



Afghanistan Research & Evaluation Unit and Collective for Social Science Research



Conference on Afghan Population Movements



Holiday Inn, Islamabad

14 February 2006

- Theme** Afghans in neighbouring countries: issues, concerns and solutions.
- Objectives** To present the findings of AREU's research on transnational networks to stakeholders and policymakers.
- To initiate discussion leading to a comprehensive policy solution to Afghan population movements to neighbouring countries.
- Conference design** During the morning session the Government of Pakistan and Afghanistan, representatives from Iran, donors, and other key international organisations will discuss potential policy responses to the findings presented by AREU.
- The afternoon session will focus in more detail on key research findings relating to Afghan population movements.
- Sponsors** The European Commission (EC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Office (ILO)
- Key participants** **Government of Afghanistan:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
- Government of Pakistan:** Ministry of Labour, Office of the Chief Commissioner on Afghan Refugees, National Aliens Registration Authority (NARA), Protectorate of Emigrants
- Researchers:** Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Collective for Social Science Research, University of Tehran, International Organization for Migration, International Labour Office, Altai Consulting, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics

MORNING SESSION

Introduction to the research, and the outline and purpose of the conference

Paula Kantor, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Overall research aims

1. To improve understanding of the relationship between transnational networks and sustainable reintegration from the perspective of returnees as well as Afghans remaining in either Pakistan or Iran
2. To trace social support networks in Afghanistan and abroad, and to use this information to help identify the characteristics of successful reintegration
3. To make recommendations to the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran regarding mutually agreeable solutions for Afghans living and working in neighbouring countries

Country-specific research aims

In Afghanistan, to investigate:

- the decision-making process around both leaving Afghanistan and returning
- the existence and strength of transnational networks
- the role of cross-border movements and remittances in creating livelihood strategies that can sustain return

In Iran and Pakistan, to investigate:

- reasons for not returning and possibilities for return
- existing links with Afghanistan
- livelihood patterns
- experiences of labour migrants (Iran)

Conference aims and outline

Aims

- To present findings of AREU's transnational networks research and other related research, highlighting policy recommendations
- To discuss possible policy responses to Afghan population movements to and from neighbouring countries

Outline

- Research presentations from AREU and partners, and complementary research by IOM and ILO
- Panel discussions, with comments from government and the international community

The relevance of transnational networks in the context of Afghanistan

Alessandro Monsutti

There are three main points that form the basis of this introduction:

- the prior existence of transnational networks beyond Afghanistan (for centuries Afghans have travelled within the country and the region, while this movement has taken on a new dimension in light of the recent war);

- the relevance of the transnational networks for the social and economic reconstruction of Afghanistan (each year hundreds of millions of dollars reaches Afghanistan through remittances, contributing directly to family support and, indirectly, to national recovery);
- the need to bring the notion of transnational networks into the political debate (this must be addressed both at the regional level, but also in multilateral discussions between donor agencies etc.).

Approaches to migration

- The figure of the refugee (1951 Convention, 1967 Protocol)
- Typologies (causes and motivations; forced/voluntary migrations; political/economic migrants; pull/push factors)
- Transnational networks (strategies; the notion of transmigrant – a person who maintains relations with many people over different places; multi-sited research in a globalised context)

There is a need for a new methodology to account for this situation. If people belong simultaneously to different places, our research must be carried out in simultaneous places. AREU therefore carried out research in nine places, finding that migration is an ongoing process and follows a multi-linear path: this is a positive reaction to Afghans' circumstances.

Repatriation is not, *per se*, the solution; it is only part of the solution. A more comprehensive solution will take into account the continuous movement of the people.

Main conclusions

- Recognising that ongoing migration is a tool of reconstruction and a constitutive feature of Afghan social life, there is a real need to look beyond the three solutions to the refugee problems usually recommended and promoted by UNHCR:
 - voluntary **repatriation** in the country of origin
 - **integration** in the host country
 - **resettlement** in a third country
- These three solutions are based on the idea that the movement must stop.
- A more comprehensive solution that takes into account the strategies developed by the Afghan population, including the back and forth movements between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, must be promoted.

Presentation of research findings from Afghanistan

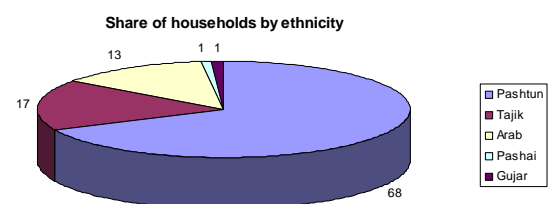
Gulbadan Habibi, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Jalalabad City and peri-urban areas

- 50% of the interviews were done in the city; 50% in peri-urban communities
- Fieldwork took 4 weeks
- Over 100 questions were asked, taking 90 minutes per interview

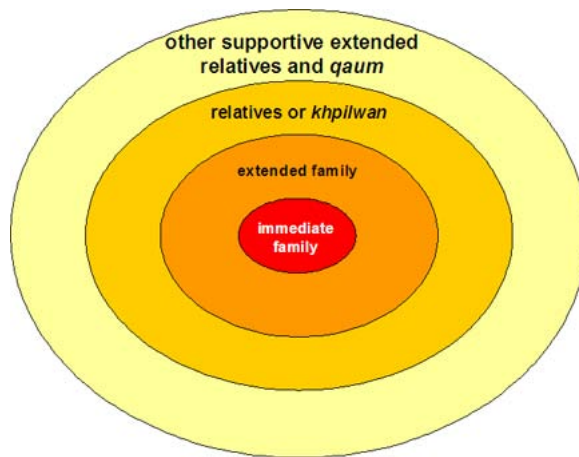
Interview locations were in public and private spaces

- on streets and in markets
- in shops
- in a *hujra* (male-only guesthouse)
- in homes
- outside sitting on a *katt* (bed for sitting)
- in a *kodala* (hut made of mud without a door)
- in private compounds



A total of 100 adult individuals (75 male and 25 female) who returned in the past 1–6 years were interviewed.

Families migrated together, lived together and returned together, providing substantial social and economic support.



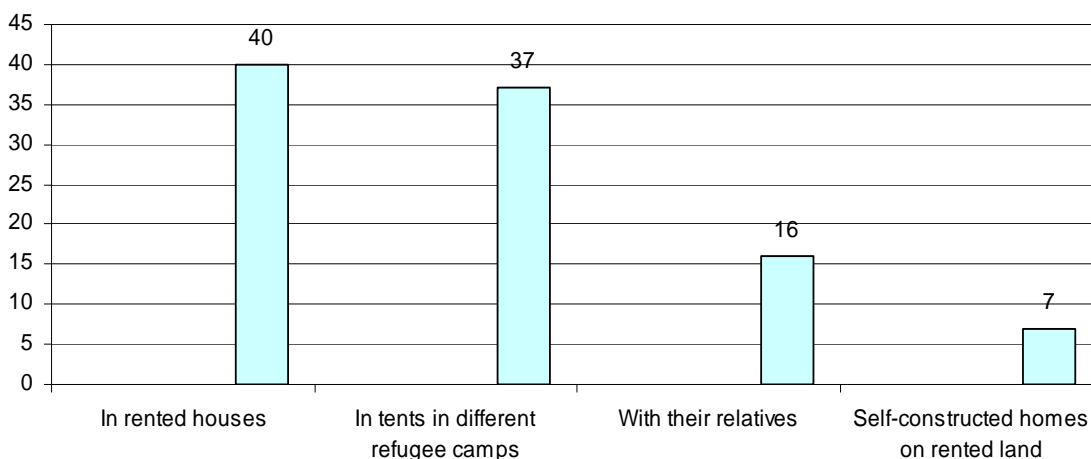
Why did refugees choose to go to the NWFP?

- Close geographical proximity
- Same language and religion
- Presence of relatives

Crossing the border

- Initial trip made through mountains passes on foot, donkey, camel or horse
- Migration often occurred during intense fighting
- Women and children often faced difficulties
- Cost of crossing was high, on average US\$160
- 47% used savings, 14% sold livestock and 11% borrowed from relatives and friends

Shelter and housing in Pakistan



Livelihoods in Pakistan and on return to Afghanistan

Type of employment	Pakistan	On return to Afghanistan
Regular salaried	16%	18%
Business	11%	24%
Small business	22%	23%
Daily wage	44%	28%
Farming	5%	5%

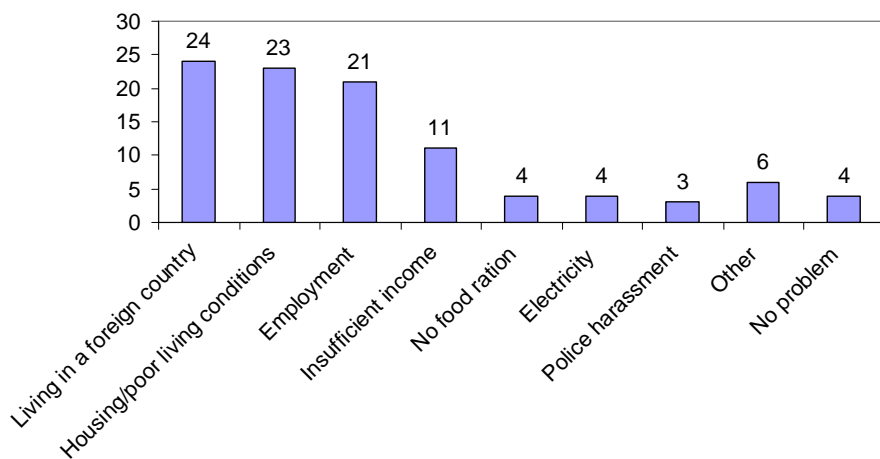
Major reasons for return

- Improved security and freedom 25%
- Increased job opportunities 10%
- Return of relatives 8%
- Better life in own country 7%
- Police harassment, lack of belonging, food ration cessation and camp demolition were also mentioned

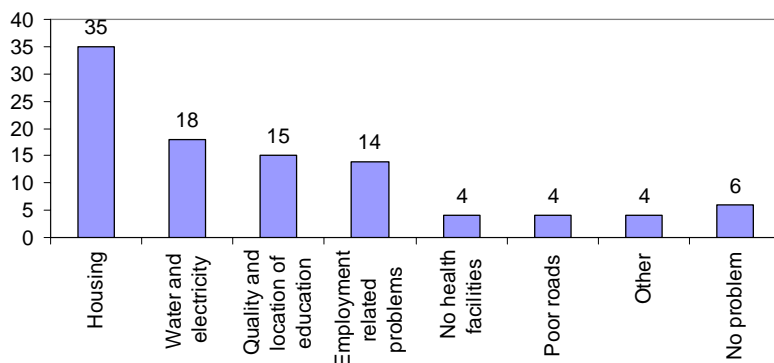
Return, resettlement and reintegration

- 63% returned to the same location they left from
- 93% resettled close to their relatives
- 51% settled close to those they lived with in Pakistan
- 93% never felt isolated
- 60% received support, including financial, from relatives

Problems faced in Pakistan



Problems faced in Afghanistan



Change in economic situation after return

- 68% believe their conditions have improved
- 19% think that things have remained the same
- 12% think their economic situation has deteriorated

Reasons for improvement (multiple responses possible)

- 47% noted more employment and more workers
- 31% noted better wages
- 37% noted lack of rent payment meant more money in the household
- 28% said more work in Jalalabad compared to rural Nangarhar

Reasons for worse economic situation

- The majority of those who find their situation unchanged or deteriorated are generally very poor
- This group owned no property (house or land) prior to migration and lived in Kacha Gari Camp

- For 75% of the 12% in the worst condition, the major reason was poor health of the primary wage earner

Policy recommendations

Housing: there is a severe lack of basic housing facilities, especially for the urban and peri-urban poor

