the FE programme because the formal education programme is much larger. They have recently had about 100,000 pupils now down to 80,000, and I have had about 20,000."

"Non-formal education is often considered a field for *women*. That automatically gives it lower status. I don't say this to be negative, and I have excellent male colleagues and friends at work. But I just want that fact to be noted."

"It should also be remembered that there are certain fields of importance particularly to women when dealing with non-formal education as there are also some other fields that are of particular importance to men. In all our eagerness to be gender-sensitive, we must not become gender-blind."

"We can easily agree that adult literacy programmes should be offered both to men and women, but not necessarily in the same groups. Sometimes, it is not good to mix young and old either. Actually, men are more sensitive to some of these 'status aspects' than women; they feel they lose face in front of women and can feel embarrassed. That is never a good situation when attempting to create a good learning environment. As literacy teachers and adult educators, we must understand this and cater for the learners, not for what is easiest for us as teachers or administrators", Waheeda says.<sup>22</sup>

When we first met Waheeda Farouk some five years ago, we couldn't help wondering what this *fine and elegant lady* was doing in refugee education and how she would fit into work in the refugee camps - places and situations which

are far from luxurious and fashionable. Well, we must admit, we didn't quite think of ourselves, being European and often clad in tie and suit and probably looking more out of place than she did as a Pakistani of Pashtun origin, and thus ethnically at least one of the majority of the refugees. Clothes, jewelry, ornaments, books, and other symbols may remind ourselves of who we are, and show the others, refugees or non-refugees, who we are, or want to be.

In any case, if you work in adult education, which is Waheeda's special field, then the first thing to remember is to be yourself, to be adult, to be inclusive and to show respect.

"Teaching adults to read, impart new knowledge in a foreign country, give simple tips about hygiene, nutrition, health, family planning, tolerance and understanding for other people's cultural ways and religious beliefs, peace, human rights issues, conflict resolution, and so on, demands a lot of sensitivity about the unwritten and unsaid. It demands what the Germans call 'Fingerspitzengefühl', but that is only gained through experience, based on education and skills in psychology, pedagogy, cultural studies, religion and so on. Perhaps I should add, too, that commonsense is also important, simply that we try to be human and attempt to put ourselves in the situation of the refugees", Waheeda says.

*Source: Interviews with Waheeda Farouk, BEFAre, Peshawar, 21.12.04 and 14.05.05*

## EDUCATION FOR WOMEN Mother and Child Health Care

In our context of Afghan refugees women have had less access to knowledge outside the home. If we are blunt, we may say that most women are less knowledgeable and more ignorant than men. However, women have other knowledge based on other experiences than men, such as about nutrition, hygiene, food preservation, child rearing, and so on. In many families the administrators of the household are women, especially older women, who teach the unmarried girls and the young wives about their duties. The young

boys are also mainly taught by women and by elder siblings, and less by their fathers and other men, until they grow older. "My mother was my first teacher", most of us can say, not only in Afghanistan but all over the world.

The fact that women are often secluded in the home does not give them much opportunity to gain alternative knowledge and opposite viewpoints. This situation shouldn't be seen as shameful (to women and men), but at the same time it should also be acknowledged and the situation should be tried to be modified and corrected in our time.<sup>23</sup>

For example, many women do not have the required knowledge about "mother and child health" (MCH). Henceforth, this was one of the first course programmes that BEFARe introduced

over 15 years ago. If the mothers, or young and adult women, could not come to course centers, courses were organized in their homes or at the MCH clinics when mothers brought their young children for vaccination, or when they brought a sick child. Such courses can be termed 'awareness training' and since they started in 1989, over 80,000 women have gone through these courses.

The courses include topics like the following ones: • mother and child health; • children's pre-natal health; • prevention and child mortality; • child growth and nutrition; • environment and hygiene; • vaccination and follow-up; • family health and HIV-AIDS; • gender issues; • mine awareness.

Over the years, simple materials have been developed for teaching these issues. Today,



Photo: UNHCR Magazine "Refugees", Vol. 1, No. 134, 2004.



Refugee men in Africa attending a school class with a female teacher. A man making the roof for his house.

Top right, Afghans drying building blocks in the sun to get shelter a step better than a refugee tent.

Africa and Asia are different continents, with many different countries and cultures. Yet there are also parallels in the lives of all people and indeed poor refugees in all developing countries.

Refugees are resourceful people trying to rebuild or at least make bearable their lives and temporary homes and in recognizing the importance of education.

BEFARe has no less than 21 *separate courses*, or course units. Pictorial charts and other materials are used to explain issues more clearly.

"We have become modern, too, and have developed some audio cassettes that make teaching more entertaining and the content easier to remember", Waheeda says. "Naturally, this training is in the local languages, Pashtu and Dari, sometimes mixed with some Urdu since the Afghans have picked up the language of the host country, or sometimes because the health educator prefers to use Urdu expressions, which is useful in the local Pakistani community where the people live."

The most recent development in BEFARe is a six-month NFE course, which integrates mother and child health care issues with the first level of the female adult literacy programme. Referring to the definition above, this can be termed '*functional literacy*'. In other words, the learner gets subject-matter knowledge and literacy at the same time, which makes the literacy work more interesting and relevant to the learner.

Adults don't readily accept to learn things just because the teacher says that they are important, as we mentioned above. When we teach children, we get away with that; we tell the children that this or that will be something they need

when they become adults, or when they reach secondary school. Adults won't accept such explanations. They use their own intellect and judgment to decide what they think is useful. Literacy may be good and well, but they would like to learn something 'real' at the same time since they have little time to waste. "This is one of the cornerstones in our functional literacy programmes; this particular one directed to women, while others are directed to men", Waheeda explains.<sup>24</sup>

## HOME SCHOOLS

BEFARe's *Home Schools Programme*, which has been in operation since 1996, is intended for those boys and girls who for a variety of reasons cannot go to ordinary schools. It should be noted that in the BEFARe home schools there is almost gender parity in participation. Of the almost 43,000 pupils that had completed the home schools programme by the end of 2004, about 19,000 were girls. In the peak year 2002, nearly 5,500 girls completed the home schools.<sup>25</sup>

Other organizations usually run home schools only for girls, such as Save the Children - United States (SC/US), which started a couple of years before BEFARe.<sup>26</sup> SC/US uses the term 'home-based schools', while BEFARe calls them 'home schools'. SC/US runs its home-based schools for girls in the refugee camps in Balochistan, some hours' drive from Quetta city in South-Western Pakistan near the more conservative Southern Afghanistan. Recently, enrolment in SC/US's ordinary schools has been about 15-16,000 pupils, and about 4,000 in the home-based schools. A major reason for organizing home-based schools has been to make sure that girls are allowed to complete the full primary school cycle of 6 years, not being withdrawn when they approach puberty. UNHCR's Evaluation of BEFARe in 2002 shows that the dropout rate for girls was much lower in the home schools than in ordinary schools.<sup>27</sup>

SC/US has also used home-based schools for girls to recruit teachers for the younger girls. The



Experienced Master/Lead Trainers in the NFE Programme at a meeting in the BEFARe Head Office in Peshawar.

best girls would be recruited into middle schools and some few would have an opportunity to continue with complete secondary education either full time or parallel with teaching of younger girls. It is interesting that reports from SC/US's home-based schools in Balochistan show that girls in these schools often do better at exams than boys do, in spite of the fact that boys are having teachers with better education and more contact hours. There are many reasons for this, one is that the class size in a home school is smaller than in an ordinary school; another reason is that the pupils are monitored more closely and the learning environment is more pleasant.<sup>28</sup>

It should also be noted that girls do as well, or better than boys at school in general. All those old men, and sometimes even old women, who are prejudiced against educating girls, should take note of such facts!

There are many reasons for the need for *home schools*: If there is no school at all in an area, or if the school is too far from the children's place of residence, which in particular hinders the girls from attending school, establishing a home school can be the solution. The school would then normally be at the teacher's home, or in another large house or room on the compound.

We should not forget that it is not only girls that need to be protected on the way to school or even at school. We all know that the Islamic culture is particularly concerned about their young girls, especially when they approach puberty. However, boys also need to be protected at that age: the boys should not get into bad company and they should not be exposed to adult habits like smoking cigarettes or using drugs, and so on. Sometimes, there may be fanatics who try to influence the boys. Earlier, there were stories about Afghan boys being persuaded or forced to join various guerilla groups or other antisocial groups. Naturally, any father or mother would protect their children from such incidents. Recently, some pockets of these antisocial groups are said to have resurfaced. Young boys may

sometimes need to be protected from sexual abuse, or kidnapping and taken into forced labour, as servants or helpers for older men, gangs or families.<sup>29</sup>

As educators we would like our children and youth to develop positive attitudes and values. We would like them to grow up in joy and happiness and to learn to live rich and normal lives as youths and adults. Moral education, often connected to moderate religious education, is essential.

Important general knowledge is included in the courses, such as: • peace, conflict resolution and human rights; • environmental protection; • cultural heritage; • health and hygiene; and • Islamic values.

The home schools have a condensed primary school programme, which goes over 30 months (or 3 years), covering the full primary school which would normally take five or six years. The school day is just a few hours. Sometimes, the home schools are bridges to the ordinary formal schools.

In addition to teaching ordinary school subjects, health issues, ethics and moral education, the home schools have a unique contact with the community and the home to which it belongs. Both the parents and children are engaged in education issues, leading both parties to gain higher motivation for education. The school day is organized flexibly depending on convenience of the parents and children. The school day is shorter than an ordinary school day to allow the children to help with housework, looking after younger brothers and sisters, or helping with income-generating activities. In many ways, the 'good practice' of the home schools has led to changes in the ordinary schools.

Home schools can be non-formal or they can be formal schools. If they are intended to be ordinary primary schools, it is essential that the curriculum and exams are the same as in the formal system. Pupils in home schools should not be shortchanged with lesser knowledge and lower certificates than other pupils, if it is the intention to give a full primary education in the home

school. Sometimes, though, the home school is not intended to be a full primary school, but an alternative, which is a "*second-best*" solution. The home school can also be used as a bridge over to ordinary primary, or secondary education, which is particularly important if it doesn't give a complete primary school education, or is a dead end as for further education.

The experiences from the home schools run by BEFARe, SC/US and other refugee education organizations in Pakistan can bring valuable 'good practice' to help shape the future of the education system in Afghanistan.<sup>30</sup>

As we have shown, BEFARe has included *both boys and girls in its home schools*. In its ordinary formal education programme, BEFARe has not been successful in reaching gender parity in pupil population, or gender equality among the teachers, head teachers and managers. However, efforts have been made in recent years to correct some of these shortcomings, to avoid BEFARe being termed mainly as a men's project. Sometimes that is being said, and in some instances, there is some truth to it, but much less now than five or ten years ago. The UNHCR Evaluation Report (2002) has some critical remarks as for the low number of women in leadership positions in BEFARe. However, in a summary statements concerning gender issues/girls' education it says: "Taking the amount of restrictions regarding girls' education into account (...), BEFARe has done a good job."<sup>31</sup>

In June 2005 we visited several non-formal schools, including home schools, in Peshawar and a few hours' drive outside the city. In *Landi Sarak* in Peshawar city we visited a *co-educational home school*. Landi Sarak is a non-camp urban neighbourhood near *Khazana Camp* and the residents are working class Pakistanis and Afghans. The residents live in slightly segregated parts of the neighbourhood but attend the same mosque and share other public facilities.

The home school that we visited had only Afghan pupils, 23 boys and 6 girls from 10 to 12-13 years for the boys, with some of the girls



Home schools for girls and boys in NWFP.

being 13-14 years. Usually there is a majority of girls in co-educational schools, but that was not the case in this school. Since there is a shortage of female teachers many of the teachers are male. In the Landi Sarak home school the teacher was an experienced teacher from a formal BEFARe school. When we visited the formal schools were having their summer holiday so the teacher was free to teach the non-formal class in the morning but would otherwise teach them in the late afternoon. A non-formal teacher is paid one thousand Rupees per month while a teacher in a formal school earns four thousand two hundred. The school day is just a few hours in a non-formal school but still the pay is considered very low.

The children in home schools and other non-formal schools come from poor families. The better off urban refugee children enroll in private Pakistani schools but then they have to pay school fees. Outside school hours the boys in Landi Sarak said that they were helping their parents with some work in the fields and also playing sports. Some few were helping with carpet weaving. We got the impression that there were not enough positive spare-time activities for the boys. Some of the girls mentioned that in addition to helping with housework they listened to the radio and read newspapers. Some of the older girls mentioned that they sometimes would watch TV at a neighbour's house.

The children were all Pashtun mostly coming from Kunar province and areas near Jalalabad in Afghanistan. The parents had come

to Pakistan when the Soviet war started. About ten of the children's fathers had gone home to Afghanistan for work. One of the boys said that his father was a teacher in Afghanistan, but otherwise it was manual work. The children were not optimistic about returning home. Most children had visited Afghanistan, but they mentioned that they had no houses and no fields for agriculture; one pupil mentioned that there were people other than Muslims in Afghanistan now, and that it was dangerous in many places.

The visit to the school and the session of classroom observation and conversation with the pupils and teacher was a positive experience. The teacher activated the pupils, using locally made teaching aids and taking pupils up to the blackboard frequently and asking others questions.



Helping with carpet weaving.

The pupils seemed interested in learning and all of them had textbooks and notebooks. Some of the children expressed interest in continuing their education, and there seemed to be several gifted boys and girls. Some said they wanted to become *teachers* and some mentioned that they would like to become *engineers* and a couple of the girls dreamed about becoming *doctors*. However, social mobility is slow in refugee and returnee communities and the children are likely to remain at the bottom of the social ladder either they stay in Pakistan or they move to

Afghanistan.

The BEFARe staff member who escorted us to the school, *Fakhar Zaman*, Deputy NFE Head, said that he felt proud of being able to help running a school for the needy people in the Landi Sarak. He said BEFARe was able to run the school we visited thanks to assistance from *The World Bank's Post-Conflict Fund*. However, we were told that the funding was coming to an end and that it was uncertain if the school could continue.<sup>32</sup>

We also visited two home schools for girls in *Badaber Camp* about one and half hours' drive from Peshawar towards Kohat in NWFP. Both schools had young female teachers, one only 17 years old and the other one 20 years. One of the teachers had had to drop out of secondary education because the girls' school had been closed in her neighbourhood. She had wanted to become a doctor but now that dream was unlikely to come true, she told us. But as far as we could see she was already a very confident teacher, at the age of 17, teaching biology for 19 girls in Grade 4 when we visited. The teacher in the other school some kilometers away had been taken out of secondary school because her family, notably her father, did not allow her to continue beyond Grade 8.

Both schools were neatly kept, with some adults moving around outside the open classroom to give some cool air in the summer heat, and some young boys who were hanging around during their school's summer holiday and eavesdropping if they could, or helping with carpet weaving next door. Some of the boys seemed to have made a sport out of getting refining their weaving techniques and getting the job done quickly! We don't think this should be termed 'child labour' if it takes place in the family home for a few hours a day. It is similar to helping with housework, collecting water or weeding in the vegetable garden - rather than distracting the girls in their home school. Carpet weaving becomes child labour if it is employment outside the home for long hours and it leads to keeping the children away from school, homework and



normal interaction with family and friends, including time for sports and games. Such child labour is then harmful.

In both home schools we visited, escorted by some of BEFARe's master/lead trainers, it was impressive to see how well organized the schools were and how positive the atmosphere and learning environment was. Based on the visits and other data and discussions we felt that we could safely draw the conclusion that BEFARe's training courses for the teachers and the master/lead trainers must have been very good. The supervision and guidance was seen as another essential component for the success. In an evaluation study of The World Bank Post-Conflict Fund Programme, which we contributed to in June 2005, we concluded that one 'good practice' was BEFARe's excellent monitoring, control and advisory system of the schools.<sup>33</sup>

## FUNDING

As we have explained above it has always been difficult to receive sufficient funds for education

in the refugee camps and even more difficult for urban schools. One problem to the NGO is that donor-funded projects cover certain areas and certain periods but it makes long-term planning difficult for the implementing partner. For example, a donor may provide funds for teacher training courses but not for textbooks, teachers' salaries or other expenses. As we have emphasized above, *non-formal education activities and home schools are usually lowest on the donors' priority lists.*

The reasons for lack of donor-interest may be difficult to understand since the same donors would in words but not always in deeds express their concern for pupils in areas such as Landi Sarak. Donors and specialists agree that education does make a difference for poor people, and it is a long-term investment with positive effects on the families' health, nutrition, women's rights and economic development. Education is particularly important for refugees. Therefore, it is important that organizations like BEFARe keep up their advocacy work, even now when the trend in the donor community is to reduce budgets. In the future, non-camp urban or rural schools, with mixed Pakistani and Afghan populations, would probably stand a better chance of receiving funding.<sup>34</sup>

Vocational, technical and skills training and education is essential for young men and women to become able to make a living in Afghanistan in the future. The non-formal education courses include both practical training, for example bicycle repair, and theoretical training. Basic literacy training, MCH courses and so on are given. Condensed primary school training is also given so that older children who have dropped out of the formal school system, or never had a chance to get enrolled can receive primary education. They only attend school for a few hours per day because these children usually have to attend to *income generating activities* or *housework*. Some of the particularly successful pupils continue in the FE system and may be able to complete secondary school. In several areas the "good practices" from the NFE system has led to changes in



Non-formal skills and literacy training for men and women.

the mainstream schools.

The women at the bottom of the photo seem to discuss important issues: Have they perhaps found new income-generation systems, which take into consideration that most women in Afghanistan will have to work from the home, that they may need micro-finance, that marketing is often a problem, that the banking system is very underdeveloped, and so on? But the Afghans are known for great creativity, which they will certainly need in reconstruction and development of their country in the years ahead. Refugees who return from Pakistan with skills and ideas from BEFARe's NFE training will be a great asset.<sup>35</sup>

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

The current vocational and skills training programme is a small programme in BEFARe. It has benefited well over 3,000 participants, from among the most underprivileged of the refugees, so that they could gain skills for sustainable livelihoods.

Most of the participants have been women, who have attended courses in fields like:

- food preservation; • embroidery; • tailoring;
- beadwork.

Men have attended courses in fields like:

- tailoring; • carpentry; • bicycle repair. The current programme is called *Integrated Vocational Education and Skills Training Programme*. This name is used to underline that it is a broad programme with a many-faceted content.

In earlier years, i.e. from November 1982 to March 1996, and before BEFARe was formed a more ambitious practical education training programme, run by the Pak-German Technical Training Programme (PGTTP), gave training to over 32,000 beneficiaries; about 50% Afghans and 50% Pakistanis. It gave four months practical training and literacy training. Upon completion, the trainees were given a toolkit in order to be able to start work as carpenters, shoemakers,

tinsmiths, etc. About 2/3 of the trainees found work soon after completion of the training, either in self-employment or in jobs.<sup>36</sup>

For the sake of orderliness, it should be mentioned that from 1984 to 1995, the main German assistance to refugees in Pakistan was named Pak-German Basic Education Project, PAK BAS-ED, which then from 1 January 1996 became GTZ-BEFARe, and part of it was moved to Afghanistan and became a registered NGO and known as AG BAS-ED, which still is an active and growing organization. *Some of the changes began gradually from 1990.*

Vocational and technical training, including apprenticeship, is a field in which Germany is known for special competence and experience at home and in other parts of the world. Therefore, it was unfortunate that the larger project was discontinued when BEFARe was created in 1996.



Eng. Hamish Khan, BEST, with a handicapped trainee who went on to become a trainer herself.

However, for a few years, a follow-up project, known as the *Vocational Education and Training (VET)*, was implemented, notably from 1999 to the end of 2000. UNHCR allocated a budget of Rupees 11 million to that project. However, due to UNHCR's budget cuts, vocational training was cut, including almost all the funds for training of handicapped and vulnerable refugees. It should

be said that this was, at least partly in accordance with UNHCR's Education Field Guidelines, which give priority to primary education for children and adolescents. However, the Guidelines also say that priority shall be given to *vulnerable and handicapped*, and UNHCR only partly adhered to its own guidelines.<sup>37</sup>

The UNHCR Education Field Guidelines that were followed were those from 1995; those have since been updated in 2003, but as regards this particular aspect, the 1995 Guidelines did give UNHCR an opportunity to continue its important work of VET, but it chose not to do so. We also know that the UNHCR Representative in Pakistan at that time was keen to seeing the activity continue, but the head of the Programme Section in UNHCR had less understanding of education and other social refugee issues. UNHCR also had very limited professional education expertise in Pakistan.

Furthermore, we would also have to pass on some of our critical remarks to the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which did not take over this activity, or advocate strongly for its continuation, in annual consultation and negotiation meetings with the Government of Pakistan. As far as we can see, it would also have been in Germany's own interest to have given higher priority to one of its "*flagships*" notably vocational and technical training.

We point out these aspects because we believe that vocational, skills and technical training and education are of particular importance to refugees.

**Hamish Khan**, who worked at the GTZ vocational and technical training projects from 1982 to 1996 is full of praise for the work that was done. "We should only have done so much more", he says. "We gave special attention to participation of women, which was not really ahead of its time in general, but was early as regards Afghan women. Furthermore, we emphasized *development of empathy and respect for manual labour*", Hamish says. He says that these attitudi-

nal educational aspects should be part of all basic education activities.<sup>38</sup>

After his important work related to GTZ, Hamish Khan, has managed to establish a new NGO named *Basic Education and Employable Skills Training (BEST)*, with offices in Peshawar, serving the urban and camp refugee communities in the area. BEST has activities in various fields, such as education, logistics, food distribution, and other fields related to refugees.

Engineer Khan was educated in Germany and speaks fluent German. The reputation of his work made BEST the first local NGO, in addition to a few international ones, to be accepted as an implementing partner for UNHCR after "9/11", in January 2002. There was controversy about including local NGOs since it had been a rule that all UNHCR's implementing partners from 1996 should be international organizations..<sup>39</sup>

Skills and vocational training were given greater attention at certain periods earlier in BEFARe's activities. However, such training still forms a part of the NFE programme, and the literacy training is today giving greater emphasis to *functional literacy*. Hence practical issues and content of more immediate utility is given greater emphasis than before, but the duration of the training is often shorter than during the above-described projects.

When we in June 2005 held discussion meetings with NFE master/lead trainers and teachers at BEFARe, we also invited some of the participants who had completed training to find out how they had benefited from the non-formal training they had received.

**Jan Mohammad**, an 18 years old tailoring apprentice, explained that he had completed BEFARe's NFE training programme in literacy training, which included Pashtun, Mathematics and Islamic Studies, and in a vocational field, which in his case was a six months tailoring course. Jan told us that he had made himself the excellent shalvar kamis he was wearing. He explained that he had gained employment as an apprentice with his teacher and was earning

twelve hundred Rupees per month, almost the same as his father who was selling second-hand clothes. Jan hoped to move home to Afghanistan and continue his trade there, but he could not go yet because the family owned no house or land there. His family had lived in exile for over twenty years, and property and land prices had gone up tremendously in most places in Afghanistan, including in Jalalabad where his relatives live, we were told.<sup>40</sup>

## LITERACY TRAINING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Adult Literacy Programme has been the major NFE programme under BEFARe and its predecessor since 1992. More than 70,000 men and women have benefited from the courses. The complete cycle of training courses is 18 months, divided into three six-month courses, which in addition to reading, writing and simple calculations includes other general knowledge, civics education and development of information and skills related to family and community life.

Most of the training courses are separate for men and women partly out of tradition and culture and partly because the life-skills and practical skills will vary for men and women. There is a division of labour between the genders, which is reflected in the training courses. For example, the mother and child health care (MCH) courses are provided only for women participants, while other practical courses are for men alone. The main book (the Reader) that is followed at the third level of literacy training, i.e. during the last six months, is separate for men and women.

Over the years, BEFARe's NFE programme has developed more relevant teaching materials and teaching-learning methods, which are "tailored to measure" the participants. The training of teachers, instructors and community leaders has improved over the years. In the early years, pedagogy and methods related to literacy and adult education were often seen as easier and simpler, needing less training than for the "proper teachers" dealing with formal education.

These attitudes have changed due to deliberate efforts by the NFE programme leaders and teachers. Often, it is more difficult to teach adolescents and adults than children.

BEFARe's NFE teacher training courses have deliberately recruited *religious leaders* in order to make them aware of the detailed content of the courses provided to the teachers and the learners. In the past the *mullahs* and other community members would sometimes complain about certain messages in the courses being un-Islamic. After explaining the content to the various community leaders, and enrolling religious leaders in the course, such complaints would vanish.

When we in June 2005 participated in the evaluation of assistance to BEFARe's NFE programme from The World Bank Post-conflict Fund (2002-2005), we found that to include the better trained religious leaders in further training to become NFE teachers led to greater sustainability of the programmes. Well trained and equipped with the relevant teaching aids, BEFARe learned that a number of the religious teachers are ready to teach other subjects than religion, notably NFE subjects, languages, maths, science, etc. Even girls who are not allowed to attend FE schools due to the age limit when they reach puberty are able to continue their training in classes conducted by the religious leaders. It should be noted that the religious leaders are particularly respected members of their communities. This is an achievement of BEFARe's careful and patient efforts over many years.<sup>41</sup>

As we discussed in general in this chapter, literacy training, civics education, and various other skills and practical topics go together. Along with other activities, the literacy and other NFE training form the basis for the people's communal participation in their local community, the refugee camp or a sub-section of it. If done well, these activities lead to coordinated and planned community development. Religion forms part of community life but religious training is not the only training that should be given to create development and betterment of daily life.

## SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SMCs)

The school management committees (SMCs) have become corner stones in the community development activities. Naturally, most of the members of the SMCs are literate, or semi-literate, but there are also some illiterate members.

The chairperson is always a respected person in the community, and he or she is usually better educated than the others. However, there are cases when the chairperson, too, is illiterate. This is more common for girls' schools, which only have women members on the committee, as there are few literate women among the older refugees.

We have discussed community development with a large number of refugees, teachers, members of SMCs, and other parents and refugee camp residents.<sup>42</sup> It is evident that the work that BEFARe has undertaken over the last more than five years to establish a SMC in every school and camp is a major achievement. UNHCR, as the major donor agency, helped in implementing this work, not only in BEFARe, but in all implementing partners, through allocation of some funds for staff, notably community workers and field assistants. In NWFP, assistance was also received from Swedish Save the Children, which for several years seconded senior community service staff to UNHCR's Peshawar office. *Anne Siri Rustad saw the completion of the major SMC efforts in 2002/3.* Other short-term staff was also seconded from other organizations. The sum of these efforts, which have been given special attention over more recent years, is that BEFARe can now pride itself on having a SMC in every school and camp. Waheeda in the non-formal education programme, and her colleagues in the formal education and community development programmes have given the school management committees and other community development work major attention over the last years and daily life in the camps has changed markedly because of this work.

Naturally, the SMC is important for the run-

ning of the ordinary primary school. However, it is also important for various non-formal education activities. More importantly the SMC is a bridge between the school, the home and the wider community. The committee also has important model functions and training functions for the future development of civil society in the camp and in the home country upon repatriation. The SMC is a forerunner for establishment of and participation in various organizations and interest groups in the home country when that time comes.<sup>43</sup>

In our interview with *Gullakhtha Palvasha*, SMC Chair, some of the specific tasks related to the school management committees have been taken up, and in particular the SMC she chairs. It should be noted that although Gullakhtha has not herself learned how to read and write, all her children have gone to school. Her arguments for education and the tasks of the SMC are quite similar to those of educated women and men, such as the medical doctor, who is chairman of the SMC at the boys' school next door. In both those cases, it is evident that the schools have excellent head teachers and good teaching staff, who have attended various courses organized by BEFARe.<sup>44</sup>

The establishment of a system of SMCs is an example of the outcome of good cooperation, over time, among different partners, including BEFARe's. Such achievements cannot be appreciated unless a historical perspective is applied because spot checks cannot illuminate changes. We would like to give UNHCR credit for having insisted on every school having a SMC, or PTA (parents-teachers association) as it is called in SC/US schools.

Such committees lead to people discussing issues, and leads to change in attitudes, and less orthodox opinions. One example of this may only partly be due to the work of the SMC. We discussed the single-sex schools with one of the younger Afghan teachers. To our surprise, he was quite open-minded about the future in that field. He said he did not really see it being a big deal that education was not sex segregated. *"In the*

*schools near Peshawar, I think that parents and teachers can accept coeducation, at least for the lower grades of primary school, and in many situations in adult education, too, and also when holding community meetings.*"<sup>45</sup>

Again we would like to commend the deliberate step-by-step work implemented over one and a half decade by Waheeda and her colleagues in BEFARe's NFE programme and its other departments, especially Azad Khan Khattak in CP&D. We would also like to draw attention to the *Afghan refugees themselves*. Often we fail to acknowledge that change can only take place if those who are affected by the change, accept and internalize it, probably little by little. For example, the co-educational classes, which we mentioned above, would only be accepted very slowly and carefully.

Margaret Sinclair has studied *social change in refugee contexts*, including in our context in Pakistan. In her book "Learning to live together" she focuses on values and attitudes and not only knowledge objectives. In other words, the outcome and impact of education shall be immediate and also long-term; it shall improve the everyday environment in the camps and help lead to peaceful living in the future. Education and its related activities in the community shall contribute to preserving the past as well as creating learners whose minds are open to change and alternatives.<sup>46</sup>

## TEACHER TRAINING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION

We have in various sections in this Chapter taken up aspects related to teacher training and curriculum, or content, in adult education. However, since we will discuss issues related to teacher training and professional development in refugee education in a separate chapter in this book we will only draw attention to the importance of teachers as related to non-formal education here.

We have to mention again that BEFARe, as well as other refugee education organizations, has over the years given *less attention to training teachers for NFE than for FE*. This has been mainly because donors have provided less fund-



ing for this sector as compared to the much larger formal education sector, which has also generally been seen as more important. However, over recent years, BEFARe has regularly organized general training courses and refresher courses for its different groups of NFE teachers, notably master/lead trainers, field education supervisors and, probably the most important ones, the classroom teachers. Over the years, since BEFARe started training courses for NFE, it has provided courses of some sort (from one to several weeks' duration) for over 1,000 male teachers and well over 400 female teachers. Some teachers/instructors have attended several courses. Over the years, a number of the teachers have left their jobs for various reasons. Some have also returned home to Afghanistan.

Waheeda Farouk draws particular attention to two important activities.<sup>47</sup>

She mentions the importance of the *Mobile Libraries*, which are collections of books and teaching materials, made available to teachers during training courses. As the name suggests, these libraries are moved around, new materials added and changed, as the courses are held in

various locations, on changing topics and for new groups of participants. Sometimes the teachers will provide materials they have made themselves, which can then be studied by other teachers and give ideas for how to make materials or examples.

The other activity that Waheeda draws attention to is the *three-year long teacher training project* (2002-2005) made possible through assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The project, which is known as *Afghan Refugee Education Project* (CIDA-AREP) provides up-grading for teachers in the formal and non-formal education programme, and gives special attention to gender issues and the long-term effects of assistance, i.e. the project aims at assisting repatriation of teachers and their future work in Afghanistan. The project includes two other implementing organizations, notably the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Ockenden International (OI). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is also included as one of the partners in order to provide professional coordination and advice.<sup>48</sup> "However, we must not forget the assistance we received a few years ago from The World Bank, under its Post-Conflict Fund, which made crucial impact in up-grading of our teachers", Waheeda says.<sup>49</sup>

## BETWEEN NON-FORMAL, FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

Illiterate woman plays key role in local community as leader of the School Management Committee (SMC)

This interview pays tribute to the excellent community work done by an *illiterate woman*, **Gullakhta Palvasha**, an Afghan refugee in Pakistan. Her life story shows that bookish education is not always needed to do a good job, even in the education sector in a community with a mixture of people with and without formal schooling. Yet, we should not forget that literacy

and basic education remain cornerstones in upbringing and socialization of our children. Gullakhta knows that as she has ascertained that all her children have gone to school.

Gullakhta Palvasha lives in Kacha Garhi Refugee Camp outside Peshawar. She is the Chairwoman of the School Management Committee (SCM) in one of the best schools run by BEFARe. She says that this year, she has heard that BEFARe is struggling with its funding since UNHCR has reduced budgets and they expect more refugees to return home to Afghanistan.

Gullakhta is the mother of seven children, four girls and three boys. All of them have gone to school, including the eldest daughter of 30, who is now married. One boy is currently in grade 12 and will sit for his secondary school examination soon.

"I take great pride in seeing all my children educated, although most of them could only do primary school. We are poor people; my husband works in a little shop and I am a helper at a clinic", Gullakhta says.

"In the SMC we are five women in BEFARe's School No. 099 in Kacha Garhi. I am the oldest member, now 45, which is an advantage and it was probably a main reason I was elected as Chairwoman. You need some experience in your own family, life and community to take on a task like this", she says. "One of the most important tasks is to encourage parents to send their children to school. In the first place it is important that the parents enroll their children in school and, secondly, they must make sure that the children attend school every day, and they must let the girls and boys complete all the six years of the primary school in the camp. We also hope that some can find places in secondary schools. It is wrong to take out a girl when she is ten or eleven years and marry her off, or promise her to somebody. It is also wrong to take the boys out of school and send them to earn money in town. *Childhood and early adolescence are times for learning*. I have to remind the parents that it is as important for their daughters as for their sons."

"When you talk to parents about these

issues, as I do as Chairwoman of the SMC, I have to visit their homes and take time to talk to them in confidence. You need to explain why education is important, and you need to be both firm and strict otherwise many parents may not listen, although people are getting a better understanding of the need for education in today's world. Often education is the only way out of poverty for a refugee", Gullakhta says smiling, yet with some seriousness and authority about her.

"I also tell parents that I made sure that all my children went to school. People listen to what you say, but even more important is that they see that you live as you preach. So I keep telling them about my own children, even if they have already heard about them before. I think it helps them, because they will then think that if she could educate all her children, then they can do it as well - being equally poor."

"I would also like to emphasize that in order for parents to send their children to school, it is important that the quality of the school is good, and that parents soon find out or hear what people say. We are lucky in our school to have *Balgis Rangg* as our Head Teacher, and we have a good team of teachers. BEFARe has given them extra training courses and advice. Thus, the parents know that the children are taught the right things. That includes Islamic studies, moral issues, reading, writing, arithmetic and all the other subjects."

"It is also the SMC's task to make sure that the school compound is kept clean, with latrines, proper sewage and clean water for the pupils to wash their hands and maintain general cleanliness in the school. It is essential that repair works be done whenever needed, which means that we have to collect some money from the parents, usually five Rupees per child per month. Some parents with several children cannot afford to pay even such a small amount. This gives an indication of how poor people are, and how little they have for their daily requirements, like food, medicines and so on. Sometimes, I am surprised that they do send their children to school

at all, that they do actually find some money to pay the SMC contribution, pay for school uniforms and other school related expenses."<sup>50</sup>

We ask Gullakhta why she is still illiterate. "There is no literacy class in the area where I live", she explains, and she says that she doesn't have much time to think about her own education. "It is almost 25 years since my husband and I, with two small children came to Pakistan as refugees. We have had to struggle hard to make ends meet, get food on the table and educate our children. In our home the children have always come first."

