

AFGHAN LINKS

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Afghan Links is a free newsletter for readers who have a keen interest in Afghanistan, its history, people and culture. It invites news and articles from anyone who wishes to create and maintain constructive links between Afghanistan and other countries by sharing their expertise, information and ideas in any field.

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Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit (AREU)

Bound for the City: A Study of Rural to Urban Labour Migration in Afghanistan

New working paper from the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), reveals that rural to urban migration is rapidly increasing in Afghanistan, and urban labour markets are under constant pressure to accommodate new arrivals.

The study surveyed nearly 1,000 Afghan men and women who had migrated to the cities of Kabul, Herat or Jalalabad. Not surprisingly, the major reasons people had come to the cities were because of lack of work in the rural areas and the perception of better opportunities in the cities. The majority of migrants (66.7%) were married, and landlessness and homelessness were high among the population, at 71% and 43% respectively. Most of the respondents relied upon their own savings to afford their migration, and received little financial assistance from family or friends at their destination.

The study did reveal some surprising findings, including:

- Seasonality has little impact on rural to urban migration. Most of the migrants were either unemployed or employed in non-agricultural sectors in the rural areas, and therefore the agricultural cycle had no impact on the timing of their movement. Moreover, the majority of migrants planned to settle permanently in the cities, thus indicating that this form of migration is typically unidirectional.
- It took on average three weeks for migrants to find any type of employment in the urban settings, and the majority settled for unskilled work even if they had skills that could be used in other jobs. There were almost no opportunities for unskilled labourers to gain skills that would help them to “graduate” to more secure employment. The majority of respondents, likewise, had no assistance in obtaining their first job.
- Women take significantly longer to find employment (almost one year) and earn much less than their male counterparts in the same sectors. There are virtually no mechanisms for women to obtain employment without male assistance.
- Migrants spend a major portion of their income on the basic necessities of housing, accommodation and transport, and as a result, accumulate very little in savings—the average savings in hand of respondents at the time of survey was 100 Afs [US\$2]. Nevertheless, most migrants felt their economic situation had improved through migration, and the length of time spent in the cities correlated strongly with this improvement.

AREU's research points to the fact that through migration, rural poverty may be shifting to the cities. A comprehensive poverty alleviation strategy, coupled with immediate interventions at the source and destination of migration, is needed to address this problem and the burden imposed on urban labour markets.

Copies of the paper can be obtained online at www.areu.org.af or at AREU's office in Shahr-e Naw (across from the Insaf Hotel) in Kabul. [home](#)

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

Increased contribution from the Private Sector is Key to Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction

An increased contribution from the private sector is key to economic growth and [poverty reduction](#), ADB Vice-President Geert van der Linden told participants today at a conference on achieving results in private sector development. The three day conference, held at ADB Headquarters in Manila, brings together nearly 100 representatives from governments, private sector, academia, and donor organizations from all over the Asia and Pacific region. "Throughout Asia and the Pacific, private sector development and increasing the contribution of the private sector to the economy is key to economic growth and poverty reduction," said Mr. van der Linden. "ADB's [Asian Development Outlook](#), released earlier this month, shows that gross domestic product in developing Asia grew by well over 7% last year - the highest rate since the 1997 financial crisis. A major driver behind the high rate of growth was a marked revival of business investment." However, he also noted that many studies have shown that private investors regard economic and regulatory uncertainties, macroeconomic instability, high tax rates, regulatory and administrative requirements, corruption, and insufficient

infrastructure, finance and skills as significant barriers to investment. Speakers in the conference include senior government officials from [Malaysia](#), [Nepal](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Thailand](#), and [Viet Nam](#). Department of Finance Assistant Secretary Gil Beltran is representing the [Philippines](#). They are joined by academics from [People's Republic of China](#), [Indonesia](#), [Republic of Korea](#), as well as a representative from the Federation of [Indian](#) Chambers of Commerce and Industry. "The [Millennium Development Goals](#) and increasing globalization pose significant challenges for economies in Asia and the Pacific," Malaysian Minister Dato Mustapa noted in his keynote speech.