- In coordination with the municipality of Jalalabad and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, begin a public debate on how to regularise informal settlements
- Support programmes facilitating self-help construction of inexpensive basic housing
- Establish similar construction projects to assist those who have returned to destroyed or damaged homes in both urban and rural areas

Access to services: lack of access to basic services (water, power, education, health care) is a major concern

- Raise awareness about existing locally provided services (education, health care)
- Improve state capacity to deliver power and water to all residents, particularly poor rural residents

Employment: for some poor and less-skilled returnees, the lack of jobs is a pressing concern

- Develop small-scale government and non-government projects to encourage the economic participation of the vulnerable poor in both urban and rural contexts (e.g. establish and foster small businesses)
- Develop small-scale government and non-government projects which are custom-made and acceptable to women, to improve their ability to generate income for their households

Community participation

- Stress community participation and self-help in a variety of development activities, to build upon the close-knit nature of many communities, neighbourhoods and villages

Additional research

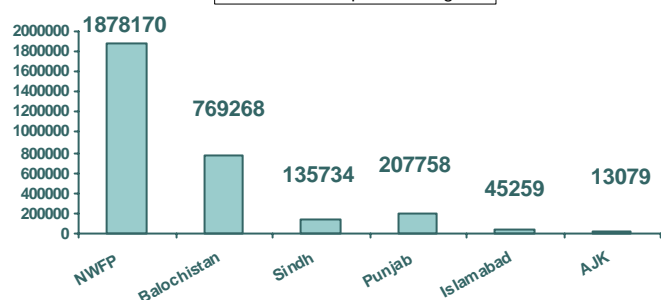
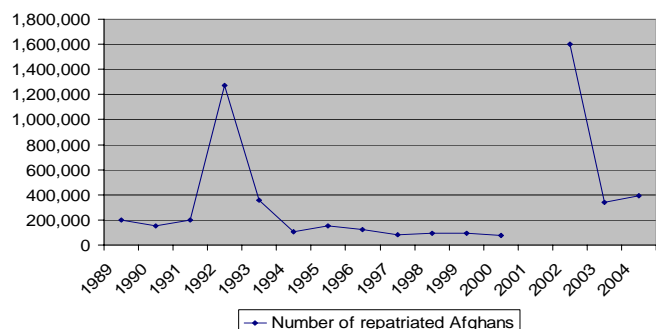
- Examine existing labour markets in Jalalabad City, its peri-urban areas and surrounding rural regions, in order to develop relevant employment and income-generation projects
- Further examine the process of reintegration and its sustainability

Research findings from Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar, Pakistan

Haris Gazdar, Collective for Social Science Research

Numerical context

This study took place at the same time as the UNHCR-sponsored census of Afghans in Pakistan (taking into account not only those considered as refugees), which revealed that there 3 million Afghans in Pakistan, living in households. Up until now there had been a lot of scepticism about previous figures, which were obviously very problematic. If we think that the existing policy paradigm is adequate, all we have to do is look at the repatriation figures. 82% of 3 million have no immediate plans to repatriate – however the current policy paradigm focuses almost exclusively on



voluntary repatriation. Voluntary repatriation has certainly helped many people, but obviously there are many (82% of 3 million) who still need to be managed.

Geographical distribution of Afghans in Pakistan

Out of 17.4% of all Afghans in Pakistan intending to return to Afghanistan in 2005, 74% live outside the refugee camps. 82% of 3.05 million have no immediate plans of return according to the 2005 Census.

Ethnicity and age groups of Afghans in Pakistan

- 82% are ethnic Pashtuns
- The next largest group is Tajik (7%), followed by Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, Baloch and others
- An estimated 55% are under 18
- 19% are under 5

If there was an appropriate time to view Afghans in Pakistan through the refugee paradigm, this figure of 55% under 18 makes it clear that this paradigm is no longer applicable.

Case studies

Need to reconsider who the Afghans in Pakistan are, how they live, their jobs and social networks, and how they think about their futures. Case studies were conducted in Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta during 2004–05.

20.1% of Afghans live in Peshawar, 11.1% in Quetta and 4.3% in Karachi

Planning the future

Repatriation in the context of:

- reducing vulnerability
- increasing security (shelter and safety)
- achieving economic stability
- improving livelihood opportunities
- Inter-generational differences within families (economic opportunities, higher education, insecurity for girls)

The main issue discouraging return to Afghanistan is the lack of shelter. Security is no longer the top reason – this comes third after shelter and employment opportunities. These responses vary according to socioeconomic status. For example, housing is important to those who are living in refugee camps; for those living in well-established areas livelihoods (jobs) are most important.

The main finding

Afghans in Pakistan have coped, survived and managed their lives quite similarly to how life is managed by Pakistanis in Pakistan.

Afghans in Karachi behave more or less in the same way that internal migrants behave in Pakistan. People in Karachi rely on informal social networks to survive, find jobs etc. In Quetta (an urban centre surrounded by a very rural, tribal society), Afghans were able to come to the city by seeking out and recovering tribal connections (e.g. Pashtuns from Kunduz). In Peshawar (an urban centre of NWFP, which became by default a centre servicing similar communities in both Pakistan and Afghanistan), Afghans were recognised as part of the community as their counterparts on the Pakistani side are.

The reasons for Afghans to come to Pakistan and being displaced are *not the same* reasons for remaining. Therefore the existing policy paradigm (that sees Afghans in Pakistan as residual refugees) is missing the point, and is not appropriate.

Transnationalism as a reality

Borders matter little in terms of the mobility of people and goods (the Pakistani government policy has allowed Afghans to come and go; Quetta and Peshawar can be seen as urban centres that serve

both sides of the border); this allows Afghans living in these border areas to maintain close connections with their homes in Afghanistan. These durable networks are not just going to fade away. Peshawar and its surroundings in Pakistan and Afghanistan are virtually a single market. The writ of the state is weak with respect to border control, and most Afghans and Pakistanis alike are sustained by the informal sector.

Transnationalism as a way of thought

- Assumes that it is not only possible, but also desirable, to maintain a presence in both countries and, circumstances permitting, even in a third country
- Transnationalism, therefore, is a state of being which is facilitated by the existence of cross-border social and livelihood networks

Transnationalism as a strategy

- Transnational families: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, and third country (Middle East, Europe, Australia and the US)
- Existence of financial if not physical connections among extended family
- Family: the most fundamental unit of networking and strategising for Afghans on the move
- Displacement, settlement and repatriation involved entire extended kinship group
- New forms of affiliation and identity – political parties, resistance groups and Islamic organisations linking Afghans with Pakistanis

Afghan–Pakistani networks

- Ties with a range of Pakistani (and international) counterparts
- Linguistic and cultural links (Pashto, Hazara tribal connections)
- Religious ties (Sunni, Shia, Ismaili)
- Close ties between Pakistani political–religious parties with their Afghan counterparts
- Cross-border economic activities based on mutual advantage

Implications of transnationalism

- Crucial determinant of the success and sustainability of policies
- Reversing transnationalism would cause serious disruption to the economy and society in general, let alone the lives of the Afghans
- Strong relations of mutual advantage between Afghans and Pakistanis (economic, linkages based on segmented sub-national identities) – political feasibility

The Pakistani government's stance

- Deep involvement of Pakistan government in Afghanistan since 1979
- This involvement indirectly drove different waves of refugees across the border from the 1980s–2001
- The international context became less favourable to Pakistan
- Increase in economic burden of refugees on government
- Economic sanctions on Pakistan due to its nuclear programme
- Refugees forced to return
- Government refuses to allow refugee registration
- Border temporarily closed to new arrivals
- In 2001, Afghans ceased to be exempt from the Foreigners' Act

Policy context in Pakistan

- From open borders, full international support ... to border and camp closures, pressure to repatriate and diminished political and humanitarian support

- How to balance the “new Afghanistan” with local realities, domestic politics and international distrust?

Key policy changes

- Suspension of the UNHCR and GoP’s screening programme after September 11, 2001
- Establishment of the National Aliens Registration Agency (NARA) for all irregular migrants to Pakistan (2001)
- Afghan Refugees Repatriation Cell established in Karachi (2001)
- Tripartite Agreement, signed by Afghanistan, Pakistan, and UNHCR in 2003, which recognises voluntary repatriation as preferred durable solution for problems of refugees
- UNHCR begins to end services to camps

Solutions with vision

- Acceptance of the reality of transnationalism
- Need to build a political consensus, which is likely to take time and effort
- Promotion of frank and open debate and dialogue within and across states
- Possibility of citizenship, possibly dual, for people of Afghan origin in the long term?

Opportunities for immediate action

- Local communities: recognising class and ethnic differentials within Afghan population
- Address issues of irregular settlements
- For those who remain in Pakistan, and the generation born here, the right to own property would facilitate their security and benefit the state from regularised housing
- Formalise informal economic relations
- The existence of “middlemen” and their impact on the Afghans in Pakistan
- Complexity of Afghan activities in Pakistan
- More realistic and beneficial to the state to recognise the economic contribution of Afghans and attempt to formalise these activities

Addressing these issues

- Work permits and same legal rights as locals. Register with NARA. Monitor seasonal and cross-border labour migration
- Programmes and projects designed to increase skills to alleviate poverty while in Pakistan, and give them the option to consider repatriation

Opportunities for Afghan youth

- Make a simple and consistent procedure for accrediting and recognising educational qualifications from each other’s schools and colleges
- Improve access to educational and employment opportunities in Pakistan
- Create employment opportunities in Afghanistan

Continued assistance and protection to vulnerable refugees

- Some Afghans will remain eligible for protection as refugees even if new and flexible policies do greatly reduce their number
- Existence and recognition of other categories of Afghan migrants to Pakistan does not mean that the category of “refugee” will cease to be relevant
- Pakistan must continue to offer protection to refugees, with the support of UNHCR

Transnational networks and sustainable reintegration of Afghan migrants in Iran

Mohammad Jalal Abbasi Shavazi, Head, Department of Demography, University of Tehran

History of Afghans in Iran

Transitory migration of Afghans to Iran motivated by economic differences has occurred since the nineteenth century

Afghans have moved to Iran in four waves:

- 1880–1903 during Amir Abd al Rahman, particularly Shia Hazaras to Mashhad
- 1979–89 during Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (3 million)
Islamic revolution in Iran promoted Islamic “brotherhood” and Afghans entering Iran were categorised as involuntary religious migrants
- 1989–93 particularly the urban, educated, middle class
- 1994–2001 during rise of Taliban movement

Number of Afghans in Iran

- Gap between census figures and other estimates of the number of Afghans living in Iran. Figures for 2001 ranged from ~2.3 million to 3 million.
- In November 2004, around 1 million *registered* Afghans remained in Iran, including 113,201 single Afghans; there are an estimated 500,000 *undocumented* labour migrants.
- Ethnicity of registered Afghans in Iran: Hazara (43%), Tajik (31%), Pashtun (15%), Baloch (5%), Uzbek (2%) and other (3%).

Case studies in Tehran, Zahedan and Mashhad

- Main questions: Afghan households based in Iran for at least 8 years
- What are the reasons for households to remain based in Iran?
- What livelihood strategies do these households have?
- What links, if any, do they have to Afghanistan, and how have these varied over time (remittances, visits, work etc.)?
- How do they see their long-term future in relation to Afghanistan?

Main questions: transitory Afghan labour migrants in Iran

- What is the nature of the life of migrants, and how is this similar to, or different from, their experiences of life in Afghanistan? What are the positive and negative aspects of being labour migrants?
- Why have respondents become labour migrants?
- What are their future intentions in terms of return and mobility?