But couldn't any of your children help her to learn to read and write, even now, we wonder. She says that she would like her daughter of 15 to help her, not any of her sons.

As thanks for our discussion, we feel we ought to offer Gullakhta a little gift, but we were not prepared for that, so the only suitable thing we have with us is a textile document folder with embroideries, which was made by a refugee women's group run by an NGO called Ockenden International. We jokingly say that the folder is for her literacy papers and books, and that she should talk to Waheeda in BEFARe's NFE programme to get some help, maybe a literacy class in her camp. We promise to come back after a year's time when we expect Gullakhta to be literate!

Driving back to Peshawar, we reflect about



BEFARe Teachers, Head Teachers, Managers and Supervisors at a Training Course in Peshawar. Spring 2005.



Gullakhta's situation and achievements. BEFARe's Senior Manager for the formal education programme, who has accompanied us, *Mujadidi Aga Shah*, says that there are many such excellent women and men in the refugee communities, and among ordinary Pakistanis.

"Many poor people make the best out of their lives with little. They struggle and work hard and with luck and the grace of Allah they can achieve amazing things even to the envy of better off and better educated refugees. They may be uneducated, but they can still be wise and knowledgeable", Mujadidi underlines.

"Naturally, education helps in making people aware of things. They get rid of misunderstandings and ignorance, old-fashioned ways and extreme ideas. It gives people a feeling of freedom and being at the same level with others, empowerment, we call it nowadays. Literacy is indeed basic in our modern times. But literacy must always go together with general knowledge and also skills training. It must be functional literacy training. That goes for children as well as adults."

Mujadidi says that Gullakhta is a unique woman. "Unfortunately she never had the opportunity to learn to read and write, or take other training, but because she is intelligent and has learned through experience and hard work in informal ways, she is ahead of many others. The refugee life, with all its difficulties and hardship, also makes people see and learn things they would never have learned if they had stayed in the home village all their lives."

"Under other circumstances, Gullakhta might well have become a teacher or head teacher herself. But when she grew up in Afghanistan, very few girls in the rural areas would go to school, if there were a school at all, even for boys. She and her husband have managed to make the best out of their lives as refugees. They have educated their seven children. I am proud to call Gullakhta my sister, and her husband my brother", Mujadidi says. "Their children and grandchildren will have to realize

the dreams that Gullakhta and her husband could not realize for themselves. But I still think they are being rewarded, by their children and the community, who show a lot of quiet respect for people like them."

"When you meet people like Gullakhta, it gives you an opportunity to reflect about *formal education*, *schooling in the modern way*, about *non-formal education* in classes and courses, and about the *life-long learning* in informal ways, which we all take part in. Sometimes I wonder if we put too much emphasis on the importance of Western schooling for people who live in rural settings like 80% of the Afghans do. Perhaps if we could give them basic literacy and general knowledge, they could organize local meetings and educational sessions, and a lot of the teaching-learning they would do in even more informal and 'invisible' every-day ways. Well, as a teacher, I should perhaps not think like this", Mujadidi says, "but I must admit I from time to time do question modernity. Yet, we cannot turn the clock back either. Even Afghans in the mountainous villages will have to get used to modern schooling - and it is mostly good and to their advantage."<sup>51</sup> (See also the FE Chapter.)

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The cumulative data presented show that BEFARe's non-formal education activities have grown in magnitude over the years. (Until the critical budgetary situation at the end of 2005). The qualitative development is probably even more significant. The history of the NFE activities shows that the deliberate and patient work of the BEFARe staff in NFE and CP&D has born fruits. NFE and CP&D have become separate departments within BEFARe with recognized results and importance.

It should be noted that NFE is always an important element of refugee and other emergency education. BEFARe's work has also taken cognizance of that in the long-term (chronic) crisis it has been involved in for so long. Currently,

at the time of the on-going large repatriation of refugees and rebuilding of Afghanistan non-formal education again plays a significant role on both sides of the border. In Pakistan, its importance in urban and rural refugee hosting areas will grow in the years to come. After the earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October 2005 a number of NGOs provide non - formal education as an immediate response to the affected children and adults.

Sometimes NFE is seen as an education activity mainly for women. It is true that some aspects concern women, such as mother and child health care. However, NFE is not a women's activity. It also includes adolescent and adult men. Functional literacy courses are tailored to measure the needs of the various groups of learners.

BEFARe has in its work shown the importance of including the local refugee communities in its work. Religious leaders have also been invited to participate in training courses for teachers so that they can know the content/curricula used and so that they can include secular content or separate courses in their work. However, it should be appreciated that mullahs should mainly teach religion and moral education but it is important that they give support to secular education in non-formal and formal programmes. The importance of expanded cooperation is essential.

A major part of the NFE activities is literacy training, with related civics and life-skill training. BEFARe has developed materials and trained teachers based on its experience over the years. Functional literacy has clearly become the pedagogical foundation of all NFE activities.

Vocational and skills training were earlier sometimes organized as separate projects or sub-projects, not merely as components of other activities. Due to limited funding the special courses have become less common. However, BEFARe still has several such shorter courses (in modules), which are often connected to literacy and other basic non-formal education.

Donors and educators everywhere praise the work done in non-formal education. Nevertheless, and in spite of the unit cost being low, the funding is often limited to such training for adolescents and adults, and even for older children who need condensed 'second chance' primary education.

It is recommended that BEFARe's NFE work be subject to *research and more in-depth study* so that further improvements can be made and so that other refugee education organizations can draw lessons from their achievements. Furthermore, it is also hoped that the formal education system can learn from non-formal education activities to benefit emergency and regular education programmes in developing countries.<sup>52</sup>



Notwithstanding the need for increased importance being placed on girls' education more attention is needed to improve boys' education especially related to relevant curriculum for older boys. Further work is needed regarding co-education.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks for providing information and data for this chapter go to Waheeda Farouk, Head of the Non-formal Education Department in BEFARe. We are also grateful for the practical help she provided so that we could visit schools and non-formal education centers and interview teachers and participants. Although Waheeda Farouk's name appears many times in the text, we have had full independence to make our own judgments and evaluation of the various aspects of the NFE activities in BEFARe, which we still consider no less than impressive. Hence the Head and staff of such work deserve credit. Waheeda herself moved to NFE some years ago. The responsibility for strengths and shortcomings of the chapter rests with the author of the book.

<sup>2</sup> (a) See the Notes to Chapter 2, "Historical Background". (b) See other publications in social and human sciences, particularly in cultural anthropology. (c) An important introductory book is, Reardon, Betty A.: *Tolerance – the threshold of peace*. The Teacher's Library, Primary-school Resource Unit, UNESCO, Paris, 1997. (d) See UNHCR's main periodic magazine, *Refugees*, Vol. 1, No. 126, 2002. Theme: "Women: Seeking a Better Deal." UNHCR, Geneva, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> (a) *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*. Adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948. (a) A wealth of relevant literature on gender issues and other aspects of basic and social, human and economic rights have been published over recent decades. (i) Since we believe in comparative studies we will make reference to an anthology about African efforts in achieving greater gender equity: *Changing Times. Changing Attitudes. Alternative Portrayals of men and women. Sample products of the DANIDA-UNESCO workshops for the production of gender sensitive radio programmes – For use in non-formal education programmes*. UNESCO, Paris, 2001. (ii) A basic booklet prepared by UNESCO as part of its efforts as the lead monitor of implementation of EFA: *Gender Equality in Basic Education*. UNESCO, Paris, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> See UNHCR's period (annual) booklet, *Refugees by Numbers*, and for update of global, regional and country figures the agency's main periodic magazine, *Refugees*. UNHCR, Geneva.

<sup>5</sup> See Ekanayake, S.B.: *Afghan Tragedy. Education in the Doldrums*. Al-Noor Publishers & Printers, Islamabad,

2000 and 2004.

<sup>6</sup> (a) See annual reports, seminar reports and other documents from the major NGOs in refugee education in Pakistan, such as Save the Children (US), Ockenden International (UK), GTZ-BEFARe, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and others. (b) See also UNHCR's booklets: *Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan 2003, 2004 and 2005*. UNHCR, Islamabad. (c) *Searching for Solutions. 25 Years of UNHCR-Pakistan cooperation on Afghan Refugees*. UNHCR, Islamabad, June 2005.

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR: *Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva, February, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Fischer, Tove and Fran Qureshi: *Pakistan Education Project. Ashgaro Refugee Camp in Kurram Agency – NWFP. Final Report*. (October 2001 - September 2004.) Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Peshawar, December 2004.

<sup>9</sup> See the above-mentioned UNHCR *Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva, February, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> See (a) Ekanayake, S.B.: *Mega Trends and Challenges in Refugee Education*. GTZ-BEFARe, Peshawar, March 2003. (b) Sinclair, Margaret: *Planning education in and after emergencies*. International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), UNESCO, 2002. (c) Sinclair, Margaret: *Learning to Live Together: Building skills and values for the twenty-first century*. International Bureau of Education (IBE), UNESCO, Geneva, 2004. (d) IRC: Various studies on psychosocial issues. International Rescue Committee (IRC), Peshawar, 2001-2004.

<sup>11</sup> Abuse issues have been taken up in a number of reports and investigations in recent years. Since UNHCR staff members have been identified as abusers in some sexual abuse cases of women and children, the agency has given special emphasis to these serious issues, which are always harmful to the victims. Abuse cases are damaging to the agency concerned and studied carefully by United Nations Headquarters, especially in cases where staff members may have been involved. For a summary of some relevant abuse aspects, see (a) UNHCR's main periodic magazine, *Refugees*, Vol. 1, No. 126, 2002. Theme: "Women Seeking a Better Deal", p. 7. UNHCR, Geneva, 2002. (b) For the situation among Afghan refugees in Pakistan, reference is made to, *Refugees*, Vol. 2, No. 132, 2003, where the following article by Jack Redden (including interview with the Head of UNHCR's sub-office in Peshawar, Masti Notz) takes up related issues: "Kerosene shortages, property disputes, rape,

lost children. It's all in a days work for a UNHCR protection officer in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province." UNHCR, Geneva, 2002. (c) For detailed information, the specialized NGOs and UNHCR's implementing partners, SHARP and SAVERA, Islamabad, should be contacted. Save the Children Alliance, ICRC, UNICEF and others also work in these fields. (d) The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, New York, undertook a study related to Afghan refugees in Pakistan in 2002 and monitors developments globally.

<sup>12</sup> (a) ARC: Various materials under the project *Action for the Rights of the Child (ARC)*. UNHCR, Geneva, 2000 – 2003. (b) Machel, G.: *The Impact of armed conflict on children*. United Nations, New York, 1996. (c) Machel, G.: *The impact of war on children: a review of progress since the 1996 UN report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. Hurst, London, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> In its schools in Kurram Agency, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) took up the issue of corporal punishment from it started its project in 2002. It practiced a no-tolerance policy in this field, i.e. if a teacher was using any form of corporal punishment he or she would be fired. Other NGOs have similar policies but since the organizations are larger it may not always be possible to discover them and take appropriate action.

<sup>14</sup> UNDP: *Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2004*. UNDP, Kabul, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Ekanayake, S.B.: See, for example, *Mega Trends and Challenges in Refugee Education. Guide Book for Trainers*. GTZ-BEFARe, Peshawar, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Sinclair, Margaret: *Learning to live together*. International Bureau of Education (IBE), UNESCO, Geneva, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Sinclair, Margaret: *Op.cit.*, Introduction.

<sup>18</sup> (a) Data concerning Tanzania's functional literacy campaigns in the 1970s can be obtained from the main donors to the campaigns, notably Swedish International Development Authority (Sida) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The author of this book has published reports and books which are available at the library/information center of the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation (Norad), Oslo, and the library of the University of Oslo. The library of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden, is also recommended, and the *Africana Section*, Maktaba, University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. (b) Data concerning the current refugee situations of Afghans (in the main host-countries Pakistan and Iran) and South Sudanese (in the main host-countries of Kenya and Uganda) can be obtained from the UNHCR offices in those countries. In Nairobi, Kenya, UNHCR has a regional service center with a "Sudan hub". (c) Furthermore, attention should be drawn to comparative education (and other comparative studies) as academic disciplines. It is important that the basic theories and methods of comparative education are understood before researchers go on to undertaking comparative studies in sub-disciplines like refugee education. In Germany 'Auslandspedagogik' has

long traditions; other industrialized countries have also given attention to systematic studies of 'cultural borrowing' and comparative education for very long. Usually, the comparative studies take place between advanced countries. The borrowing takes place between presumably more developed to presumably less developed countries. Hence the field of comparative and international education is not least essential in developing countries, although not always given enough attention. The field has a renewed importance in our time when *globalization* is high on the international agenda.

<sup>19</sup> UNDP: *Afghanistan National Human Development Report 2004*. UNDP, Kabul 2004.

<sup>20</sup> For access to Mwalimu Nyerere's numerous books, speeches and articles, including the 'South Commission', we recommend that the following libraries be contacted: *Africana Section*, Maktaba, University of Dar-es-Salaam; Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden.

<sup>21</sup> Interviews with Waheeda Farouk, BEFARe, Peshawar, 21.12.04 and 14.05.05

<sup>22</sup> See reference 21.

<sup>23</sup> See various references to this chapter concerning the situation of women in Afghanistan, such as the 2004 UNDP Report for Afghanistan and other literature concerning gender equality.

<sup>24</sup> See reference 21.

<sup>25</sup> GTZ-BEFARe: *Annual Report 2002*. GTZ-BEFARe, Peshawar, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> (a) UNHCR: *Education Mission Report to Pakistan 1996*. UNHCR, Geneva, 1996, p. 10. (b) For detailed information about SC/US's refugee education work in Balochistan, especially as regard girls' education, home schools for girls, training of female teachers, middle and secondary education for girls (and boys), curriculum development (incl. basic competencies of learning), etc., reference is made to various reports available from SC/US's offices in Quetta and Islamabad. Special reference is made to: (i) Bhimani, Mobina: *Primary Education Program Impact Evaluation*. SC/US, Quetta, 1998. (ii) Rugh, Andrea B.: *Home-Based Girls' Schools in Balochistan Refugee Villages. A Strategy Study*. SC/US, Quetta, July 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Johannessen, Eva, S.B. Ekanayake and Udo Bude: *Evaluation of GTZ/Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe) in Pakistan. Final Version*. UNHCR, Geneva, 2002, p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> This has been documented in various reports from SC/US, Quetta.

<sup>29</sup> (a) Johannessen, Eva et al: *Op.cit.*, Section 5.5. (b) Coleridge, Angela: *Our Future and our Rights. A book for Afghan children and young people*. Save the Children Sweden, Peshawar, 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Ekanayake has taken up this area in several of his papers and books, including in materials concerning teacher training. See, for example, *Mega Trends and Challenges in Refugee Education. Guide Book for Trainers*. GTZ-BEFARe, Peshawar, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Johannessen, Eva et al: *Op.cit.*, p. 26. See also p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> School visit to Landi Sarak urban (non-camp) school, Peshawar, 09.06.05.

<sup>33</sup> School visits to two schools outside Peshawar, 08.06.05. Interview-meeting with master/lead trainers at BEFARe, Peshawar, 10.06.05.

<sup>34</sup> Host countries may reduce services to refugees as a *push factor* to encourage them to return home. In our context, this was the case after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and in the mid-90s, when Pakistan hoped that refugees could continue returning to Afghanistan. The donors' interest for keeping up the assistance level also diminished. Currently, Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as the donors hope that the refugees will continue returning home. Whether it is a vice policy to use reduction in funding of sectors like education before the refugees leave is questionable. From a professional point of view it has been argued that funding should be increased substantially for a few years to general education, vocational, technical and skills training in the host country for the refugees and in the home country when the returnees arrive there. The argument is that refugees must be made able to return home and education is essential in that connection. They must also be helped into employment at home, possibly subsidized employment for some time. The counterargument to this professional argument is that if education is provided in the host country the refugees are not going to return. We believe it is the professional (educational) argument that is correct, not the latter (the political one). We believe that education, skills training and "bridging assistance" are essential factors to encourage return. Hence accelerating return and reintegration at home, not the opposite as seems to be feared by politicians/governments. Recent research proves the professional argument. Actually, education is a tool to accelerate sustainable repatriation.

<sup>35</sup> Ekanayake, S.B. and Atle Hetland: *Op.cit.*, p. 40 and 69-75.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Hamish Khan, BEST, Peshawar, 21.12.04.

<sup>37</sup> UNHCR: *Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva, February 2003. See Policy Statement 1: Education for All, Item 1.4, which includes special education and education for vulnerable groups.

<sup>38</sup> As Note 36.

<sup>39</sup> Following the 9/11 world events and the following invasion of Afghanistan in late October 2001, UNHCR invited to a number of meetings with NGOs and partners in Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta, which included discussions about inviting additional implementing partners to participate in education activities. Since 1996 only international implementing partners had received funds from UNHCR, with some minor exceptions, notably in special education and skills training. Naturally, there were many and difficult discussions about why new implementing partners would be needed, and if so, what criteria one should use for selection. One difficult issue was whether additional

partners should be local and/or international. In principal, there was interest for including local organizations, but then came the issue of funding since international organizations usually add own funds on top of what donors like UNHCR allocate. We believe that the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) was included as a new implementing partner in education because of its anticipated access to funds from the Government of Norway, and the organization's own sources, and possibly for other political/strategic reasons. It should be added that we are in no way questioning NRC's professionalism. Yet, we do not know if the selection of new partners was done on a level playing field. At the same time, NRC and BEST, the two major new partners, have proven to perform very well, as far as we are informed.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Jan Mohammad, BEFARe, Peshawar, 10.06.05.

<sup>41</sup> Ekanayake, S.B. and Atle Hetland: *Provision of Teacher Training for Afghan Refugees in Non-formal Education, including vocational and skills training, and middle and secondary education, in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), Pakistan, January 2002 – June 2005*. The World Bank Post-Conflict Fund assistance to GTZ-BEFARe. *Evaluation Report*. Peshawar, June 2005, p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> During 2000 – 2005, the author of this book has undertaken numerous visits to refugee camps/villages, urban refugee schools, refugee coordinating bodies, and various organizations dealing with refugees in Pakistan as a consultant to UNHCR, UNESCO and other organizations. In the 1990s, we gained experience from visits to camps, non-camp rural settlements and urban settlements in Tanzania and Kenya. We also carried out various coordination, advocacy and planning work related to refugee issues, with emphasis on education, in bilateral, multilateral, NGO, and local government contexts.

<sup>43</sup> (a) For some further discussion of aspects related to community participation, see, Johannessen et al: *Op.cit.*, p. 69 ff. (b) See also other chapters in this book where further issues related to the particularly important field of community development are discussed. Reference is also made to *Internal Working Notes* entitled "BEFARe Community Participation and Development", prepared by Azad Khan Khattak, BEFARe, Peshawar, 15.07.05

<sup>44</sup> Interviews with Gullakhta Palvasha and Mujadidi Shah in Kacha Garhi Refugee Camp, Peshawar, 15.10.04. (A different version of the article has been used as a newspaper article entitled "A woman who leads from the front" published in the "Education Expo 2005 supplement" to *The Dawn*, Islamabad, 26.02.05.)

<sup>45</sup> Interview with BEFARe refugee teacher in Peshawar, 20.12.04.

<sup>46</sup> See, (a) Sinclair, Margaret: *Learning to Live Together*. International Bureau of Education (IBE), UNESCO, Geneva, 2004. (b) Ekanayake, S.B.: *Operational Parameters of Education for Refugees in Emergencies* (working title), Peshawar/Islamabad, Forthcoming.

<sup>47</sup> *Internal Working Notes* by Waheeda Farouk, "Brief History and Achievements of Non-Formal Education

Department in BEFARe”, Peshawar, September 2004. Related interviews and discussions in September and December 2004, and in April and June 2005.

<sup>48</sup> See CIDA-AREP reports available from the participating organizations and the CIDA-AREP Project Monitoring Unit, c/o IRC, Peshawar, and CIDA-PSU, Islamabad.

<sup>49</sup> See, Ekanayake, S.B. and Atle Hetland: *Op.cit.* See in particular Ch. 4 and 5 on good practices and project impact.

<sup>50</sup> Ekanayake, S.B. and Atle Hetland: *Working Notes for the current book*, where it is shown that in 2002, the SMCs in BEFARe schools collected PKR 3.4 million. The committees used these funds to improve the standard of the school environments and the education quality for thousands of girls and boys, adults in literacy classes, MCH centers and

other non-formal education activities. Peshawar/Islamabad, 10.11.04.

<sup>51</sup> Interviews with Gullakhta Palvasha and Mujadidi Shah, Kacha Garhi Refugee Camp, Peshawar, 15.10.04.

<sup>52</sup> (a) Reference is made to UNESCO main policy and background document on emergency education prepared in connection with the EFA meeting in Dakar, Senegal. *Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis: Challenges for the New Century*. UNESCO, Paris, 2001. (b) Reference is also made to INEE’s publication entitled *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction*. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), c/o UNESCO, Paris, 2004. (c) It should be noted that BEFARe is a member of the international INEE expert group on further development of minimum standards in emergency education.





## Teachers, Teacher Training and Professional Development in BEFARe

Chapter

# 7





## Teachers, Teacher Training and Professional Development in BEFARe

*This chapter summarizes issues related to the work and thoughts of teachers in general and in particular in refugee education. We discuss teacher training, training of trainers (ToT) and professional development issues. BEFARe's extensive work with development and production of teaching materials is examined. As a leading organization in refugee education in Pakistan BEFARe's special role and responsibility in coordination and cooperation with other organizations is also reviewed.*

*When discussing professional development issues, some critical aspects are raised regarding why the results in refugee education and in teacher training were not even better than they actually were. This is not withstanding the good work that was done but it is trying to draw lessons for the future and for current refugee situations elsewhere. It may be fair to ask more critical questions of BEFARe than other implementing partners. Perhaps we have a right to expect particularly high professional standards from BEFARe, the world's largest refugee education project/organization, with sizeable resources from donors?*

*We draw attention to the asset that BEFARe represents for future work for refugees/returnees and additional target groups in Pakistan due to its breadth of experience and high level of competence. In this chapter we focus on BEFARe's foundation being built on its professional expertise in teacher training, implementation of educational programmes for children and adults, and the related administrative and organization expertise. Building on the past and exploring new avenues through systematic R&D work, we believe that BEFARe has the potential to attract funding and play a major role in education and other development fields in the years to come.*

*In order to give the reader a feeling of closeness to the issues discussed and "get to know" some of the actors, we present several interviews with teachers who have been trained in BEFARe's schools and have become teachers in the organization. We also cite older experts working as teachers, head teachers and trainers of trainers.<sup>1</sup>*

## Refugee Teachers - Background

1. Education for refugees and ordinary situations is to a great extent similar, especially when the refugee situation no longer is a short-term emergency situation but becomes a medium or long-term/permanent situation, where many pupils attend all their school years in refugee schools. In case of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, including those living in the refugee camps/villages in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), this is the case for the majority. This means that most of the pupils in the BEFARe schools know no other schools. A number of the teachers have also lived in Pakistan all their lives and do not know first-hand any other life than that of being refugees.

2. Although there are many similarities in a medium and long-term refugee situation to an ordinary life, there are also major differences; psychologically, economically, socially, etc. To be a refugee pupil and a refugee teacher has many different aspects from being a pupil or teacher in an ordinary situation. The refugee situation is much more demanding for pupils and teachers.

3. We emphasize both similarities and differences in the introduction to the chapter about refugee teachers. We also discuss it elsewhere in the chapter, especially as related to psychosocial issues. It should be born in mind that refugee pupils and their families may have psychological scars and experience trauma that can hardly heal. The majority of the refugee teachers share the same backgrounds as those of the pupils and their families.

4. Up to forty percent of the teachers can be Pakistanis as per

agreements between Pakistan and Afghanistan, in understanding with the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR in order to teach subjects where it is (or was) difficult to find Afghan teachers. The percentage has in recent years been lower in BEFARe's schools, about thirty percent. Since contact with and some degree of integration with the host-country is seen as important in any refugee situation, it is always important that a certain percentage of the teachers come from the host country.

5. As per universally accepted rules, specified in UNHCR's Field Guidelines (Geneva, 2003), the primary school curriculum and the medium of instruction shall as a rule follow that of the refugees' home country. Some adjustments are always good, especially when the refugee situation is long-term. For example, it should be realized that in Pakistan, Urdu language and some cultural knowledge is important to any person who lives in the country for a long time.

6. In NWFP, the majority of the refugees are Pashtuns, thus they come from similar ethnic backgrounds and speak the same language as the majority of the people in NWFP and Peshawar. There are some refugees whose mother tongue is Dari (Persian), Afghanistan's second largest language, and some others who come from minority ethnic and language groups.

7. Teachers in refugee situations have to take all the above psychological, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and other aspects into consideration in order to be good teachers. Henceforth, we pose the question: Refugee teacher, and impossible task?

8. Refugee teachers need better education, teaching materials and equipment than what ordinary teachers need. In emergency situations, which in theory are supposed to be short-term, the circumstances are different. Refugee teachers have to do with less than ordinary teachers. Even good schools like those run by BEFARe have lower per pupil unit cost than what is advisable. Will the situation change in future? That is our hope, simply that it will become unacceptable to give less to those who have lost everything and need more than those who live in ordinary, peaceful and well-organized situations.

9. We have given limited attention to school buildings in this book. Nevertheless, good classrooms and other facilities are considered important to ascertain a good teaching-learning environment benefiting teachers and pupils. BEFARe emphasizes this and includes libraries and other facilities in the list of facilities; BEFARe's six sub-centers are therefore also resource centers.

10. The responsibility for erecting school buildings falls outside BEFARe's direct responsibility, which rests mainly with the community (once the initial 'tent-school phase' is over). The school management committees (SMCs), supported by the parents and teachers, have a major role in maintenance issues and improving physical infrastructure, such as building additional classrooms, leveling the playgrounds, building latrines for girls, etc.

## Who become Refugee Teachers?

1. Eight out of ten refugee teachers come to the job by coincidence. They have no previous teacher training and they had no plans to become teachers until they are thrown into exile as refugees. However, refugee teachers usually have secondary education, not always completed due to war and other circumstances.

2. Very few refugee teachers have completed teacher training college or university degrees in education. Some have technical/college or higher education in other subjects than education. Refugees with teacher training and teaching experience are great resources for refugee communities and will usually be employed as head teachers, managers and trainers.

3. In the Afghan refugee communities, female teachers on average have shorter schooling than their male counterparts but they are often as good or even better in their work than their male colleagues as measured by their pupils' performance (exam results). Female teachers are often particularly academically gifted

young women who are barred from continuing their education for traditional cultural reasons.

4. In order to cater for girls who for traditional cultural reasons, or for example because the school is too far away, BEFARe runs home schools for girls.

5. Unlike other organizations, BEFARe also runs home schools for boys who may have dropped out of ordinary schools or for other reasons can only attend home schools, usually because the school day in the home school is only about half that of a regular school day, which gives the pupils time to earn money the rest of the day.

6. Sometimes, BEFARe's home schools are for boys and girls, and the teacher can be a man or a woman. Also other organizations run such schools for girls only, with female teachers. The relatively small classes and closely monitored learning environment are reasons for good performance in home schools.

7. About ¼ - 1/3 of the teachers in BEFARe's schools are women. Relatively few of the managers have been women but due to deliberate efforts these have led to clear increase in recent years. There are more women in the non-formal education programme than in the formal education programme.

8. Refugee teachers are paid an incentive but not a full salary. This distinction is important to the main donor, UNHCR, as it underlines that the responsibility for education in the camps/villages rests with the community. Currently, the monthly incentive is Rs. 4,200 for a teacher and Rs. 4,500 for a head teacher. A teacher/instructor in the non-formal education programme is paid Rs. 1,000 per month. Provided that the parents can afford it, they are expected to top up the teachers' salaries. In addition, they are expected to establish a School Management Committee (SMC) and pay contributions to maintenance, etc.

## Partners in Development

In addition to the teachers and head teacher, BEFARe works with a number of other partners. These photos include a small selection.



*Imran Zeb Khan*

Govt. of Pakistan



*Hasim Utkan*

UNCHR



*Ingeborg Breines*

UNESCO



*Jurgen Wintermeier*

GTZ



*Nancy Hatch Dupree*

ACBAR/ARIC

# Section I

## REFUGEE TEACHER – AN IMPOSSIBLE JOB?

### GOOD TEACHERS EQUAL GOOD SCHOOLS

What makes some schools become good schools while others remain average or poor? Researchers have given this question greater attention in recent years and have isolated different *factors* in order to answer this question. They have concluded that *the most important factor* in making schools good schools is the *human element*. *It is good teachers and head teachers* that make schools into *good schools*. Maybe parents and educationists have always known how important teachers are and researchers have only documented it through systematic studies and given it an official stamp?

Parents everywhere know how important teachers are. They play key roles in developing children's liking (or the opposite) for various school subjects and their general development of values and interests.<sup>2</sup> Aside from the teachers, parents, sisters and brothers, other family members or extended family and close friends play key roles in the children's formative years. Writing on the topic of childrearing, the former American First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton used the phrase "It takes a village" as title of one of her books.<sup>3</sup>

*The second most important factor* in making *good schools* is that the teachers are generally well regarded in the community.

*The third factor* is also essential, notably the relevancy of the curriculum and the availability and quality of teaching materials, i.e., textbooks, teachers' guides and supplementary materials.

*The fourth factor* is the physical facilities of the school, which influences the teaching and

learning of subject-matters, and includes aspects such as that the classroom is not overcrowded and that there are some special rooms and facilities for chemistry, physics, sports, etc. This includes such aspects as a well-kept and clean school yard, for example, with some flowers and bushes, playgrounds and sports fields, and other things which create a pleasant environment and develops the child's attitudes to maintaining and looking after the environment around him or her and develops aesthetic values. Washrooms must be available.<sup>4</sup>

In this Chapter we shall focus on *refugee teachers*. Before doing so, let us pay tribute to teachers everywhere. To be a teacher is one of the most difficult, important and demanding professions a person can chose. In the case of a refugee teacher, it is often not really *by choice*, but rather *by chance*. It is perhaps a bit similar to an arranged marriage, which is common in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere in the region. After "the marriage", i.e. after the teachers have started their work, they usually begin to like their new situation. Many teachers that we have spoken to in the BEFARe schools and in other refugee schools run by various NGOs and self-help refugee groups, often speak passionately about their work as teachers.

### CURRENT AND FUTURE NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN BEFARe SCHOOLS

In BEFARe's schools today, about one third of the head teachers are women and a slightly lower percentage of the classroom teachers. Well over

one third of the pupils are girls and the percentage has been increasing.<sup>5</sup> These are major achievements during the recent years and result of deliberate efforts.

BEFARe has had over 2,500 teachers in all, but since 2005 it has begun reducing the number of teachers in accordance with reduced funding from UNHCR, which is the major donor. In 2005, BEFARe has had to lay off a large number of its teachers, about 800.

UNHCR sees the reduced funding in the light of the ongoing repatriation of refugees. In practice, relatively few refugees from the camps have returned to Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> During 2005 reduced number of teachers often led to very large class sizes in some of BEFARe's schools. There were sometimes as many as 100 pupils per class, although the average class size was 40-50 pupils. Large class sizes led to difficult working conditions for teachers and pupils, and parents became worried about pupils wanting to drop out of school as they felt they were not learning much, or the classes were disorganized. Parents do not know how to occupy their children and fear they may get involved in antisocial or extremist activities.<sup>7</sup>

Difficult working conditions will worsen in the future, as BEFARe and the other implementing partners have to lay off teachers in the next few years. It is assumed that the refugees will return home to Afghanistan. Reduction of services in the camps is seen as a 'mild push factor' to encourage the refugees to return home. It is uncertain how soon the repatriation will take place, or if many refugees, instead of returning home, will find it better to stay in Pakistan's urban areas.

Many factors influence refugees' decisions as regards repatriation, and we should remember that such decisions are difficult to make, especially for the head of the household and the breadwinner/s.

Availability of education, especially at primary and secondary levels, at home in Afghanistan, is one factor that will influence how fast the refugees will return home. Other factors

are also important, such as housing and access to arable land (free of landmines), other employment, security, health services, and modern facilities such as electricity and transport. It should be noted that refugees in the camps who have been able to send their children to primary schools have enjoyed a life at a higher development level than what they will find in Afghanistan now, or be able to experience for themselves and their children in the foreseeable future. Can we blame responsible parents for delaying their return home?<sup>8</sup>

As for the refugee teachers from Pakistan, especially those from good schools like those run by BEFARe and other implementing partners receiving funding from UNHCR, it is hoped that they can gain employment in the education sector in Afghanistan. Teachers from some of the good self-help schools may also stand a chance of being employed as teachers in Afghanistan.

## THE DATABASE OF AFGHAN REFUGEE TEACHERS IN PAKISTAN

In 2002-2003 BEFARe coordinated the development of a database of Afghan Refugee Teachers in Pakistan. The database includes nearly 5,000 refugee teachers in Pakistan, the majority work for BEFARe and the remaining ones come from eleven other organizations implementing refugee education projects in Pakistan. Urban refugee teachers were not included in the database because of capacity and cost limitations.



Teachers also need to be pupils. *This photo is from a Training Seminar for female teachers in Peshawar. 2005.*

At the handing over ceremony in Kabul, the following organizations were present in addition to BEFARe: GTZ, the Embassy of Germany, UNHCR and UNESCO. Afghanistan's Assistant Minister of Education at the time, Professor M. Moeen Marastial, officiated at the occasion.

BEFARe and the other partners, including UNESCO, which was providing advice on the work, hoped that the Afghan education authorities would make immediate use of the database as the country was and still is in dire need of trained and experienced teachers. In May 2003, Professor Marastial suggested that the country needed 100 -150,000 teachers and that over 90% of the existing teachers working in the country's schools lacked up-to-date training. The refugee teachers from Pakistan were seen as a resource from the point of view of the Afghan education authorities considering the great shortage of experienced teachers in the country. Many of the refugee teachers in the database have ten years or more experience but rarely hold a complete teacher's diploma.<sup>9</sup>

Professor Marastial said that he was particularly glad of the database, which his Ministry had also taken part in developing, including approving the questionnaire used for data collection.