"The key challenge is how to focus government-led efforts in creating a conducive business environment."

The conference is looking at private sector development strategies as processes and examining how planning and executing them could be effective in accelerating reform by increasing accountability and focusing on results. It provides an opportunity for exchange of good practices, challenges and lessons learned among countries from all over the region. As an institution committed to poverty reduction, ADB actively pursues private sector development. "Working with both the public and private sector, ADB has developed the expertise, and a range of instruments and approaches, to assist governments in achieving an environment in which the private sector can grow and prosper," Mr. van der Linden said.

"Through our public sector operations, we provide loans and technical assistance to assist governments, and these can take a number of forms. For example, we are currently working with [Bangladesh](#), Viet Nam, [Cambodia](#) and PRC to improve the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises, including improved access to credit and related support services. On the infrastructure side, we are working with Bangladesh to facilitate private sector participation in the gas sector."

He added: "We also play an active role in private sector development through private sector operations. These include loans without government guarantees and equity."

ADB's involvement in both public and private sector operations uniquely positions itself to leverage private funds for large investment needs, and to promote partnerships between private and public sector players. ADB can mitigate investment risks through guarantee instruments, such as partial credit guarantees or political risk guarantees.

ADB will later publish a good practice reference guide for taking a strategic approach to private sector development.

[About ADB](#) Source: ADB Media Centre – 18th April 2005.

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CONFLICT RESEARCH

"Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond" - Prospects for Improved Stability Reference Document

New Report by - Barnett R. Rubin, Humanun Hamidzada and Abby Stoddard. Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 'Clingendael', Conflict Research Unit, April 2005.

[Conflict Research Unit](#) Occasional Paper - [Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations](#). Please see attachment 2.15 or ask Jeanne for a copy by emailing Afghanlinks@aol.com [home](#)

COUNTER NARCOTICS

PRESS RELEASE 26 April 2005 - The Afghan Government Welcomes The Arrest Of Bashir Noorzai On Us Territory

The Afghan Government welcomes the arrest of Bashar Noorzai, one of the world's most wanted heroin traffickers, in the United States of America.

The Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, is committed to the fight against narcotics, and is working hard to reform law enforcement, the judicial sector and prisons to ensure more and more people like Bashar Noorzai are arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned here in Afghanistan.

In order to ensure a functioning criminal justice system a Counter Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force was launched on 12 December 2004 to fast-track major drug cases within the criminal justice system. 35 specialist investigators, 35 prosecutors and 15 judges will be trained and operational by the end of 2005.

The Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, is working on a secure court and prison facility, which will be developed at Pul-e-Charkhi prison by mid-2005 to deal with major drug trafficking cases.

Eng.Habibullah Qaderi Minister for Counter Narcotics said "Effective Counter Narcotics legal framework will be developed through the completion of a review of relevant laws with necessary amendments adopted by the Afghan Government in 2005. New laws on money laundering and the freezing and confiscation of assets will be adopted in mid 2005 as well". He also added, "That the Afghan government is committed to implementing all the laws concerning Counter Narcotics and will make sure a well functioning judicial system is in place for arresting, investigating and prosecuting drug criminals". **Source:** Ministry of Counter Narcotics, Kabul, 26 April 2005. [home](#)

FIELD NEWS

Future Generations/Afghanistan - March 2005 News, Updates and Announcements

C O N T E N T S

1. Welcome - Ghazni Report 2. First Radio Station Comes to Jaghori - Dai Kundi Report 3. Dai Kundi Teachers Go to Winter School - Bamian Report 4. The Story of 500 Women in Shaidan Photo Essay 5. Radio Comes to Jaghori Sang-e-Talkh, Jaghori District, Ghazni

Message from the Deputy Director of Future Generations

We thank those of you who continue to give us your reactions to our efforts to bring you closer to the field reality in Afghanistan and the successes that we have been experiencing in our work in the central highlands.