Methodology: Afghan households

- 50 structured interviews in each city
- Snowball technique and via personal social networks
- Features selected for: widows as household heads, ethnicity, age and phases of arrival to Iran

Methodology: labour migrants

- 15 open-ended interviews in each city
- Snowball technique and via personal social networks
- Features selected for: Afghan place of origin, occupation in Iran

Afghan livelihood strategies

- Active participation in regional social networks that functioned as safety nets through access to credit
- Money borrowed/loaned for: illness, accident, funeral costs, housing bond or *rahn*, marriage costs, relative's smuggling fee
- Iranians featured in Afghan livelihood strategies in Tehran; horizontal relations were more common than vertical
- Assistance included loaning money, advocacy, and purchase of goods prohibited to unregistered Afghans

Transnational networks

- Most Afghans in Iran participate in transnational networks spanning Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and further abroad
- A common practice is to make transnational links through marriage
- Most Afghans have relatives living abroad and sustain contact via letter, telephone and occasionally email

Remittances

- Households remitted very little money to Afghanistan, nor did they receive money. Afghans in Zahedan were more likely to remit money, perhaps reflecting the proximity of the border.
- Some Afghan households have begun to remit money to Afghanistan to support the livelihood of relatives who have returned and not found work.
- Afghan households in Iran very rarely receive regular remittances from relatives abroad.

Return to Afghanistan

- Most Afghans do not intend to return to Afghanistan in the medium term; they prefer to remain in Iran if they are permitted to do so.
- Despite the clear majority who want to remain, many express discontent at their social and economic marginalisation in Iran.
- The advantage of relative material comfort and economic opportunity in Iran is a strong motivating factor to remain.

Assessing change in Afghanistan

- Perceptions of economic development and political stability/rule of law in Afghanistan are critical to decision-making about return.
- The reintegration experience of returnees from Iran influences the decision-making of their relatives remaining in Iran.
- Afghans with successfully returned relatives are significantly more willing to return than those whose relatives have not returned successfully, i.e. have not found work and are spending savings on daily living.

Gender and return intention

- Women are far more likely to want to remain in Iran due to better facilities, and perceptions that Iran is less patriarchal.
- Women are concerned about personal security and the risk of violation of their own and their daughters' honour.
- Households with daughters of marriageable age are significantly less willing to return to Afghanistan.

Religious minority and return intention

- The percentage of Hazara Afghan returns to Afghanistan compared with other ethnicities is low.
- Hazaras are almost entirely Shia Muslim and comprise 43% of the documented Afghan population in Iran.
- Hazara returns comprise only 25.6% of the total UNHCR-assisted return figures to Afghanistan.
- This imbalance is possibly due to Hazara perceptions of continued prejudice against Shias in Afghanistan, and experiences of religious freedom in Iran.

Imperative of welfare facilities and work

- Ready availability of housing and utilities, work, and health and education in Iran motivates Afghans to stay in the medium term.
- Perceived lack of rule of law and disarmament, health and education, and housing in Afghanistan discourage return in the medium term.
- Afghans with less education are concerned that they will only be able to find seasonal manual labour opportunities in Afghanistan.
- Afghans with university qualifications are concerned that they will be unable to find work in the government in Afghanistan.

Return destinations

- Afghans living in Tehran and Mashhad prefer to return to Kabul, even if Kabul is not their place of origin, followed by Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif. (These cities are perceived to be more secure for Shias due to the size of the Shia populations relative to Sunni populations.)
- Afghans living in Zahedan prefer to return to their places of origin, possibly reflecting the maintenance of ties to their places of origin by virtue of Zahedan's proximity to the border.

Diverse reintegration strategies

- Households remain in Iran in the medium term to save money to purchase land or housing in Afghanistan prior to return
- A household member travels to Afghanistan to arrange accommodation and investigate work prospects in preparation for the household's return
- Returnee households struggling to cope in Afghanistan return to Iran to accumulate more capital
- Returnee households struggling to cope send a member back to Iran to work and remit money to the household in Afghanistan
- Returnee household heads migrate to another province in Afghanistan to work and remit money
- Returnee households relocate to another province in Afghanistan to improve their economic situation

Labour migrant experiences

- Labour migrants in Mashhad and Zahedan travel frequently to Afghanistan due to their proximity to the border
- Difficulties in crossing the border and risk of deportation are insufficient barriers to mobility
- Labour migrants remit substantial amounts of money, with annual averages of:
 - Mashhad: 1.2 million Tooman (US\$1,300)
 - Zahedan: 970,000 Tooman (US\$1,008)
 - Tehran: 690,000 Tooman (US\$775)

Policy recommendations

- Support the UNHCR to retain its membership of the Tripartite review

- Improve the current process for the reintegration and employment of skilled Afghans and their families currently living in Iran
- Provide easier access for Afghans to make reconnaissance/preparatory visits to Afghanistan
- Establish a bilateral arrangement that provides a clear legal identity for members from returnee households who return to Iran to sustain the reintegration of their household in Afghanistan
- Continue burden-sharing aid and support to NGOs working with the most vulnerable

Panel discussion: Key challenges and policy options for managing cross-border population movements

Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, Ministry of Labour, Government of Pakistan

Pakistan has hosted up to and more than 3.5 million Afghans for last 25 years. In spite of the fact that Pakistan has its own visa regulations, cross-border migration, restrictions and exemptions on Afghans workers and refugees, Afghans still enjoy the privilege of travelling into Pakistan without completing formalities. Due to the brotherhood that exists between the two countries, many regulations are not implemented. Pakistan has own labour force of 47 million; 43 million are employed, many are underemployed. The net unemployment ratio is about 7.69% of the total population. About 3.6 million Pakistanis are unemployed, in addition to several million Afghan refugees.

Pakistan faces huge employment challenges. Many Afghan refugees are self-employed or not dependent on government of PK due to assistance from NGOs; many are contributing to the economy of Pakistan. In some case they receive remittances from abroad. Many Afghans have travelled abroad on Pakistani passports and have managed to get national ID cards; one generation has been born here and the other has grown old here.

Twenty-five years of unrest has demolished much in Afghanistan, but significant reconstruction is taking place. Many Pakistanis are participating in the reconstruction of Afghanistan; it is surprising that skilled Afghan workers in Pakistan do not go back to take part in this reconstruction. The government of Pakistan is making efforts to ensure that Afghan refugees return home with dignity, because they are our brothers. We have a very close relationship; Pakistan wants to help not only Afghan refugees but the government of Afghanistan as well. Reconstruction needs more momentum; there is a need to ensure the basic necessities of life are available there. This will help in repatriation efforts if these services are there, and in turn this will help Pakistan deal with its own unemployment.

Mohammad Haider Reza, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Afghanistan

Afghan population movement has been traditional in the region for a long time; Afghans have always been in search of a better life that helps their own families and contributes to the prosperity of the employers in places where they are employed.

The lack of security and job opportunities have caused Afghans to migrate – thanks go to the governments and peoples of all those countries who have hosted Afghan nationals and provided support to them. The government of Afghanistan is aware of the challenges faced by these host countries; but it will not be able to receive the returned refugees all at one time. There is still much to prepare for their return. Fighting is no longer a major concern; Afghanistan still faces many problems with landmines. Most returnees come to the major cities, which creates problems in those cities. How long will Afghanistan need to be able to prepare to receive returnees with dignity and be able to provide them with jobs, etc.? The answer depends on the Afghan economy and its stability.

Absolute self-sufficiency is a long road ahead. Afghanistan needs support from its neighbours and the world community to ensure this occurs. The government is doing its utmost – from the London conference, to the submission of its Millennium Development Goals. This country's economical backbone has been broken; it now needs time and attention from Afghans and the international community to heal. Afghanistan's geography is an asset – countries nearby could benefit enormously from trade and business with and through Afghanistan. There was a regional economic conference in Kabul two months ago where G8 countries talked about enhancing trade and investment. Things are

moving in the right direction – with the new president and parliament, school attendance is up, men and women are contributing to reconstruction. Nevertheless the country cannot take back refugees from Pakistan and Iran all at once. There are concerns about the second generation coming back: if and when they come back, they may feel like aliens in Afghanistan. Call it labour migration, or something else; if there's a choice in it that's one thing, but being forced to leave your country is another.

Mohammad Naeem Ghiasi, Deputy Minister for Refugees and Repatriation, Government of Afghanistan

For the fourth consecutive year, the pace and volume of repatriation to Afghanistan remains considerably high. Since March 2002, we have received more than 4.5 million returnees from Pakistan and Iran. The fact that returns have continued at such high levels for four years underlines our belief – and more importantly, the belief of our own people – that things are improving in Afghanistan.

It is positive to see this gesture of confidence in the future of Afghanistan and the constructive contribution made by returnees to the rebuilding of the country. Nevertheless, ensuring sustainable reintegration for returnees remains a challenge. Lack or shortage of adequate employment and housing are, namely, some of the key constraints. Afghanistan has come a very long way in a short space of time. But we all know that post-conflict reconstruction is a long-term task and will take time to show results. Our policy has constantly been to support and advocate for voluntary, gradual and safe return of Afghans to their country. You will therefore understand why I draw your attention to the need to continue your assistance in future, for much work remains to be done.

Many Afghans remain outside the country. Only Pakistan and Iran host nearly above 3 million Afghans in total. Not all of them are refugees. This poses a complex issue that requires attention from many different angles, particularly in the context of migratory phenomenon and regional cooperation beyond the movement of goods and services. We must recognise the fact that many Afghans have built solid socioeconomic and cultural ties across the borders between us, Pakistan and Iran over the last two and half decades. The existence of transnational networks is a reality in the current movement of Afghans out of the country. While some Afghans will remain outside the country for refugee and asylum reasons, an increasing number of Afghans will move in the region for labour and other socioeconomic purposes. Both practice and research/studies undertaken more systematically in the last couple of years testify to this fact.

As an Afghan, I am aware both of the value of transnational networks and labour migration, and the fact that it is not new. Afghans have been migrating for centuries and have always maintained close social and economic links with their country. I am also aware that the existence of these networks and movements has important implications for how the government approaches future policy development in this area.

For the last 25 years Afghan mobility and migration has been largely overwhelmed by the refugee problem as huge numbers left out country due to the war, human rights violations, drought and famine. But happily for the world, the region, and – most of all – for our country and its citizens, this has now ended.

Though Afghanistan is still facing many difficult problems, population movements due to conflict have ceased. This is a very important achievement. It can be attributed to the progress towards peace and stability, to the assistance of the international community, and to the courage and resilience of our people.

Afghans now leave their country for different reasons. The number of Afghans crossing into Iran and Pakistan for labour migration, commercial and social reasons is significant. Migration in search of temporary labour has become an integral part of Afghan families' livelihood strategies. At the same time, Pakistanis and Iranians can come to work in Afghanistan, to establish business, and to trade.

While Afghans continue to migrate mostly for economic reasons an important number of Afghan "refugees" continue to live in the neighbouring countries. Until now we have seen mainly the return of Afghans to northern and central provinces that had left after 1996. Return to the south and south-east has unfortunately been minimal because of insecurity and underdevelopment of those areas.

The Afghan government together with the help of the international community and in particular the UNHCR has been struggling to offer minimal reintegration assistance. The task has been enormous and we have been able to respond only to some of the needs of the many Afghans returning home since 2002. The challenges before us are even more daunting – access to adequate shelter, water and employment.

Assisting those who wish to return is an important task but it is not the only one. Today, we have also heard about Afghans who continue to leave their country for economic and social reasons. We have also learned that there are many Afghans who do not wish to return not because they have anything to fear, but because they have established permanent links with their host country. Afghans in Iran and Pakistan, for example, have become an economic reality in some sectors and make a valuable contribution to the economy of those countries.

My government is aware that we must improve our knowledge of population movements beyond the refugee context. We must certainly start to take measures to develop policy and programmes to manage them better in partnership with our neighbours. The studies conducted in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran have shed new light on these trends. We shall have to consider their implications carefully as we assess how to manage the movements of our population in the future. Indeed, as many other countries have experienced, having a portion of our population working and earning money for their family and country, can contribute significantly to national development.