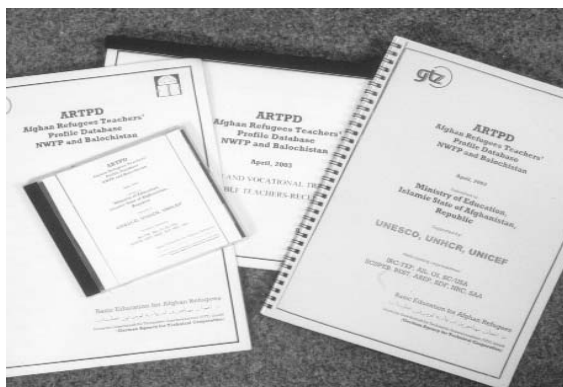
For various reasons, however, including lack of a budget to employ additional teachers and lack of proactive, common approaches by the United Nations and non-governmental organiza-



Holgar Munsch handing over the Database to Hon. Prof. Marastial in Kabul, May 2003.



Some of UNESCO's policy and strategy documents in emergency education, named an "EFA Flagship".



Some of the reports from the Teachers Database project, coordinated by GTZ-BEFARe, supported by UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR.

tions in Afghanistan, the database has not been used properly. BEFARe's leaders and other refugee education experts find that the database should be considered a "good practice" and can form a model for what should be done in other refugee situations when the time of repatriation comes.<sup>10</sup>

# Section II

## PROFILES OF AFGHAN REFUGEE TEACHERS

Below, we shall present excerpts from interviews with a handful of Afghan teachers in BEFARe schools and hear in their own words something of their life stories and their thoughts – about their past, their current situation and their future. The brief excerpts can only give us glimpses of the teachers’ experiences and what they have been through in their professional and private lives.

Let us be reminded that there are many teachers with similar life stories to those that we present here. The specific situations will vary, but many aspects are often very similar. Whether it is right to say that we can generalize on the basis of a limited number of interviews may be to go a bit far. We should also remember that each refugee - and each refugee teacher and pupil - is unique, with his or her own life story. Recall also that there are about 25 million people in Afghanistan; the wars have lasted for more than 25 years; some 8-9 million people fled the country to become refugees; millions have been, or are, internally displaced persons (IDPs) because of wars and drought.

Each person, each teacher, has been affected and has his or her story to tell. Most stories are negative; people have scars and have been traumatized, but there are also positive experiences in the midst of tragedy. The teachers tell about themselves and they tell about their pupils.<sup>11</sup>

### TWO REFUGEE TEACHERS WHO CAME TO PAKISTAN AFTER 11 SEPTEMBER 2001

“We are glad to help in this miserable situation”

Since the 11 September 2001 events in New York and Washington were so unique in the world’s history, and soon affected the countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan, we shall dwell on the stories of two Afghan refugee teachers who came to Pakistan after the “9/11” events and the invasion of Afghanistan.

Later, we shall present some other refugee teachers, who have been in Pakistan longer, having received education away from home and are now teaching in BEFARe schools. First, excerpts from interviews with the two who came after “9/11”.<sup>12</sup>

The first *two teachers* we have chosen came to Pakistan as refugees after the tragic events in the United States on “9/11”, and the subsequent American led invasion of Afghanistan, which included severe bombardments of the Taliban stronghold areas in Eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border, to oust the Taliban regime, eliminate its sympathizers, destroy the Al Qaeda terrorist network and apprehend Osama bin Laden.

Yet again Afghans had to flee their home country due to war. About 300,000 people sought refuge in Balochistan Province and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in Pakistan. Some pupils and teachers attended BEFARe schools, but most refugees were given protection, shelter, food, health services and education in temporary camps near the border in the so called *tribal areas* in Pakistan which have traditionally had porous borders with Afghanistan as a result of semi-nomadic lifestyles and livelihoods.

The schools that were opened, termed non-formal schools, were run by organizations like



Save the Children (US) in Balochistan and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Kurram Agency in NWFP. Later, some of the pupils and teachers joined BEFARe schools for some time, but most of them have now returned home to Afghanistan, or they have settled in “old camps” or in urban areas. The makeshift camps, which were established after “9/11”, were closed in the autumn of 2004, in accordance with agreements between the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan, in understanding with UNHCR.

There is no doubt that the “9/11” events changed the world, and they certainly changed the situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and elsewhere, and the situation in Afghanistan itself. The American led invasion of Afghanistan supported by NATO and other forces, began on 18/19 October 2001. It started as a severe war situation, with major bombardments, and there was widespread fear of a prolonged war. UNHCR and its implementing partners in education, including BEFARe, held a number of emergency planning meetings and developed *contingency plans* for receiving and providing education for large numbers of refugees. The highest number used in the contingency planning was a possible influx of up to 1.5 million refugees.<sup>13</sup> The author of this book coordinated the education planning in the UNHCR country office in Islamabad.

Pakistan originally wanted the required camps to be established inside Afghanistan, but gave in to allowing temporary camps to be established across the border in Pakistan. Since the Taliban resistance turned out to be less than expected, and in military terms it could only be minimal against the world’s largest and most modern military powers, the direct, major war activities only lasted for a few weeks. However, spot bombings have continued until the present date in an effort to “wipe out” pockets of Taliban resistance. The search for Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar goes on. As mentioned above, the number of post “9/11” refugees who came to Pakistan was about 300,000, which in the quarter century Afghan refugee crisis was seen as a small number!



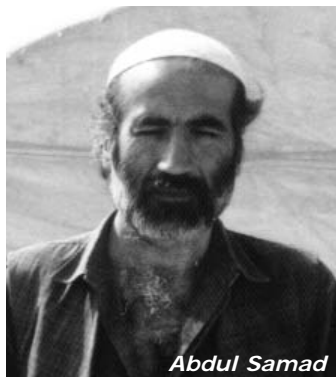
**Alam Gul** is in his late twenties. In November 2001, he came to Balochistan, Pakistan, across the border from Southern Afghanistan, after the tragic “9/11” event and the American invasion and bombing in Afghanistan. Alam had done his Middle School, Grade 8, in Zabool in Afghanistan, and had become a refugee in a temporary refugee camp near Chaman town in Pakistan.

“Life is unpredictable”, Alam, says. “I never wanted to be a teacher; I always wanted to be free from restrictions in jobs. My family used to live a peaceful and free life back home as we are nomadic pastoralists rearing livestock. When I got married, I had to pay ninety sheep and ten million Afghanis, our currency in Afghanistan. My brother, who still lives inside Afghanistan, looks after around one hundred sheep that we still have left. If I had not got married, I would have had to do the same as our animals are our livelihoods and security.” “Soon after I arrived in the refugee camp, the NGOs started recruiting teachers. I took the test and was chosen, but it is a very responsible position to be a teacher, and I feel I have a lot to do. You know these children have already been through a lot of hardship and they need a lot of guidance and help, and they need to focus on education and use their energy in positive ways.”

“I am now glad to be in Pakistan and I am busy in my job and I would rather stay in this country than in Afghanistan as long as there is

war and insecurity at home. Still, one day, I hope that my family and all these children can go home and live among their own people in their own land.”

After we spoke to Alam the situation in Afghanistan has improved and the camps in Pakistan have been closed. His wish for the school children to return has come true.<sup>14</sup>



*Abdul Samad*

**Abdul Samad**, who was in his late thirties came to Balochistan following the “9/11” events and the American invasion and he became a refugee teacher. “Wars are devastating”, Abdul says. “I lost my father and my nineteen year old brother in the Soviet war. I have seen many people I loved taken from me in the blink of an eye. I have seen places I cherished turn into dust in front of my eyes. My children are displaced and we live at the mercy of others, and I and so many other Afghans have had to bear this due to no fault of our own.”

“I have seen better days”, Abdul says. “I had a medical clinic that was burnt down during the civil war. During the Taliban time, I was working as a school teacher and also running a pharmacy shop, but during the Taliban time, I left my teaching job and only ran the pharmacy shop. You almost had to hide a university education at that time otherwise the Taliban might come after you. They only believed in religious teaching in the *madrassas*, not ordinary schools.”

“As a refugee in Pakistan, I am glad to be able to help out with school work in the refugee camp and it is a relief for me to keep my mind off

many sad things, and it is very important that the children do the same. Our children need to learn about other things apart from wars, conflicts and destruction. I think the school has brought positive change to the general atmosphere in the camp. I have eighty children in my school; twenty-four girls have enrolled, and I am teaching them together with the boys.”

“Although I have had more than my fair share of sad experiences in my life, I still look to the future with optimism. I know that Afghans will be able to return home one day and live in peace in their own homeland. I know my own son will grow up and see a different Afghanistan. Otherwise God would be unjust to us, and that I cannot believe.”<sup>15</sup>

## OLD PUPILS – YOUNG TEACHERS

In the autumn of 2004, at one of BEFARe’s many *refresher courses for teachers*, we had the opportunity to gather a group of *five former pupils, who have now become teachers in BEFARe schools*.<sup>16</sup> We wanted to learn from them something about refugee education in the BEFARe schools in the past and present - and also get some opinions about the future. In addition, we wanted to know something about the teachers’ backgrounds, current situations and plans.

First, we spoke with the teachers as a group, and as one would assume, the men were more talkative than the women! That would be expected in an Afghan context when men and women attend the same meeting. It would simply not have been polite of the women if they had spoken more than the men or outshone the men. Our group of teachers was young, but the men were on average older and had longer teaching experience than the women. That also contributed to the women listening more than expressing their own opinions. It should be added, though, that in other situations when we have discussed issues with Afghan women they are not short of opinions and knowledge, and they are usually not shy of expressing their views.



Old Pupils - Young Teachers

In addition to the group interview and discussion, we held separate interviews with each of the teachers later, and visited some of the schools. We also talked to a number of other teachers during training courses and visits to their schools. We attended some lessons in their classrooms and got an impression of the teaching methods they followed, the pupil-teacher relationships and the general school atmosphere.

In connection with the work on this book and our earlier work in refugee education in Pakistan, we have spoken to tens, maybe hundreds of Afghan refugee teachers. The sample of five teachers whom we held in-depth interviews with, and spoke with on many occasions, can be seen as *typical examples* of the young Afghan refugee teachers in Pakistan and specifically in BEFARe schools.

Although not a scientific sample we still see the teachers we have spoken to as representing the broader group of Afghan refugee teachers in Pakistan. We will present excerpts from the interviews with the five teachers, and some other older teachers, in this chapter. Naturally, other data from other sources will also be included when relevant.

Our group of five teachers is interesting in many ways, in particular since these teachers are “*old pupils*” who have now become “*young teachers*”. They have all had to grow up in exile, in a foreign country, although just a neighbouring country with people of the same, or quite closely related ethnic backgrounds. They all come from homes which have appreciated education. They were particularly academically gifted and hard working when they were pupils. They have been supported in their endeavors, and have themselves contributed to shaping their current situation as is often the case in unpredictable refugee situations.

The *support of parents and immediate families* of the five “old pupils – young teachers” should be particularly emphasized. Furthermore, the importance of the aid organizations and implementing partners in education in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) should

also be mentioned. BEFARe is the major organization for primary education but there are also other important organizations, such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Pakistan Government’s Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR). We mention those in particular since they have been involved in the running of secondary schools for boys and girls. IRC has a special focus on girls’ through its Female Education Programme (FEP).<sup>17</sup>

In mid-2005 the CAR secondary schools and many of the IRC secondary schools had to be closed due to lack of donor funding, notably from the main donor UNHCR.

Let us remind the reader that for a young refugee boy or girl, especially a girl, to have had the opportunity to attend secondary education, makes him or her one of the “select few” since less than 5% of refugee children have the opportunity to continue with education after primary level. This is the case among Afghan refugees in Pakistan, as it is among refugees in other developing countries in Asia and Africa.<sup>18</sup>

The opportunity for a young refugee boy or girl to continue with secondary education is based on several factors. Good academic performance at completion of primary school is the basic requirement. Then the parent’s interest in sending the son or daughter to secondary school is essential. The head teacher and other teachers, sometimes with members of the school management committee, often play a major role in discussing with the parents why the young child should continue with schooling rather than begin earning some money, and, especially for the young girls, getting ready for marriage. The parent’s economic situation also plays a role, as the poorest of the poor cannot afford the extra cost of sending a child to secondary school. Sometimes they may just allow one of the boys in the family to get secondary education.

Our group of five “old pupils – young teachers” belong to a sizeable group of young Afghans in Pakistan who have had a good upbringing, done well at school, and have persistently made use of the education opportunities given to them

by the host country, Pakistan, and the various implementing partners providing primary and secondary education. In addition, many of them have attended English language courses and computer courses provided by private schools in Peshawar city or in some of the larger and more modern refugee camps.<sup>19</sup>



## TWO YOUNG FEMALE TEACHERS

*Abida Sharifa and Nazifa*

**Abida** and **Nazifa** are approaching 20 years of age.<sup>20</sup> They have been teaching since the autumn of 2003 in BEFARE School No. 27 in **Jalozai Camp**, about one and half hours' drive from Peshawar. Jalozai is one of the larger refugee camps and it is also considered one of the more conservative ones. Our young teachers are dressed accordingly, with a *dupatta* headscarf, to cover their hair and most of the face. When we met them at a course in Peshawar they were both in beautiful white cotton scarves over the *shalvar camise* wide trouser dress which is standard clothing in Pakistan and in Afghanistan. In the camp, they both wore black *dupattas* and *shalvar camises*. Interestingly enough, the black headscarves were slightly more transparent than the white ones and we had no problems noticing the beautiful and smiling women behind the scarves.

"I want to study medicine at Jalalabad University in Afghanistan", Abida says. "And I

want to study engineering at the same university", Nazifa says.

Abida's father is a medical doctor, so perhaps the choice of profession wasn't so difficult for her. Nazifa does not come from a middle-class family. Her father was a labourer even before they became refugees and he is now running a shop in the refugee camp in Pakistan. Nazifa's mother has two brothers in exile in Europe, one in England and one in Russia. Both young women come from relatively large families with many brothers and sisters, and as is quite typical, their brothers have been given more education than their sisters, and the young women's mothers are illiterate. As would be expected, both young women have done extraordinarily well at exams. Nazifa got first class in all subjects at secondary school.

Abida and Nazifa have clear information about their planned studies in Afghanistan. They will first have to sit for entrance exams and if they succeed, they will take up their planned studies. Young unmarried women can only stay with their parents or other close relatives. Hence, Abida and Nazifa have made arrangements with suitable male relatives in Jalalabad with whom they can stay during their studies.

"One of the reasons why I want to study engineering is that I would like to earn well", Nazifa says. "Then I can help the rest of my family", she says.

Neither Abida nor Nazifa have any plans to get married soon. They can only hope that their families are not in a hurry to get them married off either, because that would end any dreams about further education. We discuss back and forth about such future issues with the young women, and they have no problems reflecting on them, even with two middle-aged men, one Afghan and one European.

We make a few jokes about possible candidates, like a female doctor could marry a male doctor, and they could establish a medical practice together, and treat both male and female patients. Abida would like to know what advice we would give. "Is it good for a husband and

wife to have the same professions?” she asks.

As with most things in real life, we say that there are no easy answers, and our advice is that the issues must be thought about and discussed with the future husband, if the question should arise. “And what if the wife is more successful in her career than the husband? Will men in Afghanistan – or in Europe – be able to accept that?” we ask.

We also suggest that Nazifa should consider what kind of engineer she wants to be. “There is certainly need for construction work and building engineers”, she says, and she wants to help in reconstruction of her war torn country. We suggest that maybe it is easier for a woman to take chemical engineering and go into food processing, for example, than the typically male dominated fields, or maybe she wants to go into teaching and research.

Neither the visitors nor the young women who are currently *refugee teachers*, can answer these questions, as their answers only lie in the future.

The discussion goes on for a good while, and it strikes us that this kind of discussion could have been held anywhere in the world, not only in the head teacher’s office in a poor, conservative Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan. It would not have been very different if we had been in a school in the country’s modern capital city of Islamabad, or Lahore or Karachi, or perhaps even in Europe.

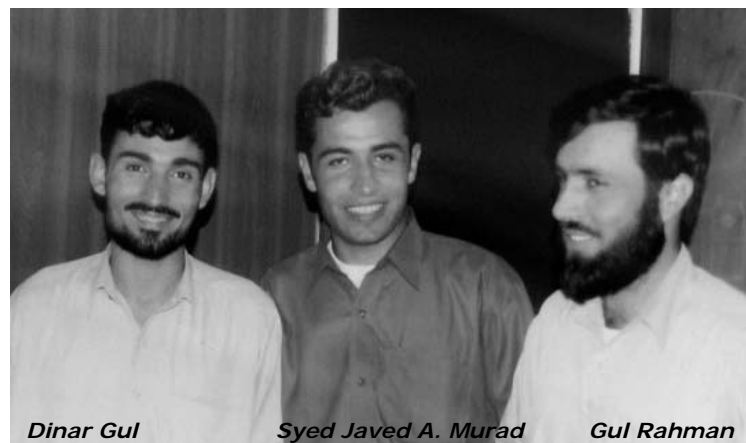
It strikes us that Afghanistan will change when young, educated and competent refugees like Abida and Nazifa return home to Afghanistan from Pakistan. They have obtained a broad and reflective world outlook from good training and work experience in BEFARe’s schools in Pakistan, and from exposure to modern and traditional ideas in the refugee camps, the city of Peshawar, Pakistani mass media and literature.

The women appear traditional. Yet, they are also *modern Afghan Muslim refugee women*. We hope that they can keep their combination of *modern and traditional identity*.

“I am not yet attending any computer training course, because I am still attending an English language course in Peshawar. It is a long way to travel after school and I can only manage one course at a time”, Nazifa says.

“To be a teacher is demanding and difficult”, the young women agree. “In some classes we can have a large number of pupils, sometimes as many as 50, while in other classes, we have only 15 or 20 pupils.”

They also agree that today people understand that education is important. “When we went to school here in the refugee camp there were very few women teachers, and very few schools for girls. Now there are lots”, they say. “I had one teacher who was very nice”, Nazifa adds. “When I teach I try to remind myself of how she was doing things. I think it is very important that teachers are good role models for their pupils.”



### THREE YOUNG MALE TEACHERS

*Dinar Gul, Syed Javed Ahmad Murad and Gul Rahman*

The three young male teachers all teach in BEFARe schools in Kacha Garhi Camp, near Peshawar.<sup>21</sup>

*Dinar* is the youngest of the three, just over 21, but already a *seasoned teacher*, and he has even been a head teacher in a self-help school before he joined BEFARe. He is an early starter

in other ways too, having got married several years ago. He is now a father of two children. Dinar was born in Pakistan after his family came to Pakistan soon after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. His father worked as a labourer in the oil wells in Saudi Arabia for 14 years.

**Gul** is 28 years old. Like Dinar, he has grown up and been educated in Pakistan as his family became refugees in the early 1980s. He, too, had teaching experience from a private self-help school before he joined BEFARe as a teacher. He has attended several teacher training courses at BEFARe. "But my intention was to become a doctor", Gul says. "I studied at the Afghan University in Peshawar for more than two years but then the university was closed after "9/11" and most of the students moved home to Afghanistan. I was already working, in addition to studying, since I had married. Now I am the father of three children. I can not move to Afghanistan yet", he says, "because I don't have any job there."

"My first priority is to support my family. I am still dreaming of becoming a doctor, or maybe a secondary school teacher. But teaching is not well paid, so even now I have to work in the afternoons in a private company, which deals with the transport business", he explains and adds that there is no time even for part-time studies.

**Javed** is the only bachelor among the three. This has given him better opportunities for higher education. He is 26 years old and is the only one who holds a university degree, a BA in Pashto. He has also taken English language courses, a series of advanced computer training courses and several of BEFARe's teacher training courses. His father is a head teacher in one of the best BEFARe schools in Kacha Garhi Camp. We find that teaching was probably an obvious job choice for a young, modern Afghan refugee like Javed, but maybe not forever?

Although he has grown up and been educated in Pakistan, Javed says that he is determined to return home to Afghanistan in the future. He has visited his home area near Jalalabad city, a

few hours drive from the Pakistan border, many times especially after the fall of the Taliban regime. His father tried to return home some years ago, but had to give it up after some months and returned to Pakistan again.

"Still, I believe it is just a matter of time before we can return. Security is important, especially for older people, women and children. I am also concerned about security, but to me a good job, affordable housing, and visible improvements in the social sectors are more important. I must be able to see that the country is moving in the right direction before I decide on returning home. As returnees we must feel welcome to help in rebuilding our country, together with the majority who lived at home throughout the war years", Javed says:

"Security is important, but you can not wait until the country is totally safe and secure. We are recovering from decades of wars and a lot of weapons are in circulation, and there is a whole culture of using the weapons. Then there is the huge problem with poppy opium production, illegal sale and connected crime. In spite of all these problems, I think that most Afghans would like to return home when it becomes possible to do so", Javed says.

"I would also like to say that there are a good number of young Afghans like me, who have grown up in good homes, have been able to get good education and develop healthy interests. I feel lucky, in many ways, in spite of the fact that my family has been quite poor. Many refugees and also Pakistanis have lived under poorer conditions but somehow we have kept our *self-respect*. My thanks go to my parents, relatives and friends, to local and international refugee organizations like BEFARe, to Pakistani organizations and the University of Peshawar. I am grateful to many Pakistanis who have helped us without expecting anything back. Even when I return home to Afghanistan I will still feel very close to Pakistan and especially people in the Peshawar area."

## SOME GENERALIZATIONS

Our “old pupils – young teachers” agree that there have been quite marked changes in teaching practices over the years. The young male teachers mention the same aspects as the young female teachers, notably that *the child has been put more in the center* in recent years. That means that there is more interaction between the teacher and the pupil, and that pupils are encouraged to ask questions and develop their *creative and critical mind*. Today, young teachers are also encouraging *group work*, something which was very rare some years ago.

“Well, it is still not common because of the large class sizes, with up to 50-60 pupils in tiny classrooms, where the pupils sit on mats on the floor. Practically it is difficult to organize group work”, the teachers tell us.

“Sometimes we know better ways of teaching but we still follow old-fashioned methods, simply because that is an easier way out”, Dinar says.

“However, I still feel younger teachers are different from older teachers”, Dinar says. “Or, maybe I should say that most teachers today are different from the teachers I had when I went to primary school 10-15 years ago”, he corrects himself. “Teachers today are much more *flexible, informal and democratic*. When I went to school the teachers often used the stick. They also didn’t ask if the pupils had understood and learned. They didn’t give and correct homework very often. Some of the teachers would often come late in the morning, too.”

Dinar goes on listing a row of negative attitudes and practices from his school days.

“Often it was because our teachers didn’t know better, but sometimes it was also because they lacked textbooks and other teaching materials for the pupils. They also didn’t have teachers’ guidebooks. All this made it difficult to be a good teacher. The old teachers focused on *controlling the class*.”

“I believe the teacher training courses have played a major role in changing the teachers’ atti-

tudes. In addition, the parents take interest in their children’s education in a different way today, unlike when I went to school”, Gul says. “The parents have realized that education is important, especially for the boys but also for the girls, and they don’t just want the religious teaching of the Quran schools, the *madrassahs*. Parents have realized that their children need religious and moral education, but they also need other secular subjects.”

“It is always important that the parents show their children that they are interested in what the children learn at school. It is also important that they keep in contact with the teachers”, Gul stresses.<sup>22</sup>

The young teachers we have spoken to were critical of the old-fashioned and harsh ways that many old teachers used in the past. We hope that they have given a true picture of the reality in the schools today, and not just an ideal or theoretical picture. We asked some of the BEFAR senior staff and head teachers about that. Mr. *Mujadidi*, who is one of the most senior and experienced Afghan teachers and managers in the BEFAR office says that he thinks the young teachers point at a general trend, and he also thinks that the young teachers are a product of their own time.

“They have new and more democratic attitudes, and above all”, Mujadidi emphasizes, “I believe we see the results of the pedagogical training we have given in numerous basic and refresher courses. The master/lead trainer courses and materials, such as the teachers’ guides, form very important elements in the modernization process.”

“In general I agree with the young teachers, but I would also defend my own generation, at least modify the impression somewhat”, Mujadidi says. “Those who were refugee teachers twenty years ago were from a different time. Secondly, many of them did not have a proper background in teaching. They had very limited teacher-training courses, and a good number of them had poor secondary education. But I think most of the old generation has changed today.”<sup>23</sup>



## TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

BEFARe organizes a number of *pre-service and in-service training courses* for its teachers. The in-service courses are often referred to as “refresher courses”. Since the original pre-service training courses are only of a few weeks’ duration, there is a great need and interest in the refresher courses amongst teachers and managers. The *master/lead trainers* also need to update their knowledge, skills and pedagogical orientation and more advanced courses have been organized for them, especially during recent years.<sup>24</sup>

The *pre-service courses* cover the basics of how to organise and manage a school class, relate to students and work with colleagues and parents. Assessment, examination and reporting procedures are given attention. Orientation about how to use teaching materials is a major part of the pre-service courses. General orientation about teaching methods and pedagogical issues is also given some attention. Child psychology and general introduction to “teaching under stress”, and how best to work with traumatized children and families, have become central topics in recent years as greater understanding of the broader psychosocial aspects of refugee education has developed. Peace education and conflict resolution, environmental

awareness and gender issues are yet other examples of new topics that have been included. Of these *cross-cutting subjects* environmental awareness probably still lags behind.<sup>25</sup>

In general, it should be emphasized that a large number of refugees suffer from various degrees of *post-traumatic disorders*. Prolonged time spent in exile also leads to additional psychosocial problems. However, psychosocial issues, clinical and social psychology, special education and many related sub-disciplines are fields *lacking specialists*. Staff with more general and broad knowledge are also lacking. As we have pointed out elsewhere in this book, these competencies cannot be taught in a matter of days or weeks as they are highly specialized subjects requiring longer training, studies and practical experience. Life experience, common sense and wisdom gained through difficulties which refugees and poor people have more than a fair share of are important elements but cannot substitute for systematic educational studies.<sup>26</sup>

A couple of weeks’ of pre-service training cannot make justice to all the themes and topics that a refugee teacher needs to know. It should be appreciated that teaching refugees is often *more demanding* than teaching in ordinary schools. Yet, the training that is being offered remains limited even in BEFARe’s good formal



Experienced refugee teachers in one of BEFARe’s boys’ schools in Jalozaï Camp, NWFP, 2005. At the center is the Head Teacher with Mujadidi Agha Shah (white beard and glasses) from the BEFARe Head office in Peshawar.

education programme, which has always given attention to teacher training.<sup>27</sup>

Many improvements have been made over the years but since the duration of the pre-service training courses remain short, there is a limit to the improvements that can be made. That has been done for teachers in non-formal education, with good results, but then we need to bear in mind that they had very limited pre-service training earlier.

It is hoped that in future, *all refugee teachers, anywhere in the world*, will receive more than a few weeks' of pre-service training, which is usually based on secondary education (mostly higher secondary education but sometimes only lower secondary education).

In a few cases, refugee teachers in BEFARe schools have attended ordinary teacher training, or other college or university education, prior to becoming refugee teachers.<sup>28</sup> To the extent such candidates are identified, and they are willing to take on teaching in refugee schools, they will soon be allocated more responsible tasks, such as head teachers, master/lead trainers and supervisors.

The pre-service training for refugee teachers remains limited in time and scope because the donors have not been willing to allocate the required funds for longer and better training. In-service training courses and classroom observation and advice play major roles. In-service training is positive in itself, even if the pre-service training had been longer. BEFARe, and other implementing partners in the refugee camps, have managed to improve significantly the in-service training courses provided in recent years. Naturally, without donors allocating funds such improvements could not have been made. Still, it should be remembered that the training is far from adequate, especially the pre-service training.

As mentioned elsewhere in this book, an important Canadian funded project has been implemented over recent years, focusing on professional development, gender issues and other pedagogical fields. The project, known as the CIDA-AREP, involves three implementing part-

ners, of which BEFARe is the largest. The other partners are the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Ockenden International (OI). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Islamabad has been included to provide professional advice and assist in coordination. UNESCO and UNHCR were involved in initiating and planning the project with CIDA's Programme Support Unit (PSU), in Islamabad. The strength of this project has been its emphasis on developing understanding for *professionalism* in teacher training and in the teaching profession, including gender issues as integral elements.<sup>29</sup>

The *in-service training courses* cover various topics and the teachers can enroll in courses they feel a special need to take, or the head teacher or a supervisor recommend the teachers take for specific training. It should be mentioned that although the systematic training courses are short, and even if teachers keep taking courses over several years, cumulatively they rarely amount to more than a total of a couple of months training. They cover various areas, but are not real "modules" that can be used for building a complete, recognizable *teacher training diploma*.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to these training courses, the head teachers and supervisors give advice and try to help the individual teachers in improving their performance. BEFARe also organizes training courses for the *head teachers, managers and master/lead trainers*. A supervisor and head teacher at a school undertake *classroom observation*, and on that basis, specific comments and advice are given. Since teaching is in many ways a very practical profession, which can only be learned on-the-job, classroom observation is essential. A teacher may keep doing certain things excellently, while he or she may also keep repeating the same mistakes in other fields. A teacher may ignore certain themes and topics which he or she finds difficult to teach, or because he or she is ignorant about the topic. Teachers, like other people, may have good habits and bad habits, but as professional educators they must be made

aware of their strengths and weaknesses and learn how to curb weaknesses. If a colleague, or a teacher trainer, observes another teacher's classroom performance, valuable advice and suggestions may be given and the teacher's performance may improve.

Although it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish *advice* from *criticism*, professional teachers will usually know not to interpret advice negatively, and the one who gives advice must be a good practical psychologist. Young teachers, as well as old and experienced ones, must always be treated with understanding in the same way that they must treat their pupils with understanding.

It should be mentioned that a teacher's performance does not exist in a vacuum. His or her performance has to do with how the head teacher runs the school; the teaching material and other resources provided; the class size and so on. Sometimes a teacher can teach young pupils very well, but not older ones – or vice versa. Some teachers may be good in teaching weaker pupils, or working with *handicapped pupils*, while others may do best when teaching the *academically gifted pupils*.

A teacher in a large refugee class in a BEFARe school, often with 40-50-60 pupils, must always have an eye open for the heterogeneity of his or her pupils. If possible even in large classes, each pupil must be given special attention – because each pupil is different and unique. Naturally, this makes it almost impossible to be a teacher and a refugee teacher! That is also why we should pay tribute to the teachers, especially refugee teachers, who do excellent work under very difficult circumstances.

"There is no doubt about that today's teachers are much better equipped for their work than the earlier teachers were", says one of our young teachers, Syed Javed Ahmad (26). But he adds that there are exceptions. One such is his father.<sup>31</sup>

"My father has been a teacher throughout his working life and certainly for as long as I can remember. He has also been a head teacher for many years. I would like to say that he is a very

good teacher, and I have learned a lot from him, not only as his pupil but also when taking up teaching myself. I have borrowed many of his pedagogical insights, and especially his *cheerful and humorous ways* of handling children. I don't know if I will ever be as good a teacher as my father", Javed says. Yet, he also underlines that times have changed.

"Certain attitudes towards children are different today. We focus much more on *activating children*, and not just making them listen to long teacher monologues. Sometimes old-fashioned teachers behave as if they know everything, or at least they want the pupils to think so. It is more important to help the pupils develop curiosity and interest in exploring issues themselves."

"I think a younger teacher often does very good work - and older teachers, too, if they have kept up with the times and followed developments in the world. I also think that older teachers learn from discussions with younger teachers, attending refresher courses and so on. Perhaps younger teachers are even better than the older ones, in spite of the older teachers having a lot of experience."

"Teacher training for young teachers in pedagogical fields and frequent refresher courses, discussion seminars and so on, are very important. But I would also like to emphasize the importance of teachers having *good subject-matter knowledge* – either they are refugee teachers from Afghanistan or Pakistan. The young Afghan teachers often have better subject-matter knowledge than older teachers because they have gone to good primary and secondary schools, often run by BEFARe, IRC and other organizations. The young teachers in our schools have attended refugee schools in Pakistan themselves, mostly run by BEFARe at primary level and by IRC and other organizations at secondary level, such as, for example, schools supported by Swiss and Belgian organizations, and the Government of Pakistan through the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees Education Cell (CAR/EC). Many teachers have attended further training courses at private schools or institutes, for exam-

ple in English, computer science, and some have even attended some university training at Pakistani universities, or at the Afghan University in Peshawar, which was more like an advanced NGO college. However it closed after “9/11” and most of the students and teachers moved back to Afghanistan.”

“In conclusion I would like to underline the importance of good subject-matter knowledge, preferably tied to up-to-date general knowledge about current social development issues. It is important that we remember the importance of the subjects and the curricula at the same time as we keep emphasizing pedagogy and teaching methods.”<sup>32</sup>

Mr. Mujadidi, the senior teacher, manager and teacher trainer agrees with his young colleague. “Javed’s points about the importance of the continuous training courses are very important. Also his points about what I would describe as more democratic attitudes of younger people, and the focus on more child-centered learning. All of this is true”, Mujadidi says. “We who are getting old know it too, but maybe we don’t always practice it.”

He says that in general Afghan teachers today are well qualified in most subjects and in pedagogy. “This is a result of careful selection of teachers and the many training courses BEFARe and other implementing partners have established.”

“Afghan refugee teachers are not always well trained in *English* and *Urdu*. Lack of Afghans with skills in certain subjects was the main reason for recruiting Pakistani teachers ten or twenty years ago, and even today”, Mujadidi says. He goes on explaining that there is an agreement including the Pakistani and Afghan authorities and UNHCR which allows up to 40% of the teachers in the refugee schools to be Pakistani citizens. “We have to accept Pakistani teachers, and most of them are excellent teachers, working both in the formal and the non-formal training programmes in BEFARe”, Mujadidi says.

“The Pakistani teachers are included in our in-service training programmes, and we do not

really distinguish between a Pakistani or Afghan teacher in BEFARe. A teacher is a teacher – and a good teacher is indeed a good teacher! Nationality doesn’t matter then.”

“Still, I would add that the majority of the refugee teachers should as a general rule be from the home country of the pupils. After all, we are working towards preparing the refugees for returning home. The fact that they learn about the host country, from indigenous teachers from that country is a bonus. It gives valuable knowledge to take home to Afghanistan.”

“We should also be realistic enough to admit that some of the pupils will also stay on in the host country for a long time or even for good. And a few lucky ones will get a chance to take ordinary university education at Pakistani universities”, Mujadidi says, bringing in aspects that are not often talked about in refugee education in developing countries. However, it is known that long-term refugee situations often lead to a sizeable proportion of the refugees staying on in the country of exile even when situations have improved in their home country.<sup>33</sup>

In recent years BEFARe has *expanded its teacher training* markedly. It has reached a much larger number of teachers with training courses and advisory sessions at school and classroom level. The figures show a steady increase in the number of teachers and supervisors reached with training from 1996 to 2003. The figures have increased steadily from four to five hundred per year to *two thousand* in 2003, when it peaked.



A mixture of teachers at work and teachers attending training.

Such quantitative data gives a clear indication of the importance placed on teacher training by the organization, and also by donors, since BEFARe is dependent on donor funding for its work. Significantly, additional funding has not come from BEFARe's main funding organization, UNHCR, but from other new donors.