The Government of Afghanistan, with UNICEF support, has just published a comprehensive, provincial-level survey of child health, education, and civil rights based upon 2003 data. Bamian ranks last in the overall assessment of 32 provinces. Dai Kundi, then part of Uruzgan Province, ranks next to last. Ghazni is in 20th place. The indicators cover such things as pregnancy, delivery, and breastfeeding; immunization levels, prevalence and treatment of diarrhea and acute respiratory infection; water and sanitation; education and child rights; and mortality rates. This survey confirms what we already knew, but it also suggests places where rapid interventions—combined with research on their effectiveness and functioning in the field—can make a real improvement in the lives of Afghan children and their families. This is work that we are well-equipped to undertake.

President Karzai has appointed a cabinet that seems to have been chosen for its potential to deliver quick improvements in life here. Ministers have all been told that they must produce measurable results in six months, and they accepted the challenge. We see a new urgency at the working levels in the ministries with which we are associated.

This is a moment in time when experience in the villages with what works (and what doesn't) and understanding of what needs to be done with outside assistance may be joined with the political will to make real changes in top-down ways of working. If so, Afghanistan is poised to produce real social change that is both just and lasting. Dorothy Knapp - Deputy Director dorothy@future.org <http://www.future.org/> [home](#)

FLIGHTS

Afghanistan: Indian Airlines Cleared For Use By Un Staff

At the SMT Meeting of 25 April 2005 the use of Indian Airlines, note NOT Air India, was authorised for use by UN Staff to and from Afghanistan.

Source: Safar-i-shoma Khosh, Jean Lausberg UN FSCO: Afghanistan – 25th April 2005. [home](#)

HEALTH

New generation of Afghan midwives fights 'silent tsunami'

The first generation of professional midwives to undergo full training has graduated in Afghanistan, where maternal and child mortality are the worst in the world, officials said.

In all, 138 female trainees from more than 20 provinces completed a two-year course at the Afghan institute of health science, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Aga Khan Development Network.

"Fifty to 70 mothers die every day from birth complications, which is a silent tsunami for Afghanistan," public health minister Mohammed Amin Fatimi told the graduation ceremony late Wednesday.

According to a report, a mother dies from birth complications every 30 minutes in Afghanistan and maternal mortality rates are 60 times higher than in developed countries.

Almost all Afghan women give birth at home, but only eight percent get help from a trained birth attendant. Due to traditional and cultural restrictions male doctors or health attendants cannot help women give birth.

More than 250 out of 1,000 children die before the age of five in Afghanistan, while in France it is five out of 1,000, according to the World Health Organisation.

"Afghanistan has the world's highest maternal and child mortality rates," Edward Carwardine, the United Nations Children's Fund spokesman in Afghanistan, told AFP.

Afghanistan would eventually need 8,000 to 10,000 midwives, Fatimi said.

By the end of April another 90 midwives will graduate from similar courses in northern Balkh and western Herat provinces, which will take the number of new trainees to 228, according to a USAID statement.

Some 830 new midwives are expected to be trained by the year 2006 under a USAID grant of 6.7 million dollars and additional funds from the Aga Khan's organisation.

Graduate Shakeela Abdali said: "It is our day today and we are glad that here with us comes another batch of health messengers, for whom thousands of mothers have waited so long."

Two and a half decades of war has left Afghanistan suffering in all walks of life, especially in security, economy and health. **Source:** AFP - 14th April 2005 [home](#)

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

World Poverty Day – April 24th 2005

April 24 - World Poverty Day. The three major UK political parties will be discussing the development statements they have made in their campaign manifestos. **Source:** CARE International ebulletin 20th April 2005

http://www.careinternational.org.uk/donate/take_action/mph/

Every single day, 30,000 children are dying as a result of extreme poverty.

This year, 2005, we finally have the resources, knowledge and opportunity to end this shameful situation.

That's what this website is about. **Join the band of people** who are taking action to make poverty history. It only needs to take you a matter of minutes every month, but it will help us to literally change the world.

If this is your first visit to the site these are the 3 things you should do – [join us now](#), [get a white band](#) & [find out more](#). <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/> [home](#)

MEDIA

98.1 ARMAN FM Celebrates its Second Birthday, in style

April 16th marks a special day in the ARMAN FM calendar. Two years ago this day, a humble radio station with few staff and many critics blasted its tunes across Kabul. The energy and enthusiasm ARMAN FM brought to the city won through in the end, and to this day stands as testimony to the Afghan population's willingness to make and seek changes.