I am certain that today's discussions can assist us to understand this issue better. More importantly, I am confident that, with the continued assistance of the international community, it will help the Afghan government to find ways and means of reaching agreement with the countries of the region on how we can cooperate together on this question. From our side, I can assure that the Afghan government and I personally will look into it seriously.

Migration is an effective coping strategy for many Afghan families. This has been the case in the past, and continues to be so today. We have to make sure that we both preserve and develop this mechanism. As it has proved for other countries, we recognise that migration can make an important contribution to the reconstruction and development process.

The development of government policy in the area of migration will be important for maintaining good neighbourly relations with the countries of the region. In that connection, we look to international assistance agencies like IOM and ILO to help us develop a medium-term strategy to address challenges of border management and labour migration.

Today's research findings show quite clearly that Afghan migrants suffer considerable hardship either because they are exposed to unscrupulous traffickers or because they are subject to detention and deportation. Working conditions for Afghans abroad are also insecure. Until now there are no clear policies on foreign employment or institutional arrangements. The answer to these problems lies not with control or suppression but in identifying ways to manage it better through developing positive interventions and minimising risks and problems.

Alireza Gholipur, Third Secretary, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan

The Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan have a common border stretching about 900 kilometres, and naturally the disorganised situation in Afghanistan and its fate are closely linked with the national security of Iran. Major indices which can describe the link between the national security of Iran and the situation in Afghanistan are numerous. The most significant of these indices are:

- The existence of a long-drawn common border between the countries (related figures are between 855 and 930 kilometres);
- The danger of the spread of political instability resulting from crises in Afghanistan to other countries of the region;
- Smuggling of narcotics and other items;
- Active presence of other major actors in the crisis of Afghanistan;
- Continued crisis of refugees at regional level.

The presence of millions of Afghan refugees in the countries located in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan is viewed as the direct outcome of the crisis in Afghanistan. Political instability in Afghanistan from mid 1970s onwards has culminated in the emergence of the phenomenon of wide-ranging emigration of Afghans to neighbouring states. Military invasion against Afghanistan in 1979 and the civil war following the collapse of the Najeeb Government intensified this trend.

During the preceding years, the national security of Iran has been linked tangibly with the issue of the presence of Afghan refugees in this country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its Islamic and humanitarian policy, has, in the preceding years, hosted several million Afghan refugees. But this issue has also had negative impacts on the political, economic and social security of Iran. In the political dimension, separation of suspect elements from ordinary refugees has always been viewed as a problem for the countries hosting the refugees. This problem becomes further evident when there may exist some sort of enmity, rivalry or conflict between the two countries, namely the one from where they emigrate and the other which hosts them. The refugees who, in the past, took shelter in Iran originated from such type of countries. Iran, in the past, has hosted Afghan and Iraqi refugees while the government of Iraq and also the Taliban regime, and even the ex-communist government of Afghanistan, had adopted some sort of conflict and hostility towards the government of Iran. Iran is presently hosting several million foreign refugees, and in this respect, ranks first in the world. Undoubtedly, control over this large number of refugees and separation of terrorist groups' elements from ordinary refugees among them in political and security terms is very crucial and, of course, incurs colossal expenditure.

Meanwhile, it is likely that even ordinary refugees too may not be in consonance with the social and cultural system of the host country. The extent of direct links and connections between them on the one hand, and the native people on the other, is an issue which every country hosting refugees and displaced people defines and classifies according to its national security.

The social security, in its capacity as a smaller part of national security, is affected by the crisis of refugees. Different and even conflicting culture of refugees with the culture of the people of the host country can bring about numerous social problems for the host nation. One of the cases, which is considered as a suitable example of link between the two concepts, namely national security of Iran and the problems of Afghanistan, pertains to the blows which some of the Afghan refugees have inflicted upon the social and psychological security of Iran. A glance at the degree of interference by some of the Afghan refugees in affairs such as theft and murder points to the significance of this matter in a manner that some of the disciplinary and security authorities of the country have, on numerous occasions, requested for enforcing further control over the social behaviour of the Afghan refugees and expulsion of that group of these refugees who are living in Iran in an unauthorised manner.

In economic terms too, the national security of Iran has been affected by the situation prevalent in Afghanistan. Continuation of the problems in Afghanistan and the continued presence of Afghan refugees in Iran have incurred considerable expenditures on the macroeconomy of our country.

In the preceding years, millions of US dollars have been spent on the affairs of these homeless people. For example, in the year 1996 alone, 37 billion rials were incurred by the camps of the refugees living in them all over the country. This is at time when most of the Afghan refugees resident in Iran were living outside these camps. Other expenditures imposed on the general budget of Iran due to benefiting of the refugees from the subsidies granted in health, remedial, general items, living environment etc., and also reduction in job opportunities for the Iranian nationals can be calculated separately. It may be interesting for you to know that for example, only the expenditure on removal of garbage from urban areas related to 3.5 million Afghan refugees is estimated at \$1.5m per day.

Emergence of the Taliban group and deployment of its forces along the common borders of Iran and Afghanistan too intensified the crisis of emigration at the regional level. This group not only, by expanding the extent of war and clashes in Afghanistan, made a greater number of people in that country homeless but in some cases, also prevented the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland. For instance, due to escalation of the attacks of Taliban and intensification of hostilities in Northern

Afghanistan, the Iranian plan on repatriation of 250,000 Afghan refugees via Turkmenistan to their country in the spring of 1997 was suspended.

Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic of Iran, from the very outset of eruption of crisis in Afghanistan, has made its best efforts to alleviate the sufferings and problems of the people of that country. In this same connection, our country has, in its capacity as one of the states hosting the largest numbers of Afghan refugees, despite receiving the smallest amount of aid from the international community in this regard, has always tried to provide the best services and facilities of Afghan refugees, so much so that tens of thousands of Afghans are studying in Iranian schools, and benefiting from the educational, health and social facilities being provided free of charge. Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran, by implementing such projects as construction of schools, small workshops, technical and vocational schools, health and remedial centres, highways in accordance with the international standards, libraries and training centres, strengthening of academic and university institutions and other projects in Afghanistan has made constant efforts to kindle hopes of a better future for the oppressed people of Afghanistan, and by providing sustained assistance to that country, is ranked among the largest donors to Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly and persistently believes in the fact that arrangements should be speedily made so that the Afghan refugees may be able to return willingly to their homeland, and this will naturally be possible through maintenance of security and development in that country. In conclusion, Afghanistan will be built and developed only when Afghan refugees return to their native country from different states of the world and participate in the rebuilding process.

Comments

Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan: Pakistan has suffered from instability in Afghanistan in economic and security terms. Humanitarian and security issues are interrelated. All Afghans should be repatriated with dignity and honour. The concept of migration should be adopted by western countries as well as third world countries. The solution to the problem should be sought in Afghanistan, not in neighbouring countries.

Piyasiri Wickramasekara, ILO: AREU researchers referred to emerging transnationalism in the region which accords well with the concept of circular migration – a good practice. International instruments recognise that everyone has the right to leave or return to his or her home country, but there is no corresponding right of entry to a third country which is governed by notions of state sovereignty and a complex set of immigration controls. The ILO has developed a non-binding multilateral framework on labour migration using a rights-based approach. A few developed countries have expressed reservations about some elements of this framework. It is indeed worrying that immigration barriers in the West are increasing in an era of growing transnationalism as noted by AREU researchers. In my view transnationalism and transnational citizenship should be the vision for the future.

Naghma Imdad, Savera: Interested in idea of transnational linkages and finding solutions not only for Afghan refugees but for many other groups within Pakistan who are semi-nomadic and have been forced to settle down in certain areas. We should try to capture the spirit behind this and look at it seriously; Afghan refugees were more traumatised when they had to be settled than when they were forced to move from their country.

Mohammad Haider Reza, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Afghanistan: May no one ever witness the experience of Afghans who experienced terrors of war. Afghanistan was a shield for Pakistan; if they did not stop Soviets, they would have reached Karachi. Afghanistan has been merely a base for terrorism. We are not proud of Afghanistan's narcotics production; why is it the poor farmers of Afghanistan producing opium? They are forced to do it by circumstance of poverty. Afghanistan needs alternative livelihoods for farmers and inputs from international community. In the 1980s it was Pakistan which was under pressure to do something about narcotics; it eventually moved to Afghanistan; it could move to China or Central Asian countries. Regarding terrorism, cross-border attacks are common now. Violence from a factional point of view is not a real threat, but the problems are coming from the two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan must fight it together.

Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, Ministry of Labour, Government of Pakistan: Afghanistan is not being blamed; the hard facts being faced by the government of Pakistan are that offshoots of unrest in Afghanistan have moved into Pakistan. We are facing problems on social, cultural and economic fronts which may be attributed to our own policies as well. The government of Afghanistan should develop their own policies regarding immigration and in that way they can achieve better targets and goals in economic terms.

Indrika Ratwatte, UNHCR Pakistan: Earlier we were looking at people movement phenomena that will continue in an evolving world; the question is how does we manage it (governments, NGOs, etc.)? What are some of the lessons learned from other regions? Porous borders pose a number of issues; research needs to reflect some of the best practices of what works and what can be tailored for this situation.

Haris Gazdar, Collective for Social Science Research: There is a danger of the perception that different states are playing a zero sum game. It is useful to take it forward by placing the discussion between these three countries into a global discussion of population movements. Pakistan and Afghanistan would probably support each other – their economies have similar features, with remittances, etc. What can we offer the world?

Mohammad Jalal Abbasi Shavazi, Head, University of Tehran: We talked about coping strategies of Afghans surviving in these host societies; it is my personal belief that there should be Afghan refugees present at this conference (from Pakistan, Iran).

[To Dr Reza:] Instead of asking governments to postpone accommodating Afghans, you should be working hard to bring Afghans back to Afghanistan. You have educated Afghans living in Iran, but they do not have a clear idea of what is going on in Afghanistan; they are marginalised in Iran by not being able to buy land or build houses. Having a sense of marginalisation, it will be difficult for Afghan migrants, for Iranian and Pakistani governments. Those left alone (second generation) do not have any attachment to their host country. There is a need to emphasise that these people are Afghans. The government of Afghanistan needs to go to Iran to find these bright second-generation students and get assistance from the international community (subsidies, housing, etc.) to entice them to return to Afghanistan. If they have been able to cope with being marginalised in a host country, won't they be able to use these coping strategies elsewhere?

Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, Ministry of Labour, Government of Pakistan: There is a generation of Afghans who have grown up here are Pakistanis. If the process of repatriation is delayed, they will be alien to Pakistan as well as Afghanistan.

Mohammad Haider Reza, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Afghanistan: "Brain drain" is an unfortunate consequence of Afghan fighting. Realistically, what good will it do to bring large number of Afghans back to Afghanistan when we can't even provide for their most basic needs? While we are trying to prepare the ground, the government cannot take in and employ all these skilled people who would come back. The private sector needs to grow in order to accommodate these returnees.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Population movements between Afghanistan and Pakistan

Elca Stigter, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

[Note: IOM had not yet received approval of the Government of Pakistan regarding the study.]

Overall aims

- To improve understanding of the characteristics of Afghan and Pakistani movements to neighbouring countries.
- To establish the extent, scope and nature of population movement to Pakistan by generating a quantitative data set on cross-border flows between those countries.