Until a few years ago the *German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)* provided up to 20% of the funding to BEFARe, but rather than increasing its funding as it was considering before "9/11", BMZ's funding ceased.<sup>34</sup> We would argue that this was premature, especially as regards teacher training. Most of the refugees in the camps in Pakistan remain there and it can be argued that they are in greater need of training now, in order to feel equipped to return home and assist in rebuilding Afghanistan and the country's education system. BMZ, however, must have considered that it had funded BEFARe for a very long period, and that in future it would focus on assisting Afghanistan directly rather than the refugees in Pakistan.<sup>35</sup>

Aside from expanding its teacher training activities in recent years BEFARe has placed greater emphasis on a more *holistic approach* in its various teacher-training courses. Pedagogy, psychology and psychosocial issues are now being taken up in some detail, unlike before when the underlying behavioral and learning issues were not dealt with. *Teaching under stress* has become a term commonly used. However, *special education subjects* are still not given the place that they should in post-war situations, with many children and adults having *great psychological and physical educational and medical needs*.

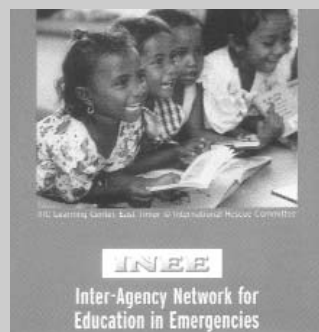
Still, it should be remembered that the improvements made in BEFARe's teacher training in recent years have been quite impressive. UNHCR's Evaluation of BEFARe in 2002 particularly praises the practical training offered through classroom observation and related discussions and other follow-up activities. The Report recommends further expansion along the

same lines as part of the pre-service and in-service training.<sup>36</sup>

Earlier, the short pre-service training courses which were more *orientation courses or briefings* for teachers-to-be focused mainly on the more immediate needs of the teachers. These were things like managing a large class of refugee children, organizing tests and examinations, correcting homework, and practical teaching methods related to the available teaching materials.

Based on the major improvements made in BEFARe's teacher training activities over the last decade, it is our optimistic judgment that we can expect further improvements in the years to come. We hope that lessons will be drawn from BEFARe's past experience concerning teacher training for refugee teachers and that the organization will be able to continue its work to include refugee-hosting areas in the future.

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, is an open network for organizations, institutions and individuals. UN organizations and international NGOs were founders of INEE about five years ago. The current steering committee



includes the founding members and some additional organizations, notably UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, The World Bank, Norwegian Refugee Council and Save the Children Alliance. INEE has established a Working Group on Minimum Standards, coordinated by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), with ad hoc or sub-groups on various issues, such as teacher training. BEFARe is a member of the INEE Working Group on Minimum Standards and Dr. S.B. Ekanayake has been appointed as BEFARe's current member, considering his broad international experience and expertise in teacher training, adult education, curriculum development, educational planning and other issues related to refugee and development education. Although, INEE represents a step in the right direction it can not substitute for deeper professional work which must be carried out at professional millieux. It is hoped that INEE can stimulate development of such work, without trying to become implementer itself. The real work can also be done at universities and similar institutions, linked to organizations like BEFARe.

BEFARe has appointed a member to attend INEE's international working group to develop minimum standards for teacher training for emergency situations.<sup>37</sup>

## "OLD TEACHERS – NEW METHODS – AND OLD WISDOM"

### Some Reflections and Tentative Conclusions

Based on our discussions with a large number of teachers, our school visits, in-depth interviews with teachers and pupils, studies of reports and other literature, we can draw some conclusions. We are of the opinion that the young teachers we cited above, supported by older teachers, are pointing out general *positive trends in teaching habits*. The training courses are valuable inputs but they are not the final end-results. There is still plenty of room for modernization of traditional teaching methods. Many teachers still spend far too much time lecturing and too little on the child centred methods. This was also pointed out in UNHCR's Evaluation Report in 2002. Other studies have also taken up key aspects concerning educational improvement strategies, with reference to BEFARe and other refugee schools.<sup>38</sup>

There are excellent examples of older teachers who have "moved with the times", through experience, in-service training, listening to their pupils and younger colleagues, and so on. BEFARe as a large professional organization has developed practical implementation systems and, more importantly, *professional standards* for its work in refugee education.<sup>39</sup> This has been possible due to a variety of reasons. Above we underlined that "old pupils" have become "young teachers" and are adding value to BEFARe's culture. In this section we are using the heading "*Old teachers – new methods and old wisdom*", underlining that old teachers are also adding value. Perhaps it is a bit unfair to focus on "new methods" only. We should remember that it is not always true that new things are better.

Sometimes "*old is gold*". That we know from a grandmother's or a grandfather's wisdom and ways with grandchildren.

Still we would like young teachers to be given credit for their work and efforts, their active pursuance of change, their idealism and search for solutions. After all the young will soon be in responsible positions and carry the burden of decision-making.

Yet, we also want to pay tribute to the older teachers, or rather teachers of any age. Those of us who have practical teaching experience know how difficult and challenging it can be to be a teacher and also how trying pupils can be, and how frustrating it can be to have overcrowded classes, poor sanitary facilities, teaching materials that are outdated, or teaching materials that come late (or never) from the school administrator's office, and not enough books for all the students.

It can also be frustrating if the community does not support the school, if the School Management Committee (SMC) is not very active, as was the case in most BEFARe schools only five or six years ago. It can be frustrating to see that parents who have gifted children won't allow their son or daughter to continue with her or his education. This is sometimes because the older child needs to begin earning money, or maybe a daughter according to culture and tradition is expected to stay at home and prepare herself for marriage. Sometimes there are domestic problems in refugee homes, caused by traumatized parents or relatives, or just ordinary, human frustration. Some fathers, and even mothers, may be addicted to alcohol or drugs. There may be cases of child abuse in the home or the community. Sometimes, households may be incomplete because of the war or for other reasons. We may find unaccompanied minors living on their own, too, without adult relatives in the community.

Questions arising from situations of these kinds belong to the many difficult questions a teacher and head teacher is faced with, older teachers more than younger teachers, because there are issues that only life can teach us to be

prepared to solve, not university degrees, BEFARe's refresher courses or modern attitudes. Yet young teachers have also grown up in difficult circumstances as refugees, and carry many memories and mental burdens, and they may gain maturity and wisdom earlier than the rest of us. The difficult backgrounds may sometimes be of advantage when handling difficult situations in the refugee camp schools and communities. We should remember that as a general rule, people in a refugee camp, or urban refugee settlement usually have more social and mental problems than people in ordinary non-refugee settle-

ments. Trained staff, people with training in psychology and special education, would certainly be useful to help solve some of these difficult problems. BEFARe refresher courses and degrees would be useful.

We take up these aspects here, as we introduce the reader to two particularly experienced and successful teachers, who are now both head teachers, notably **Balgis Rangg** and **Syed M. Tahir Murad**. We should remember that behind them, there are hundreds of other excellent teachers in BEFARe schools.

Balgis Rangg is head teacher of a girls' school in Kacha Garhi Camp outside Peshawar, and Syed M. Tahir Murad is head teacher of the boys' school nearby.



Balgis Rangg, Head Teacher, Gullakhta Sadazi, Trainer, and Gullakhta Palvasha, Chair of the School Management Committee (SMC), BEFARe School No. 099, Kacha Garhi Camp.



Dr. Iqbal and Syed Muza, Chair and Deputy Chair of the School Management Committee (SMC), BEFARe School No. 160, Kacha Garhi Camp.

## HEAD TEACHERS AND MASTER/LEAD TRAINERS

Gulakhta Sadazai is a Master Lead/Trainer in BEFARe. In the photo Gulakhta is together with **Balgis Rangg**, *Head Teacher of BEFARe Girls' School No. 099 in Kacha Garhi Camp outside Peshawar*.<sup>40</sup> Also present was the English teacher in the school, Husnia Amin, who sometimes had to help us as an interpreter. Elsewhere in the book, on pp.174-5, we have presented an interview with the Chair of the School Management Committee in this school, Gullakhta Palvasha.

The Head Teacher, Balgis, is a qualified teacher from Kabul with about 20 years teaching experience and since 1996 she has been a Head Teacher. Her husband is also a teacher. She has two sons and four daughters. Balgis mentions with pride that all her children have received education, including further training to become teachers, computer specialists and one is an engineer. All this suits a good teacher's family.

In the introduction to this chapter, we mentioned the importance of a good head teacher in making a good school and we find that Balgis exemplifies this: School No. 099 is one of BEFARe's best schools. Just from visiting the school on a few occasions, we could tell that this was a good school from the good atmosphere

that prevailed. More tangible are the excellent exam results.

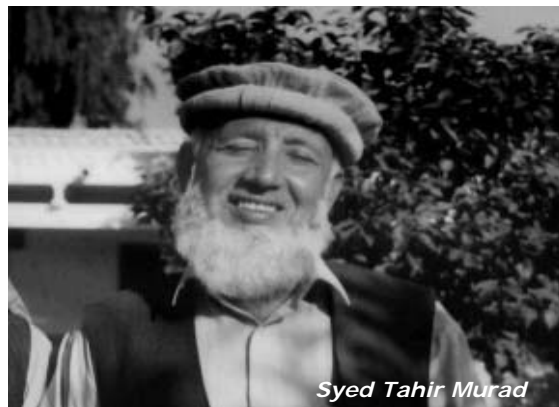
The head teacher and her other staff represent a solid team leading and teaching the children in their school. Their tasks also include teacher training and classroom observation. Guidance of younger teachers is an important task for the head teacher and the master/lead trainer when she comes to the school. Furthermore, the master/lead trainer discusses introduction of new teaching methods and materials with the teachers, and is available for any other advice and discussions.

Over the years, BEFARe has trained a group of master/lead trainers, who already have good teaching experience and theoretical and practical pedagogical training. They become a *team of mobile inspectors and advisers* assisting the head teachers and each teacher in all the BEFARe schools. Based on the recommendations in the UNHCR Evaluation Report of BEFARe (2002), further emphasis is given to classroom observation and practical advice. The training courses cannot always fulfill the practical needs the teachers have for specific advice concerning their work in the classroom. Many issues can best be analyzed, discussed and solved on the spot. As we have mentioned elsewhere in this chapter UNHCR's Evaluation of BEFARe in 2002 also emphasizes the importance of the practical pedagogical work and recommends expansion of classroom observation.<sup>41</sup>

Balgis underlines the importance of advising teachers on teaching methods, both general methods and such related to BEFARe's teaching materials. Teachers in formal and non-formal education programmes are included in the sessions that the master/lead trainers organize in the schools. Balgis also mentions that greater emphasis is now being placed on *gender issues* and *child protection*, including both boys and girls. "Although gender issues are said to be important and we talk quite a lot about such issues, I feel we have still got a long way to go to reach *real gender equality* in our Afghan culture. But compared to understanding of gender issues in my

childhood and today, or even just five or ten years ago, many changes have taken place", Balgis says.

"Today, girls' education is almost taken for granted. If you had asked me when I started as a teacher if I thought we would have become as 'liberal' as we now are I would never have believed it. I think the men begin to realize that they too will gain from having better educated women around them, in the homes and in jobs outside the home. On average, girls do better at school than boys do, so then girls need opportunities to continue their education and get into jobs. We need to improve the opportunities for further education for girls and boys in the refugee camps and urban areas. In Afghanistan there is great need for focusing on secondary education. I think we who have been refugee teachers and have been involved in girls education have valuable experience to take home to Afghanistan."<sup>42</sup>



Syed Tahir Murad



BEFARe School No. 160



## Section III

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### TRAINING OF TRAINERS

BEFARe has in recent years been using a growing number of *Afghan and Pakistani experts* in higher positions and leadership roles in different project and sub-project fields, and in the organization as a whole. In *teacher training*, including in fields of *training of trainers and further professional development* areas, this is clearly the case. In addition to the Afghans and Pakistanis, some international experts are still called in to help when needed.

“Now we should be a bit cautious when saying that this has happened recently”, Mujadidi explains. “BEFARe has always mainly relied on local personnel. But in higher administrative posts we have had foreigners, mostly Germans. As an Afghan myself I am glad that more locals get into posts. Most of them are Pakistanis but some are Afghans”, Mujadidi says.

for many years until he retired and became a consultant with BEFARe and other organizations. While with the United Nations in the 1990s, he prepared a number of booklets and books on refugee issues and education in Afghanistan, in particular focusing on teacher training and development of teachers’ guides and other materials. At home in Sri Lanka he had been a Principal at a teacher training college and been Director of non-formal education in the Ministry of Education.”<sup>43</sup>

BEFARe has maintained professional contact with relevant local and international organizations, including United Nations organizations, in particular UNESCO and UNHCR in addition to the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). BEFARe has also worked with the refugee coordinating bodies, such as the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) in Peshawar, and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR), including its Education Cell, in Peshawar, and the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) in Islamabad. Furthermore, the relevant Ministry, SAFRON, has also been a partner and contact has been maintained with education authorities in Afghanistan, directly or through the Consulate in Peshawar and the Embassy in Islamabad.

In this sub-section we shall draw attention to the important field of *training of trainers*, which, admittedly, has *not* been given the attention it deserves in refugee education in general. This is the case all over the world, especially in Third World refugee hosting countries.

Above, we underlined the need for proper pre-and in-service *teacher training*, with advisory



“Our most senior external expert in teacher training is a foreigner from the sub-region, notably *Dr. S.B. Ekanayake* from Sri Lanka. He worked for UNESCO and UNHCR in Pakistan

services in the schools, including classroom observation.<sup>44</sup>

Different forms and levels of teacher training are important. *Firstly*, training of the general classroom teachers and head teachers is important, including training in pedagogy, teaching methods, etc., and knowledge and skills of the actual subjects that the teachers will teach and the skills and methods related to teaching of each of the subjects. *Secondly*, the field of teacher training, or as we often say, training of trainers (ToT), should in the future be given greater attention than in the past. BEFARe has given the field some attention in recent years, but not enough, mainly due to lack of additional funding.

In order to improve the *quality of basic education for refugees*, more advanced training of trainers is required. Furthermore, improvement at the level of trainers will lead to better teachers and an up-lift of the whole field of education, such as improved quality and increased enrollment at primary, secondary and higher education levels, and also in non-formal education and in *education planning* and research.

Since teachers and teacher trainers are crucial *community members and leaders*, and especially influence the social sectors in the refugee camps and communities, more advanced training and education of the teachers and teacher trainers is even more essential. When the highly trained and experienced trainers and other teachers move home to Afghanistan their role and importance will only increase both in their professional capacity and as community members and leaders.

We find it necessary to mention that donors and implementing partners in refugee education have failed to give ordinary and more advanced teacher training the required priority. This has led to lack of development of *leaders and advocates* for the education sector and of other aspects of the daily lives of refugees in long-term refugee situations. We would argue that such training is particularly important in medium and long-term (chronic) refugee situations, such as

the one of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. It became evident relatively early in the current situation that it would be large and last for many years. The first major repatriation could only take place after over ten years in exile, and a few years later, new and large groups of refugees streamed across the border to Pakistan. Such a large-scale refugee situation should have warranted systematic planning of repatriation and reconstruction, although nobody could predict *when* that would be possible. On the other hand, everybody could tell *that* it would occur, at some stage in the foreseeable future, if not, permanent solutions as regards integration in the host countries (mainly Pakistan and Iran) needed planning.

Furthermore, it should be noted that *donor organizations do not have the professional expertise required for leadership in refugee education*, not withstanding that UNHCR, UNESCO and other United Nations organizations do have some expertise. UNHCR's general expertise is more geared towards short-term refugee crises, not long-term and chronic crises, where actions will demand different analyses and be more related to ordinary development than emergency assistance. Since refugee education is not a prioritized sector in UNHCR or any of the other UN organizations, or at a collective international level, education probably suffers more than other fields. Education is gaining attention but is not yet a top priority.

Several NGOs have a fair amount of expertise in refugee education. However, the NGOs depend on funding from donors for most of their activities; notably the United Nations and the bilateral donors. The funding has not been generous enough in refugee education in general, and particularly not in teacher training and more advanced educational fields. What if the Afghan refugee crisis had been in Europe, would the funding have been higher?

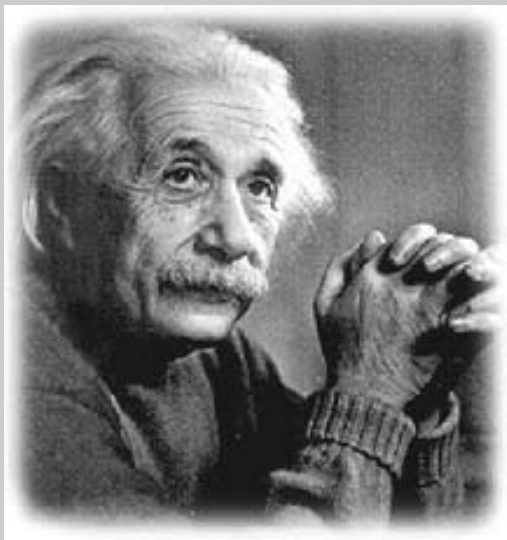
Instead of trying to answer that question we shall argue from another angle. We would suggest that in developing countries, including the Afghan refugee crisis in Pakistan, refugees should have organized themselves in stronger *profes-*

*sional interest groups.* The United Nations, NGOs and other organizations should have given more support to this than they did. Furthermore, *local institutions*, such as Pakistani universities, teacher training colleges, research institutes, etc., should have been included, not least in the education sector. It is surprising to see that such institutions have only played marginal roles. Institutions in the other major refugee-hosting country, Iran, should also have been included, and institutions in Afghanistan. In future, institutional cooperation with the immediate neighbours will play a major role in Afghanistan's development efforts.

Germany provides funding through UNHCR for a higher education scholarship programme known as **DAFI** (Albert Einstein German

Academic Refugee Initiative).<sup>45</sup> DAFI students and graduates could also proactively have been integrated in professional interest groups, with institutional linkages at Pakistani universities. They represent an important group of educated human resources with potential to occupy senior and leadership posts in the 'new Afghanistan'.

Worldwide more than a thousand refugee students receive DAFI scholarships and in Pakistan the number peaked in 2002 when there were 170 Afghans studying at Pakistani universities, 40% women and 60% men. It was the second largest DAFI programme in the world, only surpassed by the DAFI programme for Afghans in Iran. During recent years numbers have gone down to less than fifty students. There are no statistics available for how many of the almost nine



"Albert Einstein was also a refugee", is the text on a UNHCR poster. In his honour and giving hope to needy and deserving refugees, a scholarship programme was established in 1992, notably the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative, known as DAFI from its German acronym. The DAFI scholarship programme, which is funded by Germany and administered by UNHCR, is the only major facility that exists worldwide to support refugees to take higher education in the country of refuge. Scholarships are awarded based on merit and need. Worldwide, more than a thousand individuals benefit at any time from the programme. Considering that there are millions of young refugees in the world, this facility is very limited and the competi-

tion to receive a scholarship is extremely stiff. However, DAFI does give hope and dreams to young academically gifted refugees that even they can succeed, even if they don't reach as far as Albert Einstein! In future, it is hoped that other scholarship programmes will be established for higher education and for secondary and technical levels.

It should be borne in mind that many refugee children never get a chance to go to primary school, and only some five percent of those who complete primary school can continue to secondary level. Education opportunities are always more limited for girls than boys. About forty percent of the close to nine hundred DAFI scholarship recipients in Pakistan have been women.

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) provides study loans (which may in practice be turned into scholarships) to Afghan refugees in Pakistan on similar terms as DAFI. Some bilateral donors, NGOs, wealthy Afghan relatives living abroad and individual philanthropists also help some young Afghan men and women to take higher education. However, only DAFI and IDB have organized programmes.

Those who receive DAFI scholarships and IDB loans promise to return home to Afghanistan upon completion of their studies in Pakistan as soon as conditions allow. Statistics about how many of the candidates who have actually returned is not available, but it is known that there are DAFI candidates among Afghans who occupy top posts in the civil service and as ministers. It gives us pleasure to take note of their success, and also recall that some of them started their schooling in BEFARe's primary schools in Peshawar and elsewhere in NWFP, with teachers trained through German and UNHCR funding, with supplementary teaching materials prepared by committed BEFARe staff, and at home, Afghan parents who gave their children the right moral and ethical upbringing.

hundred DAFI graduates from Pakistani institutions have returned to Afghanistan, and if not, if they are working in Pakistan or if they are part of the brain drain to the West or the Middle-East.

It is part of the scholarship agreement that the candidates shall return home as soon as conditions permit. This is also a requirement of the other major facility that exists for Afghan students in Pakistan, the Education Loan Scheme of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which at its peak some years ago provided loans to over one hundred Afghans at Pakistani universities.

Some may delay the return until conditions are good, as seen from a professional perspective, or they may want to gain experience and specialist training abroad before returning home, or they may want to save funds to buy a house or start a private medical practice at home.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, BEFARe was never directly involved in implementation of the DAFI scholarship programme. There was also no *common committee for higher education for Afghans* in Pakistan. UNHCR discussed the possibility of BEFARe implementing the DAFI scholarship programme in 2002 but BEFARe felt it was outside its mandate and capacity at the time, and the programme continued to be implemented by UNHCR. However, if BEFARe had handled DAFI, we believe it would have benefited the programme as well as BEFARe, for example in the field of teacher training, training of trainers, non-formal education (especially MCH and other health sector fields since about 40% of the DAFI students studied medicine), etc. There would also have been good opportunities for establishing institutional cooperation. In the future, it is possible that BEFARe will take on professional administration of higher education training activities.<sup>47</sup>

## BEFARe AS A LEADING ORGANIZATION IN REFUGEE EDUCATION

In refugee education in Pakistan, BEFARe has been the *leading organization*, notwithstanding essential work also being done by other major

implementing partners, such as Ockenden International (OI), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children (US), and others. Teacher training has been an area of concern of all these organizations throughout the Afghan refugee era, especially in more recent years, when training of trainers gained more focused attention and additional donor funds.

The role of being the leading organization in refugee education in Pakistan came to BEFARe for several reasons, the main one simply being that it was always the largest organization, about five to six times larger than the next one, in number of pupils, teachers, and budget. It has a large number of managers, leaders and specialists at its main office in Peshawar and the six sub-offices (resources centers) in NWFP province. BEFARe has managed to shoulder the leadership responsibility well, throughout the refugee era and not least in recent years.

Let us mention that in the Balochistan camps outside Quetta city, Save the Children (US) has had a similar dominating role. For a long time it was the only international implementing partner receiving major funding from UNHCR. However, whereas BEFARe has had over 100,000 pupils, SC/US has never had much over 20,000.

Again, let us mention that there are other education organizations in NWFP and in Balochistan – in education and other sectors. In Peshawar city self-help schools have provided for many non-camp refugees. In Quetta city the urban refugees make up the majority of the total number of refugees in the province, and the number of school-going children. Thus, the urban schools are indeed important in Quetta, and they are important to many families and children in Peshawar and other cities in Pakistan. Unfortunately, they receive little funding from international donors. It is UNHCR's general policy to use its funds in the refugee camps/villages.<sup>48</sup>

## DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULA AND SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING MATERIALS

BEFARe's teaching materials have been used extensively in the refugee schools in the camps in NWFP and Balochistan, and in urban refugee schools. In the recent five-year period, SC/US has developed its own supplementary materials in some main subjects, following a concept known as "basic competencies of learning" (BCL). These are excellent materials following the most modern pedagogical methods.<sup>49</sup>

It should be underlined that BEFARe has been the main developer of supplementary teaching materials, *used by all organizations running refugee schools in Pakistan*. More than one hundred textbook titles have been produced. The work started early in BEFARe's history and the achievement is impressive.

It is important to mention that all BEFARe's textbooks are termed '*supplementary teaching materials*', i.e. they come in addition to the main Afghan textbooks. This is an important principle since refugee schools are usually required to follow the curriculum of the home country to which it is assumed that the refugees will return.

In the Afghan refugee case, which lasted for a very long time and is still not over, cooperation arrangements were established between the Afghan authorities and the University of Nebraska at Omaha in U.S.A. to update Afghanistan's often out-dated materials after the Soviet era. The curriculum and books were known as the *UNO curriculum* and *UNO books*. Most of the UNO books were printed in a donor-funded printing press, with a huge stock of imported paper, and transported to Afghanistan. This support to education in Afghanistan was also provided during the Taliban regime.

BEFARe's materials were developed as supplementary materials to the UNO materials. In the same way, SC/US developed its BCL materials in addition to but not in place of the UNO curriculum and materials. From time to time, organizations running refugee schools in

Pakistan have been criticized for having changed the Afghan curriculum. BEFARe has been criticized for this many times, probably due to its large production of materials. However, the criticism has been based on superficial knowledge. Instead of criticizing BEFARe for having branched off from the Afghan curriculum and old books, we should commend BEFARe for its impressive work in developing more relevant materials, without ignoring the old Afghan curriculum. SC/US and other NGOs who have developed supplementary materials should also be commended for their efforts. We should remember that this work was done out of a need for developing better and more relevant materials to benefit pupils and teachers.

The teachers' guides should be mentioned especially. They are separate advisory booklets, or introductions in the pupils' books, explaining how to teach the various sections and topics of the books. Such "recipes" are very helpful, especially when teachers have limited formal training in pedagogy and teaching methods, and even in subject matters, which is the case for many refugee teachers in BEFARe and other refugee schools.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORK AND COORDINATION

BEFARe's interest in professional development led to the establishment of a special unit in 2000, named the *Knowledge Centre*, expanding the tasks of the ten-year old *Production Section*. Dr. S. B. Ekanayake, a former long-term UNESCO and UNHCR staff member in Pakistan, was instrumental in seeing the Knowledge Centre take off. He worked closely with other senior BEFARe staff members, including the Chief Technical Adviser and Project Director at that time, *Holger Munsch*, and many others.<sup>50</sup>

The Knowledge Centre, which in 2003 was renamed the *Research and Development Department (R&D)*, is headed by **Dr. Mahmooda Rehman**, who is Professor Emeritus, University of Peshawar.<sup>51</sup> The new name re-emphasizes its

importance, not only in the field of education in a narrow sense, but in BEFAre's broader fields of operation. In 2004, for example, BEFAre included training of Pakistani local government councilors in its training activities. This is in line with BEFAre's wish to contribute to poverty reduction, empowerment and training of women and men, livelihoods training, etc. Participants in BEFAre's courses and programmes will be refugees and marginalized Pakistanis; or put differently, the participants will be needy people irrespective of nationality. In future, BEFAre will draw upon its vast experience and competence especially as regards refugees, but also in other contexts to benefit children, youth and adults in education and in other fields.

The R&D department is likely to play a key role and be a cornerstone in BEFAre's future work. It should, for the record, be mentioned that previously BEFAre has hardly carried out any research at all. It has certainly developed an impressive number of textbooks, booklets, reports, training manuals and other materials. Some studies and surveys of the materials have been implemented. Deeper research studies are yet to be implemented, and they should possibly only be implemented in cooperation with established research institutions, such as the University of Peshawar, which is BEFAre's nearby neighbour at Rahatabad in Peshawar.

To exemplify BEFAre's expansion of activities, a large project for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Pakistan/Afghanistan Office, should be mentioned. BEFAre handled logistics, etc., in connection with implementation of absentee voting in the refugee camps for the Afghan Presidential Election, which took place in October 2004. Refugee schools and the School Management Committees were key focal points in connection with implementation of the voting.<sup>52</sup>

Considering the historical significance of the election, BEFAre was particularly honoured to help in the exercise, which was the first time ever that Afghans, at home and in exile, had had the opportunity to cast their vote to elect their coun-

try's leader, and it was indeed a great time for the refugees in Peshawar.

We spoke to several of the voters soon after the election, including a few groups of female teachers and SMC members, who had all voted and they enjoyed speaking about it afterwards. We only came across voters who had voted for *President Hamid Karzai*. We asked the women if they had not voted for the female candidate, Dr. Masooda Jalal, but got only smiles and jokes back. Meanwhile she managed to secure some five percent of the votes, ahead of many of the male presidential candidates. Maybe some of our teachers and SMC members will vote for her next time if she will run?<sup>53</sup>



As the largest refugee education organization in Pakistan, BEFARe has always worked closely with **ACBAR**, including its *Education Subcommittee* and **ARIC**, the *Afghan Resource and Information Centre*. The unique founder and coordinator of ACBAR and ARIC, Dr. *Nancy Hatch Dupree*, is now also a member of BEFARe's Board of Trustees.<sup>54</sup>

In its professional development, BEFARe has shared materials and has held numerous meetings and discussions with Nancy and her staff, in particular staff members from Afghanistan, but also from overseas and locally from Pakistan. ACBAR has offices in Peshawar and in Kabul.

All ARIC's materials, including BEFARe's materials will be moved to Afghanistan, but Nancy says that it is important that the materials will be safe. Now this seems to be the case at the University of Kabul. The books and reports constitute an essential resource, indeed a treasure, which will benefit current and future generations of pupils, teachers, social scientists, historians and others. The materials will be invaluable for Afghan and foreign students and researchers to shed light on and develop greater understanding of the Afghan refugee history in Pakistan – and the country's general history during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

As we have mentioned above in this chapter, BEFARe played a key role in the development of a *Database of Afghan Refugee Teachers in Afghanistan*, which was done in 2002-2003. Here we draw attention to some broader issues since BEFARe's R&D department is involved in many broad issues.

We can draw a parallel to another long-term refugee situation, notably that involving The Sudan, where peace seems to be coming after two decades of severe civil war between the North and South, sending millions into exile. Repatriation from neighbouring countries has begun, similar to that in Afghanistan; South Sudan is in need of teachers and other groups of skilled personnel at middle and high levels. In both country cases, too few refugees were given secondary, vocational and technical education.

On average, less than five percent of refugees in developing countries get a chance to continue beyond primary level and many do not even get any primary education, or literacy and other adult education for those who missed the childhood education opportunity.<sup>55</sup>

Planning and developing databases of personnel who wish to return home after long-term exile shed light on a number of issues. The work points at a pro-active approach to help refugees to prepare to return home, or prepare for long-term employment abroad. For obvious reasons BEFARe limited the exercise to teachers but the general method is the same for other personnel categories. Additional incentives and actions may be needed to help the returnees find relevant work at home.<sup>56</sup> In cooperation with other relevant organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), BEFARe can help other NGOs with developing databases and planning repatriation.

Specific incentives and 'bridging arrangements' may be needed to help the returnees into relevant work at home. IRC has reported that of the teachers they have laid off in 2005 between two thirds and three quarters have found employment in primary and secondary schools in Afghanistan thanks to special actions planned by IRC.

Building on its broad experience, BEFARe will be able to play a pro-active role in various fields of repatriation in the future. It will also be able to develop other fields of activities, for example, related to development of the refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan. BEFARe's R&D department is important in a variety of fields and not only in the education sector.<sup>57</sup>

We have above in this chapter and elsewhere in the book repeatedly underlined that we question whether partners did a good enough job in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan. The honour and burden for the results, and lack of results, rest on the numerous multi- and bilateral organizations, the major NGOs, and the local institutions and organizations, including government authorities in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In this section about professional development and coordination, it is the right place to ask: Did they give the education sector as a whole the attention it deserved, especially basic education (primary and non-formal education) and teacher training, for both female and male participants?

The author of this book, as an educationist, will certainly conclude that not enough was done, either as regards quality or quantity and that many important fields were given a token support and some fields were ignored.

In the circumstances, it is puzzling that education was not given greater attention, considering the presence of large and excellent organizations like BEFARe.

Naturally, BEFARe had to focus on its target areas in NWFP, as per the sub-agreement with UNHCR, its main donor, and other donors when additional funding was obtained. Thus, we can conclude that BEFARe did well in its target areas; it ran schools and non-formal education centers for up to 120,000 children and adults, it mobilized the refugee communities in the camps/villages to send their children to school, it ascertained that each school established a school management committee (SMC), and so on. BEFARe also helped in coordination tasks and advice vis-à-vis other implementing partners and UN organizations. If BEFARe had taken on a wider advocacy role, it would have gone outside its sub-agreements with donors, but perhaps a large organization like BEFARe should have done that? And it did have some bilateral BMZ funds. Nobody else was in a better position to take on such a role, especially in cooperation with ACBAR and the various partners and authorities. Perhaps this is a shortcoming of BEFARe?

Furthermore, who else could have done more as advocates for refugee issues and refugee education than ACBAR together with BEFARe?

We have already mentioned UNHCR and other multi- and bilateral organizations and government authorities in Pakistan. But what about those numerous international organizations, diplomatic missions and international NGOs

that were evacuated from Afghanistan in the 1990s and given temporary location to operate from Pakistan's capital Islamabad? Some of them had offices or were on frequent missions to the major refugee hosting cities of Peshawar, Quetta, Karachi, and elsewhere. Were they all just sitting in Islamabad "*waiting for peace in Afghanistan*"? Some tried to provide assistance to refugees while in Pakistan, such as UNICEF's Afghanistan office and several others, in addition to following developments in Afghanistan and implementing assistance there. Was the assistance that was given to refugees in Pakistan dependent on the organization's planned efforts or was it because of individual staff members' efforts?

In this book we are not in a position to answer these questions, but we find it our duty to ask the questions, *inter alia*, because they also fall under the questions that need to be posed to BEFARe.

*Historical studies and research are required to establish why education was not given greater attention than was the case.* The needs were obvious, the donors were there, excellent organizations like BEFARe was in full swing, but what went wrong? Were there too few *real experts* in the organizations dealing with education? Would BEFARe have acted differently if the R&D Department had been established earlier? Do we still accept that refugees in developing countries can be short-changed with poorer education than other people? Are we not yet including the refugees in our concept of Education for All?<sup>58</sup>

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

BEFARe's involvement in teacher training and professional development activities related to Afghan refugees in Pakistan is one of the most impressive activities of the organization's work. In recent years training of trainers, R&D and other more advanced issues were also included in BEFARe's work.

The statistics presented show the large quantity of training provided. We have also discussed the qualitative improvement that has taken place



in pre- and in-service training courses, classroom observation, etc. As part of the improvements made, we have mentioned that new topics have been included in the training, such as psychosocial issues and peace education. More and better training for teachers/instructors in non-formal education has also been provided.

BEFARe's development of supplementary teaching materials, teachers guides and other books/booklets and reports is yet another field of success in the organization's work. The backlist of publications includes over one hundred and thirty-five titles.

BEFARe's professional competence and leading role in refugee education and teacher training, including coordination functions, is recognized and valued by partners and donors in Pakistan. In future, BEFARe will build on its broad expertise in provision of formal and non-formal education, community development, teacher training, organizational and coordination skills, and innovative approaches in education and related fields. BEFARe aims at being a flexible organization, open to many changes that are coming in the near future. Many refugees will return to Afghanistan, and camps and schools will be closed. Some refugees will try to make a living in Pakistan and stay-on in separate Afghan settlements, or in mixed settlements with a majority of Pakistanis, in urban or rural refugee-hosting areas.