How far we have come, and so much we have reason to celebrate. When men and women talking on the airwaves was once condemned; is now considered normal. When music and laughter left people aghast; now lifts the spirits of people who have endured so much. Many of the 'original crew' still remain at ARMAN FM, including Massood Sanjar, Sima Safa, Rohullah Ahmadzai, Hadiya and Mustafa Azizyar. New DJs, dynamic programming, entertainment, comedy, news, competitions and talkback have added that extra touch that makes ARMAN FM the most popular FM station in Afghanistan today.

But most of all, ARMAN FM expresses its gratitude to its listeners – a special bunch who've remained loyal, dedicated, bright and enthusiastic over the last 24 months. As part of the greater ARMAN FM team, we want to thank you for your unwavering support and wish you many happy returns!

ARMAN FM broadcasts at 98.1 MHz on the FM band, and will reach over 1 million additional million people in Kandahar taking its total potential audience to 8 million listeners. Additional information can be found on the web at www.arman.fm.

For further information please contact Saad Mohseni on: saad.mohseni@arman.fm or +93 79 44 55 66. [home](#)

NGO's Holding NGOs Accountable

Non-governmental organizations raise billions of dollars each year from individuals, private and public sector donors and charitable foundations, including \$8 billion so far for the recent tsunami relief. However, there is no accepted benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of NGOs in their stated missions. Nor are NGOs subject to the same standards of budgetary and governance oversight as listed companies or government officials in democratic states. NGOs constitute the not-for-profit (NFP) sector of international civil society and include advocacy and lobbying groups, for causes such as women's rights and the environment; service organizations for disaster relief, humanitarian aid and economic development; and policy institutes, think tanks and specialized educational organizations focused on international affairs.

Since its founding in 1945, the U.N. has been a staunch supporter of NGOs. Today 2,613 NGOs are registered with the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), while 1,407 NGOs are accredited to the U.N. Secretariat's Department of Public Information. The Union of International Associations in Brussels monitors over 58,000 international non-profit bodies pursuing 42,000 strategies based on 4,800 categories of issues.

The distinguishing feature of NGOs--as of all charitable institutions--is that donors do not benefit directly from their contributions. Instead, the benefit accrues to third parties targeted by the organizations or to society as a whole. As a consequence, NGOs have traditionally been accorded the presumptions of moral authority, altruism and absence of conflicts of interest. However, the NGO sector, despite its beneficent intentions, is viewed as a candidate for the same type of governance standards as the private, for-profit, sector.

Pressure to improve NGO accountability emanates from various forces:

Philanthropists: Charitable foundations, which used to donate without strings attached to NGOs, are now increasingly setting requirements on how funds may be used. This restricts the initiative of the NGO while transferring the mission decision from NGO to donor. NGOs are under pressure to professionalize transparency and governance standards in order to demonstrate that they are worthy custodians of donations and to regain control of their own agendas.

Academia: Calls for improvement in NGO accountability and governance and for the democratization of civil society have emanated, among others, from the Yale School of Management; the Hauser Center for Non-Profit Organizations at Harvard; the Center for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics; the Center for the Study of Globalization and Regionalization at the University of Warwick; and the One World Trust.

United Nations: Given the role of the U.N. in promoting NGOs, U.N. accreditation might appear to be an appropriate mechanism for standardizing NGO effectiveness and governance. ECOSOC's accreditation rules theoretically require a "democratically adopted constitution," "representative structure" and an "appropriate mechanism of accountability" but are largely devoid of timely enforcement powers.

A panel chaired by former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso submitted a report in June 2004 on U.N.-Civil Society relations, but its proposals focused on U.N.-specific problems such as de-politicizing the process of accreditation and placed little emphasis or urgency on increased transparency and governance.