Methodology

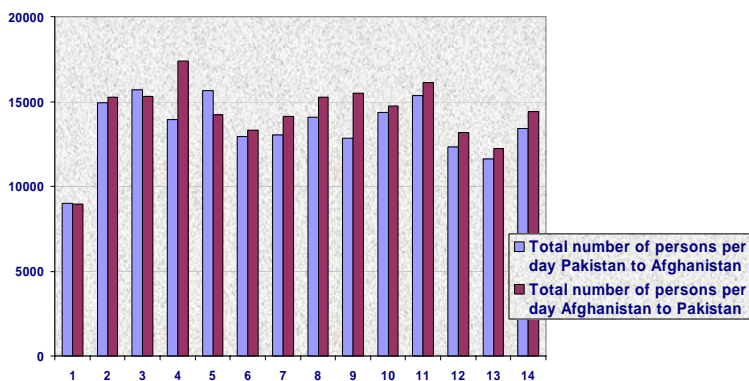
- Research period: December 2004 to July 2005
- Three purposive non-random surveys in bus stands in Jalalabad and Kandahar (total of 2,609 interviews)
- Three two-week vehicle counting exercises at Torkham and on the road to Spin Boldak/Chaman
- One small survey among construction companies in Kandahar
- Stakeholder interviews in Kabul and Islamabad
- Literature research

Limitations

- Non-representative sample
- Potential ethnic, gender and class bias

Scope of cross-border movement

Example: Number of persons crossing per day, per direction, Torkham border (1–14 January 2005)



Summary of findings

- Torkham (1–14 January, 2005): proxy total of 389,115 travellers/average of 27,795 per day
- Torkham (14–27 May, 2005): proxy total of 371,374 travellers/average of 26,527 per day
- Spin Boldak (21 June–4 July, 2005): proxy total of 93,414 travellers/average of 6,673 per day
- Afghan–Pakistani cross-border movements are substantive.
- The volume of the Torkham cross-border movement is approximately three-quarters more than the one at Spin Boldak/Chaman.
- An explanation for this contrast can be sought in the differences in population density in the respective border areas, including the presence of Afghans in NWFP, and the strong correlation between bilateral cross-border trade and person movements.

Gender

- Close to or 100% male, partly due to gender bias.

Age

- Average age of traveller is respectively 36, 38 and 35 years old.
- Largest group of travellers is respectively 21–30 years (32%), 31–40 years (30%), 21–30 years (39%).

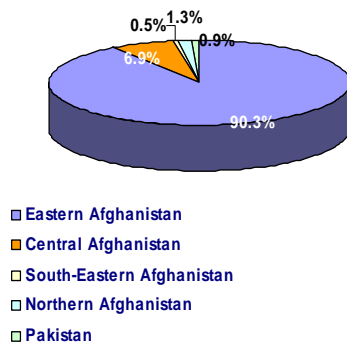
Marital status

- Majority of the travellers are married (respectively 82, 82 and 75%).

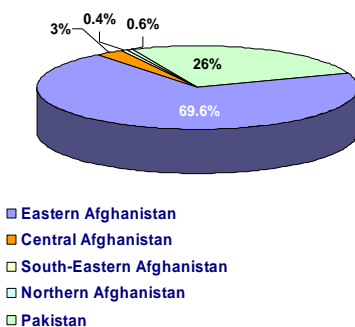
Ethnic composition

- The majority of the travellers are Pashtun (respectively 94, 86 and 67%).
- The flow through Spin Boldak/Chaman has a larger number of other ethnic Afghan groups, as well as a relatively large group of Pakistani men (12%).

Province of origin (Torkham survey 18–30 December 2004)



Province of residence (Torkham survey 18–30 December 2004)



- Majority of Afghan travellers using Torkham originate from eastern Afghanistan, most of them coming from Nangarhar (respectively 70 and 53%).
- Majority of travellers via Spin Boldak/Chaman originate from southern (38%), and, secondly, from south-western Afghanistan (18%).
- Percentages of current residence decrease for all regions in Afghanistan and show a clear increase for regions in Pakistan. Respectively 26, 25 and 44% of the respondents live in Pakistan.

Main destinations in Pakistan

- Jalalabad surveys: NWFP (87/87%), Punjab (11/14%), and Sindh (2/7%).

- Kandahar survey: Balochistan (66%), Punjab (20%), and Sindh (11%).

Means of border crossing

- Torkham: Over 90% of travellers without identity documents.
- Spin Boldak/Chaman: 84% of Afghan travellers without identity documents, and about 25% of the Pakistani travellers without national identity documents.

Thus, much of the cross-border movement between Pakistan and Afghanistan is unregulated.

Circular movement

- The large majority of travellers cross on a regular basis into Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Only a relatively small number travelled to Pakistan for the first time (respectively 4, 13 and 10% of the respondents).
- The length of stay in Pakistan varied greatly, with the travellers passing through Torkham staying on average a relatively shorter period in the country.
- The large majority of travellers intended to return to Afghanistan.
- Torkham: intended length of stay: a maximum of seven days (35/24%), 1-4 weeks (24/13%), within three months (19% spring survey).
- Spin Boldak/Chaman: intended length of stay: one month (21%), two and three months (8% each), one year (12%).

Reasons for cross-border travel

Torkham border crossing:

- Going home (respectively 35 and 24%); family ties/social relations (respectively 30 and 13%); medical reasons (respectively 13 and 14%); work (respectively 13 and 29%).

Spin Boldak/Chaman border crossing:

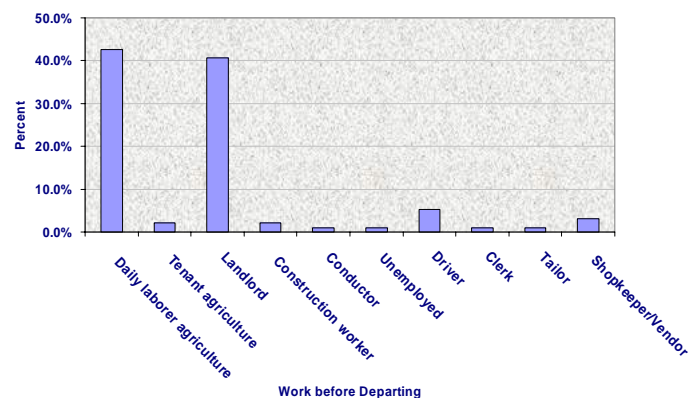
- Going home (43%); business/work (19%); medical reasons (16%); visiting relatives (14%).

Reasons for coming to Afghanistan, whose home is in Pakistan

- The largest group travels for social reasons (respectively 66, 59 and 53%). Other reasons include work, check on property or exploring the security, labour market and housing situation in Afghanistan.

Work of Afghans before departure to Pakistan

- Lack of perceived employment opportunities and presence of social networks and work in Pakistan rather than wage differentials



Remittances

- Not all Afghans travelling across the border for economic reasons are able to save money in Pakistan.
- Most of the savings are spent at the subsistence level, although a small minority used part of their savings for accumulation, such as for the *mahr*, land or the construction of a house.
- Most of those travelling for economic reasons and using the Torkham border-crossing return to Afghanistan carrying their own savings, while a relatively larger group using the Spin Boldak/Chaman border crossing intends to use the *hawala* system.

Conclusion

Cross-border movement between **Afghanistan and Pakistan** is/has:

- **Substantial in both directions and recurrent**, with the size and patterns reflecting the major political, economic, social and demographic changes witnessed in Afghanistan over the last quarter of a century.
- **Since 2002, a gradual shift has taken place towards “normalisation of cross-border movement” between Pakistan and Afghanistan**, motivated by the presence of transnational networks, social capital, the comparatively better social services in Pakistan, the growth in unofficial and official bilateral trade flows, the economic opportunities in either country, and the long presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Main recommendations

- **Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan:** enter into a dialogue on cross-border population management, which includes the development of legislation to regulate, protect and encourage reciprocal economic migration opportunities – IOM has initiated the trilateral dialogue between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan on migration management.
- **Government of Afghanistan:** give serious attention to migration as a policy issue in the future Afghan National Development Strategy currently under preparation – as part of the capacity-building efforts funded by the EC, IOM has placed an International Advisor on Migration Management in Kabul.
- **Donor community:** the intensification of efforts to secure long-term development assistance to address poverty among resident populations in border areas in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- **Donor community:** support the two governments to undertake further research regarding cross-border movements, labour markets, the role of companies/agencies in identifying opportunities of work, and the usage of remittances.

ILO study on the Afghan population in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Piyasiri Wickramasekara, Senior Migration Specialist, International Labour Office (ILO)

Structure of presentation

- Objectives of the study
 - Develop a detailed demographic, social and economic profile of the Afghan population in Iran
 - Review the labour force and employment situation of the Afghan population in Iran
 - Assess their impact on the local labour market
- Research methodology
- Main findings
- Policy implications

ILO regional study on Afghan population and employment

- Overall coordination by ILO International Migration Programme, Geneva
- Methodology: based on field surveys of households and establishments, case studies, and focus group discussions besides review of secondary sources
- Study in Iran
 - Local consultants and ILO
- Study in Pakistan
 - Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
- Study in Afghanistan
 - Altai Consulting

Iran study: research collaborators

- ILO

- Overall Coordinator & migration specialist: Dr Piyasiri Wickramasekara
- Statistics and surveys specialist: Dr Farhad Mehran
- Research team in Iran
- Household survey
 - Dr (Ms) Ladan Noroozi, Ministry of Planning and Analysis
 - Mr Mohammad Nejatian, Director, Shakhes-Negar, Tehran (statistical consultancy firm)
- Establishments survey
 - Professor Saeid Eisazedah, Department of Economics, Bu-Ali-Sina University, Hamedan
- Case studies
 - Ms Novine Movarekhi, Consultant

Field survey information

- Household survey:
 - 1,540 households (8,430 persons) selected in first wave of a snowball sampling scheme.
 - 11 Shahrestans
- Establishments survey:
 - 1,049 establishments covering 1,261 Iranian workers and 2,102 Afghan workers.
 - Locations: Isfahan, Khorasan, Sistan-Yahedan, and Tehran
- Case studies:
 - 25 case studies in Tehran and Qazvin

Average household size	5.6
Male-female ratio %	108
Dependency ratio (Iran population)	71.6 (49.8)
Age group %	
0–4 years	11.3
5–17	37.0
18–59	47.9
60 & above	3.8
Born in: %	
Iran	46
Afghanistan	54
Average stay in Iran	7.7 years

Economically active %	
Males (2281)	66.4
Females (253)	8.2
Unemployment rate (15+ yrs) %	5.5
Male	3.5
Female	10.4
Afghans sending remittances (% of total number of households)	11
Visited Afghanistan since entry to Iran	15%

Female-headed households

- Only 66 female headed households out of 1,505.
- 51 widowed; 2 divorced; 11 married; 2 never married.
- 47 literate; 19 illiterate.
- 26 employed; 37 inactive; 3 unemployed.
- None have secondary jobs.
- None send remittances to Afghanistan.

Structure of employment

Agriculture	9.5%
Industry (manufacturing, mining, gas, electricity and water)	29.6%
Construction	25.8%

Trade, repairs, hotels and restaurants	22.8%
Transport and communication	2.6%
Domestic services	0.2%
Other	9.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Average earnings of Afghans employed by sector (Toomans per week)

Agriculture	30,936
Manufacturing	29,939
Construction	34,354
Wholesale and retail trade	31,264
Transport communication	30,706
Other services	24,813
<i>Total</i>	<i>31,016</i>

Wage levels by occupation (Toomans per month)

Occupation	Afghan	Iranian
Professionals	228,120	235,288
Clerks	131,380	138,920
Service and sales workers	119,308	157,823
Skilled agric. workers	130,543	175,805
Crafts and related trades	162,715	182,760
Plant & machine operators	121,624	142,944
Elementary occupations	159,424	188,340
Total	155,222	178,856

Source: ILO establishments survey, 2005

Note that although Iranians do get higher salaries than Afghans within given employment sectors, they are not exceedingly higher.

Employment status change

Status	In Afghanistan (944)	In Iran (944)	Retained same status in Iran (365)
Employer	51	18	1
Own account workers	382	276	143
Unpaid family worker	105	5	1
Regular employee	270	315	150
Seasonal employee	66	43	16
Casual employee	70	287	54

Note the frequency of changes in individuals' employment status between Iran and Afghanistan. This is most interesting in reference to the change from "unpaid family worker" – many were in this category in Afghanistan, but not in Iran.