It is hoped that Pakistan, and NWFP and Peshawar city in particular, will realize the value of having an organization with BEFARe's experience and competence ready to get involved in work for the mentioned and additional target groups, and also in additional fields, in the future.

In this chapter we have sometimes pondered

questions like: What were the costs and benefits of the Afghan refugee era? How much did Pakistan gain or lose from it, and in what fields were there benefits or losses? We have taken up these questions in this chapter since they have to do with professional issues and R&D. Studies and analyses are needed to answer or shed some light on such questions. It is hoped that BEFARe's R&D department can contribute to studies in these fields. We assume that one of the findings will be that many Pakistanis, not only Afghans, have gained from refugee activities, and in our case, from activities in BEFARe. Many Pakistanis have paid major contributions as teachers and managers in BEFARe, and they have also gained from their employment in BEFARe. They have attended training courses and worked in a highly professional organization.

However, the main beneficiaries of BEFARe's work have always been the Afghan refugees; pupils, teachers and their families. Many have already returned to Afghanistan. We hope that many more will return to their homeland in the coming years and that they will manage to settle in well, take part in reconstruction of their country and their own lives, and eventually enjoy better lives than what comes to refugees in foreign lands. We hope that the education and experience BEFARe provided to pupils and teachers will prove useful to them. We also hope that the BEFARe teachers will find relevant employment in Afghanistan, and that pupils will be able to complete their primary education and receive further education. We also hope that special education services will develop soon in Afghanistan because the needs are great. Gender equality, for pupils, teachers, and head teachers, we hope will be achieved and accepted universally - in Afghanistan and worldwide.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks for providing information and data for this chapter go to the managers and teacher training staff at BEFARe, including head teachers, teachers, instructors and members of school management committees at the schools. Thanks go also to the pupils who always were willing to be photographed and make our school visits lively and joyful. Special thanks go to the teachers who volunteered to give interviews and tell about their work and life, and excerpts of interviews are presented in this chapter. Without the help of Shakir Ishaq, Mujadidi Agha Shah, Waheeda Farouk and other managers and teachers at BEFARe the work with this chapter would have been difficult. The unique help of one teachers' family should be acknowledged, notably that of Syed Tahir Murad and his son Javed Ahmad, head teacher and teacher, respectively, in Kacha Garhi Camp outside Peshawar. Head teacher Balgis Rangg and her staff in the girls' school also gave invaluable help. We are also grateful to leaders and staff of NGOs, United Nations organizations and individual refugees for information and reports they provided so that we could develop deeper insight.

<sup>2</sup> See research reports and Fil. Dr. dissertations from the Institute of International and Comparative Education (IP), University of Stockholm. IP was very early to study 'what was right not only what was wrong' in schools.

<sup>3</sup> Clinton, Hilary Rodham: *It Takes a Village*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> School management committees have been established in every BEFARe school. The SMCs have special responsibility for collecting funds from parents for maintaining and improving the school compound and physical facilities, which includes building additional classrooms, planting trees and flowers, etc. It also includes ascertaining that the school has drinking water and good toilets. This is particularly important for girls' schools since lack of toilets is one factor which can prevent parents from sending their girls to school.

<sup>5</sup> See, (a) *BEFARe Monthly Newsletter*, Vol. 3, Issues 24 and 25 (for May and July), 2005; (b) BEFARe's Annual Reports (recent years). BEFARe, Peshawar.

<sup>6</sup> See UNHCR's booklets: *Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan 2003, 2004 and 2005*. UNHCR, Islamabad.

<sup>7</sup> See *BEFARe Monthly Newsletter* mentioned in Note 5.

<sup>8</sup> In Pakistan's Census of Afghans living in the country, undertaken in February/March 2005, questions were asked

about why the Afghans (refugees and other categories) did not intend to return home. The main reasons given were; lack of shelter, security and livelihoods. GoP/UNHCR: *Census of Afghans in Pakistan*. Population Census Organisation, Islamabad, and UNHCR, Islamabad, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> See (a) the CD and reports from the Database of Afghan refugee teachers in Pakistan, collected in 2002 - 2003. *Afghan Refugees Teachers' Profile Database*, NWFP and Balochistan. BEFARe, Peshawar, April 2003. (b) Each NGO participating in the above Database and other NGOs dealing with refugee education have further and up-to-date details concerning their teachers' profiles, i.e., years of experience, gender, age, ethnicity, etc. An aggregate updated database has not been made.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*. In connection with UNHCR assisted voluntary repatriation of teachers and other categories of trained human resources from neighbouring countries to South Sudan, the Database from Afghan refugee teachers in Pakistan was consulted in July - September 2004. In future more systematic and detailed data should be prepared well in advance of repatriation in order to provide required training, etc. Data must be made available in simple forms relevant to the various users, i.e., refugees/returnees, sending and receiving organizations, local government authorities, etc. The Database made in Pakistan is the first large and systematic database we are aware of and it forms a 'good practice', but improvements can be made, especially as regards actual use once the material is collected and made available to the authorities and organizations.

<sup>11</sup> (a) See the Bibliography to the Chapter 2 "Historical Background". (b) See also various issues of UNHCR's main periodic magazine, *Refugees*. (Vol. 1, Number 126, 2002, discusses issues concerning refugee women, including Afghan women.) UNHCR, Geneva.

<sup>12</sup> *Teaching for the Future. Profiles of Afghan Refugee Teachers*. UNESCO, Islamabad, 2003. The book manuscript was prepared by Atle Hetland for UNESCO. Excerpts from the interviews with Alam Gul and Abdul Samad are repeated in this book, with minor adjustments in the text.

<sup>13</sup> (a) Working documents for contingency planning in UNHCR, Islamabad, 2001-2002, where the author of this book was a consultant that time. (b) See also two Ring Binders, which were prepared by the author; *Emergency Response in Refugee Education (2002)*; *Summary Report of Issues in Refugee Education (2003)*. UNHCR, Islamabad.

<sup>14</sup> (a) See various reports about repatriation released

by UNHCR, Islamabad. (b) Frequent reports about the situation of refugees in Pakistan and returnees to Afghanistan are being prepared by UNOCHA's "IRIN News Network", Islamabad. (c) Pakistani newspapers report daily/weekly on the situation of refugees/returnees in Pakistan and to some extent also on the situation in Afghanistan. (A number of media clippings are available with the author of this book.)

<sup>15</sup> See Note 12 above.

<sup>16</sup> Group interviews were held with the five young teachers at BEFARe's office on 14 October 2004. One individual interview was held on 15 October 2004. Mujadidi Agha Shah, Syed M. Tahir Murad, Syed Javed Ahmad Murad and Waheeda Farouk answered additional questions on numerous occasions.

<sup>17</sup> (a) The International Rescue Committee's Female Education Programme (FEP) is renowned for high quality education and has played a major role in providing education for female refugee pupils. See various IRC reports and brochures. (b) The Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees Education Cell (CAR/EC), Government of Pakistan, with assistance from UNHCR, was in charge of implementation of secondary education for the refugees until mid-2005 when the secondary schools were closed as the refugees were expected to return to Afghanistan.

<sup>18</sup> This figure is commonly accepted among refugee educationists. See the background document for establishment the Refugee Education Trust for Post-primary Education (RET) by Vivien Stewart and Timothy Brown, with preface by Sadako Ogata, Geneva, 25 August 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with female teachers, Jalozai Camp, NWFP, 2 December 2004.

<sup>20</sup> See Note 16 above. On 2 December 2004 we visited Jalozai Camp, NWFP, and to hold further interviews with the young female teachers in their schools. Mujadidi Agha Shah escorted us during the visit and helped with language translations when required.

<sup>21</sup> See Note 16 above. In addition to the earlier interviews, we held further individual, in-depth interviews with the young male teachers in Peshawar on 23 and 24 October 2004.

<sup>22</sup> From interview with Alam Gul on 24 October 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Mujadidi Agha Shah on 25 October 2004.

<sup>24</sup> See various course materials prepared by Dr. S.B. Ekanayake for courses at BEFARe for master/lead trainers, including his books; (i) *Mega Trends and Challenges in Refugee Education, Guide Book for Trainers*. BEFARe, Peshawar, 2003; (ii) *Operational Parameters of Education for Refugees in Emergencies* (working title). Peshawar/Islamabad. (Forthcoming.)

<sup>25</sup> Environmental education seems to have been given more attention in earlier years than today. For example, UNESCO, Islamabad, prepared a set of booklets in the 1990s, and cooperated with UNHCR on various project issues. The major project taking up environmental issues was included in a three-phase UNHCR project during 1984

- 1996, funded by The World Bank. For further details concerning this particular project, see; *Pakistan Impact Evaluation Report No. 15862-PAK*. The World Bank, Washington D.C., June 28, 1996. In future, when considering assistance to refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan, environmental issues as well as income generating activities should form central elements of any project.

<sup>26</sup> Several NGOs providing education for refugees and teacher training are giving more attention to psycho-social issues, such as BEFARe, IRC, Ockenden International and others. However, there is still a long way to go before these issues and the many sub-disciplines of special education are given the required attention. If there is shortage of teachers locally, it ought to be possible to link up with local universities and colleges in Pakistan, and institutions overseas. In our time, it is also possible to access relevant information and courses through Internet and distance education institutions.

<sup>27</sup> The project leaders were from the beginning of the education projects for Afghan refugees in Pakistan aware of the need for good teacher training. However, in practice it was not possible to meet ideal demands, mainly due to lack of sufficient funding. The general understanding was that refugees should return home in a short time and that long teacher training and their training in exile was therefore 'emergency education', and one could accept lower standards, incl. semi-trained teachers, for the anticipated relatively short time in exile. Today, this understanding is slowly beginning to change. As for the Pak-German Bas-Ed and GTZ-BEFARe project leaders' concern about teacher training and other professional issues at various project stages, see key planning documents, progress reports and other documents, inter alia; (a) *Case Study. The Situation in 24 Pilot Schools in North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan*. Peshawar, December 1985. (b) *What did you learn in school today?* By Udo Bude and Habib-ur-Rahman. Peshawar, 1987. (c) *Management of Primary Schools Under Stress: Guide For Principals*. Compiled by Askar Azam Ahibzada; Preface by Michael Hirth; Technical Advisor S.B. Ekanayake. Peshawar, October 1995. (d) *BEFARe Project Description. Serial No. XV*. Peshawar, August 1996. (b) *BEFARe Project Mirror. Serial No. VII*. By Mohammad Nasim Qasimi. Peshawar, November 1996. (c) *Case Study. The Situation in 24 Pilot Schools in North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan*. Peshawar, December 1985.

<sup>28</sup> For accurate reference to the Database of Afghan refugee teachers in Pakistan, see Note 9 above.

<sup>29</sup> Reports from the CIDA-AREP project are available from the project's different partners and from the Project Monitoring Unit, housed at IRC in Peshawar. Especially during the planning period and the first project implementation year, the author, on behalf of UNESCO, Islamabad, prepared a number of progress reports and other material of professional value.

<sup>30</sup> See BEFARe's course outlines for further details. The two chapters in this book about Formal Education (FE) and Non-formal Education (NFE) also include some infor-

mation about teacher training.

<sup>31</sup> Interviews with Syed Javed Ahmed Murad and Syed M. Tahir Murad, Peshawar, 21 and 23 December 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Syed Javed Ahmad Murad, Peshawar, 23 December 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Mujadidi Aga Shah, Peshawar, 23 December 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Discussions between UNHCR and GTZ/Embassy of Germany in 2001 and 2002. The author of this book was a consultant at UNHCR, Islamabad, at that time and there was considerable interest from the German side in increasing funding to UNHCR. UNHCR's Representative at that time, Hasim Utkan, was particularly interested in receiving additional funding to general primary education and other fields, such as vocational education, special education and literacy training. After "9/11" the German focus shifted quickly to provision of assistance directly to Afghanistan. However, education was not a prioritized area for Germany in Afghanistan and is only beginning to be given attention today. As for BEFARe and refugee education in general in Pakistan, we have elsewhere in this book regretted that the German funding to refugee education dwindled at the time it did, when it should rather have been increased, which we consider would have been in Germany's interests and certainly in that of UNHCR and the refugees/returnees.

<sup>35</sup> (a) See Note 34 above. (b) See also, Ekanayake, S.B. and Atle Hetland: Working Notes for the current book, p. 10. Peshawar/Islamabad, 10.11.04.

<sup>36</sup> Johannessen, Eva, S.B. Ekanayake and Udo Bude: *Evaluation of GTZ/Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe) in Pakistan. Final Version.* UNHCR, Geneva, 2002.

<sup>37</sup> BEFARe has taken several initiatives related to improvements in teacher training and R&D. BEFARe has nominated Dr. S.B. Ekanayake to be its representative on the INEE minimum standards committee from 2005. INEE, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency, is an open network with a small secretariat at UNESCO, Paris; currently at UNICEF, New York.

<sup>38</sup> (a) Johannessen, Eva et al: *Op.cit.* (b) In addition to UNHCR's implementing partners in education, we should remember that other NGOs and self-help schools also try new methods in the classroom and teacher training courses. One such NGO is the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), Peshawar/Kabul. Materials are available at the various NGOs. Most organizations are registered in the coordinating bodies ACBAR and/or ANCB in Peshawar. The Afghan Resource and Information Centre (ARIC), housed at ACBAR, Peshawar and Kabul, is the largest library of refugee literature in Pakistan/Afghanistan.

<sup>39</sup> See BEFARe's report sheets and other materials for field/school visits, etc.

<sup>40</sup> We visited BEFARe School No. 099 several times in 2004 and 2005. We conducted interviews with Balgis Rangg, Head Teacher, on several occasions. On a couple of occasions our visits coincided with visits by managers and master/lead trainers and we got a positive picture of the

manner in which classroom and school observation and advice took place, using instruments mentioned under Note 39 above.

<sup>41</sup> Johannessen, Eva et al: *Op.cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Balgis Rangg, 14 May 2005

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Mujadidi Aga Shah, 15 May 2005. Interview with Dr. S.B. Ekanayake, 15 June 2005.

<sup>44</sup> The INEE committee work related to minimum standards in various refugee/emergency education fields, including teacher training and training of trainers, will be useful in developing new standards, or, as it is termed 'minimum standards'. INEE has published several books and CDs of relevance. [www.hamninfo.org](http://www.hamninfo.org) Training for refugee teachers should be much longer than the very brief courses that are common today. Courses of 3-4 months' duration are more realistic duration considering the difficult work that refugee teachers have. Even longer duration, say 6-8 months would be important, for example organized as a 3-4 months' introductory training module, followed by one-two similar period/s during school vacations, with part-time course-work during the school year. It is also hoped that we soon can reach a situation when training of experts (or semi-experts) in various fields can be trained, i.e. in special education subjects, early childhood development, languages, science subjects, vocational training, education planning, etc. Even if the refugee situation in question is expected to last for a short time (but experience has proven that most refugee situations last for many years) we have to develop better and longer refugee teacher training courses in future. This is a general issue worldwide, especially in developing countries. It is in no way only limited to the Afghan refugee situation in Pakistan, which seems finally to be coming to and end. (Of other international organizations in Peshawar, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) gave major attention to training of teachers for work in Afghanistan. When "9/11" changed the world, and the work of NGOs in Pakistan/Afghanistan, SCA was in the process of planning full teacher training for a class of Afghan refugees at a Swedish teacher training college/university.)

<sup>45</sup> The DAFI Scholarship programme was for many years administered by Tauqir Mirza, UNHCR, Islamabad, who developed a keen interest in the programme. His successor Nasir Sahibzada, who took over in 2003 also gave the programme major attention. However, the programme was always administered as an appendix to the education fields that were seen as more important, notably basic education.

<sup>46</sup> Although there may be some 'wastage' from a programme like DAFI, i.e. that a large percentage of the candidates will never return home, we warn against drawing too categorical conclusions about the value of the programme. Even if a refugee does not return home, or he or she returns home only for a short while, or in retirement, DAFI gave hope and a better life to some few refugees. A relatively small percentage of those who received DAFI scholarships came from the refugee camps, including adolescents who had attended BEFARe schools, but most of the recipients

were urban refugees. The programme is well monitored from UNHCR, Geneva, and the DAFI officer (seconded by Germany) visits Pakistan every 1-2 years to evaluate developments and problems. For further details, see DAFI/Education Mission Reports and other documents and brochures in UNHCR, Islamabad.

<sup>47</sup> In the future, there could be closer cooperation between DAFI and the German higher educational programme known as DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), which gives attention to institutional cooperation. Towards the end of a refugee era (before and early in the reconstruction phase) it is important to normalize activities, including such related to higher education and research. Teacher training, educational planning, statistics and research should always have a central place throughout a refugee period and at its end.

<sup>48</sup> As for general guidelines, see UNHCR: (a) *Handbook for Emergencies. Second Edition*. UNHCR, Geneva, 2000. (b) *Education Field Guidelines*. UNHCR, Geneva, February 2003. (c) It should be noted that UNHCR and the host Government of Pakistan have solicited for funds for refugee-hosting areas and urban refugees (which in the current refugee situation constituted half of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan). However, such funds would be seen as outside UNHCR's main mandate and donors would be less willing to provide funding. In recent years and currently, there seem to be greater interest for assisting urban refugees and in particular refugee-hosting areas, which would have a majority of Pakistani citizens, living in poor conditions.

<sup>49</sup> The basic concepts are described in, Chinapah, Vina: *Basic Learning Competencies*. UNESCO, Paris, 1993

<sup>50</sup> The establishment of the Knowledge Centre, later renamed R&D department, was a major innovative action, which was important to (a) give professional aspects greater place and (b) give clearer focus to future planning of change and development (of BEFARe as an organization and of content in education and other fields).

<sup>51</sup> Except for consultants and short-term staff members, Dr. Rehman was the first academic appointed at BEFARe. The organization should have appointed academic/highly professional staff members earlier and it would have benefited from it in its work. With focused efforts we believe funding would have been possible.

<sup>52</sup> In 2004 BEFARe implemented a major short-term project on behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) regarding Out-of-country Registration and Voting (OCRV) in the Afghan Presidential Election in October 2004. In all such exercises schools (buildings) and human resources (head teachers/teachers, SMCs and parents) play key roles.

<sup>53</sup> Democracy is a new concept in Afghanistan's history. Equal rights for women and men are indeed new concepts. However, refugee women experience few problems in

being allowed in taking part in the Presidential Election in NWFP.

<sup>54</sup> Nancy Hatch Dupree, born in America, had lived in Afghanistan since the 1960s with her husband Louis Dupree, a renowned scholar when she was forced to leave the country soon after the invasion of the Soviet Union. The couple probably felt like related to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and they both devoted their lives to the Afghan cause, writing books, giving lectures and speeches and establishing an organization ACBAR and Library, ARIC, in Peshawar and Kabul. Nancy has continued the work after her husband passed away many years ago. She is a member of BEFARe's Board of Trustees. Dr. Hatch Dupree is one of the most respected foreigners in the Afghan refugee community in Pakistan.

<sup>55</sup> See reference in Note 18. The seriousness of lack of educational opportunities for refugees at secondary level, and literacy training, basic skills training and vocational training, is graver than statistics reveal. It is hoped that the extremely low progress rate will be considered unacceptable in the near future. Even in many poor African countries 20-25% of the primary school cohort continues at secondary level.

<sup>56</sup> The importance of assisting refugees to repatriate and get relevant jobs at home should be emphasized. In BEFARe, local and international staff and consultants have been concerned about the field, termed 'bridging assistance'. Cooperation should be established with several NGOs, UN organizations (such as ILO, UNESCO, etc.), other international organizations (such as IOM), bilateral organizations and Government authorities. Teachers is a professional category of particular importance, inter alia, because teachers and head teachers can be used in many types of jobs, in addition to teaching. More than a quarter of all refugee teachers in Pakistan are women.

<sup>57</sup> BEFARe places importance on applying its expertise in education and related fields in future, especially in refugee-hosting areas.

<sup>58</sup> The United Nations and the international community in general use Education for All (EFA) as a general term. The target is to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE), and close to universal literacy, by 2015. The education targets are part of The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which also emphasize economic development, health and other development areas. Refugees and IDPs, who on average are about one percent of populations in developing countries, must not be 'forgotten' in the EFA/MDG efforts. In education, the new term 'inclusive education' is a useful reminder to include and mainstream all marginalized groups, yet also allow them to keep their uniqueness.



## BEFARe - A “Flagship” in Refugee Education

Contributing to refugee and emergency education worldwide

Chapter

# 8



## BEFARe - A “Flagship” in Refugee Education

*In this chapter we draw attention to some of the salient features of the BEFARe project. Its achievements are among the most advanced in refugee education, and the project is the world’s largest.*

*The achievements can be measured in number of pupils who have completed primary school, adult education courses, training courses for teachers and various community development activities. BEFARe, as an organization, has also developed into a solid local non-governmental organization (NGO), aiming at continued activities in education and other sectors to benefit Afghan refugees, refugee-hosting areas and victims of the devastating earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October 2005.*

*From 2006, activities also take place in Afghanistan.*

*We believe that when an impact study is carried out of BEFARe and GTZ-implemented assistance to refugee education in Pakistan, they will be given a high score. Many countries can draw lessons from the work done in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan, including the project which is the main focus of this book, making it a foundation book in refugee and emergency education.*

*We are convinced that the impact of the project in Afghanistan is already noticeable. We hope, however, that donors do not cease to assist refugee education in Pakistan at this crucial point and continue to provide ‘bridging assistance’ to the returnees. We hope that assistance is enlarged for several years to come so that the about four million Afghans who are still living in Pakistan and in some other countries, can return home with dignity, with skills and knowledge, with prospects for livelihoods as adults, with education as children and youth, and with realistic hopes for a sustainable and prosperous life ahead for all men and women.*



## *An Exile's Dream of Coming Home to Afghanistan*

*Sometimes, when I am alone and I close my eyes,  
I think of my country, Afghanistan, and it makes me sad inside.  
Afghanistan, you are the love of my life,  
you have always had a special place in my heart.  
My parents talked about you and you sounded like heaven on earth.  
My elder brother and sister also talk about you and I become envious.  
I have never seen you, my beloved home country,  
but you are there in my heart, in my dreams.  
Sometimes, though, I wonder if you really are that fantastic.  
Yet that I cannot tell since I have lived all my life in exile and  
I only know what others have told me.  
There are many things that I have learned in exile, even things  
I would not have learned at home.  
But there are also many things I have never learned because  
I have been away from home.  
I hope I can learn all the things I have missed about you.  
But I also hope you can accept me the way I am.*

*I have many new ideas, taught to me by teachers and others, and  
I have plans for change and reconstruction.  
I also have heard about old-fashioned customs and ways that I do not want to keep.  
You know, I have learned that men and women are equal.  
I have learned that everybody must go to school and that  
the land belongs to all regardless of cradle or creed.  
I would like to come and meet you some day soon now, my dear Afghanistan.  
Yet, I keep postponing it because I both long for you, and at the same time,  
I am afraid of meeting you.  
Perhaps I am like an orphan whose parents have been found.  
I am like a child who wants to keep the dream and not face the reality, not quite yet.  
I also want you to be ready for me when I come, so that you do not disappoint me.  
And I do not want to disappoint you, so I keep learning and preparing for coming home.  
I may be a demanding returnee and I may expect too much from you.  
Yet, I also want to help rebuild you, my Afghanistan,  
so that you can truly shine, like you shine in my heart when  
I close my eyes.*

*I want our meeting to be joyful and happy. I want you to shine forever.  
This time, Afghanistan, I don't want wars, conflicts or drought to destroy our land.  
Are you ready for me so that I can come home to you, Afghanistan?  
Am I ready, not only to meet you, but to live with you for the rest of my life?*

*Syed Javed Ahmad Murad*  
Young Afghan Refugee Teacher in Peshawar, Pakistan

This book gives an overview of refugee issues, in particular, refugee education in Pakistan and elsewhere. Emphasis is placed on the BEFARe project, which is a broad term for several projects implemented by the German government aid agency, GTZ, in Pakistan, recently registered as a local organization. Most of the funding has been provided by the United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHCR. In addition, some bilateral German aid has been provided from BMZ, as well as assistance from various other international and local organizations.

BEFARe has always operated within the parameters of the Government of Pakistan, overseen by the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), Islamabad, and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and its Education Cell (CAR/EC), Peshawar.

We have termed BEFARe *the world's largest refugee education project*, believing this to be correct, at least when excluding activities of the United Nations Organization for the Palestinian Areas, UNRWA, which falls outside the general refugee responsibility of UNHCR operations.

To cater for more than *one hundred thousand pupils and up to three thousand teachers* has required major administrative, pedagogical and other professional organizational support on the part of GTZ-BEFARe.

In addition to BEFARe, there are several other highly professional international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or implementing partners as they are called in United Nations and UNHCR terminology. UN organizations with part of their mandate in education, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WFP, and other organizations, including bilateral ones, are important actors in the refugee education community in Pakistan. These organizations are particularly important as funding agencies and as agencies of policy development, while the NGOs that focus on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), such as BEFARe, are specialists in implementation.

There are two or three major focus areas of support for refugees and refugee education in

Pakistan. They are defined according to where the refugees live and where the refugee camps have been established, notably in Quetta, Balochistan, and Peshawar, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Mianwali in Punjab is a third refugee-hosting area with one refugee camp, but it is small in comparison to the other areas, which have had up to two hundred camps in all.

In Quetta and Balochistan province, Save the Children - United States (SC/US) has played a lead role. In Peshawar, BEFARe has played a similar role, although not with quite the same monopoly status that SC/US has had in Quetta over long periods. However, BEFARe is about five times as large (measured in number of pupils) and could be said to have played the *lead role in refugee education in the whole of Pakistan*.

We believe that refugee education has been well served by all the participating organizations, most of them international NGOs. The quality of the services provided has been consistently *good or excellent*.

However, we, including BEFARe, should not *rest on our laurels* because there are still many refugees, in the camps/villages and many more in urban areas who have never had an opportunity to enrol their children in school – should they have wanted to do so. Initially, this was not always the case but, today, most parents want their *sons and daughters* to go to school.

Literacy and other youth and adult education opportunities are still few.

Secondary education opportunities have always been limited, and higher education has been for *the select few* in spite of UNHCR's DAFI Scholarship Programme (funded by Germany) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Loan Scheme.

We would all have liked to see *education for all children* of primary school-age, academic and vocational secondary school opportunities for at least a quarter of primary school leavers, and skills training for livelihoods for the rest. We would naturally have liked to see a good proportion afforded the chance of college-level educa-

tion, liberal university education and training in the professions.

Following medium- or long-term refugee situations, when reconstruction begins and refugees return home, the *importance of educated human resources* always become clear, along with the difficulties that arise when this has been neglected. Some of Afghanistan's difficulties today are caused by the fact that many refugees have not received enough, or indeed any formal education. Those who stayed at home during the years of war and conflict, notably some two-thirds of the 20-25 million population of Afghanistan, had even more limited education opportunities – especially during the Taliban regime – than those who left for Pakistan or Iran. Education opportunities were better in Iran than in Pakistan, but it was usually only provided according to that country's curricula. In Pakistan, Afghanistan's own curriculum, with modifications over the years, has been followed.

During the Taliban regime, girls' education was available for less than ten percent of school-age children in Afghanistan, and it was very unevenly available, depending on geographical area and social class. Thus, many refugees had a better chance for education than those who stayed at home. Yet far from all refugees had the opportunity to go to school.

At the current time of ongoing *repatriation and reconstruction*, the importance of educated human resources at all levels and particularly at middle level is becoming clear. Such resources include teachers, nurses, midwives, electricians, plumbers, commercial school graduates, administrators etc. Teachers have been included in this group, but often they are at a more advanced level, especially those who teach in secondary schools. Teachers and head teachers usually have a special role to play as *community leaders* in addition to their ordinary teaching duties.

It is unfortunate that donors and implementing partners, and sometimes even the refugees themselves, did not realize clearly the importance of education at an early stage in the three-decade long Afghan refugee era. Some, such as

the German development aid workers, UNHCR and other organizations did realize the importance of education, but the *forcefulness* that was required was missing perhaps even in these organizations. We have felt at times that discussion of education matters was important in terms of seminars and conferences rather than in terms of implementation in refugee camps/villages and in the shanty towns for urban refugees and their Pakistani hosts living in the same neighbourhoods.

On another continent, notably Africa, the Sudan is in a situation similar to Afghanistan's. Peace seems to have come finally to that country after civil wars and conflicts that have lasted about the same length of time as in the sad case of Afghanistan. There too millions of refugees in neighbouring countries and further away, and IDPs, now look to return home, provided they can find shelter, livelihoods, education for their children and other basic social services.

Refugee life also opens people's eyes because they get a chance to experience alternatives. They get exposure and new ideas. This is a positive outcome of what is mostly a miserable existence. Forced migration is rarely, if ever, an easy ride.

For the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the shortcomings were many. Those who received education through organizations like BEFARe were well served. But there were never more than *fifty to sixty percent of school-age children in school*, and at best, in the refugee camps/villages, only *one third of the pupils were girls*.

For *urban refugees* there was very little funding for and implementation of quality education and yet they comprised about half of all Afghans living in Pakistan over the last decades. Coordination of organizations should also have been done better, although the *Education Subcommittee of ACBAR* (Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief) and others did excellent work, considering the circumstances. Perhaps BEFARe could have played an even more proactive role had it formed part of a consortium-type organization with other partners. The beneficiar-

ies themselves, the refugees, and local Pakistani and Afghan institutions and organizations should have been included too.

Shortcomings aside, the success stories in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan should be celebrated. BEFARe is one such *success story*. Hence, the author of this book nominated BEFARe for the *Nansen Refugee Award for 2005 and 2007*, whose secretariat is in UNHCR, Geneva. The award was established in honour of Fridtjof Nansen, the Norwegian explorer and philanthropist who is seen as the world's first high commissioner and spokesman for refugees. Although the winner in 2005 was another worthy organization in the battered Great Lakes Region of Africa, we believe that BEFARe, refugee education and the sad and brave history of Afghan refugees were seriously considered. Perhaps it has a winning chance in 2007?

Thousands of teachers have been trained through BEFARe's teacher orientation and training programmes, as well as through practical experience in well-organized schools and in-service advice and training. Through BEFARe, hundreds of thousands of children have received primary education. Close to one hundred thousand adolescents and adults have received literacy training and other non-formal education. In addition, through BEFARe and other organizations, tens of thousands have received skills and vocational training

This book is mainly a *documentation* of BEFARe's work. It contains some analysis but the total *impact* of the work has not been evaluated.

We advocate on behalf of *education for refugees and IDPs everywhere*, not only for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, their brothers and sisters in the host country, and returnees upon arrival in the home country.

When the time to go home comes, education needs to be supplemented by additional assistance, notably *employable skills, maybe subsidized temporary employment, housing, social services, micro-finance and other assistance*. If we think that education alone can make major changes, we are like ostriches hiding our heads in

the sand. Yet we also know that without education, the other factors, notably money and other incentives, are certainly not going to work.

We would like to emphasize BEFARe's particular achievements as regards *awareness creation, enlightenment and education of the public*. Special mention should be made of its highly successful work in *community participation and development*, which has included the establishment of *school management committees (SMCs)* in every BEFARe school. This community training has reached hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees, who have been pupils without knowing it! For those who return to Afghanistan, or for those who stay on in Pakistan for some time and become integrated, this knowledge and experience will be particularly useful.

Democracies, peaceful and prosperous societies, are built by people who are *active participants in their communities*. People will discuss, argue, agree or disagree, look for alternatives, new solutions, and so on. They will in each case try to reach *conclusions* if not always *consensus* that are acceptable to everyone in the community, not only to the powerful and strong, but also to the weak, the handicapped, the minorities, and the women. The term '*inclusive education*' underlines this point.

We believe that BEFARe has taught the inhabitants of the refugee camps/villages the main aspects of building and living in more democratic and egalitarian societies, where the strength of an argument should not be decided by a person's wealth, possession of arms, formal education, gender or other attributes that people may traditionally have had to accept, but by an argument's real strength and practical value to the development of the society in question, and to the benefit of each and every member of it.

We believe that BEFARe has contributed to developing understanding of the need for *greater gender equality, the rights of the child, and human rights in general*.

When the *impact* of BEFARe is one day evaluated, we are confident that it will be a positive evaluation: it will get a high 'test score' at the

final exam. In the meantime, we hope that BEFARe's work – and that of its sister NGOs – will continue and expand. We hope it will include Pakistanis in poor areas in the cities and rural areas, including people afflicted by the devastating earthquake of 8 October 2005 in Pakistan, among them BEFARe's traditional areas of operation.

If the reader feels that he or she has learned something about BEFARe and the examples provided through its work, after having read this book, our efforts will not have been in vain.

Though in all humility, we should remember that whatever writers, researchers, donors and philanthropists do, *the burden is always carried by the refugees themselves and their hosts*, not by outsiders. The real achievements, therefore, are

always those of the people themselves. However, funds and assistance can make a difference and no efforts are without significance.

Since there are still several millions Afghans in Pakistan who need education, *the work must go on*. All of us must contribute until all Afghans who wish to return to their homeland are safely home with the prospect of being able to live their lives in harmony and progress. Such a prospect should include schools for their children and young men and women. The prospects for the New Afghanistan should indeed be *Education for All* and *Literacy for All*, in accordance with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Afghanistan is now again part of the international community and aims at the same standards as other countries.

## Recommended Reading

In this Chapter we have not included Notes. Instead we would like to recommend a few titles for further reading; some of which have been included in the Notes in other chapters.

1. UNHCR: *Searching for Solutions. 25 years of UNHCR-Pakistan Cooperation on Afghan Refugees*. UNHCR, Islamabad, 2005. See also, *Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan*, published by UNHCR, Islamabad in 2003, 2004 and 2005.
2. See Note 26(b) in Chapter 2.
3. UNDP's *Human Development Report for Afghanistan*. UNDP, Kabul, 2004.
4. In *education*, three recent booklets about Afghanistan are recommended. (a) Craig Naumann et al: *Results and Discussion of Education Data collected in the Afghan National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2003*. World Food Programme, Kabul, April 2005. (b) Craig Naumann: *Survival, Dropout and other Indicators. Compilation of some Basic School Statistics in the Afghan School System*. Analysis: WFP CO AFG, Education Unit. Main Source: UNICEF RALS, 2002 and 2003/4 data. World Food Programme, Kabul, 2005. E-mail: craig.naumann@wfp.org (c) AREU has compiled several surveys and reports from Afghanistan and Pakistan. [www.areu.org.af](http://www.areu.org.af)
5. For a *writer's account* of the situation in Afghanistan in 2002, with emphasis on repatriation, we recommend, Albinati, Adoardo: *Coming Back. Diary of a mission to Afghanistan*. Hesperus Press, London, 2002, and UNHCR, Geneva, 2003.
6. For a *photographic account*, we recommend, Zahnai: *Return. Afghanistan*. (Preface by Ruud Lubbers, UNHCR

High Commissioner, and an essay by Ron Moreau.) UNHCR/Aperture Foundation, Geneva, 2004.