Effectiveness: The post-tsunami relief was testimony to the skills and power of NGOs. However, it also revealed deficits in NGOs' ability to operate. In Sri Lanka and Indonesia, regulatory, legal and enforcement inadequacies allowed abuses to occur. Australian charities, for legal reasons, could not easily channel funds outside Australia. And only Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States readily permit the spending of domestic charitable donations abroad.

Measurement and enhancement of NGO effectiveness will probably reflect the standards in the private sector, such as agreement between boards and managers on the overall mission of the organization, definition of the tools needed to carry out that mission and efficient and timely financial and non-financial reporting.

Decision-making processes that can be demonstrated to be both disciplined and professional, and which are documented and reasonably transparent to third parties will be important as well. In addition, board members and managers will need to be held accountable for their actions against objective criteria communicated to the stakeholders of the organization.

Not-for-profit organizations in the United States (known as registered charities in the United Kingdom) have equally come under scrutiny. In fact, U.S. legislative action primarily directed at domestic NFPs may prove the most influential in the reform of NGOs internationally. Within the U.S. NFP sector, there are one million tax-exempt charitable organizations, and debate is intensifying on the issues of mission, means, management, transparency, accountability, performance measurement and governance.

The main effect of being a U.S. NFP is tax-exempt status under U.S. Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3), which enunciates the "exempt purposes" of a charitable organization.

The chairman of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, Sen. Charles Grassley, has announced his intention to introduce legislation that will provide a regulatory framework for NFPs. The commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, Mark Everson, outlined to the Committee in June 2004 new requirements that the IRS is implementing to force disclosure of compensation, governance and other policies.

On March 1, the Committee received a report, which it had commissioned from a coalition of 175 NFP leaders, recommending tightening of NFP financial operations and a database of information on charities. Many international NGOs are US 501(c)(3) organizations and will be required to comply.

Stricter compliance requirements with regard to clarity of purpose, performance, governance, transparency and reporting may cause the ranking, combination or even disappearance of some NGOs. Just as with U.S. NFPs, international NGOs will find it in their interests to stay ahead of the trend, lest government-imposed requirements prove stricter than voluntary ones.

U.S. and U.K. government rules are likely to dominate disclosure and governance requirements for the larger NGOs until broader-based regulations can be agreed on. NGOs must prepare for the kind of disclosure and self-assessment that corporate governance standards set for listed companies themselves.

They will come under increasing pressure to focus on stated missions and defined target audiences and be judged against self-set standards vis-à-vis their boards of trustees, donors, governments and the public at large.

NGOs are faced with the challenge of ensuring demonstrable effectiveness, professionalization of management and transparency of governance. If successful, funding from public and private sources will increase and the ultimate pursuit of their missions will benefit.

This article is part of Oxford Analytica's Daily Brief Service. Oxford Analytica is an independent strategic consulting firm drawing on a network of more than 1,000 scholar experts at Oxford and other leading universities and research institutions around the world. For more information please visit www.oxan.com, and to find out how to subscribe to the firm's Daily Brief Service, [click here](#).

Source: Source: Forbes.com April, 5, 2005.

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PRTS

PRTs IN AFGHANISTAN: Successful But Not Sufficient - Peter Viggo Jakobsen Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) Report 2005:6

Abstract

The report analyses the contributions made by the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) on the ground in Afghanistan. It concludes that the PRTs are successful because they have helped to extend the authority of the Afghan government beyond Kabul, facilitated reconstruction and dampened violence. At the same time, it is equally clear that they cannot address the underlying causes of insecurity in Afghanistan. The PRTs only make sense as part of an overall strategy in which they serve to buy time while other instruments are employed to tackle the military threat posed by the Taliban and Al Qaida; the infighting between the warlords; the increased lawlessness and banditry; and the booming opium poppy cultivation and the drug trade. A comprehensive strategy that couples the deployment of more PRTs by NATO with determined action against these causes of instability is therefore required. Future PRTs should be based on the UK PRT model, which is generally considered the most successful. To heighten its profile in Afghanistan, Denmark should consider establishing a PRT of its own or contributing to the establishment of a joint Nordic PRT. **For the full pdf report please see attachment 1.15.**

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Peter Viggo Jakobsen, Head of Department, Con. ict and Security Studies, DIIS.