Reasons for preferring employment of Afghan labour – employers

Reason	Number*	Percent**
High sense of responsibility and dedication	756	72.1
Ready for difficult and hazardous jobs	614	58.5
Lower wages compared to Iranians	320	30.5
Undefined regulation for Afghans	146	13.9
Difficulty with employing national workers	130	12.4

Absence of non-wage payments to Afghans	61	5.8
<i>Total sample</i>	<i>1,049</i>	<i>100.0</i>

* Reasons include multiple responses

** Each reason as % of total employers sampled (1049)

Source: ILO establishments survey.

Note that predominant reason for preferring Afghan workers was that they had high sense of responsibility and dedication; also that lower wages were expected and their readiness for hazardous and difficult jobs.

Employer views (N=1043)

	Yes %	No %
Can use Iranian workers at same wage when Afghan workers are not available?	69	31
Are you willing to pay extra wages to employ Iranian workers?	88	12
<i>[Extra wage % willing to pay (average) – 8.3]</i>		
Are Iranian workers willing to do same jobs at Afghan wages?	59	41
Will the price of final products increase if no migrant worker is hired?	54	46
By how much % increase in price	36	
Can you continue without Afghan workers?	91	9

Note that the answer to the last question, “Can you continue without Afghan workers?” was overwhelmingly yes – and that this was inconsistent with the other answers in “employer views” section.

Iranian workers’ perceptions

	Yes	No
Willing to work in Afghan-dominated occupations	834 (66%)	426 (34%)
Why not?		
o Arduous nature of work	112	
o Wages are too low	114	
Not like to do same work	44	
Other reasons	29	

Main findings

- o The impact of the Afghan population on the overall labour market seems to be limited and dispersed, with concentration in low skilled and low wage sectors
- o Afghan workers have helped in keeping consumer prices low, benefiting Iranian consumers
- o Higher Afghan (male) labour force participation rates and lower unemployment rates highlight the livelihood strategies of the Afghan workers
- o Linkages with Afghanistan, especially in the form of remittances and financial support are limited
- o Even after years of living in Iran, many Afghan households still have a precarious socioeconomic position in terms of employment stability and security
- o 95% of Afghan employees do not have written employment contracts with the employer
- o Very few workers have social protection
- o Social security, work insurance, leave and other benefits
- o Changing government policies are probably leading to further marginalisation
- o Access to education by Afghan children is a serious and sensitive issue

It was emphasised that overall impact of Afghans on Iranian labour market seems to be limited – remember that only males are being inserted to the labour market, and only in two or three sectors.

It was also emphasised that Afghan workers make a positive contribution to host countries – e.g. keeping prices low for consumers. ILO often points out the benefits to host countries, whereas host countries usually speak about migrants as a problem.

Afghan male labourers seem to “work harder to make ends meet” in comparison to Iranian males – often they are underemployed, but they still can’t afford to not work.

Policy implications

- Creating conditions for return and reintegration in Afghanistan is of very high priority, but indeed a daunting task in the short to medium term
- Bilateral dialogue is essential to sort out the complex economic, social and political issues involved
- Employer preference for Afghan workers, and reluctance of Iranian workers for same jobs suggests a situation of continued reliance on the Afghan workforce, which needs to be recognised in policy
- Policies need to be sensitive to the special situation of women and children

Added that the ILO multilateral framework on labour migration – non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration – will be considered for approval by the ILO Governing Body in March 2006. It will be a “tool kit” for governments and other concerned agencies for formulating credible labour migration policies.

Afghan population in Pakistan and their contributions to the economies of Pakistan and Afghanistan

A.R. Kemal, Director, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE)

Objectives

- Develop a demographic, social and economic profile of the Afghan population in Pakistan;
- Assess the integration of Afghans in Pakistan’s labour market; and
- Possibilities of return of Afghan refugees and their re-integration in Afghan labour market.

Methodology

A combination of various methods including:

- Household survey of 1000 households selected randomly from 50 primary sampling units (PSUs) (25 from each province); 20 households from each PSUs; and ensuring coverage of men, women and children;
- Establishment survey of 100 enterprises of different sectors selected from NWFP and Balochistan; and
- Focus group discussions.

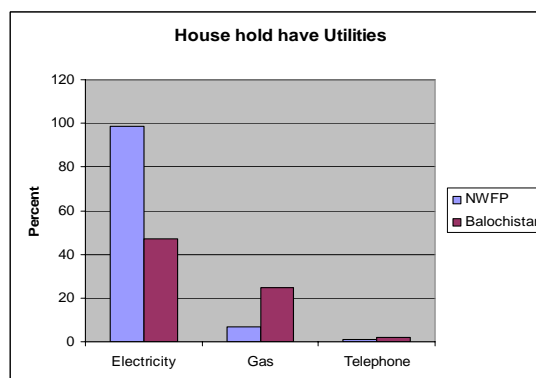
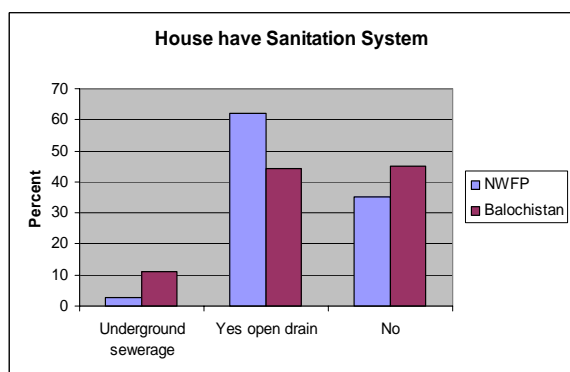
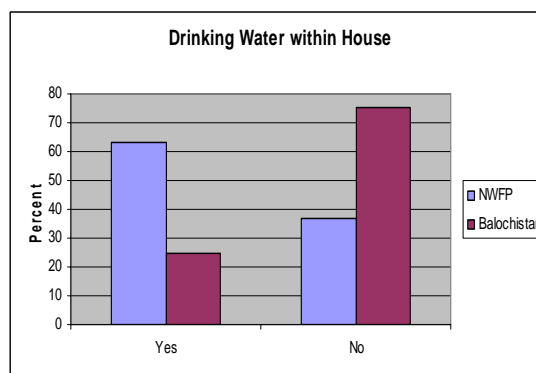
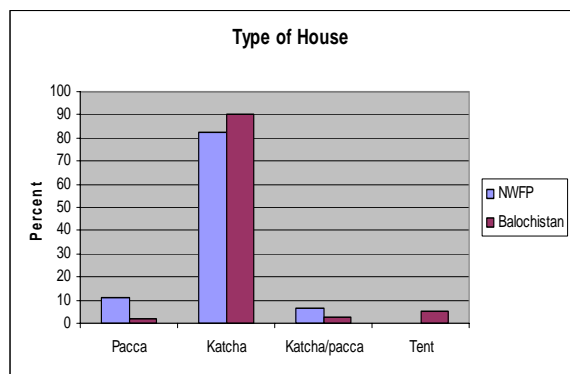
Main results

Demographic profile

Out of the total sample of 7037, 55% from NWFP and 45% from Balochistan:

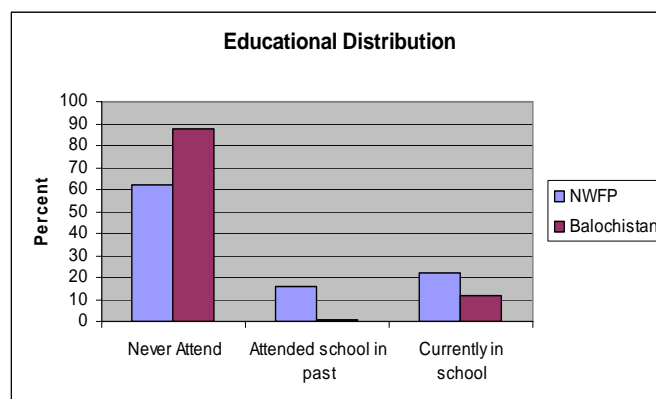
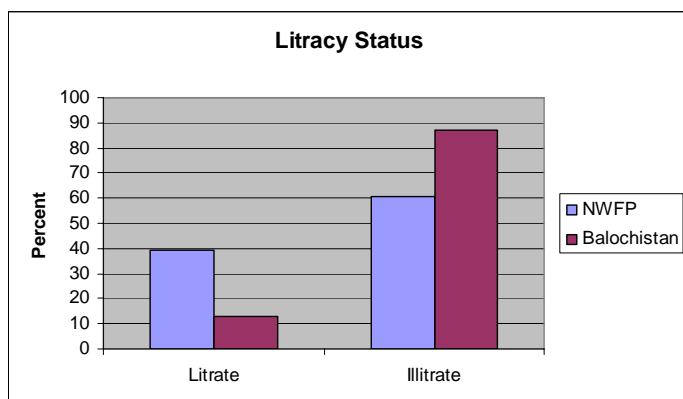
- 53% males and 47% females: male–female ratio of 113
- Average family size 7.1 slightly higher than the Census
- 34% married while 65% never married
- 3% have Pakistani spouse

Housing conditions



Education and training

- Currently student
- Mostly going to government schools
- Second choice NGO/UNHCR-run schools
- Deeni Madaras attended by small percentage (5.8%)



Employment and wages

Occupation	NWFP	Balochistan	Total
Agriculture	—	5428.8	5428.6
Non-ag wage labour	4407.83	3977.5	4191.6
Self-employed	7706.9	6310.6	7237.7
Regular employees	5429.2	4329.4	5076.4
Ag wage labour	3650.0	4073.5	4028.0
Professionals	6407.4	7500.0	6528.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>5826.42</i>	<i>4578.1</i>	<i>5245.8</i>

- LFPR 31.8%
- 54.6% non-ag wage labour and 6.4% ag wage labour
- 34.2% self-employed
- 3.5% wage employees
- Unemployment rate 19.8%

Profile of establishments

- Afghans' presence mainly in trade, carpet weaving and transport.
- Small scale operation: in 3 out of 77 cases total value of business worth exceeded Rs 100,000.
- Mostly unregistered businesses.
- Majority of the business on rented premises; only 19 out of 76 premises were owned by the businessman.
- Out of 76 entrepreneurs, 64 were sole owners of the business.

Current status and future probabilities

- Owners reluctant to sell their business due to high profit margins.
- 26 entrepreneurs plan to expand their business.
- Almost all plan to borrow funds from friends and relatives or use their own savings to expand.
- Almost one half intend to start the same business in Afghanistan on their return.
- To initiate the same business in Afghanistan need more than Rs 100,000.
- Major constraints: lack of capital and inadequate market.

Wages

- Skilled full-time local workers were paid market wage ranging between Rs 3000 to Rs 5000.
- Afghan workers were paid slightly higher wage by the Afghan entrepreneurs as compared to the market wage.
- The wage rate of Afghan casual labour and unskilled labour was Rs 4500 and Rs 3500 per month respectively.
- Afghan trainees get less than local *shagirds* (Rs 260 to Rs 4500 vs Rs 1050 to 4500).

Remittances

- In 71 out of 76 cases no money was remitted to Afghanistan.
- Only in 3 cases, Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 was sent to Afghanistan.

Migration and return planning

- Most of the families residing in NWFP arrived in 1979.
- Talibanisation and fall of Taliban were not the cause of migration in most of the cases.
- A large majority, i.e. 87% Afghan refugees are Pashtuns, about 90 percent in NWFP and 82 percent in Balochistan.
- Interestingly 61.6 percent of Afghan refugees are born in Pakistan.
- Only 5% (314 out of 6099) intend to go back voluntarily.
- In 70% cases intended year of return is 2006.
- About 29% intend to go back in 2007 and remaining in 2008.
- In Balochistan, no one showed any willingness to go back in 2008.
- Almost 97% in Balochistan and 57% in NWFP had no house in Afghanistan.
- About 80% who owned a house in Afghanistan reported that it has been destroyed in the war.
- Living in Pakistan is better than the living in Afghanistan.
- Largely feel Pakistanis have been very helpful.