7. A recent *theatre play* takes up sole searching questions about migration and refugees. Ariane Mnouchkine's pageant of the uprooted. See a review by Johan Lahr: "The New Nomads", depicting asylum seekers turned into voyagers. *The New Yorker*, August 1, 2005. [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com)
8. The Pakistani daily, *The News*, Lahore/Karachi/Islamabad, has a Special Report on refugees and returnees on Sunday June 26, 2005. The articles include, inter alia, a well-researched historical article. [www.jang.com.pk](http://www.jang.com.pk)
9. BEFARe's recent *Annual Reports* make useful reading, especially for 2002, 2003 and 2004 and 2005. BEFARe, Peshawar. In addition, BEFARe has produced a few *DVDs* about formal and non-formal education and one about the future, entitled, *BEFARe: The New Horizon*. Contact the organization for copies. [www.befare.org](http://www.befare.org)
10. The author has written a number of articles on refugee and returnee issues in various *Pakistani dailies*, especially *The Dawn* and *The News*, and several other publications, including some short articles in *Forced Migration*, published by the Oxford University Refugees Studies Centre, Oxford, UK, with the Norwegian Refugee Council. Subscriptions from Third World institutions are usually free. [www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org)

## Part V

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## Going Home

How well are the refugees prepared for returning home and what educational qualifications do they bring with them from Pakistan?

Chapter

# 9





## Going Home

How well are the refugees prepared for returning home and what educational qualifications do they bring with them from Pakistan?

*This chapter focuses on the many difficult decisions that face refugees when they consider returning home after years, sometimes decades, in exile. The 'going home' process may seem straightforward but in practice it requires serious consideration and planning.*

*This chapter acknowledges that the process is difficult: on the one hand, it is a happy time when the option of return actually exists, on the other hand, the refugees have to leave a relatively safe and organized situation to meet factors which are unknown. They need to find shelter, livelihoods, daily security, health services, education for their children, and so on. The returnees also need to know that their neighbours and other people really welcome them home; not only the central government and the official authorities. They also need to be relatively sure that the peace will hold, that life prospects are better at home than in exile, and that living costs are not prohibitive, as is often the case after wars, especially in major cities. The answers may vary from one ethnic group to another, and from one geographic area to another.*

*Many Afghan refugees in Pakistan have lived in exile for a long time. They came in major exoduses due to the wars in Afghanistan: notably in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in the mid 1980s and in the early 1990s. Some came at other times, including after "9/11", but most of those who came recently have already returned home.*

*There are still about three million Afghans in Pakistan and most of them are refugees. A similar number have already returned after "9/11" or more precisely after the UNHCR assisted repatriation programme started in the spring of 2002. Some Afghans are still coming to Pakistan, mostly to seek survival and livelihoods.*

*Availability of education for children and adolescents is an important element when deciding on 'going home' or 'staying-on'. Qualifications and prospects of work at home are even more important. How well were the refugees trained and prepared for going home? What lessons can we learn from Pakistan's efforts in Afghan refugee education, including those of BEFARe?*

*The chapter draws relatively few conclusions. It focuses on the many difficult questions that arise when we discuss refugee issues, even when it is about 'going home'. All humanitarian and development aid includes many difficult issues and decisions. We outsiders influence poor people's lives directly, and we must always bear in mind that each refugee and each family is unique.*

*At the end of the chapter we discuss some aspects related to lessons that we can learn from the quarter century Afghan refugee era, especially as related to education. We ask whether what we did contributes to the refugees now being in a good position to return. Here it is possible to draw a positive conclusion, notably that Pakistan and Pakistanis treated their Afghan brothers and sisters well, with the help of the international community. But should more have been done, or should other measures have been taken? Also should more have been done for the poor Pakistanis in refugee hosting areas and communities?<sup>1</sup>*

*Special thanks for providing information, data and opinions for this chapter go to the teachers, parents and other refugees we have spoken to during the work with the book. Thanks also go to other people; Afghans, Pakistanis and others, who have shared their valuable insights. A large amount of written material has been consulted, especially from UNHCR and other United Nations organizations. Weeklies and daily newspapers have also been consulted over several years, especially Pakistani papers such as The News, The Dawn and others. The author remains responsible for interpretations and analysis of issues.*



Painting by Professor Gh. M. Shabnam Ghaznawi of his former home in Kabul, Afghanistan. The artist has lived in exile in Pakistan for many years and the painting shows a house, not a home, without solid foundation and surroundings. The artist may have used this symbolically to show how he feels about how the past wars and conflicts have treated him, his family and hundreds of thousands of other Afghans in exile and at home in Afghanistan.

The painting is in the ownership of the author and permission to reproduce it has been given by the artist.<sup>2</sup>

See also *Prose Recitation* about going home to Afghanistan, written by Syed Javed A. Murad, a young Afghan refugee teacher in Pakistan, in the introduction of Chapter 8.

## Post-Refugee Options

There are three solutions for refugees at the end of a short or a long stay in exile:

- Return to home country
- Resettlement in "third country"
- Integration in the country of asylum (temporarily or permanently)

### 1. Return to home country

For the majority of the refugees, the first option is generally considered the *most preferred solution*, by the parties concerned, i.e. the refugees themselves, the host country, the home country, the international community, including UNHCR and other UN organizations, donor countries, NGOs and interest organizations.

Since spring 2002, close to 3 million Afghans have returned home from Pakistan, more than a million from Iran, and smaller numbers from other countries, bringing the total number to almost 4.5 million. UNHCR has actively assisted this voluntary repatriation, which has turned out to be the largest such operation in the agency's history.

Some of those who have returned have not been able to settle in at home and have had to come back, and some other new refugees have entered Pakistan, but the repatriation has generally been a successful operation.

Return to the home country can be delayed by various unsettled legal issues, either in the home country or in the country of exile, for example if a refugee has established business in partnership with a national in the country of exile. Payment of the share the refugee is entitled to may be delayed, either on purpose or because the formal or informal business operation cannot afford the money to be paid without closing down. Other situations may be outright, or close to, bonded labour which sometimes include young adolescents and even children. In the home country there may be dis-

putes about ownership of the refugees' land. For example a neighbour may have taken over the land of those who fled and may not be willing, or able, to give all, or any of the land, back to the actual owner. These are examples of situations delaying repatriation. They can usually only be solved amicably if given time, combined with legal advice and common sense. Some cases need court's decisions but enforcement of such decisions is often difficult. Every year UNHCR Pakistan has promptly published end-of-year summaries of its repatriation work, which has always been implemented in close cooperation with the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan, in accordance with the tripartite agreements. Donor countries have funded the operations, mainly through UNHCR, which has also directly implemented much of the work, with the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the NGOs. (See exact reference below and in the Notes.)

### 2. Resettlement in "third country"

Only a small number of countries in the world accept resettlement in "third country". It is a facility used by UNHCR to find permanent residence for refugees who, for various reasons, cannot live safely in the first country of asylum, or in the home country, for fear of continued persecution. In 2005, some tens of thousand of places were open for resettlement of refugees in about 20 countries, with U.S.A., Canada and Australia taking the largest numbers. Sometimes, not all resettlement places are made use of, mainly because of time-consuming processing procedures, and it can also be difficult to draw final conclusions in many individual cases. It should be emphasized that resettlement remains an important offer of a fresh start for a very small number of refugees, and that

it is important that the system is maintained.

### 3. Integration in the country of asylum

Integration into the country of asylum is an option that refugees who have lived abroad for a long time, or who were born abroad, are particularly interested in. Families with children of school going-age, and particularly adolescents doing secondary or higher education may be interested in staying in Pakistan rather than returning to areas in Afghanistan with particularly poor education opportunities.

Handicapped and other vulnerable individuals and families are often unable to return home and make a living in Afghanistan.

However, the majority of those who are interested in integration in the country of asylum, in this case Pakistan, are ordinary Afghans who find daily life in Pakistan better than in Afghanistan, with better prospects for their children, and who find Pakistan as much *home* as Afghanistan. Let us repeat that most of these refugees are ordinary poor Afghans, making a living as daily wage earners and trying hard to meet daily expenses. Some are businessmen with good incomes. Many of the refugees are Pashtuns and belong to the same group as the majority in the hosting areas, but some are from minority ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

It should be mentioned that there is a relatively large group of Afghans who are businessmen and traders traveling frequently between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and maybe also visiting Iran and other neighbouring countries. The better off in this group may not be *refugees* in a true sense. Some may even be involved in illegal or semi-legal trade and smuggling.

## The refugee/returnee situation in Pakistan

1. Pakistan has been a generous host for millions of Afghan refugees for more than twenty-five years, as we have repeatedly mentioned in this book. UNHCR has been the coordinator of the international assistance to Pakistan and the Afghan refugees. Although there are shortcomings in the assistance provided by the international community, UNHCR has generally performed as well as could be expected under its mandate. The massive assisted voluntary repatriation since spring 2002 has been implemented without major shortcomings with the general agreement of all parties.

2. At the end of 2006 there are still about three million Afghans in Pakistan, most of whom would be considered refugees. About half a million Afghans take part in the labour market in Pakistan, assuming that each family has six members. In addition, family members may be involved in income-generating activities on a part-time basis, such as carpet weaving or other handicrafts.

3. In 2006, the Government of

Pakistan's *National Database Registration Authority (NADRA)* will carry out a registration exercise of all Afghans in the country who were counted in the *Census of Afghans in Pakistan* undertaken in spring 2005. The current tripartite agreement (Pakistan-Afghanistan-UNHCR) has been extended until the end of 2006. Based on the *registration*, in the second half of 2006, it will be decided what kind of solutions will be required to bring the Afghan refugee era to an end in ways which are acceptable to the parties concerned, with a time-frame (3 years). Discussions about, and search for, optimal solutions still go on.

4. In 2005, close to half a million Afghans chose to return to their home country under the UNHCR assisted programme, which was above the adjusted expected figure of 400,000. It is hoped that the number of returnees will continue to be high in the coming years, thus making it easier for the host country to accept *special solutions* for a relatively small number of individuals and families who will seek *integration in Pakistan*, tem-

porarily or permanently.

5. Assistance to refugee hosting areas and selected host communities in Pakistan is given priority. Future international assistance is sought shifted from refugee assistance to more ordinary development assistance ("mainstreaming"). Such assistance is also required for Pakistan, not only for Afghanistan although the latter is obvious and requirements large to settle returnees and reconstruct the country.

6. Since Pakistan and Afghanistan are close neighbours, with a common history, present and future interests, it is important that the refugee era be brought to an end in a way which is acceptable to both countries and their people, and that it is also acceptable in a regional and international geopolitical context. Naturally, it is everybody's hope that the political and economic developments in Afghanistan will be such that people do not need to flee their home country and become refugees in Pakistan and other countries again.

## Education and the refugee/returnee situation in Pakistan

1. Most of the Afghan refugees who came to Pakistan were *illiterate*. Rural refugees and especially women were more often illiterate than men from the major cities. Some refugees had some or full primary school. A small group had secondary education, technical training and even university education. A very small number had completed university degrees from Afghanistan, the former Soviet Union or elsewhere. Most of those with higher education, and refugees from the upper segment of Afghan society found refuge in the West, not in Pakistan, and a small proportion of this group is likely to return home.

2. In Pakistan, the children in the refugee camps/villages had a much better possibility of getting good primary education than those in non-camp/urban settings. However, even in the camps there

were rarely more than fifty, occasionally up to sixty percent of the school-age children being enrolled in the 6-year primary schools. The percentage of *enrolment of girls* increased over the years and peaked at about thirty-five percent in BEFAre schools in 2005.

3. UNHCR's statistics from the large two-year voluntary repatriation in 2002 and 2003 show that *less than a quarter* of the returnees had any formal education at all. However, the majority of the refugees were urban refugees. Later, when refugees from the camps began to return in larger numbers, the percentage of literates and returnees with primary school and further education increased.

4. The fact that a very high percentage of the refugees have returned home without having

had any formal education is a major shortcoming on the part of the international community in provision of services to refugees in Pakistan. It also slows down rebuilding of Afghanistan, as the country will lack educated human resources for many years.

5. In future refugee crises it is hoped that education will be given higher priority. Refugees form part of the groups, which are included in the Education for All (EFA) movement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be realized by 2015. Education for girls and adult women and men are included in the objectives. A special UN girls' education initiative has been launched (UNGEI) and the literacy decade (UNLD) runs from 2003–2012.



### References:

See, inter alia, UNHCR's three booklets about the *Voluntary Repatriation from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2002-3, 2004 and 2005*. UNHCR, Islamabad. See also, *Searching for Solutions. 25 years of UNHCR-Pakistan Cooperation on Afghan Refugees*. UNHCR, Islamabad, 2005.

As for further references concerning information in the boxes, see the above chapters in the book, including Notes for details.

The Bibliography includes some important website and e-mail addresses.<sup>3 & 4</sup>



*Photo: Fiona Torrens-Spence. Islamabad, 2003.*

## INTRODUCTION

Returning to their homes and villages is the ultimate goal for most refugees, but it is both a euphoric and frightening experience. The process of planning to go, and actually going, is not easy, especially not when the refugees have been in exile for many years, even decades. On average, the world's refugees live in exile for some ten years, not just a few years, as we often think and plan for.

The majority of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan who returned home in 2005 had been in exile for more than two decades, and the younger ones were born in Pakistan. However, most of the refugees would have visited relatives in the home country once or more, and they would have gathered more detailed information about the situation at home before deciding to return, and maybe sent one or two of their family members on "exploration missions" to take a final look and discuss the return with family, friends, neighbours and authorities at home.<sup>5</sup>

UNHCR's magazine *Refugees*, Vol. 1, No. 134, 2004, is devoted to "*The long road home*", with discussions of principles and practical questions that arise when refugees plan to repatriate, and some reports are from concrete refugee and returnee situations. The cover story has been given the telling title, "*Dreams and Fears: I am going back to the land God gave us*".<sup>6</sup>

Under the sub-heading "*Complex Problems*", it is stated that *in theory at least*, refugees, humanitarian agencies, such as UNHCR, and governments, all agree on the overall solution: *the process of 'going home' should be relatively straightforward.*

Instead, *in practice, it is always a complex*

*equation* embracing extreme emotions and practical considerations – euphoria, fear, dreams, nightmares, nostalgia, hostility, legal issues, and so on.

Some of the questions arising before the refugees can return are: Why abandon the relative safety of a refugee camp, no matter how desperate the conditions, for a leap into the unknown? Will there be any homes, schools or clinics to return home to? What about land and crops? Who stays in the old house and who cultivates the land? Will there be jobs and education? What about physical dangers such as landmines? Can people who have been away, sometimes, for many years, socially reintegrate with the civilian population, which stayed at home during the war?

Both the refugees and those who stayed at home have often changed; their families have grown larger, some of the refugees may even have changed religion or denomination, or taken on habits that were seen as unacceptable before. Can civilians, especially the young, who have tasted city or urban life during exile, even within the confines of a crowded refugee camp, return to isolated and often primitive hamlets and farms?

Refugees sometimes face the perplexing prospect of deciding whether to go back to the country when there is peace in one region, but fighting in another, and they may worry about whether the peace will last.

We could go on posing more difficult questions but let the above suffice. They serve the purpose of showing that although in theory the process of returning is straightforward, in practice, it is not.



Since the individual refugees and their families face dilemmas and difficulties in connection with returning home, the agencies supporting refugees and returnees, including UNHCR and NGOs, take these issues into account, and they work with the host country and the refugees' home country in planning the *voluntary repatriation or other durable solutions*. It is a general principle that *repatriation should be voluntary*. First of all that means that refugees must be given ample time to plan, and they must be given information, advice and other required assistance.

If possible, the *early stages of a refugee situation* should include consideration and planning of *how to end it*, with some time estimates concerning when the refugees will eventually go home, and the conditions required for it to be feasible. This may not always have been done, and the actual planning of repatriation will mainly begin when the situation in the home country is such that the option of return exists.

Many of the questions and issues that the returnees are faced with are *private and practical* ones; they include logistical considerations and related actions. Other issues are more *subtle and complex*. Both sets of questions and issues will eventually influence the "going home" process.<sup>7</sup>

## EDUCATION ABOUT REPATRIATION

In education, there are a number of important topics, outside the ordinary school subjects, that refugees need to address during their months, years or decades in exile – as we have tried to show in earlier chapters of this book about Afghan refugees in Pakistan. *Preparation for going home should be considered an education-related topic* to include children, parents and other adults. The psychosocial and practical aspects about "going home" must be dealt with, including collection of information about the situation at home. The latter is particularly important since such data must be realistic and correct and neither too positive nor too negative. It goes without saying that schools and teachers play

major roles in this connection, together with other civil servants and, of course, relatives, friends and old neighbours.

When the actual time comes that *refugees* turn into *returnees* they can draw upon discussions and knowledge gained from formal and non-formal education sessions in the refugee communities. Still, there will be a whole new range of concrete issues to address. Some issues are short-term, and will be over when the refugees have reached home, while other issues and problems may arise *upon return home*, and hence be new to the returnees and their environment. Some of the long-term issues are developmental in nature, and it may take a generation or more to solve them.

Gender issues, peace and reconciliation issues, questions about democracy, elections and development options, and a wide range of daily-life and future-oriented issues confront the refugees upon their arrival home. *The better prepared and more knowledgeable the refugees are before going, the easier will be the return and reintegration*.

However, since there are many unknown and uncontrollable factors, thorough planning and preparation is no guarantee for smooth and successful return. On the other hand, without any, or with little preparation, the process of *going home* and *re-integrating* will be harder.

## EDUCATION FOR REPATRIATION

Education is in itself an asset to every person, refugee or non-refugee. In earlier chapters we have emphasized that education should impart general knowledge and orientation, and not only be focused on employable skills. Still, the latter are certainly important, not least for refugees and returnees, because without livelihoods they have no sustainable future ahead of them at home.

Practical, general knowledge, or life-skills, as we often term it today, is also of great importance, especially to rural residents in

Afghanistan, who will need to be more self-sufficient than the urban dwellers. Therefore, non-formal education is of great importance, including topics like mother-and-child health care, early-childhood development, psychosocial issues, and so on, in addition to literacy and civics education for the new Afghanistan.

*The more formal schooling at primary and secondary levels a refugee can get before returning home the better.* Training directly related to employment and income-generation is essential, notably skills, vocational and technical training, and even university education, if possible. The majority of the Afghan refugees will only return with limited education, but still, on average, their education and exposure will generally be higher than that of those who stayed at home during the war years. In our time and age, and as Afghan society changes, education and training for refugees should aim at *gender parity* and *equal opportunities for boys and girls*.

Throughout the book we have emphasized the importance of providing *education for all refugees anywhere in the world*, and in our context, *education for all Afghan refugees in Pakistan*.

We have emphasized that the international community has fixed 2015 as the target year for provision of *Education for All (EFA)*. EFA includes all boys and girls, irrespective of giftedness, handicap or other differences among people. This means that there shall be no discrimination against any child's access to education, based on geographic, social, economic, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, or any other factors. "Special programmes have to be developed to reach various groups of handicapped and other minorities, such as refugees", wrote the UNESCO Director in Pakistan in a book about refugee teachers in 2003 and she added that, according to UNESCO's estimates, about one percent of populations in developing countries are made up of refugees and other displaced persons.<sup>8</sup>

In Pakistan, during the Afghan refugee era, and especially after the devastating earthquake

on 8 October 2005, the percentage is even higher. In addition there are the Pakistanis living in refugee hosting areas and communities, who are often as deserving and vulnerable as the refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The United Nations has re-emphasized the EFA efforts in connection with its Millennium Development Goals, which focus more specifically on poverty reduction and economic, social and health aspects. Again, the target year is 2015, which is less than ten years away.<sup>9</sup>

On a more general note, it is interesting that at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was estimated that about 150 million people were living outside the country of their birth, amounting to two and a half percent of the world's population. UNHCR has estimated that of these about 15 million, or ten percent, were refugees.<sup>10</sup> Dependent on the definition of *refugee*, the percentage may be much higher. It should be noted that many people become migrants through varying degrees of force. Hence, the term "*forced migration*" is a professional term for a variety of migrants who leave their home place or country for a whole range of reasons.

There is also a large "hidden number" of migrants, including persons being victims of *human trafficking*, including its worst kind, *child trafficking*, which is increasing and is beginning to be given greater focus in studies and policy work.<sup>11</sup>

Afghanistan has had an unprecedentedly high number of refugees abroad and many of them are "*forced migrants*". Pakistan, which is a much larger and more populous country, also has a large number of migrants and foreign workers abroad, especially in the Middle East and the West. Some of them do not return home permanently but become immigrants. They didn't leave because they were forced to leave, so there is a big difference between such migrants and refugees. However, those Afghans who left more for economic or other reasons of their own choice are similar to the Pakistanis working abroad. When the time of "going home" comes, at the end of the refugee era for the Afghans in

Pakistan, and at retirement age or contract expiry for Pakistanis working abroad, the two different groups will face many of the same questions and considerations. Is it better at home or abroad? Or, perhaps, can I have a foot at home and a foot abroad, getting the best of “both worlds”?



One of the first travels abroad after Angelina Jolie became UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador in 2001 took her to Pakistan, where she visited refugee camps/villages and schools for Afghans in Peshawar and elsewhere in NWFP. The American actress has paid several visits to the country later. She came back again soon after the devastating earthquake in Northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005. Photo: United Nations, Pakistan, 2005.

## HOW WELL ARE THE RETURNEES PREPARED FOR GOING HOME?

In Afghan refugee education in Pakistan we never managed to enroll more than between one-quarter and two-thirds of the children of school-going age in the refugee camps/villages, and a lower percentage in urban areas. The statistics prepared by UNHCR in Pakistan at the end of 2003, following the first couple of years of repatriation after “9/11”, show that only about twenty percent of the returnees had any *formal education* at all. We keep repeating these figures because they give a simple and clear picture, which we all can easily understand.<sup>12</sup>

The education situation among the returnees was probably not quite as dramatic as the above mentioned figures indicated; many had attended

some *non-formal education and skills training courses* with some apprenticeship elements, and every refugee had had informal exposure to new knowledge, values and ways of doing things in a foreign country and with people from other ethnic backgrounds and areas in their home country. This must be counted as education, although it cannot be labeled *formal education*. Still, the figures were dramatic. The poor education indicators can partly be explained by the fact that the majority of the refugees who returned soon after “9/11” were the poorest refugees, mostly from urban areas. In 2004 and 2005, the percentage of refugees with some education was higher, and increasing mainly since the refugees in the camps began returning in larger numbers.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of all the good work done by Pakistani authorities, international organizations, NGOs, the refugees themselves, and other individuals and organizations, the *low percentage of educated returnees* leaves a stain on the Afghan refugee era in Pakistan.

We should add that the *refugee hosting areas*, with poor Pakistani sisters and brothers, were also not given the attention they deserved. In Pakistan, as in most other refugee situations, it is a general rule that in order to receive assistance from the international community (coordinated by UNHCR and the host government) the refugees must register and live in a refugee camp/village. However, in Pakistan the assistance the refugees received was not covering all expenses and the refugees had to find some livelihood to sustain themselves and their families. In order to get employment, mostly for daily wages, the refugees would undercut the going rate that Pakistani citizens would require. Urban refugees received minimal assistance. This led to extra burdens on poor Pakistanis who competed in the same market place, or, put crudely, the same crumbs from the rich man's table. Sometimes, refugees would have a little better access to services than the locals, but they would normally not have the family and social network that locals would have.

It should not be forgotten that *Pakistani*

*authorities* have provided a number of direct or indirect services to refugees, such as free or reduced costs for medical treatment, electricity, water and other services. In addition, poverty stricken and extremely vulnerable urban refugees in many cases also received some assistance from private individuals and NGOs run by Pakistanis and Afghans. Some limited assistance was also provided by international organizations.

In Pakistan, where about half of all Afghans, mainly refugees, lived in urban areas and not in camps, the international community should have provided more direct assistance, especially in the fields of education and health. At least this would be the perspective as seen from a humanitarian point of view.

Basic data about the number and conditions of urban refugees was not available until a Census was carried out by the Government of Pakistan (GoP), assisted by UNHCR, in February/March 2005.<sup>14</sup> In its repatriation report for 2005, UNHCR Pakistan, writes: "To ensure international burden sharing and to facilitate the temporary stay of Afghans in Pakistan, UNHCR is also assisting the GoP in developing its plan for Refugee Affected Areas (RAA) & Host Community (HC) Development Programs. The goal of the RAA and HC programs will be to alleviate poverty among selected communities, both Pakistani and Afghan."<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore it is stated that UNHCR will continue to assist the Government of Pakistan in mainstreaming assistance to selected refugee host communities and channel such assistance through ordinary development channels. In such areas, as well as in Afghanistan, it is important to address the economic, social and environmental development issues. Refugees and returnees need to be assisted so that durable solutions can be found. Shelter and sustainable livelihoods are key, but also security and social services, including general education, civics education, literacy, and employable skills training.

In the above mentioned UNHCR report it is also stated that the agency wishes 2006 to be a *year of hope* for many Afghans in exile, express-

ing optimism as regards their possibility of returning to their homeland and living there in peace and dignity: "UNHCR and its partners hope to be an integral part of making their aspirations a reality", the document concludes.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the large and successful repatriation after "9/11", there is reason for optimism. The Government of Pakistan acknowledges that the voluntary repatriation process has largely been successful. Yet, the GoP also "remains concerned over what it notes as a *reverse flow of Afghans into Pakistan*, which is more a phenomenon of economic migration of Afghans seeking livelihood opportunities in Pakistan."<sup>17</sup>



Practical and vocational skills, literacy, life skills and other education and training are valuable assets when a refugee returns home and sets up a new life and a new home. Peshawar, 2004.

## SOME FURTHER EDUCATION FACTORS INFLUENCING REPATRIATION

When refugees return home, it is often said that *the only luggage* they can take with them is the knowledge and skills they have learned abroad and the exposure they have had to new knowledge, ways of doing things, and new ideas and values. They have often become more tolerant and developed greater respect for other people. Yet, they have also learned to cherish their own traditions and values, perhaps not all and blindly, based on comparison and exposure.

Families with *school-age children* and adoles-

cents in colleges, universities, or in their early years in careers, are less likely to return home than other refugees. This is the case for Afghan refugees in the West and also in Pakistan, where there are better education opportunities than in war-torn Afghanistan, whose secondary, technical and university level institutions will only be rebuilt over a decade or two. After wars it always takes longer to rebuild post-primary education than primary education, with some literacy and other adult education. Professional institutions, the health sector and the general civil service will also be rebuilt gradually. Services will be insufficient and job opportunities will be few. Furthermore, people are not sure of the daily security situation, and they cannot yet trust fairness in enforcement of law and order. De-mining goes on but in some areas the process will take several years. Especially in rural areas, there will be risks for many years to come.

In Pakistan, only some five percent of Afghan refugee pupils who completed primary school could continue to *middle and secondary education*, and a tiny percentage managed to reach *university level*. This is still slightly better than for refugees in other developing countries, but it is still much lower than the average for ordinary youth in developing countries, which even in poorer African countries reaches one-fifth to one-quarter.

*Vocational education and skills training courses* reached a good number of refugees in Pakistan, but if we study these courses in further detail, the course content was often quite rudimentary and not always planned by professionals. Practical work-opportunities, which indirectly or sometimes directly include *on-the-job training*, have reached a large number of refugees. Various short courses, especially in English language and computer work, offered by private sector schools, have reached a large number of Afghan refugees, especially in the main refugee-hosting cities of Peshawar, Karachi and Quetta. When returning home, many Afghans will discover how useful such training courses have been, and they will see the lack of such training at home.

Very few refugees come home with *fame and fortune*, and the ones who have been more successful in exile will probably remain abroad.

In the case of *Afghan refugees in the West*, very few have returned home, and the main reason is that they have had some success where they have gone and, even more importantly, they hope that their children and grandchildren will have a better life where they are than what they expect to be the case in their homeland.

The Afghan diaspora in countries in the West will consider Afghanistan their homeland, but they will still prefer to live abroad and be more like immigrants than refugees. The second and third generation will not have direct affinity to people and places at home, although they may keep contact with relatives "at home" but will feel more and more part of the new land.

We should remember that most of the Afghans did not move out of *choice* but out of *despair*; they were forced to move due to war and conflict at home. Sometimes, though, the strongest "push factors" may have been economic; notably the need for livelihoods and fear of immediate or future poverty.

Many of those who managed to seek exile in the West were not the poorest Afghans; the poorest could only reach the nearest refugee camp or urban shantytown in a neighbouring country. Still, we should be careful to substitute the term *economic migrant* for *refugee* without knowing the details in the various cases.

The "pull factors" are many in the richer countries, especially in countries in the West, where the social and economic welfare systems are well developed. Older people can expect good health services when they need it, and the young ones will have education and employment opportunities. (UNHCR discusses these issues in its fiftieth anniversary book, published in 2000, in Chapter 11, "The Changing Dynamics of Displacement", and especially the sub-section entitled "The growing complexity of population movements".)<sup>18</sup>

It is still too early to say if, and how many of, the Afghan refugees and migrants in the West,

will actually return to the land of their ancestors. Some may go and stay for a while, others may return periodically, and yet others may return in retirement, with the “safety net” of having children abroad in case they need to travel for medical treatment or other reasons.

## LESSONS LEARNED IN REFUGEE EDUCATION

Lessons will be drawn by all organizations, institutions and individuals who have been involved in the large and long-lasting Afghan refugee era in Pakistan over the last quarter century (from 1978/79), and the largest voluntary repatriation exercise UNHCR has ever been involved in, notably that of Afghan refugees returning home from the spring of 2002.

The refugees themselves also draw conclusions, which influence their decisions about “going home”. In many cases the refugees know the key issues as well as, or better than the experts. They have first-hand knowledge and they may also have directly related education and experience. Refugee teachers, managers and NGO staff are the main experts on “their own situations”. They are key experts in drawing lessons from experience, including advising on future refugee situations and reconstruction work in home country (countries).

The Afghan refugee education experience in Pakistan is of general interest, not only to educationists and educationalists, but everyone dealing with refugee issues, or who are refugees themselves. It has become increasingly clear that education has an influence on, or is part of most of the other refugee sectors. Researchers and international experts are focusing more on this obvious fact than in the past when they “compartmentalized” sectors more.<sup>19</sup>

Of particular interest to those studying Afghan refugee education in Pakistan is that the world’s largest refugee education project was that of *BEFARe in Pakistan*. The project has largely been a great success and is a pride to the implementing partner, the German government aid agency GTZ and now the local organization BEFARe, the main donor UNHCR, with the German government ministry of development aid, BMZ, the other donors, and the host country Pakistan and its Commissionerate for Afghan refugees in Islamabad and Peshawar, CCAR and CAR.

*What overall lessons can we draw? What lessons pertain particularly to the education sector? Are we drawing lessons and documenting experience, or do we let unique experience go to waste? Are we helping the Afghan refugees and other concerned parties in developing mechanisms to make use of the experience from Pakistan (in BEFARe and other organizations) in developing Afghanistan’s future education system and giving guidance in other refugee situations?*

We shall list *ten lessons*, which we believe are of interest. When refugees go home, they take with them their conclusions and experience. The knowledge will help them in the future when rebuilding their lives and home country. The knowledge is also of importance to other countries in reconstruction and in avoiding future conflicts.

Provided that refugees are *invited to contribute* to their home countries’ reconstruction, and there are *mechanisms to make use of their expertise*, the refugees are more likely to plan to go home soon; not only from neighbouring countries but even from overseas.

## Ten lessons learned in refugee education in Pakistan

The lessons are important in themselves and they also influence the 'going home' process

**Lesson 1:** In other similar refugee situations, which turn out to be long lasting, complex and unpredictable as for magnitude, shape and when they will end, a comprehensive and constantly updated database is needed.

**Lesson 2:** There is a need to seek development of better mechanisms for planning and cooperation among all partners, within and between the various sectors. Teacher training and professional development must be given much larger attention. This also includes training of refugees to become leaders and senior managers.

**Lesson 3:** There is a clear responsibility for the international community to assist the host government (and also the refugee-producing country) in providing education for all children, literacy and skills training for adults and secondary and higher education for a much larger percentage than in the Afghan refugee era in Pakistan. There are many factors explaining the situation, but it should not be excused or "explained away". We should have done better – in spite of the education achievements in Pakistan and Iran being among the best in refugee situations in developing countries.

**Lesson 4:** Refugees and other displaced persons, such as those affected by the earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October 2005, should be given special priority under the United Nations goals to be reached by 2015 as described in various plans and programmes. There is a need to comply with the goals and objectives of the international community as regards EFA and the MDGs, including girls' education (UNGEI) and literacy for all (UNLD).

**Lesson 5:** A clear humanitarian approach and targeted plans are needed in line with thinking and objectives of "inclusive education" in order to comprehend the groups that need special protection and help, including the physically and mentally handicapped and traumatized, the vulnerable and extremely vulnerable refugees (many of whom are women), and others. Special topics need to be given attention, such as peace education and democracy, gender issues, reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, environmental issues, etc.

**Lesson 6:** The international community should widen its assistance to include urban (non-camp) refugees and local refugee hosting areas and communities. In Pakistan half of the refugees were urban, yet they received negligible international assistance.

**Lesson 7:** It is essential that EFA is not seen as a luxury but of direct benefit to children and adolescents. Education interventions reduce conflicts. It is realized that unemployed youth, especially adolescent boys, are increasing risks for conflicts. Education gives a high rate of return in social and economic fields. Girls' education must usually be given special focus in planning and implementation; again the rate of return is high.

**Lesson 8:** Documentation, studies and research, should be implemented during, at the end of, and after refugee crises. Both case studies and theoretical studies are important.

**Lesson 9:** Whereas coordination and cooperation is important, as mentioned above, exchange of information and experience with colleagues handling refugee crises and refugee education elsewhere, including on other continents, is essential. It adds comparative data, ideas and insights. Some distance training courses can be used, e.g. in teacher training.

**Lesson 10:** It is important to establish linkages between host country and home country for future, normal cooperation. Even during refugee/emergency situations it is important that closeness is maintained with the ordinary education systems and agencies.



This article is from a Special Report section about refugees in *"The News on Sunday"*, Lahore/Islamabad/Karachi, 26.06.05. The article takes up cultural aspects related to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, with emphasis on language and literature among Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group among the refugees and in the refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan. <sup>20</sup>

*The News, 26.06.05*

## "O Peshawar, you will miss us"

Afghans have done good by Pakistan. They have reinvigorated Pashto language and literature. Through Afghan refugees, Pashtuns from both Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed on a standard script for Pashto.