Source: sent to the Afghanlinks Newsletter by ACBAR – 18th April 2005.

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TRAINING

RedR/ANSO - NGO Security Management Workshop August 21st – 24th 2005 - Kabul

As part of the RedR/ANSO Regional Security Learning Initiative (RSLI) a 4-day Security Management Workshop (SMW) will be held in Kabul on 21st – 24th August 2005

Previous SMWs

- **RedR held two successful Security Management Workshops in Kabul in October 2002**
- **In March 2004 the first RedR/ANSO collaboration produced a further two successful workshops.**
- **In February 2005 the first RSLI SMW was held. The SMW planed for June 2005 is already full.**

Participants for the workshop will be senior managers or staff committed to managing security within their organisation.

The deadline for completed applications will be June 20th 2005

Course Content and Structure

The RedR/ANSO collaboration has allowed the contextualisation of the standard RedR Security Management training resources to suit the security conditions that humanitarian organisations operate under in Afghanistan, thereby making the course more relevant for NGOs.

The aim of the workshop for relief managers working for Afghanistan based agencies is to enhance the knowledge and skills of staff responsible for security management so that their organisations and staff can operate more safely, and thereby contribute to more effective programmes. The workshop will equip participants with the tools and approaches to:

- Manage risk through the analysis of threats and vulnerabilities within a specific context;
- Develop a staff security strategy based on the working context and their relief programme;
- Review and improve staff security practice and procedures.
- We have noted that there is a strong demand for security management skills relevant to the conditions agencies are operating under in Afghanistan. During the workshop we will work with agency staff to address these issues and provide tools, guidance and tips to assist participants in incorporating best practice in security management into agency operational procedures, policy and practice. RedR will bring a training team competent to offer expert advice on these issues, as well as the training experience to help facilitate group learning based on pooling common experience of what is currently working well.

The contents of the workshop are as follows: it will run for 4 days and is comprised of main modules addressing various aspects of security management, each main module comprises of a series of sub-modules which will be drawn upon to provide a mix of individual sessions to cover a range of security related issues, skills and management techniques that address the concerns and aims of the participant group.

The Core Modules for the Security Management Workshop include:

- Managing for Security
- Context Assessment
- Risk Assessment
- Security Strategies
- Incident Reporting & Analysis
- Interpersonal Communication
- Specific Threat Modules

In terms of structure, the workshop will have two facilitators, and a number of guest speakers. However, the event will be in the hands of the participants, who are encouraged to bring along their security plans/guidelines as well as questions and concerns regarding security to be addressed at the workshop.

The workshops will be held in English and therefore participants should have a high level in comprehension and spoken English to benefit fully from the course. Please contact redr@afgnso.org for an application form. **Source:** Dave Heed, Regional Security Learning Initiative, Coordinator, ANSO/RedR, +93 (0)79177017.

Web sites www.redr.org www.ihe.org.uk

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UNAMA

Press Briefing by Paul Fishstein - Deputy Director for Research - Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Conference on ‘Transnational Networks: Recognizing a Regional Reality’

Good morning. My name is Paul Fishstein, and I am the Deputy Director for Research at the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). AREU is an independent, Kabul-based research organization with the objectives of conducting policy- and action-oriented research to improve Afghan lives and strengthening the capacity and culture of research in Afghanistan. We also maintain a resource center which is available to all interested persons. All of AREU's publications are available on our website.

I wanted to brief you today on a regional workshop being held here in Kabul on Wednesday and on the results of some research that AREU is conducting on the issue of Afghan refugees and migrants in neighboring countries.

Even before 1978, economic differentials between Afghanistan and its neighboring countries lead to significant migration of Afghans seeking employment. In particular, the booming oil-based expansion of the Iranian economy during the 1970s created opportunities for Afghan workers. The invasion of foreign forces at the end of 1979 then helped to create what was then the world's largest refugee population, which received significant assistance and support from Afghanistan's neighbors as well as the larger international community.