- Afghans feel dedicated to Pakistan and intend to help Pakistan in any way they can.
- Unavailability of shelter, personal security and livelihood are the main constraints in going back to Afghanistan.
- In FGD, implementation of Sharia (Islamic Code of Law) came out as the pre-condition to go back for the refugees in Quetta and improved economic conditions in Mansehra.

Policy recommendations

- Better economic and security conditions would help in voluntary return.
- Forcefully repatriating the refugees may not be very helpful because they may come back due to porous borders.
- There is need to have a joint strategy between Pakistan and Afghanistan to solve the problem.
- While they stay, Pakistan provides better education and other facilities.
- United Nations should provide for more resources.
- Afghans should be given a special status so that they can contribute legally to Pakistan's economy without the harassment of law enforcement agencies while they are in Pakistan.

If there is better security and economic conditions in Afghanistan, it will aid voluntary repatriation – but most important is changing the perceptions of refugees of what it would be like to return.

Returnees' integration into the Afghan labour market – an empirical study: presentation of the research and key findings

Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad – September 2005 / January 2005

Riffat Manasia, Altai Consulting

Research questions

- What are the demographic, social, and economic profiles of worker Afghan returnees and their families?
- What is the nature of the returnee worker's integration into and impact on the Afghan labour market?
- What are the major problems encountered during the integration process?
- What are the existing support programs and what recommendation can be provided to improve them?

Research modules

1. Household survey: 600 households in Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad
2. Enterprise survey: 100 enterprises (returnee heads of enterprises and employees)
3. Qualitative research through 25 cases studies, 15 focus groups, and interviews with key informants

Household survey (600)

- 65% in urban area
- 30% in rural areas
- 5% in returnee camps

Enterprise survey (100)

- 47% small (<10 employees)
- 30% medium (10 to 50 employees)
- 23% large (>50 employees)

Highest level of education of household members			
	Total	children < 16	adult
Illiterate	42%	34%	47%
Primary education	26%	50%	13%
Lower secondary education	12%	12%	13%
High school	13%	3%	18%
University degree	4%	0%	7%

Status	Revenue (USD)	% sample
Very low	0 <= 80\$	32%
Low	80 <= 150\$	27%
Average	150 <= 250\$	21%
High	250 <= 600\$	16%
Very high	600 <= 8000\$	4%

Demographics

- 50% Tajiks, 32% Pashtun, 12% Hazara, 6% others
- Mean household: 6.9 people

It was emphasised that the financial status given in the table was only *declared income*.

Social status

- 75% of households surveyed have only one source of income
- Mean expenses: food \$120 + non-food \$80
- Mean income: \$212
- 35% cannot cover their expenses
- Large spectrum of income distribution across households, but 60% are under \$150

Average social condition above Afghan standards, but the poorest struggle.

Working status of household members:				
	Total	Count	children < 16	adult
Employer	1%	39	0%	2%
Employee	15%	394	1%	21%
Own account worker (self-employed)	11%	286	2%	15%
Unpaid family worker	7%	187	9%	6%
Too young or too old to work	9%	241	20%	3%
Student	29%	783	56%	16%
Housewife	25%	675	8%	33%
Disabled	0,6%	16	0%	1%
Jobless	1,2%	31	0%	1%
Other	2%	53	2%	4%
N= 2705	100%	2705	100%	101%

- 1.5 working member per household, only 1.2 per household earn income
- Among income earning working members 45% are self-employed or employers
- 12% of children work, mainly as unpaid family members
- Only 10% of adult women work
- Declared employment is very low (11% among « active » household members)

Trends

- 80% had difficulties finding a job
 - Very low income = 92% say it was difficult / very difficult
 - Very high income = 62% say it was easy / very easy
- Still, 90% found a job in less than 6 months (36% < 1 month)

Which was the most important network to find a job?	
Relatives	48%
Ethnic / religious network	7%
Connections made in exile	1%
Professional network	30%
<i>Others</i>	
No network	13%
My husband (for women)	1%
N=600	100%

- Network are highly utilised to get informed about job options or get hired
- 10% of returnee workers found a job with their former employer
- Tajiks count more on their professional networks, Pashtuns on family links, Hazaras on religious network

The very high rate of reliance on family and friends to find a job was emphasised – the Afghan government needs to capitalise on these networks as opposed to more Western models of employment assistance, such as job centres.

Sector classification of returnee workers / household survey				
ISIC V.4 Simplified classification	Total	Av. Income USD	Men	Women
A. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2%	91	2%	
B. Mining and quarrying	0,3%	350	0%	
C. Manufacturing	13%	125	13%	5%
D. Electricity, gas, air conditioning	1%	194	1%	
E. Water supply; sewerage, waste management	0%	100	0%	
F. Construction	25%	139	26%	12%
G. Wholesale and shops (retail)	20%	287	21%	10%
H. Transportation and storage	7%	145	8%	2%
I. Hotels, chaikhanas & restaurants	2%	187	1%	5%
J. Information and communication	1%	430	1%	
K. Financial and insurance (including banks)	0%	113	0%	
M. Professional & technical activities	1%	100	0%	2%
N. Administrative and support services	0%	120	0%	
O. Public administration and defense	9%	137	9%	10%
P. Education	7%	79	3%	43%
Q. Human health and social work	2%	155	2%	2%
R. Arts, entertainment and recreation	0%	140	0%	
S. Other service activities	2%	176	2%	2%
U. NGO/International Organizations	5%	371	4%	7%
Non specified	5%	215	5%	
N=660		180	N=602	N=58

- Returnees are integrated in most sectors although three highly dominate.
- It was emphasised that there is a high rate of entrepreneurship in the Afghan context.
- It was also emphasised that one third of returnees are employed in the lowest category of ISCO classification.

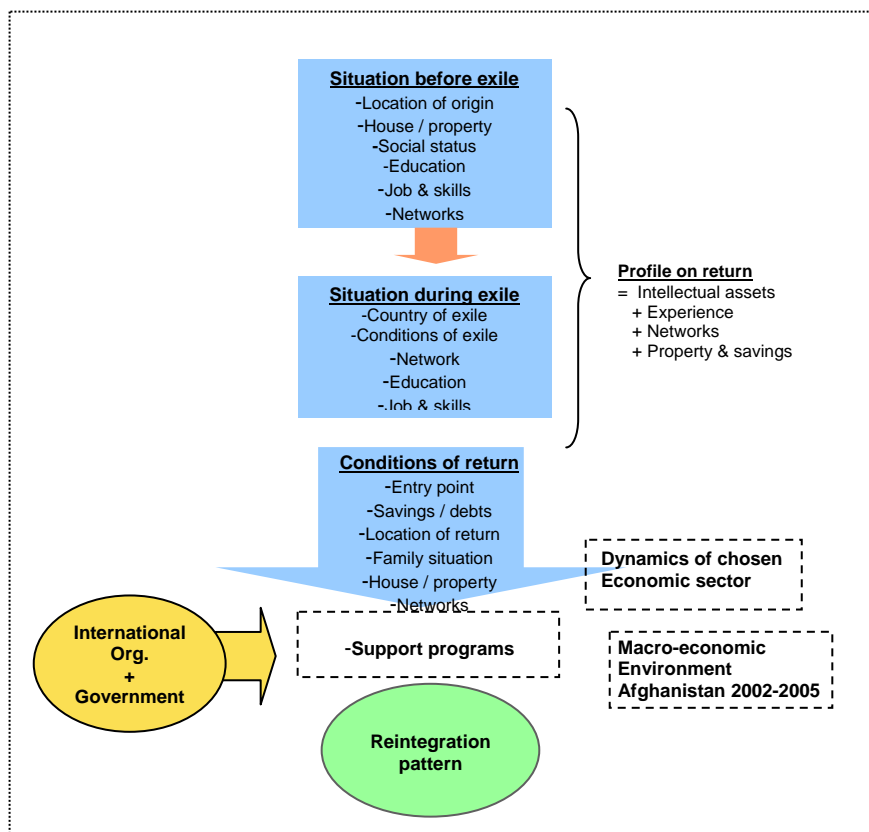
Group classification of returnee workers / household survey				
ISCO 88 Classification	Total	Av. Income USD	Men	Women
0. Armed forces	2%	112	2,2%	0
1. Legislators, senior officials and managers	7%	720	7,0%	1,7%
2. Professionals	10%	121	6,0%	50,0%
3. Technician	6%	169	5,6%	6,9%
4. Office & customer service clerks	6%	217	5,8%	8,6%
5. Shops & market sales workers	17%	150	17,4%	10,3%
6. Skilled workers (agriculture)	1%	90	1,0%	0,0%
7. Craft & related trade workers	12%	166	12,3%	12,1%
8. Plant & machine operators	6%	129	6,0%	1,7%
9. Labour workers / elementary occupation	34%	122	36,7%	8,6%
N=660	100%	180	100%	100%

- All functions are represented, with a third of returnee existing at the lowest level
- Women are mainly employed as teachers, in shops and small services, and crafts.

Incomes

- Lowest salaries are in agriculture (\$90/month), labour workers (\$122/month) and professionals. This category is affected by low salaries of teachers (\$79/month).
- Highest salaries are among managers and senior officials (\$720/month), as well as in the international organisations / NGOs sector.

Returnees' reintegration patterns
The result of several groups of interconnected factors



Example 1: Vulnerable / situation of failure

- Government employee in Kabul before exile
 - Employment in manufacturing in Pakistan
 - No vacancy at Ministry on return
 - No house on return. Limited savings
 - Fails to reconnect with family and network
 - Stays in a returnee camp. No support programme
 - Works as casual labourer
- Does not cover family costs. Forced to borrow.
→ Return perceived as a failure → Wants to go back to Pakistan

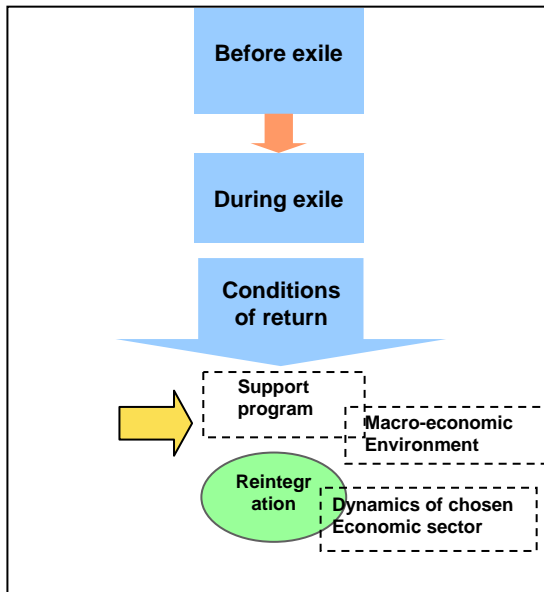
Example 2: Entrepreneurship as a reintegration pattern

- Worker in construction in exile
 - Works as a construction worker on return (6 months)
 - Access to the owner of a new marketplace (professional network)
 - Father has a piece of land. Gets loan through bonding the land
 - Opens a fabric retail shop (flourishing sector in Jalalabad)
- \$400 monthly income
→ Successful reintegration

Example 3: Woman with successful return from Europe

- Parents government employees before exile; average situation
- Exile in Europe, where one uncle is already settled
- Studies in Europe, university degree + journalism
- Comes back in 2002; job in media NGO; salary \$500
- Booming media sector, becomes trainer at Radio Killid