"The mass migration 1979 onwards turned millions of Afghans homeless – yet the removal of the iron curtain along the Durand Line after almost 100 years proved a blessing in disguise for the Pashto language. The linguistic link between the people having similar culture on either side was re-established and nourished.

Pashto then was fast vanishing from school books, under the heavy influence of Urdu. It was ignored on the official television channel, marginalized at the radio station and the number of Pashto speakers in Peshawar city – the only Pashtun city on the world map – was declining. Come the Afghans, and Pashto was given a new lease of life.

During the stay of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, Pashtuns from both sides agreed on a standard script to remove ambiguities that were hindering the growth of a language spoke by more than 50 million people. Afghans in the wake brought newspapers, magazines, and a sizeable number of literary work. Different factions of mujahideen, fighting the Soviet invaders with the active help of Pakistan and the West, as well as intellectuals having crossed over from Afghanistan, have no doubt reinvigorated Pashto language and literature.



In the beginning, the Afghan refugees concentrated on glorifying the ‘holy’ war against the infidels, which continued rigorously till the late 1980s. The trend, however, changed with the withdrawal of the Soviet forces and the writers, painters, poets and intellectuals now focused on the sufferings of the homeless Afghans in Pakistan. At the same time, there were writings inspired by people caught in the civil war in Afghanistan.

The exhibition of paintings of Afghan children organized by UNHCR and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees some years ago was about planes dropping bombs, tanks, and missiles. It was about destruction and wailing women – images which have recently been replaced with those of houses and greenery, of cows, trees, cars and schools that have teachers.

A vast majority of the Pashtuns live in Pakistan. Interestingly, some two million Pashtuns live in Karachi, according to the 1998 census. This is the biggest concentration of Pashtuns in a city. But Peshawar has been and will remain the fort-city of Pashtuns, like it was the walled city of non-Pashtuns in the past. The new face of Peshawar is testimony to the Afghan influence in recent decades. The change is expressed loudly in food and dressing and music and in crafts such as carpet weaving – and indeed in the new value system that has emerged out of the reciprocal relationship between the Afghan refugees and their Pakistani hosts. The Afghan exodus may have stopped after the overthrow of the Taliban regime, but the inflow via Torkham in the north and Chaman in the south continues to further enrich this tradition.

Take music to gauge the widening of the Pashtun horizon. In the past all the Pashtuns had was Radio Kabul; today Afghan singers like Qamar Gulla, Shah Wali, Farzana, Naghma, and Baryalay Sammadi are no more voices from a distant background. All these singers at one time or the other have made Peshawar their abode and found the same feeling and love from people here which they were used to back in their own country. As many of the Afghan artists, writers and intellectuals prepare to return home, it is not just them who are experiencing the pangs of separation. The pain is as much local, and the hosts feel they are about to lose an asset.

Budding Afghan poet Babarzai’s so bids his farewell to Peshawar:  
*“Pa maza maza Kabul ta Kadi larhi, Peshawar biya pa moong pasi ba jharhi.”*

***“Slowly and gradually the Afghans are going back to Kabul.  
O Peshawar, you will miss us, and will cry after us!”***

- Behroz Khan

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks for providing information, data and opinions for this chapter go to the teachers, parents and other refugees we have spoken to during the work with the book. Thanks also go to other people; Afghans, Pakistanis and others, who have shared their valuable insights. A large amount of written material has been consulted, especially from UNHCR and other United Nations organizations. Weeklies and daily newspapers have also been consulted over several years, especially Pakistani papers such as *The News*, *The Dawn* and others. The author remains responsible for interpretations and analysis of issues.

<sup>2</sup> We have been given permission to use reproductions of several paintings by Professor Gh. M. Shabnam Ghaznawi, a renowned Afghan painter living in Pakistan, in this book. For readers who are interested in seeing other paintings by the same artist, and his selection of a number of other paintings, with a brief biography of each painter, see the large book by Prof. Ghaznawi entitled *Afghan Refugee Artists*. UNESCO, Islamabad, 2002. E-mail: gh\_shabnam\_786@hotmail.com

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR's repatriations booklets mainly contain quantitative data, except for the latest one, which has more qualitative data. (a) UNHCR: *Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan 2003*. UNHCR, Islamabad. (b) UNHCR: *Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan 2004*. UNHCR, Islamabad. (c) UNHCR: *Voluntary Repatriation from Pakistan 2005*. UNHCR, Islamabad.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> See UNHCR's main periodic magazine, *Refugees*, Vol. 1, Number 134, 2004. UNHCR, Geneva.

<sup>7</sup> For some data about vulnerable and extremely vulnerable Afghan refugees in urban areas in Peshawar, see an evaluation report of a major project by IRC. The report also includes general data and is an advocacy report for more massive education for the poorest and most vulnerable refugees and host communities, i.e., to include Afghans and Pakistanis. Hetland, Atle: *International Rescue Committee (IRC), Pakistan. Durable Solutions Project (DSP): (a) Main Evaluation Report* (open); (b) *Separate Field Visits and Interviews Report* (confidential). IRC, Peshawar/Islamabad,

October 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Hetland, Atle (for UNESCO): *Teaching for the Future. Profiles of Afghan Refugee Teachers in Pakistan*. UNESCO, Islamabad, 2003. "Introduction" by Ingeborg Breines, p. iii.

<sup>9</sup> See the list of international declarations and instruments defining education as a basic right at the end of this book.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR: *The State of the World's Refugees 2000. Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*. UNHCR, Geneva, p. 280.

<sup>11</sup> The field of human trafficking, not only child trafficking, is in general growing. We do not have data showing that this pertains especially to refugees or Afghan refugees in Pakistan. We recommend that the reader explores literature from libraries in UNHCR, UNICEF, Save the Children, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Women's Commission on Refugee Women, and other organizations.

<sup>12</sup> See Notes in the Formal Education Chapter.

<sup>13</sup> See the UNHCR booklets referred to in Note 3 above.

<sup>14</sup> See, Government of Pakistan and UNHCR: *Census of Afghans in Pakistan. 23<sup>rd</sup> February – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005*. Islamabad, 2005. See, also the UNHCR booklets referred to in Note 3 above.

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR: *Voluntary Repatriation from Pakistan 2005*. UNHCR, Islamabad, 2005. p. 20-21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR: *The State of the World's Refugees 2000. Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*. UNHCR, Geneva, p. 275 – 287, and in particular, p. 280 – 282.

<sup>19</sup> Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA): *ADEA Newsletter*, Vol. 16, Number 4, 2004. (a) Article by Susan Oppen: "Building Resilience to Conflict", incl. "Providing education after conflicts: lessons learned from country experiences". ADEA c/o UNESCO/IIEP, Paris, 2004. (b) See also article by Joris van Bommel: "Education Before, During and After Conflict", incl. "The Mombasa Declaration".

<sup>20</sup> *The News on Sunday*, 26.06.05, Lahore/Islamabad/Karachi, Special Report section about Afghan refugees.





## Coming Home

What livelihoods and education system meet the returnees in Afghanistan?

Chapter

# 10



## Coming Home

### What livelihoods and education system meet the returnees in Afghanistan?

*In this last chapter of the book we shall focus on major aspects of the education system in Afghanistan. We also draw attention to some overall aspects of Afghan society but with emphasis on education. For a general historical background about Afghanistan reference is made to Chapter 2, where we also discuss some issues related to current affairs.*

*The boxes at the introduction of the chapter include a major overview of the education system. It should be underlined, however, that Afghanistan's education system is still in the making. Data presented should be taken only as a rough indicator; sometimes more of intentions than reality. However, Afghanistan has made significant gains in education since "9/11". It is probably one of the most successful sectors, and a sector where there is a great desire to achieve more fast. At the same time, there are huge problems and there are also pockets where there is resistance to education; more so for girls and women than for boys and men. Education is mainly basic education (primary school and literacy and other non-formal education), but it is also secondary education, technical training and higher education, and teacher training. It is evident that lack of female teachers slows down provision of girls' education in many areas of Afghanistan. This in turn also slows down the return of refugee families with girls.*

*On another continent some decades ago, the great educator Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the first President of the independent Tanzania, said that we should use the book as a tool to uplift our lives and rid us of ignorance the same way as a farmer uses the hoe to cultivate his or her land. Afghanistan has embarked in the same way under President Hamid Karzai's leadership.*

*We believe that the refugees in Pakistan and in other neighbouring countries, will pay great attention to the prevalence of education in Afghanistan when deciding on whether to return now, postpone until later or maybe for good. They want quality education and a better future for their children at home; not only the educated parents, but all refugee parents.*

*We wish that the parents could have been given better education while in exile, which would help them in finding livelihoods upon return. Yet, even if many could not receive formal schooling, literacy and skills training, and further qualifications while in exile, they do return with exposure, practical experience and valuable knowledge. We also believe that refugees return home with greater tolerance, new ideas and general knowledge from years and often decades in neighbouring Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>*



Painting by Professor Gh. M. Ghaznawi entitled *"Old Bazaar in Kabul"*. 2002. The painting is in the ownership of the author and permission to reproduce it has been given by the artist.

See Note 2 in Chapter 9 for reference to a UNESCO book by the same artist with a collection of paintings by Afghan refugees.

## AFGHANISTAN

### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND EFFORTS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

#### Basic development indicators for Afghanistan

1. Afghanistan is listed as one of the five or six poorest countries in the world (even when including the illegal drug trade), with the majority of the people living below the poverty line. Modern health services are rudimentary, especially in rural areas. Life expectancy in Afghanistan is 44 years for women and 45 for men (2003, CSO). The child mortality rate is estimated to be one in five (before the age of five years). In spite of wars, drought, high child mortality, diseases related to poverty (including TB and polio), and outflow of refugees and migrants, Afghanistan's population has been growing over recent decades and is now 25-30 million.

2. Afghanistan's gender disparities are larger than in the other countries in the region, with the former Soviet republics to the North scoring higher and the countries to the South being more similar to Afghanistan. All are Muslim countries. The average literacy rate is estimated to be only 14% for women and 43% for men, with great socio-economic and geographic variations (2003, MICS/UNICEF). The average for both sexes is about 29-30%, which places Afghanistan among the lowest of all countries in the world (2004, HDR). School enrolment (at all levels) is estimated to be about 60% for boys and 40% for girls, again with huge variations throughout the country.

3. The economic activities are also tilted gender-wise, and it is esti-

mated that women only have 30% share of the participation and men 70%. It is estimated that of the earned income, men earn about USD 1200 and women USD 400 per year (2003, HDR).

4. About 90% of the country's development budget comes from foreign reconstruction and development assistance. As mentioned, the illegal drug trade is a serious problem; it may hamper the central government's possibility to introduce law and order country-wide. However, many of the warlords and regional leaders have been included in President Karzai's new government following the election of a parliament and his own election (after having been interim president) in 2005.

5. Improvement of security, law and order, reconciliation and peace, livelihoods, housing and development of the social and economic sectors is key to Afghanistan's future stability. It is also important to realize that the development efforts will take time and they must be made indigenous, i.e. the country's local resources in agriculture and other fields must be the basis for further development and industrialization. At the same time, urbanization may be important for national integration and development of peace and prosperity. The general framework for Afghanistan's first 5-year emergency rebuilding programme was drawn up in Bonn in 2001, and the framework for the next period in London in early

2006. It is essential that the international community continues to see Afghanistan's normalization and reconstruction as an international duty, since major international powers also have to take much of the responsibility for the country's problems in the last quarter century.

6. It is also essential that the international community delivers on its pledges and promises as Afghanistan hopefully comes lower on the international news agenda. If the country, on the other hand, is not assisted, including with a "window" of assistance to tribal and other neighbouring regions of Pakistan, Afghanistan could relapse back into further, and new, conflicts and wars, with geopolitical aspects, which would yet again lead to exodus of refugees and countless other indigenous problems. Pakistan, together with the international donor community and other neighbouring countries, has a particularly heavy and difficult duty in providing the right help and cooperation.

7. The Afghan Conference in London in January/February 2006 gave hope for the future of Afghanistan: the international community expressed satisfaction with the last four years' developments and gave commitments to continue its financial and other support in the short-term as well as in the long-term.

*Note: References are included at the end of all boxes.<sup>2</sup>*



## Basic data concerning education in Afghanistan

1. Afghanistan's education system was in a shambles at the fall of the Taliban regime. NGOs played a major role in provision of education. Education for boys was better than for girls. It was estimated that about 30% of boys went to school but only 10% of girls. It was a deliberate policy to give priority to boys. There were socio-economic and geographic differences, and there were periodic ups and downs in girls' education. It should be noted that many of the Taliban leaders sent their own daughters across the border to Pakistan (or Iran) to receive primary, secondary and sometimes also higher education. The way the Taliban treated girls in the education system and the way women were treated, notably to a major extent kept away from the public sphere, in addition to other extremist/orthodox and unpromising interpretations of Islam,

can be seen as major reasons why the West turned so strongly against the regime at this particular time in history.

2. Historically, education was always for the select few in Afghanistan, mainly depending on class and geography. The number of school children went down drastically from 1980 (the peak year until then) to 1985, but it crept slowly upwards afterwards, with some fluctuations, until the Taliban's fall in October 2001. The number of pupils was about the same in 1975 as in 1995, about one million, but the number of school-age-children doubled over the twenty-year period.

3. The "back to school campaign", which UNICEF played a key role in launching from the beginning of the first school year after the fall on the Taliban at the end of

March 2002, was a tremendous success. The authorities had estimated less than a doubling of the existing enrolment but saw more than a tripling of intake in primary and secondary schools.

4. *"Today tears come from the eyes of our people, but these are tears of happiness, because our children, our daughters and sons, are going to school. These are tears of pride"*, President Karzai said in his speech at Amani High School in Kabul on 23 March 2002.

5. Subsequent years have seen further increases in enrolment: in 2003, the enrolment figure for grades 1-12 was close to four million, increasing to close to four and a half million in 2004 (Naumann, 2003), and about six million in 2005 (GoA, quoted in Munsch, 2005).

## Geographic and gender disparities in education

1. The geographic disparities in enrolment remain much the same today as they have been historically: The north and northeastern parts of the country (and in particular the cities in those areas) have always had higher enrolment than the central areas, south and southwest of Kabul and the whole of the south of Afghanistan.

2. The gender disparities have improved but they are still similar to the way they have been historically. The enrolment of girls is between thirty and forty percent.

3. As mentioned above, 40% of the pupils (at all levels) are girls and 60% boys, but with huge differences. For example, in Kabul, the enrolment rate for girls is about 80%, while in other provinces (mainly in the south) it can be as low as 15%. Then there are some areas where education enrolment in general is dramatically low; such pockets are, for example, Kandahar, which has an overall primary school enrolment of about 22% and the enrolment of girls is as low as 1.4%; in Hilmand province, the figures are

42% and 6.5% while in Kabul they are 49% and 34% (Naumann et al, 2005). This remains the case even with today's impressive increase.

**Note:** *Statistics from developing countries are often unreliable, especially in countries in and after conflicts where areas may be inaccessible to outsiders. Recent information from Afghanistan indicates that the actual enrolment and school attendance may be up to 25-30% lower than the reported figures.*

## Schoolhouses, textbooks and other resources

1. During the years of wars and conflicts about 80% of all schools in Afghanistan were seriously damaged or destroyed. In 1978, there were about 1150 primary schools and 350 middle schools in Afghanistan. Only six years later, the numbers had fallen to 210 primary schools and 78 middle schools (Ekayanake, 2004).

2. In the 2002/3 school-year, 3500 of the existing 5000 schools were considered in great need of repair.

3. In 2003/4, there were 7000 schools (or, what was termed “learning spaces”) with 70% formal government schools and 30% non-formal schools.

4. In 2004/5, the number of required schools to accommodate the 6 million pupils would be in the range of 10,000.

5. A large proportion of the school buildings were constructed by NGOs.

6. It goes without saying that many of the pupils have to learn in overcrowded classrooms, sheds or sometimes in schools “under the sky”. Anecdotal information also tells us that schools may exist on paper but not in reality, caused by lack of schools, facilities and other resources.

7. Lack of teachers salaries, or very poor salaries (about forty-five dollars per month and some unreliable payment of food allowances), is one such major “shortage factor”. In rural areas, where the control and sanction mechanisms are limited, schools would sometimes be “ghost schools”. Parents would simply not find it worthwhile or safe to send their children to school, and

the children would themselves rather learn in informal settings; play or help their parents at work.

8. UNICEF has played a key role in provision and distribution of textbooks and other teaching materials, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and NGOs since the first “back to school campaign” in 2002.

9. Afghan refugee organizations in Pakistan have, over the last decades, developed a large number of textbooks and teachers’ guides, labeled as *supplementary teaching materials*, which can be made use of in revising and renewing Afghanistan’s curricula and textbooks. BEFARe has developed more than one hundred books and teachers’ guides. (See Chapter 7 for some further details.)

## Teachers and teacher training

1. The Database of Afghan refugee teachers in Pakistan was prepared in 2002/3. The work was coordinated by BEFAre, in cooperation with NGOs and UNESCO as the main adviser and UNICEF and UNHCR as participants. The Database included about 5,000 experienced teachers, about 30% women, when it was handed over to the Ministry of Education in Kabul in April 2003. Unfortunately, the Database was only made limited use of due to shortcomings on the side of the Ministry of Education, UN organizations and NGOs in Afghanistan. However, it remains a model for how data about human resources can be collected and made available at the time of repatriation. Stronger cooperation between organizations in Pakistan and Afghan would have made it more useful. (See Chapter 7 for further details.)

2. Integrating and making use of former refugee teachers, who return with new ideas, experience and some training, is important, albeit a small help in improving the standards of classroom teachers and of head teachers.

3. It is generally thought that nine out of ten Afghan teachers are untrained or need further training.

4. Afghanistan's Ministry of Education has recorded shortages of teachers. In 2002 there were about 65,000 teachers but another 30,000 were needed and in 2004, there were about 100,000 teachers, yet another 50,000 were needed. Shortage of female teachers hampers girls' education,

5. Since 2003, over 50,000 teachers received short pre- and in-service training courses. It is estimated that the new curriculum (completed by the end of 2004) required training of another 50,000 teachers. A large proportion of the teachers have been trained by NGOs.

6. As a general rule, teachers are required to have secondary education as basic general education in order to be accepted to teach and attend the emergency training courses and ordinary teacher training.

7. Upgrading and modernizing the teaching force, including in peda-

gogy, psychology, teaching methods and subject matters, is an essential task to ensure higher quality standards in Afghan schools. The work has begun but it will take many years to reach a normal situation when all Afghan teachers will receive a complete teachers' diploma of two years' duration based on a good secondary school certificate for primary school teachers and a university degree for secondary school teachers. In addition, there is the training of teachers for vocational and technical training institutes, colleges and universities to be considered. Some teachers need to have exposure to research and high-level knowledge, and all teachers should be assisted with updating their knowledge during their career.

8. Already, Afghanistan has taken the initiative in establishing teachers' unions and associations.

## Policies, planning and curriculum development

1. The first curriculum changes were initiated with the first “back-to-school campaign” in 2002, with UNICEF as central actor, with the Afghan authorities, and later USAID, The World Bank, WFP, bilateral agencies, such as Denmark/Danida, and NGOs like Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA). The international organizations (and others) also play key roles in implementation of education in the districts and provinces, with the NGOs having the greatest presence at local levels together with the Ministry of Education. Security precautions have to be taken by all implementing partners with foreign linkages, especially in certain areas, not least in Kandahar, Hilmand and other southern provinces.

2. In 2003, the first comprehensive policy document was submit-

ted to the government by a large education commission under Dr. Ghaznawi's Chairmanship. He is a former UNESCO staff member. The report takes up broad background issues. Quantitative data has been collected from the local levels, as far as possible. Deeper consultations with the users seem not to have been implemented. There seems to be extensive contact among partners at central level, with a small group of agencies and donors playing lead roles, with the GoA.

3. Afghanistan's government has stated that it wishes to ensure that all children receive 9 years quality compulsory education. Expanded provision and improved quality of further and higher education will also be prioritized and related to reconstruction needs. Vocational and adult education will also be provided. Afghanistan wishes to

comply with the objectives of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Education planning and monitoring will be given priority, including development of EFA action plans, to ensure progress towards achievement of targets by 2015.

4. As for education change and improvement, inputs can come from refugee education, especially in Pakistan. Organizations like BEFARe possess a large amount of relevant knowledge and experience. BEFARe has, over the last decades, developed a large number of textbooks and teachers' guides, labeled as supplementary teaching materials. (See Chapter 7 for further details.)

**Sources:** (a) *CSO Statistical Yearbook*. Central Statistics Office, Kabul, 2003; (b) MICS/UNICEF: *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey/United Nations Children's Fund*. Kabul, 2003; (c) HDR: *Human Development Report Afghanistan*. UNHCR, Kabul, 2005, and earlier reports; (d) Wirak, Anders et al.: *Afghanistan: Norwegian Education Team Report. Draft 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005*. DECO/LINS/NCG, Oslo, 2005; (e) Naumann, Craig: *Compilation of Some Basic Schools Statistics*. World Food Programme (WFP), Kabul, 2003; (f) Munsch, Holger: *Education*. Chapter in an evaluation report of aid to Afghanistan, carried out by Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Bergen, Norway, 2005. Strand, Arne and Gunnar Olesen (Eds.): *Afghanistan: Findings on Education, Environment, Health, Gender, Livelihood and Water and Sanitation (2001 to early 2005)*. R 2005:15. CMI. (g) Naumann, Craig, et al: *Results and Discussion of Education Data collected in the Afghanistan National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2003. (NRVA 2003.)* WFP, APEP, USAID, SC/US, Kabul, 2005; (h) Various articles in magazines, journals and newspapers handling current affairs related to Afghanistan and the region, published in Islamabad, New York, etc.; (i) See also earlier chapters in this book, *inter alia*, Chapter 2 and 7.



*Photo: Fiona Torrens-Spence. Islamabad 2003.*

## INTRODUCTION

The overall situation in Afghanistan has been described briefly above, but the main emphasis has been placed on the *education sector* and especially basic education for children. In the remaining text of this chapter, we shall follow the same pattern and discuss education issues from the point of view of refugees who return home from Pakistan. Basic education is usually general without any specific vocational orientation. In the case of refugees, they are all in need of *livelihoods* when they come home and we shall therefore consider to what extent the education the refugees received in exile helps them in this respect.

In our context, in a book which is mainly about BEFARe and other well-organized education activities in Pakistan, we would like the reader to bear in mind that many of the refugees who return home will compare the good schools their children have attended in Pakistan with the schools they find at home in Afghanistan. It goes without saying that few schools in Afghanistan reach the BEFARe standards, in quality, management and administration. BEFARe's teachers are usually experienced teachers, who have attended BEFARe's training courses and are supervised and given advice when needed by trainers and managers, and they have relevant textbooks and supplementary materials at their disposal. The classrooms are, however, often quite overcrowded and modest; but at least they do have classrooms.<sup>3</sup>

It is natural that Afghan refugee parents and children make comparisons with *what they come from* with *what they come to*. In the current Afghan situation, there are shortcomings, and a

BEFARe pupil will usually miss his or her good school in Pakistan. But then there are also other refugees who return home, many from urban areas, whose children have not attended good schools, just some self-help schools who have had very limited resources, in poor urban areas in the cities of Pakistan.

In Pakistan the returnees also know that the assistance from the international community, mainly channeled from UNHCR through NGOs, is also being reduced. Some have seen this, even in BEFARe schools, and many have heard about it. Therefore, they have realized that provision of education in refugee camps in Pakistan is coming to an end. "Then better not cling on to staying in Pakistan, but rather go back to Afghanistan and try to make the best out of it there", is what many refugees think. For example, Pakistan in agreement with UNHCR have closed several large camps in and near Peshawar in 2006, and a large number of schools have been closed too. (See future updates in press releases from UNHCR, IRIN and GoP.)

The education system the returnees find in Afghanistan is not yet ideal, and availability and quality varies tremendously from location to location. The people who have lived at home in Afghanistan all the time may sometimes be less interested in education than returnees who have realized the great importance of formal education for children, further training for adolescents, and skills training, literacy and other adult education. They know that even general education is important in order to find a job, and if the youngsters, especially the young men, have learned some skills, the possibilities for finding gainful employment is much higher than if they

are unskilled. We should bear in mind that most returnees, and again especially the young men, will have to seek employment for somebody else; they will not be self-employed, cultivate their own land or have their own small-scale businesses.

Initially, there may be disagreement and disappointment on the part of the returnees, but we believe that they will soon realize that the “*education luggage*” that children and adolescents bring with them is a great asset when rebuilding their lives and the education system at home.

However, it is a fact that the international community could have done more in order to give basic and further education to a much larger proportion of the refugee children and adolescents than what was the case. We shall not repeat the professional arguments and documentation for that here, in order to make repatriation faster and durable reintegration more successful, as we have discussed these issues in earlier chapters in the book. Here, we shall only underline that more and better *employable skills training* would have played a particularly important role.

*Refugee teachers* who return will soon realize that they possess useful qualifications and they will most likely either become teachers, community workers or get into other paid employment or voluntary help. Often though, the local community needs time to get used to the returning teachers and sometimes they need to overcome the threat that a better qualified refugee teacher poses to the home community.

In this book, we have repeatedly praised the professional and personal quality and competence of refugee teachers. Imagine what a former BEFAre teacher can do in Afghanistan today if he or she is willing to see the possibilities – and is given the opportunity to help!

We do not believe that the main obstacle is the education system when a refugee family returns home.<sup>4</sup>

The education systems the refugees have attended in Pakistan, and more so in Iran, may have been a bit different from the government education system at home in Afghanistan. However, the differences are usually small and

can easily be overcome; Afghan school authorities would realize the importance of integrating the former refugee pupils as well as teachers.

There are many other obstacles which are much more complicated when returnees come home than integrating pupils and teachers in the home country’s school system. The returnees together with the school authorities and village members at home can solve these reintegration problems themselves.

In other sectors what the returnees do may not solve the problems; for example, *finding acceptable shelter and paid jobs*. In education, on the other hand, the human inputs; what the returnees can do will count.

Education is in addition one of the fields which Afghanistan’s leadership is placing very high on the *reconstruction and development agenda*. It is also a sector, which has made tremendous progress over the last years, whilst results are less visible in other fields. It should be noted that *national political institutions* have also been established, especially at central level, and that the *presidential and parliamentary elections* were successfully held in 2004 and 2005. It is interesting to note that about a quarter of the parliamentarians are women. Who could have believed that during the Taliban time?

## “BACK TO SCHOOL” AND “BUSINESS AS USUAL”?<sup>5</sup>

How Afghanistan is faring in educating its people can serve as a crucial indicator for how well it is faring on the road to resuming “*business as usual*” as a nation. Also, the efficacy of the outsider in helping build a peaceful Afghan society can be directly measured by the success or failure of their endeavours to educate the country’s younger generation in a way, which enables it to get on with life, armed with skills necessary to forge ahead in a society, which is still very tough socio-economically.

For any education system to be successful it is important that it imparts knowledge, skills and attitudes, which are consistent with the society’s

social, economic and cultural context. More so for strife-ridden societies like Afghanistan, breaking away from many aspects of its past and starting afresh on a new and peaceful road, with help not interference from stronger neighbours, superpowers and other donor countries. There has to be *willingness to make compromises* when the new school system develops. For many Afghans going to good schools and skills training centres in neighbouring countries, it can be tempting to stay on in refugee camps or even as urban refugees rather than to return to their homeland. Many refugees want to go home, but not quite yet, they want more education luggage with them before returning, especially employable skills, so that they can have better job prospects.

The real test of how useful these skills and knowledge will be for *profitable employment in real life situations* still lies in the future. In the meantime, it is important to evaluate how well the returnee children and adolescents fit into the refurbished Afghan education system. That is, if they all find places, especially the girls in rural areas, and boys and girls beyond primary school. Do the teachers show up to teach considering that they are paid less than two dollars a day? Are the teachers qualified? Do they have textbooks and other materials? Do the returning children feel welcomed home and integrating well with their brothers and sisters in the post-war environs? Or, do they feel alienated by a system of education, which to a large extent is actually run by foreigners?

Before trying to shed some light on these questions, it seems appropriate to consider who is doing what when it comes to educating the Afghans and what the results are so far.

According to the figures cited in *UNDP's Human Development Report for Afghanistan, 2004*,<sup>6</sup> well over half of the children of school-going age, or on average possibly about sixty percent, are actually going to school. As we showed in the boxes above, the figures vary between boys and girls, geographic areas, and between the cities and rural areas. On average, only **30-40**

**percent of girls attend school**, and up to **60 percent of the boys**. There are about **six million pupils** in Afghanistan's schools. In general, school attendance is better in the north and central areas southwards to Kabul, but further south it becomes dramatically poorer in many provinces and districts, and in some of the most orthodox and conservative areas, just a small percentage of the girls go to school and some ten to twenty percent of the boys. It is also a worry that teachers are so poorly paid that in many rural and remote schools, where there is less monitoring from the side of the authorities, the schools do not operate as they should. They are sometimes "ghost schools" which exist on paper but not in reality.

Due to *lack of buildings* and *shortage of teachers*, many schools have to be run in shifts. That is in situations where there is a great demand and teachers and pupils do show up and take advantage of the education provided. The flipside of that coin is that the school day becomes short, and sometimes boys get the lion's share and the girls may not be prioritized. However, girls are prioritized in one particular field, in refugee situations and in Afghanistan, notably when it comes to *home schools*. We find such schools important, especially in a transition period after wars, in situations where Western education is not yet accepted in conservative communities and for other reasons, for example the distance to the school is far and unsafe. In such cases home schools should be organized for boys and girls.

BEFAre and other organizations have unique experience from running home schools for groups of refugee children in Pakistan, which Afghanistan can learn from.<sup>7</sup>

Craig Naumann, an international consultant with yearlong experience from work in education in Afghanistan, highlights an overlooked phenomenon, notably that there is *ethnic discrimination* in certain parts of Afghanistan. In an interview, he mentions that in some areas, the minority ethnic groups may have difficulties in being admitted to school. He says that in some



cases, the only alternative is to establish a separate school for the ethnic minority group, and he adds that over time it will be possible to reach an understanding between various ethnic groups, but it is usually a gradual process since attitudes change gradually. "On the other hand we also have evidence of students from different ethnicities attending schools together without problems."<sup>8</sup>

The *new curriculum for Afghan schools is nearing its completion*, assisted by experts from the University of Columbia Teachers' College in the United States and elsewhere. During the refugee years, there was particularly close cooperation with the University of Nebraska at Omaha in the United States and the so-called "*UNO textbooks*" were used in refugee schools in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan. The curriculum and textbook changes are much larger this time than for decades and it is hoped that the new books will suit the Afghans social, economic and cultural context and fulfill the needs of the people.

It should be noted that the Afghan Ministry of Education had the wisdom to introduce so-called "*life-skills*" content in the curriculum for grades one to three, as a foundation of the social studies curriculum that covers grades four to six. The life-skills syllabus focuses on the importance of building and maintaining healthy social relationships, peace skills such as responsible problem solving and reconciliation, care for the environment and other similar notions.

The new curriculum will play an important role in contributing to *resolving, or avoiding occurrence of conflicts* that so frequently plagues Afghan society. In the case of existing or potential conflicts, we would hope that the new curriculum will result in the younger generation overcoming them. Stereotypes, prejudice and preconceptions can only be eradicated by education; specifically secondary school education which serves to strengthen the foundation laid earlier.

It should be added that *peace education* is essential in schools everywhere, not least in

countries coming out of wars and conflicts. In BEFARe's schools and other refugee schools in Pakistan, peace issues were given increasing importance, in line with the general importance given to peace education in pedagogy.<sup>9</sup>

In a longer time perspective, peace education in schools can contribute directly to solving many internal problems in a country, but cannot do much to avoid *external interventions*, or other interference, which Afghanistan has suffered. However, peace educators and activists in peace movements believe that the response to such external interference and influence will be different if children and adults have learned about and discussed peace issues at school and in public debate. If this is true, then peace education is a powerful tool that can help countries enjoy durable peace, not only at the political level but at many other levels that are important in people's daily lives.<sup>10</sup>

For Afghanistan, it is important to take advantage of the investment that all the well-meaning foreigners are making in order to help in improving the country's education system.<sup>11</sup>

It should be underlined that efforts by *foreigners can only assist*. The major efforts should be carried out by Afghans and under the leadership of government staff and leaders. But foreigners can and should help in providing expertise and advice in various fields, such as, teaching and learning methods, curriculum development, preparation, printing and distribution of textbooks and materials, evaluation and assessment methods, education planning and monitoring, education research, etc.

Foreigners could also have a role in setting targets, making sure that realistic inputs are available, monitoring implementation, and also taking corrective measures if developments are not on track. Some of these tasks are probably easier for foreigners to handle, especially at central level, but also at provincial levels.

NGOs do certainly have a role to play, staffed with foreigners and locals, but their role should be adjusted to the needs and policies as set by the country's government and the interna-

tional donor organizations. In principle, someone also needs to “keep an eye” on the donors too, and the NGOs, as has already been a topic in Afghanistan since the majority of the development aid has gone outside the ordinary government channels. It is the recipient country, with the donor countries and organizations that in partnership have to monitor implementation. Reviews and evaluations are important but have not always been sufficient. Afghanistan’s large reconstruction operations require *special monitoring and control systems* as soon as possible. There is also need for continued staff development and institutional capacity development programmes. These issues pertain to all sectors, including education, where there is a great need for training of teachers and managers.

*The contents of the teaching materials should be modern* and build on new knowledge in pedagogy, but the materials must not have a *foreign outlook*. If they do, that will make many parents less interested in sending their children to the government schools. They would in that case rather send their children to *madrassas*, or other private schools if they exist and the parents can afford it. Some parents may even keep children away from educational institutions which they think have foreign (Western) content if they believe it does not harmonize with the Islamic religion and traditional values.

There have always been *pockets of deep conservatism* in the Afghan society, not only during the Taliban regime. Yet, there is also the opposite problem, notably that some people, perhaps adolescents, lack solid foundations and can be “swayed with the wind”. We believe that this can be an existential problem felt by many Afghans, after all the criticism their traditions and way of life have received.

There is a great need for *public education* in Afghanistan, in schools, through mass media, civic education organizations, and so on, in order to develop the new Afghanistan, with democratic institutions, gender equality and greater equality between rich and poor, learned and lay, handicapped and able bodied, and so on and so forth.

Related to the above is the *education of teachers*, social and health workers, community leaders and various types of civil servants. Naturally, teachers play a special role in local communities in cities, towns and especially in the villages. Above, we have devoted a chapter in this book to issues related to *refugee teachers*. Many of those aspects we have discussed are as relevant for ordinary teachers as they are for refugee teachers, or in the current situation of Afghanistan, when many of the teachers are involved in reconstruction and rebuilding of the country, and are *emergency teachers*.