Discussion of a “durable solution” to the refugee issue has been going on since the early 1990's, yet even after the massive return of Afghans after the fall of the Taliban, large numbers of Afghans remain in both Pakistan and Iran. While the on-going perception has been that of a refugee situation, with large numbers of refugees poised to return once peace is created, there is now increasing recognition of the reality that the refugee paradigm no longer describes the situation of Afghans in the two countries

AREU began its research on transnational networks in 2004, partly due to the results of AREU's other livelihoods research, which showed that remittances from family members living outside of the country was a significant factor in sustaining the livelihoods of households. The current research, which is being funded by the European Commission and Stichting Vluchteling, is looking at transnational networks in three areas of Afghanistan (Maimana, Herat, and Jalalabad), three areas of Pakistan (Quetta, Peshawar, and Karachi), and three areas of Iran (Tehran, Mashad, and Zahidan). In the research in Pakistan and Iran, AREU is working with partners, the Collective for Social Science Research and Tehran University, respectively. To date, the research has produced several area case studies and a briefing paper (the latter available at this briefing).

Based on the work to date, we can make the following points:

- The importance of trans-national migratory networks as a key livelihood strategy for households, in response to economic insecurity, is confirmed.
- Well-established networks and linkages between the three countries exist for the circulation of people, money, information, and goods, with Afghans in neighboring countries retaining close ties with their homes.
- Existing migrant communities, including those who arrived before 1978, help to facilitate the entry of new arrivals.
- There is continued movements of Afghans in both directions, largely for economic reasons.
- Some Afghans, especially those living in rural areas of Pakistan and Iran, are reluctant to return to Afghanistan out of concern that they will no longer have access to education, health care, and other social services.
- The illegal nature of most current migration has a number of consequences, including:
- High vulnerability to exploitation by smugglers (who may also be involved in narcotics trade or human trafficking), criminals, corrupt officials, and unscrupulous employers. In many cases, there can be a situation close to that of bonded labor, with the migrant being handed over to the employer at the destination.
- Exceedingly high costs for making the journey, including fees paid to smugglers, and bribes paid to officials for passports and other facilitating documents.
- Encouragement of corruption by police and other officials.

The above findings present a number of challenges to policy makers, including:

- Understanding the contribution of regional migration to all three countries, and identifying common areas of interest. This may be politically volatile, but it is important for establishing and maintaining good neighborly relations between the three countries. The benefits to migration are obvious for Afghanistan, and include the support that remittances provide for households and even for investment in reconstruction activities. For the neighboring countries, Afghans currently make important contributions to key industries, such as construction and transport.
- Acknowledging that 100% repatriation is not possible or even a meaningful concept.
- Finding a way to transform what is a successful livelihood strategy into a tool for development.
- Establishing legal framework and instruments that acknowledge the reality of migratory flows.
- Ensuring that legal and institutional protections are still available for those who truly are refugees

As I mentioned, the conference will take place on Wednesday 27 April at the Hotel Intercontinental, and will be co-hosted by the Ministry of Refugees and AREU. The morning will be very much policy oriented. After a presentation of study results to date, we will hear a response first from a panel of officials from the Ministries of Refugees, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Labor and Social Affairs, and Economics, then from the international community, including the EC, UNHCR, World Bank, IOM, and ILO. There will also be a chance for input from the regional embassies, as well as other stakeholders. During the afternoon, we will have a more detailed presentation of research findings, with a chance for additional discussion. At the end of the morning session, from 12:15 – 12:45, the Ministry of Refugees and AREU will give a joint press conference to discuss the conference and key issues emerging from the research. **Source:** UNAMA - Kabul – 24 April 2005. [home](#)

If you want further information on any of the above subjects please email Jeanne Bryer at Afghanlinks@aol.com

NB. All information contained here identifies the source and is shared with readers in good faith. If you find any incorrect details please let me know and they will be rectified immediately. *Afghan Links* is produced by Jeanne Bryer who formerly worked for the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and who currently works for Khorasan Orphanage in Kabul and the Kathy Evans Afghan Education Trust. If you no longer wish to receive the Afghan Links Newsletter please send an email to Jeanne Afghanlinks@aol.com and your address will be removed.