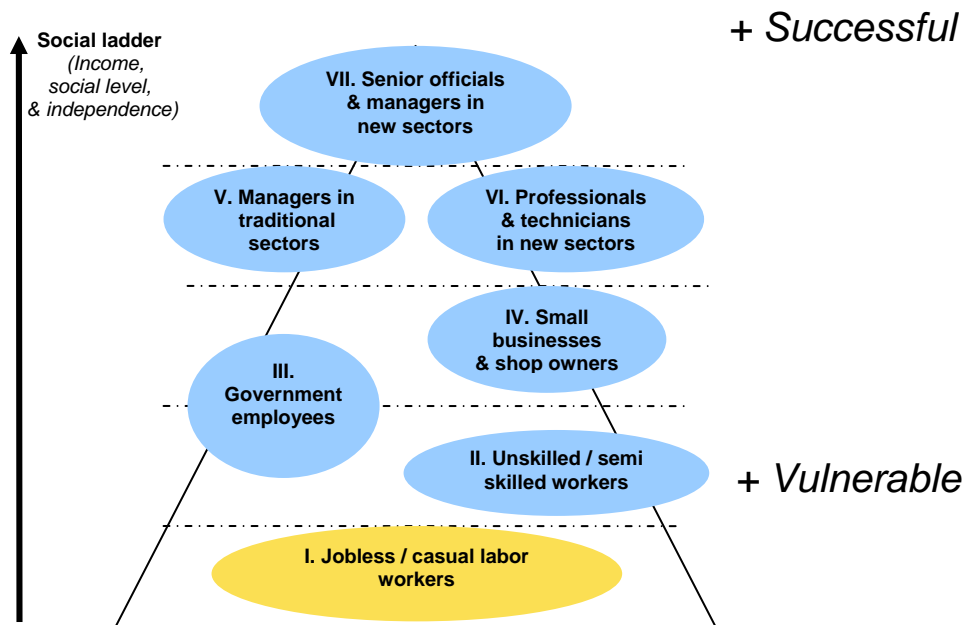
- Good know how in Afghan media + election period (international funds)
 - Creates a communication agency / public information campaign
- 15 employees, 2 production studios. High profitability.



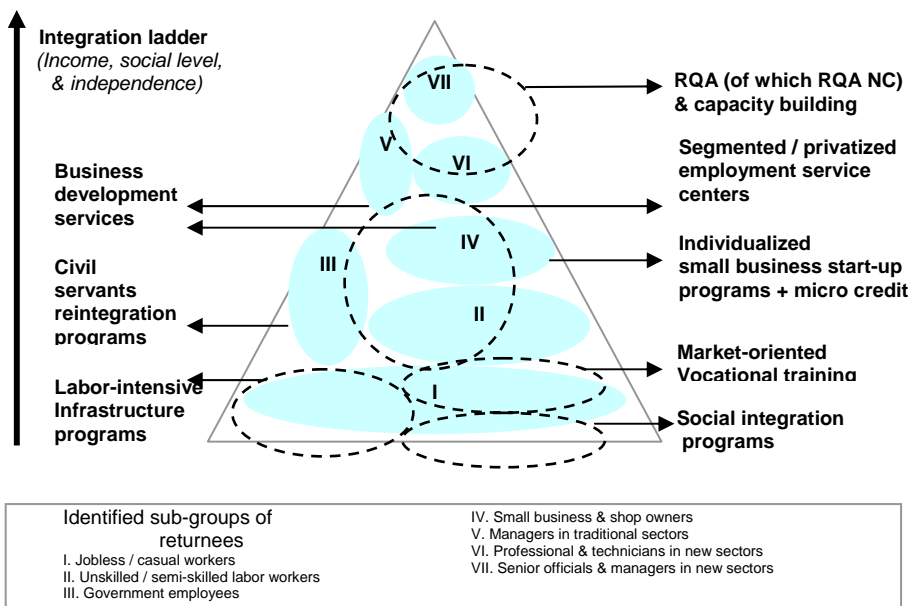
A combination of factors place returnees at various levels on the social ladder.

Key finding: The status of “returnee” is not a determinant to successful integration.

Returnees range from the most vulnerable to the most successful across the social ladder.

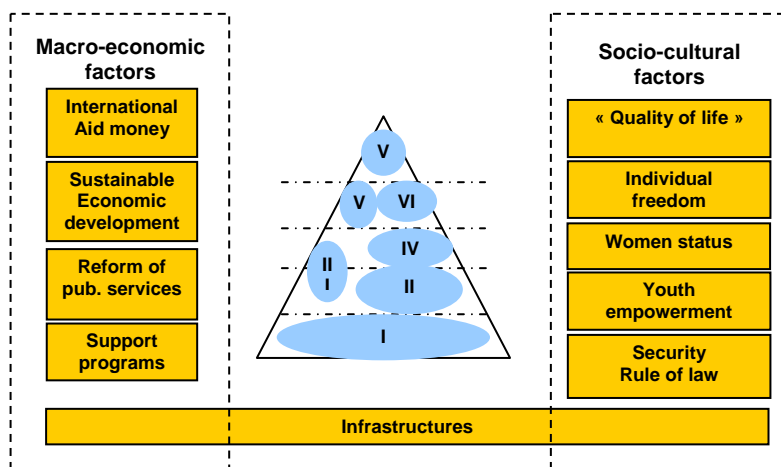


- Programs must address different returnee profiles through different entry points.
- Programs should be extended, focused on the needs of each sub-group, and market oriented.



Perspective: Integration is not guaranteed in the long term

- Most returnees came back recently
- Many got used to other quality of life and access to facilities
- Integration on arrival is not a guarantee for long-term staying
- A range of different factors are involved ("tipping point")



Policymaking: Questions remain for further research

- Should the Afghan Government try to retain returnees in Afghanistan or "organise / legalise" status of migrants with neighbouring countries?
- Should the return of 3 millions Afghans still in exile be encouraged / accelerated? Can Afghanistan absorb more labour force in the coming years?
- What will happen at the end of the reconstruction / aid money bubble to labour market and how will policies cope with this change?

Panel Discussion: Role of the international community

Scott Schirmer, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM welcomes the opportunity to address you today, and thanks the organisers of this conference for their efforts. Earlier today, we heard informed views regarding a common issue of concern to the region. Although the speakers viewed the issue from different perspectives, all recognised a need to address the issue in a multilateral manner. Thus the views and opinions can serve to strengthen the discussion rather than act as a means of division. They represent a myriad of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

IOM welcomes the opportunity to join in on this issue and to add our expertise and advisory capacity to the discussion. With that in mind, IOM has inaugurated a Tri-Lateral Dialogue on Migration with Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This project will serve as a forum for informal discourse focused on developing comprehensive and compatible national and sub-regional migration management strategies. The TLDM aims to help these governments develop a common orientation to manage migration by enhancing mutual confidence and identifying policy priorities and further practical measures within a comprehensive, balanced and collaborative framework. The TLDM will be characterised by its non-binding and practical character.

In the initial phase, through informal and structured discussions, the TLDM will focus on the identification of a migration framework built upon a set of common understandings outlining fundamental shared assumptions and principles underlying migration management for the region. Specific joint policy and technical workshops will complement the dialogue features in this initial phase.

Piyasiri Wickramasekara, International Labour Office (ILO)

We all agree this is a complex issue that cannot be solved overnight. We are happy about our productive cooperation with IOM and UNHCR in the project financed by the EC. Initially we were not keen to become involved in a refugee issue but soon realised it has wider labour implications. The basic point we must remember is that every person – whether labelled as a refugee or a migrant – has basic human rights which should be respected. ILO will continue work in this area, especially in capacity building in Afghanistan based on research already done which was not for its own sake. The ILO's strength is that it deals with all aspects of labour, including standards, social protection, employment and social dialogue. We are also a tripartite organisation involving governments, workers and employers. We heard about IOM's initiative in Trilateral Consultations, but would like to request IOM not to leave ILO out of these discussions since they relate to labour migration issues as well.

Ewen Macleod, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR's involvement in the Afghan refugee situation over the last quarter of a century is well known. Its future role and engagement is less clear. The high quality research presented today provides some important pointers through its ground breaking insights into the complexity of the situation.

It is UNHCR's experience that protracted refugee situations do not remain static. They evolve over time. Large-scale refugee movements across borders are a problem that initially require international cooperation to address. During this phase, UNHCR's provision of international protection and assistance brings much needed stability and governance to the situation. But over time the dominant challenge changes from being a problem to be resolved by states and international cooperation, to being one of addressing the problems of individual refugees themselves. These gradually morph into new political, economic and social forms. It's important, therefore, to be analytical and engage in different modes of enquiry about the nature of the problems we are trying to address. This will help to align policy and programmes with the realities on the ground.

This regional research programme supported by the European Commission through UNHCR has provided what we hope will be an important precedent. We believe it sets a benchmark for how analytical work of this type can be applied to other protracted refugee situations. We look forward to

more in-depth assessments of some of the key issues raised to date, and to moving from research into active planning and implementation of the findings.

Finally, while we certainly agree that voluntary repatriation is not the only solution, we should note that it has been the most important component to date. The return of over 4 million people is not an achievement to be dismissed lightly. UNHCR will continue to support voluntary return and reintegration. Our contribution to the latter has been to focus on rural housing for poor returnees. This has proved to be a well-conceived undertaking. But we will work to catalyse the involvement of others to address both return and reintegration and other solutions.

Anwar Khan, NADRA, Government of Pakistan

Most Afghan refugees do not want to return; of those who return, many of them are female. There is a need for reconstruction by those who can do it; Afghans in Pakistan are doing a wonderful job here but they could be very useful at home. Afghans need funding to reconstruct their country and development. We also request the Afghan government to try to change the perceptions of insecurity; Pakistanis are going there for their livelihoods, so there is no need to say it will take a long time to repatriate the many Afghans living outside their country. Finally, transnationalism should not be selective; it should include the first world also.

Alessandro Monsutti

Transnational research is very important; but we need to better understand power in Afghan society and do more localised research to see how power structures have changed over the last few decades.

Naghma Imdad, Savera

All these studies have implications for more research; one would not like to come to quick conclusions to the questions raised by this research. It is good to see all the partners are seriously interested in this. For instance, what about women (in IOM's studies of border crossings)? What happens to those women unable to visit home? How many single mothers (vs. female headed households) are affected by these issues? Multi-pronged and multi-sited approaches are necessary that accommodate these differences.

Mohammad Jalal Abbasi Shavazi, University of Tehran

There are many positive aspects of life in Afghanistan. It is important for those in Afghanistan to change the image of Afghanistan among their neighbours to show that the country has changed, just as Iranians abroad have negative perceptions of their society due to media and external influences. It is important to create a sense of identity for Afghans all over the world to be proud of the country and want to come back.

Concluding remarks

Paul Fishstein, Director, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Thanks to the EC, ILO, IOM and UNHCR for sponsoring and hosting this conference. Thanks to our partners in research, representatives from Afghan government ministries, colleagues and friends from the government of Pakistan for attending.

Some of same issues raised here today were also raised at last year's April conference in Kabul. The situation of Afghans is more complex than a single label. The refugee paradigm is insufficient to cover the complexities of motivation for population movements, which has been borne out by the research. Question of shared identities (for example where Afghans have been born or come of age in another country) have been highlighted again and again; over half of the Afghans in Pakistan are under 18, roughly 20% under the age of 5 – this has a very significant social effect.

Durable repatriation and return is dependent on livelihoods that can support returning Afghans. The question of services remains key – urbanised Afghans have become accustomed to sanitation, health

care, etc. 37% of Afghans do not return to same location from where they emigrated; we need to consider that social services in urban areas are being overwhelmed.

On the policy side, there is a need for investment in social services and job creation in Afghanistan. There is also the question of management – identifying mutual benefits for all countries and coming up with strategies to manage the situation.

Finally there are four key words that we could take away from today's discussions: sovereignty (control of fate and borders), management, confidence (in return), and dignity.