The number of children completing primary school, having qualifications for middle and secondary education, is steadily increasing. Some are returnees who come home mainly from Pakistan and Iran, but more and more pupils come out of Afghanistan’s own primary schools, putting pressure on the system for further education. Education planners in Afghanistan believe that opening a sufficient number of *middle and secondary schools*, and other middle-level skills, vocational and technical training, is not an insurmountable task.

With sustained donor support, as was pledged at the *London Conference for Afghanistan* at the turn of January and February 2006, the rebuilding of the education system is possible.

The fields that take longest are higher education and research, and the *creation of a culture* in the government and private sectors that are conducive to development.

School certificates, with bookish knowledge, skills and attitudes, are essential but they need to be paired with good *practical experience* afterwards. For most developing countries, the latter is a much more complex problem than to erect school buildings, develop and print books, and even educate teachers. When we use the term development of human resources, which is key in developing the new and modern Afghanistan, we include *education and training at school as well as practical on-the-job training and maturity*.

## EDUCATION FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Throughout this book we have emphasized the importance of education for refugees, returnees and the majority of Afghans who lived at home during the recent decades of wars and conflicts. In this chapter, we have in particular underlined that *education is a key factor in rebuilding and developing a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan*. We have tried to highlight that the returnees find a far from perfect education system, but still a system which is on track.

We are emphasizing that a country's people are its *real capital*. The better educated and trained they are, the richer the country is. However, this human capital cannot be used only by itself, it also requires other inputs, in order to develop the country. In Afghanistan there is a very long way to go to develop the country's institutions and infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, water, health, security, the judicial system, and other sectors.

The success that Afghanistan can show in its development of the education sector over the four-five years after "9/11" promises well for the country's further reconstruction. Educated and trained people will be in a better position to do the jobs and do them well. The better backgrounds people have, the easier it will be for them to find livelihoods – either they are refugees returning home or they are Afghans who endured the difficulties at home during the long years of wars and conflicts.

Although we are concerned about education, it should be underlined that investments must also be made in infrastructure, institutional development, in health and nutrition, and other social and productive sectors. Yet, on the other hand, we also know that without an educated and trained workforce no country can succeed, especially a country like Afghanistan, coming out of wars and conflicts, and still experiencing post conflict problems including security problems, huge illegal smuggling of drugs and corruption.

The future development problems are much

more *complex* in a country like Afghanistan than for an industrialized country, say in Europe. The latter has a much larger base of excellently trained people, it has capital, functioning institutions, low corruption, law and order, and so on.



These girls are from a makeshift school established after the devastating earthquake that hit Kashmir and NWFP, Pakistan, on 8 October 2005. Amongst the four millions affected by the earthquake; the death toll was more than 80,000. Many of the survivors became homeless and had to move into temporary camps. Victims of natural disasters, like the earthquake in Pakistan, experience similar trauma and have similar needs for help as victims of wars, creating refugees. Afghan refugees have done their best to help out after the earthquake, especially in villages in NWFP, where BEFAre is also involved.

In Kashmir, the interest for education among earthquake victims in the temporary camps was much higher than expected. When the people can move back to their settlements in the mountains after the winter season is over, it is hoped that they can "take the schools with them", i.e. that permanent schools can be established for children and literacy and skills training centers for adolescents and adults. Establishment of women groups should be given special attention. In addition to focusing on ordinary functional adult education issues, the groups should also focus on psychosocial issues related to rehabilitation after the earthquake.<sup>12</sup> Photo by United Nations, 2005.

This again points to how crucial education and training are to form the basis and move ahead.

It is with pleasure we note that **BEFARe** and other projects and activities dealing with refugees in Pakistan have made excellent contributions in the education sector over the years. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have returned home to Afghanistan with basic education from BEFARe's good schools in Pakistan. Some are still in school and need to complete their schooling upon return to Afghanistan. Thousands of experienced and trained BEFARe teachers, head teachers and managers have also returned home. About thirty percent of the pupils and teachers are girls and women.

The former BEFARe pupils and teachers are contributing significantly to Afghanistan's development. BEFARe books and other materials are also valuable assets to the new Afghanistan.

*BEFARe still has a large number of pupils in its schools in Pakistan.* That means that essential education work still continues on both sides of the Afghan border on the way to a normal situation.

In Pakistan, there are refugee-hosting areas with poor Pakistanis who need help, and there are Pakistanis and Afghans affected by the devastating earthquake in Pakistan in October 2005. Afghans and Pakistanis work hand in hand to make the best out of difficult situations, including as refugees, hosts of refugees, returnees, workers and experts on both sides of the borders. The two countries and their people have much in common in peace and when disasters strike.

## THE FUTURE

Many Afghan refugees in Pakistan and elsewhere are *cautious* when deciding on returning home. This is understandable. But as for the education sector they meet in Afghanistan, we believe that refugees will find it satisfactory. Afghanistan has never, in its history, had such a large number of pupils going to school. Some sources show figures as high as six million, although very few

pupils are in high quality schools. The quality would usually be lower than schools run by BEFARe and other NGOs in Pakistan, or the government schools in Iran. Still we hope the Afghans at home and the returnees find the school system bearable, accepting that it is continuously being rebuilt and improved. Returnees too can play a major role in improving the school system. Teachers, parents, pupils and the local communities where the schools are situated, should all help on the road to a better future.

Other problems, such as lack of housing, livelihoods, health services, and law and order, and general security are more worrying. But this book is about education, and it is therefore our task to report on that sector, which we find to be on track and moving fast in the right direction.

The international community has promised Afghanistan assistance in rebuilding the country, and they have said they will be there over the long haul. The conferences after "9/11" have all confirmed this; in Bonn, Tokyo, Berlin and London. The international community also has a responsibility for assisting Afghanistan since the last quarter century's wars and conflicts were much due to geo-political reasons and foreign influence. Now, it is up to the Afghans to get back into the driver's seat and steer future developments.

The foreign forces should be warned and make it possible to give Afghanistan back to its rightful custodians. Afghanistan will remain a poor country for many years and decades, but it does have the potential to reach acceptable economic levels, which can give the people of Afghanistan a future in peaceful development, where the daily struggle leads to betterment and improvements are not destroyed, but where people again care for each other and can look forward to a better future in safety for their children – a country which every Afghan will be proud of calling home. We as educationists have a special duty in this, but each Afghan has his or her duty in rebuilding their land.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> (a) Special thanks for providing information, data and opinions for this chapter go to the teachers, parents and other refugees we have spoken to during the work with the book. Thanks also go to other people, Afghans, Pakistanis and others, who have shared their valuable insights. In a footnote below a few names have been mentioned. (b) There is a range of new books giving background about the modern and “new” Afghanistan (fiction and more journalistic reports), such as (i) Albinati, Edoardo. *Coming Back. Diary of a mission to Afghanistan*. Hesperus Press, London, and, UNHCR, Geneva, 2003; (ii) Seierstad, Aasne: *The Bookseller of Kabul*. Little, Brown, Time Warner Books, London, 2003; (iii) Hosseini, Khaled: *The Kite Runner*. Riverhead Books, New York, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Sources for the boxes: (a) CSO *Statistical Yearbook*. Central Statistics Office, Kabul, 2003; (b) MICS/UNICEF: *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey/United Nations Children’s Fund*. Kabul, 2003; (c) HDR: *Human Development Report Afghanistan*. UNHCR, Kabul, 2005, and earlier reports; (d) Wirak, Anders et al.: *Afghanistan: Norwegian Education Team Report. Draft 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005*. DECO/LINS/NCG, Oslo, 2005; (e) Naumann, Craig: *Compilation of Some Basic Schools Statistics*. World Food Programme (WFP), Kabul, 2003; (f) Munsch, Holger: *Education*. Chapter in an evaluation report of aid to Afghanistan, carried out by Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway, 2005; (g) Naumann, Craig, et al.: *Results and Discussion of Education Data collected in the Afghanistan National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2003*. (NRVA 2003.) WFP, APEP, USAID, SC/US, Kabul, 2005; (h) Various articles in magazines, journals and newspapers handling current affairs related to Afghan and the region, published in Islamabad, New York, etc.; (i) See also earlier chapters in this book, especially *Chapters 1, 5, 6 and 7*.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the references in Note 2 above, reference is also made to Note 3 in Chapter 9, notably UNHCR Pakistan’s booklets concerning repatriation.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR’s offices in Pakistan and Afghanistan have detailed information about various repatriation issues. The offices have Public Information (PI) Officers and also Mass Information (MI) Officers; the PI officers maintain overall information while the MI officers have further details about the local community situations. (b) Information is updated and made available almost daily from other media organizations and networks, such as IRIN, which is a network under the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

<sup>5</sup> In the following text of this chapter we draw heavily upon material from key international organizations

based in Afghanistan, the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Save the Children Alliance, bilateral aid agencies (USAID, Danida, etc.), a number of other organizations, and various Afghan ministries in education and other sectors. As mentioned in Note 1 a few individuals deserve special mention for their assistance in providing data and contributing to the analysis in this chapter: Craig Naumann, an international consultant, with some four years of experience from work in the field of education, mainly for WFP, in contact with other organizations. Muhammad Badar Alam, Assistant Editor, The News, Lahore, also needs special mention. Furthermore, Dr. S.B. Ekanayake should be mentioned as contributing to this chapter as well. His book entitled, *Education in the Doldrums. Afghan Tragedy*. Islamabad, 2000 and 2005, has been drawn upon, and in particular the last chapter, “Curriculum Conflict”, which is new in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the book.

<sup>6</sup> See Note 2 (c) above.

<sup>7</sup> Laila Ayoubi completed a Ph. D. dissertation on home-schools for refugee girls in Pakistan at Preston University, Kohat, 2006. The author had the privilege of advising and discussing issues during Dr. Ayoubi’s work with her dissertation.

<sup>8</sup> Several interviews were held with Craig Naumann in Islamabad in October – December 2005. Some of the data originates from these interviews and some from an article in “The News”, Lahore/Islamabad/Karachi, 22.01.06, by Atle Hetland and Muhammad Badar Alam.

<sup>9</sup> See BEFARe’s Annual Reports, including the one for 2005, and various internal reports in non-formal and formal education. See also Holger Munsch’s report (in German) entitled, *Grunderziehung für afghanische Flüchtlinge. Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (BEFARe). GTZ Fallstudie. Gutachten im Rahmen des Sektorhaben Bildung und konfliktbearbeitung*. Bremen, October 2004.

<sup>10</sup> See countless UNESCO reports for general aspects of peace education, including as related to emergency situations. See website addresses at the end of the book.

<sup>11</sup> In the boxes at the beginning of the chapter we have included some basic data about the education sector. The references in Note 2 above give further references to studies/evaluations.

<sup>12</sup> See, Atle Hetland: “ABC of post-disaster” and “Curriculum for change” in “The News on Sunday”, Lahore/Islamabad/Karachi, 30.10.05 and 25.12.05, respectively.



" I am ready to go home now",  
this young Afghan boy seems to be saying



# Annexes

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## Annex 1

# INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

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## Introduction

The following text concerning the usefulness of the international instruments and declarations is from a recent publication by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) entitled, *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction*. INEE, c/o UNESCO, Paris, 2004, page. 71. (Currently, INEF is housed by UNICEF, New York.)

BEFARe is the coordinator of the INEE Working Group on Minimum Standards for Teachers and Other Education Personnel.

*International instruments and declarations proclaim the right of all individuals to have an education, which sets the foundation for the promotion of all human rights. The right to free expression, the right to equality and the right to have a voice in decision-making with regard to social and educational policies are integral parts of education.*

*In emergency settings it is essential that these rights are preserved. As part of the emergency response, education authorities and key stakeholders should develop and implement an education plan that takes into account national and international education policies, upholds the right to education, and is responsive to the learning needs of affected populations. This framework should aim to improve the quality of education and access to schools and should clearly show the transition from emergency response to development. Community involvement in the planning and implementation of interventions, programmes and policies is vital to the success of any emergency response.”*

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## The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948.*

### Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

### Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

### Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
  2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
  3. Parents have the prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.
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## **The Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

*Adopted in London, November 1945.*

**The Preamble** emphasized that the states parties to the Organization's Constitution believed in "full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge (...).

**Article 1** of the Constitution of the Organization emphasized its role in contributing to peace and security "by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations."

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## **The Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy**

*Declaration of the 44<sup>th</sup> session of the International Conference on Education.*

*Endorsed by the General Conference of UNESCO, November 1995.*

With this Declaration, Ministers of Education expressed their concern with the "manifestations of violence, racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and violations of human rights" as well as "by religious intolerance, by the upsurge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and by the growing gap separating wealthy countries from poor countries". They also expressed their conviction that well-carried out education policies will contribute to the development of tolerance and understanding, thus to the development of human rights and to the construction of a culture of peace and democracy. They reaffirmed their determination to base education on principles and methods that contribute to forming the human personality, who are respectful of their fellow human beings and determined to promote peace, human rights and democracy.

The Integrated Framework of Action pays attention to the "vulnerable groups" in order to respect "their right to education" and set up for them programmes and specific means and methods of teaching organized in a way that enables them to fully exercise this right.

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## **The World Declaration on Education for All**

*Adopted at the World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990.*

**Article 1**, Section 1 of the Declaration affirmed that "every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs". Section 3 added, "Another and no less fundamental aim of educational development is the transmission and enrichment of common cultural and moral values. It is in these values that the individual and society find their identity and worth."

**Article 3** added that "basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults" and declared, "For basic education to be equitable, all children, youth and adults must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning."

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## **The Dakar Framework of Action**

*Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.  
Adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, April 2000.*

### **The six goals of the Dakar Framework of Action**

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

*UNESCO, which is responsible for co-ordinating the EFA Movement, has developed standard-setting and monitoring instruments, and correctional measures to be taken underway, without which many goals may not be reached by the poorer developing countries. The international community has committed itself to supporting each country's efforts, provided the policies and actions by the country itself are considered sound.*

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## **The Ten Years United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)**

*Launched by Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations at the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, April 2000.*

UNGEI's aim is at reaching equality of enrolment and achievement in education between girls and boys. UNGEI mounts a sustained campaign to improve the quality and availability of girls' education through collaboration among different partners within and outside the UN system.

UNGEI recognizes that the education goals will not be reached unless affirmative actions are taken in support of girls' education. The international poverty reduction goals will not be reached without concerted efforts to achieve gender equality and to eliminate discrimination against women and girls. Therefore, UNGEI is envisaged as an essential, integral element in the global efforts to reduce poverty. UNGEI is a major UN system contribution to the Education for All Movement and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. UNGEI's task force is co-ordinated by UNICEF.

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## **The Millennium Development Goals**

*Among other standard-setting instruments are the Millennium Development Goals, 2000,  
of which two goals specifically concern education.*

**GOAL 2: Achieve universal primary education.** Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

**GOAL 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

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## The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD). 2003 – 2012

*Adopted at the 56<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, December 2001.*

*Launched at UN Headquarters on 13 February 2003 with UNESCO as lead agency.*

The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), 2003 – 2012, aims to extend the literacy to those who do not currently have access to it. **“Literacy as Freedom”** is the theme of the Decade.

While societies enter into the information and knowledge society, and modern technologies develop and spread at rapid speed, close to 1 billion adults are illiterate (more than one in five people above the age of 15) and at least 120 million children have no access to school, and hundreds of millions attend sub-standard schools. It has been estimated that about half of all children who do not attend school belongs to groups affected by war, conflict, post-conflict and emergency situations.

Countless children, youth and adults who attend school or other education programmes fall short of the required level to be considered **functional literate** in today’s world, mostly in developing countries.

The UN Resolution (56/116) recognizes that literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they face in life. **Literacy represents an essential step in basic education**, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century.

UNLD endorses the insight that literacy is not limited to the generic skills of reading, writing and calculating, but is instead a **human right related to development**. Literacy may be culturally, linguistically and even temporally diverse.

UNLD aims at achieving **50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015** as well as equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. (See EFA goal 4, where girls and women have been mentioned specifically; reference is also made to the girls’ education initiative, UNGEI.)

Doubling the literacy rate in countries with very poor literacy is a very conservative goal and the UNLD spirit is that countries should achieve universal, or close to **universal literacy**.

In Afghanistan and the “tribal areas” on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, sometimes the literacy rate is often less than ten percent, and among women just a few percent. In such cases, the spirit of the UNLD is reaching much more than doubling of the literacy rate. UNESCO supports each country in developing its **National Action Plan for Literacy**, modeled on the International Action Plan, to take cognizance of the situation in each country unique situation and internal variations.

UNLD focuses on meeting the learning needs of those who are excluded from quality learning. (See EFA goal 6.) Attention shall be given to various marginalized groups, including children, adolescent girls and boys (such as drop-outs) and adults in situations of **conflict, emergency, and displaced people and refugees**.

The Decade will also play a vital role in realizing the objectives of the **Education for All movement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**; the latter focus on eradication of poverty, economic development, and health issues, including education.

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## Annex 2

## Literature and References

Considering the constant production of new literature and references in today's world, we have decided not to include an ordinary **Bibliography** in this book. The main substantive chapters include relatively detailed **Notes** with references to some of the existing literature.

Below, we present the websites and e-mail addresses to selected organizations and institutions so that the reader can have access to the latest information directly from these. The list is not exhaustive.

The Government of Pakistan has information on issues pertaining to all aspects of refugees/returnees at Ministry level and at its Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), House 10, Street 30, F-7/1, Islamabad. Furthermore, there is a Commissionerate (CAR) in each of the major refugee-hosting cities in Pakistan.

### Addresses for further information and literature acquisition

#### 1. GTZ and BEFARe

- BEFARe – Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, 8 Tatara Road, Rahatabad, Peshawar  
www.gtz.de  
befare@befare.org  
shakir@befare.org
- GTZ Headquarters  
Eschborn, Germany  
www.gtz.de

#### 2. International networks

- IRIN - UNOCHA's integrated humanitarian aid information network, Islamabad.  
irin@irinnews.org
- INEE - Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. www.inee.org  
coordinator@ineesite.org
- RLN - Refugee Livelihoods Network

hqep00@unhcr.ch

#### 3. Coordinating body and library for Afghan refugees in Pakistan

- ACBAR - Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, incl. Education Comte. acbar@brain.net.pk
- ARIC - ACBAR's Afghan Resource and Information Centre aric@brain.net.pk

#### 4. Some International NGOs in Pakistan in refugee education (implementing partners)

- OI-Ockenden International (UK), Peshawar/Quetta/Islamabad.  
pakocken@comsats.net.pk
- IRC - International Rescue Committee, Peshawar/Islamabad/Kabul www.theirc.org  
melkanzi@theirc.org  
afgeducoord@theirc.org
- SC/US - Save the Children (United States), Quetta/Islamabad.  
www.savechildren.org  
aamin@qta.savechildren.org.pk  
acole@savechildren.org.uk
- SC/UK – Save the Children (UK), Islamabad.  
www.savethechildren.org.uk
- SC/Sweden – Save the Children (Sweden), Peshawar.  
radda@brain.net.pk
- NRC - Norwegian Refugee Council (Norway), Peshawar/Teheran/Kabul.  
nrceeduc@brain.net.pk
- World Vision Pakistan  
www.worldvision.org
- Mercy Corps (UK), Quetta/Islamabad  
www.mercycorps.org

#### 5. Some local NGOs in refugee education in Pakistan

- Afghan Institute of Learning, Peshawar/Kabul.  
sakenay@brain.net.pk
- Society for Support for Primary Education in Balochistan, Quetta/Islamabad  
www.scspeb.sdnepk.org  
scspeb@yahoo.com
- AED - Academy for Educational Development, Islamabad. www.aed.org

## 6. Some United Nations Organizations \*

- UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Islamabad  
islamabad@unesco.org j. sequeira@unesco.org
- UNESCO Office, Kabul. kabul@unesco.org  
m.meleisea@unesco.org
- UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok (curriculum development, etc.) www.unescobkk.org
- IIEP – UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning, Paris www.unesco.org/iiep
- UIE – UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg (literacy and adult education).  
www.unesco.org/education/uiie
- IBE – UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Geneva (curriculum development).  
www.ibe.unesco.org
- UNEVOC – UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Bonn www.unevoc.unesco.org
- UIS – UNESCO Institute for Statistics.  
www.uis.unesco.org uis@unesco.org
- UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Islamabad. E-mail: pakis@unhcr.ch  
shahzad@unhcr.ch
- UNHCR Headquarters – Senior Education Officer, Geneva. www.unhcr.ch  
cdr@unhcr.ch  
ahlen@unhcr.org
- UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund, Islamabad.  
tthodesen@unicef.org
- UNICEF Headquarters, New York. www.unicef.org
- ILO – International Labour Organization, Geneva  
www.ilo.org

## 7. Some universities and research institutes

- Area Study Center (Russia, China and Central Asia), University of Peshawar  
ascrcra@paknet.com.pk
- Human Rights Studies Centre, Faculty of Law, University of Peshawar. hrsc@psh.paknet.com.pk  
www.hrsc.edu.pk
- Hazara University, Mansehra  
huniversity@hotmail.com
- Refugee Studies Center, University of Oxford, UK  
Website to its magazine: "Forced Migration Review"  
www.fmreview.org
- AREU-Afghan Research and Evolution Unit, a Kabul based NGO.  
www.areu.org.af

## 8. Some individual experts

In alphabetical order; the list is not comprehensive.

- Syed Javed Ahmad (primary, IT, Pak./Afgh.)  
syedjaved\_ahmad@yahoo.com
- Tauqir Alam (history, migration, Central Asian geopolitics) mtauqiralam@hotmail.com
- Anne Kristine Angeltveit (emergency management of

educ. and other proj.)

- annekristine2005@yahoo.no
- M. Daud Awan (refugee hosting areas, earthquake response, institutional cooperation, Pak.)  
hazara\_university@yahoo.com
- Laila Ayoubi (home schools, Pak./Afgh.)  
layoubi@butler.edu
- Ulf Bartholomae (management, innovation, Pak./Asia)  
ulfbarth@yahoo.se
- Anthony J. Barrett (management, leadership, culture, refugee hosting areas, Kenya/Sudan)  
tonyturkana@yahoo.com
- Tim Brown (secondary, general, Sudan/East Africa)  
brownunhcr@yahoo.com
- Laila Bokhari (pol.science, religion, sociology, Pak./global) laila.bokhari@ffi.no
- Udo Bude (management, research, evaluation, Pak.)  
uhu.bude@t-online.de
- Dana Burde (girls' education, educ. for repatriation, research, Pak./global) dsb33@columbia.edu
- S.B. Ekanayake (teacher training, adult educ., history, Pak./Afgh./Asia) ekanayake92@hotmail.com
- Ingrid Fosslund (management, planning, health educ., Central Asia/Africa) ingridfosslund@hotmail.com
- Ulrike Hanemann (adult education, general, Afgh./global) u.hanemann@unesco.org
- Michael Hirth (planning, management, Pak./Afgh.)  
michael.hirth@giz.de
- Eva Marion Johannessen (special educ., eval., Pak./Afgh./global) em-johan@online.no
- Bjorn Johannessen (emergency aid, media, current affairs, Pak./Afgh./Asia/Africa)  
bjorn.johannessen@mfa.no
- Evelin Gerda Lindner (psychosocial issues, trauma, Eastern Africa/global) e.g.lindner@psychologi.uio.no
- Eldrid Kvamen Midttun (advocacy, networks, admin., global) eldrid.kvamen.midttun@nrc.no
- Holger Munsch (management, vocational, general, Pak./Afgh.) h.munsch@t-online.de
- Craig Naumann (statistics, analysis, planning, Afgh.)  
ccnaumann@yahoo.com
- Pilar Robledo (management, fieldwork, Pak./Central Asia) pilarrobledo@yahoo.com
- Mujadidi Agha Shah (management, curriculum, planning, leadership, Pak./Afgh.) mujadidi@befare.org
- Margaret Sinclair (overall, peace, Pak./Afgh./Eastern Africa/ global) maragaret\_sinclair@yahoo.com
- Sabiha. H. Syed (migration, demography, Pak./Central Asia) shsyed8@hotmail.com
- Fiona Torrens-spence (educ., languages., Pak./Afgh.)  
ftspence@yahoo.com

\* Although UNESCO has a number of specialized offices with relevant information about refugee education, mentioned in our list, it should be noted that UNHCR is the main refugee agency. However, UNESCO has a potential to play a more proactive role, and is likely to do so, if we are to achieve Education for All, including refugees, by 2015, as per international goals.

## Annex 3

# Earthquake in Pakistan

## Emergency Education and Community Services as Part of the Early, Medium and Long-term Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters

Following the devastating earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October 2005, the Government of Pakistan, the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, local and international NGOs, private companies and individuals responded quickly. However, the response was not fast enough, especially not that of the United Nations and the international community, which have to mobilize the donors through 'flash appeals' and other mechanisms since they have minimal 'reserve budgets'.

The large natural disasters in the last few years, notably the *earthquake in Pakistan* in 2005, the unprecedented *tsunami in South East Asia* at the end of 2004, and other disasters, prompted the United Nations to evaluate and revise its preparedness and ability to respond quickly in emergencies. The UN decided it needed to establish the **Central Emergency Response Fund** (CERF) to be able to purchase, or provide from its several warehouses around the world, goods and services immediately after disasters have stricken, thus avoiding critical delays and saving lives and suffering. The *United Nations Headquarters and the United Nations Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (UNOCHA) maintain their strong leadership and coordination roles related to emergencies, in cooperation with the disaster-stricken country or countries in each case. In addition, donor countries and organizations, and numerous local and international non-governmental organizations play essential roles in fund-raising and as implementing organizations providing the assistance on the ground, together with the government authorities.

At the Pakistani level, the Government has

set up a **Federal Relief Commission (FRC)** to coordinate, monitor and implement the emergency, transition and long-term development aid required after the earthquake in 2005. It is foreseen that in some fields assistance will be needed for at least a five-year period. FRC will develop improved systems for local coordination of disasters, including sector/subject-area coordination in 'clusters', monitoring and evaluation of work and results, budget control, etc. FRC aims at improving markedly the country's preparedness for response to possible disasters that may strike in future.

For all practical coordination after the 1985 earthquake, Pakistan has established the **Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA)**, which works in collaboration with the **UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordination**.

Pakistan has a **Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR)**, with sub-offices (CARs) in the major cities of the refugee hosting provinces. The country still hosts between 2.5 and 3 million Afghan citizens, although not all are refugees in a strict sense but more like 'economic migrants', mostly fleeing from *living on less than a dollar a day*, or in other words, extreme poverty in Afghanistan. From poor areas within a country, for example caused by drought or other environmental reasons, general poor and uncertain living conditions, disturbances, discrimination, etc., people may also migrate away and settle temporarily or permanently in other areas.

There is often a fine line between the term (voluntary) *internal migrants* and *internally displaced persons (IDPs)*. In recent years, the UN



This photo collage is from areas hit by the devastating earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October 2005.

Photo: Torgim Halvari, 2005/6.

Refugee Agency UNHCR has begun to grapple more seriously with the mentioned fields, which clearly fall within the agency's core mandate of *protection*. Furthermore, UNHCR has begun considering education and community services as *proactive tools in protection*.

*Forced migration and human trafficking*, within and across borders, are fields of increased concern to UNHCR and other organizations and governments as the magnitude of these problems is already high and growing. It is sometimes said that the profits in these fields are higher, and the risk lower, than in other international crime, including smuggling of drugs, which is a curse to Afghanistan's development and security. Often, children and young adolescents fall prey to these crimes. UNICEF, Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and many other local and international organizations are already helping national governments and NGOs in beginning to handle these serious problems on the ground, in international forums, and in various other ways, such as helping in creating awareness, collecting data and seeking solutions.

After the earthquake in Pakistan, BEFARe responded quickly and opened some non-formal

schools. Since BEFARe works in NWFP and it already had a sub-center (resource center) in Abbottabad, near Manshera, which again is only some 30 kilometers from one of the hardest-hit towns by the earthquake, Balakot, these areas were chosen for BEFARe's initial assistance, which it partly implemented in cooperation with the UN Education Agency UNESCO.

For long-term assistance and more ordinary development aid to the people of these and other areas, we recommend that BEFARe seek cooperation with the *teacher training college in Abbottabad* and the new *Hazara University in Mansehra*. BEFARe, with its long practical, and also some theoretical experience, can draw upon the higher educational institutions' research and teaching capacities, and they can in turn learn from BEFARe and other NGOs dealing with refugee education, community services and other emergency response. In emergency work it is always important to *combine theory and practice*, and UNHCR's guidelines in education and other fields are often exemplary.

In future BEFARe-academic institutional cooperation, emphasis can be placed on typical psychological and pedagogical disciplines, such as



post-traumatic stress, psychosocial issues, teaching under stress, etc., and the study of management activities related to communities in and after emergencies, in addition to other issues which the institutions and partners may find to be within their fields of competence and capacity.

The institutions and organizations could also play key roles in developing *local manuals and guidelines, and evaluation methods*, for response to emergencies, to be channeled into the plans for preparedness, which the Government of Pakistan's new bodies FRC and ERRA are in charge of. Unfortunately, there is likelihood for disasters happening again, sooner or later, in this country, or in other countries in the sub-region.

As for refugee issues in Pakistan, and returnee issues in Afghanistan, there is need for inter-university/college cooperation, not only in our fields of concern, notably education and community services, but in many other fields too. We have elsewhere in this book pointed out that emergency issues in general, including refugee issues, which usually turn out to be long-lasting emergencies, have been given inexplicably little research and scientific attention.

Although we know that Pakistan and Afghanistan are situated in areas, which are more likely to be affected by earthquakes than many other parts of the world, little research has been done in fields like geology, seismology, architecture, construction works, and other natural science fields, and how to respond afterwards, which becomes a combination of natural and social sciences – and practical and common sense. Pakistan's newly established FRC will be in a position to guide policy developments but it is also necessary for the scientific and professional milieux, locally and internationally, to increase their involvement and provide politicians and civil servants with the data they need. We should add that data in many of these fields will often remain inaccurate, but in other fields, data is precise, and lessons can be learned from elsewhere in the world, such as Japan, south-western USA, Turkey, Iran, etc.

Keeping to the scope of this book, we have in earlier chapters recommended that emergency

education, teaching under stress, first-aid, and other topics mentioned above become compulsory components in all teacher training courses and studies of education at local universities. In spite of the large and long-lasting Afghan refugee crisis, and Pakistan being one of the world's largest refugee hosting countries, limited documentation and research have been done.

In future, studies should take place within the various disciplines, such as education, psychology, sociology, history, demography, and other fields. Migration studies, including forced migration and related fields, would comprehend most of these issues, but they should still be dealt with as part of the various university subjects and disciplines, and at the teacher training colleges and schools for social and health workers.

*Community services* include several of the more practically oriented areas of importance to educationists and social workers in and after disasters. Much short-term and long-term suffering can be avoided if specialists in education and social work are included in providing assistance. Some of the assistance is highly specialized and it requires additional medical and other expertise in physiotherapy, ergotherapy, psychology, and other fields, and the fieldworkers must be able to judge when victims need to be referred to specialists. In this book we have emphasized that *special education* ('inclusive education') should be given higher priority in refugee and other emergency education.

The Abbottabad-Mansehra area, where BEFAre has some of its activities, is near the Afghan border and an area which has been a *refugee hosting area* throughout the Afghan refugee era. It should be noted that estimates made soon after the earthquake showed that two – three hundred thousand of those affected were Afghan refugees; several million Pakistanis were affected, mostly in higher elevations in Kashmir and other areas in northern Pakistan (and some also in India and Afghanistan), while damages were less in lower areas in NWFP and elsewhere, including as far south as the capital city Islamabad and Rawalpindi nearby.

In NWFP there are many *Afghan refugee*

*teachers* and others who possess skills and understanding of great importance to help the earthquake victims. We hope NGOs and others have consulted them for advice, and that some of them have been employed by good organizations like BEFARe and others in helping the injured, traumatized and devastated people after the earthquake. Many, maybe all, refugees have unique competence in how to handle and get through difficult daily-life situations.

Perhaps we can say that Afghan refugees have gained *knowledge in suffering* over decades. In addition, they have received help from kind people, authorities and organizations in Pakistan. After the earthquake on 8 October 2005, their special experience gained a strange new value. It should be remembered that the people who have been at the receiving end for so many years, would certainly like to be invited to *pay back*, if even just a little.

In the years to come, BEFARe's work will focus more on refugee-hosting areas, where there will be a majority of Pakistanis but with a segment of Afghans, and now also possibly some migrants after the earthquake on 8 October 2005 and some of its stronger aftershocks. BEFARe's

experience from refugee education is highly relevant in the current earthquake relief work, in particular as related to the transition and long-term response phases, and in connection with 'integrated populations' in refugee hosting areas, in particular in poor urban communities. Together with the universities and colleges, BEFARe should initiate documentation and analysis of the response after the earthquake in education and community services.

Let us end this brief annex in an optimistic spirit: It seems possible that provision of universal primary education and literacy can become a reality sooner in areas receiving assistance after the earthquake than in some other areas of Pakistan. Education and skills training become particularly important to earthquake victims and refugees because their ordinary livelihoods have often been made difficult or impossible, and some people may wish to migrate to safer areas. In many cases, education and skills become 'the only luggage' and hope for young people to avoid poverty, or even experience prosperity. For this to come true would be our prayer.





## Learning Away from Home

### A Foundation Book in Refugee and Emergency Education

Cases: "Basic Education for Afghan Refugees" - BEFARe and other refugee and returnee education activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan  
1980 - 2005

By Atle Hetland



*Atle Hetland* (Norway/Kenya) is the author of *Learning Away from Home*. He is a specialist in development and refugee education and research and has spent more than 25 years in this field, including 5 years in Afghan refugee education in Pakistan as a consultant working for UNHCR, UNESCO, and other organizations. During the work with the book he has been professionally affiliated to Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan

S.B. Ekanayake (Sri Lanka/Pakistan) has been research associate on the book project.

Fiona-Torrens-Spence (UK/USA) has been language and editorial consultant.

Salman Beenish (Pakistan) has been the graphic designer and photo editor.



"Mother's Tears" (oil colour) by Afghan Artist  
Gh. M. Shabnam Ghaznawi

*"I believe that provision of basic secondary, technical and vocational education is the most important help we as a host country can give to refugee children and adolescents. Education is also an essential tool in preparing refugees for returning home because education will give them a better chance of finding employment in Afghanistan."*

*Dr. Imran Zeb Khan*  
Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees Government of Pakistan.

*"I find education an essential element in rebuilding Afghanistan and it is important for the refugees to become active members in society. I would like to express gratitude to host countries and donor countries, bilateral organizations, United Nations and other multilateral organizations, and a large number of non-governmental organizations for the education they have provided to refugees over many years."*

*H.E. Dr. Nangiyalai Tarzi*  
Ambassador of Afghanistan in Pakistan

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www.alhamra.com  
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